

Ensuring the office is more than just a place to work

Interior branding in the workplace



by Susan Redgrave

How can branding be used in office design?

Firstly it is important to fully understand your company's business philosophy, its business strategy, and where it wants to be within its own marketplace.

Secondly one must consider the nature of clients or customers likely to be visiting the building? What is their profile? Are they young and dynamic or are they conservative? Will they feel comfortable and at ease sitting in your reception? Or will they be glad to leave? The visual impressions that they observe while visiting your reception, along with other factors, will determine whether they wish to do business with you.

You must also consider how your staff feels working in the office. Are they motivated and loyal to the business? Do they feel proud to be working for you? The interior environment which you create for your staff will have an effect on their work and perceptions of your company. By creating the right environment through design you can help your business grow, and ensure that your overall business strategy reflects this reality in the office environment.

A good environment combined with excellent management skills will make staff feel appreciated and positive about their work. If your offices are dull, uninspiring, and over-

WE are all familiar with branding. Conventionally it is achieved through such things as logos, signage and printed literature which feed into a product or service.

However, the concept of branding can equally be extended into the working environment. The qualities and values of a company can be communicated through the building using interior design like exterior branding is used in the High Street.

You will readily recognise the interior of a Body Shop outlet or Prêt à Manger sandwich bar. Why? Because the philosophy or 'brand' behind the company has been interpreted visually into the interior spaces. This is the essence of interior branding.

A brand can be:

- a personality
- a subconscious collection of perceptions
- a 'badge' or visual identity
- the 'essence' of a company
- a differentiator
- something that gives authenticity
- something that gives reassurance

PASSION FOR SERVICE



ADD A FESTIVE GLOW TO YOUR CORPORATE DINING EXPERIENCE

However you choose to celebrate the Festive Season, we invite you to celebrate with us at the London Marriott Hotel County Hall.

From November 26th 2008 to December 30th 2008, enjoy private dining in any of the 11 elegant private dining rooms, perfect for your company's Christmas party. Prices begin at £47.50 per person and include a 3 course meal, coffee, mince pies and stollen. Subject to availability.

For further details on our special events or general enquiries, please contact us directly.

The London Marriott Hotel County Hall
Phone: +44 (0) 20 7928 5200
www.marriottcountyhall.com

Marriott
LONDON COUNTY HALL



crowded with little consideration to space planning or design, your staff are less likely to be inspired and motivated themselves.

When a company downsizes, void office spaces conveying despair and negative perceptions by staff and customers alike can result. However good design and space planning can enhance the brand and re-position the company into a new market sector.

Interior branding is also very valuable when two companies merge. You have two different cultures merging into one business, often with one of the companies having to move out of their building into the other company's premises. This can often cause conflict between the two organizations. Interior branding methods can positively enhance the situation and be used as a driver for change. It can help develop the identity of the merged companies into a positive new one where the staff feel proud to be part of the process.

An example of this process was a project I worked on for the Scottish law firm Maclay Murray & Spens which in 2004 merged with the City of London firm City Law Partnership. One of their aims was to be widely perceived as a UK law firm with offices in the City of London as well as in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

They first selected an appropriate building in the City for the new entity and selected space on the top floors of a landmark, contemporary, stainless steel and glass, Norman Foster building with fantastic views. This was a clear, decisive move away from the more conventional Scottish branch office image previously seen in their existing traditionally-built HQ.

The interior design and branding on this project were critical to establish the new image. An interior was created using contemporary materials, fixtures, fittings, lighting and finishes which reflected the new brand and complemented the building. New graphics and marketing materials were studied with aspects of the printed communication material re-interpreted into the interior environment. This was particularly evident in the main reception and client-facing areas, giving the newly created brand additional strength.

Susan Redgrave is Design Director and founder of Inter Arc Design Ltd, specialising in interior design and branding for offices in the corporate and private sector and visiting Consultant Professor for Syracuse University

www.interarcdesign.co.uk