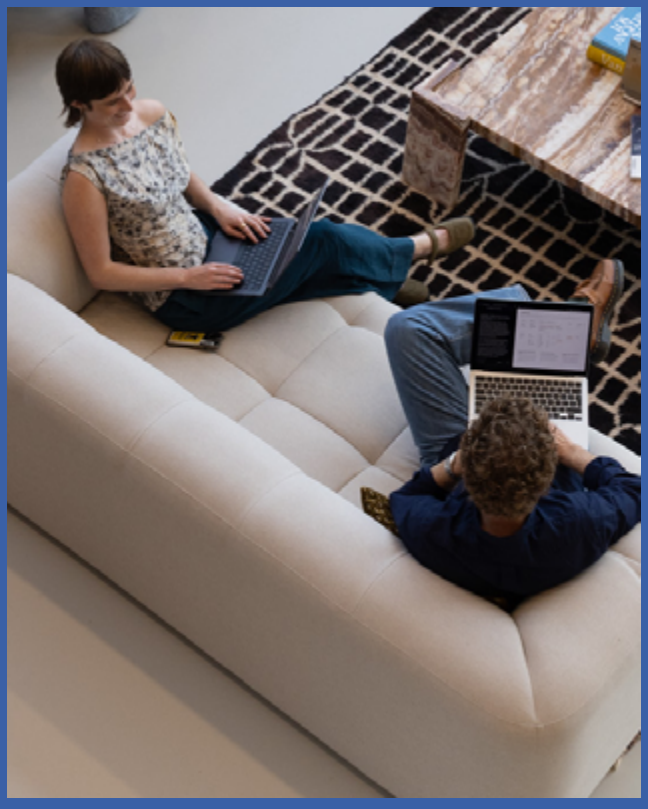
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BLU



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THE OFFICE MOVE GUIDE

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BLU is published by Aquablu in Amsterdam. This first issue is about the office move: what to decide, when to decide it, and what happens to the things that get left until later. It was made with work.club, part of .re-group, and with the office managers, facility managers, designers and workplace specialists listed opposite.

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Editor and writer | **Tori Wilson**
Design and art direction | **Pyrros Tsioutras**
Photography | **Luca Janmaat**
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Contributors

work.club, part of .re-group

Martijn Roordink — Co-founder and chief executive officer
Yalcin Ol — Design-and-build lead
Annika Lieon — Operations manager
Larissa de Jel — Community manager
Jules Hooijdonk — Commercial and place strategy manager

Workplace and design strategists

Elmar Wilens — Workplace strategist and founder of EWIP
Paula Sobów — Interior architect at Powerplant
Henk Schouten — Senior project manager at Hospitality Group
Daniel Ringshaw — Design-and-build partner at DMG
Casper Schwarz — Founder of Casper Schwarz Architects
Michael Levie — Co-founder of citizenM

Case study voices

Stacy Bergener — Workplace experience manager at Tebi
Krista van Rijt — Office and event management team lead at Mysolution
Melissa Hendrikse — Office manager at Van Gooi
Hans Rombout — Office manager at MyWheels

Aquablu

Marnix Stokvis — Co-founder and chief executive officer
Fabienne Walch — VP of Marketing
Rebecca Baddeley — Office manager
Gijs van Rhijn — Chief financial officer

Thank you to the work.club and .re-group team for taking us through every stage of a move, and to the designers, consultants and workplace strategists who shared their expertise. Thank you to Tebi, Mysolution, Van Gooi and MyWheels for opening their offices and speaking openly about their moves, and to our own team for doing the same.

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work.club RKM Offices

The **Architecture** *of* ***Aqua***

An office move happens once every five to 10 years. On paper it sounds like a simple task. In practice: a million decisions need to be made, and they tend to fall on one person, the office manager or facility manager, typically relying on the goodwill of the team to help them to the finish line. Anyone who's been at the helm of this mission knows timing is everything. It can feel like a marathon and a sprint at the same time. Just ask our office manager Rebecca Baddeley, who championed our own move earlier this year (but we'll get to that later).

As move-in day approaches, a lot can go wrong. Suppliers can fall through, contractors might turn up three days late causing a domino effect of delays, you might forget to install the plumbing or build too few electricity sockets. The list goes on.

But despite its challenges, an office move is also a rare opportunity to add immense value to your working environment. And while the investment in expansion is already being made, the business case is there to get the details that drive real usage right. There's little return on four walls and a cluster of empty desks, after all.

That's why we've produced this guide: to support office managers, facility managers, and anyone else leading an office move with practical advice, insights from industry leaders, and additional tools to make the move as smooth as possible and to get the most out of it. With so many up-and-coming, fast-growing companies in the Netherlands right now, it seemed like the right time.

It's broken into five chapters. The first makes the case for why the office now has to work harder than ever to be a place people choose. The second is about making it theirs: the everyday rituals and spaces that pull people in. The third looks at future-fitting your office from day one, for sustainability and wellbeing. The fourth tackles the timing trap: what to decide before the design freeze locks it in. And the fifth shares insights into how to get it all right without doing it all alone.

To write it, we partnered with workplace specialists work.club, part of .re-group. We spoke with CEO and founder Martijn Roordink, design and build lead Yalcin Ol, operations manager Annika Lieon, community manager Larissa de Jel and commercial lead Jules Hooijdonk who each took us through a different part of the process. Supporting commentary comes from Hospitality Group's Henk Schouten, Powerplant's Paula Sobów, workplace strategist Elmar Wilens and DMG's Daniel Ringshaw. It features case studies from Aquablu clients Mysolution, Tebi and Van Gooi, and work.club client MyWheels, plus first-hand advice from the three people who ran our own move: office manager Rebecca Baddeley, VP of marketing Fabienne Walch and CEO Marnix Stokvis.

Chapter

No. 01

Earning the commute.

Offices need to work harder than ever to earn the commute. Here's what the landscape looks like in 2026, and how to stay relevant.



work.club Club Strozzi

Martijn Roordink

Aquablu speaks with **.re-group CEO Martijn Roordink** on why an office move is a rare moment to add value and how, in 2026, designing for social connection and 24/7 custom usage is the answer to earning the commute.



It comes as no surprise to most that, post-Covid, the office landscape has shifted dramatically. While a five-day week full-time at the office desk was once a universal mandate, employees now have choice. The comforts of home on the menu mean offices need to work harder than ever to earn their keep.

The numbers back it up: 88% of people now work hybrid, according to the global workplace-experience benchmark Leesman (Focus Forward, 2025). Getting them through the door is harder, too. Leesman's Hybrid Future study (2024) found that for 49%, the commute discourages a trip in.

So, how can offices remain relevant when they're no longer the only option? And how can office leaders leverage a move or expansion to maximise advantage?

To find the answers, we speak to the workplace expert team at .re-group's work.club, starting with CEO Martijn Roordink who has been advocating for the reinvention of real estate since the early 2000s, well before the pandemic hit.

Having been recruited at global office space network Regus in the year 2000, Martijn began his first business in 2003, an operating platform delivering added-value services to the users of real estate. Within a couple of years it became the largest of its kind, growing into the company Spaces.



“Spaces was one of the first workspace philosophies built around design, music, like-minded people, and services that were better than what you had at home,” says Martijn.

“I sold that business in 2014, but I still had the urge to reinvent the stray space, " he says. Which led to .re-group, founded in 2020 with Michiel Brouwer, followed by its workspace platform work.club in 2025.

"Laat je vastgoed los," or “let go of your real estate.” That’s their signature line.

It means what matters is not the four walls of the building itself, but delivering added value inside. “When I started Spaces, the benchmark was set by Google, Facebook, Twitter. Their philosophy for being the most attractive employer was: anything you want, we'll deliver. Wellness, gym, great food, anything. It was about keeping people inside, for productivity,” says Martijn.

“That's changed. People don't come to the office for the perks anymore, they come because they're people, and that's what we'd forgotten. You come for social connection, onboarding, energy, learning, even falling in love.”

The human element. It's what the convenience of working from home can't replace.

The numbers say the same. According to Leesman, the top reasons for coming to the office are meetings and collaboration (59%) and bonding or socialising (50%). 42% of employees feel socially disconnected from colleagues when working remotely (The Hybrid Future, 2024).

"A company is a movement. You're working for a story, to make change happen, and that can't happen if you're never there. But that means the office has to be somewhere people genuinely want to be," says Martijn.

"That's why we now use the work.club model. Becoming a member of a club gives you social connection, a sense of being part of something. The same should be true of a building."







What the shift looks like: The 24/7 space

Rather than an attempt to resist or beat hybrid, Martijn's approach is to bring hybrid to the office itself; to create a multi-functional space for different working styles, moods, activities, and times of day.

"A building shouldn't serve just one narrow purpose. Ideally it's relevant 24/7," says Martijn.

"So from a design point of view you have to create a hybrid philosophy."

Martijn starts by envisioning all the various possibilities and learning what people genuinely want.

"You always work from a programme of demand and a growth 'wish' programme. And the design brief itself has changed," he says. "In the past we built lots of open space. Because of Covid, Teams and Zoom, we now need many enclosed 'cell' spaces too.

"What your design has to achieve is that it's social, attractive, dynamic, interactive, and full of choice. So you might have a cinema, a bar, a club space, enclosed meeting rooms, and you play with it."

But variety alone doesn't earn the commute. Once the big moves are right, it comes down to the detail.

"It's the same principle behind Aquablu," says Martijn.

"When I started Spaces, I had the best coffee experience in the world. But that's not enough anymore; you have to deliver the best of every experience.

"Hydration is part of that: non-alcoholic options, choice, something that makes a person feel special. Because it's never about the volume of people; it's about the one-on-one. Every single person is the person."

The office may no longer be the only option. But a move, done well, is the moment to make it the one people choose. And that, Martijn argues, is worth every cent to get right.



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Five Rules for Getting the Space Right.

Twenty-five years and millions of square metres in, here are Martijn's top lessons for planning a move - a quick map of what the rest of this guide unpacks.

01

Get the order right. Function first, then the base build, then the interiors. "In building and design you have two forces: time and money, and they never quite work together." Decide what the space is for before you decorate it.

02

Design for adaptability. Build for the company you're becoming, not just the one you are today. "It's a real investment, and it depreciates over five to ten years, so if you get it wrong you can't just change it."

03

Don't be penny wise, pound foolish. "It's like clothes. Ratan Chadha, the founder of Mexx, used to say 'wear a beautiful Tom Ford jacket with a Gap shirt. If the jacket is Tom Ford, people assume the shirt is too'." Spend where it counts.

04

Get the fundamentals right. "A good climate. Good light. The range to support different ways of working. And comfort, it should feel a bit like home." The invisible things make or break a space.

05

Make hydration part of the plan. "Hydration is part of the comfort level, just like the climate... The new generation thinks hard about hydration, wellbeing, food, sport, those crucial elements. And this is the new way of property management: you can actually organise it, it's part of the plan."



In conversation with Elmar:

Setting the compass

We speak with workplace strategist Elmar Wilens, founder of EWIP, about why the office has to work harder than ever to earn the commute, and what that means for a move.

Tell us about your work. What sort of problems do companies usually bring you when it comes to an office move?

Usually I come in when there's a big move or a wider transformation on the horizon, or one that's already started. Most organisations realise quite quickly that it's far more work than they expected, and that it touches everyone in the company. That's completely understandable. You only do this once every seven to ten years, and the people running it are doing so on top of their day jobs. So at some point they decide they'd like someone with more experience on board.

What makes getting the move right more critical now than ever?

Expectations have gone up. The office is now competing with a very comfortable setup at home, and people need a good reason to make the trip. There's also a real war for talent, especially in Amsterdam. I've seen it with law firms: candidates know exactly what each firm offers, right down to the atmosphere in the office, so you want to stand out.

Then there's the business side. An office is typically used four days out of seven, and on those days around 50% occupancy is a benchmark most companies are happy with. When you add that up, investing in a building and a fit-out is quite a leap of faith, so it deserves to be taken seriously.

How can offices become more attractive for teams?

The office should be identifiable with the company it represents, its values and its image. I don't think it's about luxury or perks, because perks are a never-ending story. You can build an office like a very chic hotel and it'll be lovely, but it won't say anything about who you are.

If you work from home a lot, you only experience your company through a screen. When you walk into the office, you should recognise it straight away and feel, "ah, this is me, I belong to this team." That feeling doesn't come through a monitor. Getting there means making a real choice about what you stand for, and plenty of companies find that hard. But I'd say it's the best investment they can make.

Is defining client identity part of your job as a workplace strategist?

Yes, it's usually one of the first things I do. Sometimes I'm there from the start, sometimes I arrive when things are already slightly off the rails. Either way, I try to re-engage the compass.

Mostly that means asking a lot of questions. I often compare it to your own home: everyone would design theirs differently, and we wouldn't all like each other's taste. But an office has to be something everyone can get behind, so you look for the common ground and translate it into materials, colours and a way of working. Part of my job is also making sure the group is being honest with itself, because they'll be living with the result for years. You don't always make friends doing that, but it's worth it in the end.

How is the office landscape changing at present?

What I see is organisations really trying to get people back into the office. Covid showed us you can keep a business running from home, but very little new comes out of it. For that you need to be together, to feed off each other's energy, challenge each other and enjoy working together. People like being part of a herd, a familiar group.

You also hear people say the office is now just for meetings and the focused work happens at home. I don't believe that. A lot of younger people find it hard to concentrate at home, and they want to feel part of a team. A good office lets people do their best work, it has to be a space where people perform too.

Any universal advice for "earning the commute" and getting people to actually use the office?

First, be careful about cutting square metres just because the space isn't being used. If the design doesn't work, people won't use it, and cutting back only makes that worse. If you offer four desks for every ten people, you're effectively telling six of them they're not welcome. People feel it.
Second, start with a conversation rather than a rule. A team manager might say, "We'd love to see everyone Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This is our floor, and that's when we do our teamwork." If people feel part of a group, they'll plan around it. It's also worth asking the ones who don't come in what's holding them back. Design plays its part, but it's really the strategy and the communication behind it that make the difference.



work.club Club Strozzi

CHAPTER

No.02

MAKE IT THEIRS.

Design for the people using the space, not a picture book. Here's how to involve your team and what to prioritise, so you land on a space that feels like their own.



work.club Club Strozzi

Aquablu speaks with **Paula Sobów of Powerplant and Henk Schouten of Hospitality Group** on how to design an office space teams think of as their own, and return to again and again.



Paula Sobów

Interior architect Paula Sobów tells a story about two offices. The first was, by all means, beautiful. Exquisite joinery, considered materials, everything resolved to the last detail. "It worked on paper and in the technical drawings; everything worked," she says. And yet something was off.

"It was so nicely done, people sat there whispering, keeping their voices low, not wanting to touch anything. Everyone was quiet and gentle."

So the company asked workplace design studio Powerplant to design a second space, smaller and next to the first. Somewhere, they said, a bit more fun. The team built a kind of gym: a room for five-a-side football and events, with the freedom for people to arrange it themselves. "In the end, our space became the most-used space and the reason people came to the office," Paula says, "because there they felt they could connect and, even make it messy."

While aesthetics is, of course, an important element when it comes to design, the real test of a well-designed workplace, says Paula, is whether people feel comfortable.

"It might be beautifully designed," she says of the offices she sees most often, "but it's like a still life, just a picture. The furniture is nice, the brands are cool. But it's about designing an office where people can genuinely feel at home.

"They need to be human, not just sit down and work like a robot."



"It's about designing an office where people can genuinely feel at home."

— Paula Sobów, Powerplant

What earns that feeling comes down to the spaces built for connection. Powerplant began life in hospitality, restaurants and leisure, before it moved into offices, and that heritage shapes how Paula reads a floor plan. The areas that matter most, she argues, are the hospitality zones: “they're where you really connect.”

“The reception and front desk, the pantry, the coffee bar, the restaurant. They are the heat spots of an office," says Paula. And in a hybrid week, connection is the whole reason to make the journey in.

"You're not designing a canteen anymore," says Paula.

"You're designing a co-working space."

Variety, versatility, and customisation has become the new baseline.

Henk Schouten



Hospitality Group's senior project manager Henk Schouten has been working within the hospitality space as a consultant of over forty years. Like Paula, he sees the purpose for offices is shifting.

"When you work at home you have a slice of bread with cheese or ham and a glass of milk - as a Dutchman - and get on with your work," he says.

"So why come to the office? To socialise, to meet, to have meetings, and alongside that, to have a nice lunch break with a good range of food to choose from. That's become much more important in bringing employees back."

Henk brings this thinking into how he designs kitchen and dining spaces for the modern office.

"These days, when we build or convert a restaurant, we make it a combination of things so the whole area is in use all day, not just at lunch.

"The seating area is made up of a quiet zone, a busy zone, and so on, but you can also move walls for a meeting area, and at lunchtime the walls come away to make one bigger seating area. So the area is far more usable throughout the whole day."

But it's not just about the space, he says. What you offer within it is just as important.

"It's the whole beverage package too. It's much more important now that people can choose, and what you also see is that people know what they want. They're aware of it."

A drinks bar, an all-day canteen, a room people are allowed to make messy: there's no template for belonging. What makes someone feel at home in a space depends on who they are and how they work. So how do you find out what your people want?

You start by asking, says Henk. "Listen to your employees. It's so important."

Before Henk begins any project, he speaks to people to understand how the organisation works, how individuals operate on a day-to-day basis, and what might be limiting them.

"First, we interview the relevant stakeholders, because we want to understand the current situation.

"It's important to know the flow of employees through the building. What do they do during a working day?"

Common Ground

Like Henk, Paula starts by becoming familiar with the people in the space. “Create common ground first,” she says. “Before the project starts, you need to know what people actually need, you don't just design a space because you like it.”

“Listen to your employees. It's so important.”

- Henk Schouten, Hospitality Group

One employee might come in purely to sit at a desk, visit the kitchenette briefly, and work. Another might arrive for a meeting and never really leave the kitchen table, drifting in and out as the day unfolds. The space needs to work for individuals, as well as the team.



When it came to the two spaces evaluated by Paula, one, people worked around; the other, worked for them. The difference wasn't the budget. It was that the second room let people be people. It was designed to make it feel like theirs. “Fun and autonomy are the two key takeaways,” she says. And that’s best achieved by knowing them.

In conversation with Larissa:

The *art* of belonging

We speak with Larissa de Jel, work.club community manager, about what makes people feel at home in a workplace; and the importance of the small, everyday moments.



Your title is community manager. What does that actually mean, day to day?

I'm the contact person for everyone in the building. They come to me for facilities, for reservations, to host events, and I coordinate all of it. But the biggest part is welcoming people and making sure they feel welcome. My job is to make people feel this is their second home and connect with each other. It's a big job, but it's fun.

What actually makes a workplace feel like a second home?

The big events help, a summer barbecue, a Christmas party, plus off-site events like padel or golf days. But the small things matter just as much: being there for people, so they can come to you with any question and you help as much and as fast as you can. And sometimes just having a coffee and a chat. That's part of the experience too.

"My job is to make people feel this is their second home."

— Larissa de Jel, work.club

If you're designing a workplace people actually want to be in, how should you think about the different ways people work?

You have to have everything in one. Offices with open workspaces but also meeting rooms and phone booths where people can shut themselves off to focus. Hospitality spaces too where people can eat, drink and socialise. We have that mix, and I think it's important to create different options.

Why does getting people together in a space beat everyone working from home?

When you're actually in the building, you share things with the people around you, and you make connections. Work should be fun. A lot of people come in, do their work, and go home: okay, I'm done. We want a home feeling. Not literally home, but that they feel good, that it's nice to be here, to have a drink, a chat, to join in.

Thinking about the offices you've seen, what do people most often get wrong?

They're too white. It's often just a square with white walls, and it needs more colour. When you walk into a building you want to feel like you're in a living room, that it's relaxed, that it's nice. At work.club locations we try to make people feel comfortable and bring a bit more character to the space than traditional offices.

"When you walk into a building you want to feel like you're in a living room."

— Larissa de Jel, work.club

You keep coming back to small, everyday moments. Which ones actually build community?

The kitchen, where people come together. And what we call the internal street, the co-working area, where they run into each other and have a quick chat or a coffee. And the Thursday drinks once a month, when everyone comes together. The day after an event, you see people chatting more. It's a really nice atmosphere.

Is there a moment where you saw your community really come alive?

Not long ago we had the summer barbecue, with more people than the year before. At an event like that you see people being themselves. The DJ's playing, we have a quick dance, everyone's chatting. And the day after, we hear "yesterday was so nice." That feels really good.

The office people turn up for, by design

Six things the research — and the experts — agree on.

01

Offer choice, not a row of desks.

Different modes of work need different settings: focus rooms, phone booths, a café, lounge, collab zones. According to Leesman, workplaces with a genuine range of settings score higher on almost everything, and 56% of people now work at unassigned desks anyway (Rhythms, 2025).

02

Make hospitality the heart.

Put the best coffee, hydration and food where people naturally gather, and let those "heat spots" carry the social life of the office. The top reasons people come in at all are collaboration (59%) and socialising (50%) (Leesman, The Hybrid Future, 2024).

03

Nail the invisible fundamentals first.

Climate, daylight, acoustics and comfort make or break a space before aesthetics ever do. Noise is consistently among the top complaints in open-plan offices (Leesman, Rhythms, 2025), so design in quiet zones, not just open ones.

04

Design serendipity back in.

The one thing home can't replicate is the unplanned encounter. Create paths, thresholds and shared points where people bump into each other. 49% of office workers say losing spontaneous interaction is the single biggest downside of hybrid (The Hybrid Future, 2024).

05

Bring nature in.

Daylight, greenery and natural materials measurably lift wellbeing, creativity and focus. Some of the cheapest upgrades win the biggest payoff (Scientific Reports / Nature, 2024).

06

Put water where people gather, and make it good.

A visible, high-quality water point promotes hydration and acts as a point of connection. WELL recommends a water point roughly every thirty metres (WELL v2, Feature W07).

On making it theirs: How to involve your team

Both Henk Schouten of Hospitality Group and Paula Sobów of Powerplant start every project the same way: by asking. The thinking is simple: people use and value a space they helped shape. The work splits in two.

Ask first. Before anything's drawn, find out how people actually work and what the current space gets wrong. Survey the right people, sit down with each team, and watch where people already gather. Paula runs workshops with every work group; Henk builds his plans around "the flow of employees through the building." The most useful questions are about the work itself - what people come in to do, and where they get held up.

Then hand over some ownership. Set up a small, mixed group to stay involved throughout, and let people make the small calls: the furniture, the colours, the names of the rooms. As Annika Lieon, work.club's operations manager, puts it: it's their office too, so give people a say before the move. Explain what each space is for and why. Then close the loop: show people how their input changed things, including what you couldn't do and why. Involve people early and they become the ones who explain the changes to everyone else, and who provide support when things get difficult.

"It's not only the CEO who knows what all employees like."

— Henk Schouten, Hospitality Group

Five questions worth asking:

When you choose to come in, what are you actually coming in to do?

What do you have at home that the office doesn't give you?

Where do you go to focus? To collaborate? To take a break?

What's the one thing that would make you want to be here more?

What should we keep from the old office, and what should we leave behind?

Get the full toolkit: a ready-to-run staff survey and workshop.

Free to download.



"Create a human heart, a space where the senses are pleased and all of a sudden, people take it as their habitat."

— **Michael Levie**, co-founder, citizenM

"The social space in the office is not a weak version of a true hospitality space in town. It can be on the same level. Why not?"

— **Casper Schwarz**, founder,
Casper Schwarz Architects

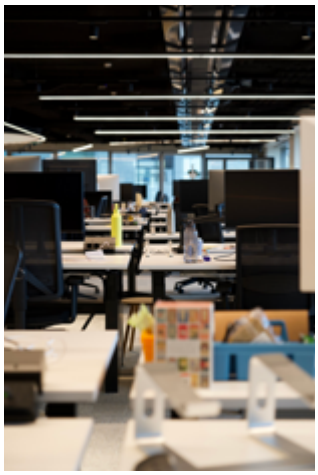




"Give people something of real quality and they'll seek it out. It becomes a sense of belonging."

— **Elmar Wilens**, founder, EWIP

Tebi: Reading the room



For Tebi's workplace experience manager, Stacy Bergener, a good office move begins by knowing your people and trusting your gut.

When Stacy Bergener joined Tebi, it had around 40 people. Within eight months the all-in-one hospitality platform provider had more than tripled, and growth had come with natural challenges. The company had spread from a few desks to three separate floors and the division was costing cohesion.



So they moved, with a simple goal: get everyone back onto one floor, visible to each other and able to connect. The new office was a turnkey space leased from another company; not a perfect fit but ready for Stacy to make Tebi's.

tebi


tebi

She started the process of making it their own by asking questions. "I met with the general managers and each department head to talk about what their teams need," she says, "then made sure that was all taken into consideration before we moved in."

But it's also about understanding people, by observing. "I see it and I know what needs to be done based on how people behave," she says. At Tebi that meant designing around a coffee culture. "I know I've got my coffee connoisseurs, so I need at least two machines, two grinders, and counter space for their toastie machines."

At her last company, the same instinct had pointed somewhere else, "they needed a beer tap."

Different crowd, different answer, but the same discipline work out who you're building for before you build it. "It really depends, you have to know your people: how they work, what they need, what they like."

For a company that builds tools for hospitality, one space mattered the most.

"In the kitchen you run into everybody from every department," she says. "It's one of the most important parts of the office. It really is over food, drinks and snacks that connections are truly made."
So the kitchen was where Stacy put her attention, and where the choice about what to put in it carried the most weight. It would take a month or two in a construction zone to build out, and she wanted what emerged to feel like a genuine step up rather than a sideways move.

"I wanted to make sure we were leveling up. I wanted people to feel this is better than what we had," Stacy says.

Knowing her people, she knew a proper hydration point was exactly the kind of thing they would notice. "That's when someone recommended Aquablu. I looked at it and thought, this is great: one machine, we're all on one floor." With almost everyone in the office every day, Stacy's after the compounding daily return of the small decisions.

Questions like: "'Can I make you a coffee?', 'do you want some sparkling water?' It creates a family moment," she says. Stacy expects the hydration point to earn its place in exactly that spot. "I really think everyone will realise what a game changer it is," she says. "It's like the watering hole where all the animals come together to drink. It's going to elevate the space."

"I see it and I know what needs to be done based on how people behave."

— Stacy Bergener,
workplace experience manager, Tebi



Takeaway:
Growth had pulled the team apart, and the move was the chance to bring it back together. Start with how your people behave, build the space around where they gather, and fit it to them rather than to a template.

See how Tebi did it
-read the complete case study.



Mysolution®



Home is where the hub is

Recruitment and staffing software company Mysolution has grown rapidly at its Houten base near Utrecht, beyond one building and into two. But what keeps the team coming together and connecting is a shared experience over food.

"We try to bring everyone together," says office and event management team lead Krista van Rijt. “Lunch is a big part of that, making it social, just bonding with everyone, instead of everyone either going out to grab something or eating behind their desk.”

Communal lunch all happens in one room. The cafeteria feeds people, but it does more than that. "It's literally a kitchen," she says, "but it's the kitchen of the house, the hub."

As a recruitment and staffing solution, it makes sense Mysolution has a people-first focus. Krista is always looking for ways to make the office a welcoming and inspiring space that’s worth the commute.

"An Aquablu machine helps, because they (employees) don't have one at home," Krista says. "Lunch helps. And just planning small things in the office that are more fun when you're here than when you're not."

Read the full story

By the numb3rs

The numbers don't lie. People give purpose.
Bonding and socialising is a top reason people come to the office (50%), just behind meetings and collaboration (59%).

It's what home can't replace.
42% of workers feel socially disconnected working remotely, and the biggest downside of hybrid is losing spontaneous conversation (49%).

And it keeps people satisfied.
Organisational culture (63%) and the quality of co-worker relationships (55%) are among the top reasons people stay or take a job.

All figures: Leesman, The Hybrid Future (2024).

Chapter No. 03

Future-fit from day one.

Future-fitting an office comes down to getting the fundamentals right from day one and while thinking ahead on wellbeing and sustainability. Nail both and the office lasts for the long-haul. Here's what to build in, and why.

A move isn't just about adding desks and upgrading the interiors. It's a rare chance to set the tone for where your team is heading and to create a space that supports growth.

Future-fitting that vision means building a space that fits your plan. It also means investing in wellbeing and sustainability from day one. It's building a step ahead of industry standards, rather than meeting the minimum and paying to upgrade a few years in.

None of it takes a certificate or a corporate budget; most of it is a matter of priorities. However, industry certifications can be a solid starting point for understanding what to aim for.

Elmar Wilens has spent seventeen years strategising office moves and says two of the most recognised industry standards include WELL and BREEAM.

"BREEAM has more of a technical emphasis: the building needs to perform to a certain level," he says. "Some of the considerations include power usage, the amount of fresh air that goes in, the ability to create your own energy, how much energy the building consumes in total, for example.

“It's focused on how the building is built and what materials you've used — whether they're sustainable or circular.

"WELL, by contrast, emphasises the people inside who need to work there. It considers things such as the ability to adjust lighting levels, the distance to the nearest water tap, the amount of fresh air, whether you're providing low-sugar products."

One standard is about the performance of a building and the other is about how people perform in it.

Elmar says while it’s mostly ‘top-tier’ companies paying to certify, regardless of your company size, it’s worth paying attention and working to the criteria.

"You're coming to a new office anyway, and some are relatively small investments. If all those items improve productivity by half a per cent, and that's really a low estimate, then you already have a positive business case," says Elmar.

The payoff is twofold: a space that promotes productivity and one that lasts.

The criteria to focus on mostly come down to practical considerations that contribute to a well-functioning space, including climate and acoustics; growth flexibility; and atmosphere. Here they are, in order of priority.

Future-fit, at a glance

The invisible fundamentals — climate and acoustics first; they are expensive to add later and the first to be cut.

Build for change — quality where it is fixed, flexibility where the company will grow.

Build less, reuse more — right-size the space and reuse what you can; the greenest square metre is the one never fitted out.

The simple wellbeing defaults — hydration, greenery, daylight, somewhere quiet. Low cost, high return.

Why it's worth it — the payback is people working better and a space you don't have to overhaul to meet the next standard.



work.club Club Strozzi

Designing to the criteria

As Elmar puts it, when certification isn't possible, or doesn't make sense financially, designing to the criteria as much as you can regardless is one way to set your office up for the future.

WELL v2 organises its requirements into ten concepts: Air, Water, Nourishment, Light, Movement, Thermal Comfort, Sound, Materials, Mind and Community, and that list on its own is a ready-made brief for a healthy office.

There is a lighter route for a company that wants formal recognition without a corporate budget. Fitwel costs a fraction of WELL, is assessed on submitted documentation rather than on-site testing, and is reviewed within sixteen weeks,, which suits smaller, faster-moving organisations; WELL is built for businesses pursuing top-tier ESG compliance.

Either way, use the criteria as your checklist, and pay to certify when it adds value.

The ten WELL concepts, as a fit-out checklist

Air. Ventilation rates, filtration, and keeping pollutant sources such as paints, adhesives and cleaning products out of the space.

Water. Filtered drinking water, regular quality testing, and dispensers placed close enough to be used. WELL asks for free, potable water within 30 metres of every regularly occupied part of the floor plan (WELL v2, Feature W07).

Nourishment. What is available on site, including fruit and vegetables, portion sizes, and limits on added sugar in packaged food and drink.

Light. Daylight and views from work areas, and artificial lighting people can adjust themselves.

Movement. Stairs, cycle storage, sit-stand desks, and a layout that makes walking the easy option.

Thermal comfort. Temperature and humidity held within a set range, with some individual control over it.

Sound. Acoustic separation between focus and collaboration areas, and background noise limits in meeting rooms.

Materials. Furniture, finishes and cleaning products screened for harmful chemicals.

Mind. Quiet and restorative space, greenery, and policies that support mental health.

Community. Inclusive and accessible facilities, and space that supports people gathering.

Review the WELL Building Standard for the full breakdown.

Functional design

When asked how he designs a space for genuine use, Elmar says the foundations of a building and the final design are two sides of the same coin. While you need a quality design to bring people in, you need to get the functional commodities right to make them stay.

The first things to consider, Elmar says, is fresh air and climate, then acoustics, with greenery and adjustable lighting also important. "But climate and acoustics usually come first," he says.

They matter most because they are the hardest to add once a space is built, and the first to be cut when costs rise. "Climate is usually a very expensive factor," he says. "Acoustics is really intangible up front but, when done right, creates a long-term benefit for everyone working in a space, especially in an open office."

He specifies too: "'Air conditioning' is too shallow. It's the climate itself."

Climate means the whole indoor environment rather than a cooling unit in the ceiling. It covers the volume of fresh air coming in, the temperature and humidity it arrives at, how evenly it is distributed so that nobody sits in a draught or a warm pocket, and how much of it can be adjusted zone by zone.

According to Dutch building regulations (Besluit bouwwerken leefomgeving, Art. 4.122), new offices have to supply at least 6.5 dm^3 of fresh air per second per person. Once people are in the building, CO_2 is the simplest way to tell whether the system is keeping up. Dutch workplace health and safety guidance puts good air quality below 800 ppm, treats 800 to 1200 ppm as acceptable, and reads anything higher as a sign of insufficient ventilation. The same guidance gives 20 to 24 degrees and 40 to 60 per cent relative humidity as the ranges most people find comfortable for desk work.

In short, the invisible things matter. An ordinary office with good air and acoustics will outperform a beautiful one with stuffy meeting rooms and loud working spaces.

Some buildings will already have the climate and acoustics sorted to a good standard before you arrive. That's the ideal outcome to look for. But don't assume. Know the standards and what's needed for a functional space before you view the building and customise to suit your needs from the beginning if they're not already met.



Designing for a company you can't yet see

At some point, future-fitting stops being a checklist and becomes a way of thinking. How do you design for a version of your company that doesn't exist yet?

"It's really difficult to foresee the future," Elmar admits. "If your budget doesn't cover everything, choose wisely and go for quality items, which allow you the flexibility to adjust later."

However, being flexible doesn't mean going cheap. "People experience quality. Everyone experiences quality; they might perceive it in different ways, but everyone experiences it," he says.

"If you have a well-designed chair, for example, it's still good after fifteen or twenty years, because it was well designed. So don't cheap your way into a solution. Go for quality, because that will be much more durable over time."



work.club Club Strozzi

The work.club view: use less, build to last

work.club CEO Martijn Roordink has spent twenty-five years in the business of space. He built Spaces into one of the largest flexible-workspace networks in the world before selling it and founding work.club and .re-group, which rethinks how buildings are used via its flexible workspace and property ecosystem. His case for a future-fit office begins, counterintuitively, with using less of it.

"In the Netherlands we have fifty million square metres of office space, far too much," Martijn says. As reflected in his signature line "laat je vastgoed los" or 'let go of your real estate', the most sustainable decision of all is often to build less.

For a growing company that means sizing the office to how people genuinely use it. With hybrid as the norm, spaces are rarely fully occupied as they were prior to Covid. So designing multi-function rooms that earn their keep across the day instead of sitting empty between meetings is one way to reduce your footprint. As is using upcycled materials as much as possible.

Taking work.club W70 in Rotterdam, for example, what might have typically been overhauled or discarded, the team took what was left behind by the previous renter and transformed it to match their vision. "Every material we used was reused from what was already in the building," says Martijn. "It's extremely important."

When it comes to choosing where to spend, Martijn says to start with the building itself. The foundational elements.

"The functional design is what's premium," he says. "You pay rent for a building that performs well: the installations, keeping it cool, reflecting the sun, the right materials."

The rising minimum

Some of this is no longer optional. In the Netherlands, offices have been required to hold at least an energy label C since 2023. Below that, a building cannot legally be used, and the direction of travel is towards label A by 2030.

Henk Schouten, a senior project manager at Hospitality Group who designs the service areas inside these buildings, is currently working on one where the owner has decided to go well beyond the minimum requirement.

"We have an order from a building owner who says, I want it future-proof, and it must be Paris Proof. I'm happy to invest a lot of money now to make it Paris Proof, because I know many tenants will want to rent it," Henk says. "For him the money is no problem."

Paris Proof is the Dutch Green Building Council's benchmark for a building that matches the Paris Agreement: no more than 70 kWh per m² a year in measured energy use, against a Dutch office average of around 195.

The owner isn't just doing a 'nice' thing. He's protecting the letting value of the building, which is a useful signal about what tenants are expected to be asking for by the time your own lease comes up for renewal. The legal minimum keeps rising, and the easiest time to get ahead of it is while the fit-out is already open.

The simple upgrades

With so many acronyms to get to know, it can sound like a lot to digest, but some of the highest returns cost the least: healthy food and beverages, real planting, daylight and adjustable light, and somewhere quiet to retreat to.

On the drinks, the default has already moved. Henk treats a healthy offer as part of the concept rather than an upgrade to it.

"In the early days we'd install a fridge with a glass door full of all kinds of Coke," he says. "We definitely don't do that anymore. We only put healthy drinks in those fridges."

It goes in at the start rather than getting added later. "It's already part of our concept design. In the concept we talk about achieving a happy customer and a happy employee, and how to give them the pieces to make that happen. One of those pieces is a nice pantry with a drink you can choose, and it's important that it's healthy."

Hydration shows how little it can take to meet a real standard, and it's increasingly expected. Water is one of WELL's ten concepts, with points scored simply for a visible water point roughly every thirty metres. Movement, Nourishment and Mind sit alongside it, which is how sport, food and quiet space end up on the same scorecard as ventilation and materials.

Employers are backing it at scale. According to the International WELL Building Institute, 557 million m² of real estate was engaged with the standard by July 2025, across nearly 100,000 locations in 137 countries and more than 180 Fortune and Global 500 companies. That is twelve times the footprint of early 2020, and the milestone was announced at IWBI's 2025 Social Sustainability Summit in Amsterdam.

The market has moved with it. Company sports subscriptions like Urban Sports Club and ClassPass have become popular ways to support employees, with massage and mindfulness alongside the gyms. Adyen lists daily lunch, a stocked kitchen and an onsite barista among the reasons to work at its Amsterdam head office. Meanwhile Dutch fit-out suppliers now sell low-stimulus rooms as a standard product line, while a decade ago a quiet room meant a spare meeting room with the blinds down.

As Martijn puts it: "The new generation thinks hard about hydration, wellbeing, food, sport, those crucial elements. And this is the new way of property management: you can actually organise it, it's part of the plan."

Building for tomorrow

Future-fitting doesn't mean trying to predict exactly what your company will look like in five to ten years. It means making the space work well today while giving it the quality, flexibility and foundations to keep working tomorrow.

The best choices aren't necessarily the most visible ones. Good air, acoustics, daylight, materials, hydration and spaces that can adapt as your company changes may not make the biggest impression on move-in day, but they shape how the office feels and performs long after.

And as expectations around wellbeing, sustainability and building performance continue to rise, meeting today's minimum is unlikely to be enough for long.

Build for what your people need now. Build well enough that it still works for what comes next, and avoid paying twice.



work.club Club Strozzi

Cutting the Cans

Mysolution®

As Mysolution grew, so did its cans. Over a decade, the recruitment software company has expanded from around 40 people to more than 200, spread across two buildings near Utrecht. Every new hire meant more soda in the fridge, more deliveries, more packaging to deal with. At its peak the company was getting through around 500 cans a week.

As Mysolution's space expanded, office and event management team lead Krista van Rijt decided it was time to make a change: that's when she installed a REFILL+ Series 2.

But it wasn't the office expansion itself that drove it. "It was that we had cans of soda in the fridge, which is bad for the environment and a lot of work for us, the restocking, the buying, the recycling of it all.

"I wanted to do something more environmentally friendly," says Krista, who found swapping stacks of single-use cans for a hydration system took a real chunk of packaging, deliveries and waste out of her team's weekly routine. "Not necessarily my time," she says, "but my team's time.

"All the transporting of the cans back and forth." It was a recurring, invisible load that grew with every hire.

The REFILL+ Series 2 has helped Krista curb that, with compounding benefits.

"It's cost-effective, it tastes great, it's healthier, it's better for the environment, and it's less work. It's all of those things combined."

Krista notices the shift in her own habits too. "I'm a big water drinker myself, and I think I've doubled my intake," she says. "It's just plain water, you get sick of that after a while, so this really, really helps."

With functional flavors and zero-sugar, the healthy option became the easy one, Krista notes "there isn't a day that goes by that there isn't someone who says, 'I like this so much."

As Mysolution keeps growing, the decision keeps paying back: a little greener, a little healthier, every week it runs.

Read the full story
- how Mysolution cut the cans.

> ***"It's cost-effective, it's healthier, it's better for the environment, it's less work… all of those things combined."***
>
> ***- Krista van Rijt, Mysolution***



MyWheels: use only what you need



MyWheels runs the largest car-sharing fleet in the Netherlands; with roughly 3,000 cars across more than 75 locations, most of them electric and booked by the hour through an app. Its proposition is simple: most people don't need to own a car to use one. It's all about greater flexibility and lower impact, and this is the exact same thinking they applied to their new office space when it came time to move.

"We're not about making you drive more kilometres. We're about making the kilometres you do drive more efficient," says Hans Rombout, who was the company's office manager when it moved and now works in HR.

"It was ready to move in."

- Hans Rombout, MyWheels

When MyWheels outgrew their office near Amstel station, there were two things he knew he needed from the start. The first was flexibility: room to grow but as they needed, in real time. The second was efficiency: a space ready to move into, with the ability to customise.

The team anticipated their headcount would fluctuate in the coming years, so committing to an office designed around a fixed number or goal didn't make sense. And as a team committed to reducing impact and excess, they wanted something that aligned with their mindset.
Then, he found work.club's Zandkasteel office.



"It's a flexible company. We didn't want to stick to an office with 100 desks, but wanted the flexibility to maybe rent an extra room, or just let it go, or use flexible working spots, which Zandkasteel offers," says Hans.



Like all work.club locations, the Zandkasteel office provides communal spaces such as social areas and co-working pockets, meaning clients don't just have access to the private offices they lease. They also have the flexibility to spill out beyond those areas and make use of the shared areas too.

Beyond the shared spaces, the flexibility comes from being able to customise their own space at any time.

"It's very easy to say you want an extra room, or can we just use an extra office space for maybe a month or two. They're always helpful, and are willing to think about options in whatever way we need," says Hans.



mywheels

The fundamentals ready from day one

As a lean company, Hans did not have the time to manage a full move himself. So he needed something that was pretty much ready to go, with some space to bend to their needs.

The climate system, ventilation, acoustics, power and connectivity were already installed and working before MyWheels signed, with partitioning walls put up by work.club to create MyWheels' desired layout.

"It was ready to move in," says Hans.

MyWheels took three offices next to each other along one of the building's 'internal streets' - shared co-working space. The team turned them into a desk area, a clubhouse for lunch and two meeting rooms, with work.club's design and build lead Yalcin Ol handling the construction.

Hans brought the requirements and ideas; work.club translated them into a floor plan and built it. The resulting meeting rooms are now used every day.

"They took a lot of things out of our hands."

Contractors, infrastructure and the foundations of a thoughtful office were taken care of for them.

"I think in the end it's the cheapest option to be flexible."

- Hans Rombout, MyWheels

Plus the ability to adapt

With the fundamentals set, MyWheels were able to be flexible with the extras too. For the first two years, MyWheels rented their furniture rather than buying to work out what they liked. The team could try different arrangements, move things around and see what worked before committing to a final setup.

Once the layout had settled, the company bought the furniture.

Then the team needed more room again.

In July, the company occupying the other three offices besides MyWheels moved out. Hans took the newly available space and moved its parent company The Sharing Group across from the other side of the building. The two companies now share meeting rooms and a lunch room.

It was the second change to MyWheels' footprint in two years. Neither required a new building, a new lease or another fit-out from scratch.

"I think in the end it's the cheapest option to be flexible," says Hans.

And money aside, it took away the hesitation to get going, too.

"Whatever you do, you always have the opportunity to change. So it's just a thing of, just do it, and in the time being you will create the space you really wanted to have."

Making sense of the standards

WELL — focuses on the people inside, across ten concepts: air, water, nourishment, light, movement, thermal comfort, sound, materials, mind and community. Thorough, and priced for corporate budgets.

What it costs: around €2,500 to enrol, then about €1.50 per m^2 with a floor of roughly €7,000, plus on-site performance testing from about €13,000. For a 1,500 m^2 office that comes to somewhere near €22,000 in scheme fees. IWBI members and projects in emerging markets pay less. (International WELL Building Institute)

FITWEL — the more accessible health certification: no mandatory preconditions, no on-site testing, and review within sixteen weeks.

What it costs: around €450 to register, then a flat fee of about €6,500 for any workplace under 4,600 m^2, which means a 1,500 m^2 office pays the same as one three times the size. (Center for Active Design)

BREEAM — measures the building's environmental performance: energy, water, materials, waste. Across Europe, and in the Netherlands in particular, it has become the effective baseline for a new building.

What it costs: a €600 deposit at registration, set against a certification fee of €0.88 per m^2 for a new build or renovation under 5,000 m^2, so roughly €1,300 for a 1,500 m^2 office. For an existing building of that size, BREEAM-NL In-Use costs €2,550. DGBC partners pay about a quarter less. The BREEAM Expert and Assessor are engaged and paid separately. (BREEAM-NL, tariff schedule 2026)

LEED — the US-born rating, concerned like BREEAM with how the building performs; widely used on international projects.

What it costs: €1,496 to register, or €1,188 for USGBC members, then a combined design and construction review from €2,222 for an interior fit-out. At 1,500 m^2 an office pays that review minimum rather than the per-m^2 rate, so call it around €3,700 in total. (US Green Building Council)

NOTE: Fees are given for a mid-range office of around 1,500 m^2, at standard non-member rates. WELL and Fitwel bill in US dollars; their euro figures here are rounded conversions at the time of writing (€1 = $1.1614).



work.club Club Strozzi


Kartell
SHIGERU BAN

The case, in numbers

It isn't just a gut feeling. The case for future-fitting is backed by research too.

+**61% / +101%** — In a controlled study by Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, 24 participants scored 61 per cent higher on cognitive-function tests in simulated green building conditions than in conventional ones, and 101 per cent higher in green conditions with enhanced ventilation. (COGfx Study 1, 2016)

+15% / +6% — The Human Spaces study of 7,600 employees across 16 countries, including the Netherlands, found that workers in offices with natural elements such as greenery and daylight report 15 per cent higher wellbeing and are 6 per cent more productive than those in workplaces without them.

~90% — The World Green Building Council puts staff, salaries and benefits at around 90 per cent of a typical business's operating costs, against roughly 9 per cent on rent and 1 per cent on energy, which is why even a modest gain in how well people work outweighs what a healthier building costs to build in.



work.club RKM Offices


HYDRATI
THE OFFI
SHOWS
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CHAPTER **No.**

04

Decide before design freeze.

The decisions that shape an office are up against the clock. Here's what to lock in early and in what order.



work.club RKM Offices



There is a point in every fit-out past which changing your mind gets expensive, or simply isn't possible. Officially it's known as design freeze: a formal milestone in a project when planning and design are approved. In other words, the moment your decisions are locked.

On a full fit-out it lands roughly six to nine months before move-in; on a fast turnkey job it comes sooner. Either way, once it passes the walls are set, the orders are placed, the money is committed. After that, anything you forgot is a retrofit.

How long the move itself takes varies wildly, from a matter of weeks for a plug-and-play space to twelve or eighteen months for a ground-up fit-out, but the rule holds at any scale: the decisions that shape the office are made at the brief, long before the build, and the ones that touch the building have the highest stakes. So it's important to get the order of things right, from the beginning.

Start with function, not finishes

Yalcin Ol runs design and build at work.club, on projects from a couple of partition walls up to six-month fit-outs. He has his process down to a fine art.

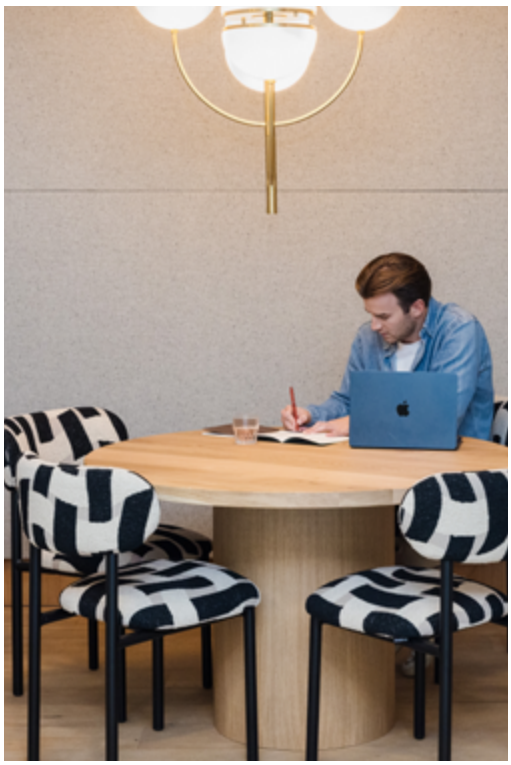
"First we get all the drawings and the floor plans," he says. "Then we calculate how much you need for a wall, a floor, the air conditioning. From that we make a plan, then we design it, and then we start the project."

Function first, finishes last. The square metres, the climate, the electrics and the layout are worked out before anyone chooses a colour. Some might call these the boring bits, but they're the parts that will affect usability most in the long run.

Nail the invisible elements

This is where the real long-lead calls live: plumbing, power, waste, insulation, the routes for water and air. They're the things you can't see in a finished space, and the hardest things to change once it's built.

Hydration is the clear example. A water point isn't a plug-in you add at the end. If you want complete control over the design, it has to be planned into the floor as infrastructure. By WELL's standards, free drinking



water should be accessible within 30 metres of every regularly occupied part of the floor plan and at least one point per floor. So, it affects more than just the primary kitchen.

"Every building has its own routes for the water, the electricity, the airflow, and we need to involve all of those," Yalcin says. "Every pantry needs three electricity groups, and two outlets for the coffee machine."

When it comes to adding water points at the end of a project, you're not just choosing a sink or a hydration point any more, you're reopening the floor.

Why hydration gets missed

"It's a familiar challenge on fit-out projects, and one that Daniel Ringshaw, director of design and build company DMG Workplace, has seen many times.

"In many cases, these things don't get specified before the project starts," he says. "The orders have been placed, the money's been put aside for the pipework, the waste, the water, the cutouts."

When a request for a system like REFILL+ Series 2 then comes in partway through, the most cost-effective opportunity to integrate it has often passed, he says.

It is then either introduced as a more expensive add-on or doesn't happen at all due to budget or time constraints. Much of this comes down to how the equipment is budgeted.

"Often the business has the Aquablu as a leased item," says Daniel. "It doesn't go into the project costs, it sits separate."

Because it sits outside the main project budget, it can easily fall outside early design conversations too.

For anyone planning a fit-out, there's real value in bringing infrastructure items into the conversation early, even those that are leased or installed later. Including a hydration system within the core project budget can also help ensure a smooth process from design stage through to installation.

"The sooner this comes in at the start, the easier it is," says Daniel.



Don’t stop at the design

Getting on top of design freeze isn’t just about making a plan and deciding the right things early. Staying on top of things as you go is just as crucial to getting things right. Yalcin tells us managing the subcontractors is one of the most important parts of the puzzle.

"Six weeks before we start, we tell the subcontractors: we have a project in six weeks, can you deliver?" he says. Everything is scheduled and sequenced: plumbing, electrics, partitions, flooring, HVAC, each with its own slot.

Don't rest once the agreement is made either. Yalcin recommends chasing, continuously. "In the Netherlands there's more demand than supply in construction, so they can skip me," he says. "I call them one or two days before and say, I'll see you in two days, right? You're going to do this and that for me, one hundred per cent? And then I still call the same day."
The plan is a living thing you manage.

Asked for his one piece of advice, Yalcin keeps it to two things: know exactly what you want, early, and manage the people you're relying on to deliver it.

Get the sequence right and the long-lead calls made, and the office you move into will be the one you designed.



work.club RKM Offices

WORK CLUB



How to plan the move: a Q&A with operations manager Annika Lieon, work.club

Where do you actually start? "Ask for the measurements of the office first, you can get them from the property manager. Then start looking for furniture."

How many quotes are needed, at a minimum? "Three. Compare the cost, but also the delivery time, that's so important."

What has to be ordered first? "Furniture, because the delivery time is the longest, and you can't work without desks and chairs. Plants come later."

How long does a move really take? "For a plug-and-play office, about a month. From scratch, more like half a year. Finding the right suppliers takes the longest."

Where do people get the timing wrong? "The contract gets signed fast and the check-in gets planned fast, so there's no time to make sure everything's actually in the office on time. Sometimes I'm brought in a week before, sometimes a few days."

What's one thing that most people forget? "Check everything before check-in. I go to the office straight away and go through it: does it all work, is it clean. Fix it before people arrive."

And how do you stay on track? "I make a list with the timing and the to-dos with everything on it, in order."

The office-move decision timeline

Here's what to decide, and when, so nothing gets done too late. The short version.

1. The brief — 12–18 months out.

Review headcount and growth, ways of working, where the kitchen and social hubs sit, and whether you want built-in hydration and coffee — flag it now, so water, waste and power are designed in from day one.

2. Concept design — 9–12 months out.

Confirm the layout, pantry and tea-point locations on plan; plus indicative routes for water, waste and power.

3. Design freeze — 6–9 months out.

The point of no return for anything plumbed, electrical or insulated. Consider final water, waste, and electrical positions, plus air conditioning and insulation, with specs locked and handed to the M&E contractor.

4. Build / fit-out — 3–6 months out.

Order long-lead items with a buffer, book the install slot, sequence furniture and IT.

5. Move-in — move week.

Commission and test, snag, brief facilities, launch to staff.

After the freeze, moving a plumbed point means M&E rework and extra cost; or a retrofit that disrupts the finished office.

Get the full **Office-Move Decision Timeline** - the complete phase-by-phase checklist, plus a free fit-out hydration check.

Your architect will ask for the specs, so we've done them for you.

The REFILL+ Series 2 fit-out and specification guide. Dimensions, cabinet sizes and the exact water, waste and power a built-in hydration point needs, in the form your architect or contractor can work from. Send it before the design freezes. **Free to download.**

An empty space and a ready-made office need very different timelines.

work.club can manage either one, from the design through to the move.

See locations and **talk to their team.**

Tebi: Against the clock

A fast-growing hospitality-tech company moved three floors into one on a four-week build window. Here's how workplace experience manager Stacy Bergener decided what to lock in early and worked around the one thing outside her control.



Tebi's move ran on a tight build window, but Stacy Bergener had planned for it. She'd run a bigger, slower job before, at her last company and so had some idea of what she was up for.

"We did a full build-out: the planning, design and build in seven or eight months, which was record time, but we had a massive team and an external design team."

Tebi's was leaner and faster. "From the time the contract for the new office was signed to when we moved in was maybe four weeks, just under." A window that short means there's no time for mulling over decisions once you're out of the gate.

At a glance

Company: Tebi - building tools for the hospitality industry

Team: doubled from around 40 to about 130 people in eight months

The move: three separate floors consolidated into one, on a ~4-week build window

Locked in early: the Aquablu REFILL+ Series 2, meeting booths, the pantry rebuild

The result: the essentials in place from day one, the calls that mattered made early, and a landlord deal that shared the pantry cost







Setting the priorities

With just weeks to work with, deciding the must-haves , ahead of time, was the first port of call.
"I focused on prioritising what we absolutely needed to work in the space, the non-negotiables," she says. "One was meeting booths, and the other was the pantry."

Everything else flexed around those two. The old office had meeting rooms spread across several floors; the new one had four, so booths filled the gap and when the space was fixed, Stacy got resourceful. "We even repurposed an old closet into a meeting room."

When asked how she juggled so many decisions at the one time without dropping the ball, Stacy said she was thorough with her planning. For example, when it came to the meeting booths, she made a spreadsheet of seven companies, including their costs and contract details, made as many calls as she could and carefully assessed each option before locking in her decision.

"We made a deal with our lessor, so they're paying for half - it's part of their investment into the space too."

- Stacy Bergener, workplace experience manager, Tebi

"Aquablu was a must for me. It was one of the first contracts we signed once we knew where we were going and what we were doing."

- Stacy Bergener, workplace experience manager, Tebi

The calls she made early

Stacy knew some things needed to be planned early and placed hydration with the essentials.

"In a growing company, in a workplace-experience role, you're stretched; you wear so many hats, you're managing vendors, you're the one doing the invisible work, the heavy lifting," Stacy says.

Looking ahead, she knew speccing a hydration system early would save her time in the long run.

"Right now (pre-move) I've got sparkling water coming in as bottles, and it's me reloading and moving them. Anything that saves me time and takes work off my plate, I'm all about. The last thing I need to worry about is bottles."

To make sure it happened, she budgeted it in from day one.

"It was one of the first contracts we signed once we knew where we were going and what we were doing.

"The last thing I wanted was to be adding another monthly cost at the end."

Some things you can't control

The single piece Stacy couldn't control outright was the pantry, which was down to the lease, not her planning. She wanted to customise it to suit her team, but because Tebi subleases the space, the rebuild had to run through the landlord's contractors, on their timeline.

She planned what she could and negotiated with the landlord to share the bill. "We made a deal with our lessor, so they're paying for half, it's part of their investment into the space too." She got the rebuild signed off. And she sequenced the hydration so nothing waited on her end: with the REFILL+ Series 2 contract locked months earlier and designed into the space.

"Ideally I'd have liked everything perfect from the moment people arrived," says Stacy. But on a four-week clock, with a room running on someone else's schedule, she'd done as much as she could: locked the calls that could be made, and planned for the ones that were foreseeable.

Stacy's advice

Stacy's advice to fellow managers running a move: trust your read of the room.

"Really use the vendors and services that make your job easier and provide the healthier option.

"You have intuition about what people need, and if you don't, you ask and find out," she says.



See how Tebi did it

Read the complete case study.

Van Gooi: Getting ahead of the game

For Van Gooi's office manager, Melissa Hendrikse, a good office move is planned upfront, not on the fly, with the things behind the walls decided before the window closes.





When electrical automation specialist Van Gooi took a larger office for its Utrecht arm, Van Gooi Energy Systems, the space needed work before anyone could move in. The kitchen was coming out and being rebuilt. There was no Wi-Fi, so cabling had to be run. Room for growth needed to be considered. Plus the facilities.

Melissa, Van Gooi's office manager, was the person holding it all together and keeping things on track. When asked how she managed it, she says clear communication, planning, and a little breathing room.

The first thing she locked in was the location.

It needed to be in the same area the team was already working in. That meant knowing how much space was needed, including the number of meeting rooms.

Next, she considered facilities, like the toilets, plus equipment like desks and monitors.

Then there's everything the building itself has to provide: the climate system, the cabling for the Wi-Fi, pipes for the kitchen and water points.

"Once you know when you get the keys and when the renovation is happening, I always leave some space in between, because something can always go wrong," Melissa says. "So it's: first the renovation, then you can build it out with cabinets and the kitchen."

Melissa's advice: mapping it out

A move is a million things at once. Melissa says getting all your ideas out of your head and making a visual map of it would be her first bit of advice for anyone endeavouring to manage a move themselves.



"If you make a map you can draw it in and visualise it."

- Melissa Hendrikse,
Office manager, Van Gooi

"Make a map and plan it out properly," she says. In Van Gooi's case, Melissa ordered the furniture first and arranged it afterwards. In hindsight, she believes the space could have worked harder for them, had she made a map from day one. "Maybe the room could have been more efficient. You have a lot of space, but you have to think about it, and if you make a map you can draw it in and visualise it."

The other thing she would flag, and a common issue, is the climate system. It was on her list and it got installed, but the question of extra cooling in parts of the office came up again once the fit-out was well under way.

"For the air conditioning, they now say it might have been more convenient to add more installations, but we're too late, because the ceiling is already done."

By then adding it would have meant reopening finished work for a difference of a degree or two between one part of the building and another, and the company agreed together that it was not worth doing at that stage.

"When you make the plan for the renovation, that's when those decisions need to be made. If you come afterwards, it's too much work and too much money."

Despite the gap, Melissa's realistic about what running a move is like. "The basics are there, but there's always something to improve. Something goes wrong, you have to change the plan and get creative with what you have."



"It's better to think about it early so it goes smoothly, hopefully in one go."

- Melissa Hendrikse,
Office manager, Van Gooi

"Once the new kitchen is rebuilt and the water pipes are done, the machine can finally be installed."

Melissa understands it makes sense to get ahead of the game. Spec in the things that create a space people want to be in from day one, rather than just the skeleton first, or risk paying twice.

"You've already put in the effort and the money, and then you have to rebuild it again. Maybe they say we have to remove part of the kitchen and rebuild it. Then you're doing it twice. It's better to think about it early so it goes smoothly, hopefully in one go."

The essentials from day one

Like climate, hydration depends on speccing things early. Pipes need to be considered from the get-go if you want full control over the placement of the tap points. Luckily, Melissa was onto it.

Part of that came down to listening to her people, who knew what they wanted and made it known. The Utrecht team had been visiting the Van Gooi head office, where they already had REFILL+ Series 2 on three floors, and they had made themselves clear. "They'd always said, 'I'm jealous, we don't have it in Utrecht.' So I said, 'okay, when there's a new office I'll arrange it for you.'

"But you have to think about the installation, so the water pipes are in the right place."

The kitchen was already being rebuilt, so rather than treat the dispenser as something to sort out after the move, she put its water and power into that plan.

vanGooi

TECHNICALLY INGENIOUS

See how Van Gooi did it

Read the complete case study.



SELF-REFLECTION: BEHIND OUR OWN MOVE

We wrote this guide partly because we could have used it ourselves. Here's the honest take on how our own move went, from the two people who ran it. VP of marketing Fabienne Walch scoped and planned the front half. Office manager Rebecca Baddeley steered it through construction. They learned many lessons the hard way so you don’t have to.

There's an irony our office manager, who ran our own move, can't get past. The pipes in our kitchen did not get plumbed to plan. The designs were drawn, it was discussed in meetings with all the right people, but something still went awry along the way.

"It's so ironic, given I'm literally saying this so that people do their plumbing in advance for the hydration point, and we didn't even manage to get it right," says Aquablu office manager Rebecca Baddely.

But there was more to it than just planning. It also comes down to picking the right partners.

So, rather than pretend our own move was flawless, here's what actually happened, the parts we'd do the same, and the parts we've learned from.

Function before finishes

The planning started as the 'decide before design freeze' ethos should, with what the office had to do long before how it would look.

Aquablu VP of marketing Fabienne Walch led the move from the brand side and asked every department the same thing. Not "what do you want," but "if you could change one thing." The answers were almost entirely practical.

"The big things were very pragmatic: phone booths, meeting rooms, kitchens, the walk to the hydration points, to the pantry, and the separation of teams that are on calls a lot and are noisy from the ones doing deep work," she says. "That was, I think, ninety per cent of what we got back."

Nothing about aesthetics. "It's really about going to the office to be able to focus, to not be stressed because of the noise or harsh lighting. Very much functionality."

That set the order. Rooms and layout needed to be decided first, because those were fixed by the space itself. "First we had to know how many rooms we needed, and whether the space even allowed it."

From there, we chose materials that reflect our brand identity and not personal preference. Light woods and cool steel. Sleek finishes and interesting textures. While the feedback on look and feel was only positive, the success of an office comes down to functional design more than finishes.

"You can't lead with design, because people will do whatever they want," Fabienne says. "You need to understand how they move, where they go, where they eat their toasties, and then plan around that."

"That's why we decided on two floors. Downstairs is the messy floor. But upstairs the kitchen needs to be clean."

We didn't manage to get it all right. For example, downstairs some cupboards are out of reach for anyone who isn't over six feet. The glasses cupboard relative to the dishwasher is not as accessible as it could be. Small things that are easily overlooked in the design process without an expert guiding you through it.

"With small things, like how do you open a cabinet, you really need to think about it the way a person approaches it, like with a house. If there's a table in the middle, and you walk in from the right side, your natural motion will always go one way. There are so many little things like that to consider," Fabienne says.

The lesson: how people move needs to be considered above aesthetics.

Prioritise what's behind the walls

This is where our move earned its scars.

Fabienne knows first-hand the importance of getting the parts behind the walls right and what to fix early. "Water connection, drainage. Electricity is easy, it's never an issue, you can always pull a cable from somewhere. But water is the most important. And the pipes and the points."

She learned it in real time. The showers the team wanted nearly didn't happen. "If you want showers you really need to understand whether it's possible to pull pipes through. We had a concrete floor. We can't pull pipes, we can't drill into the concrete floor."

And when it came to ventilation, the early calls required expertise that were beyond our skillset. The issue was, when viewing the building, we understood the legal requirements were already met. They weren't.

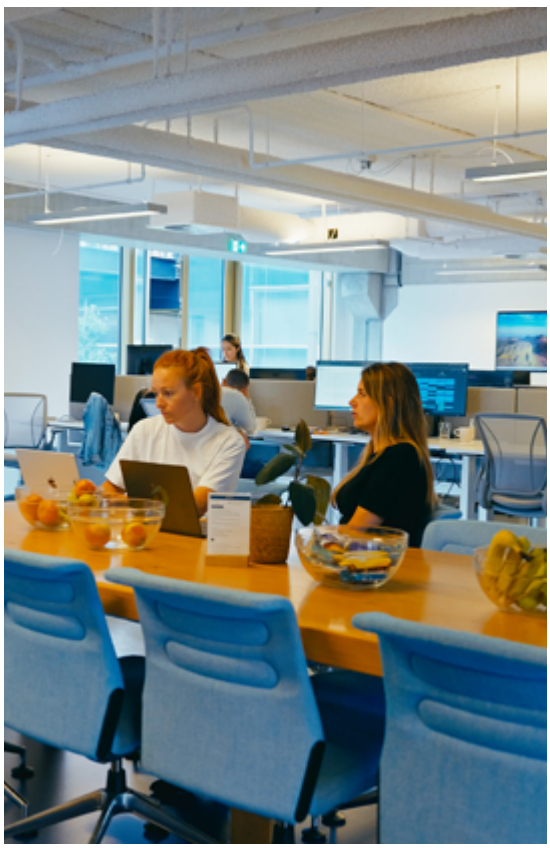
"We had to do the full ventilation ourselves, and we didn't expect that," says Fabienne. "It's insanely expensive. No scale-up can really absorb it."

Her advice from it is the one that keeps echoing across everyone we spoke to: get the behind-the-walls knowledge into the room before you sign, and take someone who understands buildings to every deal you do.
"Take someone with you, or know the rules for your country," she says.

"People tend to take liberties if they don't feel like you're massively onto it."

- Rebecca Baddeley,
Office Manager, Aquablu





Manage the people, not just the plan

If the plan is a living thing you manage, Rebecca was busy breathing life into it from the day she picked it up.

She came in mid-construction, into contractors who were already at war. "There was serious contention between some of the contractors, all blaming each other for different things."

Her diagnosis matches Yalcin's advice on page 67 almost word for word: contractors do what they want unless you're chasing relentlessly.

"People tend to take liberties if they don't feel like you're massively onto it," she says. "With really clear communication and really clear expectations that you then follow up on, every day."

When asked how she would approach it if she could start again, Rebecca says "by having fingers in every pie right from the get-go. You've got a more innate understanding of what needs to be done and how to handle it."

Fabienne says she'd consider putting in place contractual measures. "Service level agreements are really, really important. When you work with building companies, make sure you keep them accountable for how fast they build something and to what standards." Put teeth in the contract: "if they fail what are the consequences? Make them clear from the beginning. Mostly monetary fines are the biggest motivation."

And both landed, independently, on the same final takeaway: consider your contractors carefully.

This was where the plumbing went wrong. Despite having weekly meetings with the builders and architects, including one in person before the install, the plan was not followed.

"The builders. They did mess up there. They didn't follow the drawings. I think the architects also messed up a little bit. I think everyone had a bit of a role in it, there was some miscommunication, but the builders really messed up."

When asked how it could have been avoided, Rebecca gives a clear answer: "The quality of the subcontractors and where they're based." Ours were scattered across Europe, "they're hard to get hold of, and they can't just come here and fix something."

Fabienne takes it further. "Ask people who have worked with them before what their experience was. Don't go for the cheapest, because they eventually won't deliver what you want. Go for maybe the premium one where you have a really good feeling. And just be very clear contractually."



"Water connection, drainage. Electricity is easy. But water is the most important."

- Fabienne Walch,
VP of Marketing, Aquablu

What we'd tell you

We got the order right: function first, requests mapped, the brief built around how people work. We got the discipline right in the end, Rebecca refused to let it fail.

What we'd change is upstream of all of it: the behind-the-walls calls and the people making them. Spec the water and the ventilation early, check the plan back against real use before the freeze, and hire subcontractors you can actually reach and hold to account.

We wrote the chapter because we learned it the expensive way. Decide before design freezes - especially the things behind the walls. Take it from the people who didn't, in their own office.

Aquablu



CHAPTER 05

No. *The final call.*

An office move can be a huge undertaking. But nobody does it alone. Three office managers and a CEO who have been through it tell us what mattered most, what they let go of, and how they stayed sane doing it.



work.club Club Strozzi

Our own office manager Rebecca Baddeley picked up our move on her first day in the job. It was mid-construction and she jumped straight into the deep end.

Contractors running late, movers unable to step in when booked, permits needed at the last minute. Asked what it was all like, she tells it truthfully. "It's a whole job in itself. You can't just do this on top and go, this is fine on top of my normal work. It's not. If you want to do a good job, that needs to be your job, and that's it."

Stacy Bergener, who manages the workplace experience at Tebi, moved from three floors into one across a four-week window after the company doubled. Asked how much work a move actually is, she doesn't sugar-coat.
"It's an insane amount."

Melissa Hendrikse at Van Gooi says proper forward planning and budgeting are the only way to manage it. "It's a lot," she says.

Despite the challenge, they all did it. Melissa pitched the case for what she wanted for the new office and won approval. Stacy turned around a move against a four-week clock and levelled up the space. Rebecca stepped up when it was needed and delivered something exceptional under pressure.

Across the board, the message was clear: know what matters most, leave yourself space, and ask for help.

Melissa shares the load with her fellow colleagues. "You don't have to do it alone. You can always ask for help, and then together you come up with something good."

Stacy focuses her energy into the few things the office cannot do without, whittles down what isn't needed and stays realistic about the rest. "Realise as soon as possible that you're not going to please everyone all the time," she says. "Make the decisions you'd want people to make for you, and take care of yourself at the same time."

And Rebecca says know your boundaries and be clear about what's really possible. "You really have to take other things off your plate. You need to figure out how to be clear with your boundaries really quick. And that's a hard thing to do, but I think it's the only way to actually do this successfully."

The three moves were different, but none of them was a solo effort. Each manager had to decide where their time and attention mattered, where someone else could take over or who to trust on getting a job done, and when something could wait or when it needed planning early.



work.club Club Strozzi

In conversation with Marnix:

Signing it *off*

Aquablu CEO Marnix Stokvis made the final calls on our own office move. We asked him what he wishes we had done differently, what he thinks is worth fighting for, and how he decides on a cost that will never show a qualitative return.



Our own move was managed by people who already had full-time jobs, including yourself. What was that like?

At that stage we were so busy running the company, running the fundraise, running a hundred things. We had no dedicated person doing the office move as well. In the beginning, Fabi and I were literally doing it together. We just didn't have the full headspace to think it through properly, which meant we were sometimes surprised by additional costs.

If I had to do this again, I would have made sure that, even if it was on a temporary basis, I had a dedicated person to spend time on this office move, so that we could actually track the budgets better, sit down with the CFO, and look at what we're doing and what we're not doing. We did it to the best of our abilities. We have an amazing office, but it ended up a little bit more expensive than I initially had hoped for.

Where did the budget go wrong?

We were trying to do as much as possible with as little money as possible. So we first made a very, very big, let's say gold-plated, idealistic office design, and then we looked at how we could make it fit the budget, which was tough. And because we did it that way, you kind of get the budget creep.

The difficult thing was that we focused a lot on the design phase, and on the budget there I think we got that really well under control. But then with the contracting part there were unforeseen costs, and we didn't budget for that at all. In hindsight, that's something I could have done better: budget better for unforeseen costs. I also think we had an unreasonably ambitious low budget. But doing a lot with very little means you can't always play it safe. Sometimes you just have to take the risk.

If somebody can only fight for a few things, which ones should they go for?

The things that are built in, you need to get right. The ventilation, in our case, is something you need to build in. Anything in your kitchen, you need to get right. We have steel worktops, and if I now have to drill a hole for another product, it's really tough. So everything that needs to be built in needs to go right. Everything that can be flexible, take the flexibility.

With office chairs, for example, there's some flexibility. Maybe you lease them, you can upgrade them along the way. TV screens need to function, but you can also upgrade them. The add-ons you can be flexible with, but the core things, get them right from the start.

Are there any decisions you would take back?

The ventilation. We got three quotes, and initially they said, this is the version, you'll be all good, that's the minimum amount, you'll have enough ventilation, it will be enough cooling. And we thought, okay, if that's enough, let's do it.

And now we've been pushing to get it sorted, and it takes three, four, five months to actually get that adjustment going through. I don't care if I need to spend thousands more on it, but I can't live with this situation. That was a tough one. That was a big learning.

What's something you're happy you spent the money on?

An example is the standing desks. We could have gone for something like a hundred flat desks, and I think it would have saved us about sixty, seventy per cent. What we did is we went for full-on standing desks, and ones with cable management specifically. Ergonomically, for a workplace, it's pretty good. People can stand up, sit down, and you need the movement. We have a pretty active team.

I'd rather invest in products that are high quality, that I know aren't going to break down, and that are also the better option for the people. I believe we're investing to make people thrive.

What if the budget genuinely will not stretch?

If you look at our office move, we achieved so much with fairly little budget by being very creative. Where do you get your tables from? Where do you get the desks in the middle, the electronics and all of that? We made really good deals with potential partners as well.

So you can have a minimum budget, but you can get creative, and just focus on getting the right solutions in, and then maybe you phase some things into a second part, instead of committing to everything and doing it cheap.

How do you decide on something that will not show a return?

It's not always directly possible to quantify the impact as a financial metric and say, 'okay, this gives us so much more productivity, therefore it's a good financial decision'. Often these things are pretty vague. I think there's a massive amount of hidden cost, hidden cost of productivity, hidden costs around employment, that people don't visibly notice and can hardly quantify, but we all know it's there. And that's thinking not from an Excel sheet, but thinking as humans, essentially.

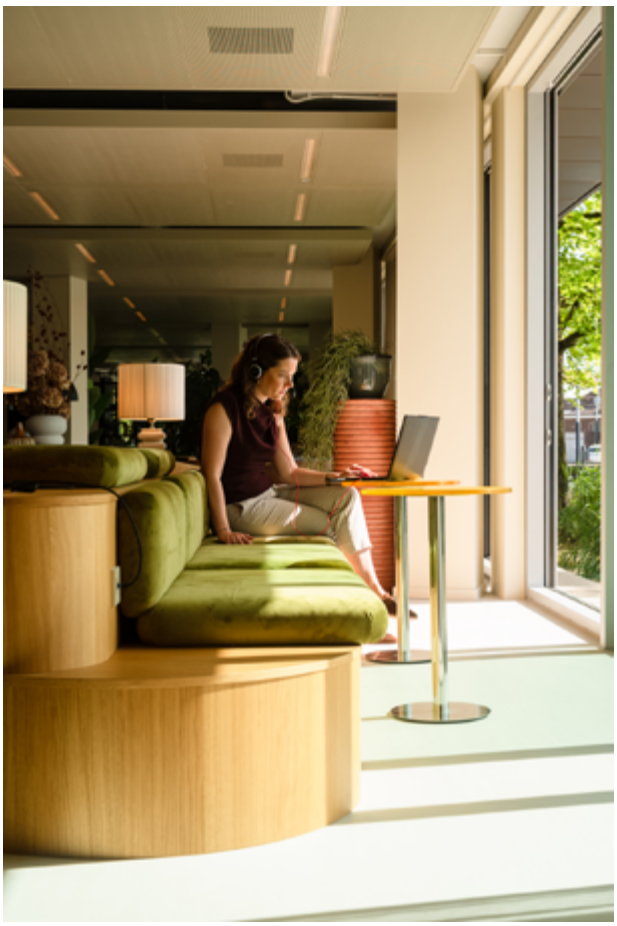
It's really difficult to quantify, so on the one hand you need to do it a bit intuitively. It's different if you're making a 5,000-person office versus a 110-person office, right? But for me, I essentially try to look at it logically. So if we're building an experience centre, it's great for the people, can I also set it up for partners? Now it becomes a way that we can also generate some kind of revenue from it. If we have multipurpose locations, that's great. For the other things that aren't normally multipurpose, I try to look at what's reasonable and makes sense for the team.

Is there a way to frame these decisions to finance?

If it costs ten, twenty, thirty euros per employee per month extra, that's not even a percentage of the employment cost of that person. So if you invest one per cent in all these other amenities, or two, and you make this person feel happy, they're committed to the brand, they're more creative, they're more productive, they're healthy. It's so much more beneficial.

work.club: having it done for you

We partnered with work.club, not just for their office design expertise, but because we know a move is a huge job and they have the tools to carry it. Jules Hooijdonk, who is commercially responsible for work.club and .re-group, shares how having someone else take care of the hard parts can make the difference.



Designing an office for your people, future-fitting the space, locking every call before the design freeze, then managing the people who build it: it's a job on top of a job. So for anyone who does not have the luxury of time, is in need of flexibility, or just wants to reduce their footprint, work.club offers an alternative.



Its menu of options ranges from an empty floor for you to customise to a turnkey space where the fit-out and day-to-day infrastructure are already taken care of. Its club models also give tenants access to shared spaces for working, meeting and socialising beyond the space they lease.
It isn't necessarily the cheaper option on paper. But the monthly price only tells some of the story. When you take on a space yourself, you also take on the fit-out, the infrastructure, the people required to run it and the cost of changing it when your needs inevitably shift.

Interpreting the invoice

As work.club commercial and place strategy manager Jules Hooijdonk puts it, the real estate industry is a vague one on pricing. A direct comparison isn't always available, making it hard to make informed, objective decisions.

"What you have nowadays with the traditional brokers is that everybody holds their cards close to their chest. So you don't know what's available. One offer is with furniture, the other one is without. It's always hard to really explain the difference between different quotes. So it's really for us as well to help them understand what the offer is," Jules tells us.

He explains work.club offers a menu of options and, while leasing a floor and adding the services yourself will have a lower upfront rate per square metre, services can add up fast.

"If you don't have a receptionist taken care of, you need to hire a receptionist yourself, meaning you need to pay a salary for a receptionist. If you need to do all the fit-out yourself, all these things add up, so while the office lease you pay per month is lower, the total cost will actually be higher," he says.

For companies that don't want to take on that investment themselves, the turnkey model shifts the equation.

Pay for the space you genuinely use

The benefit isn't just getting the construction work out of your hands. It's being able to move into a functioning workplace built for flexibility and community, and only paying for the space you really need.

In a hybrid culture, that often means less than your total headcount, but with the flexibility to welcome everyone into the space should they want it.

"Most of the focus is put on the communal spaces. The ones you walk into when you come into the building, where you'd have the phone booths where you can work, but also the quieter spaces, and all these extras," says Jules. "That gives some breathing space for all these clients. You don't pay for all these extra spaces, and it gives them flexibility."

It also means spaces for social interaction, the main driver for getting people into the office, are prioritised.

"What you have in a clubhouse is a space where you can socially interact with people. That can be over a coffee with your colleague, but it can also be that you have an event space, where you could have a podium, where you could have stand-ups, where you could organise drinks and parties, or even inspirational, TEDx-type talks."

WORK CLUB

Build in room to change

While work.club attracts clients across a range of headcounts, for growing companies in particular, the flexibility they offer makes the most sense.

"What we actually see with most companies is that they don't know what's going to happen in a couple of years' time," says Jules. "Looking a year ahead is already a challenge."

Standard agreements run for a minimum of 12 months, with tenants typically staying for at least three years and up to five. Jules compares it to a phone subscription: you might sign up for the initial flexibility and stay for the service.

"I have a subscription I can cancel every month, but I've been with the same provider for three years already, because why would I get the hassle of changing all these things while I'm still happy with the service they provide?"

An office move will always come with trade-offs and decisions around how to best manage your budget and what's considered value. For companies without the time, expertise or appetite to manage every part of a fit-out, having someone else take care of the hard parts can mean more than a smoother move. It can mean a workplace that is ready for the people using it today, flexible enough for what comes next, and one less full-time job to take on along the way.

Looking for a space?

See **what work.club has available**, from an empty floor you fit out yourself to a turnkey office that's ready on day one. Agreements start at twelve months.



work.club Club Strozzi

What you'll hear, and what to say

Here are six things that often get said when organising an office move and responses to consider when the time comes.

"Can't we sort that out after we move in?"

For anything that needs water, waste, power, ventilation or space above a ceiling, leaving it until later can mean a much higher price to pay when you're ready. For anything designed-in, do it now. For anything flexible, it's up to you and your budget.

"It's a nice-to-have."

An office move is the chance to invest in your people. The nice-to-haves can be the difference between four walls plus a set of desks and a space they want to be in, boost productivity, and even improve efficiency. Work out which ones make the most sense for your team and whether they need to be specced now or can be genuinely added later at no additional cost.

"We've already got something that works."

Okay, but are we happy with the status quo and how does it compare to an upgrade? What's the experience like, do people really use it, who's managing it, how much of their time does it take, and how easy is it to service? Weigh up the pros and cons on a long-term timeline, work out what each is really costing and then decide.

“We’ve got a cheaper quote.”

Don’t assume the quality of comparable products and services are the same, or even sufficient. When it comes to subcontractors reliability and quality will vary greatly so do your due diligence. When it comes to a building, one might include furniture and the other might not. For products and services, one might include maintenance and the other assumes you will arrange it. Ask both suppliers to itemise the same list, including who is accountable when something fails and what happens at the end of the term.

“Renting works out more expensive.”

Renting or leasing over buying is almost always going to be more expensive over the course of a long-term contract, but offers other benefits that can offset the cost. Whether it’s flexibility, the cost to manage the thing or job, the time and energy to maintain or replace something. Work out what the hidden costs are, including hours of time, and weigh up the options side by side.

“Can’t you manage it yourself?”

You probably can, but the question is at what cost. What is your own time worth and what are the stakes of making a mistake, because the errors a rushed move produces tend to be structural rather than cosmetic and expensive to undo. Compare the cost of a resource or facility against the work or rework you are trying to avoid.

From bottled to built-in: the three-year view

Designing a new office is the perfect moment to improve your infrastructure and facilities — when it comes to hydration, several options exist, but they're not all equal. Here we've weighed up what default options like cans plus bottles and coolers actually cost against smart hydration.

	Bottled water and cans	**Water coolers (plumbed/jug)**	**REFILL+ Series 2 built in**
Cost per drink	~€1 bottled water(500ml) ~€0.80 canned/flavoured	~€0.20 water drink (200ml)	~€0.33 flavoured
Three-year total	**~€156K** (bottles) **~€60K** (cans)	**~€75K** (Water coolers)	**~€48K** Based on per-drink cost (0.33) × drinks (4000) × 60 (months)
Up front	Nothing, then a delivery invoice that never stops	Low. Rental, or buy a consumer-grade tap	No capital cost on an all-inclusive subscription, or buy from around €6,000
What you carry	Deliveries, storage, fridge space, restocking, recycling. All of it grows with headcount	Bottle swaps and storage on jug-fed, or a water line for mains-fed. CO_2 swaps either way	A water line and a power point, decided before the design freeze. Then a serviced utility with cleaning, filters and support included
What you can report	Nothing tracked, so savings are hard to evidence	Nothing tracked	Bottles saved and CO_2 avoided, reported monthly

*Assuming 100 employees and 5 office days per week. Assuming 1L per day p/employee (2 bottles) & 1 can per day p/employee.

A caveat about coolers. Coolers may be the cheapest line in the table, but it only accounts for plain water. The flavoured drinks are added on top, which usually means most offices are really comparing built-in against coolers plus cans rather than against coolers alone. Account for what your headcount drinks when assessing the options.

What to consider. Bottled and coolers cost very little to get started, need no installation and are flexible. Built-in ideally requires a decision upfront if you want full control over its placement, with water lines to consider early. What you get in return is a lower cost per drink, a fraction of the plastic and the logistics, greater variety, and a fixture that suits the office you just paid to build.

Bottled, coolers or built-in. See the full comparison of bottles & cans vs coolers vs a REFILL+ built-in.
Clearly outlined and ready to take to your team.
Free to download.

How to ask

CFOs are fielding many requests mid-move, so we asked our own about the best way to approach him when looking to make an upgrade for your office infrastructure.

Gijs van Rhijn, CFO, Aquablu

1. Know your game
Amenities like hydration and coffee are usually leased, so they often sit outside the fit-out budget and are therefore easy to leave out of the plan. Make them visible from the start.

2. Do your research
Get a clear view of what's available for improving office amenities or the F&B experience. A move is the best time to make space for change, so know what you're working with.

3. Treat company resources like your own
Any proposal you make should come with a price and contract duration that you've evaluated carefully. Be able to explain why it represents the best value for the business.

4. Frame it the way finance reads it
Calculate the total cost of ownership. Finance needs to understand what an approval will cost the company over time, broken down by period and component.

5. Put the cost in perspective
Cost alone shouldn't be the decision factor. Present the proposal as an investment: if we go this route, what does the company get in return? Investing in healthier workplace alternatives can support employee satisfaction and productivity: benefits that can far outweigh the initial investment.

6. Show ownership
Nothing builds credibility like knowing your proposal inside out. Think through the costs, commitment and benefits, and be ready to explain why you believe it's the right investment for the business.

See the full three-year cost sheet. Ready to take to your finance team.

Free to download.

To the office managers out there

So there you have it. The Aquablu x work.club Office Move Guide. A summary of our collective learnings plus insights from workplace strategists to guide your own office move, when the time comes.

You will likely make some mistakes. We learned many of the lessons within this guide the hard way. But setting your priorities from the beginning and understanding what needs to be fixed before the design locks is the safest way to nail the parts that matter most.

And, like our own office manager Rebecca Baddeley, don't forget to bring the good vibes along the way.

"Hey, to my office managers out there: I see you, I feel you. It's a thankless job sometimes. Actually, it's not. I get thanked all the time, it's a very visible role. But I think our main function is vibe-bringing. We're out here to give people a good time. Keep things running smoothly and make sure everyone enjoys coming into the office, loves where they are, feels like they're in a good space and enjoys working together. As long as you take the trash bags out and look after your fellow friends and make sure they're having a good time. Smile at them, give everyone a pat on the back, tell people they've done a good job. That's what it comes down to."

work.club

work.club is .re-group's platform for flexible offices, meeting rooms and events. Each club is a curated space with its own character, from a desk for an hour to a full office, with memberships for individuals and teams, all bookable in one place. Because work.club is part of .re-group, the same team can take on a move end to end, from the first decision through to the finished space, so you can hand the whole thing over rather than run it yourself.

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More locations coming soon.

Photography for this guide was shot at RKM Offices, Sarphatistraat 370, 1018 GW Amsterdam, and Club Strozzi, Barbara Strozzilaan 101, 1083 HN Amsterdam.

WORK ■ CLUB

The toolkit

Planning an office move? These are the tools, comparisons and real-world examples referenced throughout the guide. Use them to plan your move, make the case for your decisions and work out what needs to happen before the design is fixed.

All tools

Aquablu builds REFILL+ Series 2, a hydration dispenser that connects to the mains and serves still, sparkling and flavoured water without a single bottle or can. We're based in Amsterdam and work across 16 countries. See the dispenser, the flavours and how it's serviced at **aquablu refill series 2**

Talk to us

If you're working out where hydration fits in your fit-out, what it needs from the plans, or what it costs for your headcount, we'll look at it with you. We also run tastings at our Amsterdam office, and can bring one to yours.

hydration@aquablu.com · +31 20 808 0180 · aquablu.com

Interviews

Aquablu conducted all interviews between July and September 2026. Quotes have been edited for length and clarity.

work.club and .re-group: Martijn Roordink (CEO and founder), Yalcin Ol (design and build lead), Annika Lieon (operations manager), Larissa de Jel (community manager), Jules Hooijdonk (commercial lead)

Industry: Elmar Wilens (founder, EWIP), Paula Sobów (Powerplant), Henk Schouten (Hospitality Group), Daniel Ringshaw (DMG)

Clients: Stacy Bergener (Tebi), Krista van Rijt (Mysolution), Melissa Hendrikse (Van Gooi), Hans Rombout (MyWheels)

Aquablu: Rebecca Baddeley, Fabienne Walch, Marnix Stokvis, Gijs van Rhijn

Panel, p. 29: Michael Levie (citizenM), Casper Schwarz (Casper Schwarz Architects) and Elmar Wilens, speaking at the Aquablu × Vitra panel, 2025

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Programma van Eisen Gezonde Kantoren, TVVL. p. 43

Summer temperature and **relative humidity** at work, Arboportaal. p. 43

Energy label C obligation for offices, in force since 1 January 2023, and the label A aim for 2030, Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland. p. 47

Paris Proof energy target for offices, Dutch Green Building Council. p. 47

Sipma J. Het werkelijk energiegebruik van kantoren in het jaar 2019, TNO 2022 P12077. p. 47

Global WELL adoption figures, International WELL Building Institute press release, 10 July 2025. p. 48

Certification fees, p. 58

All fees were checked on 10 September 2026.

WELL v2 pricing, International WELL Building Institute

Fitwel certification process and fees, Center for Active Design

Kosten BREEAM-NL Certificering 2026, BREEAM-NL / Dutch Green Building Council

LEED certification fees, U.S. Green Building Council

Euro reference rates, European Central Bank. Rate used: 8 September 2026, €1 = $1.1614

Market and company examples

Amsterdam office benefits, Adyen careers site. p. 48

MyWheels fleet and locations, MyWheels. p. 53

Aquablu figures

Three-year hydration cost comparison, p. 103: REFILL+ Series 2 pricing from Aquablu, September 2026. The bottled water, can and cooler costs are Aquablu estimates. The assumptions are stated on the page.