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SMART WORKSPACE

THE KOLKATA OFFICE OF **BROTHERHOOD NETWORK MEDIA PVT. LTD.**, DESIGNED BY **DEVIKA BANERJEE**, CUTS ACROSS ALL TRIED-AND-TESTED BARRIERS TO PRESENT AN OFFICE THAT BEARS RESEMBLANCE TO INTERNATIONAL WORKSPACES.

Text: Sudeshna Chakravarty **Photographs:** Ashis Saha

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pread across a sprawling 5,000 sq. ft., **Brotherhood Network Media Pvt. Ltd.**, a new ITES start-up for the **Anandabazar Patrika Group**, has an international appeal. Designed by **Devika Banerjee** of **Designers Guild**, the concept was woven around the theme of a 'World Beyond Barriers'. "We started with the name 'Brotherhood' and wanted the office to symbolize the spirit behind the word," says Devika. The concept was about creating a workplace that is seamless, fluid and without borders; to provide an environment that energizes young minds and promotes thinking, sharing and collaboration. "We felt that an ethno-global ambience (physically and visually) would empower and motivate employees to achieve greater heights of creativity," Devika adds.

The green upholstered sofa in the reception area lends the space a lively and warm look.





2

The hangout area for the workforce is placed close to the workstations lending employees a more relaxed space to work.

3

The meeting area that doubles up as the reading area, accentuated with a sofa and tables having interesting designs.

4

Note the daybed in the meeting area, where employees could catch a wink.

Interestingly, this project was floated as a competition with many ace designers in the race. Devika's firm won the competition and had to complete the entire project within a stipulated time and a penalty for delay was attached. It was a challenge which was ably handled by Designers Guild, who completed the project much before time.

Owing to the nature of work carried out at this office, the spaces had to be planned in a way that would ensure complete creative productivity. Elaborating on this aspect, Devika says, "What made the design process satisfying was that the client seemed to empathize with our sensibilities." She began by prioritizing the use of the space into three sections namely Action, Breaks and Essentials. Action was to be the creative heart; this was the place where people would sit and work on individual workstations. Breaks were the areas where employees could unwind like the hangout zones, cafeteria or zones, where the workforce could relax while exchanging ideas. Essentials include the must-haves of any functional workspace like a gymnasium, washrooms, server room and UPS areas. "We also designed a nap room with a daybed in case someone needed to catch up on his/her sleep," she shares.



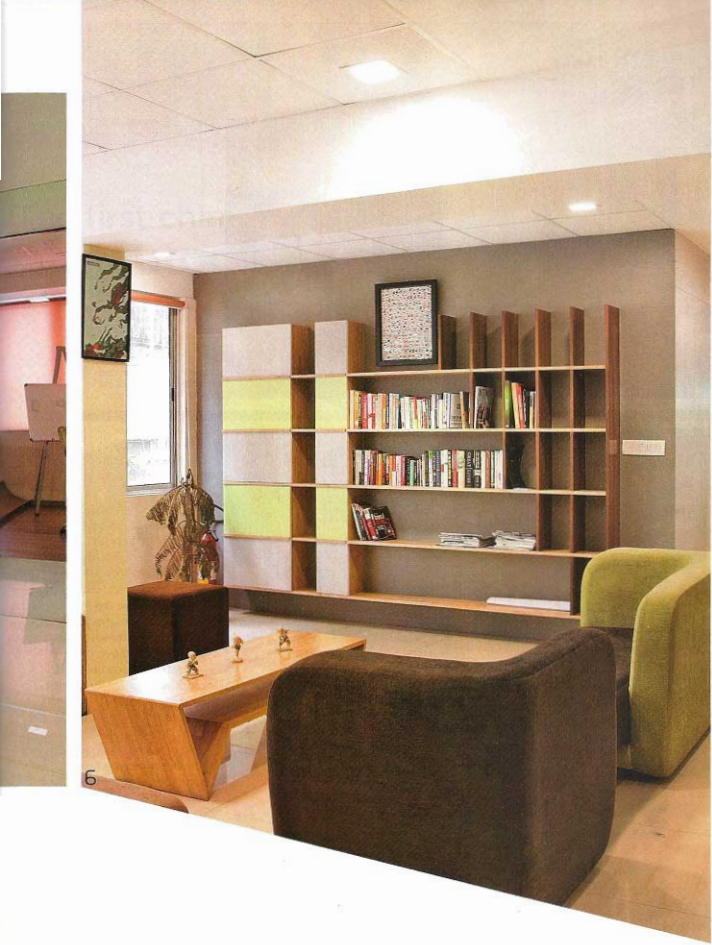


5 From the reception area, one can see the cubicles and meeting areas; the glass doors promotes transparency in the office.

6 The colour scheme throughout the office is subtle and complements the overall decor and furniture pieces.

Additionally, the hangout areas were strategically placed close to the Action areas, without any visual or physical barriers. "It wouldn't matter whether you are at your desk or reclining in a deck chair as long as you are a part of the creative process," the designer smiles and says.

Throughout the design, one notes the spirit of brotherhood being reinforced in form of spaces that fosters camaraderie and synergy. Design elements are carefully chosen to complement the theme, from the desks sans *frontieres* to the customized cafeteria Ottomans that sit around a central roundel. The collaborative areas for meetings are placed adjacent to one another and connected with one big partition. Functionally independent, they appear visually interlinked.



6



7
The workstation sans frontiers help maximum interaction.

8
Note the deck chairs and comfortable couches in the hangout area.



Once Devika was done with the planning, the real challenge was executing some of the more experimental designs. She extended her design sensibilities into creating some unique furniture pieces including the workstations, futons and deck chairs. What catches the eye are the set of seats that assume the shape of a flower when put together. She played with interesting colours on the blinds and upholstery or small area of cabinet laminate to spike up the toned down chic monochromatic colour tone of the entire decor. Another interesting feature is the use of light-wood finishes on all the furniture to give the spaces a lively and more contemporary, young vibe. "It was wonderful and gratifying to be praised by the client for all our efforts," Devika tells us.

The design of this office truly promotes team spirit and brotherhood. ■

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