

MEDIA COVERAGE: CTV MAKES A TIGHT FIT WORK

When CTVglobemedia acquired most of CHUM Ltd., it meant a move downtown for a lot of CTV staff and a move to smaller workstations for just about everyone. A recipe for widespread complaint? Not at all.

BY PAMELA YOUNG

In 2007, CTVglobemedia bought out CHUM Ltd., setting off a wave of intense activity in CTV Television's Corporate Services and Facilities departments that soon rippled outward to the media conglomerate's long-time design services partner Mayhew. The deal meant that CTVglobemedia would be acquiring three mid-rise early-20th-century buildings in downtown Toronto: the landmark former CHUM Television facility at 299 Queen Street West, and adjacent buildings at 250 and 260 Richmond Street West. CTV Television would relocate sales staff from its suburban Agincourt facility to the downtown complex, while simultaneously consolidating operations with former CHUM specialty TV

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channels. At the same time, the new owners chose to relocate CHUM Radio's Toronto operations from 1331 Yonge Street to the 250 Richmond Street West building. The phased move will continue throughout 2009 and possibly into 2010, depending on when CTV gains total occupancy; as a condition of approving the sale, the CRTC ruled that CTV would have to divest itself of CHUM's CityTV stations (subsequently acquired by Rogers), and for now CityTV and CityLine are still occupying studios at 299 Queen West, pending completion of their own new facility.

But much of the post-buyout transformation has now been completed, and so far this intricate jigsaw of a move has proceeded smoothly. "The first challenge was getting everyone in," says Mayhew design consultant Rochelle Jones, the design project lead. By any standards, this is a high-density workplace. On the sixth floor of 260 Richmond Street West, for example, a sales division with approximately 115 employees occupies a 9,500-sq.-ft. floorplate.

In the beginning, says Susan Mason, senior director of corporate services at CTV Television Inc., space standards were developed – and then revised downward when it became apparent just how snug the fit would be. Many CHUM employees already working in the downtown complex, along with many CTV people who were relocated from the Agincourt facility, previously had 6 x 9-foot workstations; they now have 6 x 6-foot workstations plus an optional tower. Directors who had offices ranging in size from 175 to slightly over 200 square feet at Agincourt now have 150-sq.-ft. offices downtown.



Vivid paint hues and punched drywall partitions inexpensively add some drama and creative ambience to the space for the Design & Graphics department in the 299 Queen Street West building.

Left: Leaving mechanical equipment exposed preserves the higher ceiling heights that offset the density of the floor plans. Glazed walls with space-saving sliding doors partition off directors' offices from public areas without blocking natural light. Below: Sales divisions on the fifth and sixth floors of 260 Richmond Street West have 6 x 6-ft. workstations and optional tower units for additional storage.



To create efficient footprints and maximize daylighting opportunities, Mayhew, which is both a Steelcase dealer-ship and a design firm, selected a number of Steelcase products, including the systems furniture lines Kick and Payback, and Pathways moveable walls. Steven Cascone, Mayhew's director of design, points out that wheeled pedestal units with upholstered tops do double duty at the 6 x 6 workstations as filing cabinets and guest seating; staff were given the option of having a tower unit for additional storage or forgoing it to have a bit more free space.

PHOTOGRAPHY: MAYHEW

Incandescent track lighting was replaced with cooler, far more efficient LED and fluorescent fixtures, and significant mechanical and electrical upgrades were made to formerly multi-tenanted space at 260 Richmond. Overhead mechanical ductwork and cable trays were largely left exposed, not only to keep these elements easily accessible for maintenance and reconfiguration but also to preserve the higher ceiling heights that offset the density of the floorplans. Low workstation heights and floorplate-traversing pathways that provide views to the outside also help to prevent this tightly packed workplace from feeling like a warren.

For special events such as the MuchMusic Video Awards, CTVglobemedia temporarily transforms some workspaces into public spaces. In the eTalk and Fashion Television studios, training tables and foldable task chairs (Train and Kart, respectively, both manufactured by Stelcase's Vecta division) take the place of conventional workstation furniture. "If we had systems furniture in there it would take days to rewire everything and put it back," says Dave Nicholson, CTV Television Inc.'s director of facilities projects. CTV contracts out this recurrent reconfiguring to Mayhew; Mr. Nicholson notes that transforming 8,020 square feet of studio/workspace into event space takes the crew about two and a half hours.

When the move-in for the Bravo! channel had to be completed within a particularly speedy turnaround, CTV went with Mayhew's SmartSpace program, which enables clients to select new or used components in Steelcase's Answer system, available in a limited palette; orders to lease or buy from this standard kit of parts can be filled quickly, and Mayhew will 'buy back' components at half their original value up to three years after acquisition. To save money and minimize waste, CTV has also reused existing furniture where possible. And when the economic downturn hit hard last year, Mr. Nicholson value-engineered a number of spaces where renovation was still pending, retaining more of the existing partitions than had originally been intended. "In these areas," Ms. Mason says, "we didn't get the meeting room size we wanted, and the offices weren't exactly where we were going to have them in the first place, but the adjacencies were still quite good."

The clients and designers note that integrated and efficient work done by the general contractor and the engineering firms has contributed significantly to the streamlining of this complex project. End-user response to the renovations completed so far suggests that higher density has not engendered lower satisfaction. "There have been very few complaints, and the complaints we've had have not been size-of-office-related," Mr. Nicholson says. Whether they work in the media business or not, that's the sort of 'no news' that most facility managers would consider very good news indeed. | CFM&D

SUPPLIERS

Design: Mayhew Architects; **General Contractor:** Dalton; **Mechanical Engineers:** Andronowski & Associates Ltd.; **Electrical Engineers:** Naylor; **Furniture:** Steelcase; **Flooring:** Milliken, InterfaceFLOR, Stone Tile, Altro and Savoia; **Lighting:** LAM, Sistemalux and Eureka; **Millwork:** Nevamar, Wilsonart, Formica Solid Surfacing, and Corian