

Transform your office space into a tool for positive change

 By [Linda Trim](#)

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When considering the value of the office space, traditional methods usually take into account the initial investment that companies make when building or renovating space. Some companies even think of buildings purely as a cost of doing business. But what if the value of space was thought of in terms of the return on investments that companies can realise if they plan and manage their spaces strategically?

Cost calculations could extend beyond the obvious costs of the initial lease and even operating costs. At Giant Leap, we help organisations to think of their space as a tool for organisational change and help to shift the paradigm in how space is valued.

For many years, business results have been left out of the office space equation. Space was never seen as a strategic asset. However, businesses are now starting to see the impact of their office design on their performance and productivity. It goes way beyond just placing a desk where it fits best!

For example, when we plan space, we consider how much time is saved having access to the right tools, worker satisfaction, improved productivity, and other human and social factors. This helps companies to see their space as a strategic asset and not just a drain on the balance sheet.

How much space a client requires

The first step is to assess how much space a client actually requires. From there we can see if they are maximising their space or if they actually require a lot less.

The next step is to assess a building and do a building evaluation from an interior architectural perspective. We need to look at items such as the air-conditioning systems, lighting, infrastructure, etc.

Designing effective office spaces can give a company a competitive edge, especially if proper research has been done. So before we begin designing any space we take detailed briefs from clients and really understand how their organisations work. We need to understand it from a staff point of view as well as a company point of view.

When work is a pleasure, life is a joy!

There is ample evidence that enjoying work, and being emotionally involved and engaged with your work, can positively

influence productivity. Positive emotions at work are associated with less absenteeism and a lower intention to change jobs. Today, one of a company's biggest expenses is recruiting for staff as it isn't just the recruitment costs, but also training staff up to the company's values and standards. Besides the loss of productivity that companies suffer when someone leaves, it takes months to get a new person up to speed. Taking this into account, it is more important to have an office that encourages people to want to come to work. Our motto at Giant Leap is "When work is a pleasure, life is a joy".

People need to be encouraged to leave a nice home to come to an office where they want to be. This is all affected by the interior architecture in a building. The air flow plays a huge role, as does lighting and acoustics. An office that is incredibly noisy will offend people. They may not realise why they are grumpy at the end of the day, but it can be incredibly offensive as can an office with no air-conditioning. We take all of these into account when designing space.

Shaping order from chaos

Most of our success has come from shaping order from chaos - designing effective spaces for the way people work. Not only do you want effective space, but space that encourages well-being in an office. Knowledge workers today are plagued by stress, ailments, fatigue and illness. One wants to try to prevent burnout, which impedes productivity and the day-to-day running of a business.

Now, more than ever, it is important for companies to support the office worker and to use the workplace effectively to achieve this goal. A well-designed office space will ease stress and nurture more productive, creative and healthier employees.

ABOUT LINDA TRIM

Linda Trim, director at FutureSpace, a co-working joint venture between Investec Property and workplace specialists Giant Leap.

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