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Compass: Building a Workplace Performance Dashboard

By Jim Ware and Charlie Grantham

We are very pleased to announce that in early 2009 we are launching an important new collaborative development project. Our goal is to design a Workplace Performance Dashboard that will display important workplace metrics in four critical areas:

1. Economic and design parameters
2. Social/workforce effects
3. Environmental impacts
4. Bottom line business results

Would you want to travel in a plane where the pilot didn't know how high up he was, which direction he was headed, how much fuel he had, or how long the flight would last? We doubt it. Then why do you make major strategic asset decisions without knowing where you are headed, what impact your decisions will have on the bottom line, or what you are doing to the environment?

Just to survive, let alone thrive, in these very difficult economic times, organizations need to focus on two priorities immediately: **reducing costs** and **increasing agility**. The global nature of the economy demands that you drive your fixed costs as low as you possibly can. At the same time, you must be able to respond quickly to, and even anticipate, competitive threats and opportunities anywhere on the planet.

In the current economic situation there is clearly significant pressure to reduce workplace and workforce support costs. At the same time, organizations must continue to focus on attracting and retaining high-quality talent and capturing the advantages of access to a global labor pool; increasing organizational agility; reducing the business risk of disruption from terrorism and natural disasters; and reducing traffic congestion, commuting costs, air pollution, and other environmental impacts.

Yet it has become clear that for most organizations measuring these outcomes is difficult at best. But without being able to measure the business impacts of major workplace decisions, there is little chance of actually achieving effective levels of performance. The last several months have shown us that investment decisions made with less than adequate information can be disastrous.

Candidly, we find it hard to imagine businesses formulating workplace strategies without having a clear understanding of how those strategies will affect operating costs, agility, talent attraction and retention, workforce productivity and, ultimately, business performance.

And if basic business performance isn't enough of a reason for enhancing workplace strategy, the emergence of public policies focused on the "Triple Bottom Line" should serve as an added incentive. At both the state and the federal levels we are seeing movement towards both positive incentives and negative enforcement policies aimed at corporate sustainability. We believe that within three to five years firms across the United States will be required to monitor and report on both the environmental and the social consequences of workplace location and

design decisions. And employee commuting is increasingly being recognized as a major factor affecting both corporate and local community sustainability.

Thus we are launching a collaborative development project that will produce a comprehensive workplace performance dashboard and decision support tool. We invite your participation beginning in early 2009. You can download a two-page overview of the project by clicking [here](#).

Project sponsors will have a unique opportunity to help define the components of the dashboard and to apply it to their own workplace strategies and portfolio decisions well in advance of its public dissemination, and at significantly reduced cost.

Companies participating in this project will enjoy “first mover” advantage in their competitive workplace strategy decisions. The measurement tools we produce will become the foundation of a rational decision process for making choices about workplace locations, policies, and facilities design, and for assessing the ***bottom-line business impacts*** and ***environmental outcomes*** of those choices.

Flexibility, sustainability, and workforce engagement are the watchwords of business performance today. The metrics and tools produced by this project will give your company the capability to make effective strategic choices – ***before your competition does or regulation forces you into a corner.***

So if you want to reduce your costs by 40%, increase productivity, and have a positive environmental impact, join us in this project. We have a limited number of sponsor opportunities, and we encourage you to team with us starting in early 2009.

Either of us would be happy to talk with you about your interest in becoming a project sponsor. The attached two-page project description will provide you with an overview of the project's focus and process. If you are seriously interested we'll be happy to provide you with a much more detailed work plan with specific deliverables and sponsorship fees, including our proposed intellectual property rights licensing program. [Send us an email now](#) to initiate that conversation.

About the Work Design Collaborative and Future of Work Agenda

Future of Work is a global network of resources – practitioners, thought leaders, researchers, and senior consultants – who are committed to building and implementing physical, social, and technology-based work environments that are cost-effective, socially and environmentally responsible, and personally satisfying.

We are focused on defining the future of work and helping our members and clients achieve new levels of workforce and workplace productivity. *Future of Work* produces and distributes management tools, surveys, benchmark databases, white papers and technical reports, conferences and workshops, newsletters, books and articles, and public presentations on the changing nature of work. The Work Design Collaborative, LLC, provides leadership and infrastructure services for the *Future of Work* community.

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