

contract




Silver Lining

Sabre Holdings, a travel commerce company located in Southlake, Tex., enjoys a colorful environment—and a silver level LEED certification—thanks to HKS Interiors

By Amy Milshtein

design





Going somewhere? Then chances are Sabre Holdings, a travel commerce company, helped you on your way. From airline tickets to hotels to cruises, Sabre's technology keeps the travel industry moving. Sabre Holdings recently moved, too. Its new office in Southlake, Tex., designed by HKS Interiors, boasts color, cool, and a silver level LEED certification.

Sabre Holdings is a leader in travel commerce, retail travel products, and providing distribution and technology solutions to the travel industry. From Travelocity to a web-based corporate travel system to airline and agent services, Sabre's technology is everywhere. In fact, 40 percent of worldwide reservations are made through Sabre and in 2002 its revenues totaled \$1.6 billion.

Once part of American Airlines, Sabre recently broke off on its own. Along with a new corporate headquarters, it decided to create a new corporate culture as well. Instead of the traditional model,

Sabre wanted a collaborative atmosphere, one that supported teamwork and casual interaction.

This dynamic just wasn't possible with its old floor plan. "It was very 'Dilbertville,'" remembers Glenn Clarke, vice president and design director of the commercial interiors department for HKS. "Private offices on the perimeter, an endless maze of high-paneled cubicles in the core, and everything was gray."

The Southlake office represents a total shift. From the sculpted drywall to the stained concrete, the interior is energized with texture and movement. An exposed ceiling adds a bit of industrial edge. As it is the corporate headquarters, the main entrance dresses up a bit with artwork tucked into seating niches and a perforated metal cover hiding the ceiling mechanicals.

And gray? Forget about it. A rich, surprising mélange of hues is used throughout the 450,000-

sq. ft. space. "Actually we wanted to use a little gray for balance," remembers Clarke. "But the people at Sabre wouldn't hear of it."

While a few private offices remain, most employees have moved into open plan. But don't think boxes. Instead, Sabre chose hexagonal units that feel more like a cockpit than a cube. "Rectangles just aren't efficient shapes," says Dean Sanderson, vice president of real estate for Sabre. "The corners become dead spaces." With all of the furnishings on wheels, employees customize their space for maximum efficiency.

Using a main street concept, HKS lined all services on a major corridor to encourage employee interaction. As intended, workers meet, mingle, and bounce ideas around on the fly. The servery, another main meeting area, remains warm, energetic, and homey.

Sabre Holdings' front door balances a polished corporate statement with the energy and excitement of the private spaces (cover.) By putting major amenities on a main street (above) Sabre's employees casually interact with each other throughout the day.



Sanderson insists that the new environment goes a long way to attract and retain the knowledge Sabre workers need, but doesn't go over the top. "We didn't want one of those warehouse-like, late '90s, dot-com interiors," he says. "But it still had to be exciting. I think we ended up with a wonderful balance."

Attracting employees represents another reason Sabre decided to gain LEED Certification. Standing for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, LEED offers certification using a point system based on energy conservation, lighting, recycled content, and air quality. "This is an act of self-policing," explains Sanderson. "We knew it was right for the community and it would be important to our potential employees."

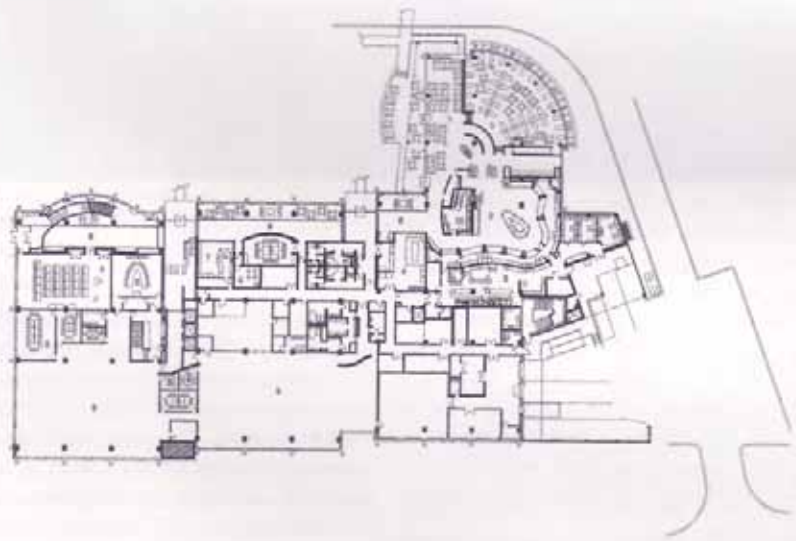
Admittedly challenging and more expensive, meeting the Silver qualification meant integrating such factors as a totally organic landscape maintenance program, rigorous water and energy savings, and maintaining exceptional indoor air quality. LEED targets and goals were discussed throughout the design and construction process.

Meeting LEED lighting requirements, for instance, challenged Clarke. "It means mostly fluorescents and that takes a lot of creativity to work with," he says. "They can dull a space because the light is so even." To counteract that effect Clarke used various fluorescent sources in different ways to add interest. Here and there he added incandescent bulbs for pop.

"In the end I got a better building," says Sanderson. For instance, HKS estimates that Sabre will save \$120,000 a year on utility costs alone. "We would have met many of LEED criteria anyway," Sanderson says. "But some would be overlooked simply because we were not aware of the issue." He points to requiring the contractor to recycle waste as one below-the-radar example.

As the first Silver-certified building in Texas and one of the largest in the United States, Sabre has generated much interest. Now, Sanderson fields calls from other companies nationwide, who are interested in the LEED program. "It just makes sense to do," he says. "We will definitely shoot for the Silver or even higher with our next building."

To all the large corporations out there: The bar has been set, are you willing to go for the Gold? ☐



What's behind the angled blue wall that seems to be reaching to the clouds? The stairwell, of course (previous page, top left). Hexagonal workstations (previous page, bottom left) efficiently use square footage. The open plan's different colored fabric panels were installed completely at random for an energizing effect (previous page, right). Blues, browns, greens, and reds are not the colors of vacation but the colors of Sabre (above). The palette presents a reversal of the gray interior from which the company came.

Project Summary

Who

Client: Sabre. **Architect, interior designer:** HKS. **Construction manager:** Sverdrup/CRSS (Jacobs Facilities). **Structural engineer:** Brockett Davis Drake. **Mechanical/electrical engineer:** James Johnston & Associates. **General contractor:** The Beck Group. **Lighting designer:** Archillum Lighting Design. **Acoustician:** Pelton Marsh Kinsella. **Photographer:** Aker/Zvonkovic Photography.

What

Wallcoverings: The Designtex Group, Luna. **Paint:** Sherwin-Williams. **Ceiling:** Decoustics, Capaul, USG, Armstrong. **Laminate:** Wilsonart, Laminart, Formica, Pionite, Abet Laminati. **Dry wall:** Facility Construction Service; USG. **Masonry:** Texas Stone & Tile. **Flooring:** Texas Stone & Tile, Quarry Tile, Daltile, Forbo. **Carpet/carpet tile:** Durkan, Interface, Masland Contract, Shaw, Constantine. **Lighting:** Linear, Litecontrol, Lightolier, Cooper Portfolio, Winona, Shaper, Elliptipar, Visa, Cooper Halo. **Glass:** Fuller Phoenix. **Wall systems:** Vista Wall. **Window treatments:** Mecho Shade. **Doors:** Dallas Door. **Door hardware:** Schlage. **Lounge seating:** Brayton, HBF, Nienkamper, Bernhardt, Holly Hunt, Dakota Jackson. **Upholstery:** Luna, Architex, Black Leather. **Workstations, files, shelving:** Teknion. **Workstation seating:** Cooke. **Cafeteria, dining, auditorium seating:** Brandrud, Haworth, EMU. **Other seating:** Harter. **Conference table:** Knoll, Nienkamper, Teknion. **Cafeteria, dining, training tables:** Vecta, SoHo, Davis, Teknion. **Architectural woodworking:** Khoury. **Cabinetmaking:** Facility Construction Service. **Planters, accessories:** Pyrotech. **Signage:** ASI/3H Signs. **HVAC:** TD Industries; York. **Under floor systems:** Humphreys and Associates. **Plumbing fixtures:** American Standard. **Food Service:** Systems Design International.

Where

Location: Southlake, Texas. **Total floor area:** 450,000 sq. ft. **No. of floors:** Building 'A' 5 floors, Building 'B' 4 floors. **Average floor size:** 50,000 sq. ft. **Total staff size:** 1,700. **Cost/sq. ft.:** \$35.

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