



Libro Credit Union

Ontario, Canada

Corporate Space | Branch System

Libro Credit Union and NewGround have a partnership stretching back 25 years. Over this time, NewGround has done branch studies and ideations, established Libro's current brand presence, and designed over half of Libro's branch system.

As Libro expanded, NewGround found a new building for its headquarters in what was once a major depot for the Canadian Post. This building was repurposed and given a fresh, modern look, with each floor being remodeled as tenants moved out and Libro expanded into the space.

The gem of this expansion was the new technology floor, which now provides a cutting-edge work environment that can attract and retain skilled talent. The design was so successful, other departments compete to schedule company events there, or just visit to enjoy the space.

21

Branch system



System-wide Transformation

25

Years of partnership



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Ontario, Canada

Corporate Space | Branch System

Libro Credit Union (Libro) is Canada's corporate credit union and has a long-standing partnership with NewGround, dating back to 1990. Libro's main office is a large multi-floor building that was once a major depot for the Canada Post. The building might have otherwise been razed, but has been recycled into a fresh and modern space for Libro Credit Union. In 2008, Libro purchased the building and worked with NewGround to establish their corporate main office inside the facility. This five-story building has approximately 170,000 square feet of total floor space. In 2008 and 2009, NewGround designed and built out administrative space on a couple of floors, but the building still had many existing tenants. Libro decided to grow into the facility as the tenant leases expired, creating a phased approach for renovations and allocation of space.

After Libro amalgamated with another credit union, Libro realized it needed to merge its technology departments, which meant the need for more space. The fifth-floor tenant had recently vacated, which fit with the phased plan to move into new floors as new space was needed. The NewGround strategy team confirmed this would be a feasible move with their space and personnel projections.

Southwestern Ontario has a booming tech sector, so Libro knew that they needed to create a cutting-edge work environment to attract and retain skilled talent. The NewGround/Libro team visited many of the high-tech employers in the area to understand what is attracting - but most importantly, retaining - top talent. The NewGround design team needed to design very specific work stations for different positions within the department such as hardware and software developers, IT, and network maintenance. Custom work stations were designed to make each of these stations functional for the employees working in them. A central meeting area, café, and lounge were designed with fun, vibrant elements with employee comfort in mind. Libro Credit Union has a strong community and employee-oriented brand and wanted this reflected in the space. Challenges facing the design included creating an engaging and attractive workplace without losing the brand and accommodating high-tech systems into a mature building.

Libro Credit Union's design has been so successful that departments on other floors go out of their way to visit and admire its beauty. Employee birthday parties, meetings, and other events are all scheduled now to take place on the fifth floor to utilize its amenities



Libro - Woodstock

Woodstock, Ontario, Canada

Branch Transformation

Transformational Design: Creating Safe Havens

After a 25-year partnership with NewGround, Libro Credit Union needed to refresh their design for a new branch in a new town – Woodstock. A change in Libro’s management team opened doors for new opportunities. In a town with less than 15,000 people, they decided Woodstock was the perfect small town to make a big impact, and knew they needed an evolved design to reflect the evolved community needs.

Aligned with their mission, Libro calls their members “Owners” and their staff “Coaches.” Even their CEO is called Chief Coach. When Owners arrive, Coaches guide them into large, private offices for a personal one-on-one consultation. Libro’s overall goal is to focus on expert coaching as a top service offering, setting them apart from competitors. This advice-based branch strategy offers personalized coaching appointments to best serve owners. Coaches also use hoteling spaces to provide a quick, easily cleaned workspace solution. First impressions count. With a fresh, modern take on an older branch NewGround designed, Libro wanted to really capitalize on their evolving marketing strategies to look and feel rejuvenated and remain relevant. The interior design includes an inviting, airy design with open spaces and generously large offices to prevent feeling cluttered and being too close to others. To create an attractive, airy space, the 2,700 square foot building features an open yet smaller modern lounge and café area, complete with a unique greenery wall showcasing Libro’s brand and emphasizing the fresh and clean space. The relaxed color scheme helps make both Owners and Coaches feel at ease.

Designed with excellent air circulation in mind, the exposed ceiling shows the heating and cooling system, a nod to the impression of fresh air. Teller pods are located close to the front doors so owners can conveniently come and go as they please, and are spaced 10 feet apart to allow for physical distancing. These are also simple, uncluttered pods that making cleaning protocols easy. Self-serve stations also offer physical distancing and are easy to wipe down after each use. Any off-stage shared spaces are intentionally left clean and uncluttered, making sanitizing simple to maintain.

The exterior features an array of glass, allowing street views to the inside to determine how busy the space already is. This also helps with social distancing guidelines to eliminate issues of reaching max capacity. With these forward-thinking design strategies, Libro stands as one of the most successful credit unions in all of Ontario.

