



# Your guide to achieving an inspired office design.

BRING EMPLOYEES TOGETHER FOR A MORE EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE.



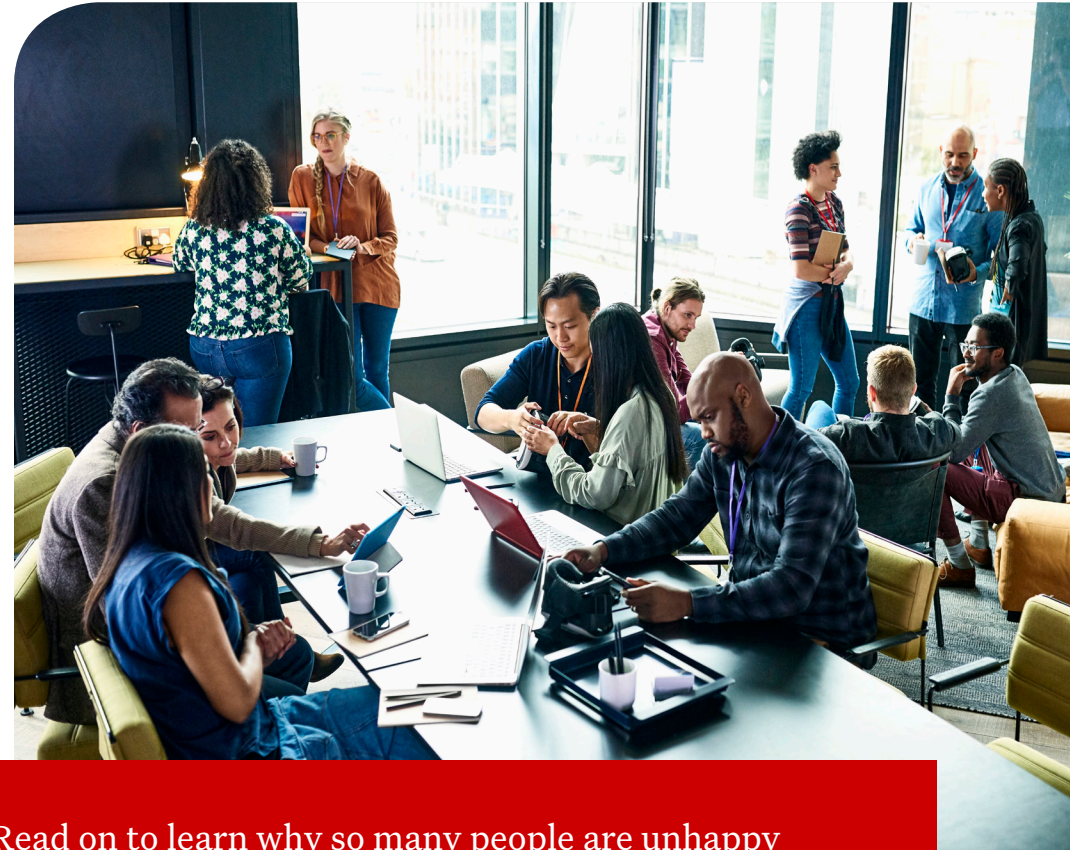
A group effort:

# Give employees a say, get their buy-in in return

Designing a new workspace or redesigning an office is a challenge in terms of logistics, cost and internal politics. For a truly successful design project, you want as many employees as possible to feel they've been heard; it ensures their support and enthusiasm for the new look.

*"It's human nature to want to feel included. If you feel included, you're going to feel proud. If you're working in a space you had a voice in, it's a win-win for everybody."*

— Anne Bradley, vice president for workplace interior design, Clark Nexsen



Read on to learn why so many people are unhappy with their current workspaces, and how you can lead the way toward design solutions.

Craving creativity:

# Turn employee dissatisfaction into solutions

Staples polled more than 300 administrative professionals and office managers and found that most people can find something — or several things — to change about their current workspace.

These respondents were hungrier for inspiration than they were for practical changes.

What change to your workspace would most improve your ability to do your job and/or increase your happiness at work?

**39%**

A more inspiring workplace

**26%**

More flexibility in terms of where I work

**13%**

Better access to equipment I need

**5%**

Improved meeting spaces

**17%**

Other

How could your office make it easiest for you to collaborate with co-workers?

**40%**

Make the workspace more inspiring to stoke creativity

**16%**

Provide more open tables and coworking spaces

**19%**

Provide better meeting technology to include remote workers

**15%**

Provide more private meeting space

**10%**

Other



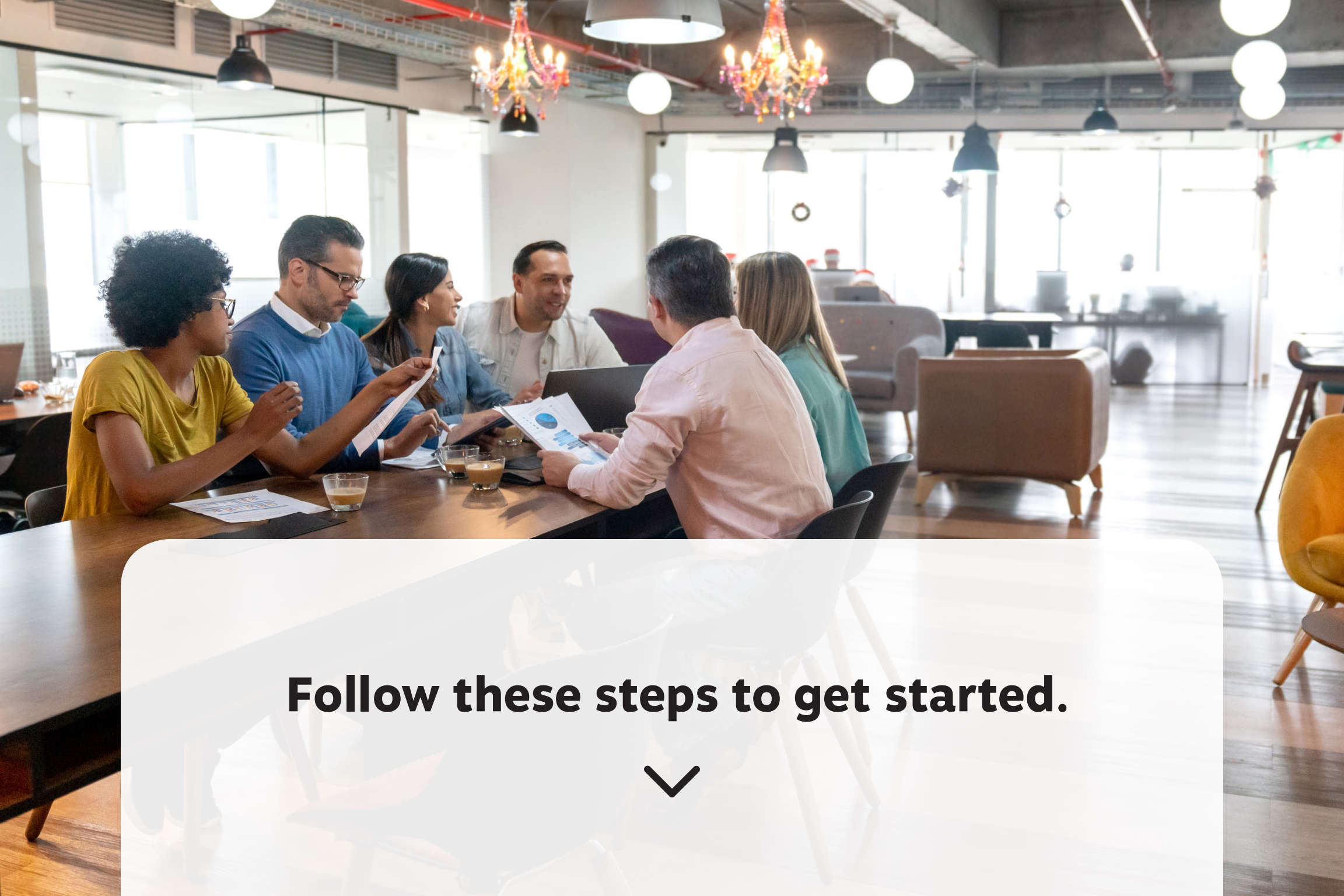




The takeaway?

**For happier employees, keep  
creativity and inspiration in mind  
when launching a redesign.**





**Follow these steps to get started.**





## Step 1:

# Ask a lot of questions before you begin the project

Research and discovery is the first step in a successful design or redesign, and it's as simple as asking employees how they work, what they need and what they want. Sometimes you have to ask these questions multiple times throughout a process.

Collect employee feedback via a survey or through designated representatives for each department. Don't make assumptions about what employees need to be productive and happy. Instead, ask enough questions to truly understand why employees hold certain opinions about what the space should look like.

For example, a lot of people think they want an open office, but it doesn't make sense for some workplaces, says Bradley of Clark Nexsen. Active listening throughout the process is how you get to the most honest, helpful suggestions.

### Questions to ask employees:

- What tasks do you perform during a workday?
- What's working in your current space?
- What's not working in your current space?
- What's something you'd want in a new space?
- What's something you wouldn't want in a new space?

### TWO TAKES ON OPEN OFFICES:

*"(I'd like my workspace) in a more open area so I am not so secluded from my peers and co-workers ... I'm isolated from everybody else in the company, and it's just lonely."*

— Kim R., receptionist

*"I wish I could put up walls for when I need to have private conversations or for when it gets too loud."*

— Caitlin C., HR manager



## Step 2:

# Think about workflow and department needs

When planning what and who goes where in a workplace, think about how work gets done on a daily basis.

- >> Should certain departments be physically near one another to facilitate collaboration?
- >> How many people work in each department, and how might that number change in the future?
- >> What equipment comes with each worker, and how much space does each person need?
- >> What IT requirements do we need to plan for?
- >> Which employees work on confidential matters, such as human resources and finance department staff?



Lynne F., an office manager, is frustrated with her desk, which is attached to a wall and forces her to sit with her back facing the door.

*"I don't always hear people coming, which is a big privacy issue because I process payroll and other private matters. Because my computer screen faces the door, as people walk by my office they can see what I'm working on. So I end up closing my door half the time, which no one likes."*



## Step 3:

# Don't forget the simple stuff

Read articles about office trends, and you'll hear about perks such as yoga studios, massage tables and sparkling water bars. But ask people what they want in a workspace, and the answers tend to be simpler: Most employees want to be comfortable, set up for productivity and given opportunities for inspiration and creativity.

### HERE ARE SOME TYPICAL REQUESTS FROM THE STAPLES POLL:

#### Storage

*"I have baskets and piles everywhere. I just need a couple of carts to put them on to make it appear more orderly."*

— Liz K., office manager

#### Space

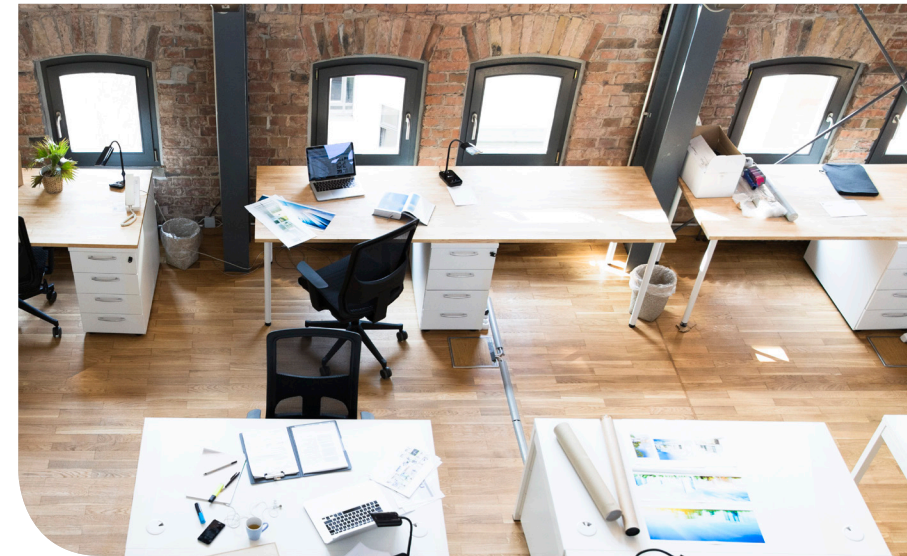
*"I need more room for my supplies in my office."*

— Annette H., bookkeeper

#### A desk that fits

*"I need a proper workstation. I'm short and can't find a desk with a low enough surface to be ergonomic."*

— Rebecca R., construction coordinator





# The simple stuff, continued ...



## Comfortable temperatures

*"I'd like a portable heater. It is always freezing."*

— April C., administrative assistant

## A place to rest

*"We need an improved breakroom. Ours is only big enough for two vending machines, a refrigerator, a coffee maker and microwaves. I'd love to have a space with tables and chairs."*

— Kim D., administrative assistant

## Some beauty

*"I'd love more color. We have white walls, white desks, white cabinets and gray carpet. We also have horrid overhead fluorescent lighting that makes you feel like you are on trial. I need warmth."*

—Alisha K., accounting specialist

## The chance to personalize

*"I would like walls, not a cubby, that I can really decorate and call my own."*

— Karen L., administrative assistant

## Step 4:

# Look for opportunities for fun and culture

Most of what employees want in a space is straightforward. But a new design or a redesign is also an opportunity to add special features, if they make sense for your business.

Amenities are increasingly important to attracting top talent, but they only succeed when they fit the company's culture, Bradley says. For example, a trendy bar for mixed drinks doesn't belong at a conservative workplace that never hosts a happy hour.

That said, adding new perks can help a business change its image; a stodgy firm known for its formality might broaden its appeal with a cool café or hangout space that has comfortable seating and informal workstations.

## Questions to ask about your culture:

- » If this office had a personality, what would it be?
- » Do we want this design to reinforce that personality, or alter it?
- » Do employees spend a lot of time working together?
- » Do employees socialize together?
- » Are there after-work activities in this office? Should there be?

### ONE EMPLOYEE'S WISH:

*"I'd like to have a game room! I think it would help employees wind down at lunch and be refreshed for the next four hours at work. Also, it might inspire camaraderie."*

—Jessica C., administrative assistant





## Step 5:

# Keep everyone updated



As the project progresses, keep employees apprised of its status and any important changes. This is helpful for avoiding surprises that might erode support among employees, especially those who aren't part of regular discussions.

Bradley recommends regular “town hall” updates; you can do one session with the whole workforce or smaller sessions by department.

These meetings should focus on a particular topic, such as construction updates or timelines. This allows people to feel included even if they can't dictate the direction of the project, Bradley says. And when the new space is finally open, people can focus on getting to work rather than griping about what didn't turn out the way they expected.

In summary:

## Include many voices, but do it strategically

When planning a workplace design or redesign, remember to ...

- >> Solicit suggestions and opinions via a survey or through department representation.
- >> Look for opportunities to inspire creativity.
- >> Spend time researching how the work is currently done and how it can be done better.
- >> Plan according to department needs.
- >> Remember the basics: comfort, productivity, happiness.
- >> Put in a special feature, like a café or a game room, if it makes sense for your culture.
- >> Keep everyone updated on progress and changes.



For more inspiration for office design and productivity, visit [staples.com/resources](https://staples.com/resources).