

delve

JULY 2021 **V16**

**Designers You
Need To Know**

**Delving Into The
Public Sector**

**New Releases From
Across The Contract
Design Industry**

*Cover Photo: Sirena Chair by
Global Furniture, featured at
Mohawk College.*

**Global
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Is Creating Better Learning Environments

Onda



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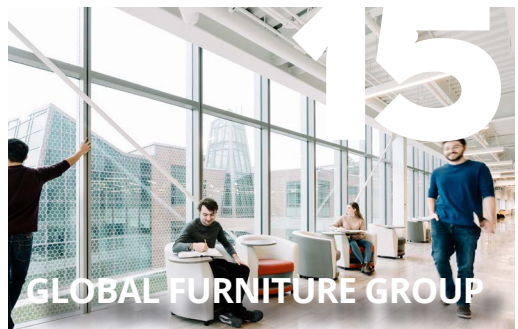
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30 YEARS OF DESIGN EXPERIENCE

Susan Mulholland discusses her career in the design world, and what she hopes newer designers can learn from her experience.



GLOBAL FURNITURE GROUP

COVER STORY: Global Furniture Group is creating better learning environments.



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editor's note

Dear Reader,

The last 18 months has been a whirlwind to say the least! BUT as we move closer to the biggest event of the year (Neo-Con), we are thrilled to see manufacturers working hard to push out new and exciting lines that represent their commitment to excellence and their capacity to be adaptable.

In this issue we cover a wide range of new product releases and focus on topics covering the Education market and introduce you to new designers that should definitely be on your radar.

It's an exciting time to be a part of the Contract Design Industry. We invite you to dive into this issue of Delve Magazine!

Enjoy!

Do you have an idea for an article in Delve? We want to hear from you! Send us and email at...

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INTERIOR DESIGN

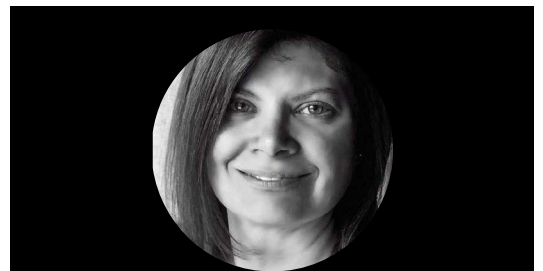
What 30 Years of Experience Has Shown Me

I have been writing for Delve Magazine now for 15 months. In most of my articles I have talked mostly about what I have experienced and what I know from working in the design industry for 30 years. Yep, I have been doing this longer than some of the readers of this magazine have been alive!

What is interesting to me is that although I am considered a senior designer, I know interior designers who have been in it much longer: 45+ years for some of them. And what I can tell you is that although there has been lots of changes over the years; a lot has stayed the same.

For example- interior designers are still referred to as decorators. HGTV and other home show personalities and celebrities are not interior designers no matter how many times they tell you they are. Residential designers know this better than commercial designers. Interior design is not just about selecting the right color palette or even knowing the difference between a task chair or lounge chair. Because it takes more than an eye for color or creative talent; it takes education and experience to know what is good design. Understanding that every choice you make as an interior designer has a direct affect on the outcome of the entire building not just the interior. That our choices also need to take into consideration the health, welfare and safety of each person who enters and uses the spaces we design. It is the interior designers responsibility to verify and check each material, piece of furniture and space plan to make that does not cause harm.

Architects are not trained in interior design specifically- interior designers are not trained in architecture specifically. What we learn is that both architecture



By Susan Mulholland

Susan Mulholland studied interior design at Northern Arizona University and is an NCIDQ certificate holder. She has 30 years of interior design experience in commercial design. Her experience in the industry covers a large variety of projects that focus on workplace, healthcare, and hospitality. Her design studio Mulholland Art & Design Commercial Interiors is in Tucson, Arizona, where she has been helping clients for the past 20 years. [Connect with Susan Mulholland on her website.](#)

HOT TOPICS: TEXTILES

and interior design are dependent on each other. We both know just a little bit about each other's discipline and that is why there is always confusion among ourselves, other design partners and clients. Architecture and interior design is a symbiotic relationship because we are dependent on each other's knowledge and expertise to make a project a success. Architecture is the art and practice of creating plans for man made buildings and other structures. It involves a vast knowledge that includes some interior design; but not everything. The world we now live in, and the world we are designing for has become more complex. Material choices for both the exterior and interior of buildings carry with them the potential to do harm if used incorrectly. Architects need to understand that professionally trained interior designers who have passed the NCIDQ are tested on specific knowledge related to life safety issues and are required continue to gain knowledge are better at understanding the complexity of today's building environment. They will be also be prepared for tomorrows.

This is why I am still working as an interior designer after all of these years. The thrill of design is always there – creating the unexpected and showing my clients infinite possibilities.

But it isn't an easy job or profession. Like I have said many times in other articles- interior design is not a profession for the weak or thin skinned. You are always being criticized for your efforts, because beauty is in the eye of the beholder and because designers who are good at what they do make it look like anyone can do it!

The truth is that not everyone can do what we do. Even the most talented and creative have struggled to be successful in this business. If you are not able to stand up for yourself, value your time, feel worthy enough to be entitled to a reasonable compensation for your skills than you will more than likely lose your desire to continue in this profession as an interior designer. Many of my colleagues over the years have quit design and gone into completely different professions because they could not take the pressure and stress this job has from the very start- even when you enter design school in college it's rough going. Many designers are under paid for their work no matter if they work for themselves or someone else. There is a misconception that interior designers make a lot of money from their projects and that their fees are ridiculously high. The reality is that we as designers have to struggle to get a reasonable wage for decades- our salaries compared to other design disciplines are still lower. There are still equality issues as well as a diversity issue that has not been solved.

One of the reasons for this is the fact that only twenty-two states plus the District of Columbia and Porto Rico have some sort of interior legislation that regulates the practice of interior design. This is significant. The remaining states that do not have any legislation, for example Arizona, has cited the reason as being because we are right to work state. Yet nail techs and landscapers do require a license to do their job. The combined efforts of

both ASID and IIDA to lobby the Arizona State legislature have been ongoing since the mid 1980's. These efforts have been met with mixed reactions from both legislators and other design professionals- including many architects. This opposition comes from a variety of angles- mostly there is a misconception of what interior design legislation will ultimately do- that is protect the general public and architects from unqualified people working as professionals. This is because legislation and any form of registration will require professional interior designers to be accountable for their specifications and designs. We would be taking on some of the same risk architects take on- in other words we would share the burden of responsibility for the lives and safety of our clients. My hope is that before I retire all 50 states will enact some sort of legislation for our profession; that includes my home state of Arizona.

So what has changed in the past thirty years? Well, like a lot of professions technology has made an enormous impact on design. Not just interior design but architecture and engineering. All aspects of the built environment have been impacted by the changes that have come with technology. Besides technology, the second biggest change I have seen is how the elements of design are curated.

Design magazines, furniture catalogs and even trade shows have all been changed by the internet of things. Long gone are the days of endless catalogs and brochures. Services like My Resource Library have allowed designers, manufacturers and dealerships eliminate the need for a catalog library. Designers still need to have physical samples of carpeting, fabric and other finishes to make certain that colors are accurate and so that clients can see what the surfaces will feel like. Furniture samples are still in demand for example to help clients not only see the actual piece before they buy it, but because nothing beats a good old fashion sit test to make sure that is what they are looking for especially in seating.

My journey as an interior designer is not over. I feel that there is so much more I can do to further the profession for the future! I know that my passion for this profession is never waning and my desire to help clients, other design professionals, like architects and even other interior designers learn and appreciate the value of a great interior will forever be apart of me. My hope is that by writing articles that share my experience and knowledge I will help to push the profession further and bring understanding and appreciation for what designers can do to make all the environments every living thing inhabits more beautiful and healthier. The power of design goes beyond just our interior spaces it affects our psyche and our spirituality in ways we may not be aware of. Being a true interior designer gives you the skills necessary to do more than just fluff pillows. Understanding that there is more to being an interior design professional is what makes interior design a complex and worthy profession.

river+





9to5 SEATING REINVENTS THE STACKING CHAIR WITH DESIGN-FORWARD KIP

9to5 Seating is launching Kip, a groundbreaking all-mesh stacking chair and stool collection. The new line elevates the multi-purpose space and combines unprecedented style and convenience at an accessible price point.

Kip features a level of design and support that sets it apart from other seating in this category. Its all-mesh construction comfortably relieves pressure points, while supporting up to 300 lbs. The collection is easy to clean and disinfect with just a 1:10 bleach-to-water ratio.

Built light with mobility in mind, Kip was created for spaces that see a rotating group of users in the course of a day such as cafés and large public areas. Its angular frame complements the chair's seat and back lines in Black or Dove Gray mesh and plastic. Models include side chairs, counter-height stools (24" seat) and bar-height stools (29" seat). Sides stack nine on the floor or 24 on the optional dolly. Counter and bar stools stack five on the floor.

"We're bringing sophistication to a category of seating that has been sometimes overlooked in design innovation," said Dara Mir, President and CEO of 9to5 Seating. "But 'multipurpose' is

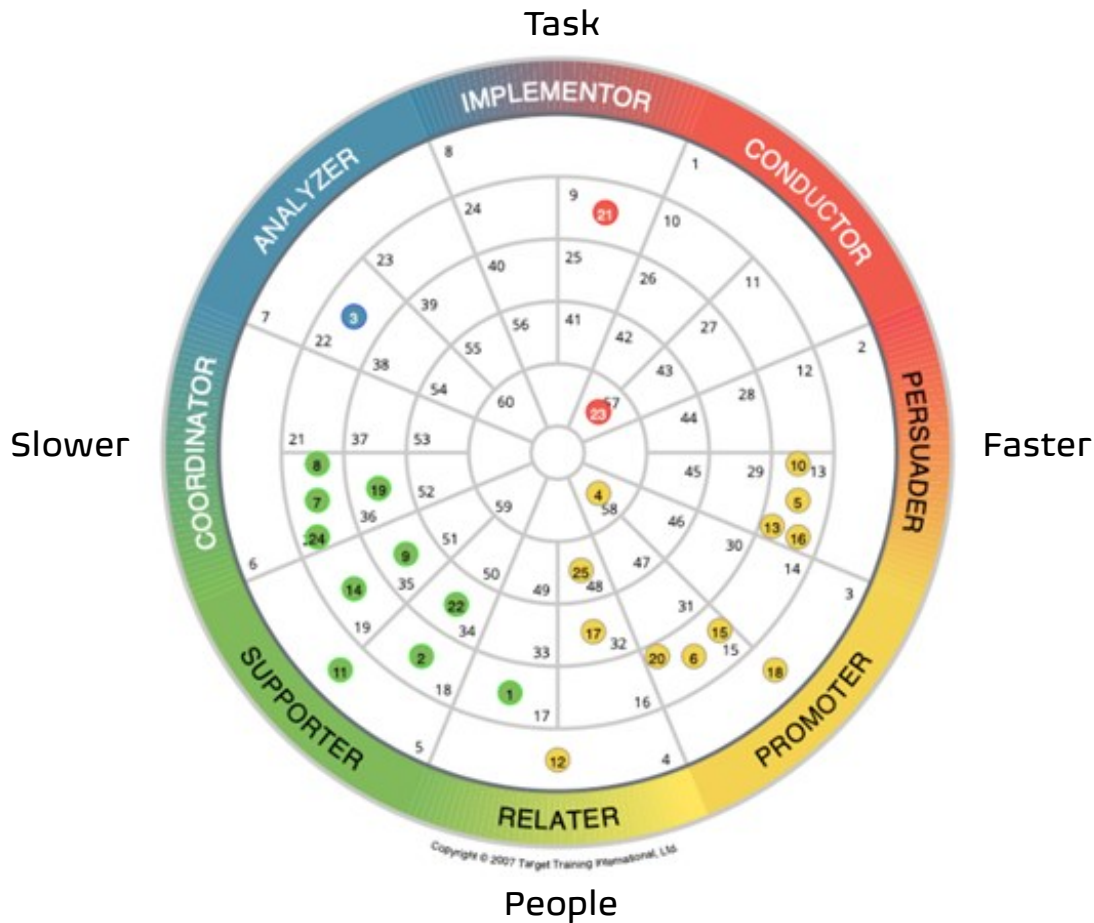
the name of the game in today's workspaces—open-concept offices, breakout zones and collaboration spaces. Kip delivers truly stylish modern seating in those environments."

Kip is backed by 9to5 Seating's lifetime warranty and has achieved BIFMA LEVEL 1 and GREENGUARD Gold certifications. Kip starts at \$295 List.

About 9to5 Seating

9to5 Seating is a vertically-integrated company that specializes in the design and production of ergonomic office seating to accommodate the rigorous demands of today's office environments. 9to5 Seating presents an extensive collection of executive, task, guest, conference, stool and lounge seating.





The BEST Dealer Designer (part 2)

By Alexandra Tseffos & Rob Langejans

In the June edition of DELVE, you read our article about the need for strong internal communication as the linchpin to success. Because the contract furniture world is evolving faster than ever and customers are asking for even more speed and accuracy, clear communication matters. What about external communication? Our view is that you address the internal first, then focus on your communication with customers.

If you put yourself in the customer's shoes, you'll notice that it's hard to make sense of all the information and conflicting advice that's offered about how to address their real estate needs. Even between dealers and manufacturers, the customer may find a variety of viewpoints! When you can think and act like the customer, you'll be able to better understand and better solve their concerns. How do you think and act like the customer? One primary step is to understand yourself, then apply a simple tool to understand others.

In our program, Moving Designers, we use the DiSC behavior-

al assessment. DiSC has a long and proven history of measuring behavioral and communication tendencies. With new understanding of oneself, the door opens to adding and altering behavior. The short explanation of DiSC is that people answer questions that determine how they perceive problems, people, pace, and procedure. Behaviors are measured between slower or faster and if they primarily focus on the task or on people.

The graphic shown here is from a large dealer sales and design team, which is representative of common outcomes when dealers take the DiSC assessment. Designers are mostly represented in the Supporter and Coordinator sections (green dots), and sales are largely found on the Promoter and Persuader sections (yellow dots). This isn't either good or bad, and it is quite common and predictable. But do you notice a gap?

Largely missing from the behavioral styles are the upper left "Analyzer" (blue) area, and the upper right "Conductor" (red). This is neither good nor bad yet with this awareness you, as a dealer

sales team made up of green and yellow styles, need to plan for how to communicate with your customer who may not match your style. If you consider people in facilities or procurement, they'd likely appear on the upper left of the graphic, in the blue section. They often will think, behave, and decide in a slower pace while focusing on the task at hand. Green and yellow styles will find it harder to connect and communicate if everyone behaves in their natural styles.

Many designers might think understanding the customer is the job of a salesperson. This perception may be changing in cases where a designer is involved earlier in the sales process, for example, with live design in a meeting with a potential client. Understanding the different styles is critical while talking about solutions. If a facilities person is in the meeting, discussing something like workstation orientation or how the users of space will interact could be critical. However, if it is the CEO, overall workplace satisfaction might be a topic of importance while themes like panel heights may be avoided. Without considering the audience, the designer might not connect to the customer as the salesperson has anticipated.

Let's consider a common approach to teamwork—and teamwork doesn't just mean "pairing up" with someone on a showroom tour. Many times in our program, Moving Designers, we hear about how on showroom tours a designer is paired up with the A&D firm, a dealer principal with the CEO, and the salesperson with other members of the customer group. Instead, as you plan for showroom tours you could be asking about how each

personality plays a role in the meeting. Does pairing still make sense when only based on job titles?

The best dealer designer and salesperson will understand themselves first, and then how to adapt to others who they interact with. We alluded to this earlier, so here's how to "read" your customer: Your first question is to ask "Does this buyer seem to behave and communicate in a slower, or faster pace?" That answer will place them either the left side of the wheel or the right. Congrats, you've narrowed your options for reading their style! The second question is if they seem to focus on the task or on people? You can determine this by how much they talk, and what they talk about. When you can answer this second question, you can determine which quadrant best describes the person.

Choosing a furniture dealer is a huge feat that we sometimes overlook because it is our everyday. Dealers are many times the last remaining party involved after the install and handle much of the ongoing move/add/change work. Participation is a must in order to add value and better understand the client. In a virtual or hybrid meeting understanding where customers fall on the DiSC Wheel is critical to understanding and quickly making a connection.

In conclusion, we are excited to see the continued importance and growth in the role of the dealer designer. When dealers recognize the value of team selling, internal team dynamics, and have a method for understanding the customer, it's a win-win!



Rob Langejans, Principal at AlwaysStrategic, is committed to helping salespeople and teams move from average to powerful when facing the customer. His business focuses on presentations, pitches, and sales strategy. Rob has a long career at Haworth in Holland, Michigan where he excelled as a sales coach and sales trainer, with certifications from Franklin Covey, Ken Blanchard, and Miller Heiman to name a few. Prior to Haworth, Rob was a presentation coach and sales consultant to companies including Herman Miller, Steelcase, Kellogg's, and Stryker. He is an expert in strategic communications and sales strategy.



Alexandra Tseffos started her career as a dealer designer before joining Configura's Training & Support team where she assisted dealerships and manufacturers across the Americas. Alexandra took her dealer knowledge and CET skills (including her most coveted skill of designing live for clients) and joined a dealer business development team, calling on end-user clients in the commercial real estate market. That was her first introduction into real estate before joining CBRE Minneapolis to head business development efforts for a tenant representation team. Her businesses, Silent T Consulting & The Design POP, are a culmination of all this experience. This is not just about furniture application and design. This industry is about service and adding value is a necessity!

6 MRL FAVORITE PRODUCTS FROM ACROSS THE LIBRARY

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

DAVIS SACHET

Offered in multiple back heights with arm and armless chair designs, a wide range of options creates the basis for this sophisticated family of seating. A unique welt detail surrounds the chair shell and allows contrasting fabric options to heighten the design appeal of Sachet. A variety of base options each tell their own unique story, offering elegant details to complement the delicate details of the shell.



STANCE HEALTHCARE FLO

Comfort meets durability when dining with our Flo Chair and Table Series for Behavioral Health. Offering beautiful organic lines and a soothing color palette, Flo provides a calming aesthetic that invites users to relax while dining safely in an intensive use space.



ERG INTERNATIONAL NIKKI COLLECTION

The Nikki collection has a modern bench look that includes modular units, lounge seats, ottomans, and tables. With the fully rounded sides it offers, it evokes a feeling of comfort that invites a sit down and with its low back design, creates an open space. This collection includes a standard clean out option on backs and sides, making it an ideal choice for healthcare, corporate and educational environments in lobbies.



TRENDWAY LEVADO

Levado our newest Height Adjustable Table introduction, offers a versatile solution to height adjustable working. Combining practicality with style, users can effortlessly add movement at the single touch of a control pad. It's Smart, Quick and Flexible.

FORMASPACE CASEWORK

Formaspace laboratory casework takes your specialized needs into consideration, whether it's new construction or remodeling an existing lab space, Formaspace can address any and all casework needs.



BLU DOT LOOKOUT OUTDOOR LOUNGE

No meditation app needed. All-weather rope weaves around a tubular aluminum frame forming an architectural silhouette that suspends you in serenity. Fulfills your hammock dreams without the need for trees.





SIT ONDA, ALL-MESH CHAIR.

Discover instantaneous, responsive comfort from within ONDA's award-winning sleek framework.

Workplace context has changed dramatically this past year. Corporate, home or hybrid workspaces are the norm, but to what degree is still uncertain. What is clear is that public health and safety is more important than ever. How can a chair support these shifting contexts and standards? To be in your home, it needs to have great design, but it also needs to ensure ergonomic comfort, support and adjustability to keep you productive wherever you find yourself working. You should look and feel good in your chair. It should be easy to use and be appropriate in scale to fit in different spaces dedicated to work. All of these considerations came into play when Via Seating's Studio V, developed their new ONDA seating series. ONDA supports both ergonomic and design philosophies and holds both in perfect harmony. Another key consideration is that a work chair needs to be affordable, regardless of who is making that purchasing decision for the workplace. ONDA—Italian for “Wave”—Via Seating's first all mesh chair checks all of these boxes. It is available now in a wide range of mesh colors including Via Seating's Patented Proprietary Copper-Infused Mesh.



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**DESIGNERS YOU
SHOULD KNOW:
COURTNEY SMITH**



WHAT MAKES SOMEONE A DESIGNER

by Courtney Smith

What makes someone a designer, and how do you know if you are one? This is a question I've struggled with throughout my teens and into my early twenties. It's such a subjective word, that sometimes the definition itself seems to change and evolve with time or context. Is a designer an artist? Is design simply a type of artistry? Or is a designer something different altogether? It's difficult to pinpoint the very moment I knew interior design was the right path for me, but I have to say – life has a special way of steering you in the right direction.

During my childhood, I remember having a fascination with color, shape, and movement. I learned to express myself with paint, colored pencil, and graphite. By high school I was taking advanced art classes, just trying to figure out how to put down on paper what I was seeing in my mind. As my skills grew, so did my curiosity. With the notion of college looming ahead, the pressure to pinpoint a career choice became more apparent.

While I seemed to have a knack for math and science, I knew that whatever my career ended up being, it needed to be rooted in creativity. With fine arts being a passion of mine, I considered the idea of attending art school. However, I could not ignore a voice inside that was begging me to think outside the box.

At this point in my life, I had a very limited idea of what architects do – they design buildings, right? The only exposure I had to architecture as a field of study was from the movies. Blueprints of buildings and scaled paper models were the images that came to mind when I thought about architecture. And while I was interested in the idea, something still felt like it was missing. I had always had a fascination with architecture and a respect for the field. But I needed a way to express my passion for creativity – for color, texture & pattern. I found myself developing a curiosity for the layouts of interior spaces, and what emotional and psychological effects they have on the end user. My inter

**DESIGNERS YOU
SHOULD KNOW:
COURTNEY SMITH**



Courtney Smith

est in furniture and finishes also started to grow. I found myself wondering, “Why this specific color on the wall?” and “Why did they select this style of chair?” As I began asking more questions like these, it gradually became clear to me that interior design was the perfect way to marry my creativity and love of color with the technicality of architecture that intrigued me so.

I found myself at Kent State University, surrounded by young adults just like me – trying to find an avenue into the world of design. Eager to learn and ready to give up their nights and weekends for the sake of their studio projects. And as I completed project after project, confidence in my ability grew. I developed a fondness for model building, for hand drawing, and color rendering. There is a kind of magic that comes from creating something out of nothing – to think up a thing in your mind and see it come to fruition in front of your eyes. And this is when I realized that I was achieving what I had hoped for all along. The aspects of fine arts that I loved most as a child – to see in front of you what you see in your mind – were the same things I loved about interior design.

By the end of my senior year, I had completed my thesis. As the culmination of everything I had been trained for, it was the greatest and most treasured accomplishment of my school career. The project challenged myself and others in my class to analyze the needs of the city of Kent, and to develop a new program as an answer to those needs. I chose to theoretically renovate an existing building on North Water Street and transform it into a swanky downtown piano bar called “The Glass Key.” With expert guidance from my outstanding professor Tina Patel, the project exceeded my expectations. Drawing inspiration from the inner workings of a grand piano itself, I developed a concept of “Vibration,” focusing on key elements like fluidity, flexibility, and transparency. The use of undulating patterns to inform material selection and fixture placement helped to drive the concept fur-



The Glass Key Piano Bar Area.

ther. By implementing a color scheme that highlighted the historical nature of the existing structure while also introducing a modern flair, The Glass Key came to fruition. As the project that symbolizes my transition from university to the real world, it is by far one of the greatest achievements of my educational career.

As that transition to working in the field took place after my graduation in 2019, I came to understand the importance of maintaining this idea of conceptual thinking. It is far too easy to follow the latest trend or go for the obvious choice. We as designers have so much information at our fingertips, and it can sometimes be difficult to sift through all of our options and find exactly what we are looking for. However, when you do the work and find that special accent piece or conceptualize that furniture design, the reward of seeing your ideas come to life is unlike any other. And this brings me to yet another reason why I love interior design – the only thing limiting creativity is your own imagination. Whether it’s simply a color scheme, texture, or a pattern – the smallest idea can evolve into something larger and take shape in reality.

So, at the end of the day – what makes someone a designer? Perhaps it’s the ability to see things differently than others. Maybe it’s an eye for color, a knack for detail, or a wild imagination. But above all else, a designer is someone who uses conceptual thinking as a way to solve problems where they exist and create innovation where they don’t.

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Creating Better Learning Environments

GLOBAL FURNITURE GROUP

From the front door to the classroom, how a learning space is designed can impact performance and influence how students feel when they're in school – as well as how they feel about their school. A study by McGill University has examined the direct connection between space and learning. Titled, *Research-Informed Principles for (Re)Designing Teaching and Learning Spaces*, the study identifies key space planning strategies that support active learning – an approach that engages students with course material through discussions, problem solving, case studies and other methods. Below is a summary of some of these key principles of active learning, along with some thought starters for furniture to support them.

Active Learning Principle: Engagement

Spaces that promote individual, active engagement with course content in both digital and analog formats to support different ways of teaching and learning.

To support individual engagement, we look to furniture options that support different types of tasks and preferences for how students need to work in comfort. Worksurfaces need to be able to support the use of notebooks, textbooks or laptops. To accommodate digital learning materials, multiple screens may be present to display different content simultaneously. Easy access to infrastructure and resources like printing, power and internet is essential for both students and faculty.

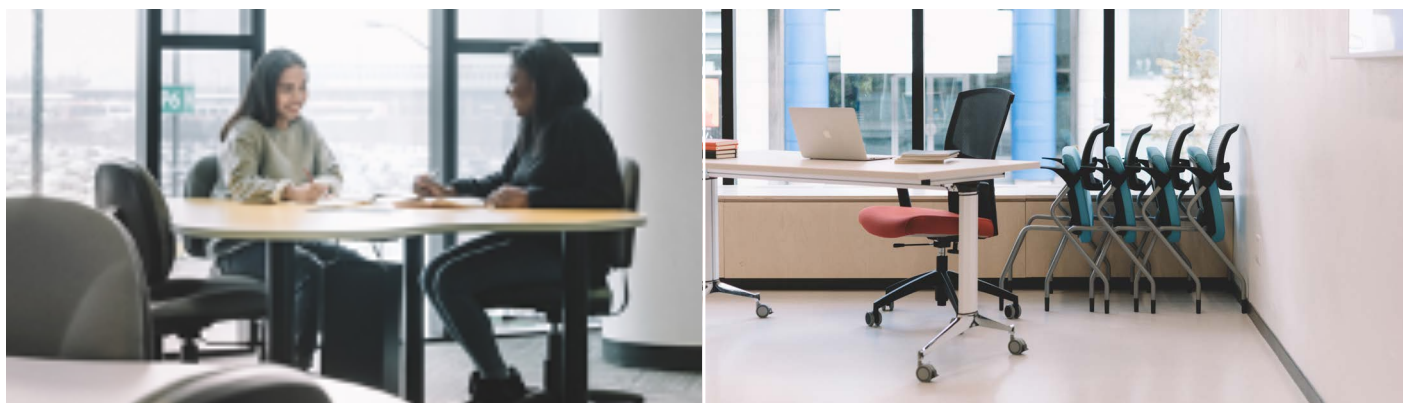


Global offers a range of seating with integrated tablets that provide ample surface for laptops, tablets and traditional note-taking. Hinged tablets swing into position easily, making it easy to sit or stand. Fully upholstered chair options also provide additional comfort and support for a quick chat or an extended class. **Shown: Sirena chair, Mohawk College (left), York School (right).**

Active Learning Principle: Collaboration

Spaces that support active engagement with one another, ensuring students can work both individually and in collaboration.

To encourage collaboration, plan for ways to support face-to-face communication. Flexible, mobile seating allows groups to form, shift and interact, and individuals to move about easily. Integrating furniture of different heights and shapes keeps sightlines unobstructed for open communication. Incorporating collaboration tools such as whiteboards facilitates group work.



Global offers a range of versatile group and pod tables that create a range of configurations to enable students to work independently or collectively. Mobile tables and whiteboards move around for group use as needed. Nesting chairs like Global's Spritz can be tucked away when not in use to create more space within the room. **Shown: Zook pod tables, Leading Post-Secondary Institute (left). Spritz nesting chairs and Terina mobile table, York School (right).**

Active Learning Principle: Communication

Spaces that facilitate communication and interaction between students and faculty.

To support open communication, spaces need to provide easy access to all students and faculty. Furniture should be specified to avoid impeding sightlines and planned in a way that creates clear pathways to access others. Using flexible and mobile furniture that can be moved around ensures a range of teaching strategies are supported throughout the day.



Global offers a range of multi-purpose tables that can quickly adapt a space to suit learning needs. Features like a simple flip-top mechanism are designed for single-handed operation. Flip-top tables are also able to nest in an upright position to minimize storage space. **Shown: Terina mobile tables, York School (left), McMaster University (right).**

Active Learning Principle: Community

Spaces that reflect the university's culture and priorities and be designed with future flexibility in mind.

To nurture community, furniture can help extend the learning experience across both formal and informal learning spaces, inside and outside the classroom. A range of seating types allows for different postures and comfort to support activities of a few minutes, a few hours, and those that are individual or social in nature. Reconfigurable and mobile furniture ensures spaces can be adapted for a variety of learning approaches over the short term or long term.



Global offers a range of flexible and modular seating that is simple to reconfigure. Available in 120-degree and curvilinear shapes, Global's River+ provides limitless planning possibilities - from lounge areas to classroom breakout groups to learning common spaces, while maintaining a consistent look across campus. **Shown: River seating, Yerba Buena High School (left), York School (right).**

Space and the furniture within it is a powerful tool in helping facilitate engagement, connection and community, the key outcomes of successful active learning strategies. Visit us here <https://www.globalfurnituregroup.com/education> to explore the possibilities for the future of your space.

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*Karen Stillwagon
Director of Design, East RID*

*Texas A&M University
Bachelor of Science,
Environmental Design*



Q&A with Karen Stillwagon

A graduate from Texas A&M University with a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Design, Karen began her career as an architectural designer and is now leading the interior design process from concept through furniture installation. She has a background in multifamily and hospitality design with 15+ years of experience in the interior design industry. She successfully manages all of the East Coast projects while overseeing her teams in the Dallas and Orlando offices. Project scope of work includes managing full space planning, construction documents, and furniture specification packages.

Q: What moment in life influenced you to pursue interior design?

A: I was influenced by my Dad to get a degree in Architecture, only because I didn't really know what I wanted to study coming out of high school. He said I was good at math and art so I should give architecture school a shot. I really enjoyed the creative spirit of all the students and studios. I loved studying architecture history so it ended up working out for me. From there I fell in love with Interior Architecture in my career and it evolved into Interior Design and here I am!

Q: Tell me something about yourself that isn't on your resume?

A: I love to travel and explore new places, watch old movies, hang out with my husband and two rescue Huskies (Rigby and Riley)

Q: What is your greatest accomplishment? Career, personal, education?

A: I am really proud that I have ran and completed 19 half marathons.

Q: What one piece of advice would you give yourself (if you could) at the beginning of your journey?

A: That there will be some hurdles in your career but you will pull through and figure it out. You will learn so much about yourself after you get over the bumps in the road and be better for it.

Q: How do you develop yourself outside of the work environment?

A: I meet with my leadership coach every month to go over goals and hone in on leadership skills. She gives me resources, advice, and books to read to help me grow in my leadership skills. It has been very helpful.

**DESIGNERS YOU
SHOULD KNOW:
KAREN STILLWAGON**

Q: When working remote what is hardest for you?

A: During the pandemic, collaborating on design and overseeing design was a challenge. I would be on the phone with my team for hours, we would have a virtual meeting up and sketch on the screen to come up with ideas. It is so much easier in person to sit at a table and design with the team, sketch, and grab alternate samples as needed. It was good to still have those interactions even though we couldn't be in person because I have the best team and we made it work.

Q: What makes you happiest and most effective when working with others?

A: I think having a healthy support system at home, exercising regularly, and getting good rest helps me to give my best at work. I believe that you have to take good care of yourself in order to be your best for others at home and at work.

Q: What was the last thing you really geeked out about?

A: It was actually "my resource library" (And I am not just saying that) My coworker who handles our library showed off the program yesterday during our staff meeting. The virtual books are such a great idea and the fact that it updates pricing, and you can search for certain items is amazing. The whole company was super excited that we are getting it set up!

Q: What are some challenges you've faced in your career and how did you overcome them?

A: Experiencing 2008 and the heartbreak that it brought to so many of us in the design profession was a really rough spot in my career. I overcame that time just by trying to have hope and a good attitude. It definitely made me a person who does not take work and life for granted. It made me a more grateful person.

Q: Can you describe your typical day or week?

A: What's great about my job is that it is different every single day and every week. My days are fast paced jumping from project to project and looking over the different arrays of designs that our talented team comes up with. My absolute favorite part is helping out with space plans and design concepts. I also travel frequently for meetings and visit our other offices.

Q: What artist/designer has been your biggest influence?

A: I enjoy Kelly Wearstler's designs. I really like that her designs are sophisticated but also quirky and playful. It's great that she has clients in the residential world and the hospitality world that are willing to take the risk and be edgy.

Q: Do you have any advice for someone interested in this field/job? Are there any written materials you suggest I read? Which professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?

A: We hire people at HPA Design heavily based on personality. If the person seems hard working, organized, and has a sense of humor, you are in. Our culture is very important to us because you can teach different skill sets but having the right team members is the pinnacle of our business. Being a dog person is also a bonus. I would tell people to try to be engaging, conversational, and excited during interviews.

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MOVING THROUGH THE YEARS

Stella by Jasper Chair.

100 Years of USA Manufacturing

Steam bending is a lost art. The process requires saturating lumber with steam until the wood fibers are pliable for bending. It is a long and intensive process, but the added strength is irreplaceable. A craft that most manufacturers forego, but not Jasper Chair. Bending wood has been an integral part of the company since its start in 1921. Jasper Chair has gone through a similar process over the last century.

Like the wood, Jasper Chair has had to bend over time and adjust as the market has changed. While continuing to strive every day to provide uncompromising furniture that will last a lifetime. School and office furniture was the original focus of the company. Having provided high-quality seating that could handle the rigors of everyday use. Around the mid-1980s, Jasper Chair saw the potential of the growing hospitality industry. From there, new designs were developed to fit those environments that we dine and entertain in.

Around the time of transition from Fred Barth to Jeff Barth as Presidents, Jasper Chair made the decision to become strongly

focused on the hospitality industry. Since then, Jasper Chair has worked with everyone from large national restaurant chains to small mom-and-pop shops. Now being able to meet the needs of restaurants, country clubs, and resorts.

The Barth Family has been an intricate part of Jasper Chair's history and future. Jeff, having grown up on the factory floors, has knowledge that only one with that unique upbringing would have gathered. He stands behind the high quality of the seating that leaves our doors. Pushing to move forward as the times change, Jeff has expanded the factory multiple times and added several of the highest quality technology equipment and operating software to ensure maximum lumber yield and improved efficiency.

American Always – that is how Jasper Chair has always operated. All our chairs are made under the same roof from start to finish right here in the Midwest. There are no shortcuts involved in building a chair to last a lifetime. Therefore, we build every chair from scratch. From drying raw lumber to final carton, we

**JASPER CHAIR
SHOWROOM
FEATURE**



self-perform all stages of building our furniture, so we can fully stand behind what we sell. This has allowed us to keep pricing and lead times down over the past few years, as other companies have been hit with supply chain issues, tariffs, and very long lead times.

Building chairs in one location also allows for us to work closely with customers and designers to ensure their needs are met. Whether that is a slight modification such as made-to-measure dimensions to building a completely custom chair. Jasper Chair will work to masterly craft the exact product, tailored uniquely for each project.

Shapes and chair features have changed greatly since the classic all wood chairs. In today's world, a chair is a further attribute of an environment. When patrons walk into a hotel, restaurant, or resort the furniture is one of the first things they will notice. It sets the tone for the experience and continues until patrons walk out the door. Jasper Chair has options for various settings, from all wood to fully upholstered.

This year was started with a statement as Jasper Chair introduced thirteen new series. From the soft curves of Stella to the statement tall backrest of Tate. Molly, our favorite club chair welcomes guests with a slight embrace. Baden is offered with brass ferrule leg caps on smooth turned legs to add an extra decorative detail. Working toward more modern lounge designs, unveiled were four new lounge series: Avery, Bella, Maxwell, and Parker. Incorporating sinuous spring seats to ensure long lasting and comfortable seating, each design offers its own unique design.

The last century has been a rewarding one for Jasper Chair and we would not be where we are today without our customers. Our appreciation for all those who have been a part of our journey is endless. Moving into the next century, Jasper Chair will continue to build our chairs in the same manner that allows us to stand behind, our products, but also focus on moving with the times. Cheers to the next 100!



jasper chair

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Delving Into The Public Sector

by Michelle Warren

Delving into Public Sector

Are you considering pursuing federal sales as a vertical market? Or are you new to the selling to federal government and wondering how you can better understand this important vertical? If so, this issue of Delving into Public Sector is for you.

There are many free resources to help you better understand selling to the Federal Government. We will review some of the primary resources in detail and, at the end of this article, I have listed additional ones to dig into for more information.

MAS Office Hours

In the past year the General Services Administration (GSA) has started MAS (Multiple Award Schedule) Office Hours. These are monthly webinars that cover different topics each month with a chance to ask MAS experts questions on each call. You can register for all of the MAS Office Hours and you will also receive a copy of the presentation each month. They have also started putting some of the recordings on the GSA YouTube Channel.

GSA (General Services Administration) YouTube channel

Everyone is on YouTube now including GSA. They have their own channel where they post a lot of different recordings including the afore mentioned MAS Office Hours. So, now there is a library of trainings you have access to on your own time.

QPC (Quality Partnership Council)

Per the GSA website, the Quality Partnership Council (QPC) "is the GSA Integrated Workplace Acquisition Center's (IWAC) Sup-

plier and Industry Engagement Forum. QPC exists to foster a common understanding between customer, contractor, and GSA. Council communication, education and collaborative efforts are focused on continuous improvement of processes, policies, and service to customers and each other." The QPC is for any supplier that holds a GSA Multiple Award Schedule Contract in the Furniture and Furnishings category. The QPC has a board that consists of representation from industry for the Furniture and Furnishing Schedules and GSA. Board members remain in their position for a four-year period. **The current industry board members are:**

Furniture: **Suzanne Renz**, Haworth Director of Government Sales and Carol Espinosa, Principal Freedom Interiors

Furniture Services: **Allyn Richert**, President Trade products and Dimitri Mortsakis, Director of Sales and Marketing CRS

Furnishing and Floor Coverings: **David Maynes**, Director of Government Markets Atlas and Randa Thayer, VP of Government and Education Strategic Accounts Southeast Shaw Industries, Inc.

In addition to the industry board members, there are 8 GSA board members. Per the QPC website, "These GSA board members are committed to partnering with industry in engaging internal and external stakeholders as needed to ensure the best possible outcomes to problem resolution and improvement efforts, planning educational webinars to address member needs and communicate key initiatives and operational issues, and incorporating voice of the customer to QPC discussions and efforts."

INDUSTRY HOT TOPICS

I encourage you to register to be a member of the QPC and then attend the meetings. Currently they are doing two virtual meetings per year so there is no excuse for not participating! You will learn and have the opportunity to meet new people at GSA, at agencies and in the industry.

Below are some nuggets of information that were discussed at the most recent QPC meeting.

- Be on the look out for some BPAs. One from Region 9/10 and one from Department of Education
- Public Building Services (PBS) center for workplace strategy is looking at what the workplace looks like post covid for government agencies, and they are looking at a "home office in a box" concept for those employees who will be working from home or hybrid, to ensure they have good, ergonomic furniture to work from
- The QPC recently started spotlighting small businesses and the two this meeting were Seating Concepts and DATUM
- The Air Force was a featured speaker and they spoke to the success of the Seating BPA, the ability for the Air Force to use the NAVY BPA for items not under an Air Force BPA and the upcoming systems and modular BPA which has an anticipated award date in 2022
- Catalog Management spoke to the new Common Catalog Platform (CCP) which will replace Schedule Input Program (SIPS) which is about a year away- I know many manufacturers are very excited about this and cannot wait for this to happen
- There were also some great breakouts at this QPC: Data and Marketing, Contractor Teaming Agreements, MAS Consolidation update, Office relocation and reconfiguration, MAS contract administration, and Flooring

If you would like to review the slides or listen to the recording you can access everything at the above link for the QPC under Event resources.



MICHELLE WARREN

Michelle Warren is President of [Catalyst Consulting Group](#), a firm specializing in providing strategic solutions to the commercial furniture industry to enhance companies' sales and positioning within their industry and distribution. Michelle has been in the commercial furniture industry for over 25 years with experience on both the dealer and manufacturer side of the industry. She has experience at the EVP, VP and National Sales Manager level for large and small manufacturers.

Clubhouse

Lastly, I would like to invite all of you to join us on Clubhouse. There is a Contract Interiors Club which hosts rooms with different topics throughout the week and I host a room called Demystifying Public Sector every other Wednesday where we dig into Federal as well as State/Local/Education and Cooperative. Reach out to me or connect with me on LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/michelle-warren-47a6888/> to get more information.

Some other resources for Federal knowledge:

LinkedIn: [GSA Furniture Quality Partnership Council](#)

LinkedIn: [GSA](#)

GSA Interact: <https://interact.gsa.gov/tag/furniture>

GovCon: www.govcon.com

Summit Insight: www.growfedbiz.com (Note: Judy's book on Government Contracting is excellent!!)

Bloomberg Government: Great resource and has a lot of FREE webinars you can attend, www.bgov.com

Deltek: Great resource and has a lot of FREE webinars you can attend, www.deltek.com



SitOnIt Seating launches eBEAM™ -- an exciting new power + data beam.

With a one-stop philosophy that helps designers create any (and every) space, SitOnIt Seating is continuing their summer-long goal of introducing new collections. From innovative office chairs to high-efficiency stackers, their portfolio of award-winning solutions keeps growing – and the latest addition is a powerful resource for the office.

Unlike most industry introductions, eBEAM is a new product that's not really meant to be noticed. While the straightforward, seamless design certainly looks nice on a showroom floor, one of its most dynamic features is the ability to supply power and data without the visual mess of cords and cables.

“Our eBEAM gives new meaning to the concept of clean energy,” explains Director of Product Marketing Darren Keele. “Power beams like this are often installed in large quantities. Managing multiple power and data cables in a single space can be challenging, and the cable management options on eBEAM help keep everything organized, which is something not a lot of beams offer.”

From space planners who want an uncluttered look to I.T. and maintenance teams who wrestle with power cords every day, everyone can appreciate the organization options on eBEAM. And its design possibilities don't end there.



**SITONIT SEATING
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Adaptable leg positions, multiple beam lengths, and an array of power and data ports provide the flexibility to make eBEAM fit just about anywhere you need it. Plus, the design includes seamless screen integration when you want to offer protection or privacy with acrylic, fabric and markerboard options from SitOnIt Seating. (See their Sector, Motif and Doodle solutions here.)

Straightforward and streamlined. The new eBEAM from SitOnIt Seating is simply powerful (and powerfully simple). You can learn more about this collection and see all that's new at <https://info.sitonit.net/ebeam>.



SitOnIt Seating is a leading manufacturer of commercial solutions in the U.S. — and #1 in task chairs. From tables and lounge to screens and more, we've been the go-to destination for comprehensive, build-to-order solutions for almost 25 years. We combine award-winning design with the fastest lead times around, and our design and planning services can turn product innovation into your space inspiration. We're able to build almost any specification you want, deliver it when you need it, and offer a level of value no one can match. It's all part of our indie California spirit and drive to be the one place you go for any (and every) space.

SitOnIt • Seating



Handy Stool by Leland Furniture.

FINDING JOY IN LEARNING SPACES

Leland has a story on its website, and also featured in the current issue of the Leland Post, about “The Joy of Making”. To us and our team in Grand Rapids, MI it’s all about joy, and we feel that all learning, and especially formal education, should bring joy.

Over the decades of varying philosophies on pedagogy, the factor of joy has never been seen as a primary issue in education, and while it is now clear that the design and layout of spaces is very impactful in K12 environments, the nuances found in color, materials and finishes are still not being given sufficient attention. Like the old adage “Show me your workspace and I’ll tell you what your employer really thinks of you”, Leland says “Show me your school and we can tell you what the expectations are.”

These days distinctions between educational furniture and office furniture are actually no longer valid – just as with the modern

workplace, the modern school in our knowledge economy is essentially a place with the same purpose for fostering inquiry and embedding knowledge capture and exchange. This new understanding informs the Leland approach to designing educational furniture. For too long we have been stuck with what could be called a factory-model classroom. Our American K12 system was based historically on the approach Horace Mann saw in Prussia in the middle of the 19th century, which had many strengths in preparing young people for the new industrialized economy at the time, as well as providing a scalable model for growing a system of public schools. At that time when schools were mostly parochial, Horace Mann believed large groups of students learning together could blur the divisions among religious groups and unify everyone into a more egalitarian society. It is interesting today that teaching models still seek to overcome divisions, but now they are viewed as divisions between race and economic class.

But over time it became evident that this original vision from Mann's time was seriously deficient and our federal government declared openly in 1983 in *A Nation At Risk* that our system was starting to fail. In the next 15 years many radical changes occurred with educators shifting their philosophical approaches to teaching and learning: they came to emphasize new methodologies that centered on critical thinking skills, deconstructionism, and a lot of collaboration. To support these instructional approaches classrooms would feature moveable desks to enable collaborative teams, circular tables to facilitate discussions, and feature technology very prominently. This has involved a lot of erroneous assumptions that led to a lot more mistakes.

While technology is a powerful tool, it must be implemented with the intention of enhancing educator-facilitated learning, not substituting for it. A program of handing students a device and expecting positive results won't work, and the past year of Covid-19 and the struggle with remote-learning scenarios has proven this point. K-12 innovation today must go beyond designing and producing new tools, and focus also on designing new classroom models that properly take advantage of what these tools can do. And when we come to the next level we must be careful that the furniture does not shape or limit the teaching and learning – does it work for what we know about learning today, or only for what we know from the past?

The role of the teacher is quite different now, so we may ask: where does the teacher fit into the furniture? From the 'sage on the stage' the teacher is now 'guide on the side' - facilitators of instruction, guides to the curriculum, rather than a sole source of instruction. In response the role of the student has also changed, becoming more of an active participant in the learning process. With education terminology including the concepts of design thinking, project-based learning, game-based learning, personalized learning, collaborative learning, blended learning, kinesthetic learning, as just several, teaching formats such as flipped learning, maker education, STEM/STEAM and STREAM education have become commonplace (and everywhere with an emphasis on coding).

In light of all these advances what should modern learning spaces look like, and at Leland we ask: what should learning spaces *feel* like? The best scenario is for all of these modes of learning to be located if possible in the same physical space and arranged in such a way to minimize any disturbances between them. This is a model of combined learning spaces as a decentralized one since the focus is on the students. The teacher's desk is most likely just another table and is not prominent at all.

But at Leland we recognize that regardless of the size of a space it's the furniture investment that has the most potential to impact effective and flexible modes of learning. We see our furniture as a strategic investment that will reflect an educational

institution's culture and identity. We know it should create an inclusive environment, but we also want to enable one that brings joy. Leland envisions the furniture also as a new pedagogy to promote engagement, health and well-being, and choice, so desks, chairs, tables and other furnishings cannot be afterthoughts, chosen at the end of the process after all the other design decisions. As a powerful resource for both K12 and Higher Ed institutions aiming to encourage students to express creativity and solve problems, individual furniture pieces and collective settings need to respond to the growth and development needs of children, youth, adolescents, and adults.

In our 30 years of manufacturing furniture Leland has become renowned for a unique combination of high design and extreme durability with most of our seating meeting a 500 lb. test. There's less need to divide furniture into the categories of 'institutional' or 'corporate', and preconceived ideas about classroom furniture vs. breakout furniture are becoming less and less relevant as well. Our concerns are the academic outcomes and prioritizing the needs of learners – this ties into the joy factor, and the way school furniture should be seen as a true 'investment'. Whether a school or an office, the requirement is for a collage of space-types that accommodates a diversity of learning styles as well as addressing a spectrum of sensibilities for inclusiveness.

At Leland our furniture designs respond to this knowledge:

1. Furniture must reflect the philosophy that modern education settings should be places that emphasize and encourage social interaction.
2. A greater variety of spaces always improves the quality of study and socializing;
3. Elements of adaptability that afford greater flexibility enhance student satisfaction in any space;

Typical spaces in progressive schools:

The *atrium with gathering stair* is a feature in many new institutional designs and is now often being added to link older buildings in more traditional settings. Conceived as a place for gathering and collaborating, these spaces are intended to nurture idea sharing and communication between teaching faculty and students, as well as between disciplines. Often regarded as an 'information commons' such spaces serve as an informal living room for congregating, supplemented with smaller articulated spaces for quiet study and group meetings. Ideally there will also be outdoor spaces for gathering adjacent.



The true Information Commons will be conceived of as more of an innovation space, featuring abundant technological resources for research and information with the emphasis on virtual tools over traditional reference materials.

A range of furniture for casual encounters will be found along with the tables for group activities and some private study carrel-type arrangement.

At the gathering stair we see a particular moment when high-density stack chairs (Leland Mass) have been set up for a more formal event with high Fixed tables and Mass stools where the tables are easily and quickly powered from the floor to accommodate the necessary equipment. On a typical day the stairs serve as just that – a place for encountering and engaging with the larger space and community, and for stopping to sit for a conversation or impromptu meeting.

In a *library area* or in an 'information commons' there is both a project table and a soft-seating area where one can easily re-arrange the upholstered pieces (Leland Beachstones) for reading in solitude or for a small group discussion. The Beachstones come in both adult and child sizes along with various coordinating table options with different surface choices. Students' satisfaction with spaces is connected to whether they can manipulate furnishings within the space to suit their learning needs, so



the furniture is lightweight and mobile enough as to be easily moved throughout the day.

In *open work areas* standing and regular height tables (Fixed tables) allow students to work alone or in small groups, and balance a mix of study spaces in the open congregated spaces.

The Fixed table evokes a singular high aesthetic of a mid-century piece, brilliantly forming a functional metal extrusion into a shape that mimics turned and tapered wood – a change from the usual harshness of metal legs and table frames. A variety of tops from laminate, wood veneer to Corian and Forbo Furniture Marmoleum enable the same table to be used in maker-spaces and other heavy-duty work/crafts areas, as well as reading tables in libraries where the resilient Forbo surface is preferred. In standard lengths up to 120 inches, the Fixed table comes in both counter and bar height as well as standard table height.

Rather than build technology into the furniture with the removable panels and requirements for tools that one so often encounters, Leland came up with a solution where technology is cleanly supported in the tables yet allows for future flexibility. The unique metal extrusion allows for any cabling to be dropped down into any of the four legs, and the design is such that no



**EDUCATION
FEATURE WITH
LELAND FURNITURE**



Handy Stool by Leland Furniture.

clips or additional fussing is needed to keep the cords in place. The table-top technology itself is flush, thereby not impacting the full use of the surface when nothing is connected, offering a combination of outlets and USB ports.

The M2 stools can be had as both counter and bar height as well as chairs – all offering a variety of cut-outs in the back, or even an actual logo. The two-tone seat-shell affords pops of color on the exterior while the clear natural seat on the inside minimizes the appearance of any abrasions or scratching. These, along with many others on our website, meet the 500lb. test, and the frames can be had in a wide range of colors.

Contemporary interior architecture strives to avoid double-loaded corridors and dead-end halls in educational buildings and *all shared spaces should invite engagement and encourage interaction on a casual and spontaneous basis*. Furnishing these areas can be problematic with code regulations for fire and egress, so the ability to pull up a seat and work with a white-board or other instruction tools calls for light moveable furniture.

A stack of Leland's Handy stools can be arranged in front of a chalkboard or writeable wall when needed for *a breakout session for a team from an adjacent classroom*, or they may just serve as a spot to sit for a one-on-one session with a teaching staff member. Available with wood and upholstered tops in addition to the basic stool, the cavity not only serves as a storage cabin to keep one's possessions or beverages out of harm's way, but also affords the proper recess for placing one's leg(s) at the ergonomically correct angle when leaning forward. Flat disc bases and solid cone forms to stools force our legs to remain out front,

causing an incorrect arching of the spine when leaning in.

At the end of the day as is true in all good design, Leland believes 'less is more'. For students who already may feel forced to go to the same place every day, any extraneous move to address them, be it slogans, supposedly inspiring sentences on a wall, colors that remind them they are children, or at least not yet like the grown-ups, will be felt as irritating and obnoxious. Sophisticated materials and finishes mean 'respect', and at Leland student furniture ('just kids furniture!') is not 'play-play', cheap plastic, almost junk stuff in loud colors. Drawing on the natural environment Leland's materials and colors are for classrooms that inspire students, and for spaces that are light and airy, even for older spaces are more traditional. as not every classroom will follow the same template. Places of education are not leased short-term spaces like corporate offices so Leland builds the strongest products for institutional use, and the best-designed so that the visual sustainability is as long as our product's long life-cycle.

We understand that as schools compete for parents' dollars the facility has to differentiate itself with a furniture selection that supports superior programs and methods, including the encouragement of behaviors, and very importantly with the nuances of materials and colors enhancing both the levels of student engagement and their joy of learning.

As John Dewey stated twice with different words: "School is primarily a social institution, a process of living, not a preparation for future living"; and "Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself." At Leland we are all about living the good life!

REIMAGINE CASEGOODS



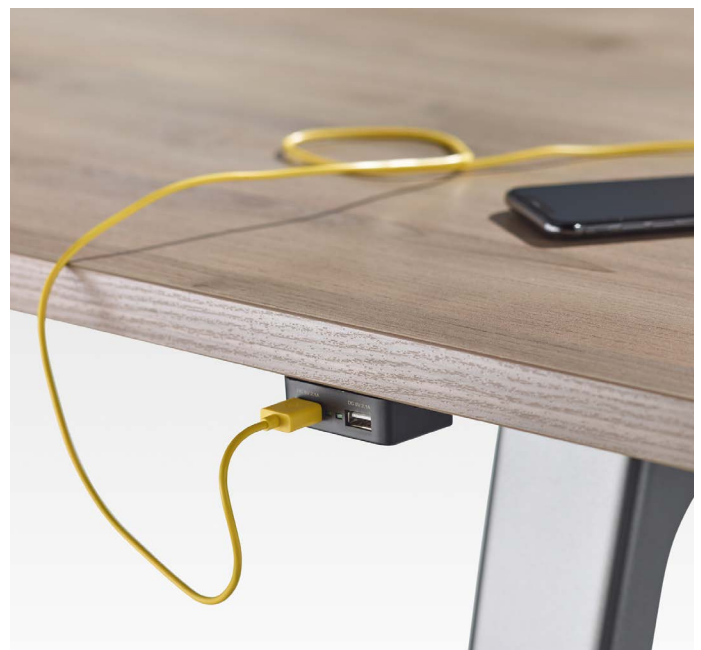
Halifax Collection by Tayco.

WITH TAYCO'S HALIFAX COLLECTION

Designed with high functionality, Tayco's Halifax Collection provides flexible casegoods and table solutions for any multipurpose workspace. The collection is both functional and artistic, creating a unique, light feel that will establish the perfect office atmosphere.

This inviting line was built for the every day, evolving office. The demand for adaptable office furniture continues to grow. Private offices are becoming more dynamic, needing to fit into smaller spaces, be lighter in appearance and feel more like home. This changing trend allowed Tayco and Fig40 to reimagine what casegoods look like and what they can do, allowing them to straddle existing and evolving planning styles to develop something completely new.

"The Halifax Collection was a very engaging project to work on. Workplace design is in a state of flux with many interpretations of what a "private office" is and how it can be used. Our challenge was to design a product that can respond to the evolving and uncertain requirements of clients and designers. But we



**TAYCO
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FEATURE**

had to do this while remaining relevant to more conventional applications, with a product that can be made efficiently by Tayco at a competitive cost point," says Lee Fletcher, Partner at Fig40. "Halifax is a system that reinterprets casegoods: it is flexible, with a clear identity and wide scope of application."

Private offices are becoming more dynamic, shared in use, lighter in detail and with lower storage requirements. Incorporating adaptable furniture encourages productivity and flexibility, allowing offices to tailor spaces to individual preferences and business needs. Every element has been well considered to ensure optimal functionality and comfort, allowing us to evolve from the constraints of traditional casegoods to create a lighter feel and unique design you truly want to be part of the office.

This new private office collection, with industrial flair, is highly customizable to the user with dynamic configurations for tables, legs, storage and cabinets, as well as the opportunity to add personality with metal components available in 20 different colours.

"Halifax is a strong testament to Tayco's leadership in setting market trends," says Kevin Philips, CEO of Tayco. "It demonstrates our passion to enable everyone who works at a Tayco station to be their most productive, in a stylish and comfortable setting."



Halifax Collection by Tayco.

Halifax truly validates Tayco raising the bar through progressive design and providing the ultimate product experience.

In addition to the Halifax collection, Tayco offers a wide variety of systems and case goods office solutions including their extremely sought after Switch line. **Learn more about Tayco at [Tayco.com](https://www.tayco.com).**

tayco®



Getting To Know Cronan & Associates

Cronan & Associates is an independent rep group for interior products, including commercial and healthcare furniture, ergonomic products, signage and sound masking. We recently had a chance to ask them a few questions about their business and why they love being a part of the Contract Design Industry.

Q: Tell us a little bit about how Cronan & Associates got started?

A: My Uncle and Aunt had been in the industry for many years and owned an independent rep group based in the Houston. They began repping a very unknown line of ergonomic seating, and they were struggling to get any dealers to sell that manufacturer's products in the Austin market. They proposed the idea that I become a dealer for them to sell that manufacturer's seating. So, while attending The University of Texas at

Austin, I started a one person dealership, out of my bedroom in a house that I shared with two roommates. And, I focused on this one line of ergonomic chairs. Upon graduation, I was doing better financially than any professional entry level job was offering, so I stayed in the business. Upon graduation, I moved to Dallas, and became a 3rd partner in my Uncle and Aunt's rep group. We were partners for 8 years, before my wife Lisa and I ventured out and started Cronan & Associates in 2000.

Q: How has the company changed over the years?

A: We saw a lot changes and challenges in our early years. We started Cronan & Associates in October 2000, and immediately saw the dot-com bust, then 9-11, then a few years later the 2008 recession. That made for a rough first decade! But, we moved forward, were fortunate enough to create a top notch and very comprehensive line package, added territory (from just North Texas to now covering TX, OK, AR, LA and MS), two showrooms, and a phenomenal 20 person team!

Q: What do you think is the secret to Cronan Associates longevity and success?

A: From my early years in the business, I learned that as a manufacturers rep, your reputation is everything. You always do the right thing. Especially in tough financial times, some reps choose to take shortcuts, sell product direct around dealers, etc. My Uncle always told me that those ways of doing business are never good for an independent reps business, and we need to always think long term. We have always believed that the dealer is our vital lifeline, and we protect them at all cost. The minute you fail to recognize that partnership, and make a bad decision or two, it can never be undone. Another key expectation in our company is that we will never be outworked. Even our most successful and highly paid reps run chair/other samples to customers in 100 degree heat (no fancy delivery services for us) and just go out of their way to support their customers. Our team has a very “roll up your sleeves” mentality, and not only do they make themselves available to help their customers, but, they make themselves available to help each other. We have a great culture, and our response time will be second to none.

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

A: The contract furniture industry is truly unique. Starting in my early days, and learning about the science of ergonomics, and how furniture can actually improve the work environment, I knew this would be a rewarding career. The thing that I like most today, is the diversity of businesses and people that I get to interact with on a daily basis. I always say that of many of the buildings that people just casually drive by everyday, I actually get to go in them, and understand what many of those companies do. And, we help them become more efficient and create better work environments. We get the opportunity to work with all influencers in our business, from dealers, to commercial real estate people, to general contractors, as well as A&D firms and end-users.



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

A: So much has changed since we started the company 21 years ago. Internet, social media, and so many cultural changes. We plan to stay on the leading edge of technology and continue to find innovative ways to get our unique message out there. We have a great team, and an incredible group of manufacturers. Our market has to know when, where and how to use our great product offering.

Q: If you could use just one word to describe Cronan Associates what would it be?

A: Persistence. We do not give up. There is always a way. Specifiers need us, and our manufacturers solutions. They may not know it yet, but, there is always something in our arsenal that can be used on their projects. It may not be furniture, but, it might be an acoustical solution, signage, lighting, messaging, space division or something else. If those folks aren't specifying our products now, we need to be in front of them, educating them on what we have to offer.

KEEPING CONNECTED

With the challenges that 2020 brought, it is more important than ever to "Keep Connected" to our clients, friends and colleagues. We have been simply inspired by all of the innovative ways our Rep Group friends have found to do just that! The pandemic hasn't slowed them down one bit, and relationships are still at the center of their strategy.

In the "Keeping Connected" section of Delve Magazine, we will highlight inspirational snapshots of what our Rep Group partners are up to, and how they are finding innovative ways to stay connected to their clients.

We hope you enjoy this new feature, and are inspired as much as we are!



Bill Bierer, Leah Pagano & Frankie Guaraca

Ice Cream Event With OM Seating – Bill Bierer & their local reps Gibson Interior Products – Leah Pagano and Frankie Guaraca in New Jersey.

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