

ATTRACT TOP TALENT

by Taking Another Look
at Your Breakroom



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Informational Guide



IN THIS GUIDE YOU'LL LEARN

- 5 Ways The Best Breakrooms Attract Top Talent
- Breakroom Design Best Practices
- How To Avoid Breakroom Design Flaws
- Why Updating Your Breakroom Matters

Breakrooms are a key place every onsite employee is virtually *guaranteed* to visit during the day. Yet, when employers think about how to attract and retain top talent, improving the office breakroom isn't usually the first thing that comes to mind.

Despite a breakroom's unassuming nature, the space offers a unique benefit that most other work areas lack. Updating your breakroom to incentivize relaxation and socialization is an easy way to make a meaningful difference—thanks to the breakroom's ubiquity, frequent use, and status as a high-traffic communication hub within your organization.



5 WAYS THE BEST BREAKROOMS ATTRACT TOP TALENT

Across the board, highly talented workers want a great, relaxing space to take a break. When they're well-designed, breakrooms can also improve efficiency, inspire new ideas, lead to a sense of community and foster a kind of organic company culture that permeates and elevates all other aspects of office work. Here are 5 key ways great breakrooms help attract and keep great talent.

1. Breakrooms improve work-life balance

A good breakroom encourages employees to engage in activities otherwise held during off-hours, like socializing, hosting holiday events, celebrating small and large life moments, catching up on the news, learning about hobbies, taking power naps, making food, and checking social feeds.

By breathing more life into the workday, well-designed breakrooms help talent stay motivated, inspired, and engaged.

2. Breakrooms foster social connections

Breakrooms ensure workers feel part of a larger, more connected workplace community. The best breakrooms encourage not just socialization, but a different kind of socialization than we see in other workspaces.

By serving as a place to foster these kinds of social interactions, breakrooms can help employees feel more satisfied, and their desire to stay at your organization grows.

3. Breakrooms allow employees to do great work

Breakrooms offer employees a place to relax, refocus and recharge, preventing burnout and increasing productivity.

4. Breakrooms improve employee wellbeing

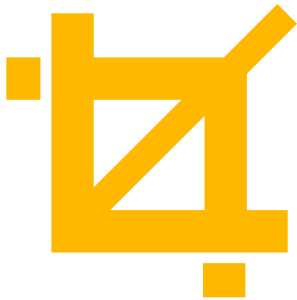
Speaking of burnout, employee stress is nothing to sneeze at. A highly stressful workspace can easily lead to higher turnover, and without a way to remedy burnout, organizations are at risk of losing both new and longtime talent.

Well-planned breakrooms may serve as a cultural "green flag" that shows your company is committed to the wellbeing of its workers, leading to better work, greater employee satisfaction and higher retention rates. While not the only solution to a stressful workplace culture, a breakroom goes a long way toward signaling a safe space for employees to unwind and recharge.

5. Breakrooms are a key market differentiator

In an extremely tight job market, anything your company can do to differentiate itself from the competition will have a net positive impact on attracting and retaining talent. While an average or subpar breakroom may not be a dealbreaker for employees, updating your break space is an easy, one-time fix that immediately contributes to a stronger workplace culture.

Whether you're attracting new candidates or hoping to hold onto long-term employees, a thoughtfully designed break space can scream "this company really gets it" more than any other space in the workplace.



BREAKROOM DESIGN BEST PRACTICES

What makes a great breakroom *great*? If you're looking to transform your break space, consider the following design principles.

1. Invest in furniture that puts comfort and relaxation front and center

Everything that makes a breakroom work begins with a relaxing environment that emphasizes good seating, lighting, and amenities. Here's what to include when decorating your breakroom:

- Inviting sofas that maximize seating space
- Comfortable, tasteful chairs
- Relaxing cushions and pillows
- Furniture with built-in power, enabling workers to charge devices while on break
- Soft lighting and ample natural lighting
- A pleasing color palette that's brand-appropriate
- Up-to-date coffee makers, refrigerators, beverage coolers and other useful amenities
- Ample and secure storage spaces for stowing personal belongings

By decorating your breakroom in ways that speak to your unique organizational style and preferences, you'll create a space that inspires all other elements of a successful relaxation area—sociability, wellness, engagement, interaction, inclusivity and more.

2. Encourage social interaction

Breakrooms are conversational hubs. Good breakroom design incorporates opportunities for more social interaction by including:

- Chairs, couches, and tables for maximum seating
- Communal tables, coffee bars, and other conversation spaces
- Interactive spaces and games
- Standing room for events, celebrations, and gatherings

3. Champion health and wellness

Along with ergonomic seating, which is important for both wellness and inclusion, you can promote health and wellness in your break space by adding:

- Healthy snack options
- Access to fresh water
- Spaces for physical activity, stretching, and downtime
- An activities board that highlights office and community wellness activities
- Reading material, technology and other enrichment equipment

4. Offer worker-led personalization

As with other major business decisions, when it comes to updating your space, workers want to feel included. When possible, involve employees in designing your updated break space. Consider creating a company survey to see what features your workers want included in a new and improved breakroom. When renovations begin, allow as much input and transparency as possible to ensure you're creating a space for everyone.

5. Showcase awards and accolades

Where should your company awards and trophies go? In the breakroom, of course. By showcasing accolades, thank-you notes, awards, photos, and other positive memorabilia in your breakroom, you're creating a space that feels both lived-in and loved, ensuring employees stay connected to you, your organization and your larger mission.

Showcase awards and accolades by adding:

- A recognition wall or employee achievement board
- Trophy cases & awards shelves
- Framed certificates and other memorabilia

6. Don't forget about diversity and inclusion

The best breakrooms are both comfortable and inclusive. As you update your space, be sure to create an environment that speaks to the diverse needs and preferences of your workforce by respecting the different dietary requirements, religious practices, physical and mental needs, and cultural preferences of your colleagues.

What does this look like in practice? For instance, creating a breakroom that's both physically and neuro-inclusive might mean sprucing up your space with ADA-compliant furniture, privacy pods, booth seating and other secluded areas that offer a breather from stimulation.

Keeping diversity and inclusion top of mind is especially crucial when it comes to ensuring your colleagues stay engaged in their work — if they don't see their unique needs reflected throughout your workspace, they might seek out employers who are more inclined to offer accommodations.

7. Avoid “minimum viable product” syndrome

Just as “providing a space to showcase awards” doesn't mean “reserving a spot on the fridge to tack up thank-you notes,” updating your break space doesn't mean doing the bare minimum to improve your office culture.

To keep workers engaged, go a step beyond what's necessary. Work with your company to create a space that recognizes employee values and makes your team feel cared for. Here's a few ways to inspire delight and appreciation every time employees enter the breakroom:

- Offer beverages and other refreshments, and always keep them well-stocked
- Invest in high-grade appliances, like microwaves, refrigerators, and toasters
- Install easily accessible charging stations for mobile devices and add private areas for making calls
- Add natural elements, like well-tended plants, to instill a calming, refreshing breakroom atmosphere
- Don't skimp on maintenance needs, and always make sure the breakroom is clean and functioning properly
- Routinely swap out games, reading material and technology to keep workers engaged and motivated
- If complaints —like a lack of comfortable furniture — arise, always take them seriously
- Test and re-test ideas to continually improve your space

COMMON BREAKROOM DESIGN FLAWS (AND HOW TO AVOID THEM)

We've talked about what makes a great breakroom shine. But what causes a breakroom to fail? As you work to create a breakroom that cultivates positive employee interactions, the following are pitfalls you'll want to avoid.



1. Hanging onto out-of-date amenities

Up-to-date amenities can go a long way toward improving employee morale. A refrigerator that's large enough to stock lunches, a coffee maker that's fast and efficient and a microwave that heats food in short order will help your workers take care of their needs while also allowing them to return to work sooner.

Upgraded seating is everything. Rather than holding onto old or less-than-functional furniture, regularly update and replace seating to make sure your workers stay comfortable and safe.

2. Forgoing privacy

Sure, breakrooms should encourage socialization. But a breakroom should also be a place where workers can take time away from others. If your breakroom is a completely open space, make sure there are still designated spaces to make personal calls, read, work, unplug devices, recharge from meetings and eat in peace. You can do this by:

- Providing private seating in addition to communal seating options
- Furnishing your breakroom with personal tables
- Reserving certain break areas as designated private spaces
- Introducing “no-tech” zones where people can unplug from social feeds, email channels, text chats and other tech in order to rest and recharge
- Adding privacy pods, space dividers and other furniture options that give workers a break from stimulation
- Establishing both a “private” and “public” breakroom

3. Skimping on ventilation and lighting

Just as with other spaces, breakrooms need good ventilation and lighting for workers to thrive. Poor air circulation can lead to stuffy, damp, or humid conditions, and a lack of lighting can lead to a dingy environment that discourages socialization and relaxation. If possible, set up your break space in an area with ample natural lighting — barring that, lots of soft, artificial light will help create a warm and inviting space.

4. Not offering enough space

Coat-closet sized hubs do not make for great breakrooms. Neither do to-go coffee stations set up between desks. In general, cramped breakrooms make workers feel crowded and uncomfortable. If your current breakroom doesn't allow for employees to lounge and relax, consider relocating your break space to a larger area of the office.

Of course, upgrading to a bigger space isn't always possible or practical. But don't worry—if you're working with space limitations, there are still ways to create an inviting breakroom. Design solutions like compact furniture, tables that maximize seating space while minimizing surface area and other options can keep your break space feeling roomy without encroaching on other workspaces.

5. Forgetting to be inclusive

Your workforce is diverse. Your breakroom should be, too. Stay away from design options that don't factor in accessibility needs, dietary differences, and religious or cultural practices. To make sure you're creating a breakroom that works for everyone, be sure to share your renovation plans with the larger office.

QUICK-GUIDE TO BREAKROOM FURNITURE



Furniture-Planning Checklist

- A scratch-resistant, stain-resistant table surface
- Non-marring floor glides to protect solid floors
- The correct height for chairs and tables (Make sure to note if the table/chair is standard, bar height, or counter height.)
- Your desired style (Do you want traditional or modern furniture?)
- Products that are ANSI/BIFMA certified (These products are made from high-quality materials and are designed to last.)

Need-to-Have Essentials



Breakroom Tables

Sturdy, functional tables designed for commercial settings

Size:

Breakroom tables come in a variety of tables—from small bistro tables to larger, cafeteria-style tables

Most popular materials:

laminated, metal, plastic, wood veneer, and solid wood



Breakroom Chairs

Comfortable, durable seating that's easy to clean and promotes employee relaxation

Flexible styles:

stacking chairs, folding chairs, armless chairs

Most popular materials:

fabric, plastic, vinyl, and wood



Breakroom Storage

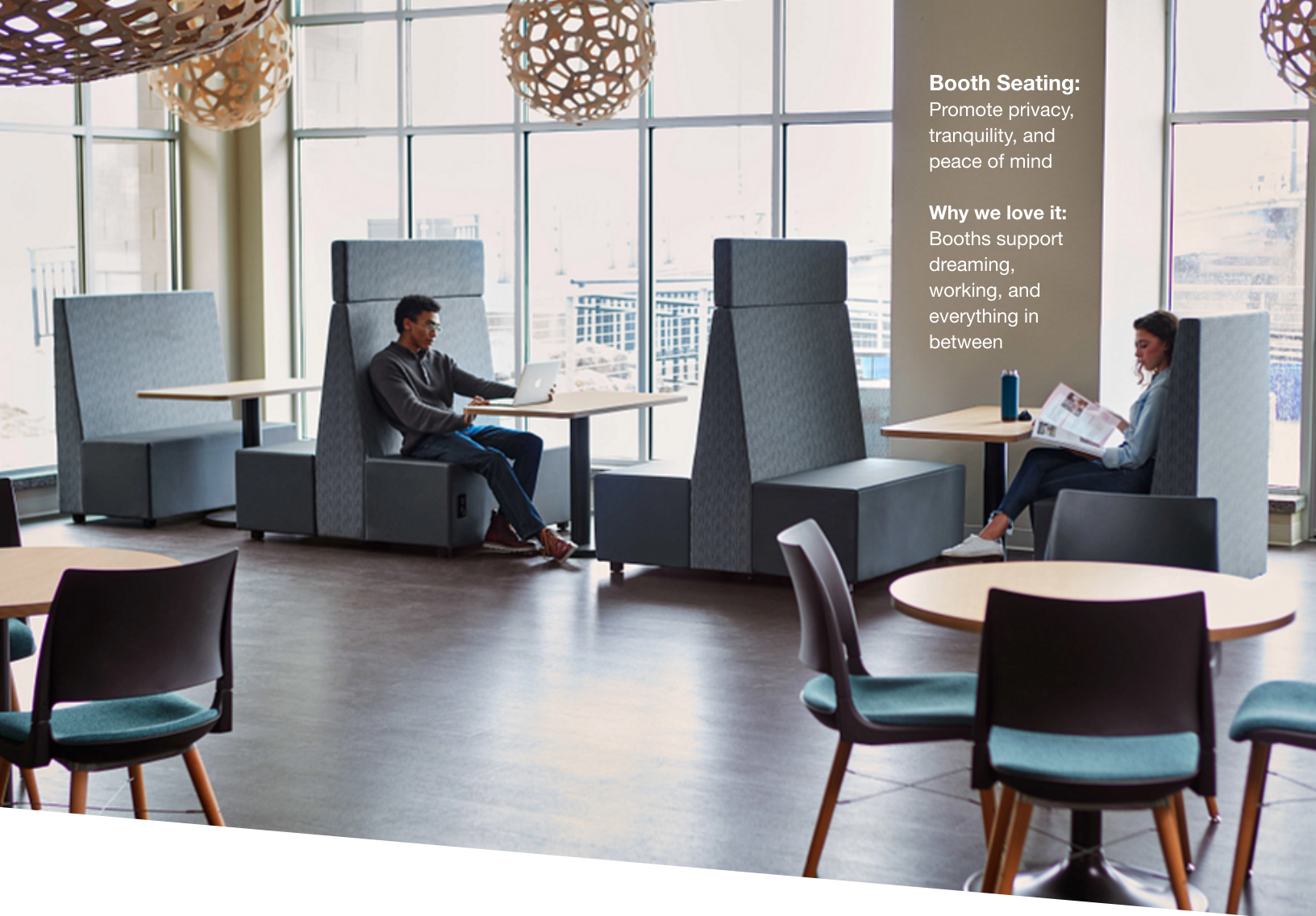
Provide space to store dishes, utensils, coffee supplies, snacks, cleaning supplies, etc

Hard-working storage options:

cabinets, shelves, carts, and credenzas

Most popular materials:

laminated, metal, wood veneer



Booth Seating:

Promote privacy, tranquility, and peace of mind

Why we love it:

Booths support dreaming, working, and everything in between

Nice-to-Have Additions



Space dividers:

Provide flexibility and privacy

Space division options:

modular walls, folding screens, acoustic panels, glass or plexiglass partitions



Outdoor furniture:

Meet employee expectations for a mix of experiences from the office with access to outdoor space

Outdoor favorites:

picnic tables, benches, patio table sets, and comfortable seating for celebrations and events



Sofas:

Enhance downtime with furniture that looks as comfortable as it feels
Don't have the space? Get the same effect with club chairs or loveseats



WHY UPDATING YOUR BREAKROOM MATTERS

At first glance, breakrooms might not seem like a top priority — but a well-planned, thoughtfully designed breakroom may be appreciated by every worker your organization hires.

By investing in your breakroom now, you'll be making a quick and painless improvement that improves office morale while also helping to attract and retain great talent.

Ready To Rethink Your Breakroom?

Inspired and ready to rethink what your breakroom has to offer? We've got you covered. Our collection of breakroom solutions is flexible enough to meet the team's needs while also meeting your unique business, style and budget requirements. Take a look at how you can upgrade your break space for maximum impact by connecting with our design experts and exploring furniture solutions today.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.nationalbusinessfurniture.com/breakroom-furniture>



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