

HAWORTH

Redesigning Culture & Space

June 2018

Case Study
EPM Business Group

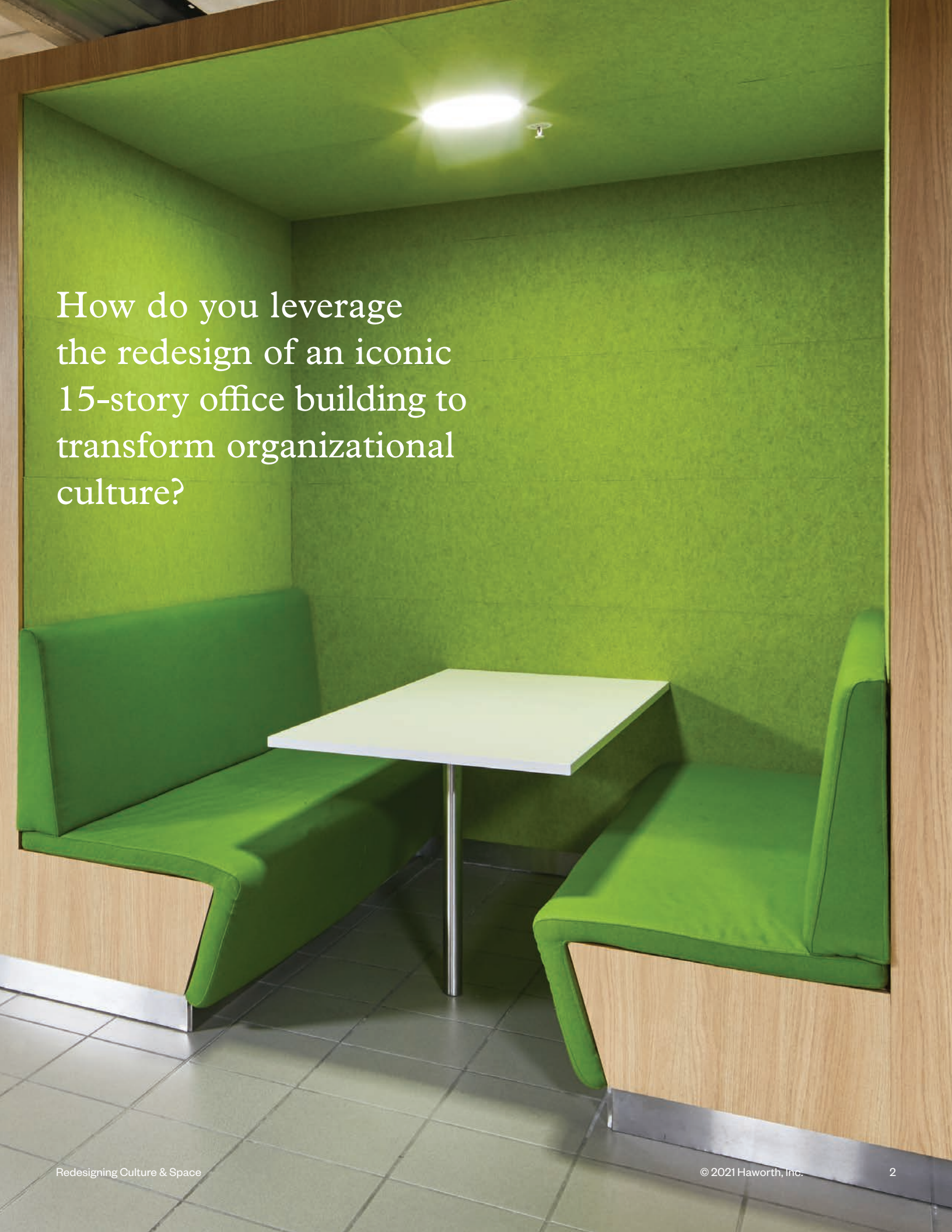
Location
Medellín, Colombia

Project Type
Headquarters Renovation

Design Firms
EPM Architectural Team
Studio Sur

Dealer Partner
Arista de Colombia



A modern office lounge area featuring two green upholstered sofas with light wood bases, facing each other around a white square table with a metal leg. The walls are covered in green acoustic panels, and the ceiling has a recessed light. The floor is made of light-colored square tiles.

How do you leverage
the redesign of an iconic
15-story office building to
transform organizational
culture?

Overview

EPM Business Group, a public services company headquartered in Medellín, Colombia with locations in Central America, the US, and Europe, provides services that improve the lives of more than 13 million people. EPM wanted to leverage the redesign of its iconic 15-story office building as an opportunity to transform its organizational culture—from one of hierarchical decision-making to a culture that fosters continuous improvement and superior customer experience.

Recognizing its 4,000 employees as EPM’s greatest asset, the project team delivered a people-centric redesign to better support well-being and performance through spaces that foster collaboration and bring value to business practices.

Specifications



- Building Age: 20 years
- Stories: 15
- Employee Capacity: 4,000

Objective

Create a space for EPM to better attract and retain talent, enable faster decision making, and increase knowledge transfer.

Solution

Use some existing assets and redesign space to optimize use, support sustainability efforts, maintain flexibility, and reduce operational costs.

Results

Reflecting organizational culture, the space promotes socializing and collaboration, innovation, and new ways of working.

A Cultural Shift and a Model for the Future

The 20-year-old building with capacity for 4,000 employees wasn't adequately supporting collaboration, connectivity, and adaptability. There was distance between executive-level managers and their teams due to physical constraints in the building. Collaboration happened mainly in formal, scheduled meetings behind closed doors or in cubicles. The enclosed environment restricted people from meeting and networking with others—even those in the same department.

The EPM Architectural team led and worked hand-in-glove with the Haworth Research Team and Studio Sur to create a pilot space with a focus on three key drivers: transform culture, foster collaboration, and understand the potential impact of the new space on employees' effectiveness.

Noise Reduction

The most important workspace features for EPM workers were legibility, noise, and meeting room design—acoustic support and adaptable meeting rooms were utilized throughout the building.



Research-Based Design

EPM partnered with Haworth to run diagnostics and collect data to identify the issues that impact human, organizational, and facilities performance. This research forms the foundation for Haworth's Organic Workspace® approach to space planning. As both client and partner, the EPM team collaborated from the beginning of the diagnostic phase to understand their current organizational culture and define the culture of the future.

Dynamic Space

Many individual private offices gave way to more collaborative, ancillary spaces. A variety of workspaces were designed throughout the building for the needs of different teams.





Haworth's involvement in creating value-driven customized workplace solutions takes place early in the design process through a collaborative change management approach that translates workplace research and knowledge into a conceptual applied design strategy. Feedback was gathered through senior leadership engagement, automated online employee surveys, onsite tours, senior management interviews, employee focus groups, and interactive project team and translation workshops.

Initial diagnostics revealed a recommendation to divide the project into two phases: first, the transition floor, which would serve as a pilot for the new workplace and influence the design of the rest of the building; the second phase would utilize feedback to design the rest of the building and implement a change management process customized for the needs of EPM employees.

A Connection to Nature

Well-placed planters, floor-to-ceiling windows that allow for natural light to flow indoors, and outdoor gathering spaces provide employees access to nature while supporting well-being.

“Together we have identified the opportunities, the diagnosis, and the support from Haworth that would guarantee the quality of the deliveries throughout the project renovation.”

Diego Salazar
Corporate Communications Manager, EPM





Research was conducted with 336 EPM employees to assess the impact of new workspace concepts within the pilot space compared to their traditional office space. Leveraging the data helped establish direction for workplace change. Haworth conducted a workplace assessment survey several months before EPM employees moved to the pilot space, and administered a post-move survey about three months after employees started using the pilot space, giving them the opportunity to learn about the new space and adjust to the change. Predictive modeling statistical techniques were also used to reveal the workspace capabilities and explain outcomes in the measurements of well-being, life satisfaction, inclusiveness, engagement, and performance.



Communicating Change & Designing the Space

Upcoming changes were communicated throughout the project to keep everyone aware of what was happening. Change management took a two-prong approach, focusing on both managers and employees. Since managers are responsible for driving change within the organization, a special training program was dedicated to them to receive feedback and provide the training and tools they required.

Employees were also provided with timely training and information. Change champions were identified to help move the organization faster through the change curve. The champions acted as ambassadors for the new workspace and were empowered to train, engage, and provide coworkers with information and tools for support.

Promote Socializing & Collaboration

A variety of workspaces designed for the needs of different teams were included to foster connection between employees.





“The western and eastern sections are more united through bridges that spiral, to create a dynamic space, breaking the symmetry and encouraging people to use and explore the building in a more dynamic way. It was key to be able to open the building to the outside. I believe the balconies are one big success of the project.”

Andrea Sánchez
Director, Studio Sur

The initial design was the basis for a strategic program that aligned the managers' vision, the company's objectives, and the real needs of all users. For the pilot project, two-thirds of the employee population were moved from cubicles with high partitions into cubicles with low panel heights. At the same time, a variety of collaborative meeting spaces and group social spaces were also added, along with various new technologies for those spaces.

Through the HumanSpace™ model EPM learned that the investment in the new office space has increased the performance of the human capital by 6.64 percent. Young people especially love the space, making the building an ideal recruiting tool. And, the 40 percent improvement sought after in the project has also been achieved through the reuse of existing furniture, as well as organization and standardization of all the remaining elements.



Customer Profile

Founded in 1955, EPM Business Group (Empresas Públicas de Medellín E.S.P.) is a public company based in the city of Medellín, Colombia. With locations in Central America, Chile, Mexico, United States, Spain, and Colombia, EPM contributes to people's well-being and equitable community development through responsible, comprehensive solutions for energy, water, sewer service, and information and communication technologies. EPM strives to improve the lives of more than 13 million people across the regions it serves.

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- Intuity® benching
- Kite table
- Lively® chairs
- M Series lockers and lateral files
- Monkey Nut
- Openest® Chick™ pouf
- Pace
- Places® system
- Planes® tables
- Space Enabler (Maria & Eddy)
- Very® task chairs
- Very wire seating
- Zody® chairs

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