

Revitalizing Your Staff by Rejuvenating Your Office

By Joyce Russell Hadley

How long has it been since you last made a change in your office décor? Was it when you first moved into your current facility or office space? Has your business or practice grown and you are now suffering from “clutter-itis” or “storage stress syndrome”? Did you make a substantial investment eight to twelve (or more) years ago in a professional interior designer and you want to make sure you get every dollar of return? The difficulty is that you and your staff are working in this 1980’s environment every day, yet living in the new century.

The work environment impacts not only you, as the owner or manager, and your customers and clients, but also your employees. Your employees spend more of their waking hours within these walls than their own homes. They are here, in most cases, five days a week, nine hours a day. Their work surroundings become dated, old, tiring, just as one’s home does if not infused with change. We automatically evolve our homes with new artwork, furniture, wall color, and mementoes. The same can and should be done for our work place to keep it alive and current.

Having said that, updating and keeping our offices vibrant does not require a whole new “out with the old, in with the new” interior design every two years. By changing the office arrangement, implementing ergonomic principles, rotating artwork, and use of seasonal décor, your employees can find the work place more inviting, appealing, a mentally inviting place to work each and every day.

Office Arrangement Many offices, or areas of a given office, are not arranged efficiently or aesthetically appealing. Speak with the employee that works in that particular area and ask them what is annoying or inconvenient. Then ask how they would make it better. Let each staff member brainstorm and contribute. It’s their workspace, they often know it the best. Evaluate the ideas generated and select what can be implemented. Move furniture between offices and work areas. Try new arrangements. Shake it up!

Rotation of Artwork Most offices have certificates, awards, and citations in abundance, often scattered on their walls like fall leaves blown in the wind. Gather these in logical or meaningful groupings and arrange each grouping in a pleasing manner. If any grouping will continue to expand, design this into your layout and location selection. If your office has artwork, or you are able to add to it, consider rotating it. This can be done in two ways. The first is by displaying only part of the collection at any one time, just as museums do. The second is by simply changing the artwork location. If items A and B are approximately the same size and shape, switch their location once or twice a year. Creating or adding to needn’t be an expensive proposition. There are good quality reproductions, framed posters, and even whimsical, fun thematic ideas of your staffs’ relating to your business, product, or service.

Seasonal Decorating I am referring here, not to holiday, but to seasonal decorating and arranging. This is another home decorating concept that can translate to the work place. As with rotation of artwork, changing the arrangement for winter and then summer in an area of the office can have as much impact as completely redecorating. Two good areas to apply seasonal arranging are the conference room and waiting/reception area. Rotation of artwork has been previously discussed, but this is not limited to only framed wall art. Three-dimensional art, bowls and containers, plants, types of teas and coffee served, candy or cookies, an area rug, even a small accent chair, all can be changed or rotated seasonally, refreshing your office and rejuvenating your staff from the daily doldrums. Let your employees loose on this portion and have a little creative fun.

The office environment mentally and emotionally impacts upon everyone who enters every day. While it is a reflection of your business, it also affects the performance of your employees. Safety, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness are all important factors to the success of a business. However, an attractive and reviving environment is far more likely to produce positive work attitude and employee retention than a stagnant institution. Renewing your office doesn't have to cost a fortune, can utilize what is already in the office, and be a fun project for your staff. The result can be a vital and vibrant office for you and your employees to open the door to every morning.

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