

Young Tech: Identity

The connectivity resultant from social media has led to more transparency than ever before. Now that workers can see the inner workings of the companies to which they belong, they are wanting to engage with the founding processes at those companies. Young people expect the same transparency they experience on social media in all facets of life, including work.

The tech industry has responded by creating a transparent, actionable environment at work to engage employees in the growth and development of the business identity. Now that workers can see how a company is growing its identity, they are compelled to engage.

Engaging in the growth and development of a company's identity is supported by companies across the Bay Area. Facebook encourages employees to hack the system - pull it apart to see if we can put it back together better. Google has 20% time: employees can spend up to twenty percent of their time to work on whatever project they would like. If the project goes well, it often gets integrated into the company's offerings. Employees in these scenarios are actively contributing to the identity of the company and are best integrated and engaged in building the brand and value.

The influence of the Millennial generation to advocate for their own participation in business identity has driven other generations, like Boomers, to prioritize the right 'fit' at work. To attract today's recruits, company

Today's top technology companies move as quickly as the new recruits they employ. Having a clear brand is no longer about having the right graphic on the wall; it's about being receptive to change the wall - or the whole space.

While aiming to direct a sense of brand to clients visiting client space, companies should also aim to direct a sense of brand to employees working in the space every day. The employee zone should reinforce the brand's cultural priorities, business vision, and corporate values in a dynamic, iterative way.

In the early days of tech, interior architecture was a lot about image. Today it's about action. Large graphics that represent a cultural brand are great, but they are static, which may as well be stagnant in the fast paced economy in which they compete.

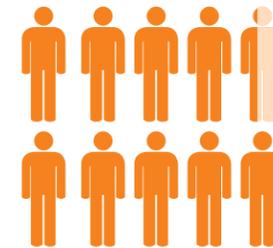
For companies like Facebook, that could mean nothing is overly wrought - it is a neutral space for employees to freely engage and develop. At Google it could mean open space for experimentation or pin-up boards to show each team's 20% projects to the office.

For any firm looking to engage employees, it could be a ad hoc desking to encourage employees to grow ideas together; a wall of faces and places for each employee to share their extracurricular lives at work; an art wall to paint/draw/hack your space however you feel.



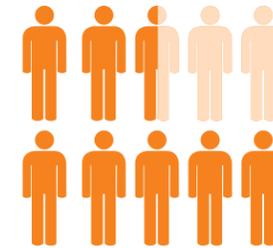
92%

Millennials cite work/life balance as their top priority in considering a new job



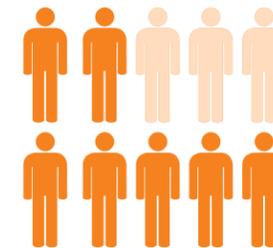
75%

Generation Yers cite work/life balance as their top priority in considering a new job



70%

Boomers cite work/life balance as their top priority in considering a new job



Offices which inspire physical action are the trend. Identity is founded on action and social response now more than ever. Slick design and graphics aren't good enough. People should be able to graffiti the graphics, write on the walls, and reconfigure the furniture.

Architecture can open up space and attitudes for conversation and collaboration about what the company wants to be, and how it will express that to the world.

Identity is composed of a number of characteristics. And as the company develops, so too will its office environment. Designing for flexibility and growth allows space to iterate as quickly as its employees. Please look for this discussion in the next edition of Young Tech: Flexibility and Mobility.