

Study Shows Co-working Boosts Business for Freelancers

11.21.13 | Rotterdam, Netherlands | Co-working, the practice of independent workers sharing an office with others rather than working alone at home, generates jobs, forms professional collaborations and increases business know-how.

New independent research by Associate Professor **Vareska van de Vrande** of **Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (RSM)**, shows co-working contributes positively to the position of self-employed professionals.

With increasing numbers of freelancers and independent contractors using flexible and hosted workspaces, the definition of the workspace is rapidly expanding outside the traditional corporate environment. One popular trend is "co-working space," an office environment set up for a loose collection of unrelated business professionals who prefer to pool their resources in a central location rather than working alone in home offices, at the kitchen table or in the local coffee shop.

Vareska van de Vrande's research, which was co-authored by Associate Professor **Niki Hynes** of **Curtin Business School**, Australia and **Katrin Burmeister**, Assistant Professor at RSM, compiled input from more than 500 users of Dutch co-working platform www.Seats2meet.com (S2M).

It showed that one in eight participants found a new job or temporary assignment through working in such a place. One in four users said they started professional partnerships or collaborations with other co-workers; and 50 percent said their business know-how — such as the correct use of tax forms — had significantly improved.

Results of the study indicate that the majority (65 percent) of people using S2M are entrepreneurs, another 10 percent are students and about 5 percent are unemployed. Many of them don't have an office of their own, and many respondents indicate that they like to have "people around them" or "the feeling of going to work."

This is reflected in their motivations for working at S2M: the most common reason being a change of working environment (40 percent); followed by having no office of their own (19 percent); and wanting to be more flexible in terms of the locations and times they work (16 percent). Other reasons include the possibility of meeting people, the often central location, and the possibility of interacting with others.

The researchers found that the large diversity of co-working users and their wide-ranging professions made it easier to establish new connections with potential customers, new business connections and find new colleagues.

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