

# Turning Vision Into Reality

Keewaydin listened to National City Bank's vision - then delivered an innovative, cost-effective space solution. The start-to-finish relocation met all three expectations; quality, cost and time.

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David Andreas  
President and CEO  
National City Bank



*Don Kjonaas, Senior VP, Operations  
David Andreas, President and CEO*

**N**ational City Bank President and CEO David Andreas had a vision for banking in the 21st Century ... a bank with a focus on state-of-the-art technology and user-friendly customer service. But the sixth largest bank in Minnesota faced a major roadblock: the physical space in the building which carried its name was old and tired and could not fulfill the vision.

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Facing a challenge unlike they had faced at any time in the recent past, National City Bank turned to The Keewaydin Group, a Minneapolis based real estate consulting firm, for a solution. And Keewaydin turned National City Bank's vision into reality... a five floor, 100,000 square foot bank, including all of the Bank's headquarters needs, in the center of a downtown Minneapolis shopping complex.

# B U S I N E S S P R O F I L E

When Bank executives started the process, they had one question: “Is it possible to find space in downtown Minneapolis to fulfill our vision?”

“My first job was to hire the experts,” explains Don Kjonaas, Senior Vice President of Operations, who selected The Keewaydin Group. “The kinds of clients they were doing business with told me they were more than just a real estate brokerage firm,” Kjonaas says, “I knew I would be getting the whole team -- from site selection and lease negotiation to relocation project management. They could take us from beginning to end.”

From the start, Kjonaas realized that they wanted something very different. “Keewaydin picked up quickly on our vision and stayed with it. They became real leaders on the team when we started looking at different options.”

Keewaydin saw that the Bank’s vision demanded an innovative, non-traditional space solution. According to Kjonaas, Keewaydin’s creative approach steered the search to places where the Bank “could step far outside of the box” in terms of building types -- from a shopping and entertainment complex along the Mississippi River, to a long-vacated armory building that skirts the City’s central financial district. Kjonaas recalls when the team stood in the armory in ankle-deep water and visualized how the Bank could occupy one end of the building and develop the other end into an indoor, community park. “Keewaydin left no stones unturned,” he says. “They certainly were willing to take a risk. They dared to be different.”

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## Gaviidae Common - The Perfect Solution

Gaviidae Common is an upscale five story shopping complex in the center of downtown Minneapolis, anchored by Saks 5th Avenue and Neiman Marcus. When Keewaydin first put the idea of Gaviidae Common on the table, it was almost fully occupied by retail shops. Keewaydin surmised that the shops above the second floor were less than successful and suggested to the landlord that those retailers on the top three floors should be relocated in favor of National City Bank. After initially rejecting the idea of a bank in its upscale retail center, the landlord eventually saw the potential of a win-win deal: National City Bank would bring almost three hundred employees and a new life to the upper floors of the center, and the Bank’s vision of a high tech, visually open, customer-oriented environment seemed to blend well with the first and second level retail shops. The center’s other anchors agreed.



*Interactive Customer Theater*

*Photo Provided by AVW Group, Project Audio Visual Consultant*

# B U S I N E S S P R O F I L E

“Keewaydin helped us to refine, restate and demonstrate the vision in the Gaviidae space even before we knew it was a good idea and what it would look like,” CEO Andreas says, “through their willingness to listen, Keewaydin captured the possibility of Gaviidae by linking our values to something that was possible in the space.”

About Keewaydin’s analysis and advice, Andreas says: “As compared to a traditional real estate company, Keewaydin had no self interest. They understood the depth and complexity of the situation, plus they knew all the players and how to work with our lawyers. I valued the quality of communication the firm brought to the real estate and lease negotiation process.”

According to Andreas, “Using Keewaydin’s analysis to look at the absolute comparables, we found we needed less space at Gaviidae. In the final analysis we got an outstanding deal at far less than it would have cost in any other Class A building alternative.”

The Bank’s attorney confirmed Keewaydin’s value in the process. “I have high regard for the Keewaydin people. I found them to be creative, knowledgeable and relentless in pursuing the best interests of National City Bank during extensive lease negotiations,” says Ed Chanin, Partner at the Minneapolis law firm of Maslon, Edelman, Borman and Brand.



*Interactive Kiosk and Teller Line*

*Photo Provided by AVW Group, Project Audio Visual Consultant*

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## **Keewaydin Keeps Their Commitments: On Time & On Budget**

When the lease was completed the stage was set for realizing the Bank’s vision through design, furnishings and new technology. The move date was scheduled to coincide with the termination of the Bank’s lease, 400 days in advance. Both National City Bank and Keewaydin, now operating as the project manager for all of the Bank’s work within the new space, were determined to make the target date and keep the project on budget.

Andreas recalled one “fateful meeting” which demonstrated the firm’s commitment to stay within the budget and deadline. It also spoke volumes about Keewaydin’s willingness to meet under any circumstance and work as a team with the Bank.

# B U S I N E S S P R O F I L E

The meeting took place in the Minneapolis/St. Paul airport terminal before Andreas and his wife left for an extended, overseas trip. Both Kjonaas and Keewaydin's project manager met with him to make final line-item budget decisions. "We made design choices and eliminated costly items that didn't fit the vision. I trusted Keewaydin's judgment and promise to stay on budget," Andreas said.

"I really couldn't have done this job without Keewaydin," says Kjonaas with a smile, "not only did we pick quality vendors, but Keewaydin built an early reputation for getting the job done among contractors and vendors alike. Keewaydin held them to task. It wasn't a power trip -- the contractors liked and respected the project manager for that. They were tough, but fair."

The project's architect also offered kudos. "Keewaydin was able to synthesize the Bank's vision and goals with the people dynamics", said Jack Boarman, Principal at Boarman Kroos Pfister Rudin & Associates. "They made our job as architects easier because of their focus and level of understanding of the design process."

National City Bank moved into its new space on the date Keewaydin and the Bank set. From leading the extensive site search and developing the first budgets, to negotiating an outstanding business deal, and supervising the physical move on-site, Keewaydin upheld its promise to turn National City Bank's vision into reality.



*The Project Team: (l to r) Terri Smucker, Keewaydin; Peter Kitchak, Keewaydin; David Andreas, National City Bank; Shannon Reilly, Keewaydin; Don Kjonaas, National City Bank*

"We made design choices and eliminated costly items that didn't fit the vision. I trusted Keewaydin's judgement and promise to stay on budget."

As he reflects back over the project, Andreas sums up the bottom line: "Keewaydin maintained cost, quality and time. Normally, people say you can only expect two out of three. We got all three."

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**KEEWAYDIN**  
REAL ESTATE ADVISORS

1922 IDS Center, 80 S Eighth Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
612.341.4422  
Fax: 612.349.6439  
www.keewaydin.com

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