

# teknion case study

## CLIENT

Alterna Savings and Credit Union, Ltd.

## ARCHITECT

Chmiel Architects

## DEALER

Holmes & Brakel

## PRODUCTS FEATURED

Leverage Furniture System  
Livello Height-Adjustable Table  
Altos Architectural Walls  
Teknion dna

## the project

The vision for Alterna Savings' new headquarters in the Canadian capital of Ottawa began to take shape in 2014 with a goal to honor its history, while enabling the enterprise to transition to a more collaborative work environment. Seizing the opportunity to lease four floors of a new LEED® Silver building, Alterna left behind a maze of corridors, private offices and meager communal space. A modern facility in a lively urban neighborhood would now allow Alterna to close the gap between its work practices and its physical workspace.

Working with Chmiel Architects, along with Teknion and dealer Holmes & Brakel, Alterna opted for an open plan and a series of meeting rooms with glazed walls, rather than enclosed offices and conference rooms with zero visibility. As befits a company that values transparency, the plan modeled an airy, light-filled workspace that would promote a fluid interaction among people and departments and a sense of shared communal space. There were to be no private offices, even for executives. Quiet privacy rooms and heads-down work pods would provide a haven for tasks that require focus or confidentiality.

Given the expectations of a new generation of workers, Alterna also requested a technology-rich environment with a fresh, friendly—yet professional—look that would appeal to bright young millennials. The concept of an urban park formed the basis of design. Meeting rooms, cafes and circulation routes take aesthetic cues from pavilions, picnic areas and park pathways, utilizing textures, forms and colors drawn from nature, including custom botanical motifs etched into glazed walls and various shades of the color green.

Aesthetically, Alterna's offices depart from the traditional formality of financial services groups, and are more understated than what one expects from start-ups and the technology industry. But the client's new offices are wholly relevant, projecting ideas of community, innovation and the flow of information that place Alterna firmly in the present after more than a century of community-based service.

## the response

Given the openness of a floor plan liberated from cubicles and walls, furniture acts as an essential tool for realizing Alterna's goals. The Teknion portfolio made it possible for the client to select a variety of furnishings that allows people to work in a technology-enabled environment, alone or in groups, whether sitting or standing and at different levels of formality.

The project entailed furnishing 180 workstations, as well as communal lounge areas, cafés, meeting rooms and other spaces across the landscape of the office. To accommodate staff at all levels, Teknion developed three workstation configurations: a 6- x 8-foot workstation, clusters of 120-degree workstations and larger executive workspaces equipped with tables and chairs for informal meetings.

Leverage proved to be ideal for Alterna: cost-effective, flexible and customizable. Workstation panels were specified at 42 inches (107 cm) high and fitted with translucent glass screens to provide seated privacy without discouraging casual conversation. A choice of panel Elements—Whiteboard, Tackable and Accessory—tailor each workstation to the user's preference and work habits. Storage towers afford a place for personal items and mobile file pedestals topped with cushions perform double-duty as guest seating. Livello sit/stand height-adjustable worksurfaces encourage staff to perform tasks while standing—thereby stimulating circulation and renewing energy and mental alertness.



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Fully glazed meeting room “pavilions,” built with Teknion’s Altos architectural walls, maintain open sight lines across the floor plate of the office from one end to the other. The modular, relocatable walls allow Alterna to alter meeting room locations and dimensions at any time, with no further construction work. At the same time, Altos glass walls allow daylight from the building perimeter to flow into the space, while also creating an acoustic shield—essential to minimize the distraction of ambient noise outside the meeting room.

Teknion dna, a group of low-profile seating and tables, was selected to create inviting lounge areas where people can gather to work on a very impromptu basis. The modular product permits easy reconfiguration, thus addressing the client’s desire for flexible, fluid workspaces. Teknion dna so impressed the client, that Alterna has now specified the seating for several of its branch offices.

The client chose furniture finishes from Teknion’s standard offering, primarily Storm White and a light wood finish for workstations and storage, and seating upholstery in various shades of green that act as striking accents. A mix of warm and cool tones, neutrals and brights, creates visual balance, with vibrant green cushions glowing against cool white walls and the occasional wash of vivid orange that adds a touch of upbeat energy to the serious business of banking.

While financial services is an industry built upon tradition and constancy, today’s banks and financial services companies often adopt environments more akin to what we have come to expect from creative enterprises and the technology industry. Alterna and its design team have created a headquarters that embodies its identity as a modern financial services group, one that projects stability and openness to new ideas.

## products

### LEVERAGE FURNITURE SYSTEM

Leverage® is a panel-based furniture system that makes it easy to customize the office, allowing the client to specify the desired level of features for each workspace, while achieving an affordable price. Panels, worksurfaces and mounted storage connect off-module for optimal use of space and inventory, and 120-degree planning expands the spectrum of planning possibilities.

### LIVELLO HEIGHT-ADJUSTABLE TABLES

Designed for dynamic, multi-functional spaces, Livello™ comprises a collection of height-adjustable workstation tables and mobile, flip-top meeting tables that integrate seamlessly with freestanding or panel-based environments and enable users to adjust to the task at hand.

### ALTOS ARCHITECTURAL WALLS

Altos® is a modular architectural wall system designed to facilitate reconfiguration or full relocation as required. Its universal framework allows changes in elevation, dimension, fascia function and finish to maximize flexibility and the life of the product. Clean, crisp lines harmonize with building interiors and project a modern aesthetic.

### TEKNION DNA MODULAR SEATING

Teknion dna™ is a collection of lounge seating and tables designed to expand the functional repertoire of lounge seating. Modular design allows units to align on all sides, thereby offering a wide variety of possible configurations and multiple applications in both open spaces—such as reception or casual meeting areas—and enclosed rooms.

