

Press Release.

## COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COLOURFUL PIXELS.



**The territory of the network provider CISCO Systems is the virtual world. This is also reflected in the design of the Stuttgart branch. The advantage of this is: Doing without material space favours the quality of the location itself and promotes communication.**

The dream of a paperless office developed in the mid nineteen nineties. For the majority of companies, however, work of this kind has proved to be nothing more than a hollow pipe-dream of the Internet boom. Instead of vanishing, the cellulose document mountains have piled up ever higher and higher. But not at CISCO Systems. This international corporation with a German subsidiary, ranked as one of the top companies in the country, and that won the "Germany's Best Employer Award 2009" has specialised in the development of software and hardware for network technology. CISCO Systems digital field of activity is plain everywhere in the daily working lives of the employees: the majority of staff are mobile, they do their work on a small notebook and are thoroughly familiar with a digital workload. Not a scrap of paper.

The decision was taken in early 2009 to close the old Stuttgart branch and move into a modern, open office building. The goal was to make an efficient use of this location change. "We wanted to use the situation as an opportunity for introducing CISCO employees to a new office type, one that has often been talked about, but far too infrequently implemented", said Stephan Kerkel, Project Manager at the Frankfurt architectural office Aukett + Heese, responsible for renovating and reconstructing the ten-year-old real-estate property. This new office type was the so-called non-territorial office.

### **Colourful diversity in an open office.**

The idea behind this: to replace the old fixed workplaces within a marked-off open space area containing flexible working-units of different characteristics that can be used by the employees based on their daily needs and activities. The spectrum ranges from individual concentrated work in an encapsulated space to spaces for informal discussion in the corridor areas right down to the classic open-office structure with an acoustically sealed conference

room. The striking point about this communal working solution is that the communication and touch-down zones take up about two-thirds of the total area, while the classic back-office is reduced to a minimum.

This heterogeneous arrangement not only offers variety, but also the opportunity for choice. “Firstly, the work done is not the same every day and secondly a person is not in the same mood every day”, the architect explained. “Sometimes you want company and at other times quiet seclusion with no noise or people around. This range should be reflected wherever possible in the architecture and the furnishing of the office.”

While tables, dividing walls and storage furnishings from Bene were used in the office area, the lounge and think-tank zones have been equipped with Bene Coffice seating furniture and High\_Com desks. The conference rooms, which are used to some extent for international meetings, are sealed off from the general area with acoustic pearls and furnished with the elegant Bene AL management series. The somewhat cooler atmosphere here promotes concentration in the otherwise linguistically lively rooms in its own special way – by restraint and withdrawal. Seating and standing table constellations dotted about from other furniture manufacturers round off the back-office zone furnishing concept and encourage face-to-face communication in an informal setting and in passing.

### **Perception from different angles**

Breast-high storage furniture between the separate work areas, some even with integrated pot plants, ensure that the employees seated behind them feel spatially sheltered, while people standing up or walking around the 1700 square metre office premises can always have the big picture. The gentle colour changes in the textile floor covering – from a light grey-brown tone to a somewhat darker shade – follow the same scheme, drawing a clear line between open access areas and quiet zones. “The differentiation in the spatial perception between standing (more communicative) and sitting (when you are usually concentrating) was an important aspect of our planning from the start”, Kerkel explained. “Ultimately, the objective is that employees can interact with one another not only in the conference rooms defined for the purpose, but also in the back-office.” The spatial opportunities for discussions are almost unlimited.

The office atmosphere is lightened by a couple of amorphously shaped cells that stand freely in the working landscape like bright spatial sculptures. These “amoebas”, as the architects have dubbed them, not only set colour accents, but also provide spatial orientation. Above all, they mark out places where colleagues can withdraw occasionally into a solitary space, or be social.

The colour scheme of the separate islands has been adjusted to match the broad Bene colour spectrum and continued throughout the whole of the interior design. It could be pure chance or perhaps a sign of the synergy between the two companies: the strong colours chosen here pick up on CISCO’s corporate design colours, thereby reflecting the corporate culture.

Whoever works here, according to the inspiring message, is an important pixel in a big, colourful and communicative network mosaic. Leisure time and power napping are also included: The yellow amoeba accommodates a tea kitchen and bar, table football is hidden away in the green amoeba, and the light blue amoeba has relaxation spaces complete with a massage chair and a chaise longue.

### **Efficiency through spatial flexibility.**

The CISCO Stuttgart branch is designed for 100 to 130 employees. But since most of the people are out and about in the field for much of the time, there are not usually more than an average of 30, 40 employees on site. This is reflected in the number of workstations, allowing valuable spatial resources that are usually in very short supply to be used for luxurious and differentiated spatial possibilities. This makes the non-territorial office an efficient solution for everyone involved, employer and employees: The one benefits from a smaller-sized office, the other from the useful investment of the money thus saved.

*“We are very happy with the way the concept has been implemented, and Cisco Stuttgart employees participated in the design. The design and furnishing of our rooms with intelligent Cisco technology and modern furniture puts our own vision for the “future of work” into effect. Our employees enjoy spending time in the office, because it offers a place for concentrated work and effective meetings as well as for relaxing get-togethers during the work breaks. Our customers and partners are also very impressed with the office. The number of visitors doubled in the first three months. This is also a contribution to economic and ecological working methods; it means we reach a greater number of people interested in us and our services.”* Peter Rothfuss, Regional Sales Manager & Office Leader Cisco Stuttgart.

*“It is a fact that the organisation of space is perhaps the least recognised – and most effective – tool to bring about cultural change, accelerate innovation projects and to promote the learning process in an organisation.”* Tom Peters, US management consultant.

### **Facts.**

Project	CISCO Stuttgart
Client	CISCO Stuttgart
Architects	Aukett + Heese, Frankfurt a.M.
Interior	Bene Frankfurt, GmbH
Products	Bene, Bla Station, DeSede, Fritz Hansen, Poltrona Frau, Steelcase, Vitra, Walter Knoll
Photos	Werner Huthmacher, Berlin

### **About Bene.**

Bene is convinced that there is a clear connection between the design of office and work environments, company culture and the success of a company. Bene's concepts, products and services turn this philosophy into reality. Development, design and production as well as consulting and sales are united under one roof. With 82 sites in 33 countries and 1,295

employees worldwide Bene offers its customers regional access to all of its services. In the 2008/09 business year, consolidated sales of the Bene Group amounted to EUR 265.3 million. Bene is market leader in Austria and number six in Europe.

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