

case study

DaimlerChrysler Canada Inc.



“Our new workplace was key to meeting our organizational goals. We needed more than just nice offices – much more.”

John Mann

Director of Engineering and Regulatory Affairs
DaimlerChrysler Canada Inc.



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A tired building and a recent merger were pushing Daimler-Chrysler Canada's headquarters to the brink. The '50s-era building could no longer effectively support the company: the antiquated infrastructure couldn't accommodate technology requirements, space limitations resulted in departments that were scattered throughout the facility, and HVAC systems were failing. It was time to make a move.

A move uptown.

Objectives

Senior management knew DaimlerChrysler Canada could not continue to operate effectively or successfully if they did not move to a new facility. The company needed a new building that would support present and future needs if they were to continue to introduce exciting and innovative products that exceeded their customers' expectations.

At the same time, the City of Windsor was in the midst of a revitalization project of its downtown core. As the largest employer in Windsor, Ontario, DaimlerChrysler was approached by the city and asked to consider moving their headquarters to a downtown location. DaimlerChrysler liked the idea and agreed to a joint development with DaimlerChrysler Canada as the lead tenant occupying nine floors of a 15-story office tower in the heart of the city.



Due to organizational changes DaimlerChrysler no longer needed to co-locate their Canadian corporate headquarters with their manufacturing facilities and decided to relocate to waterfront property in downtown Windsor.

John Mann, director of engineering and regulatory affairs, was responsible for coordinating the building design and construction with the developer and the city, as well as the office planning and move. With their location determined, John and his team began to pursue the goals for their new building. The primary goals included:

- create a highly-effective workplace that improves operational efficiencies and productivity
- create a flexible technology infrastructure that can respond to changes inexpensively and quickly
- create a highly-flexible environment, using existing furniture standards, that can be easily and inexpensively reconfigured
- improve employee satisfaction by creating a comfortable and inspiring workplace



DaimlerChrysler is one of the world's leading automotive companies with an impressive product range. Recognized as having many of the most valuable brands in the automotive industry, Daimler Chrysler strives to offer customers the best there is in terms of innovation, design, safety, quality, and service.

An integrated approach.

Situation

The process began by organizing a series of offsite meetings with senior executives from all parts of the company. "Our objective was to fully understand the entire organization — our infrastructure needs, how we inter-relate with each other, our communication paths and our interdependencies. As a result, the involvement and support of the senior management team was there from the start of the project. Together we used this information to create a workplace that would support the way we want our company to operate," explained John.

"This project involved more than just moving from one building into another one that had a nice working environment," said John. "We wanted to create a building that supported our company today but could also evolve with us as we changed, and that meant considering more than just the furniture. We had to take a holistic approach to the entire project. And we only had eight months to complete it."

This challenge was tailor-made for Steelcase and Mayhew & Associates (a Steelcase dealer) who proposed to DaimlerChrysler that they take the approach of an integrated solution, that would address furniture requirements, as well as architectural and technological needs. The integrated solution would create a highly flexible environment that could respond to changes over the life of the building quickly and inexpensively. As well, great efficiencies could be gained by using a single source supplier, saving DaimlerChrysler both time and money.

Steelcase and Mayhew & Associates worked closely with DaimlerChrysler architect, WZMH Architects, to demonstrate how their architectural products can be used to create a flexible building infrastructure, and how their furniture and technology products have been designed to work seamlessly with these elements.



Effective work environments include three core elements: architecture, furniture and technology. Steelcase supports people at work by integrating these elements seamlessly.

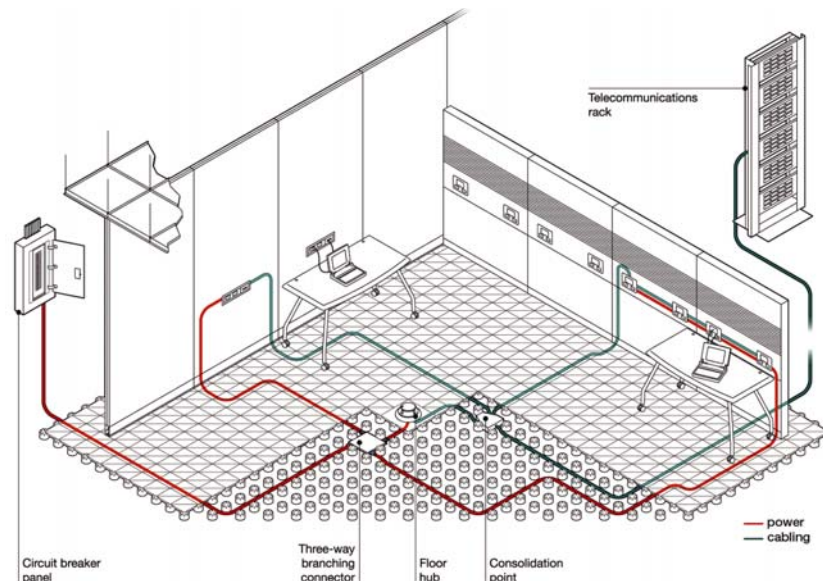
“By using an integrated approach that considered furniture, technology and architecture, DaimlerChrysler realized great operational efficiencies during the project and continue to do so every time they make a change.”

Mark Campbell, Architect, WZMH Architects

Situation continued "As architects for both base building and tenant fit-out, WZMH Architects was faced with an extremely tight time frame to provide both base building construction and tenant move-in," explains Mark Campbell, architect, WZMH Architects. "The integrated solution presented by Steelcase was brilliant. And our ability to select high quality, compatible furniture systems from a single source was just what we needed to complete the project on time."

It's all about infrastructure.

Solution The team struggled to find a solution that would facilitate change quickly. During a visit to the Steelcase facility, the DaimlerChrysler team was introduced to Pathways Underscore access floor. Only 2½" high, the floor could create the flexible infrastructure DaimlerChrysler needed without affecting floor heights. "You don't even know it's there," said John. "Underscore provided us the opportunity to do things we had never done before."



Power is easily delivered where it's needed through the use of Pathways® Architectural Power. This system of modular electrical components runs beneath the access floor to provide connectivity that starts with the end user and is carried back all the way to the circuit breaker panel in the electrical closet.

“Steelcase made a strong business case as to why we should work with them, and they proved that the total cost would be much less than if we shopped everything around, or dealt with other suppliers.”

John Mann, Director of Engineering and Regulatory Affairs

Solution continued

Pre-assembled modular components seamlessly connect to floor boxes, hub tables, Steelcase walls and furniture, reducing installation time and costs significantly. Most importantly, when it's time to make a change, the modular connections are easy to move.

“We deliberately took advantage of the opportunity and put a lot more infrastructure under the floor than we needed,” explained John. “The cost was minimal. So we have data and power waiting to be used when we need it. And the distance to any connection point is short. Pathways Underscore is so easy to use that we can move equipment or people the same day the request is made! It's vastly superior to older raised floor technologies.”



Only 2½" high, Underscore created the flexible infrastructure DaimlerChrysler needed without affecting floor heights



Wiring in the Answer power system connects directly to the Pathways Architectural Power, which is housed beneath the floor.

Pathways Architectural power was installed under the Underscore low profile access floor to deliver power from the service closet to users wherever it is needed.

Solution continued

Flexibility in architecture was created using I-Line Moveable Walls. I-Line provided space division for private offices and meeting rooms and allows for fast, mess-free moves when facility needs change.



Private offices and meeting rooms are created using I-Line Moveable Walls. Interior wireways enable vertical wiring and cabling distribution from ceiling to floor.



DaimlerChrysler chose I-Line Moveable Walls for their flexibility. Simply pick them up and move them when it's time to make a change, without the environmental impact of conventional drywall construction.

User needs.

Solution continued

The building's infrastructure was now decided. But the needs of their users also had to be addressed. With a smaller floorplate than their previous building, DaimlerChrysler was concerned productivity would be lost, as the 400+ employees would be spread out over nine floors. The information they had gathered from their sessions with all functional areas became increasingly important and helped DaimlerChrysler identify where departments should be located to enhance communication and collaboration.

Steelcase Answer systems furniture was chosen to support their employees' needs. The product's flexibility and versatility could support their corporate furniture standards and addresses a variety of user needs, working seamlessly with the modular wiring infrastructure. Each floor consists of two rows of workstations in a central ring, leaving the core and windows free for aisles and allowing access to natural light.

The new building also provided DaimlerChrysler with the opportunity to further enhance their communication goals by moving their advertising agency, Pentamark, closer to them. Pentamark works exclusively for DaimlerChrysler and it made a lot of sense to have them co-located with the company's internal sales and marketing groups. Although very different in its look, a highly-effective working environment was created for Pentamark over two floors, using the same modular infrastructure and furniture.



The new floor plan allows employees throughout the building to enjoy natural light.



Metro's Archipelago seating provides a casual conversation area that overlooks the Detroit skyline.

The flexibility and versatility of the Answer system worked seamlessly with the modular wiring infrastructure.

Working together.

Solution continued

To ensure the project ran smoothly, the team (DaimlerChrysler, WZMH Architects, Steelcase and Mayhew & Associates, the city and the developer) met every Tuesday to update each other and quickly address any outstanding issues. “This helped us identify issues before they became problems and kept the project moving forward,” said John.



DaimlerChrysler chose Answer systems furniture to create highly flexible workstations that balance the need for privacy, while encouraging communication and collaboration between people and departments.

When it came time to install, the benefits to an integrated approach were reinforced. The schedule could run various tasks in parallel, rather than sequentially. Modular components manufactured off-site and delivered ready for installation make for a quicker and lower cost execution. And as the single source supplier, Steelcase and Mayhew & Associates were in direct control of more aspects of installation, including the coordination of various tradespeople, making the entire process simpler and more efficient.



Casual team spaces like this one were created where employees could collaborate and share ideas.

“We held weekly meetings at the Steelcase facility and could easily visualize our goals and the ultimate results. I can’t remember when a team got along so well or a project went so smoothly; I’m sorry it’s over.”

Mark Campbell, Architect

Happy together.

Results

Only eight months after the project had begun, DaimlerChrysler had moved into their new building. The facility has successfully met user needs, and gives those responsible for ongoing changes the ability to manage the process strategically.

In fact, after only six months DaimlerChrysler re-configured an entire division and was very pleased with the way the building systems responded. The building's performance has set a new benchmark.

And what about the users? "Employees love it," reaffirms John. "You see a distinct change in pride that employees have in their company, in their work environment and in who they are. And that's absolutely what you want. You want people to be proud of themselves, to be proud of their jobs, and proud of the company they work for because they will then put their personal passions into achieving the goals of the corporation. And that's what we're seeing."



“My job is to facilitate other people’s passions. The workplace is key to making it happen.”

John Mann, Director of Engineering and Regulatory Affairs

Steelcase products used:

I-Line Moveable Walls
Answer® systems furniture
Pathways® Underscore
Pathways® Architectural Power
Vecta® E-Table
Leap® Seating
Protégé® Seating
Storage Cabinets
Metro® Archipelago Seating

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