

Is Your Office Presenting the Image You Want to Your Clients?

Have you ever entered your office and seen it as a first time client or customer would view it? Is it truly presenting the message and image you think it is? The image you really want projected about you and your company or business? Is the reception area welcoming, comfortable, or does your prospective customer have to trip their way around stacks of old magazines and boxes of papers to be archived? Does your own office have an area for the client to sit and have eye contact with you or are you barricaded behind a wall of desk clutter and distracting light fixtures?

Your office says a lot about you, your business, and how you conduct it. Marketing experts advise answering the telephone with a cheerful, upbeat greeting to place callers in the same frame of mind. Having clients and potential customers walk into a well-designed office can have the same benefit. An additional benefit is that it makes the work environment easier and more enjoyable for you and your employees as well. Most of the following tips can be done by you and cost little more than some elbow grease and cleaning supplies.

- Get rid of the clutter! Remove those boxes and stacks of papers, records, computer print outs, and old magazines. Either recycle them or archive them, but do not store them in public rooms. They are also a safety hazard in a fire or emergency evacuation where people who are unfamiliar with your exit plan will be trying to leave quickly and can bump into these stacks.
- Take down and store away holiday decorations promptly after holidays are over. If you use live trees or plants at holiday times, be sure to keep them well watered and clean up any needle or leaf droppings.
- Arrange artwork and other wall arrangements in relation to furniture placements, not at “eye height”. The old rule of “eye height” is no longer used because whose eye height is correct? Yours, your partner’s, the receptionist’s? Artwork is most attractive when it is hung in relation to a piece of furniture or a furniture grouping.
- Gather small pieces of artwork, such as diplomas and awards, into a grouping for greater impact rather than scattering them around the office in many places. Arrange the items on the floor first in an appealing design, and then transfer this on to the wall. Introduce greenery into your reception area and your own office. This brings life into the environment. It doesn’t have to be the real thing, it only has to look real. If you do choose live plants, be sure to take proper care of them. A sick, or even worse, a dead plant will not convey the image you are trying to create.
- Consider adding a little sparkle to your office. Something as simple as a crystal or polished silver bowl filled with candy in golden wrappers appeals to both the eye and the taste buds – two senses in one item.
- Once a month, sort through all of the collected literature, magazines, and assorted detritus in the reception area. You may be surprised at what has gathered there. And remember, while your clients and prospective customers are waiting for you, all they have to keep occupied is sit and sift through just those very same items. Toss out any damaged, outdated, or loose papers and magazines. Rotate with fresh publications, your latest brochures, specials you are promoting, articles you have had published, your newsletter, anything you want the public to know about.
- Paint is cheap and there is nothing like a fresh coat of paint to make a place feel clean and new. Consider using your corporate colors, or painting the company logo behind the reception desk or on the floor. Add a dramatic graphic on a long hallway wall to perk the place up. Ask your employees for their ideas and using it helps build company branding

Just as with our homes, when we have been in our offices for a long time, it becomes easy to overlook the small cracks and the temporary can become the permanent. Walk out of your office, clear your mind of how it looks, now turn around and walk back in to see it from the eyes of a prospective client. Are there ways you could update your look? Are you really projecting the image you want? Try a few of these tips and see if they help freshen your office's look.

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