

The Business of Furniture | June 24, 2020

BOF



**Returning
to Work and
School—KI
Leads With
Empathy,
Insight and
Innovation**



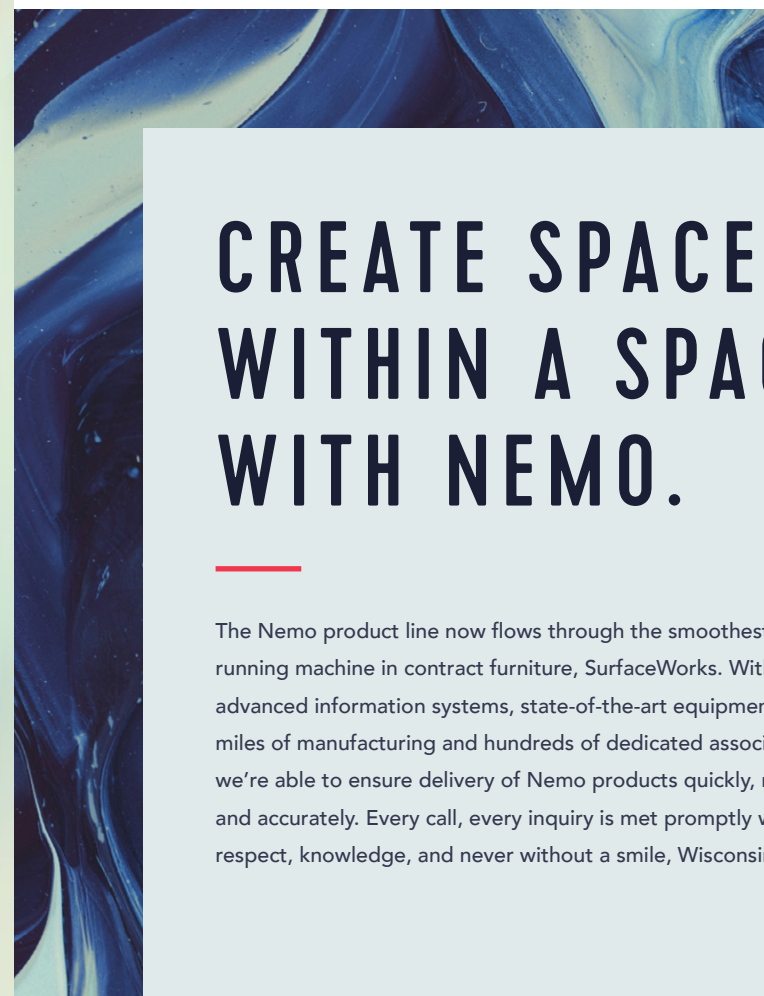
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KI is in the process of bringing about half of its organization of 500 or so workers back, while helping other companies come alive as well.



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Indiana Furniture is inviting the industry to take a new look and experience the changes it has worked on for the last few years.



YOU CAN SEE IT IN THEIR EYES

The pride, determination and sheer grit of the employee-owners at KI – and those across our industry. Through the most challenging of times, we've embraced new ways of working, carried our businesses forward and inspired each other every step of the way. THANK YOU!

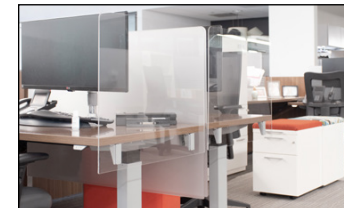


ki.com

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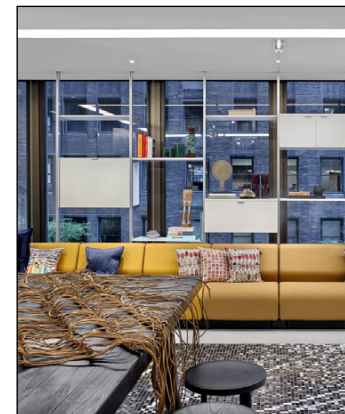


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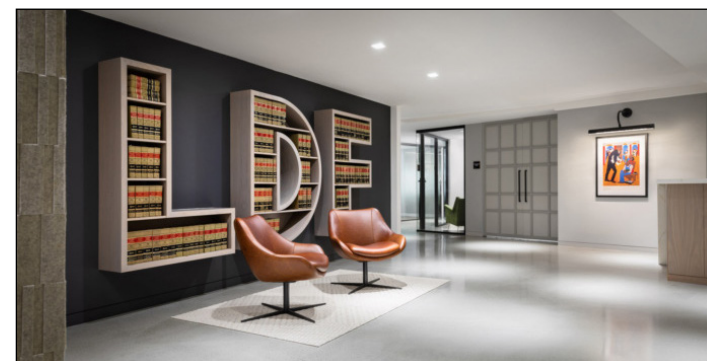
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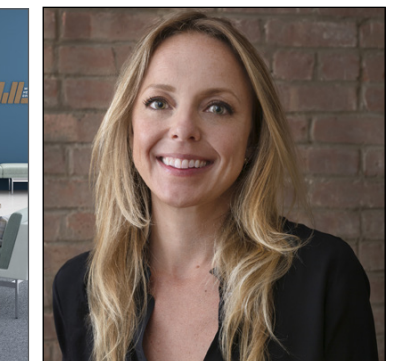
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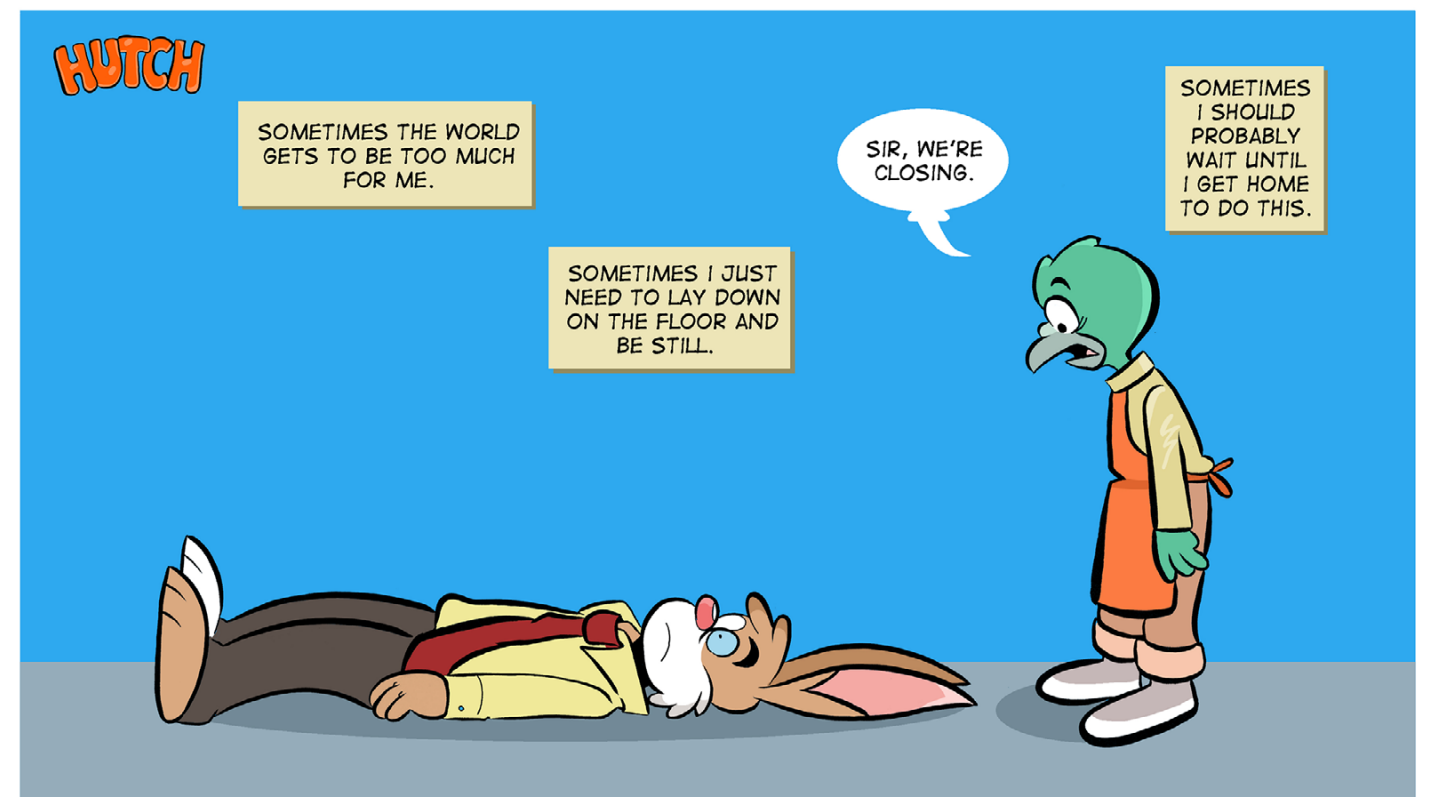
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Business of Furniture and *Workplaces* magazine are the go-to sources for keeping you informed about everything that is happening in the industry. From trends that affect your bottom line, to new products that will help your customers work better, to stories that will help you run a better, more informed company.

ROB KIRKBRIDE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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Time for Us to Exemplify the Spirit of Gambaru



Good Wednesday friends,

Sometimes, the end is really the beginning. Today's issue will be the last with the Industry Bulletin Board section. It was designed to keep you informed about industry happenings related to the COVID crisis, and we hope it has done just that.

Thankfully, it has run (very nearly) dry when it comes to COVID-specific industry news. That is a very good thing, indeed. Usually, when you shut down a section of your publication, it is a bad thing, yet I've never been more happy to shut down a section. It means things are getting better, even if it is ever so slightly.

It was an amazing run of stories and information and a great example of how our industry went above and beyond to help protect frontline workers by sewing masks, working on ventilators and producing products that helped keep people safe.

Though the Industry Bulletin Board is going away, I'm going to keep writing this column. I really enjoy communicating with readers on a personal level. I'm going to reserve this space and hope it will be the conscience of the industry — pointing out what we are doing great and calling the industry out on areas where it's falling short, if necessary.

The shock of COVID is over. Now the hard part begins. It is time to rebuild and renew the market. While that may be a bit out of our hands, there are some things we can do to turn the corner. Most importantly, we need to be indispensable to our customers. Many of them have questions about how to return to work safely. Be the expert that they need right now, even if it is not initially about selling them products. If you give them the best advice, the sales will come eventually.

It is also important to be an ally to your own employees. I speak to a lot of people who are still scared to venture out. They are scared to go to work. If that's the case with your staff, be flexible and understanding. Allow them to work from home, if appropriate.

The past 10 years or so have been a time of incredible change for the office — the most active period of turmoil

in the history of the office. A few months ago, I would have said that epoch was coming to an end. The office was still changing, but most had made the transition to open plan, collaborative workspaces. Few had really worked outside the office. Almost everyone does now. That shift has shown the strengths and weaknesses of working from home. Some love it, and many employers are allowing workers to stay at home if they like. Others can't wait to be in the office and connect to coworkers again.

I feel we are back on the precipice of change. COVID is going to change the way we work once again. And again, the office furniture industry is on the front line. The world is looking to us for what's next. I am confident we are up to the challenge as long as we listen to customers and help them through this potential minefield.

Be innovative. Be bold. Take some chances.

We are at an inflection point. Times like these can make or break companies. Be one of the companies that make it. All of us at Bellow Press are here to cheer you on. We have an important job, too — to act as the sounding board for your ideas, the proponent of your projects and the clearinghouse of information that can help everyone in the industry. We take that job very, very seriously.

As we begin to emerge from this crisis, make sure to keep your head up. And be proud in the knowledge that you did your part to get through this unprecedented period.

The Japanese have a proverb: "Nana korobi ya oki" (literally: seven falls, eight getting up). It means fall down seven times, and get up eight. It shows the spirit of gambaru, a concept deeply rooted in the Japanese culture and approach to life. The literal meaning of gambaru expresses the idea of sticking with a task with tenacity until it is completed — of making a persistent effort until success is achieved. It is a lesson we can all learn in this time of great change.

Rob Kirkbride and the Business of Furniture team

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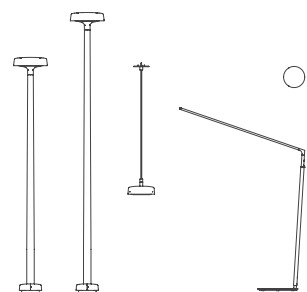
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Our mission is to support healthy workplace communities in the commercial furniture industry in North America, and to support other like-minded charitable organizations in carrying out this work internationally.

Time is running out

There is just one week left to complete our [online survey](#) to provide critical information that will guide our initiative to support workplace wellness.

For every survey completed before June 30, 2020, INDEAL will donate \$1.00 to INDEAL Cares.

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INDEAL  CARES

National Office Furniture Announces Products to Retrofit and Redesign the Future of Work

National Office Furniture, a unit of Kimball International, has unveiled research information and product solutions to help partners retrofit existing products, redesign spaces and reimagine what's next.

With more than 250 new solutions to help redefine the future of work, National has solutions for the office, the home and all of the in-between spaces where work happens. Its new screen collection offers a variety of sizes, attachment methods and materials, so a wide range of spaces can be retrofitted for increased protection. New Fringe lounge enhancements create space division, and Alloy benching panels accommodate employees' physical, emotional and psychological well-being.

National's Preparing for the New Mindset document offers strategies for success when re-engaging employees in the workplace. Complete with detailed information regarding people, places and processes, this guide provides step-by-step planning considerations that can be used when creating safe workplace environments across all aspects of a business. From identifying workplace risks to addressing employees' physical, emotional, psychological and cultural needs, this piece offers extensive protocols and considerations for a successful post-COVID-19 introduction to the workplace.

The company's "Considerations to Retrofit and Redesign" document offers inspiration and solutions for the now, near and next. With before and after images, plus product suggestions, it is a comprehensive guide that outlines National's solutions to address today's new working environments.

The Now, Near and Next video is a comprehensive Return to Work story, point of view and research toolkit presented in a brief, under 400 second Pecha Kucha format. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach, National shares key learnings in the same spirit of cooperation that's inspired so many since this pandemic began.

[LEARN MORE](#)

CONSIDERATIONS TO RETROFIT AND REDESIGN

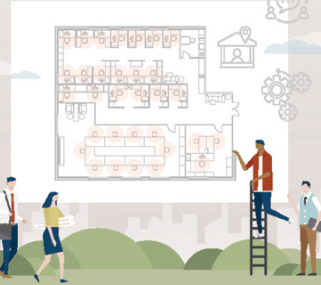
INSPIRATION FOR NOW, NEAR, AND NEXT



NATIONAL

PREPARING FOR THE NEW MINDSET

PEOPLE, PLACE, AND PROCESS



NATIONAL

WHAT GOES INTO A CHAIR (BEFORE YOU DO)

A chair's design is a balance between form and function, as it needs to be ergonomic, pleasing to the eye and durable. We rock, twist and stand on chairs; they're arguably one of the most overlooked and overused pieces of furniture we can own. Self-taught British designer Tom Dixon says, "It's more demanding from a structural engineering point than you think. The construction becomes really important."

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)


BIG NUMBER

13,000 CHAIRS

Office furniture manufacturer HON has recalled more than 13,000 chairs due to a fall hazard.

According to a recall notice from the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the chairs' back can break, creating the potential for injury to the user. HON has received reports of 11 chair backs breaking, including two reports of minor injuries.

The recall involves HON's Gateway office chairs with model numbers HGTMM and HGVMM and manufactured from February 2019 through February 2020.

WATCH: DESIGNING WHAT'S NEXT: DESIGN + INFORMAL SPACES

Watch Lew Epstein, General Manager of Coalesse and Turnstone, as he answers 5 questions in 5 minutes on the future of informal, shared spaces in a post-COVID workplace. Spoiler alert - they're here to stay.

[WATCH VIDEO](#)


THE STREAM

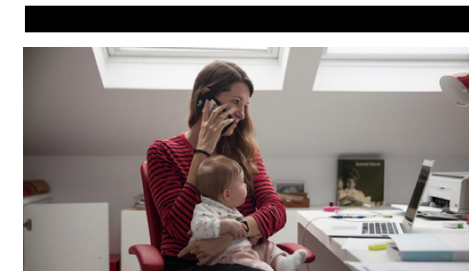
OFFICES IN THE POST LOCKDOWN ERA WILL FOCUS ON WHAT THEY ARE GOOD AT

Office spaces will become a hive of activity in the future as more businesses embrace office designs which promote innovation, creativity and team collaboration, predicts commercial real estate advisors Colliers International. The EMEA Workplace Advisory team has published its latest report, Exploring the post-COVID-19 Workplace, which evaluates feedback from its global Work from Home survey to discuss future workplace trends.

More than 5,000 respondents from 18 different industries completed the company's global Work from Home survey, which found support for the continuation of some working from home after the pandemic is over, but also a desire to return to the office to collaborate with colleagues. Some respondents also expressed a preference to having a defined work and home life. The report concludes that the office is far from dead, but that businesses are likely to embrace more remote working practices in the future.

"Attitudes towards remote working have been completely challenged by this global pandemic," said JanJaap Boogaard, Head of EMEA Workplace Advisory. "The greatest surprise for many companies has been the realisation that their organisation can work remotely, be productive, and stay connected. This awakening has started a new conversation for many businesses as they explore their work processes, business culture and question what the future is for their workplace."

"However, the office is very much alive and kicking, because it is hard to create a compelling team culture when working remotely, we need face-to-face interaction in order to build true, meaningful connections," JanJaap continued. "COVID-19 will be the catalyst for a new evolution in office design, as more businesses look at how best to capitalize on the credible option of remote working."

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)


HOW THE PANDEMIC IS FOREVER CHANGING THE EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP. AND WHY THAT MATTERS.

How are you doing? Are you comfortable there on your couch, taking on another workday with your computer—and maybe the family pet—resting on your lap? Or maybe you're at your kitchen table, working amongst the remnants of your family's breakfast. Or if you're lucky, perhaps you're at a desk in the back room, two monitors giving you a panoramic view of the growing number of open tasks still in progress. You've got your Zoom background to hide the mess behind you, but you've had to duck out of a meeting more than once to take care of a screaming child. Welcome to the world of tomorrow, today.

Across the United States, employers and employees alike are trying to figure out what working from home long term is going to mean, not just in a logistical sense but in a human one. Our workspaces, for those of us lucky enough to be able to take them with us, have blended into our homes, and our officemates replaced by our families, roommates, and pets. A dizzying change that happened all at once from coast to coast, the delineation between on and off the clock has eroded into almost nothing. The nine-to-five becomes more of a general guideline than anything else, because if you're not in the office, you cannot stop your life from breaking in. Even your cat attends your meetings, demanding to rest front and center on the warmth of your keyboard.

Once upon a time, you worked solely in an office. Perhaps it had a break room and provided free coffee. It certainly provided you with office supplies and an environment conducive to focus and creativity; if nothing else.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)



IIDA to Furlough Staff

IIDA WILL RETURN TO NORMAL BUSINESS OPERATIONS JULY 20 AT FULL STRENGTH AND WITH A ROBUST SLATE OF PROGRAMMING.

Responding to the vast impacts of COVID-19 and the economic reverberations caused by the outbreak, the Chicago-based headquarters office of International Interior Design Association has announced furloughs of its headquarters staff.

Based on current and anticipated economic conditions, and in consultation with its International Board and financial advisors, the nonprofit membership organization will place its head-

quarters staff on furlough June 14 through July 19. This will allow staff to take advantage of CARES Act benefits while the organization elects appropriate action to maintain fiscal strength.

During this time, IIDA will pause regular business operations and all scheduled headquarters webinars, programming and outreach. IIDA will return to normal business operations July 20 at full strength and with a robust slate of programming.

“While this is a difficult decision, we recognize this action will allow IIDA to preserve revenue and offset early unforeseen impacts caused by the outbreak,” said Cheryl S. Durst, IIDA executive vice president and CEO. “It is the most fiscally responsible option to take at this time and one that we believe will contribute to our resiliency now and in the future. I’m optimistic about what lies ahead.”

Throughout the furlough peri-

od IIDA will continue to provide the support and professional development resources its membership depends on via IIDA.org, including resources such as the career center, distance learning and webinar recordings and affinity programs. In addition, local chapters will continue to offer relevant programming, services and community outreach to members during this time.

Upon return on July 20, IIDA will immediately resume outreach, services and programming – including the next phase of Collective D(esign), its well-received webinar series that has brought critical and timely content via virtual conversations to thousands of industry design professionals across the globe.

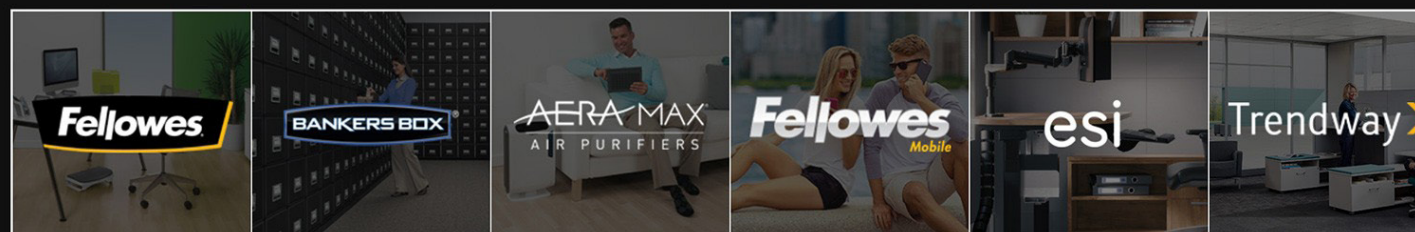
Next, the series will focus on career challenges designers face in the current climate and offer real-world help and ideas. In addition, plans are underway for new programming that puts a spotlight on diversity, inclusion and equity; women in leadership; and the return-to-work phase of the COVID-19 crisis. IIDA will also be working directly with more than 300 new chapter leaders to offer foundational training in the leadership and business oversight each chapter requires.

The IIDA staff expect the return to headquarters will be a time of renewed excitement as the association continues its mission to inform and inspire its members and the design community at large. **BoF**

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Fellowes Brands Announces New Contract Interiors Division

FELLOWES BRANDS STRATEGIC EXPANSION INTO CONTRACT FURNITURE BEGAN WITH THE ACQUISITION OF ESI AND TRENDWAY.

Fellowes Brands has formed a new division, Fellowes Contract Interiors, designed to service the contract furniture market. Fellowes Contract Interiors unifies three brands, Trendway, ESI and AeraMax Professional, and they'll be sold through one contract furniture division. The new group leverages the strengths of each organization and enables unified leadership, innovative product offerings, enhanced customer services and expanded resources.

"Bringing together these great organizations under the Fellowes Contract Interiors division allows us to leverage each other's capabilities, while strengthening our market position," said Mark Rhoades, president of Fellowes Contract Interiors. "It also allows us to take our partnership with our dealers to the next level as we provide new growth opportunities for their business. Each brand will continue to demon-

strate a commitment to delivering the quality, speed and ease that our customers have come to rely on."

John Fellowes, CEO of Fellowes Brands, said the company has consistently provided solutions that address the ever-changing work environments since its beginnings in 1917. "These three distinguished brands create an opportunity to deliver solutions that meet the unique needs of today's business professionals," he said. "By leveraging Fellowes Brands global capabilities in the areas of design, production, operations and digital, we can further advance our mission to help our customers be their best and feel their best."

Fellowes Brands strategic expansion into contract furniture began with the acquisition of ESI, a leader in ergonomic product solutions, including monitor arms, height-adjustable tables, power solutions, sit-to-stand

solutions, task lighting and wall-mounted and mobile workstations. It then added to its family of brands Trendway, a full-line manufacturer of custom contract architectural products and furniture, including more than 500,000-square-feet of manufacturing capabilities in Holland, Michigan.

AeraMax Professional, an award-winning brand and leader of commercial-grade air purifiers sold through Fellowes current channels, will expand to be offered through Fellowes Contract Interiors division as well. Fully conceptualized, developed and launched in-house at Fellowes Brands, AeraMax Professional brings clean air into the workplace through commercial grade air purification, which is key in protecting building occupants from airborne contaminants and viruses. **BoF**



Deirdre Jimenez, CEO BIFMA



Kristie Juster, CEO Kimball International



Matt Schadt, CEO of Nucraft Furniture

BIFMA Names New Leader at Virtual Annual Meeting

IN HER NEW ROLE, JIMENEZ WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR LEADING BIFMA AND PARTNERING WITH ITS BOARD OF DIRECTORS, MEMBERSHIP (REGULAR, SUPPLIER, SERVICE AND INTERNATIONAL) AND STAFF BY CONNECTING AND ADVANCING THE INDUSTRY'S COMMON INTERESTS THROUGH A PERIOD OF DISRUPTION AND GROWTH.

BIFMA found its new leader and introduced her to the industry during its annual meeting, the first it has ever held virtually. Deirdre Jimenez was appointed the first president and chief executive officer of the trade organization for the office furniture industry. Tom Rear-don, who is retiring, served as executive director for 22 years. Jimenez starts July 7.

The annual meeting, which is usually held in Chicago on the final day of NeoCon, was held virtually because of the ongoing pandemic.

In her new role, Jimenez will be responsible for leading BIFMA and partnering with its board of directors, membership (regular, supplier, service and international) and staff by connecting and advancing the industry's com-

mon interests through a period of disruption and growth.

Jimenez is both an architect and interior designer with more than 25 years of leadership experience serving in executive and ownership roles in corporate real estate and national AE consulting firms. Most of her career focused on the workplace environment, where she developed an understanding and appreciation



Tom Reardon



Hank Menke

of the role furnishings play in the emerging practice of workplace strategy.

She is a registered architect in several states, has earned the NCIDQ certification and numerous professional industry awards.

“Deirdre’s strategic drive and

her distinguished career in workplace architecture and design make her the perfect choice to lead BIFMA in support of the industry,” said Hank Menke, board chair. “We’re thrilled to welcome Deirdre aboard.”

Jimenez said, “At this pivotal

stage in the commercial furniture industry, I’m very excited to join BIFMA. Building on the organization’s historical focus and growth-oriented initiatives, I look forward to collaborating with the board of directors, members and team on telling BIFMA’s story and broadening its outreach.”

BIFMA also announced the election of new industry leaders to its board of directors. Kristie Juster, chief executive officer at Kimball International, and Matt Schad, CEO of Nucraft Furniture, were elected at the May meeting of the board.

Juster became CEO of Kimball International in 2018 and prior to that served for more than 20 years as a global executive at Newell Brands. Throughout her career, she has driven significant growth for the businesses she has led through brand innovation, distribution channel expansion, including e-commerce, and a global mindset. She is a graduate of Cornell University.

Schad held positions in product development and operations before becoming CEO of Nucraft. Prior to joining the company, he was an attorney practicing in Washington, D.C. He is a 1994 graduate of Amherst College where he majored in economics, a 1998 graduate of Wake Forest School of Law and received his Executive MBA from Notre Dame in 2014.

Reardon welcomed the election of these executives. “The furniture industry is fortunate to have leaders with diverse backgrounds

willing to offer their vision of the future, especially as we all address the profound challenges in the workplace and world today,” he said.

It was an unusual annual meeting for BIFMA. Instead of the meetings of old with their rubbery eggs and greasy bacon in the conference room of the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza (though last year’s location in the MART and food were much better), the meeting was held online and was attended by nearly 200.

Reardon started the meeting by addressing the elephant in the (virtual) room: his retirement. “As most of you probably know, in January of this year, I publicly announced my intention to retire in early Q2 of this year,” he said. “Well, here we are in late Q2, and I’m still here, but the transition is forthcoming.” Reardon said the coronavirus outbreak, stay-at-home orders and travel restrictions temporarily stalled the search process.

Reardon said he is very pleased and proud to pass the leadership with the organization on to a solid foundation. He said BIFMA has the highest number of members ever and realized the highest dues revenue and the highest total revenue ever recorded. “Your organization has been on a steady growth trajectory since the last recession in 2009,” he said.

He thanked the organization for making his time at BIFMA “a truly memorable and rewarding experience.”

Reardon was surprised with a new bicycle, which was rolled in during the call with the membership.

“I can’t say that becoming BIFMA’s executive director or even working for BIFMA was ever part of some grand career strategy,” he said. “Both were opportunities that presented themselves at a time that it just seemed right for me to say ‘yes’ to them, but I can say that throughout the course of my education or even in the early part of my career never would I have imagined that I would find myself working side by side learning from and being mentored by some of the most talented CEOs and executives from any industry. I think I’ve given a lot to this organization over the years. But in many ways, I feel like I’ve gained even more. And for this I’m humbled and eternally grateful.”

Reardon was surprised with a new bicycle, which was rolled in during the call with the membership.

Menke recognized board members, who he called the finest board of directors he has ever been a part of. He also recognized Groupe Lacasse’s Sylvain Garneau, who was leaving the board after years of service.

Jimenez said she is honored to have been selected to lead

BIFMA and thanked the selection committee for a thoughtful process and many conversations.

“I appreciate the opportunity to build upon Tom’s legacy, to work with the board charting the next chapter for the association, and to continue the critical work that is underway led by the staff,” she said. “I’ve been asked more than once what I intend to do in the first 90 days and my answer is: simply ask more questions. I look forward to getting to know the staff, the committees, any initiatives currently underway and especially how we have to adapt in order to ride out COVID together with the board. We’ll develop goals for 2021 and map out future initiatives to grow the association further and elevate the role our members serve in the industry. I also look forward to speaking with as many members as possible, seeking your feedback and how we can better serve you. As I’ve learned thus far, there are many complex and impactful initiatives in process.”

She said the BIFMA Leadership Conference is historically held in January, and it is being reviewed in the context of COVID. Jimenez said BIFMA expects to have a direction for BIFMA 360 in the next few weeks. The Compliance program continues to move forward and is still targeted for implementation in March 2021. Confluence, the new program that was to run during NeoCon, will make its debut in June 2021.

BoF

We launched Products, People and Projects this year to help fill the gaps. We don't want all the information we would have learned about at NeoCon to be lost.

So we worked with theMART to come up with a program you have seen the past few weeks. For the rest of the summer, we will be presenting Products, People and Projects, a few companies at a time so as not to overwhelm the reader.

We're thrilled to present stories from KI and Indiana Furniture in today's issue. Make sure you read the stories to learn about what these great companies are doing.

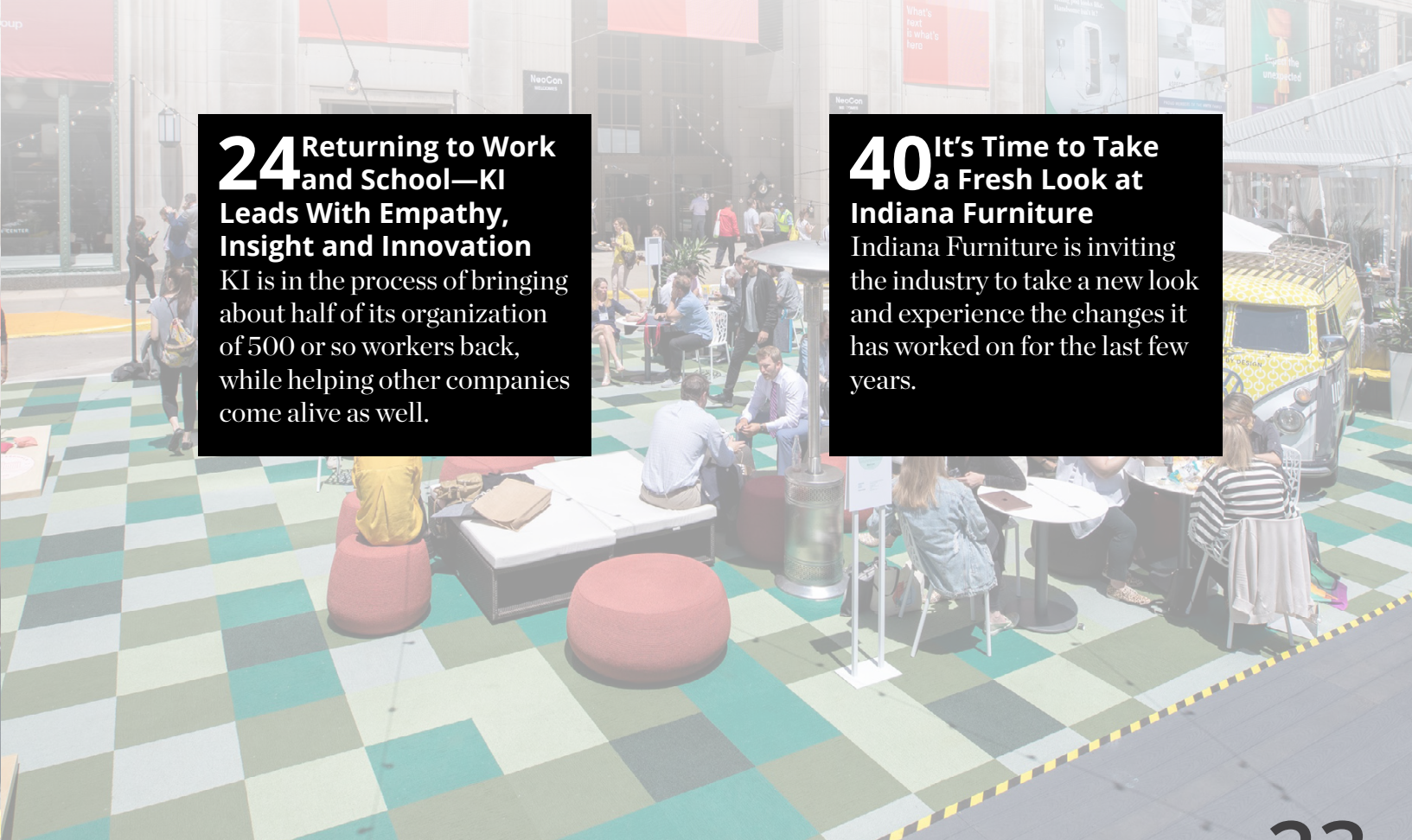
NeoCon: Products, People and Projects

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Returning to Work and School— KI Leads With Empathy, Insight and Innovation

If we've learned anything about life during the Covid -19 era, it's that there is no silver bullet. What works for one may not work for another. What appears to be a "best-practice" today is obsolete tomorrow.

"At KI, we are listening carefully to our customers and making the best decisions we can based on current information. And as we all know, it changes quickly," said Jonathan Webb, Market Leader, Workplace at KI.

KI is in the process of bringing its own organization of 500 or so workers back to the office, while helping other companies come alive as well. As states are opening in different stages, KI is in tune with what each state is doing and furthering that conversation with clients about what they are doing in their own organizations and what they need.

"It is important for us to help guide our customers through the process in a way that is consistent with their return-to-work strategies," Webb said. "There are all kinds of return-to-work documents floating around out there, and we have our own as well. But they are simply guidelines. Our goal is to help other organizations return safely without compromising the many positives of working together in a shared environment."



All Terrain screens provide division between workstations.

As with workplaces, there are no hard, state mandates or deadlines when it comes to opening schools around the country.

“At the end of the day, we are trying to give people a sense of security and relief,” he said. “It’s about being empathetic. We need to show empathy for the organizations we are partnered with to safely bring their employees back to work. If we listen and focus on producing solutions that meet the needs of our clients, then I think we’ve done our job.”

Kids are resilient

As with workplaces, there are no hard, state mandates or deadlines when it comes to opening schools around the country. But, in speaking with education officials over the past few weeks, Bryan Balleger, VP of Education at KI, is finding a general consensus among higher education organizations that there will be updated policies, social distancing protocol in place, cleaning supplies available and maybe one student to a dorm room. Many higher ed officials are

trusting that, students, when armed with the information they need, will make smart choices.

While this is the case in many parts of the country, it does not hold true for all – especially as new spikes in cases are occurring in different states daily. One example: on May 12, the California State University System chancellor announced plans to cancel nearly all in-person classes though the fall semester at all 23 campuses around the state.

“This illustrates the fluidity of COVID-related changes,” Balleger said.

Balleger’s team recently conducted interviews with students from grade three through undergraduates about how distance learning has been working for them and what has not. As far as using the technology, working on the projects and staying in a school mode—from all grades—overall, the students



MyWay lounge seating provides ample space for individual work as well as an area to meet with others.



Strategically placed seating like Sway and MyWay anchor spaces, providing options for individual space or places to gather safely.

KI is offering solution ideas to schools that work with the existing furniture in each part of a campus, whether its KI's or another brand.

said they could do the things, but they really want to get back to campus.

"They miss their friends," Ballegeer said. "They miss playing baseball, hanging out at recess, or goofing off in the cafeteria. And interestingly, most responded that they miss their teachers. Students expressed a need to stand near their teachers, to interact with them in a real way, not just on a computer screen.

"What I will say, even without the interviews," Ballegeer continues, "Educators and even parents obviously know this too, but kids are incredibly resilient—kindergarten through higher ed. So our role is to ensure their safety first, but when it comes to how they will deal with or respond to new COVID regulations put in place or the new furniture put in place, we shouldn't really fear. They will be far better at adapting to it and thriving through it than most of us adults will. As adults, we have pretty much formed our opinions, but kids' natural resil-

ience gives them the mindset of: 'let me just figure it out.'"

KI is offering solution ideas to schools that work with the existing furniture in each part of a campus, whether its KI's or another brand. Using simple, yet strategic furniture arrangements to installing screens and partitions are KI's initial go-tos in solving back-to-school issues in a COVID world.

"We're not going to sprint to make some new product just to say we made some new 'COVID product,'" Ballegeer said. "We will do better by our served campuses and their students if we leverage our current solutions and help them think through their specific campus needs. Schools need support in their budgets, they aren't a bottomless pit of money by any means. We're just trying to connect dots. We are continuously posting a lot of information and facilitating or participating in community discussions nationwide. We're pulling educators from different parts of the country



$$= \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{x-3^2}{\sqrt{x^2-3}}$$

$$= \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{x}{\sqrt{x^2+x}}$$

$$= \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{x^2+x}{\sqrt{x^2+x}}$$

$$= \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{2x+3}{x^2-5x-1}$$

Connection Zone benching with dividers create individual study areas.



The Tattoo Collection supports various ways of working by allowing the user to rearrange elements within the space as needed, on demand.



Universal height-adjustable screens give employees the option to create a barrier between themselves when needed; screens can also be specified with tackable material.

The move toward less dense spaces might be the hardest pill to swallow for companies.

to talk about worries, needs, protocols, plans, suggestions. Just putting them in contact and enabling the sharing of information among each other is an approach we're already seeing pay off for our campus partners. All campuses share most of the same struggles and with some schools ahead of others in their approach to a plan, sharing that valuable intel is beneficial to all."

Lasting Implications of Covid-19

When it comes to the office, Jonathan Webb believes two common themes will rise to the top as companies revamp for a post-pandemic workplace — implementing wellness practices and reducing density in the physical space.

Wellness practices, already becoming a priority in the workplace, might now include adding sanitation stations around the building and making sanitation supplies easily accessible. Or, rethinking café layouts to ensure food is prepared and presented in a safe way.

Webb advises that building owners and organizations will need to look at how air flow is managed throughout their space. What can be done to systematically improve the

overall health in their buildings?

"I think you're going to hear more about the health of buildings even more than we have in the past few years," Webb said. "And whether it's Fitwel® or Well Building Institute™ standards, or any other standards regarding building wellness, I think you'll see more organizations pay attention to that. How is that going to impact furniture?"

The move toward less dense spaces might be the hardest pill to swallow for companies.

"We have historically calculated most things in dollars per square foot and have shrunk the amount of personal square footage per employee," Webb said. "Now, a conference room that used to hold 20 people, will be limited to hold about 8-10 and everyone will sit a little farther apart."

Technology can be leveraged to create more space between people, to have no physical contact at all — connecting a staff meeting to people who chose not to leave their personal workstations, or who are working from home.

"That's reducing density in its simplest form," Webb said. "It becomes a little more chal-

Movable and flexible furniture solutions can enable organizations to create distance in dense spaces with one kit of parts, as with KI's Tattoo line.

lenging when it comes to personal workstations. Employers will likely experiment with different layouts to maximize distance between employees."

Movable and flexible furniture solutions can enable organizations to create distance in dense spaces with one kit of parts, as with KI's Tattoo line — designed and launched a few years ago as a flexible, freestanding line.

"So, for COVID-related arrangements, we used the same kit of parts to create different layouts," he said. "Take a benching unit and turn the tables or use storage to create separation between co-workers, or inserting screens. We obviously did not design Tattoo as a COVID-response line. But it is becoming an important line in the KI arsenal because of its inherent flexibility. The same set of parts that we have used to create collaborative spaces and closeness can now be used to reduce density by creating barriers in the space."

Storage solutions with high back panels are another creative option for dividing space between workstations. Banks

of employee lockers can also delineate space and direct foot traffic in ways that support social distancing.

"These are the types of things we're working on and most of the ideas were born out of different client engagements," Webb said.

Creating prototypes can be done within hours or a day at KI, and Webb jokes his office is turning into a fort with the accumulation of KI's prototype pieces around his desk.

"For us, the really important part of this design process is the ability to rapidly prototype. We have our own model shop and testing lab right here on site with our industrial designers and design engineers right here too," Webb said. "And right now, their role is to help us create some of those solutions with extremely tight timelines."

KI is also educating its clients on materials that are more readily available right now. The biggest impact on the furniture industry's lead time is the limited availability of acrylic, which is being eaten up by every industry," Webb notes.



Tattoo flex screens can be rearranged to delineate space or direct traffic flow. The magnetic markerboard screens support workspace activities.



Sprocket-shaped Pillar tables offer a larger surface for multiple people to work around. Mobile seating options such as Intellect Wave chairs and MyPlace ottomans ensure students can move around as needed.

KI remains committed to helping its customers find the answers.

“Retail, hospitality ... everywhere you go, people have an acrylic screen in front of them,” he said. “So good for the acrylic industry, I suppose, but not great for the furniture manufacturers that need acrylic. But we’ve been smart about it and took an early inventory stance, and we do have a supply for our clients.”

Helping its clients bring new things to light is something KI is proud of—that process of being able to create something from a cocktail napkin sketch or a piece of scrap paper—that’s one thing that Webb feels is a stand-out for KI.

“It’s a key differentiator for KI,” he said. “Our goal is to listen to what our clients are asking us for and work with them to modify or co-create a specific solution to address the issues that are important to them and bring everyone back into the workplace.”

All hail the queen

Still, with all of the convoluted information out there, what’s the point of all these protocols, especially in schools, where the little kids in particular, will have a hard time keeping their distance from each other.

“As a former school administrator and in talking with dozens nationwide, that is probably the most difficult part of making a return to campus a reality,” Ballegeer said. “The logistical challenges will be the toughest to solve. Whether it’s in the halls, at recess or in cafeterias, it’s all about minimizing that flow — students staying in their homeroom all day while teachers circulate, and lunch will be brought to them there. But students still need to get out for recess or a break. They still need to arrive to school, whether it’s on buses or a parent drop off. So, things like staggered arrivals and dismissals, block scheduling, or rotating the students on a week-in/week-remote schedule are some options administrators are reviewing and planning for now. But if anyone has a guaranteed plan/answer, they would be queen of the world.”

While many questions remain for the future of the workplace and education, KI remains committed to helping its customers find the answers. **BoF**

To read more from Jonathan and Bryan, check out the KI blog at:

<https://blog.ki.com/>

It's Time to Take a Fresh Look at Indiana Furniture

What comes to mind when you think of Indiana? Words like “solid,” “friendly” and “traditional” probably pop into your head. That's great for a company like Indiana Furniture. Who wouldn't want to be known by those descriptors?

Yet the company is so much more than that. While you might have been able to lump it under the “traditional” banner a decade ago, you certainly can't today. Indiana Furniture has proven to be adept at design, quick to spot trends and exceptionally easy to work with. Though the venerable company is 115 years old, it is going through a metamorphosis, of sorts. It is as reliable, friendly and solid as ever, but it is also a company committed to introducing exciting new designs and open to new ideas from its customers and distribution partners.



Fifteen Lounge

“I think a lot of people have in their mind what Indiana Furniture is ... or actually was. And that’s not who we are any longer.”



“We think it is important that people look at us a little differently than they have historically,” said Mike Blessinger, vice president of sales and marketing for Indiana Furniture. “I think a lot of people have in their mind what Indiana Furniture is ... or actually was. And that’s not who we are any longer because of how we’ve evolved and the direction we’re heading in regards to all the things we’re doing as a company — operationally, service wise and certainly with

product and the product mix.” Those changes are pushing Indiana Furniture into a growth spurt heading to another level. Indiana Furniture is inviting the industry to take a new look and experience the changes it has worked on for the last few years. Really, the transition has been a decade in the making. About 10 years ago, Indiana Furniture recognized if it was going to be successful going forward and not just fade away like some of the other Southern Indiana



Fifteen Lounge



Iconic Casegoods, Clutch Executive Seating & Spirit Lounge Chair



Strut Table Leg & Clutch Executive Seating

Indiana Furniture is at the place where a lot of things have come together.

furniture makers, it had to change. Indiana Furniture is a reliable company with a sound foundation. That means it does not make changes lightly. What makes the company reliably solid is the same thing that has kept it from reacting as quickly as some flash-in-the-pan companies. It had to find the right balance between taking the right risks and being diligent and practical.

Indiana Furniture is at the place where a lot of things have come together. The right leadership is in place with Max Verkamp as president and chief executive officer. Verkamp has pushed the company forward since he arrived four years ago, but in the right steps and the right phases. The company is beginning to attract attention

from new customers and the design community.

The first product that really showed Indiana Furniture was committed to change was its One10 conferencing collection, which was launched on the company's 110th anniversary. It was a different collection for the company — modern, sleek, contemporary. Indiana Furniture hasn't let up on the gas since.

"We've certainly attempted to try and make our products relevant, while maintaining all the things that people expect from Indiana Furniture, such as quick lead times (three weeks, with specials often coming in four weeks)," Blessinger said. "Also, our customer service is top notch.

Indiana Furniture was set to have a spectacular NeoCon. It is launching seven new product lines.

We are able to back up anything we say. We try not to get too far out of our main core but with where we're going, there's just a lot of momentum and that progressive-looking product, of course, that's what the market demands."

Most importantly, he said, Indiana Furniture is at the point where it can serve any client in any situation. It wasn't always that way. The company might have passed on opportunities if it didn't think it had the right products or the right pedigree to compete. Now, Blessinger said, Indiana Furniture can respond to any request.

"We're very comfortable talking about any project or any situation," he said. "We've arrived at a point where we know we're not go-

ing to be the most widely specified product line, but there's no doubt our reps and customers can now open up our website or a brochure to show images of Indiana Furniture and be very proud to say this could go anywhere. And that's where we're at now, and we keep pushing more and more in that direction."

Indiana Furniture was set to have a spectacular NeoCon. It is launching seven new product lines. The featured product is called Iconic, and is also the theme that Indiana Furniture planned to use for NeoCon and its summer launches.

Iconic was designed internally with a lot of input from the marketplace, including from customers and reps. It has a mid-century modern



Fifteen Lounge and Fifteen Pods

Indiana Furniture also has a new task and conference room chair called Rockstar, which fits well with the Iconic line. Rockstar was developed in-house with comfort and broad usability in mind.



Rockstar Task Seating



Iconic Open Plan & Spirit Seating

feel. What started out as a simple table-based product grew into something extremely flexible and with a lot of details the company thinks are very unique. Iconic can be used in private offices or shared environments, as a casegoods line, and also in ancillary situations when the customer might only need storage in a conference room or a room divider with a beautiful bookcase. Mid-century modern has been around for a while, and Blessinger said it wanted a product line that would be fresh and not simply trendy.

Indiana Furniture also has a new task and conference room chair called Rockstar, which fits well with the Iconic line. Rockstar was developed in-house with comfort and broad usability in mind.

The company also is introducing Fifteen Pods and Fifteen Lounge, which come from its relationship with U.K. furniture maker Edge Design. "We're partnering on the designs and then manufacturing all the products in Southern Indiana so that we can control lead times, textiles and

service expectations for our customers," Blessinger said.

Again, pods and lounge chairs aren't new to the market, but the Fifteen products are Indiana Furniture's take on them and fits its identity. The company is very good at understanding who they are and where they should fit. Another Edge Design product being introduced is Runna, a collection of pouffes that work well for impromptu seating, ottomans and more. Furthering the style options for tables, the company is adding a leg detail called Strut that was acquired with the close of the Paoli brand.

Finally, in response to changes spurred by COVID-19, Indiana Furniture has expanded its options with screens and dividers to further provide privacy, define personal space and increase safety of workers.

All of the products have launch dates and all will be available for sale or taking orders before the end of August.

While the company is focused on the now, for



Strut Table Leg & Rockstar Seating



Runna Pouffes



Fifteen Lounge



Iconic Executive Office



any company with a 115-year history it's worth noting how it got started. In the early spring of 1905, several members of the Jasper, Indiana, Business Men's Association were looking for a piece of land to start a new business. And after finding five acres on what was the edge of town at the time, the group formed Jasper Novelty Works on St. Patrick's Day. Indiana Furniture was born.

With an ownership that has changed surprisingly little since those 97 incorporators formed the new company to produce office furniture, cupboards, kitchen cabinets, china closets, wardrobes, washstands and other similar goods, Indiana Furniture has formed the bedrock of the industry for an astonishing 11-and-a-half decades. In many ways, it continues to mirror the community from which it arose by focusing on rock solid products and honest business dealings.

While "novelty" covers a lot, right from the start, the company made more desks than anything else. In the 1910s, the company moved

toward production of tables, library furniture, roll-top desks and a growing line of secretary, typewriter and general office and school desks, churning out about 1,200 desks a month during the period. In 1927 the name was officially changed to Indiana Desk Company. In 2005 another change was made to Indiana Furniture to better represent the evolution of the diverse products offered by the company, and that direction continues today.

Its history literally grew out of Jasper itself. The area was surrounded by beautiful hardwood forests of white oak, walnut and ash. Add to that an "old country" work ethic and craftsmanship, and you have an area ripe for furniture making. Almost all of the founders of Jasper Novelty Works were either immigrants from Germany or the sons of immigrants.

Like many communities founded in the Midwest, Indiana Furniture's roots began growing in the middle 1800s. Farmers and craftsmen from Germany, Austria, Bavaria and Prussia left their homeland in the 1830s and 1840s looking

for new opportunities. Many found themselves in Jasper, an area that resembled their Southern German homelands.

According to a book written on the company's history, "From the start of the venture, Jasper Novelty Works functioned in a manner significantly different from that of countless other businesses begun during the American age of industrialization. Whereas most successful American companies were founded and run by a strong individual who often conducted himself in an autocratic manner, Jasper Novelty Works found its strength in a highly talented board of directors. Often, the directors also worked in the plant, using their talents and experience in a position of authority or skilled expertise."

As the company continued to evolve, a shift was made where the management of the organization has been entrusted with employees rather than descendants of the founders. This has suited the organization well over the past half century by allowing it to attract and retain talented leadership at its own will and by the

will of the management team. The continued involvement of the original ownership still persists with the board of directors, but the day-to-day operations have long been managed by an employee-based team allowing for diverse backgrounds and open-minded perspectives to continue the evolution of the company.

Throughout the years, Indiana Furniture has grown and prospered because it listens to its customers, distribution partners and designers. And it will continue that going forward, Blessinger said.

"So the big conversation (we want to have) is, 'What do you think? Tell us what you need.' And then we want to react to that," he said. "We believe we're very, very good at collaborating with customers to provide what they need. If we understand what's going on for projects and customers, or if a dealer wants to put a program together, when we have the chance to really dig into a conversation, we know together we can arrive at great solutions." **BoF**

PACIFIC WEST

DEMOLITION REQUIRED

ANEHEIM, Calif. — Shopoff Realty Investments has gotten the OK from Anaheim's city council for the Lincoln At Loara townhomes project. The project will require the demolition of an industrial building on the property to build the 115-unit gated townhome community. The entitled community also will include open space amenities such as a community recreation area and pool, pocket parks, lounge areas and a dog park. [The Orange County Register](#)

OMNI GROUP PLANS COMPLEX

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — In one of the larger construction project filings in Los Angeles since the coronavirus took hold, Onni Group is seeking to build a 215,000-square-foot office tower in Hollywood. An entity controlled by Onni president Rossano De Cotiis filed with the city to build the 14-story tower at 6381 Hollywood Boulevard, records show. The plan would involve demolishing a set of low-rise commercial buildings. The Vancouver-based firm that has become one of downtown L.A.'s biggest residential developers bought the site in December for \$41 million. [The Real Deal](#)

MOUNTAIN WEST

FOUR-PHASE MIXED-USE IN WORKS

PHOENIX — A massive mixed-use development with Class A office, hotel, retail and apartment buildings near Peoria Sports Complex is one step closer after the Peoria City Council approved an agreement Tuesday with American Life and Steinhauer Properties. The project, called Stadium Point, will include

more than 1 million square feet of development on 17 acres owned by the city. The project will be in four phases. The first is design of the master plan and relocation of a well on the property. The second phase will feature construction of some Class A office, parking, retail and dining. The third phase is construction of the hotel, residential, retail, dining and entertainment. The fourth phase is construction of more Class A office, parking and residential. The total project must be built out no later than 10 years, according to city documents. [Phoenix Business Journal](#)

FINANCING SECURED



CHANDLER, Ariz. — An affiliate of the Douglas Allred Company secured \$73.5 million in financing for the speculative development of a 300,000-square-foot Class A office project. NorthMarq's Eric Flyckt and Casey Allred arranged a \$46,000,000 construction loan and \$27,500,000 mezzanine equity investment. The project comprises two, three-story buildings and an 800-stall parking structure. The concrete tilt-up buildings will offer 10- to 12-foot ceiling heights, high-quality finishes and a six per 1,000 parking ratio. Park Place is a 200-acre business park assembled and developed by the Douglas Allred Co. beginning in 2007 at the intersection of the 101 and 202 freeways.

The company has completed more than 1.5 million square feet in Park Place, comprising office, manufacturing and retail buildings. [Connect Phoenix](#)

MIDWEST

\$4.5 MIL BUILDING PLANED



GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Consulting firm Michigan Software Labs, is getting home. The company is partnering with an investment firm owned Cheri DeVos to build a three-story building in Ada Township. The total cost of the new build is \$4.5 million. The company has 35 employees, but the new building will provide the firm with enough space for 75 people. "Several companies are shifting their existing large events budget set aside for onsite events to custom software development to continue to grow their business and our team is here to help them in that process," said Mark Johnson, managing partner. [MLive](#)

NORTHEAST

SITE REDEVELOPMENT HOME TO WUXI

WORCESTER, Mass. — Chinese biomanufacturing company WuXi Biologics will develop a \$60 million office project in Worcester, approximately 45 miles west of Boston. The 107,000-square-foot building will anchor a 46-acre master-planned biomanufacturing campus called The Reactory, a 470,000-square-foot

redevelopment of a site formerly occupied by Worcester State Hospital. Worcester Business Development Corp. sold the 7-acre parcel of land to WuXi for \$1.5 million. [RE Business](#)

WORK BEGINS ON NEW MIXED-USE



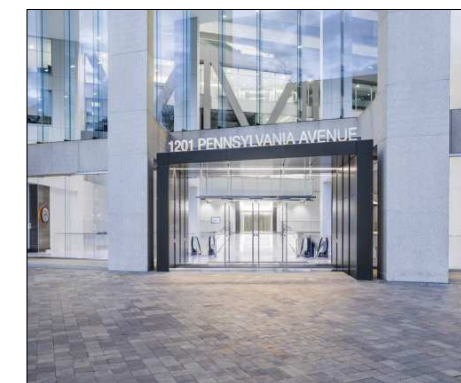
BURLINGTON, Vt. — Nedde Real Estate has begun work on a 96,000-square-foot office and multifamily redevelopment project in Burlington, approximately 40 miles northwest of Montpelier. Project costs are estimated to be roughly \$20 million. The locally based developer will convert the People's United Bank Building, located at 77 Pine St., into a property with 43,000 square feet of office and bank space and 50 apartments. People's United Bank currently uses the office space as its headquarters. The apartments will offer loft, one- and two-bedroom floor plans. The project is slated for completion in summer 2021. [RE Business](#)

GREAT VALUE PROPOSITION

BALTIMORE — OneDigital has signed a 16,245-square-foot lease at 909 Rose Avenue, a 212,000-square-foot office building in the Pike & Rose neighborhood of North Bethesda, Md., with landlord Federal Realty Investment Trust. 909 Rose offers a great value proposition for new trophy office buildings in the

region, offering a roughly 30 percent discount to downtown Bethesda trophy rents that are around \$70 per square foot. One of the aspects that drew OneDigital to the property is that it allows its employees and clients to avoid the dreaded commute into downtown Bethesda. The building has been thoughtfully designed with the latest wellness features, including a fresh air filtration system that supports hospital-grade clean air circulation and touch-less building entry and elevator access points. [Commercial Observer](#)

NED SIGNS FOR TWO FLOORS



WASHINGTON — The National Endowment for Democracy has signed an 82,000-square-foot lease at 1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, a 450,000-square-foot office building in Washington, D.C.'s Penn Quarter neighborhood. It has unique bones in its steel construction which provides better column spacing and ceiling heights. Other highlights of the building are three sides of quality window-lines, no alley views and a 13-story, sun-lit atrium. Amenities include a rooftop deck with views of the Capitol, a conference center and a new fitness facility. There are also HVAC upgrades. [Commercial Observer](#)

SOUTH

WORTH BREAKS GROUND

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Worth & Associates has broken ground on Walker Ranch Business Park, a two-building office and flex office project in San Antonio. The firm is developing the complex with Joeris General Contractors and Chesney Morales Architects. Completion for the 135,000-square-foot development is scheduled for 2021. Worth acquired the site from Coker United Methodist Church. Building I is slated to have 58,000 square feet, with office suites ranging from 1,500 to 3,500 square feet. Planned amenities include a break room, two conference rooms, outdoor break areas and bike trail. Building II is scheduled to have 78,000 square feet and 26-foot clear height. It will include the possibility to add up to 37,000 square feet of mezzanine space. [Commercial Property Executive](#)

FLOWER MOUND HAS MAJOR TENANT

DALLAS — A North Texas-based health care technology and services firm is upping its game with a new headquarters. IntelliCentrics is taking 31,330 square feet of office space in a new building in Flower Mound. The company is moving to the new Lakeside International Office Center, a project of Dallas' Staubach Capital and Irving-based developer Realty Capital. IntelliCentrics took the entire top floor of the new four-story office building. [The Dallas Morning-News](#)

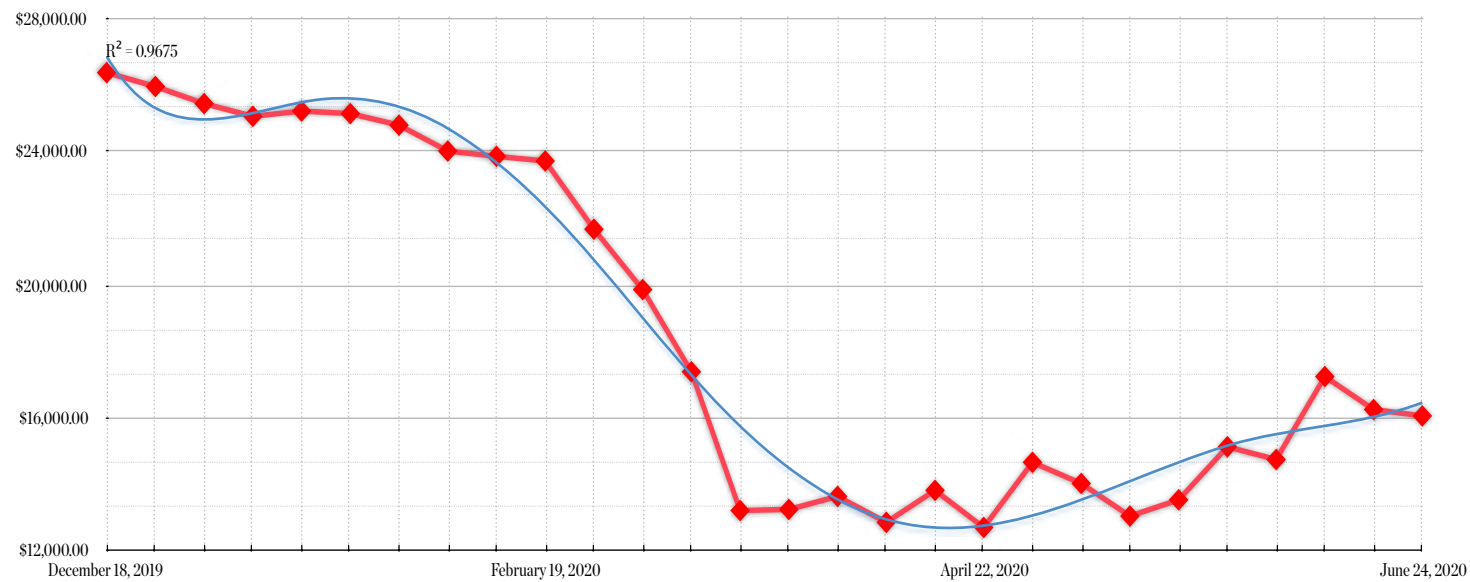
Compiled by Emily Clingman

BoF

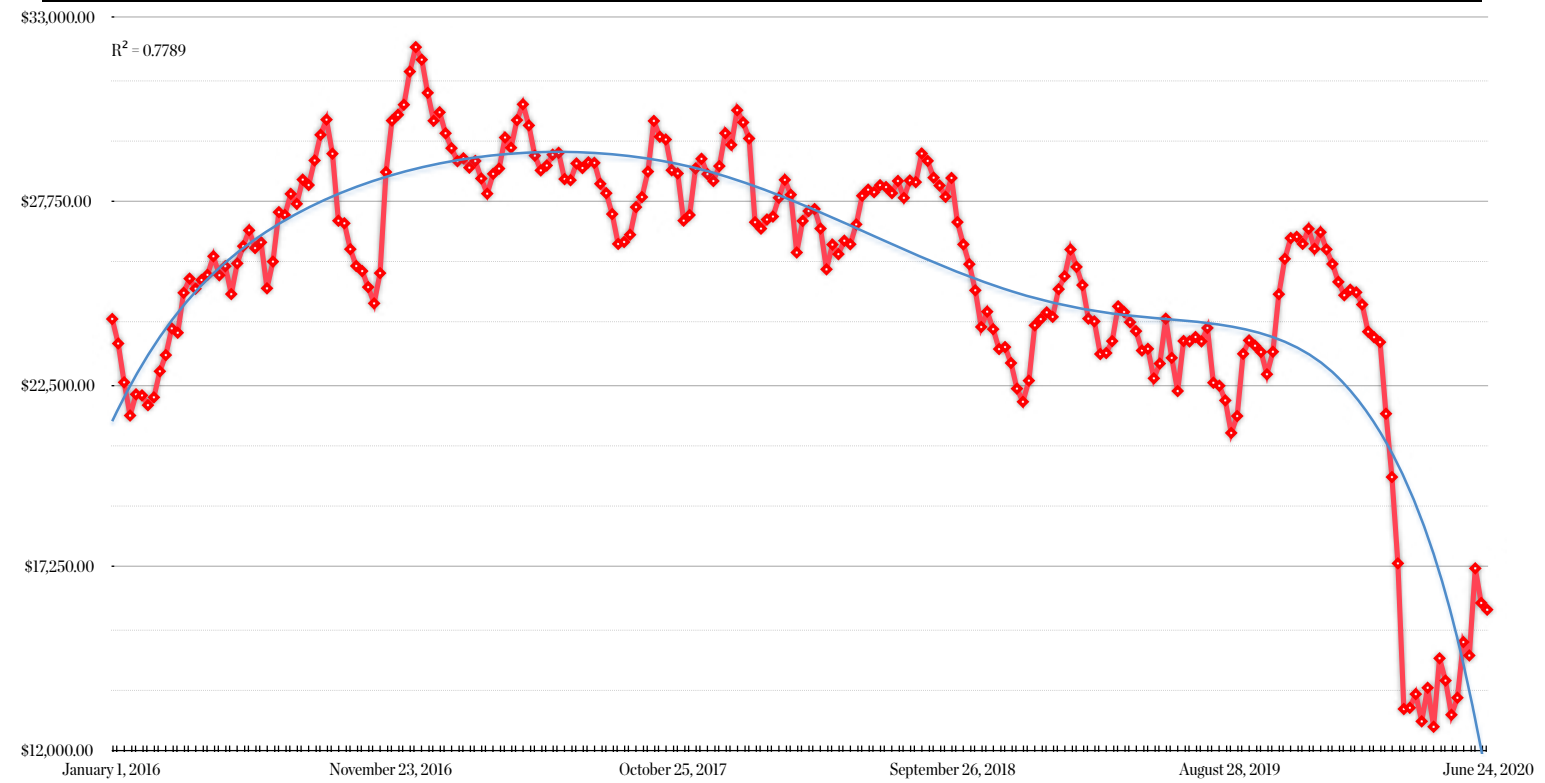
ALL TIME | January 1, 2016 BoF Industry Index Start: \$24,379.54
 YEAR TO DATE | June 24, 2020 Yearly Start: \$25,443.00 (2019 Ended Up +15.31%)

CURRENT VALUE **\$16,052.71** **TOTAL GAIN / LOSS** **-8,326.83 (-34.15%)** **2020 YTD GAIN / LOSS** **-9,390.29 (-36.91%)**

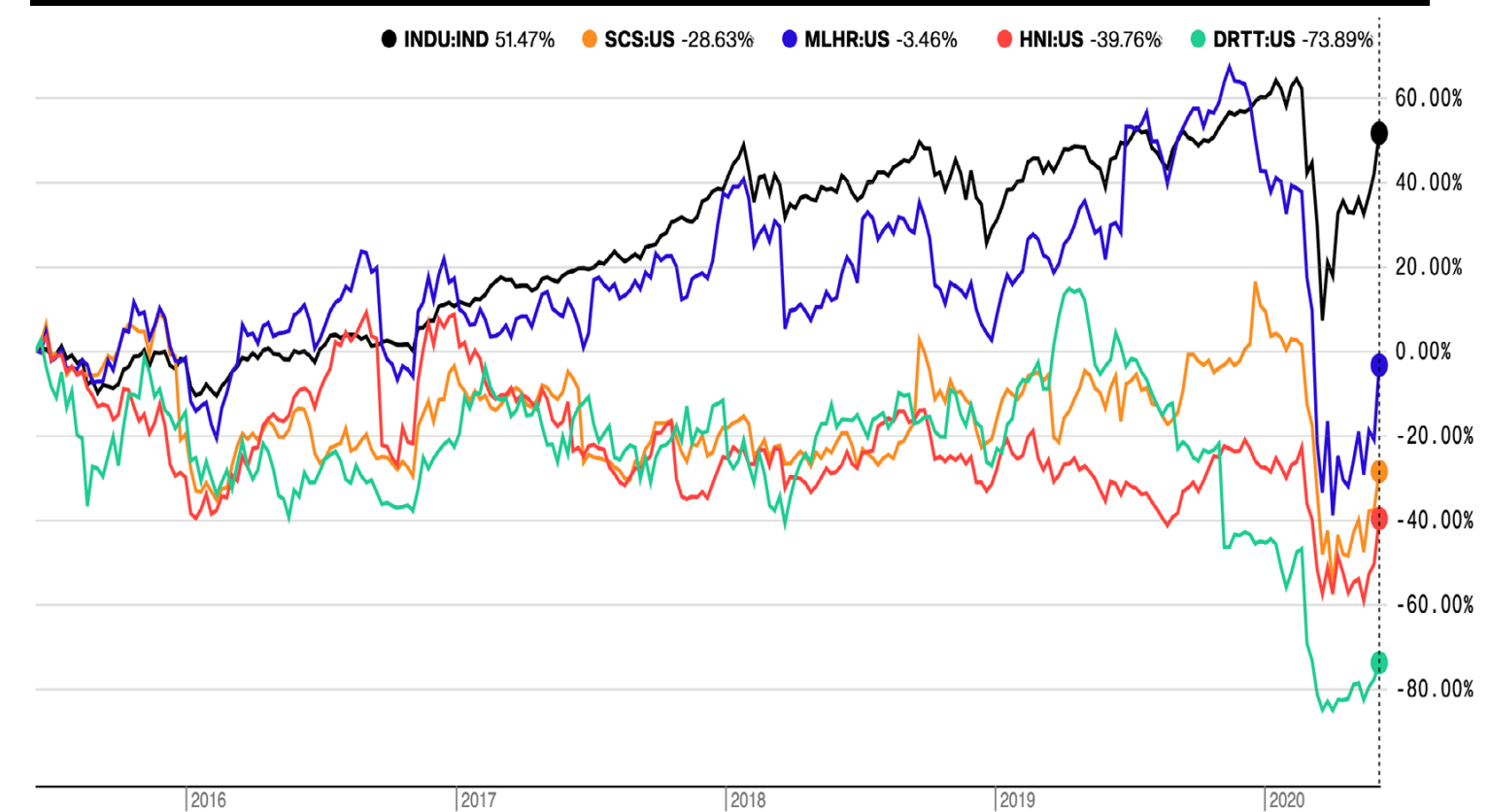
▲ SYMBOL	PRICE	CHANGE	TOTAL GAIN	1D GAIN	OPEN	PREV CLOSE	VOLUME	MARKET CAP	DAY RANGE	52WK RANGE
DRTT:US DIRTT Environm...	1.31 20:00	-2.96% -0.04	-81.12% -563.00	-2.96% -4.00	1.37	1.35	38,246	110.93M	1.30 -1.30	0.71 -6.04
FLXS:US Flexsteel Indust...	11.91 20:00	+0.51% +0.06	-73.04% -3,227.00	+0.51% +6.00	11.94	11.85	87,149	95.29M	11.55 -12.05	7.81 -21.31
HNI:US HNI Corp	29.90 20:04	+3.53% +1.02	-17.08% -616.00	+3.53% +102.00	29.43	28.88	331,017	1.28B	28.98 -29.97	16.61 -42.90
INQ:CN Inscape Corp	0.47 13:07	-4.08% -0.02	-84.33% -186.84	-4.08% -1.48	0.50	0.49	14,700	6.76M	0.47 -0.50	0.35 -1.40
KBAL:US Kimball Internati...	11.51 20:00	+1.32% +0.15	+17.81% +174.00	+1.32% +15.00	11.61	11.36	119,710	423.97M	11.25 -11.64	8.19 -22.40
KEQU:US Kewaunee Scie...	9.42 20:00	+1.67% +0.16	-47.05% -837.00	+1.67% +15.50	9.38	9.27	1,116	25.91M	9.38 -9.42	6.96 -20.28
KNL:US Knoll Inc	12.75 20:04	+3.24% +0.40	-32.18% -605.00	+3.24% +40.00	12.54	12.35	491,156	646.74M	12.25 -12.77	7.74 -28.30
LEG:US Leggett & Platt L...	35.52 20:04	+4.78% +1.62	-15.47% -650.00	+4.78% +162.00	34.56	33.90	1,226,760	4.70B	34.32 -35.75	22.03 -55.42
MLHR:US Herman Miller Inc	25.37 20:00	+4.86% +1.18	-11.60% -333.00	+4.86% +117.50	24.62	24.20	562,759	1.49B	24.36 -25.56	14.39 -49.87
SCS:US Steelcase Inc	12.13 20:04	+1.93% +0.23	-18.59% -277.00	+1.93% +23.00	12.13	11.90	901,900	1.39B	11.85 -12.27	7.02 -23.02
TILE:US Interface Inc	7.96 20:00	+3.38% +0.26	-58.41% -1,118.00	+3.38% +26.00	7.89	7.70	324,948	465.48M	7.83 -8.06	5.06 -17.68
VIRC:US Virco Mfg. Corp	2.40 20:00	-5.88% -0.15	-27.93% -93.00	-5.88% -15.00	2.44	2.55	1,476	37.71M	2.38 -2.44	1.82 -5.00



BoF Industry Index - Since Jan 1, 2016



Five Years - Major Industry Stocks



How Do Dealers Manage the Expense of Social Distancing?



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](https://twitter.com/stephenviscusi), Like [Stephen on Facebook](#); and follow him on [LinkedIn](#).

Dear Stephen,

I own a furniture dealership in a major city in the northeast — it's the city that never sleeps (except for the past few months). And we are one of the largest dealers for a major manufacturer. You have heard the story about the cobbler whose kids don't have shoes. We provide beautiful environments to our clients, but not for ourselves. We have lots of people crowded into a small place. Not exactly what you would call the appropriate amount of space for "social distancing" under today's circumstances and rules.

My own office has the most amount of real estate which I will soon partially relinquish. It's the size of a golf course, which is not unusual for many of the dealer owners I know. The sales and support people are squeezed into tight quarters, in part because we have had such growth in sales and in part because I wanted to keep costs

down. Rent is a fortune here, so we're careful about every square foot. It hasn't been a problem from a client and visitor point of view because we rely on the manufacturers we represent for the customer experience showrooms, not our sales office. Most of our customers never come here, and we take full advantage of the manufacturers' showrooms.

Historically, until the pandemic hit us all, the financial and space equation has worked out. We have commissioned salespeople and to give them a generous amount of the gross profit and keep commissions high, I need to keep expenses low. It has been to their benefit. Now my cost of doing business while social distancing is going to increase substantially so I am asking our VP of sales to come up with solutions. He sells but is also paid on P&L.

He suggests we may have to cut sales reps' commissions as a way to control overhead that is going up as we roll out all the "safe office" steps. They will not be happy. It gets more confusing because I have a mostly mature salesforce, and they are afraid to get back on the subway or make sales calls in person, so many of them have already told me they do not even want to come back into the office but want to work from home. The good news is there's zero office cost for that, but I think it's important people come into the office (OK, call me old-fashioned).

So what do you think of the logic of my explanation that our cost of business is going up, and there's no way we can move to less expensive space right now because we're stuck with a long lease. I just have to do more with the space I have. That may mean letting people go to make more room

or figuring out a work-from-home scenario for certain positions, which doesn't really appeal to my business sense.

I like to run a tight ship. We have already let some support people go because we just don't have the work for them, and we've let go of a few salespeople we should have released a long time ago, but that doesn't solve the space problem.

And it is not just the real estate cost. We are buying face masks, hand sanitizer, gloves and plexiglass screens and incurring extra cleaning service costs. It all adds up. We want everyone back to work, preferably in the office, safe and making money for themselves and their families. My great VP of sales jumped on all of this to help me, but how do we pull this off — the balance between profit and empathy?

Signed,

Dealer in A Pickle, Trying to Save a Nickel!

Dear Nickel,

Your own office is the size of a golf course? Well, at least you admit it. Funny, Mike Bloomberg worked in an office not much bigger than him, both as mayor and as CEO of Bloomberg LLC. Social distancing is a real new cost of doing business today, like it or not.

You are right that you may eventually require more real estate as business rebounds, and you need to hire people back, and that eventually

means more rent. When that time happens, adjust your costs accordingly and explain it to your people. That is not your problem today. The problem today is downsizing support people, keeping the ones who will work hard and socially distancing your office accordingly.

That's your problem, not your employees and the cost of doing business in the modern world today. I can't help but think if a company today decides to squish employees into the tiny spaces of the past (Remember how we used to say "You don't need a big workstation because you should be out on the road"?) sooner or later a whistle blower will report you. Yes, your salespeople may gossip to the manufacturers you represent, there may be complaints to your own HR department or worse, your name showing up on a site such as www.glassdoor.com.

"Nice place to work but we are more cramped-in than a Trump rally." Guess how many companies are already being reported when someone is not wearing a mask in a state like California, where it is required and employees start fighting with and shaming one another? Productivity goes down when employees are arguing or reporting each other's safety blunders. Fix the office, eat the cost and take a pay cut yourself if need be. Pay cuts are not just for people who work for you. Got that?

And as far as the outside salespeople who do not want to return to the office at all, this is going to happen more and more. People are understandably skittish about public transportation, yet for many that's the only way to get around the city. I like salespeople to base themselves in the office myself, but I have to be

open to change. Salespeople in the office keeps them focused and you and your sales manager involved. So the way you do that is to lead by example. Be sure the two of you are in the office first thing in the morning and stay engaged the whole day. When someone is "working from home" call them and let them know you are in the office — and they're not. Mostly have a strong CRM like www.salesforce.com and track it closely.

Some people will just not want to be in outside sales anymore. Toward the end of the summer, I predict a number of outside reps will just quit the industry. And age has nothing to do with it. Young and old, some people just do not want to take the risk to sell a piece of furniture, so let them find a new job where they think they will have less chance of being around so many people.

You need to make it clear by Labor Day 2020, or pick a date right for your company and geography, that you expect everyone back working at the office. If they cannot do it, find out why and evaluate the working conditions on a case-by-case basis. A person who has proven their value and importance to your company may merit flexible working arrangements. But if an employee decides to leave, they are easier than ever to replace. And as for you, the boss and owner, consider being a little more trusting and think about evaluating your employees on results, not where they sit all day. Do not lose a big producer just because they want to work from home. Let their sales make the decision, not your out-of-date trust issues.

Stephen

2020 Cancelled? One of the Toughest Years could be Your Best Year

It started out as a great year. The economy was rolling, the stock market was breaking records daily, unemployment was at its lowest. People, the economy, business — everything was thriving. We were riding the wave, spending money, having fun and living our best (or so we thought) life.

Then it all stopped — as if in slow motion, everything we knew, loved and enjoyed came to a screeching halt. We were in lockdown. What started out as a few weeks, turned into months — and for some, the quarantine isn't over yet. People lost their jobs, businesses have closed, the economy sank ... and more. All right before our eyes.

Then, things started to get cancelled. I could list them all, but that would take up way too much space, and you'd get bored reading it — not to mention, you've lived the cancellations. Weddings, graduations, once-in-a-lifetime trips, business expansions, conferences, sports, the Olympics, the list goes on.

The bottom line is, it feels like the world got cancelled and the collective attitude is we should cancel 2020 along with it. Good riddance, right? Way too much for us to deal with, especially all at one time. The hashtag #Cancel2020 started trending quickly for this very reason, and most people cannot wait to close the chapter on this year.

But what if 2020 could become the most important year of your life? What if amazing things were still possible? What if 2020 is the year you've been waiting on?



Have a suggestion for the column? Please email Sid at sid.meadows@embark-cct.com

Sid Meadows is the founder and principal of embark cct, a coaching, consulting and training firm focused in the contract interiors industry. You can follow Sid and embark on Facebook (@embarkcct) and LinkedIn (@sidmeadows) or visit the website at www.embark-cct.com

It's a great question and something for all of us to think about. What if, despite all the craziness and the unpredictability, this is your year? Your moment to step into your best self. Your year to make it, to rally and surge to new heights when the world reopens. What would you need to do?

The answer to this question can be found by asking yourself three key questions to give you the direction you need to move forward. Think of these questions like a venn diagram. As you answer the questions, the location where all three of your answers overlap is your sweet spot — it's your direction, the place you need to go (not what you need to do, that comes later).

People

Who are the people you love working with, love to serve and why? Answering this question will give you a lot of insight on who you like working with — and nothing makes life more fun and enjoyable than working with “your people.”

For me, the answer was really clear: business owners, sales leaders and salespeople. I've been in all of these positions in my career. I understand each position, the challenges, what it takes to be successful and other insights gained only through experience. And I've been in sales my entire career, so it makes sense I would navigate to work with this group of sales-oriented people. Besides, sales is just a fun industry to be in, and salespeople have one of the most challenging and rewarding jobs.

Where do you find your people? Who are they, what are they doing, and what value do you bring to them? Find them!

Passion

What are you the most passionate about and why? Another question that provides a lot of insight. If you're a designer, but your passion is helping children grow and develop — you're in the wrong career. Do you see what I mean? This can be the most challenging question to answer, since it requires you look deep inside and be honest with yourself about what you are passionate about. This can be a risky question to answer, because for some answering this question honestly might open a conversation about a career change.

For me, the answer was coaching. Coaching is my passion. I love coaching people and helping them move forward, move past blocks in their career and in their lives, and discover the success they want and need. When I finally sat back

in my 20-something-year career in Contract Interiors Sales and thought about why I was resisting the passion I had for coaching, I was pushing away my passion, gritting my teeth to stay where I was “safe” in my career — and that was all about my ego and money.

See, I had a limiting belief that I could not generate the revenue I wanted by focusing just on coaching in my business. Once I stepped into that passion and took the leap, any fears I had about not generating enough business were very quickly put to rest by new, repeat and long-term business deals. What are you falsely believing about yourself that's damping out your passion? Discover your passion and where that overlaps with the people you serve.

Revenue

What can you do to generate the revenue and income you need to live your best life? Now, let's be honest, answering this question can be daunting. We all want guarantees of the dollar signs in our bank account at the end of the year, and that's a scary thing to put on paper and truly desire for yourself. But what if you remove all the barriers of what you think “might” be possible and stop worrying about what failure might look like if you don't reach your goal? Discovering your answers to where you want to be monetarily can be motivating and empowering. You might even be surprised at what you will find you want in your business and for yourself.

For me, this was a hard discovery, choosing business pivots that led me to where I wanted to be in terms of revenue. What I came up with through answering this question was offering a new coaching service, called Business Advisory. This is a combination of coaching and consulting that's focused solely on business owners and helping them solve complicated problems in their business, move forward and grow. And it has worked — this service has taken off, the decision to move more toward my passion for coaching was a good decision, and I love every minute of it.

If you do the work, answer the hard questions and find the courage to move forward with what you want next — anything is possible. 2020 can be your best year ever — even though right now, it may not seem possible. It all starts with discovery, then listening, learning, implementing and growing — and it doesn't matter how old you are, where you live, what you do or any other demographic the world uses to categorize us. Do something today that makes 2020 one step closer to being your full-circle, best-year-yet comeback.

You've got this. Get started today. One step forward — because you and only you can make your dreams come true and make 2020 your best year yet!

Be sure to join the conversation and share what you discovered, the steps you are taking and the impact you are making by visiting my blog at www.sidmeadows.com.

GUANGZHOU, CHINA

CIFF

July 27-30, 2020



Founded in 1998, China International Furniture Fair (Guangzhou/Shanghai) (“CIFF”) has been successfully held for 44 sessions. Phase two of CIFF is dedicated to office furniture and seating, hotel furnishings, accessories, metal furniture, and furnishings for public spaces and reception areas, as well as materials and machinery for the furniture industry.

www.ciff.furniture

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

Export Furniture Exhibition

August 27-29, 2020



Export Furniture Exhibition (EFE) is internationally known to global buyers from all over the world as one of the top furniture fairs in Southeast Asia. One of the major highlights of EFE2020 is the inauguration of the “Office Furniture Hall”.

www.efc.my

COLOGNE, GERMANY

Orgatec 2020

October 27-31, 2020



ORGATEC is a trade show that is dedicated to innovations and concepts in the working environment and work culture. ORGATEC will gather professionals from various fields that will explore the newest trends and novelties in the industry.

www.orgatec.com

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

EDSPACES

November 11-13, 2020



EDspaces is where innovations are unveiled and collaborations form, bringing together education’s creative change agents who plan, design and manage innovative learning spaces. Leaders from school districts and colleges, architects, interior designers, distributors and exhibitors will engage and participate in the ongoing transformation of educational environments.

www.ed-spaces.com

LONDON (NEW DATE)

Clerkenwell Design Week

May 25-27, 2021

Clerkenwell is home to more creative businesses and architects per square mile than anywhere else on the planet, making it truly one of the most important design hubs in the world. To celebrate this rich and diverse community, **Clerkenwell Design Week** has created a showcase of leading UK and international brands and companies presented in a series of showroom events, exhibitions and special installations that take place across the area.

www.clerkenwelldesignweek.com

CHICAGO

NeoCon

June 14-16, 2021



NeoCon is the world’s leading platform for commercial design and the annual gathering place for over 50,000 design professionals and end-users. Marking its 52nd edition, NeoCon continues to serve as the commercial design industry’s launch pad for innovation - showcasing game-changing products and services from leading companies and emerging talent, and providing unparalleled access to the most cutting-edge solutions.

www.neocon.com

EVENT

DATE & LOCATION

CHINA INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE FAIR, CIFF (PHASE TWO) (NEW DATE)

July 27-30, 2020
Guangzhou, China

CIFF (Shanghai) sends tailor-made invitations to audiences from different industries and sectors through different channels. It hosts nearly 150,000 importers/exporters, dealers, retailers, brand chain stores, designers, architects, real estate developers and other professional audiences from 200 countries and regions annually.
<http://www.ciff-sh.com/en/index>

EXPORT FURNITURE EXHIBITION (NEW DATE)

August 27-29 2020
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Export Furniture Exhibition (EFE) is internationally known to global buyers from all over the world as one of the top furniture fairs in Southeast Asia and the fair continues to attract more and more trade visitors annually. The exhibition is the signature event of the Malaysian Furniture Council (MFC) and organized by EFE Expo Sdn Bhd., a wholly-owned company of MFC.
<http://www.efc.my>

DOMOTEX ASIA (NEW DATE)

August 31 - September 2, 2020
Shanghai, China

DOMOTEX asia/CHINAFLOOR is the leading flooring trade exhibition in Asian Pacific and the second largest flooring trade exhibition worldwide. As part of the DOMOTEX shows’ group, DOMOTEX asia/CHINAFLOOR is mainly targeting the emerging Asian markets. In 2019, the 21st edition of DOMOTEX asia/CHINAFLOOR covered over 175,000sqm of gross exhibition space filled by 1,560 exhibitors from 40 countries.
<http://www.domotexasiachinafloor.com>

ORGATEC 2020

October 27-31, 2020
Cologne, Germany

ORGATEC is a trade show that is dedicated to innovations and concepts in the working environment and work culture. ORGATEC will gather professionals from various fields that will explore the newest trends and novelties in the industry.
<http://www.orgatec.com>

INDEAL LEADERSHIP EVOLUTION

November 8-11, 2020
San Diego

INDEAL’s 2020 Conference provides program members with an opportunity to gain critical knowledge focused on supporting business growth and profitability. This year’s event offers perspective on developing teams that thrive, along with valuable insight into the state of the commercial furniture industry, economy and program at large. A varied agenda and numerous prospects for networking combine the benefit of multiple experiences into one, streamlined event.
Event website coming soon

EDSPACES

November 11-13, 2020
Charlotte, North Carolina

This is the event for connecting key stakeholders who are designing, building, equipping, and managing learning environments with the manufacturers, distributors, and service providers offering solutions. Explore how the convergence of technology, space, and pedagogy impact learning.
<http://www.edspaces.com>

CLERKENWELL DESIGN WEEK

May 25-27, 2021
London

Clerkenwell is home to more creative businesses and architects per square mile than anywhere else on the planet, making it truly one of the most important design hubs in the world. To celebrate this rich and diverse community, Clerkenwell Design Week has created a showcase of leading UK and international brands and companies presented in a series of showroom events, exhibitions and special installations that take place across the area.
<http://www.clerkenwelldesignweek.com>

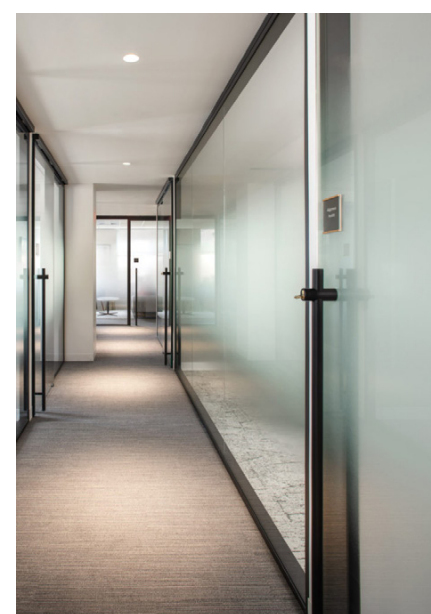
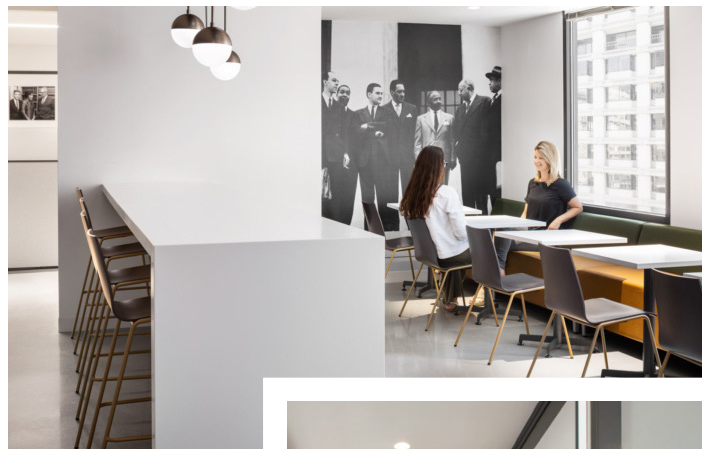
NEOCON

June 14-16, 2021
Chicago

NeoCon is the world’s leading platform for commercial design and the annual gathering place for over 50,000 design professionals and end-users. Marking its 52nd edition, NeoCon continues to serve as the commercial design industry’s launch pad for innovation - showcasing game-changing products and services from leading companies and emerging talent, and providing unparalleled access to the most cutting-edge solutions.
<http://www.neocon.com>

Cancelled / Postponed Notes:

BoF will provide continuing coverage of Coronavirus related cancellations and postponements, and will provide you with new dates when they are made available.



Photography: Trent Bell



NAACP Legal Defense Fund Offices – Washington DC

OTJ Architects were engaged by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to design their offices located in Washington DC. The NAACP LDF's new workplace celebrates a storied non-profit heritage while looking resolutely to the future of a premier legal practice. In order to address the unique challenges of a workplace that intersects two seemingly disparate industries, OTJ drew on both legal and non-profit sector intelligence acquired through over 30 years of design partnerships with organizations in both fields. OTJ approached this project with a keen awareness of the importance of donor, member, and staff optics in developing design recommendations for a project of this visibility.

FIRM: OTJ Architects
 CLIENT: NAACP Legal Defense Fund
 14,000 sqft
 SCOPE: Office
 LOCATION: Washington DC
 INDUSTRY: Non-Profit / Government

[READ MORE](#)

Workplaces



HOW WE USE THE OFFICE MAY CHANGE, THE WORKPLACE IS HERE TO STAY

THE A+D COMMUNITY IS LOOKING FOR AN IMMEDIATE AND LOGICAL RESPONSE TO HELP CLIENTS SOLVE FOR THE NEAR TERM RETURN TO THE OFFICE.

BY BRIAN WILSON, CO-FOUNDER, PAIR

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Workplaces | June 2020

Where I'm Working | Digital Tools Arrive to Get Frontline Employees Back to Work Safely | Survey Reveals Employee Attitudes on Remote Work and the Future of Office Space | The Contactless Office | How We Use the Office May Change, the Workplace is Here to Stay | The Workplace as a Social Organism | Furniture Industry Insights for the 'World of Work' Post COVID-19 | Embracing a New Reality. Workplace Strategy Insights for COVID and Beyond | Adjusting Office Spaces for A Post-Pandemic Workplace | Chicago's Fulton East Is Nation's First Office Building Designed To Deliver Health-Focused Operating Solutions For Post-COVID-19 Business Environment | IIDA's Collective D(esign) Series Focuses on Adaptability and Change in the Workplace | Product Matter

Read the June 2020 issue today at: <https://bellowpress.com>



VIRTUAL DESIGN

Creativity Goes Digital: Harnessing the Power of Virtual Design

AS WE CONTINUE TO BOTH BALANCE A WORKFORCE THAT REMAINS REMOTE AND PREPARE FOR A FUTURE THAT HOLDS STRONG TO SOME OF THE REMOTE WORK IDEOLOGIES EVEN AFTER IT'S SAFE TO RETURN TO THE OFFICE, HOW DO WE DESIGN FOR A DIGITAL WORKPLACE THAT FULFILLS OUR NEED FOR HUMAN INTERACTION?

by Amanda Schneider

Nearly five years ago, a group of international researchers embarked on a [study](#) to determine if social interaction impacted the creative process. Research participants were asked to come up with creative ideas in an outdoor Zen garden. One group was presented the assignment via a robot programmed to have creative expressions while another was explained the assignment through a PowerPoint presentation. The results revealed the group presented to by the robot developed more creative results than the group instructed by PowerPoint. Simply put, human creativity craves interaction — so much so that in this case, it even flourished when that interaction was simulated.

Flash-forward five years to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we're faced with a remote workforce required to break away from the social interaction that feeds the creative process. And while many people have embraced the remote work structure as a way to experience a better work-life balance, most members of the architecture, design and interiors industry are left craving the human interaction that helps spur their creative juices.

So, as we continue to both balance a workforce that remains remote and prepare for a future that holds strong to some of the remote work ideologies even after it's safe to return to the office, how do we design for a digital workplace that fulfills our need for human interaction?

Acknowledge social element of digital has pros and cons

Throughout the pandemic, many people turned to social media and videoconferencing to feed their need for human interaction. And while these platforms have their fair time and place, it's important to recognize the role they — specifically social media — play in the design process.

Recognizing the stronghold social media has on influencing perspectives, Tom Polucci, firmwide director of interiors at HOK, explained why we must follow social trends but also acknowledge the need for the traditional creative process. “Expressing our thoughts about the positive and negative ways design is being influenced by social media and other digital platforms enables us to demonstrate a strong point of view about design,” he said. “We want to understand the risks of chasing trends and gravitate toward the value of the rigorous design approach we can only achieve by working together in person.”



Recognize digital has a place in creative process

While on one hand, creativity builds off of human interaction, technology provides much-needed time savings. As we slowly, and perhaps partially, transition back to the physical office, Paul Nemschoff, vice president of global strategy and marketing at Haworth, explained how relying on technology for process-oriented tasks helps free up in-person interactions for creative thinking.

“A lot of design work is conducted by two groups — traditional A&D and dealer designers that often must coexist within a project,” he said. “I believe that the digital side of our interactions allows work to happen more expediently, enabling a rapidly iterative design exploration. By transitioning this process to the digital realm and creating new tools that facilitate more efficient communication between designers and product partners, we’re allowing designers more time to focus on what they do best — the creative process.”

Prepare for societal shifts driven by digital world

Nemschoff believes the way we are interacting with brands as a society has already shifted to the digital in many ways. But that doesn’t mean we don’t still need a sprinkle of physical interaction. As he put it, “With mobile technology today, many people interact almost exclusively with a brand digitally. Think about all the products you have bought online before you even used, touched or experienced them in the store. The way people interact with companies will change, but the bulk of what we are buying is still physical, and human beings still crave direct human interaction and experiences.”

He elaborated by sharing what he calls his favorite Haworth experience to date: “I was in Milan visiting our Poltrona Frau leadership a few years back, and to this day, I still remember how I was in awe of the rich leather smell that hit me as I entered the building. You simply cannot replicate that experience digitally, and to designers and manufacturers, that sensation is like the lifeline to our creative inspiration.”

To Polucci, this balance is achieved by asking the right questions of the design process to ensure that digital is not sacrificed for personal interaction and vice versa. “We must question our point of view about designing in the digital age to make sure our designers are asking themselves the right questions at the start of each project,” he elaborated. “Are we, as designers, creating ideas and concepts for a space through a rigorous process that includes an analysis of the site and the needs of the client’s users and customers? Are we challenging each other about why we are making specific aesthetic choices and asking how they fit into the project concept? Are we challenging clients who suggest specific ideas about the aesthetics and products to make sure they support the concept? When you start digitally, these questions — which may have been addressed organically when the meeting is conducted in person — become crucial.”

As we look to a formula to perfectly balance the digital and physical needs of our transitional workforce, perhaps we are best served by acknowledging there is no exact science and that respect for basic human interaction, whether that be technology enabled or in person, remains crucial.

Polucci put it best: “Flexibility will be our best friend as we move forward. We have all figured out how to work from home, stay connected and collaborate. I hope in the near future we have the opportunity to work anywhere yet still connect physically together at the workplace. I also hope we do a better job taking care of each other. We can focus more on the well-being of friends, family, colleagues and the human condition. **BoF**

Amanda Schneider is President of ThinkLab, the research division of SANDOW. At ThinkLab, we combine SANDOW Media’s incredible reach to the architecture and design community through brands like Interior Design Media, Metropolis, and Material Bank with proven market research techniques to uncover relevant trends and opportunities that connect back to brand and business goals in a thought-provoking, creative, and actionable way. Join in to know what’s next at thinklab.design/join-in.



PRODUCT DESIGN

Maars Understands Now is the Time for Space Division, More Than Ever

NO ONE WANTS TO WASTE MONEY ON AN UNSIGHTLY PLEXIGLASS PANE THAT A CUSTOMER WILL THROW UP AND THEN THROW AWAY IN A COUPLE OF MONTHS.

by Rob Kirkbride

When Maars Living Walls designed the M923 product — a hackable mobile space divider — COVID didn't exist. The product was designed to help ease some of the distractions and difficulties with the open office. But as the world tries to safely return to work, the new product is also proving to be invaluable for workers trying to create a little space between each other.

As the office changes quickly, so too can the space with M923. It is a simple-to-use product designed for workers to create their own privacy in open-office structures and personalize their own workplaces. M923 is a modular panel system, though not in the sense of traditional desk panels.

Instead, M923 creates a flexible and versatile system. The M923 concept combines modern wall decoration, functional office furniture and movable walls. The result is a complete system that provides privacy in what Maars calls “an aesthetic and ergonomically responsible manner.”

Panels are available in different colors and materials (including moss, cork, absorption panels, whiteboards and textiles). Users easily can change the panels and design the wall themselves. Because the panels are easy to change, it's possible to adjust the appearance of a room very quickly and inexpensively. And because the panels are 99% reusable, the system is sustainable and environmentally friendly. With its many possibilities, M923 not only can be used in an office environment but also at events or in restaurants and shops.

As we return to the office with new perspectives about what is safe and what is unsafe, M923 can play an important role. The health and safety of workers is now critically important. Maars believes that space division is at the heart of future design. Spaces in addition to the office — schools, lobbies, restaurants, retail, airports and more — are mandating methods that respect the need for some separation and a sense of safety.

“Of course, we never designed it with a pandemic in mind, and yet here we are,” said Robert Craven, president of Maars North America. “The concept is really about providing boundaries within the open office environment. That boundary could be at the end of a workstation. So it could be a physical boundary, a visual boundary to create a sense of comfort, or we can take the product because it's planned in modules and create individual workstations that people can sit within to feel safe or have more comfort within that environment so that they're not as exposed as they typically would have been in a more open plan.”





No one wants to waste money on an unsightly plexiglass pane that a customer will throw up and then throw away in a couple of months. M923 is a product that can be used to create a barrier in the post pandemic office, but can also be used for other purposes when the crisis passes.

As a product, it is a bit of a departure for Maars Living Walls, the Dutch company best known for its high-end modular wall systems. But the company believes it is the right product for the right time for offices where concentration can be difficult, but workers don't want to be bothered to call facility managers when they want to change the look and feel of a space.

Because it's fairly easy to install, maneuver and recreate different shapes and sizes, it gives designers a lot of flexibility. Consisting of interlocking profiles with snap-in-place panels, and fully relocatable, M923 truly is a "living wall." It defines open areas with the right type of functionality — and the right balance of porosity and privacy — for the task and tenant at hand. And it's always attractive, no matter the configuration.

In our new reality, physical boundaries are key. M923 lets you quickly create boundaries between walkways and working team members. You also can divide open areas into smaller zones and even into individual workspaces. The wall can be used to separate spaces beyond the open office — including between tables at restaurants, in lobbies and hotel registration desks, at air-

ports, in stores and schools and more. M923 offers easy customization and personalization as well as a sense of privacy and security, both now and moving forward.

The advent of the open office — coupled with consumers' demands for customization, immediacy, privacy and flexibility — informed Maars' development of M923. Working in collaboration with renowned global design and architecture firm Gensler, Maars created M923 to be a modular panel system unlike any other. The patent-pending product officially launched in the fall of 2019.

"What we know is that people want to go back to work," Craven said. "It's just a matter of how that space is going to be when they get back to it, how they are going to feel safe in that environment and how they are going to interact in that environment. The norm of having a bunch of people in tiny rooms to collaborate will change. The question is: How are we going to utilize that space more efficiently? And so you start to think about it, not only from the demountable walls that are highly acoustic solutions, but offer a comfort to a more flexible type of product. It's just getting people back into that environment and creating that safety and that element of feeling like they want to come back. But the good news is, as we know from all the studies so far, is that over 70% of the people really can't wait to get back to work. It's just ... what is the space going to look like?"

Acoustic privacy has become paramount in the open-office environment. We've seen adjustments with the growing number of standalone privacy pods and "cubby" seating, which are great products but, given that they're typically used by multiple people, they likely will require continual cleaning. A variety of M923 panels let you easily improve acoustic privacy without investing in difficult-to-maintain products or entirely modifying your space.

Users can easily change the M923 panels and design the wall themselves. Because the panels are easy to change, it's possible to adjust the appearance of a space very quickly and inexpensively. The myriad options make the M923 ideal for changing up spaces from offices to restaurants to retail with style and ambiance.

Creating a product that is so different from anything else on the market has its challenges. Giving architects and designers such flexibility can be paralyzing to their creative process. Where does one begin to design using M923? Maars made it easy by creating an augmented reality app for users and architects. They can discover the possibilities of M923 with the app available on the App Store and Google Play. The AR app allows the customized wall with all available panels to be placed virtually in a room. The self-assembled wall with accessories then can easily be forwarded to order. **BoF**



DESIGN

Place Matters — Designers Weigh in on Physical Barriers in Design and Starting with Empathy

WHEN FAMILIES SUDDENLY FOUND THEMSELVES NEEDING TO KEEP BUSY WHILE QUARANTINED AT HOME, MANY TURNED TO DIGITAL ACCESS TO MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS ONLINE.

By Emily Clingman

Place matters. Humans crave and demand a sense of place. Place is personal, and we want to have agency over our own place. As COVID-19 disrupted everyone's sense of place around the globe, people and communities began exploring different perspectives regarding space.

In a recent NeoConnect panel discussion — “Experience: Art, Culture, Deign” — Cheryl Durst, International Interior Design Association executive vice president and CEO; Madeleine Grynsztejn, Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art Pritzker director; and Amanda Williams, artist and architect at AW Studio in Chicago, discussed place, specifically in reference to art's role in facilitating a sense of place.

When families suddenly found themselves needing to keep busy while quarantined at home, many turned to digital access to museums and cultural institutions online. Recent surveys have found people who participated in an online art or cultural experience said they were 30% more likely to return to an actual cultural institution in the post-COVID future.

This brings up the idea of access and a concept called “threshold fear.” Digital streaming of art events fetched a whole new community of viewers that otherwise can't, or just haven't, accessed art before. One significant reason many people don't visit museums or cultural events is the hurdles involved to take part — from mobility issues getting to the event, economic barriers to affording the event, to feeling unnerved by guards at the door or feeling intimidated by not understanding the cultural code of a museum, for example.

“If we make sure these issues are mitigated, we offer an even warmer welcome on behalf of the museum and remove the threshold fear,” Grynsztejn said. “This is something that I think is important for museums going forward.”

If certain people don't feel they have access to cultural events like museums, ballets, festivals or civic events, they won't feel a sense of place, they will feel out of place, or they won't experience the place at all.

“Access means community. And community means IDEA: inclusion, diversity, equity, access — and now, especially in the last few weeks, but always, justice,” Grynsztejn said. In a museum setting, such as the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art, she said diversity and inclusion must exist not only in its galleries, but through programming, museum operations, its board, its membership and staff.

“The online museum is here to stay,” Grynsztein said. “But the physical space needs to be accessible to multiple audiences. Museums can help build a society that has an increased sense of responsibility that is equitable, inclusive and just.”

Museums are not the only institutions to offer their content essentially *carte blanche*. Universities are offering free, non-credit classes, dance companies are streaming live performances, design organizations are offering free courses and access to industry resources and the list goes on. What does this mean for people working in the architecture and design space?

Williams addressed race and segregation issues through her art and design work in Chicago. In the same way the pandemic highlighted disparities most prevalent with health and preexisting conditions among the black community in Chicago, Williams believes it also opened a lens on how far the schism is becoming between the haves and have-nots.

“So we’re in this moment, especially with black people and historically the way the United States has been structured, if you aren’t even a human to begin with, and then you’re emancipated, but every single piece of land has been carved out and owned by somebody else, how can you function?” Williams said. “People are trying to find their social place where their lives matter ... carving out space for themselves. For us designers, it’s not just reimagining six feet apart or ADA and zoning rules. Those are all necessities. But designing, for 30 seconds or a minute — at the bus stop or in an elevator — how are we going to design these spaces that are public and civic, but they aren’t?”

Because of COVID-19, public places like parks were closed — understandably, noted Williams — but then the public spaces became surveilled and policed.

“Cities are primed for this kind of reaction because they have been designed in such a segregated, gridded, limited way,” she said. “How are we as designers going to think on that smaller level of giving place to people? How about empathy for the incarcerated population or our elders who are isolated, or convalescents — what does it mean to design for that? It’s not about wallpaper patterns or the floor or color scheme (anymore). What does it really mean to give four people in one room their own place? That’s a really powerful question.”

Williams admitted work like this is hard.

“Just take a deep breath,” she said. “We have to pace ourselves, especially in the intensity of the moment. It might feel like we are walking into the dark, but do not be afraid to walk into the unknown. As designers and artists, we are the ones who have to do it.”

Creativity must be trained

In another NeoConnect virtual discussion — “Using Creativity to Spark Creativity” — designers Giona Maiarelli, Maiarelli Studio; Elizabeth Von Lehe, ASID; Gareth Brennan, Eventscape; and Mike Johnson of Perkins+Will talked about how the COVID quarantine sparked new creativity, but also dwindling morale from the extended isolation.

The way designers and clients are working is very different and disruptive to

the normal way. In the best of circumstances, the dance between the two requires listening and attention to details. Now, more patience and creativity is necessary to continue the work.

“The heart of the way we think of design is through a lens of empathy,” Von Lehe said. “You don’t design a space that is effective without putting yourself in the shoes of the end user — not just the client sitting across from you at the conference table, but their clients, the person that’s going to be in that hospital, in that day care or that school. How does that relate to our current situation? It must be a revolving approach to empathy and our use of creative practice. Creative skills are muscles we must exercise. When I was in school, I swam, but the coach also made us run, which strengthened us in our core sport. The same is true in our practices as creatives and creators.”

As things start to reopen, Von Lehe points out designers will be back to outward-facing empathy. Holed up watching Netflix and the news for two months, “we want to get out and help others,” she said. “We all have these unique skills. We have to ask ourselves, how can we give them away, how can we lend them out during this current situation, that some are really, really hurting from?”

Johnson has been using this time in isolation to explore his artistic side beyond his designing at Perkins+Will, to express himself in ways he hasn’t been able to do before. He’s also been absorbing more art in the wake of emerging political and social unrest.

“Art and creativity now, is a way we can speak what we can’t put into words,” he said.

Through this process, Johnson circled back to thoughts on his professional work and wondered, “How do you create a space where everyone feels welcome?”

Listening a lot, he concluded, and “putting yourself in their shoes. Design needs to create a powerful story that people can get behind and support, where they have pride in the space and the company they work for.”

Johnson also realized working in isolation is hard, and designers need to be empathetic with themselves, too.

“(Quarantine) was difficult at the beginning,” he said. “I hated it. We know as designers that what we do is not an individual task. It’s a group effort. And even though we’re doing it, we’re using a different form of communication, I do miss the accidental interactions with people, whether it’s personal or creative.”

Coming together creates a synergy that lacks without real human connection, which Johnson believes is required for people to be creative.

Brennan agrees.

“Often it’s not what’s said in the boardroom, it’s those casual meetings at the coffee machine, or in the lunchroom, the different departments interacting — that’s when the magic really happens,” he said. “The reason many of us got into this kind of work is because it’s enjoyable. It’s difficult to do when you’re sitting alone.” **BoF**

ACOUSTICS

Peaceful Home Working with Woven Image

Woven Image, the International interior finishes company, supplies acoustic solutions to the contract market. In response to the overwhelming increase of home working it has introduced several acoustic home office solutions to assist in creating a productive and positive home working environment. Made from Woven Images innovative EchoPanel acoustic panel, the products have great sound absorption features, and easily fold away to restore your workspace back to a home when not in use.



The perfect study corner can be created with Cocoon, a free-standing collapsible screen with hinged connectors enabling it to flexibly curve around your home working space. If you are working from home in a shared space, the screen gives you just that little bit more privacy that you need both visually and acoustically and creates a professional backdrop perfect for those non-stop video conference calls. Cocoon can also be used as a pinboard, allowing you to personalize the screen with your favorite picture or notes you might need to be able to access easily. It comes in six colors and two heights.

Desktop can be arranged in many ways to adapt to your home and workspace needs. It is a



screen solution that can be folded around your PC or used as a tabletop screen partition to help you divide up a shared workspace, allowing you to get the space you need to concentrate better while working from home. Features include enhanced visual privacy, reduced screen glare and improved audio clarity when taking calls. Desktop is lightweight and portable, meaning you can easily set yourself up in another room when you need that slight change of scenery to inspire productivity. Desktop is also pinnable, so you can personalize your space with special

pictures and important notes. Available in six modern colors, it's great for creating a professional feel while at home.

SEATING

B.Goode Releases Antimicrobial Chair



The B.Goode naturally antimicrobial chair from Woodstock Marketing, for hotel rooms, conference rooms or collaborative space, is designed with well-being in mind. The modern antimicrobial vinyl, in either charcoal or silver, is accented by the curving, uncoated copper arms. The arms will patina over time, giving the chair a distinguished personality.

The B.Goode antimicrobial chair's features include arms coated in pure antimicrobial copper, upholstery of hospital-grade, antibacterial vinyl and a one-handle, knee-tilt mechanism.

SEATING

Mojo - From Source International

➔ The Source International team has introduced Mojo — a small scale multipurpose chair with a modern look that fits the office, home or hospitality areas.



At a time of uncertainty, Mojo embodies “multipurpose.” The simplicity of its form brings a precise aesthetic to any working, meeting or dining area. It can ground your focus on the task at hand or embrace you comfortably at the dining table thanks to its small scale and being armless and lightweight.

“The chair is a miniature architecture — a tool to create sophisticated and functional interiors ... beautiful to look at and comfortable to sit in,” said Samuli Naamanka, the chair's designer. “Its slightly rounded seat, angular shapes and cushioned shell make Mojo aesthetically an excellent item for the home office.”

Naamanka is an award-winning interior architect and product designer from Finland — a country heralded for beautifully designed plywood products from Alvar Aalto and his contemporaries. “As a Finnish designer, it is natural to use plywood and beautifully bent legs made as light as possible,” Naamanka said. “To me, designing sustainable products is a matter of using long-lasting materials that are recyclable like iron or steel or compostable like wood. However, the most important thing is to design products that have a long life cycle — which means well-designed products.”

The chair can be specified with wood or metal legs.

HEALTHCARE SEATING

Kimball Creates the Unexpected with Whittaker and Whittaker Health Modular Seating

➔ Kimball has launched Whittaker and Whittaker Health, a modular lounge collection designed by Pam Light and John Duffy of pL-D, that combines flexibility and durability for work and health environments.

Whittaker's graceful silhouette is reflected in the very lean, long lines of this family of lounge chairs and sofas. The collection combines elegance with comfort, and its vast offering of sofa and bench components come together to form a variety of configurations. A choice of different cushion types, materials and finishes augment the adaptability — giving Whittaker the ability to move from one type of space to a totally different type of space.

The family's individual components can be used as independent elements or freely combined to adapt to health care interior environments. The upholstered body and cushions feature clean-out as standard for ease of cleanability, a requirement in health applications today.



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GROUPS / DEALERS

INDEAL Cares

➔ INDEAL recently launched INDEAL Cares — a charity on a mission to support healthy workplace communities within the commercial furniture industry in North America and in underserved communities around the world.

INDEAL recognizes a commitment to workplace wellness and employee well-being is more important now than ever before, and our industry can play an important role in making significant improvements within our four pillars: active living, mental health, disease prevention and spine health. INDEAL Cares will serve employees within the commercial furniture industry at large — and we want to hear from you.

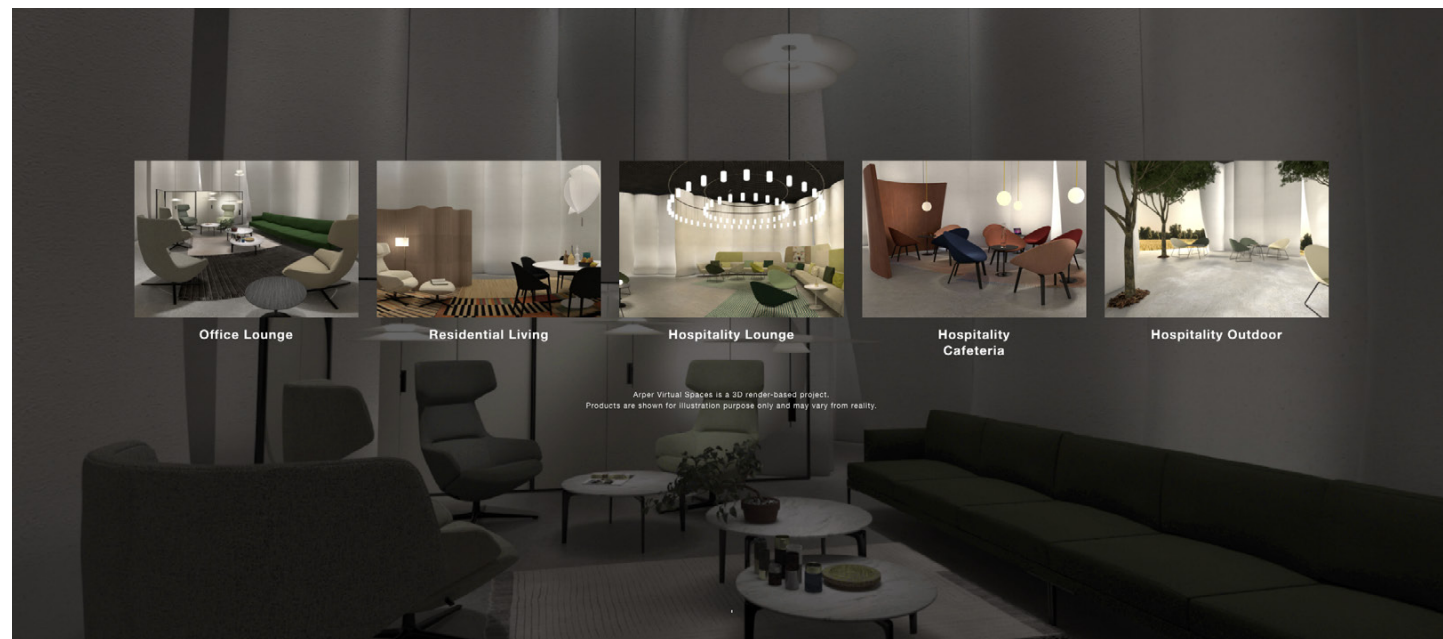
Please complete the INDEAL Cares Employee Survey on health and well-being, available until June 30. Your input will provide critical data that will help guide our initiative. For every completed survey, INDEAL will donate \$1. We look forward to working together to improve lives and promote wellness at work.

Learn more about INDEAL Cares at <https://www.indealcares.com/get-involved>.

MANUFACTURER

Arper Presents Virtual Spaces, a Digital Journey to Discover the Lounge World

➔ Arper's new Virtual Spaces is a digital experience which invites people to explore five lounge spaces furnished with the new 2020 collections: Aston Club (designed by Jean Marie Massaud) and Adell (designed by Lievore + Altherr Désile Park) and a selection of Arper's chairs, sofas and tables.



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Suzanne Tron

The two lounge chairs, presented in May, complement the brand's collections, offering inspiration for spaces designed for meeting, creating or taking a break.

The red thread that unites the different locations represented in Virtual Spaces is the use of shapes, lines and colors that combine to create environments characterized by the unmistakable Arper's personality.

The five solutions all can be explored in 3D and are customizable, allowing visitors to select different combinations of finishes, fabrics and colors. The customization feature allows users to view different atmospheres and experiment with various furniture solutions.

The main player in Office Lounge and Residential Living is Aston Club, with its classic and timeless line, presented in its corporate and residential versions. Adell, with its welcoming and comfortable personality, furnishes the hospitality lounge, cafeteria and outdoor situations with an informal yet sophisticated approach.

Giovanni Peracin, group brand and marketing director, said, "We believe this virtual experience perfectly showcases the different contexts and situations where the products and brand values are best expressed.

"The ability to select different moods, fabrics and colors will certainly provide our partners with useful ideas for their new projects.

"We know that the opportunity to touch products and to physically immerse yourself in the Arper world will always be considered the most pleasant option, however, the Arper Virtual

Spaces tool still manages to give you a great taste of what the brand can offer.”

The innovative project was created by Arper, with the technical collaboration of Absolute Beyond, architectural design by Studio MAIO and creative direction by Jeannette Altherr. The styling is by Leandro Favalaro and lighting by Cube.

ASSOCIATIONS

ASID Virtual Internship Program Puts Students at the Center

As COVID-19 disrupted work across all industries, students were thrown into a new world of remote learning and cancelled summer opportunities. The American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) has stepped in to answer the call and help them continue their critical hands-on learning with its new Virtual Internship.



The initiative centers around on-demand course content curated especially for undergraduate and graduate students, giving them access to the rich professional development experience typically achieved through an in-person internship. The program culminates in live learning and interactive shadowing opportunities, matching students with industry leaders and practitioners to learn from the best and gain invaluable exposure to the full scope of design firm work.

By presenting students with new ways of virtually exploring the design world, ASID is empowering the next generation of design leaders to continue their lifelong learning and engage with their future colleagues.

“It is vital that we continue to support students’ educational journeys,” explained Kari Stringfellow, ASID vice president, member experience. “ASID and our talented members have an obligation to share our wealth of knowledge with these aspiring designers. We hope that by taking them beyond traditional classroom learning with chances to explore professional skills like working in a team and pitching a project to clients, they will be fully prepared and excited for the next step in their careers.”

The Virtual Internship enables students to create their own, custom experience pulling from five key areas of study reflective of the skills acquired during a traditional design internship: products, materials and vendor relationships; current issues and opportunities; teams and roles; project phases and process; and portfolio design and development. Participants steer their own course through these categories. They can focus solely on one or dabble across all five.

Students experience much of the same content as practitioners with on-demand programming from the ASID Academy. To close out the summer, the independent learning will be complemented by live, interactive sessions with leading practitioners, such as “ask the expert” panels and portfolio reviews. These live programs invite students into the world of practicing designers, gaining understanding of the ins and outs of working at a firm, from team meetings to project presentations and more. New content will be added in the coming weeks to create an even more dynamic experience for the participating students.

The ASID Virtual Internship is available exclusively to ASID student members. Thanks to its digital roots, students from across the country who may not typically have easy access to internship opportunities will be able to network and learn from their future peers.

TRAINING

Fall Enrollment Is Open for Solomon Coyle Project Management Training

Solomon Coyle is accepting reservations for project management training classes scheduled to begin mid-September. The program is available to dealers having a primary alignment with Allsteel, Haworth, Herman Miller, Kimball, Knoll, Steelcase or Teknion LLC. Registration can be done online at the Solomon Coyle website.



“Disruption is producing opportunity that stands to multiply as the concept of ‘workplace’ continues to change,” said David Solomon, the firm’s managing principal. “Dealers can leverage project management to capitalize on the opportunities. Our approach to PM training develops and hones that leverage.”

Scott Jamison, the primary instructor and Solomon Coyle’s lead consultant for dealer operations, believes that we’re going to have to evolve toward a new understanding of what the “typical furniture project” requires. During the fall term, he’ll provide current context for the course material by covering many of the project management considerations arising from workplace change.

“Whether it’s workplace strategy and design or product design or materials and finishes, we’re seeing a lot of innovation,” Jamison said. “And dealers are complementing those efforts with their own innovations in terms of service types and project execution. The implications for sequencing, labor estimating, project logistics, site safety and more are significant, and it’s going to take time and thought to get it all right. Meanwhile, dealer PMs are still accountable for project efficiency, profitability and customer satisfaction. The PM job is more important than ever to dealer success.”

Solomon Coyle’s PM training program simultaneously addresses dealer goals for margin protection, customer satisfaction and retention and talent management. The course is delivered through 10 interactive webinars, individualized instructor attention, a wealth of field-proven work tools and supporting materials and a final exam assessing student comprehension.

Program details are available in the project management training section at the Solomon Coyle website. Questions can be addressed to support@solomoncoyle.com.

REPRESENTING

GMI Announces Rep of the Year: Allor Group from Michigan

GMI Companies, the parent company of Ghent, Waddell and VividBoard, has announced that Allor Group has received the Rep of the Year award.

“We’re honored to be recognized as GMI’s rep of the year,” said Rick Allor, principal of Allor

Group. “We knew our market needed a solution for communication tools. With highly styled and highly designed whiteboards and glassboards at competitive price points, combined with quick ship delivery and excellent customer service, our customers realized the benefit of these tools immediately. GMi made our jobs easy.”

The Allor team has four reps covering Michigan with their focus on interior furnishing for corporate, higher education, health care and hospitality. They pride themselves on the relationships they’ve built for the last 20 years with designers and dealers across the state. Ghent’s whiteboards, glassboards and mobiles, VividBoard’s patient room boards and Waddell’s space division furniture complement the rest of their lines.

“We couldn’t be more excited in the growth out of a territory so close to home,” said Ashley Blevins, national sales manager. “With our headquarters in Ohio it may be hard for us to cheer on the state up North, unless you have a team like the Allor Group in your corner. Their team exemplifies what we have worked hard to find in our partners at GMi: drive, trust, honesty and persistence. This is exactly why they were able to earn this award after only two years as our partners.”

CAREERS

Helen Herrick Joins MBH Architects as Studio Director

➔ Helen Herrick has joined MBH Architects’ New York office as studio director. Herrick will lead the New York team with a focus on cultivating a culture of creativity, engagement and connection to the entire firm.



Herrick

“We’re thrilled to have such a highly respected and accomplished industry professional lead our New York team,” said John McNulty, founding principal of MBH Architects. “Her dedication to establishing an inclusive and holistic spirit has been incredibly well-received across the entire MBH community.”

Herrick will use her strong management and leadership skills to ensure projects remain on track in terms of deliverables, budget and staffing. Her vast knowledge on the client side of design will ensure MBH teams are tuned in to client expectations, contributing to MBH’s reputation as a multi-sector architecture and design firm.

With more than 20 years of industry experience, Herrick has cultivated a portfolio that includes projects of all scales and in many sectors, including corporate, health care, education, retail and hospitality spaces. Having managed large-scale and geographically dispersed teams in her previous roles, Herrick holds the key to the continued success of MBH’s work throughout not only the New York area but across the firm’s global offices.

“I’m excited to work closely with such a talented, curious and energetic team of people,” Herrick said.

CAREERS

Moseley Architects Names Dora Kay New Senior Living Sector Leader

➔ Dora W. Kay is Moseley Architects’ new senior living sector leader. Based out of Moseley Architects’ office in Fairfax, Virginia, she will spearhead the firm’s efforts to serve a population expected to grow more than 20% in the next five years.

With more than 30 years of experience, 20 of which focused on senior living facilities, Kay has established herself as one of the country’s leading designers in environments for the aging. Since graduating from Virginia Tech School of Architecture and Design and joining the firm in 1998, she has amassed a portfolio that encompasses a variety of project types, including independent living, assisted living, memory care and affordable housing.

“She brings decades of design strength and business acumen in her distinguished service to our clients nationwide,” said Moseley Architects’ President and CEO Stewart Roberson. “We are very excited to watch Dora and our team build on the substantial record of success they have established year after year.

“Over the past 20 years I have had the wonderful opportunity to work in the senior living arena, which has fostered many long-term relationships while assisting providers to grow and evolve,” Kay said. The genuine love and care that goes into creating these unique environments is inspiring. It has been amazing being a part of these partnerships, forging new paths, and watching the industry grow and diversify.

“Focused on the future of senior environment, I am looking forward to this next decade as we prepare for the generations behind us with new products, engaging environments and incorporating innovative technologies as well as incorporating sustainability and resilience into our designs.”

ASSOCIATIONS

IIDA NY Chapter Elects President for 2020-2021 Term

➔ The International Interior Design Association’s New York Chapter (IIDA NY) has announced the inauguration of Erin Ruby as chapter president for the 2020-2021 term. Ruby has served as an executive board member the past 15 years, including as co-chair for the Pioneering Design Lecture Series for the IIDA NY chapter. She succeeds Annie Lee, who was president for the 2019-2020 term. Ruby’s presidential term goes into effect in July.



Ruby

IIDA NY is a professional organization that unites interior design professionals in the New York area, providing them with networking opportunities, educational events and charitable initiatives. As chapter president, Ruby plans to emphasize the importance of community-related outreach and cultural diversity.

Ruby is the founder of her namesake New York City-based multidisciplinary firm, Erin Ruby Design, which specializes in the development of branded, commercial interiors and product design. She also co-founded the SolutionsNOW Foundation, a nonprofit that provides immediate support to local, underserved communities, seniors and individuals experiencing food, housing and economic hardship in New York City’s Upper Manhattan neighborhoods.

Prior to starting her firm, Ruby worked for architecture and interior design firms TVS Design, TPG Architecture and Studios Architecture. In 2019, she received the IIDA Leadership Award of Excellence for her dedication to and advancement of the interior design profession. Together with the IIDA NY board members, Ruby will continue increased recruitment efforts, forward-thinking networking events, educational opportunities, business development services and creative workshop programs.

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keliopulos@trendway.com

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