



Project Case Study: *Incubator Space*

Galvanize 1.0

Designed to give entrepreneurs and innovators the best chance for a successful launch of their new ventures, Galvanize created an “innovation ecosystem,” a space defined by growing startups through capital, community and curriculum. Its ecosystem offers support for every phase of the business development process from shared areas for one or two people to large suites for 10 or more.

Project Overview

DRIVERS

- + Create an “innovation ecosystem”
- + Accelerate entrepreneurs’ business growth
- + Provide a place for many purposes
- + Develop future technology talent

TACTICS

- + A social and public Galvanize hub
- + A range of different sized work spaces
- + Shared and abundant amenities
- + Furniture that adapts to changing technology
- + Multiple types of high-tech collaborative spaces

OUTCOMES

- + Heart of Denver’s startup community
- + Increased speed to market
- + Broad access to talent and resources
- + Easy transitions between phases of business growth
- + Space reflects a refined look and feel
- + An innovations center

SCOPE

- + 30,000 square feet
- + 245 desk seats
- + 248 alternative seats
- + 300 members
- + 72 companies
- + 24 students

PRODUCTS

- + Antenna Workspaces
- + Generation Family of seating
- + Chadwick seating
- + Propeller tables
- + KnollStudio
- + KnollExtra

YEAR COMPLETED

2013

Galvanize transformed the historic Rocky Mountain Bank Building in Denver into an entrepreneurial campus

Drivers

Capital, Community, and Curriculum

Looking to be a “community and creative hub of entrepreneurs and energy,” the importance of Galvanize’s mission goes far beyond the space. Galvanize reinvents how startup companies function and provides the much-needed capital and education to get their ideas off the ground.

“Galvanize is a community that brings together the ingredients to create a recipe for break out companies,” says Jim Deters, Galvanize’s Managing Director and Founder. “We bring together innovators into our container. The container needs to be alive and inspiring and that has to do with architecture and design and your physical space.”

“Compelled to Come”

“Our goal was to create a space where people were compelled to come because they know it’s better. They learn more, are more relevant and have better ideas,” says Blake Mourer, principal at Open Studio Architecture, the architect of the space.

Armed with these objectives, the Galvanize team — Galvanize, Open Studio and The Nichols Partnership, Inc., the project’s developer — collaborated with Knoll’s workplace strategy group through the planning and development of the space.

“We only think and dream big,” says Christopher Crosby, Executive Vice President of The Nichols Partnership, Inc. “We wanted to work with partners who shared that same passion and vision.”

Tactics

A Concentration on Location

Aptly located in Denver’s historic Rocky Mountain Bank Note Building, which originally printed stock certificates and more recently housed a charter school, the team designed the space to evolve the settings traditionally associated with contemporary grassroots entrepreneurs such as garages or basements. The result is the blending of a fashionable, boutique hotel; a hip café; and an advanced, high-tech office into a single dynamic space.



Galvanize exterior

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“Chance Favors the Connected Mind”

Galvanize accommodates more than 300 individuals, from approximately 65 startup companies, and is built on the idea that “collaboration is the new competition and that innovation works much like neurons in the brain — sparking insights across nodes and synapses.” To this end, the space is designed to facilitate this collaboration; the startups are encouraged to work together and draw in ideas from various points of view. The Galvanize motto states, “chance favors the connected mind.” With this in mind, amenities and collaboration areas are abundant throughout the space.

Creating a Space for Many Purposes

Gather — a public café, bar and eatery located in the lobby of the building — functions as the hub of Galvanize’s creative engine. Furnished with KnollStudio pieces, it acts as the connection center, pulling in people from both within the Galvanize community, as well as the public. Other spaces include a gym, game room, phone booths and multiple types of high-tech collaborative spaces. Through the strategic use of furniture, each of these interactive group spaces serves a different function and has a distinctive feel — soft seating for casual interactions, high top tables for quick meetings and enclosed conference rooms for formal meetings.



The hub of Galvanize, Gather, features a café, bar and lounge area, where guests and members are encouraged to convene over food and drink to exchange ideas.

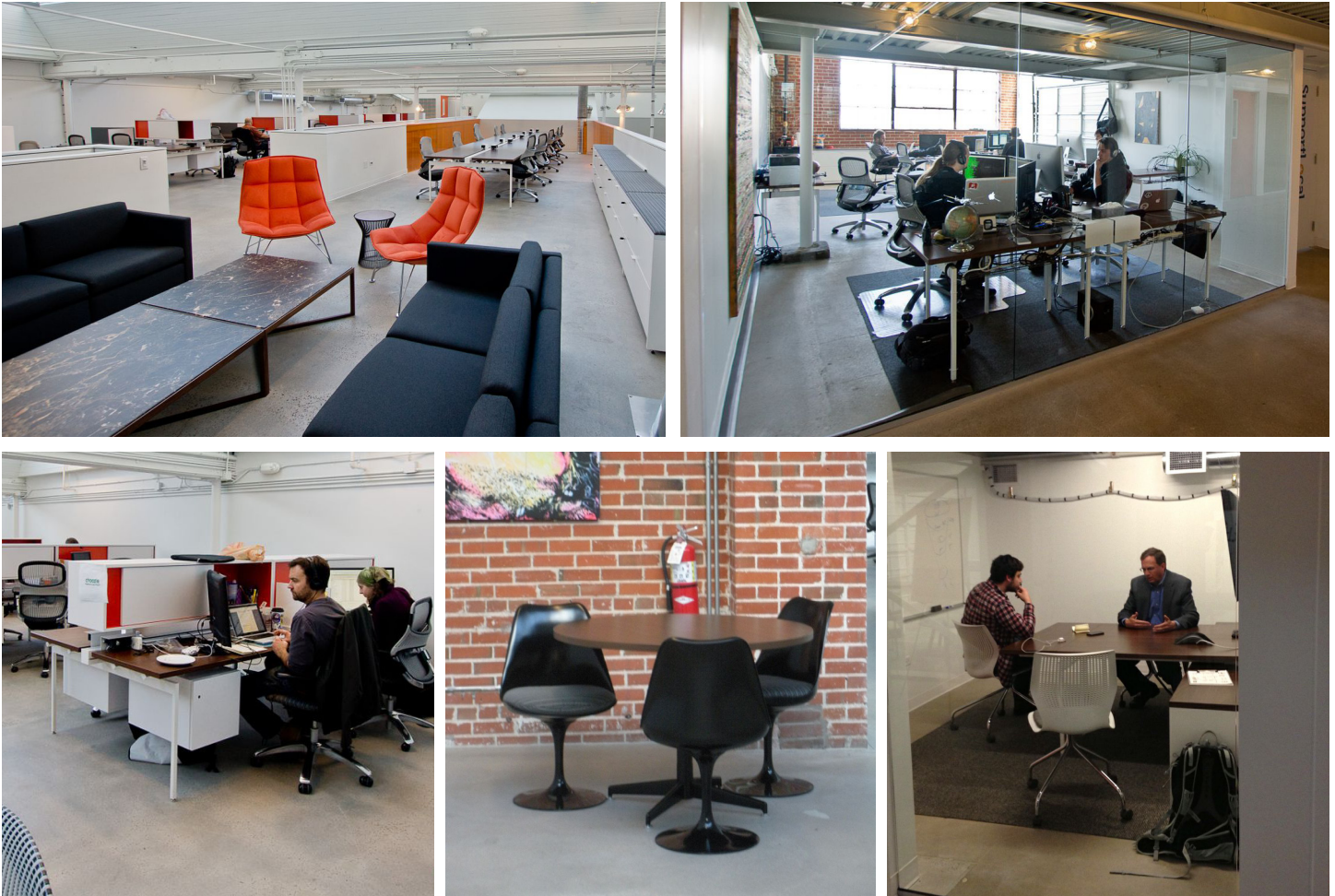


Just Starting Out

The path to success begins in the main floor Atrium, a common area furnished with “hot desks.” Antenna desks on casters provide the flexibility and ease of reconfiguration to easily transform the Atrium into an event space for all of Denver’s entrepreneurial community. The space is made up of two different height desks, standard height located in the center of the Atrium and high tops located along a perimeter chalkboard wall. The chalkboard wall acts as a way to encourage free and fun-spirited thinking among the entrepreneurs, as well as a nod to the building’s former life as a school.

Gaining Momentum

Larger stations, positioned on the second floor Atrium, provide the next step for growth. Permanent locations, these workspaces offer more storage and worksurface area for emerging entrepreneurs’ needs. For companies further along in the growth continuum, “gSuites” are located around the Atrium’s perimeter, allowing startups to have their own identity, yet still be a part of the larger community. These suites, capable of housing six to 30+ people, still utilize the Antenna desk and incorporate both informal meeting and lounge spaces.



Clockwise from top left: Adjacent lounge areas provide for quick and hassle free team meetings; gSuites allow larger startups to maintain their own identity, yet remain part of the larger community; Media enclaves provide plug and play technology, allowing members to easily share their ideas; A variety of collaboration areas are planned throughout the space; Permanent desks offer more storage and worksurface for emerging entrepreneurs.

Valuing flexibility and comfort, Galvanize selected the Generation family of chairs for all the task seating, using the smaller scale ReGeneration in the first floor Atrium area, the Generation chair in all the gSuites and second floor Atrium, and the lightweight, multipurpose MultiGeneration chair in teaming and group areas.

Investing in the Future

In addition to bringing people together and building future businesses, Galvanize develops future talent. The gSchool, located on the second floor mezzanine, is a 24-student start up school, which trains individuals in computer programming, design and development. No ordinary school, the gSchool is a six-month-long high intensity program that gives students who graduate a money-back guarantee. It allows students an opportunity to cross paths with venture capitalists, angel investors and successful tech entrepreneurs.

Due to its extensive technology needs and desire to promote effortless reconfigurations and collaboration, the gSchool is furnished with Knoll Chadwick chairs and Propeller tables.

Outcomes

Supporting the Continuum of Growth

Galvanize has brought Denver into the entrepreneurial conversation, becoming the heart of its startup community. Galvanize hosts 10 to 12 events a week and draws some of the most well-known names in the tech industry for insight. The Galvanize space has supported this continuum of growth to such an extent that it has planned two additional sites for 2013.



The gSchool's two large classrooms feature easily reconfigurable furniture and ample power and data for the up-and-coming computer programmers; The main floor Atrium, furnished with "hot desks" for beginning entrepreneurs, can easily transform into an event space



Offering a Place

"The Knoll furniture pieces hit all the right notes. They add a refined look — polished and hip. None of these companies could have afforded to have this space, with all the amenities, themselves; that's why they like it here. They have access to so many talented people and resources all within an incredible space. In Denver this is the place to be," says Meryl McDonald, Community Director at Galvanize.

Facilitating Cooperation and Collaboration

Both the layout of the space and the furnishing have, as it was hoped, facilitated cooperation and collaboration among Galvanize users. The variety of space types gives these high-paced users the ability to choose how they want to work and, because the team planned the space to foster chance encounters, members have seen their ideas grow exponentially, aiding in their ability to get ideas to market.

One member stated, "I gave up some privacy to work here, but I get collaboration, which is so much more important for my business. This is my third company. I can see what sticks and this is a Petri dish of ideas... you really get to see the evolution of those ideas. Everyone brings in something different — a unique perspective."

Built for Flexibility

"For events the space is dynamic. We do large events for hundreds of people without renting one piece of furniture. The Antenna is so flexible," say McDonald. "It is cool to see how everything can come together. We can make bars out of the high top tables and bring in the tables from the café. We have such limited storage, so it's great that, through moving the furniture around, we can create all these great spaces."

A Living Lab

Another feature that grew out of Knoll's collaboration with Galvanize was the "Living Lab." Inspired by Galvanize's mission and work, Knoll took up space in one of its studios and uses the space as an office and innovations center — testing how Galvanize users interact with and use space, technology and furniture.

"At Knoll, we are continuously exploring the connection between workspace design and human behavior," say Kylie Roth, Director of Workplace Strategy at Knoll. "Our partnership with Galvanize is giving us firsthand insight into user response, helping to inform product development and workplace applications." ⁸

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