

FALL 2023



Workplace Insights

Navigating the Future of Work: Designing a Hybrid-Friendly Workplace

Today's workplace is drastically different than the typical office of even five years ago. Many companies have a renewed focus on fostering collaboration, improving communication, and increasing productivity. To achieve these outcomes in a hybrid-work environment, we've assembled a list of important items to consider when designing a workspace for today:

- 1. Establish policies and procedures.** Clear hybrid-work policies are essential to creating an effective workplace where associates are engaged and productive. Transparent communication and well-defined expectations can improve attendance in the workplace. Policies can also assist in understanding the number of individuals in office and therefore how much space should be allocated for use on any given day. This can help design teams create a flexible environment with multiple workspace types and levels of usability.
- 2. Design in zones.** Creating different zones or neighborhoods brings organization to large square footage environments. Consider arranging floor plans into neighborhoods to break up the typical

office configuration, thus giving the end users a more visually interesting and easily navigable workplace. Some common zoning types include:

- a. Social...all-team gathering spaces, open cafes.
- b. Creative...brainstorming and collaboration spaces.
- c. Technology...presentation areas, data visualization studios, technology sandboxes.
- d. Quiet...individual workspaces or reading.
- e. Resource...meeting spaces, huddle rooms, war rooms, etc.

Another benefit of separating space types into zones? The overlap of noise from collaboration spaces into quiet zones for focus-driven work can be mitigated.

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- 3. Integrate technology.** In a hybrid-work environment, the integration of technology is a crucial component of workplace design to connect employees in the office with those working remotely. Technology is also a key tool to supporting multiple work styles for those in the office. Users can seamlessly transfer their digital workspace between workstations, meeting rooms, or collaboration areas throughout the day.
- 4. Find the right amenities.** Companies have often focused on providing a great deal of amenities to try to attract and retain employees. As companies transition to a hybrid-work approach, amenities are still important, but no one amenity will magically bring employees back into the office. Investigate what added features are valuable to your associates and can enhance their health and wellbeing.

And a final note: Stay flexible! Hybrid-work environments are, by their definition, imbued with flexibility. The key to successfully designing for workplace changes is being open to modifying the workspace as your employees' needs evolve in the future. Following these guidelines will lead to improvements in collaboration, communication, and productivity.



CONTACT US

Direct any comments or questions to:

Mike Trageiler, Director

Client Development

mtrageiler@hixson-inc.com

Phone: 513.241.1230

www.hixson-inc.com