

MMQB
NOVEMBER 11, 2019



BuzziTable from BuzziSpace

INDUSTRY BRIEFING

EVENTS

BIFMA Leadership Conference

January 22 - 24, 2020

BETTER: It's what we all want. Better in our lives. Better in our work. Better for those around us. This year's 360° will explore the concept of Better, what it means in leadership, talent, marketing, and the stories we tell. Our speakers will deliver their content and expertise through a unique lens to help us get better.

The 360° is BIFMA's chance to provide thinking from unexpected voices and perspectives that will help us as an industry be better.

www.bifmaleadershipconference.com

NeoCon

June 8 - 10, 2020

NeoCon is the world's leading platform and most important event for the commercial interiors industry, held each year at The Mart in Chicago. Since launching in 1969, NeoCon has served as the annual gathering place for the commercial design world's manufacturers, dealers, architects, designers, end-users, design organizations and media. The three-day event showcases game-changing products and services from both leading companies and emerging talent—providing unparalleled access to the latest and most innovative solutions. A robust educational program of marquee presentations and CEU sessions offers world-class expertise and insight about today's most relevant topics as well as the future of commercial design. NeoCon is open to trade, media, C-Suite executives and other industry-related professionals.

www.NeoCon.com

China International Furniture Fair - Guangzhou

March 28-31, 2020

China's largest furniture fair shifts back South to Guangzhou for the 45th edition.

www.ciff-gz.com

BRIEFING

AIS Celebrated Manufacturing Month with Events, Educational Sessions

AIS, the largest manufacturer of commercial office furniture and seating in New England, celebrated Manufacturing Month with a number of events and educational sessions throughout October. Events included visits by Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker and Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito, tours and discussions for local students, and an employee appreciation day.

The official national Manufacturing Day was Oct. 4 (held annually the first Friday of October); AIS held events that day as well as throughout the month. Manufacturing Month activities focused on the importance of manufacturing to the local economy. The events also helped AIS to mark its 30th anniversary. The company was founded in October 1989 by Bruce Platzman and Arthur Maxwell.

"When a local economy rests on a solid manufacturing foundation, local businesses of all sizes and industries benefit. We're proud to be the largest employer and manufacturer in Leominster and proud to be celebrating 30 years," AIS President and CEO Bruce Platzman said.

Manufacturing is 10.1 percent

of Massachusetts' total economic output and comprises 7.8 percent of the Commonwealth's workforce (about 250,000 people in the state work in manufacturing), according to Mass-Development.

With over 600 employees who work in manufacturing jobs at its headquarters location, AIS is one of the largest employers in traditional manufacturing in the state of Massachusetts. More than 250 women work at AIS's Leominster location, and more than 30 countries are represented in the employee population. With 800 employees nationwide and annual sales of more than \$220 million, AIS's dealer-centric focus and network extends across North America. AIS has been awarded "Manufacturer of the Year" from the Office Furniture Dealers Alliance eight times since 2008.

Manufacturing Month Activities

On Oct. 4, AIS hosted students from Forest Grove Middle School, Worcester East Middle School and Worcester Technical High School. More than 100 students and teachers enjoyed showroom and factory tours and participated in a panel discussion with AIS employees.

Visitors learned how AIS has earned acclaim for product design, just-in-time manufacturing and sustainability across the industry. The company is a recipient of the prestigious

Shingo Prize for Excellence in Manufacturing.

Students and teachers from Nashoba Regional High School visited AIS on Oct. 8. They learned about the business side of manufacturing as well as the technical aspects of the industry. They toured the company's factory and showroom, listened to presentations from AIS employees, participated in mock sales and design activities, and socialized with AIS team members over lunch.

Governor Charlie Baker visited AIS on Oct. 9, touring the manufacturing floor, meeting employees and presenting a proclamation declaring October to be Manufacturing Month in Massachusetts.

"Manufacturing continues to be an important economic driver of the economy in the Commonwealth," Governor Baker said. "The state is home to over 7,000 manufacturing companies and 250,000 manufacturing employees. I am proud to be here at AIS to celebrate Manufacturing Month and all of the continued contributions this company – and so many others throughout the state – make to our economy every day."

(See news about Governor Baker's visit at <https://www.ais-inc.com/about/news-events/governor-baker-celebrates-manufacturing-month-with-visit-to-ais>.)

AIS recently received the

Worcester Business Journal's 2019 Manufacturing General Excellence Award and the MassHire North Central and Central Region Workforce Boards' Growing and Ready Our Workforce (GROW) Award. Additionally, AIS was a recipient of the 2019 Boston Business Journal Corporate Citizenship Award, given to the top charitable contributors in Massachusetts.

AIS honored its employees with an appreciation day on Oct. 11 that included a picnic under a huge tent at headquarters catered by local food-truck companies. At the event, Platzman awarded the Barney Platzman Award to Francesca Jimenez Vega. The award, given annually, is named for the CEO's father and given to an AIS factory team member selected for his or her hard work and dedication. This is the first year that a woman has won the Barney Platzman Award.

"AIS thanks Francesca for her dedication, and we are so thankful for all the hardworking employees we have. We would not be where we are without them," Platzman said.

Oct. 17 brought more visits from business and political leaders, and students. AIS was the first stop in a tour of Central Massachusetts sponsored by the Mass Office of Business Development and the Mass Office of International Trade and

Investment. Nearly 30 international delegates visited the AIS factory and showroom. Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito and Platzman welcomed the crowd and shared their love of the region.

"Manufacturing is an industry that matters to us in the Commonwealth," Polito said. "Five years ago, we restructured our thinking around manufacturing. A lot of the things that needed to be made were being shipped out, and we wanted to retain the ability to [make things] here. We invested in the industry – over \$100 million. And the most important piece of what is driving this economy in Massachusetts is our investment in people."

During a tour of the factory, Platzman noted the many flags of various countries hanging on a huge wall, each denoting the home countries of AIS employees. Platzman said to the group, "If your country's flag is not represented here, let's work on it!"

(See news about Lieutenant Governor Polito's visit at <https://www.ais-inc.com/about/news-events/massachusetts-lieutenant-governor-and-international-delegation-visit-ais>.)

Later that day, AIS hosted the Boys and Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster for factory and showroom tours. The North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation partnered with AIS to provide the experience for the club members.

INDUSTRY BRIEFING

On Oct. 25, Massachusetts Senator Dean Tran visited AIS and presented the company with a special citation honoring AIS's 30 years in the state of Massachusetts. In 2018, Tran had nominated AIS "Manufacturer of the Year" for Central Massachusetts.

On Oct. 29, AIS hosted a "CEO Unplugged" event presented by the North Central Chamber of Commerce. Platzman spoke to chamber members about how AIS has evolved over the past 30 years. Attendees also enjoyed a facility tour.

Later that day, AIS hosted the October Young Professionals of North Central Massachusetts networking series. Designed for professionals in the region who are 40 years old and under, the goal of this group is to build meaningful, professional and sustainable relationships.

"AIS is committed to being a MassMade company that prides itself on its role in the local community, in the state and in our country," Platzman said. "It's been an incredible 30 years and there is so much more ahead of us!"

GROUPE LACASSE AND VERMONT STATE CONTRACT SIGNED

Groupe Lacasse LLC has been awarded a contract with the State of Vermont under contract number 39259. The contract is for an initial period of two years,

through October 31, 2021, with three possible 12-month extension periods, through October 31, 2024.

Groupe Lacasse is well known for the incomparable quality and design of its products. This new agreement makes all Groupe Lacasse products available to contract-using entities, including Vermont state agencies, political subdivisions of the State of Vermont and state-accredited institutions of higher education.

VividBoard Launches New Website & Branding

VividBoard, a division of GMI Companies, is pleased to announce the relaunch and re-brand of their website, www.vividboard.com. The completely revamped site features a simplified design, improved functionality, and enriched content to help our partners in the healthcare industry and beyond understand the value and expertise VividBoard provides to help improve communication across the healthcare continuum.

"VividBoard has a history rooted in improving patient communication and engagement," commented Susan Claus, Senior Marketing Manager at GMI. "Healthcare providers look for partners with expertise, relevant knowledge, and prod-

ucts that meet the demands of their environment. We've done the research and we're excited to show it off with our updated branding and website."

Healthcare facilities continue to move towards patient-centered care to attract and serve patients. During a hospital stay, patients are there to be comforted, informed, and well cared for. Using a simple tool such as a patient room board can help improve the patient's recovery time and overall satisfaction.

"VividBoard has helped facilitate greater patient engagement and communication for more than a decade," shared John D'Agostino, Chief Operating Officer. "From innovating product materials and features to enhancing informational content most relevant to the healthcare industry, VividBoard has become the trusted expert in patient room boards."

Created with architects, designers, and dealers in mind, the site features more images and product details, as well as resources like spec sheets and design program symbols for space planning. Users can also begin to design their own board with VividBoard's Board Builder tool. With the added collateral, special attention was paid to make the navigation easy to use, giving the visitor the information they need when they need it.

VividBoard's new website will regularly be updated with news

on product additions, additional imagery, as well as industry developments and news via VividBoard's blog, "The Lime-light." Visitors are encouraged to explore the new website to download content, request samples and literature, and submit quote and bid requests. Visit www.vividboard.com today to explore.

Clear Design Launches CET Designer Extension

Office furniture manufacturer Clear Design announces the launch of its product catalog extension for Configura's CET Designer, the all-in-one software solution for space planning and configuration.

Clear Design opted to include new Smart Symbols in its fully automated digital catalog so users can drag and drop selected items into a layout that functions with the company's specific item numbers, pricing, and configuration options.

"We're excited to offer our fully automated product catalog in CET so both clients and our internal team can create accurate quotes and photo-realistic renderings quickly and efficiently," said Clear Design Director of Operations, Robert Warrilow. "CET has quickly become a widely used tool in the commercial interior space, and we're excited to partner with Configura to make our products available

to its users. Creating configurations, renderings, and accurate quotes for Clear Design products is now faster and easier than ever, which is an important milestone for both our client experience and our Lean journey."

With the new extension, users can easily adjust workstations for their unique needs and all correlating parts and pricing will update automatically, eliminating the possibility for errors or misconfigurations. This CET integration falls perfectly in line with Clear Design's drive to provide the absolute best customer experience. Clear Design's furniture for the whole office, from workstations to conference tables to training solutions, is included in the extension, now available in the CET marketplace.

"I've worked with Clear Design for several years; they are always able to move quickly and have a great team," said Kimberly Jordan of Source COI, a Clear Design dealer. "I very much look forward to using their extension in CET, and only imagine it will even further enhance working with the Clear Design team."

ODDS & ENDS

JOINED: Nicholas Ritter has



Ritter

joined **Meadows Office Interiors** as Director, New Business Development. A seasoned business develop-

ment professional, Ritter has a robust background in the contract furniture industry. Most recently, he served as a Business Development Manager at Haworth Inc. where he was responsible for key accounts. Previously, he gained experience as an Account Development Representative for Humanscale. Ritter holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado Boulder. At Meadows, Ritter will focus on generating new business with existing customers, while also actively seeking out new client opportunities. His industry know-how, product knowledge, and background in developing new account relationships will allow him to hit the ground running. Ritter will work out of Meadows' New York City headquarters in Manhattan's Lipstick Building. 