

# CASE STUDY



Project | *Living Lab at Armstrong World Industries*  
Location | *Lancaster, PA*  
Architect | *Gensler*  
Product | *Myriad of Armstrong Ceiling & Wall Solutions*



1 877 276-7876  
[armstrongceilings.com/livinglab](http://armstrongceilings.com/livinglab)

## the challenge:

Ensuring a safe and healthy work environment is critical as workers return to all types of indoor commercial spaces. The confidence of knowing systems and facilities have been implemented or upgraded to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and other airborne pathogens is paramount to increasing a sense of occupant well-being before the return of many to their traditional workplaces. As a result, a critical part of re-entry is assurance that employers are providing a safe, healthy indoor environment to meet occupants' ongoing needs not just now but also for the long term.

## the solution:

To demonstrate how a workplace of the future can function, Armstrong Ceiling & Wall Solutions recently opened its Living Lab, a renovated 10,000-square-foot workplace on its corporate campus. Created in partnership with architectural firm Gensler, the fully-equipped office space is designed with optimal acoustics, lighting, cleanliness, comfort, and exceptional air quality in mind. Armstrong employees work in the space, providing feedback on a variety of individual and collaborative areas. In addition, Armstrong sales representatives bring architects, designers, building owners, and facility managers to tour the space.

According to Gensler Senior Associate Stephen Freret, the Living Lab is intended to be a testing ground and push the limits of innovation to a future workplace model that embodies a "healthy spaces" philosophy, which is built on four key design strategies:

- Elevate wellness and sustainability in the employee experience
- Create a "wow" factor that delivers premium customer and employee experiences
- Optimize for workplace flexibility and digitalization to innovate faster
- Foster connection to community

*(Continues on second page)*

He also notes that “bringing the outdoors in” was an important theme. “At Gensler we believe one of the keys to a healthier and happier work experience is access to green spaces and the ability to easily access outdoor environments,” Freret states. “In the Living Lab, we designed the space to immediately put this design strategy front and center.” Biophilic design elements in the Lab include numerous hanging plants, plenty of natural light, warm wood tones, and deep, earthy colors.

Once inside the Living Lab, the first element employees and visitors encounter is a large 5' x 20' wall-mounted dashboard that displays detailed information about the Lab's indoor environmental quality. Building metrics displayed include real-time air quality, carbon dioxide level, humidity, temperature, and other biomechanical data. The intent is to assure occupants they can feel confident in their surroundings while working in the space.

## Eight Distinct Areas

The Living Lab itself houses eight distinct areas. They include:

- Main entrance – features touchless entry, sanitizer and a temperature scanning kiosk
- Work lounge and café – variety of furniture options – anti-microbial hardware and touchless features – plenty of natural light– easy access to outdoor workspace
- 24 open office workstations – back-to-back or pinwheel configurations – sit to stand ability – 6-foot spacing for safety and privacy – natural light from windows
- Ideation area – collaboration space – features integrated technology capabilities
- Maker's Space – hands-on space – designed to allow teams to work on new products
- Huddle spaces and focus rooms – flexible mixture of collaborative and individually focused work settings – integrated ceiling and wall solutions in each
- Conference rooms – one large, one small – integrated technology in both
- Outdoor working space – complete with furniture, power, and Wi-Fi

A myriad of ceiling and wall products from the Armstrong portfolio are installed throughout the space to reassure building occupants are surrounded by materials and systems that work 24/7 to keep them safer and healthier. They include both AirAssure™ ceilings and VidaShield UV24™ air purification systems to maintain air quality, Total Acoustics® ceilings to provide the best combination of sound absorbing and sound blocking properties, and ceilings from the Sustain® portfolio to meet the highest sustainability standards in the industry today.

The Armstrong and Gensler teams also leveraged a change management process to engage stakeholders and to obtain real-time feedback that facilitates a smooth transition to a new way of working. Looking into the future, change management programs will be considered to enable forward thinking spaces, like the Living Lab, to optimize employees' experiences.

Upon completion, the Living Lab earned a WELL™ Health-Safety Rating Certification seal from the International WELL Building Institute™. The certification provides a framework for organizations to prepare for a safer and healthier future. It also earned an Air Quality Recognition Award from HVAC provider, Trane®, for its clean air.

