

# Workplaces

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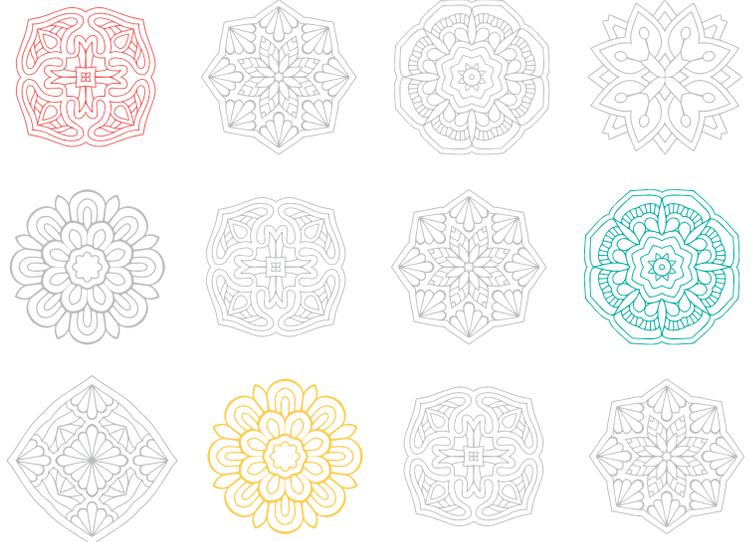
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Interior Design Billing Index & Research from ASID | NeoCon  
Chicago Clarkenwell Design Week | Simplicity in Design Roundtable  
MullenLowe's Office in Former Tobacco Factory is Smokin' | Giraldi  
Architects Transforms its Headquarters in Florence | Growing Vineyard  
Vines | Create a Quintessential Home Office | Truly Green Office or  
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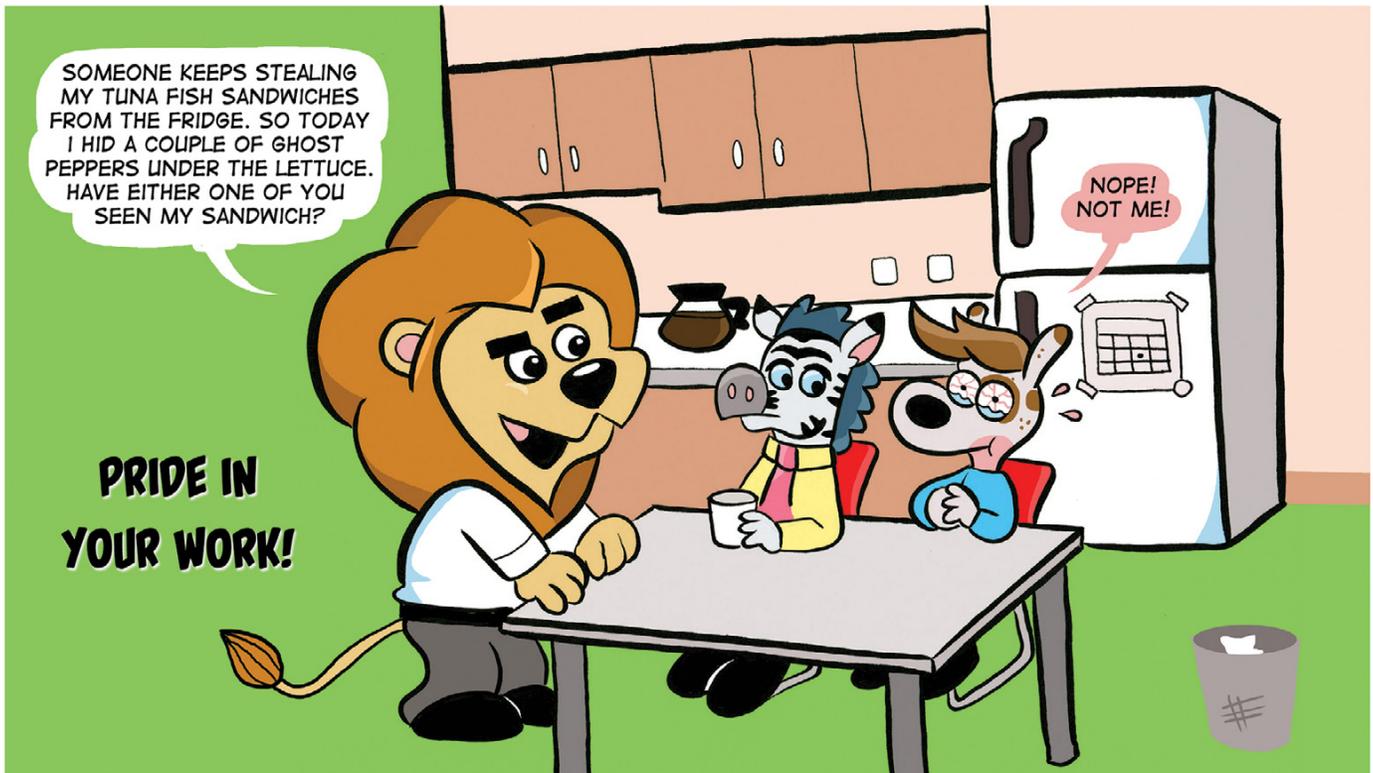
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Clerkenwell Design Week is a quirky, powerful, bold and increasingly important event for the interiors industry. The three-day event, held at the end of May in one of London’s most important architecture and design hubs, packed in nearly 40,000 visitors to see the latest in new products, new ideas and new trends that will affect how people work for years to come.

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# SIX-MONTH OUTLOOK: DESIGN INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO EXPECT FAVORABLE FUTURE OUTCOMES



Looking forward the design industry remains optimistic about the near term outlook for business conditions. The six-month business conditions index score of 63.4 for March was virtually unchanged from the December score of 63.6 and markedly higher than September (59) and June (57) scores. The consistency of these scores (above 50) going back over twelve months argues for continued expansion for the design industry.

The Conference Board's March expectations sub-index of its overall consumer confidence measure jumped nearly 7.4 points from December to 113.8. It is now at its highest level since 2000. Business expectations continue to improve and consumers also expressed much greater optimism regarding the short-term outlook for business, jobs, and personal income prospects.

The Dodge Momentum Index increased 6.7 percent in March to 144.4 (2000=100) from its revised December reading of 135.32 and was 29 percent higher than the same month a year earlier. According to Dodge Data & Analytics, The Momentum Index has now risen for six consecutive months and continues to signal the potential for increased construction activity in 2017.

Taken together, the ASID six-month interior design business conditions index, the Conference Board's expectations index and the Dodge Momentum Index reflect an improving broader economy and that spending for design services will continue over the next six months.

Table 4: Expectations for Interior Design Business Conditions

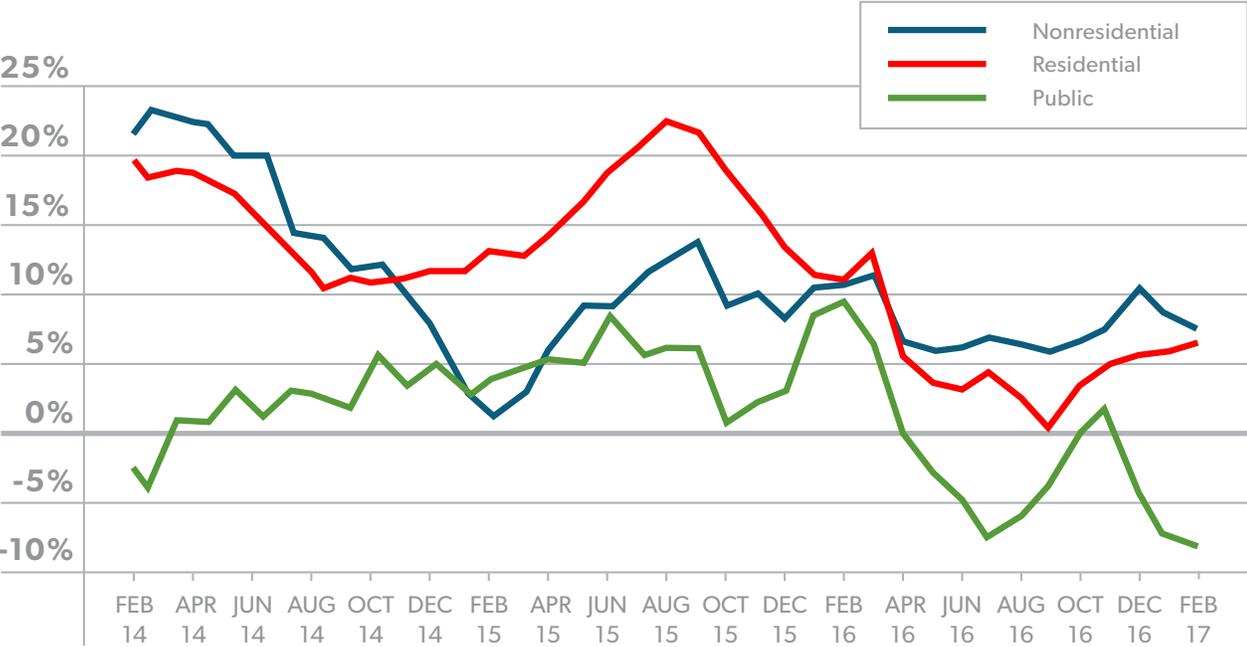
MARCH 2017

Expectations	ASID
About the same	55%
Better than they are now	36%
Worse than they are now	9%
Business Six-month Outlook Index	63.4

# CONSTRUCTION SPENDING SHOWS STRONG GAINS

U.S. construction spending in February rose to a decade high spurred by strong gains in residential construction spending. Total construction spending for February was \$1.93 trillion, 0.8 percent higher than in January and 3 percent higher than in February 2016. Private residential construction spending, which includes residential, nonresidential, and home improvement was \$484.7 billion, a 1.8 percent increase from the previous month and 6.4 percent higher than last February. While total nonresidential spending was relatively unchanged from a month earlier, it increased 7.4 percent year-over-year. Public spending increased 0.6 percent in February but is down 8 percent year-over-year.

**Figure 9: U.S. Construction Spending - Year-over-year Percent Change** FEBRUARY 2014 TO FEBRUARY 2017



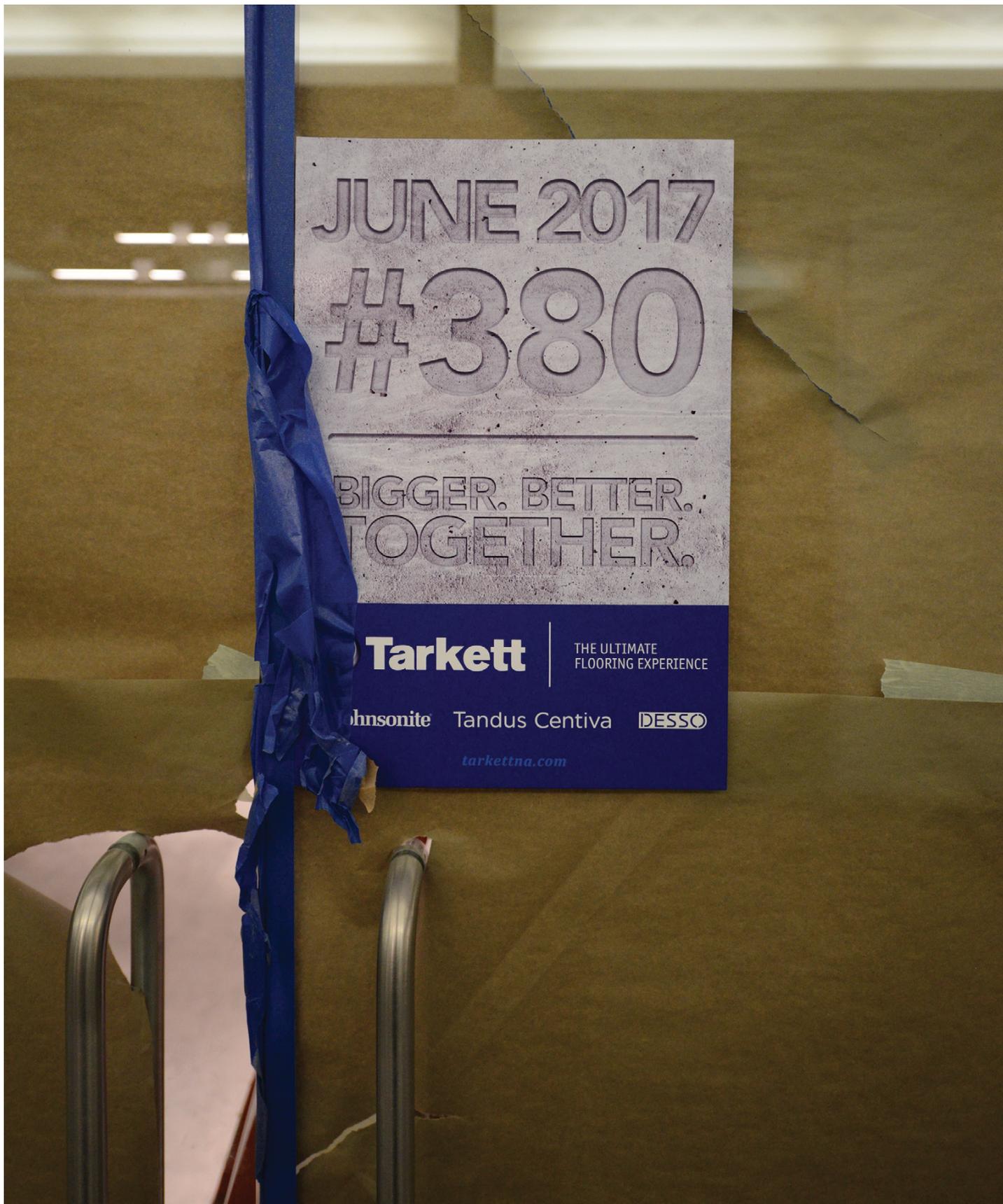
Residential improvement spending (Figure 10) amounted to \$162,683 million in February, 3 percent higher than January and 10 percent more than the same month a year earlier. According to the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, strong and stable growth is predicted for the home improvement and repair market in 2017. Propelling this growth are healthy gains in home prices that are encouraging home modeling reinvestments.



The 49th edition of NeoCon, the premier, global platform for connecting, learning and conducting business in commercial interiors, will draw more than 50,000 design professionals from across the globe to theMART, June 12-14. For almost five decades, NeoCon has served as a launch pad for innovation, offering ideas and intro-

ductions that continue to shape the built environment. The industry's definitive gathering place, NeoCon, is where macro-trends such as "the future of the office" and "wellness" gain momentum and become part of the collective conversation. *Workplaces* magazine will be on site during the show. **Stop by and say hello at 7-5113.**









**Clerkenwell Design Week** is a quirky, powerful, bold and increasingly important event for the interiors industry. The three-day event, held at the end of May in one of London's most important architecture and design hubs, packed in nearly 40,000 visitors to see the latest in new products, new ideas and new trends that will affect how people work for years to come.

The event has gained in importance and scale since its inception seven years ago. In 2016, about 35,000 visitors attended the festival — representing about 70 countries. Much is put into CDW by the showrooms there, mainly because 65 percent of the visitors are architects and designers. Last year nearly 100 showrooms participated and all of them are within walking distance of each other (there are an additional 50 or so “fringe” participants, which are a short distance away from the neighborhood. In 2016 there were more than 300 exhibiting brands.

Unlike some industry events that are too buttoned down, CDW knows how to party. On Thursday, so many people were attending showroom parties they spilled out into the street, making it nearly impossible to walk through the throngs of people. There are more parties than you can shake a Pimm's cup at.

Yes, most of the big guys are at CDW. Steelcase, Knoll, Haworth and Humanscale all have permanent showrooms in the Clerkenwell neighborhood, which isn't a surprise when one considers the neighborhood has the highest concentration of designers and architects in the world.

But the exciting products are coming from the smaller domestic furniture makers and those from abroad who understand the importance of the event. A good example is Boss Design, which has a large showroom on the neighborhood's busiest road to show off new products. Lyndon, a brand by Boss Design used CDW as a platform to launch a new sofa and chair collection, along with the new 120 table range designed by Mark Gabbertas. During the exhibition, visitors also had the opportunity to see a new color pallet of the Agent collection.

CDW is an amazing venue for exploring new products and companies, many of whom want to find contract furnishings partners in North America. CDW is refreshing because of its quirkiness. Temporary showroom space includes a nightclub and the former Clerkenwell House of Detention, a prison that still has the “charm” of brick arches and rusting bars. Still, the owners of the small, bespoke furniture makers occupied the cells, that 100 years ago were home to prisoners. **WPM**











## Clerkenwell Design Week “Simplicity in Design” Roundtable

**SIMPLICITY IN DESIGN** means a lot of things to a lot of people. For some, it is the restraint shown by designers like George Nelson and Charles and Ray Eames, whose mid-century modern stripped down products to only those components necessary.

Many would say the Apple iPhone is a pillar of design in modern simplicity. But is it really? When asked to name an example of a product that is the opposite of simplicity in design, London architect and designer Colin Macgadie pointed to his iPhone.

“This is constantly making me crazy with how complex it is,” said Macgadie, chief creative officer at BDE architecture+design, during a fascinating discussion titled “Simplicity in Design” at the Humanscale showroom during Clerkenwell Design Week.

So just because a product looks simple doesn’t mean it performs simply. That was one of many lessons learned at the panel discussion moderated by Jeremy Myerson, the Helen Hamlyn chair of design at the Royal College of Art in London.

Simple looking designs, panelists agreed, are a good first step, but buildings and the products inside them need to be simple to use as well. The interface is almost as important as the product itself, argued Giuseppe Boscherini, who owns the London-based collaborative design firm Boscherini. “(Great) design happens when things are intuitive,” he said. “The first task of simplicity of design is asking questions about what is actually needed.”

Panelists gave other examples of designs they feel are simple, yet functional. Tyler noted the Rolling Bridge, a curling bridge that is part of the Grand Union Canal office and retail development project at Paddington Basin in London conceived by British designer Thomas Heatherwick and designed by SKM Anthony Hunt with Packman Lucas. Lhermitte picked Pantone 152, better known as safety orange, the bright color used on safety equipment because it is easily seen. **WPM**

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# MullenLowe's Office in Former Tobacco Factory is Smokin'



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**A**fter a successful teaming for the design of its Boston headquarters, MullenLowe engaged TPG Architecture to design its new office in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The 37,500-square-foot space is in the city's newly developed Wake Forest Innovation Quarter.

The office design was an opportunity to create a strong identity for MullenLowe as a “challenger” in the advertising industry, a scrappy, do-everything ad firm with a global reach. MullenLowe's staff work in multiple disciplines for diverse clientele, so the space had to be flexible and inspirational.

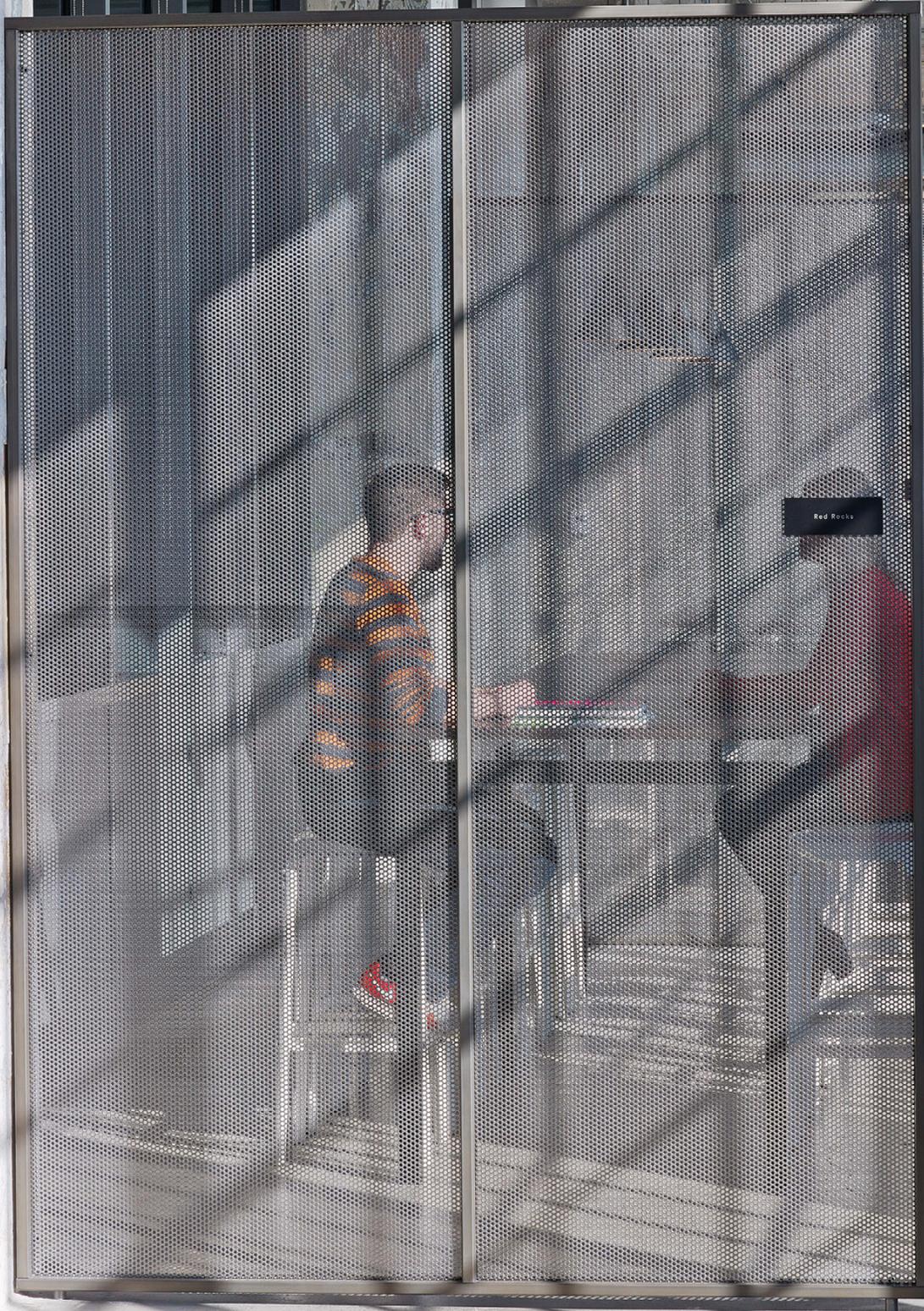
The space itself was breathtaking when the design team first walked through. Built in the 1930s, the building was originally a tobacco factory. A large, deep floor plate, 14-foot ceilings and metal-frame windows were the raw materials that provided the framework for the new offices. The design concept was to respect and celebrate the existing structure, leaving the walls and ceiling untouched by using floating free forms — rectangular boxes built between the columns — to create space within the space.

The L-shaped floor plate naturally split the space into two distinct wings. The reception area is situated at the vertex of the wings, in an existing open atrium with stairs to the lobby. By placing reception there and using the free form boxes to subdivide the space, the design team brought focus and continuity to the plan, dividing the raw space into functional neighborhoods and providing myriad open and inspiring creative environments.

The program required an assortment of collaborative spaces, including conference rooms, huddle booths, photo and recording studios and a media screening room with stadium seating. Structural columns and beams were left exposed, still coated with nearly a century of layered paint, which was minimally sandblasted to prevent peeling.

Finishes and furniture were inspired by the raw space. The freeform boxes are clad in plywood and dark gray painted sheetrock, while the chair colors were sampled from the peeling paint on the concrete walls. The designers devised a system of perforated metal screens to allow for magnetic pin-up space throughout the office without interrupting the openness and fluidity of the floor.

MullenLowe's space is more conducive for hosting events for local groups such as the Arts Council, as well as outside vendors, such as the local coffee house that provides the staff with an on-site barista. Internally, the open work environment and common areas allow for more accidental collisions and natural collaborations, all of which are selling points when hiring new talent and pitching clients. **WPM**



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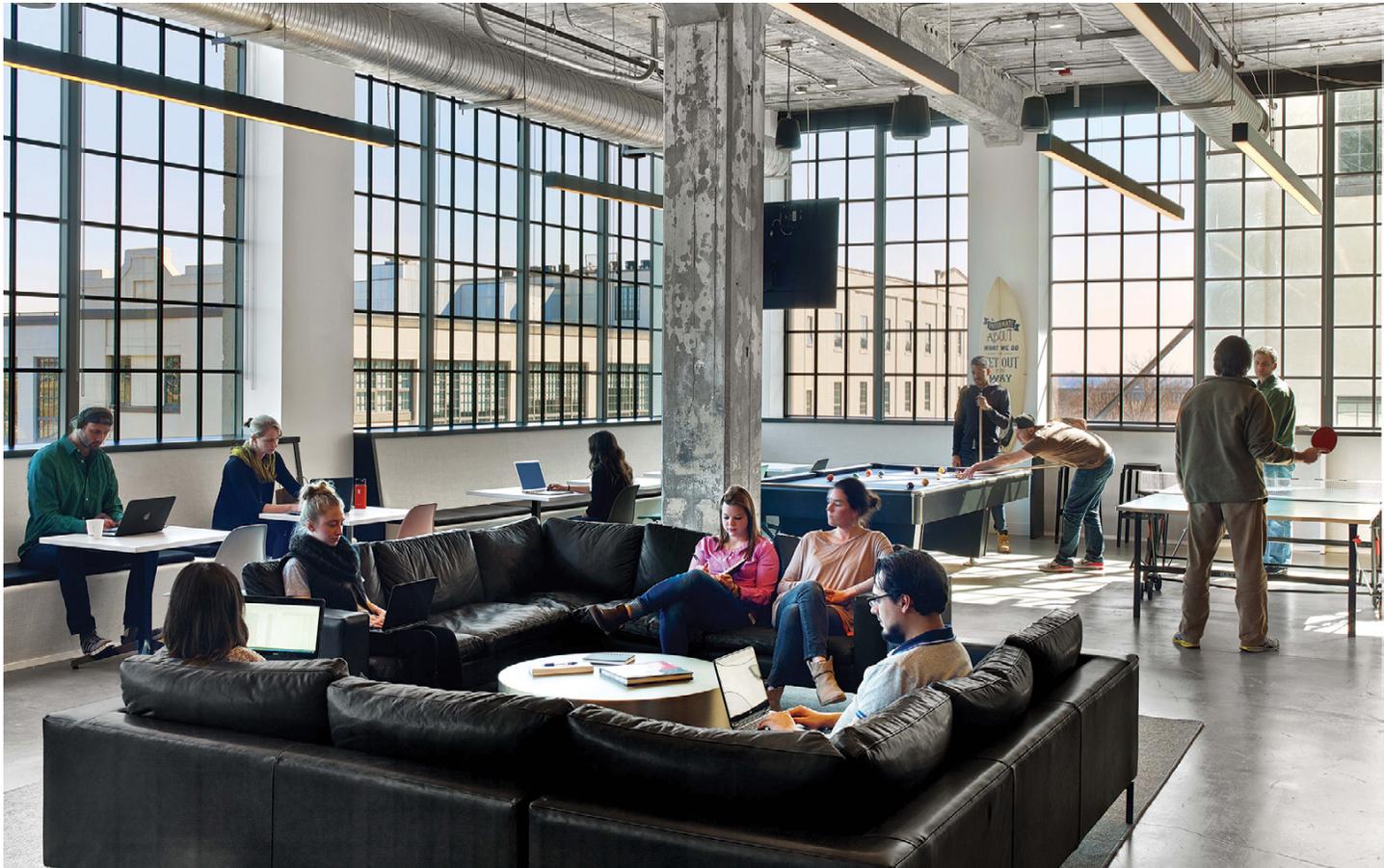
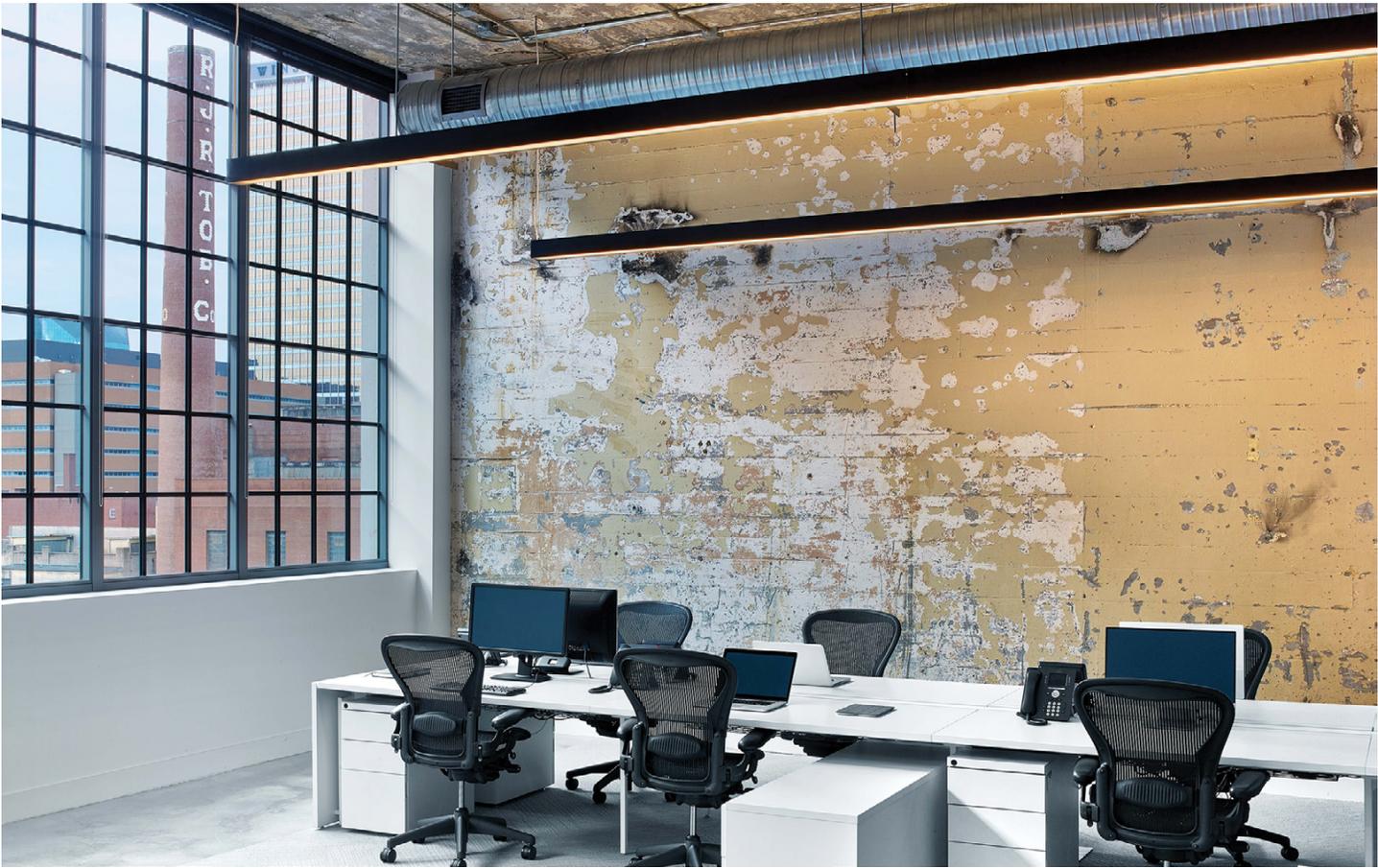


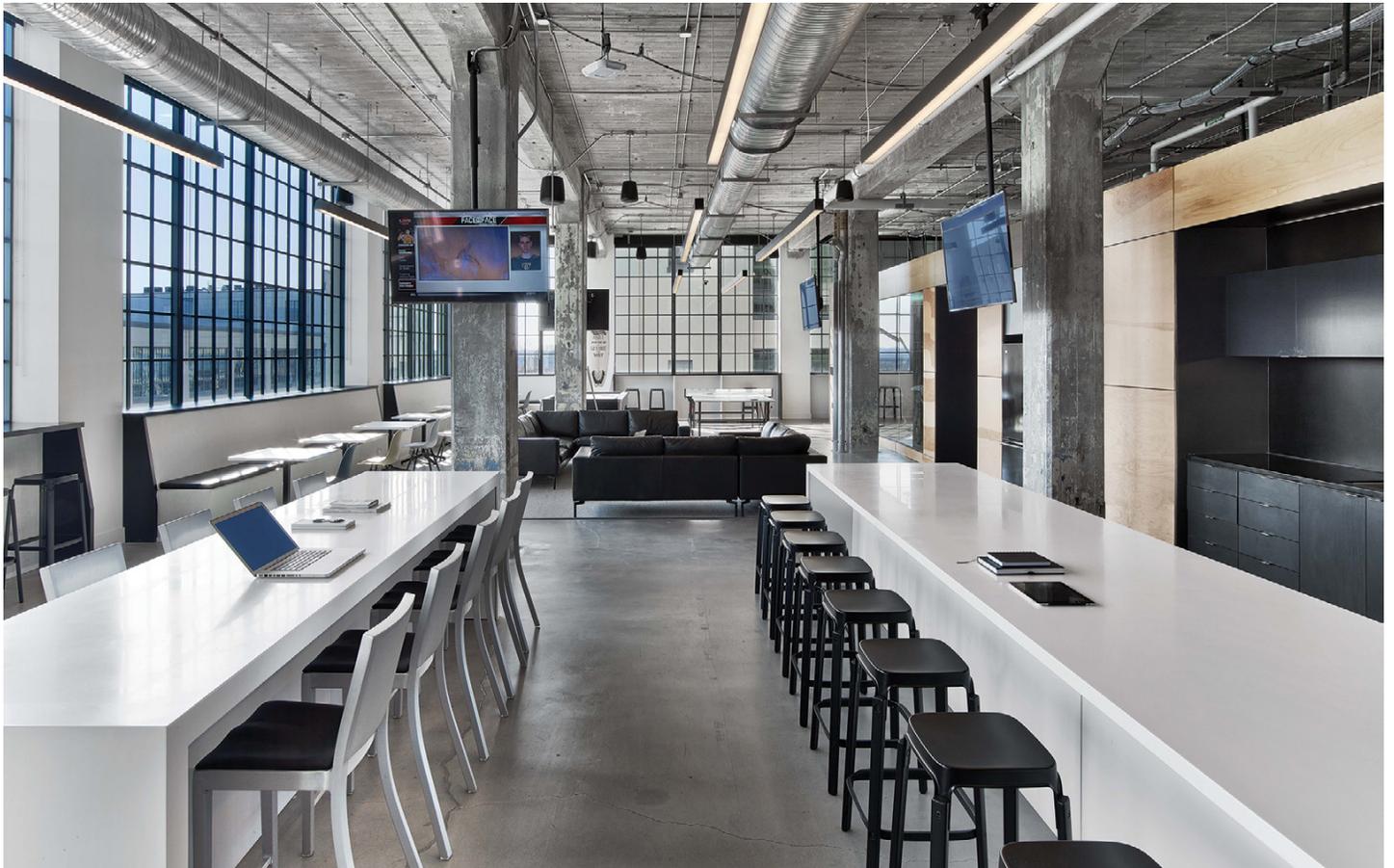


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# GIRALDI ARCHITECTS TRANSFORMS ITS HEADQUARTERS IN FLORENCE

Founded in 1997 by Architect Fulvio Giraldi, the design studio consists of five partners and 22 associates (all between the ages 27 and 40 years old).

**The Giraldi Associates Architects have relocated their headquarters in Florence to a 600-square-meter space inside the palace Antinori-Aldobrandini. Plasters and frescoes combine with the fresh and modern design, creating a unique workplace.**

Founded in 1997 by Architect Fulvio Giraldi, the design studio consists of five partners and 22 associates — all between the ages 27 and 40 years old. It is a growing studio — unusual for Florence where there are many organizations that have had to downsize their staff or even close.

At GAA, however, the atmosphere is new, exciting, young and dynamic, thanks to the spaces that define the company's strong communication and design identity.

The structure is divided into 11 areas, including rooms dedicated to design, testing new products and materials and meeting rooms. There is also a kitchen that gives colleagues the opportunity to interact during breaks and relax in an area where soft poufs land on the green carpet the color of the grass. The relaxation area will soon become a nursery, as there have been six births in the last year. The company believes it will be a service that will enhance the quality of life for the babies and the mothers who work there.

Giraldi has always desired to create a solid team able to share a quality work experience at the highest level, but also to be able to have fun and relax inside the office.

In the Santo Spirito neighborhood of Florence, among the alleys of beautiful handcrafted products and antiques, on one of the most important streets, rises up the historical residence built in 1400 by the Antinori Aldobrandini family. It was restructured in 1800 and recently modernized.

Just across the carriage gallery at the ground floor, visitors find a stone staircase decorated with marble statues and mirrored walls. The first floor is lit with natural light because of a glass wall that overlooks the internal garden.

On the right, a door covered by mirrors hides the studio of Giraldi Associates Architects. It is an office where the modern line of furniture contrasts with the pompous 19th century shell.

Passing through the entrance door, visitors' attention is caught by the GAA sign with blue LED and located on a cement panel. The blue light crashes on a Superonda sofa located under the panel. It bumps into the blaze coming from the

*story continued on page 57*













TERS BUILDING FLORENCE 2005/06 PROPOSAL











chandelier that lights up the rest of the corridor, exposing a reception counter made of white lacquered wood. A big cow covered by cardboard supervises this space. It is a piece of artwork by the artist Ziggurat. From the reception room, two doors lead to other spaces — the meeting room and the rooms dedicated to design.

A vault of the ceiling in the meeting room is completely painted with frescos, and at the core of the room, a long table of raw wood gathers together 12 seats. Through a Wi-Fi connection, presentations and videos can be broadcast on the monitor.

A marble fireplace created a warm space ready to host clients and professionals. From the meeting room, one enters into two rooms dedicated to design. The first one, cobbled with parquet floor, looks out onto the street and has big windows, while the second one has a view of the internal courtyard of the building. In this room, there are three long lines of white lacquered wood desks, while on the floor there is a green carpet that softens the magnificence of the ceiling entirely embellished with stuccos.

Crossing the hallway visitors find two big wood doors finished with golden frames, behind which is the third room dedicated to design. Two long, white lacquered wood desks welcome 12 seats, while at the core of the room, there is a glass table for samples and materials. The hall that also looks out onto the inner garden of the building, stands out for the presence of a red carpet that makes the space welcoming and contrasts with the magnificence of the marble fireplace and the stuccos on the ceiling.

Within this dynamic space, besides the design area, a place to relax plays an important role. This area has soft ottomans on a green carpet. Additionally, there is a kitchen that gives colleagues the opportunity to interact during breaks. No detail has been overlooked. Everything has been studied to give clients and designers the opportunity to have an inspiring workplace.

In the last part of the building, there are four smaller rooms. One of these is the personal office of architect Fulvio Giraldi. It is a reserved space that reflects his dynamic personality, including some fitness equipment.

The enlargement of the Florentine office, the renewed image, the graphics and the web site represent for the studio of Giraldi Associates Architects a creative and functional change of a team and focus — one that is in continuous evolution. **WPM**

# GROWING VINEYARD VINES

CLOSE YOUR EYES AND IMAGINE MARTHA'S VINEYARD. SEA BREEZES, SAILS FLAPPING IN THE WIND, AND LOBSTERS. THE ISLAND, SEVEN MILES OFF CAPE COD, IS THE INSPIRATION FOR THE VINEYARD VINES BRAND AND THE COMPANY'S FOUNDERS, BROTHERS SHEP AND IAN MURRAY WANTED VISITORS TO THEIR NEW OFFICE TO FEEL AS IF THEY WERE VISITING THE ISLAND. STORY BY ROB KIRKBRIDE



# Workplaces



# Workplaces

**T**he young and cool are the arbiters of fashion, and if you take a stroll around any campus in the country, you will see the happy pink whale logo of the brand Vineyard Vines on polo shirts and casual clothing everywhere you look. If you don't know the brand, ask your kids. They do. That's why the company needed a new office that reflected the preppy, nautical nature of its culture.

Close your eyes and imagine Martha's Vineyard. Sea breezes, sails flapping in the wind, and lobsters. The island, seven miles off Cape Cod, is the inspiration for the Vineyard Vines brand. The company's founders, brothers Shep and Ian Murray, wanted visitors to their new office to feel as if they were visiting the island.

That vision of the island lifestyle was delivered by the Atlantic Group, a furniture dealer with headquarters in New York and offices in Connecticut. The Vineyard Vines team wanted to get a feel for the Atlantic Group and find out if it would be a good fit for the project so it started with a casual conversation about workplace strategy and company culture.

"I didn't think that was going to be the start of the interview process," CEO of The Atlantic Group Companies Dave Spannaus says jokingly. "They wanted to understand all the things we do — to share our company philosophy."



# Workplaces





## Like many who grow up in Connecticut, the Murray brothers worked in Manhattan.

It was a good fit. Though Vineyard Vines spoke to five or six other office furniture dealers in the marketplace, they decided to move forward with just three. The Atlantic Group was invited to do a mock-up of how it envisioned the Vineyard Vines office. The two companies had very similar visions for the new 91,000-square-foot office in Stamford, Connecticut, that brought together a number of offices into a single location on the water.

Like many who grow up in Connecticut, the Murray brothers worked in Manhattan. The pair decided that commuting into the city wasn't for them. They spent every summer on Martha's Vineyard, which made them huge fans of the water, fishing and having fun. When they were younger, they played in various bands, recorded albums, started assorted small businesses and always combined their earnings to buy the best old boat they could find, so they could head out on the water and escape life from time to time.

In the late 1990s, the brothers found themselves miserable, sitting behind desks in Manhattan. Trading in their business suits for bathing suits, they decided to sell ties so they wouldn't have to wear them.

The first 800 ties were delivered July 3, 1998, and sold out in the first week, according to the background information on their website. "We quickly re-ordered, paid off our debt, hit the road and moved into our first office," it continues. "After that, we moved to a bigger office and hired a few friends to help out. Then, we moved to an even bigger office, hired even more people, and opened a few more retail stores, proving that the American Dream is alive and well. Today, we're in an even bigger office and are opening more stores across the country."

# Workplaces

It is definitely a bigger office. The company employs about 300 people at its headquarters. It also has expanded into a wider range of products that includes clothing for men, women and children — and now products for the home.

The office culture represents the brand and those who wear it. It's full of young, talented professionals who look like they grew up in Fairfield County, Connecticut, and its preppy, nautical lifestyle. Vineyard Vines believes in supporting like-minded events as well. You can find Vineyard Vines sponsoring sailboat races in New York Harbor, and the Kentucky Derby. It's also the official style of this year's America's Cup.

With a finely cultivated brand, it is no surprise the Murray brothers were involved in the smallest details of the office design. For example, since ship decks are often made of teak and holly, the pair wanted conference room tables to have that same look and feel. In many places, the company's distinctive logo was included in the furniture. There is branding in nearly every inch of the space, from the mock store found inside the headquarters to the conference tables.

The mock store is just that — a full-sized store within the headquarters used to see how certain products are staged and how they will look in the real thing. There is also an all-white room with white furniture where buyers come in to look at upcoming clothing lines, giving the products the stage, not the furniture.

The 300 or so employees work in what Spannaus calls “super collaborative spaces.” A large cafe area not only has tables for eating breakfast and lunch, but also overstuffed sofas and shuffleboard and foosball tables. Decorating the space are Vineyard Vines surfboards and neckties. The company's





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## **It is a youthful, spirited and colorful office, intertwined with furniture that could be categorized as “upscale dormitory.”**

neckties are used often in the office as decoration and branding. Tied around oars in a part of the office that overlooks a nearby marina, they give the space a punch of color.

It is a youthful and spirited office, intertwined with furniture that could be categorized as “upscale dormitory.” This gives the space a great collaborative feel that is smart and tailored. It is a far cry from the company’s former offices, which would best be described as Dilbertville. Collaborative spaces are used to separate departments for informal meetings. And since the brand was founded in a home, the residential feel of Vineyard Vines’ offices is a major part of the design. All the windows in the private offices are residential windows, which gives it a homey feel and is cost effective compared to a glass-front office.

Since the brand is up-and-coming, there was not an unlimited budget for office fit out. So designers got creative. In one room, an old piece of a ship, which was purchased online, provides a nautical theme that was naturally antiqued. “Since Shep and Ian are such visual people, they could really envision what they were looking for pretty clearly,” Spannaus says. “That means we had to find a variety of manufacturers and suppliers.”

A variety of product solutions were used to express the personality of Vineyard Vines. To begin, Allsteel Stride was used for workstations and private offices. In the conference rooms, there are

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## “Through our collaboration, we gained a deep understanding of the Vineyard brand.”

Woodtech custom conference tables. Bringing it all together are Woodtech coffee tables and side tables in custom finishes, as well as Sit-On-It Torsa task chairs and conference room chairs.

Pieces from numerous lines were used for ancillary furniture: Hickory Leather Company custom couches, Palacek chairs and stools, Restoration Hardware tables and lounge chairs, Keilhauer café seating, along with Serena and Lily chairs and accessories.

They also tie a lot back into the company’s retail stores. For example, the reception desk at the headquarters mimics the stern of a boat. It appears as if the receptionist is sitting at the back of a boat when they greet visitors. There is a door behind the reception desk that looks like it could be used to enter the boat – it’s for storage – a place for visitors to hang coats and a refrigerator holding cold drinks. A lot of Vineyard Vines retail stores use the same boat stern as a checkout counter.

Vineyard Vines thought about future growth as well. When designing the office, they prewired the spaces for maximum density. That way, as they add more employees, the furniture is simply added and plugged into the existing system.

“Through our collaboration, we gained a deep understanding of the Vineyard brand and used that as a basis to make product recommendations from numerous manufacturers,” says The Atlantic Group’s Project Manager Lynn Nicholson. **WPM**

## CREATE A QUINTESSENTIAL HOME OFFICE

Today's home office designs are as eclectic and imaginative as the individual personalities of their owners.

Story by Jennie Morton





## **Workplaces**

**What does your **ideal home office** look like? Unbound by a corporate aesthetic, you can create a stately executive space, an energetic nook with bright colors or a retro retreat with midcentury modern flair. No matter your line of work, a home office should be personable and functional. Achieve the perfect work-life balance by purposefully selecting furnishings, storage, lighting and accent pieces.**



## Carve out the perfect space

Today's home office designs are as eclectic and imaginative as the individual personalities of their owners. Home-based workers aren't just C-suite types — telecommuters, entrepreneurs, independent contractors and employees with flextime benefits are all enjoying the benefits of working out of their humble abodes. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the share of workers doing some or all of their work at home grew from 19 percent in 2003 to 24 percent in 2015. These figures represent several million Americans who have dedicated a corner of their private residence to their professional lives. Mobile technology is largely responsible for this shift, as well as the rise of knowledgeable laborers who can complete tasks from virtually any loca-

tion.

While the appeal of working from home continues to grow, creating an ideal space that fosters productivity can be a daunting challenge. Aspirational photos abound online but are hard to translate into reality without a generous budget. If you are new to working from home, start with the basics — location, location, location.

"A dedicated room is still high on people's wish list. Some homeowners prefer to have a space solely for work so they aren't distracted by family or entertainment," explains David Branham, director of marketing at the workplace solution provider Poppin. "If a spare bedroom isn't available, underutilized spaces can be repurposed: a dining room, foyer, sitting room or even a

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corner of a finished basement.”

Not everyone is sold on having a secluded work area, though. Many households are embracing a family center — a communal space where parents and children work side by side, says Ivonne Ronderos, a principal with the residential design firm DKOR. Adults can tend to their own projects while monitoring homework and technology usage. “We are also seeing more multipurpose spaces that are a combination library, den, TV and computer room,” adds Jackie Kiracofe, a residential interior designer for Phelan’s Interiors.

**You may need to get downright intrepid to create your ideal work space. Convert a closet, alcove, bay window, landing or loft. Even that odd space underneath a staircase can be a great place to tuck a desk and shelves.**

Don’t feel obligated to set aside an entire room for work purposes. You can run an entire business empire solely from a smartphone — no need to waste space with printers, filing cabinets or an executive desk. A discretely placed work surface and stool may be all you require to work comfortably.

“In newer homes, workstations are being integrated into the main living space, such as off an eat-in kitchen or within a great room,” Kiracofe says. “I like adding a small console table behind a sofa — it can take turns as a desk, decorative shelf or sideboard. Recliners with computer or tablet holders are another popular choice.”

Ronderos adds it’s also common to see offices tucked into master bedrooms. “Many are already designed for a sitting area that can easily accommodate a side table or small desk set,” she says. “These rooms often have large windows that let in plentiful light or offer privacy that can’t be achieved elsewhere in the house.”

You may need to get downright intrepid to create

your ideal work space. Convert a closet, alcove, bay window, landing or loft. Even that odd space underneath a staircase can be a great place to tuck a desk and shelves.

“You can fit a lot into a little space,” Branham says. “Make an office area by getting rid of excess furniture, repositioning a bed or moving a bookshelf. Then chose furniture and accessories that will support your work habits.”

### **Furnishings that go the extra mile**

Once you’ve decided where to set up your command center, outline your ideal work conditions. Your home office needs to be equipped with the right elements to foster creativity and efficiency. Before you start ordering furniture, ask yourself these questions:

- What tasks do I work on from home?
- What size desk surface do I need for technology or projects?
- Do I need storage for files or reference materials?
- Are electrical outlets easily accessible?
- Do I like switching between different work postures?
- How important is privacy?
- Is accent or task lighting necessary?
- Will clients visit this space or see it while video conferencing?

“Design the space around how you will be the most successful. A thoughtfully furnished home office should inspire and motivate your best work self,” Ronderos says.

### **Desks**

A wood executive desk can look handsome in a home office but it’s often overkill for smaller spaces. Kiracofe finds clients struggle with the size of their office and end up with large furniture that dominates the room. You might have to hunt at different stores or flea markets to find pieces that complement your layout.

Desks also don’t have to be anchored in the middle of the room, Branham adds. Push them against a feature wall or a window. The user can still face the door if they wish, but now there is space to add occasional tables or

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plush seating.

Some entrepreneurs work exclusively on mobile devices so a desk is obsolete for their business needs, Ronderos points out. A portable tray or a built-in shelf can be used when a laptop or tablet surface is needed.

## Seating

Task chair options are plentiful. Make sure ergonomics is a key selling point. In addition to lumbar support and adjustable tilt, many chairs are rated for 4-, 6- or 8-hour work increments. If you have a standing-height desk, look for chairs or stools that move with you into different postures, Branham says.

“To make your home office inviting, incorporate cozy accent chairs,” Kiracofe says. “There’s no reason you can’t curl up in an armchair to check email. Add lamps and side tables to create reading nooks or comfortable spots to have a phone conference.”

## Power

This is one feature most homeowners overlook. Even with new construction, outlet placement may not correspond to your office layout.

“Create a docking station for charging,” Ronderos says. “The electrical ports can be hidden inside drawers or under desk edges so messy cords aren’t an eyesore.” Many desk surfaces now come with integrated charging — no more bending over or getting on your hands and knees to reach a power strip, Branham says. You can also place a floor outlet in the middle of the room and position a desk over it, Kiracofe adds.

## Lighting

When a spare bedroom is used for a home office, the only light source is usually overhead. This soft lighting is great for getting dressed or reading in the evening, but it’s usually insufficient for long stretches of concentrated activities.

“Many clients ask for more lighting after they realize how dim the space is,” Kiracofe notes. “We use a combination of overhead, recessed, task and decorative fixtures to layer the light.” For example, a torchiere floor





Alexia Fodere

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lamp can brighten a dark corner, and LED strips under shelves will illuminate surfaces below. Beyond the practical, a vintage table lamp, small chandelier or a funky pair of wall sconces can add touches of panache.

## Storage

Don't let your office become a dumping ground for other members of the household. Even if you only have a small workstation, organizational accessories are your best friend. Ronderos is a fan of concealed storage tucked behind European-style cabinets with concealed hardware, which can be hung overhead or as floating units at desk height.

Particularly for small work areas, Branham recommends vertical organization. Wall-mounted cabinets and open shelving ensures desks don't become cluttered. A slim file pedestal is also perfect for corralling items that need to be within reach.

## Have fun with personalization

Home offices that are utilitarian and boring are often productivity killers. This work space is an extension of your home, so take the opportunity to accessorize it with fun and meaningful decorations.

"Embrace color. So many corporate offices are a sea of black or grey but your home office is the anti-cubicle," Branham says. "You have the freedom to personalize your space, and there's no one to tell you no. Think about the objects you see during work hours. Your office landscape should have visual interest. Chose colors that elevate your mood and energy."

"The wonderful thing about working from home is you have complete say in how your space is designed. Make your office reflect your personal brand," Kiracofe says. "Accessories, accent pieces, patterned upholstery, throw blankets, rugs and artwork will transform an office into an inviting space that you will be happy to work in every day." **WPM**

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*Jennie Morton is a freelance writer with an interest in the built environment. Her home office moonlights as a movie theater in the evenings*



## TRULY GREEN OFFICE OR OUTDOOR WHIMSY

Everything in a building can be rethought from a healthy perspective. Air, ventilation, water, light, sleep, sound and movement all impact how we feel and how we work. More nature translates into a better working environment.

**Story by Nancy Trent**

Every year, experts at the Global Wellness Institute, the nonprofit research and educational resource for the global wellness industry, identify the wellness trends set to unfold. “Wellness architecture” is one of those at the top this year.

Everything in a building can be rethought from a healthy perspective. Air, ventilation, water, light, sleep, sound and movement all impact how we feel and how we work.

More nature translates into a better working environment. A study reported by the National Center for Biotechnology Information found employees who are in contact with nature at work show significantly less stress and stress-related health complaints. On the other hand is the “sick building syndrome,” where ventilation, air, and water in a building causes employees to get sick.

Designers are seeing the fun in bringing outdoor pieces indoors. In addition to health benefits, bringing outdoor culture inside is energizing. The perk gives employees the time and ability to do things in the office they wouldn’t normally get a chance to do, such as nap, meditate or do yoga.

Outdoor furniture is also easier to move for more mobile executives, and oftentimes is less expensive and more resilient.

“Ask people where they want to vacation or retire, and there is always a strong link to nature,” says outdoor furniture expert Kirt Martin, vice president of design and marketing at Landscape Forms Inc. “We know that when people are outside their stress drops and creativity rises. It’s obvious that they value being outdoors, so bringing the outdoors inside sends a signal to people that it’s a fun space.”

Companies want to see more group spaces in these pleasurable places. Landscape Forms drives them to look at spaces that have been underutilized. “There is more pressure on corporate workplaces to keep the workforce happy,” Martin says. “Companies are putting indoor furniture outside, like flat screen TVs; at the same time it’s not unusual to see an Adirondack chair in an office. There is a novelty to it. It helps create informal, collaborative spaces that younger generations expect to see.”

Of course, they still want to stay connected and charged, which is what Landscape Forums’ Go Outdoor Table does.

Imagine a workplace with picnic tables in conference rooms and floor umbrellas instead of room dividers. That’s an office I’d like to head to every day.

### **Bringing in the joy of outdoors**

Many design strategies can be put in place to bring the whimsy of outdoor living to the office.

Bri Smith, marketing manager for Picnic Time Family of Brands, believes with the boom of millennials in the workplace, companies are breaking free of strict rules and regulations. Today’s workforce is more creative, laid back and definitely does better with a more fluid/fun work environment. Having outdoor products like Picnic Time’s elaborate baskets helps the workplace to elicit the outdoor spirit.

When it comes to adding energy and spunk to the office, taking a small step by adding some outdoor furniture can do the trick. It breaks up the daily grind by changing the mindset and reducing the amount of time employees think they need to be outdoors.

“Fun is becoming part of doing a good job,” says Michael Galica, vice president of new business

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development for Sifas In-Outdoor Living Furniture. “Bringing outdoor furniture indoors started in Silicon Valley to inspire people to have more fun and be more productive, creative and happy.”

Introducing outdoor cabanas to an indoor office space provides an excellent station for working, charging and even napping. The Equinox Cabana from TUUCI umbrellas can be customized for seating space, electric outlet installation and speakers. Staff can feel like they’re poolside at their favorite resort while boosting their productivity and creativity at work.

“We see outdoor furniture as an extension of your living room,” says TUUCI Marketing Manager Vanessa Cendan. “Establishing a family environment in your company is essential in these times to help a brand grow. Bringing in a piece of home to the office helps to foster that.”

More offices are looking for an elaborate outdoor style, says Louis Stack, CEO of Fitter International Inc., which provides smart products to help make the most of every hour of the day. Fitter First balance boards are an example of how to keep moving while staying put at your desk. “Outdoor furniture impacts the ambience making it more ‘loungy,’” Stack says.

“Incorporating outdoor furniture into an indoor space creates a sense of whimsy – breaking up the everyday structure of the typical office furniture you might find in a corporate setting,” says Via Director of Marketing Whitney Grimes. “Using outdoor benches for indoor waiting areas, lounges or cafeteria pieces gives a sense of playfulness that some may lack in a 9-5 setting; hopefully rejuvenating not only the space but the people who are in it.” Via seating paints a new picture of what outdoor





seating should look like. Its new Tahoe collection harnesses the creativity needed to sit down with a laptop in tow to open your mind to a new kind of environment. Tahoe provides the opportunity for restful contemplation or social gathering, making it possible for your work setting to be wherever you are, indoors or outdoors.

**Keep it moving**

Sandra Turner, CEO, Vigi Corp., wrote her industrial design thesis on inspiring natural movement and later created Vidget Seating. Influenced by natural systems of movement in nature, Vidget

is an environmental, stackable piece of furniture that gives you the ability to move naturally. It allows space to transform, similar to the changing of nature, and provides the unpredictable feeling of change, freedom and flexibility experienced in nature.

Joe Demin, chief relaxation officer at Yellow Leaf Hammocks, has been shipping hammocks to offices for dedicated relaxation spaces and even conference rooms. At the Kiva.org office in San Francisco, they have a “hammock room” for employees to relax and recharge. Arianna Huffington created a dedicated nap room at the Huffington Post headquarters in New York City, outfitted by Yellow Leaf

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Hammocks. The official hammocks of the SXSW festival were set up across the convention center and the city.

The Yellow Leaf Hanging Chair Hammock has a small footprint that stretches out like a full-body recliner. The design cradles the neck and shoulders to reduce tension while working on a laptop. Lying down in a hammock has been linked with improved brain activity. Encouraging employees to relax at work can actually help increase productivity.

## Exercise your right to go outdoors

B4 Adventure can set up an adventure anywhere, including the office. “People use our slack and ninja lines for easy access workouts in the office,” says Ed O’Brien, CEO of B4 Adventure. You can use it to work out or just hangout and swing. It’s great for open workplaces so people can let off steam and generate positive feelings. They are used in offices, warehouses, etc.

## In the Air

Today’s indoor air pollution crisis can be a silent killer. The culprit can be fumes from toxic furniture, paints or fabrics. These toxins can cause long-term heart and lung problems, in addition to having an instant impact on health and concentration.

Most paints are made with toxins. Acrylic paint is a cocktail of toxic chemicals. Some soy, whey and chalk paints still have acrylic. It takes 3.5 years for paint to stop off-gassing it’s toxins.

Innovations in building materials, though, are keeping the air fresh.

Milk paint is better for your health and the environment. The Real Milk Paint Co., makes a hassle-free, pre-mixed formula strong enough to be used on all woods, floors, stone and concrete, in addition to furniture. Real Milk Paint has zero VOC (volatile organic compound) and is also compostable. It even can be used to fertilize your garden.

Plants that remove deadly toxins can be grown





in an indoor garden. GreenWalls has an indoor and outdoor vertical green wall that provides the perfect climate for a natural garden. The company works with you on the design and upkeep of it.

Air purification and ventilation systems also can help. There are a handful of products to choose from, including BetterAir, the first probiotic space purifier; BlueAir with HEPA-silent technology; AirSerenity, which hides in your HVAC system; and AtmosAir, which is used to monitor the air at LAX airport and NFL training facilities.

### **Let the sun shine in**

The more exposure to light the better. “Everyone wants the corner office with the window, but as work evolves, the definition of the workplace is no longer confined to four walls,” Martin says.

US Markerboard co-founder Scott Newman specializes in curating, designing and producing dream office spaces for companies across North America. Aside from installing the right window treatments that block harsh sun rays while allowing natural light through, Newman finds incorporating glass

boards into a space is another great way to reflect natural light across the office.

“Your team spends 40-plus hours a week in the office, so it needs to be a place that’s well lit, open and provides opportunities to spark creativity,” Newman says. “From glass boards to the right window treatments, all of these contribute to creating a happy workflow that allows employees to produce their best work.”

Glass is unique because it is a material that is thousands of years old, yet somehow feels modern at the same time, says Dony Dawson, vice president of product design at Clarus Glassboards. “Its very existence is to bring inclusion into space division,” he says. Clarus offers a range of products for highly customizable solutions, including glass walls for conference rooms and lobby applications; transforming means of communications into works of art, so yesterday’s presentations will no longer be today’s distraction. **WPM**

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*Editor’s Note: Nancy Trent is a writer and speaker, a lifelong health advocate, a globe-trotting trend watcher and the founder and president of Trent & Company. A former journalist for New York magazine, she has written seven books on healthy lifestyles..*

# Workplaces





# Inside Poppin's **Colorful** One-Stop Solution for the Workplace

WORDS BY STEF SCHWALB

# Workplaces

**N**YC-based Poppin is a one-stop shop of workplace solutions for companies of all sizes. With offerings spanning desk accessories, branded products and commercial furniture, Poppin was developed to address market trends based on fulfilling a specific need the company's founders saw lacking in the industry.

"The shift from traditional brick and mortar to online and omni-channel retailers is happening fastest in the office product and furniture industries," says CEO Randy Nicolau. "If you look at the top websites by revenue, five out of 10, including Staples, Amazon and Walmart, sell office products and furniture. Our job is to make our clients' lives easier so that they can focus on their business and not furnishings."

Unlike most business-to-consumer brands that only have a retail store and online presence, Poppin also has a direct, business-to-business salesforce, showroom experience and wholesale distribution channel. "Like Tesla, the maker of electric cars, Poppin is vertically integrated: We design, make, sell and handle delivery of our product to the customer," Nicolau says. "We've consistently focused on simplifying the ordering process, minimizing costs and dramatically reducing delivery times since every piece of our furniture collection is always in stock and ready to ship in two weeks."

To achieve this, work stylists are assigned to clients, and Poppin takes a "customer-obsessed approach to its website," according to Zack Abbell, Sr., Ecommerce director. The company is dedicated to flipping the script on today's outsourced, hourly waged customer service culture to elevate the customer experience. "We employ a team of customer service agents and sales representatives that sit in our headquarters just feet away from the furniture designers, engineers and operations teams," Abbell says. "They are well-trained in how our products work, what services we provide and how to foster a value-added relationship with our users/customers.

Down to the core, our sales development team on chat is not a support team in our organization — they are our brand ambassadors empowered with the information and creativity to service all of our 20k+ chats a year. Their goal is to give the best experience possible in the most human way."

In addition to that elevated level of customer service, having a variety of offerings available is critical to the company's mission of providing everything employees need to work happy. "Work is no longer just what you do at the office from 9 to 5," explains Jeff Miller, vice president of design. "It's what you do at home, on your way to work, or with your friends from work. Now, with omnipresent technology (for better or worse), it's pervaded every aspect of our lives. Because of this, we've sought out to create solutions for all work scenarios — whether you're a growing startup and need modern furniture quickly, a Fortune 500 company looking to personalize products with your brand logo, a student or someone who works remotely."

While catering to both start-ups and Fortune 500s, the company has found these two demographics are beginning to have more in common design-wise within the current workplace climate than they did before. "As urban real estate costs force traditional square footage and person allotment down, desks will continue to get smaller," Miller notes. "To balance the constriction, companies will spend more on token perk areas, including cafes, lounges and play areas." As the ratio of desks to employees drops further, companies are investing in alternatives, adds David Branham, director of merchan-















dising. “Whether it’s soft furniture in a lounge (see Block Party Lounge Collection), cafe-style seating near the office kitchen, (see our Upbeat Stool) semi-enclosed furniture that provides temporary spaces for focused work (see our Privacy Panels for the Series A Desk System) or communal workbenches for working alongside your team of choice are some of those alternatives.”

**Poppin makes its products simple, elemental, distilled — the better they can take color, the better they can fit well into any environment and the better they can read as one happy family across categories.**

Increasingly, large companies — whether Fortune 500 or not — are incorporating aspects of small business, start-up and entrepreneurial cultures into their own and are using their workspaces to broadcast those values. “The Poppin style intentionally says, ‘new,’” Branham says. “Our catalog has everything organizations need to work comfortably, which is definitely a core val-

ue of today’s workplace; but Poppin has designed more than just ‘work style.’ Our approach simplifies the entire experience of purchasing office furniture, while offering a top-quality product and an exceptional level of customer service. Everybody wants that kind of design.”

Adds Miller: “Product design is a blend of sculpture, engineering, and marketing and, ultimately, the product has to address all evenly; but so much of what we make are products that functionally achieved a level of commodity long ago. So our first impulse is not to reinvent but to eschew anything extraneous. Then add further desire with clever details that enhance the function.”

Poppin makes its products simple, elemental, distilled — the better they can take color, the better they can fit well into any environment and the better they can read as one happy family across categories. “From the initial assortment of desk accessories, we worked hard to develop a modular system of sizing and interrelation to support further collection additions,” Miller says.

As Poppin has moved forward with complementary materials and formats, it has been able to rely on that foundation. “Studies also prove that color boosts happiness, productivity and creativity, so neutrals are no longer the order of the day. Blue can have a calming effect, while orange stimulates endurance for long-term projects,” Miller says. “I believe if you organize your work environment with color, your thoughts will be more organized and colorful, too.” **WPM**

ProductMatter | **ESI All-Flex Adjustable Table Base with Conceal Cable Management**



## ESI ALL-FLEX ADJUSTABLE TABLE BASE

IN THE SEARCH FOR WAYS TO IMPROVE OUR OFFICE ERGONOMICS, only one thing can be considered the focal point — a high quality, height-adjustable table. For testing we chose ESI's All-Flex adjustable bases. We have all seen a myriad of adjustable tables that allow us to get out of our seats and keep moving throughout the day, but it is often the small things that make an adjustable base stand out from the crowd.

The All-Flex is just such an example. When we received it the first thing we noticed was the quality of the construction and bulk of the frame. We knew this was going to be a solid and sturdy base.

The second thing we noticed was the design of the cross channel. It is notched, allowing room for an under-the-desk keyboard tray surface allowing for greater ergonomic flexibility.



## ESI All-Flex Adjustable Table Base

\$1,521.00.

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



The frame allows standard adjustment of the its width, which can accommodate worksurfaces between three and six foot wide. The adjustment of the cross channel is easily accomplished due the clearly labeled dimensions on the crossbar. It ensures the adjustment is done correctly the first time, minimizing assembly time. The frame also can be adjusted to accommodate desks of various depths.

The depth adjustment is accomplished by lengthening both the worksurface supports and feet, by lengthening the front of the support arms and the feet. These adjustments keep the legs toward the back of the work surface, reducing the likelihood of hitting your knees on the table legs if you need to work down at end of the desk or if a visitor pulls up a chair for some collaboration. It also reduces the cluttered look in an open office.

The feet are extended through a telescoping action at the front. This would normally leave an unsightly gap, but not with the All-Flex due to the onboard storage plate that conceals the gap normally visible. The onboard storage keeps the concealment plate from becoming misplaced if the desk needs to be reconfigured for a shallower worksurface.

Although these features are very nice, what makes an adjustable desk ergonomic is, simply put, its adjustment, or more specifically its ease of adjustment. Our desks are quite heavy with a large thick butcher block worksurfaces and large monitors, yet the motor is quiet and smooth, allowing adjustment from 25.5 inches to 51.5 inches.

The programmable control panel allows for four heights. The previous base was not programmable, so we would not always hit the optimal height on our first attempt.

Once it was correctly programmed we no longer need to fiddle to find the correct height. We would hold the button down and know it would stop on its mark. This reduced frustration and saved time. Some would even continue to work while adjusting the height.

After using the All-Flex for several months, we were unable to find any flaws. The old base has since been retired, never to be used again. **WPM**

## ESI CONCEAL CABLE MANAGEMENT

A HEIGHT-ADJUSTABLE TABLE IS GREAT TO KEEP US MOVING THROUGHOUT THE DAY and help us maintain neutral posture. It also brings with it an additional concern, unsightly cables hanging from the worksurface.

This problem can be fixed with a cable management system. Preferably one that is attractive, easy to install and customizable for the individual's application. While testing the All-Flex base, we also tested ESI's Conceal cable manager. We found it was a great option for cable management.

The Conceal includes 23 links plus a weighted base and a link that attaches the assembly to the bottom the worksurface. The maximum height is 53.5 inches. Extra links can easily be removed, optimizing

the assembly's length and eliminating unnecessary clutter from under the desk.

The top link can be attached anywhere on the bottom of the work surface, increasing the installation's flexibility and matching an individual's work surface configuration. It can also be moved and attached to different locations on the bottom of the work surface, if needed.

The links fold in two directions, allowing it to fold back and forth on itself as the work surface is lowered. It will fold in the direction with the least resistance. If there is an object on the floor that is in the way it will just fold in the opposite direction.

The weighted base keeps the bottom of the Conceal in place but can be easily

moved, if needed. This also increases its flexibility.

Running the cables through each of the links is easy. The links have four channels. The cables or wires can be fed through the links from one end of the assembly to the other. The cables also can be placed or removed from individual channels by pushing them through the channel's slots.

The Conceal is an attractive accessory to a height-adjustable desk. It is easy to use and installs quickly. The Conceal does what it is designed to do: manage cables and reduce the under desk clutter. **WPM**

**ESI Conceal  
Cable  
Management**

[www.esiergo.com](http://www.esiergo.com)  
**\$62.00**



## **AEROPRESS COFFEE MAKER**

THE AEROPRESS COFFEE MAKER IS OLD SCHOOL. There are no high pressure steam valves or capsules filled with coffee. You have to boil your own water. And you have to stir the coffee yourself before you press it, by hand, into your cup — one cup at a time.



It takes some time and effort, at least as you are getting used to the process. But you are rewarded with one of the best damn cups of coffee you can make at home or anywhere else. It does what other coffee makers often fail to do: make a good cup'o joe.

You can make coffee two ways with the AeroPress — as an espresso-style coffee or an Americano — simply the espresso version with a bit of added hot water. The AeroPress is for coffee pros, not newbies. AeroPress works best with a fairly fine ground coffee, which means it can be a bit strong for the average coffee drinker.

Even though it is strong, AeroPress coffee is not bitter. There's science behind how AeroPress was designed by Alan Adler, a Stanford University engineering lecturer

who is more famous for his Aerobie sports product. He was disappointed by his home-brewed coffee, even though he tried various coffee makers. So he started studying coffee brewing and identified the ideal conditions for brewing the best possible cup. Once the ideal conditions were identified, he spent more than a year creating a coffee maker that brews coffee under the ideal conditions.

Here are the ideal conditions for making a great cup of coffee: 1) time — AeroPress brew time is about 30 seconds. Since coffee gives up its rich flavors quickly, extended brewing time makes for bitter, acidic coffee; 2) temperature — very hot water works best; 3) grind — finely ground coffee gives greater surface area, essential for rich coffee; 4) grit — AeroPress brews a clean, grit free cup, unlike French press coffee makers that let coffee through the metal filters.

When we first tried AeroPress, we were a bit skeptical. It took a little work. Yet after a few cups of coffee, we were sold. Simply put, AeroPress is the king of coffee. **WPM**



**AeroPress  
coffee maker**  
available at amazon

**\$30.00**



## LOWEPRO FASTPACK BP 250 AW

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER to have a job that makes carrying around a DSLR camera a must. The camera is a tool used daily by architects, designers, teachers, construction managers and many other professionals.

But it can be difficult to find a bag that fits all the needed gear without being so professional photographer-focused to be overkill. There are many camera bags for recreational shooters and many for photo pros, but there are few for those in between.

The Lowepro Fastpack fits the bill — with a few frustrating failings. The Lowepro Fastpack BP 250 AW is a travel-ready backpack designed for a DSLR, 15-inch laptop and a tablet. It is sturdily

built with strong, comfortable straps. It can be used with or without the included padded waistbelt. The pack can be secured to a rolling suitcase with compression straps that smartly tuck into the shoulder straps.

It has several compartments. The main is for your camera and lenses. It is easily accessible from the outside of the pack, which is a wonderful feature when you don't want to fish through your bag for a



spur of the moment shot. An annoying detail is the way the zipper moves around the opening, making it difficult to close.

The open zone at the top of the pack has multiple pockets and space for organizing your smartphone, cables, pens, keys and other items, though the depth of the pockets make it hard to find smaller items at the bottom.

In addition to the easy access to the camera, the bag does a great job of allowing quick access to a laptop, which can slide into a cavity just in front of the user's back. It is spacious and easy to get a laptop in and out. The space also includes a smaller slot for a tablet device.

Valuable gear is protected from the elements with a built-in, all-weather cover that pulls up from a spot hidden at the base. The cover certainly works, as it protected a bag full of our gear from a torrential downpour in New York recently. Without the cover, some of the electronics would certainly have been ruined.

In addition to complaints about the zipper, we didn't like the small, uncomfortable hand strap at the top of the bag. It is awkward, especially when the bag is fully filled and heavy. There are so many pockets and cavities, and the pack is so large, it can get uncomfortably heavy, though we aren't sure if that's because we stow too much in our bag or the bag itself is too big. When fully filled, it barely fits under the seat in front of you on an airplane, which may be a consideration for some. **WPM**



**Lowepro  
Fastpack BP 250  
AW**

[www.lowepro.com](http://www.lowepro.com)  
\$130.00



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## Salt Lake City Tops List of Best Places to Start a Career; Newark Comes in Last



**W**ith graduation season upon us, the personal-finance website WalletHub recently released its report on 2017's Best & Worst Places to Start a Career.

To help recent graduates launch their careers in the right place, WalletHub's analysts compared the 150 largest markets in the U.S. based on 23 key indicators of career-friendliness. The data set ranges from availability of entry-level jobs to monthly average starting salary to housing affordability.

### **Best Places to Start a Career**

Salt Lake City, Utah  
Orlando, Florida  
Austin, Texas  
Grand Rapids, Michigan  
Tempe, Arizona  
Atlanta, Georgia  
Miami, Florida  
Denver, Colorado  
Irving, Texas  
Madison, Wisconsin

### **Worst Places to Start a Career**

Jackson, Mississippi  
Chesapeake, Virginia  
Shreveport, Louisiana  
Detroit, Michigan  
Yonkers, New York  
Montgomery, Alabama  
Augusta, Georgia  
Cleveland, Ohio  
Toledo, Ohio  
Newark, New Jersey

### **Best vs. Worst**

- Durham, North Carolina, has the highest monthly average starting salary (adjusted for cost of living), \$3,909, which is 2.7 times higher than in Honolulu, the city with the lowest at \$1,447.
- Gilbert, Arizona, has the highest median annual household income (adjusted for cost of living), \$84,973, which is 3.3 times higher than in Hialeah, Florida, the city with the lowest at \$25,850.
- Oxnard, California, has the highest workforce diversity, which is 1.8 times higher than in Durham, North Carolina, the city with the lowest.
- Madison, Wisconsin, has the lowest unemployment rate, 2.7 percent, which is 4.6 times lower than in Detroit, the city with the highest, at 12.3 percent.
- Boston has the highest share of the population aged 25 to 34, 22.8 percent, which is 2.2 times higher than in Cape Coral, Florida, the city with the lowest at 10.4 percent.
- Irvine, California, has the highest share of the population with at least a bachelor's degree, 66.4 percent, which is 5.8 times higher than in San Bernardino, California, the city with the lowest at 11.5 percent.

To view the full report and your city's rank, please visit:  
<https://wallethub.com/edu/best-worst-cities-to-start-a-career/3626/>

# EndMatter

Planner of the Modern Office, Florence Knoll Turns 100

## Florence Marguerite Knoll Bassett

Florence Marguerite Knoll Bassett (née Schust; born May 24, 1917) is an American architect and furniture designer who studied under Mies van der Rohe and Eliel Saarinen. She was born Florence Schust in Saginaw, Michigan, and is known in contract furnishings circles as “Shu”.

In 1938, Hans Knoll founded his furniture company by that name in New York. In 1943, Florence Schust convinced Hans she could help bring in business to his company even in America’s wartime economy by expanding into interior design by working with architects. With her architectural background and design flair, she succeeded. They married in 1946, she became a full business partner and together they founded Knoll Associates. A new furniture factory was established in East Greenville, Pennsylvania, and dealers of Knoll’s furniture were carefully added over the next several years.

Knoll felt architects should contribute their design ability to furniture as well. Some of these furniture designs would become design icons of the 20th century and have remained in the Knoll line for decades due to their timeless design. When Hans Knoll died in a car accident in 1955, Florence Knoll took over operation of the company. She designed chairs, sofas, tables and casegoods during the 1950s, many of which remain in the Knoll line to this day. In 1958 she married Harry Hood Bassett. In the 1950s her work was often included in The Museum of Modern Art’s “Good Design” exhibits. Although Knoll did a great deal of residential work, she worked in the International Style that was especially successful in corporate offices.

As an architect, Knoll’s most famous creations are the Connecticut General Life Insurance Company Headquarters building in Bloomfield, Connecticut and the interior of the CBS Building in New York City. Her vision for the new office was clean and uncluttered, and the corporate boom of the 1960s provided the perfect opportunity for her to change the way people looked at work in their offices. Her open-plan layouts were clean, uncluttered spaces. She retired as Knoll president in 1960 but remained with the company as the director of design until 1965 when she retired completely. In 2002, she was awarded the National Medal of Arts. She turned 100 in May 2017. **WPM**





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### The Tipping Point: When Mobile Working Can Actually Improve Productivity

Mobility and workplace flexibility are top of mind for many organizations today. Often it's thought that mobility and productivity have an adverse affect on one another. But that's not necessarily the whole story because worker mobility has been linked to ... Continue reading →

EMPIRE STATE OF MIND  
AN EMPIRE OFFICE BLOG

Category: Trends  
Posted on March 18, 2014 by Richard Galardo

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# WORK

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## CDW Roundtable Explores Simplicity in Design

SIMPLE LOOKING DESIGNS, PANELISTS AGREED, ARE A GOOD FIRST STEP, BUT BUILDINGS AND THE PRODUCTS INSIDE THEM NEED TO BE SIMPLE TO USE AS WELL. BY ROB KIRKBRIDE

**S**implicity in design means a lot of things to a lot of people. For some, it is the restraint shown by designers like George Nelson and Charles and Ray Eames, whose mid-century modern stripped down products to only those components necessary.

Many would say the Apple iPhone is a pillar of design in modern simplicity. But is it really? When asked to name an example of a product that is the opposite of simplicity in design, London architect and designer Colin Maagdie pointed to his iPhone.

"This is constantly making me crazy with how complex it is," said Maagdie, chief creative officer at BDE architecture+design, during a fascinating discussion titled "Simplicity in Design" at the Humanscale showroom during Clerkenwell Design Week. So just because a product looks

simple doesn't mean it performs simply. That was one of many lessons learned at the panel discussion moderated by Jeremy Myerson, the Helen Hamlyn chair of design at the Royal College of Art in London.

Simple looking designs, panelists agreed, are a good first step, but buildings and the products inside them need to be simple to use as well. The interface is almost as important as the product itself, argued Giuseppe Boscherini, who owns the London-based collaborative design firm Boscherini. "(Great) design happens when things are intuitive," he said. "The first task of simplicity of design is asking questions about what is actually needed."

Maagdie said there is nothing wrong with complexity in itself as long as the end result is simple for people to use. He pointed to a recent project his firm completed that was presented in a simple way to his client. The complexity came in the execution. In the end, he said about 85 percent of the initial vision was realized — not bad for a major project for a high-profile client with equally high expectations.

The simple design can also be a cop-out for lazy design. The cubicle is simple to specify and use, but it might not be best to foster a happy, productive and collaborative workforce. It is easy to make a workplace complex, said Saul Tyler, partner and head of work-

**"If you don't see it, but you use it all the time, that to me is the perfect design."**

place for Hoare Lea, an engineering consultant based in London.

The best designs, which almost always are the simplest, are often the design elements that are unseen, said Oscar Lhermitte, a multidisciplinary designer and the curator of "No Randomness," an exhibit at Humanscale's London showroom during CDW.

"If you don't see it, but you use it all the time, that to me is the perfect design," he said, using a manhole cover as a good example of this. City dwellers walk by dozens of them everyday, but rarely notice them. Yet they serve an important purpose and are designed well. If you've ever wondered: A manhole cover is round because it cannot fall through its circular opening, whereas a square manhole cover could fall in if it were inserted diagonally in the hole. Manhole covers don't need to be rotated or precisely aligned when placing them on the opening and a round manhole cover — often heavy — can be easily moved and rolled.

As humans, we may be predestined for complexity, Myerson described a seminar he recently

attended where the presenter asked everyone to stand up and pat their heads and rub their stomachs in a circular way while standing on one foot. A few of the more dexterous could, he said. The presenter surprised them by asking why they were trying to do all three tasks at the same time, which was not specified in her instructions to them.

In fact, it seems we are in a world filled with complexity. Maagdie said he collects millions of points of data for his clients about the buildings they inhabit. That rush of information is of little use to clients, so it makes sense to simplify it. Simplicity is also in the eye of the beholder. For Magadie, the iPhone is an overly complex tool. For a 17-year-old surfing the web, taking photos with it and chatting with friends — simultaneously — the iPhone is a perfectly simple tool.

Panelists gave other examples of designs they feel are simple, yet functional. Tyler noted the Rolling Bridge, a curling bridge that is part of the Grand Union Canal office and retail development project at Paddington Basin in London conceived by British designer Thomas Heatherwick and designed by SKM Anthony Hunt with Packman Lucas. Lhermitte picked Pantone 152, better known as safety orange, the bright color used on safety equipment because it is easily seen. **BoF**

# Upfront

THE WEEK IN CONTRACT FURNISHINGS

EVENTS

## Clerkenwell Design Week Gets Underway in London

THOUGH THE OPENING DAY WAS SUBSIDED BECAUSE OF THE TERRORIST BOMBING IN MANCHESTER THE NIGHT BEFORE, CDW MANAGING DIRECTOR DAREN NEWTON SAID THE SHOW MUST GO ON WHILE OFFERING THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS TO THE VICTIMS. PAGE 16

THE STREAM

**topicarchitecture.com**  
**Standing desks and the rise of 'healthy design'**  
 If you've been inside any workplace renovated within the last few years, you've probably noticed that once-ubiquitous private offices are giving way to open floor plans with a variety of spatial configurations, from desk clusters to counters to lounge seating. At the same time, architects and clients are finding common ground in designing for health, embracing that the places in which we work can help or hinder our wellbeing.

**Are Introverts Better In the Corporate World...?**  
 Steekase dealer BKM says that introverts are good at being alone. Introverts are already comfortable being inside their own heads, so long hours working by themselves on a project doesn't phase them. Where an Extrovert loses steam is when they are not surrounded by large groups of people. Introverts draw power from their alone time, where they can focus solely on the task at hand. [bkmtelex.com](http://bkmtelex.com)

**BIG NUMBER**  
**22,000 MEMBERS**

As WeWork expands its reach, now operating 140 locations in 44 cities spread across 15 countries, it's increasing appealing to a different clientele: corporate America. According to the company, members working for large companies has become the fastest growing segment of WeWork's business. There are roughly 22,000 members considered enterprise clients, defined as workers for companies that employ more than 500 people.

**Desiging Hotels That Can Flex**

There will always be hotels catering to specific needs. There are hotels for pampering, hostels for the frugal adventurer and business hotels designed for efficiency. And no doubt, these types are likely to exist in the future. But more recently, there's a shift from accommodating to specific market niches towards places that can adapt to changing moods and activities. Over the past year, we've been discussing this topic of flexible, adaptive places. Our 2016 Sleep Set project and collaboration with the Sinus Institute has us rethinking hospitality stereotypes.

**If you really want to get to know your colleagues, lock yourselves in a room together**

Trust falls are passé. Paintball leaves bruises. The best way to bond with coworkers now is doing an "escape room," a game in which participants are given a set amount of time (usually an hour) to solve a series of puzzles and free themselves from a locked space. A theme or concept gives the game urgency—players are told they have an hour before a killer virus wipes out their city, for example, or they must break out of prison before the warden returns. One particularly meta room in Florida has corporate participants escape from an office. The first escape room opened in Japan about a decade ago. Today an online directory lists rooms in 101 countries, from Cambodia to Colombia. They're popular with students, overstressed urban professionals, corporate retreat organizers, and the Obama family, who "busted out of a Hawaii location with 12 seconds to spare. It's a relatively low-stakes way to learn how a team operates under pressure, outside the confines of the office. [qz.com](http://qz.com)

**CULTURE CHAT: THE OVERLOOKED CONNECTION BETWEEN COLLEGIATE DESIGN AND WORKPLACE CULTURE**

"As companies look to recruit the best and brightest from college campuses, they are overlooking one major factor in the attraction and retention of recent graduates—incorporating campus design elements into work environments to attract young professionals. Global infrastructure and design firm, AECOM, along with contract furniture company, KI, conducted new research on collegiate design as a driver of workplace design, and set out to examine how college students like to work and how companies can apply this style within."

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