

The background image shows a modern office space. On the right, a large, bright yellow geometric structure, resembling a stylized letter 'A' or a corner, dominates the foreground. To its left, a hallway with glass-walled rooms leads into the distance. The ceiling is high with exposed white structural beams and modern lighting fixtures. In the lower-left corner, a white desk and blue office chairs are visible. The overall aesthetic is clean, bright, and architectural.

# Guiding Business Transformation Through **Design**

Utilizing architecture and design to incubate the bold shift of a newspaper industry leader toward a digital-first media company.



“We started with a proposition that we were going to change everything about the way we do business. The Progressive AE team responded quickly to us. And we moved forward with a great deal of trust.”

MLive Media Group

## Strategic Objectives

As part of a visioning process, the Progressive AE team led key stakeholders from Advance Publications through an immersive engagement intent upon setting priorities and understanding goals for driving future success. The following strategic objectives were established:



### Culture Change

- Create buzz, energy and excitement
- Make work visual
- Promote collaboration
- Create openness and trust
- Celebrate the new business model while respecting its heritage



### Community Engagement

- Connect employees with the community
- Invite the public into the conversation
- Push staff outward into the community
- Invest in the recovery of the central business district



### Talent Retention and Acquisition

- Create attractive environments for new talent who support the new business model
- Retain staff that encourages growth and adoption of the new strategy
- Create an empowering work environment



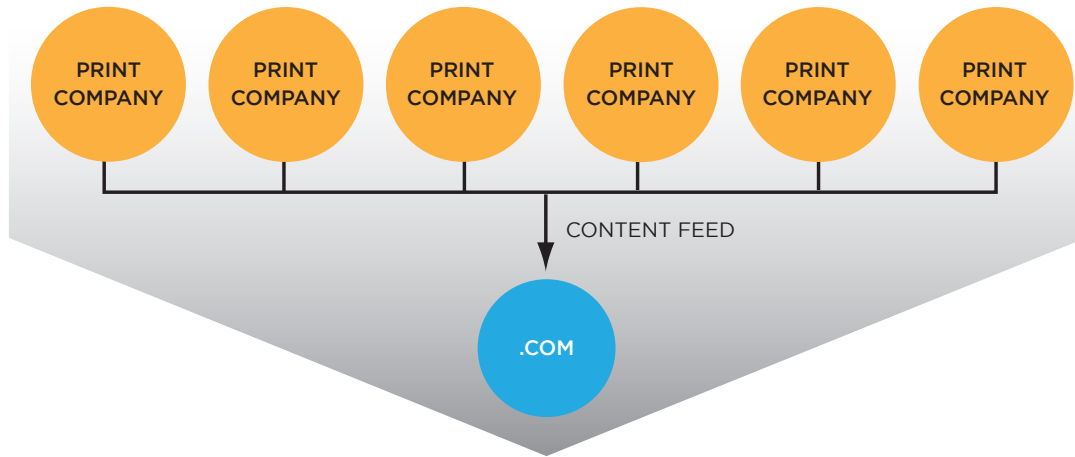
### Sustainable Operations

- Transition from owned to leased spaces
- Create flexible environments to meet current and future needs
- Ensure efficient utilization of space



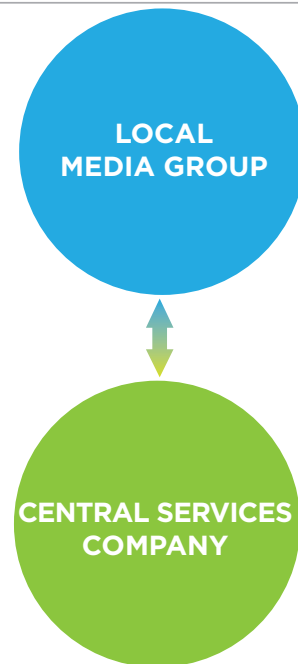
## OLD BUSINESS MODEL

Local newspaper companies share content with regional digital affiliate for digital distribution.



## NEW BUSINESS MODEL

Local media group digitally distributes content and shares content with central services company for print publication. Central services company also supports media group operations such as HR, IT, Finance.



## Design Concept

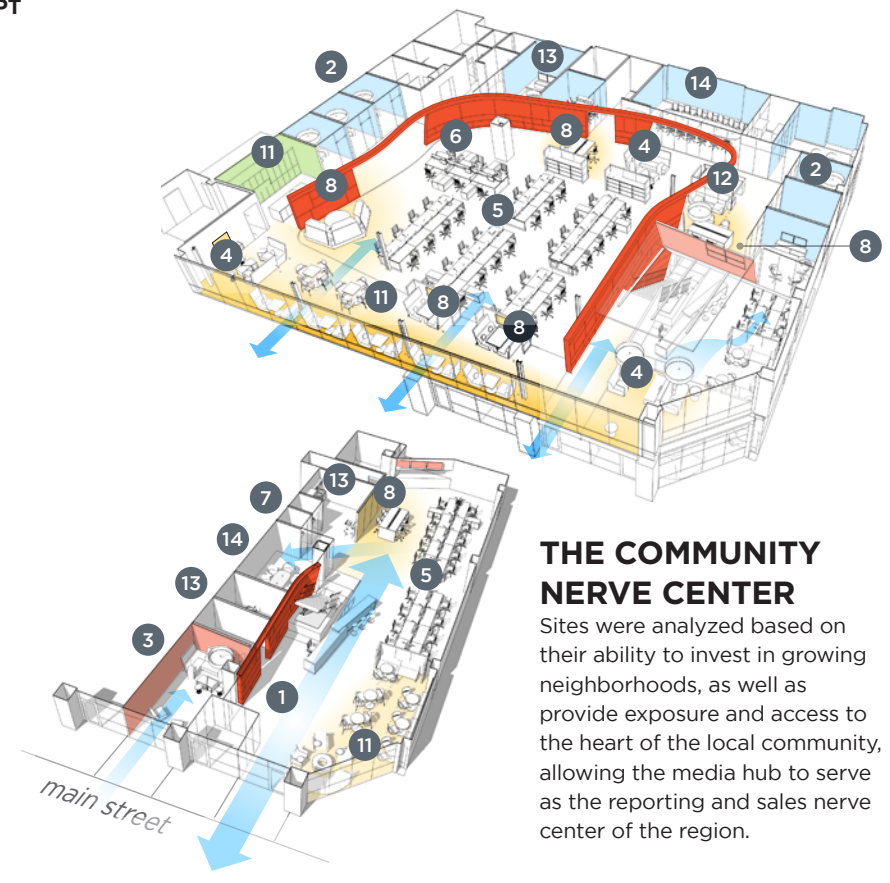
Strategic objectives derived from the visioning session were synthesized through an intensive hands-on design charrette into architectural concepts for both the media group and the central services companies. For each geographic region the design team manipulated these concepts to provide creative solutions that respond to each site's unique spatial constraints of each site while maintaining the strategic objectives through a consistent kit of parts. The following diagram illustrates the business model transformation and the corresponding architectural concepts.

**KIT OF PARTS** The original design was established with the ability to respond to each location's specific needs and constraints, while simultaneously maintaining the essential pieces to support the vision and brand. These pieces make up the tool kit utilized at each location.

- MULTIMEDIA
- BRANDING
- COLLABORATION
- MEETING
- OFFICE
- HOSPITALITY

## MEDIA GROUP CONCEPT

- 1 CONCIERGE/ARRIVAL
- 2 ENCLAVE
- 3 INTERVIEW ROOM
- 4 WORK/SOCIAL
- 5 MOBILE NEIGHBORHOODS
- 6 RESIDENT NEIGHBORHOOD
- 7 PHONE BOOTH
- 8 TEAM/MY WORK
- 9 TECHNOLOGY
- 10 TRANSPARENCY
- 11 COMMUNITY/NEIGHBORHOOD CAFE
- 12 LEADER HUB
- 13 COMMUNAL RESOURCES
- 14 STUDIOS/ENCLOSED COLLABORATION

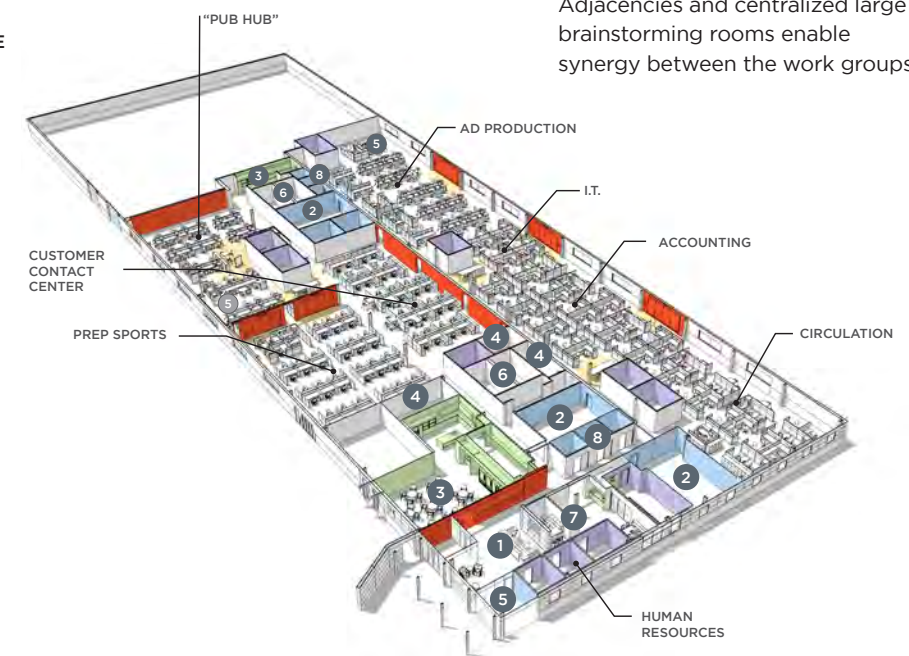


## THE COMMUNITY NERVE CENTER

Sites were analyzed based on their ability to invest in growing neighborhoods, as well as provide exposure and access to the heart of the local community, allowing the media hub to serve as the reporting and sales nerve center of the region.

## CENTRAL SERVICES CONCEPT

- 1 ARRIVAL
- 2 BRAINSTORM
- 3 COMMUNITY CAFE
- 4 FILE STORAGE
- 5 MOBILE NEIGHBORHOOD
- 6 RESTROOMS
- 7 LEADER HUB
- 8 ENCLAVE



## EFFICIENT SUPPORT

Central services were established to strategically collocate regional resources for business administration and support. Adjacencies and centralized large brainstorming rooms enable synergy between the work groups.

Logistical Challenges

Successful delivery of a portfolio of projects at this scale required a design team with comprehensive expertise and the agility to covertly deliver across the nation. Over the course of four years, a design team of twenty-plus architects, engineers, and interior designers collaborated with local contractors to realize workplace solutions for the central services and media companies in nine states across the United States.

Services Required

- VISIONING**

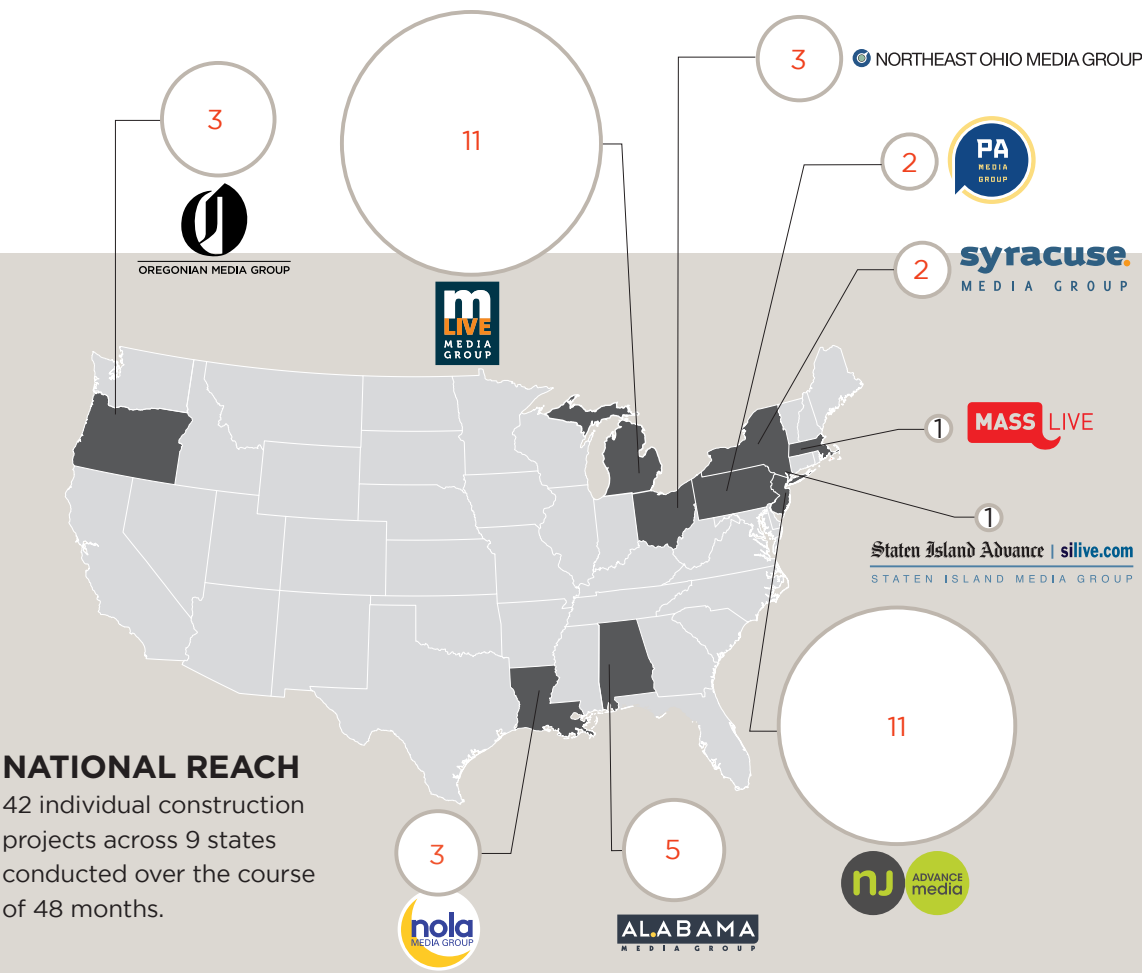
  - Business model incorporation
  - Leadership alignment
  - Priorities
  - Measures
  - Immersive design charrette
  - Culture change planning
- ARCHITECTURE**

  - Space planning
  - Kit-of-parts design
  - Environmental branding
  - Signage
  - Site adapt
  - Systems coordination
  - Specifications
- PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**

  - Project management
  - Construction management
  - Budgeting/estimating
  - Consultant integration
  - Real estate acquisition
  - Design/build
- ENGINEERING**

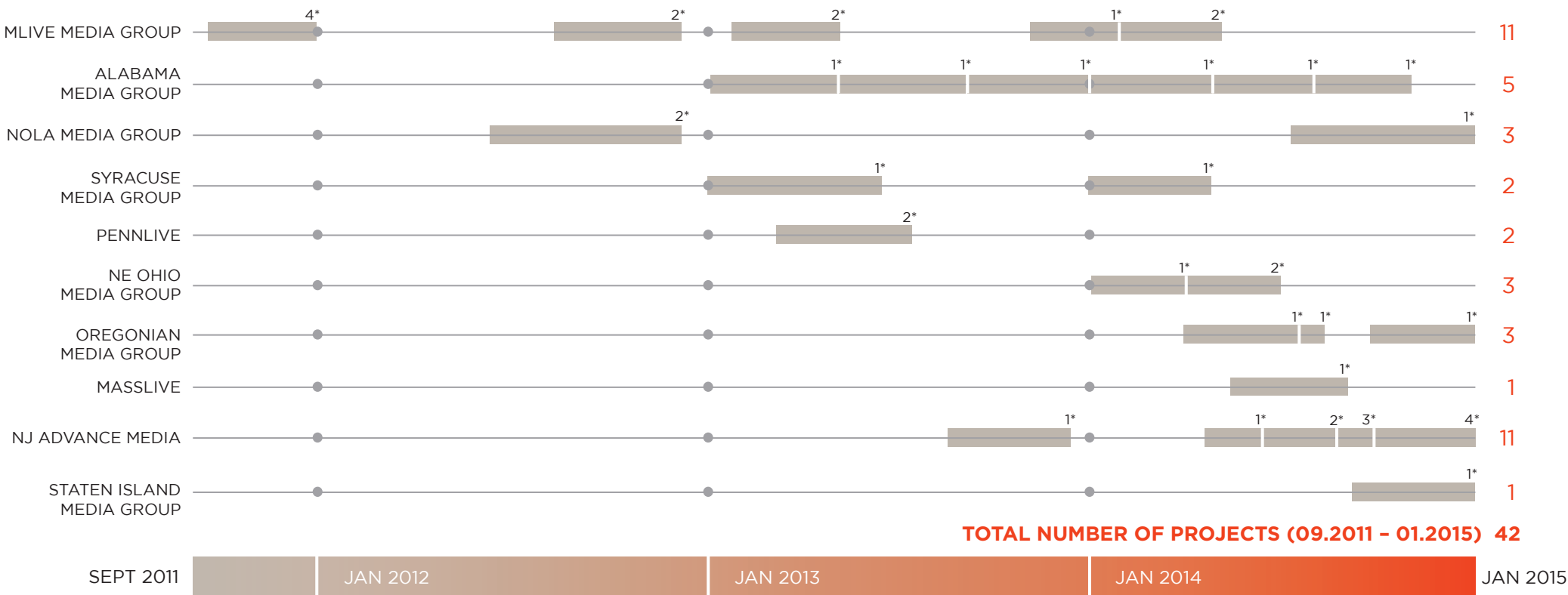
  - Electrical, mechanical and structural
  - Information technology integration
  - Audio/visual
- INTERIOR DESIGN**

  - Space planning
  - Furniture application design
  - Brand-specific finish palette development



AGGRESSIVE SCHEDULE

With project schedules ranging from 90-120 days, the project required a skilled team to ensure rapid design and construction. The complete project schedules included site selection, acquisition, construction, move in, and finally, occupancy. Individual media group project schedules are shown in the table to the right.





# CULTURE CHANGE

“The new business model needed a facility designed to encourage collaboration, promote growth and project community leadership. It is an integral part of our culture.”

-Syracuse Media Group

## Make the work visual

Visual continuity is essential, putting work activities on display. Whether formal meetings or spontaneous conversation, nearly all activity can be seen if not heard. Large scale photographs celebrate the published work providing a sense of pride for the community and staff.

## Promote collaboration

Entice staff to engage in varying styles of interaction from large collaboration to impromptu discussion. Increase the communication between work groups, specifically sales and content, creating a synergy vital to the successful delivery of information.

## Create openness and trust

An open work environment promotes interaction and breaks down departmental barriers. Access to mentors and leaders provide employees with a sense of empowerment. This new way of working and learning encourage growth and idea sharing.

## Create buzz, energy, and excitement

Transform the traditional newsroom to accommodate the digital workforce of the 21st century delivering solutions across multiple platforms. Encourage both content and sales staff to be agile by providing the tools needed to respond to the demands of a digital culture, increase efficiency and build productivity.

## Celebrate the new business while respecting heritage

With the transformation into a digital-first media group, co-branding was used to unify the company’s legacy with the new brand. This melding of companies developed a recognizable brand while still honoring the heritage of newsprint.

Infused heritage photos illustrate “culture matters” in an ever advancing environment.



Team/my work spaces are located adjacent to resident/mobile working neighborhoods allow staff to switch from focused “my” work to impromptu “team” work, changing postures and locations. Often placed along high traffic pathways to enhance exposure, promote conversation and display the work being done to all employees.



Touch-down zones are situated along the perimeter of the open working neighborhoods, providing peripheral knowledge of activity and increased visual connection to work being developed.



Mobile neighborhoods allow transient staff to work in ways that best support “how they work”. Increased engagement raises levels of connectivity, learning and inspiration. Low partitions keep open site lines and encourage communication with neighbors.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

High traffic, high exposure sites were strategically chosen to promote the brand as part of the community. Their presence in the city center demonstrates accessibility and investment to the local economy.

## Invite the public into the conversation

By growing the public's interest in the development of media, a stronger bond is created between producer and consumer. The public feels welcomed and invited into the daily activity of the hub. The resulting space serves as a social hub that supports community interaction as well as focused work zones.

## Encourage staff to engage with the community

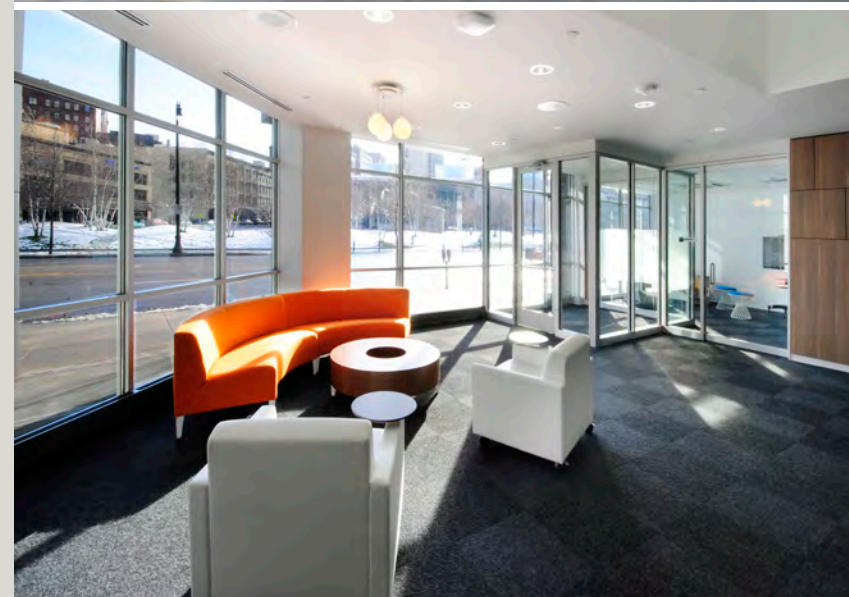
Immersion into the local culture, business, and events ensures a deep awareness of the pulse of the region. Employees are encouraged to engage with the local people and places as part of their daily workflow. The office feels like a place to easily come and go without an interruption to work.

## Invest in the recovery of the central business district

The central business district is the heart of the community and foundation for economic growth. Presence downtown expresses an interest to support local government and businesses in the development of the future by investing in the local economy.



Highly visible brand/messaging systems foster engagement amongst community and establish an environment of innovation and forward thinking.



The transparent facade and visible lounge furniture near the entry welcomes the public and puts the activity of the hub and community/neighborhood cafe on display at the street level. Interview rooms are strategically placed street side to create transparency to "who" and "what" is being reported - inviting the public into the conversation. These rooms are equally transparent to the interior, contributing to the awareness and knowledge of current events amongst staff.



FAR LEFT: A distinctive color palette reinforces brand identity while establishing a sense of place within the local community. LEFT: Custom signage/branding takes advantage of the central location and draws interest of the public with a dominant presence in the community.

Locating work/social neighborhoods along the exterior wall promotes team/community connectivity by creating a highly visible and engaging presence along street front. Eliminating barriers to the public immerses staff in local culture and establishes trust within the community.



Visible from the street, a community/neighborhood cafe setting with a concierge to greet guests creates a casual and inviting environment. Street-facing branding and live media streaming create a sense of place and interaction for outsiders.





# TALENT RETENTION & RECRUITMENT

Vibrant, fresh, and sophisticated architecture and palette complement the brand, creating a unified experience to aid the culture change

## Create an empowering work environment

Freedom in the workplace empowers individuals to choose how they work. The environment is sensitive to the human condition, and supports all work styles and needs, providing a comfortable atmosphere that encourages healthy lifestyles and welcomes diversity.

## Recruitment

Showcase environments that are competitive on a national scale to recruit the best and brightest talent in the industry. Spaces need to reflect the values of the next generation and support their preferred work styles. Support socialization, networking, and multitasking.

## Retention

Retain the staff that support and build the new business model. Maintain an efficient and successful workplace environment. Provide places that foster personal development through mentorship, ensuring the strength of future leadership. Promote individuality and reward results.



Natural light and prominent views are showcased and treated as an asset where possible. Large volumes are utilized as hubs around which all other functions are organized, and left open to allow for maximum borrowed daylight. This provides employees a sense of empowerment, rather than an individual office.

Combining hospitality and teaming functions supports the multitasking nature of the next generation workforce. Interactions can be more casual than reserving a conference room and allow a change in posture. Phone booths provide the acoustic privacy required to complement the lively conversations and “buzz” of the open work environment.



The architecture embraces formally and conceptually the idea of cafe style work settings. As a feature design element it emphasizes the importance of the employee and supports different work styles. This gesture expresses the commitment to a changing workplace dynamic and pays tribute to the desired needs of the staff.



Traversing through the space, “multimedia walls” serve as the canvas for staff - supporting community photography, digital displays, and white “idea” boards.



Adjustable height workstations provide employees an opportunity for atypical working postures, supporting comfort and wellness through ergonomics.



Unique and inspiring entrances illustrate a sense of pride for company, staff, and guests to celebrate, while also creating a “wow” factor. Each hub is customized to provide a local flavor promoting a sense of belonging and place. Locally reclaimed wood serves as a backdrop to the Oregonian brand. The branding on the ceiling and floor give tribute to the printing heritage by resembling the old fashioned print press method.



Vibrant, fresh, and sophisticated architecture and palette complement the brand, creating a unified experience to aid and celebrate the culture change within.



“With the help of Progressive AE, we decided to renovate the truck garage of the Grand Rapids Press Printing & Operations Center near Grand Rapids into an office building to hold 250 employees—a very ambitious and creative endeavor.”

-Advance Central Services Michigan

## Build two strong companies

Maintaining two separate companies that act as one entity is essential to ensure long-term success. Media Hubs conduct business in the public eye, interacting directly with the surrounding communities. They are responsible for developing content, building sales through strategic products, and marketing the enterprise for a localized region.

The regional central services company act as the supporting backbone that keeps the regional media hubs running smoothly. They are responsible for managing finance, human resources, information technology, operations, in addition to the print and distribution for print products.

## Transition from owned to leased

The business focus is to be on the products and information. The management and maintenance required of owning facilities across the U.S. redirected resources from the primary business. By transitioning to leased property, management allows property-intensive resources to be reinvested back into the core business, in addition to keeping each region flexible, with the ability to respond to and take advantage of the local real estate market.

## Flexible environments to meet current and changing needs

Create a flexible workplace that can be transformed to support an ever-changing market. The space supports the varied work styles that today’s digital worker requires and allows for adaptation to the changing needs of the future.



Renovating legacy real estate locations for re-use, such as this former truck storage and maintenance facility which was converted to office space, can capitalize on their location and proximity to infrastructure while returning the asset to productive use.



Above, a random lighting design allows the space to be reconfigured, unconstrained by the ceiling grid. The workspace highlights flexibility showcasing the multiple work styles available within a single office. Mobile workstations increase space efficiency by limiting personal storage and providing more space for communal working/social/teaming zones.

Left: Media hubs are located in central business districts, providing high public exposure and access to local government, businesses, and events.





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