

**SMALL**

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# ENTERPRISE

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Ramco Systems Office, Chennai

# The Future Work Places

*Change is inevitable*

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*Office of Arc, Lijo Jos and Reni Jos, designed in mid-level.  
Entry through the mid-level. The large window opening to a bamboo grove.  
Entire office in black, white and red colour scheme.*

# Changing Office Design Concepts

**Office spaces have changed. Of the ones that haven't, it should!**



*The art inspired Office of Arc. Lijo Jos and Reni Jos*

**Just like the way we work changes, so is our work spaces. An increased need for informal spaces, comfort at work, interactive spaces and innovative designs rule the offices of tomorrow. However small the office space is, entrepreneurs would love to get it designed with vibrant colours and aesthetic interiors for an increased positive energy for work.**

Till recently, closed cabins, clearly marked hierarchy in seating, cramped interiors all were the hallmarks of offices. The hiking real estate prices, scarcity of spaces at prime locations, shoe strings budgets of start-ups, all have taken a toll on the office spaces of SMEs. But however small the place is, decorated with a vibrant and aesthetic design seems to be the mantra of the new age entrepreneurs.



*Stitched view of the office of Arc. Lijo Jos and Reni Jos*



*The concept of comfort conferencing at the Office of Big Bang Elements. No Board room, and furnished with couches and coffee table only*



**Tasneem Khilawala**, Interior Designer

### Comfort Conferencing

Gone are the days when round tables were a conferencing compulsion. Lets face it, they were boring, uncomfortable and dreadful for many. The new age conferencing happens on comfi couches over a cup of chai or coffee. The introduction of this kind of conferencing basically happened in the artistic field. However on seeing the boost in productivity it caused, companies in many other industries have also adopted it.

Comfort conferencing avoid employees feeling trapped and helps them open up. Prospective clients feel comfortable and more connected, increasing the chances of better business. Tasneem Khilawala, interior designer with insight says, "comfort is the way to go. If your employees like coming in for a team meet, or feel motivated topo bring prospective clients to the office because its comfortable, its only good for your business."

The concept of comfort conferencing also increases the niche appeal of the office. Accompanying the couch with a coffee table and a few bean bags can help increase usability, seating space and also a certain formality. For internal core team meetings, things can be more comfortable and conducive



**Khushboo Sharma**, co-founder at The Big Bang Elements

### Transparent Door Policy

New age office spaces have gone a step ahead. The closed door policy is a thing of the past. Entrepreneurs now believe in connecting with their work force through a glass door.

This not only helps them to keep an eye on the work force while in his or her cabin, but also ensures that they stay motivated. Because the work force can constantly see them working too, a beautiful two-way accountability can come into place. Increase in productivity is a given. Khushboo sharma, co-founder at The Big Bang Elements opines, "this design helps me keep an eye on my team without taking a round every now and then. It also allows me to share a smile with some of them at a challenging time. It gives them a motivational boost."

The concept of transparent doors also bodes well for the beauty of the office. While it restricts the privacy, the option of keeping shades, curtains or sliders can solve the problem. It would be best to keep the material light and in line with the color palate of the company's branding.



The informal and chic board room of Ramco Systems, Chennai. Creative furniture, decor and colours to be noted



**Kinnar Shah**  
Partner at AllEvents.in

### Zero Cabins

Coming from the school of thought that believes that every human being in an enterprise is equal, this office space format completely eliminates the visual hierarchy. While the work process and flow follows the stipulated hierarchy, it isn't visible in the seating arrangements. Boss, management and executives, all sit together. No cabins.

While this format does take away a certain R&R appeal, motivation does remain. It also boosts the team spirit as everyone works closely together. It is however, a format for an enterprise with a small work force. It may prove to be impractical for a large work force team. Kinnar Shah, partner at AllEvents.in suggests this design for all small team enterprises. "Brainstorming, taking opinions and even sharing a joke is really easy with this design. We all work together, that's why we work so well", says he.

Zero cabins is not a new concept. For smaller enterprises, such office spaces are often how things start up. However, continuing with such a format even later can bode well for the sense of belongingness in the workforce. "It is true that many companies build open spaces, but an open culture is still to reach" says Vijay Bhaskar, an online entrepreneur from Bangalore. It needs to be noted that at the office of the corporate giant Sapient, even the Managing Director sits with his huge team.



A informal corner with bean bag where employees can discuss projects

Let's talk

NUMBERS too!!

no ideas

BANG  
YOUR HEAD  
HERE



EV



A leisurely corner with swing for employees to spend some relaxed moments or discuss an official matter. Office of Ramco Systems



*CEO's Cabin at Housing.com's office*

### Lifestyle Spaces

The corporate follow several trends as set by the giants like Google, Facebook, Yahoo etc. It is true that SMEs with limited budget cannot afford going behind all trends, but they can explore options in a more business oriented way. Hashim who runs a software business in Kochi rented out two rooms of the fairly large office space for a canteen space as well as a small gym. "In a way I am supporting another entrepreneur and I earn rental income for these spaces" says Hashim. This enhances the experiences of his employees as they can plan their work out after office hours and make discussions over a cup of coffee.

"If you have at least 100+ employees working in your office, why don't you have a mess and a work out space or a hangout place for them?" asks Hashim. With the increasing number of woman workers, a space for crèche is also something that can be explored.

### Your Office, Your Space

A concept of our own space among the employees creates a work from home feel as well as more attachment to one's work place. Simple things like keeping a microwave in the pantry to have food hot, a hang out zone with a bean bag or a balcony work space, can create a great difference even in small offices.

Comfort of the employees not only means leisure and informal spaces. Corporate giants like Google says right posture too have a great impact on work. Moreover, the health of stressed out and sedentary staff becoming a concern, firms have started to invest in gyms and change in postures. While the big names are innovating and trying to discourage the sedentary habits of workers, small entrepreneurs can think about investing in comfortable and ergonomic furniture for the right posture and comfort of the workers.

### Eco Friendly

Go Green being the buzz word of today, it won't take you much to create a soothing green touch in your office. It can be a wall turned vertical garden, some greenery in and around or just ample day light peeping into your rooms which would bring in fresh air and save you from electrical expenses.

Arch Lijo Jos had to choose their office in the middle of the city, but still an opening to a green patch - a bamboo grove created by them on the side of their complex, according to them have a great impact on their work. Their compact office space in just 58.8 sq m, is laid in multi levels. "The site itself was in two levels. So we planned it in such a way that, the entry is through the mid-level and the lower end, which is actually below the ground level is the studio space. It gives a feel of sitting under the shade of a large tree" says Lijo. The large openings not only give a relaxed mood, but also save energy as they hardly have to use the lights during daytime.





*Imperial Servcorp Office*

### Shared Spaces

Shared work spaces are now getting very common with start-up companies. Companies like 91Springboard, ShareDesk, Regus, Share your Office, Corworkable, etc are offering shared spaced not only in cramped Tier 1 and 2 spaces, but in upcoming destinations like Kochi also. Companies like Imperial Servcorp offer premium serviced office spaces with fully-furnished spaces including board rooms, information technology (IT) and telecommunication facilities etc which can be used on "pay-per-use, only basis in the metros.

There are many other office space ideas surfacing these days. Breaking barriers of the traditional, these schools of thought are bringing about a revolution in the very concept of office spaces. While many formats are only suitable for a certain niche, the ones listed above can be applied to enterprises of all industries.



**Anju Kumar,**  
Artist and interior designer

"According to me office should be contemporary designed. This will give the feeling of a zen so that people working there should be able to connect and the productive level would increase. Even in a tiny space with right kind of accessories and furniture one can deliver creativity and increase the positive vibration. On a whole, the place should look cheerful and happy".

**Harsh Vardhan G,**  
Executive Vice President,  
Ramco Systems

"Open work spaces are in today. Cubicle culture has been transformed into more open work space approach, not just for transparency but to help employees get the out of box feel. Businesses are hoping to stimulate productivity and innovation in a communicative environment where spontaneous interactions can happen across disciplines and teams. There is no fixed place, the flexibility helps them work wherever enabling them to be more productive based on their minds at the very moment."



# HOUSING



## Advitiya Sharma

Co-founder, Housing.com

"Housing is all about the people it has. And the ideas they bring. The company is led by a bunch of dynamic youngsters. And their spirit is infectious. The ambience in the office is fun and energetic.

It's a friendly environment- one that puts you at ease. The office decor has been done up in vibrant colours and funky furniture. It's an informal atmosphere, and this has helped in the building of a strong team".

## Sriram Satuluri,

MD/CEO at Unus Dynam Group

"I would like to see the open office architecture, with not many cubicles. I prefer seating function wise, as it would help to grow productivity. Also would like to see the work tables with LED lightings symbolising 6 thinking hats...AS and when the management want to speak to the employees, the situational lights will be lit and employees would react in that way. I would like to see the management theories implemented in day today life and the office interiors and seating must make help this possible".

## Karthik Raichura,

Founder and CEO  
Management Paradise

"We have a 7 seated office right now- 4 outside and 3 inside the cabin. As our team expands we will create a mezzanine floor which can accommodate 6 people on it - all this just 225 sq ft! Still it should be such that its lets people work independently without bumping each other".

- *Rashida Khilawala and Dhanya Menon*