

Empowering the 0-to-1 Journey: Designing for Innovation at IIMA Ventures

For a startup founder, the typical workday is anything but predictable. Building a company from the ground up requires individuals to constantly shift gears, moving rapidly from deep, focused problem-solving to highly collaborative brainstorming.

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“At IIMA Ventures we partner with entrepreneurs in their 0 to 1 journey by providing capital, coaching, connect, and community. As a founder, your role changes every hour. Sometimes you are stuck with some critical thinking or financial modeling and sometimes you require a very collaborative approach.”

VIPUL PATEL | Partner, IIMA Ventures

To support these dynamic shifts, IIMA Ventures recognized that their incubated teams needed an environment as agile as they are. They partnered with Steelcase to design a workspace that could seamlessly transition to meet the ever-changing demands of early-stage entrepreneurship.

Designing for “Morphability” and Rapid Scaling

When designing for startups, one of the most critical challenges is anticipating growth. Incubated teams often start with just a few individuals with a bright idea, but they need the infrastructure to seamlessly scale into larger organizations.

“We had to look at spaces where people can scale from a small team to a larger team. Entire infrastructure had to be morphable.”

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Because these young entrepreneurs are constantly presenting, pitching, and tinkering, a standard office layout simply wouldn't suffice. The solution required orchestration spaces and maker labs where ideas could be physically brought to life. Visually, this is manifested in the campus's sweeping, tiered wooden amphitheater seating, which acts as an impromptu gathering space where founders can casually work on laptops or assemble for larger town-hall-style meetings.

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A Palette of Choice and Control

To translate this need for extreme flexibility into a physical reality, the design team leaned into the philosophy that the environment should empower its users, rather than restrict them.

“We strongly believe space can shape behavior, and we feel the strongest tool to make that happen is giving a palette of choice and palette of control.”

TIRTHANKAR BASU | Managing Director, India & SAARC, Steelcase Inc.

By utilizing highly adaptable, movable furniture—particularly in the Venture Lab—teams are given the freedom to completely orchestrate their surroundings. Desks equipped with casters can be instantly reconfigured from traditional classroom rows into tight, collaborative pods.

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This flexibility means there are no restrictions on how the space is used. Whether it’s a day dedicated to founder training, intensive coaching, or open ideation, the physical setup facilitates the exact type of conversation needed in that specific moment.

“The movable furniture products by Steelcase used in the venture lab gives full flexibility to the users to plan the activity their way.”

Balancing High Energy with Deep Focus

Beyond mere functionality, IIMA Ventures recognized a deeper purpose: utilizing physical space as an enabler to forge the culture of these newly formed companies.

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The environment was meticulously designed to harness natural sunlight from all sides, creating a high-energy atmosphere. Floor-to-ceiling glass walls illuminate the sleek concrete architecture, while vibrant red acoustic privacy pods are stationed strategically throughout the floorplan. These pods provide founders with an immediate sanctuary for confidential investor calls or heads-down financial modeling, ensuring a perfect balance of privacy, focus, and collaboration.

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For young talents to decide where to dedicate their careers, the quality of the physical workplace serves as a powerful signal of stability and ambition.

“Quality of the workspace matters a lot when someone is trying to decide their career, and occupying a space like this which has been furnished by Steelcase gives the confidence in the team that we’re here for the long run.”

ACHINTYAA TEWARI | Board Director, Lead, Piersight

Today, the boardrooms, bidding rooms, and the highly active Venture Lab at IIMA Ventures stand as a testament to the power of intentional design. By providing a world-class infrastructure that balances architectural openness with modular agility, IIMA Ventures isn’t just fitting out a space—they are building the foundation for the next generation of industry-defining companies.

Watch the Video:

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