
The evolution
of the office

The evolution of the office desk.

Morgan Lovell



The evolution of the office

Introduction

From typewriter table to standing up for itself.

These cornerstones of the modern workplace have gone through some serious changes since the 50s. From the early days of typewriters to the digital age of smart desks, we're going to uncover how office desks have kept pace with the times – and if they're soon to become obsolete.



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1950s & 1960s

Tank you very much.

It's the 50s and the modern office is just starting to take shape. Enter the iconic tanker desk, a trusty workhorse that could take whatever the bustling office threw its way. As the name suggests, these were built tough, often made of steel to withstand the rigors of the daily grind. With their sturdy construction and ample storage space, they were the perfect match for the era's cutting-edge technologies – typewriters, telephones, and more.

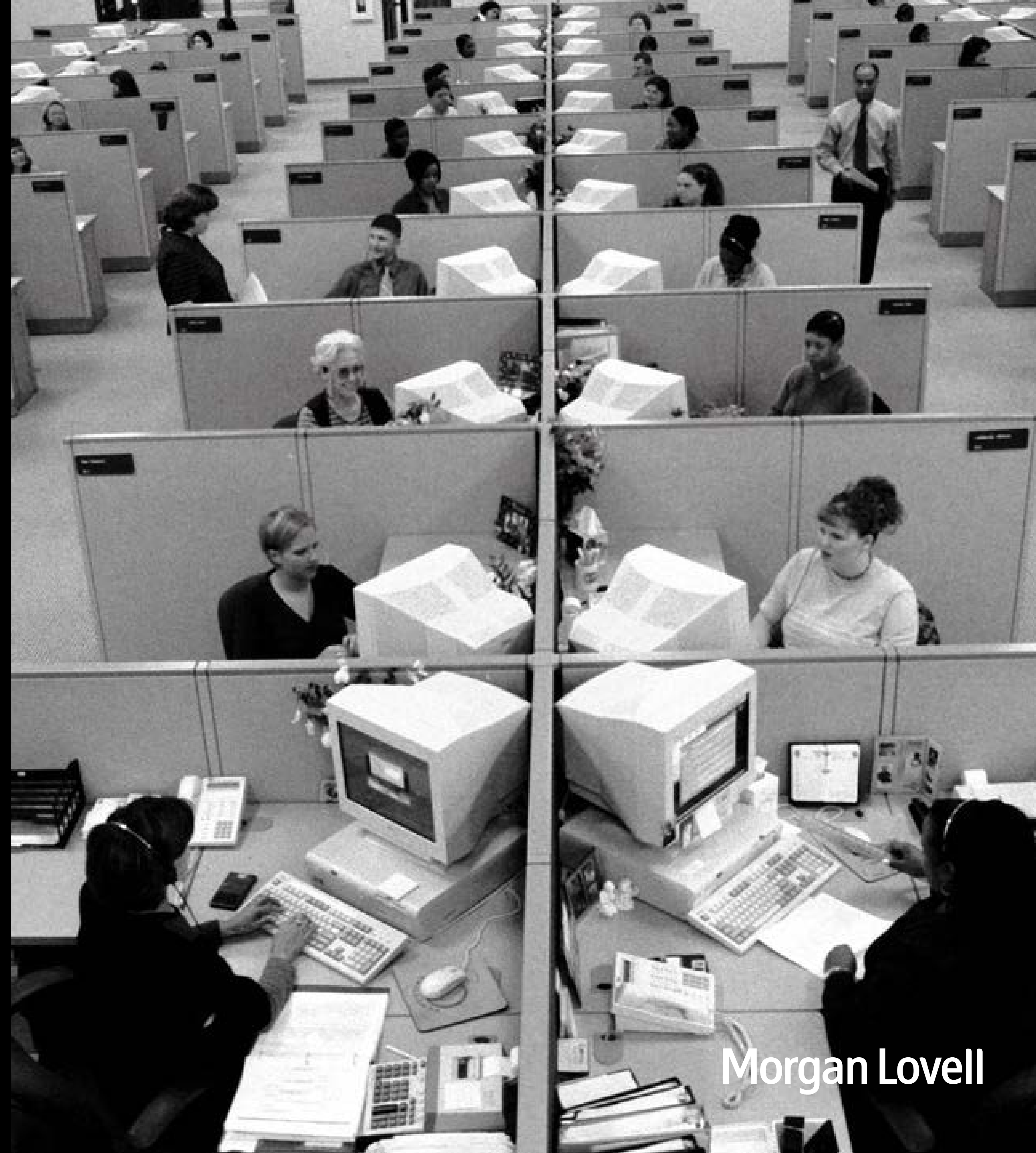


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1970s & 1980s

It's hip to be square.

The 70s and 80s saw the emergence of the cubicle. While they provided privacy and arguably helped focus, they quickly gained a reputation for being impersonal and isolating. The confined space and lack of natural light made them feel cramped and claustrophobic, and the homogenous design lacked any personality or inspiration. It wasn't long before the "cubicle farms" of the 70s and 80s became synonymous with soulless work environments, leaving employees feeling disengaged and unfulfilled.



1990s & Noughties

Tear down those walls.

The 90s and noughties brought a growing awareness of ergonomics and its impact on office design, with open plan replacing cubicles. But it wasn't just the layout that got an upgrade, tech came on leaps and bounds. Computers got smaller, but the screens got larger and flatter. So desks had to adapt to accommodate these behemoth monitors. It was all about finding the perfect balance of form and function, and the office was all the better for it.



2010s & 2020s

Desk and office: conscious uncoupling.

With the rise of remote work, the office desk has gone through yet another transformation. But these aren't your average desks, they're smart desks with built-in charging stations and cable management systems. And let's not forget about standing and adjustable desks - no more being glued to our chairs. Then there's hotdesking. Think musical chairs, but with desks. Multiple employees use the same desk space at different times, saving space and reducing costs for companies.



2030s & Beyond

It's a desk, but not as we know it.

As technology continues to evolve, so too will office desk design. In the future, desks may become even more integrated with technology, with features such as voice-activated assistants and augmented reality. In addition, the trend toward remote work is likely to continue, and desks will need to be designed to meet the needs of a distributed workforce.



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Your place or zoom?

If you'd like to discuss how we
can future-proof your office,
get in touch.

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