



5 CONSIDERATIONS WHEN FITTING OUT YOUR COWORKING SPACE WITH HIGH-SPEED INTERNET



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FEATURED INDUSTRY EXPERT



Paul Orrock
Project Manager, Medusa

One of the most important factors to the success of any workspace is the speed and reliability of its internet connection. It is no longer viewed as a member desire or an amenity – it is a critical, expected component for everyday work. Without consistently fast internet speeds, you risk struggling to retain members on a month to month basis.

We spoke with Paul Orrock, project manager with Yardi. Orrock's role is to manage the deployment of the Yardi Medusa Wi-Fi infrastructure. He is responsible for the execution of client projects from concept, to design, all the way to delivery.

Orrock explained five high-level considerations to take into account when fitting out your coworking space.

1. WHAT TYPES OF MEMBERS DO YOU WANT TO ATTRACT?

You have to know and understand your member base in order to provide them with the proper internet solutions. If you have a significant amount of small businesses working out of your space, their demands are likely to be different than if you have a large number of freelance writers or lawyers, for example.

“You first take the attitude of faster is better,” Orrock said in regard to internet speed. “You then go down the road of how to deliver that speed.”

The first thing to consider is a high-speed internet link.



2. WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO ACHIEVE FOR YOUR MEMBERS?

"A small to medium size coworking location would be looking at a speed of an internet circuit of between 200-500 mbps," Orrock said.

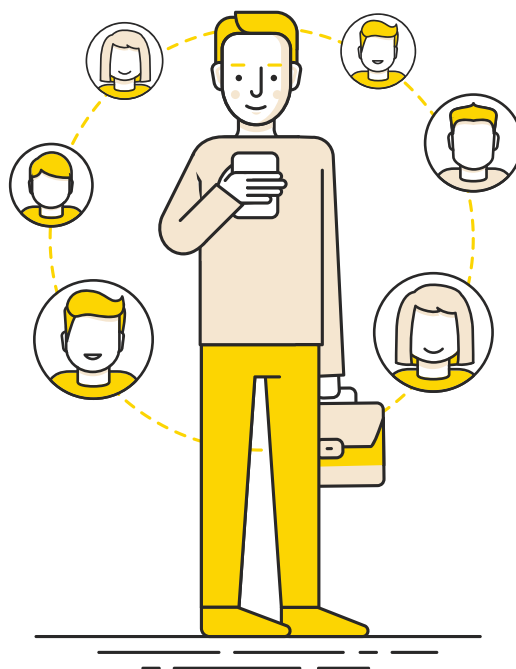
However, he added, "as speeds become less and less expensive, we're seeing that the norm is now 1 GB links to our coworking locations."

This not only represents a significant increase in the speeds that most members are used to, but a price to speed ratio that is improving constantly for operators.

Operators are not typically bound by normal office hours. You are supplying internet for your space close to 24/7/365 in many cases. So Orrock explains that a resilient circuit is very worthwhile in the coworking industry.

'This is done by buying two Internet Connections which constantly monitor each other, if one was to ever fail then the other connection is ready on standby waiting to step up and take over automatically when required to restore the full connection" he added.

You may have a large number of corporate coworking members. You could have many independent tax accountants. Regardless of member base, at this level of high-speed internet, not only will you surpass all your members' ranges of needs, but you'll attract a new member base which may feel other coworking spaces cannot provide what they demand.



3. WILL YOUR MEMBERS CONNECT PRIMARILY BY WI-FI OR WIRED CONNECTIONS?

One of the key factors is that mobility within a workspace is now commonplace; members increasingly moving around and no longer stay sat at a single desk. As a result it is more common for connections in coworking spaces to be delivered wirelessly, and while wired infrastructure is a requirement, wireless speeds are now equal to or even faster. Some Wi-Fi systems struggle with this, but leading Wi-Fi technology and expert deployment will handle these requirements with ease.

“We are finding that flood patching is slowly becoming a thing of the past as coworking spaces move away from livening up every floor socket they have and instead elect to simply provide a great wireless service which their operators can quickly jump on and satisfy their connection needs”, he added.



4. WHAT TYPE OF BUILDING IS YOUR SPACE LOCATED IN?

What is the structure of your building? Is it multi-storey? Is it narrow or wide? Old or new? Did it serve a different purpose before it was fitted out for a workspace?

In the case of owning a new building, you have the opportunity to design the core of the infrastructure from the ground up. So when someone approaches Paul and his team with a blank slate for a new building that's going to start going up in several months, there are no limitations as to where the wiring can go and they have the ability to make it a 'bulletproof' network.

Of course, retrofitting an older building is much more common. In this case there are far more limitations as to what can be done with the wiring, based off the questions of the structure we laid out just above.



5. DO I WANT TO USE COPPER OR FIBRE?

“There’s a misconception in the industry that fibre is better,” Orrock said. “Fibre is very good. It’s very fast. But it can also become extremely expensive and you need to make your switches fibre ready.”

This boils down to cost verses functionality conundrum for the operator. If you require to link multiple pieces of hardware together by fibre then the hardware costs can easily double with all the added extras as well as overheads which are required for this. There are fibre specialists which will accommodate this as well as offering a reliable complex working solution but they will price accordingly. This is why copper is usually considered a much more basic but cost effect way of achieving a similar infrastructure, as per Orrock’s explanation.

Largely due to the fact that it is easier to make it resilient, Orrock’s infrastructure team quite often uses copper. “We can carry 10 Gbps over copper. Copper is also significantly tougher than fibre. Fibre can be fickle and fragile, and due to this you need to make sure you have the space available to carry it accordingly. This may not even be feasible in an older retrofitted building. While Orrock advocates fibre in the case of building a new structure with no obstacles, copper is the choice for existing buildings.

In summary, first and foremost ensure that you know what you want to achieve for your members and what members you currently have or want to attract. From there, you’ll decide on a wired or wireless connection and whether you want to use fibre or copper. These answers will largely be dictated on the type of building you’re located in and whether its new or retrofitted from previous use. To learn more about the Yardi Medusa product, please click the link below.



coworking@Yardi.com

YardiKube.co.uk



Yardi Systems Ltd. 201-249 Avebury Boulevard, Milton Keynes, UK, MK9 1AX | +44 (0)1908 308400
Yardi Stirling. Wallace House, 4th Floor, 17-21 Maxwell Place, Stirling, UK, FK81JU | +44 (0)1786 230830