

SIX PATTERNS

WORK

conciierge

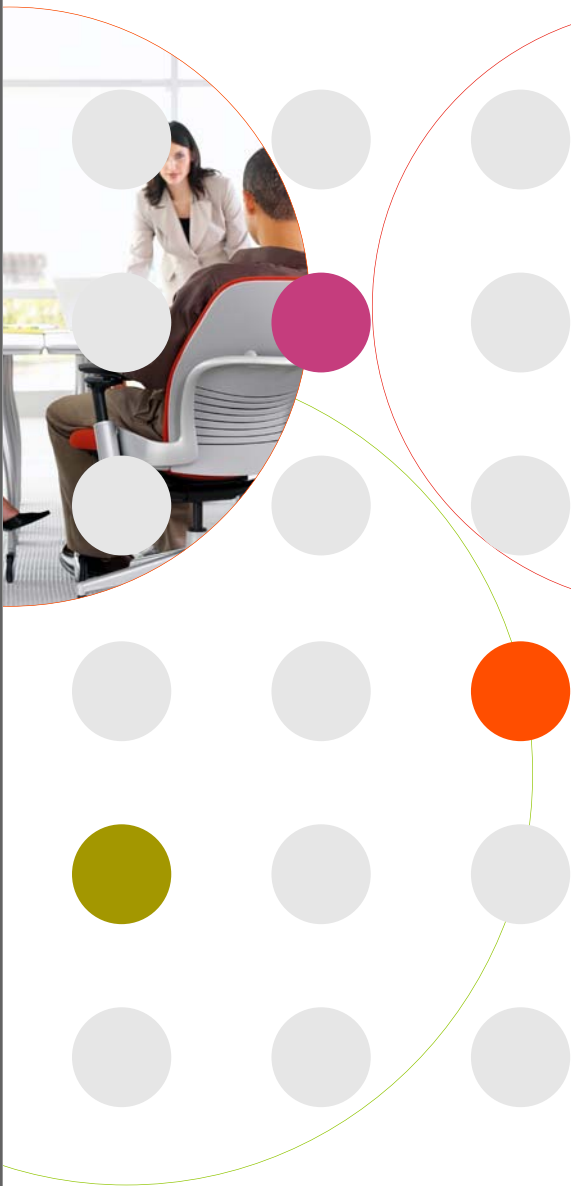
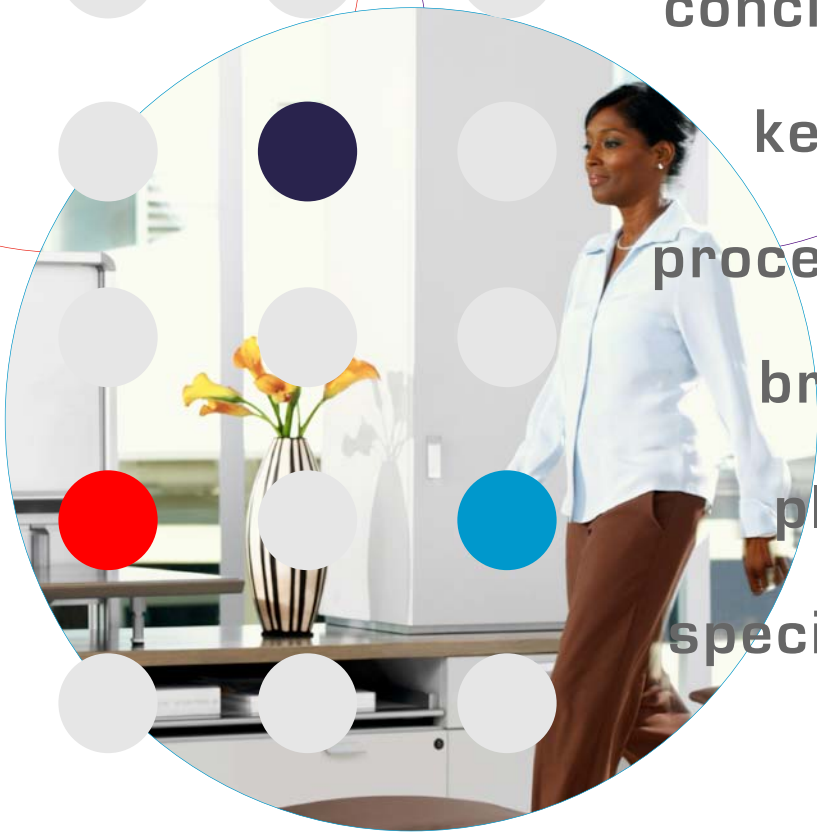
keeper

processor

broker

player

specialist





IT'S NOT AS RANDOM AS IT SEEMS...

Computer desktops and drives. Email. Attachments. Memory sticks. CDs. Binders. Random notes on napkins. Piles and files of paper. Here, there, everywhere. Incoming, incoming, incoming.

Order is hard to come by in today's chaotic, information-bloated workplace. And it's getting worse every day. Increasingly, just one thing seems most important: can you access what you need when you need it? Keeping the flood of information from overwhelming the workplace and people's ability to work effectively has become a major design challenge.

Is there any way out of this mess? Fortunately, the answer is yes.

Science has validated that virtually every form of apparent chaos—from hurricanes to drip art to human networks—has its own underlying patterns. Even the time-honored notion that every snowflake is different has been discredited by the scope and precision of modern research.

Steelcase's ongoing research into how people work has resulted in the discovery of six distinct patterns of work. It's an insight that couldn't come at a better time. A well-designed workspace that's configured to the type of work being done in it can make a big difference in today's increasingly smaller and more intense workplace.

The discovery of these patterns is a boon for designers, too, who are increasingly asked to deliver more in less time. Understanding each of the six patterns can help designers easily tailor workspaces to individuals, even when the basics—size and major components—are universally planned.

Patterns exist and have been discovered in the chaos of today's workplace. Steelcase's ongoing research into how people work has resulted in the discovery of six distinct patterns of work.

A HUMAN CENTERED APPROACH

The six information management patterns that Steelcase researchers have identified are based on categorizations of how individual knowledge workers manage the information they control. The findings are based on research Steelcase did collaboratively with IDEO, The Doblin Group, E Lab, Archideas, Jump Associates and Otherwise.

The project spanned more than three years, and the research went down two dramatically different paths. One subteam studied typical office workers in a cross-section of companies of various types and sizes. Another subteam studied “extreme users”—people who had complex needs or difficult problems managing their information because their situation or business was atypical.

Early in the project, it became clear that everyone creates “collections” of information and objects related to their work, and they arrange this stuff in three primary stages— active, anticipated and archived—to help them remember what they have and how it fits in their work flow. In other words, keeping is directly related to using. More than personal style, how people arrange and manage what’s in their workspace depends on the work they do.

The researchers dubbed this initial insight “the triple-a model.” The more they observed, the more they realized that people tend to have larger collections in one stage versus another, and the ratio among the three stages depends on the nature of the work.

“We found that the patterns that emerged from the so-called ‘normal’ office workers were not only valid but had broad application to all users, regardless of circumstances or special needs,” reports one of the researchers, Michael Fazio, principal of Archideas, a design firm.

WORKWAYS WORKS

WorkWays™, a new web-based assessment tool from Steelcase, uses 10 questions to identify which of the six pattern types a person is. The results include tips and ideas so you can easily match the design of the workspace to the pattern of work being performed.

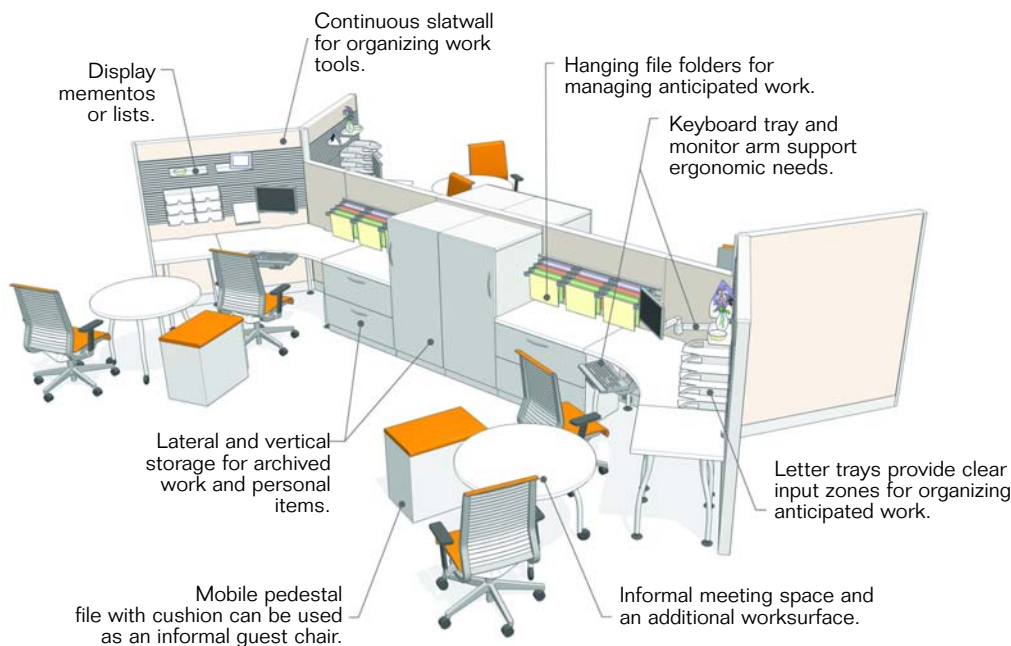
Contact Steelcase at 800.333.9939 to learn how you can put WorkWays to work for you.

Repeatedly, even in very large or complex organizations, the research team was able to match each individual’s *modus operandi* accurately to one of the six patterns, based on an assessment of how they managed information.

Traditional data collection methods for customizing workspaces usually have meant a daunting task for designers and planners. Breaking new ground and patent protected, the findings of the Steelcase project provide easy ways to bring order to what previously seemed random, chaotic and unmanageable. The end result is specific planning considerations for how to design spaces that best support each pattern of work.

CONCIERGE

Concierges are responsible for making sure a department or function runs smoothly, and they have a wide variety of tasks. As a result, they have a high level of interaction with others. Typically, they have a wide focus and are logistics-oriented. Their work is characterized by high levels of interaction. Their information collections help support others’ work and can call for high security.



To best support a Concierge:

- Provide space for multiple, thin stacks of information
- Supply large zones for paper-based information -- active, anticipated and archived
- Provide space for informal information exchanges
- Create space for displaying reminders and planning lists

KEEPER

Keepers are responsible for maintaining and accessing records, documents, objects and information for others.

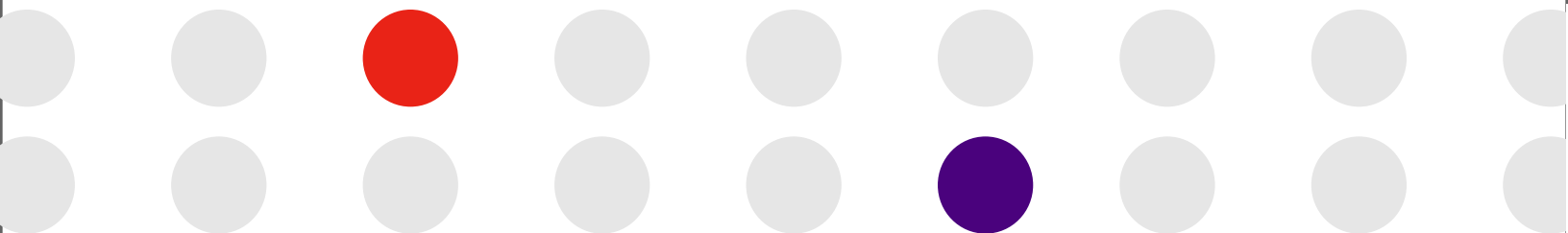
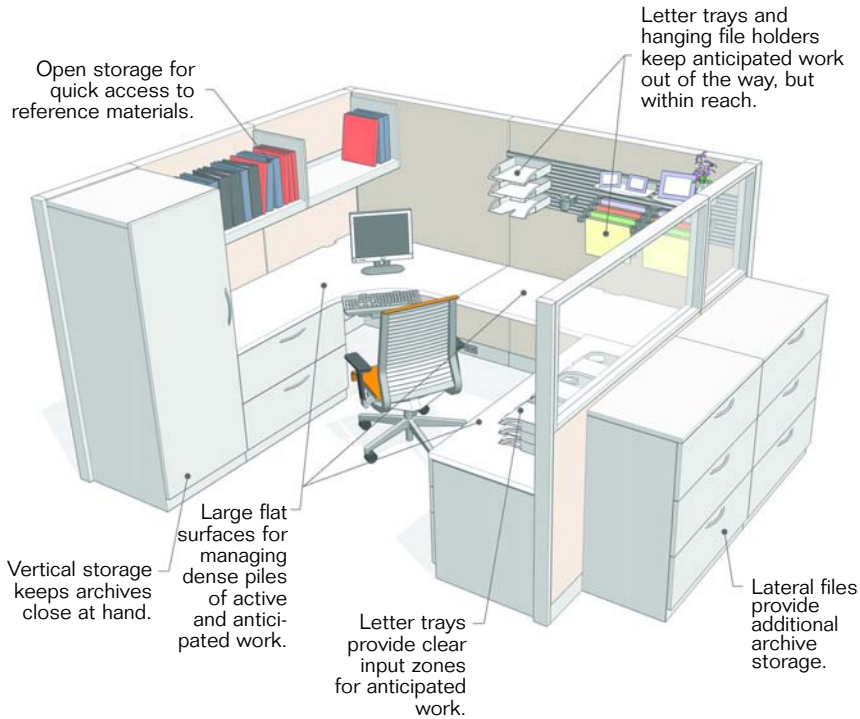


They may have inherited a system from a predecessor. With moderate interaction needs, Keepers experience many interruptions from Brokers, Players and Specialists. Their focus is typically contextual, and they are logistics or protocol oriented. A Keeper tends to keep information collections hidden and stored

vertically, though removable notes may serve as reminders of tasks pending.

To best support a Keeper:

- Provide staging areas for dense stacks of files/boxes
- Ensure that archive storage is nearby
- Supply space for some interaction with others
- Make labeling and cataloging of information easy



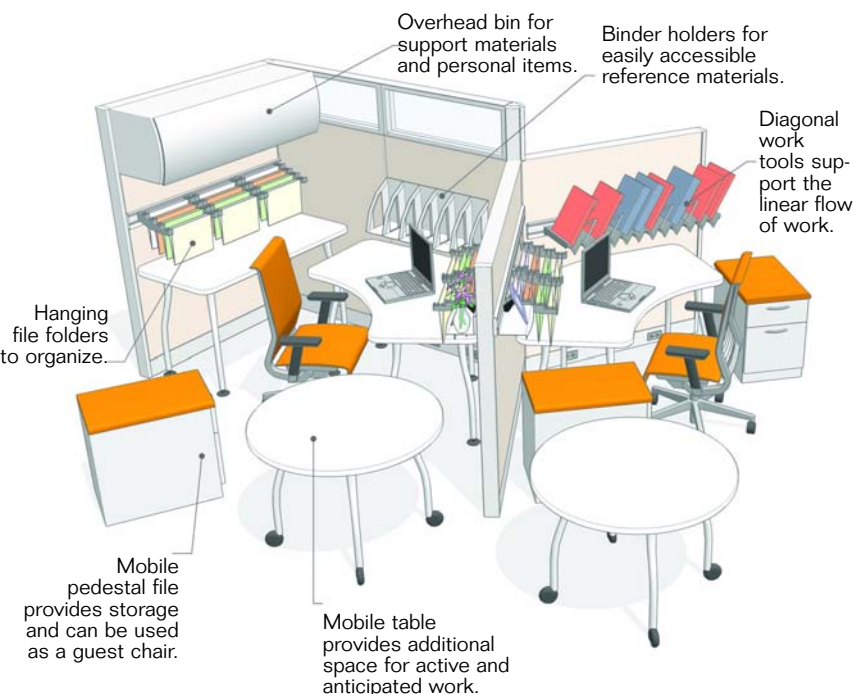
PROCESSOR

Processors perform predefined tasks on a continuous flow of information. Their work is highly filtered and has a predictable set of inputs and outputs. Protocol is important, and content and action are closely linked. Their tight focus often means little interaction with others. Their information collections usually represent projects in progress, along with supporting references. Both hidden and visible files are typically stored horizontally, with notes attached.



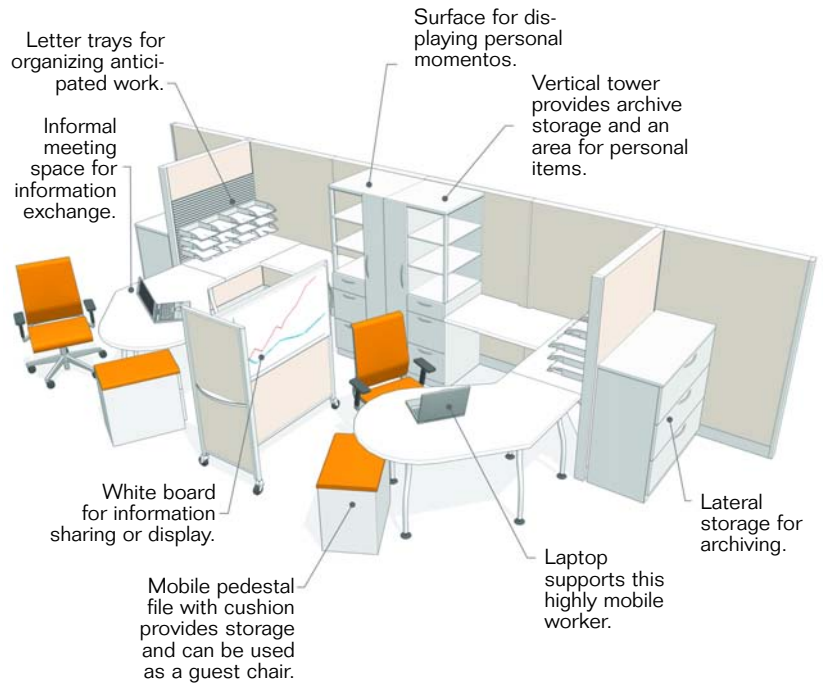
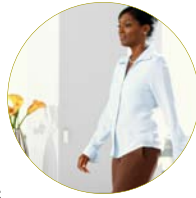
To best support a Processor:

- Provide space for linear movement of collections of information
- Create balance between zones for active and anticipated paper-based work
- Ensure storage space for personal items
- Be less concerned about visitors than for other five types



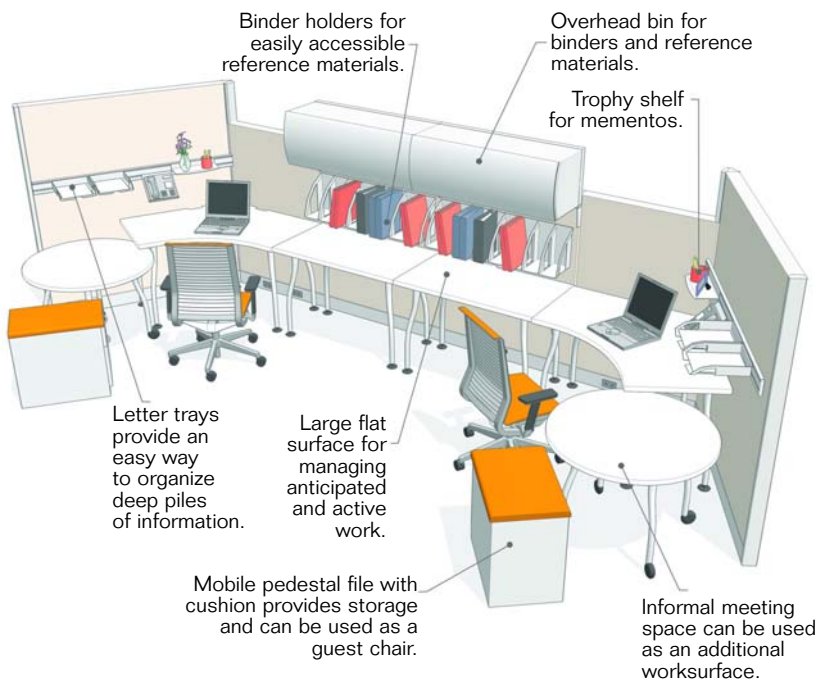
BROKER

Brokers tend to help direct information to those who need it most. With a wide focus and broad scope, their work is highly unstructured, highly interactive and often at the managerial or strategic level of the organization. Because their work is so interactive, they often have difficulty finding time to do individual work. Since they are expected to filter information, they must assess and facilitate what needs to be disseminated to others and kept close at hand. Also, trophies or awards from past work or personal experiences are often displayed.



To best support a Broker:

- Provide large flat surfaces for many small stacks of anticipated paper-based work
- Ensure a zone for active paper-based work, though it can be small
- Provide ample meeting space within the workstation
- Supply staging areas for packing and unpacking the work that Brokers take with them



PLAYER

Players bring their specific skill sets and disciplinary knowledge to a team. They often receive filtered information from others and have a strong emotional and professional connection to their field. Their work is complex and contextual in focus. They must manage a large number of information collections, which are typically visible and managed horizontally. Their desktops may serve as their parking lots, with work stacked on either side of the primary worksurface. They have a need for moderate interaction and are involved in highly variable processes.

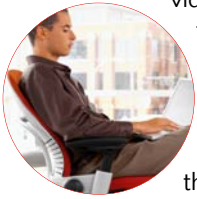


To best support a Player:

- Ensure space on worksurface for one or two deep piles
- Provide ways to balance anticipated and active paper-based work
- Create space for team work
- Provide more shelving for binders than lateral files

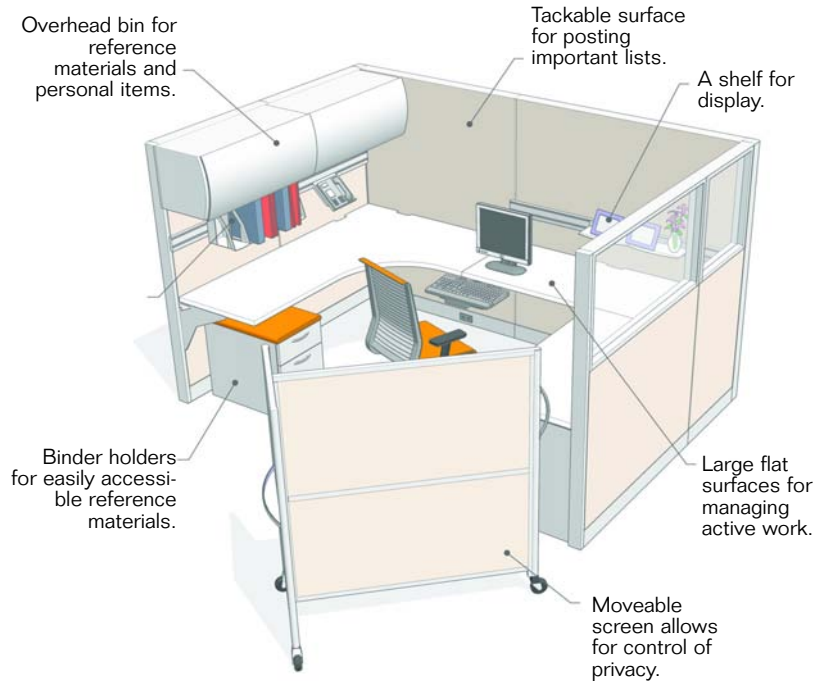
SPECIALIST

Specialists have a tight work focus and often work individually, even if their output is used by a team. Because of this tight focus, they are often shielded from outside distractions so they can stay within their defined processes and concentrate. They often keep the information under their control longer than the other five types and use their disciplinary and content knowledge more. Their work tends to be more open-ended. Their information collections tend to be visible and flat, though vertical items may include quick lists, references and trophies of past exemplary work.



To best support a Specialist:

- Provide flexibility in space, since the shape of information collections varies by project
- Ensure a large zone for active paper-based work
- Create space for trophies and visible quick reference materials
- Be less concerned about providing meeting space than for the other five types



NATURAL PATTERNS

By understanding the individual types based on predictable patterns of information and object management, we can enhance the effectiveness of people. We can transform the idea of storage from simply storing stuff to being a powerful system of knowledge management. By understanding the natural patterns of how each type works, workspaces can be created that allow people to work in ways that fit who they are and what they do.

TRIPLE-A MODELS Everyone creates “collections” of information and objects related to their work, and they arrange this stuff in three primary stages—active, anticipated and archived—to help them remember what they have and how it fits in their work flow.

