

Washington Post: Rethinking the Modern Newsroom

Washington, DC • Project Category: Interior Architecture

An open, energized, and wired space helps a venerated newspaper reinvent itself as a media and technology company.

With its click-clacking typewriters and fog of cigarette smoke, the newsroom exactly depicted in *All the President's Men*, the film about The Washington Post's reporting on the Watergate scandal, hardly seems like the early ancestor of the Post's current workplace. Yet it was. And the evolution from that Post newsroom to its current version—complete with AV screens, HD video cameras, and an elegant modernity—hinged on what is known as the convergence.

The convergence brings together new digital tools and processes for content creation and distribution, enabling content to flow between platforms. It also necessitates interdisciplinary teams that work in non-traditional, rapid-fire ways to develop and distribute content.

The Post's former home, outfitted with high-paneled workstations, too many offices, and retro-fitted technology, was never designed for such workflows. Hence the media company's decision to secure and revamp six floors in One Franklin Square, a building on DC's famed K Street. However, One Franklin Square was not without its challenges.

With two centralized cores and a forest of columns, the building forced the design team to think long and hard about how to implement one of the new workplace's key features: an open plan. To make this plan a reality and overcome One Franklin Square's structural constraints, the design team created neighborhoods, or groupings, of workstations.

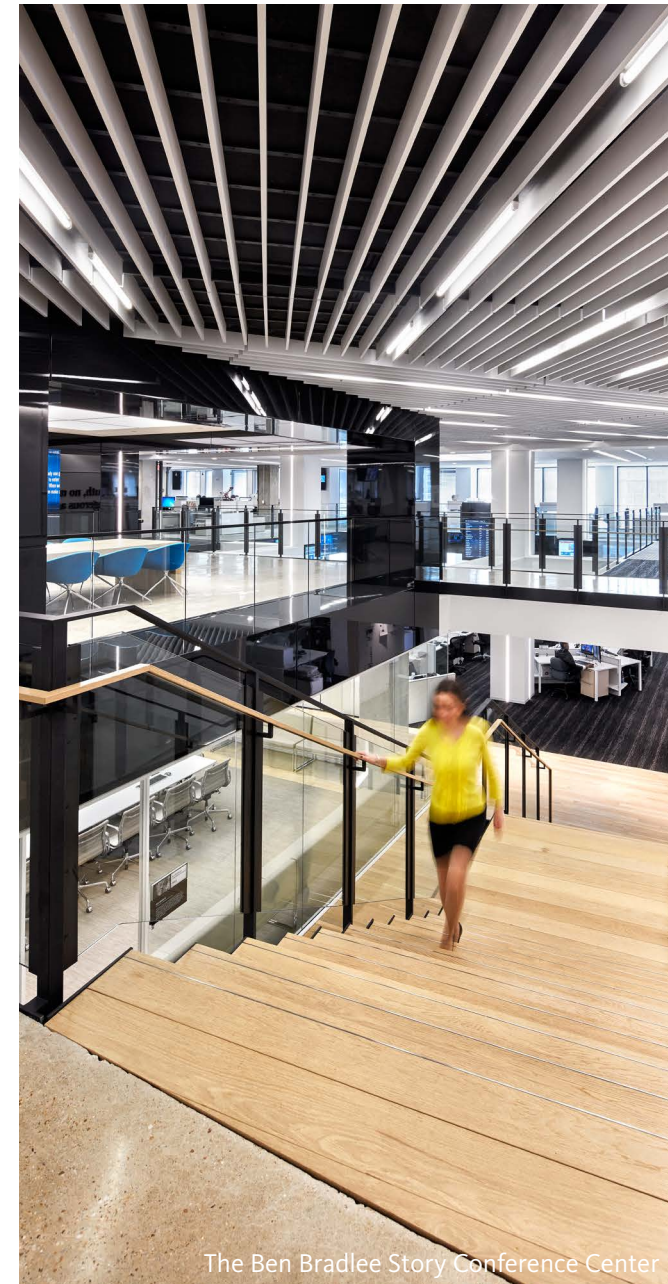
The result was a home that is 92 percent open plan, thereby allowing reporters, engineers, social media specialists, and videographers to intermingle in a truly converged newsroom. In this converged environment, the news hub serves as the center of information. This centrally located, double-height space features a ribbon of monitors displaying the Post's real-time website analytics as well as news channels, news websites, and social media portals. The setup allows the Post to fine tune its content and distribution instantly.

Off the news hub sits the Ben Bradlee Story Conference Center, where the Post's editors gather twice daily to discuss news content. Increasingly, such content includes video. Hence the newsroom's offering of a traditional broadcast video studio and three live-shot settings that capture the newsroom's full length and branding, including the Post's iconic nameplate.

Other branding elements celebrate the paper's rich history. Throughout the workspace, you'll find quotes from Post luminaries and images of famous front pages on a feature wall. Collections of the paper's historic headlines adorn conference room glass fronts, while signage from the old Post building greets guests in the reception.

Though many of the branding elements represent the Post's past, the company's new home is a forward-leaning media environment. Witness the 400 person multi-purpose room. With its studio lighting, AV equipment, and sky-fold partitions, it is the ideal locale for the many Washington Post Live events the company hosts.

As the Post continues to redefine what a media company can be, it will rely on its headquarters to be its incubator of innovation and connector of people, technology, and ideas.



The Ben Bradlee Story Conference Center



“At the heart of this project was the idea of helping a legendary newspaper company evolve into a media and technology enterprise. We did not take that lightly.”

- John McKinney, Design Director

The Washington Post

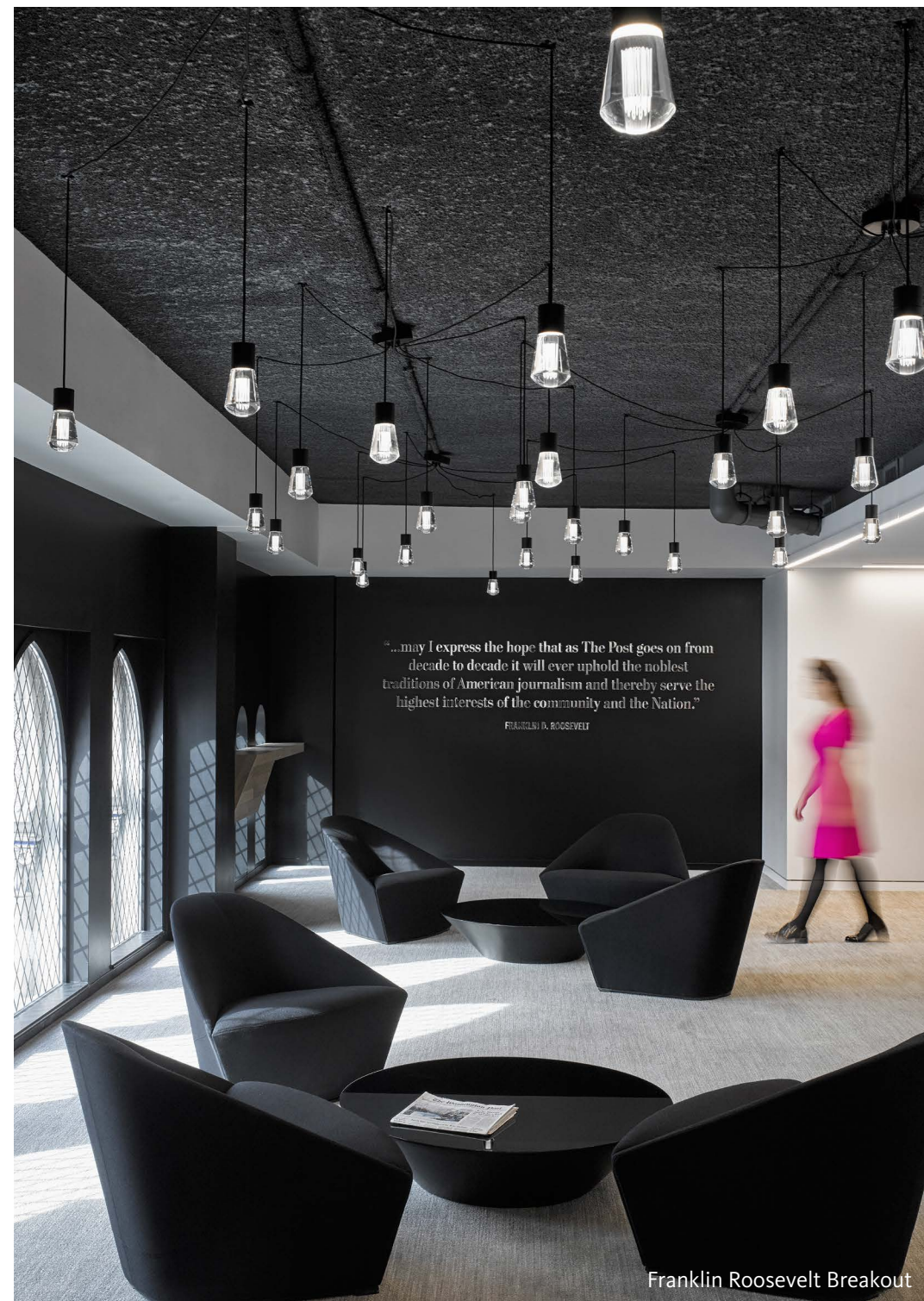
The Washington Post

Signage from the Post's Former Office

express the hope that as The Post goes on from decade to decade it will ever uphold the traditions of American journalism and thereby serve the highest interests of the community and the Nation.

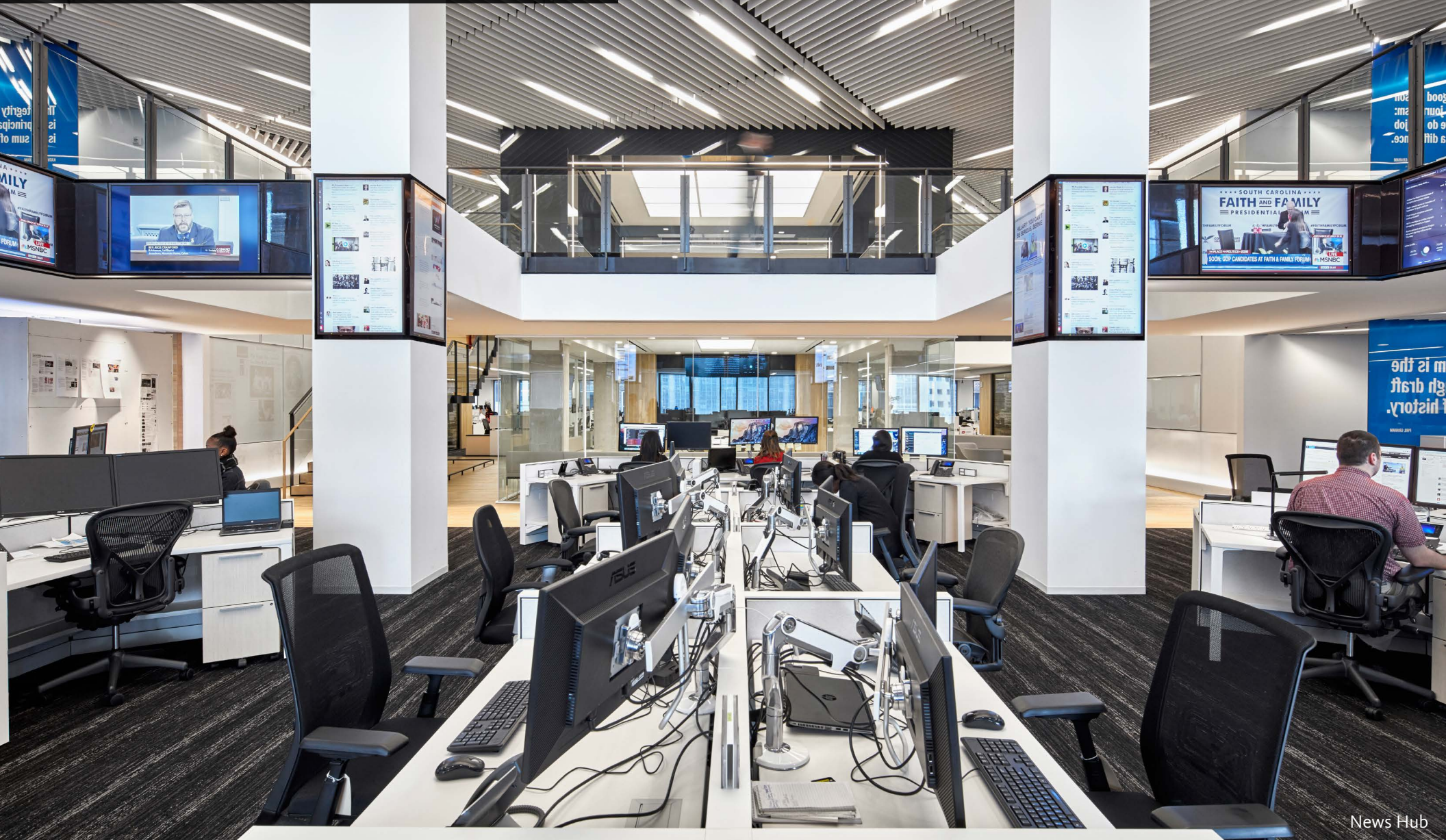


Washington Post Live and Legendary Art



Franklin Roosevelt Breakout

The hub serves as a central hive of data and information that allows the Post to fine tune its content creation and distribution on the fly.



A key design driver was creating a newsroom to reflect the interdisciplinary convergence of the work of journalists today: writers and editors next to videographers, photo editors, designers, social media writers, and technology engineers.



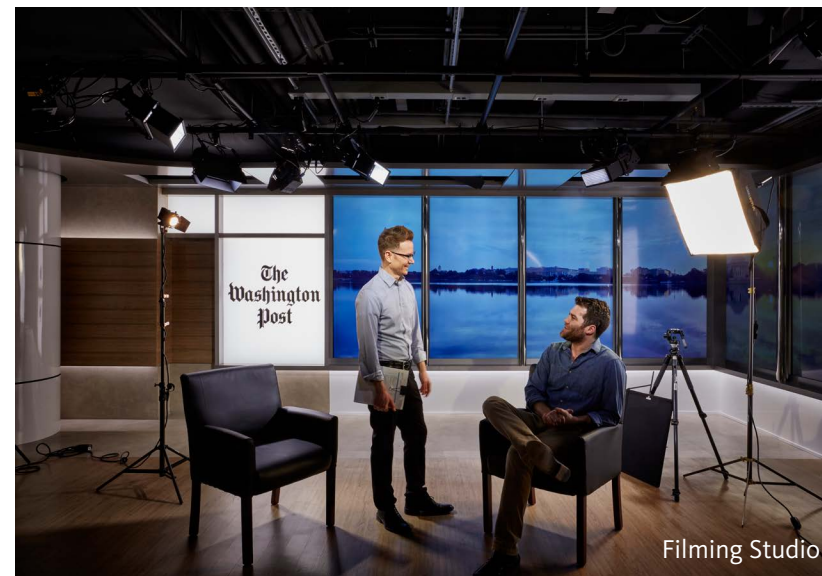
Live Shot



Recording Studio

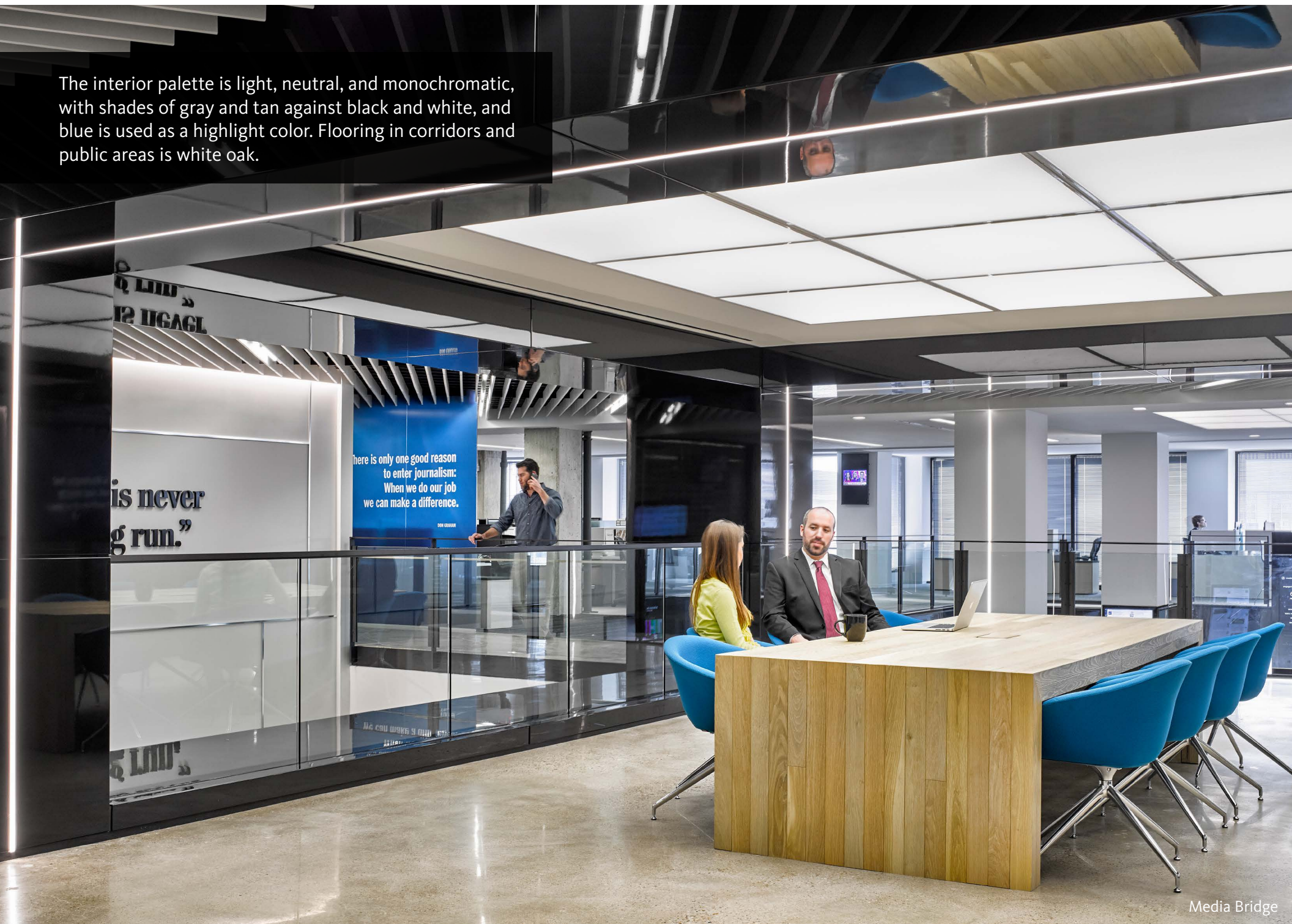
“The truth, no matter how bad, is never as dangerous as a lie in the long run.”

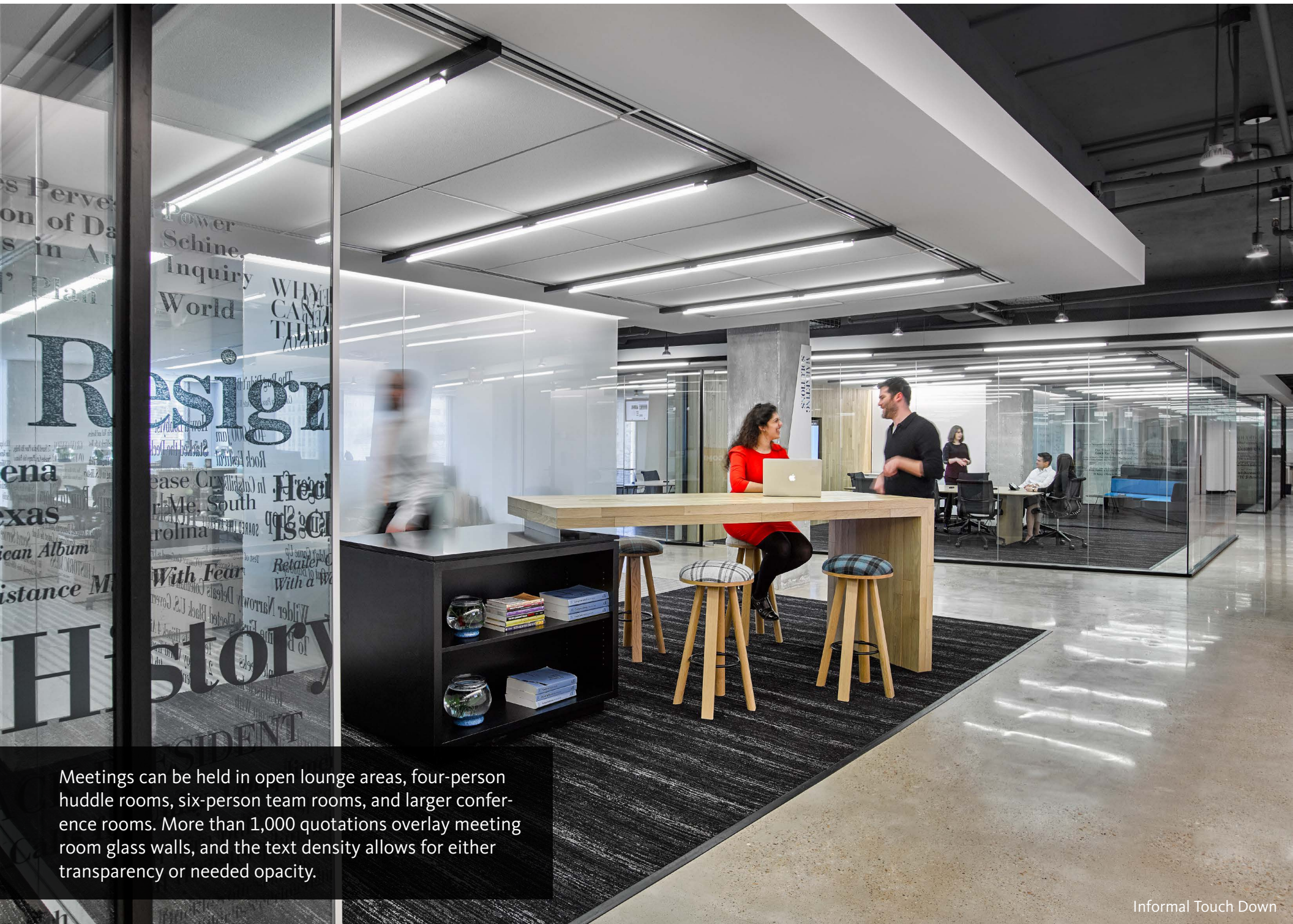
BEN BRADLEE



Filming Studio

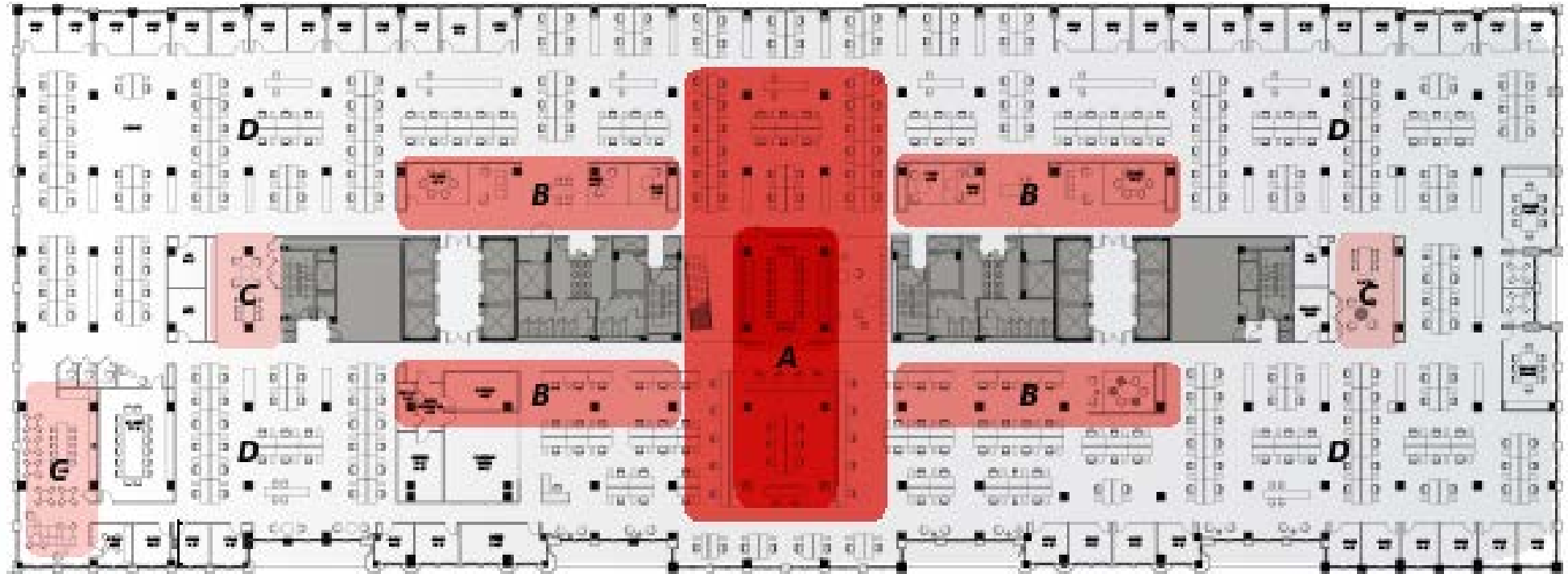
The interior palette is light, neutral, and monochromatic, with shades of gray and tan against black and white, and blue is used as a highlight color. Flooring in corridors and public areas is white oak.





Meetings can be held in open lounge areas, four-person huddle rooms, six-person team rooms, and larger conference rooms. More than 1,000 quotations overlay meeting room glass walls, and the text density allows for either transparency or needed opacity.

Newsroom: An Open, Energized, and Wired Workspace



A HIGH ENERGY "The Buzz"

B ACTIVITY ZONE - Meeting

C ACTIVITY ZONE - Copy and Pantry

D FOCUS ZONE - Work