As more Millennials finish school and move into the workforce, commercial real estate is adapting to the different work styles and preferences of three generations. Coldwell Banker Commercial Affiliates surveyed more than 2,000 American adults to better understand where and how Millennials, Gen Xers and Boomers prefer to work, and how those trends are impacting commercial real estate.

I would prefer working in a private office to any other office location (e.g., cubicle, open desk, shared office).
Base (2,065 respondents)

Most Americans would prefer working in a private office to any other office location.
• 72% of U.S. adults would prefer working in a private office to any other office location.
• 70% of Millennials would prefer working in a private office to any other office location.
• 77% of Gen Xers would prefer working in a private office to any other office location.
• 71% of Boomers would prefer working in a private office to any other office location.

What is the longest length of time you are willing to commute to work each work day?
Base (2,065 respondents)

Millennials are willing to commute nearly twice as long as any other generation to get to work each day (results reported as mean averages).
• Millennials are willing to commute an average of 51 minutes to work each day.
• Gen Xers are willing to commute an average of 36 minutes to work each day.
• Boomers are willing to commute an average of 31 minutes to work each day.
• Overall, U.S. adults are willing to commute an average of 38 minutes to work each day.

I would prefer working from home to working from an office.
Base (2,065 respondents)

More Gen Xers and Boomers prefer to work from home than Millennials.
• 77% of Gen Xers prefer working from home.
• 71% of Boomers prefer working from home.
• 67% of Millennials prefer working from home.
• 70% of U.S. adults prefer working from home.

I would prefer working in an office space with an open floor plan to a floor plan with cubicles or private offices.
Base (2,065 respondents)

Most Millennials prefer working in an office with an open floor plan.
• 55% of Millennials prefer working in an office with an open floor plan.
• 41% of Gen Xers prefer working in an office with an open floor plan.
• 41% of Boomers prefer working in an office with an open floor plan.
• 44% of U.S. adults prefer working in an office with an open floor plan.
Face-to-face business meetings are/would be important to me.
Base (2,065 respondents)

More Millennials believe face-to-face business meetings are important than Gen Xers and Boomers.
• 77% of Millennials believe face-to-face business meetings are important.
• 67% of Gen Xers believe face-to-face business meetings are important.
• 74% of Boomers believe face-to-face business meetings are important.
• 73% of U.S. adults believe face-to-face business meetings are important.

I would be as comfortable working from a mobile device (e.g., mobile phone, tablet, laptop) as I would be working from a desktop computer.
Base (2,065 respondents)

Millennials are the most comfortable working from a mobile device, but Gen Xers and even Boomers aren’t far behind.
• 63% of Millennials are as comfortable working from a mobile device as they would be working from a desktop computer.
• 54% of Gen Xers are as comfortable working from a mobile device as they would be working from a desktop computer.
• 48% of Boomers are as comfortable working from a mobile device as they would be working from a desktop computer.
• 53% of U.S. adults are as comfortable working from a mobile device as they would be working from a desktop computer.

I am/would be comfortable sharing my work space with someone else.
Base (2,065 respondents)

Most Millennials would be comfortable sharing their workspace with someone else.
• 59% of Millennials would be comfortable sharing their work space with someone else.
• 46% of Gen Xers would be comfortable sharing their work space with someone else.
• 49% of Boomers would be comfortable sharing their work space with someone else.
• 51% of U.S. adults would be comfortable sharing their work space with someone else.

I currently own or plan to own my own business.
Base (2,065 respondents)

Millennials are the most entrepreneurial generation.
• 38% of Millennials currently own or plan to own their own business.
• 29% of Gen Xers currently own or plan to own their own business.
• 20% of Boomers currently own or plan to own their own business.
• 27% of U.S. adults currently own or plan to own their own business.
Commercial Office Space Preferences Among U.S. Adults

September 2014  Coldwell Banker Commercial Affiliates

I would prefer to work somewhere that allows easy access to restaurants, shops, gyms and other amenities.
Base (2,065 respondents)

Most Americans would prefer to work somewhere that allows easy access to restaurants, shops, gyms and other amenities.

• 80% of U.S. adults would prefer to work somewhere that allows easy access to restaurants, shops, gyms and other amenities.
• 83% of Millennials would prefer to work somewhere that allows easy access to restaurants, shops, gyms and other amenities.
• 82% of Gen Xers would prefer to work somewhere that allows easy access to restaurants, shops, gyms and other amenities.
• 76% of Boomers would prefer to work somewhere that allows easy access to restaurants, shops, gyms and other amenities.

Access to public transportation is important when considering where to work.
Base (2,065 respondents)

Among all generations in the workforce, access to public transportation is most important to Millennials when considering where to work.

• 58% of Millennials feel access to public transportation is important when considering where to work.
• 49% of Gen Xers feel access to public transportation is important when considering where to work.
• 49% of Boomers feel access to public transportation is important when considering where to work.
• 52% of U.S. adults feel access to public transportation is important when considering where to work.

I would prefer to walk or bike to work as opposed to any other method.
Base (2,065 respondents)

Millennials are the most likely generation to prefer to walk or bike to work.

• 50% of Millennials would prefer to walk or bike to work as opposed to any other method.
• 45% of Gen Xers would prefer to walk or bike to work as opposed to any other method.
• 41% of Boomers would prefer to walk or bike to work as opposed to any other method.
• 44% of U.S. adults would prefer to walk or bike to work as opposed to any other method.

While open floor plans may work for some, the corner office for senior leaders is still an important thing to have.
Base (2,065 respondents)

While open offices are becoming more common, most U.S. adults feel the corner office for senior leaders is still an important thing to have.

• 67% of U.S. adults feel the corner office for senior leaders is still an important thing to have.
• 66% of Millennials feel the corner office for senior leaders is still an important thing to have.
• 68% of Gen Xers feel the corner office for senior leaders is still an important thing to have.
• 65% of Boomers feel the corner office for senior leaders is still an important thing to have.
Response base:

Total respondents: 2,065 American adults (ages 18 and older)

Definition of generational classifications:

For the purposes of this survey, the different generations were defined as follow:

- Millennials: parents age 18-34
- Gen Xers: parents age 35-49
- Boomers: parents age 50-69

Full methodology:

This survey was conducted online within the United States between July 29th and 31st, 2014 among 2,065 adults (aged 18 and over) by Harris Poll on behalf of Coldwell Banker Commercial Affiliates via its Quick Query omnibus product. Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, the words “margin of error” are avoided as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.