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# The Importance Of Proper IT Office Workspace Design

The global market is facing a significant challenge in last couple decades. Many large countries in North America, Asia, and Europe including the U.S., China, Japan, England, German and Italy are all facing the talent shortages since the workforce age and experience declining growth rates. Compare with the old time, the workforce age is much older, more racially and ethnically diverse. The U.S. labor force growth rate is expected to grow only slightly slower than previous decades. The annual growth rate of the U.S is only 0.7 percent over the year of 2010-2020. The increasement of size of the labor force is 1.1-percent lower than the increasement posted over the previous 10-year period.

The employee base of the professional, scientific and technical services sector is aging. Much of the work in the market requires high skills and experience. This situation presents a challenge of maximizing the return on recruitment and retention efforts. In addition, it also presents developing mechanisms that facilitate knowledge transfer in multigenerational workplaces.

Skills predicted to be in demand include management, marketing, operations and especially the information technology proficiency.

## PERSONALITY PLAYS A ROLE

Despite overall similarities, all programmers are unique in an IT company; they differ in intelligence, personality and they work in their own special areas, as well as in height, gender, weight, and all sorts of other mental and physical variables.

The relationship between workplace design, the work that takes place and the personalities of the employees is important. The workers today are no longer tied to their own work desks. They are much more transient in the open work space during the day. As office designers, it is necessary to be aware that 'one size does not fit all'. Some developers might prefer working in an open space with noise distraction, but some developers might have trouble at focusing on their work in the noisy environment. These differences can depend on the activity, the way a person prefers to work, and their personality.

One of the most commonly ways of defining and assessing personality used in the UK, and particularly in the workplace, is the five-factor model (FFM) or the 'Big-Five'. This model defines five key factors of personality: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism. People who rated highly on different aspects of the personality model had some difference in their response to each study. It can explain the reason why some people prefer to work in open or agile workspace, and others prefer work in the separated place with less distraction.

As activity-based working becomes more prevalent, and personality is much more important than before, a 'one size fits all' approach to design can no longer be considered.

The research literature from Oseland in 2012 shows that some personality types are better working in a place with noise distraction than others. Research into collaboration has shown that

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the most productive teams in big companies are those with a rich mix of personality types, but the workspace design of many companies is often more suited to extroverts.

## **TYPES OF WORKSPACE**

### **Cubicles**

The cubicle office is very popular in the old times. It represents a culture of control, hierarchy, and conformity. Each of employees works in his or her own cubicle, the whole place is fairly uniform. Usually creativity is not very important in the working system. The primary focus tends to be on task completion. This high efficiency working model is exactly some companies need. The management is there to deliver the results as quick as possible. This type can cause trouble for some companies need new ideas and innovation since employees are expected to be independently efficient in this model.

A study from the University of Sydney proves why cubicles may be a horrible choice. The study revealed that about 60% of workers stuck in cubicles do not enjoy the lack of sound privacy.

### **Open Space**

Compare with cubicles, open space office has much more room for employees. People can work at any of the available seats and have a clear line of sight to many of their coworkers. In this type of the office, employees are more empowered to communicate, collaborate, and create. New ideas pop out easily, the discussions are easy and smoothly happened in the work. It can save a lot of time for works to communicate by sending email frequently. When Facebook unveiled its new campus in 2012, Mark Zuckerberg claimed their workspace would be “the largest open floor plan in the world.” He believes the open design focus on mobility, empowers individual boundaries and encourages chance encounters. This kind of culture is a little messier with many people sharing with one table, but it is ideal for businesses that want to come up with new ideas, innovate. Developers can complete their work efficiently, but the emphasis is placed on working intelligently rather than working on repetitive, well defined tasks.

### **Separate Office**

Unlike cubicle or open workspace, a separate office provides privacy for confidential or personal conversations. This type of office is the best choice for employees who are easily distracted by background buzz. Programmers will not get disturbed by people passing by work desk, or entering and leaving the office. Separate office can avoid too much talking in a day. It can actually save a lot of time. Nevertheless, the divide between each employee by separate office works both ways – it also creates a distance between them, possibly affecting the teamwork relationship. Sitting closed in a private room, the developer might miss out on important communications that make their way to the team. Smooth communication requires as little barriers as possible, and a separate office is definitely a huge one.

## **IMPACT OF OPEN OFFICE**

An open space working environment is supposed to force employees to collaborate. Works in the same office can share one table and talk more face to face and spontaneously

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brainstorming about new ideas.

Nevertheless, a recent study by two researchers from Harvard Business School, Ethan S. Bernstein and Stephen Turban offers evidence to support an opposite opinion: It does not really work that way. Almost every developer in the office wear headphones and tune out because of the noise. Most programmers in the office actually prefer working at home because of the lack of privacy protection. Professor Bernstein said in a recent interview, "I walk into this space, and I see everyone wearing big headphones staring intently at a screen trying to look busy because everyone can see them."

The researcher found that after the company change their office to open space style from separate office, employees spent 73 percent less time in face-to-face interactions. At same time, email use rose 67 percent and IM use went up 75 percent.

## **OPEN SPACE OFFICES HURT WOMEN**

An open space environment of office might seem like the best solution for fixing the sexual harassment that can take place in a sperate office. Nevertheless, women tend to be more sensitive than men to the noise generated in open space office. Women tended to sense they were being scrutinized for their appearances by male peers without any privacy at their desks.

Stefanie Johnson, a professor who studies diversity and fender issues at the University of Colorado said in her study, while open office environments may work will in more gender-balanced workplaces, where the split between male and female workers is more even. A workplace with more male workers and toxic cultures could make the sense of being on display distracting. The best way to address this issue is through the right messaging from leadership and the attention to the company and organization's culture.