

Work Better

# WB

**Design. Insights. Research.**

Fall | Winter 2022

**A World of Design**

Discover exceptional design through the Steelcase community of brands

**Leadership by Design**

New spaces for leading in the era of hybrid work

**New+ Notable**

Design with intention that inspires

# The Design Issue

**Steelcase**

**Steelcase Community of Brands**

Steelcase and our community of brands bring together a spectrum of products and services in design, technology, materials, learning and health, to help create places that work better.

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## Change by Design

Some media say the office is dying, but we'd argue it is being reborn.

Yes, office attendance is below pre-pandemic levels, according to data from Kastle Systems, but that reflects how often a badge is being swiped, not how many people are coming into an office or how they feel when they get there. If a hybrid worker comes into the office three days a week they are simply swiping their badge less often. That's not to suggest that hybrid work is the only reason attendance numbers are down – many people were unhappy with their office before the pandemic and plenty are in no hurry to return. But if you step back and take the long view, work is going through a time of dramatic change – hybrid is new for most of us. We are all figuring out new rhythms and how work is evolving. It's a fluid situation and leading organizations are asking themselves, "What is the role of the office? What job do we need it to do?" It's a time of rethinking and rebirth, not death. And that's where design comes in.

**Designers are problem solvers, and the reinvention of work that is happening right now needs designers to challenge our assumptions and recreate our experiences.**

People are being deliberate about where and how they work. So we need to be deliberate about designing places for the way work happens today, that are flexible enough to adapt to the way it might be tomorrow. Our new Work Better magazine is dedicated to sharing the latest in design, insights and research that helps the world work better. In this inaugural issue, we celebrate the many talented designers from Steelcase, our expansive community of brands and from firms around the world who solve problems and help create places where people want to be. We explore ideas for how the office might be reborn, in big and small ways. And we are committed to helping design places that work better so people can do their best work.

Welcome to Work Better magazine, where we'll bring you new ideas, insights and solutions that help how we all work.



**Chris Congdon**  
Editor in Chief,  
Work Better Magazine

*Chris Congdon*

## New Spaces for New Work

New WorkLife Centers have opened in Paris and Melbourne to showcase solutions for the new era of hybrid work. Our spaces in Dubai, Munich, NYC, Toronto, L.A., Washington, D.C., Boston, Dallas, Atlanta, San Francisco, Chicago and Grand Rapids have also been updated. Visit a location near you to experience concepts for the new ways people are working today.



Grand Rapids



Toronto



Melbourne



Paris



Dubai

### WorkBetterLabs Popping Up in North America

Open for a limited time, these WorkBetterLabs prototype the workplace of the future. Visit one now in Philadelphia, Austin, Northwest Arkansas and San Diego. New locations in early 2023 include Raleigh, Houston and Calgary.

## Latest Hybrid Work Research

Creating an equitable and engaging experience for both in-room and remote participants requires intentional integration of technology and space, including lights, cameras and audio. Ocular™ is a curved table designed specifically for the Microsoft Teams Front Row experience. The curvature of the table ensures every in-room participant can see one another and be at eye level with remote colleagues.



### New hierarchy of needs for the hybrid workplace

**Enhance Performance**  
Access to better technology, tools and spaces should make work easier than working at home or anywhere else.

**Socialize with Purpose**  
People need intentionally designed spaces that help them break down silos, build team camaraderie and influence others to advance their work.

**Create Community**  
Engaging in rituals like volunteering, hack-a-thons, cultural celebrations or personal milestones brings meaning to work and aligns people's values with others.

Learn more about this research  
[steelcase.com/NewHybridNeeds](https://steelcase.com/NewHybridNeeds)

Steelcase Global Report:  
**The New Era of Hybrid Work**  
Find out what matters most in the office now.  
[steelcase.com/GlobalReport2022](https://steelcase.com/GlobalReport2022)



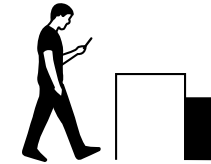
\*Source: Steelcase Global Research 2021-2022

### Three emerging types of hybrid workers

**1 Anchored**  
Required attendance. Needs owned, individual spaces.



**2 Untethered**  
Has no assigned space and works in shared social, team and personal settings.



**3 Destination**  
Decides when to come into the office and needs more owned team or project spaces.



Welcome to the Steelcase community of brands

H A L C O N

HALCON, known for their beautiful precision-tailored wood furniture, uncompromising design and master craftsmanship, is now a Steelcase company.

GOODEE

B Corp™ Certified GOODEE, a Black-owned, responsibly-curated marketplace offering essential home and lifestyle products, is now available in Canada through the Steelcase dealer community.

Established & Sons

Innovative British design company **Established & Sons** is now available in EMEA, in addition to the Americas through the Steelcase dealer community. Their unique collections bring contemporary design solutions to the evolving workplace.

Buildings have an outsized impact on climate change, causing 37% of all global greenhouse gas emissions, according to the World Green Buildings Council.

As a company that makes office furnishings that go into buildings we have the opportunity – and responsibility – to minimize our impact. **Better Is Possible.**

## Designing for the Planet

“There are many choices product designers can make such as using recycled content, designing for recyclability or reuse or minimizing waste. One area we’re focused on is designing products that weigh less, meaning we use less materials in the first place.”

Michael Held  
Steelcase Vice President of Global Design



### Steelcase Flex Perch Stool

Uses electronic waste byproducts vs materials from virgin fossil fuel

70% of recycled content

100% recyclable

Changing colors during production creates imperfect mixed pigment versions that are gifted to charities, not wasted

### Another First for Think

Think is the first Steelcase product to receive a Declare label – like a nutrition label, it provides the highest level of transparency about what building products are made from.



### Carbon-Smart Choices

Steelcase Series™ 1 with CarbonNeutral® product certification offsets 100% of emissions through projects like forest management, renewable energy and electric transportation.

### Knit-to-Fit Stops Waste

Steelcase Flex Personal Spaces Privacy Wraps use Camira Knit, made from recycled polyester and “Knit to Fit” using exact measurements, so it’s waste-free.

### Old Mattresses, New Life

The Savina sofa uses Ecopure®, a recycled foam made from discarded mattresses and sofas.



## A Force for Good



### Australia Healing, Respect and Equality

This year we introduced our first of four Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP) in Australia. RAPs provide a framework to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through job opportunities, professional partnerships and cultural exchange.

### India + Germany Plants Install Solar Power

493 solar panels in Pune, India and 76 panels + technologies that produce both heat and electricity in Rosenheim, Germany deliver:

**50%** of energy for their daily manufacturing activities



### Europe Employees Help Ukraine

Employees throughout Europe organized many efforts, including donation drives for people seeking shelter in Romania, raising money for a field kitchen and essential supplies to refugees on the Polish border and providing funds for temporary housing for Ukrainians arriving in Bavaria.

### France Building a Circular Economy

Through a Steelcase program offered in France, Belgium, Switzerland and Luxembourg called Eco'Services, we help find alternatives to landfill through product resale, donations, upcycling and recycling. Circular by Steelcase is a new offering from Eco'Services that brings products back to like-new conditions so they can be used longer and stay out of landfills.



### United States Best Employer for Women

Steelcase ranked 13th out of the 400 organizations Forbes named as best employers for women in the U.S. These companies rank highly in the areas of parental leave, family support, flexibility, inclusive hiring practices, representation, career and pay equity.

Women make up: **1/3** of top executive positions at Steelcase

### India Women of Steel

Only 12% of manufacturing jobs in India are filled by women, and in early 2021 women represented only 10% of the workforce at our Pune, India plant, who mostly sewed or packed boxes. A focused effort and new program called “Women of Steel,” designed to support learning, development and engagement, increased the number of women to 60%, filling diverse manufacturing roles in the plant.

**64%** of Steelcase Board of Directors



**Steelcase Impact Report 2022 Now Available**  
Learn how we impact our communities, strive toward bold emissions reduction targets and foster a culture of inclusion and integrity.  
[steelcase.com/ImpactReport](https://steelcase.com/ImpactReport)

### Introducing the Better Futures Community

This new community of people and organizations work to explore bold approaches to equity, education and the environment. They invest and accelerate new ideas, collaborating with partners to co-create solutions that make lasting social impact.

# Leadership

## by Design

Executive spaces are not designed for hybrid work. It's time for change.

It used to be an experiment on the fringes, but hybrid work has gone mainstream and it's one of the biggest economic and cultural changes facing leaders today. Most organizations who choose hybrid work are trying to offer a balance between the flexibility people want and the need to bring employees together to create greater cohesion and build a sense of community.

Some leaders worry their corporate culture is slowly dissolving and talk of “quiet quitting” – pulling back from work while staying in the job (or, as some would say, a Tik Tok term for disengagement) – is making them think it's time to make sure they're leading by example.

Hybrid work policies can be a struggle for companies when people come into offices that still look like ghost towns. There's a critical mass that's needed to gain momentum and leaders play a critical role – they need to be accessible in ways they may not have considered in the past and to set the tone for the adoption of hybrid work. “Congratulations. You are the new amenity,” McKinsey's Workplace Strategy and Change Leader Phil Kirschner tells leaders. “It used to be the gym, the cafeteria, being able to bring puppies to work, whatever it is, but the executives are the new amenity.”

But the current office might be a barrier to leaders who want to be accessible and role models for hybrid. Workplace design traditionally focused on leaders' needs by creating executive floors or suites that were set apart from the rest of the organization. It became a constraint to building transparency and made it harder for leaders to have serendipitous connections with employees. A fundamentally different approach to leadership spaces can be an important tool for building the kind of culture and fostering the kind of behaviors leaders want to see.

### Accessible. Approachable. Functional.

One of the things we know from our research is that employees want their leaders to be visible, accessible and transparent in how they run the business. For many leaders this requires new behaviors and practices, which can be a challenge because they also need to get their jobs done.

*“Executives are the new amenity.”*

Phil Kirschner, McKinsey Workplace Strategy and Change Leader

So how can leaders balance the need to be more approachable to employees yet still have a highly-functional space to handle the moments of crisis they're dealing with more frequently, as well as the day-to-day needs of the organization? How can they collaborate as a leadership team and share quickly with each other as well as the larger organization. And how do they do all this in a hybrid work environment when they need to interact with people in-room and remote participants? “Our clients are telling us they are struggling with these issues and looking to us to help them,” says Steelcase CEO Sara Armbruster.

This is a time of seismic change and we believe space can help shape new leadership behaviors. We have a history of prototyping and testing progressive new ways for leaders to work. Our new leadership space applies our research and insights to create an innovative approach for leaders in a hybrid world.

The new space, called the “Leader Commons” and located within the Steelcase Learning and Innovation Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan is a behavioral prototype – a fully-built-out environment where concepts are tested and evaluated in real time. Like its name implies, this space is designed to be highly accessible and approachable for employees, yet functional for the demands of leadership roles. It offers spaces where they can focus and collaborate, both in-person and remotely. “We know organizations need to rebuild the social capital that was lost while everyone worked from home,” says Cherie Johnson, global design director. “Traditional leadership spaces don't offer the transparency and accessibility people want today.”

**The design was inspired by dynamic neighborhoods that have a range of diverse public and private spaces which encourages equity, engagement and ease of use to address the needs of hybrid work.**

### Making Hybrid Work

Hybrid work will require new kinds of spaces for leaders to connect easily with both in-person and remote participants and the right technology is essential for a seamless experience. Leaders need a variety of hybrid collaboration options for both 1:1 and group conversations in open and enclosed spaces that are easily accessible.

Steelcase is collaborating with industry-leading technology partners to rethink the hybrid work experience and create holistic solutions that integrate space and technology. We work together early in the design process to ensure spaces work better for people, teams and organizations.



Learn more  
[steelcase.com/technologies](https://steelcase.com/technologies)

## Designing a Leadership Neighborhood

The design concept of creating spaces that are more like a vibrant neighborhood is based on our belief that the workplace needs to be more inclusive and create the sense of community that people and organizations need to thrive. Neighborhoods are a tangible way for organizations to communicate their values and shift their culture. Every neighborhood has its own distinctive character and four key design principles guide their creation.



### Me + We

Just as city neighborhoods have homes and shared spaces, a leadership community should support both individual and team work.



### Fixed-to-Fluid

Leaders need a highly adaptable and resilient space that can ebb and flow with their needs. The easier it is for them to make changes on demand, the more effective the space will be.



### Open + Enclosed

Privacy and the ability to focus in the office has become even more important. Leaders need to be able to find the level of privacy they require.



### Braiding Digital + Physical

Every space may need to be a video space. Video meetings are a new norm in the office and everyone needs to see and be seen, hear and be heard. Technology and the physical space need to be considered holistically to provide an equitable experience for both in-person and remote participants.

## Topography of a Leadership Neighborhood

A leadership neighborhood includes a diverse range of owned and shared spaces that meet the various needs of hybrid work.

- 1 C-Suite Home Bases**  
Owned personal spaces for leaders that provide privacy for focus work with adjacent back porch spaces for 1:1 collaboration.
- 2 Executive Assistants Pods**  
Workspaces provide proximity to leaders as well as to other assistants who work as a team to support leaders. Highly mobile furnishings allow for personal control and preferences.
- 3 Social Hub**  
Located at the entrance of a Leader Commons, this approachable space encourages people to gather and allows informal access to leaders. It can be an "on deck" area for people coming to attend scheduled meetings.
- 4 Courtyard**  
Located in the center of resident spaces, it's a space where leaders can easily come together, with mobile boundary elements that can accommodate varying team sizes, provide visual and acoustic privacy and enable hybrid collaboration.
- 5 Front Porch**  
Located near main traffic thoroughfares, these informal and comfortable ancillary spaces can be used before and after meetings, as touchdown spaces, for casual conversations or for hosting guests.
- 6 Community Meeting Spaces**  
A range of fully enclosed, bookable meeting spaces are equipped to support hybrid collaboration and are available to all employees. These include Hybrid Huddle Rooms, Hybrid Active Collaboration Spaces and Hybrid Informative Collaboration Rooms.
- 7 Communication Kiosks**  
Analog and digital media integrated throughout the space provide places for storytelling and messaging to both employees and guests (*not shown on floor plan*).



### Making Leaders Visible

To make the space accessible, this leadership neighborhood was intentionally designed on a major footpath to create opportunities for serendipitous interactions between leaders and employees.

### 1 Homes for Leaders

This space includes 10 C-Suite Home Bases, distributed throughout the Leader Commons. Their close proximity makes it easy for leaders to connect. Each space provides similar amenities and tools, but privacy levels vary based on leader's work style preferences.

Illustration by Jocely Williams

# A New Vision for Leadership Spaces to Support Hybrid Work



## Back Porch

An aside space to the pod serves as a back porch that signals availability and allows quick shifts for collaboration with both in-person and remote participants. A height-adjustable Mackinac table behind the pod provides a place for 1:1 meetings or to connect virtually.



## Private Zone

Integrated technology and easy access to work tools makes this compact space highly effective for deep focus and hybrid 1:1 collaboration.

## C-Suite Home Base

This new kind of CEO space is highly visible, positioned on a main traffic path, yet gives leaders the privacy they need to do their work. Designed around a freestanding pod, the space has multiple areas for different kinds of work. Close the sliding door for deep focus work or video calls (each leader has a curated background that speaks to who they are).



In this setting:

Campers & Dens by Orangebox  
Mackinac Desk System by Steelcase  
Steelcase Karman™



**C-Suite Home Base Personal Zone**

For leaders who prefer a more open environment, boundary elements provide shielded privacy and the opportunity to personalize the space.



**Back Porch**

This back porch uses lounge furniture to create a comfortable and relaxed space — an alternative to working at a desk or a place for gathering with a colleague.

*In this setting:*  
Steelcase Flex Personal Spaces with Privacy Wrap  
Steelcase Flex Active Frames  
Gesture™ Chair by Steelcase  
Grace Sofa by Bolia





### Social Hub

An approachable and multipurpose café space for leaders and employees to meet; ideal for connecting before and after meetings with leadership. It also includes touchdown spaces for people to do individual work.



*In this setting:*

*Grid Sofa by Established & Sons  
Marien152 Guest Chair by Coalesse  
West Elm Work Greenpoint Bookshelves and Credenza  
Wing Chair by Carl Hansen & Son*

# Behind the Scenes

The Steelcase design team and the Applied Research & Consulting (ARC) group worked closely with Steelcase leaders to learn the new behaviors they wanted the space to support and what changes needed to be made to help re-energize the organization's culture. The ARC team conducted a series of discovery exercises, workshops, surveys and interviews to better understand the challenges leaders faced and how the space should be designed to support the new needs of hybrid work.

The Steelcase design team used a highly collaborative process with leaders to create the Leader Commons. Through the use of survey tools and one-on-one interviews, they learned about each person's leadership style and how they prefer to work — alone and together with others. The result was a range of solutions that solved the tension between the needs for accessibility and privacy.

“Every individual workspace was designed to enhance performance as well as provide sanctuary,” says Cherie Johnson, global design director. “But they are unique in how they achieve that. Every workspace provides similar amenities and tools, but differs in how we tailor visual privacy, and how they are represented as individuals. Curating a space that embodies their personality and creates a personal connection when seen on video calls or in person was an important part of this new hybrid experience.”

*The Steelcase Design Team (from left to right): Global Creative Design Lead Jon Rooze, Interior Design Lead Sarah Armbruster, Senior Industrial Designer Kai Yu and Global Design Director Cherie Johnson.*



## Remote Leader Space

This novel approach gives remote leaders a place to call home when they are in the office. A “work tent” for individual work, a front porch for informal meetings, and a freestanding acoustic pod provide a range of spaces from which to choose.

*In this setting:*

- Steelcase Pod Tent*
- Steelcase Karman™ Chair*
- On the QT by Orangebox*
- Steelcase Flex Active Frames*
- Hana Chair by Moooi*
- Poof Pouf by Moooi*

# A World of Design

Discover exceptional design through the Steelcase community of brands

At Steelcase, we are a community that serves our customers and the beauty of work through extraordinary design. We develop, source and deliver innovative design works from many points of view and from many creative brands to provide boundless possibility for all the ways people work. Our design brands represent a spectrum of aesthetic, price and performance options – from renowned designers around the world. And as a community, every brand we partner with reflects our shared principles of design with intention, integrity and quality to help you create beautiful places that work, your way.



Learn more about our design brands  
[steelcase.com/ancillary](https://steelcase.com/ancillary)



Through the combination of uncompromising design and high-quality processing, Mattiazzi has become a celebrated premium wood-working brand from Italy.



Intrinsically inspired by the brand's British roots, Tom Dixon's furniture, lighting and accessories are internationally recognized for their use of materials and techniques.



British brand Established & Sons is a leading platform for innovative, world-renowned design with contemporary collections that respond to the evolving workplace.



**Sebastian Wrong**  
Design Director,  
Established & Sons  
U.K.

*“We have always made objects with character and spirit, and being able to craft this emotion into an object for today's working environment is key to our existence. Our designers like rule breaking.”*



## skram

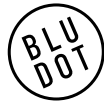
An American manufacturer of sustainable heirloom furnishings at-scale for design-driven residential, commercial and hospitality applications.



## GOODEE

A Black-owned, Montreal-based curated marketplace offering essential homewares and lifestyle products for better living through responsible brands and artisans.

[goodeeworld.com](http://goodeeworld.com)



Minneapolis-based designer and maker of modern furnishings, spanning home and office categories, and thoughtfully designed to have personality and a purpose.



## coalesse

Coalesse creates enduring furniture for the modern workplace that performs beautifully – in spaces where people can connect, create and focus comfortably.



**Micheal Young**  
Designer, in collaboration with Coalesse Hong Kong

*“The work of a designer is to take the language of a product to a new dimension. For me, design is all about the evolution of shape and form, and what the materials bring to the environment that we live in.”*

## DESIGNTEX

American designer and manufacturer of research-based applied materials for built environments that deepen the human experience, balancing beauty and utility, form and performance.

*“Products designed for the workplace should deliver an emotional, aesthetic experience as well as an added layer of performance. We like products with purpose.”*



**Susan Lyons**  
President, Designtex U.S.



# moooi

A mix of lighting, furniture and accessories that outlasts everyday interiors, defines personalities of spaces and delivers the extra touch of unexpected creativity and beauty.

*“To surprise your client, you first have to surprise yourself. Design is the international language of ideas. Good design empowers limited circumstances, mobilizing unlimited imagination.”*



**Marcel Wanders**  
Founder and Designer,  
Moooi  
Netherlands



## Bend Goods

Founded in Los Angeles, California, Bend Goods is on a mission to create designs that are superbly crafted, delight you aesthetically and shape your life.



# S K

Stephen Kenn is a Los Angeles-based design studio that creates original and well made pieces for home and travel.



# emu

Italian brand EMU combines tradition, technology and contemporary design to produce practical and comfortable outdoor seating, table and lounge solutions.



# FLOS



Latin for flower, the name FLOS is recognized as a source for illuminating the human experience by offering finely-crafted pieces created by lighting artist legends.

# H A L C O N

With exceptional innovation, uncompromising design and master craftsmanship, Minnesota-based HALCON creates furniture tailored to the modern workplace.

[halconfurniture.com](http://halconfurniture.com)

*“Culture, mentorship, camaraderie and productivity come from being together. More than ever, workplace design can facilitate the togetherness and connections people and organizations need to excel.”*



**Ben Conway**  
President, HALCON  
U.S.



# Bolia.com

Inspired by the colors and materials found in mother nature, Bolia reinvents Scandinavian design to create beautiful furniture built to last, to love and to keep.



**Kateryna Sokolova**  
Designer,  
in collaboration  
with Bolia Ukraine

*“Ukraine, my native country, inspires my industrial designs. Its eternal transformations constantly give me ideas. I always try to capture the cultural differences and uniqueness of the countries I visit. In my opinion, good design combines three essential ingredients: simplicity, functionality and passion.”*

# orangebox



*“No designer should design a space without building in flexibility for the future because the only constant right now is change.”*

**Mark Partridge**  
Designer, Orangebox  
U.K.

Workspaces that remove barriers and bring people together. Smartworking™ solutions respond to ever-evolving workplace needs so you can work wherever you want and however you choose.



Danish iconic design that is a combination of simplicity, aesthetics and functionality brought to life through skillful work with the highest quality materials.



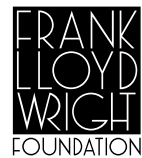
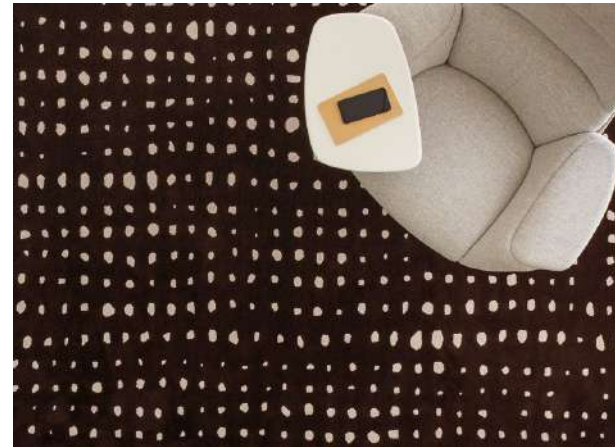
# Kartell

Known for its creativity and innovative use of material, Milan-based furniture maker Kartell combines beautiful aesthetics with great functionality.



# nanimarquina

Spanish rugmaker, nanimarquina, combines traditional rug weaving techniques and materials with modern design – making tradition contemporary.



Carrying on Wright's vision, the Foundation's mission is to inspire people to discover and embrace an architecture for better living. Steelcase and the Foundation are joining in a new creative collaboration.

[steelcase.com/FLWCollection](https://steelcase.com/FLWCollection)

*“While people know Wright for his work in architecture, his passion for creating equitable, inspiring work environments was visionary and his ideas have only become more relevant over time.”*

**Stuart Graff**  
President & CEO,  
Frank Lloyd Wright  
Foundation  
U.S.

# viccarbe

Founded in Valencia, Spain, Viccarbe works with designers from around the world to create a collection of collaborative furniture and accessories inspired from a blend of different cultures.



**Victor Carrasco**  
Founder + Designer,  
Viccarbe  
Spain

*“Improving the life of others is my biggest motivation and this is why I believe that creating kind and iconic products for people can provoke new, unexpected and positive bonds between them.”*



## extremis

A renowned Belgian furniture design group with a collection of products that focus on togetherness and celebrating life outdoors.



**Dirk Wynants**  
 Founder + Designer,  
 Extremis  
 Belgium

*“I only want to make something new if I can discover an actual need that can be solved in a better way. Good designers must believe everything can be improved.”*



The Hong Kong-based furniture brand delivers well designed, modern furniture for home, work or play at an accessible price point.



## west elm

Together, Steelcase and Brooklyn-based West Elm help organizations create beautiful spaces that work better. Designed by West Elm. Brought to life by Steelcase.

*“Bringing the authenticity of the home into the office permeates everything we do. We see what people want in their daily lives and then create spaces where people want to be.”*



**James Killinger**  
 Sr. Designer,  
 West Elm  
 U.S.



# Introducing Michael Held

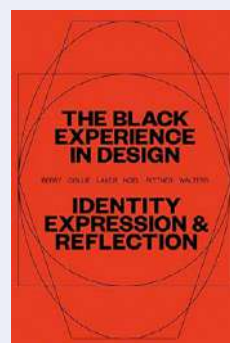
Steelcase Vice President of Global Design



Michael recently took over the reins for the Steelcase Global Design Studio and relocated his family to Grand Rapids, Michigan. He has lived in seven countries and traveled the world extensively. Work Better caught up with him just a few days after he arrived in the U.S.

**WB: How did you get attracted to design?**

**MH:** I grew up in a small German town that was almost like a medieval museum. When I was 12, my brother and I got to move into our basement. I got to think of what I would do with my own space for the first time. A few years later, when my parents redid their living room, for whatever reason, they listened to my ideas. A carpenter used my rough sketches to create my first pieces of furniture. They liked it and so I also ended up designing my dad's office. My parents still live with that furniture today. I also built furniture for a couple of friends, very industrial pieces of welded, raw steel and cushions my mom sewed. I wanted to learn more about design as a means to learn new things.



**What Michael's Reading Now**

The Black Experience in Design: Identity, Expression & Reflection by Anne H. Berry, Kareem Collie, Penina Acayo Laker, Lesley-Ann Noel, Jennifer Rittner, Kelly Walters

Design Emergency: Building a Better Future by Alice Rawsthorn & Paola Antonelli

**WB: How do you approach design challenges?**

**MH:** Curiosity and creativity. Asking questions instead of falling in love with answers and valuing creative ideas. It's a privilege to work in a job where you get asked to be creative every day. That needs to be paired with a purpose for what we do. For us, it's our customers. You have to connect creativity and curiosity to a tangible business mission. You can work all your life on crazy explorations, but what's the point if none of it impacts what people do or how they go through their day?

**WB: What do you do when you have a creative block?**

**MH:** Empty my head. Do something else. Ask others for help. Go cycling or walking, hiking, climbing, making, building ... anything to lose myself in repetitive physical activity so my brain can do the work without being watched.

**WB: How do you think about sustainability when designing new products?**

**MH:** We should design lighter-weight products with as much recycled or recyclable material as possible. And we need to make it intuitive to disassemble. My grandmother went through WWII. She learned how to live with less. How to reuse. We used to think that was crazy as kids. But now as an adult I look at that with different eyes. We grew up in an era of abundance. Just use more, there's always more. But now we're realizing that designing less is more.

**WB: How is that reflected in the way you've designed your own home?**

**MH:** The way we live is inspired by the way we lived in Asia. It's super efficient. The layout is smart. There's nothing that isn't there for a reason.

**WB: What is the biggest workplace design shift you are seeing right now?**

**MH:** People can work anywhere. The office will play a different role than it has in the past 100 years. To be truly customer-centric, we will help our customers solve their problems wherever they work. I'm excited. This challenge is different from anything Steelcase has thought about. Work is not going away. It's changing. Some people want a routine. Others want freedom. All of this means the workplace is changing, too. I'm not in preservation. I'm in design and I think about where we're going next.

**WB: What's your favorite part of your workplace?**

**MH:** Project areas when new prototypes are set up. It's the fastest way to engage and learn. I enjoy a good barista bar for great coffee and pastries, meeting colleagues and customers while learning new things. And our new hybrid-ancillary spaces at our Learning + Innovation Center in Grand Rapids make it easy to connect with great technology in beautiful spaces.

**WB: How has living and working in different parts of the world influenced you?**

**MH:** My views are much more diverse because I have more cultural references to draw from and more comparisons to make. I've become more humble, reminding myself not to jump to conclusions. It's helped me to understand people a bit better and become more empathetic. I am able to draw on my experiences to help open other people's minds as well.

**Last Words**

I've always been fascinated by creatives that operate at the fringes of their fields or society, the weird ones (and their collaborators) that push us forward with new ideas and commit to radical approaches at the time. I always liked to do things a bit different from other people. I was okay not fitting in, maybe that's why I was lucky enough to stumble into design relatively early on. —

**Design Voices: Education**

What is the single biggest change you've made in the way you design learning spaces since students have returned to schools?



**Prof. Dr. techn. Katja Ninnemann**  
Digitalization and Workspace Management, Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft Berlin, Germany

I've redesigned my teaching concept so I can easily switch between physical and virtual learning spaces, and focus on learning processes independently of external factors and spatial options. Architects and designers should first understand the challenges of hybrid teaching and learning processes and then redesign learning spaces step-by-step together with lecturers and students.



**Gretchen L. Holy, Assoc. IIDA**  
Principal, Higher Education Interior Design Leader | DLR Group Kansas, U.S.

The past few years have shown a spotlight on student anxieties and insecurities. Our focus has shifted to ensure student engagement and wellbeing are infused in all academic and social settings to nurture the whole student and meet not only their academic, but their social and emotional needs.



**Richard Leonard**  
Architect and Director, Hayball Melbourne, Australia

Effectively overnight, online teaching and learning became an integral and routine part of education. This has had an obvious impact on the technologies applied to support online education, and emphasized the importance of spaces to facilitate it – spaces that are video capable and incorporate furniture and settings that support its effective use.

Illustrations by Jonny Ruzzo

# Designing *With*, Not *For*

Key learnings point to equity, not equality, as a goal for inclusive workplaces.



Illustration by Anna Parini

*“Nothing about us, without us” is traced back to the South African disability rights movement of the early 1990s and communicates the idea that any decision affecting a group of people should not be made without the direct participation of the people being impacted.*

“Designing for inclusivity is not a solo endeavor. The more we partner and practice inclusive design, the more we can absorb and build upon the knowledge people share with us,” says Kamara Sudberry, Steelcase inclusive design leader. “It’s impossible to share our learnings without recognizing we are always improving and have more to learn moving forward.”

In that spirit, we are working with leading organizations to accelerate our learning (see community partners). These partners are invaluable as Sudberry and her colleagues

learn, listen, observe and create more inclusive practices and workplaces.

Surveys, interviews, roundtables and design exercises all inform a better future workplace. These interactions come from a place of trust, respect and empathy.

#### Equity Over Equality

There are nearly 8 billion people in the world. Yet for decades workplace design has focused on standards — giving everyone the same accommodations. Offices with rows and rows of desks and chairs strive for equality. But this assumes everyone works in the same way, at the same time, in the same place. That’s simply not true. Hybrid work is the latest example of people desiring more choice and control over their work experience.

Today’s era of hybrid work should take on a more inclusive approach to designing the

workplace focused on equity. Instead of giving everyone the same thing, provide people with a range of experiences that allow them to select what best accommodates their needs.

#### Inclusive Design Process

Inclusive design is not a destination or an outcome — it’s a process. Done well, it is baked into an organization’s culture, process and place. It invites people in, gives them a voice and provides them with agency to participate.

“Designing for inclusion begins with recognizing exclusion,” says Kat Holmes, author of *Mismatch: How Inclusion Shapes Design*. Identifying those left out leads to the next step which is to intentionally invite those important voices to identify barriers and co-create accommodations.

Exclusion can be the result of physical, cognitive and cultural barriers, as well as many others. Exclusion often intersects many areas based on someone’s identity and the personal knowledge about the world they’ve gained through direct, first-hand life experience. Reimagining accommodations with people who have been left out is at the heart of innovation, and creates opportunities to solve for one or many forms of exclusion.

“It’s time to move away from one-size-fits-all to the one-size-fits-one approach,” says Sudberry. “By championing choice and control, we empower people to find the place and ways in which they feel their best and do their best work.”

#### Community Partners

**G3ict** Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies. [g3ict.org](https://g3ict.org)

**IAAP** International Association of Accessibility Professionals. [accessibilityassociation.org](https://accessibilityassociation.org)

**Special Olympics Michigan** Sports training and athletic competition for people with intellectual disabilities. [somi.org](https://somi.org)

**SPORK!** A voice for the disabled community. [sporkability.org](https://sporkability.org)

**The Valuable 500** Global business collective innovating together for disability inclusion. [thevaluable500.com](https://thevaluable500.com)

**World Enabled** Supporting implementation of legal mandates for inclusion and diversity. [worldenabled.org](https://worldenabled.org)

# New + Notable

Design with intention  
that *inspires*

Discover solutions from Steelcase  
and our community of brands

[steelcase.com/new](https://steelcase.com/new)



*“Everwall was designed to inspire and allow designers to think about the full range of possibilities with interior architecture.”*

Cherie Johnson, Director, Global Design

**Everwall™** by Steelcase

Adaptable architecture with the right balance of acoustic performance, aesthetic options and price. One of the fastest installation times in the industry.



*“We wanted to design beautiful height-adjustable tables that appear weightless.”*

Markus Jehs + Jurgen Laub, Designers



**HELM Executive Desk** by HALCON

An executive desk and meeting table featuring luxurious materials, integrated technology and an adjustable-height worksurface.

## Places for Privacy

Access to private spaces is more important than ever, especially as more work happens on video.



**Steelcase Flex Personal Spaces**

A new approach to the hybrid workspace, giving people a heightened level of privacy, control and comfort.



**On the QT** by Orangebox

Freestanding phonebooth that can be placed anywhere you need privacy.



**Air<sup>3</sup> Pod** by Orangebox

Its automatic louvered roof and fail-safe fire system makes it the most advanced pod in the market.

## Seating With Style

Add comfort and luxury to social spaces, meeting rooms and waiting areas with these new contemporary and versatile seating designs.

**Embrace Stool**  
by Carl Hansen & Søn



**Visti Armchair** by Bolia



**Seed Collection**  
by Bolia



**FILO** by Mattiazzi

**Island** by Established & Sons  
Inspiring gathering spaces with a great  
vibe. Choose from a variety of elements,  
colors and textiles.



*“The concept was designed to encourage relaxed social interactions... a place to linger and recharge, bringing about productivity or rest.”*

Erwan Bouroullec, Designer

# Better Hybrid Collaboration

Hybrid meetings are here to stay but less than 10% of the world's 90 million meeting rooms are video-enabled\*. And while technology is critical, more often people report frustration with the space itself, complaining it's too small, uncomfortable, noisy, lacks visual privacy or is hard to reserve.\*\*

The best hybrid collaboration experiences bridge the gap between people physically in the room and those who are remote. It's not enough to bring remote people into the space, in-office participants need a better virtual presence by designing for the entire experience — keeping important elements like cameras, acoustics, content and lighting in mind. Three key goals guide these spaces: equity, engagement and ease.

We've learned it's critical for design, facilities and IT to work closely together to pilot, design and develop new hybrid spaces. The room should enhance the technology and vice versa so everyone can contribute at the highest level. That was the goal when Microsoft and Steelcase began working together to redesign the conference room. The result: a new room configuration paired with new furniture designed to augment the technology.

It starts with flipping the layout of a traditional rectangular conference room so everyone is facing the long wall. Ocular™, a new curved table, developed for the Microsoft Teams Front Row Experience (which positions remote participants in a larger, eye-level gallery while sharing content, chat and other meeting elements) cues people to sit where they can see one another and remote participants eye-to-eye. Overhead lighting ensures everyone has a soft glow and is literally seen in the best light. And Logitech technology adds a camera that automatically zooms in on the speaker and a controller that joins the meeting with one touch for a seamless experience.

\*Frost & Sullivan, March 2021; State of the Global Video Conferencing Devices Market, Forecast to 2025  
\*\*Steelcase Global Research 2022



## Hybrid Collaboration Goals

### Equity

Strive for equal experiences on both sides of the camera

### Engagement

Design for everyone's ability to participate and contribute

### Ease

Create a seamless flow between different types of work and experiences



### Tap Controller by Logitech

Makes video meetings simple with one-touch join, calendar integration, easy content-sharing and a consistent experience across all rooms.



### Rally Bar Mini by Logitech

All-in-one video conferencing experience, provides brilliant optics and high performance audio to meeting rooms.

### Ocular by Steelcase + Microsoft

The curved shape of the table creates an eye-to-eye view so it's easy to see and be seen.



### Everwall by Steelcase

Provides best-in-class acoustics and integrates a wide variety of technology.



## Power Where and When You Need It

Innovative ways to keep your devices powered and people working.



**Under Worksurface Utility Power** by Steelcase  
One cord-out technology lets you plug in multiple items below the worksurface.



**Steelcase Universal Modular Power System**  
Activate shared spaces with plenty of convenient places to plug in, all powered by a single outlet. No hardwiring or electrician needed.



**Powerstrip Intro** by Steelcase  
Convenient desktop power for height-adjustable desks, multiple monitors, computers and task lights. Available with two power outlets with USB A+C 20W, a single power outlet with a dual USB-A or two power outlets.

**Steelcase Flex Mobile Power**  
Just under three pounds, Mobile Power is lightweight and portable. A responsive, flexible handle makes it easy to take with you when you're on the move.



# Illuminate Your Space

Create the perfect aesthetic with lighting that's both functional and beautiful.



**Oplight** by FLOS

*“Design’s role is to improve atmosphere, to improve quality of daily life on the most fundamental level.”*

Jasper Morrison, Oplight Designer



**In Vitro Unplugged** by FLOS (Above)  
An elegant outdoor lighting collection designed by Philippe Starck, In Vitro modernizes the classic lantern into a contemporary structure.

**Steelcase Eclipse Light** (Left)  
Beautiful LED lamp seamlessly integrates the functionality of a video and task light. Flickerfree technology and superior color performance mimics daylight to make shadows disappear, make you look better on video calls and reduce eye strain.

\*Available on Steelcase Store







## Making Space for Health

The West Elm Health Collection by Steelcase Health offers a selection of popular workplace furniture modified specifically for healthcare environments to create welcoming spaces that meet the evolving needs of patients, families and clinicians.



West Elm Health Slope



West Elm Health Mesa



West Elm Health Sterling



## Spaces for Learning

79% of students say active learning experiences are better than traditional classrooms. Flowform™ by Smith System lets students rearrange the space however they want.



Flowform Learn Lounge Table

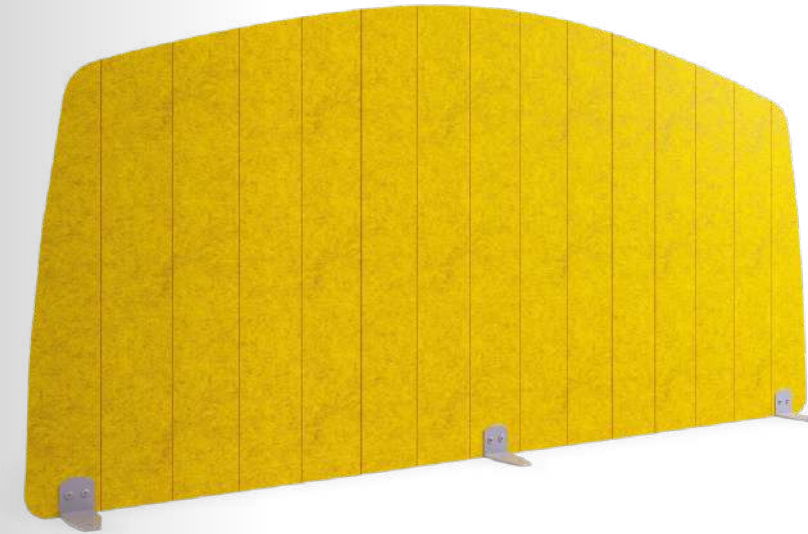
Flowform Square Ottoman



### Smith System®

Built for Learning. Smith System believes that every student and teacher deserve the best possible space to inspire learning.

Flowform Learn Lounge Screen



Flowform Learn Lounge Single Seat



Flowform Hexagon Ottoman



Flowform Learn Lounge Double Seat



Accord Mixed-Media Collaborative Board  
by Polyvision

# Shape Shifters

Going beyond rectangles  
in the hybrid era

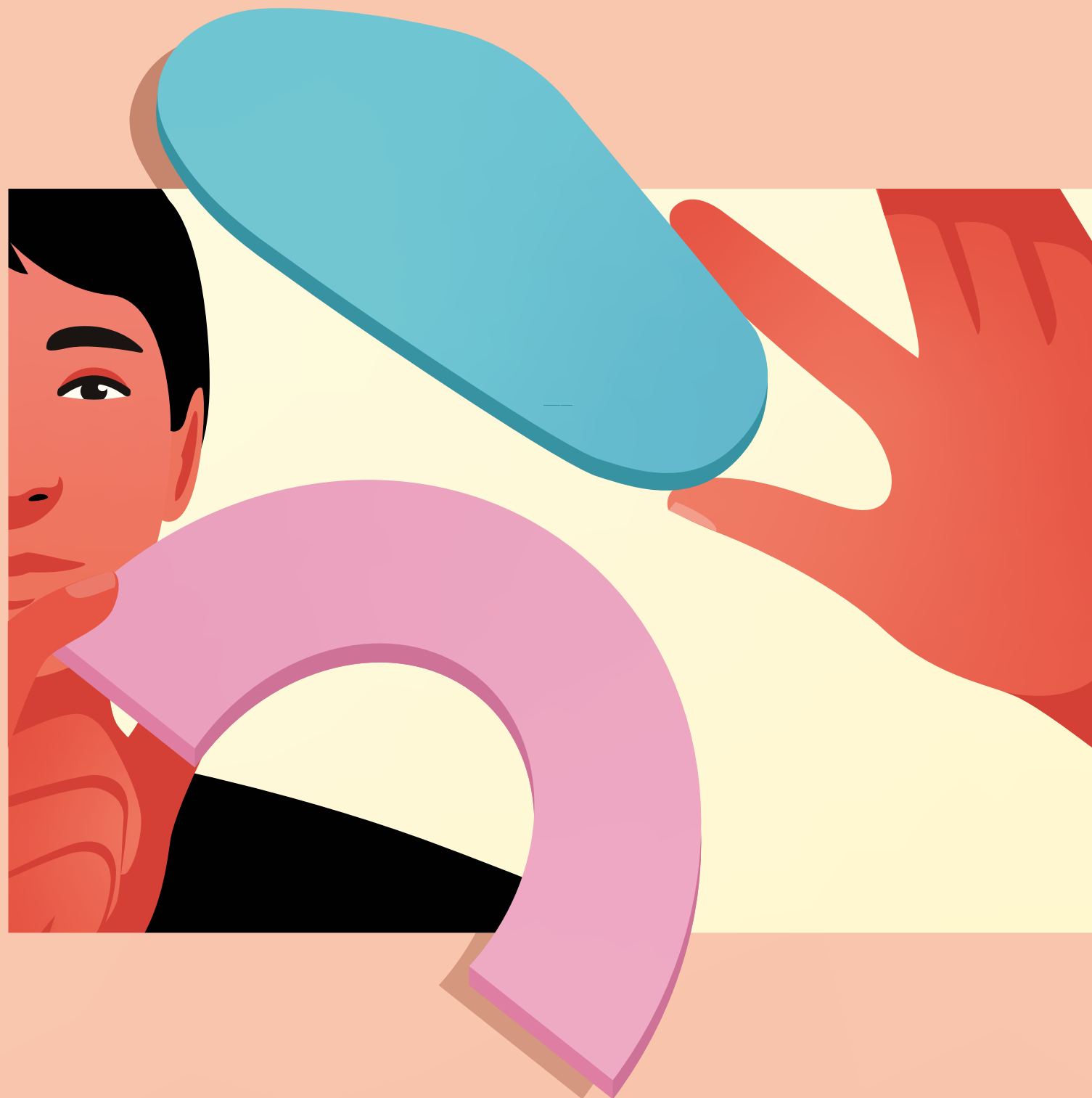


Illustration by Anna Parini

Picture a typical conference room. A long rectangular table faces a short wall. People sit turned toward the monitor — forced to lean in to see remote teammates. Looking at the back of one another’s heads. Some voices are hard to hear. And, the setup reinforces hierarchy. The “head of the table” is likely running the meeting.

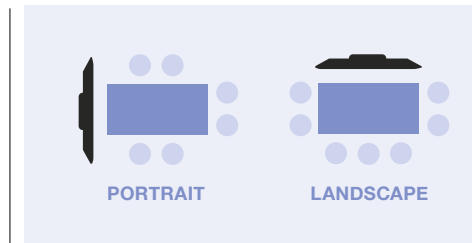
Today, more than half of all meetings are hybrid. Designers are rethinking traditional paradigms to create spaces that work for everyone — in person and remote — which means designing for the camera as much as the people in the room. It also means rethinking that rectangle.

“This is all about sightlines,” says Mary Elaine Roush, Steelcase global design principal. “We have to design so everyone has eye-to-eye contact with remote participants and any content being displayed. But we can’t lose what we know about in-room collaboration that works which includes everyone in the room being able to see one another as well.”

Collaboration is the top reason people want to come into the office. Yet, Steelcase global research suggests people are not satisfied with spaces for hybrid collaboration. Successful hybrid collaboration requires thinking like a movie director. Lights, camera, audio, content. Where should cameras be mounted for natural eye-to-eye contact? How many speakers and microphones do you need? Where can cords be nested?

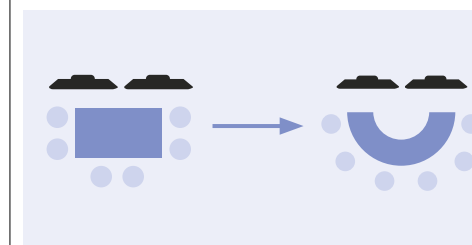
Roush was one of the designers who took part in a global design charette with input from our IT partners; Microsoft, Zoom, Logitech and Crestron. Teams experimented with new ways to create more equitable, easy-to-use spaces that enhance how people engage in the conversation. “Understanding the capabilities of specific technology is critical. That’s what helps us create holistic solutions that really perform,” says Roush.

Teams co-created new room configurations, discovered new angles and innovated with new shapes to support hybrid collaboration.



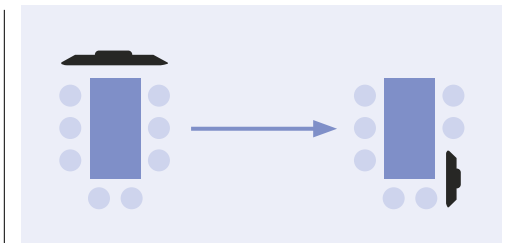
## Portrait to Landscape

Hybrid meetings present an opportunity for designers to think differently. When fewer people are in person, the room can be used in new ways. By changing the orientation of the room from portrait (facing the short wall) to landscape (facing the long wall), people on both sides of the camera can see and be seen. Everyone in the room is equidistant to the camera. Remote participants can see facial expressions and body language.



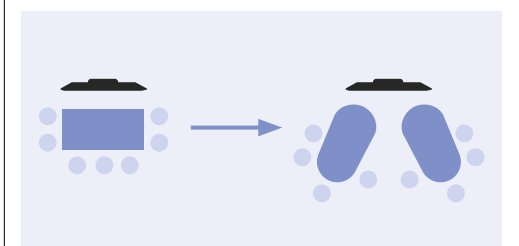
## Corners to Curves

By shifting from rectilinear furniture and spaces to furniture designed and configured in geometric shapes with rounded or curved features, in-room participants can see one another at all times in addition to being at eye level with remote colleagues. That eye-to-eye view creates more equity between those in-room and remote. “The shape of the table helps position the person in the room for the best video experience,” says Roush. “Rectangles stack people on video and you can’t see everyone easily. Thoughtfully designed table shapes specifically for video, position people to have the best sightlines.”



## Humanizing Hybrid

“We spent a lot of time talking about how to bring remote participants down into the conversation instead of having them displayed as if they are always at the front of the stage,” says Roush. The teams are exploring where the remote participants live in the physical space — trying to get closer to an in-person experience. By offering more flexibility and improving sightlines, designers can create more natural, human interactions. Multiple monitors, mobile devices and new software and hardware features offer ways to separate people from content. A camera positioned with the monitor that hosts people helps maintain eye-to-eye contact to emulate a more natural conversation.



## Few to Many

As part of a range of spaces and technologies, multiple furniture elements or monitors allow for a variety of solutions for different types of hybrid collaboration. Lots of factors need to be considered like how the space will be used, its size and available software and hardware features. Ownership plays a role here. If a team owns this space, they are more likely to take advantage of adjustable elements. If this is a widely-shared space, a fixed configuration may be more successful since typically meetings leave little time to test or troubleshoot devices. ■■■

Hybrid

# Inspiration



*“The repeating lines of fabric cord extend this graphical presence, distorting subtly as the body sits down.”*

**FILO**  
Designed by Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec for Mattiazzi

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**On the Cover**

The Menagerie of Extinct Animals by Moooi, part of the Steelcase community of brands, celebrates nature's diversity and Moooi's commitment to protecting the planet and its occupants through sustainable design.

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