

Trends and Traps in Office Design

When furnishing your office, many people might decide to consult an independent interior designer on such a costly strategic investment. Issues like image and the organizational culture of the company are often best left to the experts. If you do not have the option of consulting an expert, you can reduce your risk by considering the following:

1. Do I really need a 'flexible system'?

The answer is 'yes', regardless of the size and nature of your business. But what does 'flexibility' really mean for most Hungarian businesses? It is really possible to accurately estimate the growth rate and character of any organization? - again, yes. But many people confuse growth with reorganization and flexibility.

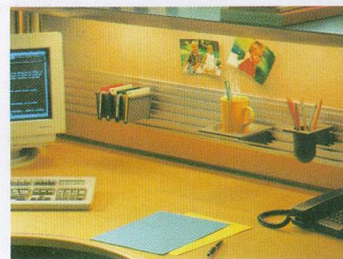
Growth should mean furnishing new offices, not cramming and supplementing the present ones. Only a limited number of workers can be placed in any one room. The strong trend now is to choose a changeable furniture ensemble with a wide variety of complementing features.

Flexibility also often means very quick, ad hoc grouping and harmonizing. This is typical of companies with flat lay-outs which usually use rollable, so-called 'personal negotiation' segments in an otherwise statically furnished room. This is a nightmare for many interior designers, because the office can come to look like an earthquake zone in a minute - especially when these rollable elements are forgotten in the passage-ways and make physical negotiation difficult. Here the trend is

to use fixed negotiation segments, which are suitable even for quick discussions in an informal, standing position.

2. Easy cabling

It is often best to use the easy accessibility found in most showrooms as a model for cabling. But in cases, where the worker has to face a table



which is standing next to a wall fully occupied by machines - or when other obstacles may block easy access to electrical outlets - showroom models are insufficient. The trend is now towards convenient installing cables under the movable surface of a table or the vertically positioned cable-space of a panel system, which is equipped with doors. The cable-case column is a new innovation which stands independently from the table and leads the cable directly to the surface of the table. It also allows you to place a PC monitor on top of it.

3. Unrestrained drawers

It may seem like a tiny detail, but you can avert serious accidents if you check how the drawers of the container under the table are protected against tilting. Several producers build an immovable counterweight into the container. But at the same time they are inadvertently making this a new source of danger. You can easily get your fingers pinched between two moving opened

drawers, especially when the drawer cannot slide out to its full length. The trend is toward a tilting restraining mechanism, which allows opening only one drawer at a time. In this way, the centre of gravity of the container cannot topple over and your fingers will remain safe.

4. Storage technology

Even many major international companies are still using the conventional loose-leaf files as their only method of archiving and docketing active files. Consider that a file with a spine seven centimetres wide will take up seven centimetres on the shelf, even if only half full, and wastefulness is inevitable. The trend is now toward using hanging files, which let you keep files side by side, regardless of how full they are. This means that you can

utilize about 95 % of available storage capacity. Searching is much easier with pull-out drawers, and you only have to buy new shelves when the old ones become totally full.

5 Useful sitting furniture?

Many people think, that they bought a good chair if it has all the facilities and can be adjusted in several ways. Usually, they like fixing the angular offset by tilting the chair back backwards. This is actually a terrible position for the spine to be kept in for extended periods of time. The trend is the synchronous mechanics chair, which automatically follows the movement of your back and it is not fixable in the position when it is tilted backwards. The ergonomically designed chair allows your body to move continuously, followed by both the seat and the back of the chair. This offers full support for the base of the spine. But be careful to consult the manual carefully before making further adjustments.

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