

# delve

JAN 2023 **V34**



**STRENGTH IN NUMBERS...**

# **ZERO**

**BY OFS**

*Cover Story on page 15*



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Doug Gregory discusses the future of innovative mount solutions.



Eagan Visual gives us an insight into the future of Contract Design and the impact of the immersive workplace design trend.



**COVER STORY:** OFS launches Zero.

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## editor's note

Dear Reader,

As we look towards the future, it's important to consider the evolution of the contract design industry. This month's issue of Delve Magazine is dedicated to exploring the advancements and possibilities that lie ahead for this field.

From new technologies and automation, to changes in legal regulations and industry standards, we delve into the ways in which Contract Design is being transformed. You'll have the opportunity to read about some of the most innovative and forward-thinking professionals in the field, and learn about the challenges they've faced and overcome.

We also take a look at how advancements in Contract Design will impact businesses and individuals alike, and explore the ways in which these changes will shape our future.

As you explore this issue, we hope you'll find inspiration and insights that will help you navigate the ever-changing landscape of Contract Design. We invite you to dive in and join us as we explore the future of this exciting and vital industry.

*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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# Innovative Mount Solutions

BY DOUG GREGORY

Dean Heckler didn't set out to turn the world of technology mounts on its ear through innovative, design-led solutions. But the need for mounts that didn't look like leftover angle iron meant he couldn't really help himself. The need for mounts presented itself to Dean, and he was driven to design the most efficient and attractive mount possible. The sustained success of Heckler Design in the fast-changing world of user technology testifies to the passion of innovation.

Boring design doesn't cut it at Heckler Design ([www.hecklerdesign.com](http://www.hecklerdesign.com)). Whether it is first-in-class 10th gen iPad mounts or best-in-class display mounts and equipment credenzas, the principles of sound design lead the way in every product bearing the Heckler brand.

Based in Phoenix, AZ, Dean got his start in point of sale mounts for iPads, was brought into small office devices by his customers, and eventually found opportunity in AV

## INDUSTRY HOT TOPICS

carts and wall mounts. Practical guidelines like designing mounts to nest, to stack for reduced shipping costs, and to be engineered with the installer in mind created a group of solutions appreciated by all involved.

In a digital world, displays rule. User accessibility, clean design and outstanding functionality enhance any user experience. Unmatched quality creates a great client experience. Heckler products combine these attributes in ways confirm their commitment to make no boring designs! Simplicity with purpose.

### Apple's 10th Generation iPad

With their close relationships with both technology manufacturers and key distributors, Heckler begins designing for new devices prior to launch to make sure its mounts are ready. When Apple introduced the 10th generation iPad 10.2 in the fall of 2022, Heckler was ready.

From digital patient charting to home automation to employee time clocks and delivery service management, there are countless applications for wall-mounted iPads in commercial environments. The Heckler Wall Mount MX secures the iPad close to the wall for a great aesthetic while providing administrators clear access to buttons, microphones and speakers.

Apple is known for the incredible attention they pay to design detail. Instead of transforming Apple design into a clumsy mount, Heckler's Wall Mount MX presents a shadow effect that makes it look as though it is floating on the wall. Its aesthetic is complementary to the Apple iPad while presenting it to users where they need it.

Tucked neatly behind the sculpted front bezel, the iPad's buttons, speakers and microphones remain accessible and functional.

Looking to create a public kiosk? Use the Guided Access feature built into the iPadOS to restrict button functionality for administrators. The Heckler Wall Mount MX design also includes a steel tab to manage access to the USB-C cable. Heckler continues to disrupt conventional expectations for how we mount technology.



### Simplifying Wall-Mounted AV Displays

Every meeting space, whether a defined room or a casual location, is being outfitted as a Zoom Room, Teams Room or a smart room with one or more interactive displays (such as from [www.i3-technologies.com](http://www.i3-technologies.com)). Before Heckler AV Wall, this meant digging into walls to access power, data and to house equipment. With the ingenious AV Wall system, virtually any size display can now be mounted proud of the wall, whether a single display or dual displays. Cameras and control panels are handled with ease with economical accessory packages.

Not only does this create a great looking installation, but cables and accessories are ingeniously managed. When it comes time to move the displays or make changes in the room, simply move the AV wall to another location with access to power and data, and you're good to go.

Built in Phoenix – like all Heckler products – everything about AV Wall is simple, clean, robust and deceptively functional. It's design also dramatically reduces installation costs and ships in an economical package. With a variety of sizes, colors and applications, there are many reasons large enterprises are standardizing on this innovative product.

### AV Equipment Credenzas

Many AV display applications require one or more pieces of support equipment, whether amplifiers, signal boosters or breakout boxes for cameras or sound bars. Managing this equipment typically requires free-standing or built-in racks or separate spaces dug into walls.

**INDUSTRY  
HOT TOPICS**

Heckler Credenzas are designed to efficiently support up to four units to manage the clutter of cables and equipment. A drop-down front panel offers easy access to equipment while keeping it out of sight for users. Use Credenzas by themselves or combine them with AV Wall for quick deployment by pre-configuring equipment prior to going to the installation site.

**Mobile AV Mounts that Wow!**

Mobile technology represents the coming wave of interacting with displays as users move them from room to room or area to area. Plug-and-play has come to large screen technology, and Heckler made the decision to support mobile requirements by thinking differently about what users were looking for.

Heckler AV Carts (I refer to them as Mobile Mounts) take a different route to supporting displays that can weigh in at more than 100 pounds. Their creative 90 degree base offers incredible structural integrity to the vertical members holding the display, camera, sound bar, control panel and whatever is coming next.

With oversized casters for easy mobility, the spare design of Heckler AV Carts mean the displays are the focus. The base design means carts can be nested – 15 carts take only 30 square feet. They even pack 10 carts / mounts to a pallet.



**Practical solutions never looked so good!**

Disruption never looked so good nor performed so well. Heckler's success is based on taking a fresh look at supporting technology and enabling it to perform simply and where needed. Their customer support capabilities are designed with the same attention to detail and ensuring distributors have all the information needed at their fingertips (or mouse). Even the support tools Heckler provides for installation support set new expectations for what it means to be a supplier leveraging all the tools 2023 provides.

No matter the technology your clients use, Heckler has innovative solutions that elegantly and efficiently support a wide range of displays. The organization is committed to staying in front of new product launches and supporting distributors with capable tools and media.

Are you ready to learn more? I help distributors succeed in AV technology, and Heckler Design is a key part of creating success for distributors and customers alike.



**About Doug Gregory**

*Doug Gregory, Syntigrations 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@syntigrations.com](mailto:dgregory@syntigrations.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. Can you guess the theme? The products are listed in no particular order.

## **FARRAH**

NATIONAL OFFICE FURNITURE

Inspired by the crisp lines and sophistication of modern mid-century design, Farrah features tapered legs and inset base panels that create dramatic and timeless lines. This collection of lounge seating and tables is a sleek solution for modern settings.



## **HY COLLECTION**

ORANGEBOX

Hy Collection's strength and clarity of design means it works well individually, in larger groups and when grouped with other Smartworking products. It provides a surprising wealth of design options and is suitable for use in lounges, meeting areas and workspaces.



## **CĀAV**

JSI

Whether it's time for a cozy respite or for a relaxed work session away from the desk, Cāav's workspace enclosures and lounge furniture add the element of choice to open offices.



## **JOELLE**

KIMBALL

Designed to create informal, impromptu meetings, Joelle brings a casual charm to the workplace. Its small scale fits in anywhere without crowding the space, and its simple, intuitive nature makes it easy to reconfigure.

## **CARLTON**

ERG INTERNATIONAL

The Carlton collection encompasses four shells, the Guest chair, the Mid-Back, the High-Back and the Demi-back Barstool. They offer a fully upholstered shell and seat, and features an added seat cushion for extra softness and comfort. This collection suits a wide range of applications, from Office and Lobby seating, to a collaborative meeting at a high table.



## **ALMG**

SIXINCH

Designed by Pieter Maes, the lounge chair name evolved from Al-MG<sup>3</sup> – the thinnest aluminium alloy available to manufacture the chair. This seat brings an element of origami to life. The shell is made of Al-Mg<sup>3</sup> alloy and the base is a powder-coated steel.





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**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](mailto:Michelle@strategic-catalyst.com), connect on LinkedIn or visit [www.strategic-catalyst.com](http://www.strategic-catalyst.com) to learn more about her work.*



# Delving into the Public Sector

Here we are once again in a new year (Happy New Year!!!) It happens every year but somehow it seems to sneak up on us, doesn't it? 2022 is behind us and it went out with a bang as far as some awards/changes in the Public Sector world. Overall, I think it was a good year in Public Sector, but I feel 2023 holds even better opportunities for us in this vertical.

I was speaking with Paul Holland, Managing Principal at Solomon Coyle, a couple of weeks ago and he started our conversation with a statement that encouraged me in this new year. He said "We continue to see strength in the Government vertical in each quarter's Market Outlook survey thus far. As we complete the Q4 2022 Market Outlook report, we look for this strength in Pipeline Activity to continue. The Government vertical performed well during and post-pandemic, and we believe if we see a general softening in the economy, we expect the Government sector to be a leading segment along with Education and Healthcare." Then I came into January with projections that Federal Civilian agencies are looking at a 10% increase in budget and DOD a 6% increase and comments that most states (never all) have "full coffers." (Shout out to my Catalyst team member, Dan Conaty, for using "coffer" in a sentence already in 2023!!)

So, what were the big changes and what should you be doing as the commercial market continues to soften, but Public Sector is continuing to do well? Let's jump in and discuss!

**So, what are the big changes/awards that happened at the end of 2022:**

1. NCPA was acquired by OMNIA Partners! From the OMNIA Partner's press release: *OMNIA Partners announces the acquisition of National Cooperative Purchase Alliance (NCPA), a leading national government purchasing cooperative based in Houston, TX. This most recent acquisition enriches OMNIA Partners as*



## INDUSTRY HOT TOPICS

*the nation's most experienced cooperative purchasing organization serving state and local government, K-12 education, and higher education institutions.*

2. The Air Force awarded their systems contract to 6 manufacturers!
3. VHA IDIQ opened up for new products to be added
4. Packaged Office program went from letter of supply to CTAs
5. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has terminated a class waiver of the Nonmanufacturer Rule (NMR) for multiple NAICS codes

I am sure this is not EVERYTHING that happened, but these are the ones that I think we need to address the obvious questions "so, what does this mean for me?" and "how do I take advantage of these changes?" Today I will address 1-3 on the list.

Let's start with the OMNIA Partners acquisition. First, if you already hold an NCPA contract it is business as usual FOR NOW, but you should feel like you just won the Cooperative lottery! OMNIA Partners is the most sought-after cooperative. As you create your strategy for NCPA you should also be thinking OMNIA Partners. OMNIA Partners' furniture contracts see more business than the GSA contract furniture markets! OMNIA Partners saves you time and money. Participation is free and gives public agencies access to the cooperative buying power of more than 234,000 entities to help you do more with less by reducing product and administrative costs. They are the largest and fastest-growing organization in public procurement, creating maximum purchasing power and resources for their participants. You will need a strategy and a person/people to help you make this contract successful for your company.

The Air Force Systems furniture and walls award is done!! This is a big deal on the Federal side. There used to be a BPA, but it has not been in place for years. Officially 6 manufacturers received a contract within the Air Force OWFP to offer Systems, Demountable Walls and ancillary products through a mandatory sourcing two-tiered program. So, now we are down to 6 manufacturers who can sell systems to the Air Force through this mandated contract. If you are aligned and your manufacturer is not on the list, there are some manufacturers looking for dealer partners.

The Veterans Health Administration has had a furniture IDIQ in place for about 5 years now, with annual spend of \$130M+ per year. There are 9 awardees- all dealers and all Service-disabled veterans (SDVOSB). After a small hiatus, the VHA opened up the contract for price increase as well as deletions and additions of products. If you are a dealer that has VHA clients, but not an awardee, find a partner to work with that holds the IDIQ. Most of them are willing to partner. If you are a manufacturer and are not on the IDIQ, create your plan to get on the next go around - possibly end of 2023.

Next month we will discuss the changes to the Packaged Office program and to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). I hope you are already in agreement that 2023 will be a great year in Public Sector.

I look forward to meeting you here monthly to see how everything shakes out and what new happenings we can delve into!

**Cheers to a successful 2023!!**





*Dimension Curve by Eagan Visual*

# Transforming the 9-to-5: The Rise of Immersive Workplace Design

In today's fast-paced business world, companies are realizing the importance of creating a dynamic and stimulating work environment for their employees. With an emphasis on flexibility and collaboration, modern office designs are moving away from traditional setups and towards innovative spaces that foster connection, community, and creativity. From modular furniture to remote working options, companies are re-envisioning the office experience to meet the evolving needs of their workforce.

The office design industry has undergone a significant transformation in recent decades to meet the evolving needs of the workforce. In the past, offices were primarily made up of cubicles and separate executive suites, with an

emphasis on individual and focused work. However, the early 2000s marked a shift towards more open and collaborative spaces, influenced by the rise of dot-coms and start-ups. These companies, led by young and entrepreneurial minds, challenged traditional workplace practices and behaviors, leading to a blending of work and life in the office. This shift towards more open and collaborative spaces has become even more important in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, as many companies continue to embrace remote work. The need for collaboration and community building has become even more vital, as many employees continue to work from home. Office design needs to reflect this new reality and create spaces that promote connection and collaboration.



## *As the world of work continues to evolve, the way office spaces are designed is also shifting.*

One of the key trends in office design is the integration of flexible furniture and advanced technology that enhance teamwork and community building. Whiteboards, for example, are now equipped with state-of-the-art technology that enables seamless virtual interactions, making remote employees feel like they are a part of the team. One example of this is Egan Visual's EVS whiteboards, which provide crystal-clear visuals and vivid colors, essential for keeping hybrid and remote employees engaged during meetings and presentations when integrated with technology. As companies continue to adapt to the changing nature of work, it is expected that we will see an increasing number of advanced collaboration tools like this being implemented in the workplace, helping to foster teamwork and connection among employees.

Companies will also place a higher emphasis on designing team-centered spaces that encourage conversations and collaboration among employees through the use of modular furniture solutions, such as room dividers and mobile boards. With the use of modular room dividers and mobile boards, employees can create private areas for focused work or quickly reconfigure a space for a team meeting or brainstorming session. The modular design approach not only allows for greater flexibility in the use of space, but also a more dynamic office environment that can easily adapt to the changing needs of the business.

Modular solutions are also cost-effective for businesses as they can be easily reconfigured to meet changing needs, rather than incurring the cost of new construction. This type of design not only promotes collaboration and interpersonal encounters among employees but also helps to break down silos and encourages a more open and inclusive work environment. By providing different types of spaces, employees can choose the environment that best suits their work style and needs, whether they require a quiet and focused space or a more social and collaborative environment.

Flexible office spaces are becoming increasingly popular as they allow employees to choose the area of the office that

best suits their need. Unlike traditional offices with fixed and assigned desk positions, flexible workspaces can be easily rearranged to accommodate changing business objectives or quickly scale up and down to fit teams of different sizes. The modern workplace demands more than just a place to focus on work. It's a place to connect with company culture, collaborate with teammates, and to learn and grow. To meet these diverse needs, modular and flexible workspaces are becoming the solution. These types of spaces provide a variety of different areas for employees to choose from, including quiet areas for focused work, collaborative spaces for teamwork, and relaxation areas for breaks. By providing these different types of spaces, organizations can create a destination where employees can come to work and feel a sense of purpose, not just a place to clock in and out.

The integration of mixed and hybrid spaces in the office environment not only provides access to unique products and resources that are often exclusive to on-site locations, but it also promotes a sense of community and connection through in-person interactions and engagements. This combination of tangible benefits and social connections creates a sense of legitimacy, value, and desire for employees to be physically present in the office.

As the world of work continues to evolve, the way office spaces are designed is also shifting. The traditional concept of a standard office layout, with assigned desks and a few meeting rooms, is becoming less relevant in today's workplace. Companies that have already adopted a more flexible, multi-space approach are in a better position to adapt to these changes. But for those that haven't, it's crucial to take action and create a workplace that truly meets the needs of employees. This means designing an office that offers a variety of spaces for different types of work, and making the journey to the office worth it. Returning to the office post-pandemic presents a real challenge, but with the right design, it can also be an opportunity to create a more engaging, productive, and human-centric workplace.

# Integrated Docking Clutter Free Custom Design



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# STRENGTH IN NUMBERS ...ZERO

A single fastener elegantly and structurally secures a frame, a molded wood seat and backrest into a simple chair. Meet Zero. In collaboration with the danish design and manufacturing company, Magnus Olesen, OFS introduced Zero at NeoCon 2022 where it was recognized with the Best of NeoCon sustainability award.



*Zero by OFS*

**COVER STORY:  
ZERO BY OFS**

Zero was designed by Danish designer Øivind Slaatto for aesthetic longevity and a circular approach to easily replace, restore and reuse components. Simplicity is its strength as it passes the most stringent industry testing protocols albeit a natural minimalist and disassembles in seconds for restoration and reuse so its time in use can strive to outlive its timeless design.



**ABOUT OFS** | OFS is a family-owned contract furniture manufacturer dedicated to crafting experiences and products that contribute to places where people want to be. Founded in 1937, OFS provides furniture and logistics solutions for office, healthcare, education, lifestyle, hospitality, government, and home office markets worldwide, offering seating, tables, casegoods, and open plan products. The brands, Carolina and Bryan Ashley are OFS companies. OFS is based in Huntingburg, Indiana.





**By Ashley Blevins**  
**VP OF SALES, VIA SEATING**

*With 16 years of professional marketing and sales experience focusing primarily on dealer and customer relations.*

*My passion is serving customers by providing value-added solutions that solve their needs. My leadership style starts with teamwork, leading by example, and influencing team members through a trial and error methodology to determine winning strategies. I thrive in leading teams, driving metrics through encouragement, and coaching while influencing and navigating change management to meet company initiatives.*

*As a certified presenter of various CEU's; training and educating our industry on important and challenging subjects feeds into my lifelong passion around learning while allowing me to share my passions with others.*

[Connect with Ashley Blevins on LinkedIn.](#)



## **Selling Yourself, Your Products and Your Company Hybrid Style!**

**Change is hard. Change is challenging. Change is painful.** A natural human reaction that we have experienced at some point throughout our lives and career. As our industry drives towards a crossroad that is driven by change, we must understand that while change can be difficult, it also holds so much promise. A shift in mindset can help you overcome those first initial pains that can paralyze and hold you back from the most important thing: getting started. I want you to understand that while change may be hard, it can also be an adventure that drives growth and opportunity for you and your business.

Our industry has changed more in the last three years than it has in the last thirty. Consolidation for both dealers and manufacturers on its own has been dramatic. But consider the hybrid workforce, technology and digital integration. Increased emphasis on human health, mindfulness, wellness, sustainability, equity diversity and inclusion and more and more! All are driving forces that we need to pay attention to as all of these are factors considered by specifiers and procurement personnel. In addition, our consumers have changed their purchasing habits and therefore we (as manufacturers) with our industry partners, need to adapt to accommodate these new practices.

In my view, the most impactful change comes from how we interact with our customers through sales and marketing in this hybrid world. My sense is, how you have handled that change over the last two years is directly reflected in your or your company's success. We can no longer deliver dazzling, interactive, in person presentations to large sales and design teams. Instead, we are having to utilize technology to accommodate hybrid (in person) and virtual (remote) presentations, sometimes simultaneously. This combination of presentation methods can be challenging, but also highly effective if done right. As we look toward selling furniture in this new world, I'd like to outline six simple principles to keep in mind before, during and after your presentations that will set you apart, keep you relevant and bring you success.

### **1. People are the currency of our industry**

a. If you haven't figured it out, relationships are critical to being a successful seller and marketer. Maintaining and growing your network should be the first step you take for setting yourself up for a successful future.

i. **Network, Network, Network** – Get out there and utilize opportunities to be introduced to new connections through your current connections. Then, follow the next steps to engage with them.

b. We as humans thrive for connectivity. We need and yearn to be connected to others. Apart from making eye contact, actively listening and paying attention to your body language, show your connections ways to connect with you. Be sure that the digital platforms you point them to are ones that you are actively engaged with every day.

i. Sell yourself through your personality, what you love and put yourself out there as a person. **People want to work with People.**

1. Remember, not every person has to like you... Your goal should be that they want to work with you because you have proven they can trust you to put their best interests above anything else.

### **2. Reinforce your Values, Principals and Differentiators**

a. Create energy around your differentiation. How is your company, product, service or solution different? How are YOU different?

i. How can you help your connections today, tomorrow and in the future?

ii. What do you provide to them that others do not?

iii. How can you solve problems before they happen?

b. Understand your value proposition. This can be different for each type of customer as well, so make sure you create customized value propositions to help each type of customer. How will your value proposition help them save time. Time is the greatest advantage anyone can provide a customer. Provide value through this alone and you will rise above your competition.

c. Reflect back on who you are and what skills set you or your company apart. Then educate your customers on your unique value propositions and how they relate to their needs. Enter Insight Selling:

### **3. Insight Selling = Selling through means of education**

a. **Insight selling** is formally defined as coming to the table armed with valuable information for the prospect. Insight sellers are educators, distilling the terabytes of information available online for prospects to browse into digestible insights that empower prospects to make decisions they can be confident about.

b. People will buy from people they trust. Since trust takes time and evidence that you have the skills to help them solve problems, a barrier to entry with new customers can be found through education. Become an expert in an area of the industry you are passionate about and then find ways to educate your customers. This gains their trust and showcases your competence within the industry.

c. Use education as your selling strategy. Help your customers first understand your values, principles and differences. This should be the first thing you introduce and educate them on. The product and service you provide comes secondary and will provide them with the trust in the product or service you provide.

### **d. Why Educate through insights?**

i. Fact: those who share insights on their industry, at the right time will increase their sales on average by 11%.

ii. Knowing more about our industry and emerging trends allows you to solve problems before they happen, driving trust and transparency with your customers.

### **4. Become an Uber Responsive Problem Solver**

a. Responsiveness is key in our industry as our customers are being asked to do more work than ever before, time is the great equalizer.

b. In order to take responsiveness to the next level, you need to problem solve, brainstorm and provide solutions in the same time sensitive manner you respond to a quote request.

So how do you become good at that?

### **i. CURIOSITY**

1. Ask your customers what they need, what problems they are struggling to solve and what stands in their way of success. Then provide ideas and solutions. Brainstorm with them and become a trusted ally.

### **2. Curiosity is the gateway to problem solving**

### **5. Stand Out Digitally:**

a. Do not rely only on your company's brand and marketing teams to do all the digital work. It's been said that in person or "physical" interactions will remain at or below the 50% mark when interacting with your customers. That means the other 50% needs to be digital. But in a digital world, how do you stand out?

b. A good selling and marketing company takes current contacts and provides "air cover" to them through marketing avenues like email blasts, social media and more. Then on the sales side, having dedicated strategies on interacting with each customer profile through personalized emails, video messages and virtual education is key.



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- i. CRM's have made this much easier to accomplish but still need time and energy to do it successfully. You need to understand each customer's profile, who they are and what problems you can solve for them to make this work.
- ii. Remember, Education should be your mind set. Quick hacks, use of high-quality images and ideas are what you should focus on.

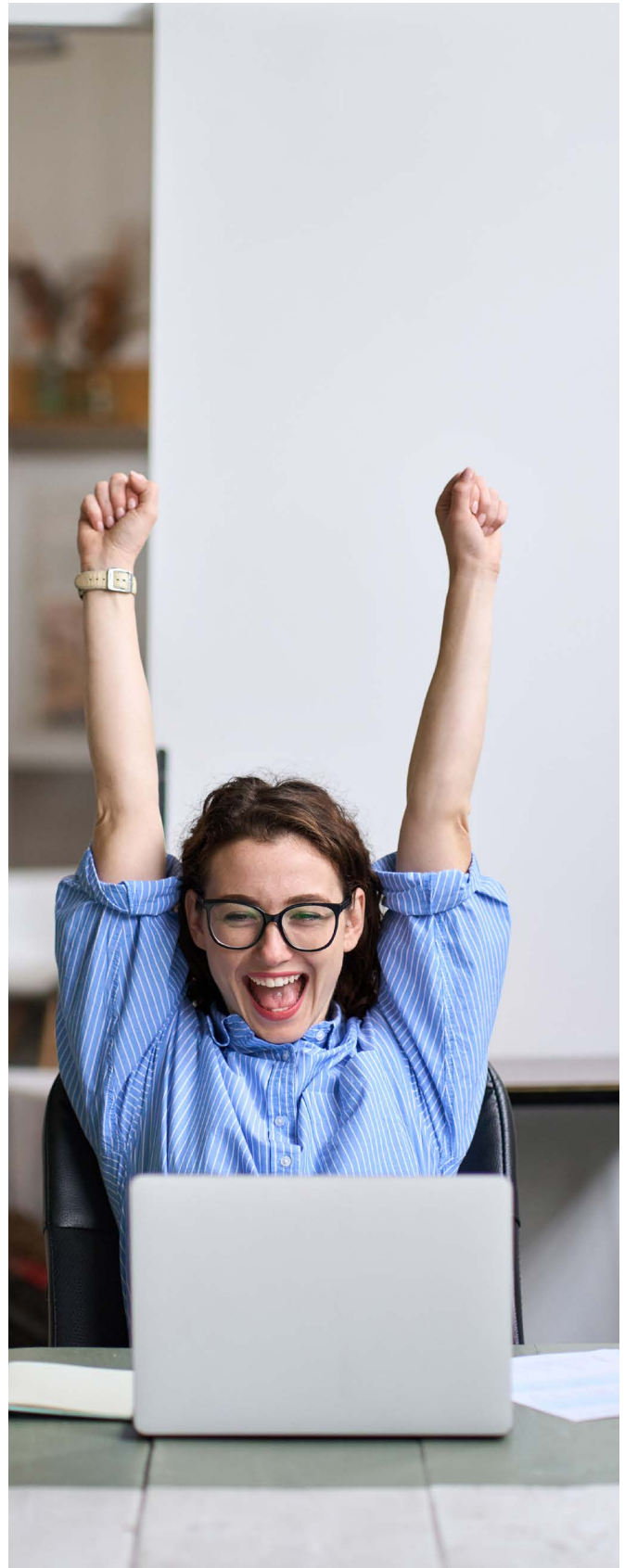
**6. Process Innovations Trump Product Innovations**

- a. The number one issue we hear across the industry is “we do not have time” Companies who are successful in finding solutions to this urgent need for various groups of customers will have the most successful innovations and growth. Product alone will not get us there.
- b. Our customers are not as open and eager to take time away from their tasks so how we sell to them will become more important than ever before. For a customer to invest time in you, you need to provide value through innovations that help them do their job more efficiently. Innovations through technology will lead our industry forward:
  - i. Online quoting and specification tools
  - ii. 24-7 Accessibility to product information and renderings
  - iii. Digital integration to their internal systems
  - iv. Ease of ordering and tracking of shipments

In closing, as we drive through a new way of selling to our customers, change is how we evolve, improve and ultimately beat out our competitors. Networking and then educating them on your value propositions will allow them to trust you and therefore your products. Understanding your customers by maintaining curiosity and then helping them solve problems will allow you to stand out. Maintain in person and digital interactions through uses of technology and process improvements that save your customer's time.

Time is the great equalizer.

**Cheers to implementing a successful strategy to sell differently in 2023!**





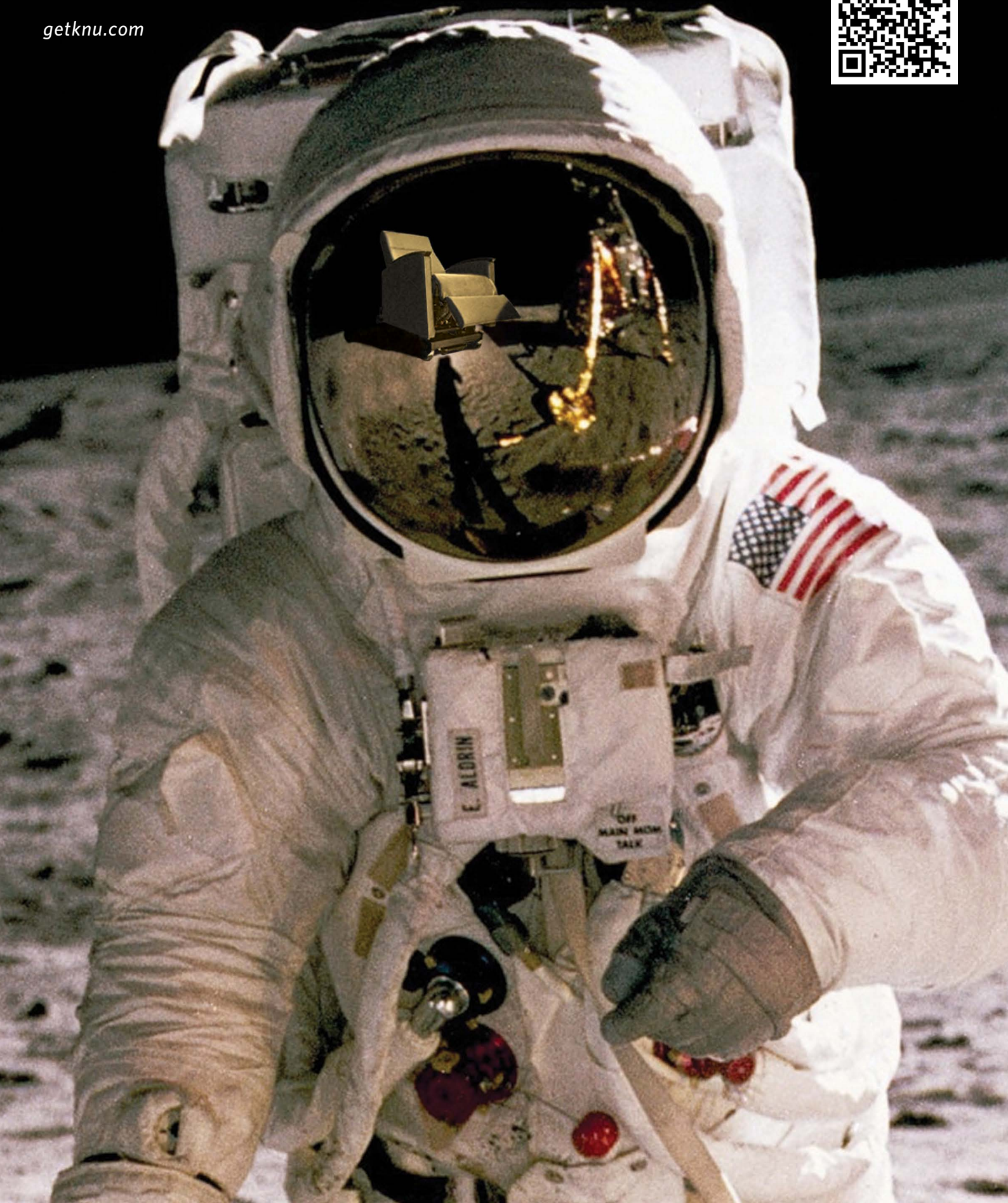
# A Revolutionary Launch

Going where no healthcare recliner has gone before—  
La-Z-Boy® Healthcare | Knú Comfort® introduces  
weightless zero gravity comfort to healthcare spaces.

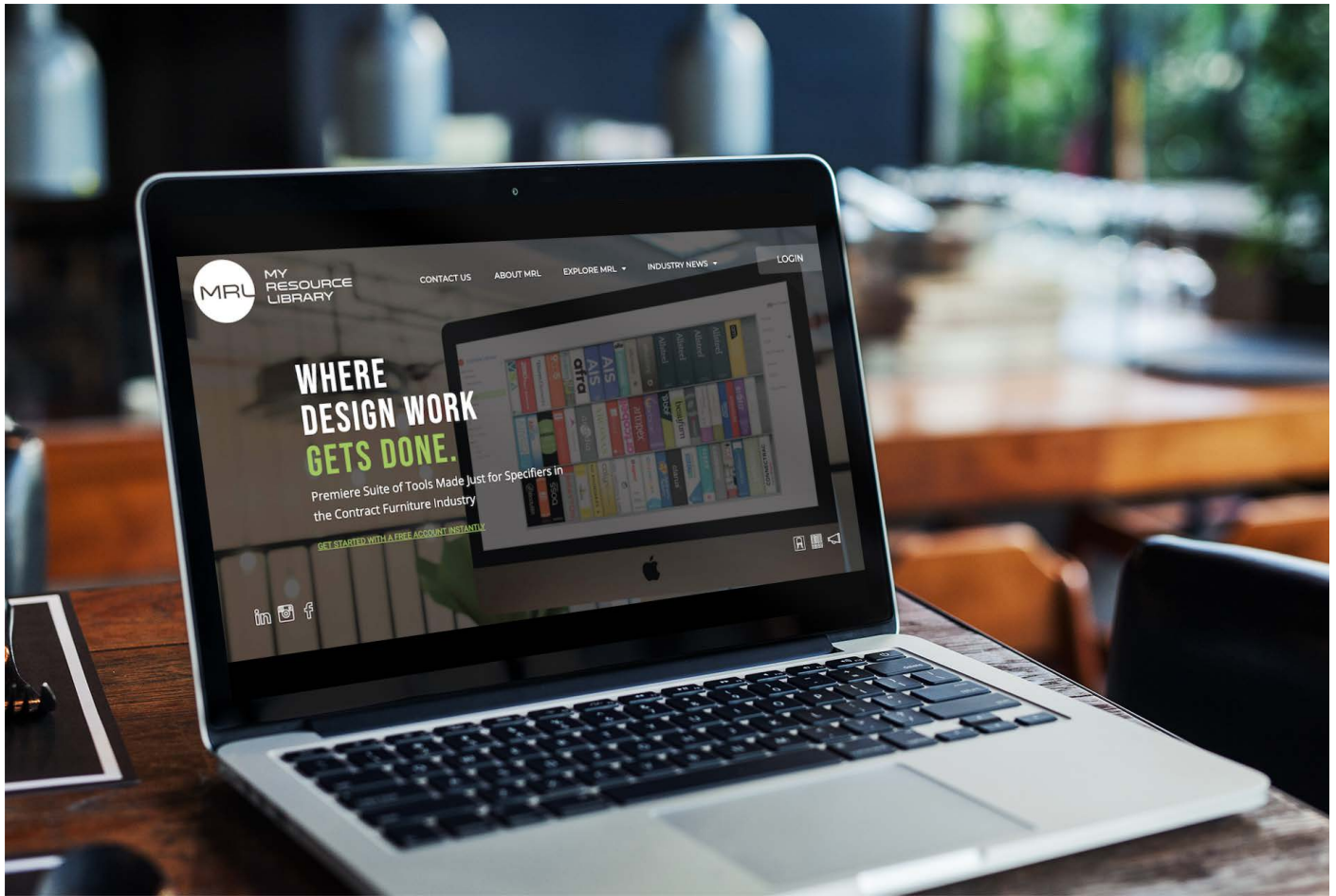
[getknu.com](http://getknu.com)

LA Z BOY®  
HEALTHCARE

KNÚ®







# A New Look for My Resource Library

***My Resource Library launches new public-facing website and 'Pro Notify Tool'.***

My Resource Library is thrilled to announce the launch of our new public-facing homesite! The site has been completely redesigned with a fresh new look and feel. We've focused on providing a user-friendly experience, making it easy for you to find the information you're looking for quickly! In addition to simplified navigation, we have also made it much easier to get information about MRL's Pro Services. We hope you will enjoy the new site as much as we do and as always, we welcome your feedback.

[Take a look HERE](#)



**PRO NOTIFY:** Communicate with your customers and team within the Project Tool, capture image specific chat and reactions, and receive real-time email notifications on project activity.



## **HBF TEXTILES INTRODUCES TWO-PART HARMONY - PART TWO: COATED FABRICS**

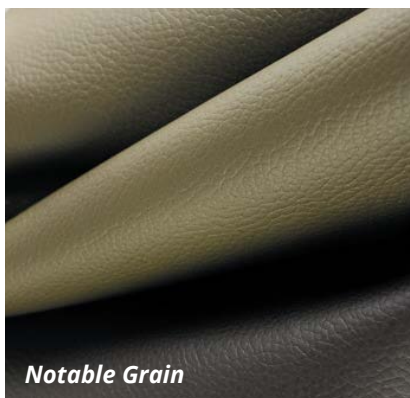
**Four new coated fabrics for contract design delivers high performance and durability with a luxurious touch.**

HBF Textiles is pleased to introduce Two-Part Harmony - Part Two: Coated Fabrics, a new collection of coated fabrics—Well-Loved, Notable Grain, Inherent, and Intersection—offering a newfound level of performance and versatility for contract furnishings. The second part of a two part collection, the faux leathers are made from innovative materials with a high-hydrolysis and abrasion rating.

The four new coated fabrics include three new polycarbonate faux leathers, Well Loved, Notable Grain, and Intersection, along with the brand's first silicone product, Inherent—which is inherently flame resistant, inherently antimicrobial, and inherently stain resistant (with no additional treatments).

“The Coated Fabrics collection was born from a need for well-curated performance materials,” said Mary Jo Miller, VP of Design and Creative Direction for HBF Textiles. “By selecting specific colors and hues, HBF Textiles’ woven fabrics compliment these new coated fabric additions to offer comfort, versatility, and elegance for contract interiors.”





### **Notable Grain**

Notable Grain has the look and feel of real leather—but with all the benefits of an innovative synthetic. This material's heavy weight mimics the heftiness of real leather and upholsters beautifully for both indoor and outdoor furniture. Available in 13 rich colorways, Notable Grain is bleach cleanable with no stain resistant finish added, and appeals to high-performance contract projects and vertical applications.



### **Well-Loved**

Well-Loved is a collection of ultra-soft, distressed faux leathers that evokes the look and feel of antique leather—perfect for contract projects that need a high-performance answer. Available in 14 rich colorways, Well-Loved is bleach cleanable with no stain-resistant finish added, which means it's also ideal for vertical applications and even outdoor usage.



### **Inherent**

Meet Inherent, the hero of all coated fabrics. Inherent is stain-resistant, antimicrobial, flame-resistant—and it doesn't need anything added to make it so. Silicone is a naturally versatile and robust material, benign to health and environment, and capable of meeting the toughest of requirements. Available in 18 fresh colorways, Inherent is bleach cleanable, with no stain resistant finish added and approved for outdoor use. Inherent is applicable to high-performance contract projects as an evocative upholstery choice.

### **Intersection**

Intersection combines the softness of textiles with the beauty of a coated fabric. Its diamond-patterned surface adds texture to upholstery, while adding depth and richness to contract spaces. This new coated fabric is available in 12 colorways, bleach cleanable, and can withstand the demands of any project.

With superior durability, performance, and strength in innovative materials, contract environments are being taken to new levels with HBF Textiles' new coated fabrics.

Prices range from \$59–\$65 per yard for coated fabrics. Part Two: Coated Fabrics is available online and through all HBF Textiles showrooms.



### **About HBF Textiles | [www.hbftextiles.com](http://www.hbftextiles.com)**

HBF Textiles gives dimension to the lives and spaces of users, designers and communities through the essential qualities of fabric. Their expertise comes from understanding the inherent qualities of fabric—yarn, dyeing, spinning, structure and weave. What they produce is not just textiles, but a larger web of relationships. Weaving textiles together with manufacturing and production, they are part of a two-hundred-year-old legacy of textile manufacturing within North Carolina. And, with like-minded mills and collaborators—locally and globally—they explore together the myriad of possibilities of what fabric can be.



# Tribute to Paul Gajewski

Over the last ten years since starting My Resource Library, I have met so many amazing people in our industry. I saw them at trade shows, followed them on LinkedIn and Instagram, and met with them during my travels. I consider myself blessed to get to know everyone I've met and will continue to meet. So in late December 2022, when I received word that Paul Gajewski, owner of COPA Contract, a manufacturers rep group covering the Pacific Northwest, had unexpectedly passed away, I knew our industry had lost a friend. I had lost a friend. I would run into Paul yearly at

HD Expo in Las Vegas, Healthcare Design Expo, NeoCon in Chicago, and Ergo Expo in Las Vegas. He was a great supporter of My Resource Library, and we always found time to discuss business and new ideas for MRL. I knew Paul only professionally, but I knew that he was an industry veteran when he started COPA Contract – in 1987 and someone I wanted to pay tribute to someone, as he was equally as passionate about the industry that I love. To honor him, I reached out to people that knew him best.



**TRIBUTE TO  
PAUL GAJEWSKI**

**Wilson Chow with President of OM Seating**

When Paul passed away, I really struggled with a way to come to grips with that as a reality. As a matter of fact, I still struggle with it.

Over time, I've had to somehow search for words to share with customers and even within our own Office Master family about our shared loss of Paul ...and instead, I've often found myself just simply at a loss. Searching for the "right" words that could ease pain or that could best describe this empty feeling spurred by Paul's conspicuous and sudden inaccessibility.

Even now, it often strikes me as more than a little ironic that we'd be in the position to try and somehow memorialize in words a man who was so glib and facile and incredibly gifted with his words that he was automatically voluntold to make speeches at every single company dinner, always. As such, did he ever need anyone to speak for him? No. Yet, here we are, attempting to do just that. Paul's capacity for one-liners, zingers, soaring rhetoric, biting sarcasm, and just plain laugh-your-ass-off, self-deprecating humor and wit was only matched by the genuineness of how he cared for the people (and cat) in his life.

He loved his family – both his personal and his furniture family – undoubtedly. And we all loved him right back in that same, full measure.

From Paul, I learned words like "copacetic" (who says that really?!). He and I talked about his father – of whom he was

very proud. Paul frequently brought up his son and his wife and shared about what they were doing and where they were at the moment. He spoke of books he was reading – and recommending – with the same zest that he'd use in rhapsodizing about his beloved showroom or his next big idea for a Furniture Dominance Strategy.

He was passionate and energetic. I've been regaled on many a call about his heroism on the basketball court; apparently, he was capable of raining 3's from everywhere on the court and scoring all 15 points of an 11-point game! We've shared many late-night calls where he started by pressuring me for the launch (and samples) of some new product line that we'd only just "introduced" (which is not technically a launch yet, right Paul?!)... then only to have that same call (d?)evolve into us taking turns quoting lines to one another from "A Few Good Men."

In the end, it turns out that Paul Gajewski was himself a singular, good man. Our friend and brother. Our rep, who (all cheesiness acknowledged) represented the best of what our company, but also our people, could ever hope to be. Dedicated, flawed, caring. Every bit is real. I constantly miss his optimism, right along with his pessimistic and sarcastic comments. I miss the pitter-patter that was the rhythm we could get into with a conversation about – well, anything. Furniture quite often. But family, and so much more too. I will miss his constant and firm belief in me, in us, and overall in the meaning of "Family." I will constantly miss our talks about every which thing, as we both planned for the bright future ahead together.



**TRIBUTE TO  
PAUL GAJEWSKI**



**Scott Bruce, Paul's longtime friend, and COPA Contract business partner:**

Remembering Paul Gajewski is a great pleasure. Paul didn't just light up a room; he was able to light it on fire. He had a presence that was full of energy and passion that was entertaining and engaging. Paul was all about having laughter and fun in his life, and it fulfilled him to share it with others.

In business, Paul was dynamic. When he was presenting a manufacturer's new product, he did it with enthusiasm and zeal to sell both the sizzle and the steak. Paul loved selling, but he always kept a balance between representing his manufacturer and his dealer with integrity and loyalty.

One Neocon, after dinner and a few cocktails, Paul and I happened to walk by a Men's Warehouse. Paul had spotted a sports coat in the window, and he suddenly went into the Men's Warehouse with me trailing behind him. He was looking at a red sport coat with this playful glimmer in his eye. Paul said we should go to the manufacturers' Sunday meetings dressed as "Frick and Frack Real Estate Agents." It was Paul's sense of humor that convinced me to buy matching sports coats and shirts to add some fun to the show for everyone.

Paul was a great business partner (34 years), salesperson, and truly cherished best friend. He was a gift to my life with his energy, passion, and an exceptional sense of humor.

**Michael Smith with Panaz:**

Paul and I clicked from the moment we first met each other. We had the same sense of humor and love for our industry as well as we both had some amazing shirts that we wore. Who knew I would find my Paisley twin out there LOL!

One of the things that stood out was how many people Paul knew. Everywhere we went, he had friends. He took me on my first trip to Montana ( after 30 years of living in the USA – not wanting to rush into things, ha-ha), and he had some amazing contacts and customers there. Holland America, in particular, was one of them, and they were devastated to know Paul had passed away.

Paul was a great man and was genuinely loved by his customers. I am very grateful I got to know him and worked with him on some really cool projects. He will certainly be missed by many people. From all of us at Panaz, we extend our heartfelt sympathies to his family.



**TRIBUTE TO  
PAUL GAJEWSKI**

**Greg Laffen, owner of CE Associates, an Independent Rep Group covering Northern California:**

I met Paul 35 years ago at a NOPA show in LA. I was attending the show to find factories to represent and stumbled into him and Scott Bruce, his business partner, in front of the Office Master (OM) booth. Paul introduced himself and directed me to Bill Chow, stating, "this Factory is going to be great." We became good friends and business associates from that point. Paul had a big heart and always cared about the success and well-being of others. Even if you had met Paul just one time, he left an impact on you. His quick wit and sense of humor could bring a large group or one person at ease and create a sense of camaraderie and fun at any moment. He was kind and generous, always thinking about the team's success and how he could add value. He loved our industry, his role as an independent rep, and how he could serve others. He was a great athlete, playing league basketball into his late 50s, and was very competitive on the links. He often spoke of his sweet wife, Dannah!

Although I am very sad I will forever be grateful for the fact that Paul was in my life for these years. His presence made me a better man!

**Jared Abramowitz with ZGO Technologies**

Like so many, Zgo Technologies was shocked and saddened to hear of the passing of Paul Gajewski. I only knew Paul after him taking on the Zgo line. In reaching out to so many rep groups, understandably, many do not want to take on new lines. Not Paul. He quickly grasped and appreciated Zgo's products, messaging, and goals in the industry. He jumped right in and always did all that he could to represent us in the best way possible. For that, I am extremely grateful and appreciative. Zgo will miss him.

On a personal note, my fondest memory of Paul was on a trip I made up to Seattle. After a day of meetings, we went out for some good food, drinks, and conversation. We had a lot of laughs and ended up shooting a few games of pool. He beat me and never let me forget about it. I have come across many people in my 26 years in the industry, so I can confidently say that he was a genuinely good guy. I will miss him.

**Phil Hicks, President of Created Hardwood:**

Paul was our Pacific Northwest partner for three years and was a true pleasure to work with. He made it a priority to always check in and update us regularly. Paul made us feel like he was always trying to promote our brand and do the right thing. I can honestly say after every conversation, our frame of mind was lifted.

The guy's sense of humor was second to none, which fit in perfectly with our HD Expo trips and dinners in Vegas. He was truly an upper to any mood and will be missed as a great friend. Until we hang in heaven, rest in peace, Pauly.

**Dan O'Malley, Director of Emerging Opportunities for Lesro:**

Paul was the consummate salesman's salesman. He always pushed us to be better; better products, better service, better programs, always challenging us to be a better, more valuable supplier to our dealers. Paul always pushed me to be better as well. He was never bashful about expressing his opinion of my ideas, sometimes congratulating me and sometimes suggesting that I do more thinking. More often than not, though, more thinking was what my ideas needed.

Thank you, Paul, for making Lesro - and - me better. You will be missed.

**PAUL GAJEWSKI**

**August 20th, 1960 to December 1st, 2022**

*Prom people that just met Paul once to people that have known him for years, his characteristics rang true: Hilarious, Devoted (to his family, Wife Dannah, son Jason, stepson Hunter and stepdaughter Shannon – and to the contract furniture industry), Proud, Energetic, Adventuresome, and outgoing. Paul was on a father-son vacation with Jason in Zihuatanejo when a completely unexpected heart attack struck him. A celebration of life will be held on January 28th, 2023, at 2 pm at Lakeview Golf and Country Club in Lakeview, Washington.*

*The impact Paul had on our industry was incredible, and to use the words Wilson Chow used at the end of an email to me, "Paul Gajewski, speechlessly, deeply missed."*



Kip by Tayco

## The Future of Contract Design: Adaptable & Collaborative Work Environments

Contract design is continuously changing to keep up with the evolving need of employees and work environments. It is evidently in the process of transitioning towards a more flexible and collaborative setting. With the increasing number of people who work remotely and the growing need for efficient communication between all Team members new forms of approaching the contract design emerge, ushering in a new era for the industry.

### A Workplace With Intention

The business world has changed dramatically. Three years ago, no one could have anticipated such a drastic shift to a world where work is increasingly virtual and the need for smaller carefully curated spaces has grown. Now, the word

“workplace” has an evolving definition, one that will likely be completely different for the next generation of workers.

As traditional physical offices are being complemented by virtual workspaces, the need to go to the office has decreased. Now, every trip to the workplace is a valuable moment to collaborate across multiple organizational levels, and with colleagues that may not have worked together or had the opportunity to get to know each other before.

It is no longer enough to simply have a desk and a chair. Businesses need furniture that fosters collaboration, creativity and productivity. The office needs to be an exciting space that draws the worker in.



So far, we are seeing trends where designers are incorporating communal tables, open spaces and lounge areas into their designs to facilitate this new environment of work.

In addition to collaborative space, workers still need a place to touch down and get work done. This is driving demand for new kinds of workstations, that satisfies privacy needs without losing the open office ambiance. Modern system like Switch from Tayco allows for different high panels, providing solutions for hoteling or dedicated private workspaces.

The industry is rapidly transcending the old paradigm of open versus closed workspaces to instead, offer solutions that give employees more autonomy and control with versatile solutions for their workspace.

### **Mobility's Effect on the Modern Work Environment**

The ever popular hybrid working model has an increasing number of employees working from home meaning companies need to ensure that their employees have the appropriate tools they need to be productive while they're at the office and at home.

Innovative solutions like mobile pedestals with lockable casters that can be easily moved from one room to another are carefully designed to create a less rigid and more flexible environment for employees, giving them the possibility to easily move their belongings from one desk to another. A perfect solution for offices where hoteling is becoming standardized. In the future we imagine dedicated pedestals that can lock away into seamless storage cabinets would be an ideal secure solution to allow for personal storage without causing clutter.

Additionally, manufacturers have the challenge to think ahead of the trends and offer reliable, functional solutions for employees who are constantly changing from working in and out of the office setting. Designing workspaces with lockers, allow employees to leave files and personal items without having to carry around heavy bags or briefcases full of paperwork every day. If the home becomes a workplace

too, equal attention should be paid to the design of that environment as well.

### **Workspaces that Connect People**

Contract design should guarantee optimal conditions for collaboration in work environments. This will encourage the required functions of face-to-face employee settings including brainstorming, innovation, and connection among Team members. Furthermore, and probably more importantly, it has the potential to improve both company culture and employee experience.

Knowing that collaboration is important and time spent in the office is likely limited, in addition to hoteling setups, activity-based workspace is a new style that is emerging. It aims to specifically improve cooperation, productivity, and employee satisfaction by allowing the employee to freely use the office for the required function. Employees that need to collaborate can use conference rooms and meeting rooms with conference tables with wire management options and technology like Norris. Those who require peaceful work can relocate to private offices, often made up of Tayco's Cosmo or Switch tall panels. Finally, individuals in need of a break can use the common area space to connect and bond with colleagues.

As the workplace evolves, so does the furniture. The work environment is evolving from its past monolithic state to become a flexible environment that offers a diverse and adaptable set of functional spaces which responds to the modern world demands. Manufacturers need to ensure they are adapting to the new forms of working and collaborating to meet the needs and well-being of employees overall.



# My Resource Library Welcomes Laura Carlson to the Team



Laura graduated from the University of Cincinnati with a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design in 1998. Her passion for design is the essence of her personality. Laura has over 20 years experience in the contract interiors industry, starting with Architectural Sales for Virginia Tile Company in 2002. After 7 years with Virginia Tile, Laura moved to Arizona and switched to the Dealer side of the industry, working for a Teknion dealership (OM Workplace) and a Herman Miller dealership (Workspaces) before starting her own successful rep group – Blue Sky Contract Furniture - in 2012.

In her position at MRL she will lead, develop, and build the Architectural Materials Library. Develop and deploy a sales plan to reach and introduce the vast MRL audience of specifiers to the manufacturers, distributors, and products they have been requesting. She will also focus on proactively identifying and assessing her clients need to enhance customer satisfaction.

An Ohio (Cleveland) girl at heart, Laura loves design, travel, spending time with her two girls (ages 17 and 21) and two puppies (miniature schnauzers), going to basketball and football games (High School and College). Laura and her husband of 23 years, Jeff, enjoy spending time in Flagstaff, Az, Hawaii, and Mexico.

Laura officially joined the MRL team on January 3rd and is already hitting the ground running!!

*"We're beyond excited to add Laura's expertise to the MRL team," remarked Jim Palmitier, President of My Resource Library. "Her deep background in Architectural Product Sales and broad experience engaging with industry specifiers is exactly what we need to lead our expansion efforts." or "Her deep background in architectural product sales and broad experience engaging with specifiers at all levels will be the pillars of her success as she leads the expansion of the library."*

**- Jim Palmitier, President of My Resource Library**





# Getting to Know Gibson Interior Products

*Gibson Interior Products is a four-generations family-owned independent manufacturer's representative organization operating in New York, New Jersey and Florida. They have more than 75 years of experience in selling commercial office furnishings. The categories they specialize in are furnishing products for corporations, healthcare, education and hospitality.*

[www.gibsonoffice.com](http://www.gibsonoffice.com)

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

**A:** Growing up in an Office Furniture family I knew one thing, selling desks and chairs like my dad and granddad wasn't for me....But a few years after my dad passed in the mid 80's I took a job with a friend of his representing High Point Furniture and then moved on to Raynor Marketing. When my daughter Laura was born in 1991 I set out to follow in my dad's footsteps and form my own rep group. Armed with resumes and some business cards I walked the 1992 Neocon halls talking to anyone who would listen and that began an

amazing 30 year journey...I spent 25 years as a small group in a small space in the NY Design Center. As my clients and team grew, from 4 to 14 by 2018, we knew it was time to go big or go home...

**Q: How has the company changed over the years?**

**A:** Going from 2000 sq feet on Lexington Ave to 12,000 sq ft on Broadway in 2019 was a major turning point, investing everything I had to create a jaw dropping mouth watering one stop shop for all who buy, sell and specify contract furniture

**REP FEATURE:  
GIBSON INTERIOR  
PRODUCTS**

and architectural products....

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

**A:** Our secret sauce is service, there is no hand book to reping and its certainly not the cake walk many think it is... Hard work and common sense has always worked for me... Add to that the fact that I've been blessed to represent some of the best manufacturers in our industry, 25 years with lines like Logiflex, Arcadia and Spec Furniture along with many others....

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

**A:** What excites me now is seeing my team at work, watching them water and nurture seeds I have planted over a lifetime and seeing them succeed, that is most rewarding.....

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

**A:** Seeing my daughter Laura who was only one years old when this long strange trip began, seeing her running the company, well, it blows my mind...She is a 4th generation Gibson selling office furniture here in New York City....Her success in securing and continuing my life's work ensures her many years to come of continuing what her great grandfather started in 1940 down on Reade Street....

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

**A:** In one word I'd have to say "sweet"



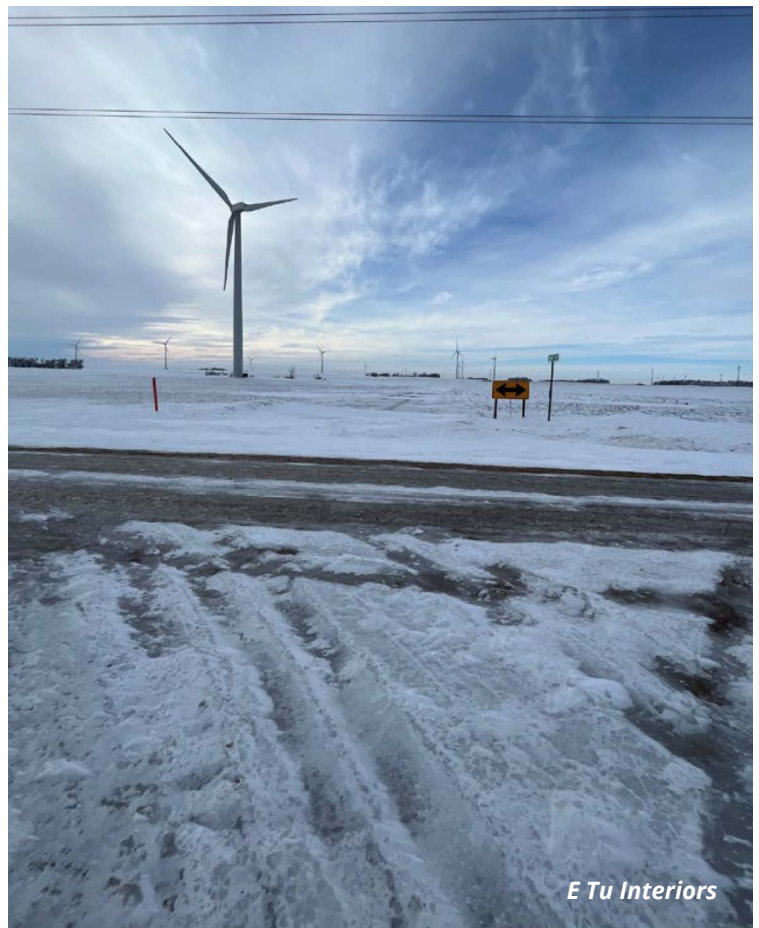


# KEEPING CONNECTED

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!



*E Tu Interiors*

## E Tu Interiors

While the winter wanes on, samples still get shuffled and shown. With a break in the winter advisory warnings, e tu Interiors bundled up and hit the road. Covering Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota during the winter months can be tricky, but when it works it is so wonderful to be able to connect in person.

**KEEPING  
CONNECTED**

# E Tu Interiors



# Hart Associates

Your #hartreps are happy to introduce our new social media coordinator, Dunkin. He loves innovative products and belly rubs. He recently promoted products from our new manufacturers - Egan Visual and MR Walls. Schedule your showroom tour today, and Dunkin may greet you.

Follow Dunkin on Instagram @dashing\_dunkin and via Sarah Hart Hall's LinkedIn and Instagram pages for the latest on #hartproducts serving Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, Central/Southern Illinois and Arkansas.





**delve**<sup>MRU</sup>  
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