

# Revitalizing an industry leader's corporate headquarters

by Tiffany English

“Global. Innovative. Trusted.” Those words reflect the driving force behind Cubic Corp.’s established international presence and six decades of industry leadership in the transportation and defense industries.

The company’s San Diego operations are spread between three locations, with some of the buildings dating back to the 1950s. Due to underinvestment in the facilities throughout their lifetime, the overall campus was due for consolidation and modernization.

Ware Malcomb was hired early on to provide master-planning services, first to analyze the existing locations and provide feasibility studies that would weigh different options for consolidation. After the master-planning studies and standards development were completed, Cubic decided to create a new, modern prototypical workplace environment for employees.

The standards were developed to provide design consistency throughout the campus and streamline efficient design solutions.

## Real estate strategy

The real estate strategy behind Cubic’s campus modernization of its corporate headquarters arose from the desire to consolidate the three San Diego sites, totaling approximately 500,000 square feet (46,400 sq. m.) into one campus and increasing density by 25 to 30 percent. The objective: deliver a work environment respecting cost and shareholder value, while creating a modern and efficient workplace. By consolidating operations, Cubic would be able to streamline operational processes, improve communication and cross-pollination, and renew and emphasize its brand and cultural identity.

Ware Malcomb’s Interior Design and Branding Studios led the visioning and programming sessions. Cubic sought to develop a prototype to study and understand their employee needs and workspace requirements. Meetings were held with Cubic leaders and employee focus groups were held to define elements most important in the design of the new work environment.

The design development was fueled by the results of the visioning sessions. From the sessions, it was found that the key attributes desired by





Benny Chan, Fotoworks

employees included access to natural light and a modern design aesthetic with impactful colors. Another significant finding from the sessions was the desire for an open, collaborative culture integrated with quiet, heads-down workspace.

As part of the prototype phase, the standards were implemented to provide Cubic with the opportunity to test them. The standards addressed suite and departmental entries, branding and wayfinding, meeting and amenity spaces, and work stations and private offices. Many of these spaces were designed and sized based on a modular footprint to allow for adjustments to changing business needs.

### The prototype

The prototype was created to be studied over the next year to understand Cubic employees' habits, their likes and dislikes, and any realized efficiencies created through this new environment. The objective was to analyze the new standards and implement refinements, based on observations of effectiveness in the year following. These enhanced standards would then be applied to the next phase of campus modernization.

Since Cubic project teams continuously change, the interior spaces need some flexibility to accommodate their workflow. As a result, the new 13,000-square-foot (1,208-sq.-m.) prototype office space expands and contracts, depending on the need, through the selected furniture solutions. The furniture was key to creating the flexible work environment and its catering to different requirements. Demountable glass walls were used to allow physical separation while maintaining a visual connection, and to support change without reconfiguration.

The transition from a generic, closed-office environment to a more open, modern office design was enhanced by new graphics and technology solutions to improve global employee communication. Throughout the space, impressive, super-sized graphics pay homage to military and defense, one of Cubic's core businesses.

The project team successfully revived the space and created a new interior standard for Cubic. The team created a design communicating Cubic's history and brand: "Global. Innovative. Trusted."

### The results

After the prototype project was completed, Ware Malcomb participated in follow-up meetings with a focus group of Cubic employees. These employees occupied the new space and were responsible for gathering and providing feedback from colleagues. Overall, they were very enthusiastic about the prototype's results and the positive impact the new workplace had on efficiency, usability and morale.

"Engaging Cubic employees in the modernization process was and continues to be essential as we update our work environment from the large office footprints we once had to smaller, more flexible and collaborative space," said Joy Hagin, corporate director of Facility Services at Cubic.

Cubic, Ware Malcomb and Unisource Solutions worked together in the follow-up

meetings to gather and analyze the prototype data. The Interior Design team looked at potential cost savings and reevaluated the different types of meeting spaces based on the usage behaviors of the prototype space. Because the focus group results showed a continued need for different-sized informal and formal meeting spaces, the team implemented slight modifications to the design. The prototype was updated for use going forward in the future phases of the Cubic campus modernization.

### Looking forward

The prototype phase set the stage for the renovation phases to begin within Cubic's building No. 8. This building is approximately 100,000 square feet (9,290 sq. m.) and its projects have been divided into three phases, with Phase 1 currently under construction.

The most significant factor working on Cubic's campus modernization is the team collaboration between Ware Malcomb, the engineers, the general contractor, and Cubic's in-house construction and facilities team. The team was intimately involved with the project to retrofit a very old building. The Cubic team was instrumental in identifying as-built conditions, supporting the transitions, and working with the mechanical, electrical and plumbing engineering team to come up with the most efficient solutions. This was the key to establishing long-term real estate value for Cubic's facilities.

The effort put forward to create a tried, tested and true prototype working environment proved Cubic's dedication to its employees by creating a new cohesive, modern and efficient workplace to truly support their needs.

Revitalizing the campus not only enhances real estate value, but also provides Cubic with added benefits concerning recruitment, retention and marketability. Having a new campus environment to attract potential clients and high-quality employees is significant to the company's operations and will secure its continued industry leadership in decades to come.



*Tiffany English, CID, LEED AP, is principal at Ware Malcomb and leads the growth and overall management of the San Diego offices. She also is a member of the firm's Interiors Advisory Committee and serves as an account executive on select national corporate accounts.*