



How Do You Maximise Your Office Space?

Depending on which research document or suppliers marketing materials you read, there are various figures banded about regarding the percentage of office space which is being wasted and the associated costs that companies are incurring.

But when you look for the answers to the inevitable question “how can I maximise my office space?” the response is guaranteed to include work space audit and report.

Don't get me wrong, work space audits are hugely beneficial exercises that enable you to understand how your offices are being used by your team and can identify superb opportunities for improving your workspace. But for those that simply want to get more out of your existing office or are fortunate enough to be starting with a blank canvas as you move into your next offices, there are some simple techniques you can use to help yourself.

The first thing to work out is the square metre-age of your office space and divide it by the number of employees. If your answer is anything above 12sq.m. you could be doing better.

A sweeping move to reduce your average workspace per employee would be to move to hot desking.

Now hot desking has been a hot topic (pardon the pun) for many years but has never really materialised. Most companies still have a dedicated desk for every employee and have no plans to change

Before you dismiss the idea completely, have a look round the office and count the numbers of empty desks. Now count the number of people in the office that would probably be more effective in front of clients.

Still think you need all your desks?

One company took drastic action to encourage more of its sales team to visit clients by reducing the number of desks by 40%. The move resulted in their enquiry rate immediately shooting up with no detrimental effect on performance!

But before you flick open the yellow pages for your local skip hire company you should also consider how often you have clients visiting the offices? How many internal meetings do you have and how many people generally attend?



From this you can begin to build a picture of the way in which your offices are being used and the space requirements you need in terms of the number of desks and the number and size of meeting rooms.

The use of glazed partitioning systems can provide a cost effective means of creating versatile work areas that can be used as meeting rooms and shared work spaces.

But enough of the analysis and theorising. How can you maximise your office space?

Look around any office and the things that take up the most areas are desks and storage systems. In truth the office layouts have been driven by technology.

There was a time where every office was packed with corner desks which were almost essential to accommodate large cathode ray PC monitors. The move to LCD monitors means that corner desks are now excessive and modern office designs are incorporating bench or wave style desks with built in cable management and under desk pedestals for individual storage. And for those that are looking to maximise every available inch of working area you could look at fitting the LCD monitors to privacy screens between desks.

But if we go back even further, the advent of the desktop PC created a furore over the potential for a paperless office. Whilst computers have certainly reduced the level of paperwork, very few companies could claim to be paper-free or indeed have any inclination to achieve it in the future.

Record and filing storage therefore remains a key consideration in most office environments, however too many organisations rely on the traditional banks of grey filing cabinets. Not only are these an eye-sore, they are also a poor use of space.

Any facilities manager worth their salt will understand that there are significant financial gains to be achieved by efficient storage and filing systems.

Not only can you reduce the floor area and the associated costs taken by storage systems, there are also major monetary gains available from the impact storage can have on personnel costs, churn, productivity and speed of information retrieval.

High density storage walls can transform an office environment creating a stylish storage solution that can also double as an effective partitioning system. The opportunity of creating floor to ceiling storage capability could increase your storage capacity by as much as 50% whilst using the same floor area. Or look at it another way. You could have the same amount of storage by using 50% less floor space.



With an array of finishes to suit every environment and complemented by accessories to store virtually every conceivable object, the days of the filing cabinet are numbered.

Storage can be further enhanced by systems such as the times2 filing system which as the name would suggest more than doubles the storage capacity of a traditional filing cabinet with the ability to rotate the inner system to provide access to 50% of the records stored at a time.

But it's not just about floor space. By integrating storage systems with work practices and assessing the requirements in terms of adjacency and frequency of access, companies can design storage solutions that boost productivity as well as maximising office space.

By creating team storage areas feeding into central storage systems that share consistent media, companies can dramatically reduce the floor area requirements of storage whilst supporting and in some cases defining the work processes of the team.

When it comes to storing large volumes of records on site companies can make significant savings through mobile and slide-a-side systems that enable quick access to large number of files without taking up entire offices.

But don't be fooled into thinking that archive storage means big boring grey boxes. Some of the latest intelligent filing systems boast electronic programming with their own remote control and have been created by the same designers of Bang and Olufsen hi-fis turning storage into stylish design features.

For companies located in industrial units that are looking at maximising office or production space, one potential solution may be a mezzanine floor. By building up, the same space required by office areas can be halved allowing more floor area for production facilities

Most modern car showrooms have identified the enormous space that mezzanines can create and indeed save from what is currently dead space. Visit some of the luxury car garages and you will see the levels of quality and sophistication that mezzanine floors can achieve.