

WHAT DO EMPLOYEES REALLY WANT AT WORK?

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If you've been wondering how to help employees work to maximum efficiency and peak productivity these insights about what employees really want at work will help.

New studies find that your employees have a pretty good idea of what the work environment that supports productivity looks like versus one that doesn't. Add to that their work preferences and mix in a little cutting edge design making use of user friendly technology and your employees will vote for your office as the ideal work place.

Why is this important?

Attracting and retaining top quality skilled employees is high on the list of 'must haves' for organizations wanting to develop a significant edge over competitors. An organization that provides a supportive work environment that helps employees achieve their professional goals translates into loyalty and high level productivity.

Here are a few ways progressive organizations are making their offices appealing:

Responsiveness to individual needs: Office buildings are beginning to make use of artificial intelligence to monitor as well as respond to individual employee needs. For example, personalized climate control and lighting in an individual's work station.

Practical layouts with central social hubs: Recognizing that the younger generations place a high level of importance on social interaction and collaboration by integrating social hubs and serious work areas.

THE EDGE IN AMSTERDAM:

A perfect example of this new concept working seamlessly is 'The Edge' in Amsterdam. It is said that this is the greenest, smartest building in the world and we have to admit that its capabilities

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are impressive. Here's what it offers: Indoor climate mirrors outdoor climate as it mimics natural air currents throughout the building for your personal comfort. Too hot or too cold? Not to worry... once you reach your workstation, the building's artificial intelligence adjusts the temperature and light to suit you.

- ▶ Natural light is always 23 feet or closer to where you work.
- ▶ The smart roof provides efficient acoustic control where indoor and outdoor noise is muted.
- ▶ Smart customization is as close as your phone: People working at The Edge have an app on their smart phone. This app tells the building what kind of work space will be needed when the person arrives in the morning. The building's A.I. will determine where the person needs a sitting or a standing desk, whether they'll require a meeting room or private space for focused work.
- ▶ The building immediately readies what the person needs based on their schedule. The industry term for this is 'hot desking' or 'unassigned work space'. In line with the most up to date office design philosophy, employees do not have a single work station at which they work every day, they simply move to the station best suited to the task at the time. The result is fluidity as people move between stations to access the facilities or people they need at that moment.
- ▶ It's not all about the work though. When it's time for a coffee break, the on campus coffee bar's intelligent espresso equipment remembers exactly how you like your coffee. It's like having your own personal barista. Who couldn't get used to that?



THE ZURICH INSURANCE COMPANY:

This organization did some impressive research before designing their new H.Q. in Schaumburg, Illinois. Not only did they work with a large number of their own employees in an on site focus group, but also with outside experts.

Here's what they found:

- ▶ Employees preferred areas dedicated to social interaction rather than having them interspersed between serious working areas. They wanted these social hubs screened off from work areas

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so that ambient noise and food aromas wouldn't disturb people working nearby. They felt that having social areas featuring casual furniture including sofas and tables with chairs, interfered with their ability to get work done.



- ▶ Employees also wanted privacy for focused work or private conference calls and meetings.
- ▶ Natural light access was a big request.
- ▶ Height adjustable work surfaces were in high demand.

The conclusions from this research is not all that surprising. It confirms the current thinking that the ideal office will incorporate a hybrid of privacy and open plan factors where employees have some autonomy over where, when and how they work.

When considering a new office design, it makes sense to take these findings into account. If you have any doubts about what your employees will find most desirable, it's always a good idea to create a focus group or forum setting in which to propose and ask for ideas before settling on your final design. This way you'll get maximum buy-in from employees and have a greater chance of achieving your productivity and loyalty goals.

If you'd like a little help with this, please don't hesitate to give COFCO a call!



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