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office fact file



OWNER Gunnebo India
 AREA 18,600 square feet
 LOCATION Lake City Mall, Thane

Well-balanced office

Gunnebo India's office caters to employees' work and relaxation needs

FEATURE AVRIL NOEL D'SOUZA

When the hassles of working out of the decrepit Mazagaon office got too much for it, the management of Gunnebo India, a security solutions company decided to shift its office to Thane, just outside of Mumbai. Going into the details of what was wrong with the old space, Nicholas Robert, Managing Director explains, "The infrastructure and facilities at our earlier location were quite restrictive and getting old. Besides, the space comprised a series of disconnected units which didn't help at all."

The management knew that it wanted the new office to provide both professional functionality and recreational space for the employees. With this in mind, it decided to bring in Planet 3 Studio, an award-winning Mumbai-based firm to design the new facilities. "We wanted a radical change in office culture. Gunnebo has 75 years of experience in the international market, and

we wanted our new office to reflect just how far we have come. We also wanted to create a space where our employees could relax," says Nicholas talking about the plans "We were partial to Swedish design with its emphasis on minimalism. Planet 3 came up with the plan which was most in line with what we had envisioned. Besides which," he adds, "we were really impressed with its energy and enthusiasm for the project."

Walking into Gunnebo's new office at Lake City Mall in Thane, I was immediately struck by the crisp, clean lines of the contemporary design. Modular pieces of furniture line up to form a flexible reception, which allows for smooth movement around the work area. Each room in the building has windows; giving the building an almost-transparent feel and making the rooms seem larger than they really are. There are also a series of casual, work-oriented spaces that promote a flexible work culture.

Kalhan and Santha Mattoo, the principal architects for the project, spent three days

Ingenious usage of glass makes the Gunnebo office appear much larger than it actually is



LEFT The caricatures of top management on the café walls have been well received and provide great comic relief

BELOW The orange-coloured walls add a vibrant touch to the décor

interacting with the employees on their own turf to gauge their essential requirements and come up with a design which would create more fluidity in the workspace.

A general rule of thumb when designing office spaces suggests that there should ideally be 100 square feet of workspace for every employee. 180 employees on the Gunnebo roles and 18,000 square feet of space at their new location meant that Planet 3 would not have any additional space for the planned recreational facilities. To come up with a solution, the architects had to think out of the box.

The 40 people on the sales team make up the largest segment of employees at Gunnebo. While spending time with Gunnebo's employees, the architects noticed that a lot of people on the sales team worked offsite, only coming in to use the computers for 15 minutes or so at a time. By creating a system called 'Hotdesking', whereby employees booked computer time in advance, they reduced the total number of computer terminals thus saving precious space. This left the architects with 2,500 square feet for the recreational area.

This recreation area accommodates a discussion zone, huddle space, vending machines, a library and a landscaped sky garden. At the café, the bright orange walls with caricatures of senior company management dramatically emphasise the chilled-out factor. "In order to provide a relaxed space, we decided to include caricatures of the leaders of the company like the CEO and the Managing Director," says Santha.

"Not only are our employees extremely happy with the new office space, it has been well received by our clients as well," says Nicholas. 

