

Strategic Lean Project Report

Building a Modern Work Environment at Commerce



Agency: Department of Commerce

Project Impact

The Department of Commerce (Commerce) improved our Work Environment index, resulting in an improvement in employee satisfaction with the work environment from 74% in 2018 to 80% in 2019.

Commerce touches every aspect of community and economic development: planning, infrastructure, energy, public facilities, housing, public safety, crime victims, international trade, business services and more. We work with local governments, tribes, businesses and civic leaders to strengthen communities so all residents may thrive and prosper. An agile and highly engaged workforce is critical to our success. We strengthen communities by strengthening Commerce.

Governor Inslee directed agencies to build a modern work environment (MWE) through Executive Order 16-07. We focused on looking at how, when and where people do their best work and providing staff with the necessary options and tools. Commerce, not only offers more flexibility to our employees, we also thought outside the cubicle and creating an effective, efficient workplace. Our transition to a MWE improved our ability to work effectively in the communities across the state, our partners and each other.

Project Summary

Commerce already enjoyed a high degree of employee satisfaction with flexibility (92%) and mobility (80%) both key aspects of a MWE. However, our overall work satisfaction index was at 74% with our physical space at a low of 57% satisfied. Our past technology weakened our ability to host productive virtual meetings and work sessions. Commerce hosts many work groups and virtual meetings as a way to lower barriers to access (travel costs and time commitments) for the many communities and stakeholders. Through collaboration both within teams and across the agency this process helped Commerce meet strategic priorities. It demonstrates trust of staff to do their best work, whether that happens in a cubicle or in a coffee shop. Applied fully, the MWE provides an optimal mechanism for Commerce to meet its mission of strengthening communities, accomplish our strategic priorities of diversity equity and inclusion, and to live our values of creativity, collaboration and trust.

The original problem statement in 2018: Currently we are at 74% for overall work satisfaction index compared to our target of 80%, which we want to reach by 2020.

With leadership commitment, a cross-agency team and a commitment to Plan, Do, Check, Adjust (PDCA); Commerce implemented the following improvements:

- Published the agency "Office Space and Facilities Standards" including approved furniture standards.
- Reviewed 32 agency policies and updated 24 MWE related policies including developing a new "Supporting Mobile and Flexible Work" policy. An Advisory team collaborated on all policy work.
- Hosted employee forums title "Myth Mitigators" sharing information and discussing MWE concerns.
- Upgraded our conference rooms to be remote meeting friendly, including new wireless technology.
- Finalized a pilot project resulting in an updated work environment including a more open appearance, more collaboration spaces, touchdown spaces and capacity for an additional 15 work stations.
- Upgraded common areas in our Olympia and Seattle offices to provide for more touchdown and collaboration spaces.
- Updated our recruitments for our Tribal Liaison and Outreach positions so their duty station could be located anywhere in Washington.

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Project Results

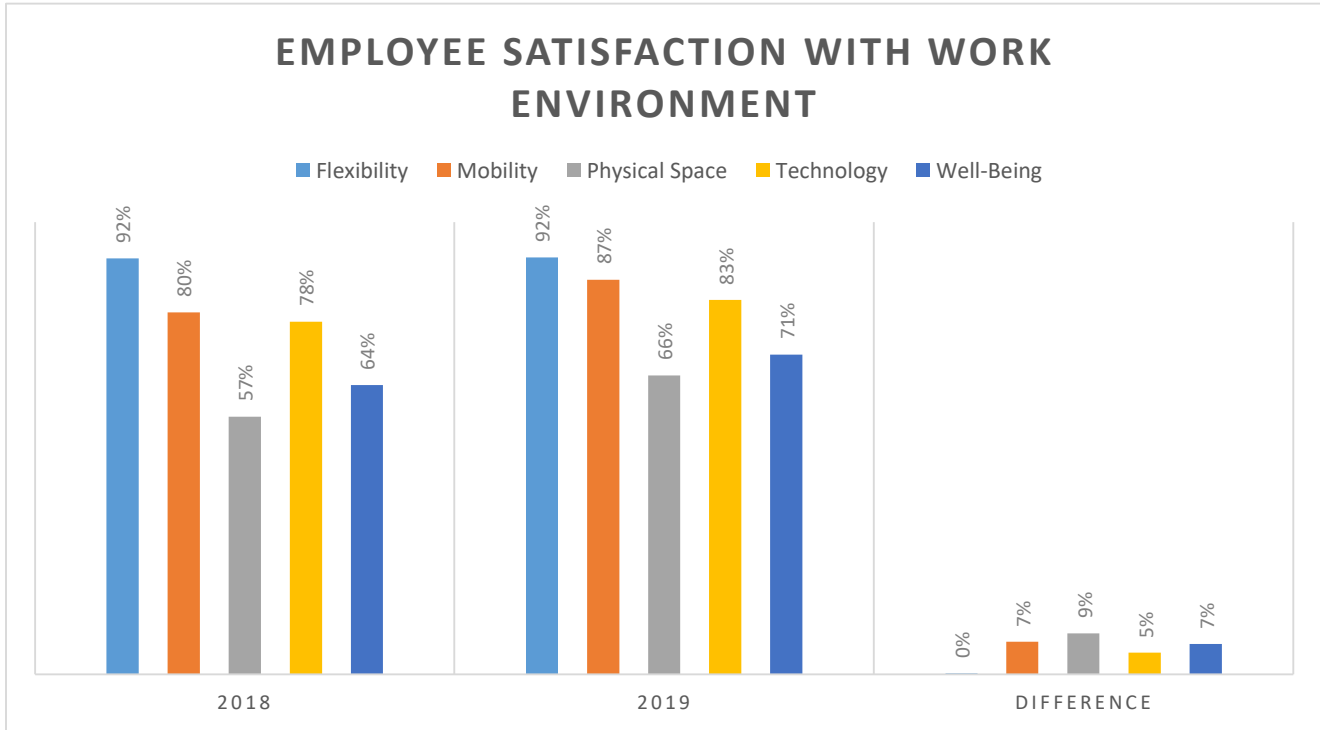


Increased Employee satisfaction with the overall work environment **from 74% in 2018 to 80% in 2019.**

Employee Engagement

Increased Employee satisfaction with physical space from 57% in 2018 to 66% in 2019.

→ *Target achieved: 80%*



Project Details

Date improvement project was initiated: 12/16/2016

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