

# RETHINK

ISSUE  
ONE

## HOW ACOUSTICS AFFECT WORKPLACE PRODUCTIVITY

Ever wondered how the  
furniture in your office affects  
your productivity?

## MAKE YOUR WORKING ROUTINE HEALTHIER

Make these simple changes to  
your routine to start living  
a healthier lifestyle

5 Workplace

*Design Trends*

From bof<sup>®</sup>

for 2017

# Content

## WHAT WE DO

Wondering who are we and what do we do? Turn the page to reveal all!

4

## BIOPHILIC DESIGN by Nominique

Explore the benefits of incorporating this new trend into your space

6

## HOW ACOUSTICS AFFECT WORKPLACE

### PRODUCTIVITY by Ocee Design

Ever wondered how the furniture in your office affects your productivity?

8

## HOW TO MAKE YOUR WORKING ROUTINE

### HEALTHIER by Flokk

Working in an office can be bad for your health. Make these simple changes to start seeing the benefits.

10

## 5 WORKPLACE DESIGN TRENDS FOR 2017

We examine the design trends emerging in workspaces this year.

12

## VIRTUAL REALITY IS HERE!

Scan the QR codes and use your BOF Google Cardboard to immerse yourself in some of our 3D plans.

14

## OUR FIRST YEAR OF SIT-TO-STAND WORKING

It's been a year since BOF switched over to the sit-to-stand way of working. We give our honest opinions on the change.

16

## "SERENDIPITOUS ENCOUNTERS OF THE WORKSPACE KIND" by Spaceoasis

How are collaborative environments creating "serendipitous encounters" in the workplace?

18



6

8

10

12

18

4

16

# Who We Are

Here at BOF, we create inspiring environments for working & learning. Based in South Wales, we are an independent furniture supplier who provide you with the furniture you need; sourced from homegrown and global manufacturers.

Our creative, passionate & knowledgeable team possess over 30 years experience as a furniture specialist within the Education, Public & Private sectors. We aim to provide an honest, professional and personal experience from initial inspiration to finished installation.

# What We Do

## Design & Planning

Creative design is what excites us. This is why we provide a professional service, while having a little fun along the way!

We understand the design process can be one of the most integral parts to the overall success of a project, so our design team are involved in every project we undertake.

With over 60 years of combined experience in planning inspiring environments for working and learning, we are also one of the most experienced design teams in the industry.

## Furniture Supply

Supplying furniture is the most important part of what we do. We supply furniture for all working and learning environments across a wide range of sectors.

As an independent brand, we aren't biased towards a single supplier.

We provide you with the furniture you need, sourced from homegrown and global manufacturers. Our independence ensures that we specify products with the correct aesthetic, form, function and most importantly; within your budget.

## Delivery & Installation

Our delivery and installation team are professional, experienced & trained to the highest level with valid CSCS cards and up to date health & safety training. We are always uniformed and ready to answer any queries you may have regarding your installation. With allocated weekly delivery routes, many sole supply contracts around the UK and a unique location in South Wales, we are ideally positioned to deliver efficiently across the UK in our own fleet of commercial vehicles.

### Our new fleet has arrived

We have recently extended our fleet of delivery vehicles to include 5 new 7.5 tonne trucks & 2 new 3.5 tonne long wheelbase vehicles with Euro6 diesel engines. This will vastly improve our carbon emissions and impact on the environment.



BOF Showroom

## Our Showroom

Our South Wales furniture showroom is a space dedicated to showcase how furniture, people & technology combine to create inspiring environments.

We treat our showroom as a living office, where staff are free to work wherever they choose; this helps you to visualise how your finished environment can be used, but also gives you the option to try before you buy.

Why not pop in and visit? Our friendly and knowledgeable staff are on hand to help you create your perfect space.



Tower House  
Tower Close  
Bridgend  
CF31 3TH

This issue features guest articles from our partners:

**ocee**  
DESIGN

nomique

!|o|!|:

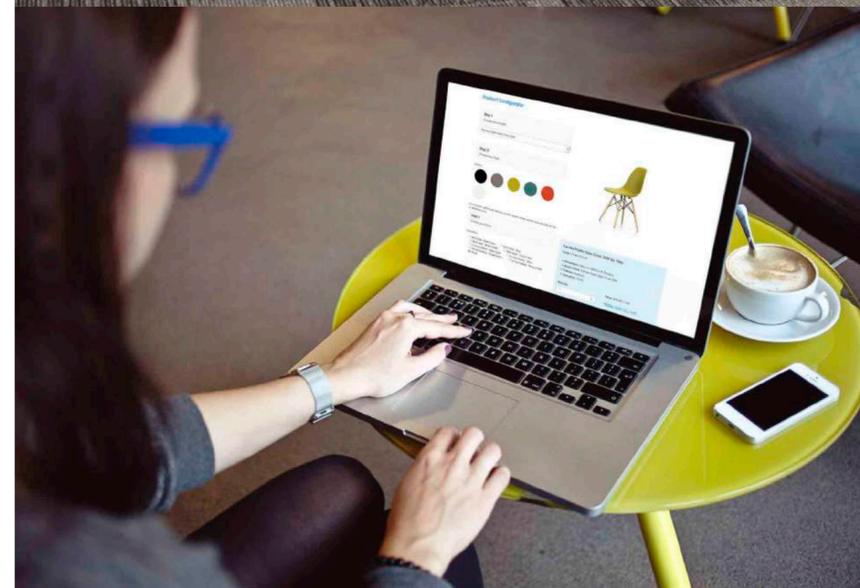
spaceoasis<sup>®</sup>

## Like what you see?

All products featured in this issue are available at:

**bof.co.uk**

With our online configuration tool you can change the colours and finishes of products so you get exactly what you're looking for.



Printel, Madrid

The word 'biophilia' literally means a love of life or living things. (It stems from Greek "bios" = life and "philia" = love) We have an intuitive and deeply ingrained attraction to nature, and a biological need for contact with the natural world.

Biophilic design integrates nature and natural elements, material and forms into architecture and interiors.

# Biophilic Design

by nomique

## LOVING ALL THINGS GREEN

As humans we are highly responsive to the experience of nature. In fact, experiencing nature is profoundly important for our functioning, health and well-being. A study, conducted by the University of Washington shows that both visual access and being within nature helps the mind focus and can help reduce mental stress and illness. To boost well-being and productivity in the workplace people need access to daylight, a pleasant view, spaces that contain natural elements or even access to the outdoors.

1. Place plants throughout the office
2. Create an outdoor space
3. Implement "Green Walls"

## DAYLIGHT

Multiple studies confirm that workers who get sunlight are likely to be more active, sleep well and are generally of better mental and physical health. In turn artificial lighting, including office lighting and light from electric devices can be disruptive to our system and can result in poor sleeping quality. Poorly designed lighting can also result in eyestrain, headaches or can affect our vision. Big windows that allow plenty of daylight are key to a well-designed workspace.

## ROOM WITH A VIEW

Another study has found that workers with a better view, judged by size and vegetation content, were consistently associated with a better work performance. The presence of natural vegetation, seen through a window or placed inside the office, also reduces stress and supports workers' ability to focus their attention. According to the Human Spaces global study, the ideal biophilic space in the UK would include:

- > Natural light (33%)
- > View of the Sea (27%)
- > View of the countryside (22%)
- > View of a lake (20%)
- > Quiet working space (12%)

## BRING THE OUTDOORS INDOORS

Placing plants throughout the office is a good way to integrate nature into the workplace. Studies have found that having a plant on your desk increases productivity and cognitive attention, as well as acting as an air filter. Beyond plants some companies install "green walls", "indoor forests" or "vertical gardens" to integrate more nature into the workplace. Even posters or high definition screens displaying images of nature can help to improve the work environment.

## PATTERNS OF NATURE

The use of natural materials like wool, wood and stone connects the build environment to nature. Colour and textures that mimic nature or can be found in nature create a sense of warmth, familiarity and comfort into the office environment.



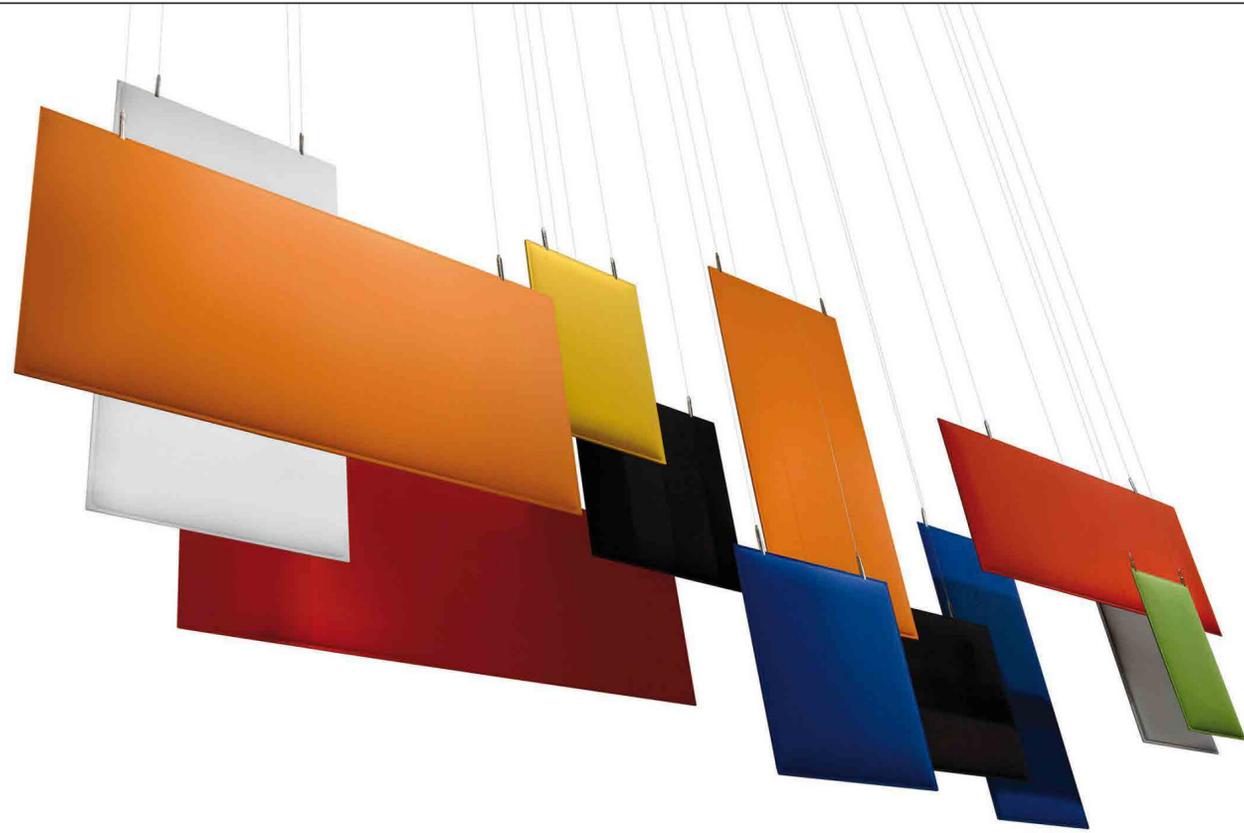
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## How Acoustics Affect Workplace Productivity

by **ocee** DESIGN

Our understanding of how people function in the open plan office has evolved over the last 20 years. In particular, much research has been conducted regarding the effect of the acoustics in the workplace and how this influences productivity and well-being. In fact, the majority of office workers identify noise as a major concern.

Contrary to what many believe, people are able to work effectively in both quiet and noisy environments. For example, most of us, at some point, have had to work in an aeroplane or in a noisy café, and can do so relatively easily. But what is it about the open plan office that causes us so much distraction when noise levels are comparatively low? This question has been investigated again and again, and one factor stands out as the main cause of distraction – speech intelligibility. We are able to work in a space where speech is audible, however, the clearer and more intelligible the speech becomes, the less able we are to ignore it and focus on our work.

A good acoustic space is about the reduction of speech intelligibility where privacy or concentrated work are required, and increasing it where communication and collaboration take place. The focus should not be on reducing noise levels, but rather manipulating the clarity of the speech signal. Acoustic products should therefore be particularly effective at speech frequencies.

This new understanding of our biggest distractor has led to the development of relatively recently adopted standard

– BS EN ISO 3382-3 – which enables us to quantify the acoustics in an office in relation to speech intelligibility and distraction. By testing an open plan office to this standard, the number of people distracted by one speaker in the office can be established, as well as the level of speech at certain distances and the general rate at which loudness decreases as sound travels across the office. This powerful method of accurately assessing the quality of the acoustic environment has resulted in the development of better, more effective products, that are designed for purpose.

Quality acoustic products provide solutions for the control of reverberation, reduction of speech level, and even systems which introduce 'good' sound into a space to reduce distractions. Used in various combinations, these products will improve the quality of the acoustic environment, allowing staff to be more productive and increasing worker satisfaction and well-being.

Choosing the correct acoustic solution requires expertise; it is important to consider the complete environment. Independent acousticians are available to offer advice or conduct on-site acoustic assessments.



Four@Us Solo

“Systems which introduce ‘good’ sound into a space to reduce distractions. Used in various combinations, these products will improve the quality of the acoustic environment, allowing staff to be more productive and increasing worker satisfaction and well-being.”

INTRODUCE ‘GOOD’ SOUND INTO YOUR WORKSPACE WITH A FEW OF OUR FAVOURITE ACOUSTIC PRODUCTS AT **BOF.CO.UK**.

### Fabricks

Fabricks are super acoustic bricks made from acoustic foam and wool fabric, designed to look fabulous, divide space and reduce noise. Quickly configured and reconfigured, Fabricks offer the flexibility to change spaces in the modern open plan workplace by creating walls for meeting spaces and individual work areas.



### Medley

Sound reduction is demanded to aid concentration and reduce disruption, in turn helping to improve efficiency and accuracy. Medley can fulfil all of these requirements using a variety of solutions.



### Den

In any open plan work area there are times when you need to find your own space. The environment we work in has to facilitate both the privacy needed to concentrate and the space needed to collaborate.



### Four@Us Wall Pod

Four@US Wall gives you the opportunity to exploit every square foot of space by creating work areas on underutilised walls. Whether you need a comfy spot for a coffee break or a practical work facility.

All products in this article can also be seen at our newly refurbished South Wales Showroom. Contact [info@bof.co.uk](mailto:info@bof.co.uk) to arrange a visit!

# HOW TO MAKE YOUR WORKING ROUTINE *Healthier*

Since the start of the year, several alarming reports on the state of health in the UK have come to light, most notably the recent report from The Health Survey for England, which shows that over 15 million Brits are living with long term health issues.

"The demands of modern day living are taking their toll on the health of the nation" said Professor Sir Muir Gray, clinical adviser to Public Health England, the government organisation responsible for the survey, continuing "Busy lives and desk jobs make it difficult to live healthily. And it's those in middle age that are suffering the consequences most, as their health reaches worrying levels." The crux of the argument is that modern day lifestyles leave little to no time for people to worry about their own personal health, and that we ignore the tell-tale signs until it is too late.

As we transition through our lives, we adopt unhealthy habits, and put less stress on our bodies. The report shows that 83% of people aged 40-60 are overweight, drinking too much or not taking enough exercise. For many this is a result of a gradual decline in activity, but it's never too late to change. Whatever your age, adopting healthy practices is key to ensuring better life quality.

Making changes to your daily working routine can have a significant impact on your health, and help you to not become one of the gloomy statistics we see today. So what CAN you do to your working routine for a healthier lifestyle.

## Change your working environment

As highlighted in our recent blog on workplace design trends – a healthier outlook on office design is widely becoming seen as a necessity in combating unhealthy lifestyles.

A growing body of research is showing that our office environments are massively detrimental to our well-being, and we need to rethink our approach to working environments to bring about a positive change. The aim is to provide a working atmosphere which discourages sedentary behaviour and rewards movement and fluidity.

This includes a variety of things, such as sit-stand desks, more versatile office design to encourage movement, and active seating which encourages subconscious body movement. It's about adding movement wherever possible.

## Slip in your exercise around work

For some people, finding the right time to fit in a gym class can be a struggle. Long working hours, a stressful commute and then possibly hectic family commitments mean that by the time your chore list is complete, there's only time for a bite to eat before hitting the hay. Evaluating your commute to work can be one way to find time for exercise.

If your commute is quite long, you could look at jumping off the train a stop or two before your final destination and exercise from there. Even a brisk walk is beneficial, if running or cycling isn't appealing to you. It could also save you a few pennies on reduced transport fees.

Adding exercise to your routine could also have a positive effect on your day, with activity shown to increase focus, improve memory and make you feel happier.

A lot of offices are equipped with shower facilities too, enabling you to freshen up upon arrival. If not, a change of clothes and a quick wipe will make you work ready. Still not convinced? Stick to using your journey home as your exercise commute.

## Add activity to your working day

If the previous is not an option for you, then you could consider adding exercise into your working day, utilizing your office environment to add movement to your daily routine. Total Jobs have a great selection of 'deskercises' here, which you can add to any part of your day.

This and more found over on Total Jobs excellent blog on workplace exercises. You can also do these as a group, making it a daily event for everyone in the office, to avoid embarrassment and to ensure keeping it up after the initial novelty period has worn off.

## Things to avoid

### Cake Overdose

We all love cakes. Whilst undoubtedly joyous, an overly cake friendly culture can be damaging to your health, as recently highlighted by The Faculty of Dental Surgery. Make sure everyday isn't cakeday in your workplace.

### Camping out all day

Make sure you keep active during the day. Try to get up out of your chair at least once every hour. Go make that cup of tea. Walk over to your colleague's desk instead of emailing them. Do some deskercises! When it comes to lunchtime, try not to eat it at your desk. Get some fresh air, and importantly get moving.

Whatever it is, make sure that by the time the bell strikes home time, you haven't been sat in your chair since you arrived in the morning.



HÅG Capisco

by  
**!lo!:**



Vitra Citizen Office

## 5 Workplace Trends for 2017

In 2016, Agile, collaborative and convivial working were the buzz words at the tip of everybody's tongues with a big focus on staff well-being and comfort. These new ways of working are already being successfully integrated into the modern workplace.

However, we believe that some of the main 2017 workplace design trends will refine these ideas further; whether it be through aesthetic, design or form and function. After visiting three of the most established furniture exhibitions of 2016 (Orgatec, 100% Design and Clerkenwell Design week) we noticed how new products had been designed to push the boundaries in these new ways of working even further. These events gave us the perfect indication of what the 2017 workplace should, and will look like.

So, here we go: In our opinion here are five of the main workplace trends to keep an eye out for this year.

### At home, in work.

In 2017, expect to see the workplace to include more and more furniture that would fit just as well in your home as in your work space. These domestic inspired products create relaxing, comfortable places to break away from your desk; and with the provision of ample power and data, even become informal work and meeting spaces!

### Bringing the outdoors in.

"Biophilia" describes the inherent bond between man and nature. Fresh air, natural light and generally being immersed in nature have all been proven to improve happiness and well being. So why should this end at the front door to your workplace?

Within the furniture and interiors industry we've noticed a big shift towards bringing the outdoors into the office. And the best thing? This can be achieved very easily through the use of feature walls, plants and raw natural materials indicating a nod to mother nature.

*Turn to page 6 for more on biophilic design*

### Shhhhhhhh!

As open plan, collaborative working environments are becoming the norm; the need for easily accessible quiet spaces has become more and more vital. The benefits of open plan working have been long communicated. But still, when you're taking a very important call, you don't really want to hear about what Kelly in admin had for dinner last night, do you? At last years events and exhibitions we saw lots of brand new takes on office pods and rooms, semi enclosed touch down spaces and agile acoustic solutions.

### "If you look after your staff, they'll look after your customers. It's that simple"

While scrolling through LinkedIn I found the above quote from Bill Gates, and it really stuck with me. A workplace's number one should be it's staff, not customers. Ergonomics can have a massive influence on health, happiness and general well-being and we're now seeing a large shift towards ensuring people are made as comfortable as possible each day. One of the big trends we started to see last year, and well definitely see move to the forefront of workplace design this year is "Sit-to-Stand" working.

### Always on.

In 2016 we saw more and more furniture ranges being supplied with integrated power solutions. As agile working becomes more prominent throughout the workspace, expect to be provided with what ever power you need, wherever you are! From soft seating in breakout spaces, to charging facilities in dining areas; the office is always on.



#### LIKE THIS?

Visit our blog to see more about design trends, industry news and our Weekly Wrap Up's.

[bof.co.uk/blog](http://bof.co.uk/blog)

# Virtual Reality is here!

In 2017, Virtual Reality is more prominent in the media than ever. Here at BOF, we have invested in state-of-the-art technology to allow our clients to immerse themselves within their inspiring new environments, way before installation.



Scan here

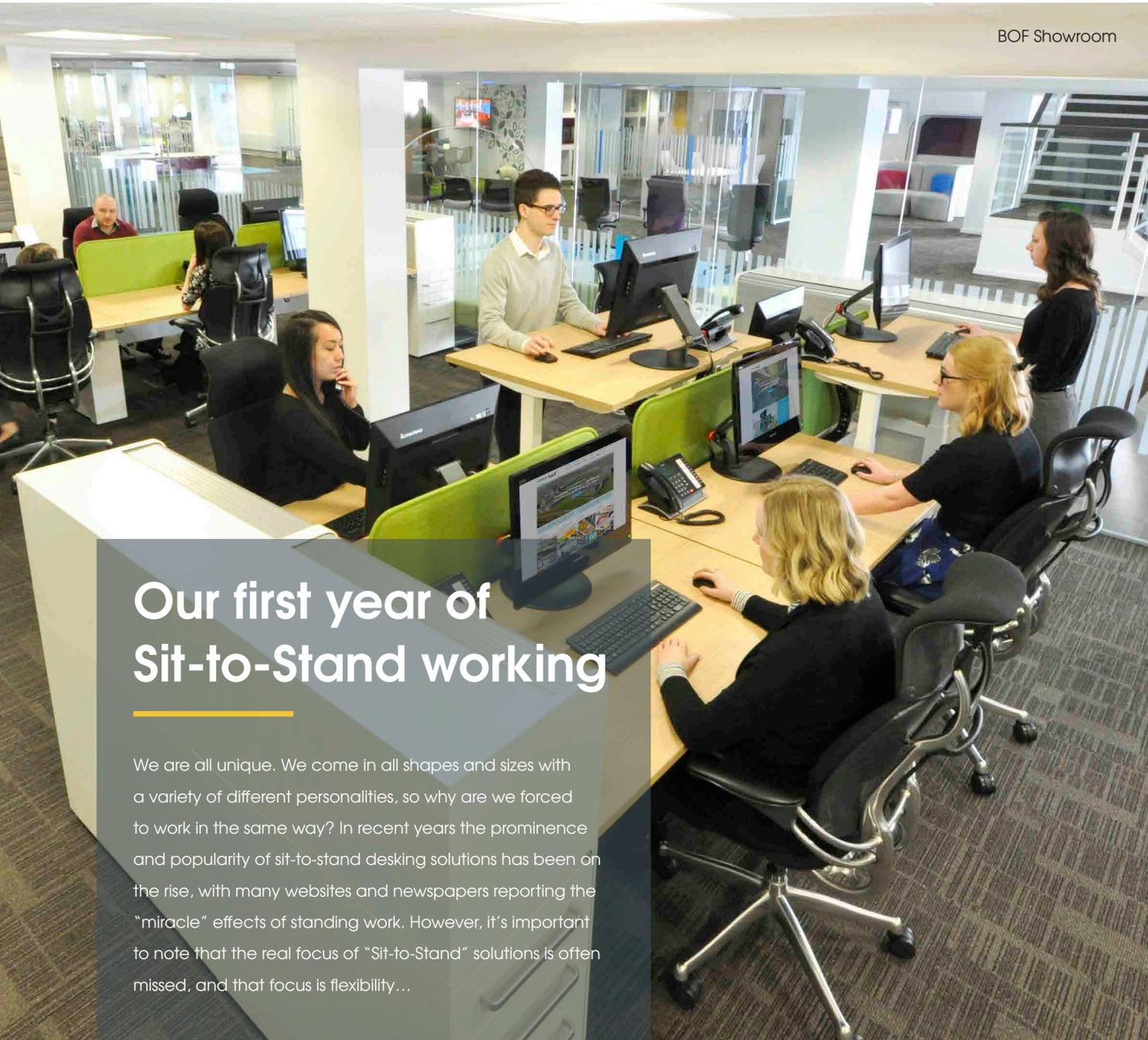


## How to view in 3D virtual reality

Simply download a "QR" scanning app on your smartphone, scan one of the QR codes above, pop your phone into your brand new BOF cardboard device and transport yourself to some of our 3D rendered environments. It's that simple!



Tweet us a photo @bof\_furniture using your new BOF VR headset!



BOF Showroom

## Our first year of Sit-to-Stand working

We are all unique. We come in all shapes and sizes with a variety of different personalities, so why are we forced to work in the same way? In recent years the prominence and popularity of sit-to-stand desking solutions has been on the rise, with many websites and newspapers reporting the "miracle" effects of standing work. However, it's important to note that the real focus of "Sit-to-Stand" solutions is often missed, and that focus is flexibility...

### A flexible "Sit-to-stand" environment has shown the following...

- > Increased HDL (good cholesterol)
- > Decreased incidents of breathing difficulties
- > Decreased swelling of the lower limbs
- > Reduces lower back discomfort
- > Shows little to no decrease in productivity
- > Workers varying between sitting and standing positions were 78% more likely to report a pain-free day
- > Improved communication between colleagues
- > Better working atmosphere through ease of communication

"Sit-to-Stand" facilitates not just sitting and just standing, but the freedom to choose from a variety of postures depending on the task at hand. The result? A working environment that ultimately leads to happy, comfortable, healthy and productive employees!

A year on from the introduction of sit-to-stand desks in our Bridgend showroom, we give you our honest opinions on the positives and negatives of an adaptable workspace.



Judy Hall  
Head of Sales

### How many hours of the working day do you stand at your desk as opposed to sit?

A lot of my time is spent out on the road, so when working from the office 95% of my working day is in the standing position.

### How easy was the transition from traditional sitting work to adopting a sit-to-stand mentality?

Due to the health benefits I experienced straight away, standing was the most natural way for me to work, so there was never a transition issue for me.

### Would you recommend sit-to-stand desking over traditional workstations?

A 100% yes from me!

### How many hours of the working day do you stand at your desk as opposed to sit?

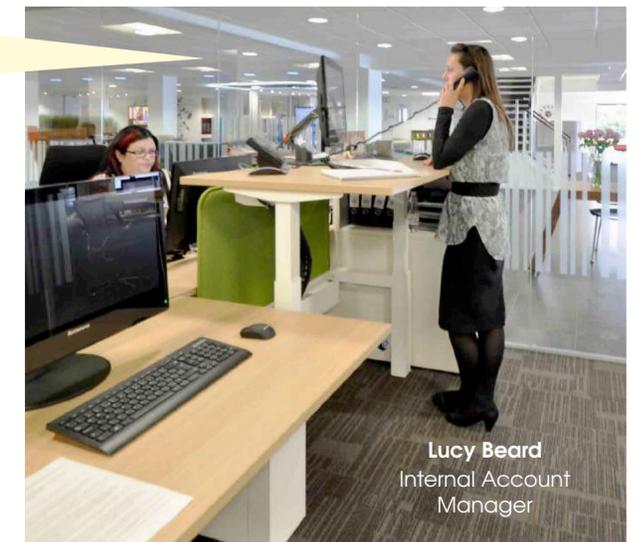
When the desks were first installed I would stand for the majority of my day. As time has passed I now tend to sit with my chair at a taller height than standard and raise my desk to a more comfortable height. I still stand at various points throughout the day, but with the easy to use electric adjustment I can choose to stand or pick a comfortable sitting height with ease.

### What are the positive experiences of using Sit-to-Stand desks you have encountered so far?

It's great to be able to stand while running through work with a colleague, being both at the same height feels far more natural than someone stood beside you hunched down to look at your screen.

### Do you feel utilising sit-to-stand desking has had a positive or negative impact on your work productivity?

Overall I've found Sit-to-Stand has had a positive impact on my productivity. I'm not the best at sitting still so being able to change my posture throughout the day definitely improves my focus and concentration, especially first thing in the morning!



Lucy Beard  
Internal Account Manager

### Do you feel utilising sit-to-stand desking has had a positive or negative impact on your work productivity?

The introduction of Sit-to-Stand has had a positive impact on my productivity. The option to sit or stand lends itself to varying work scenarios e.g I stand most of the time, but for concentrated work (Tight tender deadlines, where I need to be very accurate, have some isolation to compose specific responses etc) I will sit. This effectively puts me into a 'booth' situation which gives me a little more privacy.

Also, I find colleague communication when standing allows for faster responses to queries, assistance etc. meaning my workflow is more efficient.

### Would you recommend sit-to-stand desking over traditional workstations?

Absolutely – in my opinion best development to personal workspaces since I started office work.



John Tovey  
Contracts Manager

# “Serendipitous encounters of the workspace kind”

by **spaceoasis®**

Innovation has long been hailed as the life-blood of business. We have Charles Darwin to thank for the slightly unnerving ‘innovate or die’ mantra often trotted out by entrepreneurs and business leaders. While innovation may be necessary to survival, actually making it happen can be hugely challenging. Collaborative workspaces are gaining popularity as one response to finding ways to drive innovation and efficiency within organisations.

BOF installation at  
Fulton House, Swansea University

## Happy Accidents

The belief behind serendipity (def: a desirable discovery made by accident) in the workplace is that networks, rather than hierarchies, drive businesses and projects forward. Designing collaborative workspaces that force unplanned interaction between co-workers helps build and strengthen those networks, creating opportunities for serendipitous encounters. You’ve probably experienced a casual chat on the stairs that gave you a great idea, or an impromptu meeting over coffee that unblocked a project. Serendipitous workspaces are designed to make those meetings happen deliberately, rather than by chance.

## Giants of collaboration

Perhaps the most famous example of a workspace designed to encourage collaboration and serendipitous encounters is Pixar’s offices in Emeryville,

California, conceived by Steve Jobs. He decided that rather than creating separate spaces for each department, he would drive collaboration by design. People from all over the campus are drawn to the central atrium, which houses mailboxes, screening rooms, cafes and leisure facilities, where they mingle with people they might not ordinarily see. Even the shyest introvert has to leave the safety of their desk and make eye contact with others. Originally the only bathrooms in the building were on the ground floor, which meant everyone had to walk down the central staircase for a comfort break (although this was later changed, you have to admire the commitment!). Google’s offices share a similarly collaborative ethos, which it refers to as ‘casual collisions’, and you are never more than 150ft from food, whether that’s a micro kitchen, coffee shop or restaurant, so there are plenty of places for planned and spontaneous

meetings. Private phone rooms, sofas, booths, pods and meeting rooms provide a variety of places to work alone or collaborate with others.

## Back in the real world...

Not all of us have the luxury of designing an office from the ground up with a billion dollar budget, but if you’re planning a refit it’s worth considering how you could encourage more serendipitous encounters and collaboration between teams. Whether it’s a coffee bar on the ground floor, a range of meeting pods or soft seating areas to encourage spontaneous sit-downs, encouraging strong networks should be on your list of objectives when thinking about your workspace design.

BOF 3D plans for Bournemouth  
University Fusion Building

## Get in touch!

We hope you enjoyed the first edition of ReThink and that the articles inspired you to Re-Think your workspace!

In our 30 years as a furniture supplier, we have had the privilege of creating inspiring environments for some of the largest Universities, Schools, Councils, Police Forces and private organisations in the UK.

If you would like more information or you would like to discuss what we can do for you, please get in touch by dropping an email to [info@bof.co.uk](mailto:info@bof.co.uk).

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