

## 5 Innovative Furniture Solutions

By Benna Crawford

A small- to medium-size business should have workspaces that encourage efficiency and productivity, while being cost effective. You don't need the resources of a venture capitalist to design a work environment that's economical, high-style, low maintenance and environmentally friendly.

Cool, collaborative, convertible and comfortable are some of the new ideas to drive your decor.

### A Chair That Has Your Back

The well-designed desk chair comes in every material from bonded leather to space-age synthetics. But trendy or traditional, it should perform a few key functions. An adjustable back that shifts hips forward, aligns spine and shoulders, and provides good lumbar support is critical. Mesh delivers open-air comfort; tilted waterfall cushions reduce stress on legs and promote healthy circulation. An armless chair makes wheeling in and out of tight spaces a breeze. Kneeling chairs encourage constant slight movement and naturally upright spines. Offer several choices among ergonomically-designed chairs to keep employees healthier and happier.



### Easy to Be Green

You want your workplace to be green and sustainable. So invest in green furniture. Innovations in recycling, remanufacturing and clean design maximize your use of space, minimize exposure to harmful chemicals, keep material out of landfills, perform multiple functions and reflect your office style. Sleek, powder-coated or melamine-laminate desk units join to form "L" or "U" shapes and reconfigure to add separate file cabinets, keyboard trays, extra drawers and shelves, or a bulletin board. An open "window" in a matching, attached hutch keeps office communication going when two desks are pushed back-to-back. Reclaimed hardwood veneer work surfaces are beautiful and budget-friendly.



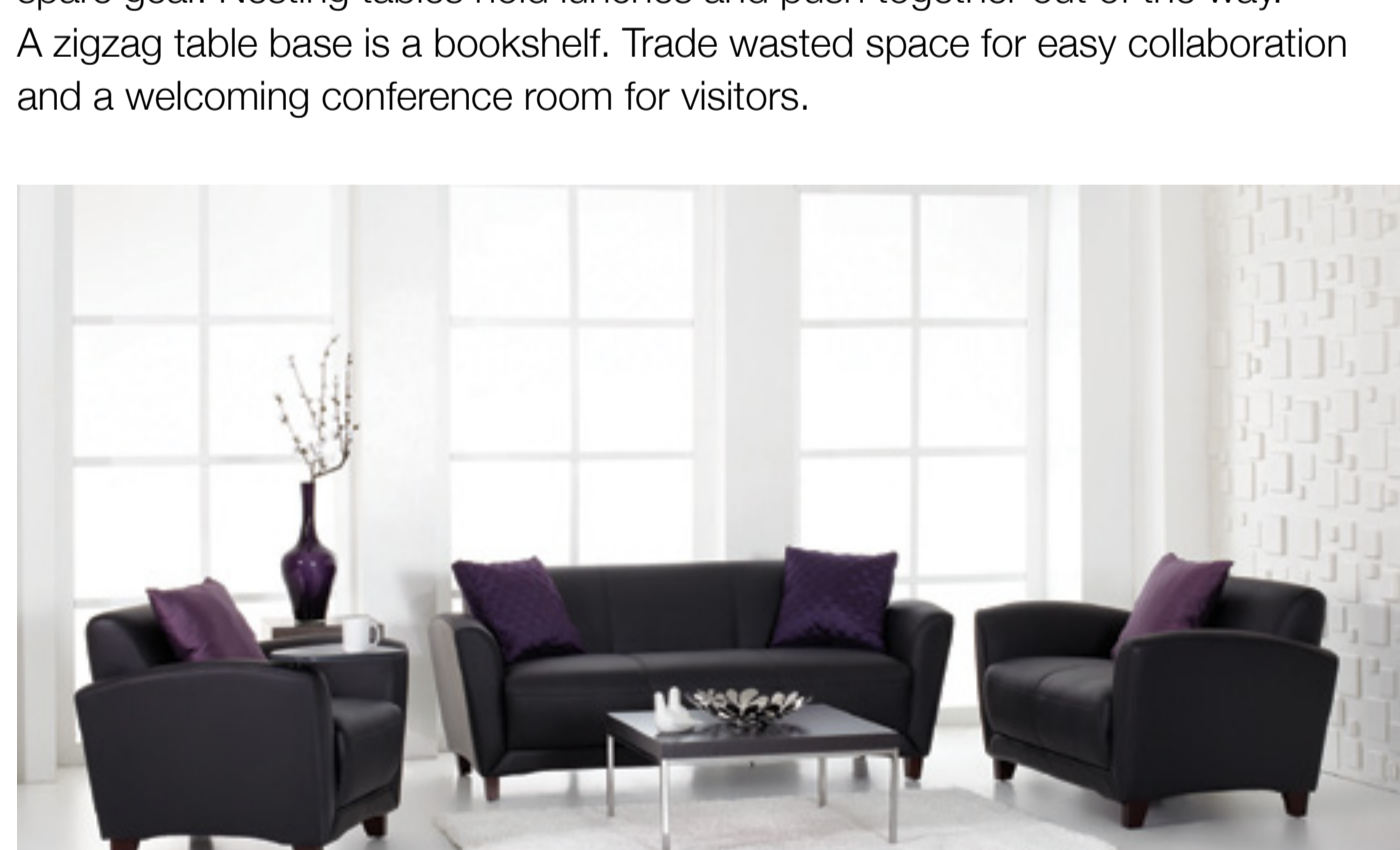
### Hideaway Home Office

The challenge for part-time telecommuters and work-from-home entrepreneurs is creating a comprehensive workspace in limited square footage. The computer armoire will restore your sanity and corral your paperwork. When closed, it's an attractive piece of furniture that will complement your decor. When opened, it's a power center with a pullout keyboard platform, drawers and cubbies to organize tools and space-saving lateral files, bookshelves, room for a monitor and printer, power strips and a charging station.



### Styling the Common Room

The leading-edge office designer envisions the conference room as an incubator of creative ideas and a theater for client meetings. Get the furniture right and you've nailed it. Solid leather club chairs and a lounge sofa are durable, substantial and stylish enough for the office confab or the high-stakes pitch. An ebony laminate coffee table provides room to lay out a campaign or display a model. Trunk tables add hidden storage and shelf tables hold magazines and contain clutter. Ottomans with lift-up tops are footrests, flexible seating and catchalls for spare gear. Nesting tables hold lunches and push together out of the way. A zigzag table base is a bookshelf. Trade wasted space for easy collaboration and a welcoming conference room for visitors.



### Gathering 'Round the Table

The personal desk is out of date in the high-energy, 21st-century office. Employees migrate from office, to home, to client work sites with everything they need to do their jobs on the go. Modular work spaces, pop-up offices and collaborative office designs mean less wasted real estate and greater creative buzz. A large table with plenty of daylight, power strips, gear chargers and informal proximity to project team members sparks synergies and inventive solutions. With movable partitions, privacy screens, book holders and paper trays, a place at the table can be instantly customized to the current occupant. Ergonomic chairs and adjustable task lighting give workers choices to avoid back strain and eyestrain.

