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6 a-ha moments in corporate space ideation

At NewGround we've pioneered the use of the Ideation session as a prelude to designing your new corporate headquarters or flagship building. The Ideation session enables company executives and employees to exercise the right side of the brain and tap into the core elements that make their organization unique.

But an interesting thing happens during these workshops - without fail, teams involved in the Ideation sessions will often have a significant "A-ha moment" - or two or even three. These are the unexpected discoveries that can lead the design in a whole new and exciting direction.

Here are a few examples we've seen from recent Ideation sessions.

Successful collaboration is by design

Some of the biggest "A-ha moments," are when teams begin to think about the headquarters beyond the need for individual workspaces and traditional conference rooms. It's not just about cubicles vs. offices. It's about creating a physical space that supports and encourages collaboration.

Because a culture of collaboration doesn't just happen. It must be deliberately designed

through unique and convenient areas to capitalize on the physical proximity of your teams.

Technology isn't an add-on

An "A-ha" that oftens surfaces is the idea that technology is fundamental to corporate design, which means it shouldn't be an after-thought. Conversations about meeting rooms and collaboration spaces should begin with questions like "What type of technology needs to be utilized in this area?"

Last year our Canadian office worked with a client in one of the most remote, rural areas of northern Canada, near Alaska. They were very technologically savvy - not despite their remote location - but because of it. The "A-ha moment" for them was the idea that being tech-savvy was integral to both their brand and their culture, and that their building should reflect that as well. It should be completely centered on technology.

Location as a recruiting tool

Location is often a source for "A-ha moments." As part of our Strategy program, we look at logistics as well as demographic patterns, and sometimes clients conclude they need to build in a new or upcoming location, not necessarily because land is cheaper or because it's more convenient for the executive team, but because relocating to a new area allows them to attract a new or different pool of talent.

Analyzing demographics and psychographics by zip code can sometimes unlock that "A-ha," uncovering that location may be a factor in why an organization may have previously struggled to recruit certain types of employees.

The Open Office Concept Isn't for Everyone

During one session a community bank became mesmerized by an exercise about what the interior should look like. They initially thought "cubicles and offices," but eventually they ended up with a very open space, similar to many Silicon Valley companies.

On the other hand, some organizations that begin with an open office concept in mind, realize, in an "A-ha moment" that it doesn't align with their culture. There's no one-size-fits-all design for every organization, which is why we put such emphasis on aligning your environment with your brand and your culture.

Planning for future generations

When contemplating the legacy they'll leave to future generations, a common "A-ha" clients have is realizing that the way they'll be working in 10 or 20 years, will be very different than the way they work now.

Through this process it dawns on them that, within the lifespan of this new building, there will be another generation running the organization. That's one of those "A-ha moments" that can be a little surreal.

Conclusion

An Ideation session is a great way to exercise the creative, right side of the brain. During these intense, one day to one and a half day brainstorming sessions, brain synapses fire and create new connections as a result of the cross-pollination between employees and executives, many of whom wouldn't have otherwise sat down to discuss the future of their workspace.

And the happy conclusion during many of these Ideation sessions is the spontaneous discoveries that arise, those "A-ha moments," that often become transcendent and create those unique differentiating concepts that can help your new flagship or headquarters building truly stand out.