

## Studio Site

*Repair & Maintenance at the Studio*

# Designing Your Space

By Gordon S. Carter

Once you have finally picked out the space you are moving to, it is time to begin designing your facility. A good space planner (architect) and studio designer can be big time savers in this phase of the project. But first let's take a quick look at your new offices.

By this point you should have determined how much space each person needs to perform his or her job. When you get down to planning your offices you also need to look at how the various positions interrelate to one another.

For instance, you don't want your sales department at the opposite end of the building from your traffic department. They must be close so they can communicate quickly and easily.

Saving only a few steps from one person to another can result in hours of lost time saved and cut down on unplanned interruptions along the way.

### Talk To The Staff

As you plan each office, be sure to work with the people who will be using the space. When you get some ideas on paper, talk to them and find out what they think. Remember that some people have a great deal of difficulty visualizing an office from a floor plan. A three dimensional drawing or model may be more helpful.

If you are working with a CAD system on a computer, consider a 3D module for the system. This can "walk" people through the proposed room so they can see how the various parts work together. It may be worth the extra expense to save a lot of changes later. Your space planner may already have such a system, so check with him before you buy.

Remember that your plans will go through a number of changes before they are complete. How you visualize someone else's work space may be totally impractical for them, so be sure to listen to what they tell you.

### Individual Vs. Open

As you plan your space, there are two basic approaches you can take to office space--the individual office and the "open" office. Individual offices give everyone lots of privacy and a little extra security and can even be a great ego booster for some people. However, changes can be rather expensive if you have to remove or add a wall.

The "open" office is nothing but a large space with dividers between individual work spaces. The dividers are usually tall enough to provide some measure of privacy, but will not keep the spaces as quiet as individual offices. On the other hand, they are much easier to change and move.

Whichever approach you take, as the individual work spaces take shape, you will have to consider getting around in the space. Corridors or walk spaces can take up 1/3 to 1/2 of your total floor space if it is not carefully planned. This can get costly and even cause you

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performance."**

to shortchange some work spaces to allow for the extra corridors. Plan your traffic flow carefully.

### Light And Power

As you determine floor plans, the electrical plans will begin to take shape. Make sure each work space has adequate light, both in the day and at night. Some people will end up working late and will need enough light to work. Also, make sure your lighting is not hard on the eyes. A good space planner can help with this. Remember that good lighting will pay for itself in improved performance and the morale of all who work under it.

One area that is commonly overlooked in office plans is adequate electricity. Make sure that each office has enough outlets for everything in it. A typical office may have a desk lamp, radio, tape player, clock, computer, printer, and a few other items to plug in. A simple duplex outlet is simply not enough for all of this. It is silly to move into a new space and have to buy an outlet strip or two for every office when enough outlets could have been installed from the beginning.

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By the same token, make sure the power is distributed well. Add up your power drains in each office, and you will find that it is best not to have more than two or three offices on a 15 amp circuit breaker. Otherwise you are just spreading the load too far.

Another area where you should allow room for growth is in your telephone wiring. Remember that many offices will have a multi-line phone, a fax machine and a computer with either a modem or a network connection. Be sure to specify enough wiring to each location to handle all of these needs plus some that you don't know about yet.

### Anticipate Mistakes

As you finalize your office plans, check the furniture layout and the details of the furniture. A common mistake is to have outlets and phone jacks on the wall under the desk, only to find out that the desk has a modesty skirt that prevents access to the wall.

There are a lot of details to look at, and no one can catch all the possible errors. However, if your design team is experienced in the field, you should be able to catch most of the major mistakes before they are built into your space forever.

A final word about designing your offices. Someone will need to plan for decoration of your office space, in particular paint or wallpaper, carpeting and wall decorations. Some designers seem to think that white walls are the best, judging from all the white walls I have seen at radio stations.

But in the real world people have coffee cups, food and dirty hands. White walls do not stay white for long. Be sure that whoever picks your paint, wallpaper and carpet is aware that a radio station is not generally a clean environment.

A good designer will find something that looks good and will stay looking good for a long time. Wash-

able wall coverings and stain resistant carpeting, along with careful choice of color, will help keep your station looking good.

Next time we'll begin designing the studio space for our new station.

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