

# THE NEWS FROM THE IIDEX FLOOR



In September the 25th annual IIDEX/NeoCon conference and trade show took place in Toronto. In keeping with the uncertain economic climate, several major manufacturers scaled down the size of their booths – and a few decided to stay away entirely this year, or to be an event sponsor rather than an exhibitor. It seems, however, that tough times really do foster creative thinking. The market is clearly looking for flexible furniture lines that are as suitable for an entry-level workstation as they are for a senior executive's office, and the manufacturers are listening. There was a lot of emphasis this year on delivering value within a compact footprint, and on benching and other collaborative configurations. Reconfigurability is, quite literally key: many workstation manufacturers were quick to point out that their products can be taken apart, recombined and reassembled with an Allen key.

There was a time when clients would specify a systems line for workstations and a casegoods line for private offices, but increasingly the distinction between the two is disappearing. **Allsteel** describes its new **Stride** as an integrated kit of parts that "can create a seamless workplace of open plan, private office, traditional panel-based or light-scale desking for a range of needs." *Stride* is Allsteel's first line to be developed from the ground up for Cradle-to-Cradle certification, and it is compliant with the 2008 passage of BIFMA Design for the Environment.



**Keilhauer's Vanilla** is an executive task or boardroom chair that incorporates "Pelvic Balance Point" technology – design that takes into account the fact that women tend to sit more upright and more forward in their chairs than men do, and accommodates the sitting preferences of both genders. Knee-tilt and syncro-tilt versions are available; there are four arm options.

Canadian manufacturer **Tayco** has entered into a joint venture with UK manufacturer **Boss**. A selection of Boss-branded product is now manufactured out of Toronto and distributed throughout the North American market by Tayco. Among these products is **Money Penny**, a new mesh-back chair with a wide range of adjustment controls.

**Three H Furniture Systems** has now officially launched **MultiStations OS**, a line it previewed at NeoCons 2007 and 2008, in order to incorporate client feedback into the final design. Designed to meet open-plan and collaborative work environment needs at a competitive price point, **MultiStations OS** is something of a systems furniture and casegoods hybrid. Components are stacked and anchored with proprietary posts, frames and accessory rails; storage units may be shared between workstations. A proprietary snap-and-lock system makes it possible to slide components together and connect them with an Allen key. This system also simplifies reconfiguring.



◆ **Teknion** presented **dna** collaborative lounge seating by Denmark's **Acer Design** as part of its **WorkplaceOne** office planning concept. Backrests can be variously positioned on dna bases to create configurations that range from sofa style to cruciform. Designed to create a range of spaces within an open-plan setting suitable for everything from heads-down work to spontaneous interaction, the WorkplaceOne concept also included **Powermat**, a thin mat that 'profiles' the power needs of any electronic device placed on its surface and provides power only as needed. Teknion partnered with Powermat to launch this technology at NeoCon Chicago 2009, where it was a Best of Competition winner.



◆ **Kimball Office's Fluent** encompasses worksurfaces, tables, storage elements and privacy screens that can be combined to create single or double workstations, reception desks or private offices. In this leg-based series, worksurfaces and table desks connect to storage units that have finished backs, and can therefore serve as space dividers. A wide range of storage units assists in accommodating different workstyle preferences and providing ample storage capacity within compact footprints.



◆ **Planes** height-adjustable tables (shown in the foreground of the installation shot above, and at right) from **Haworth** offer six mechanism options, including incremental, crank, torsion and three ranges of electric. Range of heights varies from model to model; a sit-to-stand range of 22 inches to 48 inches is the most extensive. Earlier this year Planes was a Gold Best of NeoCon winner in the height-adjustable worksurfaces category. **Haworth** also introduced enhancements to its **Compose** desking, with a specific focus on benching.



◆ The benching trend remains strong, and **Tisch** from **Inscape** was one of the notable contenders in the category. Designed in Europe and manufactured in Canada, Tisch consists of a relatively small range of components that can be configured for desking, benching and conferencing applications. To facilitate cable management, sliding tops unlock and move forward, allowing access to power and data cables anywhere along the cable tray. For easy assembly and reconfiguration, all fasteners can be undone with an Allen key.