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**Bayer in South Africa redefines its workplace with id.work**

**to create a flagship design for a new way of working**

Interior design and workplace strategy firm id.work has completed a landmark office transformation for Bayer in South Africa. The global enterprise with core competencies in the life science fields of healthcare and nutrition relocated from a 25,000m² traditional workspace in Isando, Ekurhuleni, to a 1,600m² high-performance office in Waterfall, Midrand, embracing a new way of working designed for flexibility, collaboration, and a future-ready workplace for current and future employees .

The three-year partnership between id.work and Bayer has resulted in the launch of the first Next Normal Office Concept (NNOC), supported by the company’s Dynamic Shared Ownership (DSO) operating model in South Africa. This innovative workplace concept is adaptive and agile, eliminating assigned desks in favour of flexible, tech-enabled environments.

The Next Normal Office Concept (NNOC) is a new era of flexible workspace model where multiple teams or individuals share a common workplace environment, explains Tandi Jacobs, General Manager of id.work. It is designed and managed to accommodate multiple people or teams to encourage collaboration, networking and community building. This model also allows for certain spaces to be used for a few hours or booked out for team workshops over a few days. This approach greatly promotes an agile working philosophy, which allows employees to work where, when, and how they are most effective and often across different spaces and is not tied to a specific desk or location.

The move reflects Bayer’s commitment toward driving progress in the region, catering for evolving employee needs, and ensuring that the company remains a major contributor in the global marketplace and the future of work.

*“This project is a true flagship for us,”* says Jacobs. *“It’s not just about a beautifully designed office but about facilitating deep organisational change. We were proud to help Bayer translate a global vision into a local reality* – *creating a space that supports business performance and enables cultural evolution.”*

**A collaborative design journey**

The project’s success was underpinned by an unusually close partnership between id.work and Bayer. From the outset, the team carried out an in-depth analysis of Bayer’s culture, workflows and aspirations. Recognising that Bayer employees had long been accustomed to cellular offices, the transition to a completely open and shared workspace required sensitive change management and strong internal alignment.

A design committee of Bayer employees worked side by side with the id.work team, shaping decisions around furniture, finishes, artwork and local cultural references. South African flora and fauna were incorporated to give the space an authentic, place-based identity. This inclusive process ensured the final outcome reflected Bayer’s values and resonated with its people.

*“Our approach is to embed ourselves within the client’s culture,”* Jacobs explains. *“At Bayer, there’s a real sense that every voice matters. That same ethos was reflected in how we approached the* – *collaborative, respectful and co-created.”*

**Designing for agility and connection**

The new office features multiple layers of adaptability, including the ability to reconfigure three interconnected spaces into one. Using acoustic curtains, the design allows the area to transform easily into a large “town hall” for company-wide meetings or into three smaller collaborative zones, depending on the need. This level of spatial flexibility allows Bayer to scale and shift its workspace in real time, maximising function and employee comfort.

Integrated technology supports hybrid working patterns, while ergonomic and acoustically considered solutions make the space equally suitable for quiet focus and active teamwork. The entire office supports Bayer’s shift towards a more dynamic, collaborative and inclusive work culture.

As part of its broader role, id.work also managed the relocation, from detailed planning and space allocation to post-move support. The result was a smooth transition with minimal disruption essential for a business of Bayer’s scale and complexity.

**Positive feedback and long-term impact**

The response from Bayer has been overwhelmingly positive. The Head of General Services for Bayer in Sub-Saharan Africa, Keegan Subramony, expressed enthusiasm for the new space, noting that it not only reflects the company’s mission but also enhances employee engagement and supports business performance. Additionally, he noted that with this new office, Bayer is well-positioned to build on its legacy of innovation in the region.

Despite many employees having worked at Bayer for decades, the cultural shift has been embraced, thanks to the transparency and inclusiveness of the process. Staff report feeling energised by the new environment and empowered by their involvement in shaping it.

Jacobs believes the Bayer project exemplifies what future-forward workplace design can achieve. “*It’s a living example of how design, when guided by strategy and empathy together, can reshape the employee experience,”* she says. *“We’re proud of what this project represents, both for Bayer and for the South African workplace landscape as a whole.”*

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