



Four Key Takeaways from the 2018 Lab Design Conference

SUMMER 2018

Hixson's Brian MacKenzie and Roselia Harris recently attended the 2018 Lab Design Conference. Here are their top takeaways from the annual event:

1. Gone are the days of the drab lab. Today, the use of branding and color in labs, [*which Hixson has incorporated in our lab designs for years*](#), are finally becoming more prevalent. Branding can visually tell the story of the lab's purpose, serving as a reminder to lab workers, and helping to increase employee pride in the workplace. Adding color and branding also plays a role in attracting and retaining potential clients and employees.



2. Collaboration is important. Research is quickly becoming more collaborative and team-driven. Lab design is helping promote this shift through the creation of lab spaces that are open and flexible, and which incorporate space for socialization. Collaboration spaces in the lab setting do make an impact: Impromptu meetings (or huddles) are driving innovation and in turn, creating better results. In addition, a place for food and drink close to the lab is one of the best ways to encourage collaboration.

3. Labs are moving toward rapid project delivery models. The use of stage gate processing and open communications between identified project team members were identified during one presentation as key success measures in helping design and construct a new lab within a short 15-week timeframe. In addition to these factors, Hixson also recommends that companies building new labs pre-select a General Contractor, and begin work with the local zoning boards as early in the design process as possible.

4. When it comes to lab air, what flows out of your lab is as important as what is coming into your lab. Lab design has always made a conscious effort



to remove exhaust from inside the building. Yet once that exhaust has left the building, then what? Air flows, wind patterns, the impact of nearby buildings, and other factors all matter when pumping exhaust outside of the building and must be considered during lab design: The last thing you want is for the exhaust to re-enter the lab facility, or enter your neighbor's building, even in barely discernible quantities.

experience in brief

AI is on the rise in the lab setting. The modern research laboratory is evolving to include technologies that weren't conceivable just a few years ago. As the business costs associated with research continue to rise along with the costs for construction, organizations are exploring new ways to push the limits of their available budgets.

Labs are beginning to incorporate robotics, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning into their research environments and how to increase operational efficiencies with these technologies.

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