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## Why the pod is popping up everywhere in offices in South Africa

The pod — a small, free-standing box or space that is typically soundproof and designed to fit just one or two people — is taking over offices in South Africa according one of the country's biggest office space and furniture consultancies.

And there is good reason for the rise in its popularity.

Isla Galloway-Gaul, Managing Director of Inspiration Office said: "Privacy pods that allow you to meet or talk on the phone without others overhearing, or work in complete silence, have been installed in many offices ranging from start ups to large companies with thousands of employees.

"We have experienced rising demand for pods over the past few years and expect them to become increasingly popular in offices in South Africa."

One of the biggest reasons for companies installing pods in their public spaces is people's need for silence and privacy.

"We all need periods of silence, especially at work," said Galloway-Gaul. "Working and commuting in busy urban environments is putting a lot of noise and busyness pressure on our lifestyles."

People around the world tend to spend increasing numbers of hours at work compared to decades past, and because of the rise of open plan offices we need the option to go somewhere quiet and carry on working.

“While many people like open plan offices, others find it makes for a more difficult work environment by creating more stress, reducing productivity and lowering job satisfaction. Most people struggle with concentration anyway, even without interruptions and elevated noise levels,” she added.

Privacy pods are an ideal solution and easily installed.

“They do away with the need to build entirely new private rooms, can be added and removed according to need and as they are small, can be slotted in without making much change to the overall office space or aesthetic. They are also much more cost effective and far less disruptive than making wholesale changes to an office,” said Galloway-Gaul. “Companies can still have uncluttered open offices and accommodate those who need quiet.”

Another reason behind the rise of the pod?

“An increased focus on wellness,” said Galloway-Gaul. “There are a lot of introverts in the world that need a place to go to think and recharge,” she said. “And even those who aren’t, may want a few moments of peace every so often.”

Productivity is another factor.

Pods make it more convenient for people to work more, thereby increasing productivity. Productivity in the workplace is vital to support an efficient business and enhance the bottom line, but it is apparent that a lot of employees feel that they are sometimes restricted by the environment around them.

Said Galloway-Gaul: “Organisations must create as much choice as possible to enable employees to vary noise levels to meet their needs depending on what they’re working on.

“There is a growing demand for pods around the world. It’s a growth area and one that could be a disrupter to how companies plan their spaces.”

