



delve^{MRL}

SEPTEMBER 2020 **V6**

**Finding A Way
Forward With
MooreCo**

**A Few of Our Favorite
Education Products
Form The Library**

**Making Schools Safe
In 2020 And Beyond**

Education is At the Heart of Design

**A look at the wide scope of comprehensive
design education.**



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Susan Mulholland discusses how a comprehensive and lifelong learning approach can help designers.



Emma Tessler evaluates the current needs of educators and explores how good design can help move us forward.



Amy Moulis discusses how lifelong learning can help create a more fulfilling life.

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editor's note

Dear Reader,
Education is truly a cornerstone of our industry. From the education of designers, architects and more, to how we as an industry affect the future of education design. There's no question, educational themes are an unavoidable part of the Contract Design world.

In this issue of Delve, we look at education from several different perspectives. First we look at how a designer's approach to their own education can set them apart from the crowd.

Then we discuss all of the new challenges the Education Design sector is facing in the post-Covid-19 environment. We look at several solutions from manufacturers, and more.

We invite you to dive in and enjoy all of the feature articles and product highlights that center around "education".

As always, please email us with any submission ideas for Delve.

industrynews@myresourcelibrary.com.



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Education is At The Heart of Design

The First in a Three-Part Series

Education is more than a timely topic. It is probably one of the most critical issues, not just for teachers, schools, or even students but for everyone. In the next three articles, we'll discuss why knowledge and communication skills are essential tools every designer needs to have for a successful project. The designer who believes that they will learn everything they need to know in school will not be as successful as the designer who believes what they have learned in school is just the beginning of what they will learn during their entire career.

Interior design is the profession of knowledge. There I said it! What I mean is that to be an interior designer is to be knowledgeable and aware not only of what is hip and trending in colors, fabric choices, or the latest furniture style but how design affects our environments and, most importantly, our daily lives.

When people ask me what I do for a living, I tell them that I am a commercial interior designer, and then I follow that up with I create environments with a purpose for people. This statement sums up what we all should be doing. Whether or not you are a commercial or residential designer, the meaning of purpose is why we do what we do.

Purpose can be anything from helping a client be more productive, sell a product, do a specific job, be healthy, have a safe place to live, or have fun! These things require a knowledge that goes beyond what color to paint the walls or what cool chair to use. Every space we design involves knowledge that comes from understanding how that particular environment should work and why. We need to really understand who will be using this particular space because it will ultimately lead to the best design solution.

Designers need to be aware of everything that is going on around them. A lifelong learner is someone who is curious about everything, not just one



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.](#)



idea or topic. Good designers need to be lifelong learners. They need to see what is going on now and what will be ahead in the near future. Many things that don't necessarily relate directly to design should be understood because you never know if that particular subject or idea is important to your client. It may be something they feel so strongly about that they are hiring you to create an environment that incorporates that idea or topic.

Let's take a subject like wellness. Wellness in all of its forms has been interwoven into the design aesthetic for several years. It has been a hot topic in industries like hospitality and workplace. In the healthcare industry, evidence-based design has been driving this concept that healthy environments don't need to look completely sterile to promote health. Instead, the finishes, fabrics, and even furniture that are used need to be able to help keep pathogens and other harmful entities from interfering with the patients' or caregivers' health. This is wellness in its purest form. This is what I mean when I say that a subject that doesn't necessarily relate directly to interior design on the surface suddenly becomes important.

If you haven't been learning how wellness works into a design concept, now is the time to start. What I mean is that this is the new knowledge base for interior designers. We will be tasked with educating our clients and even our design team members on why we need to be super diligent on what we specify for anything related to the interior of that space. This is a direct result of the pandemic- we are changing our focus on design to be more in tune with our clients' needs.

For example, as I mentioned in the first paragraph, education is at the forefront of everyone's minds NOW. Whether you have kids in school, are a student, a teacher, administrator, or even just a concerned citizen, we are all thinking about schools. The pandemic has made us all hypersensitive about each oth-

er, especially while we are inside a building. School design has always been about how we learn- what kind of furniture, lighting, and even colors work well in learning environments to keep students engaged in what is being taught by the instructor. But now we see that what we thought we knew about educational design is not what we need. We need to have spaces that are built around flexibility and technology. We will also be tasked to design educational spaces that seriously address health and wellness. Not by creating healthcare like spaces, but spaces that still encourage learning that are now also addressing a new kind of safety- our health. Our new goal will be to design educational environments on all levels to meet all the occupants' health and wellness needs, not just the teachers or the students but anyone who enters a school.

This is not just about adhering to the CDC guidelines or how to design remote (home)classrooms; our design work will need to focus on more than just the latest trends. We will need to focus on how we design a space to accommodate the unknown.

Interior designers will need to be more cognizant of what changes are happening in building and health codes and the attitudes of the general public. We will need to be more knowledgeable than ever before when it comes to what we specify, draw, or suggest to our clients as a design solution. We will need to have design solutions that meet these new and ever-changing demands.

Most importantly, we will need to adapt the way we communicate this knowledge to our clients so that they understand what we are doing is not just creating a beautiful space, but that we have considered all of those unknown conditions that may affect the health and wellbeing of the people using our well-designed space.



Make a Statement

The Jax Collection delivers dramatic lines and striking angles with its geometric, sculptural design that transforms a workplace into a modern showroom. With meticulous tailoring and beautiful craftsmanship, Jax makes a statement. Jax comes in a variety of options with its signature style across all models – High-Back, Mid-Back, Side – with a choice of bases and finishes.

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Finding A Way Forward With Compass by MooreCo

2020 has been a year of change, and the world of design is taking note. Decisions are being made now in virtual and physical rooms across the nation, with innovators hoping to create a future with more options for how students can learn easily and effectively. With change comes a unique opportunity to improve on old models and make way for new ones. This is true for work, for home, and for schools.

For MooreCo, that means starting the process of hearing from teachers about what an ideal classroom looks and feels like going forward. They are no strangers to change. In fact, they've made it their mission to create environments where people thrive for the last 35 years. When the Compass Collection was created in spring of 2020, it was designed to make life easier for teachers and more fun for students.

Laboratories and makerspaces in schools are in need of storage tools that are multi-functional and provide easy access to all students. With the Compass Collection, MooreCo created a line of products that work for every classroom and need. Marketed this summer as a handy, lightweight sanitation station, the Compass cabinets are conveniently mobile and surprisingly lightweight for how well-constructed and durable they are. Cabinets

and tables include locking casters and come in a variety of custom configurations. But the benefits of the Compass line are not only the moveable aspects of the pieces. The line is incredibly customizable. Cabinets can be lined with cubbies and drawers to store everything from PPE to laboratory learning tools.

The design philosophy behind Compass came at an ideal time. When everything is shifting and no one is quite sure what the way forward is, discovery is the name of the game. So, with the Compass line, MooreCo is channeling the ability to navigate a new way of learning for all. This means easily moveable pieces for teachers to stay safely distanced, when necessary. It also includes safety features like rounded edges on cabinets and makerspace tables so that there are fewer incidents with active kids in a hurried classroom. Easy access and mobility are important for teachers and students, so the Compass pieces come with a handle option and are lightweight and easy to move throughout the classroom.

For Robotics and science teachers, the Compass collection is a welcome change to the classroom of yesterday. Because the pieces are so customizable, spaces can be made to reflect each school's methods and spirit. The variety of bright colors to

MOORE CO FEATURED EDUCATION SOLUTIONS

choose from mean that designers and educators can encourage a sense of tranquility or energy in class, depending on the colors used.

The Compass line is durable and well-constructed enough for years of use. Cabinet tops are reinforced so they won't dent or buckle. Large casters and the optional handle create easy and smooth mobility throughout each classroom. Each piece is retrofittable with different top accessories to accommodate activities, and a pegboard side panel option creates easy access to learning tools or equipment for labs.

There are other signature MooreCo features to the Compass Collection that will add bright upgrades to classrooms. The optional whiteboard easel and TV mount top options make these pieces versatile and multi-functional. Available in three height options, the Compass cabinets come in a mini, midi, and maxi width. Between the size options, the choice of 10 MooreCo signature colors, and 12 laminate top options, the Compass collection will satisfy the needs of virtually any learning environment, no matter what needs to be stored.

The Makerspace tables can be made with the laminate tabletop option or butcher block tabletop option are available and will provide a sturdy tabletop for working. Students can write, draw, or plan on the porcelain steel surface option that won't dent, scratch, stain, or ghost.

Though the Compass Collection is not the first of its kind, MooreCo has found a way to improve upon many features that are missing from competitors' similar lines. Reinforced tops, doors that fold flat, and pieces that come fully assembled are just a few of the features that set Compass Collection apart. For this reason, we can see that MooreCo is aiming to lead the way with Compass, helping shape the classrooms of the future.

MooreCo plans to hold a virtual conference at the end of October. Topics will be based around how to navigate the future of learning and how furniture and learning tools can help or hinder the success of teachers and students of all backgrounds. One thing is clear, that in changing times, learning must be made fun, active, and accessible to all. MooreCo is an example of a company creating solutions for classrooms everywhere, and they are



INDUSTRY RESOURCES



The traditional Red Stick (Baton Rouge) Flamingo takes a seat in the halls of the School of Interior Design at Louisiana State University to remind students and visitors to social distance while bringing a smile to the faces of students and faculty. Submitted by LSU.

This fall, the Interior Design Educator's Council launched a new program dedicated to assisting interior design educators as they navigate the new and uncharted territory in teaching and learning. Plans for institutions vary widely and educators are searching for ideas and resources to deliver quality education.

IDEC's SMART reSTART is a collection of teaching essentials to help educators develop alternative teaching models, rethink facilities, and utilize digital communication tools to enhance learning and the health and wellbeing of students and teachers. Smart reStart is module based so educators can easily locate resources relevant to their concerns and challenges.

Each module includes fundamental ideas to implement or adapt at your institution and a collection of theories and concepts to consider when creating alternative teaching models or evolving the model already in place.

Check out the Top 10 Ideas for teaching and learning now and in the future.

- **Advice for Faculty Members in a Turbulent Time**
- **Education Post Coronavirus**
- **Krispy Kreme Face Shield**
- **Manual of Physical Distancing**
- **Miro**
- **Morpholio Trace**
- **Nordic Rebels**
- **One Shot Video**
- **Sample HyFlex Class Plan**
- **Sit and Get Fit**

If you are searching for ideas and resources, Smart reStart is your one stop shop, available to IDEC members only. For information on joining IDEC, visit www.idec.org.

SMART reSTART MODULES



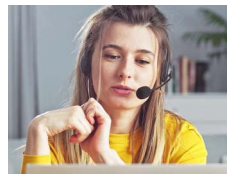
HYFLEX/HYBRID TEACHING

Studies, videos, and downloadable class plans on flexible and hybrid environments for teaching and learning.



TEACHING RESOURCES

A wide variety of resources including Engaging Students, Lessons Learned, Critique and Communication, Enhanced Course Content and more!



DIGITAL COMMUNICATION TOOLS

A comprehensive list of tools and platforms to improve efficiency in virtual settings or for HyFlex/Hybrid teaching. Also included is IDEC's Premier Partner, My Resource Library.



FACILITY PLANNING AND DESIGN

A collection of planning and design guidelines, articles and tools written by experts from across the globe.



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

From stress and fatigue relief to guidelines on healthy classrooms, this module offers tips, studies, and short video clips to help institutions focus on the health and wellbeing of educators and students alike.



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Studies, videos, and downloadable class plans on flexible and hybrid environments for teaching and learning.



Return To The Classroom With Haskell Education

Haskell Education is proud to have been included in the recent interiors + sources ehandbook titled “Reopening & Reimagining Educational Facilities Amid COVID-19”.

In this article, you will find a link to our 2 page white paper authored by John Myers, Director of Marketing and Training at Haskell Education that was included in their ehandbook. With all the challenges facing schools as they re-open, there are numerous strategies that can be deployed to help educators through this difficult time.

As we consider our return to school, we need to look at both immediate as well as long-term solutions that will continue to foster engagement while keeping our children and teachers safe.

The following are suggestions and ideas that can help your institution:

- Encourage active learning
- Expand classroom spaces
- Maintain the highest level of engagement possible
- Support physical and emotional wellness
- Quick and easy implementation
- Utilize existing resources

We will also be working with numerous experts in their field with the goal of providing useful insights and strategies that can help institutions navigate this challenging time. Please check back here to have access to these resources as they are added for your students and teachers.



Ethos Chair with Storage Base



Echo Individual Student Table

EXPERT WHITE PAPERS

ON RETURNING TO THE CLASSROOM

[*Strategies for Student Engagement During and After COVID-19*](#)
By John Myers, Director of Marketing and Training, Haskell Education

[*Wellness & Covid 19*](https://www.haskelleducation.com/wellness/)
<https://www.haskelleducation.com/wellness/>

FALCON™

ASCENT TABLE COLLECTION



LIFT



FLIP



FOLD

falconproducts.com



Innovative Privacy & Health Solutions By Loftwall

Furniture brands have had to adapt more in 2020 than perhaps any year in recent history. All annual plans, budgets, goals, and launches have been scrapped, and household names have shifted into the "whatever it takes" mode to survive this year. Few industries are affected by COVID-19 more than the commercial furniture world, where tens of millions of white-collar American employees were banished to their homes - meaning commercial office furniture has never been needed less. This massive pause in the economy brought thousands of projects and bids to a screeching halt - with Fortune 500 companies making huge decisions about if and when their people will return to the office.

That inflection point of the industry has paved a way for several entrepreneurial brands to make a name for themselves in a time when nimbleness is being rewarded. There is perhaps no better case for this than Loftwall, a Texas-based manufacturer of privacy systems. Before COVID-19 changed the landscape of the American workplace, the company positioned itself to be obsessed with the micro and macro opportunities to give people the ability to focus in their workplaces.

"When we looked at the competitive landscape at the end of 2019, we believed there was a real opportunity to plant our flag on the issue of privacy in the workplace," said Bryce Stuckenschneider, CEO of Loftwall. *"Sure, there are dozens of acoustics brands that solve one part of the problem, but if you*

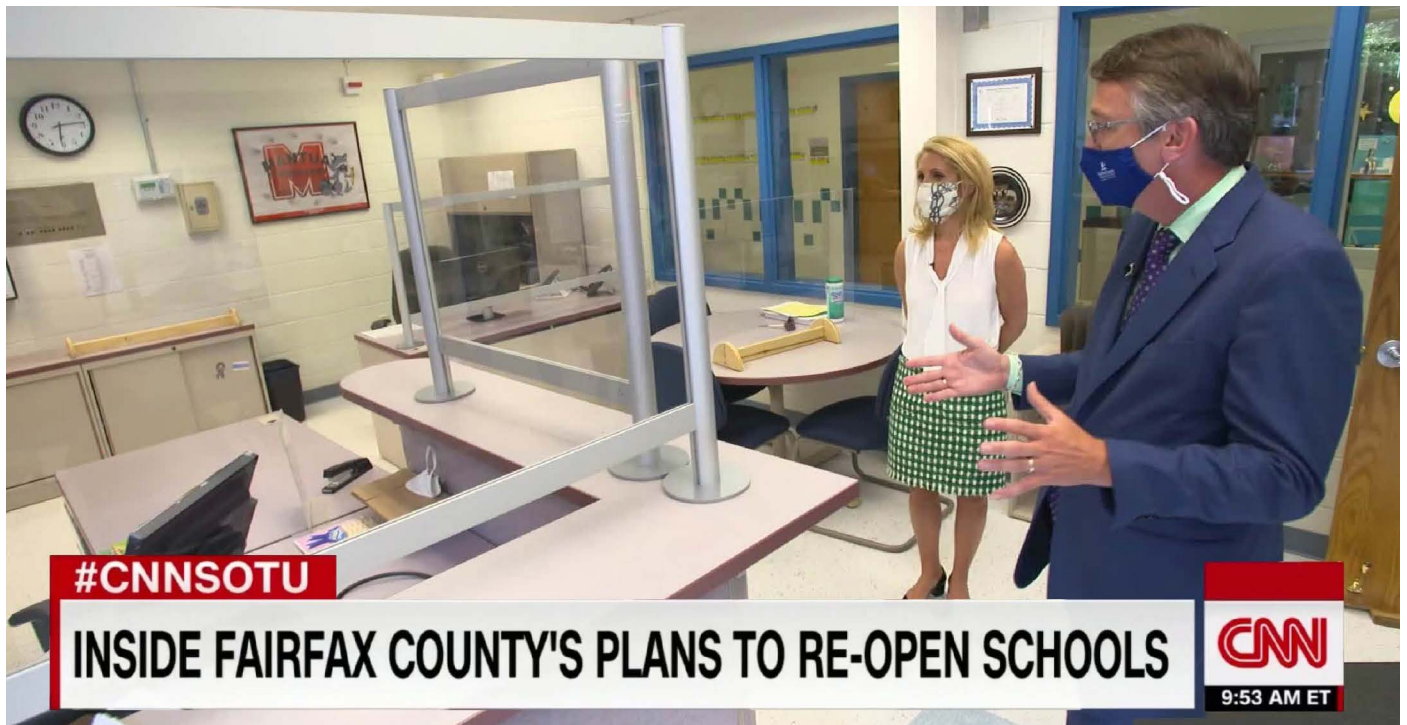
believe distractions and effective use of space are the Achilles heel of the open office, there were too few companies working to solve this problem before 2020 began."

So when social distancing became mission-critical for space planners, Loftwall was ready to answer the call. Before April was over, Loftwall had launched nine new products that were engineered to address "reopening safely" for businesses. That speed propelled record growth at Loftwall, but the inquiries quickly evolved from the corporate and retail world into the classroom. Hundreds of schools began calling to understand how they can equip their classrooms, cafeterias, and libraries with products to allow their students separation and flexibility. Unfortunately, not every school has a relationship with a furniture dealer nor the funds to come up with a cohesive plan campus-wide. Many schools were forced to create makeshift partitions for their students with PVC pipe and shower curtains.

But slowly, schools realized they could take the best practices that the corporate world was using and apply it to keeping their students safe. But if a typical American school day requires proximity, how can a school deliver that with federal recommendations of distancing students?

"This is the biggest adaptive challenge in my career, and in the history of public education," Cindy Marten, superintendent of San Diego Public Schools, told the [New York Times](#).

**LOFTWALL
FEATURED EDUCATION
SOLUTIONS**



Loftwall's Counter Shields were recently featured on a CNN segment about school's reopening plans.

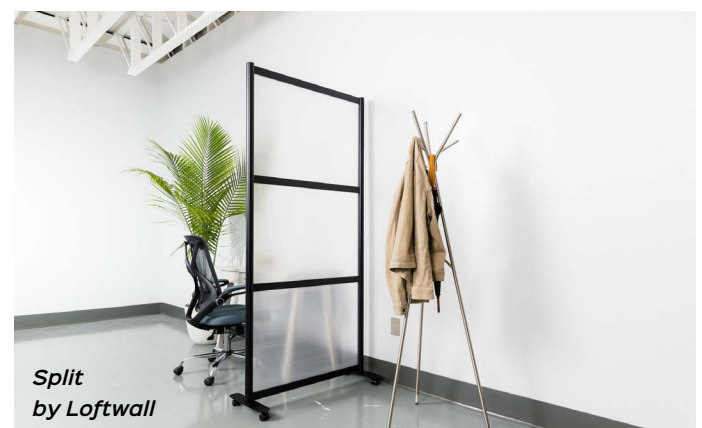
So the answer is that the school year is destined to be anything other than typical. Teaching styles must change, spaces must be reconfigured, and in Loftwall's case, new products must be designed. Loftwall was asked by multiple districts to re-imagine what a classroom could look like. And it was out of these conversations that Loftwall and their engineering team learned they were poised to help schools across the country.

"At the end of the day, our value proposition has to be safety and flexibility," said David Fortener, Loftwall's Director of Product & Engineering. "Each day is a new round of inputs and variables that we work to accommodate for our customers. One minute we could be trying to help ESL classes at an urban school socially distance, the next minute we're helping a high school biology lab enable their students to collaborate on projects together. No two spaces are the same that we're designing for, which makes it even more exciting to roll up our sleeves and get to work."

And that may be one of the themes that Loftwall can hang

their hat on with a record year in 2020 - the willingness to roll up their sleeves and challenge "the way it's always been done." As class sizes have needed to shrink (and many students are opting for online education to start the school year), schools are working hard to repurpose existing space into new classrooms. That's where Loftwall products like Framewall, Weave, Pivot, and Blox come in particularly handy. These modular walls were designed to quickly assemble and provide maximum acoustic barriers without needed permits, contractors, or a Master's Degree in furniture assembly.

Whether you're re-opening a school, an office, a clinic, a movie theater, or a warehouse - business leaders need to be willing to think outside of the box and color outside the lines. Luckily for this Made in the USA brand, Loftwall has a fully stocked box of crayons to help these people get the job done.



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Explore more at [fritzhanzen.com](https://www.fritzhanzen.com)

FRITZ HANSEN



How Design Can Lead the Way: **Making Schools Safe in 2020 & Beyond**

BY EMMA TESSLER

As we find ourselves in Back to School mode again, we have all begun to question what this year will mean for the students and teachers who are donning face masks along with school bags before they walk into their buildings.

There's no denying that the school year will be anything but normal in 2020. Teachers have found themselves in situations similar to that of nurses in March, but without the prestige that comes along with the title. With school funding at an all-time low and with no clear direction from federal or state governments, school districts have found the task of creating concrete plans in the face of a potential second wave incredibly difficult.

As Designers, we know that there are many opportunities for

design to create safe spaces for occupants. We have developed health and wellness design solutions for users in residential, commercial, and retail spaces for years. So why is it that Educational Design has been so behind on this "trend" and that we are only seeing it come to light now?

COVID-19 has spotlighted many weak points in our society & lives over the past six months. But none has been as glaring as the lack of public health-centered design currently facing our teachers and students. When a 2 oz. bottle of off-brand hand sanitizer was the only COVID-19 precaution provided to teachers as they reenter the classroom; we have to ask ourselves -- what can we do to make schools safer in this COVID-19 world?

EDUCATION DESIGN FEATURE

A 2 oz. bottle of hand sanitizer isn't going to cut it.

After interviewing several teachers to understand their perspective, their current situations, and what they desire to see change, I've compiled a dream list of ways Interior Design solutions that are readily available could be used in educational settings. Many of the teachers I spoke to were shocked that these solutions existed, since their school districts considered none of them as viable options.

Some of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to make schools safer are the same things that many public spaces like retail have already implemented. Providing permanent hand sanitizer stations throughout a school building is an easy thing to do, and many schools already have a few of these. Hand sanitizer stations can be branded with school colors and/or mascots to incorporate them into the natural school setting, and could easily be accompanied with mask stations, where anyone could come and pick up a fresh, disposable mask in case something happens to their own. In younger schools, sinks can be installed in classrooms (many are already equipped with one) and should be accompanied by antiviral soap and paper towels. These sinks -- equipped properly -- will help encourage good hygiene and germ awareness from a young age.

Along the lines of encouraging personal hygiene, schools could also provide mask sanitation containers that utilize UV light technology. These containers could be used by all students and faculty to sanitize their masks during lunchtime, or during "mask breaks" that some schools have implemented. Making one-way lanes in hallways/corridors with dividers between traffic can also be quite effective in reducing contact between those moving around in school buildings between periods or classes.

On a larger scale, many new technologies could be added to educational settings to make the buildings a cleaner and healthier place to spend the day in. Antibacterial handle sleeves could be easily applied to all door handles, faucets, and other high-touch areas. When exposed to light, these sleeves undergo an oxidation process, which breaks down germs so that they're not spread to every individual that touches these surfaces. Water fountains (many of which are already outdated) should be replaced with touch-less copper fountains. Copper is an alloy metal, which means it's naturally antimicrobial. That, along with touch-less bottle filling stations, significantly decreases germs

spreading while keeping students & staff hydrated. Temperature screening stations can also be set up at all entrances to school buildings, to ensure that all who enter are healthy. In the event that someone comes down with COVID-19 symptoms while in the building, a Quarantine Room could become a designated waiting area until the symptomatic individual is picked up. These rooms can then be easily sanitized, with the reassurance that the germs were reasonably contained.

While not all schools have the budget for significant changes to their building infrastructure, such changes could have major impacts on keeping students and faculty safe and healthy. Air filtration systems in school buildings can and should be replaced in favor of HEPA filters, which heavily filter recirculated air in the building. At a minimum, if schools can't revamp their filter systems, they should be cleaning them and replacing filters regularly. Restrooms -- a hot place for germs to spread -- should have indigo LED lights installed within. These occupancy lights come on when no one is in the restroom (mainly during evening hours), and the light emitted kills bacteria. These lights could significantly aid school cleaners in ensuring that all bacteria in bathrooms are regularly cleaned out. All rugs should also be removed from school buildings for a cleaner environment. Floors should be replaced as needed with poreless surfaces that can be easily cleaned with a bleach-based solution. Antiviral sealants can also be applied to floors as an extra precaution against the spread of germs. Lastly, more plant life should be introduced into educational spaces. Plants help to naturally filter indoor air that's recirculated and good for our mental health, which contributes to our immune systems. Whether it's a few more potted plants in each classroom or the installation of indoor living walls, the introduction of plant life indoors has been shown to impact human well-being significantly.

Now, as we look at the vast array of Design solutions available during these uncertain times, I challenge you to consider how you can begin to help implement these changes in your local districts. How are you taking your Interior Design expertise and making sure your teachers and children stay safe this school year?



EMMA TESSLER

Emma Tessler is an Interior Designer at MKDA in Manhattan, New York. She focuses on Corporate Design and has a passion for creating spaces that combine both beautiful form and human-centered functionality.

6 MRL FAVORITES: EDUCATION PRODUCTS IN THE LIBRARY

The following products represent 6 of our favorite education products currently on My Resource Library. The products are listed in no particular order.

KIT CHILDREN'S STOOL

MIEN

Ideal for active sitting environments like brainstorming sessions or circle time, this unique ergonomically designed stool enables a student to move while sitting in a stationary position.



CLOUD 9 DESK AND TABLES

MOORE CO

Cloud 9 Desk and Tables are a configurable system for your flexible classroom or training room. Specifically designed for supporting a variety of learning modes to promote interaction in your classroom.



BRIGHTON JR

ERG

Our Children's collection has been expanded with some great additions that allow more flexibility to create some great spaces. Whether you need tables, chairs or soft seating, our collections have extended to many options. We also offer a variety of soft seating from ottomans to modular units.



SNOWFLAKE

SPEC

Snowflake shaped tables are available as standard in 24", 30" and 36". Other shapes such as round or square as well as other sizes may be available. Snowflake is a fun solution for any area where the little ones gather.

MULTI-PLAY TOWER BY HABA

GRESSCO

Fun for a large age range thanks to four independently playable sides. Stimulating - visual, haptic and acoustic elements. A variety of activities to stimulate children's senses for dexterity, cooperation and the laws of physics.



SEE-THRU TABLE DIVIDER SHIELDS

JONTI-CRAFT

Make the most of your table space while supporting social distancing and physical separation with this see-thru divider. It creates six separated workstations and does not require installation to the tabletop - simply move and reposition to the area of need.





Work From Home Or Back to the Office?

The Magic is In the Margin

Originally published on LinkedIn

BY RYAN MENKE

There is clearly a hot debate out there right now on the future of the office and the impact working from home will have on our industry. So far there appear to be three camps starting to form around the subject. 1) WFH doesn't work; 2) WFH will be blended into a flexible work strategy; and 3) WFH is the future of work. Let's explore the pros and cons of each.

For some, especially those with young kids at home, WFH is not working. Having no barrier between their work and personal lives is an issue that is exacerbated by family and/or friends being home all at once. The parent/s are trying to get work done while the kids are wanting their attention...after all mom and dad are home so it must be family time, right? But even if the kids are in daycare, we are still seeing droves of people struggling

without their routine and identity that comes with work. But, there are also others that are having a tough time in this new situation. In rural areas, people are struggling with spotty internet connections and in dense urban environments space constraints with roommates and noisy surroundings have been an issue. For these groups, a destination outside of their residence is needed to get work done.

We've also seen the polar opposite feeling about WFH where companies are adopting this temporary situation as a permanent new way of working. After all, their employees are able to stay on task, get projects done and the company continues to move the business forward. The bottom-line savings of not having a lease or mortgage is significant. They see the pandemic as an accelerant to a freelance phenomenon that goes by many

**INDUSTRY
HOT TOPICS**

names [“The Liquid Workforce”, “The Gig Economy”, “Remote Intelligence”] and was well underway pre-COVID.

What I think we are missing in this conversation is the deeper human perspective. Yes, working from home allows people to avoid long commutes that congest our roads and pollute our skies. Yes, working from home provides schedule flexibility and a place to focus during normal times. Yes, working from home can provide more quality family time with our loved ones. Yes, you can check tasks off of your list and stay on track on your projects. And, yes, you can stay superficially connected with video conferencing technologies, but what does connection really mean and what are we potentially giving up?

Before COVID-19, loneliness and anxiety were at an all-time high across the globe. Addiction is a direct response to loneliness and isolation and is the exact same biological trigger to meet the need for relational connection. It is also the same “high” when someone “likes” our content on social media. Loneliness is a result of a lack of meaningful connection, community and relationships in our lives and trying to fill that void with “likes” and “thumbs up” is a frivolous pursuit that only steepens the decline of our mental wellbeing. If loneliness and isolation are producing massive social and cultural mental health and addiction challenges, then why would we encourage people to stay home?

It doesn't matter if you are an introvert or extrovert, we all need connection and belonging. It is the reason we join book clubs and bike clubs.

Humans long for connection and it requires a much deeper experience than what talking into a screen can provide. We are genetically wired for connection. It doesn't matter if you are an introvert or extrovert, we all need connection and belonging. It is the reason we join book clubs and bike clubs. We experience people with all our senses and need that in-person feedback. Only when we are together do we get to experience the richness and depth of another person. We learn about each other through ad hoc conversations and physical proximity. You can literally feel the energy in a conversation when you are together.

So, yes we can do our “jobs” remotely, but what we lose is far too important. Culture is the conversations we have with one another. Conversations (I'm talking deep and meaningful conversations) don't happen over a Webex. If this was a technology problem, it would have been solved long ago by companies like Apple, Google, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft, etc. There is a reason they build campuses for their employees to engage face to face.

The magic of in-person conversations is in the margin. The

magic of in-person conversations is in the margin. It is that spark that comes from the friction of a passionate or exploratory conversation. It is that palpable energy that builds between people until it crescendos in that “aha moment.” This is what will be lost as people rush to carte blanche work from home policies. They are a cost play and I posit that those that choose to pursue this path will regret them dearly as their competitors that prioritize people first will out-innovate and perform them.

As in all things, we should strive to strike a balance. If there is no separation, work and life will become more intertwined and create no space for one or the other. I believe this further blending of work/life might have the opposite intended effect and could create a more stressful environment than what we experienced prior to this pandemic-led shift.

The positive elements of WFH should not be ignored. Less congested roads have dramatically reduced pollution and given Mother Earth a chance to breathe. The flexibility and focus that WFH provides are also extremely valuable. However, it is undeniable the importance that placemaking provides in creating human connection. Place is the tinderbox that ignites the spark of conversation into a flame of progress. It is the flywheel for innovation and creativity.

By adopting a high-trust distributed model, businesses and individuals will move faster, innovate more and reduce our environmental impact.

The path forward, as I see it, is one built on truly listening to and understanding human needs, not corporate ones. Trust and Transparency will be fundamental building blocks in the new world. They will empower the individual or team to choose the optimal place to get their particular work for that day complete. Transparency creates a common vision and shared information across the organization. Trust eliminates unnecessary commutes and meetings and empowers decision making at the tip of the spear. By adopting a high-trust distributed model, businesses and individuals will move faster, innovate more and reduce our environmental impact.

Consider - In full transparency, our company makes office furniture. We also used to make wooden blinds, scoreboards and wagons. I'm witnessing and feeling these things first hand through our company, so I wanted to share some perspective on WFH. If offices go away and humans and Mother Earth are better off, count us in. My hope, no matter where you work, is that you feel valued by your company and fulfilled in your professional endeavors. Did I mention we used to be a brewery too before prohibition :) Be safe out there and find the magic in the margin wherever that may be for you!



RYAN MENKE

Ryan Menke is the SVP Sales and Marketing at OFS. He has a multi-disciplinary background and is passionate about the Contract Design Industry.



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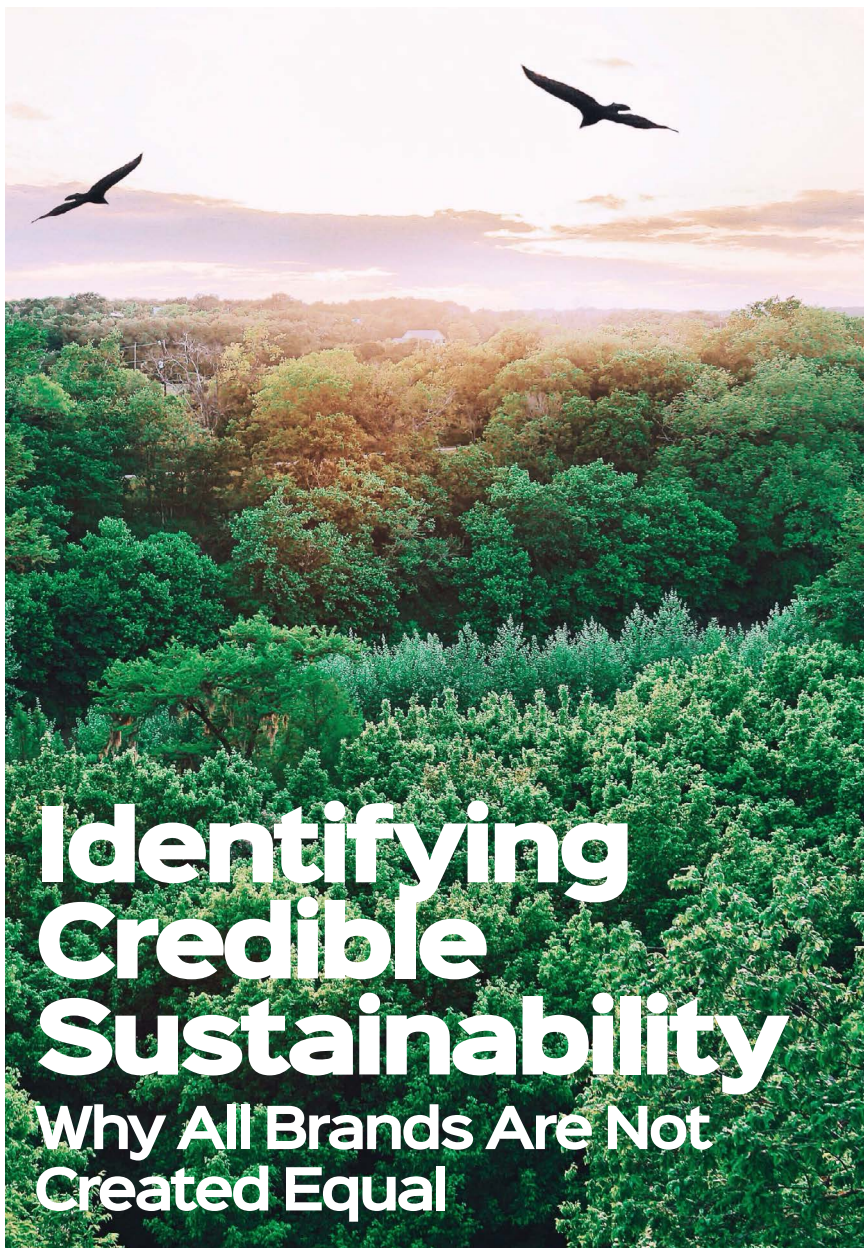
By Ashley Blevins

Ashley Blevins is the Director of Sales for GMi Companies who is a manufacturer of the brands Ghent, Waddell, and Vividboard. After spending over a decade in marketing, specializing in dealer relations, Ashley has been responsible for expanding the national sales footprint for the GMi family of brands.

Ashley is a certified presenter of CEU's and travels the nation providing presentations that train and educate dealers, architects, and designers on skills to educate their clients and close the sale

Ashley has found her passion in serving customers by providing value, earning trust, and turning customers into partners. Her philosophy for marketing and sales revolves around embracing change, trial and error, thinking strategically and using data to drive your next move. I

n her free time, you can find her enjoying the country air with her family or waving her Terrible Towel on Sundays.



Have you ever turned on the radio to hear the same song playing on every channel? Overplayed, saturating the market, winning awards? Just like that popular song, the furniture industry has several themes that are overplayed. Sustainability is one such theme. Maybe you've heard of it? It seems to pop up in every article you read, every email campaign, and on the home page of every manufacturer's website. But have you ever noticed how often it is misused or misunderstood? This confusion and misinformation are often referred to as "greenwashing."

It's meant to make consumers think the products they are buying are, in fact, "chemical-free", or "non-toxic", "sustainable." This confusion has led to an epidemic within the interior industry. We need to educate ourselves and our clients on fully understanding the sustainable aspects they are seeking. Understanding the client's perspective on the term is key to answer their needs. Let's digest five of the top sustainability attributes and discuss what each one looks at and, ultimately, how to source the products that meet those needs.

SOURCING

First, utilizing products from companies that source their materials legally and sustainably. This attribute investigates the materials that make up a product and ensures they are sourced sustainably and practice legal and safe labor laws. For example, an article was recently published regarding the mica industry; mica is a powder used in cosmetics to create that shimmery glow in highlights, eyeshadows, and pressed powders. However, the mica industry has a history of unethical sourcing practices that include forced and child labor. What can a beauty company do when a material is vital to their product? It starts with partnering with manufacturers they can trust, those who have a sustainable mission and transparency in their efforts.

The consumer can also choose products that are sourced in the United States. However, some materials like mica are manufactured in higher quantities overseas, and due to demand, sourcing only in the U.S is not an option. When this is the case, how transparent are manufacturers? Do they explain that they source materials locally whenever possible?

Understanding sourcing standards is key when outfitting a [Living Building Challenge \(LBC\)](#) or [LEED building](#).

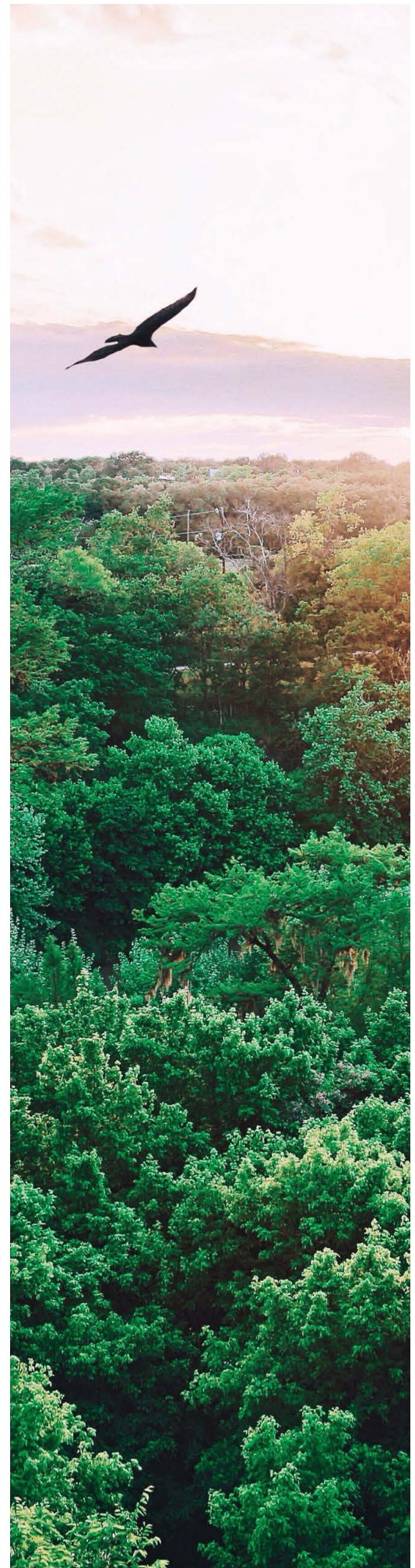
RECYCLED CONTENT & END OF PRODUCT LIFE

Next up are two attributes that fit under the same category: recycled content and the product's recyclability at the end of life. There is no set standard used to search and find products that achieve a recyclability certification; however, it is one of the most marketed attributes manufacturers will expose concerning their products. It's common to read product specs that include things like "made of 100% post-consumer scrap" or "utilizes 70% recycled content".

Pay close attention to what the manufacture discloses about recycling the product at the end of life. Is the product easy to recycle, or will it take too much time to disassemble each part/piece, ultimately forcing end-users to send it to a landfill? Another option is to find companies that have a closed-loop program or a take-back program. To find products that care about this, you can search the [Cradle to Cradle](#) certification. Cradle to Cradle does have limited products certified, so also look at [Environmental product declarations](#). For the most part, this information is easily attainable on most manufacturer spec sheets and online content.

EMISSIONS

The media ensured our next attribute pulled on the heartstrings as articles were published marketing the effects of emissions on children in the education market. The emissions attribute speaks explicitly to the chemical emissions after the product is in use and the impact of emission exposure during the manufacturing process. One of the most talked-about terms in this attribute is ensuring products release low volatile organic compounds (VOC's). You hear of VOCs regarding stains, paints, wood preservatives, laminate or veneer coverings, and many other product components that we encounter within the industry. The reason emissions have become a popular attribute is really market-driven.



EMISSIONS (CONTINUED)

People are becoming educated about the side effects and demanding change. Products that utilize chemicals that emit VOCs can cause side effects like nose and throat irritation, headaches, nausea, fatigue, dizziness, and asthma, to name a few.

Does the name [GreenGuard](#) ring a bell? GreenGuard developed this certification as they researched and developed an understanding of the VOC effects on children within the preschool and K-12 industry. As the awareness spread in the

education market around this attribute, it translated into a widely requested sustainable attribute. Along with GreenGuard, you can also look for products that meet this requirement through the [SCS Indoor Advantage label](#). These are not the only two you can look for as the test is relatively easy to follow, but they must be done with a third-party laboratory to verify product claims.

RENEWABLE & BIO-BASED MATERIALS

There is a national uptick in the banning of straws and plastic bags, incorporating plant-based biodegradable bowls, reusable water bottles, or glass containers instead of plastic. Why? Because of the education around our next attribute, utilizing renewable or bio-based materials. Some of these attributes are hard to find; think of an office chair, for example. There are fabrics, cushion foam, metal legs, casters, arms, all made up of different materials. So how do you find furniture that incorporates renewable materials? First, you can check for [FSC certified](#) wood products.

FSC stands for the Forest Stewardship Council and reg-

ulates the sourcing of wood in a sustainable manner. They also provide guidelines to manufacturers on storing the wood materials without exposing them to chemicals that can make the certification null. Another product evaluation to look for is [SAN](#). SAN stands for Sustainable Agriculture Network; they certify products like bamboo, wool, flax to ensure, just like FSC, that the sourcing of these materials is done so in an environmental manner. So, what are you to do if you can't find a wood or bamboo office chair?

WHAT IS LEVEL?

In addition to the attributes already covered, understanding the manufacturing processes is another element to stay on top of. How much energy and water is wasted during manufacturing? Are employees breathing in harmful chemicals? What happens when the product reaches the end of life? There are so many things outside of what was outlined that go into creating sustainable products. Wish there was an easy way to find a product that fits all those needs? Enter [LEVEL](#) by [BIFMA](#) and Cradle to Cradle. Two of the most extensive product certifications identifying and certifying over 13 sustainable attributes. Both do a deep dive into emissions, forest management, sustainable agriculture, chemistry assessment, red-listed chemicals, recycled content, end of life

options, life-cycle assessment, manufacturing energy, water and emissions, social fairness, and site visit. Cradle to Cradle has around 500 products certified. LEVEL was developed by BIFMA to help provide a third-party certification as opposed to their ANSI BIFMA e3 certification. You may see companies promoting their products are "ANSI BIFMA e3 certified."

What you might not realize is this is a first-party certification. The e3 standard was developed as a set of guidelines for manufacturers to follow when producing products for the furniture industry. However, BIFMA does not qualify that claim, so it's tough to validate if they followed those standards. LEVEL takes this to the next level and requires third-party certification.

Visit <https://www.levelcertified.org/> to find products available with this certification. There are over 5000 to date, becoming one of the easiest and fastest ways to find sustainable product choices.

Both LEVEL and Cradle to Cradle certifications are extremely extensive and can take time and money to be certified. So for manufacturers without deep pockets, let's discuss other attributes you can look for. First, look for easily reconfigurable products; this allows customers to utilize them in various ways so they can continuously reconfigure to their needs. This is not only good for the environment but also for a client's pocketbooks. Warranties are another area to pay close attention to. Products with an extended warranty speak to durability for your client's use and the long-term impact

on the environment. Longer warranties allow products to be used for years to come, resulting in less long-term waste and fewer products ending up in landfills. Bottom line: partner with manufacturers who have a clear mission that involves the environment and are transparent in their efforts. Source products from ethical manufacturers, do some research online and learn more about the third-party certifications outlined. Don't let your clients fall victim to the "greenwashing" agenda companies are taking advantage of, and help educate the industry on the facts around sustainability.

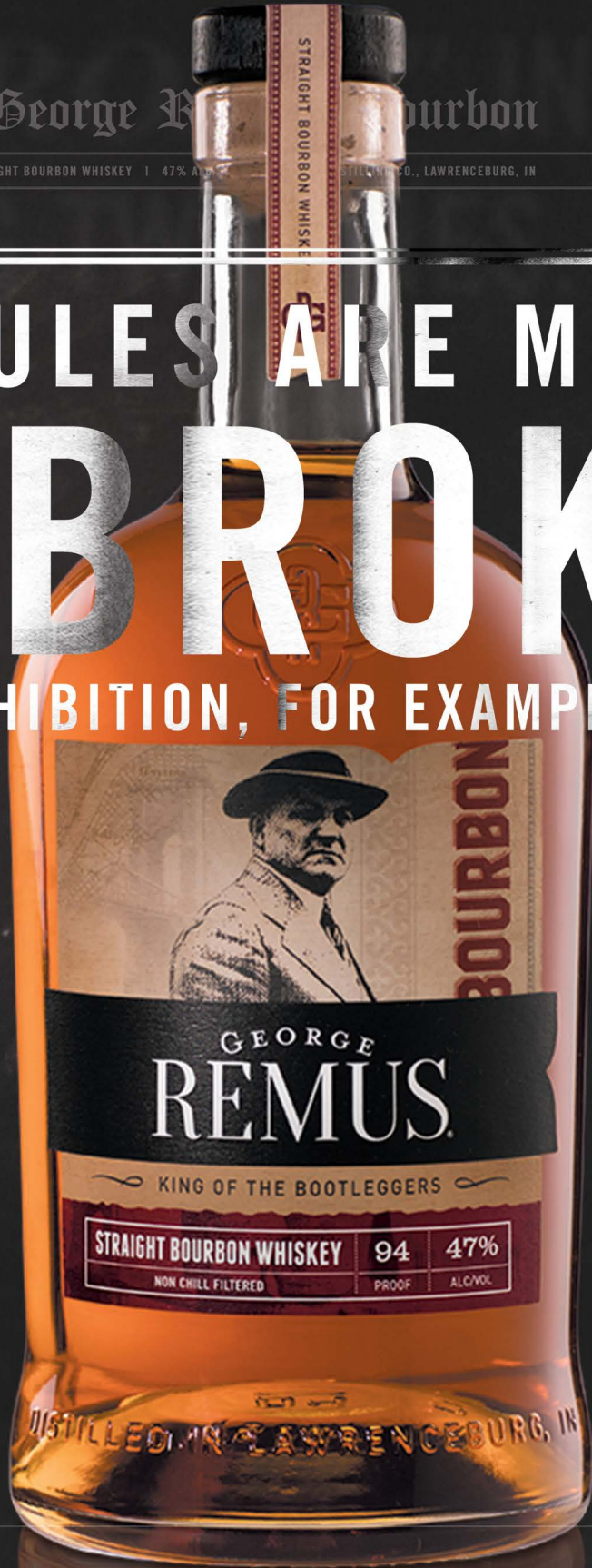
SOME RULES ARE MADE TO BE BROKEN

PROHIBITION, FOR EXAMPLE

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SELF-LEADERSHIP IS BASED ON SELF-AWARENESS, AND ONE TRUTH NONE OF US CAN ESCAPE IS THAT IF OUR MINDS ARE NOT STIMULATED AND INSPIRED, WE WILL OFTEN FEEL UNFULFILLED. SO HOW DO WE CONNECT TO MEANINGFUL, LIFELONG LEARNING?

BY AMY MOULIS

Education is an ongoing process throughout our lives that takes many forms. We are all continually learning, from traditional schooling to an online seminar or listening to your favorite podcast. There is no one exact way to receive an education. It happens whether we seek it out or through the natural course of life.

Education is defined as: the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of ed-

ucators; however, learners can also educate themselves. Education can take place in formal or informal settings, and any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels or acts may be considered educational.

On a professional level, continuing education is an expectation to stay current with a license to practice in many industries, including the design industry. Teachers learn new teaching methods, and doctors are taught new procedures and treatments to help their patients. We are all continually

learning based on the industry in which we work.

But what about our own ongoing education as we evolve and grow throughout the different phases of our lives? The definition references the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits, along with the invaluable insight that learners can also educate themselves.

Educating ourselves is an interesting thought as it requires us to be in a state of self-connection and curiosity. Using your intuition to help guide you down

**DEFINING
SELF-LEADERSHIP**

paths of self-discovery where the learner is educating themselves is how we all grow and develop in our lives' ongoing education. Being connected to our intuition is the starting point to lead us to what is most important for each of us to live a thriving life. I believe now more than ever it is the ongoing education we seek on our own that helps provide each of us with an experience we love.

The definition also mentions any experience that affects our thoughts, feelings, and actions as educational. So how do we become more intentional and proactive learners? First, start with a plan based on what excites you, and then go find ways to connect with these subjects on multiple levels

As a lifelong learner, the path to a more intuitive and thriving life is through education in whatever form it takes.



AMY MOULIS

Amy Moulis is the founder of [TheModernIntuitiveLife](#), a conscientious way of living and excelling in every aspect from finance to food. Through her web-based platform, and utilizing her certification as a Leadership Development and Coaching Professional (CPC), Amy seeks to help support individuals who are curious about how they can listen to their own intuition and ask the questions to guide them to their unique answer.

**THIS IS THE FIFTH
PIECE IN A SERIES:
'THE MODERN INTUITIVE
LEADER'
BY AMY MOULIS**

**Tapping Into
Your Inner
Leader**

In Last year I attended a health and wellness conference called In GOOP' Health'. If you aren't familiar with GOOP, it is the company started by actress and lifestyle guru Gwyneth Paltrow. In GOOP, 'Health' is the brand's annual signature event bringing together experts in various industries.

Like all conferences, attendees had the opportunity to tailor their schedule to attend breakout sessions based on interest in areas such as financial health and wellness, spiritual practices, workout sessions, and social justice initiatives.

Looking back on the conference almost a full year later and seeing it through the lens of the definition of education, this event perfectly balanced both formal and an informal setting for learning.

Beyond a formal school education, we learn so much of what we know based solely on what we connect with and have an interest in. What connects all of us is when we share our knowledge with each other.

As the definition says, we can be educating ourselves, or we can be under the guidance of an educator, but any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels or acts may be considered educational.



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