Future-Proofing Your Workplace:

THE LONG-TERM VALUE OF STRATEGY

EFFICIENCY-DRIVEN STRATEGY THAT UNLOCKS LONG-TERM FINANCIAL GAINS

INSIGHTS BY

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SHORT-TERM EFFORT, LONG-TERM REWARDS

Too many organizations build their workplace without first completing a comprehensive, forward-looking strategy. They do so to save a little money upfront, but they lose much more in the long run.

Without a strategic roadmap, these companies often encounter surprise costs and problems in the future. The biggest problem they end up facing? An all-around loss of efficiency.

If you do the strategic planning and design appropriately for your operations before you even start building, you'll save money in the end. In fact, NewGround clients that have chosen to do so improve their internal efficiency by 18% by our measurements.

This leads to cost savings in what is often the biggest expense: their staff. Organizations that prioritize upfront strategic planning produce more with fewer people.

IF YOU WANT TO GAIN EFFICIENCY, BUILD FOR THE FUTURE, AND SUPPORT GROWTH IN A QUICKLY CHANGING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT, YOUR WORKPLACE STRATEGY NEEDS TO:

1. Evaluate all of the dynamic elements of growth

2. Conduct thorough programming analysis

3. Check peer data and emerging trends

4. Aggregate your findings

5. Present your case to stakeholders

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EVALUATE ALL OF THE DYNAMIC ELEMENTS OF GROWTH

When creating a strategic plan of any kind, you start with the end in mind.

But few people do this when looking for a new space. They "eyeball" a space and make a guess based on their current needs, not on the next ten years of projected growth. A strategy process will help you define where you want to be—where you see your organization in the future—so you can work backward.

That way, you'll think strategically about how you want to grow. And you'll avoid the pitfall common to most companies: moving into a space that's inadequate for the long term and having to address facility concerns again in just a few years.

STAFF AND SPACE
The most obvious place to begin your evaluation is your staff. Consider the size you anticipate your workforce will grow to and the space they'll need. Ask yourself what happens if you double in size one day—what will that mean for the building?

The size of the building you expect you'll need, not just now but down the road, ultimately affects the piece of property or the space you want to acquire.
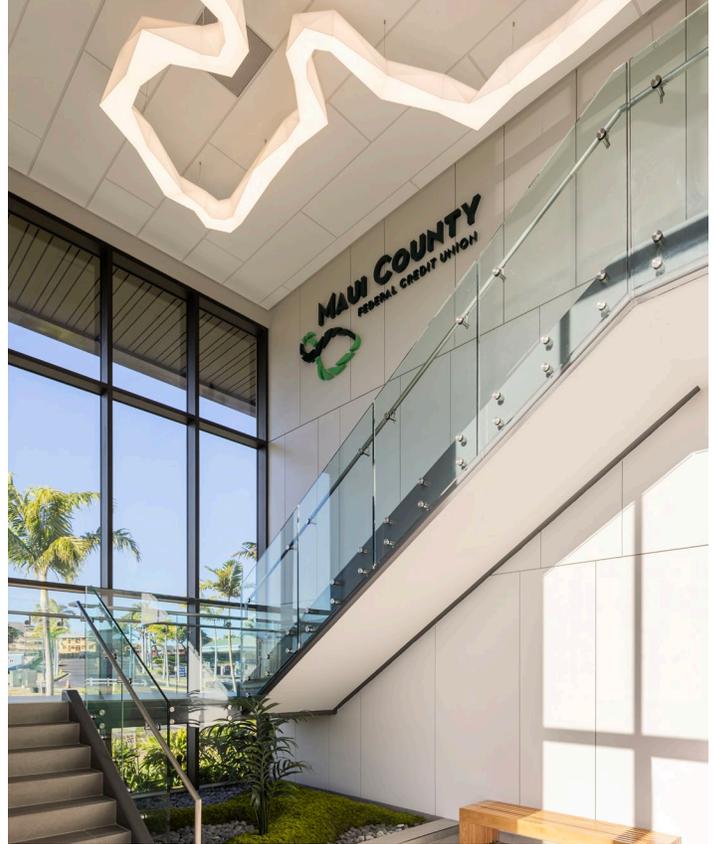
That means you might end up purchasing a building twice as big as you currently need. Or you might construct a multi-story building that leaves you with empty floors to be completed at a later time.

It will feel uncomfortable when you move in at first. But if you've crafted your strategic business plan to include growth, you'll fill it in—and you'll be glad you planned ahead.

WORK STYLES
In today's landscape, there's a thorough mix of remote, in-person, and hybrid work styles. The question is, how do you want to operate?

While some companies are requiring employees to return to the office five days a week, others are seeking to offer more

flexibility with remote and hybrid options. Think of it this way: if 30% of your workforce is not in the office at certain times, that's 30% of space you don't need.

The work styles you decide to implement will impact and determine the space you need.

DEPARTMENT ADJACENCIES AND SIZE
Another question to consider is who needs to be next to whom? Adjacencies affect efficiency. Designing for adjacencies impacts architectural design.

Here are a few scenarios:
+ Two departments collaborate frequently. Yet because they are located on different floors, they constantly get up and take the stairs or the elevator to work together.
+ Your organization has a department that requires frequent

access to important files, but the file room is on another floor of the building.

+ One of your departments is especially large. You need to decide whether it can afford to be split or if you should design the space to accommodate the entire department.

Strategic workplace programming would position highly collaborative departments adjacent to each other and factor in department sizes to maximize efficiency.

SUPPORT SPACES

Conference rooms, employee lounges, and collaboration areas are examples of support spaces that are useful to everyone in the organization. When considering them as part of your strategic plan, you need to think about the needs of each department.

What kind of space does Training need for their various sessions? How big does Marketing's staging area need to be? Think about the flex spaces required by each department to perform some of its key functions.

REGIONAL OFFICES

Factoring your regional offices into your strategic plan involves two main considerations: separation and consolidation.

Ask yourself if your business can operate more efficiently if you:

+ Relocate one or more departments to a different building you own that has excess space
+ Combine branches that are sparse and occupying more space than they need

Your recruiting efforts will also dictate how you use your regional offices. If you're growing rapidly or it's easier to recruit in one particular location, it might benefit you to refocus and place your Operations personnel there.

MARKET EXPANSION

Consider, too, how you are expanding your business's footprint into new territory. Compare the market pace to your business's growth and projections. Are you poised to keep pace or outperform the market?

Expanding into new markets requires more than just a presence—it calls for a tailored strategy that maximizes efficiency. Analyzing market research will help you determine the space you'll need.

POTENTIAL MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS

Lastly, no strategic evaluation is complete without asking the question: what is the likelihood you'll engage in a merger or acquisition? Better yet, are you open to it? If so, you might allow for a certain amount of space in addition to your base numbers.

This isn't a guessing game but a strategic, educated guess based on what you know about your organization and industry.

② CONDUCT A THOROUGH PROGRAMMING ANALYSIS

Next, you'll need to get your team on board. Their input is crucial because the building directly impacts their work.

Your organization is like an ecosystem—everything is connected. Suppose your employees want hybrid work, for example. This affects the square footage, which affects the building's efficiency, which affects the bottom line. A thorough programming analysis can help clarify what you need from a building.

SURVEY AND INTERVIEW YOUR DEPARTMENT LEADERS

Start by distributing a simple questionnaire. It should cover basic information like their current position, staff numbers, and how they see their role growing or evolving. It should also get granular and ask about their desired type of workstation: cubicle, remote office, or something else.

Surveying your staff leaders is beneficial to your overall strategy for a few reasons:
+ It allows your team the opportunity to have input in the decisions.
+ It gives them a chance to participate in the process of creating a workspace that is tailored to them.
+ It reveals data you could only get by asking for their perspective.

ASK ABOUT PROJECTED NEEDS

You'll also need to gather information on projected staff and space needs. At this point in the process, your input is valuable, too.

As you look at your staff roster, start with who you have. Then, evaluate what should change, where you can be more efficient, and any new positions you anticipate.

Projected staff needs will vary by department: your executive staff numbers might be more straightforward and rigid, whereas personnel growth in your marketing department or call center might need to be more flexible.

Potential space needs are dependent on whether your staff is located on site, at home, or a mix of both. That's because programming for a hybrid workstyle is complex—in some cases, you're looking at a difference of thousands of square feet.

REQUEST THEIR WISHLIST

Finally, ask your team for their wish-list. This is their opportunity to request any special equipment or furniture other than what you'd find in a standard office.

One person might share that physical storage is low priority because they work with digital files; another might hope for a credenza to house books and deliverables. You may even receive some unique suggestions you hadn't thought of before.

③ CHECK PEER DATA AND EMERGING TRENDS

When developing your workplace strategy, take note of what other organizations in your industry are doing. For example, if your business is a credit union, what are your competitors doing

Process & Program Development

PROGRAM SESSION → PRELIMINARY PROJECTION → MANAGEMENT REVIEW → FURTHER REFINEMENT → FINAL PROGRAM BOOK

④ AGGREGATE YOUR FINDINGS

Next, combine your workplace data with growth and square footage estimations. Adjust for adjacencies and create a strategic plan that projects the space each department needs for the next 15 years. The result is a comprehensive Personnel and Space Program (created by you—or even better, by your collaborators at NewGround International!) that includes:

+ Square-foot projections in five-year intervals
+ Scenarios with figures to illustrate and compare options
+ A recommendation for your best-case scenario

If you choose to work with a strategy team like ours, you'll review the findings together and spend time considering the study's results. Additionally, you'll want to create a polished summary that can be presented at the board level.

in terms of growth and staff? Peer data can help you identify what's working for others—and whether it will work for you.

Following emerging trends can also give you insight into departments that are trending upward:

+ Marketing and IT are currently high-growth areas that are occupying more space than they used to. There is a growing emphasis on marketing, which means more space is needed for storage, layout, and collaboration. While tech equipment is getting smaller (and taking up less space), the number of people needed to staff IT departments is increasing.
+ New and specialized Compliance roles need filling as regulatory agencies insist on more requirements.
+ Training is not only growing—it's evolving. Wheeling a whiteboard into the conference room and calling it a training space won't suffice anymore. The key to designing a training space is movable partitions to adjust the size of the room.
+ Customer Service now needs staff and space for not only call centers but also specialized positions like online chat.

⑤ PRESENT YOUR CASE TO STAKEHOLDERS

Lastly, get the stakeholders on board. Present your plan to show how you've journeyed through the process of strategically uncovering how to meet growth needs. This process ensures they're not spending money on anything unnecessary. This isn't a guessing game—these are accurate predictions based on data.

Remember, you're making a case for immediate investment that will lead to future gains. Show them the gains in efficiency when you only build what you need. By designing something specific to your needs, you're leveraging every inch of space, so nothing is wasted.

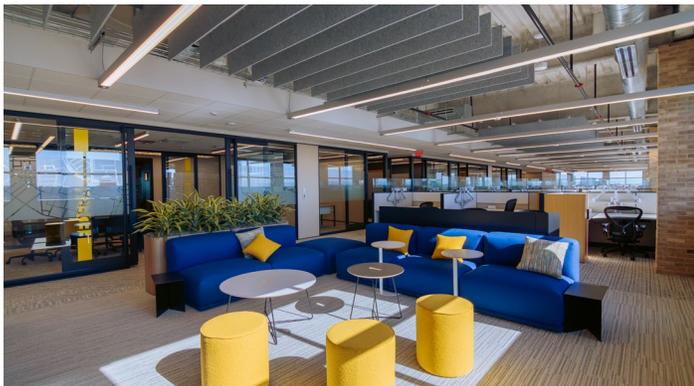*Craft a bold 15-year space strategy for every department.*
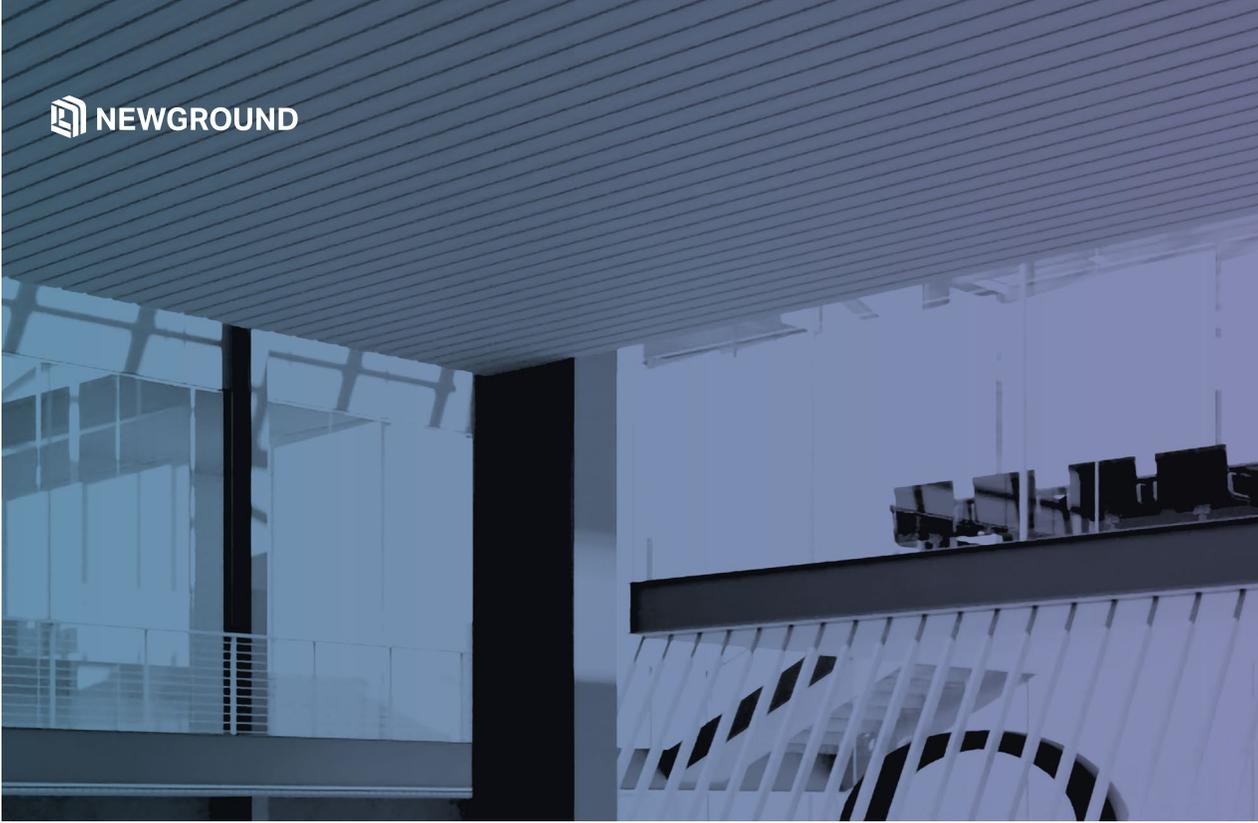
YOU'LL NEVER REGRET PLANNING FOR EFFICIENCY

Most organizations make one of two mistakes: build according to who they are today or build according to who they think they'll be in the future. Without any data behind their decisions, they end up wasting time and money on a space that proves unfit for them.

That's because ultimately, the research impacts the design. With NewGround's strategy offering, you tap into our 100+ years of experience so you can:

+ Build exactly what you need—no more, no less
+ Be prepared for the next 15 years of growth
+ Increase overall efficiency
+ Build the best possible space for your needs

A plan like this adds clarity and creates a workplace optimized for where you are and where you're headed.

About NewGround

NewGround International helps brands plan, design, and build innovative spaces that turn heads and accelerate growth. Our Strategy services provide a comprehensive plan to align your business, brand, and location for growth and success. **Learn more and schedule a conversation at newground.com.**

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