

U.S. General Services Administration





Sector Focus: Government Organization

When the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), Heartland Region, moved its office in Kansas City, Missouri, it faced unique design challenges. The GSA employs a large workforce, and the majority of employees are not in the office every day due to telework schedules and work-related travel. Meanwhile, as a government agency, the GSA must adhere to specific objectives for efficient spatial planning while encouraging collaboration, openness, and an active work day. The GSA realized it required a balance between efficient planning and the needs for flexibility, natural light and views, and healthy activity.

To meet these objectives, GasteringerWalker&, a design firm based in Kansas City and Chicago, partnered with Kansas City-based SFS Architecture to develop a planning strategy to eliminate most private offices and to prioritize, instead, smaller, unassigned, flexible workstations. The reduction in individual spaces, made possible by the digital nature of work today, created the opportunity for more generous shared spaces such as conference rooms and collaborative areas. In addition, a "hoteling" system gives employees choice over where and how to work depending on the needs of a particular day and time.

Working with Spaces, Inc., a Knoll dealer, the team designed 600 free address stations and 50 hotel stations with approximately 655 primary seats (Generation by Knoll®), using Dividends Horizon® Worksurfaces and AutoStrada legs. To keep the workstations open and allow wide access to natural light and views, the team selected Antenna® Fence—a low profile option—with up-mounted

storage and screens. To encourage a sense of community, the design team broke the work areas into 'neighborhoods' loosely assigned to a division, while keeping desks unassigned. Color was used for wayfinding and spatial definition. Universal Height-Adjustable Tables were selected to support physical activity and personalized adjustability throughout the day.

Some individualized storage was necessary that could flexibly accommodate multiple users with unassigned workspaces. The team selected Anchor™ and Series 2™ Pedestals, the former for its digital keylock, the latter for mobility.

The team placed many shared and collaborative spaces at the building perimeter, attracting employees with natural light and panoramic city views. Huddle and phone rooms, equipped with power support, are scattered throughout, permitting focused and private work. Break areas are located between departments, becoming gathering spaces. To a similar end, the team strategically positioned conference rooms, which use MultiGeneration by Knoll® side seating, in areas of high visibility to outside agencies.

The GSA achieved its explicit objectives to reduce its national utilization rate (136 square-foot per person) while also meeting other more nuanced challenges. Employees report greater satisfaction due to the transparency and openness of the space and the ease with which casual interactions and planned collaborations occur. The mobile work philosophy, aided by unassigned workstations, has also been well-received.





Drivers

- Reduce GSA's square-footage to national utilization rate of 136 square-feet per person
- Increase collaboration and cooperation
- Encourage a more active workforce
- Create an open space with equal access to views and daylight
- Accommodate a work culture where many employees travel and telecommute

Tactics

- Eliminated private offices except in special cases
- Exchanged larger, assigned workstations for smaller, shared workstations that can be reserved
- Work areas broken into 'neighborhoods' to keep the scale of the space small
- Sit-to-stand workstations
- Selected a low height service wall and located stations toward the interior
- Implemented headcount to work-seat ratio of 3/2
- More group and collaborative spaces than individual spaces

Outcomes

- Increased employee satisfaction
- Greater visibility via open, daylight space, atrium, low sightlines and ample exterior views
- Greater interaction between departments on a daily basis due to informal gathering spaces
- Greater collaboration both in the office's focus spaces and through virtual networks
- More easily accessed spaces for outside agency use

Scope

- 135,000 square feet
- 600 hotel workstations
- 50 free address workstations
- 5 private offices
- 655 primary seats

Knoll Products

- Systems Furniture: Antenna® Fence with up-mounted storage and screens, Dividends Horizon® Worksurfaces, AutoStrada® legs, Universal Height-Adjustable Table
- Task Seating: Generation by Knoll®
- Side Seating: MultiGeneration by Knoll®
- KnollTextiles: Eclat Weave, Classic Bouclé, Quark, Beacon, Tailor Made II
- Storage: Anchor™, Series 2™ Pedestals

Year Completed

2015