

# Make the office work for you in 2014

 By [Linda Trim](#)

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Every January, we begin the working year with high hopes of making it our most successful 12 months to date. While it is often overlooked, a critical place to start is your working environment. Indeed, having a great workspace is almost half the battle won - and with minimal effort and expense you can get it right!

At Giant Leap Workspace Specialists, we believe that you only need to get a few essentials in place in order to make the office do the work for you in 2014:

**1. Improve communication:** Create spaces that allow people to see each other and communicate easily. Take down walls where they aren't needed and allow information to flow freely throughout the company. Privacy is still important, however, so make sure that you provide spaces which also allow for some peace and quiet.

Our favourite new invention for 2014 is the phone booth: step inside when you need to concentrate or have that awkward discussion with your bank manager!

**2. Promote sustainability:** Green is the latest and greatest corporate buzzword, but turn it into a reality. Start a sustainability project, and get your staff into the groove. Begin recycling, for example, and introducing green products to your interiors.

**3. Break time:** We all spend so much time and energy staying connected and always available - particularly in today's hyper-connected, globalised business world - but this quickly leads to exhaustion and poor work performance. It is time we all started to break away for short periods of time. The office hours of 9-5 are no longer the norm with people working from all over the world, at all times. Many of us battle to switch off and feel we need to be in touch 24/7. The office should provide areas for people to chill out and disconnect from the noise, not only to work quietly but also to relax for brief periods of time throughout the day.

**4. Meet out the box:** Find new ways to meet and brainstorm, aside from the boardroom. Many great ideas are formulated in informal or quirky settings where people feel more at ease and relaxed. Start to introduce stand to sit meetings where meetings are less inhibited and a lot quicker. These can be introduced throughout the office areas, and due to the informality, they don't need to be booked like a meeting room or boardroom. They are quick and very effective.

**5. Prioritise wellness:** We all strive for balance. Introduce "work-style" to your employees. The right office can help to provide a balance between work and play, and inspire staff to find their own personal rhythms that are conducive to both productivity and happiness. Introducing wellness talks, fitness zones and antibacterial coated desks can all play a huge role

in reducing office sicknesses and promoting health, for example.

**6. Brand your building:** Does your office maximise great branding and marketing opportunities? Desking, for instance, can be a powerful tool to send out new products and messages. This strategy can keep employees ahead of the curve and they are constantly reminded of company values and mission statements.

**7. Spring clean:** Conduct a thorough clean out every quarter. Clear desks of the clutter, as it clears heads at the same time. We are part of a recycling community today and clutter doesn't fit anywhere into this picture. Get savvy with your desk space and see performances improve simultaneously.

**8. Zone out:** Teach employees how to work away from desks. Individual desks are becoming a rarity. So encourage staff to branch out and enjoy the different spaces in the office. As they break out, so do their thoughts and their ability to produce phenomenal work!

## ABOUT LINDA TRIM

Linda Trim, director at FutureSpace, a co-working joint venture between Investec Property and workplace specialists Giant Leap.

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