

# FACILITIES STRATEGIES: SHIFTING THE FOCUS FROM SPACE PERFORMANCE TO HUMAN PERFORMANCE

Growing numbers of case studies demonstrate that ensuring adequate facilities for the needs of workers almost always pays for itself — usually within the first three years.

A well-planned space balances:

- Speed — Minimizing worker downtime
- Flexibility — Simplifying future changes
- Cost — Up front and over time
- The Human Element — Supporting worker and team performance

Today's organizations must constantly change to meet shifting customer interests and demands. Long-term space planning must be an abstract, adjustable perspective on possible needs, with the ability to support multiple growth and change scenarios.

Creating the right combination of flexible, long-term and short-term solutions represents a fundamental challenge. Here are four ways to help make that happen.

## **1. Do the most with what you have.**

This may seem simplistic, but reconfigurations often do not require a complete overhaul. Perhaps existing walls can remain or an ergonomics program can ensure that workers' environments adjust to fit them. Many times, freestanding components can simply be added as needed.

## **2. Design integrated spaces rather than individual footprints.**

Consider work areas as functioning units rather than as a collection of individual footprints. Layouts should be structured to support collaboration, with flexibility to allow the space to grow and adapt.

## **3. Allow more user control.**

The ability to mix configurations and components gives workers a sense of personal control of their workspaces. What's more, if workers can decide how to situate desks, tables, partitions, markerboards, and seating, facilities managers can concentrate on creating a highly competitive, dynamic environment at the global level.

## **4. Support teams and private work within the same area.**

Emphasize larger, reconfigurable spaces that accommodate a variety of levels of group and individual needs. Consider primary work areas that support teams of various sizes and peripheral private areas that can be shared as needed — but be sure to acoustically separate group and individual areas to ensure that they do not interfere with one another.

## **References**

Syfert, T. & Brand, J.L. (1999). Facilities Strategies to Support Corporate Change and Flexibility.