



**BUSINESS
FURNITURE**

Upmarket desking ranges



The curious case of the incredible shrinking office

Mobility, flexibility and sustainability are three key drivers that for some time have been impacting offices and have shaped business environments in very real ways.

As we head into 2010, and soon into a new decade, these influences will remain and will continue to affect the physical environment we work in.

Office furniture suppliers like CN need to be conscious of these trends and we must make certain that we are ready and able to respond to the changing demands brought about by these indicators.

LOOKING AT 2010 AND BEYOND

Exacerbated by the worldwide economic meltdown, as well as the impact of spiraling real-estate costs, more and more we are seeing workplaces that reflect the needs of the 21st-century workforce. In South Africa, add to that the growing realisation that high energy costs are here to stay and you will bear witness to how companies are being forced to rethink their office space solutions.

Without doubt office space can no longer be seen as only an expense for companies active in the modern market place. In fact, offices today are rapidly emerging as key branding tools and important marketing and image indicators.

Consider the impact of our high-end ranges like the Ego, Sigma and Glamour. It would be impossible as a visitor to an office with this line up of furniture not to be visibly impressed by the fine veneer and the elegant design lines. The inference projected by this look and feel is clear: as a company we have arrived!

Another emerging trend of real significance is consolidation bringing people together in less space while still making it an efficient place to operate from. Until a few years ago, offices were widely viewed as a “necessary” expense for a company. Now leading companies are recognising that office space is as important to their bottom-line as sales, service marketing and product branding.



LOOKING AT 2010 AND BEYOND

The modern workspace is no longer just about “where we work”. On the contrary, it must also reflect something important about “who we are”, “what we represent”, “what we offer” and “what we want to achieve”.

First impressions count and the appearance of an office can be as important as the quality of the product or service a business offers. Furthermore, workspaces are crucial to employee retention and staff members are much more likely to stay in a job if they like the environment they work in.

With private, enclosed offices disappearing at a rapid rate and cubicles getting smaller, open-sight offices will predominate. That means partitions are getting lower, because research shows that offices space feels bigger when there is a panoramic, open-plan view. In addition, workspaces are seeing bigger communal areas and more places for collaboration. Our Café ranges will hold increasing appeal because of this.

For the 21st-century office to be effective, employees will, more often than not, work in teams and small groups and make increasing use of readily available areas where they can stage impromptu meetings without the formality of having to reserve space.

As collaborative areas grow and desk space shrinks, offices start reflecting new business realities. Workstations are smaller, comfortable ergonomic chairs allow employees to work smarter for longer and flat-screen monitors have dislodged the enormous computers of old. Slender desk tops and streamlined, multi-functional furniture means that offices can shrink without the occupants noticing much of a difference. Looking at old CN catalogues it's clear just how much the ergonomics of our desking solutions have evolved to accommodate this burgeoning trend.

Flexibility, such as putting furniture on casters so that it can be moved around with ease, height-adjustable desktops and, of course, shared workstations, are further critical elements being demanded by the 21st-century office.



Informal meeting areas



LOOKING AT 2010 AND BEYOND

But what do smaller, more flexible offices mean to individual privacy and comfort? One upshot is that small spaces or break away areas have begun to emerge as private niches for employees to take a few minutes of downtime. Furnishings there tend to be more lifestyle orientated and the overall emphasis is on comfort and style.

An overriding trend is the strong crossover between residential styles, while maintaining the durability and needs requirements of commercial products. Manufacturers across the board are creating designs that reflect more comfortable environments and at CN we are at the forefront of this trend with a broad range of funky offerings that deliver on this mandate. Our Innovation, Sitland and MySpace ranges would be good examples of this kind of multi-application furniture.



Multifunctional meeting areas

Lifestyle breakaway zones







While all these concepts are not brand-new, they are becoming increasingly prominent. Large corporations are using terminology like “hotdesking” and “teaming spaces” more frequently, but in reality these concepts are popular with large and small companies alike.




For today's designers, setting the mood and image is what office design is all about open spaces, being colourful, not having a closed-door policy and using glass doors and partitioning. In terms of the workforce, this builds community. Space drives function.

With this in mind, there can be no doubt that through our constant innovation and delivery of integrated products and services, that we are well positioned to be able to deliver on these 2010 requirements. Our challenge will be to help our customers make smart choices about their future business environments. And with furniture that is all about: “With Design Flair” this shouldn't be too difficult.

CN where the language and currency is all about **Great Design.**

E & OE

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