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**Outstanding – Bharti's One Airtel Centre,
Gurugram!**



office

The aerial view of the Costa Coffee cafe which is highly popular with the staff.



Proud to be Bharti!



The impressive One Airtel Centre in Gurugram showcases its atrium.

The all-glass six-storeys as viewed at night.

The key design drivers for the two-year old, six storey, 7,00,000 sq ft Bharti Airtel office in Gurugram were the company's four DNAs – Think Fresh, Can Do, On My Side, In Touch.



With the lights on, the red walls at different levels remind one of the Airtel's logo's vivid red.



The red walls make for Airtel's spot-on brand identity.

The verticality in the waiting lounge is heightened by the tall green plants.

TEXT: AMITA SARWAL
PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY
BHARTI AIRTEL GURUGRAM

Collaboration zones such as this facilitate interactive workspaces to foster healthy discussions.

Using these DNAs as her guidelines, Debora Emert, Design Director, NCUBE Planning and Design's 'vision was to develop a centralised office of international corporate standards which was being implemented pan-India. This analysis and comparisons with other Indian and global peers were used as yardsticks to guide the standards incorporated during Bharti Airtel's managerial visioning sessions.'

The original client brief was to create a world-class



An informal Discussion zone where red again predominates.



The Leadership floor housing the executives, shows a diversity of design principles in each room.

campus remodel serving as a trendsetter for the environmental quality of workspace and to provide amenities for all employees for a work-life balance. The space was to be evolved to accommodate the changes in the way people work as a result of acclimation to the original design, reduce the hierarchy of space based on title, and create Activity Based or Immersion Planning spaces and reduce the square footage per person usage.

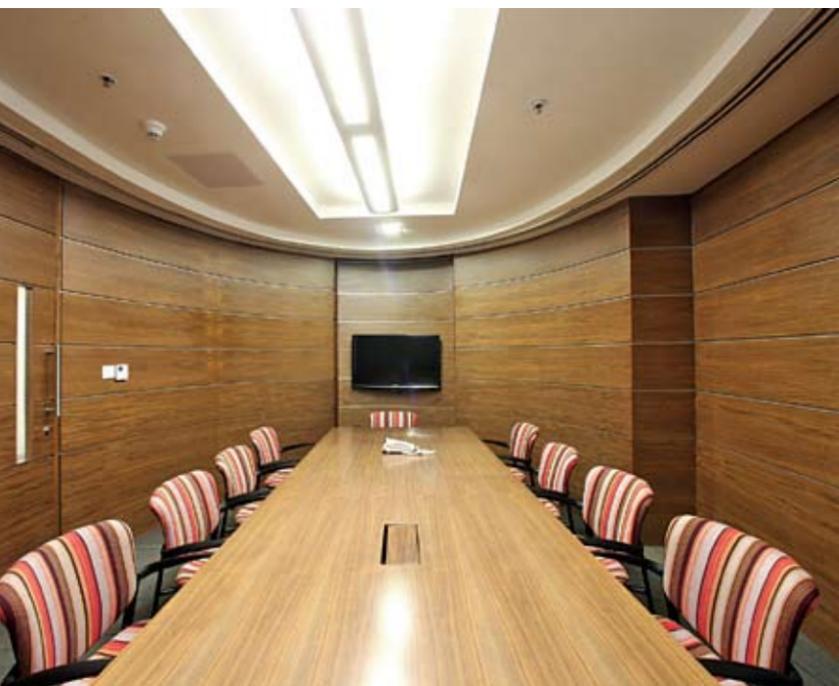
'Airtel's corporate real estate team with its partner NCUBE Design involved relocation and consolidation of its headquarters. A master planning grid maximised building efficiency with reduced expenditure. Both the interior and exterior of the building sport the brand colours,' reveals Debora.

One Airtel Centre incorporates 19 offices for almost 4,000 employees. It was imperative to increase business synergies coupled with open and closed collaboration areas for employee interactions or quiet introspections. The dynamics of Airtel are further enhanced through various zones to spatially suit diverse activities and functions. Work zone's linear layout comprises work tables without screens and panels, enabling transparency through better visibility and interaction. Flexibility has been explored through writable desk tops in the team-cluster arrangement of workspaces. Collaboration zones facilitate interactive, adjacent workspaces to foster healthy discussions through the provision of whiteboards and LCD



'At One Airtel Centre a master planning grid maximised efficiency with reduced expenditure. Both the interior and exterior of the building sport the brand colours.'





A series of Meeting zones for formal discussions.



screens. Integrated with technology for formal discussions, Meeting zones are evenly distributed on every floor. To accommodate silent thinkers, Quiet zones are enclosed rooms open to all, but restrictive in duration of use to prevent isolation. Breakout zones are semi-enclosed spaces for informal interactions and brainstorming activities in a relaxed ambience. Furnished with lounge chairs and sofas, the Lounge is an extension to the Work zone. The Cafe houses a cafeteria and pantry for coffee and lunch breaks. Finally, the Convenience zone includes locker storage and mobile charging stations.

'One of the goals of this project was to maintain the existing building structure with minimal change. In terms of interior non-structural elements, we created a solution which maintained existing elements whose change would have a significant impact on construction costs and building systems such as mechanical HVAC and lighting. Constructed elements such as meeting rooms and cabins were either used in their existing configuration and function or repurposed with minimal changes. Our original interior planning had been developed to provide a basis for long term occupancy evolution, so minimal changes were needed in these areas,' explains Debora.

The main challenges were achieving the targeted increase in occupancy density while creating adequate areas for thoughtful quiet work versus louder functions such as group collaboration for the building to become primarily

FACT FILE

Typology: Office
Name of Project: Bharti Airtel Centre
Location: Gurugram, India
Client: Bharti Airtel Ltd.
Design Director: Debora Emert
Completion: December 2016
Built-Up Area: 7,00,000 sq ft



One of many Collaboration zones.



A cosy staff cabin is fitted with a meeting table for two.

Dimensional Designer

Debora Emert, has a cachet of 35 years' experience in the fields of commercial Interior Design and Interior Architectural.

Upon completing her Bachelor of Applied Science in Interior Design from Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ, Debora was



affiliated with several multi-office national design firms across the United States. She imbibed skills from working on a varied range of commercial projects.

Since 2005, Debora, as Design Director for NELSON India (affiliate of Nelson US and now known as NCUBE Planning and Design) brings a pragmatic yet creative sense to each diverse process undertaken. She interacts with in-house designers to continually elevate the design process provided for its clients. NCUBE is a pioneer in providing corporate interior design and build solutions to major corporations. The firm has evolved into a cross-disciplinary team of 120 including architects, interior designers, 3D-artists, procurement specialists, quantity surveyors, construction managers, landscape designers, HVAC/electrical and plumbing engineers and branding specialists.



The Cafeteria has become a communal hub for the employees. The ceiling deserves special attention with its petaled panels. Bright coloured chairs and an art mural on the floor add further vibrancy.





A diverse range of work stations which are connected with the aisles having solid strips of colour separated by prominent red dots.



office



Another set of Work zones.

a free address facility. There were also implications with sensitive information storage and sharing which resulted in some areas needing physical separation or enclosure. Another key challenge was the perception that, since

workspaces were becoming smaller, and in some cases where individuals were moving from a private cabin to an open office workspace, these had to be offset by providing new spaces which augmented newer ways of



working and amenities with new benefits.

Current trends in workspace design which include the integration of elements in the office to promote and support collaboration there are similar typologies of spaces which recur although the detail of the space is unique. Some of these at Airtel include the media type open meeting spots and semi-enclosed lounge seating.

‘As designers we encourage clients who want to include elements or designs recalling their branding. Airtel Marketing was also involved in the integration of logos and imagery from branding campaigns to reinforce the organisations goals, values and products,’ states the lady.

The designer concludes with her ‘two favourite areas at Airtel – the Café spaces on each floor overlooking the atrium. These elements were in the original design, in spite of concerns that they would be underutilised. They became instant successes! The other elements which I like are the centre cluster of semi-enclosed pods with bench seating, bean bags, marker boards and screens. To me they feel intimate and collaborative simultaneously’.

Exactly a decade ago, Bharti Airtel, India’s leading global telecommunications services provider, aired a truly inspiring advertisement – Proud to be Indian, Proud to be Bharti. This still holds good and sums up the company’s philosophy – and perhaps, its mission statement. 