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Loft offices – for less deskbound workflows and more engagement

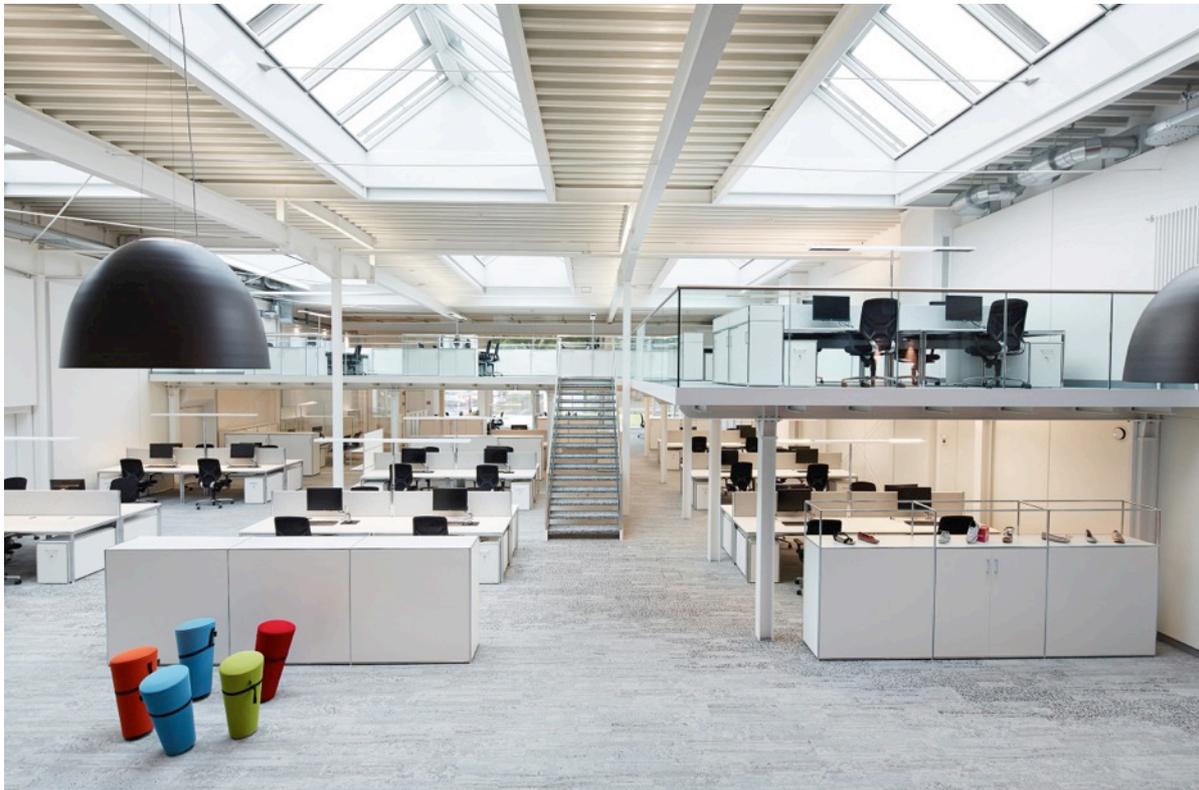


Photo: Dauphin HumanDesign® Group GmbH & Co. KG

High ceilings, open-plan layouts and light-flooded rooms have transformed previously practical but dull inner-city workspaces. This change has caused a real boom in loft architecture in international cities. But even in smaller and medium-sized towns conversions of old factory facilities into offices or residential units are also popular. A company called Wortmann from Detmold in Germany has shown that even a virtually windowless warehouse, never designed to accommodate people, can be remodelled to become a light-filled office. Wortmann is a footwear company, known for brands like "Tamaris". Architect Andre Rohde was appointed to convert one of Wortmann's outdated warehouses into a state-of-the-art office with a showroom. The crisply designed, versatile setting meets all the requirements of modern office spaces. The castors on Wilkhahn's "IN", "Stand-up" and "Stitz" chairs are also perfect matches.

The warehouse is just under 54 by 18 metres in size and the key task was to raise its roof by 80 centimetres. For fire-prevention reasons the space had to be divided up into three areas and three raised galleries were added. This layout reflects some of the company's departments which are based here and include sales, marketing and accounts. The architects deliberately retained the industrial character of the warehouse. The masonry on the fire walls isn't plastered, with both pipes and the design exposed. The lights and the carpet have an industrial appeal. Skylights ensure plenty of daylight throughout and make the room look bigger. On two sides the loft office opens up via a stick-system façade to the room beyond.

Wilkhahn

When planning the interiors, Antje Pegger from office interior design company Wackerhagen opted for work stations with the same layout, a wide aisle and communications areas in different designs. The goal of the concept was to ensure people were more physically active in the three departments themselves and to encourage greater interaction between people from different departments. In this process, "Stitz" or any of Wilkhahn's furniture that fosters movement, has various roles to play.



Photo: Wortmann KG

Due to its athletic design, three-dimensional range of motion and strong appeal, "IN" is perfect for the communication-driven and engagement-focused concept. The cover on the chair's back is made of 3D Formstrick (form-fit knit) which is used in the development of sports footwear. Spacious seating areas, sofas and a corner for picnics are ideal for informal chats. As a sitting-standing stool, "Stitz" on the other hand is deliberately put in some of the glass-walled conference rooms under the raised galleries. Media presentations and meetings requiring a certain gravitas take place in a specially designed, signal-red container. And for spontaneous meetings in the office, anyone can just grab one of the colourful "Stand-ups" which are scattered throughout the space. An extra benefit is that this cheerful eye-catcher's fabric cover absorbs noise.

Wilkhahn

Project info:

Project: "The Loft", the transformation of a warehouse into an office for 180 people
Completion date: September 2015
Address: Klingenbergstrasse 1-3, 32758 Detmold
Floor space: approx. 2,800 square metres plus a 600-square-metre showroom
Client: Wortmann Internationale Schuhproduktionen, Detmold
Architect: Andre Rohde, Detmold
Interior designer: Antje Pegger for Friedrich Wackerhagen GmbH & Co. KG, Pattensen
Furniture: Motion-driven items like the Wilkhahn IN office chair, Wilkhahn's Stitz sitting-standing stool and Stand-up



Photo: Wortmann KG

Wilkhahn

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