

interior design

more employ

More employees Less space

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The gigantic vastness in which our planet and all other heavenly bodies exist and operate is called space. We cannot measure its volume dimensionally as we do not know if and how the universal space is contained. But we all recognise its value. It is priceless. For we well know, without it we cannot exist.

The human race has always been fascinated with the vast amount of universal space. That is why we are so eager to capture a fraction of it, big or small, and to make it our own. We have become experts in containing these fractions of space in masonry or other types of architecture in order to live in them. Ultimately we put a price tag on them and convert them to cash.

Subsequently, today in our world, space is considered to be one of the most valuable monetary assets. People sacrifice entire lives in order to possess a fraction of it, no matter how small.

This explains why we don't like to waste space. We want every inch of space we own to count. To be put to good use. This is even more evident in the commercial world today.

In retail for example, the term sales per unit area describes the standard and usually primary measurement of store success. The profitability of a store is measured according to its sales per square inch.

Since 2005, annual store sales in the range of \$300 per square foot (\$3000/sqm) is considered a respectable result in the United States as the national average for regional malls.

Based on this standard, business operators in general are geared into justifying the amount of working floor space on the basis of its productivity, in many cases by incorporating more employees on less floor space... but how can one successfully incorporate more employees on less floor space?

Russian dolls

Let's talk about Russian dolls for a moment. You know, the kind of dolls of decreasing sizes placed one inside another, also known as stacking dolls or Russian nested dolls. And for

the benefit of any Russian-speaking readers, Babushka or Matryoshka dolls. A set of Matryoshkas consists of a wooden figure that can be pulled apart to reveal another figure of the same sort inside. It has, in turn, another figure inside, and so on. The number of nested figures is usually five or more.

This concept can also be seen in every day items we use, for example a nest of tables. The element that makes Russian dolls and nests of tables intriguing in terms of design is the effective use of negative space, a term used in art and interior design.

Negative space, in art, is the space around and between the subjects of an image. The use of negative space is a key element of artistic composition.

Negative space, in interior design, is the space that exists around, inside, or in between objects, either on a floor plan or elevation; it is sometimes described as circulation space, or empty space. And it is also a key element in the effectiveness of a designed interior.

Storeroom

If you visit a storeroom you will find very little negative or empty space. How do you feel in a storeroom?

Most of us don't like to spend too much time in a storeroom or shops that look like storerooms. Why? Simple: we like comfort. As human beings we resent places or situations which encroach into our personal space or jeopardise our dignity and comfort.

So minimising negative space can be counterproductive, disastrous, even hazardous. This is especially true in commercial environments where the safety of the employees and clients is paramount. Productivity and profitability are, of course, the main objectives of a business operator. But to achieve these, the workplace should be human-friendly. If employees feel that their dignity, personal safety and comfort are sacrificed at the workplace for the sake of profit that business will ultimately suffer.

The equation "negative x negative = positive" would not apply here, because in this case negative use of negative space equals disaster.

