

# A Guide to Finding the Right Office Space

2021 Edition



**Oaktree**  
Interiors

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The Guide to finding the right office space

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2021

# Welcome.

## Let's Get Started...

Well, perhaps not surprisingly, throughout our 30 years in this business we've assisted lots of companies in helping them to decide which workplace - office space best meets their requirements. We know what's required to create the most ideal environments, so to help you make those difficult but important decisions, we've put this guide together so you're better informed from the outset.

What can you expect from our office fit out expertise?

- Fully managed integrated service
- No hidden costs
- Health and safety compliant
- In house design team



# Getting Started

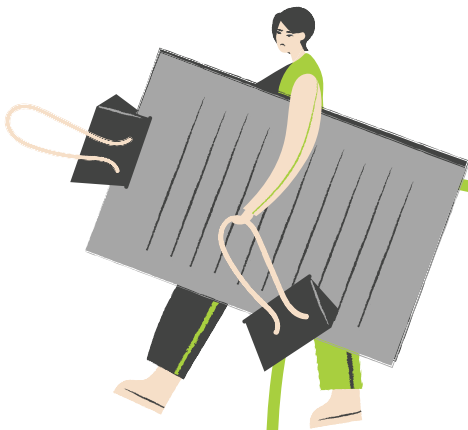
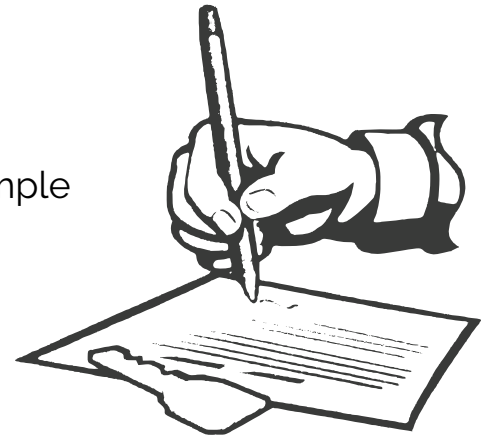
It's important to find the workspace that's best for your business. The right space will support your people, processes and technology, ultimately delivering business success. Let's start with some industry advice that will help keep you informed and on track.

## Some Notable Extra Costs

Dealing with some of the legal elements first:

As with all property acquisitions, fees are payable to various specialists along the way. Items such as:

- Stamp Duty
- Solicitors' Fees
- Various surveys – for value and condition, for example
- LTA's (licence to alter) fees
- Dilapidations costs



## Instruct a Property Agent

When negotiating a new lease we strongly advise you to appoint an agent so that they can assist you on the various options open to you. Options such as lease-breaks, rent reviews, service charges and limitations on re-assignment should also be considered.

**It's best to address these points before appointing a solicitor.**





## Play Your Cards Right



As with most property searches, it always helps to have a broad scope in terms of size and location; the greater your flexibility the better your chance will be of finding that ideal solution. Make sure your property agent and/or the one acting for the vendor knows you have "options", it'll help with any negotiations!

We'd urge you, the moment you've decided to seriously consider a new property, to do so at the earliest opportunity. There's much to consider and so allowing as much time as is reasonably possible can only help you find the best office/workplace to meet your requirements. Like most residential conveyancing, commercial transactions can often take upwards of 3-4 months.



As you start to build a profile of your needs, it's well worth making sure you reach out and engage with as many of your colleagues and departments as you can. Their input and 'wish lists' really will contribute to developing a comprehensive schedule of needs, wants and likes. Use this to create your basic search criteria and then let it evolve as your search progresses.

## We're here to help you...

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Once you've gathered your basic schedule of needs, it will be beneficial if you ask workplace specialists to assist you by undertaking various assessments and space evaluations, based on your current working practices. Often these lead to changes in the amount of space required, which if adopted can further reduce your costs moving forward.



## Contact Us

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If you'd like some help in finding that ideal property, then we're just the people to help you do so. Why not give us a call and we'll go from there.



0345 218 6955



[hello@oaktreeoffice.com](mailto:hello@oaktreeoffice.com)

## Client Case Study - G R Wright & Sons

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**G R Wright and Sons required a full 'shell and core' refurbishment of their 21,000 sq. ft. office building. The company's brand identity was important to be incorporated into the design given the 150-year history.**

Wright's had recently acquired a new site at The Pinnacles in Harlow, Essex, which has been transformed into a brand-new state of the art mill. The site also accommodates a large warehouse and three-storey office building, which Oaktree Interiors refurbished into a modern new headquarters.



The re-fit of the ground floor required a complete modernisation; newly formed corridors were created as 'curved' walkways, built predominantly from full-height glass and solid doors, enhanced with the installation of bulkheads above, giving a modern and contemporary look.

Wrights wanted the solid brand identity that had been built up over decades to lead the design... we achieved just that; a timeline of Wright's company history was included within the decor of the modernised, large reception area.

*"Really proud to present our completed office and staff facilities, this has been a labour of love for us to design with the help of Oaktree Interiors. We always wanted a modern office, but at the same time, it was important that we used this space to celebrate our rich and long history. Floor to ceiling murals and a timeline running up the staircase really brings the place to life. The mural of Florrie packing small packs of flour, circa 1950 sits in the staff breakout area. We wanted to make sure the facilities were great for all the staff, make it a place people wanted to come and work, hopefully, we have achieved it!"*  
- James Wright, Production Director

# Your property search starts right here:

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As we've already suggested, it really is beneficial if you get underway with your property search as soon as possible. Of course, each search/transaction is different to another, but there are still factors which remain fairly consistent in all cases, so time really is of the essence. The more time you have to get this right, the more chance you have of achieving a successful project.

**1** Appoint someone internally (within your organisation) to be the team leader. He/she can then involve other staff members in collating all salient information. Distribute survey sheets, issue questionnaires and generally gather as much information as you can. At the same time, have a workplace specialist on board, someone like us, so the journey begins together from the outset. It's the ideal moment for both client and partner to develop a relationship.



With the above in mind, think about appointing a property agent to assist with the search, start viewing properties and set about creating your own short list. Once you've ascertained if the basic financials and location are suitable, ask us to use the data we have (based on your requirements) to prepare some initial "test-fits" which will illustrate just how your requirements might align with the space being considered for your chosen short-list of properties. We can even prepare an estimate on the fit-out costs so that you're fully informed before deciding which property to progress.

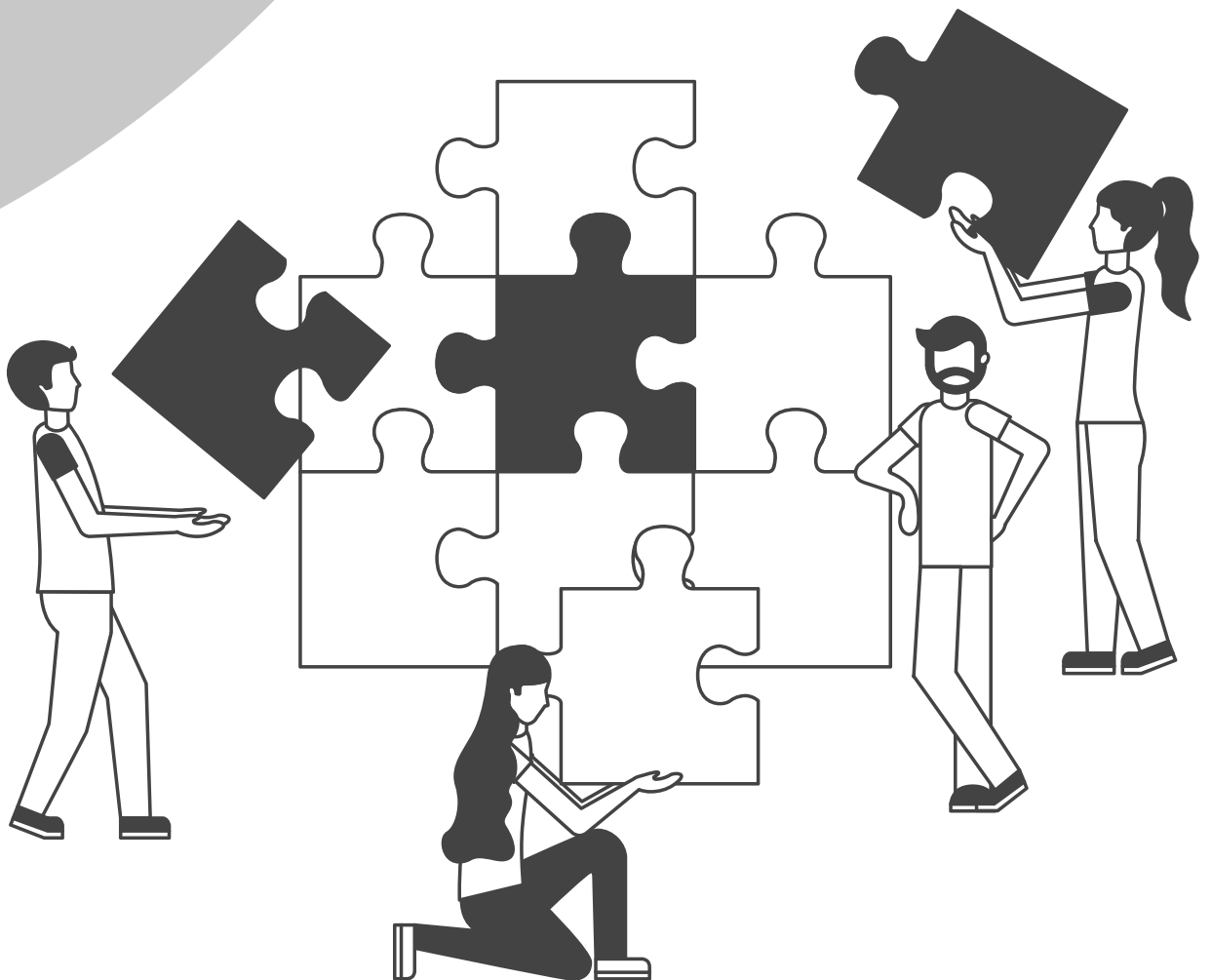
**3** Once you're content that the chosen property is the one for you, you can proceed with your negotiations, agree Heads of Terms etc., appoint a solicitor, sort those LTA's (licences - we'll help you!) and get the new lease signed so you can get cracking on making the space perfect for your occupation.



## The 'Move Team'

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With us onboard, your property agent and solicitor too, you'll be well set to kick-start the move project knowing that your chosen professionals will guide you every step of the way. It's preferable for one, maybe two company team members to be appointed to liaise with us on the day-to-day running of the project and although this can often be a time consuming exercise, we'll do what we can to make the experience an informative and enjoyable one.



Contact us:



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## The 'Move Team'

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Remember, the property agents know their business, so you can be assured that any asking rents etc., will be market appropriate and also that they will advise you on the finer details of the lease, thus bringing to your attention any peculiarities that may exist before you commit. Building in as much flexibility now, pre-contract, may save you lots of time, money and aggravation when you come to re-assign or discharge the lease further down the line.



For our part, we'll make sure that your new space meets your schedule of needs, at the same time as factoring in any future growth requirements deemed appropriate; to include...



**Tech;** forms a huge part of our lives these days, both personally and professionally. As well as engaging our in-house IT literate team, we will of course communicate with any third party IT consultants you may wish to appoint, so that we can ensure anything critical, connectivity etc., is dealt with from the outset.





## Design & Build (that's what we do)

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As part of our standard services, we will take care of everything for you as a turnkey service, so that's all the pre-contract work, the test-fits, the detailed plans, the design, the estimating and everything necessary to deliver the completed project on site. Although entirely optional, we acknowledge that some of our clients might prefer the services of an independent Project Manager, often they're appointed to support the client's resources if it becomes an onerous task. A suitable qualified/experienced Project Manager will oversee all communications between the client and us. He/she will evaluate any information we provide and will make sure that the prices being charged for are reasonable and market compliant.



They'll also oversee the completion of the project, from snagging, to the issuing of certificates and manuals. They'll even advise on the most appropriate form of contract, whether it's a simple letter of instruction referring to various design/build documents, or a more formal industry acknowledged format, such as a JCT contract.

We often work with Project Managers, if asked, so we're fully used to knowing what they'll require.

## The Three Amigos... How do they align with each other?

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### Your Design & Build Partner will be...

...responsible for carrying out a workplace audit so that your existing space and how you use it is thoroughly evaluated. Any areas being neglected will be identified, likewise any areas that require more focus or strategic positioning will be carefully noted and included in the strategy moving forwards. Test-fits, space plans, outline designs and costs will be provided too. They'll help with any short-listing.



### Your Solicitor will...

... draft any leases making sure it's fully compliant with the law, that you're fully informed as to any specific commercial points of note, prepare and agree the Heads of Terms and make sure everything negotiated and agreed sits neatly within the finally agreed lease.



### Your Property Agent will...

... review all aspects of the lease to consider any obligations or constraints. With the move strategy and requirements defined they will search and select numerous properties for your consideration. With the input from the D & B partner, some outline costs can be established before any meaningful time is spent on furthering the potential acquisition. The agent will initiate any early negotiations on your behalf and will make sure the deal is appropriate and "tenant friendly".



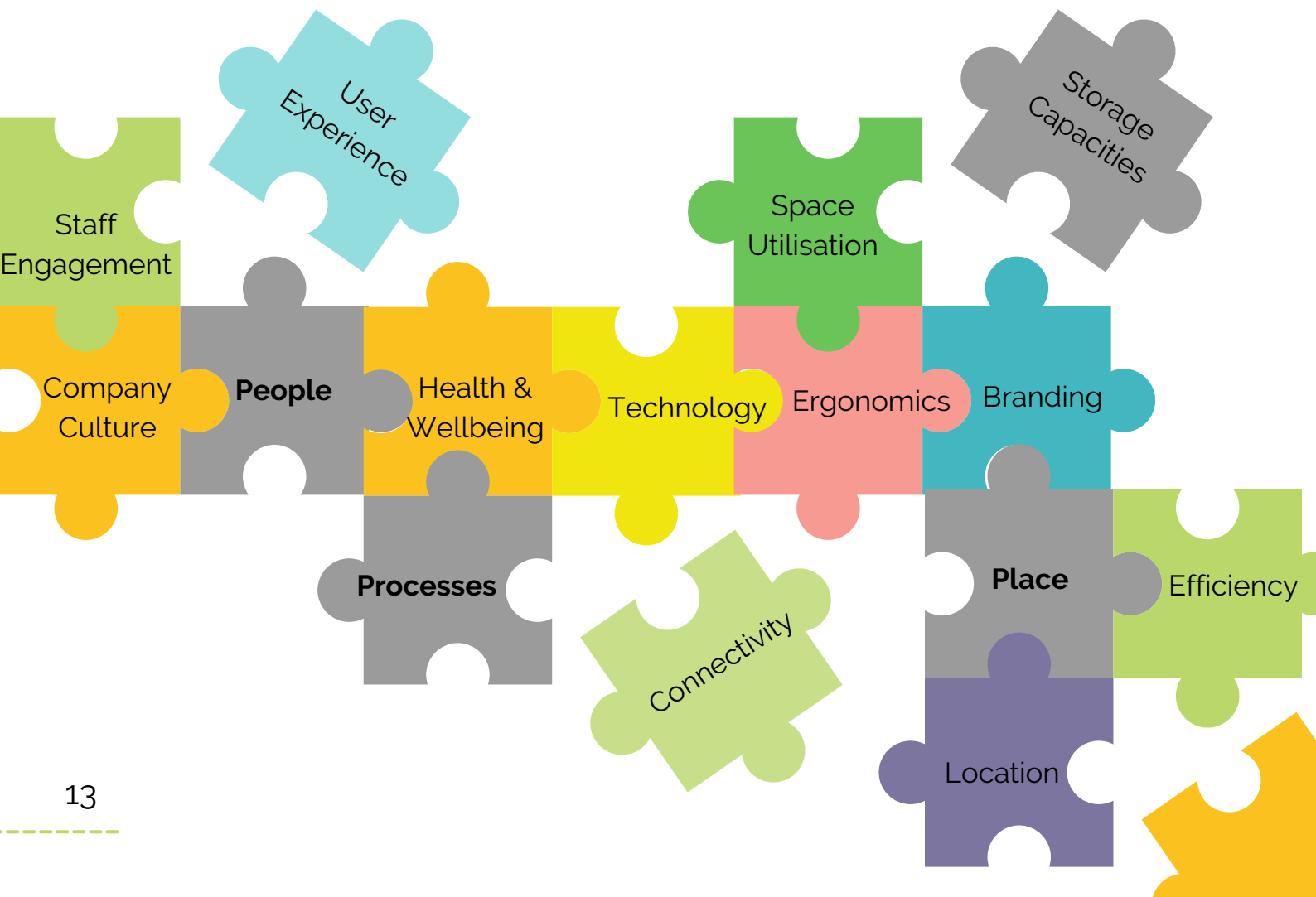


## So What Have You to Consider...

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Well, every company is of course different, but whatever the size and nature of your business it's likely that you'll fall into the same three essential categories as everyone else, that's; **one**, your staff and their requirements, **two**, how they go about their daily routines and **three**, where they go about doing them.

The fast moving pace of commerce and tech these days demands that any new working environment really should place health & wellbeing at the forefront of any new design. The transient and ever increasing agile working methods we're mostly adopting dictates that the user experience, that's for both employees and clients, really is supportive and inspiring.



# So What Have You to Consider...

## Workplace Wellbeing

There's no question that our workplace fundamentally supports our mental and physical wellbeing, yet despite this many people sometimes view their environment as being detrimental to their general wellbeing.

Now that the COVID-19 pandemic has arrived, perhaps it isn't surprising then that general health and wellbeing has never been so important. To help combat the negative effects this might have, we have now adapted our office designs and planning criteria to help protect us as we continue to work together. Aspects such as social distancing and circulatory areas being strategically planned are just two of many new design parameters with which we now include "as standard".

## User Experience

Notwithstanding the above, it has always been generally accepted that the look & feel of the workplace affects and influences just how the business is perceived by staff, clients and visitors alike. In addition, we know from our 30+ years in this business, that a well designed workplace features highly in the expectations of those employees who remain ready & willing to stay loyal and committed, rather than to move on sooner than envisaged.

First impressions are often the only meaningful impressions, so they have to be right. Listening to your staff, attracting the best there is and impressing clients are all objectives well worth making a priority.



**Workplace Wellbeing Concerns**

# 30

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## Years of Experience

Ever since the start of the 90's we have been designing, fitting-out and supporting our customers in their quest to find new premises, or indeed to refurbish their existing. Thinking about it we've built more than £300 million pounds worth in that time, and whilst we're confident that we'll continue to deliver successful project after successful project, we strive to improve our skill sets daily, to keep abreast of the ever changing rules and laws and to keep pace and innovate where we can on the latest design concepts and the important 'green' and sustainability issues to which we are fully committed.



## Ask Oaktree

Our CEO, Perry Mills, wrote many years ago, **“our mission is to familiarise ourselves with your organisation, design an environment that suits your needs, manage the project with the least disruption, build to the highest standard and uphold our promise to deliver on time and within budget”**. We believe this still says everything about us; it stood firm back in the day and it stands firm today. We have a real passion for what we do; check out our testimonials and read what some of our clients have had to say about us.

"We're really proud of our new Bristol offices which have already had a hugely positive impact on our culture.....Collaborative, innovative, agile, flexible and fun. We're delighted with the results. The team have done a sterling job and were very professional and accommodating throughout the process. Would highly recommend".

- Leo Hewitt, Associate Director  
Robert Half International



"We needed to upgrade and update our Customer Reception. One call to Oaktree and the project was underway. We're delighted with how our new Customer Service Area has turned out. It is bright, welcoming, and reflects our Company and the brand we represent, very well. The transformation is superb. From the start, the team has done a great job and were very professional and accommodating throughout the process. Without hesitation, we would highly recommend"

- Andrew Baker, Managing Director  
VW White Rose

"I cannot speak highly enough of the team at Oaktree who refurbished our office in North London. Our project threw up some unexpected issues but nothing that Oaktree couldn't fix and nothing was ever too much trouble. The staff, from the Project Manager to Site Manager to contractors, were all a delight to work with, making the whole process as stress free as possible. The project came in on time even after the numerous variations to the specification that we made during the project. I would highly recommend Oaktree to anyone who wants a company that devotes themselves to helping you realise your vision for your working environment."

- Sarah Griffin, Director



UniTrust

"Thanks to all at Oaktree for making our office relocation project to new premises a smooth exercise. The new office provides a great modern working environment for our staff based there and customers and partners that visit. I am happy to recommend Oaktree for office Design & Build projects"

- Andrew Tavener, Head of Marketing  
Descartes Systems UK Ltd

DESCARTES





# Contact Us



Thank you for downloading this guide, we hope it has helped to begin the next stage of your fit out. Please get in touch with our team if you have any questions or would like to book a free consultation, we would love to help.

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[www.oaktreeoffice.com](http://www.oaktreeoffice.com)