How to Create an Inspiring Work Space for Your Design Team

Creative types know that working day after day on various projects is taxing for even the most creative person. Figuring out ways to refill the creative well and stay motivated isn’t easy. But what if you could find inspiration from the very space you work in?

One study on employee engagement found that about one-third of workers aren’t fully engaged. Disengaged workers are less likely to feel satisfied in their roles and more likely to leave, causing higher churn rates for companies. While many factors play into how engaged employees feel, the overall work environment has a huge impact.

Help your employees feel engaged and inspired with the following nine ways to update an office space for creatives.

1. Get Rid of the Cubes!

Cube farms are quickly becoming a thing of the past. Dry, boring cubicles aren’t inspiring to anyone. Not only that, but they separate workers, creating a situation where brainstorming is next to impossible. If your office is filled with cubicles, swap them out for flexible walls that can be moved around at will to fulfill a wide variety of needs.

2. Add Collaborative Areas

At times, your design team will need to work quietly and alone. Other times, everyone will need to pull together and collaborate. On other days, some team members will need collaboration while others need quiet space. Design a work

space that allows for all of these scenarios by using small work areas, such as an office pod turned into a lounge area.

You'll want both small collaboration areas for small groups and large areas for the entire team or several teams to work together on big projects.

3. Display Beautiful Art

Take the aesthetics of your space up a notch or two by displaying art. More than likely, at least one of your designers is also a hobby artist. If you can personalize the space by using art that your employees have created, everyone will feel more connected and appreciated. Swap out the art from time to time to give everyone a chance to share what they've created.

4. Go Wireless

Ugly wires running here, there and everywhere mess up the overall design of a space. Look for ways to hide wires or go wireless. Sometimes, hiding wires is simply a matter of thinking through the placement of computers and other equipment. Get rid of wired mice and keyboards, and go for wireless options.

5. Bring in Plants

There are many reasons to add plants to your office space. Not only do they provide beauty, but they also help clean the air, creating a healthier work environment. In one university study, employees who were surrounded by plants were 15 percent more productive. Their concentration levels were higher than in offices without plants.

In addition to the productivity and health benefits, plants make a space look better and can provide inspiration by giving

workers a break from drab walls and ceiling tiles.

6. Offer a Pet Day

Although certain standards are needed to keep the office pleasant for everyone, allowing employees to bring in a pet or personal item from home can provide inspiration. Few things are as fun as a puppy's antics. While it might be distracting on a daily basis, adding a puppy to the office environment every once in a while can provide a welcome break from grueling work and add an element of excitement to the day. In addition, sharing a part of their lives allows workers to become more of a community.

You may want to allow only a few pets at a time or in certain areas to accommodate co-workers who have allergies and keep distractions to a minimum.

7. Incorporate Natural Light

Today's modern office worker spends about 80 to 90 percent of their time inside. A lack of natural light and fresh air impacts employee health and motivation. When designing your office space, look for ways to bring more light inside. Doing so might simply be a matter of unblocking windows and removing blinds. The strategy could also be more involved, such as adding skylights and more windows.

If you're on a tight budget and can't afford major renovations – or you're in a building where they aren't practical – try to find some outdoor space where employees can escape for lunch or a break and breathe in the outdoor air. A rooftop garden or outdoor patio area are both simple solutions.

8. Throw Away Desk Assignments

Traditionally, workers had a specific desk that they went to each day to do their work. This setup isn’t conducive to a flexible work space, and it’s no longer necessary, as computers have become more portable.

It makes more sense for designers to have a variety of areas where they can work. Allow them to choose the space that feels best for them each particular day.

In practice, this strategy may look like a designer who starts off in a common area, brainstorming with other team members. They then move to the rooftop garden with their laptop to lay out the plans discussed during the brainstorming session and get a bit of fresh air. Finally, they might move to a desk in a quiet spot where they can begin the actual design.

9. Get Rid of Clutter

A space that’s well-organized and uncluttered is more pleasant for everyone. Taking away the assigned desks as mentioned above allows much of the clutter to be cut from the office. Those who would keep messy desks don’t have a permanent desk to create the mess, and those who would normally keep things neat aren’t overwhelmed with co-worker clutter.

Add plenty of storage, and get rid of anything you don’t actually use or need – sell it or donate it. Go digital whenever possible to get rid of paper clutter and the need for lots of storage.

Inspire Your Design Team

There are many ways to inspire your design team, and creating a beautiful work space is just one of them. Take the time to get feedback from your employees about what they’d like to see

in their area and what would be most helpful to their design process. Even minor changes can make a big difference in the overall productivity and mood of the whole team.

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