

Title:

Home Office - Designing for the Senses

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705

Summary:

The psychology of color can have a huge impact in your home office along with the elements of smell, touch, taste and sound.

Keywords:

color, psychology of color, home office, interior design

Article Body:

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Sight--Seeing Your Business Take Off

Color--Use company colors to best advantage. If you don't have any specifically, select a couple. Consider the psychology of color in your selection.

Here is a summary of the psychological impact of some of the most popular colors:

Red quickens the heartbeat, which means that one may eat more, spend more and lose track of time in the presence of red. Orange is the great social equalizer and represents affordability (i.e. Home Depot). Yellow spurs memory (legal pads), can indicate caution, is generally considered sunny and cheerful and is great in spaces with little or no natural light (creates the illusion of sunshine). Blue promotes trust and a general sense of calm. Green indicates growth and renewal and is the "color of money". Purple often represents royalty and, depending on the time of year, religion. It is also a favorite color of creative types and is known to alleviate insomnia (i.e. promote daydreaming). Brown is usually viewed as conservative and dependable (think United Parcel Service). White indicates independence and wealth (afford to keep it clean!). Black can be very upscale and chic but also indicates a hands-off atmosphere (look but don't touch) and is best used sparingly.

Light. Natural light is preferred and best if from two directions. Maximize interior lighting by using incandescent instead of fluorescent lighting. (Torchiere lights with dimmers are cost effective.)

Art. Imagery enhances the work environment. If clients visit your office, choose art that is appropriate to the company image. (i.e. if a travel agency, then images of exotic destinations, if a financial planner, then images of Wall Street, graphs of stock trends or images of companies on the exchange.)

Balance. Use a mix of square, hard edged shapes and soft rounded curves. For example, if a rectangular desk is used consider a round conference table.

Composition. Is there a visual cohesion? Do the finishes used on the furniture look unified? Is the room arrangement functional and effective?

Sound--Hearing the Sounds of Productivity

Banish noise. It is difficult, if not impossible, to work effectively with noise distractions, whether it be the lawn mower, a dog barking, kids playing or an over-cranked stereo.

Determine your favorite background sounds. Do you prefer music (if so, what style?), talk radio, TV, trickling water or just quiet? Incorporate a radio or stereo system in to the room design or perhaps a water feature, such as a tabletop fountain.

Taste--Feasting on the Fruits of Your Labor

Quench Your Thirst. Even if it's just a water cooler. The idea of clean, clear fresh water in a glass (no paper cups folks!) can quench thirst and provide a mood lift. Adding a mini refrigerator if there is room can alleviate those trips to the kitchen and be great for any visiting vendors or associates deserving a quick break. Keep it well stocked with favorite beverages. In cooler climates, a coffee maker can be a real convenience and its own wakeup therapy!

Maintain Munchies. Use a colorful glass bowl for sweet treats or even a tray of fruit for a quick bite.

Using plants, especially citrus or herbs, adds a culinary element to the office and can have an aromatherapy effect. Taste is closely tied to smell.

Touch--Feeling Your Goals Within Reach

Add tactile elements to please your sense of touch - leather, wood, stone, cashmere, wool, chenille, rattan, wicker, sisal.

Mix hard slick surfaces with softer elements. Don't forget visual texture, such as patterns and plants. Layer and combine for greatest effect.

Smell--Scents of Success

Aroma therapy is big business these days. Find out what triggers your creativity and lifts your energy by experimenting with a variety of scents, such as lavender, pine, citrus and sandalwood. The scent doesn't have to be overwhelming or flowery to be effective.

Avoid negative scents like mustiness, old gym shoes, day old Chinese takeout and such. Always maintain a neutral or fresh scent. Scent can even be used as a signature for your business. If you are in a home baking business, nothing beats the heavenly smell of fresh baked cookies (which is often a scent used to sell houses!).