



Space planning the ergonomic new office

Space planning your new office effectively is key to getting the most out of the new space and your employees, resulting in a functional and pleasant environment and increased productivity.

When consulting on any project, from a general refurbishment of an existing space, replacement of furniture and creating a new layout or the **design and build** of new premises, the planning of the space will be paramount.

Refurbishments or new builds are broken down into various parts of the programme of works to be completed such as the mechanical & electrical, **partitioning**, finishes and furniture. These elements are viewed as one from the outset. In general it may be desirable to purchase furniture from one company and the fit out from another but the two elements must have synergy and have been planned together for the space. When one company is managing the entire project many of the common problems can be overcome with ease, such as power and data in relation to desk positions. These are often problematic areas of the build where breakdowns in communication can result in delays and costly changes. All this is avoided when one company manages the project.

During the initial stages of a project consultation the areas for consideration would be:

- Thoughts about the use of the entire space? eg. Is it to be used for Staffing only or customer consultation/showcase for products etc.
- Numeric population of the space?
- Departmental layout of the area? eg. Accounts, Human resources, sales etc. (these departments often operate at differing vocal volumes and foot flow.)
- What's needed by the occupants? eg. Break out areas, tea points, print/post areas, meeting areas and so on...
- Reception area offices and meeting rooms, how many, how many people within them?
- The sound attenuation and privacy of the rooms to be built?
- Comms room, power /data allowance and future expansion?

These questions and many others can be addressed during the initial planning.

The next stage is the submission of the initial plan and proposal for the build specification and the requirements of the space as discussed. At this point all becomes clear as the submitted plan illustrates our interpretation of what the client had in their 'minds eye'. **3D plans** give the full spectrum of options as **flooring**, **decoration** and lighting can be illustrated and adjusted. Using this plan the client is able to understand the submitted proposal for the space and constructively comment on the design and begin the process of fine tuning for that final design.

Once a final design for the space has been agreed focus can be given to the finer detail such as furniture and fittings. Scaled drawings indicate the space as it would be in reality showing all aspects, desk-ing, natural corridors, distances of travel. With Power, Data and lighting implemented this may affect the choices of furniture, from the desk-ing and its cable management to the position of the print or post areas. The final choice suits the optimum office layout.

Storage should also be chosen carefully at this planning stage. A move to a new space can see the reduction of storage. In recent years storage has been in decline due to the digital age and the reduction of paper based processes. Poorly planned storage can result in wasted space which can be costly and inefficient.

A well planned office will lead to increased productivity and efficiency and will create a pleasing and functional environment, a place where your employees will want to be. The key to achieving this satisfying and cost effective end result is the **professional space planning** and ensuring all trades are involved from the outset.

Once a well thought out plan is produced the rest of the project will follow...