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The Business of Furniture

June 13, 2018

HIGHLIGHTS

14 UPFRONT: Bush Industries and Bush Business Furniture Sold to Lorraine Capital

This acquisition was almost lost within the much larger pool of acquisitions announced the past few weeks.

18 Successful NeoCon Wrapping Up in Chicago

Mobs of people came to NeoCon 2018, anecdotally one of the busiest on record.

30 NeoCon Keynote Address: Art Gensler Gives Insight to Success

Many designers socialize with other designers, which is great but those designers will never give you a job.

< Crowds packed NeoCon this year.




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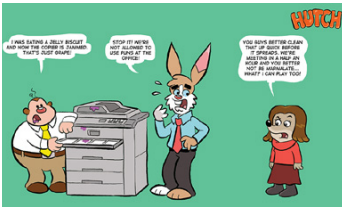
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13 | Hutch Industry Cartoon



14 | Upfront



17 | The Stream

COLUMNS
 Stephen Says 36
 CoLaboration - Al Everett 38

FINANCIAL
 Industry Shares/Graphs 34

CALENDAR & MORE
 Regional Industry News 32
 Upcoming Events 42
 Marketplace 58



18 | Successful NeoCon Wrapping Up in Chicago

Mobs of people came to NeoCon 2018, anecdotally one of the busiest on record. The halls were packed Monday and Tuesday as specifiers went to the Mart to find out what the future of work looks like.



26 | Flurry of Acquisitions Roils Industry

Marking the importance of a diverse product offering that spreads far beyond the office, it was the biggest week of acquisitions and partnerships in the industry in recent memory, and all of them were announced just before the opening of NeoCon.



46 | Hekman Focuses on Booming Senior Living Furniture

People are living longer, and the elderly who might need a little help but aren't ready for a nursing home are not satisfied with the clinical, institutional look of the furniture available to them from most manufacturers.



50 | Steelcase Plugs into Microsoft (and what it means for the company and industry)

The collaboration began about 18 months ago with Creative Spaces — an immersive ecosystem that brings together place and technology to help people generate new ideas and move them forward.



40 WHITEBOARD Reinventing the Workplace



41 PLACES PwC Offices – Melbourne



NeoCon Wrap-up Issue coming June 20th



54 PULSE The latest industry happenings



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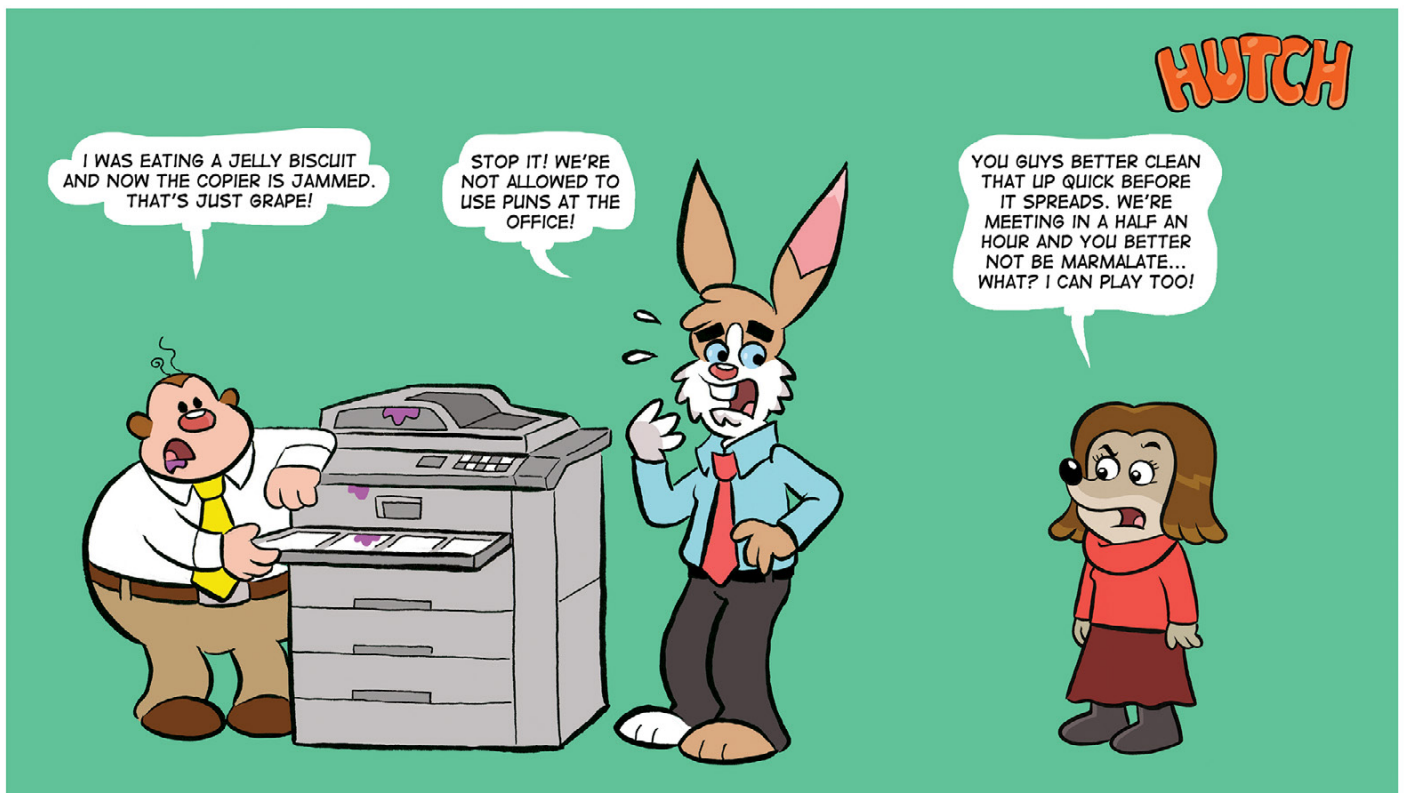
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ROB KIRKBRIDE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Bush Industries and Bush Business Furniture Sold to Lorraine Capital

Bush Industries, a Jamestown, NY-based home and office furniture manufacturer, has endured the highs and lows of a company that has lasted for nearly 60 years.

The company thrived in the late 1990s, reorganized through bankruptcy in 2004, and recently returned to local ownership through a management buyout. Now comes the latest chapter in its history: Lorraine Capital, a Buffalo private equity firm, has bought the business. Terms were not disclosed.

For the executives who bought back the company in 2014, this was the natural next step, said Jim Garde, who was one of those executives and is retiring as CEO.

“We bought the company with the idea we wanted to get it on a sustainable, steady base, and then find a partner that we could sell it to who would recognize that and help us grow it,” he said.

Bush has nearly 400 employees worldwide, about 300 of whom are in Jamestown. It has manufacturing operations in Jamestown, warehouse operations in Erie, Pa., and Reno, Nev., and an office in China.

Lorraine declined to disclose Bush’s annual sales figures. But Garde said the company “has done very well” over the past few years. Through May, he said, its sales were up nearly 30 percent from the same period a year ago.

“We had some other opportunities to sell, but we were really attracted [to Lorraine] because of their focus on Western New York and how much they appreciate keeping a base here,” he said.

William Maggio, Lorraine’s managing director, said the quality of Bush’s leadership team was part of what appealed to Lorraine. “These are very, very skilled individuals from very diverse backgrounds who have done a remarkable job turning this business around and positioning it to be one of the innovators.”

As customers have become more comfortable making large purchases online, Bush’s leaders “have been able to really kind of introduce the furniture into this space like no one else has been able to do,” Maggio said.

Paul S. Bush founded the company in 1959. In the mid- to late 1990s, the company was riding high, enjoying steady growth in sales and profits. Forbes named Bush one of the “200 Best Small Companies in America” for 1996-97. Strong sales of personal computers fueled demand for its office furniture.

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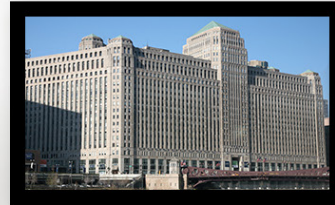


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If you haven't done the math, take our word for it: Residential plus commercial equals resimercial, or interior design for commercial spaces that embraces the qualities of the home. It's a trend that's poised to change the industry for designers and manufacturers alike, and one that made its appearance at NEOCON, over June 11 to 13 in Chicago.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)



BIG NUMBER

32 PERCENT

Only 32 percent of respondents to Staples' recent Workplace Survey say they spend all their time working in an office. Generational differences further underscore this issue – millennials say they only spend 67 percent of their time in an office. Employees are spending less and less time in traditional offices and are instead now opting to customize their workspaces to their needs, according to the survey.



How tech tools are powering workplace design decisions

Workplace strategists, architects and designers are streamlining office fit outs by using advances in data and analytics, utilization technology, 3D renderings and even augmented/virtual reality (AR/VR). These tools are helping organizations hone in on the right workplace plan—and see it through.

“When you can spin around a 3D model and even ‘walk’ inside the yet-to-be-built space, you get a truer sense of whether it fits your needs,” says Megan S. Mackinson, Vice President, Occupancy Planning Consulting, JLL. “Recent improvements in visualization and ‘walk-through’ technology bring so much more confidence to the decision-making process.”

New technology enables better decision making even before an organization sketches out a rough idea of what their new dream workspace will look like.

These tools are helpful in a world where the basic questions around how best to use space have become increasingly complex.

The rise of mobility programs, in particular, has complicated workplace design decisions. In the offices of yesteryear, where employees sat at an assigned desk from 9 to 5, workplace planners simply needed to provide a 1:1 ratio of desks to people. Today, many employees work remotely at least some of the time, or frequently move around to different workspaces.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

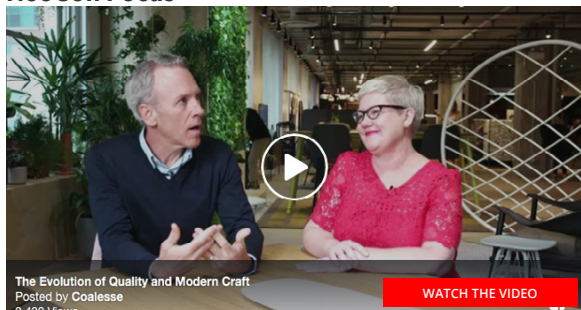


When offices die, how do you design an office chair?

When you look around at your office, what do you see? Maybe it seems like just a bunch of chairs and tables, a few conference rooms. But that entire set up is built on an assumption about what work means, inherited from the 19th century. If your office has invested in spacious desks for every employee, and Aeron chairs customizable by every owner, what your employers are really saying is: We expect that most of your work happens at your desk, because you're working on your little piece of the puzzle, like in a factory.

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Watch: Coalesse Global Design Director on NeoCon Focus



[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

Coworking is breaking away from its cultural and geographical stereotypes

There is a persistent image of a coworking space as a sort of glorified serviced office for tech and creative startups who can't afford the eye-watering rents in the areas they need to be. This is usually in the technology hothouses of the world's major cities where they can work alongside the corporate giants and fellow innovators that thrive there. The reason such perceptions exist is because they are largely true. It's no coincidence that coworking spaces have thrived up till now in the world's most expensive property markets – in London, Hong Kong and New York, serving exactly the sorts of start-ups and freelancers who rely on proximity to their potential clients.

Although New York and London have been the epicentres of growth in coworking, the focus is shifting to other markets. WeWork expects that its biggest growth markets in 2018 will be in Hong Kong and China.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

San Francisco On Verge Of A Coworking Explosion And Landlords Are Taking Note

Two to three years ago, landlords were less willing to consider this type of tenant, but now they are actively seeking to partner with coworking providers to create a better tenant mix within their portfolios.

While many landlords have been actively leasing large blocks of space to the likes of WeWork, which is now the fourth-largest San Francisco tenant, many are seeking high-end boutique providers that target specific demographics. Coworking sites also double as a building amenity and service.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

NeoCon



Successful NeoCon Wrapping Up in Chicago

MOBS OF PEOPLE CAME TO NEOCON 2018, ANECDOTALLY ONE OF THE BUSIEST ON RECORD.

BY ROB KIRKBRIDE

“The report of my death was an exaggeration.”

— Mark Twain, May 1897.

The same, of course, could be said of NeoCon, the annual conference in Chicago that is wrapping up with just a half day left.

Anyone who attended the 50th anniversary of NeoCon, though, knows the show might be as strong as ever.

Mobs of people came to NeoCon 2018, anecdotally one of the busiest on record. The halls were packed Monday and Tues-

day as specifiers went to the Mart to find out what the future of work looks like.

Though much has been made of those who have been to many NeoCons over the last 50 years (Dick Resch of KI who has been to all of them, first and foremost),

the show is still new and fresh, especially for those like Madeline Boyd, who works for Made Interiors in Country Club Hills, Illinois. It was Boyd's very first NeoCon and she — like those who have gone for decades — was wowed by the 2018 event.

“Everyone kept telling me that I needed to go to NeoCon,” Boyd said. “It has been absolutely great. I've had such fun walking around and talking to reps. I thought it would be much more formal, but it's actually relaxed and fun. I'm really inspired by the products I've seen.”

That's music to the ears of Byron Morton, vice president of leasing at the Mart. Business of Furniture caught up with him walking the 10th floor with a very broad smile on his face. “Isn't this great?” he asked.

And why not? The event has been great, surpassing most expectations in terms of attendance and new products. A lot of new was in what is a 50-year-old event. Showrooms stood out, including some that were greatly expanded and improved.

Brands like Groupe Lacasse, Workrite Ergonomics, GMi, AIS, ESI, Teknion and Steelcase all showed their best in newly expanded and remodeled showrooms. Steelcase took the top prize for showrooms this year.

But it was the small- and mid-sized companies that made the most of the new space. Sylvain Garneau, chairman and chief executive officer of Groupe Lacasse, said his company's showroom nearly doubled in size

story continues on page 24

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to about 11,000 square foot. In the company's old showroom, it could display about 10 percent of its line.

"It was going to be a challenge every year unless we were able to get more space," he said. "Now we can show most of the collections that we produce. I couldn't be happier."

Nightingale was marking its 90th anniversary and did so by celebrating its employees. President Ed Breen brought all

of Nightingale's employees to Chicago as part of its anniversary. And when a group of Gensler designers entered the company's cool showroom, he not only showed them the company's product line, he also took the time to introduce to them to the Nightingale workers who build the company's furniture.

The new expanded showrooms, like Workrite's, also exhibited some exceptional products. Workrite showed off its new

Advent height-adjustable desk. Three years in the making, it is the first height-adjustable desk designed as a Parsons table — a modernist square or rectangular table whose four legs are square in cross-section, flush with the edges of the top, and equal to it in thickness.

The desk has four individual micro actuators, and it snaps together easily with a few cam locks. "We looked at the height-adjustable market, and we were



concerned about the market,” said Charles Lawrence, president. “There was a sense that there was a sea of sameness. The challenge with creating a Parsons desk that is height-adjustable is stability. Simplicity is what everyone wanted as well.”

Regardless of the product or category, NeoCon 2018 is proving the show still counts. Dan Tuohy, chief executive officer of Tuohy Furniture, said NeoCon gives the industry a hard deadline to meet,

pushing innovation and discovery.

“It is still relevant,” he said. “Here in the U.S., this is the only true (office furniture) show. Everybody knows when it is and where it is. (Organizers) have done a good job reinvigorating NeoCon. They are working really hard to make it design-relevant as well. If I would change anything, it would be to make it a bit more like Milan where the whole city gets involved.”

Another new showroom was GMi, which made the most of the new space created on the 11th floor. Jim Harter, vice president of sales and marketing, said the company and its brands were on the seventh floor and is happy to have a permanent showroom.

“I love coming to NeoCon because it helps me understand the industry,” he said. “It helps me understand where we are, too. It’s a fun industry, and I like the people in it.” **BoF**



Flurry of Acquisitions Roils Industry

IN A HEAD-SPINNING FLURRY OF ACQUISITIONS, TWO OF THE INDUSTRY'S LARGEST COMPANIES HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY ADDED TO THEIR BRAND LINEUPS AND BOLSTERED THEIR ANCILLARY, EDUCATIONAL, OUTDOOR AND RESIDENTIAL FURNITURE OFFERINGS.

BY ROB KIRKBRIDE

In a head-spinning flurry of acquisitions, two of the industry's largest companies have significantly added to their brand lineups and bolstered their ancillary, educational, outdoor and residential furniture of-

ferings. Steelcase announced it would work with West Elm, acquired educational furniture maker Smith System Manufacturing Co. and formed a partnership with outdoor furniture maker Extremis. Not to be out-

done, Herman Miller announced it acquired pieces of Maars Living Walls and residential/contract furniture maker HAY, both strong in Europe.

Marking the importance of a diverse product offering that

spreads far beyond the office, it was the biggest week of acquisitions and partnerships in the industry in recent memory, and all of them were announced just before the opening of NeoCon.

Arguably, the biggest news was the Steelcase/West Elm marriage. West Elm has been in the contract furniture industry, but has been without a partner in the arena since it dumped Inscape.

The two companies are finalizing the details of this new relationship. Steelcase expects to offer a selection of West Elm furniture designed specifically for the workplace through its network of U.S. and Canadian dealers by the end of the year. This partnership builds upon the successful relationship West Elm established in 2015 with Designtex, a Steelcase company, which designs textiles and surface materials and manufactures and distributes West Elm fabrics.

The two companies plan to design, manufacture and distribute new workplace solutions in West Elm's signature modern aesthetic, giving businesses easy access to a more expansive array of choices through the Steelcase dealer network and West Elm contract furnishing dealers. This West Elm collection would complement Steelcase.

"Steelcase and West Elm share an ethos of improving the physical, cognitive and emotional well-being of people at work," said Allan Smith, vice president of global marketing for Steelcase.

"Together we aspire to help organizations create inspiring,

Smith noted Steelcase sees the opportunity to double Smith System's business within five years by expanding sales in North America through the Steelcase dealer network.

high-performance workplaces where people can be highly engaged and do their best work."

Cheryl Carpenter, vice president at West Elm, said the company is delighted to be working with Steelcase and creating spaces that support the needs of today's workers. "We are connected to our consumer every day and have a deep understanding of their preferences from lifestyle to workstyle," she said. "Together with Steelcase, we will create customer experiences that leverage our differentiated resi-

dential design, shared commitment to world class innovation and Steelcase's industry-leading workplace expertise."

West Elm has been in the contract market since 2015. The brand has grown in large part due to its understanding of emerging workplace concepts and commitment to three key values that inform its designs: well-being, residential inspiration and choice.

Steelcase also announced last week it was acquiring Smith System Manufacturing Co., a Texas-based manufacturer of furniture for the pre-K-12 education market. The acquisition is expected to advance Steelcase's growth strategy to offer a broad range of products in the education, health care and office markets.

"As education markets continue to grow, the combination of Steelcase and Smith System will create incredible value for our customers," Smith said. "Together, we can help schools create outstanding learning environments where students thrive, such as collaboration spaces, makerspaces and tech labs."

Smith noted Steelcase sees the opportunity to double Smith System's business within five years by expanding sales in North America through the Steelcase dealer network and bringing Smith System's products to corporate customers and global markets.

Founded in 1905, Smith System makes educational environments more healthy, comfortable and inspiring for students and educa-

tors. Smith System will operate as an independent subsidiary under its own brand. It will continue to support its network of existing dealers and extending its reach through authorized Steelcase dealers.

“We believe that joining forces with Steelcase offers us a path to accelerate long-term growth, while maintaining the agility that has made us successful,” said Molly Parnell, vice president of sales at Smith System. “Steelcase and Smith System have complementary offerings, and we look forward to growing our business together in pre-K-12, higher education and corporate learning environments around the globe.”

Though not an acquisition, Steelcase also announced a new relationship with Extremis, a Belgian furniture design group with a collection of products that focus on the outdoors. Steelcase will offer a collection of Extremis products throughout the U.S., Mexico and Canada with expected availability in late summer 2018.

“Organizations understand that great employee experiences can be enhanced by bringing their people together in inspiring places,” Smith said. “Outdoor spaces enhance well-being, support hospitality and expand the workplace ecosystem for creative collaboration. This relationship will give our customers easy access to more outdoor furniture choices through our industry-leading dealer network.”

Extremis was founded by Dirk Wynants in 1994. With head-

quarters and manufacturing in Poperinge, Belgium, the company’s design ethos is derived from a Shaker quote: “Don’t make anything, unless it is both necessary and useful ... and if it is, don’t hesitate to make it beautiful.”

With that in mind, Extremis began making furniture suited for the outdoors and indoors in completely non-standard ways. “We’ve never lost our strong focus on intelligent, common sense innovation and sustainability,” said Wynants, founder and owner. “Our designs provide tools to bring people together and stimulate conversation. Our new relationship with Steelcase provides workplaces with more choices when it comes to connecting their people.”

Not to be outdone, Herman Miller broke some major news prior to the opening of NeoCon as well.

The company announced last week it is leading a group of investors to acquire Maars Living Walls, a global designer and manufacturer of standard and customized modular walls. Under the terms of a preliminary agreement, Herman Miller will acquire 48 percent of Maars equity for \$6 million with an option to acquire a controlling interest over time. Additional investors in the group include select U.S. certified Herman Miller dealers, a European dealer and members of the Maars management team led by the incumbent CEO.

Headquartered in Harderwijk, the Netherlands, Maars was founded in 1946 and has

since expanded to more than 45 countries. Maars creates innovative solutions for interior spaces, including offices, health care facilities, airports, hospitality and universities. Customers have included Dow Jones, General Electric, Google, IBM and Microsoft. Revenue for Maars in the most recently completed fiscal year totaled approximately \$65 million.

“Maars products will be a key part of our offering that brings customers best-in-class solutions to help them create a variety of enclosed settings,” said Brian Walker, president and CEO of Herman Miller. “Now, more than ever, customers are looking for environments that are flexible, modular spaces, and Maars meets that demand with innovation and design at the center. Combined with other solutions we have or will be introducing in the near future, we will have a broad and leading portfolio in this important and growing solution segment. This is another key step in our efforts to increase our share of wallet as we build a stronger dealer ecosystem.”

Menno de Vries, CEO of Maars Living Walls, added the acquisition strengthens the company’s mission to improve people’s well-being and productivity by combining Maars Living Walls with the Living Office strategy of Herman Miller. “Maars will have access to Herman Miller’s expansive and strong dealer network in North America and their global customer base,” De Vries said. “This combination significantly

expands our global reach and opens up many new opportunities for the Maars brand, our people and our growing network.”

The modular wall market is growing quickly in North America and is already well-established in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Maars is now better positioned to capitalize on the North American market, as it continues to build its global distribution in this category. “We are excited to join our co-owning dealer partners in this endeavor,” said Jeremy Hocking, executive vice president of strategy and business development for Herman Miller. “We know that this solution set requires a highly committed and capable dealer network to lead specification and installation. We believe this unique investor group ensures we have the right folks to guide the implementation of the Maars strategy to expand their presence in the North American market and develop a leading global position. We are confident that the seasoned management team at Maars and our industry-leading distribution network will be a winning combination.”

Maars product lines include Lalinea, which was developed in collaboration with a leading international architectural firm that focuses on minimalist design. LineaCube was recognized with the Best of NeoCon GOLD Award at NeoCon 2016 for creating an independent architectural space within an open office floor plan. The design features its own

ventilation, acoustic insulation and absorption, and integrates power, data, audio and lighting into the ceiling.

Herman Miller also announced it acquired a 33 percent equity interest in Nine United Denmark A/S (HAY) for \$66 million. Herman Miller also acquired the rights to the HAY brand in North America for approximately \$5 million. The company has the option to increase its ownership stake in the future.

Founded in Copenhagen in 2002 by Troels Holch Povlsen and Rolf and Mette Hay, the company is a strong player in ancillary furnishings in Europe and Asia and active in both the contract and residential furnishing markets. Over the course of the coming year, HAY’s goods will be available through Herman Miller’s Design Within Reach channels. Herman Miller will launch an online store and open four HAY retail locations in North America. HAY products will also be integrated into the offer to Herman Miller’s North American and International Dealers.

HAY extends Herman Miller’s global reach and dramatically expands the company’s offering of furnishings and accessories for the home, contract and hospitality markets.

“HAY is one of the best articulated design brands in the furnishings space,” Walker said. “HAY is a key building block toward our stated priority to scale our consumer business. The HAY assortment will significantly ex-

pand our offer to a younger, more urban demographic that we have targeted for expansion.

“With more workplaces and commercial spaces adopting a residential feel, the opportunity to offer quality designs at an attainable price point is only expanding. Adding HAY’s considerable stable of products to our ancillary offer further cements Herman Miller’s ability to deliver excellent design to customers regardless of budget or what kind of space they’re outfitting.”

The existing management team led by CEO Henrik Steensgaard will continue driving the HAY brand, its product development and its efforts in Europe and Asia from their headquarters in Denmark. CEO Henrik Steensgaard will report to a new HAY board of directors chaired by Troels Holch Povlsen.

“Herman Miller is the perfect partner to expand HAY’s position in North America,” said Rolf Hay, co-founder of HAY. “On a personal level, Herman Miller and the work of Charles and Ray Eames are big reasons I do what I do today, and I am excited to align with a company that shares our sense of purpose and values.”

Hocking said Herman Miller is “pleased to join Troels Holch Povlsen and Rolf Hay as co-owners of the company. And we’re also delighted that Rolf and Mette Hay will maintain their current creative and leadership roles.” **BoF**

NeoCon



NeoCon Keynote Address: Art Gensler Gives Insight to Success

MANY DESIGNERS SOCIALIZE WITH OTHER DESIGNERS, WHICH IS GREAT BUT THOSE DESIGNERS WILL NEVER GIVE YOU A JOB.

BY TODD HARDY

When you've been in the furniture design industry for more than 50 years, it's no surprise to be the opening morning's keynote speaker for NeoCon's 50th anniversary.

And that was the case this week as Art Gensler, founder of Gensler, the world's largest design and architectural firm, started things off by being interviewed by Cheryl Durst, executive vice president and CEO of IIDA, at the NeoCon theater.

In 1965 when Gensler started his company, he had no business plan and no money. Fifty-three years later his company is at the top of the design and architecture world with 3,500 clients spanning virtually all market sectors and more than 6,000 employees — half of which are younger than the firm — spread across nearly 50 offices.

When asked how he accomplished this, Gensler said it started while having a drink with an architect friend who asked him

to plan an office in San Francisco. His employer at the time agreed to let him work part-time so he could take on the project.

That left Gensler living paycheck to paycheck, needing to be paid for in cash every two weeks to make ends meet while working out of a small, rented space in the back of an office.

Gensler quickly found out he loved working with interiors. It led to meeting wonderful people who took him around the world. He feels very lucky to have been

in the right place with the right people.

A big difference in the industry in those early times was that there was no real business plan, Gensler said. He believed there was a need for it and found a way to fill it.

Gensler credits his success to “unanticipated opportunities” that brought results one would never expect. He recalled an example that occurred when he was speaking at a conference in Monterey, California, on workplace design. Another speaker at the conference was a computer expert named Steve Jobs.

Afterward, Jobs approached Gensler and told him about a new company he was starting called “Apple.” Jobs wondered if Gensler could help design the offices. Gensler went to Apple the next day and worked for the company during its early days. He even remembers hearing Jobs and Wozniak arguing as he went about doing all he wanted to do — which was design an office.

Another “unanticipated opportunity” happened when he needed to change a flight. Because of the high cost for making last-minute changes with a major carrier, he decided to try a new airline called JetBlue. The airline’s CEO was on that flight working with the flight attendants, and he introduced himself to each passenger. When he asked Gensler what he did, Gensler answered by saying “we do airports.” The CEO told him the Port Authority in New York wanted JetBlue to use a particular architect for a new

airport whom he thought he was an idiot. The next day Gensler sent him information about his company, and a couple of weeks later he had the job.

While Gensler referred to the incidences as “unanticipated opportunities,” Durst pointed out they were more than that because he seized the opportunities.

When asked about his professional and personal success, Gensler talked about how many designers socialize with other designers, which is great, but designers don’t give other designers jobs. He encouraged designers to find out what is going on in the community, meet people with different backgrounds and broaden their knowledge base. “Design will get the work done, but relationship building gets the job and keeps the client,” he said.

Over time Gensler has been able to stretch his clients as one would a rubber band, pushing their boundaries of trust until trust is reached. In the end, the client knows when the job is done they will be pleased with the results.

Another piece of advice he gave to attendees was to “have a life after six.” In other words, be more than a great designer and get a life outside work. He testified about how quickly time goes by: It seems to him that he just started, and he remembers every detail.

Durst pointed out when Gensler talks about his firm, he always talks about his “people.” When he talks about his clients,

he does the same, rarely mentioning the organizations but always the people. “If I do anything well, it is select people,” Gensler said. “We have a very, very strong culture that’s different than many firms, and so we tell potential employees it is going to take a year to believe we will do what we say we’re going to do.

“We really do believe in the family. For example, we started early on bringing partners and wives and significant others to all of our events because we feel that we want the family connected.”

Gensler likes to say he has a family of about 6,000 in 50 locations. They share everything — the money, the rewards, their lives and the making of their careers.

The company has a list of 500 people worldwide it needs to hire, Gensler said. He wants them to join their family but it takes time, because the company is different. It wants designers who talk about “we” and “us” not “me” and “I.”

Gensler is semi-retired and serves primarily as a spokesperson for his company, which is being run by the third generation of Genslers.

When asked if after 53 years there was anything he would do differently, Gensler said “I don’t know because I don’t look back.”

His philosophy is simple: “I can’t change what happened so I don’t worry about it. I can only look one direction and that is ahead.” **BoF**

PACIFIC WEST

HISTORIC BUILDING REBUILT WITH MODERN LOFTS



JUNEAU, Alaska—The 102-year-old Hellenthal Building (with a history as a bank, law office and vaudeville theater) has “great bones,” with its concrete structure reinforced by rebar, according to developer Dale Whitney. But, everything else had to go—making way for the renovation the 13,000 square-foot structure and now exposed 16-foot loft apartment ceilings. The building, sitting on 6,000 square feet of land, is one of the few residential-commercial buildings in Juneau’s city center. The two-year completed project, features residential lofts and street-level commercial space.

[Juneau Empire](#)

FIVE-STAR FACILITY PLANNED FOR CITY OF ROSES

PORTLAND, Ore.—Portland developer BPM Real Estate Group announced plans to build Portland’s first five-star hotel at the site of a popular downtown food cart pod. In addition to the hotel, the tower will include a mix of offices, condominiums and, in a nod to its current use, space for a food hall. Plans call for 225 hotel rooms on nine floors. “The timing is just right for this project,” said Walter Bowen, the chief executive of BPM. “Portland is growing and changing from a town to an international city. The demand for a five-star luxury hotel matched with complimentary commercial and

residential tenants in a multi-modal location has never been greater than it is today.”

[Oregon Live](#)

MAKER SPACES OFFER OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

STOCKTON, Calif.—Bailing on San Francisco, Bay Area artisans continue to revive nearby downtown Stockton, bringing intriguing new ventures to old spaces. The latest is HATCH Workshop, a nonprofit academy offering training and education in fine crafts and design for students and the Stockton community. “All high schools are cutting the shop classes out,” said Executive Director Malachi Trent, “so there’s no way for the younger generation to know if they like to get their hands dirty and create things.” Courses also will be offered to post-grad emerging makers and to the Stockton community at large.

[Recordnet](#)

MOUNTAIN WEST

DOWNTOWN TO SEE NEW DEVELOPMENT

PUEBLO, Colo.—Construction is set to begin on a long-awaited downtown mixed-use space. The redevelopment of the former Clark’s Western Wear building will include a small grocery, retail space and seven loft apartments. NeighborWorks, a housing and community development group, purchased the historic building last August and plans to complete the development by September 2019.

[The Pueblo Chieftain](#)

HERBAL-INFUSED COWORKING

DENVER—Cultivated Synergy, located in the heart of Denver’s arts

district, is now open, serving as a hub for the cannabis industry. By hosting cannabis-infused yoga and dab-and-dine events where industry partners can network, as well as offering a collaborative office space for startups and small businesses, the coworking company aims to be the epicenter of the local marijuana industry. With more than 60 members, representing almost 30 companies and brands, some members don’t occupy actual office space, they’re still part of a bigger networking group that helps sponsor the many events in the 6,500-square-foot, renovated warehouse. Cultivated Synergy is looking to expand into the Seattle and Los Angeles markets within the year, and may open more spaces in Colorado, including Colorado Springs, Fort Collins or Boulder.

[Boulder Weekly](#)

MIDWEST

SMALL TOWN GETS BIG TECH

MINNEAPOLIS—Just off the main drag in the North Woods town of Ely, often described as the end of the road, a side door to a brick building offers locals and visitors a little haven of modern technology. The new Ten Below Coworking space—a basement office with desk seats for a dozen people—boasts the city’s first fiber-optic broadband-connection available to the public. “We have a lot of folks who come and enjoy our outdoor amenities and everything that there is to do here in Ely, but some folks still need to be tethered, even if it’s for a few hours at a time, back to their home offices,” said project coordinator Richard Stuart. “We’re here to fit that need.” The space is modeled after those in larger cities, but, the fees charged

will be substantially less, ranging from \$15 for a one-day pass to \$175 for a monthly pass with access 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

[Minneapolis Star Tribune](#)

FAÇADE FACELIFT IMPROVES WORN BUILDING



MILWAUKEE—Milwaukee-based supermarket operator El Rey Enterprises LLP decided to upgrade the facades of three adjacent buildings that house a group of small businesses. The buildings, constructed between 1885 and 1923, were showing their age. The buildings now not only have a more attractive appearance and some new tenants, it also landed a Mayor’s Design Award. The three buildings, which have six storefronts total around 13,800 square feet, feature replaced old storefronts with new brick facades, including doors and windows, and new signs. The project, which started in May and was completed in November, cost \$210,000.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#)

EAST SIDE ANTICIPATES RENNOVATION

DETROIT—City of Detroit planners have outlined a vision for increased development in the Villages district on Detroit’s east side, including more affordable housing and more retail development. Plans call for extensive new mixed-use development, renovated housing projects in the area and significant streetscape improvements, including wider sidewalks, protected bike lanes, and

landscaping. Most of the work is expected to go out for bid soon and see construction get underway in 2019.

[Detroit Free Press](#)

NORTHEAST

NEW DEVELOPMENT TO WARM UP VIBE

BOSTON—The 525,000-square-foot future home of Amazon.com Inc. in Boston’s Seaport District, as well as the accompanying Harbor Square Park, were approved by the Boston Civic Design Commission. Amazon confirmed that it plans to hire 2,000 tech workers at the 17-story office. The tower will reach 270 feet in height and include 444,000 square feet of office space across 15 levels and 81,000 square feet of retail space across two levels. Many of the materials used in the park, including a wooden boardwalk, weathered steel and stone boulders, will be used in an effort to warm up the park’s tone.

[Boston Business Journal](#)

COMPANY AIMS TO CHANGE PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE

NEW BEDFORD, Mass.—Studio2sustain is a leader in not just design, but adaptive reuse and preservation of historic buildings. Self-described as environmental evangelists, the team is on a mission to educate the public about environmental and energy issues. Showcasing its vision, s2s recently completed the renovation of the new Bristol County Savings Bank in the historic Candleworks building—seeking a Living Building Challenge certification.

[South Coast Today](#)

SOUTH

SOUTH OF TOWN GROWING WITH RESIDENT APPROVAL

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.—A vacant piece

of land on Chapman Highway will soon be transformed into Creswell Landing, home to several popular restaurants and services that will be new to South Knoxville. This location lands at the intersection of John Sevier Highway and Chapman Highway—major corridors in South Knoxville, an area which has seen a lot of growth in the last decade, and residents are eager to have new options for shopping and dining.

[Knox News](#)

OFFICES OF THE FUTURE TAKING ROOT



BIRMINGHAM, Ala.—In a search for the offices of the future—places with a fun, challenging and rewarding environment, The Birmingham Business Journal surveyed its readers. Lewis Communications came out on top with its array of individual offices and private workspaces surrounding a large open lobby. The bold and colorful kitchen space at Big Communications stands out as a creative place for taking a break or holding an impromptu meeting. Showcasing technology advancements, readers voted the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama a stand-out, with its video board and surround-sound conference room.

[Alabama Business Journal](#)

Compiled by Emily Clingman

BoF

ALL TIME | January 1, 2016

BoF Industry Index Start: \$24,379.54

YEAR TO DATE | January 1, 2018

Yearly Start: \$29,689.10 (2017 Ended Down -6.51%)

























Total Value (USD)

Day Gain (USD)

Total Gain (USD)

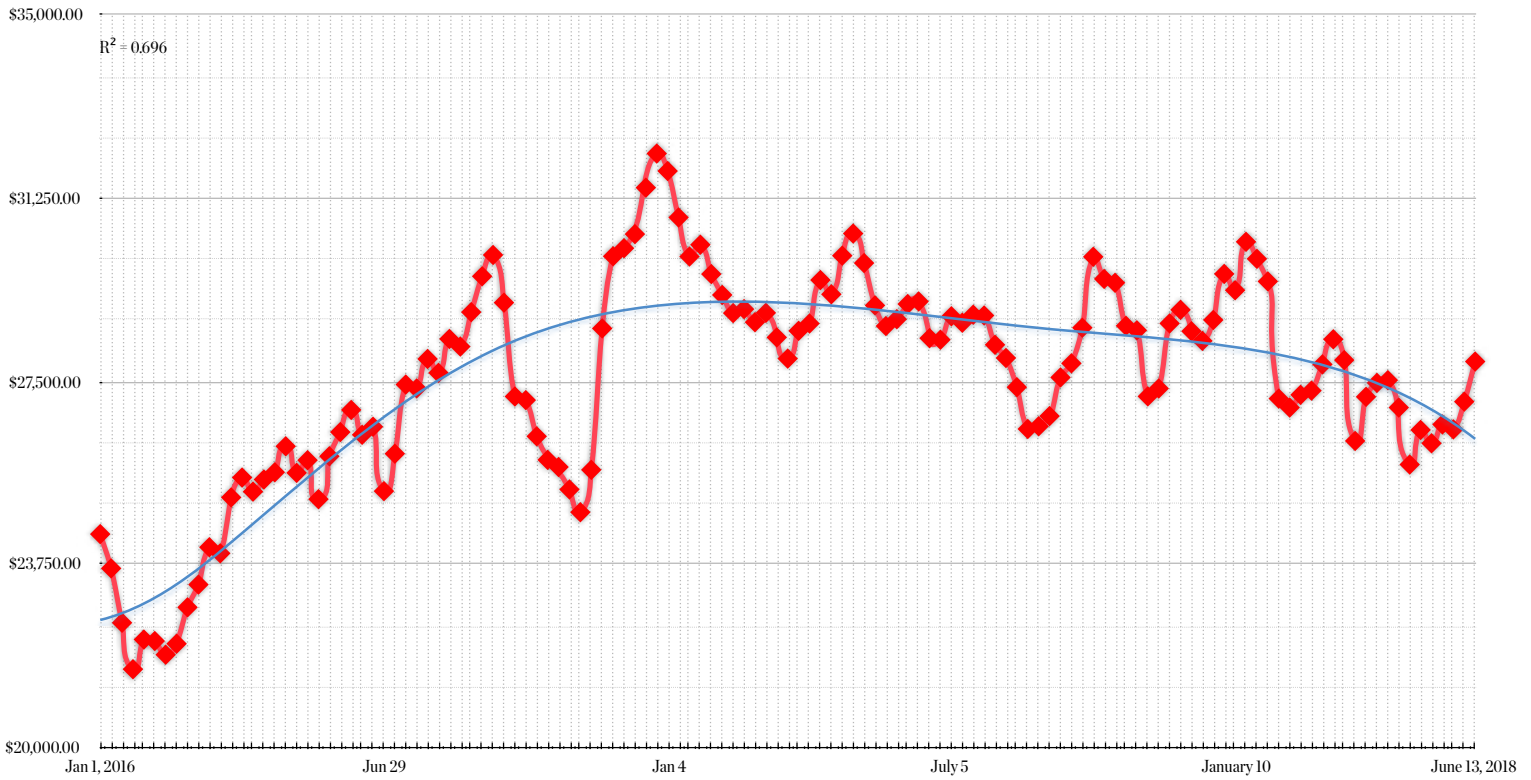
2018 YTD

27,910.65 ↑ **281.17** | +1.02% ↑ **3,517.29** | +14.42% -1,778.45 (-5.99%)

Symbol ▶	Last Price Time (ET)	2 Day Performance	%Change Day Change	Volume 30 Day Average	52 Week Range
DRTTF:US DIRTT Environmental Solutions	5.10 20:10		+3.78% 0.19	100.00 5,338.47	 3.44 6.00
FLXS:US Flexsteel Industries Inc	39.64 06/12/2018		+3.01% 1.16	24,645.00 19,534.70	 34.74 57.79
MLHR:US Herman Miller Inc	35.35 06/12/2018		+0.86% 0.30	333,584.00 252,564.00	 29.25 41.84
HNI:US HNI Corp	38.64 06/12/2018		+1.66% 0.63	295,898.00 157,054.67	 31.16 43.42
INQ:CN Inscape Corp	1.82 06/08/2018		-10.78% -0.22	1,100.00 556.20	 1.82 4.00
TILE:US Interface Inc	23.70 06/12/2018		+1.07% 0.25	241,126.00 375,336.72	 18.30 26.25
KEQU:US Kewaunee Scientific Corp	33.85 06/12/2018		+0.46% 0.15	2,078.00 2,391.27	 22.85 34.95
KBAL:US Kimball International Inc	16.19 06/12/2018		+0.37% 0.06	150,317.00 73,883.70	 15.40 20.96
KNL:US Knoll Inc	20.97 06/12/2018		-0.14% -0.03	93,110.00 176,064.67	 16.57 24.00
LEG:US Leggett & Platt Inc	44.72 06/12/2018		+0.61% 0.27	1.14 M 1.10 M	 39.57 53.96
SCS:US Steelcase Inc	15.00 06/12/2018		0.00% 0.00	403,663.00 447,910.69	 12.50 17.40
VIRC:US Virco Manufacturing Corp	4.55 06/12/2018		0.00% 0.00	10,623.00 10,481.23	 3.95 6.05

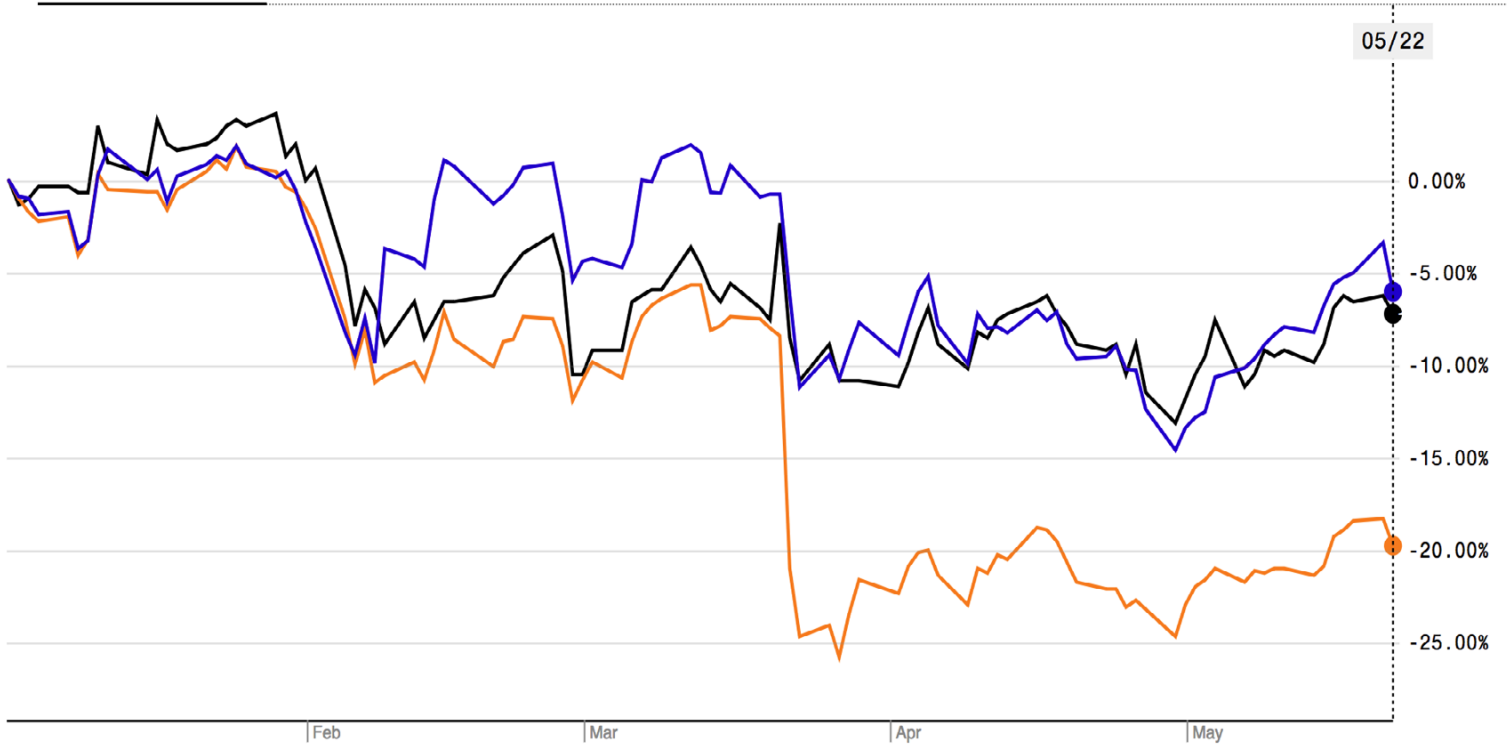
STOCK GRAPHS

BoF Industry Index - Since Jan 1, 2016



Steelcase, Herman Miller, HNI - Year to Date

● SCS:US -7.21% ● MLHR:US -19.75% × ● HNI:US -6.01% ×



Selling Furniture Is Not Brain Surgery

Dear Stephen:

Help me settle a disagreement with my wife. Some context first: As you know, this is the 50th anniversary of NeoCon, and it's my 26th NeoCon. It was a great week, and I am glad it is over. I like my job, and I am an avid reader of BoF and love your column. As a reader of yours, I follow your advice, and I always have my resume ready and up-to-date.

On my resume, I have an executive summary at the top and the various job experience follows. In that top section, I describe myself as an "Experienced 25-year veteran of the contract furnishings industry." My wife thinks I'm dating myself to my detriment

by mentioning the number of years I've worked, whereas I think it's proof of my value to a prospective employer. I have the same note on my LinkedIn. I am not embarrassed about being 52 or one of the older people in the industry; I think it's a benefit. Hey, companies always tell you how long they have been in business and wear it as a badge of honor. Why should I be any different? Help me talk some sense into my wife.

Yours,

Oldie But Goodie



You can send your workplace questions to Stephen at: StephenSays@bellow.press

Questions selected to be answered, will appear in this column. Please use the Subject: Stephen Says for all emails. Stephen Viscusi is a bestselling author, television personality, and CEO of The Viscusi Group, global executive recruiters located in New York. Follow Stephen on Twitter @stephenviscusi, Like Stephen on Facebook; and follow him on LinkedIn.

Dear Oldie But Goodie,

No can do. I'm sorry to burst your bubble, but your wife is right. I hear from candidates all the time who love to tell me about the 25, 30 even 40 years of experience they have. I get it. You think that it proves you know the industry in and out. Unfortunately, this usually isn't the case. In my experience and based on what I hear from my clients, explicitly calling out the decades you've been in the business just makes you sound old. If I am buying a piece of furniture, I want the craftsman to be someone who has been making

The simple truth is to be a sales rep or manager you don't need years and years of experience, but experience can make you good.

furniture for 60 years. Now, do I need the person selling it to me to have sold it for 60 years? Not so much.

I want to be careful here because I'm not saying those of you over 50 can't get jobs. Companies today are very willing to hire people well into their 60s. There are more jobs than there are people to fill them. With that said, there's no reason to draw attention to your age. Experience is much better expressed in action and

knowledge than it is in years. Anyone who looks at your resume should be able to see how committed you are to your industry, and if the experience is as good as 25-years of practice should be then it should shine through in the interview process. It is just as important to follow this rule on your LinkedIn.

The simple truth is to be a sales rep or manager you don't need years and years of experience, but experience can make

you good. Instead of emphasizing the former, emphasize the latter. In some jobs, having experience is essential, in other jobs being good is sufficient. Brain surgeons need experience. Selling furniture is not brain surgery!

Listen to your wife and change the language in your executive summary to emphasize your skills, not your years of service.

Stephen

Client Discovery: Two Questions that can Help You Build Your Empire

We have all done it. Yes, including yours truly. I still find it difficult to admit to chasing prospects and clients into what eventually becomes a soft pipeline entry. This is because I did not challenge my prospective client during initial discovery sessions. Notice I did not say intimidate, I said challenge. As you will see later, it is all about how the message and questions are delivered.

Whether you are an architect, designer, project manager or sales rep, you have probably been trained and coached in your client discovery process, such as how to ask your prospective clients questions to determine needs, build client relationships and create the required solutions. These solutions are a result of problems and opportunities for improvement. This is one of the most important skills we all learn to master.

Since writing an article last year about the client discovery process, I have had a chance to participate and lead hundreds of discovery meetings. The only thing constant is change. Over the past year our discovery has evolved from asking “the one magic question that can change client conversations” to “the two questions that can help you build a pipeline empire.” By adding a second challenging question during our discovery session, client acquisition improved by almost 30 percent. It also accelerated the initial entry of prospects into our client pipelines because of the elimination of what I like to refer to as the “closing stall” or lack of making a decision.

By the time one of your team members has a discussion with a prospect on the phone, that prospect



Al Everett is a partner of MethodWhy, LLC. MethodWhy helps you find, nurture and keep more customers like your best customers.

Al can be reached at: aeverett@methodwhy.com and you can learn more about MethodWhy at: www.methodwhy.com

likely already has a vision of how your solution can either be helpful or harmful to their business. For the potential buyer, this call is simply about clarifying the information they’ve already gathered. So how do you fight the battle against information bias?

In this instance your team can ask the first powerful and magic question to gauge how much research the prospect has done, and potentially make them reconsider an established opinion.

The question: “What do you think we do?”

Just by asking this, your team can grasp the prospect’s thinking and level of understanding of your product or solution. Below are four insightful benefits HubSpot research identified for teams when they ask this powerful question.

“They get a handle on the product’s online presence.”

“When a salesperson poses this question, the prospect will tell the rep, based on what they’ve read, what they think the product does. The prospect’s answer allows the rep to determine whether their

online materials need to be improved or clarified for a better understanding. If the prospect is unclear about what the product does after a significant amount of research, it might be time to plot a new path and change the product's marketing presence."

"They get an understanding of what the prospect thinks of the product."

"This question also prompts the prospect's opinion of the product. The prospect will ideally dive into how they think the product can help solve a pain point or bring them one step closer to their goals, and how they imagine it fitting into their business. For the sales rep, this is incredibly valuable information. By reading between the lines, the prospect can learn two critical pieces of information with one simple question."

"They can correct or confirm the buyer's assumptions."

"Based on what the prospect has told you, the rep is now in a position to either correct the assumptions the prospect has made about the rep's product or confirm them. In the event the prospect has gathered unreliable information, the sales rep can step in and correct the inaccuracies so the prospect can gain a better understanding."

"They can paint a clearer picture."

"Finally, after gathering a significant amount of information from the prospect, the rep is now in a position to paint a clearer picture for the prospect of the value of their product. Armed with pain points and goals, the rep can create a tailored message to fit what the prospect is looking for in a solution."

In the age of the Internet, your prospective clients spend more time researching and less time with sales teams. When they finally reach out to sales, your teams need to be ready. A simple question can go a long way in correcting false assumptions or changing skeptical minds. I have personally adjusted my discovery process by asking the magical

question first in all of my meetings. Once we are comfortable with the response and their climate, the next step is to go through our normal discovery questions to determine needs, etc., and get them to clearly acknowledge their issue and problems that need to be solved.

Once you get a handle on the client problems and issues they need to solve, by asking another simple question your team can grasp the prospect's commitment and willingness to indeed solve its problem. This has really helped us with prospects that initially were window shopping (so to speak) and not really ready to pull the trigger because of budgets and other key priorities.

What is the other magical question that will have them all looking at each other and often shocked that you would even dare to ask them? "How bad do you want to fix these issues or problems?"

This sounds so simple yet most of us hesitate to ask a client this question for fear of intimidating them. It gently sends a message you are willing to help but the door swings both ways. It can be the start of clear transparency for both sides in this journey. I also reinforce the fact I am willing to help them in any way that I can. I never try to sell to a client — customers do not like to be sold to!

Many of you reading this are saying to yourself that it is not that simple. I agree, it's not. However, if you keep beating around the bush by asking the usual question, "When do you expect to make a decision?" you will be chasing more accounts than you can imagine. And I will ask the question, "How is that working for you?"

Many of you have found success in your own way with great discovery techniques. Please feel free to reach out and give me your ideas and perspectives on what is one of the most important steps in our journey with potential clients.

So tell me, what is it that you do ... with client discovery? **BoF**



The evolution of the Office Workspace

The open-office plan became a benchmark for creating individual space without doors, ceilings and walls. A large open area could be divided up into smaller squares that allowed workers to have semi-private areas to work on their daily tasks.

By creating these spaces with panels instead of walls and hanging work surfaces that had file cabinets and storage attached seemed so modernly efficient that this became the standard for most office spaces until recently.

The idea of creating a personal office without large pieces of bulky furniture made perfect sense. When the panels became electrified, these cubes became the most desirable way to create an “office” environment; especially as telephones, typewriters, fax machines and computers became the necessary tools to do office work.

But is that still the case today? Not according to a recent article written in The Wall Street Journal’s online daily news briefing, called the “The 10-Point.” WSJ Editor-in-Chief Gerard Baker noted in his article, “Musical Chairs,” that the office of today is nothing like it was even 10 years ago.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

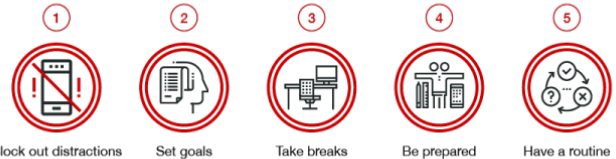
FLEXIBLE OFFICE SPACE IS BECOMING MAINSTREAM AS DEMAND GROWS

The provision of flexible office space is increasing as landlords look to capitalise on its increasing demand by occupiers. Alongside this a significant proportion would be happy to work in partnership with a flexible office space provider. According to a new study; UK Landlords & Investors Embrace the Flexible Revolution from CBRE, the majority of UK landlords (92 percent) believe that flexible office space is on the brink of becoming mainstream and are not only keen to monitor but respond to the growth of flexible office space. Over three quarters (77 percent) of survey participants stated that they are currently considering some form of flexible provision.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

Office Expectations are Changing - Is Your Company Ready?

Top 5 tips for working remotely*:



Block out distractions

Set goals

Take breaks

Be prepared

Have a routine

*Answers sourced from survey respondents who said they worked from home, a public or co-working space

What modern workers consider “the office” is sharply different from just a few years ago according to the most important finding of Staples’ recent Workplace Survey.

Employees are spending less and less time in traditional offices and are instead now opting to customize their workspaces to their needs. In increasingly competitive

markets, employers need to pay attention to the rapidly shifting desires of employees to attract and retain the talent they need to succeed.

Only 32 percent of respondents to the survey say they spend all their time working in an office. Generational differences further underscore this issue.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

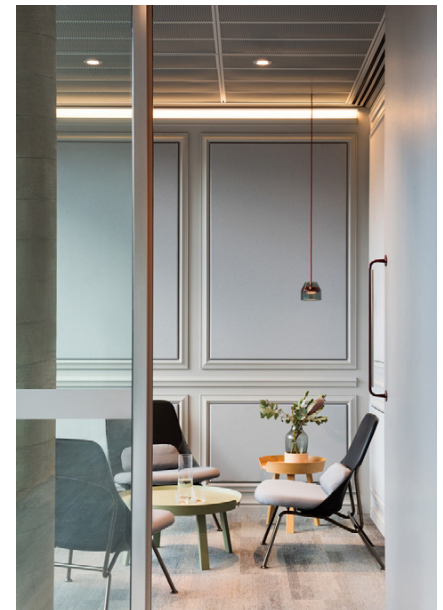
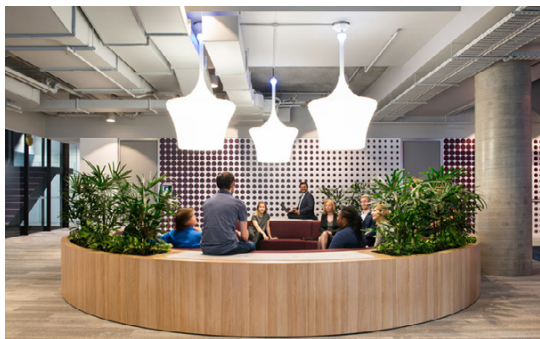
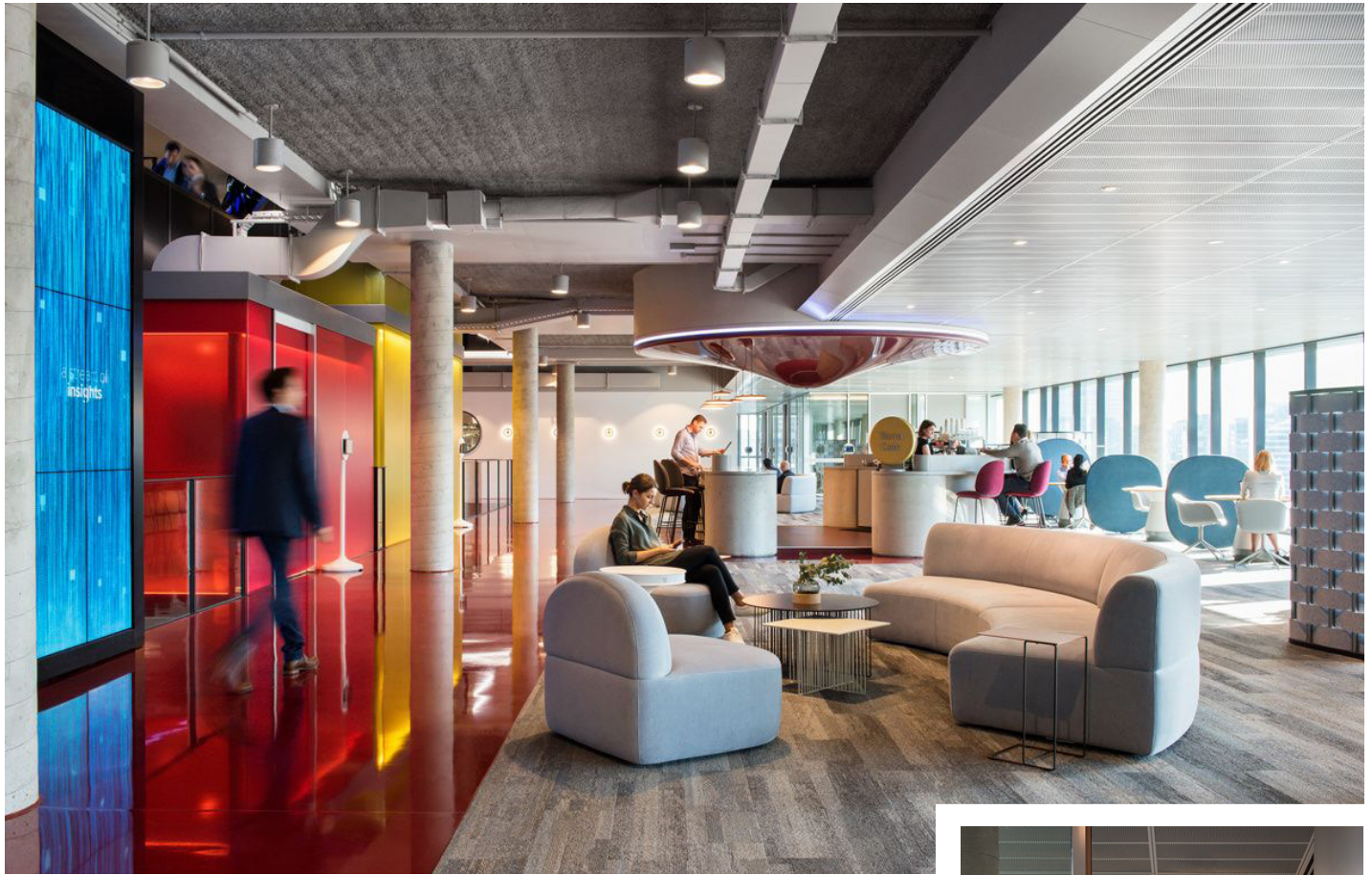
Why your office needs a makerspace—it’s about investing in the creative workplace

Gallup research tells us that \$450 billion is lost each year in the US to disengagement in the workplace. And those that can harness the power of the creative class have an advantage in business. Innovation can make or break companies in emerging industries, so engaging top creative talent is crucial.

That’s where makerspaces come in. Building a culture of “intrapreneurship” (internal entrepreneurs) is a key component in anticipating what’s next, and this can only happen

when your people have the right places to create, nurture, and manifest their ideas. Makerspaces in the workplace are inspired in part by the collaborative spaces pioneered by tech start-ups. Harvesting our talent’s creativity and innovation requires the right spaces and, in turn, creates a culture that attracts the best. While a makerspace is but one attractive aspect of culture, it can be a crucial element in today’s battle for talent.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)



Photography: Nicole England



PwC Offices – Melbourne

Futurespace designed the offices of professional services firm PwC, located in Melbourne, Australia.

PwC has recognised that we live in a fast paced, ever changing world. Business is constantly being disrupted (think of Uber, Air BNB and Amazon) and as strategic professional services advisors PwC are acutely aware of this. They saw that to continue to innovate and remain leaders in their field, they'd need to completely rethink how they engaged with clients.

These four Client Collaboration Floors challenge old ideas of formal client interactions and boardroom meetings. As this is a completely new way of working the design of the space needed to support people through this process of learning to use a new type of environment.

FIRM: Futurespace
 CLIENT: PwC
 SCOPE: Office
 SIZE: 96,875 sqft
 LOCATION: Melbourne
 INDUSTRY: Consulting / Business Services

READ MORE

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

NeoCon - Chicago
June 11-13, 2018



NeoCon celebrates its 50th edition as the world's leading platform and most important event of the year for the commercial design industry. Held every June at theMART in Chicago since 1969, NeoCon serves as the commercial design industry's launch pad for innovation.

www.neocon.com

LAS VEGAS, NV

Ergo Expo
August 21-24, 2018



For more than two decades, professionals have relied on **ErgoExpo** to learn how to build an effective ergonomics program or maximize an existing one, on any budget, in any industry. ErgoExpo is also home to the industry's largest expo, featuring hundreds of exhibitors offering thousands of ergonomic and safety products — all under one roof!

www.ergoexpo.com/

COLOGNE, GERMANY

Orgatec 2018
October 23, 2018 - Oct 27, 2018



Discover visionary concepts at **ORGATEC**. The digital transformation means work is no longer tied to firmly defined spaces and times. Tomorrow's office can be anywhere ... even in our heads. The future belongs to flexible knowledge workers who work creatively and with a sense of responsibility — and it belongs to a work culture that is based more so than ever before on cooperation, motivation and trust.

www.orgatec.com

TAMPA, FLORIDA

EDSPACES
November 7 - 9, 2018



If you're planning education spaces for the future, this is the conference where you can get a years worth of CEU credits, training on new products, and network with the industry who's who. Great session content, tours, and hands-on learning has been developed to meet your needs by your architect colleagues of the AIA Committee on Architecture for Education.

www.ed-spaces.com

PHOENIX, ARIZONA

Healthcare Design Expo
November 10 -13, 2018



From keynotes and panel discussions to facility tours, networking opportunities, and an exhibit hall showcasing the latest products and innovations, **HCD** brings it all together at this must-attend event.

www.hcdexpo.com

TORONTO, CANADA

IIDEXCanada 2018
November 29 - 30, 2018



IIDEXCanada is a 2 day event being held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre North Building in Toronto, Canada. This event showcases products from 15,000 interior designers, architects, landscape architects, lighting designers, industrial designers, facility managers, developers, and business executives.

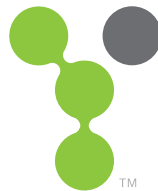
www.iidexcanada.com

EVENT	DATE & LOCATION
NEOCON 2018 The premier, global platform for connecting, learning and conducting business in commercial interiors. http://www.neocon.com	Jun 11, 2018 - Jun 13, 2018 Chicago, Illinois
ERGOEXPO 2018 Maximize workplace ergonomic initiatives and safety & wellness programs at the largest ergonomics event in North America! http://www.ergoexpo.com/	Aug 21, 2018 - Aug 24, 2018 Paris Las Vegas Hotel
THE 42ND CHINA INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE FAIR (CIFF) Using the National Exhibition & Convention Centre (Shanghai•Hongqiao), the show covers 400,000 sqm. Over 2000 brands from the upstream and downstream industry will participate from various sectors including outdoor furniture, office furniture, commercial furniture, hotel furniture, furniture machinery and raw materials. http://www.ciff.furniture	Sep 11, 2018 - Sep 14, 2018 Shanghai, China
ORGATEC 2018 ORGATEC 2018 is an international exhibition for office facilities including architecture and design, acoustics, lighting, furniture and equipment. http://www.orgatec.com	Oct 23, 2018 - Oct 27, 2018 Cologne, Germany
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MAKERS

Hekman Focuses on Booming Senior Living Furniture

By Rob Kirkbride

PEOPLE ARE LIVING LONGER, AND THE ELDERLY WHO MIGHT NEED A LITTLE HELP BUT AREN'T READY FOR A NURSING HOME ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE CLINICAL, INSTITUTIONAL LOOK OF THE FURNITURE AVAILABLE TO THEM FROM MOST MANUFACTURERS.

Hekman Furniture was involved in ancillary products long before the category was cool. The brand is known for its residential furniture products and fine selection of clocks by its sister company, Howard Miller.

But one part of this constellation of brands, Hekman Contract, is taking a different tact — attacking a niche market in a way only it can. The brand is going after the growing senior living market, creating furniture that fits everything from the increasingly high-end bedrooms of assisted living apartments and condos to the specialized furniture needed for memory care units.

People are living longer, and the elderly who might need a little help but aren't ready for a nursing home are not satisfied with the clinical, institutional look of the furniture available to them from most manufacturers, said Andrew Christmann, marketing manager.

“Contract wise, we can offer everything under the Howard Miller/Hekman blanket, plus products like bedside cabinets (and other casegoods) and customize it the way the customer wants it to be,” he said. “We can essentially furnish an entire senior living facility from the front door to the bedroom.”

Before you dismiss this as a market that is, well, too niche, consider the demographics. A glut of baby boomers are about to enter this segment of their lives. Currently, there are 1.4 million senior living facilities in the U.S., and that number is expected to more than double to 3.2 million by 2040.



Director Chris Silguero said unlike the contract furniture “scrum” (he is the former vice president of sales at Trendway), the senior living market is small enough and specialized enough that it keeps all but the most serious competitors out. The furniture needed in these living quarters requires a certain level of quality and robustness, yet with a feel and style that would fit in a high-end hotel. Simply put, it is not a market every manufacturer has the tools to easily jump into.

THE MARKET OPENED UP CONSIDERABLY AFTER THE DEMISE OF AMERICAN OF MARTINSVILLE, WHICH HAD AN ASTOUNDING 90 PERCENT MARKET SHARE OF THE SENIOR LIVING FURNITURE MARKET.

“Part of our appeal is we can pull in all our brands,” Silguero said. “From contract to residential to Howard Miller. We can take that residential flavor and give our customers contract grade, all in a homelike environment. This is a market that is in an explosive mode, and we are looking at a quarter century of growth.”

The market opened up considerably after the demise of American of Martinsville, which had an astounding 90 percent market share of the senior living furniture market. That left a stable of reps without furniture to sell. Hekman Contract eagerly jumped into the market. It already had the capacity at its Zeeland, Michigan, and High Point, North Carolina, manufacturing and upholstery plants.

If you haven't visited a senior living community for a while, you might be shocked by what you find. Yes, there are still places where seniors walk around in terry cloth robes and the smell of urine hits you when you walk in the door, but those are becoming increasingly rare. Instead, seniors are opting for the more opulent, with grandiose entrances featuring stone fireplaces, dining rooms that rival fine restaurants and rooms that look like high-end hotels.

Many include a variety of care, from truly independent living to memory care units that specialize in Alzheimer's and dementia patients. Seniors can transition to higher levels of care as they age without moving to an entirely new facility.

As new senior living complexes are built, they are all vying for the same customer. That means amenities like nice furniture can make the difference between a family picking one place over another. Senior living homes that look like a hospital with a

medical-like entrance and a nurse sitting behind a sliding glass panel are not going to attract seniors who are more interested in living than waiting to die.

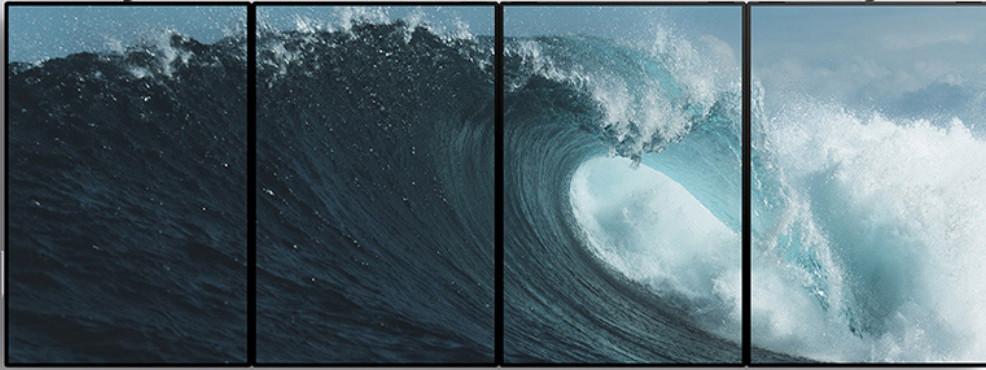
So how do you create a community that is more cruise liner than crusty old folks' home? Hekman Contract is beginning with the dining area. That is the first place a senior's family is likely to look when they arrive at a home. Styles are more mid-century modern than institutional. A mix of dining options are being offered, from bistro cafes to more private dining.

Couches, loveseats and accent chairs, all with custom upholstery, fill gathering spaces. In apartments and patient rooms, wardrobes and cabinets in a number of styles are offered by Hekman Contract. The furniture comes in hardwood and laminates. In memory care and assisted living, heat-treated laminates are used for easy cleanup.

Hekman Contract also has some of the specialized furniture necessary for these high-care areas, including bedside chests and cabinets with transparent door fronts that help memory care patients remember where they stored their personal items.

Dealers and reps can be a bit apprehensive to get into the market. The thinking is that senior living development is a direct market with large conglomerates controlling what furniture goes where. While somewhat true, the potential is still massive. Hekman Contract is currently tracking the development of more than 6,000 senior living facilities. **BoF**





TECHNOLOGY

Steelcase Plugs into Microsoft

(and what it means for the company and industry)

INSTEAD OF ANSWERING ANY ONE OF THOSE QUESTIONS WITH HIS CREATIVE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIO, AHMED ELHUSSEINY BRINGS THEM ALL TOGETHER AND BELIEVES DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES SUCH AS ART, ARCHITECTURE, NARRATIVE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY CAN MINGLE UNDER ONE ROOF, OR LABORATORY, IF YOU WILL.

By Rob Kirkbride

When Steelcase announced it was working with Microsoft on its new Surface Hub 2, it didn't come as a surprise. The two companies stated more than a year ago they were teaming up to explore the future of work and develop a range of technology "designed to help organizations foster creative thinking and better collaboration."

The collaboration began about 18 months ago with Creative Spaces — an immersive ecosystem that brings together place and technology to help people generate new ideas and move them forward.

Surface Hub 2 is the latest project, a system of easy-to-hang wall mounts and a lightweight, rolling stand that "gives people true mobility to collaborate anywhere and to reorient the device in the best way to visualize their information," said Sara Armbruster, Steelcase vice president, strategy, research and digital transformation. Designed by Steelcase, this complementary system of integrated components will give local and remote teams the fluidity to collaborate whatever way works best for them.

THE GO-TO-MARKET STRATEGY BETWEEN STEELCASE AND MICROSOFT HAS BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL SO FAR, SHE SAID, AND IS EXPECTED TO GAIN STEAM GOING FORWARD.

The product is under development and *not* ready to show at this year's NeoCon.

What is truly intriguing is the future of this relationship between the technology and furniture giants. Where will it lead? What kind of products can we expect? Will it really change the way we work?

The collaboration between Microsoft and Steelcase continues to develop, and according to Christina Vernon, who works in market development and strategic partnerships at Steelcase, the two companies are already learning a lot from each other. Steelcase understands space and furniture; Microsoft understands technology. Together, they are showing one another how the connection between the two happens in the workplace.

It's what happens next that could end up changing the industry.

Vernon said the development of the Surface Hub 2 is a good example of what the joint endeavor can do. The original Surface Hub is a wonderful tech product that allows for collaboration, communication and information gathering, but it isn't mobile. The Surface Hub 2 is. Since it uses "tiling," where smaller screens work together and are scalable, it can be moved and separated.

It also has a cart, which Steelcase helped develop, making it truly mobile. Microsoft doesn't really need Steelcase's expertise to make a cart. It does need Steelcase's understanding of the office space to sell it. Steelcase has extensive experience working with facility managers, who are ultimately the people who will specify the Surface Hub 2. They also understand how space is used and where a tool like this should be placed so it will be best utilized.

“THIS LATEST COLLABORATION WITH MICROSOFT, ALONG WITH OUR EARLIER WORK TOGETHER DEVELOPING CREATIVE SPACES AND WORKPLACE ADVISOR, SHOWS THAT TECHNOLOGY CAN MAKE PLACE MORE EFFECTIVE AND THAT WELL-DESIGNED PLACES CAN HELP TECHNOLOGY BE EASIER TO USE.”

“This is really about mobility and movement,” Vernon said. “Teams need to be able to take their work with them. Removing it as a front-of-the-room display helps get people up and moving.”

The relationship with Microsoft is more about the evolution of work, space and technology than it is any single splashy product. That is certainly true for the Creative Spaces, which will be fitted with the Surface Hub 2 in the future. “We will have a whole new group of settings that allow technology and furniture to be supportive (of each other),” Vernon said. “What Microsoft wants is for technology to be integrated wherever a team needs to be.”

The go-to-market strategy between Steelcase and Microsoft has been very successful so far, she said, and is expected to gain steam going forward. Steelcase is learning much more about technology, and Microsoft is learning about the “spatial implications” of work and its technology.

This learning is happening as the companies' executive teams work together. So

far, the integration between the them has been seamless, according to Vernon. “The two companies are keeping open lines of communication and for our customers, this is going to make a big difference,” she said.

Steelcase is leveraging Microsoft’s Azure cloud computing platform, for example, to run its Internet of Things offerings for space utilization planning. That’s nothing new for a company like Microsoft, but using that data from the office is an entirely different story. Steelcase can take data Microsoft is so good at collecting in an office and make sense of it since it understands what the data means.



Microsoft is becoming a bigger part of Steelcase’s NeoCon story as well. Steelcase has five Surface Hubs in its Chicago showroom and seven Surface Studios. Surface Hub 2 will be making its official debut this fall.

“As organizations pursue growth they need to foster more innovation, which needs a new kind of work culture,” Armbruster said. “To support this change, we believe it’s critical to create a great employee experience at work to attract the right talent, engage people and help them do their best work so organizations can innovate and grow.

“Creating a great employee experience requires three things: create a culture that supports the well-being of people, provide technology that works where and how people need it, and give people a diverse range of spaces to support the different types of activities they do throughout their day. Yet many organizations design these three elements independently, with HR, IT and real estate all functioning as separate departments and with separate teams. Together with Microsoft, we’re working to help organizations bridge this gap to bring people, place and technology together holistically, as an interconnected ecosystem. This latest collaboration with Microsoft, along with our earlier work together developing Creative Spaces and Workplace Advisor, shows that technology can make place more effective and that well-designed places can help technology be easier to use.” **BoF**

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Please include **high resolution photos** along with your release; at least 300 dpi. You can submit online at:
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MANUFACTURERS

Innovative Office Products Acquires HAT Contract

➤ Innovative Office Products has completed the acquisition of HAT Contract, a San Jose-based, North American designer, contract manufacturer and distributor of office ergonomic products, including height-adjustable tables, power/data beams, drawer pedestals, dividers, work surfaces and electrical components for benching and bases.



Fox

HAT's founders, Brian McNay and Tony Glaves, will continue to manage the business operations, reporting to Innovative CEO David Fox.

HAT was founded in 2013 by McNay and Glaves after they'd had significant experience in the contract office furniture market. In the five years since its inception, the company has rapidly grown to be one of the largest suppliers of height-adjustable bases and related products, selling to national and global corporations throughout North America.



The height-adjustable segment of the office furniture market continues to benefit from strong tailwinds as new and existing offices are being reshaped by the introduction of ergonomic and innovative office productivity solutions. HAT products are recognized in the contract office marketplace as an accelerator of the movement

toward open office environments. Its products are known for the health benefits associated with height adjustability.

"We founded HAT with the vision of delivering next-generation workspace ergonomic solutions to businesses of all sizes and in all industry segments, helping them achieve smart and efficient workplace transformations," McNay said.

Based in Easton, Pennsylvania, Innovative is an award-winning, North American designer and manufacturer of office/workspace ergonomic and related products, including monitor arms, sit-stand workstations, multi-monitor mounts and desk stands, point-of-sale (POS) mounts and health care and specialty OEM mounting solutions. Innovative began as a family owned operation in 1986 and has grown into a global company over the past 30 plus years.

The company designs, develops and assembles products in the U.S. and sells into multiple markets, including corporate offices, retailers, hospitality providers, hospitals and other health care providers and the government. Its account base covers North America, Europe (through its Copenhagen office) and Australia.

Innovative is a portfolio company of Cathay Capital. In addition to Cathay, the shareholders of Innovative include senior members of management, Norwest Mezzanine Partners and ORIX Mezzanine & Private Equity. Cathay's cross-border strategy focuses on providing access for its North American portfolio companies to resources and networks in China and Europe to establish sales relationships, improve operating and sourcing capabilities and enhance the strategic capabilities of portfolio companies in key global markets.

"The ergonomic segment of the office furniture industry has been growing in a very healthy

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fashion in North America as an increasing percentage of professionals and employers continue to focus on smart office products that enhance workplace health and wellness while improving employee productivity,” Fox said.

“We are delighted to have HAT become a part of our family and are thrilled to partner with Brian (McNay) and Tony (Glaves) to fuel the rapid expansion of this powerful, high growth platform over the coming years. Our strategic visions are perfectly aligned and we are excited to achieve dynamic growth on multiple continents as we plan to continue to develop innovative ergonomic and mounting solutions together to satisfy expanding demand for products that improve health, wellness and productivity.”

MANUFACTURERS

eisysINC is Becoming Corona Group

🔗 On June 11th eisysINC a provider of visual presentation products and ergonomic deskings to the office, healthcare and education marketplace, is changing its name to CORONA GROUP INC.

Sam Corona, the founder and CEO, said, “We felt NEOCON was the ideal place to announce the change. But the most important thing is: nothing else is changing. We’re the same company, owned and run by the same people. We’ll stick to the same exact standards in the way we build our products and serve our customers. And we’ll continue working to make products more user focused, durable, greener and more ergonomically efficient. We’re just going to be answering the phone with a new name.”

eisysINC began in Birmingham in 1996 as Ergonomically Integrated System.

It has grown to be a national leader in glass and porcelain markerboard solutions as well as a highly rated provider of unique ergonomic sit-stand desking systems. Starting June 11th, its name will become CORONA GROUP INC.

DEALERS / DISTRIBUTION

INDEAL Launches Inspiration At Work, New A&D Marketing Resource For Dealers

➊ As part of its ongoing program of marketing support for members, INDEAL, the premier dealer organization for the contract furniture industry, has launched Inspiration at Work, a new publication to be issued twice a year that targets buyers and influencers within the A&D community.

Each volume of Inspiration at Work will highlight an example of visual beauty outside of the industry to serve as a starting point to create a mood board of product based on shapes, colors and overall feel of the art. The first volume features the work of Jason deCaires Taylor, a British artist whose underwater sculptures challenge the viewer to think differently about how everyday actions affect life below the waves.

“Our new Inspirations program provides a unique marketing platform that truly differentiates INDEAL dealers from their competition,” said INDEAL co-founder Dave Gatherum. “The program sends a clear message of innovation and creativity that will resonate with the design community and underscore the ability of INDEAL dealers to support them in their pursuit of exceptional solutions to design challenges.”

CAREERS

Liberty Diversified International Names Matt Homan President and CEO

➋ Liberty Diversified International, a New Hope, Minnesota-based manufacturer of packaging, office furniture and building products, has named Matt Homan as its president and CEO.



Homan

Homan most recently served as president of the off-road vehicles division of Polaris Industries, where he held a variety of leadership positions since joining the company in 2002. He is credited with successfully leading and building the off-road vehicles business into one of Polaris' largest divisions. Prior to Polaris, he worked in key marketing positions at General Mills and West Publishing (now Thomson Reuters).

“In addition to his successful track record growing businesses, Matt's deep manufacturing expertise and proven leadership abilities will be essential as LDI celebrates its 100th anniversary in business and prepares for the next century of success,” says Mike Fiterman, chairman of the board. “Matt is an exceptional, authentic leader who has embraced our deeply held values and is ready to lead LDI as we grow to a \$1 billion company and beyond.”

CAREERS

Industry Veteran Hanny Wong-Regrut Joins Arenson Office Furniture

➤ Hanny Wong-Regrut has joined the sales team at Arenson Office Furniture.



Wong-Regrut

With a background in business administration and more than 30 years in the San Diego furniture community to her credit, Wong-Regrut brings to Arenson's clientele significant experience and expertise. She will be taking a lead role in managing client relationships, training and supervising Arenson's sales team and managing inventory. She also will be active in showroom presentation strategy development.

Arenson has been serving San Diego's office furniture market since 1975. Its furniture showroom is in San Diego.

CAREERS

Francis Cauffman Welcomes New Leadership

➤ Mark Harbick has joined the architecture, planning and interior design firm Francis Cauffman as principal and corporate practice leader for its New York City office.



Harbick

An architect with more than 25 years of experience in creating progressive workplace environments, Harbick has been acquainted with the firm and its leaders, President John Campbell and Partner Anthony Colciaghi, for many years. With a goal to grow the firm's presence in New York City, Harbick will lead the New York Corporate Workplace Practice and oversee all aspects of the firm's Manhattan office, including research, design and marketing. Francis Cauffman also has a practice in Philadelphia.

"Mark comes to Francis Cauffman with a uniquely diverse portfolio that adds to the depth and capability of the firm in terms of design and innovation," Campbell said. "We're really looking forward to having him onboard as we continue to grow our Corporate Workplace portfolio."

A graduate of the University of Detroit School of Architecture, Harbick's award-winning work has been widely published in leading architecture and design media. His design leadership was nationally recognized when named Contract Magazine's Designer of the Year in 2006. He brings to Francis Cauffman an ability to translate a company's vision, purpose and culture into environments that respond equally to the client's business drivers and the employee's experience. Some of his most notable work includes projects for clients such as Bloomberg, Pixar Studios, NBC Sports, Bloomingdale's and Mercedes-Benz.

"In this era of shrinking footprints and decreasing budgets, it's more important than ever for design to respond to and elevate the human experience," Harbick said. "I'm excited to join such a talented and like-minded team. I look forward to working with them to grow and strengthen the Francis Cauffman brand and portfolio in New York and beyond."

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MANUFACTURER SALES

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- Monitor and act as a company representative to the government market
- Act as a company representative to GSA and other government contracts
- Process contract modifications as needed
- Provide information and assistance on government RFQs and projects
- Maintain, review and manage all state/federal annual registrations and reporting requirements
- Other duties as assigned

Requirements:

- Experience in contract or administrator role; government contracts administration is required; experience with all types of state and government contracts is desired.
- Ability to provide excellent customer service
- Strong technical proficiency required, including Microsoft Office products
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in a dynamic environment
- Strong organizational, time management, attention to detail and analytical skills
- Ability to work independently as well as in a team environment; offer constructive feedback and direction to support goals

Interested candidates should submit a resume and cover letter to Tatiana Rodoslavova:

tatiana@specialt.net

DESIGN DRAFTSMAN IN ATLANTA AREA

MANUFACTURER DESIGN

Special-T is hiring a Design Draftsperson to join our growing team! Entry-level applications are welcome.



Special-T, an established table manufacturer and distribution company headquartered in Alpharetta, GA looking for a design draftsman to join our new product development team. This person will be responsible for the timely and accurate creation of complete manufacturing drawing packages; acquire a fundamental knowledge of in-house and vendor manufacturing capabilities and product families and create efficient designs that effectively meet internal and external customer needs.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

Generate 3D models of parts and assemblies as well as complete manufacturing drawing packages based on criteria established by Product designer, Design Engineer and Manufacturing.

EXPERIENCE & SKILLS:

- Strong initiative and positive attitude
- Strong technical and mechanical aptitude
- Willingness to work hands-on with product assembly and testing
- Ability to work effectively with superiors and peers to resolve issues and implement change.

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At **Bellow Press** we deliver a platform to reach facility managers, specifiers, interior designers, reps and dealers who seek insightful, strategic coverage of the contract furnishings industry as a front-and-center concern. We cover the industry from a strategic point of view, concentrating on quality analysis and independently written articles, helping you understand the business better.

Our competitive edge lies within its highly targeted and fully paid subscriber base - you're investing to reach an extremely qualified audience. It's more affordable on a per-page basis than broad interior design based monthly publications, and it's more affordable on a CPM basis than in-market publications. Better yet, none of your media buy is wasted: we pinpoint the industry professionals who are specifically focused on contract furnishings.

- Target the audience you want
- Increase brand awareness
- Put your brand next to great content
- Shorten the link between discovery and purchase

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- Well organized and task oriented, with attention to detail and follow through.
- Competence with computer technology and appropriate software applications.
- Strong working knowledge of SolidWorks or equivalent software
- The ability to read and interpret design drawings
- Microsoft Office, specifically Excel and Word

Interested candidates should submit a resume and cover letter to **Brandon Byess:**

bbyess@SpecialT.net

TERRITORY SALES MANAGER - NYC

SALES

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Scandinavian Spaces is a new curated portfolio of selected brands that fills almost every commercial furniture need. Our brands offer cutting edge furniture and interior solutions for the modern-day work environment. With a foundation rooted in Nordic design, we stay true to our core values - minimalism, ergonomics, and sustainability.

Key Responsibilities:

- Develop a detailed and strategic sales plan to build market share with a focus on key commercial Architecture & Design firms and Dealers.
- Maintain and grow relationships with top specifiers in the A&D community; Call on strategic architecture and design firms to drive specifications locally.
- Work with Marketing Dept. to consistently communicate

business and design trends

- Attend and participate in trade and industry events (IIDA, NEWH, Neocon, ICFF, etc.)

Please send cover letter and resumé to:

careers@scandinavianspaces.com

MULTIPLE POSITIONS - REGIONAL SALES MANAGERS; INTERIOR DESIGNER



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S.P. Richards is searching for a Furniture Regional Sales Manager located in the Atlanta, GA market. The territory includes Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Florida. We are looking for someone with at least 5 years of commercial furniture experience, has relationships with furniture dealers and loves to travel. We offer a competitive salary, annual bonus opportunity, company provided vehicle, company credit card and many more great benefits.

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If interested, please contact Charity Piomelli at:

CPiomelli@innovativeworkspaces.com

or call 800-524-2744.

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