



Culture of error

## TRIAL AND ERROR

### Why perfectionism can stand in the way of successful restructuring

The home office requirement is no longer in place, and many people are returning to the office. So companies are currently reconsidering their structural and spatial set-up even more. Instead of looking for solutions that are viable over the long term and wanting to try and avoid things going wrong if possible, it's a good idea to create flexible approaches, be more adventurous and accept the possibility of mistakes.

At least that's the opinion of Marc Kim Bobsin, partner and shareholder in the high-profile planning office Seel Bobsin Partner, who was interviewed on a previous occasion for an [article](#) we published recently about future scenarios in office design. Today we'd like to look at how office organisation and planning might change successfully in the short and medium term.

#### Just get on with it?

While many employees are thrilled to be returning to the office so that they can finally meet their colleagues more than just virtually, new questions are cropping up in different places: can I still work from home as often as I want now? What safety measures are companies offering for the return to the office?

How can infection prevention be guaranteed in the workplace? What time and work models are the best options for office activities?

Exciting times and complex questions are best met with pragmatism and a certain tolerance of mistakes. For instance future home working opportunities will depend on the company allowing this on a voluntary basis again, and are relevant to the company's duty of care with regard to infection protection. The Corona Health & Safety Regulation still applies, spaces need to be put back to normal, the necessary distances implemented (where that can't be done our **hygiene screens** might be a solution), in short, it's a matter of deciding what's appropriate and testing it out.

Maybe now's also a good time to think about looking for solutions for when higher numbers of employees are present, if this hasn't happened yet. The König + Neurath **WORK.CULTURE.MAP** can be used to establish the status quo of the work culture currently practised in terms of leadership style and employees, and this can then be integrated into the change process as a basis from which to derive space planning and office design. As they say, there's no right and wrong, but it's worthwhile checking what suits your individual goals better.

## The opportunity to learn from mistakes

We humans are programmed not to make any mistakes at all if possible. However making mistakes is part of evolution. Without mistakes there can be no learning process. It really is true, plenty of studies confirm that the most successful people have made lots of mistakes. They became masters of failure and learned two important rules for success as a result:

- +** They learned how to move on.
- +** They took a risk, lost, learned from their mistakes and next time they choose a different solution. In other words they are successfully implementing the principle of trial and error.

*„Trial and error is a method in which different strategies or theories are tried out until you arrive at a correct solution or satisfactory result – until the errors have been reduced or eliminated to an acceptable level.“*



## How imperfect do we dare to be?

How tolerant we are of mistakes, how flexible we are, how we handle changes in our office routine – all of this is certainly a matter of what type of person we are and what our character is like. And it's also a generation thing. Why? Let's take a look at the people we work with.

While those born in the Baby Boomer generation learned to enjoy privileges and were able to invest most of their working lives in status and stability, Generation X is already much more familiar with change as a result of experiencing the economic crisis. Members of Generation Y (otherwise known as “Why?”) on the other hand started out as digital natives – so they are already used to questioning existing situations and are increasingly dismissive of fixed structures. The generation following them, Generation Z, in which they have already been born into the digital world, is even more flexible and willing to experiment. Before the COVID-19 pandemic we had already commissioned a study in which we took a closer look at the requirements of Generation Z. Read more about it here.

## Who works how? A generational question

When we look at how employment has changed it becomes clear that working – and the way people feel about their jobs – has radically transformed over the past 50 to 70 years. The “working man” of the fifties was followed by generations of people who were “of their time” and who in turn characterised their work. The following generation model helps to understand developments and draw conclusions. Admittedly how adaptable and open to change people are is also a matter of their own personality, social background and individual mindset.

*Baby boomers. The men and women born in the high birthrate years from the late fifties to sixties were ambitious and hardworking employees who brought with them the spirit of the economic boom and were*

able to increase income and living standards for the majority. Their working approach is ambitious and structured.

**Generation X.** These are people born from the end of the sixties to the end of the seventies, and in many sectors they constitute the majority of the workforce. This generation was characterised by the economic crisis and social insecurities. Result-oriented, independent work is important to them. They aim to achieve a good work-life balance, although they always have a tendency to overwork.

**Generation Y.** Generation Y, known for questioning anything familiar, comprises employees who were born between the eighties and the turn of the millennium. The digital natives and high potentials combine work and private life as long as work is fun. They work creatively, quickly adjust to new situations and are keen to avoid familiar structures.

**Generation Z.** This generation consists of people born between 1999 and 2019 into the digital world. They love to experiment, are creative and always open to new ideas. They work to finance the life they want to live and they think it's important to keep both these areas separate.

Joseph, Frederic F.: What is trial and error? (2015), <https://flowleadership.org/what-is-trial-and-error/>, letzter Zugriff: 08.07.2021

HR monkeys. Data driven recruiting (2021), <https://hr-monkeys.de/babyboomer/>, <https://hr-monkeys.de/generation-x/>, <https://hr-monkeys.de/generation-y/>, <https://hr-monkeys.de/generation-z/>, letzter Zugriff: 08.07.2021

Stelzer, Tanja (2021), Aus Fehlern lernen, 05.05.2021, <https://www.zeit.de/2021/19/menschliches-versagen-fehler-luebecker-impfunglueck-raumfaehre-challenger-corona>, letzter Zugriff: 08.07.2021.

Generation XYZ – der Überblick über die Generationen auf dem Arbeitsmarkt, letzter Zugriff: 08.07.2021