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# **Managing New Workspace Concepts—A Strategic Change Project in a German Insurance Company**

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## **Abstract**

Organisational changes have high failure rates. Managing workspace concepts resulting from office re-designs as organisational change initiatives has gained increasing attention among researchers and practitioners in the field of organisational development (OD) and change management. Based on a symbolic-interpretive research approach, this action research study systematically explores management and crucial change activities during the development and implementation of a new workspace concept as a strategic change project in an insurance company. This study makes theoretical contributions to two fields: first, change management and OD; and second, workspace design. The insights gained into the development of change activities enrich both the workspace design literature and the OD literature in which systematic analyses for effectively managing new workspace concepts are rare. For practitioners in the fields of facility management, human resources (HR) and change management, this study advances the understanding of workspace concepts as a means to facilitate strategic change and provides valuable recommendations on appropriate change management activities.

**Word count:** 6.908

## 1. Introduction

Research has shown that many change initiatives fail (Choi & Ruona, 2011) for manifold reasons (see, e.g., Biedenbach & Söderholm, 2008; Hornstein, 2015). ‘Poor execution’ of change (Pollack & Pollack, 2015) and ‘shortcomings in [...] the planning [...] of the change process’ (Burnes, 2011, p. 446) have often been cited in the literature. So far, the scientific literature on planned organisational change has lacked a consensus on the ‘basic change processes’ (Stouten, Rousseau & De Cremer, 2018, p. 752). Due to the fragmented literature and the various perspectives used by researchers in the organisational development (OD) field (Hallencreutz & Turner, 2011), there is a broad variety of not only theoretical models, concepts and frameworks but also methods, tools and techniques used in practice. There is no one best way to manage organisational change (Beer & Nohria, 2000), so these models, concepts and frameworks are always context specific and should be individually tailored for organisations where changes occur (Biedenbach & Söderholm, 2008; Cao & McHugh, 2005; Hallencreutz & Turner, 2011).

Organisations increasingly implement new workspace concepts based on physical workplace changes and manage them as strategic change initiatives to achieve better individual and organisational performance (McPeck, 2016; Zhou & Hoever, 2014). However, scientifically analysing such concepts constitutes a new task for change management theory (Hongisto, Haapakangas, Varjo, Helenius & Koskela, 2016). The introduction of activity-based open offices and the resulting workspace concepts (including changes in individuals’ work patterns, processes and social behaviours) have been ‘a highly neglected business resource’ in change management (Skogland & Hansen, 2017, p. 96). The lack of professional change management in workspace change projects (Kämpf-Dern & Konkol, 2017) might explain the various contradictory and mixed results produced by empirical studies on these concepts (Chadburn, Smith & Milan, 2017; Haynes, 2007). A profound understanding of ‘how workplace designs might be effectively changed or managed’ (Kupritz, 2002, p. 444) is lacking, so the authors of this study situate management of new workspace concepts in the theoretical foundations of planned organisational change in which ‘individuals, teams and organisations [transition] from a current state into a desired future state’ (Hallencreutz & Turner, 2011, p. 63) by managing ‘sequential steps’ (Burnes, 2007). Given OD’s overall goal to improve organisational performance and effectiveness by changing organisations’ attitudes, beliefs, values and structures (Cummings & Worley, 2014), we adopt a symbolic-interpretive research approach and a social-constructivist perspective to formulate the following research question:

*How can new workspace concepts be managed to support strategic change?*

To answer this question, we analyse the introduction of activity-based open offices and the resulting new workspace concept in a German insurance company experiencing transformational changes. Situating this study in the tradition of OD as planned organisational change presumes that new workspace concepts that result from office re-designs and address the ‘social, physical, and technical components of the work environment’ (Schriefer, 2005, p. 229) can be managed as organisational change initiatives in order to achieve strategic goals. In this context, we assume that appropriate change management activities can increase employee satisfaction and productivity. We also assume that a new workspace concept results in a ‘new state of being’ (Levy, 1986, p. 11) and, therefore, accomplishes transformational change for the users directly affected (Skogland, 2017).

This paper is structured as follows. In section 2, we explain the theoretical underpinnings of organisational (strategic) changes in general and workspace changes in particular. In section 3, we present the action research (AR) approach we applied. In section 4, we share empirical

findings identifying crucial requirements and change management activities, which are further discussed in section 5. The study closes with the study limitations and recommendations for future research in section 6.

This study makes two theoretical contributions. First, we contribute to the emerging discussions on workspace concepts in the context of organisational change. This systematic, real-time study of an OD initiative provides in-depth insights into successful management of workspace change ‘based on theoretical models and systematic empirical research’ (Kämpf-Dern & Konkol, 2017, p. 223). By combining the change management and OD literature and the workspace design literature, our research contributes to a holistic understanding of the physical workplace as an integrative component in new workspace concepts that can be strategically managed to facilitate organisational goals. We thus respond to Petrulaitiene, Rytönen, Nenonen and Jylhä’s (2017, p. 154) call to ‘narrow the gap between organisational behaviour and physical environment studies’. Second, this study identifies concrete activities that ‘change agents should perform to [e]nsure the success of a change effort’ (Worley & Mohrmann, 2014, p. 215). We thereby add valuable knowledge to change theory (Bennis, 1966) and implementation theory research (Worley & Mohrmann, 2014) explaining ‘what must be done, and in what general order, to trigger changes in organizations’ (Choi & Ruona, 2011, p. 54).

## 2. Theoretical Underpinning

### 2.1. Managing Organisational (Strategic) Change

According to Kurt Lewin (1947) who considers OD as a planned, structured approach (Burnes, 1996), organisational change can be defined as a conscious, deliberate, intended decision to achieve a desired change outcome (Cummings & Worley, 2014). In traditional models, OD goals, such as improving organisational processes and effectiveness (Buller, 1988; Choi & Ruona, 2011), are achieved incrementally through participative means (Bareil, Savoie & Meunier, 2007). The strategic management perspective is integrated with the OD perspective viewing ‘change as intentional efforts to make differences in the organizational work setting for the purpose of enhancing individual development and improving organizational performance’ (Choi & Ruona, 2011, p. 47). Strategic management’s traditional emphasis on strategy, structure and rewards and OD’s emphasis on people and processes thus are jointly considered (Buller, 1988).

Various models, concepts and strategies for the implementation of (strategic) change have been developed (Dunphy & Stace, 1993; Hallencreutz & Turner, 2011), but there is no consensus on ‘basic change processes’ (Stouten et al., 2018, p. 752) in planned organisational change theory. Anderson and Anderson (2001) identified content, people and process as the main elements of comprehensive change strategies that need to be aligned to successfully manage organisational change. In this context, *content* means ‘the strategy, systems, technologies and work practices’ (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015, p. 244) or the differentiation of organizational change into first and second order or transformational changes (Chapman, 2002; Levy, 1986; Lin, Chen & Su, 2017). *People* refers to ‘humans involved in the change, and their behaviour when implementing change’ (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015, p. 244). According to leadership theory, successful organisational changes are connected to transformational managers (Eisenbach, Watson & Pillai, 1999) who ‘are person-oriented, spend [...] their time talking and working with people, [and] listen [...] to views from all levels’ (Callan, 1993, p. 71; see also Hussain et al., 2018). Middle and top-level managers have crucial roles in initiating and facilitating strategic change through sensegiving and sensemaking (Balogun, 2006; Gioia & Chittipeddi,

1991). The role of the (strategic) change agent—understood as an external or internal consultant (Nikolaou, Gouras, Vakola & Bourantas, 2007)—is to provide ‘technical, specialist or consulting assistance in the management of change’ (Caldwell, 2003, p. 132).

To improve the success of organisational changes, individuals’ and change recipients’ concerns, resistance and stress during planned changes need to be considered (Callan, 1993; Waldersee & Griffiths, 2004). Although research has long focused on individuals’ resistance to change (Mento, Jones & Dirndorfer, 2002), the concept of individuals’ readiness to change is regarded as ‘more congruent with the image of proactive managers who play the roles of coaches and champions of change’ (Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993, p. 682). Not only individual variables (e.g. personal attitudes, preferences and experiences with the organisation) but also contextual variables (e.g. trust in management, organisational support and participation levels) play important roles in how employees experience organisational changes (Cunningham et al., 2002; Eby, Adams, Russell & Gaby, 2000; Oreg, 2006; Thakur & Srivastava, 2018). Accordingly, it is important to note that change is stressful for employees ‘when it is perceived as threatening to their tenure, job roles, career paths, status and power within the organization’ (Callan, 1993, p. 72).

*Process* refers to ‘actions and procedures carried out to implement change’ (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015, p. 244). In this context, it is especially important to diagnose a situation, motivate change, create a vision and clear communication strategy, ensure the commitment of (senior) management and manage change through proper planning of time, risk factors and budget, in addition to implementing and sustaining change (Bareil et al., 2007; Cummings & Worley, 2014; Miller, Johnson & Grau, 1994; Stouten et al., 2018). Although following a participatory approach is necessary for various types of changes (see, e.g., Buller, 1988; Bareil et al., 2007), broad employee involvement is especially important for behavioural and social changes (Waldersee & Griffiths, 2004).

## 2.2. Managing Workspace Concepts as Planned Organisational Change

Work environment research has proposed various ways to successfully configure office designs to ‘facilitate change and at the same time maintain [... employee] satisfaction [and] productivity’ (Spreckelmeyer, 1993, p. 182). However, a profound understanding of ‘how workplace designs might be effectively changed or managed’ is lacking (Kupritz, 2002, p. 444). Activity-based offices, though, lead to ‘new ways of working’ (Brunia & van der Voordt, 2016, p.31) letting employees decide ‘where, when and how’ they work (Appel-Meulenbroek, Groenen & Janssen, 2011, p. 123). Consequently, the value-adding effects of individual and organisational performance are increasingly taken into account (see for example Appel-Meulenbroek, Kemperman, Van Susante & Hoendervanger, 2015; Bergström, Miller & Horneij 2015; Morrow, McElroy & Scheibe, 2012). Nevertheless, holistic and systematic frameworks for effective workspace change projects based on ‘a professional change management’ (Kämpf-Dern & Konkol, 2017, p. 229) are rare in OD research (Inalhan, 2009; Morgan & Anthony, 2008; Skogland & Hansen, 2017). Due to ‘the interrelated and individual nature of change processes, [...] change activities have to fit to the situation, the goals and the individual needs’ (Kämpf-Dern & Konkol, 2017, p. 227). In-depth knowledge of how such ‘spatial change management’ to increase individual and organisational performance might look like is needed (Skogland & Hansen, 2017, p.95).

Research has shown that effective organisational change requires changing and aligning the organising arrangements, social factors, physical setting and technology (Duffy, 2000; Porras

& Silvers, 1991). Physical workplace attributes, such as layout, ambient quality, furniture, headphones and mobile information technology (IT), play important roles in this context (Danielsson & Bodin, 2008; De Been & Beijer, 2014; Inamizu, 2014; Mulville, Callaghan & Isaac, 2016; Palvalin & van der Voordt, 2017). However, design strategies that focus on social and organisational factors, employee participation and individual needs are considered to be even more important (Rothe, Lindholm, Hyvönen & Nenonen, 2011; Spreckelmeyer, 1993). Employee satisfaction and productivity are associated with adequate storage space (Brennan, Chugh & Kline, 2002; De Been & Beijer, 2014), workplace personalisation (Brunia & Hartjes-Gosselink, 2009), a focus on employee–workplace interactions, and individual control over the ambient environment (Bennett, Pitt & Price, 2012; Brunia & Hartjes-Gosselink, 2009; Haynes, 2008; Ketzes & Mitchell-Ketzes, 2006; Palvalin & van der Voordt, 2017; Vischer, 2007). Given employees’ potential losses from workspace changes, offering extra services such as sports programmes, catering and cleaning services is essential (Klaffke, 2016; Roth & Roth, 2018) to ensure that ‘the majority of all affected employees draws a positive benefit balance, outweighing the additional effort and losses against the gains’ (Kämpf-Dern & Konkol, 2017, p. 224).

Behavioural changes such as spending time in dedicated communication zones and openly sharing knowledge among colleagues do not come automatically in organisational contexts in which employees have long worked autonomously in closed, private rooms (Haynes, 2007). Indeed, ‘knowing the culture you are designing for is an important aspect of office design’ (Elsbach & Bechky, 2007, p. 97). The project team’s knowledge and skills heavily contribute to the successful management of new workspace concepts (Rasila & Rothe, 2012), so an interdisciplinary project team is required (Bell, 1992; Kaczmarczyk & Murtough, 2002; Schriefer, 2005). ‘No one-size-fits-all office design works for every task in an organization’ (Elsbach & Bechky, 2007, p. 96), so the workspace concept needs to be task specific and designed for an appropriately selected group (Bradley, 2002; Elsbach & Bechky, 2007). Supporting employees after the concept implementation through dedicated IT and new work practice training, demonstrating the use of the furniture and explaining the design intent of various rooms (Haynes, 2008; Kämpf-Dern & Konkol, 2017; van der Voordt, 2004) might ensure that employees build ‘new connections’ (Inalhan, 2009, p. 17) and thus attach to their new environment. To achieve sustainable, enduring organisational change (Brennan et al., 2002; Oliver, 2007), it is necessary to prepare employees for their new work environment and the required behavioural adaptations, for example, through joint development of office etiquette and the ‘appropriate support of self-management skills’ (Palvalin & van der Voordt, 2017, p. 433). Similarly to the aforementioned OD process, a clear, effective communication strategy (Morgan & Anthony, 2008), such as ‘project ambassadors’ (Kämpf-Dern & Konkol, 2017, p. 227) where employees’ representatives act as the voice between employees and project team and vice versa, might ensure that employees feel sufficiently informed throughout the change process (Bradley, 2002; Schermuly, 2016).

### **3. Research Method**

#### **3.1. Interpretive Research Approach**

This study is situated in the symbolic-interpretive understanding of organisation theory (Hatch, 2018). It is built on the assumption that ‘human understanding and action are based on the interpretation of information and events by the people experiencing them’ (Gioia & Chittipeddi,

1991, p. 435). ‘All knowledge is relative to the knower and can only be understood from the point of view of the individuals who are directly involved’ (Hatch, 2018, p. 14), so ‘an envisioned end state [emerges] through the purposeful enactment or social construction [...] among individuals’ (Poole, van de Ven, Doole & Holmes, 2000, p. 61). From an interpretive perspective, therefore, change processes focus on the social construction of meaning (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Weick & Quinn, 1999) and the creation and transformation of organisations through discourse (Barrett, Thomas & Hocevar, 1995). The OD perspective addresses individuals’ reactions to change (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999), so the focus is on changes in ‘individual members’ on-the-job behaviors’ (Choi & Ruona, 2011, p. 48). Based on these assumptions, it is hypothesised that (1) entities participate in events; 2) entities develop their own versions of the truth depending on their previous experiences (Smollan, 2013); 3) the meaning of entities, attributes and events may change over time (Poole et al., 2000); and 4) managing change is about ‘facilitating recipient sensemaking processes to achieve an alignment of interpretations’ (Balogun & Johnson, 2005, p. 1596).

### 3.2. Action Research Study

To answer the research question, we conducted action research (AR), which has been widely used in organisational change research as this reflective method ‘allows a researcher to engage in an organisation, simultaneously create knowledge about that process [...] and] assists in developing an understanding of the ways that social systems change’ (Pollack & Pollack, 2015, p. 54). This AR study took place at a German insurance company that developed and implemented a new workspace concept by rebuilding existing enclosed offices serving one or two employees into activity-based open offices. This workspace concept was directed from the top down (by top management) and implemented from the bottom up (by two departments with 80 employees). This project served as a pilot test to gain knowledge of how employees cope with change intended to increase their satisfaction and productivity. To secure close access to valuable data throughout the project, the research took place through ‘action with the goal of making that action more effective’ (Burnes, 1996, p. 12). The emphasis, therefore, was on ‘intervention, rather than observation’ (Pollack & Pollack, 2015, p. 54), and the project followed a cycle of (McKay & Marshall, 2001) 1) diagnosis; 2) action planning; 3) action taking; 4) evaluating; and 5) learning (Figure 1; Susman & Evered, 1978).

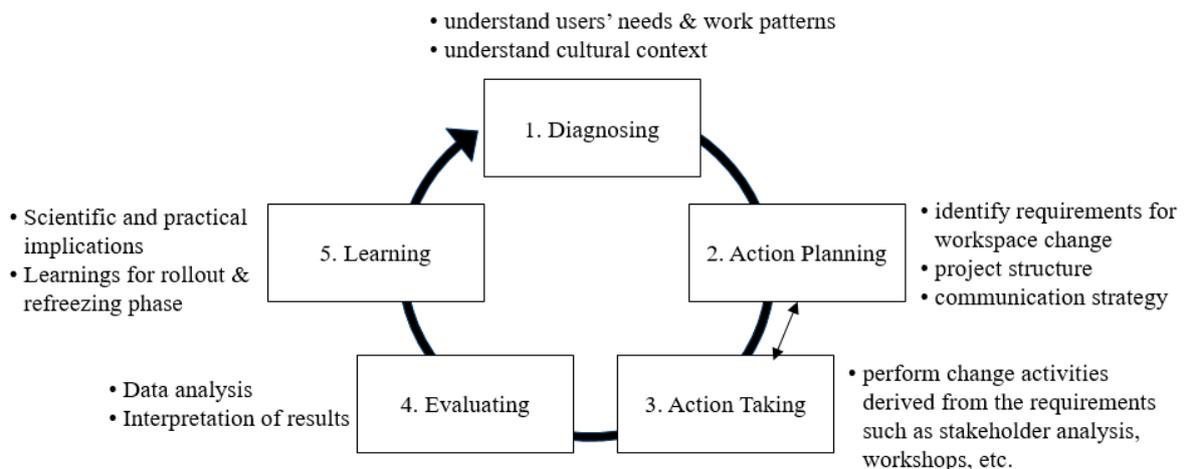


Figure 1: Action research process.

The diagnosis phase started with analysing the project background, structure and people involved. The interdisciplinary project team consisted of employees from the human resources, real-estate, IT and communication departments; two experts in change management and organisational culture; an external architecture firm; and two researchers in the field of innovation management and OD. Throughout the AR process, one of the researchers spent at least two days a week at the organisation, participated in all the important project meetings with the leaders and middle managers and had conversations with the pilot users. This internal researcher and first author of this study also had access to archival data and protocols from past meetings, the firm’s intranet and project presentations, in addition to performing the data collection and data analysis. The other researcher was involved in consulting activities concerning change management, provided methodological and conceptual support throughout the project and helped structure the findings. The study was conducted over one year (concept development) and three months (concept implementation; Figure 2).

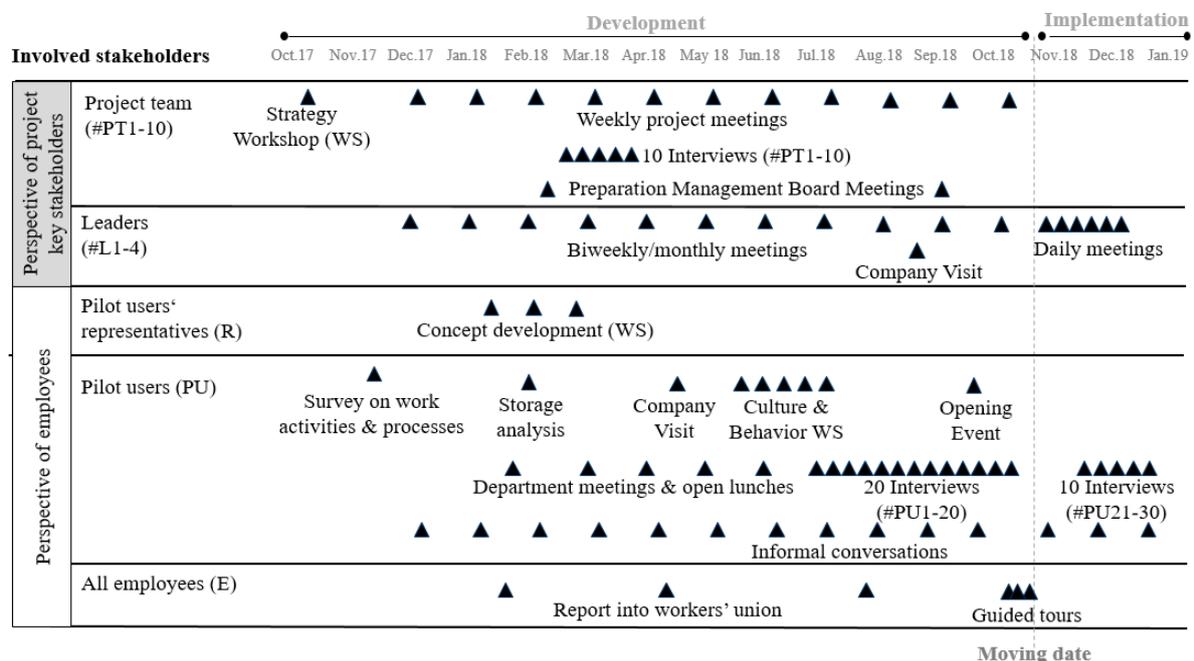


Figure 2: Overview of the timeline, planned project steps and data collection.

Top managers selected the 80 pilot users from two departments based on pre-defined criteria such as team size, work processes and representativeness of the company. Responding to general industry changes in knowledge-intensive and services industries, the company developed a new cultural vision and mission statement focused on the individual employee in order to create an atmosphere of trust, teamwork, communication and transparency and to promote digitisation, automation and flexibility in all processes. To establish a common understanding within the project team on the strategic goals of the workspace change project, a strategy and context workshop was held immediately after the project kick-off. The workshop participants discussed questions such as ‘What are the strategic goals of the new workspace concept?’ and ‘How can the organisational culture be described?’. Project preparation documents and informal, face-to-face conversations with the pilot users also helped to understand the affected users’ attitudes, feelings and worries and to build trust with them.

The action-planning and action-taking phases did not follow each other sequentially, so they were jointly considered as one phase. Feedback was continuously collected throughout the action-planning and -taking phases. The researchers continuously shifted between planning the

change based on the requirements identified from the various data sources during the development phase (Figure 2) and taking action in related change management activities.

To take action in the participative workshops depicted in Figure 2 and to build trust between the project team and employees, the leaders of the pilot users solicited volunteer employee representatives to communicate between the pilot users and project team. Jointly refining the workspace content allowed taking into account employees' worries, for example, about adequate storage space, workplace density and acoustic and visual protection. Based on surveys, observations and conversations, the pilot users' individual work processes, activities and needs were considered in the development of the workspace concept, particularly in the area layout and the ambient environment. The project team supported the pilot users' need to clean up by providing personal lockers, waste containers, and tips, tricks and resources to digitise paper documents but without imposing strict requirements on workplace organisation (e.g. requirements regarding storage needs). Broad employee involvement was realised through shared decision making using display controllers at think tanks (retreat areas for concentrated work or meetings), the size of think tanks (space for two to five employees) and amount of think tanks (a total of 15 think tanks for 80 pilot users) and the naming and design of meeting rooms through an idea contest, as well as shared decision making on bags, pre-selected colours and pre-selected furniture. To create personal benefits, high-quality laptops and headsets, a kitchen cleaning service, water taps with three different types of filtered drinking water, and ergonomic furniture, including height-adjustable tables, were provided for free. As compensation for the loss of workplace personalisation, a dedicated photo wall was designed and shaped by the employees, and they were given individualised water bottles. All employees were free to store personal items in their personal lockers.

To create a change vision throughout the organisation, an extensive communication strategy was implemented using the intranet, dedicated mailings, regular department meetings, meetings with the pilot users' direct leaders and open lunches for all interested employees in the company. Furthermore, regular reports were made to the workers' union to win its support for the overall project. Concept progress was pro-actively communicated, leading to additional meetings. For instance, the pilot users were informed about construction delays and news from the workers' union and were presented with a virtual, three-dimensional (3D) model of the workspace and a mood board showing the final colours and materials. To increase employees' limited experience and knowledge of new workspace concepts, a visit to a company that had successfully implemented a workspace concept was offered as a learning journey. In the early meetings with the pilot users' leaders, the project team focused on winning them over to the overall project idea and raising their awareness of their function as role models throughout the project. A special company visit showing the leaders a recently implemented workspace concept was aimed at preparing them for their new management role by discussing their concerns and giving them new ideas on what the daily life might look like.

Given the high importance of preparing all the pilot users to work in the new environment, a participative workshop was held with all 80 pilot users to address the organisational change, particularly the new culture, new work patterns and emerging concerns such as data security. This workshop led to the development of office etiquette with general guidelines for the new workspace concept. The clean-desk principle was the only strict rule that emerged, and the focus of the workshop was on raising awareness about the on-going cultural change and its relationship to the new ways of working in the new environment. A hot topic list was made of employees' serious concerns such as 'Are there enough toilets, fridges, wardrobes, storage?', 'Is there enough acoustic protection?' and 'How do we handle the curious passers-by who will distract us from working?.' The list was continuously checked and managed throughout the

pilot project. A festive opening event featured speeches by the project sponsor and members of the board of directors. After the opening event but before the pilot users' move into the new environment, hundreds of other employees took guided tours to explain the overall project goals and prevent potential disturbances by passers-by after the concept implementation.

In addition to various encounters and conversations with all the involved stakeholders, data were collected from 40 semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in leading and consulting positions in the workspace change project (#PT1-10). Repeated interviews were also conducted with the pilot users directly affected by the workspace change (#PU1-20). The interviews were conducted in German and lasted 60–80 minutes each. All the interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim and qualitatively analysed (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014) using qualitative data analysis software MaxQDA. According to social constructivism, 'employees in organizations [...] develop their own versions of reality from the[ir] many experiences' (Smollan, 2013, p. 730), so it was crucial to conduct interviews with both the project team and the pilot users. In doing so, the main facets of the conducted change management activities were identified. Additional data were collected from secondary materials from 900 hours spent inside the company. Figure 3 gives a detailed overview of the data collection.

No	Acronym	Project role	Department(s)	Data source type	Time of data collection
1	PT	Project Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>human resources</li> <li>real-estate department</li> <li>IT/technology</li> <li>communication</li> <li>change management expert</li> <li>organizational culture expert</li> <li>external architecture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 Interviews (#PT1-10), conducted in German, audio-recorded &amp; transcribed, duration: 60 – 80 minutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development phase: Mar – Apr 2018</li> </ul>
2	L	Direct Leaders of pilot users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actuarial line operation (2 leaders)</li> <li>Business process management (2 leaders)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions and conversations (#L1-4) from biweekly/monthly meetings and from company visit (during concept development)</li> <li>Discussions and conversations (#L1-4) from daily meetings (after concept implementation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development phase: Dec 2017- Oct 2018</li> <li>Implementation phase: Nov – Dec 2018</li> </ul>
3	R	Pilot users' representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actuarial line operation (7 employees)</li> <li>Business process management (6 employees)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions and conversations (#R1-13) from concept development workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development phase: Jan – Mar 2018</li> </ul>
4	PU	Pilot users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actuarial line operation (44 employees)</li> <li>Business process management (36 employees)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 Interviews with pilot users (#PU1-20)</li> <li>10 follow-up interviews (#PU21-30)</li> <li>Surveys on work activities and processes, storage during concept development</li> <li>Discussions and conversations with pilot users (PU) from company visit, culture workshops, opening event, department meetings and open lunches during concept development</li> <li>Informal conversations (PU) before and after concept implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-move interviews: Jul – Oct 2018</li> <li>Follow-up interviews: Dec 2018 – Jan 2019</li> <li>Development phase: Nov 2017 – Oct 2018</li> <li>Implementation phase: Nov 2018 – Jan 2019</li> </ul>
5	E	All employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employees from head quarters, insurance company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report into workers' union</li> <li>Guided tours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development phase: Feb – Oct 2018</li> </ul>

Figure 3: Overview of data collection. Note: The names of interviewees and their departments were anonymised by agreement.

In the evaluation phase, the data were analysed, and the results were interpreted, as presented in section 4. As suggested by Miles et al. (2014), the data analysis followed an iterative process of data reduction and analysis using codes created from the literature and codes that emerged during the analysis. For example, we grouped statements about ‘willingness to change’ and ‘questioning the overall project’ into the theoretical category of ‘considering readiness to change’. This deductive analysis was aimed at identifying the main requirements during the organisational change initiative. These requirements mostly came from the interviews with the project team members and the pilot users but were refined through analysis of the feedback continuously collected from meetings with the leaders and the workers’ union and conversations with the pilot users and their representatives during the development phase.

Deductive analysis was followed by inductive reasoning to group related change activities into second-order categories derived directly from the data. In the third step, these second-order change activities were refined based on the pilot users’ and the leaders’ evaluations during the concept implementation. This step analysing data from follow-up interviews with the pilot users, daily meetings with the leaders and informal conversations with the pilot users after the concept implementation ensured that the research identified crucial change activities targeting employee satisfaction and productivity. To increase transparency and deepen understanding, key quotations (Patton, 1990) from the various stakeholders were selected to describe the meaning of the concrete change management activities in the empirical findings.

#### **4. Results**

This section presents interpretations of the empirical results from data collection throughout the action-planning and -taking phases and the data analysis during the evaluation phase. Figure 4 presents the identified requirements leading to crucial change activities when managing a new workspace concept in an insurance company, which are described further in this section.

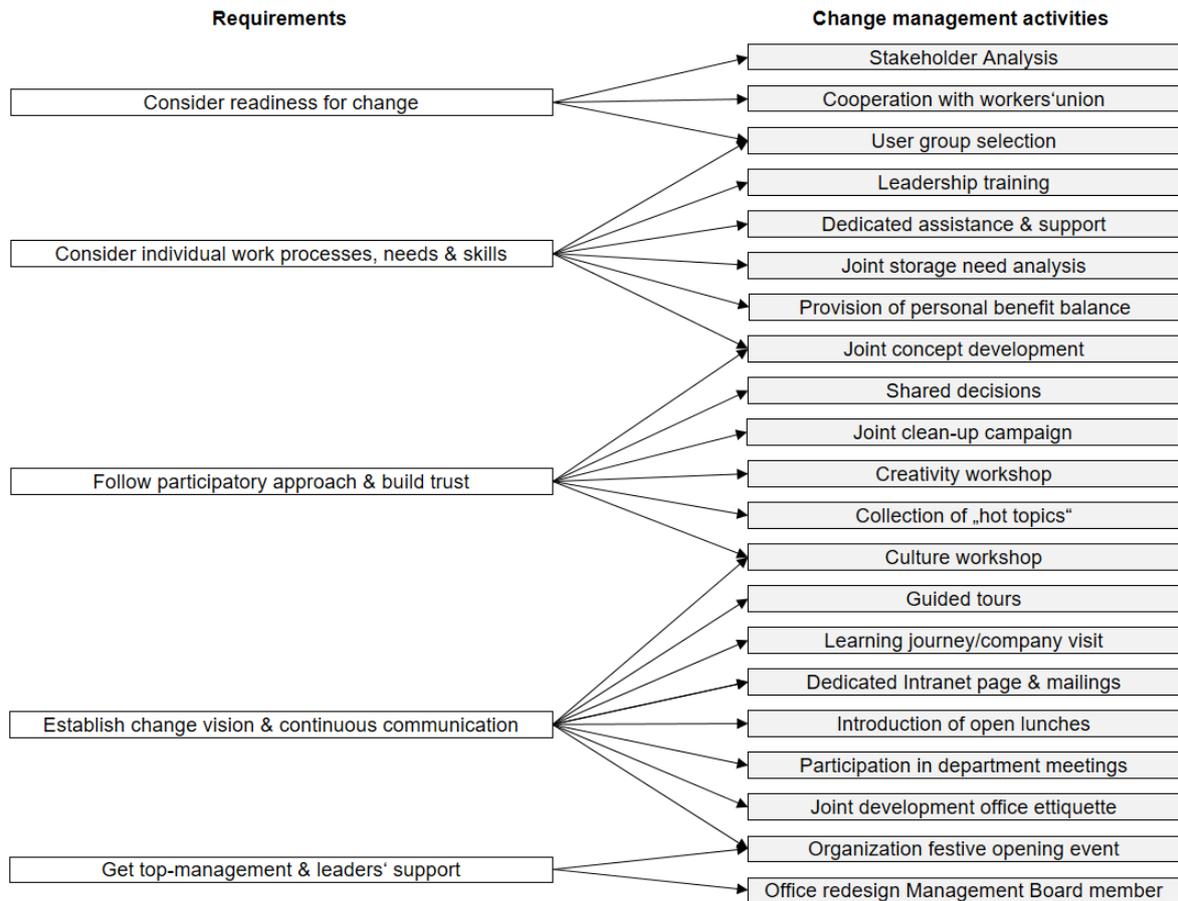


Figure 4: Summary of the main identified requirements and change management activities.

*Readiness for change.* Early in the development of the new workspace concept, it was determined that conducting stakeholder analysis was important to clearly identify the roles, attitudes and relationships of all those involved in the change process. Continuously updating stakeholder analysis would require identifying changes in stakeholders' attitudes in a timely manner and ideally managing stakeholders' (e.g. the workers' union) expectations throughout the project. Due to the lack of up-to-date stakeholder analysis, the complexity of the workspace changes and the dependencies on other initiatives might have been underestimated, and the cooperation with the workers' union was not initially built on trust. Surprisingly, despite the involvement of a professional change consultant from the beginning, the pilot users' individual readiness, for example, was not assessed through a change readiness survey. Consequently, top management did not consider the pilot users' personalities, dispositional patterns, traits and competencies when selecting the user groups. Interestingly, individual employees started to defend the overall workspace concept against negative remarks from highly pessimistic employees. Selecting a mixed user group of employees with positive and negative attitudes towards the workspace change, therefore, became important to encourage open discussions among the pilot users.

Requirements	Readiness for change	<i>We really don't have the time to engage with such a project. We have so much to do. And the new workspace concept is something that additionally stresses us out.</i>	#PU 13
		<i>Why didn't we take volunteering users? People from this department work since years under high pressure. (...) I always questioned the user selection.</i>	#PT 10
		<i>Maybe I am too new to the team and therefore I see it different. But I notice that everyone is complaining and no one is trying to get used to the idea of a new environment. They totally block it from the beginning. They already are saying: This is going to be crap.</i>	#PU5
Activities	Stakeholder Analysis	<i>Why didn't we conduct a stakeholder analysis? I mean there was one, but this was just really at the beginning. Normally you should repeat that and do it thoroughly for every stakeholder that might be involved at any stage in the project.</i>	#PT6
	Cooperation with workers' union	<i>We really don't want such open offices. (...) A lot of companies start going back into their old structure. Why do we have to do it now? I think I speak for all the employees when I say: The workers' union will not support such open offices from the 70ies.</i>	E
		<i>I know that the workers' union is also against that project. I mean, they have their reasons...</i>	#PU8
	User group selection	<i>Since months we work every Saturday. We have so much to do that we even have to come to work at the weekend. (...) and you just feel guilty if you have children and can't work Saturdays. It feels like letting your colleagues down. (...) and now this open office! I really don't understand it!</i>	#PU 22
<i>I was not a fan of that project...but now I find it not that bad... I even started defending the concept. I really can't stand those people who are complaining about everything all the time. The coffee doesn't taste, it is too loud... and then I just started defending it [laughing]. I like the coffee here!</i>		#PU 14	

Table 1: Readiness for change and related change management activities.

*Individual work processes, needs and skills.* Depending on the users' processes, needs and skills analysed in the interviews, observations and surveys, some employees felt that it was crucial that the project team provide dedicated assistance, particularly IT support, joint storage needs analysis, document digitisation and problem-solving during social conflicts after the concept implementation. For the leaders, it was crucial that a company visit and leadership training were provided to discuss potential problems raised by the new environment and to sensitise themselves to the cultural changes and new leadership styles focusing on trust instead of control.

Requirements	Individual work processes, needs and skills	<i>I have these special requirements. I need an ergonomic mouse. And I really can't work in an open environment with many people. (...) I need absolutely quiet surroundings to be able to concentrate.</i>	#PU5
		<i>Workplace personalization is really important for me. I'm not sure how this will be in the new environment. Maybe I get used to it, but for years I put all the postcards I got from colleagues on my wall. Birthday wishes, get-well-cards and so on. I think I will miss that a lot.</i>	#PU14
Activities	Dedicated assistance & support	<i>It was really helpful that someone from the IT was present especially during the first days with the new hard-and software. (...) And the project team was also here to help us when we had questions.</i>	PU
		<i>I really like that you [the project team] moved in together with us. You better see things; you are here with us to help when we have questions or conflicts. I think especially in the beginning you being here is important</i>	#PU7
	Joint storage need analysis	<i>I have all the documents. I started organizing them, but I really don't know when and how I should digitize them. Actually I need them all to get my work done...and I like writing things down. So having it digitized wouldn't help me...</i>	#PU2
		<i>When you provided us these models of our personal lockers... That helped to visualize how much space we have. (...) I was surprised that it was so spacious. I thought it is going to be like in a swimming pool. These tiny lockers.</i>	#PU12
		<i>There are colleagues who collected 20 or more empty water bottles in their cupboard. (...) In the new concept they will have water for free so they won't need that space anymore (...) It is not our call to tell them what they should store and what they should throw away. But we can provide them with tips and tricks on how to organize workplaces.</i>	#PT3
	Leadership training	<i>Getting the leaders on our side was really tough. (...) I mean with the leaders we are having here in this company; you sometimes don't know on what side are they? Do they feel like employees? Or do they act on behalf of the company? Do they feel entrepreneurial?</i>	#PT1
		<i>I think the regular meetings with the leaders helped us to convince them from the project. At first, they thought it is just about the room. They still fall back in that thinking sometimes. But in general, they now start thinking about "how will we lead in future?" (...) To be honest, I think our leaders are not the best ones. They didn't receive much training in the past. And the best actuarial line operator got promoted as leader in the past. (...) They are far away from leading by trust and performance.</i>	#PT2
		<i>When I am sitting in the kitchen lounge with my colleagues and drinking a coffee, there are leaders around here who might say: Don't you have work to do?</i>	#PU21

Table 2a: Individual work processes, needs and skills and related change activities.

Selecting different user groups was essential to take into account the broad variety of patterns and needs during the concept development. Although individual patterns and needs were considered when co-designing the area layout (e.g. workplace density and activity zones) and the workplace design (e.g. acoustic and visual protection and the number and size of think tanks and meeting rooms), the pilot users stated that they lacked quiet and privacy in the new environment. The personal benefits resulted primarily from the provision of high-quality equipment (e.g. acoustic and visual protection, new laptops, modern office design, ergonomic furniture, curved monitors and additional kitchen services) rather than adapted work processes and patterns (e.g. the ability to hold ad-hoc meetings, have available meeting rooms and easily consult with colleagues during customer calls). The provision of a personalised photo wall and personalised water bottles ensured that the pilot users felt appreciated and gave personal benefits to as many users as possible. The pilot users' deliberate use of workplace personalisation in their daily work (e.g. family pictures on the work desk to remain calm during demanding customer calls) emphasised the need to manage workspace changes holistically, for example, through adapting additional employee trainings to the job.

Requirements	Individual work processes, needs and skills	<i>I have these special requirements. I need an ergonomic mouse. And I really can't work in an open environment with many people. (...) I need absolutely quiet surroundings to be able to concentrate.</i>	#PU5
		<i>Workplace personalization is really important for me. I'm not sure how this will be in the new environment. Maybe I get used to it, but for years I put all the postcards I got from colleagues on my wall. Birthday wishes, get-well-cards and so on. I think I will miss that a lot.</i>	#PU14
Activities	User group selection	<i>And we have all these customer calls. There are 100 calls a day sometime. With 80 people sitting in one large open room it just will be noisy and impossible to work.</i>	#PU13
		<i>I think it's good that we have two different departments here. To really see: Does it work for them as it does for us? (...) I mean, from the conversations it became clear: there are many colleagues that are very skeptical, because they have so complicated tasks to perform (...) and therefore need their own office. (...)</i>	#PU1
	Joint concept development	<i>At first I thought we are going to sit like battery hens...But then our wish to change the six-people benches into two-people benches was considered... I think it was great that we could participate and co-design things throughout the project. I really had the feeling that the project team cared about our ideas and our worries...</i>	#PU14
		<i>I have special data security requirements. I am responsible for the employee contracts. (...) Sometimes this employee (and customer) comes by my office and in future everyone will see him or her. So there won't be any privacy protection. (...) I would need a separate room or a dedicated area where no one can look into my screen.</i>	#PU22
	Personal benefit-balance	<i>The laptops they get are the premium top class. (...) Only the sales men have similar IT equipment – employees who have been highly valued for years. And now the pilot users (...)</i>	#PT2
		<i>To be honest, a less fancy model would have been just fine. But it is great to have such a laptop. (...) If I would have known that we get so great laptops, maybe I would have been less negative all the time.</i>	#PU25
		<i>The photo wall is nice. I am pleased every day when I walk by. Of course it is different in these new rooms, but personalization at the workplace is important for me. I also brought a calendar. I have to carry it back and forth [clean desk principle] every day, this is annoying, but now my place feels more like home.</i>	#PU28
		<i>There are for sure things that became worse. Especially for some people. (...) But I see that so many things were improved. (...) The openness here through the missing walls. (...) The general environment. It positively affects my wellbeing.</i>	#PU11
		<i>I mean for years we have been trained to put personalized items on our desk. (...) When we have a demanding customer call such items help us to stay calm and to focus. Now we can't do that anymore.</i>	PU

Table 2b: Individual work processes, needs and skills and related change activities.

*Participatory approach and trust building.* Various forms of involvement such as workshops, joint clean-up campaigns and shared decision making increased employees' trust and desire for the workspace change. It took some time to convince the pilot users that the project constituted a green field with no pre-set final concept, but over the course of the project, their initial mistrust in their degree of involvement in the concept development was replaced by trust in the project team. The creativity workshop in which employees' representatives created their own ideal workspace concept enhanced their belief that they could bring in their own ideas and that the project team took their fears seriously. The joint concept development started with dividing the general area layout into different activity zones and ended with defining concrete elements such as workplace equipment, so employees had sufficient time to become familiar with the idea of working in the new environment and to share their own ideas. Furthermore, the joint clean-up campaign, culture workshop and hot topic list prepared employees for their new environment and showed that their concerns were considered. The positive feedback regarding the shared decision making and the idea contest, which generated 35 ideas and 60 votes from the 80 pilot users, demonstrated employees' strong desire to participate.

Requirements	Participatory approach & build trust	<i>The first information event was ridiculous. They [the project team] were standing on the stage telling: You get great new rooms and it is going to be awesome. But we don't know yet how they will look like. And I just thought: For sure... [ironically]. I couldn't believe that it is really open and that we are involved in the development.</i>	#PU 1
		<i>I have the feeling that I can co-design the concept. I mean it is not about the carpet. If it is green, yellow or red. (...) But for example that you considered that we want our own keyboards. I am happy that this is realized.</i>	#PU 14
Activities	Creativity workshop	<i>I really liked the creativity workshop (...). Looking through all these magazines with the fancy furniture was nice. I think creating that photo collage according to our wishes and favors really helped me to engage with the overall project idea.</i>	#PU 22
	Joint concept development	<i>Employees tend to think in terms of physical elements and the status quo: this is my place, this is the table I need, I want to sit there. (...) we need to overcome such thinking. We need to ask about the activities and the work tasks: How do you work today? What are you doing?</i>	#PT 9
		<i>No one from our department wanted to be a representative in the beginning. Our colleague finally agreed to do it (...) And then he really had fun. (...) yes and for me the representatives' concept was great. I had the feeling that I could tell him my issues, and he always informed in our department meetings about the progress (...)</i>	#PU 11
	Joint clean-up campaign	<i>At first I thought: I don't want to clean-up my office. There were so many things... I just did not know where to start. (...) But when I finally managed to get into it, it actually was quite fun (...). I had some nostalgic moments (...)</i>	#PU 14
		<i>Cleaning up our office helped me to get an overview of all the things I collected over the years. (...) There were indeed some things I don't need anymore. It was a liberating feeling to get rid of all that old stuff.</i>	#PU 21
	Culture workshop	<i>This workshop when we all have been together. From the different departments (...) It was a good way to get to know the others (...)</i>	PU
		<i>I think it was great that we all participated in such a workshop. (...) I really had the feeling that the project team cared about our ideas and our worries.</i>	#PU 4
	Collection of "hot topics"	<i>On our learning journey we experienced that other companies have the same problems (...) New rooms bring fundamental changes, not only visible ones, and this creates uncertainty. (...) but many of the problems or concerns will just go away after a while. So collecting these things and continuously assessing them after moving into the new space might help...</i>	#PT 6
		<i>I like that there is this list that you regularly discuss with our leaders. I have the feeling that open topics are worked through.</i>	#PU 12
	Shared decisions	<i>Deciding on the parking disks for the think tanks or the bags showed me that you really cared about our opinion.</i>	#PU 21
		<i>Having the freedom to decide on things was great. It was the first time around here that employees had a say in something.</i>	#PU 7

Table 3: Participatory approach and related change activities.

*Establish change vision.* A change vision before the concept implementation could not be established in the organisation. The communication during the concept development focused on the changes accompanying the new workspace concept, such as cultural changes, increased flexibility and home office options, improved social coherence and interaction among colleagues, quicker assistance answering questions, health-related advantages from ergonomic furniture and increased movement during the workday, and an atmosphere of wellbeing and cosiness from new furniture and modern design. In this context, continually clarifying the project goals related to employee satisfaction and productivity was crucial to prevent employees from suspecting that the management board and the project team had hidden agendas. As the leaders' responsibilities and skills were not clear from the outset, more emphasis should be put on integrating the leaders into the strategy workshop before the project kick-off in order to clarify the project goals and the leaders' role during the change. Although the participative culture workshop and the joint development of office etiquette helped establish a common understanding of the related cultural changes in the new environment, the project team's move into the pilot space, in particular, better controlled the concept performance and continuously reminded the users of the agreed-upon behaviours aligning with the cultural mission statement.

Despite regular, continuous communication through various channels such as a dedicated intranet and mailings, department meetings, open lunches, visual 3D materials and a learning visit to another company, joyful anticipation of the new concept could not be established before the move into the pilot space. Repeating the project goals across various channels to reach as many employees as possible and using the same communication throughout the project were necessary to eliminate misunderstandings about the company’s intentions to cut costs rather than invest in its future. These measures alleviated employees’ general fears and persuaded them to support the planned workspace change. Basic project decisions such as the selection of laptop models and the provision of facility services were taken immediately before the concept implementation, so these positive quick wins could not be communicated ideally. In this context, the festive opening event to introduce the new offices exclusively to the pilot users can be viewed as creating positive momentum as a majority started to excitedly imagine working in the new environment. The special role of visual materials and company visits with similar workspace concepts in helping employees imagine their new environment and shaping their attitudes towards the new concept, therefore, should not be underestimated. Taking advantage of realistic 3D models, the use of virtual reality and more visits to companies with similar concepts might help create more such positive momentum. Depending on individuals’ acceptance of uncertainty and need for information, there is a trade-off between sharing concept design details throughout the process (e.g. continuous communication) and increasing anticipation of the final workspace design (e.g. less communication about the concept implementation).

Requirements	Establish change vision	<i>I think the project is just about saving workplaces and cutting costs.(...) It is also about our productivity...and probably they want to control us more.</i>	#PU 4
		<i>Last week they complained about how it is going to be with the types of tea. And I said: Guys, this is the smallest problem. You have something to do, you have a job and we have a great place to work. (...) I think, the positive things coming along are more openness, and that you don't feel so isolated. (...) and you might get involved into a conversation with colleagues from other departments.</i>	#PU 5
Activities	Culture Workshop	<i>At first I thought why do we need such a workshop? It is about behavior and we are all grownups. But then I realized that it really makes sense to just get everyone on the same page.</i>	#PU 5
		<i>I don't know what to think about that workshop. (...) I mean for me all these things have been clear before, but I guess for some colleagues it was really helpful, especially the discussions about social control.</i>	#PU 7
	Joint development office etiquette	<i>And with the guidelines we developed, we have something we can stick to.</i>	PU
		<i>I really like that you [the project team] moved in together with us. You better see things; you are here with us to help when we have questions or conflicts. I think especially in the beginning you being here is important</i>	#PU 23
	Dedicated Intranet page & mailings	<i>I was maybe two or three times on that page. But there was nothing posted. So I figured you wouldn't update it anymore (...) and therefore I didn't look up again.</i>	#PU 25
		<i>We will provide an interactive Intranet page. So we won't need separate email addresses, but have all the information integrated on one page. And the employees can even interact with that page.</i>	#PT 5
	Participation in department meetings	<i>You came often into our department meetings. (...) I had the feeling to be well-informed throughout the project.</i>	#PU 8
		<i>I found it difficult to imagine the concept. (...) I always imagined those open offices from the 70ies until I really saw the 3D model in a meeting. This was the first time when I thought: O wow, this is great. It might be not that bad after all.</i>	#PU 14
		<i>Especially the last months before moving into the new offices I didn't feel well-informed (...) you made a secret out of everything. We didn't know the colours or how many plants we'll have</i>	#PU 25
	Introduction open lunches	<i>I didn't know about the open lunches. (...) If I had known, maybe I would have come.</i>	#PU 12
<i>(...) we can't just complain about the concept. We have to make the best out of it. Now you are offering these open lunches, of course I come... It is also a good opportunity to ask questions (...)</i>		PU	
Learning journey	<i>You can't take the fears away. I think you have to experience it on your own. (...) it seems as if the visited company had great experiences with such concepts. There was no one there saying: this is crap! But they were rather keen on their concept.</i>	#PU 2	

Table 4a: Change vision and related change activities.

After the concept implementation, guided tours to promote the change vision were offered to the majority of employees. The workspace concept, particularly the strategic goals and design intent, was extensively explained, so mostly positive feedback replaced negative feedback for the first time. Employees participated in events during working hours (e.g. the opening event and participative workshops) rather than leisure time (e.g. open lunches and company visits), so simply offering more workshops or participative events might not result in the desired outcomes. Carefully discussing and planning such events with leaders and sensitising employees to the intended takeaways were crucial to achieve the desired change outcomes, especially in a context of limited time.

Requirements	Establish change vision	<i>I think the project is just about saving workplaces and cutting costs.(...) It is also about our productivity...and probably they want to control us more.</i>	#PU 4
		<i>Last week they complained about how it is going to be with the types of tea. And I said: Guys, this is the smallest problem. You have something to do, you have a job and we have a great place to work. (...) I think, the positive things coming along are more openness, and that you don't feel so isolated. (..) and you might get involved into a conversation with colleagues from other departments.</i>	#PU 5
Activities	Festive opening event	<i>And the opening event needs to be organized in a festive manner. To show the employees that it is something special, that they matter.</i>	#PT 6
		<i>The moment when I first saw it was spectacular. I think this was the moment when I thought: I really want to move in there. And how you created tension at the opening event (...) And we were the first ones who saw it...</i>	#PU 21
	Guided tours	<i>This is a quantum leap for our company!</i>	E
		<i>Thank you so much for the explanations and the great presentation. I really would love to move in such a concept now.</i>	E

Table 4b: Change vision and related change activities.

*Top management and leaders' support.* Leaders' lack of support, especially initially, and users' limited time presented challenges during the workshops, events and other participative formats. The pilot users did not view the management board member's office redesign as important in changing their attitudes towards the workspace change, but his participation and acceptance speech during the opening event made most pilot users feel appreciated. No drinks or snacks were served at the opening event due to a lack of internal buying processes and a non-alcoholic drink policy. Stronger support from (top) management might secure exceptions for future events.

Requirements	Management support	<i>We don't have that time .... Company visit would be fine, but it is nothing I can afford right now.</i>	#L2
		<i>Please organize such workshops really efficiently. (...) Our employees need to focus on the work. They don't have time to discuss in workshops their wellbeing. I mean, I understand the purpose behind that...but they are working under so much pressure right now.</i>	#L1
		<i>Maybe you can organize it during their leisure time? I am not sure if someone will come... could you maybe offer it during the lunch breaks?</i>	#L4
Activities	Festive opening event	<i>I mean Mr. W. [management board member] explained it in his speech. (...) I believed him that this project is not about cutting costs. And he asked us for our patience.</i>	#PU 11
		<i>I found it strange that there was nothing to eat. I mean you announced it so big in advance and then there was nothing provided. I mean there were those salt pretzels and some orange juice...But it was not what I expected. I don't need fancy food there or anything... It was just the expectations I had, the way this event was announced beforehand. Maybe having champagne or something else to use for a toast. (...) Still, the event was great, but next time, maybe you could provide something.</i>	#PU 7
		<i>The opening event with the member of the Management Board being present was really great. His speech might have changed some of my colleagues' opinions about the new workspace concept. He reminded us of the project goals and asked us for our understanding. I liked that.</i>	#PU 21
	Office redesign board member	<i>It is nice that he is redesigning his office (...) To be honest, it doesn't affect me. I wouldn't go in there for a meeting. It is too far away and he still has his secretary sitting in front of the office. (...) It would be strange going in there.</i>	#PU 12

Table 5: Management support and related change activities.

## 5. Discussion

Following the presentation of the empirical results from the evaluation phase, the discussion in this section focuses on the implications derived from the learning phase. As shown in this study, certain crucial change management activities need to be performed to meet certain requirements and support the overall process of managing a new workspace concept in an insurance company. In line with recent research, this study shows that individuals' situational and dispositional patterns (e.g. personality traits, knowledge, capabilities and skills) influence how employees experience organisational changes (Bareil et al., 2007; Burnes, 2011; Eisenbach et al., 1999; Grau, 1994). Employees' individual readiness for change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Oreg, 2006), along with their work processes, needs and skills (Bradley, 2002; Elsbach & Bechky, 2007), therefore, should be considered in order to increase pilot users' satisfaction and productivity when implementing a new work environment.

This study confirms the need to follow a participatory approach, build trust between the pilot users and the project team, establish a change vision (Miller et al., 1994; Stouten et al., 2018) and have a strong commitment from top management's decision-makers (Bareil et al., 2007; Cummings & Worley, 2014). These requirements make certain change activities especially important to achieve the desired change outcomes. No one-size-fits-all approach exists for content development or change implementation, so organisation-specific change approaches consisting of various activities need to be individually defined (Hallencreutz & Turner, 2011). Nevertheless, a holistic workspace change strategy—leaving room for organisation-specific refinements—can be developed by aggregating the identified change management activities into the change strategies' core dimensions of people, content and process (Figure 5; Anderson & Anderson, 2001). The arrows among the people, content and process indicate the main elements of these strategies that need to be aligned (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015).

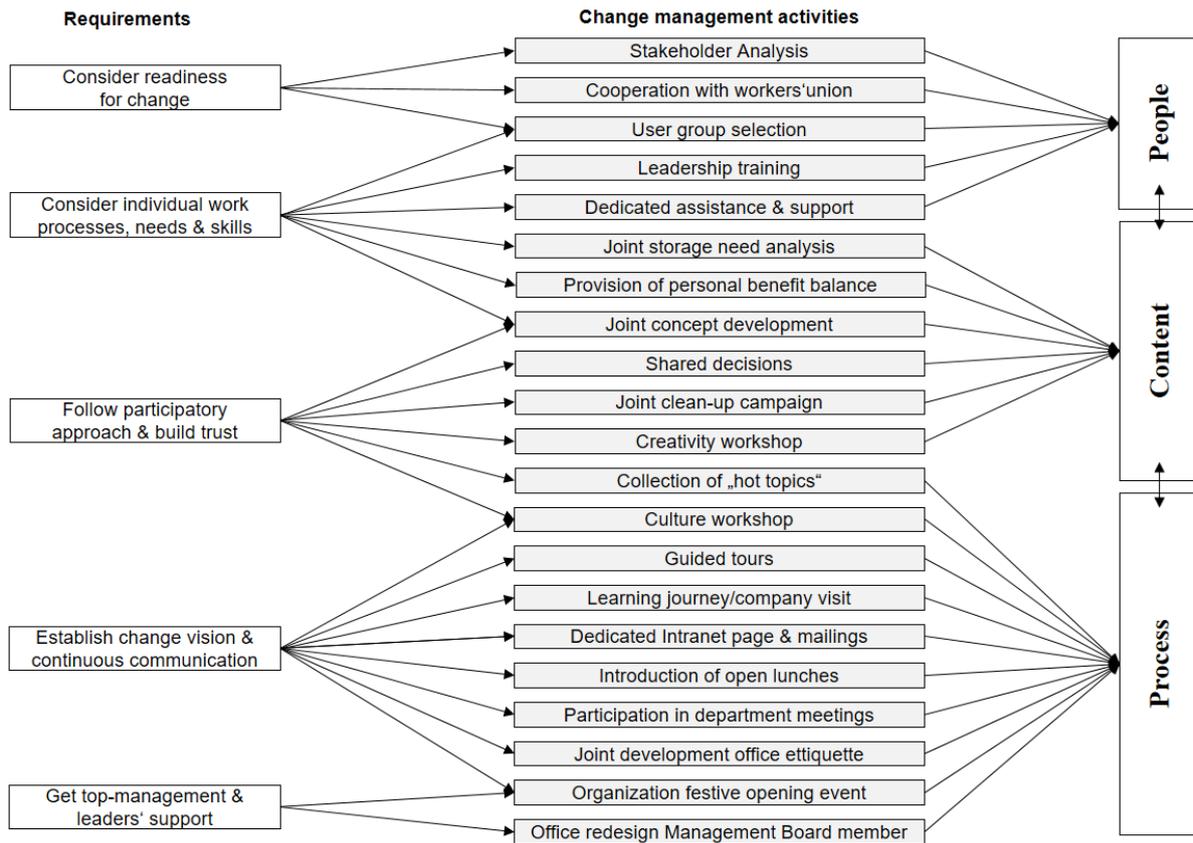


Figure 5: Workspace change strategy.

Change management activities in the people category address the individuals involved in the change process. Instead of top management selecting the pilot users, volunteering by employees in user groups could achieve the desired change outcomes to increase employee satisfaction and productivity. Furthermore, the change process depends on the leaders' abilities 'to navigate the turmoil of metamorphosis [... by] providing a vision that is attractive [and engaging] to followers' (Eisenbach et al., 1999, p. 81) and to provide 'clear responsibility and priorities with extensive communication and freedom to improvise' (p. 82). In line with the literature (Callan, 1993; Cascio, 2000; Eisenbach et al., 1999; Hussain et al., 2018; Stouten et al., 2018), more emphasis should be put on initially providing appropriate training to clarify the leaders' role during the change process and support their skills and transformative capabilities. Improving the leaders' communication skills and sensitising them to the new organisational culture might make employees feel more entitled to use collaborative areas, drinking coffee and working away from their traditional workstations. The special roles of the project team and the leaders as problem solvers, role models and ambassadors after the concept implementation (Kämpf-Dern & Konkol, 2017) should be considered, especially within organisational cultures that typically do not encourage employees to openly criticise the company's decisions or address conflicts. Although research has recommended conducting pre-change workshops to plan the change communication strategy (Burnes, 2011), this study also identifies the necessity to perform stakeholder analysis throughout the project. Up-to-date stakeholder analysis can facilitate proactive communication, for example, with the workers' union to win support for projects, which is found to be especially important in organisational contexts with many stakeholders with various political interests.

Change management activities in the content category refer to the participative workshops that, in this case, helped to consider individuals' needs and preferences (Rothe et al., 2011) in the final concept design. Joint concept development and shared decisions are identified as crucial to overcome employees' concerns and fears about new workspace concepts. The literature has emphasised the need to involve employees, especially during behavioural and social changes (Waldersee & Griffiths, 2004) such as new workspace concepts (Rothe et al., 2011; Spreckelmeyer, 1993; Roth & Roth, 2018). The separation of the area layout development and the workplace design has been identified as especially important to help employees overcome traditional thinking about person–place connections in the workplace (Inalhan, 2009). Aligning with suggestions from other authors (Kämpf-Dern & Konkol, 2017; Spreckelmeyer, 1993), the physical place and the non-tangible space elements of new workspace concepts need to be jointly considered and managed in order to achieve personal benefits for employees.

In the process category, open discussion of the intended project goals during the participative culture workshop is identified as crucial, especially when employees' self-management skills need to be supported to achieve sustainable organisational change (Brennan et al., 2002; Oliver, 2007; Palvalin & van der Voordt, 2017). Openly sharing the cultural mission statement and related, jointly developed office etiquette for the physical workspace design can facilitate changing organisational culture. Change communication that provides 'accurate and up-to-date information about the pace and direction of change' (Callan, 1993, p. 70) and is built upon clear, strategic goals is confirmed as essential—especially in cultures characterised by general mistrust. Support, clear decisions and reliable statements from top management are needed to better shape the communication strategy throughout the project. In this context, crucial, short-term wins during organisational change (Mento et al., 2002) can be realised by continuously revealing details, for example, of new workplace equipment and design elements. To achieve transformational change, more culture and behaviour workshops to improve conflict-resolution and problem-solving skills should be provided, in addition to personal, daily conversations with users and leaders. When continuously considering employees' ideas and feedback (Hongisto, 2016; Morgan & Anthony, 2008), what matters to showing appreciation for employees are the small things, such as personal conversations, opening events, idea contests and guided tours of the new spaces.

## **6. Limitations and Future Research**

This study provides an overview of crucial change management activities for new workspace concepts in an insurance company and provides a valuable link between change management theory and practice. Nevertheless, the study findings should be understood in the context of OD being 'more than a set of tools and techniques' (Cummings & Worley, 2014, p. 11). The findings should be interpreted as inspirational activities for the more important 'learning and improving in ways that make individuals, groups, organizations [...] more capable of managing change in the future' (Cummings & Worley, 2014, p. 11). The findings are subjective due to the applied symbolic-interpretive and single-case research approach and, therefore, might not be generalisable. Additional objective, long-term data to measure the change outcomes in individual satisfaction and productivity need to be included in further studies.

The post-data collection was conducted less than three months after the concept implementation, so whether employees will fall back into old routines remains an open question (Lin et al., 2017). As shown in this study, changes in the physical workplace leading to a new workspace concept can be managed as an organisational change initiative that has the potential to achieve strategic goals. Even with behavioural changes to increase individual satisfaction

and productivity after workspace changes, motivating and inspiring all the affected stakeholders throughout the organisation can be challenging, especially in the long term. Although this study takes an important step to understand management of transformational workspace change, future research on long-lasting, organisation-wide workspace changes after concept roll-out could be highly interesting. To identify the full potential of new workspace concepts when understood to initiate a fundamentally new organisational structure and to identify mutual dependencies and drivers between workspace change and organisational transformation, more research should be focused on new workspace concepts and related workspace change strategies embedded in broader organisational transformation processes.

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