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# BOF

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NeoCon: Products, People and Projects  
**BoF**

**20** Groupe Lacasse Shifts to Address Changing Office  
The Quebec-based manufacturer has done a masterful job of shifting gears to address the crisis, first by coming out with a package of furniture for the home office and by creating products that make office work safer as well.



NeoCon: Products, People and Projects  
**BoF**

**34** Nook Takes Pod Life to a New Level with a Focus on Agility and Wellbeing  
Nook, by Do Company, a Bristol, England-based design startup, creates semi-private spaces critical for productivity, focus, confidentiality or simple respite from the noise and traffic on the floor.

# NeoConnect

It's time for the design community to connect

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June 2020 on [neocon.com](http://neocon.com)

NeoCon

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7 | Hutch Industry Cartoon



12 | Upfront



13 | The Stream

**COLUMNS**  
Stephen Says 52  
Training & Development 54

**FINANCIAL**  
Industry Shares/Graphs 50

**CALENDAR & MORE**  
Regional News 48  
Upcoming Events 56  
Marketplace & Classifieds 74



## 14 | Gensler says Reports of the Death of the Workplace Have Been Greatly Exaggerated

In part of its ongoing exploration on how design is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, Gensler finds the future workplace may be entering its Golden Age, not of sudden death.



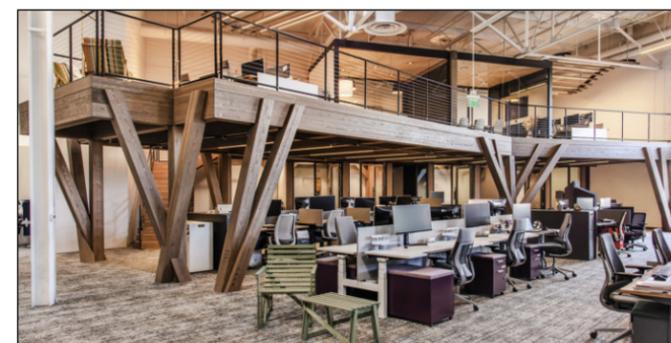
## 17 | Knoll Design Days are Around the Corner

Hosted this year as a free virtual event for industry insiders and design enthusiasts alike, Knoll Design Days will take place June 9-10, 2020, bringing the Company's unparalleled expertise on design and the workplace to audiences in a digital-first format.



## 60 | Designer Outlines How Hospitality, Social Spaces will Change post-COVID During Haworth Webinar

Rottet said social spaces may just be the design that is needed to keep workers at a safe distance from each other while fostering a comforting, residential feel many will crave in the crazy new world of work.



58 PLACES One Workplace Offices – Santa Clara



62 FIRST LOOKS The latest product introductions



66 PULSE The latest industry happenings

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## The Business of Furniture

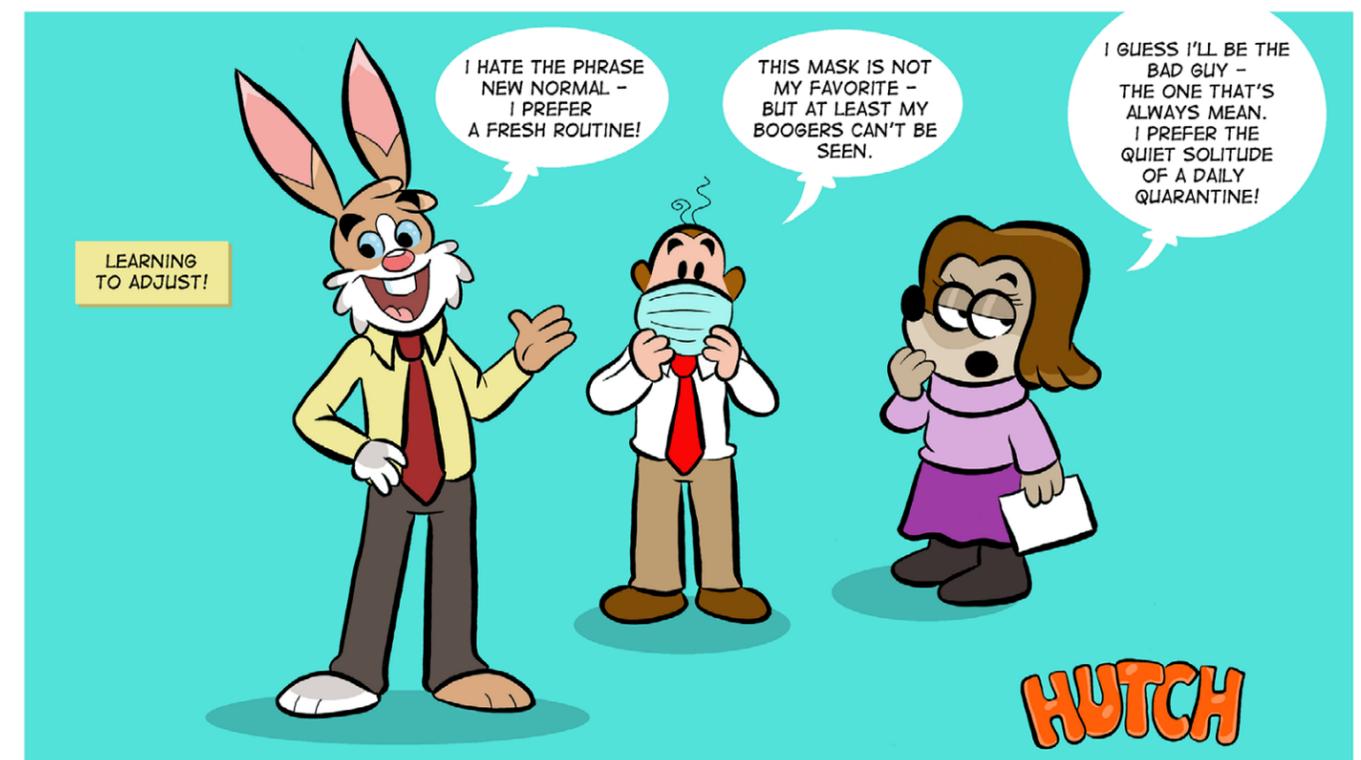


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*Business of Furniture* and *Workplaces* magazine are the go-to sources for keeping you informed about everything that is happening in the industry. From trends that affect your bottom line, to new products that will help your customers work better,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



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## COVID-19 Industry Bulletin Board

### Editor's Note:

Information during the Coronavirus outbreak is at a premium. Business of Furniture is dedicated to getting you the latest industry information. This is a new section that will run throughout the crisis. Feel free to send me your company's information at [rob@bellow.press](mailto:rob@bellow.press). It can be news (as you can see below), simply a shout out to the industry or a friend in the industry or something funny, uplifting or inspiring that you are seeing.

### From Continental Office

➊ Herman Miller dealers Continental Office of Columbus, Ohio, and ID+A of Louisville, Kentucky, have announced a partnership with work experience data company Hopewell to support the launch of their return to work programming and initiatives designed to help companies reimagine the future of the workplace beyond the immediate return to work post COVID-19.

The trio is positioned to help companies struggling to understand and prepare for the ramifications that COVID-19 will have on the way people approach work and the workplace. Hopewell has developed a proprietary way to assess Work Experience Persona types and help organizations reimagine their space, amenities and technology to enable different personas to reach peak performance. With the support of Continental Office and ID&A, both trusted partners for their clients and experts in space design, these personas can inform back-to-work design plans and help leaders prioritize which teams should return to the office and when.

"There has never been a more critical moment for companies to prioritize their employees' individual work preferences," said Ami Murphy Iannone, Hopewell co-founder and chief brand officer. "And there has never been a more efficient way to gather and understand those preferences. We believe that data can help employers approach their human capital with empathy and individual consideration as they reimagine the workplace, now and as this situation evolves over the next year. Our data can help firms like ID&A and Continental Office design for this new paradigm."

This deeper understanding of an organization's human capital can help companies determine which workers are priority to bring back to the office, which environments are important to create within that reimaged workplace, which employees can remain productive continuing to work from home and what resources and amenities each type of worker needs to reach peak performance.

"We've been serving some of our clients for more than 30 years, and many of them have very large workforces to consider," said Mark Eley, ID+A CEO. "They're facing an unprecedented challenge, and they need guidance and data to implement effective and safe return to work programs, not to mention maintaining a pleasant and productive work environment. It's no easy task."

### From Configura

➋ This year, we're doing our part to protect the health of our community by turning CET Experience into a virtual conference. While we will miss seeing you in-person, we are looking

forward to offering the CET Experience you love, but from the comfort of your office!

The North America CET Experience will be Oct. 13-15 for three half days of virtual learning from noon to 5 p.m. EST. The fall partner meeting will be Oct. 12 from noon to 5 p.m. EST. The China CET Experience is scheduled for Nov. 25-27.

The virtual ticket provides access to breakout sessions, keynote presentations and the CET Designer Awards Ceremony. The website launches June 15 and registration opens June 29.

The North America ticket cost will be \$150 and the China ticket cost is still to be determined.

### From COE Distributing

➌ Now, more than ever, it is crucial to keep team members engaged, connected and positive. With so many unknowns spiraling around in the world, especially during this global pandemic, it is essential for employees to feel like they have normalcy, safety and an outlet for communication within the workplace and among peers. JD Ewing, COE Distributing CEO and president, has created this engaged and positive environment and outlet for his team, and he wants to share his expertise so more companies can do the same.

Here are some suggestions on how Ewing has been helping his team cope with its stressors, while keeping them engaged and positive:

Be fully transparent with the team. Tell them how the business is doing, whether it is good or bad. Also, be open and honest with how you are personally feeling to build a strong connection. Ewing sends out daily emails full of business updates and numbers, ideas for the company he wants input on and positive messages. He also sends out two video recordings each week that let the team members know what is happening in the company.

Stay in constant communication with your team members. Have daily huddles every single day between departments, facilities and the entire company as a whole. Use these huddles to discuss problems, find solutions and just to check in. Daily huddles are critical for a department and business to run efficiently, and they are even more critical during this time, because they are the only way team members working from home can have face-to-face interactions.

Have fun with your team members. At COE, Ewing has been offering two Live Breakaway with JD sessions each week, where the COE team members and sales eeps can come together and talk about anything from what shows they are binge watching to anything business related. Ewing also hosts happy hours every Friday evening.

Bring your team members in on ideas and solutions. Allow them to share their opinions and offer suggestions. You never know how many great suggestions you will get you can use to help business grow.

Always have an open-door policy. Let your team members know you are here for them, and there are also other resources available that allow them opportunities to talk through their thoughts and feelings.

Help them feel safe! If they are coming into the workplace every day, make sure the proper guidelines are in place, and you supply them with the PPE needed to make them feel secure. If team members can work from home, encourage them to do so, but supply them with the tools needed for success and once again ALWAYS COMMUNICATE!

While the world is definitely experiencing a new normal, there are still ways to keep the old normal in your company. Provide your team members with stability, transparency and engagement, and you will be surprised how much your company still flourishes, even through a pandemic.

# Instead of Wringing Our Hands About What We can't Control, We Need to Start Worrying About What We Can



**Happy Wednesday everyone,**

It is June 3 and in a normal year, everyone in the industry would be furiously preparing for NeoCon and getting ready to head to Chicago. Originally scheduled for June 8-10, TheMART and NeoCon's organizers made the prudent decision to cancel the show this year. Though things are beginning to open up around the country, there is no way the show could have been safely held at this time. Kudos to theMART for making the tough, almost unthinkable decision to hold off until next year.

But if you are like me, NeoCon has become

an annual tradition. I've lost count of exactly how many I've attended, but it is more than 20. That's a lot of steak dinners. And if you are like me, you've probably bitched about having to attend the annual event. Long days, longer nights, exhaustion, social overload, unfamiliar accommodations that make getting a good night's sleep tough.

For me, the proverb "absence makes the heart grow fonder" has never been more true. Because despite my gripes over how tough the show can be, I still love it. I am going to miss NeoCon. More specifically, I'm going to miss all

the people I connect with while in Chicago.

The Bellow Press team would be arriving in Chicago just about now. We have had a booth at theMART since our inception and this year would have been no different. We would have been hard at work getting everything together for our own space. We also would be covering the last minute changes to the building and showrooms.

By Friday, we would start shifting gears — covering the many meetings all of you have leading up to the show with your reps and sales team. And that's when the parties start, with INDEAL leading things off every year. For us, Saturday and Sunday are spent putting the final touch on our own stand and reconnecting with friends. We often spend one of those evenings with journalists from other publications, many of whom we know from shows like Clerkenwell Design Week in London, iSalone, Orgatec and the China International Furniture Fair. It is our turn to host them at our local show (often with bad food at dive bars like Kuma's Corner).

Like you, things get serious for us on Monday. While you worry about your showroom or stand and how the crowds will perceive it, we have to worry about all the showrooms and stands. It is a massive job spread over our entire team. And as you go to sleep at the end of the day with the steak dinner still weighing heavy in your stomach, we go back to our hotel room to start writing about what we've seen. It starts all over again on Tuesday and Wednesday.

After three exhausting days, the Bellow Press team has a tradition of convening on Wednesday for a late lunch at Portillo's where we go over story ideas, trends and other interesting things we've seen at the show. Most of us head home Wednesday night or Thursday. The new

products, people and projects we hear about at NeoCon give us content for the rest of the year.

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 are beginning to see today. 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. I'm thrilled to present stories from Groupe Lacasse and Nook in today's issue. Make sure you read the stories to learn about what these great companies are doing.

If you like what you see, it is not too late to get involved. Contact my colleague Melissa Skolnick at [melissa@bellow.press](mailto:melissa@bellow.press) for more information about Products, People and Projects. It is a great marketing program and a great value for our readers and NeoCon exhibitors.

Also, make sure to check out NeoConnect, another great program being hosted by theMART. For the full month of June, NeoConnect will feature product and company details from NeoCon 2020 tenants and exhibitors and a full roster of complementary NeoCon CEU webinars, online panel discussions and virtual social events. Go to [neocon.com](http://neocon.com) for more information and registration.

Nothing we can do can replace NeoCon since it is as much about the people as it is the products or educational programs. But we can't give up either. Instead of wringing our hands about what we can't control, we need to start worrying about what we can.

*Rob Kirkbride and the Business of Furniture team*

## Scandinavian Spaces Virtual Showroom – A Northern Neon Journey

In response to the ever-changing climate of 2020, Scandinavian Spaces is finding new ways to celebrate design and inspire like-minded creatives.

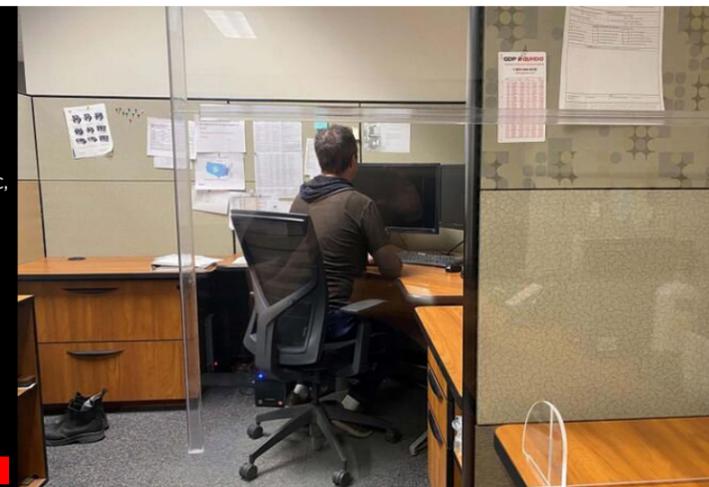
With this year's June 8-10 NeoCon in Chicago canceled, Scandinavian Spaces is sharing a virtual experience that will continue to bring the design community together in the new digitized world. Inspired by the ephemeral northern light skies of Scandinavia, the company's 2020 NeoCon showroom will feature forward-thinking designs and electrifying color. The space will be adorned with furniture that embraces ergonomics and sustainability. Mimicking the aurora's magnificent current of color — and with furniture as unique as the polar lights themselves — the showroom will feature the brand's core values of color, design and life.

Highlights include sophisticated new product introductions, showcasing the latest in Scandinavian design. Visitors will be able to journey through the Scandinavian Spaces Virtual Showroom Experience to see what the buzz is all about. The virtual showroom can be toured via [scandinavianspaces.com](http://scandinavianspaces.com) starting June 8.

### NOT SO FAST, 6 FEET OFFICE: PLEXIGLASS CUBES CAN'T SOLVE CORONAVIRUS CONUNDRUM

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, plastic partitions between desks are "hot right now." From Cushman & Wakefield to the OSHA, recommendations are pouring forth for how the owners and managers of buildings — offices, casinos, even schools — should rework their floor plans so as to stop the spread of the coronavirus with see-through barriers.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)



### THE NEW OFFICE IS AN ECOSYSTEM OF WORKSPACES AND EXPERIENCES

Real estate giant Cushman & Wakefield recently published *The Future of Workplace*, surveying more than 40,000 people globally about their work experiences during the pandemic to assess how employees are coping and what the new normal will look like.

The upshot: Employees are adjusting well to working from home and their productivity levels remain surprisingly high. However, as businesses reopen, the future workplace will no longer be limited to a single place; instead, it will be an ecosystem of various locations and experiences.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

### BIG NUMBER

# 74 PERCENT

About a month after the US lockdowns for the pandemic began, Morgan Stanley CEO James Gorman told Bloomberg TV that it had become clear to him that the firm could operate with "much less real estate."

In a Gartner survey in April, 74% of CFOs said they intend to move at least 5% of their previously on-site workforce to permanently remote positions post-COVID 19. Nearly a quarter of respondents said they will move at least 20% of their on-site employees to permanent remote positions.

### C.D.C. RECOMMENDS SWEEPING CHANGES TO AMERICAN OFFICES

Upon arriving at work, employees should get a temperature and symptom check.

Inside the office, desks should be six feet apart. If that isn't possible, employers should consider erecting plastic shields around desks.

Seating should be barred in common areas.

And face coverings should be worn at all times.

These are among sweeping new recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on the safest way for American employers reopening their offices to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

If followed, the guidelines would lead to a far-reaching remaking of the corporate work experience.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

## THE STREAM

### PLEXIGLASS IS THE NEW HOT COMMODITY AS BUSINESSES TRY TO REOPEN

Manufacturers are racing to crank out the hand sanitizer, masks and clear plastic dividers that are emerging as integral elements for reopening the U.S. economy amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Stepped-up production has sent prices for materials soaring: The alcohol used in sanitizer has tripled in price since January. Wait times for plexiglass-style sheeting are now measured in months rather than weeks. Scores of companies are hunting for fabrics that block virus-laden particles to supply their employees with masks. All told, the \$5 billion U.S. market for personal-protection equipment is expected to grow nearly 15% this year from 2019, according to IBISWorld, a market research firm.

Part of that market has served front-line medical workers, for example with highly protective N95 masks. Now, demand for gear is coming from myriad sectors of the economy to protect people as activity broadly restarts.

Companies' ability to obtain scarce protective equipment and temperature-sensing cameras will help determine how swiftly and smoothly they can emerge after closing for weeks to curtail the spread of the virus. Spending on masks, sanitizer and dividers is crimping corporate margins as businesses also anticipate a stretch of lower sales from customers worried about venturing out in public, or scrimping after pay cuts and lost jobs.

Demand for protective equipment from governments and deep-pocketed buyers such as Walt Disney Co. and McDonald's Corp. looking to protect their workers and customers could also put small businesses at a disadvantage in locating sanitizer, disinfecting wipes and other goods through suppliers or at retail stores.

"It's easier to get 10,000 masks than it is to get 10," said Luke Bosso, chief of staff at the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, which has helped distribute 25,000 bundles of masks and hand sanitizer to small businesses.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)



### COLLIERS SEES SHARP INCREASE IN OFFICE VACANCIES

The coronavirus has forced Colliers International to make "adjustments" that counterbalance present and the future negative trends that the coronavirus pandemic has had on its national office markets.

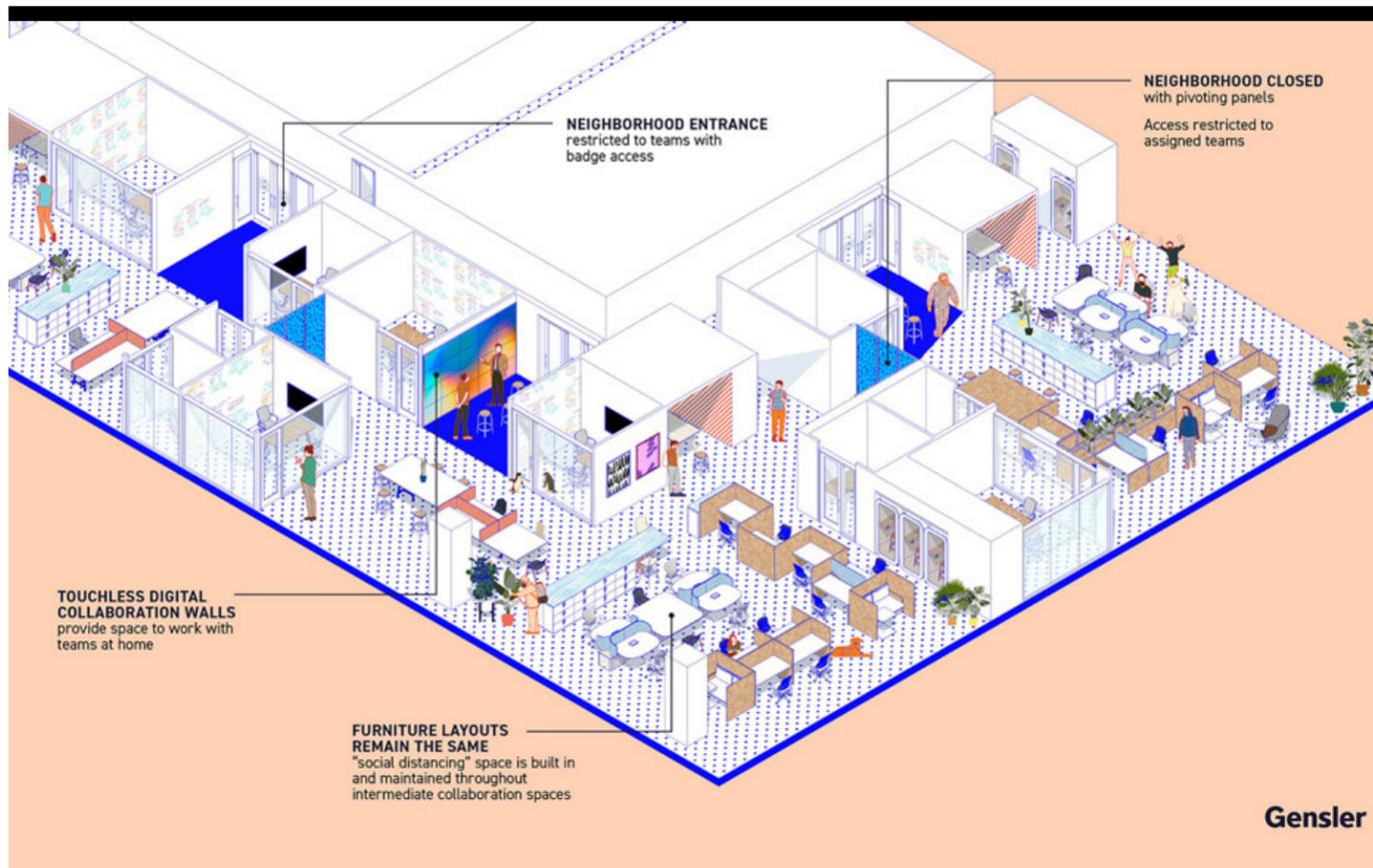
Before the coronavirus, leading housing markets in the US showed signs of cooling in the first quarter of 2020. While rents saw minimal changes, once the coronavirus led to stay-at-home orders and social distancing restrictions, market vacancies and lower absorption have increased. According to the Colliers Q1 2020 Top Office Markets Snapshot Report, absorption was negative in four markets and fell in two more.

The report attributed Covid-19 to slowing leasing activity in March. It placed blame on the coronavirus for the creation of a "climate of uncertainty" that will put decision making on hold as businesses reevaluate their real estate needs and seek to contain costs.

The coronavirus pandemic will impact all of its markets. But those, such as Silicon Valley and Seattle, which have tech-led markets and established firms with strong balance sheets, will be the most resilient. Meanwhile, the collapse of oil prices will sharply impact Houston and coronavirus pandemic will test the entertainment sector in Los Angeles as production has come to a close.

Also from Colliers' top 10 nationwide office markets, Manhattan is experiencing a slowdown in first-quarter leasing activity. Washington, DC, has elevated vacancy. In Chicago, large-block availability "is a heightened concern."

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)



## Gensler says Reports of the Death of the Workplace Have Been Greatly Exaggerated

THIS TIME OF TRANSITION BACK TO THE OFFICE WILL FORCE COMPANIES TO THINK ABOUT REALIGNING THEIR FUTURE WORKPLACES WITH KEY ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN OUT OF REACH BEFORE.

In part of its ongoing exploration on how design is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, Gensler finds the future workplace may be entering its Golden Age, not of sudden death.

“For millions of office workers around the world, work has been consciously uncoupled from its usual location for the first time. And what’s been pleasantly surprising — interrupting children,

pets, and roommates notwithstanding — is that most people are pretty good at working from home,” writes Randy Howder on Gensler’s Research & Insight blog.

As a result, numerous leaders are asking if their companies need workplaces at all. Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey recently told most of his employees they never need to come back to the workplace and Nationwide Insurance

announced the closing most of its office locations. Some feel that COVID-19 is the 9/11 of workplace — meaning just as travel and security were transformed in the wake of that tragedy, our workplaces will never be the same.

“There’s no way to predict what the future workplace will be, but we now know two things. According to the Gensler U.S. Work From Home Survey, most people do want to go back to the office.

They also expect the workplace to be different from the one they left behind. No doubt, the office will evolve along with changes in business priorities and cultural norms,” Howder writes.

In the initial return to the office, Gensler foresees sensible moves like spacing workers apart, enhancing cleaning protocols, and installing touchless fixtures are akin to the precautions one sees at grocery stores and other essential businesses. But, over the next several weeks, a lot understanding of the virus will change and its effect on workplace reentry, as will the mitigation strategies.

“Staying on top of the science and letting the dust settle before investing in what might be expensive, short-term, or short-sighted solutions is probably the smartest thing employers can do,” Howder writes.

Gensler poses many questions about the possibilities:

What if we could get rid of many of the things most people hate about work and build up the things that inspire and engage us? What if going to the office was something we all looked forward to? Even though we can all cook at home, we go to restaurants because we want the social experience of being together. What if we felt the same about our offices?

One of the biggest shifts might be a pushback against presenteeism, which developed because of the difficulty of measuring the productivity of knowledge work. In our return to the office,

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employees could finally be free to self-determine when and where they gain the most satisfaction from the kinds of work they're doing. For some functions, that would clearly be in the office. For others, it would be at home or somewhere else. If an organization measured performance based on results and actual value added, how might that improve an employee's day-to-day experience and engagement?

What if we moved beyond the tyranny of the recurring one-hour meeting, allowing routine matters to be handled virtually or on one's own time? What if routine decisions didn't require 10 people sitting around a conference table? What if we could avoid unnecessary consensus-seeking for inconsequential decisions? What if the dreaded weekly staff meeting was a thing of the past, replaced with more immersive, informative, and connected experiences?

What if we could eliminate unplanned interruptions, helped in no small part by poorly designed open-plan offices, instant messaging platforms, and the "ding" of push notifications with smarter tools and more engaging forms of collaboration? What if we could ease the pain of constantly switching between tasks and suffering from the draining cognitive switching penalty, which leaves us exhausted and with little to show for our efforts?

What if traveling to meet people face-to-face was reserved only for truly meaningful interactions (especially when a virtual meeting would suffice)?

Expensive business-class travel for 30-minute meetings in far-off countries could be a thing of the past. The carbon footprint, needless expense, and damage to lower backs are reasons enough to never go back to that way of doing business.

What if we could flatten entrenched hierarchies and embrace diversity? Since there's no corner office on a Zoom meeting and virtual work doesn't require living in an expensive ZIP code, could we see greater access to talent and wider acceptance of those with different cultural, economic, and family backgrounds?

"While workplace design on its own cannot deliver us to this promised land, it can be a catalyst for change when considered as an integral part of an organization's operating system, delivering a meaningful, engaging, rewarding, valuable, and sustainable employee experience," Howder writes. "Just imagine if this virtual connection was tethered to immersive digital surfaces in a workplace, for example, so that it created a seamless presence of community in the physical world joined with the digital world. Taken further, one could imagine full integration of virtual reality, digital collaboration tools, advanced conferencing, sensors, and other smart building technologies into our future work lives, whether we are at home or in the office. Rather than witnessing the death of the workplace, we could very well be watching it enter its golden age."

BoF



## Knoll Design Days are Around the Corner

Knoll announced program details for Knoll Design Days 2020—Opportunities for Change. Hosted this year as a free virtual event for industry insiders and design enthusiasts alike, Knoll Design Days will take place June 9-10, 2020, bringing the Company's unparalleled expertise on design and the workplace to audiences in a digital-first format. The program, noon to 6:00 PM ET daily, builds on the success of the Company's current k.talks series and its Women In Design Dialogues presented at Fulton Market Chicago in 2019.

Knoll Design Days—Opportunities for Change explores Knoll's holistic, research-driven point-of-view with today's top thinkers in workplace strategy and planning; product design, architecture; interior design; and textiles. The program includes fresh thinking on strategies for planning workstations, private offices and shared spaces as well insights about materials and color.

"Simply put, the very nature of how we work and live is always changing, whether it's in response to new technologies, evolving work culture or the COVID-19 crisis. A successful workplace addresses change—

and Knoll always strives to find the right opportunities for organizations to adapt," stated Benjamin Pardo, Knoll Executive Vice President, Design.

"We're here to help organizations adjust to a new normal and give people confidence in their work environments. We look forward to expanding the dialogue around considerations for a healthy work life, through what I think is an incredible representation of what our constellation of brands can accomplish," added Pardo.

### Program participants include:

- Antenna Design Principals, Sigi Moeslinger & Mashimichi Udagawa
- Barber Osgerby Principals, Edward Barber & Jay Osgerby
- Thomas Bentzen, Principal Designer, Thomas Bentzen Industrial Design
- Nina Bruun, Textile Designer
- Dorothy Cosonas, Creative Director, KnollTextiles
- Carol Crane, Knoll Vice President, Education/Healthcare
- Dan Grabowski, Designer
- Marie Hesseldahl, Product Design Manager, Muuto

- Sharon Johnston, Johnston Marklee & Associates

- Marc Krusin, Designer

- Piero Lissoni, Architect & Designer

- India Mahdavi, Architect

- Susan Magsamen, Founder and Executive Director of the International Arts + Mind Lab, Johns Hopkins University

- Benjamin Pardo, Knoll Executive Vice President, Design

- David Rockwell, Founder and President, Rockwell Group

- Kylie Roth, Knoll Senior Director, Workplace Research

- Zoë Ryan, Art Institute of Chicago's John H. Bryan Chair and Curator of Architecture and Design

- Tracy Wymer, Knoll Vice President, Workplace Strategy

- Kim Yao, Principal ARO Architecture Research Office

- Cindy Allen, Editor-in-Chief, Interior Design Magazine

In addition, Pardo, who will host many of the segments, invites viewers to join him for cocktails each evening with designers and friends. **BoF**

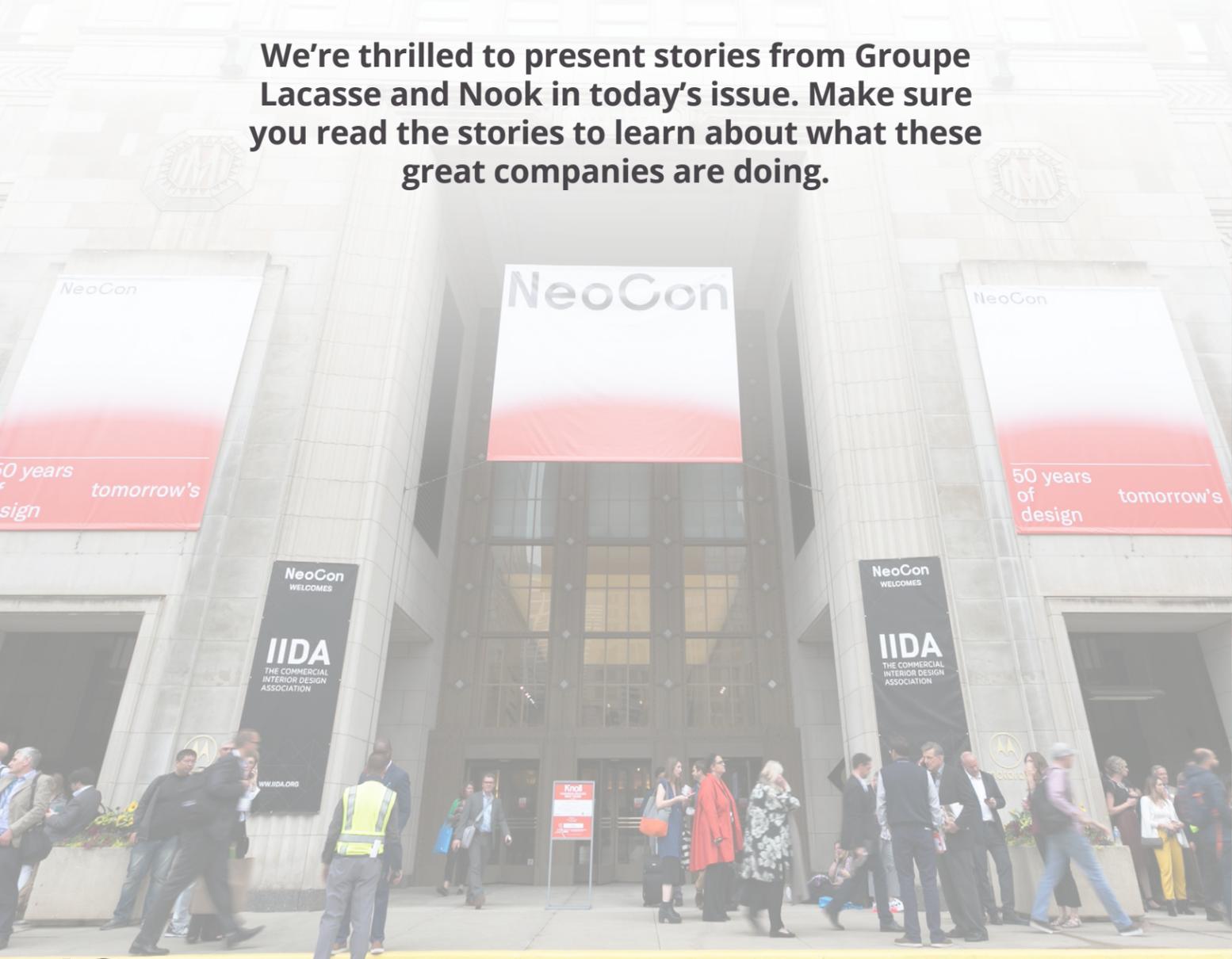
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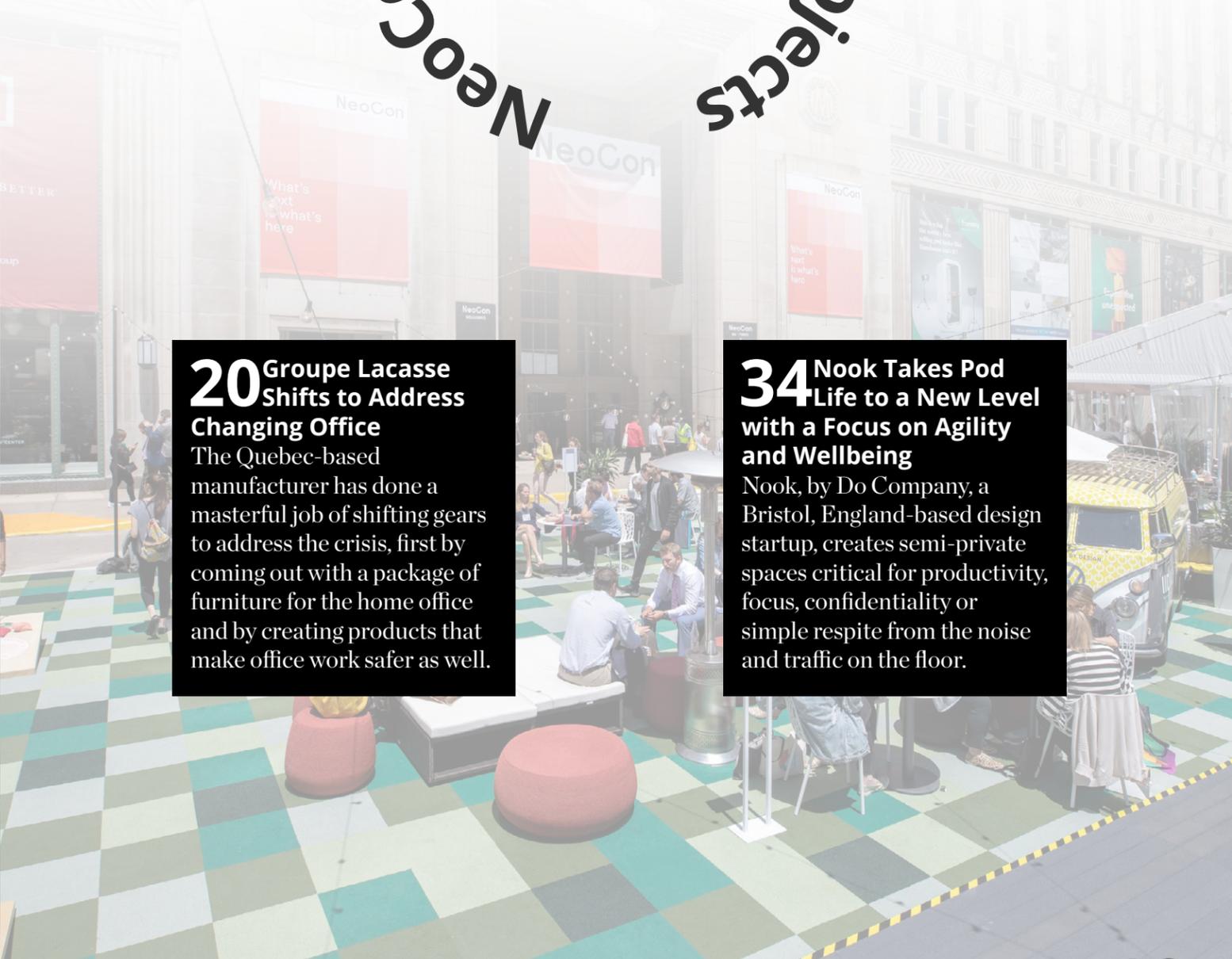
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# Groupe Lacasse Shifts to Address Changing Office

by Rob Kirkbride

**No one would have wished for a worldwide pandemic.** But no company in the office furniture industry might be better positioned to respond to the needs of both the work-from-home and the traditional office than Groupe Lacasse.

The Quebec-based manufacturer has done a masterful job of shifting gears to address the crisis, first by coming out with a package of furniture for the home office and by creating products that make office work safer as well.

Soon after the pandemic hit, the Groupe Lacasse team gathered (virtually) to come up with solutions for workers suddenly pushed into inadequate home offices and next for companies that want to reopen but don't know how to keep their workers safe. The company's response also benefited from its use of the latest edgebanding technology which creates an attractive table edge that is easily cleanable and keeps out germs.



## Since Groupe Lacasse has so much manufacturing experience making custom products, it was easy to transition some production to a home office offering.

“The first reaction across the board with our employees and with people we knew and what we were observing with other people being forced to stay home, was the necessity in many cases to let our people work from their homes,” said Sylvain Garneau, chairman and chief executive officer. “Very quickly it became a critical agenda item, that this shut-down is going to last much longer than anticipated and that it is going to require us to adapt to an

uncertain working environment, indeed an uncertain future — just like all our customers.”

Home office became a fast focus as its products already lent themselves to the category. Since Groupe Lacasse has so much manufacturing experience making custom products, it was easy to transition some production to a home office offering — slightly smaller in scale, but still the same commercial quality the company is known for. It was important

Groupe Lacasse still serve home office customers for its dealer network, so it made sure to include its partners in the design, marketing and sales of the products.

Groupe Lacasse’s home office planning started before COVID-19, said Dominic Aubry, product manager for laminate casegoods. “We spend a great deal of our time imagining the future and how it impacts our daily business, which underpins our



**Prior to the pandemic, many companies were reluctant to try work from home because they might have less control or the work might not be as efficient.**

long-term product development plan, and working from home was already part of that plan," he said. "So we were already contemplating what that would look like. What changed was the impact of COVID-19 and the speed at which people were required to work from home. Obviously, many companies shutdown completely, and many businesses who remained open had no choice but to send their employees home to work virtually."

What started as a temporary setting became more long term as the crisis went on. For most new work-from-home employees, it might have started with a dining table or a small spot in the living room. As the weeks working from home have turned to months, home office workers started to look for a more permanent solution. Some companies have decided not to bring workers back to the traditional office at all. Others are opting to split workers into different shifts or have them work from home a few days a week.

"We believe that when everyone gets the green-light to return to work, there may not be room for them because physical distancing rules will apply," Aubry said. "In order to make room, many companies will keep their employees virtual asking them to work from a remote setting. Not only that, we believe some businesses may even realize financial or productivity gains to having employees working remotely, making this more than a short-term trend."

Prior to the pandemic, many companies were reluctant to try work from home because they might have less control or the work might not be as efficient. Since they were forced to try it, some of them are seeing the advantages and could keep the concept. That's why Groupe Lacasse believes working



## The industry hasn't done a great job serving the home office market.

remotely and working from home will continue to be a strong trend in the months and years ahead.

Groupe Lacasse started by looking at the different characteristics and particularities of the market. A sure way to fail would be to introduce commercial products and simply throw them into the home and believe it would be a perfect fit. There are differences in the markets. The first thing the company observed was the size differences and space configurations.

"There is a significant difference between the residential and the commercial markets," Aubry said. "If you have ever tried to fit a 36-by-72-inch desk with a credenza, a hutch and a lateral file, maybe even a bookcase, obviously it won't easily fit in most residential spaces. So we started to think about scalable furniture, with different configurations in support of residential space restrictions in order to be more efficient on a square footage basis and take more advantage of wall space, certain not to block windows, closets and doorways."

Also the general aesthetic and feel of the furniture has to be different. Nobody wants ugly fur-

niture, especially at home. The aesthetic was slightly more important in residential furniture, Groupe Lacasse found, because furniture participates in the décor of the house. And obviously some market conditions like price and delivery time were very important because in many cases, the end user is going to pay for the furniture. So Groupe Lacasse came up with a solution that is really reasonably priced.

The industry hasn't done a great job serving the home office market, said Kevin Glynn, executive vice president of sales. He said the industry has left it to the likes of Wayfair and IKEA and ready-to-assemble furniture makers.

"What we did to address it was to introduce products that are not ready-to-assemble, but primarily come already assembled, and with a level of service online big box stores simply can't provide," he said. "And we're not selling direct (to consumers); we're offering our dealer partners the ability to sell home office furniture to their clients. We do not sell online; we truly support our bricks and mortar dealers, the traditional commercial dealer market. That's who we're always





going to support with Groupe Lacasse products and services. We have taken a BIFMA-certified product and scaled it to fit a smaller, dedicated home office environment wonderfully well. You can't have the same scale of product — it would overwhelm a relatively small space that you're dedicating your home-based office furniture to."

But it's not scaled back in terms of quality, he said. It's going to be the same quality with the same commercial warranties, which in Groupe Lacasse's case is a limited lifetime warranty.

"You're getting a tremendous quality product, with great design,

at an affordable price, scaled to suit the home office," Glynn said. "That's been our goal, and we've just released it to the market. It will be available through Groupe Lacasse authorized dealers."

Groupe Lacasse found its niche — a collection of home office furniture that was commercially tough and could be used eight hours a day, stylish enough to work in a home and at a price point that won't break the bank for a home worker who might have to purchase the products themselves.

The next step was to imagine how the office itself might change. For the last decade, open space,

benching, desking, long surfaces and getting as many people as possible in the least amount of square footage was the rule. Now, the opposite is true. Space is needed, as are personal protection accessories at workstations, along with panels and screens for physical separation in benching or desking solutions.

Regardless of when or how offices reopen, they will be different than they were in the past, Garneau said. But the company did not want to create products simply to chase the post-COVID trends. It wanted to create products that its dealers could sell and customers could buy that would



## Regardless of when or how offices reopen, they will be different than they were in the past.

help employees work regardless of the situation.

"Now, 12 months from now, are we going to be back to normal? I have no clue, I don't know," Garneau said. "It's still too early. The only thing I know is that employers are looking at what they can do to safely bring their people back. They're looking at solutions. And what we want to do is to provide a functional yet unobtrusive product solution that meets the needs of a post COVID-19 workspace, that provides for the well-being and safety of the employees well into the future should another wave of the virus ever materialize. It's intended to help employers and employees to get back into normal work mode, or a new normal, and again be safe and secure where they are. This is what we had in mind."

Physical distancing will certainly be im-

portant as people return to the office. Garneau said Groupe Lacasse was inspired by documents on staying safe in the workplace, visions from architecture and design firms and projections from the real estate industry. The company got to work.

After just four weeks, they have developed solutions for casegoods, systems and seating they can bundle together that can be extremely helpful in the near term for its dealer network, either for retrofitting the current setups employers have with screens and panels that can divide and make separations or for new setups.

It wasn't easy. Design has to happen. Product engineering has to happen. The supply chain has to participate (and just as fast as Groupe Lacasse). The company used what it called a stage gate process for new products or enhancements/improve-





ments — a methodic step-by-step system. “Obviously, in this case, we shrank everything,” Garneau said.

Groupe Lacasse has benefited from its continuous investment in the latest technology. The company made massive investments in 2018 and 2019. Those investments are paying off. Without the high-tech manufacturing, Groupe Lacasse would not be able to move as quickly as it has or provide as many options for shapes and materials.

The company is the first to introduce laser technology for edge banding on laminate surfaces. Though this might seem like a minor improvement, it is a significant development for the company and its customers, especially in a time where ease of cleaning and sealed surfaces are critical.

A traditional work surface includes a substrate that has been laminated. Somehow the manufacturer adheres an edge to it. In the past, it has always been glued on, Glynn said. That always leads to that little line that goes around the circumference of the work surface, which is the very visible glue line.

“When you go into older installations and some newer ones, you can put your fingernails on or put a pen in, and pull that away from the work surface, the substrate,” he said. “We have introduced a new technology into the factory that is new in the market, that is laser installed. Through a laser beam — we call it the Fuse edge — you actually meld the edgeband to the substrate. So it eliminates the glue line, and you cannot pull it away.”

This has some real advantages in a post-COVID-19 workplace, just by happenstance. It’s much easier to clean. It has an antimicrobial tendency to it because nothing can get into that glue line where that space used to be. So it is very, very cleanable.

“That’s the one advantage, but primarily it was in terms of durability,” Glynn said. “It was introduced because of durability and the aesthetics. It’s a very clean look. You do not see the matching edgeband. Designers really take to it quite nicely.”

The virus has not changed Groupe Lacasse. It is still the highly focused company dealers love to partner with and customers love to work with. Still, the way it is addressing the market is different, Garneau said. **BoF**

# Nook Takes Pod Life to a New Level with a Focus on Agility and Wellbeing

by Emily Clingman

*Nook /nook/ A corner or recess, especially one offering seclusion or security.*

**Think back to when you were young and the feeling you had when you found a secret place to hide, or to read, or play with a flashlight.** Whether you put a sheet tent over your bed, made a cozy sneak-away in the cubby under the stairs, or built a fort in the woods, there is something magical and comforting and safe about hiding out in your own space.

Secret spaces charm the kid in all of us, and tiny hideouts foster the imagination — which research finds is vital for both children and adults. The About My Brain Institute, in “The Importance of Imagination,” by Tao de Haas, says imagination is the key to innovation.



## Solving the open space problem for people by providing an escape sanctuary, which protects but does not isolate.

de Haas writes, “The ability to imagine things pervades our entire existence. It influences everything we do, think about and create. It leads to elaborate theories, dreams and inventions in any profession from the realms of academia to engineering and the arts. Ultimately, imagination influences everything we do regardless of our profession.”

Private retreat spaces serve adults beyond sparking nostalgia. In an open workspace, having a quiet, personal space is critical for productivity, focus, confidentiality or simple respite from the noise and traffic on the floor.

Nook, by Do Company, a Bristol, England-based design startup, creates semi-private spaces for exactly these purposes. Originally crafted as a refuge for introverts and workers on the spectrum in open plan work environments, Nooks are now helping everyone to improve their wellbeing and productivity in workplaces,

schools, science parks and innovation centers, and events.

David O’Coimin, chief executive and founder of Nook, launched the company four years ago.

“The original idea behind Nook is based on four cornerstones,” O’Coimin said.

- Solving the open space problem for people by providing an escape sanctuary, which protects but does not isolate.
- It needed to be an agile system, built for mobility and change. Furniture needs to evolve as the space evolves.
- Sustainability — making products out of recycled and sustainably sourced materials and also making a product long lasting and recyclable are the book-ends of true sustainability.
- Affordability. Period.





## The booth that looks like a little house became an instant hit, and Nook quickly developed a global reach.

Nook debuted with the Nook huddle.

"I knew that in order to make a successful product that people would buy, I needed to bake the science inside and keep it simple — a privacy space for two people to have a meeting or a place for one person to do some work."

The booth that looks like a little house became an instant hit, and Nook quickly developed a global reach. And it did indeed help people focus and have better meetings.

But O'Coimin and his team found over time that Nook was perfect for addressing other factors employees face in the office.

Studies show about 15% to 20% of people are neurodivergent, which can include autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and dyslexia. Different neurological conditions respond differently in

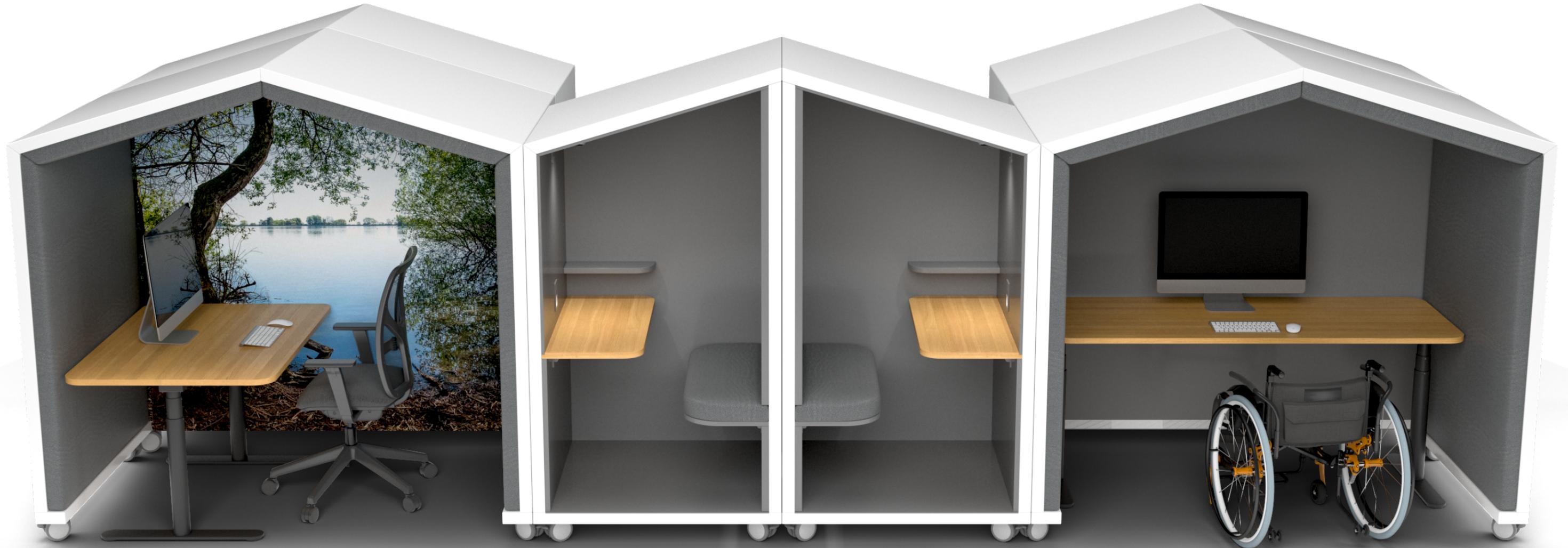
various settings. Anything from 40-80% of your workforce may identify as introvert. While an open office layout might be common and fun to have, that scenario could be overwhelming to many employees.

Nook's are equipped to help neurodiverse people cope with challenging environments.

"Nook is a tool for companies to accommodate their neurodiverse employees and to benefit all. Your people are 90% of your power, they need to be taken care of," O'Coimin said. "Employees need choices to manage their needs at work. It's been shown to reduce anxiety levels before they reach meltdown and in so doing prevents challenging behavior. The result of this is less exclusion and much greater opportunity to access experiences most people take for granted."

Nook can be adapted specifi-

*Nook Open and Nook Solo join Nook Huddle to put inclusive personal and social spaces at the heart of work and learning spaces.*



Science Park



Coworking



Facebook



Innovation Hub

## Nook can be adapted specifically to fit certain needs.

ally to fit certain needs. For instance, a person with autism might find it difficult to make direct eye contact with people. That can be greatly alleviated with the help of a mirror.

"If we install a mirror on the back wall of a Nook, that anxiety can be greatly alleviated," he said. "They can use the mirror to aid in communicating with someone or they can just observe the environment they are in and be a part of it from a space that feels safe to them, while still feeling connected with their peers."

O'Coimin describes other features that can be utilized to help people to process information. For instance, someone who is dyslexic can adjust specialized lighting in a Nook a certain way, a hue specific to the individual, and their brain will settle, and the words will come back in line. This facilitates better focus and more productivity. Sometimes adjustable lighting is good for people to regroup or recharge. The color lilac or light shades of pink are very calming. Blue hues assist in cooling the body down — helpful if it's starting to feel hot and stuffy in the office.

"It's not just dimming the light up and down, that's not enough,"

O'Coimin said. "You want to bathe the space in a particular hue to meet your needs. This is neuro-inclusivity, using particular tones of light that can really affect your mood."

Scent is another element that can help with memory. In a health care setting, a Nook equipped with scent capabilities can help dementia patients. In a workplace setting, employees can adjust the scent in their Nook while working to retain information, and when they return and use the same scent, the scent will aid in developing a stronger memory.

Workplaces, especially those designed with an open layout need to include get-away spaces for people to step out of the open environment into a space of their own for a bit to self-regulate. Oftentimes, prospective employees will survey the land while visiting the office and they will look for amenities, like private spaces, to meet their needs during the workday.

"We really need to focus on what a business needs," O'Coimin said. "I think mindfulness and wellness is too general. What they really need are tools to show them the path on business outcomes — to reduce stress, reduce absentee-

**Workplaces, especially those designed with an open layout need to include get-away spaces for people to step out of the open environment into a space of their own for a bit to self-regulate.**

ism, to reduce staff turnover. When prospective employees are visiting your office, they are evaluating it. Where they will fit in the space? If your space doesn't look like it supports mental wellness (it's noisy, it's crowded,) they won't take the job. And people already there will burn out sooner and quicker. Show companies the path to the business outcome, or how to make money from it, or help them save money from it, for employees to perform better. If you can't show users how they can perform better, then I don't think you can really expect to succeed."

**Post-Pandemic Preparation**

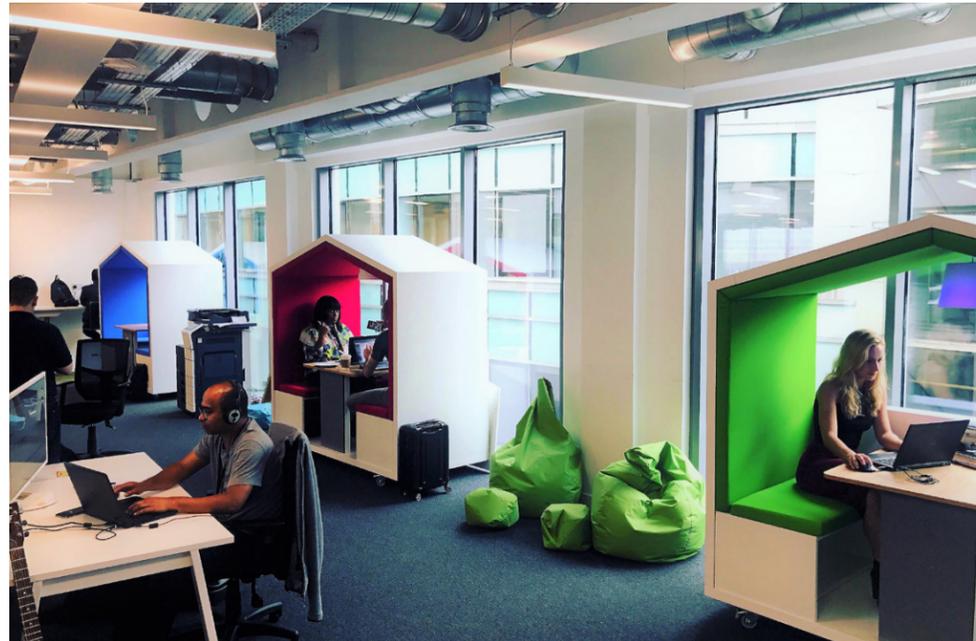
But, that was then. What about the office now?

No matter what the percentage was before of introverts, which can range from 40% to 80%, O'Coimin says, the sensitivity to mental health is going to be higher after the COVID pandemic.

"None of us know what it's going to be like in six months or two

years," he said. "Were all predicting what it could be. But we were COVID-prepared in some ways. The DNA of our product was always ready for COVID and agility. We don't sell panels. We don't sell other furniture. We only do Nook and we come from the position of mental health, a position of neurodiversity. I didn't know what we were going to do when I designed it. I just knew we would want to be able to change it in the future — so it's about the agility we put into the product right from the start. And we knew it wasn't going to be important right away, but we knew it would be important one day. I could not have imagined it would be a global pandemic that made it important."

Nook readily and easily jumped right into the pandemic health-care crisis. The company donated Nooks from their demo and event fleet to hospitals so staff can retreat to a wellness space to properly withdraw and get their personal balance back.





**“We’ve become recognized as a company that already cared about this health, safety and wellbeing.”**

And if your company already has Nooks installed, they can be changed to accommodate social distancing protocol in 30 seconds, O’Coimin says, by easily removing two screws from one of the benches inside and bringing the seat around the other side of the Nook wall.

“Now only one person can sit inside, and the other person can sit outside, and you have a private, safe space still,” he said.

Existing Nooks can be upgraded and affordably changed to meet post-COVID standards and air filtration systems, UV light design that kill viruses like corona, filter the air inside the Nook and contributing to clean air in the environment.

“What I want to do is to create meaningful tools for organizations which are fully useful all of the time” O’Coimin said. “For example the new Nook Open is a shelter in the form of a Nook huddle, but with no seats, table or even floor. It is hyper-flexible for multiple uses, accommodating your existing furniture or quickly and easily occupied by someone in a wheelchair. Either way it works great for everyone, with no compromises. Nook Solo is a single person short-use booth, providing privacy and quietness

for video-calling or deep work, but crucially without enclosing people and cutting them off from the vibe of the space, something no one else seems to be doing because of the pre-COVID perceived need for isolating phone booths. We don’t really follow the trends. Life might have been easier if we did!”

And kind of on purpose, and kind of by default, O’Coimin followed that significant instinct he had from the beginning, which has now placed Nook as the leader in ‘third-space’ solutions that deliver on wellbeing.

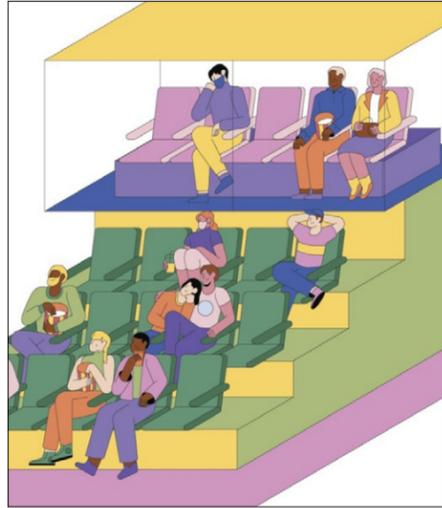
“What started as a safe-space for marginalized people has grown to a system of affordable ingredients to help mid-market businesses put flexibility, wellness, inclusivity and community at the heart of their changing work and learning spaces.”

“It went almost completely quiet during the initial weeks of pandemic shut down. Then it all came back, but it’s coming back differently,” O’Coimin said. “Customers want to know how they can adapt what they have, and what is our advice to them moving forward. We’ve become recognized as a company that always cared about flexibility, health and wellbeing.”

**BoF**

## PACIFIC WEST

## CRY, CRY BABY



LOS ANGELES — To live through the COVID-19 pandemic is to see the surfaces of our cities rewritten by invisible narratives of contagion. “If you take the great architectural inventions of the 20th century: the airport, the high-rise, the freeway — those are the things that are challenged the most right now,” says Brett Steele, dean of UCLA’s School of the Arts and Architecture. “They have great density, or they promise movement at high speeds. Those are exactly the things that sit at the crux of the crisis we are going through.” The solution may involve segmenting larger spaces and segregating the most vulnerable in a separately ventilated environment — the virus version of the glassed-in “cry rooms” contained within some churches and movie theaters.

[Los Angeles Times](#)

## ONE GRAND FOR NEW DIGS

MENLO PARK — If your home office needs a little bit of sprucing up, you might want to see if Google is hiring. Google CEO Sundar Pichai announced in a blog post the tech giant would give “each Googler an

allowance of \$1,000 USD, or the equivalent value in your country, to expense necessary equipment and office furniture,” as the company’s employees largely work from home during the coronavirus pandemic.

[Fox News](#)

## MOUNTAIN WEST

## PROJECTS UNDERWAY IN PHOENIX AREA



TEMPE, Ariz. — In May 2019, a joint venture between Ryan Cos. and University Realty broke ground on 777 Tower at Novus – Building 1, a 169,223 -square-foot office development in Tempe. Wells Fargo Bank provided a \$38.2 million construction loan. Scheduled for completion in the second part of 2020, the six-story building will feature open floorplans with penthouse office space and a central plaza. The upcoming property is part of the planned 330-acre Novus Innovation Corridor. Other projects include an university health sciences center and the Wexford Innovation Center.

[Commercial Property Executive](#)

## MIDWEST

## DEVELOPMENT SPURT UNCERTAIN

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Companies that might otherwise bring jobs to Kansas City are passing us up because the city doesn’t have

enough high-end office space ready on demand. That was the pitch from developers and supporters of the 25-story \$133 million Strata office tower expected to be built at 13th and Main streets in the heart of downtown. It’s the first office tower of its type in nearly 30 years — one built speculatively for multiple tenants rather than one company’s headquarters. Developers expected to start construction this year. But the spread of the coronavirus and its chilling effect on economic growth are slowing things down. “We’re still pushing as hard as we can,” said Jon Copaken, principal at Copaken Brooks. “If you look at the decision-making uncertainty in the environment right now, it’s got to cause some delays no matter how hard we’re working.”

[Kansas City Star](#)

## NORTHEAST

## IBM ON THE OUT

NEW YORK — Tech giant IBM plans to leave its nearly 70,000 square foot WeWork outpost in Union Square, one of the first major companies to drop real estate as the coronavirus pandemic forced employees to work remotely. IBM — which recently announced it would lay off thousands of workers — told Business Insider that ditching the WeWork space had nothing to do with the job cuts or the coronavirus pandemic but was “about making structural changes for IBM’s long-term competitiveness.” The company will still lease space from WeWork in cities like Chicago and London.

[Commercial Observer](#)

## POST-PANDEMIC HOPE IN THE BOROUGH

BROOKLYN, N.Y. — Brooklyn’s office market has been sluggish in recent years, hampered by large, available

spaces, a plump development pipeline and reticence from big space users to make the jump from Manhattan. But as businesses begin to plot their futures, Brooklyn players are banking the borough could reap economic rewards in the immediate aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic. For the owners left standing, their cheaper Class A office space with more big, open areas and less reliance on the subway are emerging as key selling points for the borough.

[Bisnow](#)

## NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT REVEALED



NEW YORK — New York City’s Landmarks Preservation Commission will soon review proposals to renovate and expand a row of historic structures in Manhattan’s Gansevoort Market Historic District, otherwise known as the Meatpacking District. The buildings were originally completed in the 1840s and are rare surviving examples of pitched-roof row houses in Manhattan. Renderings from BSKS Architects illustrate an extensive restoration of the façade to reflect its original red-brick design and gray slated roof. This includes replacement of existing street-level awnings and installation of new aluminum-cased windows.

[New York Yimby](#)

## TICTOK BIGGEST NEW TENANT

NEW YORK — TikTok is coming to Times Square. The parent company for the video-sharing app has inked a lease with the Durst Organization for 232,000 square feet at One Five One, formerly known as Four Times Square. The company will take seven floors at the 48-story building — five at the top and two at the base — leaving the property with about 326,000 vacant square feet. The deal could ease concerns that tech companies will not lease nearly as much office space as they did before the pandemic.

[The Real Deal](#)

## SOUTH

## TWO-BUILDING LEASE

ATLANTA — Hines and Invesco Real Estate announce that Microsoft Corporation is set to occupy the entirety of the two-building, office development, Atlantic Yards. The company will create 1,500 new jobs at the Hines and Invesco Real Estate development, within the Midtown Atlanta market.

[GlobeSt](#)

## FIRM OPEN NEW OFFICE

ROCK HILL, S.C. — A new office tenant has landed in downtown Rock Hill. Labella Associates, an architecture, engineering and planning firm based in Rochester, New York, has signed a lease for new office space at Fountain Park Place, a 48,000-square-foot office building. The new office, which is the firm’s second location in South Carolina after its first in North Charleston, will primarily focus on water and wastewater, solid waste and stormwater engineering services to state and local governments and private clients. The Fountain Park Place

building, which is located at 331 E. Main St., is part of the larger Fountain Park development, a public-private partnership between the city of Rock Hill and Comporium.

[Charlotte Business Journal](#)

## TWO NEW DEVELOPMENTS



VESTAVIA HILLS, Ala. -Two new developments will soon be coming to Cahaba Heights: Parkside at Dolly Ridge and Cahaba Heights Corner. Parkside at Dolly Ridge, a mixed-use office/retail development to include about 6,700 square feet of community retail and office space with ample surface parking. Cahaba Heights Corner should come sometime early next year. The development includes 8,000 to 9,000 square feet of office space and 3,000 square feet of retail.

[Vestavia Voice](#)

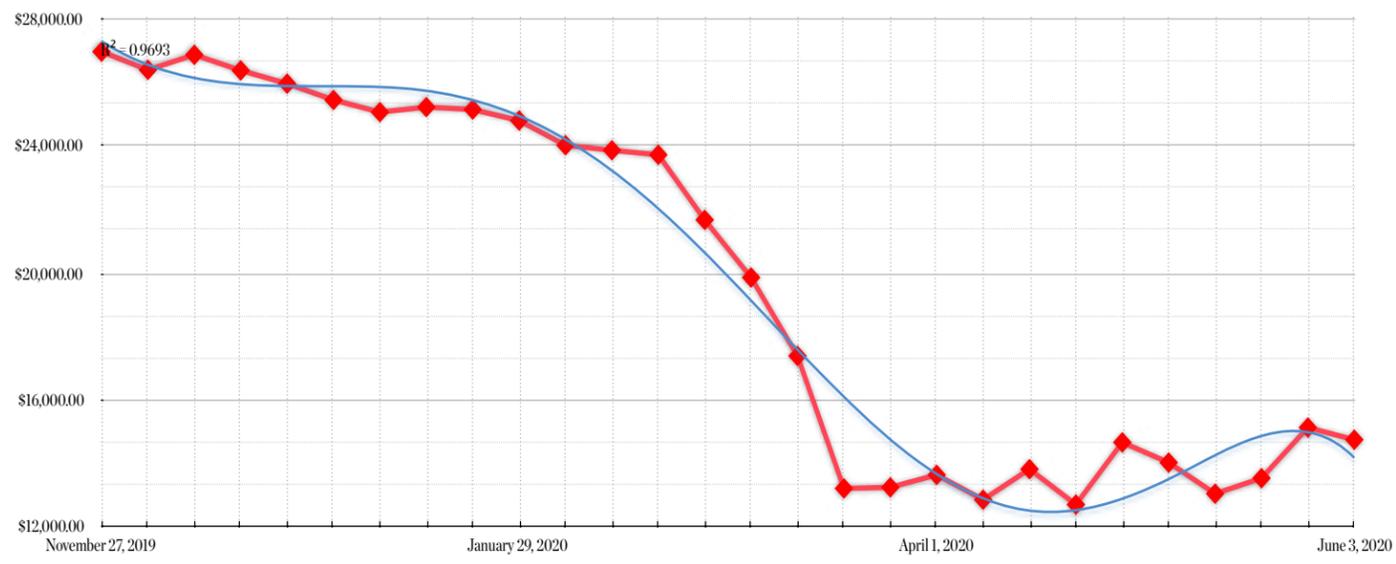
*Compiled by Emily Clingman*

BoF

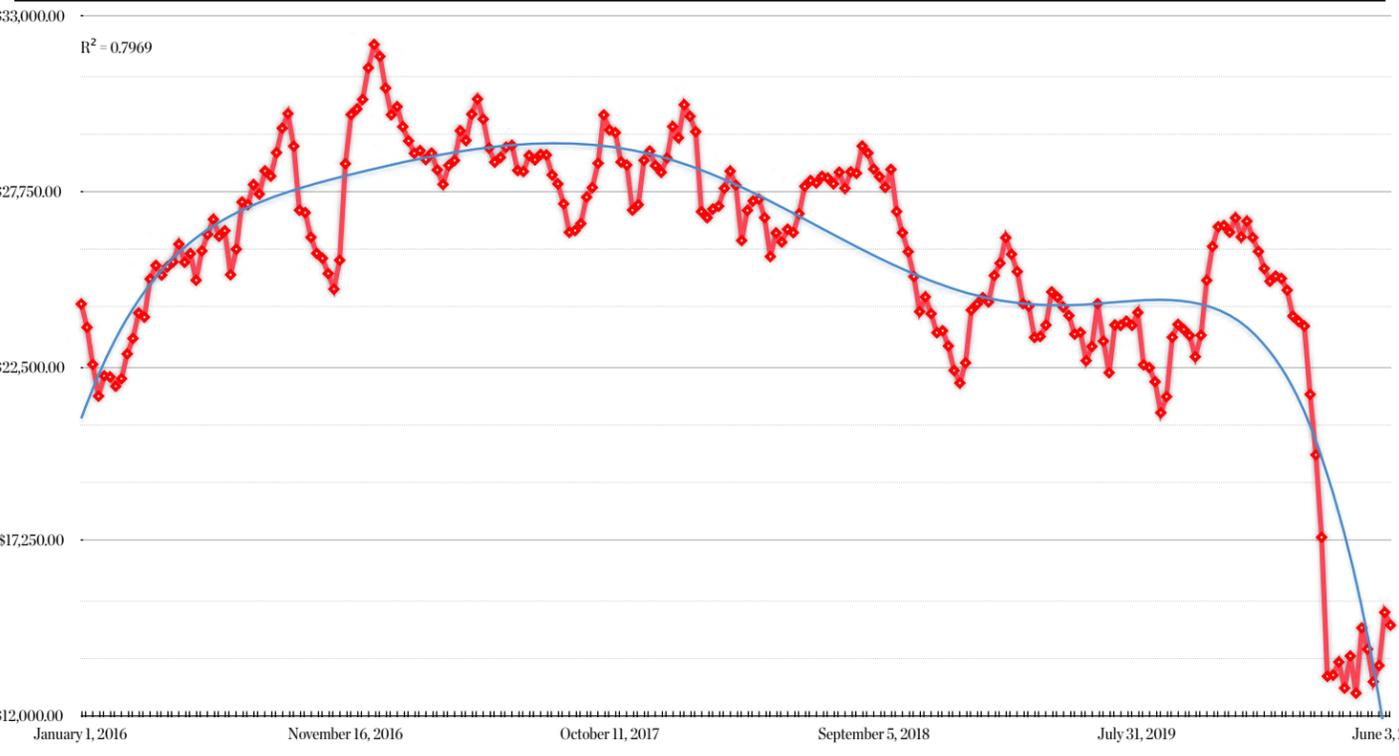
ALL TIME | January 1, 2016 BoF Industry Index Start: \$24,379.54  
 YEAR TO DATE | June 3, 2020 Yearly Start: \$25,443.00 (2019 Ended Up +15.31%)

**CURRENT VALUE** **\$14,741.20** **TOTAL GAIN / LOSS** **-9,638.34 (-39.53%)** **2020 YTD GAIN / LOSS** **-10,701.80 (-42.06%)**

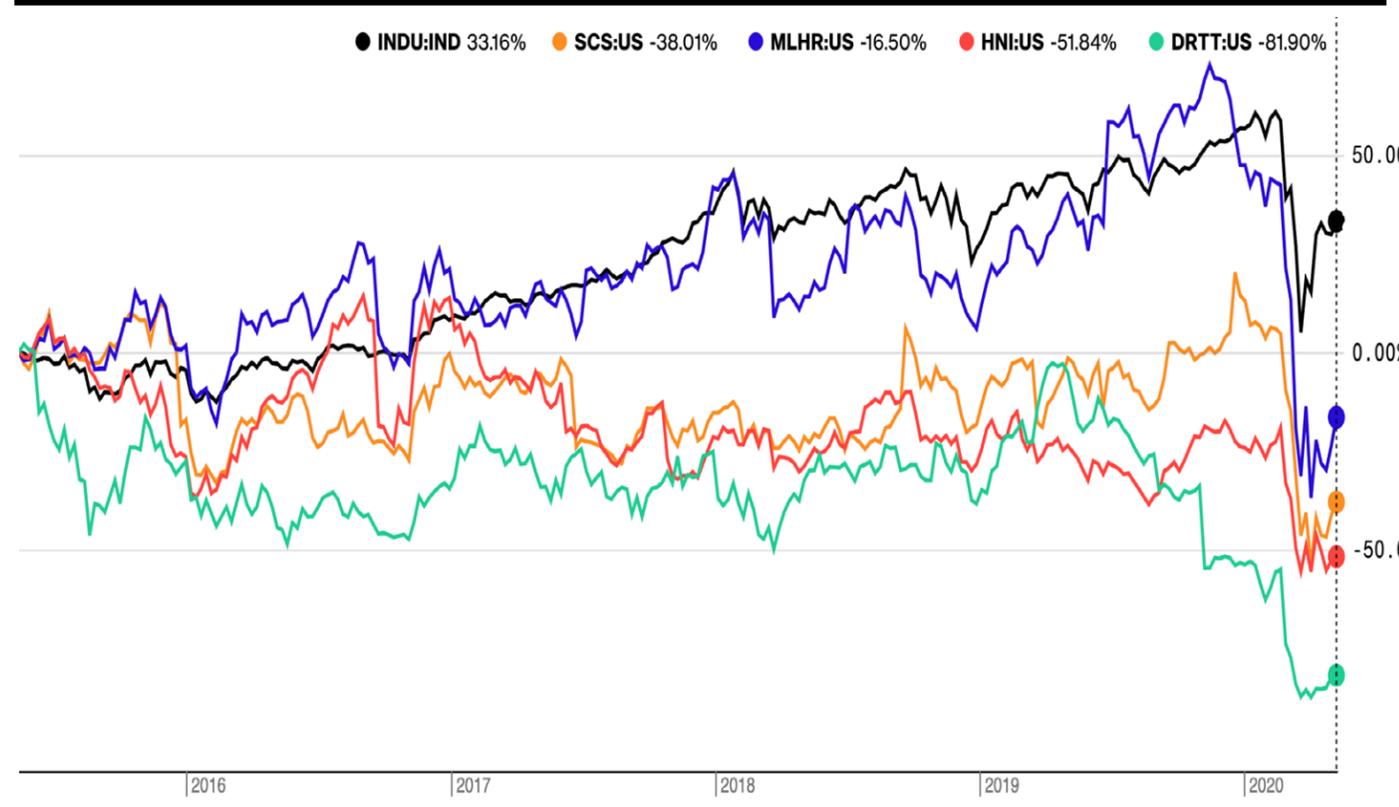
▲ SYMBOL	PRICE ↕	CHANGE ↕	TOTAL GAIN ↕	1D GAIN ↕	OPEN ↕	PREV CLOSE ↕	VOLUME ↕	MARKET CAP ↕	DAY RANGE	52WK RANGE
<b>DRTT:US</b> DIRTT Environm...	1.28 17:20	+1.59% +0.02	-81.56% -566.00	+1.59% +2.00	1.25	1.26	965,534	108.39M	1.25 - 1.32	0.71 - 6.19
<b>FLXS:US</b> Flexsteel Indust...	9.46 17:20	-3.07% -0.30	-78.59% -3,472.00	-3.07% -30.00	9.75	9.76	52,229	75.69M	9.21 - 9.94	7.81 - 21.31
<b>HNI:US</b> HNI Corp	25.63 18:40	+1.26% +0.32	-28.92% -1,043.00	+1.26% +32.00	25.64	25.31	204,727	1.09B	25.37 - 26.16	16.61 - 42.90
<b>INQ:CN</b> Inscape Corp	0.51 00:00	+13.33% +0.06	-83.00% -184.08	+13.33% +4.44	0.51	0.51	38,450	7.33M	0.51 - 0.51	0.35 - 1.70
<b>KBAL:US</b> Kimball Internati...	11.32 17:20	+0.98% +0.11	+15.86% +155.00	+0.98% +11.00	11.33	11.21	225,582	416.97M	11.13 - 11.50	8.19 - 22.40
<b>KEQU:US</b> Kewaunee Scie...	9.10 17:20	-4.21% -0.40	-48.85% -869.00	-4.21% -40.00	9.55	9.50	1,630	25.03M	9.08 - 9.55	6.96 - 22.53
<b>KNL:US</b> Knoll Inc	10.97 18:40	+2.24% +0.24	-41.65% -783.00	+2.24% +24.00	10.90	10.73	287,537	555.60M	10.80 - 11.20	7.74 - 28.30
<b>LEG:US</b> Leggett & Platt L...	32.39 18:40	+1.89% +0.60	-22.92% -963.00	+1.89% +60.00	31.81	31.79	1,340,501	4.28B	31.81 - 32.66	22.03 - 55.42
<b>MLHR:US</b> Herman Miller Inc	23.75 17:20	+2.41% +0.56	-17.25% -495.00	+2.41% +56.00	23.73	23.19	543,504	1.40B	23.36 - 24.30	14.39 - 49.87
<b>SCS:US</b> Steelcase Inc	11.75 18:40	+1.29% +0.15	-21.14% -315.00	+1.29% +15.00	11.75	11.60	1,416,611	1.35B	11.64 - 12.01	7.02 - 23.02
<b>TILE:US</b> Interface Inc	8.59 17:20	+1.30% +0.11	-55.12% -1,055.00	+1.30% +11.00	8.38	8.48	536,415	502.32M	8.38 - 8.82	5.06 - 17.68
<b>VIRC:US</b> Virco Mfg. Corp	2.80 17:20	+8.75% +0.23	-16.07% -53.50	+8.75% +22.50	2.25	2.57	26,153	43.92M	2.25 - 3.00	1.82 - 5.00



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Five Years - Major Industry Stocks



# What to Put on LinkedIn When You Are Unemployed



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 was furloughed from my job a month ago, and this week my company announced significant cuts. For some of us, those furloughs turned into terminations. I was the last hired in my division in Chicago, and so I was let go first. Of course, I want to find a new job as soon as possible. Other people I know who lost their jobs are already interviewing. Here is my question:

What do I put on my LinkedIn?

I received a pretty generous severance, so in my head, I feel like I am still working for my employer until the severance is up.

Legally I know I am not working there because I am already collecting unemployment. Part of me hates

the idea of announcing to my network and the world that I lost my job. I am always concerned about what people will think. Do I have to change the status on LinkedIn?

Out of work With Too Much Pride

# Make it clear you're hunting, and I promise you will have a new job before you know it.

Dear Pride,

When you're unemployed, updating your LinkedIn profile can get complicated in a hurry. But only if you let it. Remember, the purpose of updating your profile is to attract prospective employers. Choosing the wrong content could drive hiring managers away instead of attracting them. Or if they think you are happily employed, you may not be the first person they contact for an interview. A lot of who is even contacted about an opening is controlled by AI (artificial intelligence). So I think everyone should know you are unemployed.

Did you say you are worried about what people think? Are you kidding me? If there is ever a time not to worry about judging you for being

out of work, it is now.

My career advice for finding a new job is to make it evident on your LinkedIn profile that you are unemployed so that prospective employers contact you. That is also the fastest way to get the word out to your peers in case they have any ideas for you.

Remember it's so easy to update social media today. You cannot tell anyone: "Oh, it happened so fast. I have not had a chance to update my LinkedIn profile yet". They will not believe you, think you are a dinosaur or worse dishonest. Really, not a chance to update? What have you been doing?

It's essential to be honest because it's easy for potential employers to check your

background when considering you for an interview or employment. Prospective employers usually do this way before they tell you. And guess what? Being unemployed rarely has any impact on what they will offer financially, which is sometimes what the candidate thinks. (I know you were thinking that!).

So get out there fast and let people know you are looking! You are competing with a lot of other people right now. I think you want everyone to know you are looking sooner than later to get the interview sooner than later. Make it clear you're hunting, and I promise you will have a new job before you know it.

Stephen

# HOPE: Another Meaning to One of the Most Overused Words in the World

**When I did a Google search on the word “hope,” I got 2.7 billion hits in 0.64 seconds. I’d say that’s an indication it’s a popular word and likely one of the most overused in the world today. The dictionary defines hope (a noun) as a “feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen” — especially focused on good things. We all need hope, and we all need good things to happen in our lives.**

One of my favorite quotes is by Christopher Reeve, who said, “Once you choose hope, anything’s possible,” and it’s so true. Hope is a feeling, an emotion, momentum that changes our mindset and helps keep us focused in the right direction. And as Reeve said — once we choose it, anything is possible.

But in the current situation it can be hard to have hope, especially if you are one of the many people still in quarantine, still adjusting to life during a pandemic or have recently lost your job. So, here’s a new perspective and meaning to the word hope to help you see how it can not only benefit you, but benefit others.



Have a suggestion for the column? Please email Sid at [sid.meadows@embark-cct.com](mailto:sid.meadows@embark-cct.com)

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

Let’s change ‘hope’ to H.O.P.E and shift the focus to “help one person everyday.” Yes, I made it an acronym — so all of your furniture peeps should love it and remember it, just add it to your ever-growing list of acronyms.

Think about the brevity of that implication for just a minute. Who can you provide hope to today by helping one person? We all have a lot we can give, and there are so many ways we can help each other — we just need to do it, without thinking about it and without asking for anything in return.

Over the past 60 days, I’ve helped dozens of people by providing more than 80 hours of free coaching — without asking for anything: no pitch, no offer, no nothing, just helping them through their current situation. I built an entire new webpage to help people who are looking for

a new career and removed all of the gateways. All the info is out there, and it’s free, no email address required.

On a more personal level, I answered a late night call from a friend who wanted me to review her resume before she submitted it for a job she was really interested in. I connected a customer with a colleague that led to them working together and doing some really cool stuff — and this morning, before I started writing this column, I did some quick research and sent it to a complete stranger who reached out to me for help.

I’m sure you might be thinking, “Well, good for you, and stop bragging.” The thing is, I’m not sharing this to brag — I’m sharing it to show you what’s possible. I’m using my experience, skills, talents and gifts to the best of my ability. What do you have that you can share with others that will help them? What impact can you make? Remember, it takes one small action to create a ripple effect.

Recently, I’ve noticed this trend going around LinkedIn. People are copying and pasting this message:

“If you’ve recently been laid off, and we’ve worked together in the past, please get in touch and let me know how I can help you. Can I put you in touch with a contact at an agency or com-

pany? Can I write a LinkedIn recommendation for you? Do you want me to send someone an email to put in a good word? Please let me know if there’s anything I can do! Note: I saw a colleague post this and want to multiply this energy.”

While I like the intent of this message — to help people — I don’t like how it’s being used, as a broadcast post, that really only makes the person posting the message feel good about themselves. “Hey, look what I did, I copied and pasted something to show how I’m supporting others.” However, if you posted this, I’ll give you credit for at least trying — but if you really want to help someone that has been displaced and looking for work, reach out to them directly.

LinkedIn has this really cool feature, called “messaging” — use it. It’s much more effective, and if you really want to help, it will be easy for you. Engage in a conversation, connect with others, see how you might really be able to help them — you never know, they just might be able to help you, too. It all starts with a conversation.

Think about it for a minute — what would the world look like if every day, everyone of us helped one person. If this really happened, there would be a lot less stress, anxiety and depression — and there would be a

lot more kindness, happiness and joy. Who wouldn’t want to thrive in that world?

Let’s start spreading more hope in the world by providing H.O.P.E to those that need it the most. The next time someone reaches out and asks for help — help them. Use your gifts to make a positive impact in someone’s life — they’re asking for a reason, and you’ll never know what you can do for them until you engage in the conversation. And remember, it’s our obligation and responsibility to talk about what we do so that people who need our help can find us. Every day you don’t talk about it and share what you do is another day the right people can’t find you.

And I’ll continue my support by saying — if I can help you, please contact me! My email address is [sid.meadows@embark-cct.com](mailto:sid.meadows@embark-cct.com).

I’d like to give a big shout out to Jasmine Star for the inspiration to write this week’s column, which came from her podcast, the Jasmine Star Show and an episode that was an interview with Jen Gottlieb. Keep doing great things Jasmine, you’re making an impact!

*Be sure to join the conversation, share your thoughts and visit my blogs at [www.sidmeadows.com](http://www.sidmeadows.com), and let’s keep this conversation going.*

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

[www.efemy](http://www.efemy)

COLOGNE, GERMANY

Orgatec 2020

October 27-31, 2020



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

[www.orgatec.com](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 51st 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
<p><b>NEOCON</b>                      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 51st 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.  <a href="http://www.neocon.com">http://www.neocon.com</a></p>	<p>June 8-10, 2020                      Chicago</p>
<p><b>CHINA INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE FAIR, CIFF (PHASE TWO) (NEW DATE)</b>                      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. Without a doubt, excitement and innovation are the key words of the next edition of CIFF Guangzhou which is completely reinvented.  <a href="http://www.ciff.furniture">http://www.ciff.furniture</a></p>	<p>July 27-30, 2020                      Guangzhou, China</p>
<p><b>EXPORT FURNITURE EXHIBITION (NEW DATE)</b>                      Export Furniture Exhibition (EFE) is internationally known to global buyers from all over the world as one of the top furniture fairs in Southeast Asia and the fair continues to attract more and more trade visitors annually. The exhibition is the signature event of the Malaysian Furniture Council (MFC) and organized by EFE Expo Sdn Bhd., a wholly-owned company of MFC.  <a href="http://www.efemy/">http://www.efemy/</a></p>	<p>Aug 27-29 2020                      Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia</p>
<p><b>DOMOTEX ASIA (NEW DATE)</b>                      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.  <a href="http://www.domotexasiachinafloor.com">http://www.domotexasiachinafloor.com</a></p>	<p>Aug 31 - Sept 2, 2020                      Shanghai, China</p>
<p><b>ORGATEC 2020</b>                      ORGATEC is a trade show that is dedicated to innovations and concepts in the working environment and work culture. ORGATEC will gather professionals from various fields that will explore the newest trends and novelties in the industry.  <a href="http://www.orgatec.com">http://www.orgatec.com</a></p>	<p>October 27-31, 2020                      Cologne, Germany</p>
<p><b>INDEAL LEADERSHIP EVOLUTION</b>                      INDEAL’s 2020 Conference provides program members with an opportunity to gain critical knowledge focused on supporting business growth and profitability. This year’s event offers perspective on developing teams that thrive, along with valuable insight into the state of the commercial furniture industry, economy and program at large. A varied agenda and numerous prospects for networking combine the benefit of multiple experiences into one, streamlined event.                      Event website coming soon</p>	<p>November 8-11, 2020                      San Diego</p>
<p><b>CLERKENWELL DESIGN WEEK</b>                      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.  <a href="http://www.clerkenwelldesignweek.com">http://www.clerkenwelldesignweek.com</a></p>	<p>May 25-27, 2021                      London</p>
<p><b>NEOCON</b>                      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 51st 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.  <a href="http://www.neocon.com">http://www.neocon.com</a></p>	<p>June 14-16, 2021                      Chicago</p>

**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.



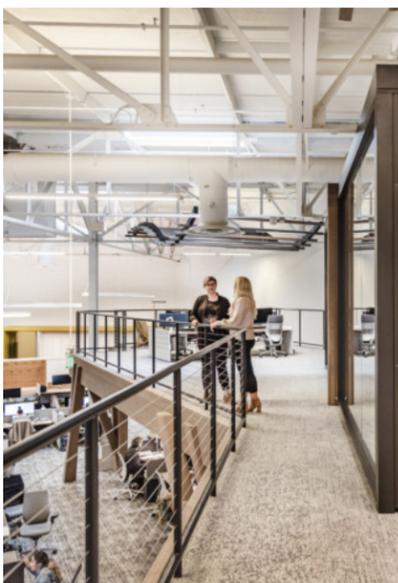
### One Workplace Offices – Santa Clara

One Workplace created a greater sense of shared workspace for their offices located in Santa Clara, California.

In 2017, One Workplace was faced with the need to expand. While this fast-growing company was adding staff, the way their employees were working had also changed. Adding real estate was one option, but reconsidering the way they used their existing space was an essential first step.

One Workplace began by building a new way for employees to work that relied on greater use of shared workspaces supported by a variety of flexible settings. This provided a richer work experience and a sense of autonomy – the ability to choose when and how people used these work settings.

[READ MORE](#)



Photography: courtesy of One Workplace

**FIRM:** One Workplace  
**CLIENT:** One Workplace  
 35,000 sqft  
**SCOPE:** Office  
**LOCATION:** Santa Clara, CA  
**INDUSTRY:** Office Furniture Dealer



## Workplaces | June 2020

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

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



INSIGHTS

## Designer Outlines How Hospitality, Social Spaces will Change post-COVID During Haworth Webinar

ROTTET SAID SOCIAL SPACES MAY JUST BE THE DESIGN THAT IS NEEDED TO KEEP WORKERS AT A SAFE DISTANCE FROM EACH OTHER WHILE FOSTERING A COMFORTING, RESIDENTIAL FEEL MANY WILL CRAVE IN THE CRAZY NEW WORLD OF WORK.

by Rob Kirkbride

**For years**, architects and designers have promoted social spaces as a way for workers, hotel guests and others to connect with others. So in the time of COVID-19 these spaces are dead, right? Not so fast, said Lauren Rottet, an award-winning designer who spoke last week during a virtual presentation called Haworth Connect.

Rottet, whose firm Rottet Studio has designed everything from Target's headquarters to Bill Gates's office and countless hotels around the world, said social spaces may just be the design that is needed to keep workers at a safe distance from each other while fostering a comforting, residential feel many will crave in the crazy new world of work.

"They are fun, they are open," she said while showing off spaces her firm has designed in recent years — almost all prior to the coronavirus crisis. "Most of these spaces are not crowded. They are about space and seeing others, but not people crammed into each other."

Still, there are many hurdles to clear before offices are as safe as they can be. The spread of the virus can be mitigated by creating more space between workers, putting up barriers and installing cleaning and sanitation stations — relatively easily solved by design. Rottet pointed to two serious challenges facing offices going forward, neither of which can be solved through traditional design: air quality and elevators.

Air quality has to improve in offices, she said. LEED and Wellness standards have tried to integrate fresh air into their approach. It won't be an easy fix, but Rottet said it might lead to more work outdoors or a hybrid approach of indoor and outdoor workspaces that are connected.

An "authentic" approach is needed for the new environments, whether work, hospitality or travel, she said. This approach includes three things: Spaces should appear clean and safe; spaces need to be clean and safe; and spaces need to function clean and safe. The final point is the most difficult because design will need to be used to control human behavior.

Hotels will change as well. Rottet expects to see sealed rooms that aren't entered after they are sanitized. She also believes rooms might have personal sanitation products guests can use to clean rooms themselves and not have cleaning staff re-enter rooms during the stay.

For offices, there is some good news, she said. Social spaces are safer than crowded conference rooms. Social spaces are designed so people don't have to sit right next to each other, and they can help workers relax and think. When designed well, social spaces give workers more. "They give your body the six feet instead of your desk six feet," she said.

Is the virus going to reduce the office environment? Rottet said she doesn't know, but expects office workers to be more spread out and more use of outdoor space and integration of the surrounding landscape. She sees "cleansing thresholds" at offices and clean desk policies to allow for better cleaning.

From an aesthetic standpoint, Rottet expects the "Brooklyn" industrial look to make way for the cleaner, lighter and brighter contemporary look. Colors like green, white and blue — what she called clean colors — will make a resurgence. She also expects offices will be more visually connected to the outdoors.

"So what will the next decade of socialization look like? It is a confusing scenario for sure," she said. "Just when the world had embraced the togetherness trend we are told to quarantine and steer clear of one another."

Still, the need for humans to gather will never change.

Rottet knows what she is talking about. She is one of the most celebrated interior architects in the world with an extraordinary record of awards, publications, lectures, juries and honors. She is the only woman in history to be elevated to Fellow status by both the American Institute of Architects and International Interior Design Association, and she has designed more than 60 million square feet of space around the world. **BoF**

## SCREENS

## Frövi Releases Picket and Protect

It is now vital that the workplace is adapted to ensure employees can maintain social distancing guidelines and limit the risk of airborne germs being transferred between colleagues.

Whether dividing individual desk space or an entire office area, Frövi's range of protective screen solutions are designed to help keep employees safe, healthy and improve well-being in the modern workplace environment.



Picket Safe Felt Screens are designed with hygiene in mind. Their unique anti-microbial properties inhibit the growth and spread of bacteria and viruses. The picket shape is designed to allow maximum flexibility, enabling it to be fitted to all work surfaces. The grooves enable an easy fit around corners and provide cut lines to trim screens to suit. The scalloped edge detail not only adds a warm and playful visual but also allows for cable management.

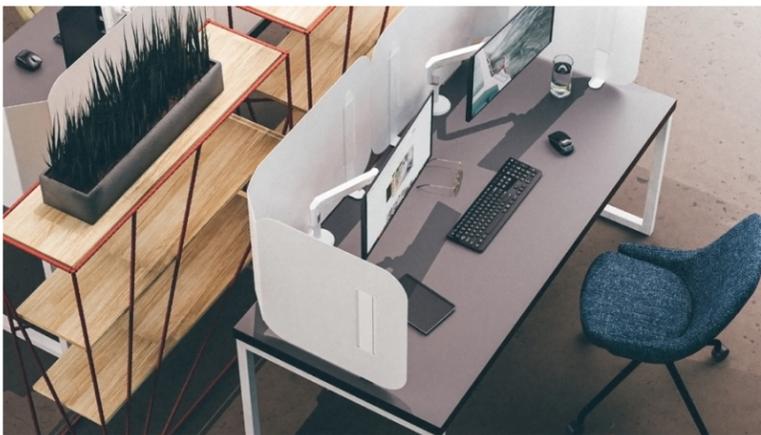
Protect Screen is a flexible, lightweight and easy to install screen, providing a universal solution to your workplace safety. It is made with a durable, easy-to-clean plastic material which is also recyclable when it

comes to the end of its use, making Protect the perfect temporary solution. Frövi designers have challenged themselves to create a cost effective and incredibly versatile product that responds to the new need for workplace safety.

Whether dividing individual desk space or an entire office area, our range of protective screen solutions are designed to help keep employees safe, healthy and improve wellbeing in the modern workplace environment.

Picket Safe Felt Screens are designed with hygiene in mind – their unique anti-microbial properties inhibits the growth and spread of bacteria and viruses. The picket shape is designed to allow maximum flexibility, enabling it to be fitted to all work surfaces. The grooves enable an easy-fit around corners and provide you with cut lines to trim your screen to suit. The scalloped edge detail not only adds a warm and playful visual but also allows for cable management.

Protect Screen is a flexible, lightweight and easy to install screen, providing a universal solution to your workplace safety. Protect Screen is made with a durable easy-to-clean plastic material which is also recyclable when it comes to the end of its use; making Protect the perfect temporary solution. Our designers have challenged themselves to create a cost effective and incredibly versatile product that responds to the new need for workplace safety.



## SCREENS

## A New Privacy Panel Collection by BuzziSpace that Provides Optimal Concentration and Safety at Home and Office

Improving concentration and promoting physical distance are easy with the BuzziTripl privacy panel collection.



BuzziTripl Desk and BuzziTriple Wrap Desk were developed with tabletop applications in mind. BuzziTripl Desk shields against noise and visual disruptions, while BuzziTriple Wrap Desk has the added benefit of being able to convert a regular desk into a more private and cocooning space. Both versions offer separation and distance from people to ensure a healthier communal work environment and to mitigate safety concerns in today's social climate.

BuzziTripl Home's side panels can be folded in for easy rearrangement and storage, perfect for compact homes and families where working and living happen simultaneously. The lightweight solution is available in low and high versions. BuzziTripl Home Low creates an intimate environment where concentration and comfort are desired while kids and others are around. BuzziTripl Home High serves double duty as a screen to eliminate visual clutter that may appear in the background during professional video meetings as well as a room partition or a playroom for the kids, while you are working.

The collection uses three layers of BuzziFelt, a BuzziSpace proprietary material made of recycled PET, to capture and reduce sound. Offered in wedged and round corners, the panels are available in a variety of monochrome or bi-color options. The tackable surface adds a layer of personalization and convenience to accommodate notes, photos, grocery lists and more.

## SEATING

## Resonate - a Design Collaboration Between Gensler NY and Haworth

Resonate is a collection of contemporary, modular lounge furnishings and chairs from Haworth that support the in-between time when ideas form. Based on a uniform platform structure and formed wire base, each piece plays a complementary role in creating and defining group lounge neighborhoods adjacent to work areas.



A design collaboration between Gensler New York and Haworth Design Studio, Resonate offers a light-scale modern aesthetic that brings a workplace to life. It's visual lightness relates harmoniously to today's interior landscape. Variety of scale and materiality with a curated palette of finishes and color enable unique combinations.

A variety of configurations encourages employees to choose a workspace that suits them best, in a group or solo, for

time to focus, collaborate, interact and socialize. Neighborhood spaces are defined using five elements, all within the same square dimensions and height:

Environmental standards include recycled content and no chemicals from Haworth's list of banned chemicals. The collection meets BIFMA standards with anticipated BIFMA level and GREENGUARD Gold certification.

## TABLES

## Introducing Brace, Latest Solid Wood Collection from Davis

The Brace table collection from Davis blends the technological precision of modern design with a celebration of wood's unique, natural characteristics. Brace's architectural legs, constructed from either bent solid wood or angled solid steel, form a minimalist base. The slender base design is a



triumph of physics, using geometric properties to support the thick solid wood top. Each leg unites at the floor and then splits into a fork which connects to the underside of the table. Brace's name was inspired by this detail.

Ranging in size and shape from small meeting to large conference, this table collection asserts itself as an anchoring visual in any interior from contract to residential. By combining the stylistic comforts of home with commercial

durability and versatility, these tables adapt to their surroundings through a mastery of angle and proportion.

## SEATING

## Arper Launches New Collections Adell and Aston Club

With a shell made from 80% recycled polypropylene, Adell's calming form has been designed with sustainability at its foundation, putting both body and mind at ease.



The link between the polypropylene shell and nature is strong. This is due not only to its organic shape and the use of recycled and recyclable material, but also to the special texture on the surface. Its concentric pattern draws inspiration from tree rings and shell stripes and is present on the entire external and internal surface. It is made of more than 500 hand-designed lines characterized by an aleatory and irregular progression. The result is a shell with a unique material appearance.

Adell's shell can be disassembled for responsible disposal. All materials used can be recycled or upcycled and incorporated into the life cycle of other products, thereby reducing overall waste. The paints used incorporate environmental protections. Adell is made without glue to eliminate emissions and ensure all component parts can be recycled or repurposed. Adell's wood base version is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.

Adell has been created with adaptability in mind. Designed for use in spaces of repose, Adell can be customized to suit myriad contexts, from lounge areas to waiting rooms, educational common areas, hospitality spaces or residential settings. To accommodate a variety of contexts, Adell is available in a recycled textured plastic finish only, fully upholstered, in plastic with upholstered seat cushion or in plastic with a removable cushion or full cover, for indoor and outdoor use. Base options include metal or wooden leg configurations or sled base in metal.

Aston Club's strong and classical lines convey an enduring allure. Its internal parts are made from post-industrial recycled plastic. It can be entirely disassembled and all materials can be recycled or upcycled and incorporated into the life cycle of other products, reducing overall waste.



Aston Club is produced without any glue to reduce emissions and allow for the responsible disposal of all component parts. Aston Club uses a powder-based coat that is free of VOC emissions.

The internal components of the Aston Club lounge chair are made from recycled plastic from industrial waste and without the use of glue. With its clean lines and softly supportive structure, each component piece has been carefully crafted to provide both visual and physical comfort — be it in office, hospitality or residential contexts. A matching footrest is available. Each Aston Club chair and footrest can be customized with myriad upholstery options — from classic fibers to contemporary patterns — and all pieces are recyclable. The base is finished in polished or painted aluminum.

Remember to include us on your company PR distribution list. **Send To:** news@bellow.press  
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## ASSOCIATIONS

## Announcing BIFMA Learning and Attributes of Contract Furniture

➤ BIFMA Learning, a new portal for training and education, has been launched by BIFMA. Initially, the portal will serve as a training platform for BIFMA faculty. These individuals are authorized to deliver the association's CEU-accredited courses in-person or via webinar. Any associate from a member company may participate. For information on how to become approved, contact BIFMA.

Three courses are currently being offered, all of which meet the highest standards for CEUs by the accrediting bodies of IDCEC, AIA and GBCI. "We are happy to share our expertise by providing high value continuing education that meets health, safety and welfare requirements for interior designers and architects," said Jennifer Wammack, director of outreach for BIFMA.

BIFMA Learning launched with the addition of a new Attributes of Contract Furniture course. This CEU explains eight of the key attributes that drive furniture decisions in the commercial built environment. In this era of increased numbers working from home, the attributes of aesthetics, quality, craftsmanship, safety, performance, health and wellness, sustainability and verification are every bit as important for employees working remotely. The course provides the tools necessary for making balanced and appropriate choices with user safety at the core.

BIFMA is committed to educating the marketplace about the importance of furniture safety for all those who influence purchasing decisions. In the near future, BIFMA Learning will expand to provide on-demand content for those seeking to fulfill continuing education requirements in interior design (IDCEC), architecture (AIA), and green building (LEED AP and WELL AP).

## TEXTILES

## Luum Textiles' Tilt Shift Wins Green Good Design Award

➤ Luum Textiles' Tilt Shift has been recognized by the Green Good Design competition.



"Luum creates products combining age old weaving techniques with new technologies," said Dave White, vice president of Luum Textiles. "Our designs are intended to promote a healthier and more sustainable planet."

Suzanne Tick, Luum Textiles creative director, said, "When creating collections for Luum, I always look to nature for inspiration and am always searching for more innovative manufacturing solutions that elevate our products both at the fiber level but also within the context of their overall environmental impact. Tilt Shift uses

post-industrial and post-consumer cotton from apparel waste, showcasing how discarded products can have a second life and create a beautiful and rich new textile."

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Suzanne Tron

Tilt Shift is part of the Future Tense Collection which highlights the company's progressive approach to textile design and an emphasis on super scale and the duality of materials. Its linear design and use of recycled matter encourages users to shift values toward sustainability.

Using post-industrial and post-consumer cotton from apparel waste, the pieces are sorted by color, shredded and spun into yarn. This new approach toward sustainability is at an industrial scale. Isometric language and forced perspective of architectural drawings inspired the parallax pattern that engages the viewer and prompts them to adopt new ways of thinking. The color palette combines neutrals with unexpected accents of bold bright colors. This juxtaposition of color signifies the contrast of artificial and natural components found within the fabric.

The Green Good Design Awards are sponsored by The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design and The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies.

## MANUFACTURER

## Nook Pod Announces Finalists for Design Competition and Asks for Vote for Winner

➤ A number of weeks ago the design community was challenged to create an aesthetically pleasing Nook equipped with an additional "super power," and the five finalists have been selected. A popular vote of their peers will determine the winner.

The winning design will be built full size, acknowledging the genius of the designer and showing

their inspiration and methodology. Once built, the Nook will be showcased at trade shows across North America when circumstances allow, and then donated to a mental health charity.

The design community can look at the finalist's entries at [nookpod.com/design-competition](http://nookpod.com/design-competition). The winning design will be announced at a virtual event as part of NeoConnect on June 8. Voting closes Friday.

Organizers were “blown away by the creativity, talent and attention to detail shown in each and every entry,” according to a press release. The detail — including the designer's inspiration and methodology — is described as “insane.”

Finalists, in no particular order, are: Morph designers: Mariana Serratos, Joy Perez-Tsai, Paige Parrish/Ware Malcomb | 4D designer: Celeste Martinez/Fielding International | Bio Phil designer: Autumn Tiller/Staples || Teleportation designers: Mariana Serratos, Joy Perex-Tsai, Page Parrish/Ware Malcomb | Relax designers: Sheri Crawford, David Rivers/xdesign & Green River.

#### SUPPLIER

## LOGICDATA Readies Plans to Unveil Office Experience June 8

➔ As a global provider of motion-based products and solutions for the office furniture industry, LOGICDATA prides itself on a long track record of remaining nimble in an ever-changing marketplace. So when NeoCon 2020 was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, instead of shelving plans to connect with customers, LOGICDATA made a swift pivot to provide its trade show experience in a virtual format.



On Monday, June 8, — the original opening day of NeoCon 2020 — LOGICDATA will release its “virtual office experience,” providing an easy, intuitive format for anyone in the office furniture industry to access. A link will lead visitors to an interactive, virtual “living” office space equipped with LOGICDATA components as part of the adjustable furniture layout experience. A live link will be provided June 8.

“Trade shows like Neocon remain an important way for companies to connect on a personal level, and we look forward to the time when those forums are once again offered,” said Johannes Gradwohl, CEO of LOGICDATA. “At the same time, we are in the innovation business and know that our customers are relying on us to find alternative ways to keep in touch, such as our virtual office experience.”

#### MANUFACTURER

## Studio TK's Freehand Receives Green Good Design Award

➔ Studio TK has announced the Freehand occasional tables collection earned a 2020 Green Good Design Award. “Sustainability has always been at the core of Studio TK's mission,” said Charlie Bell, Studio TK president. “Being recognized for our hard work on an international platform is an honor, and displays how our dedication to both design excellence and a more sustain-



able future is making a difference across not only our industry, but globally.”

Freehand is a multi-purpose occasional table system designed for commercial interiors of any kind, including lobbies, offices and retail settings. Its adaptable nature and variety of shape and size options allow for the collection to fit any space, serving as a side table or coffee table depending on the layout of the area it occupies.

Composed of an aluminum base, Freehand is assembled through a series of clips and removable tops. Consequently, at the end of the product's life, the aluminum parts can be easily recycled over and over again in a true closed loop.

Freehand's wide range of potential finish combinations yields a product that allows ample expression in commercial interiors, whether specifiers wish to match the top and the sides to fit a consistent brand-centric design scheme, or mix and match to create compelling contrast.

The annual international awards program is jointly sponsored by The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design, and The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies.

#### ASSOCIATIONS

## IIDA to Inaugurate Sascha Wagner as 2020-2021 International Board President and Additional New Board Members

➔ The International Interior Design Association (IIDA) has announced Sascha Wagner is the 2020-2021 president of the IIDA International Board of Directors. Angie Lee has been elected the 2020-2021 president-elect. Also elected to the International Board for new terms as vice presidents are George Bandy, Gabrielle Bullock, Diana Farmer-Gonzalez, Fiona Grandowski, Jon Otis and Amy Storek.

“Sascha has long been instrumental in the development and leadership of IIDA,” said Cheryl S. Durst, IIDA executive vice president and CEO. “In his previous role as the president-elect, he demonstrated strong community engagement, advocacy of the design profession and significant industry guidance. We are excited to welcome him and Angie as the new leaders of IIDA for this coming term.”

All board members will be inaugurated on May 27.

This year's new members will join returning members of the International Board: Susana Covarrubias, (immediate past president, 2020-2021), studio director and design principal, Gensler, IIDA Northern Pacific Chapter; Erika Moody, (vice president, 2019-2020), principal and shareholder, Helix Architecture + Design, IIDA Mid-America Chapter; and Ronnie Belizaire, (vice president, 2019-2021); corporate real estate manager, Daimler, IIDA Michigan Chapter.

#### MANUFACTURER

## Kimball Welcomes New Partner Ritz

➔ Kimball has announced the addition of Ritz as its newest partner in the New England territory in support of its network in the commercial, health care and education vertical markets for Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont.

Founded in 1990, Ritz is a leading contract furniture rep group in New England. With a network of 10 associates, Ritz provides services throughout the region and supports furniture dealers, architects, designers and end users with ideas and solutions from early schematic design through project delivery.

The Ritz Group services clients at its showroom at 112 Beach St. and its Kimball branded showroom at 70 Federal St. in Boston.

## REPRESENTATION

## Scandinavian Spaces Hires Local Representative to Cover Houston and Louisiana

➔ New sales representation has been announced for Scandinavian Spaces. The curated line will be represented by FABS. “We are very pleased to be partnering with FABS,” said co-owner Thomas Jonsson. “We have been able to attract excellent independent representatives and can now proudly say that we have local representation in Houston and Louisiana.”

Rooted in Nordic design, Scandinavian Spaces is quickly expanding across the North American market.

## ASSOCIATIONS

## ASID CEO Randy Fiser Will Step Down to Pursue a New Opportunity

➔ The American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) has announced Randy Fiser is stepping down as chief executive officer at the end of July.

Fiser has accepted a new position as CEO and executive director of the American Geophysical Union he will begin Aug. 17.

“For eight years, Randy has provided invaluable leadership, passion, vision and service to our community,” said Jennifer Kolstad, ASID board of directors chair. “He understood and championed the ability of interior design to impact not only the beauty around us but also our health, wellness and well-being. His recent efforts have further strengthened ASID’s position as the global leader on interior environments. We will miss his contributions to our network.”

Fiser will leave ASID after working collaboratively with its national board to complete a new multi-year strategic plan for the association. During his tenure, Fiser advanced the importance of evidence-based interior design through more than \$1 million in ASID Foundation-sponsored research. He conceived and oversaw construction of ASID’s new headquarters, which became the first dual LEED and WELL platinum-certified space in the world. He partnered with unexpected organizations — among them the Clinton Global Initiative, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and AARP — to enhance ASID’s impact and the public’s appreciation of the effects of interior design on health, business and education outcomes. He also diversified ASID’s business model to generate revenue from innovative programs, events and content, along with membership dues.

“I’m proud of our work during my time at ASID to demonstrate design’s power to improve people’s lives through attention to the places we live, work, learn, heal and play,” Fiser said. “I look forward to continuing my efforts to improve lives by serving an association that applies science to

societal challenges affecting people, planet and universe.”

The ASID board will appoint an interim CEO and begin the search for a permanent CEO.

## CAREERS

## Custom Crafters adds Chicago Industry Leader to Team

➔ Kris Imala, a leader in the Chicago commercial interiors industry, is joining the Custom Crafters’ team as director of sales.



Imala

“Kris has an incredible reputation and track record with architects, general contractors, designers and dealers,” said Paul Kelly, vice president of sales and marketing for Custom Crafters, a supplier of custom furniture, casegoods and architectural millwork. “We’ve had the pleasure of interacting with Kris on many Chicago projects and have always been impressed by his knowledge, professionalism and tenacity. We’re thrilled to bring those attributes to the Custom Crafters team.”

Imala has more than 20 years in business-to-business sales, including roles as global account manager with Humanscale, a workplace ergonomics company, and most recently, global account manager with commercial flooring leader Milliken & Company.

“The opportunity to be part of Custom Crafters is incredibly exciting,” Imala said. “For the past 15 years I’ve been deeply ingrained with the office and commercial interiors world. This new role allows me to not only utilize that industry and product expertise to expand the Custom Crafters’ offering, but also deliver new and expanded solutions to my incredible network.”

Custom Crafters works directly with general contractors, architects, designers and contract furniture dealers, delivering interior solutions from full buildout to furniture additions. Headquartered in the Chicago area, but serving clients nationally, it focuses on corporate, health care, hospitality, senior living and education markets.

## CAREERS

## MBH Architects Appoints New Business Development Manager

➔ MBH Architects has hired Melissa Winburne as business development manager for the firm’s Denver office. Winburne will lead efforts to manage and grow the firm’s client roster throughout Denver and the surrounding areas.



Winburne

“Melissa Winburne has quickly become an integral member of the Denver office,” said Dimple Manghani, principal of MBH Architects’ Denver office. “Her networking abilities and management expertise is a great asset for our growing team, and we look forward to watching her bring new opportunities to MBH.”

Winburne brings nearly 20 years of industry expertise to the MBH family. With a passion for making connections and being an extrovert by nature, Winburne has created a network that focuses on lead sharing and collaboration.

Having started out her career in graphic design, Winburne sought new opportunities to flex her creative muscles and found herself conducting marketing and business development for a landscape architect. Most recently, Winburne has held roles in the AEC industry, working for various architecture and design firms, where she built an in-depth knowledge of the industry and how to

effectively start and maintain relationships. She has an avid interest in the changes and advancements in the retail, multi-family and commercial markets.

“MBH has such an impressive portfolio and has an exceptional record of drafting client-tailored designs,” Winburne said. “I am thrilled to be working with such an inspiring group of people and cannot wait to help lead the charge in making MBH Architects a well-known name throughout the Denver area.”

Winburne joins the firm at an exciting time, as MBH Architects has just celebrated its 30th anniversary, and the firm’s project portfolio and client base within the Colorado region has been rapidly expanding.

## CAREERS

## HOLLY HUNT Names Marc Szafran President

➔ HOLLY HUNT’s new president is Marc Szafran.

Szafran is responsible for expanding the company’s position as the leading partner for interior designers and an industry innovator of product design, quality, service, digital platforms and showroom settings.



Szafran

“I’ve long admired HOLLY HUNT and have worked with the brand over the years,” Szafran said. “Our industry is quickly evolving, and there is a huge opportunity to adapt and adjust to strengthen our business. Among other initiatives, we’re doubling down on investments to accelerate our digital presence, realign customer service to keep pace with industry needs, introduce new products such as our HOLLY HUNT wallcovering lines and open new showrooms on both coasts. I’m honored to be a part of this world-class team.”

Szafran, who has more than 15 years of experience in the high-end residential and commercial design sectors, will oversee business development, product design and development, sales and client support services, operations, finances, marketing and brand strategy. He was selected by founder Holly Hunt because of his experience leading major interior design firms plus his deep understanding of the HOLLY HUNT brand and its importance in the ever-changing design landscape. Most recently, Szafran oversaw the operations and growth of Michael S Smith Inc., an international design firm and trade showroom based in Los Angeles, with outposts in New York and Madrid.

“I’m so excited to welcome Marc to the helm of HOLLY HUNT and know his experience with some of the world’s most renowned designers and artisans makes him uniquely qualified to guide our brand for the next generation,” said founder Holly Hunt. “After working with Marc for years in his previous roles, I know he understands the value of outstanding client service and is passionate about serving our clients and always making them look good. Marc also gets our brand DNA and company culture. These are all critical to ensuring HOLLY HUNT continues to be a strong partner for designers now and into the future.”

While serving as president and chief operating officer at Michael S Smith, Szafran oversaw operations, marketing and business and brand strategy for the eponymous design firm and launched product lines and showrooms under the Jasper and Templeton brands. Before joining Michael S Smith, Szafran was president and general counsel of Thom Filicia Inc., a design business founded by one of the nation’s top decorators and television personalities. There he developed a long-term growth strategy for new business segments and oversaw the transformation of a single-focused

company into a competitive, multifaceted enterprise in the design, product, media and lifestyle arenas.

“Marc is an outstanding collaborator who provided the business insights and leadership that contributed to the largest growth period in our company’s history,” Michael Smith said. “Beyond his keen business and analytical capabilities, Marc has a unique strength in team building and in challenging and inspiring employees to always do their best work.”

Szafran, who will be based at the HOLLY HUNT headquarters in Chicago, will work closely with JoAnnah Kornak, senior vice president/executive creative director, and Dan Campbell, senior vice president sales and business development.

“As a proven leader in creatively led businesses, Marc is poised to develop the blueprint to propel HOLLY HUNT into its next phase of innovation and growth,” said Andrew Cogan, chairman and CEO of Knoll, HOLLY HUNT’s parent company. “His strategic decision-making and problem-solving capabilities, along with his commitment to delivering unparalleled design, quality and service will allow him to bring the iconic HOLLY HUNT brand into the future.”

Szafran holds a J.D. from Cardozo School of Law and is a graduate of Syracuse University.

## WOODWORKING

## Mark Richey Woodworking/WallGoldfinger Furniture certified as New York City M/WBE

➔ The architectural millwork and contract furniture market has a new M/WBE option in New York City.



Richey

Mark Richey Woodworking, the parent company of WallGoldfinger Furniture, has been certified as a minority and women-owned Business enterprise (M/WBE) by the New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS).

An architectural millwork company, Mark Richey Woodworking has long been certified as M/WBE in its home state of Massachusetts. The company sought certification in New York City because of the increasing volume of work it does there, especially through its WallGoldfinger furniture division.

The certification recognizes majority owner Teresa Richey, who is a native of Peru. Richey is also the company’s treasurer and spouse of company namesake Mark Richey.

“Especially at this time when businesses are in turmoil, it’s encouraging to hear about a minority and woman-owned business looking at an even brighter future in such an important market,” Teresa Richey said.

Government agencies, nonprofits and for-profits often seek out M/WBEs voluntarily or through agreements and mandates.

Earning the certification involved a rigorous application and review process that took 10 months. The certification lasts through May 2025.

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- Recent GDP growth expectations have been estimated at 3.2% to 3.5% for 2019.
- Medium term perspectives place such growth at 4% by 2021.

**The Company:**

- 18 years in the office and commercial space furniture market, and among the leaders at present.
- Differentiating factors include providing customers with design and implementation of solutions, transforming office spaces into unique environments, tailor-made to the needs, expectations and budgets of each organization.
- Products and services are provided through three separate divisions or business units.
- Integrated solutions are provided to customers, from office and commercial space designs and blueprints, to manufacturing, delivery and installation of furniture, both standard and custom made.
- Customers benefit from an integrated solution in which company designs, builds, furnishes, installs, and automates the working environment to the customers technological specifications.
- Distribution and commercialization of its products and services to a wide variety of clients nationwide is accomplished through offices in Bogotá and Medellín, and an e-commerce platform.
- During the past six years, The Company has increased market share among the industry leaders.
- ROE for 2017 and 2018 was 26% y 34% respectively.

**Inquiries**

For further information and in order to receive a teaser, and confidential information memorandum that further describes

the opportunity please contact bicon investment banking in Colombia:

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