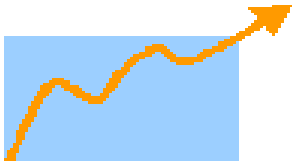


SpaceMed Trendline

Generic Administrative Office Suites Provide Efficient Space Utilization



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Background

The traditional healthcare facility has many departments involved in the administration and management of the organization in accordance with policies established by the governing board. Most of these administrative services use generic office space with a mix of private offices, open or partially-enclosed cubicles, and open workstations to accommodate different hierarchies of staff dictated by the organizational structure and peak-shift staffing. Patient traffic to these areas is rare.

As many of these departments are being forced to resize their staff in response to cost containment pressures and changing skill requirements, vacant offices and workstations are often scattered throughout the organization. At times, growing departments may need to pack multiple people into a single office, while shrinking departments have surplus space. Many departments also have dedicated conference rooms which, although infrequently used and inappropriately located, were not available for use by other hospital staff.

Current Trend

Space for administrative staff — not involved in day-to-day patient care — is increasingly being centralized into generic administrative office suites with a central reception area, groups of conference rooms, shared office equipment, and flexible workstations. This configuration provides the most efficient space utilization and ensures that space is equitably allocated and distributed among the departments and services that need it at any given time. The intent is to assign offices and workstations according to the immediate need allowing for the flexibility to reassign the space on a periodic basis as demand changes and staffing levels fluctuate. This prevents staff from becoming overly territorial about their space. With more sophisticated information systems, space can still be charged to department or cost center budgets based on use. Conference rooms and classrooms can be scheduled centrally based on daily demand thus ensuring optimal utilization.

Looking to the Future

Imagine the scenario where every member of the healthcare administrative staff is assigned mobile computing devices such as a laptop computer, personal digital assistant (PDA), or cellular phone — in lieu of an office, desk, file cabinets, book shelves, and hard-wired computer and desk phone. Whether the staff member is an administrator, nurse manager, financial analyst, surgery scheduler, information technology programmer, or a pre-registration clerk, he/she either works from home (when management objectives can be quantified), works in a central administrative office suite (or building) in an assigned office or cubicle, or works directly at the point-of-care, or point-of-service, to facilitate the needs of the organization's patients and other customers.

SpaceMed Trendline

Generic Administrative Offices Provide Efficient Space Utilization

Continued

Using wireless technology, all staff can access the institution's secure Intranet and external Internet to input, retrieve, review, analyze, and store all data and information required to fulfill the requirements of their specific role within the organization. In this paperless environment, all day-to-day communication occurs electronically via e-mail, voice mail, or video conference, and routine management reports and information — such as time sheets, budgets, and personnel assessments — are all created, transmitted, and stored electronically. This scenario seems somewhat futuristic when envisioned for the healthcare industry even though for many other industries this is the standard operating procedure.

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