

## Another city won over by Commerce Design Concept Montréal exports concept to Brussels

**Montréal, September 10, 2008** – Montréal Mayor Gérald Tremblay is pleased and proud to announce that the city has signed a memorandum of understanding with Pro Materia and Design September, two design-promotion organizations based in Brussels, to bring the Commerce Design Montréal concept to the Belgian capital.

Brussels is the sixth city worldwide to adopt the concept, following the lead of Trois-Rivières, Québec; Saint-Étienne, Marseille and Lyon, France; and New York City, U.S.A. Drawing inspiration from the benefits of Montréal's experience in terms of the revitalization of commercial arteries, Brussels hopes in turn to improve the quality of its urban living environment, its image and its appeal, by providing a stimulus for creativity and innovation in commercial design. The Commerce Design Brussels contest will reward business owners for the overall quality of the layout of their premises and for highlighting the work of architects and designers. The contest will be officially launched September 23 as part of the "Design September" colloquium organized with the support of the Brussels-Capital Region.

"The expansion and growing reputation of the Commerce Design contest in Europe and the United States is helping to position Montréal as a leader when it comes to strategies for the development and promotion of design," Mayor Tremblay declared. "These knowledge transfers are very beneficial for our city, both in terms of visibility and encouraging networking with other emerging design cities. These exchanges go hand-in-hand with Montréal's recent designation as a UNESCO City of Design. The advent of this new partnership is not only very stimulating for Montréal; it also benefits all of the cities in the Commerce Design network."

For her part, Lise Coirier, Director of Pro Materia, noted: "The replication of the Commerce Design contest in Brussels shows our willingness to proclaim the Belgian capital as a design city on both the local and international levels. The goal of this contest, initiated by my association Pro Materia in collaboration with Design September and with the support of the Brussels-Capital Region, is to enhance the appeal of Brussels. Good design generates added value, which contributes to the economic, urban and social development of the city."

### **An eminently exportable concept!**

Organized by the Ville de Montréal from 1995 to 2004, Commerce Design Montréal sought to persuade Montréal merchants of the benefits of investing in the design quality of their premises with the help of qualified professionals. A further goal was to create a ripple effect and convince owners of other businesses of the benefits of design on their bottom line, and to exert a strategic influence on the revitalization of commercial arteries in the city.

The success of this made-in-Montréal concept received abundant media coverage, and its potential was recognized by other cities, which in 2003 began seeking out Montréal's expertise to set up their own contests inspired by Commerce Design. So far, six cities have followed Montréal's example.

The impact of Commerce Design Montréal was acknowledged in 2002 when the Ville de Montréal received the International Downtown Association's top honour, the Outstanding Achievement Award, for its dynamic, innovative and unifying character. The contest was also named one of 48 best practices worldwide as part of the UN-HABITAT 2006 Dubai International Award for Best Practices to Improve the Living Environment. The award recognizes the excellence of projects that have a positive, sustainable impact on improving the living environment.

In 2006, the Commerce Design Montréal contest evolved into the Créativité Montréal design de commerces contest, run in partnership with the private sector. Winning entries in the contest's third edition will be announced November 6.

For more information about the Commerce Design Brussels contest, visit the website [www.commercedesignbrussels.be](http://www.commercedesignbrussels.be).

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