

The New Office

Ideas to Fuse Inspiration and Performance

There's no question about it. Employees around the world are rejecting standard, bland offices and demanding something fundamentally different. This anticorporate backlash is loud and clear. But the solution isn't as clear.

Organizations have added spaces that feel more like home, which are emotionally comfortable, but can become physically uncomfortable and often lack the tools required to get work done. So, what's the "recipe" for a high-performance space that is informal and inspiring? Why are some spaces always busy, while others remain empty?

Here's what we're learning:

1. HEALTHY POSTURES

You don't have to sit up straight all day, regardless of what your mom told you. People need to be encouraged to shift postures throughout the day, move around and sometimes even given permission to put their feet up—research shows a more relaxed lounge posture promotes creative thinking. Make sure to provide a broad range of options so people can sit, stand, perch, lounge and move.

2. BRING THE OUTSIDE IN

People thrive in environments that incorporate natural sunlight or provide accessibility to the outdoors.

3. MATERIALS MATTER

Activate people's senses with a wide range of textures, patterns and colors that can be soothing and relaxing, or energizing and stimulating and choose a variety of products and materials that display a level of craftsmanship.

4. MAKE IT REAL

Place meaningful artifacts and accessories to encourage innovation and playful thinking.

5. CONSIDER PROXEMICS

When people need to collaborate, provide enough space between them so the space feels comfortable.

6. CREATE BOUNDARIES

Use screens, walls, other furniture or even plants to define spaces. This will create spaces that feel more permanent, and provide a place for focus when needed.

7. LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Be intentional about where to locate a space based on what type of work will happen there and what behaviors you want to encourage. Areas for socialization and informal collaboration should invite people to interact.

8. POWER PLAY

Beautiful spaces get even better when they provide access to power that's within easy reach.

9. MAKE IT PERSONAL

Allow people to personalize the space and make it feel their own.

10. NOURISHMENT

A well-designed café can invite spontaneous collaboration or offer an energized place for individual work.

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