

TECHNICAL BRIEF:

Resolving a Challenging Design Feature in a Collaborative Office Space

From September 2016 through December 2017, The Weitz Company served as the construction manager and general contractor for Holmes Murphy & Associates' new headquarters in Waukee, Iowa. The 93,700-square-foot building is complemented by an outdoor patio area and water feature with a bike path connecting it to a local trail system. The office commons include a light-filled atrium with a harvest table and seating. Other commons spaces include conference and collaboration areas, a coffee bar, a state-of-the-art kitchenette and gym. Employee workspaces include cubicle configurations and private offices.

The design process with the architecture firm, Substance Architecture, and developer, Knapp Properties, began months before construction. Weitz became involved in spring 2016 during the planning meetings. Working hand-in-hand with the architects and the owner, the Weitz team discussed wants, needs, designs and overall constructability with the architects, developer and owner. The plans for the new headquarters included exposed concrete and steel, walls upon walls of glass and sleek features amidst open, naturally lit space.

During the design phase, conversations around the atrium — a significant feature within the building — began. Drafted plans for the atrium initially included more conventional office furniture. Tim Hickman, the lead architect from Substance on the project, had an idea to install a harvest table in the middle of the building's foyer. With corporate office spaces becoming more collaborative, the Substance team saw this harvest table as the perfect solution to getting people out of their workstations to work, socialize or have small group meetings. The chief executive officer of Holmes Murphy shared this vision for the company's new office.

The idea itself was straightforward enough: a 36-inch high, I-shaped beam with a 30-foot long butcher's block on top of it. However, the work had only just begun as supplies would have to be sourced, the costs discussed and the installation planned. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of everyone involved, the harvest table was incorporated in



to the project without any schedule impacts. The table was specified to be raw steel and wood with power integration.

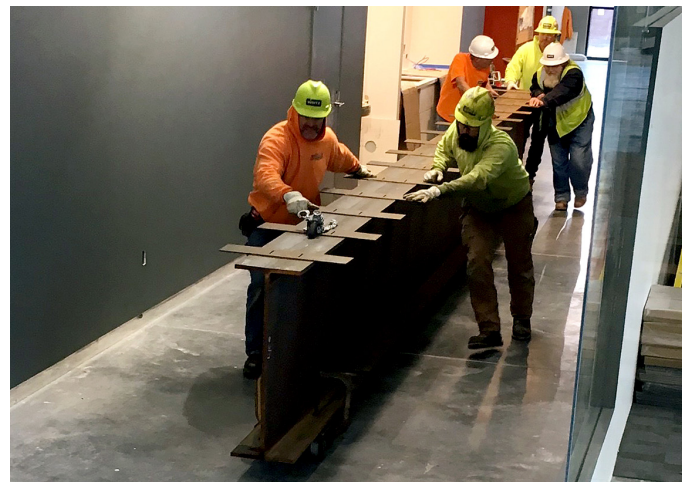
To be able to wire the table with electricity, the Weitz team had to: 1) Design and install the underground electrical rough-in; 2) Plan the cut-outs needed through the beam components; and 3) Understand the general electrical installation on how to mount the underside to make it user-friendly. Once the beam arrived, the team had to run stub ups through the bottom flange and up the web to the countertop. While finalizing countertop detailing, the supplier confirmed the wood top could not support itself, so plates were added along the top flange of the beam every two feet to add stability to the top and allow for concealed fastening of the system.

As construction continued on the building, Weitz left walls out so raw materials (like the 36-inch tall by 30-

foot long steel beam) could easily be delivered. The beam was procured by the Weitz Supply Chain and installed by Weitz Industrial team and Weitz millwrights. The beam itself was the biggest beam on the project and weighed about 3,000 pounds (or about 1.5 tons!). For installation, the team utilized nearly 10 men, a forklift and block and tackling, along with temporary wheel assemblies.

Weitz carpenters set the top — a honey-stained, clear-coat, water-safe, food-safety-approved oak that came in three 10-foot slabs each measuring 1.5 inches thick and 5 feet wide. Each slab weighed around 80 pounds and was made in Minnesota. Architectural Arts procured the wood slabs, which took two months to manufacture.

The whole process drew insight and expertise from many of the project's stakeholders and will be a distinctive and innovative design feature at Holmes Murphy & Associates for years to come.



ABOUT THE WEITZ COMPANY

As the sixth oldest A/E/C firm in the United States, The Weitz Company has forged its reputation on constantly seeking new construction innovations and technologies that provide clients with predictable, reliable and collaborative services. From first interaction with clients through project closeout, Weitz focuses on delivering value and eliminating waste during the construction process. It's a discipline that encompasses all of today's fundamental build qualities, and Weitz team members work diligently to align and elevate these practices to meet the specific needs (and wants) of every client. The end result is a project experience that is impossible to duplicate.

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