

Choosing Commercial Furniture that is Sustainable AND Affordable

Today there are many furniture options available to business owners that are both sustainable and affordable. The key to achieving both is like many business decisions...careful planning.

Most companies **primary goal** when purchasing furniture is to **maximize the investment the have already made in office space and personnel.**

The next step is to establish your priorities. Do you want an environment that:

- Projects your corporate image
- Is adaptable to current and future technology
- Maximizes the performance and well-being of your personnel

All of the above? Some of the above? Or do you have additional priorities? Be sure to communicate these objectives early in the conversations with your furniture consultant.

Think long term. The most sustainable furniture, from a resource perspective, is that which can be “re-purposed” as your company changes.

- The modular concept of workstations has now expanded to include desks, storage, reception and conference areas. At last month’s NeoCon, World Trade Show for Commercial Furnishings, most major manufacturers showcased casegood lines that allowed for pieces to be reconfigured as needs changed.
- Choose colors and designs that are timeless. Then, instead of replacing entire areas, you can update with splashes of accent color.
- During the planning stage, think of your walls as another piece of movable furniture. As the needs of the workplace have changed, many companies are now tearing down drywall and rebuilding to create more collaborative areas. Or worse yet, companies are not creating the spaces they need because of the cost to tear down and re-build. Moveable walls, now available at many price points, increase the flexibility and efficiency of your company and save money over the lifecycle of your space.

Ask for products that are GreenGuard Certified or can demonstrate other third party certifications, which verify that their chemical and particle emissions meet acceptable indoor air quality pollutant guidelines and standards. No more “new furniture” smell!

- GreenGuard Certification has been available since 2002 and most major manufacturers of systems furniture and task chairs have been awarded this certification for many of their lines. Many casegoods manufactures have changed, or are in the process of changing, their processes and finishes to be compliant.
- You can still choose custom fabrics – just be sure to ask your furniture consultant to check their certification.

Check Recycled Content. This information is available from most major manufacturers. If this is important to you, have your furniture consultant request the information on your behalf.

Don’t buy what you don’t need. This may seem obvious, but many times there are options that will never be used - think of gizmos on task chairs. Sometimes more is not better, especially if it leads to waste.

So, like any other major business decision, plan ahead and you CAN have a work place that is attractive, sustainable and affordable.

For more information about choosing the right office furniture, contact Karen Stiles, LEED AP, Director of Sustainability, Florida Business Interiors

940 Williston Park Point, Lake Mary, Florida 32746
407-708-5929 Direct www.4fbi.com