

Taking action toward an active office



Looking for a way to put your office into motion? Try transitioning from a sedentary space to a truly active environment. According to Susan Kill, VP and GM of Furniture at Staples, having an active office means promoting not only health and wellness among individuals but also collaboration among your entire team.

To her, an active office inspires “creative movement,” which goes far beyond getting people out of their desk chairs. Embracing a mobile lifestyle attracts cutting-edge talent and fuels a more engaged office culture. It all starts with having an innovative space filled with inviting furniture. Here are Kill’s best tips to get you started in making your office more active.

1. INSPIRE COLLABORATION

Making your office more collaborative starts with inviting collaboration in creative ways. That means promoting movement and interaction with bright spaces that make working together easier and more approachable. For a truly collaborative workspace, Kill recommends thinking beyond traditional conference rooms and integrating soft seating areas with couches and chairs that encourage casual conversations. When a flat surface is necessary, integrate standing-height tables that feel less rigid than conference tables, causing a shift toward a more open mindset. Though a fully open office environment might create more problems than it provides solutions, fostering an environment that encourages coworkers to mingle and interact outside of meetings can improve the collaborative nature of an organization. Making some simple furniture additions is a great start in developing work spaces that facilitate stronger, more collaborative teams.

DO:

Integrate casual meeting areas with soft seating and standing-height tables to drive more collaboration in your workplace.

DON'T:

Let your workplace design limit casual office interactions or minimize collaboration by keeping it in the conference room.

2. IMPROVE EMPLOYEE HEALTH

According to a recent Staples Workplace Survey, 80% of today’s employees believe their employers have a responsibility to keep them mentally and physically well. Taking a more ergonomic approach to your workplace can help you meet those expectations and keep employees healthy. Kill recommends not only opening your workspace up and but also finding ways to motivate employees to move about throughout the day. Breaking down physical barriers also provides employees with better views of each other throughout the day, which promotes a more friendly environment and encourages collaboration. Some workplaces even integrate office-wide afternoon stretching sessions to help employees stay loose from start to finish.

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Once you've opened your space up, additions like height-adjustable workspaces improve employee circulation and mental health. Changing postures and positions throughout the day can go a long way in promoting better health in your office, so it's important to encourage employee movement, verbally and with furniture solutions.

DO:

Provide employees with access to furniture that challenge traditional work styles in health-forward ways, like desk risers or standing desk options.

DON'T:

Expect all employees to work to their healthiest, highest potential when they aren't given workspace options.

3. INSPIRE COLLABORATION

In the modern workplace, there are ways to gain energy throughout the day besides caffeine. According to Kill, a team-based office structure puts employees in a position to gain energy from each other, which inspires stronger ideas and rewards working as a cohesive unit. This cross-pollination of thought is easiest when both office executives and the office space itself encourage collaboration among employees. Stimulate teamwork by facilitating team building and emphasizing each employee's responsibility to be a team player. For example, some companies allow teams to play music of their choosing out loud during certain times of the day to give a quick boost or end the day on a high note. Beyond that, office layout and furniture can really drive the team-first message home. Letting teams arrange their own work areas and meet in casual settings facilitates stronger team dynamics. Additionally, breaking down physical barriers between employees, such as cubicles, encourages more unplanned interactions and builds trust.

DO:

Open your office up to a team-first mindset that energizes employees.

DON'T:

Assume employees will build strong team dynamics without the right tools to make it happen.

4. INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY

The key to designing effective office spaces is striking balance between functionality and visual appeal. By providing employees with an inspiring space filled with tools that fuel great work, you develop a culture that facilitates productivity at every turn. According to Kill, creating a pro-productivity environment starts with integrating the right technology and touches in the right spots.



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For example, any space intended for meetings must have an appropriate number of power outlets, and desk areas require lighting that energizes without being too overwhelming. Additionally, provide employees with an ample amount of privacy and storage. Once you've maximized your space's functionality, boost its visual appeal by choosing colors and wall art that demonstrate your individual business's culture.

DO:

Give employees the tools they need to succeed, from useful technology to fresh storage options.

DON'T:

Emphasize visual appeal over functionality, or vice versa.

PROS AND CONS.

Not all offices are meant to work in the same way. Finding an office design that energizes employees and fits your company's goals is key to making the most of your space.

53% of employees in open offices describe the space as collaborative.

38% of employees in closed offices describe the space as collaborative.

37% of employees in open offices believe their office design creates distractions.

28% of employees in closed offices believe their office design creates distractions.



To take your first steps toward a more active office and learn more, visit [Staples](#) or give us a call at 1-844-243-8645.