

Office Trends to Watch Out for in 2018!

Written by Chaithra M D
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Workplaces have to constantly adapt to the changing times if they are to remain relevant. Social trends along with innovations in technology have led to a rapid paradigm shift in the way office environments are being shaped up. Regulations and changes in Human Resource laws too are influencing the working of workplaces. These changes are reforming the work of the Human

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Resources department of companies. They have to make sure that employees adapt to the changes seamlessly and ensure in the least disruption while preparing for changes. Read on to know more about some of the major workplace trends that are predicted to be embraced globally this year –

- **Greener workspaces:** Companies will strive to provide a greener and healthier working environment for employees. It is known that the ambience of the place greatly affects productivity. Giving your office a green makeover will and incorporating sustainable practices such as recycling and using natural lighting and cooling systems in cabins will go a long way in decreasing your environmental footprint. It also saves energy costs. You are directly Investing in the health of your employees and this ensures an increase in their satisfaction and productivity. Including your employees in planting pots around will make them feel involved and happier.

- **Digitalizing work environments:** Workspaces will become more and more digital. With the advent of the Internet of Things (IoT), offices are gearing up to make themselves more adaptable to digital workspaces. Workers are demanding for technology to make their office tasks easier and faster. Making all the data and applications needed for them to complete their daily tasks accessible from any device is the crux of digital workspaces. Employees today want to have the freedom of being able to work from anywhere. This mobility naturally needs that the workspaces be digitalized. This unified approach will ensure faster completion of tasks.

- **Wellbeing practices:** More and more organizations are conducting wellness programs and activities to ensure the wellbeing of their employees. Most workspaces these days also have yoga centres, prayer rooms and recreational activities to help the employees unwind while at work and to keep stress at bay. For most people, the major source of stress is work-related. Therefore, it makes sense that the mental health of employees is being emphasized on. Healthy employees mean a healthy growth of your business. Many companies also have food counters that provide healthy, customised food for employees.

- **Upskilling instead of hiring:** Businesses are focussing on reskilling existing employees instead of mindlessly hiring new employees to cut down on costs. According to a report by IBM, it was found out that with appropriate training, there was a 10% increase in productivity at the year-end. There is a major skills gap that is sweeping the industry right now and it will only get worse if employees aren't adequately trained. According to a report by McKinsey, 82% of surveyed executives at top companies believe that upskilling is at least half the answer to the threat of skills gap.

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- **More diversity in workplaces:** Many top organisations are striving more than ever to diversify their workplace as much as possible. There are employee support groups being set up in offices. Diversity in ethnicity, age and gender will be greatly encouraged while hiring employees. This not ensures fairness, but also the growth of business because now there are perspectives and different ideas from varied backgrounds. A significant mixture of these diversities will bring in fresh ideas and innovations. Managers should have the skill to be able to bring out the best from people regardless of their background.

- **Increased age of retirement:** Many employees are working beyond the age of 65. So be prepared to work with an even more diverse workforce! Not only are people working past the age of 65, but many of them are even re-entering the industry. Experience definitely counts, and this will benefit newer employees wanting to learn from and get a different perspective on things. A retirement study taken in 2017 in America showed that more than 40% of people who worked beyond 65 did so because they enjoyed the work. A study by Pew Research predicts that by the year 2050, around 1.5 billion people will be working beyond the age of 65.

- **Co-working spaces:** More businesses today are open to the idea of shared workspaces than ever before. Co-working helps build a connected community and a healthy working environment. These are mostly used by start-ups because the flexibility suits them well. Another important aspect is reduced costs. Most people are open to the idea of meeting people from diverse working backgrounds at common spaces in the office to discuss ideas or engage in hearty banter.

So these were some of the major changes in workplaces that companies and employees will have to brace themselves for this year. Since many of businesses have adopted agile practices in their operations, adapting to these changes will not be an issue.

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