

A modern office interior featuring a wide staircase with a metal railing and glass balustrade. The space is bright, with large windows on the right side. Two men are standing on a mezzanine level, looking at a large abstract painting. Another abstract painting is on the wall below. A complex geometric light fixture hangs from the ceiling. The floor is made of light-colored wood.

LEGAL WORKPLACE DESIGN TRENDS INDUSTRY

TPGArchitecture





The Legal Industry has had dramatic shifts in the last decade, specifically in how their workplaces are designed. TPG has identified **four overarching themes** which are impacting workplace design for the legal profession:

- 01** THE ECONOMICS OF REAL ESTATE
- 02** ATTRACTING & RETAINING TALENT
- 03** TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION
- 04** ADAPTABILITY & FLEXIBILITY

THERE ARE MANY TRENDS THAT CHARACTERIZE LAW FIRM OFFICE
PLANNING TODAY. HOWEVER THE TWO PRIMARY GOALS ARE

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING TALENT, AND

REDUCING A FIRM'S REAL ESTATE FOOTPRINT.

ALL OTHER TRENDS SUPPORT THESE TWO GOALS.

— JAMES PHILLIPS, FOUNDER, TPG ARCHITECTURE



THE ECONOMICS OF 01 REAL ESTATE

Historically, law firms have occupied, on average, 2-3 times more square footage than any other industry.

Today's law firms want to reduce their real estate footprint as a way to reduce their overhead costs.

We've seen:

a. Reduction in square foot per attorney

2011 2016
800 → **500**
RSF RSF

b. Reduction in universal size offices SF

2013 2018
350 → **140**
RSF RSF

c. Since 2011, an increase in shared offices

2011-2018
↑ 50 %

ATTRACTING &

RETAINING TALENT

02

A diverse and multigenerational workforce has a new set of values and work styles that need to be considered in the workplace. With a strong focus on talent recruitment and retention, here are some of the ways in which law firms have strategically responded to a fast changing labor market:

01 Experience & Placemaking

Law firms are creating spaces that are authentic, comfortable, and that provide a level of hospitality to create remarkable experiences for both employees and clients.

02 Well-Being

Creating a state of well-being in the workplace allows staff to thrive. This includes access to daylight, more open and transparent spaces, wellness initiatives, and respite areas such as cafés and lounges.

03 Mentorship & Collaboration


There are positive dynamics created by the multigenerational mix – the main one is knowledge sharing. Mentorship requires specific workplace design elements that promote peer-to-peer learning.

In addition to mentorship, new roles, processes, and business structures have made legal firms more collaborative. Currently, law firms demonstrate ratios as high as 1.3 collaborative seats per attorney.

THE LEGAL INDUSTRY IS COMPETING WITH TECH COMPANIES FOR THE SAME TALENT. FIRMS MUST ADAPT TO NEW WORK STYLES IN ORDER TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN THE BEST TALENT.

- SUZETTE SUBANCE, MANAGING EXECUTIVE/STUDIO CREATIVE DIRECTOR





TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

03

New technologies have had two major impacts on the legal industry:

Mobility & Choice

Technology has given employees the opportunity to work from anywhere at any time. Workplace design has responded to this new flexibility by creating a broad range of spaces that respond to different work activities throughout the day. The idea of mobility is gradually being welcomed by progressive legal practices.

Smaller Libraries & Reduced Overall Storage

In-house libraries continue to shrink as information becomes more accessible online. As the legal industry transitions into a more digital one, the space requirements for libraries and storage have decreased and have unlocked the opportunity for more flexible working styles.

AS TECHNOLOGY HAS ADVANCED, LAW FIRMS HAVE DOWNSIZED OR
ELIMINATED LIBRARIES ALTOGETHER.

**MILLENNIAL (LAWYERS) WILL NOT MISS THE
BOOKS BUT THEY WILL MISS THOSE BIG TABLES
AND THE ENERGY THAT COMES FROM
WORKING ALONGSIDE ONE'S COLLEAGUES.**

— AMERICAN LAWYER JOURNAL, 2018





ADAPTABILITY & FLEXIBILITY

04

As law firms continue to reduce their overall real estate footprints, they also seek to make the most of every square inch of their spaces. Because we cannot predict the future, layouts must be more efficient, streamlined, and flexible to adapt to rapidly changing workforce needs.

Flexible and Modular Planning

Over the length of lease, firms seek workplaces that will ebb and flow with them as they grow or contract. Planning with flexibility in mind ensures that a spaces will accommodate client needs on move-in day and for years to come.

Convertible Spaces

On a day to day basis, flexibility means the ability reconfigure spaces to meet changing business needs. Solutions like multi-purpose spaces, movable partitions, and flexible furniture allow spaces to be easily converted.

Timeless Design

A timeless design requires the creation of an authentic workplace that reflects your culture and brand.

**IN WORKPLACE DESIGN,
THERE ARE NO
RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS.**

**WHAT MATTERS MOST IS ADDRESSING
AN ORGANIZATION'S NEEDS AND CULTURE.**

**THAT'S WHERE TPG
COMES IN...**



By consolidating its footprint from five to four floors, this client reduced its real estate by 50,000 RSF.



To accommodate projected growth within limited space constraints, this client incorporated universal office sizes, doubled up associate offices and created more opportunities for collaboration and mobile working.

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