

## CRE Terms: Outfitting Office Space



In our last commercial real estate (CRE) terms article, we looked at the way office buildings are classified, according to their status in a particular metro or market. As we noted there, the way office spaces are being used is also changing, particularly as companies incentivize the return to work and adopt hybrid working policies.

For CRE professionals working in the office sector, staying on top of client trends (and terminology) is an important part of closing deals that really meet client needs. With that in mind, in this edition of terms, we're delving into some buzzwords around how office space is designed and used.

### **Coworking and Flexibility**

An older term you've no doubt seen making a resurgence is coworking space. According to the NAIOP CRE Terms and Definitions booklet, coworking space is: "Workspace offered for lease for short- to long-term periods in a communal setting. Space for office, artistic or manufacturing use can be leased by the day, month, year or even hour."

Spots in coworking spaces can be rented out at various levels, all the way down to individual workers renting desks on an "on-demand" basis.

Companies can also rent flexible workspaces which their employees can use as part of a hybrid strategy. In recent years, these kinds of solutions have jumped in popularity, as workers, and companies, adopt more flexible policies.

## Outfitting Office Space

### Inclusive Space

As Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives become a priority, another design principle that's gained traction is ensuring that workspaces promote inclusivity. In the office context, inclusive space can mean a range of different things – from offices built with accessibility in mind, to providing both contemplative and collaborative areas to cater to different styles of working.

Another term that you may hear from clients is neurodiverse design. In this case, changes to lighting, noise levels and visual clutter can all be used to make office spaces a more attractive option for neurodivergent employees that may find traditional offices overwhelming.

### Designed for Comfort

Many businesses are also opting for office designs that tempt workers back by putting comfort and aesthetic appeal front and center.

“Resimercial” design includes furniture and décor that puts employees at ease to create a more “homely” atmosphere in the office. As a recent article in WorkDesign magazine puts it:

“The logic behind resimercial design is that comfortable employees are happier and significantly more productive and creative.”

The ethos behind biophilic design is similar. In this case, office space is designed using natural materials, plants and natural light to create a more inviting environment. Like resimercial, these changes aim to make office space more appealing, and promote employee wellness and engagement in the workplace.

As these office design principles show, an important part of the return-to-office for companies is prioritizing features that put employee needs in the spotlight. For CRE professionals, being able to “speak the language” is just another tool in the toolkit.

