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01 Luxy Prima chairs in a natural finish make a casual setting refined
 02 An open welcoming space at Arkwright by Haptic Architects. Image by Inger Marie Grini

INSPIRING OFFICE SPACES

To cultivate ongoing motivation within your team, you need not look beyond the walls of your office. Lauren McGroder discovers that thoughtfully designed environments are fast becoming the signature of productive companies.

It has been some years since technology giants, such as Google and Facebook, alerted the world to the benefits of corporate design. Many offices, however, have now evolved beyond the novelties of fully stocked bars and gaming systems. What they require is a more sophisticated method to inspire their employees; something that appears less ‘start-up’ and more solid. When executed correctly, thoughtfully designed office spaces are capable of inspiring long-term motivation in your employees.

Social beings

There is a widespread perception that the success of an office design is dependent on which of two categories it conforms to: contained cubicle-style rooms or large, open-plan spaces, the latter being the preferred option in recent years.

According to Steve Gale, head of workplace strategy at Hong Kong-based M Moser Associates, it is the “convivial workplace” that people are seeking – an office that promotes social interaction between employees where ideas can be

swapped and discussed and there is a greater sense of shared purpose.

For every open-plan aficionado, however, there is an equally insistent promoter of spaces that afford employees the privacy and uninterrupted thought processes that only contained spaces allow.

A Haptic approach

London-based architect firm Haptic is pioneering the high-design office movement in Europe and offers a solution to pacify both schools of



“SO LONG AS THE NATURE OF THE WORKFORCE ITSELF EVOLVES, OFFICES WILL NEED TO ADAPT IN RESPONSE.”

03 Marshall Wace's office by Ted Moudis Associates blends homely with professional 04 Arkwright's 'James Bond' executive lounge is designed for quiet contemplation 05 A playful touch at Arkwright: a secret door in the wall. Images 04 and 05 by Inger Marie Grini



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thought. No project better demonstrates the harmonious corporation of collaborative and private spaces than Arkwright. The Oslo-based office space would not be out of place on the pages of a contemporary design publication, with employees operating within a series of spaces, each one evoking a mood conducive to different styles of work.

Perhaps most impressive of all is the 'James Bond' room, a windowless room in the heart of the building cloaked in tones of chocolate brown and accessorised with leather. These elements and the rather playful addition of a secret door within its walls create a reflective, intimate atmosphere balancing the light, open spaces of the rest of the office.

Expression and adaptation

In a 2010 study led by Craig Knight involving 47 office workers in London, those workers who arranged an office to their own liking were up to 32 per cent more productive than those not given this control. Photos and pot plants of course add a personal touch, but for employees to feel truly engaged with their workplace, a more hands-on approach is required. Gathering the office together for one weekend to paint a wall or discussing ideas for artwork that convey a sense of company identity encourages everyone

to invest in their shared space. A little office pride can go a long way to making employees feel valued as part of a team.

Like Arkwright, the office of Marshall Wace LLP is something to be admired, and was largely influenced by the employees themselves. The London-based private wealth management fund recently relocated its Connecticut office to New York City, bringing with it a whole array of design challenges beyond the superficial. The office dynamic and company ethos was forced to adapt to an external environment that was considerably more fast paced than the one it was used to.

To navigate the transformation, Marshall Wace hired Ted Moudis Associates to design a space that is hospitable, collaborative and, most interestingly, residential, all of which is remarkably executed in the reception space. Natural light combines with homely touches like sheer curtains and a plush velvet seating area to create an environment that is at once professionally engaging and welcoming.

Corporate luxe

Office makeovers do not require a demolition permit to be effective, however, and an industry of innovative

office products has emerged in response to the movement. Luxy Italian Office Furniture, now distributed through New Zealand company Trenzseater, is a brand that has successfully transformed the aesthetic of corporate furniture without compromising functionality.

The Prima collection of office chairs is designed to be fluid in its function and versatility with a catalogue of customisation options. Uniting each design, however, is the philosophy that “we must free up our minds, shake off the melancholy, appraise the spectacle of the world we live in, and do so from a vantage point”, whether that vantage point be chromium plated or crafted from laminated beech.

Given the workspace revolution we have witnessed in the last decade alone, little is certain about what the future of corporate design holds. So long as the nature of the workforce itself evolves, offices will need to adapt in response. Strategic managers will welcome such change, acknowledging the innate link between office environments and company ethos, and with such a sophisticated industry of products and services available to utilise, will likely be greatly rewarded through engagement and productivity. ♦



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Fact file

www.mmoser.com
www.hapticarchitects.com
www.tedmoudis.com
www.trenzseater.com



New events space for Hilton Melbourne South Wharf

Following a five-month, multi-million-dollar renovation, the Hilton Melbourne South Wharf has proudly unveiled its new signature meetings and events space, Woodside.

Comprising an outdoor terrace and four meeting rooms which can also be opened into an expansive space of over 400sqm, the unique area can cater for a range of different events.

The Woodside rooms open up onto a heated outdoor terrace overlooking the South Yarra River. The terrace can be utilised as a unique breakout area or a function space in its own right.

Paying homage to the wharfing industry that once defined Dockside where the hotel now stands, the events space combines bold metal features with warm timbers, creating a relaxing environment for meeting attendees.

Located on the edge of the CBD and on the banks of the Yarra River, the property's convenient location offers direct internal access to the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre making it the ideal base for your next business event.

www.hiltonmelbourne.com.au/unique-events