



Updating Identity a Complex Process

Gensler is the world's leading design firm for business, with locations spanning the United States, Central America, Europe and Asia. Gensler's Tokyo office recently completed a move from Nagata-cho to Aoyama with the overall intent to update its identity.

According to Dian Duvall, a Principal of Gensler in the Tokyo office, the decision to move was a reflection of changes in its client base, as well as the fact that Aoyama is better situated for its staff. There were also other reasons to be located in Aoyama, such as it being the center of commercial furniture vendors and having a high overall image more suited to the creative nature of Gensler services.

Consideration for the move began in January 2010, and with the help of Sanko Estate, several suitable locations were previewed and analyzed. By March, a terrific site in a prime area of Aoyama was selected, and a lease agreement was reached by the end of the month.

Ms. Duvall relates that the decision for the new building was based about 30% on hard data, and about 70% on intuition. Since the company is essentially a design studio, they were looking for a building that truly fitted that identity.

The building was one of the first places they previewed, and was about 30% smaller than their previous Nagata-

cho location. However, through more efficient design and use patterns, the change was largely unnoticed by their employees. In addition, the design challenges Gensler encountered were quite similar to those shared by their clients, many of whom were also looking for smaller spaces. Ms. Duvall pointed out that the company viewed these design challenges as "design opportunities" and a variety of approaches were called into play. The company ended up relying on what Duvall calls "Smart Japanese Design" which calls upon a number of resourceful approaches to space usage.

Another key consideration was public transportation, used by virtually all employees in their work commute. The new location is served by three subway lines, making it convenient from nearly all major Tokyo suburbs. Gensler Tokyo was also fortunate to have a regional managing director that was extremely supportive.

Key to the new location is its position on the second floor of the building, overlooking an intersection at the entrance to the outer garden of the Meiji Shrine. The entrance road is lined on both sides with Ginkgo trees, which provide a beautiful view throughout most of the year. The space facing the street features floor-to-ceiling windows which let in a great deal of light while

Accordingly, knowledge work requires a high level of cognitive involvement as well as analytical and judgment skills, while process remains important but is far less structured. Knowledge work is also a composite of individual and collective modes identified above. For Gensler, the WPI represents an extremely useful tool in the design and layout of workplace environments.

facility installations. B is defined as "construction designed and paid for by tenants, but supervised and executed by building owners or companies specified by them, under existing agreements with tenants." Examples include partition constructions and construction to change standard interior finishing and/or facilities. C is defined as "construction paid for by tenants and executed by their specified interior contractors." Examples include furnishings and furniture.

Finally, a third important factor are environmental considerations such as asbestos and structural conditions in terms of earthquake countermeasures. Familiarizing yourself with these considerations is part of making yourself more fully aware of your operating environment.

Thanks to the help offered by Sanko Estate, Gensler was able to fully apply their expertise in creating the optimum working environment for their own operations in Tokyo.

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also making the company highly visible to the outside world. This "street presence" gives a very accessible image to the public.

Adjusting to Realities in Japan

While costs for restoration of a property back to its original condition are very minimal in the U.S., in Japan they are more considerable. Moreover, arrangements in Japan call for the use of designated contractors, which can add to startup costs when leasing a new location. Still, as Duvall points out, the overall standard of craftsmanship is very high, and new tenants from overseas are often surprised at how little needs to be done when they move in.

For international firms planning on locating in Tokyo, Ms. Duvall outlines three key factors in making a decision on location. The most important is location, and choosing one that supports your identity while working well with public transportation.

The second important factor is familiarizing yourself with the construction process in Japan, including details on restoration (returning the location to its original condition) and knowing the distinctions of A, B and C construction classifications. Briefly, A is defined as "construction designed, supervised, executed and paid for by building owners or companies specified by them." Examples include standard interior finishing and

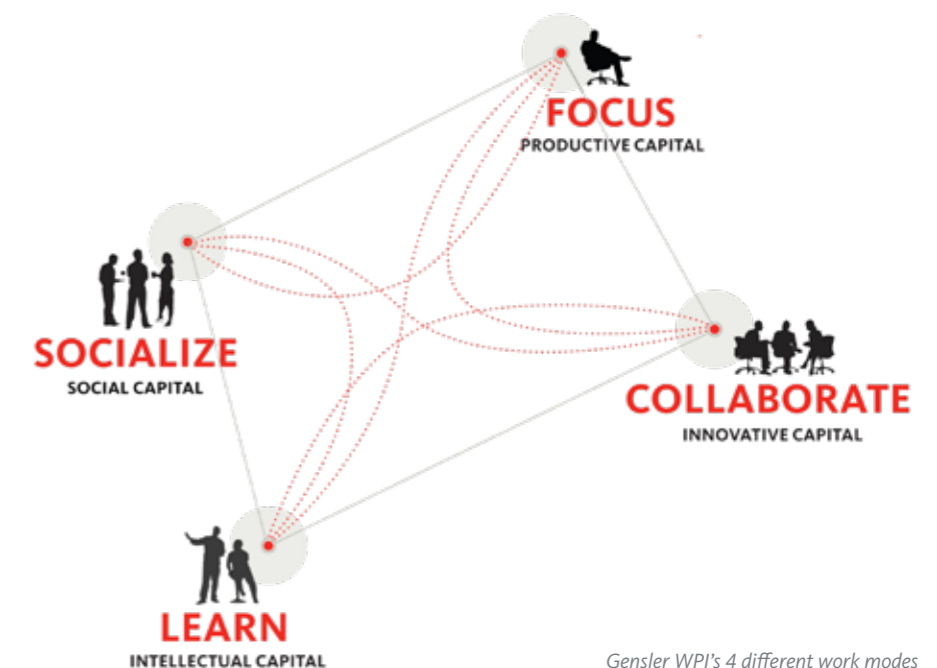
After a series of test fits, the new location was found to be well within capability requirements for virtually all working situations. Gensler also applied their Workplace Performance Index® (WPI), which requires that the design fully address the four modes of work, identified as Focus, Collaborate, Learn and Socialize. People who develop and apply knowledge and information in the workplace are known as "knowledge workers," and these greatly outnumber all other workers.

While industrial era companies were focused on task processes and tools to improve speed, efficiency and productivity, knowledge economy companies realize competitive advantage through the creation of ideas.

Gensler

Gensler, founded in San Francisco in 1965, is a global architecture, design, and planning firm with 35 locations and over 2,500 professionals worldwide. The firm has over 3,500 active clients in virtually every industry and delivers projects as large as a city and as small as a task light for an individual's desk.

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Gensler WPI's 4 different work modes