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Beyond the desk: Why luxury office design is the new competitive edge in 2025

How prestige, location, and amenities are redefining what tenants expect from premium office space in 2025

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As tenants return in person, office space has become more than just a workplace. It's now a recruitment tool, a retention strategy, and a competitive differentiation in the market. In today's post-pandemic reality, where employees have become accustomed to working at home, companies need to think about how they can encourage their employees to return to the office. They want more than just desks – they want places to inspire their creativity.

And in high-end positions and luxury offices, expectations are even higher.

At Alchemy-ABR, our experience developing high-end commercial projects has provided my team a front-row seat to the shifting expectations in today's office market.

We've seen firsthand how the right combination of design, location, and amenities can transform a building from just another address to a must-have headquarters. Our recent work on the ultra-luxury boutique office building 125 West 57th Street has reaffirmed one key insight: Employers are in need of offices that are better and more evolved than ever before.

This specific project offers tenants a prime location in the Plaza District, modern and sleek design, and unique luxury amenities, including 250 square-foot private outdoor terrace spaces on several different floors. This isn't just a workspace – it's an investment that supports the performance of your staff.

So, what exactly are our tenants and their employees looking for? Here's what real estate developers need to understand if they want to attract top-tier firms in the current landscape.

What Today's Office Tenants Are Looking For

Lobby and arrival set the tone for the stay

First impressions start at the entrance. Our space at 125 West 57th Street, for example, sets the tone for the visit immediately upon arrival. The lobby offers a sleek, dynamic design, setting the tone for the high-end finishes throughout the office spaces above. Tenants are also met with a designated 24/7 security team and camera coverage to safeguard the building and its occupants.

A prime location matters more than ever

After the pandemic, location is more important than ever. In today's world, employees are used to working from the comfort of their own homes, with a minimal to nonexistent commute. A prime office location is exactly what corporations need to get their employees back into the office. Great views, easy commutes, and walkable access to top-tier dining and activities—when a building sits in the center of it all, it becomes a magnet.

Luxury tenants buy into the story, not just the space

Tenants in the ultra-luxury category aren't just looking for an office – they're looking for a corporate statement. The building is their headquarters, so it must reflect the caliber of their business. Location, architecture, and history are all contributors to what a tenant is looking to invest in.

Luxury amenities are no longer a perk. They're a baseline.

Tenants are looking for amenities that will tempt their employees back into the office. Consider rooftop lounges with city views, fitness centers that rival boutique gyms and concierge services. Spaces should be designed with comfort, privacy, and prestige in mind.

At 125 West 57th Street, located on Billionaire's Row, we've leaned into this demand. Tenants get to enjoy an exclusive amenity club, with 4,300 square feet of outdoor terrace, a curated lounge, private meeting rooms, a state-of-the-art conference center, event space with a catering kitchen, and 13'-5" floor-to-ceiling glass windows that offer soaring Central Park views.

The bottom line – Tenants are coming back into the office, but only in spaces that match their lifestyle and values. As developers, it's our job to create spaces that speak to power, performance, and prestige. Done well, a luxury office building becomes more than just a place to work – it becomes a destination, a brand asset, and a reason to return.

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