



Cara
Vaughan, Ontario



Cara Operations is the largest operator of full-service restaurants in Canada and the country's leading caterer for the travel industry. Founded in 1883, Cara has seen many changes in the workplace. Their new headquarters in Vaughan, Ontario is designed to propel the company into yet another century.

A year-and-a-half before the building was even out of the ground Theo West-Parks of Westparks+Associates joined the architects and engineers as a prime consultant on the project. "We wanted to develop an energy in the space that would make, particularly the younger staff, enthused about the brand," she explains.

The integration between built-out architecture and the product itself was just outstanding.



The 80,000 square foot main floor space contains a reflecting pool, skylights and coffee bars. Transparency is the key for the building's look, feel and operations. From executives working with their teams to visitors touring the food testing kitchens, light and glass make it work. Much of that glass comes in DIRTT Glass Walls. "The integration between the built-out architecture and DIRTT was just outstanding," says Ms. West-Parks. Previously her firm worked with other movable and glass walls in similar conditions, but they were disappointing in their details. "I was impressed with the way the DIRTT Walls installed and how well they are thought through," she says. "In the executive area there is a lounge where we used DIRTT Walls with 3Form. It exceeded our expectations as far as look, finishing and quality."

Before the project began Ms. West-Parks took advantage of the 3D flythrough capabilities of ICE® software to help show the space to the client decision team. "They were very excited by the visuals." The intelligence of ICE also meant the DIRTT Walls were made to the exact specifications of the building's dimensions. "There was a lot of interior/exterior work happening at the same time," she explains. "There could have been issues in that something wouldn't match the specs – but it all went fine."

It went more than 'fine.' Westparks+Associates won the 2009 ARIDO Award of Merit (one of Canada's highest interior design honors) for their work on the Cara project.