# Pod Placement Guide

A little handbook for creating happy offices

This placement guide has been a passion project at Framery for a long time. Our research and expertise in acoustics and office environments has produced a lot of data – so the next natural step has been to try and share that information.

We want companies, and the people in them, to succeed and make the most out of their work surroundings.

Much like the modern office environment, this guide will continue to evolve and expand.

We hope you'll find it as useful as we have enjoyed making it.

**framery**

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# Pod Placement Guide

## About this guide

At Framery we take our job seriously, employee satisfaction and happiness fanatically. Our goal is not just to erase distracting noise from workplaces, but we want to tackle everything that makes people unhappy. Studies show that nine out of ten of the highest performing workplaces are either fully, or extensively open plan, but still many fail to provide employees with an environment that adequately supports their daily efforts[1]. It's time to change all of this.

[1] Leesman, 250k Report, 2018

The most important tool in this mission are our silent workspaces. When placed correctly, our pods can improve communication, reduce rush, improve results – and this way increase happiness among your company's employees.

Whether you are designing a totally new office, or planning on placing Framery pods in an existing floor plan, the following guide will help you to understand how to best place each individual Framery pod, and what shared benefits they may bring.

# Creating happiness with silent workspaces

**Placement principles**

1. Provide enough pods

2. Consider the users needs

3. Create activity zones

4. Place near users

5. New ways of working

6. Details

# 1

# Provide enough pods

*It is essential.*

We at Framery have studied and found that the primary obstacle of using pods is their limited number. In the beginning, 1 Framery O for every 10 employees and 1 Framery Q for every 15 employees is often sufficient.

We have studied this in more detail and found, that different kind of work sets different requirements for the work environment:
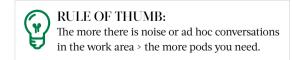
Editorial and administrative work:

- Ratio of 1 Framery O pod for every 20 employees was not enough. In this case, adding more pods resulted in an improvement of work environment satisfaction.

Human relations:

- HR work is highly collaborative and requires lots of talking in the phone and one-on-one meetings. In Framery HQ, ratio of 1/5 (for O and Q) in HR department was not sufficient – the pod quantity was amped up for a more accessible environment.

| Employees | Framery O | Framery Q |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1–15 | 1–2 | 1 |
| 15–30 | 2–3 | 2 |
| 30–45 | 3–4 | 2–3 |
| 45–60 | 5–6 | 3 |
| 60–75 | 6–7 | 4 |

**RULE OF THUMB:**
The more there is noise or ad hoc conversations in the work area > the more pods you need.

# 2 Consider the users' needs

*Employees, teams and the natural flow of work is the basis of pod placing – not the floor plan.*

It is important to acknowledge how each employee has various different needs throughout their workday. Needs vary in accordance with the work tasks: some tasks require collaboration, others undisturbed focus. People also have varying personal preferences for the work environment – other people get energized from the buzz at the open area, while others find it annoying. What is important is to offer equal opportunities for everyone to get their work done.

A study of top workplaces demonstrates that the best work environments in the world are designed according to the needs of the employees.[1] By understanding the needs of your employees in your office, and how they utilize each part of the space for different activities, you can learn to better support their performance and wellbeing during work days.

## 1
### Sense walk
Take a "sense walk" in your office. Where does the work take place and where do people gather? Where people chatter informally? Where there is noise?

## 2
### Collaboration and concentration
Which employees, teams or departments primarily need collaboration – and which ones concentration?

## 3
### Have a look at the layout
Spot your findings in your office layout. Which areas need spaces for collaboration, concentration or something else? Are there unexpected places where people gather?

[1] Leesman+ research report

## What floats your boat?

Modern employees can be roughly divided into four groups according to their mobility.

Considering the work culture and the location of the pods – it's good to also consider the different types of employees and what they might appreciate. This also affects the amount of pods you need in your office.

### Anchor
Traditional work at desk, has a need for focus. Doesn't move around much.

### Connector
Lots of movement inside the office, runs from one meeting to another.

### Gatherer
Work includes being out of the office at customers' or partners' place. Regional movement. Use of shared spaces at home base.

### Navigator
Home office is just one of the work locations. Global work. When at home office, they use shared spaces.

## Your findings | ## Our suggestion

| Your findings | Our suggestion |
| --- | --- |
| **Underused open collaboration areas / work stations** | Replace with a 2Q / Q with suitable furniture. |
| **Too much open space** | Divide spaces with Q's and 2Q's. Create zones for working together, having a meeting or a video conference. |
| **Noise & distractions?** | Locate many O's to the noisiest area, near the employees. Also provide Q pods for having a spontaneous meeting. |
| **No place to relax** | 2Q, NapQ and Betty's Cafe. |
| **Collaboration & communication** <br> Focused work together | Meeting Maggie, Working With PAL, Betty's Cafe (for more informal appointments). |
| **Concentration** <br> Focused work alone | O for brief work sessions, MeTime for longer periods of time, Working With PAL for sessions that require a desk. |
| **Creativity** | Q models such as Meeting Maggie, Working With PAL and Betty's Cafe, 2Q decor options. |
| **Confidentiality** | O for phone calls and Q models for confidential conversations. |
| **Contemplation recharge** | Betty's Cafe, NapQ. |
| **Too much open space** | Divide spaces with Q's and 2Q's. Create zones for working together, having a meeting or a video conference. |
| **Ad hoc meetings taking place** | Provide meeting spaces (Framery Q) for ad hoc / spontaneous meetings, so that the pods can't be reserved in advance. |

# Create activity zones

*Answering the needs. A functioning workplace consists of different activity zones that are derived from the needs of the employees.*

The idea behind activity zones is to provide multiple work spaces, which are tailored for different work tasks. Examples include a silent room with zero distractions for private working, open area for more collaborative work, meeting rooms for formal and informal gatherings and common rooms for having a break.
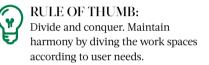
In general, every office have their assigned, or commonly accepted areas for conducting the daily work. The "must have" areas include areas for focused, daily work tasks, spaces for meetings, video conferences and collaboration and more informal areas for private recharging or playful and spontaneous, ad hoc encounters. Creating activity zones is about leveraging the different zones to support daily work and individual needs. Office workers choose to locate themselves to these activity zones depending on the nature of the current task at hand and personal preferences.



**RULE OF THUMB:**
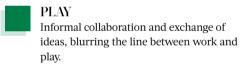Divide and conquer. Maintain harmony by diving the work spaces according to user needs.

Activity zones is something we have studied a lot at Framery. We found out that it is not sufficient to place the pod only according to the floor plan. Avoid positioning the pod with minimal effort, such as placing the pod in corners or in a corridor. Instead, divide the floor plan to smaller activity zones based on the activities and where they take place in your office. Don't forget common areas where people meet, such as cafés, restaurants, meeting rooms and lounge areas.

# Which zones are relevant in your work?

## Main activity zones

**FOCUS**
Concentrating 100 % on the job and making sure that there are only wanted distractions.

**COLLABORATE**
Co-creating, ad-hoc meetings and creative encounters, setting the scene for innovations that are the key to success.

## Sub activity zones

**PLAY**
Informal collaboration and exchange of ideas, blurring the line between work and play.

**RECHARGE**
Having a moment to relax and re-orientate for the next task ahead.

## Activities inside the zones

- Co-work
- Support zone
- Creative work
- Sharing
- Communication

- Chill out
- Contemplation
- Confidential talks
- Working alone
- Meetings

# Create zones within zones

*We at Framery promote a
zone within zone -mindset.*

The basic idea is that there is this larger area – be it collaboration or focus zone – where the daily work takes place. Inside this larger area is a Framery pod, that is other activity zone than the larger area. This provides many possibilities to uniquely support daily work.

For example, the work zone of IT support team may be a focus area, with a mutual understanding of not disturbing others and keeping the environment quiet. A Framery Q in this focus zone represents a collaboration zone. Whereas in the case of a marketing team doing their daily work in a collaboration zone, a Q or O pod can be a quiet oasis from the buzz of the office.

This also challenges the more traditional view of work environments, in which collaboration takes place in certain areas (typically meeting rooms) and concentration work happens in (noisy) open areas. Our pods can be seen as a mini zone. NapQ represents a recharging zone, Meeting Maggie is a collaboration zone and so forth.

**FOCUS**

**COLLABORATION**

## Open plan office collaboration areas

*Working together.*

Open area in the office are typically the place where basic work is carried out. According to work environment research, the open areas should provide many easily-accessible private spaces (Haapakangas et al. 2018).

When locating pods to open plan areas, keep in mind the following:

- Provide Framery O pods for ensuring that phone calls won't disturb work – and makes sure that private calls remain confidential.

- Provide Framery Q pods for focused work or a quick break ( 2Q, MeTime, Working with PAL or NapQ) and conversations ( 2Q, Meeting Maggie or Betty's Cafe). Spontaneous conversations won't disturb others and confidential conversations with colleagues are possible.
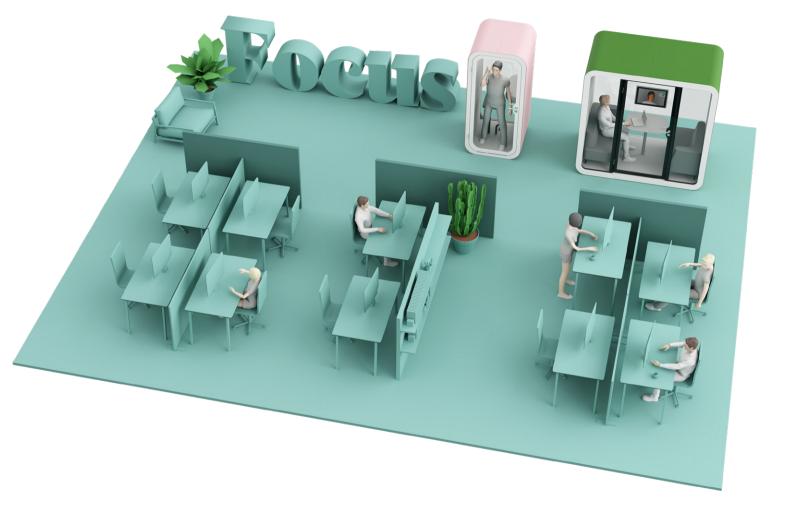
# Focus areas

*All we wanted was
some peace and quiet.*

Quiet areas of the office floor plan are where most of the focused work and private meetings take place.

When placed correctly, Framery O and Q pods within these office areas will both, reduce the employee distractions caused by random phone calls, but also allow people take on confidential phone calls and demanding tasks without the fear of being overheard. Framery Q pods in these areas give employees a private and safe silent space to work with full focus in without any disturbances. They also work as an ideal place to have confidential discussions with colleagues.

Framery Q pods in the silent areas provide both individuals and groups an easy-to-use private space to work in without noisy disturbances. Remember that employees have different preferences and needs for privacy: others can concentrate in the middle of a busy and noisy area, while others require stillness.
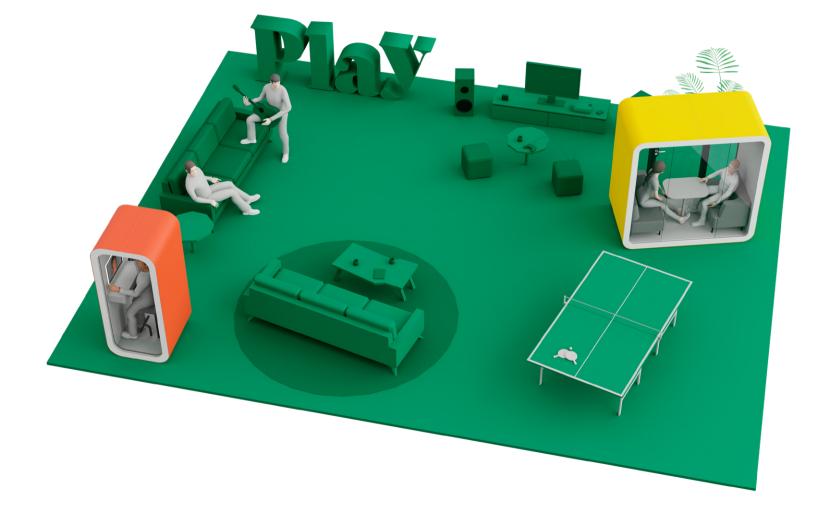
# Loud and informal office areas

*Frankly, my dear, I can't hear a damn.*

Louder office sections are where both collaborative meetings and playful social encounters take place.

Framery pods in these areas provide privacy in the middle of hectic hotspots of the office. These pods function as a perfect space to take on private calls, isolated work tasks or quick private breaks. They also allow people to withdraw for a moment to have confidential one-on-one meetings without the fear of interrupting others, or being interrupted by them.

Louder parts of the office floor are where both meetings and social ad hoc encounters will occur. Framery Q and O pods in the louder office areas are perfect for private phone calls, work tasks requiring privacy or quick breaks. These pods can be ideal spaces for people to have confidential one-on-one meetings, brainstorming sessions or interviews without the fear of interrupting others – or other overhearing them.
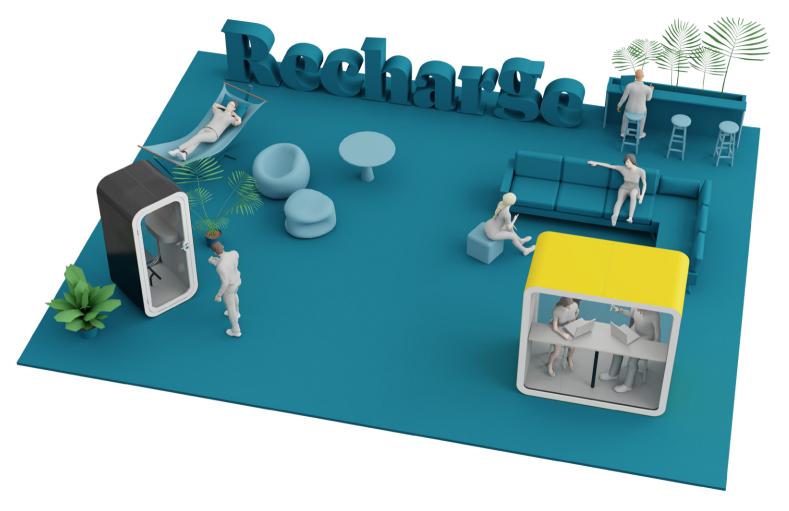
# Lounge and recharge areas

*Chill out, gather your thoughts.*
*There's work to be done.*

Unlike social and informal play areas, recharge areas should a place where employees can take the time to gather their thoughts for next tasks ahead.

In these areas, Framery pods should be added for a more secluded break in silence, or for ad hoc meetings without disturbing others. Having an area to withdraw to during the day can bring new energy to the work day.

# Place near users

*Centralize the pod location within the zones.*

We have studied the factors that make it difficult to use our pods. The two top reasons are the pods being too occupied or too far away. We learned that it is essential to place the pod close to the users, so that they can access the pod within a few seconds. We humans tend to minimize effort. Place the pod too far away and the occupancy rate (and satisfaction!) will drop.

Thus, place the pods inside the activity zones, serving a specific groups of people. Don't stress about equal access - trying to allow an equal access for everyone rarely works. Locating in a central way makes the pods easy to use and this way users can easily check whether the pod is occupied.

Locating close to the user is important for many reasons. If the pod is too far a way, employees:

- can't see with if the pod is occupied or not.

- may feel that they're becoming isolated from their colleagues.

- will have more difficulties in carrying their laptops, papers and tools to the pod.

- wont have time to answer quickly to an incoming call.

**RULE OF THUMB:**
Pods are meant to be used – frequently.
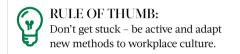So keep them close to the users!

# New ways of working

*Change in the work environment
is a change in the way of working.*

When the pod is installed and ready to use, encourage your employees to actively use the pod along their daily work. Perhaps a little opening ceremony is in place?

Besides, consider house rules or guidelines for booking the rooms. It is wise to offer spaces, some of which can be used right away and some must be booked in advance. Video conferences are often arranged in advance and thus, a space reservation is needed. Make sure that it is possible to book 2Q space beforehand, just like any other meeting room. If there is space in the office, offer Framery Q pods for ad hoc video conferences.

Framery usability studies found that major usability issue is the difficulty to carry papers and tools to the booth. It may be a good idea to encourage paperless working and introducing office bags for carrying personal belongings conveniently. Limited purpose of use, viewing the pod only as a "phone booth", reduces use and usefulness. Encourage employees to creatively use the pod for whatever they need.

**RULE OF THUMB:**
Don't get stuck – be active and adapt new methods to workplace culture.

**Encourage employees
to explore the work
environment and find
work practices that
suite them.**

# Details

*It's the little details that are vital.*
*Little things make big things happen.*

Consider some practical details when placing the pod.

## 1.



The pod's door should be pointing to an optimal direction, towards the targeted groups, to invite more people in.

## 2.



Unorthodox placing. The pod should be where people are – be it then the cafeteria or the office. A good place for a pod is along the people flows.

## 3.



Make sure that it is easy to see whether the pod is free to use.

## 4.



Ensure that there is enough floor space around the pod.

# Happiness creates success. Framery creates happiness.

## Placement principles

*Bringing it all together. Finally, here are all the main principles for pod placing.*


1. Provide enough pods


2. Consider the users needs


3. Create activity zones


4. Place near users


5. New ways of working


6. Details