

A man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a plaid shirt over a dark t-shirt, is looking down at a desk. The background is a blurred office space with a corkboard, a framed abstract painting, and a window. A semi-transparent grey box is overlaid on the image, containing the title text.

# 5 Tips To Unleash

THE CREATIVE WORKPLACE

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The workplace has changed dramatically over the last 10 years, evolving from the Office as a Product - a place to go to do your job surrounded by tall beige walls or panels - to the Office as an Experience - a diverse environment for unleashing opportunities for innovation and creativity, and aligned to support what people DO and how they FUNCTION, rather than by job title.

There are central characteristics that are hallmarks of a creative workplace, let's specifically look at these 5 concepts:

1. **CIRCULATION** and layout
2. **Minimize DISTANCE**
3. **Make a VISUAL CONNECTION**
4. **Diverse Areas for COLLABORATION**
5. **Sense of Wellbeing**

To get started transforming your workplace into a productive and profitable tool for creativity, begin your design process incorporating these 5 concepts, or use to alter your current workspace, and start seeing results.

## CIRCULATION AND LAYOUT

### 1

Think of your office as a community, or a town hub, with streets, sidewalks, paths, gathering area, parks; a place for neighbors to interact.

We know that informal interaction is the most robust method for increasing performance and effectiveness. These moving encounters flourish in well-planned spaced. Make it easy to navigate your office space by:

- **Keeping work areas off of windows**
- **Allow for complete access around the perimeter**
- **Provide plenty of interior corridors**
- **Minimize turns**
- **Keep it simple**
- **Offer workspace choices**
- **Eliminate dead ends**

You know what happens when a person or group of people get stuck in a "dead zone"? They act as if it is their own territory that only they control. This is not conducive to an effective office environment. Make sure that everyone can spatially connect to the larger group.

If you can't eliminate the dead end, then make it into a place where people WANT to go, and feel welcome like a staff café, co-working space, fitness room or recreational area.



## MINIMIZE DISTANCE

2



If your co-worker is across the office, on another floor, or in another building, even off-site and hard to get to, you won't go there! Research shows that optimal separation for spontaneous communication between co-workers is 33 meters or less.

Technology helps to some extent, but it just makes sense to be physically nearest to the people you work with every day.

Keep teams or people that work together adjacent to each other. Re-think your teams if you need to. This makes it easier to spontaneously share information and ideas, and work together.

When paired with flexible and adjacent meeting areas, staff may not have to spend as much time finding and scheduling conference rooms just to have a conversation to share information and ideas. think about how much time and money this could save.



When you can see your team, know if they are in the office and where, what they are working on, and whether they are available, it makes it easy for people to stay connected without interruption – a great form of nonverbal communication.

How do we do this? Eliminate barriers. Use low panels or NO panels. Use glass if you need enclosed spaces. This helps eliminate the feeling of alienation or separation and encourage sense of community.

Another advantage; you may be able to actually enjoy seeing the outdoors - trees, changing weather, other people, grass, sky – if you don't have to look at panels or drywall. A client recently moved from an office literally without any windows to a light and bright space created by use of low panels and surrounded by windows with views of the treetops and urban views. They tell me it is like working in a tree house. What a connection they each now have to the outer world during the workday!

What do these elements have in common? They each robustly support group-based work. It's all about eliminating work silos and providing a dynamic, flexible environment.

## MAKE A VISUAL CONNECTION

3



## COLLABORATION

### 4

In W. Edwards Deming's classic book *Out of the Crisis*, he taught us the value of working together as a team. Each person brings a different area of expertise to the table and when we collaborate, we can develop better ideas more efficiently. These same principles apply to the workplace and the design of the workplace has responded.

We know that people collaborate best when seated side by side, so include a wide variety of diverse areas suited to the way you want to collaborate - co-working for flexible group space including soft seating for informal conversation and huddle areas for small groups. Remember to include areas for quiet focus and provide choices and options for collaboration spaces. Ideas do not happen in a vacuum. Ideas incubate and grow when shared and combined with other good ideas. Maybe you have heard the phrase,

"Chance favors the connected mind". Increase the opportunities for a team to connect.





Why do we care about employee Wellbeing? Wellbeing is the outcome of a sense of connection to co-workers, of shared mission, control and choices in the physical environment, a sense of participation, accomplishment, and social interaction. Wellbeing results in opportunities for Work-Life balance. A recent Gallup report titled *Women in America: Work and Life Well-Lived*, research shows that while income is important, 60% of women rate the importance of greater work-life balance as a key factor in choosing a workplace.

Wellbeing contributes to improved employee retention and workplace engagement.

So when you have a bring-your-pet-to-work-day, provide an employee coffee or cereal bar, include a ping pong table and other places for social interaction, you are contributing to Work-Life balance.

Employees may actually LIKE being at work! And at the end of the day, they can head out feeling less stressed and able to spend quality time with family and friends.

Whether designing new space or altering existing, integrate these 5 concepts now to unleash your creative workplace. Each concept contributes to the *Workplace as an Experience*. This is where good ideas come from!

## AN OVERALL SENSE OF WELLBEING

5



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Robin is the CEO and Owner of InteriorLOGIC, Inc., which she founded in 1989. InteriorLOGIC is an SBA Certified WOSB and a Woman-Owned Business Enterprise certified by the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration.

Robin has more than 35 years of experience in the planning and design of workplace environments. Robin provides expertise in the evaluation and integration of workplace change, including strategic facility planning, interior design concepts and branding, budget development, project planning and quality assurance.

The proprietary Strategic Facility Planning™ method developed by Robin, SFP360®, is unique to InteriorLOGIC core services and the framework of our planning process.

For 11 years prior to founding InteriorLOGIC, Inc., Robin built the design, sales and marketing brand of an office furniture dealership representing a major office systems manufacturer. She is a proud recipient of the 2014 Governor's Trailblazer Award.