



DATA MATTERS:

How Law Firms are Using Metrics to Add Value to Their Office Spaces

7
 quarters of
 unique data has
 been gathered by
 every law firm
 by now

The Hybrid Workplace — Changing Context, New Due Diligence

In an industry whose service expertise is based on accurate interpretation of legal precedent, it is difficult for many law firms to embark on a post-pandemic real estate planning process where there is no tried and tested set of best practices to follow. The last 20 months have presented a trio of unprecedented external market and cultural forces that have forced a complete re-evaluation of everything from work environments and workflow to recruiting practices. The law firms that accurately diagnose and reflect how their practices have responded in real time to these external factors — the pandemic and the rapid onset of widespread remote work, the social justice and Black Lives Matter movement, the intense competition for talent, as well as the evolving relationships between professional and support staff — will be positioned for sustainable success.

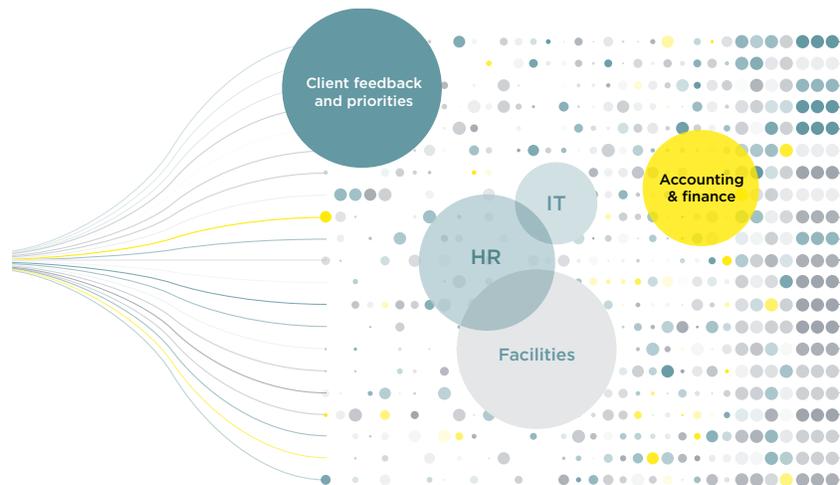


Every law firm has almost seven quarters of unique data and organizational observations. Whether you have a practice that has been diligent with quarterly staff surveys or have to rely on new feedback and data collected from across the practice, the seeds of the best real estate strategy for your firm live in those unique metrics, and not in your competitor's new real estate solution.

A holistic change in business practices demands a holistic approach to data-gathering. Look across your entire organization to uncover relevant metrics and feedback.

Expanded Approach, Expanded Input

A holistic change in business practices demands a holistic approach to data-gathering. It's imperative to look across your entire organization to uncover relevant metrics and feedback that can give insight into how your practice and clients reacted to the upheaval that began with COVID-19 in March 2020 and the widespread adoption of remote work. Defining the most effective workplace strategy and real estate solution for your law firm begins with your firm's real time response.





Data sources include:



HR

In addition to typical absentee and attrition statistics, human resources professionals and practice managers have a front-line view of attorney and staff response to remote work, diversity priorities accelerated by the social justice movement, projected talent needs magnified by an increasing labor shortage, as well as staff feedback regarding all new external forces. Try not to make general conclusions. It's imperative to parse all available information by age cohort; business development and mentorship priority; as well as partners, staff and practice group. Additional personal data includes gender, ethnicity, and commute, as well as individual agility with technology adoption.



IT

IT is often overlooked as a source of actionable employee and workflow insight. Trackable insight can be revealed in basic metrics like onsite and remote network connectivity, mobile and onsite phone use, help desk inquiries, and even printer and copier use. Assessing technology readiness for advanced workplace tools is critical to planning for and managing hybrid workplaces - including the ability to dynamically set desk and phone assignments, deploy and monitor occupancy and seat sensors, and manage all iterations of face-to-face and remote.



FACILITIES

As attorneys and staff return to work, it's important to supplement observation with key occupancy metrics - from cardkey and fob access swipes, utility use, as well as available parking ratio and weekly use. Assessing hybrid workplace readiness will require understanding your facility's available communications infrastructure to support enhanced technology demand to host desk reservation systems and robust remote communication. Some forward-thinking landlords are even offering selected tech solutions as amenities.



ACCOUNTING & FINANCE

A comparison of your firm's actual and projected profitability - pre- and post-pandemic - is a primary metric. Comparative practice group performance and growth data, attorney billings, future growth projections, as well as the firm's total cost of occupancy in its current facilities are foundational.



CLIENT FEEDBACK AND PRIORITIES

If no structure for ongoing client feedback exists, use this opportunity for attorneys to call key clients and gather direct information about each account's priorities and evolving workflow and communication preferences.

The urgency to collect all relevant data and feedback — and the effort to accurately document and interpret it — needs leadership sponsorship. This is an opportunity to challenge and empower your management team to participate in and commit to a metrics-based analysis and projection of future work practice and workplace needs. An essential component of this due diligence is a frank evaluation of your firm’s change management profile. As your team proceeds from due diligence to establishing a new workplace strategy, choosing an approach that matches your organization’s appetite for change is essential to successful design, implementation and adoption.

Defining Hybrid Workflow and Changing Space Use Priorities

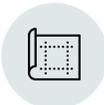
With your firm’s unique due diligence metrics complete, it is time to reconcile tomorrow’s workflow and workforce priorities with your existing workplace strategy and real estate commitments. Savills can assist in an expedited evaluation of location and facilities needs to help guide short-term decision-making prompted by upcoming lease expirations — and our multi-disciplinary team can also develop longer-term planning strategies for redefining and maximizing existing space use. Critical questions and assessments include:

 **Does your firm’s workspace design and workplace strategy support or inhibit the value of face-to-face work?**

Today’s office environments and remote work strategies need to support collaboration, mentorship, inspiration and innovation, as well as team and culture-building.



Choosing an approach that matches your organization’s appetite for change is essential to successful design, implementation and adoption.



How can you redefine your offices to meet the new space use priorities?

Past planning models and ratios for office, support, conference, and common areas are now challenged by new demands for flexibility and mixed-use space.



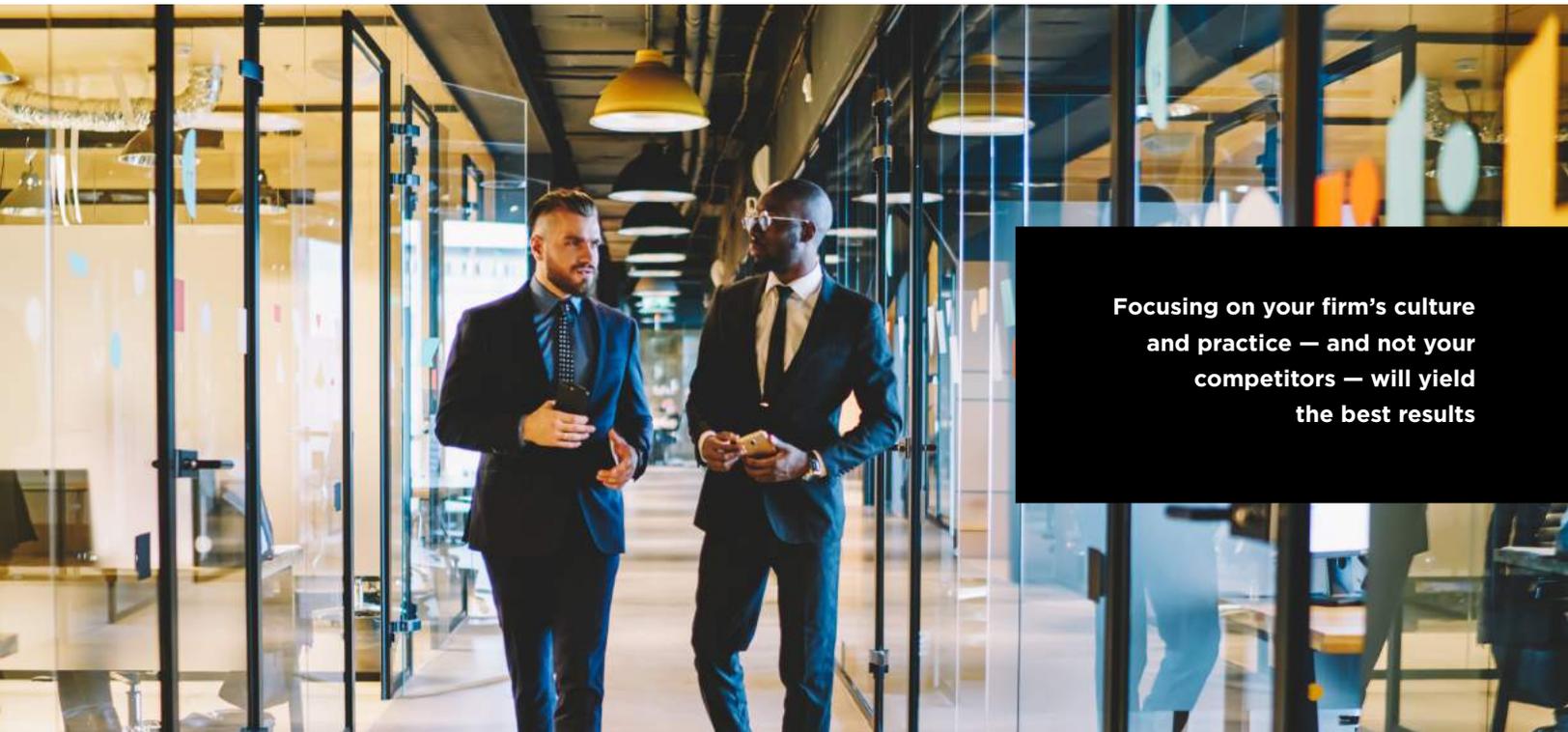
Are your offices a reflection and driver of your firm’s unique culture?

Integrating new imperatives for recruiting and retention as well as workforce and client experience are essential to defining each law firm’s brand and competitive advantage.



From Discovery and Interpretation to Consensus and Action Plan

While metrics and feedback are critical to informing decision-making, culture is the ultimate driver of an effective discovery process — and the subsequent development of a successful space use, workplace and overall real estate strategy. Focusing on your firm’s culture and practice — and not your competitors — will yield the best results. Savills can assist in designing an effective and customized discovery and decision-making framework — whether your practice’s management style is democratic or centralized, formal or informal, inclusive or exclusive. Our goal is to assist your management team in defining an accurate solution, to provide the communications framework to gain consensus, and to build an achievable implementation timeline that accommodates both your firm’s change profile and underlying real estate commitments.



Focusing on your firm's culture and practice — and not your competitors — will yield the best results

Marty Festenstein
Senior Managing Director
North America Workplace Practice Group

[Click here to view Marty Festenstein's profile.](#)

The information in this publication is gathered from multiple sources deemed to be reliable at the date of publication, however Savills has not verified such information. The information contained herein may contain errors or omissions and is presented without any warranty or representation as to its accuracy. No material may be used in whole or in part without prior permission of Savills.

At Savills, we help organizations find the solutions that ensure employee success. Sharply skilled and fiercely dedicated, our integrated teams of consultants and brokers are experts in better real estate. With services in tenant representation, capital markets, project management, workforce and incentives strategy and workplace strategy and occupant experience, we've boosted the potential of workplaces around the corner, and around the world, for 160 years and counting. Amplify the power of your people.

