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When Comfort Drives Design

Vol. 10 Issue 07

How should Alberta maintain its economic diversity in the face of the energy boom?

- ☐ Offer tax breaks and incentives for strategic industries (eg. High tech, filmmaking)
- ☐ Increase government contributions to research and development
- ☐ Make low-interest loans available to strategic regional employers (eg. Sawmills, meat-packers)
- ☐ Maintain a business-friendly tax and regulatory environment across the board

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Photography by John Gaucher, Text by Tracy Hyatt

Company: Meyers Norris Penny LLP
Dimensions: 20,000 sq. ft.
Architect: Kasian

How to design a professional-looking office in two easy steps. Step one: slap on dark wood panelling in the boardroom, preferably a mahogany-coloured hardwood. The darker the finish, the easier it is to dupe a whole lot of people into believing you've spent loads of money. Step two: invest in leather presidential chairs. Just imagine the smell of money. Now that's old school.

Today, architects have adopted modern design as the timeless classic – spaces that are simple, but evoke power through the use of colour and materials. The Edmonton office of accounting firm Myers Norris Penny presents itself differently from other accounting firms. Its interior is adamantly professional and transparent, designed to make clients feel at ease, not intimidated by hard-nosed architecture or interior design. Its pared-down colour palette and choice of high-quality finishes drive the space's overall approachability.



Office design begins in the reception area, the place where businesses should always pay attention to the face they present, says Crystal Graham, principal at Kasian, who worked on the four-month-long project. "It's your very first chance to say something about your business and reflect your culture."

Myers Norris Penny guests are put immediately at ease by the deliberate choice of warm materials in the reception area, the use of natural light, splashes of prairie colours, exotic materials and brushed metal hardware. In total, about 15 drivers make the 20,000-square-



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foot space unique throughout. "It feels open and transparent and most of all comfortable. Maybe there are some prestigious law firms that need their office to be ostentatious, but that's not who Myers Norris Penny is, and that's not who their clients are," adds Graham.

Slatted partitions separate the reception from the private offices, capture the afternoon sun and enhance the gold tones. A sycamore bulkhead cuts east to west through the reception area, maximizing the space and emphasizing angular planes. "You wouldn't know it from a casual glance, but we deliberately wanted to draw people into the reception area and the sycamore bulkhead achieved this," says Graham. "Instead of using maple, which would have been quite typical, sycamore is interesting and has more depth."

Suddenly, a mid-morning appointment with your accountant isn't so bad after all





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