

Workspace Interiors Services



Glossary of Terms

When considering a new project, it's important to know your options. Expand your knowledge of basic office furniture terms, workspace function definitions, and common design industry words and phrases. Then let your Workplace interiors specialist help you find products that fit your needs.

Basic Furniture Terms:

Accessories — Items that complete a workstation or private office, including office supplies, trash cans, keyboard trays, telephone headsets and lumbar support.

Acoustic Panel — Systems furniture panel that divides space and absorbs sounds within the workstation.

Ancillary space — Secondary office space including common areas, kitchens, cafeterias, waiting rooms, mail/storage rooms and conference areas.

Casegoods — Any cabinet-like non-system furniture, mostly used in reference to wood or laminate private office or conference room furniture accessories.

Conference Room — A traditional designated group workspace, most often consisting of a sizable table with seating around it.

Desking — Worksurface solutions for private offices and open plan workstations that don't feature cubicles.

Laminate — A scratch- and stain-resistant decorative overlay that adheres to particleboard or flatboard.

Lateral File — A filing cabinet that is wider than it is deep to allow for side-by-side or front-to-back filing. Typically comes in widths of 30 inches, 36 inches and 42 inches, with varying heights.

Panel System — A desk system that consists of

modules that allow for a variety of configurations to maximize available office space, and address power and communications wiring.

Private Office — An office with full walls and a door, usually occupied by one person. Often reserved for management-level and higher employees.

Reception Area — The waiting area in an office where visitors arrive to check in for meetings.

Seating | The various types of chairs that are found in an office setting, including task chairs, conference chairs, stackable seating and guest seating.

Systems Furniture — A general term for bundles of panels, work surfaces, shelves and other items sold by a single manufacturer as a package for open area offices.

Task Chair — A chair provided that supports employees to work at a desk.

Task Light — An additional light source usually provided at a desk or workstation. It can be freestanding or mounted underneath an overhead storage cabinet.

Training Room — A room used primarily for one-on-one staff instruction. Flexible furniture that addresses various classroom styles.

Veneer — A surface treatment that uses thin layers of wood applied to the substructure of desks and furniture, giving the impression of solid wood.

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Vertical File — A filing cabinet that is deeper than it is wide, in which files can only be stored front to back.

Wall System — Movable, floor-to-ceiling architectural panels — usually demountable — used for private office and conferencing space configurations.

Workstation — A small, self-contained workspace separated by wall panels. It includes work surfaces and related components and seating for the employee who inhabits it.

Functional Concept Terms

Collaborative Space — A workspace that allows groups of people to come together to solve problems and brainstorm ideas.

Common Areas — Space available for all employees to use; e.g., hallways, lobby, restrooms, collaborative spaces.

Flexible Workspace — Workspaces that can be reconfigured for different functions and needs, or policies that allow employees to work when and where it makes the most sense.

Focus Room — Quiet space for one to two people in an open office setting.

Hoteling — A method of supporting reservation-based, unassigned seating in an office environment. Similar to hot desking.

Huddle Space — Areas for informal meetings.

Open Concept — Office spaces that are not divided by floor-to-ceiling walls and have minimal private offices. Often include breakout rooms and meeting areas.

Phone Booth — A single-person room or desking area where an employee can make private conference or personal calls or complete short-term projects that require additional quiet or privacy.

Remote Working/Remote Workers — Employees who work from home or somewhere other than the company's office building. Also referred to as "mobile workforce."

Touchdown Space — A workspace that is used as a substitute for a larger office, often by remote workers.

Water Feature — Self-contained (often indoor) fountain, pool, pond, etc., that is usually powered by a pump. Used as a design element in spaces from office reception areas to hospitals and clinics.

Design Industry Terms

Aesthetics — A set of principles concerned with the nature and appreciation of art, beauty and taste.

ANSI/BIFMA — Furniture performance standards certification program through the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the Business & Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association (BIFMA). Standards include comfort, safety, sustainability and durability.

Asset Disposition — The process of selling, scrapping, recycling, donating or disposing of assets including office furniture.

Biophilia — A hypothesis developed by Edward O. Wilson that suggests there is an intrinsic bond between humans and other living systems.

Corporate Culture — A blend of the values, beliefs, taboos, symbols, rituals and myths all companies develop over time.

Ergonomics — The science of fitting the tools and equipment of the workplace to the worker.

Evidence-Based Design — Basing decisions around medical facility design projects on the most current, credible research and information in order to create spaces that provide the best possible outcome for patients and staff.

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GREENGUARD — A program that certifies products for use in indoor spaces based on low chemical and particle emissions. It is a criteria for LEED certification (see LEED).

Humanistic Design — Similar to biophilia, the process of bringing nature indoors, using natural materials and evoking nature by bringing natural images into a space.

LEED — Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). A voluntary nationwide green building rating system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and the Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC) to recognize buildings for environmental leadership. The four levels of certification are Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum. For more information, visit <http://www.usgbc.org/leed>.

Life Cycle Assessment — Assessing the environmental impacts of a product or service through all stages including raw material extraction, manufacturing, delivery, use and disposal or reuse.

Perching — The efficient use of a ledge, shelf or other surface to create a new use for the space, including additional workspace or to enhance the design of a room.

Punch List — The list that captures all the needed steps in an installation. Also refers to the list that is generated after the project's completion to indicate any items that are missing or damaged.

Resimercial — The trend of bringing more homelike (i.e., residential) influences — particularly colors, finishes and fabrics — into commercial spaces and furnishings. Born from the theory that more comfortable work environments tend to help workers relax and collaborate more naturally. Sustainability | Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

USGBC — An acronym for the United States Green Building Council, an organization whose mission is to accelerate the adoption of green building practices, technologies, policies and standards. USGBC establishes LEED certification guidelines.

Value Engineering — A method of improving the value of goods or products and services by examining their function.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) — Chemical emissions from products such as office furniture and building materials, which may cause adverse health effects.

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