



2017

# DESIGN TRENDS



tru**space**

creating room  
for success



**Between rapid technological growth and the millennial generation claiming the majority of the workforce, Canadian organizations are being faced with a new challenge: discovering fresh ways to positively influence their position and success within their corresponding industries.**

Until recently, design has been overlooked as a means to improve performance, increase productivity, and attract top talent – and understandably so. It's difficult for businesses to calculate the tangible benefits and results of workplace design. Furthermore, as the Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment and the British Council for Offices explained, assessing “the relationship between the design of the workplace and business performance...is an ambitious endeavour in a complex and little understood field.” As a result, companies have opted to bring about change in different, more calculable ways.

That being said, at Truspace, we've seen organizations begin to take on a heartier, more qualitative look at how office design can benefit business and the bottom line. Business owners and directors are realizing that the physical space in which people work dramatically influences their performance. And in this era, when a generation who is vastly different than its predecessors is infiltrating the workforce, maximizing the workplace is not merely the 'trendy' thing to do - it's a necessity.

At Truspace, we predict the following six office design trends – or movements – will orchestrate great change for organizations; not only in 2017 but well into the future.

# Personalization of the workspace

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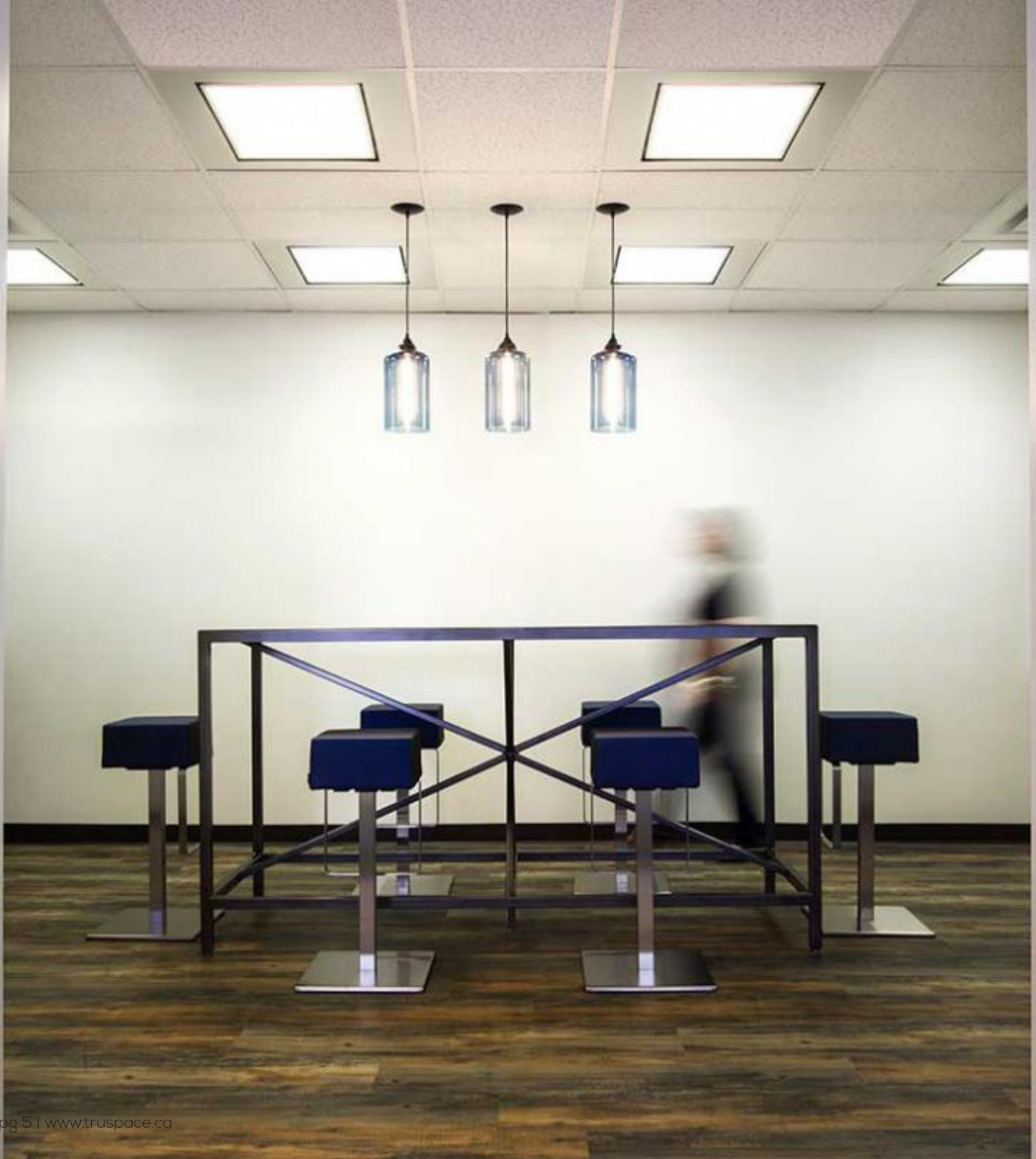
Exceptional workspaces are no longer novel – they're expected. What's more is that the definition of great office design isn't universal, and it isn't about jumping on the latest design trend bandwagon.

While innovative companies like Google, Airbnb, and Facebook create wildly unconventional and dynamic environments for their employees, the purpose of such design is deliberate, not just for fun. What we mean by this, is that transforming the workplace into an adult playground similar to the Googleplex isn't necessarily a wise decision for every business. Companies shouldn't jump on board with this design style simply because some of the largest, most successful corporations in the world did. What we do recommend, however, is that more organizations take on a more personalized approach to office design.

Before envisioning the end result, design experts must first truly understand the organization they're collaborating with. What makes the company tick? What compels its workers to put forth great work day-in and day-out? Which values drive the mission and vision of the company – and why? Only after a thorough understanding of a client's organization exists can the design team create a space intentionally designed for the organization as a whole.

A key component in this discovery process is involving every layer of the business from the onset. From the support staff and the accounting department to the creatives and directors, every member brings unique perspective and value to the design and build process. By engaging the whole team, the final result will be an accurate representation of the organization and its culture.







# Flexible spaces

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Due in large part to the astonishing rate that knowledge industries are evolving, organizations are seeking new ways to manage ongoing change. One solution business leaders are exploring is a workspace that can adapt to constant and sudden developments.

In response to this need for adaptable workplaces, we've seen the creation and growth of two flexible office solutions over the past couple decades: activity based working and co-working. We anticipate these solutions exploding in popularity in 2017 and onward.

Activity based working (ABW) leads to full utilization of available space while empowering workers to choose the most efficient and productive mode of work. No space is designed with only one intended purpose. Rather, any particular space can serve multiple needs. One area can serve as a meeting space, a break room, and a quiet place to focus – all within a single workday.

Co-working has evolved from a solution for innovative freelancers, entrepreneurs, and start-ups to a system that makes sense for bigger business. The concept of co-working stems from a desire for people to work together in a “shared, communal setting” – cutting costs, saving space, and promoting collaboration.<sup>1</sup>

## **THE BOTTOM LINE: SHARING SPACES LEADS TO THE SHARING OF IDEAS**

Whereas the conventional office layout may have stifled collaboration and engagement, leading to an ‘every person for themselves’ mentality, the flexible workspace supports the opposite. Co-working and ABW are intended to increase both planned and spontaneous interactions. And since there's less ownership within the office, organizations report a greater sense of unity and cohesion amongst workers. This openness welcomes diversity, and diversity breeds innovation.





## **FLEXIBILITY IS THE LANGUAGE OF MILLENNIALS**

Millennials are every bit as hardworking as Gen-X and the Baby Boomers. Despite being labeled lazy (or worse), they're willing to put in long hours and make themselves available outside the typical 9-5 workday – they just want to do it on their terms. Those terms, more specifically, come in the form of a flexible work schedule.

This generation grew up with technology integrated into nearly every aspect of life. Technology travels with them everywhere. Consequently, Millennials believe that the ability to work is only limited by access to the Internet and their smartphone or laptop.

A large workplace survey conducted by Gensler shed more light on this idea: “A new generation of workers who grew up with social and mobile technology are bringing a new suite of expectations around flexibility and access as they continue to enter the workforce. To succeed, employers must follow suit by providing workplaces that support individual choice of when, where, and how to work.” But don't worry that this will cause the downfall of collaboration and teamwork. When given the choice, almost three-quarters of people still opt to work from the office. <sup>2</sup>

At the heart of any flexible workspace is the understanding that there must be a balance. Yes, we're progressing toward more communicative and open work atmospheres, but this cannot be done at the cost of privacy and individuality. Social interaction in the workplace has been described as a “highly complex process,” and in order for a communal work environment to succeed, opportunities for “intense and private reflection” are necessary.<sup>3</sup>



# Design that showcases brand and culture

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A corporate brand tells a story. Typically, this story has been used to connect a company to its external audiences. However, organizations have also started investigating how their brands can impact the connection between employees and their workplace.

People are drawn to that which is similar to them. As the laws of attraction state, like attracts like. In the world of business, this means a well-defined brand and corporate culture will help appeal not only to the best talent but also the right talent. Rather than only seeking out highly skilled employees, progressive companies build a team comprised of people who govern their lives by the same values. In doing so, the commitment an employee feels toward their employer is stronger. As the CEO of Starbucks said, “If people believe they share values with a company, they will stay loyal to the brand.”

Visually communicating the brand and its story within the workplace means more than placing a decal with the company mission statement on the wall. Each element of design must serve a purpose and tell a different part of the brand’s story. Glass walls demonstrate the value of transparency and openness; bold, interactive group zones shows the importance of idea sharing and collaboration; a serene, plant-filled relaxation room proves that wellbeing is a top priority.

A strong worker-workplace connection promotes engagement and loyalty. As the workforce sees greater competition for the top talent, and retention becomes increasingly more important, we predict a greater number of organizations will seek opportunities to strengthen the corporate culture and the embodiment of their brand’s story within the work environment.







# Incorporating more natural elements

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Universally, people experience a strong pull toward nature. Humans need a connection to nature in order to thrive. The problem workers encounter, especially in urban locations, is a total disconnect from this very thing that leaves them feeling healthier, more relaxed, and less stressed.

Numerous scientific studies have been conducted in an effort to demonstrate how strong the human-nature bond is. The research has even gone on to investigate how natural elements affect people in the workplace. One study in particular, called “Biophilic Design At Work,” which involved 7,600 workers from 16 countries (including Canada and the USA), provided valuable insight for employers and commercial design and build experts alike. Not only did the findings show the importance of integrating nature within office spaces, but also the most impactful methods of doing so.

Natural lighting and indoor plants top the list of beneficial ways to incorporate nature into the office; but color, textures, patterns, construction materials, and even artwork are all powerful tools in creating a workspace that speaks to the human desire to be close to nature.<sup>4</sup>

This intrinsic desire isn’t just emotional fluff, either. Upon investigating the results of increasing exposure to nature in one specific workplace, a researcher found that “as workday nature contact increased, perceived stress and generalized health complaints decreased.”<sup>5</sup> The physical and mental benefits provided make the presence of nature a necessary component to effective office design.

We expect that as more studies like this are conducted, companies will begin investing further in biophilic office design as a means to improve productivity and employee well-being.



# Using furniture that represents the brand

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As we previously mentioned, the more an office environment respects and reflects a company's values, the stronger the brand identity is. This means that even the office furniture has a role in representing the corporate brand. The furniture influences how employees and guests in the office engage with an organization and its brand. As a result, each piece should support a company's overall style.

As collaboration becomes an undeniably crucial tool in the workplace, we'll see a decline in the traditional office layout, as it no longer serves the changing needs of the workplace. Eliminating big offices and generic spaces crammed with cubicles will create room for a variety of different workstations that speak to an organization's need for flexibility and personalization. We'll say goodbye to the cookie-cutter and instead welcome furniture that promotes the desired office culture.



# Encouraging wellbeing through health-conscious design

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Generally speaking, discussions of wellbeing conjure up thoughts of healthy eating and physical activity. While both of these considerations are indeed necessary for the workplace, we predict a broader focus on health in 2017.

Providing a health-conscious work environment is often quite subtle. Take, for example, the psychology of color. People experience certain physiological responses upon entering a room. Most won't even realize that the color on the walls or in the artwork may have caused a reaction. However, as organizations seek new opportunities to maximize performance, taking ownership of the mental and emotional impact office design will become a necessary step. Comprehending how green versus yellow office walls (as examples) can trigger entirely different moods in employees is empowering for business owners.

And we're not just talking about color, either.

The right combination and placement of natural, electric, and ambient light enhance a worker's mood, leading to an improvement in work output. Ergonomic furniture relieves the physical pressure on the body, enabling people to concentrate more effectively on their responsibilities. Relaxation spaces answer the call for stress reduction at work, and many businesses are setting aside space intended solely as a haven for employees. Even casual meeting spaces can impact worker wellbeing. Instead of stifling creativity in a formal boardroom, brainstorm sessions are enriched in more vibrant, interactive meeting spaces.





# How Truspace can initiate growth for your organization

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At Truspace, we believe that leveraging the workplace to create positive change within an organization doesn't actually begin with a building or its design. In order for a new layout, paint color or creative furniture solutions to trigger any sort of reaction, we need to consider the bigger picture. What mission, vision, and values are guiding the organization? What types of people are driving this mission forward? Only once these questions are answered can we generate real, sustainable growth.

Our team's innovative approach, combined with an unwavering commitment to embodying your mission and values within your workspace, ensures you receive an office solution that allows your workers to thrive. The spaces we create are bold, compelling, and flexible - resulting in a workplace culture that inspires commitment and drives performance.

The advantages of working with our team of custom commercial design and build specialists include:

**A streamlined approach.** As your single point of contact, we coordinate the entire design/build process, ensuring strict adherence to timeline and budget.

**We get the big picture.** Working on every detail of your project means we don't prioritize one element of the process over another. From electrical to layout to furniture - every stage is as crucial as the next.

**We court you.** We really get to know your business and its people. This intimate understanding helps us deliver a tailored solution that's authentic to the goals, vision, and values of your organization.



**Our people.** We choose people who truly live our corporate values. This means you've got a curious, passionate, innovative, dedicated and courageous team committed to your project.

**Our solid relationship with suppliers.** As a full-service design and build company, we maintain strong relationships with our suppliers and tradespeople.

We believe that exceptional office design goes beyond fleeting fads. Instead, we treat each organization we work with as the unique entity it is – creating customized design and build solutions that will withstand future growth.

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# Truspace

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Truspace is innovating the way office design build is being done throughout Canada. We define, design and create sophisticated workspaces, taking care of everything in the process, so you don't have to. The end result is a truly inspiring work space your business and your people deserve.

Our in-house team of professionals have extensive and in-depth knowledge of how good office design can reduce real estate costs, boost business performance and help you keep and attract key talent.

Whether you are starting from scratch or looking to transform your current workspace, we take the time to truly understand the needs of your business and staff.

Contact us today and learn how we can combine your ideas with our expertise to create an eye-catching office design your business and staff deserve.



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