

FURNITURE: BUY LOCAL, BUY USA

There are multiple venues to purchase commercial grade office furniture in this global marketplace. With furniture frequently the largest capital expenditure in an office relocation, the opportunity to purchase USA-made furniture and to stimulate our economy have never been more vital. No one purchases American as effectively as our military; I salute NAVFAC and their requirements to not only purchase USA-made, but also to purchase furniture that is environmentally friendly. In the absence of government initiatives, how can a commercial company purchase "Made in America," while maintaining budgetary considerations?

Acquiring furniture is a dilemma that my customers and I struggle with everyday. There are several buying options which include "as is", refurbished, new imports or new locally and/or USA-produced. Whenever possible, I will suggest new furniture built locally, because it not only supports California companies, it enables customization and field modification.

"As is" can be the most unpleasant solution for more mature companies. In America, settling for less is not our nature. A typical scenario might be that the client requires 25 offices and finds a supplier that has 25 mahogany wood desk sets, purchases the offices for \$1,200 per office plus \$250 to deliver. Next, they want to add

nate, for an additional \$1,200 plus \$200 to deliver. Had they purchased everything new, an import, they would have paid the same or less, everything would be perfectly matching and would include a 10-year to lifetime warranty. With "as is," they end up with furniture that is eclectic, worn out, probably damaged, not keyed alike, meaning they have two to four different keys for each office, there is no warranty and there are no savings.

Although liquidators will say you are saving 75% off retail, the true savings are not that great. The industry is highly competitive; every dealership is offering huge discounts, from 50 to 65 percent. At the end of the day, used furniture is not the color nor exactly the configuration or anything else you want. Your gorgeous new building has old furniture. Really, how much do you save; maybe 10 to 20 percent?

The U.S. Navy in San Diego has developed a unique model in furniture reuse. This program, which has saved the Navy over \$9 million since the program's inception in 2009, allows for the streamlined reuse of "as is" furniture without cost and paperwork for military customers. This program has been an impressive success, keeping over 584 tons of waste out of landfills and avoiding \$79,000 in landfill costs. Rear Adm. Bill French, commander of the Navy's Southwest Region, said he expects this success will continue to grow. If you can find a program similar to the one Rear Adm. French has created for the Navy, absolutely take advantage of it. Otherwise, when it comes to "as is," be cautious.

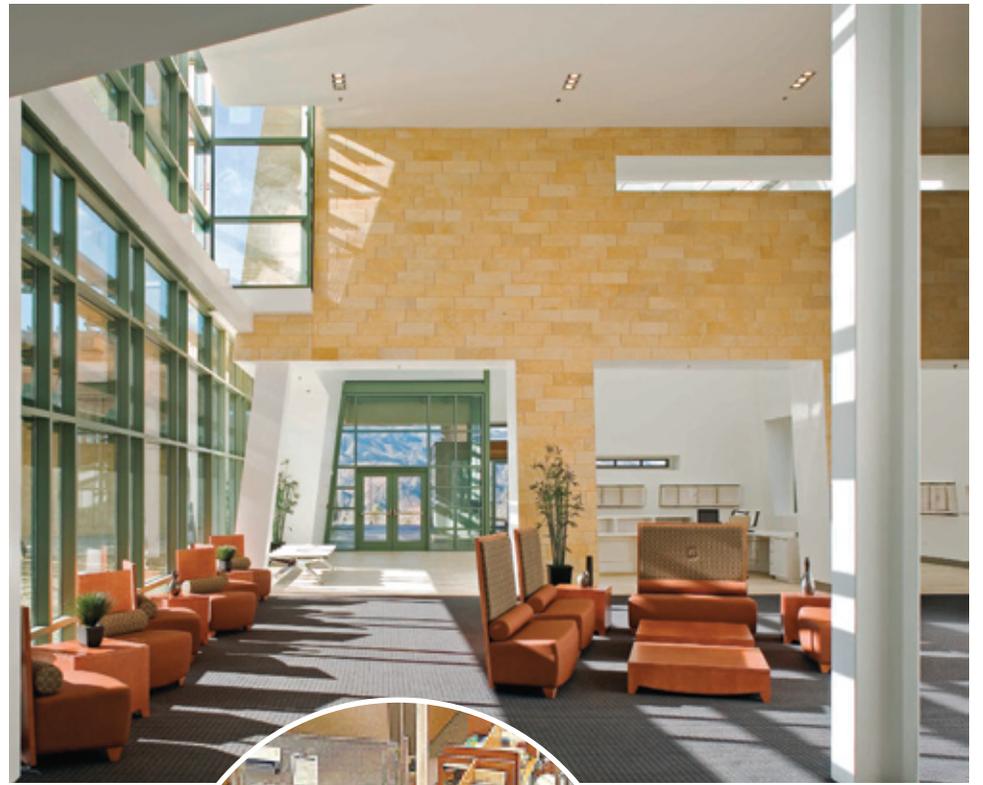
"Refurbished" systems furniture is one of the most intelligent ways to purchase furniture, and I highly recommend this. It's just as it sounds; new fabric, paint and brand new worksurfaces. If you work with a reputable company, it will look absolutely new and will be exactly the configuration and finishes you want. I have completed installations at the Alzheimer's Association, Solar Turbines, Hargis Engineering, Anvita Healthcare, and numerous other companies. This is a wonderful way to buy furniture and save money without compromising quality. Final costs and savings are dependent on project scope. If you need less than 25 stations, more savings are realized. If you need more than 100 stations, you will save less, as the new manufacturers heavily discount larger projects.

Last year, Provide-Commerce required 500 stations and was evaluating import versus refurbished furniture. The costs were similar, although the refurbished cost slightly less, but the import offered more impactful and versatile design. In the end, they purchased refurbished systems locally, in eye-popping fabrics. The interior design firm, ID Studios located in Solana Beach, provided the design inspiration to the space, which reduced the need to have the furniture provide the design

impact. If you work with a local refurbisher, you not only mitigate freight costs, you also support our local economy, all while keeping furniture out of the landfills. Is this a great way to purchase furniture, or what? Truly "Think Globally, Act Locally" at its best. Hats off to this great San Diego company!

Purchasing new imports, unfortunately, may

If you are looking to transform and redefine how and where you work, and the idea of yet another Dilbert cubicle leaves you cold, the best solution is locally made Studio. Iiac Golf prides itself in integrity and simplicity of design with their golf apparel and accessories. Standard refurbished or new systems furniture did not reflect their corporate culture. Raw



be the most cost-effective way to buy beautiful, well-made furniture, while maintaining design continuity. Not every company has the financial resources to purchase mid-priced or high-end furniture and budgets often necessitate purchasing some imports. Until a government initiative to offset costs is implemented, this option will remain one of the most effective solutions to reduce furniture expenditures.

With the competitiveness of the market, large projects have the ability to negotiate incredible discounts, imported or not. Thomas Jefferson School of Law, another ID Studios, Inc., project, was defined early on to reflect environmental responsibility, and the furniture had to contribute to the LEED Gold rating of the building. Permeating the 8-story "learning environment" are a host of green materials (with high recycled content) and natural forms (reflecting sand, water, sun and sails), speaking to the local and regional influences of San Diego. ID Studios and TJSL received 12 bids for furniture that included every purchasing option for their new East Village school. They chose a mandate to only buy American-made goods. Their private office needs were very specific, and we were able to meet their requirements not only by providing custom wood casegoods from Indiana Furniture, a 3rd generation U.S. company, but also with laminate ceiling height bookcases with wood detailing from Omni Pacific, a local San Diego company. By mixing wood with laminate, we saved them \$3,000 per office; a small detail that didn't compromise design integrity, but saved \$300,000.

unfinished wood, sand blasted steel beams, perforated steel plates and Forbo tack "panels" and an open architecture reflected the image this company wanted to convey: real, earthy, and certainly not conventional or boring. Yet they have to maintain a modest budget. We were able to meet both requirements with Studio. Every project and solution is thoroughly unique and is truly a partnership between the architectural professional, the client and our industrial team. It's a collaboration and sharing of design vision and expertise, designed specifically for the company's business, budget and design aesthetic. Some clients know exactly what design they are seeking, while others rely on our creative vision. Sustainable materials are absolutely utilized as much as possible. From upscale wood "systems" furniture for CBS and DreamWorks to churches, architectural firms and nonprofits, furniture can be produced with pricing from \$1,000 per station or office to \$5,000, depending on the image and the materials utilized. Highlighted projects are included in this article and more images can be found on our website, www.icesd.com.

Until there are financial incentives to Buy USA, our Spanx will be made in China and our Champion skivvies will be made in Indonesia; that's just the way it is. But when you are thinking of making a large acquisition such as furniture that has an immediate positive affect for our community, please "Think Globally and Buy Locally" when possible; our children will thank us.

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bookcases, lateral files, round tables, etc. to complete this great deal they now own. They purchase the add-on items new, which somewhat coordi-