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QUARTERLY
JOURNAL OF
STUFF THAT
WORKS &
CAN MAKE
YOU MONEY!

BRAVO Bulletin

Helping Sell More Stuff!

The Bulletin was created to help share product and system news that we believe could help find new customers, develop new business, and introduce new products or significant developments with all of our manufacturing partners. We will also attempt to demystify some of the more complex issues of our industry and put it in plain English!

Usable Info

We will be writing this for and sending this to only the Dealer Sales Reps and Leaders we work with. This will allow us to offer more candid information on products, pricing, and competitive placement—and let you decide what and with whom you want to share this with.

We'll be interested in your feedback—good and not so good—so please don't hesitate to share—and knowing most of you—I know that won't be an issue!



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SWITCH IT UP!



One of the great promises of systems furniture when it was originally introduced was the ability to reconfigure the pieces into new layouts—to adjust to the changing work environment, whatever that might look like down the road. The real truth however is that most open plan cubicle layouts were never changed from the original installation. The inherent strength built into the products weren't being utilized.

As a new Rep for Steelcase back in the roaring '80's we actually opened and stood in our file drawers to demonstrate how darn strong our product was! And that kind of strength was overbuilt into all the products back then! Over the years a lot of the steel has been replaced with plastic and other cost-saving materials in order to hit a price point the market erosion has

driven us all to. Now it's the norm to heavily discount legacy products and take single digit margins in order to win business! However there is a better way!

Tayco has introduced a new generation of "Systems" furniture. **SWITCH** was designed with a seasoned industrial design firm Fig 40 with several commercial furniture products already to their credit. The product was "reverse engineered" so a performance and price point were given priority. Traditional thinking was challenged. The result was a kit of parts that allows multiple work functions to be supported; reception, open-plan workstations, benching, cube-based workstations, call-center high density layouts, tables, private offices, and height-adjustable surfaces.

SWITCH

Photo Gallery



Giotto Suspended Elements



Printing on Oversize Panels



Snowsound Fabric



The design-build criteria for **SWITCH** was Dealer and end-user driven.

- ① Meet Market Needs Functionally
- ② Elevate A&D consideration of Tayco
- ③ Install quickly and easily
- ④ Priced Aggressively

Research showed the vast majority of cubicle-style workstations were never reconfigured until they were moved to a new location. So why over-build a product that would need to be sold at thin margins in order to compete with the “off-shore” lower quality products? Let’s build a quality product with attributes clients want and are willing to pay for. Leave the rest out. Build in strength with smart engineering and new age materials.

The new system needed to look “smart” in order to gain the attention of the client and specifiers. Attention to detail was a must! Clever nuances were built-in, like the drop-down utility ports, which include USB jacks! Panel end coat hooks, and cable pathways that were simple and elegant.

From the very beginning of the research done for this new offering, dealers said their markets was under attack! Competitive pressure were causing products to be sold at razor thin margins and too often installation labor was a break-even proposition! We saw the opportunity to change both of these unacceptable situations. A main criteria the product was designed to do from the beginning was install quickly and easily. Too often manufacturers took costs out of their product by off-loading the assembly costs to their dealers and shipped them parts and pieces that the dealer would then have to assemble, adding to their labor costs! Bad form!

SWITCH

Great effort was made to ensure **SWITCH** shipped as fully assembled as possible and can be installed as quick as anything currently on the market today. This was also supported by a revitalized packaging and shipping methodology at Tayco. From tail-gate to butts in seats, the goal is to assemble quickly and efficiently!

The commoditization of systems furniture has been widely groused about at all levels of our business. The introduction of “Off-shore” products compounded the problem. Discounts went from aggressive to ridiculous! Let’s design a product from the beginning that looks like its over-built but is underpriced! Mission Accomplished!

Nearly 100 Dealers and dozens of Designers have been to the Tayco factory since the roll-out of **SWITCH**—and *none* of them have accurately guessed the pricing of SWITCH. All have been high, some guesses were double to what the product looks, feels, and performs like! *Moral of the story—we can sell SWITCH at HIGHER MARGINS, make MORE MONEY and still beat the competition!*

Another sign SWITCH is right on target, more than 70 Dealers have already placed Showroom orders and some early success stories are emerging from across Canada and the US, including one 300 workstation project that had a prestigious Design Firm involved.

“We are Great Partners for Smaller Dealers who want to grow!”

- Kevin Phillips, CEO Tayco

MAKE
THE
SWITCH



BIZ DEV

Looking for new Business Opportunities—try these non-traditional markets!

Car Dealerships



You drive by them every day—your local Auto dealerships are coming off a record year (over 17 million autos sold in the US last year) and they are under pressure from their factories to keep their showrooms updated. **Tayco** furniture has been a staple in furnishing more than 3,000 car stores across the country. Each brand has its own “Standards Program” that we can comply with! Also **OCI-Sitwell** soft seating is also a strong player in this market—their chairs are built well, available in a variety of options and fabrics, and priced really well! We can help you gain market entry!

Hotels



We’ve all be in them—the ubiquitous hotel conference room with the chairs that all look just like the last hotel conference room you were in! Where do all these come from? Well more than half of them come from **KFI**! They offer a variety of these built like a tank and priced like a Hyundai seating. Priced extremely aggressively and some even ship in 24 HOURS! Speed Kills!



Restaurants

Think back to your last meal in a new or hip eatery—noisy? I bet it was! Check out the Yelp reviews—I bet a lot of them men-



tioned how noisy the place is! If its one thing Chefs and Owners of restaurants can’t stand its bad reviews! We can help fix the noisy, cavernous sound many of these places have. **Snowsound** has lots of installations all over the world, and here in North America—including this one shown above in Seattle. Even Starbucks is using their panels to make your favorite coffee shop more intimate!

Huddle Spaces

One of the hottest topics in the AV Dealer world is Huddle Spaces. Scares them to death! For



two reasons...one they are small “hang-n-bang” TV on the wall with simple stand alone connectivity inputs (hard for them to make money on these smaller projects), and secondly they involve furniture! Gasp!!! **Tayco** has several table and end-wall offerings, with more on their way, and **KFI** and **Sitwell** have excellent seating options. And don’t forget the acoustic requirements of these spaces that **Snowsound** can address. And to help tie all these together is our Audio-Video partner **Tempest Technologies** with offices in Seattle and Portland metro and proven projects in Boise, Anchorage and Honolulu! Great partners all. Don’t pass these projects by—they can be profitable moneymakers for you!

Check us out at:

www.tayco.com

FACTORY NEWS



MERGEWORKS

Define Your Workspace

MergeWorks moved their Headquarters and Manufacturing facility from Dallas, Texas to San Antonio, Texas. The move allows MergeWorks to expand their plant facilities—they moved into a brand new space that will be better able to accommodate their growth. Most of the key personnel made the move to San Antonio, however several did not and Scott Klinger, owner of MergeWorks is working hard to hire new staff.



Also from Mergeworks is the introduction of a new desk/table top screen option. Called EchoScape™ Its made from 60% post-consumer recycled plastic PE water bottles, EchoScape™ panels are sustainable and eco-friendly. Panels are lightweight, high impact resistant, VOC-free, and available in a variety of colors. This new material is available in all their standard divider screen applications and is positioned as Sight & Sound Privacy Solution. Call me if you would like a sample sent of the PERC itself—its also tackable—BONUS!



Coming soon—a single combined binder for both brands—which currently is housed in two separate binders! Saves shelf space and helps quickly locate all their product without having to thumb thru multiple Binders. And don't forget their QuickShip program—chairs ship in 5 DAYS or LESS!



SITWELLNEXT

SNOWSOUND®

Acoustic Panels & Fibers

Snowsound is rolling out a cut yardage fabric called Snowsound Fiber Textiles. Snowsound Fiber is a patented technology based on soft interconnected polyester fibers, inherently flame retardant and able to impede bacterial growth thanks to the silver ions included in the molecule.

The interaction between the fibers and the special acoustic design of objects and support systems reduces the annoying acoustic reverberation in the environment, improving quality

of life and work. Great applications of this fabric would be curtains, roller shades, upholstery and wall hangings. Available by the end of Q1 this will be priced as any cut yardage would be and available in a variety of weaves, shades, colors, and textures. Watch for more on this in the coming weeks.



We all know SPEED KILLS—and its especially true in furniture! KFI has just added more products to the 24 HOUR ship program! Now about 70% of the product portfolio can SHIP within 24 HOURS!



The balance of the portfolio ships in no longer than 2-WEEKS! Their products run from elegant café and breakroom tables and chairs to public space tandem and rail seating to hospitality stack and specialty seating. They also offer outdoor tables and chairs targeted towards corporate spaces, including a lightweight aluminum offering. Their new Urban Loft solid table tops are killing it in the restaurant sector...we now have 12" samples—call us for some—you'll love these!



Check out all our lines at: www.bravopartners.net

HUDDLE SPACES

As the walls keep coming down, the need for interaction continues to climb! Recent studies show the average worker in an “open plan” space gets interrupted every 12-minutes, and it takes almost another 20-minutes to refocus and regain the effectiveness they had before they were interrupted! This is a HUGE loss of productivity.

A way around this has been to build small meeting spaces—both walled for privacy or simply set apart from other work space. These are being called **Huddle Spaces**. The need for these is exploding!

In an excellent article, [Cindy Davis](#) from of all places **AVTechnology Magazine**  writes a great article addressing all the various aspects of these quickly growing spaces. You can access the entire article from their website www.avnetwork.com or ping me and I will send you a Word doc reprint of this entire article.

Cindy makes a lot of equipment recommendations—not all I agree with as being the best solution (remember she is writing to a tech-literate AV Engineering Group) for furniture folks—but she touches on all the key attributes and guidelines for these spaces. Here are some of the key ones:

- There should be 1 huddle space for every 10 people in the open plan or 20 in Private Offices.
- The spaces should offer between 20 and 25 square feet per person the room is designed for.
- Key elements of the space include seating, surface area for writing, tablets or laptop (not necessarily a table), a display, connectivity to the display (wired and wireless), data connectivity (wired or wireless) lighting control, and acoustic privacy control.
 - ◊ The display height should be 4-8 times the length of the further away occupant.
- Adequate HVAC is required to make these spaces productive.
- A reservation system offers efficiency in the use of these spaces.



Other key attributes of these spaces include a webcam to facilitate video conferencing.

- There were nearly 100 Billion Video Conferences completed in 2017.
- **Skype**, **BlueJeans**, and **Zoom** are great and easy Video Conference Service Providers
- **Logitech** and **Microsoft** make great and affordable HD webcams with USB connectivity and onboard microphones.

Other key features of these rooms

- TV—go buy it at Costco—who cares!
- Connectivity—**Barco Clickshare** is my personal favorite—allows Windows and IOS devices to connect to display to share contents, video and audio.
- Soundbar—if quality audio is important, add a soundbar since most of the speakers on TV these days are not very good and rear-firing. **Sonos**, **JBL**, **Bose** all make good products.
- A Reservation system can be provided by the **EventBoard** App and an iPad Mini and wall dock. Half the price of some of the other systems on the market, like media:scape.

For more industry insight check out the article I referenced or call me or Ted at our Tech Partner, **Tempest Technology** at 425.996.0228 or their website: (www.Tempest-av.com)

Don't Fear the Gear!

Year Ahead Thoughts



As I travel around our Pacific Rim region, I get a great perspective on our industry, our economy and signs of opportunity or regression. I thought I would share some of these random thoughts with you all at one place, all at the same time. Many of these thoughts and observations come from the Dealer Principals I call on and consider friends as well as Business Allies.

As business people and entrepreneurs we risk our livelihoods and businesses everyday by making decisions based on our experience based on intelligence.

The one general overall sentiment throughout the region is a more optimistic outlook towards the overall business climate. The recent tax code changes may be fueling some of this. Corporate spending is generally on the increase—replacing capital goods are on a priority list. Major firms like Microsoft, Amazon, Costco all have building programs going on. These mass expenditures have a “trickle-down” effect on many other firms. There are 65 construction cranes swinging in the Seattle area alone. 30 in Portland. Industries with expansion plans I am seeing are biotech, healthcare, transportation, hospitality, and government. The government “thing” is real at almost every level; Federal, especially the DoD, and cities seem to be the most active. Ports are also underway with major expansion-renewal programs.

So how does this translate into our business? The industry major players are mostly flat in their earnings and stock performance. They have major capital invested in making a lot of the products we no longer seem to be selling these days, most notably systems. And what is being sold, is too often at thin margins. I see opportunities in the ancillary products, specialty seating, mobile privacy and display products, height adjustable and acoustic solutions. Systems furniture opportunities at Regional-sized firms offer the best opportunities for profitable returns on your selling efforts, these tend to be relationship-based sales. The Audio-Video opportunities still exist in droves and I believe represent an extremely profitable growth opportunity, but a solid tech partner is a must in order to capitalize on these opportunities.

Hope sharing many of the thoughts I’ve heard all of you voice brings value in this New Year. One thing I am sure of, 2018 will be a better, more positive year than ‘17 for all of us willing to get out of our seat and on our feet—the business is there to be had! Let me know how I can help you get more than your fair share!



Who Is Bravo Partners

Bravo Partners was created to help Architects, Furniture Dealers, and End-users provide client-centric solutions for businesses that demand enabled, reliable, and easy to use work environments, especially in Collaboration spaces. With our manufacturing partners; **Snowsound, Tayco OCI, Sitwell Seating, MergeWorks, Stilles, and KFI Seating.**

We also represent the Pacific Northwest’s most comprehensive Professional-Grade single source provider of AV, IT, Security, Telephony, Electrical & Low-voltage Contractor designed to integrate with the Commercial Furniture Dealer network; **Tempest Technologies.**

Together, we are **Bravo Partners!**



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