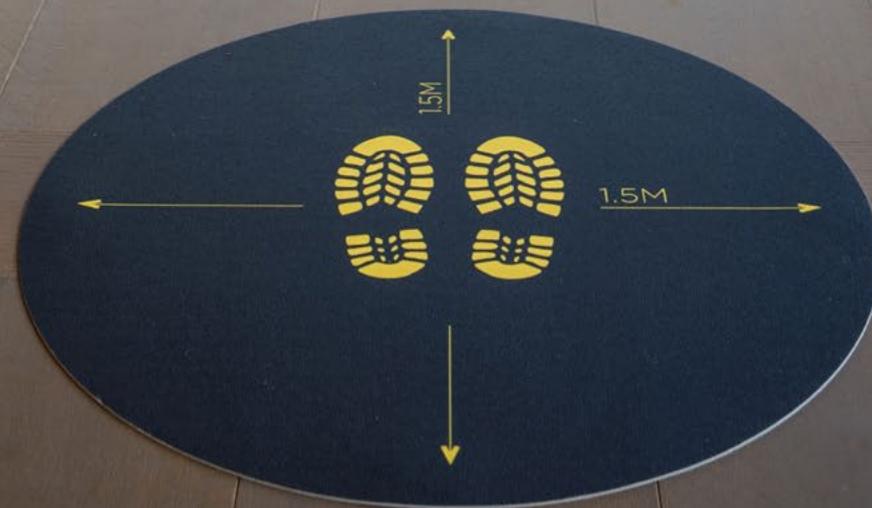


EDGE – Home Working Experience

Edging further towards total work experience



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The Dutch lead the way with many things. It is therefore no surprise that leading property company EDGE headquartered in Amsterdam, has achieved some of the highest employee experience scores on record. In March 2020, as the world went into lockdown due to concerns over coronavirus, EDGE decided to again survey its entire workforce to understand their experience of working from home.

In a world where, for health reasons, we're advised to keep a one-to-two-meter distance from others, a lot of office buildings around the world need to be adapted. The team at EDGE spent March – July 2020 both reflecting and learning to create a work environment that exceeds even new standards.

EDGE is a company that takes its employee experience seriously. They understand that the space an employee works in impacts the work that they complete and can both aid and disrupt their ability to work productively.

The company's original headquarters in Amsterdam was coined 'the smartest building ever constructed' holding this position firmly for many years, while others caught up. The company's new HQ, EDGE Olympic, was opened in 2018 is the healthiest building in the Netherlands, and has a Leesman+ accreditation, scoring an Lmi of 81.7. Respondents agreed almost unanimously that the building is a place that they are proud to bring visitors to (97.8%) as well as somewhere that positively impacts the organisation's culture (96.7%). So, as the world went into lockdown in March 2020 and EDGE's workforce began working from home, it was almost a sure thing that employees would miss their high performing and supportive office-based environment.

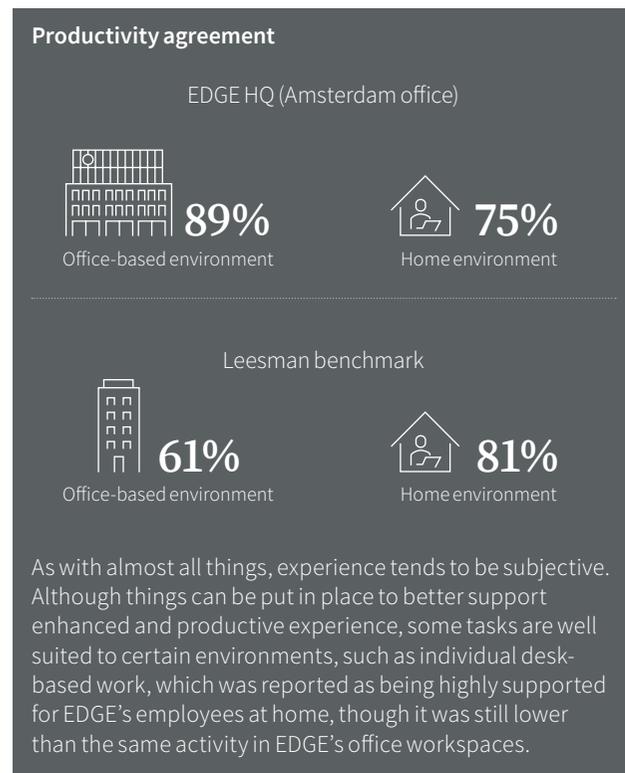
EDGE Olympic achieved an overall HLmi score of 62.7, after deploying the Leesman home working experience assessment in April 2020, showing a huge gap between employees' home and office-based experience.

Direct comparisons can be made between the two environments, but what is immediately apparent is that EDGE's employees longed for social connection during the first half of 2020. Interestingly, EDGE's overall H-Lmi is lower than Leesman's wider home working experience benchmark [at the time of assessment] of 73.6 – further cementing the disparity between the optimal environment of EDGE's workplaces and employees' homes.

The property team worked extensively to ensure its buildings were safe environments for employees to return to, after lockdown, and Leesman data has shown that the younger generation (below 34 years of age) were likely keener to return first, reporting the lowest home experience scores overall. Those who have worked more than 18 months at the organisation appear to be more entwined with EDGE's culture and processes, reporting higher scores relating to connectivity to colleagues and the organisation itself.



It's obvious from the data that, during the time employees were working from home, the technological aspects of work experience held up well, indicating that EDGE's core team successfully aided their workforce with the move to temporary home working, supporting them with the equipment they required, enabling them to continue their work. 89% of respondents felt they had access to all the IT devices and tools they needed and all the software applications/programs needed.



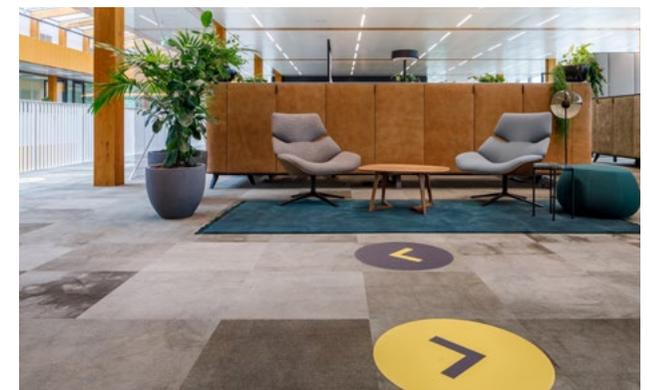
Connection, knowledge sharing, and informal social interaction seemed to be a struggle for employees during the enforced home working period. The Leesman home working benchmark also indicates this, but in EDGE's case it is even more prevalent. Learning from others was supported by a mere 17% of the organisation, and collaboration on creative work and larger group meetings or audiences also suffered greatly during this time.

The outstanding scores EDGE previously achieved on its office-based experiences, in conjunction with the absence of social connectivity has caused many people to crave the workplace ecosystem they left behind. That said, EDGE also wanted to ask its teams the average number of days they sought to work from home in the future and how many they worked from home pre-COVID. The results show that home working will take a more prominent role in the overall strategy moving forward – on average employees worked 0.4 days at home pre-COVID. Post-COVID, the workforce stated they'd like to work from home on average 2.2 days a week.

EDGE appreciated that this meant they had to sweat their asset, the peak performing workplace, even harder, to ensure employees felt more supported than ever, and had everything they need to feel comfortable, safe and productive. For EDGE, technology has always been a key source of information and a key basis for their developments. To modify their workspaces to meet COVID-19 safety requirements, some minor software changes were made to the sensors connected to the EDGE Smart Platform at EDGE Olympic. The platform offers full transparency on current building performance, visualising, for example, the maximum number of people per meeting room to ensure a safe distance at all times. Through the EDGE Smart Platform, facility managers and employees are directly informed about the overall performance of the office, as well as the space currently used.



CO₂ levels are a very important indicator of how fresh air is and go a long way in preventing the risk of Covid. As such, the platform warns people when the air quality is too poor to stay in a room and all meeting rooms have an extra 30-minute ventilation break after each scheduled meeting. Facility management can also make use of this data for more efficient cleaning, maintenance and scheduling.

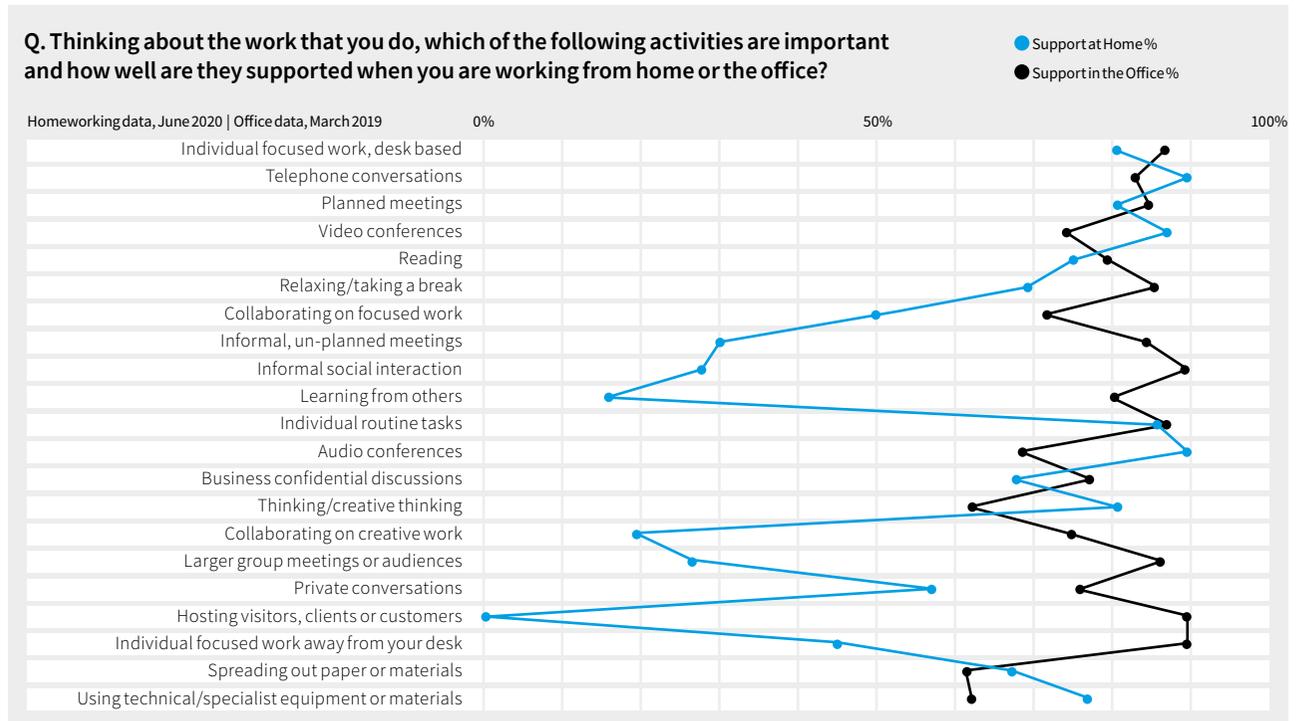


EDGE wanted to understand the data at as granular a level as possible, to help plan for the future and make adjustments as necessary, as well as supporting those who felt they needed to return sooner, to do so.

“We carefully examined all data the building was already measuring and – together with external experts such as virologists and indoor climate specialists – we looked at it from the perspective of how this data could help prevent the risk of Covid.” **Florijn Vriend – Product Lead Wellbeing**

For EDGE, some employees appear to have thrived with home working, though those who did not really suffered. The wider Leesman benchmark proves the same is true for the masses, and there are so many factors that impact one’s work experience – whether at home or the office.

EDGE’s employees, overall, felt as though their homes supported them with thinking and creative thinking (90% agreed) and individual focused work, desk based (89% agreed). If employees therefore work from home more in the future some more deep focused work can be achieved there, though it’s crucial to remember this does not mean the same activities are not supported in the office. Leesman+ (high performing) spaces do well to offer variety in their work settings, to support a wide range of tasks and working preferences. Focused work away from a desk, for instance, is something EDGE employees appear to struggle with at home, so by having inclusive variety in their office space, a balance can be achieved by all employees – whose home settings vary greatly.



A third of EDGE’s workforce felt as though they did not have a good work life balance while working from home. The data here allows for opportunities to be derived in terms of implementing flexibility of choice for employees when coming into the office and at what times. Ultimately, experience comes down to more than just the physical environment. Culture plays a huge part and being a people-centric organisation, EDGE understands this and capitalises on it with its full suite of workplace offerings, employee support for remote workers, technological advances to keep the space safe, and communication with employees.

It’s imperative that EDGE’s employees keep returning to base, to get a dose of the ‘secret sauce’, in order to feel as though they can productively work from home on a flexible basis. All 119,000-sq-ft of the EDGE Olympic building in Amsterdam’s central business district, is state of the art, comprising EDGE’s new headquarters, the offices of three other long-term tenants, co-working studios and desk space, a central atrium, a cafeteria, and terraces on the rooftop and ground floor. With such a space left vacant, waiting to be populated again, it’s easy to understand why EDGE’s employees feel less supported overall at home.

“We are currently seeing a massive return to office under the Covid restrictions; in some part for those who need to do focussed work and do not have that opportunity at home, but mainly for the teams that suffered most in terms of knowledge sharing; being able to go back is helping them tremendously in connecting with each other again face to face, which is a crucial aspect of their jobs. It turned out no online tool was able to offer that the way a good office space can.

As the pandemic forced everyone into a massive work-from-home experiment as never seen before, zooming in in on the subjective experience of the lockdown has helped us understand how to help our employees during this period, how to aid specific teams and subgroups within our workforce, but it has also immediately allowed us to draw lessons for future workplace strategies. By comparing the homeworking dataset to our (pre-Covid) office dataset and by using our smart building data, we have a crystal-clear picture of how the office was, and should be functioning in the future. With our new company EDGE Next we are providing the technology used in EDGE buildings to office buildings worldwide allowing anyone to benefit and optimize their space on a real time basis.”

Coen van Oostrom, EDGE's Founder & CEO.

