

Amsterdam workspace concept comes to SA

 By Jessica Tennant

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Following last month's launch of the Amsterdam-based workspace concept, Spaces at Atrium on 5th in Sandton, I interviewed Dutch founder Martijn Roordink to find out what it offers the South African workforce besides a place to plug in your laptop, and for his views on this new way of working.

Roordink believes work is about people and ideas.

“ Technology has created a modern economy, driven by empowered individuals. This informs the way we develop inspiring workspaces – with a love for design, and where our energetic team takes care of all the details so you can focus on developing your next big idea. ”

What really makes Spaces unique though is its energetic community of business nomads, freelancers, entrepreneurs, international workers, project teams, and both startups and well-established companies – basically a bunch of interesting people who love what they do.

How does it work?

We offer a service where you pay for what you use. You can hire an office or a meeting room for a day and you just pay for that. And if you decided to upscale, you can do that too.

Our options are pay by day, month, year – whatever is suitable to you. Price varies depending on what you decide to take up.

Members enjoy 24-hour worldwide access to all Spaces' business clubs. Lockers are available, so you can safely tuck away your jacket and gym bag before finding the day's workspace at a quiet table or at the centre of the action in our social heart. If you just want a little more space to stretch out, book a meeting room for a few hours or the whole day.

Wondering how to field your phone calls while working in such a public area? We've thought of that too – just duck into a phone booth to keep the content of your calls private and avoid disturbing others.

Prefer your own desk in a shared space? Choose a dedicated desk where you can work with the devotion and concentration your projects require.



Martijn Roordink, founder of Spaces.



Spaces at Atrium on 5th in Sandton.

■ **Spaces has been popping up across Joburg and throughout SA. Is there a big enough market for this in SA?**

Amid South Africa's current local and global economic and political climates, the uncertainty has seen the South African flexible workspace market proving that the workspace-as-a-service industry thrives in times of uncertainty. A lack of excessive funds and a booming entrepreneurial community has encouraged businesses to look for flexibility, and the serviced office model offers the most attractive and appropriate solution to an unstable economy.

“ South Africa has a booming entrepreneurial spirit. The idea behind co-working is to provide a conducive space for businesses and entrepreneurs to conduct business, without paying the traditional office space amount. ”

A place where entrepreneurs could have the space to spread their wings and grow their business. A co-working space is quite different from a mere shared office space because it has the added value of community. It will provide cubicles, individual offices, conference spaces and meeting spaces. It will implement strategic programmes that foster an inclusive community that will strive to build on common values, cultural traits and a have set of moderate, equitable house rules. It provides all of the resources required to conduct a business, such as fibre internet, a business address and meeting rooms.

■ **How have South Africans responded to it?**

With the rise in property prices, renting commercial office space has become more and more expensive and competition for prime real estate gets tougher. South African contractors, entrepreneurs, small/medium enterprises and now 'blue chip' enterprises have embraced this new way of working as it provides a solution for everyone.



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■ **Comment on this new way of working.**

Co-working spaces have grown in popularity over the last few years, and it is no surprise that many companies are now exploring the option of moving their business into the hub of a dynamic co-working environment.

■ ***But what exactly is co-working, how does it differ from the typical office environment and could it be a good choice for your business?***

Typically, co-working allows entrepreneurial-spirited teams the freedom to work in a collaborative environment.

“ *Whereas in a traditional office environment most are employed by the same organisation, those in a co-working space work for various companies spanning a variety of verticals and sizes.* ”

Co-working spaces are available in many cities worldwide. In these ecosystems, workers are exposed to a range of new people and can benefit from mingling, mentorships and even partnering with other firms.

For more information on where you can find these flexible office *Spaces* and so on, visit [SpacesWorks.com](https://www.spacesworks.com).

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