

Business

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Interiors Offices that come to work

By Janice Brunson
staff writer

Flexibility is the driving force in today's office decor.

As costs for commercial space continue to soar and increasing numbers move into white collar positions, the resulting space crunch demands office design that is easily and cheaply altered.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Barbara Marini, a private commercial decorator, incorporated fuchsia-colored neon light with brilliant greens and blues to create entry and display areas for The Athletic Suppplier.

Large commercial clients constantly change office space, according to designer Janice Purcell of Carson Business Interiors in Southfield.

"Big clients continually reconfigure to suit their immediate needs. (Design) jobs are ongoing," said Purcell, citing Fireman's Fund Mortgage Co. in Farmington Hills.

Purcell has been working with Fireman's Fund for nearly four years, reshaping the office interior to accommodate additional employees and changing needs.

"One of the reasons we (commercial designers) are here is to fit the office environment to the individual at every level, from top to bottom. Clients know something is wrong and they come to us to fix it," Purcell said.

STUDIES ON EMPLOYEE productivity indicate that those working in environments tailored to individual jobs produce more than those laboring in dated bullpen environs.

The ideal situation is a work station containing some 15 separate components and outfitted with furnishings that "work" for the employee.

"Most people typically sit four to six hours a day and perform multiple tasks. They need a chair that supports all functions, a chair that thinks for them," said Robert Shapland of Steelcase Inc., a Michigan company that designs and manufactures office equipment.

The Sensor, a chair which Shapland said cost Steelcase \$10 million to develop, "senses body movement and responds as though it were living," according to the Sensor brochure. Deluxe models include

"bladders," or inflatable cushioning that conforms to individual body size and shape.

THE PREVALENCE of computers have changed the office landscape, calling for multi-use desks and tables that are larger and lower, indirect lighting to reduce screen glare and increased overhead filing cabinets.

"Paperless office" predictions of the past have not been realized, Shapland explained. Computers have also created a new area of concern.

"We can no longer ignore computer cables and electrical wires," said Jean Johnson of Carson Interiors. Former solutions, like using flat electrical wire under carpet, may be inadequate due to the sheer volume of office computers today. One of every two employees now uses a computer and estimates put the number at one in one by the year 2000.

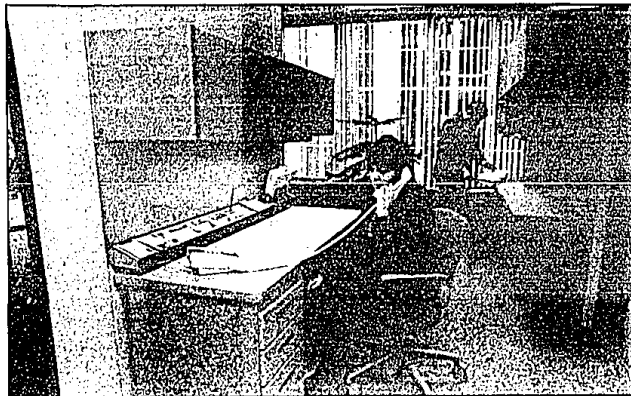
"Floating floor" is a solution Don Brann of Rochester favors. Brann, who has owned Don Brann Associates for 20 years, said floating raised floors installed one foot above a first floor are gaining in popularity for several reasons.

They provide hidden space for unsightly wires and cables, can be instantly accessed for repair and provide flexible placement of sockets and plugs for individualized use, according to Brann.

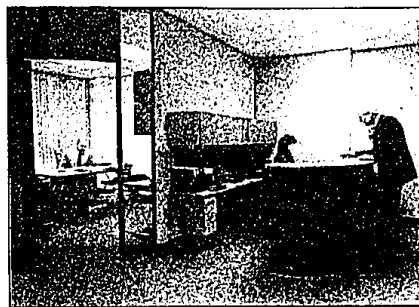
But installation can be expensive, costing nearly \$6 a square foot for flooring with an unfinished surface.

THE STERILE business office environment is giving way to a homier look.

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JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer



Today's office design reflects working conditions where most people typically sit four to six hours a day and perform multiple tasks. This U.S. Gypsum office was designed by Don Brann Associates.

Terminal woes Computer anxiety deprogrammed

By E. Dale Lee
staff writer

Although the computer industry has been on a 30-year growth binge, there are still business people gripped with fright at the thought of dealing with a mainframe or micro-computer.

As the number of computers in the workplace has multiplied, so, too, have related service industries. Hoping to fill one void is Dr. Diane Dailey of Flint, who holds the hands of keyboard-limbed clients of a Troy-based computer store to help them overcome their fear of computers. She plans a second business at 840 W. Big Beaver in Troy.

Dailey, who claims hers is the first U.S. foray into computer psychotherapy, said clients referred to her from the computer store, PC 1-2-3 of Troy, have all been permanently cured of the keyboard jitters.

A psychotherapist for a quarter century, Dailey began treatment about a year ago and has seen about 100 patients from small and mid-sized companies.

Dailey, who earned a doctorate in social work and psychology from the University of Michigan, has developed a treatment that includes hypnosis, personal psychotherapy and cassette tapes that command the listener to relax and learn.

Patients seeking to battle computer anxiety comprise about 5 percent of her practice, but she expects that percentage to rise at least 10 percent in 1988 if she can convince large corporations in the area that treatment of the problem has merit on a mass scale.

WIN PSAL, general manager of PC 1-2-3, said there hasn't been a great demand for the service, but he believes it's needed.

"From a marketing viewpoint, there are not enough customers to base a psychotherapy practice on but the idea works," he said. "Our clients have said good things about it."

One of them tried group therapy before finding "the cure" at the hands of Dailey.

"I went to three psychologists to get over my anxiety problem, and they couldn't help me," said Fred, a UAW committeeman whose company computerized safety and educational programs for its workers.

'One phobia is really the same as any other, and that's why I decided to give this a whirl. Some people are always fearful of computers at first and as a result have a tense reaction to them.'

— Dr. Diane Dailey

"It took me about three months of listening to relaxation tapes and talking with Dr. Dailey, but my anxiety problem has disappeared.

"I've learned my fears were not well-grounded. I can do things I never thought I could. I have confidence now, and I'm comfortable at the keyboard. I can function fine... now."

Dailey predicts a growing need for computer-based psychotherapy.

"One phobia is really the same as any other, and that's why I decided to give this a whirl," she said. "Some people are always fearful of computers at first and as a result have a tense reaction to them."

"Through psychotherapy, we tack-



le fearful thoughts and negative physiological reactions. So long as there are computers, there will be fear of them — but that fear can always be allayed."

SOME of Dailey's clients come from businesses that want to calm their employees' fears, especially when a companywide computer system is installed that is far more sophisticated than the previous one.

"Workers who come in because their business requires them to do so and think they have the problem at hand cannot be helped with this method of psychotherapy," Dailey said.

"But with the proper attitude anyone can overcome this fear. Performance anxiety, which is what 90 percent of the people who fear computers have, is the easiest phobia for any psychotherapist to treat successfully."

Earl, a retail business owner, agrees with Dailey's assessment of the importance attitude plays.

"You don't have to be a genius to operate a computer. You just have to realize it's something new you have no experience with."

According to Dailey, people who fear computers are:

- Afraid of making fools of themselves.
- Afraid of changes.
- Procrastinators who are able to learn but don't know it.
- Really believe they're not good at running a computer without proving to themselves that they've really tried.

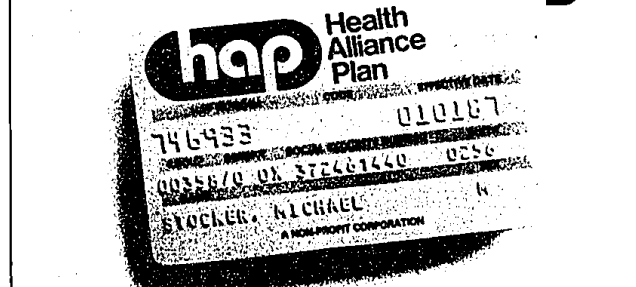
"It's tough for somebody who's a success on the job to admit that he or she might not be perfect. But you don't need to be. Get functional and let your fingers carry you."

According to Dailey, students and executives are the most likely to be anxious about computers.

"Those who could use immersion transformation might be executives or students who are confronting increased competitive pressures from their computer-literate colleagues," she said. "For many people, especially our parents' generation, entering the world of computers is as frightening as taking a space flight."

The fear of computers can be a roadblock to success. But I believe just about everybody can become computer literate and succeed at what they wish."

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