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Offices to smile about

New flooring solutions for workspaces are making offices better places to work in says Navjot Dhillon, Marketing Manager, Gerflor.

Advances in technology and a heightened focus on employee wellbeing are having a major impact on office design. This, added to the continued trend for open plan environments with different functional zones, has led to companies taking a more holistic approach to the design of their workspaces.

According to the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), recruitment strategies in certain sectors see the physical design of workspaces as critical in attracting and retaining staff. Flooring can therefore be a useful tool in creating a contemporary environment that reflects a company's image, supports innovation and ensures a pleasant work environment which contributes to a happy, healthy workforce.

This means design, performance, installation, maintenance considerations and acoustic properties are all valuable considerations, as well as budget and health and safety requirements. While carpet tiles remain a popular choice, the sector is experiencing demand for design-led, resilient floorings that offer wider aesthetic options and performance benefits.

Technological advancements, an abundance of in-trend designs in vinyl and fast-track fitting methods have led to luxury vinyl tiles (LVTs) taking this area by storm. With so much to offer, LVT floorings provide cutting edge solutions for functional spaces to boardrooms.

As workspaces are increasingly influenced by interior trends, designs are following suit, with new options in grey and limed wood effects and concrete finishes being seen. Clever use of design and colour can help create a sense of space and flow to a building or define different 'zones' such as meeting, creative thinking and eating areas. Flooring can help stimulate or relax, creating more inspired and personalised workspaces; and by incorporating bespoke logos companies can really make a statement.

In terms of performance LVTs with a durable 0.55mm wearlayer for moderate traffic, or 0.70mm for heavier use, are ideal. Those with easy-to-clean PUR+ surface treatments and advanced scratch resistance will lower maintenance and stay looking good for longer. Where sound transfer is a problem, acoustic options, with sound impact insulation of around 15db or more, help make busy offices quieter to work in.

As well as dry back, adhered installation, LVTs now have loose-lay alternatives. Innovative interlocking systems are perfect for refurbishments and can be laid over most smooth, hard existing surfaces without adhesive, offering rapid, clean and cost effective installation. Flooring can easily be altered if offices are reconfigured, and with the average length of office lease now under 5 years, mobility between premises is important.

Some office areas also have a greater slip resistant requirement; however, slip resistant flooring doesn't have to be boring. Manufacturers are listening to customers and high end versions are becoming more trend-led and have the technical qualities to be relied on when it counts. For example, an R11 slip resistant vinyl achieving a 20RTMRz micro surface roughness measurement indicates a low slip risk in wet conditions.

With businesses looking for ways to differentiate themselves and retain the best workforce, and with design, performance and eco credentials all high up on the list, vinyl continues to be a product that can deliver.

Learn more about Gerflor solutions, ask for a free sample or contact us to speak to a specialist today by calling 01926 622 600, emailing contractuk@gerflor.com, or visiting gerflor.co.uk for the latest innovations.

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