

Ash Brokerage

Fort Wayne, Indiana

Case Study



Since its establishment in 1971, Ash Brokerage had grown so much that the firm was operating out of two separate locations that were very traditional and didn't reflect the people and culture of the family-owned and run insurance brokerage operation. CEO Tim Ash had a vision of bringing employees, clients, and community together. He imagined a new, inspiring, energetic space that would enhance culture and engage employees. A chance meeting with partners in space design set the tone for what's possible in the workplace—and the potential impact a well-designed space can have on the workforce.



Unlocking the Potential in People

Growth may have been the initial driver behind the project, but Tim Ash also took the opportunity to create a space that enhances the Ash Brokerage culture while supporting the people who work there. Tim's serendipitous meeting with architecture firm MSKTD was soon followed with a visit to Haworth's corporate headquarters. Besides touring the showroom, the Ash Brokerage team engaged in sessions that would delve into the facets of the firm's organizational culture.

Haworth deployed its LENS™ Assessment Toolset through a workplace strategy design workshop to dig into culture and workspace needs. Grounded in science, the LENS tools utilize a proprietary process to unlock, assess, and analyze the data necessary to bring informed design recommendations to Haworth clients.

"You think you're going to look at furniture and fit that furniture into your office, and it's just supposed to work," said Tim Ash, CEO at Ash Brokerage. "What we found was something much different. We know that anybody can make furniture, but it's the furniture in your surroundings—in your architecture—that unlocks potential in people. That's when you have magic."



A Vision Comes to Life

Rising nine stories above a parking garage in downtown Fort Wayne, the Ash Skyline Plaza takes up an entire city block and has retail stores, a residential tower, a parking garage, and a rooftop green space. Levels 7, 8, and 9 accommodate the Ash Brokerage headquarters, which covers approximately 65,000 square feet. The new space features a three-story atrium, dining and recreation areas, and outdoor terraces. It's more than a national headquarters—it's a vision come to life.

Bringing People Together

"One of the big driving components of his company are the people and the culture," said Josh Smith, Architect at MSKTD. "Tim wanted a place for them so they can benefit from all the amenities."

Ash Brokerage culture encourages people to be passionate about what they do, get the job done right, and treat everyone with dignity. It's about performing without seeking the spotlight—one of the reasons Ash Brokerage has been named one of the "Best Places to Work in Indiana" eight out of nine years.

"Some of the key elements were to incorporate three floors and conjoin all the people who work together," said Joleen Gottwald, Interior Designer at MSKTD. "Tim also wanted a space that was open with low-level partitions so there's a lot of camaraderie within the workspace. Another aspect of the design was to let in light, so we have a lot of glass in the project."







Engaging Employees, Serving Customers

With a strong company culture, employee engagement was really important for Ash Brokerage, so employees were encouraged to provide feedback around the space design. There is variety in sizes and types of meeting spaces, for private conversations or large brainstorming sessions. The Skyline Conference Center can be separated into three independent spaces for meetings, training, or special events.

The vibrant color palette, along with coffee bars, collaboration areas, and even a ping-pong table, support the energy and vibe that Tim Ash desired for the workspace.

"You can go to any office environment, sit at a desk, in a chair, and do your work," said Tim Ash. "But I look at our space and say we made this choice to invest in the products that we selected with Haworth as a way to unlock the potential in people so our clients are better served because of the environment our people are in."

Open, Inviting, Collaborative, and Inspiring

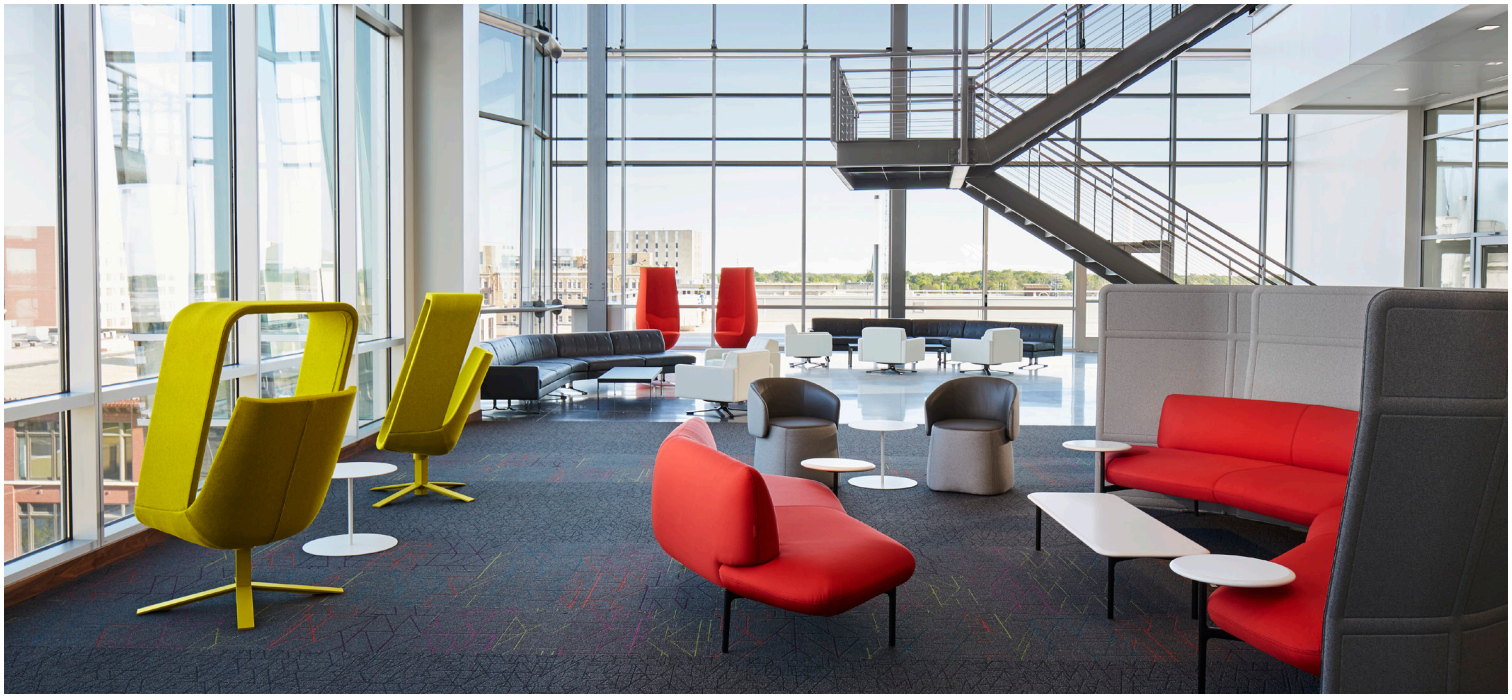
About nine months after move-in, Haworth conducted a post-occupancy survey as part of the LENS assessment. Results revealed that employees working in the new space seem more satisfied than in the old space.

Personal Control and Workplace Affordances were the two categories that made significant improvements since the pre-occupancy survey. In particular, respondents rated personal control over different aspects of the physical environment significantly high, especially around work area appearance, flexibility of furniture to support work, the ability for people to organize and personalize their individual workspaces, and access to meeting rooms. Survey results showed that the new workspace afforded what people need to stay productive in a satisfactory and supportive environment. The respondents felt they had quality furniture, availability of technology tools, and a variety of work environments that contribute to their productivity.

The Ambient Environment category on the survey revealed the largest improvement overall, largely due to employees' access to natural light. In fact, the building was designed to allow every employee to be within 50 feet of a window for access to daylight, allowing for more inspiration and creativity.

Ash Brokerage employees have reacted positively to the space. "First of all, you see a lot of smiles," said Tim Ash. "You want to see the best in people—in attitude and in their spirit. This space has really unlocked that in people—the natural light, the creativity of the design, the furniture, and how it looks and makes people feel. There's not been a day since we moved in that there hasn't been a positive comment or someone on our team who isn't grateful for the environment and the experience it's created."







Customer Profile

Ash Brokerage is the nation's largest independently owned insurance brokerage firm, providing services to customers in the US since 1971. Working with financial professionals, Ash Brokerage leverages its relationships with more than 80 top-rated carriers to find the product that best fits clients' needs. Family-owned and run, the firm is driven and focused to doing what's right for clients in order to make a difference in the lives of people.

Haworth Product

- TecCrete®
- PowerBase AI
- Enclose®
- Compose®
- Patterns
- Suite™
- X Series®
- Reside® Desking
- Beside® Storage
- Belong™ Accessories
- Planes® Tables
- Zody® Seating
- Very® Task, Conference, Side, and Stool Seating
- Hello® Seating
- Harbor Work Lounge® and Ottoman
- ToDo® Seating
- Openest™
- Haworth Collection™

Architect / Design Firm

MSKTD & Associates, Inc.
Fort Wayne, IN

General Contractor

Weigand Construction
Fort Wayne, IN

Haworth Furniture Dealer

Interphase Interiors
Grand Rapids, MI

Photographer

Dave Burk

* Please note that some products shown are not manufactured by Haworth.

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