

# Meetings to *Flip* For: Optimize Open Spaces for Maximum Productivity







**The return-to-office wave is gripping the enterprise. According to a recent report from HR software maker Leapsome, 56% of HR leaders say they're being pressured by CEOs to mandate in-office work arrangements. Meanwhile, a Resume Builder survey found 90% of companies plan to implement some sort of a return-to-office policy in 2025.**

But many organizations are finding that there simply isn't enough office space for these returning workers.

"Federal workers have been ordered back into offices only to face shortages of desks, computer monitors, parking and even toilet paper," NPR reported, noting some federal employees have been ordered to report to storage units instead of offices due to space constraints.

Amazon postponed some of its sweeping return-to-office orders for similar reasons: there simply aren't enough desks. Amazon offices in the San Francisco area were reportedly short about 800 desks.

While physical space is at a premium, employees are also wary of encountering the same in-office frustrations as before. Chief among them is the inability to find and book an available meeting room and the drain the seemingly endless search has on productivity. There's a need to flip the old methods and find a new option to overcome the challenges of hard-to-book meeting rooms. For many, the solution lies in open space meetings.

Here, we'll outline the key benefits and challenges of open meeting spaces, and offer suggestions to optimize your office spaces to accommodate more open meetings.

# In-Office Meeting Mishaps

## What's the matter with traditional meeting spaces anyway?

According to a [report by Steelcase](#), **40% of employees spend an average of 30 minutes per day** searching for an available meeting room or space to collaborate. And a [study by Gensler Workplace Research](#) found that workplaces with flexible, well-managed meeting environments report **employee productivity rates that are 23% higher** than workplaces where employees face constant logistical challenges.

When an appropriate meeting space can't be found, meetings are often cancelled or rushed – which diminishes the quality of collaboration. And when an estimated 37% of an employee's time is spent in meetings, getting the most value out of those scheduled communication and collaboration times is essential.

Poor use of office space is also hitting companies in the wallet. According to a [study by Gable](#), **40% of office space goes unused daily**, creating unnecessary overhead costs. The study also noted that poor office space utilization can cost a company **\$11,000 per employee per year**.

## So, how do organizations break out of this budget-busting cycle?





# Open Spaces FTW

One way enterprises can better utilize office space and eliminate the productivity drain of the frantic search for meeting rooms is to use more open spaces. Using open spaces for meetings gives companies several strategic advantages, including the following:

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## **Enhanced collaboration and communication**

Open spaces offer the opportunity for spontaneous interactions, making it easier for team members to engage in impromptu meetings, discussions, and brainstorming sessions. This can lead to increased innovation and quicker problem-solving, as employees can easily share ideas without the barriers of enclosed offices.

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## **Cost efficiency**

Open spaces can be more economical than building private offices, meeting rooms, and cubicles. Open spaces save on construction and materials and allow companies to allocate resources to other areas.

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## **Flexibility and adaptability**

Open spaces can be easily reconfigured to accommodate meetings of different sizes and purposes, which is beneficial for companies that need dynamic spaces for collaboration.

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## **Promotion of company culture**

Holding meetings in open spaces can break down hierarchical barriers and introduce equality and community among employees, enhancing trust and open communication and contributing to a stronger company culture. To ensure employee concerns are heard, you can conduct regular surveys to identify any issues and adjust scheduling and open meeting policies accordingly.

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## **Better light and aesthetics**

Moving from often windowless meeting rooms to open spaces can maximize natural light and create a more pleasant and inviting atmosphere. According to [Business Insider](#), exposure to natural light can improve employee moods and productivity.

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## **Activity-based work**

Open meeting areas can foster an environment of activity-based work, where employees choose their work setting based on their tasks. This can lead to higher employee satisfaction scores and improved efficiency and productivity by giving employees the opportunity to choose environments that best suit their work needs.



# Avoiding disruption

The benefits of open meeting spaces are plentiful, but that doesn't mean they're not without challenges.

Holding meetings in open office spaces can pose a logistical challenge for some organizations. While open spaces are designed to promote collaboration, flexibility, and agility, they can wind up being less productive if not done right.

## Key challenges of holding meetings in open spaces

### Noise disruptions

Background chatter, phone calls, and other sounds can disrupt focus and drown out conversations, making it hard for meeting participants to concentrate, contribute, and collaborate.

### Lack of space

Since open spaces are designed for impromptu meetings, sometimes they are all occupied, meaning meetings can't happen.

### Lack of privacy

Meetings and conversations about sensitive or confidential topics run the risk of being overheard.

### Lack of tools

Open spaces often lack access to necessary meeting tools like whiteboards, projectors, video conferencing, and more that can impact collaboration and productivity.

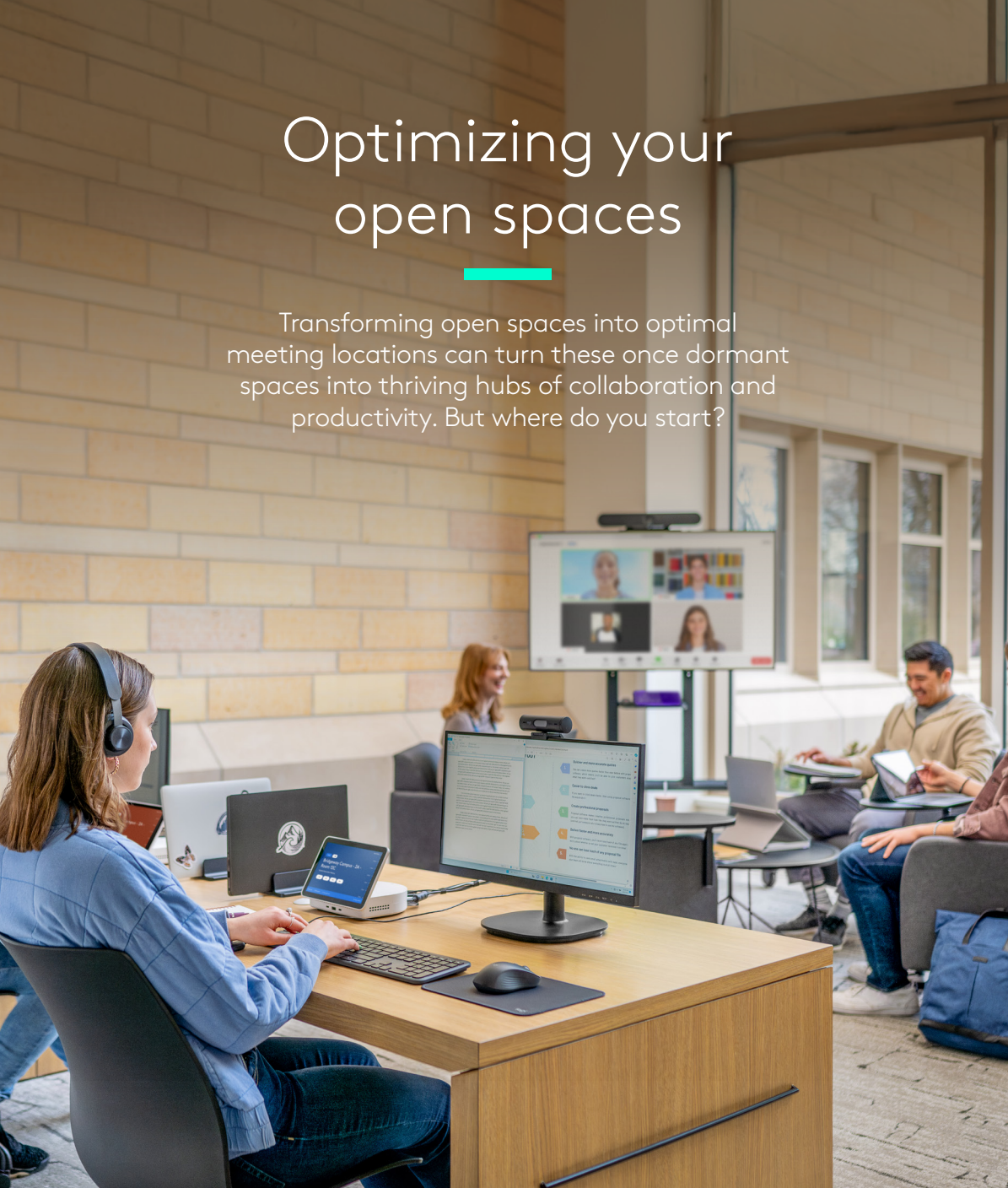
### Interruptions

Whether intentional or not, interruptions by passersby are possible during meetings in open environments.

*While there are some challenges inherent with meeting in open spaces, the benefits are tough to beat.*

# Optimizing your open spaces

Transforming open spaces into optimal meeting locations can turn these once dormant spaces into thriving hubs of collaboration and productivity. But where do you start?



## Define zones for meetings

Determine which open office areas are best for meetings and which are best for personal work zones. This can reduce disruptions for both meeting attendees and neighboring coworkers who are trying to work quietly.

You can start by creating semi-private spaces in open areas. Use movable partitions, if available, and arrange furniture such as couches, chairs, tables, and stools into loosely defined collaborative zones. You can also use visual markers like signage or floor markings to identify areas where meetings are welcome.

Implementing movable furniture, foldable tables, and adjustable seating options can also create spaces that can be redesigned on demand as meeting size and volume require. Consider using open shelving as space dividers to visually separate areas without blocking views and access.

## Use acoustic solutions

Reduce background noise and improve focus and communication during meetings with easy-to-use solutions like soundproofing panels or noise-dampening materials. Carpeting and rugs can also absorb sound, while noise-canceling technologies like desktop sound barriers or white noise machines can help cut down the din.



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## Set behavioral norms

Implementing guidelines and meeting etiquette recommendations can ensure open space meetings flow smoothly without creating too much disruption. Guidelines can include volume control, avoiding interruptions, and turning off notifications during meetings. You can also establish quiet zones where coworkers can focus even if a meeting is going on nearby.

You can further reduce interruption by setting scheduled times when open area meetings can occur. Enable employees to book key meeting zones and encourage the consolidation of smaller, ad-hoc meetings into scheduled blocks.

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## Use technology

While one of the challenges of open spaces is the lack of technology, there are new and useful tech solutions that can help make open spaces feel more dynamic and versatile for meetings that fuel collaboration and productivity.

Solutions like digital white boards, projectors, and modern presentation kits are key, as is ensuring that Wi-Fi is reliable and power is readily available in areas where meetings are likely to occur.





# Enter Rally Board 65

One solution that can transform open spaces into a superior meeting area and help organizations overcome space-related challenges is Logitech Rally Board 65. The portable all-in-one collaboration device can turn any open space into a full-fledged video conferencing meeting room. Featuring a 65-inch touchscreen display, Rally Board 65 ensures teams can collaborate anywhere creativity happens.

It delivers AI-powered audio and video to ensure optimal framing and crystal clear sound in any meeting environment, and in busy, open spaces, it helps eliminate distractions and interruptions by using AI to blur background activity, minimize ambient noise, and balance voices so remote attendees can focus and feel included. Rally Board 65 can be wall-mounted, placed on a table, or paired with a mobile cart to move between open spaces and meeting rooms with ease to meet the moment for any occasion.

Rally Board 65 also helps organizations overcome the common challenge of a lack of tools and technology in open spaces, by being easy to set up and to use. Simply roll it into the space, plug it in, and it's ready, with minimal configuration required.





## Rally Board 65 unlocks numerous benefits in open office spaces.

Ensure clear and balanced audio for all participants with a powerful speaker system tuned for open spaces.

Move Rally Board 65 anywhere for stand-up meetings, ad-hoc collaborations, or recurring meetings in open spaces.

Set it up quickly and easily with minimal IT support for installation and operation, offering plug-and-play functionality.

Flip Rally Board 65 so the camera is either on the top or bottom of the screen for added flexibility, so it aligns better to the eye level of attendees to create a more inclusive meeting experience.

Filter unwanted noise and ensure voice clarity with advanced microphone arrays integrated with AI algorithms.

Eliminate the need for additional equipment with all-in-one functionality combining audio, video, and display.

Facilitate brainstorming, team engagement, and interactive discussions with a 65-inch responsive touchscreen.



All-in-one solutions, like Rally Board 65, can help your organization leverage unused open spaces and optimize them for collaborative and inclusive meetings that may have otherwise not happened. Transforming open spaces into viable and valuable meeting areas can ultimately save money and improve productivity.

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