

Building Security (Excerpt)

The following is an excerpt from the Herman Miller Research Summary:
Building Security: Defining and Achieving It(©2003).

“Herman Miller: Could you talk for a minute about how an interior space can increase security? Access control? Surveillance?”

Vickroy: It’s about balancing what needs to happen operationally and what needs to happen with floor security. Having public space that is secure from the open office space is important for clients. Very seldom do you see an elevator that opens directly into an unsecured area.

There are clever ways to make the office area secure, but it doesn’t have to feel like a fortress. It should feel natural. We need to balance what a space needs to say from a brand-image or organizational culture point of view with what we need to be secure. Begin with human contact: have someone who can assess the situation and lock or unlock doors meet visitors.

You also want people to make turns. You don’t want them to have unimpeded, straight-ahead access to interiors. You need them to have to make a choice about which way to go. This slows things down. People these days are increasingly asking for fail-secure systems. Even when the power goes down, the locks stay locked. This involves more planning for such things as stairwells that are accessible from the lobby and stairwells that are accessible from the office areas.

Afshari: Another way is to provide exiting systems that function independently of entrances; that lets you keep your doors locked always.

Vickroy: Clients are also concerned about industrial espionage and losing valuable intellectual capital. When a client has outside people come in, we design areas where meeting and engagement spaces for consultants or other kinds of collaborators don’t give everyone access to all areas. A concern about security is really changing how law firms are being designed, for example. Now partners’ offices are separated from conference rooms and centers. There is a third kind of space, secure from some spaces but open to collaborative kinds of work. It’s just a reflection of new realities for business, a layering of access.

Afshari: Laboratories are also similar. Projects are separated from each other, and some spaces are kept private from independent contractors. Schools are also changing. Barriers now keep people who are visiting libraries or gymnasiums from entering the rest of the building.

For the complete text of this research summary, please CONTACT Thomas Interior Systems.