

Workstations

General

Workstations are a major component of today's office spaces. The general concept of designing workstations is to provide efficient designed workspaces in the least amount of space. With rising costs of office space, workstations provide a cost effective means of minimizing the workspace size while maximizing the efficiency of each work area. Workstation types include products that are panel based, free-standing desks, and desk systems with surface mounted screens.

Planning

- Establish a team to evaluate the workstation requirements for each department or workgroup.
- Plan your workstation around work processes, employee communication, equipment and storage requirements.
- Plan for easy access of frequently used items such as reference material, files, equipment, etc.

Tips

- *Anticipate your growth. Does your office space and workstation size allow for future expansion?*
- *Determine the general budget per workstation. Budgets may determine the size and type of workspaces that will be designed. Panel based workstations are generally higher priced than desk based workstations.*
- *Don't be strait jacketed by what's been done before. Consider different layouts and workstation sizes.*

Layouts

- Select the workstation layouts that best suits your work process.
- Determine the privacy requirements. Different panel heights provide options for workstation privacy, sound control and storage options. Consider screen mounted desking options as a cost saving alternative.
- Locate all office equipment and storage and associated media in each workstation layout being considered.
- Evaluate your current and future storage needs (filing, binder or books, supplies etc.).
- Does the desk and equipment layout allow for ample writing and conferencing space?
- Does the layout afford adequate privacy, intercommunication? Consider higher panels along the spline to support overhead binder storage and lower panels separating the adjacent workstations to provide a more open work area.

Selecting a Manufacturer

- Evaluate each manufacturer's product offering against the layouts that have been selected.
- Review the range of products offering multiple layout opportunities. Can the same components be used in both in workstation and private office applications?
- Review the manufacturer's overall product line to meet additional furnishing needs such as seating, storage, conferencing, etc. It might be important to provide a common design element throughout all areas of the office environment which would include product design features, fabrics and finishes.
- Create a shortlist of manufacturers that meet your functional and aesthetic needs. Obtain comparative pricing based on layouts being considered and on other anticipated furnishing needs.

Tips

- *Get us involved as early as possible. We would welcome helping you during the design phase, as we can provide information on the best applications of our products and to advise on cost.*
- *Check on each manufacturer's standard lead times. If follow up purchases need to be delivered on an accelerated basis, check into standardizing on products offered in their quick-ship or in stock programs.*

Workstation Components

Panels

Workstation panels provide separation of space, sound control, support for workstation components, and for the distribution of voice/data wiring. Panels are available in standard fixed height, monolithic type design or more flexible panels that are segmented with stacking capabilities. This new panel design offers the ability to change the panel's height without the disrupting the workstation. This will reduce the cost of maintenance as well as the long-term cost of ownership.

Panel Heights

Common Panel Heights

Set panel heights for your desired level of privacy and overhead storage. Common heights are as follows:

- **42" High Panel:** Commonly used in reception areas and where total visual and verbal communication is required. A common application would be in a reception desk application or where employees that work closely on a consistent basis.
- **54"- 56" High Panel:** Provides seating privacy, but allows a visually open environment in a standing position. This height has limited overhead storage capabilities.
- **60"- 70" High Panel:** Provides standup privacy and is commonly used where substantial overhead storage is required.
- **70"- 80"+ High Panels:** Provides additional height where still further overhead storage is required or where sound privacy is paramount.

Tips

- *To provide a more open workstation environment, use higher panels (60"to 68") only where overhead storage is required and lower panels (42" - 56") to separate workstations.*
- *To allow more employees to benefit from natural light, align higher panels perpendicular and lower panels parallel to the windows.*
- *Consider using glass, especially with segmented style panels, to create a visual open environment while maintaining a degree of separation and sound control.*
- *Standardize workstations to use the fewest different panel heights and widths. This allows the greatest degree of flexibility during workstation reconfigurations and requires the least amount of inventory.*

Worksurfaces

Worksurfaces provides surfaces for writing, conferencing, and equipment support. When planning for each station's worksurface layout and size, is important to consider the amount of writing area required as well as the equipment be located in each workspace. This includes items such as computers, printers, fax machines and phone equipment.

Worksurface Shapes

Common Worksurface Shapes

- Rectangular: Commonly used in straight desk, desk return or credenza workstation layouts. Sizes start at 24" long and usually are sized in 6" increments to correspond to panel widths. Worksurfaces are normally 24", 30", and 36" in depth.
- Corner: Commonly used in workstations requiring additional depth for computers or other equipment. The corner unit is usually used with a rectangular worksurfaces returns on each side, thus creating a non-handed "L" layout. The corner units are designed to accept 24" and 30" deep returns on each side.
- Specialized Shapes: All manufacturers provide an offering of special worksurface shapes and sizes. These shapes provide a variety of teaming, desk and equipment support options. Review the worksurfaces offering by each manufacturer being considered and evaluate how they may be used in workstation layouts being considered.

Tips

- *Standardize worksurface sizes and shapes to accommodate as many workstation layouts as possible, allowing the greatest amount of flexibility during workstation reconfigurations.*
- *Does the manufacturer offer worksurfaces that can be used in private office applications in either freestanding or wall mounted applications.*
- *Verify wire management options provided with each manufacturer.*
- *Don't be afraid to try a corner or other special worksurface shapes, they are designed to make the workstations more efficient and more flexible.*
- *A speckled or flecked worksurface pattern can hide minor marks or flaws, while being easier on the eye. Many manufacturers offer wood grain laminate patterns that provide a rich look at no additional cost.*
- *Select a light color surface to minimize glare.*

Workstation Storage

Workstation Storage Options

Storage provided in workstations can accommodate binder, paper filing and bulk item storage. Planning for workstation storage is important. A properly designed workstation eliminates placing of items that are not being used on the worksurface.

Workstation Storage - Overhead

Open Shelf - Used for binder or notebook storage.

Binder Bin or Flipper Door Unit - Used for binder, notebook or bulk item storage. A flipper door or other closure improves aesthetics, while offering lockable security.

- Overhead storage units are normally panel mounted and start at 24" wide, increasing in 6" increments.
- Overhead storage units are normally installed on panels having a minimum height of 60", and are sized to match panel widths.
- Task lighting is commonly attached to the underside of overhead storage units.

Tips

- *Determine each workstation's security needs. Binder bins can be lockable.*
- *Locate the workstation's writing areas under overhead storage with task lighting may be installed.*

- *Locate overhead storage in locations that are easily reachable.*
- *Storage within workstations should be task-oriented, while storage outside workstations should be for long-term records, supplies or other intermittently used materials.*

Workstation Storage

Workstation Storage Solutions

Workstation Storage Types:

Box File Pedestal - Pedestal consists of one 6" drawer for miscellaneous items and one file drawer for hanging file storage. Usually hung from a worksurface and is typically the minimum amount of pedestal storage provided in a workstation.

Box Box File Pedestal - Pedestal consists of two 6" drawers and one file drawer for file storage. This pedestal is floor supported and may be used to support the worksurfaces.

File File Pedestal - Pedestal consists of two file drawers for hanging file storage.

Mobil Pedestal - Mobile pedestals are available in both box box file and file file drawer configurations.

Lateral File Storage - Two drawer lateral files located under the worksurface provide greater hanging file space.

Personal File Storage Towers - Personal storage towers provide one cabinet that has wardrobe, file and shelf storage in one cabinet.

Tips

- *Locate the box box file pedestal adjacent to the workstation's writing area for easy access to writing tools and paper storage.*
- *Use mobile pedestals where workstations that change frequently. A mobile pedestal may be used as an additional workspace when pulled out from under the worksurface.*
- *Don't overlook storage areas for personal belongings-purses, lunches, desk accessories, etc. The box box file pedestal is commonly used for this type of storage.*

Electrical

- Locate all equipment (computer, printers, fax, copier, phone calculator, radio, pencil sharpener, postage meter etc.) within the layout and provide the necessary power accordingly.
- Position duplex outlets near all equipment, including task lighting.
- Provide isolated electrical circuits or quality surge protection systems for electrically sensitive equipment (computers, faxes etc.) within your layout.
- Workstations typically have at least three duplexes. Most electrical systems support a four circuit - eight wire configurations. Be sure to check with an electrical engineer on local electrical codes.

Tips

- *Planning for the location of electrical receptacles is important during the planning phase.*

- *For a laptop or any other portable equipment, position the power supply at an easily accessible location (above the desk or worksurface).*

Phone - Voice/Data, Local Area Network

- Evaluate each vendor's wiring capacity against your wiring specifications and estimated wiring volume. Many manufacturers have the ability to run the wiring both in the base and in the top of the panel for easy access.
- Coordinate that the wiring to be installed is after the panel installation and before the components are installed. Be sure to locate the access boxes in a easy to get to location.
- Review each manufacturers access to wiring for ease of long term, flexibility, maintenance and repair.
- Locate phone, data and networking connections based on your workstation and equipment layouts.

Tips

- *For mobile computing, locate the data and networking connections in an accessible location, such as above the desk or worksurface.*
- *Your local phone service provider, data transmission or computer systems vendors may offer free design and planning services for your office networks. Get them involved during the design phase of your project.*

Lighting

- Locate task lighting above workstation or desk writing areas. Task lighting is usually installed under overhead storage units.
- To minimize glare and eyestrain, eliminate lighting from behind the computer screen.

Tips

- *Provide freestanding desk lights for a more sophisticated look and to provide directed lighting to the writing area.*
- *Consider investing in energy-efficient task lighting. The payback periods keep getting shorter, while the environmental impacts keep improving.*