

delve

APR 2022 V25

**Innovation
Issue**

**Students
Bring New
Thinking
To Storage**

**Mixing it
Up with
CEI Hawaii**

**ENHANCE YOUR SPACE WITH
OFGO STUDIO'S**

**INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR THE
EVOLVING WORKPLACE.**



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contents

APR 2022 V25

EXPLORING INNOVATION
BY SUSAN MULHOLLAND 04

MRL'S PRODUCT ROUND UP
A FEW OF OUR FAVORITES 08

WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR-
BY MICHELLE WARREN 09

ENHANCE YOUR SPACE
BY OFGO STUDIOS 11

INNOVATION
BY BORGIO 14

INNOVATION MEETS EXCELLENCE WITH BODYBILT 16



Susan Mulholland explores the topic of innovation through the lens of a global manufacturing leader.



We highlight six of our favorite products inspired by innovation, currently in the library.

11

ENHANCE YOUR SPACE WITH OFGO STUDIO

COVER STORY:
OFGO STUDIO's
Innovative Solutions for
the Evolving Workplace



contents

APR 2022 V25
continued

CELEBRATING WOMEN IN THE INDUSTRY WITH HIGHTOWER 19

CULTURE OF INNOVATION BY CORIANDER DESIGNS 20

INNOVATION TAKES CENTER STAGE WITH DESKMAKERS 22

STUDENTS BRING NEW THINKING TO STORAGE BY FLEETWOOD 24

INNOVATIVE DESIGNS BY HOMECREST OUTDOOR LIVING..... 26

INNOVATIVE MINDSET WITH HOWE 29

LEARNING IS ALL ABOUT INNOVATION WITH JONTI-CRAFT 31

A STORY OF INNOVATION BY KARTELL 33

MIXING IT UP WITH CEI HAWAII BY MRL STAFF..... 35

MODERNIZATION OF RE-UPHOLSTRY WITH KAY CHESTERFIELD... 37

INNOVATING SUSTAINABLE DESIGN WITH LANDSCAPE FORMS 39

FLEXIBILITY LEADS TO INNOVATION WITH LA-Z-BOY HEALTHCARE.I.KNJJ.COMFORT..... 41

ALTITUDE RESOURCE GROUP REP GROUP FEATURE 43

KEEPING CONNECTED BY MRL STAFF..... 45



Landscape Forms discusses how their commitment to sustainability has led to product innovation.

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editor's note

Dear Reader,

Innovation drives the Contract Furniture Industry, and is key to the continuing evolution of design.

In this issue we examine all aspects of innovation and celebrate the many industry leaders working to innovate the next great solution in Contract Furniture.

We also look at how many companies are working with educational organizations to spur new ideas that will lead to discovering new solutions.

We invite you to dive in, and reach out to those whose stories inspire you!

Enjoy!

Do you have an idea for an article in Delve? We want to hear from you! Send us an email at:

industrynews@myresourcelibrary.com.



**THE
MY RESOURCE LIBRARY
FAMILY**



Join me as I explore the next chapter in commercial furniture manufacturing and workplace design. In this multi part-article series, I will talk with Australian manufacturer [Schiavello](#) as we look at our industry from a global perspective. We will be discussing ideas on Innovation, new ideas on workplace design, craftsmanship, and how these trends will define our industry in the future. This series will culminate in June during NeoCon. This annual tradition in Chicago is when interior designers, manufacturers, and end-users from around the world meet to view new products and share ideas on innovative solutions for all things related to Contract design.

INNOVATION: How One Global Company is Doing Things Differently

Furniture design and production. That is really at the heart of our industry. Interior design, more so than architecture, revolves around furniture. Interior finishes such as flooring, window and wall coverings, textiles, and lighting are also included in the design mix. All of which are produced by manufacturers and craftsmen from all over the globe. From a design and manufacturing sense, our world is forever getting smaller. Especially during the pandemic when we lived through our computers in endless Zoom meetings. Our global economy is built on the notion that it no longer matters where you are in the world; everyone can participate in the conversation.

Our experiences with supply chain issues and the high fuel and labor costs may be slowing down the global market for design. Companies with responsible manufacturing practices are seeking new and innovative ways to bring their products to the global marketplace.

Innovation is the implementation of an idea that results in an improvement on the status quo or directly solves a critical challenge.

For the past fifty-five years, a company based in Melbourne, Australia, has innovated how furniture is manufactured and designed - Schiavello. Schiavello's philosophy on production and most importantly, design, is a bit unorthodox as it starts at the traditional end. This future-focused design philosophy is led by strategic insight from extensive research into how businesses and employees' function, including their behaviors, common goals and problems.



By Susan Mulholland

Susan Mulholland studied interior design at Northern Arizona University and is an NCIDQ certificate holder. She has 30 years of interior design experience in commercial design. Her experience in the industry covers a large variety of projects that focus on workplace, healthcare, and hospitality. Her design studio Mulholland Art & Design Commercial Interiors is in Tucson, Arizona, where she has been helping clients for the past 20 years.

[Connect with Susan Mulholland on her website.](#)

INDUSTRY HOT TOPICS

The end, in this case, means a direct line to the end user. Their process begins with the consumer who will be using their products, whether it be a chair, a desk, or even an entire office space. This innovative approach has been built into their business model from the beginning.

Schiavello is a significant employer and producer of all things related to the built environment throughout Australia. They view their work differently than most global companies as they now expand into the US market. If you think of innovation as providing a solution to an existing problem, then what Schiavello has been doing is truly innovative and different from what most furniture manufacturers do.

Interior designers, in particular, commercial designers, want to set their clients' interior spaces apart. This is especially true if they are identity-driven corporations that want to stand out in their industries. Interiors are part of marketing a brand and become part of that company's identity. If a company's distinct logo, unique color, or even way of working is what they use to sell their business- they will want that to be included in the design of their corporate offices.

Designing a custom piece of furniture to help create that unique brand has always been a challenge for most large manufacturers in the United States. Production lines need to be standardized to be efficient, resulting in most US manufacturers unable to create a custom version of products for their customers.

Changing one thing, no matter how small it is, can disrupt the whole manufacturing process, resulting in delays or even stopping production entirely. This creates long lead times, disruption of distribution, and can even add additional costs to materials needed to create that one-of-a-kind product. This type of "customization" is often referred to as a special order and can come with a hefty price tag. Should this inefficiency be accepted as how things are always done?

For decades Schiavello has been keen on the idea that if you want to create a perfect interior environment, you need to see the environment from the user's eyes. This is what purposeful furniture is and what Schiavello has been dedicated to for over fifty-five years.

How are they able to do that differently than most manufacturers? They understand the process doesn't start with manufacturing. It begins with an idea. When an interior designer starts working with a client, they usually are presented with a set of possibilities. Possibilities are how I think of it because at the beginning of the design process- everything is possible. It may not be feasible or even practical, but it is possible.

Interior designers are innovators. A designer knows that being able to create the impossible sometimes requires ingenuity and creative thinking. I am always happy when I find like-minded manufacturers, builders, and craftspeople who think the same way. When this happens, there is no such thing as impossible or



INDUSTRY HOT TOPICS

too expensive or too long- because the process that is required is already in place-that is innovation at its best. Schiavello has found a way to achieve that by allowing custom orders to be part of their standard offerings. They use previous production of products to kickstart the custom design process. This helps designers create without restraints or fear of going over the client's budget.

Worldwide manufacturers know that if they are to compete in today's marketplace, they need to be able to work within the current conditions that are part of the global economy. Long lead times for production, supply chain issues, and fuel costs are significant obstacles to just-in-time manufacturing, which requires that all the materials are readily available and easy to obtain consistently.

Typical furniture manufacturing in the United States face a disadvantage when most of their raw materials are sourced from overseas. Schiavello has an advantage in Australia, they have long term partnerships with a variety of companies for sourcing materials within the country, they can be better positioned to provide this to their customer base. How will they do replicate that in the US? By being innovative with technology and starting in an intentionally focused way. Their presence in the United States begins controlling the outcome. With resources available directly in-hand, no matter where the order comes in in the

world, Schiavello has the ability to control those resources on their terms and achieve better results for their customer.

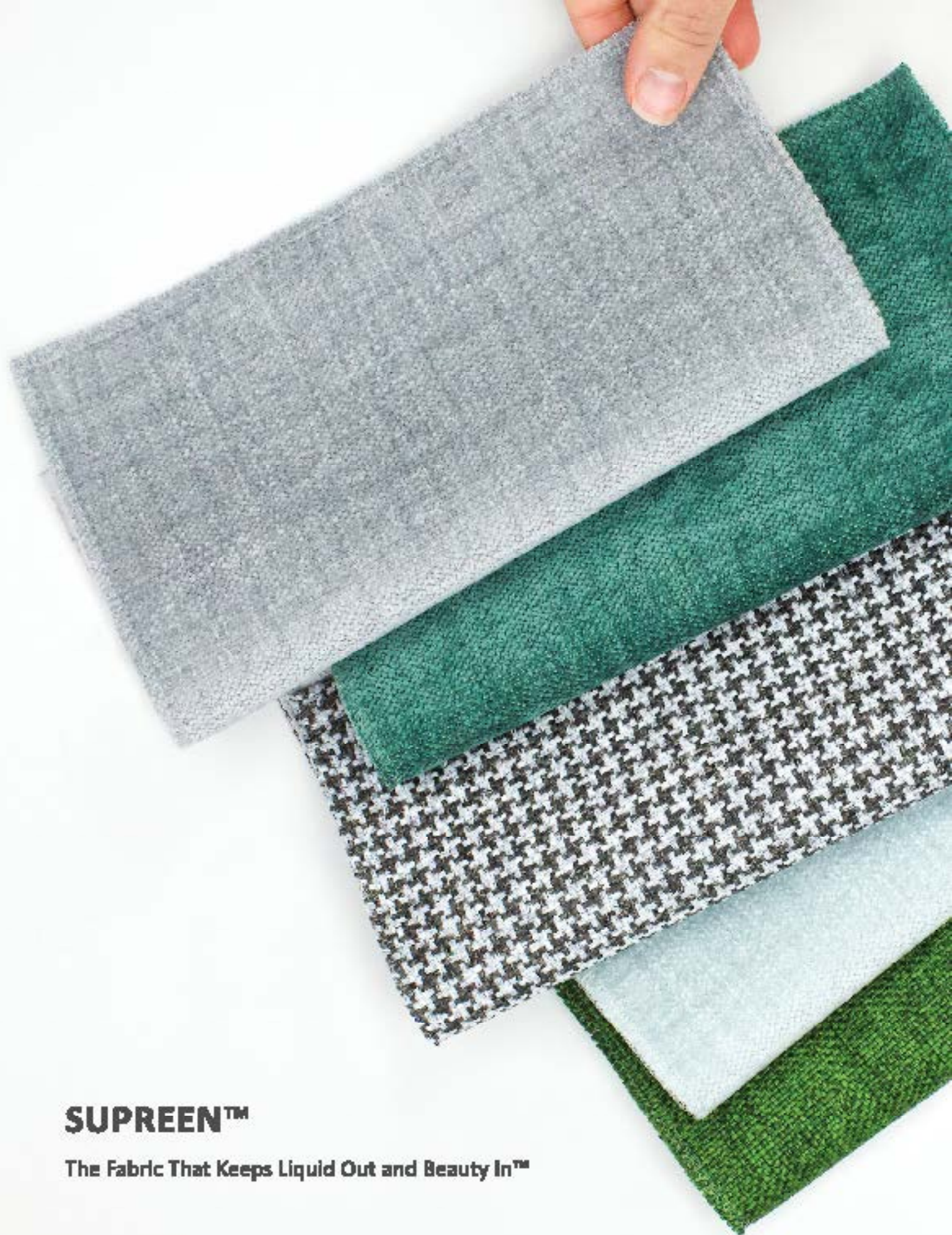
For designers, like me, who rely on manufacturing partners and furniture dealers to provide the products needed to achieve our vision, it is not just a way of doing business or bringing products to market that Schiavello is bringing to the US. Their innovative approach to product design, manufacturing, distribution, and delivery to the customer may not be new to them, but it will be for us- as designers and furniture dealers-this is a new way to bring our ideas and design to our clients.

As we think of what the future holds for our industry, we need to have a mindset that is much like that of Schiavello's - be the solution, show your clients and your competitors that the impossible is possible by looking for alternative ways of approaching the restraints we are facing. The next trend in office design will require manufacturers like Schiavello - who see the next phase as an opportunity to help move our world forward with more flexibility. Embracing our desire to have furniture designs be more selective and unique, we will be able to keep innovating new ways to bring them to an ever-expanding global market. Our future depends on innovative products and the ideas that inspire us to create them.



To learn more about Susan Mulholland, please visit her website at: madciaz.com.

*To learn more about Schiavello, contact **Jeff Thompson**, Executive Vice President North America (614) 402-4958 jthompson@schiaavello.com or visit schiaavello.com/furniture.*



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6 MRL FAVORITE PRODUCTS FROM ACROSS THE LIBRARY

The following products represent 6 of our favorite products currently on My Resource Library. The products are listed in no particular order. Can you guess the theme?

JUMPSEAT® WALL

SEDIA SYSTEMS

The award-winning JumpSeat Wall provides touchdown seating for endless applications where short-term seating is needed but space is limited. The innovative folding mechanism allows the seat to cantilever off the wall, making it ideal for hospital corridors, waiting rooms and more.



STORE

MAGNUSON GROUP

Painted steel workspace utility cart with one fixed shelf, a strap handle for portability, and an optional magazine caddy that can be hung on either side and side shelf. Anthracite Grey strap. Magazine caddy or optional shelf can be a contrasting paint color.



ZOO STOOL

NIENKAMPER

Nienkämper continues to expand its range of innovative library furniture with the introduction of Zoo. A colorful collection of fun-shaped children tables and stools that is scaled to fit the littlest reader. Ideal for libraries, classrooms or public spaces, Zoo will capture the imagination of any kid at heart.



ODIE

GREAT OPENINGS

Please welcome Odie, the latest addition to our portfolio of innovative Personal Storage Companions designed to help you thrive in today's dynamic workplace.

INNOVATION C

SCANDINAVIAN SPACES

Innovation C is a multi-functional chair where the backrest can also be used as a table or workstation. The clean lines in the C-shaped top makes the chair look beautiful in all angles. It invites you to sit in many different ways, of which all are correct.



CONNECT RAILS

LANDSCAPE FORMS

When Landscape Forms set out to develop the first comprehensive and integrated collection of site elements for the streetscape and transit core, it partnered with a world-leading expert. BMW Group Designworks brought to the challenge a deep understanding of the role of public transit in the life of the city.





By Michelle Warren

Michelle Warren is President of Catalyst Consulting Group, a firm specializing in providing strategic solutions to the commercial furniture industry to enhance their sales, positioning, and distribution.

With 25 years of industry experience on the dealer and manufacturer side of the industry, Michelle has been recognized as an innovator in selling to the Federal Government, State/ Local Government, Higher Education and Cooperative Purchasing. Her expertise includes: sales strategies, strategic planning, 3-5 year road mapping, targeted marketing plans, distribution development, hiring reps, and training for reps and/or dealers.

Michelle is known as a “serial networker” in the furniture industry and enjoys meeting people and making connections happen. If you’re interested in connecting - reach out at:

Michelle@strategic-catalyst.com, connect on [LinkedIn](#) or visit www.strategic-catalyst.com to learn more about her work.



**Women In The
Public Sector:
Interview with
Lisa Merder,
Vice President, Workspace Sales
Solutions at OMNIA Partners**

This issue we continue the series of meeting successful women who have built careers in or with a focus on Public Sector. Lisa Merder is well known in the furniture industry and had much success on the manufacturer side building teams and programs for successful public sector initiatives. A little over 5 years ago Lisa left the furniture industry to pursue a career at OMNIA Partners. Today Lisa is the Vice President, Workspace Sales Solutions at OMNIA Partners. She has been my go-to for many years for both federal and cooperative learning.

Michelle: Lisa, we have known each other for a long time, but can you give us some background on how you ended up with a career focusing on Public Sector?

Lisa: Being in public sector for over 20 years has been amazing. When I started, no one knew what a cooperative was and the advantages it has for public agencies. Now, it is very common and growing to non-profits and state adoption. I used to work with the federal government and healthcare agencies and found the purchasing process much easier in public sector.

Michelle: It is funny you say you find it much easier because when I train, I tell salespeople especially those focused on GSA that other salespeople try to make it sound very difficult and different to keep people out of the sector! I am a testament that it is a specialty you can learn in time and there is a lot of need for experts in public sector in furniture. So, when did you know you were going to be spending your career with a public sector focus vs commercial or other vertical?

Lisa: Probably about 10 years ago. When I was asked to make a choice in my supplier role, I felt more aligned with public sector. I also enjoyed working with my community and seeing the renovations and buildings

Michelle: Interesting, I know you were focused on federal government way before 10 years ago so perhaps like me you went kicking and screaming into

INDUSTRY HOT TOPICS

this vertical only to find out it was a good fit for you!! As you look back at your career, what are the key influential people or factors that supported your success?

Lisa: Tammy Rimes MPA, Executive Director of NCPP, National Cooperate Procurement Partners, has been someone I have admired for years. Tammy simplifies the process as she was a buyer in her past life. She can tell a story, with humor, that allows suppliers and procurement to relate to current events that they are dealing with today.

Additionally, National Cooperative Procurement Partners was my influence as well as Marcheta Gillespie, President of NIGP who I met when I was a supplier many years ago. Marcheta is very well known in the public sector space. As she speaks to large groups, her sense of humor, her experience, and the respect she brings to the procurement teams has always motivated me to be able to share very similar experiences as a supplier partner.

Michelle: Tammy is such a great person and so willing to help others. Hoping to have an interview with her coming soon! So, Lisa, we all know the path does not normally go the way we think or plan it to...along the way were there any twists or turns that developed that helped you to learn that you did not anticipate?

Lisa: When I was a supplier partner for so long, I never thought about being an employee of OMNIA Partners. Being on this side of the curtain has allowed me to help other suppliers to be successful. In developing a training program for the supplier partners, I was able to share the success I had with my former company. I have been on many panels talking about best practices and never thought this would be in my future. Now, I am a subject matter expert in the furniture space which allows me to share industries best practices to our agencies and suppliers.

Michelle: As someone who worked for a manufacturer that held an OMNIA Partners contract, I will say you do the best training and education or manufacturers and having you and other people on the OMNIA Partners team that have sold furniture has been so impactful in helping others grow their program. I know there are quite a few women in leadership roles at OMNIA Partners and it appears that Public Sector is

favorable to women in general. How do you see the opportunity for women in Public Sector?

Lisa: I think opportunity for women in Public Sector is favorable, just like other companies. In my world, I was lucky to have opportunities to work with men and women across many companies.

Michelle: What is one piece of advice you have for women wanting to develop a career in Public Sector?

Lisa: I suggest you get engaged because that is how you are going to continue to grow to understand what your opportunities are and not just limit yourself to what you think you know in the world you are working in. Using social media platforms to follow people, agencies and organizations is very helpful. www.omniapartners.com is a great organization to follow.

Michelle: Great advice! I never intended to end up in this vertical, but I am forever grateful for the opportunity and where it has lead me to today! Last two easier questions: what one book would you recommend for a woman pursuing a career in Public Sector and/or what one podcast you would recommend for a woman pursuing a career in Public Sector?

Lisa: The book I would recommend is *Spend Matter*. It is a great publication for public sector. As for podcasts, I do not know of one specifically for public sector I would recommend, but I would encourage your readers to listen to *The Trend Report by Sid Meadows*. He interviews a lot of great people from the furniture industry and gives them the opportunity to tell their story and the story of their companies.

Michelle: Lisa, thank you so much for sharing your story with us. Well, there is another book for me to read! We have both been interviewed by Sid for *The Trend Report* and I could not agree with you more. I love to hear the stories and "meet" people from the industry I do not know in real life.

I hope you are all enjoying this series of interviews. We have some amazing women in our industry and I love sharing the stories of the ones who have pursued careers focused on public sector.



LISA MERDER
Vice President, Workspace Sales Solutions at OMNIA Partners

At OMNIA Partners, we believe in delivering extraordinary experiences within every industry. We can collaborate with you on solutions for our public and private sector members. We believe in the same things you do...reducing administrative burden of time and resources, greater efficiency and economies of scale in acquiring goods and services, and no cost to the members. And, we like to have a little fun along the way. **Connect with Lisa on LinkedIn [HERE](#).**



ENHANCE YOUR SPACE

WITH OFGO STUDIO'S
INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS
FOR THE EVOLVING
WORKPLACE.

COVER STORY OFGO STUDIO



As the workplace continues to evolve, OFGO STUDIO is pushing the boundaries with innovative solutions that foster meaningful spaces. Envision the future of the workplace outside of the classic corporate office; rather as a collective of spaces that are both functional and adaptable. OFGO STUDIO's latest launch, PULSE DIGITAL™, is the perfect solution for the modern workspace, offering a more flexible approach to the utilization of space. PULSE DIGITAL™ is a slim profile electronic lock designed for use on a variety of storage solutions including: lockers, pedestals, filing drawers, desks, and a variety of multi-use cabinets.

How can integrating PULSE DIGITAL™ locks add benefit to your space? The hybrid work model is a solution which many companies are currently exploring and hoteling has become useful in helping to manage and maximize workspace usage. At the same time, while hoteling can offer better management of co-working spaces, it is not the ultimate solution for all job positions or departments which find greater benefit in having their own personalized space. That is the beauty of OFGO STUDIO's newest collection. With the ability to switch between public or private use modes, the PULSE DIGITAL™ lock allows employers to deploy and reconfigure spaces to accommodate numerous types of work environments such as: hoteling, benching, semi-private, or executive space. As the workplace continues to evolve, accommodating an adaptive and flexible workplace environment has increased in relevance as a result of the Covid pandemic. OFGO STUDIO's integrated digital lock solution offers the ability to modify environments to function as either assigned or public use, while at the same time allowing for easy facility manage-

ment via the use of an optional master key. By eliminating the requirement for 'keyed-alike', the specification process becomes simplified and allows employers to easily manage spaces by either user or department, equipped with a programmable code that provides over 1 billion password combinations.

The PULSE DIGITAL™

lock collection is the latest addition to OFGO STUDIO's vision of Premium for All. This innovative vision focuses on taking unique and premium options and making them universally accessible. OFGO STUDIO delivers on this idea not only by offering effective product solutions but also through providing superior construction methodologies, including: INVISA™ edgeband technology, SURFACE+™, Premium TFL and PULSE DIGITAL™. To learn more about these innovative solutions, visit ofgo.com



THE PULSE DIGITAL™



where inspiration is built.

KH Kimball
Hospitality



According to Merriam-Webster, the definition of innovation is: “1-A new idea, method, or device . 2 - The introduction of something new.”

Some individuals may say that in its overuse, the word “innovation” has certainly become a buzzword in today’s society, and therefore, diminishes its meaning. Author Bruce Nussbaum once said, “When people talk about innovation in this decade, they really mean design.” Yes, it may be true that marketers frequently use this word to help advertise products and services and you the reader of this article may be tired of the use of the word, but the truth of the matter is that without real innovation, there is no progress, there is no growth, there is no advancement. Innovation is a creation process that is exceptionally unique and truly revolutionary. Innovation is the act of recognizing a need in the marketplace and developing a concept that meets those needs. Perhaps, we as individuals may need to stop looking at the word “innovation” as a simple fact, but rather as a complex concept of reformulation and integration.

A smart design achieves functionality, a unique design expands the imagination; but, put those two concepts together and you achieve a clever design that is purposeful, significant, and is able to change and adapt according to the needs of a

consumer. Customization makes a great design, truly exceptional. We are told to not go through life with a cookie-cutter approach. Instead, we are encouraged to take risks, to make mistakes, to gain experience, and to give attention to individual differences. That is how the world should approach the conceptualization of a space and the manufacturing process of furniture.

Oftentimes, individuals say, “This sofa would be perfect if...” or “I love the look of this chair, but...” Customers should not have to settle for what they want, that is why Borgio has made it their priority to provide customization options to their clients. From a limitless choice of textile possibilities to dimension alterations, all orders are tailor-made for each customer. Home of two state of the art CNC machines, Borgio looks to control the manufacturing process in house. This offers their customers the quickest lead times and the ability to customize their order to meet their individual needs. When companies offer their clients personalization options, it can only strengthen the business to business relationship.

INNOVATION BY BORGO

The business to business relationship is an integral part of the innovation process. After all, companies innovate their goods and services for the betterment of their customers. Over the last decade, the emergence of technology is at the forefront of the global economy. There is a necessity for companies, organizations, and institutions around the world to integrate technology into their products and services. Educational environments are one of the many institutions that are continuously innovating their systems for greater productivity. Commonly referred to as the Smart Classroom, there is a need to design or renovate new and existing classrooms to integrate technology to foster a better teaching and learning environment. Designers, architects, dealers, and manufacturers are tasked with understanding how common classroom variables, such as sound, temperature, shape, light, color, materials, and furniture, can support modern teaching and learning practices, in order to maximize efficiency, promote the dissemination of information, and encourage memory retention.

With innovation also comes equality. Many companies are revolutionizing the products and services that they offer to their consumers or they are incorporating new ideas into their organizations in order to encourage equal opportunity and access for all. Much of the progress made so far is a direct result of The Americans with Disabilities Act. The Americans with Disabilities Act, also commonly referred to as ADA, is a civil rights law that was implemented in 1990 to prohibit the unjust discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Whilst there is still a very long way to go before we achieve true equality, the more individuals that recognize their part in this social movement, the more progress we can make as a whole on a global scale.

Recognizing the need is the first step to success. Higher educational institutions are beginning to recognize the need for accessibility. For example, individuals with limited mobility, such as those requiring a wheelchair, are oftentimes limited to which areas of the lecture hall they are able to access. Borgo has the privilege to aid these institutions in implementing different accessibility options for the students and staff. While lecture halls built in recent years are designed to include dedicated ADA spots, it is the existing lecture halls that pose a problem of where individuals requiring a wheelchair can sit comfortably and have access to a writing table. One of the products that Borgo has begun to offer to its clients is an adjustable, standalone, fold-away writing table. Standard



writing tablets are typically attached to the arm of a fixed chair. The idea behind this new product is that it offers the institutions the ability to incorporate these compact tables into their existing lecture halls in locations that are easily accessible. It is also important to note that not all wheelchairs are built the same. That is why it is essential that this table is height adjustable, so that the user can customize the height of the table to suit their specific needs. In this case, this product is the evolution of an existing product in order to make a positive and meaningful impact on society.

Society and the ideologies of individuals play a large role in the creation and transformation of innovation. In a world that is technology connected, information can travel quickly and the spread of ideas can be extensive. Whether it be on social media, a documentary, or the latest issue of Delve Magazine, society feels compelled to share their ideas and beliefs and it is this widespread circulation of information that drives our global economy forward. Innovation is developed from a core idea in order to improve on the quality, durability, and/or price of the good or service. It is important to note that innovation is not always successful; but, it is our responsibility to continue to advance our society in hopes of creating a better world for future generations.

This article was written by the team at Borgo. To learn more about them, please click on their logo below:





INNOVATION MEETS EXCELLENCE

BY PHILIP LEYERLE
EDITED BY DAVID FLETCHER, MBA

FOR COMFORT AND QUALITY SEATING

Who is BodyBilt?

At BodyBilt, our passion is making the most comfortable and highest quality products. Our inspired pursuit of this ideal drives us to improve the lives of our customers every day by providing innovative products built to last for many years to come. The people we serve define our processes, which center around constant growth and development of innovative solutions and solving customers' unique ergonomic and comfort needs.

Our approach to innovation began from the company's inception in 1988. The first generation of products was designed based on a NASA commissioned study titled "*The Anthropometric Source Book*." The BodyBilt design focuses on a natural position the human body assumed while asleep in a weightless environment. The study focuses on the open angle between the torso and the thighs at approximately 110 degrees (History, BodyBilt 2022).

Our Experts

The BodyBilt experience delivers a holistic approach to customer service and sales. All sales managers are professionally trained in ergonomics and hold a CEAS Certification (*Certified, Ergonomic Assessment Specialists*). This blended ap-

proach ensures that our customers receive excellent service and give recommendations based on the customer's specific needs. BodyBilt customers can rest assured knowing they have an expert to consult and support them through the entire sales process.

Our Commitment to Environmental Stewardship

BodyBilt is committed to doing its part to help the planet. Our commitment to corporate social responsibility is a core priority organization-wide. Some CSR methods include incorporating recyclable and eco-friendly fabrics, reducing the use of plastic by using soy-based foams, and reducing cardboard for shipping by providing blanket wrapping for shipping seating products.

BodyBilt has recently partnered with Duvaltex to provide CLEAN IMPACT TEXTILES to our customers. These fabrics are a new, industry-first material made from 100% post-consumer recycled polyester. Duvaltex is proud of this Teknit product; the company states they have no waste during the knit manufacturing process. This process helps to reduce the carbon footprint during transport and eliminates waste.

INNOVATION WITH BODYBILT

Tackling the Post-COVID World through Innovation

As we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, we recognize that we need to remain fluid and adaptable to the new changes the world has faced. To help combat COVID-19, we began to offer EPA-registered antimicrobial protection fabric options to help protect our partners and insulate them from risk. Our antimicrobial fabrics make it easy to clean and disinfect against particles and variants. SILVERTEX and ULTRALEATHER PROMESSA offer antimicrobial protections while maintaining BodyBilt's high standard of comfort and quality.

Our 10-Point Posture Control System

The 10-Point Posture Control System gives our customers a wide range of adjustments to alleviate pressure on their spinal column. The system accommodates more people from the 5th percentile to the 95th percentile while promoting the ideal ergonomic and neutral posture.

New Technology for 24-Hour Application Seating

We have designed Pressure-Reducing Seat Contours, which allow for redistributing body weight more evenly on a seat pan. This design focuses on better support for the spinal column, pelvic structure, and improvement of lower body circulation.

BodyBilt continues to innovate by utilizing science and technology as part of our continuous improvement process. Our newer products include innovations like SKYDEX Technology, which reduces peak pressure by 60%, and our cutting-edge air cell lumbar in our mesh back products.

With the launch of our Next24 chair, we became the first chair manufacturer to offer SKYDEX, a patented polymer technology that reduces seated pressure. SKYDEX provides more seated comfort than a traditional ergonomic chair. This technology sustains 24-Hour shifts and increases employee comfort.

The Aircelli 24/7 is one of the first products to implement air-cell technology for lumbar support. The Elastomeric Lumbar Support allows for customizable firmness levels on lower back support to relieve stretched ligaments, muscle fatigue, vertebrae misalignment, and pinched discs.

Chair Arms - Adjustability

A BodyBilt chair is not complete without a set of innovative



armrests. Our 4-way adjustable forearm support relieves shoulder, neck, wrist, and arm strain. Also, we offer 12 different armrest options to ensure that every customer has their unique needs met and accommodated. These 12 interchangeable options demonstrate the ability of our products to be modular and meet the needs of a varying population.

Driven by Commitment

BodyBilt's commitment to our customers is to produce the highest quality ergonomic products. We will never forgo proper fit, design, or function for outward appearance. Our approach to innovation promotes an agile and robust response to even the most complex ergonomic situation. The importance of comfort, modular design, and corporate social responsibility remain at the heart of our mission.



DESIGN-ATLAS

bridging the gap
for interior designers



What's new
since we?



At Design Atlas, we help interior designers create premium content for their built-in database and website.

Discover how we can help you create content for your website and database.

Keep building
your library!



As you create content for the website, our editorial team will review and help you build a content library that will drive sales.

Find out how we can help you build a content library that will drive sales.

How do we
measure it?



At Design Atlas, we help you create content for your website and database. We'll help you track the performance of your content and make adjustments as needed.

Find out how we can help you track the performance of your content.

What if we can't
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CELEBRATING Women IN OUR INDUSTRY

My Resource Library (publisher of Delve magazine) is thrilled to feature inspiring stories and commentary from incredible women in our industry. We are committed to highlighting these stories in an ongoing attempt to shine a light on dynamic women leaders in all aspects of Contract Design. If you'd like to share your story of women in our industry with Delve readers, please send an email to industrynews@myresourcelibrary.com.



Natalie Hartkopf (she/her)
Co-Founder, CEO
Hightower

"Since our founding, Hightower has been a majority women-owned business. In 2021, we shared news about our Women Owned Enterprise certification, official recognition of the work we've done to support diversity throughout our organization. Our women-owned status highlights what makes us unique in our industry; Hightower is a family-founded, US-based furniture manufacturer, and women throughout our organization have played a pivotal role in our success. We're pushing to make even greater strides in gender equality, pay equity, and diversity in our recruiting, hiring, and internal career advancement. As a leader, and as a mom, these are areas I focus on, excited about a more sustainable future, for our industry and beyond.

Environmental sustainability is a related area where we're pushing as Hightower works toward BCorp certification. Hightower teams partner with our Sustainability Manager to ensure specification of healthy products across our portfolio as well as continued improvements in material transparency. From a broader perspective, we're working to help close the gap between manufacturers and the A& D community through education like our CEU program to communicate the importance of specifying healthy products. These are all long-term commitments; we have to stay humble, look for blind spots and be open to the fact that good ideas can come from anywhere."

By Natalie Hartkopf

Learn more about [Hightower](#).





Coriander Designs has been busy these past few years. While many small businesses saw lower sales and were forced to make cuts during the pandemic, Coriander expanded their workforce and acquired a company. "It's all a part of our plan to take over the world." Mark Jacobsen, VP of Business Development, says with a chuckle. All laughs aside, Mr. Jacobsen's words ring true for the mentality of the company's leadership team especially when you consider what they have coming down the pike.

On May 1st the Woodinville based furniture manufacturer will launch a new website and brand direction, and unveil a bold new company vision. Coriander's Vision: "We aspire to be the most innovative domestic commercial Furniture Fabricator in America by 2026." A bold statement indeed, but one backed by a company-wide commitment to innovation and a history of looking to the future.

So how does Coriander Designs plan to build a culture of Innovation? To start, they plan to build on their roots. The company was founded in 1979 by Ken Boudreau, a man who always looked for ways to challenge the factory owner status quo. Unlike most owners, who are obsessed with productiv-

ity and repetitive manufacturing, Ken loved to take on challenging, out-of-the-box projects. Fueled by his passions, he built his factory to be a fusion of classic craftsmanship combined with state-of-the-art machinery. Decades later, Ken's foresight continues to enable Coriander the flexibility to do small innovative hand-crafted projects and large-scale production runs. This approach, combined with an eagerness to satisfy each customer's unique and unconventional desires, has positioned Coriander as a trusted innovation partner of the Pacific Northwest Architectural community for over forty years.

15 years ago, Coriander found new ownership and new opportunities for innovation in Ken's daughter, Carly Boudreau. "My father started Coriander before I was born so you could say I was born into it" she says. Born into it or not, she is definitely born for it as evidenced by the company's accomplishments under her leadership. Under her direction, the Coriander name has become synonymous with large-scale, custom work for projects like multi-floor certified Living Building tenants, tech campus renovations, outfitting an entire cruise ship and creating a technologically-riddled, mixed materials gaming table for Wizards of the Coast.

INNOVATION WITH CORIANDER DESIGNS

Throughout her tenure, Carly has remained loyal to Coriander and Ken's principles of dedicated customer service, employee empowerment and forward thinking as evidenced by the quality work leaving the factory and skilled workers staying. In fact the average employee lifecycle at Coriander is 16.8 years, a stat normally unheard of in the manufacturing industry. A large part of this is based in Carly's leadership approach. "Hire people I know I can trust, and allow them the space, support and opportunity to excel...I love that everyone takes ownership and pride in what they do, and that shows in the products that leave our factory doors."

As mentioned, Carly and Coriander have been busy with much of that work culminating in a forthcoming brand refresh, new website and product launches. The new ventures were in large part due to the recently instituted leadership team. This group of both seasoned and recently hired employees is dedicated to driving Coriander towards its near and long-term goals with the creation of a new vision, company values and tagline.

Coriander's New 2022 Values:

- We aspire to build a culture of innovation.
- We value the power of team and teamwork over individuals
- We seek to help every team member reach their full potential
- We believe in transparency with full accountability
- We are driven by our vision and obsessed with every detail
- We believe our work should strive to be environmentally restorative

Coriander's New Tagline: We bring innovative workplace furniture solutions to life

While the values are new, the culture behind them has always been an important piece of the Coriander way. From the beginning, our factory was built for expansion and flexibility. Over the years, we've remained dedicated to our clients' needs and our employees' growth. And we will always be obsessed with every detail. But putting these beliefs to paper gives them so much more power and reminds us that we can always do better, for us, for our customers and for the planet.



Which brings us to our final innovation building block: environmental responsibility. While Coriander has always offered responsible materials with their Green Series, this past year they began a new initiative to increase their sustainable efforts, including becoming an FSC® certified shop and offering a Tree-for-Table program. Additionally, Coriander's acquisition of Meyer Wells last year has offered further healthier alternatives for conscious-minded clients in addition to beautifully-crafted works of art from wood.

So, how does Coriander Designs plan to expand their culture of innovation? To start, they plan to make good on their vision through a continued commitment to their values, their clients and their employees. They plan to keep the principles that made them who they are close and the ambitions that helped them get where they are today even closer. And then, perhaps they will work towards taking over the world - at least after 2026.

About Coriander: Coriander Designs is a 42-year-old commercial furniture manufacturer with a 44,000 square ft. manufacturing facility located in Woodinville, WA. Coriander is a certified WBE (Women-Owned Business) that differentiates itself through innovative furniture designs and unique custom solutions for the workplace, healthcare, education, and hospitality industries. Our end customers include Microsoft, Amazon, T-Mobile, Google, Facebook, and Hyatt Hotels.

This article was written by the team at Coriander. To learn more about them, please click on their logo below:





INNOVATION TAKES CENTER STAGE AT DESKMAKERS

At the core of DeskMaker's most successful product launches lies innovation. From collaborative design work to creative product solutions, the team at DeskMakers is continually seeking new and better ways to get things done.

When developing new product, it's all-hands on-deck. Everyone is encouraged to provide ideas, ask questions, and offer constructive criticism. We've worked with outside designers on new product and are always thinking of ways to incorporate technology to creatively increase efficiency and improve the lives of our customers. One such product is Ascend.

Characterized by simple, clean lines and thoughtful details with a contemporary look that moves quickly and quietly with end users. The height-adjustable base shroud conceals a large portion of the T-Foot, allowing the column and wires to pass into the base for a clean aesthetic.

The collection is intended to easily coordinate with the entire family of DeskMakers products so it can be mixed and matched while ensuring a sense of design continuity.

"With the introduction of Ascend, we are able to add height-adjustability to some of DeskMaker's most popular casegoods lines, including SPX, Milano and Convergence," said Phil Polishook, CEO of DeskMakers. "The collection gives our customers additional flexibility and functionality with multiple looks and as many configurations possible, while supporting their most important asset: the health and wellness of their people."

Innovation has also led to time and costs-savings within our factory. We've streamlined processes to get product out the door quickly, and into the hands of waiting customers. With supply-chain issues plaguing our industry, the speed at which

INNOVATION WITH DESKMAKERS

we manufacture is of utmost importance. Our VP of Manufacturing, Alan Dean has made strides on our processes and assembly line to shorten lead times and lessen our environmental footprint by minimizing waste wherever possible.

Time-savings is not only important to our factory, but to our daily work as well. Employees at DeskMakers are encouraged to develop not-to-do lists. Team members frequently review processes and procedures and look for ways to simplify our day-to-day work. A core value engrained into each team member's daily routine, employees are taught to think like innovators – a win-win for employee and brand alike.



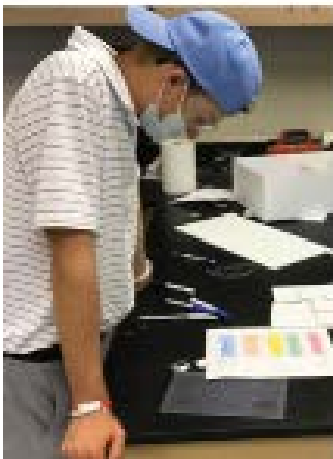
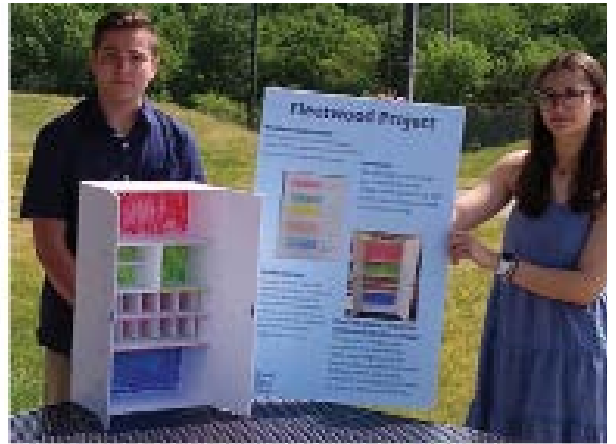
ASCEND

About DeskMakers

Based in Los Angeles, DeskMakers is a leading manufacturer of tables and workstations for private and open plan offices. Offering custom-capabilities and attention to detail, their passion is to enrich the lives of customers by providing them with tailored solutions that meet their design needs. With an endless array of sizes and configurations, in a variety of finish and material options, DeskMakers is recognized as the ultimate source for design-flexibility in office furniture. For more information, visit www.deskmakers.com.

This article was written by the team at Deskmakers. To learn more about them, please click on their logo below:





STUDENTS BRING NEW THINKING TO STORAGE

When you're looking for design inspiration, the best place to start is often the end user. Fleetwood Furniture has discovered there can be great benefit for both sides when students are brought into the process of designing classroom furniture.

Forest Hills Northern High School, just outside Grand Rapids, MI, launched its Project Next in 2018. It's a multi-disciplinary, experience-based program designed to provide additional context to classroom learning. The lead teachers

jumped at the chance to collaborate with professional furniture designers.

"We teach across disciplines and we're always looking for real world connections," says teacher Eric Baird. "Fleetwood agreed to work with us when a lot of other companies were pulling back because of the pandemic. They showed us a standard storage cabinet and invited students to rethink its function and design with particular users in mind."

INNOVATING WITH FLEETWOOD & FOREST HILLS N. HIGH SCHOOL

Students broke into small teams and tackled the project from several angles, including a makerspace and an art teacher's classroom. They did research, brainstormed, built mockups and presented their final concepts to Fleetwood executives over the course of a semester.

"At first glance, it's a standard cabinet and what can you really do to add a wow factor?" says Baird. "But when you apply design thinking and understand the needs of the user, the ideas come fast."

For example:

Different ways to balance security and visibility. Could battery powered LEDs provide lighting to highlight what's stored deep on a shelf? Could doors be made from high-impact, opaque polycarbonate to make it easier to see what's inside?

Varied usage: How can an art teacher use a cabinet for painting supplies this month and pottery supplies next month? Could there be different shelving modules that fit inside the cabinet frame? Could a Siri-like smart speaker help track items borrowed from the cart and not returned?

Through the process, Baird says, students learned a range of 21st-century skills including how to identify and draw out each other's unique talents. "They realized quickly that someone who was great at CAD drawings might not be the best person to build the prototype. They learned to work as a team, and they came to understand the need for reliable documentation in case a team member was sidelined by contact tracing when a key deliverable was due."

Terry Sullivan, Vice President of Sales at Fleetwood, says he was impressed with the students' thinking. "They didn't just come back with wild ideas. They understood the feasibility and the economics, and thought through environmental impact, aesthetics and functionality. From the day we introduced the project to the final presentations, there was a tremendous amount of growth."

The Forest Hills collaboration was not the first time Fleetwood partnered with students on a design project. The previous year, at the innovative Design39Campus in San Diego, Fleetwood and its dealer, Culver-Newlin, brought students and teachers into an intensive two-day design charette.

"We said to the students, let's do the research and actually redesign the teacher presentation cart," says Design39 principal Joe Erpelding. "The hope was to create an experience for the students that supports their passion for design, but also to create a product that would make an impact."

In this case, Fleetwood engineers built a prototype based on student input. You can see more about the project and the reaction to the big reveal in this video.

"Collaborations like these inspire our designers, and inspire the next generation of designers as well," says Sally Swift, VP of Marketing at Fleetwood. "We haven't brought these concepts to market – at least, not yet – but it's such a wonderful opportunity to better understand how our products are being used."

This article was written by the team at Fleetwood. To learn more about them, please click on their logo below:





AIR INFINITI LOUNGE SEATING AND TABLES

INNOVATIVE DESIGNS IN A TREND-DRIVEN MARKET

Outdoor spaces in contract environments have surged in recent years, driven by themes such as biophilia, wellness programs, and workplace amenity spaces. The pandemic has further amplified the importance of outdoor spaces, which will be critical tools to reshape, redefine, and design workplace and hospitality environments of the future. The evolution of outdoor space design will also prompt new product innovations, incorporating materials and design to perform in contract environments.

Innovation is at the core of everything we do at Homecrest Outdoor Living, from our original swivel rocker mechanism in 1956 to our exclusive air collections today. There is no denying that consumers crave new technology in durable and functional designs. The question is how do we as manufacturers continue to satisfy that need?

It all starts with our experienced team of industry veterans.

A thorough understanding of trends and best practices gives us the ability to anticipate consumer desires and develop products that align with their wants. From there, we design and manufacture pieces to our strict quality standards, ensuring comfortable, unique furniture that lasts. Through this process, we have created some of our most popular, revolutionary collections.

Double Layer Sling Technology

One of our most widely used and recognized innovations, our proprietary double layer sling fabric technology offers a comfort experience unlike any other sling seating on the market, as well as enhanced durability. Armed with the knowledge that aesthetics, ease-of-use, and comfort are at the forefront of consumer's minds, we developed this technology to emphasize those features, all without sacrificing the durability that Homecrest is known for.

INNOVATION WITH HOMECREST OUTDOOR LIVING

Rather than the standard single piece of fabric stretched between the chair frame, we use a two-piece fabric design that stretches over internal support rails to ergonomically shape the sling. This not only allows for a more attractive profile, but it also ensures an easy sling replacement process for customers. The double layer sling is field replaceable, so when it comes time to update furniture, they can simply order new slings online and replace the fabric themselves.

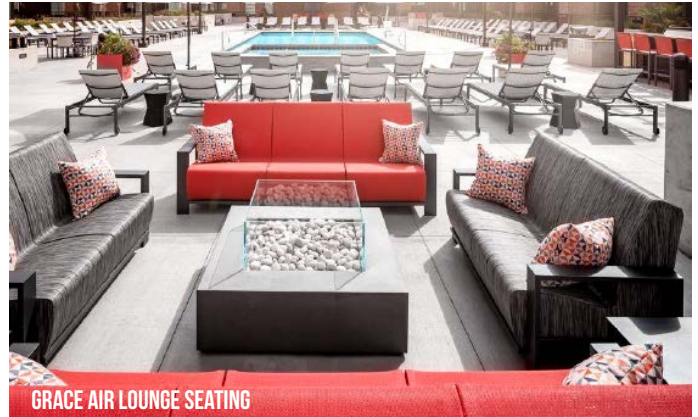
Most importantly, the double layer sling design seamlessly conforms to the body to create a comfortable and ergonomic sit like no other. Though the quick-drying and minimal maintenance benefits of sling furniture often come at the expense of comfort, our double layer sling technology eliminates that compromise. Moreover, our double layer slings and all of their innovative features are protected by an industry-leading warranty.



Air Collections

We took our double layer sling technology and lounge seating to the next level with our foam-free air collections. Combining the appearance of cushioned seats with the low-maintenance and quick-drying benefits of sling seating, we created a cushionless design that has the look and comfort of lounge seating. This innovative design allows rain or pool water to pass through the sling material so the seating will dry exceptionally fast compared to traditional cushions that can take days to dry when water saturates the cushions. Not only does this give customers the aesthetic appeal and luxurious sit that they want, but it also offers those features in a virtually maintenance-free construction.

To start, we formed fabric around a reinforced frame to create a cushioned look. This fabric, our unique Sensation sling offering, incorporates UV-resistant elastomeric yarn into our standard PVC sling fabric for outstanding stretch for comfort



and ergonomics, shape retention to prevent sagging over time, and longevity. Air collections are available only in these double layer Sensation sling fabrics to guarantee the most premium seating experience. Just like our regular sling seating, this fabric is field replaceable to ensure many years of enjoyment.

In addition to the visual appeal and comfort that our air collections offer, their innovative design means they require minimal maintenance. Ideal for both hospitality and commercial spaces, these pieces are constructed to be fast drying and easy to clean. Additionally, the Microban®-infused Sensation sling fabrics are antimicrobial, bleach-cleanable, and mold and mildew resistant. This revolutionary feat is especially beneficial in public spaces, allowing businesses to offer lounge seating that has virtually no drying time and can be easily cleaned between uses.

Natural Series Table Tops

As one of the first furniture suppliers to introduce “Faux Stone” table tops in the 1990s, it was only natural that Homecrest continued exploring the arena of composite materials. Enter our individually crafted Natural Series collections. These table tops feature the beauty of natural wood or stone, but are crafted from engineered composites in a solid surface design, eliminating the weathering concerns intrinsic to natural materials. They come in a variety of molds, from the reclaimed wood look of Timber to the industrial chic style of Concrete. While consumers typically recognize Homecrest for our transitional selections, these tables offer an earthier aesthetic to appeal to those of all tastes and preferences.

Using molds cast from authentic wood and stone materials, our Natural Series collections easily replicate the substances they are modeled after. This gives customers the opportuni

**INNOVATION WITH
HOMECREST OUTDOOR
LIVING**



NATURAL SERIES TIMBER COLLECTION

ty to incorporate these pieces of nature without sacrificing the durability that Homecrest products are known for. Natural wood outdoor tabletops, for example, require annual maintenance such as resealing and are prone to warping and splintering, while natural stone is sensitive to cracking. Comparatively, our Natural Series tabletops require no such annual maintenance, and the engineered solid surface material isn't affected by such weathering effects.

Each table top is individually handcrafted to offer a realistic, artisanal, and unique appearance. It also ensures that no two table tops are exactly alike. They come in a variety of sizes and styles for total customization to any space or environment. In addition, our Natural Series table tops are formed using our revolutionary composite material that offers incredible strength and resistance to scratches, fading, and warping over time. This, combined with our powder-coated aluminum base, means these tables are meant for weather resistance.

While our customer base continues to grow and evolve, we have to be prepared to adapt along with it. From following trends to anticipating needs, innovation is an involved process. At Homecrest, we have a rich history of innovating, and we are proud to continue building that history with better materials, improved processes, and quality products. Not only does it allow us to stand out among the crowd, but it also creates an excellent opportunity to develop customer satisfaction and loyalty.

*This article was written by the team at Homecrest Outdoor Living.
To learn more about them, please click on their logo below:*

HOMECREST™
O U T D O O R L I V I N G



There is no true functionality without constant innovations. It takes more than just creating something new. It takes more than keeping up with current trends.

Innovation must redefine a product or service and establish ideas which create a new value. It is an essential subject concerning the long-term competitiveness of companies.

HOWE has been in the market for nearly 100 years, mainly due to its attitude towards innovative thinking. It is one of the company's values that defines its actions and business decisions. Flexibility is impossible without innovation. Firstly, it is all about getting the function as accurate and precise as possible. Then simple solutions can redefine a way of thinking about the space and furniture, creating a new value for the users by giving them exceptional flexibility and freedom.

Our concept and design philosophy are rooted deeply in the Bauhaus tradition. HOWE's functional furniture solutions are all analyzed and engineered down to the most minute detail. Mobility, stackability, multi-functionality. Everything has a clear purpose and is designed for mass production as well as for individual use. The minimalist aesthetics of the furniture solutions are indeed timeless, democratic, and global.

From our perspective, every room should support and facilitate the ability to think and act freely. While functionality and versatility are fundamental, we also devote considerable effort to creating furniture that will easily blend into any in-

terior design and décor, and thereby enhance the overall architecture and visual ambience.

From a green perspective, space-saving and multi-functional furniture means that the same piece of furniture can be used in a variety of situations. Consequently, fewer pieces of furniture are required. Moreover, it is just as important that we design durable furniture with a low 'total cost of ownership' because this means less waste and hence less consumption of natural resources.

For HOWE innovation is about daring. We constantly challenge the existing solutions and ask questions if the functionality we offer now answers all the needs of the spaces where people work, think, study and communicate.

Innovation requires more creativity and more willingness to take risks than the implementation of typical projects. At HOWE, we dare to test ideas and solutions that appear improbable, group people together in new settings and combine materials in new ways.

INNOVATION WITH HOWE

Since 1928 HOWE has been delivering space optimizing and multi-functional furniture and has created a business model where innovation is deeply imprinted into processes. It means that the company has to be development-orientated and continue thinking along new lines and seeking out possibilities for development; by appreciating exciting ideas and trains of thought and celebrate initiative taking, to create and maintain a constant lead over our competitors in terms of design and procedures.

HOWE's approach to function and design proves that ideas developed one hundred years ago provided solutions that are timeless, and universal. Our 40/4 chair is the greatest example of innovative thinking – an everlasting piece of design which continues to create value time over time.

One notices it could be done differently, and it should be done completely different than decades before to solve the problem or deliver new quality of service. This is exactly what David Rowland did. He dared to change the approach towards stackable chairs and fundamentally redesigned the product.

All stacking chairs had a problem of thickness of the construction under the seat limiting the number of chairs in a stack – the obvious, but technically challenging solution was provided by Rowland: the seat and back are set within the frame, rather than on it. Added to this stroke of genius are other inventions – parallel stacking, the dolly for stacking, and connectivity, which allows the creation of rows of seats.

Rowland called himself an “architect of products.” The scope and quantity of his work might seem limited, but in truth it was dedicated to the greatest cause – to design a minimalistic stacking chair. With minimalization being the end state in all senses: materials, weight, volume, and cost. His outstanding work was a further development of the Bauhaus modern aesthetic. The 40/4 series has become one of the most widely used chairs of the last quarter century because of its stacking properties. Genuinely innovative.

Yet another great example of innovative and out-of-the-box thinking is the SixE chair designed for HOWE by Pearson Lloyd. It's been 10 years since we launched SixE – a polypropylene, stacking chair created without any usage of glass fiber. It means it is ready for being recycled numerous times. How to use minimal materials, and guarantee comfort and strength? It was a great challenge back then and we looked for answers. An innovative solution with a curved surface

resulted in a chair that is very efficiently stacked, light, and super comfortable. Also, an original approach towards its surface pattern solved commonly known issues with polypropylene shells – it enabled easy cleaning and hiding potential scratches. This small innovation has made the chairs even more future-proof, extending their life cycle.

Defining function is crucial and then the form will follow. Neither functionality nor design can be compromised within HOWE projects. We search as long as it is required to deliver truly innovative solutions. Which means thinking beyond trends and not tapping in fast pacing fashions. By recognizing the true nature of people's needs we can focus on devising new furniture solutions and being at the same time resourceful, resource-conscious and masters of simplicity.

"Bringing value-added to the market is something we thrive on. With our newest product lines, like the AS series from Andreas Störiko, we keep proving that movement and multi-functionality have always been essential. To meet the growing need for flexible settings and agile processes, we have taken a design that provides the highest mobility, allowing for innovative use of any space."

**- Ulrick Bloch Nielsen
VP Sales and Marketing at HOWE**

And we never stop at HOWE. From the beginning of company's history in the 1920s, supreme functionality has been an integrated part of our furniture solutions. Design, we believe, is about the marriage of function, form and... innovation.

This article was written by the team at Howe. To learn more about them, please click on their logo below:





Education is evolving...and rapidly. From the infusion of technology into nearly every aspect of instruction to a growing emphasis on the “whole child,” early childhood centers and elementary schools are working diligently to improve every child’s and their teachers’ school experiences. At Jonti-Craft, constant conversations with educators, hands-on time with watching and studying how young learners navigate the school day, and a commitment to creating furniture that meets educators’ and students’ needs drive innovation.

Tapping Into Virtual Reality Technology to Connect Facilities Design with Instructional Priorities

Jonti-Craft is among the first adopters of virtual reality (VR) in classroom design. This technology gives designers, facilities managers, school leaders, and frontline educators the opportunity to experience what their new or redesigned learning spaces will look like, how they’ll function, and how the furniture they choose will contribute to student comfort, safety, and learning engagement. From storage to story time, and small group learning areas to quiet spaces for individual reading, VR design support gives customers a “you are here” experience so they make the right choices for each grade level and every kind of learning opportunity.

Said Matt Hinkle, Jonti-Craft’s National Sales Manager, “VR has given us a way to expand the way we work with our customers. As they explore the virtual classrooms we create based on their needs and specs, they can visualize a finished classroom, library, or other environment. They can ask questions, request alternative configurations, or other furniture options and see how their choices impact room function and budget. It’s an immersive, collaborative way to work with our customers and incorporate their ideas and needs. This technology has also been a net positive in our ability to close larger projects more quickly.”

Enabling Collaboration

Jonti-Craft’s leadership team also learns from the company’s own in-the-field sales specialists and dealer channel representatives who saw opportunity in the power to create compelling visual proposals in real time, while working onsite with school customers. As a result, the company was the first early childhood manufacturer to incorporate sales-based design software. The company uses KITS Collaborator to offer in-the-field design capabilities so dealers and end users can participate in the design and product selection process and use the immediate feedback to, as Matt Hinkle notes, “get to yes!”

Materials: Fabrics, Colors, and Superior Quality Construction Are Part of the Innovation Landscape

Schools, daycare centers, and healthcare environments all share a need for durable, healthy, environmentally sound, and aesthetically appropriate furniture. Jonti-Craft is now expanding the integration of new materials, such as sound damping panels and plexiglass table dividers to keep classrooms quieter and to keep students focused on their work while maintaining healthy distances from one another. These kinds of innovations, while simple in nature, can make a significant difference in the way students and teachers experience learning and teaching.

On the color front, Jonti-Craft is continually introducing new palettes and color options for seating, tables, and more. From a vibrant new lime green to a calming driftwood gray, educators can brighten up their classroom environments and give students a critical sense of belonging in their classrooms.

Making a Leap from Desks, Tables, and Chairs to Experiential Learning

The product design team at Jonti-Craft has dramatically expanded their approach to create innovative learning options. From play kitchens and reading nooks, to dress-up centers, castles, imagination stations, sensory tables, and rolling STEM centers—the whole category of early learning furniture has expanded, and Jonti-Craft is leading the charge with rapidly expanding collections of furniture that inspires learning and exploration.

Responding to Changing Health & Safety Needs in the Classroom

In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, innovation carried the day at Jonti-Craft as the company answered schools' and healthcare center needs for portable, affordable, no-plumbing-required handwashing sinks. The company's Clean Hands Helper sinks, introduced prior to the pandemic, were suddenly in high demand. With a quick manufacturing pivot and an expedited shipping process, the company produced thousands of portable sinks to help school re-open and stay open safely. It's another example of the intersection of innovation and opportunity that propels the company's success.

Manufacturing Processes Continually Updated and Expanded

Nick Schwarz, Jonti-Craft's Chief Operating Officer, shared his perspective on innovation, through an experienced manufacturing and production lens. He explained, " Jonti-Craft continues to invest in technology to help us remain an industry leader. In the past year, we took on one of the larger projects in our recent history – rearranging several pieces of equipment within our factory, coupled with pairing some new equipment with our existing machinery to optimize our layout. This project required significant advanced planning and intricate steps to accomplish with little disruption to our customers. As a result of this project and strategic investment, we are poised to provide increased production capacity and performance for our customers."

A Legacy of Innovation that Keeps Growing

From the early introduction of furniture designed to contribute to healthier indoor air quality and environmentally safe spaces, Jonti-Craft has operated with a strong commitment to the environment, choosing suppliers that incorporate forestry management plans and engineering box-making systems to reduce cardboard waste.

Innovation in Education Inspires Innovation at Jonti-Craft

As American schools innovate in the ways they deliver learning opportunities for students, Jonti-Craft is innovating across each of its operational areas to answer education's evolving needs. In daycare centers and schools in all 50 states around the country—and even across the globe—as children come to class, that innovation is helping improve and enrich their experiences in class and beyond. That's a good day at school for this furniture manufacturing innovator.

This article was written by the team at Jonti-Craft. To learn more about them, please click on their logo below:



A STORY OF INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY & CREATIVITY:

Kartell's design between new materials & a commitment to sustainability



LOUIS GHOST BY KARTELL

INNOVATION WITH KARTELL



LOUIS GHOST BY KARTELL



MINI KABUKI BY KARTELL



GE' BY KARTELL

Design is creativity, technology but above all the ability to give shape to a vision and excite. The history of Kartell starts precisely from the relentless drive for innovation and has evolved over the decades by experimenting with ever new materials and solutions, constantly raising the level of the technological challenge, to reach previously unthinkable goals.

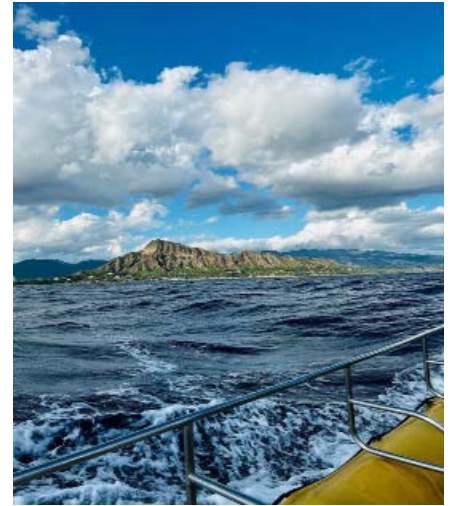
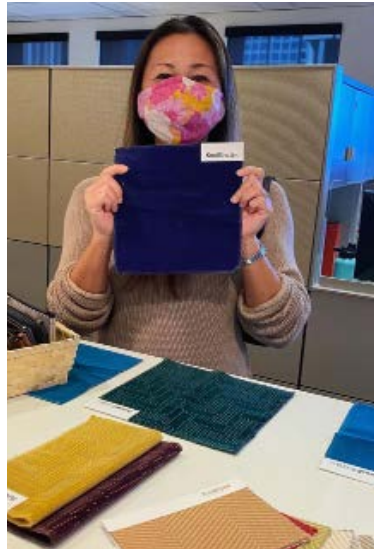
Today the challenge continues with the commitment to make design ever greener. Polycarbonate 2.0 - which combines a second-generation renewable polymer produced through a synthesis process derived largely from industrial waste of cellulose and ISCC certified paper - ensures a reduction of up to 60% of the environmental impact in terms of carbon dioxide emissions, compared to the production of fossil-based polycarbonate. The Smart Wood collection, entirely in wood from FSC-certified forests, is made with an industrial mold

that has allowed Kartell to create something absolutely new: a thin layer of wood worked with a mold capable of bringing the curvature of the panel to the limit. And again, the new frontiers of Bio and recycled material. A path, told in the "Kartell loves the Planet" manifesto, which always puts quality, emotion and product experience first and in which research and technological development are at the service of quality, design and, at the same time, attention to consumer well-being and the environment.

This article was written by the team at Kartell. To learn more about them, please click on their logo below:

Kartell

**MIXING IT UP
WITH CEI HAWAII**



MIXING IT UP WITH CEI HAWAII

BY MRL STAFF

At MRL, we are fortunate enough to partner with dealers across the world, connecting people industry wide. Our most recent travel took us to Oahu, Hawaii where we co-hosted an A&D event with CEI to celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

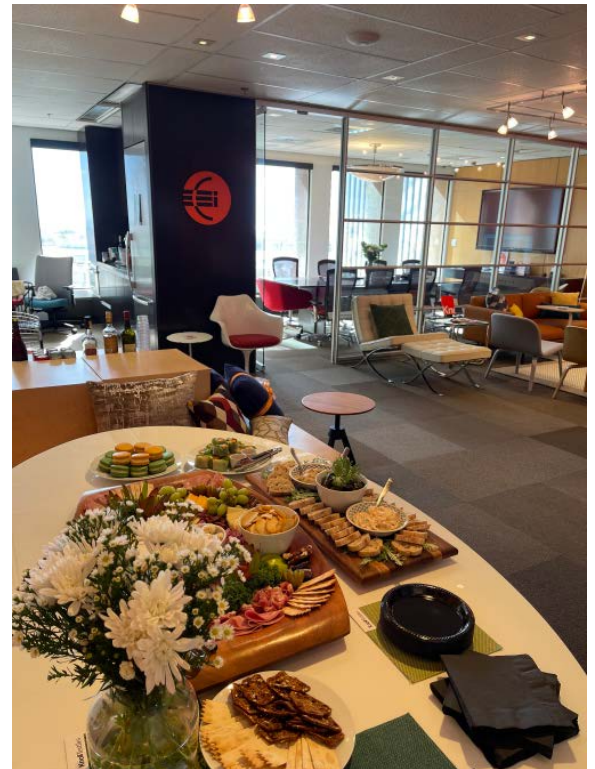
Designers and industry professionals alike came to share drinks and casual conversation in CEI's space, complete with a balcony view of the Pacific Ocean. A long history of excellence in the Contract Furniture industry, CEI represents the best of the best from culture, to commitment to their customers, to staying industry relevant and on top of trends. At MRL, we are grateful to have relationships with dealers like CEI who go above and beyond to build lasting partnerships and grow business alongside MRL in an ever-evolving market.

This event was attended by Peter Vincent & Associates, Inform Design, Douglas Emmett, Dean Sakamoto Architects and Next Design.

Keep up to date with MRL and be on the lookout for more events like this in your area!



MIXING IT UP WITH CEI HAWAII



WHO IS CEI HAWAII

Serving the state of Hawaii and the Pacific Rim for more than 25 years, Corporate Environments International ("CEI") is a full-service commercial-contract furniture dealership representing Knoll and over 150 globally recognized brands. CEI also represents Falkbuilt digital component interior wall construction, building beautiful, sustainable custom interiors for the private and public sectors. As a full turn-key solution to Hawaii's businesses, educational institutions, healthcare providers, government and military, we deliver innovative, holistic solutions built on three core strengths: quality products from globally recognized brands; white-glove planning and project management services; and insights drawn from decades of experience.



HOSTING THE A&D EVENT WITH MRL

We're honored to have co-hosted the St. Patrick's Day Wine & Cheese party with MRL here in Honolulu. Jeff and Jim were great to work with, they're a lot of fun, and made planning so easy. The new MRL Pro has a lot to offer, and I know that the designers that joined us are looking forward to the new pro features and building their personal MRL libraries. We definitely look forward to working with MRL again in the future! As we say in Hawaii..."hana-hou"...



THE MODERNIZATION OF RE-UPHOLSTERY AS A TOOL FOR SUSTAINABILITY

By *Kriss Kokoefer of Kay Chesterfield, Inc and Cynthia Bleskachek of The Funky Little Chair*

Employee attraction and retention:

In the wake of the pandemic and the Great Resignation, forward-thinking employers are offering environments that look more like living rooms than offices. It is a trend that's been gaining momentum for almost a decade, but after the necessity of working from home, the soft collaborative environment has become the new standard for attracting employees back to the workplace.

We have all been watching webinars and reading articles about "the future of workplace". We can't help but notice they all include installation shots of soft seating in collaborative areas. The question then becomes, what options do people have for maintaining and reusing this furniture so these spaces look good for a long time?

We believe there is an opportunity here for an innovative business: More soft seating means greater demand for upholstery care.

Sustainability and low hanging fruit:

The other big news is that we have a significant furniture waste crisis on our hands. In 2017, for example, the U.S. sent 9.8 million tons of furniture to landfills. And unfortunately, a majority of it came from commercial spaces.



2 MILLION TONS OF US FURNITURE IS BURNED YEARLY FOR ENERGY, RELEASING CARBON DIOXIDE AND NITROUS OXIDE INTO THE AIR

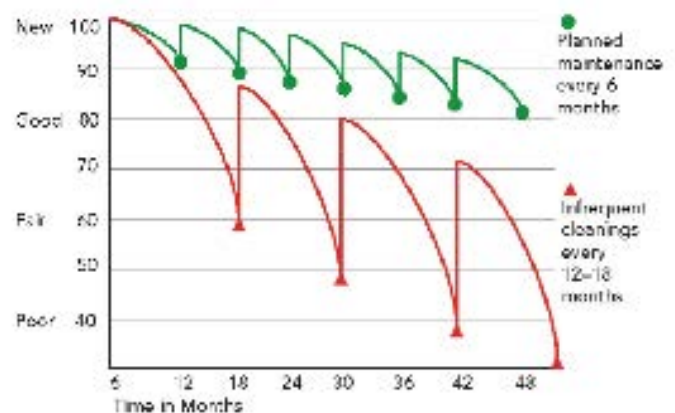
The good news is you can be a superhero with the upkeep and reuse of soft seating. It is one easy pathway to changing those numbers.

First, businesses should consider a regular cleaning program for all upholstered pieces. This ensures that quality furniture



70% TO 80% OF WHAT THE FURNITURE INDUSTRY PRODUCES GOES TO LANDFILL.

and fabrics last as long as possible, extending the value of the initial purchase. Ongoing professional cleaning means furniture lasts longer and looks better.



UPHOLSTERED SEATING STILL LOOKS LIKE NEW 4 YEARS LATER WITH REGULAR CLEANING AT 6 MONTH INTERVALS

Upholstery will eventually become worn or outdated, this is when re-upholstery will offer the opportunity to make the "old" new again.

While ordering new seating may be the most familiar and accessible option, consider that reupholstery can offer designers an infinitely expanded menu of customization options. Plus, it's a relatively simple way for companies to improve on expressed goals of sustainability.

Interior designers understandably want to start with a clean slate to express their one-of-a-kind ideas - we don't want to

**INNOVATING WITH
KAY CHESTERFIELD
& THE FUNKY LITTLE CHAIR**

stop them. . . but we recommend aiming to reuse 20% of their seating. That may not seem like a lot, but until recently, it was 0% - it was literally not in the commercial designer's playbook.

Committing to some reuse is a valuable step in the right direction. And moving is a great time to relook at the soft seating inventory and imagine how it might be utilized in the new design. And from what we have read, this is something millennials will love to hear about.

Project management, processes, and technology:

Historically, the professional upholsterer/business owner wears many hats, from skilled labor to project management. For small jobs, this works well - but bigger projects require a bigger team that can work together through all phases of the custom re-upholstery process.

Professional project management and communication are critical to commercial design. Kay Chesterfield's "secret sauce" for meeting the growing reupholstery demand is a team of highly skilled project managers with backgrounds in contract furniture, manufacturing, and sustainability.

Our goal is to make the maintenance of upholstered goods an easier process for designers, furniture dealers, and facilities managers.

Apprenticeships and certification:

Encouraging more designers and stakeholders to consider the care, maintenance and reuse of upholstered pieces is only part of the puzzle - getting the work done is also no small task.

Upholstery is currently experiencing a widespread skilled workforce shortage. Master craftspeople are retiring, taking decades of experience with them. In most cases, there is almost nobody prepared to take their place.

This is obviously problematic, if we want more clients to choose reupholstery.

In anticipation of growing demand, Kay Chesterfield over the past several years has explored many options for locating or creating new team members.

This has included slow and extensive networking, online and in person, making connections with other businesses and professionals - something that has been historically uncommon in the upholstery world.

Happily, these tides are shifting. Positive collaboration means upholstery businesses are in a much better position to handle unexpected or extra large requests, such as are likely to occur in the commercial arena.

In almost every state throughout the U.S., upholstery has long since disappeared from trade schools - likely due to decades of declining career placement.

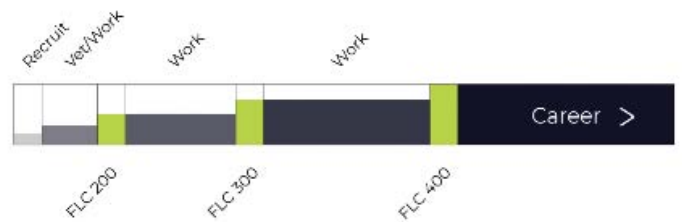
The best immediate option for employers is to train new upholsterers in-house: Apprenticeship programs.

Given that the development of a professional requires thousands of hours, this is a SIGNIFICANT challenge to the business.

But this common goal led to a cross country connection between Kay Chesterfield in Oakland and The Funky Little Chair in St. Paul.

Apprenticeship paths traditionally combine on-the-job experience with stretches of structured training. Modern technology makes it possible to put that training directly into the workplace, which is extremely helpful when classrooms have disappeared, or are very far away.

Could online training programs coupled with a professional workshop help promising candidates achieve greater fluency faster? While also leading them to a fulfilling career?





Landscape Forms Sets the Standard

While many companies still struggle to design and manufacture their products sustainably, Landscape Forms finds the solution through a commitment to continuous innovation. In fact, innovative approaches to sustainability inspire and ignite everything the company does and everything it creates.

Perhaps that's to be expected from a company founded by a landscape architect and passionate outdoor enthusiast, based on the principles of Design, Culture and Craft. But what may be surprising is to learn that Landscape Forms has been doing this for over 50 years. Today, Landscape Forms is the industry leader in innovative integrated solutions of high-design site furniture, advanced LED lighting, structure, and custom environments for outdoor spaces.

As proof of their commitment to innovation, Landscape Forms holds an impressive 150 patents. The company's award-winning outdoor furnishings, structures and lighting consistently set the standard for sustainable design inno-

vation and excellence that help designers, landscape architects, landscapers and other clients achieve beautiful, functional spaces that enhance every outdoor experience.

Durable is Sustainable

Based on the notion that *durable is sustainable*, all of their products are designed and manufactured with intentionality to ensure that they stand the test of time. By designing and engineering their products to withstand the rigors of natural environments and heavy use, Landscape Forms' products live long successful lives in outdoor landscapes. Created for durability, longevity and low maintenance, these products embody the company's commitment to responsible stewardship of the earth's resources.

Bright Ideas to Protect the Planet

The company's lighting designs support the health of the planet. The use of high-quality lighting components – from

INNOVATING WITH LANDSCAPE FORMS

internal electronics, to LEDs, to surge protection – allow the luminaires to last longer, without the need for replacement. In addition, their lighting fixtures utilize aluminum heat sinks because aluminum is an efficient conductor of heat and is easily and infinitely recyclable.

Landscape Forms also created processes whereby 99 percent of the water used in their manufacturing process is recycled. In addition, they use recycled materials in their products whenever possible – and have also developed programs to recycle materials used in the manufacturing of their products. Case in point, all steel, aluminum, wood scrap and sawdust generated during the manufacturing processes is recycled, some using specialized recycling processes.

Their sustainable approach to design and manufacturing extends to their wood furniture products. Landscape Forms only utilizes wood species that weather naturally so they don't require paint or finishes. And for other materials that do require coating they use only finishes that are free of lead and hazardous air pollutants (HAPs). Moreover, the finishes used don't generate hazardous waste, and contains less than 1 percent of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Once processed these trace VOCs are fully inert and cause no emission into the environment.

Sharing Best Practices and Creating Opportunities Locally

Sustainability drives every aspect of their business: product development, materials, facilities, manufacturing, supply chain, and people. And as Landscape Forms strives to be a model for other companies – both within and outside their industry – they eagerly share their innovative approaches to environmental accountability and preserving the planet for future generations, as evidenced by their commitment to 1% for the Planet.

Close to home, after learning that many small businesses near their Kalamazoo, Michigan headquarters don't meet minimum quantity requirements for large-scale recyclers, Landscape Forms initiated a program partnering with these local businesses. The result is a recycling “co-op” that pools and bales recyclables, allowing smaller operations to ensure their materials also stay out of landfills.

Landscape Forms also gives preference to local material suppliers and vendor services to significantly reduce the environmental impacts resulting from extended transportation. In addition, the majority of their steel and extruded aluminum originates from mills and plants within 150 miles of their facility in Southern Michigan, and they make sure all suppliers from whom they source material are regularly audited for responsible environmental practices.

Walking the Walk

Everything the company does is viewed through the lens of sustainability. That was no less true when it came to designing and building their own corporate office space and manufacturing. Their 50,000-square-foot office expansion in 2000 incorporated many innovative, large-scale changes to reduce its environmental impact, including breaking up heat islands and leveraging site orientation to maximize energy conservation. In addition, they use only LED lighting in their offices and facilities, which has enabled them to reduce energy consumption from lighting by more than 80 percent.

So while many other companies continue to be challenged when it comes to sustainably, Landscape Forms serves as a model – demonstrating that through continuous innovation and an uncompromising commitment to design excellence that also protects the planet, companies can thrive.

This article was written by the team at Landscape Forms. To learn more about them, please click on their logo below:

landscapeforms®



LIFT RECLINER SERIES BY KNÚ COMFORT®

HOW FLEXIBILITY CAN LEAD TO INNOVATION

What does innovation look like today? Very rarely, perhaps once in a person's lifetime, does something radically different come onto the scene- a wheel, printing press, light bulb, or computer scale creation that has the power to bring wholesale shifts to a society. As the old proverb says, "there is nothing new under the sun." But while these radical milestones in humanity's journey are few and far between, we have seen constant innovation in the iteration of these ideas; the wheel paved a way for the automobile and the computer went from filling a room to fitting in your pocket. While this continued cycle of improving past ideas will always persist, changes over the last few years have amplified the value of a different vehicle of innovation: flexibility.

Over the last couple years the way that we live our lives, interact with others, and do our work have changed so significantly and so constantly that relying on past ideas with incremental improvements does not innovate to the same measure that it once did. With the inability to reliably predict what the newest challenge will be six months into the future,

let alone two to three years, today's innovators need to be able to assess immediate and near-future needs and be able to deliver final solutions faster than ever before. The old methods of developing products or sharing ideas simply cannot meet the demands of today's ever-changing landscape. We believe much of the success our organization has seen in recent years is due to our ability to adapt and remain flexible, whether in product development, marketing and sales, or getting products to customers.

The team of problem solvers in design and engineering at the La-Z-Boy Healthcare | Knú Comfort Design Center have developed a unique process to allow new ideas and products to come to life. Once a new idea or design has been defined, the task soon changes from simply developing to surpassing expectations. 3-D printing capabilities support work areas that allow ideas to become physical mock-ups at record pace, allowing immediate testing for comfort and performance, along with dissolving any challenges that may arise.

INNOVATING WITH LA-Z-BOY HEALTHCARE | KNÚ COMFORT

As with all aspects of the organization, the entire team participate in our process, allowing a variety of perspectives to find the best solutions and avoid any potential bottlenecks when a new product reaches sourcing or production. This also gives our team the ability to start at the outset with sustainable and environmentally friendly materials as building blocks to create with, rather than the most convenient from a design standpoint.

Having an organization that can match the ebb and flow of customer needs has been a key advantage for us in these times, not only in the development of new products, but in finding solutions within current product lines. Our Exam Lift Treatment Recliner was created to fit a niche market, but once temporary hospital wings and pop-up clinics began to emerge, we recognized a great deal of interest in it as a multipurpose product to provide seating, sleep area, and exam table functionality, all within the minimal footprint of a recliner- with considerable savings both in space and cost. The same can be said of our Durable 650 Series recliners, which were designed with the ability to be fitted with a vast array of options to customize them to any healthcare environment, or even repurposed by retrofitting newly available options onto previously purchased recliners.

Greater flexibility has not been solely a product-centered need; it has been equally imperative from a sales perspective. The significant changes in the availability to meet customers in a traditional way have necessitated new ideas in reaching customers. In the summer of 2020 we launched our mobile showroom, which has been taking our products across the nation in a safe and convenient way that is still in high demand, even after most major restrictions have been lifted. On demand virtual showroom demos of product became a key way for us to fill gaps when in-person meetings were not a possibility. The need to think outside of the box has allowed us to become stronger in the multifaceted approach we take to reaching customers, and innovate in our means of building helpful connections to those we serve.

Though the production process is often, by its very nature, a rigid one, we have even been able to build in flexibility there to meet shifting customer needs. Our Rapid Response quick ship recliner program has continually been successful, as it provides an immediate solution to healthcare facilities who may have an urgent need arise. In a time of supply chain challenges and an industry with constantly varying lead times, adding the flexibility to our production process to enable the Rapid Response program has brought innovation through the peace of mind a customer can have in knowing their product is in a box and ready to go, and not contingent upon a string of vendors and raw material suppliers being on time.

We have been able to further our flexibility by adding another production facility in a different geographic location, allowing us to stay around one third to half the lead time of others in our category, where some have grown to 40 weeks or more (which is complemented by virtually all of our parts and raw materials being domestically sourced). Aside from the obvious benefit of added capacity, this has enabled us to navigate logistical and carrier issues that have arisen in recent times. While there are still challenges, this has given us more options to negate the effects of national transit problems, as well as be more adaptable in working in larger new projects into a schedule that normally would be filled by existing projects.

As the world works toward the goal of getting things back to the way they were a few years ago, the innovators among us will appreciate the opportunities to try different things. Whether that process finishes in a year or fifty years, the value of remaining flexible has made itself abundantly clear, and will remain in the DNA of organizations that will continue to thrive well into the future, no matter what may come.

This article was written by the team at La-Z-Boy Healthcare | Knú Comfort. To learn more about them, please click on their logo below:



**REP GROUP
FEATURE**



Getting to Know Altitude Resource Group

REP GROUP FEATURE

Q: Tell us a little bit about how your rep group got started?

A: Altitude Resource Group was initially founded in 1995 and was purchased by Richard Weiss in 2009. Prior to the purchase the group consisted of the original owner handling the territory all by himself. After the purchase the group was rebranded to its current form and expanded to 4 people growing not only sales bandwidth but also increasing its sales year over year up until the current pandemic hit.

Q: How has the company changed over the years?

A: Altitude Resource Group in its current form now consists of 2 Principals, a full-time designer, and a dedicated GC rep. We also have an amazing showroom in conjunction with a fantastic dealer partner that allows us an opportunity

and space to show our end users/the A&D community the breadth of our manufacturing partners.

Q: What do you think is the secret to your rep groups longevity and success?

A: For us, it is and has always been about building relationships with our dealer partners. While we do branch out to the A&D community, as well as call on the GC, PM, and TI sectors, our real magic happens when we find dealers that trust us to have their backs with the great group of manufacturers we have on board. We have also worked really hard to find the right manufacturers who we can depend with quality products and superior service.

**REP GROUP
FEATURE**

Q: What makes you most excited about working in the contract design industry?

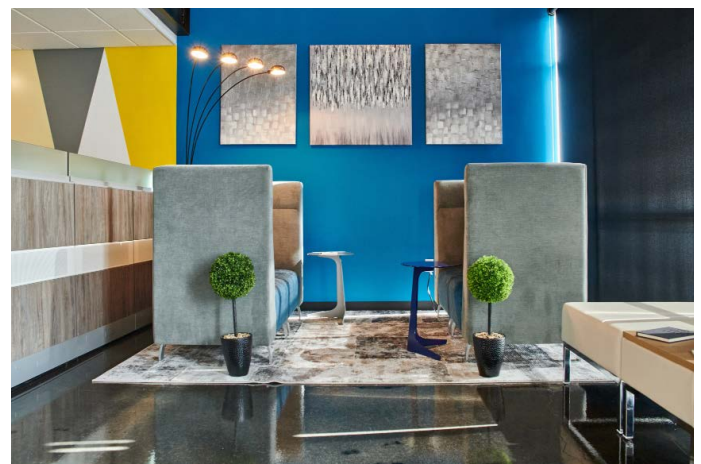
A: No two days are ever the same! Our team enjoys the day-in day-out task of tackling new projects, helping our dealer partners, and finding out of the box solutions that suit every-one's needs.

Q: How do you think your group will evolve over the next 5-10 years?

A: We will continue to be a value proposition for the contract furniture community. As an independent rep manufacturer rep group we feel it is vital to be able to provide services for our designers and dealers we work with daily. We see us adding more to the design side of our group. Offering a complete sales package with renderings, and being able to include all of our product lines is vital. We also will be branching out on our contract offerings and are getting into the site furniture and outside space realm to further broaden our groups project scope.

Q: If you could use just one word to describe your company what would it be?

A: Loyalty



KEEPING CONNECTED

With the challenges that 2020 and 2021 brought, it is more important than ever to "Keep Connected" to our clients, friends and colleagues. We have been simply inspired by all of the innovative ways our Rep Group friends have found to do just that! The pandemic hasn't slowed them down one bit, and relationships are still at the center of their strategy.

In the "Keeping Connected" section of Delve Magazine, we will highlight inspirational snapshots of what our Rep Group partners are up to, and how they are finding innovative ways to stay connected to their clients.

We hope you enjoy this new feature, and are inspired as much as we are!



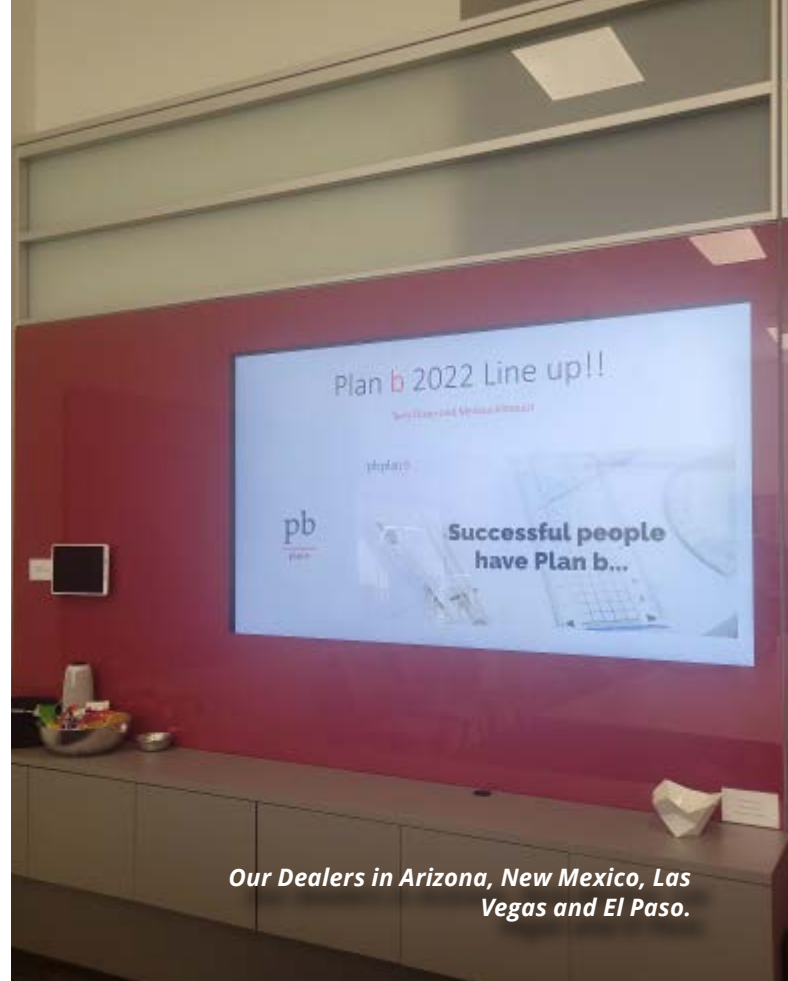
B3W

The B3W Southern CA team, Danielle Ferry, Katie Parker, Randy Ares and Rick Bartlett, had the opportunity to visit the Coriander Design factory in Woodinville, WA. It was a great day to see firsthand the quality and innovation of Coriander's beautifully designed products. There was even time for a little wine tasting to cap off the great trip.

<https://b3w.com>



Plan B is back at it with in person presentations at our Dealers in Arizona, New Mexico, Las Vegas and El Paso.



Our Dealers in Arizona, New Mexico, Las Vegas and El Paso.



Plan b participated in the long awaited IIDA Unveiled Event at Westworld.

Plan b

Innovative manufacturer representatives in the Contract Furniture Industry, in the Southwest.

<https://myresourcelibrary.com/Planb>



Terry Dixon and Melissa Almquist

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