

DESIGN IN FOCUS

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The Latest in Office Furniture



Converse Montreal
Canada -
Indesign





Photography by Marc Cramer



The desire for a location closer to the city's international airport (for better access from visiting Converse colleagues from other countries) and the launch of a new product line combined to justify this new workspace for the iconic sneaker brand's Canadian HQ. In terms of image, the Converse offices needed to express both the brand's historical status and its new, hipper character. The project incorporated strongly articulated geometry on the lower level, dedicated to showroom. Rolling racks supply useful storage and display, while presentation rooms face each other for meetings of various sizes. Obviously, the activities and discussions here usually involve shoes, so one is never far from those, both formally and less so, such as in the shoe-shaped central foyer space, a hint of the many yet-to-be-designed shoes waiting in the company's future, or perhaps an allusion to an ideal shoe no-one has yet envisioned. In work areas, open vision lines predominate, fostering a collective work spirit and underlining the active spirit of the brand.

Indesign first removed ceiling and floor finishes to reveal the steel structure and concrete slabs, letting these set the general approach. White and charcoal planes of gypsum took over from there, set off by metal furniture and careful lighting, focussing on the product. Doors in walnut lead to interior and exterior basketball courts, referencing indirectly the first sports shoe designed in North America, in 1917, by Converse. More current sports stars line the walls in portraits to lend the celebrity element so central to today's professional sports. In its special position as a kind of 'indie' sports brand, smaller, hipper than the giants, Converse has to maintain an in-between balance; successful but not enormous, cool but not self-consciously so. Indesign's office design runs with that.

