



Zing when you're winning



Zing's a good word, and definitely not used enough. Not just used too rarely in case studies, zing's too rarely used in everyday parlance, full stop.

So when ID:SR's Anna Henshaw and Howard Powsney describe the colour palette at Peninsula as 'citrusy, with a bit of zing', we thought, you know, hello?

It does though. It zings.

We really rate the design of Peninsula's new offices in the heart of Manchester. Not just the colours either. We really rate the client, Peter Done, whose brief included the word 'funky'. And we're impressed by the skilful and subtle use of a kidney bean shaped space that Anna describes as a 'squished oval'.

Here's another good word for you: considered. This is about as considered, in every detail, that you'll come across in a serious business environment. And Peninsula is an extremely serious business, as Office Services Manager Michael Harding explains.

'We're employment law and health and safety consultants. Our clients are mostly SMEs – we act as their legal reference point for those issues. We employ a large number of field based consultants who meet with clients and provide them with necessary handbooks and documentation; this of course is backed up by a telephone advice service. We provide a great deal of training for our clients – our >>>>>>



‘It’s random and it’s careful,’ comments Anna. ‘We clearly couldn’t do straight walls, so we had to make the curved alcoves seemingly random. We’ve worked hard to add interest, not to make any space feel desolate. The use of citrus colours defines zones, they highlight distinct areas, and the touches like the bespoke rugs, curtains and furniture all underscore the overall sense.’

‘The main office space is mostly open plan,’ says Michael, ‘in that there are relatively few cellular offices. The curved sweep of the building is probably the biggest obstacle we threw in ID:SR’s way! All the managers work with their teams, with the Directors spread throughout the building accordingly – there’s an ‘approachable’ culture at Peninsula.’

The workstations are typically arranged in banks of eight positions, ensuring teams work together. ‘The radial desk pattern naturally follows the building line, fully exploiting natural light and impressive views across the city and low banks of storage divide spaces ensuring sight lines are maintained,’ adds Howard. ‘Because of the shape of the building, cable management needs, communication and the way people work here, the bench approach was always favoured. We actually looked at a dozen different systems. There was a long analysis of task chairs as well, with many different ergonomic models tested. Quite rightly the health and safety experts had to be convinced – Humanscale’s Liberty chair was chosen in the end.’

A shortlist of suppliers was invited to mock up on site and present the various bench solutions to the client and project team. The Tangent 80:80 bench system >>>>>>>>>>>

>>>> services go all the way through to tribunals and indemnity schemes. We’re the market leader in Britain and Ireland.’

We asked about Peninsula’s roots and the journey that’s taken the company through to its impressive position today.

‘The company started in Bradford in 1983. Our owners Peter and Fred Done (of Betfred fame) had a problem at one of their bookmakers shops – and as they say, liked the company so much they bought it! Various moves to Salford and Manchester followed as the company grew and expanded. What you see here is a combination of expansion and property investment in a fantastic headquarters building.

‘The staff here are in telemarketing, field support, advice teams, support services and senior management. In many ways, the investment is threefold: in property of course, but also our people and the Peninsula brand.

‘We chose ID:SR to design the space because we really wanted to put our stamp on it – to deliver something really special. We employ good loyal staff with a good retention rate; we felt the time had come to go the next step and give something to our staff in terms of a great working environment. Peter wanted the common areas to be a five star hotel in feel; he wanted to get away from the norm in office buildings.’

Our tour started, logically enough, on the ground floor in the Executive Lounge. And indeed, there’s something Sanderson Hotel inspired, with spaces delineated by curtains, cool low level seating and contemporary lighting. Moving through to the meeting and training rooms we get that zing. The rooms are accessed via a series of

ante-spaces which together form an organic central milling zone populated by clusters of striking furniture including Allermuir’s Bison, Naughtone’s Hush and Vitra’s Amoeba. It’s considered and detailed throughout. Spatially, the asymmetric use of an apparently awkward curve of the ‘squished oval’ wastes nothing. Colour coded in citrus tones, the thoughtful design of this important zone is impressive.

Heavily used every day, the four rooms are kitted out with top level AV and folding walls for maximum flexibility. Visually, the connection in the zesty palette between the Burmatex carpet, the Kvadrat upholstered wall panels and the Casala curvy chairs, for example, are subtle and refined.

The use of colour, discreet catering back up, Barrisol ceilings and Terrazzo flooring create a meeting/training area that’s as good as we’ve seen.





►►► proposed by Ralph Capper Interiors provided the perfect solution for Peninsula's project requirements.

'We listened carefully to the project brief set out by ID:SR,' explains Ben Capper. 'In tender situations, some of our competitors take a very direct approach, bypassing the design team to hard sell to the end user. This really undermines the whole tender process and causes disruption. ID:SR were very strong in maintaining a fair and structured process from start to finish, enabling the client to compare the quality of each tender proposal and come to an informed decision.'

With regards the loose furniture, ID:SR tried hard to focus on local suppliers. This was partially to support the regional economy, but for good green reasons too. 'At ID:SR we strive to find every opportunity to provide a sustainable solution,' comments Anna. 'Ralph Capper Interiors worked with us through the final specification process and ultimately oversaw the complete furniture package. With Ralph Capper Interiors it's not just about the

product, there's service too...and, importantly, an understanding of our design ideas.'

'Our strength is our ability to act as an unbiased consultant to the design team, carefully sourcing each piece to fit the brief rather than selling a pre-determined product or range', comments Ben Capper. 'Ultimately we supplied furniture to The Peninsula Project from over 20 different manufacturers and we think the results speak for themselves. I'm really proud of our team's hard work on this project.'

The fresh, clean design of the main office areas is immediately apparent as we tour the space. Those considered touches are everywhere, perhaps most noticeably in the central resource zones and brew areas on each floor. These zones support the staff's daily activities and provide spaces for collaboration.

'These are places for the staff,' notes Michael. 'The feedback was that they wanted a place away from their desks to breakout. They're used very well – in fact the design of these is an example of a

massive culture shock for them...in a good way!'

'We consulted with staff a good deal,' agrees Anna. 'So it's pleasing to have such a positive response. But it's important to say that everything was designed and built for a clear reason; everything has a need. It's the ID:SR activity driven design approach.'

There's a level of quality everywhere, particularly noticeable in the central resource zones. 'The point is it's not just a stud wall, it's a beautiful piece of furniture. We really pushed the joinery elements! Within the ground floor reception and Executive Lounge areas we stretched Corian to its limits. Having said that, the fit out cost for the project was very realistic and reasonable,' comments Howard.

'We've had a good reaction from the staff,' confirms Michael. 'On entering the telesales floor in the old building you would be hit by a barrage of sound. Well, we've got the same people here, but it's a lot calmer. People really like the environment, and they respect it more.'

And it's got ZING! ●

essential ingredients | Client • **Peninsula Business Services** www.peninsula-uk.com

Interior Design • **ID:SR** www.sheppardrobson.com | Project Manager • **Swithenbank Property Consultants** www.swithenbankpc.co.uk

M&E Consultant • **Troup Bywaters & Anders** www.tbanda.co.uk | Main Contractor • **Office Projects Limited** www.oplgroup.com

Furniture Consultant • **Ralph Capper Interiors** www.ralphcapper.com | Photography • **Hufton & Crow**

Carpets • **Burmatex** www.burmatex.co.uk

Lighting • **XAL** www.xal.com | **Artemide** www.artemide.com

Systems Furniture • **Tangent** www.tangentfurniture.co.uk

Task Seating • **Humanscale** www.humanscale.com