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O F T H E W E S T

Beautiful spaces and the people who design, live and work in them



inside out

In order to optimize functionality, Gensler, a goliath in commercial design, was willing to upend tradition for client Deloitte & Touche. In this new configuration, the term "the inner circle" takes on a whole new meaning.

By Nancy Clark Photography by Sherman Takata

In med-speak, Seasonal Affective Disorder is thought to be caused by light deprivation. Lay people call it the "winter blues." And for too long in the corporate world, exposure to natural sunlight via a window office has simply been a function of how high up one ranks in the organization.

In 2004, at the Denver office of Deloitte & Touche, LLP, the managing partners and officers had private offices on the outside perimeter of each floor, while C-level types had their backs to the view from Pike's Peak to Long's Peak. Plus, everyone was feeling the squeeze of too many bodies in their 17th Street offices. Managing Partner Sandy Rothe, who had relocated to Denver from Texas just in time to experience the crippling snowfall of 2003, recalls the firm evaluating nearly every other building in Denver as a potential new home. In addition, "Workplace standards were changing," he says.

Ultimately, the decision was made to relocate temporarily while the office was gutted and remodeled, adding space to accommodate a force that today totals three floors and 340 people. Deloitte & Touche's facilities managers for all of the company's 100 global offices saw bona fide reason in reversing the floor plan, standardizing the size of executive offices, and locating them at the core of each floor while positioning group workstations around the outside window wall. The window-wall workstations, explains Carol Koplin, senior associate with Gensler, chosen to do the renovation and among the world's leading architecture and interior design firms, are low in height, allowing more of the staff to receive actual daylight in their workspaces.

Space That Sizzles

Completed in June 2006, the 56,000-square-foot office has sizzle and pop. The era of passive ownership of the view has ended. Each employee has more square feet than previously, and HR can relocate execs without worry that one office is larger or "better" than another. "Easy way-

finding" was one of the goals of the new floor plan, explains Koplin of the standard use of corner rooms as conference rooms or team training.

An acoustical consultant was brought in to engineer the high-sound-control ceiling tiles installed to a quiet STC rating, a practice that stops nearly all noise from passing through closed doors. Training-room doors slide back into pockets to maintain the streamlined tidiness of this real estate, while allowing flexible use of the space.

Besides more square feet and improved natural lighting, the Deloitte & Touche offices are lit with energy-efficient lighting; room sensors turn off the lights automatically when no one is in the office. Deloitte practices "hoteling," allowing employees to travel to any other corporate office and reserve a workstation prior to arrival. Just go to any one of the kiosks throughout the office or submit a request online that not only ensures desk access but provisioning for that desk as well. "We have employees who are in the office one day a week or one day a month," explains Rothe. "A good day is when no one is in the office because they're all out working at clients' offices."

Classy and Comfortable

The Gensler team, with William Frank as architect for the project, located what they call "touch-down sections" throughout the facility, including clusters of chairs and convenient side tables for laptops (the







entire place is wireless) or a Kinko's-type copy center. Dry-stacked stone quarried in Wisconsin wraps some walls. A lunchroom equipped with plasma TV tuned to the news allows staff to stay tuned to current events. A second intranet TV alongside delivers day-long office communications, eliminating the overload of bulletin boards and paper that clutters other environments outside of these three floors.

Seating in the collegial dining area offers room to chat with others or sit peacefully alone at a window-ledge counter that faces westward overlooking the mountain panorama. The innovative Wellness Room is a respite for an employee who isn't feeling 100 percent and needs a quick nap. Even the bathrooms have been remarkably made over. Above the sinks are individual mirrors that lend a comfortable residential sensibility; showers are provided for employees (more than half are under 30)

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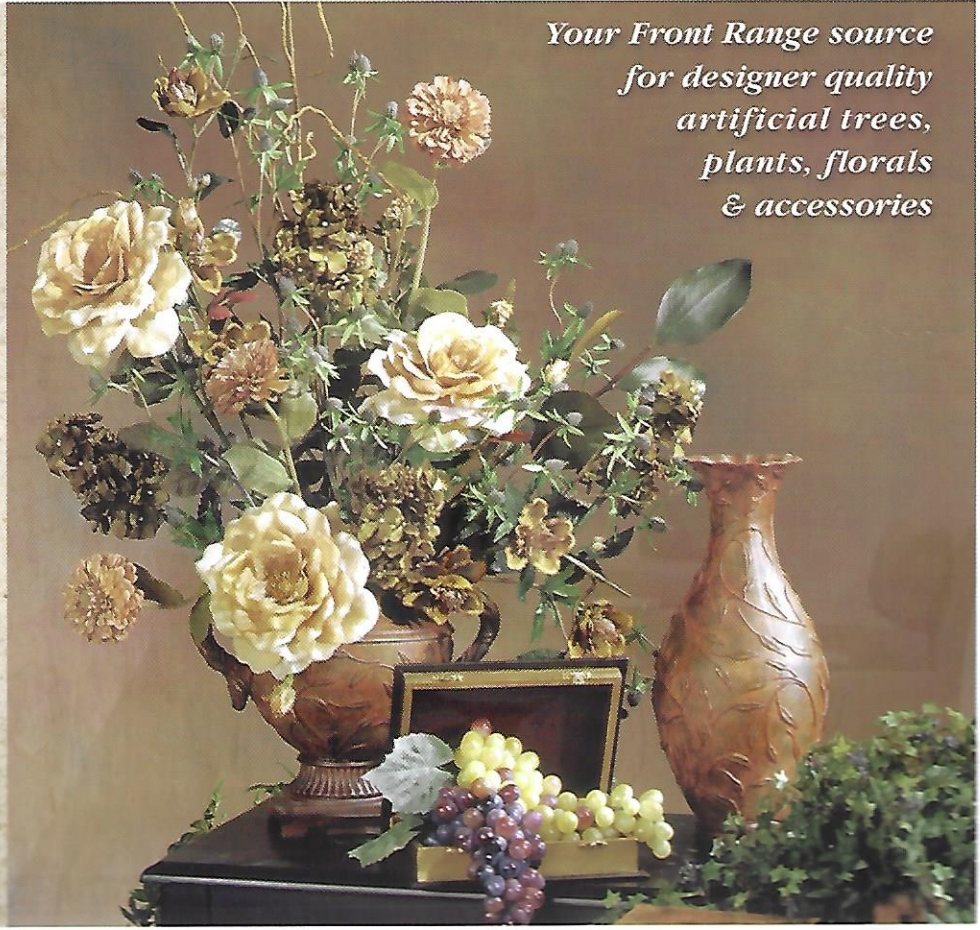
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