

FORUM {FOCUS}

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IIDA's Corporate Forum, led by Advisor Jim Walker, IIDA, AIA, LEED AP, encompasses the areas of practice including financial institutions, professional office space, industrial facilities, public and community spaces, and transportation facilities. *Perspective* spoke with Walker to better understand the trends affecting corporate interior designers.

What trends are currently emerging in corporate Interior Design?

It is obviously not a trend, but the biggest issue to affect workplace design — other than technology — is sustainability. The concepts of daylight harvesting, green materials and transparency, for example, are all drastically changing corporate Interior Design. We as designers are leading the effort. But it is amazing how quickly the corporate world is signing on to make their companies more sustainable.

The other issue facing corporate Interior Design is the cost of real estate. As a result, we are finding our clients moving to more open planning, smaller offices and more flexible, collaborative spaces.

Why are these particular trends emerging?

We are seeing these changes happening in all aspects of Interior Design for many reasons: cultural changes, environmental changes, generational changes. We are much more global in our outlook about everything in our lives, including the workplace. These observations give us much more information to apply to new and unique design solutions. We are seeing the American office get much more efficient and collaborative because of this globalization of the workplace.

What impact do these trends have on corporate interior designers?

It means that we as designers will have to be creative with “less” — less space, fewer materials, more efficient furnishings and Cradle to Cradle materials. We will need to look at new and unique ways of dealing with visual and acoustical privacy, and more efficient ways to light spaces.

Is the corporate interior design focus growing?

Of course it is growing and will continue to do so. Corporate design grows even during periods of slow economic growth as companies downsize or look to new efficiencies. 

Did You Know?



- The IIDA Corporate Forum has established a Task Force. All Members are welcome to join. For more information, contact IIDA's Headquarters at **888.799.IIDA**.
- The IIDA Forum Advisors Industry Roundtable will take place in September. Watch for future issues of *Perspective* for more information.