



BROST ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS LTD

February 2012 Newsletter : 1

Testimonial

"We started planning a move for our company office in 2008. From the beginning, I knew one of the most important pieces of this daunting task was to select an Architect to guide me through to the end. Because of past experiences, this decision was an easy one for me to make. I turned, once again, to Dave Brost, Jr., of Brost Architects & Planners. We started construction in 2009 and finished in 2010. Dave was a true professional in every sense. As we celebrate our second anniversary this month, I am very thankful to Dave Jr. and his staff for the beautiful office they created for me, and the professional job they performed. Keep up the fantastic work."

- Clancy Sullivan
Pat Brokerage Company

Contact Us

For more information: visit www.brostarchitects.com, call us at 319-366-8531, send us an email at brostarch@brostarchitects.com. To receive our monthly newsletter, visit the "Contact Us" page on our website and sign up for our email newsletter.

Keeping Employees Happy: Trends in Offices

Given that most workers spend 50% of their hours awake in an office, it's important to have an environment that encourages productivity and happiness. The old adage, "a happy employee is a productive employee" has been proven to be true time and time again. Looking at many of the most successful companies today, many of them have a wide variety of ways they keep their employees happy. While it's true that raising wages will always make employees happy, there are several other things you can do to ensure their happiness.

There's nothing more depressing than a dark office with very few windows and seemingly endless rows of cubicles. Employees don't want to feel as if they are working in a sweatshop. Adding color to the workspace, paintings, and making sure that it is well lit with ample windows can do wonders for morale. Workers like to look out windows, perhaps for a visual break, but also for inspiration. Pendant lighting, track lights or wall-mounted fixtures are attractive artificial lighting options when natural light or lots of windows aren't available.



Photos by Paul Gates Photo, Inc. www.PGphotoinc.com

Continued on Page 2



BROST ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS LTD

February 2012 Newsletter : 2

Pat Brokerage Co. Des Moines, Iowa



When Clancy Sullivan needed a new building for his business, Pat Brokerage Company, he turned to his good friend Dave Brost, Jr. Clancy was looking to create an open and relaxed atmosphere full of amenities, to make the lives of his employees more convenient. The open office plan provides ample daylight for everyone in the building.

The placement of fireplaces and televisions helps create the relaxed home-like atmosphere the client sought, while the employees of Pat Brokerage monitor current market conditions on the news or watch a Minnesota Twins baseball game. The facility incorporates green strategies, such as: a geothermal HVAC system to more economically heat and cool the building and daylighting strategies that reduce electrical consumption.

Due to today's increasing use of mobile technology, more and more companies are offering transitional work spaces. These allow for multiple users to occupy the space at different times. Flexible work area allowing for laptops, cell phones, and tablets are also increasing in demand. Non-traditional work spaces, such as sofas and lounging chairs are appearing more and more. Another key for today's work environment is making sure that office equipment is ergonomic. People spend so much of their day at a desk and on a computer that it is imperative that it fits their physical demands, which will vary with each worker.

A building with unique architecture is also a fun way to boost worker's morale. Using bright colors on your walls as accents can also grab attention. Light colors open up a small space and darker colors can make a larger space seem a bit cozier. A well-appointed break room with snacks, reading material, and beverages is a must-have. It is a place where workers can cool off, socialize, eat, and come down from the day. Break-out areas, gardens, and extra spaces like workout facilities can all allow for increased productivity and exchange of ideas.

When Clancy Sullivan needed a new building for his business, Pat Brokerage Company, he turned to his good friend Dave Brost, Jr. Clancy was looking to create an open and relaxed atmosphere full of amenities, to make the lives of his employees more convenient and enjoyable. There is a work-out facility and showering space provided for employees, encouraging them to be healthy and happy. The placement of fireplaces and televisions helps create the relaxed home-like atmosphere the client sought. Another perk for employees is the presence of kitchen equipment, which allows for employees to really make themselves at home in the office.

The employees of Pat Brokerage Company can monitor current market conditions on the news from many locations throughout the building or watch a Minnesota Twins baseball game. The facility uses lots of natural feeling materials, including cultured stone and wood, in addition to contemporary shapes, accent colors, and materials to maintain visual interest. Another feature is an outdoor patio off of the break room that overlooks a wooded area for pleasant breaks. The open office plan provides daylight for everyone. The facility also incorporates green strategies, such as: a geothermal HVAC system to more economically heat and cool the building and daylighting strategies that reduce electrical consumption.



BROST ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS LTD

February 2012 Newsletter : 3

About Us

Mission:

The mission of Brost Architects is to design spaces that enrich peoples' lives and enhance communities by providing personal service with active client participation and developing lasting relationships.

Value:

Brost Architects collaborates with business and community leaders, with an appreciation for architecture, that need unique, functional, and cost-effective spaces, by designing places that exceed expectations. Unlike large, out-of-town firms, Brost Architects is rooted in the community. We communicate clearly and promptly, develop lasting bonds with clients, and ensure that the same design professionals work on projects, from the start of design to the completion of construction. This is demonstrated by our many repeat clients, who enjoy their beautiful, cost-effective, energy efficient designs and often refer us to others.

Lunch & Learn: Structurally Insulated Panels

We frequently have suppliers and representatives give us presentations on new or developing products, market trends, and studies. This year, we attended a seminar about structurally insulated panels (SIPs). SIPs are a high performance building system for residential and light commercial construction. SIPs are made of a sheet of insulation foam core sandwiched between two sheets of sheathing. The panels are typically provided in increments that are compatible with wood framing dimensions.

SIPs can simplify the construction process, as erecting a wall is a matter of setting up factory designed, pre-assembled panels with all of the openings for doors and windows already cut out. By using sheathing on the panel, drywall installers also have more flexibility with the location of screws. One of the other benefits of SIP construction is that heat transfer is reduced because studs are usually not required in the wall panels. The rigid insulation board is able to run nearly uninterrupted along the wall and cuts down on temperature transfer.

However, SIP construction does come with some drawbacks. There are significantly fewer contractors in the area with SIP construction experience than there are with conventional wood framed construction. In the United States, SIP material costs tend to be more expensive than conventional wood framing, although it is easy to save on construction costs, as erection is quick. SIP construction also requires special attention be paid to detailing, in order to prevent infestations within the insulation space of the panels.

SIP construction is an interesting technology with many potential applications in the construction industry. This is especially true in areas that have traditionally been dominated by wood framed construction. If you are interested in exploring the use of Structurally Insulated Panels for your next project, let us know and we'd be glad to help you explore this construction technology further. For more information on SIPs, please give us a call or visit the Structural Insulated Panel Association at www.sips.org.