



Hyatt Reservation Center



The Hyatt hotel chain cultivates an image of comfort and style—just the opposite of what reservation agents experienced in its Omaha call center. Determined to align its dated call center with its sparkling brand image, Hyatt embarked on a facility remodel that included a liberal selection of Herman Miller and alliance products.

**HOSPITALITY;
OMAHA, NEBRASKA**

Topic:

*Brand
Collaboration
People*

Application:

*Call Center
Collaboration/Team
Conference
Open Office*

Project Scope:

*650 occupants; 509
workstations, 15 private offices;
50,000 square feet*

Herman Miller Product:

*Ethospace® System
My Studio Environments™
Resolve® System
Vivo® Interiors
Aeron® Chairs
Caper® Chairs
Celle® Chairs
Meridian® Pedestals
The Intersect® Portfolio*

Programs/Service:

Easy OptionsSM Capability

Year Completed:

2008



Make plans to stay at a Hyatt and chances are you'll speak with a call center agent in the company's Omaha reservation center. Home to some 600 agents, the facility fields calls from guests seeking comfort, style, and premium appointments.

Until a recent renovation, however, the reservation center itself lacked those attributes, appointed as it was in a style best characterized as dark, dated, and dreary. And with no other Hyatt hotel in Omaha, many agents had no other frame of reference for the Hyatt brand.

"We feel our building should convey the Hyatt brand to our associates," says Chris Hale, vice president of call centers for Hyatt Hotels and Resorts. "But after 18 years of being in the same facility, it was time for a little refreshing."

Upping the urgency was Omaha's evolution into a call center capital. With plenty of nearby call centers competing for hard-to-find agents, Hyatt could ill afford to let its people grow disenchanted with their work environment.

"Retention and morale were right near the top of Hyatt's wish list," says Janet Schawang, an account manager with AOI Corporation, a Herman Miller dealer in Omaha. "They wanted to create a space that would be inviting to employees."

And while you're at it, Hyatt requested, let's aim for more natural light, less clutter, and better collaboration areas, too.

MULTIPLE SYSTEMS

Hyatt and AOI had worked together for a few years, long enough for the hotelier to buy hundreds of Aeron chairs for its Omaha reservation center. The highly adjustable Aeron was the best option, Hyatt reasoned, because skimping on comfort was a poor one. After all, agents with sore backs can hardly be expected to exhibit a perennially positive attitude.

Now, however, Hyatt was interested in something more—a complete remodel. Hyatt stressed that it didn't necessarily need to find the one systems workstation that would be



satisfactory for all applications within its two-story reservation center. Instead, it wanted the best system for each job—and if that meant ending up with multiple products, so be it.

And so it was. The workhorse of Hyatt's redesigned space is Vivo interiors, an economical frame-and-tile system that's used for all call center stations on the second floor, as well as several private offices on the first.

To improve acoustical privacy, the frames on the call center stations are a bit taller than they had been before the remodel. Even so, the call center feels roomier than ever because translucent tiles rim the top of each Vivo workstation, allowing in light from perimeter windows.

AOI planners brightened the space even more by placing two dozen supervisors in Resolve stations adjacent to the windows. Built from poles with screens attached at 120 degrees, Resolve produces open, inviting workstations that encourage interaction and allow light to flow through. Hyatt even reinforced its brand image among call center agents by printing the Hyatt logo on Resolve screens.

Elsewhere on the call center floor, a large Ethospace frame-and-tile system serves as a command center for monitoring call volume and supporting agents. Meanwhile, on the administrative floor below, supervisors who had toiled in fixed-wall offices are now more accessible in My Studio Environments, a compact wall-based system that allows workers to control their privacy.

OF COLLABORATION AND CLUTTER

Hyatt supplemented its Aeron seating with Celle work chairs in conference rooms and Caper side chairs in My Studio workstations. Private offices use Sleek executive chairs from First Office, a Herman Miller alliance partner.

Bretford, another alliance partner, supplied the tables for Hyatt's conference rooms, while informal meeting areas have Kotatsu work tables. Part of Herman Miller's Intersect portfolio, the low-slung Kotatsu table supports collaboration with an integrated shelf for meeting materials.

Further supporting collaborative comfort is Mod Pod lounge seating from alliance partner Brandrud. Consisting of plush modular units that can be linked in myriad ways, Mod Pod is used in waiting areas, private offices, and casual meeting rooms.




And that problem with clutter? AOI solved it by specifying custom Meridian lockers and pedestals through Herman Miller's Easy Options capability. Interspersed throughout the call center floor, each storage locker has six lockable compartments. Meanwhile, the pedestals at each Vivo workstation have two lockable drawers, so employees on back-to-back shifts can each have their own.

Agents are issued one key that opens both their locker and pedestal drawer. Result: Personal items stay secure, while the call center stays tidy.

All in all, the preponderance of Herman Miller and alliance product makes the Hyatt reservation center something of a furniture showroom—and most definitely a recruiting showcase.

“When we show prospective associates around, it’s clear that the caliber of our workplace is something they consider when deciding whether to work here,” Mr. Hale says. “Even though we’ve been in this building for nearly two decades, our redesigned space helps us compete effectively with brand new call centers.”

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