

Reprinted from the July 22, 2015 issue of U. S. 1 Newspaper

## A New Way of Work In a New Workplace

When NRG, an energy trading company headquartered in Carnegie Center, wanted a new headquarters, it didn't just build another glass box. They set out to build a completely new kind of office space at 804 Carnegie Center, one that is powered by solar panels, wind turbines, and can operate completely off the grid. When the sun isn't shining, the building can draw power from an enormous battery. (U.S. 1, May 6, 2015.)

The building represents several trends in commercial real estate, including an emphasis on environmental friendliness and changes made to improve employees' work-life experience. It's radically different on the inside too, with everyone from the CEO to the newest entry-level hire having the same sized desk. There are no offices, just big, open workspaces.

The Princeton Chamber of Commerce will host an event on Thursday, July 30, from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. at Springdale Golf Club to discuss "The New Way of Work." Speakers include Bill Walsh, director of corporate facilities at NRG, and Marlyn Zucosky, partner and director of interior design at Joshua Zinder Architecture and Design. Tickets are \$30, \$40 for nonmembers. For more information, call 609-924-1776 or visit [www.princetonchamber.org](http://www.princetonchamber.org).

As Zinder's director of interior design, Zucosky has become an expert in the ways offices are adapting to new ways of working. She recently wrote this article about how businesses can effectively work with interior design architects to design the kind of workspace they need.

Today's tenants demand more from their office spaces than ever. Smart building owners and real estate brokers understand that surface gloss solutions — like lining a law firm's conference room with mahogany bookshelves or slapping primary colors on the walls for an advertising agency — don't cut it. The workplace is a business and productivity tool, and a physical expression of the occupant's core mission. Often it's part of a mobile work scheme, too.

By engaging architects and interior designers early in the process, property owners and brokers are better able to meet tenant's needs. After all, even a numbers-driven broker knows that clients want their spaces to do more than house workers or signal corporate identity. Selling the benefits of the building speaks to the facility's role in bottom line productivity. Because of this, brokers and owners are looking to architects and interior



*Epocrates-Athena Health, 2014*

designers for ways to make for-lease spaces more than dollar-per-square-foot commodities.

Often this process starts before an office property or space goes on the market. JZA+D has developed a number of ways that the architecture and interiors firm can play a more effective role in serving brokers — and attracting tenants.

### KEEPERS OF INFORMATION

Brokers rely on their architecture and design partners to know how interior layouts work and how they can be best utilized. Does the tenant work in huddle groups that need a flexible space for impromptu meetings? If so, the interior designer may be able to create these spaces without piling costs onto the tenant installation. Does the company have unusual IT or A/V needs? The architect can aid in planning for them in advance.

### FAST ACTORS

A quick response is often the key to a happy relationship between broker and architect. Just as a broker might offer a "nickel tour," the architect should be able to offer a "nickel plan." These plans give a test fit for the space resulting in a crisp but no-frills drawing or schematic — an important selling tool, because often these are the first drawings a tenant will see.

### VISUAL EXPERTS

Prospective tenants may not expect brokers to visualize interior solutions — real estate professionals are often expected to focus mainly on the

numbers. But by offering a little guidance, an architecture and interior design team can fill that gap; to prep the broker with visual ideas. Sometimes it takes drawings, but often a simple walk-through of the space will help a broker communicate the true underlying potential of a vacant space. The broker then has a better ability to sell the prospective tenants on the benefits they value most, while helping them find the best possible fit.

### TREND SPOTTERS CONCEPTS

Hoteling, "hot-desking," and collaborative work environments are nothing new, but sometimes it takes an architect to see what's on the horizon and how it will apply to a specific type of tenant. The dedicated receptionist, for example, is quickly going the way of the steno pool. While there may still be someone sitting front and center to direct guests and answer phones, the job is often combined with other administrative responsibilities.

### INSIGHTFUL LISTENERS

Programming office spaces is always part art and part science. Before you can plan a successful space, you have to be a good listener and know that in order to serve the needs of the owner and broker customers it is critical to also understand and serve the needs of their customers — the tenant or end user. Only by being careful listeners are we able to weigh these needs and deliver the best solutions for workers, tenants, and owner customers.