

Farrow cites key personal traits and characteristics important to this specialty. The designer must:

- *Find it easy to meet people, talk to them, listen, and care about their issues.*
- *Be able to manage (say “no,” prioritize, move initiatives toward the desired goal).*
- *Remain focused on the company’s business objectives and not be side-tracked by another agenda.*
- *Be comfortable with corporate hierarchy/politics.*

Farrow adds, “If you care more about the client’s issues than your own, or can put aside the ‘purity of design,’ this can be an extremely exciting and fun thing to do! You’re playing the big boys’ game in their court, and the stakes are high. The ‘forgiveness quotient’ is lean. It can be exhilarating! One key to my personal success was the short-term nature of the project, and the visible results that occurred which were directly responsive to personal efforts. However, do know that Corporate America can be a lot more ‘black and white’ than the average design firm, which may or may not be comfortable. For me, this was a very nifty opportunity! I’m extremely grateful for the fun I had, and the credibility it added to my resume. It can open doors you never imagined. Few designers have this arrow in their quiver.”

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## WORKPLACE CONSULTING

Of those interior designers engaged in the practice of nonresidential design, more than 75 percent are involved in designing the workplace. It is therefore no surprise that a specialty practice area of workplace consulting has emerged as one of the leading specialties in the profession.

Workplace consulting is provided as a specialty practice by interior designers who help clients gather and evaluate workplace-related information in order to make informed decisions that will enhance and improve the work environment. The workplace consultant investigates and recommends ways companies can make their workplaces align better with business goals, become more

Of those interior designers

productive, and address issues that affect employee recruitment and retention. The workplace consultant offers clients a broad view of available workplace options and best practices. Workplace consulting includes a number of different approaches to facilities issues, and may range from developing high-level strategic planning to creating a corporate newsletter for employees about to undergo significant change in their work environment.

Interior designers are naturally skilled, through education and experience, to lead many of the efforts required in providing workplace consulting services. Other chapters in this book address a few of these consulting areas, such as strategic planning and sustainable design. Four other common workplace consulting specialties are innovative officing, benchmarking, change management, and post-occupancy evaluations.

### **Innovative Officing**

Innovative officing is a term that describes the design of office environments that optimally support the people, corporate culture, and work processes housed within. Innovative officing includes many traditional workplace components, as well as the introduction of various “alternative officing” concepts, such as hotelling, activity-based worksettings, telecommuting, and shared work spaces.

The interior design professional is a viable consultant to lead companies as they explore how innovative officing can support corporate objectives. Many companies recognize that their office environments have not kept pace with the change of their business, whether it is a change of vision, leadership, culture, or simply growth. Smart organizations realize that in order to be effective, their work environments must align with their business goals and objectives. This realization often leads to the exploration of ways they should change the work environment in order to support these new changes and evolving work processes.

The interior designer who provides these consulting services is especially attuned to his or her client, and works with the client to evaluate and consider options that are appropriate to its business culture and the needs of the staff. Often, the designer will need to introduce new officing concepts, a process which requires an in-depth study regarding how the staff use space, both presently and with an eye to the future. Often, the first step is for the design professional to train and educate the staff at all levels concerning the many