

GREEN BUSINESS QUARTERLY

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Corporate & Retail
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Real Estate Services
Interior Design

SIEGEL & STRAIN ARCHITECTS

Award-winning firm champions sustainability
with unique ecologically based techniques



INTERIOR DESIGN

Commercial, Medical and Residential Interiors

LOCATION:
Boise, ID

USGBC MEMBER SINCE:
2004

PROJECTS IN THE PAST YEAR:
30+

EMPLOYEES:
4

CORNERSTONE DESIGN

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

AS ONE OF IDAHO'S ONLY GREEN INTERIOR design firms, Boise-based Cornerstone Design's green philosophy is to design today for tomorrow's generation by not being wasteful, using only what is needed, and using local resources.

"Another part of our sustainability philosophy is the types of materials that we use," says Suzie Hall, LEED AP, president and principal designer of the firm. "In addition to healthy products, we use products

made out of recycled materials that can be made into something new at the end of their life—the cradle-to-cradle philosophy. For instance, when we buy carpet, we know that it can be recycled, broken down fiber into fiber, backing into backing, instead of going into the landfill."

Hall became increasingly interested in sustainability after attending a seminar as part of a design conference in Salt Lake City in 2003.

"The seminar was given by a local architect and when he started talking about healthy spaces that were also responsible and environmentally friendly, I started thinking about my three children," she recalls. "It just clicked for me that this is what I need to be doing—designing for the future so the design of today doesn't erode the availability of things for my children and their children. That was my light-bulb moment."

Cornerstone Design incorporates sustainability in every project that it undertakes, whether it's a LEED project or not. One of its successful strategies in accomplishing this is through Integrated Design, a process by which everyone on the project team—the architect, contractor, interior designer, engineers, and the owner—comes together before the project begins.

"By getting everyone around the table, you can start talking about ways to increase sustainable design, such as how it impacts the mechanical system, what finishes are being used, and cost," Hall says. "If you do that at the very beginning as a team, the project is more cohesive and sustainable because you eliminated many unnecessary items. It's very energizing, and you're learning from each other. It's the most synergistic type of design process you can have."

Cornerstone's biggest commitment to its green philosophy is its design studio. The firm purchased a building shell and built it out to LEED-CI Gold standards. It was certified in May 2008.

"That's a real testament to all of our principles," Hall says. "We purchased the building shell and designed everything using LEED standards and sustainability through the design construction. We also use it as a working showroom. That was a huge investment and commitment."



Suzie Hall, president and principal designer.



This private office in a LEED-CI Gold-certified studio showcases Steelcase FSC-certified office furniture, decorative fluorescent pendant lights, and low-VOC paint.

Cornerstone Design has been part of the design team on 9 LEED registered projects. Of these projects, one has achieved a Platinum rating and three have achieved a Gold rating. Hall acted as the LEED Administrator on two of the Gold projects.

Internally, the company recycles everything it can, from paper to batteries to glass. It was one of the first companies in the area to get commercial recycling bins. It also donates old catalogs and binders to interior design and architecture students so they can be reused. Energy efficiency was incorporated into its studio, as well. The purchasing standards for office supplies and all printed matter have to meet recycled content value or FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification.



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Suzie Hall, President & Principal Designer

This conference room by Cornerstone features recycled-leather wall tiles and a table fabricated from FSC-certified walnut.

Recently, Hall and two colleagues have decided to help other local businesses become greener and formed a green consulting firm, Green Steps.

“We’re offering green services on a strategic level to companies on both how to green their business internally and externally,” Hall says. “Green Steps doesn’t just start with a project, but with a company that is looking to go green and glean what drives them internally and help steer them along the green path.”

Hall is proud to know that she’s making a difference in the lives of people in terms of the health and performance of the space that they occupy, whether it’s their office or home.

“My goal is to always create a space that is beautiful and functional, healthy and sustainable,” she says. “It’s so enjoyable to help educate people and guide them to better choices.” GBQ

Cornerstone Design
healthy & high performance interiors™

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