

# Deskpass brings coworking flexibility to Orlando

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By Tiffani Sherman

The coworking trend is changing Orlando's office landscape and a new membership plan can help people find the space that fits their organization, whether it's for an hour, a day, or more.

"Coworking space is a trend, not a fad. It will grow as a larger percentage of the office space occupier spectrum. But it also means a user group leasing and buying office space, which ultimately is a good thing for the market," said Jeff Sweeny, managing director of commercial real estate for Cushman & Wakefield. "By becoming more mainstream, it is considered for quick location startups, as well as small headcount firms looking for larger building amenities and prestige."

Initially, most of the area's coworking locations were in the central business district. "We are starting to see interest in suburban locations. It has become a known option for office space whereas five years ago it wasn't," Sweeny said.

Currently, four coworking spaces in the Orlando area are participating in Deskpass, a membership plan that allows people access to 450 venues in 19 different cities for one monthly fee. It went live on January 21.

"We realized that it's hard for people to learn about coworking and then to give it a try," said Nicole Vasquez, cofounder and chief community officer of Deskpass. "So part of the reason we built Deskpass is a way for people to easily learn about all the different workspaces and meeting room options in their area and be able to easily have access and try them out and find the one that's the best fit for them."

Deskpass is a web site or mobile app that lists different workspaces by location and members can reserve a space directly from the app. Once reserved, the app will send directions, parking information, and more.

"Everything is automatic it's like with one click you can book a space, show up, and get right to work," Vasquez explained. "When you arrive, the managers will get you settled in and you have a day of coworking or you have a meeting room booking, or both."

Members pay a monthly fee for a set number of daily passes. As a trial, the first month is free and allows four visits a month. After that, it's \$49. A \$99 plan allows eight visits and there are other plans including more visits and amenities. Unused visits carry over and there is no contract.

"So many more people are coworking now, from individuals all the way up to huge corporations, and they need professional workspace because a cafe or working from home doesn't cut it when you're a professional trying to get work done and be productive and not distracted," Vasquez told GrowthSpotter. "The whole concept is to give people access to on-demand to workspaces and meeting rooms in their area and across the country."

"I'm definitely one for utilizing any type of platform around. I think it's a good opportunity to get people in the space and I'm always down for free marketing," said Nina Calabrese, operations and community manager for Co.World in Winter Park, who along with Novel Coworking, Serendipity Labs, and Venture are now part of the Chicago-based Deskpass. Other coworking spaces are in the process of becoming part of the service.

"It's mainly going to help boost the coworking scene, so we're excited for that," Calabrese explained. "I think it's a good a good idea and a good value to everybody."

Like the other member workspaces, Co.World receives a fee for every Deskpass member who utilizes their space. It is free to be listed on the Deskpass platform.

"The concept is just a continued evolution of the industry, Sweeny said. "As corporations consider hoteling space and shared offices based on part-time use, the co-working industry is adapting to that same trend for its industry."

Each location has a profile on Deskpass highlighting the mood of the space, the amenities, parking availability, and more.

"You can review a profile of each space before you book. You can see their photos, the description that they've put in about their space, you can see that the amenities," Vasquez said. There is even an option to help people know whether the space tends to be loud and lively or quiet.

On the same day Deskpass began in Orlando, it also went online in Jacksonville and Tampa. Orlando was particularly attractive to Deskpass, thanks to conference and tourist traffic.

"There's a lot of people coming in and there's a demand for it. We have members that contacted us through the website, so we keep a list of people requesting and we actually had a lot of people requesting Orlando," Vasquez said. "The caliber of spaces, they're in good areas, and they are really reputable brands. It's just a great market."

"The goal is to bring awareness so that people know that we're here, to bring them into our facility and then once they come in, they see what other options are available," said Justina Phillips, general manager of Serendipity Labs, a coworking space in downtown Orlando. "So we always hope that it just gets somebody in the front door and then that opens it up to more opportunity."

The service just began on the 21st, and Phillips said one man has already used Deskpass twice. "I know that the gentleman that came in is looking at potentially signing on and looking at other options that we offer here in our location," Phillips said.