

The interior features at 1 Discovery Place in Sandton, for which Paragon Interface won an award, help to promote a healthy work style.
PICTURE: PARAGON INTERFACE



By Bonny Fourie

AS TECHNOLOGY continues to disrupt global workspaces and companies strive for higher productivity rates, the creation of "agile workspaces" is emerging as the main shift in today's ideal workplace design.

Companies are also looking to retain top skills, so they need to offer more than just a monthly salary and financial perks.

Explaining modern agile workspace trends, Dale Friedman from Paragon Interface says this includes support spaces which allow staff the freedom to select work settings that suit their tasks. There should also be a level of privacy.

"These can range from cellular zones for privacy to team collaboration areas geared to allow creative flow."

One of the largest restrictions on agile working is senior management, many of whom believe employees working in lounge-type settings or coffee shops are not really working.

"But this is often where staff are the most productive. If the steer comes from the top that staff have the freedom to work in whichever spaces suit them, staff are happier and more focused, which leads to better productivity and staff retention."

Having facilities within buildings, so staff do not need to leave during the day, is a concept Paragon Interface encourages clients to consider, Friedman says.

"One of the simplest ways to help settle ideas with clients is to visit our recent successful projects within South Africa, and

AGILITY FOR PRODUCTIVITY

Neat workplaces include support and private spaces to retain top employees and draw their best

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MORE COLOUR AND VARIETY

New generation has new needs in office environment

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exhibitions and offices around the globe, where they can see the ideas are current and work well for the business needs."

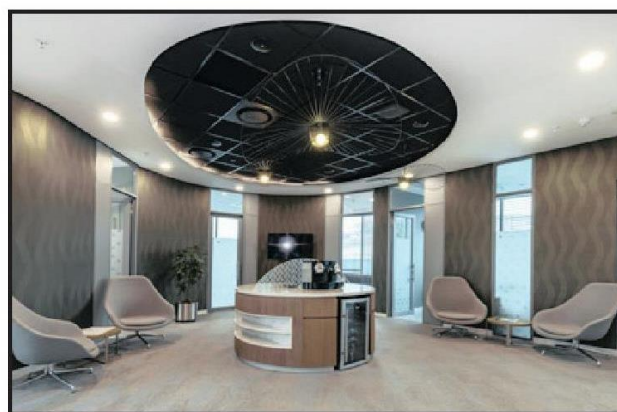
Globally, open-plan office designs are now more geared towards the agile space concept, which Friedman says reduces the number of open-plan desks, as staff are able to work anywhere in the building.

"This allows for desk-sharing ratios and the end result is more agile spaces. Another global trend is the use of colour in the furniture."

Many global companies travel between international offices so they understand overseas working environments.

"They are more willing to be progressive in interior design and often create new trends by applying an 'African edge' to global ones."

Leon Breytenbach, national manager of the Rawson Property Group's commercial division, says with more millennials holding senior positions, Generation Z entering the workplace, and technology developing exponentially, facilities such as break rooms,



Even acoustics in office areas go a long way to improving the working environment.

PICTURE: PARAGON INTERFACE

coffee and snacks on call, gyms, spas and flexitime are helpful in retaining top employees.

Nick Deligiannis, managing director of Hays in Australia and New Zealand, says artificial intelligence will also continue to sweep every company department and will be a big influencer of workspace design.

"Artificial intelligence will be a big influencer of workspace design"

– Nick Deligiannis, managing director Hays Australia and New Zealand

