



Photo: Itai Cohen

Architect Evelien Koekkoek (BNI):
“Technology is altering our way
of thinking”

Digitization shapes our interiors

The ever progressing trends in automation and digitization will during the coming years exert a strong influence on the workplace and living environments. In the process, innovation and flexibility are paramount factors, says Evelien Koekkoek, a Board member of the Association of Dutch Interior Architects (BNI). “Technology is very rapidly altering the traditional mode of thinking.”

An example: the writing desk. Most offices have a desk. But for how long still? “At this moment, desks are generally still needed”, explains Evelien Koekkoek, “but you can’t miss noticing a

change. Desks were conceived because we had to have a fixed place to put our typewriters. That was also the case with the PC. However, as of the arrival of the iPad, it has become immediately noticeable how the dependency on a fixed work station is reduced and how people are performing their tasks with ever greater flexibility. That trend will only increase.”

“Creating added value to the space invariably remains the starting principle”

During this period of transition, many companies are currently looking for suitable solutions, remarks Evelien Koekkoek, who besides being a BNI Board member is also active as an independent interior architect. Trends such as New Ways of Working and Activity Based Working (with multinationals such as Google and Microsoft being important pioneers) have, in her opinion, opened up new avenues and laid the groundwork for new trends wherein, for instance, conventional office space, without relinquishing transparency, reserves increasingly more room for more task-related work environments wherein acoustic problems and noises create less of a hindrance. At the same time, the drive and orientation towards flexibility continues.

Adaptation

“Many companies are keen to jump on the development bandwagon”, says Koekkoek, “but in practice we note that, within a few years, they want to be able to re-adapt the interior in a relatively uncomplicated way should the practical situation demand it. They are continuously preoccupied with the question whether the set-up and the organisation of the business remain in synch with the working methodology and they wish to preserve room to manoeuvre within it. Sometimes, this also has to do with cost control. They note how everything is in flux.”

This dynamic is not likely to change, at least not for the time being, such is her firm conviction. “There is question of interaction. Businesses continue to automate, leading to the elimination of jobs and shifting workers into different functions, resulting in a need for a different lay-out of the work floor and, consequently, a different interior organisation. One notices the progression of this development and I expect that, as a result of ever increasing digitization, we will witness a further acceleration