Optimizing Workplace Design for Innovation

Workplace design should address needs for privacy, structure of activity, and user control. Including a variety of spaces offers people the freedom to choose appropriately based on their preferences and the range of work modes that foster creativity—from intense focus to rest.

PRIVACY
Freedom from unwanted, irrelevant disruption

FOCUS:
- Requires insulation from interruption and distraction
- The more focus needed, the more insulation and privacy needed

RESTORE:
- Can look like many things, done alone or with others
- Privacy need is lower, but can depend on preferences

STRUCTURE OF ACTIVITY
Stability and predictability of a space

FOCUS:
- Customization can preserve cognitive resources to support deep thought and understanding
- Tools for externalizing and embedding thoughts assist with deep thinking

RESTORE:
- Activities can vary widely, done alone or with others
- Varied spaces with novel elements foster incubation and insight

USER CONTROL
Personalization options to support activities and preferences

FOCUS:
- Requires deep thought and understanding
- Greater user control provides predictability to preserve cognitive resources

RESTORE:
- Involves less control over the environment
- Access to others for serendipitous interactions is more important for groups

For creativity and innovation to flourish, organizations should protect their employees' ability to focus and encourage restorative behaviors in the workplace. Given the right spaces and tools to support the ideal creative rhythms within your organization, people can be free to do what they need to do to innovate.

For more information on the science behind cultivating creativity and innovation, download the Haworth white paper, Optimizing the Workplace for Innovation: Using Brain Science for Smart Design.

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SPECIALIZED BUSINESS UNIT SPACE

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

Planning around the needs of groups that occur naturally can:

1. Cut down on costly physical changes over time.
2. Align the facility with the strategic goals of an organization.
3. Help workers innovate, reducing project times and/or improving services.

Common workplace design needs:

- Appropriate spaces to support the creative rhythm and how quickly innovation needs to occur
- Areas accommodating a range of focus and restorative activities—for both individuals and groups—with the right environmental, ergonomic, and technological tools
- Adjacencies in the overall floorplate and the appropriate transitions between spaces should meet specific individual and group needs

Here, we see the elements that can be used to create these spaces.
For organizations that have specialized business units, spaces specifically designed for their needs can be incorporated into the floorplate.

FOCUS		**RESTORE**

FOCUS		**RESTORE**

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PROJECT ROOM
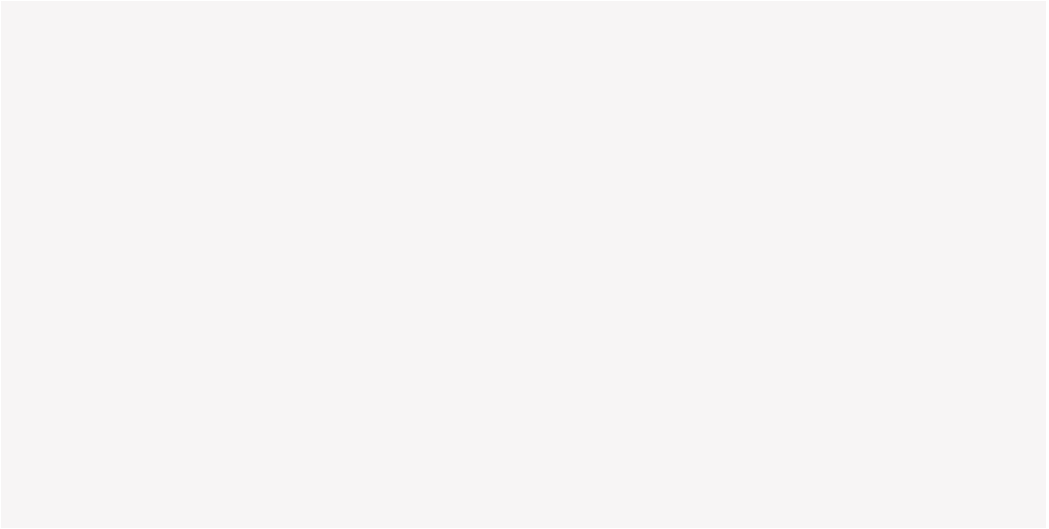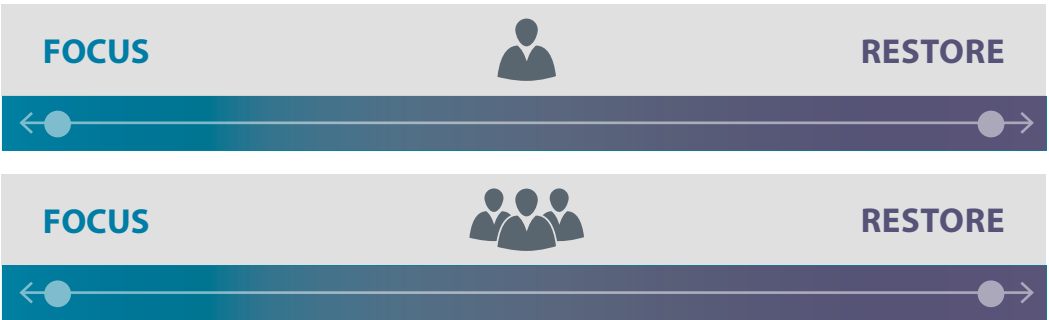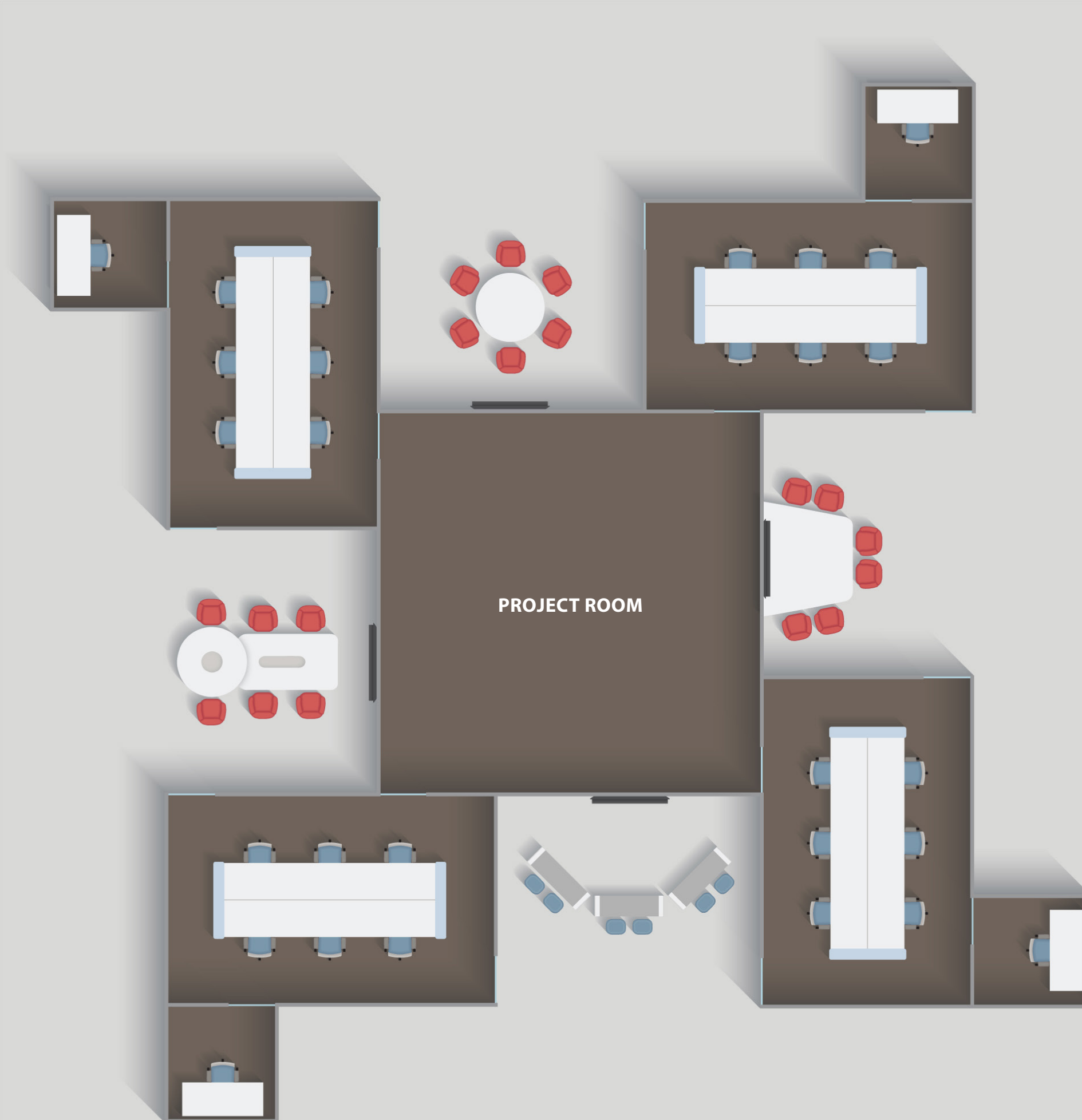
SPECIALIZED UNIT: STRATEGIC THINKING SPACE

Primary Function:
- Long-range, "big idea" projects

Business Examples:
- High-tech firms
- Advertising
- Product development

Cultural Characteristics:
- Dynamic
- Entrepreneurial
- Risk-taking
- Cutting edge

Business Unit Dynamics:
- Multiple teams concentrating on different functions
- Work together to reach goals, find and solve problems, produce new products, etc.

Key Space Requirements:
- Strategy development
- Intense research
- Deep thinking—alone and group

Creative Rhythm:
- Long periods of high-focus group work and collaboration
- Long periods of rest
- Possibly working on multiple projects simultaneously

Spaces:
- Accessible workspaces
- Centralized project room for multi-functional group focus work
- Due to intense periods of focus work, restorative spaces are outside of the unit space to encourage movement
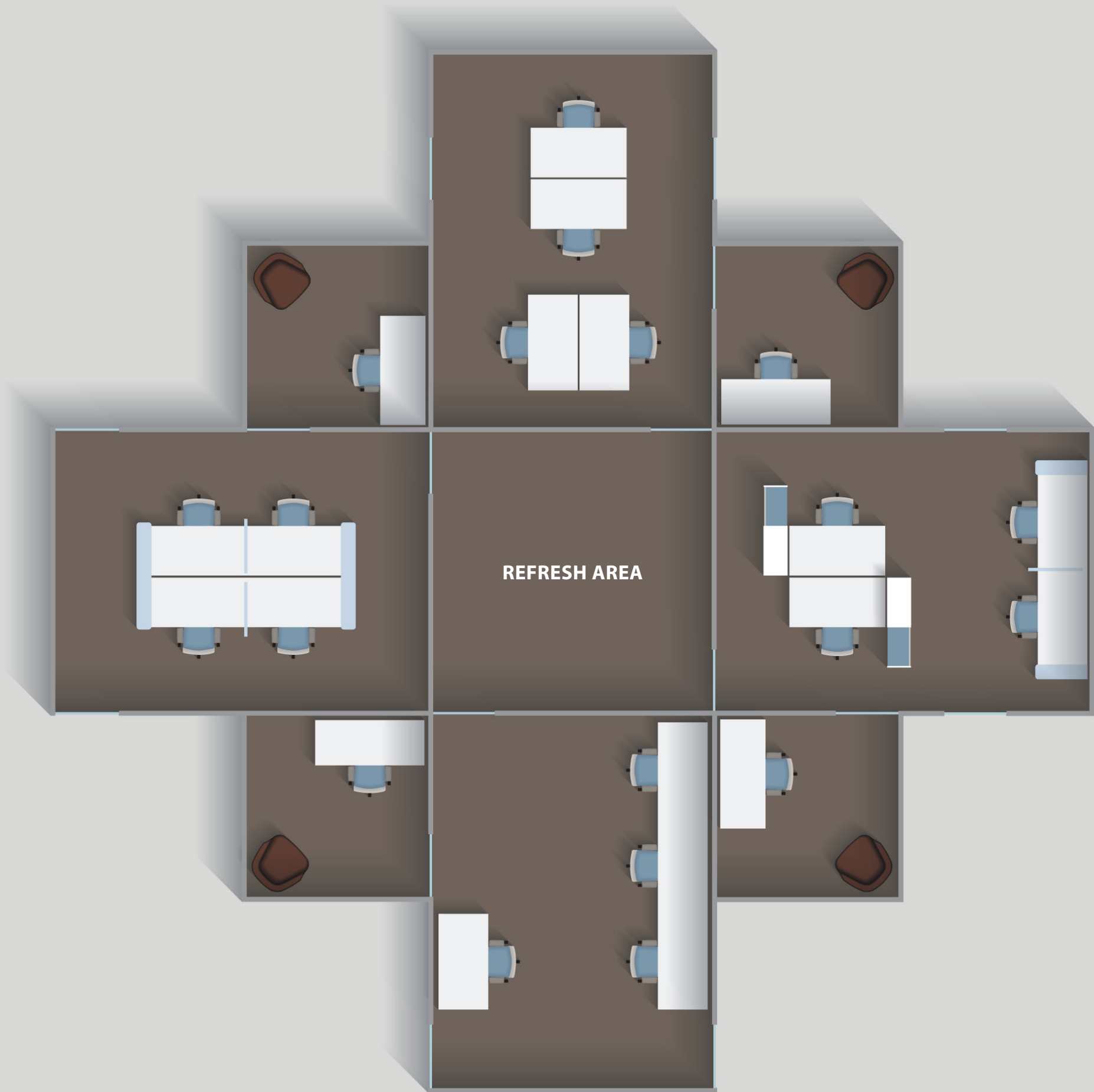
FOCUS   **RESTORE**

FOCUS   **RESTORE**

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REFRESH AREA

SPECIALIZED UNIT: TACTICAL EXECUTION SPACE

Primary Function:
- Routine-based, structured activities

Business Examples:
- Sales
- Customer service/call center
- Transaction-based unit

Cultural Characteristics:
- Efficient/methodical
- Schedule-oriented
- Dependable/risk management
- Competitive/market leaders

Business Unit Dynamics:
- Teams work independently to reach their respective goals
- Rely heavily on one another
- Coordinated work across different teams is less integrated

Key Space Requirements:
- Vary based on team functions, goals, and workstyle
- Access to team for group work

Creative Rhythm:
- Short periods of focus work
- Short periods of rest
- Work on one project at a time

Spaces:
- Configured to support the team's tasks and workstyle
- The need for individual privacy can vary, since group focused work is needed more often
- Central refresh area for restorative activities and socialization
- Formalized group activities happen nearby, but outside the unit space

FOCUS   **RESTORE**

FOCUS   **RESTORE**

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All organizations need to innovate, but not all organizations do it the same way or to the same degree. For that reason, there is—unfortunately—no single, perfect floorplate or application design for innovation. However, peak creative and innovative performance always requires a work environment that:

1

Protects focus

2

Encourages restoration time

3

Provides in-between, or transition time
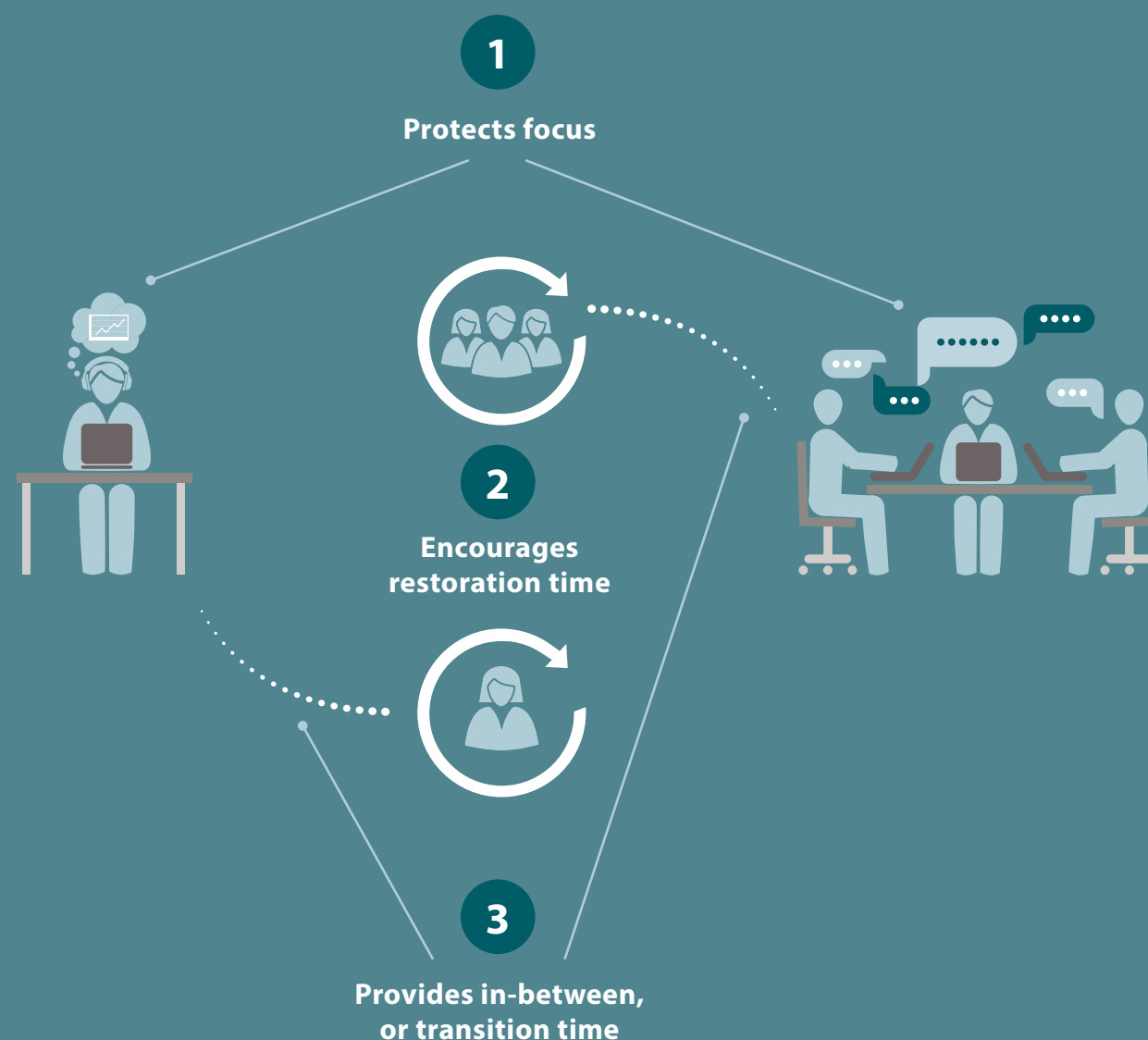
To foster the creative process and encourage innovation, designs need to create a framework of designated spaces that support these activities—tailored to needs of people and groups who use them.

RESOURCES

Need a Little Design Inspiration?
Visit the Haworth Idea Starters page and explore more floorplans and applications to help you design inviting workspaces that support team workstyles while encouraging creativity and innovation.

See How It's Been Done
Check out our Client Spaces gallery and Case Studies to see how some clients promote a culture of creativity and innovation with design.

Help Organizations Boost Innovation
Learn more about why organizations need to unlock creativity and innovation in the workplace at haworth.com/innovation. There, you can also download the Haworth white paper, "Optimizing the Workplace for Innovation: Using Brain Science for Smart Design," to learn about the science that explains the importance of workplace design in helping organizations innovate.

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