


phone number

When it comes to the emergence of new instantly recognisable, successful brands, the mobile communications business has stolen the show over the past 10 years. Our High Streets, our newspapers, our TVs, our own pockets even, are dominated by them.

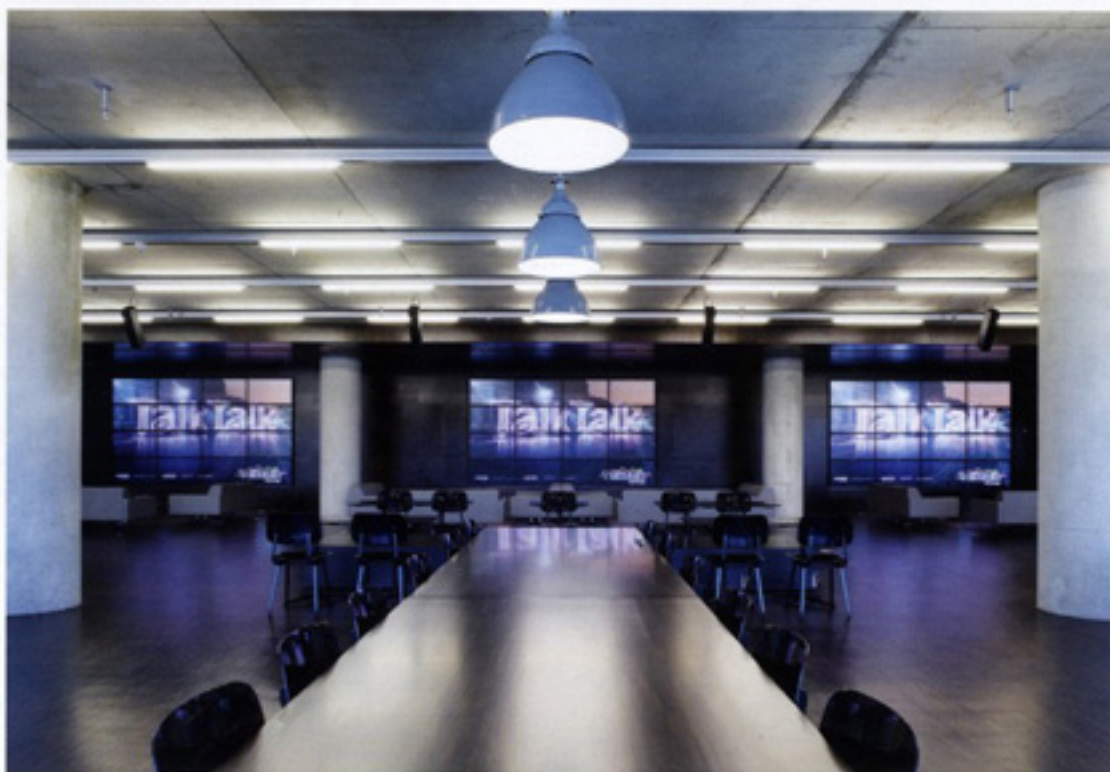
Emerging right at the forefront of this unprecedented brand competition is TalkTalk – the broadband and home phone company launched by The Carphone Warehouse. The company is committed to helping people gain access to fast broadband and excellent home phone services at a price they can easily afford.

The company launched in 2003 with a revolutionary home phone package that enabled TalkTalk customers to talk to each other for free. In 2006 it was the first company to offer free broadband. This meant that broadband, which historically was very expensive, was available to all.

TalkTalk employs thousands of people across the UK, Ireland, South Africa and India, and its continued growth and success has led to the development of a brand new London HQ. 







»»»»» The building is located adjacent to the Head Office of Monsoon and Accessorize (opposite Westfield) in the Nottingdale area of West London, which is currently undergoing huge regeneration. Mario Testino's studio is just across from them too. The building forms part of the second phase of Allford Hall Monaghan Morris's development of Nottingdale Village and TalkTalk cunningly took possession of the White Building immediately after completion.

We are met in the buzzing, open ground floor space by Found Associates Director Daniel Beardsley, who discusses the design of the project.

The refined industrial interior concept that Found Associates has created for TalkTalk had to provide an approachable yet intelligent environment for a company that is fast becoming one of the biggest telecoms

companies in the UK. The new London home now houses some 950 employees, a number, we discover, that increased during the course of the project. 'When we looked at the project initially, we were expecting staffing levels of around 800, but they were able to bring more people in – which is obviously good for them in the long run.

'The layout of the upper floors is quite regimented, so we were dealing with quite strict architecture here and we felt that we needed to respect that. We didn't want to create too many interior interventions. The layouts on floors 1-6, which are the main workforce areas here, are set out in rows, but broken into different teams. This has created a greater efficiency, and because of that they were able to bring more people over here.

'This was a brand new building and they are the first occupier – and they had this

drop-dead date to bring everyone in. The campus as a whole has the Yellow Building next door and then you have a studio building, which is light industry, so as part of the planning they had to have different types of usage here. That was one of the driving forces behind coming here – in Acton they didn't have a great deal around for the staff. The client ensured that the staff were very much on board – so they had what they called champions and they had monthly meetings with the teams so that everyone knew exactly what was coming their way. It was all very carefully planned.

'The genesis behind the design is that we wanted to ensure that we weren't interrupting the existing architecture – this is an award winning design, together with the Yellow Building next door. That really generated a palette of materials. On the ground floor you can see the exposed concrete columns, and that replicated itself up throughout the building. The idea was that they wanted to extend each floorplate with as few columns as possible.'

Straight away we can see that there are a number of interesting and quirky design details that give a twist to this extensive office space. From the fumed oak parquet strip – the first of its kind to be installed in the UK – throughout the ground floor, to the lighting reclaimed from the old Rover factory and the central benches, the main reception/canteen area provides a striking contrast to the rest of the workspaces we find above.

The vast ground floor space is dominated on one side by the equally vast, impressive media wall. 'The ground floor is the key to the concept for us,' Daniel continues, 'because they had to encourage people to come from the upper floors, they had to make that journey and come to meet each other. What happened in the previous buildings was that everyone either ate at their desks or there were small rallying areas where small groups would sit together. What they found was that people weren't meeting one another. This was almost forcing everyone down. To eat or drink you now have to come down to the ground floor. They also have company-wide presentations here, and the wall acts as a backdrop to these.'

Three and four meter long, interactive screens form the media wall within the cool lounge zone. The wall can be flexibly managed to provide a backdrop for internal and external presentations, as well as demonstrations, sporting events and major announcements.



With WI-Fi connection throughout, staff are encouraged to hot desk and take informal meetings throughout the space.

In addition to the work-related meeting zones, there is a staff canteen. Providing a high quality environment is a very important aspect of the TalkTalk ethos and therefore the canteen occupies the largest area on the ground floor and caters for all staff meals and refreshments. The oak flooring has also been incorporated into three large central benches and perimeter bar.

Located away from the main space, and utilising as much natural daylight as possible, the 'conservatory' provides a space for multiple casual or formal meetings over breakfast or lunch.

Each floor throughout the White Building has been zoned by blocks of colour that match the TalkTalk branding, with striking artwork providing a central focus.

The six 'working' floors are designed to be as simple in layout as possible with main service/utility areas featuring lively colour-coded blocks at each end of the floor. 'The whole idea of the efficiency was that people don't have a desk here,' Daniel explains. 'They are encouraged to move around and use the ground floor as they wish. The floors here are divided into teams, so who

sits where is basically driven by which team you're in. This really works in terms of efficiency as the teams tend to naturally lend themselves to the size of the floorplates and that has meant there are no obvious gaps. In the corners of each floor we have casual seating areas – which are heavily used, and on the lower floors there are individual meeting rooms.

'We were keen to have as much whiteboard use as possible, so you will see we have flexible screens which are dragged out and used extensively.'

Each of these floors has its own tea/coffee point, a complementary lighting scheme that includes sensitive and soothing uplighting, smart central breakout zones and more examples of brilliant contemporary artwork adorn the central walls.

Asked to produce an approachable yet intelligent environment, whilst also conforming to a stringent environmental assessment, Found appears to have succeeded on every level. The result is an office which has achieved all that it set out to. It has even been awarded an 'excellent' BREEAM rating – one of only a handful given out in the UK. Almost to prove the point, Found has now been appointed to design a new local restaurant which is being developed to cater for both the offices and the public ●



essential ingredients

Client:	• TalkTalk
Design & Planning:	• Found Associates 020 7734 8400 www.foundassociates.com
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Carpets:	• Milliken 01942 612846
Task Seating:	• Orangebox 020 7837 9922
Lighting:	• Zumtobel 020 8589 1800
Breakout Furniture:	• Hitch Mylius 020 8443 2616