

Carbon Design Group

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Carbon Opens New Seattle Studio

Seattle, WA. May 31th—As Carbon Design Group rolls into their 18th year of doing business, the world-recognized product development consultancy has moved into their new, 11,000 square foot studio in the heart of Seattle's University District.

"We'd really outgrown our old space—both in the size of the firm and in the level of work we do," says Dan Blase, Carbon's president. When the Carbon team began the hunt for the right location, they knew they wanted to be in a vibrant area closer to the business center of Seattle. They also wanted light, lots of windows, and wide open spaces to encourage the collaboration and cross-pollination that's vital to delivering great results for their clients. An entire floor in the new Russell Hall building provided all this and more—it gave Carbon the opportunity to complete the build-out to best serve the needs of Carbon and its clients.

Working with SKB Architects and Tom Bristol, AIA, Peter Bristol, an industrial designer at Carbon, and Hal Brown, Carbon's Director of Engineering led a collaborative effort to complete the space. Carbon's diverse clientele ranges from medical companies serious about saving lives to consumer electronics companies pushing to define what's next. The key was finding the right balancing point that would ensure Carbon's clients and employees would find the space both inviting and enabling.

"As a design philosophy, Carbon tries to be pretty honest and show the core or raw nature of the materials in a product," explains Bristol. "It was an interesting challenge to apply that approach to our new space." A figure-eight floor plan navigates the building's dual "cores" of elevator shafts and bathrooms. Ceilings are largely left exposed. Studio lamps are little more than the fluorescent tube itself and concrete floors abound. Rich ironwood accent walls help balance the clean, understated aesthetic.

The main lobby and conference rooms share an expansive view of downtown Seattle and the Space Needle. The open studio space looks out on a beautiful lawn at the edge of the University of Washington campus. Even the large machine shop and engineering labs are flooded with natural light.

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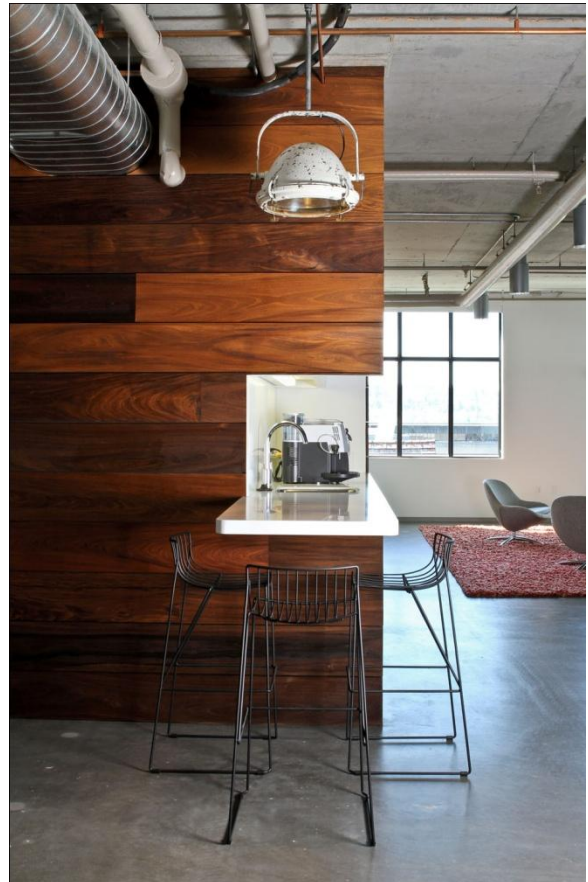
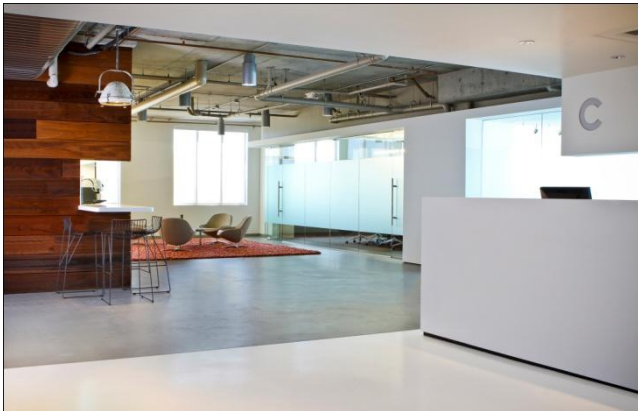
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The Carbon team designed several features, including custom conference room tables. “There’s a sense of permanency you get with big, heavy tables—it doesn’t feel like the company is about to pack up and leave,” explains Brown. Since the typical mahogany conference table has a too traditional feel, the Carbon team designed their own. The Lyptus butcher-block tops are an alternative to more exotic woods. The base is reminiscent of a giant, black I-beam. A gap was left in the middle of the table to allow easy access for internet, projector, and power hookups. The space between the two vertical plates that form the table’s legs hides all the cabling and eliminates visual clutter. As a bonus, “...you don’t play accidental footsy with people you just met,” adds Bristol.

Bristol, who’s recently received [attention](#) for his personal work, also designed a unique and highly-practical coat rack in the form of a grid of pegs that appear to push through the wall. The pegs form a gradient with the upper left corner poking out the farthest, and the lower right barely breaking the surface. Besides adding visual interest, the gradient increases utility. “As you lay coats from bottom to top and right to left, you can successively lay one on top of the other because the pegs get longer as they go,” says Bristol, “creating a natural shingling of coats.”

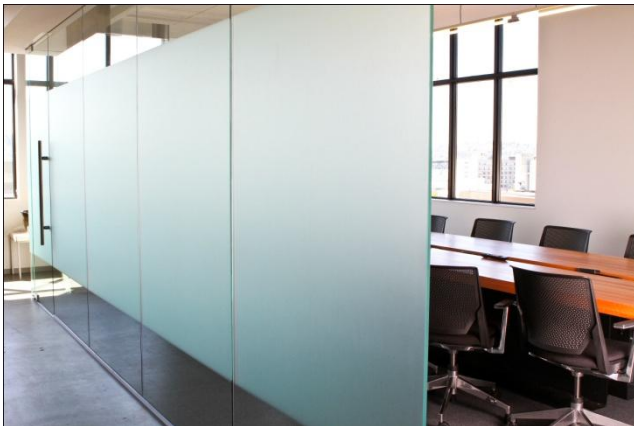
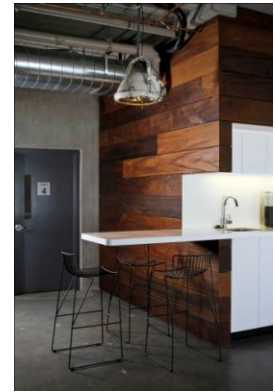
“From the outset, we wanted to create a place that inspires both our team and our clients,” said Blase. “We’ve found that several of our clients enjoy the space so much, they work here even when they aren’t working on Carbon projects, so I am confident we hit that mark.”

High resolution images available for download at: www.carbondesign.com/press/newstudio



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About Carbon Design Group

Carbon Design Group is a full-service product development consultancy based in Seattle, Washington. Carbon lives at the intersection of technology and design. We delight clients by blending insightful research, thoughtful design, and end-to-end engineering expertise. We apply informed intuition and inspired ingenuity to create stand-out products and experiences that connect. Our holistic approach minimizes risk, speeds time to market, and delivers results that resonate. Carbon is widely recognized for innovation and for the development of iconic product families. Our portfolio of clients includes GE, Intel, Medtronic, Microsoft, Panasonic, Philips, Xbox, and many more. To learn more, visit www.carbondesign.com.

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