CREATING AN EXCEPTIONAL CORPORATE CAMPUS
Contents

Section

01 Why corporate campus? 01
02 Creating an exceptional corporate campus 03
03 Case studies 05
04 Conclusion - the importance of design 14
05 References 15

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01 Why corporate campus?

Campus style workplaces are widely held to offer numerous business benefits to large corporations including, amongst others, attraction and retention of talent, strength of brand and culture, enhanced communication and a ready expansion strategy.

Essentially, businesses choose the corporate campus model because it brings people together.

This paper explores the design elements considered in the creation of an exceptional corporate campus and summarises a range of corporate campus configurations used by some of the world’s leading companies.
There is much anecdotal and some empirical research dedicated to the advantages of corporate campuses, including flexibility, connectivity, brand, community and talent attraction.1,2,3 However, less often discussed is how advantages during boom periods and times of stability may become disadvantages during economic downturns.1 The potential for excess land or buildings, ongoing landscape maintenance, and limited transport options and amenities can all have a detrimental effect on how a campus functions over time.

The HASSELL Creating Exceptional Places framework, developed as part of our Urban Futures research program, is based on analysis of design indicators and prevailing issues in urban development. It identifies six dimensions of successful places that can be applied at a range of scales – from the city, to precinct and corporate campus developments, right down to small workplaces.

The dimensions highlight the global and local challenges in providing places that are well positioned to withstand various negative forces, as well as opportunities to accentuate the positive ones:

1. Multi-connected
2. Co-operative
3. Super-concentrated
4. Restorative
5. Distinctive
6. Adaptive

Alignment of these dimensions with the business objectives and workplace culture of an organisation is a strong starting point for the planning of a corporate campus.

The following case studies of leading organisations around the world explore the potential of these dimensions to positively influence the branding and productivity of companies, and, importantly, the health and wellbeing of their employees.
The overarching benefit of a campus arrangement, from which all other benefits stem, is the potential for connectivity - physical, organisational, and community links that can be forged and strengthened by large numbers of staff being located together.

While there are obvious benefits from co-locating employees (in the same or adjacent buildings), the broader potential for connection is sometimes overlooked. Location has been identified in research as the chief parameter of corporate campuses, outranking amenities as the highest physical factor contributing to attraction and retention.\(^2\)

Transport is central to this, and should be seen in the context of the company workforce - where they live, their travel preferences, and how limiting travel options may affect the company’s ability to attract staff. This is almost always the most contentious issue affecting employees in organisational relocation because it can significantly affect people’s daily lives.

Connectivity between work and home is not the only consideration however. Access to a suitable labour pool will be enhanced by housing options, access to services and other lifestyle choices. Capacity for expansion and costs are also affected by the primary decision of where to locate the campus.

Adjacency to activity in related fields can be a crucial attractor. The benefits of geographic proximity of like-minded industries (agglomeration) have long been recognised,\(^3\) and are demonstrated strongly by the three Silicon Valley case studies herein. Apple and Google here, and Facebook West (see page 10) are part of a significant multi-connected ecosystem of technology companies.

Low rise and suburban in their physical form, and located between the urban centres of San Jose and San Francisco, these three world leading companies benefit from the longstanding advantages of agglomeration. The co-location of many like-minded technology companies and start-ups near Stanford University provides an intensity of talent, research and innovation, and a connected regional community with shared purpose.

### Apple Campus 2

**Cupertino, California, US**

- **Typology:** Suburban
- **Population:** 13,000
- **Construction:** 2014–2016
- **Site Area:** 700,000 sqm
- **Floor Area:** 260,000 sqm
- **Cost:** $US 4 billion
- **Design:** Foster and Partners

The circular form of the new Apple campus (currently under construction) represents an ‘infinite loop’ of collaboration, around a shared, central courtyard. The building, one and a half kilometres in circumference, will provide an open-space system designed to encourage accidental mingling. This internal connectedness and fluidity is yet to be tested, but consciously builds on the already strong connections to the surrounding community of innovators in the region.

Apple is seeking to provide a unique campus form that supports its already legendary brand. To underscore the importance of a distinctive campus experience, Apple offers “a serene environment reflecting Apple’s brand values of innovation, ease of use, and beauty.”

While Apple is not the only company to tie its brand to the physical environment (see Novartis and adidas) it is, perhaps, more overtly reliant on brand value across its products and workplace.\(^5,6,8,9,10\)

### Google

**Mountain View, California, US**

- **Typology:** Suburban
- **Population:** 8,000
- **Construction:** 1997–2005
- **Site Area:** 46,500 sqm
- **Floor Area:** 185,800 sqm
- **Cost:** $US 319 million
- **Design:** Clive Wilkinson Architects/DEGW

Although Google’s regional location may not offer the immediacy of inner city connectivity, culture and services, it provides a more focused community of industry connections and compensates its staff with targeted services on site. Google consistently ranks as one of the best places to work in the world, offering free food, and amenities including hairdressers, gyms, pools, games, dry cleaning and on-site medical staff.

The Googleplex, as it is sometimes known, was designed specifically to mimic the loose structure of a university campus, with a variety of settings and potential learning and working formats both internal and external.

The site was chosen because of its setting near San Francisco Bay, its proximity to universities, its family friendly environment and central position in Silicon Valley.

Google has recently announced its latest campus expansion plans (yet to be approved by the local council), which include easily re-locatable and re-configurable lightweight structures that maximise the adaptability of the spaces and the site itself.\(^11,12,13,14\)
Campuses are shared places. They bring people together physically and foster a sense of common purpose. Both the external neighbourhood and the internal company community can be enhanced by a co-operative corporate campus.

Co-location has the potential to positively affect interaction among employees and provides a strong statement about the importance of cross organisational communication. However, co-operation can extend beyond the employees, to include the surrounding community.

As an economic anchor within a neighbourhood, a campus can provide the local economy with a significant boost, and a marketable identity. But a good relationship with the surrounding community is also important in negotiating growth and contraction planning, and in the resolution of housing and traffic issues, amongst others.

The partnership at Menlo Park, California, between St Anton Partners and Facebook illustrates a positive approach to this type of relationship. The two organisations formed a strategic collaboration to build a residential community (including low income housing) within walking distance of the new campus. Facebook also funded local improvements and restricted vehicle numbers at the new campus.

There are other ways to co-operate. The majority of corporate campuses now include various retail and services outlets on site, or provide public access to sporting and other facilities.

Others have begun to invite the start-up business community into on-site innovation hubs, or incubators. Google’s “Campus” tower block in London houses over 90 start-ups and has a waiting list of more than 800 new technology companies. The development of this type of facility can be seen as complementary to the rise of co-working and decentralised workplaces now located around the world. The opportunity to provide diversity of activity on site, access to new talent, and a supply of lettable space to boost asset flexibility can help to cement the business case for a campus environment.
### Telefonica

**Location:** Madrid, Spain  
**Typology:** Suburban  
**Population:** 14,000  
**Construction:** 2004-2008  
**Site Area:** 390,000 sqm  
**Floor Area:** 140,000 sqm  
**Cost:** $US 641 million (€500m)  
**Design:** Rafael de La-Hoz

The administrative buildings of this large development are distributed around a central, grassed atrium – the lawn of the campus. At the corners stand four large cubes which delineate the perimeter of the site. A canopy of photovoltaic panels over the central areas generates some of the energy required for the campus and provides shade in the shared spaces between buildings.

The campus seeks to invite the community into the site by incorporating a shopping centre that is open to the public, a childcare centre, health centre and gymnasium. These shared spaces allow the development of transparency and trust between the company and the public.  

### Alibaba

**Location:** Hangzhou, China  
**Typology:** Suburban  
**Population:** 9,000  
**Construction:** 2006-2009  
**Site Area:** 60,000 sqm  
**Floor Area:** 150,000 sqm  
**Cost:** Not available  
**Design:** HASSELL

The design of the Alibaba headquarters is based on connectivity, clarity and community. The workplace has been designed to be a positive and healthy environment to encourage informal and creative meetings throughout the complex, building co-operative relationships throughout the shared spaces.

With a vision to become the number one data sharing platform in the world, and the company with the highest employee happiness index, Alibaba has a strong focus on getting people together to share ideas.

The campus is a series of clustered buildings arranged around a central courtyard. Hubs, internal and external streets, bridges, roof terraces and strategically placed destination points contribute to the collaborative intent.

### ANZ Centre

**Location:** Melbourne, Australia  
**Typology:** Suburban / Urban Hybrid  
**Population:** 6,500  
**Construction:** 2006-2010  
**Site Area:** 18,500 sqm  
**Floor Area:** 130,000 sqm  
**Cost:** $A 750 million  
**Design:** HASSELL and Lend Lease

ANZ Centre is the largest single-tenanted commercial office building in Australia, designed around the concept of an urban campus. A central common and a hierarchy of shared spaces creates a rich variety of settings and an openness that fosters interaction.

Permeability through the publicly accessible ground floor common, which contains cafes, public art and a visitors’ centre, is an important element that seeks to connect ANZ to the public, its customers, and to the city around it.

Locating the work floors around the central atria maintains a high level of visual connection between the public ‘common’ and the workplace – reinforcing the day-to-day connection between the ANZ population and the community it serves. This demonstrates a new direction for a banking institution seeking to balance the need for security and transparency.
03 Case studies
Distinctive

A distinctive campus combines a global perspective with local meaning. There are many and varied opportunities to express brand and culture: aesthetics, space, services and management can be used to create and deliver a concentrated experience that not only communicates, but enriches the image of an organisation.

In a globalised jobs market, talent attraction and retention are ongoing issues for many companies. HASSELL research into the attraction and retention of staff has previously shown that after the two major factors of salary and culture, facilities were the next most significant factor in making an organisation attractive. Extra amenities were most important in making facilities appealing, and then aesthetics.31

The provision of an optimal working environment that also has an attractive lifestyle component may be the deciding factor for sought-after talent. A number of the companies noted in this paper seek to make bold architectural statements with their workplaces, from the circular Apple building, to the soaring towers of Tencent and the lattice screens of Alibaba. Each of these is the result of a deliberate process of design to define and enhance the image and brand of the companies involved.

But the local context is important too, in defining the values of a company. Sporting facilities and history are embedded in the adidas campus, while the architectural legacy of the naval shipyard are incorporated into the Urban Outfitters headquarters in Philadelphia. These distinctive and localised references can underscore a company's brand, its local identity, and the campus experience.

Urban Outfitters
Philadelphia, US

Typology: Urban
Population: 600
Construction: 2005-2006
Site Area: 26,000 sqm
Floor Area: 32,500 sqm
Cost: US 100 million
Design: Meyer, Scherer and Rockcastle

Urban Outfitters was the first major non-ship building corporation to move to the Navy Yard, which had ceased as a ship building facility in 1996. With the benefit of a tax incentive for historic preservation, the dilapidated building was completely renovated. The workplace is supported by numerous amenities such as a gym, yoga studio, dog park, farmers' market, a cafeteria, library, and courtyard.

One of the major reasons to relocate was to bring the company's entire workforce, previously spread over six locations into a single building to enhance interaction.

Since moving to the new premises, employee morale and wellness have increased, with an overall drop in sick leave, and an 11 per cent reduction in employee turnover. Departments now work closely together and the campus has improved creative collaboration, which ultimately improves their bottom line. The company's revenue in 2008 increased 22 per cent over 2007, and the retailer opened 49 new stores (it now has almost 300 around the world).33,34,35,36,37

adidas
Herzogenaurach, Germany

Typology: Suburban
Population: 3,800
Construction: 1998-2018
Site Area: 200,000 sqm
Floor Area: Not available
Cost: Not available
Design: KINZO, COBE and others

The adidas campus consists of a series of buildings located on an old military airfield surrounded by Bavarian farmland. Numerous new buildings with a contemporary aesthetic have been designed to capture the “genuine adidas experience”.

The regional location of the campus makes the attraction and retention of world-class product designers, digital and brand experts difficult. Adidas has been losing market share to the world's biggest sportswear brand Nike, which is seen as far 'cooler' in consumer surveys and is based near Portland, which is ranked as the most liveable city in the US.

Acknowledging that it is hard to recruit at its headquarters near a town of just 24,000 people, adidas has invested in providing a campus that appeals to potential recruits whose passion is sport by providing sports fields, a climbing wall, and fitness centre as well as sporting memorabilia, kindergarten and high quality canteen.38,39,40,41,42

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03 Case studies

Super-concentrated

The super-concentrated campus creates places of focused energy and diversity, and uses land efficiently while maintaining high quality amenity for its users.

As cities become increasingly dense, available land in central locations is becoming scarce, and expensive. It is expected that by 2050 up to 70% of the global population will live in cities and some argue that the sprawling campus model is unlikely to be feasible in the future. Vertical campuses may be able to provide the same benefits as their horizontal counterpart, but better align with the challenges of increasingly dense urban environments.

Tencent has embraced the idea of a super-concentrated campus, which is particularly suited to the hyper-dense urban form of large Asian cities. Their new campus in Shenzhen, China, seeks to encourage interaction via horizontal shared spaces within and between two adjacent vertical towers.

This vertical approach could also help to resolve “reverse commuting”, where people prefer to live in the city (e.g., San Francisco) and drive or take private buses to suburban campuses like Apple, Google, and Facebook. This phenomenon can exert pressure on housing prices in already desirable locations and potentially lead to community backlash.

But super-concentration of the urban form is not the only way to generate vibrancy in a campus. Workspace densities (the number of square metres per person), or density of activity are equally important in creating an attractive and efficient workplace. The new Facebook West campus boldly seeks to bring a concentration of activity and collaboration to the workplace through the co-location of 6,000 staff in one large open plan layout. Other companies take a more nuanced approach to the connection and concentration of aligned activities and staff through strategic adjacencies.

Tencent

Type: Urban vertical
Population: 12,000
Site Area: 33,000 sqm (estimated)
Floor Area: 270,000 sqm
Cost: US$290 million (1.8 million RMB)
Design: NBBJ

Tencent takes a campus model with green spaces and amenities that are usually on the ground plane and flips it vertically within two 250 m tall towers. Three interlinking bridges — sky streets — spread key social spaces across the organisation — a ‘knowledge’ bridge at the top (libraries, conferences), a ‘health’ bridge half way down (fitness centre, pool) and a ‘culture’ bridge at the base, connecting the city with the company through a public gallery.

The concern about high rise workplaces for many companies is that they will segregate and isolate employees. It is expected that this inverse design will help break down office social hierarchies.

Facebook West

Type: Suburban
Population: 6,600
Construction: 2013-2015
Site Area: 40,500 sqm
Floor Area: 50,530 sqm
Cost: US$120 million
Design: Frank Gehry

Aligning with research that suggests being on the same floor is the most valuable precondition for interaction, Facebook will place over 6,000 staff in one large room to maximise the opportunities for collaboration.

“The idea is to make the perfect engineering space: one giant room that fits thousands of people, all close enough to collaborate together. It will be the largest open floor plan in the world, but it will also have plenty of private, quiet spaces as well. The roof of the building will be a park that blends into the community with a long walking trail, a field and lots of places to sit. From the outside it will appear as if you’re looking at a hill in nature.” —Mark Zuckerberg, CEO Facebook.

The campus will be supported by numerous services including a café, sports pub, bicycle repair shop, pet services, dry cleaning and package drop off, sports facilities, and a community business facility.
03 Case studies

Adaptive

An adaptive campus accommodates change through innovation and flexibility. Campus style development can be an attractive strategy for organisational growth - owning a large area of land or a group of co-located buildings facilitates fast turnaround of new projects, and options for changes in the fit-out of workspaces.

Departmental and team space flexibility is becoming more important as economic and business conditions become more volatile. An ability to reconfigure constantly, easily, and cheaply into knowledge hubs and networks for specific projects is valuable.

But in the event of business contraction, restructure or takeover, a flexible strategy that allows repurposing, downsizing or disposal is equally valuable. Campuses grow well, but do not shrink well – unless they are designed to do so. The current glut of business parks and obsolete corporate campuses in New Jersey in the United States is a testament to the potential for a growth strategy (implemented by the city in the 1980s) to be undermined by economic conditions, technological change and shifts in business models.48

Long term planning and an emphasis on consistent design parameters can allow a company the flexibility to grow (as British Airways has been able to do), or contract. It can also provide certainty of the company’s development intentions for the surrounding community, evident in the master planning and urban regeneration intent of the Novartis campus.

British Airways

London, UK

Typology: Suburban
Population: 4,000
Site Area: 114,000 sqm
Floor Area: 19,000 sqm
Cost: $US 321 million (€200m)
Design: Niels Torp / RHWL Architects

The campus consists of six horseshoe shaped four storey buildings backing onto an atrium street. Bridges that cross the street connect the individual buildings, which house almost entirely open plan workspace- no personal space is assigned, although enclosed areas are available for meetings and study. The street houses a health centre, hairdresser, travel agent, supermarket, bank, and food outlets.

Since first occupying the campus in 1998, British Airways has reconfigured the spaces a number of times as their user departments and space requirements have developed and changed. This included the doubling of the occupancy (originally 2400 staff) through clever use and interpretation of the original design principles.49

Novartis

Basel, Switzerland

Typology: Urban dispersed
Population: 7,500
Construction: 2001-2030
Site Area: 200,000 sqm
Floor Area: Not available
Cost: Not available
Design: Vittorio Lampugnani and others

Novartis appointed Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani to develop the master plan of an old industrial suburb within the city, and recruited a host of world renowned architects to design various buildings within it. The site is now partially redeveloped, and will continue to change over the next two decades. In alignment with its health values, the campus is a car-free, non-smoking zone with generous public green areas.

Novartis values design and environments that promote innovation. Over time, the campus is expected to transform from its original use as an industrial production site to a modern research centre for the express purpose of attracting the highest quality scientific talent.

This long term planning provides stability and a strong brand statement for the company. The site transformation is also part of a broader plan for regeneration of the surrounding harbour area, providing value for the company as well as the city.50,51,52
03 Case studies

Restorative

A restorative campus is one that provides a balanced experience for its users, with options for passive and active recreation, as well as support for work/life balance. The restorative value of nature is central to people’s health and wellbeing, but also valuable in its own right.

The large population contained within a campus enables the economies of scale required to provide (or have access to) amenities that otherwise could not be supported: fitness centres, food courts, banking, and in larger campuses, child care facilities, parkland, and drycleaning, as well as precinct-based environmental systems.

These amenities are particularly important on sites located away from urban centres. They can assist companies to attract appropriate talent by tailoring services to particular needs, preferences and demographics - a bicycle repair shop at Facebook West encourages bike commuters, and a childcare centre at the Royal Bank of Scotland in Edinburgh enables a more family friendly workplace. Mixed uses that invite the community in, including supermarkets and other retail and cultural activities are increasingly common.

The human benefits of access to green space, natural light and fresh air are well documented. Corporate campuses with landscaping and gardens are able to provide opportunities for their staff to walk, play sport, or relax in the outdoors. In the case of adidas, sporting facilities provide both amenity and brand reinforcement, but at other campuses, the provision of these elements is a necessary part of providing an attractive and relaxed place to work.

Large grounds also afford the opportunity for companies to address issues of corporate environmental sustainability through land remediation, ecological diversity, water sensitive design, and other environmental initiatives.

Optus Centre
Sydney, Australia

Typology: Suburban
Population: 7,000
Site Area: 76,000 sqm
Floor Area: 84,000 sqm
Cost: Not available
Design: Rice Daubney/HASSELL/Anton James Design/James Mather Delaney

The Optus Centre campus was designed around the metaphor of a village - six four to five storey buildings linked by circulation streets, each centred on an internal, communal town square.

The location of departments was specifically planned to encourage movement between the buildings, which surround a secure, landscaped courtyard. This 50,000 square metres of restorative space contains an amphitheatre, water features and gardens, Multi-use sports fields, a health centre, gym and a childcare centre have been combined with flexible work practices to provide a healthy balance within a large corporate environment.

Royal Bank of Scotland
Edinburgh, Scotland

Typology: Suburban
Population: 3,400
Construction: 2002-2005
Site Area: 364,000 sqm
Floor Area: 74,000 sqm
Cost: $US 562 million (£350 m)
Design: Michael Laird/RHWL Architects

The corporate campus of the Royal Bank of Scotland is set on 65 hectares of serene parkland, on the site of an old country estate and hospital at the edge of Edinburgh.

The main office building has seven ‘business houses’ and is arranged around a tree lined internal street that acts as the principal focus and circulation spine of the building.

Amenities are distributed along this main street: a conference centre, leisure centre, staff club, childcare centre, coffee shops, hairdresser, pharmacy, bank and a supermarket. A Business School, developed jointly with Harvard Business School, is situated on an adjacent parkland site.
The importance of design

Corporate campuses can have both positive and negative influences on the behaviour of their occupants. Design, in all its phases - planning, briefing, execution, commissioning and maintenance - is important in mitigating the risks while capitalising on the benefits of corporate campuses.

A clear understanding of what matters most to an organisation will assist in the decision about what type of strategy will be most appropriate.

As part of our Urban Futures research program, HASSELL has developed a framework - Creating Exceptional Places - that identifies potential opportunities and challenges in design across different development typologies, from city scale to the workplace.

Informed design decisions that balance the six dimensions of exceptional places - Multi-connected, Super-concentrated, Restorative, Adaptive, Distinctive and Co-operative - are crucial in managing the risks faced by large organisations investing in a corporate campus accommodation strategy.

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