



Sustainability: What's trending and the environmental benefits of renting furniture - by Ron Lanzo

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To all my loyal followers and readers who have become accustomed to my articles about “What to Rent and Look Who’s Renting What,” I’ll focus this article on sustainability. It’s what has been trending in the office furniture industry for quite some time now, and there appears to be no scaling back this trend. There are many organizations within the real estate industry, and they are not overlooked by the office furniture manufacturers. Sustainability is now a top priority. On a national basis we’ve seen the USGBC or The U. S. Green Building Council has taken a leading edge approach to LEED certification. In fact, LEED certification was created by USGBC. There are four levels of LEED certification that can be earned on building projects, in this order: Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum. The USGBC is focused on getting architects and builders to use highly sustainable materials in their building projects. They’ve done a great job of successfully educating the construction industry. Buildings are opening and actively promoting their sustainability level of certification as with bragging rights that Platinum is at the top of their list.

Let’s look at how renting furniture can also contribute to sustainability. Renting provides a way to reduce waste because renting furniture recycles materials that already exist. Furniture rental also reduces the demand for raw materials like wood. Foam, an artificial product that requires chemicals in the manufacturing process, can be reused rather than placed in landfill.

In terms of a design statement, AFR Furniture Rental allows our customers to express a retro look by going vintage using products that are functional yet hip.

Renting allows you to stay sustainable by using what you already own and renting what you need. Renting furniture also allows you to simplify your office or home when less means more and you can avoid clutter. When you’re done with the furniture for your project you simply call the furniture company and they’ll pick it up and return it to their warehouse for future use by another customer.

Another trend of course is that Millennials are renting more than other generations. I’ll attach a link later to an article from the New York Times in their Millennial magazine design issue. Millennials aside, renting is convenient. Furniture rental is an easier way than shopping and purchasing furniture. AFR designs your order according to your taste so you have all the furniture you’ll need. They arranged delivery, and if there is any assembly required, it is done for you as well. If you’ve ever purchased furniture from a big box store or especially from IKEA, you know

full well that you'll have a lot of work to complete when you get the product home. I'm told that IKEA is has a rental model that they are testing and expect to launch shortly in Switzerland. The super store is actively looking to become more sustainable. In their initial review of the benefits IKEA sees this rental program as giving them a circular model, which means as furniture is picked up after a rental, it gets updated, refurbished and placed back in rental for another IKEA customer. According to the CEO of IKEA, Torbjorn Loof, "When the leasing period is over you hand the product back and you might lease something else. And instead of throwing those away, we refurbish them a little and we could sell them, prolonging the life cycle of the products."

Most of the U.S. furniture rental companies including AFR Furniture Rental, also operate Clearance Centers where product that is no longer in rentable condition gets resold at deeply discounted pricing. One of the ways to increase the life cycle of rentable furniture is to use higher quality furniture. This has long been a main goal for our purchasing department to source the highest quality products that can take some normal abuse and yet retain both beauty and functionality.

I hope that you've found this article useful and if you too are interested in how renting can become a viable option for your firm, please do let us know—we'd be happy to work with you to help you achieve your sustainability goals!

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