

We asked for photos of your cool office and work space, and more than 30 companies responded. The five shown here are among the coolest spaces in the county. For additional photos, see www.sdbj.com/cool-offices. **For more of the best of what you sent us:**

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NOONAN LANCE BOYER & BANACH LLP

701 ISLAND AVE., SAN DIEGO

Ware Malcomb provided interior architecture and design services for the 5,000-square-foot space, which occupies the top floor in a historic building in the East Village.

NoonanLance's new office combines the core needs of a law firm with more progressive creative uses of open and collaborative spaces and unobstructed sight lines



SPECIAL REPORT:

COOL OFFICES

Employee-Focused Work Space Now a Table Stake, Not a Differentiator

BY JESSICA KING

Game rooms, funky art installations and even micro-brewery bars are popping up faster than ever in offices around San Diego County.

The reason?

Companies need so-called "cool" spaces if they are to recruit and retain quality talent, specifically workers who belong to the millennial generation, according to local design experts.

"It's an expectation now, not a trend," said **DeLinda Forsythe**, founder and CEO of **Innovative Commercial Environments** in Carmel Valley.

The company, which has 16 employees and annual revenues of around \$12 million, has been providing creative office furnishings since 2006.

"Twenty years ago, there was almost no demand for cool space," said **Amy Morway**, principal at **ID Studios**. "It's really been in the last 10 to 15 years that we've seen companies like **Google**, **Facebook** and **Apple** start

to drive this trend."

Morway estimates that more than 80 percent of her Solana Beach-based interior design company's clients are asking for some degree of "cool."

One such company that has gone "cool" is San Diego-based **Illumina**. The biotech company, with annual revenue of \$2.4 billion, employs 6,000 people, about half of whom are local.

"Illumina is highly collaborative and innovative — these are integral values for us and embedded in our culture. We want our office spaces to emphasize this," said **Jenny L. Durbin**, the company's manager of facilities planning and innovative workplace.

At Illumina, "cool" includes indoor and outdoor spaces to work, as well as private and group rooms, an extensive Wi-Fi network throughout it all, and a restaurant, an espresso bar and a staffed fitness center.

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Photo courtesy of studio MAHA
The new East Village offices of Noonan Lance Boyer & Banach LLP bring a contemporary vibe to a legal setting.





Photo courtesy of Jasper Sanidad

Well-known Instagram artist Kelsey Montague was commissioned to create the interactive art piece at the Center for Creative Leadership office.

^ CENTER FOR CREATIVE LEADERSHIP

3377 N. TORREY PINES COURT, SAN DIEGO

Hollander Design Group worked with CCL's steering committee to reflect the culture of the organization in the three-floor, 33,000-square-foot space in Torrey Pines. It's both a working environment and a motivational setting for staff, educators and clients.



Photo by Jasper Sanidad, courtesy of BNIM

Rivo Holdings not only has cool work space, it also has incredible views from the 22nd and 23rd floors of its downtown office.



Photo courtesy of LPA/CoStea Photography Inc.

High Moon Studios features multiple areas for gamers, meetings and individual work space.



Photo courtesy of Martin Mann

Amobee's contemporary design carries the color scheme throughout, from a more serious feel in the meeting room shown here to an informal multipurpose area on the second floor.

RIVO HOLDINGS

530 B ST.,
SAN DIEGO

Rivo Holdings moved in to its 15,100-square-foot downtown office at 530 B St. at the end of last year. Millennials make up 80 percent of its workforce, so Rivo Holdings was looking to build a sense of community and showcase how it values employees. The company, which provides contact center solutions for a variety of customer-facing companies in the finance sector, worked with BNIM on the design of the project.

HIGH MOON STUDIOS

2501 PALOMAR AIRPORT ROAD,
CARLSBAD

The recently completed 30,000-square-foot corporate headquarters is a gamers' delight. It conveys the culture of the company with game-themed art throughout, an expansive break room and hospitality area, open design housing up to 175 creators and contemporary design for administrators as well. LPA Inc. and Innovative Commercial Environments worked on the project.

AMOBEE

10201 WATERIDGE CIRCLE
SAN DIEGO

Amobee's 16,000-square-foot office in Sorrento Mesa is the epitome of Millennial office space: open, social, collaborative, cool vibe and offering many options for working untethered. Amobee is a marketing technology company that provides data for agencies, brands and publishers. They worked with AVR Skyport Studios to create a start-up vibe, including standup work stations and a lot of "hangout" space on the second floor.



WORK AREAS

High Moon Studios in Carlsbad was designed specifically for video game developers with its abundance of visual stimulation, large monitors and communal areas.

Photo courtesy of LPA/CoStea Photography Inc.



The new SOLV Operations and Control Center in Rancho Bernardo is where Swinerton Renewable Energy monitors its large-scale solar operations throughout the Southwest.

Photo courtesy of Swinerton Builders



The booking.com office in 1 Columbia Place downtown is comfortable, functional and contemporary.

Photo courtesy of Gensler



The San Diego Regional EDC office downtown has a memorable conference room table.

Photo courtesy of Scott Bennion



The Red Door Interactive office in the East Village was among the first in the area to put its conference room on the upper level of high-ceilinged space.

Photo courtesy of Red Door Interactive



MEETING ROOMS

One of the conference rooms at the Noonan Lance Boyer & Banach LLP office in the East Village.

Photo courtesy of studio MAHA

PRIVATE AREAS



The Downtown Works coworking space on Ash Street includes numerous private areas.

Photo courtesy of Scott Bennion



Photo courtesy of RMA Photography

Reflexion Health's new office downtown features a wide variety of work space.



Photo courtesy of studio MAHA

Noonan Lance Boyer & Banach LLP have stylish offices befitting a law firm but a contemporary feel that reflects its East Village location.



Photo by Jasper Sanidad, courtesy of BNIM

Rivo Holdings office downtown has multiple options for employees to work or relax.



Photo courtesy of Jasper Sanidad

The Center for Creative Leadership office in Torrey Pines has a stunning view of sunsets from its indoor-outdoor common area.

COMMON AREAS



Photo courtesy of Helix Electric

Helix Electric's headquarters in Sorrento Valley are "net zero" and include work and relaxation spaces inside and out.

BREAK ROOMS



JLL's kitchen and break room in its UTC office has an indoor-outdoor area with a view.

Photo courtesy of Jared Nelson



Photo courtesy of Joel Zwink

ResMed employees have highly functional space in which to work or relax at their headquarters in Kearny Mesa.



Photo courtesy of LPA/CoStea Photography Inc.

High Moon Studios in Carlsbad has an overtly social and gaming-friendly feel to its environment.



Photo courtesy of Martin Mann

Amobee's second-floor space in Sorrento Mesa has a lot of "hang-out" areas in addition to multipurpose areas.



Photo courtesy of Cali Bamboo

Cali Bamboo's multipurpose space in its Sorrento Mesa office includes a basketball hoop.



Photo courtesy of Joel Zwink

Lytix's extensive list of amenities at its office near UTC includes its own fitness center.

ARTWORK



Photo courtesy of Jasper Sanidad
This wall of 3-D-printed miniature office chairs is at bkm OfficeWork's UTC office.



Photo by Jasper Sanidad, courtesy of BNIM
RIVO Holdings utilizes stairwell space connecting the 22nd and 23rd floors to display art at its downtown office.




Photo courtesy of Jasper Sanidad
The Center of Creative Leadership office in Torrey Pines has surprising visual touches throughout.



Photo courtesy of Burger Construction
Using an old RV as meeting space may not constitute art, but it makes a statement at the Burger Construction office in Sorrento Valley. It also uses pieces of old shipping containers on its upstairs level.



Photo courtesy of LPA/CoStea Photography Inc.
The High Moon Studios office in Carlsbad has numerous large images of artwork from games it has designed.

Office Equipment Dealers				Listed alphabetically	Researched by Courtney Shamrell					
Company Address Website Phone		Number of: Offices Company- wide	Types of equipment sold	Business percentage					•Local executive(s) •Title(s)	Year founded
				Equipment	Furniture	Supplies	Service Contracts	Other		
Business Complete Solutions 13750 Danielson St., Poway 92064 www.bc.solutions 858-668-0809		3	Office equipment, multi-function systems, copiers, printers, production print, computers, digital signage	50	5	25	20	0	Keith Justus CEO, President	2002
Canon Solutions America 10509 Vista Sorrento Parkway, San Diego 92121 www.csa.canon.com 858-202-3900		92	Large format, printers, scanners, MFPs, digital production equipment, software	50	0	0	40	10	Nigel Thorp Market Director	2001
Copy Link Inc. 3441 Main St., Suite 100, Chula Vista 91911 www.copylink.net 619-424-8000		1	MFPs, printers, smart boards, scanners	40	0	15	40	5	Kevin Marshall President Judi Adams Sales manager	1990
MRC Smart Technology Solutions 5657 Copley Drive, San Diego 92111 www.mrc360.com 858-573-6354		8	Copiers, printers, cloud services, document management, managed print services, phone systems, PCs, laptops, data security	46	0	18	31	5	Bob Leone President John Taumoepeau Executive Vice President	1994
Office1 (1) 7323 Engineer Road, San Diego 92111 Office1.com 858-300-8701		10	Full range of IT support services, cloud based services, HaaS, SaaS, managed print	50	0	10	40	0	Todd Rogers CEO Danny Benbenek Vice President	1982
Pacific Ergonomics 10211 Pacific Mesa Blvd., Suite 404/405, San Diego 92121 www.pacificergo.com 619-546-0872		1	Custom seating, lab stools, sit-to-stand desks and tabletops, sit stools, monitor arms, keyboard tray/ keyboard/mouse, task lighting, footrests, anti-fatigue mats, document holders, laptop stands, cubicles, workstations	20	70	0	10	0	Jean Bakes CEO George Bakes President	2006
R3 Business Solutions 5725 Kearny Villa Road, Suite A, San Diego 92123 www.r3biz.com 858-779-1144		2	Production print, MFPs, wide format, printers, cloud services, managed print services	40	0	0	60	0	Roger Seeley CEO Allan Boxler Vice President Sales	2008
Sharp Business Systems of SoCal 8670 Argent St., Santee 92071 www.sbosofsandiego.com 619-258-1400		5,100	MFPs, copiers, printers	40	0	15	35	10	Dale Wedge President, SBS of SoCal	1969
Signa Digital Solutions Inc. 4863 Shawline St., San Diego 92111 www.gosigna.com 858-467-7979		1	Copiers, printers, lasers, software	50	0	0	40	10	Shannon Kirby CEO	1999

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Cool Offices:

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Millennials Matter

Three generations currently make up the U.S. workforce: baby boomers born from mid-1940s to mid-1960s; Generation X born from late 1960s to 1980; and millennials born from early 1980s to late 1990s. In early 2015, millennials surpassed Generation Xers to become the largest share of the American workforce at 53.5 million, according to the **Pew Research Center**. The center, using U.S. Census Data, reported that because the Gen X population is already well into the workforce and the younger millennials are still just getting started; the gap between those numbers will keep moving in the millennials' favor. Couple that with the fact that baby boomers are increasingly hitting retirement age, and all signs point toward millennials making up nearly half of the U.S. workforce by 2020.

Defining "Cool"

"The coolest offices are those designed specifically for the occupant reflecting the organization's culture and brand," said **Viveca Bissonnette**, vice president and design principal for San Diego-based **Hollander Design Group**, which has eight employees. "Cool" offices also break away from any "corporate" feeling, giving employees a sense of empowerment, according to Morway, who is one of 18 employees at

"In the past, real estate was focused primarily on financial objectives. Now, the occupants have taken the top spot on the priority list."
—Tiffany English, principal at the San Diego office of Ware Malcomb

ID Studios, formally known as **ID Studios Interior Design and Strategic Planning Inc.** "It inspires people to come to the office and to want to work there," Morway said of the ideal "cool" space. "A successful 'cool' office environment also makes you feel like you are part of the greater good of the company, that the work that you do actually matters," she added. The use of surveys, observation and focus groups with employees helped decide what "cool" attributes Illumina would have, according to Durbin. "Quantifying or establishing an ROI on employee productivity related to workplace satisfaction is a very hard metric to capture," Durbin said. "However, employee engagement and utilization of the space are key indicators of the success of an office program such as this."

Broad Appeal

Though often associated with website and software companies, "cool" offices are increasingly being found in other industries. "It's not just tech firms; it's CPAs, it's law firms ... it's everybody that wants to attract young talent," Forsythe said, adding it is also about retention. "You want people to be there maybe 10 hours a day and if it's not welcoming, if it's not comfortable, it's not going to work,"

Forsythe said. "People are going to want to go home." Sorrento Valley-based **Burger Construction**, which has annual revenues of \$60 million, is among those companies offering a "cool" environment to its 46 employees. Company President **Jack Burger** said its headquarters went from being a "nondescript industrial warehouse" to a family-oriented environment that includes a gourmet kitchen, game area, conference room and offices. "We operate as a hardworking, family-oriented tenant improvement construction business," Burger said. "Our people enjoy each other's company so having a residential feel to our office was encouraged."

Too Cool

What is "cool" for one company might not be for another. "Don't try to be something you are not," said **Christopher Veum**, president of **AVRP Skypoint Studios**. "In the dot-com era, we were putting hot tubs, foosball tables and zip lines in offices and they became more of a distraction than benefit." According to Veum, whose company has 50 employees, openness and lounge spaces are among the most popular elements found in a "cool" office these days. "Natural light, bringing the outdoors in, especially in Southern California, are a

huge productivity benefit and companies do realize this and ask for 'lots of natural light and air,'" Veum said. Along those lines, there's an added notion of "back to basics" being incorporated into "cool" office designs, according to **Elif Tinney**, an associate principal and director of design for interiors at **BNIM San Diego**. "We are essentially creating quiet places to focus: kitchens with healthy snacks; courtyards with fruit orchards; biophilic spaces which remind us of our connection to nature; and living rooms where we connect to each other face-to-face," Tinney said. "These are things we use now as designers and architects, but for some reason we stopped using for a while along the way." BNIM, founded in Kansas City in 1970, has offices in San Diego and Des Moines, Iowa, and employs 128 people, including 12 locally. Its annual revenues stand at around \$25 million.

What's Next

Trends truly are cyclical, according to **Tiffany English**, principal at **Ware Malcomb**. The international design firm has 22 offices, including one in San Diego. "Open office environments and smaller footprints were important in the past, for different reasons," English said. "The evolution of business has created a need for this same approach today, but for very distinct human factors." "In the past, real estate was focused primarily on financial objectives," she said. "Now, the occupants have taken the top spot on the priority list."