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ASSOCIATES CASE HISTORY

STUDENT LOANS COMPANY – DARLINGTON

“This was a high profile and extremely significant project – it represented a key deliverable for the new student finance service for England. The building had to reflect both our business and customer focused values whilst being somewhere our staff could enjoy and be proud of. We had some strong ideas about what we wanted to achieve and Journey Associates were instrumental in extracting these thoughts from staff members across the organisation, from senior management to those who would ultimately fill the building; turning them into a clear and concise brief that eventually led to the award winning design achieved at Memphis.”

David Barrett, Project Manager.

THE PROJECT

The **Student Loans Company** provides financial services including grants and loans to UK students. SLC wanted to introduce a new integrated approach to delivering these services in England by establishing a new facility, The Memphis Building, to create a central delivery unit providing a single contact point for information, application processing and customer contact. SLC needed strategic and operational briefs to guide the interior design of this new facility, which would accommodate 650 staff and support new ways of working.



OUR APPROACH

The research was planned to address three key themes: supporting new working practices to improve efficiency; to encourage collaborative working; and to enhance the perception of the organisation with students and suppliers, and internally with staff and visitors. We engaged with a wide range of senior staff across different business functions to understand their cultural and operational aspirations and to gain a deeper understanding of the strategic objectives for the workplace.

Various on-site visits to staff teams were also undertaken to observe existing work practices and gain insight into operational issues. To gain a deeper understanding of the operational requirements to allow teams to work effectively, in-depth interviews were held with a cross section of staff, ranging from senior managers to junior staff from the key departments.

OUTPUTS AND BENEFITS

The strategic brief set out the broad cultural objectives for the project and presented a design vision for the Memphis building. The operational brief took into account how services were delivered and operational issues that needed to be met by the new interior space. These briefs were then used by **3Fold** interior branding consultants to guide the workspace design. The building recently won a British Council for Offices (BCO) award for the best refurbished/recycled workplace in the UK.

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