

The Return to the Office!

As more and more offices open back up and with some employees returning for the first time in well over a year, a readjustment period is certainly needed. While working at home took some time to get used to, returning to the office may also require a settling-in period. It's great to see colleagues again and catch-up face to face, but what is the office space like to return to... and specifically the lighting?

During lockdown, we became used to working in our own little domains, adjusting chairs, tables, and even our locations to suit our personal preferences, and by now we've probably adapted the lighting to suit our requirements too.

Perhaps a window seat has been utilised allowing all the benefits of daylight to enrich our day, or maybe creating somewhere a little more intimate and low key has allowed for a spotlight on quieter moments. Whatever the preference, the ever-changing quantity, direction, and colour temperature of light can be enjoyed and to a certain degree controlled by us; we are certainly not living in a world of a uniform 500 lux everywhere.

At home we have control of our own lit environment. We have become used to adjusting the lighting levels to suit our task and our preferences, however, this personalisation may be slightly lacking on our return to the office.

We spend many hours in our offices and the lighting is important not just for our ability to see and perform tasks, to navigate our journey safely, to provide engaging and interesting interiors, but it also plays a key role in our physiology too.

At this time of the year, we should be bathed in ever-changing daylight. This aids our health and wellbeing, maintains our circadian rhythms, and provides oodles of perfect light. It also ensures, where possible, that the majority of artificial lighting is switched off, saving money and the environment. And while we can choose to embrace these factors in our home working spaces, are we able to enjoy these as we would like within our offices?

Should we be rethinking office lighting design altogether? Should we still be providing a blanket of 300 or 500 lux everywhere just in case a desk will be in such a position, or should we be providing tailored solutions to suit different staff members and office areas?

If we were to focus on providing light where it is needed, when it is needed, in the right amount for the task in hand, and for the preference of the user, we could not only see a reduction in energy use but better engagement from our staff as well.

Additionally, should we not allow the lighting to be adjusted, changed, and tweaked to suit a task, our visual acuity, or even what mood we're in? That's what we've all been doing at home!

Surely, it's time for a re-think?



Photo Credit: Origin Workspace