

ORLANDO
**BUSINESS
JOURNAL**

orlando.bizjournals.com

OCTOBER 10-16, 2008



Jim Carchidi

Precision Play CEO Michael Jenkins in his firm's conference/lunch room designed with moveable table sections and ergonomic chairs that can be arranged to accommodate various numbers of people.

Creative, flexible space

Ever-shifting staff levels, wireless technology drive the need for adjustable cubicles

by Anjali Fluker

Michael Jenkins didn't want his new office to have traditional cubicles and a conference room with a large table surrounded by office chairs.

Instead, the CEO of Lake Mary-based PrecisionPlay Media Inc. wanted the space to reflect the fact that his company focuses on interactive advertising and marketing. So, his firm, which moved Sept. 4,



OFFICE TRENDS Companies want adjustable space in case of layoffs or new hires

worked with Lake Mary-based Florida Business Interiors Inc. and came up with cubicles with multi-colored translucent panels and metal panels with 100 drilled holes, noise-controlling fabrics they call “sails” separating the workspaces and a conference room with chairs and tables on rollers, flat-screen TVs and a Wii gaming system.

It’s all part of a move in the business world in which companies want more gathering spaces for talented workers to collaborate, clear their minds and feel that their office space is a home away from home, Jenkins said.

“Offices where doors shut and nobody talks to each other not are conducive to that,” said Jenkins, whose company now leases 15,000 square feet of space in a building on International Parkway.



Bowman

“We have a lot of open space — we didn’t want [employees] to be jam-packed in small cubes. And we have a free-flowing system of furniture.”

Those concepts seem to be gaining ground in today’s more idea/creativity-focused business world, said Denny Bowman, president of Florida Business Interiors.

Changes in the economy have driven many businesses to try to better fit their space to be able to adapt after layoffs or if they add employees to a growing division, Bowman said. It’s also driving office furniture manufacturers to create more flexible, moveable pieces, he said.

Many businesses are creating “idea rooms” instead of conference rooms, where individual chairs with small swiveling tables and drink holders can be configured to allow for more collaborative conversations, Bowman said.

“It inhibits the creativity of a group if a massive structure is separating them,” Bowman said. “Every company that comes in wants to take better advantage



Jim Carchidi

Desks at Precision Play are fitted with a noise-dampening canopy that creates a quieter work environment where telephone calls are numerous.

of their space to make it more productive, flexible and adaptable.”

FBC Mortgage LLC is another local example of a firm wanting to create a more productive, functional space for itself. The mortgage brokerage firm moved into a new 6,800-square-foot office space at The Plaza in downtown Orlando on Sept. 1, and was determined to use its space effectively, said CEO Joe Nunziata.

Along with a game room — where an unused pool table in its former office in the Seaside Bank building was replaced with a Wii system — the firm also streamlined the offices so paperwork could flow from the origination department, through to the processing department, to underwriting and then to closing. “It’s not a hodgepodge of different areas anymore,” Nunziata said. “What was important to us was functionality and workflow.”



Nunziata

Top five office trends

- **Simplicity, clean lines**
- **Adaptability in technology** systems, seating, tables, cubicles, even moveable walls
- **More open gathering** spaces for employees to collaborate
- **Game rooms or idea rooms**, instead of conference rooms
- **Maximizing space**

Source: Florida Business Interiors Inc.

Technology also plays a part in how businesses set up work spaces. Flat-screen TVs, wireless phones and laptop computers are becoming more a part of the workspace.

And while future technology needs are still unknown, Bowman said many office furniture manufacturers are trying to come up with adaptable solutions for “what’s coming tomorrow.”

afluker@bizjournals.com | (407) 241-2910.