

Lianhe Zaobao (Lifestyle)

November 21, 2018 (Wednesday)



An ideal open office should allow staff to work comfortably according to his personal style.



Diversity has private spaces that allow staff to focus on work.



KOKUYO's coffee counter provides 'accidental encounter' opportunities and space.

New Generation of Office More Like HOME

Working style is constantly changing with technology advancement. The requirements and expectations of this new generation of workers in the workplace are very different from the past. Renowned Japanese stationery and office furniture brand, Kokuyo, held its annual "Workstyle Fair" in Tokyo in early November. The media-shy President of Kokuyo, Mr Hidekuni Kuroda, who made an exception to be interviewed by Singapore media, said, "ABW (Activity-Based Workplace) is a hot trend in Japan and globally. In the past, the office is like a factory. But now, with the boundaries between offices and homes becoming blurred, staff can choose where and how they work."

He added that ABW means work is no longer confined to the office. Staff are free to choose where they want to work, increasing both efficiency and creativity.

Of course, this is an ideal and may not be fully realized now. There is no doubt in President Kuroda's mind that traditional office designs and working styles will not be liberated overnight.

He said, "Big corporations must change, but big corporations tend to be more conservative. While smaller companies can make faster changes, but they are often limited by resources. This change may be difficult, but one day we will succeed. The younger generation needs such changes. They hope to use their own workstyle to work."

President Kuroda believes that to create an office that conforms to the spirit of the new generation, it is necessary to eliminate boundaries and hierarchical concepts. Therefore, in addition to the office design, we must rethink the relationship between the personnel department and staff. The personnel department should not be concern only about how staff can contribute to the company, but rather what the company can do for staff.

He said, "Personnel department and staff relationship should be a fair partnership. It is when employees get more opportunities, then the company can grow."



Kokuyo's President and CEO, Mr. Hidekuni Kuroda believes: everyone is unique and the more varied the working styles, the bigger the creative space.