



FEATURED ARTICLE

A New Legal Precedent





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ABOUT TANGRAM

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A NOTE FROM JON

Law offices have long been known for their private offices, formal layouts, and timeless professionalism. But as the way legal professionals work evolves, so do the spaces they work in.

Hybrid work is now the norm, and firms are designing offices to support both deep focus and collaboration. Virtual hearing rooms, flexible workspaces, and hospitality-inspired reception areas are redefining the traditional firm layout. At the same time, there's a bigger focus on well-being—think natural light, wellness rooms, and ergonomic workstations—helping to balance the high-pressure nature of legal work.

Inclusivity is also shaping office design, with law firms creating more accessible and welcoming spaces for employees and clients alike. The result? Workplaces that feel less rigid and more adaptable, without losing the prestige and professionalism that define the industry.

In this issue of *Puzzle*, we explore products and design trends that are shaping the modern law office—blending tradition with fresh, forward-thinking ideas. We hope this collection sparks inspiration for the future of your firm's space.



Jon Leach, Vice President of Business Development







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A NEW LEGAL PRECEDENT:

Designing For Wellbeing Not Just Status

The legal industry has been known for its demanding work culture, where putting in 80 or more hours a week was often the norm. The pursuit of partnership often came at the cost of personal relationships and overall wellbeing.

However, the global health crisis served as a catalyst for change, prompting legal professionals to reassess their priorities. According to the American Bar Association, compensation is no longer the most important consideration when deciding where to work - a healthier work-life balance is, including more flexible schedules. 65% say they expect to work remotely two to three days a week.* This concerns leaders who cite developing firm culture in a hybrid workplace is their biggest challenge.**

"For decades law offices looked the same. Stately private offices, palatial conference rooms and imposing lobbies were the norm, designed primarily as a tool to demonstrate status and prestige for clients. Firms now are being more responsive to employees' needs, using a more humancentered approach," says Keith Bujak, principal researcher, Steelcase WorkSpace Futures. Bujak led a research project to understand how the workplace can better accommodate law practitioners' changing needs. The research was conducted in the U.S. and Canada and included primary and secondary sources.

The rapid adoption of new technologies is driving change. The majority (66%) of firms expect to

increase spend on technology to support a more flexible working environment, with IT security and networking capabilities being the top priorities.* "The pandemic accelerated digital transformation," says Bujak. "No longer dependent on paper and desktop computers, mobile technology allows people to work anywhere."

According to a 2022 Steelcase study, the majority of law practitioners in the U.S. and Canada are working in the office three or more days a week (among the highest, compared to other industries), and they say they are coming in to collaborate and connect with others. Those who come in two days or less also cite collaboration as their top reason, but also rank social activities very high.

Law offices need to ensure spaces are optimized for all these activities and accommodate new work behaviors, says Bujak. "It's no longer enough to just have an impressive office for clients. Law firms need to create nurturing experiences for people that feel more human." This shift from status to performance has firms looking more inwardly towards their employees and exploring how space can enhance wellbeing and work performance.





New Workplace Experience Drivers

Steelcase researchers identified three factors driving the new workplace experience. Law firms need to design for:

Inclusion

All voices should be part of the conversation to identify everyone's needs and design spaces that support unique work processes.

Flexibility

New talent is attracted by flexible work schedules and the ability to work and connect in different locations which requires more flexible space, tools and technology.

Wellbeing

Emerging values require a nurturing work experience that is regenerative. People expect to feel better after a day at work and they need spaces where this can happen.

Steelcase research has identified how spaces need to change to better accommodate law practitioners' needs.

Community Spaces

This central hub is new for most law offices. Ideally situated in a prominent location, it's designed to bring people together, nurture culture, provide an authentic view into the firm while demonstrating to clients a high level of professionalism. This high-performing space supports mobile technology and is meant to be used by everyone to get work done, meet with peers, regenerate and host community-building events.

Private Office

Hybrid work has changed the purpose of the private office. Previously designed mostly for focus work, private offices now need to support multiple work modes and enable people to seamlessly shift between focus and collaboration, host both in-person and remote colleagues, express their personal brand and personality, and provide storage.

Conference Center

Traditionally designed to project prestige, now the Conference Center needs to act as a highperforming multifunctional space that supports relationship building. Flexible furniture and technology create spaces that support hybrid work, meetings, training sessions and community events, while still reflecting the firm's brand.

Virtual Courtroom

The pandemic catalyzed the use of videoconference technology to interact with the court system. The Virtual Courtroom allows legal professionals to connect virtually to live court proceedings and fully participate by creating a more equitable experience for everyone.

Wellness Hub

As partners recognize a greater need to nurture and support their employees' wellbeing, Wellness Hubs have started to emerge in law offices. These destinations provide a naturally-calming environment for both the body and mind to help people do their best work. Diverse settings (both open and enclosed, range of seating options, etc.) reflecting the specific needs for employees' wellbeing support inclusion and psychological safety.

Law firms are adapting to support a hybrid workforce and have realized their offices need to evolve and do more. They're breaking away from what Cushman & Wakefield call "the traditional mode of a one-size-fits-all model" and recognizing "the importance of the office as the 'firm anchor,' a focal point of firm culture, for training, mentorship and collaboration."*





Private Office

Enables focus and collaboration
Presentation of self & firm
Secures temporal storage

PRIVATE OFFICE





STAKS







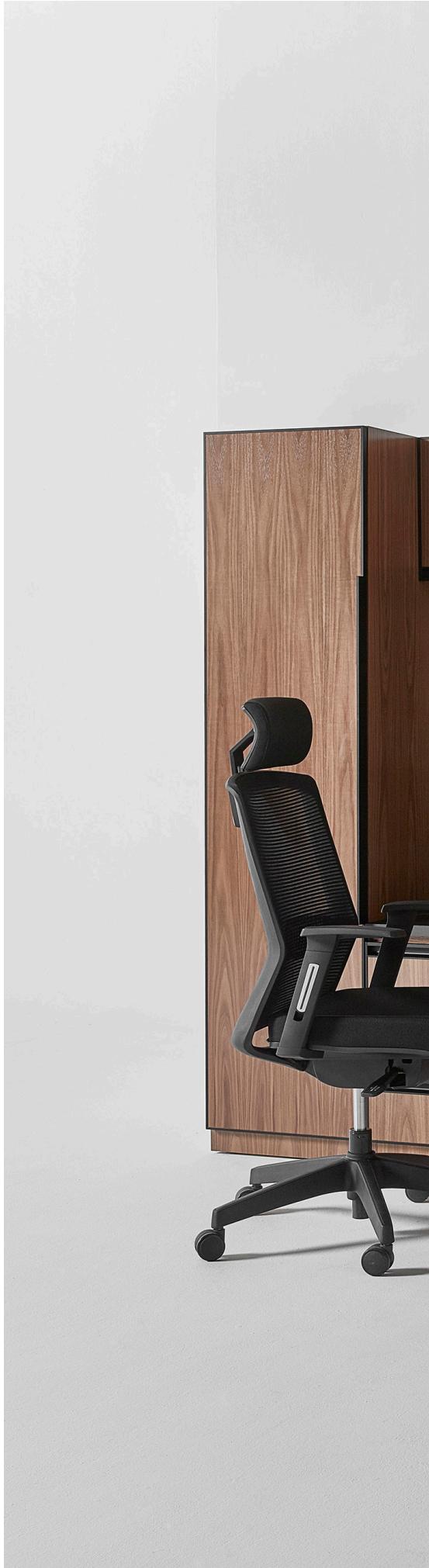


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Design Tips for Private Offices

Quick Switch

Quick switch private office allows the user to do focus work while being able to seamlessly shift to collaborative work with in-person and virtual participants.

- Widescreen monitor & camera mounted so that it can easily pivot to support the shift from individual work to collaboration. Allows the same technology to support both modes.
- To support an office sharing model, open storage provides a space for users to bring in file boxes for various durations.
- Wall-mounted L-shaped HAD provides a large surface for seamlessly switching from individual work to collaborating with two additional users. Inset shroud provides adequate legroom for all users.

Huddle

As more attorneys shift to inviting others into their office, for both virtual and in-person meetings, this space allows the owner to easily move between personal and collaborative work.

- Utilize the wall or surface behind the users (when on video) to provide an opportunity for unique brand expression.
- Shelves behind the users allow for a place to display personal mementos, awards, or other objects of meaning, to express individual personality.
- Table adjacent to the desk enables the attorney to shift their task chair over to allow 3 users to connect with remote participants or have an in-person discussion.





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Design Tips for Private Offices

Shared

The shared attorney office provides an enclosed focus space for two users with plenty of privacy, and open and enclosed storage for each. This space could be adapted to be a larger, individual private office in the future.

- A combination of lockable storage as well as open shelving for file boxes allows for easy access to items used daily and safe keeping of personal items.
- Storage between users provides privacy and a backdrop for video calls. Shelves behind the users allow for a place to display personal mementos, awards, or other objects of meaning, in order to express individual personality.
- Ottoman allows for a place for visitors to stop in for a short conversation

Large

Large attorney office with dedicated zones for collaboration and focus. High boundary between these zones provides a backdrop for users on video.

- Storage and wall mounted HAD provide a clean and refined aesthetic.
- Lounge chair and ottoman can provide an alternative posture for reading or focus work, as well as a space for respite with views to the outdoors.
- With a shift towards more attorneys taking video calls within their office, this collaboration setting can provide a dedicated zone within the office that is optimized for video calls with colleagues and clients.





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Conference Center

Projects prestige
Transforms for events
Integrates technology

CONFERENCE CENTER



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SKYWARD TABLE



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SKYWARD TABLE



OVAL CONFERENCE TABLE



ROUND CONFERENCE

interwoven

*CONFERENCE TABLE
+ 1X1 CHAIR*





Design Tips for Conference Centers

Large

High-end conference room supports large groups and features an elegant, sophisticated, and timeless aesthetic. Comfortable conference seating and easy access to power and technology allows for both in person and remote teams to connect seamlessly.

- Unique 360 tabletop camera solution can provide multi-participant framing for virtual conferences. Provides a more equitable experience for all participants whether in person or remote.
- Large conference table provides ample cable management features and power access within a sleek design.
- Wall-mounted storage can provide a place for hosting more formal meetings.

Medium

Meeting room allows users to array themselves around the table for remote participants to easily view individuals. Markerboard with content camera allows in person participants to share analog content with virtual participants.

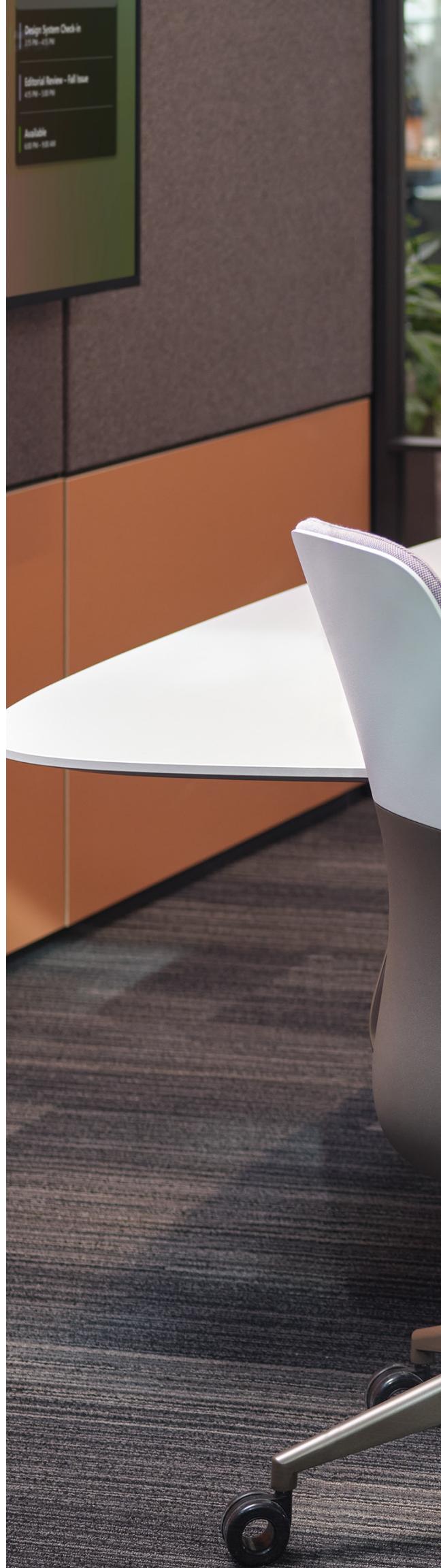
- Consider using diffused and adjustable lighting for video enabled spaces.
- Consider the views from the camera, adding a film to the glass could help reduce distractions from adjacent spaces.
- Mobile ottomans can provide extra seating or a place to drop personal items.

Design Tips for Conference Centers

Small

Intimate meeting space for important and sensitive conversations with a small group when one or more people are remote. Small, moveable ottoman provides additional seating if needed.

- Artwork or signage placed in the cameras view can be an opportunity to reflect the brand.
- Provide spaces adjacent to meeting rooms for waiting, moments of respite, or pre/post meeting conversations.
- Consider the background for on-video calls. Selecting a color/finish that can work with multiple skin tones is important.
- A small pouf or ottoman can provide additional seating if needed, or a place to drop bags.





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GRAB POUF

The New Face of Law

Designing Spaces That Work for Hybrid Professionals

By Jon Leach

The rise of remote work has undoubtedly transformed business operations across industries, including the legal sector. For law firms, the transition hasn't just been about adopting virtual meetings or hybrid policies—it was a broader evolution of how physical and digital spaces intersect to meet the changing needs of both employees and clients.

From juggling hybrid policies to developing client-friendlier spaces, law firms are in pursuit of workspaces that better meet their needs. As the site Above the Law reported, Biglaw is increasingly seeking small office leases that accommodate a modern hybrid work arrangement that presents more opportunities. Let's explore why legal professionals are reinvesting in physical workspaces and how strategic design can shape the future of the legal industry.

The Shift in Legal Client Expectations

Even in a digital-first world, clients still value the tangible professionalism of a physical office. They may appreciate the convenience of Zoom calls and so forth, but for many, stepping into a well-designed law office conveys trust, stability, and competence—qualities that are critical in legal matters.

According to iLawyer Marketing's research, people still want a law firm near them. They like being able to visit a physical space, and nearly half of respondents in 2024 stated they prefer a law firm that is within 30 minutes of where they live.

This is supported by Wolters Kulwer's 2024 Future Ready Lawyer Survey, which found that more legal professionals were spending time in face-to-face meetings last year—likely in their own physical office spaces.

These spaces also provide an opportunity to create a memorable client experience, offering a welcoming environment that builds confidence and lasting relationships.

At the end of the day, law firms offer services to real people, and their spaces need to accommodate the needs of diverse clientele going through difficult experiences. That means making them feel comfortable, welcomed, and supported -- physically and emotionally.



Designing for Flexibility

Historically, law offices emphasized grandeur to convey prestige, but that's changing.

The events of the last decade have prompted a shift towards designs that support a healthier work-life balance, with many legal professionals now valuing flexible schedules and environments that promote well-being.

For instance, on days when everyone is in the office, modular furniture and moveable walls can transform a conference room into a collaborative workspace within minutes. Dedicated quiet zones for focused tasks and open areas for team discussions can help accommodate all workstyles, helping every team member feel supported.

This physical office versatility not only boosts productivity and gives employees more flexibility, but it also future-proofs the office against inevitable industry shifts.

Flexible designs also allow firms to scale operations efficiently. A growing legal team may require additional meeting rooms or workstations, while hybrid work may shift priorities to shared spaces. A well-thought-out design can accommodate these changes without requiring costly renovations (or even finding a new space altogether).

Branding Through Physical Space

A law firm's office is more than just a place to work; it's a physical manifestation of its brand identity. Thoughtful design choices—from the layout and furniture to color schemes and artwork—can communicate the firm's values and culture.

For example, a sleek, minimalist design may signal modernity and efficiency, while a more traditional aesthetic could convey reliability and experience.

Beyond aesthetics, these spaces play a significant role in

attracting and retaining top talent.

Today's professionals seek workplaces that inspire them and reflect their ambitions. A well-designed office fosters pride and engagement among employees, which translates to better client service and overall firm performance.

Additionally, physical spaces can serve as marketing tools. Clients visiting an office that exudes professionalism and sophistication are more likely to recommend the firm to others. This ripple effect not only reinforces the firm's reputation but also positions it as a leader in its field.

The Role of Technology in Modern Offices

Technology integration is a cornerstone of today's legal workspace design. More specifically, an estimated 56% of legal firm respondents feel well-prepared to adjust their business practices, service offerings, workflows, and pricing models in response to the AI technology of 2025.

In law offices, this goes beyond basic video conferencing setups. High-tech solutions like document-sharing platforms, smart boards, and virtual reality tools for case simulations can also create a competitive edge.

Designing physical workspaces to incorporate these revolutionary technologies facilitates better functionality and enhances the overall efficiency of legal teams.

The Path Forward

As the legal industry continues to evolve, it's clear that the firms embracing innovative office design will be well-positioned to lead. A carefully planned physical workspace is no longer just an operational necessity; it's a strategic asset that can drive growth, improve client relationships, and attract top talent.



Jon Leach is Vice President of New Business Development at Tangram's Dallas office, where he leads strategic initiatives across the corporate, education, and healthcare sectors. With more than 20 years of experience in both dealership and manufacturing roles, Jon offers a well-rounded perspective and a deep understanding of the commercial interiors landscape.

Since joining Tangram in October 2021, he has focused on expanding the firm's regional

presence by building strong relationships with A+D firms, brokers, and project managers. Known for his personable and solutions-oriented approach, Jon has led successful engagements on projects for clients including Neiman Marcus, Altruist, Big XII, and McKesson.

Jon holds a Bachelor of Interior Design from Texas Tech University.



Virtual Hearing Room

Promotes Equity
Improves Efficiency
Displays Professionalism

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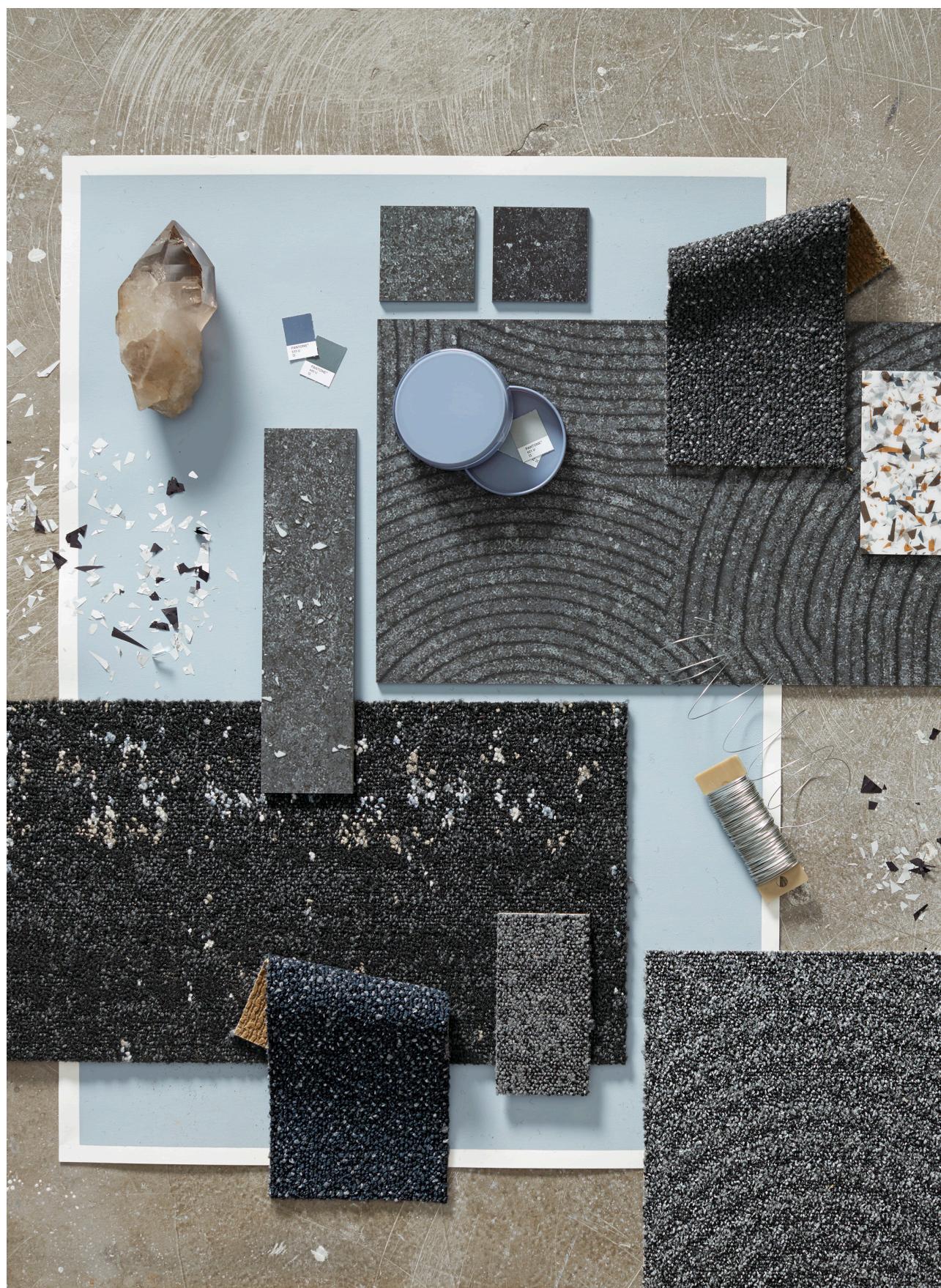
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VIRTUAL HEARING ROOM







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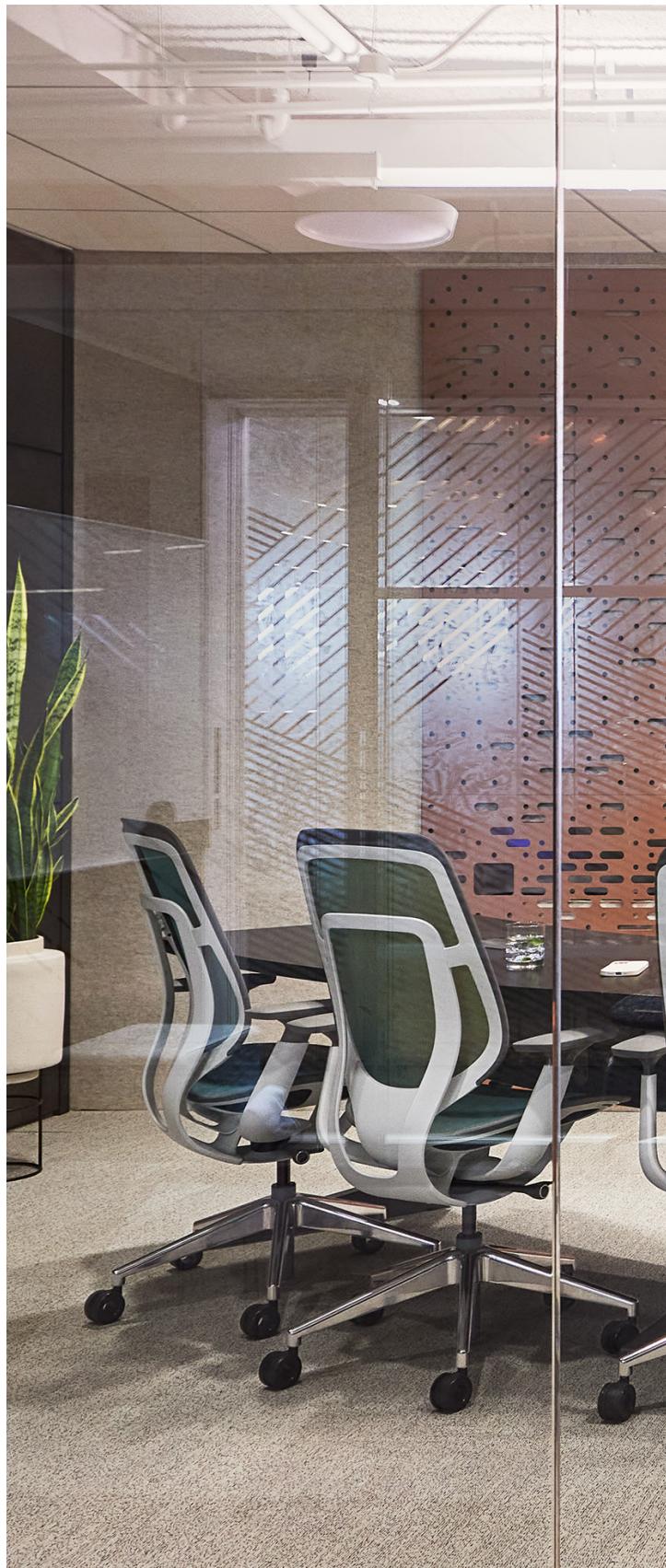


Design Tips for Virtual Hearing Rooms

Virtual Hearing Room

This meeting space specifically supports the Front Row Experience from Microsoft Teams on a large-scale, ultrawide display. Remote participants are easily viewed while sharing content, allowing for a seamless in-room/remote experience.

- Prioritize selecting a material for the background that has a color or texture to ensure that any user can be seen clearly on camera.
- Technology that can support individual framing like Front Row helps to create equity during virtual court proceedings.
- Arc table shape provides a more equitable experience for all users both in person and remote.





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Foley Hoag

An Unconventional Firm

Foley Hoag law firm moved to a part of Boston 20 years ago that at the time, was nothing more than marshland. Today, this area is now one of Boston's hottest neighborhoods that boasts some of the best food, drinks and culture.

Foley Hoag long has established itself to be a progressive firm, refusing to conform to the standardized molds imposed upon traditional law firms. For the first time since their original move-in 20 years prior, they decided to completely redo their space so the interior would better reflect their forward-thinking business model.

In the planning phase, Foley Hoag presented two primary desires. First, they required functioning pieces that would integrate seamlessly with current technology. Second, their lawyers needed to have the freedom to set up their offices how they wanted. Therefore, Studio Other, custom furniture provider, in partnership with Elkus Manfredi, design firm, presented an innovative custom workstation solution after a diligent phase of planning, designing, engineering and prototyping.

The solution includes a work wall with an eight-foot track rail system that holds the monitor arm and allows it to move anywhere horizontally on the desk, giving the user the freedom to configure their freestanding desk and guest chairs in a way that works best for them. Whether the user requires face-to-face time with their client or heads-down desk work, they will be well supported by the flexible system.

Continuing the innovative theme, Studio Other and Elkus Manfredi decided against the traditional dark wood and heavy furniture typically found in a law firm, and instead opted for a modern feel with plated steel, a thin aesthetic material that can dually support a large weight, complemented by wood fronts and accents. Foley Hoag was elated with the clean, beautiful and functional end result that remained true to the character and culture of their firm.







Community Hub

Demonstrates culture
Spans boundaries
Promotes authenticity

COMMUNITY HUB





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& SONS

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Design Tips for Community Hubs

Community Hub

This space encourages connecting with colleagues, supports authentic interactions, and provides a central hub to support the culture of the office.

Multipurpose

Large training space that allows the room to expand and provide more seating for a larger community hub during events or social gatherings.

- Mobile tables allow users to easily reconfigure them for the optimal experience for training sessions or large social gatherings.
- A two top table provides a casual space for up to two presenters during a training session.
- Adding wall hung panels and curtains along a glass wall can provide acoustic benefits in large spaces.

Social Gathering

An informal social space provides a landing spot to bring people together, grab coffee or water, catch up on emails, or connect with colleagues.

- Small self-serve bar provides a space for employees to quickly grab a coffee or other beverage.
- Mobile media cart allows users to move the technology to where they need it.
- Monitors can be used as a media wall for corporate-wide information, news, etc. or utilized for special events, or informal sharing





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Design Tips for Community Hubs

1 + 1 Mentoring

Destination space that is intended for in-person sharing. Sectional with articulating back creates a relaxed, comfortable environment for one or two to share without intruding on one another's personal space.

- Wall mounted hooks can provide a place for bags and coats.
- Diffused and dimmable lighting can provide warmth and softness to a space, giving more comfort to users.
- Power integrated into worksurfaces allow for quick and easy access for both users.

Support Enclaves

Variety of individual spaces with a range of postures providing choice and control to users. Adjacency and proximity of these types of spaces amongst social environments allow users to quickly transition through various work modes.

- Large enclaves provides users with ample worksurface space for arraying papers/files. A wardrobe can be provided for personal items.
- Individual phone booths provide acoustical privacy for video calls and have integrated technology.
- BYOD enclaves can be used as a phone booth, or a place to touchdown and catch up on emails.
- A drop-in respite space allows users to sit back and relax for a moment between meetings or to get some light work done in a more comfortable posture.



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Design Tips for Community Hubs

Outdoor 01

Large outdoor space can be utilized to host special events or corporate gatherings. Space to spread out food and beverages that may be adjacent to an indoor social or café space for easy transitions.

- Outdoor bar areas can be utilized for hosting events. Allowing a space to layout or prepare food and drinks that may be adjacent to an indoor café space.
- Extended communal tables at the back of the space provides a place for larger groups to gather. While a comfortable adjacent lounge provides a more informal space to converse with colleagues.
- High top tables can be used for special events or parties. The footrest allows for a more comfortable posture while standing. These are easily disassembled to move or store.

Outdoor 02

Large outdoor space provides spaces to work, socialize, or dine in groups of various sizes. Shades provide protection from the sun. Lounge areas can be utilized by both individuals and groups.

- Comfortable shaded lounge areas can create an informal place to gather and connect with colleagues.
- Semi-shielded individual touchdown spaces can provide a place for users to relax and enjoy the views.
- High top tables can serve dual purpose as tables for larger events or parties. Stackable stools allow them to be more easily stored.







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 **emu**
ROUND SEATING





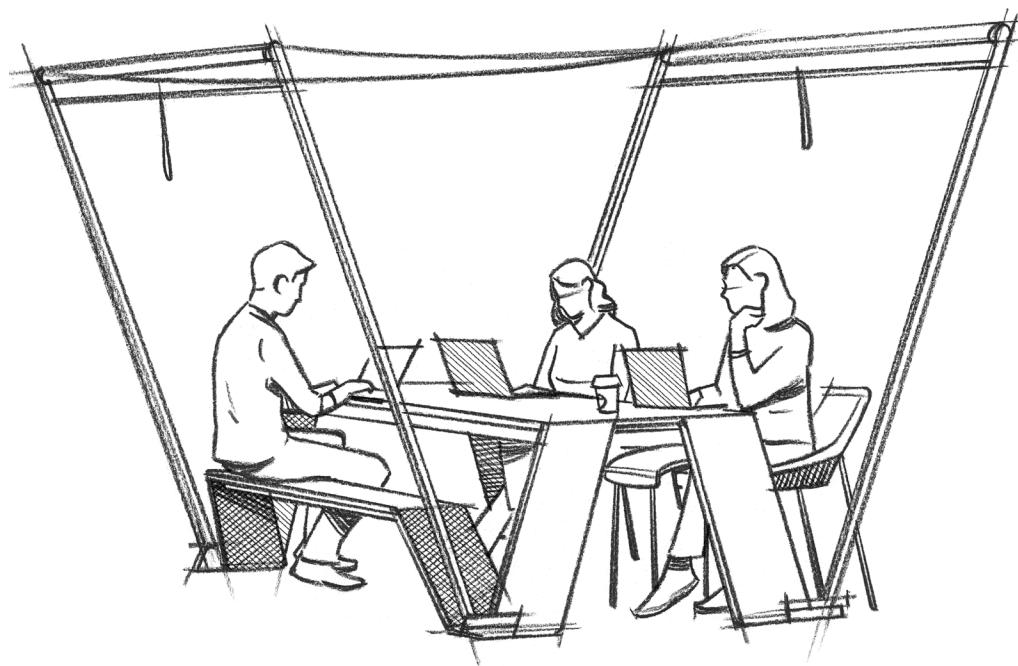
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Designed for all needs
Supports mind and body
Private yet communal



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Design Tips for Wellness Suites

Wellbeing Space

Wellness suites creates a refuge that provides access to a variety of amenities that support wellbeing, respite, and mental health. Co-location offers the opportunity of building community around these specific wellness practices.

- Multi-functional spaces with flip-top tables that can be nested for various needs such as guided, group classes or other wellness related sessions.
- Shower rooms can provide a place for users to shower before or after a workout, if they bike to work, or are working long hours. They can also serve as a gender-neutral option for restrooms.
- Individual mother's rooms with a shared kitchenette can provide a secure and private space for users.
- Private rooms with a foot washing stations can provide a space that can suit a range of users and needs, this space may be used for prayer/meditation or yoga.
- A sensory space with adjustable lighting and acoustical privacy provides a place for users that may be sensitive to certain environments and need a moment away.
- A relaxing space with biophilic elements and views to the outdoors to support respite and wellbeing for both individuals and a small group.





TANGRAM WELLNESS ROOM





