

Sharpening the competitive edge in today's "Talent Wars"







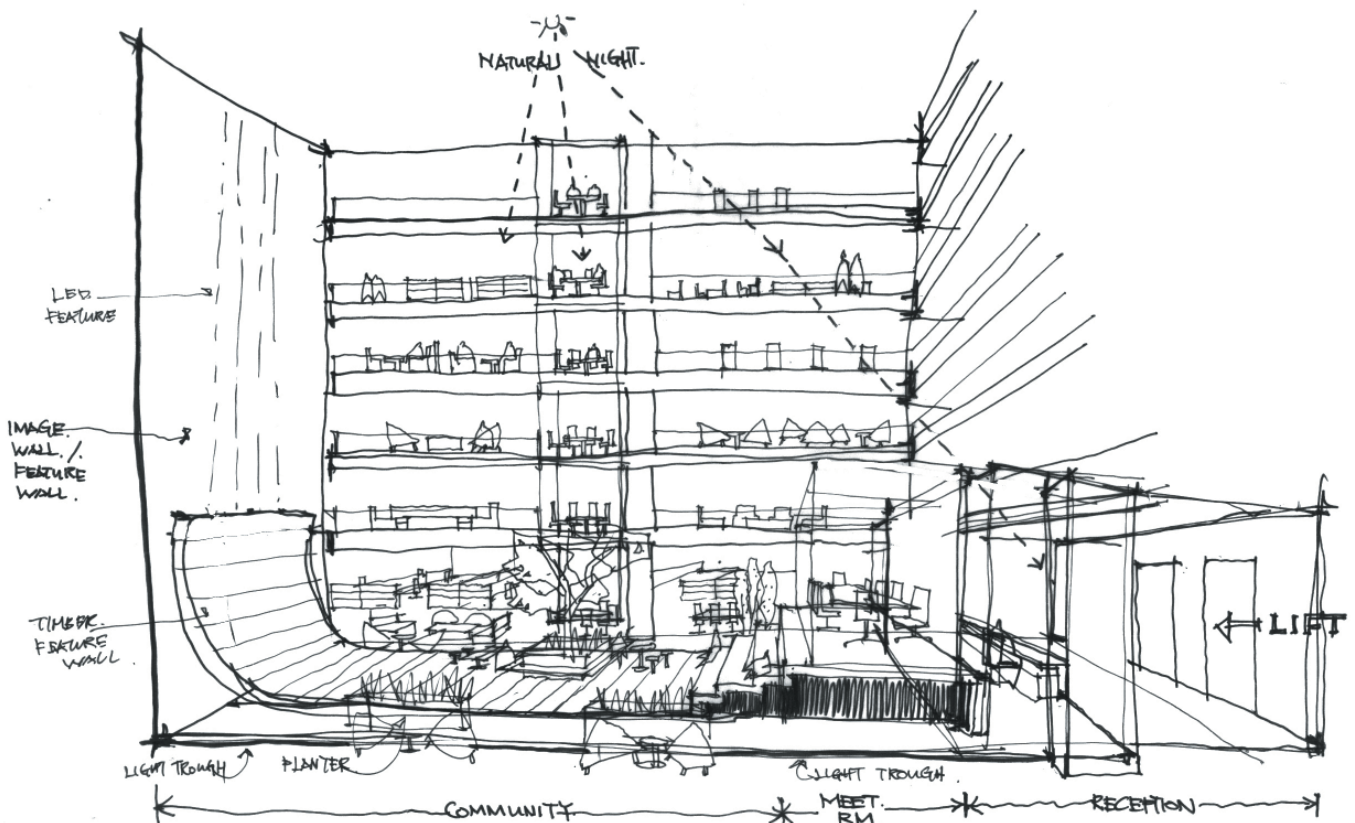
A well-designed office can help enhance a company's attractiveness and loyalty levels

There was a time when the more tempting the salary and benefits package, the more staff choices employers had. In the quest to create "added value" with which to attract new talent and hold on to key team members, businesses of the 21st Century are looking to more intangible perquisites.

Attractive, strategically planned workplaces can be one such effective benefit. This approach has resulted in many companies undertaking a radical re-think of not only their office design, but also their professional development processes and corporate cultures as a whole.

Hiring graduates is a classic case in point. In an attempt to prevent its summer graduate intake from being poached by rival companies, one major multinational recently turned to M Moser Associates for assistance in creating an office environment to woo these new recruits. Once design concepts for the new office had been finalized, M Moser urged the client to forward visuals and information about the design of its new office to its new graduate hires.

The message was clear: "The new office we are building is our commitment to you, and to being the best firm in town."





Reassuring staff in the face of change

Maintaining staff loyalty levels in the face of changing dynamics such as co-locations, mergers and changes in management style is equally vital in ensuring companies' long-term success.

A recent office re-design workshop M Moser undertook with the senior management of a leading investment bank identified several factors that were critical for maintaining staff morale. Key among them was the need for an office environment that not only motivated and energized staff, but also "gave back" to people.

M Moser helped the bank deliver on these promises by creating a large, café-style meeting space on each floor where people could "catch up and chill out".

Other tactics companies faced with change have used to encourage staff buy-in include the setting up of Starbucks-style "third place" casual breakout areas in the middle of the office.

Here, staff can escape the confines of their workstations and relax or discuss new ideas with colleagues over a cappuccino and snacks from an out-sourced caterer.

Ultimately, informal spaces do more than simply help staff to better balance the demands of their personal and professional lives. They can often end up being amongst

the most productive and profitable areas in the whole office.

Using offices as a 3-D showcase for corporate values and product lines

Increasing numbers of companies are now leveraging state-of-the-art in-house training centres that both act as corporate showcases and clearly demonstrate their commitment to the ongoing professional development of their staff.

Outside office hours, such facilities offer the additional benefit of providing an informal

space where staff at all levels can "bond" over drinks or while watching football matches on the big screen.

"3-D Branding" of the entire office is yet another proven way in which companies can redefine their corporate cultures. Ultimately, such a policy makes sound economic and marketing sense as it transforms an enormously visible and costly space into a huge, dynamic billboard for companies.

A strategically designed space can effectively communicate values and dynamism to staff. At the same time, it can present company credentials and image to clients.



Staff expectations are often more realistic than expected

A work style and satisfaction staff survey M Moser Associates conducted across several leading companies yielded surprising findings. With respondents requesting minor enhancements such as better air conditioning, ventilation, equipment, more mobility and more informal gathering areas, employees' needs and expectations were actually far more reasonable and easily manageable than expected.

Early and adequate responses to such quickly resolvable issues will ensure organizations can make giant advances in holding on to their existing staff. And in today's ever-escalating "Talent Wars", building loyalty among one's key team members is half the battle won.

Combining flexible and fixed operating philosophies to optimum effect

Working hours are becoming longer, and there is a trend for outsourcing work on a paid-by-the-project basis. "Telecommuting" is perhaps the simplest way in which companies can integrate more flexible working hour philosophies into their corporate culture.

Freeing staff to work from a time and place of their choosing, "Telecommuting" makes it easy for companies to cut down on their space and cost overheads. More importantly still, surveys have shown that such a policy

can also result in individual productivity increases of up to 20% .

With this approach, planning must allow for variable numbers of staff in the office at any one time.

First pioneered in the early 1990s, "Hot Desking" or "Free addressing" was the recipient of much publicity – not all of it favourable – when initially introduced.

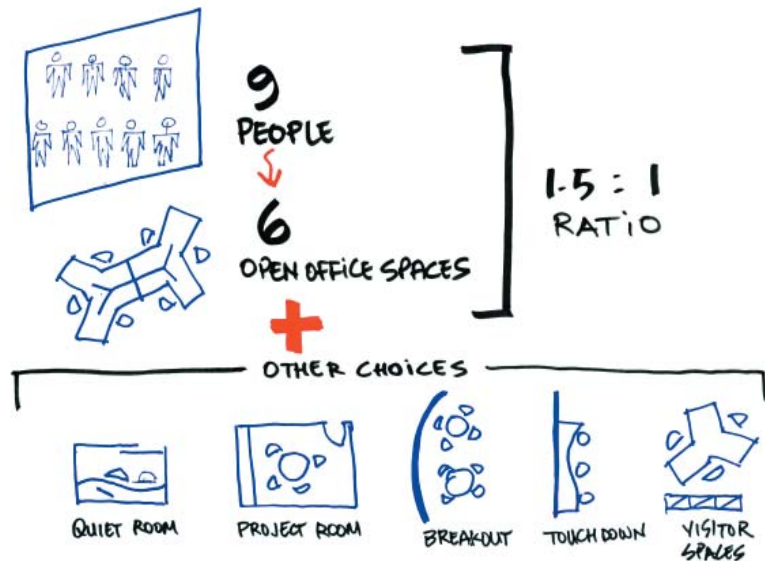
Enabling employees to use desk spaces and facilities on a first-come, first-served basis, the concept has subsequently gone from strength to strength, partly due to new achievements in technology and a higher degree of mobility.

Its variants include the "Hotelling" concept

whereby staff that are out of the office for extended or regular periods of time can pre-book their own personalized workstation when returning to the office. "Desk Sharing" is another variant, where team members, who are familiar with each other's work pattern, can share workstation space.

While these options can help to save space, they also provide workspace flexibility and offer staff alternatives in terms of where and when to conduct business.

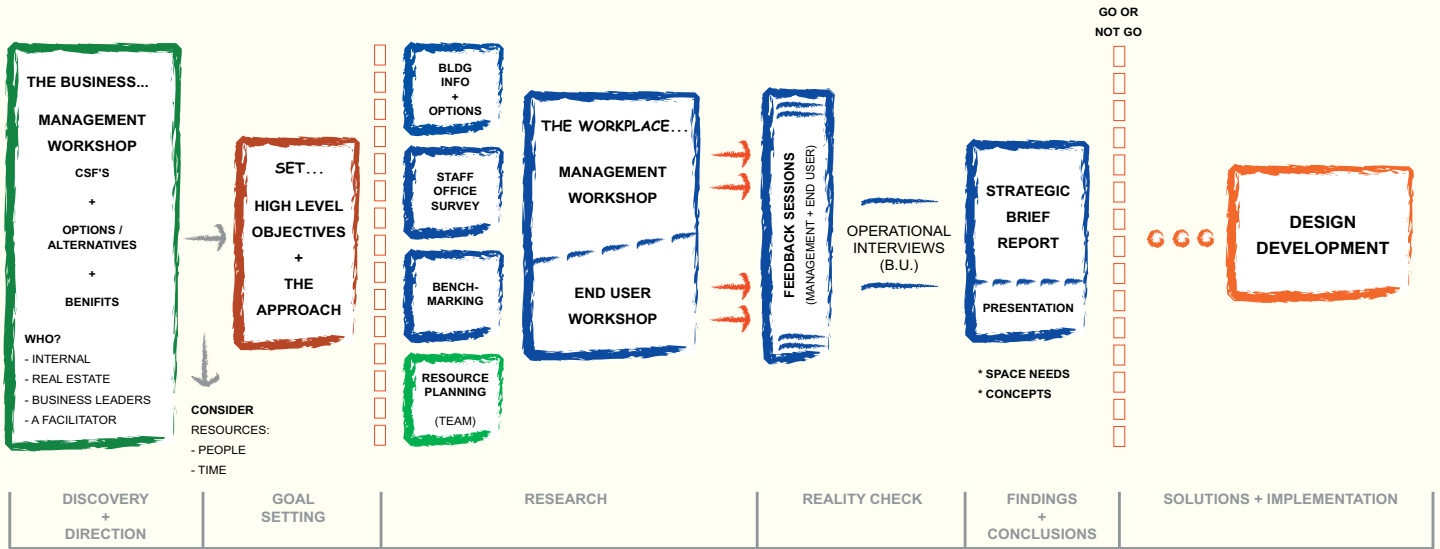
Although these methods can be effective for certain work patterns, they are not necessarily right for every organization or team. Ultimately, these approaches challenge traditional 'reward' mechanisms and need to be thoroughly contemplated from a business and end user point of view.



Above: A simple schematic explaining desk sharing...
Below: Individual solutions for individual needs.



How do we help our clients to achieve their business objectives



Above: This pre-design process was developed to explain the project process for a given client and to achieve their business objective.

The process is adaptable to each individual clients' need.

Below: A snapshot of one of the M Moser workshops to translate individual client's goals and needs into interior design and built environment.



Some business goals need to be pursued on several levels to be truly successful

Our teams of professional designers and planners work closely with our clients to address these goals and management objectives through interiors.

To do this effectively the ruling principle is to recognize every client's own unique corporate philosophy, working practices and short and long-term business needs. In designing or redesigning premises it is crucial to tailor each approach specifically for each client.

The first step involves the careful assembling of a closely-knit team comprising both designers from M Moser and staff from the client side. This team works closely together at every stage of the design process in order to ensure each project is finished to the highest possible professional standard. The methodology in resolving individual design issues must be equally thorough. In-depth investigation is the cornerstone on which effective design solutions are built. Once the design team has analysed feedback from staff, the data is transformed into concepts best suited to the individual client's needs. These are then translated into planning, design, engineering, and IT infrastructure.

This is one of a series of articles showing how strategically planned interiors can help aspiring companies achieve a broad range of business objectives. Topics have been discussed in non-specific terms to avoid betraying confidences, however, true understanding of the uniqueness of individual client is no doubt key to the success of our endeavours.

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