

The 7 Steps -
December



Workplace Innovation

1. CONTEXT

Mindmap anything you know about the topic, including vocabulary. Do some research online to help.

2. QUESTIONS

Read the listening questions to check your understanding. Look up any new vocabulary.

3. LISTEN

Listen and answer the questions using full sentences. Circle the number of times and % you understood.

Listening Questions 1

1. According to the OECD, what percentage of workers in Japan worked long hours?
_____.
2. What was the OECD average for “time devoted to leisure and personal care”?
_____.
3. When was Telework Day and how many companies were expected to participate?
_____.
4. In what year did Cool Biz debut and what was Yuriko Koike’s position at the time?
_____.
5. What’s one reason Premium Fridays were introduced?
_____.

Listening Questions 2

1. What are open office designs supposed to achieve?
_____.
2. What kind of mix are some companies now aiming for when designing their offices?
_____.
3. What are “coworking spaces”?
_____.
4. When was WeWork established and how many members do they have?
_____.
5. Name 2 large companies that are WeWork customers.
_____.

Listening 1				
1	2	3	4	5
%	%	%	%	%

Listening 2				
1	2	3	4	5
%	%	%	%	%

Discussion Questions

1. How has the work culture in Japan changed since you started working?
2. What do you think your company will look like 10 years from now?
3. What are some other workplace initiatives you would like to see introduced?

TRANSCRIPT 1

4. CHECK ANSWERS



Read through the transcript and underline the answers. Check them against your own answers.

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s latest figures in 2017, roughly 22% of employees in Japan worked long hours, which is defined as over 50 hours per week. Of the 38 countries included in the list, Japan was ranked 35th with only workers in South Korea, Mexico and Turkey **putting in** longer days. However, in the "time devoted to leisure and personal care" category, Japan came in at 22nd place with just under 15 hours per day, which was the average for all 38 countries.

July 24th 2017 was "Telework Day" in Japan, a government-backed initiative promoting telecommuting, and according to a Reuters article at the time over 900 companies were going to take part. Reuters also reported that July 24th will be **designated** as Telework Day until the start of the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo.

Another example of an initiative introduced by the Japanese government was "Cool Biz". In 2005 Yuriko Koike, then Environment minister and now Governor of Tokyo in 2017, introduced Cool Biz where office workers were encouraged to dress more comfortably. Cool Biz has **taken root** and it's now common not to have to wear a tie or jacket during the summer.

In February 2017 "Premium Friday" debuted. The idea of this is to get companies to encourage employees to leave work a few hours earlier on the last Friday of every month. According to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), one goal is to improve the lifestyles of working people. It is hoped that this extra time off will also **boost** consumer spending.

5. CHECK VOCABULARY



Read the transcript and circle any new vocabulary you find. Look them up and add them to your list.

MATCH THE SYNONYMS BY DRAWING LINES BELOW:

Put in	Increase
Designated	Change over time
Take root	Assigned
Boost	Apart from
Evolve	Work
Separate	Become firmly established

6. READ ALOUD



Read the transcript aloud at least 5 times, focusing on intonation and pronunciation.

TRANSCRIPT 2

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

How efficiently we work can be influenced by many factors including the layout of our offices.

The "open office" or "open floor" design is an example of how some companies have tried to create an atmosphere intended to inspire creativity, collaboration and productivity.

7. SHADOWING



Say the transcript aloud at the same time as the audio without reading it. Circle how many times below.

In October 2017, a New York Times article explained how the concept has **evolved** over the years. Companies are currently choosing designs that are a mix of both open and more quiet or private areas where employees can either work alone or meet in groups **separate** from whatever else may be happening in the same shared space.

Another interesting trend is "coworking spaces," where individuals or companies can rent space in the same facility and often interact with each other in common areas or during scheduled events. WeWork is one company that offers this type of service. They were established in 2010 and according to their website they have in excess of 100,000 "members" around the world and office space in more than 50 cities. They offer different plans designed to accommodate from one person all the way up to large companies, and membership includes access to a wide range of services. Some of the very well-known companies WeWork lists as customers include General Motors, Microsoft and HSBC. It will be very interesting to see how this concept develops in the years to come.

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5