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CASE STUDY



Dentsu Aegis and a turn-key solution for improved workplace culture

Perth, Australia

Future proofing by forward planning –

Dentsu Aegis Network (DAN), a Japanese-owned, UK-based media and digital marketing communications company, has offices all over the world. In Australia and New Zealand, the company employs over 1900 people and places 26% of all media spend along with 30% of all digital advertising spend. For such a successful company, it is important that its innovation and progressive nature are reflected throughout its offices. In line with this, DAN decided its Perth wing needed a new occupancy; one that would enhance employee and client relationships, collaboration and wellness.

Leaving its suburban office behind, DAN moved in to an urban workspace with unmatched views of Perth's Swan River and Kings Park. The direction of the new workspace was initiated by Schiavello's dedicated National Projects team, and engaged under our early contractor engagement (ECE) model. This model sees Schiavello Construction engage the client at the earliest opportunity in the project delivery cycle. It gives the client a single point of contact for the entirety of the project from conception through to construction, resulting in a more cohesive project while also affording the client more flexibility through the design and construction, opening up more options for value engineering.

Driving results from conception to completion –

Schiavello Construction's National Projects Director, Cale Halasa, and Design Manager, Amanda Wright, worked closely with DAN from the beginning to the very end of work on the new space. Serving as the agency between client, architect, building owners and Schiavello State Delivery teams, our National Projects team managed and delivered all aspects of the project, including developing an aspirational brief, engaging the interior designer and engineers, and coordinating the local Schiavello construction team and all other stakeholders throughout construction, ensuring a successful and timely delivery.

Meanwhile, Schiavello's Principal of People and Culture Consulting, Keti Malkoski, worked with DAN's executive team to set the workspace change objectives, quantifying what success looks like for the design in order to support business and people outcomes. Looking internally and externally, the two stakeholder groups most relevant to DAN were identified – the employees and clients. Malkoski collaborated with DAN to develop a workplace strategy that identified both groups' current needs and future workspace needs. This strategy would guide the design.

"A well-defined workspace strategy provides the client with a relevant and supportive workspace design that is future-proofed," Malkoski says. "The strategy was able to inform the best design outcomes for DAN. We engaged in a human-centred strategic briefing process that explored the current and future working needs of DAN and helped us to understand the workspace experience we needed to create for all stakeholders."



DAN's generous Schiavello custom boardroom table features integrated technology and is complemented by the soft, sculptured lines of Paloma chairs.

Malkoski and DAN's executive team also explored the different kinds of client interactions and employee relationships that occurred within DAN's office, in addition to analysing the arrival experience. The team looked at how they could attract and retain talent by balancing work spaces, 'play' spaces, and social spaces. This thorough research and introspection allowed the finished fitout to not only look beautiful, but also to be shaped by insight.

Engaging technology, innovation and movement –

DAN's front of house brings tech to the forefront and creates an entertaining, informative and interactive arrival experience for both staff and clients. Employees can sign in through an iPad, and make coffee with the touch of a button via an automated system. A video wall allows staff to play videos for formal presentations, but on a regular day, it displays the company's work for visitors to see.

With a contemporary, industrial aesthetic, the reception area provides a designated spot for developing employee and client relationships. Featuring a desk and lounge zone, it is a sophisticated and welcoming space. Carefully curated furniture adds an element of softness to the urban space. Schiavello Toro Stools in black sit comfortably around the waiting area high table, while Karo ottomans add pops of pastel colour, complementing the simple yet dramatic surrounds.

Drawing guests from front of house to back is the 'portal', a tiled, train tunnel-like space. Walking through it is impressive, and somewhat of an immersive transitional experience. Immediately out the other side of the portal, a neon sign catches the eye: 'Test Drive'. The statement playfully beckons clients to try out DAN's software and app developments on the various platforms that sit on the wall.



Large whiteboards allow DAN staff to collaborate, while Schiavello's Kayt Quiet booths facilitate private discussion without distraction from the outside office.

"Taking this strategic and consultative approach has a number of benefits – the client receives better quality outcomes, and stakeholders feel that they have been involved in the process and outcome," explains Malkoski.

Similarly, for the staff, the back of house is populated by reminders to take a break from work and to move – including a Schiavello manufactured ping pong table and a breakfast bar. These elements combine to solidify the importance placed on the arrival experience by DAN’s executive team.

These active gaming installations are a key component of the design and aimed at promoting wellness, movement and activity, reflecting DAN’s objective of balancing work spaces, ‘play’ spaces, and social spaces. “The gaming influence of this space is a constant reminder for the team to have fun and relax,” explains Tenille Teakle, associate at Woods Bagot, the interior designer behind the project.

Karo ottomans provide playful yet professional breakout seating. “The breakout area offers an instantly relaxed space with the option of working in a more casual environment at the breakfast bar,” says Teakle. This allows staff to take time out from their desks to have lunch, have some down time or collaborate with colleagues.



Wellness and gaming are key components of the new office, facilitated in part by a Schiavello custom ping pong table.

Freedom of choice in an open plan office –

It was important for DAN to enable privacy among the open plan nature of its new office. Phone booths with high, acoustically paneled and quadruple insulated slab-to-slab walls serve as spaces for private calls. Schiavello’s timber Toro Stools and Karo ottomans provide comfortable seating for short-term use in these private rooms. The thin lines of Toro’s design occupy minimal physical and visual space, ensuring the rooms feel cosy but not cramped.

Continuing to meet DAN’s requirement for a balance of spaces within the open plan environment are group brainstorming areas. Populated by large whiteboards, the spaces are distanced from the general work area, allowing groups to easily collaborate on a task together without distraction. Lounge seating is provided by Bomba Sofas, which feature supportive cushioning and an upright posture for a perfect balance between comfort and productivity. Alternatively, staff can sit within Schiavello’s Kayt Quiet, a distinctive booth-like lounge with high sides and back that provides a cocoon-like space to focus or meet, its walls buffering audio and visual distractions. Such a broad selection of furniture provides DAN employees ample choice when it comes to their workspace, allowing them to choose the space they need for the task at hand.

For meetings, a number of spaces are available – a main boardroom, small, medium and large meeting rooms, as well as focus rooms. Within the boardroom is a generous Schiavello custom boardroom table with integrated technology and the soft, sculptured lines of Schiavello’s Paloma chairs. The high level of glass utilised throughout the build reinforces the idea of DAN being open and transparent. The material is used as an architectural element to softly demarcate the lines between work, communal and meeting spaces.



Schiavello’s Krossi sit/stand Workstations.

Even at their workstations, staff members are presented with opportunities for movement and wellness and the primary goal was to make the space enjoyable and comfortable for staff. Around 30 percent of the desks are Schiavello’s Krossi sit/stands, which allow the user to move their workstation from sitting to standing height throughout the day. It is through this considered focus on its staff and their wellness, happiness, and sense of daily balance, that DAN has also opened up a new workplace culture for its staff – one focused on mental and physical health, connection, and freedom.

Finding the solutions in early engagement –

Schiavello's early contractor engagement program and Woods Bagot's design had a clear aim to maximise connectivity and comfort for DAN's employees and clients. The new Perth tenancy has an air of restrained elegance with pops of playfulness, and is an urban space that challenges the preconceived notions of what an office should be. "I've visited the office several times since completion," Teakle says. "The staff are now energised; they're happy and mobile and the feedback has been extremely positive."

"Our early contractor engagement model allowed us to have a clear understanding of DAN's aspirations and functional requirements," adds Wright. "We worked closely with Woods Bagot to ensure the workplace strategy was aligned with the design brief, resulting in a space tailored to DAN's needs."

Halasa agrees, "Despite challenges, the early engagement approach led to multiple high impact spaces reflective of Schiavello's expertise and insistence for excellence."



Bomba Sofas feature supportive cushioning and an upright posture, creating a perfect balance between comfort and productivity for the DAN team.

Interior design by Woods Bagot
Photography by Dion Robeson