



Applebee's International Inc.



**HOSPITALITY;
LENEXA, KANSAS**

Topic:
Collaboration

Application:
*Café/Dining
Collaboration/Team
Conference
Open Office*

Project Scope:
*400 occupants; 475 workstations;
180,000 square feet*

Herman Miller Product:
*Vivo® Interiors
My Studio Environments™
Meridian® Storage Towers
Meridian Pedestals
Mirra® Chairs
Caper® Chairs
The Intersect® Portfolio*

Year Completed:
2007

Applebee's wanted to consolidate its support staff in a new office building that would be as distinctive as its restaurants. A mixture of two Herman Miller systems products—Vivo interiors and My Studio Environments—helped the casual dining chain nurture a more collaborative culture.



Divided between two facilities, the support staff for the world's nearly 2,000 Applebee's restaurants was ready for a change. Consolidation into a fresher space seemed to be an especially appealing way to support the chain's consistent growth.

So Applebee's did just that, moving from the two neighboring buildings in one Kansas City suburb to a modern showplace in another, gaining more room and a smarter work environment in the process.

"Our old buildings were too chopped up to be conducive to collaboration," says Rick Griffin, associate director of facilities management. "We wanted our new support center to be open and inviting, a space that would increase associate pride and productivity."

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Designed by Kansas City's BNIM Architects, Applebee's new restaurant support center boasts a state-of-the-art culinary center and enough environmental virtues to seek LEED certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

The two-story building's various green features are designed to maximize daylight, improve indoor air quality, and conserve water and energy. There's even a fitness center on site and a walking trail out back.

To instill the collaborative spirit it wanted, Applebee's avoided a hierarchical approach to workplace design, preferring instead to configure its space strictly according to job function and teaming needs. Space planners made the strategy work by specifying a pair of Herman Miller systems products—Vivo interiors and My Studio Environments—and eliminating all fixed, enclosed private offices.

"Applebee's was adamant about not looking like a cube farm," says Susan Wiley, an account manager with John A. Marshall Co., a Herman Miller dealer in Lenexa, Kansas. "The combination of Vivo and My Studio fit their needs perfectly by allowing for different configurations that supported varying degrees of privacy and collaboration."

An economical frame-and-tile system, Vivo accounts for about 75 percent of the Applebee's workstations. The system is configured in three typicals with different interior layouts and frame heights. In general, lower frames are assigned to groups with collaborative work styles, while taller ones go to those with more concentrative styles.

[Left] Custom Meridian storage towers in all Vivo workstations make efficient use of vertical space.

[Center] Glass-topped frames enhance the spacious feel of an open, inviting work environment.

[Right] Sliding doors on compact My Studio workstations give workers control over their privacy and accessibility.

When frames go higher, they do so via glass stackers, so the space still seems open and airy. That's especially true because no stations or offices are positioned against perimeter windows, letting daylight stream throughout the space.

What's more, the Vivo frames are raised about three inches on furniture-style glides, creating a light, progressive look that enhances the sense of openness even more. That same elevated profile is matched on the custom Meridian storage towers found in all Vivo workstations. The Vivo stations also include a Meridian Pedastool®, a cushion-top mobile pedestal that can be pulled out for spur-of-the-moment guest seating.

As for My Studio Environments, it's used in a handful of departmental groupings throughout the building. Wraparound walls give My Studio the feel of a private office in a compact footprint, while sliding doors and translucent glass shutters give workers control over their privacy and accessibility.

"My Studio is unlike anything else we saw," Mr. Griffin says. "We liked the aesthetics as well as the way it helps to balance the need for both privacy and collaboration."

100 MEETING AREAS

Task seating throughout Applebee's Restaurant Support Center is provided by Herman Miller's Mirra chair, the preferred choice of a team of evaluators who test drove multiple models. Mirra also turns up in a pair of training rooms and many of the larger meeting areas—of which there are plenty.

Eager to encourage collaboration, planners carved out space for more than 100 meeting areas. Big, small, open, enclosed—there's a meeting area for every purpose, including conventional conference rooms, dozens of 6' x 6' huddle spaces for private calls or one-on-ones, and numerous open lounges.

"The layout encourages associates to view the entire building as their office, rather than simply the space assigned to them," Mr. Griffin says.

Herman Miller helped furnish the meeting spaces with mobile marker boards from the Intersect Portfolio in lounge areas and Intersect foldaway tables in some of the huddle rooms.

In addition, Caper side chairs grace the largest meeting space of all—a dining room that's occasionally used for employee gatherings. About 120 Capers on casters are used for everyday dining, and another 200 or so stacking Capers are pulled out of storage when needed.

"Vivo and My Studio anchor the project, but Applebee's kept coming back to Herman Miller for other solutions, too," Ms. Wiley says. "In the end, they wound up with a creative showplace that really complements the neighborhood feel of the Applebee's brand."

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