

ENCOUNTERS WITH PEOPLE PRODUCTS PROJECTS

INDESIGN

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LOCAL FLAVOUR

LANDINI ASSOCIATES ARE BRINGING WESTPAC BRANCHES BACK TO A LOCAL LEVEL
WITH A CONCEPT THAT MAKES CONVERSATION AND COMMUNITY THE BIG IDEA



ABOVE The blackboard behind the counter lists community events and other 'conversation starters'. In front, The Heart is an open and comfortable environment for casual conversations

WORDS MANDI KEIGHRAN
PHOTOGRAPHY ROSS HONEYSETT

ARCHITECT LANDINI ASSOCIATES
LOCATION SYDNEY | AUS
PROJECT WESTPAC KINGSFORD
BRANCH

When banking transactions are no further than a click away, why would anyone visit a branch? This was the challenge for Landini Associates, when working with Westpac to re-brand branches across Australia. The answer they found is simple (as most good solutions are): community, relationships and a focus on context.

"The big idea is that there's no idea," says Mark Landini, Creative Director of Landini Associates. "There is a central idea, and that is that it's all about the community. But in order to implement that, you can't do it in a cookie-cutter approach. It's common sense at the end of the day."

Thus, the design utilises different palettes for three different contexts – city, suburban and regional – and respects the history and individuality of each branch building. One of the first branches to implement the highly contextual and local concept is the suburban Kingsford branch in Sydney.

Gone are the lashings of red associated with Westpac, replaced by a more neutral, relaxing colour palette – an expression of the brand's new confidence.

But it's not only about a visual re-branding of the branches. Westpac's entire approach to customer relations has undergone a cultural change, where the previously prominent and respected bank manager is being re-introduced. As the concept is rolled out, each branch will be run as a small business, with links to the local community.

"We wanted a more high-touch solution, not a high-tech solution," says Karn Nelson, who was responsible for strategic planning on the concept. "Technology never works as a human interface," agrees Landini.

Instead, portraits of employees showing their personal interests line the entry, giving previously anonymous employees an identity. "People, if they want to talk to someone about really important things, they need to have trust in that person," says Landini. "To have trust in someone you need to have bonded in some way, shape or form. So you don't talk about the bank, you talk about them – doing that in the open is much less intimidating."



LEFT Landini Associates also designed the ATMs with built-in screens and the red 'W' sculpture
BELOW Brown paper on tables in The Heart allows the opportunity for visual communication

"We wanted a more high-touch solution, not a high-tech solution"

KARN NELSON, LANDINI ASSOCIATES

As such, conversations are often started casually in the central and open environment of The Heart, before moving into one of the meeting rooms, located discreetly at the rear of the branch. Hard finishes, such as hardwood flooring, have been used throughout The Heart to allow noise to create a certain level of privacy – as in a café or other public space.

Brown paper on tables in The Heart and whiteboards in meeting rooms create the opportunity for visual communication, and also give children something to draw on apart from deposit slips. "I always thought drawing was a neat way to describe complex things, to humanise them," says Landini.

And that is the key to the whole concept – humanising large, previously intimidating financial institutions. "If banks are supermarkets," says Landini, "we tried to turn Westpac into the corner store."

Mandi Keighran is Assistant Editor of InDesign.

SEE MORE OF THE WESTPAC BRANCHES BY LANDINI ASSOCIATES ON
 INDESIGNLIVE INDESIGNLIVE.COM/WESTPAC



WESTPAC KINGSFORD BRANCH

DESIGNER Landini Associates
CREATIVE DIRECTOR Mark Landini
STRATEGIC PLANNING
 Karn Nelson
PLANNING CONSULTANT
 Conics Limited, Sydney
INTERIORS TEAM Wayne Cheng,
 Yukiko Kawabata
GRAPHICS Steven Luongo
PROJECT MANAGER
 Jones Lang LeSalle
BUILDER Intrec
CUSTOM JOINERY Scribeworx
BUILDING SERVICES Norman
 Disney Young
SIGNAGE CV Services, Kelton Signs

TIME TO COMPLETE 13 months
TOTAL FLOOR AREA 240m²

LANDINI ASSOCIATES
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FURNITURE In The Heart, Le Corbusier 'No. B9' armchair from Thonet, and 'Kiku' sofa from Jordan In Meeting Rooms, Eames chairs from Living Edge. At Workstations and Break-outs, 'Boxta' clerical task chairs and 'Buro Jet' chairs from Corporate Express. Generally throughout, 'Melba' task chairs from Chairbiz.

LIGHTING Lighting throughout, from Artemide, Inlite, Pierlite, Masson for Light, Australume, and Lightinggroup.

FINISHES In Meeting Rooms, The Heart and BOH, carpet tiles from

Ontera. In Meeting Rooms, veneer from Briggs Veneers, and Halifax Vogel Group and Laminex laminates. In BOH, Armstrong ceiling tile system and flooring from Forbo Flooring. Generally throughout, Premium Floors timber flooring, aluminium by Australian Aluminium Finishing, Dulux paint, tiles from Skheme, vinyl films from Decorfilms, and upholstery fabrics from Laine Furnishings, Sustainable Living Fabrics and Kvadrat Maharam.

FIXED AND FITTED Generally throughout, Bosco storage units, monitor arms from Debetrek, electrical fittings from Clipsal, cable management from Häfele, Elsafe and Electric Cable Duct Systems.

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