

No. 8 / May 2022, Cologne
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Now more important than ever: ORGATEC 2022 provides insights into the working environments of tomorrow

Our worlds of work have changed more rapidly in the last two years than at almost any other time previously. Working from home and videoconferencing, multilocal and virtual working in agile teams have placed new demands on work environments. Workplaces need to become more flexible and at the same time more sustainable. Key topics at the leading international trade fair in October will therefore include the latest developments in hybrid and flexible working as well as smart technologies and environmentally friendly materials. To give you a foretaste of what lies ahead, we take a look at the current trends and innovations in the office furnishings industry.

As the requirement to work from home comes to an end and staff return to the office, the industry faces new questions. What's attractive about an office when it's generally possible to work from anywhere? What kind of environment do hybrid working models need? Which tools facilitate virtual teamwork? Together with the exhibitors, ORGATEC 2022 from 25 to 29 October will reveal the industry's thoughts about the office environment for the "new normal". Solutions that make the office more attractive for teamwork, the exchange of ideas and social interaction are now high on the agenda. Instead of rigid workstations, spaces are being created that support new, creative ways of working. But what do such workplaces look like?

Forever flexible: shaping spaces with interior design

Today's offices are an ever-changing landscape of spaces, people and relationships. In line with the concept of colourful diversity over dull, uniform grey surroundings, employees prefer unique and adaptable office environments. The key to agile teamwork in the face of changing requirements is flexibility. With this goal in mind, several companies scheduled to exhibit at ORGATEC 2022 offer a wide variety of modular solutions for dividing spaces into zones. One example is the Node+ system from La Cividina, designed by Ben van Berkel. It comprises a series of upholstered parts, backrests, partition walls and accessories that can be combined in multiple ways in order to create spaces for work, relaxation, privacy or socialising. With RB and Clamp, the furniture brands Mobel Linea and Palmberg are also presenting new ranges for configuring office spaces. They respond to changing requirements by using modular elements to divide a wide variety of workspaces into zones.

Versatile all-rounders: multipurpose furniture

Today, even individual pieces of office furniture are increasingly multiflexible and multifunctional. Recent examples include the Fundamentals cabinet system from



ORGATEC 2022
25.10. - 29.10.2022
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Lande or the benches and stools in the 4SIX collection from SMV, which can be rearranged quickly and in many different ways. The models in the new Pontis Hypa range from ASSMANN Büromöbel, on the other hand, can be used as desks, seminar tables or bistro tables. Thanks to their rechargeable batteries, the tables are height-adjustable and their tabletops can be positioned vertically to serve as whiteboards. Thanks to magnetic supports, the Stay Agile whiteboards from Swiss manufacturer Adeco are as flexible as their name suggests and can even be used as meeting tables. The new, multifunctional Slide table system designed by the kaschkasch design studio for Renz is equally versatile - available in various heights, infinitely adjustable and mobile thanks to castors. The Mudra universal stacking chair, developed by Brunner in collaboration with designer Stefan Diez for offices, cafeterias or private homes, boasts a similar range of uses.

Naturally sustainable: eco-friendly materials

The climate crisis remains one of the greatest challenges of our time and is playing an increasingly important role in new developments in the office industry. Younger professionals in particular are striving to live sustainably, cycling to the office, buying local products or eating a vegan diet. And the working environment should reflect this attitude, too. Manufacturers are therefore increasingly focusing on recycling as well as environmentally friendly and certified materials. For example, the new Green Eco chair, designed by Javier Mariscal and available from Spanish brand Mobles 114, is made entirely from recycled material and is itself also fully recyclable. The refined and understated Arco collection of seating furniture from Cantarutti and the new Lina chair from Calligaris have received awards for their use of FSC®-certified wood. Although still a vision of the future, Palmberg has designed a desk that is made entirely of locally sourced organic wood and feeds solar energy and the waste heat generated by equipment (back) into the electrical ecosystem in the workplace.

Circular models: cradle-to-cradle in the office

Many office manufacturers have committed to basing their product cycles on the cradle-to-cradle principle, marking a further decisive step towards sustainability. More and more companies are seeking certification to confirm their switch to eco-friendly production models. The new Lino range of chairs from Kinnarps, for example, conforms to the circular economy idea. It comprises only a few components, which can be easily disassembled, replaced, separated and recycled. The A22 stackable barstool, designed by Swedish designer Anya Sebton for Lammhults, is based on a similar concept. To facilitate recycling, it is made entirely of steel and has no bolts or screws. The yarn and felt backing used for the new Shadowplay carpets by Ege Carpets have also been recycled and can be reused.

Green working environment: taking inspiration from nature

Well-being is a key theme in today's office concepts, and studies show that green plants and other natural features can be particularly beneficial. The trend towards biophilic design is therefore set to continue. Factors such as natural light, vegetation or naturalistic design offer a contrast to technology and the hectic pace of urban life. Plants can also significantly improve indoor air quality. So why not integrate greenery directly into office furniture? Room dividers like Para Vert from Brunner bring vertical planting into the workplace, act as indoor air purifiers and

can be extended as required. New colour collections for the office, such as Pigment from Alvic or Cinque Terre Colours & Natural from Fantoni, which are inspired by colours from the natural world, also convey a sense of being close to nature.

Cosy office furniture: the new at-home feeling

Even before the pandemic, work was already increasingly freeing itself from fixed locations. This trend has also blurred the boundaries between design for the office and the home. While homes have become offices, offices are visibly transforming into home-like feel-good zones. Soft shapes and warm colours define the new welcoming culture in the world of work. Furniture ranges like HomeLine from OKA combine office functions with homely design. The latest seating furniture - such as the ingLife office chair from Japanese manufacturer Kokuyo, the Alex lounge chair from BOS Barcelona or the Pottolo chair from French label Alki - also introduces a touch of cosy comfort into the office environment. With their elegant styling, these pieces are suitable for both work and home. Fun and playful designs, such as the brightly coloured octopus-shaped Medusa stools from Dileoffice or the Pony chair-and-table combination from gumpo also promise to liven up office work. Even company bosses avoid hard edges these days. Recent executive collections like Blade X from Alea feature soft, dynamic lines and welcoming wood tones.

Office design for the home

Working from home has gained new momentum as a result of the pandemic. As a long-term solution, it's an important issue - not only for companies but also in terms of product developments. Manufacturers such as Alea, Humanscale and Wiesner-Hager have developed special furniture ranges for remote workers that meet ergonomic requirements as well as the need to fit into a home environment. As an alternative to the kitchen table, height-adjustable sit-stand solutions such as the Gravit iDesk from Kesseböhmer introduce ergonomics and individuality to working from home. The tabletop can be personalised with bespoke motifs. Models like Poppe Swifel from Bla Station or Woom Light from Klöber are functional items of office furniture and comfortable armchairs at the same time, making them suitable for sitting for extended periods in home offices. Woom Light features a moulded non-woven seat shell made from recycled PET bottles and an integrated reading light that creates an extra-cosy ambience. The Souly office chair from Nowy Styl, designed by Oscar Buffon, is another sustainable seating solution, the individual elements of which can be flexibly replaced.

Audible well-being: improving room acoustics

The more open and agile the office environment, the greater the need for products aimed at optimising acoustics. That's why companies like Strähle offer customers the option to preview spatial acoustics by entering their own room data. Room-in-room systems, such as the extended Se:cube Max from Sedus, are suitable solutions for existing structures and are both acoustically and visually attractive. Inspired by Japanese interiors, the Zen Pod from Abstracta also creates acoustically shielded spaces that can be used for digital meetings, quiet conversations and work requiring full concentration. The Flexia lamp from Artemide also takes its inspiration from Japan, and its origami-influenced design absorbs sound from its surroundings. Solutions like Silento Screen from the Lanab Group, which can be set up quickly to create meeting zones or individual workstations in open-plan offices, are designed

to help people focus in a busy environment. More compact options include seating modules like Mute Focus from Swedish manufacturer Horreds and the upholstered Buddyhub unit from Pedrali, both of which provide small acoustic islands that allow users to concentrate on work in open office landscapes.

Healthier workplaces: ergonomic and antiviral products

Health has been a hot topic in the office industry for quite some time now. The pandemic has given the issue even greater prominence and added additional considerations. Alongside ergonomics and physical and mental fitness, hygiene matters are now increasingly finding their way into office design. The spectrum of current solutions ranges from ergonomic furniture for the workplace to room ventilators and antiviral surfaces. A healthy posture is supported by products like the fully upholstered Wave chair from Köhl, which has ergonomic properties that contribute towards healthy sitting and is available in a creative diversity of colours and designs. The Novus Clu monitor arm from Novus with light gas-spring technology is another recent example of optimised workplace ergonomics. The lamps from Italian manufacturer Artemide featuring Integrallis® technology also promote good health when it comes to desk-based work by disinfecting the surfaces they illuminate.

When the office furnishings industry finally meets again in person at ORGATEC in October, the innovations on display will not only serve to illustrate the rapid pace of change in the world of work. They will also show the ongoing progression towards healthy, sustainable and intelligently organised office environments. In addition to innovative solutions and products to satisfy the requirements of a “new normal”, the leading international trade fair will once again focus on the latest trends with an extensive event programme - and the industry has rarely been more excited to discover new ideas and inspiration for the future of work than it is right now.

Koelnmesse - industry trade fairs for the interior, outdoor and design sector:

Koelnmesse is the world's top trade fair organiser in the fields of interiors, furnishings, design, home living, garden lifestyle and modern work environments. At the trade fair grounds in Cologne/Germany, the leading international trade fairs imm cologne, LivingKitchen®, spoga+gafa and ORGATEC showcase the latest trends, products and innovations, serving as international, central gatherings for the global industry. In addition to the events at its Cologne headquarters, Koelnmesse is strategically expanding its portfolio internationally: The inaugural ORGATEC TOKYO will be hosted in 2022. It will be the first trade fair in Japan to focus on professional and hybrid work environments. As the satellite event for imm cologne and ORGATEC, idd shanghai provides European companies in the premium and luxury segment of the interior design industry with a unique platform for showcasing exclusive, design-driven products.

The in-person events are complemented by ambista, the online business network for the international interiors industry, which provides direct anywhere, anytime access to relevant products, contacts, expertise and events.

Further information: <https://www.orgatec.com/trade-fair/industry-sectors>

Further information about ambista: www.ambista.com

The next events:

spoga+gafa - The garden trade fair, Cologne 19.06. - 21.06.2022
ORGATEC - New visions of work, Cologne 25.10. - 29.10.2022
LivingKitchen - The international Kitchen Show (open to the public on Friday,
Saturday and Sunday), Cologne 16.01. - 21.01.2023

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