

# *Reinventing the Workplace*

---

## ***Excerpt - The Integrated Workplace Strategy Concept (IWS)***

Becker, F., Joroff, M., & Quinn, K. L. (1995). *Toolkit: Reinventing the Workplace*. Norcross, GA: International Development Research Council

---

This research was sponsored by the International Development Research Council (IDRC). Its purpose was to help corporate real estate professionals better understand the nature of alternative officing, forces driving its development, and critical success factors in successfully implementing innovative workplace strategies.

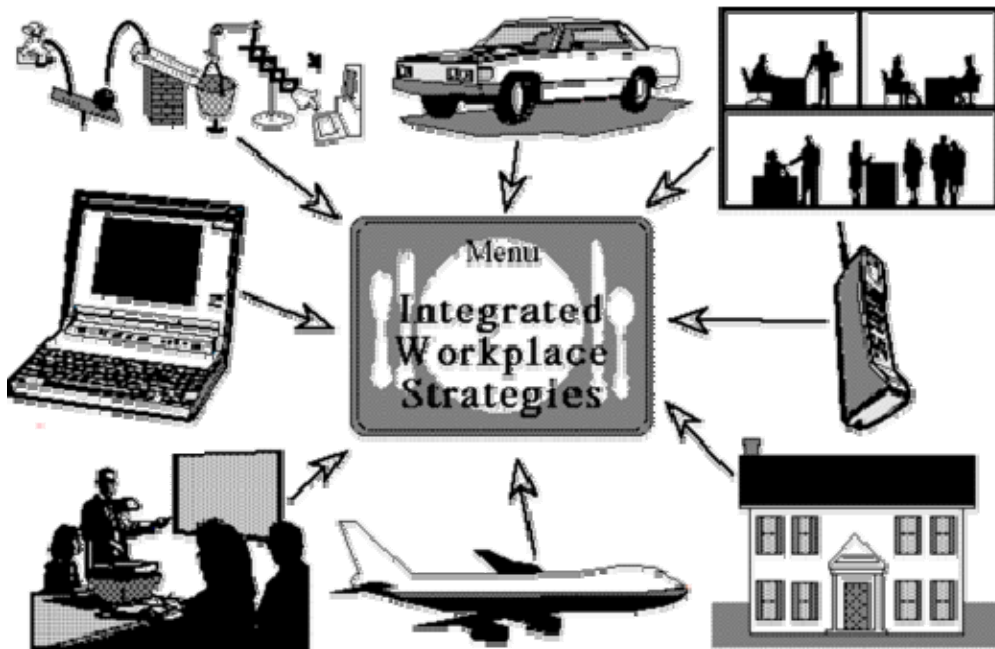
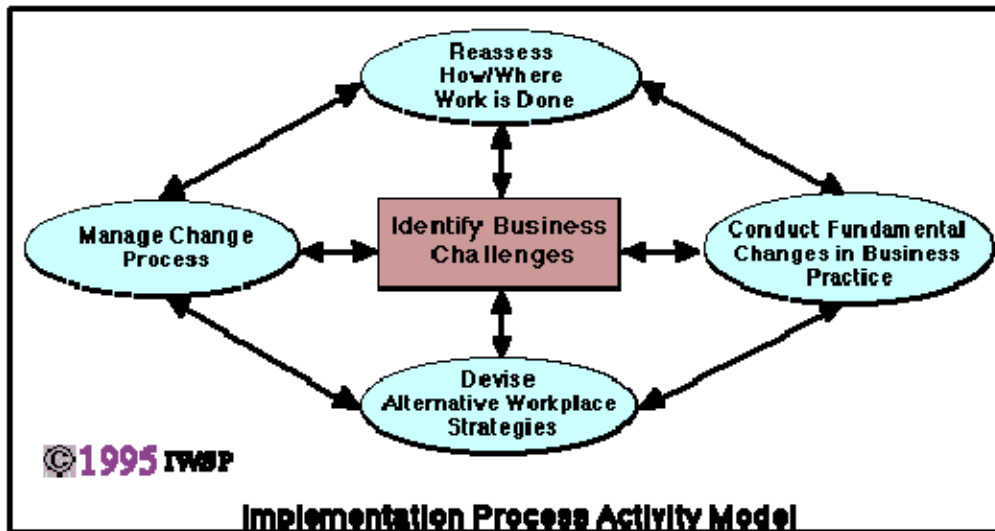
In essence, the IWS concept characterizes the workplace as a unified system that creatively combines wisdom about the nature of physical settings (where work is conducted); the information technologies used in the performance of work (how data, opinions, and ideas are accessed, processed, and communicated); the nature of work patterns and processes (when and how tasks must be performed to achieve business objectives); and finally, organizational culture and management (the formal and informal values, expectations, policies, and behaviors that influence all of the other factors). As is the case in any true system, changes in one part will affect all the others. The challenge, therefore, is to design a coherent overall strategy that enables the various aspects of the total system to work in harmony, and complement each other.

### **The Forces Driving Change**

- Reduced costs for higher profits
- Innovative products or improved productivity for competitive advantage
- Better service for improved customer satisfaction
- Policies enabling employees to balance work/family responsibilities
- Effective programs to attract and retain staff
- Facilities and processes to improve teamwork and collaboration
- Policies and practices to ensure regulatory compliance

Most companies start down the path to IWS with a narrow focus: reducing costs. Why costs? One answer lies in the aphorism that asks, "How do you get a jackass's attention?" and replies, "Hit it over the head with a two-by-four." In most organizations, cost is the two-by-four. Our study has revealed very few U.S. organizations in which

interest in IWS didn't originate in a senior management edict to cut costs, or result from a corporate real estate manager's anticipation of such an edict.



Measuring effectiveness rather than productivity is inherently more difficult, less precise, and almost always more valuable. It is a form of performance assessment that is diagnostic in intent: The goal is to facilitate informed decision-making that will shape the continuous improvement of the workplace system.