

hatching new ideas:

A new meeting space is breaking out of its shell in the St. Louis suburb of Maplewood.

Hatch opened its doors in April to a range of meeting and event clients, including companies needing off-site space for focus groups and brainstorming sessions. The venue is geared specifically for organizations that need private space combined with a host of technological amenities. Hatch is conveniently located in Maplewood with easy access to Highways 40/64 and 44, and offers free parking in adjacent lots.

Co-owner and president Joe Kromer says Hatch can accommodate groups from 10 people to 204 people. The first floor is set up for focus and research groups and can accommodate two groups of up to 14, boardroom style. The second floor houses two large "brainstorming rooms" which are easily divisible by a retractable wall and can each accommodate groups of up to 30. Large windows offer the perfect fall setting as attendees share ideas while they lounge 'living room' style. The multipurpose room on third floor can host large meetings and training sessions, or can be dressed to the nines for private holiday and cocktail parties.

The space is equipped to handle the highest level of clients' technological needs. Hatch rooms offer digital projection screens and projectors; large plasma televisions; cable TV; DVD/VCR equipment; MAC mini computers, ceiling mounted microphones and speakers; MP3, CD and cassette tape recording capabilities; surround sound; even a handheld "audience response system" that can capture and analyze attendees' survey data. All rooms have secure wireless Internet access so the space is ideal for anyone who needs a place to stop in and conveniently connect. All rooms have been engineered (including HVAC) to be soundproof to protect clients' privacy, and each meeting room has its own unique wireless Internet access password.

Hatch has space ideally suited to product testing, mock trials, depositions and other meetings that require confidentiality in a comfortable setting. Consumer feedback groups can use the venue for taste-testing programs as Hatch



offers an all new, Grade A certified, full stainless-steel industrial kitchen equipped with multiple convection ovens, deep fryers, and a range of other equipment. The industrial research kitchen is ideal for clients who want to bring in their own catering suppliers, conduct food trials, or host team building cooking classes; gourmet chef services also are available on-site. With easy elevator access, hot and fresh plates arrive precisely on time to ensure all clients are satisfied.

"The Hatch space functions well for high-level executive teams looking for an off-site meeting space to discuss company strategy," Kromer says. Many are inspired by the renovated former school building's architectural character; it's on the National Register of Historic Places. The Hatch space has a lovely tree-lined yard area that can also accommodate anything from team-building badminton tournaments, to wedding receptions under a decorated candle-lit banquet tent.

The Hatch staff has a combined total of over 30 years of meeting/hospitality experience to help guide client events and ensure every detail runs smoothly. Meeting rooms are corporate, casual, and comfortable, with beverage- and snack-stocked refrigerators as well as ice and coffee makers.

"We are seeing an increase in calls as the Highway 40 challenge approaches, so it is confirmation people are looking for convenient and well-equipped space. Maplewood also has many great restaurants within walking distance, for clients who want to plan a happy hour or dinner after their meetings," Kromer says.

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