
Car Talk: Grace, Space and Pace

I enjoy cars, and I recently stumbled upon the tagline for Jaguar that I had missed all these years: **Grace, Space, and Pace.**

When I think about what draws me to certain cars, a vehicle that nails all three of these areas will undoubtedly climb to the top of my bucket list. The genius of this trio of terms is the timeliness of each and their ability to still be relevant. Each of these ideas has an interdependence on the other two for the brand's ultimate success and broadest appeal. But this simple analogy represents a prescriptive and critical mind shift for office owners and operators as we start to contemplate the necessary next five to ten years of industry transformation.

Grace: On the surface this sounds squishier and more subjective than analytical minds would prefer. But to me, this idea of grace is at the heart of the new hospitality world. One of the definitions of grace that I really like is "refinement of movement". I am often critical of the unnecessary and self-inflicted points of friction we have collectively created for companies and individuals to secure dedicated workspace. In a complicated and confusing world of how work will look, I have not seen or read anything that would suggest that "coming back" will ever quite look like the world companies walked out of last year. More agile and gifted operations teams leveraging thoughtful and purposeful technology inside of a dynamic, physical environments will combine to create the most effortless-feeling experience for the customer.





Space: This term seems like the most obvious area to draw a comparison to office, but the cars that nail “space” for me are the ones that best understand the way humans behave and interact. We have all been in the car that looks amazing, only to discover that the touchscreen is beyond reach, the piece of chrome that sparkles in the showroom blinds you in the sun, or the seat that looks slick leaves you cramped in five minutes. Space must be vibrant, adaptable, reliable, and purposeful. To reintroduce office assets to a world trying to recall why they need them, owners and operators must embrace the interconnectivity of all these things. The truth is the car is simply the literal and figurative vehicle that gets someone from point A to point B. The office world needs to understand the role they play in companies assembling people for the purpose of advancing a service or product.



Pace: The term pace, can offer a couple parallels to the world of office operations. I will reach a little here and go in a different direction than I typically do. I talked to a disruptive, action-oriented, and forward leaning COO for a large owner-operator recently. A couple of things bubbled-up out of this power-packed 30-minute exchange. First, it is becoming clear that the gap between the winners and losers coming out of this moment will be profound. Rising tides do raise all ships, but not for the ones that sink to the bottom in the last storm. Second, as it relates to this term of pace, this COO has taken the position (that I whole-heartedly agree with) that every day right now that he wakes up and takes another incremental step forward in terms of reconstructing their team, studying and adopting the right technology, and thinking about new approaches to the asset, is a day that puts him months, if not, years ahead of those groups paralyzed and waiting for the perfect picture to form. Sometimes pace means fast and sometimes it means slow but it always implies movement.



I am optimistic that as a society we are rapidly laying the necessary groundwork that will get all of us back to interacting with each other in all of the more intimate ways that help foster the healthiest emotional, mental and psychological versions of ourselves. I believe those same face-to-face interactions also induce the strongest cultures and relationships critical to corporate health and success. The owners and operators of these boxes in the sky who can courageously act now and use grace, space and pace to come along side companies in all the right ways will ultimately win. If they do not, given what we have learned over the last twelve months, companies can and will find an alternative solution.



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