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OFFICE SPACE: EY'S WORKPLACE OF THE FUTURE PLAYS MUSICAL CHAIRS—WITH MORE THAN CHAIRS

EY brings innovative office space to Nationwide Realty Investor's Grandview Yard

By Julie France & Photos by Tim Johnson

Standing desks have been knocked down to their seats by EY. The accounting firm makes the standing desk option look not so grand by playing a game of “16 ways to work” where employees have the option of standing, chair and wavy desks, benches, barstools, couches, treadmills, bikes and more to get their work done for the day.

But seating is not the biggest change for EY in its move to Grandview Yard from the Huntington Center.

The game changer is that employees, including partners, don't have assigned desks, resulting in a new workplace dynamic everyday as workers grab a spot to work on a first-come, first-served basis or by reservations using a kiosk, app or

Due to the unpredictability that comes with every day, employees are careful to clear away all personal items after work and use a locked drawer of their own in a communal filing cabinet. If they forget to clear off a personal photos or tchotchke, it can be reclaimed the next morning in the lost and found.

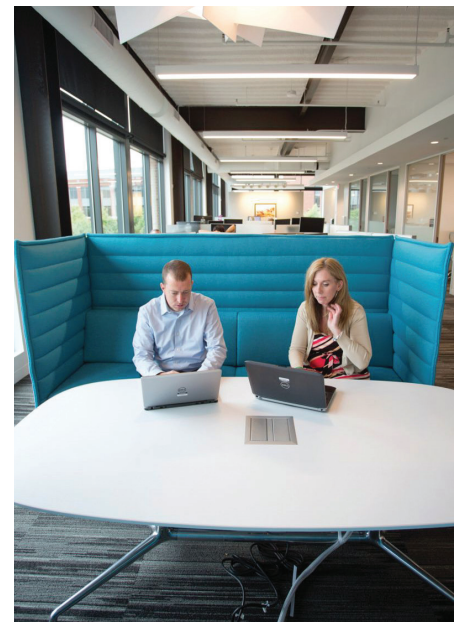
Yet personal touches are still apparent—just in a different way, via public display.

The Columbus EY employees come from 94 unique colleges, and an installation of each college on a glass bubble lets for some fun, especially during NCAA tournaments when employees can arrange the bubbles so that all the colleges in the tournament are bunched together.

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touch screen. Reservations can be made for up to two weeks at a time. The only employees to have desks of their own are six administrative assistants, three employees in creative service and one receptionist.

Colleges persist as a personal touch, as 15 large framed college logos, each representing one of the colleges of an EY partner, are strewn throughout the collaboration rooms. Luckily, according to Marshall, none of the partners went to the University of Michigan.



Located in National Realty Investor's Grandview Yard, EY has undergone big renovations to their office spaces including switching out assigned work spaces for 16 other ways to work such as benches, barstools, couches, treadmills, bikes and more.

Craig Marshall, EY office managing partner, stresses that the new space balances employees' lives. Prior to the move when employees had to pay a steep price for parking, EY employees would frequently work at their clients' offices

or at home. Due to the new quarters' free parking, easy highway access and a nearby bus stop, more employees have begun to work at the office, embodying a better work-life balance.

Despite perhaps a better work-life balance, ironically, many EY employees are moving to Grandview Yard's apartments or other nearby residences, according to Marshall.

"Too much work makes you crazy. Too much personal time doesn't pay the bills," says Marshall.

Health is also key to the workplace. The new office features one treadmill desk set in front of a Columbus sports-themed backdrop and the office owns four bikes so that employees can go for a ride near the yard for a break from the numbers. During the winter time, those four bikes will accompany the treadmill desk inside in holders to convert to stationary bikes.

However, the exercise work station isn't where all the action happens. Among the most defined spaces in the office is the GBK Hub, which hosts a joke wall, kitchen and foosball table with a panoramic view of some of the yard all set apart from the rest of the office by



National Realty Investor's 800 Yard Street building at Grandview Yard

a blue-and-white-glass working garage door.

"GBK" in the hub's name stands for the last names of three chairmen in EY's history who were Ohio State University graduates: Ralph Kent, Richard Baker and Ray Groves.

"We wanted the space to have historical importance, to know the roots of where we came from," says Marshall.

And where many came from is OSU.

Forty-two percent of EY's Columbus employees are OSU graduates, making EY's view of the Buckeyes' stadium even more pleasurable.

Whether it's the new office's exhibition of Columbus pride, or the refreshing change of space and retreat from personal life, EY has seen results from the Workplace of the Future.

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