

Finding the Right Office Space in Minneapolis

Whether you're starting a new business or moving an existing one, choosing an office location to rent should be an exciting time. You get to find a home for your passion – the place that shows the world what you're all about. However, researching and leasing commercial office space can feel more stressful than exciting. There's no need to worry. Before you think about negotiations, you need to know what to look for in a new space. There are 4 basic guidelines that will make your search easier and more productive. Here are the first three.

Every business is different, so it's important to identify exactly what you need. These first three considerations will help you narrow down exactly where you should look for available space.

1. **Choose your preferred geographic location.** Do you want to be near the airport? Is it beneficial to be along the bus lines? Are there city licensing requirements to consider? Do you want to be close to schools? Identify what geographical considerations are important to you.
2. **Determine the zoning required for your space.** Your business has to run out of an area that is zoned for its purpose. You could be looking at office, industrial, religious, or school zones, for example. If you are uncertain what the zoning is, contact the city/cities where you are considering setting up your business. Zoning restrictions will narrow down where you can look for available space.
3. **Where are your people?** Specifically, where are your clients, and where is your labor pool?

Depending on your business, you either want to know where your customers live or where they spend time. You may also consider

mapping out median age, income, rent, and gender ratio in the cities you're researching.

If you already have employees, you can choose a location that is central to them. If you're still building your staff, ask yourself what kind of people you want working for you. Where do they live? What kind of transportation do they have access to?

Searching for space for your new or existing business can be overwhelming. With the right help, however, your search can be efficient and painless. First, you determined your geographical needs:

- Geographic conveniences
- Zoning requirements
- Client and labor pools

With these restrictions and preferences in mind, it's time to look at the space itself. Answering these questions can make the difference between living a dream and a nightmare when you're in your lease.

Step four is an involved step, so it is helpful to review the above 3.. When ready, thoroughly consider all of the following:

4. Determine your needs for an office. Consider what type of building and space fit your business. Think about:

- The layout. Do you need a reception area? Do you want open or closed offices?
- The space itself. What equipment are you putting in? How high should your ceilings be? What floor load capacity requirements do you have? (For example, are you a firm with libraries?) Do you have large equipment? Will you be expanding in the future? Will you be contracting (shrinking) down the road?
- Access. Do you need to be on the ground floor? What

security requirements do you have? Do you need emergency power? What hours do you do business? Do you or clients need access on weekends and evenings?

- Controls. As you start comparing options, keep these questions in mind. How is the HVAC regulated on evenings and weekends? Who manages building issues when they arise? Are there current landlord or property management issues?
- Special considerations. What are the rules regarding signage? Do you have special power requirements?
- The lease itself. What is your budget? What options do you want for renewal or purchase?

This is a lot to think about, but you don't want to be stuck in the wrong lease because you missed a step. The best way to guarantee that you've covered *everything* is to work with a commercial real estate agent. After all, this is just the beginning. Negotiating price and terms of a lease agreement is where an agent can really ensure you're getting a fair deal. If you have any questions about finding or leasing commercial space, we would love to help you with this process. Contact us today.

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