Project management 101 *by Zavanak*

11. ORGANISATION AND APPROACHES

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11.5 The work environment

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The project working environment

A project is set up as a distinct entity.

Should it be conducted in a separate place from regular work?

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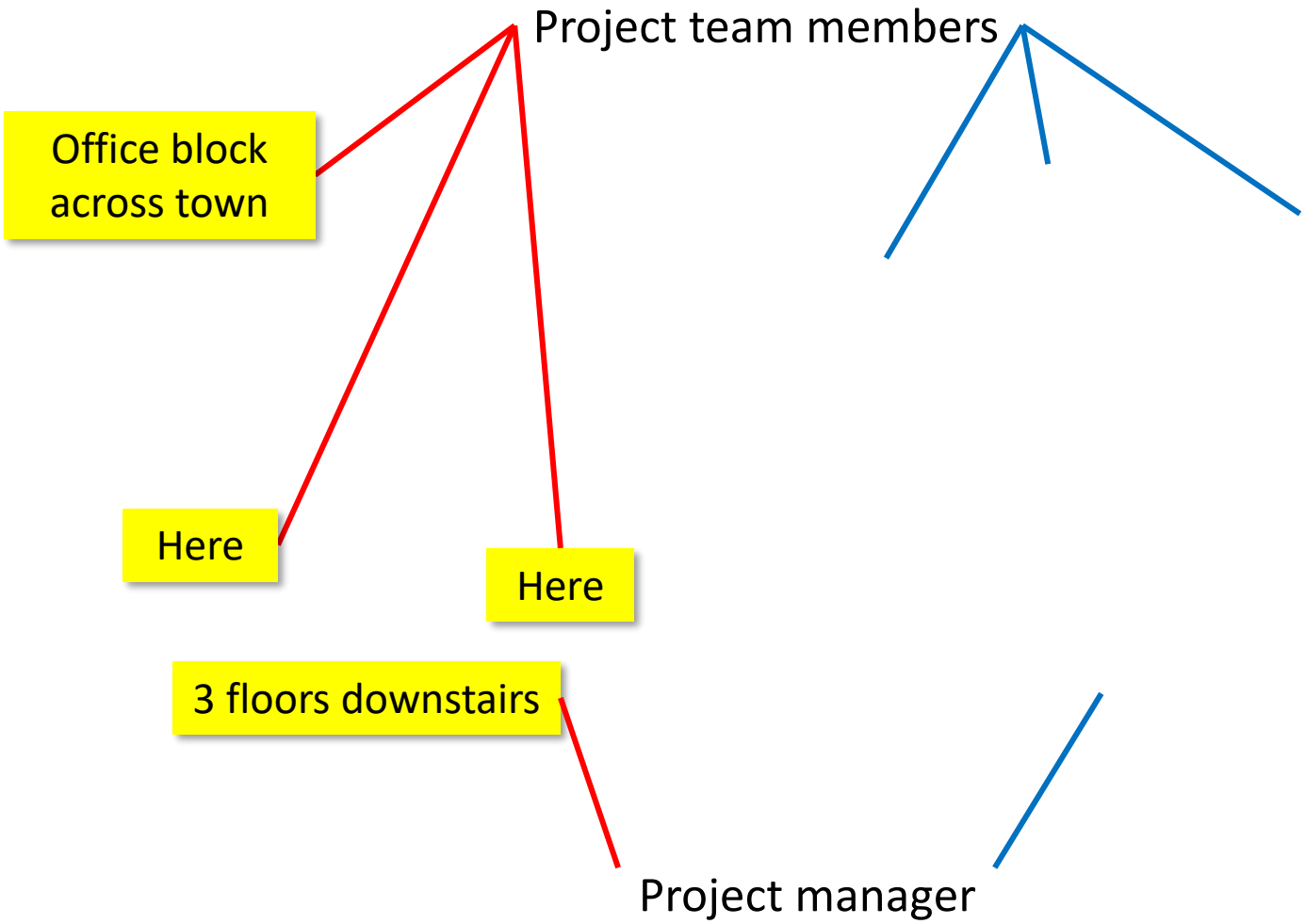
Dispersed teams can be inefficient



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Own space plus meeting spaces

- **Open office or cubicle**
- Impersonal environment
- **Water cooler conversations**
- Progress solitary tasks
- ***People get distracted***
- *Team culture is diluted*

- **Special meeting rooms and areas**
- Stimulating environments
- **Space for big prototypes**
- Emphasise project culture
- ***High overhead***
- *May foster ivory tower syndrome*

Photo: Hoya office CC 3.0
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The dedicated project room

The right space allows the team to be fully immersed in solving problems and crafting solutions.

Whiteboards

Bulletin boards

Arranged for easy co-working

Lots of note-pads, pens, junk

New stuff and old stuff

Reflects the customer's world

Area to unwind

Wireless IT

Robust furniture

Emphasis on low-tech communications

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Innovation hub

AIMS:

- **Game changing products**
- Challenge status quo, disrupt culture
- **Get to market quickly**
- Live next to the consumer, not a factory
- **Generate hundreds of fresh ideas**

(Needs senior executive blessing)

Ford Ingeni lab – central London
Designed by Richard Rogers
Opened September 2002
Closed 2003

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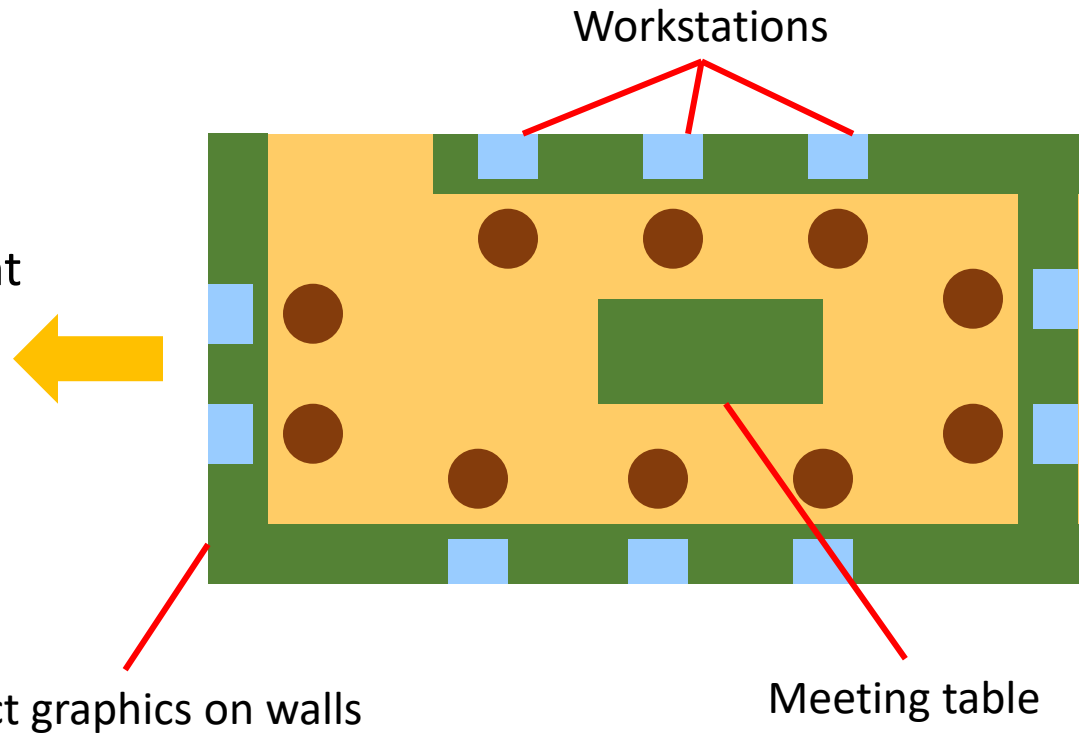
Close to the users

Automotive supply chain IT project

Base office:

- Detailed development
- Resilience testing
- Project office



Users work with developers to agree specifications, discuss detailed design options and support testing and training.

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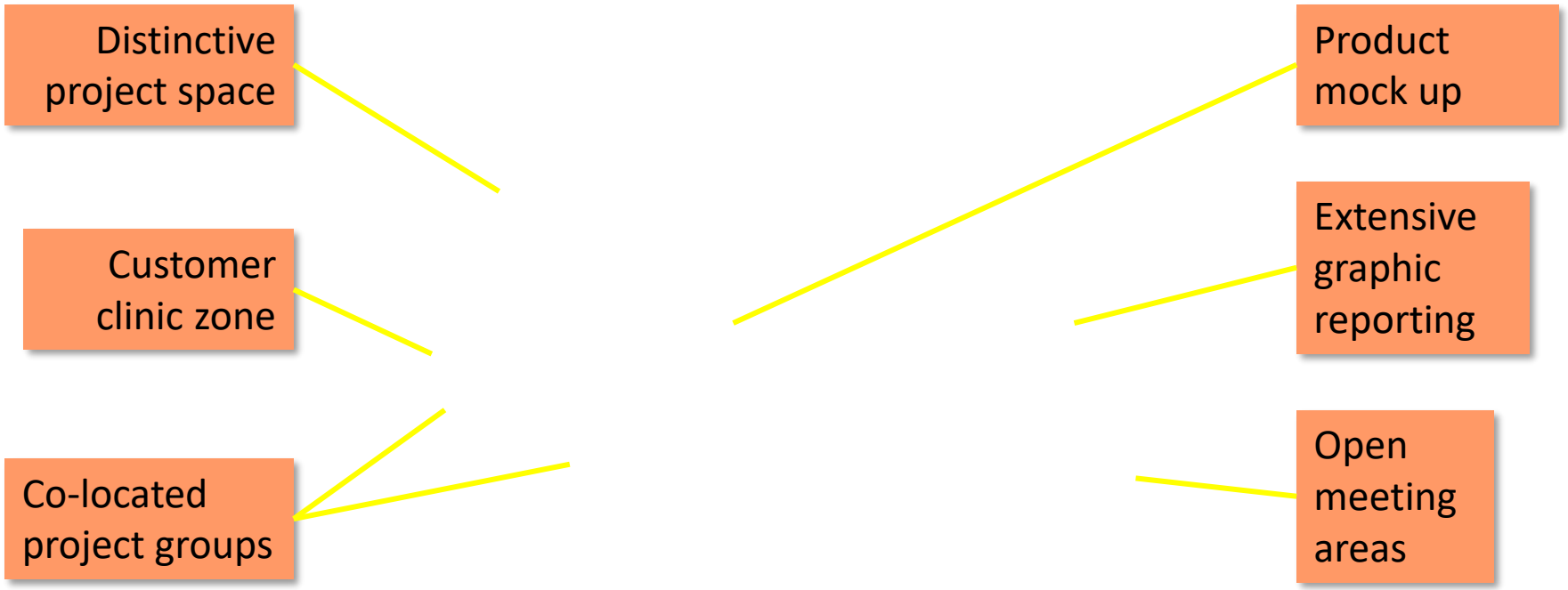
Embedded in the organisation

New product development



Co-location of key groups fosters open communication, greater creativity, concurrent development and more rapid progress.

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Making workspaces effective

Pixar HQ in Emeryville, California

Designed so people randomly bump into each other

Has a courtyard area rather than lots of corridors

Offers different sorts of work areas (cubicles, big tables, quiet rooms, etc.)

Managers and team members share space

Gives people a view outside, a comfortable temperature and good ventilation

Workplace design suits the needs of the project, not the other way round

Photo: Fubiz.net

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Drawbacks of innovative workspaces

Many people prefer some privacy at work.

Open working areas can be noisy.

The whole thing can feel rather contrived.

Use of working space might be inefficient, adding to costs.

The amount of personal interaction may actually drop compared with traditional layouts.

Use of surveillance technology raises many issues.

Perks like yoga classes and high-end canteens may not lead to better performance.

The best work has often come out of pretty unremarkable surroundings.

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