

Now Trending in an Office Near You



Today's workplaces look very different than they did 5 years ago and perhaps very different than they will in 5 years from now. Although more employees are 'working from home' in most organizations there is still a need for some shared workspace. Retention, engagement, healthy employees are all big themes impacting organizations today and the way your workplace is designed can have an impact on all 3 of these elements.

Regardless of your industry, if your employees are fast food workers, knowledge workers or laboratory workers, where they work can have an impact on how well they work.

6 Trends in Work Space Design

1. **Hot Desking or Hoteling:** Not a new idea but thanks to technology it is becoming a much more efficient way to operate. Take one office with desks for only half of your employees – add an app and a smart phone and employees have the flexibility to move around the office to a new and sometimes inspiring location that meets their needs. Hot desking is the practice of having employees use desks only when they need them. With an app (or a scheduler) they can reserve a desk for as long or as little time as needed and only when needed. The desk can be pre-booked according to the employees schedule and if everyone is using the scheduler the app can arrange everything ahead of time. These spaces can create opportunity for employees to interact with new people and in new locations that can facilitate serendipitous encounters and spur creativity and innovations.
2. **Designer spaces** – Many organizations have lovely neutral décor that is designed to be inviting and comforting to customers and guests but not always conducive to getting the best and most creative work out of employees. Now some organizations are creating 'creative' spaces around themes that are meant to inspire, relax, challenge, engage and more. A sports themes open space can be used to tackle a problem that needs a lot of energy and inspiration, a coffee shop style meeting room could be a

place to generate serious thinking about a difficult challenge. Creating spaces that mimic a coffee shop, living room, library, juice bar and more can change the experience of going to work. These rooms really can inspire employees and demonstrate that you are investing in making the workspace engaging.

3. **Multi-purpose spaces** – A multi-purpose space is not just a kitchen you can also have a meeting in, the trend in multi-purpose spaces is to create a space that encourages 'fun' and engagement while working. These spaces often include interactive components such as a basketball net, gaming table, pool table, and a coffee room that looks and feels more like a coffee shop.
4. **Melding with Nature** – Open spaces, private nooks and bringing the outdoors in can be very rewarding. Bringing nature indoors does not mean a few potted plants in the office, it involves Integrating proper light, many windows, open spaces, and elements such as water, plants, rock, lumber, sand and even fire to help create healthy and inspiring workspaces.
5. **Motion** – We know that the modern sedentary existence of the workers is leading to unhealthy consequences. That is why more organizations are moving towards a motion filled workplace. Motion can include walking meetings, movement breaks, standing desks, motion apps and wearable technology and even bringing in fitness instructors to deliver fitness during the day. The key is not to select one of these but to incorporate all. The standing desk will not solve your problems, but moving from a standing desk to a comfy chair and heading to a walking meeting will put you in motion and that is good for your health. A workplace that keeps employees in motion and healthy will often reap financial and productivity rewards.
6. **Communal Hubs** – Shared accommodations is not new but it is an interesting and growing trend. A growing number of organizations, typically smaller organizations and often start-ups in the technology sector, are joining forces to work in shared workspaces. One example of this is the Communitel space in the Waterloo Region of Ontario where many businesses, small, medium and large, are sharing workspaces not always to save on costs but also to inspire.

Your entire organization does not need to move into these communal spaces, different teams can spend time in these spaces to collaborate, meet others and take advantage of a great place to work.

Healthy workspaces require well considered planning and design. The lighting you use, the noise or sound in our workplace, the design of the furniture all combine to create a workplace that is either healthy and inviting or unhealthy and uninviting. By considering the space you work in you can create a better workplace for employees and customers alike.