

Talking Sustainability with Teknion's Sholem Prasow

During the economic free-fall of early 2009, hundreds across the globe gathered in **Teknion** showrooms to hear **Sholem Prasow** speak, an hour a week for eight weeks, as they prepared for the **LEED AP** exam. Mr. Prasow, Teknion's VP of Business Development and Strategic Planning, guided them through the logic, documentation and sustainable intent of the **U.S. Green Building Council** and its distinctive approach to making the built environment more sustainable. One of his messages: sustainability is subjective; the practicing *green* varies, depending on what is important to the individual or the organization.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 3...



Humanscale's Bob King Is Recognized by MAD as a Design Visionary

The real head-turner last week was not **Bob King's** substantial contributions to our work and our wildlife, but that his focus on human factors (the relationship of humans to their environment) has been officially recognized by an important segment of the design communities, the **Museum of Arts and Design**

FULL STORY ON PAGE 10...



CIDA: Design's Impact on Public Health, Safety and Welfare

Denise A. Guerin, Ph.D., and **Caren S. Martin**, Ph.D., professors at the University of Minnesota's College of Design, are at it again, trying to articulate in a meaningful way the value of interior design to the health, safety and welfare of humans. Their latest contribution is the research that is the basis of **The Interior Design Profession's Body of Knowledge and Its Relationship to People's Health, Safety and Welfare**, which is described by CIDA as "a seminal industry research report issued by six leading interior design organizations

FULL STORY ON PAGE 13...



CITED:

"DO WHAT YOU CAN,
WITH WHAT YOU HAVE,
WHERE YOU ARE."

—THEODORE
ROOSEVELT

Leland International

Leland has an international network of dealers that recognize the value of partnering with a company oriented to good design. "Our dealers recognize that this strengthens their relationships with their client base and also adds A&D support by reinforcing the right product" said Leland's NYC rep **Mario Riservato**. Supporting both interior designers and dealers has broadened Leland's overall industry support and aided in recent company growth.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 14...





PIECES FROM THE HIFI COLLECTION ON DISPLAY IN THE NEOCON 2011 SHOWROOM

COMPANY PROFILE

Leland International

“Can we start a furniture company without a factory?”

Tim Korzon, founder of **Leland International**, posed that question in 1992, shortly after shutting down his previous company which, he felt, involved too much manufacturing. Mr. Korzon’s lifelong passion for furniture design was being buried in sawdust. Going forward, he envisioned a company focused on design, function and comfort, while minimizing involvement with manufacturing.

A frequent visitor with his family to the province Udine,

Italy, whose three small outlying villages – Manzano, Corno di Rosazzo, and San Giovanni al Natisone – constitute what is known as “The Chair Triangle,” Mr. Korzon intrigued by the operations of the local chair companies: one company makes one part, passes it to the next company, and so on. With the support (and hard work) of family and close friends, he launched Leland International, naming the company after the Northern Michigan town of Leland, a favorite family vacation spot.

Following the Udine recipe, Leland set up shop in Grand Rapids, MI, without a factory but with a network of suppliers, and introduced its first product in 1993, the **Marquette Chair**. “I had confidence in our first product,” said Mr. Korzon. “But it took off quicker than I thought it would. Almost



LELAND’S FOUNDER TIM KORZON WITH DAUGHTER AND VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES SHANNA ANDERSON



FOUR MARQUETTE CHAIRS AS THEY APPEARED ON LELAND’S ORIGINAL MARKETING POSTCARD

immediately, we were producing a thousand chairs a week.”

The Marquette, still one of Leland’s best selling pieces, generated buzz due to its clean, classic design and to the many options that were uncommon to furniture at the time. Interior designers and architects could choose colors, back cutouts and shell perimeters to make the Marquette fit their spaces exactly as desired. “There are more than 6,500 permutations of the Marquette,” said **Shanna Anderson**, vice president of sales with Leland. “Designers love the flexibility, and we give them that freedom with each one of our products.”

Leland has added employees over the years, but none in the engineering, product-development or design fields. This allows Leland to work with any designer in the world, as well as use a well-staffed and dedicated product-development firm in **2B Studio**, a collaborator with Leland since the inception.

Leland is very much a design-focused company, but it doesn’t

skimp, particularly when it comes to the durability of their furniture. “We’ll reject a design that’s 95% ready to go,” said Mr. Korzon. “Or we’ll push it until it’s all the way there. We won’t put anything on the market unless it’s 100% acceptable.”

Durability is an important point, since many of its products are elegant and airy. At first glance, one might not think Leland’s furniture could withstand a lot of weight. International styles look sleek, but that same look can appear fragile. Leland understands the perception and goes to great lengths to prove looks are only finish deep.

Leland International tests its furniture for durability against the industry standard and passes by leaps and bounds. “All our products are BIFMA-tested,” said Ms. Anderson, “but that’s not enough. We expect our products to last many years, so we test above and beyond industry standards.”

Most Leland seating is subjected to a heavy-duty, dynamic-drop test, simulating a highly abusive impact.



THE M2 CHAIR, SHOWN AT SHERMAN HOSPITAL IN CHICAGO, CAN WITHSTAND A DROP LOAD OF OVER 500 POUNDS

companies



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The industry-standard tests show a piece's durability over time and normal use. Leland's additional impact tests indicated that its furniture can also withstand excessive abuse. Because of this, many health-care establishments, public buildings and universities find Leland International ideal.

Attention to detail is a way of life with Leland, which is one reason it is able to successfully license international designs for use in the United States.



MARIO RISERVATO

When necessary, Leland reinforces and strengthens the furniture structurally without affecting the design. The **Pluto** is a perfect example. The design is memorable and unique enough to find its way into Google and Skype, and its durability is enough to support the constant day-to-day traffic in those offices.

Leland International and its group of independent sales reps focus on marketing to the A&D community. "We're fortunate to have our furniture placed in world class end-user applications," said Ms. Anderson, "This is a direct result of many years of interior designer focus."

That being said, Leland also has



THE PARFAIT II CAN WITHSTAND A DROP LOAD OF OVER 1,200 POUNDS



EBB BENCH



THE EBB BENCH, SHOWN HERE AT SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT, TERMINAL 2, SPECIFIED BY GENSLER, SAN FRANCISCO

companies

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an international network of dealers that recognize the value of partnering with a company oriented to good design. "Our dealers recognize that this strengthens their relationships with their client base and also adds A&D support by reinforcing the right product" said Leland's NYC rep **Mario Riservato**. Supporting both interior designers and dealers has broadened Leland's overall industry support and aided in recent company growth.

Leland International has won a number of awards, most recently a 2011 Best of NeoCon Award for the **Ebb Bench** and a 2011 Best of NeoCon People's Choice Award for the **HiFi Occasional Table**. "Furniture designers," said Ms. Anderson, "want to design for Leland and interior designers want to use Leland in their work."

Competitors have also taken note. "Being recognized by competitor peers is humbling," said Mr. Korzon. "Knowing you're respected by companies that want the same markets you do is an honor. We've stayed true to our vision principles since the beginning." He is quick to credit friends and family who've been instrumental in creating and growing Leland International. "That's why we're able to continue doing what we love to do." ■



THE HIFI OCCASIONAL TABLE WON THE 2011 BEST OF NEOCON PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD