

## **Could this be KPU in 2020?**

Like most of the 100 employees on the 19th floor of Toronto-Dominion Bank's south tower in Toronto, the communications officer in the enterprise real estate division is a "floater," with no assigned desk.

Where a receptionist once sat at the office entrance, there's a computer screen he logs into and where he books available work spaces and conference areas at times he'll need them through the day. He carries his wireless laptop with him and can even set up shop in the cafeteria.

Office ergonomics studies have shown that, even in the most desk-bound professions, as many as half the work spaces are unoccupied at any given time in the work day. To counter this and reflect changing times, TD Bank has created clusters of unassigned desks.

The bank is replacing 20 floors of old offices that stationed employees in identical rows of high-walled cubicles that resembled bank vaults. In their place after the renovation will be floors with a range of work areas, from tables to couches and banquettes with swing out work tops. There are phone booths and small enclosures for private conversations, a variety of conference rooms with video conferencing screens and a lunch room with several sizes of tables.

Legal, accounting and banking and financial service firms that have been very traditional in their offices in the past are now leading the trend to what the industry calls "hoteling."

Cost saving is a big factor in the decision. Office ergonomics studies consistently found that, even in the most desk-bound professions, as many as half the work spaces are unoccupied at any given time in the work day. By sharing spaces, an office needs fewer desks and this can mean significant savings on the amount of office space required.

But a demographic shift may be just as significant. Companies competing for young talent need to offer an inviting work environment to attract workers who these days often live in tiny condominium units. They appreciate an office that feels like an extension of their homes, with lots of spaces to socialize with people, and a wireless environment that will let them work wherever they are.

The traditional office was designed to house people doing their own tasks. The future is doing knowledge work in collaboration on devices that don't need to be plugged in at a desk.

Employee engagement scores on the floors that have been reconfigured have gone up in the past year, and employees report that they feel more productive and they collaborate more after they go into the new spaces.