

## NEXT UP: GEN Z

By D2 Groups

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In light of recent discussions about open office spaces, the future looks bright. Critics argue that distractions inherent in the concept of open office prevent the very efficiency that it's meant to foster. Not only is the A&D industry working furiously to address concerns with privacy and distraction in the open office, but the newest members of the workforce are seeking a different spatial layout. Welcome Generation Z—they're the most diverse, tech-savvy, and highly educated generation to date. The chaos you've been hearing about from open office critics won't



suit Gen Z as it does the Millennials. Gen Z seeks a more purposeful workplace experience; they want to be solving problems and engaging in meaningful work as soon as they get into the office.

The open office isn't going away any time soon. As the post-Millennial generation is entering the workforce, only subtle changes to your workplace design are coming with them. The last time the workforce welcomed a new generation, walls came down and collaboration became the new focus of space. Expect newer designs to incorporate slight changes that accommodate a greater need for focus and organized cooperation in the already existing open office. Remember—Millennials will still comprise a substantial portion of the workforce.

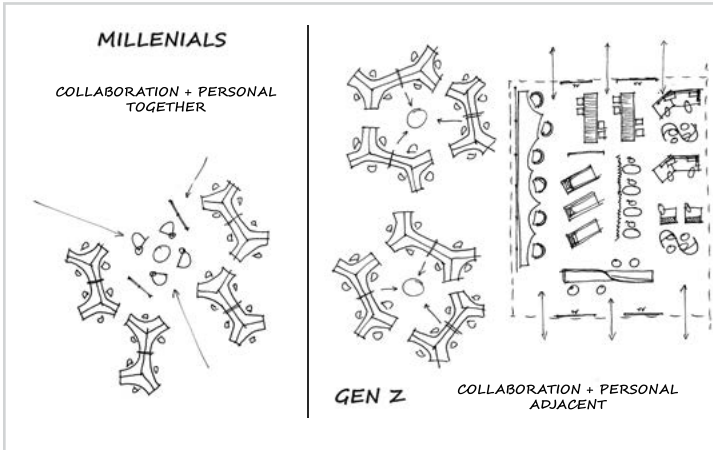
The open office will become more refined. Gen Z looks for easily navigable office environments; instead of multi-purpose spaces that double as collaboration and personal spaces as seen in the open offices of today, spaces will become more defined. The office of the future will incorporate adjacent spaces for different purposes. Open workstations, for instance, might be on one side of circulation space, while meeting tables and casual seating areas could provide collaboration settings in a space opposite to, yet designated from, those same private workstations. Different adjacencies and designated spaces will enumerate the opportunities for acoustical solutions and visual privacies that open office critics seek today.

In addition, technology no longer requires that you're tethered to a desk at all times, so movement

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Spatial adjacencies will be the focus of workspace design strategy in the future.

throughout the workplace has become the norm for both Millennials and Gen Z. One of the primary shifts you'll see from office spaces for Gen Y to those for Gen Z has to do with secondary spaces. Millennials leave their desks and personal work to go to a coffee shop or some other collaboration space in the office where they can work with others. Collaboration will be the norm as Gen Z enters the workforce, so they'll conversely retreat to personal spaces. Whereas huddle and collaboration rooms provide desired workspaces for Millennials, private focus rooms and quiet spaces will relieve Generation Z. The variety of spaces incorporated into office design for Gen Z

reflects the same spaces for the open office dissenters of today.

Ultimately, the entrance of Generation Z into the workforce will change the open workspaces to which people have grown accustomed. Change is good, though—it provides an opportunity to address the aural and visual concerns of the existing concept of open office.

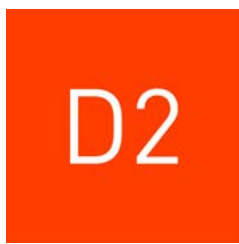
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