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Work, Life, Balance and the Cool Factor

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When I was originally put to task to find Gigya's satellite office in Phoenix, Arizona, I had things to consider that went beyond brick and mortar. I needed to incorporate the fabric of our business and our culture into a living space.

Gigya is a software company that gives business the power and ability to connect on a very personal level with their consumers and advocates. We are beyond social media—we are the infrastructure that makes everything seamless.

Connecting is also what we do with our team, which also is what we need our office space to do. When I set out to find space, I kept the connection to the team in mind. I looked for something that provided more than just a place to work—instead more a place that provided work, life, and balance. I wanted people to love coming to work and tried to eliminate all of the things that could potentially make things unpleasant.

I sought to eliminate emotions from a decision that could affect the success of our office. Furthermore, I wanted to quantify mathematically and compare our options to determine the best location for us. In order to do this, I created a very simple Excel spreadsheet and assigned each feature a score of 1-3 (3 being the highest). Then I created columns labeled with the following key features:



- **Parking.** Does the development have ample parking and could it scale up if our Phoenix office grew? This issue could be a cause of anguish if the team had to struggle to find spaces.

- **Cool Factor.** To me, this meant bars, restaurants, shops, and fun things to do nearby. I wanted people to be able to meet at cool places for lunch. I wanted people to not just come to work and leave, but to have a fun experience and great quality of life every week.

- **Accessibility - Transportation.** Traffic could be a big problem, starting days on a bad foot. I felt that if we could find a place that was accessible from all parts of metropolitan Phoenix we could help make days brighter. The goal was to find a location off a ramp of a major freeway. Phoenix traffic is not bad, but during the winter months we have a tourism spike that makes commercial arteries challenging if you are in a hurry.

- **Building Flow.** Even the best offices in the world can be hard to get to, whether it is a nine-story elevator ride every

morning or a long walk down a hall. I wanted to find a place that had easy stair access and was easy to get into. This was a difficult and subjective issue, but there were a few offices that we immediately disqualified because of building flow or access.

- **Scalability.** As more brands discover how valuable social data is to their business, the social infrastructure arena of the technology industry is growing by leaps and bounds. Consequently, we might need to expand, too. I wanted to find a building that had room for us to grow as well as a large floor plan because connecting to our team is crucial to our success, and this is best done with everyone on the same floor.

- **Cost.** This is always a key factor in any business decision, but ultimately a location that enables us to connect and build a great environment will win our tenancy. I eliminated the highest cost option only because the landlord asked 30 percent above market value for a site that finished third in my scoring.

- **Recruiting/Demographic Location.** Finding the right people to work for us is essential, so we needed to be near where the best candidates live. After my first 100 applications, I decided to plot the resumes on a map and determine the commute times for each person. With Phoenix being fairly spread out, it was a challenge to stay in an attractive office option for people in West Phoenix, East Valley, and Central Phoenix since each location can be 45 minutes apart. Looking at information from the Arizona Commerce Authority, I looked at average commute times, traffic, and freeway flow.

- **Tech Vibe.** Gigya is at the forefront of technology and part of a revolution in social data management. I wanted to be

near other companies that had a tech vibe or were passionate about changing the world through technology. I found this a difficult category due to scalability and other criteria, but it was an important factor for a few buildings. We certainly did not want to be in a building filled with lawyers, mortgage brokers, and accountants due to the differences in culture. We want to be loud and work in a high energy environment.

- **Speed of Availability.** Another great thing about being a Silicon Valley startup is that although we often enjoy great growth, it comes quickly. We needed a building that either had executive suites for us to occupy immediately or space available and ready.

Conclusion

We are currently working from MYOffice Executive Suites while our new office is being built. In the end, we found our dream space in City North, an SKB development, in North Phoenix. We will be part of a city environment featuring five restaurants and three bars on the first floor, ample parking, and the opportunity to expand.

City North makes our office accessible for our employees from just about every major area in metro Phoenix in less than 30 minutes.

With our spreadsheet and the help of our broker, we were able to find the perfect suite that will enable us to connect with our teams just like we do with our software.

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