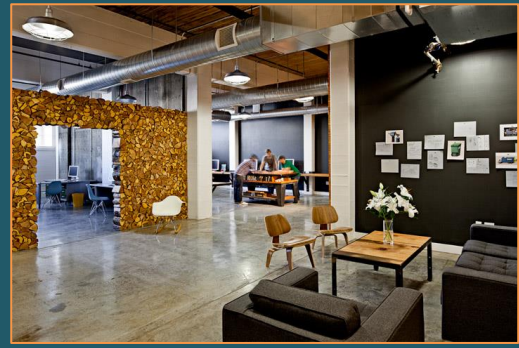


Designing Spaces for Healthier Worksites



When talking about wellbeing in the workplace, we rarely think about the physical environment as one of the factors that can make a difference to the workplace's dynamic and individual's sense of wellbeing and job satisfaction. It is where all interactions take place and small improvements will positively impact not only the quality of people's interactions with each other but also their level of wellbeing at work.

Small Enclosed Rooms

This room does not need to be extravagant but may need to include seating, good lighting and a place to plug in a laptop. Most importantly, this place needs a door; some employees do their best work when uninterrupted.

Dedicated Group/Teaching Spaces

Group spaces help foster a sense of organization; especially if utilizing a few tools like a white board and markers, projector, pens, notepads, and a table to spread supplies or materials on to help collaboration. A well-lit, closed off space can also help encourage a distraction-free environment, which is helpful when trying to get everybody on the same page.

Spaces Created with Furniture

Not all companies have the budget or the space to create individual rooms dedicated to focused effort. These businesses work with what they have, utilizing furniture to create the feeling of isolation. With comfortable seating, paneling and a good lighting design, it is possible to create spaces for the individual/groups that appear apart from the larger world outside.

Resource:

<http://vie-tality.com/can-physical-working-environment-impact-employees-morale-health-wellbeing/>

Picture: Parliament Design's Office, Portland-

<http://retaildesignblog.net/2012/12/08/parliament-designs-office-portland/>

Consider a Quiet Space

Quiet space is a little place to retreat to when all work projects seem overwhelming. It can be used for focused work or a space for stretching, praying, meditation, relaxing, or even a catnap during a break.

A few things to consider to make the space complete could be:

- A comfortable chair, couch, or seating.
- Books, magazines, even drawing/coloring supplies can be very relaxing and affordable.
- Kinetic sand, polymer clay, or a Zen garden could help put restless hands (and minds) at ease.
- Lighting- Needs to feel warm and not too bright. Natural light is best, if possible.
- Adding greenery or observing greenspace. Plants have long been known to provide humans with a calming effect, not to forget, they help filter the air if watered and the leaves are kept dust-free.
- Add art. Nature scenery could prove soothing.
- A computer, audio device, or tablet with guided meditations or information about a smartphone app or website:



www.Calm.com, which provides guided meditations for free.

- Periodically offer healthy snacks and beverages.
- A yoga mat, ball, and information on some simple stretches.
- A white noise machine to cancel out other office noise.
- Rules- Make it clear that the quiet space is supposed to be *quiet* and discourage people from participating in distracting activities such as, talking, eating lunch, or being on their cell phones, especially if the quiet space is shared.

