

Fitout trends you need to understand

Which trends will be important to your office and deliver the greatest benefits

Commercial trends - Spring 2011

With CBD office vacancy rates finally tightening in QLD, and premium tenants stepping up to secure space in some of Brisbane's premium locations it is timely to consider how fitouts are being done by the biggest and best in the market. Our Project Management fitout and relocations team, led by Alex Prenzel are seeing four emerging trends. Which ones are important to your office?

Flexible or Activity Based Working

Flexible work environments or Activity Based Working (ABW) is a concept that focuses on collaboration, offering a mix of work spaces that sit the range of an organisations activities from individual focused work to project based or team oriented work.

A distant relation of the 90s concept of hot desking, ABW takes flexibility much further, and adds culture where hot desk environments removed it. In an ABW designed office staff are given the freedom to

work anywhere, anytime and there is plenty of collaborative space. People can book desks, but the real encouragement is to drive people to work, think and implement together.

ABW works well in interactive environments where staff works on multiple projects and must share ideas with each other constantly. And it is surprisingly economical on space, accommodating 20 to 40 percent more staff in most flexible designs.

"The Macquarie Bank Shelley Street offices in Sydney are renowned for their activity based environment, offering flexible deskspaces and up to 30% of the space for collaboration in curtained breakout areas. Staff were trained extensively when the office opened in how to manage the change of workplace dynamics and now thrive in the open environment," said Alex Prenzel, Senior Project Manager of commercial office fit outs at Savills Project Management.

ABW can also allow for clever cost management as projects change, move and staff allocations are reorganised, and they have been proven to minimise printing and paper use as people simply don't want to store and carry paper around.

"In Macquarie, when they needed to move an 80 person team to another area within the building recently, the



Macquarie Bank fitout, Sydney

cost was almost nil because of the flexible way technology, phone and operations decisions have been made during the conceptualisation of the building," said Alex.

Keti Malkoski Workplace Research Psychologist from Schiavello emphasises that before an organisation decides to adopt Activity Based Working as a physical workplace approach, it needs to ensure that it is the right fit: the right fit for its people and their work.

"It is important to recognise that one size does not fit all in a physical workplace approach. To determine whether ABW is appropriate for your organisation, an analysis must be conducted upfront to understand the needs of the workforce – now and in the strategic future. Importantly, ABW will not be an appropriate



Macquarie Bank fitout, Sydney

For further information please contact:



Alex Prenzel
Senior Project Manager
T: 07 3018 6700
M: 0419 802 618
E: aprenzel@savills.com.au

Savills Project Management
Level 9, 175 Eagle Street
Brisbane QLD 4000



physical workplace match for every organisation's workforce," she said.

Keti adds, for Activity Based Working to be successful, a structured change management program must also be implemented.

"Users should be supported with the appropriate education and training, and new behaviours must be reinforced for all employees, especially leaders," she said.

Well-Considered Technology Integration

With the changes to workplaces driving greater flexibility, one of the most important trends we are seeing in workplace design is more cleverly considered technology integration.

"To get a flexible environment to work, the technology department must be central to the whole design process and information technology often ends up being more than 20-30% of a new office project budget. Technology requirements of teams, collaboration spaces and beyond office activities need to be defined clearly and this information must

underpin the strategy for relocation and fitout, ideally before the space is selected and project budget set," said Alex.

In financial institutions, fitout projects often have large and complex IT requirements, and these require careful management through the early stages of design to ensure costs don't blow out retrofitting operational requirements.

"Gone are the days of IT being an afterthought and a non-core activity within businesses. No matter what business people are in, these days, all businesses rely heavily on their IT, as we found out during the QLD floods," said Alex.

Keti Malkoski agrees that technology supports us and the way we work; continuously promoting flexibility. However, our physical workplaces need to be just as flexible. "Ultimately, there needs to be a balance between the technology, the physical workplace and most importantly, the people," she said.

Authentic Design

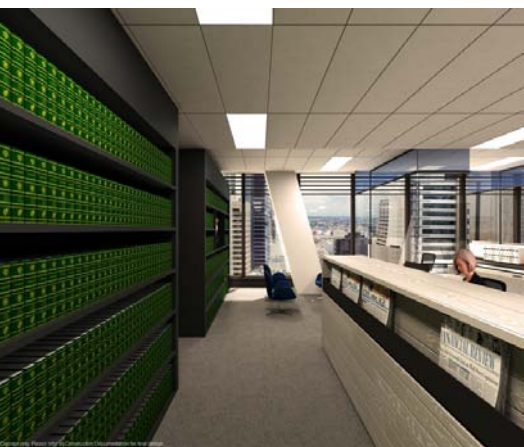
Another trend we are seeing driven by the fluctuating economy is the visual impression of workplaces. No longer are companies trying to take a cookie cutter approach to slick commercial offices, opting instead for fresh faced, visually stimulating and creative environments that improve morale, boost productivity and encourage a friendly vibe from both clients and staff alike.



Arrow Energy fitout, Brisbane

For those going down this path, gone are the days of flashy bright colours and useless art pieces. Instead we are seeing more sustainable designs with natural finishes, and soft variable lighting, giving the offices a more real look that makes employees more comfortable and relaxed, and clients less afraid to commit. It is often a corporate identity driven move, where a company is trying to differentiate itself from its competition through culture, environment and mood.

Keti has done extensive research at Schiavello on workplace aesthetics. From a psychological perspective, her research demonstrates that successful physical workplaces are those that utilise aesthetics to actively promote user comfort.



Norton Rose fitout, Brisbane

For further information please contact:



Alex Prenzel
Senior Project Manager
T: 07 3018 6700
M: 0419 802 618
E: aprenzel@savills.com.au

Savills Project Management
Level 9, 175 Eagle Street
Brisbane QLD 4000



project
management

Specifically, workplaces that allow individuals and teams to express their identities (unique or common) via aesthetics are most successful as they allow for personalisation and foster feelings of belongingness – helping users to attach to the workplace and ultimately the organisation.

Carbon Reduced

The final trend we are seeing is the move to carbon neutral, which is certainly high on the agenda for many tenants as they fit out new facilities.

Energy efficient office buildings are hot property in all the capital cities at the moment. The move towards carbon neutral offices requires companies to take a long hard look at their operational efficiencies as they plan their fitout design and future work practises. The ideal time to change to change energy usage, reduce waste and cut impact on the environment is when planning the new fitout with the selection of efficient lighting, heating and cooling systems and commercial appliances.

Other considerations we find important include:

- Changing the cultural ethos behind how the office prints, uses and stores documents
- Encourage reduce, reuse and recycle strategies and provide streamered waste disposal to support these techniques.
- Careful selection of furniture and finishes with consideration of the lifecycle of the product ideally from cradle to cradle.

“We live in a world where environmental considerations, discussed regularly, are important to us and our future. Therefore, we want to see appropriate considerations of the environment in all facets of our life – including our work and the supporting physical workplace,” said Keti.

“From a business perspective, an environmentally healthy workplace can provide a competitive advantage and assist an organisation in positive branding to internal employees and external clients. Because we value the environment, a environmentally healthy workplace can ultimately assist in attracting and retaining top talent,” she said.

Savills Project Management are working hard as the managers of some of Queensland’s highest profile premium grade fitouts.

Contact us to find out more about how we can apply these trends to your office.



Virgin Australia Head Office, Brisbane



For further information please contact:



Alex Prenzel
Senior Project Manager
T: 07 3018 6700
M: 0419 802 618
E: aprenzel@savills.com.au

Savills Project Management
Level 9, 175 Eagle Street
Brisbane QLD 4000



project
management