

CASE STUDY: MICROSOFT CONFERENCE CENTER

A New Connection for Microsoft Corporation

As one of the leaders of the technology revolution, Microsoft Corporation wanted to better connect with the high caliber, start-up talent coming out of the elite East Coast technical universities. With an established West Coast presence, Microsoft decided it was time to design an East Coast campus for its employees, customers, and potential new hires while also creating a physical connection point to the East Coast.

On the first floor of Microsoft's new, Cambridge, Massachusetts Headquarters is the conference center, otherwise known as the "collaboration zone." Microsoft wanted the entrance of their new East Coast headquarters to embody the creativity, ingenuity, and collaboration of their brand. Microsoft brought in TRO Jung/Brannen, an international architecture & interior design firm, to design the interior of this space.

"We wanted a lighting product with which we could create geometric ripples that related back to nature – out to water, but not literally," stated D. Schweppe, lighting designer.

TRO Jung/Brannen called in design experts, Schweppe Lighting Design, Inc. and Cosentini Associates, to collaborate on this project. Working closely with Microsoft, the design team was able to get a thorough understanding of Microsoft's needs and overall objectives for the new conference center.



imagine the possibilities

The center had to accommodate multiple uses for this space. The resulting design had four key areas: the formal meeting room; several informal break-out rooms; two living rooms with smaller enclosed meeting places; and lastly, a central cafe for eating, entertaining, networking, and cocktail parties.

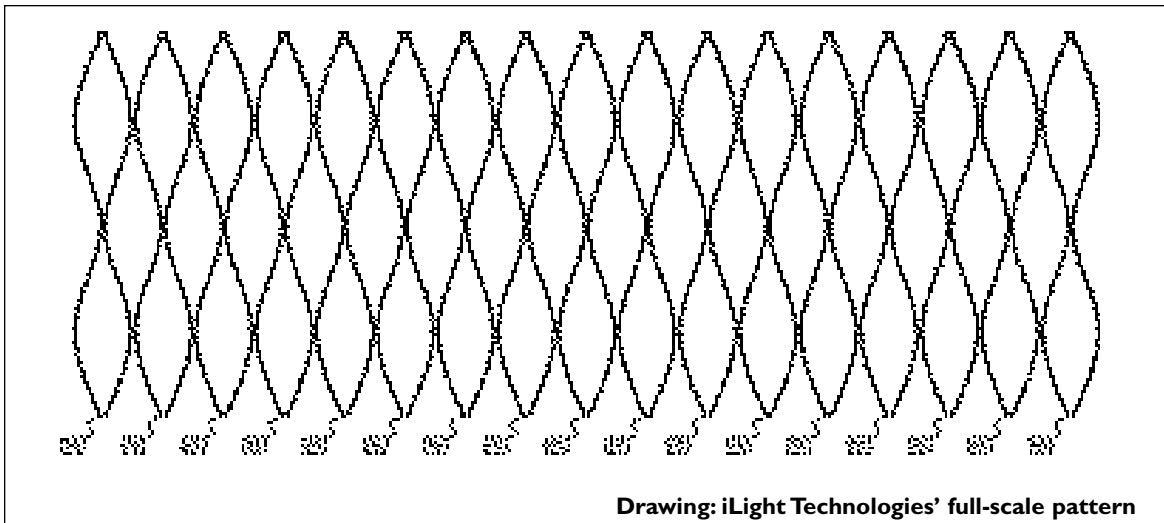
Melisa Marcotte, interior designer at TRO Jung/ Brannen and project lead explained, "Instead of using all the design funds up front, where they typically go, we wanted to create visual interest and carry the details and interest throughout the whole floor." With an open floor space, the center of the room was

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- Site: Cambridge, MA
- Interior application
- Project: Commercial
- Color: Plexineon White 2X Series 3500°K
- Direct view
- Length: 142 LF (43m)

- Designers: TRO Jung/Brannen, D. Schweppe Lighting Design, and Cosentini Associates
- Photograph: Richard Mandelkorn

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A New Connection for Microsoft Corporation Cont.

reserved for the cafe area so that visitors and employees would be likely to congregate.

“Since the center of the space had to be special, we wanted to put some unique lighting element in the ceiling over this area, but it had to be narrow,” stated D. Schweppe of D. Schweppe Lighting Design. The design team also wanted a lighting system that reflected the overall design elements of the project – new, modern, and energy-efficient. Schweppe, who has worked with iLight Technologies previously, thought that iLight would be a perfect solution for this application.

“The iLight fixture gets more compliments than any other lighting,” says Marcotte of TRO Jung/Brannen. Marcotte added, “iLight’s fixture offered us the freedom and flexibility to create the design we wanted.”

Per Schweppe, “We wanted a lighting product with which we could create geometric ripples that related back to nature – out to water, but not literally.” The White Plexineon Series was selected and

factory formed to exact specification to create a series of geometric patterns that provide a beautiful focal point in the room. The end result is a striking geometric pattern of white light mounted in the ceiling – the centerpiece of the cafe and the room.

While different technologies were considered for this project, the designers really wanted that feel of continuous light without breaks and simplicity in lighting, something that lent itself well to iLight’s white LED lighting system. Marcotte stated, “iLight’s fixture offered us the freedom and flexibility to create the design we wanted.” She added, “And the iLight fixture gets more compliments than any other lighting.”

In addition to ensuring the design was exactly right, it also had to be easily and properly installed. Schweppe asked iLight to create a full scale drawing so that the contractor would have a pattern to use for the factory formed fixtures and not deviate from the design. “If these lights were not made or installed precisely, the whole effect that we were trying to achieve could not be met,” stated Schweppe.

With the cafe at the middle of the conference center helping set the stage, TRO Jung Brannen applied a more residential, hospitality-type feel to the rest of the space. While no single element is overpowering to the overall design, each area has special details to create visual interest – from the innovative lighting in the cafe to the tangerine and avocado furniture accents – wherever you are in the center. Microsoft’s new “collaboration zone” has successfully connected all the elements to provide an environment worthwhile of Microsoft’s East Coast Headquarters.

imagine the possibilities