



# 10 Mistakes to Avoid

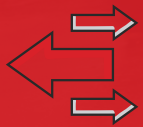
In Your Workplace Design



Embarking on a new workplace design is a strategic move many companies are considering. It can revitalize your professional environment and energize your employees and visitors alike. However, it comes with challenges that can be costly and may affect many people. We optimize your real estate investment, ensuring efficient use of resources. Our innovative designs boost engagement, creating inspiring spaces that resonate with your team. By leveraging your brand, we can create environments that reflect your values and foster deeper connections. Let us guide you through the process, anticipating challenges and maximizing the benefits of your office transformation.



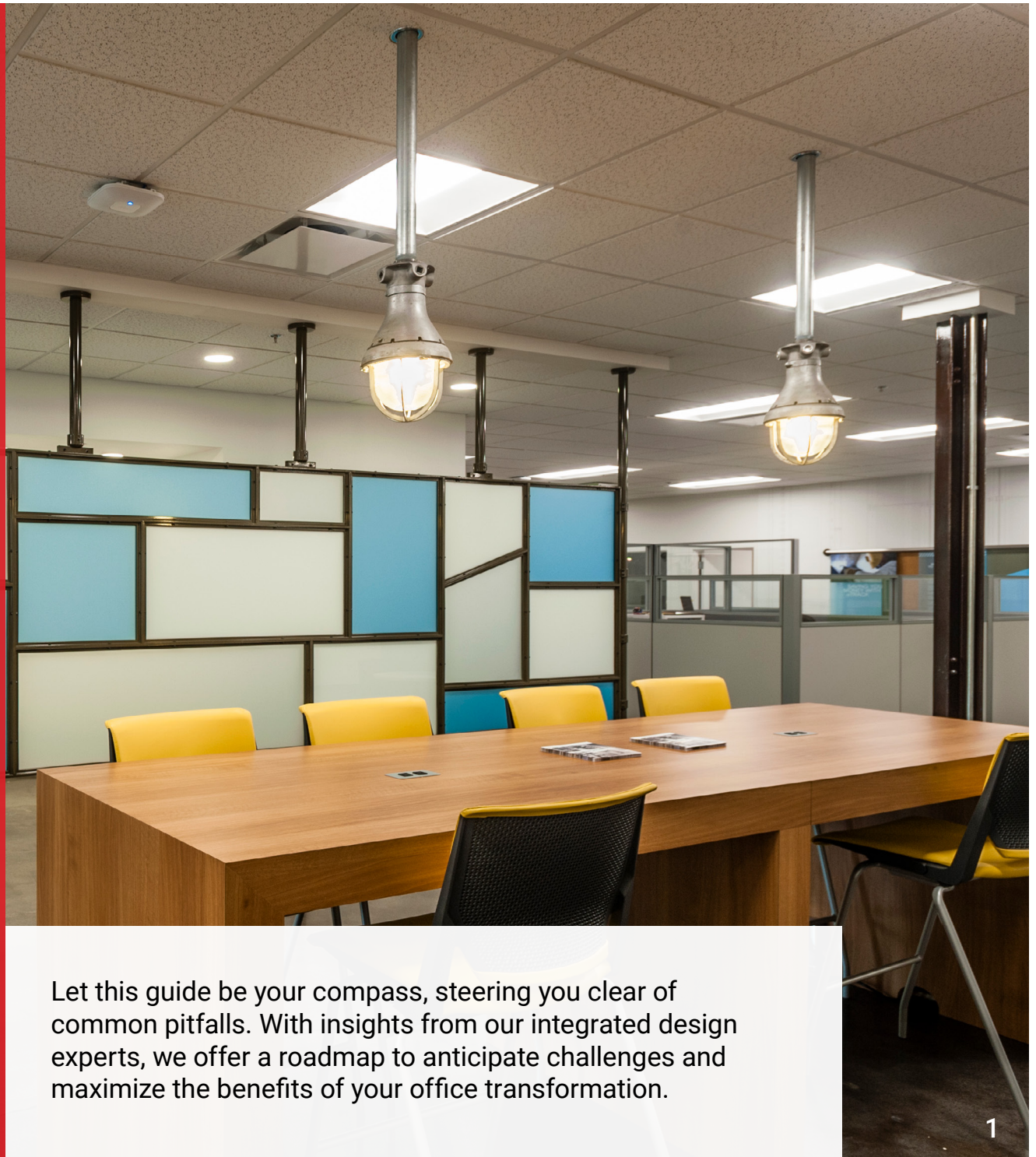
**New design is a substantial investment.**



**New design is difficult to reverse once completed.**



**New design affects every member of your team.**



Let this guide be your compass, steering you clear of common pitfalls. With insights from our integrated design experts, we offer a roadmap to anticipate challenges and maximize the benefits of your office transformation.

## The ten mistakes to avoid during your workplace design:

1. Not incorporating what your employees think and say
2. Settling for “normal” results
3. Modeling your space to look like a competitor’s space
4. Making band-aid fixes
5. Not connecting your space to the brand and company history
6. Neglecting diversity and inclusion
7. Skipping real estate strategy
8. Isolating employees from one another
9. Waiting to plan for change management
10. Working without a turnkey design partner



# Mistake 1:

## Not incorporating what your employees think and say

When considering a new design for your workplace, it is important to engage with your team to create spaces that truly resonate with them since they are the end users. Why does this matter?

### Space can enhance or detract from the way they work

Your physical environment profoundly influences productivity and job satisfaction. A thoughtful workplace design can drive a better employee experience and increase wellbeing.

### Space affects culture, morale, and engagement

The workplace atmosphere directly impacts organizational culture and employee engagement. An optimized space fosters collaboration and a positive work environment.

### Space could make a difference in the recruitment of future employees

Your office space is a reflection of your company's values. A well-designed workplace can be a competitive advantage in attracting top talent and future recruits.

### What you "think" they need is often different from what they actually need

Employee input is invaluable. Their day-to-day experiences offer insights that might not be apparent from a managerial perspective.



WBCSD envisioned an opportunity for a more collaborative and social space for their employees, moving from 30% to a 70% team-focused “we space.” This included comfortable lounge areas and seating options, carefully designed Zoom rooms and Conference rooms. The result?

# +16%

increase in perceived efficiency

# +42%

increase in perception of environmental sustainability of the space

# +19%

increase in perceived feeling of innovation.



**Listening to your team not only enriches the work environment but also unlocks the potential for elevated performance and satisfaction.**

# Mistake 2:

## Settling for “normal” results

Think outside the box. In fact, don't even think of it as a box, because your people and culture are unique to you, and your space should reflect that. Why is this important?

### **“Normal” workplaces may not suit your unique team**

Tailoring your workspace beyond what's typical ensures it resonates with the distinct needs and dynamics of your team, creating a more effective and enjoyable work environment.

### **Standard workplace design might not highlight your differentiator to employees or customers**

Your workplace is a canvas to showcase your brand identity. Going beyond normal allows you to emphasize your unique selling propositions to both your workforce and clients.

### **A standard workplace might not suit your ideal real-estate spend**

A strategic approach to design can lead to efficient space utilization and cost savings.



A leading healthcare institution saw a vision for a new research facility. Through this vision was an opportunity to build and create spaces for intentional and unintentional collaboration. This included food areas and gathering spaces, all designed with graphics and artwork to inspire creativity. The result?

# +22%

increase in employee perception that the space enhanced their ability to do work

# +10%

increase in employee perception that the right spaces are provided to do their work

# +32%

increase in employee perception that the space conveys the organization's brand



**By thinking bigger, you not only redefine your team's experience but also position your organization as a trailblazer in innovation and employee engagement.**

# Mistake 3:

## Modeling your space after a competitor

It's tempting to copy your competitor's workplace, but your space should reflect your unique brand, not mimic a competitor's. Create a design that showcases your company's distinct brand identity and builds culture.

**Just because a company is in your industry doesn't mean their space will suit your team**

Even within similar businesses, every person and every team is a little different.

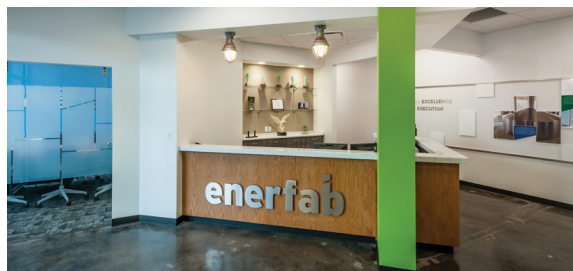
**Your problems might not match your competitor's**

Team size, location, style of working, business model, and other variables can pose unique problems. Matching a competitor's space might still leave the unique needs of your team and business unaddressed.

**You want your business to stand out**

Workplaces create lasting first impressions for potential employees and clients. Ensure you stand out by creating a strong experience of your brand and differentiators.

A leading industrial company needed a new space to foster better connections with leadership teams within the campus. Historically, offices within their industry were patterned after traditional closed offices and had very little collaboration areas. They chose to focus on their core values with messages like "safety first" and "challenge accepted" throughout the spaces to inspire and reinforce how they are a mission-focused organization.



### Challenge:

The entry felt disconnected and did not have a powerful branded "first impression."

### Solution:

The brand and a "safety first" message greets you at the front door. The lobby also has a legacy timeline feature, demonstrating growth and the partnerships. Employees, new recruits, and communities can see themselves reflected in the heritage and the brand story.



### Challenge:

No company values are reflected in the workplace.

### Solution:

Design that underscores the company values of "who they are" and integrates brand features that showcase materiality of "what they do" throughout the building.



**By focusing on your differentiators and unique goals instead of what everyone else is doing, your space can create memorable experiences for employees, prospective employees, and clients.**



# Mistake 4:

## Making band-aid fixes

When faced with a dwindling office, poor employee engagement, or lack of excitement, you feel the pressure to act fast. But making a quick move without considering the deeper issues could leave you with a hefty bill and no results.

### **Furniture and paint may not address the deeper needs of space**

The demands of a workplace require more than just “looking good.” If the issue is lack of collaborative spaces, newer desks won’t help. Even fun elements such as ping-pong tables can seem like good ideas, but may not be in sync with your team’s deeper needs.

### **You don’t want to spend big on a solution that doesn’t work**

Even a quick, short-term solution can be very costly. If it doesn’t pay off, that means waste of valuable time and money.

## Questions to go deeper:

### **Financial and real estate strategy:**

Should we renovate or relocate?

Is our working environment hybrid?

### **Company goals:**

Does our space reflect our values?

Does our space map to our long-range plans?

### **Ways of working**

Is our space helping or hindering productivity?

Does our space promote collaboration?

### **Brand**

Would a visitor recognize our space right away?

Where does our space compare and contrast to industry standards?



**By going deeper than surface-level redesigns and band-aid fixes, you can solve the root issue of problems and maximize your investment in redesign.**

# Mistake 5:

## Ignoring your brand and company history

Be intentional with the design of your space, weaving together all elements to create a story and atmosphere that connects and elevates. Why is this important?

### **Your workplace can become an immersive representation of your purpose, brand, and story**

Transform your workspace into a tangible narrative that reflects your company's mission, values, and unique journey. A space you can see, hear, and touch yields a deeper connection with both employees and visitors.

### **Create lasting impressions with visitors**

Crafting a compelling spatial story leaves a memorable mark on visitors, showcasing your identity and leaving a lasting, positive impression.

### **Your workplace is immediately different than your competitors**

Break away from the ordinary. Using your space intentionally sets you apart, offering a distinctive atmosphere that immediately separates your organization from competitors.



A Cincinnati investment firm wanted to provide a unique client experience that rivaled that of a “big city” firm. They recognized an opportunity to elevate their workplace. The result?

### **WOW Factor - The power of a first impression**

Clients enter the elevator in Cincinnati, and step off in “New York”.

### **Brand Story**

The power of the brand is the first moment of truth. The design and the art is expressive of connectivity, transparency, and collaboration throughout the spaces.

### **Well-being**

Spaces were designed to meet the WELL building standards. This included access to daylight, temperature controls, technology, and collaboration spaces to prioritize connections with clients and teams.



**Your office becomes a living testament to your brand, creating an immersive experience that resonates with everyone who steps through your doors.**



# Mistake 6:

## Neglecting diversity and inclusion

A new workplace design is an opportunity to create a more inclusive environment. Why is this important?

### Bring diverse parts of your team together

Purposeful design fosters collaboration, breaking down barriers and bringing together diverse teams to share spaces and ideas.

### Keep pace with changing workplace culture

Evolving workplace culture demands inclusive environments. Designing with diversity in mind adapts your space to accommodate the varied needs and expectations of your workforce.

### Zoom can't promote a strong culture of belonging

Virtual meetings have their place, but a well-designed physical space is irreplaceable for nurturing a strong sense of team and promoting a cohesive company culture.



Through their newly renovated headquarters, Enerfab showcased their legacy brand, developing a space that fostered a connected culture. Creating such an environment allowed them an opportunity to highlight their core values and build a team that is unified in their mission. The result?



A common space for all employees.



Design elements to pay homage to a strong company history.



Connected space that promotes movement and community.



**By intentionally creating spaces that embrace the diversity of your teams, you will strengthen the organization. Diversity of thought invites a creative, inquisitive, and collaborative culture. A successful workplace design embraces inclusion and celebrates all employees.**

# Mistake 7:

## Skipping real estate strategy

Skip a real estate strategy at your own peril. You may want to start with dramatic changes and grand plans, but taking a closer look at what you're spending on space vs what you're getting back can steer a successful workplace design.

**For every business, there are pros and cons to renovating vs relocating**

No one company is the same. Digging deep into your business needs, financial goals, and long-term plans can clarify whether a relocation or a renovation is the best move.

**With a real estate strategy, you can minimize wasted spend**

Tailor your strategy to maximize impact and space usage.



WBCSD didn't need as much space for private offices. Instead, WBCSD invested in collaborative spaces and Zoom rooms to match the changing needs of their work.



**A sound real estate strategy will ensure an efficient use of space, optimize costs and contribute to the overall productivity and satisfaction of employees.**



# Mistake 8:

## Isolating employees from one another

Depending on your industry, isolating employees from each other in the workplace can lead to decreased collaboration, lower morale, and ultimately a decline in productivity and innovation.

### Why come to the office if there's no beneficial collaboration?

Coming to workplaces with isolated offices and cubicles won't help your team see the value of in office work.

### Collaboration can improve workplace culture and morale

When space reinforces a sense of togetherness and community, people thrive.



Johnson Investment Counsel prioritized spaces where employees could gather — not just to work, but to be together. They also wanted their meeting spaces to be visible to guests and clients the moment they walked in the door.



**Building spaces where people can work together and interact with each other can change a culture from the inside and out, and excite your team about arriving at the workplace.**



# Mistake 9:

## Waiting to plan for change management

When embarking on a project that changes the daily activities of employees or visitors of a space, proper planning and communication can make or break the project's success.

### Stakeholders won't automatically know what to expect

Forming a communication and change management strategy ensures adoption of new ways of working.

### Lost productivity during a new workplace design is costly

Proper planning for transitions and temporary office accommodations can create early adoption of the new ways of working and avoid additional costs or delays.



### Tips for Change Management Strategy



Outline a clear timeline of the project



Update stakeholders with any changes to the timeline



Ask for team input on the change management strategy



**Designing a new workplace asks a lot of everyone involved, but by thinking about change management in advance you can mitigate the disruption to work, culture, and brand.**

# Mistake 10:

## Working without a turnkey design partner

The task of a workplace design often involves a juggling act between a number of partners and firms, from architect firms and contractors to research teams and design agencies, and anyone in between. Communication can become convoluted, and important steps overlooked. Why is this important?

### **There's one design-minded go-between for every construction partner**

One central partner acts as the cornerstone, ensuring seamless communication and collaboration between various construction partners to bring the vision to life.

### **Your space reflects brand**

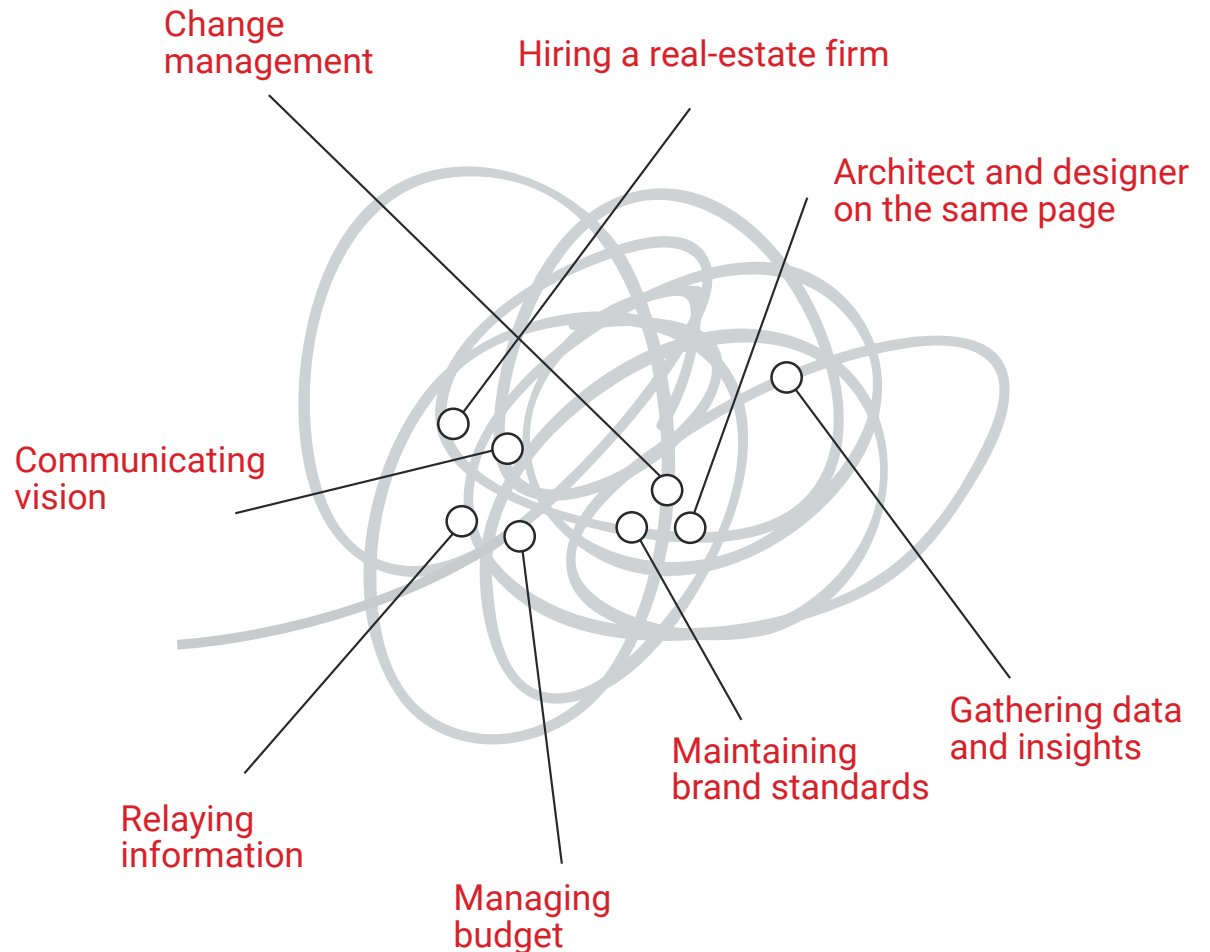
Working with a single partner streamlines execution, maintaining consistency in design and brand standards throughout the entire process.

### **One vision is reflected from earliest insights to finished space**

A unified vision, from initial insights to the final touches, ensures a cohesive and purposeful office space that resonates with your organizational identity.

### **Time and cost savings**

Efficiency translates to savings. A singularly focused partner can help optimize costs and keep the project on track.



**By working with a partner versed in the intricacies of each role, you ensure not just a beautiful space, but a cost-effective and purposeful transformation from conception to completion.**

# Mistakes to avoid?

Here's what the experts say.

1. Not incorporating what your employees think and say
2. Settling for "normal" results
3. Modeling your space to look like a competitor's space
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## So, what's next?

### Learn more

Would you rather juggle multiple partners for your workplace design, or work with an turnkey design partner that takes the stress off your plate? Simplify your path and transform your workplace.

[DOWNLOAD THE GUIDE](#)

### Talk to an expert

Ready to talk to someone who can help you with your workplace design project?

[SCHEDULE A MEETING](#)

