



## PRESS RELEASE

### THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SOCIETY CALLS FOR A NEW LEADERSHIP ROLE

**Munich, November 2016** – The 8th Global Drucker Forum, held 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> November in Vienna, focused on “Moving beyond a society of employees to an entrepreneurial society.” At the conference attended by global leaders, Sara Armbruster, Vice President, Strategy, Research and New Business Innovation for Steelcase, discussed the challenges of traditional hierarchy-based management practices in a business world that demands agility, creativity, innovation and growth.

In her talk, “Leaders and Leadership Spaces in a Volatile World,” Armbruster noted the business landscape is more global, mobile and interconnected than ever before, and insisted the way leaders interact with each other, with their customers and with their employees must evolve as well.

“The traditional hierarchy-based management practices that worked for past generations of leaders simply aren’t sufficient,” emphasizes Armbruster.

#### **How space influences leadership**

Steelcase, the leading expert for innovative workspace solutions, recently completed a two-year study of executives from major corporations in the Americas, Europe and the Middle East. The research found nearly 60% of leaders work in traditional private offices for a significant part of their work day, compared to just 23% of employees. Steelcase researchers identified common challenges executives face and identified an often ignored management tool – the office.

“Past generations saw a corner office as a badge of honor,” Armbruster explained. “But today, it sends a clear message of superiority, reinforcing hierarchical standards of the past. Today, we’re seeing leaders that seek out more connection to their teams. We’ve guided clients to reconsider how their office can actually help them build those relationships.”

The paradigm of locating executives in private offices due to confidentiality issues, Patricia Kammer, the Steelcase senior design researcher who led the global study noted. But separating leaders from their organizations reinforces hierarchy and power structure, potentially undermining a free-flowing exchange of ideas and acting as a barrier to leaders who want their fingers on the pulse of the organization. When designed appropriately, a leader’s space can help connect them to the organization, providing transparency and encouraging collaboration.

Gilbert Soufan, President of Cyviz in the Middle East and Asia said, “The workplace needs to enable collaborative work, and it needs to entice people to get together. Give the workforce a physically comfortable environment with technology that enables team members to share information easily and you get a boost in productivity and efficiency.”

Steelcase's research informed a transition of its own leadership team, which can serve as a model for executives and leadership teams around the world. The outcome of a transition would not only be personally beneficial to leaders, but would benefit their organization as a whole, helping shape a workforce needed to succeed in today's business climate.

### **About Steelcase**

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