

Is it time to put the sleep pod to bed?



By [Tracy Anderson](#)

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The impact of the millennial generation on workplace design has been significant. It's all about communication, collaboration, flexibility and happiness, with the introduction of a range of non-conventional work spaces to ensure employees thrive. Nothing wrong with that, so long as the space matches the company culture. If we're honest, we all know the famous Google slide probably only works at Google!



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A few global tech firms have set the standard for what a Gen Z office space should look like. Which brings us to the sleep pod. While having a designated nap zone sounds good on paper, most people are not that comfortable to grab a few zzzs at the office. This only works if you have a regular stream of global business travellers catching up on jet lag or a ton of staff burning the midnight oil. Yes, it's good to offer space to decompress but the egg-shaped sleep pod is not necessarily the practical answer. These days it makes more sense to double up on a space's functionality. So, a first aid room, for instance, could also offer a private shut-eye spot as well as a comfy chair for nursing mothers.



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Another potential white elephant in the corporate environment is the office gym or yoga studio. Lovely in principle but when you consider how many of your employees have gym contracts or other regular outside commitments, it's not always a sensible perk. Before making the investment in a state-of-the-art fitness centre, get feedback from the people who will be using it first. The cost of sponsoring a gym membership can be cheaper than the rent on the square metre.

And speaking of getting fitter at work, what about the treadmill desk – get a work out and get your work done? It's a great theory but many report on concentrating more on the exercise and less on the work. It's a terrific addition in a phone-booth space but, at the cost of productivity, maybe not so much in focus work areas.



Treadmill desks, [Cole Comptele / Walking Workstations](#), [Flickr](#) CC BY 2.0

Then there is the games room – that bright and funky chill zone complete with ping pong table and bean bags. It's fantastic if it suits the culture of your organisation but in say a firm of venture capitalists, you may be better off installing a

speakeasy-style coffee lounge/bar. Always consider the ethos of your company before blindly following what may end up being a design fad.

It's a bit like the bike racks and shower room for all those cyclists biking into work. Again, do the research; consider the location of your office. While it's fantastic to integrate a bike-friendly culture at work, if your workplace is in Jo'burg, there may not be enough staff commuting via bicycle to warrant the designated space.

So the point then is this: there are a host of amazing, modern, innovative office interventions but not all of them are right for your office. Don't be a slave to the latest fad. Any kind of refurb or new fit-out must be authentic to your work space. Look closely at your corporate culture, demographic and the environment you work in. Talk to your people about what they think will work well and use a professional to guide these requirements.

ABOUT TRACY ANDERSON

Tracy Anderson is an interior designer at Tétris. She has a decade worth of design experience in retail, corporate, hospitality and residential design. Some highlights include the One & Only Hotel in Cape Town, The Westcliff Hotel refurbishment in Johannesburg, Palazzo Steyn at Steyn City for Douw Steyn, private residence for Sol Kerzner and The Drostdy Hotel refurbishment in Graaff-Reinet for Rupert Properties. Anderson has a NDip Three-Dimensional Design and a BA Interior Design.

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