



# **How to make your workplace work for you**

## **Top 10 tips on how to significantly improve your profitability**

### **1. Audit your current space**

Commission a workplace study to audit your current working methods and space utilisation. This will help you gain understanding of how you can optimise your existing space, maximise your productivity and reduce your operational costs. If you are relocating, the workplace analysis will provide you valuable information about the space needed to meet your future business plans. In some cases, the report can demonstrate that you have over-estimated the square footage requirements and will help you save considerable amounts of money.

### **2. Consider new working practices**

Staff are spending more and more time away from their desks or even from the office – at meetings, visiting clients etc...Companies could make considerable savings by considering hot-desking or home-working as an option which could free up valuable office space and provide flexibility to their employees. By introducing such practices, companies can reduce their space needs by up to 20%.

When home working is introduced, companies need to ensure that remote workers are being kept up-to date by organising regular team meetings. It is also essential to have the appropriate IT infrastructure in place to enable employees to access company data whilst ensuring security and protection against viruses.

### **3. Negotiate with your landlord**

In today's market, Landlords are becoming increasingly flexible. It is worth engaging in negotiations with your landlord whether you intend to take advantage of your landlords' plans to redevelop the building, negotiate your rent, extend or simply renegotiate some clauses of your lease.

#### **4. Consider subletting vacant space**

Firstly, you will need a commercial property lawyer to check the term of your lease to ensure it is an available option.

Secondly, the space you intend to sub-let must meet basic criteria: in a well-maintained condition, refurbished and ready for occupation, with fixed service charge, flexible terms and preferably furnished. It is essential to take professional advice from your commercial property agent and a commercial interior design firm to evaluate if work needs to be carried out prior to formally marketing the space.

#### **5. Review your IT and Telecom equipment**

Another way of maximising your space is introducing flat-screen monitors on workstations. They also offer the benefit of consuming less energy and produce less heat and potentially harmful radiation than traditional monitors.

Auditing your current telecoms system will help you define if you can save money by switching provider. The deregulation of the telecommunication industry means that you can benefit from very competitive rates. Analyse your call patterns and compare telecoms suppliers' costs.

#### **6. Re-assess your suppliers and utilities spending**

Companies too often fail to re-evaluate contracts with existing suppliers on a regular basis when it could significantly reduce costs.

As with telecom providers, utilities suppliers' rates can vary and choosing the right one for you can have a positive impact on your costs.

As a general rule, try to encourage your staff to be energy conscious by switching off equipment at the end of the day.

#### **7. Check if you are eligible for tax breaks**

When considering an office refurbishment, check whether or not you are eligible for Capital Allowances with your tax adviser. Fit-out costs are considered as Capital. As Capital costs are not tax deductible, a relief is given in the form of Capital Allowances instead. These are deducted from taxable profits and reflect the depreciation in value over the life of the asset.

#### **8. Check your building systems**

By adjusting thermostats, installing water flow restrictors or checking that your air-conditioning system is operating efficiently, companies could reduce their costs significantly. Regular maintenance of air-conditioning/heating system will ensure that it operates to its maximum efficiency and will contribute to its longevity.

Set up your system to only operate during office hours, and adjust it during holiday periods such as Christmas.

#### **9. Consider off-site storage**

By storing your archives off-site, you will free up valuable office space. Most of the documents which are no longer accessed on a regular basis cannot be destroyed for legal reason. Professional storage companies can store non-current paper and electronic files in a secured and monitored environment, at a much cheaper rate than office space.

#### **10. Investigate moving to serviced offices**

For smaller companies, serviced offices can be a good temporary solution when expanding. It gives the flexibility of providing extra space rather than committing to a lease until the company finds the right building to accommodate their growing business.

*Clive Lucking is the Managing Director of Area Sq. Limited.*

#### **Notes to editors**

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Launched in January 2000 by Clive Lucking, Nigel Hudson and James Cornwell, Area Sq specialises in the design, project management, space planning, fitting out, refurbishment and furnishing of commercial office interiors. Area Sq is based in Egham, Surrey and Central London and undertakes projects of 2000 sq ft up to 70,000 sq ft throughout the UK.

Area Sq clients include Reed Elsevier, Sungard, Cendant, Microsoft, Thomson Wealth Management, Epson, Budgens, TATA, Pharmion and Capita.

For more information, please visit our website [www.areasq.co.uk](http://www.areasq.co.uk)