

BALTIMORE SMART CEO – OCTOBER 2006**PLANIT**

500 East Pratt Street 10th Floor

The first thing that hits you when you walk in the door of Planit is the color orange. Then you see the view. On the tenth floor of the 500 E. Pratt Street, Planit stands out because of the energy, color and pulse of the office. “We wanted nontraditional,” says CEO Matt Doud. “We didn’t want a traditional office space, we’re different. We wanted the office to play into that, as well. We wanted that sense to hit you over the head.” Doud wanted a unique environment and with the modular work stations, breakout rooms with bean bag chairs, orange tinted glass doors, an orange pool table, and bar in the lobby, Planit’s offices are definitely different.

Doud is a firm believer that a “creative, funky environment can make [the] work place more productive.” “People tend to be more comfortable and work harder – if the comforts of home are there,” he says. And while Planit had a creative space at their last offices above the Barnes and Noble Bookstore at 601 E. Pratt Street, Doud and Creative Leader and Co-Founder Ed Callahan felt a physical change was needed to go along with the adjustments they were making to the business. 500 E. Pratt Street was open and waiting with a clean slate. Planit takes up about two thirds of the tenth floor, and have the space to deal with their projected growth. Since moving in December of 2005, they’ve brought on 10 people. First on their minds for the new space was what they needed. So Doud and Callahan reached out to their directors and asked what they did and didn’t like about the old offices. Once they had the must-haves identified, they addressed the issue of creativity. “Even the most conservative client wants to feel a bold creative atmosphere. We wanted to make a bold statement when you walk in the door,” Doud says. Painting the floor orange and letting the spectacular view dominate the lobby will impress the client, but in order to take care of and inspire the employees, Doud and the architects, Lou Ghitman and Dawn Sangley of Design Collective, Inc. had to do some research.

Planit now houses 60 employees, so some sort of cubicles are needed. However, the work stations that the graphic designers, copy writers, and web technicians use are anything but dull Dilbert-like cubicles. If you have an office in Planit (with the exception of Doud) you don’t have a window. Instead, the panel of windows pour natural light into the open space where the employees have their modular work stations. Most directors sit with their divisions at the work stations. “[A] physical barrier puts up barriers; open makes for a more productive environment. It breaks down the ‘I’m the boss’ feel,” says Doud.

The space has been designed to make corridors tight, and then to open up into light, airy space, with very few right angles. There are more breakout rooms than offices, and fewer still office doors.

Doud and the rest of Planit are very happy with the space and the design. Doud says bringing prospective clients to the office is a conscious part of the pitch, citing the space as a “true reflection of what it’s like to work with us.”

Architect: Design Collective, Inc. – Lou Ghitman, Dawn Sangley

Furniture: American Office, Inc. – Bronwyn LeGette

