

delve

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DUAL
BY UNIKA VAEV

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Laura Barski for Inscape, discusses the notion that 'reconfigurability' is the new way to go green.

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editor's note

Dear Reader,

The true meaning of sustainability is still evolving as innovators in our industry seek to understand how to reinvent how we impact the environment.

In this issue of Delve we highlight the unique ways that manufacturers, specifiers and designers approach sustainability. Together we are helping to shape a "greener" future and ensure our industry's longevity.

We invite you to dive in, and reach out to those whose stories inspire you!

Enjoy!

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

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**THE
MY RESOURCE LIBRARY
FAMILY**



AN INTRODUCTION TO WELL BUILDING STANDARD

A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW ON SUSTAINABILITY

Building design and construction are often defined by points in history. Our built environment has evolved over the centuries, and with each new building sources. The environment is a little less healthy and our world is a little less sustainable.

Over the past century, buildings were built primarily with wood, lath and plaster walls, lead paint and casement windows. These buildings included incandescent lighting and boiler systems. They were not efficient in conserving energy resources or providing us with healthy interiors. As we moved towards the middle to end of the 20th century, building design practices that were popular were using modern materials- concrete and steel dominated the construction, closed air systems that kept air contained was recirculated by heavy mechanical air processing and ventilation systems that maintained consistent temperatures regardless of the outside weather conditions. These buildings were designed without consideration for the environment, climate or most importantly the health of the occupants.

If you are familiar with LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environment Design) you know the intent was to create a building rating system that would emphasize the relationship between building materials, design, and their impact on the environment.

The LEED certificate program was the beginning of what we now think of when we think about sustainability. But this system and review lacked one component- Human health, social equality, and wellbeing.

In every article I write in regard to the built environment my emphasis is always



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.](#)

INDUSTRY HOT TOPICS

on the fact that buildings are built for people- We use buildings to protect us from the elements of mother nature. Our lives revolve around our built environment.

As LEED became more acceptable, other concerns were developing around how we use our buildings. Although the human factor was part of the standard it did not emphasize how people engage within these buildings. By using scientific research on all aspects of the human experience within the building envelope, WELL, was created to address these issues.

Like the USGBC the WELL Building Institute created the "world's first building standard to focus on enhancing people's health and wellbeing through the built environment". This global standard recognizes that although LEED works to ensure that we are designing a more sustainable building, through material testing and verification with the emphasis on the carbon footprint of a building, it does not look at the way people interact within these buildings as having a direct connection to sustainability.

This is where WELL fits in to the sustainability conversation. It looks at the following areas that can be assessed to determine if a particular building and its organization meets the criteria to achieve a WELL Building Standard. The 12 competencies for measuring health, and well-being for human and social capital-include Mind, Community, Movement, Water, Air, Light, Thermal Comfort, Nourishment, Sound and Materials.

Each of these competencies address specific elements of human interaction within our built environment. It takes into consideration the processes we use within our organizations and how they affect our health and well-being. This is part of the other side of the sustainability equation-protecting all aspects of our human experiences.

If you look specifically at our workplaces, our workplace environment is more than just the building. If we look at the HR policies in place, the room temperature, the furniture we use, the lighting both natural and artificial as well as the water and food available for us during our time at the office, there is a direct correlation to sustaining our well-being and health. By focusing on the wellbeing of our bodies, mind and spirit we are ready to address other issues that are disruptive to our world.

Office spaces alone are not the only places where WELL is being addressed. Hospitals, schools, restaurants and even sport venues are looking at the WELL standard as a way to monitor an organization's procedures and how their buildings effect our overall health and well-being.

The research from studies on global warming have shown there is an increase likely hood of other pandemics and health related crises resulting from the lack of sustainable environment. Our lives are at risk everyday due to the effects of climate change and limited resources.

But Sustainable building practices only focus on half of the equation for a fully sustainable ecosystem.

Human sustainability is the other half- What does this mean? It means we need to target inclusion, diversity and cultural awareness in order to create a fully sustainable world. Accepting our differences and celebrating them instead of disregarding them. Embracing nature, art and biophilia by bringing it into our buildings has a substantial benefit to our mental health. Being aware that our bodies need to have certain levels of natural light to regulate sleep and that having access to clean water and nutritious organic food is essential to our overall health. We need to design our interiors so that we emphasis movement and accessibility to encourage exercise. Our design aesthetic needs to incorporate artistic expression to celebrate our culture and encourage conversations that focus on our similarities as well as our differences. All of these things are directly related to making sustainability part of our daily life.

As the world looks for more ways to limit our impact on the environment and find more sustainable ways of living, our desire to create a world that is sustainable needs to go beyond the just looking at our carbon footprint. We need to look all of the factors that impact our lives. As we navigate the complexities of our relationship with our built environment and our health, we begin to recognize that building design can have a positive impact on our health and wellbeing.

The WELL building standard presents other ways to measure these positive conditions that can be implemented by organizations within the building. The Health and Wellbeing Rating was created in part because of the COVID-19 pandemic to address the procedures that specifically impact our health, safety, equity and performance. Allowing organizations to actively put into practice policies that can be reviewed and monitored by a third party to ensure that they are being followed has in itself created a more sustainable experience for the building's occupants.

Organizations and businesses that cultivate a culture that centers on humancentric practices, are aware that having a rating system that can be monitored creates a significant benefit that out ways any monetary costs for pursuing and achieving these ratings. By putting people and their relationship to the built environment first, companies around the world are doing their part to create a better place for the future of humanity and the planet that we call home.

For more information on the WELL Building Institute and what WELL offers please visit their website: www.wellcertified.com



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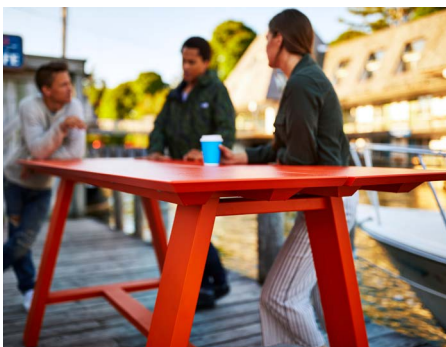
6 OF MRL'S FAVORITE PRODUCTS FROM ACROSS THE LIBRARY

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

HARVEST

LANDSCAPE FORMS

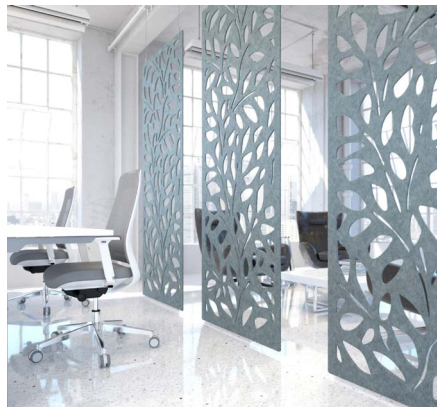
The Harvest table's generous size comfortably gathers four people on each side of the table in daylight or moonlight. An optional light spanning table center sets the mood—think candlelight or campfire.



RECYCLED

ANOVA FURNISHINGS

These environmentally friendly classics make a green statement without sacrificing good looks. Each bench and receptacle utilizes our recycled plastic lumber which is made from recycled material, and is guaranteed to stay looking new, year after year.



3F HANGING PANELS

AMQ

3F hanging panels can be installed to add privacy, divide space, soften sound pollution and for simple design enhancement. Made from 50% recycled plastic water bottles and 100% recyclable.



ENCLOSED RECYCLED RUBBER BULLETIN BOARD

GHENT

Go Green with Ghent's Recycled Rubber Bulletin Boards. Made with 90% recycled materials, this board is sure to pass any green standard. The textured surface is fashioned to withstand the toughest conditions and is paired with a aluminum or wood frame to match any interior.

A.I. STOOL RECYCLED

KARTELL FURNITURE

The A.I. family is growing, with the addition of A.I. STOOL RECYCLED, a product made from recycled material with a clear focus on comfort thanks to a broad, welcoming seat. Available in two heights to meet all needs.



EXCHANGE 2X3

ALLSEATING

Designed in collaboration with Nick Gillissie, Exchange consists of seven injection-molded recycled plastic components, equating to 16 standard configurations and over 2,725 possibilities. An alternative to traditional workstations and boardrooms, Exchange supports overall wellness by promoting movement and collaboration.



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Get real support from our human helpdesk for content and tech issues so you can move past roadblocks quickly.



By Michelle Warren

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

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

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



**Women in the
Public Sector
Eileen Kent,
Federal Sales Sherpa**

Another Federal Sales year is behind us and it sure was a busy one!! In honor of a new fiscal year, I thought I would take an opportunity to introduce you to a new friend and fabulous woman in Public Sector, Eileen Kent. Eileen has a long career of selling to the Federal Government, has owned her own consulting company for over 10 years, and is known as the Federal Sales Sherpa to those who have partnered with her to grow Federal Sales. I hope this interview inspires women (and men) to consider Public Sector opportunities as you grow in your career.

Michelle: Eileen, I am so excited to get to chat with you and learn more about your career in Public Sector! I know your story, but what were the contributing factors that led you to a career in the Public Sector?

Eileen: When the world turned upside-down. I was working at Brook Furniture Rental as Director of Sales – Midwest out of Chicago and my showroom was literally a block from the Sears Tower. In my previous work, I was a Public Information Officer responsible for evacuating the entire City in an emergency and on the morning of September 11, 2001, I walked my team out of downtown Chicago – leaving our cars parked in the lots and the showroom lights on. We walked 5 miles home in our heels that day.

The owner of the company called me and sent me on what he called, “The Lewis and Clark Expedition – You’re going to Sell to the Federal Government.” I had a ticket to DC, then to San Francisco, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Dallas, Atlanta and home to Chicago – then back around again – literally walking halls of federal buildings close to where our distribution centers were located – 8 out of 9 weeks on the road for a year. I even walked the halls of the Pentagon as a sign-maker got me in. I have so many stories.

INDUSTRY HOT TOPICS

I worked with each PM in each City for our company, and Michelle Carnabucci was our Executive in DC and together we uncovered and found the new team handling the “undisclosed location” of Homeland Security. We delivered the first 30 workstations to the very first people in their very first temporary office in 2002. After a year or two after I was on my way, Michelle captured from the lead who pointed us to DHS a building re-stack. She took that lead and really built a nice piece of business from it. I'm so proud of her for that accomplishment. But it took a year of traveling the country – to find that one key person at DHS.

Michelle: Okay, so I think we need to spend more time together so I can hear “the stories” as I am sure they are fascinating!! But so far, wow! You were thrown into selling to the Federal Government and doing new business development when the world was right in the middle of changing, what an incredible story and accomplishment. So, that was the beginning, but when did you know you were in Public Sector as a career vs a job?

Eileen: After being in the field for 12 months literally walking halls, building relationships and doing whatever it took to close deals that were “under the radar” – I was invited by Fedmarket.com / Richard White, to build “The Federal Sales Academy” in Bethesda, MD together and I traveled the country for 8 years training federal sales, proposal writing and GSA Schedule contracting. I trained a variety of teams in the furniture industry too. Even GSA itself had me speak at their Industry Days and at their QPC Holiday event in Crystal City to the Furniture Center attendees. That's when people started to call me “The Federal Sales Sherpa.” At the GSA Events in San Antonio, San Diego, and Orlando – I would be either helping a company with their booth or walking down the aisles and someone would point and say, “There's my SHERPA!” And then it stuck.

Michelle: You have definitely built a great reputation within our industry and GSA and a long career with a Public Sector Focus. You are seen as a successful woman in Public Sector, what are the key influential people or factors that supported your success?

Eileen: Persistence, Patience and Perseverance. Constant curiosity and courageously asking questions and offering solutions to federal customer needs – whether I have what they need – or I bring in a partner. You've got to get OUT there. And during a pandemic, you then need to create forums to bring people into your virtual world through education, information, video tours, innovation, networking, teaming partners, associations, and ideas.

Michelle: As you look back over the almost 20 years, were there any twists or turns that developed that helped you to learn along the way that you did not anticipate?

Eileen: In the beginning, like most people, I thought it was about bidding. Nope. It's ALL about relationships.....relationships.... relationships.

In the beginning, it took multiple visits to get the clients to tell me their current vendors, preferred methods of purchasing and their preferred furniture choices. NOW, the data is available, and I help people learn without leaving the comfort of their office, EXACTLY what people are buying, how they're buying and which vendors they prefer. The truth is out there and it's AWESOME!

Michelle: Eileen, not only are you a successful woman in Public Sector, you are also a successful woman ENTREPRENEUR. Can you share with us a little about your company, why you started it and what it is like to be a woman entrepreneur with a focus on helping people with Public Sector?

Eileen: That's so nice of you to say those kind words. Starting a business is not for the faint of heart. You have to be courageous and completely believe in what you have to offer. Especially in the realm of the government contracting consulting world. There are many, MANY great resources, consultants and corporations serving contractors. When I started, I thought I would be performing my regular training to groups of people, but the individual companies were asking me to work with them one-on-one specifically in a Chief Growth Officer role telling them one-on-one what to DO. But, they didn't have the budget for a full-time person, so that's when I created the Three-Step program which includes training on the game, understanding the people who are making the decisions and the contract vehicles they like to use so they don't have to post everything in the public bid sites. They needed to see and understand the data and know which contract vehicles and agencies to target in the coming year specific to their business expertise and offerings. Then they needed a plan to execute. I had done it for several companies capturing tens of millions for them, so I built The Three-Step program around what I did for the companies I was selling for and have since performed 350 programs for companies as small as one or two people - to huge prime contractors.



Being an entrepreneur takes the following:

1. Having a product or services you believe in 100% wholeheartedly.
2. Being an evangelist about what you have to offer, telling everyone and anyone about how you can help make their lives better, safer, and successful with your products and services.
3. Delivering perfectly and on-time without fail, every time.
4. Having a support network of teaming partners who will refer you with all their hearts and willing to introduce you to everyone they know.
5. Having a great relationship with your bank and quick access to funds during the tough times - and the growth times. And while I'm talking about money - obtain 100% payment up front. Especially at the beginning. You don't have time or resources to perform collections. Your bankers will love that policy.
6. Building a huge ecosystem of like-minded companies that you can offer as help to your clients when they need something - you don't offer.
7. Putting yourself out there on LinkedIn and other social media sites to gain brand recognition.
8. Give potential clients 60 minutes of your time - as long as you can get a 10-minute commercial about what you do in there. You give - but you also get something out of those "pick your brain" meetings too.
9. Be Kind to everyone you encounter whether they're a client or not.
10. Be Generous to your customers - give them what they paid for - AND some bonus surprises at the end. Everyone loves a surprise.

Michelle: From a person who loves data (but not necessarily digging for it) what you do is so important and such a huge asset, so we thank you for what you are offering to customers. Based

on what I know, the other women I have interviewed and our discussion so far, it appears that Public Sector is favorable to women. How do you see the opportunity for women in Public Sector?

Eileen: Some people have different opinions and experiences working as a woman in the Public Sector. Personally, I love it because I meet a lot of women in executive, director, decision maker positions and I work with a lot of women federal sales, proposal writer, back office, sales VPs, program and project managers working side-by-side. Many people consider this an "old boys' network", but I don't. I've met a LOT of fantastic women in the industry - and women who thrive in this industry. In the public sector you'll see many, MANY more women who have broken the ceiling as Administrators, Department Directors, Generals and they are fantastic leaders who are encouraging more and more women to "Lean Into" the public sector. I never leaned into anything. I got up on the table and shouted "I'm Here! Let me HELP" and I've been lucky to say I've thrived in this industry for over 20 years now. Jump in -- the water is fine!

However, when it comes to woman owned small businesses in Federal, I think it APPEARS that more and more business can be sole sourced to women owned small businesses and they're talking about it at the top, but unfortunately, I look at the data on behalf of the companies who hire me to see who buys what they sell, how they buy it, what contracts and set asides they prefer. The government has a goal of 5% for WOSBs and they have rules they've changed to give WOSBs an advantage through sole source . . . but I gotta tell you, it isn't happening as fast as we'd wish. They are barely making their WOSB goals. The VA is focused on considering SDVOSBs First - via the Supreme Court Decision called the "Kingdomware Decision" and other agencies are really trying to beef up their awards to 8a minority owned companies. There is an Executive Order that is looking to boost 8a, WOSB, EDWOSB and Disadvantaged businesses, but I say, focus on leading with your capabilities and best values, THEN, close them with your set asides depending on which ones THEY prefer to use.

I performed a quick - quick data dip of contracting data pulled from SAM.gov of every contract with a NAICS description with the word Furniture in it from October 1, 2020-February 25, 2022, so about 16 months.

There were a Billion Dollars reported in SAM by Contracts with the word "furniture" in the NAICS. They met their goal of awarding 5% to Women - in purchases of furniture "tagged" in the data under a NAICS Code with the word Furniture in it.

**INDUSTRY
HOT TOPICS**

BY NAICS DESCRIPTION OCT 1, 2020-FEB 25 2022	Sum of Dollars Obligated
FURNITURE MERCHANT WHOLESALERS	\$ 42,096,289.45
FURNITURE STORES	\$ 2,485,445.65
HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE (EXCEPT WOOD AND METAL) MANUFACTURING	\$ 3,712,420.49
INSTITUTIONAL FURNITURE MANUFACTURING	\$ 117,582,593.37
LABORATORY APPARATUS AND FURNITURE MANUFACTURING	\$ 6,404,236.29
METAL HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE MANUFACTURING	\$ 13,360,761.44
NONUPHOLSTERED WOOD HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE MANUFACTURING	\$ 161,426,664.45
OFFICE FURNITURE (EXCEPT WOOD) MANUFACTURING	\$ 468,258,406.35
REUPHOLSTERY AND FURNITURE REPAIR	\$ 1,112,484.47
UPHOLSTERED HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE MANUFACTURING	\$ 9,121,917.53
WOOD OFFICE FURNITURE MANUFACTURING	\$ 180,953,757.61
Grand Total	\$ 1,006,514,977.10

Here is the breakdown by NAICS – North American Industry Classification Codes.

BY SMALL BUSINESS SET ASIDE	TOTAL SPEND
8(A) SOLE SOURCE	\$ 35,542,603.04
8A COMPETED	\$ 10,601,627.48
BUY INDIAN	\$ 303,319.18
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED WOMEN OWNED SMALL BUSINESS	\$ 69,496.03
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED WOMEN OWNED SMALL BUSINESS SOLE SOURCE	\$ 8,506.70
HUBZONE SET-ASIDE	\$ 378,912.72
HUBZONE SOLE SOURCE	\$ 392,716.94
INDIAN ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE	\$ 2,682.36
INDIAN SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE	\$ 1,899,326.33
NO SET ASIDE USED.	\$ 312,497,272.69
SDVOSB SOLE SOURCE	\$ 1,980,183.66
SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN OWNED SMALL BUSINESS SET-ASIDE	\$ 27,714,615.21
SMALL BUSINESS SET ASIDE - PARTIAL	\$ 18,212,942.73
SMALL BUSINESS SET ASIDE - TOTAL	\$ 103,242,999.78
VETERAN SET ASIDE	\$ (39,374.96)
WOMEN OWNED SMALL BUSINESS	\$ (1,097,431.75) Yikes, I wonder what happened here?
WOMEN OWNED SMALL BUSINESS SOLE SOURCE	\$ 92,472.85
No Set Aside Entered	\$ 494,712,106.11
Grand Total	\$ 1,006,514,977.10

This is the Set aside breakdown – they're still shy to actually set aside contracts for WOSBs.

Is the Awardee WOSB? NOT a set aside, just are they WOSBs?	TOTAL SPEND BET OCT 1, 2020-FEB 25, 2022,
NO	\$ 950,118,972.95 / 94.5%
YES	\$ 56,396,613.99 / 5.5%
Grand Total	\$ 1,006,514,977.10

But if we just look at the Q/A "Is the vendor a WOSB?" These are how the numbers shake out.

They met their goal of awarding 5% to Women – in purchases of furniture "tagged" in the data under a NAICS Code with the word Furniture In it.

Michelle: See, I love data and what it can uncover!!! I think we could talk all day about WOSBs and set asides, etc so maybe we will need to do another article on that. Before we end, I would love some recommendations from you to help anyone interested in a career in Public Sector. What is one piece of advice you have for women wanting to develop a career in Public Sector?

Eileen: Get Training from an Expert who has walked those halls, won and lost. The investment in that custom one-on-one training will save you at least a year of wandering, wondering, guessing, and writing loser blind bid proposals.

**INDUSTRY
HOT TOPICS**

Michelle: Great advice. I have become a big fan of coaching over the past 2 years as I have been building my company. Also, a big fan of having a mentor and being a mentor!! What one book would you recommend for a woman who is pursuing a career in Public Sector?

Eileen: Judy Bradt's ["Government Contracting Made Easier"](#) as she says, because it'll NEVER be easy, but she can help you make it easier!

Michelle: I have that book and I must admit it is dog eared and highlighted in quite a lot of places. What one podcast would you recommend for a woman who is pursuing a career in Public Sector?

Eileen: Cheryl McCant's ["Marketing Mama"](#)

I've been a guest on a LOT of others' podcasts and training forums with the PTACs.

Here are a couple - one from the Catalyst Center and another I did just last month with the IOWA PTAC:

["The Seven Truths of Federal Contracting" - The Catalyst Center in Huntsville, AL - 2021](#)

["Marketing Opens Doors for Sales" - IOWA PTAC -2022](#)

["To Bid or Not to Bid-That's the \\$65,000 Question" - The Catalyst Center in Huntsville, AL - Aug 25 2022](#)

Michelle: Eileen, I cannot thank you enough for sharing some of your story and wisdom with us. It has been a pleasure getting to know you. You have shared your time with me and encouraged me individually and through this interview.

Eileen: Thank YOU, Michelle for bringing the reality of the Public Sector to new and upcoming Federal Contractors. Please feel free to have people connect with me on LinkedIn. I provide inspirational, educational and informational posts every single day.

If you know anyone who you think we should interview as a successful woman in Public Sector, please let me know. I love to meet new friends and share their stories and insight with you.



Eileen Kent

**"The Federal Sales Sherpa", President, Custom Keynotes, LLC
Sales Strategist, National Seminar Leader, Keynote, Trainer**

If you're one of the 10,000 students over the past 20 years who have seen Eileen Kent through a booked keynote, a public class or in a webinar, you know she is passionate about helping executives learn the game of how to win federal contracts.

Eileen has taught in Atlanta, Chicago, Vegas, LA, San Diego, San Francisco, Denver, Dallas, Houston, Orlando, New York, Boston, St. Louis, Detroit, Indianapolis, Phoenix, and, of course Washington, DC.

When training, Eileen's personal focus is to modify the material for her audience so that she will always: "Educate the New, Motivate the Frustrated and Validate the Experienced."

Kent's claim to fame includes setting up the first 30 workstations in an "undisclosed location" of the Department of Homeland Security.

Another claim to fame is managing a national sales effort for a large Midwest roofing contractor which captured over \$65M in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funding between February 2009 and December 2010.

Since she opened her own consulting business 10 years ago, Eileen has built custom federal sales action plans through her Three-Step program for over 350 companies.

The unique angle Eileen Kent brings to the classroom is real experience selling to the federal government which includes her own personal stories in the field, her costly "detours" and how to avoid them yourself.



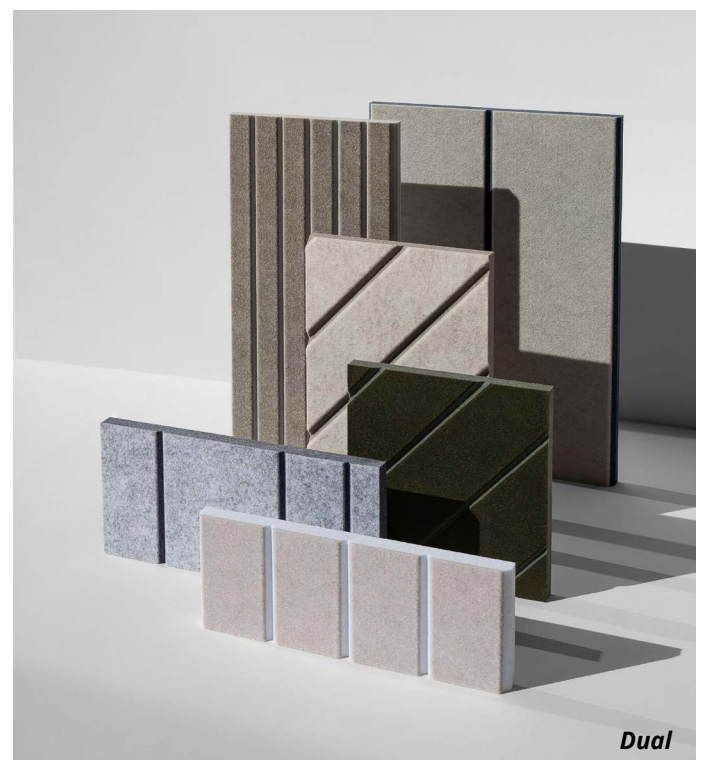
ecoustic® Dual began as a collection of acoustic panels offering up to 7,700 bespoke design and color combinations of your choice. As the name suggests, Duo features v-grooves with a two-tone color effect produced from our ecoustic® Felt fabric (33 colors) laminated onto our Cradle-to-Cradle Certified 12mm Solid Color acoustic panels (21 colors).

Our initial collection of Dual includes 7 classic elegant architectural lines such as linear, diagonal and check forms. Dual achieves NRC 0.4 sound absorption and is low VOC and Declare certified.

The Next Generation

We will soon release a new, more unique collection of designs for ecoustic® Dual, by long term collaborators Adam Cornish and Tom Skeeahan, along with Carol Debono from Instyle's inhouse design studio. The new large-scale Dual designs offer four distinct styles; however, each are inspired by our surroundings and have a dynamic quality. Each of these styles is unique utilizing the latest, state of the art,

manufacturing technology to achieve designs previously unattainable.





Ecoustic Dual Wave

Rain, designed by Adam Cornish, is inspired by the emotional experience of watching rain, countless water droplets moving at great speed and often skewed by the accompanying wind. Rain aims to capture this dynamic like a delayed shutter speed, the individual droplets transform into streaking geometric lines fading and blending the start and finish of each droplet.

Twist, design by Tom Skeehan, is informed by nature and the movement of water. With changing seasons, rainfall and snowmelt, water has a fluidity that changes direction or course.

Wave is designed by Carol Debono, from Instyle's design studio. As a printmaker, Carol explored the capabilities of the v-groove process including thick and thin lino cuts that played with light and shadow. The soft, organic, free-flowing lines were created by hand cutting.

Pivot is a variation of Instyle's Axis printed panels. Developed from a single line sketch, Pivot alters the rules of geometry by changing 90-degree angles to create playful and unpredictable relationships from one shape to another. Reminiscent of architectural diagrams, straight lines echo man-made forms and tension through structure, while the resulting shapes cascade into each other to create an overall sense of rhythmic flow.

The Design Process

A strength of the Instyle collection is its development as a 'collective' through close collaboration between design, sales and Managing Director Michael Fitzsimons. This ensures that each product aligns with Instyle's brand and addresses a need based on market research.

Instyle's signature style focuses on quality, simplicity and longevity, as well as, how the product looks, feels and performs in balance with refined, pared back designs to suit the current climate. Inspiration is often cultural rather than a literal interpretation of things. Their designers often get ideas from real life and abstract them at the start of the design process.

New developments come from many different starting points such as meeting a price point, developing a new, as yet untried material or application type construction. The joy is to take any one of these through the development process and create something new that can ultimately solve a problem for a designer, enhance an interior, perform well and be kind to the environment.

Quality and performance are paramount, no matter how much an aesthetic is inspiring, it must meet Instyle's benchmark performance standards, or it will not be developed further.

unika vaev



James Carlyle

James Carlyle WITH MRG SOUTH

a lineup of manufacturers that solve for a variety of design considerations, my inclination was to highlight as much product as I could for dealer partners and A&D. However, I realize it is much more complex to tie our manufacturers' products to a project in a way that creates an impactful user experience.

Often in this industry, we cultivate relationships over months, even years. There may not be an immediate need to collaborate, but when the time comes, we see the time we've invested in these relationships pay off. In my previous role, I met a corporate-interiors team leader for a major design firm based in Atlanta. Her key contact was one of my team members. Over the next four years, we would greet each other at networking events and industry gatherings. And one of the first calls I made when I joined MRG was to her, learning she'd also moved into a new position with an Atlanta-based dealer.

As a 24-year veteran in the commercial interiors space, I spend a lot of time considering what creates positive impact on the spaces I help furnish and the people who occupy them. Now that I am an independent manufacturer's representative after spending nearly two decades in the contract-dealer channel, I have a new perspective on how much goes on behind the scenes to create lasting impact.

"One of my favorite parts of our business is we get to collaborate with teams of creative and talented individuals who understand how to take an organization's goals to create a space that supports those goals. In my past life as a dealer, it felt like I was very much a part of this important dialogue with clients."

Moving into the world of independent manufacturers rep at MRG Southeast two years ago, I considered how I was going to earn my seat at the table with these key decision makers. With

This individual graciously offered her time to determine how we could best support each other going forward. She was just as interested in supporting me as a professional as I am in supporting her and her team. She's never participated in one of my lunch-and-learn presentations, but even without the in-depth product overviews, she is one of my biggest supporters and engages me often.

Shortly after our first meeting in our respective new roles, I had an epiphany: a major component of my role as a manufacturer's representative is being a specifier. I view myself as a product specialist and factory liaison to both dealers and A&D alike. I measure the health or success of this role not by the number of product presentations I give, but by the number of calls I get asking, "do you have something that will solve my design problem?"

The power of a relationship such as the one I have described goes beyond the tchotchkes and the occasional Power Point presentation accompanied by taco bar. We have developed a level of trust and understanding that she knows my role goes much deeper than "representative." Our relationship extends beyond that to collaborator, cheerleader, and, yes, specifier.





Flex Seating Lounge by HPFI

HIGH POINT FURNITURE INDUSTRIES. SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

For more than 60 years, HPFI® (High Point Furniture Industries) has been building furniture in the United States with respect to our environment and our community. As a world-class manufacturing operation, we strive to reduce and to eliminate impact on our environment. We recycle and reuse wherever possible. When viable and acceptable to our customers, we incorporate recycled and recyclable materials into our finished products.

Examples of our efforts include:

- Laminated boards used in our casegood products come from suppliers that meet Sustainable Forestry Initiatives (SFI) standards and/or Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC). The boards exceed 80% pre-consumer recycled wood fibers and conform to California Air Resource Board (CARB ATCM Phase II) regulations and subsequently EPA regulation TSCA Title VI for formaldehyde emissions.

- Engineered wood components for upholstered seating products meet SFI standards and comply with California Air Resource Board ATCM Phase II and EPA TSCA Title VI regulations.
- Seating foam is CFC-free and includes rapidly renewable bio-based materials.
- Fabrics and other components for upholstered seating do not contain added fire retardant (FR) materials and meet California Assembly Bill 2998.
- Dust collection systems are in place to collect residual wood released during processing of raw wood materials into finished components for final assembly. The collected sawdust is reused for generating fuel, reducing waste as well as conserving another valuable resource, petroleum.

HPFI

- Proper finishing equipment is installed and maintained to collect any negative-impact materials. Environmental professionals that specialize in safe and effective handling of such materials collect those bulk materials.
- HPFI actively markets fabrics that are both 100% recycled (or bio-based) as well as completely recyclable (or compostable). These fabrics are manufactured from post-consumer polyester (waste material left over once a consumer has used a product, such as a soda bottle) and post-industrial polyester (waste generated by an industrial process before the polyester is used by a consumer). In Life Cycle Assessments, some recycled fabrics showed significantly lower environmental impact than fabrics made with virgin polyester across all twelve of the categories studied.
- All corrugated cardboard material and containers used in the packaging and transport of our furniture products are made with a minimum of 40% recycled material (post-consumer and/or post-industrial) and meets standard performance requirements.

HPFI associates follow our established environmentally-friendly practices:

- We utilize a 4-day manufacturing standard work week, thereby reducing fuel consumption in both operations and commuting
- Color brochures which are printed are produced using FSC-certified paper
- Multiple collection bins are throughout our facilities for recycling and diversion of all production materials from landfills
- Office paper, bottles, cans, etc. are collected in our offices for recycling

Additionally, HPFI® strives to maintain a culture of integrity and social accountability as part of our sustainability strategy. This culture depends upon treating our associates

and business partners with respect and fairness, being open and honest, and following all laws and regulations. We have a published Social Responsibility policy to ensure that we meet and uphold this policy of social accountability. Our Social Responsibility policy includes the following elements:

- HPFI will not engage in or support the use of involuntary labor.
- Child labor is prohibited. "Child" is defined as a person younger than fifteen (15) years of age. The State of North Carolina law only allows 15-year-olds in certain occupations.
- HPFI provides a safe and healthy workplace in compliance with OSHA and other applicable regulations. All associates will have access to potable water and sanitary facilities, adequate lighting and ventilation. HPFI will be proactive to prevent potential accidents and injury to employee's health.
- HPFI respects the rights of associates to form, join, organize and bargain collectively in a lawful and peaceful manner without penalty.
- HPFI does not discriminate or support discrimination in the hiring and employment practices including salary, benefits, promotion, discipline, termination or retirement based on race, national origin, religion, age, gender, disability or sexual orientation. HPFI is an equal employment opportunity employer.
- HPFI treats all associates with dignity and respect and will not engage in or tolerate corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion, verbal abuse, sexual harassment or psychological abuse.
- HPFI respects the right of associates to a living wage by complying with all state and federal wage and hour laws, including those relating to wages, overtime, hours worked and provide all legally mandated benefits and ensuring that we meet comparable industry minimums. Except in

HPFi

extraordinary business conditions, HPFi will not require employees to work more than 48 hours. In addition, except under extraordinary business conditions, associates will be entitled to at least one day off in every seven-day period. HPFi compensates associates for overtime hours as required by law.

- HPFi has an open-door policy and provide a confidential means for associates to report non-compliances and address concerns and take corrective action when needed. HPFi is open to regular outside communication, provide access for verification to auditors and maintain records to demonstrate compliance with requirements.
- HPFi requires its business partners to comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Business will be required to comply with all our published and shared standards.
- HPFi ensures that the provisions of these standards are

communicated to associates by posting a copy of these standards in a prominent area and by posting on company website.

- Associates of HPFi are prohibited from receiving gifts from business partners. Gifts should never be offered or received during a bidding process.

At HPFi, we understand the future does not belong to us, nor does the earth, nor its resources. The maintenance of our environment and a commitment to sustainability, including our human resources, is an ongoing responsibility that we share with every person, organization and industry enjoying the abundance of this earth. **We pledge to continually respect our resources and build community for those of us here today and for those who will follow.**



4+ Relax & Averio Chairs
Dauphin's furniture product line is BIFMA level and Clean Air Gold certified. Sustainable materials: FSC certified wood, water-based glues, and low-emitting materials.

OVERCOMING SUSTAINABILITY ROADBLOCKS

Why many contractors can't make the switch to green construction despite concerns about global warming.

BY DAUPHIN AMERICAS

Sustainable architecture challenges architects to produce structures and designs that reduce the negative impact on ecosystems and the community at large. Why this poses a challenge is the crux of this article. Although architects and designers have made great strides in the past years in many

areas of environmental design—such as LEED and WELL certifications—there is a greater need to form a coalition amongst developers, architects, and end-users to build sustainable futures.

LEED Rating and Why it is Desirable

[The U.S Green Building Council \(USGBC\)](#) advocates for sustainable, prosperous building culture and has developed a framework for energy and a cost-efficient building known as [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design \(LEED\)](#). Energy-efficient buildings are one of the main ways we can counteract and, at times, reverse the devastating effects of global warming and the overuse of fossil fuels, but a LEED-certified building offers many more advantages for the business owner:

1. Competitive Edge: Sustainability is the buzzword of this era, and companies that accelerate the sustainability movement are more likely to gain support from clients.

2. More tenants - and happier ones: The demand for green buildings is higher every day; research shows that green buildings enjoy a [20% more occupation rate](#), **Health:** LEED-certified buildings contribute not only to a healthier planet but also to healthier people.

Adobe Systems is the first major corporation in the US to obtain a platinum-status LEED rating. The technology giant has reduced their water use by 22%, landscape water use by 76%, electricity by 35%, and natural gas by 41% since they began making gradual changes, back in 2001. A laudable advance for the sustainability movement.

Other large companies, such as Microsoft, have pledged to become carbon negative by 2030 and to eliminate their historical carbon footprint by 2050. The bar has been set high and many other companies are following suit. LinkedIn, for example, has accepted the challenge. You can see the proposal for their next construction project, a carbon-negative office space, [here](#). How are they going to do it? The first step is focused on construction materials.

As a high-profile company, LinkedIn has been able to procure sustainable materials but that is not the reality for many other companies due to the low availability of these materials; this, teamed with issues of supply and demand, costs, and the lack of education, means that architects have a long way to go before sustainable construction becomes the norm.

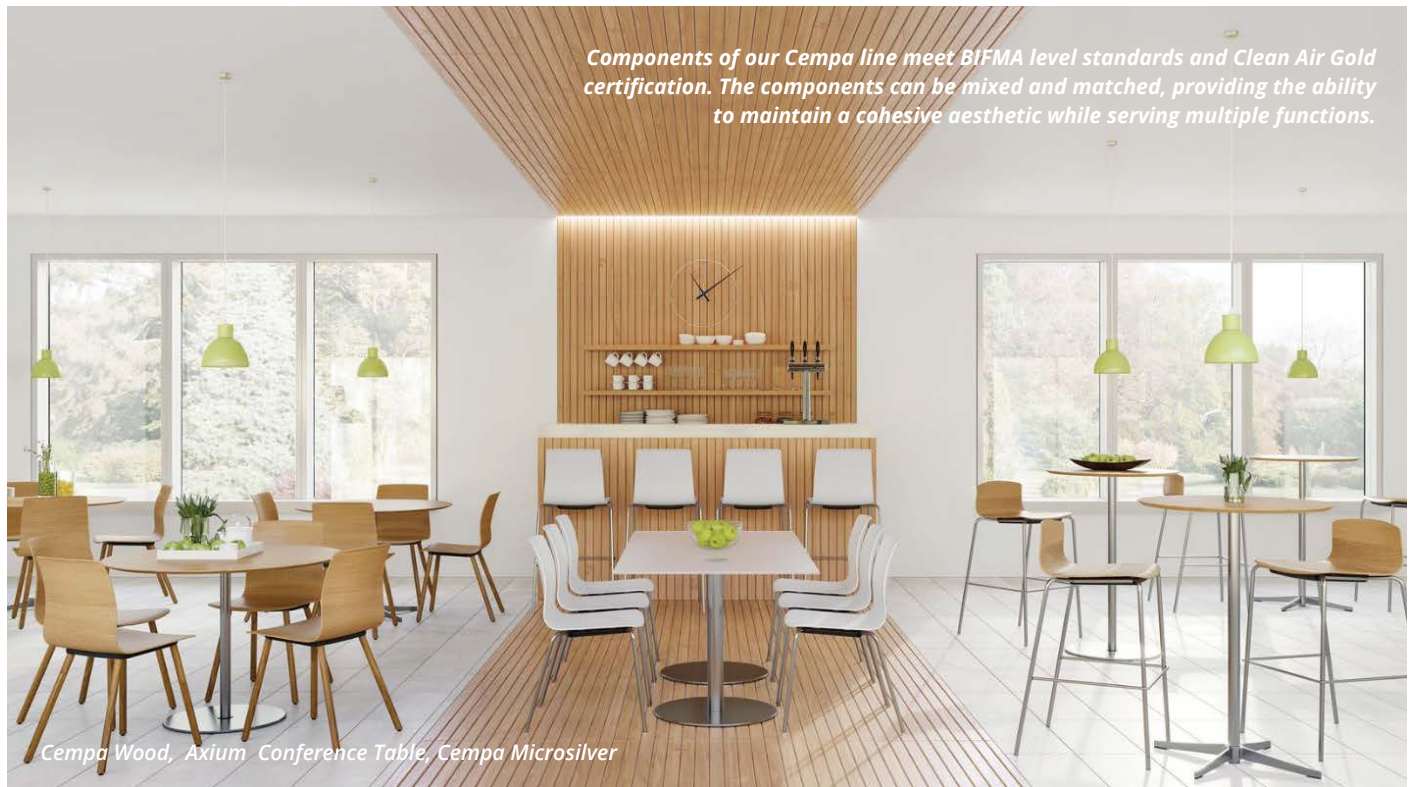
That said, Laura Soma, a sustainability expert at GLY Construction, affirms that: “[she is] seeing an increase in the number of companies who have their sustainability practices, guidelines, and by-laws. It is becoming a common culture. Today, sustainability is more about what the building occupants want and what companies need to provide to their workers to be premier employers. It is part of the next generation of business owners and developers.”

Availability of Low-Carbon Materials

From 1995 to 2015, greenhouse gas emissions from just material production increased by 120%. In 2018, the construction industry accounted for 39% of energy and process-related CO2 emissions of which 11% was for the production of materials such as steel, cement, and glass. However, green alternatives are not as readily available and affordable as we had expected.

Construction materials use energy, translated as carbon emissions, from the point of extraction of the raw materials to the transport of the final products to the building site where they will be installed. The accumulation of these carbon emissions during these phases is known as ‘embodied carbon.’ The focus of the shift is on using carbon-sequestering materials as opposed to carbon-expensive materials, but carbon sink and low-carbon materials are still not as readily available as their traditional counterparts.

The distribution of sustainable concrete, glass, and steel is almost always via small, independent wholesalers with a sustainability agenda, rather than mainstream suppliers. So, while we can argue that sustainable materials are indeed available, at the moment, they remain in the hands of small project developers and homeowners who often inadvertently counteract their good intentions as the materials need to be sourced from small-scale suppliers which are not currently ubiquitous.



The Supply and Demand Paradox

Inadvertently, 'green' projects can contribute to a higher carbon footprint. The materials must be procured, produced, and transported on-demand, tailored to project-specific criteria. So while the materials themselves for the construction project can be considered 'green,' their embodied carbon is oftentimes higher than that of mainstream options.

As the demand for sustainable materials increases, the embodied carbon they carry will go down, and we will be able to consider them truly green. We can look to solar energy for an idea of how long this may take. The photovoltaic panel was first used commercially with the launch of the US Vanguard 1 satellite in 1958. More than 60 years have passed and while it is true that prices are decreasing, only projects with substantially high budgets are currently able to incorporate them, so it is unlikely that the procurement, production, and deployment of carbon-neutral construction materials will overtake traditional ones in the race to sustainability in the near future.

The Economic Barrier to Sustainability

Arguably, the financial barrier is the greatest hurdle to 100% sustainable construction. As with solar panels, whose price has dropped from \$4.9 per watt in 1995 to just \$0.2 in 2020, the price of ecological construction materials becomes more and more attainable to the masses with time.

However, it is not a question of prices dropping overnight, but a gradual process.

While it is no mystery that in the long-term, sustainable features reduce overall costs, the initial investment is what makes the construction industry reluctant to make the change on a large scale. Adobe and Microsoft have led the way with regards to energy-efficient construction, but there is significant doubt as to whether sustainable construction yields a positive return on investment, as discovered in this article.

According to the USGBC, the initial investment in building sustainably is between 2-3% more costly than traditional construction. The fact that many large-scale development projects move millions of dollars is of significance even when talking about two or three percent. Google how to save costs in construction and there are 385 million results compared with 84 million for eco-friendly construction.

On the flip-side, Mary Tappouni, a consultant in green construction, argues that cost is not a barrier to sustainability. *"[The biggest myth about green construction is] that it costs more, which it doesn't have to, and that it's all about the environment, which it isn't. We preach the three "Ps" of people, planet, and profit. I firmly believe that you can't sacrifice any of those and be successful."*

The Role of Education and Training

UNESCO has implemented a proposal, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and offers innovative approaches for educational development within the realm of construction and is incorporated across many education systems, including the University of Michigan which is well-known for its considerations towards a more sustainable future in construction. It aims to provide the construction industry with leaders that are equipped to tackle the problems that the depletion of fossil fuels poses.

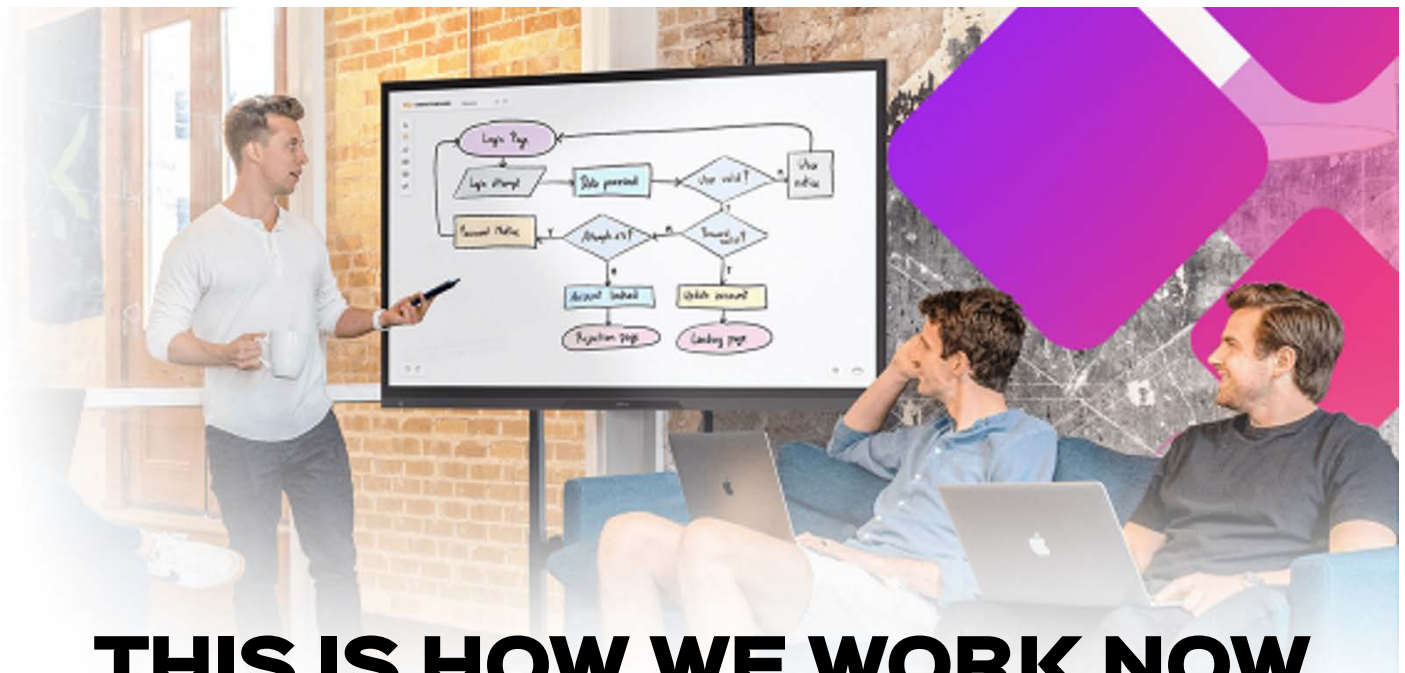
One thing is education amongst the new generations of construction industry professionals - a relatively painless task given that it is the younger generations that are the driving force behind sustainable development. Young people are more connected than ever and sensitive to popularized issues, and people under 30 years of age constitute an impressive 50.5% of the global population according to UNESCO, so it's easy to comprehend their influence.

What is the Outlook for Sustainability in the Near Future?
There is hope...

Currently, it may be fair to say that architects are facing a small amount of friction due to financial constraints and a lack of complete and thorough training. But as sustainability becomes the core of future development, training will increase, and the low-carbon alternatives to steel, glass, and concrete will abound in the marketplace - at a fraction of the current cost.

We have seen how new technology and practices always face teething problems in the earlier stages, but those creases are generally ironed out as they gain traction - in this instance, sustainability is a cause that features highly on big developers' agendas, such as those of Adobe and LinkedIn. And when giants pave the way for success, everybody else follows. Prepare to see sustainability enter our field of vision on a large scale.





THIS IS HOW WE WORK NOW

BY DOUG GREGORY

Welcome to the new normal. We all thought working from home was going to be temporary, just to get us through a tough time. Wait it out and soon work will be back to the way it was. A 1950's command-and-control mindset in a 2022 cloud-based world.

If you haven't seen the brilliant video [This is How We Work Now](#) from [upwork.com](#) poking fun at corporate-think to get "butts in the seats", you owe it to yourself to check it out. Our collective pandemic experience exposed the myths binding our 2019 work model together, and now corporate America is shocked that its workforce doesn't want to return to playing its game.

Myth #1: Build it and They Will Come

The best knowledge workers are in fact not going to put up with pre-pandemic work norms. Fully 85% of the best-performing knowledge workers indicate they want to control when and where they work. This is how we work now.

The world of work experienced an earthquake, and it is not over. The underlying foundations of the work model are in seismic shift. We need to look hard at the new realities of work, what our customers need, and delivering on a value proposition based on these new realities.

Myth #2: All You Need is Space

Commercial real estate is experiencing severe economic pressure as organizations adapt to new work models instead of plowing capital into underutilized facilities. Facilities that don't support the same function as a couple of years ago are getting axed. Even tech companies are reducing staff and shedding buildings. Just what is it workers wanted to return to so badly?

Remember Hub+Spoke? Easier said than done. Just move these 20-story buildings from this zip code to that one. Flexible spaces are all the rage, but space strategies within organizations don't neatly fit the new model. And, they don't solve the supposed driver of wanting face-to-face experiences with the team.

Myth #3: We Need Productivity

In reality, productivity is at an all-time high. Go ahead – look it up. It may not feel like it; we may not be able to sense it like we used to; we may not be as creative as we could be. The facts are that being in the same room is not a prerequisite for being productive. Workers jump through hoops to find work-around's to overcome poor work process design, but they're figuring out how to be productive.



Are we good at measuring productivity? Many say “no”, we really don’t have a clue how to measure productivity in the digital world of 2022.

Myth #4: You Miss Us!

Employee empowerment means more than just making sure I get fancy coffee or a locker at work. It means employers pay attention to how, when and where their employees want to work. It also means organizations provide them with the technology tools they need in order to perform, and that goes way beyond cell phones and laptops.

Managers got excited reading the biggest thing their employees missed about working from home was being with their fellow employees. That meant they wanted to come back into the office, so all will return to the way it was! Not so fast. They didn’t miss this enough to overcome the other obstacles to coming into some centralized space where they basically did the same thing they were doing at home – except all by themselves in both spaces.

And, the 30% or so who are introverts don’t miss the office at all.

Myth #5: Dazzle Them With Design!

Brilliant people in the office furniture industry – which is the same size it was 20 years ago – continue to talk about how to design spaces for people who are no longer there. Many talk about technology-driven data as an input for designing spaces but not about placing technology at the center of workplace design where it belongs.

Why are workers now telling their bosses – this is how we work now? Technology is redefining work, and work process experts – those of us in the commercial interiors industry – should be leading discussions on how and where people work. For the past 20+ years, organizations have invested into technology instead of office furniture; now, organizations are investing into technology instead of facilities. We have had the architecture – furniture – technology model for just as long, and still haven’t applied it to the real world.

Instead of focusing on workplace and product designs, our customers are focused on work process, on work experience, on integrating all the elements of their business model (including working from home) into something to help them prosper. They may see furniture and architectural products as a part of that, but it is just a part of the puzzle. Our customers read the same data we do: 80% of employees would rather work for a company that invests in technology to better connect in hybrid work.

Myth #6: We Need to Save our Culture

Strong work cultures give their employees the tools they need to succeed. They don’t rely on hovering bosses, butts in the seats or following everyone around with digital spies mapping the route to the conference room. If your culture doesn’t work during chaos, it wasn’t worth saving anyway.

Upwork’s clever commercial on “this is how we work now” is telling us something. It is funny because there is truth in the premise that we keep on doing what we know, not what should be done. Commercial interiors professionals find themselves trained to do a certain thing; it has created results in the past;

we know the story, the responses and how we get paid. But, much of that world is gone.

6 myths hold us in place while the world moves on. There are elements of truth in each myth, but that doesn't make them sacred. We need to recognize the realities of why and how we interact with each other, and then provide the tools and processes supporting those interactions. A key tool soon to become ubiquitous: interactive displays.

It's Not What It Is; It's What It Does

This is a truth bomb from Al Everett, a long-time friend and industry observer.

Interactive technology can be an uncomfortable conversation for contract furniture dealers. Many dealers with AV groups struggle to integrate technology into their furniture story. Scores of years of how we do office furniture couple with unfriendly tech solutions keep us from questioning market boundaries, looking at the big picture and reaching past our current limits. There is a better way.

Next month's article will focus on integrating technology into the work process conversation. This is a critical conversation for customers and a key opportunity for contract furniture dealers.

Once I caught up with the interactive displays from i3-technologies.com, their impact on supporting hybrid work productivity became clear. Supporting these displays with best-in-class wall and mobile mount systems from hecklerdisplays.com makes installation and use a breeze. The products, the tools, the processes, and more importantly – the story – are in line to help dealers create a more profitable business model.

It is technology that drives how work gets done. In an interactive world, ubiquitous access to interactive displays – either in defined spaces or on mobile mounts – is how we work today.

The focus of these articles is on generating incremental profits through a technology strategy. The structures around the pre-pandemic work model may be falling apart at the seams, but that doesn't mean opportunity doesn't exist. It just may look and feel a bit different than what we are used to.

Technology drives how work gets done more than any factor other than work process design. Shouldn't we be the ones helping organizations figure out how to fulfill their work process needs? Shouldn't we be the ones stepping outside our boundaries to show our customers how to step outside theirs? Let's show them "this is how we work now".



About Doug Gregory

Doug Gregory, Syntigration's principal, is focused on creating integrated InterActive Spaces. A consultant and entrepreneur in the office furniture industry for over 20 years after stints at both HON and Steelcase, the novelty of learning how best to meet customer needs never gets old. The journey of these articles is to help identify how interactive technology supports contract dealer growth through meeting the complex needs of our mutual clients. Doug can be reached at dgregory@syntigration.com.



RECONFIGURABILITY IS THE NEW 'GREEN'

Why Reconfigurable Products Are Some of the Most Sustainable Products

BY LAURA BARSKI, VICE PRESIDENT, MARKETING AND PRODUCT DESIGN

Say No to Disposable Furniture

The United States EPA predicts that 17 billion pounds of office equipment each year go into landfills, so it is critical that businesses take measures to reduce this waste. For decades we have lived in a throw-away society, and with the urban built environment responsible for 75% of annual global GHG emissions, businesses need to take action to improve sustainability and reduce their impact on climate change. So, what can we do as office manufacturers to become more sustainable?

We should say no to a disposable furniture economy and enter into a circular economy — a system in which products and materials are produced, used, and reused in a way that eliminates waste. But how can we make that choice and procedure as sim-

ple as possible for our clients?

What Makes a Product Truly Sustainable?

Reducing waste is one of the most sustainable actions we can take to reduce our carbon footprint. There's a reason why reduce and reuse come before recycle!

At Inscape, we seek to create workplace solutions that make sense for today and are kind to tomorrow — solutions that are sustainable, long-lasting, and produced in a way that minimizes the impact on our environment. By reusing existing components within our manufacturing processes and with our clients, we enable reuse rather than disposal of products in landfills or recycling depots.

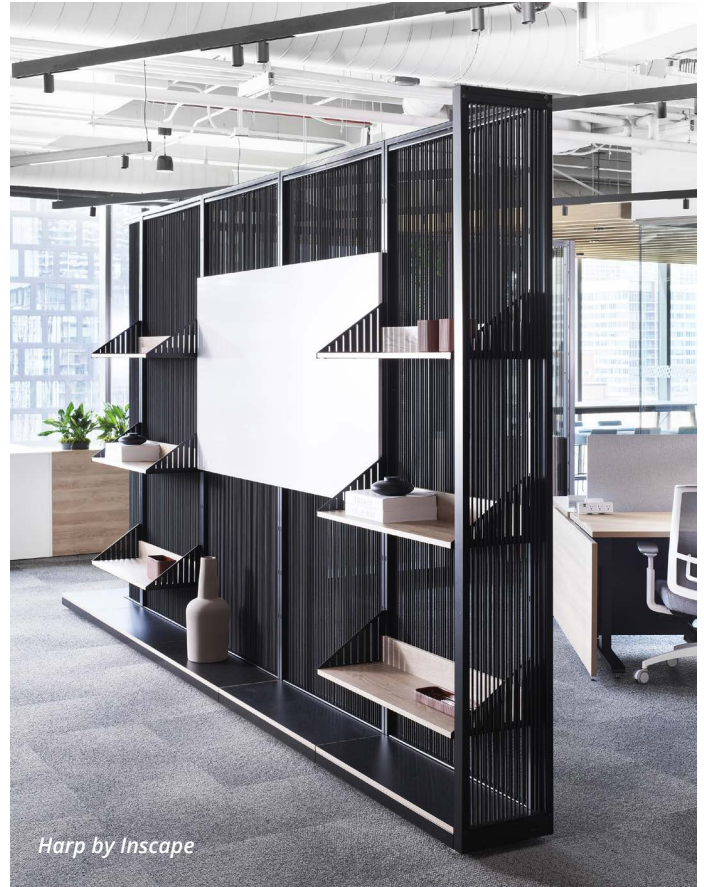
INSCAPE

Our commitment to sustainable product design starts with its focus on simplicity. This simplicity makes reconfiguring products easier for both manufacturers and clients. With fewer moving parts, the products can easily be reconfigured into newer versions over and over again. By designing products that can be easily reconfigured, we ensure that our products can be reused again and again instead of being thrown away.

Our products are designed to be adaptable and highly durable so that our clients can continue to use them for years to come. In fact, one of our clients invested in Inscape products back in 1999, and instead of buying new products, they've continued to re-use their existing Inscape furniture instead of buying new products. The furniture system was dismantled, moved to the new facility, and reconfigured to meet the trends toward more open, collaborative spaces, which saved the client over \$2 million.

How to Manufacture Truly Sustainable Products

As furniture manufacturers, we have a responsibility to make sure that our products can be reused with ease. This way, our customers do not have to worry about their environmental or financial impact when they use our products. Here are some actionable steps you can take today to move away from the disposable furniture economy.



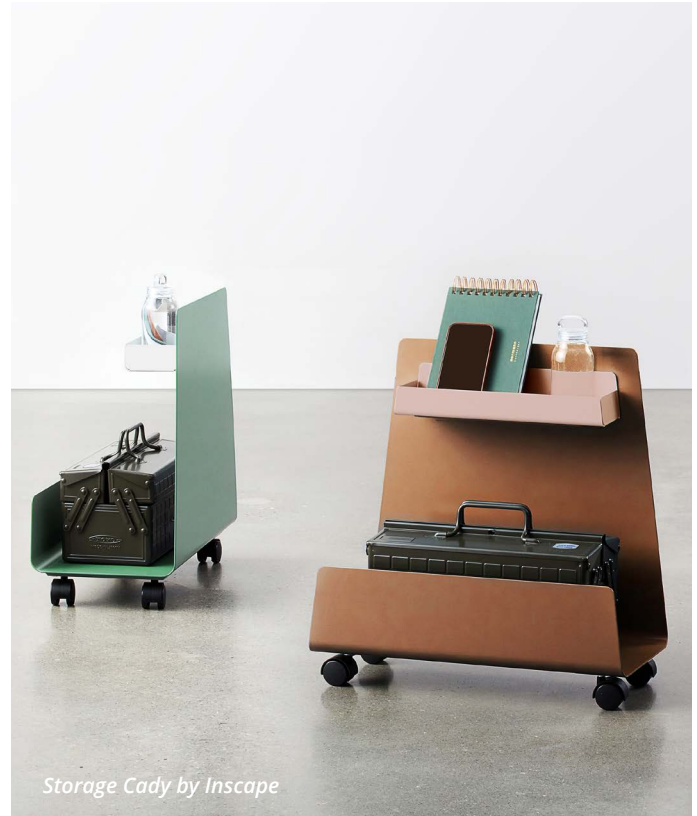
INSCAPE

It's essential to have a plan in place for what happens to these products at the end of their life. That's why it is important to design products to be easily recyclable so customers can return their used products to third-party recycling centers to be recycled into new products. This way, the materials are reused and don't end up in landfills.

Another way to reduce the environmental impact of your furniture is to reuse scrap materials during the manufacturing process. This can be done by using scrap wood and metals to create new products.

Finally, finding local vendors for your raw materials can also help lower your carbon footprint. Sourcing from local vendors reduces the amount of energy needed to transport these materials to your facility and reduces lead times so you can get your products to your clients faster.

As the world calls for more sustainable office products, manufacturers are under pressure to deliver. Inscape focuses on simplicity to help lead sustainability. We can create more sustainable products by implementing similar practices, such as recycling waste materials, sourcing from local vendors, and using fewer materials in each product. When it comes to sustainable product design, less is more.



About Laura Barski, Vice President, Marketing and Product Design

Laura has worked with a diverse group of companies in the furniture industry, bringing her energy, innovation, and creativity to product development, strategy, and team leadership. Laura has leveraged her marketing toolkit and 24 years of relationships and experience to drive evolutionary and revolutionary change to product lines and brand perception, building toward ambitious goals with dedicated, detail-oriented work. Layering innovation on top of a rock-solid foundation of industry knowledge, mentoring skills, and dynamic energy, Laura is a one-person transformation station, whether helping companies excel in the world of social media or conceiving and delivering the perfect product using proprietary technology. Laura collaborates with Inscape's leadership team to debut future-focused product offerings that showcase Inscape's ability to channel the learnings of its long history of excellence into modern solutions for modern workplaces.

inscape



IT'S NOT EASY BEING GREEN.

INTERVIEW BY EWAN MCEOIN, PHOTOGRAPHY BY
MATTHEW SLEETH AND TONY OWCZAREK.

Direct from the Schiavello archives; an article that epitomises the legacy of our foundational thinking surrounding sustainability. At a time where sustainability was rarely part of the conversation when it came to politics, ethics and the systems surrounding manufactured goods, we look at a discussion amongst industry experts about the importance of sustainability and its future presence in the industry.

Ewan McEoin, Chris Ryan and Peter Schiavello discussed the projects and systems that Schiavello and Ecodesign Australia had undertaken as industry leaders to pave the way for other businesses.

As sustainability becomes increasingly relevant, we reflect upon the longevity of our past decisions.

Chris Ryan is the director of Ecodesign Australia and professor of design and sustainability at RMIT. He recently returned from working with the United Nations developing an environmental evaluation system for manufactured goods. He has been consulting Schiavello on environmentally sustainable workplace design and production for some years. Here, he and Peter Schiavello discuss manufacturing, production and consumption issues and the challenges faced by governments, businesses and individuals in creating a sustainable future. Perhaps the way for-

ward is to examine the processes of the past?

Ewan McEoin: Chris, tell us about your collaboration with Schiavello to develop new, environmentally sustainable products.

Chris Ryan: For the moment our work is focused on researching strategic opportunities in response to environmental issues. I first collaborated on a project with Peter and Schiavello in 1995, which was an exploration of where eco-design could go, in an innovative sense. This resulted in a product that has been quite influential.

Peter Schiavello: Our original project was called the eco-redesign program and was our first exposure to environmental thinking. Schiavello's involvement in 1995 generated a greater awareness and understanding in our company of our environmental responsibility and what we could contribute toward sustainability.

Through this project we initiated our environmental management system, engaging Michael Pitcher as our environmental manager. What we are now doing with Chris is formalising our work approach, which began more as ad hoc consultancy. Since 1995 we have been generating a more structured program, which is not just environmental in emphasis, but covers other areas of research.

EM: Paolo Fantoni, who is in a similar industry to you in Italy and is one of the world leaders in the ecological production of MDF, has said that a company's responsibility is to be ethically, ecologically and socially engaged with the community. I think a lot of companies are interested in an ecological perspective because it's a good selling point. What are Schiavello's objectives in this area?

PS: When we decided to invest in an environmental management system, to educate all our people and even our broader client base, it wasn't because we saw instant returns. Our initial commitment was to be morally responsible to our people, our families and our society. Even today it costs us a lot more than we would get as a return. Our impetus is very much about our position in the market and our desire and willingness to be responsible about environmental issues. One day there will be legislation in place, which will probably require other organisations to head in a similar direction, but we have no idea when that's going to happen.

EM: Chris, you've been working in Australia and in Europe. What is your perspective on the expectations and goals of governments and businesses, and how are these two going to impact upon each other? More specifically, what is the future landscape of manufacturing going to look like?

CR: To start with, I've just been reviewing the latest information on why companies, broadly speaking, go green. It's very clear that there are both internal and external reasons. The internal reasons echo what Peter has just described; companies have an interest in insuring that contributions made through commitment, loyalty and creativity are maximised from the start. One way of achieving this is by developing a company profile that extends beyond business concerns. It's like any of the corporate social responsibility movements.

There are also external reasons. Over the last five years these have perhaps not been so clear inside as outside Australia. Ultimately they come from broad community concern about the environment, expressed through the government and policy. If you take Europe or Japan as exemplars, the aim has been to address environmental issues by finding the key drivers for change and by developing a focus on innovative solutions to environmental problems. For example, problems associated with resource issues and waste, how these are reflected in eco-design and how,

at the design stage, you can determine between 60 and 80 per cent of the environmental impact of a product. Internationally, products and consumption are the real concerns in terms of resource issues and waste. Governments have an interest in trying to find policies that will assist companies and ultimately induce, even force, them to make changes in relation to their design and innovation so as to reduce the environmental impact of products. Europe now has a set of integrated product policies, which form the major focus of their environmental policy and enable them to investigate how to set up policies that will drive product improvement. For instance, policies which consider taxes on carbon, and treat issues concerning labelling and materials, policies to do with how you assist consumers in understanding the nature of the impact of production, and how you assist industry to build environmental considerations into the design process. This is the kind of work we were doing back in 1995 with the eco-redesign program.

EM: Since at least the Industrial Revolution we've applied and refined the processes by which we extract materials from the environment to manufacture products. Do you think we should be fundamentally reinterpreting our industrial modes of production? And is it a matter of making a quantum leap in our approach to production and consumption?

PS: We are talking about the transformation of the past notion of production and consumption. The old system assumed that you could extract materials from the environment, convert them into products, use them, and then discard them as landfill. This is a very simple linear process, the turnover of which has become increasingly quick. The endpoint of a product's life presents the problem of waste, a problem we have been dealing with for a long time. The whole idea of recycling begins to suggest a shift from a linear process of production and consumption to a cyclical one, where you actually extract the resources before they become waste so as to feed them back into the beginning of the cycle.

EM: Are we returning to a pre-Industrial Revolution system, a time when we were actually quite good at getting the most out of our resources?

CR: Well we must now talk about how that might work with current scales of consumption and production, which are completely different. We are making a quantum leap in that we are no longer talking about recycling, which is a temporary stopgap measure. Everything you recycle still costs the economy and society in terms of energy and materials. If you look at this chair we are sitting on here as an example of an object of production, it displays an investment in the manufacturing and processing of materials. At the end of its lifespan is our best option to chop it up, divide it into individual bits and feed it back into a system? By doing this we throw away an investment.



EM: Do you think the future of furniture manufacturing will be a process whereby you lease furniture rather than sell it, and where you retain ownership of the materials? And what other adjustments have you investigated, from the process of manufacture through to your relationship with the consumer?

PS: In the first place, by reducing the mass of our products we use less raw materials and resources. We have invested in a number of newer processes, which have enabled us to simplify production and reduce our environmental impact. We believe that we've reduced our impact in production by between eight and twelve per cent. We are also specifying and utilising materials that are more desirable from a life-cycle analysis perspective. In addition we are focusing on educating our client base, specifiers in particular because they are the ones who have the greatest impact on the process, and the material and product selection. We are working with our clients on making environmental

analysis part of their decision-making process and helping them understand the benefits to the broader community.

Schiavello is offering what you could call a whole cradle-to-grave process whereby we will provide not just furniture, but a whole workplace environment on a rental basis. We have already done this with a number of clients. We provide the whole environment, including the furniture, and we rent it out, so that we retain ownership. At the end of the period we take it back on the basis that we can refinish or refurbish parts rather than discard them. This thinking is having an impact on the way we design our new products, as we need to design them to be able to effectively reuse the parts, and to allow ease of disassembly and reassembly.

EM: Ultimately it would seem that the business community can really induce change. When we interview designers about what

SCHIAVELLO

they do, why they produce ESD (environmentally sustainable design), we find that most of them are responding to what their client wants. Having not yet become a fundamental design concern, it's something extra the designer/specifier offers. It's easy to communicate with the specifier, but how do you encourage the business community to understand the investment they're making?

PS: Major corporations have environmental policies or position statements, but in most cases these don't carry through to their buying decisions. That is, they generally don't have environmental criteria that inform their purchasing guidelines. Most designers we've worked with have wanted to learn more about what we are doing and about what they can do. They recognise that eventually it might create a point of difference in the market, but mostly they are showing interest from a personal position.

CR: One major transformation of design criteria is to attempt to maximise the end-of-life value. You want to minimise the cost of the product by its initial value, but you also want to maximise its value to the company at the end of its life, which you can only do through the design process.

EM: Do you think at some point in the future it will become an international legislative requirement that corporations retain responsibility and address the impact and after-life of their products and material choices? For example, will a car company be

held responsible and accountable for its product's environmental impact?

CR: It is already a legal requirement in some industries across Europe and in Japan. The whole idea is that companies will have to bear the responsibility of dealing with the product until the end of its life, and to meet the regularly reviewed requirements of the amount of materials that are allowed to enter the waste track. This is what will drive redesign in the future, specifically toward modular products, which are easy to refurbish and remanufacture, and which are increasingly only leased to the client.

EM: In Australia there seems to be a low level of requirement from the government for companies to perform not only in an environmental way, but in a socially responsible manner. The environmental measures Schiavello has been taking place them at the head of this movement in Australia. How does the rest of the market get drawn down this path?

PS: Specifiers and end users will become increasingly educated and will start to become more aware of the options that are available. Schiavello researches materials and alternative processes to enable us to reduce our impact. As the client becomes aware of these issues, as they begin to understand them and specify accordingly, then really what we are doing is providing choice. If other companies want to stay in business they must compete on a similar level. In our industry specifically, the rest

"Schiavello is offering what you could call a whole cradle-to-grave process whereby we will provide not just furniture, but a whole workplace environment on a rental basis."

of the market eventually catches up because of client demand.

EM: What about those people who always specify the cheaper product?

PS: Part of our challenge is to offer a choice without actually costing more money because there simply aren't many clients who will pay more for environmentally responsible products.

EM: Do you think something like the 5-star energy rating, the green rating for commercial buildings being developed by the Green Building Council, will help shift the corporate market?

PS: I imagine it could cost significantly more in rental terms for a tenant, and that it will only be taken up in a broader scale if it's legislated. We need to appreciate the financial pressure that global competition and shareholder expectations is applying to companies and corporations in all sectors. In many cases

you can see what motivates the short sighted decisions that are made for financial reasons alone.

CR: At a federal level there is no leadership in this area. The government's approach to the environment and regulatory change strikes me as an echo of the older protectionist eras. They seem to be saying, don't worry, we will protect you from this, we won't bring in the Kyoto summit, or anything that looks like it's part of a shift for the environment. Generally, the message to industry has been, don't worry it won't happen here, which is a very different message from what you are hearing in a lot of other countries. And yet Australia can't escape the global market. On the other hand, I've been really surprised by the number of large commercial clients, even in the last six months, who are introducing quite stringent, well-thought through requirements for environmentally sustainable design in their product specification.

EM: Do you think this is a symptom of the fact that multinational corporations have set such criteria?

CR: It's either because at the Australian end companies are part of a global chain, and these specifications are intended to operate across the board, or else it's because companies are playing in the international market. It often comes down to brand identity; many companies want to make sure they are up with or ahead of everybody else in relation to social and environmental issues. You are beginning to see the same thing happening here, but not as a response to government incentives. Instead it is more about corporate - social responsibility (CSR) and the idea that you can have companies judged on and ranked according to their CSR. This is not coming from a clear legislative or government situation. It's more about brand, and a recognition that these are changes happening elsewhere in the world from which we can't stay isolated, no matter what the federal government would like.

PS: From my knowledge, even if industry had to revolutionise the way we operate today in an attempt to significantly reduce our environmental impact, and the emissions that are causing global warming, the average temperature is still going to continue to increase for a number of years. The damage could be permanent. The biggest risk we face today is that most people don't recognise the risk of global warming and the depletion of our natural resources, or accept it; they think it's only a bunch of scientists talking up

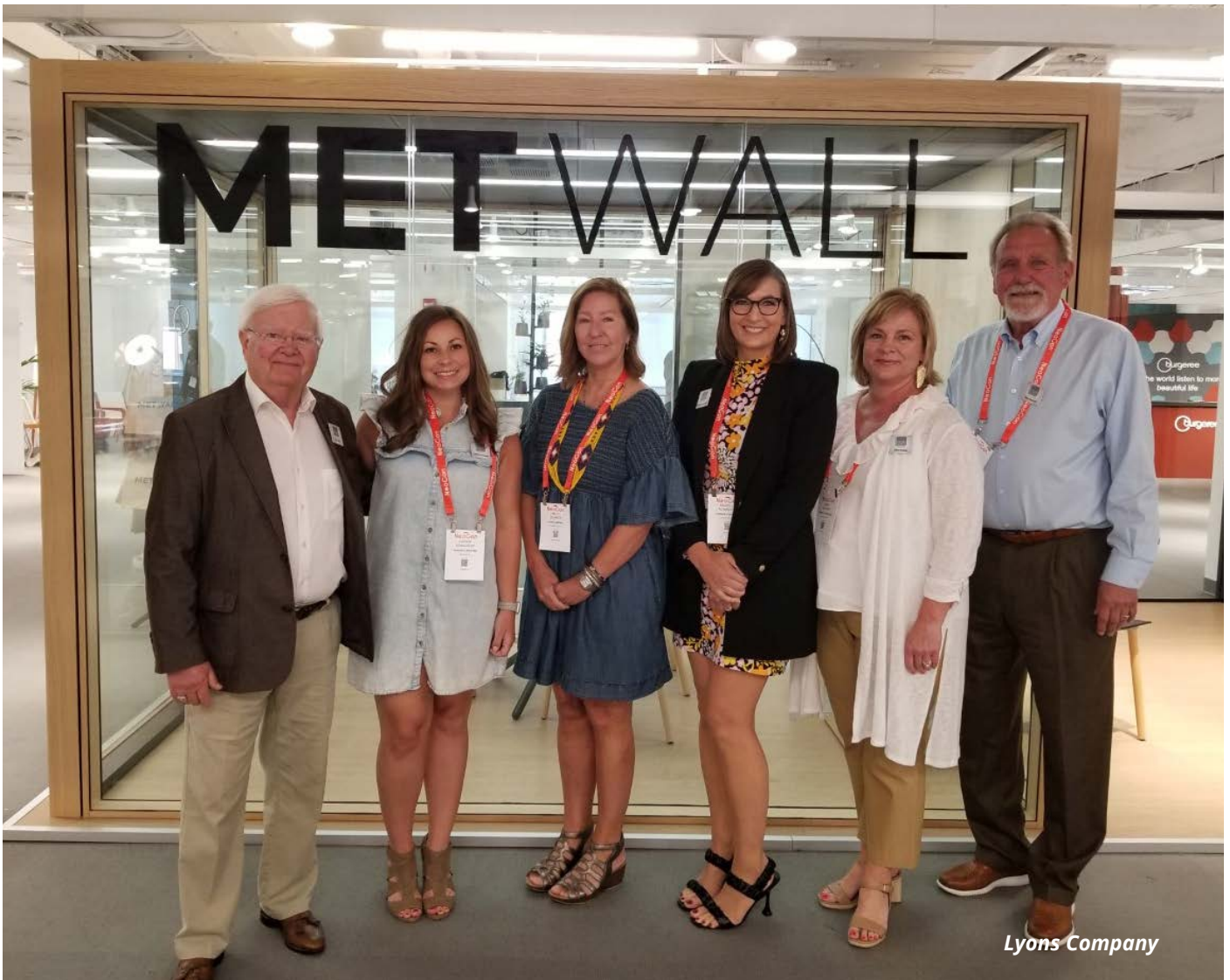
CR: Richard Pratt has recently voiced a very strong opinion that the Federal Government's approach to things like the Kyoto summit has been fundamentally wrong. The Australian government might say it will protect us from having to make changes, that although we may emit the second largest amount of CO2

per head of population in the world, we are such a small country and a small population it's not going to make a great difference to global warming. But the reality is, with the rest of the world increasing its investment in innovation, and in the fundamental change of systems, and of consumption, we will end up having to buy technology, systems and products from overseas as we won't have invested ourselves. In the future it's going to have a very significant impact on our economy.

EM: Talking specifically about corporate fitouts, many of the materials specified on sound green projects that have been highly researched are being imported from Europe or the United States. We are beginning to understand that other companies, which are doing what Schiavello is doing now, that is, investing in this process, are reaping the rewards in the global marketplace. Right now the environmental performance of products is a strong market advantage. As a business leader in this industry in Australia, what is your view on the lack of governmental and legislative support?

PS: We are disappointed that at a federal level the government isn't really using its position to influence the market. In many ways the government is like the parent who has to make the hard decisions that will be better for our future. At this stage the Australian government is not taking this responsibility. What is more interesting is that state and local government are doing things. For example, the Victorian State government has a strong environmental position in terms of the new office spaces they are planning to move into over the next few years. We've been working with a number of local councils over the last three to four years, and they have had strong environmental criteria. Some of these local councils are also accredited for the ISO14001.

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Getting to Know Lyons Company

The Lyons Company's professional associates are strategically located in Kansas City, St. Louis, Omaha, and Cedar Rapids Iowa, providing focused coverage for our manufacturers and our customers in Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska and Illinois south of Springfield.

The exceptional companies they showcase provide a wide variety of industry leading products in the areas of corporate, healthcare, education, and hospitality. Companies on GSA contract are noted.

www.LyonsCompanyLLC.com

**REP FEATURE:
LYONS COMPANY**

Q: Tell us a little bit about how your rep group got started?

A: Lyons Co was started in 1993 by Dick Lyons when he moved back to Kansas City after the wood casegood company he was President of merged with another. Dick ran and grew Lyons Co for many years, I (Michelle Acamovich) joined Lyons Co in 2007 as a rep. I took over management in 2019 and it was a relatively smooth transition because I had been with the company for so long. We now have a 6-member team running around our 4 states and a full line package of extraordinary manufacturers.

Q: How has the company changed over the years? How hasn't it?

A: We have changed and adapted in many ways over the years. For example, when I first started we were still worrying about running around to make sure everyone had updated binders and printed price lists. Now I feel like our role is more about educating and assisting our Dealers and Designers.

Q: What do you think is the secret to your rep groups longevity and success?

A: Adaptability and creativity meeting experience and knowledge. Our whole team is made up of seasoned professionals who all bring so much to the table. Together we share ideas of what's working or not and create different strategies all the time.

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

A: We're all just a bunch of furniture nerds who get excited about furniture construction and the latest innovations.

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

A: Well, the plan is to continue to grow and love what we do every day, but every time I think I have this industry figured out something new hits me, so it's never dull! I don't think technology is going away so we'll continue to use new tools like MRL and social media to meet the designers where they are and continue to evolve that way. I truly think our industry is based on relationships and trust. If we can continue to work hard for our clients, we will always be successful.

Q: If you could use just one word to describe your rep group, what would it be?

A: Dedicated.



KEEPING CONNECTED

With the challenges that 2020 and 2021 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!



Sheridan Contract | Chicago River Cruise

Sheridan Contract

Sheridan Contract represents select, North American made, contract office furniture manufacturers in the Illinois-Wisconsin territory. Their customer base consists primarily of Corporate/Commercial, Education (K-12 & Higher Ed.), Healthcare (Acute & Long Term), and Government (Local, State, & Federal). www.sheridancontract.com

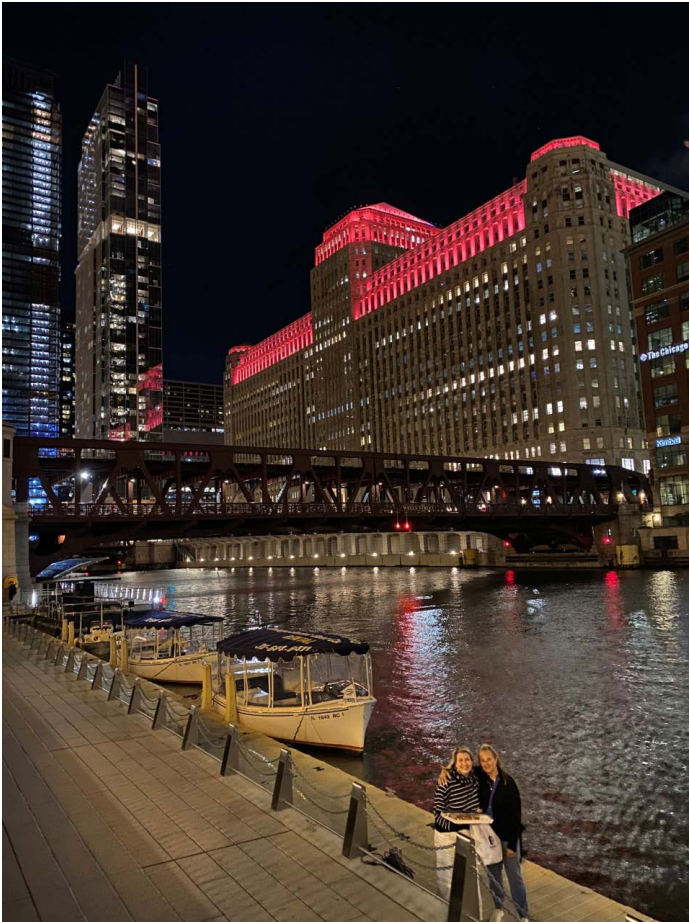
**KEEPING
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Sheridan Contract (CONT)

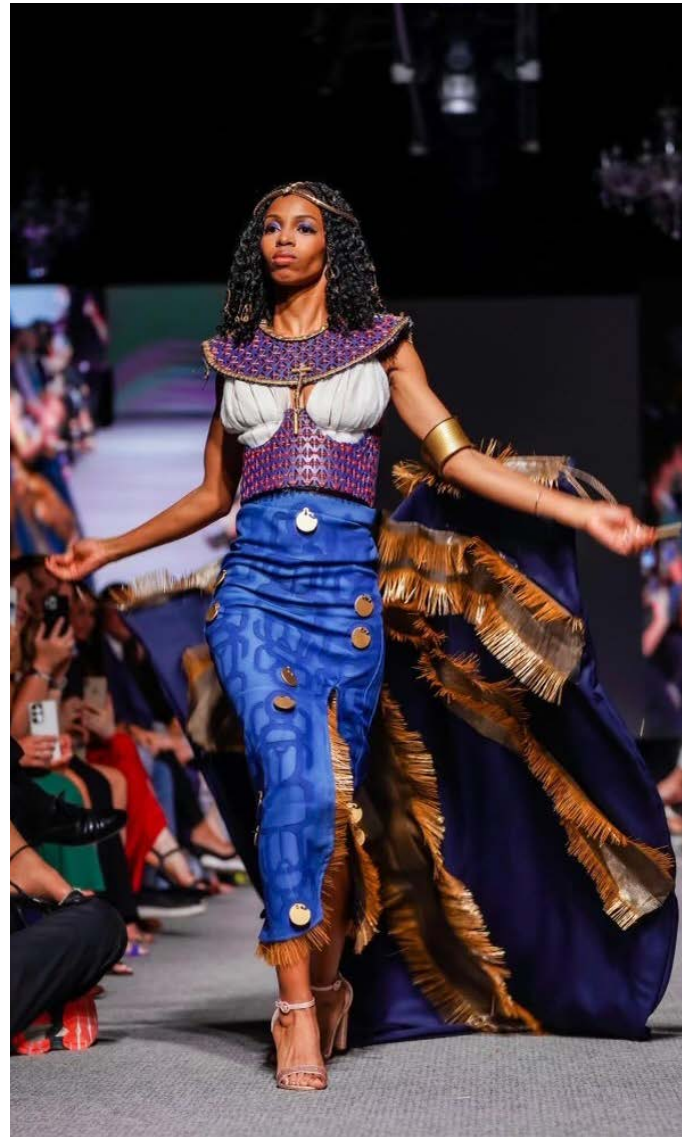
Since Covid hit and upended their typical A&D gatherings, Sheridan Contract has been hosting electric boat Chicago river cruises in an effort to get together and have more experiential style gatherings. These are two hour cruises where Captain Kevin gives his version of the Chicago Architectural tour. Slightly more colorful than the standard tours! They bring their own food and drink which helps keep the cost down, and sometimes team up with other non competing Reps to help defer the cost. It's a real team effort!

They call them everything from "Schmooze Cruise" to "Hap-E-Hour cruise" due to the environmentally friendly electric Duffy boats used in the tours) to Schmooze Cruises. They have done over 20 so far and are excited to continue to grow this tradition. They either take place just after work so we catch sunset on the river and then get to see some nighttime city lights, or at lunch time or afternoon, depending on their preference.

www.sheridancontract.com



Sheridan Contract | Chicago River Cruise



Cronan & Associates

Cronan & Associates participated in IIDA's Product Runway in Houston. It is a fashion show, where each firm is sponsored by reps or manufacturers, who provide fabrics/materials/finishes so that the A&D firm can then make an original dress out of these materials. Then one of the designers at the firm, models the dress, walks the runway, etc. Suzanne Volkman, Houston Team Leader for Cronan & Associates, was highly involved, and we sponsored two teams.

cronanassoc.com



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OCT 2022V3

Published by
MYRESOURCELIBRARY.COM