

MODUS

Office *Refurbishment*

2024 GUIDE

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1. Introduction

Your office refurbishment starts here.

An office refurbishment can be a daunting prospect. It's a potential source of disruption and upheaval as you fundamentally alter an existing space.

The benefits, however, more than make up for the potential stress. Refurbishing your office can help boost productivity and wellbeing, retention and acquisition, morale and excitement. It can render your space into something inspiring, invigorating and future-facing.

Using our decades of experience within the office refurbishment field, we've come up with this helpful, succinct guide that will take you through each stage along the refurbishment timeline. Beginning at the very first phases of planning and ending with ongoing client support post-move, let us guide you through the refurbishment process, changing the face of your workspace forever.



2. Timeline

Start preparations early to give yourself ample time for planning and design.

Depending on the size of your company, time-frames for refurbishment can differ, though the phases of the project remain the same.



Please note: these timelines act as a guide only, and some phases may run concurrently to others.

3. Choosing to refurbish

An office refurbishment is a major project that requires careful decision-making. Set the stage for your refurb by analysing the benefits of updating your space.





5 reasons to *refurbish* your office

Refurbishing your office can be an imposing **challenge**. Fundamentally changing and updating a space that you and your team are intimately familiar with can be daunting and has the potential to be disruptive.

However, office refurbishment can also come with myriad benefits – some of which can be absolutely transformative for your business. A year of rigorous planning, hard work and upheaval enacting the refurbishment can pay off massively in the long-term. And, indeed, the process itself can be an exciting, invigorating time for your company.

Here are 5 key reasons to consider conducting a new fit out on your existing office:

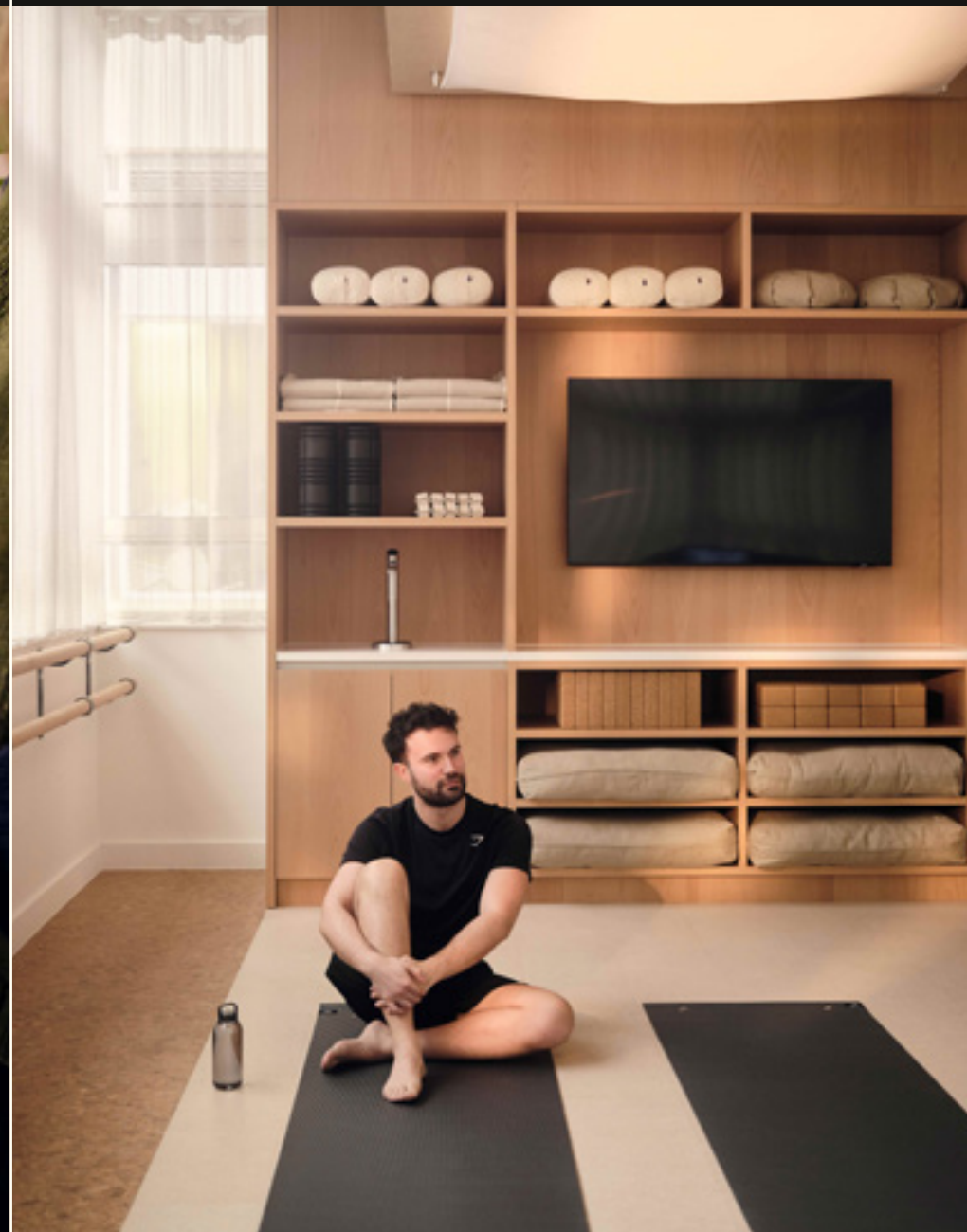
1. Future proofing and updating your space



2. Talent retention



3. Employee health & wellbeing



4. Lowering your running costs



5. Strengthening your brand




1. Future-proofing and updating your space

Since the pandemic first hit, the world of work has changed. Where once office floor space would have been dominated by cubicles with the odd meeting room, modern offices are now diverse and flexible spaces, catering for employee needs and allowing for a hybrid workforce that splits time between the office and working from home. Office design was already shifting in this direction for years before COVID, but the pandemic has definitively extolled the need for adaptation.

Deciding to refurb your office provides ample impetus for fundamentally reshaping your workspace with a view to the future, making sure that your business is fully equipped to navigate the post-pandemic world of work. **Check out our article** on reimagining the workspace in the post-covid era for some ideas on how to future-proof your office space in your next office relocation.





63% of CFOs polled suggested that employee turnover had increased in the preceding 3 years.

2. Talent retention

Employee retention is a central preoccupation of modern businesses. Turnover is an issue that is undeniably growing – in 2020, **63% of CFOs polled suggested that employee turnover had increased in the preceding 3 years**, which becomes particularly problematic when you consider that a higher retention rate has been shown to **increase the profits of a company by a factor of four**.

Refurbishing your office is an exciting and progressive time that can help employees feel like they are part of a dynamic and changing workspace. Giving staff input in the design of the new space can also create a real sense of pride and ownership around an office; a sense of home.

3. Employee health and wellbeing

Employee health and wellbeing is a huge facet of modern businesses, and given the importance of employee retention, wellbeing has never been more crucial a consideration. **Two-fifths (39%) of employees, according to a 2021 survey**, cited a decline in their mental health as a result of their employer not supporting their health and wellbeing during the pandemic, leading a quarter to become less productive, and a full 30% to look for a new job. Across the UK, ailing mental health costs employers **up to £45 billion per year**. An office fit out can massively boost employee wellbeing. Updating your with a bigger focus on wellbeing, offering amenities such as sleep pods, social zones and biophilic elements, can make all the difference, and generate a huge boost in retention and productivity.



Strong office design can make staff as much as

33%

happier at work.





4. Lowering your running costs

Lowering your running costs can be a fantastic consequence of an office refurbishment. Updating your space will allow you to create a much more efficient working environment with a greater emphasis on flexibility and agile working, thereby significantly reducing costs through the efficient use of space and resources. For more information on agile and activity-based working (ABW), **check out our article.**

5. Strengthening your brand

Creating a new office space is a great opportunity to focus on a strong sense of identity within the office through branding. Branding can be a valuable asset to any company, going far beyond the superficial. It has been shown to develop a stronger personal relationship between the business and the employee; to build a greater sense of inclusivity and belonging; to educate and inform staff on core values through a consistent, aesthetic visual language.



4. Understanding & fulfilling your office needs

The first stages of a refurbishment involve setting up the project hierarchy and carrying out a workplace appraisal, so you fully understand your office's needs – and how to meet them.



Project management

As you embark on an office refurbishment, appointing a **project leader** comes first and foremost. The project leader oversees the project from start to finish and ensures its successful completion.

A leader should be enthusiastic, have a clear vision for the business, be able to keep to timeframes and communicate openly and clearly, should have excellent organisational skills, and be able to work under pressure. This person may well be you!

Below the project leader, the project-management structure varies depending on the size of your business.





Large business

A large business might assemble an internal project team, consisting of:

Facilities management: Liaise with the external building manager; coordinate cleaning and security.

Office management: Manage reception and admin staff.

Finance team: Ensure a cost-effective refurb through budget analysis.

IT: Responsible for hardware and data storage.

Operations: Responsible for change management and staff training needs.

HR: Input on change management and staff communications.

Marketing: Deal with internal and external communications regarding the refurb and influence the look and feel of the space.

Executive assistants: Coordinate the senior leadership team’s calendars to ensure key meetings take place in a timely and effective manner.



Small business

Smaller businesses might hire an external project manager to oversee the relocation, or an internal office manager might oversee the project.



Carrying out a workplace appraisal

Workplace appraisals are commissioned by external partners that look out how a space is being used and what is happening within it. Giving at least three months for the appraisal to take place is paramount, as it will allow the partner to gather important data that you can use to make fundamental decisions on how to evolve your office space going forward.

Data collected in an appraisal can be deceptively simple yet has massive ramifications for how space can be better utilized.

This data can reveal:

1

How occupied meeting rooms are throughout the day, and how many people are in the rooms compared to their capacity?

3

Where are people gathering within the office and what types of interactions are occurring in these spaces?

2

How much time do staff spend at their desks?

4

Which spaces are 'working hardest' – are some spaces within the office empty relative to others?

With your appraisal complete, big decisions can be undertaken as to how to proceed with an office update. How much space is needed, and what type of space? How can these spaces be used to facilitate the strategy and purpose of the organisation, and cater for the different categories of worker within it?

The data collected by the workplace appraisal can be used to build a defined **workplace strategy**, focusing on potential growth and development of needs over the next five years.

Budget analysis

The budget analysis is an important part of the workplace appraisal. It shows a number of costs, including the fit out cost per square foot, dilapidation, service charges, the purchase and installation of tech equipment, and removal costs.

From here, it can be fruitful to explore cost-saving opportunities. These may include leasing options, tax breaks, grants, low-interest loans, or capital and sustainability allowances.

Internal spatial analysis

Some companies may prefer to undertake an informal internal **SWOT analysis** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). An analysis of this nature looks at the exact needs of your business and evaluates how well they are being met, and where there are opportunities for significant improvement. This can easily be adopted for an appraisal of the workspace itself – what are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with your office? What improvements could a refurbishment bring?



5. Appointing a D&B partner

The most important partnership in the process. Finding the right D&B partner is crucial to the success of your refurbishment.



Finding the right D&B partner

For a refurbishment, drawing up a shortlist of potential D&B firms early is vital. It is time to go to tender and appoint a **design and build** partner for your office fit-out.

The first step is writing a brief, which should effectively communicate your objectives, values and creative vision.



As D&B firms respond to the brief during the tendering process, it's important to incorporate a range of considerations in **appointing your perfect D&B partner**:

- ✓ Is the company financially stable?
- ✓ Do they understand the business demands?
- ✓ Have they put forward designs that meet those principles?
- ✓ Can they show a portfolio of previous case studies?
- ✓ Have they worked on similar projects?
- ✓ Do they have the required in-house expertise?
- ✓ Do they have environmental credentials?
- ✓ Are there any previous client testimonials?
- ✓ Do they guarantee on-time completion?

Most important is ensuring that your D&B partner provides the complete package of requisite items. **Does your proposed partner offer:**

- ✓ Spatial planning
- ✓ Workplace consultancy
- ✓ Project management
- ✓ Interior design
- ✓ HVAC
- ✓ Plumbing
- ✓ Fit out and construction
- ✓ Furniture selection

Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS)

The Considerate Constructors Scheme is a code of best practice that ensures the contractor’s work is organised, tidy and well-maintained. It also covers the contractor’s sustainability practices, safety and security and respect for the local community.

6. Creating your plans

Now that you've appointed a D&B partner, it's time to draw up plans as you get the project moving.



Calculating your budget

Your D&B partner will assist you in building your budget. There are a number of **factors to consider that will contribute to your refurbishment costs, including:**

- ✓ Type of building (age, location, condition, etc)
- ✓ Size of workspace
- ✓ Insurances and legal fees
- ✓ Quality and price of flooring, finishes, etc
- ✓ Waste and material disposal
- ✓ Storage and security onsite
- ✓ Planning permissions
- ✓ Project contingencies (can be up to 20% of your total fit out costs)

Cost Reductions

It's important to consider potential cost reductions and value maximisation tactics as you draw your budget together. These reductions could come from:

- Tax breaks
- Lease negotiations
- Capital allowances
- Sustainability allowances
- Landlord contributions

Planning for construction

The stage is set for plans to be drawn up specifically related to project construction.

This begins with the creation of specific **timescales**, working backwards from the date by which the project should be completed, and establishing dates for key events along the timeline of the entire project.

The next big decision is whether or not to **remain in your office** during the construction. While clearly cost-saving, it can be potentially disruptive, and a health-and-safety hazard for staff working onsite.



Several items should be discussed with your D&B partner at this stage, including:

1

Health and safety protocols for staff in the workspace.

4

Which facilities can continue to function during construction.

2

How swing space and phased refurbishment was managed on previous projects undertaken by the D&B firm.

5

Equipment/document storage during works.

3

Out of hours work for major disruptions.



Communication is key

Making sure that every department is kept up-to-date on refurbishment planning is crucial in ensuring that the process runs smoothly. It's also a great opportunity to inject energy and creativity into all levels of your company.

Creating a communications plan to update on the progress of the project is a functional, easily implementable strategy, which can be bolstered with the creation of a space – either physical or online – where employees can offer feedback related to the project. Where possible, holding weekly meetings with departments is a great way to bring teams on-board and have everyone feel like they are a part of the ongoing process.

You should also use this opportunity to contact your landlord with proposed plans for approval, and a chance to renegotiate your lease.

7. Redesigning your space

In conjunction with your D&B partner, develop and finalise your design, and let the excitement build.



4 bold approaches for a *new office design*

The modern workplace should be a bastion of flexibility, wellbeing and functionality. The marriage of these aspects of design can be a tricky balance, but a successful outcome can be completely transformative for your business.



Here are 4 approaches for a new office design to inspire your fit out:

1. A flexible and future-proofed space



2. Designing for wellbeing



3. Activity-based design



4. Embracing technology



1. A flexible and future-proofed space

Flexibility is a key tenant of the modern office and is absolutely paramount when designing your new office space. Gone are the days of static, traditional office floors with rigidly laid-out computer clusters and cubicles. Modularity and adaptability are key in allowing your business to navigate a rapidly changing working world. In designing a flexible workspace, consider: adding 'flex spaces' that aren't necessarily used for one specific purpose, but that can be adapted to meet demands on-the-fly; converting private offices to meeting rooms; fitting meeting rooms with technological innovations to promote mixed working; adding unassigned seating or benching zones for freelancers; adding informal collaborative spaces.





2. Designing for wellbeing

There is mounting evidence to suggest that our environment has a direct and tangible impact on our health. Employee wellbeing is at the forefront of design decisions in contemporary fit out. Focusing on giving your space all the amenities to meet the needs of your staff, while also deftly integrating natural sources of wellbeing in key areas – consider natural light, biophilia and air quality – can transform your workplace into a haven of wellness. Consider also designing spaces which encourage a level of movement, as static offices that demand hours a day in the same seated position are severely detrimental to physical and mental wellbeing.



3. Activity-based design

Like modularity and flexibility, an activity-based design is key for attracting and retaining talent. Essentially, an activity-based design is an open-plan spaces that delineates and defines separate areas, or 'zones', for different work styles and tasks. Consider adding multipurpose zones, lounges, teapoints, client-facing zones, quiet zones, privacy pods, collaboration zones or even colour-coded zones to create a multi-faceted working experience for your staff.





4. Embracing technology

It may sound obvious, but adequately embracing technology is crucial in a modern workplace, particularly in the wake of the pandemic and the era of ‘mixed working’. **We recently wrote** about the plethora of innovations enabling mixed working on the market today, the most transformational of which include monitoring technologies that provide real-time data and analytics on air quality, acoustics and density within the workplace at any one time –

crucial in managing a COVID-friendly workspace. Furthermore, hardware like Microsoft’s Surface Hubs or Google Jam Boards are making it ever-easier to bridge the gap between working in the office and working from home. A future-facing office will be replete with all the kit necessary to run the business successfully while staff split their time between home and the office.

Design practicalities

Beyond general design ideas, there are a number of specifics that you'll need to think about when creating your design.

- ✓ Branding
- ✓ Furniture
- ✓ IT
- ✓ Acoustics
- ✓ Storage



Branding. How do you want to brand your space? The trend for large logos in reception has waned in favour of more subtle branding devices such as branding colours used on ceiling or flooring details.

IT. While most businesses these days are, to some degree, in 'the Cloud', this is an opportunity to review your IT strategy, perhaps with the guidance of an external IT consultant to look at potential cost savings, whilst minimising risk. This could be a good time to review your disaster recovery plans too.



Storage. An office relocation might also be the time to review storage provision. There is a tendency to want to keep more hard copy files and reference material than is legally necessary. Electronic and remote storage are options here and lockers are a popular option in organisations where more flexible working has been introduced.

Furniture. There is a plethora of options when it comes to chairs and desks and an equal number of ways of moving them from the manufacturer's factory to an office project. A fit out company will often work in conjunction with a furniture consultant to give advice on the best furniture solutions, from eco-friendly options to reconfigurable desks to ergonomic seating and more.

Acoustics. Excessive noise has a major impact on concentration. Fortunately, there are a number of ways to provide comfort, from wall and ceiling products, to screens, lighting and meeting pods.

8. Working on site

Onsite work during a refurbishment can be a balancing act. Staying organised and on top of all onsite activities is a must.



Managing onsite activities

First and foremost, use the opportunity of looming onsite work to organize the workplace and get it ready for the construction to come. Dispose of any unwanted rubbish, and create some recycling areas to clear out space.

As your fit-out team gets to work onsite, several protocols should be put in place with regards to frequent meetings and site visits.

Considerations here include:

- ✓ The opening of clear lines of communication throughout the project team, with a defined chain of command.
- ✓ Holding weekly progress meetings to review the programme, design, and financials.
- ✓ Holding weekly site visits with the project team to show ongoing progress
- ✓ Issuing of meeting minutes to establish an ongoing record.
- ✓ Reviewing of statutory requirements, including fire evacuation procedures, health and safety information, local authority consents, asbestos control and management.
- ! You should also create a detailed logistics plan to track the movement of assets and personnel as work gets underway.

Health & Safety

Health and safety must always be a top priority as onsite work begins. Construction, Design and Management (CDM) Regulations mean that responsibility for health and safety management on the project lies with you.

Make sure you adhere to the following guidelines in managing your onsite activities:

- Go over your final designs with a CDM coordinator for approval.
- Check the new building's health and safety documentation.
- Create a construction phase plan with your principal contractor, and ensure it is strictly adhered to.
- In conjunction with your health and safety representative, ensure that staff safety is of the highest priority during the move.
- Make sure that all contractors working onsite are appropriately qualified, ensured, and monitored.

Evaluating the space

Once work has been completed, it's vital to perform a full evaluation and inspection of your new space before moving back in to give yourself time to iron out any issues.

A full, thorough inspection should be at least a few hours, and you should try to generate a detailed report on several facets of the fit out:

- ✓

Cleanness and tidiness of the space
- ✓

State of flooring/carpets
- ✓

Electrics and lighting functionality
- ✓

State of walls/ceilings
- ✓

HVAC functionality
- ✓

Doors/windows functionality
- ✓

Furniture accounted for
- ✓

Staircase tread evenness



9. Moving in

Your new office awaits – all that's left to do is manage your move.



Strategising a move

Moving back into a newly refurbished space can pose some challenges. There are a number of practicalities involved that require careful planning and clear communication throughout the business.

It's a good idea to prepare your colleagues well in advance by creating an **orientation booklet**, explaining the exact timeline of the move, what time their belongings need to be packed up and ready to go, where they will be moving to, how they can get there, and what time they should arrive at the new office.



Make sure you remember these items for a smooth, stress-free move-in:

- ✓ Make sure all equipment and belongings are precisely labelled by department.
- ✓ Test all new technology and equipment.
- ✓ Donate or dispose of any unwanted items.
- ✓ Distribute access cards and keys to employees.
- ✓ Make sure any tech or fragile equipment is handled with care.
- ✓ Provide any training needed to staff on new tech, protocols, etc.



Utilising your move

Now that you're in your new space, it's time to celebrate. Crack open the champagne, organise some socials, design a celebratory welcome pack – there are myriad opportunities to celebrate the big day.

A relocation is also easily utilised to leverage brand awareness and reputation. By deftly publicizing and showcasing your office transformation and new space, you can capitalize on your hard work and see some tangible business benefits. Consider these three strategies to best utilise your relocation for your company.



1 Awards

Awards are a great way to showcase your new office space to the wider community. Consider entering your workspace into a design award, such as Dezeen, Mixology or SBID. Having your project shortlisted – or win – shines a spotlight on your business, and is a wonderful reward for a job well done.

2 Social media

It's no secret that social media is fast-becoming the world's most important marketing tool, and it should never be underestimated or underutilized. Your marketing team should have a strategy and programme in place for making sure your relocation and new office is showcased front-and-centre on your business's social media platforms.

3 Events

Now that you have an exciting new space, make the most of it by holding events that foster a sense of interpersonal pride and spark inspiration and creativity. Making sure your colleagues feel at home in their new office is of paramount importance, and social events and gatherings can be a fantastic way to generate that feeling of comfort and closeness with each other and with the business as a whole.

10. After move-in day

The dust has settled. Now is the chance to reflect. How can post-occupancy data improve your business?



Utilising post-occupancy data

Post-occupancy data is a useful tool that can measure the success of your project.

One can firstly analyse whether the project was delivered on time and within the budget. Then, through an analysis of factors such as thermal comfort, acoustic comfort, lighting comfort, air quality, office layout and facility adequacy, security adequacy and private/collaborative area adequacy, data can be gathered and used to answer several questions:

1

How is the effectiveness of the new workplace perceived?

3

What are the workplace's strengths and what are its developmental areas?

2

How does user satisfaction measure up against design objectives?

4

How does post-occupancy data compare to any collected pre-occupancy data?

Happiness index surveys

One great way to ascertain the success of an office refurbishment is through a happiness index survey, which essentially measures how people are feeling in their new office.

The survey includes 20–30 questions based on employees' experiences of the workplace. By asking the same set of questions immediately after the fit out and then 180 days after, the long-term benefits of the office refurbishment become markedly apparent, while also showing where there is room for improvement.

Ongoing support

Whether you decide to use your D&B partner's ongoing support team or another external company, making sure that you have a team ready to help and support you is crucial.

At Modus, we offer unparalleled ongoing support to our clients post-fit out. We offer a unique after-sales Warranty Support Management service, providing a range of services to keep clients' workplaces looking and operating as new. As a result, we have enjoyed relationships with clients that have used our services for upwards of a decade.





11. Summary

Refurbishing your office can be a daunting task, with many considerations to take into account and the potential for significant disruption to the day-to-day running of your business.

With careful planning and decision-making, however, an office refurbishment can be a truly exciting time for your company. A time to unleash your creativity in the service of your business objectives. A chance to develop your office into a space that your staff can truly call home.

The benefits of undertaking an office refurbishment are myriad. The project could change your company forever – for the better.

Thinking of refurbishing your office?

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