



Felicia Rubinstein, founder of HAVYN Coworking, stands in the company's Darien location. She recently opened a second coworking site in Greenwich. HBJ Photo | Michael Juliano

Work Evolution

Coworking operator HAVYN grows in Fairfield County as hybrid work reshapes office demand

By Michael Juliano
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Before hybrid work became a boardroom buzzword, **Felicia Rubinstein** spotted an opportunity. She knew remote workers would still crave professional space and community — long before pandemic-era shifts made coworking mainstream.

That insight helped her launch **HAVYN Coworking** in 2019 in Darien, followed recently by a second location in Greenwich.

"I founded this as a place that I would have liked to have worked at all my career," said Rubinstein, who launched HAVYN using a small U.S. Small Business Administration loan and her own savings.

Her years running a marketing firm, followed by a stint as marketing director for a New York software company, exposed her to early signs of the workplace shift she had sensed. When she learned that nearly a third of employees were expected to work from home by 2030, it reinforced her belief that a community-focused coworking model could fill a growing need.

The pandemic hit soon after HAVYN opened, but Rubinstein said she stayed committed because she believed people would continue seeking out coworking spaces.

"During COVID, people were able to get out of their house and come here," she said. "They just kind of went into

their office, and they had that safe place, but they were able to get out of their home."

Lots of options

HAVYN's Darien location leases 22 enclosed office spaces to companies with up to five employees and 18 "dedicated" desks available 24/7. Monthly leases start at \$1,000 for the offices and \$500 for the desks.

The site also offers day passes for 80 coworking spaces at \$50, private offices for \$150, and hourly conference-room bookings. Rubinstein declined to disclose the company's revenue.

"We've done weddings and funerals and parties here," she added.

HAVYN offers amenities ranging from a kitchen with snacks and an on-site fitness center to printing services and regular networking and mentoring events.

"I have a lot of people who are just interested in meeting each other in the networking component," she said. "We have members that don't care if they ever work out of the space. They just want to come to all of our events."

For those members, HAVYN offers a \$99-per-month events-only option.

To meet rising demand, HAVYN opened a second location — a 6,800-square-foot space at 1700 Post Road in Old Greenwich — with 17 office spaces, five dedicated desks and 30 coworking stations.

More people have returned to offices since the pandemic, Rubinstein said, but many still prefer to spend part of the week working closer to home. As a result, some HAVYN offices are now shared by multiple companies.

"I've matched a lot of people to share offices, so that someone has Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and the other person is Tuesday, Thursday," she said. "I don't think this is going away."

Economic downturns can actually boost business, as some employers trade large, traditional offices for flexible space, she said.

"I had one member that had a very large office in Greenwich who had to downsize," she said. "This allows them the flexibility."

Bright outlook

The U.S. coworking market is expected to grow from \$4.99 billion in 2025 to \$7.38 billion in 2030 as more companies adopt hybrid strategies and shrink their office footprints, according to Mordor Intelligence. The Northeast accounts for 34% of the market, driven in part by office lease rates in New York City and Boston that exceed the national average by 30%.

The largest player is Switzerland-based International Work Group (IWG), which owns more than 4,000 workspace locations worldwide across more than a dozen brands and holds 20% of the U.S. market, according to

Coworking Cafe.

IWG has been expanding aggressively in Connecticut as companies downsize their traditional offices and seek shorter, more flexible lease terms. The company now operates over 30 locations in the state — about double its 2019 footprint — and had plans to open about 10 new locations this year.

More local players have also emerged in recent years. In Greater Hartford, for example, West Hartford Coworking and Windsor Worx are operated by an independent ownership group that caters to small businesses, freelancers and remote workers seeking community-oriented spaces.

Rubinstein plans to open a third location in the Fairfield-Westport area with a business partner at some point, though she hasn't begun formal discussions.

"It's open-ended," she said. "If I found something perfect and it all lined up, it would be great."

She said HAVYN distinguishes itself from bigger competitors with personal touches, including sending birthday cards and holding monthly member breakfasts.

"We are very white-glove," she said.

Meantime, HAVYN is one of about 30 for-profit companies in Connecticut certified as a B Corp, a designation recognizing high standards of social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency, as verified by the nonprofit B Lab.

Rubinstein said members are willing to pay for workspace rather than camp out at a coffee shop because HAVYN offers a quiet, clean, professional environment.

"Starbucks doesn't really want you hanging out there all day," she said. "It's the professionalism of it."

Her long-term goal is to own a coworking location with a coffee shop inside, but for now, she said her biggest focus is retaining good employees.

"They're going to be the ones to keep everybody in the business happy," she said. ♦