

READING PASSAGE

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 1–13**, which are based on the Reading Passage below.

Why people thrive in coworking spaces



There seems to be something special about coworking spaces. What makes such spaces – defined as membership-based workspaces where diverse groups of freelancers, remote workers, and other independent professionals work together in a shared, communal setting – so effective? And are there lessons for more traditional offices?

People who use coworking spaces see their work as meaningful. First, unlike a traditional office, coworking spaces consist of members who work for a range of different

companies, ventures, and projects. Because there is little direct competition or internal politics, they don't feel they have to put on a work persona to fit in. Working amidst people doing different kinds of work can also make one's own work identity stronger.

Second, meaning may also come from working in a culture where it is the norm to help each other out, and there are many opportunities to do so. Lastly, meaning may also be derived from a more concrete source: the social mission inherent in the Coworking Manifesto, an online document signed by members of more than 1,700 working spaces. It clearly articulates the values that the coworking movement aspires to, including community, collaboration, learning, and sustainability.

So in many cases, it's not simply the case that a person is going to work; they're also part of a social movement. They have more job control. Coworking spaces are normally accessible 24/7. People can decide whether to put in a long day when they have a deadline or want to show progress, or can decide to take a long break in the middle of the day to go to the gym. They can choose whether they want to work in a quiet space so they can focus, or in a more collaborative space with shared tables where interaction is encouraged.

Coworkers feel part of a community. Connections with others are a big reason why people pay to work in a communal space, as opposed to working from home for free or renting a nondescript office. Each coworking space has its own vibe, and the managers of each space go to great lengths to cultivate a unique experience that meets the needs of their respective members. Grind, for example, is a growing network of coworking spaces in New York and Chicago. Anthony Marinos, who oversees Grind's marketing, community management, and member services, shared with us, "When it comes to cultivating our community at Grind, we're all about the human element. We consider ourselves as much a hospitality company as we do a workspace provider. Our staff knows all of our members by name and profession, and we're constantly facilitating introductions between Grindists."

So what are the implications for traditional companies? Even though the coworking movement has its origins among freelancers, entrepreneurs, and the tech industry, it's increasingly relevant for a broader range of people and organizations. In fact, coworking can become part of your company's strategy, and it can help your people and your business thrive. An increasing number of companies are incorporating coworking into their business strategies in two ways.

First, they're being used as an alternative place for people to work. Michael Kenny, Managing Partner of San Diego-based Co-Merge, told us, "In the past year and a half, we've seen a dramatic increase in the use of the space by enterprise employees. We have seen teams come in to use various on-demand meeting rooms. We have users from global companies of size ranging from several hundred to several thousand employees who use the space not only to allow their distributed workers to get productive work done, but also to attract employees who demand flexible workplace and work time."

Grind is also witnessing growth in the number of remote workers who are becoming members. "We haven't had to reach out to larger organizations, they actually tend to just come to us," Anthony Marinos says. "We've had employees from Visa, journalists from the Chicago Tribune, and even people affiliated with large financial institutions all work out of Grind."

Spending time away from the office at a coworking space can also spark new ideas. Rebecca Brian Pan, the founder of COVO and former chief operating officer of NextSpace, explained how the innovation team of Ricoh, a multinational company, worked out of NextSpace Santa Cruz for several months to observe how people work and where they hit pain points. Based on member insight and feedback, and their own observations, the Ricoh team explored several new products that could help members in their daily work and chose the most highly rated product to pursue.

Second, the lessons of coworking spaces can be applied to corporate offices. Just as it's important to encourage flexibility and support your mobile workforce, there is an equally important reality of creating the right kind of work environment inside your own walls. But this doesn't just mean creating open plan layouts or adding a coffee bar.

In reality, people need to be able to craft their work in ways that give them purpose and meaning. They should be given control and flexibility in their work environment. The combination of a well-designed work environment and a well-curated work experience are part of the reason people who cowork demonstrate higher levels of thriving than their office-based counterparts.

Questions 1–7

Complete the notes below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Coworking spaces and their benefits

Definition

- Workspaces with various workers sharing a **1**

Benefits

- Different from a **2** : people linked to various enterprises
- People don't have to adopt a **3** in their job
- Working with different professionals – strengthens people's **4**

Meaning given to coworking

- Helping coworkers is regarded as the **5**
- Possibly coming from a concrete **6** : mission in the Coworking Manifesto
- Coworkers seen as a part of social **7**

Questions 8–12

Look at the following statements (**Questions 8–12**) and the list of people below.

Match each statement with the correct person, **A–D**.

NB You may use any letter more than once.

- 8** The traditional office needs substantial training input for workers.
- 9** Research was conducted by one institution on various products.
- 10** Coworking spaces attract employees from international firms wanting greater flexibility.
- 11** There is no need to do anything to attract custom from bigger institutions.
- 12** The focus of the development of the coworking community is on the people.

List of people

- A** Anthony Marinos
- B** Michael Kenny
- C** Rebecca Brian Pan
- D** None of the above

Question 13

Choose the correct letter **A, B, C** or **D**.

Which of the following observations is made by the writer about corporate offices?

- A** Care needs to be taken to develop and support a mobile workforce.
- B** The advantages of coworking spaces on professionals is underestimated.
- C** Coworking spaces have a role to play in offices in corporations.
- D** Open plan offices are a major step towards developing coworking spaces.