

Open Concept Office: Good for Business?

Increases in the popularity of open-concept office design raises the question of whether open office spaces are in fact superior to traditional office layouts. It is important to understand the costs and benefits of open-concept office layouts in order to maximize employee efficiency and health.

This report examines the research done on open-concept offices, illustrating the benefits of open-concept offices in terms of employee health and productivity and monetary gain. The criticisms of open-concept office spaces are also explored, with downsides including increased spread of disease and ability of employees to concentrate on their work. The analysis concludes that the benefits outweigh the downsides.

IMPACTS OF OPEN OFFICE DESIGN

Benefits

Health



A 50% increased likelihood of survival from people with strong social relationships



Healthy behaviors were enhanced by workplace social interactions



Lower stress, better mental health.
Lower risk of dementia and better performance on memory and cognitive skill tests

Monetary



Knowledge sharing within a company can increase, increasing productivity



Groups can move through working spaces to ask questions or contribute to projects going on in the office



Traditional offices segregate work spaces (above, left) while open office design facilitates collaboration and innovation (above, right).

Downsides

16%



Increase in people who report not being able to concentrate at their desk.

62%



More sick days for open office plans with more than 6 people.

Recommendation

A hybrid office model, incorporating both shared and private spaces, provides the benefits of social interaction gained through an open-concept office design, while also providing private workspaces required for concentration.