

# MODERN INDUSTRIAL LOFT



CASE STUDY



DIVISION 9 ENGINEERED-TO-ORDER WOOD CEILINGS



# Modern Industrial Loft

## Tripadvisor HQ

Baker Design Group's design intent for Tripadvisor's new HQ near Boston

was an "exposed wood deck and beam loft building".

It featured 13,852 SF of 9Wood 1100 Cross Piece Grille.



Designing a 282,000 SF world headquarters is a monumental task in itself, but making such a large space feel warm and "homey" is an altogether different challenge. Baker Design Group (BDG) was tasked by Tripadvisor for such an undertaking for their new HQ in Needham, MA. The design intent was to give employees and business partners a "connotation of home". The key was introducing lots of natural materials, including wood, to create an "exposed wood deck and beam loft building". The ideal, according to BDG, was creating "an 'un-corporate' working environment that is both timeless and authentic." A wood ceiling would help meet the aesthetic and acoustic requirements of the large space.

Standing in the main "forum" atrium, the overhead ceiling panels are emblazoned with a blue sky graphic to give it the feel of a strolling inside on a clear, sunny day. The blue hues of the ceiling and balcony facades and pockets of greenery are balanced with the brownish tones of the stained Red Oak ceilings. Four floors wrap the giant gathering space like stacked terraces, and a large amount of

**"It's very outdoorsy. It looks more like a home than a business."**



the building's 13,000 SF wood ceilings are visible from this vantage for an impressive architectural display.

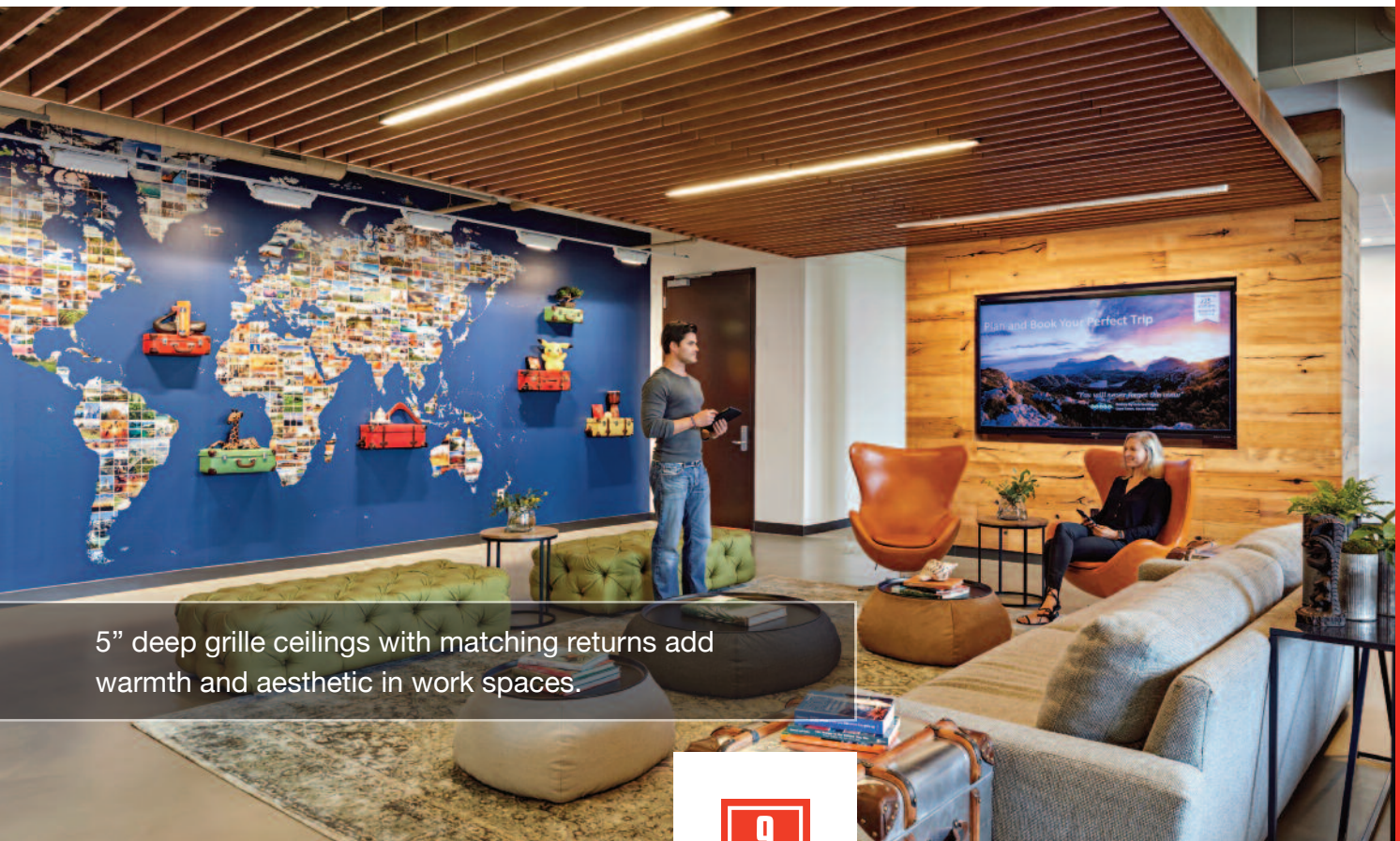
To meet the acoustic and aesthetic requirements, BDG specified a deep "baffle" Grille. Not only do the unusually large  $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 5" blades on 6" centers match the grandeur of the building, but this configuration gives enough open area to achieve the required 0.85 noise reduction coefficient (NRC), largely delivered via 1-1/2" fiberglass blanket above the grilles. This helps dampen the sound for the open-plan design, which is quickly filled with conversations and background noise from the over 1,400 employees.

The aesthetic requirement created another challenge, especially given the compressed *(continued on page 4)*





Irregularly-shaped floor plan required extensive field-cutting, capped with a trim.



5" deep grille ceilings with matching returns add warmth and aesthetic in work spaces.



schedule. The original color control was stained Teak veneer, known for its rich grain. Due to schedule constraints of securing that volume of Teak veneer from overseas, 9Wood proposed an alternate sourced in North America: Quarter Sliced Red Oak. Agreeable to the Red Oak's natural graining, the tricky part was dialing-in the perfect tone to mimic Teak's color. 9Wood provided a few versions of stained hand samples, and then a 4-panel mock-up, to make sure everyone was satisfied before fabrication.

For acoustical sub-contractor Allan Construction, the slightly irregular shape of the floor plan required extensive field-cutting of the rectangular-shaped panels. Over 2,000 LF of matching return trims cap the cuts to give each "cloud" a surround. One of the special challenges were the access panels. The depth, size and weight of the panels—1-1/2' wide and up to 10' long—rendered standard access clips impractical. Allan Construction developed a nifty solution in the field: aircraft cable with push-button pins. This allowed panel removal from the t-bar so they could swing down—no need to hoist them all the way to the ground.

If the goal was to create a "modern industrial loft", acoustical contractor Allan Construction summarized BDG's work aptly when he commented, "It's very outdoorsy. It looks more like a home than a business."



Tripadvisor HQ

## Project Details

**Tripadvisor HQ**  
Needham, MA

Total Scope: 13,852 SF

Product: 1100 Cross Piece Grille

Architect: Baker Design Group

Contractor: Allan Construction, Inc.



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