

WD Partners Case Study

Whole Foods

17 December 2014

Web version (summary): <http://www.wdpartners.com/work/whole-foods/>

FRONT Side: Quick-hit summary/overview

Whole Foods

A Relationship Built Organically

Whole Foods' partnership with WD has provided the renowned specialty grocer with a single source for services and disciplines, drawing upon our technical and creative expertise as we tie the essence of its brand into our work.

Business Challenge

Whole Foods is, in many ways, the quintessential specialty retailer. Going well beyond local sourcing and sustainable business practices, WF uniquely tailors its stores to local environments, demographics and tastes. Very regionalized, WF divisions operate differently as managers are given lots of leeway in decision-making. Over our 8-year relationship, beginning with architecture and engineering support, WD has addressed multi-faceted WF business needs by bringing the full breadth of our capabilities to the relationship.

Driving Strategy

Starting with a single store in Chicago, WD provided architectural services (exterior design) and engineering, then supported WF through the entire development process – coordinating work with construction contractors, landlords and other stakeholders. Based on that initial success, we then became engaged in additional projects including store design, fixture plans, back-of-house design, commissary layouts and more. We soon moved into full shell design and exterior work as the business relationship grew into ever wider-ranging work.

Ongoing Highlights

- Provided shell documentation, entitlements, store planning, construction estimates, and post-documentation services.
- Showed Whole Foods ways to control building costs while still providing appropriately localized design.
- Created design standards and helped map an ideal global development process.
- In-house A/E, structural, and entitlements team reduces late-stage design changes.
- Single point of contact speeds the development cycle, especially in regional rollouts which could otherwise be slow.

WD Services:

- Program Management
- Implementation Support
- Design
- Sourcing
- Planning
- Documentation

Brand Footer:

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REVERSE Side: More Detailed Story

WD Partners has drawn on its wide array of disciplines to bring critical value to Whole Foods' decentralized strategy and venerable brand.

From its sumptuous displays of organic goodness in every aisle and department to its deliberately sustainable stances on sourcing and corporate citizenship, Whole Foods (WF) has become a beloved brand to everyone from socially conscious shoppers to foodies who want only the best ingredients for home-prepared meals. For the past eight years, WD Partners has worked alongside WF with carefully thought-out design inside and out, as well as high-level strategy to extend its appeal even more.

A growing relationship

Beginning with one store in Chicago, WD provided the typical architectural and engineering services (our legacy business), designing a fresh and unique store exterior. From there, the partnership grew and evolved into work on unique layouts and product assortments for many stores across the country. Decentralized as its operational structure is, WF uses no standard prototype sets, so each store design is relatively distinct. We have supported WF through the entire development process – coordinated with construction contractors, landlords and other relevant parties.

As our rapport with the WF team grew, we got engaged earlier in the process on additional projects—store designs, fixture plans, Operations and Engineering for back-of-house design, commissary layouts, and more—ultimately moving into full shell design and exterior work. Not merely conceptual, this has almost always been work that would be developed. All along, we've maintained a vital focus on the Whole Foods brand, which ties it all together.

...And a growing footprint

Our work with Whole Foods eventually brought us to California, where our San Francisco team has been involved in high-level strategic design initiatives. There we've qualified sites for development, facilitated due diligence and supported A&E work. In Detroit's Midtown neighborhood – an urban market considerably underserved by grocers in general, let alone healthy options – we did a complete exterior design, interior store planning, and construction

administration package. Even as WF's smallest footprint in the Midwest, this store has won awards for its design. Then in downtown Minneapolis we developed a multi-level store that garnered lots of local excitement, occupying a site repurposed for mixed use and serving as the anchor of a 286-unit apartment building. In each new region and every specific project, we've had an impact that's felt in the front-of-store customer experience.

It keeps getting better...

Our relationship has provided Whole Foods with a single source of services and disciplines needed for a successful rollout in any new region: comprehensive design, including building shell and A&E, planned and executed with attention to detail. WF quickly saw the benefits of the integration of our technical and creative expertise into the strategy it was pursuing. WD's newly acquired décor and fixture fabricator, which had a legacy partnership with WF, has continued to design and procure the materials which touch many of the stores.

Talk to WD Partners today.

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