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Productivity-boosting improvements for your home office

(BPT) - Let's face it - not everyone has a home office that inspires productivity. But if you work from home at all - and the Bureau of Labor Statistics says 24 percent of people employed outside the home do at least some of their work at home - having a comfortable, organized and appealing home office can make your job easier.

Home Business Magazine says there are around 38 million home-based businesses in the U.S., and 34.3 million to 36.6 million households with active home offices. That's a lot of home offices - and a lot of ugly desks, dim lighting and clutter, too.

Many home offices are less the product of careful planning than something that evolves from a spare bedroom, bonus room or an extra corner in the basement. Even if your home office is more of an after-thought, it's possible to make some simple improvements that will enhance its appeal - and your productivity.

Here are four improvement and design choices that can help make your home office a hub of good business:

Begin with the basics

Renovating any room should start with the simplest investment that also provides a big payoff: paint. Repainting is one of the cheapest, easiest ways to completely change the look of a room. A fresh coat of paint, no matter what color, imparts a sense of freshness and energy to a room - just the kind of effect that can enhance your productivity.

When choosing a color for your home office, keep in mind that the hue should serve as a backdrop, not a distraction. Red may be your favorite color, and one you love in your bedroom, but home workers often spend eight hours a day or more in their home offices. Will the color you choose hold up to that kind of intense togetherness?

Invest in storage

Clutter in your home can range from simply annoying to downright depressing. In your home office, it can spell disaster - in the form of lost paperwork, missing projects and even lost business.

Plenty of storage and an organizational system that makes the most of it are essential for your home office. Whether you opt for open shelving, locking file cabinets, a desk with ample drawers or a combination of storage types, it's important to find solutions that work for you and fit your home office space.

Emphasize natural light

Of course you're aware of the importance of good lighting in an office setting, but did you know that ample natural lighting can boost your productivity? The mood-boosting effects of natural light are well documented, with many studies showing that office workers exposed to daylight throughout their work day are happier, healthier and more productive than those who function only under artificial light.

In your home office, ample natural light from sources such as a skylight can help reduce Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), eyestrain and stress - all ailments that stand in the way of productivity.

"Adding a skylight to your home office can be a cost-effective way to ensure you get plenty of natural light during office hours," says Ross Vandermark of VELUX America, makers of Energy Star-qualified skylights. "What's more, a properly installed, energy-efficient skylight can help you control heating, cooling and lighting costs in your home office. If you opt for a fresh air skylight, it can also help enhance the air quality in your work space."

Even if your office is on the ground floor, you may be able to add a skylight. Products such as VELUX's Sun Tunnel tubular skylights allow you to bring natural light to virtually anywhere in your home.

Still not sure of the benefit in a home office setting? Add the latest solar powered fresh air skylight and an energy-efficient solar powered blind to your home office and the products, as well as the installation, will be eligible for a 30 percent federal tax credit as a green home improvement. That's good business! Visit www.veluxusa.com or energystar.gov to learn more about energy-efficient skylights.

Sound it out

Noise can be a huge distraction, whether you're on deadline for a major project or on a conference call with a new client. Simple soundproofing steps can help you reduce noise in your home office - without costing you a mint.

Start with a good quality, thick carpet, which will help dampen sound. Next, add thick drapes and fabric surfaces such as an upholstered chair - fabrics help reduce the movement of sound waves.

With more Americans working from home, creating an inviting, inspiring office space is more important than ever.

ARTICLE IMAGE(S)



Caption



Caption

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