

Executive Summary

Picture an office filled with people. But imagine that — unlike a traditional office, where all of those people work for the same company — some of them are freelance writers, graphic designers, programmers and app developers; others are teleworkers; still others are in the process of forming startup companies or working for very small firms. The office may simply be a large room where people work at couches, tables and bench desks, or it may contain carrels, cubicles, private offices and even classrooms or auditoriums. What is this place? It is a coworking center.

Coworking — a new concept emerging from a more than 50-year foundation of innovative workspaces — is revolutionizing the concept of workplace. Interim developments like incubators, innovation centers and accelerators have contributed to the entrepreneurial ecosystem. But coworking centers have combined new functions and new operating models in interdisciplinary and collaborative ways that have spawned precipitous growth in the creation of — and participation in — these centers. All indicators point to the continued growth and diversification of coworking centers, which also are beginning to impact the functions and facilities of mainstream corporate workplaces.