

Designing from the **Inside Out**

Big Dutchman's decision to create its Asian headquarters "from inside out" has proved central to the success of the project. Not only was time and cost savings achieved because the inside and the outside were conceived as a whole, Big Dutchman was also able to benefit from a strong corporate image projected through the highly integrated interior-exterior architecture. The result is no less than "a home away from home", an office space of which all staff at Big Dutchman "are very proud".





Big Dutchman is a recognized market leader in feeding systems and housing equipment for modern poultry and pig management. Seeing the need to shorten delivery to customers as one of the initial steps towards realizing the significant potential growth in the regional market, Big Dutchman decided to construct their own Asian headquarters at Bukit Raja on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The project was defined in three distinctive parts: the office building to be designed from the inside out, the warehouse, and the remainder of the landscaped site.

Benefit of design-from-inside-out approach

M Moser was chosen as the strategic planner and design consultant for the architecture of the office building and its associated interior and ancillary buildings in the landscaped zone. Using the inside out approach M Moser's first step was to analyze Big Dutchman's business systems

and methods of working in order to establish how the building would be used. Employing what was learned in the analysis process, a thorough design brief was developed that ensured at the very outset of the project that the work by the team of interior designers, strategic planners, architects and engineers produced cost and time effective solutions.

Unlike a designated building with pre-determined architecture, purpose-built architecture allows the construction of an interior form that ensures the delivery of the functions desired by the client. This means that the exterior built to house such an interior has the specifications that best suits the client's needs from the start. This holistic design solution aligns each stage of construction with the final goals of the project, thus avoiding duplication or double handling which is common with the traditional delivery approach. This efficiency achieves time and cost savings as well as high quality in delivery, while ensuring a strong corporate image and spatial flexibility for future expansion and re-adaptation.

“...purpose-built architecture allows the construction of an interior form that ensures the delivery of the functions desired by the client.”



Opposite: Central atrium. The neutrality of the floor and the wall forms a solid backdrop upon which the light brown of the timber, the vivid orange of the carpet, the light colours of the fabric panels and the transparent green of the staircase glass harmonize into a modernistic 3D painting.

Left: Waiting lounge. Defined with an underlit raised timber platform, the lounge features a collage commissioned from Choy Chun Wei which incorporates 'found items' from within the Big Dutchman warehouse.



Interiors planning

Form follows function. To maximize the efficiency made possible by the building-from-inside-out approach, the principal functions of the building were identified from the beginning: the building is to serve as Big Dutchman's regional distribution centre, with a showroom component to display its latest products to visiting clients; on the marketing front, Big Dutchman desires to project through this new building a corporate image that conveys professionalism and modern efficiency.

After careful space analysis and planning, the form emerging in the computer generated drawings was that of a rectangular three-storey office building, 15,000 square feet in total area, with a two-storey atrium in the reception space around which all other space components centre. The 40,000 square feet warehouse is located immediately behind the office building, with direct access to the showroom.

Upon closer inspection, the integration of the

design concept starts to reveal itself through details such as the floor hardener used in the warehouse which extends through the showroom into the whole of the reception area. Its basic protective function aside, this floor hardener serves as a connecting theme underlying these three key spaces, acting as a neutral backdrop against which the more colourful features of the interiors are presented.

Take the central atrium, which houses the reception desk and the waiting lounge. Spacious and well lit, the atrium is ample and clean-cut, oblivious of any aesthetic excessiveness. Directly visible upon entrance is the timber tread staircase connecting the three floors and a horizontal bridge linking the two arms of the building at the middle level. On the right is the reception desk, and opposite sits the waiting lounge, a raised timber and carpeted platform with four leather sofas. The rear wall is clad in sandstone and the upper side walls in fabric panels. The open staircase and the horizontal bridge, being the most substantial structures within

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Opposite Top: The showroom is highlighted with Big Dutchman's blown-up signage. Equipment of particular interest to the incoming visitors are brought in from the warehouse directly behind – a major convenience made possible by the “inside-out” approach. A pantry is located at the corner for visitors and sales staff to sit down and chat over coffee.

Opposite Bottom: The straight lines of the staircase are contrasted by the rectangular details of the sandstone wall.

Bottom: The waiting lounge at the middle level connects the meeting room and managers' offices; the selected artwork reflects the nature of Big Dutchman's business.

the atrium, speak of connectivity within spaciousness and at once conveys to visitors the message that Big Dutchman is communicative.

The showroom immediately next to the atrium is also kept simple and modern. Equipment to be displayed is brought by fork lift directly from the warehouse through the connecting double doors. A pantry is conveniently located at the corner for visitors to sit down and chat over coffee. The warehouse staff are seated closest to the showroom, on the ground floor on the other side of the atrium, to facilitate easy access to the warehouse.

Attention to detail is highlighted when designing the interiors. For example, the doors and the washrooms are designed to convey the quality of a 5-star hotel desired by Big Dutchman. Also, the area adjacent to the façade on the top floor is easily convertible either to public space for a cocktail reception or to office space to accommodate expansion needs.

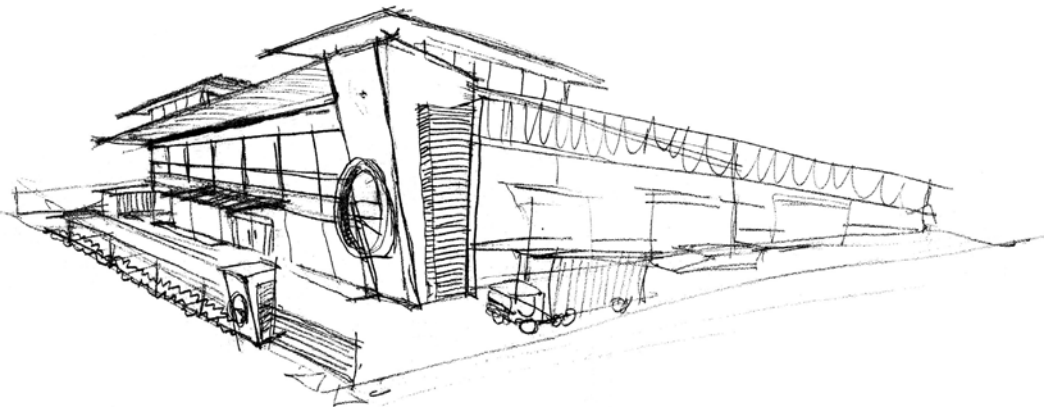
External architecture

For the external architecture, EK Tan developed the forms to house the spatial arrangement created for the interiors, thus realizing the “inside-out” approach. To one side of the building there is a tower which adds height to the elevation but it also incorporates Big Dutchman’s signage and associated corporate branding; to the opposite end, the outline of an egg is formed in the canopy of the building, a design detail which reflects the nature of Big Dutchman’s core business.

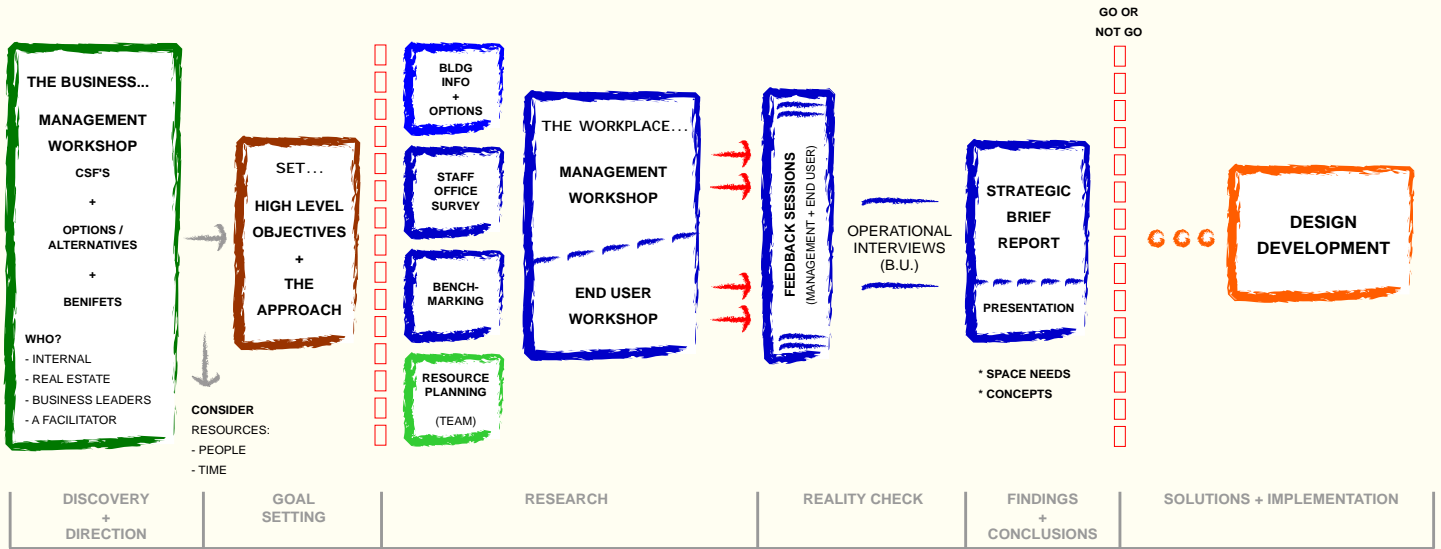
The sun and heat gain on the building façade has been addressed with sun-shading being integrated into the architectural solution, whilst still maintaining plenty of natural light to the interiors.

The entry fence, gates, guardhouse, carpets, landscaping and external lighting have all been developed at the same time as the architecture of the building to ensure a totally integrated solution, both aesthetically and functionally.

Below: The exterior of the complex truly poses a headquarter image. The sun and heat gain on the building façade is addressed with sun-shading being integrated into the architectural solution. And meanwhile there is still plenty of natural light to the interiors through full length glass windows and sliding doors.



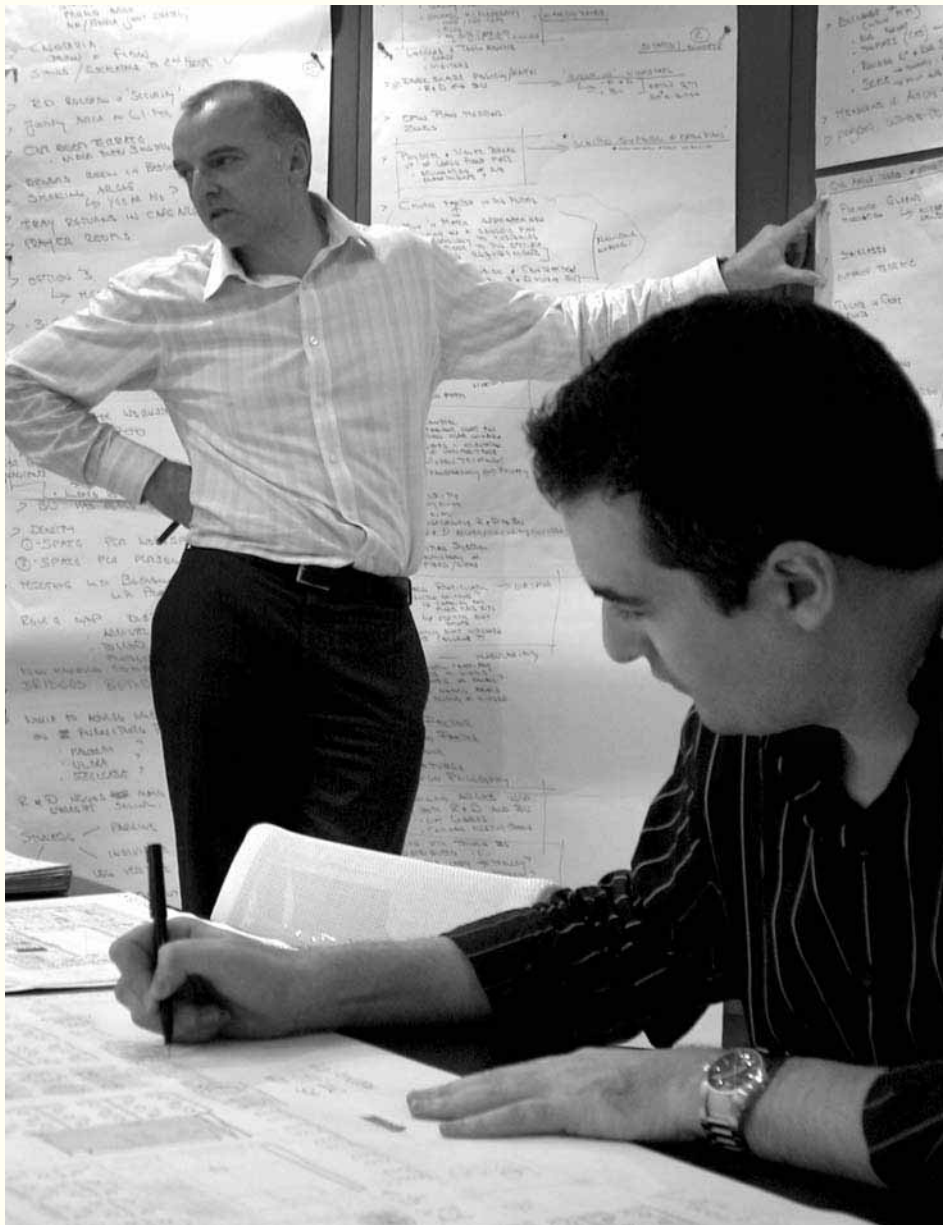
How do we help our clients to achieve their business objectives



Above: This pre-design process was developed to explain the project process for a given client and to achieve their business objective.

The process is adaptable to each individual clients' need.

Below: A snapshot of one of the M Moser workshops to translate individual client's goals and needs into interior design and built environment.



Some business goals need to be pursued on several levels to be truly successful

Our teams of professional designers and planners work closely with our clients to address these goals and management objectives through interiors.

To do this effectively the ruling principle is to recognize every client's own unique corporate philosophy, working practices and short and long-term business needs. In designing or redesigning premises it is crucial to tailor each approach specifically for each client.

The first step involves the careful assembling of a closely-knit team comprising both designers from M Moser and staff from the client side. This team works closely together at every stage of the design process in order to ensure each project is finished to the highest possible professional standard. The methodology in resolving individual design issues must be equally thorough. In-depth investigation is the cornerstone on which effective design solutions are built. Once the design team has analyzed feedback from staff, the data is transformed into concepts best suited to the individual client's needs. These are then translated into planning, design, engineering, and IT infrastructure.

This is one of a series of articles showing how strategically planned interiors can help aspiring companies achieve a broad range of business objectives. Topics have been discussed in non-specific terms to avoid betraying confidences; however, true understanding of the uniqueness of individual client is no doubt key to the success of our endeavours.

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