

GUIDE 2: OFFICE INTERIOR DESIGN - AN INTELLIGENT APPROACH





Great, you have committed to improving your office interior.

At Rhino Interiors Group we strongly believe that by inspiring people with an intelligent workspace, you are helping your business to grow.

So let's get started!

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# 4 INTRODUCTION

Before you can begin to implement a new office interior, first you need to understand more about office interior design and the impact this has on the perceived quality of your organisation's products and services.

Interior design is about more than just fluffing up cushions and arranging ornaments. It is the creation of interior décor and furnishing design ideas for commercial or domestic property using colour, lighting, materials and technology.



# 5 WHAT IS INTERIOR DESIGN?

Interior design is as much of a science as it is an art and involves the conceptualisation of design ideas based on the emotional, physical, social and psychological drivers of a client, formulated using complex computer aided design software and strategic consultancy. And because no two clients or spaces are the same, every design concept is bespoke to the individual.

#### DESIGNING FOR COMMERCIAL SPACE

Designing for commercial space is arguably the most difficult form of interior design due to the extensive diversity of personality types that exist amongst team members working for organisations. Designers will therefore display a natural ability to communicate with many different types of people in order to understand their individual needs.

As well as dealing with members of staff, building contractors and situations involving change management, an interior designer's ultimate goal is to create workspaces that maintain the company corporate culture and enhance the learning, motivation and wellbeing of all employees.



## 6 AGILE WORKING

Agile working is a concept that is dictated by complex strategic planning in order to help deliver workspaces that are intelligently designed to allow for maximum productivity of all staff by utilising the best of technology and staff expertise. Flexible office procedures are also utilised to help empower staff and encourage them to feel more motivated at work in order to help the business grow.

A true agile workspace aims to re-instate personal space for staff by creating distinctive zones in the office by which they then choose to occupy depending on the task at hand.

The benefits of agile working

- Reduction in real estate portfolios
- Reduced running costs
- Reduced absenteeism
- Reduced attrition
- Improvement in business productivity / agility
- Improved wellbeing
- Sense of personal achievement / improved productivity
- Better work / life balance
- Increase in friendship groups
- Improved morale across the organisation.

Ultimately, an agile workspace should consist of the following:

- Learning and meeting areas
- Collaboration areas
- Social areas
- Focus areas
- Welfare areas
- Concentration areas
- Meet and greet areas.



## ROLE OF THE DESIGNER IN COMMERCIAL WORKSPACES

A designer, who specialises in office design, and/or a workplace strategist, would be hired based on their ability to problem solve and create an intelligent workspace that fits to the clients original timeframe, business objectives and budget. They will have studied topics like colour psychology, acoustics in the workplace and common issues that arise in the workplace, often relating to poor communication, low levels of engagement and reduced motivation as a result of the poor quality of the space they operate in.

The designer will assess the different personalities that exist amongst the team working for the organisation, the spatial capacity of the office as well as the company culture, in order to come up with a design solution that is safe, is functional, is aesthetically pleasing and helps to improve quality of life.

By conducting a workplace consultation, this helps the interior designer to identify a balance between the different personality types within the organisation and the level of achievable increase in productivity levels, as well as helping to significantly reduce real estate occupancy savings based on the space available.



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# PERSONALITIES AND BEHAVIOURS

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In the workplace, lots of different factors can affect the way that people learn. After having conducted a workplace consultation, the extent to which staff members fit the criteria for an extrovert personality compared to an introvert will be used by the interior designer to appropriately plan an intelligent workspace.



#### Introverts vs extroverts

Introverts are motivated by spending time alone.

Extroverts like to surround themselves with other people.

#### Calming colours vs excitable colours

People who don't work well under pressure may prefer to work in a space of calm and sedateness which is often associated with the colour blue.

People who thrive in fast paced work environments and are motivated by challenges may react positively to the colour red.



## Physical learners vs visual, verbal vs aural

The way that people like to learn can vary. For some, reading a book over and over again helps them to digest information whilst others may prefer to learn by listening to a presentation or watching a video.

Giving people the option to work in different zones of the office and benefit from different channels of communication will enhance learning and improve their motivation levels. Learning then becomes something they want to do as opposed to something they have to because they can commit to learning in the best way they know how.



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# 10 Generation Z vs baby boomers

Back in the 1950's, there was no such thing as a mobile phone let alone an iPad and yet these days, mobile technology is a business critical tool.

That is why it is up to the youngsters of this generation, those born in the year 2000+, best known as 'Generation Z', to relay their tech savvy lingual to the older generation or the 'Baby Boomers'. The 'Baby Boomers' then relay their words of wisdom from years of built up knowledge and life experience to teach the younger team members.



#### 11 CUSTOMER NEEDS

We as humans require specific motivational needs to be met before we can feel content at work. So, feeling like a valued member of the team by being communicated to, having access to top quality kitchen, toilet and offices facilities, and being granted freedom and the right to be involved in decision making, is vital.

A theory developed Maslow (1943, 1954) suggests that certain motivations in a person's life take precedence over others. His Hierarchy of Needs pyramid helps define why we can't be motivated at work or feel able to progress our careers unless we feel that our basic needs, such as having access to clean facilities etc and building strong relationships with employees, are met first.



# **ESTEEM NEEDS:**

prestige and feeling of accomplishment

# **BELONGINGNESS AND LOVE NEEDS:**

intimate relationships, friends

# **SAFETY NEEDS:**

security, safety

# **PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS:**

food, water, warmth, rest

## 12 COMPANY CULTURE

The quality of an organisation's workplace, the attitude and behaviours of staff, the products and services on offer and the company culture are all representative of the company brand and they all have a bearing on each other. A weak office interior could impact the brand significantly, especially in the eyes of potential clients. It should therefore be used as a platform to showcase everything that is special about the organisations brand, from the outside and the inside.

The brand of an organisation includes the following:

- A well designed logo
- Staff who are motivated, happy, healthy, wellmannered and smartly dressed
- A workplace that is bright, airy, inspiring and motivating
- The values of the company and how they are regarded by potential customers.

## THE WORKSPACE

The interior designer will look for as many ways as possible to implement a new workspace that maximises the efficiency of your office, taking into account the following:

- Space allowance and optimisation
- Ways to increase productivity and efficiency
- Reduced carbon footprint
- Ways to attract and retain the best talent
- Reduced real estate costs
- Increased employee engagement and motivation
- Reduced absenteeism
- Defined company culture.

## 13 CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Implementing a new office space and specifically an agile workspace can largely impact people's willingness to adapt to new ways of working and so change management is a large part of this process. The interior designer is therefore an integral decision maker in making sure that the new office layout accurately reflects the needs of the business and is also representative of what staff have expressed they would like to see or are fearful of e.g. new technology.

One way that an interior designer may choose to manage behaviours in the face of change is to communicate the process to employees in the order of which it will be implemented:

- Review the clients objectives
- Observe the layout and size of the space
- Consider design ideas
- Present ideas for materials, colours and furnishings
- Calculate costs and provide customer with quote
- Devise a plan of action that helps the customer to understand how the work will be carried out
- Carry out a post project site check to confirm client is happy.

#### CONCLUSION

Interior designers play a major role in the creation of intelligent workspaces. Conducting detailed amounts of research, strategic planning and project management, they help drive positive business results based on their ability to be innovative, problem solve and communicate.



# 14 **DRIVERS AND WORKSPACES**

Desired outcomes of an optimised work environment such as increased motivation and productivity are far from the real reasons why Finance Directors, Directors, Facilities Managers or Office Managers are crying out for the assistance of an interior designer's toolbox. This is because not everyone is educated enough to understand the real benefits of an improved office space and the causal influences behind the decision to make the step towards change.

# THE REAL REASON YOU'RE GETTING A NEW WORKSPACE - PRESSURE

Although many commercial interiors companies will become nonchalant about questioning their clients' desires to optimise space in the workplace and make assumptions that their motives are the same as the next persons, challenging any client leading an internal interior design project for an organisation who says they just want to increase motivation and staff productivity should cue the question 'why?' or 'what's in it for me?'



Levels of stress, tiredness, boredom, sickness and unhappiness experienced by staff in the workplace are all classic causes of demotivation that can be influenced by a poorly designed office. This then causes them to apply pressure on others to make changes to the workplace – the decision maker. Pressure in the work environment is normally a good indicator that the business is not prioritising the wellbeing of its staff and the impact that they have on business success. Ultimately, pressure is then when drives the decision maker to make a change to the office interior however this is where mistakes happen because in their attempt to fulfill their own personal need for heightened motivation as a result of them feeling unhappy and unappreciated, this encourages them to think less about team motivation and more about self-fulfilment.

Education around the importance of implementing an optimised work environment and the benefits it can bring before the pressure cooker blows is critical for the sake of team motivation, continued health and staff productivity. As cringe as it sounds, there is no 'l' in 'team'.

Communication is your golden ticket to always making sure that no one ever has to feel put under pressure at work or like they have to cope on their own.

#### NO 'I' IN TEAM

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The journey of creating a new, completely optimised workspace to help your business and your staff succeed should not only be a worthy, long term investment for you but one that will also continue to cater for the needs of your staff, inspiring them to help drive your business forward.

Remember, making the decision to change should not be used as a reason to fix a problem but to prevent it. *"It's not hard to make decisions once you know what your values are."* – Lifehack.

## 16 **PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE**

Sometimes, it is hard for decision makers of an organisation to quantify why it is important to consider a revamp of the office space. The misconception that a new office interior is simply about a lick of paint and a waste of money, makes it harder for other people higher up to justify the cost.

Here are just some of the ways to ensure that making the decision to renew your office interior is not a last minute headache:

**Engagement survey -** asking your staff to regularly fill out engagement surveys will help alert you to any issues in the workplace that are starting to occur

**Meetings -** make sure you have regular meetings with your staff, both as a team and one-on-one to ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to air their thoughts about any concerns they may have with regards to work, including their career progression

**Team days -** engagement with your team is a major part of learning their different personalities, their strengths and weaknesses. Having a close bond with your team members will help to encourage trust and loyalty

Sickness assessments - making sure that managers conduct a sickness report on every employees' return to work after a period of ill health is important and could potentially reveal problems within the workplace

**Feedback -** ask your employees to feedback on you and your performance – this could potentially highlight things that you might be doing wrong or things you could improve on that are impacting the morale of your staff

**Health and safety assessments -** make sure your workspace and individuals' workstations are regularly health and safety assessed to ensure that people aren't suffering in silence.

# 17 AN INTELLIGENT WORKSPACE

Upon deciding to go ahead with a new workspace, knowing the kind of space you would like and what will work best for your organisation can be a minefield. Of course it is the role of the interior designer to support you in your decision but to give you an idea, these are some examples of the different kinds of workspaces you could have:









TOP: MAIN RECEPTION AND KITCHEN AREA | MIDDLE: MAIN RECEPTION AREA | BOTTOM: BOARDROOM







TOP: BREAKOUT AREA | MIDDLE: BREAKOUT AREA | BOTTOM: BREAKOUT AREA







TOP: SMALL OFFICE | MIDDLE: KITCHEN | BOTTOM: TOILET

# 21 CONCLUSION

Taking the time to regularly understand the changing needs of your business is important. Your people are your best asset so treat them with the respect they deserve and don't leave the quality of your office to chance.



# OFFICE TRENDS OVER TIME – THE KEY BENEFITS TO OFFICE REINCARNATION

Like the reincarnation of the old record player, trends once idolised have a habit of reappearing. That's not to suggest that the typewriter is once again going to make an appearance in our mid-eastern flavoured, our rainforest themed, or our playground inspired offices of today. But it does beg the question, what can we learn from our ancestors' ways of working? Are our offices changing for the better? The simple answer is yes, because even with our iPads, our Segways and our vitual offices, a core characteristic of a traditional 19th century office, i.e. when communication was revolutionised, is principally still very much a part of the infrastructure of the modern day workplace.

#### THE DAWN OF THE COMMERCIAL OFFICESPACE

Previously consisting of old, dingy, factory look alike workspaces where staff was treated like machines and high outputs of repetitive work were facilitated, the office interiors landscape still represented a time when technology and communication was limited but was reaching a stage of technological breakthrough following the invention of the telephone.

Staff were required to conduct the same work, day-in-day-out and were observed every minute of every day – they resembled a production line that allowed no room for errors, team integration, or innovation.

Skyscrapers made their debut when it was realised that more employees could be housed at the same premises to spread the work even further.

But still the office environment showed signs of extreme neglect and it was evident that people were still only working as a means to earn a living and not because they felt motivated to do so. This was all set to change over the coming years when workspaces started to revolutionise and began to help shape and influence the new meaning of the word 'work'. More people started to feel like work was becoming a definition of them and was bringing them closer to 'self-fulfilment'.

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#### 23 OPEN PLAN OFFICES

This was soon to be followed by the open plan office that sought to improve communication levels even more by encouraging more social interaction. Offices were lighter and the larger surface area allowed for more people to be integrated into the space. However it didn't take long for distraction to become a major concern so cubicles were then invented which saw desks being separated by partitioning to allow staff more privacy.

#### HOME WORKING

Home working was close to follow the open plan office. For a while it was great because it gave people the opportunity to balance their home and work lives giving them more control over the demands of 21st century living, such as parents being able to pick up their kids from school. However, aside from people feeling secluded, people also felt that their irregular being in the office would make them easier to forget and would have a detrimental effect on their career progression. It therefore didn't take long for people to recognise the positives of working in a motivating workspace that would enable them to socialise, have fun, learn new things and encounter new experiences. The concept of office interior design at this point was starting to not only play a crucial part in the building of organisation brand identity but also a very complex one.

#### HOT DESKING

Hot desking became popular at the latter end of the open office phase as it trialled people being able to work from different workstations within the office that would encourage them to integrate with other members of the team and work more independently.

It was however faced with a lot of controversy. Many felt that by hot desking they lost their identity and were being pressured into integrating just for the sake of it. Moving from one base to another presented no real benefit and failed to improve productive levels of across-channel communication.

## 24 MODERN OFFICE

Finally, the solution to an energetic, cross functional and systematic office workspace was discovered. The modern workspace now seeks to encourage people back into the office in exchange for freedom, trust, a good salary, career progression, team involvement, empowerment, appreciation and a motivating environment.

Boasting plenty of light, areas for collaborative working, colour and state of the art technology, the physical office is now a space of eden where people can feel free to learn, explore and progress their careers by having the choice to work autonomously or as part of a team until their heart is content.

## THE FUTURE - AGILE WORKSPACES

However it doesn't stop there. If you are wanting a completely optimised workspace that is designed specifically to suit the needs of the people within your business, your brand and your corporate culture...you need an agile workspace. Today more than ever, communication is linked to the pinnacle of business success. Advocated to look like universities in order to provide people with opportunities for learning and career generation, well-designed agile workspaces with heightened technology help to elevate dialogue and improve message retrieval.

The dawn of the agile workspace means that offices are strategically designed to enable people to meet and greet others in areas of their choosing, dependent on the topic in mind, the length of time they need to spend speaking to someone, the sensitivity of the conversation and the urgency. They also take into consideration the personality types of different individuals.

This intern gives people the autonomy to make better informed decisions about what channel they use to communicate – face-to-face being the optimum.

Communication is important because it helps people to learn, form better relationships and friendships, and gain a better understanding of their customers' needs. The value of communication was first realised in the early years of working and is whats prompted and inspired the new era of optimised and more cleverly designed workspaces.

# 25 CONCLUSION

Ultimately, we can learn a lot from the way that workspaces have changed over the years. We now know that through office reincarnation and through improved communication, organisations and people have the opportunity to fulfill their hot pursuit for happiness rather than a means to an end and we will never forget the values that once made Britain's workforce and how these helped build and shape our economy today.



# <sup>26</sup> INTERIOR DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Looking at how technology has changed over the years....the mind truly boggles! Although in most circumstances there is an extreme lack of people racing around their office on Segways, many organisations are now starting to demonstrate an appreciation for the level of available sophisticated apparatus that is proving to help enrich the lives of working people.

Of course some of the best office inventions are those that have served to fulfill a purpose in the working environment for years, such as the stress toy. The stress toy helps staff to relieve tension in the body whilst working and as a simple yet effective invention, it offers a solution to minimise the effects of a common health related pitfall that so many people find themselves in as a result of the intensity of the workplace. It is therefore important that items of a larger investment, such as the iPad, are also integrated into the office.

#### A – Z INVENTION MUST HAVES FOR YOUR OFFICE

The world is changing, competition is fierce and brand loyalty is flailing. So whether you define your USP as being able to offer exceptional customer service, deliver a faster than fast service, or guarantee the best value for money product, your success is limited unless you invest in the tools your staff need to do the job properly.

Check out our A – Z list of office invention must haves that help to make good workspaces, great workspaces!

Air Purifier – Helping to reduce airborne contaminants, air purifiers are a great way to tackle workplace bugs and therefore reduce staff absence rates. They are also a good addition to workplaces that don't allow for a lot of fresh air.

**Battery Bank** - In an age when there are just not enough hours in the day, we still constantly find ourselves on the move...visiting clients, going to meetings, grabbing lunch, socialising etc. A battery/power bank enables you to charge your portable electronic devices remotely so that you can stay connected wherever you are. Counter – Or the more technical term, the office bar! Well who
doesn't need a bar in the office? But joking aside, allowing your staff
the opportunity to bring clients to your workplace to socialise and
to show off the quality of its interior and your brand is a great way
to network and the bar can also double up as a place to treat and
entertain your own staff on special occasions.

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**Drinks Machine** – Did you know...it only takes 7 seconds to make a strong first impression? And the quality of your coffee is of no exception! If making a cup of coffee is the first opportunity your client has to be able to judge the quality of your business and how well it looks after its clients, you want it to be a pleasant experience. Also, the nicer the coffee, the more likely clients will want to stay for another!

**Electronic Interactive Whiteboard** – The electronic interactive whiteboard is a great device to help drive staff engagement and works in a similar way to the traditional flip chart. Used as a tool to propose and illustrate new ideas, text can be easily erased and altered, therefore making it much more environmentally friendly. The electronic interactive whiteboard can also be used in conjunction with a laptop to navigate information on screen like a mouse.

**Fitbit** – If everyone in your office had a Fitbit, how great would it be? The idea of the Fitbit is to encourage people to be healthier by exercising more. This nifty little tracking device tells you everything from your heart rate, to how many steps you've completed in a day, to your sleep patterns. It also encourages people to connect with others via an app on their smart phone in order to compete for the best results. A great devise for a team building exercise, it also gives people a hobby and a focus other than work.

**Go cordless** - It kind of goes without saying in this day and age but installing cordless scanners, keyboards, computer mice, printers, headphones, etc makes agile working much easier and allows staff more autonomy to move around the office and integrate with other team members. Opportune moments for success are also more likely to arise when this kind of flexibility is introduced to the office. Height Adjustable Desks – These days a lot of emphasis is placed on the importance of exercise at work as a result of staff spending the majority of their time sitting at a desk. Not only does sitting down for hours on end discourage people from getting up but it can also result in health problems. Height adjustable desks are a great way for people to better their posture and sometimes the physical act of standing up can help people to feel more confident and authoritative.

**Interactive Touch Table** – The interactive touch table can be designed and tailored to your specific needs, giving you a completely bespoke piece of equipment that is built using high tech software and stunning visuals. In your office or away at an event, the interactive touch table can be used to play games, conduct presentations, surf the web and is easy, fun, engaging and quick.

Juke Box – Juke box, iPod dock, vinyl player... you name it....it doesn't matter. The point is every office should have a source of music. Of course every organisation will have their own views about employees' rights to listen to music at work but even if only every now and again, music is a simple yet effective solution to help raise people's spirits and inspire and engage them in a bit of fun.

**Keyboard Laser** –The virtual keyboard is created when a laser beam is emitted from a small portable laser device, using infrared to help detect the movement of the hands. The portable device is connected to your smartphone via Bluetooth or USB allowing you to take advantage of a full size keyboard when trying to text or email. This effectively allows people to work only using their phone which is a great alternative for employees who don't have access to an iPad when they are out and about with work.

**LED Lighting** - LED lighting is not only 50% more efficient than conventional lighting but it also requires less maintenance. Lasting up to almost 100,000 hours it lasts longer and the light emitted is closer to natural daylight too so people feel more comfortable and productive when working under it (EasiLume, 2016). Mobile Devices – iPods, iPads, iPhones...the majority of us personally own at least one of these devices or similar but they also play a vital role in the work environment. Mobile devices enable staff to continue to work to their best even when they are out and about. They also give staff the autonomy to decide where they work and when they are most productive.

Noise Cancelling Headphones – Some people, no matter how hard they try, find it hard to concentrate at work. Although breakout areas offer a solution to work more privately, it is acknowledged that some people like to still be in the midst of the office buzz without wanting to listen to the noise distractions. The best way around this is by using noise cancelling headphones. Using active noise control, it allows people to block out noise whilst they work or listen to music without raising the volume excessively.

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**Organiser** – From your mobile phone, to your pen, from your sticky notes to your nail file, there are some things we just can't live without at work. So restore abit of order in your life by installing a workspace organiser. Available in all different shapes and sizes, you're sure to find one to suit all your stationary needs and crazy collectables.

**Ping Pong Table** – Everyone needs time away from their desk to have a break and sometimes the best ideas are generated when you least expect it. Introducing a Ping Pong table to the office is a great way to encourage socialisation amongst colleagues, increase motivation, install fun and generate abit of healthy competition.

**Quiet Zones** – Quiet zones and breakout areas are a must-have for every office. With so many distractions around making us lose concentration, sometimes you just need to get away from it all. An office booth for example allows for people to sit quietly, have a meeting or work in isolation away from all the noise. They are also adapted to allow people to connect to their mobile devices giving them greater autonomy to work flexibly. <sup>30</sup> **Reusable Wipeable Surface Wall** – This can be achieved in many different ways. You either purchase magic erasable whiteboard sheets that stick to any hard, flat surface without the need for pins or blu tac or if you have glass walls in your office, you might even consider allowing your staff to write on them using special glass marker pens that wipe off. The choice is yours. The idea is that information can be instantly relayed onto the walls for more impromptu ideas and discussions.

**Stress Toys** – The functional benefit of a stress toy is very beneficial. It's important to have your own corporate branded merchandise and a stress toy is an easy investment. Not only can staff use these to help relieve stress but also the actual physical behaviour of playing with something in their hand helps people to learn by stimulating the brain.

**Television** - Not only is a television in the office a good distraction for when people are chilling out at lunchtime but it also provides businesses with a means of keeping up with everything that is happening in the world. Televisions that are dotted around the office are also a good way to communicate messages to clients and staff and they can also be used in meeting rooms to display information.

**USB** – It sounds obvious but backing up important documents on a USB could be a life saver. Adaptable to most devices, it makes the transferring of data easy, especially when an internet connection isn't available.

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Virtual Online Database – Like a USB, investing in online file storage is a great way to free up your hard drive. It allows you to back up your files quickly and easily without needing to clutter up your office space with more heavy and unsightly pieces of IT equipment.

Watch – Maintaining a healthy work / life balance is critical to sustaining a healthy lifestyle. So yes a watch is important but more than that, a watch that helps make life easier for you surely is something we all need! The Apple Watch delivers information to you in an instant meaning you can decide when to work and where, knowing that you have all the information you need...right at your fingertips. Enabling you to receive all your texts and calls straight to your wrist, it even allows you to dictate messages, making it the ultimate device for contacting people whilst on the move. 31 **XXL Beanbag** – Available in lots of different colours, gigantic beanbags don't just look amazing but they are also easily transportable making them a great office solution for any agile work space.

**Yoga Matt –** Yoga... it's not unusual to see people exercising at work anymore. Yoga in particular helps staff members to reduce stress, suppress anxiety, protect their neck and shoulders and lower their blood pressure through physical poses, meditation and relaxation. So if you haven't already, invest in some yoga mats and see the change in your employees!

**Zzzzzz** – Ok so this might be a little optimistic but having a bed installed at work for staff members to have a nap is actually not the craziest suggestion in the world. It is infact now becoming more commonly acknowledged that napping at work is less about laziness and more about allowing people to recognise how to achieve their optimum state of body and mind in order to function better. A NASA study showed a nap of just 26 minutes can boost productivity by as much as 34 percent and increase alertness by 54 percent (Entrepreneur, 2014). When your employees' have a bad night's sleep they are less productive and are therefore more likely to make mistakes, resulting in a cost to you and the business.

## CONCLUSION

Investing in a new office interior is not just about the glorified aesthetics. It is about understanding the science behind an office interior that delivers to the needs of your business and how it interacts with your employees and clients. Employees are an organisations best asset so it's important that they are provided with a quality office space that enhances their time at work, helping them to feel motivated and more productive.



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