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Flight of Fancy: Sparking Creativity Through Workplace Design

A bright and bold design acts as a path to sparking creativity and boosting morale.

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Traditional offices wouldn't cut it for an organization with a futuristic vision and youthful workforce. So ATS, a transportation tech company, hired a design firm known for hip, highly inventive interiors to make a strong statement at its new headquarters in Shenyang, China.

Even Young H Design's name suited ATS' goals—as did its mostly millennial staff. “Like most of our clients, ATS wanted something outside the box,” says Antonio Berton, lead architect at the firm known for undulating shapes, unexpected lighting and unorthodox furnishings. “Our directive was to make a colorful, functional working space to boost morale and spark creativity and productivity.”

The project took five months to build on two floors of a high-rise. In March 2021, more than 200 employees moved in—and the company hopes to grow its workforce by a third within three years.

Activity-based areas are carved out of the floors' vast 25,000 square feet to offer flexibility: Workers can focus in private, collaborate in large groups or brainstorm in small clusters. Informal meeting areas are strategically placed

And ATS told the designers they were happy with the end goal: They had successfully created an artistic atmosphere that encourages workers to explore their imaginations.



The main lobby has a marble floor that evokes ripples of water, a back wall with layered lines that mimic the shape of mountains and an orange sculpture shaped like a cloud. “We wanted the room to symbolize serenity, stability and wisdom—the core values of the firm,” Berton says. “The bright cloud embraces the company’s hightech mission.”





Brightly colored walls and floors with dynamic patterns in informal meeting areas evoke roadways and help ignite innovation.



Snack bars and other busy spaces are on a smaller floor to minimize noise in work areas. Each of three bars serves its own trendy beverage— bubble tea, fresh juice or energy drinks. “The bars are cozy settings where people can socialize and exchange ideas,” Berton says.

transportation industry.



Multifaceted red and orange walls and ceilings express energy and passion while warming and brightening a windowless space.



Lighting is creatively built into wall panels while pendants in the form of modernized Chinese lanterns signal the location of social areas. “Great lighting can give depth to a space and create a cozier atmosphere,” Berton says.