



Herman Miller Living Office

Modes of Work

No matter what kind of work you do, or if you do it alone or together, this is how work gets done. In every workplace around the world you'll find people engaged in the following 10 activities.

TOGETHER

Chat

Chat is an incidental and impromptu interaction with a colleague. It offers a chance to catch up, ask a quick question, or seek out an opinion. Chat often begins with a social focus that then sparks an idea or touches on an issue.

Converse

Converse is a purposeful interaction between two to three colleagues who address a defined topic. The activity varies in formality and privacy in accordance with the subject matter being addressed and the familiarity of the participants. One or more of the parties may participate through a digital device.

Co-Create

Co-Create is the generation of new ideas and content among groups. The activity may range in scale and formality from a quick problem-solving exercise at a white board, to a multi-day retreat with an elaborate agenda. A variety of digital and physical tools assist people in sharing and generating ideas. Active engagement, conversation, content sharing, and creation are the key behaviors.

Divide & Conquer

Divide & Conquer happens when a team with a common goal finds it valuable to work on individual components of a project while maintaining close proximity to one another. Working in parallel helps to resolve issues quickly and enables spontaneous collaboration as the need arises. Developments and content are shared among the group as the goal is reached.

Huddle

Huddle occurs when a team needs to address an urgent issue, or discuss and receive instructions for a plan of action. The goal is shared resolution and accountability, with only a brief disruption to the flow of work.

Show & Tell

Show & Tell is a planned gathering at which information is shared among teams, with clients and colleagues, or more broadly to the organization. The key focus is always the presenter or information being presented. These gatherings range from informal status updates and project reviews, to regimented and rehearsed speeches. The level of audience participation varies accordingly.

Warm Up, Cool Down

Warm Up, Cool Down occurs in the time leading up to and immediately following more formally scheduled engagements. The “warm up” may consist of last-minute adjustments to a presentation, or productive conversation with colleagues. The “cool down” offers an opportunity to discuss the content of the meeting, set next steps, and ensure alignment.

ALONE

Process & respond

Process & Respond is the work generated by work. It occurs in response to (and generates) the feedback loop of emails, phone calls, texts, and messages that drive work forward. An individual may choose to set aside a specified time to do this work, or fill in the gaps of their day with it. It generally does not require extreme attention or deep thinking.

Contemplate

Contemplate is an opportunity for an individual to pause and consider the best way forward in their work, or ignore it momentarily and provide respite. The activity consists of whatever calms, inspires, and recharges the individual: enjoying a view of nature, reading a book or magazine, or sketching in a notepad. It also provides an opportunity to digest complex information with the necessary degree of focus.

Create

Create occurs when a person engages with the specific content associated with their role, solves problems, and develops deliverables. This activity is not limited to traditionally creative fields, but rather reflects the mix of concentrative, individual tasks that help move all work forward.