

LESSONS LEARNED

People prefer working at an office because it's where colleagues, technology, and tools (in that order of importance) are most accessible. Keep that ranking, and these lessons, in mind when planning an interconnected workplace.



VALUE REAL ESTATE EFFECTIVELY

Balance sheet valuations, while important, miss the point. How well office real estate fosters communication and supports collaboration, how well it contributes to worker engagement and activates culture, how it contributes to health and wellness – these are the measures of an office's value to the organization.

Post-occupancy evaluations can show if collaboration has increased. They also measure how well people can access tools, technology and workspace, how well departments are communicating with each other, indicators of how well your real estate is contributing to your business results. So, go figure.



DETERMINE CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

What must the company do to achieve its goals? Since the office must support these factors, identifying them helps drive workplace planning and design. Example: To enhance organizational collaboration, space must support one-on-one meetings at workstations, group collaboration and impromptu meetings, while also supporting the different types of collaboration: informative, evaluative and generative.



HONESTLY ASSESS CORPORATE CULTURE

How much change does the organization need? How much change can it handle? What does the company need to do to adapt to the new economy? How broadly distributed are teams? A clear understanding of the organization's culture should precede any significant work environment changes.

Communication is key, and it extends from the initial examination of company culture into planning, designing and testing of the proposed new work environment through post-occupancy evaluation and tweaks to the space.

04

MANAGEMENT SETS THE TONE

Workers won't adapt to a new work environment and new work processes if leadership doesn't model the behavior the organization needs.

Involving both management and employees in developing new work environments also helps generate earlier employee buy-in and support for new ways of working.

05

LEVERAGE MOBILITY + MAKE IT EASY

Plan for nomadic workers to easily find a space. Provide places for backpacks, room to spread out, access to colleagues. More workers are going mobile every day; the office that offers a variety of spaces that workers can easily find and adapt, will be the most successful.

06

UNDERSTAND THE GENERATIONS, BUT THINK AGELESS

Yes, the generations are different, but every generation borrows from and models the others, so you can't plan spaces based on age alone. A thorough understanding of business goals, group objectives and work styles drives the work environment design for all ages.

07

REFINE. REDESIGN. REPEAT.

Prototype the space, use it, refine it. After move in, check it again. What's not used? Any places overbooked? Need more collaboration space? What's in the way of better staff communication? Are there any work process workarounds? Great workspaces get that way because they are continually measured, reevaluated and improved.

08

NO SINGLE-USE SPACES

Would you hire a person who can do only one thing? Don't pay for real estate that can't multi-task. Consider how many different ways the space can be used. How easily the users can configure the space for the work at hand. How furniture can be used for multiple types of activity.

Consider adding Wi-Fi, collaboration and technology tools to dining spaces, lobbies and in-between spaces to better leverage those spaces and provide workers with more choice and control.