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## PayPal Lives its Values with San Jose Headquarters Redesign

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**W**hen PayPal became an independent company in 2015, the global fintech firm had the opportunity to reinvent its identity, which was subsequently reflected in its numerous offices around the world. Now, nearly five years later, the company has begun a redesign of its San Jose headquarters, currently home to more than 4,000 employees.

The efforts began with Building 15, which totals 102,000 square feet and is home to the company's finance department, a fitting place to start for a firm whose services revolve around the everyday transaction.

"At the time of our separation from eBay, PayPal really wanted to find its own identity, its own corporate culture and put a signature on our spaces," explained Tim Ritz, PayPal's vice president of Global Real Estate. "Now, we really have a vision of renovating our workspaces and reinventing them as tools for our employees to help democratize financial services and be at the forefront of connecting our brand and our workspace."

HGA Architects was hired to help with the Building 15 redesign, which sought to place emphasis on employee interaction and collaboration. SWA worked as a consultant to the project under contract, and AP+I Design was the main firm in charge of revamping the project's amenity areas.

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The layout and programming of the building were largely driven by the various “work modes” and the ways in which PayPal’s employees go about their day-to-day activities and tasks. According to Ritz, PayPal carefully planned its space usage prior to making changes in an effort to create an efficient and modern layout.



*Image courtesy of PayPal*

“We embraced creating environments that are open, but not overly exposed,” said Ritz. “We still wanted to create the opportunity to have private moments.”



This required creating “neighborhoods,” composed of various seating arrangements and social anchor points that allow PayPal’s employees to modify how they engage with others throughout the day. The social anchor points break away from work stations, allowing employees to connect without disturbing others around them. While the PayPal team wanted to maintain sightlines throughout the renovated space, they also wanted to stay away from simply creating rows and rows of desks.



*Image courtesy of PayPal*

“Seating arrangements are not the same; they’re staggered, pointed in different directions and create a feeling of privacy,” said Ritz. “Instead of layering our desks in rows, we laid them out in pods and created the opportunity for them to be broken apart or moved. We also put in soft seating and breakout tables, so that it’s an open environment, but there are a lot of different configurations that make the office feel cozier and smaller.”

Prior to the renovation, PayPal had allocated 200 square feet per person; after the renovation, the project team was able to achieve a ratio of 152 square feet per person, a 24 percent reduction.

“We want our employees to be able to use our whole campus and find the spaces that work best for the mission of their workday,” said Ritz. “Modern technology has enabled us to be less office-centric, and we wanted to create spaces that reflect how people work today.”



A large atrium with audiovisual and sound equipment, as well as large conference rooms, a bocce ball court, outdoor deck and coffee bars also add to the liveliness of the office.

The office is anchored by a neutral color palette and features large windows, hard surface floors and a wood slat ceiling feature. A single, colorful “ribbon” of light serves as a feature that weaves through the entire floorplate and acts not just as a wayfinding technique but is meant to represent the technological and global connectedness of the company. Bright pops of color play out in the furniture selection to add vibrancy and interest to the office. Many of the pieces in the San Jose office are sourced locally, said Ritz, so that while the office is still reflective of PayPal as a company, the space has a distinctly Bay Area-based flare.

“The PayPal brand has been consistent for the past few years, but what we wanted to do was create a facility design that not only reflected our design elements but [also] our value elements, and bring those into our spaces,” stated Ritz. “For example, we think about our brand as trustworthy, friendly and global, and we brought a lot of those design elements into our spaces. We use a lot of furniture that is sourced locally in the markets that we have our offices in, because that is where we are serving our customers. We want our offices to feel like the places they serve.”

Ritz continued, “If you go into a PayPal office in India, and then an office in France, they will both still feel like PayPal, but they will also feel like local PayPal. And that is what we are striving for.”



Image courtesy of PayPal