

Leslie Klipsch

April 2016 Gold Standard

The Way We Work: A New Workplace and a New Pursuit

After years of writing *The Gold Standard* from my home office, I grew weary of conducting meetings and interviews in a rotation of crowded coffee shops and craved a beautiful workspace outside of my family's home. I had read about the rise of "coworking" spaces throughout the world and saw a need in the Quad Cities for a shared space where, according to the definition, "people who are self-employed or working for different employers utilize a common space so as to share equipment, ideas, and knowledge."

After several months of planning and researching, my business partner, Amy Sivertsen, and I opened the Quad Cities' first coworking space, The Creative Collective. In the last several months we have filled our 1,000 square-foot of beautiful studio space with a vibrant community of talented creatives, communicators, entrepreneurs, freelancers, writers, developers, photographers, consultants, and artists and have reaped the benefits of shared energy, an inspiring professional environment, and human connection.

Though it's new to the Quad Cities, coworking has been in existence for more than a decade and new spaces are popping up across the country. Governor Branstad recently declared March 14th Iowa Coworking Day in a nod to the homegrown spaces sprinkled throughout the state. By 2020, it is projected that 40 percent of the American workforce will be freelancers, temps, independent contractors and solopreneurs—a number that makes me believe coworking will become more mainstream. Workers, especially Millennials, are moving from wanting to be part of a *company*, to wanting to be part of a *community*. From what Amy and I can see, coworking is a creative answer to the changing work world.

Members at The Creative Collective choose from a variety of options including a personal desk space with locked storage, shared desk space, access to a conference room and event space, areas for private phone conversations, lounge and break areas, good coffee, fast Internet, a business center, and 24-hour access. Perhaps most importantly, community members have access to our own events (lectures, workshops, professional development, readings, etc.), as well a sense of place in downtown Davenport where they are able to draw from the energy of the environment.

Of course, opening a new business requires a certain amount of hustle...and time. Similarly, so does publishing a book. I've jumped in with both feet to both of these new adventures (my memoir about motherhood and social justice will be released by Leafwood Publishers this fall), and because of that, this will be my final Gold Standard.

I've loved exploring the Quad Cities and reporting back to Gold Book readers for the past four years. The visionaries, artists, and entrepreneurs that I've had the opportunity to interview are incredible and I'm grateful for the chance to help tell their story.

And I'm thankful to the readers of Gold Book and the way you've been open to and sustained the businesses and individuals that you've read about within these pages. I hope you'll continue to

explore our community and support the phenomenal people of the Quad Cities who are doing bold and beautiful things.

This relationship to our surroundings and engagement in community is really the most basic concept of coworking and what I believe to be at the core of a life well lived: We're better together.

Learn more: The Creative Collective is currently located at Bucktown Center for the Arts (225 E. 2nd Street, Davenport) and offers monthly memberships from as little as \$15 to \$200. Affordable options allow for a collaboration and community among a diverse group of people spanning across multiple industries. Find more information at www.coworkqc.com or follow along on Facebook (facebook.com/coworkqc), Instagram ([@coworkqc](https://instagram.com/coworkqc)), or Twitter ([@coworktcc](https://twitter.com/coworktcc)). On April 6, The Creative Collective will host a lunch workshop called "Getting to Know Your Digital Customer" with digital experience analyst Jaimy Szymanski. A limited number of tickets for the April event are available online.

Editor's Note: Head to www.leslieklipsch.com to read more of Leslie's writing, listen to her podcast, and learn about the publication of her first book, *Mama Bear's Manifesto*, which will hit shelves in October.