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Should We Dump the Open Plan Office?

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Ways in which CEO Jason can make best use an office space to promote teamwork

Collaboration and teamwork are two difficult things in any given office setting. However, building trust within a team requires a lot of understanding and goodwill from the employees. Teams are very fragile due to individual differences and thus, without a clear goal, possibility of even the best teams stand a high chance of falling apart. Collaboration of workers through cross teams enhance exchange of knowledge which is beneficial to a company. To enhance teamwork, an organization need to design the office in ways that can accommodate employee interaction. The ages of office cubicles is now pretty over and it is now time to encourage teamwork. The modern offices have tried embracing the open office space designs to enhance collaboration. Office cubicles have now been set for senior managers and officers whereas all other employees share the same office space.

Although not everyone who would be comfortable sitting openly with other people due to their personal spaces, most organizations have offered versatility through short dividers between workstations to give each worker a personal space, but all people are in the same office space. This is a trending office design currently in most organizations and it looks very accommodative to everyone since it provides the employees with personal spaces, it gives then options to stand and talk to with their colleagues and sit when they need to focus on their work. Noise cancelling headphones have also been made available to help workers focus on their work when the office rooms get noisy. CEO Jason can adopt these ideas to help accommodate the urge to enhance workers collaboration and teamwork through collaboration.

To what extent are the workers opposed to the open-plan office simply being inflexible?

An open working plan means different thing to different people. To some people, the idea of working in an open office space suggests enhancement of high-tech. However, to other people,

especially introverted people, the whole idea exemplifies a working-hell, where every moment is spent on trying to zone out noise or avoid listening to colleagues. Although the idea of open office space is divisive, it is beneficial to big tech companies and is has proven effective. People have their own personal differences, and this is what makes most of the workers in CEO Jason's office feel not comfortable with his idea of converting the office into an open office. Some of the complaints that have been raised on this idea can be solved. For instance, the issue of noise raised by some workers can be minimized through use of headphones. Jason should also think of arranging the workers depending on their work specialties and also put age of workers into consideration.

Elderly workers should be segregated in their own spaces and young people the same. This will help each person to accommodate their differences. According to most people's argument, open office platforms may not necessarily improve the coworkers' friendship and collaboration as its purpose would suggest. Her findings on this showed that employees who don't like too much monitoring are likely to feel uncomfortable. People also suggest that, although complete isolation is best to encourage creativity, some interactions are essential to enhance success of some activity-based work. She thus suggests that too much open office plan destruction that tends to outweigh its potential benefits should be addressed.

Rules Jason might introduce that would make the open-plan office more conducive to effective teamwork.

According to CEO Jason's case study, collaboration is a more unified way of enhancing productivity in any work setting. The urge to enhance teamwork and collaboration is intrigued by the message he got from an online article on the major benefits of effective teamwork through an open-plan office platform. After initiating the plan in his organization, he received mixed reactions

from his employees with some embracing it but with a big percentage disputing it. Among those who disputed his idea of open office are senior employees who play a significant role in his organization. For instance, the highest paid copywriter Tony expressed his frustration on the whole idea. Tony's argument was that this idea limited his creativity due to the constant chaos and chatters from people. In order to make this idea effective, Jason needed to formulate some rules.

Since the open office platform is not one-size-fits-all, there is a need to create spaces for people who really need quiet to focus on their work regardless of whether such people find it easy to work are more introverted people. Jason also should provide spaces for everyone regardless of their personality or role in the organization to make everyone feel comfortable but at the end all achieve teamwork which is the main idea behind open office platform. Jason also needs to design the office in a way that will help him achieve his goal.

More collaboration is a noble goal, but it should be emphasized on sales teams and product teams. He should identify the specific goals he really wants to achieve to help him design the open office. This is because some of the roles performed by some workers need creativity which can only be achieved when there are minimal disruptions. Additionally, it is good to provide a diverse range of spaces in the office—but unless he is clear with his employees about which spaces are meant for which uses, chaos is bound to ensue. Jason should formulate strict rules about how the space can be used—and by whom. He should be clear that in case of discussion, people should go to the boardroom and discuss from there and in case of consultations this should be done in low tones to avoid disruptions.

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