

# delve

MAY 2022 V26

# EMECO HOUSE

A Neglected Sewing Shop  
UPCYCLED

Cover Photo: Emeco House



Rise.



The chair Elevated.

**via**  
SEATING

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Susan Mulholland discusses the future of the workplace, and office design with an emphasis on global manufacturer, Schiavello.



**COVER STORY:** Dauphin's new Indeed swivel chair brings a light touch to any workspace



David Logsdon explores an office world where dogs are welcome anytime!

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## editor's note

Dear Reader,

Have you ever imagined what the office of tomorrow might look like? Maybe we'll go back to the open office, or maybe we'll all be desinging our own personal bubbles.

This month we are exploring what the future might look like for our office design. All of our contributors share their unique thoughts and perspectives on the subject.

Which ones will you agree with?

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**



*This article is the second in my series on the 'next chapter in commercial furniture manufacturing and workplace design.' I will be talking with Australian manufacturer Schiavello as we look at our industry from their global viewpoint. We will be discussing new ideas on workplace design and how these trends will define our industry in the future. This series will all lead up to NeoCon, where 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.*

When someone knows that you are an interior designer, whether you work in a specific design specialty or not, the first question most commonly asked is, "what's the next big trend coming up in design?"

Of course, the answer depends on what type of design you focus on. Trends or developments in office design are usually based on research reflecting the current state of any given industry more so than the current color of the year or popular décor style. Contract design in any form is about the type of furniture, finishes, lighting, and space allocation that define an area for completing a task by the office worker.

In recent years there has been a big push to change the office work environment from endless rows of cubicles to open spaces where various "work" areas could be arranged, configured, or even transported that can be adapted for a team to complete a task.

The other noticeable trend was to make offices spaces look more like living rooms and coffee houses. The term 'resimercial' was coined to reflect this new office design concept. When it was first introduced, it sounded quirky and fun, and ultimately it was a way to embrace the next generation of workers who did not want to be in their parents' office space – that endless maze of unidentifiable cubicles that they remember when they were kids means something very different to the younger generations now entering the workforce.

But really, what was happening was something more profound than just trying to engage the next generation of workers. The resimercial movement has tested our current ideas of what an office should look like by preparing us for what was to come.



**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.](#)*



Although no one could have predicted the pandemic or its result, the resimercial trend gave us a head start on understanding how to integrate elements of home in our office space. Some manufacturers were already creating office furniture that met this new design trend by introducing lounge pieces that incorporated electrical outlets and data ports- looking more like furniture you would see in a college student union than an office.

But manufacturers like Schiavello took this idea further by introducing furniture that was more in step with the current research on ergonomics and wellbeing. The focus was more on the state of the workers' health than just a way of attracting younger workers.

Remote working was a trend that was only talked about in certain industries before the pandemic. It began to take hold sometime in 2007 when advancements in technology changed the way we approach information. This was especially prevalent in the medical industry, where the trend was to move away from a paper filing system. Large amounts of data needed to be transferred to an electronic system to make the industry more efficient. These jobs were best done by individuals who wanted to work flexible hours. Technology was starting to make it possible to work from, anywhere-especially from home.

Technology advancements continued to be less dependent on a single location. Cellular phones were becoming more like mini-computers, and we were discovering new ways of sharing information. Still, not everyone or every industry was ready to give up their offices. That was until 2020, when the pandemic changed more than just our ideas on what work is; the places we worked suddenly seemed less important.

Schiavello recognized a shift in how all global workers were approaching their workplace and how they conducted the tasks their jobs required well before the pandemic. Flexibility was not just a nice to have; it was a necessity. The furniture designed by Schiavello did not resemble anything manufactured in the previous twenty-five years, especially in the United States for offices. They approach furniture design as it should be approached; by defining the problem that needs to be solved. Do you need an office with endless cubicles, or can you be productive working in a more relaxed setting like your living room at home?

The furniture industry, particularly the commercial furniture industry, has been on the cusp of innovation for the past century. While the world of work was changing rapidly with the introduction of computers and other technology, the office furniture industry was doing the same. Sitting at a desk or workstation to

## INDUSTRY HOT TOPICS

"work" was what most people did during their day. All of this sitting, typing, and staring at a screen took its toll on our backs, wrists, eyes, and waistlines.

Ergonomics, the study of people's efficiency in their working environment, became a buzzword in the eighties and nineties with the evolution of the task chair. This concept of utilizing the study of human interaction within their immediate environment and how it affects our health continues today. The ideas for creating sit-stand desks, work-specific task chairs designed for continuous sitting, articulating keyboard trays, and monitor arms to allow us to move our screens to avoid glare all are part of what we consider necessary for a comfortable and efficient work environment. But during the pandemic, it was hard to accomplish this in our home office without a significant investment.

Design for all its glamour and beauty is really about one thing—especially when you think about it in terms of creating work environments; it's about creating environments that benefit our lives in a productive, healthy manner. To successfully design any type of interior environment, we need to think more intuitively and utilize design elements that make sense for the space instead of

only considering pieces specifically created for the type of project we're working on.

We also need to rethink our ideas about the relationship between equipment and technology. Every type of interior space, whether a hotel room or a board room, requires the same amount of thought when it comes to the ability to be connected to the digital world.

Manufacturers like Schiavello created furniture designs that fit the new model of working anywhere well before the pandemic. But instead of calling it remote working or resimercial, they refer to it as being malleable. The ability to adapt your work environment to any type of work situation, whether in a building, outside, or in your home, was essential to help the user be more productive.

Workplace culture and security are important in retaining a talented and consistent workforce. That requires furniture designs that are not dependent on one type of function or style. Schiavello begins with a design concept based on what are the needs that the people doing the tasks have and how flexible the



**INDUSTRY  
HOT TOPICS**

workspace needs to be. They create a kit of parts that becomes the office workspace by making it essentially hassle-free to disassemble or reassemble anywhere.

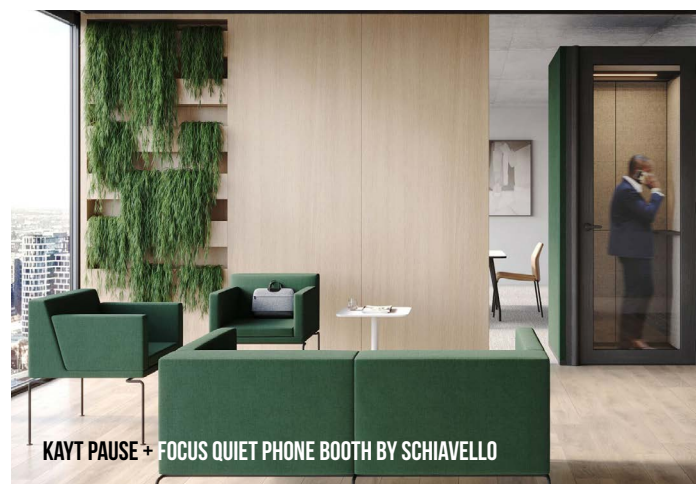
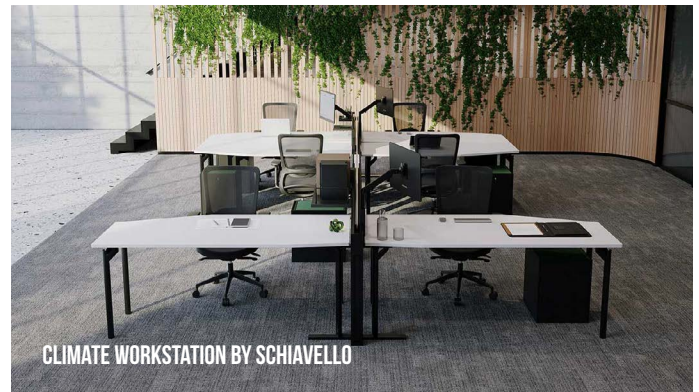
Our relationship with our office and our work are transforming together. Creating office environments that can be arranged by those using the space is not something new- it's practical. The pandemic created a sense of change in the way we approached our daily lives and how we approached our work environments. Working from home or the office should not be a choice or an obligation; it should be based on our individual needs as human beings.

During our lifetimes, we will be faced with various life-altering situations. These changes will sometimes happen quickly without much warning. Our families and our health ultimately become more important than our jobs.

Wellbeing is more than physical health; it involves every part of us, from mental stability to spirituality. In my opinion, this is the only workplace trend we need to focus on. How do we design all interior spaces that help us accomplish that goal? That means fully embracing the idea of working from wherever we happen to be, to be malleable and adaptable will be the keys to achieving that- our workplace of the future will be everywhere we are and not just limited to one place or destination. Our aim as designers should be to create livable spaces that allow us to do what we need to when we need to do it.

The pandemic emphasized the fact that our world is more accessible. Our daily relationships with our coworkers, friends, and most importantly, our family should not have to suffer because of a life-changing event. We need to have opportunities to continue to thrive and be productive no matter what happens in our own lives or globally. Working from anywhere will allow us to maintain a sense of control which will allow all of us to find the balance we need to be happy eventually.

Manufacturers who think like Schiavello will help us achieve that by providing practical solutions that give us that flexibility. We need to allow our insecurities about where we work to disappear and evolve to be more fluid. By doing that, we will achieve the balance and stability we need to be productive and content regardless of what we do throughout our lifetime.





# 6 MRL FAVORITE PRODUCTS FROM ACROSS THE LIBRARY

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

## SUSPENDED OFFICE

EZOBORD

Privacy encompasses many different needs and behaviors; each form of privacy – acoustical, informational or visual, helps people to focus, free from distractions.



## BERNADETTE BEAN BAG

ETC.

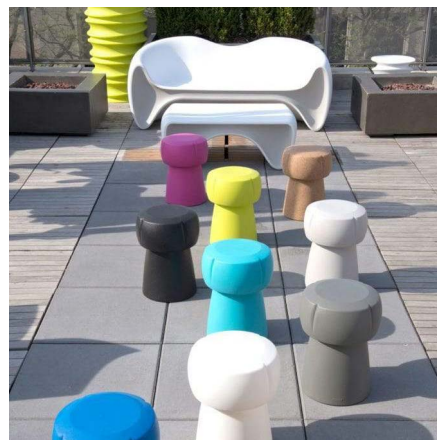
When it comes to pillows, poufs, and bean bags, it's the little things that make a difference. Our poufs feature lightweight filling and Sunfield® and Sunbrella® fabrics, while our pillows and bean bags boast a memory foam blend and matching piping.



## MEROWINGS® FOREST LOUNGER

GRESSCO

MeroWings® Loungers are a new spin on beanbags with so many possibilities - use the unique modular lug and carabiner system to connect Loungers or Headrests and create your own customized furniture pieces! So realistic-looking that they inspire all kinds of creative play activities.



## CORKY™ STOOL

TONIK

Corky is our champagne cork-inspired stool that will make you feel all bubbly inside. It's a simple yet elegant little perch that goes perfectly with friends and your favorite beverage.

## WORKSMITH CART

ARCADIA

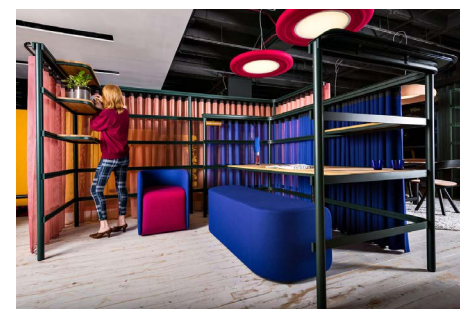
Exuding hand craftsmanship and care, the WorkSmith Cart features useful storage spaces for housing a variety of materials while maintaining a large work surface area. And to keep things mobile, solid rubber wheels allow it to be moved and positioned from one area to the next.



## BUZZBRACKS

BUZZISPACE

Design your own space, move the walls, host a meeting, create a place to focus while staying connected with the outside world. Everything is possible with this flexible and modular unit system. The dynamic, metal framework can be created and recreated according to everyday needs.





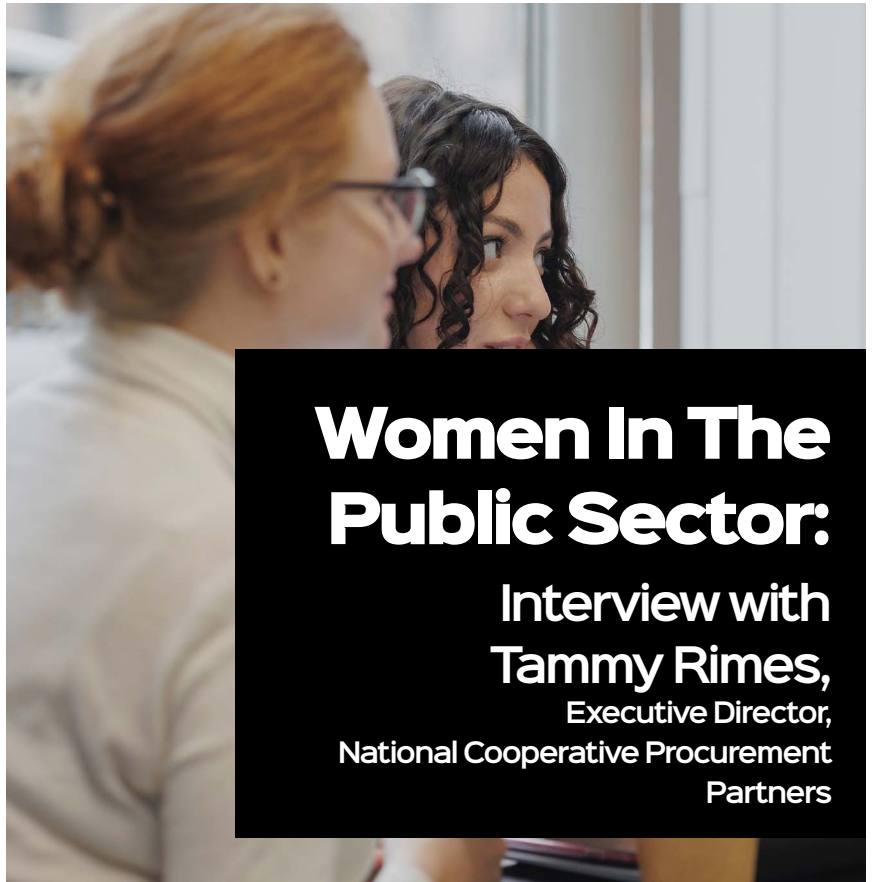
**By Michelle Warren**

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



As we continue with the *Women in the Public Sector* series, I am excited to introduce you to someone who is a relatively new contact for me in the Public Sector, Tammy Rimes. Tammy Rimes is an Inspirational Keynote Speaker - Procurement Consultant & Executive Director. I first met Tammy about five years ago when she was a keynote speaker for a trade show I was attending. I had heard her name from friends in the cooperative purchasing world and had heard wonderful things about her. Meeting her in person, she surpassed all the good things I heard. She is personal, outgoing, fun, an excellent speaker, and is full of knowledge concerning Public Sector Procurement.

Tammy serves as the Executive Director of the National Cooperative Procurement Partners (NCP), North America's Association for educational content, legislative advocacy, and support for cooperative procurement. She formally served as the Purchasing Agent for the City of San Diego with 20+ years as a government manager. With past marketing experience in the airline, retail, electrical utility, and wine industry, she has the unique perspective of working in three different worlds – corporate, government, and entrepreneurial.

I hope you enjoy our conversation and gather some wisdom that encourages you and/or motivates you in your Public Sector endeavors.

**Michelle:** Tammy, so great to get the opportunity to talk with you about women in the Public Sector. I would say you are one of the most well-known women in the State/Local/Cooperative side of the Public Sector. How did you find yourself in a Public Sector career?

**Tammy:** I needed a job! Going through a divorce with two small children, I needed a job that would pay regularly and have health benefits. My initial plan was to stay a few years, but then I started working for a new program in the Water Department and loved what I did. With a program that could truly make a difference in my community, I felt proud of the work and what our team accomplished.

## INDUSTRY HOT TOPICS

**Michelle:** I think so many people found their way to a great career in Public Sector by accident or just fell into it like you did. Those who know my story know I did as well. It was definitely not something I planned on having a career in, let alone starting a company focused on helping companies with public sector programs. So, you took "a job" but ended up with an illustrious career; how did that happen?

**Tammy:** It wasn't until I was a few years into my job that I started to think about my future.

Since the City of San Diego had many departments, I felt that I could still move around to new positions and take on new challenges. I talked to other managers whom I respected and decided that I was going to make this a career, and went back to school for my Masters in Public Administration to be eligible for management positions. I was moved or promoted about every 3-4 years to an entirely new department and role – each experience seemed to develop me for the next opportunity. I loved my career and look back fondly on many of the accomplishments of those teams.

**Michelle:** I feel that your story resembles my office furniture career story. Seeing the opportunities within the City of San Diego and positioning yourself to be promoted or change jobs internally was a great strategy. Along the way, were there key influential people or factors that supported your success?

**Tammy:** Taking advantage of training programs and tuition reimbursement for my master's degree was a big part of my success. I never got put into a "box" with my job description. That "other duties as assigned" was an area where I really grew and

excelled. It was the rare boss that didn't want you to do more or be creative. And occasionally, when there was the case with a controlling or non-supportive boss, I would bide my time and eventually promote or move out of that position. Bad bosses are always in my rearview mirror! Volunteering for special projects helped me develop new skills and led me to meet new people outside my normal circle. I feel that performing only your defined duties and staying within the lane isn't a career; it's just a job. Always learning and expanding while being customer-focused is my working philosophy.

**Michelle:** So much wisdom in that answer! Let's start with continuing education. It's so important for anyone in any role. Whether it is at the college level or getting individual coaching, which I am new to but a huge fan of, or just taking classes specific to what you are interested in. Always learning and broadening your horizons is so important. I also love your comment about "other duties as assigned." So many people look at that, and it honestly makes them mad. They have an "it's not my job attitude." You looked at that as an opportunity to pick up projects and expand your reach within the City of San Diego. I am sure that played a big part in getting noticed and positioning yourself for the promotions to other areas. So, as you were moving throughout the organization and building your career, were there any twists or turns that developed that you did not anticipate that helped you learn along the way?

**Tammy:** The Civil Service system likes conformity and standards, which is not necessarily bad.

Except when one wants to be creative, try something new, or rework an existing process. I can't tell you how many times I heard the expression, "because that's the way we've always done it," which was frustrating when the process didn't make sense or was an antiquated way of thinking. However, I never let that stop me, as my goal was to make things better or more customer-friendly. So, I learned to choose my battles or push for the most impactful initiatives. Using the words "pilot program" was also helpful in gaining initial approval to get a project started. There are so many good people in government, and it's special to have purpose and make a difference.

**Michelle:** I always cringe when I hear those words, "Because that is the way we have always done it." Change needs to be embraced in order to make things better. Choosing your battles is excellent advice. You can win the war without fighting every battle. I think you need to always keep your eyes on the goal and carefully choose which battle gets you there and which are just a distraction.

Switching gears a little...you have had a great career in Public Sector. Could you speak to how you see the opportunity for women in this vertical?

**Tammy:** When I first joined the City of San Diego at the beginning of my 20+ year career, there were only a couple of women in upper management, even though we had a history of wom-



NCMA/CAPPO CHAPTER PRESENTATION : Tammy giving her highly acclaimed "IF Your Customers Had a Choice, Would They Choose You?" presentation.

en Mayors and Councilmembers. Over my career, that evolved where women are now well represented at all levels of the organization. When I left, the City had a woman Fire Chief and Police Chief – which are typically male-dominated fields! Public Sector is very favorable to women as the schedules are routine to accommodate childcare or life/work balance, with healthcare and benefits and opportunities to advance, grow and promote across multiple sectors. With telework becoming an option, it's even better for women – and men - than ever before!

**Michelle:** Being from the East Coast, I am not that familiar with the City of San Diego government, but I love seeing all these women having opportunities at high levels in all of these ordinarily male-dominated roles. For a woman reading this article who is currently in the public sector or thinks they want a career in the public sector, what is one piece of advice you have for them?

**Tammy:** Go for it! When a promotional opportunity becomes available, some women will go through the list of criteria. If every single box can't be checked, then they don't apply for the job. If you feel that you can do the job and do it well, apply and go for the interview. Let them tell you 'no' - don't tell yourself 'no' to an opportunity.

**Michelle:** Great advice! So many times, we hear or read that women are more likely not to apply for a job or a promotion because they do not check all the boxes, whereas men just apply and show the confidence that they can do the job. Women

definitely need to overcome that fear of rejection or not being qualified" and apply. Definitely "let them tell you 'no'- don't tell yourself 'no' to an opportunity"

It has been so great chatting with you about your career and women in the Public Sector. Before we finish, do you have one book and/or a podcast you would recommend for women who are interested in pursuing a career in the Public Sector?

**Tammy:** I don't have just one – my suggestion is to read lots of different books on various topics. Being well-read and interesting helps in both your job and life!

As for a podcast, I like Tony Robbins because he encourages you to dream and go for it. Once you have a role in the public sector, listen to leaders within your industry – finance, procurement, management – and even reach out to them on LinkedIn. You'd be surprised how many will reach back with encouragement or advice.

*Thanks again to Tammy Rimes for sharing her story and insights with us as we continue to hear from and celebrate women in the public sector. I hope everyone is enjoying the opportunity to meet successful women in this vertical and learn from them. If there is a woman in the public sector you admire and would like to see interviewed, please reach out to me!*

[Michelle@strategic-catalyst.com](mailto:Michelle@strategic-catalyst.com)



**TAMMY RIMES, MPA**  
*Executive Director, National Cooperative Procurement Partners*

As the former Purchasing Agent for the City of San Diego, the nation's 9th largest City, she purchased over \$1B (yes, B!) worth of commodities and services, and oversaw a citywide overhaul of the procurement and contracting system and served as the Emergency Operations Chief during the 2007 Witch Creek Fires covering thousands of miles and destroying over 2000 homes. As a procurement consultant, she helps local governments with strategies and innovative solutions to drive savings or efficiencies.

**Connect with Tammy on LinkedIn [HERE](#).**

**BEAUFURN'S  
BRAND REFRESH**



# BEAUFURN'S BRAND REFRESH

Beaufurn is unveiling a brand refresh across all platforms, including a new identity, to reflect the company's evolution into an all-encompassing commercial furniture manufacturer. Beaufurn's new look and feel represent a commitment to innovation and the company's role in furnishing inspired environments.

"While our business has transformed dramatically over the past few years, it became clear that perceptions of the company have not evolved at the same pace", said Thomas Bongarts, CEO of Beaufurn. "The brand refresh marks a new Beaufurn both inside the company and out, with a strategy hyper-focused on the commercial furnishings audience."

Beaufurn provides the foundation for inspired environments. With a passion for design, Beaufurn will bring sophisticated styling to elevate and enhance any commercial environment. Also, we provide greater capabilities, with more options to meet both vision and budget. Finally our product is built in America to deliver both the highest quality and most dependable service anywhere.

The new brand identity, including a new logo, visual elements, and a streamlined user interface, comes as the company prepares to display at the annual Hospitality Design Expo + Conference in Las Vegas, April 26-28, 2022. Signage showing the elements of the rebranding will be prominently displayed.



# WHAT MAKES IAO SO UNIQUE?

It's not just our product;  
it's also our process!

**OUR MISSION** | Our team consists of designers and artists who all share the same love and appreciation for craftsmanship. Together, we are improving our handcrafted techniques and discovering new methods to craft. Our goal is to shine a new light on handcrafted furniture.

**METAL CRAFT** | Our process truly begins in our metal department. Each piece of steel tubing and sheet metal is measured and cut to exact dimensions. We take extra care in the cutting of our perforated metals, one of many unique things that sets IAO apart from the rest. Once cut, the steel is then welded together by our skilled fabricators. This is no easy process, as we make 100% sure every piece is square and aligned beautifully for our maple wood. After completion, the metal frames are then cleaned and washed with a lacquer solution. This allows for the steel to retain its natural watermarks and characteristics.





**WOOD CRAFT |** We take the greatest amount of care when it comes to our maple wood tops. Each top is precisely cut down, sanded, and routed to fit the metal frames. The maple wood tops are then sent to the spray room where they will receive one of our 8 available finish options. We then apply a sealer coat, which helps the grain in the maple to raise, allowing for the sanding of any and all imperfections. This seal also provides a moisture barrier to protect the wood. Once sanded, we apply our signature top coat, which gives our tops that pristine matte finish.



**THE ASSEMBLY** | To ensure the structural integrity of each of our pieces, we pre-assemble all furniture before it ever leaves our warehouse. We have a team of skilled carpenters and craftsmen who measure and label where each screw, nut, or bolt is to be secured. Once a template is drawn for your product, our team disassembles the furniture and wraps it securely on a handcrafted pallet, specifically built for shipping that piece.

While we create a one-of-a-kind product, it is truly our process that defines us. We embody the revival of craftsmanship and what it means to be made in America. When you acquire an Iron Age Office piece, you yourself become a member of our team, and a supporter of the handcrafted community. When you own Iron Age product, it is something to be admired, and tells a story you will most certainly be proud of.

*Learn more about Iron Age Office on their website:*

[ironageoffice.com](https://ironageoffice.com)





# GLASS WALL PARTITIONS AND THE FUTURE OF THE OFFICE

Glass partition walls are exactly what they sound like – non-weight bearing glass panels used as room dividers. Glass partitions are quite versatile and are designed to work in many different situations and scenarios. They range from extensive glass partition wall systems to small, intimate privacy screens and everything in-between. Glass partitions come in a variety of sizes, colors, and finishes to complement every color scheme and purpose whether you need to completely reconfigure your interior space or hide an unattractive building feature.

Today, you'll find a glass room divider used in nearly every kind of interior space – commercial facilities, upscale office buildings, institutions of higher education, and even residential homes. One of the most popular uses for glass room dividers is to give office cubicles a completely different look and feel.

So, what can glass panel partitions provide compared to other methods of interior room dividers? Plenty. Using glass



partitions as an interior glass wall has a multitude of benefits.

## Noise reduction

Many businesses have embraced an open concept office design to encourage collaboration and communication among employees. Eliminating obstructive interior walls does remove those barriers. And that's a good thing. But there's a tradeoff. An open environment can be noisy. Excessive noise

## **FUTURE OF THE OFFICE WITH CLARUS**

is distracting and makes it difficult for employees when they need to concentrate on nitty-gritty details. That's why Clarus Flex™ Wall offers an acoustic solution. Flex Wall Acoustic interior glass partitions can significantly reduce ambient noise without sacrificing the look, feel, and functionality of the open concept. And it's not necessary to use floor-to-ceiling glass panels to achieve your noise reduction goal. Half-height glass partitions, fitted with the acoustic option, will do the trick.

### **No installation required**

Since glass room dividers are portable, free-standing walls, they're ready to go right out of the box. You'll be able to transform your rooms quickly with no worries about having to close down the building or the department for installation.

### **More affordable**

Because there is no installation required, glass wall systems



typically cost less overall than a concrete, brick, or wooden wall.

### **Aesthetically pleasing**

Glass room dividers are an elegant, beautiful, and function-

al option for opening up and modernizing your space. The sophisticated, modern feel they add to interior décor is appealing. By using glass room dividers, you'll be sending the right message to your clients and that can help give your business a competitive edge in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

### **Increased flexibility**

Glass room dividers are a more temporary solution than dry-wall walls or more traditional room dividers. Portable partitions enable you to easily design and implement new office layouts. You won't be tied to your original room configuration. And, you can reconfigure it as your situation changes.

### **Encourages employee productivity and morale**

An attractive work environment can lighten employees' moods and lessen stress and anxiety. Employees are less apt to make mistakes, which increases efficiency. Plus, they will be more satisfied with their jobs and more committed to the organization. All this sets the stage for increased productivity and employee retention.

### **More comfortable, appealing spaces**

Glass wall partitions open up a room, making it appear more spacious. Although you may have numerous partitions, space will not appear claustrophobic or maze-like.

### **Provides privacy**

Privacy screens come in a variety of colors and finishes. They do double duty. You can hide an eyesore or create a private area while adding a splash of bright color to the office décor.

So, now you know what glass partition walls are and some of the many ways they can benefit your business or organization. Only you can determine whether glass partitions are a good fit for your organization's needs.

In summary, glass partitions can be planned for during the construction process or easily placed in existing buildings. Since they aren't permanent, your business or organization will have more flexibility in the future. Glass partitions are stylish, economical, practical, and efficient. They can divide your space physically, while not totally obstructing the view. Plus, they provide a modern, inviting space that makes the office a more comfortable working environment for employees.



## **Materials Innovation**

A number of world-wide issues (pandemic, war in eastern Europe) have compelled HPFI to find innovative solutions to overcome supply chain issues. Engineered hardwood, in particular Russian Birch, has been a key raw material in a considerable number of HPFI products. Alternative materials from domestic sources have necessitated the structural redesign of internal components. However, the replacement materials identified have yielded additional improvements and positive attributes. New materials for popular collaborative seating (Flex) are available locally, reduced product weights and increased durability. HPFI has also been able to expand the vertical integration of manufacturing from chair frame components that were previously outsourced to in-house manufacturing.

## **Process Innovation**

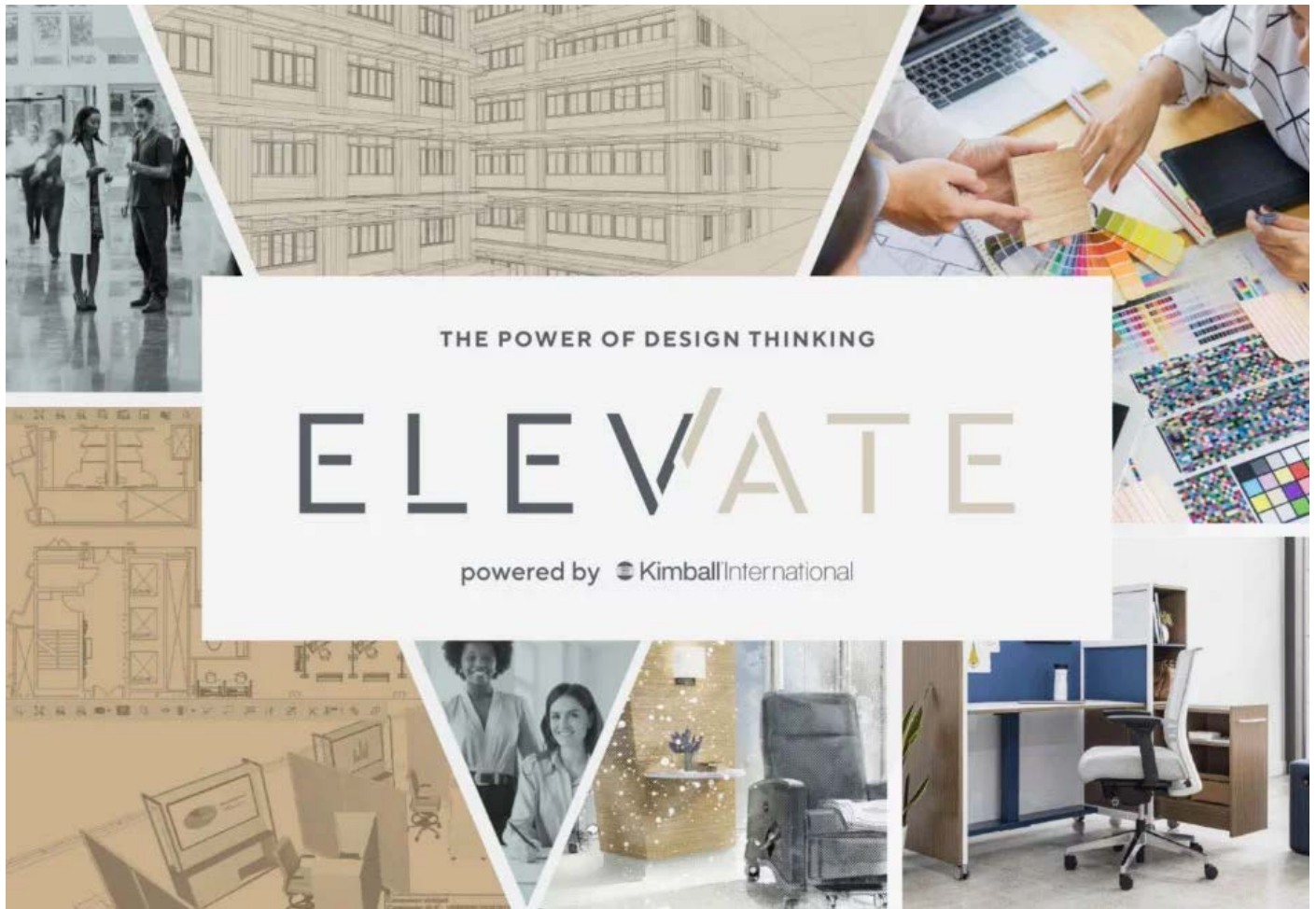
Reducing the run speed of manufacturing equipment sounds counterproductive when throughput and facility maximization are essential. However, HPFI has found that some CNC equipment operated at a slightly slower rate has increased the tool life and reduced waste from machine errors. As mentioned previously some standard materials have been in short supply or unavailable, but some substitute materials perform better and produce a greater yield of materials at the slower rate.

## **Sales/Marketing Innovation**

Listening to our customers leads the way in many areas of product development. As a smaller mid-market manufacturer, we don't have the luxury of a large staff of product designers and engineers. However, HPFI is highly engaged with our customers to glean a better understanding of their furniture needs. This focus has led the way in development of many product introductions years ahead of other manufacturers. The feedback provided leads us into areas enabling us to incorporate "planned design scale" into the product platform. The resulting solutions can then adapt to changing demands and needs over time.

For example, HPFI introduced its Flex tiered seating collection in 2015. Since that initial introduction, the product line has continued to evolve. HPFI now has the broadest selection of tiered seating with fabric, wood or combination materials, storage options, and configurations that are not available elsewhere. The innovation via end-user and resellers' input and focus positioned this product portfolio into the foremost seating collection in collaborative work and learning environments.

## FUTURE OF THE OFFICE WITH KIMBALL




“Design thinking is a process for solving complex problems and exploring innovation opportunities. By emphasizing speed, collaboration, and human-centered insights, the process often solves challenges much faster than traditional project delivery methods.” – Odell Keller.

Leveraging design helps drive extraordinary innovation. Interwoven’s ethos is rooted in a person-centered approach, and at Kimball International, we utilize research and drive a design thinking process called ELEVATE. This methodology is driven by the fundamental approach of collaboration which drives innovation; creating an environment on trust and transparency and unleashing the creative energy to reimagine and solve the problems to elevate the experience. Harvard Business Review states “...design thinking gets around the human biases (for example, rootedness in the status quo)...that time and again block the exercise of imagination.”

When we challenge the status quo of thinking utilizing design, we highlight that there are bigger, more creative, and

innovative ideas to address operational issues, challenges in environments, and ultimately drive high-level conversations to redefine and reimagine environments that we all live, work and play in. ELEVATE highlights the digital transformation that is happening through varying communication models. Interwoven utilizes a BIM (Building Information Modeling) concept to integrate all the technology platforms together, streamline visualization to help challenge the status quo and clearly communicate through visualization to help inform all key stakeholders on the outcome or output. It is truly an immersion that allows everyone to be aligned to the same vision and mission to drive positive outcomes for all. At the end of the day, the current model of work is broken. It does not truly showcase our creative problem solving, it does not streamline process and it doesn’t foster true trust and transparency. The “power” of ELEVATE fixes our broken model and drives true collaboration. This is highlighted through trust, transparency and leveraging design-thinking and digital transformation platforms to maximize all levels of engagement.

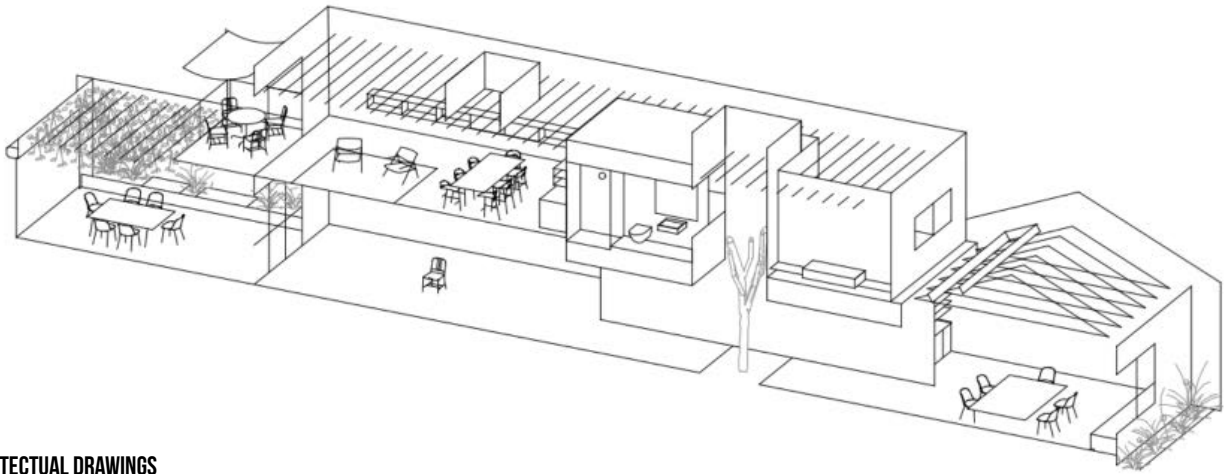


# EMECO HOUSE

A Neglected Sewing Shop  
**UPCYCLED**

Emeco opens a new building in Venice Beach, California, to serve the local community and act as a meeting place for creatives. Thoughtfully designed with an eye on the company's sustainability ethos.

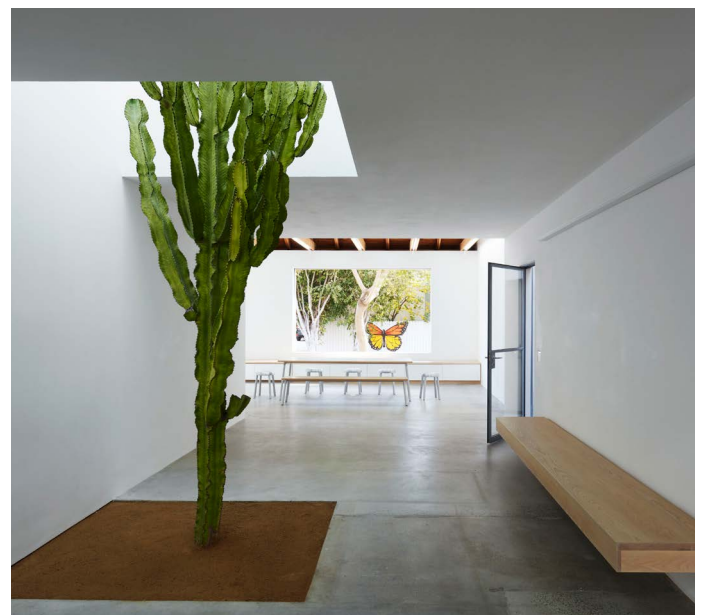
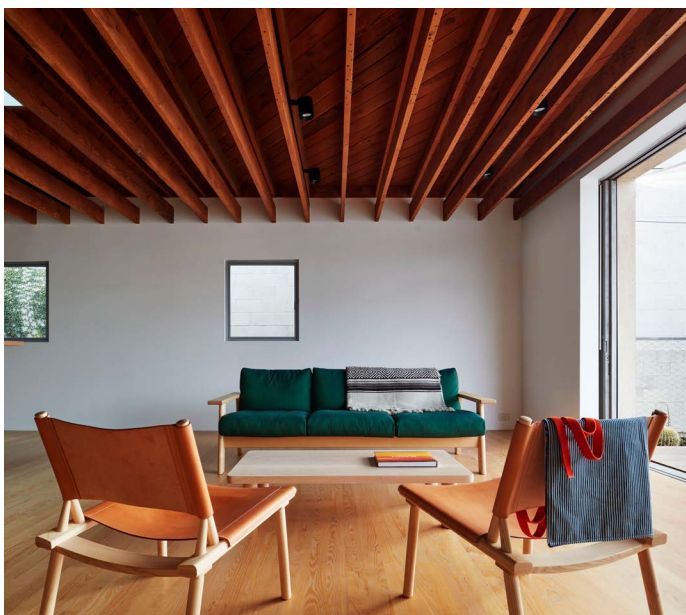
**COVER STORY**  
**EMECO HOUSE**



**ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS**  
**OF EMECO HOUSE**

Emeco - a leader in sustainable furniture design and craftsmanship since 1944 - is proud to introduce a new project in turning what's leftover into something that will last: Emeco House, a complete conversion of a former sewing factory at the edge of a residential neighborhood in Venice, Los Angeles. With the help of Berlin-based architect David Saik, Emeco Owner Gregg Buchbinder along with Emeco's Head of Sustainability, Gregg's daughter Jaye Buchbinder, spearheaded the effort to transform the 1940-era building into a modern, work/exhibition/event space with cooking and social areas including accommodation for visiting guests on the upper level. Emeco House will serve as a flexible meeting space and hub where architects, designers, and the local community can connect. In the four years of development Gregg and Jaye would meet once a week at 5:30am for an early morn-

ing surf session. "The early morning sun rise, pelicans dive bombing minnows, and dolphins playing in the waves were great inspiration for our Emeco House project. Our love for furniture emanates from our love of nature, we wanted to do architecture that reflects all of the ethos of Emeco" comments Gregg. "In a lot of ways, chairs are small buildings. This really gave us a chance to codify and scale our value system-focus on honest, humble materials. Nothing is flashy, but everything is thought through. We hope the quiet comfort will help foster a closer connection between people who come here. It's not a commercial space, it's a conversation place" Jaye adds. In an act of defiance to the ongoing demolition of buildings in the area - reliably replaced by new and insensitive constructions - Emeco chose to retain the existing





*"The design process began with the intention to **RETAIN, UPGRADE,** and **RESTORE** as much as possible of the original construction..."*

**- ARCHITECT DAVID SAIK**

**COVER STORY**  
**EMECO HOUSE**

building in keeping with their primary intention of creating an active and connected place in the neighborhood for community events and activities. Architect David Saik explains: "The design process began with the intention to retain, upgrade, and restore as much as possible of the original construction, with the new interventions and additions

progressively layered in and seamlessly integrated. The result is a kind of 'architectural natural diversity', with the old and new supporting each other in the creation of an indivisible whole." The goal of zero energy self-sustaining operation is achieved through solar energy, with the central light-well and skylights introduced to bring natural light to each space and each equipped with operable vents or fully retracting to effectively generate passive ventilation and cooling within and between the levels of the building. Planting was introduced throughout the spaces, from the cactus in the interior to planters in all outdoors spaces including a roof garden of succulents in the rear yard. The construction was realized with local contractors, carpenters, and fabricators, including expertly produced custom steel windows and doors and rolling gates, complete custom cabinetry, and bespoke interior and exterior plaster finishing. The custom fabrication attention to detail extended to the bathroom accessories which were designed by the architect and handmade in the Emeco factory in Hanover, Pennsylvania. The welded aluminum Emeco sign on the street entry gate was also made by a company craftsman, a replica of the vintage sign found on the factory building. Emeco House is a mark of Emeco's commitment to slow manufacturing and purposeful, sustainable design. It is the company's hope that it will serve as a venue for important conversations around sustainability, craftsmanship, and longevity for many years to come.



**Project:** Emeco House Venice, Los Angeles, California  
**Client:** Emeco Industries Inc. Gregg & Jaye Buchbinder  
**Architect:** David Saik, david saik studio, Berlin  
**Local Architect:** Keith Fallen  
**Photos:** Martin Tessler

**ABOUT EMECO**



*Founded on the principle, "Begin with what's left over, turn it into what will last", American furniture maker Emeco has been building chairs from recycled materials for over 77 years. In the throes of World War II, the U.S. Navy needed a place to sit. Emeco took on the challenge and in 1944 the 1006 Navy Chair was born. Built by hand at our factory in Hanover, Pennsylvania using a unique 77-step process and scrap aluminum—a wartime necessity. Ever since, we have been building chairs from recycled aluminum, so strong that we guarantee them for life. To live up to the standards we inherited from our founders, we are continuously exploring new solutions for turning waste materials into simple, useful and timeless chairs. Together with some of the world's leading architects and designers, we make the best furniture possible that also sits lightly on the planet.*





**HEALTHCARE WAITING ROOM** Urban Wall 6-core in Frosted Acrylic, Moss and Denim EchoScape. Wall Hinged Villa Wall in Moss and Denim EchoScape.

# CHANGING THE GAME IN OFFICE WORKSPACES

## IMAGINE AN OFFICE WHERE...

*Furniture is multi-functional, and can be reconfigured easily. Employees have the flexibility to define their own workspace. Acoustic comfort is achieved artistically, and new uses can be accomplished with existing furniture*

Your perfect office doesn't have to be a dream, it doesn't require a total redesign or include all new furniture. Transforming your office into a functional and beautiful workspace can be easy, affordable, and quick. All you need are well-designed products that work with your existing furniture, provide the ability to change when needed, and enhance your company's aesthetics.

MergeWorks was founded with the idea of creating high quality, ancillary products that "merge" with existing furniture to deliver the adaptability and functionality your office requires.

The company has revolutionized the concept of 'functional workspace'. With a passion for engineering and manufactur-

ing office furniture, CEO and founder Scott Klingler and his team have transformed their fair share of standard workspace setups into areas that provide the elements needed to keep a company moving forward.

So, what exactly does this look like?

Products engineered by MergeWorks are designed to provide versatile solutions that integrate with any work surface or workstation, creating an office that is tailored to the needs of the employees and the company. Because our products are ancillary, fit most furniture systems and are affordable, they allow the company's workspace to evolve along with their culture. Our products range from desk dividers to mobile walls and whiteboards, to a variety of acoustic solutions, converting open space to private space, defining collaborative areas, and improving acoustic comfort.

Our willingness and drive to create exactly what our clients are looking for has made us one of the most innovative companies in the industry. As opposed to the larger manufactur-

## **FUTURE OF THE OFFICE WITH MERGEWORKS**

ers that create a product to sell, we let the market drive us, developing office pieces that are specifically derived from a client's needs.

As an example, a large tech company came to MergeWorks with a vision. They wanted a workplace where the employee was empowered to change their space on a daily basis. They imagined individual workspaces that could be private or open on-demand depending on each employee's workload and schedule. Scott and his design team got to work on an innovative design. The result – SwitchIT panels. Once mounted using our patented magnetic mounts, these lightweight acoustic desk panels can be placed above the desk one day for a quiet, distraction free work zone, then flipped the next to instantaneously convert to an open workstation for collaborative work. The user now has control without tools or the need for the facilities department. Manufactured with our highly rated acoustic material to reduce noise, SwitchIT panels also function to incorporate acoustic comfort in the environment. The easy reconfiguration and acoustic properties of our SwitchIT panels make them perfect for hoteling and hot-desking solutions.

For our team, the goal is to focus on niche areas of the office furniture industry by continuing to develop and expand multifunctional product lines that cater to the evolving workspace. There is no shying away from a project. If a means or a method doesn't yet exist, the team designs and perfects it in-house, then delivers it to the market.

Our Fold-N-Roll Villa Wall room divider screen was developed for a large university in exactly this way. This higher learning institution's vision was to have flexible room panels to be used however the teaching style warranted. The criteria included panels that could be reconfigured quickly and in a variety of ways, that could fold flat and be stored when not in use, and that could double as dry erase boards.

The MergeWorks design team quickly went to work, incorporating flexibility and added functionality. In less than 3-weeks, the university had a working sample of our Fold-N-Roll Villa Wall room divider. This design incorporated 3 Villa Wall room panels hinged together with a gear mechanism that allowed the two end panels to rotate 180° in both directions. The 3 panels together could be configured up to 9 feet wide to separate rooms or create small study nooks by folding the end panels 90°. Each of the 3 panels can be built with a variety of materials depending on the application desired, such as fabric, acoustic EchoScape or TruBrite dry erase.

Developing products based on the vision and imagination of the end user and positively impacting how people work is a unique part of MergeWorks and what we do best. Our design and manufacturing team strives to produce products that are high-quality, affordable, easy to install, aesthetically pleasing and multi-functional.

Understanding what MergeWorks provides and how we've changed the face of the office furniture industry makes it evident why Scott and his father chose the name MergeWorks for their business. As Scott explains, "the name "Merge" was picked to illustrate how our company can offer multiple products that merge with other manufacturer's products, making us more universal than many."

As corporate workspace trends continue to evolve, it becomes increasingly important for companies to allow employees to take control of what their workspace looks like, how it functions and how it feels.

For almost 20 years MergeWorks has continually worked to develop products that make life easier for companies large and small; creating new products and customizing solutions where none currently exists. All of our products are conceptualized, engineered and produced in our state-of-the-art facility in San Antonio, TX, keeping us on the forefront of change and allowing us to quickly respond to the demands of the corporate world. Workspaces that are multi-functional, flexible, and comfortable are within reach.



**IMAGINE AN OFFICE**

*Tucker, Milo, and Vanessa on Hightower's True Love Outdoor Lounge*

# DOGS ON CHAIRS

Imagine an office that includes our four-legged friends

**By David Logsdon**

"Awww, how cute!" came the giggles from the other room as I finished up some work one evening. My wife & daughter were snuggled on the couch, scrolling through Instagram pictures of adorable dogs doing silly human things.

Smiling to myself, I realized that one of the benefits of the last 2 years is so many of us are integrating our dogs, actually our pets, into not only our work lives but also our Zoom calls. How many times have we been on these calls in our shorts & dressy shirts, only to have our beloved dog jump onto our lap to join in the fun?! I was recently on one call where my pup did this & the other ten designers all went to grab their dogs & include them in the call. It does add such a fun element to our stressful days when we can do that, doesn't it? And even more prevalent is now many offices are pet friendly, or they were before but now it's fairly commonplace, and having well-behaved dogs in the office is almost needed because they were so used to having us at home with them.

I then remembered that oftentimes my daughter would have her mini-yorkie sit on one of the sample chairs I brought home for a presentation the following day, enjoying each other as she did her homework. And then, like that sudden explosion of barking that happens when my mini-schnauzer detects the presence of the Amazon delivery-person at the door (again, usually timed perfectly with a Zoom presentation) my thoughts were filled the possibilities of our next marketing campaign – Dogs in Chairs!! (kinda' dramatic, I know, but with business articles we need to spice things up a little!)

Who doesn't love pictures of dogs doing clever things? Maybe even in silly outfits? Then combine this with the dozens & dozens of sample chairs we have in our storage



*Tucker wearing MRL shades, on Hightower's FourCast*

## IMAGINE AN OFFICE

facility, and you have a fun time!! On top of that, what if we could figure out a way to combine this with reasons for customers to want us to bring in sample chairs just to see them ("hey, check out this new lounge chair recently introduced") and we might have something cool and interesting!

**After numerous Zoom calls with our LevelWest team (and yes, some interrupted by our furry friends) we decided:**

**A.** We would have a photoshoot over near our storage facility so we could easily wheel the chairs out for the dogs to "pose" on over a couple of hours. Add some fun outfits and pumping heavy-beat dance music and we had a party! (just kidding about the music)

**B.** Pick a month to do this (was in February) and post one photo per day on both [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#) for the month.

**C.** Let our dealers, designers and customers know of the fun campaign (again, that "follow us here" thing) and have a random \$50 Amazon card prize drawing at the end of the month.

**D.** And then after that month invite them to participate with their pets in their own photoshoot, with us setting up an appointment to bring a sample chair to them (Arcadia, Encore or Hightower; their choice) and we would then take pix of their beloved best friend on our chairs. Their dog, a highly paid model, would need to be compensated accordingly so we would give them a \$25 Petco gift card.

**E.** And finally, our LevelWest team came up with a catchier name for the campaign; DogON Chairs. Successful? Yes, as our social media following did increase dramatically, but the real test is obviously increased sales. Fun? Absolutely!! For us it was a blast, but our customers all seem to really have a lot of fun every day as we posted new pix (I think Tucker, my dog had the most likes but my wife & daughter may argue that statistic with their own participating dogs, Vanessa & Milo)

**Repeatable?** 100%!! Since Arcadia, Encore & Hightower are always coming out with wonderful designs we should have new sample chairs to try again this next February.

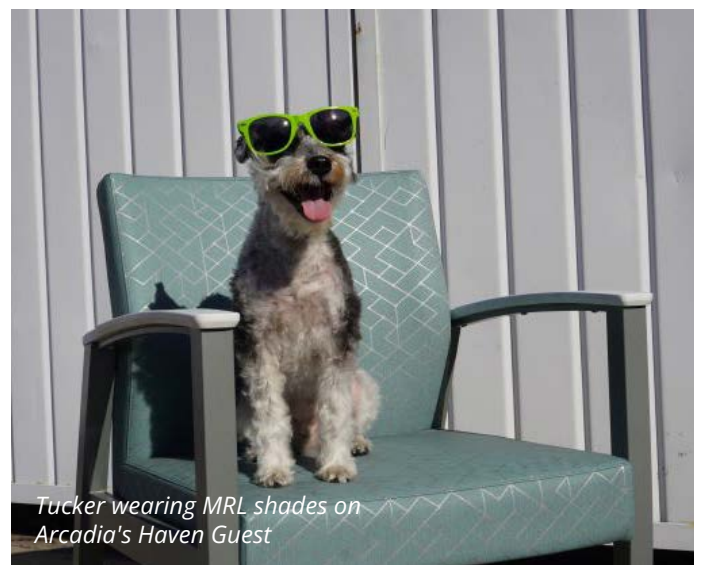
**Bottom line?** We all realize there is a new way of working which for many of us does indeed include our beloved pets, either at home or at work or the new "hybrid" workplace we are all trying to figure out, so trying to Imagine an office with Dogs on Chairs is pretty easy for all of us.



*Tucker, Milo, and Vanessa on Hightower's FourCast Stackers*



*Milo on Hightower's HappyStool.  
Vanessa and Tucker on Happy  
Midback Lounge*



*Tucker wearing MRL shades on  
Arcadia's Haven Guest*

**level**west  
for a better experience



# Getting to Know CFS Group

## REP GROUP FEATURE

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

**A:** My father, Rick Mudge, started our group in 1992 with a couple of lines, covering the 4 states in the Midwest. He started on his own, seeing an opportunity within the market to leverage his sales experience, even though at the time he was a relative newbie in the furniture industry, having made a career change after nearly 20 years in consumer products.

His penchant for hard work and perseverance served this organization well in its early years and set up the base for what we have become.

### Q: How has the company changed over the years?

**A:** We have grown substantially in a lot of ways over the years, both with our line package, our personnel and territory covered. We started off covering KS, IA, NE and MO with one person and partnering with a couple manufacturers. We currently cover 7 states, having added Minnesota, North and South Dakota in 2021 with several of our manufacturer partners, and we now represent 13 manufacturers across our territory with 8 full time people. We currently have the ability to outfit a complete space with our product lines and provide design and marketing support to our customers. We added a showroom in 2020 (right as Covid hit) and we continue to invest in that, looking to potentially expand our showroom footprint across our territory, as well as investing in technology and people.

**REP GROUP  
FEATURE**

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

**A:** I am not sure it is a big secret, but Rick always approached this as a business, not just a sales job and he instilled that in me when I joined him in 2015 until he retired at the end of 2017. We continue to manage our business in this manner. It is not just a lifestyle business. We approach this job with integrity, friendliness, and a willingness to do what it takes to try to make sure our customers are happy. We plan, budget, track our success and we forecast for the future. We try to stay very connected and networked within the industry to stay on top of trends, and we are not afraid to invest in what we believe will help us continue to grow our business and keep us relevant as the industry continues to evolve. We have also been very lucky to partner with best-in-class manufacturers. Ultimately, we wouldn't be as successful and have the longevity we have had without having great manufacturers to represent.

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

**A:** The people. Having worked a few different industries the relationships that I have built in this industry, not just in our territory, but across the country, are what I love. I also enjoy that each day is different. I enjoy the design aspect of what we do, and helping people create great spaces.

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

**A:** I see our role evolving into a more service-oriented role and being better partners within the distribution chain. To me that means that we will do more for both our manufacturers and our customers including growing our design and specification services, marketing services, project management, ancillary product selection, etc. We are starting to scratch the surface with this, and I think moving further in this direction will provide continued growth for our company and manufacturers and a closer, more seamless partnership with our customers.

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

**A:** Dynamic



**Learn more about CFS Group on their website**  
[cfsreps.com](https://cfsreps.com)

# 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!



## Rodenbeck

Rodenbeck Associates is an independent manufacturer rep group formed in 1978 and is based out of our showroom in Downtown Los Angeles, California.

We pride ourselves in outstanding customer service and our excellent mix of high quality, contract furniture lines. Currently we represent 10 contract office furniture manufacturers for all of Southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, Las Vegas, Hawaii and Alaska. We also work with GSA & Hospitality accounts in Europe, Asia and the Pacific Rim.

[rodenbeck.com](http://rodenbeck.com)

## Rodenbeck (continued)

Last night's LA DESIGN CONNECT was huge success! THANK YOU to all that visited and saw some of our latest designs from [DeskMakers](#), [ERG International](#), [Loftwall](#), [Source International](#), [Via Seating](#), [Nevins](#), [Dekko](#) and [Koncept Inc.](#)

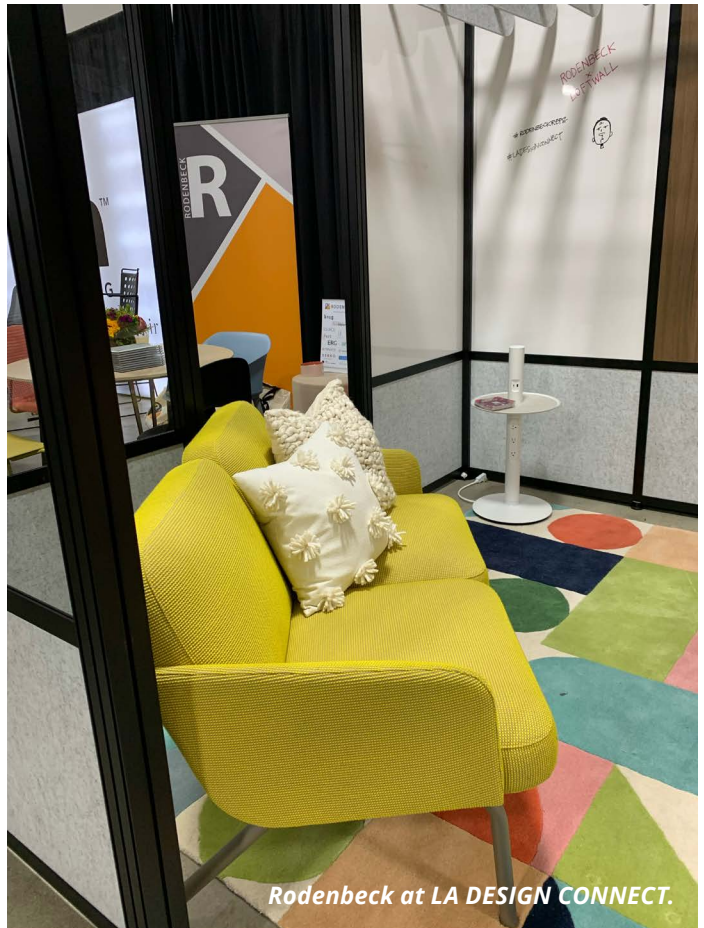


Rodenbeck at LA DESIGN CONNECT.

## LGS Group

LGS Group took part in the Be Well Showcase in Orange County, California. The event took place at Peoplespace, and raised over \$7500 for charity.

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



Rodenbeck at LA DESIGN CONNECT.



LGS Group



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