



Time Warner Cable, Ohio



TELECOMMUNICATIONS;
COLUMBUS, OHIO

Topic:

*Brand
Collaboration
Environment
People*

Application:

Open Office

Project Scope:

*600 occupants; 650 workstations;
160,000 square feet*

Herman Miller Product:

Ethospace® System

Program/Service:

*Performance Environments™:
Change Management*

Year Completed:

2007

When Time Warner Cable was planning its consolidation of five offices and its move into a beautiful new building, they turned to Herman Miller's change management team and Continental Office Environments for help. The services provided—everything from key messaging about the change to help during the move itself—proved to be invaluable to the company, setting a precedent for future moves.





When Time Warner Cable in Columbus began planning the consolidation of five offices into its beautiful and prominent new headquarters, their vision was to “improve communication within and among departments, use space as efficiently as possible and provide a comfortable work environment for all.”

Job attraction and retention was another goal. As a highly visible brand, Time Warner Cable wanted people to know that it's not only a great company to do business with, but also a great place to work.

Many of the staff members were moving from private offices to an open plan, with reduced individual space—never an easy transition, let alone with 600 people. Because Time Warner Cable operates a 24/7 business, the move also had to be completed without any interruption of service, in a time frame that was very aggressive.

Finding smart furniture solutions that met company goals was the easy part. Herman Miller's Ethospace was a perfect fit for them. But how do you go about preparing people for the myriad of changes they'd soon be facing—a new building, an open environment, less work space, and a completely different way of working?

Time Warner Cable couldn't have chosen a better furniture partner to meet the challenges head-on. The Herman Miller team knew it would be critical to offer an integrated solution. This included services from the Continental Office Environments dealership as well as from Herman Miller's Change Management team, who provided all the strategies, programs, tools, and resources needed to help employees prepare for and accept change.

The first step was a trip to Herman Miller for Rhonda Fraas, Time Warner Cable's president and Mary Jo Green, Vice President of Public Affairs. Upon arrival, Ms. Fraas and Ms. Green met with Herman Miller's Chairman of the Board, Mike Volkema. “Mike talked frankly with them about the challenges of moving an organization to an open environment, even discussing his own leadership team's struggles with embracing new ways of working,” says Rachel Friedman, Continental's Executive Vice President. “That really resonated with them. It was executive to executive talking about the importance of managing change, which was definitely a priority for both Rhonda and Mary Jo.”

And therein lies the secret to successful change management: buy-in from the top.



"It makes such a difference when executives actually embrace and invest themselves, because it's not just about buying services and hoping they work," continues Friedman. "It's about partnering with us and really investing the time and energy to lead by example. Time Warner Cable's executives were all moving to open offices, too. So they didn't just talk the talk, they walked the walk."

The message was clear: We believe in this change, and we think it's going to be good for all of us.

"There's a term for this called 'cascading' which is when a consistent message is driven through the organization from the top down, from senior management to mid management to employees," explains Tracy Brower, who heads Herman Miller's Vision and Change Management group. "That is really key in a successful change strategy. We've seen situations where there are greater and lesser amounts of leadership commitment, and buy in on the part of employees is always so much more significant when senior leadership shows by their actions that they're behind the change."

When people are impacted by change, their reactions, concerns, and questions follow a fairly typical pattern, continues Brower. "Knowing this pattern helps us coach leaders and managers about the most appropriate types of responses at different points in the process. We also provide information about how to support unique individual needs throughout the changes. These can be contextual, emotional, or tactical just to name a few."

Between Continental and Herman Miller's Change Management team, every base was covered. Brower and Holly Kriger, another member of the Vision and Change Management team, led a Change Leadership Workshop, where obstacles to successful change were identified and leaders were trained to help people progress through the process with acceptance and enthusiasm.

A "Jump Start Session" included messaging, a WIFM (What's In it For ME?) connection to the business need, desired outcomes, and other issues. The team also analyzed stakeholders/audience: shared best practices: and developed a detailed communication roadmap including communication vehicles, audiences, and timing.

Another key element of every Jump Start process is the creation of a theme and graphic identity for the change. Building on Time Warner Cable's tagline, "The Power of You," the group came up with "The Power of New." Continental partnered with Herman Miller to design the accompanying graphic, which was then infused in all move communications, materials and giveaways.

The final stage, implementation, included an information kit for all employees; approaches for Making SPACE (Sort, Purge, Archive, Consolidate, Enhance); a roadshow (a consistent presentation and talking points delivered by leaders to their teams beginning with the senior executive team); workplace protocols; and the development and implementation of activities for the actual move itself.


"The Time Warner Cable team was really committed to ensuring that employees were totally supported throughout the move process," says Kriger. "And their investment in time and effort was rewarded with the employees' commitment and enthusiasm."

The move itself was done in three phases over weekends. "It's a real nail-biter when you think about all the equipment and files and people who not only have to move in but be completely operational by Monday morning," says Friedman. "But we were determined to do our very best to take care of them."

As a result, things couldn't have gone more smoothly, says Ms. Fraas. "The assistance we received from Continental and Herman Miller in preparing employees for the move was invaluable," she says. "They were exceptionally responsive in understanding our goals. Thanks to their efforts—and to the design and the furniture itself—our employees are thrilled with the new facility, including the innovative use of space and the open environment. Because of the advanced preparation and communication we did, these changes have been embraced throughout the organization."

"Recently, when we visited Time Warner Cable in their new facility, they said they were very happy with the success of the project as well as the morale and buy-in from employees," confirms Herman Miller's Monique Robinson, Global Account Manager for Time Warner. "They credited the change management effort with 'making all the difference!'"

In fact, their new headquarters have set the standard throughout the Time Warner Cable organization and several other offices will soon follow suit. And what could be a better testament to success?

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