

[Finishes](#)

Why Materials Make a Difference to Your Workplace



Paint, texture and fabric can breathe new life into an old space. It's why so many people paint their walls as soon as they buy a house. They want to make it their own. Details within a space tell a story and it's those details that can make a space feel like home. More and more people are looking for that same feeling while at work. Warm, humanistic and natural materials are being layered together to create [inspiring spaces](#) where people want to work.

"We see interests in making spaces more eclectic, not so monolithic in colors patterns and settings," says Bruce Smith, Steelcase director of global design.

Smith reminds us words like "warm, humanistic and natural" conjure up different ideas for different people. With thoughtfully-designed spaces and a layering of materials, designers are able to appeal to more people within one particular space. Here's a look at four ways to combine materials to [enhance the workplace](#).

ENCOURAGE AUTHENTICITY



"The things that are really compelling to us are things where you see, or think you see, the hand of man in creation," explains Smith.

People are drawn to a diverse set of [surface materials](#) with complex patterns and textures found in nature. Knots, visible grain and color variations that used to signal imperfections are now exactly what many customers are seeking from their [wood surfaces](#).

These nods to [biophilia](#) support a natural, authentic feeling within the workplace. Research tells us these links to living things help people feel and think better.

PROMOTE PERSONALIZATION



Materials can help organizations advance individuality and brand identity. Scientists in the [Journal of Environmental Psychology](#) published research showing that personalization contributed to employees' positive cognitive and emotional wellbeing and led to enhanced thinking and better coping skills.

Sophisticated paint colors, for example, can create an original atmosphere. New [Lux Coatings](#) from Steelcase include finishes pulled directly from nature, such as Obsidian, which is indicative of volcanic glass.

SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY

