Collegiate Design: A New Model for Workplace Design

As more Baby Boomers retire and Gen Y and Gen Z members snap up more spots in the workforce, companies can’t afford to ignore the priorities of recent college graduates. Today’s recent college grads are strongly scrutinizing potential employers based upon their environments, far more than any previous generation. But are companies continuing to overlook the impact of their work environments and policies when trying to recruit the best and brightest from college campuses? Recent research conducted by KI and HOK explores how collegiate campus design can and should inform our workplace environments.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 3...

Handled with Care: Stories From a Brooklyn Furniture Maker

At the Foundrywood studio in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, Mats Christéen produces an artisanal furniture collection born from a fusion of Brooklyn’s industrial edge and the pure, modern lines of Scandinavian design. His pieces, in both meticulously handcrafted limited editions and more approachable versions, amplify the natural beauty of organic and often reclaimed materials, all sustainably sourced.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 10...

Side Effects from the Evolution of the Workplace

For organizations to be successful, creating human-centric solutions that focus on empowering the employee is imperative. In a two-part series, officeinsight contributor Kay Sargent examines the side effects of current workplace environment trends. This week, topics include an exploration of our human nature as relates to our physiological-environmental needs; the power and nuances of connecting with each other; and technology’s impact on work and place.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 18...

CITED:
“THE MORALITY OF AN ACT IS A FUNCTION OF THE STATE OF THE SYSTEM AT THE TIME IT IS PERFORMED.”
—J. FLETCHER, SITUATION ETHICS (WESTMINSTER, PHILADELPHIA, 1966), CITED IN THE TRAGEDY OF THE COMMONS BY GREG HARDIN
Lovi Trees are made from certified Finnish forests that are replanted after felling. Airy but stable, the 53” and 78” Lovi Trees are available in natural birch or six color finishes. Pots also available.

Lovi Trees provide a sense of wonder and delight to any space. No water required!
Securing top talent is fast becoming the biggest concern for industries across the United States. Human resource professionals claim that two of their biggest challenges over the next 10 years will be recruiting and rewarding the best employees (59%) and creating a corporate culture that attracts the best employees to their organizations (36%), according to a “Challenges Facing HR Over the Next 10 Years” study conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management in 2012.

As more Baby Boomers retire and Gen Y and Gen Z members snap up more spots in the workforce, companies can’t afford to ignore the priorities of recent college graduates. How newer generations shape their careers and prefer to work is astoundingly different from previous generations. But...
are companies continuing to overlook the impact of their work environments and policies when trying to recruit the best and brightest from college campuses?

In a recently released research study, Jonathan Web, of contract furniture manufacturer KI, and Brett Shwery, currently of design firm AECOM, but working at HOK when the study was completed, examined the reasons behind the current distinctions between higher learning and work environments. KI and HOK studied and compared the work styles found in higher education versus those in corporate environments, and found that “incorporating campus design elements into work environments would attract and appeal to young professionals who have spent the last four to six years learning, growing and working within the campus environment.”

The white paper released for the research states that, “Unfortunately, taking design cues from higher education environments isn’t even on the radar of most corporations.” This isn’t entirely true; workplace design has in fact begun to embrace elements commonly found in campus design – more collaboration, more “social scene” spaces, and a little bit of learning-based workplace interior design. But it is still the beginning of such efforts.

“Despite the fact that many companies describe their places of employment as ‘campuses’, most corporate environments used for training and collaboration fail to resemble today’s dynamic campus environments,” reads the research. “Nor do they support the preferred work styles of recent graduates; styles cultivated in highly responsive, higher education environments.”

The white paper is right about one thing: today’s recent college grads are strongly scrutinizing potential employers based upon their environments, far more than any previous generation.

The benefits of designing for recent grads are plentiful. First, it allows companies to attract grads in the first place. It also cuts down the time recently hired grads need to get up to speed with their new position, thrive sooner, and become organizational leaders earlier in their careers.
So what exactly are interior architects and designers, missing? Messrs. Web and Shwery launched into the yearlong research project with the following hypothesis: “Corporations should address today’s work styles by taking design and workspace planning cues from institutions of higher education because of the influence these learning environments have had on a newly graduating workforce.”

The research asserts that, because learning environments have played an important role in shaping and supporting the work styles of the newest workforce, and because the numbers of newest generation members are grabbing increasingly more pieces of the workforce pie, corporations competing for talent should borrow design and workspace planning concepts from institutions of higher education.

Messrs. Web and Shwery conducted interviews with Fortune 100 companies spanning a range of industries, including technology, entertainment, manufacturing and advertising. “The results revealed a significant disconnect between today’s workplaces and the expectations of both soon-to-be and newly hired employees,” notes the white paper.

While many of the results received weren’t altogether unexpected, the research did yield three key findings:

> Recently hired graduates are “lost in translation.”
> There is limited research being conducted by organizations on the recently graduating workforce and their work style preferences.
> Current workplace design does not respond to the needs of recently hired graduates.

Lost in Translation
The research found that new hires at a large majority of the companies interviewed are baffled by the relevance of their physical space (“cube farms”) and by the work styles expected of them.

One company reported a recent college graduate/new hire as saying,
“Professors give me assignments and deadlines. How I complete those tasks is entirely up to me. They don’t say, ‘You will write this paper between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. while sitting at this assigned library table.’”

In their interviews, companies do acknowledge the above fact; but still – just 16% of the companies interviewed actually offered workspaces that responded to the preferences of new workers. The other 84% of new employees floating around – referred to in the research as “lost” employees – translate into lower retention rates, a critical metric indicating a company’s future success and an expensive disbursement.

The research highlighted two ways companies can benefit by providing workspaces that emulate higher learning environments:

> Creating workspaces that foster coaching and mentoring supports ongoing training and development, opportunities new hires seek.

> Workspaces that leverage technology and support e-learning provide a crucial tool recent graduates are accustomed to and have come to expect.

Providing comparable corporate environments lessens the shock for recent graduates as they enter the workforce, reducing the “lost in translation” affect.

Insufficient Research

The second enlightening things Messrs. Web and Shwery learned was that most employers aren’t sure how new hires like to work because they simply aren’t asking.

“While most companies have campus recruitment campaigns to hire the best and brightest from universities, only a third bothered to ask soon-to-be graduates how they prefer to work,” notes the white paper. “Clearly, corporations are missing an easy opportunity to gather valuable information about their workforce.”

75% of businesses interviewed said collegiate design could impact the layout of their workspaces, but none had formally studied the collegiate learning environment to find out how it might apply to their workplaces and the needs of the newer workforce members.
This lack of research being conducted on work styles and on the connection between collegiate design and workplace design is making recruitment harder than it has to be.

It seems strange initially, but why shouldn't corporations ask soon-to-be grads at career day interviews questions like, “What do you look for in your physical work environment?” Such questions could provide businesses with important insights into the work styles they'll eventually need to embrace, noted the research.

**Inadequate Response**

The research did find that while companies are making some observations about the work styles of new graduates, a disconnect comes in those companies’ efforts to make those work styles a reality in their offices.

36% of companies recognize that recent graduates carry collegiate work styles into the workplace; 25% feel new hires like to work “everywhere”; and 100% agreed that newly hired graduates like to work in groups.

Yet, when provided with a list of the top five physical workspace priorities, Messrs. Web and Shwery appealed to the workplace interiors and facilities management industries for any existing research connecting current corporate design trends with recently hired graduates. In IFMA’s 2010 Space and Project Management Benchmarks Report #34, they found three trends connecting collegiate and workplace design:

**Increased Adoption of Distributed Work Strategies.** Classified as a way of distributing work based on tasks and responsibilities, it is often simply defined as a “work anywhere, work anytime” policy. In the workplace, that often means accommodating a variety of work styles and tasks—heads-down, concentrative work, collaboration, offsite and mobile, etc. Messrs. Web and Shwery noted, “Thinking about this strategy in the context of today's university students, it is evident that they have “worked” (studied, produced) in a “distributed” manner for years. Perhaps university planning established this anywhere/anytime design trend long before the workforce created the distributed work strategy.”

**Less for me, more for my team.** The need for individual workspaces has diminished in corporate environments, while the need for more shared spaces has multiplied. Companies are allocating more square footage for collaborative, conference, support and amenity spaces. The premise that more shared space is required for everyone, while less is needed for the individual has long been a hallmark of university planning. Students and even faculty have limited individual space so that the bulk of campus space can be shared among everyone.

**A higher degree of worker choice and control improves results.** By allowing workers to have a higher degree of choice with regard to their workplace, greater productivity will result. “…students always choose how they complete assignments and where they will be most productive,” notes Messrs. Web and Shwery. “They maintain control of time and space and produce the necessary results to complete tasks. While workplaces have only recently placed more emphasis on this approach, students have long been accustomed to it.”
valued by recently hired grads (potential hires ranked technology and community/collaboration spaces as the most important elements/priorities relative to their potential workplace), only 8% of companies said they actually consider attributes of collegiate design when planning their work environments.

“So, while organizations are beginning to recognize that recent graduates may prefer to work in a more open, collaborative environment, they are either unwilling, unable or unprepared to alter the physical workplace in order to accommodate these evolving work styles,” noted the researchers.

Curiously, one of the last things on the list of recent grads’ workspace priorities was sustainability.

“We found that it’s not that recent graduates don’t want sustainable practices,” said Mr. Web. “It’s just that they assume they’re already in place.”

The Web and Shwery research team has spent the last year in phase two of its efforts, called C2C, which focuses on taking corporate clients on tours of college and university campuses. This second phase included corporate clients from the initial research phase as well as an expanded range of new companies, including those from financial and legal sectors. Phase two of this research is projected for release sometime in summer 2016.

“We didn’t realize how few of our clients had actually been on a college campus in the past decade,” said Mr. Web. “It was a big eye-opening experience for a lot of our clients, and we learned a great deal from the tours ourselves. One of the clients on a tour said to us, ‘No wonder we can’t get anyone to come work for us.’”

“I was amazed at the similarities between campuses in different regions, and by how purposeful outdoor spaces in particular are planned.”

Outdoor spaces on college campuses were carefully planned in regions ranging from very warm to very cold climates; large and small campuses; and in state and private institutions across the country. The C2C tours revealed that universities and colleges have long embraced outdoor spaces as an integral part of campus life.

“Students have always had to use these external spaces to collaborate and congregate on campus,” said Mr. Shwery.

In their concluding comments, the researchers noted that, “As companies begin to recognize the need, value and benefits of accommodating the work styles of the newest generation of employees, few will know how to take the next steps.

“The design community and furniture manufacturers with higher education expertise will play a critical role in helping companies meet a new workforce’s preferences, successfully evolving their corporate environments.”

Because of this, the need for the design and furniture industries to articulate their expertise and their worth has never been greater.”

When it comes to the work styles of new graduates, businesses are making some observations.

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<th>Percentage</th>
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90% of corporations are recruiting their future workforce on campuses

75% recognize that collegiate design can have an influence on workplace design

0% are looking at learning environments to discover solutions for greater organizational success

(Research conducted by KI and HOK)
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Strong coffee in the brewer. Moderat’s pounding bass in the air. Mats Christéen pulls an all-nighter at Foundrywood. Passion never knows business hours, and this is a passionate man, an artist in Greenpoint, Brooklyn with a rep for kickass furniture.

At Foundrywood, Mr. Christéen produces an artisanal furniture collection born from a fusion of Brooklyn’s industrial edge and the pure, modern lines of Scandinavian design. His pieces, in both meticulously handcrafted limited editions and more approachable versions, amplify the natural beauty of organic and often reclaimed materials, all sustainably sourced.

In his work, the artist/designer projects a strong point of view about the power of handcrafted and reused materials – a view fueled by experiences in his youth.

Growing up, Mr. Christéen worked alongside his father expanding the family home in Södertälje, Sweden, a city of 65,000 about 19 miles southwest of Stockholm. As the Christéen residence grew to six bedrooms from one, father and son grew closer in their work. Given a choice between movies with mom or hardware runs with dad, a young Mats always chose the hardware store.

When the new rooms needed furniture, the Christéen men went to work. Mats learned furniture building in the very home his family lived in, and his first rehab is still there.

“I found these two armchairs from the 60s in my grandmother’s basement,” said Mr. Christéen. “She helped with the reupholstering. She may have stoked a yen within her grandson to rehab the disused.”

His current work honors those beginning experiences. Mr. Christéen told Chiara Casiraghi of lapalmemagazine.com that he prizes vintage elements, wood and steel for their intrinsic beauty. He transforms them, makes them “nicer and functional without losing the look” that attracted him. And he doesn’t always have a specific need in mind.
“I keep a good selection of materials at the shop,” said Mr. Christéen. In the Foundrywood workshop, racked and stacked reclaimed wood lines one wall. Live wood slabs lean against bricks. It’s a playground for him, but to others the space feels like a dungeon.

“There’s not much fresh air in there,” he said. “I don’t have an overhead door to open. It’s kind of a joke among the other New York City woodworkers. We work with what we have.”

The workshop is where Mr. Christéen accomplishes all of the cutting, welding and other “messy stuff.” Getting his hands dirty in pursuit of his art is just another day at work. For a client in the West Village who wanted a wall of reclaimed wood, he handpicked the beams, de-nailed them and sawed them into strips.

“I could not bring myself to call up the lumberyard and simply place an order,” he said. “It’s not the same.”

Neither does he accept the idea of someone else installing his work. After an Instagram post of a custom DJ booth he built generated Internet buzz, requests came in from near and far. Building furniture in his backyard was a start, but one that lasted briefly. Mr. Christéen first leased his workshop in 2008, prompted by an order of 20 tables for a real estate office.

“Tapping into the Maker Movement

Those backyard builds were every bit as refined as the long line of furniture that followed. In fact, Foundrywood’s earliest work helped secure that order for office tables. Originally tapped by the real estate office to craft a room divider and a freestanding bar out of reclaimed wood and gas piping, Mr. Christéen’s services soon expanded.

“The client for the divider and bar asked his boss over to see my work. Then they asked me to build their office tables.”
The client’s delight with the tables, composed of reclaimed yellow pine for tops and black steel gas piping for legs, led to another big project. A new client wanted personal workspaces for its accountants, giving each team member visual privacy. The Foundrywood solution? An industrial design with steel dividers and reclaimed wood for the worksurfaces.

“It has its practical side because the team members can use magnets to hold notes on the steel dividers,” noted Mr. Christéen.

Knowingly or not, those accountants were joyful participants in ‘the Maker Movement,’ a movement whose allure lies in the human element of being able to transact directly with the designer, the maker,” according to OpenDesk co-founder Tim Carrigan, interviewed.

From left: Desk with reclaimed yellow pine top and welded raw steel end panels; metalworking in progress; conference table with buffed steel top; nesting work tables
Meeting clients gives makers and artists a reason to step outside their studios now and then. The Seattle Times’ Rebecca Teagarden wrote in 2008, “Artists work, often in obscurity (and) sawdust, creating one-of-kind pieces that honor and transcend the trees from which they came.”

In the same article, Michael Monroe, now Director Emeritus of the Bellevue Arts Museum, in Bellevue, WA, said that the way these artists revere the natural state of wood distinguishes their works from all others. “It is cherished and worshiped for its beauty and its grain and its integrity.”

Clients want the look and the workmanship, but they also want to feel good about doing business within their communities. Buying local is now widespread, and plays to social reasons for studio-made furniture’s growing audience. Buying local is now widespread, and plays to social reasons for studio-made furniture’s growing audience.

Going Local Means Going Sustainable
Supporting local economies was among the reasons consumers cited for buying local in a 2013 report by the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC). As described by BDC officials in a Global News article, growing numbers of Canadian consumers show interest in a product’s origin, with 87% of those in the study believing that buying local is “better for the environment.”

The United States Green Building Council agrees. In LEED v4, local sourcing within a 100-mile radius and reclaimed materials can add points toward green building certification, noted a report from Dovetail Partners, Inc., a consultant for environmental decision making in design and construction.

Tokuhiko Kise, owner of Osaka’s TRUCK Furniture, isolates another piece of studio furniture’s appeal. Interviewed in 2013 by the189.com, Mr. Kise spoke about the visible genuineness of Truck’s staff, who instill “lots of love and integrity” in every product.

“With us, what you see is what you get,” said Mr. Kise. “It’s not an image, it’s just us, and I think people can see that.”

The same is true at Foundrywood. As an artist, Mr. Christéen is creative – a perfectionist and possessor of ‘pedal-to-the-metal’ energy.

“It’s just the way my mind works,” he said. “It’s my mentality and my stubbornness.”

A Peculiar Path to Furniture and Expansion
Mr. Christéen is like a professional athlete who loves the game and hates to lose. Maybe that comes from being one.
As an NHL pick in 2000, Mr. Christén played professional hockey in Sweden until a knee injury from 2001 and the resulting nine surgeries caused him to hang up his uniform for good in 2006. He was 24 then, and still needed to make a living. Fortunately for him, his persevering attitude toward life had given him a fallback gig in the midst of his hockey playing years. In 2002, he was drafted into the world of haute couture fashion, modeling in runway shows and photo shoots in exotic locales for top fashion houses.

Mats has tremendous gratitude for his past, for everyone and everything taking him to the path he now follows. The one leading straight into a Brooklyn workshop. Eight years on, he’s added space for a finishing room and a showroom, open by appointment, to Foundrywood’s home base.

In the showroom, one can experience the look and feel of finished furniture pieces – the Fractal Collection, for example.

From left: Conference/dining table in cottonwood; wood surface detail; table base detail; cottonwood top with ebony gloss inlay

Entry at the Foundrywood showroom; Mats Christén of Foundrywood; finish and materials samples; two views of the showroom
The collection features a coffee table made of one long slab of walnut with a dropped edge. The edges of the live slab remain, with the continuity of the walnut's detailed grain wrapping top and end. A fractal leg supports the opposite end of the top. Welded in-house, the leg's irregularly divided sections brings to mind Mandelbrot's theory of Nature's fragmentation in spatial patterns. The leg counterpunches the sweeping consistency of the walnut; all elements are united in the live edge's rawness.

The Fractal Collection also includes a six-shelf-high bookcase, where a labyrinth of irregularly joined metal wends its way from top to floor level.

Wood, steel and all other materials in Foundrywood’s products come from salvage stores, metal shops and lumberyards dotting Brooklyn’s grid. Regardless, Mr. Christéen controls the look, particularly with the metals, which he finishes himself with different patinas for age. The metals he uses vary according to his design vision; designs can include anything from scrap metal melted and reprocessed into rods of various shapes and lengths, to sheet steel he cuts to size and welds.

The ‘H’ shaped leg for the Apex H bench, of quarter-inch steel, is an especially difficult cut job; he leg punctures the walnut bench’s top and end when installed.

Along the way, Foundrywood’s success called for a few more hands. The team expanded to include two employees in addition to Mr. Christéen, but the need for a creative director came in 2015. The reason? To help raise the studio up the next level.

Foundrywood Creative Director James Reed brings impressive credentials in branding, product design, and production. This collaboration of artist with industrial designer sets the stage for future directions. Still made by hand, though.
“To this point, I have physically made everything,” said Mr. Christéen. “But even when we do have more employees contributing with the work, we won’t be doing things the same way every time.” Those tiny variations, the marks that show where someone’s hands made the furniture, will stay. Mr. Christéen says that when he sees furniture or art he likes, he gives it the once over.

“I look closely at the steel, the wood, to find those little man-made scratches and imperfections — I love that stuff.”

For more information regarding custom products portfolio, product images, contact information, and background on Foundrywood and its offerings, visit foundrywood.com. Follow day-to-day happenings at Foundrywood via Instagram.

As researcher, writer, and commentator, Stephen Witte reports and advises on trends shaping the future of the A&D community, manufacturers, and distribution channels. His background includes corporate roles in product management, product development, and public relations. Reach him at switte@stephenwitte.com, or through his website, stephenwitte.com.

Detail of drop-edge joinery; table bases with spline joinery; color-banded boxes with contrasting splines; detail of Apex H Bench/Coffee Table; woodworking in progress
In today’s competitive and rapidly changing world, businesses are seeking to align their workplace with their organizational needs to create a place that is both efficient and effective. But in doing so, many have focused on following trends set by others and are creating open plan environments that often result in spaces that detract rather than support the way their organization or people truly work.

As a result, productivity and employee engagement has suffered in recent years. This side effect of the modern workplace is one that most organizations cannot afford. But new evidence is starting to emerge that there are other side effects of new workplace environments as well.

Today we are designing for people and organizations that have unique attributes. At the end of the day, human resource cost is a business’s greatest expense, but also its greatest asset. People costs are 10-15 times the cost of space, so doing anything that negatively impacts your staff’s ability to be productive can be catastrophic. For organizations to be successful, creating human-centric solutions that focus on empowering the employee is imperative.

In a two-part series, we’ll examine the newest side effects of current workplace environment trends. This week, topics include an exploration of our human nature as relates to our physiological-environmental needs; the power and nuances of connecting with each other; and technology’s impact on work and place.

Know Thyself

To gauge how we are doing, we can start by looking at the basics. We are human, and therefore, most of us are creatures of habit – territorial and social, pack animal-like. Many open environments disturb our ability to meet those basic human needs, and prevent us from meeting the basics per Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

To do so, an environment must first meet the physiological needs of the occupant – lighting, temperature, movement, air, and noise. Once those basics are met, we can begin to address additional concerns of safety, privacy and ergonomics.

But if those needs aren’t met, it is subconsciously or even consciously unsettling, and we are unable to achieve at a higher level. Before open benching plans, enclosed offices and...
workstations allowed people to feel somewhat grounded and protected. But when we move people into an open environment, they often feel exposed and constantly distracted.

The open environment may have addressed issues of more open communication and collaboration, but it often came with an unwanted side effect – unsettling unease. Employees often feel more vulnerable in open plan environments, and that effect prevents people from achieving at a higher level.

When we create environments that address the basic needs of people and allow for a healthy balance of focus work and collaboration, via variety and choice that encourages movement, we put the power of place in the hands of people. Solutions that allow for adjustability, control of lighting at the task level, and air flow all help maximize human comfort. Adjustable screening solutions aid in noise reduction, limit distractions and enable privacy as needed.
Once those needs are met, people begin to seek a sense of belonging and social connection. Culture and team dynamics can be established. Providing team tables and areas for social interaction can aid in establishing a strong sense of place and community. Placing people in siloes or spaces where they are isolated all day does not reinforce a communal spirit.

After tertiary needs are met and social order is formed, individuals seek esteem. Trust, respect and transparency are important at the fourth level, and these elements are where an employee truly becomes engaged in an organization and his/her work.

Self-actualization and fulfillment, the fifth level, is where employees find values, empowerment and purpose. These higher levels of user fulfillment can be achieved by employing space and furnishing solutions that empower the individual and encourage connectivity, openness, and transparency. But designers and employers must first build a strong foundation of meeting basic needs.

Connecting and Collaborating

True collaboration happens when people connect. When people connect, they bond. When they bond, they trust. When they trust, they open up. When they open up, they think outside the box, and that’s when collaboration and real innovation happens.

Throwing everyone into a big, open floor plate doesn’t mean they will collaborate. We need to design spaces that give people room to connect with each other in smaller, more intimate settings.

Studies show that people can form tight bonds in groups of four to six. By creating smaller groupings that are more tightly connected, we empower the “camp” mentality that enables innovation. And those camp areas can be grouped in clusters that form a “clan” of up to 24, which then feed into a larger neighborhood, or a “tribe” of 48.

By adding ‘scrum’ or work areas that are meant to be messy, with tables and moveable equipment, we create spaces where people can come together, swarm and connect. Research shows that people tend to hatch ideas alone, but they extrapolate those ideas in a group. 58% of people indicate they come up with new ideas and solutions to problems outside of work. The result is a working lab for knowledge workers. It’s about creating livable spaces at work where people can come together and connect, ideate and innovate. That mix and balance of space is often what’s missing in workplaces today.

Technology’s Impact on Work and Place

Alongside the many benefits of new technologies in the workplace, new challenges have also popped up. It’s getting harder to focus, concentrate, and think at work. There seems to be no relief from all the distractions. Noisy co-workers, visual distractions and the constant ‘pinging’ of our technology are all adversely impacting our ability to concentrate or get to deep meaningful thought.

But today, the problem isn’t that the office is too loud, but rather that it is too quiet. With quieter keyboards, more texting and fewer people communicating via phone, there is no background noise, or ‘hum’ that muffles general office sounds. If you’ve ever worked at a Starbucks or other coffee shop, you know you can concentrate in those noisy environments quite well. The real problem is when you are in an environment where you can hear what people across the room are saying as clear as a bell. This can be far more distracting than general background noise. Designing environments that allow for “hum” to be created while balancing it with quiet zones affords people the opportunity to function at a higher level.

Loss of productivity?

43% Of interruptions caused by traditional activities like phone calls, chatting with coworkers, and ad hoc meetings

57% Of interruptions are digital distractions like email, logging between application, instant messaging and personal online activities such as Facebook and web searches
As people continue to experience advancements in technology, the fear of “Digital Darwinism,” the inability to keep up with technology, is a real concern for many. The World Health Organization (WHO) has projected that “techno-stress”, the stress of constantly being “on” and overwhelmed by technology, will be the biggest health issues of the future.

To address these growing concerns, many companies are creating quiet areas, technology-free zones and policies that establish tech-free hours to allow people time to think or connect with coworkers. The office of the future needs to be more human-centric. Offices must support how we work through spaces that offer balance and choice.

We work differently today than we did even five years ago. And in the coming five years, we will likely work differently than we do today. The office as we know it does need to evolve to stay relevant. People will continue to work outside the traditional office setting, and so work environments will have to transform into engagement centers, becoming the energizing hub of the company and its workforce, where people gather, share and connect.

We can’t lose sight of the fact that we are human, and we need to design spaces that reflect that one simple yet defining fact.

Kay Sargent joined Lendlease as Director of Workplace Strategies in 2014 bringing over 30 years of experience in the interiors industry. Prior to joining Lendlease, Kay served as VP of A&D and Workplace Strategies for Teknion and was a Principal for Interior Architects in Washington, DC. Kay has a BFA in interiors from VCU and studied environmental design at Parsons School of Design in NY. She has worked with Fortune 500 companies on their global real estate strategies and designed workplaces of the future. Kay serves on the Advisory Boards of WorkDesign Magazine, PaletteApp and IFI. She has also served on the International Boards of IIDA, ASID, NCQLP and NCIDQ. She is an active member of ASID, IIDA, CoreNET and IFMA.
RESEARCH-DESIGN CONNECTION
More on Plants, Nature, Green and Creativity

by Sally Augustin, Ph.D.

Studente, Seppala and Sadowska studied how seeing live plants, nature and the color green influences creative thinking. In their experiment, “Three groups [of participants] were used; one group in a classroom surrounded by plants and view to natural settings...” Business students at a British university participated in this study and the number of plants that “surrounded” them was not provided. Syvie Studente, Nina Seppala and Noemi Sadowska. 2016. “Facilitating Creative Thinking in the Classroom: Investigating the Effects of Plants and the Colour Green on Visual and Verbal Creativity.” Thinking Skills and Creativity, vol. 19, pp. 1-8.

Sally Augustin, PhD, a cognitive scientist, is the editor of Research Design Connections (www.researchdesignconnections.com), a monthly subscription newsletter and free daily blog, where recent and classic research in the social, design, and physical sciences that can inform designers’ work are presented in straightforward language. Readers learn about the latest research findings immediately, before they’re available elsewhere. Sally, who is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, is also the author of Place Advantage: Applied Psychology for Interior Architecture (Wiley, 2009) and, with Cindy Coleman, The Designer’s Guide to Doing Research: Applying Knowledge to Inform Design (Wiley, 2012). She is a principal at Design With Science (www.designwithscience.com) and can be reached at sallyaugustin@designwithscience.com.

MATERIAL OF THE WEEK

MC# 7243-01
Decoflex Light Emitting Diode (LED) Light ‘Rope’: This flexible, thin LED light ‘rope’ is encased in clear silicone. Created by Zenaro Lighting, this light strip has high flexibility and is able to bend completely in half. The flexible silicone exterior protects the diodes from mechanical damage as well as water.

The rope can be cut to length at multiple points along the fixture as needed or connected to a second strip for longer lengths. A self-adhesive tape on the back simplifies installation.

Applications include signage, fixtures in limited spaces, interior and outdoor lighting.

This column is published in collaboration with Material ConneXion. For more information regarding the material previewed, please contact Michael LaGreca at mlagreca@materialconnexion.com. T: 212.842.2050.
**PRODUCT INTROS**

> Galaxy Glass® debuted new designs from The Galaxy + Level™ Design Collection, designed in partnership with 4walls®, that harmonize with Colors of the Year. Shown in the photo from left to right are Pacific Northwest and Bubbles. Each coordinates with either Pantone® color of the year, Rose Quartz or Serenity, and both can add pizazz to “Simply White”, selected by Benjamin Moore® and “Alabaster” by Sherwin Williams®. To demonstrate the controllable levels of opacity and translucency that can be achieved with intricate designs, the company offers 6” x 12” glass samples showing three different specific options. The first column shows clear inks, the second column shows opaque inks, and the third column shows white inks with varying levels of opacity. Read More

> J+J Flooring Group’s newest Kinetex 24” x 24” modular products, Analog and Analog Mono, are designed to create an inspired visual for commercial interiors. With shared patterning and eight common core colors per style, the duo coloring of Analog fluidly interacts with the solid companions of Analog Mono. Kinetex is an innovative and award-winning textile composite flooring, constructed using Universal Fibers, offering a soft textile aesthetic with the durability of hard surface flooring. Target markets for Analog and Analog Mono are corporate, education, hospitality, healthcare, and other commercial sectors where sophisticated design, comfort and exceptional performance are required. Read More

> J+J Flooring Group: Kinetex, Analog

> Rockwell Group will debut Valet by David Rockwell, a new 14-piece furniture collection with Stellar Works, at Salone del Mobile in April. From lounge seating to customizable shelving, the 14 carefully curated pieces are crafted from expressive, tactile and refined materials including full-grain saddle leather, American walnut, black steel, and brushed brass. Highlights include: Valet, which creates an area of reprieve where one can transition from the bustle of the street to the comfort of a home or guestroom. A leather bag for two pairs of shoes hangs below a walnut shelf for personal items, along with a pocket for a shoehorn. Hexagonal brass hardware

> Rockwell Group: Valet
officenewswire

> Rockwell Group will also unveil a new collaboration with Brooklyn-based Rich Brilliant Willing during NYCxDESIGN week in May. A collection of minimalist LED fixtures, it is RBW’s first collaboration with an outside designer and is the culmination of Rockwell Group’s long working relationship with RBW on Rockwell Group projects from the Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center at Lincoln Center to residential buildings in New York, Miami and Washington, DC. The design concept for this collection was to take pure geometric forms such as spheres and cubes and soften them through variations in configuration and light. The Absolute Grid Chandelier (pictured) is based on 12”, 10” and 8” cubes. Framed brass cubes are arranged in custom configurations from a clean-lined grid of cubes to a cascading cluster, like a piece of jewelry.

> Soelberg Industries introduced a new 3D laminate color option called Magic Sapphire. Soft, glowing blown glass globes appear to float within the cubes. The chandelier can be suspended in a vertical or horizontal format with as many cube volumes—and in as many sizes—as desired. The absence of the luminaires in some of the cubes creates visual variation. Also in the collection is the spherical Moon Phase Sconce and the rectangular Notched Sconce.

Read More
NOTEWORTHY

> Kristine Scotto was promoted to Director of Strategic Planning at Workwell Partners. Having previously served as the firm’s Marketing Manager, Ms. Scotto will now also work with upper management on vendor relations and overall strategic planning, while continuing oversight of talent acquisition and driving marketing activities. She has more than six years of marketing experience, with five years dedicated to commercial interiors. She is also a Vice Chair for the Special Events Committee for the New York Chapter of CoreNet Global, as well as a member of the networking organization’s PR and Social Media Committee. Read More

>CBT (Childs Bertman Tseckares Inc.) received three top awards from the IIDA New England chapter at its annual Design Awards Gala on Feb. 11. CBT’s interior design for the Sofitel Washington DC (pictured) received the Best in Hospitality Hotel Award and was voted the People’s Choice Award winner. CBT’s interior design for the Hilton Mystic Hotel/ The IRONS restaurant also won, receiving the Best in Hospitality Restaurant Award. The interior design renovation for the Sofitel Washington DC included the lobby, ballroom, prefunction, 237 guestrooms with 16 suites, guestroom corridors, library, and meeting rooms. Intended for international and U.S. travelers alike, the design concept takes inspiration from the vintage fashions of Paris and Washington DC, celebrating both cultures’ styles to create a “magnifique” design. The design for the IRONS at the Hilton Mystic Hotel, set on the historic waterfront of Mystic, CT, is infused with authentic elements that evoke its location, creating an urban retreat that reflects the city’s iconic past and entrepreneurial present. Read More

>Duravit, celebrating in its 20th year in the United States, recognized four of its business partners with top honors at Duravit USA’s annual sales meeting. HM Wallace, based in Atlanta, was awarded the top honor as Distributor of the Year. A renowned kitchen and bath distributor founded in 2004, the company has yielded unprecedented growth for the Duravit brand and demonstrated unparalleled professionalism. The Overall Market of the Year honor was awarded to the North East sales region, which exhibited the highest marks nationwide for combined project and showroom growth. Successful product turnover rate was highlighted with the Showroom Market of the Year award, presented to the Northern California market. Whitehead Associates of Florida was the recipient of the Project Market of the Year award, following a tremendous number of project successes. Read More

>Duvaltex Inc., a holding company specializing in textile innovation and development, acquired True Textiles Inc. The acquisition includes all of the True Textiles business units, True, Guilford of Maine and Teknit. Duvaltex also currently owns Victor Textiles Inc., a leading North American textile manufacturer. As a result of this acquisition, Duvaltex becomes the largest manufacturer of commercial or contract interior fabrics in the U.S. and Canada, serving the office furniture, institutional, healthcare and hospitality industries. Both Victor Textiles and True Textiles will continue to operate as independent business units. Victor Textiles, specializing in sustainable and innovative fabrics, operates state-of-the-art mills in several Canadian locations as well as a design studio in New York City, and it uses service-and-warehouse facilities in Grand Rapids, MI. True Textiles, headquartered in Grand Rapids, is vertically integrated and has expertise in fabric design, yarn production, weaving, weft knitting, finishing, and performance enhancements. It has production facilities in Guilford, ME and Elkin, NC; plus a design studio in NYC. Duvaltex management expects the company as well as its customers to benefit from opportunities to create synergies and efficiencies across the organization. Read More

>NCARB shared a “sneak peek” of its new Architect Registration Examination®, ARE 5.0, launching later this year. ARE 5.0 will include six divisions with test durations ranging between three and a half to five hours—a substantial decrease from ARE 4.0. Each division will have 80 to 120 questions and incorporate the latest testing technology. The exam replaces vignettes with new question types: hot spots and drag-and-place, plus the incorporation of case studies. In addition to these new testing methods, the exam will continue to use multiple choice, check-all-that-apply, and quantitative fill-in-the-blank. “Case studies are a collection of questions that are used to assess a candidate’s ability to synthesize multiple pieces...
NCARB: ARE 5.0

of information, which is how architects solve problems on a daily basis,” said NCARB Director of Examination Jared Zurn, AIA, NCARB. “By incorporating the latest testing methods, the exam will more closely align with modern architectural practice.” Read More

>Stantec signed a letter of intent to acquire VOA Associates Inc. A 280-person Chicago-based architecture and planning firm, VOA is recognized for dynamic building designs serving major clients in the hospitality, commercial, healthcare, workplace, entertainment and cultural, and government sectors. With commissions across the US and internationally, VOA has additional office locations in New York, NY; Washington, DC; Orlando, FL; and Highland, IN. Notable Chicago projects include the Wabash “vertical campus” Building at Roosevelt University; waterfront reconstruction of Navy Pier; and the corporate headquarters for Grant Thornton and Wintrust. Other key VOA projects include the flagship Virgin Hotel in New York City, scheduled to debut in 2018; the Hampton University Proton Therapy Institute in Virginia; and the sustainably-designed 661,000sf NASA Headquarters in Washington, DC. The acquisition of VOA further expands Stantec’s 3,800-person building design practice. In Chicago, VOA employs more than 140 people while Stantec has a 50-person office. Combined, they will form one of the largest design firms in Chicago. The acquisition is expected to close in late March. Read More

>Steelcase Inc. is celebrating a decade of recognition in Fortune magazine’s “World’s Most Admired Companies” survey. In the Home Equipment and Furnishings industry sector, Steelcase moved up the ranks and took the second spot in the category, earning high remarks in all nine criteria. Other notable companies in the group include Whirlpool, Stanley Black & Decker and Newell Rubbermaid. Fortune describes the Most Admired list as the “definitive report card on corporate reputations.” Ranked by business experts through surveys, the companies featured on the list represent the pinnacle of excellence in nine key performance areas, from people management to global competitiveness. In the survey, Steelcase’s highest scores came in the Innovation, Social Responsibility and Quality of Products/Services categories. Read More

>Ted Moudis Associates released its 2016 Workplace Report, available for free download. The report offers comprehensive insight into how companies today are using their office space. It spans multiple industries and more than 2.5 million square feet of workspace built over the past two years. This wealth of data makes possible the discernment of several current and future trends, such as the move to more efficient footprints, a reduction of total area per occupant, the shift toward more communal workspace, and the gradual disappearance of paper from the office. Other trends identified in the report include:

- Benching/desking has become the prevailing solution for open plan, with 67% off all open workspaces now adopting this platform instead of traditional cubicles.

- Private offices accounted for just 11% of the more than 1,700 workspaces benchmarked, bringing the proportion of open plan workspace to an all-time high of 89%.

- On average, 47% of the seats available to staff were designated as “alternative seats,” in meeting rooms, cafés, lounges and quiet areas – driving the ratio of shared seats upwards to nearly one per every worker.

“These findings further validate the progressive strategies that are now being adopted by many organizations and firms which up until now had largely maintained traditional workspaces,” commented Justin Mardex, a senior associate and director of Workplace Strategy at Ted Moudis Associates. “Amenities and alternative workspaces are supporting mobility, collaboration and focus work in new ways.” Read More

>Teknion Corp. opened its redesigned showroom in Bangalore, India. The 320 m² (3,450 sf) space was redesigned by Ernest P. Greer, Principal of the Hong Kong-based consultancy g+, in conjunction with Teknion. Greer also designed Teknion’s international design center in
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. “Our new Bangalore showroom provides the perfect platform to showcase our design and manufacturing capabilities, while demonstrating our understanding of evolving workplace concepts,” said Terry McAllister, President, International Markets, Teknion. “It is also an ideal venue for us to extend our legacy as a knowledge leader internationally, while continuing to build dialog with local designers, architects, facilities managers and customers.”

The ground floor explores the breadth of Teknion and Teknion Studio portfolios through settings typical of today’s working styles – a conference room with the latest technology, manager’s cabin or private office, and a finishes area for reviewing surface materials, including the latest from Teknion Textiles. An “in-between” space serves as a touchpoint for non-resident workers, a haven for short-term, spontaneous interaction, or as a more traditional waiting area. The chair wall features products by Segis – a leader in Italian seating design and strategic partner of Teknion – whose designs complement the Teknion product range. Teknion’s architectural wall products define various spaces.

The mezzanine encompasses a piazza concept at the center of the space, encouraging interaction and the sharing of services. Dedicated worksettings – for employees who usually work in the office as part of a team or process – contrast with shared settings, for those who regularly work outside the office. Everyone has access to the Community Center to post messages and collect mail, and to make use of their personal lockers and the office service area.

In addition to the main Bangalore showroom, which opened a decade ago, Teknion operates a second showroom in India, in Gurgoan, Haryana.

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RE-SITED

> Caitlyn Cain joined the Kimball Office sales team as a Market Sales Manager, located in Denver, CO. Most recently Ms. Cain was with Shaw Industries as a Regional Commercial Specialist, responsible for regional commercial net sales growth, contribution dollar growth and sample expense. She continuously worked to build and develop relationships with key commercial customers, end users and A&D firms. Ms. Cain has a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a Concentration in Organizational Management from Colorado State University. She is an Industry Partner ASID, IIDA, an IFMA Member and is CEU instructor certified.

> Suzy O’Leary joined Galaxy Glass & Stone® as a Regional Manager for New England. Reporting directly to Executive Vice President Steven Brenner, Ms. O’Leary will be based in Boston and be responsible for developing and growing relationships with Architects and Designers in New England. “We are pleased to have Suzy as an addition to our team,” said Mr. Brenner. “She has a degree in Architecture and years of design, fabrication, construction, and sales experience which will be a great asset to Team Galaxy® and our customers.” Read More

> HDR Minneapolis Design Principal Mike Rodriguez describes the firm’s new Minneapolis office as “coffee shop meets design studio.” Located downtown in the Mayo Clinic Square entertainment district, the 10,000sf skyway studio encourages flexibility, interaction, and creativity. It features a glass storefront, an open hospitality-style kitchen, moveable multi-tier seating, and 30 feet of writeable dry-erase walls. There is no assigned seating, and staff choice, wellness, and collaboration are emphasized. The staff chooses where to sit based on workflow or mood—on a bench, soft furniture, at a bar-height table, or in semi-enclosed lounge seating. “We encourage our clients to think about the importance of providing memorable and inspiring
spaces; creating a diversity of opportunities for collaboration, interaction, or concentration; and telling the story of their brand through the design solution,” said Mr. Rodriguez. “Our studio now reflects our intent to create the most innovative, inspiring and flexible workspaces for studio members, clients, guests and the local community.”

“This truly is a space of collaboration,” said Managing Principal Jim Thomson. “The intent was for people to get up and interact, share ideas, and critically and positively review their peers’ work. We planned for this to be the case, but to see it in action is amazing!”

“Our new office layout transformed our office culture overnight,” said Brian Giebink, project architect. “We’re better connected and more involved with each other and all of the great things happening in our office. Every day is an adventure. Its unpredictable, dynamic nature aligns perfectly with our fast-paced office environment.”

“Oh, the options,” Digital Design Principal Rachel Riopel Wiley added. “I can work however I need to on any given day. I can’t deny that the location is amazing. There’s lots of energy outside the door, and inside the daylighting is great.”

“Louis Poulsen LP Circle LED ceiling lights offer creative inspiration to students at the Jack R. Lamb Elementary School in Tampa, FL. The ceilings become focal points for children in grades K-5 and the energy level is high in the hallways of this new East Hillsborough County school as they regard the artful display of constellations and meteor showers created by lighting. The design team led by Holmes Hepner & Associates Architects further enhanced the impact of the ceilings’ light designs by installing stained and polished concrete throughout the corridors that produce a reflective surface resulting in a mirrored effect allowing for the patterns to appear on the floor. The use of LED lighting, installed by Envision Lighting Systems, was key to accomplishing this goal, and the selection of the LP Circle, designed by Mikkel Beedhølm/KHR arkitekter, afforded the creative freedom needed due to the variety of sizes, colors and installation options including recessed, surface and suspended fixtures. The LP Circle provides diffuse downward directed light in a dimmable 0-10V with energy efficiency and smooth circular shape.”

ICFF®, will premiere ICFF Miami® Oct. 5-6 at the Miami Beach Convention Center. The fair will present hundreds of leading brands addressing every facet of better interiors for residential, hospitality, commercial, and high-end retail. It will feature lighting, furniture, seating, wall coverings, carpet and floorings, kitchen & bath, accessories, textiles, and materials, shown by top names and emerging designers from around the globe. Luxe Interiors + Design will join ICFF Miami with a major pavilion feature showcasing the finest luxury brands offering classic contemporary styling. “Miami is one of the strongest marketplace for our Luxe Interiors + Design brand,” said Janice Browne, SVP, Group Publisher, of Luxe Media Group. “It is a hotbed
of luxury development and a preferred investment destination for high wealth individuals from all over the globe.”

“The ICFF team has been working to bring the ICFF to Miami Beach for over two years,” said Kevin O’Keefe, ICFF Event Director. “You can be very sure we will deliver a spectacular platform to our exhibitors and attendees in October – expect a landmark event in the design industry.” Registration opens Jun. 28. 

—IIDA will present SunCon this Thursday, Feb. 25, at the Broward Convention Center in Fort Lauderdale, FL. Now in its fourth year, SunCon is considered a must-attend event for commercial interior professionals in South Florida. It is a hub for vibrantly connecting interior designers, architects, facility managers, dealers, design students, and other industry members to innovative ideas and the latest leading-edge products in the industry. At SunCon, attendees have numerous networking opportunities as well as exhibitor recognition and awards, and a plethora of booth displays by contract manufacturers from around the world. The event kicks off with event registration ($25 at the door) at 9:00 a.m. For a supplementary $25, SunCon attendees can register to take “The ABC’s of the New ADA and the FACBC Advanced.” Taught by Larry M. Schneider, AIA, the course will run from 9:30-11:30 a.m., and has been approved by the BOAID as a two-hour advanced building code course. At 3:00 p.m., Knoll Director of Workplace Strategy Andrea Sarate will be this year’s SunCon keynote speaker. The SunCon cocktail party begins at 5:00 p.m., followed by the People’s Choice and Student Awards at 6:00 p.m., and the event will draw to a close by 7:30 p.m. 

—IIDA Illinois Chapter will host Photobash on Thursday, Mar. 3 at Loft 644 in Chicago. 5:30-9:30 p.m. At this annual social event, members and guests can have their headshot taken by a professional photographer in front of one of many donated backdrops. This year IIDA-IL has invited The Society of Typographic Arts Chicago Chapter to celebrate their organization’s members as well. A few of the many backdrops at the event will be designed by STA members. Framed wallcoverings and STA patterns will be raffled off at the end of the night for guests to take home. Please Note: IIDA Illinois is hosting two Photobash events on the same night. For members who wish to register for the Photobash in Central Illinois, it will take place at Swingers Grille in Normal, IL, 5:30-9:00 p.m. 

—NeoCon organizers announced a schedule change to this year’s keynote programming. As we reported in last week’s issue (2.15.16), the speakers are David Rockwell, Paul Scialla, and Oana Stanescu, but the dates of Mr. Rockwell’s and Mr. Scialla’s presentations are now switched. The first day of the fair, Monday, Jun. 13, will be kicked off with Mr. Scialla’s keynote presentation, and Mr. Rockwell will take the stage on Tuesday, Jun. 14. Ms. Stanescu’s keynote is still scheduled for Wednesday, Jun. 15.

—New York Build, Mar. 7-8 at Javits Center in NYC, is a leading construction event for the Tri-State area, and tickets are free. It is attended by thousands of contractors, architects, developers and construction professionals from across the region. The event features an exhibition with more than 150 booths, free-to-attend conference and training workshops, “Meet the Buyer” sessions, and extensive networking opportunities.
RAYMOND JAMES BRIEF 2.16.16

Knoll: Reaffirm Outperform; 4Q15 Sales and Adjusted EPS Beat

Analysts: Budd Bugatch, Bobby Griffin, David Vargas

**Recommendation:** We are reaffirming our Outperform rating on KNL, despite trimming our target price to $24 (~32% upside) following Knoll’s 4Q15 earnings release and conference call. Despite facing a slowing office furniture environment, Knoll continues to execute well and its diversification strategy (shift towards more high-end residential) continues to bear fruit, illustrated by 4Q15’s sales and adjusted EPS beat. Accordingly, our positive investment thesis remains intact. After a strong year of margin improvement in 2015, we believe Knoll’s margins will improve further over the next few years as a result of: (1) a reasonably “ok” domestic office furniture environment mixed with company-specific actions to improve operating efficiency in Knoll’s office furniture segment; (2) a benefit (to a lesser degree than 2015) on office segment gross margins from the weak Canadian dollar (vs. the USD); and (3) further diversification and penetration into the ultra-high end residential furniture segment (spearheaded by Knoll’s Holly Hunt business). All of these aspects should drive improving financial metrics for earnings, cash flows, financial strength, as well as a rising dividend payout.

**4Q15 sales/adj. EPS beat.** As detailed in a prior brief, Knoll reported 4Q15 adjusted EPS of $0.43, better than our $0.42 estimate (also consensus). More impressively, total sales increased 6.7% y/y to $305.7 million, above our $296 million estimate and $300 million consensus.

**Shift towards higher margin business.** Today, ~38% of sales and ~61% of profits derive from outside Knoll’s N.A office segment. Furthermore, the operating margins on both Knoll’s Studio and Coverings segments are substantially higher than its office furniture margins. Moving forward the strategy is pretty straightforward: Management aims to drive further growth in its Studio and Coverings segments, while improving the operating performance in its office furniture segment. Collectively, this should continue to drive further consolidated margin improvement. Recall, Knoll is the newest office furniture manufacturer to lean manufacturing principles, and its current office furniture margins are well below its industry peers, illustrating the potential opportunity.

**Guidance:** Knoll does not provide formal guidance, but in the video released concurrent with the earnings results, CEO Andrew Cogan remarked that he believes Knoll can improve its operating margin by 100 basis points annually based on improving profitability in its office segment and a more profitable mix of revenue (described above).

**Estimates:** We are shaving our 2016 adj. EPS estimate to $1.62 from $1.63. Our new model assumes a higher overall tax rate in 2016 (37.5% versus 36.5%). Knoll’s 2015 tax rate was artificially low due to higher R&D tax credits that will not repeat again in 2016.

### Industry Stock Prices

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*DJIndust*
**BUSINESS AFFAIRS**

> AIA reported the January Architecture Billings Index score was 49.6, down slightly from the mark of 51.3 in the previous month. The new projects inquiry index was 55.3, down from a reading of 60.5 in December, and the design contracts index was 50.9, down very slightly from 51.0 in December. (Every January the AIA research department updates the seasonal factors used to calculate the ABI, resulting in a revision of recent ABI values.)

“The fundamentals are mostly sound in the nonresidential design and construction market,” said AIA Chief Economist Kermit Baker, Hon. AIA, PhD. “January was a rocky month throughout the economy, with falling oil prices, international economic concerns, and with steep declines in stock market valuations in the U.S. and elsewhere. Some of the fallout of this uncertainty may have affected progress on design projects.”

Regional three-month moving averages showed the West with the highest ABI (50.8), followed by Northeast (50.4), South (50.3), and Midwest (48.9). By sector, multi-family residential scored highest (51.9), followed by commercial/industrial (50.5), institutional (49.9), and mixed practice (49.0). www.aia.org/press/releases/AIAB108080

> AIA’s semi-annual Consensus Construction Forecast is projecting that spending will increase just more than eight percent in 2016, with next year’s projection being an additional 6.7% gain. Current survey results indicated significant demand for hotels, office space, manufacturing facilities, and amusement and recreation spaces.

“All indicators signal that the demand for design industry services should maintain momentum into 2016 as economic and labor markets continue to advance,” said Jack Kleinhenz, ASID economist. “I’m not overly concerned about the recent contractionary readings, as their overall trend remains in expansionary territory. Nevertheless, construction spending will continue to show fits and starts, and some backpedaling is probable to show up in the cards.”

Design firms experienced a modest downturn in December across all sizes of firms compared to September. December IDBI billings show contraction across all sizes of firms since September, with the exception of firms employing 10 to 24 people (IDBI score of 60). During 2015, both sole proprietors and firms employing 2 to 9 people experienced mild volatility in demand but were in expansionary territory. New positive indicators for January suggest that December’s soft demand is temporary.

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**Market Segment Consensus Growth Forecasts**

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<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amusement / recreation</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare facilities</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public safety</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The AIA Consensus Construction Forecast Panel is conducted twice a year with the leading nonresidential construction forecasters in the United States including, Dodge Data & Analytics, Wells Fargo Securities, IHS-Global Insight, Moody’s economy, com, CMD Group, Associated Builders & Contractors and FMI. www.aia.org/press/AIAB108071

> ASID released the fourth-quarter 2015 Interior Design Billings Index on Feb. 18. Overall, business conditions in 2015 were healthy and supportive of the design industry, building on momentum from the previous year. The average IDBI score of 57.2 was identical to its 2014 figure. The ASID indices are centered on a score of 50; above 50 indicates expansion and below 50 indicates contraction. In addition, project inquiries scores continue to remain high, with an average of 60.7, slightly below 62.7 posted in 2014. Key drivers to the continued growth across the interior design industry included renewed growth in housing and construction activity.

“All indicators signal that the demand for design industry services should maintain momentum into 2016 as economic and labor markets continue to advance,” said Jack Kleinhenz, ASID economist. “I’m not overly concerned about the recent contractionary readings, as their overall trend remains in expansionary territory. Nevertheless, construction spending will continue to show fits and starts, and some backpedaling is probable to show up in the cards.”

Design firms experienced a modest downturn in December across all sizes of firms compared to September. December IDBI billings show contraction across all sizes of firms since September, with the exception of firms employing 10 to 24 people (IDBI score of 60). During 2015, both sole proprietors and firms employing 2 to 9 people experienced mild volatility in demand but were in expansionary territory. New positive indicators for January suggest that December’s soft demand is temporary.
All regions indicated business conditions had weakened at the close of the year. The South and Midwest regions reported IDBI scores of 41 and 47, a decline in month-over-month billings. Both regions spent the past 12 months with positive IDBI scores above 50. The Northeast, after enjoying strong second and third quarters, stayed above an IDBI of 50 until December, when it dipped to 46. The West ended the year with a fourth quarter average of 45, down from its third quarter IDBI average of 52.

Total construction spending for November was .4% lower than October, but 10.5% higher than in November 2014. Private construction, both residential and commercial, was the driver of 2015 growth. Spending on private residential structures, particularly excluding home improvement, was a consistent performer, where single-family and multi-family spending has been upbeat.

Looking forward, the design industry remains positive about its near-term outlook. The December six-month business conditions index score of 68 is a slight uptick from the September score of 66, indicating expected increases in billing. The consistency of these scores suggests continued expansion for the design industry. https://officeinsight.com/officenewswire/asisdbillings-index-shows-design-industry-momentum-to-start-2016/

>Mohawk Industries, Inc. will post its fourth-quarter 2015 earnings release on Thursday, Feb. 25, with a conference call webcast scheduled for Friday, Feb. 26, 11:00 a.m. Eastern Time. The call will be webcast live via the Investor Information section of Mohawk’s website. To participate in the call, please dial 1-800-603-9255 (US/Canada) or 1-706-634-2294 (Int’l/Local); Conference ID: 24993589. For those unable to listen at the designated time, the webcast will remain available for replay until Friday Mar. 25 over Mohawk’s investor relations website and at 1-855-859-2056 (US/Canada) or 1-404-537-3406 (Int’l/Local); Conference ID # 24993589. http://mohawk-kind.com/CorporateIRNewsReleases.aspx

>Mohawk Industries, Inc. also reported several developments in a Form 8-K filed with the SEC on Feb. 19:

- On Feb. 18, John F. Fiedler informed the company that he will not stand for re-election as a director effective as of the end of his current term, which expires at Mohawk’s annual meeting to be held on May 19.

- On Feb. 18, the company elected Filip Balcaen to serve on its board of directors. Mr. Balcaen will serve as a Class II director, with a term scheduled to expire at Mohawk’s Annual Meeting to be held in 2018. Mr. Balcaen is president of Baltisse N.V., a private investment firm headquartered in Belgium, a position he has held since Dec. 21, 2006. He has extensive experience leading and growing businesses in the flooring industry. He began his career in flooring in 1984 working in various positions at the Balta Group, one of the largest producers of textile floor coverings in Europe, where he served as board member from 1990 to 2015 and CEO and Chairman from 1990 to 2004. He was also the indirect owner of 100% of the IVC Group, a global manufacturer of luxury vinyl tile and sheet vinyl flooring products, where he served as CEO from 2004 to 2010 and then as chairman until 2015. On Jan. 13, 2015, Mohawk and Unilin BVBA, a subsidiary of the company, entered into a share purchase agreement with Mr. Balcaen and Enterhold S.A. regarding the purchase of the IVC Group, which was completed in June 2015. At the closing, Unilin paid to Enterhold €665,575,916.92 and transferred to Enterhold 805,811 shares of the company’s Common Stock, which are subject to a registration rights agreement between Enterhold and the company. An additional €15,000,000.00 is held in escrow by ING Luxembourg SA for the benefit of Enterhold pending resolution of any indemnification claims arising out of the acquisition. In addition, in connection with the closing Unilin provided funds for (i) the payoff of €146,827,013.12 in principal and interest owed by the IVC Group to entities that are wholly owned by Mr. Balcaen, and (ii) the purchase from Baltissimo N.V. of a warehouse facility related to the IVC business for €2,880,000.00. Each of Enterhold and Baltissimo N.V. are wholly owned by Mr. Balcaen.
- Effective Feb. 18, Mohawk’s board of directors approved amendments to the company’s Restated Bylaws to implement majority voting in uncontested director elections. (Please see the Form 8-K for more details.) http://mohawkind.com/Corporate-IRSECFilings.aspx

> Steelcase Inc. reported in a Form 8-K filed Feb. 19 that on Feb. 18, Director R. David Hoover notified the company that he does not want to be nominated for re-election to the board of directors. Mr. Hoover has been a member of the Board since 2012, and his term on the board will end at the company’s 2016 annual shareholders’ meeting. Mr. Hoover has indicated that he is retiring from the Board for personal reasons and not because of any disagreement with the company on any matter. http://ir.steelcase.com/financials.cfm

TECHNOLOGY

> Humanscale’s M/Connect universal docking station, launched last month at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, is now available to order. An integrated monitor arm base and docking station offered with Humanscale’s best-selling line of monitor arms, M/Connect unites technology and ergonomics to enhance the computing experience. It provides universal device accommodation, easy access to user connections, and high-speed charging—all while eliminating desktop cable clutter.

The debut of M/Connect targets key trends emerging in contract design: the shrinking office, the connected office, health and wellness at work, and the rise of hot-desking. M/Connect is purposefully engineered to place active ports above the desk and passive ports below. It provides universal connectivity with a small footprint, offering easy access to user ports and concealing IT connections and cords with its cable management system.

Consisting of two levels, M/Connect’s USB hub resides on the work surface and provides four USB ports plus a combo headphone/microphone jack directly in front of the user. The undersurface dock includes three USB ports, an HDMI and DisplayPort connection for video, and a Gigabit Ethernet port for the network/Internet connectivity. Each level contains one high-speed charging port. https://officeinsight.com/ officenews-wire/humanscales-mconnect-combines-ergonomic-comfort-with-universal-connectivity/

SUDOKU

Fill in the empty cells so that every row, column and cube contains a digit from 1-9, without duplication. (Level: Easy)
Rep Group or Independent Sales Reps - New York Area and Georgia (including Tennessee, Alabama & Mississippi)

Fast growing, high-end, MADE IN AMERICA, contract furniture maker is seeking an Independent Sales Representative or Rep Group to lead sales growth in strategic market areas.

Responsibilities: Managing existing and new accounts, improving and building new relationships, prospecting potential clients, preparation and delivery of sales presentations.

Requirements: Minimum of 5-years office furniture industry experience required, dealer or design experience preferred. Ideal candidate will be a self-starter, motivated, goal-oriented, enthusiastic, team player.

We have over 500 employees in three facilities located in three prominent domestic furniture manufacturing region in the United States. While there are many employees, we work much like a family. This translates to a positive team approach and providing proactive, quick responses to the needs of the marketplace.

At National, we believe in having a world-class team that champions growth, diversity and operational excellence. We are creating an environment that inspires an insatiable desire to learn, stretch and do things better every day. We have immediate openings and are seeking individuals to be key players on our team.

District Manager Positions

Washington/Oregon
(preferred location Seattle, WA or Portland, OR)

New Jersey
New York (preferred location New York City)

These positions are responsible for territory management with focused attention on dealer development, vertical market end-users as well as the A+D community.

Successful candidates must:

• Be personally responsible, focused and effective utilizing full array of resources for sustained growth
• Leverage sales tools, such as our enhanced dealer programs, new product introductions and exciting sales incentives
• Focus on areas of opportunity within our key vertical markets and identify opportunities to exploit for future growth in the market
• Develop and follow-through on long term strategies to win project business
• Possess strong communication and organizational skills in addition to strong business planning and business development skills
• Have the proven ability to manage and develop key accounts
• Be analytical thinkers with creative problem solving aptitude for overcoming business challenges
• Have a sound foundation in report analysis with excellent understanding of sales and marketing functions
• Hold extensive knowledge of the office furniture industry and 3+ years of demonstrated successful sales growth

As a business unit of Kimball International, we offer an attractive salary and flexible benefits package including a retirement plan with 401(K) feature.

National is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, genetic information, disability or protected veteran status.

To learn more and apply for these positions, go to www.NationalOfficeFurniture.com/Careers.
Sales Representative - Seattle/Portland

Luna Textiles, an innovative, international contract textile company based in San Francisco currently has an excellent opportunity for a dynamic and highly motivated sales professional.

The individual will have responsibility for the sales and service of the Greater Seattle region plus the city of Portland. The candidate must be based in Seattle. No relocation will be considered.

National Sales Manager - Dallas, TX

Smith System is seeking a National Sales Manager to report to the VP of Sales to call on school districts, A&D community and dealers. The preferred location of the candidate is at our factory in the DFW area.

Essential Functions:
> Willing to travel extensively to areas not currently covered by our Regional Sales Managers.
> Self planned, scheduled and executed calls with schools, dealers and A&D firms.
> Dynamic personality for presentations.
> Proven success developing relationships to drive growth and new business.

Required Experience:
> 5 years in school furniture or contract furniture world.
> Solid presenter and closer.
> Proficient in Microsoft Office applications.

Please send your cover letter and resume in confidence to Molly@smithsystem.com

We are an Equal Opportunity Employer

Rep Group Partner - New York, NY

This is a great opportunity to become a partner in a long established rep firm in the New York City market.

Pringle Ward, a highly respected organization with high volume lines is looking for an experienced person to join our sales group as a partner. No financial investment is needed. A combination of ambition and experience will help to secure your future in office furniture. As a partner you will be a major part of our organization with the opportunity establish financial security.

For more information contact: Roy Lamendola rlamendola@pringleward.com 212-689-0300 Ex. 217

Lead Graphic Designer - Southern California

ERG International, a leader in Contract Furniture Manufacturing located in Southern California, is looking for a person to lead the Graphics/Design Department.

Qualified person would have a Degree in Interior Design with heavy emphasis in Graphics and a minimum of 5 years work experience.

Join us in enjoying the exceptional Oxnard beaches! The company will consider relocation assistance on an individual basis.

Interested candidates should contact ERG International by sending their resume and salary request via email to: sales@erginternational.com.
**Textile Designer** - Orangeburg, NY

**Arc-Com** is a premier supplier of contract textiles and wallcovering. We have a proud reputation built on excellence, strong customer satisfaction, and expertise in developing innovative and high performance products for all contract markets. Arc-Com’s corporate office is located 15 minutes north of the George Washington Bridge, in Orangeburg, N.Y.

The Arc-Com Design Team creates and introduces innovative and high performance textile products for the corporate, hospitality, healthcare and institutional markets. We are expanding our Textile Design Team and are looking for a creative Designer to work on product development.

**Position Requirements:**

> Foundation knowledge of the contract industry

> Ability to create and modify artwork digitally is essential

> CAD experience, specifically Photoshop & Illustrator.

> Excellent Pattern and Development skills.

> Strong color sense.

> Experience in woven textiles and fabric constructions.

> Knowledgeable with test requirements. Flammability, Crocking, Colorfastness, and Abrasion.

> Experience working with contract textile mills.

> Excellent follow-up and communication skills.

> Strong organizational and analytical abilities.

> Must have own transportation.

Please email resume to Niacovone@arc-com.com.


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**Furniture Consultant** - NYC

**Furniture Consultants** is looking for a new career minded designerSpecifier to join our design team. Applicants must have a bachelor’s degree in architecture, interior design, or industrial design.

The ideal candidate would have experience in contract furniture, systems furniture and the design of commercial spaces. We are a NYC based dealership representing hundreds of manufacturers. Our services include space planning, specification of different furniture and wall systems and custom designed solutions.

We are looking for a creative problem solver with close attention to detail. Proficiency in AutoCAD is a must. Expertise with a variety of software packages, including Project Matrix, CET Designer, Team Design, and Microsoft Excel highly desirable. Proven ability to interface and communicate effectively with manufacturers, clients, design firms and internal team members is a must.

Interested candidates should send a resume to: Sylvia.herrera@e-fci.com

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**Sales Representative** - Philadelphia

**Momentum Group**, a leading supplier of contract textiles, is growing and seeking a new Sales Representative in Philadelphia, PA.

**Position Purpose:**

To provide best in class service to client base including furniture manufacturers, designers, purchasing firms and end users via product/industry knowledge, introduction of new product, knowledge of new technologies and innovation as it pertains to textiles and the specification process. Increase profitable sales as designated in the strategic plan, as well as working within expense guidelines unique to each territory.

**Qualifications:**

> Bachelor’s Degree

> 2-3 years of industry experience in a contract/commercial market.

> Candidates with experience selling contract textiles or dealer sales persons highly desired.

> IIDA and/or NEWH membership or affiliation desired.

> Must live Philadelphia, PA

> Excellent presentation Skills Required

> Must be computer proficient

> Online Applications only!

Multi-Line or Direct Sales Representative - Textiles/Wallcoverings - Eastern PA/Delaware/Southern NJ Territory

Carnegie, a leading textile/wallcovering company is seeking multi-line or direct representation in the Eastern Pennsylvania/Delaware/South NJ territory. Sales experience in the A+D community is required. Candidates must be self-motivated, entrepreneurial, with excellent communication and interpersonal skills. Interested candidates should submit their resume along with a cover letter to Erika Gaies, Vice President Sales:
egaies@carnegiefabrics.com.

Multi-Line or Direct Sales Representative - Textiles/Wallcoverings - Colorado/Utah Territory

Carnegie, a leading textile/wallcovering company is seeking multi-line representation for our Colorado/Utah territory. Sales experience in the A+D community is required. Candidates must be self-motivated, entrepreneurial, with excellent communication and interpersonal skills. Interested candidates should submit their resume along with a cover letter to Leah Van Loan, Executive Vice President Sales:
lvanloan@carnegiefabrics.com.