

GRUPO BANCOLOMBIA

Medellin, Colombia

Size

800,000 square feet

Project Highlights

Headquarters consolidation of 4,000 employees from 14 buildings; Modular planning maximizes flexibility and allows for reconfiguration from open workplan to private area or conference room; Central circulation maximizes access to views and natural light; Amenities: fitness center, rooftop terrace, full-service cafeteria, 5-story parking garage, conference center; Use of wayfinding to differentiate sectors within working environment; LEED EB-Gold

Services Provided

Workplace design strategies; Full service design and architecture; Code consulting; Artwork consultation; Environmental graphic design; LEED services





The Bancolombia Headquarters project originated from the need to consolidate 4,000 employees, operating from 14 buildings in the city of Medellín, Colombia. The new 800,000 square foot headquarters makes a statement about the company’s commitment to its most valuable asset: its employees. The complex includes five sectors with two cores, five levels of parking, seven levels of office space, a conference center, one level with cafeterias, a fitness center, and lounges.

Achieving total flexibility so that areas could be re-configured with minimal cost and/or time was key. In turn, the design and workplace strategies teams created four basic modules: two for open offices, and two for private offices. Open office workstation modules are either 6-ft. by 6-ft. (single) or 6-ft. by 12-ft. (double). Private office modules, which can also be used for conference rooms, are either 12-ft. by 12-ft. (single) or 12-ft. by 24-ft. (double). Based on these space parameters, any office area of the building can be transformed from an open work plan to a private area or conference room; without modifications to the circulatory system.

The design team identified four principles that clearly reflect the company’s culture and personality. These principles guided the design of all environments: flexibility, sustainability, simplicity, and an understated quality. The key features that reflect these principles are as follows:

- To achieve the required flexibility, all spaces are designed based on the workstation module (noted previously). Design solutions include a flexible lighting design, demountable walls, and an under-floor system to distribute power, data, and air conditioning.
- To ensure the access to views and natural light for all employees, the main circulation was placed on the building perimeter, defining the windows and the views as common areas. Individual controls, the building systems, and the locally-sourced materials contribute to the sustainability story.
- A simple, custom designed furniture system of “spines” and sliding desks was sufficient to respond to the various configuration needs, maintaining a sense of order within the space. The furniture for reception and lounge areas was selected based on their simple geometric forms.
- As an element that contributes to the way-finding within this extended complex, only the external vertical planes of the building cores contain color. Shades of red, yellow, and blue brighten the colored and back-painted acid-etched glass. Gray, white, and natural wood hues keep office areas understated.