



CP & Associates completes Minamoto Kitchoan's 2,000 s/f east coast flagship location at 509 Madison Avenue

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Construction services firm CP & Associates bridges cultural differences to complete Minamoto Kitchoan's east coast flagship boutique at 509 Madison Ave.

When Minamoto Kitchoan, a purveyor of Japanese sweets known as Wagashi made the decision to move its Fifth Ave. boutique, they did so knowing they had assembled an international team dedicated to creating a collaborative work environment.

The project team consisted of the Minamoto's representative Kajima Building & Design Group, Inc., Kaneko Architects, P.C. and the construction firm of CP & Associates. Although the bi-level flagship, which features a walk-in freezer, a product preparation area and an executive office totals 2,000 s/f, the project presented challenges that had to be overcome. The trio established an approach that would enable them to plan for and manage issues before they would affect the project's expedited time line.

Minamoto tasked the team with completing their flagship in 10 weeks; delays were out of the question. In conjunction with Kajima and Kaneko, CP devised a trade schedule that dovetailed with Kajima's master project schedule, enabling the construction firm to maximize trade performance. On any given day, five to eight subcontractors worked simultaneously within the confines of the new boutique.

To ensure that the teams remained on the same page and were working with the latest directives communicated from Japan, a fluid model of communication was established. Daily site meetings and numerous calls were conducted between team members to make certain that Minamoto's expectations were crystal clear to all parties. "On such a high-end project, there is no such thing as over communicating," said Phillip Pignatelli, principal at CP & Associates. "We had to check and re-check every project detail to ensure nothing would be lost in translation."

To say CP & Associates took extra special care when installing finishes would be an understatement. The majority of finishes were one-of-kind works, hand crafted by Japanese artisans. Minamoto's flagship features light-boxes faced with Washi paper, Juraku wall coverings and light coves faced with Shikkui, a lime plaster that actively improves indoor airquality. Meticulous attention was paid to their handling and installation. For each, after the manufacturer's instructions were translated from Minamoto's native Japanese, a CP principal remained onsite during the installation process to ensure that the intended design aesthetic was achieved. In addition, the flagship also boasts locally sourced finishes such as a Stone Source porcelain tile floor, Luminii LED lighting and handcrafted white oak retail showcases.

The final product, a luxuriously crafted boutique that echoes Minamoto's brand DNA, elevates and showcases the Wagashi purveyor among its neighboring European Chocolatiers. The project also serves as an example of how companies from opposite sides of the world are capable of creating a

successful work environment.

"When dealing with non-US clients, you must be committed to understanding and respecting the cultural differences that exist between the project teams," said Pat Acocella, founder of CP & Associates. "You have to develop a model of project management that overcomes those differences. We did that."

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