

# Innovation, ideas and creative concepts

Elevation - illustration  
of lantern lighting  
effect of gallery.

Photos: Radek Brunecky

The Swisscom Business Campus is neither showroom nor office but rather a space for interaction between customer and Swisscom experts. There is no product sold; solutions are sought. Your customers are not the average; rather, company directors looking for tailor made high-tech communication solutions. By Anthony Tischhauser, Pamboukian lightdesign.

The Swisscom Business Campus is a smallish space based on the notion of The Office of the Future. It bears some resemblance to the original concept of a 'paperless office' that dates from the 1940s – a system of shared microfilm based hyperlinks. The campus also draws on elements that may be loosely associated with contemporary office design: open office landscape, hot-desk zones, retreat nooks, informal discussion areas, think-tank tech-driven spaces and a relaxation lounge to accommodate digital interaction and all sorts of individual working modes.

Situated in the transformed former industrial and now trendy and edgy district of Kreis 5 in Zurich West with studios, ateliers and shops, theatres and Technopark start-up centre, the Business Park is, strangely enough, on the ground floor of a residential block. Several smallish areas conceived for boutique-like shops are strung together to achieve the required floor area. The plan weaves between and around the west-facing entrance lobbies to the dwellings above. They are orientated to an urban park landscape. The Business Campus facing east

is entered off the piazza and opposite the Renaissance Hotel.

Suddenly the client was no longer happy with tones of beige, dark timber finishes, carpeted floors and classic spaces – no more corporate feel. Just before construction was to begin, Swisscom asked Holzer Kobler Architekturen to intervene and embody its swing in mood. The architecture should now reflect a relaxed approach to meetings and induce formal and stressed upper management clientele to 'let go.'

How could this be achieved? The architects made a virtue out of the shop and other bits and pieces of space by stringing them together through a passage designed as a promenade. The promenade as core or *raison d'être* of the ensemble, morphs into different spaces animated in their own right. The promenade is treated as a gallery along the approach elevation with niches in the angled wall opposite the glass front. Each recess is devoted to a Swiss inventor. The Business Campus is about innovation, ideas and creative concepts. There are no private or public areas. The only spe-

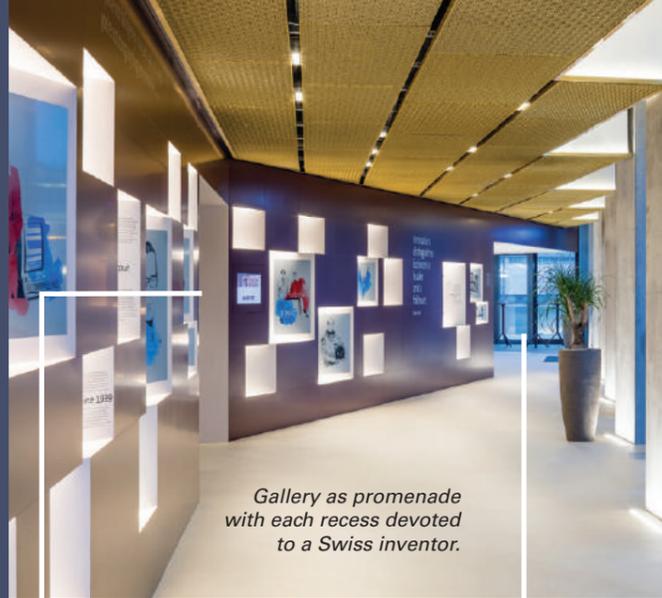


Entrance with etched  
panel wall, and lounge.

cifically defined space, which is off the gallery, is the 'strategies room' or think-tank for strategic planning. It is 'virtual' in character and oval - its plan based on the proportions of the Oval Room in the White House. Movable wall screens in shades of red provide for mood change, acoustic treatment and revealing the white walls behind for projections, as well as the dynamic LED wall screen.

On entering off the piazza one is drawn to a large table that is neither office table nor dining table, but a surface that serves a use given it at any moment. This lounge space is not only for relaxation (at the press of a button it is transformed into a high tech space), but the area of resolution. Other scattered and different sized spaces, quite different in character, serve as 'laboratories' for hammering away at ideas or solving specific aspects of larger problems. The core of permanent staff sit around their own elongated table or move around as desired. There is no daily pattern, order comes and goes for any particular pitch.

The lighting design brief was any designer's dream. It stated that the lighting shouldn't speak of



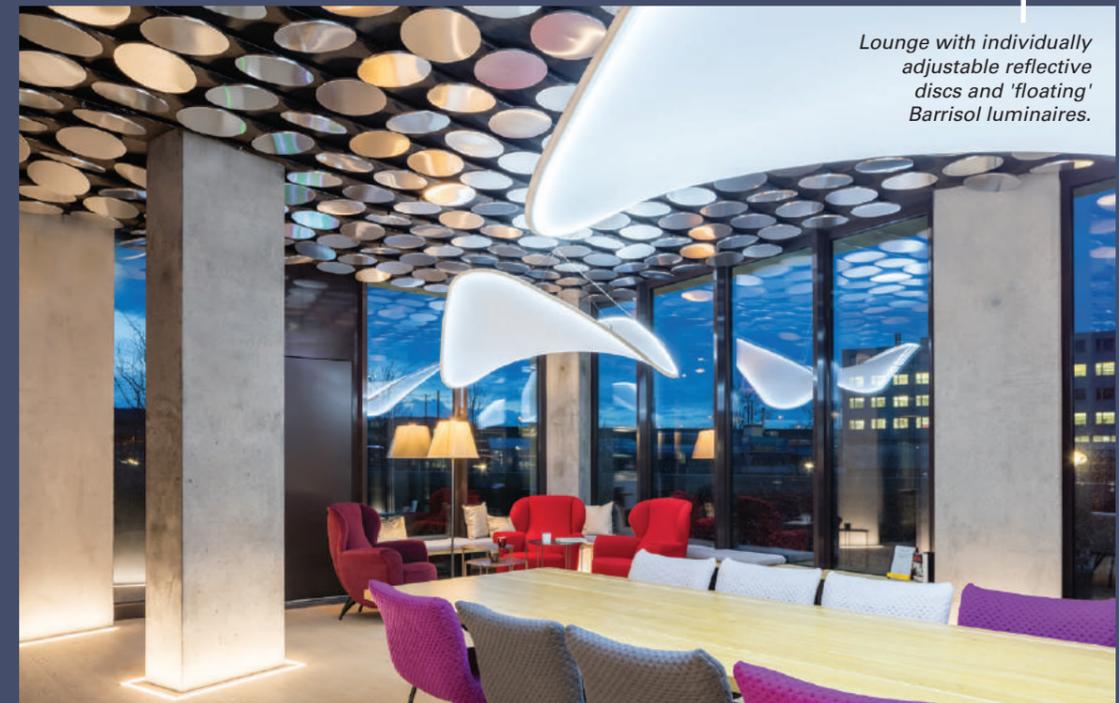
*Gallery as promenade with each recess devoted to a Swiss inventor.*



*Nook as secluded space for small-scale discussions.*



*The 'strategies room' or think tank: Honeycomb ceiling.*



*Lounge with individually adjustable reflective discs and 'floating' Barrisol luminaires.*

the normal office, it should be more comfortable and less formal. As an experienced designer who usually does his own lighting, the architect insisted that he had not seen before. Here was space that demanded an element of theatricality. Elements of colour light were introduced to certain areas. The uplit columns would change hues of soft light for events or even a late night work-out. The lighting also had to fulfil office basic standard needs and complement the premise that all areas are day-lit and fit for purpose on a clear day. The idea of a circadian lighting system (the basis for Pamboukian lightdesign's commission) immediately found the client's approval. When the budgets became avail-

able and were slowly tightened it was struck off the list. So was the colour change. But intelligent light management is still in place.

In the lounge, where discussions may continue into the night, an element of 'glamour' is introduced. Large suspended floating cloud-like structures provide mood. It is the first installation of the new luminaires by Ross Lovegrove designed for Barrisol. The gallery at night is designed to read as a long continuous space from outside. The gentle illumination of the ceiling fascia emphasises the stretch of space. The gallery as such glows and is read as an enticing signal that cannot be overlooked. The promenade echos the piazza; the passer-by and viewer are invited to 'look in.' LID