

THE BRIGHT SIDE® OF CHANGE

Written by Donna Rae Smith

The Color of Productivity

If you stop by Bright Side's office in northeast Ohio, the first thing you'll notice is the vibrant colored walls. We find it virtually impossible not to be energized and uplifted just by opening the front door. Beyond the colors, you'll see open workspaces, an abundance of natural light, and two spacious rooms where we work with clients to accelerate personal and organizational change. Because our work focuses on thriving on change and breaking through perceived boundaries, it was only logical for us to create a space that was bold and confident.



Squares with Concentric Circles, Wassily Kandinsky

Bright Side isn't alone in recognizing that the office environment contributes to (or detracts from) creativity and productivity. We intentionally created a work environment that reflects our office culture and values, and that facilitates our work.

Clients routinely tell us that the energy of our office space is contagious, and they notice that the positive, engaged people on our staff reflect the physical space. Even clients whose work environments are traditional and staid confess that they prefer our colorful environment over their more staid office environments.

In a recent [Wall Street Journal article](#), Jonah Lehrer points to recent studies that link office environment to health, and also performance. Participants in one study were better at connecting seemingly unrelated subjects when sitting in a high-ceilinged room. And—no surprise to us at Bright Side—wall color does impact performance.

Well-designed office spaces recognize that different types of work require different environments. Client phone calls and report writing often require quiet, distraction-free spaces. There are plenty of other times though when it's necessary to work face-to-face, either in a formal or informal setting. Cross-fertilization between business units is essential for success, and the traditional

model of keeping people in silos is increasingly being reconfigured. [This article](#) from Co.Design gives 8 tips for promoting the flow of ideas, and includes some great photos that will give you an idea of the possibilities for office layouts that promote productivity and healthy relationships.

A focus on the bottom line, especially in these economic times, makes redesigning office spaces unrealistic for many companies. And it's ultimately a mindset shift, especially for those who've spent a lifetime pursuing the corner office. But it's increasingly important to realize that design—even decorative details like wall color and [plants](#)—is not inconsequential or frivolous, but actually impacts employee satisfaction, effectiveness and productivity.

The Experiment

You too can intentionally enhance productivity and wellness in your work environment. Take a look at your workplace:

- Does it cater to different types of work styles?
- Is it suitable for different types of work?
- Does it inspire?
- What does it say about your office culture?
- What initial, low-budget steps could be taken to create a more engaging environment?
- If you could design your dream workplace, what would it look like?

Try something small and observe the impact on others. Keep us informed of your experiments and their impacts.

THE CONVERSATION: Share the results of your experiment in the comments below or contact the author directly at donnarae@bright-side.com.

ABOUT DONNA RAE SMITH

Donna Rae Smith is a guest blogger for Smart Business. She has forged a career, enterprise and an applied discipline on the practice of teaching leaders to be masters of change. She is the Founder and CEO of Bright Side, Inc., a transformational change catalyst company with an emphasis on the behavior-side of change. For more than two decades, Donna Rae Smith and the Bright Side team have been recognized as innovators in executing behavioral strategies coalesced with business strategies to accelerate and sustain business results. Bright Side®, The Behavioral Strategy Company, has partnered with over 250 of the world's most influential companies. For more information, please visit www.bright-side.com or contact Donna Rae at donnarae@bright-side.com.

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