



The Organic Workspace

White Paper

HAWORTH®

DESIGN POINT OF VIEW

Haworth's design philosophy or 'design point of view' has, like the Organic Workspace itself, developed organically over years. Particular phases in the company's growth can be picked out and given premium place in the continuum, a process of maturation with regard to design, just as the whole Organic Workspace story is one of an idea that grows from a number of sources. Dick Haworth's inspired creation of the pre-wired or pre-terminated panel is the first milestone, one that put his company in a dominant position in the US office furniture market and formed the basis for the Haworth dictum of 'design from within'. We could say that the acquisition of European design-led companies, especially Castelli, with their highly developed aesthetic, was another significant step, and one of course that, on the face of it, looked like 'design from without'. But it's the nature of Haworth's ability to absorb wisdom as well as generate it that made the design culture of our acquisitions quickly add their unique flavourings to a unique recipe.

Then came sustainability, probably the most significant modifier in design thinking since design thinking itself. Partly as a response to this new imperative, the introduction of the Organic Workspace concept is the final major milestone – not to say that there won't be more in the future – but crucially important because it represents in part Haworth's own re-invention – call it re-design – of itself. Very few companies, and to our knowledge none in our market, have the intelligence, the vision, and above all the courage, not only to re-design themselves but to commit

huge investment in re-making their own headquarters as, among many other functions, the living, breathing exemplar of that transformation. That is design from within. The bedrock of all this creative and business activity has to be the Ideation Group, or rather what the Ideation Group represents, which is Haworth's open-minded (and open-handed) commitment to experiment, research and the creation of a coherent body of workspace knowledge. But accumulated knowledge turns into wisdom somewhere along the line, and as the learning process has continued so its benefits have been reaped, then sown right back into the company's consciousness.

One of our many internal White Papers on the nature of the workplace has this to say about design: 'Part of Haworth's evolution has been a shift in our focus away from studying objects to better understanding relationships within the entire interior envelope. Different building typologies, group culture types, and unique personal workstyles frame the design opportunity from numerous perspectives.' As you can see, the design emphasis – the point of view, if you like – has moved and will continue to move towards 'soft' issues such as behaviour and culture, reducing the emphasis on product itself. This chimes with Haworth's biggest design project of all, re-designing itself to offer the market a relationship with a trusted long term advisor rather than just a furniture supplier. Of course we will continue to analyse corporate needs and specify and supply objects, but they must contribute to the

new workspace world that we have devised with our client, and they must support its organic development.

Apart from the general overall introductory White Paper in this series, and this one itself, the five others are all dealing with key aspects of Haworth's 'design point of view'. Sustainability, Adaptation, Integration, Workspace Knowledge and a Global Perspective are the five intellectual foundations of the organism that is the Organic Workspace, but global consciousness and workspace knowledge are the 'thought leaders' that take us forward to the prime design principles of integration, adaptation and sustainability. As is always the case with organic entities, however, you can't really separate one element from another and say this came first and that is only there because this is here. They have

all, alongside internal product development and external social, political and cultural influences, come together organically to make... the Organic Workspace.

One final word about our design point of view. The foregoing talks about our own internal transformation, but it is only because the underlying essence of the Organic Workspace is relationship. By redesigning ourselves we are redesigning the way we work with our clients; we're in it for the long term, we're here when you need us, and indeed, when you don't. We know you will change as much as we will, although not necessarily at the same speed or at the same time. The Organic Workspace is not something that we give you and walk away; we're in it with you, for as long as it takes. And that is indeed design from within.