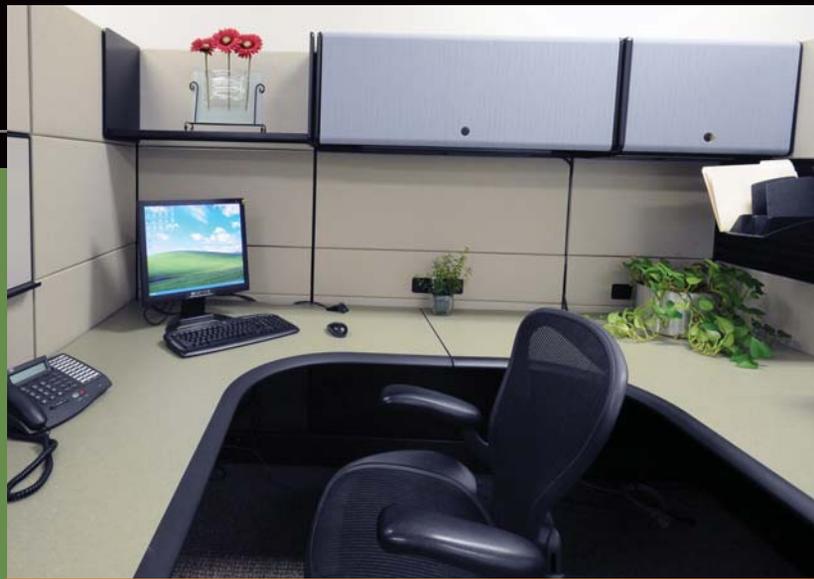


LEED

a View From the Office

BY MARK MILLER



Would you guess this was recycled Ethospace?

Could green be the new black? In commercial office buildings, things seem to be heading that way. As businesses seek to minimize their environmental footprint, create a healthier workplace for their employees and lower their operating costs, the office furniture industry is working to meet these new performance demands. LEED, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, has become the national standard by which a building and its commercial interiors are evaluated. While office furniture dealers will occasionally be involved in projects involving the standards for LEED for New Construction (NC), dealers are more likely to interact with customers interested in achieving certification under the LEED for Commercial Interiors (CI) rating system. LEED-CI has some additional furniture and furnishing-specific credits and provides office tenants the opportunity to make sustainable choices even if they don't control the entire building.

Of the five key categories in the LEED-CI criteria – Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy

& Atmosphere, Materials and Resources, and Indoor Environmental Quality – the contribution from the office furniture industry comes mainly through the Material and Resources and Indoor Environmental Quality categories.

The Material and Resources section largely focuses on reducing, reusing and recycling as many materials as possible, and there are a number of ways office furniture dealers can help their clients meet the LEED benchmarks. The key impact areas include:

- ▶ Sourcing salvaged, refurbished, or used furniture and furnishings.
- ▶ Sourcing materials made with high levels of recycled content.
- ▶ Using manufacturers within a 500 mile radius of the project.
- ▶ Sourcing furniture and furnishings made from rapidly renewable resources.
- ▶ Sourcing wood-based products and materials where a minimum of 50% is certified in accordance with the Forest Stewardship Council's Principles and Criteria.
- ▶ Designing flexible, efficient workspaces that allow clients to make long-term commitments.

The Indoor Environmental Quality section seeks to establish good indoor air quality by minimizing the sources of indoor pollutants and ensuring thermal comfort and system controllability. Another focus is to provide a connection to the outdoor environment for the occupant of the space. The key impact areas include;

- ▶ Using composite wood and agrifiber products that contain no urea-formaldehyde resins.
- ▶ Using systems furniture and seating made with

low-emitting materials.

- ▶ Providing lighting controls for individual occupant (i.e. task lighting) and multi-occupant spaces.
- ▶ Providing occupants with a connection to the outdoors through daylight and outdoor views.

LEED also allows design teams to earn points for exceptional performance above the requirements set by the LEED Green Building Rating System and/or innovative performance in Green Building categories not specifically addressed. For example, to achieve 1 point for LEED-CI Credit 3.3, refurbished, salvaged or used furniture and furnishings must amount to at least 30% of the total furniture and furnishings budget. An exemplary performance point would be awarded if the project achieved a 60% level of the furniture and furnishings budget, or a doubling of the standard performance requirement.

The reasons for green design are numerous; core values, lower operating costs, positive publicity, employee recruiting and retention to name a few. Since companies and institutions are making environmental goals an ever increasing priority, office furniture dealers will play a key role in helping them to achieve their green objectives. With LEED providing the benchmark for building sustainability, understanding the standards and offering the right products will be a key to success.

THE GREEN OFFICE FURNITURE TOOLBOX

Meeting customer demands in a competitive

Fabric on rolls for refurbished projects.



marketplace is a perpetual challenge, but playing the “green” card can give furniture dealers the extra momentum they need to win new business. Using GREEN tools can help improve customer relations and increase dealer margins, all while contributing to a healthier environment.

▶ **Liquidation** – Liquidation is the first step in the process that generates a quality piece of used or refurbished office furniture. On average, every 40-station project saves one tractor-trailer from a trip to the landfill. That number compounds when you count private offices, conference tables, chairs, and filing. John Gallen, President of EthoSource LLC, says, “By offering liquidation solutions for all brands of furniture, dealers are able to extend their relationship with the customer. Successful furniture liquidations require professional project management and knowledge of the secondary market to maximize the value to the customer and ensure that as much furniture as possible will be recycled.”

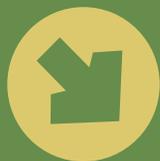
▶ **Refurbishing** – Refurbishing is the value-adding process that transforms one company’s previously owned office furniture into another company’s customized solution. This process can include the re-upholstery, refinishing, and painting of various components. Using refurbished office furniture allows dealers to meet very specific space planning, design, and budget requirements while also meeting environmental core value and/or LEED objectives.

▶ **Blending** – A flexible way to meet a customer’s needs and budget, “blending” augments existing furniture with new. According to Gary DiBlasi, Vice President of Sales at Spectrum, a Herman Miller dealer servicing the Philadelphia area, “Through the creative mix of high end, recycled product coupled with innovative new products such as storage and seating from Herman Miller or our numerous other product lines, we have been able to provide our customers with a blended solution that

simultaneously achieves the desired aesthetic as well as the green and LEED objectives that our customer has set forth.”

▶ **Banking** – A useful tool for larger customers, Gary DiBlasi says, “Banking has provided our customers with the ability to recycle their existing inventory, which may no longer match their desired specifications, into a usable credit to be applied towards the acquisition of other recycled furniture that will meet their current needs and objectives. This approach has allowed us to relieve our customers of tremendous amounts of stagnant inventory which would sit dormant in a warehouse or be discarded into a landfill.”

▶ **New Product Selection** - Driven by the end user, most office furniture manufacturers and dealers are hearing the call for eco-friendly materials and are rising to the challenge by adding to their offerings. Polyester, wood fiber, and resin are all examples of recycled raw materials that are finding their way into the design of office environments. Third party verification is another approach manufacturers are taking to assure customers of a product’s environmental compliance. Greenguard®, for instance, has established standards for environmental air quality and certifies low-emitting products. While it might take a little research, eco-friendly products are becoming an increasingly sought-after option.



EthoSource, LLC is in the business of redefining the overall expectation of what pre-owned and recycled office furniture is – and then delivering on that higher expectation by providing a product which embodies our vision of a sustainable, smart and affordable office furniture solution. With specialties in nationwide liquidation and recycled Herman Miller Ethospace, EthoSource is positioned to expertly furnish the nation’s offices today – while easing the environmental

The Ecology and Economy of Recycling Office Furniture



- ☀ By remanufacturing office furniture rather than buying it new, U.S. businesses could avoid \$93 million in disposal costs.
- ☀ Purchasing a remanufactured product can cost consumers 30-50% less than a new product.
- ☀ According to the EPA, 3 million tons of office furniture and furnishings are discarded each year.
- ☀ The amount of labor and energy required to alter an existing product during remanufacturing is 85 to 95% less than that required to manufacture a new product.
- ☀ Carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, sulfur oxides, nitrous oxides, volatile organic compounds, and particulate matter are all reduced by the recycling of office furniture, thereby reducing air pollution and global warming.
- ☀ The annual energy savings resulting from remanufacturing activities worldwide is 120 trillion Btu’s. This equals the electricity generated by eight nuclear power plants, or 16 million barrels of crude oil (about 350 tankers).
- ☀ The annual material savings resulting from remanufacturing activities worldwide is 14 million tons a year. This is the equivalent of a fully loaded railway train 1650 miles long.

Sources: Rochester Institute of Technology and The Office Furniture Recyclers Forum

burden for tomorrow.

As a nationwide leader of liquidation services, EthoSource provides office furniture solutions to organizations that are relocating, downsizing, reorganizing or moving. This full-service professional operation specializes in the purchase, disassembly, and removal of all types and brands of excess furniture – handled by our detail-oriented and industry-trained project management team.

Our expertise in the Herman Miller Ethospace system is accompanied by a host of complete services from space planning, design, and finish selection to project management, delivery and installation. Moreover, we have an extensive inventory of high end, pre-owned office furniture including seating, conference tables, casegoods and storage to complement the offering. For more information, visit www.EthoSource.com.