

New Research Reveals that Managers Lack Spaces to Focus, Creating an Office Privacy Crisis

Category: Business

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- Two-thirds of managers feel privacy is their most important need in the office, a challenge compounded by outdated workplace layouts.
- Steelcase's new modular system, Be my guest by Orangebox, a Steelcase independent subsidiary, helps organisations close the privacy gap.

According to new research from Steelcase, a global design and

thought leader in the world of work, privacy has emerged as the top need in the workplace, especially for middle managers.



Steelcase launches Be my guest, a new modular privacy solution by Orangebox

Serving as the critical bridge between leadership and teams, middle managers are juggling the pressure of hybrid work, back-to-back meetings, and constant digital collaboration. Yet, 69% say they don't have access to the privacy they need. Two-thirds also rank privacy as their most important workplace need, yet senior leaders place it only fourth, behind collaboration, wellbeing, and focus – revealing a significant misalignment that leaves many managers overextended and under-supported.

Moreover, middle managers are just as likely to be in meetings as senior leaders, yet they are significantly less satisfied with their ability to focus or collaborate effectively at work. When there are no nearby private areas, 50% of people resort to staying at their desks for video calls, leading to

frequent interruptions, fatigue, and reduced productivity.

These challenges are compounded by outdated workplace layouts. As people returned to offices post-pandemic, workspaces remained largely unchanged or had shifted further toward open collaboration at the expense of quiet zones. Assigned desks were sometimes removed to make room for more communal areas, further reducing access to private or enclosed environments. With 56% of meetings now including remote participants, the need for privacy has increased.

According to industry reports, as of 2024, 12.7% of full-time employees in India work from home, while 28.2% follow a hybrid model. By the end of 2025, it's projected that 60 to 90 million Indian employees will work remotely or in hybrid setups. This growing shift reinforces the need for workplaces to evolve beyond traditional layouts and better support hybrid teams, through more adaptable and private environments.

To help close this gap, Steelcase announces the launch of **Be my guest**, a new modular privacy solution by Orangebox designed to meet the demands of hybrid work environments in Asia. With quick assembly, scalability, and multiple configurations, the system is designed to act as a sanctuary in a busy workplace. **Be my guest** addresses fundamental employee needs and frees up meeting rooms.

Be my guest delivers workplace flexibility through three configurable components: the **Acoustic Booth**, which creates a sound-shielded environment perfect for hybrid meetings and focused calls; the **Connect Booth**, which establishes visual boundaries that provide personal space while maintaining team connection – a feature that is particularly relevant for global in-house centres across India; and the **Connect Canopy and Wall**, which transforms any area into a semi-private retreat for quiet work or spontaneous collaboration.

Be my guest empowers teams to seamlessly transition between

collaborative and independent work.

In India, where global organisations are scaling backend operations, **Be my guest** supports high-performance teams with flexible, hybrid-ready solutions. It offers rapid deployment and global design standards, helping companies create more productive and engaging environments.

Tirthankar Basu, Managing Director India & SAARC at Steelcase said, *“Privacy is a fundamental need in today’s workplace for better employee wellbeing and engagement. As hybrid work blurs the lines between collaboration and concentration, many organisations underestimate the importance of private spaces.”*

With clean lines, refined proportions, and carefully curated finishes, **Be my guest** brings a timeless, intentional design sensibility to the workplace. Each configuration, whether fully enclosed, semi-open, or a canopy, offers acoustic and visual separation without disconnecting users from the workplace around them.

Be my guest is now available in India, China, Hong Kong SAR, Singapore, and Malaysia, through Steelcase WorkLife locations and dealer partners.

About Steelcase

Steelcase is a global design and thought leader in the world of work. For over a century, we have designed, manufactured and partnered with leading organizations worldwide to create furnishings and solutions for the many places where work happens – offices, homes, and learning and health environments. Through our research, we deliver insights and design innovation that create better outcomes for our customers around the world. Our solutions are brought to life through our dealer community, Steelcase store and retail partners. And because we’re dedicated to doing our best work for the places we all share, we come together for people and the planet – using our business to help the world work better.

