

AN ARTICLE ON “IDENTIFYING PRODUCTIVE WORKPLACE  
ENVIRONMENT”

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Long back I heard a story; it was about a house of mirrors. One day a brown puppy was roaming around and enjoying the beauty of nature. Soon he reached the house of mirrors, window was open, and he peeped through it. And soon he was amazed and mesmerized to see his own joyous reflection all around in the mirrors placed inside the house. The first thought that came to his mind was “This is a wonderful place, I should visit this often”.

Coincidentally same day a white puppy lost his way and reached the same place. He too peeped through the mirror that was open and since he was lost and worried, he was horrified and depressed to see his own frown all around and the thought that came to his mind was , “this is such a terrible place, I won’t ever come here again”.

Doesn’t this story seem to be our very own, be it in school, college or office? Don’t these mirror act as metaphor to people around us be it batch mates, teachers, superiors, collogues or our very own attitude?

Doesn’t it relate to the absenteeism, Lack of interest and distraction due to an unfavorable environment, gradually leading to the lack of productivity? Now putting this into the work



place scenario we can very well analyze how employees tend to respond to favorable and unfavorable working environment, ultimately affecting their levels of productivity in positive or negative manner respectively. To understand further let us first know what comprises working environment.

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Leblebici (2012), states the physical and behavioral components of environment as follows:

**Physical Components of Environment:**

Comfort level: Ventilation, heating, natural lighting, artificial lighting, décor, cleanliness, overall comfort, physical security. Office layout: Informal meeting areas, formal meeting areas, quiet areas, privacy, personal storage, general storage, work area-desk and circulation space.

**Behavioral components of Environment:**

Level of interaction and distribution: social interaction, work interaction, creative physical environment, overall atmosphere, position related to colleagues, position relative to equipment, overall office layout and refreshment.

**Observer’s Eye**

Various academicians have studied the relation between workplace environment and employees productivity and found it to have crucial role in affecting the performance in either way on the scale of high or low. Few arguments are listed below for the reference:

- Leblebici (2012) reveals, while the employees are unhappy with the physical conditions of the workplace, they have remarkable satisfaction with the workplace by having strong behavioral workplace conditions. According to the survey results it is proven that workplace environment affects employee performance but behavioral workplace environment has greater effect on employee’s performance.

- Pech and Slade (2006) argued that the employee disengagement is increasing and it becomes more important to make workplace that positively influences workplace.
- Another researcher indicates that improving the working environment reduces complaints and absenteeism while increasing productivity (Roelofsen.2002)
- Wells (2000) states that workplace satisfaction. In recent years, employees comfort on the job, determined by workplace conditions and environment has been as an important factor for measuring their productivity.
- Sekar (2011) argues that the relationship between work, the workplace and tools of work, workplace becomes an integral part of work itself. The management that dictate how, exactly to maximize productivity center around two major areas of focus: personal motivation and the infrastructure of the work environment.



(Source:[http://www.businessperform.com/workplacet raining/workplace\\_environment.html](http://www.businessperform.com/workplacet raining/workplace_environment.html))

The job characteristics Model(JCM) is “an influential theory of work design developed by Hackman and Oldham. It is based upon

five characteristics –Skill variety, task identity, task significance, task autonomy and task feedback which are used to identify the general content and structure of jobs.” This model is based upon an idea that high task control and feedback are two essential elements for maximizing work potential.

Concept of positive psychology like hope and altruism provide a positive work environment that influences the moods and attitudes of worker. Youssef and Luthans (2007) examined the effects hope, optimism and resilience had in the workplace on employees job performance, job satisfaction, work happiness and organizational.

#### **Tit-Bits Around**

Various working personals, working for various organizations of varied size and reach, during their casual talks mentioned about the factors affecting their productivity at workplace. Few were of opinion about how their mentor intruded about the task to be done. Few expected the information about “what” is to be done not “how” it is to be done on the contrary few found their bosses to put them into the sea without life saving equipments. Few mentioned how these initial compatibility issues turn out to be lack of trust between the supervisor and subordinate with due passage of time.

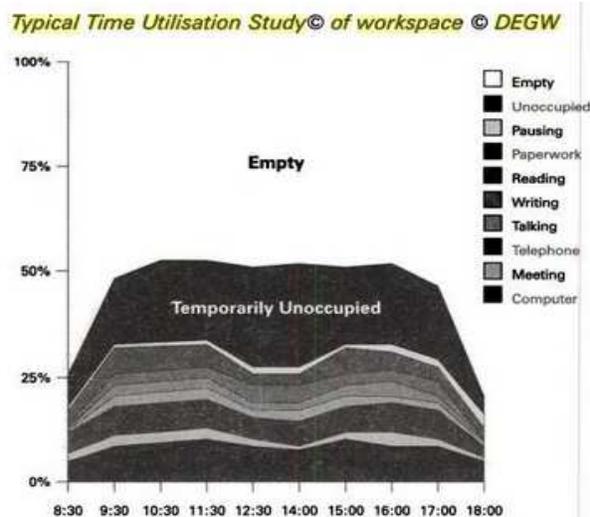
# Few advocated that due to the inappropriate workspace design there can be a possibility of one or the other issues like feeling of disconnection from other departments of the same organization, depressing feelings due to lethargy people

around (this could be due to different personality type people employed for different job specification) like lively, active, joyous sales personnel sitting beside a data entry operator. Few confessed lack of sincerity and motivation due to delayed or no feedbacks or sense of undervalued task assigned.

# Few explained how lack of trust led to internal or intra departments conflicts which eventually promote grouping (Seeking security, status, self esteem, affiliation, power, goal achievement), this grouping in turn moulds the healthy talks on performance, goals, aspiration, mutual benefits of employees and organization into personal judgment gossips.

# Few were disappointed by how their college’s invaluable continuous telephonic or in person talks, which affected their own commitment and concentration adversely.

# Few shared about organizations who have been thoughtful even about the lift operators in their building, by putting their shifts on rotation. Days, Shifts hours, the lifts (in case multiple lifts and design) being the variables. Also by connecting a TV set so as to avoid the monotony and saturation of boredom.



All these are the factors that play crucial role yet can be controlled by a few detailed behavioral modifications. Everything costs and so does work place, be it in use or empty. Another point to observe is exactly what type of activity is being performed there. Employee's time costs money too so in appropriate or ineffective work settings can also be a financial drain.

I am sure, after reading it you might find it to be your own story in one way or other. So being an employee, mentor, supervisor have you addressed these minute issues to take care of the drain on your finances? Or if you are facing these issues which are hampering your performance, have you brought them to your supervisor's notice?

It goes by saying if enough people tell you that you are terrific, after a while you will have the self concept of a terrific person. Similarly regular lack of productivity and performance can turn your capability into inability. Are you saving yourself?

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