

# Integrating workspaces, corporate culture a fundamental design principle



Accommodating organisational behaviour and culture, combined with the need to cater for an ever-evolving workplace, is a growing trend in office and commercial developments, according to Paragon Interface Director Claire D'Adorante.

It is important to design office spaces that not only embody corporate culture, but that stimulate creativity within the workplace. "We believe there is a growing trend for workspaces, meeting spaces, and break-out areas to be incorporated and integrated seamlessly as fundamental design and planning principles," D'Adorante argues.

Design variables that have to be taken into consideration are floor-plate efficiency and space flexibility for future needs, while simultaneously providing an enabling and supportive environment for staff. This includes team clusters, cellular spaces, and stimulating break-out areas.

"Our design approach emphasises teamwork and collaboration over hierarchy and insular work practices, and concentrates on creating a balance between the individual within a particular environment, in combination with the particular workplace culture," D'Adorante elaborates.

Key factors here are flexibility, so as to maximise space usage, and identify potential growth areas in the building; efficiency, which means creating multiple-use spaces; adaptability, so as

to respond to changing requirements and technologies; and sustainability, which relates to 'green' and healthy work environments that support the wellbeing of all staff.

Additional criteria are privacy, which means adding quiet rooms, focus spaces, and concentrated work areas; using acoustic materials to minimise noise transference; dividing open spaces by means of planters, filing cabinets, low screens, and existing architectural elements to create a sense of personal space; and using colour and texture, in addition to stimulating furniture and fittings, to create dedicated team areas and neighbourhoods.

The Paragon Group combines architecture, interior architecture, and space planning under a single umbrella to offer a complete turnkey service to its clients. "We deliver commercial architecture, master-planning, interior design, and space-planning services to a range of clients in all segments of the property market," D'Adorante explains.

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*We are committed to Africa, and believe in the future of its cities. Our roots are here. We have much to offer. We are able and agile, and actively participate in the continent's urban and human development. Paragon is flexible and diverse in its approach to design. Each project is unique and not driven by style, but by lifestyle and a response to user needs. Elegant and efficient planning form the core of our designs. We understand the needs of our clients, and know how to generate ever new architectural forms in a competitive property market.*

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