



**BUSINESS
FURNITURE**

HOT DESKING

Most companies have unused desk space, created by people out on the road, on holiday or in meetings. As the knowledge worker of today becomes increasingly mobile, the workspace and number of desks required by many companies is actually much less.

But according to hotdesking experts this is somewhat misleading. What hotdesking actually does is to improve the intangibles in the workplace. Factors such as staff attraction and retention come into play. Employees enjoy more autonomy, can make quicker decisions and are empowered to manage their time according to their needs. This protects the intellectual capital of companies and encourages mobility and accessibility.

Bearing that in mind however, hotdesking can only succeed if the space issue is carefully considered. An office full of desks that people can plug into and use is not a proper hotdesking solution.

Having a mixture of desks with plugs and desks with computers, areas where people can sit and meet informally, and areas where people can meet formally is the real solution. Collaboration is often nipped in the bud because there's never a meeting room free. A hotdesk solution means people interact more.

The real key to hotdesking is getting everyone to understand just what you hope to achieve right from the start. A 'rule book' or strategy is necessary before you start and if you are doing it to 'save space' it's not going to work either.

Witness-based networks are a key enabler of hotdesking. An office equipped with wireless means a computer can work anywhere seamlessly, there is no need to plug in and out of the network and this is perfect for working outside the office in wireless hotspot areas, such as cafes and airport lounges.



Is your desk hot?

Hotdesking (verb. "to hotdesk") is also known as location independent working, where workers do not have their own desks but are allocated work space according to their needs. It can be refined to mean the sharing of a desk/seat/workstation arrangement by more than one member of staff.

Hotdesking is one of several new terms that were brought into common use in the 1990s to describe a new set of working practices. It is believed that this term originated from old naval practices called "hot bunking" where shifts of sailors would share limited bunk space.



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The main enabler of hotdesking is the “follow me” type of phone system. No matter what device you are using be it mobile, landline or internet, or where you are in the world, all you need to do with a “follow me” system is dial in to your network, hit a few buttons and all calls to your company phone number will be redirected automatically to you. All your customers need to remember is one number and with that they will get hold of you at home, on the move, or in the office. To them it will always seem as if you’re at your desk.

A hotdesking arrangement enables employers with workers who do not have overlapping shifts to make better use of the available resources. This system of working is also well suited to firms who have staff who are frequently out of the office, for example sales people who are mostly on the road, so that space within the office does not have to be allocated for them permanently.

What are contributing trends?

First impressions have always been a key consideration for designers planning office fit outs – hence the emphasis given to reception design. This is traditionally where a company can show its colours, its professionalism and its culture.



A lot of the staff work remotely, and this is reflected in the design of modern offices. Not surprisingly, internal office design also acknowledges the remote nature of a company’s work, with a design that breaks down the traditional office hierarchy.

No longer are many workstations crammed together, filling the available space, while other staff have large, allocated offices that were under utilized. This is increasingly becoming impractical and as consequence, there are hot-desking facilities for staff and touch-down spaces where workers can come in for a short time and plug in their laptops to connect to servers.

Staff book meeting rooms and larger work spaces when they are needed, which is the most efficient use of resources.

Another concept that many companies adopt is a flexible working environment, one that is designed to promote staff interaction. Desks can be grouped together as needed for teams working on specific projects. The trend is moving away from large workstations with high screens. Modern workstations are more compact, the screens are lower, which helps shift the focus away from a cubicle environment.

This kind of space planning allows more space for breakout areas which is a significant feature of the “new office”. Facilities such as the boardroom and meeting rooms are centralized so that they are more connected to the office environment. This type of arrangement means each space can be closed by operable doors or opened for functions, creating multi-purpose space.

Churn, change, merge, restructure, rapid growth, downsizing businesses are dynamic, evolutionary entities and often it is not possible to predict exactly what size and shape a business will be a year out, let alone in five years.



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People's work habits are changing too. Nowadays an individual may work in a lot of different places, at home, in a coffee shop, in hotels and at airports.

But businesses still need a physical space from which to operate and the people in them need furniture for their workspaces however it's no longer always necessary for individuals to have workspaces dedicated solely to them.

Desk Sharing

Desk sharing is generally the norm in call centers (where the same desk is often used by three people in a 24 hour period) and at helpdesks, and is becoming increasingly common in sales departments where reps may spend a lot of time on the road.





Desk sharing is led by larger organizations because real-estate is expensive and they can save money and more effectively use floor space by analyzing what their staff do during the day and how much time they actually spend at the office.



The way businesses organize desk sharing varies. Some use a locker system where employees have the documents and equipment that they personally need to do their jobs in a tray in a locker – and they slot these trays into the drawers of a desk when they arrive at work. Other businesses provide staff with a cupboard on wheels that they take to an available desk.

The basic concept of the hot desk is that the employer furnishes a permanent work surface which is available to any worker as and when needed. There is no personal domain pertaining to a particular worker and physical facilities are employed as and when needed. A collection of such workstations can be referred to as a mobility center. But regardless of what you call it, companies need to make ergonomic office furniture plans that will allow for this change in operation in the office environment.



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