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A GUIDE TO OFFICE SPACE PLANNING & DESIGN

Introduction

The office space planning and design of a workspace can be critical to each employee's productivity. The design of the workplace should align with the organization's culture. Before starting your office interior design project, it is important to evaluate certain criteria before making any important decisions. The overall design and space planning of the office space should keep employees in mind and be flexible enough to adapt to business changes. This guide will outline the best practices for designing your workspace.

Critical Questions for Space Planning & Design Projects

Before starting your space planning and design project, there is an important set of criteria and questions to evaluate before making any decisions¹:

Use: What purpose do you see for this space? Determine what the use of the space will be to make sure you are creating a functional space that will achieve the objective you are looking to accomplish.

Layout: Create a floor plan that works for your company. Determine where everything will go in terms of architecture and furniture placement.

Appearance: What look and feel do you want for the space? What color would you like to use? What personalized design elements would you like to implement throughout the space?

Filing: Consider the storage capabilities you will need. Make sure to include this in the layout of your space.

Standardization: Try to standardize certain elements for large-scale projects. Consider if you'd like all conference rooms to look exactly the same.

¹ <http://cpmonesource.com/10-efficiency-tips-for-space-planning-your-office>

The Need for a Functional Workspace



Office space planning is critical when making sure your new workspace is functional. Before designing the space, it is advisable to determine which equipment you will need. Evaluate which telephones, computers, desks, workstations, filing cabinetry, and more will be needed in the space.² Make equipment easily accessible to all employees; for example, have desks close to electrical outlets and filing cabinets in shared areas.³ Designing the office around the needs of employees will prove successful in making the space functional.

² <http://d2nyc.com/>

³ <http://d2nyc.com/>

The Key to Productivity in Office Spaces: Location, Location, Location



Office space planning design experts encourage business owners to follow the 3-foot rule: provide 3 feet between sitting and walking areas, walkways should be a minimum of 3 feet wide, and provide at least 3 feet of space between workers at conference room tables.⁴ If business owners abide by these rules, they can see an increase in productivity by giving employees the space they need.

In regards to location, consider the places in your workplace that are quiet, along with the ones that receive the most foot traffic. Office spaces usually will need a distinct balance of quiet spaces for individual activities, and collaborative spaces in areas that are most frequently visited. By grouping quieter or more private working areas, and placing communal or collaborative working areas away, workers will receive the privacy they need to get the job done.⁵ It is also a good idea to utilize dividers or walls to create a barrier between employees who use their phones throughout the day.⁶ More often than not, these employees may create distractions for their co-workers.

⁴ <http://d2nyc.com/>

⁵ <http://d2nyc.com/>

⁶ <http://d2nyc.com/>

Open Space Versus Private Office/Cubicle Layout



Consider whether you want to implement an open space layout as opposed to a traditional private office, cubicle layout. Modern offices, more often than not, have open space layouts that have a variety of collaborative areas throughout. Some open-space layouts offer a mix for employees, with private nooks and offices, as well as communal areas, scattered throughout. The organizational culture and type of business you run will determine which layout will work best. Consider for your company if there is a need for privacy, if open communication is important, the growth of your company, and your company's office design budget before implementing an open-office layout.

Choosing the Right Furniture

Choosing the right furniture for your space is important to help employees accomplish their work objectives. It's important to match your organizational culture and goals to the office furniture you plan to use in the space. Ergonomic task chairs are a popular choice for offices of all shapes and sizes. Giving employees the comfort and support they need to work sometimes longer working hours is critical in maintaining productivity. Choose ergonomic chairs that have adjustable options such as seat height, arm height, and angle options for your staff members.⁷

Workstations are the new craze, as opposed to traditional desking systems. Providing employees with these flexible and innovative workstations can help your make your office space adapt to business changes. These workstations are often technologically advanced and integrate the necessary hardware and electrical components you need for your high-tech equipment. Types of workstations that are generally found in the office include ergonomic and modular workstations.⁸ Ergonomic workstations revolve around the comfort of the user and usually include lumbar supported tables and chairs.⁹ Modular workstations are tailored to the working area at hand, providing the necessary components like drawers, hutches, and more.¹⁰ You normally find modular workstations in the corners or u-shape areas in offices.¹¹

Equipping the office with filing cabinet systems that are universal for general employees can reduce the landscape of these types of office furnishings. In executive suites and for confidential information, separate filing cabinets should be utilized.¹²

For communal and collaborative areas, having a mix of different furniture options is often preferred by employees. Choose innovative loungers, couches, and other seating options for the breakroom and other communal areas within your office space. These pieces should be stylish and encourage employee communication. Manufacturers such as HON and Herman Miller have collections that exude style and collaboration.

⁷ <http://d2nyc.com/>

⁸ <http://wifinotes.com/computer-networks/what-is-workstation.html>

⁹ <http://wifinotes.com/computer-networks/what-is-workstation.html>

¹⁰ <http://wifinotes.com/computer-networks/what-is-workstation.html>

¹¹ <http://wifinotes.com/computer-networks/what-is-workstation.html>

¹² <http://d2nyc.com/>

Go Green: Make Your Office Sustainable



Making your office sustainable will give you an edge over competitors. Both employees and customers have placed a new expectation on businesses to emphasize environmentally friendly behavior – sometimes this behavior begins in the workplace. Take advantage of natural light that is available. Try to set up employee workstations and other collaborative areas by windows. This tactic allows natural light to shine through as well as reduces electricity costs by having lamps and other lighting turned off during the sunny hours of the workday.

Bring nature indoors with all-natural green walls. These walls often replace traditional office plants and are composed of a mix of different plants and flowers. This eco-friendly and natural office design choice can create a powerful focal point. These types of green walls control toxins in the air stream, while providing oxygen. Consider choosing furniture pieces that are eco-friendly and made of sustainable wood. By utilizing these furniture pieces, you can actually reduce the carbon footprint of your office space.

If natural light is not readily available, consider implementing LED lighting fixtures throughout your space. This category of lighting is more environmentally friendly versus traditional incandescent or CFL lighting. This source of lighting is not only eco-friendly, but is actually easier on the eyes.

Office Colors¹³

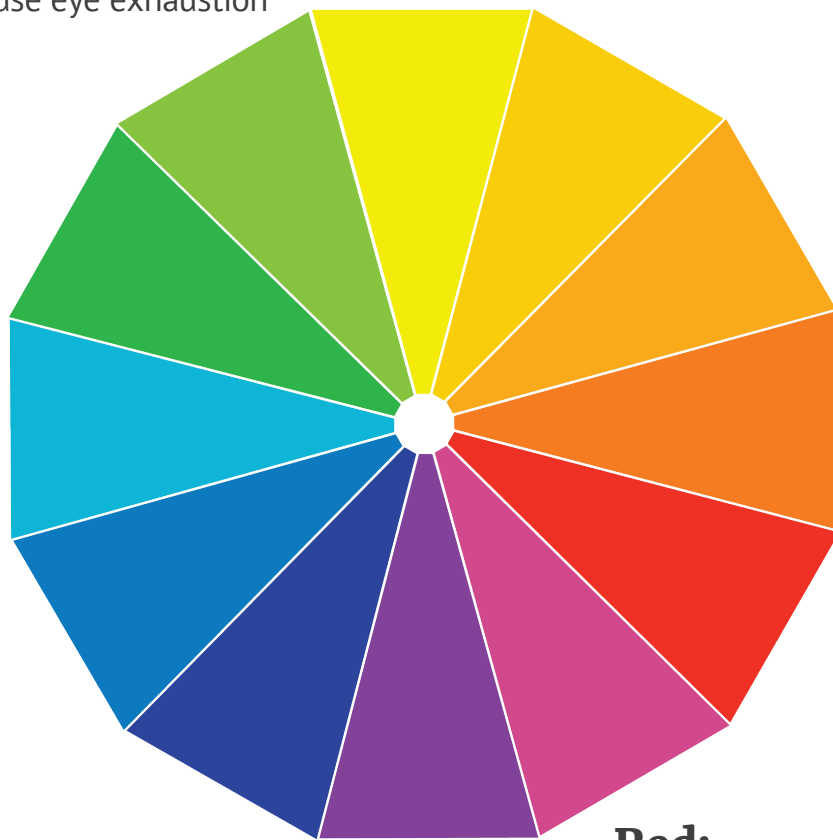
Before choosing a color for your new office, decide which color choice will best exude your organizational culture:

Green:

- Ideal choice for long-working hours
- Exudes calmness and efficiency
- Does not cause eye exhaustion

Yellow:

- Optimism & creativity



Blue:

- Great color choice for productivity
- Calming & stable
- Helps employees focus on tasks

Red:

- deal for jobs that involve physical activities
- Increase heart rate & blood flow
- Passion & emotional appeal

¹³ <http://blog.taskworld.com/how-colors-affect-office-productivity-infographic/>

Conclusion

Office space planning and design projects can be critical to the productivity of the workplace at hand. Designing your office space around the needs of employees can create a workspace that is both efficient and functional. Consider certain criteria and questions before making any major interior design decisions. By following the best practices outlined, workplace productivity can increase. By choosing the right furniture, determining the best office layout, choosing the right color, and making your office more sustainable, you can create an office that will be flexible and effective for years to come. In conclusion, by designing your office in line with your organizational culture and goals, you can create a cohesive office space that will increase workplace productivity.

Works Cited

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