

Case Study - Facilities & Space Programming

Space Requirements & Definitions

Client:

A large, fast growing regional law firm in the Southeastern United States with more than 175 attorneys.

Issues:

In 2002, the client was unable to reach consensus on whether all selected practice areas and essential business support functions could fit into space provided in a planned office consolidation. This program involved a restack of five existing and two additional floors in its current headquarters tower to integrate two remote office sites in the same city. The firm's project team recognized the need to reduce substantially the volume of hard copy case matter files in active office spaces to adequately accommodate all staff, equipment, support spaces, critical information collections and office supplies within the limitations of the new office layout. Outside independent assessment was viewed as an important element in resolving this planning challenge.

Methodology:

HMC consultants analyzed and quantified hard copy information resources and office supplies volumes, by the firm's practice groups, in active offices as well as in building storage facilities. As a next step, HMC evaluated existing information management policies, procedures and records retention schedules. Our consultants also considered the potential application of alternative technologies for information indexing, tracking and archiving in order to reduce on site hard copy filing. HMC then estimated, again by practice group, future file requirements against present space and equipment configurations, taking into consideration potential hard copy file reductions, proposed new stricter filing standards, and anticipated firm growth.

Deliverables:

As its primary work product, HMC compiled a spreadsheet indicating overall filing and office supplies storage requirements, by practice group. It included quantification of existing as well as anticipated future records and office supplies volumes. These estimates were based on recommended 20% file reduction rates, proposed new filing volume standards, and a general office growth rate. To assist the client in reaching recommended file reduction objectives, HMC also provided a preliminary file purge plan and implementation strategy that should be carried out well in advance of any moves into new or renovated space. In addition, HMC presented the project team with a preliminary configuration of required filing spaces and high-density file equipment in the new expanded office. To accommodate a potentially high load factor for hard copy files on new floors, HMC advised the firm to strengthening their floor load capacities.

Results:

Based on HMC's recommended overall net 20% reduction in filing capacity, the client proceeded with its office consolidation planning without the necessity of obtaining additional

floor space. An internal review of these estimates carried out by client business unit representatives independently concurred that the reduction targets put forward by HMC were realistic. Excess inactive case matter files presently housed in the client's offices will be removed to an expanded basement storage facility within the building, or to an existing records storage service provider. HMC's recommendations set new, more efficient filing and storage volume standards for private offices, workstations and support areas. These file capacity benchmarks, ranging from 31 linear feet to 43 linear feet per person depending on individual office configuration, will also be maintained for the future. Furthermore, the strengthened load capacities on new floors will add flexibility to future rearrangements of office space. Client and HMC evaluations both determined that the use of alternative technologies for document management and storage could not be developed and implemented successfully before the facilities restack takes place.