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# Generational work environment preferences: Case Ovenia

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2013 Leppävaara



Laurea University of Applied Sciences  
Leppävaara

## Generational work environment preferences: Case Ovenia

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Facility Management  
Bachelor's Thesis  
November, 2013

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Year	2013	Pages	67
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The objective of this thesis is to identify the present work environment preferences of employees working in the case company Ovenia and find out if there are generational differences in the work environment preferences. In the past years technology has developed fast and had influence on the way we work. The meaning and usage of work offices have changed and as younger generations start working they are used to using all these different technologies. Therefore, to attract the younger generations, companies need to take more notice on the work environment to support the new ways of working.

The theoretical framework of this thesis is based on literature, previous research papers on work environment and various web-based sources. The theory section will introduce work environment, the concept of generations, and what the previous studies have discovered on the working ways of different generations. The empirical data was gathered with qualitative online survey. The empirical section will introduce the case company, the research background, methodology and how the qualitative material was analyzed.

The results on the current work environment indicated that surveying the work environment preferences of the employees is important in order to create a work environment which would support working to the fullest. The results provide a good general overview of the current work environment at Ovenia and what are the aspects to which more attention should be paid in order to make a better work environment for people working at Ovenia. Furthermore, differences between the different generations in satisfaction with the current work environment were detectable.

The results on the work environment preferences compared to the current work environment showed that the current work environment does not fully support the needs and preferences of the employees. Also some differences in the preferences of the different generations were possible to notice. More support from virtual work environment to the moving work, and more flexible and creative workspaces were requested. Therefore it would be important for Ovenia to taken more notice of the work environment.

Key words, work environment, preferences, generations,

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### Generational work environment preferences: Case Ovenia

Vuosi 2013

Sivumäärä 67

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Tämän opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli identifioida Ovenian työntekijöiden mieltymyksiä työympäristöönsä sekä tutkia onko mieltymyksissä sukupolvellisiä eroja. Viime vuosien aikana teknologia on kehittynyt nopeasti ja vaikuttanut työtapoihin. Toimistojen tarkoitus ja toiminnot ovat muuttuneet ja kun nuoremmat sukupolvet aloittavat töissä ovat he tottuneita käyttämään erilaisia teknisiä laitteita. Houkutellakseen nuorempaa työväkeä yritysten täytyy kiinnittää enemmän huomiota työympäristöön joka tukee uusia työtapoja.

Opinnäytetyön teoreettinen viitekehys pohjautuu kirjallisuuteen, aikaisempiin työympäristöön liittyviin tutkimuksiin sekä useisiin internet lähteisiin. Teoria osassa esitellään mitä tarkoitetaan työympäristöllä, sukupolvilla sekä miten aikaisemmissa tutkimuksissa on todettu eri sukupolvien työtapojen eroavan toisistaan. Empiirinen aineisto on koottu kvalitatiivisella sähköisellä kyselyllä. Empiirisessä osassa esitellään kohdeyritys, tutkimuksen tausta, tutkimusmenetelmät sekä kuinka kvalitatiivinen materiaali analysoitiin.

Tulokset nykyiseen työympäristöön osoittavat, että työntekijöiden mieltymyksiä työympäristöön on tärkeä mitata, jolloin voidaan luoda työympäristö, joka tukisi työtä mahdollisimman hyvin. Tulokset antavat hyvän yleiskuvan Ovenian tämän hetkiseen työympäristöön ja mitkä asiat työympäristössä ovat sellaisia joihin pitäisi kiinnittää enemmän huomiota, jotta Oveniasa olisi parempi työympäristö. Lisäksi eroavaisuuksia eri sukupolvien tyytyväisyydessä nykyiseen työympäristöön oli mahdollista havaita.

Tulokset nykyisen ja ihanteellisen työympäristön välillä osoittivat, että nykyinen työympäristö ei tue täysin työntekijöiden tarpeita ja mieltymyksiä. Myös eroavaisuuksia eri sukupolvien mieltymyksissä oli havaittavissa. Paremmiin tuettu virtuaalinen työympäristö liikkuvaa työtä varten, ja enemmän joustavia ja luovia työtiloja kaivattiin. Ovenian olisikin tärkeää ottaa paremmiin huomioon työympäristöön liittyvät seikat.

Keywords, työympäristö, mieltymykset, sukupolvet

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## 1 Introduction

The ways people work today have changed dramatically from the ways people worked twenty to thirty years ago. Especially development in technology has made it possible to work almost anywhere at any given time. People are no longer bound to their desks in offices but instead their work environment has expanded to other places such as home, trains and cafés. In some jobs there is no more need for a large amount of space for folders and paperwork as almost everything can be stored in electronic form and documents can be saved on hard drives and online archives. The meaning and usage of work offices change, forcing companies to rearrange the offices to adapt to the new way of working.

Due to the changes in the working ways in the world of today, what people need, prefer and want from their work environment is quite different than before and there can be high variation in how different people prefer to work. How people feel about their work environment has always had a significant role but now that ways to work have changed also the preferences change. Therefore the purpose of this thesis is to identify the present work environment preferences and more importantly the feeling people have on their current work environment versus how they would prefer their ideal work environment to be.

Much research has already been carried out on the work environment preferences and this material is used as a background for this thesis. Some of the studies also suggest that the differences in the work environment preferences could be generational, meaning that people born and affected by same life events would have similar preferences on their work environment. Although grouping people into social generations is controversial, in this thesis the work environment preferences are looked at from the perspective of generations to discover if there really are any generational differences between how people see their work environment.

To begin with, the thesis introduces what is work environment and describes the different elements which affect work environment. For clarity the work environment in this thesis is divided into three parts: physical, social and virtual work environment. As the basis of this thesis relies on the generational thinking, in the second section of this thesis the concept of generation is familiarized, and theory on the five different generations and how they have been found to act in working world are introduced.

After the theory on work environment and generations, the case work environment is introduced. For this thesis the work environment was chosen to be the Oventia Group, one of the leading companies in the field of asset, property and facility management in Finland. Reason for focusing only on the work environment of a certain company allows the better utilization

of the results as Ovenia gets better insight to the ways the employees see their work environment and how it could be improved.

Much research on work environment preferences have already been carried out, none of which has, however, investigated the reasons people have behind their preferences. To have more insight to the ideas people have on their current work environment and the work environment of their preference, an online survey with a qualitative approach was conducted. The survey was conducted by using open questions concerning physical, social and virtual work environment. This is the way in which it was possible for people to write their real thoughts about their work environment instead of just clicking on a scale of agree-disagree. To have as much responses as possible the research language was chosen to be Finnish as it is the native language of the employees and this way the quality of the material was considered better than if the survey would have been done in English.

Using Finnish as a research language and online survey as a research method made it possible to reach employees all around Finland and get the responses quickly and in an easily usable form. The sample size was sufficient and the amount of material to be analyzed was considerable. As the questions were open, the results of the survey were mainly text and therefore different research methods were needed to help analyzing all the material in a way that enabled conclusions on the issues that needed most emphasizing.

As a result were presented how people experience the work environment now, but most importantly how people working at Ovenia would prefer their work environment and what kind of differences in the preferences of different generations were found. Also the overall feelings about the current work environment are concluded and based on the findings some suggestions are offered on what Ovenia could do to make the current work environment better and closer to the work environment the employees would prefer working in.

## 2 Work environment

The work environment is the place where the work is done. It can be considered to be a combination of the physical, virtual and social environment (Rothe, Niemi, Lindholm & Luoma 2010, 3). By this is meant that the work environment is everything that a person is surrounded with while working, meaning the tangible aspects such as the building itself, furniture and the people. Also the intangible aspects such as the virtual work environment and how they get along with their colleagues can have a more significant impact on people than the physical aspects.

In fact people are the most fundamental part of an organization and therefore their satisfaction with the work environment is important (Rothe, Lindholm, Hyvönen & Nenonen 2012, 78-79). If people do not feel good about the work environment in which they work, it can have an effect on their work performance and productivity. Therefore, having a workplace that offers the employees the possibility to enjoy working would be crucial for the well-being of the employees as well as for the success of the company. The difficulty in creating a workplace that everyone would feel most comfortable in comes from the fact that what people need, expect and prefer from their work environment can vary a great deal from person to person (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry 1990, 18-19).

From needs and preferences, needs are something that should not be compromised. Needs are something that a person cannot function without. When it comes to needs in the workplace, needs are something without which a person cannot do their work (Rothe et al. 2012, 80). Then again preferences are simply desires and wishes of people which people might not actually need to be able to work but something that if they are met or exceeded can increase the satisfaction and productivity of the person. (Rothe et al. 2012, 79.)

Therefore, the work environment preferences are important to take into consideration at the workplace. This has been realized already in studies made about work environment preferences. One of the studies used in this thesis as background material on the work environment preferences was PREFE Project (No date), a project that identified the needs and preferences of the office occupiers in a changing business environment. As a part of this study a survey for individual office space users in Finland was conducted to gather a wide knowledge on the needs and preferences people have regarding their work environment. The same study also conducted a survey among the decision makers of the organizations. Together these surveys give good insight to the differences that the users and the decision makers have on the work environment and, most importantly concerning this thesis, how the office users prefer their work environment. (PREFE Project No date.)

The preference surveys discovered that users prefer the most a workspace that supports well-being and the ability to enjoy work. This can be achieved by having a workspace that supports completion of tasks that require concentration and privacy, and makes it possible to adjust the furniture to suit own purposes. Only after this came the more technical preferences such as adjustability of lighting, air conditioning and room temperature. Still being able to adjust and influence the work environment was important to the users. Interesting was that for the organizations the preferences were more technical and adjustability of room temperature and air conditioning were the priorities. (PREFE Project No date.)

The results from the PREFE Project (No Date) already show how important it is for organizations to survey the employees about their preferences as well as the preferences of the organization to reach the best possible work environment for everyone. It is also important to remember that all the people working inside an organization are individuals with different work environment needs and preferences. Therefore as stated by Wiggins (2010, 145) flexibility and choice is needed from the space for people to work to their best abilities. It is also studied that when an organization has a healthy work environment and the employees are satisfied it can decrease the number of days they are on sick leave.

## 2.1 Physical work environment

The physical work environment is the tangible environment, meaning the building itself, the physical objects and elements inside and outside of the building. Elements of physical work environment include matters such as lighting, noise, heating, air conditioning, ventilation, furniture, and security. All these physical elements have great effect on the overall work environment and if there are problems with these elements they might cause health problems, dissatisfaction and decrease productivity.

In the end report of the PREFE Project preference surveys Rothe et al. (2010, 62) discovered that users value a workplace in which the built environment supports the task completion by giving the users a possibility to concentrate on their work. This means a workspace that supports their well-being, privacy and adjustability according to the task (Rothe et al. 2010, 62). Different physical aspects are therefore important to take into consideration to be able to offer the best possible work environment for the users.

### 2.1.1 Furniture & ergonomics

Furniture and especially the ergonomics of the office furniture have a significant role in the physical work environment. Ergonomics is one of the most important matters making the working comfortable and efficient. With ergonomics the working, working tools and work environment are made to fit to the person and this way it promotes the health of the user (Työterveyslaitos 2013d). Furniture which are not ergonomic for the user can cause severe health problems.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act (Finlex No date) gives some regulations concerning ergonomics of the workstations, work postures and work motions. Most importantly the work environment needs to be designed in a way that is ergonomically appropriate for the user. Working should not cause harm on the health of a person and any operations that could threaten the health of the person should be avoided or suitable equipment must be used and in this way minimize the strain to the person.

In the preference survey of PREFE Project Rothe et al. (2010, 62) discovered that the third most important attribute for office occupiers was the fact that people can adjust their workspace furniture. This indicated that people want to have a comfortable workspace and the possibility to modify their workspace according to their desires.

### 2.1.2 Lighting

Good lighting makes practically any space more comfortable. The most important features of good lighting according to Työturvallisuuskeskus (No date) are sufficient illuminance level, efficient glare protection, correct surface luminosity relations, and that the light is correctly aimed and the color qualities are suitable. Good lighting supports working, as well as promotes the health, safety and productivity of employees (Työterveyslaitos 2013a). Even though many think that it is just important that there is lots of light, Booty reminds (2006, 363) that for lighting not only the quantity but also the quality is important. Therefore it is important that the lighting is done correctly in a way that would not stress the eyes and maximizes the vitality conditions. (Työterveyslaitos 2013a; Wiggings 2010, 152; Booty 2005, 363.)

There are many types of light but the most preferred and the best source of light is natural light, of which there is usually not enough. Therefore also electric lighting is needed especially in Finland where there is less daylight available during winter time. Even though daylight is the best source of light, proper shading should be taken care of because for instance buildings with big windows can get uncomfortably warm during summer times when direct sunlight heats up the interior. (Booty 2006, 361.)

For electric lighting the illuminance level needed for office surroundings according to Työterveyslaitos (2010a) is from 300 to 1000 lux depending on the visual demands of the task. However, if people could choose the illuminance level by themselves, the majority would choose 1000 to 3000 lux says Työterveyslaitos (2010a). This might increase the productivity but the higher lux levels would also cause more expenses and therefore the lux levels in normal office work are under 1000 lux (Työterveyslaitos 2010a).

Kallasjoki (2003) sees lighting as a vital part of good work environment and there are different aspects that need to be considered when choosing lighting. Most important is to know what kind of work is done and what needs to be seen. Also the age and eyesight of the employee needs to be taken into consideration. Positioning of the lighting is crucial to avoid possible disturbing glare and reflections on the surfaces and especially on computer monitors (Wiggings 2010, 154). In the best situation lighting of the workspace should be flexible and easily modified according to the task and controlled by the users (Wiggings 2010, 153).

The importance of the ability to adjust lighting was also discovered to be important to office users in the preference surveys of PREFE Project by Rothe et al. (2010, 62) in which the fifth most important feature for office occupiers was the ability to adjust the lighting. Although having inadequate lighting does not cause eye injuries, it can stress the eyes (Työterveyslaitos 2010a). Therefore it is important to use proper lighting according to the task to avoid unnecessary stress to the eyes. Especially as computers become increasingly important in our work it is important take care of the light conditions.

### 2.1.3 Noise

Noise in office surrounding can disturb concentration and in this way decrease productivity. Especially in open plan offices closer attention should be paid to the sound passing and acoustics of the space. Offices contain surprisingly many different sources of noise such as printers, telephones ringing, people talking, typing on computer, and clatter from walking. A carefully made interior design plan takes all these into consideration.

Especially in open plan offices taking care of the acoustics is important. To avoid unnecessary noise sound absorbing materials should be used as well as high partition screens to separate the workstations and some pleasant sound to cover the voices. Of course it is also important to take other people in consideration while working in an office and make clear rules on how to behave in the office in a way that unnecessary noise could be avoided. (Työterveyslaitos 2010b.)

How noise affects depends on the situation and the person because everyone hears sounds differently and even the same level of noise can disturb one person differently depending on the task (Haavisto 2002). For office surroundings the reference value of noise is 45dB and this is the stated value in the Finnish law (Finlex 2013). Office work is usually something that requires concentration and therefore it is important to avoid unnecessary noise and especially sudden loud noises or constant loud speaking. When people get interrupted by noise it can cause frustration for the person who cannot due to this possibly complete all the tasks wanted or needed.

When the noise volume rises above 80dB it can be harmful for hearing (Työterveyslaitos 2011a). There are various health problems that noise causes from which the worst is having a hearing problem or losing hearing entirely. Noise can also cause a person to get psychically exhausted or socially isolated, causing stress and in this way leading to absence from work. Being exhausted can lead to slower reaction times and thereby result in accidents and decreasing productivity (Työterveyslaitos 2010c).

#### 2.1.4 Heat and ventilation

Heat has quite a great effect on the comfort of people in their workplace and how productive they are (Työterveyslaitos 2013b). Environmental factors affecting the heat balance of human are air temperature, infrared radiation, wind and humidity. In addition to environmental factors also clothing and how heavy the workload is affect the heat balance. (Työterveyslaitos 2013c). According to Työsuojeluhallinto (2013a) the recommended temperature in office desk work is from 21 degrees to 25 degrees Celsius and the optimized temperature for office work according to Työterveyslaitos (2013b) is during winter time 21.5 degrees Celsius and during summer time 24.5 degrees Celsius.

Especially during summer times the sunlight can cause the interior temperature to rise unbearably high. There are many ways to prevent infrared radiation from warming up the interior. Using different types of shades, marqueses and curtains we can prevent direct sunlight coming from the windows. There are also window glasses available which reflect or do not pass infrared radiation. Well-functioning air conditioning and ventilation also helps to keep the room temperature in the optimized limit as well as exclude draft discomfort. (Työterveyslaitos 2011b.)

The Occupational Safety and Health Act (Finlex No date) states that the ventilation of a workplace needs to be effective enough to provide enough air to breathe. There should also be enough room reserved for working and moving around the workstation. Ventilation changes the air inside to keep the air quality of the interior at the appropriate level. The idea of air conditioning is to keep the heat and humidity conditions at the optimized level. The ventilation and air conditioning systems need to be checked and maintained regularly. (Työterveyslaitos 2011c).

To have the most benefit from the air conditioning it is important to not allow the heat capacity to increase too much. If the air conditioning needs to be put on high volume it can cause draft which affects the comfort of the space. Therefore it is important to plan well where the air is directed. (Työterveyslaitos 2011d.)

In the preference surveys of PREFE Project by Rothe et al. (2010, 62) the eighth most important feature is the ability to adjust air conditioning and ninth most important is the ability to adjust the temperature. This shows that people do want to be able to affect their working conditions, but there are still more important issues in the work environment that need to be taken into consideration.

### 2.1.5 Colors & design

The reason why colors are important to take into consideration while planning the workspace is that colors affect the mood, atmosphere, vitality and satisfaction of the employees (Verkkohelpa 2007). The way people see and experience different colors varies and they can have negative and positive effects on individuals depending on where they are used and how they are seen (Nolan No date). In addition to colors also the design of the work environment can affect the motivation and inspiration of the user. With good interior design and coloring we are able to make work environment inviting, functional and inspiring.

An interesting thing about colors are the different meanings and symbolism that they have. Table 1 presents some of the positive and negative meanings of different colors. The most used colors at workplaces are usually quite natural and moderate, light and down-to-earth colors. Bright and flashy colors are something that were not used much before but in the offices of today the variety of colors is broader. Still, using too much color might make the space look confusing and heavy. Therefore light colors should be used to make the space look bigger and brighter. But no matter which colors are used, color harmony in space design is quite crucial for a good end result. With logical use of colors spaces with good color harmony can be created, becoming more comfortable to work in (Revonkorpi 2005).

COLOR:	POSITIVE MEANINGS:	NEGATIVE MEANINGS:
<b>Black</b>	Formal, sophisticated, mysterious, strong,	Negative, tragic, sad
<b>Blue</b>	Calm, trustworthy, systematic, authority	Predictable, cold, depressive, dark, conservative
<b>Brown</b>	Warm, down to earth, mature	Dirty, sad, cheap
<b>Green</b>	Natural, calming, relaxing, tough, reliable	Boring, self-evident, jealous, inexperienced, greedy
<b>Orange</b>	Vital, funny, excited, sociable,	Shallow, ordinary, dreamer,
<b>Purple</b>	Imaginative, sensitive, intuitive	Unusual, selfless, arrogant, impractical
<b>Red</b>	Dynamic, powerful, bold, passionate, confident	Aggressive, dominant, dangerous,
<b>White</b>	Pure, clean, fresh	Clinical, cold, sterile
<b>Yellow</b>	Happy, friendly, optimistic, active	Annoying, cowardly, impulsive,

Table 1: Meanings of colors (Verkkohelpa 2007, Nolan No Date)

In terms of design, in work offices it has not been taken into much consideration before. The offices have been usually following the same pattern where people have a desk, a chair and cupboards. Spaces are open plan with dividers separating the people, or own offices with impermeable walls. Meeting rooms have rectangular conference tables and chairs. In offices of today the design and most importantly the layout of the offices have finally been taken into closer consideration. Glass is used to separate spaces allowing the spaces to feel more spacious. Also more creative and colorful furniture are used and different ways to work have been included alongside the common work desk working.

#### 2.1.6 Security

The feeling of security is one of the most important feelings that people need from their work environment and security has an effect on everything. This was also discovered in the preference survey of PREFE Project by Rothe et al. (2010, 62) in which safety of the area was in the top ten of the most important attributes for office occupiers when it came to the comfort of the area. For people to feel comfortable and to work to the best of their abilities they need to be sure that they are free from danger, risk and doubt concerning their work environment (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry 1990, 22).

The importance of security has increased over the years and with the help of technology, it has become easier to control and to monitor. As security systems have developed, it has made access control easier and in this way made it easier to limit the moving of people in specific areas. But as the world relies more and more on technical systems, the society becomes more vulnerable. Even though technology helps to control and monitor security, it does not mean that there would not be need for people. Having the most high-technology security systems would not help if there are not people who act when something in the systems indicates a problem.

One way to increase the safety of the users in office buildings is to have a receptionist in the main lobby who receives the guests. The entrance floor of the building can also be used as a place to meet customers, which might sometimes be more secure than taking the guests to the actual office area. This also make users of the buildings feel more secure at their workspace when there is not possibility of outsiders wandering in the office.

#### 2.2 Virtual environment

Technologies have developed fast in the past years, changing the way people work, communicate and organize their doings. As the virtual environment is these days an important part of life it is also important to take the virtual environment into consideration when aiming to meet the workplace needs of the users (Rothe, Lindhlo, Hyvönen & Nenonen 2012, 82). The

needs and knowledge about the virtual environment are different from person to person. Some people are more conscious than others about all the different possibilities the virtual environment offers and have therefore higher demands when it comes to the virtual environment used at the workplace.

Development in technology concerns both the virtual as well as the social work environment. The way we can share and gain information has changed and become easier. The flow of information is constant and easy, which has made people spend more time in the virtual environment in their private life as well as work life, and therefore it has become a huge part of also keeping up the social connections. Unfortunately the whole potential of virtual environment is not always used at workplaces. The equipment and software are old, mostly due to quick development of technology with which the companies are not able to keep up. Changing appliances and software can become expensive to companies, as it is likely that within the next years more efficient alternatives are available, with no updates available for the older software. (Baer 2012)

As the possibilities to work also outside of the workplace have become easier remote working has become something that many prefer. By remote work is meant work that has been done somewhere else than at the main workplace, usually at home, which has been agreed with the employer and the work is part of the normal working hours. (Pekkola 2002, 18) Already around half of the workers do moving work which is one type of remote work. Moving work is working from business trips, in the field or in the premises of the customer (Pekkola 2002, 18). In remote and moving work technology plays an important role and with different technologies and software people are now able to connect their work laptops into the company network, allowing them to get in touch with the same information as they would at the workplace.

For persons whose work is not bound to a certain place, allowing remote work is easier to arrange. Remote work also requires that all the equipment and software are fit for the purpose. Thanks to developing technologies most of the work is done on computers and documents can be filed on hard drives, which allows easy access to all the needed information. Accessing the work files while working remote does require a virtual private network (VPN) or such. There are many positive but also negative aspects in remote work which need to be taken into consideration when thinking about remote working.

Positive aspects are the possibility to concentrate and work in peace, work can be mostly done when it suits best, combining work and family-life becomes more flexible, there is no need to spend hours in commute and money is saved, and there is also less commuting traffic which is better for the environment. It has also been discovered that people feel more satis-

fied with their job and therefore their work output and productivity increases. Employer saves in office expenses, although there might be some other expenses coming generated by the technical equipment and software needed to make remote work possible. (Etätyöpäivä No date)

Positive aspects	Negative aspects
- Allow concentration and work peace	- Loneliness and isolation
- Combining work and family-life more flexible	- Work hours can prolong
- Save time and money in commute	- Work and leisure time get mixed
- Less commuting -> less commute traffic	- Working at home requires adaptation from family
- Job satisfaction increases	- Managing oneself
- Work output and productivity increases	- Difficulties in remote management
- Office expenses decrease	- Position in the work community
- Allow choosing the best time to work	- Troubles in telecommunication
- Decrease in work-related psychological stress factors	- The expenses coming from the technical systems to allow remote working

Table 2: Some of the positive and negative aspects of remote working. (Etätyöpäivä No date; Pekkola 2002, 233-236)

While combining work and family-life becomes more flexible, this means that the family needs to adapt to home working and if a person does not know how to manage oneself, work and leisure time can easily get mixed. Therefore it should be remembered that when work is done outside the actual workplace it is important for the people to be able to manage themselves and their well-being at work. It is necessary to manage the remote workers to see that they can manage themselves. When people work at the workplace, work life is easier to keep apart from the private life and easier for the employer to keep a closer eye on the well-being of the employee. (Etätyöpäivä No date).

### 2.3 Social environment

By the social work environment is meant the overall atmosphere at the workplace. A good social work environment encourages and motivates people to work and gives the employees a feeling of belonging and respect (Työsuojeluhallinto 2013b). In the world of today competition between companies is high as there are many companies operating in the same field. Therefore it is necessary to have something that sets the organizations apart from the com-

petitors. Employee satisfaction and well-being have risen to a significant role in achieving this competitive advantage (Rothe, Lindholm, Hyvönen & Nenonen, 2012, 78-79).

The increasing possibilities of being connected virtually have naturally had an effect on the social environment at the workplace. People do not need to be in the same place to discuss with each other and communication between people has transferred from face-to-face and mobile phoning to email, internet and instant messaging. Although communication today is often done virtually it is important to also take notice of the face-to-face meetings of people. Using social media is quite normal for average people in their private life but when it comes to the working life, questions have been raised of whether it is acceptable to use social media during working hours, even though nowadays social media is also used as a working tool. It might also be that different ways of virtual communication are not possible at work.

Because communication is one of the most vital parts of the social environment, how it is handled between different people can have a great impact on the overall work environment. Communication from the work environment perspective can be thought to include also service quality dimensions of accessibility, reliability and courtesy. Accessibility refers to ability to easily approach and contact people for example in case of a problem. Reliability then again refers to the ability of a person to depend on others and what they have said and promised. Last but not least, courtesy refers to the tone of the communication, both written and face-to-face. (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry 1990, 21-22.)

Lack of communication can affect the work process and productivity negatively and make the work environment feel less inviting. In the working life of today open communication between the employees and the management has become something that people value in their work. Management is a vital part of the social work environment and problems with management can usually be seen in the dissatisfaction of the employees. Also how people get along with their colleagues and how communication is handled affects the overall atmosphere at the workplace. It is also been noted that when employees feel that they are a part of the team, valued and able to participate, their productivity increases (Field No date). Teamwork and how people work in a team is a crucial part of the social work environment and problems in it can have a great effect on the motivation and satisfaction of the employees as well as cause unnecessary sick leaves. (Field No date.)

### 3 Generations at work

The reason for focusing especially on generational work environment preferences was the paper *Generational Preferences: Glimpse into the Future Office* by Dr. Michael O'Neill (2010). This paper presented the key findings of a research conducted by Knoll on four generations at

work. It presented ideas on how office workspace should be designed to attract the emerging Y Generation. The paper also gives a glimpse on the general characteristics of the four generations in the working life.

It was this paper that built up the interest on the generational point of view on work environment preferences. This made to consider about the reasons behind preferences of people but unfortunately, or luckily, no research was found on the reasons why people prefer one thing over another in their work environment. This, therefore, became the reason for the focus of this thesis on the different preferences on the work environment and especially if there truly is generational differences on work environment preferences.

### 3.1 The concept of generations

To start with, it is important to first look into the concept of generations as it has a great part in the framework of this thesis. The concept of generations is not a new issue, instead it is something that can be traced all the way back to Ancient Greece (Purhonen, Hoikkala & Roos 2008, 14). However, the way we know generations today has only formed in 1800s and early 1900s. Today there can be considered to be two types of generations: biological (familial) generations, and social generations (Pohjolainen 2011).

Most commonly the term generation is linked to the biological meaning, also known as familial generation, in which children are one generation, their parents one generation, grandparents one generation et cetera. While talking about familial generations it is quite common to talk about how there are for example four generations alive in one family. In fact today having as much as five different generations alive in one family is not extraordinary due to lower mortality rate. (Pohjolainen 2011)

The definition of social generations is more complex than familial generations because the beginning and the ending of the different generations cannot be defined precisely. Therefore who belongs to which generation and why cannot be exactly limited. The most common way is to define the generations based on the age and some experience that connects the age groups together. As an example formative events such as war and internet has affected the growth of the world view of the people at that time. Even though there is complexity in defining the social generations, this thesis focuses on finding out the differences between social generations in their view on work environment. (Pohjolainen 2011)

Name of the Generation	Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y	Generation Z
Year of birth	-1945	1946-1964	1965-1979	1980-1997	1997->

Table 3: Social generations summoned up from the following reference: Burmeister 2009, 3-8; O'Neill 2010, 1; Meister & Willyerd 2010, 45.

The social generations referred to in this thesis will be: Silent Generation (-1945), Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1979), Generation Y (1980-1997) and Generation Z (1997 onwards) (Burmeister 2009, 3-8; O'Neill 2010, 1; Meister & Willyerd 2010, 45). This division is approximate and one of the many ways to divide social generations. It is also good to remember that there can also be differences between the social generations depending on the country. For instance, in Finland the real Baby Boom lasted only from 1946 to 1950 after which the birth rates started to decrease. Yet the reason why in this thesis Baby Boom is considered as the one that ended in 1964 is the final and biggest drop in the birth rates, which came at the same time the Baby Boom generation is considered to come to its end in USA around year 1964. Another reason to use the above mentioned generations is the fact that there have not been definitions in Finland for any other social generations. (Purhonen et al. 2008, 18.)

### 3.2 Five generations at work

While the oldest generation of Silent Generation, is making room for the younger generations, we are in a phase during which there are, at least for a short time, people in the working life from five different generations. According to Statistics Finland (No date), see Table 4, in 2011 there were still 11087 individuals from the Silent Generation in the work force. The youngest of Silent Generation, born in 1945, were 66 years old in 2011 and the oldest still in working life were 74 years old, born in 1937. Of course since then the number of people from the Silent Generation in the working life has decreased but as the mortality rate gets higher, it is quite likely there are still some in the working life today.

Year of birth	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939	1938	1937
Age in 2011	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74
Labor force in 2011	6377	3964	472	83	68	21	45	32	25

Table 4: Employment of Silent Generation in year 2011. (Statistics Finland No date)

The fifth generation, Generation Z, does not have many people in the working life yet. The oldest of this generation are in their late teens and quite likely going to their first summer jobs as they want to gain their own money. As we have five different generations working the workplace should be able to stretch to accommodate the working way of each generations. It is suggested that different generations have adapted different working ways and prefer different kinds of settings when it comes to the work environment. Therefore work environment should be able to support many different ways of working and change as the working ways develop.

The reason why generational thinking is important when it comes to the work environment is that we are in the middle of a change in the dominating generation, as Baby Boomers start retiring and Generation Y taking the empty spaces in the workforce making them the dominant generation (O'Neill 2010, 1; Meister & Willyerd 2009). This change, according to O'Neill (2010, 1), will be seen in workplaces as a change in the working ways as the working ways of Generation Y are quite opposite to the Baby Boomer generation. For Generation X, between Baby Boomers and Generation Y, the upcoming changes do not have a great effect, since the most important workspace features are similar to Generation Y and the working styles of these generations work well together. (O'Neill 2010, 6.)

Due to all the discussion about the changes that the new dominant generation is going to bring, it is good to have more insight into these different generations and how they are in the workplace. The following sections present separately all five generations based on the literature found about generations and their preferences. Later on in the analysis part of the research these already presented generational preferences and ways of working are compared with the research findings to see if any generational differences between the working ways of the different generations are visible.

### 3.2.1 Silent Generation

The Silent Generation as described by Burmeister (2009, 4) was born between the years 1929 and 1945. Their lives were shaped by the World War II in which the men fought and the women were working at the home front taking care of the farming and food production, and jobs that only men had taken care of previously (Aho, E. 2009; Veteraanien perintö 2002).

Back in the days as the Silent Generation entered the workforce, loyalty was valued in the workplace. It was common belief that the promotions and raises came after one had worked long enough and been loyal to their employer. Therefore quite many from the Silent Generation have spent their entire life working for the same employer. (Burmeister 2009, 4; O'Neill 2010, 3.)

Work performance Silent Generation measures by productivity and they believe that people are not to draw attention to themselves (Burmeister 2009, 4). This attitude describes quite well the workplace at that time. In the workplace at that time, there were no individual office rooms. Instead, employees worked in large halls next to each other, on their individual desks, similarly to the open plan offices of today. (Early Office Museum 2012.)

In his paper, O'Neill (2010, 5-6) presents that the Silent Generation values most the physical comfort of their workspace and least the acoustic privacy. The reason for them to think acoustic privacy, meaning no ability to access spaces providing privacy, least important is probably due to becoming accustomed to the open plan working way at the start of their working life. The importance of physical comfort might be due to the approaching retirement age of the Silent Generation.

### 3.2.2 Baby Boomers

The generation of Baby Boomers was born after the World War II between the years 1946 and 1964. The name of this generation comes from the drastic increase in births, 100 000 births per year before the 1950s, even though the birth rates in Finland turned down after this (Karisto 2005, 18). Still the amount of births kept quite steady in Finland and only decreased rapidly after 1964, just as in the USA (Karisto, 18). As the Baby Boomers are the largest generation it is no wonder it also dominates the workforce. However, in the upcoming years this generations slowly starts to retire, and according to O'Neill (2010, 1) by the year 2020 the Generation Y will take the dominant place in the workforce.

The word workaholic describes Baby Boomers rather well as this generation measures work performance in hours and are determined to work hard to gain money and wealth (Burmeister 2009, 5). For Baby Boomers workplace is a place for work and only work (O'Neill 2010, 5). Although building relationships and being loyal to peers is also considered important (Burmeister 2009, 5). These features might also describe why remote working have not been favored as then it is harder to measure how much work is actually done.

According to the study presented in the paper of O'Neill (2010, 6), Baby Boomers value the most acoustic privacy and meeting places in their workspace. As the work style of the Baby Boomers consists of formal meetings, face-to-face discussions and team work it is no wonder the quality of meeting places is valued as well as the privacy (Burmeister 2009, 5). As the Baby Boomers think the workplace is for work, it is no wonder an engaging workplace is the least important feature in their workspace. (O'Neill 2010, 6).

### 3.2.3 Generation X

Generation X was born in the period of 1965 and 1979 and was much smaller than the previous generations. The reason for the downturn in the birth rates was due to women starting to use birth-control pills which came to the market in the beginning of the 60's (Karisto 2005, 18; Erola & Wilska 2004, 15; Burmeister 2009, 6).

Meister & Willyerd (2010, 49) describe Generation X as an individualistic and idealistic generation. This generation has also been quite often defined as "slackers" due to the difficult job market which caused motivation problems for Generation X when seeking a job. Despite the motivation problems people of Generation X are usually more willing to take charge of matters by themselves and they are people who have become independent earlier than other generations. Therefore they value independence and control of their time. (O'Neill 2010, 3; Burmeister 2009, 6.)

As workforce Generation X is independent and motivated by money. This generation also expects open communication from everyone they work with and respect people based on how productive they are rather than on tenure (Burmeister 2009, 6). They have lived the time of technological development of computers and mobiles telephones, and are therefore quite good at using technology in their everyday life (Meister & Willyerd 2010, 49). Meister & Willyerd (2010, 49) also state that for Generation X it is quite unlikely to work for one employer only, but instead they look for jobs that best fit their work needs.

For Generation X the most important workspace features presented by O'Neill (2010, 6) were that the workplace should be engaging, safe and secure. Also support of casual interaction was considered quite equal to the first two features. For this generation acoustic privacy was the least important workspace feature alongside physical comfort.

### 3.2.4 Generation Y

Generation Y was born between years 1980 and 1997 and is described by O'Neill (2010, 6) as an experience driven generation. It is also this generation that according to O'Neill (2010, 1) will make over 50% of the workforce by the year 2020 forcing the now dominant generation of Baby Boomers to step aside. This generation has been born to the world of technology which from early on has influenced their life (Burmeister 2009, 7).

According to Burmeister (2009, 7) this generation is looking for opportunities to learn more and this way move forward and make a difference. They have a high level of trust on authority and they are committed to what they are doing. They want to gain knowledge by following their supervisors close up and work tight with their peers to be able to gain all there is to

know. They expect open and constant communication from everyone and constant feedback from their superiors (Burmeister 2009, 7-8; Reeves & Oh No date).

When a person from Generation Y chooses a work place they search for personal fulfillment rather than just a job (Burmeister 2009, 7-8). They want their job to meet with their expectations and this way fulfill their ideas of a workplace that suits them best. Just as Generation X, for Generation Y it is also quite unlikely to spend their entire life in one company but instead they gather the experience and when they feel that they have learned everything they move forward to get more experiences.

What Generation Y values most in their workspace is that the workplace is engaging (O'Neill 2010, 6). The least important feature in the survey presented by O'Neill (2010, 6) was the quality of the meeting places. The rest of the features (safety and security, support for casual interaction, physical comfort and acoustic privacy) were considered to be quite equally important. The most interesting in these results was that the workspace features of Baby Boomers and Generation Y and X are exactly opposite to each other. This means that when the switch in the dominant workforce comes, from Boomers to Generation Y and X, there are probably going to be big changes in the workplace.

### 3.2.5 Generation Z

Although Generation Y is for the moment the most important generation to look into, we are not to forget the next generation of Generation Z, people born after around 1997. Generation Z has grown up in a hyper-networked world with social networking, social media and social learning (Meister & Willyerd 2010, 33; 53). This interactive generation lives their life hand in hand with technology and expects quite much from new technical appliances and software. For them working with computers, laptops, tablet computers, smartphones and such is something that they have learned already from early on and therefore using these different kinds of electronic appliances comes naturally.

Why companies need to take this generation also into account while planning the future work environment is that already the first members of the Generation Z are taking their first steps into the working life. To attract and obtain the people from Generation Z, the work environment needs to support their high-technology way of working.

## 4 Case environment - The Ovenia Group

The Ovenia Group was established in 1980, and now with more than 550 employees in 21 locations around Finland, Ovenia is the oldest and largest company in asset, property and facility management in Finland. The four key strategic business units of Ovenia are commercial real

estate management, business premises management, residential property management and housing services. In spring 2012 Ovenia was the first company in Finland to receive the ISO 9001 certification for property management. Ovenia manages around 10 million square meters of properties and their approximate turnover is 40 million euros (in 2012). (Ovenia 2013a.)

As an independent expert Ovenia is self-sufficient from service providers allowing them to optimize the benefits of their customers property portfolios. There are two different ways Ovenia acquires services to the property owners: managing agent and target cost model. In the service model of managing agent, all the agreements are done in the name of the client but Ovenia takes responsibility of the management of the service providers. In target cost model all the service agreements are done in the name of Ovenia and Ovenia takes care of producing the services with the best service providers and managing of the service providers. As a part of the target cost model Ovenia has also developed a green service concept to assure that facilities are used in energy efficient and environmentally friendly way. (Ovenia 2013b.)

Environmental issues are something that Ovenia has also acknowledged as one of the key factors in property management business. Therefore Ovenia is determined to reduce the environmental impacts of the use and maintenance of the buildings by developing co-operation and exchange of environmental information between building owners, tenants and service providers. Ovenia keeps their clients up-to-date with current environmental issues and as an example offers co-ordination of LEED environmental-certificate application projects and carbon-footprint reviews. (Ovenia 2013c.)



Table 5: Ovenia values (Ovenia 2013d)

To guide the operations at Ovenia three values have been defined: customer orientation, innovation and professionalism. Since Ovenia operates in the service industry, building close and reliable relationships with their client is important for the co-operation. To give the customers the best possible service Ovenia makes sure their employees are trained and that working methods are improved constantly. Through innovation Ovenia aims to create innovative solutions and procedures which would benefit their customers. (Ovenia 2013d.)

## 5 Research background and methodology

The reason for choosing Ovenia as the case environment was a request from Ovenia itself. By focusing only on Ovenia it was possible to discover how the people working at Ovenia see their current work environment and how they would prefer their work environment to be. As a result Ovenia would become more aware of the feelings the employees have on the work environment and what kind of changes could be done to increase the satisfaction of the employees. The results give mostly a general view of the work environment and therefore more specific surveying is necessary if changes in any of the offices are conducted.

Altogether there are 572 (25.6.2013) employees between the ages of 16 and 69 working at Ovenia. This means there are four different social generations working simultaneously. From these four generations, Generation X is currently the dominant generation although only with one person more than the Baby Boomers generation. From all the people working at Ovenia, Generation X covers 35,1% of the workforce, Baby Boomers 34,9%, Generation Y 29,7% and Silent Generation 0,1%. Therefore it can be said that the change in dominant generation is an ongoing process at Ovenia and it is something that should be taken into consideration at the workplace.

### 5.1 Methodology

In an empirical study as explained by Metsämuuronen (2001, 16-17) the current case environment, which can be anything from individual to a group of people, is investigated by using diverse research methods which also include statistical material which can give deeper insights to the case examined. The diverse research methods as stated by Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2011, 5) are used for collecting data and evidence. Choosing the right research methods is a vital part of the research process and therefore needs to be selected carefully to fit the purpose and to help to discover the intended issues (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011, 5).

As the main focus in this thesis was to discover the present work environment preferences of people working at Ovenia, to reach all employees around Finland and to get as large a sample as possible, an online survey with qualitative approach was chosen as the research method. By qualitative approach in an online survey is meant that the survey had open questions in which the responders needed to describe the current situation and in addition to this ponder how they would prefer the same issues in their ideal work environment to be.

The reason for choosing the qualitative research approach over quantitative research was to find understanding (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011, 3). As explained by Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2011, 4), the true purpose of qualitative research is to find the meaning and this can be found from

words and text. A way to discover the meaning is to ask questions that start with words such as why, how, what, describe and ponder (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011, 3). Asking people to describe something or to explain their decisions gives more insight to way the person views the asked issues. Therefore qualitative research was found most suitable for the research method for this thesis as the main focus in this thesis was to discover the real thoughts behind the preferences of people when it comes to their work environment and if these preferences differ from generation to generation.

## 5.2 Creating the survey

An online survey concerning work environment preferences and the current situation of the work environment at Oventia was conducted as a part of this thesis. As the target company is a Finnish company with Finnish speaking employees it was presumable that people were more comfortable responding in their native language. Therefore already from the very beginning the survey was planned to be done in Finnish, although this meant the analyzing of the results might become more challenging.

As there is already much research on work environment preferences, it was important to become familiar with it as it gave ideas on what kind of issues have been asked before and some background on how important people have seen certain aspects in their work environment to be. The previous studies gave a lot of ideas for the possible questions for the survey done for this thesis, although it was necessary to limit the number of questions and to consider which issues were the most important ones that would help achieve the objective of this thesis.

The way the work environment has been divided into physical, virtual and social work environment in the PREFE Project by Rothe et al. (2010, 3) is an interesting and quite logical way to look at the work environment. All the three parts have quite many different themes that could be asked, but to make the survey reasonable it was necessary to limit the number of questions. As the physical work environment has the most separate aspects, six themes which were found the most important were chosen. Asking too specific questions from virtual and social work environment would have been pointless but instead people were asked to describe the virtual and social work environment from a more general point of view.

The limitations were necessary to keep the thesis together. Therefore for example an aspect such as cleaning was not found to be relevant for the results, although some people did mention that there could have been questions about the cleaning. But as it is quite likely that people want their work environment to be clean, but how they would do it might be hard to answer without background from professional cleaning. Also, as all the offices of Oventia were surveyed in this thesis there is no sense asking about the cleaning which is different in all of-

fices. Therefore finding out how people find the cleaning in the offices should be surveyed separately and especially if there has been a lot of negative feedback concerning the cleaning.

The survey questionnaire can be found from Appendix 1. To the start of the survey it was necessary to ask some basic questions about the responders. These were: gender, year of birth, office location, how long responder has been in the working life, how much time the responder spends in the office, and how the responder commutes. From these the most important was to know the year of birth due to the generational research perspective. Other questions were mainly just for background information and something that could be used as a cross-reference material.

Then the responder was asked to describe their current work environment. For the beginning there were two multiple choice questions: current workspace and current working tools. Then there were nine headline themes with open-ended response possibility. Under each headline there were questions to guide the responders to think about the subject but also to give them a possibility to think about the headline more broadly. This was done because one question would not have been enough to explain what the people were hoped to think about. From these headline themes six were related to physical work environment, one related to social work environment, and one related to virtual work environment. Space for other comments about the current work environment was also given.

After describing the current work environment, the same headline themes were used for the responders to think about what would be the ideal work environment. The same headline themes were used to allow easy comparison with the current situation. The only difference was that people were also requested to explain their decision on the question about the most preferable workspace, to gain some insight into the reasons people choose certain workspace over another.

### 5.3 Online survey

Development of technology has changed the ways information can be collected. Computing and especially the internet has created new possibilities to conduct research surveys. There is no more need to meet the people face to face or send questionnaires by mail. People can be interviewed over videoconference and questionnaires can be made online, which also helps with the analyzing of the results.

Using online survey as a research method has many advantages. When it comes to making the surveys, online surveys are generally quite easy, quick and flexible as there is a huge varia-

tion of question types to choose from. Most importantly the costs are low and the response rate is faster than with any other research method. With online survey it is also possible to reach people worldwide and they are able to respond when it suited best for them. People are also more likely to answer sensitive questions when they can respond anonymously. When it comes to the results, it is easier to analyze the data as it is usually already in the desired form or at least in a format that is easy to modify. (Evans & Mathur 2005, 197; Sue & Ritter 2007, 7).

There are also problems, such as the fact that as making online surveys is easy and fast anyone can make a questionnaire or a research about anything. Surveys are also used for marketing purposes and as people get conscious about this, important surveys can be dismissed (Evans & Mathur 2005, 196). According to Sue & Ritter (2007,8) the approximate response rate to web-based online surveys is 30%. It is also important to remember that online surveys are not always the most appropriate way to collect information. For instance there are people who do not have internet access. Therefore, before conducting an online research survey an assessment should be made of the target audience, and the research objectives as well as the kind of reporting data needed should be thought about. Also in order to obtain the maximum benefit from online surveys there should be some knowledge of how to analyze the results.

The reason for choosing online survey with qualitative approach as the research method for this thesis was obviously the fact that this way it was possible to reach all the Ovenia employees working all around Finland. It also allowed people to respond anonymously and by this way it was hoped that people would give their true feelings about their current work environment as well as the work environment of their preference. By doing the survey online it also helped with analysis of the results although analyzing the open-ended text responses was not as easy as analyzing statistical results.

#### 5.4 Analysis

The survey was conducted in May 2013 by using Webropol survey application. The online questionnaire was sent to 480 recipients working at Ovenia at that moment. Reason for not sending it to all the more than 550 employees was due to a technical problem in the personnel management system which did not for some reason allow getting email addresses of all employees.

By using online survey it was possible to have all the material in the best possible format for the analyzing. As the online survey done for this thesis was made in a qualitative approach, meaning there were mainly open-ended text responses, analyzing the results required different methods to discover the most important issues from the response texts. The problem also

with these open responses is that the qualitative material is in a sense endless. It can be analyzed in many different ways and therefore endless text could be written but finding out what is the most important material for finding out the solution to the research problem can be difficult. (Eskola & Suoranta, 179.)

As the research focus in this thesis was to discover the differences in the work environment preferences of different generations, the responses were first of all divided into the social generations introduced earlier in this thesis. At this point it was possible to notice that there were responses only from three different generations: Generation Y, Generation X and Baby Boomers. This meant that in this case work environment preferences of Generation Z and Silent Generation cannot in the end be researched as there were no answers from these generations.

As the online research had mainly open-ended text responses in which people were able to write as much as they pleased, analyzing the research was not that simple. To help with the analyzing, good planning was done already while creating the survey as the questions about different physical work environment were put separately under certain headline themes. From the responses to a certain headline theme it was then possible to notice similarities and differences in the responses. Color coding was used to separate different issues emerging from the responses from each other.

Color coding was also used for quantification to calculate the percentages of the different themes that were mentioned in the responses. Color coding was used as a help calculating the similar responses together as certain themes stood out. Then the responses were divided with the whole response rate to get a percentage. In this way it was possible to give a more specific idea on how important certain themes were for the responders. As an example, when asked about the way people would take into notice the security aspects, the responses which took notice of access control were colored with certain color. Then the total number of answers with that color was calculated and divided with the number of all responders. Good statements, explanations and important issues emerged from the responses and were highlighted separately. Some of these responses were also emphasized in the analyzing section.

## 6 The work environment preferences at Ovenia

The research questionnaire was sent in May 2013 to 480 recipients working at Ovenia, from which 58% were women and 42% were men. Altogether there were 210 responses making the overall response rate 44%. As said earlier according to Sue & Ritter (2007, 8) the response rates of web-based surveys are approximately 30% and therefore the response rate of this survey was considerably good. Especially since the approach was qualitative rather than quan-

titative. Most responses (66%) came from women meaning only 34% were men. Most responses came from Generation X (39%), secondly from Baby Boomers (33%) and thirdly from Generation Y (28%). Unfortunately there was no response from the one person belonging to the Silent Generation.

As the research perspective in this thesis was generational, the differences and similarities between the three different generations have been taken into consideration in each of the sections presenting the different aspects of work environment. From the Figure 1 it is possible to already discover how satisfied or dissatisfied people were of the current work environment. Also the variation on how different generations find the current work environment can be seen especially on the aspects on which people were less satisfied.

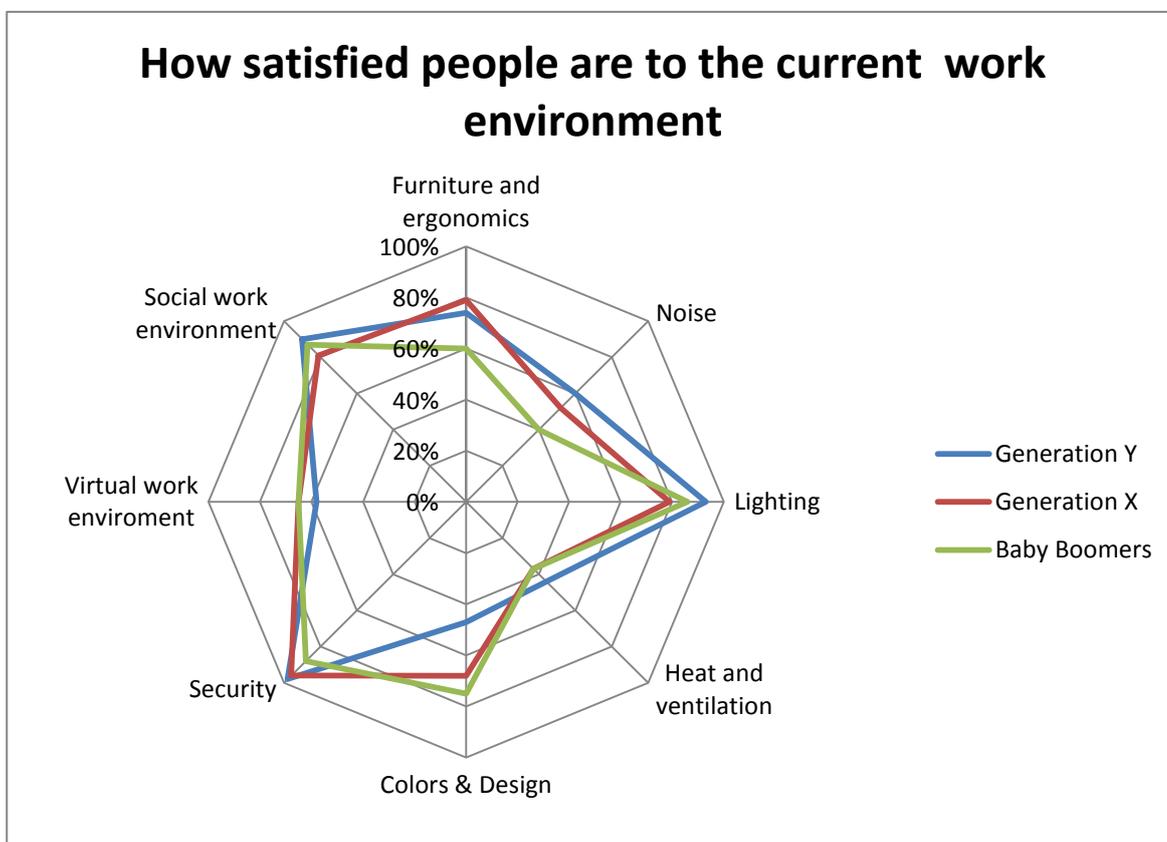


Figure 1: How satisfied people are to the current work environment

Balancing the different aspects of the work environment would be important in order for the work environment to support working to the fullest. Although this thesis already identifies some of the problems in the certain work environment aspects and gives ideas and solutions to what could be done, it is important to remember that this thesis gives more general view on the work environment preferences at Ovidia. Therefore if any changes are planned, closer surveying needs to be conducted on where the changes affect in order for the changes to be

done in a way that they will truly support the working of those people affected by the changes.

## 6.1 Physical work environment

As we have learned earlier in this thesis, physical work environment is the building itself, the physical objects and elements, and the outside of the building. The theory section introduced six of the many elements of physical work environment which were considered the most important for the survey done for this thesis on the work environment preferences. The reason for dividing physical work environment into six separate questions was the extent of the theme and therefore to get better responses it was necessary to divide the physical work environment into smaller pieces.

In the survey, people were asked to describe and comment firstly their current work environment to have some background on how the work environment is considered now and after this ponder the work environment of their preferences. This allowed knowing how they feel about the current work environment and what could be done to make the current work environment better than now. On top of the six already introduced themes, questions were asked concerning physical work environment about the current workspace and what would be the most ideal workspace and explanation for the decision.

### 6.1.1 Workspace

For the ideal workspace people were able to choose from own office, shared office, open plan office, multifunctional office or other. Currently majority of 58% work in open plan offices and for the moment there are no offices which would have multifunctional office layout. 27% work in their own offices, 11% share an office and the rest 4% work in the reception. From the following graph, Figure 2, can be seen the division of the most preferred workspace for each generation.

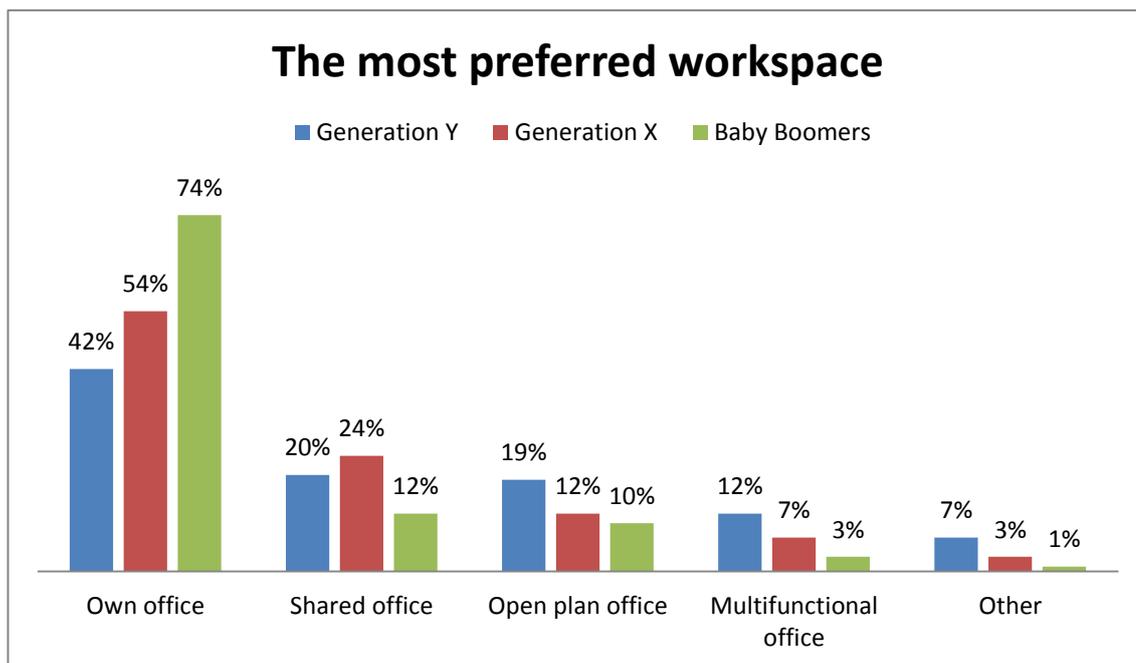


Figure 2: Most preferred workspace

As we can see from the Figure 2, the most preferred office was own office. As many as 74% of Baby Boomers chose own office as the most preferable workspace whereas only 42% of Generation Y and 54% of Generation X would prefer to have their own office. The reason for Baby Boomers valuing the most the own office might come from habit or the fact that as they have been longer in the working life it is more likely that they are also working in managerial positions which means that they need privacy to handle private and sensitive matters.

Handling sensitive matters on the telephone was in fact one of the main reasons for people choosing own office. Especially people working in the residential property management side found that it would be easier to handle confidential and sensitive matters with their clients no matter if it is done on the telephone or face-to-face. Then there were majority of the responders who found that by having their own office the peace and quiet would be guaranteed. It would be easier to concentrate on tasks that need full attention. It was also mentioned that the possibility to lock the door would allow safety when leaving personal belongings in the room. It was positive to notice that not all of the people working in open plan office prefer working in own offices. Actually from the 58% that are currently working in open plan office only 45% would prefer to have their own office.

Second most preferred workspace option was shared office which was not as popular as there could have been thought. 24% of Generation X, 20% of Generation Y and only 11% of Baby Boomers chose shared office as the most preferable workspace. 22% from the people currently working in open plan office would prefer sharing an office. Sharing an office with the closest colleagues was found to allow easy information sharing, less disturbing noises but in other

hand it would not make feel as isolated as it would when working in own office. Having just a few people in one space agreeing on a code of conduct was found easier. It was also found that sharing an office would allow it to be easier to adjust heating, ventilation and air-conditioning to desired level just as it would be in own office.

Third most preferred workspace was open plan office. Although currently majority of 58% of all responders work in open plan offices there were only 13% from all responders that would prefer working in an open plan office. Half were from Generation Y and  $\frac{1}{4}$  from Generation X and  $\frac{1}{4}$  Baby Boomers. These people found open plan office nice and spacious as well as the most social workspace which allows easy and instant communication with colleagues. The possible reason why especially people from Generation Y preferred working in open plan office might come from the fact they have most probably have been working mainly in open plan offices but also that open plan office offers better learning environment as colleagues are close by and easy contact. Working close by and hearing what is talked about around makes learning all the new matters easier.

Although working in own office was the most ideal for most there was one person who currently works in an own office but would in fact prefer working in an open plan office. The reasoning behind this choice was that a well-designed, correctly built and acoustically well-designed open plan office offers more social connections, and information sharing works better. Although if there is only open space there should be also arranged possibility to have individual working rooms which can be booked when there are tasks that need concentration and privacy. There were also few persons who said that open plan office is fine as they do not spend much time in the office. Also combining remote work with open plan office was suggested as then it would be possible to work from home if there are tasks that need concentration.

Probably an even better option for people who do not work much in the office would be multifunctional office. Although multifunctional office was not popular with the responders there were 12% from Generation Y, 7% from Generation X and 3% from Baby Boomers who preferred multifunctional office. 9% from the people working now in open plan office and particularly interesting was that three persons who are currently working in their own office would prefer working in multifunctional office. These people who chose multifunctional office thought that having a more creative and inspiring workspaces would support different work activities more than a normal office.

There were responders who took notice of the different job descriptions and how it should be possible to choose from different workspaces the one to suit the tasks the best. Some people need their own office as they spend most of their day on the telephone or handle sensitive

matters with their clients. Then there are people who work in teams in which it is important to share information with their colleagues or people who just prefer having people around them. Then there are people who do not really spend much time at the office and would not mind working in a relaxing sofa area or a small meeting room the times that they come to the office. All the requirements of these people would be easier to fulfill in multifunctional offices designed specifically for these people. Having a multifunctional office could also make it possible to lower the space costs as the spaces would be utilized better.

The best part was that even people who did not really know what multifunctional office really is, had chosen it as the most preferable workspace. They thought that it would be a nice change. Then there were also people who chose shared office or open plan office instead of multifunctional office because they have so much papers and files which they need at their work that they need to have their own workstation with shelves. Therefore, while planning the office the needs of people should be surveyed when it comes to working. Some have everything they need on their computer and hard drives but then again some need to file papers and need cupboards to put the files in.

From the rest 4% of all responders one said that remote work would be the most preferable working way as it would guarantee definite work peace. This might, depending on job description, be difficult to arrange but in some cases it might be possible. Although even then the working and the well-being of the employee should be controlled more carefully. For the rest most preferable workspace was reception. Due to the fact that they work as receptionists surely they could have responded from the perspective "if they would be working in normal office" but this was forgotten to mention and therefore the responses are what they are.

#### 6.1.2 Furniture and ergonomics

When asked about the actual workstation and the ergonomics of the furniture 79% of Generation X, 74% of Generation Y and 60% of Baby Boomers were mostly satisfied with the current situation. Some issues were found dissatisfying but they were nothing that would have decreased overall satisfaction of the workstation. As we can see, the most dissatisfied were Baby Boomers with 40% having major problems with their current workstation. What is rather interesting was that only 43% from Baby Boomers mentioned that they would prefer to be able to adjust their furniture whereas 74% from Generation X and 57% from Generation Y would prefer to adjust their furniture although they were more satisfied with the current situation than Baby Boomers.

One of the major dissatisfying issues emerging from the responses was the fact that the furniture people had cannot be adjusted or they are hard to adjust and therefore people found that it was not possible to have ergonomic work positions. Especially people who are taller or

shorter found their furniture unsuitable from them. Therefore the size of the person using the furniture should be taken into consideration when planning workstations to the office. This also saves time and money as there is straight away right sized furniture and no need to change the furniture when noticed that they do not suit the person using them. Having furniture that is ergonomic and of the right size can also save the employee from getting any problems that would need rehabilitation that the company would need to pay for.

According to the findings of the survey, the most important feature in the adjustments of the furniture was the possibility to adjust the height of table. This is because the ability to work standing up was found important, as sitting the whole day was found uncomfortable. Some people also mentioned that standing up is much better for their back than sitting. Also using different kinds of chairs such as saddle stools was found to be a nice way to change the work position during the day. In addition to different working chairs people also requested other more relaxing ways to work than the normal sitting behind a desk. For example sofas or arm-chairs were found perfect for thinking work and reading. As quite many have laptops, if there would just be an efficient wireless network it could also be possible to work with the computer on a nice and comfy sofa.

One of the most annoying issues when it comes to the positioning of the workstations was having to work with their back to the door or having others walking behind their back. This was mostly found to be unsafe due to people possibly approaching quietly from behind and people being able to read what is done on the computer, which in case of handling private and sensitive matter can be inappropriate. Also cramped offices were found discomforting due to these privacy issues. Solutions to this would be taking more notice of the positioning of the workstations, the dividers between the workstations and having all in all a more spacious office. More space would allow people to work a bit further from each other and this could make for example talking on the telephone less disturbing.

Since Ovenia has many different functions inside the company and teams which all have different needs when it comes to work, the best solution would be to have as team spaces either shared offices or divided areas from open plan office for different teams. These spaces would then be designed to meet the needs of the team and support their working. In addition to these spaces there would be also areas which would be in common use with sofa groups, tables for people who are just popping by the office, rooms for silent work and of course a break room.

As the needs of each team and the persons in the teams are different it would be essential to survey the needs of each team or each person when planning the office spaces. In this way it would be possible to build workspaces which support working. In the survey, employees re-

requested whiteboards, bigger separate team tables and that the number of shelves would be reduced. The big team tables were found important for looking at blueprints by people working in the building services department. These matters would make it possible to have the space utilized better and in some cases even save room. Still the space would support working. One way to save space would also be decreasing the number of shelves, as although some people need a lot of cupboard space there also people who have almost everything they need for working stored on their computer.

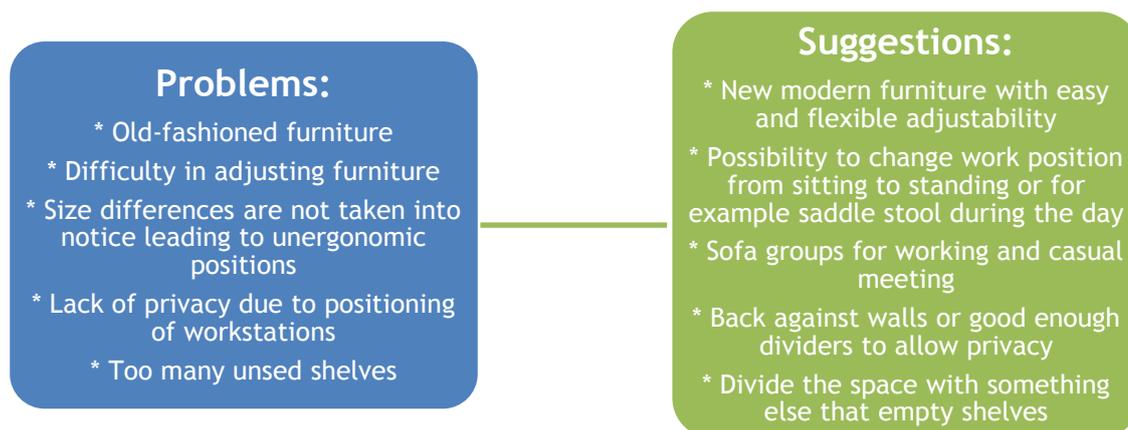


Table 6: Problems and suggestions for furniture and ergonomics

### 6.1.3 Lighting

Most satisfied with the current lighting was Generation Y with 93% who thought that the lighting was generally good. Then there were Baby Boomers with 86% and Generation X with 79% satisfied with the current general lighting. However it needs to be mentioned that although people were quite satisfied with the current general lighting some did say that lighting could be even better, the glare bothered sometimes and in some offices there were lighting that was not designed for computer working. The ones that did find the lighting partly or mostly insufficient told the reason to be too efficient lighting, the lighting was not enough (for example during winter time), or the current strip lighting caused strain to the eyes.

As we have learned earlier good lighting does not mean that there should be just lots of light. The quality of lighting is more important and especially in offices where lighting needs to support working on computer many hours per day. With this in mind, the responses for why the current lighting was not good enough from the Oventia Mikonkatu office stood out from the others. There were altogether 13 persons who responded from Mikonkatu office and from them eight complained about the lighting of the office. According to the responses, the space in which the office is located has lighting for a commercial store meaning there are bright lights, but as said above, although there is lots of light the quality of the lighting is not designed for an office. The employees have tried taking some lamps off or not turning all the lights on but then there are areas which do not get enough light. Although the five other em-

employees found the lighting good and sufficient, from the responses of the others it was possible to discover that this situation frustrates the employees and certainly would not increase their well-being and therefore it was considered a point which needed special notice.

As we can see, people were quite satisfied with the current lighting, and how the lighting should be seemed to be quite hard questions for people to respond. Daylight was requested most by Generation Y with 24% but also from Generation X 16% and from Baby Boomers 13% told they would prefer having daylight which should be utilized as much as possible. At the moment, blinds are often used to block the sun from reflecting from the computer screens. Light curtains could be good solutions as they would block some of the light. An interesting remark was given by few persons from Generation X who suggested that electric lighting that resembles as much as possible the natural daylight could be used.

As it was discovered by Burmeister (2009, 6) Generation X prefer having control over things. This can also be discovered from the responses in which 50% of Generation X would prefer to have control over the adjustments of the lighting and as many as 32% would prefer having their own desk light. Surely also Baby Boomers had 43% who would prefer to be able adjust the lighting to their preference but only 19% who preferred having their own desk light. Only Generation Y had 31% who would prefer to be able to adjust the settings of the lighting and just 12% who would prefer having their own desk lighting. These responses reflect the current situation quite well as the ones that are most satisfied feel less the need to tamper with the lighting.

If the responders would be able to choose how the lighting would be done, it would be done so that the ceiling lights could be adjusted separately for each workstation, allowing everyone to have the lighting of their preference. Some people did though take notice on the difficulties in organizing such lighting that would be possible to be adjusted for each workstation separately but certainly this is possible. The problem comes when the offices are rearranged and the lighting is not changed according to the new layout.

In addition to the normal office lighting, some modern lamps which would create a nice atmosphere were requested. These would be nice in the social spaces and meeting areas. Then there were two persons who said that it would be nice to have bright light lamps for example in the break room. This was quite a good point as it is quite dark in Finland during winter. Having bright light lamps in the break room might increase the vitality of the employees in the morning and afternoon.

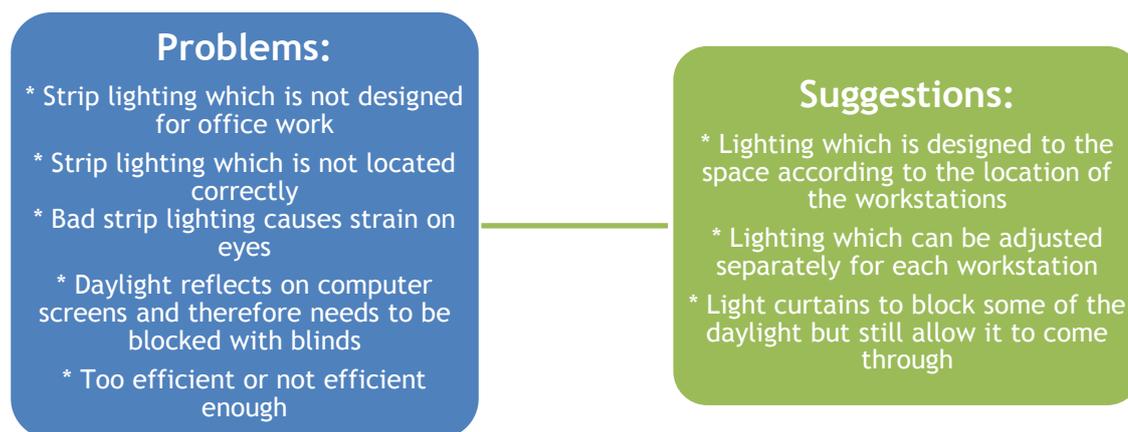


Table 7: Problems and suggestions for lighting

#### 6.1.4 Noise

The sounds in the work environment were found most stressing by Baby Boomers from whom 60% thought the work environment was unhealthy noisy. Also around half of the Generation X had the same thoughts and only 40% of Generation Y thought there was too much noise in the office. What is interesting in the fact that 60% of Generation Y is satisfied with the current sound environment is that 68% of the Generation Y works in an open plan office. A possible reason for this as told by Burmeister (2009, 7-8) could be that as this generation expects open and constant communication, the best way to achieve this is to work close by each other. In this way keeping track of what is going on in the office is much easier.

People wanted to have the sound of life, people, nature, laughter, and all the different kinds of normal noises but in a level that would not disturb. Radio was mentioned quite equally by all generations, with around 40% from each generation wanting to have a radio or some quiet music in the background. Some thought that this would also help to cover some of the noises in the office from which the most annoying noises were printers, people talking on the telephone and clatter from high heels.

32% from Generation Y and 30% from Baby Boomers would prefer to have a mostly silent workplace or at least spaces in which it would be possible to go to work when there is a need for concentration. In addition to this there were 10% from Baby Boomers who would prefer having a totally silent workplace. For the others having a totally silent workplace felt awkward and discomforting. From these responses it is possible to realize that different kinds of spaces in the offices are needed to accommodate the different needs and preferences of the users. Being able to choose from various spaces the one that suits the user the best would allow them to work to their best abilities.

One way to make the sound environment more bearable would be by reducing the sound level and echoing with proper acoustics. One of the responses took notice of the choice in furniture as there are furniture made from materials that does not reflect noise as much as some other furniture. Therefore some consideration should be done when choosing new furniture to the offices. One person from the Generation Y mentioned that fitted carpets in the open plan office would decrease the echoing. In fact the fitted carpets have developed a lot and using them in offices can actually make the air even better as the carpet binds the fine dust and is easy to clean with a vacuum.

Most interesting response on how to improve the sound environment was given by one person from Generation X. The responder had included a link to Tekniikka & Talous -website which introduced a new invention developed by Swiss research institute Empa together with companies Weisbrod-Zürcher and Douglas Textiles (Kangasniemi 2011). The invention is a decibel curtain which is a paper thin sound absorbing curtain. Curtains such as these would make it easy to decrease echoing in open plan offices without making the space feel closed and dark. When used in the windows these curtains would also allow sunlight to the office but still in a way that it does not disturb.

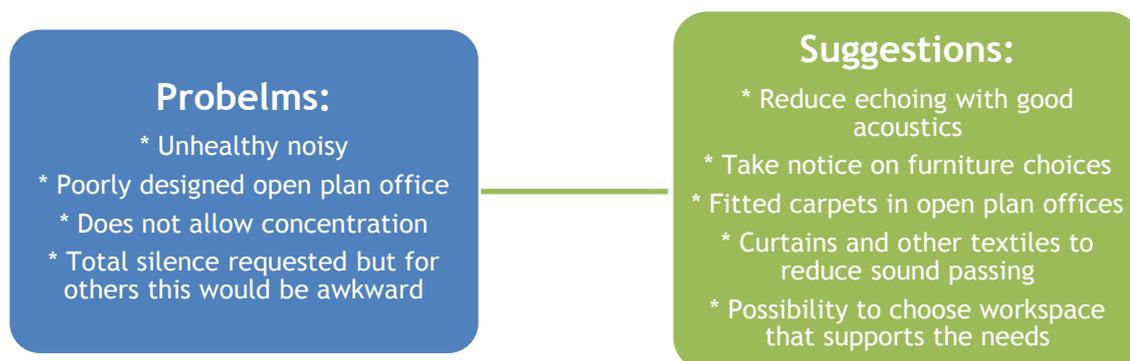


Table 8: Problems and suggestions for noise

#### 6.1.5 Heat and ventilation

The current situation regarding the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning was found to be rather unpleasant. Currently only 44% from Generation Y and 37% from both Generation X and Baby Boomers are totally satisfied with the current conditions. This means that in total there are approximately 60% from all responders who have either some problems or are totally unsatisfied with the current state of the ventilation, heating and air-conditioning.

From the responses to the question it was possible to notice that this question might have been too difficult to answer, at least when asked about how people would prefer these matters to be handled in their ideal work environment. However, asking about the conditions in

the office was important as it has a great impact on how comfortable people feel at the workplace. From the responses it is possible to discover that people are not satisfied with the situation and that there is a lot to improve. Also some ideas on how people would prefer the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning to be handled were given.

Temperature in the offices was commented probably the most. Most annoying was found that either it was too hot or too cold. Especially during the winter the offices were found to be too cold and during the summer too hot. Some people responded that they use blankets to keep warm while working, or put more clothing on. Moving heaters were also used in the offices as well as in the lobby areas to keep the work space warmer. Still summer times were found the worst as in some offices the temperatures rise closer to +30 degrees due to the air-conditioning systems are not working well enough. Then there were offices in which the air-conditioning systems were too efficient or at least they were located in places where the air causes draft on the workstations of the employees.

Fresh air was something that was found important. Although the heat recovery techniques in air-conditioning have developed in a way that for example used air is no longer mixed in to the fresh air there are unfortunately still old buildings in which there are old-fashioned air-conditioning systems and therefore the air might get stuffy especially towards end of the day. This again makes the situation during summer times difficult as in some offices it is not allowed to keep windows open to have some cross-draught. If keeping windows open was allowed, the noise coming from outside was found disturbing. For this there is no other possibility than just updating the air-conditioning system or moving to a newer building with better facilities.

Especially in the older buildings the systems are often controlled in a way that the adjustments affect either the whole floor or one wing of the floor. This causes problems, as there are different conditions on different sides of the buildings. There were people who would prefer to have control over the adjustments, most from Generation Y, although responders did realize that especially in open plan office this might be quite tricky. Therefore having own or shared offices would make adjusting the settings much easier.

Interesting was that although almost half of Generation Y would prefer adjusting the settings, there was 12% from Generation Y who thought that no one should be able to adjust the settings but instead it should be done only by the maintenance. Therefore smart systems and centralized adjustment was requested to allow the temperature be at an optimized level all year round. The adjustments were also suggested to be able to be controlled in sections in a way that even in open plan office the conditions of each employee could be taken into notice.

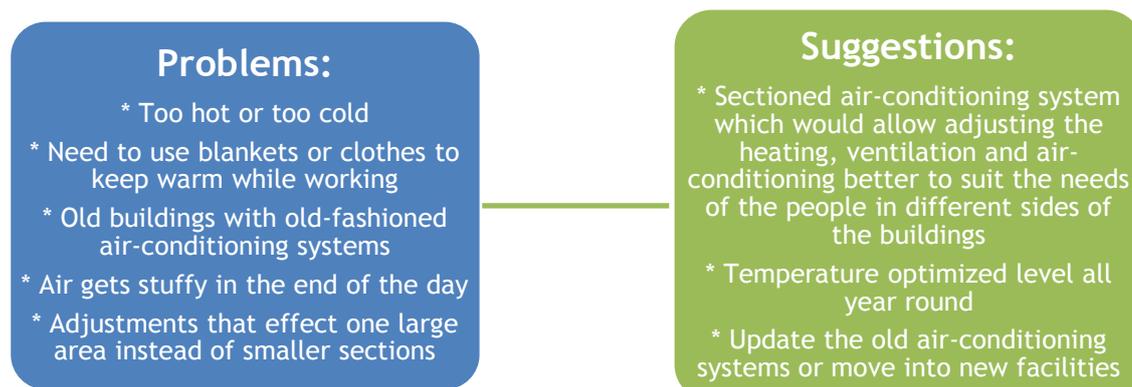


Table 9: Problems and suggestions for heat and ventilation

#### 6.1.6 Colors & design

The current coloring in the workplace was described mostly as a neutral with grey and white. Although people preferred natural colors such as white, brown and grey, the current workplace was found depressing and dull. As many as 53% of Generation Y, 32% of Generation X and 25% of Baby Boomers described the general outlook, coloring and the decoration, as gloomy, worn out, outlived, untidy, uninspiring and monotonous. However there were also people who were working in new and modern offices and were therefore quite satisfied with their current workplace.

In his paper O'Neill (2010, 6) indicated that Generation Y value an engaging workplace and in the survey done for this thesis half of the Generation Y found that the current workplace could be more engaging. It was also this generation which thought more about how comfortable the workplace is than other generations. One person from Generation Y responded that "Luovuus tulisi paremmin ilmi luovassa ympäristössä - Creativity would come out better in a creative environment". This is quite true as being creative can be hard especially if work environment which is seen unpleasant, gloomy and uninspiring. Therefore having an inspirational and creative work environment can make a huge difference.

Although Generation Y want to have engaging workplace they do not mean by this that there should be a lot of color, but instead more natural colors were preferred the most by all the generations. 68% of Generation X and Baby Boomers, and 53% of Generation Y wanted to have a quite natural, light and fresh colored workplace. Natural colors were seen as calm, discreet and warm. Although natural colors were preferred the most, there were in fact quite many, half of Generation Y and X, and 32% of Baby Boomers, who would prefer having some splashes of color in the office to brighten up the space.

Just as it was discovered in the research presented in the paper of O'Neill (2010) also the survey done for this thesis shows that Baby Boomers value the least features such as engagingness of the workplace. It was rather interesting to notice how different the responses from the Baby Boomers were when asked about the coloring and the decoration. The responses were short, and almost all responses concentrated only on the coloring and not that much on the decorative issues. However, one person from Baby Boomers made a good remark about colors affecting the way people think, which should be remembered as Ovenia operates in the service industry where it has its part in creating certain images of work environment. This is all quite true and something that Ovenia should think about in their branding. By being an example itself, Ovenia would be able to show their customers that it truly is the leader in its field.

Easy ways to add color are to have colorful furniture or textiles such as curtains or canvas pictures on the walls. Painting accent walls is also an easy way to add color but it is important to remember to choose the colors in a way that they are in harmony with the other colors used in the office. The Ovenia colors were suggested as a color theme, most probably meaning the main colors of orange, white, grey and black as well as the additional colors lime green, fuchsia and turquoise. One of the responders thought that by using company colors to bring comfort to the everyday work environment it would be possible to create company image and brand thinking.

Responders found that by creating a certain well-designed theme in the office it would most probably stick in the minds of the customers and give a positive image of the company. As people feel differently about colors, in the most ideal situation the people working in the space would be surveyed about how they feel about the different color choices and the colors to the office would be chosen according to their preference. To avoid creating a too dark or colorful office, white could be used the most as it makes the space look light and fresh. It would also make it possible for the other colors to stand out better and lighter.

Also requested were some nice modern but functional furniture, seating areas for casual meetings and telephone booths for private calls. Since some people want to have inspirational spaces with colors and others more calm and neutral spaces, making different kinds of small individual working rooms and group working rooms with different themes could be one choice. Smaller decorative touches people would make with carpets, paintings, canvas walls, personal items and green plants. Green plants were mentioned as a way to make the workplace more comfortable. Some wanted only real plants but some did not mind having green plants made of plastic or silk if they just do not look too plastic and unreal.

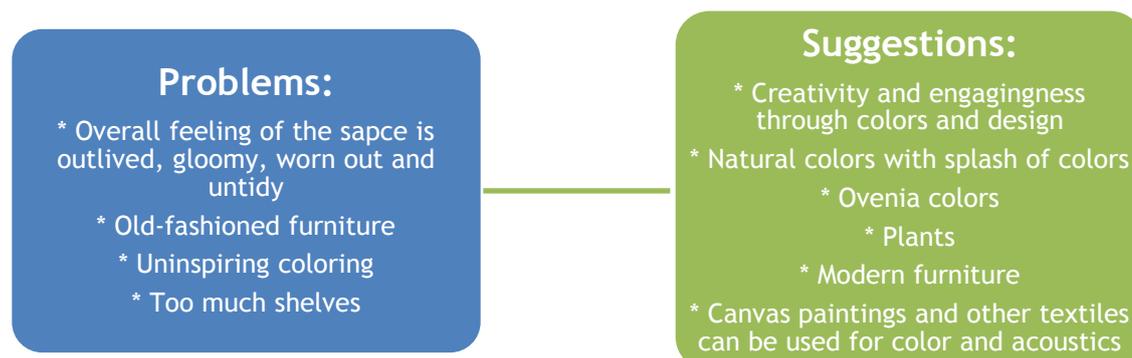


Table 10: Problems and suggestions for colors & design

### 6.1.7 Security

As feeling secure is one of the most important feelings that people need, having a work environment in which people feel safe and secure to work is naturally important. Feeling safe and secure was also found important in the research presented in the paper of O'Neill (2010, 6), in which out of all the generations, safety and security was found to be one of the most important features of work environment to Generation X and Generation Y. From the results to the survey done for this thesis it was also possible to notice that Generation X took special notice of the security aspects of the work environment but unlike in the paper of O'Neill (2010, 6) also Baby Boomers were quite concerned about the security aspects in their work environment.

From the responses to the survey done for this thesis it was positive to notice that people felt currently safe at their workplace since 98% of all responders felt safe at their current workplace. From the 2% that felt unsafe eight persons were from Baby Boomers, four persons from Generation X and one person from Generation Y. In addition to this there were also people from the 98% who had sometimes had threatening situations but nothing that would decrease the overall feeling of safety they have. Since feeling safe and secure is one of the most important features making people feel comfortable at their workplace, it is important to take notice of the matters that make employees feel insecure at their workplace.

As said before, Generation X values safety and security which can also be noticed from the responses. Various ways were suggested to secure the work environment. Of course one of the most important matters is the access control, which should ensure that no external people can access the office spaces. In this way, no one needs to be afraid of unwanted people wandering in the office, which was currently one of the reasons employees felt insecure at their workplace. There was also one person who felt unsafe when being alone in the office. Working with their back to the door or corridor was also told to feel uncomfortable and unsafe, as anyone can walk behind the back, surprise and see what is done on the computer. Therefore

the positioning of the workstations should be thought more carefully so as to allow people to feel comfortable while working. Also the possibility to keep personal belongings in a lockable cabinet was requested.

Surely access control also makes it less possible for external people to wander into the office area, but combining this with lobby reception makes it even harder for external people to be let in to places they are not supposed to access. Also having separate areas from the office areas, for example in the main lobby, can be used for meeting customers and by this way allowing the office areas to be as safe as they can be for the employees.

Threatening situations are most likely to happen in customer service work. This set Baby Boomers apart from the other generations, as they took most special notice of the security of customer service situations. These people said that the safety in the customer service situations should be guaranteed. This could be done by having panic buttons, with which other employees can be alarmed about a threatening situation, or the security company can be notified for a guard to come over to check the situation. Also emergency exits or backrooms would give employees the possibility to retreat if needed. From Generation X, security training was suggested for people working in customer service, as one person said that working in the reception does not feel safe.

How to act in emergency situations was taken into account by 25% of all responders when they were asked to think about how they would include security into their ideal work environment. One person said that the current office would be hazardous in case of a fire due to excessive amount of goods, and this is something that makes the employee feel unsafe. Therefore all the offices should have regular checkups to see that there is no excessive stuff blocking the exits. More frequent training on how to act in emergency situations and how to exit the building safely were hoped for. One good way to add to the feeling of security is to introduce the building itself, emergency equipment and the exits to all new employees as a part of the orientation

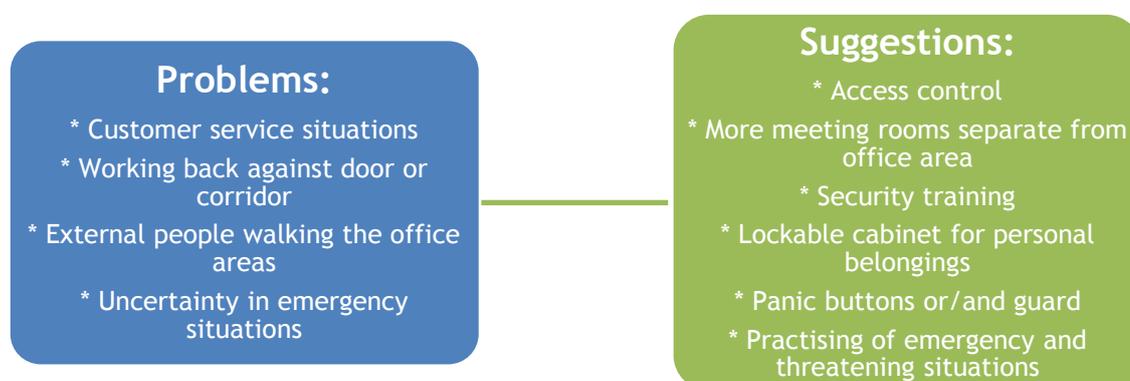


Table 11: Problems and suggestions for security

## 6.2 Virtual work environment

The more technology develops the more important virtual work environment becomes. Working is already done mostly on computers with different kinds of software and for example email is one of the most used virtual communication tools. The current situation at Ovenia was found mostly satisfying by 63% of all responders. The rest 37% found that the virtual environment was not working at all or there were some aspects in the virtual work environment that needed improvement. Most dissatisfied was Generation X from which 23% found a lot to improve in the way the virtual work environment is utilized. Also Generation Y found a lot of aspects that could be done better.

From all the different aspects of virtual work environment, remote work heated up the feelings the most. It was possible to notice a lot of variation in the possibilities to do remote work and there were 20% from all responders who were frustrated with the way remote work was handled at Ovenia. For some, remote work was not allowed, but then again there were people that said they have the possibility to do remote work and they use this possibility a lot. It was also discovered that for some remote work had been denied due to their job description, although some of them did not quite understand why, and it had not been explained to them. Only one person thought that remote work was not necessary as work should stay at work.

As told before, remote working is work done somewhere else than at the actual workplace but which is part of the normal working hours and has been agreed by the employer and employee. Therefore it was not surprising that, after becoming familiar with the responses about the current virtual work environment, that the most popular feature in the ideal work environment was the possibility to do remote work. From each generation around 50% mentioned that there should be a possibility to do remote work. Remote work was hoped to be organized in such a way that it would be a part of the normal working hours and not something that is done on top of the normal working hours.

There were few reasons mentioned why remote work should be allowed. First of all, it would ease the working days of people with long commutes. There were people who found it unnecessary to take an hour long commute to work if there was not any meetings for the day and if the work could be done from home using a virtual private network (VPN) connection. Then there was a person who found that the current workplace is so restless that working from home would allow concentration and in this way increase productivity. These are two important issues that should be taken into consideration. As the main function of the workplace is to be a place where employees can do their work, it should be designed in such a way that they do not feel the need to work from home because the work environment is somehow restless. Also some kind of common rules and guidelines on remote working should be applied, to

avoid inequality. People should also be made aware of why they are not allowed to do remote work if it is denied.

In addition to remote work it was possible to notice that people had also taken other aspects of the virtual work environment into consideration. The virtual work environment was hoped to be built stronger and more acceptable. This means that more should be invested ~~more~~ on the new operating systems, software and equipment in order for work to be more efficient. Taking full advantage of the virtual work environment means that virtual filing systems should also be done in a way that the material is easy to produce and file, and that the material is easy to read. Having a good online filing systems would also make it possible to go towards a paperless office, which was requested by three responders.

Quite many found that the virtual work environment has not been utilized the way it could be. The current operating system, Windows XP, was found old-fashioned and something that does not support the new ways of working. The internet connections were also considered slow and in some offices there was not a wireless network available. A wireless network would allow more flexible working as the work could be done also in the other areas of the office than the actual workstation. A wireless network can be considered as an important feature in the office of today, especially in multifunctional offices.

From the different equipment, laptops and smartphones were the most preferred working tools. Then came table computers and tablet computers. Currently only 2% of all responders use tablet computer but if people would be able to choose, as many as 28% would prefer having a tablet computer as one of their working tools. Why people prefer a tablet computer was mostly the fact that it would be easier to use in field work. Especially people who do apartment inspections would benefit from a lightweight tablet computer, as they could take notes straight to the computer, instead of writing everything first down on paper and then back at workplace on computer. The current laptops were also considered heavy and a lightweight tablet computer would be nicer to carry around when having customer meetings outside of office.

As the work in the field of property management requires a lot of moving around, having systems and equipment that support moving work would be necessary. One person from Generation X hoped that laptops, tablet computers, and smartphones would integrate better to moving work in the future. This would make it easier to work where it is needed, and avoid doing everything twice. Although a lot of moving around is required, to avoid unnecessary running around having good video conference possibilities would most probably ease working for many people. It was also this feature that set Baby Boomers apart from Generation Y and X as 40% of Baby Boomers mentioned the possibility for video conference as an important feature in

their ideal work environment. Reason for employees choosing video conference possibility was because it would decrease commuting between offices and this way saves most importantly time but also money from the expenses that come from travelling here and there.

Although email is a quick and easy way to communicate, instant messenger as a virtual communication tool was requested. Generation Y and X are born and raised with different technologies and are used to using different kinds of instant messengers to be reached easily. Therefore it was no wonder there were 12% from Generation Y and 4% from Generation X who would prefer an instant messenger such as Microsoft Lync also in the working life. Having a virtual communication tool would make it easier to have a quick and instant connection to colleagues. Instant messengers could also reduce the number of telephone calls and therefore it would make working in open plan office much more pleasant.

Sinetti, the Ovenia intranet, was found generally a good and functional place for internal briefing. Some people use Sinetti daily and others when they need to look up some information. It was said that Sinetti is a great help when learned to use properly. Sinetti was also hoped to be used more on actual dialogue between the people rather than only as an information channel.

Last but not least, one person from the Baby Boomers thought that the virtual work environment should not be over-emphasized at the expense of sociability. Most likely this means that even though there are ways to be connected online, we should not forget the importance of meeting face-to-face. Meeting people in person surely gives a different kind of impression and might sometimes be a better option than phoning, emailing, video conferencing or instant messaging. Still, having all these different communication options make the working more flexible and therefore these are something that Ovenia should take a closer look into. Quite likely a well-functioning virtual work environment would increase productivity and ease the working.

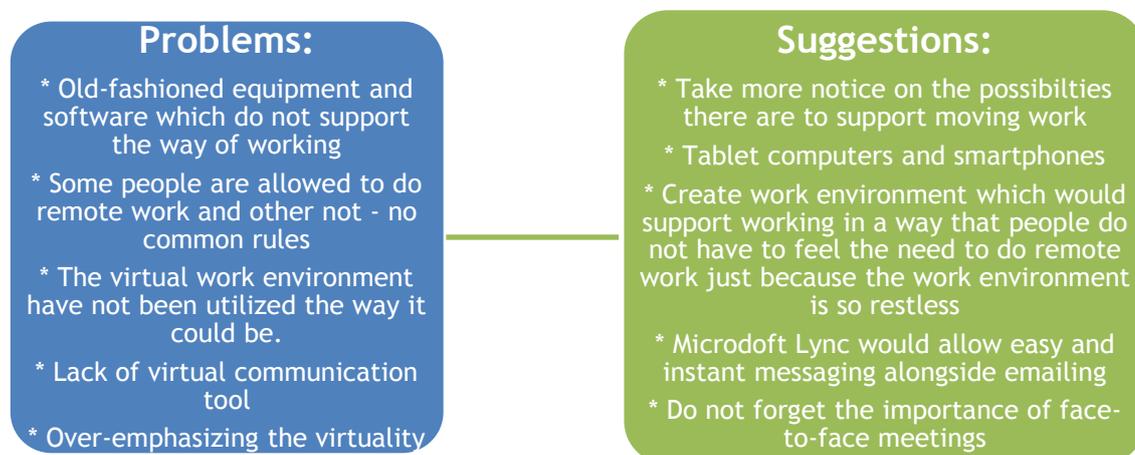


Table 12: Problems and suggestions for virtual work environment

### 6.3 Social work environment

Since the social work environment is one of the most crucial parts of a healthy and pleasant work environment, it was good to notice that the social work environment at Ovidia was found to be rather good. 90% of Generation Y, 87% of Baby Boomers and 81% of Generation X found the current social work environment mostly pleasant. However, these percentages give quite rosy picture of the situation as from all of these people 45% found some aspects in the social work environment that would need improving. These were nothing major which would make the social environment totally unbearable, but changes would definitely increase the satisfaction to another level.

Although the general atmosphere was found rather pleasant, it would be essential to take notice of the 19% of Generation X, 13% of Baby Boomers and 10% of Generation Y who found the social work environment unsatisfactory as well as the suggestions of how the people who were satisfied would make the social work environment better. The most dissatisfying issues in the social work environment brought up were inadequate social spaces, communication problems, lack of respect, tightness of the air, distressing and anxious environment, too much work and hurry which does not allow them to enjoy working.

The importance of the social work environment was possible to be discovered from the responses. How people would want their social work environment to be received a lot of similar answers from all the generations. First of all, the overall atmosphere should be positive, relaxed, open and communication should be easy and flexible. The atmosphere was hoped to be humorous and some laughter would make a huge difference. Asking for help and communicating with closest colleagues, people from other teams as well as with upper management should be easy and natural. Especially for Generation Y having open and supporting social work environment is important, as they want to learn everything they can and gain new knowledge (Burmeister 2009, 7). It was also emphasized that people make the office, rather than furniture.

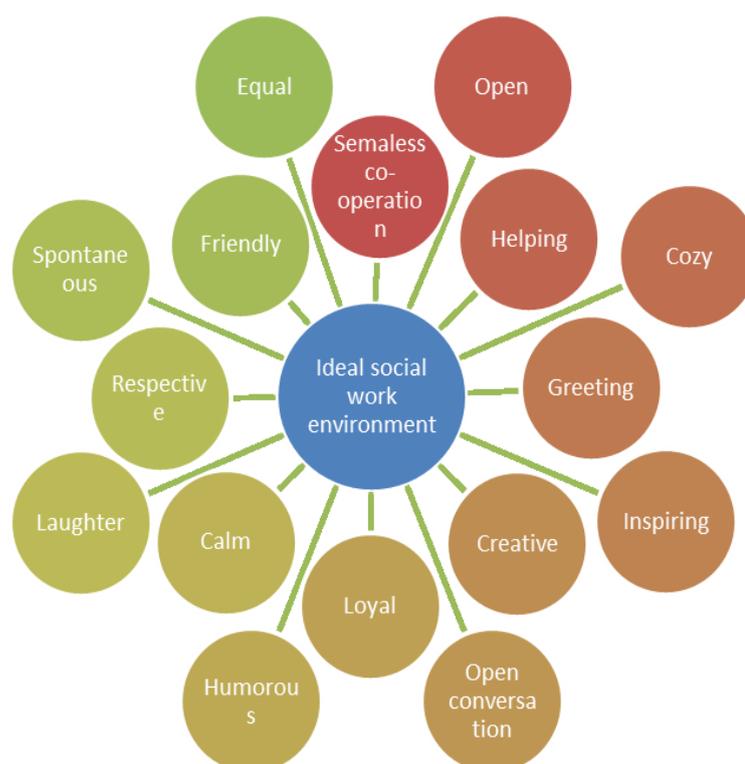


Table 13: Adjectives which describe the ideal work environment

One of the important aspects for the responders was the social spaces, as in break room. The current social spaces were seen in some offices as inadequate, since there was no kitchenette and water tap available, and employees need to get the water from the bathroom, which was not considered appropriate. The social spaces were also considered small and uncomfortable, and in some cases the social spaces were also used for meetings, which limited their use from eating, relaxing and casual interaction.

Although people did prefer separate meeting areas from social spaces, Generation Y people hoped to have multifunctional social spaces which could be used for having casual meetings and in this way also maximize the use of the different spaces. As people did want to have a separate kitchen area for eating, the solution could be to have different sized spaces either closed or for example in the corridor, which would allow casual and formal meetings. These spaces could also be reserved for individual working or group working. Important when planning these areas is that they are somehow separated from the main office areas, as the employees currently working close to break rooms told that they get disturbed by the noise coming from kitchen appliances, cutlery and people talking and laughing.

Another important feature, and quite an important one, was appreciation. Some people responded that they do not feel appreciated at their workplace. This is something that would be crucial for people to work to their full potential. This might have a great effect on their

productivity and they might not feel comfortable coming to work, leading to people finding better workplaces in which they could feel comfortable. Some also found the atmosphere tight and tense which was due to colleagues changing often and the companies merging and a lot of new people trying to get to know each other and their working ways.

The feeling of disrespect might partly emerge from communication problems. Within the team everything is working but the connection to the Ovenia Group was found physically weak. Most problems in communication were found between the grass root and the upper management but also between different teams. The communication was found to be difficult and restrained. The communication was also found quite insufficient and getting information might sometimes take quite a long time. These matters were considered to decrease the satisfaction with the overall feeling of the work environment and it is no wonder as without communication nothing can really work. People mentioned that having a good superior is an important part of the social work environment.

There were few persons who found that there is too much work for them to be possible to enjoy being at work. In addition to this the work days get extended and work is also done from home on top of the normal working hours mainly due to the fact that remote working has not been agreed on with the employer. This huge workload of people is possible to notice in the social work environment. As people get more stressed it can be seen in the way people have difficulties to organize their work and in their productivity. Therefore it would be important to take care of the well-being of the employees and monitor regularly how they cope with their work. Employees should also be encouraged to take care of their well-being and make it easier for them to contact their superior in case they feel they cannot cope with the workload.

Social facilities such as showers and locker rooms were only requested by few responders. These facilities would be essential for example to people who cycle to work. Why there were only few responders who mentioned locker rooms and shower possibilities might be due to the fact that people did not understand to think about those as a part of the social work environment, the amount of employees who need these spaces is so low, or the people who commute by bike just did not take part in this survey. Still, some kind of space should be offered for people to change clothes and shower. It was also pointed out that the cleaning of bathrooms was not always sufficient enough.

One person found that team rooms were more efficient than open plan offices. This would allow for easy communication between the team members, although too tight teamwork might mean that getting to know the other employees in the company becomes difficult. Therefore also the links between different teams should be emphasized, and people should

know at least what the main activities of different teams are and how they affect their working. People should know who to contact in certain issues so that the information does not need to be moved from person to person.

As a way to connect people from different teams, more of some kind of get-together events were suggested. One suggestion was a Friday afternoon coffee with bun or something of that sort. Also, fruits were hoped to be on offer as a way to have a healthy snack during the day. Also, few times a year people wished to have nice recreation days and relaxed Christmas parties. Small things were considered to create a joyful feeling at the office. Quite interesting was that there were also few persons who felt that the social work environment was not needed and that they want that the workplace is just for working, not for socializing. How serious these people were in these statements cannot be said.

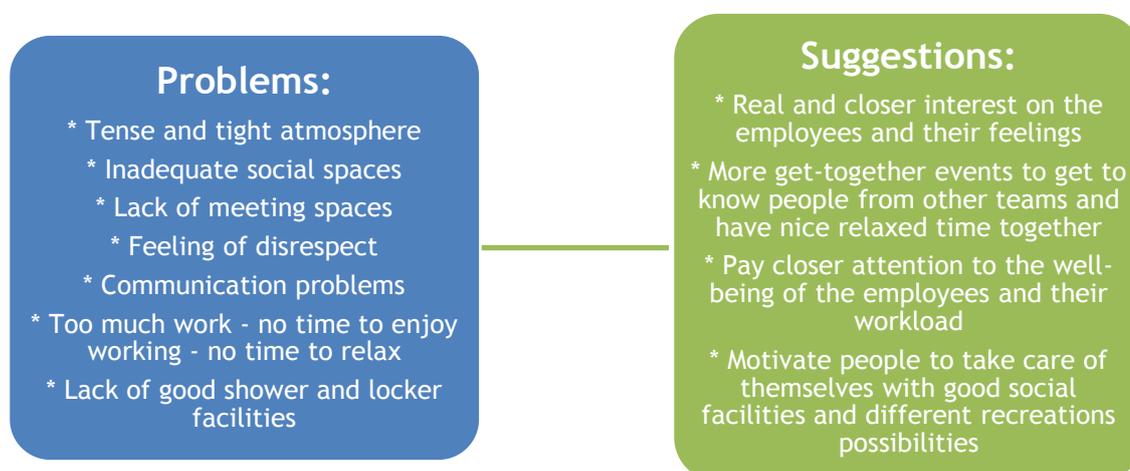


Table 14: Problems and suggestions for social work environment

#### 6.4 Other material emerging from the research survey

In addition to the main issues about the work environment preferences, there were also few other interesting aspects emerging from the asked background information, which partly also influence the work environment. One of the aspects was how much time people spend at the office. This is relevant for the planning of the offices since people who spend their entire time at the office might have a bit different needs than people who spend only half of their time at the office. The other aspect is commuting, which affects the way for example parking possibilities need to be taken care of, or if there should be need to encourage people or support people commuting with public transportation.

From the response on how much time people spend on average at their workplace it is possible to notice how much moving work there is done in this field. Only approximately 19% of the responders spend all of their time at the primary workplace. Out of all generations, peo-

ple from Generation Y spend most time at the office as 70% of them spend more than 80% of their time at the office. Then again from Baby Boomers half of the responders spend less than 80% of their time at the workplace. Although Baby Boomers spend in total least time at the office, from Generation X there are more people than in other generations who spend less than 50% of their time at the primary workplace.

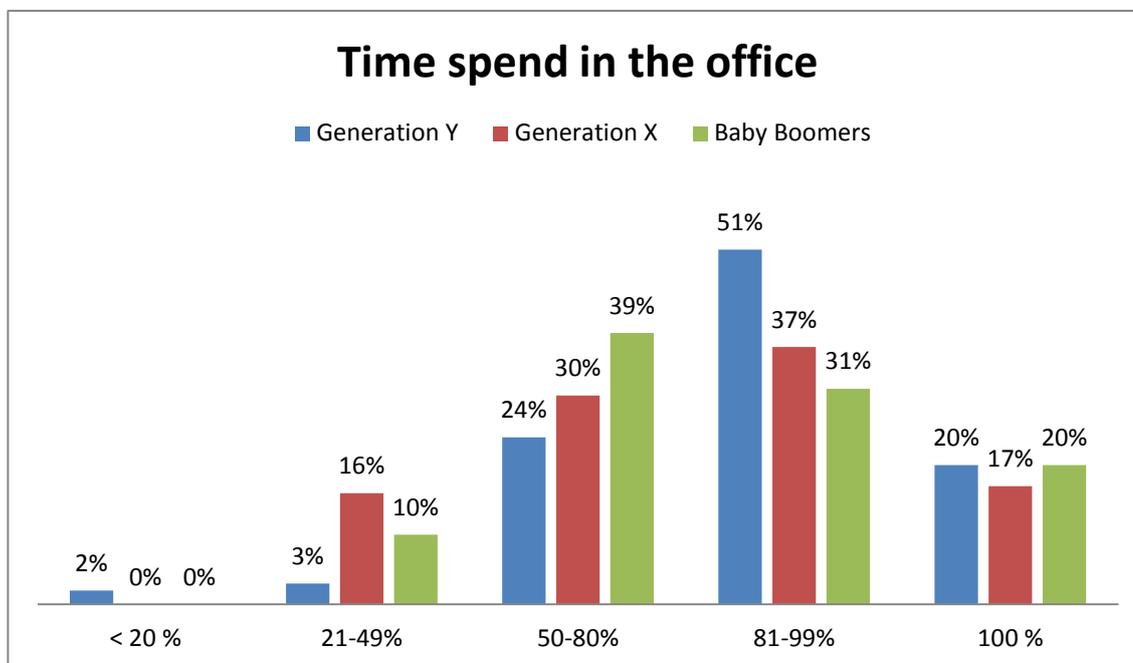


Figure 3: Time spend in the office

These responses reflect quite well the property management field, in which job descriptions require moving around, visiting the building sites et cetera and therefore people cannot spend their entire time at the primary workplace. As people do not spend much time in the office, it might be reasonable to think about what kind of office settings would be best to suit the working style of these people. Especially for people who spend less than a half of their working time in the office, having an own separate desk might not be necessary if there would be bookable rooms or hot-desk type of working spots.

To the question about the commute ways people were able to choose one or more commuting ways. The alternatives for commuting ways were car, public transportation, cycling, walking and other to be specified, which in this case was motorcycle. Car as the most common way of commuting was not surprising and 74% of Generation X and Baby Boomers used car to commute. Interesting was that Generation Y was the only generation in which public transportation was more popular than car, as 56% used public transportation and just 47% car.

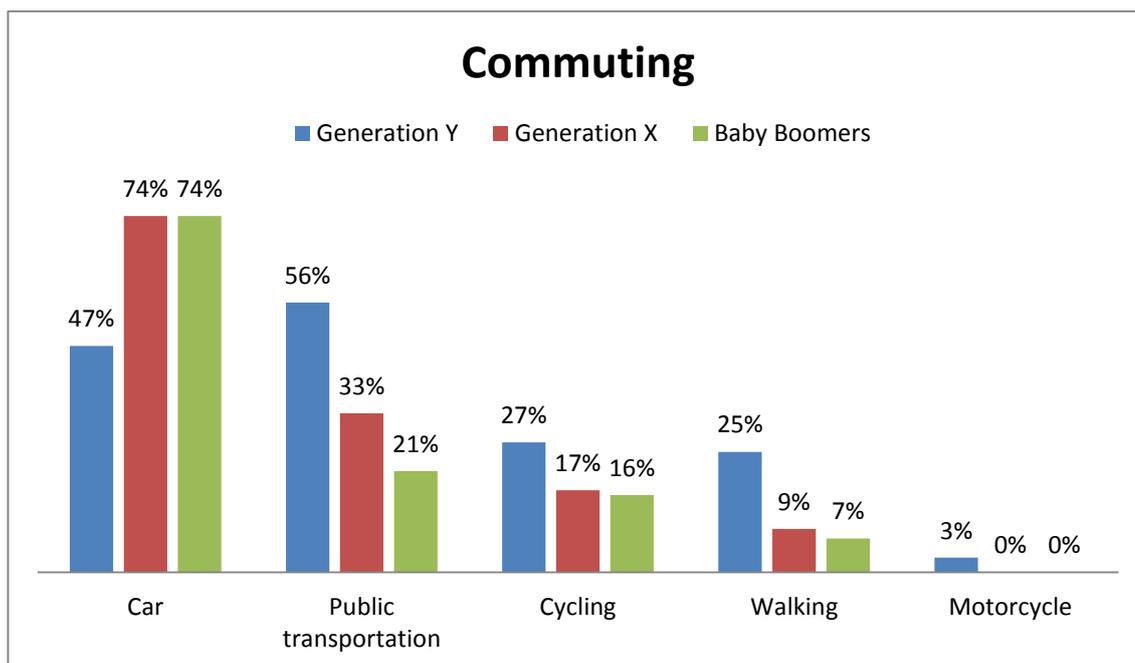


Figure 4 : Commuting

From all the responders using public transportation, 79% live in the metropolitan area. This might come from the very obvious reason that these people are still young and less likely own their own cars, and therefore use public transportation. Using public transportation at the metropolitan area might also be much easier. The third most used commute way was biking with 20% of all responders, fourth walking with 13% of all responders and finally 1% of all responders ride motorcycle to work.

## 7 Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to identify if there are generational work environment preferences and more importantly to find out how people feel about their current work environment versus how they would prefer their ideal work environment to be in the case company Ovenia. As a result a good general view on the atmosphere in the current work environment and how people at Ovenia would prefer their work environment was gained. Due to the generational point of view it was not possible to make the thesis more specific nor to take all the different aspects of work environment into notice. However, from the ones that were surveyed it was possible to discover the importance of asking people for their opinion about their preferences concerning the work environment.

From the results it is possible to discover that more specific surveying would be needed, especially concerning the heating and ventilation, noise and the virtual work environment. Also the interior design would be one of the issues which should be paid more attention to. It would most likely increase employee satisfaction with their overall work environment, since

good interior design would also take into notice not only the colors and decoration, but also the sound passing.

The results indicate that there are aspects in the work environment which would need more attention than others, and the issues with which people were quite satisfied, in general had still many small issues which made the employees feel uncomfortable at work. The fact that people were satisfied with the security aspects was positive, as security is one of the most fundamental parts of making people feel comfortable. Although people were generally quite satisfied with the social work environment, the overall impression still seemed to be that people do not feel that they are listened to. The atmosphere was found tense and tight, and there were feelings of disrespect. People also seemed to have too much work or the work was so fragmented that it caused unnecessary strain.

By listening to the employees it would be possible to create a work environment which would support working and in this way support task completion. From the results it is possible to discover that people would prefer having a workspace that would support their working more than the current workspace. This includes good and functional virtual work environment which would support moving work. The workspace would be flexible, and adjusting to the needs of the person. Interior design would be modern, natural and bright with accent colors from the Ovenia theme colors. Most importantly, the atmosphere at the workplace would be open, communicative and joyful.

The company values are important and surely working in service industry requires customer orientation, but also the employees should be valued. Paying more attention to employees and their well-being would most probably allow the employees to feel that their work is appreciated, and this would show in the way they act with their customers. Ovenia should remember that people are the most fundamental part of the company and it would be essential to promote the well-being of the employees in order to achieve the company goals. Since it seems that Ovenia is getting bigger and bigger, taking care of contacts with the employees becomes more and more important. It would be essential for Ovenia to pay more real interest to their employees and their well-being. Creating a work environment which would support the working of all the employees would be an important part of this.

Through this thesis it was possible to notice that making more specific separate surveys in all the offices would be necessary for finding out the most crucial issues to be taken care of in each office. Each office has employees working under various job descriptions and therefore it would be necessary for Ovenia to survey the needs of each team and each employee to make the work environment support precisely the needs of the team. The reason why the current work environment was found distressing and anxious is the fact that people are working

in open plan offices which are not designed properly and there is not enough closed meeting places to hold meetings in, or to work on projects.

Although people can work in open plan offices it should be considered if this really is the best possible solution for a company such as Ovenia. Although an own office for the reason of silence, peace and quiet was the most preferred office space, this might be quite difficult to arrange. Still, an open plan office as an only possibility most probably does not support all the different functions inside one company. If continued with the current open plan office solution, more attention should be given to the layout, acoustics, and the meeting rooms. As there are different activities in each office, the meeting rooms should be designed to support the different activities in the office.

In the end it needs to be said that during the thesis process it was possible to notice how challenging it was to make a qualitative research, at least from such a broad perspective and without any background in qualitative research. Focusing on a smaller sample would most probably have been easier, but then the generational research focus would not have been valid. Still, in the end, this thesis did show how essential it would be for Ovenia to research more specifically the work environment. By conducting more specific surveys on each of the 21 offices would allow taking care of the specific problems in those offices, and creating solutions which would support the people working in the those offices.

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## Appendix 1

Kysely Ovenialaisille ihanteellisesta työympäristöstä / Survey on ideal work environment for people working at Ovenia

### 1. Sukupuoli / Gender

- Mies / Male
- Nainen / Female

### 2. Syntymävuosi / Year of birth

- Valitse listasta syntymävuosi / Choose year of birth from the list

### 3. Kuinka pitkään olet ollut työelämässä? / How long have you been in the working life?

- 0-2 vuotta / years
- 3-5 vuotta / years
- 6-10 vuotta / years
- 11-20 vuotta / years
- 21-30 vuotta / years
- 31 < vuotta / years

### 4. Toimipiste / Office location

- Valitse toimipiste listasta / Choose office location from the list

### 5. Kuinka monta prosenttia työajasta keskimäärin vietät toimipisteelläsi? / How many percentages from the working time do you spend in the primary workplace?

- <- 20%
- 21-49%
- 50-80%
- 81-99%
- 100%

### 6. Liikkuminen työpaikan ja kodin välillä / Commuting between work and home

- Auto / Car
- Julkinen liikenne / Public transportation
- Kävelen / Walking
- Pyörällä / Biking
- Muu, mikä? / Other, what?

### Tämän hetkinen työympäristö / Current work environment

Työympäristöllä tarkoitetaan työpaikkaa sekä sen fyysistä, sosiaalista että virtuaalista ympäristöä. Seuraavat kysymykset liittyvät nykyiseen työympäristöön. Kuvailkaa perustellen millaisessa työympäristössä tällä hetkellä työskentelette ja kuinka se tukee työntekoa. Kerrothan vain nykyisestä tilanteesta. Siitä, mikä olisi mielestänne parempi vaihtoehto nykyisen tilalle, kysytään seuraavalla sivulla. / Work environment means the workplace and its physical, social

and virtual environment. The following questions concern the current work environment. Describe the current work environment and how it supports the working. Tell only about the current work environment. How you would prefer the work environment is asked in the next page.

#### 7. Tämän hetkinen työskentelytila / Current workspace

- Oma toimistohuone / Own office
- Jaettu toimistohuone / Shared office
- Avokonttori (merkitty paikka) / Open plan office (marked place)
- Monitilatoimisto (monia erilaisia tiloja, joista voi valita mieleisensä työtehtävän mukaan) / Multifunctional office (various spaces from which to choose according to the task)
- Muu, mikä? / Other, what?

#### 8. Tämän hetkiset työvälineet / Current working tools

- Kannettava tietokone / Laptop computer
- Pöytäkone / Desktop computer
- Tablettitietokone / Tablet computer
- Matkapuhelin ilman Internet-yhteyttä / Mobile telephone without Internet connection
- Älypuhelin / Smartphone
- Muu, mikä / Other, what?

#### 9. Työpiste ja ergonomia / Workstation and ergonomics

- ✓ Millainen nykyinen työpisteesi on? / How is your current workstation?
- ✓ Onko työpisteesi ergonominen työtehtävääsi nähden vai onko sitä mahdollista muunnella? / Is your current workstation ergonomic and can it be adjusted?

#### 10. Värit ja sisustus / Colors & design

- ✓ Millainen on työpaikkasi tämän hetkinen värimaailma ja sisustus? / How is the current coloring and decoration in the office?

#### 11. Valaistus / Lighting

- ✓ Kuinka nykyisen työympäristön valaistus on hoidettu? / How has the lighting taken care of in the current work environment?
- ✓ Tunnetko valaistuksen olevan riittävä? / Do you feel that lighting is enough?
- ✓ Voitko vaikuttaa työpisteesi valaistukseen? / Can you effect on the lighting of your workspace?

#### 12. Äänimaailma / Sound environment

- ✓ Millainen on työpaikkasi tämän hetkinen äänimaailma? / How is the sound environment in your current work environment?
- ✓ Onko nykyisessä työympäristössäsi esim. työskentelyä häiritseviä ääniä? / Is there any disturbing noises in the current work environment?

#### 13. Turvallisuus / Security

- ✓ Koetko olosi turvalliseksi työpaikallasi? / Do you feel safe and secure at your workplace?
- ✓ Kuinka turvallisuus on otettu huomioon? / How has the security been taken care of?

14. Ilmastointi ja lämmitys / Heating and ventilation

- ✓ Toimiiko työympäristösi ilmastointi ja lämmitys halutulla tavalla? / Is the heating and ventilation working in the desired way?
- ✓ Voitko vaikuttaa ilmastoinnin tai lämmityksen säätöihin? Miksi tahtoisit/et tahtoisit vaikuttaa? / Can you affect the adjustments of heating and ventilation? Why would you / wouldn't you want to effect on the adjustments?

15. Sosiaalinen työympäristö / Social work environment

- ✓ Millainen on työpaikan tämän hetkinen sosiaalinen työympäristö? Ajattele esim. seuraavia asioita: / How is the current social work environment? For example think about the following issues:
- ✓ Yleinen ilmapiiri / Overall atmosphere
- ✓ Kommunikointi työkaverien/johdon kesken / Communication with colleagues / management
- ✓ Sosiaalinen kanssakäyminen / Social interaction
- ✓ Sosiaalitilat (esim. keittiö-, seurustelu- ja oleskelutilat) / Social spaces (for example kitchen, social, and relaxing spaces)
- ✓ jne? (and so on?)

16. Virtuaalinen työympäristö / Virtual work environment

- ✓ Kuinka työpaikallasi hyödynnetään virtuaalista työympäristöä tällä hetkellä? / How is the virtual work environment utilized currently?
- ✓ Esim. Intranetti, etätyö mahdollisuus, langattoman netin käyttö, virtuaalinen arkistointi, virtuaalinen keskustelumahdollisuus esim. videopuhelu. / For example intranet, possibility of remote work, wireless network, virtual filing, virtual communication tools such as videoconference.

17. Onko nykyisessä työympäristössäsi vielä jotain, mitä haluaisit kommentoida? Kerro tähän vapaasti. / Is there something else you would like to comment on the current work environment? Tell here freely.

**Ihanteellinen työympäristö / Ideal work environment**

Seuraavat kysymykset käsittelevät henkilökohtaisia mieltymyksiä työympäristön suhteen ja ovat pakollisia vastata opinnäytetyön tutkimusosan takia. Kertokaa perustellen, aihealueittain, millainen olisi Teidän mielestänne ihanteellisin työympäristö. / The following questions concern the personal preferences to the work environment and are mandatory to response. Tell the reasoning by subject, how would you be the most ideal work environment.

18. Ihanteellisin työskentely tila / The most ideal workspace

- Oma toimistohuone / Own office
- Jaettu toimistohuone / Shared office
- Avokonttori (merkitty paikka) / Open plan office (marked place)
- Monitilatoimisto (monia erilaisia tiloja, joista voi valita mieleisenä työtehtävän mukaan) / Multifunctional office (various spaces from which to choose according to the task)
- Muu, mikä? / Other, what?

19. Miksi valitsemasi tila on mielestäsi ihanteellisin työskentelytila? / Why is the chosen space the most ideal?

20. Ihanteelliset työvälineet / Ideal working tools

- Kannettava tietokone / Laptop computer
- Pöytäkone / Desktop computer
- Tablettitietokone / Tablet computer
- Matkapuhelin ilman Internet-yhteyttä / Mobile telephone without Internet connection
- Älypuhelin / Smartphone
- Muu, mikä / Other, what?

21. Työpiste ja ergonomia / Workstation and ergonomics

- ✓ Millainen olisi työpisteesi, jos saisit itse päättää? / How would your workstation be if you would choose?
- ✓ Huonekalut, ergonomisuus, muunneltavuus jne. / Furniture, ergonomics, adjustbilty and so on.

22. Värit ja sisustus / Colors & Design

- ✓ Kuvaile ihanteellisen työympäristösi värimaailmaa ja sisustusta. / Describe the colors and decoration of your ideal work environment.

23. Valaistus / Lighting

- ✓ Millainen olisi ihanteellisen työympäristön valaistus? / How would the lighting be in your ideal work environment?
- ✓ Kuinka kukin työntekijä voisi vaikuttaa oman työpisteensä valaistukseen? / How would everyone be able to effect on the lighting of their own workstation?

24. Äänimaailma / Sound environment

- ✓ Minkälaisia ääniä ihanteellisessa työympäristössäsi saa olla? / What kind of sounds there can be in your ideal work environment?

25. Turvallisuus / Security

- ✓ Miten turvallisuus otettaisiin huomioon ihanteellisessa työympäristössäsi? / How would the security been taken care of in your ideal work environment?

26. Ilmastointi ja lämmitys / Ventilation and heating

- ✓ Kuinka ilmastointi ja lämmitys hoidettaisiin ihanteellisessa työympäristössäsi? / How would the ventilation and heating be taken care of in your ideal work environment?
- ✓ Haluaisitko, että sinulla on mahdollisuus vaikuttaa ilmastoinnin ja lämmityksen säätöihin? Miten, miksi? / Would you like to have a possibility to adjust the heating and ventilation? How, why?

27. Sosiaalinen työympäristö / Social work environment

- ✓ Minkälainen olisi ihanteellisen työympäristösi sosiaalinen ympäristö? / How would the social work environment be in your ideal work environment?
- ✓ Yleinen ilmapiiri, / General atmosphere
- ✓ Kommunikointi työkaverien kesken, / Communication between colleagues
- ✓ Sosiaalinen kanssakäyminen / Social interaction

- ✓ Sosiaalitilat (esim. keittiö-, seurustelu- ja oleskelutilat) / Social spaces (for example kitchen, social, and relaxing spaces)
- ✓ jne. (and so on.)

28. Virtuaalinen työympäristö / Virtual work environment

- ✓ Kuinka hyödyntäisit virtuaalista työympäristöä ihanteellisessa työympäristössäsi? / How would you utilize the virtual work environment in your ideal work environment?
- ✓ Esim. Intranetti, etätöön mahdollisuus, langattoman netin käyttö, virtuaalinen arkistointi, virtuaalinen keskustelumahdollisuus esim. videopuhelu. / For example Intranet, possibility of remote work, wireless network, virtual filing, virtual communication tool such as videoconference.

29. Tuleeko mieleesi vielä jotain muuta, mikä olisi Teille tärkeää ihanteellisessa työympäristössä? / Is there something else that would be important for you in your ideal work environment?