

We launched Products, People and Projects this year to help fill the gaps. We don't want all the information we would have learned about at NeoCon to be lost.

So we worked with theMART to come up with a program you have seen since early June. For the rest of the summer, we will be presenting Products, People and Projects, a few companies at a time so as not to overwhelm the reader.

We're thrilled to present stories from Bush Business Furniture and ERGOBOND in today's issue. Make sure you read the all stories in this great series to learn about what these great companies are doing.



24 **Bush Business Furniture: The Work from Home Experts™**
 Bush Business Furniture can safely claim the title of the work-from-home experts. For nearly 20 years, the company has helped people work from home with products built to contract specifications, scaled properly for the home office and designed with a blend of functionality and style.

42 **ERGOBOND Focuses on Movement with its Innovative Furniture**
 ERGOBOND was all set to show off its innovative products designed to help workers move at this year's NeoCon. The annual show was supposed to be a launchpad for the company's new brand, and then the virus hit, and the company's plans were put on hold.



Bush Business Furniture: The Work from Home Experts™

Bush Business Furniture can safely claim the title of the work-from-home experts. For nearly 20 years, the company has helped people work from home with products built to contract specifications, scaled properly for the home office and designed with the right blend of functionality and style.

The Jamestown, N.Y., company is being rewarded for its knowledge, quick shipping and well-designed furniture. Sales are up 35% as workers scramble to find the most appropriate products to work from home.

The trend toward working from home, which was taking shape in recent years at a trickle, has turned into a torrent. Everyone needs home office furniture now, but many workers were sent home so abruptly they may have underestimated the importance of a proper work-from-home set-up said Peggy Brown, director of inside sales.



We've since noticed a change where people have upgraded from that lower end desk to a more professional grade option.

"It has been a very volatile year for the industry amid the pandemic, especially in the B2B contract space," she said. "A lot of that business came to a screeching halt in the mid to late March time frame, and there was a significant shift to PPE products and social distancing solutions. I think that speaks a lot for the industry, our ability to be very nimble and pivot to support customers in the way they need during challenging times. In our case, our history has been built on home office solutions. So we stayed true to what we do well — we remained focused on servicing the heightened need for quick ship, reliable and safe home office furniture."

"In the early stages of the pandemic, customers were look-

ing for low-cost furniture they could place in the corner of their living room or bedroom, according to Brown. They thought they would return to the office and wanted a temporary solution. We've since noticed a change where people have upgraded from that lower end desk to a more professional grade option. Many people are now dedicating a private room in their homes to work, now that they know they may in fact be there for the long haul, 40-plus hours a week. So that's really what we've seen over the last few months: The shift from meeting a quick need to upgrading the home office space because workers and employers alike are looking at work from home as a long term strategy."





NeoCon: Products, People and Projects
BoF



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Work from home is — at least in part — becoming the new normal, and it is going to be more widely accepted than ever before following the COVID crisis, Brown said. Whether that is on a full- or part-time basis, there have been many studies already that show employees at least want the option to work from home, even if it is only two or three days a week.

As businesses do open up, they may also be faced with some resistance from their workers telling them they prefer the work from home arrangement now that they have acclimated to it and have found it effective.

“Our product development team has done an outstanding job over the last several years in bringing commercial-grade

quality products to market designed and engineered for small parcel shipping in stylish designs and modern on-trend finishes,” Brown said. “So that term ‘resimercial’ has been at the forefront of our commercial strategy because the style, quality and price point that our products provide fit today’s market exceptionally well.

Bush Business Furniture is seeing a blend of customers — those sent home with no resources from their employers who are buying furniture out of their own pockets and those who are buying from the company using a stipend from their employer. Other companies are establishing programs for employees that provide an approved package of home office furniture they can choose from.

The logistics of sending employees home to work can challenge any company, but BBF's proven quick ship transactional model takes the complexity out of the furniture requirement.

We are seeing an increase in the number of companies providing stipends and implementing formal policies and procedures for work from home. There are risks and liabilities such as workers compensation concerns that should be considered. Standards programs, BIFMA-tested and certified product options and installation services can help mitigate those risks, Brown said.

The logistics of sending employees home to work can challenge any company, but BBF's proven quick ship transactional model takes the complexity out of the furniture requirement, according to Brown. The company provides in-stock products with same day shipping, delivery to the end user in three to five business days or a full service installation in

10-14 business days. "Our solution ensures the employee is up and running quickly whether they live in the neighborhood or across the country," Brown said.

Bush's products are designed and developed for that quick ship experience. The company does have a team that supports the customer with any assembly help they may need. For larger orders that are eight pieces or more on average, Bush delivers (at no additional charge) to an inside room of the customer's choice. The full service installation option, even for smaller transactional orders anywhere in the country, includes deluxe services such as leveling, door/drawer adjustments, cleaning and packaging removal.





BBF has been servicing work-from-home clients and standards programs for close to 20 years.

While other furniture manufacturers in the contract space are focused on large project business, Bush Business Furniture is in the minority since it has always focused on transactional opportunities. The company is not looking for multi-floor corporate facility outfits. That's just not its specialty.

BBF has been servicing work-from-home clients and standards programs for close to 20 years. The company knows what it is uniquely good at:

"All teams and departments at Bush collectively work together to deliver on our brand promise of easy, fast and affordable," Brown said. "Other companies that have jumped into the work-from-home wave might not fully understand the market or how to service it over time, it can be unpredictable and very time sensitive. When a product is needed, it's needed quickly — they don't want to wait weeks or months to get their desk, file and chair."



Consumers want an all in one experience: desk with chair delivered by the same source on the same day.

Styling is important in this segment of the market. BBF has worked to expand its variety of residential-type products — so it has a lot going on in the more contemporary gray finish variety in light, medium and dark tones. Those have been selling very well, and the company has focused on expanding finishes within proven successful product lines. BBF has some two-tone mix designs it has brought to market, including the Jamestown collection. It is lightly scaled, but very aesthetically pleasing for home

interiors. The company also has a broad variety of seating, which is relatively new. BBF has always been known for desks, not so much seating, but about a year and a half ago, the company launched a very comprehensive line of chairs.

“What we’ve found is that consumers want an all-in-one experience: desk with the chair delivered by the same source on the same day,” Brown said. “If they have any assembly problem or concern, they can call us directly, and it’s taken care of.”





The company has undertaken some strategic initiatives to curate an assortment that is precisely applicable to the work-from-home demand and working to invest in its inventory and support of those products.

BBF sells through its website, but that is a very small component of its overall business. The company also partners with various dealers, e-commerce retailers and the office superstore channels.

Right now, BBF is focusing on serving its new influx of customers. The company has also undertaken some strategic initiatives to curate an assortment that is precisely applicable to the work-from-home demand and working to invest in its inventory and support of those products.

The company is rightfully proud of its work.

"This year has been challeng-

ing for everyone on a variety of levels, so we're just very happy to be able to be of service," Brown said. "Despite our own staff navigating work from home and through the period of time where our factory was closed down, we still had inventory; our distribution centers remained functional following CDC guidelines; and we could still get products out to people. The safety and well-being of our employees and our ability to serve the customer have remained our top priority, making sure we have the products in stock so we can meet the needs of the market now and into the future."

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