CORT and Work Design Magazine recently fielded a survey asking readers to tell us about their office. As you plan for your office’s future, consider asking similar questions or otherwise soliciting feedback. Today’s workplace has come a long way but as you’ll see, your employees likely think there is still room for improvement.

About the respondents’ workplaces:

Respondents in traditional offices cited outdated furnishings/design as the biggest challenge of their layout and expressed a desire for new office furniture and accessories. More collaborative space was the top request, with 63% selecting it as the thing they’d most like to change in an office redesign.

Respondents in open offices, on the other hand, were most challenged by noise levels. While appreciating the collaborative nature of their space, they expressed a desire for more “phone booths” and small breakout rooms as well as white noise or other noise management. Open office workers also made it clear that one size does not fit all. Their top office redesign request was for more diversity in the types of workstations they have access to, specifically calling out ergonomic options such as adjustable-height desks.

Although I like the open plan concept for collaboration, we do not have enough private heads-down areas for work that requires concentration or quiet.

No matter the type of office they were in, survey respondents also reiterated the importance of a few elements that can make a huge difference in their overall workplace satisfaction:

- Natural light and windows
- Workstations that accommodate their technology
- Easy access to pin-up space, whiteboards and other tools of collaboration

Whether you are managing a traditional or open office design, supporting employees’ needs for both “me space” and “we space” is important. According to our survey respondents, finding the right balance may actually be the key to unlocking the workplace of the future.