**Offices**

**A**n office is generally a room or other area in which people work with specific duties attached to it.

Office as place originally referring to the location of one's duty. When used as an adjective, the term "office" may refer to business-related tasks. In legal writing, a company or organization has offices in any place that it has an official presence.

An office is an architectural and design phenomenon and a social phenomenon, whether it is a small office or entire floors of buildings up to and including massive buildings dedicated entirely to one company. In modern terms an office usually refers to the location where white-collar workers are employed.

**History of offices.**

Offices in classical antiquity were often part of a palace complex or a large temple.

There was usually a room where scrolls were kept and scribes did their work. Ancient texts mentioning the work of scribes allude to the existence of such "offices".

These rooms are sometimes called "libraries" by some archaeologists and the general press because one often associates scrolls with literature. In fact they were true offices since the scrolls were meant for record keeping and other management functions such as treaties and edicts, and not for writing or keeping poetry or other works of fiction.

LC Smith – 1940 1890\_Office 2

**Industrial Revolution**

The Industrial Revolution (18th and 19th century) saw the rise of banking, railroads, insurance, retailing, oil, and the telegraph industries. To transact business, an increasing large number of clerks were needed to handle order-processing, accounting, and file documents, with increasingly specialized office space required to house these activities. Most of the desks of the era were top heavy with paper storage bins extending above the desk-work area, giving the appearance of a cubical and offering the workers some degree of privacy.

The relative high price of land in the central core of cities lead to the first multi-story buildings, which were limited to about 10 stories until the use of iron and steel allowed for higher structures. The invention of the safety elevator in 1850 by Elisha Otis saw the rapid escalation upward of buildings.

By the midpoint of the 20th century, it became apparent that an efficient office required discretion in the control of privacy , which is needed to combat tedium linked to poor productivity, and to encourage creativity.

In 1964, the Herman Miller (office equipment) company engaged Robert Propst, a prolific industrial designer, who came up with the concept of the Action Office which later evolved into the cubicle office furniture system. 3

**Office spaces**

**T**he main purpose of an office environment is to support its occupants in performing their job - preferably at minimum cost and to maximum satisfaction. With different people performing different tasks and activities, however, it is not always easy to select the right office spaces. To aid decision-making in workplace and office design, one can distinguish three different types of office spaces: work spaces, meeting spaces and support spaces. For new, or developing businesses, remote satellite offices and project rooms, Serviced Offices can provide a simple solution and provide all of the former types of space.

**2.1 Work spaces**

Work spaces in an office are typically used for conventional office activities such as reading, writing and computer work. There are nine generic types of work space, each supporting different activities.

a. *Open office* - An open work space for more than ten people, suitable for activities which demand frequent communication or routine activities which need relatively little concentration.

*Team space* - A semi-enclosed work space for two to eight people; suitable for teamwork which demands frequent internal communication and a medium level of concentration.

*Cubicle* - A semi-enclosed work space for one person, suitable for activities which demand medium concentration and medium interaction.

Open office Team space Cubicle 4

b. *Private office* - An enclosed work space for one person, suitable for activities which are confidential, demand a lot of concentration or include many small meetings.

*Shared office* - An enclosed work space for two or three people, suitable for semi-concentrated work and collaborative work in small groups.

*Team room* - An enclosed work space for four to ten people; suitable for teamwork which may be confidential and demands frequent internal communication.

Private office Shared office Team room

c. *Study booth* - An enclosed work space for one person; suitable for short-term activities which demand concentration or confidentiality.

*Work lounge* - A lounge-like work space for two to six people; suitable for short-term activities which demand collaboration and/or allow impromptu interaction.

*Touch down* - An open work space for one person; suitable for short-term activities which require little concentration and low interaction.

Study booth Work lounge Touch down

**Meeting spaces**

Meeting spaces in an office are typically used interactive processes, be it quick conversations or intensive brainstorms. There are six generic types of meeting space, each supporting different activities.

a. *Small meeting room* - An enclosed meeting space for two to four persons, suitable for both formal and informal interaction.

*Large meeting room* - An enclosed meeting space for five to twelve people, suitable for formal interaction

*Small meeting space* - An open or semi-open meeting space for two to four persons; suitable for short, informal interaction.

Small meeting room Large meeting room Small meeting space

b. *Large meeting space* - An open or semi-open meeting space for five to twelve people; suitable for short, informal interaction.

*Brainstorm room* - An enclosed meeting space for five to twelve people; suitable for brainstorming sessions and workshops.

*Meeting point* - An open meeting point for two to four persons; suitable for ad hoc, informal meetings.

Large meeting space Brainstorm room Meeting point 6

**Support spaces**

Support spaces in an office are typically used for secondary activities such as filing documents or taking a break. There are twelve generic types of support space, each supporting different activities.

a. *Filing space* - An open or enclosed support space for the storage of frequently used files and documents.

*Storage space* - An open or enclosed support space for the storage of commonly used office supplies.

*Print and copy area* - An open or enclosed support space with facilities for printing, scanning and copying.

Filing space Storage space Print and copy area

b. *Mail area* - An open or semi-open support space where employees can pick up or deliver their personal mail.

*Pantry area* - An open or enclosed support space where people can get coffee and tea as well as soft drinks and snacks.

*Break area* - A semi-open or enclosed support space where employees can take a break from their work.

Mail area Pantry area Break area 7

c. *Locker area* - An open or semi-open support space where employees can store their personal belongings.

*Smoking room* - An enclosed support space where employees can smoke a cigarette.

*Library* - A semi-open or enclosed support space for reading of books, journals and magazines.

Locker area Smoking room Library

d. *Games room* - An enclosed support space where employees can play games (e.g. computer games, pool, darts).

*Waiting area* - An open or semi-open support space where visitors can be received and can wait for their appointment.

*Circulation space* - Support space which is required for circulation on office floors, linking all major functions.

Games room Waiting area Circulation space