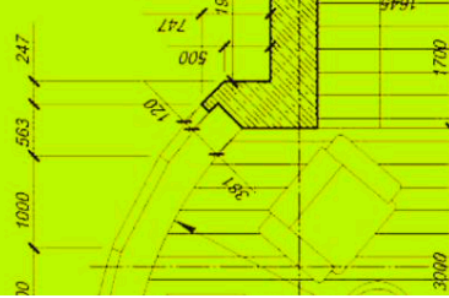


How to future proof your office

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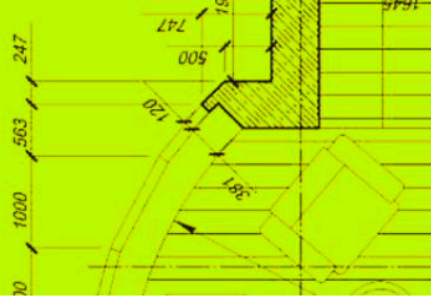
There's no doubt that the nature of work is changing, driven largely by technology. Digital connectivity means that many employees no longer have to be rooted to desks to access documents, software, information and services.

Young people entering the working world today were pretty much born with a mobile phone in their hands and the idea that you have to be located in one place, five days a week, with a desktop PC and a landline would seem pretty alien to them.

"So how should the modern office environment respond to the changing reality of work and the expectations of those entering employment in the Twenty-Tens?"

Here's our guide to future proofing your office.

How to future proof your office



1. Plan for flexibility – Zoned areas of working

Planning for flexibility? Sounds a bit like an oxymoron as a plan suggests sticking to a prescribed course. **We prefer to think of it as being prepared for adaptability.**

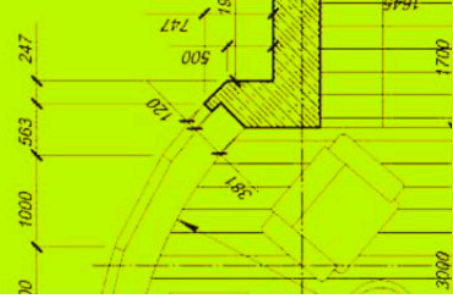
In many sectors, work is increasingly driven by events, discreet projects and programmes, where people come together to deliver specific pieces of work. Teams are formed for the lifetime of a specific project, using existing employees, contractors and personnel from the customer or partner organisations.

Workspace designs and furniture arrangements need to be flexible to respond to changing requirements. Employees and project workforces now need to have access to a variety of different work environments that suit the particular task or activity being undertaken for the duration of the project.

Different types of workspaces might include:-

- **An area of hot desks, extended tables or workbenches** where people can spread out with paperwork, designs, CAD drawings etc and also be able to plug in their portable digital devices. No longer will desks be individualised or personalised.
- **Informal seating areas** where people can come together in a collaborative way, meeting informally, to generate ideas, to discuss progress. Tables, worktops can be placed between seats/chairs to accommodate devices and papers.
- **Areas where privacy can be assured** such as pods or booths for single occupancy (or more) or quiet rooms for team meetings that need to be held in private or might otherwise disturb other people working nearby.
- **Multi-purpose breakout areas** which can provide meeting and collaborative working space alongside hot and cold drinks and individual workstations.

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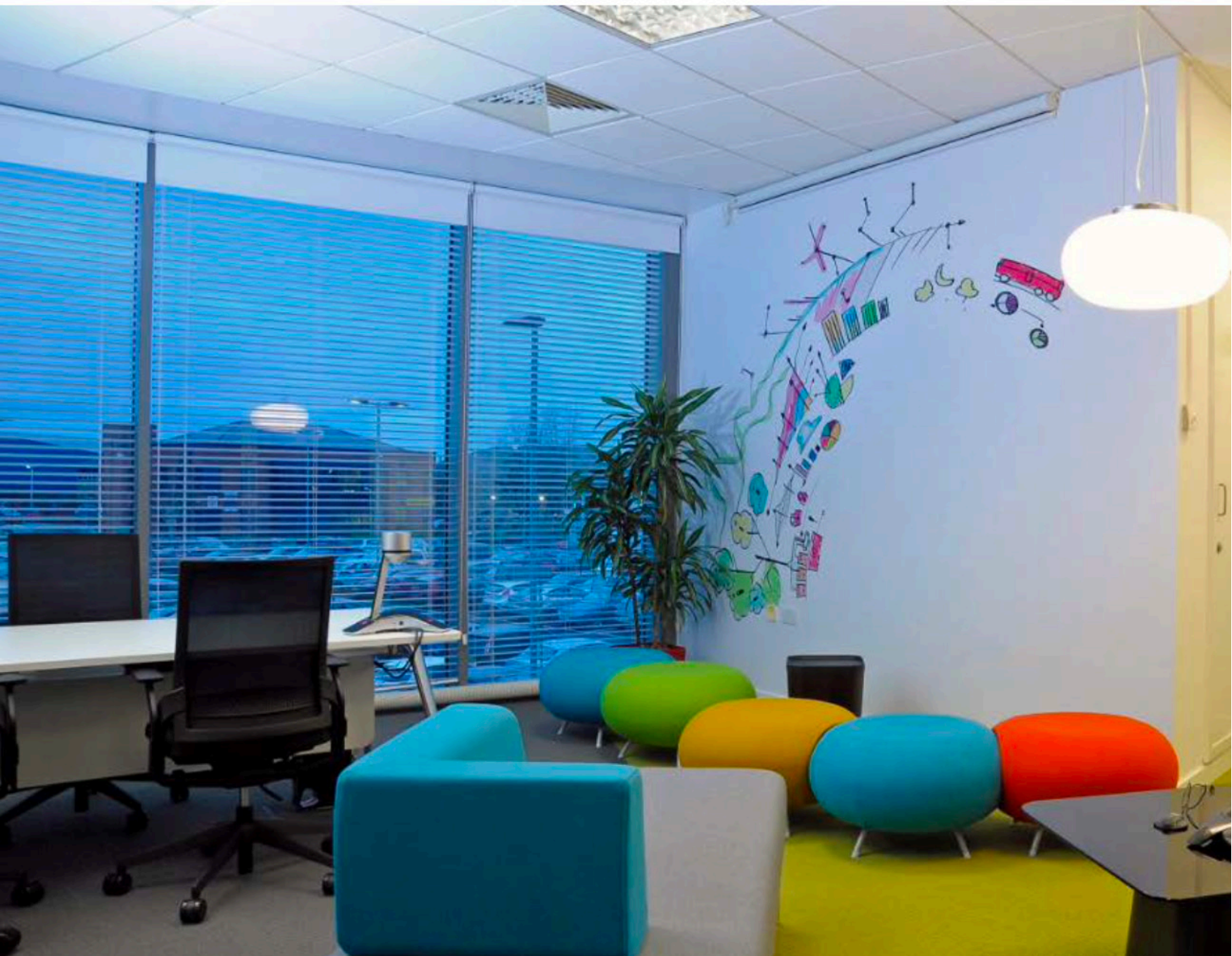


2. Plan for flexibility – Multi-purpose areas

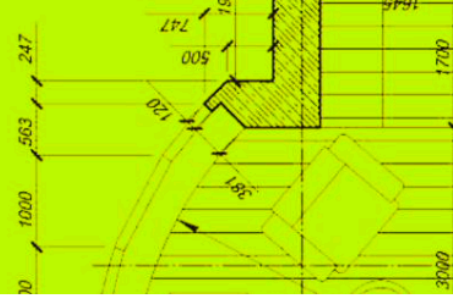
Spaces can be designed so that they easily convert to several different uses.

For example, for a small sized company, it might work better to arrange the layout of your office space in a conference style as opposed to individual desks.

Long workbench style configurations can provide excellent convertibility, allowing individuals touch down points as well as shared or collaborative working.



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3. Plan for new technology

Technology will continue to drive change.

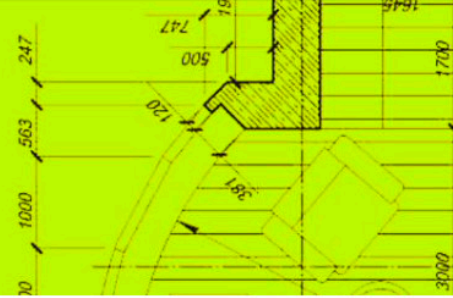
Emerging over the horizon is wireless charging. Gone will be the day when you have to scabble about looking for the right adapter to charge your phone or portable digital device. No longer will desks have to be positioned close to electrical power points. No more will hours be lost untangling a 'spaghetti-like' mess of cables under a desk.

Phones, laptops, printers, lamps will all soon be charged using wireless solutions. This has the potential to revolutionise office layouts, allowing much more freedom over workspace arrangements and designs.

Hewlett Packard, for example, have developed a wireless charger which uses Qi inductive charging technology to wirelessly charge their Elite x3 device. It works by placing the mobile device on top of the charging device and the technology does the rest.

Businesses need to recognise and to plan for the impact new technology will have on the working environment. With more and more people connecting and communicating with the office from home, it is undeniable that the office spaces of the future will look very different from those of yesteryear and even of today. The shift is already happening. How many times have you walked into an office environment and seen low occupancy of desk space? Businesses need to rethink their office space utilisation in the light of these developments. Under-utilised space is potentially expensive which is why some companies are looking to remodel their workspaces along completely different lines.

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4. Plan for a healthier workspace

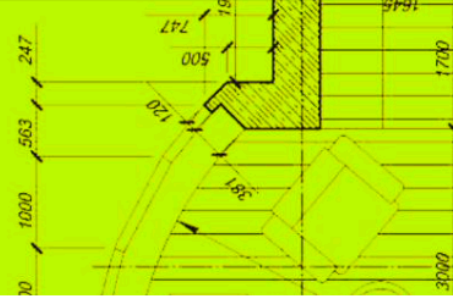
The spotlight is on the sedentary nature of office working

By providing furniture - tables, desks, chairs - that are height adjustable and allow for staff to work at their desks standing up - not only are you future proofing your office, you're future proofing your staff too!



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How to future proof your office



And finally...

When is an office not an office? When it's a shared community working space

As more and more people go freelance, there is a growing movement towards individuals sharing office facilities in a co-working space.

Flexible as homeworking can be, it can also be quite isolating. These shared community co-working hubs mean that people can reconnect with others in a physical space, share ideas, collaborate and even book meeting rooms.

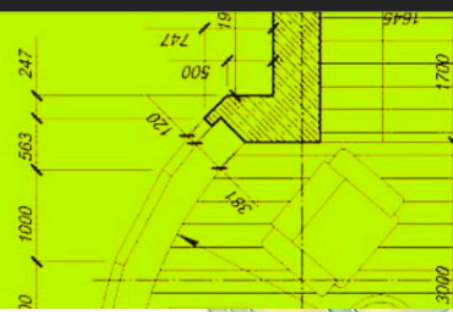
Perhaps big companies with large office buildings should take a note of this co-working revolution and consider whether they should design their office space along the same lines?

As more and more of their employees use technology to work from home, one way to future proof their office space might be to create a co-working hub atmosphere, by:-

- doing away with fixed desks;
- doing away with traditionally hierarchical office layouts;
- doing away with the traditional office 'feel' all together.

Instead, they might want to create a social space where people come together to meet and work collaboratively. Furniture and layouts can be designed with a flexible and 'light' touch in mind, to encourage the sharing of ideas and to foster creativity.

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Inspired to
future proof
your office?

Let's make change a success

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