

THE PERSONAL WORKPLACE

**A system of office furniture designed for
comfort**

VOLUME NUMBER

1

OVERVIEW AND SCOPE
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

THE PERSONAL WORKPLACE

The system is intended to deal with the whole environment of the office at all scales. It will range in scope from the smallest piece of furniture to the largest aspects of the organization and layout of the corporate office building.

In marketing the personal workplace system, CES workplace will be responsible not only for a furniture system, but will move into a position in which it takes responsibility for the whole work environment.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

2. THE CHARACTER OF OFFICE SPACE

3. TYPES OF INDIVIDUAL WORKSPACE

4. IMPORTANCE OF GROUP SPACE

5. THE LAYOUT PROCESS

6. PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF THE NEW LINE OF FURNITURE

7. COLOR AND LIGHT

8. THE OFFICE BUILDING

APPENDIX

**WORKBOOKS AVAILABLE FOR THE PERSONAL WORKPLACE
SYSTEM**

1. INTRODUCTION

THE PERSONAL WORKPLACE SYSTEM IS INTENDED TO LAUNCH AN ENTIRELY NEW SYSTEM OF OFFICE FURNITURE WHICH WILL COMPLETELY CHANGE THE CHARACTER OF THE AMERICAN WORKPLACE.

The system will have the following essential features:

- 1. A layout process which allows managers, and workers together to lay out their own workspace, according to their needs.**
- 2. An overall sense of organization which is more in keeping with the real work habits of American office workers.**
- 3. A system of furniture which is simple, flexible, colorful and elegant, and more like "real furniture".**
- 4. The ability to form space which is personal and unique, to each individual group within a corporation, and to the individuals working and their individual work-stations.**
- 5. The system will deal with the WHOLE environment: walls, floors, ceilings, windows, rooms, as well as what is commonly called furniture.**

We may sum up the intention of the system by saying that we intend, with this system, to allow people to have an environment in which their hopes and dreams, their maximum effort, and all their creative ingenuity and resourcefulness as workers will come fully into play.

2. THE CHARACTER OF OFFICE SPACE

The main reason for introducing The Personal Workplace is to make a major change in the comfort and efficiency of people working in offices. The long term aim of the personal workplace system is to revolutionize the entire environment we have come to know as the office.

Most American companies are now manufacturing versions of the systems developed in the 1950's.

However, after thirty years, it has now become clear that the early office systems available in the period 1960-1990, have had a number of important defects in the way that they serve people. Chief among these defects are the following:

1. People feel alienated and inhuman in their place of work.
2. The poor quality of the workplace is not only an aesthetic matter, but goes to the root of people's working efficiency. In many cases people have to leave the office to get any real work done.
3. Work-stations are cramped and isolated, yet lack privacy when it is needed.
4. There is often relatively little group feeling. The overall quality of the group environment is extremely bad: cohesion of the office as a social institution is virtually ignored.
5. Work-stations are repetitive and box like, allowing no creativity or soul to the individual person.
6. The quality of light is terrible. It is not only not daylight, but it has a harsh softness which makes people feel utterly dissociated from themselves and their normal happy feelings.
7. Many work-stations are empty more than half the time.
8. Absenteeism is widespread, and turnover of personnel is rampant. Many people feel they have to "move on" because they cannot find satisfaction where they work.
9. Productivity is low.

THE PERSONAL WORKPLACE

10. All in all, people's satisfaction is at a low ebb. Goals of real human creativity, of being treated like a person and feeling like a person, of being in a situation whose fundamental *feeling* is profound, are entirely missing for a whole generation of American workers. The widespread assumption people have is that life begins when you get home. The 9-5 work period is a necessary evil which people struggle through, to get enough money to enjoy the few hours they have with their family. Yet the fact is, that most human beings spend the greatest proportion of their waking lives at work, or in work-related activities.

It is imperative, that we begin a new generation of offices, in which work is a pleasure, and in which work and life are inseparable... this will not only help to solve the emotional dissatisfaction which most American workers feel. It will also increase productivity and lower costs.

These problems of office space, and the vision of a new kind of office is described more fully in the rough draft workbook 6, "REVOLUTION IN THE CHARACTER OF GENERAL OFFICE SPACE: THE NATURE OF THE WORKPLACE".

3. TYPES OF INDIVIDUAL WORKPLACE

Every workplace ultimately succeeds or fails according to the quality of its individual workstations. Yet in informal interviews, among people who are interviewed, an astonishing 77% say that their workplace is not satisfactory, and that they are not comfortable working there, and that they cannot get as much work done as they want to. Many also say that they cannot get any work done in their office. Solution of the individual workstation is therefore the king pin of the personal workplace system.

Current office practice contains four major types of office workspace.

- 1. PRIVATE OFFICES** **35% of all offices**
An office surrounded by walls.
- 2. PROFESSIONAL MAZE** **20-25% of all**
Cubicles providing partially private space for professional and technical groups.
- 3. OFFICE FACTORY** **20-25% of all**
Individual screened micro-workstations for computer and telephone operators
- 4. BULL PEN** **20% of all**
Many desks in a single space, where free communication is the main function.

We intend that the personal workplace furniture system will provide a system of workspace for all four categories. In view of the emerging combinations of these different types in current American offices, the system will deal with them as a continuum, in which principles and products of each type appear recombined and transformed to apply to the all the others. This continuum will be extended by various new combinations proposed from within the personal workspace system.

THE PERSONAL WORKPLACE

In all cases, we shall aim at an office or workstation which is perfectly adapted to the person's work, with special reference to individual work-habits and situation.

The importance of this principle is illustrated for one particular case, the private office, in workbook 4, "EXAMPLES OF PRIVATE OFFICES DESIGNED BY DIFFERENT MANAGERS".

The aim of the personal workplace system is ultimately to provide the same level of personal satisfaction and differentiation, to **all** American workers, in all four categories of office space.

4. IMPORTANCE OF GROUP SPACE

In all four cases, we believe that the satisfaction of the work environment, and its efficiency, also depends on the type of space which exists for **groups** — work groups, departments, and project teams. The group space includes the space **between** individual offices and workstations, which is often neglected.

The personal workplace system will provide specific ways of organizing group space, that supplement the four elementary models now in common use, with arrangements of work that change the relation between individual and group, in such a way as to be more realistic, and better attuned to people's work needs and human needs.

Solutions to these problems are, so far, in an early stage of development. They are touched on in **workbooks 6 and 7**, but will ultimately be incorporated in the layout processes which guide the formation of the larger office.

5. THE LAYOUT PROCESS

In order to help both individuals and groups make their offices finely tuned to their work habits, we have developed various processes of office layout. The process of office layout is addressed to the workers and managers in an office. It takes the form of a manual supplemented with a model. The process leads the office user through a series of steps which gradually build up a complete office layout tailored to each group's and individual's particular needs.

One portion of the office layout process will help a group, or a department, manage the large scale layout of rooms and workstations in their area, with special reference to the ways that workstations are related to one another, and to the group space and space between the workstations.

Other portions of the office layout process will help individuals to manage the layout of his/her own workstation within the context of the larger whole created for the group.

The layout process for private offices is available as workbook 3, "LAYOUT PROCESS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL OFFICE". Others will appear later.

We view the layout process as a crucial management tool in the more general process by which both groups and individuals are encouraged to take charge of their own work, and get an office space which creates group cohesion and individual satisfaction.

6. PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF THE NEW LINE OF FURNITURE

In order to supplement the layout process, and the concepts and philosophy of personal workplace, the items of furniture have the following characteristics.

- * They are small, to make your office as spacious as possible.
- * They are elegant.
- * They are colorful.
- * The items are not homogeneous, as in past systems: instead the pieces of furniture are each designed to perform their tasks as well as possible: the result, a room full of furniture which has the character and style of your own living room.
- * Some pieces can be joined to form permanent walls which do not have the flimsy character of movable office systems, but more the solid permanence of a room that has been in a place for many generations.
- * Other pieces are loose, so they are easy to re-use and rearrange.
- * The system is designed to make rooms. The main target is not the furniture, but the space as a whole, the room in which you work, its pleasantness, efficiency and comfort.
- * The individual pieces of furniture emphasize comfort and convenience. The pieces are solidly built, simple, and minimal, and built to last.

A tentative first catalog of furniture items is shown in workbook 2, "CATALOG: THE NEW LINE OF FURNITURE".

7. COLOR AND LIGHT

Central to the new system, is the beautiful light in the offices. The system is based on a system of lighting that overcomes the oppressive uniformity of normal office lighting. It has the sparkle, and life of natural light.

The heavy and deadening quality of most offices comes from the system of lighting. Natural light has a sparkle, which works different on the eye, and differently on the body. It enormously increases your ability to work, think, discuss. It relieves your tiredness. The major feature of the lighting system is a system of wall lights which are placed at the wall-ceiling interface, to form a lighting cornice. It has a warm natural sheen, and also casts soft light on wall and ceiling surfaces. The wall lights are supplied with natural light reflectors that can be installed either below, or above, the wall light, according to room configuration. A major feature of this natural lighting system, is the use of colored surfaces, which have a geometry and sparkle, comparable to the sparkle which occurs in nature. The designs are hand-painted color structures, photographically reproduced. As the light bounces off these surfaces, the quality of the light has some of the luster and brilliance of daylight.

The color process which will allow people to get the right balance of color in their own office area, and yet maintain a personal feeling, is given in workbook 5, "COLOR: THE PROCESS OF CHOOSING COLOR FOR AN OFFICE".

8. THE OFFICE BUILDING

To supplement the personal workplace, we propose that a supplementary service which guides the construction of office buildings will be offered, in such a way that work-places can be comfortable and efficient. This is not because the personal workplace system furniture requires a special environment in which to function. The system can be used in any environment, and will improve the qualities of that environment as a place of work.

However, the furniture of the personal workplace is based on a series of functional insights which may *also* be carried beyond the scope of the office furniture, and into the design of office buildings. The functional insights on which the personal workplace is based, not only teach us how furniture should be laid out and made, for comfort and efficiency. They also give corresponding insights about the design, layout and construction of office buildings. If incorporated into office buildings, these insights will lead to a new generation of office buildings which are — in their functional efficiency and comfort — the counterparts or complements of the furniture system.

We recommend that CES workplace clients, if they ever have occasion to plan, or build, new office buildings, may benefit from these insights and would do well to incorporate them in the design, and that CES provide a planning service to extend its knowledge and wisdom about office use into the field of buildings.

A very early draft of a manual on office buildings is shown in workbook 7, "OFFICE BUILDINGS: THE NATURE OF THE BUILDINGS WHICH WILL EXTEND THE QUALITIES OF THE PERSONAL WORKPLACE TO THE WHOLE WORK ENVIRONMENT".

Ultimately we envisage a situation in which CES will be recognized for its knowledge and expertise, not only in furniture, but in the whole office environment field.

THE PERSONAL WORKPLACE

APPENDIX

**WORKBOOKS AVAILABLE
FOR THE
PERSONAL WORKPLACE SYSTEM**

THE FOLLOWING WORKBOOKS ARE NOW AVAILABLE IN FIRST DRAFT

1. INTRODUCTION

2. CATALOG

THE NEW LINE OF FURNITURE

3. LAYOUT PROCESS

FOR THE PRIVATE OFFICE

4. EXAMPLES

PRIVATE OFFICES LAID OUT BY DIFFERENT CUSTOMERS

5. COLOR

THE PROCESS OF CHOOSING COLOR FOR AN OFFICE

THESE WORKBOOKS SO FAR ONLY AVAILABLE IN VERY EARLY OUTLINE DRAFTS

6. REVOLUTION IN THE CHARACTER OF GENERAL OFFICE SPACE

THE NATURE OF THE WORKPLACE

7. OFFICE BUILDINGS

THE NATURE OF THE BUILDINGS WHICH WILL EXTEND THE QUALITIES OF THE PERSONAL
WORKPLACE TO THE WHOLE WORK ENVIRONMENT

THE PERSONAL WORKPLACE

OTHER WORKBOOKS TO BE PUBLISHED LATER

8. LAYOUT PROCESS FOR THE GENERAL OFFICE
COMMUNAL PROCESS FOR LAYOUT OF DEPARTMENTS

9. COMPUTER LAYOUT PROCESS FOR THE GENERAL OFFICE:
MANUAL AND DISK
PRACTICAL METHOD FOR LAYOUT OF LARGE OFFICE AREAS

10. CATALOG TWO
THE NEW LINE OF FURNITURE: ITEMS FOR GENERAL OFFICE SPACE

**All these workbooks will be available as individual pamphlets,
or bound as a single master manual for the personal
workplace system**