

New work: new break. How architecture transforms break room designs.

Date : Friday June 7th, 2019



© Foto: Peter Becker GmbH

“Sometimes you need a little break so that you can see things differently.” This and many other phrases decorate the colourful calendar in the offices. However, it isn’t known among all employees how much truth lies behind these “phrases to make you think”.

Breaks are an important and essential part of our motivation. If you treat your body and mind to a little peace regularly and recharge your batteries, you can concentrate better and prevent falling into a mental stupor. So, get away from your desk! And this is where it starts to get a little more complicated, because quite often, the suitable choice of room is lacking. We’ll show you a few possibilities of how to work regeneration into your spatial design.

The break room becomes a cafe.

The classic break room becomes a working cafe and represents a calm area for retreat and encounters. Here, the working café also asserts its claim on interior architecture and spatial arrangement. It is a place for a lunch with colleagues and there are various possibilities of withdrawing and drinking a coffee in peace.

Combined with bar counters and tea kitchens, the working café loses the aura of a classic break

room in the office. If you play with the characteristics of the existing rooms and individually adapt the type of furnishings, you can achieve the best possible advantage. Soft enclosures with screens can be appealing to the eye as well as useful for storage space.

The working café is also a popular choice for the employees for occasional working. Some people consciously look for more lively places such as cafes or restaurants so that they can work in a more relaxed manner.

The canteen: a room for everyone.

The canteen is nothing new, but it's an important place for regeneration. Mainly larger companies offer their employees affordable food in their own company restaurant. As well as its primary function of "nourishment", the canteen also contributes to relaxation and promoting social communication. Sausage and chips is no longer enough, however. Millennials above all demand sustainable and healthy food. The quality of the food, the design of the room and arrangement of the furniture in the canteen inevitably show how much the company values their employees.

But the canteen can do even more: With a flexible room design, the dining area can be transformed for employee events, training or even presentations. With the conscious use of colours, materials, light, room climate and furniture, modest canteens are turned into multi-tasking living spaces.

The middle zones are the focus.

The poorly lit middle and edge zones of office building were barely given any attention before. Modern office planning is now addressing these more intensively. These zones can become actively designed meeting places with a relaxing character for a spontaneous exchange of ideas. Employers still frequently have concerns about too much comfort and a drop in efficiency. However, studies have proven the opposite: Attractively designed "random" encounter areas have a positive effect on the working day. A brief, informal exchange of ideas with colleagues can increase productivity.

When designing middle zones, there are no limits to creativity. Depending on the possibility and space, these areas can become lounges, retreat niches and play areas with swings and table football. No matter how unconventionally the areas are designed, the aim is to bring employees closer together. The interior architecture can support these relaxed, casual atmospheres.

Activity garden and outdoor meetings.

Outdoor spaces and nature have a great influence on our wellbeing. A study conducted by Interface about employees in Europe proved that wellbeing and productivity increases by around 13 percent if the working environment incorporates natural elements. This is why companies and architects are also including the outdoor area more and more. A landscaped garden is ideal for movement-oriented leisure activities and also for walk & talk meetings. If the premises are not located in a green setting, a terrace or winter garden can also be established. Designed to be architecturally interesting with quieter and livelier areas, break times, the end of the working day and meetings can take place out of doors.

New work also means finding new paths to regeneration. Constant reachability also requires spaces where employees have the opportunity to retreat. Employee break times must not be forgotten about in a sea of agility.

To conclude, we can see regeneration spaces as a reflection of the company culture. They thus communicate a message to the outside world: The quality of their design shows how much the company values their employees and guests. However, these zones should absolutely achieve one thing – they must match the company culture, otherwise they seem insincere and will not be used.