



JOHN W. BAUMGARTEN ARCHITECT, P.C.
NY, NJ, PA, CT, MA, DE, FL

At The Office: Office Design Principals

We all spend a good part of our adult lives “at the office”. It’s where we are called upon to be inspired, creative and innovative in our chosen fields of endeavor. Yet quite often, the office environments we work in are not very inspiring.

Of course, the way the space is planned is as important as how it is finished. Open modular furniture areas feel truly open when they are placed next to window walls instead of being “blocked-off” from daylight by banks of offices. We often place offices “in-board” of the open work areas with interior windows allowing “borrowed light” to filter in from the workstation zone.

There is the usual tug of war with the landlord who is customarily executing the build-out with “building standard” materials and methods of construction. Often, these base building materials do not satisfy a tenant’s aesthetic desires or even operational needs. We advise our clients to selectively upgrade certain materials and finishes which provide the most “bang for the buck”.

Flooring is a common upgrade. We strongly recommend the use of a good quality modular carpet tile to our office clients. Carpet tile allows for ease of maintenance at high traffic areas over the life of the lease. Modular carpet especially makes sense where modular furniture systems are used since carpet can be “refreshed” in areas where furniture is moved or reconfigured. Better quality carpet materials with high quality, stain resistant fibers may even save dollars in the long run as they will most likely have a significantly longer installed life than “building standard carpet” if properly cleaned and maintained.

A relatively low cost upgrade is to ask the landlord to apply a greater variety of paint colors. This allows for the designation of accent walls which can provide more aesthetic interest, can reinforce an overall spatial rhythm and provide visual landmarks.

Another upgrade we often recommend to clients is wood doors over hollow metal. Wood doors can add an air of warmth and elegance to an otherwise drab space and can be “matched” to millwork at reception areas and executive suites for a consistent “look”. We can also borrow light by using full height glass walls.

By using innovative planning and selectively upgrading finishes, your workplace can become a show place.

