SUTHERLAND

DESIGN THINKING ISN'T JUST WHAT WE DO, **IT'S WHERE WE WORK**

If you visit the South of Market district of San Francisco, or "SoMa" as it's called, you'll see a skyline that reflects the economic success story of the city. It's home to disruptive challenger brands like Uber and Airbnb and blue chip global tech giants like Salesforce; a vibrant economic community rubbing shoulders in flagship high rise architecture. When Sutherland was searching for a location to create a US center of excellence for our design thinking practice Sutherland Labs, SoMa was a natural choice. But despite the impressive range of office spaces and facilities in the area, it took almost a year to find the right location. Why? Well, put simply, design thinking is a discipline that doesn't follow the crowd.

Our commitment to design thinking affects everything we do, which meant our San Francisco labs facility had to showcase the power of the discipline to transform traditional business processes, including the design and layout of our workplace. As they say in nearby Silicon Valley, we decided to eat our own [design thinking] dogfood, and the result is a building that's as distinctive in the SoMa landscape as Sutherland is in the global marketplace.

Design thinking the workplace

Design thinking is a way of engineering business processes to work smarter. It's also the methodology that underpins customer experience (CX) design, which is fast becoming a key market differentiator for successful brands. Studies show companies that invest in CX record up to five times faster revenue growth than

CX laggards,[1] and that differential in performance means demand for design thinking services is growing rapidly.

We created our first Sutherland Labs facility three years ago in London - one of the largest dedicated user experience (UX) facilities in Europe - because we recognized how important design thinking would become to all industry sectors. Our new San Francisco workplace had to reflect the same pioneering approach. It had to be a large, purpose-built facility that was geared-up around challenging conventional business wisdom and delivering outstanding customer and employee experiences. That meant understanding that a client's user journey doesn't start after they sign in at a shared reception desk and take the elevator up to your offices, but from the moment they arrive outside.

Our San Francisco labs sit alongside the steel and glass of 21st century downtown, but it's a very different kind of building; an 18th century wine warehouse. From the moment you see it, the old warehouse is shaping your expectations of what happens inside. That attention to detail underscores what design thinking is all about, i.e. understanding the needs and experiences of your users, then designing working processes that promote the outcomes you want.

Sutherland began as a business process outsourcer back in 1986, focused on

1 https://www.forrester.com/reportThe+US+Customer+Experience+Index+2016/-/E-RES131003

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It took about nine months of considering locations before we chose one of the few remaining brick and timber buildings in South of Market. It's full of history and that was important; we wanted people to experience that sense of being in a place where history got written, because that means it's also a place where change happens. And it shows how Sutherland has changed too.

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Darin Wright,
Chief Engagement
Officer, Sutherland

DESIGN THINKING
THE WORKPLACE
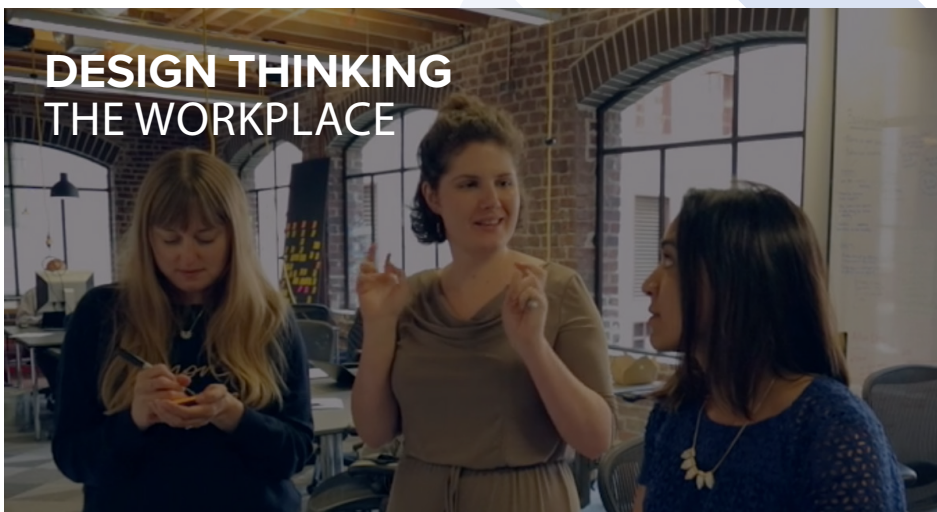
DESIGNING FOR
WORKPLACE DIVERSITY

contact center, but now we have evolved our focus to prioritize the customer experience, across all channels. The new branding expresses the integrated end-to-end process transformation work we do; a journey that's taken us way beyond traditional outsourcing into the realms of robotic process automation (RPA), artificial intelligence (AI), and human centric process design. Our new building reflects that evolution.

A workplace designed for changing working practices

There's no cubicles or traditional offices in the new building. Open spaces encourage people to collaborate across disciplines and role hierarchies as the need arises, which is vital for the dynamic nature of design thinking work. The privacy afforded by individual offices is provided by quiet zones that offer desk space when it's needed, but doesn't put people into boxes. This kind of interior flexibility is important because employee needs and behaviors change throughout both the day and the lifecycle of a project, so what works one day might not work so well the next.

Within Sutherland's design thinking practice, we have specialists in design strategy, service design, visual design, consulting, research, predictive analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), platform development (robotics and chatbots), and a variety of tech services, and

there's no one-size-fits-all office solution for that kind of multi-disciplinary team roster. The design thinking solution was to create a space that uses a mix of open plan design, purpose-built workshop spaces, and communal quiet working zones. The typical interior design of most SoMa office towers - organized around centralized blocks for elevators and utilities to facilitate fire regulations and so on - limits the variety of interior layout options, and subsequently, the variety of tasks that can be accomplished there. We needed a different kind of environment to accommodate a different kind of work.

Designing for workplace diversity

The SF labs team is drawn from the disciplines of psychology and sociology, visual design, filmmaking, blue chip corporate executives, and experienced product and platform engineers. This culture of diverse experts blends academic research, creativity, engineering talent and business experience, and it marks the difference between innovation for innovation's sake, and innovation that cuts costs and grows revenues. It also means a traditional office layout isn't appropriate for their working needs; you need a space that's a mixture of research lab, library, design studio, and management consultancy.

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Everything about the space has been designed to deliver specific outcomes. As you enter, there's an executive briefing space for clients and purpose built user experience (UX) research and testing facilities, through to an open plan space like a sandbox for playing collaboratively with new discoveries and concepts. There's prototyping zones, developers, conference rooms, and so on. We sweated over every detail, even the type of furniture, to create a space that helps clients and employees to get the results they need.

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Owen Daly-Jones,
SVP & Global Head,
Sutherland Labs

Beyond the resident design thinking teams, the space also had to work
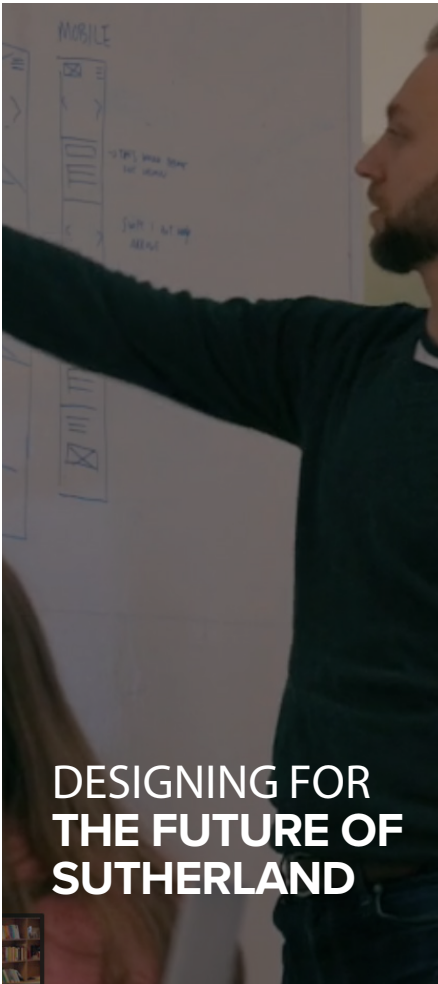
DESIGNING FOR **THE FUTURE OF SUTHERLAND**

effectively for everyone who would visit it. Sutherland has thousands of employees situated in over 60 global locations, and the London and SF labs play host to an ongoing company-wide design thinking training program for business leaders and practitioners from across Sutherland's many divisions. The sheer variety of disciplines that represents for a global corporation is huge, from healthcare specialists to IT infrastructure engineers, retail AI platform consultants, airline experts, financial services executives, etc. The list is as long as it is varied. We needed facilities that would accommodate professionals with different workplace needs, but also provide them with a break from their everyday routines and the opportunity to understand the hands-on, deep-dive research techniques.

The same logic applies to client needs too. Design thinking is about facilitating conversations that will transform business processes and deliver measurable results. Put simply, clients don't just visit your offices, they work in them. So, the workspace needs to accommodate their working needs as well as provide them with a fresh perspective on their business issues.

Designing the future of Sutherland

Our SF team has been redesigning patient experiences for a leading US healthcare provider, mapping the omnichannel patient journeys that influence patient choices of hospitals and clinical practitioners. They've studied the customer profile data for one of America's largest retailers to design AI-powered predictive analytics platforms that help their customer care services to increase upsell and cross-sell opportunities, and use personalized price promotions to reduce customer churn in every client contact scenario. They've also used ethnographic filmmaker teams to observe gamers for one of the world's leading entertainment consoles, and used that insight to develop chatbots that save man hours, reduce contact center call volumes, and create higher customer satisfaction scores for password recovery and typical user account management. The lab's output demonstrates how design thinking can both diagnose and solve business problems, applicable to almost every industry sector and market.

The customer experience is predicted to become the main differentiator between brands by 2020,[2] more than price or product. The challenge this represents for all brands is transforming their traditional customer engagement and back-office business processes to meet rising demand for 24/7 omnichannel access to brands and automated, self-service customer interactions. Design thinking is a means to keep-up with this lightning-fast pace of change, and deliver end-to-end process transformation. This is the only effective way to maintain market share against disruptor brands, and remain competitive

2 https://www.walkerinfo.com/knowledge-center/webcasts/docs/Walker-Insights-Webcast-Customers-2020.pdf

> We want Sutherland employees, just like our clients, to recognize that without design research and user journey mapping there's a risk you'll create products and services that don't have a market. Getting hands-on with our design thinking teams in a purpose-built space is the most effective way of achieving that. It's training by doing.

Andrew Swartz,
Director of Design Research,
Sutherland Labs

> It's a really diverse group of people in San Francisco, like our London Labs. We're drawing on different disciplines, taking people who are endlessly curious, and creating an environment that mixes them together in different combinations depending on the needs of the work. The design of the building reflects the diversity of the work that gets done there, and the diversity of the people who do it.

Owen Daly-Jones,
SVP & Global Head,
Sutherland Labs

THE CHANGING DIGITAL BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM HAS PLACED A PREMIUM ON DESIGN THINKING

despite the ever-increasing customer choice and need for instant gratification offered by the digital world.

The changing digital business ecosystem has placed a premium on design thinking, and that's why Sutherland has built a global design thinking practice to complement its process transformation

expertise. Our SoMa labs demonstrate that design thinking isn't a fad, a trend, or a new industry mantra, because we don't just practice design thinking for business, we used design thinking to create the place where we do business.

> We call it 'bringing the outside-in.' I was on the client side for years, and it's easy to become insular and view your business domain through the lens of company press releases and the traditional way your organization does things. This whole building is designed to give professionals a creative space for new ideas, but also provide the disciplined methodologies and facilities they need to unpack business problems in the structured way they're familiar with.

Ben Stuart,
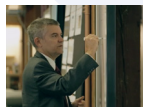Chief Marketing Officer,
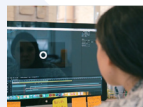Sutherland

OUR VIDEOS

Building History

Designed for Results

Delivering Delight

A Culture of Diverse Experts

Outside In

Is your organization ready for a new model of process transformation that puts exceptional customer experiences first? For more information on how we can help you transform your process to optimize the customer experience, please visit us at www.sutherlandglobal.com, email us at sales@sutherlandglobal.com, or call 800-388-4557 ext.6123.

As a process transformation company, Sutherland rethinks and rebuilds processes for the digital age by combining the speed and insight of design thinking with the scale and accuracy of data analytics. We have been helping customers across industries from financial services to healthcare, achieve greater agility through transformed and automated customer experiences for over 30 years. Headquartered in Rochester, N.Y., Sutherland employs thousands of professionals spanning 19 countries around the world.