

Press release

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Steelcase launches Forward a new workspace architecture

Steelcase, the worlds leading office furniture company, today announced the launch of a major new furniture system called Forward - the first solution that treats Workspace and Architecture as one integrated whole. Forward, which will be presented on October 19 at the Orgatec trade in Cologne, represents the current state-of-the-art in workspace solutions, going further than perhaps any other system toward addressing the demands of the modern work environment.

Forward is born from a collaboration between Steelcase and the renowned architecture, planning and design firm Foster and Partners, led by Norman Foster. In this mutually beneficial alliance, Steelcase contributed a deep understanding of user needs, evolving work modes and work processes, while Foster and Partners supplied unparalleled know-how on office architecture, space management and modern design. This unique collaboration allowed the team to take a more holistic approach to workplace design. In fact, it led to a new way of thinking about office interiors an approach that Steelcase calls Workspace Architecture.

Workspace Architecture

The idea behind Workspace Architecture is to look at the office as an integrated whole, encompassing the building, the interior structures, the office furniture and the technology. This radical new approach reconciles for the first time - workspace requirements with office architecture.

Forward is based on the recognition that white collar work is undergoing radical change. Technology, one of the main drivers of change, has created a situation where office work is no longer constrained to traditional desk space and traditional office hours. Work is always on and can effectively be carried out almost anywhere. In addition, as portable tools and technologies proliferate, people expect the office to offer them the same level of freedom, mobility and technological leverage that they enjoy in their personal lives. The truth is that many of todays workplaces are lagging behind. Their structures and furnishings are too complex and inflexible to cope with these changing demands. In contrast, Steelcase Forward is designed to act as a change enabler, supporting new work styles, new lifestyles and new organisational forms.

Structure and Freedom

Forward balances organisational structure with individual freedom. Its innovative bridge element and post and beam units enable planners to create a grid system around which everything else can be configured. This allows the workplace to be structured along a variety of planning options - bringing coherence and harmony to a diversity of spaces - while enabling the various work settings to be irrigated with power and communication cabling. The bridge takes over the functionality of the traditional

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desk by accommodating all the electronic tools (telephones, computers), connections, power and data cables, accessories, storage units and lighting equipment. This frees the desk itself to become a smaller, lighter, more detached element. We call it simply a table.

By using this system of fixed bridge elements and movable tables, Forward gives users a new kind of freedom, allowing them to quickly reconfigure their personal space at any time to suit either individual or collaborative work. The table can be quickly moved around for an impromptu meeting, and afterwards returned to the bridge for dealing with concentration tasks. This environment brings a lot of new freedom to the office, allowing people to use the same space for different activities and work in new, more mobile ways.

A diversity of work settings

Forward's highly flexible workspace concept allows planners to create a diversity of work settings within a given space, all of which are united by the same structural framework and the same silent design language.

Organisations can therefore support various kinds of work tasking, teaming and in-between using just one, highly versatile furniture range. Thanks to its light structure and easy extendibility, Forward makes planning, installing and reconfiguring the office so much smarter.

About Steelcase Inc.

Steelcase Inc. helps individuals and organizations around the world to work more effectively by providing knowledge, products and services that enable customers and their consultants to create work environments that integrate architecture, furniture and technology. The company has led the global office furniture industry in sales every year since 1974. Its product portfolio includes interior architectural products, furniture systems, technology products, seating, lighting, storage and related products and services. Fiscal 2004 revenue was approximately \$2.3 billion.

Steelcase Inc. and its subsidiaries have dealers in more than 900 locations, manufacturing facilities in over 35 locations and approximately 14,000 employees around the world. The company's Class A Common Stock trades on the NYSE under the symbol SCS.

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