A METHODOLOGY ON
HEADQUARTER DEVELOPMENT

READY
SET
START

THE EXPERTS IN FINANCIAL
INSTITUTION HEADQUARTERS

NEWGROUND

There are many things to consider when planning for a new headquarters, and some organizations may not even realize they need a new headquarters at all. However, whether they realize it or not, an outdated headquarters can negatively impact the overall performance and success of a financial institution.

BUT WHERE DO YOU EVEN BEGIN TO IDENTIFY WHAT AREAS NEED FOCUS?

Is your space being underutilized or overutilized? Do your employees have enough room to thrive and focus on your consumers? Can you retain and attract talent with your current workspace? Do you know the direction your organization is going and where your targeted growth needs be focused?

TRUST THE INDUSTRY EXPERTS
NewGround has been the leader in building financial headquarters for over 100 years. As a result of our long-standing experience, we consistently see factors that tie directly to the success and outcome of a physical space. When considering these factors, the building, the employees, and the overall corporate happiness, a new space can exceed the expectations of clients and staff alike.

These factors have been carefully evaluated and compiled in a new HQ scorecard. Leveraging our experience in the industry gives us unique insights into five key factors that consistently play into the success of a headquarters. These key factors are:

S **SAFETY** – Is your headquarters meeting modern safety standards including COVID/infectious disease space trends?

T **TECHNOLOGY** – Is your headquarters technologically up to par with enough back-office support for call centers of the future?

A **ATTRACTION** – Can your headquarters attract new talent with amenities candidates desire?

R **RETENTION** – Is your headquarters designed to accommodate growth of a team and retain talented employees?

T **TRAINING** – Can your headquarters handle increased employee training or training in a hybrid work from home age?

DOES YOUR HEADQUARTERS MEET THESE STANDARDS?
Overall, there are several factors that go into a successful headquarters. You may find one aspect of your headquarters lacking, or several. Regardless of which element your headquarters may be struggling in, there are several tools you can use to help with your next headquarters plans.

Don't forget, your headquarters is the pillar of your organization. It serves to represent you, your consumers, and your employees. If your headquarters isn't representing you correctly, or if your facilities are lacking in START qualities, don't wait for a solution and let your problems get even worse.

SAFETY

HEADQUARTERS SAFETY IS MORE THAN A FIRE DRILL

Safety is more than a buzzword. It is a key deciding factor in whether or not employees and consumers will feel comfortable in your space. As industry leaders and experts for more than 100 years, we've identified headquarters safety as a key factor in a financial institution's overall success when designing and building a new headquarters.

HVAC AND SANITATION SYSTEMS MATTER

NewGround starts our safety standards from the design and strategy phases, planning out HVAC and sanitation systems. These systems are designed to filter air and keep employees healthy while in the office. Depending on the headquarters facility's needs, sanitation stations can also be designed and built around the office to encourage employees to maintain cleanliness and hygiene. With COVID-19 changing people's perceptions and understanding of safety, maintaining a clean workplace is more important now than ever before.

POST COVID-19 SAFETY PRECAUTIONS
+ HVAC systems
+ Sanitation stations
+ Frequent hand-washing stations
+ Access to cleaning supplies
+ Safe distances between employees

A SECURE AND ACCESSIBLE LOCATION

The location of a headquarters can also influence an institution's success in safety. Where is your headquarters located in relation to main roads? Is it in a safe part of town? Do your employees feel comfortable walking or commuting to work? Do they have to cross heavy areas of traffic to get the building? Finding a location where your employees and consumers are safe is just as important as designing the building itself.

SECURE ENTRY POINTS

Whether it's a keycard or scanner for the elevator to your floor or a mobile app key that allows you entry into the building at all, setting up a secure entry system is an important aspect of office safety and employee peace of mind. While this is a preventative measure, it can also factor into increased employee safety in the event of an incident or emergency.

SECURE SERVER ENVIRONMENT

The last major factor to consider for a safe headquarters is network and server security and safety. Most professional industries and markets have digital environments and landscapes, especially for those incorporating work from home and hybrid work environments. Websites and servers have to stay secure, both from online attackers and from physical threats. Companies decrease the risk of losing important assets by providing a secure server environment. Secure servers protect your organization and your consumers, making it one of the most important aspects of headquarters safety.

Safety and security aren't just something to consider after an accident or problem has occurred. Companies should address and acknowledge safety in the design and build process. If your headquarters safety is outdated, consider updating your headquarters facility with the newest safety features. NewGround can help.

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YOUR HQ TECHNOLOGY CAN MOVE YOU FORWARD

With more and more employees working from home, and with consumers utilizing digital channels for their banking needs, financial institutions have to maintain up-to-date technology. While most technological channels are kept on the cloud, there are still technologies that can be implemented in a headquarters design to improve the employee and consumer experience. As industry experts in headquarters design and build, we've seen firsthand the positive impact that updated technology can have on an organization's overall performance. Headquarters technology that is modern and capable can help the employee and consumer experience.

PROVIDING HIGH-SPEED INTERNET ACCESS AT THE OFFICE

In order to remain productive, employees should have access to high-speed internet access while in the office. They should be able to access databases and servers quickly, with little to no load time. *The infrastructure of a headquarters should be crafted to help improve connectivity between on-site and cloud solutions.* This will also benefit employees who may be working from home and need to upload work to the cloud. While data centers aren't usually kept on-site of a headquarters anymore, the headquarters itself should still have the technology necessary to support increased cloud use.

CYBERSECURITY AND ENCRYPTED NETWORKS

Increased digital channels mean increased risks of hacks and data breaches. This can pose serious problems for financial institutions, their consumers, and their employees. To protect everyone involved, the digital channels must have the proper cybersecurity and encrypted networks. While most of this can be done online and through the cloud, and not in a physical location like a headquarters, a headquarters can still implement technology safety features to help protect data. This includes things like training space, which gives employees the resources they need to understand potential security threats. IT personnel should also have the tools, resources, and space they need to assist with employees in or out of the office.

The infrastructure of a headquarters should be crafted to help improve connectivity between on-site and cloud solutions.

TECHNOLOGY

...OR KEEP YOU STAGNANT.

HEADQUARTERS TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS HYBRID WORKSPACES

Hotel workspaces are desks and stations where employees can work without being tied down to one specific desk or spot. These types of work environments are being used more and more with hybrid work environments to allow employees freedom and flexibility. In order to properly use these types of workstations though, the technology must be completely uniform and updated for each space. This will allow any type of employee to use any type of workstation.

*"As industry experts, we've seen firsthand the success that financial institutions can have when they implement infrastructure to support high-speed internet and cloud connectivity. **These institutions have higher productivity as a result.**"*

KEVIN BLAIR
President and CEO, NewGround

Headquarters technology should also be implemented in transformational spaces, such as conference rooms and break rooms. Technology can be incorporated in many different ways in these spaces, such as:

+ Technology that allows break rooms to transform into conference or meeting rooms

+ Project and presenter technology to allow employees to display media in different spaces

+ Audio equipment to handle sound traveling to different areas and corners of a room

+ Computer ports that allow different equipment to hook up to displays and audio equipment

While data centers are rarely housed in headquarters facilities anymore, the technology a headquarters uses is still critical to employee growth and productivity. Headquarters facilities are adapting to a hybrid work environment, and the technology has to adapt and update as well to keep up. NewGround has seen firsthand how successfully implemented technology can positively affect a financial institution. NewGround has a team full of industry experts ready to help you plan, strategize, design, and build new facilities full of updated technology.

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ATTRACTION

ATTRACTING EMPLOYEE TALENT WITH A NEW HQ IS POSSIBLE

Job markets and industries change frequently, sometimes in favor of employee talent and sometimes in favor of corporations. Regardless of how the job market fluctuates, your financial institution will likely always need to attract employee talent. Can aspects of your headquarters help attract new and upcoming talent to help push your institution to higher levels? The answer is a resounding yes!

IS YOUR HEADQUARTERS WELL-DESIGNED FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES?

Pay and benefits are critical factors to attracting talent, but other factors play a role in which company a person will desire working for. A large factor is where they'll be spending most of their time. Consider the following:

+ Is your headquarters well-designed?
+ Is your headquarters equipped to handle new talent?
+ Is the space aesthetically pleasing, or is it gray, and monotone?
+ Does it have appeal to new generations?

In our experience, talent is more excited to work for institutions with creative, unique designs as opposed to organizations that don't employ those unique elements. Design and visual appeal are strong contributors to attracting employee talent.

SHARED SPACES OR CLOSED OFF CUBICLES? BOTH ARE IMPORTANT TO YOUR EMPLOYEES

The layout of the space is a key factor for employee attraction. Employees need to understand how they will be interacting with other employees. Will it be through a modern, shared space, or private cubicles? Modern headquarters tend to implement innovative shared spaces, collaboration areas, or meeting zones to encourage employees to communicate and work together. For roles that require more privacy, private offices are still a requirement for many of the HQ clients NewGround works with. It's all about thinking about the space, how it works with your employees, and their purpose.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Ask yourself the questions your employees do. When it's time for lunch, where do you go? Do you bring a lunch from home to eat at your desk because there's nothing nearby? Do you have to drive for miles before you find a desirable restaurant? Having your headquarters at a desirable location is still extremely important to attracting talent – even for a hybrid workforce. It's also a critical factor in establishing your presence in the community.

DO YOU MEET "MODERN" HEALTH AND SAFETY DESIGN STANDARDS?

Lastly, new talent wants to be sure they are safe wherever they are working. Health and safety design standards can't be ignored or cast aside; they are a critical part of attracting employee talent. If staff are going to be spending most of their time in one space,

*"Employees should recognize your headquarters building as an already established location. They should also be able to travel to desirable restaurants for lunch, and the building should be placed in a good location for this. **Our Strategy Team are experts in surveying locations and potential sites for new headquarters**, and we have determined that headquarters placed in areas with attractive restaurants and entertainment nearby will have increased employee and talent interest."*

KEVIN BLAIR
President and CEO, NewGround

they should feel safe in doing so. They should know the building is designed with their health and safety in mind, whether it's through air filtration systems, updated HVAC systems, or modern entry and exit points to prevent intruders. Rather than brush off safety or react after something has happened, a successful headquarters is built around preventative health and safety design standards. This helps current employees feel safe and attract new talent brought in by the comfort of a safe headquarters building.

Attracting new talent can be a challenge, especially in a competitive market. Your brand is more than your building, but it is still a key foundation as you make offers to new employees.

Employees want to work with companies where they feel they have room to grow, both internally and externally. The best way to reflect a culture is to do so in a headquarters building. What does your headquarters building say about you?

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RETENTION

CAN A HEADQUARTERS IMPACT EMPLOYEE RETENTION?
ABSOLUTELY!

When you think of your organization's headquarters, you probably think of it as your base of operations. It's the place where most of your staff reside, handling the behind-the-scenes aspects of your institution. But is your headquarters working for you, or against you? Our teams at NewGround have studied what impacts employee retention, and as a result have discovered several notable factors in regard to headquarters design.

While the headquarters building may seem like the place for your employees to shine, it might be pushing them away. Thankfully, there are ways to check and know for sure if your organization is helping or harming your success.

ENJOYABLE AND FUNCTIONAL WORKSPACE
The first key factor of employee retention is an enjoyable and functional workspace. Sometimes it can be difficult to tell whether a workspace is functional. Ask yourself the following questions about your headquarters workspaces:

+ When employees are working in their spaces, are they able to work effectively?
+ Is lack of space holding them back?
+ Are close cubicles making it difficult for them to complete daily tasks?
+ Do they often have to leave their space and travel across the building to get what they need?

These questions are all indicators that a lack of necessary space is preventing an employee from working in an enjoyable and functional manner. Employees should feel empowered in their spaces, not held back by what they can't do. To help employees feel empowered, modern headquarters should always give employees the space that they need to succeed. If an employee isn't getting that support, there's a higher chance of them leaving for better opportunities.

AMENITIES ARE A NECESSITY
Another important factor when examining the effectiveness of your headquarters is to consider employee amenities. Many of NewGround's clients design spaces specifically with employee amenities in mind to improve the overall quality of life in the office. These amenities can include a gym, coffee bar or café, recreational space, and more. While each office has its own unique spin on what amenities they do or don't want to include, a basic level of employee amenities is necessary to keeping employee retention numbers high.
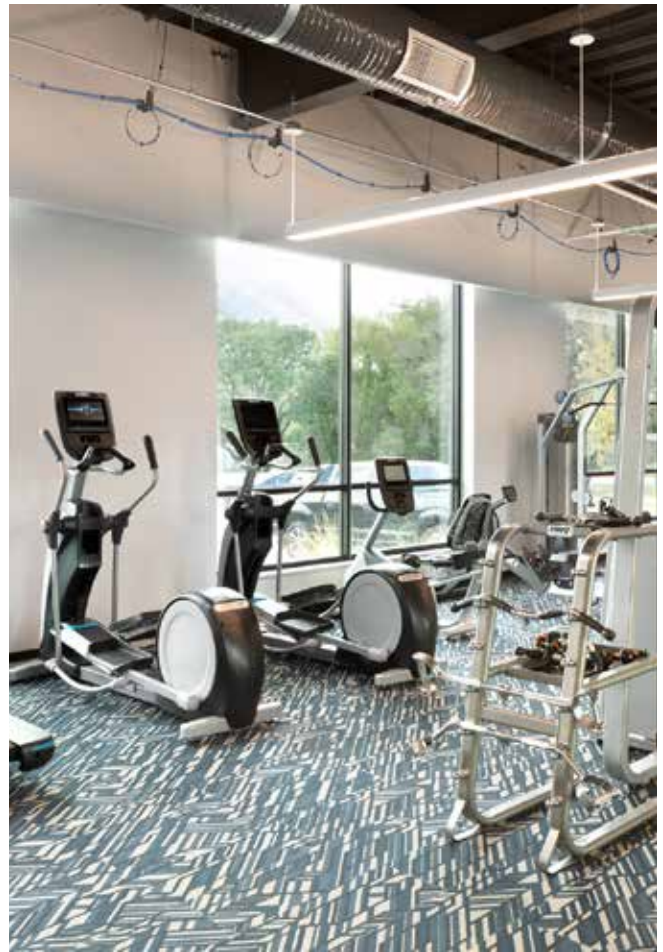
CONFERENCE SPACE FOR FUTURE NEEDS
Space is a critical factor for employee retention at any headquarters location. Have you had to transform meeting rooms and spaces into employee cubicles? Employees shouldn't feel cramped or shoved into corners that otherwise weren't meant for employee workspaces. Aside from just general workspace,
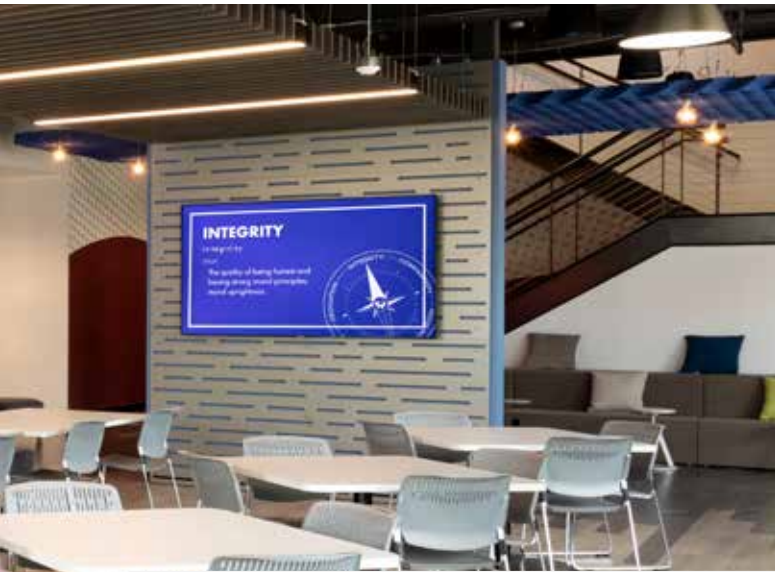
> *"Taking the time to interview and survey employees about what they would like from a new space is an important part of the success of the headquarters.* **Institutions who implement employee amenities and listen to their staff will retain more key talent.**"

KEVIN BLAIR
President and CEO, NewGround

meeting and conference space should also be considered. Do you have enough conference space for your current and future needs? Is your employee count expected to grow over the coming years, and can you account for this growth? All departments and teams must have meetings. Maintaining proper space for meetings and conferences is key to keeping employees happy.

TEAM COLLOCATION IS CRITICAL
When evaluating your headquarters, consider how your teams interact with each other. If the design of a space leads certain employees and teams to be cut off from each other, communication breaks down. Consider where your team is located.

+ Are they all near each other, in a space where they can collaborate and meet regularly?
+ Are they spread out?
+ Where are they located in regard to other important teams they collaborate with regularly?

Having teams too close to each other in a cramped space can also be a problem. Finding the right balance is key, and team collocation is critical to a successful headquarters and employee retention. Employees who feel cut off from other staff or teams won't feel welcome and are at a higher risk of leaving.

Overall, maintaining employee happiness is the easiest way to retain employees overall. Happy employees are productive employees. On the other hand, unhappy employees will leave for environments they're more comfortable with. *Our experience and expertise have taught us that headquarters that design their facilities around their employees will have greater success in retaining and attracting top talent.* This includes having an enjoyable and functional workspace, new employee-centered amenities, plenty of meeting and conference space, and a focus on team collocation. If your headquarters is lacking in any of these qualities, your employee retention rates could suffer. Thankfully, NewGround is the solution.

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TRAINING

HQ TRAINING: YOUR EMPLOYEES' TICKETS TO SUCCESS

A main office for a bank or credit union serves many functions for an organization and serves as a key foundation in your organization's success for today and in the future. As the leading experts in headquarters strategy, design, and build, NewGround has found several key factors can directly impact the overall success of an institution, one of which is its ability to properly train your new employees. Employee training is a critical part of any business and having the right space to do so is crucial. So, where do you begin when evaluating your headquarters training capabilities?

SPACE FOR LARGE GROUP MEETINGS IS A MUST

When you walk through your headquarters, do you have dedicated space for large group meetings? Can your staff and employees gather together to have team meetings and conferences? If your answer is no, then there might be a problem with your headquarters spacing. Allocating efficient space for large group meetings and conferences means dedicating space specifically for collaboration. Allowing teams to communicate, meet, and grow together will directly tie into a headquarters and organization's success.

MANAGERS MUST HAVE SPACE TO TRAIN

Even if your headquarters is visually appealing and attracting new talent, you must have the space available to train that new talent. Managers have to be able to have dedicated space to train. Depending on how large the company is expected to grow, and how many new employees will be added to the business, efficient training space is necessary. Additionally, training for individual roles varies greatly. For example, when training new customer support employees, it's important to have space where new employees can shadow and watch someone directly.

TRAINING ALLOWS FOR CONNECTIONS

Training new employees doesn't have to be all work. It should also allow new employees to understand the company culture. New employees should have the opportunity to meet with current staff members and start making connections. They should be introduced to staff they'll be talking with regularly and begin establishing work relationships. Training can be fun if given the right tools and space for it to be interactive and collaborative.

Training new employees should be exciting; it means your institution is growing and adding new talent to an already existing team. But that excitement can be dashed by improper and ill-equipped working spaces. Give your employees and new staff the opportunity

WHAT ARE THE PAIN POINTS YOU HAVE IN YOUR CURRENT HEADQUARTERS?

A headquarters can have many problems holding it back from being a place where your employees can feel welcomed, appreciated, and able to do their jobs as efficiently as possible. Ultimately, your headquarters should be able to answer all of the following questions positively to be effective.

Is my headquarters safe for my employees and consumers?

Is the technology in my headquarters equipped to handle modern demands?

Is my headquarters positioned to attract new talent?

Is my headquarters able to retain top talent?

Is my headquarters equipped to properly train new employees?

"I remember working with a client who identified training as a key factor they had to improve for their customer service support team members. One member would stand and hover over the person they were watching. The new team member couldn't concentrate fully, and it was an awkward layout for training. Their new space properly designed training module areas with side-by side seating, desk space and technology to support learning a job properly."

KEVIN BLAIR
President and CEO, NewGround

to shine and connect with other team members by properly equipping your headquarters facilities. If your headquarters is holding you back from training new employees, it might be time to reevaluate the facility. Thankfully, NewGround has a team full of industry experts ready to help you plan, strategize, design, and build new facilities.

If you feel you relate to any of these pain points, don't hesitate to reach out to NewGround. We have strategy and design experts that can help identify areas of potential stress in your headquarters and help plan ways to fix them. Whether it's a headquarters renovation or a new ground-up facility, we can ensure that your facility is serving you and your employees in the best way possible.

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ABOUT NEWGROUND

NewGround is the industry leader in planning, designing, and building Branded Spaces for financial institutions, corporations, and retailers, and we have been for over 100 years. During this 100+ year period, we have designed and built over 15,000 financial institutions consisting of headquarters facilities, operations centers, retail branches, branch flagship prototypes, and system-wide branch rollouts.

We employ over 140 employees across North America, with offices in St. Louis, MO; Waterloo, Ontario; Honolulu, HI; and Chicago, IL. As leaders in branch, main office, and headquarters design and development, we use our proprietary approach of "Leading with Strategy" and all in-house team to create a unique and actionable road-map for our clients.

If you're interested in connecting with us about your headquarters project, schedule a call with Scott Florini today.

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