

1989  
CELEBRATING  
30 YEARS

# nyrej

## Company of the Month: IA Interior Architects celebrates 35th-year; Goal to always inspire lives with visionary design

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IA's design for Google's New York campus includes an interactive, AV-enabled ceiling feature.

New York, NY Celebrating its 35th year, IA Interior Architects (IA) is a global architecture firm focused on interior architecture. Since 1984, their goal has always been to improve people's lives through visionary design. As architects, designers, strategists, and environmental specialists, they translate qualitative and quantitative information into environments built around people, processes, technologies, and business drivers. With offices in 21 metropolitan cities globally, IA is guided by a one-firm philosophy; they work together as a cohesive organization with a tremendous amount of inter-office knowledge sharing.

When considering qualitative information, they dive into each client's goals, brand, culture, and each user's experience, to create human-centric design. They do this by understanding how users move through and utilize spaces—be they workplace, retail, hospitality, healthcare, etc.—and what connects them from one experience to the next. Creating landmarks, or destinations, enables them as designers to curate experiences, from a small retail space to an entire office building. By harnessing technology's rapidly evolving capabilities, IA also works with quantitative data—metrics, program requirements, analytics, and algorithms—in new ways to inform the design process and at every level imbue each project with features that respond to individual, team, and company necessities.

Through innovation and the addition of business intelligence tools, they have transformed the

communication process for project delivery by connecting diverse data points and making them interactive, digestible, and shareable on-line—an experience-driven, human-centric approach to match their design process. IA pioneered the use of Revit and Virtual Reality (VR) to design interiors and create virtual prototypes for all projects. With clients and colleagues located anywhere in the world, they can virtually meet and collaborate inside projects with full, built-in audio and markups via VR.

IA New York's office features an interactive digital wall that tracks and responds to subtle body movements in real-time.

For collaboration with clients, real estate consultants, and others, they connect project information with Building Information Management (BIM) using a cloud-powered Autodesk BIM 360 platform, which they prototyped with Autodesk. They can harvest, analyze, and share the design, space, and geographic information system (GIS) data inherent in their BIM workflow within Revit and utilize custom benchmarking dashboards to visualize local and global project data for project/account management and quality control.

With both qualitative and quantitative information and tools, they create human experiences that encourage user ownership. To further realize human-centric spaces with the right mix of features, spaces, technology, and amenities requires a thorough understanding of user tasks, patterns, and insights, distilled from IA vision sessions and client interviews. Sensitive to the multiple demands of today's environments—the need for convenience and choice; the drive to support diversity and create wellness; the desire for community and comradery; and the commitment to environmental stewardship—IA works to exceed client and user expectations. They design inherently flexible spaces to provide user customization aligned with individual and team preferences that express and inspire brand, culture, and community. Designing spaces for all users' preferences, that are intuitively navigated, flexible, reconfigurable, and hackable, empowers users to own their space and supports diversity.

As a medium to humanize spaces and engage occupants with the environment at a visceral, emotional level, our use of creative technology—an emerging discipline that melds art, design, and digital interfaces for a dynamic, immersive spatial experience—invites users and visitors to interact with the workplace and through their actions elicit a physical response from the workplace itself. Their installations, unique for each project, take a variety of forms, from a wall-mounted LED screen that responds to viewer movements with a swirling, morphing configuration of fluid colors, to an alcove surrounded by screens. In the IA-designed City Cave at Google's New York office, screens change with images of the city in response to specific, emotion-related search terms chosen by users. As another example, at Wel at Humana, the health insurance company's new fitness center in Louisville, motion-tracking LED panels, arranged in a freeform configuration along a stairwell, cycle through a combination of shapes and colors based on movement and time of day and week. Each of these installations, which fascinate, spark joy, and differentiate the workspace, can be refreshed through programming. These data-driven algorithms create user experiences unique to

each client's mission.

Especially relevant in workspaces, IA recognizes that amenity destinations, including spaces for gaming, meditation, fitness, eating, lounging, etc., are a significant factor in attracting and retaining talent, but more importantly allow users to decompress and revitalize from the intensity of work. Venues for nourishment and social interaction play a big part in supporting wellness, sharing, and community. Case in point is a current technology client's headquarters where a variety of spaces provide for both. In particular, the main café, designed to create the feeling of sitting in a park, offers a variety of group and intimate settings. In addition, a unique greenhouse-inspired room with glass walls and ceiling, hanging plants, and plentiful natural light combines a biophilic experience, the warmth of comradery, and the satisfaction of good food. Smaller cafes on other floors are destinations that extend the dining experience throughout the entire space, offering accessibility to hot food and shared meals. For a quick pick-up, coffee and snack bars are on each floor, and at the barista bar in reception, users and guests can come together for coffee and conversation.

The team-based way they often work today requires support for individual and group learning that drives organizations towards a future that extends beyond walls. Training and demonstration rooms with video capabilities remain vital, but remote, life-size communication via floor-to-ceiling screens, as well as interaction and learning through holograms, currently used by MasterCard and other IA clients, portend the future. Users can share and see into the physical space of others, adding a new emotional and meaningful layer to communication. Furthermore, tasks such as research and security performed by Artificial Intelligence (AI), will profoundly change the nature of how we interact with our environments. And IA will be at the vanguard looking toward the next evolution to create experience-focused, human-centric spaces.

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