



Introduction to Space Configuration

Many people will say they need their office for the work they do; they need a quiet place to concentrate and a private place to use the phone or for private conversations with employees. They may also argue that the office needs to be big enough to hold meetings of two to four persons and to have storage for all of their paper documents. What they don't always realize is that the more floor area taken up by private offices, the less is left for shared support spaces such as meeting rooms, group file storage, break-rooms, mother's room, etc. As a result, employees often find their workplace inadequate at supporting all of their work. Other space planning solutions might better support what they do.

One option for employees with a concentrative work pattern is to provide small private offices that have enough work surfaces for day-to-day work, with a guest chair for one-on-one meetings, and with enough storage for files accessed on a daily basis. Small meeting rooms are nearby for meetings of two or more people and open meeting tables in the adjacent open workspace can be used for spreading out and working with unusually large amounts of paper. Shelves and file cabinets near the workstations can store infrequently accessed files.

Another option for people with concentrative work patterns is to provide workstations in a quiet open work area. Noisy activities should take place in the nearby enclosed spaces—long phone calls taken in focus booths, ad hoc and scheduled meetings in small meeting rooms. Mobile work technology such as laptops and voice over IP phones should be in place to enable people to work away from their desks.

The workstations should have enough work surfaces for day-to-day work and enough storage for files accessed on a daily basis. Shelves and file cabinets near workstations can be used to store group files and infrequently accessed individual files. Open meeting tables near workstations can be used for working with unusually large amounts of paper.

Conversely, employees with an interactive work pattern may occupy workstations in collaborative open work areas. Each workstation can have one or two guest chairs for meetings of two or three persons or for two people working side by side. In addition to storage at the desk for frequently accessed files, shelves and file cabinets near workstations can store infrequently accessed individual and group files. Focus booths and enclosed small meeting rooms near workstations provide easy access to quiet places for concentrative work, conference calls, and small meetings. It is important to have mobile technology in place so that employees can fully utilize the variety of work settings.

Employees who primarily interact over telephones may be accommodated by workstations without guest chairs. However, open meeting tables and small meeting rooms should be easily accessible for face-to-face interactions. Focus booths should be provided for both heads-down work and conference calls. Mobile technology should be in place to allow employees working away from desk.

No matter the solution one may adopt, the goal is to plan a work environment that can effectively support the full range of activities employees must perform at work.