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NEOCON EDITION 2024

JUNE 2024 V51

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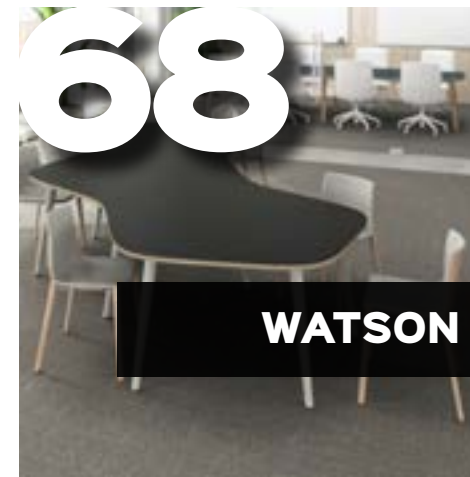
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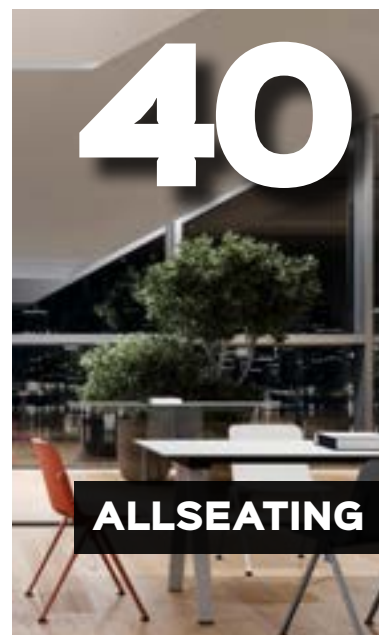
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editor's note

Dear Reader,

As we gather for another inspiring NeoCon, the excitement and energy in the air remind us of the boundless innovation that drives the Contract Design industry forward. This year, we celebrate the relentless pursuit of creativity and excellence that defines our field.

In this special issue of Delve Magazine, we bring you a curated collection of stories and insights that highlight the groundbreaking ideas and pioneering products shaping the future of Contract Design. From the latest trends to the most innovative solutions, our content showcases the vibrant spirit of innovation that propels our industry to new heights.

Enjoy the issue!

The My Resource Library Team

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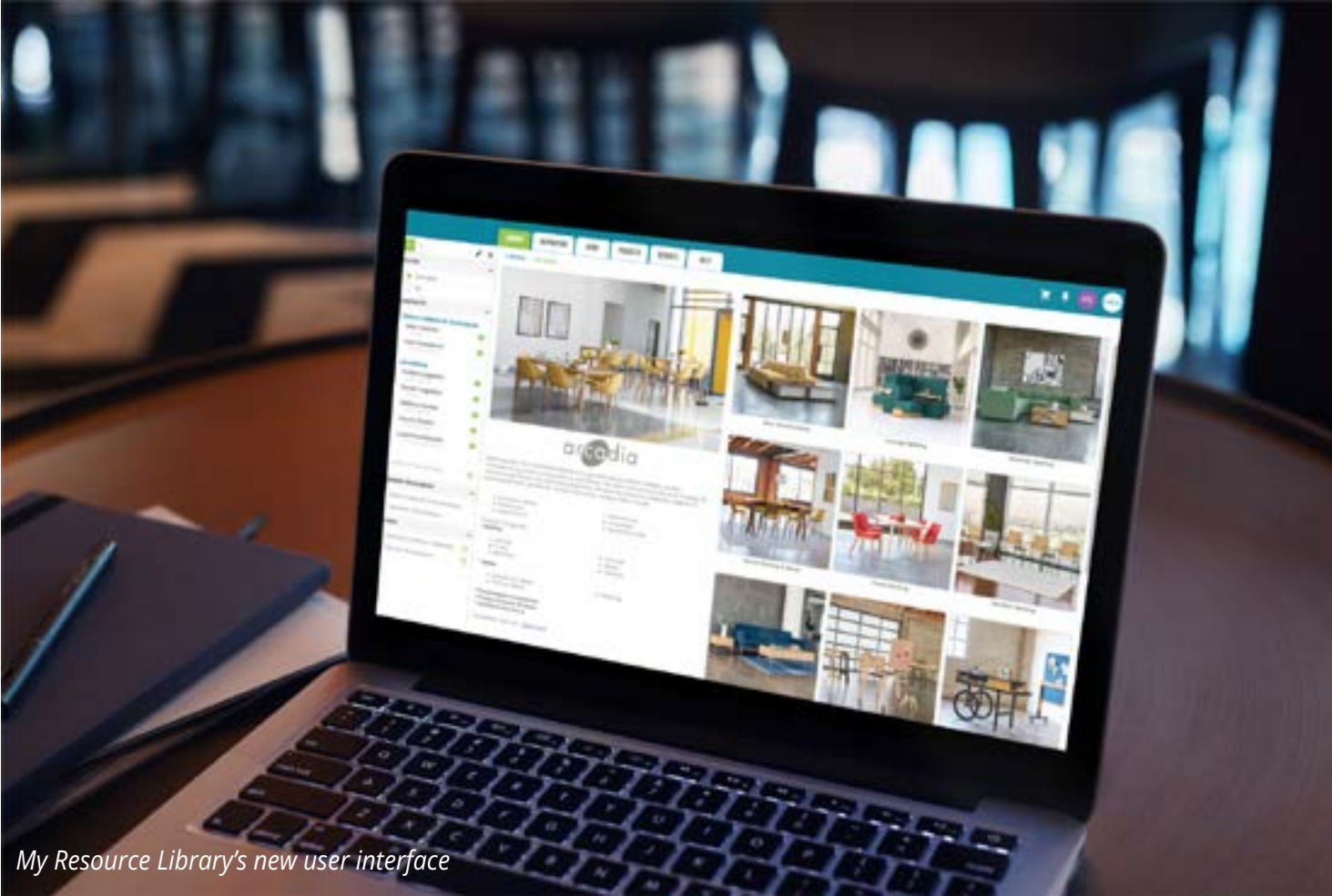
THE STATE OF MY RESOURCE LIBRARY

By Jeff Carlson, Principal of My Resource Library

At My Resource Library (MRL), we pride ourselves on being more than just a website—we are a transformative asset integral to the commercial design industry. With a curated selection of over 300 trusted manufacturers and cutting-edge digital tools designed to streamline workflows, MRL offers unparalleled ease of connection and collaboration. From inspiration to installation, we simplify and streamline the entire specification process on a single, comprehensive platform, eliminating the need to switch between multiple websites.

2023 was a standout year for MRL, marked by the launch of our new PowerBi Dashboard for Manufacturers. This innovative tool saw brand activity soar with 15,628,650 items viewed, our search engine delivered 12,973,574 product impressions, and 128,710 unique users engaged with our site. These achievements have left us inspired to explore new heights.

Last year, we welcomed Laura Carlson, an expert in Architectural products to spearhead our Materials Library, a highly requested feature by all the A&D and



My Resource Library's new user interface

Dealer Designers. Under Laura's leadership, and with the support of the MRL programming team led by Mike Goodman, Principal of MRL, we have not only met but exceeded expectations. The introduction of Sample Ordering has revolutionized how users access materials, providing a seamless, cost-free process for both users and manufacturers, thereby enhancing industry relationships.

In early 2023, we enlisted Brandi Hoffman, a skilled User Interface/User Experience Designer from B Digital, to revamp our entire website. The launch of Version 6.0 in December was met with resounding acclaim from reps, dealers, designers, students, and manufacturers. The new version is cleaner, faster, easier to navigate, and significantly more intuitive.

In February 2024, we proudly hosted the North American Independent Rep Council meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona. What began seven years ago with 14 charter member rep principals has flourished into a gather-

ing of 65 rep groups and 84 principals. This council, deeply rooted in my family's legacy in the industry, fosters a vibrant community for independent reps to collaborate, share insights, and enhance their businesses.

At My Resource Library, we don't just follow industry trends—we set them. Our commitment to continual learning and expansion ensures that we not only meet the current needs of the industry but also anticipate future demands. By expanding our digital offerings and forging new partnerships, we aim to maintain our role as leaders in innovation and service within the commercial design industry.

Jeff Carlson

Principal, My Resource Library

BIG NEWS

From two trusted industry partners

REVEALED JULY 1

delveseries.com

SLOAN

MRL

MY
RESOURCE
LIBRARY

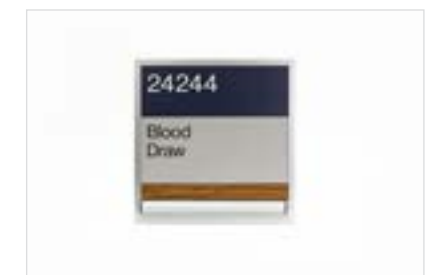


2/90 SIGN SYSTEMS UNVEILS THEIR NEWEST MODULAR SIGN SYSTEM:

MEET FRAME - A DYNAMIC FLEX-FIT MODULAR SIGN SYSTEM.

With a legacy spanning over four decades in the signage industry, 2/90 Sign Systems has been an unwavering ally for VA projects for more than thirty years. Their enduring commitment to quality and service is exemplified by the fact that over half of the Veteran Administration Medical Center facilities opt for 2/90 signage solutions. In line with this commitment, 2/90 Sign Systems proudly

introduces "Frame" - a cutting-edge flex-fit sign system that aligns seamlessly with the latest VA Design Manual. Although designed to meet the criteria set forth in the new VA Design Manual, 2/90's FRAME Modular Sign System is a picture-perfect solution for any facility that desires the aesthetics of a framed system with the functionality of a flex-fit system engineered for changeability.



INNOVATING IN SIGNAGE SOLUTIONS

The Frame Modular Sign System from 2/90 is poised to transform the landscape of VA signage solutions. This innovative sign system stands shoulder to shoulder with 2/90’s existing signage solutions like “Slide” (rail system) and “FAI” (frame and backplate system), solidifying 2/90’s position as the sole manufacturer offering three of the four component-based sign systems outlined in the VA Design Manual.

TAILORED PROCUREMENT CHANNELS

Understanding the diverse procurement needs of government clients, 2/90 Sign Systems provides three distinct procurement options: GSA, UNICOR, and commercial channels. This commitment to flexibility, coupled with their industry expertise and unwavering commitment to excellence, positions 2/90 as the premier choice for VA signage solutions.

FRAME: FLEX-FIT SPECIFICATIONS

As stated in the VA Design Guide, “flex-fit” frame sign systems are composed of a frame with extruded aluminum parts that are mechanically fastened together. Frame Modular Sign System boasts a sleek aluminum frame with front-loading graphic inserts secured by hidden tempered steel spring clips. This flex-fit system ensures a seamless and secure fit for any signage needs. The extruded aluminum frame accommodates signs of any size and accepts both horizontal and vertical accent strips, various insert configurations, and material thicknesses. With a standard anodized aluminum finish that radiates elegance, the frame can also be painted in any of 2/90’s standard paint colors, VA colors, or a custom color-match option for additional design options.

COMMUNICATING IMPORTANT INFORMATION WITH VITALSIGN

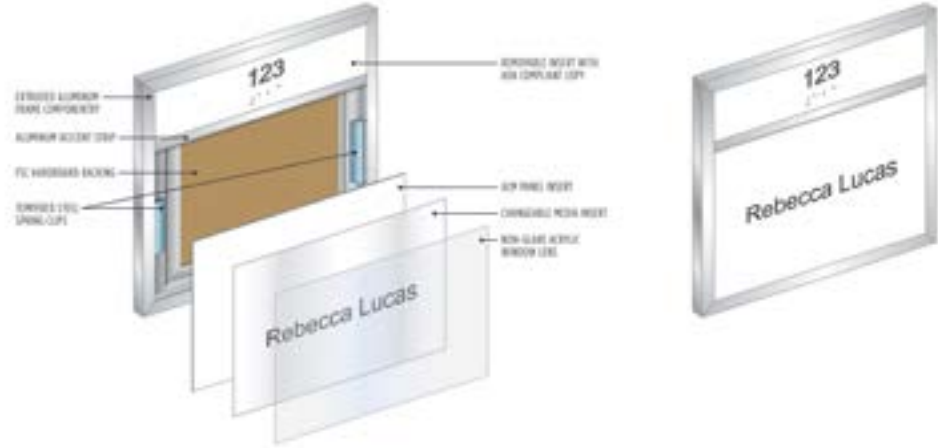
Frame accepts VitalSign inserts to communicate effectively with patients, visitors, and staff. Self-contained messages are secure and changeable using a magnetic tool, reducing the need to touch the sign’s surface preventing the spread of infectious diseases.

SUSTAINABILITY AT THE CORE

At the heart of all 2/90’s sign systems lies a deep commitment to environmental sustainability. Frame Modular Sign System is meticulously crafted using recycled aluminum componentry and sustainable certified wood elements, making it a responsible choice for environmentally conscious clients. The system’s design allows for seamless replacement, reconfiguration, or updates to ensure it evolves effortlessly with any facility changes over time. As with all 2/90’s sign systems, when the message changes, simply replace the insert, not the entire sign.

VERSATILE DESIGN ELEMENTS

One of the standout features of the Frame system is its versatility in design elements. With the ability to add horizontal and vertical accent strips, Frame provides flexibility in design, accommodating various insert configurations and insert materials with ease. Whether incorporating paper inserts, VitalSign inserts, SmartStrips, or SmartInserts, the Frame system offers a host of options to cater to diverse signage needs.



MANAGE CHANGES WITH PAPER INSERTS

Effortlessly keep signs up-to-date with paper inserts. Our Frame modular signs are designed to accommodate any document, photograph, or graphic image printed on standard paper sizes. At 2/90 Sign Systems, we offer a range of die-cut perforated paper in various sizes, colors, and textures. To change the insert, simply slide it to the side of the frame to release the paper insert and protective lens. Then, insert the new message into the hidden spring clip in the frame and slide it in the opposite direction to capture it on the other side.

ENHANCING FUNCTIONALITY WITH SMARTSTRIP AND SMARTINSERT

For added functionality and convenience, 2/90 Sign Systems offers SmartStrip and SmartInsert accessories that enhance the utility of the Frame signs. The SmartStrip allows for holding a variety of messages, while the SmartInsert enables the display of different messages that can be revealed or concealed as needed. This innovative approach to signage customization ensures that the Frame sign system remains adaptable and efficient in meeting evolving communication requirements.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, 2/90 Sign Systems has once again set a new standard in the realm of VA signage solutions with the introduction of the Frame Modular Sign System. Combining innovation, sustainability, and versatility, the Frame Modular Sign System is poised to redefine how signage solutions are ap-

proached within VA projects, along with all sign projects where a flex-fit sign system is desired. With its meticulous design, commitment to quality, and adaptability to changing needs, the Frame Modular Sign System stands as a testament to 2/90’s enduring dedication to excellence in the signage industry.

FRAME “FLEX-FIT” SYSTEM HIGHLIGHTS

- Aluminum frame design.
- Front-loading graphic inserts.
- Inserts secured by hidden tempered steel spring clips.
- Extruded aluminum frame allows for any size sign.
- Frame accepts horizontal and vertical accent strips.
- Frame accepts various insert configurations and materials.
- Standard anodized aluminum frame offers a beautiful finish.
- Frame can also be painted in any of 2/90’s standard 60 colors, VA colors, or custom color-match.
- All parts can be easily changeable.
- Environmentally friendly with recycled aluminum componentry and sustainable certified wood elements.

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ANNUAL DOSE OF DESIGN INSPIRATION: NEOCON IN CHICAGO

By Susan Mulholland, NCIDQ, IIDA, WELL AP

When is the best time of the year to be an interior designer? For me, it's always around mid-June, especially if I am in downtown Chicago. Nothing beats the energy that comes from the gathering of thousands of like-minded individuals who enter the doors of the Merchandise Mart every year for the event known simply as NeoCon.

Our industry is filled with more than its share of conferences, design markets, and trade shows—never mind the endless podcasts, blogs, and Instagram posts. But it takes being at the heart of where it starts to set NeoCon apart. Everyone who has been here knows that what we see here will inspire design ideas for years to come.

Whether this is your first or twentieth time attending the show, there is always something new to see. New manufacturers are joining the long list of favorites with exciting new ways of presenting their products. As designers, we feel compelled to seek out the newest form or material that we can add to our design arsenal—which is why we come to Chicago and the Mart every June.

This will be my tenth time attending NeoCon in person. Even though I live in the Southwest, I visit Chicago every two or three years. In the years that I haven't been able to make it, I have relied on my friends and colleagues who attended to provide a recap and their own personal impressions of the show. Their individual experiences and insights are as valuable to me as mine. This is why this show is so important- even if you don't get to attend in person- the an-

tipication and excitement can still be felt vicariously through other designers, your own sales reps, and reading the design dailies published daily during the show.

Our industry has been through a lot since the very first NeoCon in 1969 when new ideas were taking shape that would redefine how we envision working in an office environment. This is when furniture design was in the midst of a design renaissance. No one could have predicted what the next 55 years would bring. Our industry would see the challenges and changes in how we as a society view life and work. It has survived and adapted to economic challenges, changes in business practices and market segments, design preferences, and technology.

New materials, furniture design and construction, manufacturing techniques, and regulatory measures for life safety and health have all been part of NeoCon. Industry professionals, advocates, educators, and innovators attend this show to present their insights and knowledge to an eager audience each year to be inspired and informed. Our clients, who depend on our expertise to create the best possible work environment, expect us to know not just what is trending in design- they expect us to be knowledgeable on the other issues that affect the decisions they need to make to benefit their employees and company's bottom line. Our work goes beyond just what is hip or stylish- we need to address ergonomics, wellness, and sustainability for our clients to see that their design projects have a more significant impact. NeoCon does more than showcase the newest

furniture or fabric introductions; it provides valuable continuing education tracks that help us continue learning and improving as professionals.

This show is not just for American designers and manufacturers; designers and manufacturers worldwide also attend NeoCon. This is a global event because it is where our industry gets to see what's important in other parts of the world for corporate interiors and how we can incorporate these ideas into our designs. Furniture, lighting, sound masking, color, and other interior finishes that bring life to empty buildings are all part of the international mix that can be found at the show.

When I think about the shows I have attended, I think about how that experience has impacted my design practice. From the type of projects I have taken on to the materials and new furniture options I have introduced to my clients. I know that each showroom I visit at NeoCon can be an essential part of any current or future project, so I take the time to meet the manufacturers' representatives working the showroom floor.

This is why coming to the Mart with an open mind is so important. Each and every NeoCon is different—we get to experience something that only happens once a year. Although many manufacturers have decided to leave the Mart and move on to other parts

of the city, it is still worth the time to venture through the maze of showrooms, see the manufacturers who are still here, and meet the new manufacturers who are opening showrooms for the first time.

New manufacturers are added every year with innovative products and ideas. I would say that if you can be objective and willing, you will gain the most out of the show's true purpose—that is, to celebrate commercial design at its best.

Everyone has reasons for attending; some even have their own method for getting the most out of the show. Still, for those of you who are attending for the very first time in your career- the best advice I can give is to take in as much as you can, be prepared to be overwhelmed with an ocean of ideas for your clients and project teams- you might think that you will need to see and do everything while you are here. Still, I know from experience that it takes more than just attending once to accomplish that.

From the time the showroom doors open at 9 AM to when they close, you will feel the rush of something exciting happening, and your outlook on your career will be different. You will truly know why this is the best time of year to be you, a commercial interior designer. You will see why everyone who comes once to this show wants to come again and again.....it's an experience of a lifetime that happens every year!



ABOUT 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 LinkedIn or on her website at www.madciaz.com.

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Fellowes



THE ART OF COLLABORATION:

Think Outside the Rectangle



By Beth McGrew, VP of Sales, Calyx by Claridge, and Laurie Provin, SVP of Marketing, Calyx by Claridge

THE EVOLUTION AND CONTEXT OF COLLABORATION

The way we work is constantly evolving along with technology, generational influences, design innovation, environmental factors, real estate costs and corporate profitability. In our careers we have seen private office walls come down and their former inhabitants relocated to cubicles alongside their teams, creating collaboration with a chip on its shoulder. Continuing to succumb to real estate pressures, our companies then replaced spacious and more thoughtfully arranged cubicles with rows and rows of benching systems leaving us to jockey over that one perpetually booked conference room or don personal headphones to escape the distractions of high noise levels and give us the

freedom to avoid constant eye contact signaling, “I’m not available.” The lack of privacy for focused work and areas for small group collaboration drove us to seek anonymity in public spaces. As a side effect, we developed an addiction to the comfort and aesthetics of the anti-office atmosphere along with the many amenities they offered.

Today, corporations and learning institutions, partnered with talented interior designers and strategists recognize the ebb and flow between privacy and collaboration and are creating interior landscapes that have an anti-office feel and provide a balance of environments for both.

QUANTIFIABLE COLLABORATION

What we know about how and why we collaborate is now much more quantifiable and scientifically proven. The best ideas don’t come from an elite few. Collaboration fosters better learning and productivity outcomes. We know and appreciate that students and employees have vastly differing learning profiles, work styles, roles, voices, and personas. When we have a sense of control over our environment and our spaces, we feel safer to ideate as individuals and exercise our voices.

Technology continues to evolve but writing creates visceral connections that you can’t achieve by sharing a document or through an email thread or string of chat messages. In its Spring 2024 report devoted to reducing job-related stress and protecting against burnout, Harvard Business Review highlighted the phenomenon of ‘collaboration fatigue,’ noting that texts, emails, Teams (or similar platforms) messages, and project management programs with communication and notification functions have created a culture of being always on and immediately available, leading to information overload and exhaustion. The suggested antidote: analog and in-person collaboration, the kind that lends itself perfectly to whiteboards and glassboards, especially those purpose-built for new ways of communicating and with an elevated design sensibility.

When environments are alluring and intriguing, ideas follow suit. In this new era of the remote, hybrid, and distributed workforce when many of us come together, it is for the sole purpose of collaborating as a team. Collaborative tools should have form, function and flexibility coupled with the design aesthetics to hide in plain sight and serve more than one purpose.

SPONTANEOUS COLLABORATION

As an industry, we have inadvertently restricted collaboration to a rectangle, whether a conference room or the writing surface itself. But the fact is, we collaborate everywhere we congregate. Think

of the last great idea your team had or the last time a breakthrough or ‘aha’ moment occurred. Chances are, it wasn’t while you were seated around a rectangular table, in a rectangular room, writing on a rectangular board. It was more likely as you passed someone in a hallway or in the breakroom and said, “have you thought about?” or “what if?” And chances are just as likely you had nowhere to document that stroke of brilliance.

One of Calyx by Claridge’s mottos is Capture Genius Where It Happens, because we’ve all been in that type of exchange. We promise to circle back to the idea, but all too often the moment passes, and the details are forgotten. Spontaneous collaboration happens daily, often while we are transitioning between traditionally ‘labeled’ spaces. Provisions and planning should be made to allow for more spontaneous collaboration—lining corridors and transitional spaces with floor to ceiling glassboards and whiteboards and strategically placing mobile writing surfaces in cafeterias, lobbies and wherever people tend to gather.

Designers and building owners alike rightfully shy away from vast white rectangles on walls in highly visible spaces. While they do place writing surfaces right at hand, they can also give an otherwise serene and warm environment a sterile and impersonal ambiance. Consider instead, collaborative tools hidden in plain sight.



FUNCTIONAL ART

Through advanced applications including digital and ceramic printing, glass and porcelain writing surfaces are transformed from commoditized white rectangles into functional works of art, allowing them to coexist harmoniously with any design scheme. Rather than grab unwanted attention for their spartan functionality, they can be appreciated for their beauty. Inspired by hues and tones—think desert sunsets and ocean waves—found in nature, Calyx by Claridge’s Ombria process, maintains full writability while infusing the soothing flow of ombre gradients onto glassboards, ranging from sleek and compact mobile units to floor to ceiling glass board wall systems.

DUAL PURPOSE SYSTEMS

In the ever-evolving landscape of corporate and learning spaces, there has been a marked shift toward multifunctionality. Everything needs to do more than ONE thing. A mobile whiteboard must also easily function as a space delineator. A writing surface might be called into service for wayfinding and brand identification. Meetings that begin in one space frequently migrate into another zone, leaving participants with the problem of quickly preserving the ideas and discussion points that were generated. Track systems with lightweight removable panels, such as the Aceno collection from Calyx by Claridge, were created precisely for this scenario and can be easily moved from place to place, allowing for team and individual ‘off the wall’ freedom of movement. And the Mina mobile, with its low-profile seamless edges, is designed to allow multiple units to align seamlessly adjacent with each other, creating impromptu meeting areas with built-in collaborative surfaces. What’s more, the dual sided nature of the Mina can accommodate acoustic material on one side and a porcelain writing surface on the other, promoting both noise abatement and collaboration in a compact and easily movable format.



Mina Mobile in Zest courtesy of Linked Reps



SPACE CREATION AND DELINEATION

With the prevalence of open concept offices and learning environments, the ability for products to be both movable and flexible is a necessity. These characteristics facilitate creating boundaries for enclosed work or additional teaming areas that provide privacy without compromising collaboration. These space-creating products can be used to communicate both “do not disturb” and “meet here.” Depending on specific needs, they can be constructed with integrated writing surfaces, tackable panels and sound absorbing material. Various heights and widths further expand flexibility and functionality. With the exception of tackable fabric, all surface materials can be digitally printed to provide the ultimate in customization.



FIXED BUT FLEXIBLE

While mobility is a key driver in collaborative tool construction and adoption, there continues to be a need for fixed collaborative writing surfaces. But fixed doesn’t have to mean inflexible or require a move back to the rectangle. Calyx by Claridge offers collaborative wall systems that allow the designer to create an individualized solution, choosing from a range of heights and widths, endless color combinations, customized printing options and installation configurations. Need to wrap around a corner or an obtrusive column? No problem. Need movable and repositionable tack pads or writable glass shapes, consider it done. The possibilities are as numerous as the collaborative styles and communication preferences to be found among any group of people working together toward a common goal.



More Than a Whiteboard

Designing spaces for collaboration requires a holistic approach that prioritizes flexibility, inclusivity, and wellbeing. By creating environments that support teamwork, creativity, and knowledge sharing, while recognizing the unique needs and characteristics of the individual, organizations can unlock the full potential of their employees. Embracing creative design principles and leveraging artistic innovation to connect people across boundaries, collaborative spaces become not just physical locations, but catalysts for cultural transformation and organizational success.

A refreshing experience,
Fizz is a blend of playfulness,
comfort, style and positive energy.



Michelle Warren

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

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

Michelle is known as a "serial networker" in the furniture industry and enjoys meeting people and making connections happen. If you're interested in connecting - reach out at: Michelle@strategic-catalyst.com, connect on LinkedIn or visit strategic-catalyst.com to learn more about her work.



By Michelle Warren

NeoCon 2024! It's that time of year again, time for most of our industry to focus on their new showroom, to plan their rep meetings and most importantly find out where the best parties will be! While the team at Catalyst is just as excited to see the new showrooms, sample the new products and hit the dance floors, we are also reminded that we are half-way through the calendar year. This means we are already into the buying season for Education and heading into the major buying season for Federal and State agencies. Beyond picking out our killer wardrobes for Chicago, with appropriate shoes, our focus starts to narrow and we begin thinking about what we can be doing now to ensure successful year ends for Public Sector programs across all verticals. Remember, July 1st and Q4 are basically right there once NeoCon finishes up. Don't step off the gas! Keep your efforts consistent and focused through the summer!

We've gathered 8 ways to end the buying season with power, strength & success!

1. Product Highlights. Know which products are right for which verticals. I know this sounds very elementary but take the time to know which of your products are right for each vertical and make sure these products are on the necessary contracts for each vertical.

2. Competitive Landscape. Know your competition in these verticals and how you stack up against them. Use this information to better position yourself with-in the dealer as the solution.

3. Monitor Government Procurement Opportunities: As I have said many times, I love public sector because there is a lot of public information. Know where the RFIs/RFPs/RFQs are being published and track them. You should do this all year but especially in the buying seasons.

Leverage Ebuy. This is for Federal only and you must be a contract holder to access and respond to Ebuy. I know everyone is not a fan of Ebuy and many say that once it hits Ebuy it is decided. I can only say this is not always true. I have many stories of winning something on Ebuy that was not specified in the product we were representing.

4. Effective Marketing. Make sure you are creating targeted effective marketing for each of the verticals. This should include items like appropriate products, case studies, and contracts the products are available on. This also includes making sure you understand your customer and what is important to them i.e. socio-economic status, sustainability, country of origin, lead-time etc.

5. Promotional Campaigns. Consider doing a promotion to these end users or dealers that includes deeper discounting for a limited time or competitive dealer fees to increase the chances of your products being specified. This is another reason to be in front of the end users and dealers and gives them a reason to use your product over someone else's.

Along these same lines, offer bundled deals. Create bundled packages of items commonly purchased together. This can encourage larger orders and provide value to the end users.

6. Leverage the support your contracts offer. This is for contract holders only and mainly for cooperatives. Know what these contracts are willing to do to support you in being successful. Many have direct sellers that you can work with, opportunities to email their members, addresses for mailing and phone numbers for calling.

7. Engage in contracting events, trade shows and conferences. These are great opportunities to be in front of the end users in the buying season. There are industry days with agencies (virtual and in person), trade shows/conferences regionally and nationally that your public sector buyers are attending. Determine which ones make sense for you and be there! You don't always have to spend a lot- some of these events may be reverse trade shows or just one day events where you can network with the attendees.

8. Follow up on outstanding quotes/proposals. Make sure you follow up on any quotes you have done that are still open. Confirm if they will be making the award this year or not. If this year, when do they require delivery? This is especially important with Federal as there are times the product needs to be delivered prior to yearend.

These 8 tips will allow you to maximize your sales potential within your public sector contracts, during the most crucial quarters. Agencies across all levels of government, even if they have claimed funding issues the rest of the year, have money in the 4th quarter and will be spending it. There is no one golden strategy for every government program to use but there are key fundamentals, like these, that will put your program in an advantageous position to pick up end of year business. Public Sector programs are best built slowly to ensure they are sustainable, the 4th quarter gives you a chance to land projects that will give you that quick jump that everyone wants. Have a great summer and Happy Selling!



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June 10th – 12th | Booth #7-2018

NEED A MID-MORNING RESET AT NEOCON?

You're invited to a bold & bright coffee bar

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We're excited to announce we're launching our CET Designer Extension.

Offering enhanced design and specification tools to support space planning and product ordering for manufacturers and dealers nationwide.



TRANSFORM
THE OUTDOORS

ENHANCE COLLABORATION WITH INTENTIONALITY



"I've never been asked for that before." At a recent focus group, we were diving into workplace trends and getting feedback on our newest addition to our unique collaborative solutions, GRVT™ (pronounced gra-vuh-tee, like gravity). GRVT is the first mobile collaboration hub combining a table, writing surface, seating, and power that is suitable for indoor and outdoor environments. So of course, our participant had not been asked for it previously. It is the first of its kind.

As we have consolidated into one brand, we have tailored our offerings to meet the evolving demands of modern workspaces. Our focus on the visual aspect of communication, collaboration, and learning sets us apart—we are not just a whiteboard company.

Instead, we integrate design elements that enhance these collaborative interactions.

It seems everyone does a trends list (we put our own out earlier this year!). Our team does the research, so you do not have to. We regularly hold town halls with our team of sales reps, focus groups with dealers and designers (let us know if you want to be included!), and have been active members with BIFMA committees and sub-committees relevant to our product offering for over 15 years. We believe in developing, marketing, and selling solutions that empower people to work better, together.

Let us peek at some of the trends ASID's 2024 Trend Report identified and how Ghent products support those trends.



TREND: HEALTH & WELLNESS

Preserve from Ghent is a prime example of how workplace design can embody health and wellness. Not defined by four walls, Preserve reclaims the outdoors providing a smart use of otherwise forgotten meeting space. Inspired by nature, Preserve will help free your mind to think outside of the walls. An outdoor workspace supports neurodiversity of the workplace, helps reduce stress, increases cognitive function, and allows for heightened feelings of happiness.

By prioritizing the health and wellness of employees, Preserve contributes to a more productive, comfortable, and satisfying work experience, aligning perfectly with the growing emphasis on creating healthy workspaces.



GRVT INDOOR/OUTDOOR MOBILE COLLABORATION HUB

TREND: LIVING & LEARNING WITH GEN Z

Gen Z, having encountered diverse life experiences early on, values connections and prioritizes flexibility in their work style. This preference extends to dictating when and how they work, leading to a competitive landscape where employers vie not just with each other but also with opportunities that offer autonomy and side hustles. To meet these evolving needs, creating an appealing office environment becomes crucial, facilitating tasks that require physical presence through adaptable products like GRVT. GRVT's design breaks physical barriers, bringing people together like the force of gravity. This fosters natural collaboration inside and outside the building, empowering employees to tailor their work environment to their changing demands.



POINTE MOBILE GLASSBOARD & PARTITION

TREND: A CUSTOM APPROACH TO TODAY'S WORKPLACE

Ghent's mobile whiteboards and glassboards go beyond mere functionality, offering a customizable work experience. Not only can they be easily moved to adapt to changing needs and collaborative activities, but they can also be customized with a variety of options. These options include color matching to any hue of your choosing, an array of materials including fabrics, glass, acoustic PET and more, as well as graphics that allow organizations to tailor the mobiles to their unique preferences and brand identity. This level of customization adds another layer of personalization to the workspace, creating an environment that is both functional and visually striking and inspiring to give employees a sense of pride in their workplace.

TREND: DIGITAL MARKETING IN DESIGN

As identified by ASID, this trend focuses on where inspiration is found and shared. However, we would be remiss if we did not mention our investment in the digital space: meeting you where you specify. You can find Ghent products in My Resource Library, CET through our own extension as well as the Commercial Interiors Library, Cyncly, Ecomedes, and through our own proprietary Product Builder tool. If you have not explored our offering on any of these platforms (or even given us a follow @ghentproducts on Instagram), check us out sooner rather than later.



MYTHOS

TREND: QUIET LUXURY

quiet luxury - We wholeheartedly embrace this trend both as a brand and as a manufacturer. Visual communication tools may not have crossed your mind beyond their functionality, but that is where our expertise comes in. We have elevated the ordinary: crafting exquisite products designed to seamlessly integrate into any space. Mythos epitomizes this approach, offering a personalized touch of luxury in workspace solutions with its understated, yet sophisticated design. Its versatility allows for various configurations, materials, and finishes, making Mythos a standout showcase piece or a subtle blend within the environment, all while facilitating collaboration effortlessly.



TREND: SUSTAINABILITY RULES

We are committed to staying ahead in the commercial furniture industry, exemplified by our adherence to the BIFMA e3 standard. This standard underscores our dedication to sustainability across environmental, health, wellness, and social impacts, amplifying the significance of our work as an Ohio-based manufacturer.

LEVEL certification evaluates a product's sustainability across multiple attributes, including material selection, energy efficiency, social responsibility, and impacts on human and ecosystem health. The Aria and Harmony glassboards, with their LEVEL 2 certification, exemplify this commitment. They utilize water-based paints prepared just-in-time to reduce VOCs and waste, feature low-iron glass for clear, true colors, and offer easy installation, saving time and



costs. Ghent's glassboards hold independent LEVEL certification by UL and adhere to the CDPH Standard Method V1.2-2017 for indoor air quality.



GHENT'S NEW SHOWROOM, SUITE 1094

The solutions requested from us do not always fit neatly into a box. We are here for the challenge of bringing the right products for the work that must be done both in and out of the workplace. See these trends (and others) in person in our new expanded showroom, Suite 1094. We hope you will visit us to experience the first of-its-kind GRVT Mobile Collab-

oration Hub while enjoying some specialty coffees (skip the coffee line Monday and Tuesday 9-11am) or craft cocktails and beer (Monday and Tuesday 2-5pm) during NeoCon. Experience what makes Ghent more than just a whiteboard.



DAVIS design is a choice



Elora Lounge by sebastian herkner
Bonh Lume by jebs+laub





La-Z-Boy® Healthcare | Knú Comfort®

More Than Recliners

A Passion for the Patient Room...

Expanding beyond the premier Durable® Series of healthcare recliners, the broad and varied lines of sleep products crafted by the design team at Knú® Healthcare have made it their fastest growing category, enhancing the patient room with a comfortable seat and sleep space for loved ones to find welcome relief.



Sleep Chair
(Sleep Position)



Max Sleep Sofa with Lift Table & Recliner Leg Supports (in Sofa Position)

...And Beyond

Outside of the patient room, several collections of public area seating round out the offering. Visitor and lounge seating, hip chairs, modular lounge, and others bring trusted comfort to the masses, without sacrificing performance and durability.



Kascade Lounge



Kadia Mod
Metal Lounge



L A Z B O Y
HEALTHCARE

KNÚ

NEOCON 2024: WHAT ARE WE DOING **HERE?**

By Matt Spaulding

NeoCon is here again. And thank goodness! This is the time when the commercial interiors industry comes together to celebrate achievements, showcase innovative ways of thinking, explore new products, and of course, rekindle relationships and make new connections.

This is all great. But on a deeper level, what are we really doing at NeoCon?

When we meet old friends in the Mart's jam-packed elevators, we're curious and asking good questions. "How are you? "How's your job?" "What showrooms have you been to?" "What is catching your eye?"

When we attend one of the many awesome learning sessions, we come with an open mind, ready to absorb all we can. We're taking copious notes. We're snapping pictures of the presentation to retain the information. We're listening intently.

When we tour the beautifully designed showrooms to view the amazing new products, we're using a multitude of critical thinking skills. Will this product work for my project or a future project? Can I get that seat cushion in a different fabric option? How many finishes does that surface come in? Is this product going to be better than the one I usually specify? And the list goes on.

For brands exhibiting at NeoCon, their sales and marketing people are deploying a multitude of high-level skills too. They are acting as educators; they are expertly explaining how their products work, how they solve a challenge or make things better. They are seeking to gain more information; they're inquiring about what the designer does, and what he or she works on. They are curious and inquisitive; they're seeking to determine whether or not the product they offer can indeed support that designer's needs. They are being empathetic; they're listening intently to the designer's challenges. And more importantly, the best sales and marketing people are being transparent and authentic; they're not speaking in platitudes or obfuscating facts. Instead, they are being completely truthful and transparent about the brand. They're pulling back the curtain to talk about their sustainable manufacturing or their realistic lead-times. They are being honest and transparent with every answer.

So what does all this lead to? In short, it leads to building trust, the most powerful thing humans can create. Trust is why people do business with you. It's why people come to your parties or events. It's why people follow you on social media. It's why people want to connect with you. And it's also why people will defend you when you make a mistake.

We are fortunate to work in an industry with curious and inquisitive people. And, there are so many in our industry who are uniquely authentic, transparent and willing to share their expertise in a beneficial way for the greater good. For many of us, building trust is in our DNA.

But for the brands (not the people) exhibiting at NeoCon, I have a challenge. Is your brand doing everything it can to build even greater trust? We live in an ever-increasing digital world, where connecting in-person (aside from NeoCon and other industry shows) is falling by the wayside. It's clear that Zoom meetings now take the place of what used to be in-person meetings. Add to this the growth of generative AI, which is blurring the lines between human-made vs. machine-made, and there is a real challenge.

Now more than ever, brands need to strengthen their trust level. So, the challenge for brands be-

comes: How can you listen to your customers better? How can you be even more authentic and transparent? And how can you share your expertise in a more meaningful and educational way (hint: not salesy)?

So, what are we doing here at NeoCon? Yes, we're connecting, learning, sharing and having a great time. But on a deeper level – because this is a business/industry event, after all – we're also consciously or subconsciously establishing, strengthening, or in some cases, losing trust. The people and the brands who place an emphasis on building trust will have a much richer NeoCon experience. And the people and the brands who invest and commit to this long-term, will stand to gain even more benefits farther down the road.

Have fun in Chicago! I trust you will all have a great NeoCon!



ABOUT MATT SPAULDING

Matt Spaulding is the founder and president of Spaulding Communications, a strategic marketing communications firm that works exclusively with commercial architecture, design and building product brands to help them discover and share what makes them great. He can be reached at matts@spauldingcommunications.com

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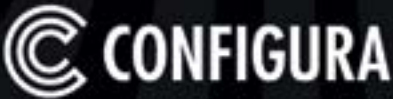
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GETTING TO KNOW CORE Office Interiors

CORE Office Interiors is a Furniture, Fixture, and Technology Solutions Provider dedicated to accountability and service excellence. Based in Texas, we are HUB certified and a Service-Disabled, Veteran-Owned Small Business with over 35 years of experience. We leverage emerging technologies, innovative thinking, and collaborative processes to ensure our clients' needs are met at every stage. Our passion lies in helping clients bring their design visions to life and offering strategic consulting to enhance their experiences in their built environments, whether it's for work or leisure. Apart from our space planning, design, procurement, and installation capabilities, we also specialize in office reconfiguration, company relocation, asset management, A/V and acoustic consulting, and ongoing post-installation services. At COREoi, our commitment to People, Process, and Technology sets us apart, and we firmly believe that working boldly entails collaborating to discover superior solutions.

CORE OFFICE INTERIORS

Core Office Interiors Locations
Austin, Houston & San Antonio

Profile Contributor
Brad Wells, CRO

*MRL PRO Dealer
Since 2019*

Q & A WITH CORE OFFICE INTERIORS

WHAT DROVE OR INFLUENCED YOUR DECISION TO GO PRO?

One standout feature of MRL Pro that we appreciated was its capability to create our own "Standards Catalog" within My Projects. As a web-based solution, this made our catalog more accessible to our sales and design teams across multiple locations. This feature allowed us to access design standards and incorporate new styles as work and learning methods continue to evolve, offering real time solutions to the entire company when presenting options to potential customers. In more detail, we could access comprehensive information we developed such as 2D designs, 3D models, rendered solutions that included complete SIF data, and streamlining budget requests. We utilized our standards catalog for bid responses, rapid quotes, and as inspiration to expedite requests, ultimately aiding in the decision-making process. Another great feature we utilize is the accessibility to our 'most-used' vendor partners' online catalog organization for solutions, photos and specifications.

HOW DO YOUR TEAM MEMBERS USE MRL?

Our sales and design teams leverage MRL for streamlined access to supplementary solutions and can craft visually stunning presentations akin to Pinterest, but amplified! Utilizing our subfolders within our standards catalog, sharing projects with customers and prospects for ideas starters, typicals and budgetary pricing solutions like: Seating, Break & Training Rooms, Desks, Office Suites, Benching, Workstations, Architectural Products, Healthcare and Higher Education, are solutions we continue to develop and evolve into our offerings package. For prospect development, more qualified lead generation to bid responses, our teams can send more informative solutions curated in a clean, presentation format. With project notifications, they can track

when customers, prospects, or designers are reviewing the information, allowing them to understand what is being viewed and reviewed.

WHAT KEY FEATURES OF MRL PRO DEALER DO YOU FIND THE MOST BENEFICIAL TO YOUR DAILY ACTIVITIES?

The enhanced Project Tool feature will be utilized in response to a recent award we received from a customer that includes an extensive standards package. Using Project Tool, we can efficiently organize and reference standards as our team progresses through the design development process. After finalizing the standards, we will easily share them across departments, locations, and service partners, ensuring smooth internal collaboration and uniform adherence to standards. With Project Notify, we will be able to track our packages and know where and when they have been reviewed. This provides a backstop to keeping customers in the loop and informed.

Our design department constantly uses the Inspiration Gallery to seek idea starters and inspiration for collaboration spaces. The newly updated and expanding Inspiration Gallery library equips our design team with fresh tools and imagery that we use for RFPs and collaborations with A&D firms as well as customers.





Houston Showroom



Austin & San Antonio Bowling Night



Rodeo Gala

As COREoi expands, we are exploring additional ways to leverage the tools provided by MRL Pro Dealer to support our growth and enhance our ability to close more business. MRL is just one of the many examples of technology that Core Office Interiors utilizes to deliver a superior level of service. Tools like MRL are essential for our employees who cultivate relationships and deliver value to our customers. Having instant access to information through MRL empowers our teams to share valuable insights with our customers, ultimately aiding them in bringing their spaces to life. **Visit them at their website coreoi.com**

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THAT FAMILY FEELING

By Allseating

Family can mean different things to different people, but at the root of all the various definitions we find the consistency of connection, collaboration, and teamwork. With this in mind, Allseating's 2024 Chicago showroom theme titled "That Family Feeling" will celebrate relationships forged with clients that inspire their "all-together better" approach as well as their ever-evolving product families.

This year Allseating will debut enhancements to five beloved product lines, including Ayles™, Eighty Two™, L1®, Innate®, and R.E.S.® and showcase its newest product launches, Allora™, Dart™, and upcoming Equation™.

Located across from the Mart at 325 N Wells Street, Suite 210, Allseating welcomes you to visit their showroom and "Step Into the Family Room" to view these products and all their other products first hand.

*Every family
consists of different
personalities...*



First up is the enhancement to Ayles. Named after the stunning windswept Ayles Ice Shelf in the Canadian Arctic, Ayles is a stylish, modern lounge chair that blends business with relaxation. It exudes a mid-century style that's as comfortable as it is affordable. Although Ayles is a lounge product, ergonomics are still built in, with a suspension consisting of an innovative formed metal spring-back frame for improved lumbar support and superior comfort. What better way to honor this product family by introducing a much-anticipated tablet arm option, enhancing the overall look of the chair while also magnifying its functionality in a variety of public waiting spaces and open commercial offices.

Secondly, Eighty Two was introduced in 2022 and pays homage to the company's 40th anniversary. Envisioned by Allseating's CEO and Founder, Gary Neil, Eighty Two has hit the market by storm and is revered as one of Allseating's highest value products when considering price point in relation to design, comfort, and functionality. To further enhance Eighty Two's versatility in the market, and to provide variety

to their clients, Allseating will be introducing a high-back version of this chair. This new model offers a more desirable back height for taller users and users who crave more shoulder support.

Following Eighty Two is L1, another product that hit the ground running when it was launched. L1's specialty lies in its superior back support, and the chair was named in honor of this. Being the first vertebra in the lumbar region, the L1 vertebra bears the weight of the upper body and is essentially an integral part of keeping your spine upright and in working order. L1 is carefully crafted to marry comfort and support with clean, simple and ergonomic design. Allseating is excited to launch a highback option to this chair, accompanied by a full seat, furthering its ability to accommodate an even wider range of heights and body types, ultimately ensuring all workers are being supported throughout the workday.



Eighty Two



R.E.S.

The third task chair seeing some enhancements is Innate. Conceptualized with a clear purpose in mind, seamless ergonomic integration, Innate was designed in collaboration with award winning industrial designer Todd Yetman. It checks all the necessary boxes to really bring that purpose to life. With an immaculate style that is somehow both minimalistic and all-encompassing, Innate features a weight-activated mechanism with adjustable tilt tension, a fully inte-

grated adjustable lumbar, as well as integrated seat height and seat depth adjustments. The signature N3 Ergo Arm is one of Allseating's most adjustable arms, with arms that orbit 60 degrees around the user and armcaps that pivot up to 245 degrees. A standard synchro tilt version of Innate is also available with adjustable tilt tension, and four-way adjustable arms. This year, join Allseating in their excitement as they unveil two enhancements to the Innate family; a mesh back as well as a more accessible synchro tilt model, both of which keep the best features of Innate while offering a list price that is more accessible.

Last to share some enhancements is R.E.S., the product of in-depth research and thoughtful development. Designed in collaboration with modus ID, a Toronto based design firm lead by Nick Gillissie, R.E.S., which stands for Research, Education and Solution, was launched as Allseating's answer to support the rich exchange of ideas between students and instructors in small to medium sized groups. It is a unique hybrid of designs, combining elements of lounge seating with that of focused task seating to meet the needs of higher education and corporate settings alike. Originally launched featuring a laminate shelf and tablet work surface, Allseating is excited to showcase this in an optional plastic finish in either black or smoke.



Innate

Following these enhancements, Allseating is thrilled with the recent excitement around Allora, the latest addition to the Allseating family of products. Designed by Italian-based design studio, ScagnellatoFerrarese+Masiero, Allora is a single shell guest chair inspired by the time spent in-between, from the lobby, to the cafeteria, to the training room and more. Its namesake, "Allora," is the Italian filler word used when thinking of what to say or introducing a sentence. Perfect for all the spaces in which people spend waiting, meeting and learning. Featuring options such as a flip-up tablet, book basket, ganging and beam seating, Allora also boasts some impressive stacking capabilities, including the ability to stack with a tablet. Allora is the perfect addition to everyone's seating family.

Following Allora is Dart. Much like its name, Dart is simple and to the point. The newest member of Allseating's conference family was designed to address the ongoing shift to collaborative working spaces that we see in modern offices. Time spent in the office is focused less on routine tasks and individual work and more on inspired collaboration, leading many companies to prioritize meeting spaces that fit their team's specific needs. Offered in a midback or highback and available with either task or conference arms, Dart's unique stitching details make it the perfect accent to any meeting space.

Finally, Allseating is also celebrating the launch of their Configura Extension Technology (CET) catalogue earlier this year. This extension streamlines the crucial steps in the design specification and visualization of furniture and interiors, fostering bet-

ter communication between dealer, customers and specifier. Adding to their existing "family of specification tools", the CET Commercial Interiors extension gives customers the flexibility and confidence to select products with ease and precision, empowering them to create functional and inspiring spaces that include Allseating's full family of products.

To further bring their theme to life, Allseating has commissioned a local Canadian artist, Carson Ting, to "personify" their product categories: Task, Conference, Lounge, Education, and Healthcare. Based out of Vancouver, Canada, Carson Ting's award-winning artist-led studio specializes in art and design with a particular emphasis on illustration and is renowned for its unique and whimsical style. He has had the honor of working with numerous global brands, including Nike, Adidas, Starbucks, Snoop Dogg, Porsche, NBA, Mercedes-Benz, Doritos, Microsoft, Red Bull, and more! Every product family consists of different personalities and you're going to love seeing his creations come to life in the Allseating showroom!

Allseating continues to forge relationships that inspire to innovate and evolve. The comfort in knowing Allseating clients are more than just clients – that their needs are anticipated and expectations surpassed. Once you've been introduced to their family of products, and the team behind it, you're a friend for life! Come meet the family and you'll never look back.

Allseating's Chicago showroom is located across from the Mart at 325 N Wells, Suite 210 (2nd floor).



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REFLECTING ON MY RESOURCE LIBRARY'S JOURNEY AND ANTICIPATING FUTURE INITIATIVES



LAURA CARLSON
*Director, Architectural Division
My Resource Library*

In the dynamic landscape of resource management, My Resource Library (MRL) has emerged as a pivotal platform, offering innovative solutions to manufacturers and companies centric to the contract interiors industry.

As we glance back at its evolutionary journey, marked by milestones and achievements, we also cast our gaze forward, envisioning new initiatives that will further revolutionize the industry.

My Resource Library was born from a vision (Jeff's vision) to connect people more efficiently than managing contacts/manufacturers in an excel file, while offering an option to printing gobs of marketing collateral, eliminating the cumbersome and proverbial "updating of binders"... MRL swiftly evolved into a multifaceted platform, adapting to the evolving needs of its users.

The journey commenced with the consolidation of disparate resources into a centralized digital space, eliminating inefficiencies associated with traditional methods of resource management. This transition catalyzed a paradigm shift, empowering companies to transcend geographical constraints and access a diverse array of resources at their fingertips. Our first tag line: "Always Available, Always Updated".

Key milestones, such as the integration of user-friendly interfaces and customizable features, facilitated seamless navigation and personalized experiences for users: the most robust search tool, and opportunity to house critical information right in the manufacturer's binder. Moreover, strategic partnerships and collaborations expanded MRL's reach, fostering a vibrant ecosystem characterized by knowledge exchange and synergy – our powerful Project Tool with PRO Notify.

Reflecting on MRL's trajectory unveils a tapestry woven with innovation and resilience. From its humble beginnings to becoming a cornerstone of resource management, MRL has consistently upheld its commitment to empowering ALL industry partners (specifiers, contract dealers, end users, manufacturers) and driving efficiency.

One of the defining attributes of MRL's journey is its responsiveness to feedback and market dynamics. User-centric design principles have underpinned every iteration, ensuring that the platform remains aligned with evolving industry trends and user preferences. This adaptability has not only sustained MRL's relevance but also fortified its position as a trailblazer in the realm of resource management. MRL's platform is backed by more than a century of combined experience specifically focused on the contract interiors industry; with a passion to bring a best in class experience every time!

Furthermore, MRL's impact extends beyond mere convenience; it has catalyzed transformative change within organizations, fostering collaboration, and facilitating informed decision-making. By democratizing access to resources, MRL has leveled the playing field, empowering companies of all sizes to compete on equal footing.

As we stand at the cusp of a new era, brimming with



possibilities, the horizon beckons with promise and potential. Building upon its foundation of innovation, MRL is poised to embark on new initiatives that will redefine the boundaries of resource management. We are actively looking towards AI and the role that it plays in maximizing efficiency while staying true to design intent, and respective of finding the most appropriate product or solution.

Additionally, MRL remains committed to fostering a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing. Through initiatives such as virtual forums, webinars, and industry-specific communities, MRL will facilitate meaningful interactions among stakeholders, thereby fostering innovation and driving collective growth.

As we embark on this journey of reflection and anticipation, one thing remains abundantly clear: My Resource Library's evolution is a testament to the power of innovation and resilience. From its inception to the present day, MRL has continually pushed the boundaries of possibility, transforming the way companies manage and leverage resources.

As we look towards the future, guided by a shared vision of progress and prosperity, MRL stands poised to lead the charge towards a more connected, efficient, and sustainable future. With new initiatives on the horizon and a steadfast commitment to excellence, MRL will continue to shape the landscape of resource management, inspiring generations to come.





GETTING TO KNOW LEVINE CONTRACT

Featured Rep Group, Levine Contract Furniture Group, www.lcfg.com

Our company was founded by my father, Harvey Levine, in 1973 at a desk in the Pan Am building on 42nd street in New York City. When he opened for business, sales were made in person or on the phone and orders were sent by mail. When John Calvano joined the company in 1975 he expanded the sales territory simply because he owned a car.

Things have changed since then. Clients shop for furniture on their phones and tablets while standing at their desk or working from home. Decisions about what chairs or desks to buy sometimes have more to do with ROI than aesthetics. Large projects are specified and ordered with the push of a button, and a consultant might have more to say about a new office than the person that owns the company occupying the space. We also work globally through our

design partners and extensive dealer network, wherever our clients happen to be.

What has not changed is that Levine Contract Furniture Group provides the same great service to our many clients today as Harvey and John did in the early days. We have also always represented the best independent contract furniture manufacturers in the industry.

Our manufacturing partners have been selected carefully based on quality, flexibility, product category, and price point. By blending our manufacturers together, LCFG is able to provide furniture to outfit an entire office tailored to each client's specific needs within budget and on time.

Q & A LEVINE CONTRACT FURNITURE GROUP

TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT HOW YOUR REP GROUP GOT STARTED?

In 1972 Harvey Levine was approached by Jack Cartwright to return to NYC and sell his seating line. After another friend, Jim Egan, offered him the chance to represent his new whiteboard cabinets; Harvey packed up his family and moved from Chicago to NYC to open Levine Contract Associates in early 1973.

Harvey's first office was in his Westchester kitchen and within a few months he secured a desk in the Pan Am building. Orders were sent by mail, he had a land line and he visited as many Interior Design firms, end users and dealers as possible.

A few years later his friend (and former Michigan salesman at Directional Furniture in the Midwest), John Calvano, joined the company. They became equal partners, rebranded as Levine Calvano Furni-

ture Associates and stayed together in business for almost 40 years.

Matthew Levine worked there as a kid sorting literature and samples, started full time in 1992 and never left. It's important to mention that Justine Spicer started at LCFG in the 80's and is currently the longest serving full time team member at the company. She's also the nicest person in you will ever meet.

HOW HAS THE COMPANY CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

The most drastic change is how technology is woven into all aspects of business and that it allows seven people to accomplish in a day what used to take 30 people a week to get done. We have also pivoted our market strategy over the years based on economic conditions, pandemics and workplace trends.





WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE SECRET TO YOUR REP GROUP'S LONGEVITY AND SUCCESS?

It's no secret: we have great independent manufacturing partners, we provide good solutions to our clients, and work with a team mentality. It also doesn't hurt to have effective showrooms.

WHAT MAKES YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT WORKING IN THE CONTRACT AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY?

It's exciting to participate in creating the exceptional interiors being created by our friends in design. It's very fulfilling to experience projects from inception through to completion.

HOW DO YOU THINK YOUR GROUP WILL EVOLVE OVER THE NEXT 5-10 YEARS?

Our group will evolve based on emerging technology and how it influences design trends in the workplace, education, retail and healthcare.

IF YOU COULD USE JUST ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE YOUR REP GROUP, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

DEDICATED



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CAPTURE THE VIBE

By Indiana
Furniture

Serenity

Whether it's the rhythm of a favorite song, the warmth of a sun-kissed afternoon, or the buzz of a lively crowd, vibes have a way of enveloping us. And that's exactly what you'll experience with Indiana Furniture at this year's NeoCon. From the unveiling of their new Design Studio to the flowing curves of Serenity, the effervescence of champagne to the electric collaboration of Synergy... you'll feel it.

And let's not forget the vibe of connection—those moments of shared experiences, of conversation, of laughter, coupled with the ripple effect of great design and the elements that weave us all together.

Join Indiana Furniture at The Mart, Suite 1042, during the show to capture your daily dose of good vibes. Throughout the day, grab a coffee or raise your champagne flute as they celebrate their new space—a destination for elevated design mixed with today's practicality. Take in the beauty and flexibility of their latest product additions. Be inspired by advanced specification tools to easily bring it all together. Then, before you call it a day on Monday and Tuesday, vibe with them at Happy Hour starting each day at 3:00pm.

The company's new Chicago Design Studio, located on The Mart's 10th floor and just down the hall from their previous space, offers additional square footage, views of the Chicago skyline and river, and an infrastructure that's more suitable for configuring furniture for today's and tomorrow's needs.

This new space will feature a broad mix of their established products in casegoods, tables, seating, and space division, and will highlight newly launching products being debuted at NeoCon. Visitors will have a thoughtfully designed place to experience smart design coupled with functionality, as well as a variety of tools that will make specification easier, including a new partnership and the launching of an online configurator.

Products making their NeoCon debut include Dab Seating, the Serenity Collection, and Synergy Collaboration.



A LITTLE DAB GOES A LONG WAY

Dab is multi-purpose, stackable seating that offers a broad range of functionality and style, and is ideal for personal and shared offices, teaming and collaborative areas, training and learning spaces, meeting and huddle rooms, break rooms and cafes, and so much more.

Dab provides extensive design possibilities through a palette of options to outfit any space. Select from upholstered, mesh, or poly seats and backs. Choose arms or go armless. Roll with casters or opt for glides. Specify a black or aluminum leg frame. Or bring your vision to life with single or contrasting fabrics from a wide variety of graded-in or contract fabrics, vinyls, and leathers. The choice is yours.

Models with casters stack four high while models with glides stack seven high. Or use the optional, easy-to-connect ganging bracket to keep chairs evenly spaced and in place. Perfect for applications like waiting rooms, auditoriums, universities, airports, and other public and shared spaces.

In alignment with Indiana’s deep commitment to

the environment, Dab is indoor air quality and BIF-MA level® certified, and the collection contributes to USGBC’s LEED® and The Green Building Initiative’s Green Globes® Programs. But, more importantly, it’s inherently green. Seat, back, and arm frames are made from 70% recycled material to provide a more sustainable chair design which lessens our carbon footprint.

And with every Dab chair ordered, Indiana Furniture will donate a percentage of the sales to The Common Thread for the Cure, a foundation dedicated to the battle against breast cancer. Since being established, the foundation has awarded more than \$1,000,000 in grants to deserving recipients in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. If you’re affiliated with the furnishings and design industries and you or an immediate family member has been diagnosed with breast cancer, you’re eligible to apply for a confidential grant through The Common Thread for the Cure. These grants can be used to meet financial responsibilities so you can focus on what is most important—survival. To learn more, go to www.commonthreadforthecure.org.

PEACE + VERSATILITY

The Serenity Collection offers subtle and understated upholstered chairs with a sweeping form to provide superior comfort. The simple design makes it the perfect solution for a variety of applications including individual workspaces, meeting rooms, and more.

Serenity is easily personalized through integrated arm and armless models, the selection of five base options—ranging from wood to polished aluminum and 4-Leg to 5-Star bases with casters, as well as a broad selection of wood finishes and graded-in and contract upholsteries, including fabric, vinyl, and leather.

And Serenity is responsible too. It considers the environment by using renewable and recyclable materials, and complies with the mechanical standards that focus on safety and durability.

THE ENERGY OF COLLABORATION

As the workforce changes and offices embrace new hybrid and collaborative work models, the way we work in spaces is evolving. Sometimes we need to work alone, sometimes in a small team, and sometimes as a large group. Spaces ebb and flow as workers come together to collaborate and then move apart for privacy. That’s where Synergy comes in.

Synergy allows users to easily configure and reconfigure spaces to support these fluid work styles.

Introducing a new collection of partitions, tables, and seating to create spaces in an impromptu way without the need for complex architecture. This line promotes flexibility to adapt to different interactions, forming areas to gather, separate, and then gather again...all in personalized ways, and all within the same open space.

Synergy offers a functional range of partitions, including options for storage, TV mounts, tackboards, dry erase boards, laminate panels, corner applications, lockers, planters, shelving, recycling, and more. Pair the dividers with a thoughtful portfolio of soft rectangle and view-shaped seated, counter, and standing height tables, available as freestanding or with casters. Then add Synergy’s seated, counter, and bar height stools and benches to complete your spaces.

The line boasts a large selection of laminates, wood finishes, and graded-in and contract upholsteries, including fabric, vinyl, and leather, allowing nearly limitless designs to meet your vision. And it’s responsible too. Synergy considers the environment by using renewable and recyclable materials, and complies with the mechanical standards that focus on safety and durability.





Synergy



Dab



Serenity



To bring it all together and make visualizing and specifying office furniture easier, Indiana Furniture will be adding several tools. One of them is an online configurator to quickly select and option products from their seating and tables offering. The configurator will be launching around NeoCon and conveniently located on the company's website under Resources as well as on applicable product pages.

They've also partnered with Thumbprint Furniture. Thumbprint is "Furniture Design, Simplified." This new tool is dedicated to simplifying the commercial furniture design and specification process through best-in-class technology. Thumbprint is a furniture-centric software that reflects the way furniture packages are actually designed, specified, and managed. It takes interiority into consideration so users can make both global and local changes to the furniture package. And, most importantly, it automates

the most tedious aspects of specification to allow for more bandwidth for the creative, people-centric aspects of the furniture process. To learn more, go to www.thumbprintfurniture.com.

From a new Design Studio to product additions to powerful tools, Indiana Furniture has a lot to vibe about. So go ahead, stop by their new space at **The Mart, Suite 1042**, during NeoCon to experience what it's all about, and immerse yourself in the vibe.

Indiana
FURNITURE

Seating for an
evolving world.



HÅG Tion



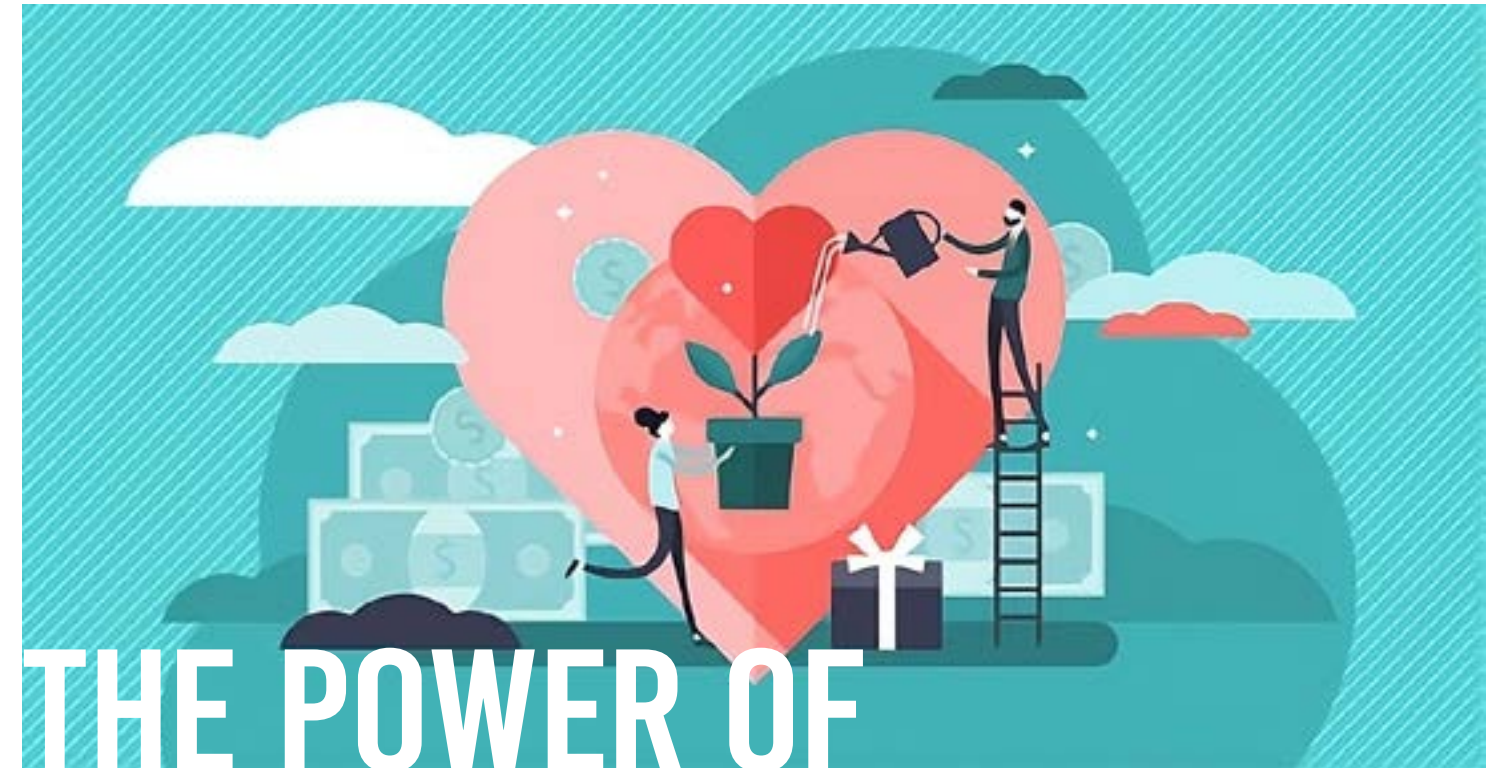
HÅG Celi

Among the world's most sustainable chairs.

HÅG Tion and HÅG Celi are made of an impressive 75% recycled and renewable materials. Both series have a broad selection of eye-catching monochromatic color options.

Explore these products and more at the 9to5 Seating showroom suite #1095 at NeoCon.

9to5seating.com



THE POWER OF PHILANTHROPY

By Steven Sloan

Elevating Brand Identity Through Giving Back

In today's competitive business landscape, building a strong brand identity goes beyond offering exceptional products or services. It encompasses a deeper connection with communities and causes that resonate with your company's values. Philanthropy, the act of giving back, not only benefits society but also plays a pivotal role in shaping brand identity and perception. Think of Ronald McDonald House, Subaru's partnership with National Forest Foundation, or TOMS shoes Buy One, Give One model.

One of the most profound benefits of business philanthropy is its ability to humanize a brand. By engaging in charitable activities, businesses demonstrate their commitment to making a difference beyond profit margins. This human-centric approach resonates with consumers who increasingly prioritize companies that "do good." Through dedication to philanthropy, your business aims to showcase

the heart and soul behind the brand. And it doesn't always have to be a financial commitment; it could be time volunteering or offering "pro bono" services that benefit worthy organizations.

Messaging around your charitable activities needs to read as authentic and, most importantly, be authentic. If you say a percentage of sales will benefit a cause, then it's important to follow through on that promise. False claims will do more damage than good for your brand.

There are plenty of organizations doing charitable work within the design and architecture communities. At SLOAN, we are proud supporters of several industry-specific charities that align with our mission and values. These organizations not only make a difference in people's lives but also contribute to the advancement and sustainability of our industry.



Some of our favorite industry charities include:

1. Designs for Dignity: Dedicated to transforming the spaces of non-profit organizations through donated products and design services, Designs for Dignity embodies the belief in the power of design to create positive change. www.designs4dignity.org

2. Hip Hop Architecture Camp: By combining hip-hop culture with architecture, this organization inspires underrepresented youth to explore careers in design and urban planning. Supporting Hip Hop Architecture Camp reflects the commitment to diversity and inclusion in the design industry. www.hiphoparchitecture.com

3. DIFFA (Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS): Through fundraising and advocacy, DIFFA provides support to those affected by HIV/AIDS. Involvement with DIFFA underscores the belief in using design as a tool for social good and health advocacy. www.diffa.org

4. IIDA's Design Your World: This program empowers underrepresented youth to explore careers in interior design and architecture, fostering the next generation of industry leaders. The program invests in the future of our profession and promotes equality in design. www.iida.org

5. Live Together: Live Together advocates for re-imagining the senior living community by building intergenerational housing models where seniors live side-by-side with young adults, many of whom have aged out of the foster care system. www.livetogethercommunity.org

At SLOAN, we understand the significance of philanthropy in fostering meaningful relationships and making a positive impact. And as a marketing and public relations firm in the A/D field, we not only contribute to worthy causes but also strengthen our brand identity as a socially responsible entity by aligning our efforts with non-profit organizations that share our values and support our industry.

By actively participating in philanthropic endeavors, your business not only gives back to the community but also reinforces its commitment to social responsibility and ethical business practices. Through these partnerships, you continue to shape your brand identity as a compassionate, forward-thinking organization that strives to make a difference in the world.

We'd love to hear about the charities and organizations that are important to you. We're always on the lookout for an opportunity to help amplify the messages of causes we believe in. **Email Steven directly at stevens@hellofromsloan.com**



ABOUT SLOAN

SLOAN is passionate about all things design and architecture – the people, the products, the places. As a full-service public relations and marketing firm dedicated to the A/D community, the SLOAN team is the ultimate opportunity spotter for your brand and your biggest cheerleader.

A NEW GHENT EXPERIENCE

VISIT US IN SHOWROOM 1094





Ezzeri Lounge

CREATING LIFESTYLE AMENITY SPACES

KIMBALL INTERNATIONAL

As places to work, learn, and heal continue to evolve, traditional amenity spaces are becoming more and more significant. Once a simple spot for a quick coffee break or an impromptu social interaction, today's amenity spaces are transforming into an ecosystem that supports well-being, encourages connections, and enhances productivity.

In an era when individuals are shaping their daily routines to reflect their personal values, we're seeing a shift toward a new paradigm. Enter "Lifestyle Amenities". These spots are where convenience intertwines with purpose. Where simplifying life actually empowers work, learning, and personal health. Where development happens on an individual level.

At Kimball International, we partnered with Ipsos, a

global leader in market research, and Arigami, a distinguished interdisciplinary research team, to study how spaces can be designed to help people feel like they belong. We explored the relationship between workplace belonging, company culture, spatial types, and sensory design. We conducted studies to understand how destinations can be deliberately designed to enrich daily life.

Our research uncovered that there are four fundamental needs - connection, community, comfort, and choice - that must be addressed in workplace design to create spaces for belonging. By embracing a human-centered approach and creating lifestyle amenity spaces that align with these categories, facilities can support personal productivity and improved well-being.



Daymora Lounge

FUNDAMENTAL NEEDS: CONNECTION, COMMUNITY, COMFORT, AND CHOICE

- Connection encompasses meaningful interactions that build a sense of camaraderie among colleagues, helping them to feel valued, respected, and supported.
- Community focuses on aligning a shared purpose among employees to build a feeling of togetherness, involving a collective alignment between individuals with the organization's values and goals.
- Comfort involves creating an environment that promotes physical and psychological well-being so employees feel safe, cared for, and valued.
- Choice involves granting employees the flexibility to decide where and how they work, fostering a stronger connection to both their tasks and the organizational culture.



Lifestyle amenity spaces provide more than just a place to work. It's an experience. From existing customers and employees to potential clients and talent, these spaces signal that the organization values work-life balance, innovation, and personal well-being. In today's competitive job market, such amenities can be the differentiating factor that sets a company apart, making it not just a place to work, but a desired community to be part of.

Amenity spaces support engagement and productivity by providing choices in where, when, and how people work. With options ranging from quiet pods for focus to lounges for recharging, workers can match the setting to the task. Thoughtfully designed lifestyle-focused amenity spaces engage employees and energize work by providing more places, postures, and possibilities.



Work-life balance and flexibility grow more important to employees every day. Amenity spaces support the whole person, not just the worker. Convenient, efficient spaces aligned with personal values increase employee satisfaction by making people feel valued for who they authentically are. When choices are provided that empower people, it's reinforced that their personal well-being, comfort, and preferences matter.





In our mission to create lifestyle-rich amenity environments that cater to a diverse spectrum of needs, we've identified three essential space categories – focus, gather, and nurture. These categories serve as the foundation for crafting environments that are dynamic, productive, and fulfilling. Rather than operating as isolated components, when integrated, they form a multi-modal experience. By incorporating spaces designed to focus, gather, and nurture, facilities can effectively showcase their sincere dedication to supporting employee and guest success and happiness.

Focus areas spark productivity. They are versatile and flexible. They offer quiet areas for concentrated work or study. Whether a secluded corner for deep focus or a private pod for quick tasks, focus areas support task-based work and learning by catering to individual needs for concentration, away from distractions.

Gather spaces foster meaningful interactions. By prioritizing community and connection, these areas

are crucial to include in any facility. From enhancing collaboration to encouraging learning and group engagement, these spaces provide communal areas for interactions.

Nurture zones encourage well-being. With a focus on mental and physical health, these spaces can range from meditation rooms to relaxation areas that offer a retreat for stress management and mental health support. They underscore the importance of a holistic approach to health and wellness.

By crafting destinations that are deliberately designed to enrich daily life, places to work, learn, and heal feel more personal and comfortable. Kimball International offers a wide range of product solutions designed to outfit focus, gather, and nurture spaces. Visit their new Chicago showroom at 318 North Carpenter Street to experience their Lifestyle Amenities solutions and learn more about creating spaces designed to foster connection, community, comfort, and choice. Learn more at kimballinternational.com.



NeoCon

After Hours



**MONDAY**
JUNE 10, 2024

**STARTS AT**
8:00PM - 1:00AM

**TREEHOUSE/TUNNEL NIGHTCLUB**
151 W. KINZIE ST,
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WE BELIEVE IN THE OFFICE

Get to Know Watson Furniture

For over half a century, Watson has built high-quality office furniture out of our home in the Pacific Northwest. From the craftspeople shaping our designs on the factory floor to the engineers, designers, and sales professionals who bring our products to life, we share a collective commitment to surpassing expectations. Pride in our work and our collective dedication to bringing the best out of one another drive the quality of workmanship and trust we bring to our clients and to the entire commercial interiors community. Our journey from a local workshop to a beacon of industry excellence is a testament to the dedication of our team.

Though our industry has weathered turbulent change since the pandemic, we maintain that the physical office remains an important hub for innovation, networking, and collaboration. This guiding principle drives us to design, build, and deliver furniture that is exciting to us; furniture that is simple, effective, and feels damn good to work at.



PROACTIVE, NOT REACTIVE

The past few years have thrown our industry into a tailspin. We'd all heard that the office was dead, and that work would continue to be virtual, transient, and fundamentally disconnected. Who would want a desk? A meeting table? This period became an important opportunity for us to assess and improve. Since then, we've grown our teams, expanded our manufacturing facility and optimized its processes, and re-engineered existing products to be more efficient to produce - lowering costs while maintaining the build quality we're known for. Instead of bowing to gimmicks or trends, we doubled down on products we believed in, releasing new workstations and tables instead of mimicking the uptick in work pods, booths, and lounge-style furniture. This was also a valuable period for us to continue working closely with our clients. We engaged our customers and asked, 'What are they requesting?' 'What kinds of modifications to standard products are we seeing?' and, 'What problems are they facing that our furniture can help with?'

Even though we were busy, one important thing stayed constant; we missed our neighbors and our colleagues. Additionally, we began to recognize

that many of our own employees didn't have the luxury of a living situation that was conducive to focus. Let alone professions where remote work wasn't an option. These reflections resonated with us, solidifying our core belief that most of the traditional elements of the workplace, in many ways the most important ones, weren't going anywhere. The office is here to stay.

FOSTERING CONNECTIONS THROUGH DESIGN

Through prioritizing, listening to, and engaging with past and present customers, our team produces exciting products like one of our latest launches showcased at this year's Neocon, the Edison Workbench. This design was spurred by a customer's need to reallocate workstations easily and cost-effectively in response to their office's shifting density. Not only that but be visually impactful and compelling enough to help entice team members back into the office. The result? A workbench that can be seamlessly linked to add workstations and detached from one another to remove them while ensuring a complete product at any stage of reconfiguration.



Edison Rail, Watson's bending rail system, easily defines zones for focus, collaboration, and socializing



A collection that comes with ample storage options, Zo Office works across open office layouts and private office settings



Unveiled in 2023, the Mastermind collection will be seen in new and exciting configurations during this year's event

This is just one example that demonstrates the value of listening to our client's needs, finding tailor-made solutions, and making those solutions scalable to address greater industry needs. To us, being solution-agile is part of a proactive design process that allows decision-makers to strategize rather than react to last-minute changes.



The Edison Workbench is designed to scale with the needs of its environment. New segments can be easily added or removed as workplace density changes



Watson has delivered furniture for the forward-thinking office for almost 60 years. Built at the company's manufacturing facility in Poulsbo, Washington, Watson products are responsibly sourced and focused on timeless and functional design

SHOWCASING OUR LEGACY AT NEOCON

NeoCon is always an exciting opportunity for us to reconnect with the entire commercial interiors' community. When you walk through our showroom, located on the third floor of theMART in suite 341, you'll see new releases and reimagined legacy products that celebrate the many rhythms of modern workplaces.

Our showroom is laid out in a series of functional vignettes that range from individual open-plan workstations and private offices to creative labs and traditional meeting spaces. This year we're showcasing several recent product launches like Mastermind meeting and conference tables, and Zo Office, a height-adjustable workstation with an integrated storage credenza that was born from our Zo storage collection. The effect of the space is that it feels just as inviting, and has a natural rhythm, where people, place, and shared purpose can move together in harmony.

At Watson, we believe in the office and in the amazing work that can happen when we come together.



We're proud of what we do and continue to build on our legacy of thoughtful design and enduring craftsmanship to serve the workplaces of today and tomorrow. As we look to the future, we invite you to explore our showroom, engage with our team, and discover how, together, we can create workspaces that inspire, adapt, and thrive.

Visit us in showroom 341 during NeoCon.

watson

SPOTLIGHT ON OFGO STUDIO



SAVOY

Delivering on Our Premium for All Mission



At OFGO STUDIO, our mission is to create the highest quality products and make them universally attainable – because we believe that everyone deserves the best. We call this mission: PREMIUM FOR ALL. We deliver this vision through superior construction methodologies, including:

INVISIA EDGEBAND TECHNOLOGY: Delivering a superior edge detail on laminate products with a clean edge finish and high-performance features such as a permanent bond that is tamper resistant & can withstand moisture and various chemicals and solvents.

REFORCE CONSTRUCTION: A unique construction method, facilitating easy part interchangeability, while delivering a tough and durable case for all storage components, resulting in proven longevity.

ECO+ & SURFACE+: 70% of OFGO STUDIO laminates come standard with ECO+ and SURFACE+. ECO+ laminates are manufactured using 100% recycled wood cores, resulting in the recycling of nearly a quarter of a million tons of post-consumer wood fibers annually. SURFACE+ laminates are manufactured to be

non-porous and inhospitable to the growth of bacteria in accordance with ISO 22196: 2011 standards.

PREMIUM TEXTURED LAMINATE: These premium laminates represent half of our standard thermally fused laminate collection. These finishes capture and replicate the natural characteristics of wood through an embossed surface that closely mimics real wood textures.

DURATEK & JIGSAW CONSTRUCTION: DURATEK, a construction method utilized across a variety of OFGO STUDIO lounge furniture replaces traditional hardwood with a steel frame, ensuring durability and complete modularity with field-replaceable components. Meanwhile, JIGSAW serves as the standard construction method for OFGO STUDIO modular soft seating collections, featuring intricate assembly techniques that reinforce each joint through interlocked components.

To learn more about our construction methods, visit www.ofgo.com/premium.

OFGO STUDIO is a second generation, family owned and woman-led business based in Concord, ON Canada.

“People often ask: so, what’s your story?” says Nicole Shamir, Executive Director of OFGO STUDIO, “well, contract furniture has been in my DNA for as long as I can remember. As a child, I watched my father David, build his office furniture business from the ground up and I quickly developed a deep connection to the industry. In 2019, I officially assumed the role of Executive Director at OFGO STUDIO. Alongside my amazing team, we relaunched the brand with a powerful vision: PREMIUM FOR ALL. Since then, I have had the privilege of leading the charge towards furthering our brand vision and together we have successfully launched almost two dozen new collections, finishes, and enhancements.”



Our latest collection, SAVOY™, represents a premium line of concealed and integrated height-adjustable desks tailored for the dynamic workspace. It features fully enclosed height-adjustable desks, ideal for an executive ambiance, as well as minimalist partially enclosed height-adjustable shrouds, offering a sleek and functional aesthetic. SAVOY offers an artfully crafted design with the versatility of OFGO STUDIO’s passion for functionality; perfect for creating a workspace that is not only beautiful, but productive.

“The introduction of SAVOY elevates OFGO STUDIO workspaces to a whole new level,” says Alex Sisk, Vice President of Sales at OFGO STUDIO.

“We understand that in today’s world, workspaces have evolved beyond the traditional workstation and 5-day-a-week use. Through the integration of important ergonomic features like height adjustability and fresh storage solutions, SAVOY is meticulously crafted for the modern workplace.”





Seamless storage with integrated height adjustability is a breeze with SAVOY. From pedestals and bookcases featuring integrated height adjustable mechanisms to sleek wall-mounted floating shelves, maximize storage versatility for optimal organization and functionality. For additional storage options, pair the SAVOY collection with MYZONE or MODERN storage pieces for a cohesive design. Functional and concealed storage is also available using the all-new pull-out box drawer, perfectly positioned within the drop down to low storage in new fixed height stack-on desks. Additionally, fixed height stack on desks feature the all-new A-leg with wire management built-in.

Each part of SAVOY is thoughtfully designed to inspire your vision, harmonize, and adapt to the current and future workplace, while also discovering a new level of sophistication and functionality. With its clean design, exquisite craftsmanship, and premium materials, SAVOY will help elevate your workspace to extraordinary heights.

“We maintain our customer focus as the key building block of our strategy. We operate in a manner that gives us the capability to accomplish projects of various sizes and scopes while remaining nimble and flexible. This flexibility is what sets us apart.”

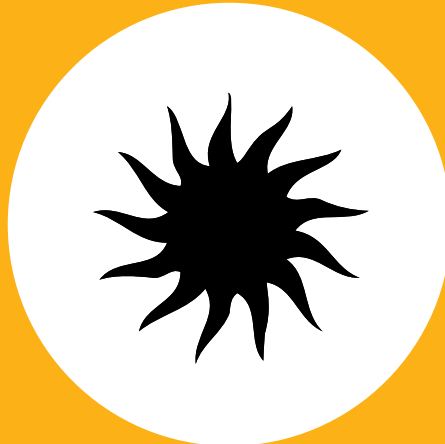
Our corporate philosophy encapsulates the idea that people define the shape of an organization, and the shape of the environment in which they work is defined by the way it is used. As an organization, OFGO STUDIO believes in communication, cohesion, a diverse culture, and building relationships. We design products in the same way: to be cohesive, diverse, and to promote a sense of community.

“It is an exciting time at OFGO STUDIO and in the contract furniture industry as a whole,” says Alex. “The industry landscape has, and continues to evolve rapidly. Our organization is perfectly suited to the rapidly shifting workspaces of today and the future. I invite you to join us as we continue to deliver on our PREMIUM FOR ALL mission.”



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FROM INBOX
TO IMPACT

By Laura Barski

The Power of Personal Touch

Imagine this: you've just survived another marathon trade show, and your inbox is jam-packed with the same old "nice to meet you" emails. But then, you spot a unicorn—a handwritten thank-you card nestled among the digital noise. In today's avalanche of instant messages, such a personal touch doesn't just stand out; it feels like finding a four-leaf clover in a field of astroturf.

THE BUSINESS MAGIC OF GOING OLD-SCHOOL

At giant gatherings like NeoCon, your digital follow-up is just one in a sea of many. But a handwritten thank-you card? That's like sending a cute puppy through their mail slot (metaphorically speaking, of course). It cuts through the noise and stays in the memory longer a hot knife through butter. It's not just charming; it's strategic.

WHY I'M ALL IN ON THE HANDWRITTEN HUSTLE

As a seasoned marketer with a hefty 27 years in the game, I've got a soft spot for the classics-yes, even in our uber-digital age.

Emojis? Fun. GIFs? Sure thing. But a handwritten note? That's the secret handshake of communication. According to a survey by MRF, a whopping 65% of people say nothing beats the personal touch of a handwritten card.

Industry thought leaders like Harvard Business Review and the American Marketing Association sing praises for these tangible tokens. They aren't just nice; they build connections sturdy enough to outlast any social media trend. Even McKinsey & Company and Forbes agree-adding a sprinkle of personal touches, like handwritten notes, to your sales strategy isn't just nice; it's downright smart.



would a high-end brand send a note on flimsy paper? No way. They'd go all out with quality that you can feel with every fingertip touch.

REAL-LIFE MAGIC AND PRACTICAL TIPS

Picture a boutique hotel chain that launched a thank-you card campaign. Suddenly, their repeat bookings shot up by 20%, and their online reviews glowed brighter than a lobby chandelier. Or a tech company that saw a 30% spike in sales after mixing thank-you notes into their follow-up routine.

WHY THIS WORKS EVEN WHEN WE'RE WORLDS APART

Remote work? No problem. The thrill of discovering a thank-you card peeking out beneath a keyboard or tucked into a planner can spark an office-wide grin. There's real psychology here: getting, opening, and reading a physical note taps into feelings of recognition and appreciation that our daily digital dose just can't match. It turns a message into an experience.

CRAFTING CARDS THAT CAPTURE YOUR BRAND'S SOUL

Every thank-you card is a mini billboard for your brand. It's about more than saying thanks; it's about showcasing who you are. Paper choice and ink color -each element should scream 'you'. Think about it:

WANT TO MAKE SURE YOUR THANK-YOU CARDS PACK A PUNCH?

Start by personalizing each one; drop their name and tailor the message to resonate with the specific details of your chat. Next, ensure that the design and messaging align perfectly with your brand's essence to maintain consistent brand vibes. Timing is key, so send the card promptly while the memory of your meet-up is still fresh in their minds. Finally, opt for top-shelf quality materials that convey to the recipient they are truly valued-nothing says appreciation like the good stuff. So, why wait? Scoop up some cards (or get snazzy with custom prints) and your favourite pen—let's leave a mark they'll never forget!



LAURA BARSKI, FOUNDER OF BARSKI & CO
At Barski & Co., we thrive on shaking things up and embarking on a journey to make your brand stand out from the crowd. With a sprinkle of creativity and a dash of strategy, we're dedicated to crafting experiences that not only leave a lasting impression but also spark conversations. From captivating events to memorable campaigns, we specialize in turning heads and winning hearts. Contact Laura at laura@barskico.com



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DESIGN TAKES SHAPE AT NEOCON 2024

Immersive New and Expanded Showrooms, Exciting 7th Floor Additions, and More

The 55th edition of NeoCon, June 10-12, at THE MART in Chicago will spotlight innovations from over 400 leading and emergent brands. Nineteen companies are unveiling new permanent spaces, from inaugural new showrooms, to reimagined, renovated, and expanded footprints. Exhibitors have pulled out all the stops with groundbreaking product launches and immersive displays, leveraging their presence at THE MART and NeoCon to capitalize on the event's capacity to drive growth and foster quality business opportunities.

"Our recent leasing transactions, renewals, and expansions alone speak volumes about THE MART's enduring value as a hub for the North American design

community," says Byron Morton, Vice President & Co-Head of Leasing, THE MART. "More than just a building, THE MART is its own user-centric ecosystem; a centrally located destination and an amenity-rich year-round resource. The most important event for the contract furnishing market, NeoCon is core to THE MART's DNA. We continue to be an essential platform where brands can grow and thrive and where the industry can come together to network, collaborate, and do business."

Since 2023, THE MART has completed nearly 200,000 square feet of leasing transactions, offering attendees an exciting array of captivating new brands and innovations to explore at NeoCon. Among the highlights are eight new showrooms making their debut

during the event. Esteemed companies such as Estonian manufacturer Silen, Belgian brand Bulo, and Sweden-based Mizetto have all selected THE MART as the home for their flagship showrooms and operational bases in the U.S., strategically positioning themselves for expansion within the North American market.

"We are thrilled to announce the grand opening of the Silen showroom in Chicago at THE MART during NeoCon 2024," remarks Endrus Arge, CEO & Co-Founder of Silen. "With the significant increase in demand for Silen's market-leading office pods and privacy solutions among American companies, the opening of a dedicated showroom in the U.S. design capital sets us up for continued growth."

"The establishment of our first and only U.S. showroom in THE MART has been a personal passion project for me," says Carlo Busschop, CEO, Bulo. "We worked with Gary Lee Partners to design a space which supports our savvy independent reps and clients and will best showcase our latest designer collaborations. I look forward to forging new relationships within this dynamic and innovative business community."

After two years of exhibiting on the 7th floor, Mizetto is excited to mark a company milestone with their inaugural permanent showroom on the 3rd floor of THE MART. "We are thrilled to have a foothold in the North America market, spotlighting Swedish craftsmanship and embodying the essence of Sweden's modern culture and design—a true honor for Mizetto," says Malin Muskala, one of Mizetto's founders.

U.S.-based soft seating specialist Fõmcore also makes its NeoCon debut with its first dedicated showroom. *"NeoCon offers us an exciting launch moment and allows us to reach a critical mass of qualified specifiers," notes Misty Diller, Chief Creative Officer, Fõmcore. "We've built a reputation for crafting spaces that ignite collaboration and spark creativity in K-12 educational environments. We're thrilled to be able to demonstrate our expertise in our first ever showroom at THE MART."*

Croatian manufacturer Prostorija, formerly known as Kvadra, has a new permanent space on the 3rd

floor, which showcases their design-forward indoor and outdoor furniture solutions. On the 10th floor, Ontario-based ergoCentric is highlighting its wide assortment of ergonomic office seating, desks, and accessories in a new 3,000-square-foot space, while family-owned Nevins has incorporated lush flowers and natural elements into the furniture displays in their new, nearly 2,000-square-foot space. In their new 11th floor showroom, Akouo Acoustics is offering attendees the opportunity to speak to their knowledgeable consultants about state-of-the-art solutions for auditoriums, lecture halls, performing arts venues, and workplaces.

Several established brands are revealing expanded and renovated showrooms, as they continue to invest in their real estate in THE MART. Leading acoustics manufacturer Turf has transitioned from a 4,000-square-foot showroom to a sprawling 20,000-square-foot Innovation Center, which is a hub for research and operations, and which will host dozens of year-round employees. The development underscores a growing trend of brands redefining and enhancing their MART spaces.

Doubling their footprint on the 10th floor of THE MART, Ghent, a GMi Company's expanded space invites visitors to interact with the company's full offering of premium visual communication tools and space division furniture. Kettal, Arcadia | Encore, and Innovant are also unveiling expansions. Once again, many exhibitors—the likes of which include Stylex, Momentum, and Bernhardt Design—are taking advantage of the show as a moment to reimagine their showrooms and reconfigure their spaces.



Ghent, a GMi Company
Showroom 1094, 10th Floor

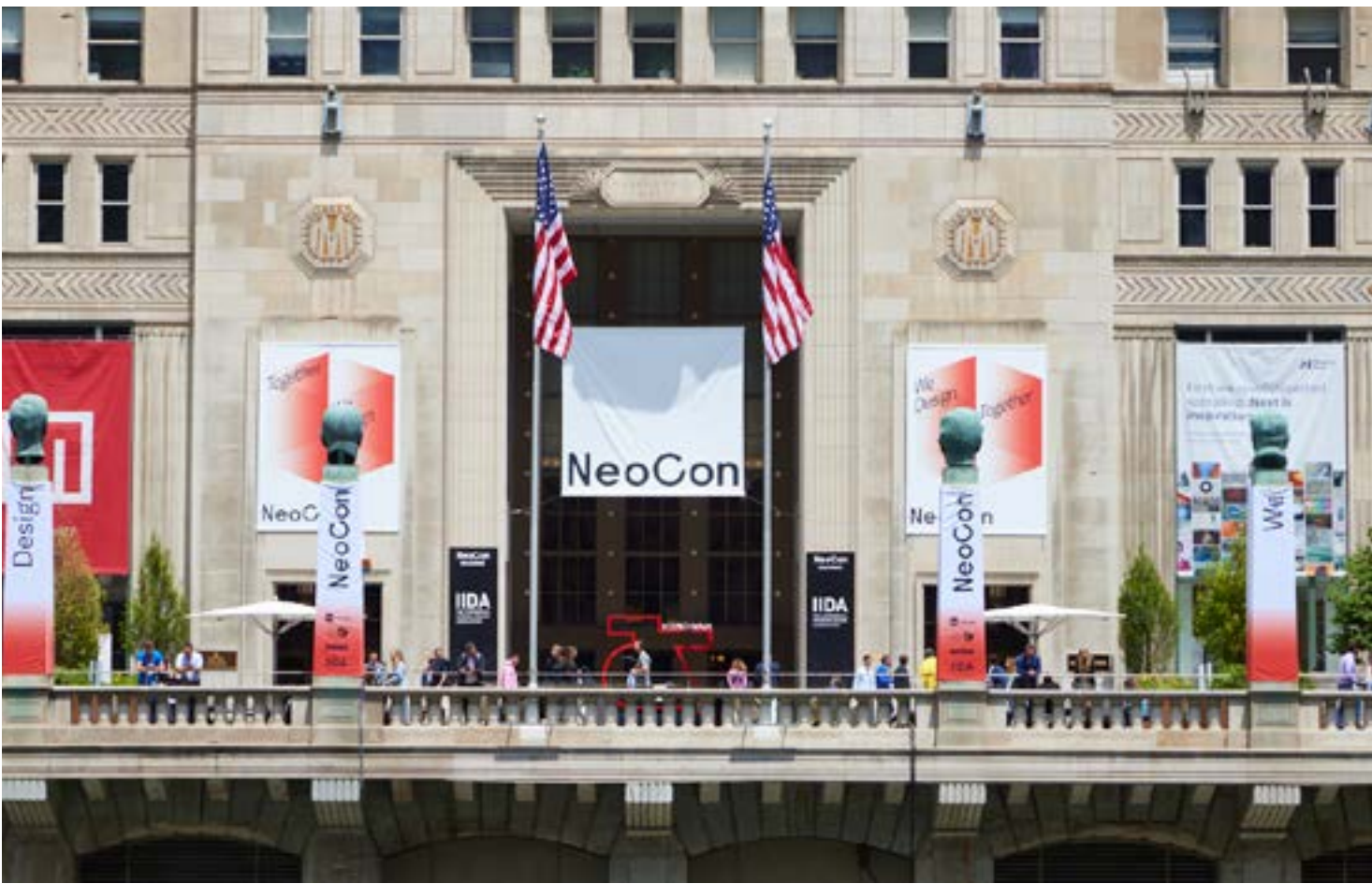
“NeoCon is truly the premier event to engage with industry professionals, share our passion for innovative design, and find new inspiration across all aspects of our business,” remarks Helen Kim, VP of Marketing, Arcadia | Encore. “And we’ve been looking forward to it even more this year as we’ve nearly doubled our showroom footprint. Not only does this represent our commitment to growth, but also serves as a vibrant platform for both new introductions and currently re-

leased products.”

The 7th floor, organized by product category, is a premier venue for discovering pioneering brands that are at the forefront of innovation. “In addition to dedicated areas for Technology and Furniture + Fabrics, visitors can explore over 15,000 square feet of companies in the Building Products | Interior Finishes + Materials | Flooring section,” notes VP of Exhibitor Sales Julie Kohl. “This includes the new Climate Positive Solutions Gallery, which offers a curated selection of environmentally responsible materials and innovations that meet the demands of commercial specification without sacrificing design, durability, or budgets.”

Curated by journalist and CEU content creator Kenn Busch, founder of Material Intelligence and Climate Positive NOW, the Climate Solutions Gallery features low-carbon and carbon-negative materials and related technologies. Elsewhere on the 7th floor, attendees can discover cutting edge, new to NeoCon brands, such as CECOECO which provides state-of-the-art illuminated digital screen solutions for commercial spaces; Focal Point, a vertically integrated, lighting and acoustical systems manufacturer; design-forward, nature-inspired flooring specialist Karndean Designflooring; Lamitech, a leading manufacturer of decorative High Pressure Laminates; and M|R Walls, Futrus and Privacy Plus, renowned for high-performance, versatile, and attractive surfaces for a range of applications. Notable returning companies including AHF Products, Behr Paint Company, Benjamin Moore, Configura Inc., emuamericas, llc, Formica Corporation, FreeAxez, LLC, FUNC, Hollman, MOCKETT, Mute, NARDI S.P.A., OFFICES TO GO, Room & Board for Business, SnapCab, Ultrafabrics, Zintra, Artizin LLC, and Fi Interiors are on view, joining over 200 exhibitors on the 7th floor.

World-class programming including keynote presentations by three provocateurs: Gensler’s Global Entertainment Leader Bob Weis, multi-disciplinary artist and designer Yinka Ilori, and Academy Award-winning costume designer Ruth E. Carter, as well as special events, experiences and workshops with key design partners round out the 2024 edition.



THE MART



[My Resource Library](#) and the [NAIRC](#) hosted one of the most-attended parties at NeoCon 2024! “NeoCon After-Hours” was held at the Treehouse & Tunnel Night Club in Chicago, and was attended by members of the Contract Design Industry. This invite-only soiree provided an opportunity to mix, mingle and let loose!

My Resource Library and the NAIRC would like to thank all that attended, and we look forward to future events! *Did you attend NeoCon AfterHours? Send us your pics at hello@myresourcelibrary.com !*







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KEEPING CONNECTED

JUNE 2024



Delve Magazine, along with My Resource Library, are committed to fostering connection within the Contract Design community. Each month, we feature stories from our partners that showcase events, networking opportunities, and community-focused initiatives. Keeping Connected is one of our favorite recurring sections in the magazine, and hope that you enjoy it as much as we do!



Contract Office Reps

Contract Office Reps hosted “Driven by Design” in Orange County in March! This event is Orange County’s premier contract interiors exhibit that showcases the latest trends in commercial environments.



Contract Furniture Professionals

Their team, spread across 14 states, rarely gathers in one place, but they continue to make impactful connections. Recently, Bob Koehne held a Darran lunch-and-learn in Indianapolis with CSO Architects, showcasing the Honey collection. Tom Schlich assisted with a custom Viacraft installation in Kentucky, creating a reception desk inspired by a horse saddle for a thoroughbred equine industry company, with Furniture Solutions in Lexington. Jeremy Anderson collaborated on outdoor seating for Forest General Hospital in Hattiesburg, MS, with Babmar. Although we lack pictures of our reps, these images highlight their remarkable work.





Cronan

The Cronan rep group represents the best of the best in commercial furniture manufacturing, and we pride ourselves on serving our customers in unexpected and vitally important ways – and that starts with hiring all-star employees characterized by servant leadership, knowledgeable, and excellence in every circumstance.



Gibson Interior Products

Gibson Interior Products understands the critical importance of connecting with our clients and firms on a regular basis. We like to host monthly spa nights for one firm at a time so we can truly focus on getting to know each person we work with.

Our spa nights include dinner, drinks, a masseuse and a manicurist making for a fun and relaxing night for our friends and colleagues in our showroom!



We Thank You!



ZIA Collection

Design by **J Robert Bazemore**

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT
FROM CONCEPT TO COMPLETION
A COMMITMENT TO INNOVATION

The process of designing a modern table collection requires a combination of artistic vision, technical skills, and practical considerations—ZIA's design balances form and function, creating visually appealing and functional tables and accessories resulting from collaboration, creativity, and innovation.

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