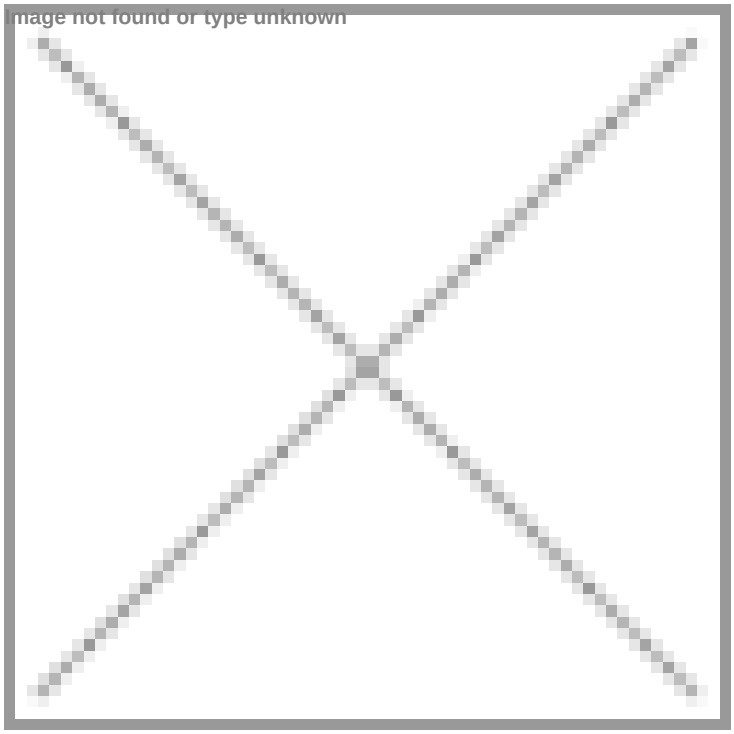
BioSpectrum
the business of Bio & Health Sciences

“Spatial, material, and technological interventions transform busy life sciences workplaces into calm, high-performance environments”

03 November 2025 | Views

Unispace has released its Global Workplace Insights 2025 Report: A Moment of Clarity, revealing that workplace noise and distractions remain the top global challenges, but Indian employees see things differently. The study finds that 98% of Indian workers believe offices will remain relevant in 2030, higher than the global average of 93%, making India the most optimistic market about the future of physical workplaces. In order to understand the current and future scenario of the workspace environment within the Indian life sciences sector, BioSpectrum India spoke to Abi Roni Mattom, Country Director of Unispace India.



The 2025 report highlights a significant shift in employee expectations from perks to essentials like calm, comfort, and customisation in the workplace. How is Unispace helping life sciences organisations redesign their spaces to meet these fundamental needs?

The Global Workplace Insights 2025 survey, comprising over 5,200 employees including those from the life sciences sector, reveals a clear mandate that workspaces must deliver calm, comfort, and customisation rather than superficial perks. Overall 47% of staff cite noise and distractions as their top performance blockers, this shift is especially urgent.

Unispace is addressing this shift through its 3Cs framework: Calm, Comfort, and Customisation, which guides the design of human-centred environments. The company begins with in-depth research, including employee surveys, occupancy studies, and role mapping, to understand how different teams interact with their workspace.

Designs then incorporate quiet zones with advanced acoustic treatments, workstations with personalised lighting and temperature controls, and task-based settings tailored to lab and research work. Technology amplifies this through environmental sensors that adapt lighting and temperature in real time, and digital booking tools that let staff reserve rooms or lab benches that fit their specific needs. This combination of human-centric research, dynamic controls, and flexible space typologies ensures life sciences professionals can seamlessly transition between tasks and maintain peak productivity.

Noise and distractions are cited as the top blockers to workplace performance globally. What practical strategies does Unispace recommend to create calmer workplace environments that support focus and productivity in the life sciences sector?

Recognising the precision required in research and analysis, Unispace designs environments that actively minimise noise and disruption. The company establishes dedicated quiet zones fitted with high-performance acoustic panels and sound-absorbing ceilings to reduce ambient noise. Spatial buffers, such as enclosed booths and focus pods, are strategically positioned between active labs and open-plan offices to contain sound.

Material selection plays a key role. The flooring and wall finishes are chosen for their sound-dampening properties. Unispace also integrates noise sensors that provide real-time acoustic data to facility managers, enabling dynamic adjustments.

Through digital booking systems, employees can secure silent workstations or rooms equipped with adjustable lighting and airflow controls. Together, these spatial, material, and technological interventions transform busy life sciences workplaces into calm, high-performance environments that support concentration and accuracy.

With the workforce increasingly flexing between physical and digital realms, how does Unispace integrate technology and space design to enhance employee well-being and collaboration?

Unispace combines digital intelligence with spatial design to create hybrid workplaces that support well-being, flexibility, and collaboration. The firm analyses occupancy sensor data and access patterns to understand how employees move between labs, offices, and meeting spaces. These insights inform balanced layouts that cater to both focused work and collaborative activity.

Using digital twin technology, Unispace models and tests workflow scenarios virtually before construction, ensuring that the final layout enhances both functionality and flow. Once operational, a unified mobile app becomes the interface between users and their environment, allowing employees to book workstations, adjust lighting and temperature, and access health and safety information seamlessly.

This integration of technology and design enables life sciences professionals to move fluidly between physical and digital tasks while maintaining well-being, autonomy, and connection.

The report underscores the growing importance of neuroinclusive workplaces. How is Unispace addressing the specific needs of neurodiverse employees in its workplace designs?

Unispace's approaches neuroinclusive through empathy and evidence-based design. The company conducts stakeholder workshops and empathy mapping with neurodiverse employees to identify potential sensory triggers such as harsh lighting, visual clutter, or strong contrasts.

In response, Unispace creates a spectrum of sensory environments that cater to individual needs. Private focus rooms include non-reflective surfaces, dimmable lighting, and acoustic treatments, while "calm zones" incorporate soft textures, biophilic elements, and natural light to provide gentle sensory stimulation.

Simplified wayfinding systems, featuring consistent signage and colour-coded areas, help reduce cognitive load. Additionally, a mobile app interface allows employees to control temperature, lighting, airflow, or white noise according to personal preference.

Regular post-occupancy evaluations ensure these spaces evolve based on feedback, creating a workplace where neurodiverse professionals feel supported, valued, and able to perform at their best.

What role do amenities, such as wellness spaces and hospitality services, play in the modern workplace, and how does Unispace balance these against the need for calm and focus?

Unispace integrates amenities in a way that enhances employee well-being without disrupting concentration. The firm strategically locates wellness and hospitality zones at the periphery of lab and office clusters, ensuring that mindfulness rooms, lounges, and hydration stations are accessible yet separate from core work areas.

In these spaces, material differentiation reinforces the intended function: hard finishes and vibrant tones define social areas, while acoustic wall panels and softer palettes maintain tranquillity in focus zones.

Technology adds another layer of control. Environmental sensors monitor noise and occupancy levels, alerting facility managers when spaces approach capacity to prevent overcrowding. This careful balance allows life sciences organisations to offer premium amenities while preserving the calm and focus vital to scientific and analytical work.

Given the uncertain future of the traditional office with hybrid models and AI adoption on the rise, what is Unispace's vision for the office by 2030?

Unispace envisions the office of 2030 as a dynamic hub for collaboration, innovation, and culture. Employees are expected to spend some days every week on-site, using the office as a centre for connection and creativity rather than routine tasks.

Traditional rows of desks will be replaced by modular neighbourhoods designed for teamwork and rapid adaptation. AI-enabled innovation labs will facilitate data analysis, simulation, and prototyping. Moveable partitions and modular furniture will enable teams to reshape their environments in minutes.

Digital twins and workplace sensors will provide continuous feedback, allowing real-time optimisation of layouts and occupancy. Sustainability will remain central, with low-carbon materials, bio-adaptive lighting, and air quality monitoring becoming standard.

By combining human-centred design with AI-driven intelligence, Unispace's 2030 vision redefines the office as an evolving ecosystem where people, technology, and purpose converge.

How does Unispace advise life sciences companies to navigate the challenge of balancing visibility and collaboration needs with the often conflicting requirement for quiet and focused workspaces?

To reconcile the demands of visibility and focus, Unispace employs a layered zoning strategy that ensures collaboration and concentration coexist seamlessly. At the centre are open collaboration hubs defined by low or transparent partitions that preserve visual connectivity. Surrounding these are "focus rings", clusters of quiet rooms, acoustic pods, and phone booths that act as buffers against sound.

Flexible elements such as mobile dividers and glass-walled meeting rooms with soundproof glazing allow visibility without sacrificing privacy.

Technology enhances this balance. Occupancy sensors and booking systems provide real-time data on space utilisation, enabling teams to schedule collaborative or focused work effectively.

This multi-layered approach allows life sciences organisations to maintain openness and engagement while giving individuals the quiet, controlled spaces necessary for precision work.

Dr Manbeena Chawla

(manbeena.chawla@mmactiv.com)