



nerej

Who needs a desk when the whole office is your workspace?

March 05, 2015 - Front Section

We've all heard the debate over open offices: having open space breeds collaboration and innovation, but it can be distracting to employees who need more private, quiet space to focus, whether it's for one phone call or the whole day. While working in an open office is appealing to some, others might find it overwhelming or ill-suited to their personal workplace needs.

For companies rethinking their office layout, a critical concept to keep in mind is in-office mobility. By expanding an employee's workspace options beyond just their desk, a company can ensure they are providing a productive and comfortable work environment for all employees as they move through the course of their days.

A great example of this is global advertising agency Arnold Worldwide and its parent company Havas. When moving more than 500 employees to Boston's Downtown Crossing, Havas wanted to foster the kind of collaboration needed to generate the creative work the media conglomerate is known for. Private offices were not part of the new layout, marking a deliberate departure from the 85% closed office plan of the firm's previous offices. Instead, the integration of over 60 conference rooms, flexible-use work stations, a company caf   and bars - one of which is appropriately known as Barnold - reinforces the firm's community-oriented culture and facilitates informal collaboration.

Giving employees mobility within the office is vital. A caf   can fuel organic conversations over cups of coffee. Those looking to focus can find a quiet space away from the buzz of the office. When designers do away with individual offices and cubicles and instead begin to think about a "desk" as a myriad of workspace options, they will better meet the needs of both employees and a company looking to foster creativity while preserving productivity.

Victor Vizgaitis, AIA, LEED AP, is principal, Sasaki Associates, Boston.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540