

CREATE AN INSPIRATIONAL WORKPLACE

Do you need to reassess the look of your office? Below are some design tips to get you started.

1. Clean up your clutter and get organized. If you can't/won't/don't want to do it yourself, stop feeling frustrated about it. Call an expert who will customize an organizational plan that is personalized to you and your workflow. You don't have to be great at everything, you just need to know who to call.

2. Establish a floor plan that addresses function and flow. A good office floor plan gives you quick, easy access to items you need on a daily basis and is compatible with your type of work. What is unique about your business and workflow? Do you need room to lay out blueprints and swatches? Do you collect marketing samples and magazines for ideas? Your office should address your needs.

3. Start your office interior design with something that inspires you. Begin with a piece of artwork, an area rug, a lamp, an accessory or an upholstered chair that speaks to you. Then build the room's style and palette based on what you love and what you already have.

- Blues are said to be imaginative and progressive
- Yellow is cheerful and stimulating
- Red is powerful and daring
- Orange is adventurous and unique
- Green is soothing and is said to help you think
- Purple is ambitious and associated with royalty

4. Choose wall colors. Trust a designer's experienced opinion: it is easier to find a wall color to match an item than find items to match a wall color. Pick your inspiration piece and general style before you paint the walls. Next, follow these tips for selecting a great wall color.

- Just because they place a color on a swatch doesn't mean it should ever be on a wall.
- If you want something in your office to "pop", don't match the walls to that item.
- Use a tint, tone or shade of a color in your palette, instead of an exact match.
- Unless you are experienced with wall colors, know that colors are more intense than they seem on a small color chip. You might want to move down the color card a shade or two lighter than your first choice.
- A room can be interesting without the walls screaming color. Neutrals also have longer staying power.

5. Establish a focal point. A focal point is the first thing you see when you enter a space. It is necessary in all design, and many offices don't have a natural focal point, like a large bank of windows with a view. If your focal point is your desk (most of the time it is), give it visual impact by hanging grouped artwork, placing a bookshelf, or installing a specialized wall treatment (wallpaper, fabric or a decorative mural) behind it. You can also add an area rug to ground the space.

6. Include sufficient lighting in your floor plan: Lighting is the most overlooked area of designing a room and it has a large impact on the finished project. At a minimum you need at least two sources of light – most designers would argue three. In addition to your overhead light, consider a desk lamp. If you have extra seating, try a floor lamp or a table lamp next to the chair. If you have a bookshelf, installing lighting inside will give a great effect. Use an

uplight for large plants. Express your personality in your lighting. If a banker's desk lamp isn't your style, choose stained glass or something ultra modern.

7. Encourage yourself every day. This suggestion looks different in visual form for everyone, but it is important for you to consider what inspires you. For some, a piece of artwork of an exotic place they vacation is a motivator. For others, it's a whiteboard or corkboard with goals, client thank you notes, and a mission statement. Some people are motivated by family photos, fresh flowers, or an inspirational quote. Visual encouragement helps remind you of your goals, accomplishments, and dreams on a daily basis.

Follow these easy tips to transform your utilitarian office into a personal power space that inspires you every time you enter!

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