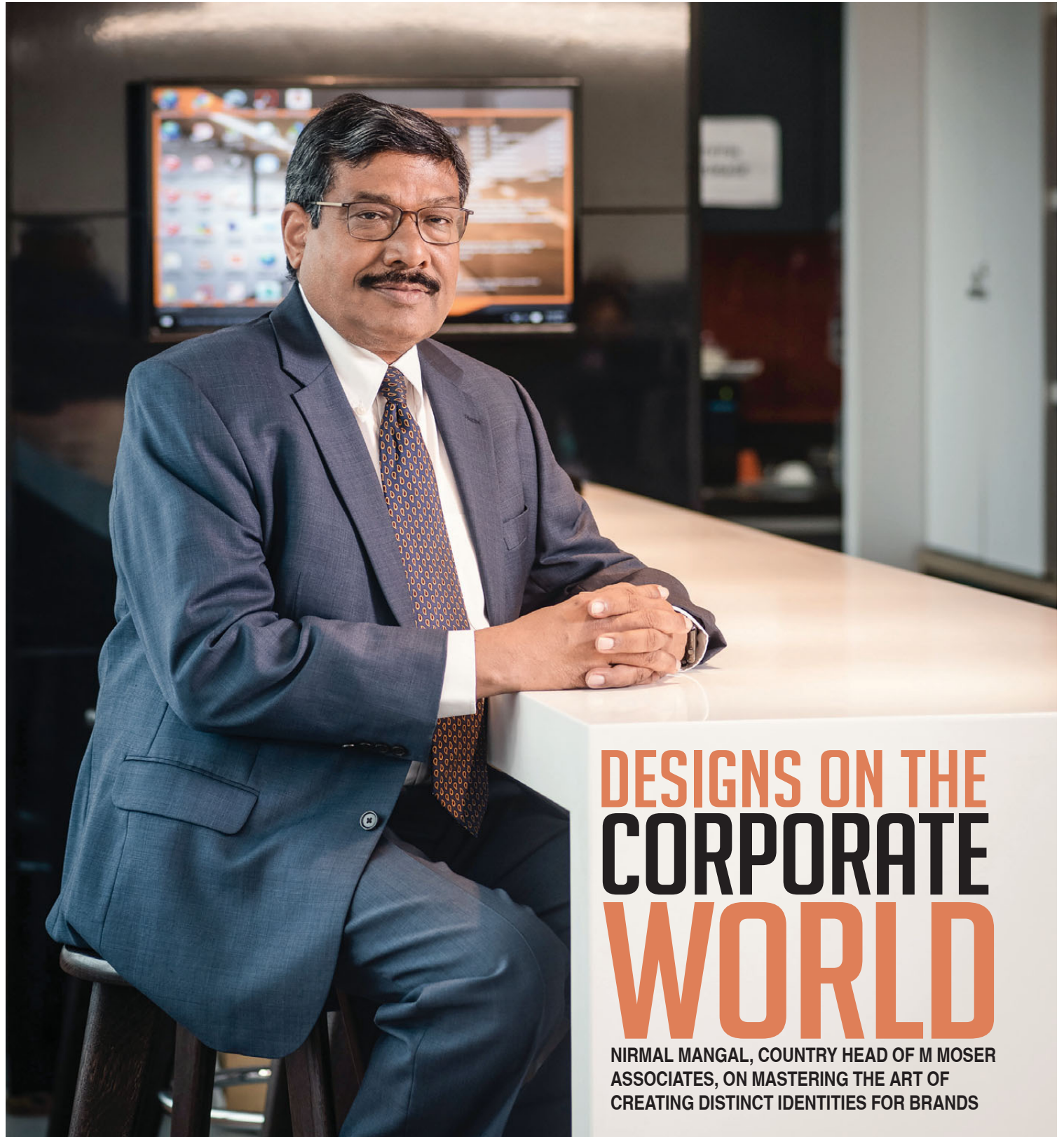


# COMMERCIAL DESIGN

Latest in office seating systems; Picking the right tools for washrooms in healthcare; A look into the new-age workspace – Awfis

The definitive guide to successful commercial spaces and facilities management

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## DESIGNS ON THE CORPORATE WORLD

NIRMAL MANGAL, COUNTRY HEAD OF M MOSER ASSOCIATES, ON MASTERING THE ART OF CREATING DISTINCT IDENTITIES FOR BRANDS



# Cut above the rest

M Moser Associates' country head, architect Nirmal Mangal shares his insight on how the firm has mastered the art of creating distinct identities for brands and its people through interior architecture

BY RASHMI NAICKER

**W**ith the convergence of various generations cohabitating workplaces, employees today are more diverse than before, and as the pace of technological and digital change gets more complex and disruptive, the workspace itself is changing significantly and rapidly. Given this, architects and designers are constantly reinventing the treatment of spaces across sectors. So, how does one cater to the ever-changing needs of its inhabitants? What will the office of

tomorrow look like? We delve on these questions and speculate on the emerging trends with Nirmal Mangal, country head of M Moser Associates, a firm that specialises in workspace strategy and design, using integrated approach to deliver solutions.

## **COLLABORATIVE APPROACH**

Elaborating on the theoretical base of the firm's work, Mangal states, "Interior design is an exploration of thoughts and ideas by designers and its stakeholders. We believe that

no two designs are alike and each must address its design brief and reflect its end-users. This is achieved through collaborative design workshops that allow us to build a consensus among stakeholders to achieve common goals for the project."

The way an office operates now is not how it has ever before. As business owners look towards the next design trend that maximises productivity, encourages team building and creativity, the notion of adaptive and interactive workplaces has garnered immense traction. "We



believe that workplaces should support an organisation's business, while being flexible, expressive, consistent, sustainable and balanced. It should allow choices of workspace setting, promote well-being among its occupants, and be inspiring for employees," explains Mangal.

The brand and its culture are other important pillars that define the office landscape. In a workplace, the branding has evolved from a simple company logo at the reception to an immersive branding environment that displays and highlights the

**“We practice a consensus-driven design process, starting with a design workshop involving all stakeholders.”**



### CO-CREATING A DIALOGUE

Programmes of varying scales and complexities often demand strategic planning and collaboration. Mangal deliberates on the challenges of establishing a synergy between all stakeholders and entities. He says, "In today's corporate world, there are multiple stakeholders with diverse design briefs, goals and aspirations. More often, some of these goals may not be in alignment with others. To address this challenge, we practice a consensus-driven design process. The process begins with a design workshop that brings

together all the stakeholders on one platform to understand each other's preferences, likes and dislikes. Through an interactive process, we facilitate a dialogue within the group. We ask them to create a priority list of 'success factors' that can guide everyone towards the common goal. This process forges consensus among the stakeholders and sets the stage for a buy-in of the design process and outcome. The list then works as a reference guide throughout the project to validate compliance."

and reasonable budgets, along with a comprehensive execution schedule. Hence, we advise clients to allow sufficient time to achieve good quality construction. In this digital age, we are often racing against time; and surely, the projects can be completed in shorter timeframes but then the quality control steps are often overlooked and the completed project often falls short of achieving expected quality."

#### **COLLABORATIVE APPROACH**

Incorporating insights from facility managers is imperative for a project's success. Facility managers bring with them experience and knowledge of managing the building's infrastructure and its engineering systems, along with the ability to provide design inputs that relate to the maintenance of building materials and its durability. These inputs, when incorporated during the design stage, can contribute towards better durability and operational efficiency in projects.

"Our approach to the design of a new project is a multi-step process-driven approach. We begin with a systematic phase that consists of direction, discovery and analysis. At this stage, we collect information for the project, conduct the design workshop, analyse our findings and present our recommendations. The next step is the interior design. This includes concept design and detailed design. Based on our findings, we prepare concept design options for review and consideration by the stakeholders for compliance with the design brief, project budget and project schedule. The concept design efforts provide multiple planning options for the look and feel of the space. We then proceed into detailed design stage upon approval of concept design. Then comes the budgeting, tendering, construction and project close-out," says Mangal, expounding on the complete process.

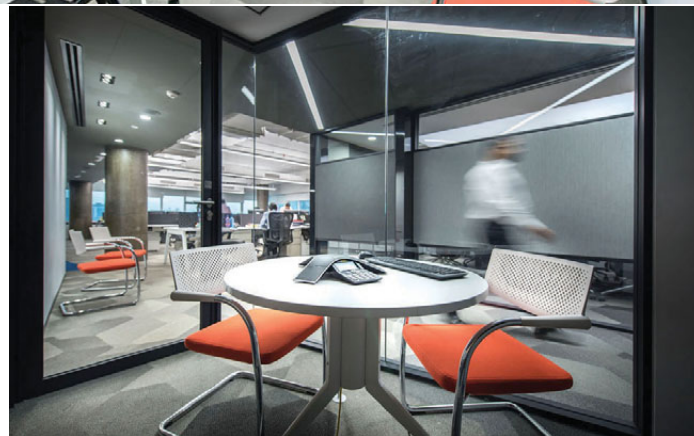


The design studio of M Moser Associates in Mumbai.

company's history and timeline. The interface between a brand and its physical entity can be demonstrated by multiple elements ranging from graphic design to creative lighting, furnishings to infographics. "The success of branding is measured by the space's memorability. Ideally, we want people to take with them a deeper understanding of the company. With corporations competing for the best and brightest, branding has become almost vital to a company's recruitment and retention efforts. Employees want to feel like they are a part of something, so it is essential to make the environment really exhibit what the company does and what its community is about."

#### **THE PROCESS**

Adhering to timelines and quality are two of the most critical aspects in a project.



Very often, haphazard planning cause disruptions in the execution process that leads to cost escalation and quality degradation. Annotating on this aspect, Mangal shares, "It has been our experience that a common thread between most clients is the aspiration for a timeless, iconic and memorable design. Such designs are achievable only with enough time allotted for design development, construction

CASE STUDIES

RED HAT OFFICES – BENGALURU, PUNE AND NEW DELHI



The open-plan workfloor at the Red Hat office in New Delhi.

When designing offices for MNCs, the task of seamlessly integrating different spaces, located at different sites, and creating a unified whole can be daunting. Introduce M Moser Associates to the picture, and the task turns into a creative opportunity to explore new design aesthetics. The Red Hat project breaks new ground with its well-crafted form, which visually links the offices located across three cities, while each maintains its unique identity. Despite maintaining a contemporary style and uniform language, the designers borrowed unique aspects from each city and merged it with the spatial fabric of the offices.

The Bengaluru facility, which functions primarily as the sales office for the company in India, integrates the “garden city”

theme with extended green spaces and biophilia, balanced by bright accents and an earthy colour palette.

Meanwhile, the New Delhi office echoes its rich historical tapestry that stands starkly in contrast to its urbanistic growth. The company’s sales team played an active role in the development of a playful planning model, with no compromise to functionality or the company’s global standards. The design merges contemporary planning with distinct cultural charm, taking off from the concept that the past informs the present. And so, the design juxtaposes modern materials with local patterns, and simple lines with decorative treatments and finishes.

For the office in Pune, a city that’s known as the ‘cultural capital of Maharashtra’, the team was inspired by the many forts and mountain ranges



Strategically placed and designed booths in the Pune office help serve as space of focus meetings.

## PROJECT INFORMATION

**Client:** Red Hat  
**Architect:** M Moser Associates

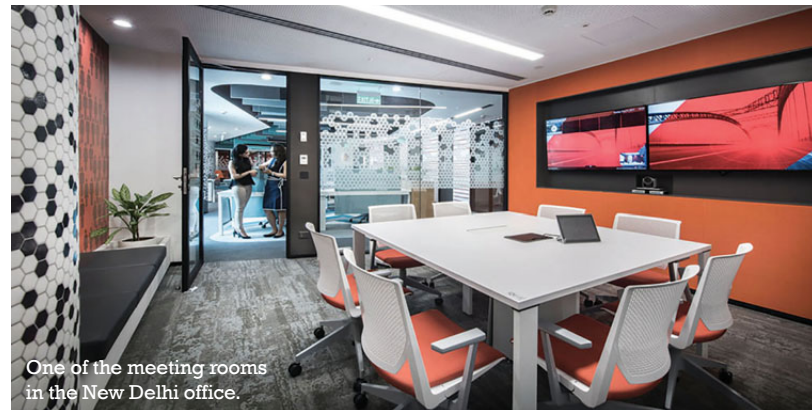
**Project:** Red Hat, Bengaluru – SKAV sales office  
**Design team:** (Key Members) Antonis Panayides, Mint, Beverly, Preetha and SuSan  
**Project area:** 10,000sq-ft  
**Initiation of project:** April 14, 2016  
**Completion of project:** February 15, 2016

**Project:** Red Hat, Pune – Support engineering office  
**Design team:** (Key Members) Antonis Panayides, Mint, Beverly, Preetha, SuSan and Yogesh  
**Project area:** 14,000sq-ft  
**Initiation of project:** April 1, 2016  
**Completion of project:** May 2, 2017

**Project:** Red Hat, New Delhi – Sales office  
**Design team:** Antonis Panayides, Mint, Beverly, Preetha, SuSan, Neha Badiye and Supratim  
**Project area:** 7,150sq-ft  
**Initiation of project:** April 1, 2016  
**Completion of project:** May 2, 2017



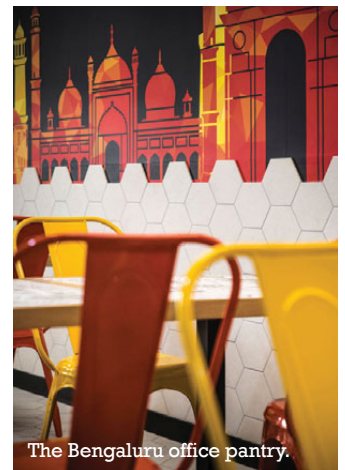
The Bengaluru facility integrates the “garden city” theme with extended green spaces and biophilia.



One of the meeting rooms in the New Delhi office.



The pantry at the Pune facility.



The Bengaluru office pantry.

that surround this region. The region’s unique Warli art as well as rangoli patterns have been incorporated through various architectural motifs and super-graphics. Combining the Red Hat corporate super-graphics and global brand standards with this rich visual language, strikes the perfect balance between international and local cultures.

The design team also reconfigured the centralised collaboration area with more spatial typologies comprising community tables, collaborative media units, and acoustic meeting pods. This communal hub was celebrated through playful architectural motifs such as colourful suspended acoustic ceiling baffles and finishes.

## DIMENSION DATA, MUMBAI



The reception has been planned like a “street”, where a glass backdrop with jaali presents a preview of the office.



Four seating windows offer meet and greet points at the reception area.

### PROJECT INFORMATION

**Project:** Dimension Data, Mumbai  
**Client:** Dimension Data  
**Architect:** M Moser Associates  
**Design team:** Poonam Kothare, Antonis Panayides, Imran Memon, and Kiran Vetal  
**Project area:** 25,000sq-ft  
**Initiation of project:** Nov 2015  
**Completion of project:** Feb 2016



A collage of acoustical ceiling modules wrapped above the work area.

**D**esigning an interior space for a global entity – especially one that enables its stakeholders to create and reinforce their brand value and equity – requires more than just a keen eye for aesthetics and positioning of office furniture and utilities. Rather, it requires a thorough understanding of the organisation, its values, goals, work culture, employee dynamics, etc. The office for Dimension Data, a subsidiary of NTT Japan, is one such case, with three conceptual aspects

defining its interior landscape – flexible, expressive and balanced.

Although the business requirements did not allow for an open-floor design, the team at M Moser proposed a hybrid layout. It would comprise of linear benches, cubicles and 120-degree workstations, which was radically different to their existing workspace, and yet was aligned to their business needs. The hard spaces and enclosures were planned towards the periphery, and a hot-desking solution was catered in two seating options –

conventional workstations as well as informal booths.

The reception has been planned like a “street”, where a glass backdrop with jaali presents a preview of the office. Four seating windows offer meet and greet points, as against conventional seating or closed meeting rooms. The focal point of design in the open-office area remains the innovative ceiling design – a collage of acoustical ceiling modules in three shades and sizes, wrapped above the work area.

## WILLIS TOWERS WATSON, MUMBAI



'Neighbourhood planning' was applied as a basic planning principle for the office.



The office cafe.

### PROJECT INFORMATION

**Project:** Willis Towers Watson, Mumbai  
**Client:** Willis Tower Watson  
**Architect:** M Moser Associates  
**Design team:** Poonam, Antonis Panayides and Beverly  
**Project area:** 130,000sq-ft  
**Initiation of project:** Oct 2014  
**Completion of project:** May 2015

Office design must reflect the company's ideations and sensibilities, and capture the essence of its ambition. While designing for Willis Towers Watson, a global multinational risk management, insurance brokerage and advisory company, M Moser Associates worked towards reinterpreting the essence of a serious environment by infusing new energy and versatility. Vivid spaces, transparent walls, and play of colours and textures, embody the interior architecture of its office in Mumbai.

The floor plate of the centre, which operates multiple shifts a day, five days a week, was a contiguous spread of 1,30,000sq-ft, spanning over two wings. The



The reception area.

major challenge was to create an engaging workplace that addresses the shift changes, high footfalls and connectivity between the two wings. The designers circumvented the issue by creating a 'landscape'

that enhances an organic geometry rather than a conventional grid plan. A hybrid layout, using linear bench, 120-degree, height-adjustable workstations, was created in a seamless manner. Multifunctional usage of spaces was the key to accommodate the business need of each shift.

'Neighbourhood planning' was applied as a basic planning principle for creating seven self-sufficient bays. Each neighborhood contained open and closed workspaces, and a 'landmark' congregation space, giving employees the choice of work setting. Thematic treatment to each 'neighbourhood' addresses the issues of way-finding, which otherwise would have been a challenge with such a large floor plate. 