

Stamp of Approval



Herman Miller and the United States Postal Service unveiled a stamp Thursday honoring the work of Gilbert Rohde, the company's first director of design, at Herman Miller's Zeeland headquarters. - p5

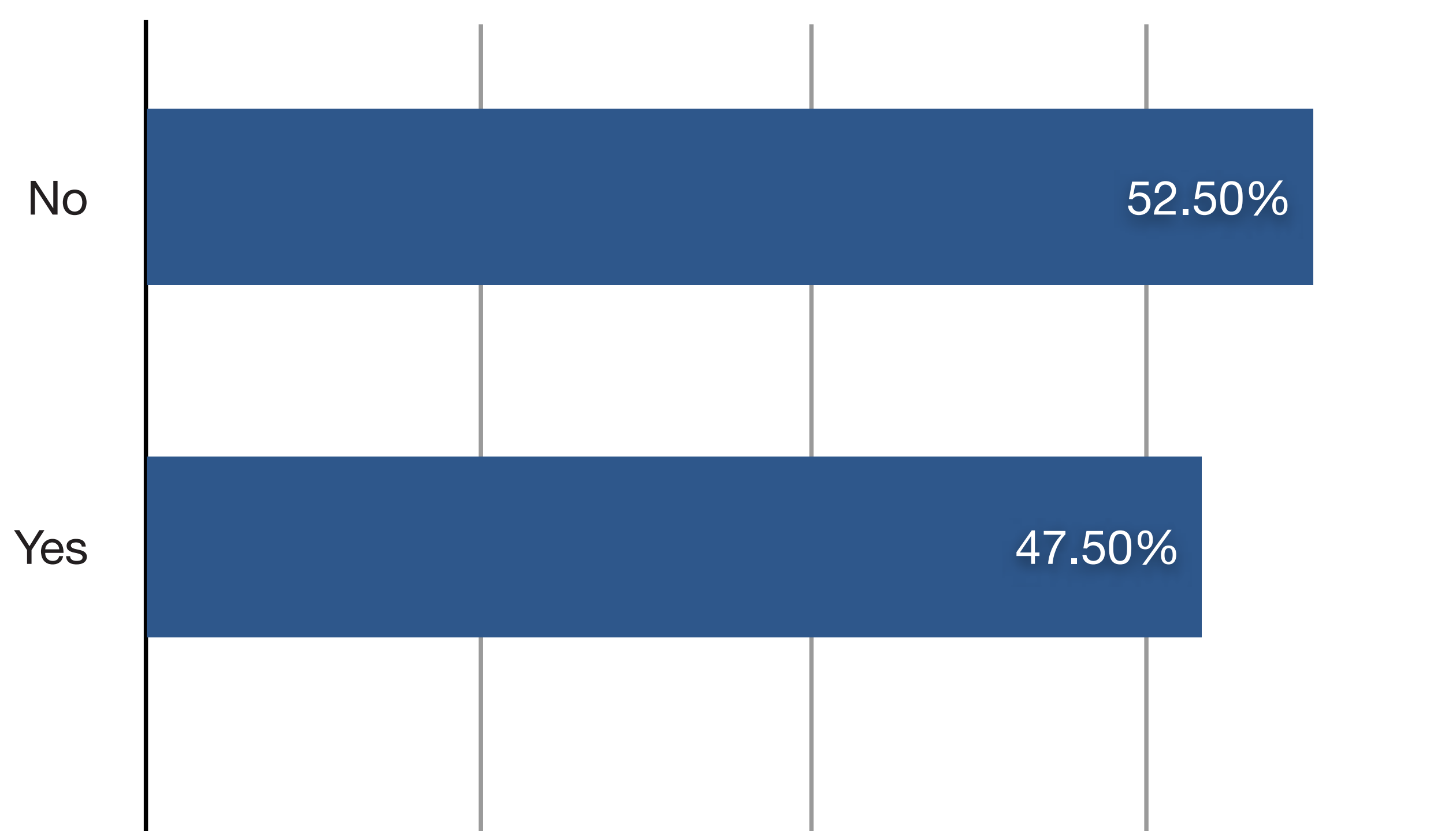
Plus

Industry Briefing p22

Marketplace p24

MMQB Online Poll

As Labor Day approaches, did you enjoy a satisfying summer?

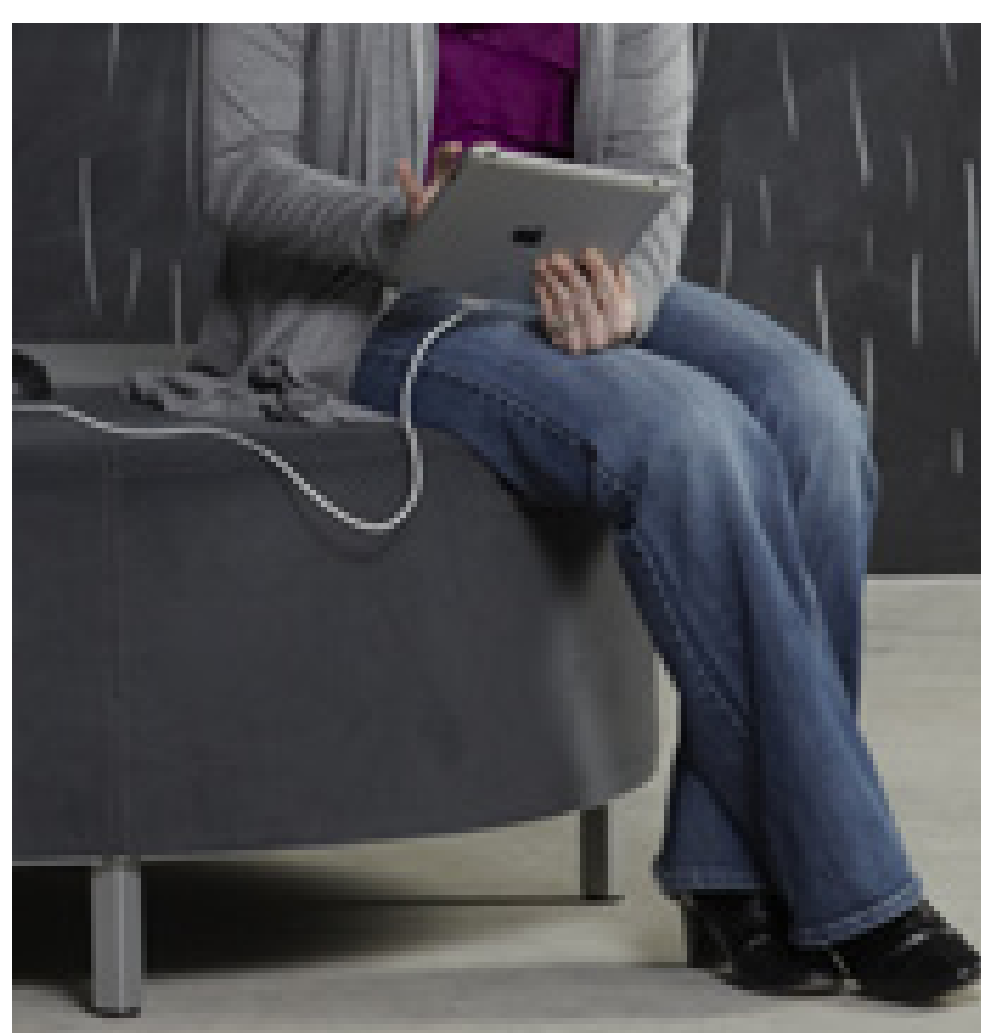


Design Driven



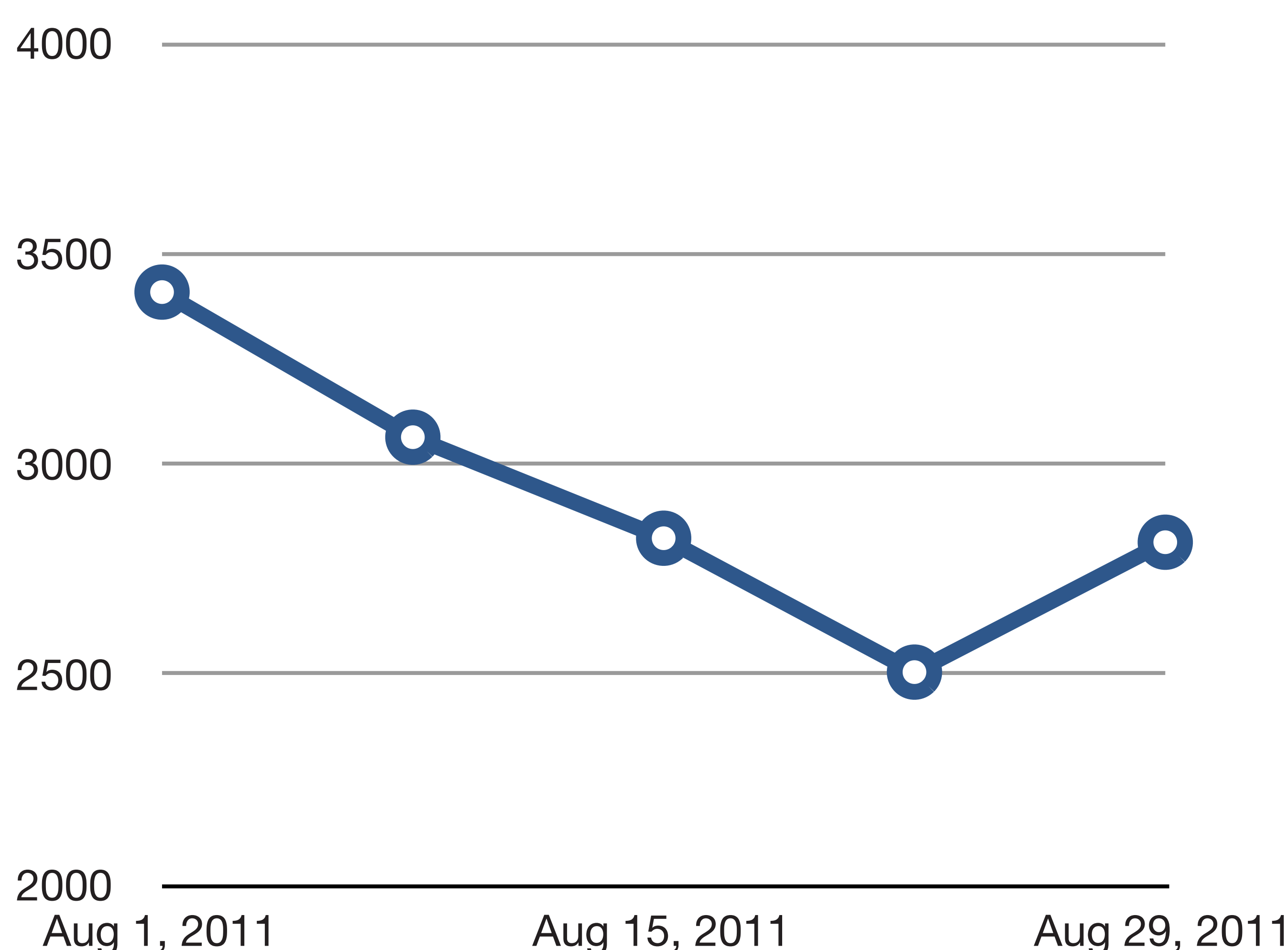
The company counts customers like Google, Skype and Apple as customers. Leland International designs with an international style that is contemporary. You probably won't find Leland products in law firms or other stuffy institutions. - p10

Corporate Sparkeology



Furniture created by Sparkeology with an eye toward the collaborative, open library spaces suddenly fits perfectly in a corporate setting. - p16

MMQB Industry Index YTD gain or loss: -28.18%



Survey: Small Businesses have Greater Concerns p4

Kewaunee Scientific Reports Sales Increased p4

ERA Products Expands Chair Line p20

New guy to oversee MMPI's contract business p21





Design Driven

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By Rob Kirkbride



Leland showroom at the Mart

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lot of companies in the office furniture industry claim to be design driven, but their ability to hit the mark and truly resonate with designers varies wildly. One company, Leland International, believes that creating highly designed products is the only way to grow and prosper.

The business model has worked well for the Grand Rapids-based company that is usually eclipsed by its West Michigan competitors in terms of industry buzz. But ask any of its customers and A-level design firms about Leland and they will tell you the same thing: If you are looking for a product with design front and center, turn to Leland International.

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The company is probably still best known for its Marquette chair, which was introduced to the public at ICFF in 1993 (back when the show had a much more contract furniture

flare). Nearly 20 years on, the simple chair with an unbelievable number of options is still one of the company's best sellers.

"That product, when it was first introduced was very unique in the industry," said Shanna Anderson, vice president of sales. "At that time, no one offered such a line with 3,000 options. After Marquette was shown at ICFF, we were immediately approached by some of the best reps in the business. It is still one of the top selling products."

The company was founded by Tim Korzon, who had years of experience in manufacturing and woodworking. Korzon said the company is a financial success because it is design driven.

"That is our focus," he said. "That is what really distinguishes Leland. We take the detail of our furniture to a level that almost everybody gives up on before they reach that point. That is the reason that such a small company like ours has such design recognition. To go up against HBF and Bernhard and (win awards at NeoCon) happens because of our high, high commitment to excellence. We compete and prevail more often than not now."

The company's top market is for corporate dining, break room and food court furniture. Leland International also does guest seating, collaborative furniture and furniture for public





Marquette

spaces like malls and airports. The company's furniture was recently chosen for San Francisco International Airport's Terminal 2 project. Leland International also does a lot of higher education and government work.

Leland International works with some of the top designers in the world. Its new bench series, Ebb, which debuted at NeoCon, was created by London designer Mark Gabbertas. Gabbertas came up with the shape after hiking a rugged section of England's northwestern coastline and coming across a hollowed log, washed up on the beach. The Ebb benches are connected with hub units to create a linked bench that looks a bit like the structure of molecules when combined.

Leland International also launched a new lounge series, The HiFi Collection, designed by Ehren Gaag of Baltimore. The lounge furniture collection is informal and works for collaborative environments. He was inspired by a visit to New York's Whitney Museum and an exhibit of sculptor Alexander Calder's wire form "circus." The continuous wire form base of HiFi was inspired by Calder's ability to take a single strand of wire and create sculpture from it without making a break.

HiFi also includes an extensive range of tables that include round, rectangular and elliptical shapes and feature surface materials such as linoleum, glass and acrylic.

Though still small — the company has sales of less than \$20 million and about 50 employees — it has launched between two and four new product lines each year, all focused on the design community. The company has won product awards the last seven years in a row. "Leland continues to strive for really excellent design in innovation and uniqueness," Anderson said. "We are really well known at A-level design offices.

I have no problem getting into Gensler offices, for example."

Leland International has spent the last few years enhancing its brand and carrying that through the entire company. It also is unique in that it employs a manufacturing model similar to Herman Miller. The company does its own finishing, upholstery and assembly, but leaves the parts production to its supply partners. The company has its headquarters and two warehouses in Grand Rapids. "Our business model is to control everything we need to control and not anything else," said Korzon.

Though Korzon would not disclose the company's sales, he said Leland International's business is "up precipitously" and "many multiples of the BIFMA numbers." ■



Ebb bench

