Privacy in the Open Workplace

As many of our clients have moved from a traditional cubical or office setting into a more open and flexible environment, we have seen several highly effective methods used to maintain and improve privacy. When these key points are followed, we have seen office heavy departments within our client’s organizations such as Human Resources and Finance prefer working in the new environment.

Screen Privacy
It is important to allow the user to feel comfortable referencing confidential or sensitive information on their screen; their placement should not locate their screen in clear view of a public area or corridor. For the majority of cases, the view of concern is directly behind the user, and this can be protected easily in the new workplace with thoughtful placement, furniture or walls.

Relation to Circulation
There are several areas on any floor in which groups can be located, and some will offer more privacy than others such as areas far from main circulation routes or public social zones. Groups that require more privacy should be located in these more private areas.

Proximity to Enclosed Spaces
End users who have frequent phone calls or meetings that are sensitive in nature should be placed near phone booths or meetings rooms. In the case of some management personnel, a meeting room can be dedicated to them while they are in the office.

Locked Storage
Allowing adequate locked project, group and personal storage is essential. Through the programming phase, these needs are discussed, reviewed and addressed.

RFID Printing
Secure printing is still possible on a shared printer with RFID technology. With RFID printing, a document is sent to print but will not be processed until the employee is physically at the printer.

Variety and Flexibility
The new workplace is designed with a variety of options and an overabundance of seats. In the event that the first placement does not suit a specific end user, then there are many other options to move to, all with various privacy attributes. The aim is to design an environment that not only is flexible in the immediate but also for long term agility.