

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The physical workspace that most of our employees experience every day is outdated, in disrepair, and not conducive to individual or team success. To provide an exemplary experience to the citizens and industries we serve, the State of Missouri should implement changes in workspace design that will improve individual employee wellness and team productivity.

Academic and professional research shows poor workspace design negatively influences productivity and job satisfaction due to physical and mental stress, which manifests itself in a variety of ways. Work stress ultimately costs employers nationwide more than \$300 billion annually¹, as it translates to accidents, absenteeism, and turnover. Failure to utilize workspace design best practices costs employers money, contributes to a negative work experience for employees, and ultimately results in a poor customer experience. Our team provided a survey to state employees across six departments to determine how they evaluate their own workspaces and we received over 1,200 responses in less than two weeks. The results show that a majority of respondents are not provided an appropriate physical environment to conduct their work.

There are several crucial workspace design elements that are proven best practices in any work setting such as: wall color, access to natural light, acoustics, ergonomics, biophilic design (use of greenery and patterns that occur in nature), and physical layout of individual and team workspaces. The Federal government, through their Total Workspace Program², is placing an emphasis on improving their workspaces along with numerous private sector examples. The aforementioned best practices, if adopted and integrated into the State of Missouri's workspace design standards, will result in improving employee wellbeing and team productivity resulting in an improved customer experience and contribute to making the State of Missouri a premier employer.

There are many perceived barriers when it comes to improving our workspaces. Prevailing mindsets are: it can't be done, it's too expensive, the Missouri Office of Administration controls the process and "won't let us" design our offices to match our needs, workspace design doesn't matter, or it's not worth the investment. The truth is, these are all myths. In fact, some of these best practices have recently been used to remodel part of the 1st and 8th floor of the Truman Building.

The money is already being spent. Walls are being painted, furniture is being ordered, and cubicles are being configured every day. Several best practice improvements can be achieved with minimal resources. The truth is, most of the money we are spending now is not being utilized correctly and we actually do have some control over the process, what we buy, and how things look. Workspace design does matter, is important, and is worth the investment.

¹ American Institute on Stress Study

² <https://www.gsa.gov/governmentwide-initiatives/total-workplace>