

# The BEST place to WORK

By Margit Whitlock AIA

## Providing The Best Place to Work

We have been trying to answer the question of “where is the best place to work” along with “what makes the best place to work,” since we discovered that happy employees make happy margins. In our quest as designers to support our clients in the goal to provide an efficient and desirable workplace, we have always responded to what the current research says on the topic. As a result, we have seen changes in design solutions – and what might be coming next is something resorts need to pay attention to now! The traveling workforce!

## Open Concept

The shift in workplace design from cellular, private offices to open concept in the last decade followed the lead of the tech industry valuing innovation through collaboration. The idea behind the movement was that eliminating barriers between workers and creating visual connectivity, will increase social interaction and knowledge sharing with positive effects on the health of employees - and the research says it worked. But it has its drawbacks, leading to new design innovations in furniture, lighting, connectivity, and space planning.

## Give Me Some Privacy Please!

The open concept begged for some privacy. It lacked a place for individual concentration and safe places to experiment when learning new skills and mastering new ideas without an audience. It became apparent that sometimes, people need a place to retreat for phone calls or conversations of a sensitive nature. So, we started to see adaptations – standalone call rooms called “The Phone Booth” and small meeting rooms for one to four people. The acoustic industry boomed with new solutions for mitigating sound in the open concept utilizing multi-layered sound absorbing materials for walls and ceilings with décor in mind. Workstation screens popped on to the office cubicle scene even before C19 distancing mandates. These screens are usually low level transparent or solid partitions depending on office needs.

## And Then Came COVID 19

Quickly, working remotely from home became the new normal for those used to the office life. Dining rooms and bedrooms became offices and



closets became conference rooms for Zoom Meetings. The stress points in open concept home design became apparent, when people found the same need for privacy at home to have concentrated time. Our ability to adapt and find a way to be productive away from the office will shape our future. Moving forward, it is looking like there will be a hybrid of work from home and office. With businesses opening again, the “home” in “work from home” leaves room for interpretation.

furniture placement and make sure outlets and wifi are available. No extension cords please!

- Spruce up your Business Center to accommodate the mid-vacation Zoomer or conference call with some privacy seating pods if space allows.
- Even better, small conference rooms for rent would be a huge selling point to the traveling workforce. Look at converting larger meeting rooms into smaller meeting spaces. There are a variety of furniture concepts that create functioning office environments on the fly.
- Incorporate some private alcoves to allow for an escape in the midst of the activity in your common spaces.
- Outdoor locations can easily be re-positioned to have working pods with shade.

My forecast predicts that people will begin to take advantage of the flexibility to work away from the office and create their own hybrid situation: Working Vacations.

## Why Not Work While Getting Some R&R at Your Resort?

My forecast predicts that people will begin to take advantage of the flexibility to work away from the office and create their own hybrid situation: Working Vacations. With Resorts opening again, guests will want to make up for lost travel time despite the work that must be done. Prepare for this quest by learning from the evolution in workspace design. Here are some suggestions to accommodate that traveling workaholic!

- A lobby or lounge can be a great remote environment with the right

With a few modifications, your owners and members just might discover, the Best Place to Work is on vacation at your resort!

*Author Bio: Margit Whitlock is Principal and Creative Director for Architecture and Interior Design at Architectural Concepts Inc., a San Diego, CA based Architectural and Interior Design Firm specializing in hospitality design. Ms. Whitlock is an accomplished speaker with engagements at multiple ARDA conventions, HD Boutique show as well as being frequently published in magazines such as Developments, Resort Trades, Hotel Business, Hiatus, Vacation Industry Review and Resort Management and Operations.*