



NYC will triumph over challenges and lead new industry trends for working environments and culture - by Laura Reddy

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NuZine is a Commercial Interior Design Firm located in Midtown Manhattan, focusing on 50,000 s/f and less for a broad base clientele. We design and manage projects for capital improvements

including corridors and lobbies, lavatories, elevator cab interiors; complete tenant/end-user renovations and relocations and spec suites for the business, tech, fashion, retail, education and hospitality markets.

Prior to COVID-19 in the last several years in the commercial market, the open space plan was extremely popular for end-users and landlords. The open floor plan satisfied many of the needs as a result to such industry topics such as high property taxes resulting in high rents. The open space plan minimizes construction costs while maximizing the amount of staff occupancy. The open space plan is also conducive to the culture of collaboration with the ability to move and work in different areas of the space such as lounge and pantry areas, moving away from the traditional desk and bullpen seating arrangements.

In January to March 2020, we saw our end user clients on path to continue expanding, utilizing the open space plan, and our property owner clients continue to opt for large single tenant floors in lieu of many small tenants per floor. For many of our clients the technology was in place to allow people to work from home. As it became apparent the COVID lock down would be significantly longer, our clients, like all businesses had hard choices in front of them and although working from home was supposed to be short term it is now a culture shift.

As a result of working at home and/or moving, residential renovations increased during 2020 while the commercial interiors (NuZine's market is 50,000 s/f and less) was pivoting to survive. In speaking with our clients, the feedback, they are getting from their staff regarding working from home, has been fairly consistent. Approximately 10% of personnel would like to continue to work from home full time, 10%-15% would choose to return to the office five days a week and up to 75% would prefer to return to the office part time and work at home part time. If business owners adapt a schedule change and allow staff to work at home part time, this will have significant impact on how office spaces are planned and utilized. This would create many opportunities for business owners to rethink their operations and consider repurposing existing space for day care, subleasing, or the creation of shared workstations for various schedules which can increase the hours of production.

NuZine has completed several office use test fits for clients over the last month and the requests for space planning has been a mix of some traditional aspects of office planning such as cubicle desk arrangements instead of the benching desks, which does not allow for separation, and incorporating some of the more recent trends of open collaborative spaces on a smaller scale. The layouts we are providing take into consideration the immediate need for safety and the long-term, sustainable requirements of the space our clients must consider signing a lease. The importance of people working from a commercial space is not only for the individual company, it is important for all the companies that are impacted daily, simply by location. The local coffee café, favorite lunch spots, happy hour hangouts, laundry services, shoe repair and clothing stores are all directly impacted without foot traffic to maintain sales.

New York City is a global center, the largest American city with the most resilient population. NuZine believes the industrious and creative people of NYC will triumph over the challenges we have faced and lead new industry trends for working environments and culture.

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