

Businessinfo

THE WORKPLACE & TECHNOLOGY MAGAZINE FOR SMEs

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with a Philips PicoPix pocket projector

...continued



Changing aesthetics

Changing work styles are influencing aesthetics too, in people's choice of colour and in the style of chair.

"The UK is still quite conservative when it comes to colour choice, but with second and third space environments, companies, and specifically designers, are using colours in a much more playful way to create a relaxed and creative ambience. This is true even in companies that have traditionally been viewed as very conservative, such as financial institutions and legal firms. A lot of this is driven by tech companies like Google, Yahoo and Amazon that have set a trend for campus-style work environments," explained Josefsson.

More imaginative use of colour has gone hand in hand with a shift away from mesh seating materials towards foam and fabrics that offer sound absorbency – important in open plan environments – and more colour choice.

While aesthetic decisions are becoming more important as working styles change, Josefsson stresses the importance of not losing sight of the most important factor: "A chair is a business tool, and to perform at the top of your game, you need a good tool to work with."

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No more shoulder-pads

Jonathan Hindle, Group Managing Director of KI EMEA, highlights the influence well-being is having on office design



After years of taking a back seat in favour of cost savings, companies are now investing in creative office planning with a focus on worker well-being, recognising it as an effective business improvement tool.

Seemingly triggered by the uber-trendy offices of the tech and media sectors, everyone from blue chips to government agencies are incorporating well-being into their workplace strategies. However, failure to properly understand well-being leads many companies to pursue cringe-worthy 'coolness', rather than a genuine attempt at creating happy, healthy and productive workplaces. Those who do address well-being adequately and appropriately have been able to combat absenteeism and staff attrition, boost productivity and improve employer branding – vital in the ongoing 'war for talent.'

Organisations must remember what's at the core of the well-being agenda: the need to 'humanise' the work environment. Furniture must be selected to create a diverse landscape, one which offers a variety of work settings so that people can choose the environment that best fits the task at hand and their preferred way of undertaking it. Whether driven by aesthetics or functionality, this furniture selection can have a big bearing on health and well-being.

Workstations: We are seeing our UniteSE and Work2 desks and bench systems specified with black legs and white surfaces to create the illusion of a 'floating' worktop, an effort to lighten the mood of a room. These systems are also being used to provide a variety of work settings suited to both individual and collaborative work. Height adjustability is

increasingly sought after to meet personal preferences, not just to accommodate wheelchair users and taller members of staff.

Sit-stand: These benches are increasingly being interspersed with a sit-stand capability using our ToggleSE desk and Work2 sit-stand programme. Meeting rooms, too, are being furnished with standing tables to encourage quick, productive gatherings, while simultaneously promoting good health.

Collaborative areas: Our Breakout system is being used to provide screening for third space drop-in work areas furnished with soft seating, creating new informal spaces for collaboration.

Storage: Agile and activity-based working and technology are coming together to revolutionise the types of storage required in today's offices. Space-efficient, secure lockers are taking the place of pedestals as the primary form of personal storage. Storage is also being used to divide space in open plan environments.

Executive suites: Senior executives, despite some initial resistance, are embracing flexible, dynamic and agile working in the open office landscape, foregoing the office furniture equivalent of shoulder pads – the '80s-style executive cellular suite.

Homeworking: the provision of a suitable chair, such as our Faveo 24/7 task seating range, is a vital component of any working environment, whether in an office or at home. The trend of providing ergonomic furniture for home working is also leading companies to supply, where possible, sit-stand desks. For these situations, we would recommend our Faveo perch-stool, which is ideal for sit-stand applications, or the Faveo 24/7 task chair.

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