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Dublin, Ohio
Sterling Commerce
Design Collective Inc.

Companies at the leading edge

of the information revolution are well aware of the strategic value of design. They know that the right image sends the right message. So it came as no surprise that a half-dozen years ago, Sterling Commerce, one of the world's leading data transfer software and management companies with big-name clients like United Parcel Service and Compaq, retained Design Collective of Columbus as consultant for its design image—from interiors to landscaping and exterior signage. When the company planned on moving its international headquarters and training facilities into a new building on campus, the agenda was simple: Showcase its own software as a working office tool, and reinforce its position as a world leader in electronic data interchange.

Design Collective's principal and team leader Robert Valentine, FIIDA, worked with base building architects to shape the future floor plate. They added skylights to the top third-floor executive space, upgraded lighting and added high-tech fixtures, and heightened the first-floor ceiling to install interactive electronic equipment for the training rooms. But the most striking changes were replacing traditional ceiling tile with European-style brushed aluminum perforated panels, and creating a grand three-story atrium.

In the executive floor waiting area, anigre cabinetry that reflects a "Mondrian" theme. The artwork is from Sterling's corporate art collection.

Workstation/storage: custom by **Merritt Woodwork**; lounge seating: Brayton International; lounge table: Cassina USA; floor lamp: Leucos; carpet: Bentley; suspended ceiling: Steel Ceilings.

The design agenda was simple: Showcase the software company's own products, and reinforce its position as a world leader in electronic data interchange.

In the lobby, Design Collective chose ceramic floor and wall tiles in black and off-white to signal hard-edge technical know-how, while a pale anigre concierge desk expresses familiar professional competence.



A blue neon curving strip brushes by the copper-clad electronic theater waiting room.

Reception desk: custom by **Merritt Woodwork**; floor and wall tile: Graniti Fiandre; copper wall: custom by X-Design; suspended ceiling: Armstrong; recessed downlights: Staff; recessed floorlights: Hydrel.

The next step was to devise shapes, forms, and finishes for the 60,000-square-foot building that communicated world-class competence. Curves, circular forms, and angled walls and door placements enliven corridors, and a curving blue neon strip inside and out leads visitors to the concierge desk. Even the traditional custom of passively waiting for appointments has been turned on its head. Future customers and clients waiting for training are ushered into a circular copper leaf-clad electronic theater, where they watch a video on a big-screen monitor that tells the Sterling story.

Ceramic tiles in black and off-white on the lobby floor and wall signal hard-edge technical know-how, while a pale anigre wood concierge desk expresses familiar professional competence. Upstairs on the executive floor, the anigre is repeated on Mondrian-inspired storage units and in

executive private offices. As a contrast, cherry was chosen for administrative assistant workstations.

But the primary showpiece is the board room. Technologically smart, handsome, and exceptionally flexible, its cherry table adapts to all the demands of today's global communications. Laptops network via a trench system in the middle, while three-quarters of the table rotates for video conferencing.

Design Collective itself is no slouch when it comes to data interchange and using design for its own marketing purposes. Its three offices in Nashville, Cleveland, and Columbus are not only electronically connected so staff can work on any project, but the Nashville office is deliberately sited in a busy mall in full view of passersby. •Karin Tetlow



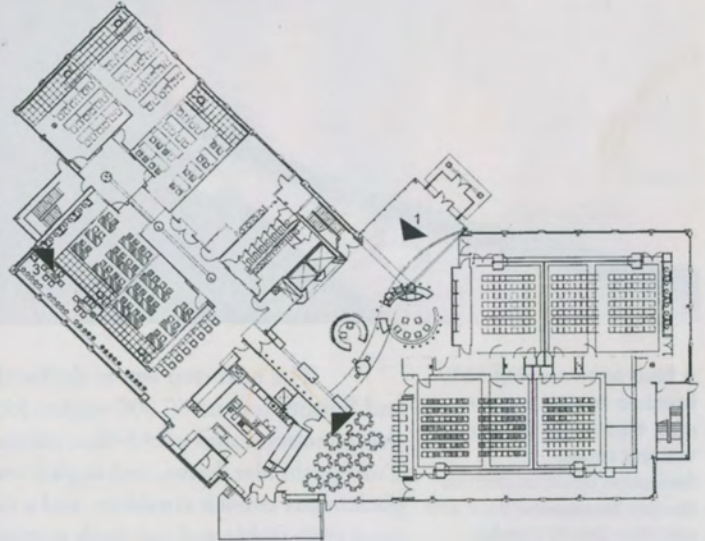
Design Collective Inc. founded in 1969, is Ohio's largest independent interior architectural firm. Design Collective has three offices located in Columbus, Cleveland, and Nashville, and provides design services for corporate offices, hospitality and food service, healthcare and housing for the elderly and educational institutions.

Blue neon is glimpsed in the circular law library on the executive floor.

Table, full-height shelving: custom by **Merritt Woodwork**; chairs: ICF.

The boardroom cherry table with a trench network access rotates on an elaborate mechanism for video conferencing.

Table, paneling: custom by **Merritt Woodwork**; chairs: Wilkhahn.



Project credits

Client: Sterling Commerce

Interior Design: Design Collective Inc.

Design team: Robert B. Valentine, FIIDA, Ralph A. Napletana, Jeffrey L. Haase, NCARB, Carla Cremers, Associate IIDA, Matthew G. Mercer, Associate IIDA, Jon D. Weaver

Architecture (base building): Bird/Houk & Associates

Millwork/custom furniture: Merritt Woodwork

Construction management: Duke Construction

Lighting consultant: Gary Steffy Lighting Design

Mechanical consultant: JMC Mechanical Contractors

Electrical consultant: JTS Services

Photography: Michael Houghton/StudiOhio

woodwork of merit



Holland & Knight, Atlanta



Sterling Commerce, Columbus



Alumax, Atlanta



Allen Bradley, Cleveland



Corporate Headquarters, Cincinnati