



# White Paper

## Better Than a Bed Check

Need to analyze occupancy patterns? Space Utilization Service offers compelling advantages.

With work styles favoring greater collaboration and mobility, many organizations are coming to the conclusion that their workplace isn't configured appropriately for their needs.

Questions emerge: Are all these private offices necessary? Would it make sense to share some workstations? Do we have the right type and mix of meeting areas our people want? How can we make our space a magnet where employees want to come and work?

The questions boil down to this: Does the way our space is set up still make sense given the way we're working now? In what ways might our space need to change in order to keep up with the way our work is changing?

To find the answer, many organizations rely on so-called "bed checks" to track their space usage. The methodology? Someone simply walks around with a clipboard and checks off which workstations are occupied at various points throughout a day, similar to lights out at summer camp.

The problem? There are many:

- **Bed checks are episodic.** You get snapshots of occupancy, never the complete picture. Bed checks can tell you who was in the space at the moment the check happens, but not how the space is being used throughout the duration of a day or week. Employees can quickly learn what intervals the checks happen and change their behavior to adjust to the study. Bed checks also cannot tell how frequently a person was in and out of their office or workstation.
- **Bed checks are subjective.** Accuracy depends on the conscientiousness of human checkers—and that can vary from person to person and day to day.
- **Bed checks produce questionable accuracy.** Do you count visual cues as "present"—a coat draped over a chair, a task light on, a half-filled coffee cup? They could be smoke screens for someone who's really out of the office. Do you insist on counting noses? What if a workstation is empty only because its occupant just left for the restroom? It is also possible to double count, by counting the coat at the workstation and the owner of the coat in the conference room.

- **Bed checks can't provide granular data.** Bed checks provide aggregated data for a whole floor or building. They cannot provide a level of granularity at the individual workstation level or the seat level within a conference room.
- **Bed checks are poor at measuring conference room utilization.** Whether a conference room just happens to be occupied while a checker is making the rounds reveals just about nothing regarding its overall usage. It is also difficult to analyze manual data collected against reservation systems to understand usage and desirability of specific conference rooms.
- **Bed check data is onerous to analyze.** Bed checks culminate in a bunch of marks on a floor plan, along with one big question: Now what do we do? Analyzing data that's been collected manually is tedious and time consuming.
- **Bed checks are expensive (if done right).** Occasional bed checks are of little value because they produce insufficient data to make informed decisions. To get actionable data, you need to conduct frequent checks—and that can add up in a hurry. In addition, many customers forget to include the cost of analysis in the overall cost of bed checks.
- **Bed checks are difficult to support business case for change.** Business units can challenge the accuracy and subjectivity of bed checks when presented with the usage of their space and the need to make changes. It is difficult to build a bullet-proof case for change and decision making based on manual bed check data collection and analysis.



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### A Superior Solution

To surmount these problems, Herman Miller developed its Space Utilization Service, which uses patent pending technology to track occupancy more completely and accurately than bed checks.

**Figure 1: Customized patent pending equipment used for Herman Miller's electronic Space Utilization Studies.**



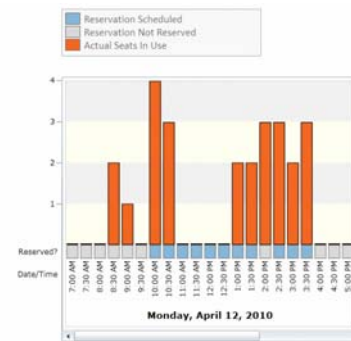
The service uses unobtrusive wireless sensors that temporarily attach to the underside of chairs and detect the slightest movement. Sensors can be affixed to chairs in workstations, conference rooms, team spaces, common areas—whatever you want to study.

Data is collected continuously during a three-week period and forwarded automatically to a database at Herman Miller. **Why is electronic data collection via the Space Utilization Service superior to the manual methodology of bed checks?**

- **Continuous data.** An electronic system that tracks occupancy constantly is far more reliable than a manual one.
- **Objectivity.** Sensors remove human fallibility from data collection. Plus, out of sight means out of mind, so their presence won't cause occupants to behave differently during the study period.
- **Accuracy.** In one test, Herman Miller used the Space Utilization Service to collect data in a space that had already been subjected to a bed check. Whereas the bed check estimated an overall occupancy rate of 67 percent, the Space Utilization Service pegged it at just 38 percent—a big difference when it's time to make big decisions.

- **Conference rooms, too.** Unlike bed checks, the Space Utilization Service pinpoints exactly when each conference room was used, how many seats were occupied, and usage patterns based on size, location, and available technology. It's even capable of comparing actual usage with reservations.

**Figure 2: An example comparison of actual conference room usage with reservation data.**



- **Comprehensive analysis.** Space Utilization data can be sliced and diced in dozens of ways—by floor, business unit, space type, time of day, day of week, mobility pattern – you name it. Whereas a bed check might simply report 50 percent utilization for a specific workstation, the Space Utilization Service can go much deeper. Was the occupant in and out all day or constantly anchored to his chair, but only in the morning? It matters for space-planning purposes.
- **Comprehensive data.** Space Utilization data is provided to customers in an online reporting tool which allows granularity of the data and the opportunity for customers to dig into their own data in order to continue exploring it and understanding it as deeply as they wish. The data is provided per workstation, per private office, per conference room seat, per conference room reservation, and much more.
- **Comprehensive recommendations.** Herman Miller takes the data a step further, preparing a report recommending specific strategies for allocating space more efficiently, and leading a process to help customers consider the implications of the data and the possible alternative – both practice and place-based alternatives.



With real estate costs so high—second only to labor in most organizations—getting the work environment right is crucial. Creating an efficient and effective work environment first requires getting the occupancy data right.

### Utilization Pie Chart

The chart provides an overview of utilization showing what percentage of spaces are frequently used, rarely used, or occasionally used. [More](#)

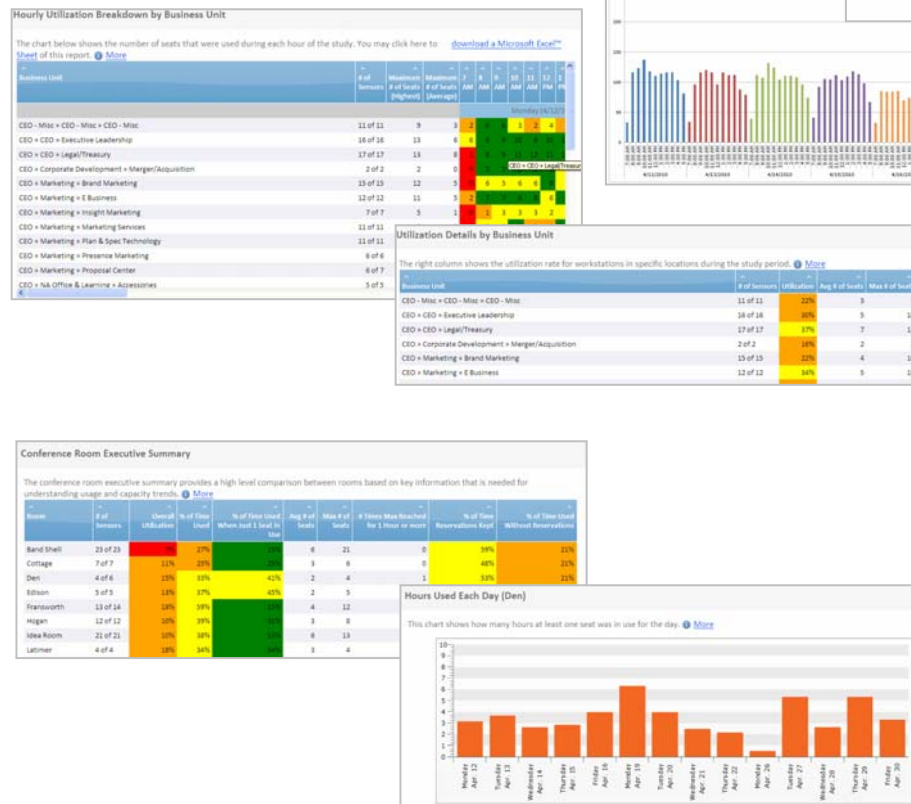
Utilization Category	Seats	Percentage
01 - 100% Utilization	8	2%
<10% Utilization	57	17%
10 - 30% Utilization	147	44%
31 - 60% Utilization	125	37%

### 9-Box Chart

The 9-Box chart gives an overview of how often the workstations are vacated for an hour or more through out the day in relationship to the number of hours worked per day. [More](#)

Time In Workstation	Time Left for 1 hour or more		
	0-1	2-3	4+
4+ hrs	21%	6%	0%
3-3:15	71 Seats	19 Seats	0 Seats
2-2:15	9%	11%	1%
1-1:15	31 Seats	38 Seats	2 Seats
0-1:15	48%	6%	0%
0-15	136 Seats	19 Seats	1 Seat

### Maximum Seats Used by Hd for All 337 Workstations & Offices



## Performance Environments