

HICKOK COLE SPINS IN NEW YEAR

What do Roman numerals have to do with fun? Just ask the folks at **Hickok Cole Architects** (Washington, DC), a 65-person architecture and interior design firm.

In its 2009 New Year's card, Hickok Cole used the Roman numerals "MMIX" (2009) playfully in the sentence "MMIX IT UP IN 2009!" as part of a card that includes a multicolor spinning wheel and a call for collaboration and idea sharing.

That concept matches the firm's collaborative approach, says Jennifer Oh, senior marketing manager.

"The firm has a mantra that 'Great ideas can come from anywhere' and it walks the talk. Hickok Cole regularly does design charrettes in-house involving employees with different skill sets and experience as well as with clients and consultants," she says. "This collaborative culture produces great results, including winning two prestigious design competitions for build-to-suit projects for National Public Radio (NPR) and the **Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS)** (Washington,

DC). The mix of projects at Hickok Cole and the mix of people—on which interior designers collaborate with graphic designers, and architects collaborate with **U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC)** (Washington, DC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) specialists, and so on—and their talents represent a strong competitive advantage. Collaborative design therefore became the theme for Hickok Cole's 2009 marketing campaign which kicked off with the 2009 New Year's card."

For the card, Hickok Cole wanted to express collaborative design in a fun, eye-catching, and clear way. For months, consultant Marilyn Mendell, president of **WinSpin CIC, Inc.** (Fredericksburg, VA), a marketing and public relations firm that serves architecture, civil engineering, and environmental consulting clients, and Hickok Cole's in-house marketing and graphic design team tracked the hot color trends in fashion and design magazines. They decided to incorporate these vibrant colors in a color wheel to convey movement, action, and

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the blending of boundaries and the converging of colors, Oh says.

Brightly colored slices floating over a black background are on the front of the 6-by-6-inch card. On the inside of the card, the slices rearrange to form a color wheel. A transparent disk fastened over the color wheel with a grommet provides an interactive component: When the viewer turns the disk, the pieces seem to move. The message reads, "Great ideas can come from anywhere... with collaboration, we can create something truly special. MMIX IT UP IN 2009!"

Hickok Cole mailed the card to all 7,500 people in its database and received many comments. Oh says the team's favorite e-mail was: "I was mesmerized by the spinning color wheel in your latest promotional mailing, and the bureau chief walks in!" ■



MAGNUSSON KLEMENCIC FLIPS OUT



"I think everyone had one of these types of books as a child."

It takes some page flipping, some mixing and some matching to figure out the "inspired" mailer by **Magnusson Klemencic Associates, Inc. (MKA)** (Seattle, WA), a 170-person structural engineering, civil engineering, seismic engineering, and wind engineering firm. And it's all on purpose.

"Several of our employees had received significant industry recognitions that we wanted to share with our clients, says Julie Jackson, marketing manager. She says that rather than a dry recitation, MKA wanted to put together a mailer that would be fun and interesting, and would at the same time highlight the firm's corporate message of professional leadership at an individual level. A brainstorming session involving Jackson and graphic designers Jennifer Covington and Michael Dickter resulted in the concept for a booklet with each page cut into three-piece sections. The top section usually doesn't match the middle or bottom sections, so there's some flipping necessary to find out the correct match, and thus the correct image.

"I think everyone had one of these types of books as a child," Jackson says. "Our firm's specialist organization was graphically reinforced by showing each individual in front of the project type in which they specialize, with their appearance further modified along that

theme to encourage visual stacking of images as pages are turned. This concept reflected our message of professional leadership at an individual level, 'interchangeably' arranged into groups of specialists based on a project's or client's specific needs."

The backside of each page can be matched to create words starting with "in" in the top page, for example "inspired," "inventive," and "intuitive."

"The overall piece and presentation embodied our non-traditional, leading-edge approach to engineering, as well as our sense of fun and humor," Jackson says.

The mailer went out to about 7,000 U.S. and international clients, and the response was very positive, she says.

"In fact, several people indicated it was the best mailer they'd ever received," she says. "Love it or hate it, the format encouraged people to look at it and remember who it was from—a large part of our mission for the mailer." ■

