

A wide-angle photograph of a modern, multi-level office lobby. The space is characterized by its high ceiling with a grid of white beams and recessed lighting. Large windows on the upper levels allow natural light to flood the space. In the foreground, a long reception desk is constructed from horizontal wooden planks. Behind the desk, a white wall features the 'HAWORTH' logo in red capital letters. The background shows multiple levels of office space with glass railings and modern furniture. A red and white decorative structure is visible on the upper level.

HAWORTH®

# Reinventing HR through Space Transformation

## One Haworth Center, 2East Renovation

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Case Study



Organizations today understand the importance of attracting and retaining smart and talented people to stay innovative and drive success. While employment rates shift over time, during a talent shortage human resources (HR) personnel have to work even harder. Our Haworth HR department understands these issues well. With the team scattered among five separate spaces in our global headquarters, they knew a change was imperative—to increase collaboration and enhance team dynamics. Ultimately, they hoped to enrich the employee experience, enhance our employment brand, and share what we've learned with our customers.



## From Transactional to Experiential: Space Design for Today's HR

It all began with a discovery process. Besides being fragmented, part of the team was located in an area that didn't have access to daylight and outdoor views—a design principle we've taken seriously since our global headquarters, One Haworth Center, was renovated in 2008. We also wanted to create a space that was welcoming to our active employees (whom we call members) as well as prospective ones—applicants coming across our threshold to learn more about Haworth.

With unemployment in the US at its lowest rate in over a decade, competition for talent has been fierce. And, as many of our customers share similar challenges, we embraced our living laboratory philosophy when embarking on the design process. Through explorations with our design and facilities teams, specific goals emerged: Create a memorable experience; improve communication and collaboration; and emphasize wayfinding.

*It all began with a discovery process....Through exploration with our design and facilities teams, specific goals emerged.*

## Create a Memorable Experience

An HR department serves a variety of clients, each with unique needs. For future and former employees, HR's proximity to the front entrance would give them easy access to recruiters and benefits experts. At the same time, HR can't be too far from the manufacturing areas to serve members in production roles with limited break time.

The project was more than a renovation of space—it was also a reinvention of Haworth’s HR department involving several key initiatives:

- Enhance the HR team’s welcoming role and dedication to serving members, new applicants, and retirees through the space design.
- Shift from an HR transaction to an HR experience.

### Our Members

The workspace is a valuable tool for engaging employees, and an important element in conveying Haworth’s employment brand. How do you create HR as a destination for people? “First and foremost, we wanted to create an experience for our members at large, where they would have an immediate sense that the space was designed for them,” said Ann Harten, Vice President of Global Human Resources. “We would constantly pause to ponder: ‘Now what is that impression going to leave for our members?’”

### Prospective Members

Attracting new talent in a space that reflected our values was a primary influence on the new design:

- Recruiting has been on the uptick, and interview spaces are at a premium.
- We wanted to put our best foot forward to attract talent.
- Interview candidates need easy access from the front door.
- The recruiting team desired small, cozy, well-designed interview spaces to make a good impression for applicants.
- Video interview capabilities were a priority to offer flexibility for candidates out of our region.

### Retirees

Members who have retired were also a key audience for the HR team. Their specific needs were:

- Easy access from the front door for seniors.
- A lounge space that would accommodate retirees’ social needs for interaction as well as confidentiality.

*“When we thought about our new space we definitely wanted it to be a destination—a hub—for our members, retirees, new applicants, our customers, and for people in the community who want to come and have a look at how we operate. So it was really important for us to create a welcoming space.”*

– Sharon Netto-Lipsky, Director of Talent Attraction and Development



### Customers

Since 2008, our headquarters has been a living lab where we can share our own stories—what worked and what didn’t work—to help our customers with their work environment challenges. The new HR space would be an opportunity to demonstrate:

- How we use our Organic Workspace® approach to create spaces that facilitate the effectiveness of people and the efficiency of real estate.
- Adaptability of our product solutions to create spaces that offer both openness and privacy.
- Applying new work trends that balance concerns with confidentiality and security.



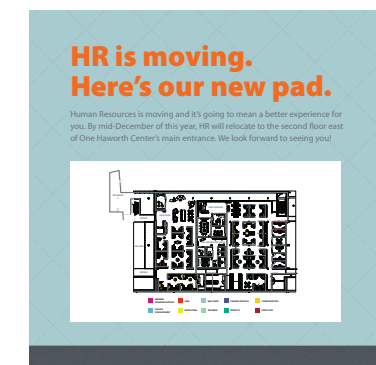
### Improve Communication and Collaboration

Haworth’s HR department was one of the only groups in the building that was not co-located. A portion of them occupied a space in 2East (second floor, east end of the building). The rest of the group was in the back of the office area, adjacent to manufacturing—with no windows to the outside. “They lovingly called this area ‘the cave,’” said Beth Scott, Workplace Design Specialist. “It didn’t have access to daylight. It was dark. And their workstation panels were 60” high—some even higher. They also had a lot of storage so it just felt very tight and small.”

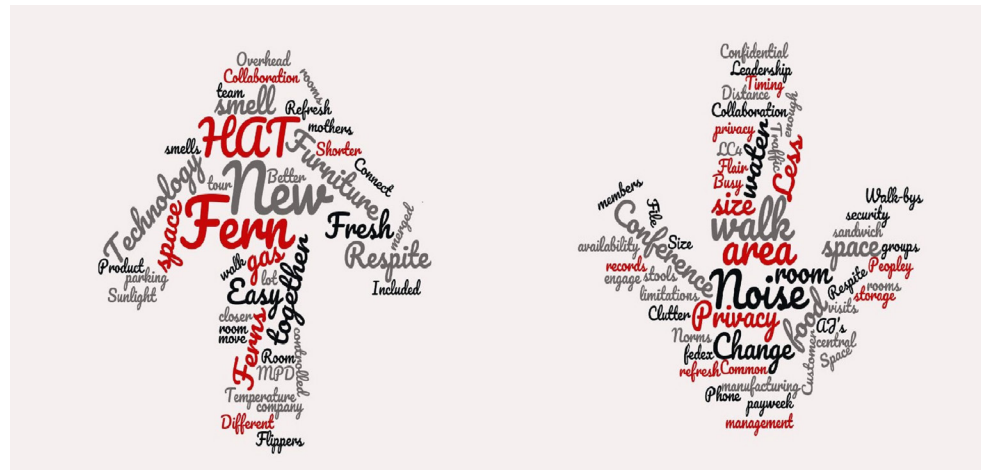
In an HR team, a variety of processes and activities happen daily—some more interactive and lively, some quiet and private. The challenge is to accommodate this continuum. For example, the recruiting team is constantly on the phone talking with people. The shared services team requires heads-down time for project work. And the benefits and compensation team needs to ensure privacy and confidentiality to protect the information they manage. “Whether it’s about your retirement funds, your taxes, or your medical filings,” said Sharon Netto-Lipsky, Director of Talent Attraction and Development, “people count on HR for confidentiality and security of their data.” But each team still needs to work with the others—from recruitment to compensation to onboarding and benefits.

### Emphasize Wayfinding

When the team analyzed the building floorplans for the best space with the required adjacencies, 2East revealed itself as the best option. Situated on the northeast side of the building and close to the main entrance, it has lots of access to daylight. Although slightly farther away from manufacturing areas than previously, analysis of the 2East area showed it balanced proximity to serve office members, manufacturing members, prospective employees, retirees, and customers. The biggest challenge would be communication and wayfinding for the more than 1,200 manufacturing workers who have little time during breaks. With 1.5 million square feet of space to traverse, it was important to provide the fastest and most convenient route.



*It’s a 12-minute walk from the farthest point in manufacturing—affectionately called “Key West”—to the HR space.*



Word clouds captured by a software application convey sentiments of excitement and fear from workshop participants.

### Design Process

Consolidating five teams into a new space and rebranding a department required a deeper level of programming than what typically occurs with space design. First, the HR team partnered with a third-party consultant to help understand their needs. “This consultant helped facilitate a set of exercises, interviews, observations, and tours,” said Beth Scott. “We did some workshops and a two-day design charrette, which led to the development of floorplans.” The design team also leveraged all three of Haworth’s proprietary LENS™ tools: Culture, Workstyles, and Office. The results influenced aspects of the overall space design.

### Core Team

A cross-functional core team was created, consisting of people from HR at different levels of responsibility.

### Workshops

Of several workshops that were conducted, of special interest is the visioning one where participants wrote down words that described their ideal workspace, capturing in word clouds with a software application.

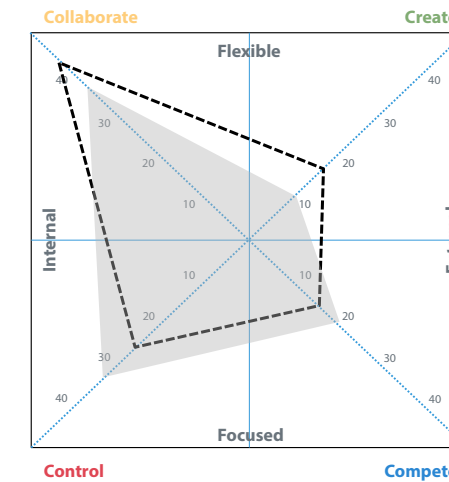
### Design Charette

From the design charrette emerged themes that drove the project’s design principles:

1. **Brand** – who is Haworth to prospective members and active members?
2. **Respect** – you know your information is secure with HR
3. **Efficiency** – easy to find HR for both office and plant members
4. **Well-being** – access to daylight and a bright, functional workspace

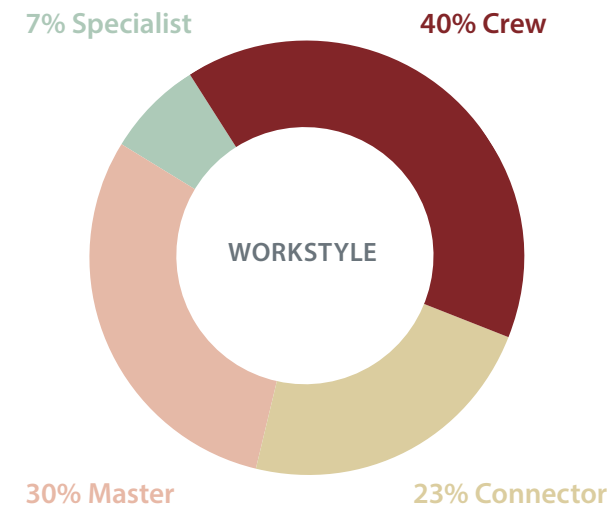
### CultureLENS Tool

Based on the Competing Values Framework™, results revealed the HR department is primarily a Collaborate culture with a need to build relationships and preferences for social spaces.



The Competing Values Framework tool is part of the CultureLENS workshop, where the results indicated HR’s culture is primarily in the Collaborate quadrant.

### WorkstyleLENS tool



### WorkstyleLENS Tool

Designed to identify the dominant workstyles among a team, results revealed the HR department comprise two primary workstyles—Crew and Master—from the four categories:

- **Connector** – people who often work in groups to generate new ideas and connect them to strategy
- **Master** – subject matter experts who primarily work alone to develop and hone strategic concepts
- **Crew** – individuals who work in teams focused on tactical objectives and deliverables
- **Specialist** – people who mostly work alone focused on specific tasks and deliverables

### OfficeLENS Tool

Includes pre-occupancy and post-occupancy surveys that informed the design team’s solution:

- HR members were not happy in their space.
- They lacked group connection and access to daylight.
- Some had inadequate storage.
- Unaligned adjacencies due to split locations and high panels prohibited interactions.
- They didn’t have pride in their workstations.

(For post-occupancy results, see page 10 of the case study.)

“We got a strong message from the survey results: We needed to bring down the panel heights, make sure people have bright, functional spaces, and incorporate new product so that they’d feel like we’re investing in them.”

– Beth Scott, Workplace Design Specialist



### Daylight for All

One of the design principles that came out of the initial discovery process was well-being, a tenet that is important to Haworth all across the organization. Well-being addresses the physical, emotional, and cognitive aspects of each person. The design team solved for these needs in several ways.

- The most obvious feature, when you walk into the space, is the access to daylight and views through the north-facing windows.
- The blue finish palette was intentionally chosen because it's both energizing and calming at the same time.
- The new respite room is a coveted place in the HR area.
- Each person also got a Fern® high-performance task chair to support their ergonomic needs.

### Floorplan Review

The design team then developed four floorplans showing different ways the new space could be configured. They met with each of the groups within the HR department, which influenced the end result.

- Two zones were created: the greeting area with a new, welcoming reception station that presents a friendly face at the HR entrance; and an area of tall panels toward the back to ensure privacy and confidentiality.
- Specifying products from our Integrated Palette™ enables us to easily change the space as business needs require. Compose® systems furniture, X Series® storage, and Active Components™ offer balance for both heads-down and group spaces in the same vicinity while keeping a cohesive aesthetic.
- Bluescape® technology enhances collaborative working sessions while smaller meeting rooms include Workware® technology for sharing information.
- To support both collaborative and focused work, as well as phone conversations and privacy, the space includes an array of small and large conference rooms, places to gather, and a phone booth.
- Adjacent to both the main entrance and HR is a conference room, furnished with elements from the Haworth Collection™, and surrounded by walls and a frosted glass door to allow for confidential conversations.

*“There’s a lot of research to support the fact that access to daylight and views has a profoundly positive impact on the human psyche. I would say that you would get no argument from anyone who now has access all day long.”*

– Ann Harten, Vice President of Global Human Resources



## Change Management

Reinventing a department the size of HR involves change for both the team and the clients they serve—whether it’s wayfinding or establishing social norms. “From a change management perspective,” said Kendra Cribley, Learning and Talent Development Manager, “I think one of the most important things we did was involve all of our department at various stages throughout the process. We included a survey at the beginning about what people wanted in the new space. Along the way, we shared with them the different stages of the design process.”

### Communications and Wayfinding

Distance and traffic pattern studies, along with a robust communications and wayfinding plan, helped convince leadership that the new space would work.

- The communications campaign strategically targeted manufacturing members, who had the longest walk to the new space.
- Maps and posters communicated the most intuitive path.
- A variety of communications tools—from a printed guide to vinyl stick-on arrows, table tents, and digital signage—informed members about the change.
- Weekly meetings kept HR members apprised of the plans.
- Change management workshops created awareness and provided forums for feedback.



*“I think a lot of people look at change management as selling the change to people. That’s not what it’s about—change management is about engaging your members because they will think of things that you didn’t think of.”*

– Bill Altana, Senior Program Development Consultant

### Social Norms

What do you get when you combine five teams in one space who haven’t worked in proximity before? A need for some behavioral norms—or social contracts. The HR group took it upon themselves to establish norms in their new work environment—and asked for group commitment.

One of the norms is for height-adjustable desks. Typically, when someone is on the phone and standing, they project their voice to the whole space. The team talked about awareness around this behavior—if you’re on the phone and standing, you might need to lower your voice or lower your desk.

Another example is for the respite room, which is a new space for the team. Small and cozy, it’s a dimly lit space with a door where people can go to comfortably relax, reflect, or rejuvenate. For this very personal retreat room, the norm is to not open the door if it’s closed, to preserve the privacy of the person using it.



## A Space Designed for Experience

A key consideration for the HR relocation project was the accessibility of the location—both close to the front door of the business and to manufacturing. Our design and facilities teams met the challenge and worked alongside the HR group to find a solution that worked for everyone.

Now, the team enjoys the refreshing colors and materials that evoke the warmth of residential design, creating an inviting space with a modern aesthetic. There's spontaneity of interaction among team members, along with accommodations for confidential tasks and conversations.

Ninety days after move-in, the post-occupancy survey provided the proof. HR members responded with positive feedback demonstrating they are more satisfied about the space than their previous locations. Improvements or increased measures include:

- Ambient environment
- Group interaction
- Job satisfaction
- Personal control
- Workspace affordances

Even privacy improved, and while the measurement is still low, the HR teams have taken it upon themselves to understand why.

“One of the pieces of advice I would give to any organization considering a move, especially when it comes to an HR organization, is to involve your people in the process. Usually, they have really good ideas about what works and what doesn't based on the work that they carry out each day,” said Sharon Netto-Lipsky.

Our HR team took the time to truly analyze what they wanted to accomplish and then created a space to reflect that. When the recruiting team plans to make an offer, there is often collaboration with the compensation team to get it exactly right. In the previous state, the teams were 150 yards apart. Today, the teams are adjacent, improving communication, relationships, and understanding.

“When I walk over to HR, I actually get people who smile at me because they like their workstations and their space,” said Beth Scott. “We have made a difference.”



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