

Taking a Step to Divert Legacy Furniture from the Landfill

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FMs are often challenged in managing the end of life of their facility's office furniture. The cost of resources, labor, logistics, and landfill fees results in a costly operational expense with a negative impact on our overextended landfills and the environment. According to the EPA data collection from 2017, over 9 million tons of furniture reach US landfills annually. Alternatives to landfill disposal, through re-use, repurposing, and recycling options, can ultimately extend the useful life of products, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce capital expenses and contribute to the circular economy.

WHO CAN BENEFIT

Employees: Extend these furniture assets to company employees. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this has been beneficial in improving the ergonomics of employees while working from home. Consult with your legal department to ensure there are no liability risks involved.

Public school districts and other non-profits: These often accept donations of gently used office furniture and equipment for their workspace and classrooms. These donations work hand in hand with other fundraising activities required to ensure the overall success of their mission. Community or business development resources within these organizations can determine alignments between their needs and your unwanted items.



Furniture remanufacturers: Furniture that has become obsolete can be modified/remanufactured to meet new workplace trends at a much lower cost. According to Davies Office, as presented at IFMA WWP 2018, models such as the following, have passed BIFMA level standards.

- Steelcase 9000, Avenir, Answer
- Herman Miller: Ethospace, AO2
- Knoll: Morrison
- Haworth: Places, Premise, Unigroup

STEPS TO PLANNING A DIVERTING STRATEGY

Inventory: Develop an accurate and comprehensive inventory that identifies the type, manufacturer, model, quantity, condition, and photograph.



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Contact your manufacturer representatives: to understand the many options available to your company that render social, environmental, and economic benefits. Most of these programs are not limited to furniture but extend to include equipment and building materials, as part of a decommissioning process.

The following manufacturers offer Life Cycle Programs through reuse, repurposing and recycling:

- Steelcase: Phase 2 End of Use Program kbishop@mccoyrockford.com
- Knoll: Full Circle Program in collaboration with ANEW. Contact: Rose Tourje, info@anewfound.org, subject: Full Circle
- Herman Miller: rePurpose Program Repurpose@hermanmiller.com
- Haworth: End of Life Management Program sustainability@haworth.com
- Humanscale – BEAM Handprint program betterworld@humanscale.com
- Teknion: Divert Program. Contact: Sarah Pellegrin, sarah.pellegrin@teknion.com

Environmental Organizations: For large commissioning projects the task can be daunting. The following companies offer managed programs with comprehensive solutions inclusive of any manufacturer brand, equipment, and building materials.

- ANEW: Surplus Stewardship – Rose Tourje, e-mail: info@anewfound.org
- Green Standards - info@greenstandardsltd.com

FMs are vital to the solution while adding value in changing the organization's message. If you are an FM and have had a successful experience in the decommissioning process or diverting your legacy furniture from the landfill, please share it. We want to showcase your story.

If you are an associate member and your company offers a Life Cycle program, please contact the IFMA Houston Chapter Sustainability Committee, and we will add you to the in-progress list of resources.

IFMA Houston Chapter Sustainability Committee
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Jim Rouse, Equinor
Emily Lai, Humanscale
Todd Yandell, C&C Wholesale Distributors