



# COLLABORATION CREATES A HIGHLY COLLABORATIVE WORKSPACE.

**CLIENT**  
AVANTI | FINANCE

**BRANCH**  
Auckland

**INDUSTRY**  
Finance

**Rapid growth meant Avanti Finance had outgrown its Auckland headquarters. Growth is one of those problems that's good to have, because it reflects well on the dynamism of the business. However, with 150 staff helping hundreds of customers every day, there was a need to find a property that could fit them all in.**

Not only that – Avanti would need to create a workspace fit for the 21st century, and then move the business, lock, stock and barrel, with the absolute minimum of disruption.

Fortunately, the executive team at Avanti had built longstanding partnerships with experts in the commercial property design and fitout sectors. Mansons were developing a brand new HQ for Mercury Energy at 33 Broadway, Newmarket. The building was a perfect fit for Avanti so they snapped up around 2000sqm over two levels.

Avanti CIO James Grieve, who was managing the move and fitout, wasted no time bringing two more partners on board.

“We’ve worked with Cemac Commercial Interiors, Sonja Hawkins Design and David Muir Design for more than 20 years,” James said. “We saw it as critical to make sure everybody was talking at an early stage, because it avoids costly changes down the track.”



## Step 1: Get everyone round the table.

James formed a Project Control Group, which in practice meant getting all stakeholders in a face-to-face meeting once a week. Avanti directors, Mansons' construction managers, interior designers Sonja Hawkins and David Muir and key people from the Cemac team were constantly reviewing plans, reporting on progress and addressing any issues before they became expensive problems.

This collaborative approach meant Avanti's ideas on how it wanted its new space to work, and the budgets that they wanted to work within, were integrated into the design early on.

This collaboration in design between Sonja Hawkins and David Muir, allowed the client specified a range of workspaces, including workstations in open plan offices, open meeting areas for informal catch-ups, video conference rooms and larger meeting rooms for more formal gatherings.

"Working with Cemac from an early stage meant they were involved in checking the cost and feasibility of the design throughout the process," David said. "They were also able to give practical construction advice to help Avanti achieve its design goals."

With Cemac informed and involved at every stage, timely decisions were taken to ensure everything would be ready for the big move. Just as importantly, last minute changes in scope and budget blowouts were avoided.

At the same time, there was a strong focus on detail. Creating a space that was not only functional but also aesthetically appealing, meant working closely with the Cemac team on the fitout.

## A total solution – from ceiling paint to furniture to floor tiles.

Cemac was appointed as the main contractor for the project. The company's core responsibility was to appoint and manage all contractors involved in the hard and soft fitout of the space, with a clear brief to achieve the required quality standards by the critical completion date.

One challenge came with the brief to leave all services exposed in the ceiling. Ducts, pipes, cables and other essential parts of the building infrastructure were to remain visible, creating a chic 'industrial' vibe. To avoid it looking like a particoloured jumble, every element was painted the same tone of gray, ensuring a neutral but sophisticated look.

## CASE STUDY

The Designers also came up with a sophisticated but subtle carpet pattern for the large floor plates. It involved painstaking work by skilled carpet layers, to build up an intricate arrangement from 16 different carpet tiles. Cemac project-managed the process and ensured the result lived up to the designer's vision.

"It's a work of art," is the summation by Avanti's James Grieve. "I saw the building with just the carpet in it, and there's not a single fault. It had to be laid perfectly and that's what they delivered."

Then there were the hundreds of individual items of furniture and fixtures required to create productive work areas. For instance, to break up the hanger-like expanse of open workspace, Avanti and David Muir specified custom-built meeting pods. These were built from slatted wood and furnished to complement the areas they were located in.

### **Delivered on time, with no surprises.**

The move was scheduled to take place over two weekends. Avanti's plan called for staff to switch off their computers on the Friday afternoon, and to switch them back on at the new location on Monday. Everything had to be in place. This entailed the relocation and reconfiguration of 130 existing workstations.

Faced with this challenge, Avanti's Data team, the moving company and Cemac's relocation crew worked as one team. Cemac's site team had already ensured that the site was ready for desks to simply be plugged in.

Avanti's James Grieve was keenly aware of the amount of work leading up to the move – and the risk if things got off track.

"We needed to move the business in two phases, over successive weekends before Easter. Any delays would have been very disruptive for our customers and our people," said James.



## CASE STUDY



“I could see how much work Cemac had to get through, and I was worried. But there were no problems at all. Our staff logged out on Friday in the old office, and came into the new place on Monday. They logged on and started work. Everything worked – from the IT systems, to the bathrooms, to the lifts.”

All in all, the project took one year from the first discussions to moving in. To manage a change of this nature, in this time frame, with no major issues, demonstrates how a collaborative approach generates the best outcome.

Even more importantly, it has helped Avanti enhance its strong and collaborative workplace culture.

### **When people like coming to work, they’re more productive.**

Avanti now has a large purpose-built office built around the needs of its business. With design ideas from the Avanti executive team, developed and extended by Sonja Hawkins and David Muir Design, and implemented by Cemac, it has created a workplace that works for its occupants.

“Staff go to the café, not only for lunch, but also for coffee during the day. It’s a change in how they operate,” says David Muir.

“They also have options to work in different areas, depending on the need for privacy or collaboration. They can take phone calls in acoustically controlled spaces nearby, so those working in close proximity can concentrate on their own tasks without interruption.”

James Grieve sees strategic benefits for the business working with a team of trusted advisors from the outset.

“Our old building was cramped and not functionally rich. What Cemac and David Muir have created for us at 33 Broadway is a much better work environment for our staff, so they can perform at the highest level,” James said.

“When you give your team the tools to do the job, they’ll deliver much better outcomes for customers.”