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CONTRACT FURNITURE REVIEW 2010

by Laurie Jones



As 2010 begins its wind-down quarter, contract furniture manufacturers can look back and be pleased with their efforts this year.

Teknion Corporation launched its new Foundations Conferencing and Casegoods lines at NeoCon 2010 and has had positive feedback. “The Foundations collection draws upon a contemporary minimalist esthetic, paring down furniture structure and surface to its essence to reveal an architecture of simple horizontal and vertical planar elements,” says Christopher Wright, design principal, figure3. “I designed each piece to serve the needs of a changing office landscape, elevating the look and function of the private office and taking into account the diverse uses of meeting rooms in the modern work environment.”

Foundations Casegoods is a collection of wood desks, credenzas, pedestals and modular storage walls. With contemporary design and functionality, Foundations Casegoods provides optimal storage capacity, making the most of vertical space while maximizing floor space. An innovative characteristic of the Casegoods line is the storage wall made up of various drawers, cabinets and niches, ultimately creating a workstation. Indirect lighting fits along the top edge to give ambient lighting capabilities and niches are accented with LED lights. The finishes for Foundations include high-grade hardwood veneers and wood solids, lustrous brushed metals, powder coatings and other high-tech finishes.

The EVO line of casegoods from SIMO Corporation offers a variety of workspace designs with lighter, floating-style work surfaces that inspire creativity on a smaller footprint. “Because people spend so much time at work, we have incorporated additions to the EVO furniture that make it comfortable, such as soft-close drawer slides and soft-close doors, and storage options in either full height to accommodate coats or lower height that will still have room for jackets,” says Anna

Mandelkau, marketing and communications.

In addition, EVO storage or display space is available above desk areas, or if installed with the lower height design, stand-up work surfaces are created. “EVO is an elegant, simple and efficient opportunity for contract office furnishings,” says Gary Scitthelm, president and CEO. “There are pre-configured solutions, but SIMO excels in high-capacity and flexible manufacturing and can meet client needs accordingly. The tag line ‘now you don’t have to give an inch to save square feet’ is a perfect summation of the development that went into creating EVO and its impact in the way it has changed private office suites,” he says.

The Global Group has proven that good things come in small packages with its Princeton line of desking – the entire desk and workstation takes up a mere 50 square feet or less. “We had a major launch at the NeoCon 2010 show with our Princeton line, showcasing a number of different layouts of the desking,” says Mark Campbell, vice president of design for the Global Group. “The basis of the Princeton design involves considering where the person sits and works, and moving outward.”

While Princeton comes with 250 components – including tempered glass shelves with rolling glass doors and exclusive hardware, and a utility drawer that accommodates garbage and recycling bins – it can easily be configured by the user or installer. “Princeton is a self-standing module that is user friendly, and speaks to the generation coming into the workforce,” says Campbell. “In addition to acting as a storage area for archival material, the bench at the back of the unit is a place for a coworker to sit and discuss a project.” The tower at the end of the bench offers space to hang jackets and store bags, and provides shelving at the end of the credenza.

fluidconcepts’ latest product, Runway™, brings technology, lighting and workstations together into one cohesive system. “Runway is an innovative technology work spine that delivers ample electrical and data services to workstations from the floor or ceiling,” says Byron Leclair, president. “The Runway spine also serves as supports for screens, supporting paper management tools and storage.”

The Runway posts can extend upwards to mount efficient lighting fixtures to deliver ambient and task lighting to workstations as an alternative, or to augment general lighting that can often be inadequate and expensive. “One important LEED factor is building lighting levels and Runway enables lighting to be placed and used

where needed to offer appropriate ergonomic lighting levels,” says Leclair. fluidconcepts has teamed up with Luxo Lighting to create the technology of a cohesive workstation system that boasts an integrated approach. Runway also offers planning flexibility as the spine can be used independently with existing workstations, and mobile/independent tables.

Herman Miller, Inc. offers a new collection of seating and tables to the lounge furniture category. The collection, called Swoop, provides comfortable light-scale solutions that suit a variety of office, learning, health-care, and residential environments. Designed by Brian Kane of Kane Design Studio in San Francisco, Swoop includes an upholstered modular lounge seating group, a light scale pull-up lounge chair and ottoman, and stools.

“Swoop creates functional and comfortable spaces, which is particularly important for higher education institutes,” says Jeff Vredevoogd, Herman Miller’s director of education solutions. “Young people sit, lounge and study in a number of ways, while alone or interacting in a group. The contour of the seats and the mobility of the tables allow users the freedom to sit or work in whatever way is best for them.”

Steelcase Inc. has responded to the changing workspace with the media:scape™ product option. “Within a short time, media:scape has been recognized as a critical innovation for how it boosts collaboration,” says Lew Epstein, director, advanced development, integrated technologies. “In the future, this solution will extend beyond facilitating local face-to-face collaboration to host virtual collaboration. Everything that customers already love about media:scape will remain the same, coupled with a powerful new ability to connect people and information across distances.” ■

Above: from Global – Princeton. Below, Teknion’s Foundations casegoods.

