

viewpoint

The people, companies and happenings making a notable impact on the commercial interiors industry

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Perspectives on Design & Inspiration



INDEAL Spaces "Reception 029" featuring Magnuson Group and Stance Healthcare

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Amanda Schneider, LEED AP, MBA founded ThinkLab, the only research entity wholly focused on the built environment. She's a respected thought leader featured in prestigious publications from the Huffington Post to Forbes to Interior Design Magazine, a sought-after keynote speaker, and the host of the popular podcast, Design Nerds Anonymous. Join in to explore what's next at thinklab.design/join-in.

The Seven Key Insights for Today's Modern Workplace

by Elizabeth Levine

Reflecting on 2019, a mere five years ago, the workplace landscape feels incredibly distant. From in-person working to fully remote and now hybrid workstyles, employees have undergone significant transitions, continually adapting to new methods of work. Yet, amidst this transition, office design must evolve as well, meeting the demands of this new era and aligning with the preferences of today's workforce. Hybrid work arrangements are becoming permanent fixtures, driven by employee demand and employer initiatives attract and retain talent. In response to evolving employee preferences and productivity goals, modern workplaces must diversify their offerings. The office remains unparalleled for fostering connections, and both employers and employees recognize its role in professional growth. As the workplace landscape continues to change, offices must adapt to accommodate and empower these new ways of working.

Companies must collaborate with designers who embrace a holistic approach when undertaking an office design or redesign endeavor. By working closely with clients, these designers should craft spaces that authentically mirror the brand identity and cater to the needs of employ-

ees. This is crucial not just for individual employees, but also for employers and the overall brand. Design solutions need to be tailored to each company's unique goals, focusing on cultivating spaces that foster a strong culture and bring people together. As companies strive to establish workplaces that embody their values and foster employee well-being, grasping what truly drives modern work environments is essential.

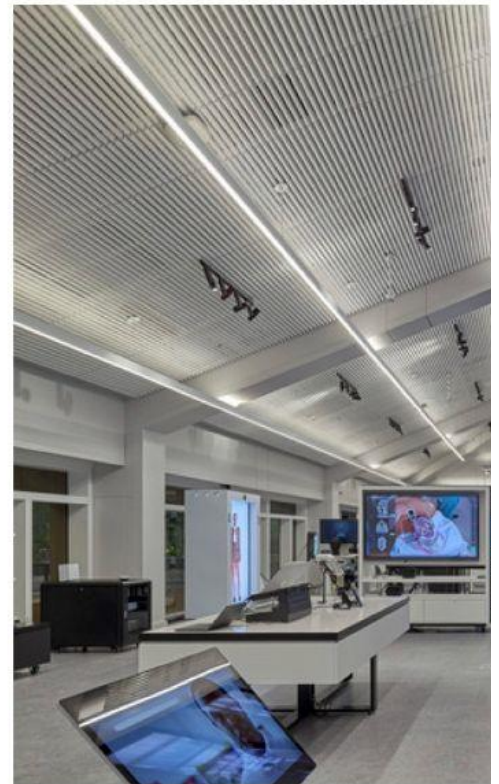
So, that begs the question, what are the fundamental insights into the modern workplace? According to our team at NELSON Worldwide, the recipe for success encompasses scalable growth, redefined spaces, personalized experiences, connectivity-driven design, identity celebration, multi-generational inclusivity, and initiatives focused on sustainability and wellness.

1. Scalable Growth

Constantly shifting hybrid work patterns, market trends, and innovative business strategies necessitate highly adaptable solutions capable of flexing and adjusting to the ever-changing needs of the office. Modern workplaces must be tailored to accommodate diverse work styles, featuring workstations catering to individual tasks and collaborative

efforts. By strategically integrating designated gathering areas, lively social hubs, and environments conducive to spontaneous interactions, today's modern office can foster meaningful connections between team members.

Ensuring today's modern offices can ac-



commodate organic change and growth without necessitating extensive renovations is critical. To achieve this, design teams must make strategic choices regarding modularity and furniture solutions that enable seamless reallocation and reconfiguration of departments as needs evolve.

2. Redefined Space

Ensuring team members have the freedom to choose environments that suit their individual needs is crucial. However, the allocation of square footage to personal spaces is influenced by various factors, including real estate considerations, business operations, and regional needs. A noticeable trend is emerging—a move towards optimiz-

ing shared spaces and amenities instead of prioritizing assigned individual workspaces.

Crafted to encourage collaboration, open zones and versatile touchdown spaces cater to the diverse needs of today's workforce, offering a range of privacy options. By strategically shifting from office spaces into open zones, workplaces can maintain flexibility and accommodate a larger number of individuals during peak hours, fostering a dynamic environment for all.

3. Personalized Experiences

In our interconnected world, work seamlessly bridges both the physical and digital realms. When employees venture into the office, they crave an environment that combines the comforts of home with the advantages of choice and control—understanding why employees leave the comfort of their homes for the office is crucial. Therefore, offices should prioritize integrating enhanced technology, adaptable furnishings, diverse work settings, opportunities for social connection, and considerations for acoustics to ensure that time spent in the office proves worthwhile and encourages them to return.

Personalized experiences are essential because every employee has unique needs. Whether individuals desire the bustling activity in a communal hub or yearn for the quiet oasis of a private nook, the modern workplace should accommodate a full spectrum of preferences. Additionally, offices must champion neurodiversity and inclusivity by providing supportive spaces, such as zones for sound-sensitive individuals

or flexible environments for movement, ensuring that every team member's requirements are considered and fulfilled.

4. Designed to Connect

The era of routine phone calls and frequent business travels for face-to-face meetings has become a thing of the past, all thanks to technological advancements enabling digital interactions. Workplaces must be equipped with state-of-the-art technology to dissolve physical barriers between individuals, offices, regions, and time zones while simultaneously enhancing inclusivity through accessibility.

Top-notch technology solutions will incentivize people to come into the office and facilitate equitable collaboration between in-office and remote team members. Spaces designed with suitable acoustics and privacy measures facilitate effortless mobile collaboration and plug-and-play interactions. This enables smooth execution of activities such as one-on-one calls, training sessions, company-wide announcements, and cultural initiatives, ensuring that all team members participate in these endeavors in a meaningful and inclusive manner.

5. Celebrating Identity

It is critical for modern workplaces to celebrate their brand's identity and honor their employees' individuality. Spaces that reflect an organization's brand, culture, vision, and values can engage team members in a shared sense of purpose. Design elements like employee experience floors, game rooms, and exhibition walls allow for





personal expression and the celebration of diversity. Additionally, for national and multinational clients, each new office location presents an opportunity to incorporate regional, cultural, and aesthetic influences, resulting in unique environments that set the office apart from its other locations.

6. Multi-Generational

With five generations coexisting in today's workforce, recognizing the diverse experiences and perspectives of these workers is vital for establishing inclusive spaces that cater to all demographics and points of view. Accommodating a broad spectrum of communication and

work styles presents a significant challenge in the modern workplace. With multiple generations in the workforce, it's increasingly common to find Gen Z seeking mentorship, while Gen X aims to offer guidance. Office spaces must now cater to these multigenerational needs by providing choice and flexibility in how spaces support work endeavors. By doing so, workplaces can evolve and adapt efficiently to meet varied needs, facilitating mentorship opportunities, leadership development, and talent retention.

7. Sustainability and Wellness

The final crucial insight for today's

modern workplace involves enhancing sustainability and wellness throughout the office. This initiative not only promotes physical health but also yields significant business advantages. Organizations that prioritize employee well-being experience enhanced performance across key metrics such as customer engagement, retention, productivity, and profitability.

Initiatives such as LEED, WELL, and Fitwel programs, combined with design elements like ergonomic furniture, diverse workspaces, and neurodiversity-friendly options, underscore a commitment to overall wellness. Additionally, wellness-enhancing ame-

nities such as meditation rooms, access to outdoor areas, and high-quality food and beverage options contribute to a workplace culture that prioritizes employee health and satisfaction.

While every modern office will exhibit its unique characteristics, these insights serve as a foundation to guide you through the needs in today's workplace. The era of one-size-fits-all solutions and cookie-cutter office designs with inflexible design philosophies is behind us. Modern workplaces must mirror the vibrant and diverse workforce, providing them with compelling reasons to opt for in-person

engagement while fostering a sense of belonging within the community. ■

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