

Inside Pixar Canada's Offices

Catherine Roscoe Barr | OCT 7, 2013

A collaborative atmosphere at Pixar Canada fuels a work-hard, play-hard culture.



To transform a three-floor, heritage-building space and set the stage for Pixar Canada Inc.'s collaborative culture, general manager Amir Nasrabadi worked with creative director Dylan Brown, chief technical officer Darwyn Peachy and local design firm Evoke International Design Inc. "We like to consider our space a smaller version of the Emeryville studio," says Nasrabadi, of the 30,000-square-foot Gastown studio.

"We knew that on each floor we would have a mix of large cubes, offices, meeting rooms and, importantly, have the best view—north side—available for everyone to enjoy," says director of human resources Sarah McNair. "Pixar values focus on collaboration, teamwork and producing work at the highest quality, so our space had to reflect that," she adds. Groovy common areas and large workspaces were purpose-built with the utmost quality and impeccable materials to inspire the high standard of work produced by Pixar Canada's 80 employees.

"We kind of have this work-hard, play-hard mentality," says creative director Dylan Brown of the corporate culture, adding that the layout encourages interaction among disparate departments. They wanted to give employees a reason to visit every floor, increasing natural interaction.

"The design of our space is really trying to encourage that flow and that casual connection, because that's where you'll get great ideas."

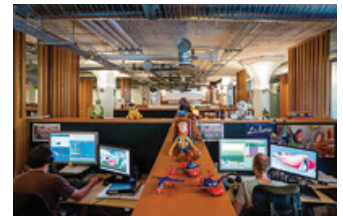
Workspaces

Only 80 staff work in the 30,000-square-foot studio. Spacious custom cubes were made from solid local wood - there are seven different types throughout the building—to soften the predominantly brick-and-concrete space.



Monsters, Inc. character Mike Wazowski

"We wanted to bring in some of the history of the company; it has such a rich history," says Brown, of the Pixar characters and original artwork in the studio. "It's important for people to remember that history and to feel a part of it. Now it's their company, too."



Library

The library, like all common spaces, is on the north side of the building to provide every employee with the best views of Burrard Inlet and the North Shore mountains, and has playful elements including a secret bookshelf passageway and custom damask wallpaper featuring tiny Pixar characters.

Kitchen

Pixar Canada's layout is planned to facilitate "forced collisions" of staff, an idea inspired by Pixar co-founder and former CEO Steve Jobs and his approach in Emeryville. "Jobs believed that it was really important to have a large common area for people to meet and eat together," says McNair.

Inside Connection

"The only piece of wood not from B.C. is in our kitchen," says Nasrabadi, referring to the fallen California redwood that was made into two tables. "One half is in Emeryville and the other half is with us at Pixar Canada - a little symbolism for the two studios working together."

Lounge

"People are sitting in front of a computer doing incredibly detailed work, so it's important to have spaces for them to get away from their desks," says McNair of the common spaces on each of Pixar's three floors, like this cosy lounge.



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