

An Ad Agency Moves Outside Boulder's City Center

By [Robert Beck](#) | [January 23rd, 2017](#)

Moving a company out of its city center and into a slightly less urban neighborhood is a big, but sometimes unavoidable, decision c-suite leaders are faced with. Urban landscapes are becoming more dense and amenity-rich, and real estate costs are continuing to rise; the combination of these factors is creating a confusing contrast in priorities for companies operating in urban areas.



Semi-enclosed third space collaboration area

IMM, a digital advertising agency facing growth – a good problem to have – chose to leave its offices on bustling Pearl Street in downtown Boulder, CO, and move into a new space on the edge of town in East Boulder. It hired OZ Architecture, a local Boulder firm to design the new 30,000 square foot space, originally an old shipping and receiving warehouse.

“The new location doesn’t have the same amenities within walking distance, so IMM was really focused on creating an amenity-rich space for its employees from scratch,” says Amanda Johnson, associate principal at OZ Architecture.

This project shows a remarkably efficient use of space – a quality coming from both OZ Architecture and IMM. The new offices feel inexplicably open, yet there is an abundance of everything from both enclosed and open meeting spaces to private offices and plenty of third

spaces. Collaborative meeting nooks and social spaces are cleverly built into wide hallways and other sometimes neglected pieces of the floor plate.



Hall with third space lounge pieces

“They [IMM] were really smart about planning for growth, and really wanted to pursue efficient space in terms of design opportunities,” said Ms. Johnson.

IMM requested for its new space, which houses 160 employees, an unusually large number of conference rooms.

“Their culture is very meeting heavy, very collaborative-heavy,” said Ms. Johnson. “Most of their teams are constantly in need of war room space and spaces where they can video-conference with clients frequently. These meeting spaces were a huge program component that we needed to sprinkle throughout the floor plan.”

The office boasts 15-20 completely enclosed meeting spaces, flexible for changing needs, and located on the building perimeter. Private offices, in contrast, are located on the interior, allowing more traffic-heavy spaces more natural light.

“There are no offices on exterior window walls, which was a great way for the higher-ups to give back to their employees.”

IMM also wanted something it called a “closing room” – a special space where they could take a client to escape from a traditional meeting room and really get to know each other. To fulfill this need, OZ Architecture custom designed a standalone sculptural millwork piece called the Analog Room, placed immediately beyond the entrance and reception.



Analog Room interior

Inside the Analog Room, which earns its name by having no phones, TVs, or overhead lighting (this is as close to analog as we can get these days), provides a calm place to sit, have one-on-one meetings, or chill out to a few records on an old school record player.

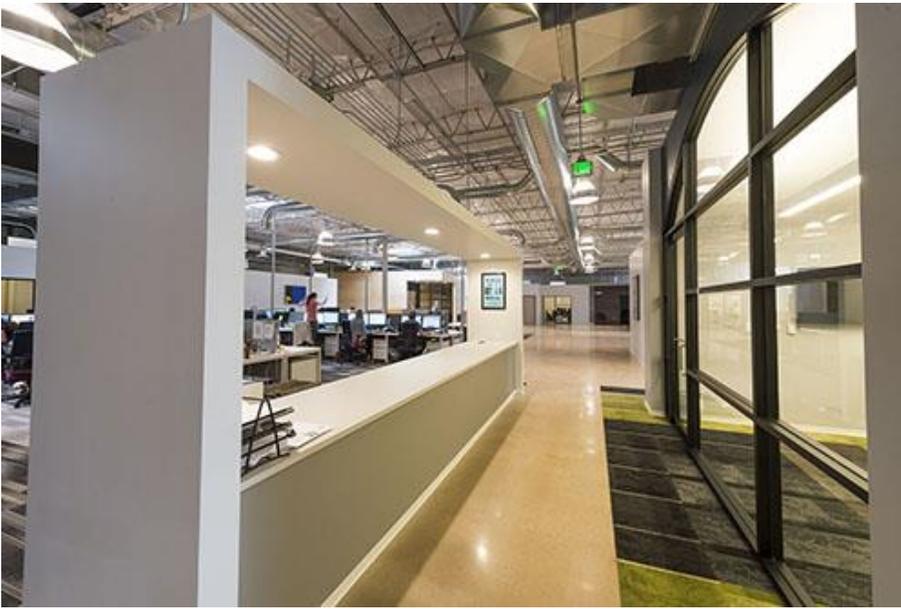
“At first, the Analog Room really was just for clients. But over time, it slowly transformed into an ‘escape’ space for employees, too.”

OZ Architecture kept the entrance area surrounding the reception and the Analog Room very open.

“We wanted the entrance to be a unique space with the stamp of their brand. And I think in those ‘first impressions’ spaces, it’s very important to have breathing room and volume.”

IMM’s CEO was especially in tune to the advantages of biophilic design. Indoor landscaping spreads evenly throughout the office interior, and an abundance of natural light streams in through large windows, skylights and garage doors. The indoor landscaping and warmer finishing qualities complement an aesthetic that plays to the building’s first life as a working warehouse, complete with 18 foot clear in the ceilings.

“It was an old shipping and receiving warehouse with no windows in it, so all of the windows and skylights had to be new,” said Ms. Johnson. “We spent a good portion of our budget on making this warehouse into a true office, including all of the mechanical and plumbing, while still reflecting its history.”



Kitchen

Much of the flooring is natural exposed concrete, but OZ Architecture installed carpet with organic movement qualities under workstations and in meeting rooms.

In addition to an abundance of social and collaborative spaces away from the workstation, IMM employees can enjoy an outdoor patio, a dining break room and full kitchen complete with stove and hood, and a deck that OZ Architecture built into the warehouse's old loading dock – complete with coveted views of the Flatiron Mountains. "Since the location isn't within walking distance to lunch options as the previous office was, they now have a chef come in a few days a week to cook lunch for everyone."



Flatiron Mountain views from Exterior mural

The building's exterior also features a mural championed by IMM's CEO, lending a playful, imaginative quality to the face of the warehouse, and frankly, the surrounding neighborhood as well. IMM's new space is a true collaboration of voices between design firm and client, each bringing to the table its strengths and big ideas to form an office that works.