
Deep Dive *Motorola and Gensler design an ocean-themed learning center.*

In today's competitive world, it's never too early to get a leg up—hence the popularity of brain games for tots. For 'tweens, meanwhile, there's Wannado City, an "edutainment" destination in Sunrise, Florida, which teaches kids stuff without letting them realizing they're learning (lest they demand to spend the \$30 admission price playing Crazy Taxi High Roller at GameWorks, down the street, instead).

Last year, Motorola, which has offices in Sunrise, sized up the theme park and recognized a marketing opportunity. The telecom giant enlisted the architecture firm Gensler to conceive a new attraction for Wannado: the M-Lab. Within *Star Trek*-worthy white molded plastic caverns, Motorola's pint-size future customers are cast as "M-Ventors" who must track and tag a mysterious

maritime species in the waters near the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution on Cape Cod. After a mission debrief by the shadowy "Dr. M," kids gather in pods where they work together, all with their own tasks and personal monitors showing the underwater habitat of the elusive target fish. "We spent a lot of effort on the details," says Russell Banks, head of Gensler's Brand Design Group. "We've got odors that create the smell of the ocean and transducers in the floor that go thud when the lab hits the bottom of the ocean. The experience is very rich."

To ensure that limited attention spans won't keep kids from coming back, Boston-based Imagine Entertainment, with whom Gensler partnered on the game content, has developed M-Lab's software to support alternative game scenarios for future versions. "It might be doctors identifying and destroying a new virus," says Banks. "Nanotechnology instead of oceanography. Or it might be research in space." What it definitely won't be, though, is an ad for cell phones; Motorola hopes that by teaching kids it stands for innovation, they'll fall for the brand hook, line, and sinker. www.gensler.com

— JESSE ASHLOCK



Motorola's new M-Lab
kids' exhibition in
Sunrise, Florida