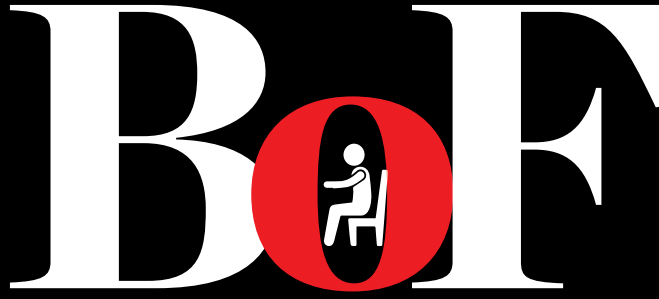


The Business of Furniture | July 22, 2020

**BOF**



Since We're  
Working from  
Home, Why Not  
Work Outdoors?

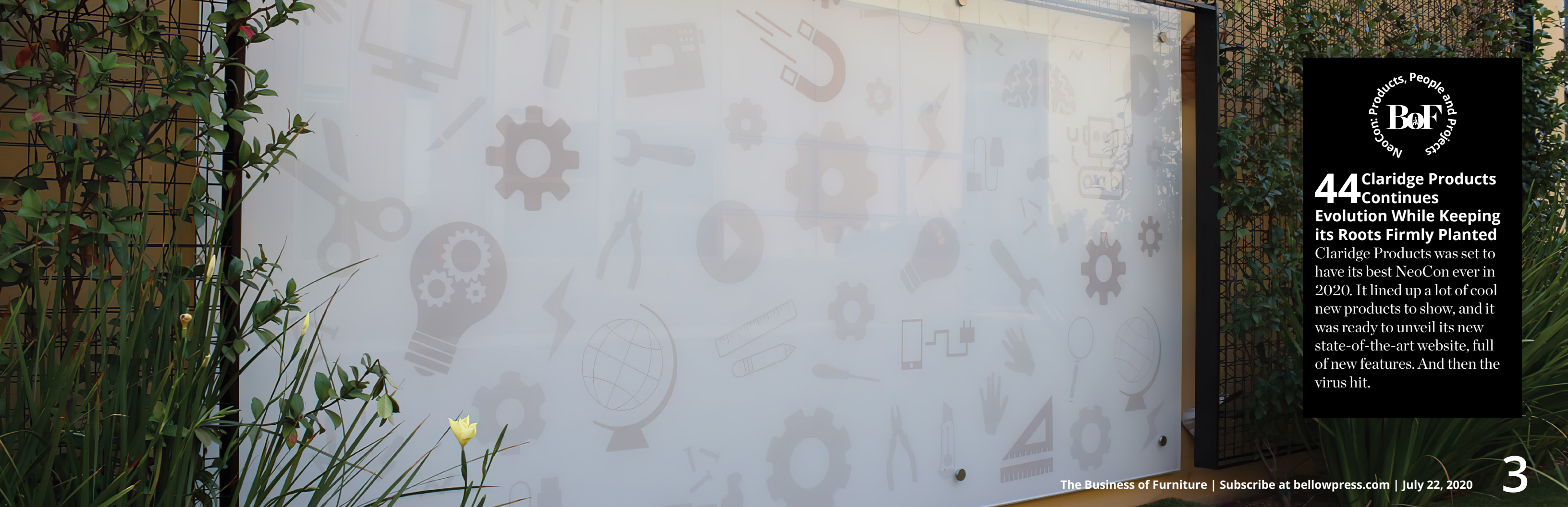






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## 44 Claridge Products Continues Evolution While Keeping its Roots Firmly Planted

Claridge Products was set to have its best NeoCon ever in 2020. It lined up a lot of cool new products to show, and it was ready to unveil its new state-of-the-art website, full of new features. And then the virus hit.





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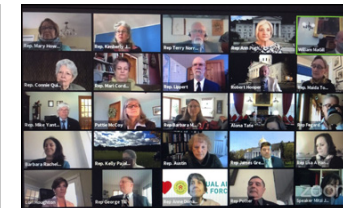


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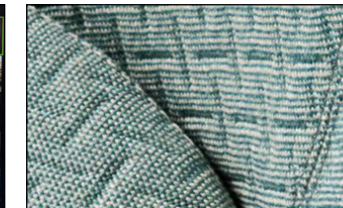
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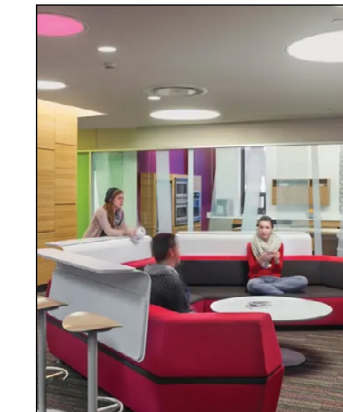
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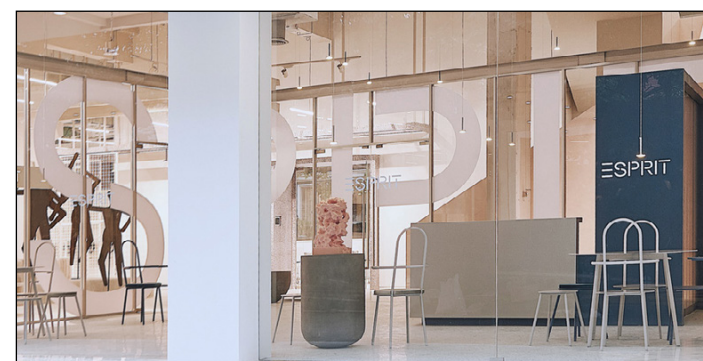
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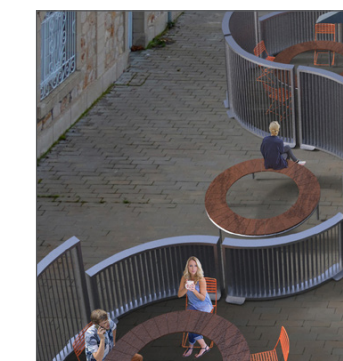


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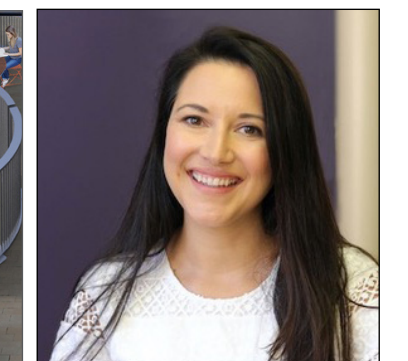
To contextualize some of these uplifting actions, we sat down with leading experts from both the manufacturing and design communities to get a better understanding of what our world will look like as we begin to transition back to the office.



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**BoF Workplaces** 

**Editor-in-Chief, Bellow Press** Rob Kirkbride

**Vice President, Sales & Marketing, Publisher, Bellow Press** Melissa Skolnick

**Vice President, Content Production, Bellow Press** Todd Hardy

**Staff Writer, Marketing Manager, Bellow Press** Emily Clingman

**Workplace Guru, BoF** Stephen Viscusi

**Training & Development Columnist, BoF** Sid Meadows

**Contributing Writers, BoF:**

Bruce Buursma, John Q. Horn, Stef Schwalb,

Jennie Morton, Michael Dunlap, Carolyn Cirillo, Kevin Budelmann

**Illustrator, BoF** Jamie Cosley

**Copy Editor, BoF** Linda Odette

**Publishing Headquarters**

382 NE 191st St, Suite 253

Miami, Florida 33179

877-BELLOW9 (877-235-5699)

**Email:** info@bellow.press

Include us on your PR distribution list.

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**ROB KIRKBRIDE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

"THEY" SAY TAKING A POWER NAP AT WORK MAY ACTUALLY INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY. BUT "THEY" HAVE OBVIOUSLY NEVER BEEN STUNG BY SUSAN'S WIFFLE BALL BAT OF DOOM!



**HUTCH**

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# Since We're Working from Home, Why Not Work Outdoors?



## Hello friends,

To those of us in the Northern Hemisphere, today marks the official beginning of the dog days of summer. And what dogs they are this year. It has been a truly difficult summer for the office furniture industry – and everyone else as well.

Interestingly, the dog days of summer come from Greek and Roman astrology and mark the period following the heliacal rising of the star system Sirius. The star system Sirius is named after the star itself – Canis Majoris – colloquially known as the “Dog Star.” Thus the name, the dog days of summer.

Of course, we know them as the hottest days of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. The Greeks and Romans connected the dog days with heat, drought, sudden thunderstorms, lethargy, fever, mad dogs and bad luck. Apparently they came a little early this year.



Alas, the dog days don't have to be dogs, especially since so many of us are working from home. I normally work from my office, an old, dusty former furniture factory. But it gets too hot in the building when temperatures soar above 90, as they have for the past few weeks in Grand Rapids. So I've spent a lot of time working from home, along with most of the rest of the world.

Some distinct advantages come with working from home during the summer months. I've set up my Wi-Fi

with extenders so I can work outside if I choose. I usually start my work day on my front porch with a cup of coffee and a check of my emails. It is one of my favorite spots and favorite times. Rain or shine, I can get some work done while greeting my neighbors who walk by, usually with a dog or kids in tow (often both).

My wife is a designer (she designs massive indoor plantscapes for buildings, not furniture) so our yard is full of beautiful flowers to look at as well. I can work while watching the bees and birds at play. Not bad.

As the sun shifts and the front porch gets too hot, I often move to the backyard. Work happens there at the pace of a Spanish workday – some work, some ice tea, some lounging in a hammock. Again, not bad.

A lot has been made of the importance of the home office recently and for good reason. Most of us are working from them. But there is nothing in the Home Office Rulebook that says you must work inside. I brought up where I've been working to encourage you to do the same. With our mobile devices, there is no excuse not to sit outside and soak up the sun while working. No one will object to you jumping on a Zoom call with the outdoors as your backdrop.

If you can't do that, try bringing some outside in to you. Cut some flowers from your yard, and put them in a vase on your desk. Open up the windows instead of running the air conditioning, if you are able to. Pour yourself a lemonade.

If you don't have the facilities to work outside at your home, many parks now have Wi-Fi service. Grab a park bench or picnic table and work from there. Our neighbors spend most of their days on a sailboat on Lake Michigan during summer months and use Wi-Fi at their marina and cellular service to work from when they are on the water.

The dog days of summer don't have to be dogs, especially if you can spend some time working outdoors. Just leave your Speedo and bikini in the drawer where it belongs. No one needs to see that.

*Rob Kirkbride and the Business of Furniture team*

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## Keilhauer Introduces Hatch an Elegant Soft Textile

➔ Keilhauer has introduced Hatch, an updated take on matelassé, the traditional, French fabric that mimics the style and effect of old Provençal quilts. In Hatch, the classic textile, most commonly associated with coverlets, is reimagined for new applications and environments.

The upholstery option features an embossed, cross hatch pattern. It complements the clean lines and forms that are a signature of Keilhauer and modern design.

The three dimensional textile is a soft and elegant solution for contract applications. Its understated pattern adds warmth and personality. It's available in 20 gentle, muted colors to accentuate the fabric's inherent softness.

Hatch, made of 76% polypropylene and 24% polyester, has heavy duty abrasion resistance, surpassing 100,000 rubs using the Wyzenbeek Method, and comes in a 55-inch width. **BoF**



## During the Workweek, 69% of Employees Spend More Than an Hour in Meetings

More than two-thirds of employees (69%) are in meetings for more than an hour a week, according to a new survey from The Manifest, a B2B news and how-to website. With meetings being held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses are finding their employees have different feelings toward regular business meetings.

Specifically, with ever-changing schedules and responsibilities, workers are busier than ever. Businesses need to show they respect their employees and their time. Ninety percent of employees say a typical work meeting takes one hour or less.

"Meetings take time out of busy schedules," said Nick Farnborough, co-founder of Clavis Social. "They should only last as long as they need to."

Structured agendas can help keep people accountable. Before any meeting, employees and managers should figure out the true purpose of the meeting and the results they are targeting. Often, meetings are geared toward checking in or exchanging ideas.

More than half of employees attend progress check meetings (53%) or brainstorming sessions (51%).

If an employee has a meeting-heavy day, their workload can be impacted. Ensuring all employees have time for their core responsibilities and tasks helps keep the company operating smoothly.

If a meeting is unproductive, no one benefits or succeeds. Factors that determine whether employees consider a meeting effective is if it helps problem-solve or build skills.

For example, more than half of managers (61%) think business meetings help solve problems. In addition, nearly half (47%) of human resources (HR) professionals learn skills at business meetings. Only 23% of individual contributors, however, think meetings help them build skills.

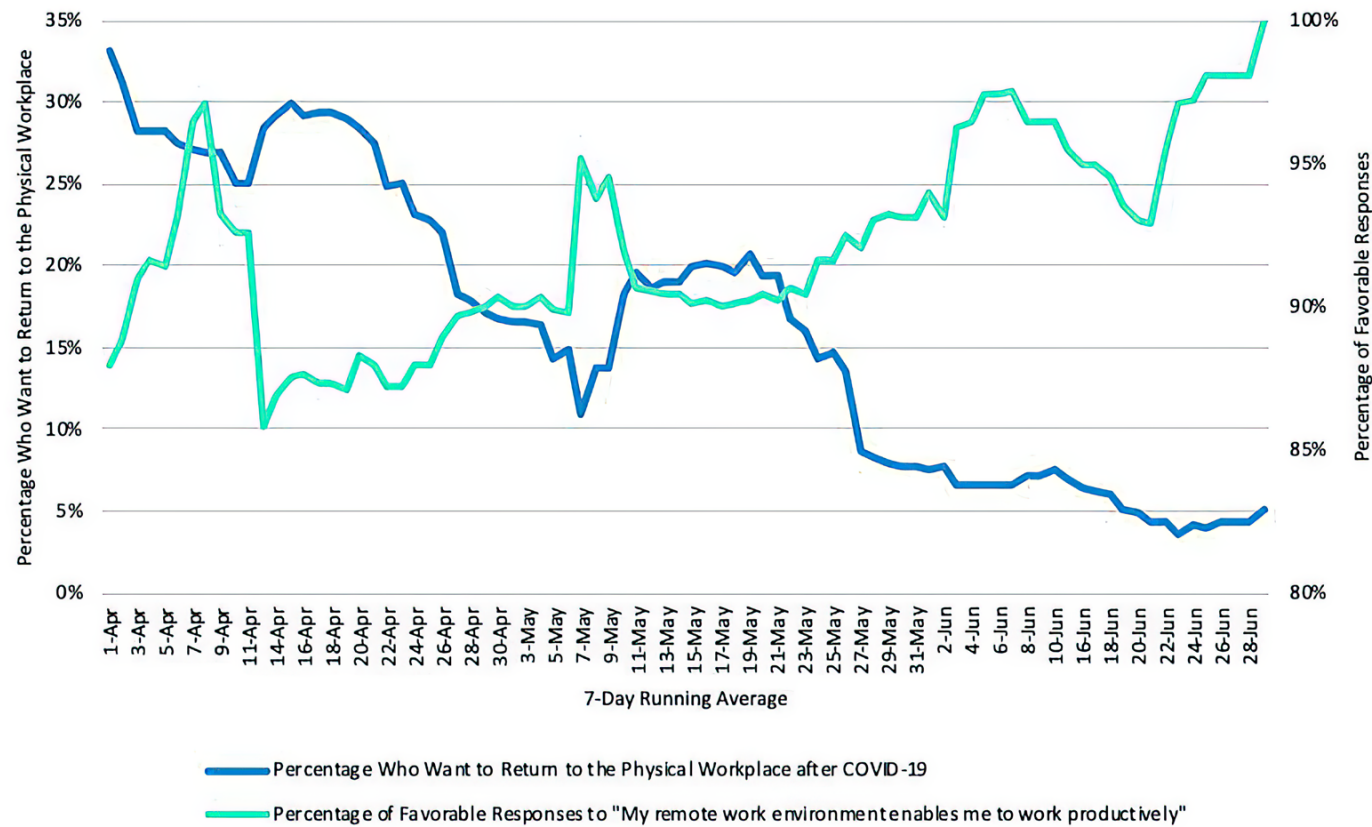
Companies need to train their managers and leaders to run them effectively and benefit all employees. Coming prepared with an agenda and visuals, designating a notetaker, and asking for feedback are just some of the ways managers can make their meetings more engaging and impactful.

Laurie Wilkins, founder of Call Outdoors, said, "without an agenda, a meeting is useless."

Companies should gear their meetings for their employees to help them gain the most out of a challenging business environment.

Read the full report at <https://themanifest.com/hr/5-tips-conduct-business-meetings>.





## Just 4% of Employees Want to Return To The Office Full Time, Down From 33% in April, According to New Data

THE RESULTS ARE BASED ON RESPONSES FROM MORE THAN 100 GLOBAL ENTERPRISES REPRESENTING EVERY MAJOR INDUSTRY.

Perceptyx, the employee survey and people analytics platform, released new data from more than 750,000 employees that shows a sharp decline in the percentage who want

to return to the physical workplace full-time, post-COVID. In early April, 33% said they wanted to return, while at the end of June, that number dropped to just 4 percent.

These results are in direct response, it appears, with the number who feel their productivity in working from home has increased. The percentage of favorable responses to “my remote

work environment enables me to work productively” has shifted from 86% to nearly 100.

“In looking at these data collected starting back in March, there has been a clear shift as employees have had the time to create a suitable remote working environment and mastered remote work tools – the newness has paved the way to the familiar,” said Brett Wells, director of people analytics at Perceptyx. “The combination of the growing experience with remote work and the additional flexibility and resources made available have negatively impacted the desire to go back to the office.”

The results are based on responses from more than 100 global enterprises representing every major industry. This data collection is part of a larger effort where Perceptyx has offered, completely free of charge, surveys focused on companies’ responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whether this trend is here to stay or will continue to shift will depend on a number of factors, including:

### The ongoing impact of COVID-19

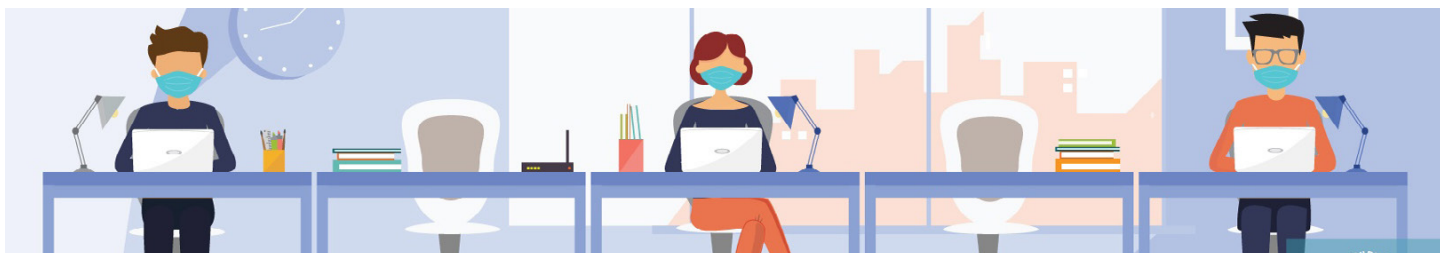
States and cities have reopened with mixed success, and given the recent sharp increase in cases, many employees are likely worried about this second wave. In turn, they want to limit their exposure to unnecessary risks that might come from returning to the physical workplace.

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**School status**

The current shift we are seeing coincided with the end of the school year in most countries, a time when many working parents and caregivers were freed from increased schooling responsibilities. The coming return to school is uncertain, and undoubtedly school decisions will impact parents' willingness – and even ability – to work in the physical workplace. It is possible there will be a reverse shift (productivity decline, desire to return

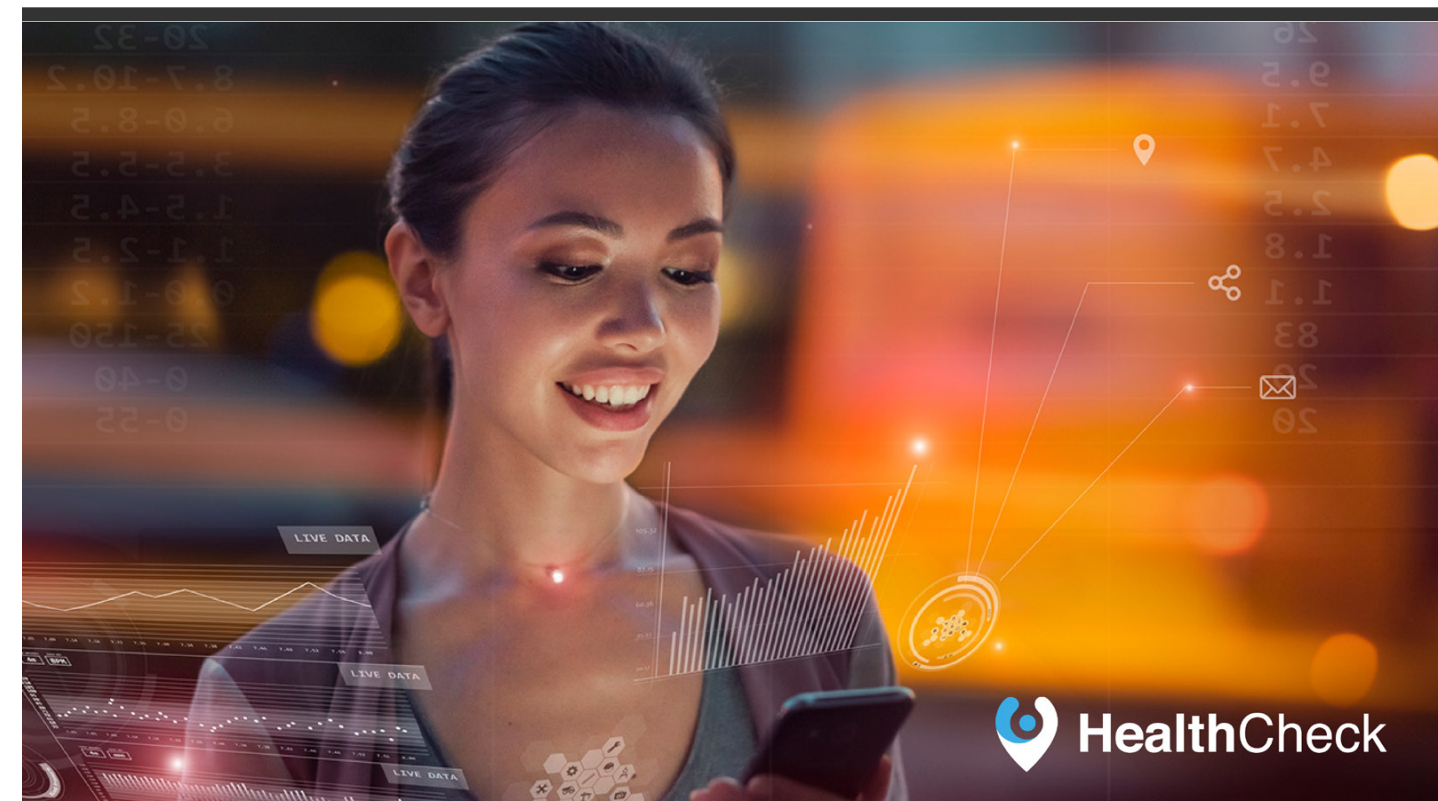
increase) as the school year approaches.

**Perceived productivity by both employee and manager**

Self-reported data must be tempered with additional, objective metrics of productivity. If the company's results, as measured by sales, profits, customer satisfaction and more, are stable or up, then it is fair to say remote work is working. However, there are benefits of offices that in time may be impacted at great rates,

such as the opportunity to brainstorm, collaborate and build a sense of unity and culture.

“The desires of employees are changing at a rapid pace, and it is critical employers understand these shifts and address them in real time,” Wells said. “Perceptyx is seeing this first hand, and we believe these data collected and insights distributed to our clients are making a real difference in work lives of employees across the globe.” **BoF**



## New Technology Platforms Help Get Companies and Employees Safely Out of COVID-19 Lockdown

PLANNING FOR RETURNING TO THE WORKPLACE AFTER A MORE THAN 90-DAY QUARANTINE WILL CONTINUE TO PASS WITH STOPS AND STARTS. STILL, EMPLOYEES MUST BE REASSURED THEIR LABOR CONCERNS WILL BE ADDRESSED BY MANAGEMENT.

The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified conditions American workers have been experiencing since the 2008 financial crisis. Even those with full-time work had already found themselves living week-to-week, paycheck by paycheck, under precarious circumstances. This

led to a sense of insecurity, as people worried about their current employment, energy bills, putting food on the table, health coverage and myriad other issues.

With tens of millions now out of work because of COVID-19, there is a strange new normal

both for businesses and their employees. Insecurity is now impacting everyone – employees and employers – and it seems to be here to stay. There is no roadmap out of the current situation. What is clear though is that everyone has the same goal: getting to the other side safely.

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But re-opening the United States economy has been a series of stops and starts, with unforeseen risks and no one-size-fits-all for each state, city or company. Thankfully, information technology is helping employers and employees along the bumpy road of getting back to business with tools that gather, analyze and interpret information in real time to allow companies to make decisions that balance the impact of their staff's health and the company's operations.

One company responding to the challenge is NEORIS, a global digital accelerator with 20 years on the market. With a goal of aiding the business environment to navigate the pandemic's uncertainties, the company has created NEORIS HealthCheck, an advanced software platform that allows companies to assess and manage risks of the pandemic to their employees and operations.

Today, employers and employees face decisions that pit work versus health, the economy versus people's lives. NEORIS HealthCheck offers a way out of that conundrum by providing the information to make intelligent, informed decisions that attend to business needs while prioritizing the health of employees. The application enables companies to share information and remain in close contact with employees, monitor their well-being and anticipate the pandemic's impact. This helps keep everyone safe

and healthy while reducing worry and anxiety.

"These are extraordinary times, and we have a responsibility to make a social impact in any way possible," said Martin Mendez, NEORIS CEO. "Our advanced platform provides companies with a way to stay closely in touch with their employees, provide support and ultimately help save lives."

**Among questions businesses are asking are:**

- Where are my people? Are they healthy?
- Where are those that have been infected?
- Where have they travelled or planning to travel to, when and where?
- What areas of our operations are most affected?
- Who are the most vulnerable and how do we efficiently provide assistance?
- How does this impact our manufacturing, warehousing and office utilization?
- What decisions should we make around "rerouting employees" based on critical employee availability?
- Which employees can we call back and which ones should stay remote?
- How do we efficiently manage and safely bring employees back into physical spaces?
- How do we leverage contact tracing and location access information in a privacy-preserving manner to make real-

time decisions that prevent further outbreaks?

To answer these questions, employers need to analyze trends to detect possible outbreaks in real-time, and to stay ahead of the curve and take immediate action for employee health and safety. Real-time visibility on employee location, status and risk for COVID-19 is important for management to know through the transition, as many as two to four contacts deep.

On the other hand, for workers to trust it is safe to return to the office, transparency is paramount. With NEORIS HealthCheck, businesses can accomplish this through employee outreach and knowledge sharing, along with community building among workers, ensuring workforce engagement and awareness.

Planning for returning to the workplace after a more than 90-day quarantine will continue to pass with stops and starts. Still, employees must be reassured their labor concerns will be addressed by management. Whether working at home through to the future Phase 4 and full capacity, every transition will be more easily accomplished using new technology.

The new normal entails a shared responsibility and shared goal to find a pathway toward a workplace ecosystem that is safe and secure for businesses and employees alike. **BoF**



## Residence Hall Design Trends to Change in Response to COVID-19

SOCIAL SPACES, SUCH AS FLOOR LOUNGES AND STUDIES, WILL BE SIZED AND ORGANIZED TO ALLOW FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING WITH DISTINCT "STATIONS" AT APPROPRIATE INTERVALS.

As universities and colleges look to design new residence halls after the current global health crisis, they will be challenged with how to safely house students while still providing for their social and academic development. Social interactions have taken on a new normal — social distancing, limited-size gatherings and a responsibility to act in a manner that does not make someone else sick. Residence

hall design will evolve to reflect the current pandemic condition, said the student-housing design experts at KWK Architects. "Safety and security will be paramount for future students and their families, likely resulting in a desire for single-occupancy bedrooms in residence halls," said KWK Architects Principal Sara Koester. "Single bedroom units can provide a safe haven — a personal retreat where students

can relax away from others." She stresses, though, that this configuration may be too isolating for a student away from home for the first time. Many residence halls are designed specifically to house freshmen, and studies have shown freshmen students in double bedrooms with a roommate have a higher rate of retention.

A "next best" bedroom design that will be considered is



a double-bedroom designed as a “paired-single” unit — two singles side-by-side — with each occupant having furniture, a closet, operable window on “their side” and only necessarily shared elements, like a corridor door and mechanical unit/thermostat centrally located. The bedroom shape would be wide and shallow, allowing beds, desks and closets to be located further apart.

“The two sides can be marked with floor patterns and paint finishes to distinguish the two zones within the room,” Koester said. “The two roommates will function as a ‘family unit’ since they are indeed sharing a room. These resident students will have experienced the pandemic in their formative years and can rely on their prior experiences to understand the importance of appropriate space boundaries.”

New bathroom designs may favor a clustered single-use bath arrangement where private-use bathrooms — each containing a toilet, lavatory (sink) and shower — are located together. When grouped with a community lavatory area, this offers opportunities for socializing while still providing for privacy. Two entrance/exit points to the facilities will allow for a one-way traffic pattern to be implemented when environmental health conditions warrant. The common lavatory area, with ample space between fixtures, will allow for ease of hand washing as well as a chance to chat with other residents while maintaining social distancing.

New staff training and procedures will be required to ensure a constant (or at least much more frequent) cleaning cycle to safeguard the safety of all building users.

Social spaces, such as floor lounges and studies, will be sized and organized to allow for social distancing with distinct stations at appropriate intervals. Areas can be demarcated with floor patterns.

“Kitchen facilities should ideally be arranged for one-way circulation and appliances spaced to permit multiple work areas with adequate buffers between,” Koester said. “Hand-washing stations should be ample and sufficiently spaced with accessories at each station. It has always been important to provide a variety of social spaces that allow for a range of activities — quiet to active and small group to large group — but now residence halls should consider including single-person study spaces where a resident may go to focus on studies or simply decompress in a private, safe zone.”

Circulation spaces in residence halls will need to evolve. Entrances to buildings will need to be wider and feature multiple single entrance doors to avoid compressing residents as they enter the building. Lobbies should be large enough to allow for pedestrian flow to the elevators or stairs while social distancing, and elevators should be sized to accommodate multiple occupants at opposite corners. Addi-

tional elevators may be needed to safely address reduced elevator capacity due to social distancing restrictions. Corridors will need to be of ample width and preferably feature small alcoves at regular intervals off the main hallway, with views to the exterior and perhaps a bench, that can serve as places to “step out” of the way and not be in the traffic flow. Doors to bedrooms should be located in recessed pockets off the corridor allowing one to transition into the main corridor flow. Air flow exchange and mechanical systems may need to be reevaluated with more frequent filter changes.

“While the program for outdoor spaces in residence hall design has always been important, this will take on a heightened importance in providing places where residents can go for relaxation and space-distant socializing, with individual areas articulated in the design of the hardscape, landscape and outdoor furniture,” Koester said. “Individual outdoor activities, like hammocking and swings, can offer places to unwind, while outdoor terraces and patios can offer places for small groups to safely meet while social distancing.”

With careful and thoughtful planning, residence hall design can balance environmental health concerns and living preferences of students and their families while fostering community and providing a nurturing environment. **BoF**



## Pandemic and BLM Protests Negatively Impacting Corporate Workplace Culture, According to Newly Released Data

THIS IS ONE OF THE NUMBER-ONE INDICATORS OF OVERALL WORKPLACE HEALTH, AND TO SEE THAT DROP IS A RED FLAG.

Corporate workplace culture has been impacted by recent world events, including the coronavirus pandemic and the #BlackLivesMatter protests, in several significant ways, according to new data released by HR compliance training and data analytics company Emtrain.

In a comparison of responses collected from more than 100,000 employees at 145 companies prior to March 15 (and presented in the Emtrain Workplace Culture Report 2020) to more than 20,000 responses collected from after March 15, Emtrain found:

- A 15% drop in the likelihood that employees would say “no” to an inappropriate request from a manager.

- A 7% increase in people having to minimize their heritage or personal identity to fit in at work
- A 9% decrease in employees who say their workplace culture is “healthy” in the area of harassment
- 7% fewer employees reporting “strong and respectful relationships” between age groups
- A 10% decline in people who say behavior in their workplace is governed by “well-understood norms.”

On a positive note, since moving to remote work and Zoom meetings, 8% more people say their coworkers can accurately pick up the mood in the room.

“These changes may not sound dramatic, but believe me they

are,” said Emtrain founder and CEO Janine Yancey. “To have employee attitudes shift this much on such key culture issues in just a few months means there are some major disruptions happening in the workplace and corporate leaders should see this as a wake-up call, particularly the decrease in people believing there are strong, well-understood norms of behavior in their workplace. This is one of the number-one indicators of overall workplace health, and to see that drop is a red flag.”

The data specifically focused on revealing changes to key workplace culture health indicators first shared in the [Emtrain Workplace Culture Report](#). **BoF**



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

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

We're thrilled to present stories from OE Electrics and Claridge Products in today's issue. Make sure you read the all stories in this great series to learn about what these great companies are doing.

NeoCon: Products, People and Projects

**BoF**



**22** OE Electrics is Ready to Jolt Industry with Plug-and-Play Products  
 OE Electrics wants to make powering your office, airport, health care facility or school easy. If you can plug it into a wall at home, why not have the same simplicity in the office? It is a world OE Electrics is working toward.

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 Claridge Products was set to have its best NeoCon ever in 2020. It lined up a lot of cool new products to show, and it was ready to unveil its new state-of-the-art website, full of new features. And then the virus hit.





## OE Electrics is Ready to Jolt Industry with Plug-and-Play Products

Why does everything electric in the commercial interiors industry need to be so complicated? After all, when we want to power something up at home, we simply plug it into a wall outlet. OE Electrics wants to make powering your office, airport, health care facility or school easy. If you can plug it into a wall at home, why not have the same simplicity in the office?

Of course, it's not that easy. When serving the international market, there are hundreds — if not thousands — of national, regional and local rules and regulations for power distribution. If only we could just plug and play. It is a world OE Electrics is working toward — simplicity in power distribution, not only in its native England, but around the world.





**As North American furniture becomes more European in scale and design, it is natural that OE Electrics would make the move to this side of the pond.**

The company, one of the most respected in the U.K. and across Europe, is coming to North America with its portfolio of products that are as well-designed as they are smart and intuitive.

The company's co-founder and technical director Tim Hobbs talks about electricity in commercial spaces with as much passion and as much focus on innovation as Nikola Tesla and Thomas Edison. Actually, to say he is passionate about the business is an understatement.

"America used to be much more a cubicle-orientated industry when it came to furniture," he said of why the company stuck mostly to the U.K. and Europe since it was founded in 1993. "They had separated walls between desks or screens, and people ran an

awful lot of the fixed wiring and steel conduit cables to fixed mounted sockets in the screens and made everybody's little office cubicle almost a fixed wiring installation. That's not what we do. We have built ourselves around a flexible soft-wiring system, which someone can plug and play on site — plug it into a standard domestic socket on the wall or a national socket on the wall, and then distribute power from there."

As North American furniture becomes more European in scale and design, it is natural that OE Electrics would make the move to this side of the pond. Furniture is now more lightweight, a lot more mobile and reconfigurable. Workers are more agile, and the whole office is a bit lighter and more open.



*Tim Hobbs, co-founder and technical director*









**OE Electrics has been supporting offices in Europe with this type of plug-and-play solution for more than a decade, so it made sense to bring its products to the U.S.**

“That created a gap in the market for a more flexible, plug-and-play solution,” Hobbs said. “Modern offices need something that can be plugged in the wall and moved around with more flexibility than a hard-wired solution with the solid conduit metal steel and its two cables.”

OE Electrics has been supporting offices in Europe with this type of plug-and-play solution for more than a decade, so it made sense to bring its products to the U.S. It has a suite of products listed for the North American market and is starting to talk to customers here. It is also following its existing customers to the market. As European companies expand to North America, they are asking OE Electrics to come with them.

In the last few years, OE Electrics’ mindset shifted from reactively supporting U.S. inquiries to proactively servicing the North American market. It identified the market and set to work on making sure it had the right products for it.

The company appointed John Corner as sales manager and Michael O’Keefe as product manager earlier this year.

“John and Mike have been integral in getting us where we need to be to launch in America,” Hobbs said. “They both have a lot of experience in the industry over there, and their insight has been invaluable since they came on board. We’re really excited to have them as the core of our new U.S. team, and customers are going to love working with them.”



**OE Electrics has put together an attractive package of products for the North American market, bringing not just configurability, but also a level of customization that is unmatched in the industry.**

OE Electrics' North American portfolio of products works with a variety of commercial furniture, easily integrating into desks, soft seating and small meeting room applications.

"Our configurable plug-and-play electrical solution is completely listed in North America," Hobbs said. "It allows a lot more configurability, a lot more flexibility for the customer, especially in the modern world of an agile office, with its soft seating, open plan areas and cafeterias, all of which are used for work by people on phones, tablets and laptops, and all of which need to be kept charged."

The company goes beyond the office. It is gaining traction as an electrical supplier for airports and supplied 5,000 electric seat modules to Hartsfield-Jackson Airport in Atlanta.

It also supplied electric connections for JFK Airport in New York and others across the U.S. "We can also support North American furniture manufacturers with projects outside the U.S. and Canada," Hobbs said. "The design of our products allows us to populate them with almost any nationality socket without changing the size or shape of the product, giving a consistent look anywhere in the world. We've supported projects in Africa, South America, Asia and the Gulf region, in addition to most countries in Europe."

OE Electrics has put together an attractive package of products for the North American market, bringing not just configurability, but also a level of customization that is unmatched in the industry, according to Hobbs.











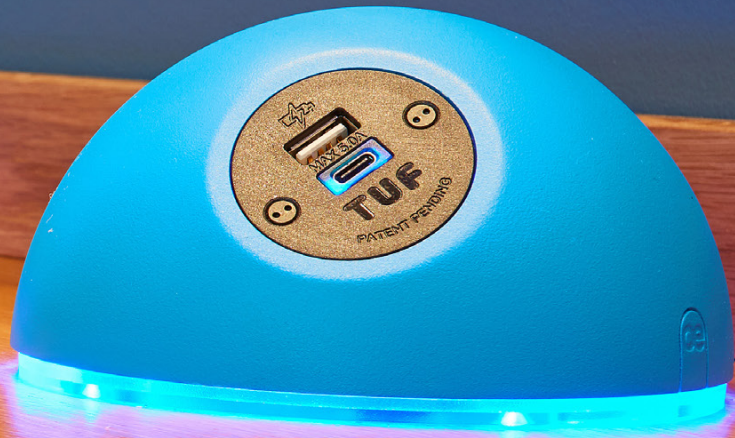
**TUF USB charging port is also unique in that it doesn't matter which way the plug is facing — it will fit into the charger.**

Add to that, one of the best USB chargers in the world. Named "TUF," it is a patented, replaceable USB charger. As technology changes, so can OE Electrics' products. That means companies and airports can simply swap out the old technology with the new without replacing the entire component. This is extra helpful as the market evolves from the old USB Type A to the higher power USB Type C. The TUF USB charging port is also unique in that it doesn't matter which way the plug is facing — it will fit into the charger. No more turning the plug over to make it fit.

"The great thing about USB is that it is universal, so whether I'm in New York, Paris or Sydney, I can use the same USB cable to charge my device. And USB-C means I can now charge my phone or tablet faster than if I used a regular plug anyway. This is likely why USB has been widely adopted throughout Europe," Hobbs said.

In 2014, the company acquired Elsafe in Australia to become its in-house electronics division, which gives it the benefit of designing its own USB chargers and maximizing their output. The team in Australia also helped develop a subsurface wireless charger called ARC-H







**Many of OE Electrics' products are like Legos that simply snap together. It's all about being easy to use and easy to work with.**

that, using a resonant coil, can charge through a 30-millimeter thick desktop without the need to router under the table. It is a quick-charging system, working with all Qi enabled devices. Many of OE Electrics' products are like Legos that simply snap together. It's all about being easy to use and easy to work with. The company spends a lot of time thinking about the future as well — staying ahead of technology so its customers don't have to. Hobbs is carefully watching trends like DC power, which he believes will revolutionize power distribution in the future.

OE Electrics has about 200 employees. It is a family-owned company that was purchased by Tim Hobbs and his father Richard in the 1990s, when it was called Office Electrics. OE Electrics recently opened a new \$11.3 million dollar facility in Wakefield, which is just south of Leeds in West Yorkshire. The growth plan for North America is to open a U.S.-based manufacturing facility to mirror the UK operation. Until then, it will hold significant stock in the U.S. with custom products being supported from the UK facility.











**OE Electrics has manufacturing sites in the U.K., Australia and Germany along with a sales office in Dubai.**

The company already operates across three continents and supplies its products to more than 60 countries. Its products can be found in offices, call centers, hospitals, airports, hotels, cafés, shopping malls, sports centers and many other environments. OE Electrics has manufacturing sites in the U.K., Australia and Germany along with a sales office in Dubai and a global distributor network in countries including New Zealand, the Netherlands, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Malta and Poland.

**BoF**



## Claridge Products Continues Evolution While Keeping its Roots Firmly Planted

Claridge Products was set to have its best NeoCon ever in 2020. The writing surface experts had signed a long-term lease for a new permanent showroom on the 11th floor of the Merchandise Mart. It lined up a lot of cool new products to show, and it was ready to unveil its new state-of-the-art website, full of new features. And then the virus hit.

While disappointing to the company that has revolutionized its products, marketing and distribution connections, Claridge is still on track to do all those things — and more. It just might take a few more months for the industry to fully appreciate all the hard work happening at the company.

And that's OK. For the past few years, Claridge has moved at a breakneck pace to expose the industry to its smartly designed products, strong manufacturing and rich history. A breather might be in order for this company that proves just because a company has a long history doesn't mean it can't move quickly and adapt to changes in the workplace and education.



*MIX Contemporary Mobile*



## The story got new legs Monday with the launching of the company's completely revamped website.

The company is proud of its history. "We were there," said Kurt James, marketing director, as he described how the company helped the U.S. get rolling after World War II, witnessed the Space Race from a front row seat and still innovates to this day.

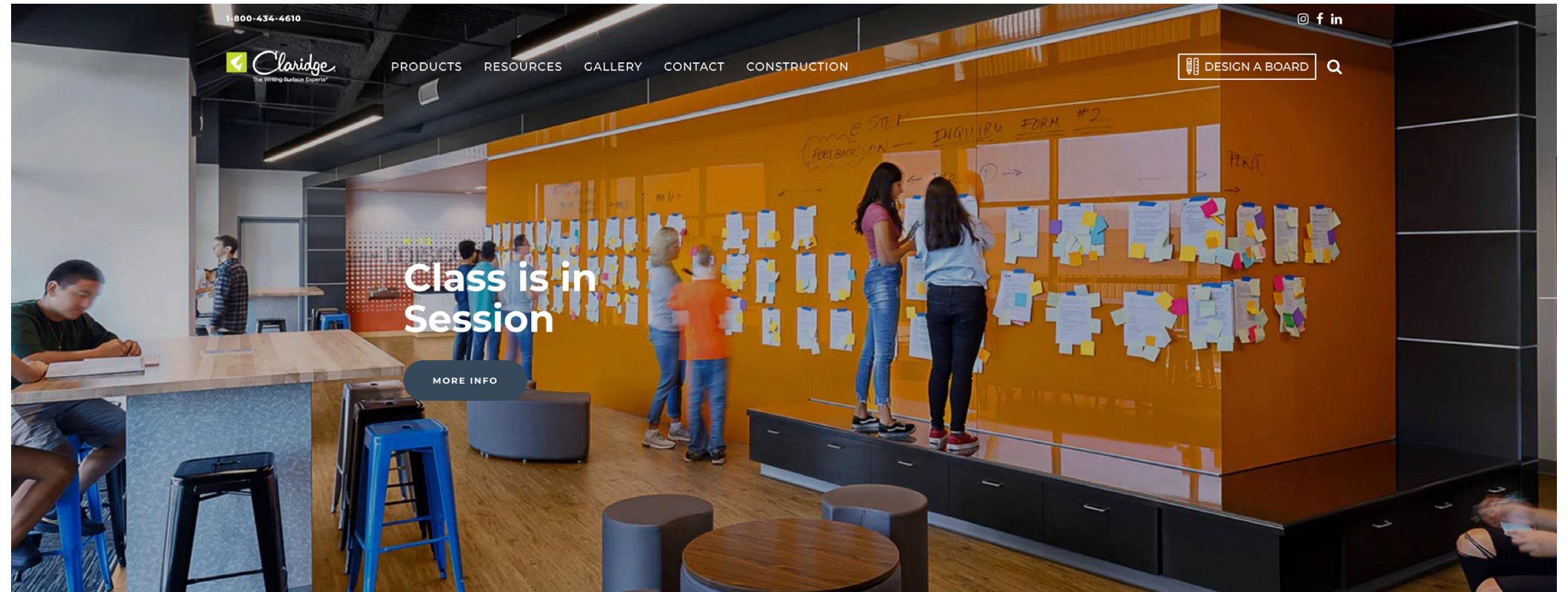
"In 2017, we pivoted, and that was a major turning point for Claridge," he said. "And today, the brand has evolved to the point where we are unveiling a new website, featuring new products, designer tools and the resources our customers expect and deserve. It really is a time for us to say, 'OK, we have officially evolved into this new and more refined brand.' We still have the same heritage. We still have the same commitment to excellence in being the writing surface experts. But we're just more polished and better positioned for future growth."

Claridge has three generations at the company. "A 73-

year history can't be faked, and it can't be copied," James said. "It has to be earned by showing up for the grind day after day, year by year; earned by delivering on promises project after project and earned by a relentless focus on being experts at what it does."

It is not a flashy approach, but instead is based on a deep passion to help people communicate effectively. Claridge boards have persisted through the rise of the digital age, even when some questioned the need for traditional writing surfaces.

This story is being told day after day through its distribution and channel partners. The story got new legs Monday with the launching of the company's completely revamped website. The website is a milestone for Claridge. Its website in the past has not helped tell its story properly and wasn't user-friendly or all that informative.



## Welcome to the new Claridge.

Claridge has a proud history of over 73 years crafting the world's finest writing surfaces for those who value the power of visual communications. We were there after WWII, helping schools get a fresh start. Our boards were used during the space race to brainstorm the moon landing. Today, Claridge continues to help businesses and schools innovate during the digital age. Claridge - The Writing Surface Experts.®

### FEATURED PRODUCTS

Recent best sellers, new products and more. Classic looks with contemporary technology.

ALL WHITEBOARDS MOBILES ROOM DIVIDERS



all Board



MIX Contemporary Wall Board  
 WHITEBOARDS



Pitch Mobile  
 MOBILES



Switch Mobile  
 MOBILES



Switch Wall Board  
 WHITEBOARDS



Venue Markerboard  
 TACK SURFACES



Venue Mobile  
 MOBILES



Claridge

The Writing Surface Experts



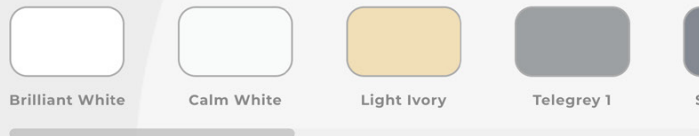


## Design a Board

Design your custom Claridge glass board in five easy steps (size, color, mount, quote).



### Standard Colors



### All Colors



BACK

NEXT



Share your design!



## Ultimately, when customers look at Claridge's product pages, they will get a much better idea of how that product will look.

The new website will propel the brand into the future with features like augmented reality (AR), an engaged (and live) person to answer questions in a chat feature and a "chat later" form that will get a response in an hour or less.

The AR tool lets website visitors look at Claridge products from every angle. Simply grab the product virtually and spin it around. The AR feature also works on your mobile device. "When you're on a mobile device, simply click the AR feature and immediately see our products in 3D, in your own environment," James said. "So you could move your camera around, position the board and take a picture of it in your space. You can save that picture. And if you're a designer, and you're out in somebody's space, and you want to bring these products in, you could do it in real time."

Ultimately, when customers look at Claridge's product pages, they will get a much better

idea of how that product will look in their space (or a typical space). Customers can pick options, colors, accents, trims and sizes. The specification tools are inspired by the ease and user-friendly interface of building a car on the Tesla website.

"Clients always want to see what our products will look like in real life, beyond what a basic rendering will offer," James said. "With showrooms and tradeshow shifting toward digital, our team wanted to create an innovative solution. So we developed an AR tool where you can tap and point from your mobile device to see a Claridge board projected into any space. Walk around a Claridge board 360 degrees, easily move it around the room, and even scale the size — it's an immersive interactive tool. When you couple this with our presence on Material Bank for physical sampling, we're spanning the spectrum from digital to physical."



## A shopping cart feature, similar to most eCommerce sites, allows designers to order free material samples through the Claridge website.

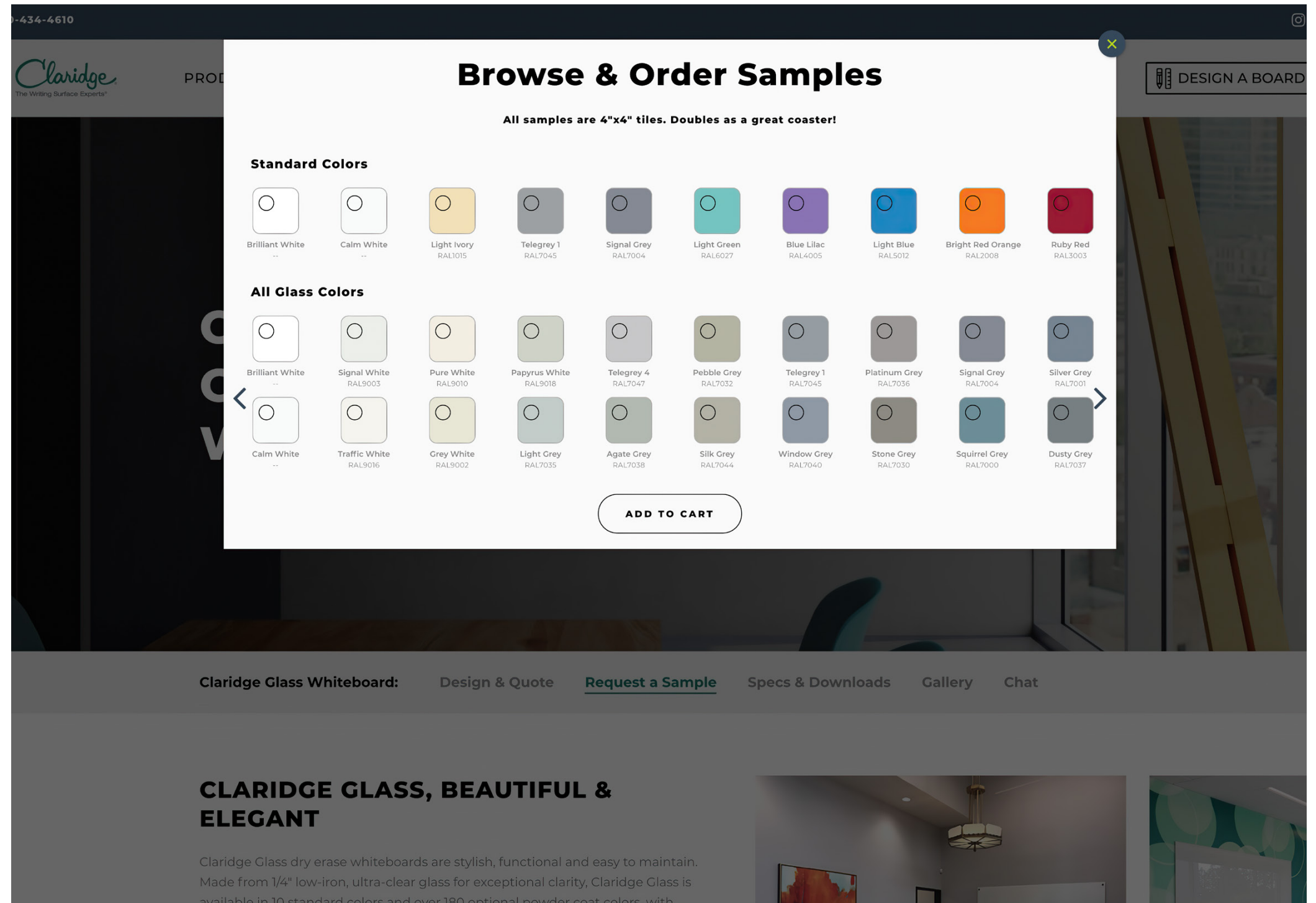
A shopping cart feature, similar to most eCommerce sites, allows designers to order free material samples through the Claridge website. Intuitive filtering and pre-defined options help clients order what they need more quickly, and make decisions more efficiently. Designer tools like Project Matrix, CET Designer, Revit and SketchUp are also easily accessible on the new site, along with photo galleries and related product information.

Most of the technology used on the Claridge website is proprietary and built specifically for the company's use. The user-friendly design tools are a major investment for the company, but important for its continued evolution.

"We want to give our website visitors the ability to build ev-

ery mobile, every wall board, every sliding board system (virtually on the website) where they can see those products in a photo-realistic environment," James said. "The next evolution of our visualization tools will be the addition of typical rendered environments where the user can place products into a variety of relevant environments based on their project type. We're hoping this will facilitate the specification process, leading to a lot of quote requests and future orders."

"We've got a proud culture of craftsmanship, customization and a "can-do" spirit. Our Instagram feed is the perfect place to tell these stories and engage on a more personal level. The new site pulls our Instagram straight onto the homepage."







Claridge Glass Whiteboard



# WELCOME TO CLARIDGE UNIVERSITY



**The videos are hosted by Professor Frank, a sketch comedian who teaches “courses” about the company’s products. “Students” of Claridge University are given a fun midterm exam to reinforce what was taught on the videos.**

## CLASS IS IN SESSION

Despite what some manufacturers will tell you, there’s not just one perfect writing surface for all applications. Watch this course by Professor Frank, comparing the differences between some of the most popular writing surfaces on the market – where to use them and where not to use them.

A new feature, Claridge University, is also on the website. The fictitious university is a way for the company to share fun and informative videos on how products can be specified and used. The videos are hosted by Professor Frank, a sketch comedian who teaches “courses” about the company’s products. “Students” of Claridge University are given a fun midterm exam to reinforce what was taught on the videos.

plan, we’ve elevated the product lines across all segments of our business. We have become more design-driven in our approach, which has helped solidify our position as the lead manufacturer in the contract furniture industry.”

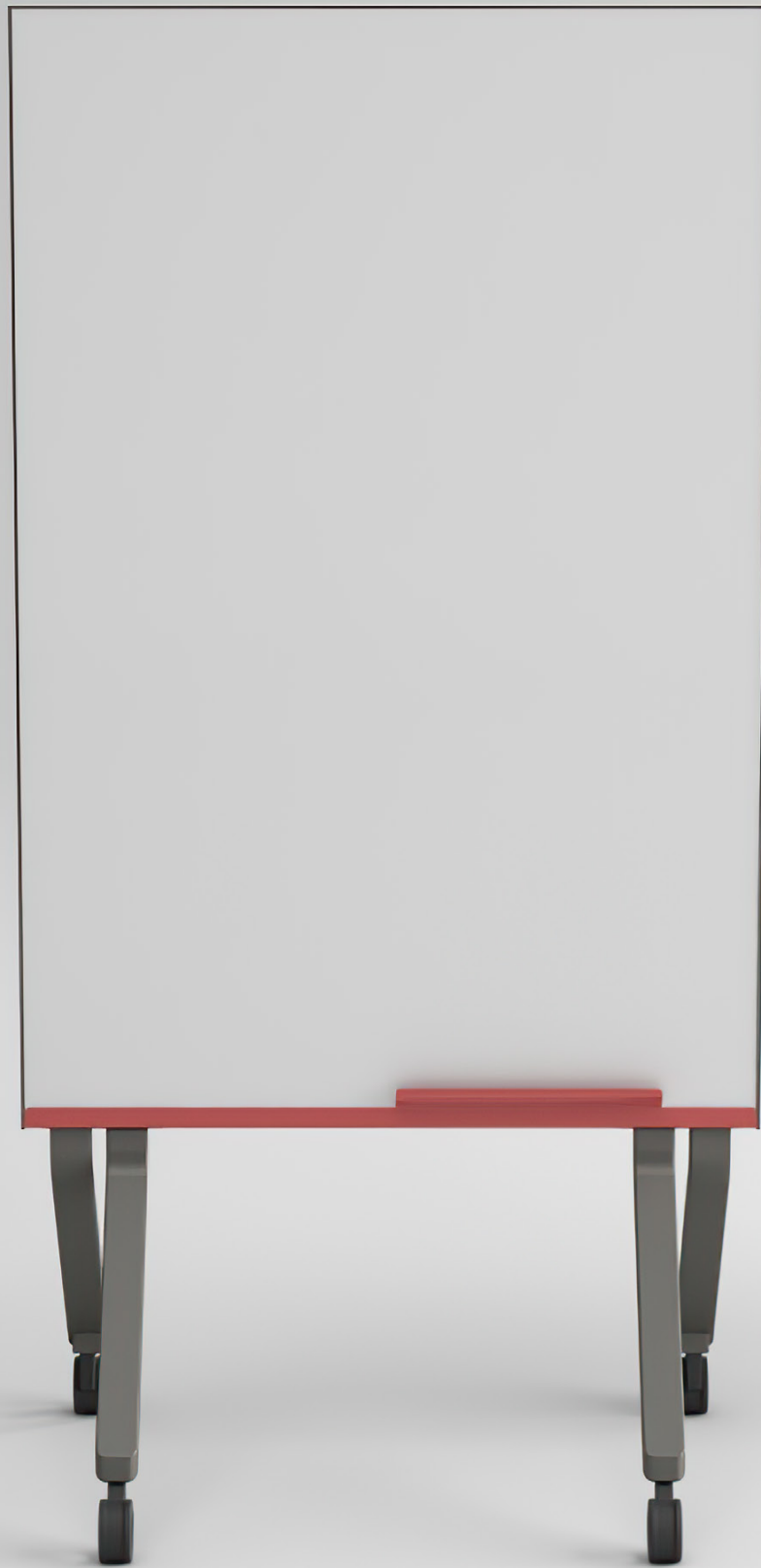
Claridge has benefitted from its work with Qdesign, the Chicago-based product design branch of Whitney Architects. “We have a saying at Claridge, it’s an evolution, not a revolution,” Steliga said. “And, you know, when you step back and look at the timetable of our brand evolution, it actually feels more like a revolution. Not only have we elevated ourselves with the leading rep groups, we’ve also elevated ourselves within the contract furniture industry.”

Gregg Steliga, national sales manager, said his goal is to make the company more relevant by using the best multiline sales reps.

“We’ve really done that in a short period of time,” he said. “With our commitment to product innovation supported by an integrated sales and marketing









**The company has been inundated with orders that can be used for room division, sneeze guards and other safety-related products.**

Claridge was ready to rock at NeoCon 2020. The company started participating in the show with a small booth in one corner of the seventh floor. It progressively moved to larger and more prominent spaces on the temporary show floor. This year, Claridge moved to a permanent spot on the 11th floor. "This was going to be a celebration of the evolution of this brand," James said. "We've experienced unprecedented growth in the last three years, and we wanted to demonstrate to people how the new Claridge is poised and ready to take off."

It's been a great ride, the company's executives said, and they are excited to see where the future lies. Of course, CO-

VID has put a twist on things. Claridge planned to show three new prototype products at NeoCon, but has them temporarily on hold until the situation with the pandemic improves.

In the meantime, Claridge has been hard at work addressing demand for its products to be used to help divide space as workers return to the office. The company has been inundated with orders that can be used for room division, sneeze guards and other safety-related products. Claridge has been able to help because it is a job shop, too. The company thrives on custom builds, which has helped address the needs that have arisen from the pandemic.



*Venue Space Divider*









## The sky's the limit with the Claridge brand.

"We wanted to develop products that could meet these short-term needs, but could also be used for long-term use," Steliga said. "So this isn't just a buy-it-now product. When COVID at some point goes away, we don't want our customers asking what to do with the products they've purchased. These are long-lasting products that can be retrofitted. The challenge for us is how do we deliver great value while also delivering products that are functional and address the short-term need ... (and) solving for the long term."

Claridge is also taking a more active leadership role in the industry. It is part of INDEAL. It

works with the major space-planning software companies in the industry. And Steliga is one of the leaders working on Dovetail, a new effort to get young people interested in the office furniture industry. In short, Claridge is committed to the industry, its distribution partners and its customers.

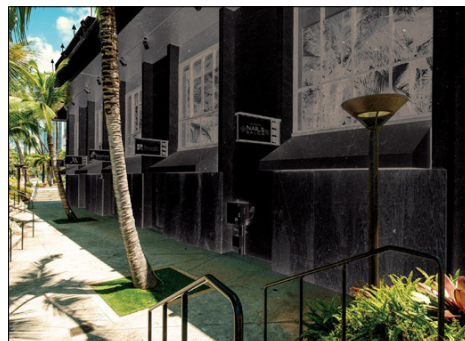
"The sky's the limit with the Claridge brand," James said. "It's time to buckle up because you're going to see us build on the positive momentum we've generated in the last three years and deliver a whole new experience for our clients and partners. It's gonna be a fun ride."

**BoF**



## PACIFIC WEST

## STILL WAITING FOR IMPACT



OAHU, Hawaii — The aftereffects of the pandemic seem likely to reduce the demand for retail and office space on Oahu, but the full impact remains unclear. Oahu's industrial and office markets were treading water during the second quarter of 2020. Both saw only small changes to vacancy rates, which were already low. Oahu's office market saw a slight increase in vacancies, from 10.2% at the end of 2020's first quarter to roughly 11% by the end of the second quarter. Meanwhile, forecasts show a 12% vacancy rate by the end of 2020.

[Hawaii Business](#)

## LOWE ANNOUNCES VENTURE

LOS ANGELES — Development firm Lowe announced a new joint venture with Related Fund Management — the investment affiliate of Related Companies — to build a 113,000-square-foot office project in Los Angeles' Arts District. The building will include four floors of office space with 27,000-square-foot plates, as well as four levels of parking with 275 spaces, and about 3,400 square feet of ground floor retail. The Arts District has been transforming for years from an unknown warehouse district a decade ago into one of the most sought-after submarkets in L.A.

[Commercial Observer](#)

## MOUNTAIN WEST

## SLC OFFICE LAUNCHED



SALT LAKE CITY — A development venture between Houston-based Patrinely Group and USAA Real Estate commenced construction on a 10-story, 332,100-square foot Class A office and retail development in downtown Salt Lake City. The building will feature a diverse mix of Class A offerings, such as floor-to-ceiling glass and 10- and 11-foot ceiling heights to maximize sunlight, outdoor tenant terraces, and mountain views. Scheduled for completion in early Q1 2022, 650 Main will incorporate the latest technology and a variety of amenity areas to promote health and wellness throughout the development.

[Connect Commercial Real Estate](#)

## MIDWEST

## CORONA-FIGHTING FEATURES TO DEBUT

CHICAGO — When it opens later this summer, a \$26 million Chicago office building will be one of the first in the country to boast features designed to address COVID-19 safety concerns. The 90,000-square-foot Fulton East, which was under construction when the outbreak hit,

has been engineered for maximum social distancing, touch-free operation and air and surface sanitization. To help reduce the spread of germs and viruses, the building utilizes MAD Elevator's Toe-To-Go hands-free elevator system and the airPHX air and surface sanitization system that the company claims reduces up to 99% of viruses, bacteria and mold on surfaces and in the air.

[Construction Dive](#)

## UNDER CONSTRUCTION

CHICAGO — The 300,000-square-foot West End on Fulton is one of the five Chicago office projects slated for delivery this year. The design features two private balconies on each of the building's 14 floors, accounting for the most outdoor space of any commercial building in Fulton Market. Another unique feature is View Dynamic Glass, a smart window technology allowing more daylight and reducing glare. Trammell Crow broke ground on the building at 1375 W. Fulton Market in late 2018 and expects to finalize it this summer. One of the main tenants, Glassdoor, signed a 13-year lease for 52,000 square feet last summer.

[Commercial Property Executive](#)

## OFFICE BUILDING PLANNED



MILWAUKEE — A new 17,800-square-foot office building is planned at a vacant site northeast of West National Avenue and South 71st Street in West Allis.

[Milwaukee Business News](#)

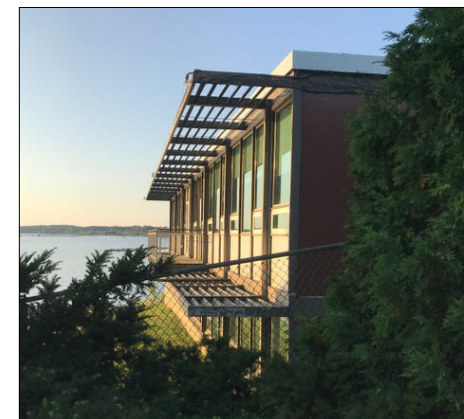
## NORTHEAST

## SEAPORT OFFICE IN WORKS

BOSTON — WS Development is currently developing the 525,000-square-foot office building in Boston's Seaport Innovation District. The 17-story property is slated for delivery in February 2021, with Citizens Financial Group providing \$435 million in construction financing. At full build-out, the Gensler-designed project will also feature 81,000 square feet of retail space. Amenities include Harbor Square Park, a 1-acre privately owned public space. Amazon has preleased the building's entire office component, which is expected to accommodate 2,000 employees. Additionally, the e-commerce giant received \$5 million in tax breaks from the city.

[Boston Real Estate Times](#)

## LAKESIDE BUILDING APPROVED



BURLINGTON, Vt. — Construction of a new shoreline office building in Burlington's South End — a stone's throw from the St. John's Club — was given a green light this month by city planners. Building 32, sited at the southwest corner of the Hula campus on Lakeside Avenue, is proposed to be demolished. The building's replacement would be constructed on the original foundation and rise from two to three levels. The expansion would increase floor

space from its current 9,200 square feet to 14,450 square feet.

[Burlington Free Press](#)

## SOUTH

## AUSTIN MARKET TAKING HIT

AUSTIN, Texas — Not surprisingly, the most recent occupancy figures for office space in Central Texas show the coronavirus pandemic is taking a toll. Local brokers say leasing activity has slowed significantly during an unprecedented time in the Austin-area office market. The region's average occupancy rate for the highest quality Class A office space fell to 88.7% in the April-to-June quarter, down from 90.4% in the second quarter of last year. The average rent for Class A space ticked up, however, to \$44.86 a square foot per year as of June, compared with \$43.73 per square foot at mid-year 2019. Depending on how long and how deep the coronavirus-induced downturn lasts, rent growth is likely to flatten out in the near term, if not outright fall.

[Austin Statesman](#)

## CAPITAL ONE TO SWITCH BUILDINGS



FAIRFAX, Va. — A new building to be constructed by Capital One Bank in Tysons now will be used for office space instead of a hotel and rise 55 feet taller than previously approved.

Fairfax County supervisors unanimously approved the alternative use for the structure, known as Building 4, and will allow it to be taller and denser than the previously approved hotel. The structure, which will be built on 2.03 acres next to Capital One's 470-foot-tall headquarters skyscraper, will be 305 feet tall and have 385,200 square feet of space, including 375,300 square feet of office space and 9,900 square feet of retail. The building's office area will be 250 feet tall and will be topped by a 55-foot architectural feature. The lighting on the building's top section will resemble that of the headquarters, which now is Tysons' tallest building.

[Inside Nova](#)

## HOSTDIME MOVES AHEAD

ORLANDO — Construction on the future home of HostDime.com one of the region's largest tech employers, is expected to start in August despite uncertainty in the office market due to COVID-19. The roughly \$25 million, 90,000-square-foot office project in Eatonville may create up to 250 temporary construction jobs. And HostDime.com's office construction may be an anomaly in the Central Florida office market, which has seen several build-to-suit projects put on hold due to the pandemic.

[Orlando Business Journal](#)

*Compiled by Emily Clingman*

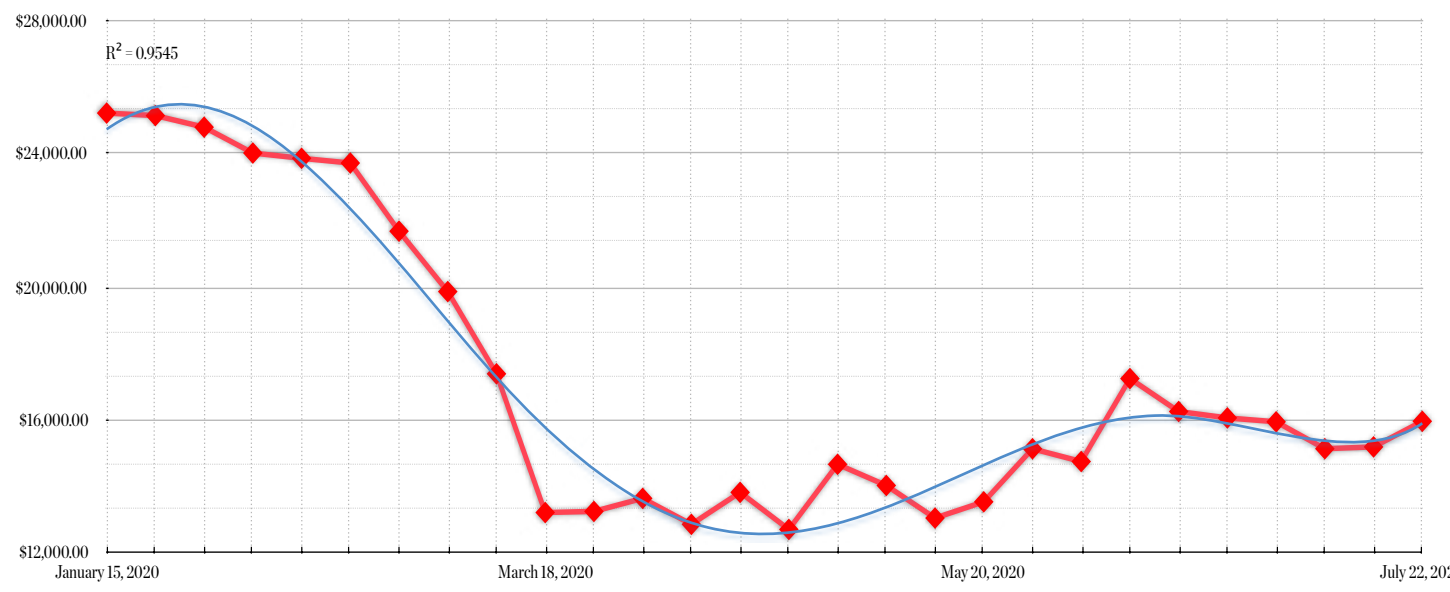
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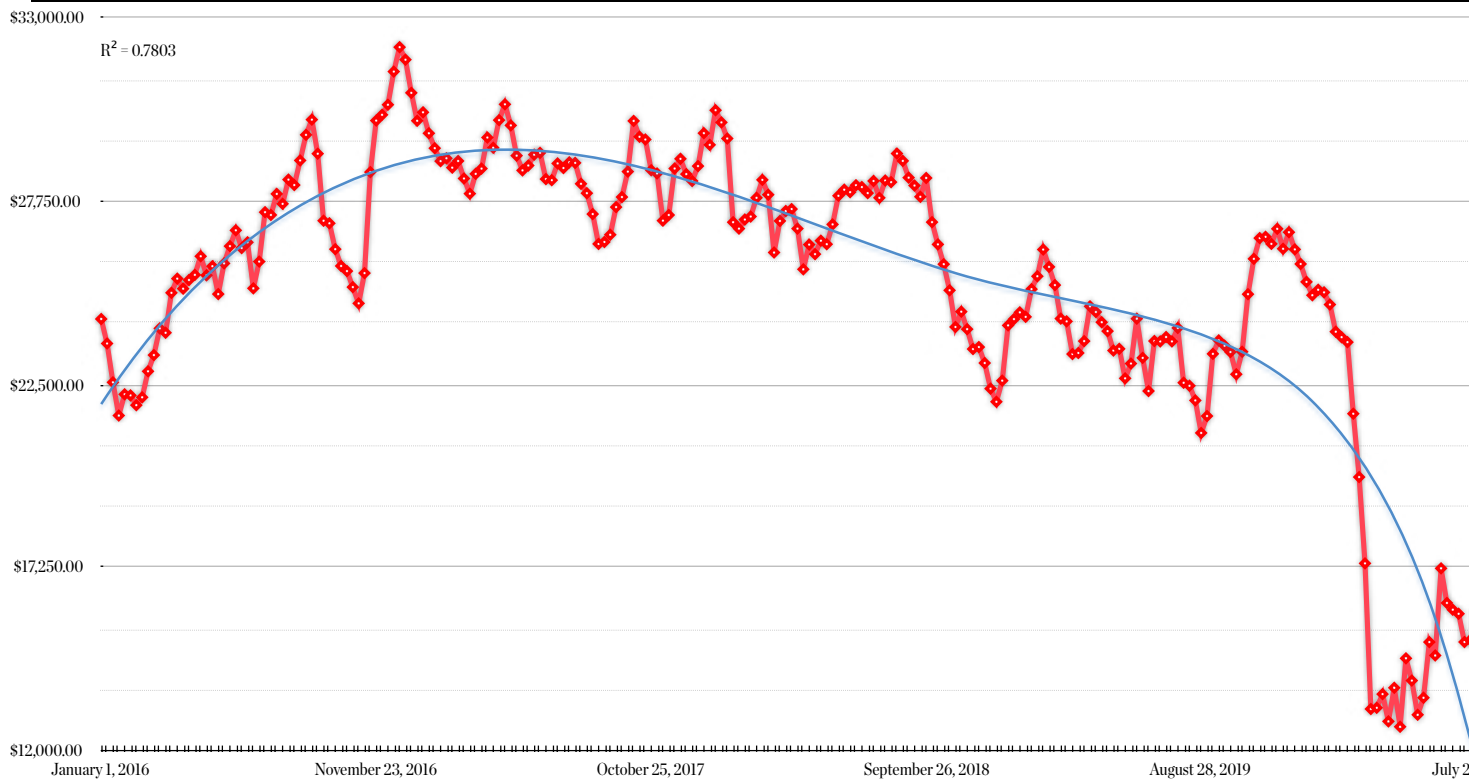
ALL TIME | January 1, 2016 BoF Industry Index Start: \$24,379.54  
 YEAR TO DATE | July 22, 2020 Yearly Start: \$25,443.00 (2019 Ended Up +15.31%)

**CURRENT VALUE** **TOTAL GAIN / LOSS** **2020 YTD GAIN / LOSS**  
**\$15,950.96** **-8,428.58 (-34.57%)** **-9,492.04 (-37.31%)**

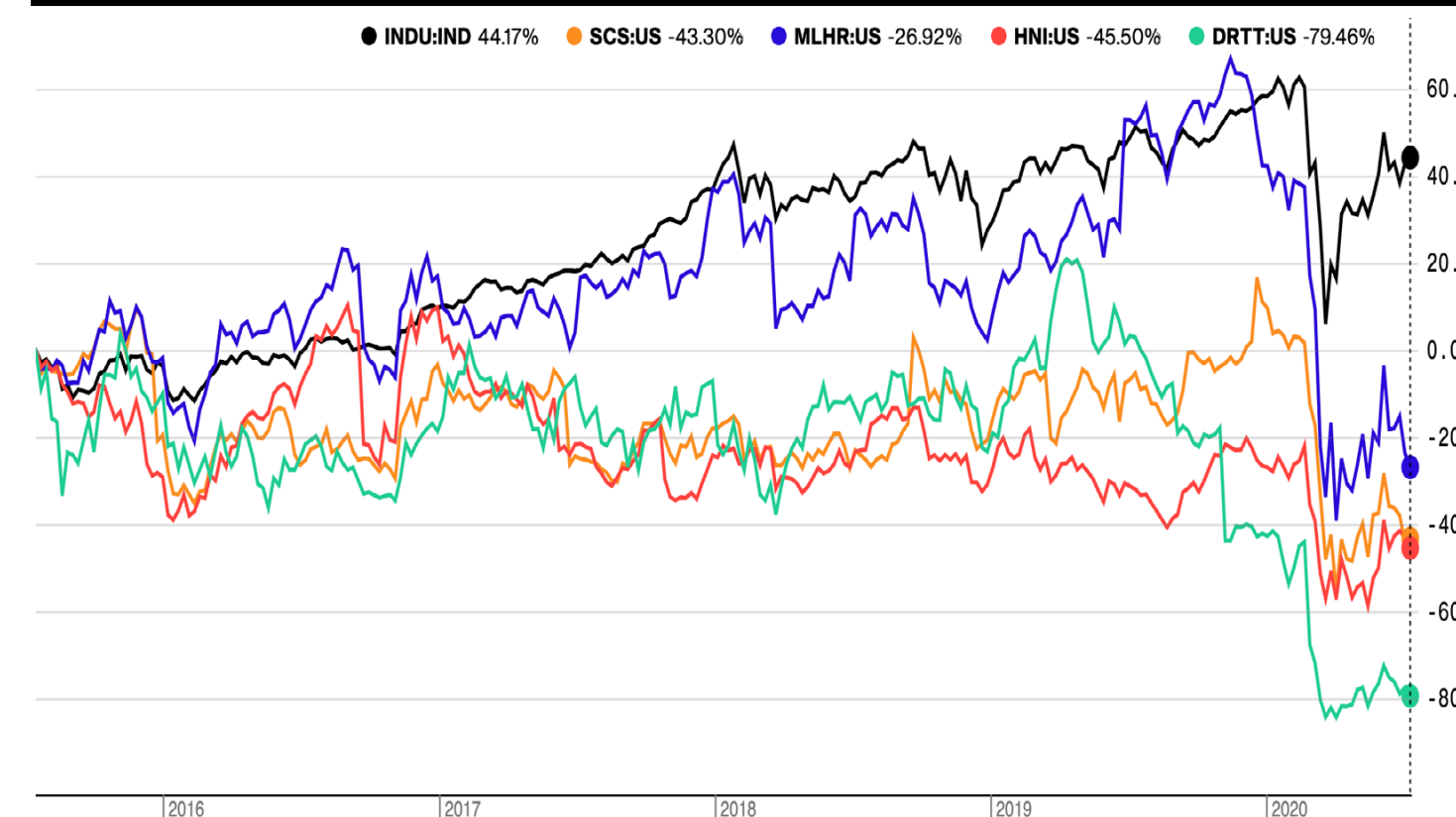
▲ SYMBOL	PRICE	CHANGE	TOTAL GAIN	1D GAIN	OPEN	PREV CLOSE	VOLUME	MARKET CAP	DAY RANGE	52WK RANGE
<b>DRTT:US</b> DIRTT Environm...	1.10 20:00	-2.65% -0.03	-84.15% -584.00	-2.65% -3.00	1.14	1.13	73,460	93.15M	1.08 - 1.15	0.71 - 5.63
<b>FLXS:US</b> Flexsteel Indust...	14.89 00:00	+2.06% +0.30	-66.30% -2,929.00	+2.06% +30.00	14.63	14.59	73,186	119.13M	14.63 - 15.25	7.81 - 21.31
<b>HNI:US</b> HNI Corp	30.33 00:00	+1.00% +0.30	-15.89% -573.00	+1.00% +30.00	30.54	30.03	295,629	1.29B	30.20 - 30.85	16.61 - 42.90
<b>INQ:CN</b> Inscape Corp	0.47 11:16	+6.82% +0.03	-84.33% -188.17	+6.82% +2.23	0.47	0.44	1,000	6.76M	0.47 - 0.47	0.35 - 1.22
<b>KBAL:US</b> Kimball Internati...	11.12 00:00	+1.92% +0.21	+13.82% +135.00	+1.92% +21.00	11.04	10.91	741,011	409.60M	10.87 - 11.32	8.19 - 22.40
<b>KEQU:US</b> Kewaunee Scie...	9.50 20:00	-0.94% -0.09	-46.60% -829.00	-0.94% -9.00	9.25	9.59	7,072	26.13M	9.10 - 9.53	6.96 - 19.57
<b>KNL:US</b> Knoll Inc	12.17 00:00	+2.87% +0.34	-35.27% -663.00	+2.87% +34.00	12.00	11.83	282,870	617.32M	11.93 - 12.43	7.74 - 28.30
<b>LEG:US</b> Leggett & Platt L...	35.80 20:04	+0.31% +0.11	-14.80% -622.00	+0.31% +11.00	35.73	35.69	748,930	4.74B	35.64 - 36.55	22.03 - 55.42
<b>MLHR:US</b> Herman Miller Inc	23.17 00:00	+1.94% +0.44	-19.27% -553.00	+1.94% +44.00	23.11	22.73	351,201	1.36B	22.97 - 23.54	14.39 - 49.87
<b>SCS:US</b> Steelcase Inc	11.13 20:04	+2.02% +0.22	-25.30% -377.00	+2.02% +22.00	11.10	10.91	895,431	1.28B	11.08 - 11.38	7.02 - 23.02
<b>TILE:US</b> Interface Inc	7.73 00:00	+1.98% +0.15	-59.61% -1,141.00	+1.98% +15.00	7.70	7.58	572,684	452.03M	7.54 - 7.88	5.06 - 17.68
<b>VIRC:US</b> Virco Mfg. Corp	2.22 20:00	-7.11% -0.17	-33.33% -111.00	-7.11% -17.00	2.50	2.39	19,439	34.88M	2.22 - 2.50	1.82 - 4.63



BoF Industry Index - Since Jan 1, 2016



Five Years - Major Industry Stocks





# Drive-Through Interviewing and Other Alternatives Take Root to Foster Meaningful Interviews



You can send your workplace questions to Stephen at: [StephenSays@bellow.press](mailto:StephenSays@bellow.press)

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

Dear Stephen,

I am an HR executive in West Michigan. We are trying new ways to safely interview candidates for positions at our HQ and manufacturing facilities. We are burnt out on Facetime and Zoom interviews and trying to find new ideas.

I read about a staffing agency that came up with a creative idea, and I am thinking of trying it out here at our company. It's moving the interview to a designated area in our parking lot where our internal recruiters can be in their own car. The candidate pulls up, window to window, but six feet apart. We have not interviewed in person or

from the office since January, but you get the idea — I'm just searching for something new and better. Parking lot interviewing also has the benefit of getting the candidate to see our impressive facilities.

It's great for spring, summer and fall, not so sure how it will work in the winter. Do you think this will appeal to candidates? Any other ideas? How does it sound to you?

Signed,

Park and Interview

Dear Park,

It sounds like a great idea! I, too, have heard of employment agencies and companies in the manufacturing industry nationwide that have begun conducting drive-up interviews. In addition to operations staff, I could picture this also working for salespeople, depending on the geography.

This creative solution that asks candidates to submit basic information ahead of time and then

## Drive-up interviewing in your parking lot is a great idea, even though it is seasonal and weather dependent, so by all means let's try it.

receive a designated date, time and parking space to be met and interviewed by the recruiter, is just one of the ways staffing agencies and HR departments of employers like you will have to innovate the hiring process. With this method, you may be able to have a "mask reveal" with the candidate, which gives the hiring manager and the candidate a better sense of who you each are and makes today's new normal more normal.

Alternatively, my own idea would be putting up a tent and some socially distanced tables outside your building, so in nice weather the interview could take place there. This takes the car out of the equation. If one candidate drives up in an old beater car and the next has a just-washed new

car, will the interviewer be influenced by that? I would hope not, but it may affect the interviewer's decisions, even unconsciously.

Unfortunately, where I am in NYC we don't have those large parking lots the midwest and southern manufacturers have, so there's very little opportunity to interview outside (on a bench in Central Park — I don't think so!). We'll be sticking with Facetime and Zoom. In other parts of the country there are lots of open parking lots so I guess you could do car-to-car interviews there, or you could even meet at an outdoor table at a McDonald's, keeping masks on. Somehow those options — meeting somewhere other than the headquarters' parking lot — do not appeal to me and seem a little weird with what

is going on today.

Drive-up interviewing in your parking lot is a great idea, even though it is seasonal and weather dependent, so by all means let's try it. Thank you for asking and bringing it to my attention. I am happy to share it with our readers and pass along the idea. Think about my outdoor tent as well. This can turn into a real boom for the SITE furniture manufacturers. And if you are a manufacturer and not making SITE furniture right now, consider it as a new product introduction for 2021. It's a very small group of manufacturers like Landscape Forms, and the greenest company I know, Vestre, with plenty of room for more competitors.

Stephen



GUANGZHOU, CHINA

CIFF

July 27-30, 2020



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

[www.ciff.furniture](http://www.ciff.furniture)

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

Export Furniture Exhibition

August 27-29, 2020



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

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

COLOGNE, GERMANY

Orgatec 2020

October 27-31, 2020



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

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

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

EDSPACES

November 11-13, 2020



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

[www.ed-spaces.com](http://www.ed-spaces.com)

LONDON (NEW DATE)

Clerkenwell Design Week

May 25-27, 2021

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

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

CHICAGO

NeoCon

June 14-16, 2021



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

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

EVENT

DATE & LOCATION

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

July 27-30, 2020  
Guangzhou, China

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

EXPORT FURNITURE EXHIBITION (NEW DATE)

August 27-29 2020  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Export Furniture Exhibition (EFE) is international furniture fair that attracts global buyers from all over the world as one of the top furniture fairs in Southeast Asia and the fair continues to attract more visitors annually. The exhibition is the signature event of the Malaysian Furniture Council (MFC).  
<http://www.efemalaysia.com>

DOMOTEX ASIA (NEW DATE)

August 31 - September 2, 2020  
Shanghai, China

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

ORGATEC 2020

October 27-31, 2020  
Cologne, Germany

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

INDEAL LEADERSHIP EVOLUTION

November 9, 2020  
Virtual E-vent

INDEAL’s 2020 Conference provides program members with an opportunity to gain critical knowledge focused on supporting business growth and profitability. This year’s e-vent offers perspective on developing teams that thrive, along with valuable insight into the state of the commercial furniture industry, economy and program at large. A varied agenda and numerous prospects for networking combine the benefit of multiple experiences into one, streamlined event.  
<http://indeal.org/2020-leadership-conference>

EDSPACES

November 11-13, 2020  
Charlotte, North Carolina

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

CLERKENWELL DESIGN WEEK

May 25-27, 2021  
London

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

NEOCON

June 14-16, 2021  
Chicago

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

Cancelled / Postponed Notes:

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





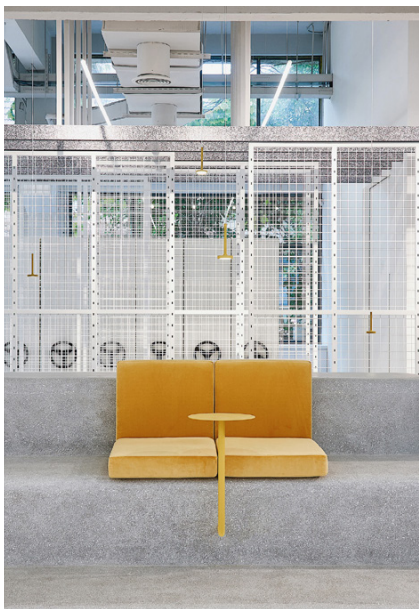
### Esprit Offices – Shanghai

SKYnoa was tasked with the clean and modern design of the Esprit offices, the global fashion brand, located in Shanghai, China.

The heritage warehouse building, in which the office is located in, provided a unique space over 2 floors, which gave the perfect grounds to reimagine ESPRIT's first headquarter of the 80s in San Francisco and bring the spirit and essence of it to life.

The discipline was clear: simple space with simple rules. The interior is clean and uncomplicated. Blocks of different heights and different materials give the guidance throughout the open space such as kitchen, meeting rooms, presentation walls or central enclosed rooms for privacy. A very bright space to celebrate ESPRIT's spirit and positivity.

READ MORE



Photography: Jérôme Zhang

FIRM: SKYnoa  
 CLIENT: Esprit  
 21,528 sqft  
 SCOPE: Office  
 LOCATION: Shanghai, China  
 INDUSTRY: Fashion / Beauty



## Workplaces | July 2020

**WHERE I'M WORKING: LUCY'S CAFÉ, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN**  
**74% OF WORKERS SAY A 6-HOUR WORKDAY WILL IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY AMID COVID-19, ACCORDING TO STUDY**  
**AS DESIGN MOVES FORWARD, DESIGNING FOR MULTIPLE GENERATIONS GARNERS MORE ATTENTION**  
**LEVERAGING HOSPITALITY CUES IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORKPLACE**  
**KI GOES BEYOND WITH OWENS CORNING IN FUTURE-PROOFING WORKSPACES WITH 'INFINITY FROM KI'**  
**VIRTUAL REALITY MEETINGS: THE NEW NORMAL**  
**AND MORE!!!**

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





DESIGN TRENDS

## 4 Design Trends of a Post-COVID Workplace

TO CONTEXTUALIZE SOME OF THESE UPLIFTING ACTIONS, WE SAT DOWN WITH LEADING EXPERTS FROM BOTH THE MANUFACTURING AND DESIGN COMMUNITIES TO GET A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT OUR WORLD WILL LOOK LIKE AS WE BEGIN TO TRANSITION BACK TO THE OFFICE.

by Amanda Schneider

Since COVID-19 became part of our everyday vernacular, the ThinkLab team has been working behind the scenes to [track the metrics](#) of how the virus is affecting the **interiors industry**.

And while our data indicates we are still struggling through the economic effects of the pandemic, we continue to celebrate the optimism and resiliency of the design industry as it moves forward by helping clients imagine positive change.

To contextualize some of these uplifting actions, we sat down with leading experts from both the manufacturing and design communities to get a better understanding of what our world will look like as we begin to transition back to the office. Here are the insights they shared.

### **New positions will help navigate our revised normal**

With remote work becoming the new norm, many professionals in the interiors industry have raised a red flag, signaling the importance of one key missing element in the design process — collaboration. Video calls and e-doc-sharing services can take you only so far, and eventually, when it's safe, we will need to come together to collaborate. Yet at the same time, many in the industry also acknowledge the benefits of remote work — providing uninterrupted time for heads-down tasks, saved time from commute and better work-life balance, among others.

As such, it shouldn't come as a surprise that the post-COVID workplace will include a hybrid of remote and in-person work — in a much more intentional way than ever before. To keep the synergy between the two groups, Ann Hoffman, director of workplace strategies at [Francis Cauffman Architects](#), suggests many companies will employ a community manager. She explained: “A community manager in the workplace should function as the connective tissue for the employees to interact with each other, remote or on-site. The position should function as a service-focused role that brings groups together with the best possible tools. While acting as the ambassador for the company brand and the culture, the community manager can monitor trends and requests and implement services on the fly to enrich the connections.”





### A reinvention of the individual workspace

At the beginning of 2020, many boldly predicted the death of the individual cubicle as the need for collaboration led the way to a hybrid of open concept and hoteling, or free address seating. In the post-COVID world, we see the personalized seating model revert in some ways, with a handful of collaboration-savvy modifications.

As Steve Delfino, vice president, corporate marketing and product management at [Teknion](#), explained it, “the lines between work modes blurred in response to the open plan, creating little distinction between personal focus space and collaborative and social areas. This will certainly change following the pandemic. Social spaces will continue operating as a destination for respite and relaxation. However, the boundaries between personal and shared space will again become more distinct. The workstation will be more focused and a bit more private with a greater focus on user control and comfort. Higher partitions and clever space division utilizing flexible products will increase a user’s feelings of well-being, which is just as important as the physical cleaning of the environments we will occupy.”

### Collaboration spaces will be more valuable

But not too fast. As Jeffrey Braun, furniture designer and creative director of [Emblem](#), reminds us, “the knee-jerk reaction is to increase individual workspaces and isolate employees in the office, but the real driver for people to return to the office is so that people can interact, collaborate, see and talk to other people. The

truth is, if people are at the office less and working from home more, then the time they are spending in the office becomes more important. So, while the traditional cubical or assigned desk will never truly go away, time in the office should be spent on collaboration and our designs for these spaces should follow suit.”

### Workplace amenities may simplify

A hot trend for 2020 was extravagant amenities. We saw workplace wellness programs offering sunrise yoga classes and posh office kitchens serving up chai tea and made-to-order lattes. Yet in many ways, these communal gatherings may shift as we rethink their sanitary protocols.

Explaining it perfectly, Julia Belkin, principal, [HLW](#), said, “Prepackaged consumables will certainly increase in popularity in response to ongoing health concerns. Grab ‘n’ go, which was already gaining popularity among millennials due to its inherent convenience, was being discussed with many organizations even before the pandemic and will likely be a growing, long-term trend. For larger companies that traditionally offered a food buffet within their workplaces, they may now simply give their staff boxed meals on-site. These could be generic or customized, depending on cost tolerance and logistics of pickup.”

At the end of the day, the key to success will be our ability to adapt and roll with the punches. In keeping with that tone, Diana Pisone, team principal in the Chicago office at [Ted Moudis Associates](#), left us with this: “The pendulum typically swings from one extreme to the other. Similar to 9/11, when we realized that we had been taking our safety for granted, our security protocols became overly stringent. Eventually we swayed back to a middle ground with many newly developed best practices, which are still in place today. The same will go with this pandemic and our socialization habits. We have overlooked our societal health. This current state will bring about temporary rigorous constraints, and eventually there will be best practices that surface and will stay in place for years to come, which too will be more middle of the road.” **BoF**

*Amanda Schneider is President of ThinkLab, the research division of SANDOW. At ThinkLab, we combine SANDOW Media’s incredible reach to the architecture and design community through brands like Interior Design Media, Metropolis, and Material Bank with proven market research techniques to uncover relevant trends and opportunities for the design industry. Join in to explore what’s next at [thinklab.design/join-in](http://thinklab.design/join-in).*



## GLASS

## Artaic Introduces Vitreous Glass Sizes with Launch of the GLYPH Collection

Artaic has launched the GLYPH Collection, which features playful, communicative designs and bright graphic icons. The collection takes a modern approach to the ancient concept of hieroglyphics, showcasing simple images that tell a detailed narrative. Inspired by the properties of Artaic's newest innovative tile line, Vitreous Glass in 1-inch and 1/2-inch tile sizes, the collection can be custom fit to any wall, floor, ceiling, pool or exterior facade.

While all of Artaic's designs are offered in a wide range of materials, including sintered glass, glazed porcelain and natural stone, the GLYPH Collection was developed specifically to feature the 1-inch and 1/2-inch size tile from Vitreous Glass line. This high-quality, Italian-styled glass is available in a versatile new geometry that allows for modular capabilities and captures beautiful detail.

The collection also offers a color palette with a selection of more than 180 colors. The shades can be mixed and blended, making the customization possibilities endless.

"Our Vitreous Glass line featuring the new 1-inch and 1/2-inch tile sizes is a game changer for industry standards, as it allows a more seamless design process than ever before," said Ted Acworth, Artaic CEO and founder. "Through the GLYPH collection, we are able to expand our offerings with the depth of color choice, while also providing clients an avenue to easily match walls to floors and other surfaces to create a stunning modern style that makes any setting a showstopper."



## SEATING

## Encore Expands Faction Series

Encore has expanded its popular executive and task series chairs.

Faction guest models complete the collection with a well-rounded offering of stackable, nestable and training-focused options.

They're available fully upholstered or in a choice of four poly-back colors with multiple arm selections in matching hues, and they provide a space-saving convenience.



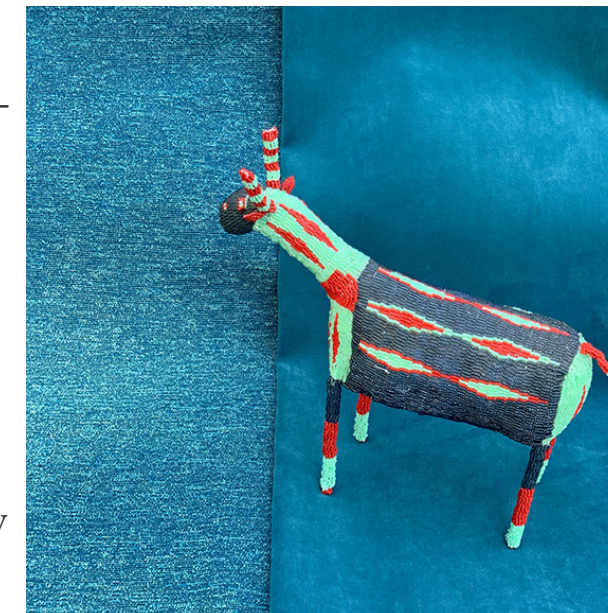
## TEXTILES

## Unika Vaev Introduces Two New High-Performance Textiles

Unika Vaev is offering two new high performance textiles, Bubbly and Suede Plush.

Bubbly is a bleach-cleanable fabric woven with proprietary yarns from the Bella-Dura brand. The blending of a multi-textured boucle yarn surrounded by a complex heathered slub yarn allows for elegant depth and a soft tactile hand. Bubbly passes 85,000 double rubs and is available in six colors.

Suede Plush provides the luxury and softness of a high-quality suede. It's resistant to inks, stains and liquids such as red wine and ketchup. Alcohol swabs or warm soap and water provide for ease of cleanability. Suede Plush is an ideal choice for heavy duty upholstery and panel applications while boasting 100,000 Martindale cycles and 16 colors.



## SEATING

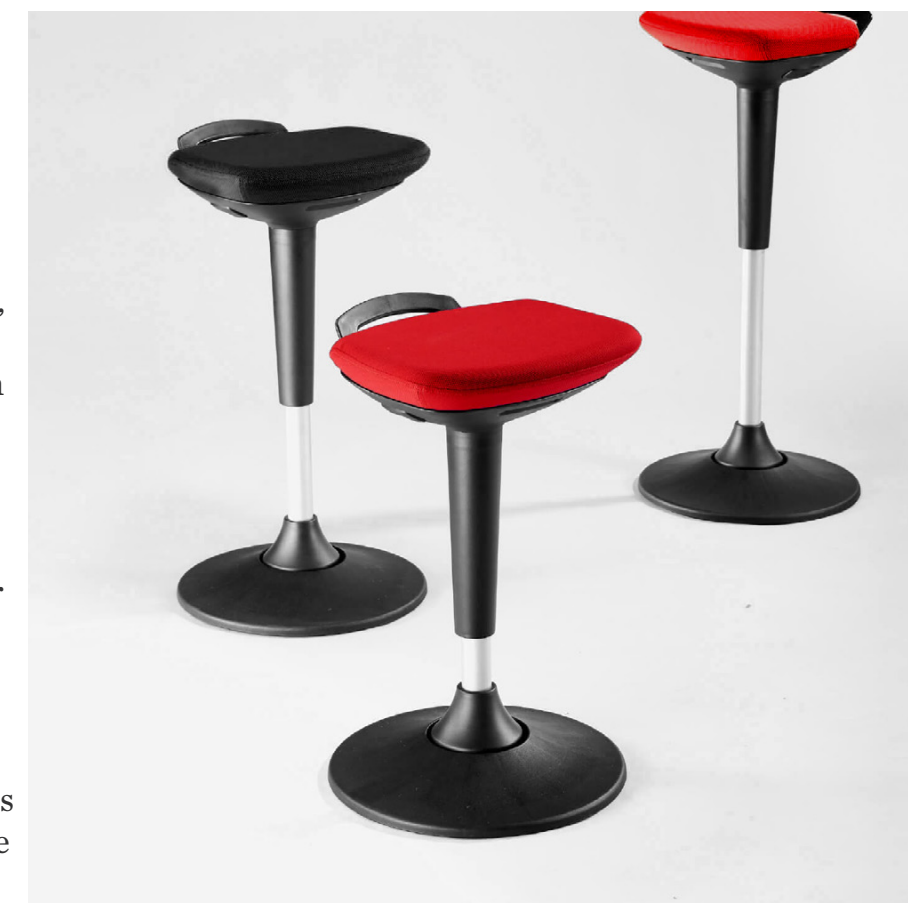
## BodyBilt Launches Pendum

The BodyBilt Pendum is an ideal stool for sit/lean environments in health care, laboratories, home offices and other settings.

Pendum combines both play and function for various types of spaces. The 135-degree open hip angle helps rock the pelvis forward, creating a healthy spinal posture. It regains an upright position when not in use.

A trumpet-shaped base enhances Pendum's sleek profile. An internal counter weight provides self-stabilizing action, while a soft elastomer sole grips different types of floor surfaces.

Seat height buttons are easily accessible under the seat. Height is controlled by a gas cylinder which is hidden by a cylindrical cover to give the Pendum a continuous form.





## PARTITIONS

## Raydoor Launches Barriers an Artful Partition System

Raydoor has launched the Barriers by Raydoor partition panel collection. Helping address COVID-19 related concerns and protocols, the collection aims to facilitate America getting back to work, out on the road, and ultimately adapting to the new normal.

The Barriers collection is offered in three main styles: perimeter, side frame and base frame. Perimeter offers a fully framed panel, visually signaling a sense of separation and division. With an added value of directing and separating foot-traffic, it is ideal for more semi-permanent setups like open-floor-planned offices, waiting rooms and more. The side frame features two leg bases on each side of the frame and an optional pass-through at the bottom, optimal for high traffic areas where objects are exchanged, such as reception desks, bank counters, etc. The base frame is only framed at the bottom, gives out a sense of “barely-there” — a perfect companion while practicing social distancing at bars, restaurants and other more intimate social settings. This version also features a clamp mount that aids easy installation and removal.

Raydoor carefully curated materials in stock from its existing product lines as the foundation of the partition system. It's produced locally in Long Island, New York, and orders can be fulfilled as fast as four weeks.



## FLOOR COVERINGS

## New Rug Collection from Fritz Hansen

Fritz Hansen has launched its newest rug collection designed by Cecile Manz. The four rug patterns draw inspiration from the designer's pencil drawings with geometric cut-outs, paper layering and colored pencils and shapes cast by sunlight through her studio windows.

Various tufting heights within each design make these rugs subtly three dimensional and tactually interesting. Each rug is hand-tufted in India and colored using acid-free dye.

Proceeds from production support children's education in Nepal, making this is a special initiative of Fritz Hansen.



## TEXTILES

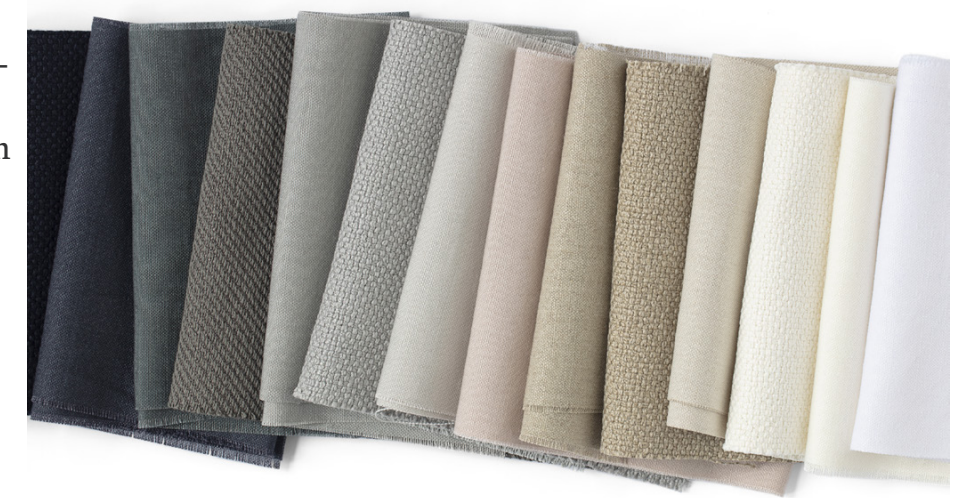
## Maharam Introduces Taut Linen, Linen Basket, and Wide Corduroy

Taut Linen, Linen Basket and Wide Corduroy are three residential textiles arriving this September that will expand the Maharam Design Studio's focus on unembellished, natural materials.

Taut Linen is a fine, unadorned texture woven in Belgium by a resource that creates linens for artist's canvases. A tight, plain weave emphasizes the fiber's refinement and slight irregularity. Light enough for window covering and strong enough for upholstery application, the delicate palette pushes beyond the natural range of linen into shades of rose, dove and sage.

In Linen Basket, weighty yarns form a sturdy yet organically varied basket weave. A mineral palette of ivory, steel, silver, indigo and flax underscores the understated luxury of linen, while playing up its lustrous dimensionality.

Wide Corduroy is a modern interpretation of a classic cotton corduroy. Woven in Italy by a 100-year-old, family-owned resource, this velvet features wales of amplified scale that can be perceived as both texture and pattern. Referencing classic corduroy apparel, the palette comprises rich jewel tones, architectural neutrals and deep pastels.



## HOME OFFICE

## Artopex Announces the Launch of Home Office Collection

Artopex has launched a new home office collection. It includes three models, including a height-adjustable desk. Open storage units on casters also are part of the collection.

“With the current situation whereby many professionals are working remotely today, the demand for home office furniture was sustained enough for us to channel our energies to develop a new range of products,” explained Daniel Pelletier, Artopex president. “These three models are manufactured in one of our factories and are delivered, unassembled.”

Inspired by Scandinavian design, the desks are offered at competitive prices and available in a selection of various finishes for the surface and the legs.





## TEXTILES

## Morbern Introduces Removal of Additives in New Bantam for Contract/Healthcare Interiors

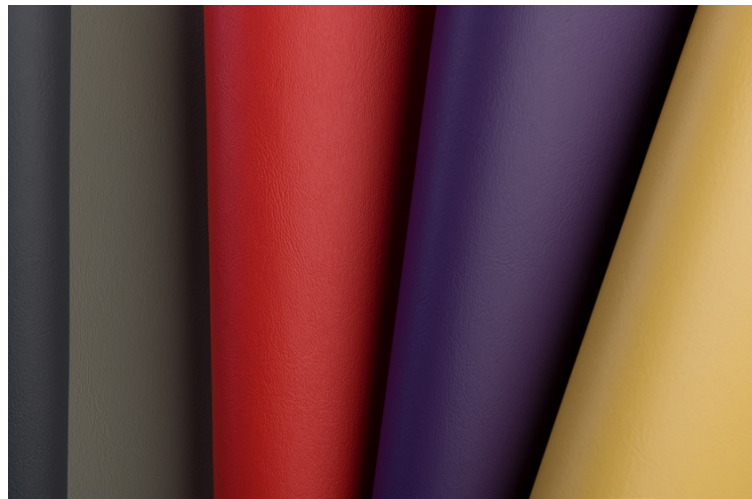
When Morbern created its latest addition to its line of commercial interior vinyls, the task was to make something different — something powerful yet sustainable. The research team delivered Bantam, and Morbern knew it had found a winner.

Bantam packs a powerful punch of performance for contract and health care interiors. Often the most challenging environments in commercial design, health care interiors demand not only high performance in critical spaces, but also health and sustainability attributes.

It's lack of additives is what makes Bantam a lightweight winner. Free of antimicrobial additives, phthalates and flame retardants — yet CAL TB-117 compliant — this fighter of a fabric shows no wear after 100,000 double rubs and is cold crack resistant to -25 F. It spars with stains like cola, coffee and ketchup and easily cleans with soap and water.

Bantam's environmentally friendly attributes means it falls under the MorGreen label, Morbern's initiative to create products that are sustainable, responsible and leave as little environmental impact as possible.

Bantam features an anti-static slip finish, urine stain resistance, sulfide stain resistance and oil resistance. Its palette of 10 colorways comes in earthy shades of blue, red, green, orange, yellow and gray.



## TABLES

## DARRAN Introduces EdgeWorks Training Tables

DARRAN's latest introduction, EdgeWorks Training, adapts to the changing work environment and provides options for safe meeting areas with the introduction of training tables. Interior Design's HiP Awards at NeoCon has awarded these new and innovative tables as 2020 Honorees.

The design takes its name from the refined profile of the steel leg. The sharp and unhampered leg is designed to give different dimensions and appearances from many angles.

The training tables feature an easy-to-use fold-



ing mechanism. Top sizes range between 42 to 84 inches in length. Tabletops can be connected with an undersurface bracket, forming larger conference tables or providing ample space between team members. Power and data requirements are facilitated through cable management systems. Training tables store away easily, requiring minimal space by nesting bases, and feature lockable casters.

The color range introduced in the Spring of 2020 balances muted hues, neutrals and a vibrant Salmon Sienna. The metal frame is available in 11 powder coat finishes coordinating with interior or corporate brand standards.

The original concept for the EdgeWorks Collection is centralized around flexibility, using as few components as possible, yet achieving endless configurations. EdgeWorks was designed by ThinkingWorks Design Studio.

## OUTDOOR

## Landscape Forms Introduces Healthy Outdoor Spaces

Landscape Forms has introduced Healthy Outdoor Spaces, a collection of new products, modified products and space planning solutions to help landscape architects create environments that support people's health and well-being.

As employees return to offices, students to campuses and the public to social venues, the need for safe and confidence-inspiring natural spaces that facilitate responsible collaboration, connection and social interaction is more important than ever. Healthy Outdoor Spaces is created with this context in mind, drawing on Landscape Forms' 51 years of experience in connecting people with the outdoors to support their health and overall well-being.

"It's an unprecedented challenge," said Landscape Forms Chief Creative Officer Kirt Martin. "How do you keep people safely distanced, yet still very much connected to each other and to their natural environment? In creating Healthy Outdoor Spaces, we concentrated on designing products and solutions that enable people to maintain that safe physical distance without sacrificing their social or emotional well-being."

Hallmarks of the new collection include clear visual cues on furnishings to denote appropriate distancing, modular panels and barriers to direct flow of public traffic and structural elements that define safe spaces for small groups.

Healthy Outdoor Spaces embodies Landscape Forms' continued efforts to help businesses, institutions and communities adapt not only to the challenges they face in immediate response to the COVID-19 health crisis, but also to new expectations for public safety that will persist over time.





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<https://bellow.press/SubmitNews>

### MANUFACTURERS

## Kimball One of First Companies to Register for The WELL Health-Safety Rating

➡ Kimball is one of the first companies to register its corporate headquarters for The WELL Health-Safety rating.

The WELL Health-Safety rating is an evidence-based, third-party verified rating for new and existing buildings and spaces focused on operational policies, maintenance protocols and emergency plans to help organizations prepare their spaces for re-entry in a post COVID-19 environment.

The WELL Health-Safety Rating was created by the International WELL Building Institute (IWBI), the organization that oversees the world's premier framework for advancing health in buildings and spaces — the WELL Building Standard (WELL).

WELL is grounded in the premise that buildings, communities and organizations play a leading role in supporting our health, well-being and ability to prepare for and respond to global health challenges like COVID-19. The pandemic has highlighted the critical role buildings play in supporting people's health, safety and well-being.

"We are fully committed to establishing a workplace that will make our Kimball family feel safe returning to work and are creating an environment that fuels employee productivity, engagement and retention," stated Wendy Murray, vice president of marketing at Kimball.

The WELL Health-Safety rating includes 21 features in the following areas, a minimum of 15 which need to be met:

- Cleaning and sanitization procedures
- Emergency preparedness programs
- Health service resources
- Air and water quality management
- Stakeholder engagement and communication

"The WELL Health-Safety rating is a sign of confidence that measures have been enacted to help support the health and safety of people entering spaces of all kinds, and that those measures have been mapped to scientific evidence and verified through a third-party review process," said Rick Fedrizzi, chairman and CEO of IWBI.



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Suzanne Tron

### ACQUISITIONS

## Catalyst Acoustics Group Acquires Texas Based Fräsch

➡ Catalyst Acoustics Group (CAG), the parent company of a group of acoustic, seismic, vibration and noise control companies, has acquired Texas-based Fräsch.

Fräsch was founded in 2016 by Gary Nightingale and Slavka Younger-Nightingale and has seen fast growth in the polyester based acoustics space.



Based in Arlington, Texas, Fräsch provides a broad offering of innovative polyester products including wall panels, ceiling panels, baffles, dividers, partitions and acoustic lighting.



“This acquisition is very exciting for us,” said Joe Lupone, CEO of Catalyst Acoustics Group. “Polyester based products have experienced extraordinary and impressive growth in the acoustics space over the past few years. Fräsch is an exciting innovator and brings the product and technical expertise along with the marketing panache it takes to be a leading brand. With the backing and support of CAG, Fräsch is poised for continued growth and success.”

Nightingale and Younger-Nightingale and all the Fräsch employees will remain with the company, and day-to-day operations will not change. “We are both eager and excited to join Catalyst Acoustics Group,” Nightingale said. “Fräsch has made tremendous progress building our brand in the A&D community. With the financial support and the sales and marketing assets that come with being a part of CAG, I feel confident that we will accelerate our current growth at a precipitous pace while continuing to fuel the innovation and creativity that architects and designers are hungry for.”

#### INDUSTRY EVENTS

### IDS21 Announces Conference Tracks and Calls for Speakers

➔ Experts, innovators and specialists within the design, architecture and interiors fields and professionals within the built environment are being sought as speakers for the IDS21 Conference.

Transformative change for both people and the planet is occurring at a rapid pace right now. More than ever, design thinking and insightful expertise is needed to push new realities forward by reimagining and reforming how we live, work and create. Speakers can take part in shaping the future by showcasing their original approach and engaging ideas in front of design decision-makers at the IDS21 Conference.

The four conference tracks for the 2021 session will be The Business of Design, Designing for the Future, Sustainability and Innovation and Future Trends.

Deadline for submissions is Aug. 15.

#### MANUFACTURERS

### Lesro Industries is awarded a TIPS Contract

➔ Lesro has been awarded a TIPS Contract. TIPS, or The Interlocal Purchasing System, is a national purchasing cooperative that offers access to competitively procured purchasing contracts to its nationwide membership.

The TIPS contract is available to many educational, governmental and nonprofit entities, including, but not limited to, K-12 school districts, charter schools, colleges and universities (state and private), cities and municipalities, counties and parishes, state agencies, churches, hospitals and nursing homes.

The TIPS contract is supported locally through a nationwide network of authorized dealers and independent sales representatives.



#### ASSOCIATIONS

### Independent Suppliers Group Announces Leadership Change

➔ Mike Maggio, chief executive officer of Independent Suppliers Group, retired July 1 and became president and CEO of S.P. Richards Company, a leading national business products wholesaler. The Independent Suppliers Group board of directors named current President Mike Gentile to the position of president and CEO.

Former CEO Maggio commented, “I have known Mike Gentile for a number of years and have worked closely with him when we were each running separate dealer groups and since the merger. Mike has been a true partner, and I am proud to have worked with him. I am leaving ISG in his very capable hands and the membership is lucky that a manager of his caliber is now at the helm. I look forward to working closely with him and the ISG board of directors to create collaborative programs to the benefit of the members.”

David Guernsey, ISG chairman of the board, said, “It was a great personal privilege to have worked with Mike Maggio as we formed and managed ISG over the past year. Mike is the consummate professional and the ISG members benefited from his skill and commitment. We all look forward to Mike’s success in his new role as the president and CEO of S.P. Richards. Going forward, ISG is blessed with another consummate professional, Mike Gentile. Mike is well-known to our dealer community, has many years of experience leading dealer groups, and we are confident that Mike will build further on what ISG has accomplished thus far.”

#### MANUFACTURERS

### Landscape Forms Earns Designation as a Great Place to Work-Certified Company

➔ Landscape Forms has been certified as a Great Place to Work company for 2020-2021.

Great Place to Work is the global authority on workplace culture with the most rigorous, data-based model for quantifying employee experience. For certification in 2020, Great Place to Work required companies to demonstrate their commitment to employees, their community and the environment.

“This is a proud moment and an important validation of everyone’s efforts,” said Marjorie Simmons, CEO of Landscape Forms, a designer and manufacturer of high-design LED lighting, site furniture, structure and accessories. “Caring for our team members, our community and our environment has history and depth at Landscape Forms going back to our founding over 50 years ago. It’s integral to our identity and purpose, and it’s wonderful to be recognized in this way.”





Landscape Forms' Great Place to Work Certification comes amid the COVID-19 pandemic, an especially trying time for businesses and their communities. The company weathered a mandated five-week shutdown with no layoffs or furloughs during that time. Later, as the nation faced protests over racial inequality, Landscape Forms renewed its commitment to maintaining an organization where all people feel welcome, respected and free from discrimination. The company introduced a listening campaign in which all employees are encouraged to voice their thoughts about its corporate culture today and how to best care for team members and the community moving forward.

"Without a doubt, 2020 has been an unprecedented year for everyone," Simmons added. "We took it as a time to live out our values, rise to our challenges and learn new ways of doing business. The Great Place to Work Certification is a wonderful recognition of our entire team's commitment to each other, our community and the world around us."

#### INDUSTRY EVENTS

## Configura Announces 2020 CET Designer Awards

➔ Configura, maker of CET Designer software, is accepting entries for CET Designer Awards. The 2020 awards will honor submissions in six categories: Success Story, Rendering, Student Rendering, Video, 360 Panorama and new this year — Innovative Extension.

"The CET Designer Awards showcase outstanding renderings and projects created by talented users across different industries," said Configura Vice President Customer Experience Tracy Lanning. "We are impressed each year by the innovative and creative submissions we receive and look forward to celebrating the great designs and talented people from all over the world."

The CET Designer Awards are free for CET Designer users to enter. The awards take place in conjunction with CET Experience, Configura's annual user and developer conference, where winners will be announced. Conference attendance is not required to participate in the CET Designer Awards or to win.

This year's CET Experience will be hosted as a virtual conference, Oct. 13-15. The conference brings together hundreds of people from around the globe — including designers, dealers, developers, IT professionals, manufacturers, Configura employees and partners.

Entrants are encouraged to enter as many categories as they wish but can only submit one entry per category. They must have a CET Designer license to submit and can only use CET Designer to create their submission. The deadline to submit entries is Aug. 31.

#### The categories and prizes are:

**Innovative Extension** — submissions from manufacturers that have improved their extension since release. Manufacturers are encouraged to submit a five-minute video about a specific challenge their extension faced and steps they took to improve it.

Winners will receive the option for a case study and the choice of CET Designer training hours or CET Developer support/training hours (First place — three hours; second place — two hours; third place — one hour).

**Success Story** — the best success story — a project completed in CET Designer that won a dealership work, made a client happy or one the designer is simply proud of. Projects of all sizes are encouraged. The top three finalists will get free registration to the 13th annual CET Experience.

(First place — \$1,000 and free registration; second place — \$500 and free registration; third place — \$200 and free registration).

**Rendering** — best rendering created for an office, material handling, health care or kitchen space. A jury will decide the top 10 finalists. The top three will be decided through voting on the CET website Sept. 14 through Sept. 30. (First place — \$300; second place — \$200; third place — \$100).

**Student Rendering** — renderings created in the software by undergraduate and graduate students learning CET Designer. Entrants must be a current student or recent graduate, and the rendering must have been created during their time in school. A jury will decide the top five finalists and the top three will be decided through voting on the CET Designer Awards website Sept. 14 through Sept. 30. (First place — \$300; second place — \$200; third place — \$100).

**Video** — fly-through videos created using CET Designer. A jury will decide the top five finalists in this category. The top three will be decided through voting on the CET website Sept. 14 through Sept. 30. (First place — \$300; second place — \$200; third place — \$100).

**Panorama** — 360 degree panorama designs created using CET Designer. All types of spaces and environments are eligible. A jury will decide the top five finalists in this category. The top three will be decided through voting on the CET Designer Awards website Sept. 14 through Sept. 30. (First place — \$300; second place — \$200; third place — \$100).

Configura employees will judge the contests. Winners will be announced during the CET Experience.

#### CAREERS

## HLW Welcomes New Director of Sustainability and Wellness in New York

➔ Jonce Walker, certified sustainable building advisor and Fitwel Ambassador, has officially joined HLW as director of sustainability and wellness. He will operate out of the firm's New York City office.



Walker

Bringing a strong background in place-based urban design to the team, Walker's portfolio spans more than 14 years of high performance sustainability work across a wide array of projects, including airports, institutional buildings, multi-family residential, commercial high-rise and interiors, master planned communities and higher education facilities.

"As HLW continues to hone our vision for a sustainable future, we sought leadership that would unite our capabilities to fight climate change while championing an integrated design process and ethos that prioritizes wellness, health and human comfort," said Lee Devore, associate principal at HLW's New York office. "Jonce uniquely understands our dedication to ecological performance, as well as our endless pursuit of regenerative spaces, and we look forward to seeing the impact of his expertise in all areas of our practice."

Walker will oversee the coordination of an integrated design process that bridges the firm's service offerings, while reinforcing HLW's pledge to the AIA 2030 Commitment — an industry framework that standardizes tracking capabilities for firms to log their progress toward achieving carbon-neutral construction in the next 10 years. Utilizing his experiences in both the public and



private sectors, Walker will be responsible for weaving sustainability into each stage of the design process, working closely alongside the firm's technology team, NEXT, to create client-facing data visualization and biometric analysis tools to better communicate the overall impact of new and ongoing projects.

"I was immediately drawn to HLW's detail-oriented nature and the scale of its international footprint, and I am thrilled to be joining the team in this important capacity," Walker said. "HLW is known in the industry for working with clients that take bold risks, and I look forward to the exceptional opportunity to encourage those organizations, as well as my team internally, to continue pushing the boundaries of what's possible in terms of sustainability, resilience and well-being at both the human and the community level."

## CAREERS

## Innovative Architecture Firm, Svigals + Partners, Celebrates Colleague and Names New Interiors Director

➔ The internationally renowned architecture, art and advisory firm Svigals + Partners has announced new leadership in its interior design studio.



Brotman

Berger

Lynn Brotman is retiring from her career as an interior designer next month to pursue personal interests and "plenty of family time." Katherine Berger, an associate, will assume the role of director of interior design.

After 17 years as the head of Lynn Brotman Interior Design, Brotman merged her firm with Svigals + Partners in 2017 and joined the leadership as an associate principal. Best known for creating vibrant, inspiring interiors for schools, workplaces, health care settings and research facilities, Brotman had collaborated with Svigals + Partners on a number of high-profile works prior to the merger, including Sandy Hook School in Newtown, Connecticut. Known and published widely, Brotman has penned articles on design methods and spoken at national industry events, including NeoCon.

"As I step back from my duties with Svigals + Partners to pursue other interests and opportunities, I'm delighted and confident about the creative, multidisciplinary team we have cultivated that will take up the mantle of interior design here," Brotman said. "I consider my mentoring of young designers and architects over the years to be my most rewarding and valuable contribution."

During her tenure as director of interior design, Brotman strengthened the firm's strategic integration of architecture and interiors, leading the charge on significant projects such as the Yale Child Study Center and Yale-New Haven Hospital's Strategic Business Office.

Brotman's retirement will be recognized with a celebration to be held later this year.

"Lynn has excelled as a collaborator and has inspired us all in how to approach design with passion and professionalism — translating unique brands into engaging environments," said Chris Bockstael, a partner with Svigals + Partners. "As Lynn's successor, Katherine Berger will likewise lead with commitment and creativity. She is an immense talent, and the interiors studio couldn't be in better hands."

A graduate of the New England School of Art and Design at Suffolk University in Boston, Berger's diverse portfolio includes work in the health care, education, biotech and corporate sectors,

with more than a decade of high-profile work in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Recent projects have included multiple corporate office spaces for Technolutions and Biohaven Pharmaceuticals, facilities for Central Connecticut State University and a simulation lab and classrooms for Yale School of Nursing.

"Lynn has been an incredible mentor and influence on how we pursue projects to build prosperous, compassionate communities," said Berger, who is an NCIDQ-certified interior designer and WELL accredited professional. "We'll continue with those values: listening to our clients, building relationships and raising the bar. We are fortunate to have Lynn's legacy to build upon moving forward."

## CAREERS

## RT London Names New President and Chief Operating Officer

➔ RT London has promoted Dale Haley to president and Lindsey Rood to chief operating officer. Haley and Rood succeed retiring President and COO Steve Eldersveld, who will remain with the company in an advisory role, working on a portfolio of special projects.



Haley

Rood

"Dale and Lindsey bring the right mix of experience and expertise to keep RT London moving forward," Eldersveld said. "No one knows this company better — or better understands our commitment to building durable, thoughtfully designed furniture here in the United States."

With an extensive track record in manufacturing and engineering, including the aerospace and building materials industries, Haley brings more than 30 years of experience to the role of president.

Haley joined RT London in 2011 as general manager of Lacey, Washington, operations. He was promoted to vice president, operations for the organization in 2015, overseeing major modernization initiatives across manufacturing facilities and guiding the company's substantial growth in the western U.S.

Haley holds a Bachelor of Science in industrial technology from Western Washington University.

Rood has more than 11 years of experience in the contract furniture industry, most recently at Steelcase, where she led a team of designers supporting the Architectural Solutions category before rejoining RT London in 2020.

During her prior tenure at RT London, Rood was hired as an interior designer and promoted to design manager, playing a key role in the development and launch of Evolve, a Best of NeoCon Silver award-winning room solution, plus the popular Turner and Lotus lounge lines.

A graduate of Kendall College of Art and Design in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Rood holds a Bachelor of Arts in interior design.



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