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2. Devesh Mistry, DGM – Chief of Workspace Design, Godrej Interio

# FURNITURE FIX

OFFICE FURNITURE IS GETTING A MAKEOVER OF SORTS, ESPECIALLY POST PANDEMIC, AS THE FOCUS SHIFTS TO A HYBRID WORKING MODEL.

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO

**T**he key to creating the workplace of the future is to view employees as unique individuals with specific needs rather than as generalised ‘workers’ while keeping empathy at the forefront, even when it comes to office designs.

**NEW VISTAS**

A recent study from Godrej Interio revealed that 84 per cent

of the workforce expect a good work-life balance from their jobs. Essentially, the workplace of the future must address public health requirements, individual employee needs, and deliver economic value to businesses through adaptive ways of engaging with their ecosystems. “Focus rooms can help employees harness a burst of productivity, through home-like privacies and focused screens. At the same time, large spaces help teams to brainstorm and create a social bond. This also

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includes a variety of workstation configurations, ranging from the traditional sit-down desk to customisable sit-stand Smart Desks. In uncertain times, the concept of larger floor spaces with service cores that fit in more functional aspects for building diversification shall be an effective remedy. Since sustainability in furniture is an earnest necessity, purchasing trendy office furniture is no longer just about looks. It is both aesthetically pleasing and healthy to design products and choose materials with long term value retention supporting 'circular design models.' These furniture products do not utilise any chemicals and don't release any unpleasant volatile

compounds," says Devesh Mistry, DGM – Chief of Workspace Design, Godrej Interio.

#### HYBRID WORKING

With things getting back to normal and office spaces operating in full strength under hybrid mode, it has become essential for business owners to redesign their office spaces as the 'post-pandemic lifestyle' themes. Hybrid workspaces of today, must serve a 'higher purpose' and stay activity-based, with employees having a choice of tailored work arrangements based on their profile and tasks to be

performed. "A dynamic shift in the lifestyle is observed, and the branded products are designed with extensive applied research and scientific discoveries. Office furniture and design trends are redefined each year to improve the employee productivity and upscale office interior spaces. As employees spend more than a quarter of their days' time at office desks and cubicles, the change in interior layout gives them a more flexible, reliable, work-friendly environment, which in turn boosts productivity. An interactive office will foster enthusiasm and provide better work results," says Parul Mittal, Director, Greenlam Industries Ltd.

#### DESIGN DETAILS

One of the new trends while designing office spaces is adding a lot of foliage which gives freshness, positivity, and vibrancy to the workspace. Another key aspect is to build well-designed functional units for storage of bags and other paraphernalia so that they do not spoil the beauty of the space and help keep things as organised as possible. "This is one of the most essential aspects of designing any office. Another trend is to focus on keeping the design as minimalistic as possible, using light colours to make the office appear larger and more spacious. Colour punches are often added to bring about a burst of colour, liveliness, and vitality in the workspace. Everyone wants their team to be their productive best, so monthly planners and vision boards, which are both aesthetic and effective, can be added. They are very effective in keeping the team focused and motivated and help them plan things out in the most efficient possible way," say Khushboo Shah & Meghna Shah, Co-Founders of The Mark Decor, Kolkata.

#### TREND CHECK

There has been a clear transition in office spaces over the years. Some of the important trends being seen in the post-pandemic work setup are that designers are working more towards utilising sustainable products and designs, interactive lounges for employee engagement, and functional spaces that include lightweight, maneuverable, and ergonomic furniture. "With technology at its peak, modern office accessories like standing desk and dynamic, functional,

modular office accessories are being increasingly preferred. Apart from emerging trends in office furniture, one thing that should be kept in mind before redesigning your office spaces is that every individual has a unique way of working and being forced to work with a specific approach may curb their creativity. Offices should be designed by keeping a space for every employee, be it the private introvert or the social enthusiast. Keeping up with trends is an easy task with the right planning and ideation," opines Mittal.

#### GREEN CALL

Today, sustainability is the need of the hour and workplaces are certainly not left behind. Today, there are options to make office furniture sustainable and add a touch of newness in the office space. "We can use recycled or sustainable furniture in various places, including office gardens, waiting areas, dining areas, and more. Additionally, we can also make partitions and desks from recycled furniture. Adding products such as an eco-triangular shelf and decorative pot stand by Econiture can add to the overall look of the space. Recycled plastic



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COURTESY: THE MARK DECOR, KOLKATA

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9 & 10. Khushboo Shah & Meghna Shah, Co-Founders of The Mark Decor, Kolkata



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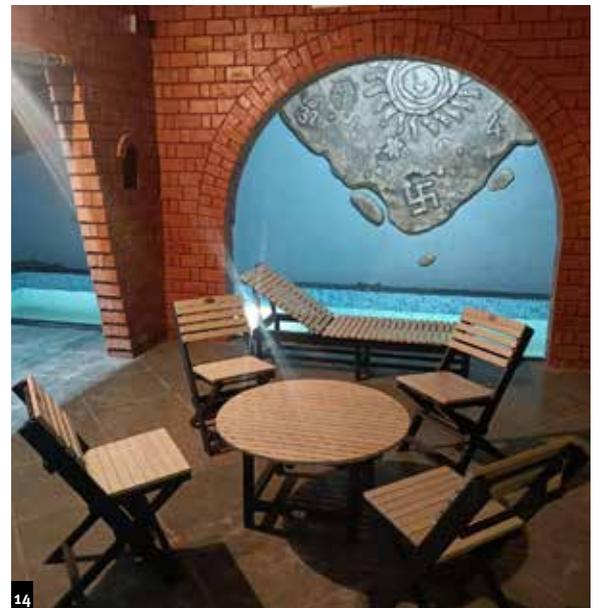


COURTESY: ECONITURE

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11 Swaviman Das, Director-Design, Space Matrix

12. Econiture furniture is waterproof, termite-proof, comparatively less costly than wooden furniture and extremely low maintenance.

13. Recycled Plastic furniture not only gives offices a vibrant look but also has environmental benefits.

14. Econiture has options to make office furniture sustainable and add a touch of newness in the office space.

furniture not only gives offices a vibrant look but also has environmental benefits. It reduces consumption of wooden and metal furniture which minimises deforestation and metal mining. Additionally, since it is made from waste plastic, it reduces the plastic waste generated enormously every day," says Madhur Rathi, CEO and Co-founder at Recycle Bell Private Limited (Econiture).

#### IN TUNE WITH TIME

The nature of work has undergone a transformation today. This has made it imperative for organisations to bring about a change in the office design to focus on the comfort of the end user. There is a need to create environments that nurture productivity and innovation – more so because users have evolved. "They are in control and will be more so in the future as well. Every element of the workspace, therefore, including furniture, interiors, and other products, is most valuable when they respond to the demands of the end-user quickly. This includes insights that can address a broad

set of needs. At Space Matrix, we rigorously study work environments, physiological, psychological, and sociological behaviors to focus on solutions that cater to these evolving needs. Extensive scientific inputs on ergonomics, energy consumption and technology are roped in to create features that are inclusive to the diverse workforce and mindful of the global energy impact. Our profound learnings, coupled with deep-rooted expertise in space and product design, helps us challenge the unidimensional conception of work enablers like pieces of furniture," says Swaviman Das, Director-Design, Space Matrix. 📧

#### WEBSITES

- **Godrej Interio:** [www.godrejinterio.com](http://www.godrejinterio.com)
- **Greenlam Industries Ltd.:** [www.greenlam.com/india](http://www.greenlam.com/india)
- **The Mark Decor:** [www.themarkdecor.com](http://www.themarkdecor.com)
- **Recycle Bell Private Limited (Econiture):** [www.econiture.com](http://www.econiture.com)
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