

*The time had come for a paradigm shift in the way organizations were structured and in the way the physical spaces of organizations were designed. But then came World War II, and the hierarchy not only prevailed, it joined the military.*

advertise their vision and confidence, and share their uniquely American exuberance. Corporate America looked to the architectural and design communities for their new image. It would be architects and designers associated with the Bauhaus in Germany who would make that image reality.

Founded by Walter Gropius at the end of World War I, the Bauhaus, or “building house,” was conceived not only as a school but as an artistic utopia that brought together artists, craftspeople, and workers. Its emphasis was on theory as well as application. Its goal, as Gropius stated in his 1919 prospectus, was “to unify all disciplines of practical arts as inseparable components of a new architecture.” The Bauhaus, which could trace its roots to the Arts and Crafts movement in England and the Wiener Werkstatte in Austria, sought to humanize technology. Its curriculum taught the spectrum of arts and crafts, including planning and building; weaving; photography; the visual arts, including woodcarving, metalsmithing, and ceramics; and advertising and graphic design.

The members of the Bauhaus included the painters Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky; the architect Mies van der Rohe; the designers Josef Albers, Herbert Bayer, Marcel Breuer, and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy; and many others. During little more than a decade, from 1919 to 1933, they produced works that have become icons of modernism. Bauhaus supporters included Albert Einstein, Arnold Schoenberg, and Marc Chagall.

After a post-World War I economic boom, the German economy deteriorated precipitously. One of the goals of the Bauhaus was to create an orderly worldview from the economic, social, and political chaos that prevailed in Germany between the two world wars. The Bauhaus was committed to giving its students “integrated personalities,” to educating them in contemporary culture as well as artistic theory and technique. Bauhaus designs combined technological expertise with the school’s philosophy of egalitarianism and dynamism.

The Bauhaus, however, existed in a climate of ascendant fascism. First located in Weimar, the school moved from there to Dessau and finally, in 1932, to Berlin, where it stayed for less than a year. The Bauhaus closed voluntarily in 1933, unwilling to accede to the conditions of Hitler’s German Reich, now firmly in power. Many of the Bauhaus masters fled to America. In 1937 Walter Gropius took a position at Harvard, where he was later joined by Marcel Breuer. Mies van der Rohe settled in Chicago in 1938 and became