

Style and Usage Guide for Coworking

The purpose of this guide is to establish and impart a consistent standard for modern-day usage of the word *coworking* and its variants in the context of the shared work space industry.

Coworking is not hyphenated.

This includes variants, such as *cowork* and *coworker*, when used in the same context.

Correct usage: A new coworking space is opening down the street.

Incorrect usage: A new co-working space is opening down the street.

Note: Your spell check, auto-correct, or style book may suggest hyphenated variants, such as *co-work*, *co-worker*, or *co-working*. These hyphenated variants are generic in meaning, however, and should not be used in the context of the shared work space industry.

Coworking should not be enclosed in quotation marks.

These are called *scare quotes*. They imply that a word is being used in a novel, non-standard, or ironic way. They can also signal a writer's dissatisfaction or unfamiliarity with the quoted word.

Correct usage: Membership in coworking spaces is more popular than ever.

Incorrect usage: Membership in “coworking” spaces is more popular than ever.

Coworking is a mass noun, a gerund, and a noun modifier.

Mass nouns lack a plural form in ordinary usage. Hence, *coworkings* is not a word.

Usage as mass noun: I was tired of my home office and decided to give coworking a try.

Usage as gerund: I've been coworking for almost a year now.

Usage as noun modifier: I don't plan to leave my coworking space any time soon.

Cowork is a verb and an acceptable noun modifier, but not a noun.

Usage as verb: People who cowork tend to prefer community over isolation.

Incorrect usage as noun: This will be the third cowork to open in our city.

Note: While it is colloquially acceptable to use *cowork* as a noun modifier, as in *cowork space* or *cowork membership*, *coworking* is the preferred and more widely used modifier.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

