

Venice Is Your Next Office

How **Webex by Cisco** participated in an innovative experiment in the historic Italian city to better understand how a hybrid-work future will revolutionize our lives, organizations, and communities.

In March 2022, a groundbreaking hybrid-work experiment undertaken by Cisco and the organization Venywhere launched in one of the most storied locations in the world: Venice, Italy. Over the next three years, the Venywhere Hybrid Work project will offer remote workers new ways to plug in and connect from various locations in the lagoon city. Promoted by the Fondazione di Venezia in collaboration with Ca' Foscari University, and powered by Cisco technology, the work-from-anywhere initiative is drawing new life to an ancient place—reshaping the economy while unlocking insights on the future of hybrid work.

“Venywhere could have profound implications for the evolution of a city like Venice,” says Massimo Warglien, Venywhere’s founder and a professor in the Department of Management at the Ca’ Foscari. “Our goal is not only to attract workers from anywhere and make them temporary citizens, but also to transform the city into a laboratory for new forms of work.”

Here’s a guide to the initiative as it endeavors to revitalize the ancient city.

1

THE CHALLENGE

Since 1950, Venice’s population has dropped from 174,000 to 50,000, and the economy has become increasingly dependent on tourism. This inspired the city to look for a new way to entice workers—and companies—to relocate there.



2

A NEW START

From March through May 2022, a total of 16 Cisco volunteers from four European countries—Spain, France, Italy, and Greece—decamped for Venice to begin a hybrid-work experiment in collaboration with Venywhere. Each were provided an apartment in Venice and every day they could choose to work in one of four locations using Webex by Cisco technology to collaborate with colleagues, customers, and partners in other locations. In the process, they explored how work-life balance can affect everything from productivity to personal happiness, and what a remote-work shift could mean for organizations and communities around the world.



3

CA' BOTTACIN

This 15th-century aristocratic palace is one of the study’s four headquarters. Here and elsewhere, participants use Webex devices (Webex Boards, Webex Desk Minis, Cisco Headsets) and collaboration software to explore how unique spaces and technology can create new opportunities for hybrid work.



4

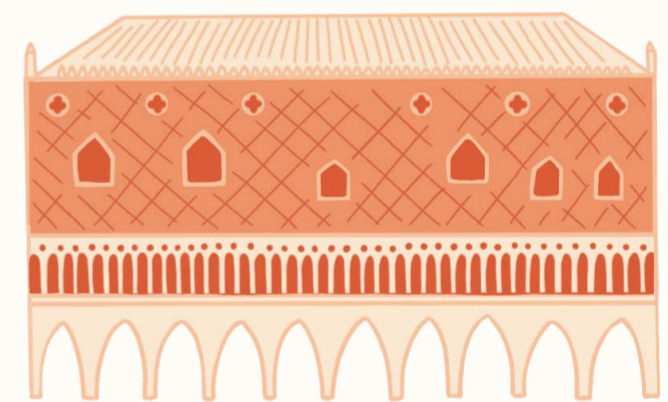
CREATING A HYBRID WORKSPACE

At Ca’ Bottacin, teams of Cisco employees, local organizations, university researchers, and interior designers join together to explore work styles and spaces. The teams collaborated with Swiss design firm Vitra to reimagine academic sites and other locations as hybrid workspaces, imagining layouts and technology solutions that inspire creativity and collaboration. They explored three key ideas: how space impacts work, leadership styles that support hybrid approaches, and which behaviors influence productivity.

5

ARSENALE DI VENEZIA

This 12th-century shipbuilding hub helped invent the idea of employee management—a tradition that continues today in hybrid work. It is now host to multiple organizations, including the Institute of Marine Science, which hosted some of the study’s participants.



6

LEADING THE CHARGE

One of the Venywhere laboratory’s key goals is to explore how leadership styles support hybrid approaches. At the Arsenale, teams use Webex devices and whiteboard software to collaborate both in-person and remotely with project consultants, gaining valuable insights for remote leadership practices.



7

UNCONVENTIONAL HEADQUARTERS

An 1820s slaughterhouse is now host to Ca’ Foscari’s Department of Management and its Strategic Innovation Hub, and is used for hybrid workshops supported by Cisco technology.



8

MAKING CHANGES

The partnership between Cisco and Venywhere continues to produce new insights on remote work and collaboration. Topics range from social and sustainability impacts to how Cisco solutions allow remote “experts on demand” to consult on archaeological projects in the lagoon.

9

EXCITING FUTURE

Experimentation on the Hybrid Work study is just getting started. As remote workers migrate to Venice, temporarily and permanently, Venywhere and Cisco will continue to explore distributed workspaces that help transform Venice into a laboratory for the future of work. It’s yet another example of the city’s ability to adapt to new challenges and to be a forerunner of business and life, no matter what comes its way.



The workplace will never be the same. That’s a good thing. Get ready for the future—today—with [Webex by Cisco](#).