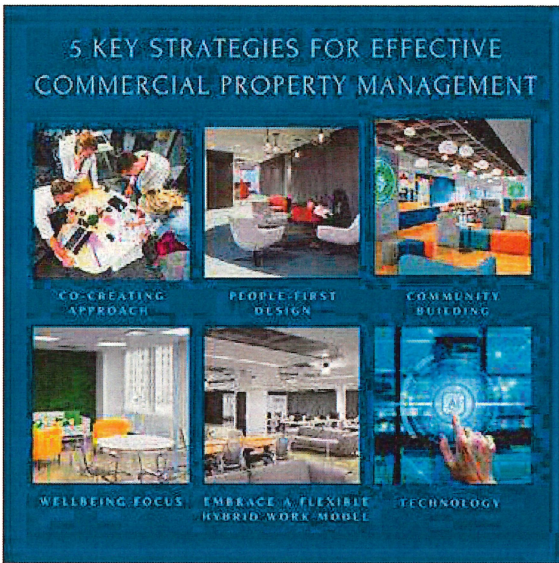


## Member Article



As JDJ Architects celebrates its 25th year in commercial interiors, with a focus on workplace environments, Jim Jordan reflects on his journey and offers five tips for office building owners and managers to retain and attract tenants in 2025.

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Over the years, we've learned that while economic fluctuations inevitably influence commercial office interior budgets and scope, one constant remains: our unwavering commitment to people. Whether we're working with building owners, managers, or tenants, our approach always begins by understanding the needs of the user. By understanding their perspective, we can align with their budgetary needs while providing architectural solutions that enhance the office environment. Our goal is to create workplaces that not only align with a company's brand but also support the way their teams work and collaborate.

Tenant improvement work has been the cornerstone of JDJ Architects for 25 years. For Jim Jordan, it's more than just a job—it's a puzzle he loves solving. "Everyone deserves a great workplace, regardless of budget. Whether working with existing conditions or incorporating strategic design interventions, we aim to reflect a company's brand while meeting their financial goals. It's a challenge I wholeheartedly embrace."

Here are five tips for interior architecture considerations to effectively manage commercial properties:

### 1. FOSTER A CO-CREATING APPROACH

Success begins with collaboration. Embracing a team-based approach that aligns the interests of building owners, managers, and tenants creates common ground and shared goals. This not only results in a more harmonious relationship but also leads to longer leases, improved tenant satisfaction, and increased profitability for building owners.

### 2. DESIGN PEOPLE-FIRST COMMON AREAS TO STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS

As businesses continue to focus on re-engaging their employees, the role of office buildings and amenities has never been more important. Organizations are increasingly prioritizing employee wellbeing by understanding their needs, acknowledging their contributions, and fostering an environment of empathy and connection. This approach will directly impact how common spaces are designed, emphasizing collaboration, interaction, and comfort.

Building owners, often working within tight budget constraints, must carefully consider what investments will yield the greatest return. For example, rather than spending on a space that may remain underused, consider amenities that align more closely with tenants' needs. Surveys can help determine preferences—would tenants prefer a gym, or is a childcare facility a more pressing need? The key is recognizing that there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

### 3. BEYOND THE BUILDING: CULTIVATE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Great commercial real estate assets don't just serve tenants—they engage with and enrich the community. Buildings that embrace their environment, contribute to local initiatives, and foster community involvement create stronger connections. Offering shared spaces, like outdoor areas or an auditorium, to the public not only enhances tenant satisfaction but also generates additional income and strengthens ties with the neighborhood.

### 4. PRIORITIZE WELLBEING IN DESIGN

In today's world, wellbeing is paramount. Office spaces that prioritize mental and physical health, support work-life balance, and encourage community-building will continue to be in high demand. This includes designing restorative spaces, integrating access to outdoor areas, and ensuring the workplace environment promotes overall wellness.

Additionally, creating preparedness plans to safeguard employees and tenants will increase trust and security, fostering a sense of stability.

### 5. EMBRACE A HYBRID FLEXIBLE WORK MODEL

As hybrid work models become the norm, office spaces must evolve. Many companies now offer flexible working arrangements, requiring office environments that accommodate diverse work styles and preferences. This flexibility is critical as five generations now coexist in the workplace, each with different communication styles, work habits, and technological skills/needs.

Designing spaces that are versatile and adaptive—capable of shifting between collaboration zones, quiet areas, and meeting rooms—will be crucial to supporting this shift. Additionally, as the need for continuous learning grows, offices should include spaces for training and education, equipped with the latest technology to support ongoing skill development and team cohesion.

**Bonus Tip:** Future-proof your designs by embracing cutting-edge technologies. AI and other advanced tools are rapidly changing how we work. Ensuring that your spaces are equipped for technological integration will ensure your tenants are always prepared for tomorrow's challenges.



**About the Author:**

James Jordan, AIA, LEED AP, JDJ Architects

For over 20 years, James (Jim) Jordan has transformed building interiors and office environments throughout Chicagoland, creating dynamic, thoughtful, client-focused designs. Jim founded JDJ Architects in 2000, specializing in commercial interior architecture which has expanded over the years to include Healthcare and Industrial interiors. Loyal employees and a roster of return clients are testimony to Jim's uncompromising work ethic and commitment to excellence. Jim is a licensed architect in Illinois, Missouri, and Texas. He is NCARB certified, a LEED-accredited professional, and is a Self-Cert Architect under the City of Chicago Self-Certification Program.

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