

ASPECTS OF A POSITIVE WORKPLACE

EXTENDED GUIDE



“Wellbeing at work means creating an environment to promote a state of contentment which allows an employee to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organisation”

- CIPD -

INTRODUCTION

The design of an office has been proven to have a material impact on the health, wellbeing and productivity of its inhabitants.

The combination of these three elements leads to the creation of a 'positive workplace'. A space that allows an employee to achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organisation.

How can you achieve this and create your own positive workplace?





You may remember the offices of yester-year when people were lined in cubicles with fixed desks, chunky monitors and wobbly chairs, sitting for hours on end in the same place with minimal interaction?

To a large extent those days are over. Or at least they should be!

The modern office promotes mobility and knowledge sharing with 'dynamic' space planning. What this means is creating a variety of places for different tasks.

For example, creating a place for...



- concentration
- interaction
- debate
- reflection

...and all manner of other business led settings depending on your needs and activities.

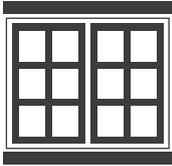
OPTIMISING DESK DENSITY



When planning desk density, this will depend on the square footage and nature of the organisation, but where possible consider partial desk sharing models, also known as 'neighbourhoods' to avoid over population and increase inclusiveness for part-time and remote workers.

The British Council for Offices (BCO) found that the average mean density is one work station per 10.9 Square Metres net internal area (NIA). They go on to suggest that densities have risen over recent years with "economic pressures and technology enablement" combining to encourage changes in working styles. Densities can only increase so far and are levelling out. You can increase the density if your working model allows for collaboration in multiple spaces, rather than relying on the majority of employees being just desk-based.

ROOM TO GROW



It's in our human nature to crave space. So leverage your building assets to use the space in the best possible way. Windows evidently maximise natural daylight penetration, but particularly in darker offices you should supplement with daylight output lighting products.

One way of giving the feeling of extra space is to open up the ceilings, a popular approach in a suitable building. You can also utilise interesting and reflective surfaces and vary the office 'colour temperature' with the furnishings and finishes that help to stimulate the brain.

CULTURAL FIT

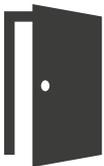


A fabulous office should not only be designed in the best possible way but should also emphatically tie in and portray the company's cultural values, culture and identity. This promotes an inclusive team ethos, helps set expectations about the working environment and ultimately makes it a place that people want to come to work in.

35%

After all, the majority of us will spend 35% of our total waking hours at work, so we might as well work as hard as we can to make sure that experience is as rewarding as possible.

WHEN IS A ROOM NOT A ROOM?

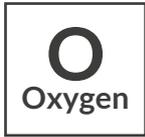


When it's left open but cleverly orientated to be partially screened. This approach can drastically reduce facilities overheads as you can utilise existing lighting and heating circuits with minimal adaptation. It also promotes an open and collaborative culture and working environment, be gone the 'ivory towers'.

Contrary to popular belief, reducing the number of walls and partitions, doesn't necessarily cause a detrimental increase to noise. You can control noise distraction with high performing acoustic solutions and clever placement of partial screening and many other planning factors.

Once you've planned out your positive workplace, there are three other holistic elements to nail down; nature, mobility and nurture. Let's take each one in turn.

THE RE-OXYGENATION OF OFFICE



Did you know that better Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) can increase productivity by 8-11%? This reiterates the importance of having sustainable heating and cooling systems and plants for reoxygenation. As well as maximising opportunities for natural light and air to circulate.



Having an eco-office doesn't mean being 'off-grid'.

Providing a connection to nature will help to bond human beings with other living systems, known as biophilia, to get the best out of them.

All employers have a duty of care to be at the forefront and acknowledge environmental accreditations, for the benefit of their business and their employees. Sustainable design practices tie into everything that goes in to achieving a modern and efficient workplace. From lighting surveys to sustainable products, it all counts.

What are the innovators at the forefront of this trend doing to achieve a healthy workplace?

PLANTS ARE GOOD FOR THE SOUL



“Offices devoid of pictures, souvenirs and any other distractions are the most toxic space you can put a human into”

In a revealing 18 month study by Exeter University, employees who could see a plant from their desk (one plant per square metre) had improved memory retention and engaged more with their surroundings. Their employers also reported a 15% increase in productivity.

THE LIVING WALL



A wall entirely populated with flora. Its fauna are its inhabitants.

With office and outdoor space at a premium, making use of every surface can achieve striking results.



Aside from the aesthetic benefits, the RHS cite that green walls provide an extra layer of insulation, cutting down on energy loss and decreasing heating and cooling requirements, as well as contributing to reduced noise pollution.



You could even grow herbs, fruit and vegetables to tie in to the health and wellbeing premises.



GET UP, STAND UP

45% of women and 37% of men spend less than 30 minutes per day on their feet at work.

Part of the solution to help decrease this is the adoption of the sit-stand desk.



Here's some maths to put this in perspective.



Your heart rate is higher when standing up, which burns up to 50 calories per hour.

At 3 hours a day for 5 days over the course of a year this equates to 30,000 extra calories burnt, or around 8lb of fat.



The equivalent of running TEN marathons!

For prolonged periods ergonomic chairs that support comfort and posture with a natural movement are vital for muscular and skeletal wellbeing.

Blue Jelly can help you trial the very best task chairs that the market has to offer.



WALK AND TALK

The evolution of the desk is not the only step change in a positive workplace, employers should encourage healthy habits like walking meetings and actually going to talk to people on other floors and at other desk banks rather than relying on email and internal calls.

Also why put a printer or photocopier immediately beside your desk. Multi-functional print devices maintain privacy so why not take a wander from time to time to collect your prints. It will make you healthier!



TECHNOLOGY = MOBILITY

Core to the agile working revolution is the integration of technology. Intuitive integration of power, networking and data transfer points all aid collaborative working.

Lighting can also play a part in mimicking natural sunlight to increase worker productivity by ensuring bodyclocks work at expected speeds.

The Internet of Things will also mean more innate objects will be connected, reporting back on their own productivity.

DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGY



The average person checks their phone over 100 times a day. The rise of mobile working means that people are 'always on'. This can be a positive and a negative in terms of wellbeing, but it's all about control and using the tech as an enabler. Smartphones and other type of disruptive tech mean that you can take conference calls anywhere, why always take them at your desk? This ties back into the zoning of spaces we discussed in Section 1.



A manager's dream, even a doctor's in fact, would surely be to actively manage health not sickness.

Many employers offer a range of wellbeing benefits as part of their staff contract packages, yet according to CIPD, only 28% of employees know what health and wellbeing benefits are on offer and how to access these services.

This gap in knowledge may be preventing or excluding employees from taking part, which goes against the aim to create an inclusive culture and team ethos.

You can encourage participation with regular communications, but there are other ways of working that can also encourage to improve wellbeing at work.

EAT CLEAN



Another way of encouraging healthy habits. Simple measures like fruit bowls in communal spaces, healthy snacks and homemade baking challenges.

POOL PARTY



If you're a small company health and wellbeing benefits can be pricey, so why not try and negotiate corporate classes or memberships with small local gyms or self-employed personal trainers. Or consider pooling together with other companies in your building to negotiate a bigger deal with a larger gym or fitness supplier.

This can tie in to any charitable team events such as "Tough Mudder" - Good luck to you all!

WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY



From pedometers to fitbits, health tracking and fitness applications have increased ten-fold in the past few years. We are living in a world where most of our activities or inactivity is tracked and recorded.

Take advantage of this data. For example, give all staff a pedometer and set stair or step challenges and chart people's progress to harness a competitive element into the working day.

NET RESULT



Taking a more holistic approach to workplace design firmly incorporates wellbeing and productivity into form and function. A positive working environment will result in higher levels of productivity, engagement and staff retention and lower levels of absenteeism.

So what are you waiting for? Start building your positive workplace today. Blue Jelly are here to help.



BLUE JELLY

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