

An Interview with Herman Miller CEO Brian Walker

Earlier this year Herman Miller CEO **Brian Walker** announced his intention to retire at the end of August 2018, contingent on the Board of Directors having settled on his replacement. Mr. Walker has been the President and CEO since July 2004 when he took the reins from his predecessor as CEO and the current Chairman of the Board, **Michael Volkema**, and much has changed since 2004 – both in the industry and at Herman Miller. officeinsight Publisher Bob Beck sat down with Mr. Walker for an interview at NeoCon in June.

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Meet Me in St. Louis: The Renewal and Expansion of Eero Saarinen's Gateway Arch Park and Museum

In St. Louis, Missouri, that city's **Gateway Arch** was designed by Eero Saarinen to commemorate the United States' westward expansion and was completed in 1965. In 2010, architecture and urban design firm **Cooper Robertson** earned the opportunity to help lead the restoration of the Gateway Arch Museum and the surrounding parks. Newly unveiled, the restored and expanded **Gateway Arch National Park** and Gateway Arch Museum show that excellent museum architecture, great monumental public art, and well-designed outdoor public spaces can help make a city great.

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Concurrents – Environmental Psychology: Silent Conversations

Humans are a status driven species, and when a new space is being designed, it's important to understand how relative status is indicated in the current one – new plans must recognize and respond, in some way to existing status “rules.” If private offices are being eliminated as one office incarnation leads into the next, employees will work to identify or create a clear and easily seen “non-office” status “symbol” – which might be access to an executive section of a floor or bathroom or something else.

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traditional office model to an agile workplace and provided opportunities to highlight UM's brand.

"By strategically retaining existing areas and rebuilding others, the design team was able to completely transform the existing space into one that better serves the operational needs of UM," said Jeff Knoll, a design director at TMA who oversaw the project. "The creation of small, distinct 'neighborhoods' – like a Town Hall, Screening Room, and Sky Lounge, among others – helps employees navigate the office's expansive footprint, and adds color, depth and functionality to the space."

TMA created neighborhoods to reduce the scale of the space and provide self-sufficient team work areas. Each neighborhood is entered via a "portal" that announces its name for wayfinding purposes and a sense of place. The office's perimeter features exposed ceilings and clusters of decorative lights, and a variety of workspaces can be found here, ranging from traditional desks, standing height high-tops, lounge seating and oversized daybeds. Walls in this area are highlighted by varying tones of red, UM's signature color.

Serving as a focal point for the space is a townhall, a

college-quad-like area, with moveable furniture that allows for casual meetings for groups of all sizes, and circulation to cross into other areas of the office. Bordering the townhall are banquette booths which provide staff alternate work areas for working or meeting. A large screening room adjacent to the townhall allows UM to host informal presentations in a more relaxed atmosphere while serving as a space for internal meetings and screenings. The room can expand via a large glass garage door that opens up to the townhall space. A big café provides a space for constant daily use, not only for meals, but for small meetings, large presentations and townhalls. One of UM's main branding concepts is to create "moments that matter"; moments that become starting points for conversations, moments that create memories, moments that make us smile. In this spirit, TMA created a "Sky Lounge," a white space with cloud graphics throughout, applied in such a way

to create a surrealist play between reality and illusion. Stepping into this area, staff can enter a new world in which to work.

"Our goal for redesigning the UM global headquarters was to transform a 20th century workplace into a productive 21st century one where employees and clients alike would want to be," said Brian Foreman, Director of Real Estate for IPG Mediabrands. "The new space that we worked with Ted Moudis Associates to build provides a bold and creative environment for work and collaboration, and increases working morale, energy and creativity. We tried to cater to our employee's needs by featuring lounges where workers can relax and feel at home. Some of the spaces are designed to encourage workers to think more creatively or playfully. We even created a speakeasy next to the elevator lobby. Drinks served after 5:00 pm!" [Read More](#)

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