Classroom Style

Rows of conference tables with chairs facing the front of the room (and the speaker), providing writing space for each person.
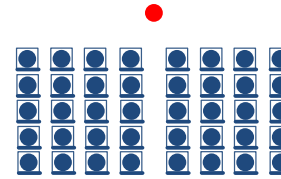
Application
This room set-up is ideal for note taking, meetings requiring multiple hand-outs or reference materials, or other tools such as laptop computers. This is a comfortable set-up for long sessions and allows refreshments to be placed within reach of each attendee.

Advantages
The presenter can see all the participants
Accommodates large groups in less space

Disadvantages
Interaction is minimal, except amongst neighbours and towards the speaker
Many participants are looking at the backs of other participants

Theatre Style

Chairs in rows facing a stage area, head table, or speaker (with no conference table).
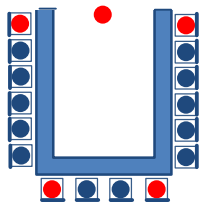
Application
This is the most efficient set-up when the attendees will act as an audience. This set-up is not recommended for food events or if note taking is required.

Advantages
Good for large groups when reading/writing are not required

Disadvantages
Elevation changes needed for large groups
No writing surface and minimal possibility for group interaction

U Shape

A series of conference tables set in the shape of the letter U, with chairs around the outside.
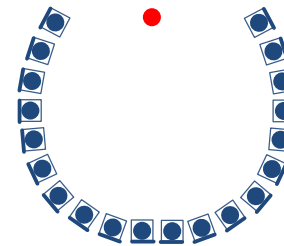
Application
This layout style is often used for committee meetings, training courses and discussion groups where there is a speaker, audio-visual presentation or other focal point.

Advantages
Good work space, good interaction between participants and with the speaker
Suitable when audio-visual or speakers are involved, but focus is on the speaker

Disadvantages
Not ideal for larger group

Horseshoe Style

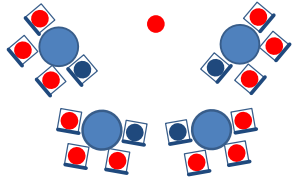Chairs in a wide part-circle, or horseshoe, and with no tables.

Application
This layout removes the protective barriers of the tables and opens up the room to discussion

Advantages
Good for groups that wish to remove protocol and to create a more relaxing, sharing and contemplative atmosphere

Disadvantages
People may feel ill at ease if they are not accustomed to this kind of layout

Cabaret Style

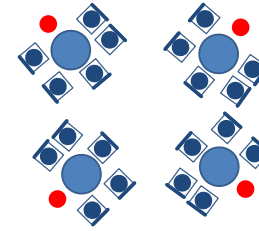Chairs around tables in groups facing a screen or speaker

Application
This set-up is the most suitable for a training course or a workshop, when there will be interactive group work and discussion.

Advantages
Teamwork is encouraged, groups can switch around easily, there is good communication and participation

Disadvantages
Many organisations have not set up their room space in way that allows this configuration (due to the shape of the room or the tables)

Banquet Style

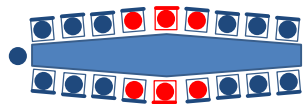Chairs around tables in groups facing a flipchart and a group facilitator

Application
This set-up is appropriate for workshops where teams are formed and work on organizational issues.

Advantages
Teamwork is encouraged, groups can switch around easily, there is good communication and participation

Disadvantages
Many organisations have not set up their room space in way that allows this configuration (due to the shape of the room or the tables)

Boardroom Style

A long table set up with chairs around the sides and a chair facing at least one end.
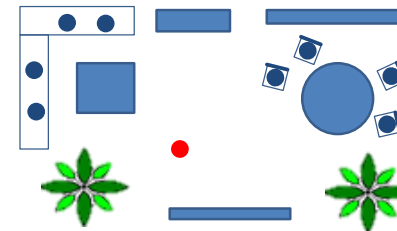
Application
This layout is often used for Board of Directors meetings, committee meetings, and discussion groups.

Advantages
Good working atmosphere, discussion and interaction amongst participants

Disadvantages
Not ideal for audio-visual presentations, very unsatisfactory for speakers who tend to be excluded from the group discussions

Workshop Layout

The whole area is laid out in a fashion that is pleasurable and stimulating for teamwork

Application
A specially designed workshop room could massively increase productivity, when generating ideas, resolving issues and making decisions that involved expert opinion.

Advantages
Teamwork is encouraged, participants can feel relaxed and energized, there is good communication and engagement

Disadvantages
Many organisations have not realised that the environment in which people work can greatly affect productivity.