



INSIGHTS INTO TODAY'S LEGAL WORKPLACE

NELSON

A modern office lounge with large windows overlooking a city skyline. The room features a grey sofa with colorful pillows, two green armchairs, and a wooden coffee table. Several large, spherical pendant lights hang from the ceiling. A man in a red shirt stands near the window, while a woman sits on the sofa and another person is partially visible in the foreground. A large television is mounted on the wall to the right.

A Guide for the NEW WORLD

The legal workplace is evolving faster than ever, driven by shifts in client expectations, talent priorities, and the role of technology in practice. In this landscape, design has become a strategic tool — shaping environments that support performance, attract top talent, and reflect the unique culture of each firm.

At NELSON, we lead with curiosity, looking beyond the immediate design brief to understand each client's objectives, operational methods, and culture. This broader perspective allows us to deliver solutions that respond to deep organizational needs.

From this experience, we've distilled five core insights that highlight how leading legal organizations are reimagining their workplaces for long-term success.



CORE INSIGHTS

into the contemporary legal workplace

01 Formalized Flexibility

We are now seeing more creative ways to address individual office space in order to support more equitable office cultures and reduce the real estate footprint.

02 Age of Individuality

How firms support and celebrate their individual cultures, clients, and employees is now top of mind. It's the people that make the company, and the office is a tool to express that belief.

03 Entertainment-Forward

More spaces for events and large meetings that offer a variety of seating options and even have alcohol on tap are being prioritized.

04 Fresh Look at Amenities

Creating an office that attracts and retains the best talent requires first-class amenities.

05 Future-Forward Spaces

Increased virtual client meetings and court appearances require spaces that offer one-touch connectivity, A/V technology, and flexible furniture options to create a successful environment for the legal firm of the future.



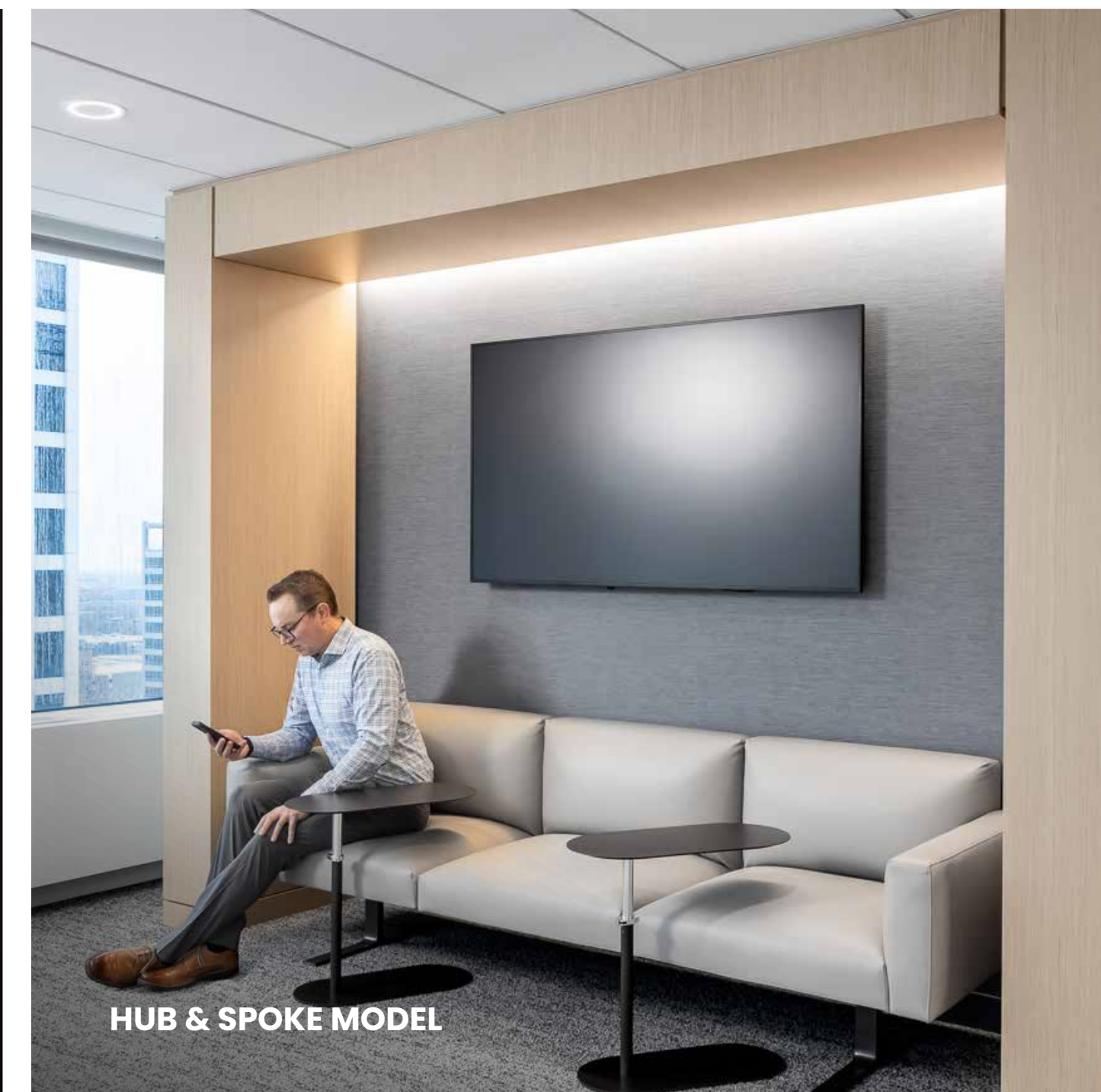
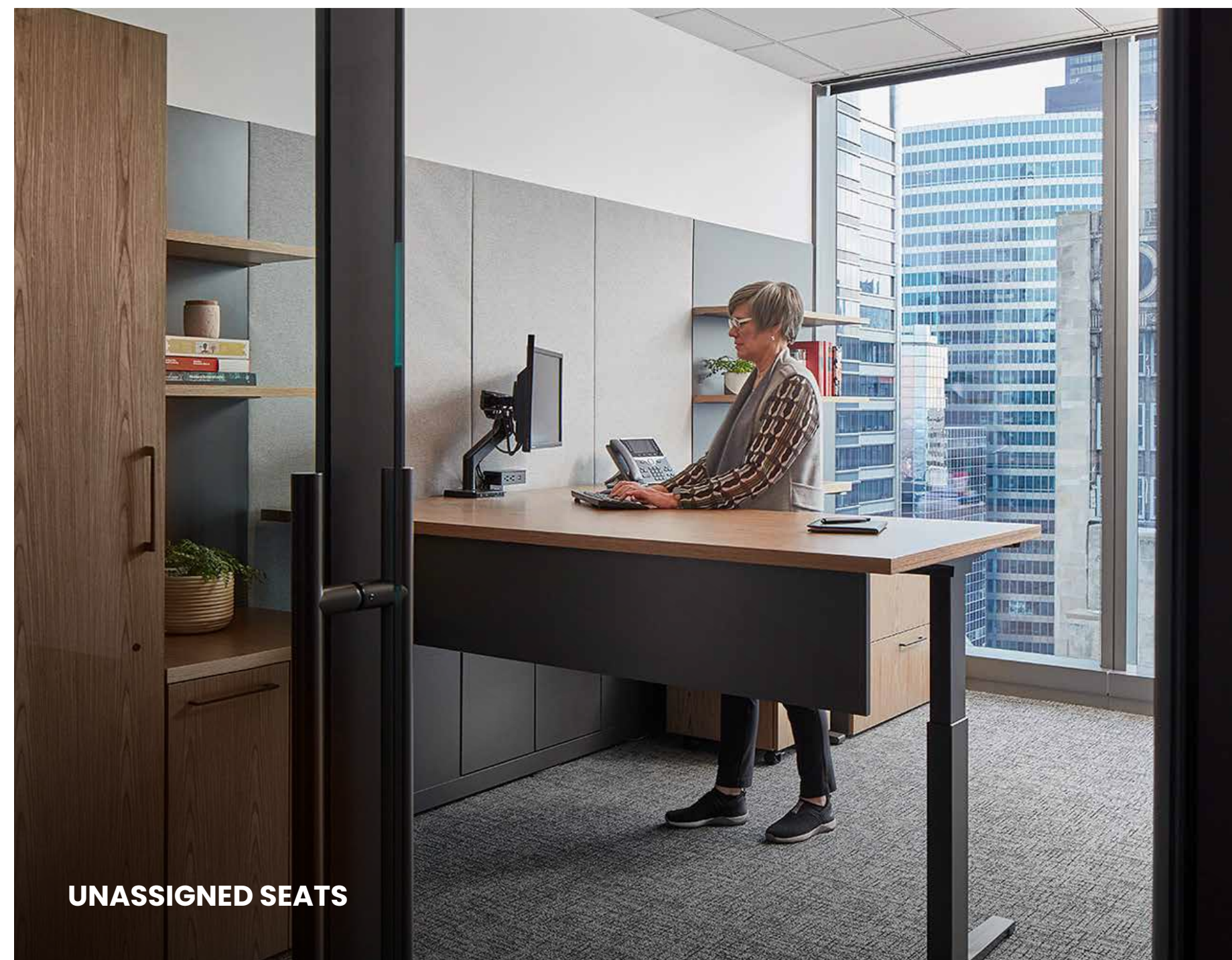


01 FORMALIZED FLEXIBILITY

Firms are now committing to flexible work schedules and incorporating these strategies into policy, making it harder to justify one seat to every person. We are seeing more creative solutions to individual office spaces that support more equitable office cultures and reduce the real estate footprint.

Options we are seeing firms experiment with: giving every employee access to an unassigned private office, doubling associates up two people to one office, utilizing areas of the office to function more like flexible working spaces for those who are more transient, and even returning to the hub and spoke model where a firm retains a smaller office in a large city center with all of the amenities but then has additional office space in areas closer to their attorney populations, where real estate tends to be more affordable.

FORMALIZED FLEXIBILITY





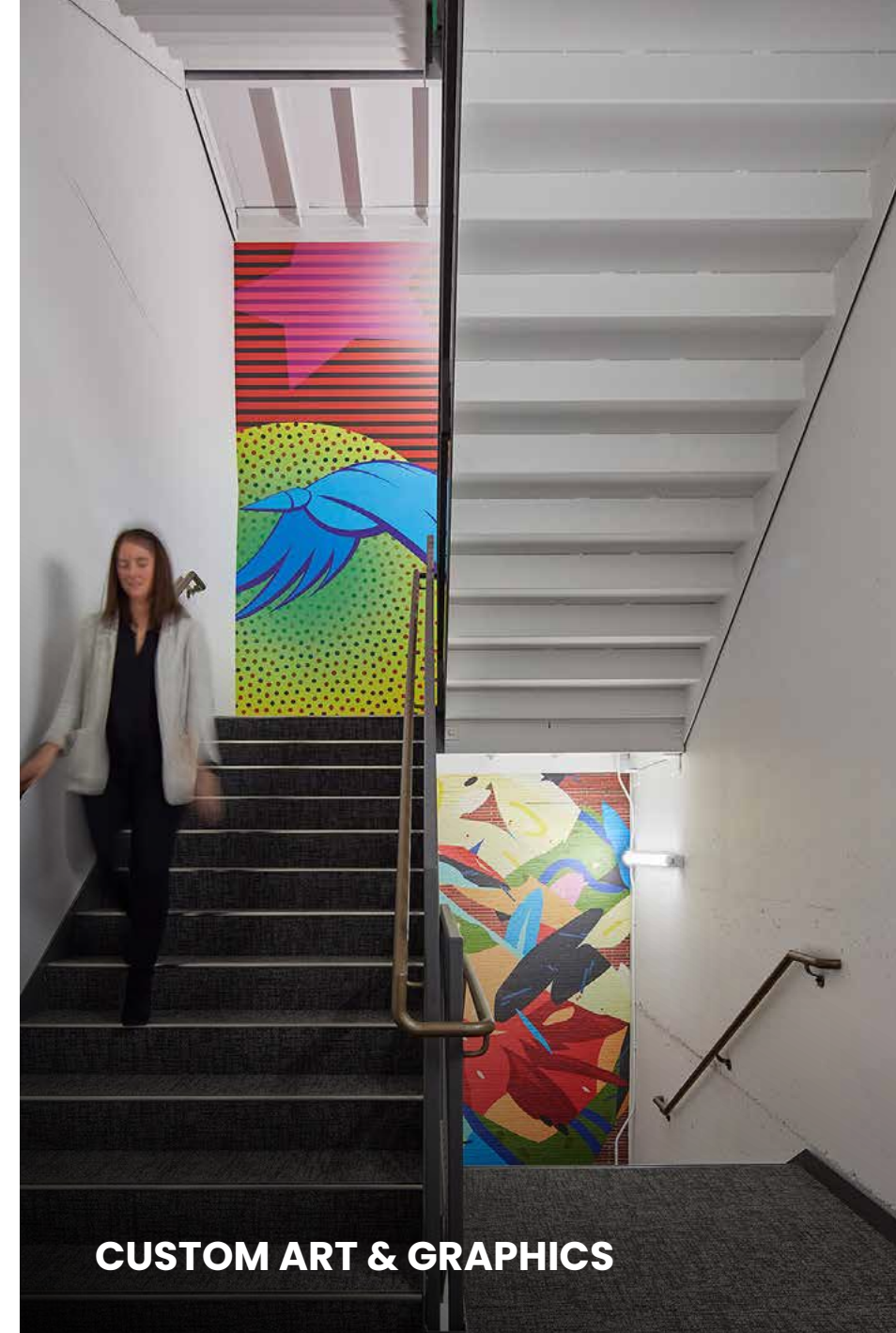
02 AGE OF INDIVIDUALITY

Rather than comparing themselves to others, firms are now focusing on supporting and celebrating their individual culture, clients, and employees. Design solutions can include increasingly personalized spaces that allow control of acoustics, temperature, lighting, and posture while still adhering to overall standards.

The legal office is also borrowing from hotel lobby and airport lounge functions with bespoke details such as branded experiential graphics, curated accessories, along with residential-reminiscent elements like rugs, lighting, and sound settings to make the office feel like home while maintaining a cohesive aesthetic and giving employees choice.



AGE OF INDIVIDUALITY



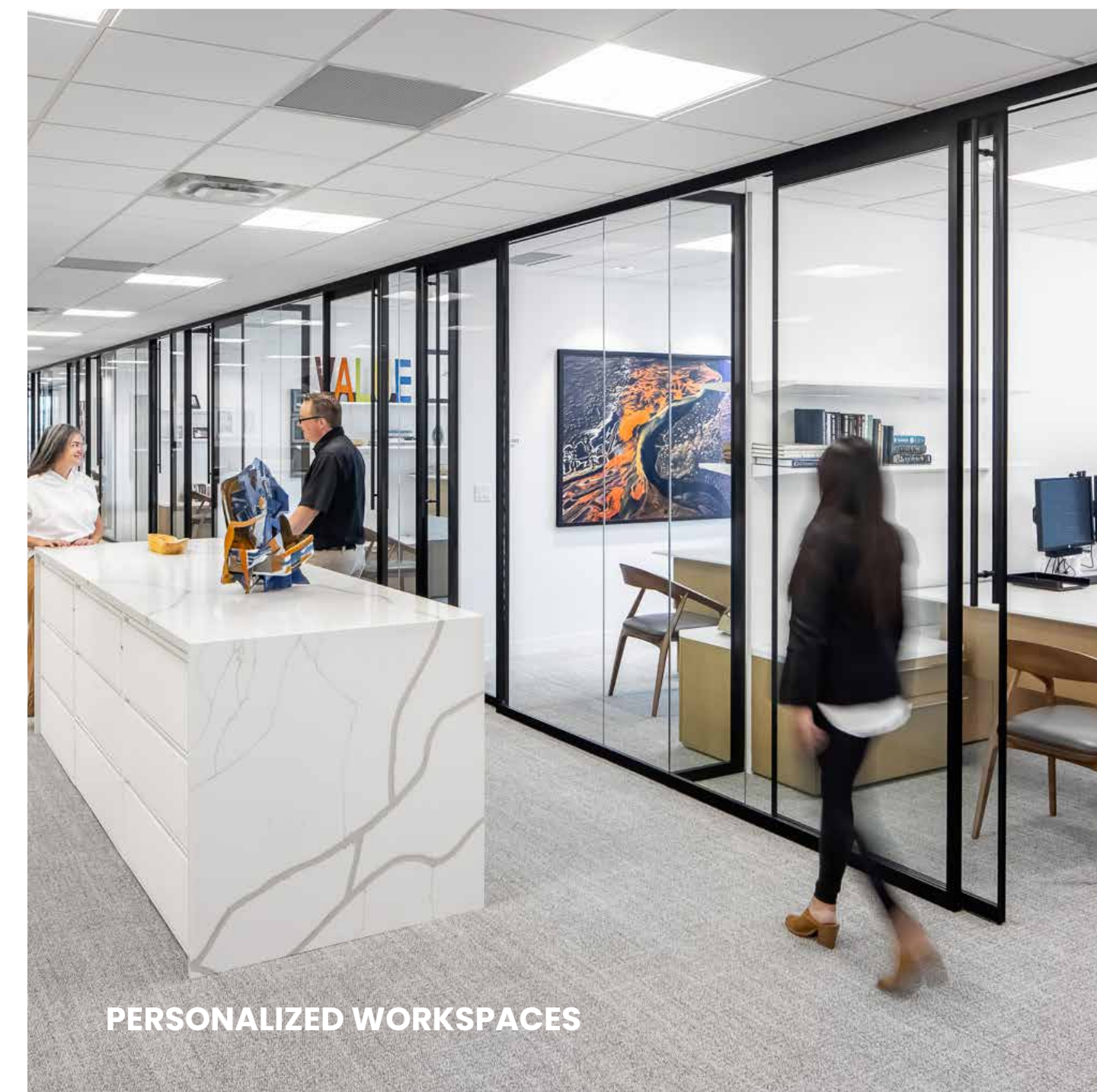
CUSTOM ART & GRAPHICS



WORKPLACE CHOICE



HOTEL/LOUNGE FUNCTION



PERSONALIZED WORKSPACES

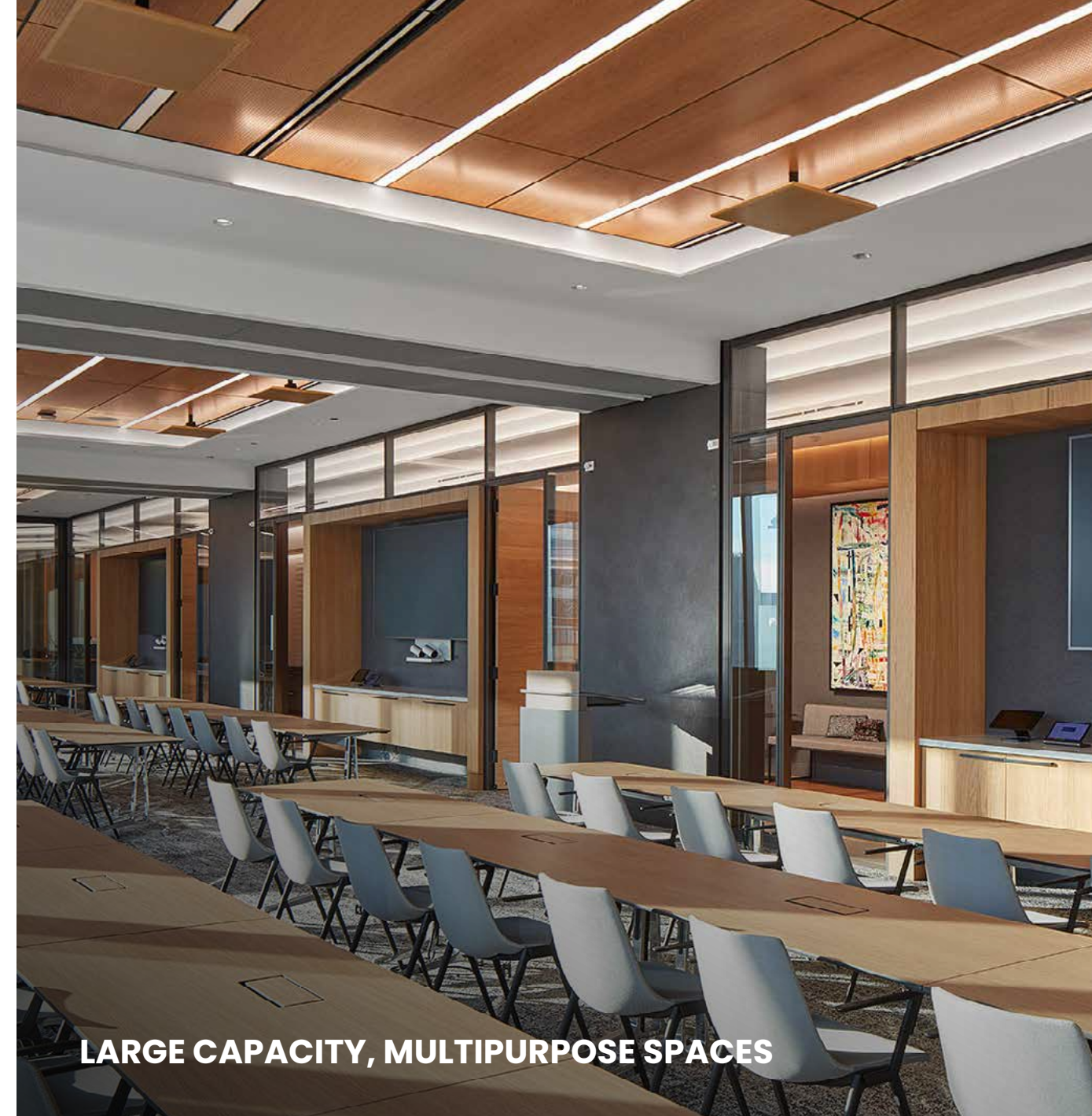


03 ENTERTAINMENT FORWARD

Formalized meeting spaces have morphed into larger scale, multi-use spaces for internal and external events. These spaces can hold 200+ people with a variety of seating types and feature movable walls, and softer details like rugs, drapery, decorative lighting and background music. Proximity to employee café spaces, coffee service, and outdoor space is key.



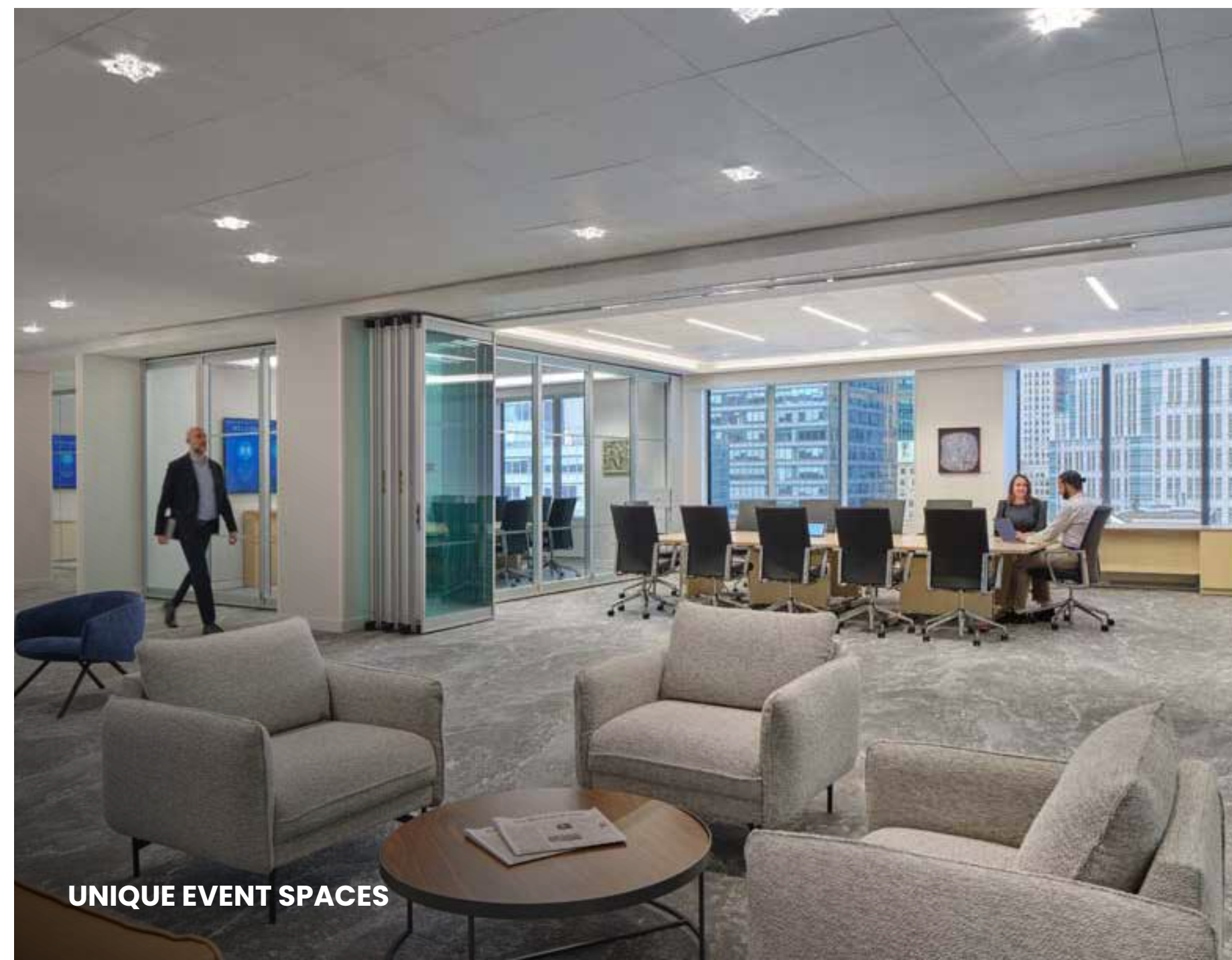
ENTERTAINMENT FORWARD



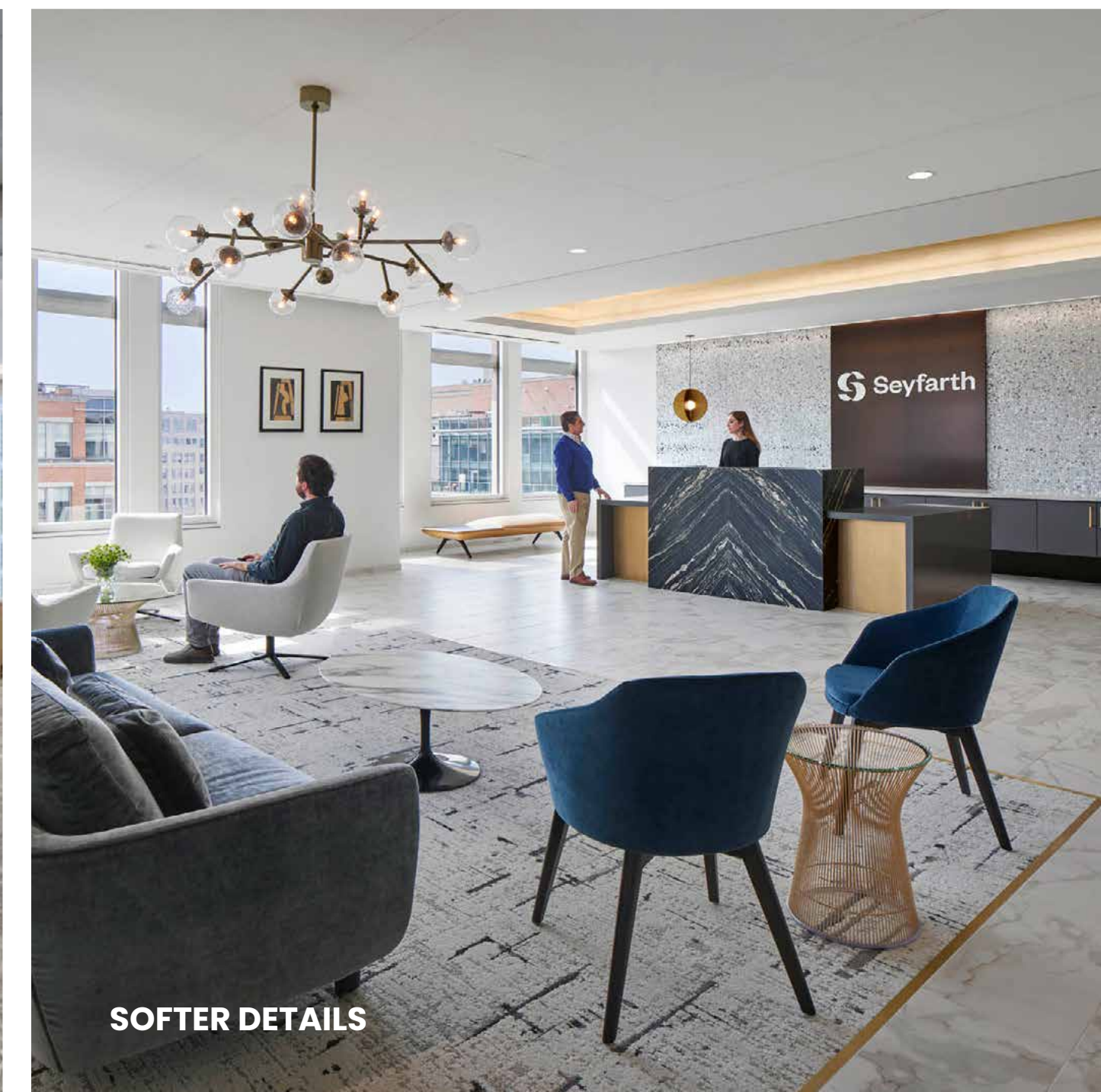
LARGE CAPACITY, MULTIPURPOSE SPACES



OUTDOOR SPACE PROXIMITY



UNIQUE EVENT SPACES



SOFTER DETAILS



04 FRESH LOOK AT AMENITIES

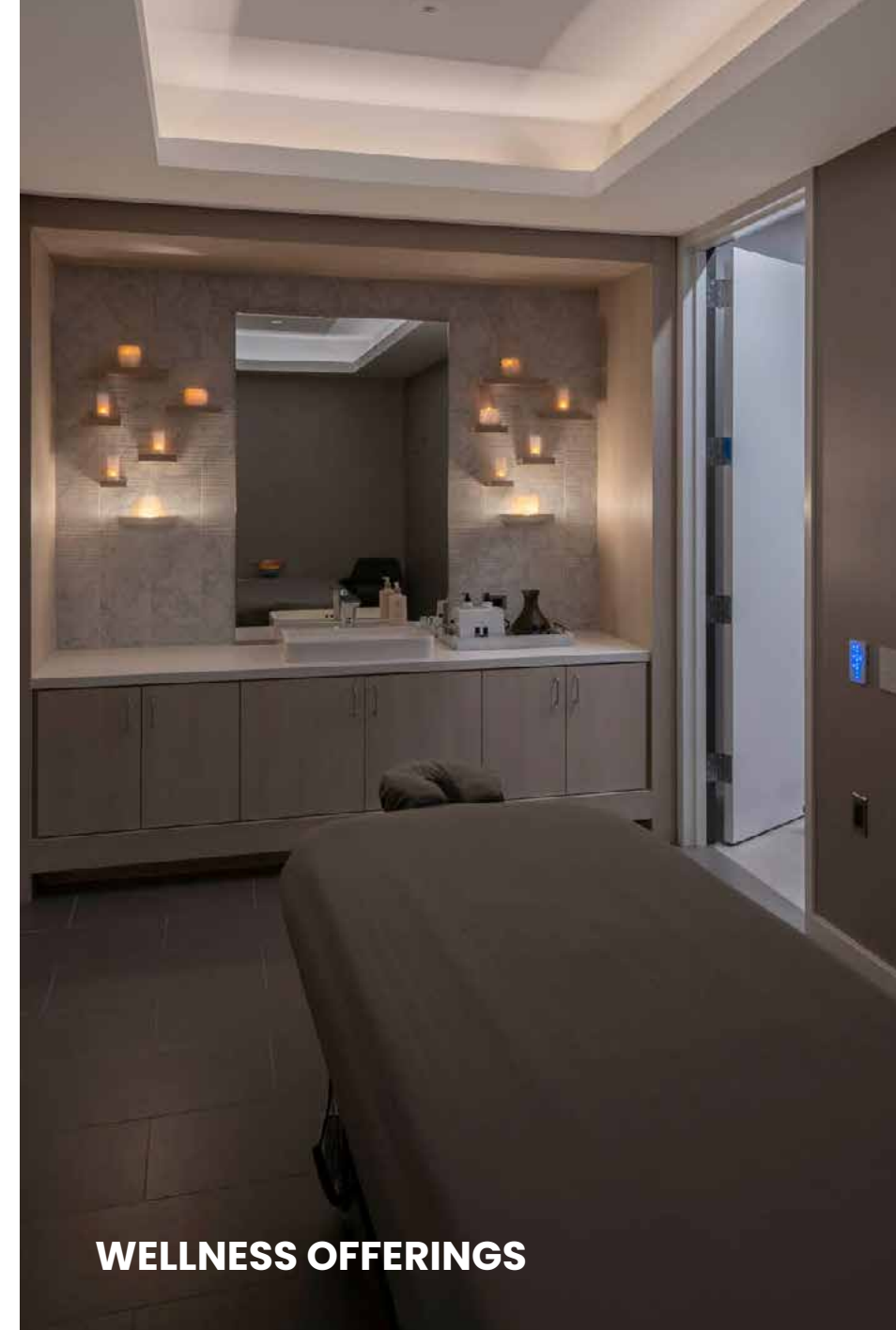
Attorneys prefer spaces that borrow from hospitality settings that emulate their favorite coffee shop, or give a law library feel, where they can work independently but amongst others. Within these spaces, access to natural light and natural views is often prized.

To elevate the employee and guest experience, firms are offering food and drink within their office space. This includes small-scale warming pantries or areas for soups, sandwiches and small plates, staffed coffee bars, more robust self-service options, and warmed food lockers for delivery services to drop off.

We are also seeing an increase in office concierge service offerings like dry cleaning, room set-up and scheduling assistance, as well as access to wellness rooms that can be used for stretching, praying, or napping.



FRESH LOOK AT AMENITIES



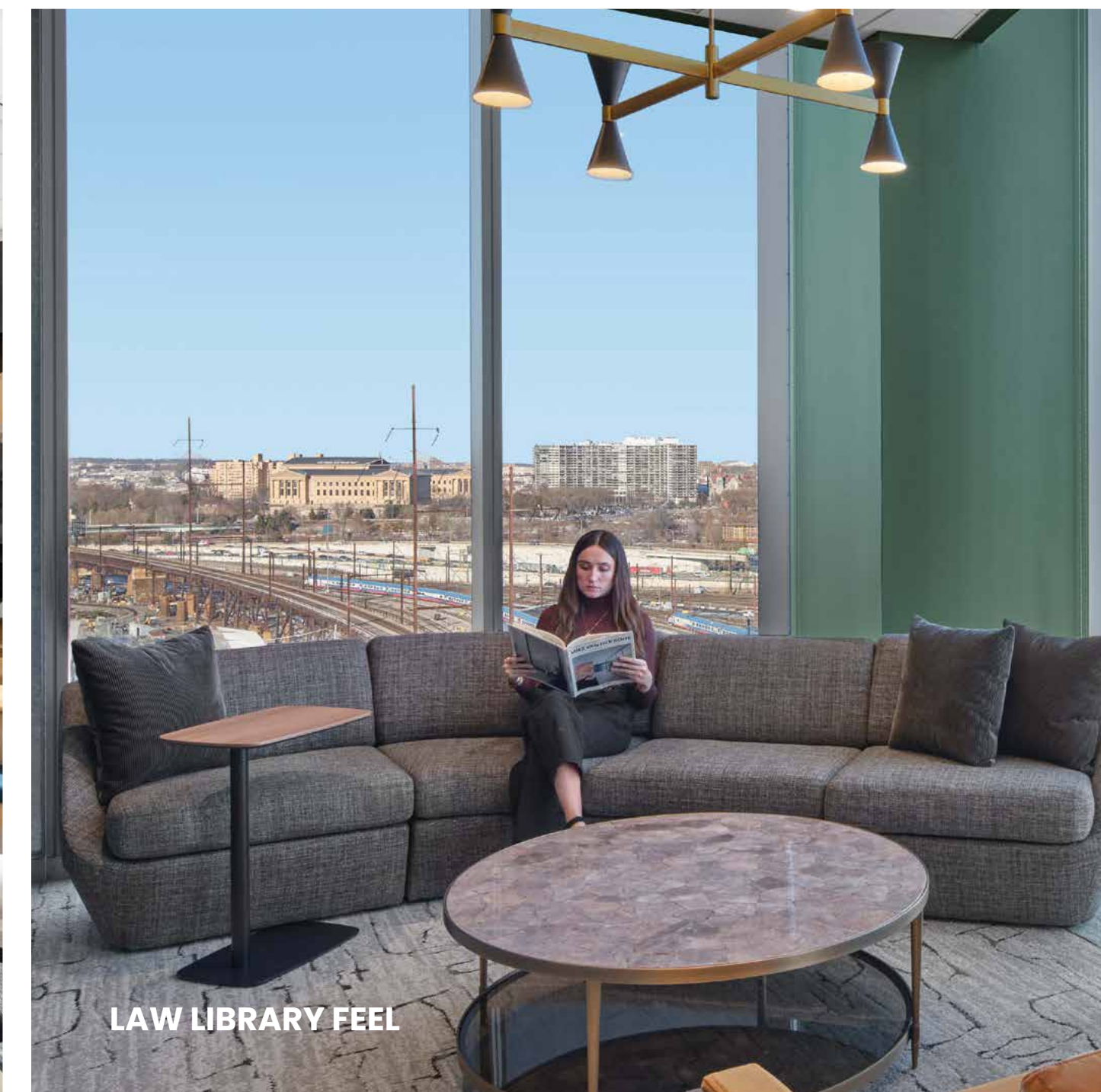
WELLNESS OFFERINGS



ACCESS TO DAYLIGHT & VIEWS



REIMAGINED DINING & BREAKROOM SPACES



LAW LIBRARY FEEL



05 FUTURE-READY TECHNOLOGY

So much more than “Zoom rooms” with better acoustics, lighting and furniture arrangements, we are designing upgraded spaces for virtual court appearances with one-touch connectivity, proper acoustics, microphones, lighting, green screens and height-adjustable surfaces and technology. Mock trial rooms feature cameras and screens on walls, movable furniture, and holograms for more realistic experiences.



FUTURE-READY TECHNOLOGY



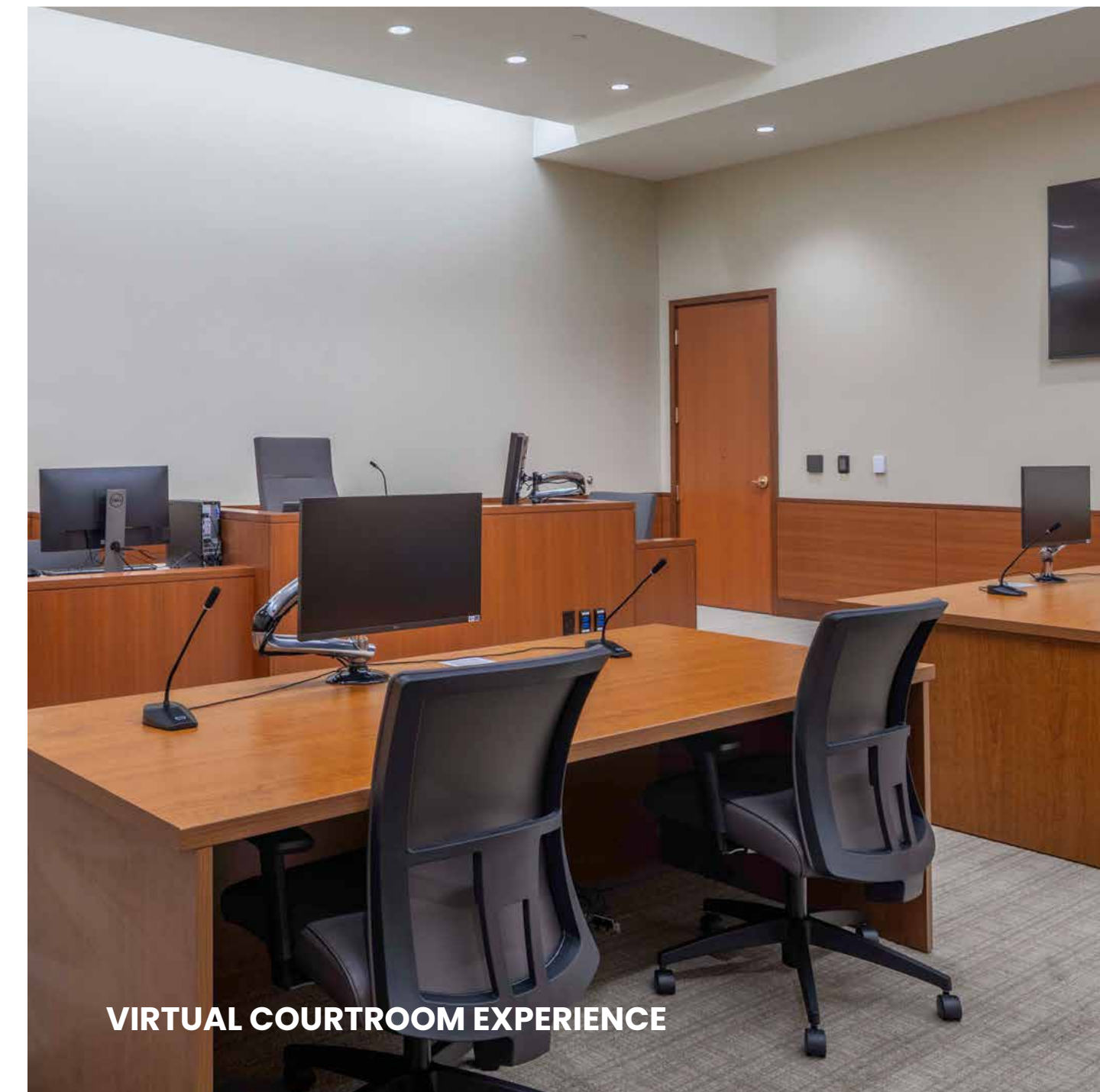
FUTURE FORWARD TECH



HEIGHT-ADJUSTABLE EQUIPMENT



ONE-TOUCH CONNECTIVITY SPACES



VIRTUAL COURTROOM EXPERIENCE



Your Firm YOUR GOALS

These insights are a starting point to help you navigate the ever-evolving and increasingly consequential world of work. While these insights are common across the sector, one thing remains true. Gone are the days of one-size fits-all solutions, cookie-cutter offices, and rigid design philosophies.

We recognize that your firm's goals are unique to you – and together, we can shape a future that embodies your visions and empowers you to excel.

NELSON

We look forward to unlocking value for
your organization.



Kristin Cerutti
NCIDQ, LEED AP ID+C, WELL AP
Associate Principal, Regional Design Leader
Legal Workplace Leader
312 578 5334
kcerutti@nelsonww.com



Amy Mason
IIDA, NCIDQ, WELL AP, Fitwel Ambassador
Manager
Senior Interior Designer
215 825 7922
amason@nelsonww.com