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Workplace Insights

Project Basics: Programming, Budgeting, and Scheduling

With the new approaches to working today, many companies are looking at ways to re-design their existing space. Consequently, some employees are being tasked with managing capital projects who have never done so before. If this is you, you'll want to start your workplace renovation by developing an understanding of three key pieces of information:

1. What is the program? How much square footage is required?
2. What is a realistic budget?
3. What is the schedule? How soon do you need the updated space?

Let's look at each of these factors in more detail:

1. **Programming**. Much of the programming phase involves the determination of the necessary square footage and the required space types. Key pieces of information required include:

   - How many associate workstations are needed in each row?
   - Would employees benefit from having a variety of work settings to choose from to meet their needs?
   - What is the desired ratio of private offices versus open offices?

   - Does your company have space standards that guide specific room sizes? Companies may have more than one acceptable room standard, including use types, occupancies, dimensions, furniture types and configurations, etc.
   - How much space is required for support functions (e.g., restrooms, cafeteria/lunch, break rooms, conferencing rooms, team spaces)?

2. **Budget**. Budget is often a significant consideration with renovation projects. To start a project with a clear understanding of the financial implications, some critical questions to resolve from the outset include:

   - What is the condition of the existing space? Will this be a full renovation, or a more minor update?
   - What level of finishes will be used?

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- What types of technology upgrades might be required? This could include Audio/Visual (A/V) equipment, networking technologies, security device integration, as well as further infrastructure to enhance employee productivity?
- Will any significant updates to existing building systems be required? Consider whether this is the time for a lighting update, or whether HVAC equipment needs to be replaced.

3. **Schedule**. You will need to understand the full timeline for the project, starting from design through construction, to make appropriate decisions for your company. For example:
   - Can the space be vacated for a number of months to allow for construction? This is often the fastest way to complete the project, but may require relocating large numbers of employees during that time?
   - Or is a phased approach a better fit? Completing the project in multiple phases may make more sense for your company, as it minimizes mass disruptions, but it will likely slow the process down.

It is important to be proactive and conduct an evaluation of program, budget, and schedule before getting too deep into the process. A small investment with an experienced A/E firm can help you understand these three critical elements, and set you up for success with realistic expectations.

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