

## Cubicles Workstations — Pro Tips

### 1 Right-Size the Footprint Before Specifying Components

The most important cubicle decision is the footprint size — 6×6, 6×8, 8×8, or larger — and it should be driven by the actual work tasks of the occupant. Choosing a footprint that is too small for the actual work reduces productivity; choosing too large wastes real estate. Survey role requirements (number of monitors, reference material volume, meeting frequency) before standardizing a single footprint for all employees.

### 2 Systems Standards Protect Your Long-Term Investment

Once you install a systems furniture platform (Herman Miller Action Office, Steelcase 9000, Haworth Unigroup), you are committed to that system for expansion and reconfiguration. Before selecting a platform, verify: the manufacturer is still actively supporting the line, components are available for purchase, and the system has the configuration flexibility to support 5–10 years of anticipated changes. Orphaned systems that can't be expanded create expensive mid-lifecycle replacements.

### 3 Electrified Panels Are Not All Equal

Panel-based power distribution quality varies significantly across manufacturers and product generations. Verify amperage capacity, the number of circuits per run, and compatibility with your electrical contractor's infrastructure. Some panel power systems require proprietary connectors from the manufacturer at significant markup; others accept standard IEC components. Understand the total cost of panel electrification — including all proprietary connection hardware — before finalizing your selection.

### 4 Panel Fabric Is a Design Statement and Acoustic Tool

Fabric panel selection is one of the highest-impact design decisions in a cubicle installation. Fabric color, pattern, and texture set the room's visual tone, define team zones, and contribute significantly to overall acoustic performance through sound absorption. Select a fabric with both aesthetic appropriateness and adequate NRC (0.70+) for your acoustic environment. Involve your team in fabric selection — it's the most visible aspect of the installation they'll live with daily.

### 5 Overhead Storage Affects Light and Air

Full overhead storage units mounted high on cubicle panels create dim, enclosed workspaces by blocking ambient light from overhead fixtures and the sense of openness in the floor plan. Reduced-height overheads (open shelves rather than full closed units) or eliminating overheads entirely brightens the workspace significantly. If storage is needed, a lower under-surface pedestal plus a small open overhead shelf balances storage and ambient light better than full tall overheads.

### 6 Glazed Panels Are a Strategic Privacy Decision

Glass or glazed infills in upper panel sections — opaque from one direction (frosted) or transparent — increase natural light transmission across the floor and reduce the closed-in feeling of high-panel cubicles. They also reduce the visual enclosure that some employees find oppressive. Full glass infills allow visible monitoring from management areas; frosted glass provides light transmission with privacy. Mixing glass and fabric infills by location creates a floor plan with strategic privacy variation.

### 7 Workstation Accessories Multiply Daily Efficiency

The base cubicle system is a platform — accessories create productivity. Consider: keyboard trays that improve typing ergonomics, task lights that eliminate screen glare, monitor arms that adjust for proper screen height, tackable whiteboard panels that enable visual note-taking, in-box trays that control document flow, and cable management clips that keep surfaces clear. A fully accessorized workstation is dramatically more functional than an identically configured unaccelerated workstation.

### 8 Partition Height and HR Policy Alignment

Cubicle partition height has HR and management implications beyond aesthetics. Very high partitions (85+ inches) create enclosed environments where supervision is difficult and isolation can affect team culture. Very low partitions (42 inches) provide no seated privacy, creating stress in employees performing sensitive work. 65-inch panels are the commercial standard because they balance privacy, supervision access, and light transmission. Align panel height choices with your HR culture and management approach.

### 9 Verify Finish Consistency Across the Full Order

Large cubicle installations — 50 to 500+ workstations — are often fulfilled from multiple production batches. Laminate finishes can vary slightly between batches, creating visible color inconsistency in adjacent workstations. Request that the manufacturer produce all panels for a single installation from the same laminate batch and document this in your purchase order. Inspect sample panels from the actual production batch before approving final delivery.

### 10 Reconfiguration Costs Must Be Budgeted

Every cubicle reconfiguration incurs labor costs: disconnecting panel power, moving panel sections, reassembling configurations, and reconnecting electrical. For an installation of 100 workstations, a single floor-wide reconfiguration typically costs \$15,000–\$50,000 in labor depending on complexity. Design for anticipated reconfiguration patterns from the start — investments in modular features that simplify moves reduce lifetime reconfiguration costs significantly.