

## Hunting for the Best Furniture?

A reclining chair, tables in beech wood, a glass top dining table, designer cupboards or a wrought iron bed - it's the furniture that imparts the maximum glamour and comfort to a home or an office. When it comes to furniture, the wish list is endless. People are often seeing planning for furniture for their home/office even before they actually finalize the deal on their home or office.

If you visit, any furniture shops (and there are plenty out there in the market), you would be bedazzled by the wide range of furniture. There are all kinds of designs available on various furniture items (and they are available in all kinds of price range too). There is furniture that is designed to give modern look and there are pieces that are more oriented towards imparting a traditional look.

Similarly, sometimes the focus might be more on comfort whereas at other times the focus might be more on the look of the furniture. In any case, the quality of wood/metal, used for the furniture, is the main factor that determines the life of a piece of furniture. Polish of the furniture is another important factor that goes into determining the quality of furniture. Again, there are separate designs for office furniture and home furniture.

Knowing how to select the most appropriate office furniture requires more than just a flair for what is in vogue and feels comfortable.

Jim DiPersia, vice president of the American Society of Furniture Designers, has worked in the business for 29 years and has witnessed many changes in how individuals choose office items. For example, it used to be trendy just to simply buy the most contemporary styles for chairs, conference tables and other necessities.

### Things to consider

- ? Location of natural lighting
- ? Location of artificial lighting
- ? Location of power outlets
- ? Noise abatement
- ? Scale of furniture to space
- ? Ergonomic qualities of furniture
- ? Tasks that will be performed by workers
- ? Whether customers will be coming into the office
- ? Flexibility and mobility of furniture
- ? Durability
- ? Color scheme

Source: American Society of Furniture Designers and Business and Institutional Manufacturers Association

"I see a swing toward higher-end manufacturers. People are always looking for durability, but in the past I think price was more an issue and would sometimes cloud good judgment," said DiPersia. "Today, the most popular types of office furniture are simple, straight-line pieces where functionality precedes gadgetry."

The ASFD, founded in 1981 and located in New London, N.C., is an international, nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing and supporting the profession of furniture design and its impact on the marketplace.

Certain office buildings, such as those which might house scientific laboratories, require flexible furniture that can be easily and inexpensively moved to suit the environment or type of research that is being conducted. DiPersia said the flexibility issue is always determined by the office environment and what type of work the employees will be performing. There are no set rules about the need for mobile, flexible furniture.

DiPersia said individuals in charge of purchasing the furniture for an office should consider the type of business, its location, the employees' needs, the amount of lighting and the function of the work space. He said the most commonly overlooked factor is ensuring the chairs, tables, desks and other items can be adjusted to meet various heights and are ergonomically correct.

"Efficiency is one of the foremost issues to be dealt with in laying out a new environment, communication systems, lighting and an overall feeling of a relaxed atmosphere. This is achieved with not only the furnishings, but color tests are being done now to determine the outcome that color has on inmates in the state penitentiary," said DiPersia. "The findings vary with warmer colors as opposed to cool. The warmer tones have been proven to render a more calming effect. A well-planned office will produce a more efficient, congenial atmosphere."

Tom Reardon, executive director of the Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association, said the most important matter that purchasers need to remember when equipping their office is the work that will be done by the employees. Factors that should be considered include how much time they will spend at their computer, talking on the telephone, interacting with co-workers and customers.

"It's important to determine whether the corporation has any image objectives. Are customers going to be coming into the business like at a law firm where they typically have high-end furniture to impress clients," said Reardon. "High-end furniture may be at the top of one company's priorities and not at many others."

Reardon said large corporations usually call professional designers to help them plan and purchase new office furniture, while smaller offices typically have to make their own decisions.

Reardon said corporations that work with architects to construct new buildings can ensure their needs are met and selecting furniture is usually a much easier task than when a company moves into an existing facility.

"If you are stuck with the building, you have to work around it as far as where the walls are situated, what type of lighting it features and where the power sources are located," he said.

Reardon said cubicle office systems often minimize noise in a busy office because the panels that separate the work stations have special acoustical properties. Appropriate floor covering and ceiling treatments can also help eliminate noise, but are sometimes overlooked when the office furniture is being replaced.

Reardon said a "caves and commons" atmosphere has evolved in corporate America today where there are common areas for collaborative work and private office areas where individuals must complete reports and other tasks.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

#### About the Author

If furniture is what you are looking for, <http://www.efurniture-store.be> is the first place (and probably the last place) to go to.