



## Ramski & Company

# 'Integrate and Value-Add'

*Ramski & Company says good design and happy clients are its measure of success.* **BY LIBBY JOHN**

Jennifer Ramski has always taken a conservative approach to her company – Ramski & Company – since founding it in 1989. In today's market, that approach has definitely paid off for the four-person firm. "In these times, we're happy that we're small," she says. "I'm very cautious and I consider work an extension of my personal life.

"Everyone here is important," she stresses. "We take care of people here. And, we enjoy the flexibility of being small. There is no bureaucracy or red tape. We celebrate our independence and flexibility."

Ramski & Company is a commercial interior design firm. Approximately 75 percent of its projects are performed with architectural partners. "When we partner, we strive to integrate and value-add," she says. "We enjoy the variety of projects our partners bring us."

On many projects, Ramski & Company is the prime design discipline. The firm especially enjoys design detailing and construction administration, she says, and strives to take lessons learned from each project to the next. "That makes us more qualified and special in our market," she explains.

Being small hasn't stopped the company from establishing a strong customer base. "We treat our clients, teammates and industry partners the way we would like to be treated," she states.

Performing a variety of projects allows the company to consistently bring a fresh perspective. "Design is supposed to be about creativity," Ramski says. "Our projects don't have a signature look. They look like our clients, what they need and what they want, only better."

### GAINESVILLE REGIONAL UTILITIES

By late 2010, Ramski & Company is scheduled to complete the Gainesville Regional Utilities Eastside Operations Center in Gainesville, Fla.,



A commercial interior design firm, 75 percent of Ramski & Company's projects are performed with architectural partners to ensure value-added services, it says.



### Company Profile

#### Ramski & Company

[www.ramskico.com](http://www.ramskico.com)

- **Headquarters:** Orlando, Fla.
- **Employees:** 4
- **Service:** Interior design
- **Jennifer Ramski, principal, IIDA:** "Our projects don't have a signature look. They look like our clients; what they need and what they want, only better."

which will consolidate several locations and services of the utility provider. The eight-building, 210,400-square-foot project will include maintenance operations, administrative offices, a training facility and warehouses on a single campus. The project breakdown is as follows:

- Buildings 1 to 3 - office/utility, 37,000 square feet each
- Building 4 - chiller plant, 3,500 square feet
- Building 5 - materials and storage, 45,500 square feet
- Building 6 - Apparatus/Shops, 7,200 square feet
- Building 7 - safety and training, 14,000 square feet
- Building 8 - control center, 29,200 square feet

Bentley Architects + Engineers has crafted the eight-building campus and integrated the architecture into wetlands. Ramski & Company is charged with integrating interior design and working with the client to program, select, specify and install the furniture program.

The project is striving for LEED silver certification, she adds. Sustainable and performance

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## High Standards

Ramski obtained a bachelor of design degree from the University of Florida College of Design, Construction and Planning, and passed the National Council for Interior Design Qualification upon eligibility. She was involved in crafting the Florida Interior Design Practice Act and among the first 25 licensed interior designers in Florida. She is an advocate for the quality practice of interior design and strives to uphold the highest professional standards in her studio.

"The work we do requires education and continuing education, experience-based knowledge of the built environment, and adherence to regulations," she says. "It is as much about increased functionality, safety and value as it is about aesthetics. It is a young, formative and exciting profession and I enjoy it every day."

highlights include taking advantage of the southern exposure by filtering natural light into the building through light reflectors and deflectors.

Among other project highlights:

- The façade of the building is accentuated with large swooping overhangs to accommo-

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date shading of pedestrian circulation. Much of the building's lighting is natural and automatic dimmers can be used to reduce energy.

- Glass is used to divide office functions whenever possible to provide views to the exterior and filter natural light even to the core of the building.
- Water usage is reduced by use of harvested rainwater from the roof. Water is stored in open water features outside the building for use in the evaporative cooling system.
- Water is also conserved by using treated storm water runoff, which is stored in natural ponds, for landscape irrigation.
- Solar electric power will be generated on-site over roof areas.
- A green roof will be featured for prominence and will serve as an educational tool.
- In addition, all of the furnishings and finishes will contribute to an enhanced indoor atmosphere with low emissions and by opti-



**ABOVE:** Ramski & Company worked on Matthias & Matthias law offices in Winter Park, Fla. The 3,000-square-foot space features beautifully detailed mahogany casework.

**BELOW:** The Matthias & Matthias project also featured columns, paneling and beams that soar 20-feet high. The clients sought a quality interior that reflects their quality services.

mizing pre-consumer and post-consumer recycled content.

### GIVING BACK

Some of the company's most memorable projects and efforts have been for its favorite charities. Ramski & Company has performed projects for the Boggy Creek Gang Camp, Ronald McDonald House and the Coalition for the Homeless Women's Residential and Counseling Center. The group finds a great deal of pleasure in joining its design partners and participating in local events to promote local food banks, Boys' and Girls' clubs, the Ovarian Cancer Alliance, United Cerebral Palsy and Beta House. "Nothing feels better than finding a great opportunity to give back," she says.

One of the studio's favorite projects is an 11,476-square-foot theater for the Boggy Creek Gang Camp in Cassia, Fla. The camp, founded by Paul Newman and General Norman Schwarzkopf, is designed for children with chronic and life-threat-

## Project Highlights

Some of Ramski & Company's notable projects are:

- Lockheed Martin Lake Underhill facility, a 14,000-square-foot renovation in Orlando, Fla. - The project focuses on the renovation of a 4,000-square-foot lobby/reception area with conference space, auditorium and restrooms, as well as a 10,000-square-foot renovation for the central campus communication corridor and public restrooms.
- Greater Orlando Aviation Authority, an 18,000-square-foot facility in Orlando - The main focus of this project was the lobby/boardroom, where the aviation authority wanted to optimize a working atmosphere and maintain intimacy between the board and its guests through the design of the space and the application of state-of-the-art technology. The project was performed with Schenkel Shultz Architecture and was the recipient of an IIDA Forum Design Award.
- Juan & Only's Cantina and Jail, WDW Dolphin Hotel, a 4,500-square-foot restaurant renovation project in Buena Vista, Fla. - The company converted the Michael Graves Italian restaurant within four weeks by working closely with the hotel project team and local artists. The restaurant featured hand painted finishes and prominent iron work.
- Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing, Florida Atlantic University. This new 75,000-square-foot LEED gold facility features low emitting materials and finishes. Ninety six percent of furnishings and 100 percent of fabrics were GREENGUARD certified and earned the project an innovation point.
- Matthias & Matthias law offices in Winter Park, Fla. - This 3,000-square-foot office features beautifully detailed mahogany casework, columns, paneling, and beams in soaring 20-foot high spaces. The clients sought a quality interior reflecting their quality services and the entire team was proud of the resulting interior.



ening illnesses. The state-of-the-art theater can accommodate 156 guests and 12 wheelchair guests. It was completed in partnership with Morris Architects and Universal Studios Florida, and was awarded the International Interior Design Association (IIDA) Forum Design Award. "The theater was completely accessible," she says. "Every camper can go anywhere and enjoy activities."

All the design partners donated their time to complete the project, which took about a year, she adds. "It was not a typical project," she says. "It was far more gratifying."

Ramski also participates in the local chapter of IIDA and USGBC events and sits on university and college advisory boards for interior design program evaluation.

### GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Ramski says she is proud of the talents of her staff, and recognizes the importance of teaching and mentoring, as well as the importance of

learning and being mentored in return. "As a senior designer in our office, I am happy to mentor and trust the talent of our junior staff members," she says. "And, I have been surprised by what my team members have been able to teach me. This is good for the entire team and that is why having room for junior staff will be so important over the next 10 years."

The company is focused on providing personal growth for each of its employees, she says. "Our flexibility affords us unique opportunities," she says. "We hope to invest in everyone's continuing education and offer people opportunities to step up and grow."

Ramski feels the ideal studio might have seven or eight staff members. "I've always liked the small studio atmosphere," she says. "People always say, 'I hear good things about you,' and that's a great way to start any conversation," she says. "I'm also proud that we have fun at work." 🌱

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