

# TEN AFFORDABLE WAYS

to re-design your office

As you probably know, we create stunning, award-winning offices all around the country. But what you probably didn't know is that a lot of these inspirational offices were done on a tight budget.



## By Adrian Norman

Adrian Norman is head of design at Morgan Lovell's Southern office. An expert at creating sustainable - but still stylish - interiors, some of Adrian's most recent projects have been for high-profile clients like Intercontinental Hotels Group (IHG). One look at Adrian's designs for IHG and you'll see why he's one of the best office interior designers in the business. He's also one of only a handful of UK designers to be both BREEAM and LEED accredited. Adrian regularly writes articles on sustainable design, and is often quoted in the press.

You see, we understand that our clients want to save money wherever possible. So whether you're designing, fitting out or refurbishing, we're full of great ideas to do just that. Have a read below and find out for yourself.

## 1. Choose Design & Build

Design and Build is our approach to transforming offices. In its most basic sense it means letting one company take care of everything – from planning permission and interior design, to fit out and even move-in day. And the benefits are easy to see.

For a start, dealing with just one supplier saves time on negotiating contracts. There's just the one agreement to sign covering the whole job. No random consultants here, there and everywhere, each with separate budgets and deadlines to manage. Best of all, there's only one fee to pay.

## 2. Go open-plan

The average cost of office space in the UK is £30 per square foot. Which is quite a staggering amount. This means that, besides your employees, property costs are probably your biggest expenditure. So, how can you reduce yours?

Going open plan is an easy way to save big. Cellular or private offices mean more partitions and more space required. Instead, put everyone into open plan, including senior management. Then sit back and watch as your property and fit out costs hit the floor, while your communication and team spirit go through the roof. Some of our most spectacular transformations have been open plan – check out our [gallery](#).

## 3. Reduce the amount of filing and storage

Think about your office storage for a moment... Taking into consideration that the average cost of office space is £30 per square foot, do you think your storage could be better?

For most offices, the answer will no doubt be yes. And it's easy to achieve. Simple things like installing tall cabinets and built-in floor-to-ceiling cupboards, which have a greater storage-to-footprint ratio than smaller cabinets, can give you space back for other uses. While you're at it, archive those ten year old documents in off-site storage. And speaking of documents, with terabytes of computer memory available for increasingly small amounts of money, now's the time to start storing and archiving all your future ones electronically.

So what are you waiting for? Begin a comprehensive storage audit today and see where you can cut back.

#### 4. Check the efficiency of the building

When you're looking for a new office, there's a score of essential questions that can help you negotiate a better deal with your landlord and potentially make huge cost savings. And the best way to find out the answers is with a professional building appraisal.

For example, the most expensive element of a refit is the heating and cooling system. It's worth checking what condition the mechanical services are in. This equipment only has a 20 year life expectancy and makes a big difference to your fuel bills.



Egmont

#### 5. A flexible office is a smarter office

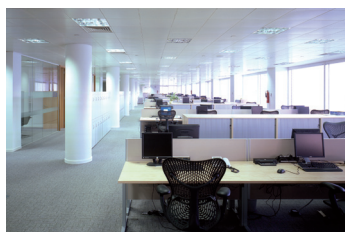
In business, nothing is ever certain. Things are always changing, so it's important that companies are flexible enough to adapt. And the same goes for your office space. Using stylish bookcases and filing cabinets to break up space not only saves you from building partitions, they also make it easy to change things around in the future should your business grow. What's more, it can give your company a really modern edge – just take a look at our case study for [Egmont](#).

And after you've saved once, you'll save all over again at the end of your lease – paying less on dilapidations (ripping everything out) as there's less to get rid of.

#### 6. Make energy savings your grand design

There are so many inspirational ways you can save energy (and therefore money) when designing an office space. And it's so easy. Take daylight for example. Simply by maximising how a space utilises natural light, you'll reduce the need for electric lighting and save on bills every single day.

And if you thought that was easy, wait until you hear that the Government will actually give you money back when you specify high-rated heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment through the Enhanced Capital Allowances scheme (ECAs). We did it at our own headquarters and saved loads. Give us a call and we'll tell you all about it.



London Borough of Tower Hamlets

#### 7. Save on furniture

Office furniture can be one of the other expensive parts in an office redesign. But it can also be where you can save the most.

It's all about being smart and using your imagination. But where you simply can't re-use or refurbish what you've already got, consider bench-style desking. 'Benching' saves money for two reasons. Benches have a smaller footprint than traditional 'L' shaped desks, and they also share legs, reducing the number of components and amount of materials used.

Oh, and they can look super-stylish. Just take a look at our case study for [Tower Hamlets](#) to see how we saved them money through 'benching'.



Skype

## 8. Swap meeting rooms for break out spaces

It's a simple trick that can save thousands. You see, the more meeting rooms you build into your design, the more your new office will cost. There are more partitions to be installed, more windows to be put in, more decorating to be done, and we haven't even started on re-routing heating and ventilation.

Our advice? Where meeting rooms aren't a necessity, create informal break out spaces. They're open and communal, they look great, clients and employees love them and they're much, much cheaper.

Take a look at the case study for [Skype](#), to see how we gave them a meeting space that's more lounge than office.



Generation

## 9. Design around existing mechanical and electrical systems

It may sound like stating the obvious, but you'd be surprised how people fall into this trap. Moving air-conditioning ducts, lighting, data points and plumbing is crazily expensive. Not only that, it's fraught with unforeseen problems. That's why a good designer (like one of ours) will design around the building's existing services wherever possible.

We recently completed a stunning new office for a company called [Generation](#). What got us the job was our competitive quote – we saved them thousands by designing around the existing services.



GE Money

## 10. Choose a building where you only need a single floor

Naturally, this is a tip for before you sign the lease, but getting a single floorplate that's big enough for you is really important if you want to save money. It's all about duplication. The more floors you have, the more copiers, tea points and meeting rooms you'll need.

Getting everyone on one floor will not only give you immediate savings on your capital outlay, but will also mean fewer things to replace, update and, of course, repair in the future. It makes simple, practical sense and, as [GE Money](#) found out when we helped them save money with their large floorplate, that's the best kind.

**Feeling inspired yet?** We're bursting with more budget-saving, office design ideas. Give us a call and we'll show you some projects we've done and share loads more of our clever ideas to save you money.

I've mentioned a few case studies - these can be found along with other examples of our work on our website at [www.morganlovell.co.uk/our-work/case-studies](http://www.morganlovell.co.uk/our-work/case-studies).

## ABOUT MORGAN LOVELL

Morgan Lovell is the UK's leading office design, fit out, refurbishment and relocation specialist. With our own teams of project managers, designers, surveyors and construction experts, we can design, manage and deliver your entire project, with only one point of contact.