

The evolution of a modern office: from workstations to modular solutions



Ira Sharfin

Chief Executive Officer
Continental Office Environments

For 75 years, Continental Office Environments has been a leader in creative workplace solutions. The company, which started as an office supply provider in 1939, has grown to become one of the largest turnkey workplace space solutions experts in the nation. Given this rich history of evolution and growth, COE is a knowledge bank of current office environment industry trends and insights.

"We're seeing a shift in the workplace in various spaces," says Ira Sharfin, CEO of Continental

Office Environments. "From the way we think about management, workplace tools, and the places that we work within, the industry is shifting to meet the demands of today's global marketplace."

In fact, award-winning furniture design company, Herman Miller, reports that 60% of the time workstations are unoccupied, 77% of the time private offices are unoccupied, and 50% of conference rooms go unused. They also note that 70% of collaboration takes place at the workstation, and 34% of this collaboration lasts 15 minutes. This suggests that there is a need for more team spaces to result in heightened creativity, higher productivity, and happy associates. Herman Miller predicts that areas not allocated to workstations, private offices, or formal meeting areas will double over the next decade. This also suggests the need for flexibility in the workplace.

"Additionally, one of the most significant trends we are seeing is that construction has begun to embrace technology, which positively affects budgets, project efficiencies, and flexibility," adds Garry Ruick, COE's President of Architectural Products. "Providing these simple yet high-tech solutions is what our clients demand today, which is one of the reasons we

are seeing a significant rise in our modular services business, such as DIRTT's pre-fab modular interior solutions."

COE is seeing their clients embracing DIRTT's fully customized, manufactured construction solutions. DIRTT not only takes a more sustainable approach to construction through its lean manufacturing processes and choice of building materials, but believes their method of building better differentiates DIRTT from typical prefabricated wall companies and traditional construction as a rising trend.

"Many aspects of DIRTT allow us to provide cutting edge, prefab solutions for our clients, designers and contractors," comments Ryan Ware, who leads COE's sales efforts for their modular construction services, including DIRTT. "Our clients are realizing many benefits by using a prefab, modular-based construction solution approach. DIRTT as a construction solution allows your space to integrate and evolve with technology, and creates an adaptable, flexible

solution that grows with your business."

What can be even more promising for companies is that DIRTT solutions have unprecedented lead times due to their proprietary software ICE that speeds up the design and manufacturing processes and includes all aspects of a space, including walls, doors, millwork, power and data, and technology. In the end, COE clients are confirming this gets them into their new spaces much faster than traditional construction, saving them time and money.

"Overall, we are seeing this rising trend in prefab modular solutions like DIRTT not only because it's beautiful and sustainable, , , but it works well for clients who need a build out quickly without sacrificing quality and aesthetics." notes Ware.

DIRTT is an acronym for "Doing it Right This Time," and companies like COE are helping their clients to do just that.

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