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## LEAD STORY

Paperless Architecture

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Joydeep Mukherjee, CEO & ED,  
H & R Johnson India

## DESIGN TALES

Ar. Khozema Chitalwala,  
Designers Group

## ON DISPLAY

Rustomjee Elements, Juhu  
designed by Jimmy Mistry





*Awe-Inspiring*  
**Awfis**

NCUBE Planning & Design Pvt. Ltd lends an industrial design vocabulary to the recently launched Awfis project in Mumbai and the result was warm, casual and ubiquitous interiors

Coworking Spaces- a more evolved concept in the west, is now increasingly getting popular with Indian start-up community. The casual work culture, open and well-furnished layouts equipped with modern amenities, affordable price and barrier free environment are influencing the millennial generation to opt for Coworking spaces, which are not only proving out to be a hub for fostering communication and creativity but also an influential medium for promoting community building. Unlike formal offices, the shared environment of Coworking spaces brings together professionals employed with different organisations and contradictory work profiles. Given this fact, it is essential that the design of the space should not only meet the functional requirements of the user but also appeal to their diverse work profiles and mind-sets. Catering to the functional, aesthetical and psychological requirements of the start-up and millennial generation, the interiors of recently launched branch of Awfis in Mumbai is a perfect example of comprehensive and cohesive workspace design. Located in the city's commercial hub - Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), the interiors of Awfis BKC strikes a perfect balance between comfort, style, modern design and aesthetics. With extreme hike in property prices and dying availability of lavish spaces, especially in Mumbai's BKC, Awfis was conceived with a view to foster a greater socio-economic impact by delivering affordable spaces to budding organizations, while providing them with necessary equipment, network capacity and community ethos, to grow and prosper. "For this particular project, the client needed optimization and renewal of already existing space, a professional output suited for Mumbai, and a design program that could cater to a broad spectrum of a varied user base," said architect Suyog Karekar of NCUBE Planning & Design Pvt. Ltd who was assigned with the task of designing the project.



Ar.Suyog Karekar

After numerous brain-storming sessions with the client and his design team, architect Karekar zeroed down Industrial chic vocabulary – an aesthetic trend in interior design that takes cues from old factories and industrial spaces, as the core theme of the project. "With collaboration being the backbone of Co-working spaces, the design intent was to craft a space that gives the users an excuse to stay curious, to observe and to interact- a warm casual space that works as an incubator for ideas. The overall vision for the space was to radiate and exhibit the energy of today's young entrepreneurs, while still allowing them to see, touch and feel the raw ground of their belonging. This has been incorporated by uniting various design and material elements that bring in energy and create an earthy raw aesthetic feel to the space, explains Karekar. Keeping up with the raw and industrial theme, architect Karekar has skillfully experimented with materials such as wood and metal to endow warmth and a rustic feel to the space. The architect has also infused bouts of warm and cool colours, on seating and walls, to add focus and depth. The space planning is enabled in a manner that a centrally located collaboration space welcomes the visitor, bringing them into a world with varied settings to choose from. The design

characterizes careful consideration and curation of every layer from flooring to ceiling. In smaller cabins, mirror has been used on opposite surfaces to give the illusion of an expansive space. The ceiling exposes service layouts carefully placed in a grid and marked with colours to provide a sense of definition. The glass provides sound insulation and sleek steel frames which maximizes visual integrity. The flooring has been done in shades of grey and mild warm colours of stone, carpet and wooden panelling. The ceiling is composed of wire mesh, industrial light fittings and exposed services in semi-private spaces, and false ceiling have been made of cardboard panels in private spaces. In terms of the lighting, the architect has used pendant lightings which display a perfect example of industrial chic design vocabulary. The wire-frame lamp shade emphasizes the presence of light and accentuates the ambience by providing a sense of volume and a sense of shape. The wireframe creates a duluting surface beneath the ceiling for a playful effect and inverse terrain to highlight the warm light of the bulb. The pendant lights adorning the collaboration space have been selected in order to translate the space into an informal lounge ambience. For more acoustically critical discussions, there are two upfront meeting pods and a phone booth that has been planned.





The furniture were chosen and placed in a way to optimize the use of space. Movable furniture has been used at places, to retain flexibility of use in collaboration zone. At the same time, table tops that fold to become wall panelling have been included, coupled with stools to provide additional sitting spaces when the need may arise. Workspaces have cantilevered desks and movable chairs to keep the ambience light and formal, to retain movement of people but stability of work based tools. Discussion rooms have a mix of both static and kinetic features, and certain partitions between rooms are collapsible to increase the capacity of spaces. This creates a temporality in the office, where semi-private spaces are continuously being changed and adapted every hour to suit the needs of the group using it within the particular time-frame. This is perhaps, the most crucial aspect of design in co-working spaces; this self-sustaining pattern of work in motion that occupies each space from time to time without infringing upon the productivity of any individual. The collab zone sets a dramatic backdrop for the reception, creating porosity in the space that defines transparency, opportunity and ease of communication.

Every layer is carefully designed and curated, from furniture, lights, flooring to ceiling. The space is designed to adapt to various activity-based functions, from touch down to ad-hoc discussion, from community space to a town hall gathering- All of it coming together to define a true collaborative space. The cabins are designed as a subtle aesthetic and focused functional space that allows the user to work in good acoustic and visual comfort. As a part of the central collab, the meeting rooms subtly carry the industrial design language. Careful to maintain the formal atmosphere of the space, equilibrium between the raw aesthetics and the important functional rationale has been achieved by choosing the right work seating, appropriate





# awfis

Work gives you meaning and purpose and life is empty without it.  
Stephen Hawking

INFINITY

IDEAS

PUSH TO START

Invention Breeds Invention

PUSH TO START

INFINITY

IDEAS

PUSH TO START

HAVE IT YOUR WAY	THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX
WORK FOR YOURSELF	DO THE NEW
NOT BY YOURSELF	ALWAYS FIND INSPIRATION

Lux levels and coupling it with materials such as cork and fabric panelling for right acoustic treatment and adorning the space with industrial materials like raw wood, industrial light fittings, Brooklyn glazed partitions and texture paint etc. The glass partitions in cabin areas display powerful graphics that are meant to inspire young minds and motivate them to concentrate on their work. These graphics also create a sense of familiarity and comfort by becoming a part of user's spatial memory. They add weight to the experience and also subtly impart privacy to the cabins by partially hiding the spaces inside. The reception, collaboration zone, cafeteria and meeting pods are located within one central space that is the locus of Awfis. Therefore, all activities, events, and movements traverse through this zone. They come together and form a dramatic backdrop for reception, a form of social heterotopia that provides mediation, constancy, reflection and a superimposed narrative of a renewed workspace within a marketplace, to every user and visitor alike.

The meeting pods retain the equilibrium in the collaboration zone. The two meeting pods and the telephone booth between them are set at one of the edges. These are characterized by soft rounded corners that gives them an appearance as if they have been placed there as an object. This sets their identity apart of being a separate space within a larger space, to emphasize on their importance and psychological hierarchy. Sound proof glass is kept clear of graphics to retain maximum transparency. Thus the use of pods influences the emotions of rest of collaboration zone and resonates well with the reception to keep the program of the space formal. 📍



“ The overall vision for the space was to radiate and exhibit the energy of today's young entrepreneurs, while still allowing them to see, touch and feel the raw ground of their belonging ”

#### Project Details:

**Project Name:**  
Awfis BKC

**Location:**  
Bandra-Kurla Complex, Mumbai

**Project Head:**  
Suyog Karekar, Design Director

**Project Director:**  
Amrut Sulakhe, Vice President - Projects

**Design Team:**  
Kunal Velankar  
Nisha Mahadik  
Sanika Koyande  
Sanjay Konde  
Saurabh Karhade  
Zeeshan Shaikh

**Area (Built-Up Area):**  
18,139 sq.ft

**Budget:**  
Undisclosed

**Photographer:**  
Prashant Bhat

Text Courtesy: Nisha Shukla