

Activating the Lobby, Creating a High-Value Hub



Bryan Kristof
Senior Designer
and Director
of Operations,
Abel Design
Group

As the quest to enhance the marketability of office lease space continues, the building lobby has become an amenity space for tenants and building guests to meet, collaborate and escape. Budget is one of the main reasons the building lobby has been overlooked for so long. Building owners are turned off by the perceived high cost of renovation as well as the project scope. Even with a large budget, the volume and complexity of a lobby renovation can be overwhelming. For example, the construction must be phased in a manner that allows the lobby to remain operational during a renovation. However, with a few strategic design decisions and clever planning, this pass-through space can be turned into a high value hub, even with a modest budget.

STRATEGIC DECISIONS

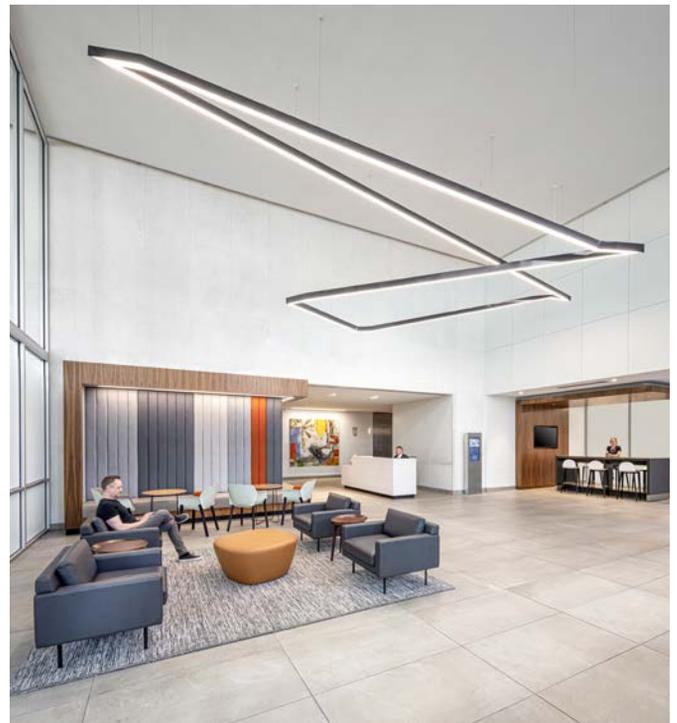
A key consideration a designer must make in a lobby renovation is where to invest the budget. Originally designed in 1975, the buttoned-up U.S. Bank building lobby needed a transformation to reflect the infusion of tech company tenants and millennial workforce.

MATERIALS MATTER

A highlight of the design, the colorful felt-covered banquettes, soften, modernize and add a playfulness to the once formal space. Clean and modern furniture and finishes integrate with the existing design features that were not being replaced, such as the marble-clad walls.

DUAL-FUNCTION LIGHTING

Lobbies often have voluminous ceilings. A dramatic light fixture can help cut into the volume of the space and become an iconic part of the building design. The sculptural lighting feature in the U.S. Bank building lobby is visible from the exterior and, at night, creates a dramatic effect for passersby.



MULTIPURPOSE ZONES

Three seating areas provide opportunities for collaboration as well as a personal escape. The lounge area offers a convenient escape to check messages, the banquette area serves as a meeting hub, and a high-top table area offers a place to power up and even host a meeting in a pinch.

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

The ability to access power sources is a must in the modern lobby, and now an integral part of the design plan. Power connections and USB ports can be found integrated into soft seating areas. A strong, free Wi-Fi signal allows people to surf the web or remote into their home or business computer without using their phone as a hotspot.

