

**The world's best  
workplaces 2017**



**What are the key components of outstanding employee experience?**

**The Leesman Index is a global business intelligence tool that benchmarks the world's workplaces and since 2010, we have remained single-minded in a mission to better understand why some workplaces deliver, while others fall short.**

## World class

In 2017, Leesman independently assessed more than 117,103 employees in 813 workplaces worldwide, further bolstering the largest available comparative body of benchmarking data on employee workplace experience.

Our findings again reveal that a large number of organisations are simply not getting what they should from their corporate workplaces. Opportunities are being consistently missed, and the impact on employees of the physical and virtual infrastructure of their workplace, grossly underestimated.

But an elite group of employers buck this trend, delivering individual workplaces that brilliantly support employee experience as reported by the employees themselves. Some of these spaces – ones that comply with strict qualification criteria – are awarded our coveted Leesman+ certification.

Increasing numbers of organisations are now setting Leesman+ certification as a corporate objective. So, understanding what makes the buildings that achieve Leesman+ status distinctive, and how it is that they differ to the vast majority of corporate workplaces, is a key focus for us.

In 2017, 21 organisations were awarded Leesman+ certification across 24 workplaces – and their outstanding achievements are celebrated here. Further insights on how the best are beating the rest is available at [leesmanindex.com/bestwork](http://leesmanindex.com/bestwork).



## 2017 certifications

Organisation	Sector	Location	Lmi	Type
–	Computer Software	Armenia	82.7	●
–	Real Estate	United Kingdom	81.7	●
Tripadvisor	Tourism and Travel	Singapore	80.8	●
AJ Bell	Financial Services	United Kingdom	80.6	●
Boston Consulting Group	Management Consulting	United States	78.5	●
–	Internet/ Gaming	Spain	77.6	●
Johnson & Johnson	Pharmaceuticals	United States	77.1	●
–	Banking	India	76.9	●
Johnson & Johnson	Pharmaceuticals	Greece	76.8	●
Johnson & Johnson	Pharmaceuticals	Switzerland	76.7	●
Johnson & Johnson	Pharmaceuticals	Italy	76.5	●
–	Insurance	Canada	76.2	●
DPR Construction	Construction	United States	75.6	●
Goldman Sachs	Financial Services	United States	75.5	●
ISS Facility Services	Facility Management	Germany	75.2	●
GE Global	Industrial Products	Canada	74.7	●
–	Banking	India	74.4	●
Lendlease	Construction	Australia	74.1	●
Discovery Communications	Broadcast Media	Netherlands	73.5	●
Broadgate Estates Limited	Real Estate	United Kingdom	73.0	●
–	Financial Services	Hong Kong	71.7	●
–	Telecommunications	Sweden	71.6	●
Cushman & Wakefield	Real Estate	Australia	71.5	●
–	Financial Services	France	70.8	●
Leesman Global Average as at 31.12.2017			61.7	

Leesman+ certified workplaces 01.01.2017 – 31.12.2017

– Client name withheld for business confidentiality

● Post-occupancy

● Other

## Measurable outcomes

No one sector, country or building type dominates the 2017 Leesman+ award league table, reinforcing previous Leesman investigations that suggest there is no one elusive secret strategy or workplace ingredient guaranteed to deliver high performance.

But it does further evidence that an outstanding workplace experience is simply one that superbly understands the working needs of the employees it accommodates, built on solid foundations that observe a series of basic workplace hygiene factors.

Stating the obvious? Perhaps. But the insights these Leesman+ spaces offer should focus industry attention on the specifics of what delivers these solid foundations – how and where they beat the rest. Because there are commonalities. And many of the common stand-out features are the most difficult components to evaluate or justify. Well, until now.

The organisational benefits speak for themselves, with Leesman+ workplaces consistently recording exceptional employee pride, productivity and sense of community agreement figures. There can be little doubt these workplaces are key assets in organisational performance and competitive advantage, where debate centres not on managing down cost, but on dialling up the employee experience.



### Pride

Leesman average	52.0%	
Leesman+	81.2%	⊕29.2%
Highest Leesman+ 2017	95.4%	⊕43.4%



### Productivity

Leesman average	58.8%	
Leesman+	74.5%	⊕15.7%
Highest Leesman+ 2017	92.5%	⊕33.7%



### Sense of community

Leesman average	58.5%	
Leesman+	73.5%	⊕15.0%
Highest Leesman+ 2017	90.9%	⊕32.4%

## How they differ

The Leesman+ buildings of 2017 are a mix of workplaces with varying concepts and solutions. But among them are key features that offer intriguing clues to how they consistently outperform their peers on the Leesman global benchmark.

These organisations see their workplaces as opportunities to make the most of their employees' daily activities and interactions, giving positive experiences across multiple touchpoints, including those difficult to justify. They recognise that higher employee engagement is achieved through outstanding employee experience.

Of the 24 buildings awarded Leesman+ in 2017, 22 are predominantly open-plan concepts, with either none or very few employees working in designated enclosed settings, and just two workplaces with more enclosed solutions making it onto the list.

In more than half of the Leesman+ workplaces, less than 10% of the respondents stated that they work from a non-allocated setting. Only two of the Leesman+ buildings from 2017 reported more than 75% of respondents working from a non-allocated work setting. This is not to say that allocated workspaces outperform non-allocated, but the balance certainly warrants deeper investigations.

# 1

Leesman+ awarded workplaces extensively feature allocated, as opposed to flexible or shared, desking strategies.



Thinking and creative thinking constantly well supported, with high satisfaction for infrastructure such as quiet rooms for working alone or in pairs.



Consistently high scores for unstructured collaborative work, including informal unplanned meetings and informal work areas.



Leesman+ workplaces record outstanding scores for supporting non-core activities, such as relaxing/taking a break, and communal areas.



Leesman+ spaces superbly support the hospitality experience for visitors, clients and customers, with reception services always scoring highly.



Virtual collaboration consistently well supported, especially with video-conference facilities – an area where other workplaces regularly struggle.

# 2

90% of the 2017 Leesman+ spaces feature extensively or fully open-plan layouts, reaffirming low enclosure spaces can work well.

# 3

All 2017 Leesman+ environments brilliantly balance the collaborative and concentrative / focused work infrastructures.

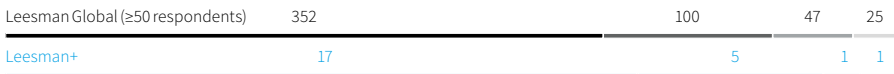


The Leesman+ workplaces outperform the Leesman global average environments with outstanding scores in features like 'informal work areas and breakout zones', 'variety of different types of workspace', 'atriums and communal areas' and 'quiet rooms for working alone or in pairs'.

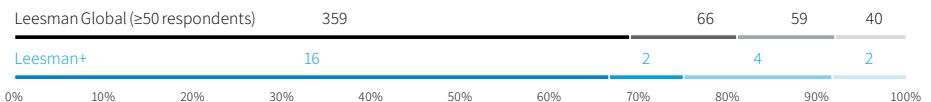


But room for improvement still exists. Even amongst Leesman+ workplaces, satisfaction with 'people walking past my workstation', 'temperature control', 'noise levels', 'ability to personalise my workstation' and storage facilities, still record large proportions of dissatisfied employees.

### Distribution of workplaces surveyed in 2017 by % of employees working in shared / private offices



### Distribution of workplaces surveyed in 2017 by % of employees working at flexible setting



● 0-25%   ● 26-50%   ● 51-75%   ● 76-100%

## Focus

Previous Leesman research has shown that the tasks completed individually are a key employee “hygiene factor” in overall experience. Successfully supporting focused work activities is a critical component in whether the wider workplace is perceived by the employee to support their productivity.

No surprise then that the Leesman+ building with the highest perceived productivity agreement (93%) is also the one where all employees say that the workplace supports ‘individual focused work, desk-based’.

It also records the highest support (88%) on ‘thinking/creative thinking’. This workplace also has the highest satisfaction among the Leesman+ buildings on ‘office lighting’ (92%), ‘space between work settings’ (93%) and ‘dividers between desks/areas’ (84%).

So, despite the indisputable social and creative contribution of collaboration, our data shows that the vast majority of employees also need to work individually, needing time to internalise and “put to paper” their post-collaborative ideas and concepts. Leesman+ workplaces successfully support collaboration and interactions, but not at the expense of individual focused work.

Collaboration has attracted such significant business media attention, it is difficult for organisations not to believe adding more infrastructures to support it is a wholly good thing. The evidence from the Leesman+ spaces simply suggests it needs to be done with some degree of balance.



### Individual focused work, away from your desk

Leesman average	64.9%
Leesman+	82.4% $\uparrow$ 17.5%
Highest Leesman+ 2017	97.7% $\uparrow$ 32.8%



“Supporting focused work is critical to employees’ sense of personal productivity”.





### Collaborating on creative work

Leesman average	64.0%
Leesman+	80.2% $\oplus$ 16.2%
Highest Leesman+ 2017	96.7% $\oplus$ 32.7%

## Collaborate

Despite individual work having a bigger impact on an employee's sense of ability to work productively, collaboration and interaction remains crucial for success. This is where, built on the solid foundations that support focused work, the Leesman+ workplaces really excel.

One workplace scores highest on both 'collaborating on creative work' and 'collaborating on focused work', with 97% and 99% of the employees saying the activities are supported. This workplace, accommodating nearly 450 employees, has practically all employees working in an open setting (both designated and flexible).

It is hardly a coincidence, that this workplace also has the highest scores on 'informal work areas/break-out zones' (95% satisfaction) and 'quiet rooms for working alone or in pairs' (84% satisfaction).

Other high-scoring workplaces on collaborative activities share the attribute of being predominantly open-plan concepts. The workplace with highest scores on 'learning from others' (96% support) also, coincidentally, has the highest agreement on whether the workplace supports 'sharing ideas/knowledge amongst colleagues' (91%) and the highest satisfaction on 'accessibility of colleagues', with an unbeatable 100% satisfaction level.





#### Private conversations

Leesman average	48.0%
Leesman+	65.4% $\uparrow$ 17.4%
Highest Leesman+ 2017	90.4% $\uparrow$ 42.4%

## Discuss

Based on our Leesman global averages, 'business confidential discussions' and 'private conversations' are consistently among the most difficult work activities to support. In the Leesman global database, only 55% and 48% of employees say they are supported in their workplace, ranking these activities in the bottom three of 21 activities.



These activities are also among the lowest scoring in the Leesman+ buildings (72% and 65%), revealing that the extensively open-plan Leesman+ workplaces still face challenges to satisfy employees with the right mix of spaces for conversations and discussions.

But there are exceptions: one of the Leesman+ workplaces delivers 95% and 90% support scores on these activities, leaving only a handful of employees in this open workplace feeling that conversations are not well supported. Of nearly 500 employees, 95% are working in open settings, of which 34% are flexible/non-allocated. So success is not impossible.

“Even Leesman+ workplaces face challenges to satisfy employees with the right mix of spaces for conversations and discussions”.



### Sense of community

Leesman average	58.5%
Leesman+	73.5% $\ominus$ 15.0%
Highest Leesman+ 2017	90.9% $\oplus$ 32.4%

## Community

Psychologically, we have an instinctive need to belong to a group and feel included, accepted and respected. In the workplace, we are also likely to perform better when we feel a sense of belonging, and when we work together towards shared goals.

But a community doesn't appear automatically; it needs places in which to evolve. So while the workplace is not the sole contributing factor in creating a sense of community at work, our data increasingly points to it being a strong influencer and enabler.



However, creating a workplace that contributes to a sense of community can be challenging. The Leesman+ buildings are generally perceived to support community, but with varying results. The highest score (91% agreement) is found in a small workplace accommodating a mere 60 employees. This might suggest it's easier to create a "we-spirit" in smaller workplaces. However, the next two workplaces exceeding a 90% score are larger, with around 450 and 750 employees respectively.

The lowest score among the 2017 Leesman+ buildings (55% agreement) is found in one of the larger workplaces in the group (with some 1,400 employees). But rather than being about size per se, the data suggests it is more about having access to your colleagues. Here, vertical distribution may be playing a factor.



The lowest-scoring workplace – a predominantly flexible open-plan space – has the lowest satisfaction with 'accessibility of colleagues' among the Leesman+ group (43%). But the second-lowest scoring workplace on sense of community is one with predominantly enclosed offices. It is, interestingly, also second-lowest on accessibility of colleagues. So here are two workplaces with two very different office solutions, but both struggling to bring employees together.



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