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How To Maximize Your Workplace.

A guide to office furnishings from

HON[®]
Smart now. Smarter later.



The HON Company is one of the largest providers of practical, professional office furniture, and is committed to sustainable design, superior customer service, and quality.

The company possesses an attitude of individual and corporate integrity with a deep respect for customers and channel partners, as it continues to provide responsive, industry-recognized customer service.

The HON Company's focus on unsurpassed customer satisfaction includes providing practical and professional office solutions to consumers, as well as rapid, continuous improvement programs that help its channel customers improve operations, from managing inventories to reducing product damage.

“He who fails to plan, plans to fail.”

You have a great company with great services and great employees. You are successful in your business ventures and you strive to make your company the best it can be. But what about your office? If you are like most of our customers, the look and layout of your office is probably not on your list of top priorities.

Don't worry. That's where we come in.

We work hard to create furnishings that fill all the spaces in which your employees interact, develop, create, and execute. Our expert and trained HON dealers are your greatest resource. They are always available to service your needs and provide you with furnishings that fall within your budget. Before you contact your local HON dealer, it is important to understand your company's space. We hope that by the end of this guide, your “Our office layout works OK” feeling will be replaced with “*Certain changes to our office layout can make our employees much happier and much more productive.*”

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Why is my office layout important to my business?

Spaces That Inspire

A well planned office does more than just look pretty. Besides the fact that it creates a good initial impression on your clients and draws in potential candidates, it also improves the productivity and attitudes of your current employees. And why shouldn't it? Your company is a place where your employees meet day-to-day to engage in activities that help the company grow and flourish. The space in which they work should do more than just house creative minds - it should inspire them.

Too often today employees are accomodating their workspace instead of their workspace accomodating them. It's sad to think all of that extra effort could be used in company projects, client meetings and development tactics. If that's not enough to convince you, look at the efforts millions of employees put into personalizing their workspace with photos and other memoirs. Your company space needs a balance of functionality and creativity to help your business thrive.



Fast Facts

The Digital Equipment Corporation Fund in Finland included porch swings, leather recliner chairs, decorative fountains, wall murals, plants, and free food in their corporate office redesign. Though somewhat lavish, they are one of the many companies who have thought outside the box (quite literally). Leaving the 19th century view of a physical office setting behind, companies now notice skyrocketing sales and performance, strengthened corporate branding, and frequent inquiries from bright people about employment opportunities. ([Offices at Work](#), Franklin Becker)

Fortune Magazine once revealed that the largest impact on productivity would result from improvements in office layout; alongside personal computers and thermal control.

According to the [Corporate Real Estate Executive](#), high quality buildings can increase productivity 10-20%.

Studies show that a 1% improvement in productivity = 10% of the facility operating cost, or the entire utility bill. ([123sortit.com](#))



Where would I start?

DON'T!

If you are going to invest your time and money in a floorplan, you want to make sure it's done right. Try to avoid these two common mistakes most companies make.

- 1) **Benchmarking.** Don't compare your company to other office setups. They are not you. They do not have the culture, management, or employee practices that your company has. Therefore, your office shouldn't look like theirs. Instead, analyze current and emerging trends. Try to identify specific challenges that your current space presents. Just because there are no signs of dramatic failure, doesn't mean there is zero need for improvement.
- 2) **Guessing.** Many companies guess how their businesses work by what they see. Although observation is helpful, there is always more than what meets the eye. Ask your employees about what they need and use, and be sure to utilize HON dealers, too. They won't guess what you'll need. They'll know.

DO!

- 1) **Call your local dealer.** Numerous companies have used HON only dealers to help them both select specific furniture items and maximize their space. Their knowledge and expertise will bring to light alternatives you never even thought possible.
- 2) **Involve your employees.** When you analyze your environment and keep your employees involved, you will gain a better understanding of your company's space. This will help you avoid future problems with your design decisions and identify your employees' level of resistance to change.

Involving your employees in the design process will also heighten internal morale. Your employee's personal workspace is one of the few areas in which he/she feels a solid sense of control. The last thing you want to do is make your employees feel powerless.

IN SUMMARY

Whichever route you choose, be very clear and honest about your plans to your employees. Genuinely listen to their suggestions and express that their opinions are of great value. This will help them better commit to the new workspace, feel a sense of shared control, and know that diversity within your company is recognized.

Tips and Tidbits

To successfully involve employees - conduct personal interviews, hand out surveys, create opportunities to review plans/decisions, communicate which decisions will be affected by employee feedback, and teach people new strategies to utilize their new space.

Be prepared for some huffing and puffing. Not everyone is great at accepting change. In fact, there may even be some anger and negative opinions voiced. Handle these encounters with a respectful, listening ear. Acknowledge the resistance, but continue to reinforce all of the positive things the new changes will bring about.



Open vs. Closed Work Environments: Which should I choose?

Now that you understand the importance of office design layout and involving your employees in the process, here are different design options. Typically, most offices will have either (or sometimes both!) open or closed work environments. There are pros and cons to each.

Open Work Environment

PROS

Open work environments are often thought of as one giant room with no boundaries or walls separating employees. Although that can be one example of an open work environment, that doesn't mean it's the only open work environment. Environments that are classified as "open" usually refer to a work setting that fosters flowing communication and many benefits:

- *Employees can receive mentoring from colleagues
- *Project directions are more clear and understood
- *Many can see how business runs by practice - not theory
- *Best environment for teams; fosters informal conversations that build trust for others' judgment calls and expertise

CONS

Some drawbacks include a greater amount of noise and distraction, little acknowledgement in regard to status and hierarchy, and possible tension. (Let's be honest. Sometimes we learn way more than we want to about each other.)



Closed Work Environment

PROS

Alternatively, there are closed work environments. Many employees prefer these environments for several reasons:

- *They allow more critical thinking and focus
- *Have lesser chance of noise and distraction
- *Provide the individual an authentic space of their own
- *Allow others to feel more comfortable having privacy
- *Signify status in regard to seniority/expertise

You might be asking yourself, "Well, if employees usually want closed environments, I should design our company office around what they want, right?" Not necessarily.

CONS

Although many employees prefer closed workspaces, they actually work more productively in open ones. In closed environments the free flow of information is extremely limited and many employees are denied learning since they cannot observe their colleagues. Also, meetings are only scheduled and informal conversation is scarce. (And don't even get us started on all the online shopping that goes on behind closed doors...)



Open vs. Closed Work Environments: Which should I choose? *cont...*

So what to do?

Incorporate both environments into your office design.

Having an array of different work settings will be more effective than trying to have one particular space accommodate everything and everyone in your business. For open workspaces, you can practice zoning, where you build clusters of individuals with the same job functions (i.e. software developers in one area, HR employees in another, etc.).

To offer closed workspaces, you can use panel systems to grant privacy, but not fully restrict the free flow of conversation between employees. Conference rooms can also be perfect for teams to develop and create, (away from those who need to concentrate and focus), and their views and high-class appearance can be utilized for meetings with clients.

Make sure to draw, map out, and talk through your plans in order to find the best alternative that fits your company's current needs. Just remember, leave room for future expansion and growth. Having the flexibility to move people and furniture around will save you time - and money.

Did You Know?

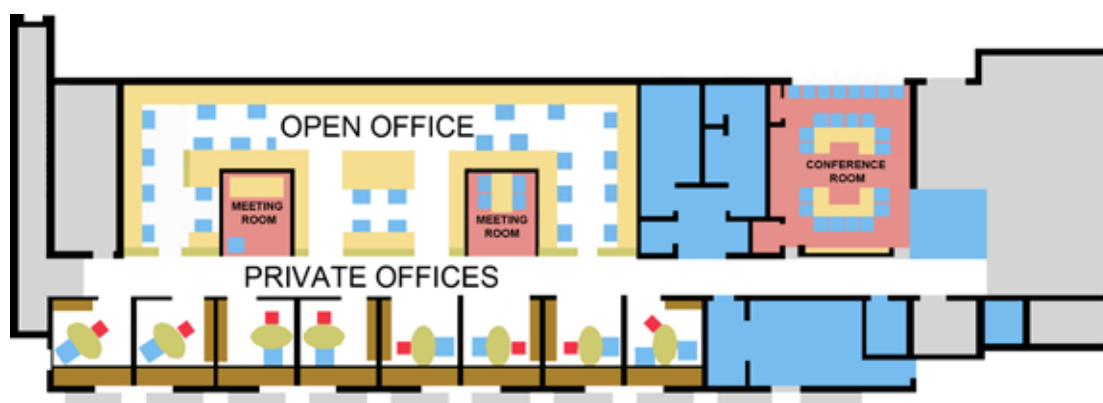
Unintended meetings with employees (such as conversing in the hallway) happen as frequently as scheduled meetings...but take 1/3 of the time.

More than 80% of observed work conversations are unplanned.

Swedish offices give the same amount of space to each employee, regardless of their status or rank within the company, because they feel it emphasizes everyone's contributions and value to the workplace.

A University of Michigan study on software developers concluded that the quality and quantity of their code in an open work space environment was two times better than the code of those who worked in a closed environment.

**Offices at Work, Franklin Becker*



What's the best way to set-up my employees' workspace?

Plain & Simple

Hard part's over. Whether you've chosen an open, closed, or combination work environment, the same universal principles need to be applied when setting up your employee workspaces. It's imperative that your employees feel comfortable with the office furniture they are provided and the space in which they work. If they don't feel comfortable, they won't perform well.

Desk

The desk is a critical component to a successful workstation. It supports equipment both above and below, and it provides the employee an area for completing tasks. The employee should have an adequate amount of workspace to carry out all of his/her responsibilities. Make sure an adjustable keyboard/mouse tray system can be installed underneath the desk's surface as it will help accommodate the ergonomics associated with good posture. Also, make sure the desk's position is arranged to have space on either side and to easily connect with electrical outlets.

Paper Documents

To avoid neck, shoulder, and eyestrain, paper documents should not be laid flat on an employee's desk. Documents laid flat cause workers to bend and twist their bodies at awkward angles to read them. Instead, invest in document holders for your employees - either screen-mounted, inline, or freestanding. They will drastically make the work process much more efficient. Another perk? Document holders get papers up and off employee desks to leave more room for work and writing. Not to mention your employees' desks will look a lot nicer. Say goodbye to those mountains of paper and hello to a design plan that not only looks good - but works.

Seating

A person, on average, will spend 80,000 hours of his/her life doing work while sitting*. That is why experts constantly stress the importance of quality chairs in the workplace. It's important to provide employees with chairs that adjust in height and offer recline, seat pan, and armrest options to avoid work-related injuries. Employees should be able to use as much of the chair back as possible for support and have adequate space between the back of the knees to the front edge of the seat pan. In addition, quality chairs should conform to the curves of the body and avoid pressure points that cause discomfort. Remind your employees to get up and move around, too! Constant sitting impedes circulation, causes muscle fatigue, and makes a sore, aching worker.

*OfficeOrganix.com



What else am I forgetting?

Lighting

Used to think there was just light and dark? Most employers do. However, there are actually three different types of office lighting: ambient, task, and natural.



Ambient lighting - The main lighting in your office that illuminates the entire building space. Proper lighting is crucial because too little lighting causes vision problems. Some employers make the mistake and supply too much lighting, thinking it will keep employees awake and productive. On the contrary, too much ambient lighting washes out computer screens and creates glare. This makes reading extremely difficult for employees and increases their chance of writing and typing errors.

Therefore, keep your ambient lighting controlled at a minimum, and add task lighting. Purchase task lights that can sit on desks and illuminate paper documents. The most favored task lights by employees are those with a low glare and that are adjustable. Be sure to position the task light to the side of the computer, so that it shines on papers and not on the screen.

Last but not least, **natural lighting** is lighting that comes through windows from the sun. Although this lighting is normally enjoyed, it's difficult for working. Supply blinds or drapes in your employee's office so he/she can control the amount of light let in. You'll soon see your employees working at light speed! (No pun intended).

Organization Accessories

Offer these accessories to your employees to keep them organized and efficient.

Notebooks/Folders - Helps keep employee papers off the desk and organized. Go with colored notebooks and folders, too. Studies by color experts have proven filing by color reduces the time it takes to find specific files by 50%.

Labels - Great for working with existing filing systems to create index tabs. Electronic label makers are relatively inexpensive and produce cleaner, easier to read labels than those that are handwritten. You can also take advantage of labels for shelves in the supply closet, drawers, tapes, etc.

System Attachments - Connects easily to existing HON panel systems. System attachments organize CDs, offer trays for phones, keep papers off desks and much more. They match perfectly, too!

File Cabinets - Great for archive files. Employees only need to keep current, relevant information at their fingertips. Everything else not consistently used but worth saving, file away.



Trash Can/Recycle Bin - One of the most important (and overlooked) organization tools to have for each employee. It encourages workers to get rid of what they don't need...and open up their desk for working.



What about other areas in the company besides our employees' work spaces?

Good question. Now that personal workspaces have been covered, let's discuss other areas of your business that may need improvement such as your lobby space, conference room, and break room. All three rooms have a large impact on your business productivity and their design is crucial.



Lobby

- Your company lobby is often the first initial impression a visitor, client, or potential employee candidate gathers about your business and its services.
- The space should be aesthetically pleasing, open and barrier free, and have exit signs clearly marked. It's best to go with timeless furniture that is comfortable and durable.
- The flooring should be durable and easy to clean as you will often have high traffic through these areas.
- Most people seated in lobbies have to wait periods of time, so make their stay enjoyable. Liven up the room with jungle foliage and pictures, provide coffee and magazines, and offer a water cooler or coffee maker to supply refreshments to your guests.
- How well you accommodate your clients while they wait for you will signify how well you'll accommodate them in your business ventures.



Conference Room

- Your conference room space is most often used for meetings, team collaboration and projects.
- Conference rooms need to function as spaces that house numerous groups of people for brainstorming and developing.
- Good air circulation, natural light, and ergonomic furniture are all needed to help make the room feel more comfortable.
- The layout of the room has to allow team members to face one another and converse.
- Necessary tools include flip charts, dry erase boards, markers, folders, projectors, computers, memo pads, writing utensils and internet access.
- Sound proofing the room is very beneficial. Teams tend to be noisy and their meetings can be very distracting to the rest of the office.



Break Room

- Don't shy away from break rooms because you think they'll be a distraction to your employee working productivity - they are exactly what the brain needs to be re-stimulated.
- Though some are lavish with pool tables, televisions, and video games, not all have to be.
- Break rooms can be as simple as one room areas with refreshments and magazines. Just create a space where your workers can retreat to unwind and recharge.
- Your employees will appreciate your recognition of their hard work and their need for a break, and will be much happier working for your company.
- Remember, happy employees often make the best employees. And they'll stay with you longer, too.



Any additional creative touches?

Edgy & Fun

Try some of these simple, creative tricks and your employees will (almost) want to work for you on the weekends.

Home Style Lamps

Home style lamps offer a sense of comfort and originality. They also create a “homey” feeling for the office because most individuals are accustomed to this type of lighting at home. Try finding lamps with animal prints, beads and frills for an extra creative punch.



Green Foliage

Foliage, whether simple ferns or extravagant tropical finds, bring nature indoors and relax your employees and guests. Plants break up the rigid construction of office furniture and look of technology by balancing man made goods with something more “natural”.



The paint color you choose for your office is very important, as different colors stimulate different moods. Try painting soft grays for in-depth thinking, warm tans for sustaining concentration, and silver blues for creativity. Sky and navy blues, muted greens, and black accents are all safe and have been linked to overall office efficiency.

Painting

Bookcases

Great for organization/research materials, bookcases signify to outside guests that your employees are knowledgeable. In addition, bookcases can also be great solutions to barren wall space. Use the tops of bookcases for picture frames, vases, and any other objects that make your office feel like home.



Photographs

Don't intimidate your guests or employees with framed degrees and awards. Instead, scatter pictures of coworkers around the office to emphasize your company's family-like nature and your focus on the most important item in your office space - the people.



Works of Art

Researchers have established a positive correlation between on the job performance and the presence of artwork in the workplace. Hanging art work and sculptures are some of the few appreciated pieces that can be incorporated into your office design.



Floor rugs are wonderful protection against wear and tear. They can also give some creative flair to your office with their different patterns and designs. Coming in all shapes and sizes, rugs can fill any space you desire, hide stains, and brighten up dingy floors.

Rugs

Music

Background music is sometimes very effective in companies that promote a more laidback, casual atmosphere. It can relax and comfort employees while they creatively think, invent, or develop, and can range from all alternatives - elevator, jazz, easy listening, rock, pop, etc.



How do I bring “green” into my office?

Office Stats

In the current, ever-popular trend of “going green”, we have heard all about recycling, not using plastic bags, and turning off lights. But we often tend to only focus on the home, and not the office.

- One office worker can use a quarter ton of materials in a year - including 100,000 pieces of paper
- Heating, cooling, and powering office space are responsible for almost 40% of carbon dioxide emissions in the US and over 70% of the United State’s total electricity usage
- Commuters emit 1.3 billion tons of CO₂ a year
- Computers in the office burn \$1 billion of electricity annually

These are just some of the haunting statistics. Yet, you still might be asking yourself, “Is it really worth it to me, profitably, to turn my company green?” We understand your concerns. However, you may want to look at some recent survey results. These results determined that 1/3 of US workers would prefer to work for a green company and more than 1/2 of US employees wish their employers would be more environmentally friendly. That number is growing. Bringing green into your office will show your company’s social responsibility to the environment as well as help you rise above other competition.

*Portland Development Guide

HON is thinking “green”!

Want “green” furniture for your employees too? Luckily, HON has developed a line with the environment in mind!

HON’s nature core fiberboard has no added formaldehyde and is made of all natural fire-retardant materials.

The HON Company became the world’s first office furniture manufacturer to have certified products from the Indoor Advantage™ program that tests products for emitting chemical compounds into the air.

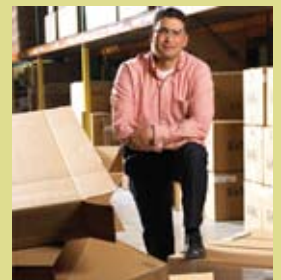
Recycling old wood, a process called comold, enables HON to save 5,000 acres of virgin forest and divert nearly 10,000 tons of wood waste from landfills every single year.



HON collects all of their unused paint to create new, gray paint as part of their waste reduction efforts.



More than 300 bales of fabric scraps are recycled by HON to keep 300,000 lbs. of fabric.



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How do I bring “green”? into my office *cont...*



Tips for “GREENING” Your Office

- 1) Switch all light fixtures to T-8 fluorescent. They use 20% less energy, have better color, and less flicker.
- 2) Install occupancy sensors in rooms so lights only turn on when rooms are occupied by people.
- 3) Turn off computers at night and set them to “sleep mode” when you are away. If every US computer was turned off at night, the US could shut down 8 power stations and avoid emitting 7 million tons of carbon monoxide yearly.
- 4) If printing for research or editing purposes, print double-side copies to save trees and profits.
- 5) Create hard copies of documents only when necessary. Surveys report that offices use nearly 1.5 lbs. of paper - per person - per day.
- 6) Avoid using bleached and colored paper. The chlorine used releases dioxins that cause health problems such as birth defects, immune system damage, and cancers.
- 7) Buy products in bulk. It minimizes packaging and is ultimately less expensive for you in the long run.
- 8) Try an automatic setback thermostat that conserves heating and cooling when it's not in use. Heating, cooling, and ventilation make up 39% of energy use in an office.
- 9) Reduce the size of your water heater. You do not need the same size water heater as the one you have in your home since you are not showering, doing laundry, or running a dishwasher.
- 10) Add low flow/low flush fixtures. US residents use 3x as much water a day as the average European.

*Portland Development Guide



How can I try the Feng-Shui approach?

Serenity Now

Feng-Shui is a way of living based on ancient Chinese philosophy that teaches individuals how to use Chi, our natural positive energy, to create harmonious environments. It's particularly useful in the office environment as work sometimes brings about chaos and stress. As the number of employees practicing Feng-Shui continues to grow, workers are finding themselves more and more efficient and in control. (Even Donald Trump practices it!) Serenity, prosperity, and wealth are all said to emerge from this philosophy - as is a more efficient work environment. Learn the various ways you can Feng-Shui your office today!



Well-Managed Files

Your files represent your past, present, and future business. To bring about Chi, you are to handle your files and records with the utmost respect by filing them and keeping them protected.

Clear Out Clutter

Organize your office. Throw out everything you no longer need, and file the rest. You need a clear and open space to work and free up your mental state. Remember - clutter stimulates negative Chi energy and will keep you from feeling light and cheerful in your workspace.

Desk Placement

It's essential that your desk is in a "commanding" position. It signifies power and control. Ideally, your desk should face the doorway since business enters through the door and you should never turn your back on it. Also, being approached from behind puts you in a vulnerable state, diminishing your power. If you are in a situation where you cannot move your desk to face the door, use a monitor mirror to visibly see people approaching from behind you.

Plants

Plants keep you connected to the natural world; the utmost essence of Feng-Shui. It is part of the practice to place plants in corners where offices are often devoid of stimulating energy. It is important that every area of a Feng-Shui room be filled with energy that is constant and moving. In addition, plants also offer creativity. They break up the rigid monotony of the workplace offering fresh and invigorating ideas.

Quality Furniture and Decor

Office furniture that is both durable and comfortable will give you a strong sense of stability. If your furniture and decor is aesthetically pleasing, it will attract Chi.

Hide Your Cables and Cords

The mess of cords underneath your desk needs to be wound and taped to the bottom of your desk's surface. The mess represents chaos and prevents the flow of Chi.



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