

# NBS

# worklife INSIGHTS



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## **Breaking out of the Box**

*WorkStage delivers a product that will change the way people create, develop and use commercial real estate.*

WorkStage is a newly formed venture between Steelcase, Inc., the preeminent designer and manufacturer of products used to create high-performance work environments, and Gale & Wentworth, LLC, one of the nation's leading private commercial real estate developers backed by Morgan Stanley Real Estate Funds. WorkStage is designed to develop the world's most user-centered work environ-

ments in half the time and at a cost approximately 10% less than conventional construction methods. "The work environment's sole reason for being is to support the people who work in it," said Jack Cottrell, CEO of WorkStage. "WorkStage develops flexible, affordable and available workspace that is designed to help companies attract and inspire employees by offering reconfigurable interior space, mobile furniture, universal access to computing and communications technologies and abundant bandwidth. By focusing on both the building's interior architecture and its external shell we are able to develop office buildings that are designed specifically for the user."

The extreme flexibility and endless plug and play capability is accomplished through the use of Steelcase's Pathways products. Customized work environments provide reconfigurable walls, floors, lighting, mobile furniture and unlimited access to technology throughout the office, enabling people to work more effectively. When developing a WorkStage building,

customers' individual needs are analyzed, the office space is planned-to-suit, modular sections are erected to construct the building's exterior, and the interior is completely outfitted and ready to occupy by the time the shell of the building is complete.

By making the user the focal point of the entire construction process, Workstage delivers a product that will change the way people create, develop and use commercial real estate. The goal is to make occupants feel more in control because of the ability to adjust their work areas' lighting, acoustics, temperature and air flow. These value-added amenities, combined with the insightful design of WorkStage buildings, aim to provide the individual worker with an advanced, flexible work environment that makes it easier for them to be more productive. In addition, WorkStage buildings will be designed to consume substantially less energy than the industry norm.

WorkStage is available in Michigan exclusively through Cushman & Wakefield in partnership with your authorized Steelcase Dealer. NBS is an authorized Steelcase Dealer.

**For more information on the WorkStage visit our website at [www.navbus.com](http://www.navbus.com)**





## Let's talk about **ispace**

What is it, you say? Can I buy it right now and install it for quick praise and kudos from the top brass? Will it elevate me to new heights in the corporate stratosphere? Probably not, but it will provide you with a sound basis for managing your space needs.

*ispace* is intelligent space. It is space designed to meet the needs of your company and your specific business environment; space to help you operate in a "dot-com" world, while keeping your workers happy and effective; and space that is flexible and reflects the image and culture of your company. Nirvana, you say? Well, maybe, but it is easier to design than you think.

### **How do you develop ispace?**

There are four basic components:

#### **Image.**

*What is the image your company wants to project to your employees and the public?*

#### **Individuality.**

*How do your people work and how does the space support it?*

#### **Innovation.**

*Is the space flexible and adaptable? Can it react to changes in the marketplace?*

#### **Investment.**

*Is it fiscally responsible and affordable?*

To build *ispace* you must understand the four components and how to implement them in your business.

### **What is your image?**

*Do you know who you are? Do your employees and clients know? One of your most important assets in a knowledge economy is your brand. In a world where decisions are made in a split second, your image has to tell the story instantly. Your space should reflect the essence of your company. If someone walks into your space, will they know who you are? Will a recruit or potential client feel welcomed and experience a sense of belonging?*

### **Individuality counts.**

*Your most valuable assets are your people. Their knowledge and abilities hold the key to the future. Does your office space support their needs?*

*No singular type of space will work for everyone. Space must be intelligently designed to meet the needs of those it serves. The hoteling space that works for your sales staff will not work for your office support personnel who reside in the office every day.*

*It is important to understand the different types of workers within your space and design space to meet their specific needs. At the same time, the space needs to retain an overall flexibility so it can adapt to changes in the workforce over time.*

*To get started, time utilization studies and interviews will help you capture information on how your people work. Observe the types of work they do and how they do it. Also, determine the amount of time they spend in a stationary workspace versus other options such as meeting rooms or outside the office. This information will provide details about your specific workforce how they currently work and how they will work in the future.*

### **Time to Innovate.**

*At this point, experienced FMs are hanging on to their standards plans and screaming that they can not have space chaos. *ispace* can incorporate standards. Space built on a universal module can be modified as changes occur in the business. For example, if "four cubicles equal two offices equals one open project area equals one large conference room," then space can be changed when needed. If open plan elements are used along with full-height panels to create enclosed offices, modifications can be made*

*easily, and even the cost of modifying drywall is not high on a modularized plan.*

*The key is innovation. Most offices will mean a blend of different types of space, dedicated offices or workstations, hoteling or virtual space and even telecommuting. Purchase modular components that can be changed easily. Avoid custom features in the space that would be negated by changes to the floor plan. Apply color to surfaces that can be changed easily later, such as painted walls and carpet insets that allow the space to be updated over time. Think about the needs of your company now and the changes in competition that could happen in the future. Innovative, flexible space will be the key to reacting quickly.*

### **Make the Investment.**

*The investment most companies put into their office space is not small. FMs should consider the impact of their purchases on the balance sheet of the company. They should be cognizant of the other areas for investment by the company, such as technology, payroll, research and marketing. How much money is realistically available for the facility budget, and how can it best be spent?*

*Lifecycle costing should be considered on purchases and write-offs of under appreciated items minimized. Do new spaces need changes immediately after they are built? This is a strong indication that the space was designed incorrectly. Does the amount being spent on churn year-to-year seem high? This is another indicator that the space is not working. Are monies being spent on leasehold construction near the end of a lease term? These amounts will likely be abandoned and have an unfavorable impact on the balance sheet.*

*Financial skills are essential for a facilities professional, and the fiscal impact of what we do has lasting effects. *ispace* should be financially sound and an investment in the productivity of the workforce. We can not afford to ignore the financial responsibility of our positions.*

This article was written for Facility Management magazine Sept/Oct 2000 issue, by Christine Neldon, CFM, IFMA Fellow; Director of facilities for Arthur Andersen in Atlanta.

## CASE STUDY

# Huntsman Polyurethanes

## *NBS Uses Collaborative Design to Boost Effectiveness*

Huntsman Polyurethanes, a business unit of Huntsman ICI Chemical LLC, is one of the world's leading producers of polyurethane chemicals.

The Huntsman flexibles business unit has been located in Michigan for more than 10 years. During this time, the business has enjoyed consistent growth of 12-15% each year. The growth resulted in the need to move to a new facility, which presented an opportunity to radically change the work environment.

**The Challenge:** Huntsman Polyurethanes recognized that a new workplace for its 100 headquarters employees could impact long term success.

“As growth continues, better, faster and more effective work on site will be needed to avoid diminishing returns on efforts,” said Julian Allen general manager, Flexibles Business. “The workplace should make it easier to draw upon centers of excellence and capture insights for greater success.”

The challenge was to use space differently so that it facilitates the unique culture and values of the organization, which includes; interdependence, achievement and passion.

The company wanted to leverage its workplace assets collectively as a strategic management tool. Such physical assets as the *building* itself, *people* (who allow Huntsman to respond better and faster) as well as *technological advancements* (which help people innovate) all contribute to the company's effectiveness.

**The Process:** The NBS/Steelcase team began planning for the new space by facilitating discussions with the Huntsman senior management team about their critical success factors, values and culture. While diverse management perspectives existed, consensus was reached on the direction of the company's future growth and trends. This information provided strategic direction for the project.

*Senior management office includes private enclave, open workstation and an adjacent team meeting space to accommodate their diverse job requirements.*



*Each team has an adjacent dedicated meeting space equipped with a variety of display and technological support. Steelcase Conjunction™, a post and beam structure, defines team areas and supports removable, sliding whiteboards and tackable surfaces.*

**The Outcome:** NBS recommended that a new group of Steelcase products called Pathways™ be used in Huntsman's new space. Pathways products can be configured easily in both teaming areas as well as individual work areas. Floor to ceiling partitions and glass enclaves can be created with Pathways to provide both full privacy or open sightlines – depending employees' needs.

NBS designed the space on the assumption that employees would need to log on and be connected to technology in many areas of the space – not just at their home workstation. Pathways provides data ports and flexibility in wiring and cabling to accommodate technology needs wherever people need to work. Pathways also offers the advantage of being re-configurable when moves are necessary or technology changes – and this can be achieved both efficiently and economically.

## *a laugh from the past*



- A] Long before the concept of "Plug and Play" floors, Carol used to hide her phone cord by raking it into the shag carpeting.**
- B] Much to his chagrin, Roger's new "Mark Hamill" haircut did not give him Jedi Powers. And Rick never appreciated being called "Han".**
- C] Life seemed so much easier before they invented work.**

## **Check it Out!**

*For more information about related topics.*

### **Functional, Funky Space is New Office Frontier**

Karen Wagner, Austin Business Journal.  
June 5, 2000.

### **Cubical Farms on the Way Out**

Cincinnati Business Courier.  
April 10, 2000.

### **Building for the Future**

Rob Smith, Puget Sound Business  
Journal. March 29, 1999.

### **Horizontal Shift**

James Overstreet, Memphis Business  
Journal. April 5, 1999.

#### **WEB SITES**

[www.navbus.com](http://www.navbus.com)

[www.steelcase.com](http://www.steelcase.com)

[www.workstage.com](http://www.workstage.com)

[www.abetterworkplace.com](http://www.abetterworkplace.com)

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## **Upcoming Events**

*Workplace Forum 2000 - 2001 —  
One Canada Square, Canary Wharf  
November 28, 2000*

*Research Buildings 2001: Next-generation  
space plans, lower occupancy costs, fast-moving,  
mission-critical projects — San Diego, CA  
November 29 - 30, 2000*

*International Development and Research Council  
(IDRC) — Sydney World Congress, Sydney, Australia  
March 22 -23, 2001*

*FM Strategies to Speed Up Processes and Address  
Corporate Change — San Diego, CA  
April 2 - 3, 2001*

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