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Sustainable Design
Rodale Offices by Suben/Dougherty Partnership
Bronx Library Center by Dattner Architects
The Ethics of Sustainability
Paints and Finishes
Working with Green Consultants

design





green ink

Since 1942, publisher Rodale Inc. has professed the benefits of healthful living. Now, employees can “work the talk” thanks to New York City offices designed by Suben/Dougherty Partnership

By Amy Milshtein
Photography by Seong Kwon

Rodale Inc. didn't jump on any green bandwagon when designing its New York City offices. The Emmaus, Pa.-based publishing house—which put out *Organic Farming and Gardening* magazine in 1942, *Prevention* magazine in 1950, and established a corporate no smoking policy in 1983—is the bandwagon. The company sits firmly on the leading edge of health and wellness issues, so when the time came to expand and upgrade Rodale's New York offices it made sense to ask Suben/Dougherty Partnership to create a clean, green space that feels as open as the great outdoors.

In 1930 J.I. Rodale moved from Brooklyn, N.Y., to Emmaus, Pa., to better his health. In 1940 he bought a 60-acre parcel and took up “natural farming.” “Even then, the company was concerned with wellness and the effects of pollution,” says Mike Sudik, senior vice president of operations for Rodale.

A niche it embodied from the start, Rodale Inc. publishes such titles as *Men's Health*, *Woman's Health*, a variety of sports magazines, and weight loss books including the popular *South Beach Diet*. While their headquarters, “is and always will be in Emmaus,” according to Sudik, the New York offices grew from 60 to 400 employees in the last four years. New space was just what the doctor ordered.

Suben/Dougherty wanted to bring in a bit of fresh Emmaus air to the new space, yet the designers never forgot the midtown Manhattan location.

Ever try a Downward Dog under glass? Yoga enthusiasts at Rodale can work out in the two-story, glass-enclosed exercise studio (opposite). By removing ceilings in the standard, boxy 1960s-era office building, Suben/Dougherty created a lobby with an open loft feeling (above).



design

As a result, the interior balances quiet, farmhouse charm with up-to-date urban excitement. An abundance of natural light pours through operable windows that showcase Manhattan views. Charming, bow-backed chairs in the coffee area offer prime seating to a huge, high-tech media screen that projects ever-changing images. These slim, state-of-the-art screens are firmly rooted in beds of river rock.

White walls, glass partitions, and metal accents lend an appropriate edge to the space. But right in the heart sits an impressive, Shaker-inspired, cherry staircase. Unexpected at first glance, the stair continues to surprise upon closer inspection. "We topped the steps with stone and lit the risers," says Susan Dougherty, principal at Suben/Dougherty. The resulting staircase glows like a functional art object, enticing employees to shun the elevator and run a flight or two.

The stairs aren't the only opportunity for exercise within Rodale. Right at the entrance stands a two-story, glass-enclosed yoga studio. "It's in a visible, public area that speaks to what the company is about," says senior project manager Cynthia Tollo. The space is used as an exercise studio every day, and it also houses large meetings, salsa lessons, and photo shoots.

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design



Farmhouse chairs contrast with high-tech gadgetry in Rodale's coffee room (left)

Furnishings and finishes also meet green standards. LEED-inspired, but not certified, the design incorporates bamboo floors, water-based stains, T5 daylight harvesting sensors, and high-efficiency, multiple-zone HVAC. Carpet tile, window shades, system furniture, and seating were all chosen for either their present recycled content or their future recyclability. Because this was such a big job, choosing green supplies only cost about “two to five percent more,” according to Tollo.

“We really pushed LEED values as much as we could,” remembers Dougherty. As a result, the open, airy interior reflects the company’s rural Pennsylvania soul and values of health and well being. And in fairness to all employees, most private offices are set at the core, leaving the window walls to workstations and other open spaces.

“I’m really pleased with the open feeling,” says Sudik. “The office feels spread out just enough without being so open that it’s wasteful.” And that’s a fresh breath of midtown air. **C**

who

Project: Rodale. *Client Team:* Ardath Rodale, chairm of the board; Steven Murphy, president/CEO; Steven Kalin, COO; Michael Sudik, vice president of operations; Anne Christos, manager of office services; Joy Werner, director of facilities & real estate development. *Architect, interior designer & lighting designer:* Suben/Dougherty Partnership; Jack Michael Suben, AIA, technology partner; Susan Dougherty, interior design partner; Rodney McManus, senior project manager; Cynthia Tollo, AIA, quality assurance and control; Jeffrey Lustig, project architect; Amanda Kim, Enrico Gessaroli, Elizabeth Maletz, Karina Gunsten & Lennart Andersson, design and production. *Structural engineer:* LERA. *M/E/P engineer:* BR+A. *Construction Manager:* Sweet Construction. *A/V Consultant:* JVN Systems. *Furniture Dealer:* Dancker, Sellev & Douglas. *Photographer:* Seong Kwon.

what

Wallcoverings: Pollack. *Paint:* Benjamin Moore. *Laminate:* Formica. *Drywall:* USG. *Flooring:* MNR Flooring. *Carpet/carpet tile:* Shaw, Consolidated Carpets. *Carpet fiber:* Eco Solution Q Premium Brand SD Nylon. *Carpet backing:* Ecoworx. *Ceiling:* Armstrong. *Lighting:* Lightolier. *Doors:* Acme, DCI Metro. *Door hardware:* Corbin-Russwin. *Glass:* Barber Glass. *Window frames/wall systems:* Acme, Steelcase. *Window treatments:* Mechoshade-Ecoveil. *Lounge/cafeteria/dining/auditorium seating:* By Client. *Workstations, metal/glass office fronts:* Steelcase. *Workstation seating:* Knoll. *Other seating:* Steelcase, Knoll. *Upholstery:* Pallas Textiles, Jhane Barnes, Designtex, Spinneybeck. *Conference table:* Nucraft. *Cafeteria/dining/training tables:* By Client. *Other tables:* Tella. *Files:* Office Specialty. *Architectural woodworking/cabinetmaking:* Igelzi Interiors. *Custom Stairs/railings:* Walter P. Sauer, MSL Productions. *Shelving, planters, accessories:* By Client. *Signage:* MSL Productions. *HVAC:* Henick Lane. *Fire safety:* Fire Code. *Security:* Kastle Security. *Building management system:* Siemens.

where

Location: New York, NY. *Total floor area:* 100,000 sq. ft. *No. of floors:* 5. *Average floor size:* 20,000 sq. ft. *Total Staff:* 450.