

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

INNOVATING WORKSPACE TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS, PRODUCTIVITY AND WELL BEING



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By Lisa Loubier

Abstract

Smart organisations understand that their primary goal is to enhance the performance of their people. In a knowledge work economy, people are the engine that keeps companies growing, adapting, improving and innovating.

Not surprisingly, thoughtful workplace design can be a powerful tool for supporting employee performance. And a collateral benefit is that what—typically—supports productivity also enhances employee health and wellness it s all interrelated.

So here are some top tips to improving wellbeing, morale and productivity.



1.0 Getting Started

An average person spends one-third of their life at work. Work-life balance isn't just a buzz-word anymore, it's practically a KPI for your company's

success. In the age of Google offering fully immersive campuses for their workforce, cubicles and bad fluorescent lighting are the stone-age. Having engaging workspaces for your employee isn't just a matter of Keeping Up with Jones, human and environmental health are intrinsically linked. There are multiple factors that lead to employee success due to their surroundings. Small yet meaningful modifications can be made to achieve an optimal workspace, even without the Google budget.



1.1 The Impact of Workplace Design on Mental Health and Productivity

Workplace design is one of the most important factors affecting the mental health and productivity of employees. The physical layout of the office, colors of the walls, furniture, lighting, and other design elements can have a significant impact on employee well-being, motivation, and productivity.

The Connection Between Workplace Design and Mental Health

Poor workplace design can lead to a wide range of mental health issues, including stress, anxiety, and depression. Conversely, a well-designed workplace can boost mood, improve focus, and enhance overall mental well-being. One of the most important factors in workplace design is natural light. Exposure to natural light can boost mood, productivity, and sleep quality. By contrast, inadequate lighting or the use of harsh artificial light can cause eye strain, headaches, and fatigue.

Noise levels in the workplace can also be a major source of stress for employees. High levels of noise can lead to decreased productivity and increased sick leave. Therefore, well-designed offices should incorporate acoustic materials and sound-absorbing surfaces to reduce noise levels and create a quieter, more pleasant work environment.

Another crucial factor in workplace design is temperature. Studies have shown that temperatures that are too hot or too cold can negatively impact cognitive function, leading to decreased productivity and increased errors. Optimal temperature levels should be maintained to ensure employee comfort and well-being.

The Importance of Ergonomics

Ergonomic design is the study of how people interact with their work environment. A well-designed workplace should incorporate ergonomic principles to reduce the risk of injury and improve employee comfort and productivity. Ergonomic design elements include adjustable chairs and desks, proper lighting, and equipment that is easy to use and operate.

Proper ergonomic design can help reduce the risk of musculoskeletal disorders, such as carpal tunnel syndrome and back pain, which can be a major source of employee discomfort and absenteeism. By ensuring that workstations are comfortable and properly aligned, employers can reduce the risk of injury and promote long-term employee health and well-being.

How Workplace Design Affects Productivity

Workplace design can also have a significant impact on productivity levels. A well-designed workplace can increase employee engagement, creativity, and motivation, leading to improved productivity and job satisfaction.

One important factor in workplace design is the physical layout of the office. Open-plan offices have become increasingly popular in recent years, as they can promote collaboration and communication among employees. However, open-plan offices can also be noisy and distracting, leading to decreased productivity and increased stress levels. To maximize the benefits of open-plan offices, employers should provide quiet work areas and private meeting rooms to ensure that employees can work effectively without distractions.



Color schemes can also have a significant psychological impact on employees. Different colors can have different effects on mood and productivity. For example, blue is calming and can promote focus, while

green is associated with nature and can boost creativity. By incorporating color schemes that promote the desired psychological effects, employers can create a more positive and productive work environment.

In addition, the use of plants in the workplace can have a significant impact on productivity levels. Studies have shown that exposure to plants can reduce stress and anxiety, boost mood, and improve cognitive function. By incorporating plants into the workplace, employers can create a more pleasant and productive work environment that promotes employee well-being.

2.0 Why Workspace is so Critical to Employee's Success

An average person spends one-third of their life at work. Work-life balance isn't just a buzz-word anymore, it's practically a KPI for your company's success. In the age of Google offering fully immersive campuses for their workforce, cubicles and bad fluorescent lighting are the stone-age. Having engaging workspaces for your employee isn't just a matter of Keeping Up with Jones, human and environmental health are intrinsically linked. There are multiple factors that lead to employee success due to their surroundings. Small yet meaningful modifications can be made to achieve an optimal workspace, even without the Google budget.



It Can Affect Your Well-Being

It's not enough to offer a fair salary and 2 weeks of vacation to keep an employee fulfilled. The current workforce, specifically millennials, admit that they would happily accept a lower salary if it meant working for a company with a strong corporate culture and focus on work-life balance. Culture and balance begins with the values you foster in your workplace.

It is important for an individual to feel their company cares about their mental and physical health. This means everything from food to encouraging movement. If a company provides a stocked kitchen, the healthier and more nutritious the snacks, the better fuel it offers. While being hangry makes for terrible morale, junk food leads to junk productivity.

Small changes like offering sit/stand desks, or encouraging small exercise breaks, have amazing impacts to the energy of employees. Workspace factors that affect the well-being of an employee also equates to the bottom line. Lack of wellness drives up costs of health care, leads to more sick-days, and loss of productivity. This means unhealthy employees ultimately cost the company more money.

Connections & Collaborative

Current design trends seem to lean towards open spaces for collaboration. They call for areas where management can mix with employees to foster synthesis and innovation. However, not all companies have the budget or time, to renovate their current offices, let alone build behemoths like Apple Park.

Simple measures can be taken to provide a more collaborative environment. If you have removable walls between desks, taking them down can create connections among employees. Think about location of desks in relation to employee organization (for example, team structure or departments). How can you create a democratic workplace? Are managers readily available for an employee to approach them? Even an open-door policy can change the feng-shui of this relationship.

Detox space: Quiet and Relaxation

On the other side of the coin, while collaboration and inclusivity is important, there still needs to be quiet areas available for independent thinking and private meetings. Some employees might not do well with constant interruptions. If you offer a variety of spaces for your employees to choose from, they can have a tailor-made environment to match their needs.

When creating or repurposing quiet spaces, they can also serve as a relaxation area. Small breaks to decompress can boost productivity and prevent employees from burning out. California Pizza Kitchen kept this in mind when building an innovative new LA Headquarters. They have multi-faceted areas that serve dual purposes such as; a serenity room, which not only offers peace and quiet, but an area for nursing mothers (required by California law), and a multi-purpose room that can facilitate large meetings or a group yoga session.

Individualized Workspace Opportunities

If you can't make significant infrastructure changes to your office you can consider implementing new policies.

Dog Friendly- Could you allow employees to bring their dogs to work? Dogs aren't just members of the family, studies have shown that dogs lower stress and anxiety. Companies that aren't ready to go full pet-friendly offer certain days or times that pets are allowed, 'Bring your Pet to Work Day' or 'Yappy Hours.' Logistically- if you don't own the building, the lease will need to be consulted. You also should chat with HR to avoid any issues with other employees such as pet allergies.

Plants- Plants are a very simple yet significant addition to a work space. You can either invest in plants for the office as whole or allow/encourage employees to bring in their own plants (or both!) Plants provide greenery that is not only appealing to the eye, but naturally calming. On top of this, they can make you healthier. A Norwegian Study monitored the effects of indoor plants over several years in offices and found that they can

significantly lower issues such as headaches, scratchy throats, or skin irritations.

Increased Overall Productivity

Happy employees are productive employees. An experiment with 700 employees confirmed that happiness can increase productivity as much as 12%. Therefore designing workspaces and environmental factors of an office with your team's happiness in mind will directly increase overall productivity.

If you encourage individual expression, and tailor your office to your culture, you can keep the team's happiness as a main goal.

Workspaces are Just as Important to Future Employees

It isn't enough to have an engaged workforce, looking towards the future, companies also need to keep a healthy influx of new talent. As the natural progression of employees move on to elevated career paths or retire, Generation Z is knocking at the door. These new recruits only know innovative workplaces, with posh Silicon Valley headquarters as the measuring stick. When these applicants come to your workspace, you need to attract them. Ryan Jenkins, a millennial speaker and generations expert, advises that for your company to attract Gen Z it must be collaborative, offer flexibility, and promote both well-being and value infusion.

3.0 Boosting Workplace Wellbeing

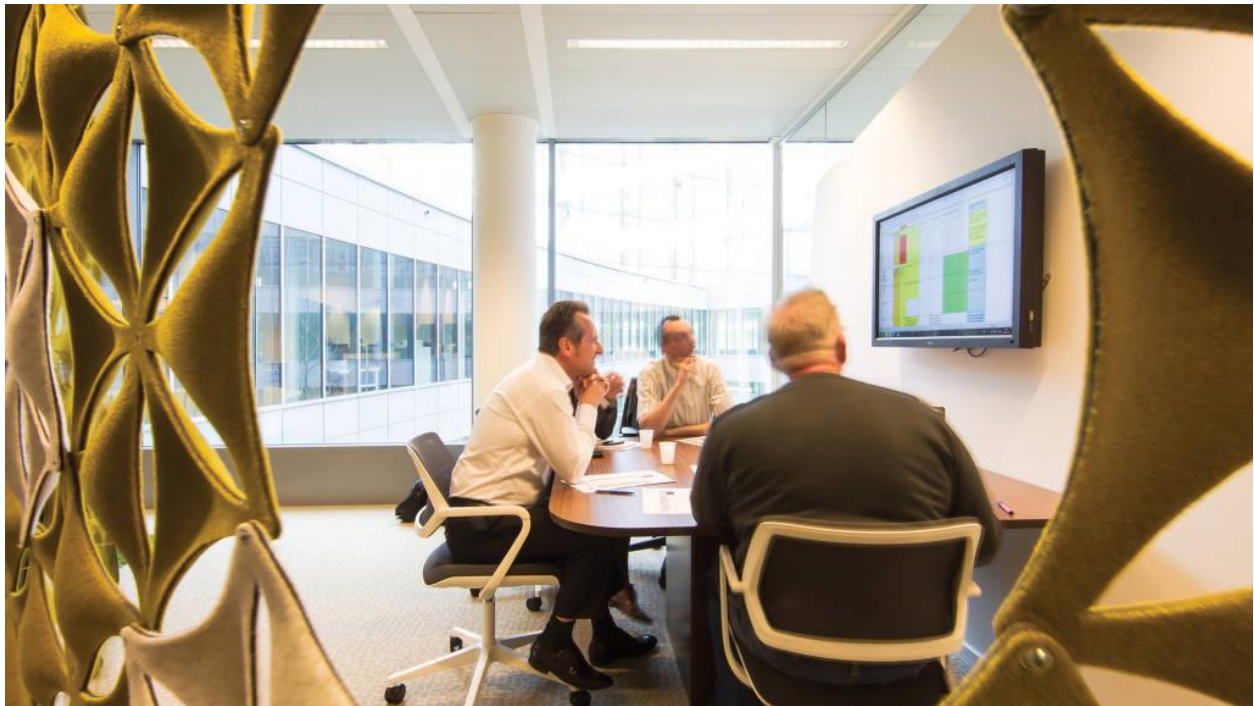
Improving employee wellbeing helps them to be more productive, creative and innovative, and less likely to leave for a competitor.

Leading organizations know that improved employee wellbeing not only helps people to be healthier and lowers healthcare costs, it also helps them to be more productive, creative and innovative, and less likely to leave for a competitor. As businesses amp up their focus on wellbeing, many are seeking ways to understand if they are making progress toward their goals, and looking to other organizations for benchmarking, as well as' inspiration. Governments are starting to measure wellbeing, since it is viewed as proof of the success of public policy. The European Social Survey,

for example, tracks social attitudes and behaviors across 30 countries. In recent years, countries on every continent, from Mexico to Chile, Japan, Bhutan and the United Kingdom, have begun studying or have adopted national measures of wellbeing.

“The most important thing executives can do is send a very clear message to their employees that they care about each person’s overall wellbeing.”

As a corporate strategy, wellbeing efforts are most visible in work environments specifically designed to boost wellbeing. A starting point is to put wellbeing in an organizational context.



□ THE VALUE OF WELLBEING

Workplace wellbeing has transcended its old description as simple ergonomics: how your chair fits, proper keyboard adjustment, etc. As work has become more mobile and collaboration-based, and pressures us to use practically every waking moment working, the Steelcase researchers define wellbeing as sustaining a healthy physical and mental state over time, in a supportive material and social environment. This holistic view embraces six important dimensions: being fully engaged at our work, authenticity in our

business lives, a sense of optimism, being connected with others, physical and intellectual vitality, and a true sense of purpose at work.

At ING in Brussels no one has an assigned workstation. Employees can choose to work at an array of workspaces, depending on the type of work they need to do.

Business leaders are learning how this holistic view of wellbeing contributes toward organizational success, thanks to researchers such as Gallup's Tom Rath and Jim Harter, Ph.D. They have measured the differences between a thriving life (fully realized factors of wellbeing) and one spent suffering (the lowest wellbeing scores) and their impact on the bottom line.

People with thriving wellbeing have 41% lower health-related costs compared with those who are struggling (at the midpoint). They also have a 35% lower turnover rate.

More and more company leaders are considering the influence of— the workplace and how it can be a major influence on employee wellbeing and how it can boost both wellbeing and the bottom line.

All employees work in the open plan and have access to natural light at Quadrangle Architects. A variety of enclosed spaces (both small and large) are available when teams need to meet or individuals need a more private space to work.

MORE CHOICES

The most obvious differentiator of a workplace designed for wellbeing: providing a range of different spaces to support the different kinds of work performed in the course of the day. A mix of open and enclosed areas, I spaces and “We” spaces, access to natural light and colleagues combine to give people choices and empower them to find the spaces and tools appropriate to the work at hand, which in turn lowers stress levels and increases vitality and connectedness with others.

□ REDEFINING PRIVACY

At Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (BIPI), Ridgefield Conn., executives received encouragement from their corporate headquarters“ in Germany to open up the office and provide workspace options. Our corporate CFO from Germany was” visiting and he pointed to a floor full of cubicles with 72-inch high panels, says John Hardiman, executive“ director,‘ ’ regional infrastructure, engineering and site services’ for BIPI. He said, I don t get” this. “Why do we put people in these boxes? You re going to change that, right?

He wanted an energized environment, to see people talking to one another, not those high, dark panels. That was one of the guiding” principles that we embraced when we moved forward with the project, says Hardiman.

The new BIPI work environment includes individual and shared open workspaces. Now people can choose from benching workstations, soft seating areas, lounges, pantries, focus rooms and group workspaces. This strategy not only fosters essential collaboration but also nurtures connections to others, an important contributor to psychological wellbeing: A global study by Gallup showed that six hours of social interaction each day increases wellbeing and minimizes stress.

“We need this luminosity, because it is happiness and life.”

“The new BIPI workplace was also influenced by comments from new hires. We had feedback that the workplace lent itself to a more’ individual approach because you were in your own little box, and we didn t really provide any kind of space, other than’ the cafeteria, where collaboration was encouraged. Younger people we re recruiting are used to working around tables and just chatting to” each other as they work. Being put in a box they found particularly confining.

Privacy remains important in the workplace for confidential discussions, quiet phone calls and the times when we just need’ to focus quietly, alone. A palette of open and private spaces solves for people s need for both

collaboration and concentration, with individual users making their choices as required by the work at hand.

INSPIRED BY THE COLLEGE CAMPUS

For workers at the new headquarters for Repsol, in Madrid, Spain, the oil and gas company's four buildings surround a central courtyard for group or individual work, dining, relaxation and reflection.

Nearly half of Repsol's workspaces are open plan (furniture is limited in height to 1.2 meters) and located next to facades. Employees enjoy outside views and plenty of natural light. Closed offices and conference rooms are located in the inner areas of each floor. Informal spaces and corridors make up nearly a quarter of interior spaces, including two cafeterias, open conference areas and media:scape collaboration settings. Repsol extended its wide open spaces strategy to accessibility: It's easy to make a 360-degree circuit of the buildings without passing through a single door.

“This work environment is designed“ to bring people together”.

This work environment is designed to bring people together, says de La-Hoz. It provides variety in both work postures and sensory stimulation, contributes to employees' physical, cognitive and emotional wellbeing.

Repsol's new corporate headquarters campus in Madrid, Spain features a central courtyard where employees can work, dine, relax and reflect.

BETTER WORK/LIFE BALANCE BEGINS IN THE WORKPLACE

Moving to a new location complicates life for employees. Commuting to the new site, traffic, travel time, access to important services (Where's the dry cleaner around here?) all affect work/life balance and overall wellbeing.

It's more than an altruistic pursuit. Ultimately, our approach will be a decisive factor in attracting future staff. It's a competitive marketplace for talent, and people want to work for us precisely because of that balance and our corporate culture, says De Colfmaker.

MEASURING BENEFITS OF WELLBEING

How much does a wellbeing-focused workplace contribute to company performance? Leaders at each company described here are convinced the workplace is producing positive results for their organization.

Repsol's first general survey, conducted less than four months after move-in, gave the new work environment a score of 7.6, on a scale of one to ten.

At BIPI, a post-occupancy survey "six months after move-in showed an increase in productivity of 15-20%. Productivity is difficult to measure, but we have measurements of perceived productivity, which is the end user's" feeling that they are getting more work done in the same amount of time, says Michael Carneglia, associate director, engineering and site services.

"A large chunk of your life is at the office and it has a big impact on your work/life balance."

"When we show new recruits our new offices, let them know how we work" here, it helps us get over that last hurdle to get them to come to work for us, says ING's De Colfmaker.

Quadrangle Architects conducted a survey six months after move-in that showed positive responses from the majority of employees. For example, 83% are satisfied with the new workplace, and 95% say it enables "them" to be productive and to make effective and informed decisions". We've seen a significant increase in productivity since we moved in, says Susan Ruptash, principal.

There's no question that improved employee wellbeing boosts productivity and creativity, reduces stress and cuts healthcare costs, and helps connect people to their colleagues and the organization. The only question is, how much does it cost a company that isn't working to increase employee wellbeing?

4.0 Does a pretty office make a productive workforce in Sydney?

Offices with scenic views, as well as high-quality indoor environments, could help employees become more productive, research suggests

The view from office windows is rarely the stuff of picture postcards. Yet the scenic quality of our daily environments has a direct correlation on our personal wellbeing, researchers say.



The team from Warwick Business School used results from an online game called Scenic-Or-Not, which features 217,000 “images from” around Britain and asks people to rate them according to their scenicness . The highest ranked pictures are broadly predictable: snow-capped mountains, tree-banked rivers, wild seascapes.

More surprising was the connection between where people live and their sense of wellbeing. Working off the health data in the 2011 census, the researchers were able to demonstrate that residents in more scenic areas are happier and healthier than those residing in less eye-catching locales.

The reasons why await further scientific investigation, yet lead researcher Chanuki Seresinhe believes it has much to do with our mental disposition (a much publicised recent study shows that exposure to nature reduces stress, for instance) and our behavioural traits (scenic spots prompt us to get outdoors and be more active). “ Seresinhe argues that the implications for business are profound. People spend a lot of time at work and their

environment definitely' affects them. So if pleasant scenery makes people feel better, there s a good case" that the scenicness of their working environment will have a similar effect.

Boosting staff productivity

Of course, the aesthetics of workplaces and its impact on employee wellbeing are nothing new. A slew of research reveals how everything from artwork on "the walls to workstations with natural light boost productivity.

Longer distance views, away from computer screens or written documents, allow the eyes to adjust and re-focus, which reduces fatigue, headaches and the effects of eye strain in the long term. Views also have a positive impact on wellbeing, in part by providing a psychological connection with other groups of people while in a safe space," states a report from the World Green Building Council.

In recent years, considerable energy has" gone into" showing how plants and flowers brighten the work experience. Biophilia (the research strand, not the Björk album) demonstrates how green office spaces generate physiological responses such as increased brain activity and lower stress hormones. A Harvard" "University paper last year found that the cognitive performance of green office workers was double that of those working in conventional"" environments'.

But green isn t necessarily scenic. When" it comes to green space, the issue is' quality, 'not quantity, says Seresinhe". Just because an area is green doesn t mean it s a beautiful area of green, she says, citing the examples of a derelict recreational park or a field with an industrial park in the middle.

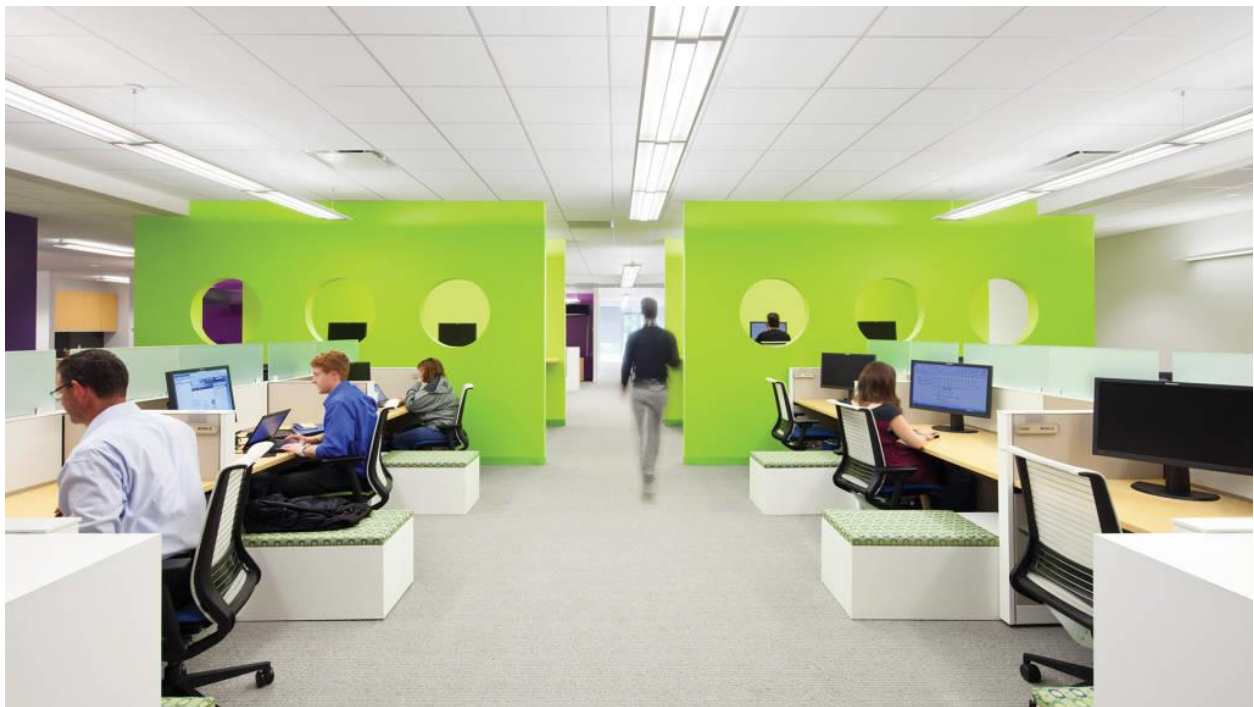
Improving city offices" "

The apparent logic of the scenic argument is that companies should relocate to the Lake District 'or the banks of a Scottish loch. However, the arrival of UK plc in the country s beauty spots would dramatically reduce their scenic qualities. And urban and peri-urban areas can be scenic too (this counters the other obvious argument that rural-dwellers should work more from home).

“It’s not about nature versus the city,” Serensinhe says. “The scenic effect exists in cities too. Buildings can be scenic [and] there” are things you can do to make the urban environment more scenic as well.

5.0 The Psychological Effects of Cleanliness in the Workplace

The physical and psychological effects of an unhygienic workplace can be debilitating for staff and visitors. The negative impact is gradual, but it is inevitable.



If you want clients to respect your business, and your staff to confidently approach their duties with high morale, you need to ensure your workplace is clean and hygienic. The psychological effects of an unhygienic and cluttered workspace can be debilitating for those required to inhabit the environment for the better part of their weekdays.

Studies have been conducted on how physical environments impact the mental wellbeing. It was discovered that there are several direct and indirect impacts on our psychological capabilities.

Various environments were studied and the workplace stood out significantly. Considering we spend majority of our lives at work, it is one of

the most obvious spaces that would affect our psyche if not well-maintained or organized.

Sensory stimulation

What we smell, see, hear, touch, and taste has a variable impact on how we perceive our physical surroundings. Staff entering a disorganised and cluttered workplace feel like they are doing an obstacle course on a daily basis.

Low Morale

One of the common problems with an unhygienic workplace is staff turnover, and more injuries. Employees lose the desire to be a team player and start job hunting if they are constantly hurting themselves on tools left lying around, breathing in dust, dodging clutter left lying around in the office, and getting sick from germs; this will definitely start to affect your business. Take the time to assess your business environment and how you can change it.

Benefits

A clean, working environment is positive in many ways. There are less injuries, less time taken off work, more positivity, a better impression with clients, less staff turnover, better productivity and turnover, and a major stress reduction for all concerned. Cleaning up at work is clearly less costly than the long-term psychological effects of an unclean workplace.

No client wants to deal with unhappy staff who put in little effort, find doing their job a mammoth task, and are half as productive as they could be. The mental impact of an unclean workplace may seem small on the outside, but can be extensive if this not immediately addressed.

Regardless of location or environment, stay one-step-head of your competitors by showcasing a workplace that any business owner would be proud of, and staff members enjoy being a part of.

How Businesses Can Benefit From A Clean Workplace

Maintaining a tidy, organised, and healthy workplace plays a vital role in determining the success of a business. According to the statistics, an average employee in Australia spends around 40 hours weekly in an office. Dirty and germ-laden surfaces around the workspace can increase the sick rate and affect your company's overall productivity.



If an organisation wants to boost its staff's efficiency and productivity, ensure you keep the work environment hygienic and productive. In addition to this, an orderly office space can leave a great first impression on your business partners, clients and potential customers.

Many business owners introduced CDP or a clean desk policy to help employees learn the right way to leave their workspace when they leave the office. It is also good to hire professionals for detailed office cleaning Sydney to maintain a clean work environment.

Here are some key benefits businesses can leverage by keeping their workplace stain-free, sanitised and organised:

1. Leaves Great First Impression On Your Clients

An orderly, tidy office space looks visually appealing and welcoming to prestigious clients and potential customers. It builds confidence, develops trust, and leaves a long-lasting impression.

2. Keep Employees Happy. Healthy And Focused

Maintaining a clean, dirt-free and organised office space can keep your employees happy, confident and focused.

3. Boosts Productivity

This is one of the major benefits of a clean and orderly workplace. A clean, fresh-smelling and maintained environment can improve your employee efficiency.

4. Improves Your Brand Image

Developing a strong brand in the competitive market requires proven marketing strategies, quality products, quick services and impressive office space. Whether you have an IT firm or a CA firm, a customer will judge your company's brand image based on how your workplace looks and feels.

5. Keeps Your Employees Healthy

Believe it or not! Cleanliness in a workplace keeps your employees healthy. Regular dusting, vacuuming of carpets and rugs, and desk cleaning keep the germs and bacteria at bay. Disinfecting contaminated areas and high-touch surfaces can keep everyone safe from lethal viruses like COVID-19.

6. Minimises Hazards

Cleanliness can save the lives of your employees as well. The mess on the floor, such as boxes, wires, or other stuff, can lead to slips and serious injuries. Plus, regular cleaning can reduce fire hazards because old cardboard boxes, and papers can easily ignite the entire premises.

Regular cleaning and proper maintenance can create a healthy and hygienic work environment for your employees. This can improve productivity, reduce sick leaves and help you easily establish a strong brand.

6.0 Workplace Strategies that Enhance Performance, Health and Wellness

Smart organizations understand that their primary goal is to enhance the performance of their people. In a knowledge work economy, people are the engine that keep companies growing, adapting, improving and innovating.

Not surprisingly, thoughtful workplace design can be a powerful tool for supporting employee performance. And a collateral benefit is that what typically supports productivity also enhances employee health and wellness it s all interrelated.



Given the nature of today's work processes, how can the workplace better support human performance? How can the workplace support all of the different activities involved with knowledge work things like collaboration, creativity, innovation, deep thinking and mentorship?

One way to better understand the nature of human performance is through a definition used by organizational psychologists, who believe it is enabled through a blend of ability, motivation and opportunity.

□ PERFORMANCE = ABILITY x MOTIVATION x OPPORTUNITY

Performance is a function of the three factors acting together. Ability has to do with whether a person can do a task. Motivation is a measure of whether a person wants to do it. Opportunity is about accessibility; a person can't do a task if she is not given a chance or if she is denied access to necessary resources or amenities—.

This framework— looking at human performance as being influenced by multiple factors reflects the difficult and variable nature of our work today. All of these factors must be supported by the work environment in order for people's best work to occur. So, how can the workplace help?

According to Judith Heerwagen, a former scientist with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory who is now a program expert with the General Services “productivity and the workplace are related in these ways:

□ A building can positively affect ability by providing comfortable ambient conditions, by enabling individual control and adjustment of conditions, and by reducing health and safety risks. Negative impacts on ability to do work are associated with conditions that are “uncomfortable, distracting, hazardous or noxious.

□ A building can positively affect motivation by providing conditions that promote positive affective functioning, ‘psychological engagement’ and personal control. Moods create the affective context for thought “processes and behaviors and are directly tied to motivation.

□ A building can affect opportunity by providing equitable access to conditions that reduce health and safety risks, equitable access to amenities and compensatory design” options where inequities exist and are difficult to eliminate entirely. Administration, Which specific workplace strategies

provide the right mix of ability, motivation and opportunity to enhance human performance? Best practices in workplace design can help.

TEN WORKPLACE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Ten fundamental design elements can positively impact the workplace environment and support the work being done:

1. Thermal Comfort and Temperature
2. Access to Nature, Views and Daylight
3. Sensory Change and Variability
4. Color
5. Noise Control
6. Crowding
7. Human Factors and Ergonomics
8. Indoor Air Quality
9. Choice
10. Employee Engagement

7.0 Ways to hack your workspace for optimal productivity

When it comes to desk clutter, keep it at a minimum.

Your work desk and workspace can actually increase your productivity.

By increasing natural lighting, incorporating blue desk accents, and making sure you're moving around regularly, your office space can help you get more done at work.

Interior designers recommend a few ways to create a beautiful, productive environment.

There are podcasts, morning routines, hobbies, and even procrastination techniques that can make you more productive.

But there's one thing that might be missing from your arsenal of time management hacks: optimizing your work desk and workspace for ultimate productivity.

Office designers from Michigan, Colorado, and New York shared their tips for making your office space attuned to a productive workday.



- Bring in some plants

Plants are an easy way to beautify your desk and improve your workplace air quality.

But research shows that employees in workspaces with plants are also 15% more productive.

Succulents are low-maintenance and widely-available, but they require lots of sun, she said.

Better low-light options include the snake plant, pothos, and peace lily.

And if you don't have a green thumb, here's how to stop killing indoor plants.

- If you work in a windowless office, take a walk outside

Workers in windowless environments reported significantly lower well-being compared to those in a sunny office, according to a 2014 study from Northwestern University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Try to get a few hours in the sun everyday.

Replace super-long cables that are getting in your way or clip them to the side

You probably have cords for your computer, keyboard, mouse, phone, headphones, cell phone charger, and maybe even more.

Remind yourself of your purpose with certain objects on your desk

Find an object or two that inspires your work and keep it on your desk.

Try an office award, a picture of your family, or a reminder of your company's ethos.

Keep healthy snacks at your desk

If you're hit by a wave of hunger way before lunch, or way before it's time to go home and enjoy dinner, you might want a quick snack to keep energy levels up.

Mixed nuts, protein bars, and dried fruits are great snack options to stash in your desk.

8.0 Conclusion

So while the workspace is imperative to your current workforce, it also equates to the future success of a company. Try these mindful transitions (that don't break the bank) to keep present and future employee's happy, successful and engaged!

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