

Yahoo! Tokyo (Japan)

An office project by Vitra, 2017

Co-working spaces, which allow freelancers, creatives and small start-ups to rent offices and infrastructure on a monthly, weekly, daily or even hourly basis, have been increasing in number over the past few years. These spaces not only enable users to save on fixed costs for offices, which are usually considerably higher, but they also tend to foster a stimulatingly interactive, interdisciplinary dynamic that becomes a hotbed for new ideas.

Co-working spaces are proliferating in almost every major city, and users can now generally choose between several providers. It is therefore essential for offices to be attractively and intelligently designed, as the first impression is often decisive.

In terms of quality, co-working spaces have to surpass traditional, standardised offices. Not just because the users – as renters of the office spaces and infrastructure – have high demands, but also because the spaces should be conducive to a pleasant atmosphere: after all, it has been proven that our environment influences our mood, sense of well-being, productivity and motivation.

As is the case for any office environment, it is not enough to simply choose attractive office furniture for a co-working space. Instead, a project must be carefully planned in order to anticipate future uses and requirements and provide functional solutions. Only on this basis can an environment be created that meets the needs of users while simultaneously conveying comfort and ease.

When planning and furnishing co-working spaces, Vitra draws on the experience of hundreds of office projects that have been implemented around the world. This approach is exemplified by the Jikken Office project for Yahoo! in Tokyo.

Yahoo! JAPAN has been operating the co-working space 'Lodge' in the heart of Tokyo since 2016. It eventually became apparent that Japanese users were inclined to utilise the various options to work on their own rather than collaboratively – mainly due to traditional working habits. As this was contrary to Yahoo! JAPAN's intentions, Vitra Japan was commissioned together with the Lodge's interior designers to develop a temporary test environment, which not only allows communication and collaboration but also actively promotes it.

The so-called 'Jikken Office' by Vitra – *jikken* is the Japanese term for experimental – was tested for a two-month period in autumn 2017. The Vitra furnishings not only fostered more cooperative work habits. They also inspired users to spontaneously modify the layout for particular events or purposes – hackathon, lecture, teamwork, presentation etc. Given the high level of acceptance and flexibility observed during the test phase, the Jikken Office has now become a permanent installation.