

new interior design trends



TOPIC

Design aspects of
office architecture

WHAT'S NEW?

Colour and material trends
in the office

REFERENCES

Infotech – enhanced motivation
through creative interior design

The colours of office architecture: balanced tension in the office



Helga Eigner
Interior Designer,
Roomware Office Consulting

It is all about relationships

Offices are built for people to enjoy living and working together. So everything should be orientated towards people. That's why the main objective of good office architecture is to put people, functions, rooms and equipment in the right relationship with one another, bringing them into a shared context. It is particularly important to harmonise potentially polarising elements. On the one hand, there are the rational considerations: people as performers, who have to carry out functions efficiently. On the other hand is the emotional factor: people with all their senses, emotions, fears and pleasures. It is here that interior architecture and interior design can make an important contribution. If we get the emotional side right, this will have a direct, positive effect on the rational factors.

The interplay of colours and light

Colours and light play a very important part in trying to establish a good relationship between people and their working environment. They determine the "visual climate" of the office. In my projects, I always aim to achieve a balanced tension, which supports either concentration or communication depending on the function of the room. Three simplified colour examples will help to put this point across:

- Blue and aqua tones promote concentration and have a calming influence, for example, as a cool balancing effect in lively office areas
- Yellow and orange have a stimulating effect and promote creativity. They are ideal in communication areas.
- With its earthy effect, brown is primarily suitable for use on the floor. Brown represents stability.

To ensure that colours have the desired beneficial effect, colour and space must be used in the right proportion. This is determined primarily by the functions and proportions of the room. In rooms, which are permanently occupied, colour should only be used as an accent; more colour is called

for in communication areas or recreational areas.

Contrary trends

On the lookout for current trends in interior and furniture design, two contrary developments can be identified: On the one hand, absolute reduction predominates. These offices are presented as colourless and straight. Surfaces are smooth, clearly shaped and either very dark or very light. On the other hand, polarising colours are used to determine the overall look providing highlights with striking effects, embedded in 70s patterns.

Regarding the choice of materials, there is still a clear trend towards accentuation. Matt wood tones – dark or comparatively light – combined with very diverse colours and materials. Traditional carpeting is beginning to lose its monopoly of the floor. Alongside wood, interest is increasing in modern, flat woven fabrics, as well as very homely textile structures and good-quality imitation stone. However, all of these developments demand adequate acoustic measures, such as the use of acoustic panels or textiles. These increasingly homely aspects are in sharp contrast with the synthetic, technology-driven design aspirations of modern office architecture. In this context, glass plays a special role. Modern glass technology means that glass can now be used where it has never been used before. Walls and sliding doors, made of glass with different levels of transparency – for example, satinised – and with different colour tones, create openness and differentiation at the same time. These trends promote team-orientated structures and at the same time combine the emotionality and rationality of modern office architecture.

Interior design has a powerful influence on what happens inside a room. It supports and accompanies the people who spend time there. Architecture and organisation, well-being and productivity are interwoven in an ongoing process. For this reason, office architecture must always be seen as a complex totality.



Office design as a factor of success

Although office design is nowadays primarily determined by considerations of productivity and efficiency, the erroneous opinion that productivity and well-being in the workplace contradict each other, still persists. Precisely the opposite can be proved to be the case:



Successful office design promotes the well-being of the individual; this contributes to motivation and therefore significantly improves performance.

The office as living space: efficiency through well-being

Well-being and efficiency are inseparably linked. This explains why emotional factors such as an interesting "office architecture"

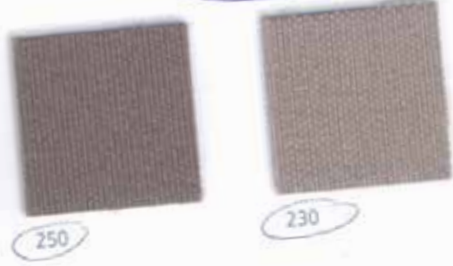
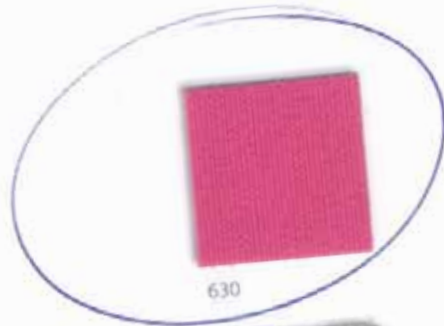


als as sources of productivity

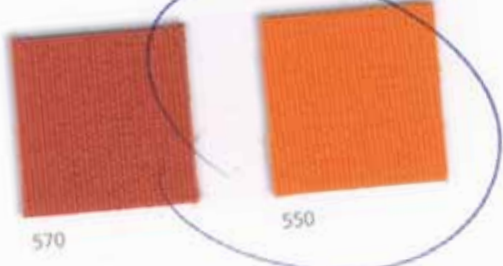
It's all in the mix:
material mix and design as core
elements of office architecture



are becoming more and more important for newly designed offices. Employee motivation must never be undermined by a "grey, everyday office atmosphere" with uninspiring architecture and furnishings.



On the contrary, a strong positive impact on the well-being and performance of employees can be achieved with creative interior architecture and good furniture design.



How to set the perfect tone: creativity and colour competence

From the design perspective, the main goal of office design is to create a **"balanced tension"** in the synthetic environment of the room – floor, walls, ceiling and furnishings. This can be achieved amongst other factors by the following:

- a careful balance between absence of stimulation and over-stimulation
- a balance between cool and warm colour tones and
- a conscious control of light/dark contrasts.

The competent use of colours plays an important role in this context. A vigilance study monitoring error quotas and long-term attention span carried out at the University of Vienna unambiguously demonstrated the positive influence of colours on office work. Monotonous offices were associated with massively higher error quotas among the study volunteers in comparison to people working in a colourful room atmosphere.

However, colour must be used with caution, especially when dealing with short-lived

fashions. "Coloured" need not necessarily mean "brightly coloured". Excessively strong colour combinations in permanently occupied offices create a distracting, performance-reducing overload of stimulation. The design goal should always be a "balanced tension", ideally supported by a corresponding mix of the materials used (wood, metal, textiles, plastics, plants etc.).

Empty space at the interface between efficient working processes

High-quality office architecture combines productivity with well-being and integrates all functional areas of the office: work, communication, recreation, archives and technology. Genuinely creative office design is in the early stages of development. But like a young plant, it is definitely growing! It can only be hoped that the more courageous architects, designers and corporate decision-makers will win through in the long-term – to achieve improved efficiency through well-being.

For further information on design aspects of office architecture, please contact us.

Integrated holistic office competence: innovative organisations put their trust in Wiesner-Hager



Visionary office architecture for the highest demands

In the Infotech / Ocilion project, Wiesner-Hager has once again demonstrated its leading role in the implementation of integrated, holistic office designs. The requirements of these IT and media companies were clearly formulated: relocation of the individual companies from two former sites into a combined office building in Ried im Innkreis (Upper Austria). Beyond this, a generous and flexible workplace design

was required taking into consideration anticipated plans for expansion. On the basis of the concept for organisational and building use provided by our partner company Roomware Office-Consulting, Wiesner-Hager developed an integrated, holistic office architecture concept, which fulfilled all of these goals in full. These offices with approximately 50



workstations (individual and group offices), integrated communication rooms and working cafés, offer security for the future by taking dynamic growth into consideration. The intelligent room and function concept ensures a high-efficiency workflow and at

the same time supports the flexible communication requirements of the IT and TV industries. The offices have a closed wall structure, but transparency is created with glass walls towards the corridor zones. Storage space, archive zones and technology islands are skilfully and strategically located in the generous corridor zone in the middle of the building.



The autonomy of the project partners collaborating with one another is guaranteed through a consistent implementation of the corporate design for the foyer/lounge and corridor zones. In the interior design concept, the image factors of competence and harmony are expressed through creative choices of colours and materials.



paro_net



outline_net



flextable

Current successful projects: BBG and Adidas rely on Wiesner-Hager

Two completely different major customers also put their trust in innovations from Wiesner-Hager. Presented with a tender from the Austrian Federal Purchasing Agency (BBG) for more than 12,000 swivel chairs, the Wiesner-Hager model paro succeeded in asserting itself against numerous competitors. In the case of Adidas,

Wiesner-Hager won the order to furnish the new communications centre in Herzogenaurach. Once again, Wiesner-Hager demonstrated its leadership competence in the communications sector with 1200 cantilever chairs from the new outline_net range and 120 folding tables from the flextable range. Incidentally, both ranges of chairs – paro and outline – share a common innovation: the high-performance active-breathing webbing for the chair back.