


# Flip Your Office

## The Zen Workspace

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## Goals for Today

- Identifying & understanding un- & under-recognized areas of workplace stress
- Productivity & workspaces that minimize stress & maximize productivity
- Strategies to promote mental & physical well-being for program leadership team
- Integration into routine



## Road Map

- The Zen Workspace
  - Atmosphere
  - Aesthetics
- Secrets
  - Reducing workplace stress
  - Managing distractions
  - Increasing productivity



## A Tip from Environmental Psychologists ....

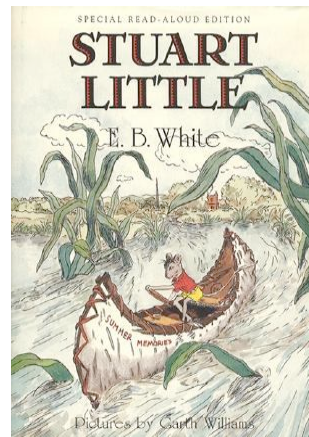
- 70,000 thoughts a day
- 80% are negative
- The key is understanding the concept of “fit” between user and environment
  - Must be adaptable
  - Must be easily ‘negotiable’



*“Every workspace can be defined as providing more or less support to people performing certain tasks and activities that have specific environmental requirements.”*



E.B. White's studio where he wrote *Stuart Little*



Your workspace should provide what is necessary to support your tasks...and only what's necessary

## What is your definition of “productivity”?

### General

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### Program Administration:

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## What is your definition of “productivity”?

### General

- Process development
- Effective multi-tasking
- Efficiency
- Attention to details
- Information management
- Task-completion
- Problem-solving
- Organizational citizenship
- Output & throughput
- Tangible deliverables

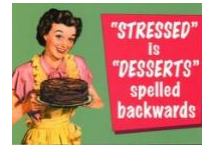


### Program Administration:

- Curriculum design
- Recruitment season
- CCC & PEC
- Annual Reports
- Budgets
- SLOEs, LORs, Attestations
- Remediation
- Disciplinary processes
- Personnel issues
- Clinical shifts
- Scholarly activity

## What is “workplace stress”?

- *Unsupportive work environment that interferes with productivity where a person expends energy (consciously or unconsciously) in activities to cope with adverse environmental conditions*
- “Daily hassles”
- Energy-consuming impediments



## Elements of “workplace stress”?

Describe adverse environmental conditions:

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## Elements of “workplace stress”?

### **Describe adverse environmental conditions:**

- Noise (eg. construction, traffic, 'office noise')
- Poor air-quality
- Extremes of temperature (or fluctuations)
- Lack of control over environment
- Uncomfortable workspace or seating
- Lack of support (e.g. social, administrative, IT dept, office infra-structure, etc.)
- Improper lighting for specific tasks
- Lack of privacy (or, respect of your time)

## Workspace Design

To Decrease Workplace Stressors:

- Promote well-being
- Increase collaboration & new ideas
- Increase productivity & sense of accomplishment



## Zen Meaning & Origin

12<sup>th</sup> century Japanese school of Mahayana Buddhism

- Emphasizes value of meditation & intuition



## Zen Meaning & Origin

Sanskrit Origin: Dhyana (meditation)

"Living fully & authentically in the present moment makes each instant of one's life a peak experience."

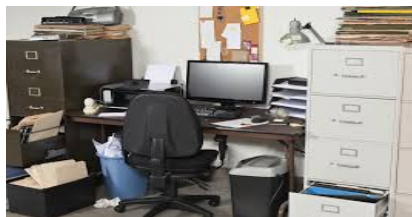


## Marketing Research in Workplace Design

- 80% of what we perceive or experience is based upon:
  - Visual senses
  - Conscious & unconscious interpretation of our environment

## Marketing Research in Workplace Design

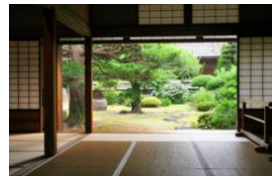
- *"Most office design is uninspired....creating uninspired and stressed employees."*
- *"Clutter slows down your mental energy and making it more difficult to focus & function."*





## Applying Zen Principles to Workspace Design

- Simplicity
- Ornament & Purpose
- Mindfulness
- Temperature
- Lighting
- Color



## Simplicity

- Lack of clutter
- Minimalist approach
- Use of natural materials (e.g. stone, wood)
- Low furniture with simple, straight lines

## Simplicity- What you can do:

- File space & storage
- Clutter free
- Organize for 10 minutes daily
- Non-essential items out of sight



## Ornament & Purpose

- Only essential items
- Choose objects with determination
- Highlight specific objects
- Ergonomics
- Form should follow function

## Ornament & Purpose- What you can do:

- Add purposeful personal touches
  - Photos or artwork
  - No windows in office?
  - Objects with motion
  - Screensavers with meaning or purpose



## Ornament & Purpose- What you can do:

### Refreshment

- Pre-make snacks for the day and/or week
- High protein brain-food:
  - nuts, fruit, unsweetened yogurts, and hummus and crackers
- Water
- Coffee/tea
- Favorite beverage holder !



## Ornament & Purpose- What you can do:

*"People are more creative and productive when they are sitting with colleagues that share the same goal or client. Not only are you able to get answers and generate solutions quicker, but because you're directly accountable to the people around you, you're more likely to stay on task and productive."*

National Academy of Sciences (2013)

## Ornament & Purpose- What you can do:

People are more creative  
& productive when:

- Share the same goal
- Answers & solutions
- Directly accountable
- Stay on task & be productive



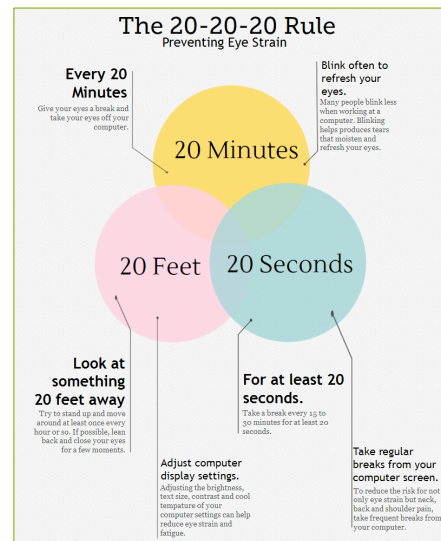
## Ornament & Purpose- What you can do:

### Ergonomic checks:

- Feet on a foot rest or resting on the floor
- Slightly reclined posture is best to reduce pressure on spine & minimize lower back pain
- Eyes 24" - 36" from the computer screen
- Top of the monitor at or below eye-level
- The "20/20/20 Rule"

## The 20/20/20 Rule: Preventing Digital Eye Strain

- Take frequent breaks
- Upper & lower eyelid 10-sec pressure massage
  - Increases tear production preventing dry eyes
  - Relaxes musculature
- Contact or eyeglass lenses made for computer work
  - Anti-glare
  - Focal length eyewear for computer work



## Mindfulness

- Conscious & purposeful environment
- Distractions
- Focus
- Awareness



## Mindfulness- What you can do ?

### Concentration-boosting strategies

- Noise-cancelling headphones
- White-noise makers
- Create song lists
  - Different times of the day
  - Different types of tasks



## Use of Music to Decrease Stress:

- Improves learning & memory skills
  - "The Mozart Effect"
- Unique link to our emotions
- Nature sounds - decreases stress
- Classical music – decreases HR, BP
- Functions as a distraction
- Helps explore emotions
- Aids in meditation



## Mindfulness- What you can do ?

- Relaxation & re-focusing exercises
  - Stretching
  - Walks & fresh air between major tasks
  - Reclaim your lunch break



## Mindfulness- What you can do ?

- “Closed Door” Office Hours
  - DND → Go “under foil”
  - Message board
  - No guilt



## Mindfulness- What you can do ?

### Other Concentration Boosters:

#### Room Scents

- Pine - increases alertness
- Cinnamon - improves focus
- Lavender – relaxes mind & body
- Peppermint – elevates your mood
- Citrus (any) - wakes you up & lifts your spirits



Keep scented essential oils or your favorite aroma therapy treat in your bag or drawer



## Ergonomic Climate

The Right Temperature Reduces Errors:

- Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA): offices should be kept between 68° F & 76 ° F

Temperature		
°F	°C	
78	25	Optimal for bathing, showering. Sleep is disturbed
75	24	People feel warm, lethargic and sleepy. Optimal for unclothed people.
72	22	Most comfortable year-round indoor temperature for sedentary people.
70	21	Optimum for performance of mental work.
64	18	Physically inactive people begin to shiver. Active people are comfortable.

## Ergonomic Climate

- Cornell University: raising the temperature from 68° F to 77° F
  - Decreased typing errors by 44%
  - Work output also drastically increased
  - Consider requesting a thermostat into your workspace design to help keep temps consistent

## What can you do to create ergonomic temperature ?



- Purchase a thermometer for your office
  - Keep temp 68-77°F
- Consider requesting thermostat be installed in your workspace
- Personal fan or heater in your office
- Keep a sweater on hand



## What else can you do ?

- OSHA: "poor air quality in office environments costs employers \$15 billion due to worker inefficiency and sick leave."
- Open your windows!
- Air purifiers & filters
- Live plants
  - Purifies air
  - Reduces humidity
  - Reduces room temperature
  - Reduces stress & absenteeism



### Clean Indoor Air





## Lighting

- Important factor in staying alert, focused and inspired to create
- Improper lighting can cause
  - Fatigue, eye strain, headaches, irritability
  - Dark spaces can produce depression
- Natural, "natural", daylight



## Lighting- What you can do:

- Bring in your own lamps or lighting
- Sculpt layers of light to create flowing positive energy
- Use "daylight" light bulbs



## Colors

### National Institute of Health

- Exposure to blues & greens
  - generation of new ideas
- Exposure to reds
  - attention to detail



## Colors in Zen Design

- Earth tones reflect peace, harmony, fresh ideas



- Neutral tones tend to be calming
- Yellows promote intellectual activity
- Blues and greens are more restful
- Earth tone colors encourage warmth

## Colors in Zen Design- What you can do:

- Consider painting an accent wall in your office
- Furniture or accents that utilize colors to serve a specific function





## 10 Entrepreneur Secrets

- Have an inbox – empty it only once a day
- Set a specific time of day to check email & return calls
  - Turn off email-notifications
  - Don't answer the phone
- Schedule tasks with time limits
  - consider impact vs effort

## 10 Entrepreneur Secrets

- Batch your tasks (e.g. emails, return calls, credentialing attestations!)
- Set deadlines
- Identify what will make your day a success & do it
- Create a weekly strategy document on Sundays

## 10 Entrepreneur Secrets

- Create a sustainable routine
- Do a nightly brain-dump -> create "To Do" list for next day
- Schedule & do at least one fun thing outside of work every day

*Thank You!*

