

THE FLIGHT TO LUXURY TAKEOVER

WHY HIGH-END HEADQUARTERS ARE BECOMING A STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE







HOW PREMIUM WORKPLACES DRIVE **TALENT, BRAND, AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE**

Across the workplace landscape, organizations are making a deliberate shift toward higher-end, experience-driven headquarters. This movement, commonly referred to as the “**Flight to Luxury**”, reflects rising expectations from both employees and customers.

Today’s headquarters must reinforce culture and communicate brand strength.

As hybrid work stabilizes and the competition for talent remains intense, the quality of a workplace has become a meaningful business strategy. Leaders are investing in elevated environments to attract and retain top performers, support wellness and collaboration, and create a visible signal of confidence for their clients.

For many community-centered businesses, the stakes are even higher. Headquarters represent stability, trust, and long-term vision. An outdated or standard environment can undermine the credibility built through decades of service, while a refined, future-ready workspace strengthens it.

SO, WHY DOES THE LUXURY MOVEMENT MATTER?

This following analysis explores why Flight to Luxury is accelerating, the measurable business impact of investing in premium headquarters, and how organizations can leverage these insights.



WHAT'S DRIVING THE **FLIGHT TO LUXURY** MOVEMENT?

The answer? A higher bar for workplace experience. The traditional definition of "quality" in corporate real estate refers to: basic amenities, modern finishes, and standard upgrades. This way of thinking no longer meets the needs of today's workforce. Employees expect environments that feel intentional, beautifully crafted, seamless technology, and supportive of both heads-down focus and meaningful collaborative work.

Today's workplaces are more than a place to work, they are:

- + A **recruiting** tool
- + A **retention** strategy
- + A **cultural** anchor
- + A customer-facing **brand** statement
- + A platform for **innovation** and **connection**

Organizations are increasingly viewing the quality of their headquarters as a core part of their employee value proposition and their brand identity.

Headquarters serve as a physical expression of trustworthiness and modern capability. A refined environment reinforces confidence and signals to customers and members that the institution is forward-focused and well-managed.



WHAT DEFINES A "**LUXURY**" HEADQUARTERS TODAY

Modern luxury in the workplace is defined by design intentionality not extravagance. It is achieved through details that elevate comfort, performance, and brand experience.

Here are some core attributes of a high-end workplace:

MEMORABLE FIRST-IMPRESSION

A welcoming, hospitality-driven entry that reflects brand personality and sets a tone of professionalism and care.

HIGH-QUALITY MATERIALS AND CRAFTSMANSHIP

Quality textures, refined finishes, and thoughtful detailing create a sense of permanence, intentionality, and pride.

TECHNOLOGY THAT DISAPPEARS INTO THE ENVIRONMENT

Built-in digital tools for collaboration, communication, and hybrid work. A seamless approach, rather than an intrusive one.

LIGHTING & ACOUSTICS THAT SUPPORT FOCUSED WORK

Well-balanced lighting and sound control that reduce fatigue, support concentration, and enhance comfort.

MULTISENSORY EXPERIENCE

This can include adaptable lighting, interactive screens, and custom scent diffusion.

Brand storytelling through environmental graphics
Subtle, artful, integrated storytelling that celebrates history, purpose, and community impact.

WELLNESS AND WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

Access to natural light, biophilic elements, a balance of quiet and collaborative zones, movement paths, and amenity-rich employee spaces. At NewGround's HQ, this translates to: a community café space, wellness room, a gym on property, hybrid-ready technology, and non-traditional conference spaces.



THE BUSINESS CASE FOR LUXURY HEADQUARTERS

In the 2024 Americas Office Occupier Sentiment Survey, 59% of respondents said they are executing or exploring relocation to better quality office space.¹

THIS BEGS THE QUESTION: ARE YOU ON THE CORRECT SIDE OF THIS STATISTIC?

Investments in elevated workplaces consistently produce stronger organizational outcomes. While every company's metrics differ, several themes hold true across industries.

RECRUITMENT AND TALENT ATTRACTION

Workplaces are a main factor in top talent choosing an employer. A high-end headquarters reflects a company's commitment to its people and creates a strong first impression during the hiring process.

EMPLOYEE RETENTION AND ENGAGEMENT

Employees want to feel proud of where they work. Well-designed spaces with innovative tech, natural light, comfortable furniture, and brand-aligned details create a sense of belonging and deepen employee loyalty.

A STAT FROM CBRE: Despite more than 70% of companies reporting that their workplaces are "effective," fewer than half formally measure that effectiveness. This gap highlights a critical opportunity: organizations increasingly recognize that office quality can differentiate them in the eyes of employees and clients, even if the impact isn't yet quantified.²

CUSTOMER TRUST AND BRAND POSITIONING

A premium environment communicates stability and competence. This can be critical for organizations. Clients perceive high-quality spaces as a reflection of high-quality service.

PRODUCTIVITY, PERFORMANCE, AND WELLNESS

Spaces that support focus, reduce distractions, and promote well-being enable employees to do their best work. Even modest improvements in productivity can create significant ROIs for large organizations. In a 2024 workplace-design survey from JLL, companies that redesigned offices to support hybrid work, flexibility, and wellness saw a substantial lift in employee-reported satisfaction and perceived productivity.³

LONG-TERM REAL ESTATE VALUE

Luxury spaces age more gracefully, support future technology more easily, and remain desirable longer than standard build-outs. This protects capital investments and strengthens long-term asset value.



LINKS TO ARTICLES:

¹ <https://www.cbre.com/insights/reports/2024-americas-office-occupier-sentiment-survey>

² <https://www.cbre.com/insights/articles/companies-now-prefer-metrics-that-measure-effectiveness-rather-than-efficiency>

³ <https://www.jll.com/en-us/insights/designing-workplaces-to-drive-success>



QUANTIFYING THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT

A luxury headquarters is not an aesthetic indulgence but a measurable business investment. The example below illustrates how even conservative assumptions can yield compelling results. In real-world projects, productivity and retention gains are often higher, pushing returns well above these conservative figures.

HERE IS A SAMPLE ROI SCENARIO:



This figure reflects a conservative industry estimate, incorporating recruiting, onboarding, and lost productivity. Many sources in HR and workplace studies suggest replacement costs can range from 30–50% of salary, depending on role complexity and training requirements.

EVEN MODEST IMPROVEMENTS IN WORKSPACE QUALITY CAN UNLOCK
OVER \$2.4M IN ANNUAL VALUE
THROUGH PRODUCTIVITY AND RETENTION GAINS ALONE.



WHY FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS ARE LEADING THIS MOVEMENT

Financial institutions are among the most active participants in the Flight to Luxury because of the sector's unique needs:

- + Customer trust is built through workplace investments
- + Competition for specialized talent can be intense
- + Changing technology requires transformation and future-ready spaces
- + Organizational culture is the backbone of productivity
- + Headquarters are long-term stability and institutional strength

HOW NEWGROUND HELPS ORGANIZATIONS CAPITALIZE ON THE FLIGHT TO LUXURY

NewGround is uniquely equipped to help institutions develop and deliver elevated headquarters environments that drive business performance.

HISTORICALLY PROVEN

No firm has built more headquarters and workplaces for financial institutions across North America. NewGround understands the operational, cultural, and customer-facing nuances that shape these environments.

BACKED BY DATA

Achieving a luxury result requires careful orchestration from concept to completion. NewGround's integrated model reduces risk, accelerates timelines, and ensures design intent is preserved through construction.

BRAND-FOCUSED

The environment becomes a storytelling tool. NewGround's environmental graphics team infuses brand values into the space through thoughtful visual moments and material choices.



ROI

NewGround designs and builds with measurable outcomes in mind including engagement, customer experience, efficiency, and long-term value. Most customers see a 20% ROI.

FUTURE-FOCUSED

NewGround designs for tomorrow: adaptable, timeless environments that stay relevant as technology, workforce expectations, and operational needs evolve.



For more than a century, NewGround has helped brands design and build environments that elevate experience and drive real results. As organizations continue to raise their expectations for what an HQ should be, NewGround stands ready to deliver spaces that inspire people, strengthen brands, and provide a powerful competitive advantage for years to come.



ABOUT NEWGROUND

NewGround International helps brands plan, design, and build innovative spaces that turn heads and accelerate growth. As expectations for headquarters continue to evolve, NewGround creates spaces that inspire people, strengthen brands, and support long-term success. Learn more and schedule a conversation at newground.com.

