OFFICE SOLUTION – A MAGAZINE ABOUT OFFICE SPACES FROM KINNARPS

office solution

A MAGAZINE ABOUT OFFICE SPACES FROM KINNARPS

GEN Z
A new generation is entering the workplace.

THE WORK LOUNGE
The dynamic hub of the office.

DESIGN FOR HYBRID MEETINGS
How to create an inclusive meeting culture.



EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE
Being an attractive employer starts with the employee experience.

NEXT OFFICE®
Kinnarps' workplace analysis makes all the difference.

Kinnarps®

“Demand that the interior design is designed to live a long life and is prepared to be updated, renewed or renovated when the time comes.”

JOHANNA LJUNGGREN, SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER AT KINNARPS, PAGE 54

We create more than just furniture



PHOTO: KARL NORDLUND

Hybrid work, AI, flexible ways of working, efficiency, undisturbed working and healthy, happy employees. There's a lot to discuss as we get our working lives back on track after the pandemic. But have the needs and opportunities of our offices really changed that much? Essentially, it's still about creating the right working environments for the activities carried out by each organisation. At Kinnarps, we're passionate about creating attractive, customer-specific solutions. We do this with a focus on sustainability, ergonomics and design, and always base our interior design on actual needs and ways of working.

It's important to us that as a customer you get value for your investment, and a solution that lasts and supports your organisation over time. That's why we focus on sustainable circularity. We guide you to get it right from the start and ensure that the furniture your organisation chooses has a long life by meeting current needs and requirements, offering flexibility, and the potential for renewal, updating and renovation.

Our Next Office® analysis tool helps organisations and companies to methodically map and understand the needs of their organisation. With the right needs-related data, we can guide our customers to make conscious choices, and create a business adapted layout and interior design solution that support the organisation's ways of working. By adding a holistic approach to ergonomics, we create attractive and healthy spaces that promote creativity, efficiency and productivity. A solution based on high quality and great flexibility is automatically good for both people and planet. That's why our furniture is always contemporary, attractive and useful.

For over eight decades, we've been developing sustainable interior design solutions that help to ensure people's well-being, good health and ability to perform their tasks in the best possible way. And we have no intention of slowing down. We are proud to produce the majority our furniture in state-of-the-art and efficient factories in Sweden.

In this magazine, we share knowledge and insights that affect your work environment and the people in it.

You'll see client projects from different parts of the world, read about hot topics and meet experts from different fields. You will experience how we create more than just furniture.

Happy reading!

ROBERT PETERSSON
CEO KINNARPS

office solution IS A MAGAZINE ABOUT OFFICE SPACES FROM KINNARPS **EDITOR-IN-CHIEF** Johanna Walden **CREATIVE DIRECTOR** Elin af Klintberg **ART DIRECTOR** Jessica Ericsson **PRODUCTION** Klintberg Nilehn Media AB **PHOTOGRAPHY** Annika Feuss, Jesper Georgsson, Morgane Guillem Ferreira, Mattias Hamrén, Linus Hellström, Johan Hultman, Timo Kauppila, Karl Nordlund, Nils Odier, Alexis Paoli, Stygn Studios, Stine Østby **WRITERS** Liselott Bergholm-Slotte, David Björklund, Kalle Dixelius, Fia Fjelde, Morgane Guillem Ferreira, Salka Hallström, Therese Hulberg, Elin af Klintberg, Antje Strohkark, Johanna Walden **ILLUSTRATIONS** Tinna Ahlander, Maja Norrby **COVER PHOTO** Kinnarps **PROOFREADING** Catrin Hellmark **REPRO** Lena Hoxter **POSTAL ADDRESS** Kinnarps AB, SE-521 88 Kinnarp, Sweden **TELEPHONE** +46 515 38 000 **WEBSITE** kinnarps.com

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focus

THE LATEST NEWS AND TRENDS IN KINNARPS' WORLD.



"We need to be flexible"

Flexibility can feel like a buzzword people use to show how important it is to change with the times. But what does it actually mean? To clarify the concept and its meaning, it can be divided into three levels: long-term, short-term and daily flexibility.



LONG-TERM FLEXIBILITY
An interior design solution that is ideal right now may not be exactly what you need in two years' time, or after a move to new premises. This could involve major adjustments to adapt the spaces to a different way of working or a fluctuating number of employees. In that case, it's important that the interior design solution is planned and prepared so that it can be rearranged in new constellations. Accordingly, long-term flexibility is a question of making conscious choices from the outset, so it's easy to make changes to the interior design later on, while retaining the harmonious overall look.

SHORT-TERM FLEXIBILITY
The needs at an office may change. A work team may need a dedicated project space for a fixed period of time, or as we saw during the pandemic, desks may need to be screened off in the interests of increased hygiene. This type of short-term flexibility may involve the ability to transform individual workstations into a project space, to move furniture between different areas without spoiling the coherence of the interior design, or to combine lounge furniture in different constellations in order to change the dynamics in a space.

DAILY FLEXIBILITY
There are some interior design elements that you want to vary from day to day, or even multiple times a day. This could be supplementing a meeting space with additional chairs or screens, having furniture on castors that can easily be moved to change a space, or access to stools that allow you to sit down and collaborate at your colleague's desk for a short while. Other examples include individual adjustment of the office chairs for the best ergonomics, or changing your working position at a sit-stand desk. Daily flexibility needs to be simple and self-explanatory.



12.9%

A comprehensive survey by the National Bureau of Economic Research shows that the number of meetings among office workers has increased by 12.9% in the post-pandemic period. The general length of meetings has decreased by 20.1%.



SUSTAINABLE DETAILS

The Vibe modular range of screens is based on a smart clamp that allows the user to reconfigure their space in lots of different ways. With the right choice of material, the clamp won't leave any marks on the furniture, making this range a sustainable and flexible choice. The honest design of the patented clamp, which is as decorative as it's functional, sends a clear message to the user that it's possible to rearrange the furniture. The well thought-out detail with a gap between the furniture and the bracket contributes to unobstructed lines of sight and safe spaces.

The art of sitting

How to find a chair for every situation.

We humans are made to move. Movement has positive effects on physical and mental health, reduces stress levels and increases productivity. In spite of this, we've developed a more sedentary lifestyle over the last 200 years – but the right interior design helps to reduce harmful static sitting! Sitting doesn't actually have to mean sitting still. All Kinnarps task chairs have been designed to encourage or support movement and provide a more active sitting. In addition there is a wide choice of meeting chairs, stools and balance balls, all providing variation and movement to the user. A workspace that encourages movement helps to ensure happier, healthier and more productive employees!



Monroe chair

TIP!
A meeting chair with castors and swivel function encourages small movements during meetings without disturbing others. This keeps you energised and focused for longer.

"Our furniture is designed to last, both visually and functionally – that is what we call timeless design."

JENNY HÖRBERG, DIRECTOR GLOBAL RANGE & DESIGN, KINNARPS

3x green

Use furniture designed for well-being.



Hedge room divider on castors for plants has an integrated sound absorber and is available in many different versions.



Bring the outdoors indoors with *Allé*, which features plants at different heights.



Create a vibrant indoor space with *Grow* plant holders. Can be placed freestanding, in groups, rows or separately on shelves, tables or cabinets.



The right palette: Kinnarps Colour Studio

The colours that surround us in our everyday lives have more than just aesthetic significance. They affect our experience, behaviour and performance. Choose colour based on the activity the space will be supporting – not on personal taste or trends! At Kinnarps Colour Studio, you can choose from hundreds of colours and materials to create an attractive and sustainable interior design solution. Our advisers help you find the right palette for your working environments.

+250

Did you know that you can find Kinnarps in over 250 locations around the world? Visit your nearest showroom today!

5 tips when choosing colour

1
Consider the purpose of the space when choosing colour, not personal taste or popular trends.

2
Earthy and muted tone-on-tone colours provide an overall look of consistency and harmony, and also make it easy to rearrange groups of furniture as necessary.

3
Use colour to delineate different zones and to make navigation easier.

4
Create contrasts to enhance a function or a preferred behaviour.

5
Avoid combining several different bold colours or patterns on large surfaces. They can cause negative distractions.

DESIGN FOR SPONTANEOUS MEETINGS

In a survey by Kinnarps, 5,000 office workers responded to questions about which type of meetings they believe will be held in the office of the future. The estimated distribution shows that spontaneous meetings account for as much as 18% of all meetings. The result is an important aspect to consider when designing the office of the future. Spontaneous meetings occur at workplaces every day. Colleagues meet in corridors, at the coffee machine or at each other's workstations to ask questions and brainstorm. These types of spontaneous meetings are not only important for employee relationships, but also enhance collaboration and problem solving. Make it easy for employees to stop and talk by having open, comfortable and welcoming seating or standing places at selected locations around the office. Think about how your organisation encourages people to meet and make sure this is reflected in your office layout.

Source: Kinnarps (2020–2022). Next Office® Insight online survey.



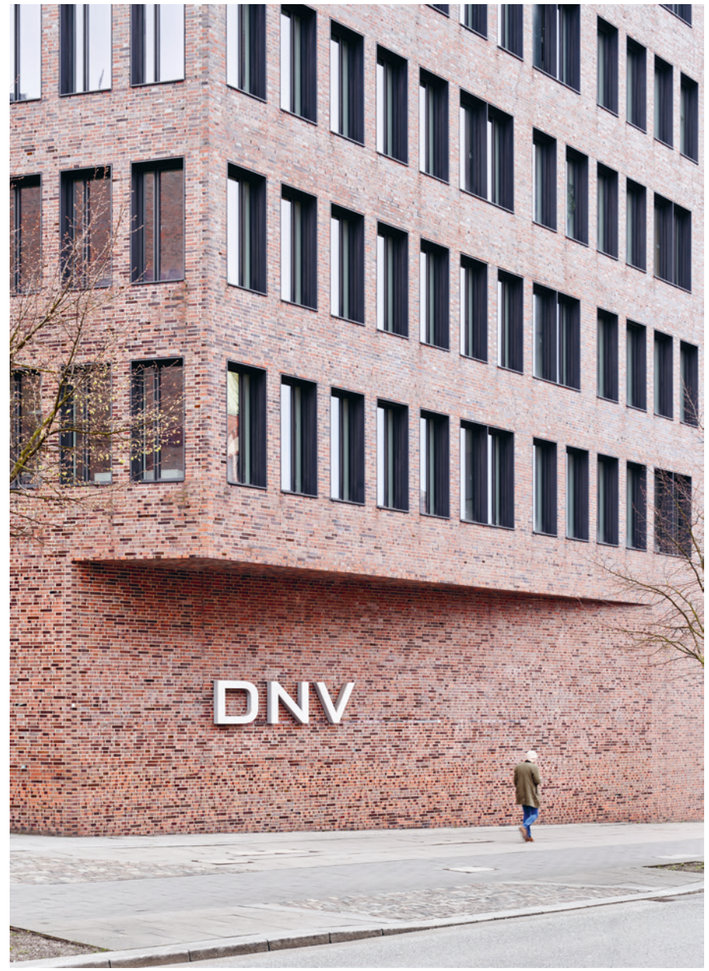


Knock on wood

Awareness of environmentally friendly interior design has increased significantly in recent years. People are more likely to make conscious choices when it comes to furniture in their working environments. It should be free from harmful chemicals and have a low carbon footprint. Sustainable wood is a highly topical issue. Lexie is one of many products from Kinnarps made of renewable FSC®-labelled wood, which guarantees responsible forestry that meets social and environmental standards. It has been designed with minimal components, all of which can be separated and recycled, which makes Lexie circular and sustainable in the long term – both environmentally and economically.

With its undulating shape and high seating comfort, the compact *Pax* chair – shown here in one of its many versions – invites you to sit down. The *Tinnef* table, with its recycled plastic tabletop, offers space for your things.

Brilliant insights



A dream location in central Hamburg, an amazing view – and a pleasant new interior designed by Kinnarps. It's no wonder that DNV staff have returned to the office.

TEXT: ANTJE STROHKARK
PHOTO: ANNIKA FEUSS

When the pandemic was over, DNV contacted its framework agreement partner Kinnarps. There was a feeling that the German head office in Hamburg was no longer fit for purpose – it was proving difficult to get colleagues back into the office. Both the furniture and the layout felt outdated, with grey colours and cell offices with no place for spontaneous meetings.

The office is in a prime location in HafenCity Hamburg. The new district has been under development in the old port since the early 2010s, a dynamic waterside area where 40,000 people now work – 800 of whom work at DNV.

The office building at Brooktorkai 18, designed by the architectural office gmp, was completed in 2010. Proximity to the port is an important factor, as DNV is a well-known global operator in the shipping industry. From here you also have a view of the historic Speicherstadt area and "Elphi", the concert hall that's become the city's new landmark. While the magnificent view is good for the well-being of the employees, it's not enough to create a perfect office. The view on the inside needs to work too.

KINNARPS WAS TASKED BY DNV to design a more sustainable, pleasant and flexible working environment. The team went to work by studying the original drawings, conducting a noise measurement and engaging employees in the process. The new interior design was presented and evaluated in workshops, with Kinnarps' interior designers on site. One group also had the opportunity to test a range of different furniture.

The project was completed in 2023 – and both employees and managers have been very satisfied with the outcome.

"Everything went so smoothly," says buyer Esther Zopf about the collaboration with Kinnarps.

"Together we've achieved a fantastic result in terms of both functionality and aesthetics."



The lounge, in an inviting earthy colour scheme, has been designed for different ways of meeting. The *Fendo* chair is teamed with the *Centrum* table and *Monolite* sofa. The playful *Mr T* stool offers active sitting.



The *Serie P* height-adjustable desk makes it possible to switch between sitting and standing. On the wall is the *Oktav* sound absorber, partly made from textile waste from Kinnarps' factories.

Since its launch in 2001, the *Plus* task chair, with its superb ergonomics and sustainable design, has been sold in more than two million units. Easy-to-replace chair components make repairs and aesthetic updates possible.



"Together we've achieved a fantastic result in terms of both functionality and aesthetics."

The award-winning *Embrace* family of chairs comes in many designs, here as a high bar stool. By the wall, seating options have been created using the *Deli* chair and the *Uni* table.

FACTS

Client: DNV
Location: Hamburg, Germany
Number of **employees:** 800
Area: 14,000 m²
Completed: 2023



THERE'S NOW a completely different atmosphere of harmony. Employees have returned to an office optimally adapted for hybrid working. What used to be small kitchen spaces have been transformed into extended lounges on each floor. This is where the partially upholstered *Deli* chairs and *Embrace* bar stools can be found. Hybrid meetings can be held with strategically placed screens in other meeting and conference rooms. On the ground floor, there's a lounge for recreation, socialising and meetings. The upholstered *Fendo* chairs, the *Monolite* sofa, the *Mr T* stools and the *Tinnef* tables invite a variety of conversations.

A good acoustic environment has been ensured by using acoustic panels, carefully selected materials and interior design. The *Series P* height adjustable desks are airily arranged in different groups and can be reserved in advance using a booking tool.

A new era has also begun in document management. In the past, filing cabinets and movable pedestals were common sights. Now everyone has a compartment in one of Kinnarps' open storage units from the *Space* range. If you need to move something, you can use a Kinnarps-designed storage bag or drawer.

The palette of warm green and blue hues blended with white has been carefully thought out. Esther Zopf, who was involved in the development, explains:

"Natural colours have a positive impact on well-being and concentration. They also symbolise the sky, the ground and the water in our DNV logo. Kinnarps' interior designers have translated this into furniture and materials in a very attractive way."

SUSTAINABILITY WAS ALSO central to the assignment. Not least because DNV offers sustainable solutions to its customers and has strict sustainability goals for its own operations. Accordingly, the choice of furniture, rugs and lighting was based on clearly defined criteria.

"Having a framework agreement with Kinnarps made things easier for us," reports Esther Zopf.

"We knew that Kinnarps is at the forefront of sustainability. This was a good fit with our specifications." ✸

"The palette of warm green and blue hues blended with white has been carefully thought out."

3x products

Ergonomic furniture for a sustainable working environment.

Embrace bar stool



Plus task chair



Fendo chair

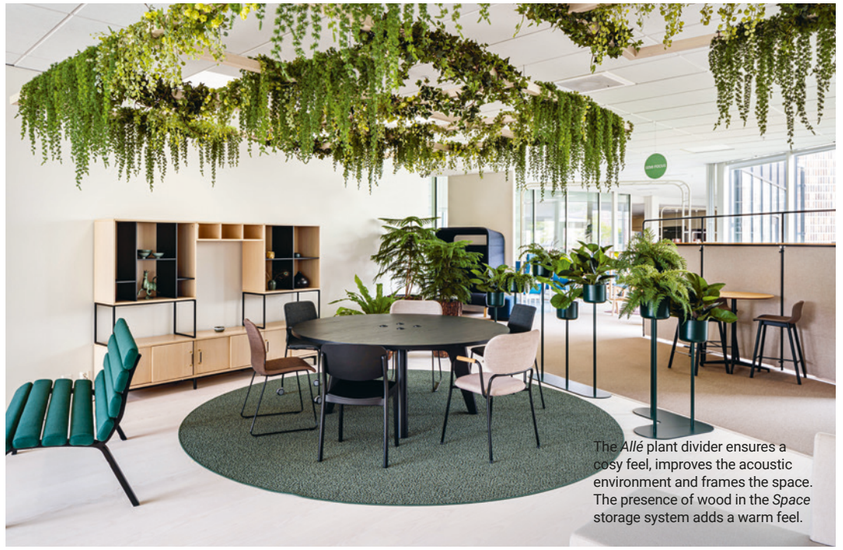


All natural

How should we design to feel better at work? Biophilic design is the answer – a technique for bringing natural elements, such as sunlight and greenery, indoors.

TEXT: JOHANNA WALDEN PHOTO: MATTIAS HAMRÉN

An interior design with earthy colours and a view featuring natural components are examples of biophilic design elements.



The *Allé* plant divider ensures a cosy feel, improves the acoustic environment and frames the space. The presence of wood in the *Space* storage system adds a warm feel.

Greenery makes us calmer, healthier and helps us think better – even indoors. Biophilic design is the name of an interior design technique that brings nature into our built spaces. While the concept has existed since the 1960s, it has become increasingly important in architecture and interior design in recent years. From having been something added to the workplace as a finishing touch, greenery is now something we plan right from the start.

The fact that biophilic design is truly beneficial is supported by modern research. A number of studies show that contact with nature can improve our cognitive functions, reduce stress and facilitate recovery. According to the *Human Spaces* report (2015), natural elements indoors can increase our productivity by six per cent – and increase creativity and well-being by 15 per cent.

"Knowledge about the way nature affects humans is an important element in our product development," reports Jenny Hörberg, Director Global Range & Design at Kinnarps.

Grow is a good example. A plant holder available in several different finishes which makes it easy to add greenery to offices, schools and care facilities.

"Plants also affect the acoustics in a space, since foliage has a diffusing effect and reflects the sound waves in different directions. This creates a pleasant acoustic environment," explains Jenny Hörberg.

As a technique, biophilic design is divided into two parts, the first of which consists of shapes that directly reflect nature. Water, daylight and plants are key components in this respect. The latter can be integrated into the space in a variety of ingenious ways. In room dividers, ceilings, walls – or in the form of green oases that form cosy room-in-rooms.

Indirect or symbolic elements can also be used to create a sense of nature. As patterns, colours, pictures and videos. Organic shapes that resist straight lines and right angles are typical of biophilic design.

The second dimension concerns the experience of the place as a whole. This is obviously something we experience with all our senses, including touch. "That's why you should also consider the choice of materials in your interior design," says Christina Wiklund, Colour, Material & Finish Manager at Kinnarps.

"Veneer, for instance, is a natural and tactile material that feels warm and soft to the touch. We simply like to touch it and feel good doing it." ✸



Grow

6x biophilic design elements

1
COLOUR
Earthy, close-to-nature colours have a special effect on our ability to recover.

2
SUNLIGHT
Promotes vitality, health and sleep quality. Ideally, you should never be more than three metres from a window.

3
VIEW
People have a special preference for views, especially if they contain natural features and greenery.

4
NATURAL SHAPES AND PATTERNS
Shapes and patterns associated with nature, such as trees, leaves, shells, spirals, tubes, ovals, domes and vaults, have a positive impact on us.

5
SENSORY VARIATION
Our survival has always depended on our ability to coordinate all our senses. This explains why sensory variation, such as different types of materials and shapes, in interior spaces contributes to well-being.

6
PLANTS
Plants are fundamental to our existence. Adding plants to the built environment promotes happiness, satisfaction, well-being and productivity.



The solution? Next Office®!



More employees, same space, better office. Sounds impossible? When Kinnarps' Next Office® workplace analysis helped Elgiganten create an inspiring workplace in existing premises, the result was exactly what they were hoping for.

TEXT: FIA FJELDE PHOTO: MATTIAS HAMRÉN

The number of employees in the office had increased and temporary office solutions with sometimes too little and sometimes too much space had started to erode job satisfaction and efficiency. The space also discouraged interaction between different departments. In order to solve the situation at Elgiganten Logistik, Technical Manager Andreas Alm requested help from Henrik Axell and Kinnarps' Next Office® workplace analysis.

"We were not in a good place – our workspace felt unpleasant and hindered rather than helped our colleagues. Nevertheless, we felt the premises had potential; we just needed help to make the most of them," reports Andreas Alm.

Henrik Axell, Head of Workplace Strategy at Kinnarps, is in charge of Next Office®, Kinnarps' tool for creating business adapted offices.

"It easily happens that you just keep adding extra desks as your workforce grows. But if you want an office that works over time, you also need to optimise the space to ensure that all the functions you need are available," says Henrik.

This is where the analysis tool Next Office®can make a difference. Since Kinnarps then enters early in the process, you get the best conditions for creating the right environment for each individual customer. Combined with the experience gained from over 400 workplace analyses, this makes Next Office® an invaluable tool for creating long-term solutions.

"Obviously, we tackled the practical challenges of the overcrowding at Elgiganten, but we were also able to do so much more, such as creating spaces that promote creativity and a sense of togetherness, which actually cultivate the company culture in a good way," says Henrik.

IN THE SPRING OF 2020, Kinnarps' workplace strategists kicked off the analysis by guiding the management team to establish the vision, goals and framework of the project. What was the purpose of the office? What happened on a typical working day? Which functions were missing? Through several lectures, workshops and surveys, the staff were also involved in jointly mapping the organisation's work patterns, capturing ideas and challenges. A current status analysis of the office was carried out, based on factors such as productivity and creativity, collaboration, well-being, as well as acoustics, light and air quality.

"The workplace analysis laid the foundation for the entire project.

"If you want an office that works over time, you also need to optimise the space to ensure that all the functions you need are available."

HENRIK AXELL, HEAD OF WORKPLACE STRATEGY AT KINNARPS

FACTS

Client: Elgiganten Logistics
Location: Jönköping, Sweden
Number of employees: approx. 130
Area: 1,300 m²
Number of floors: 3
Completed: 2022



There's a mix of high and low seating in the work lounge. Here you can grab a cup of coffee with colleagues, sit down to read a few emails or have a short meeting.

Elgiganten's figures are clear, with positive ratings in all areas. With Next Office® you get data both before and after the change, which makes it easy to follow up on how the new working environments are working.



We understood that we needed to create understanding and engagement among all employees in order to succeed with our change journey," says Andreas.

The shared vision for Elgiganten was to become an attractive employer whose employees were involved in influencing and developing the business. That the workplace was inspiring and a meeting space that gave better opportunities for more effective collaboration and that the working environment would help to ensure increased job satisfaction and well-being.

"We also wanted our employees to feel proud of us as an employer," says Andreas.

During the autumn of 2020, Kinnarps presented a layout, a design concept and an interior design solution based on the results of the analysis and the management's vision, goals and framework. In 2021, the premises were rebuilt before it was time to implement the solution in spring 2022.

"In light of the trend for remote working during and after the pandemic, the office needs to provide something more than just a workstation. It must feel appealing to come into the office," Henrik explains.



Henrik Axell, Head of Workplace Strategy at Kinnarps

The employees at Elgiganten Logistik had the opportunity to work from home two days a week and were expected to be in the office three days a week. In the new business adapted space, the office is divided into three zones intended for different levels of focused work. In the high-focus zone, you work in soundproofed rooms. If you need semi-focus, you sit in screened-off but not totally silent spaces. In the active zone, which in this case is a work

"Among our customers, we're seeing a clear trend that employers want to move from traditional coffee break rooms to dynamic hubs – work lounges."

HENRIK AXELL, HEAD OF WORKPLACE STRATEGY AT KINNARPS

Timeline – the analysis leads the way

2020 SPRING
The workplace analysis is carried out.

2020 SUMMER
The results of the analysis are compiled and presented to Elgiganten.

2020 AUTUMN
A layout, a design concept and an interior design solution are developed, based on the results of the final report.

2021 FULL YEAR
The premises are rebuilt.

2022 SPRING
Kinnarps implements the solution in Elgiganten's new premises and conducts an evaluation.

"The best thing is that everyone thinks it's more fun to go to work now. And then it really feels like we've succeeded."

ANDREAS ALM, TECHNICAL MANAGER AT ELGIGANTEN LOGISTIK

lounge, there's positive and inspiring energy from conversations and other sounds.

"The brilliant thing about Elgiganten was that, despite more employees, we managed to fit all these functions into the same space and create a much more vibrant office where people from different departments can now meet and exchange experiences," says Henrik.

Tell us more about how you can strengthen togetherness in an office.

"We work with something called holistic ergonomics, which means that we look at the big picture – physically, organisationally and socially. An office is so much more than just space and furniture: it doesn't matter how ergonomic your chair is if you're not happy at work," says Henrik Axell. "That's why it's important to have spaces that are welcoming and inspiring for everyone, and to ensure a good flow in the office."

What were your proudest moments during this change management journey?

"After each completed project, we follow up on our work. During the analysis phase, we ask employees to give the workplace a rating, which in this case was four, but after we redesigned the office it received a seven, almost twice as high," says Henrik.

"The best thing is that everyone thinks it's more fun to go to work now. Then it really feels like we've succeeded," says Andreas. ✱



Andreas Alm, Technical Manager at Elgiganten Logistik



LET KINNARPS GUIDE YOU

Four steps to your next office

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS
DEFINE THE END RESULT
The Next Office® needs analysis lays the foundation for how your office spaces should be designed to support employees and the organisation the best way possible.

INTERIOR DESIGN SOLUTION
FROM IDEA TO ACTION
We help you translate the needs analysis results into a design concept, layout and tangible drawing. We review ergonomics, functions and sustainability.

INTERIOR DESIGN SOLUTION

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION
INTRODUCING THE POTENTIAL
Through our own efficient logistics and delivery system, we deliver and install your interior completely according to drawing. We help you introduce and implement environments, furniture, ergonomics and working methods so that everyone understands the potential.

FOLLOW-UP
KNOWING IS BETTER THAN GUESSING
Based on your needs analysis, you can then continuously follow up on how your office is working and identify whether your needs have changed.

FOLLOW-UP

The AI revolution is here

In the near future, our workplaces may function like big iPhones, connecting the physical world with the digital. Henrik Byström, one of the founders of AI Lab Sweden, explains what AI might mean for the offices of tomorrow.

TEXT: SALKA HALLSTRÖM

Soon AI will take over, they say. What will this mean for our workplaces? A huge change for the better, according to AI expert Henrik Byström – provided we play our cards right. After a long career as a manager at Microsoft, Henrik has launched AI Lab Sweden, the company that helps organisations use AI in a responsible way to develop their business. He argues that AI can shape smarter workplaces, where technology works for us rather than against us.

"Within ten years, our offices will be AI-integrated in various ways, without us giving it a second thought. And our ways of working will change completely. While the physical office won't disappear, it will work in a new way – like a huge iPhone with larger elements of the metaverse, a virtual universe."

First of all, what is AI?

"A collective term for different technologies and applications based on machine learning and large amounts of data. We're already growing increasingly dependent on AI, which is why regulations and ethics are important factors to consider. Insights and analysis are critical to using technology responsibly. And we have a huge transformation ahead of us. Technology will not only change the physical workplace, but also how people interact and develop. The pandemic has accelerated that journey, even though it had started long before."

How exactly will our workplaces change?

"The most immediate change is that we'll all get access to a personal assistant, who can act as a 'co-pilot' with integrated technology to facilitate the work process. Another aspect is the connection to the physical workplace. In the real estate sector, for example, everything is interconnected. From energy and escalators to lifts. Data is continuously generated in the building and with the help of AI you can gain insights, forecast and visualise the physical appearance of a room. This enables you to optimise spaces, make sustainable choices and create a better experience."

How exactly?

"Take the 'commute regret' phenomenon that we're now experiencing: people arriving at work only to discover that very few of their colleagues are there. These isolated workers may be spread over several floors, so they aren't able to see or interact with each other. AI could help you find solutions for gathering these people more efficiently and improving the working environment."



"With the help of AI you can gain insights, forecast and visualise the physical appearance of a room."

How will AI be integrated into the physical working environment?

"In many ways. One is to optimise your property by combining other technologies, such as location tracking and Microsoft 365 services. A sensor could indicate occupied workplaces, which can be seen by others in a system. Meeting room bookings could be customised based on whether the participants wish to participate in person or remotely. Smart cameras in conference rooms can create an inclusive experience by focusing on the people speaking during a remote meeting. AI can also be used to identify discrepancies, transcribe speech into text, recognise images and translate language."

Should we be afraid of AI?

"No. But we ought to have respect for it, just like with all other technology. When the car arrived, we realised that we needed to introduce seat belts and similar safety measures. The same goes for AI. It's an extremely capable technology that we need to regulate and take a stance on."

What's the most common myth about AI?

"Maybe that AI can do everything at the touch of a button. Instead of speculating, we should try to get to grips with the subject. The more you listen, learn and experiment, the more knowledge you obtain." ✸



Welcoming and inspiring spaces. *Space* storage solutions and *Fields* sofas with a high back create a clear passageway through the office.

Flexible future

A new interior attracted staff back. Head of People Development Jessica Jokinen tells us about the transformation at Food Folk's office in Helsinki, where well-being has literally been built into the walls.

TEXT: LISELOTT BERGHOLM-SLOTTE
PHOTO: TIMO KAUPPILA



"Even though we're allowed to work flexibly, we still want our staff to mainly choose to work at the office."

Creative meeting space. The round rug defines the area with the *Vagabond* project table and *Motus* stool. The ends serve as noticeboards for pinning up pictures, messages or sketches. Drawers, a whiteboard or plants can be added for a customised look.



When Food Folk in Helsinki switched to hybrid working, it became clear that their premises were no longer fit for purpose. The staff just didn't enjoy spending time there.
The workplace on Paciusgatan has now been redesigned from the ground up to suit an activity-based way of working. The new interior design solution promotes both collaborative work and well-being among the employees. A sense of calm and harmony is evident throughout the workplace.

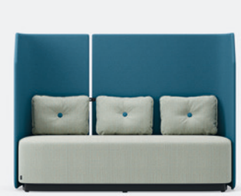
The management team realised the importance of engaging their staff in the transformation from the start. So they hired Kinnarps' advisers to ensure all their wishes and needs were met.

"The collaboration was very simple and professional. And Kinnarps opened our eyes to new things. This resulted in flexible and inspiring premises that support the modern demand for hybrid working," says Head of People Development Jessica Jokinen, and continues:

"Even though we're allowed to work flexibly, we still want our staff to mainly choose to work at the office. Now we're much more inclined to be here."



The lobby in a tranquil colour scheme, with the cosy *Rho* sofa group in focus, welcomes employees and guests.



Fields sofa



Rho armchair

3x products

Functionality and aesthetics hand in hand. Inviting furniture that helps to ensure an attractive working environment.



Vibe desktop screen



The desks are equipped with *Plus* and *Capella* task chairs, which both offer the best sitting ergonomics. The *Vibe* desktop screen helps to ensure a better sound environment and working without distractions.

FACTS

Client: Food Folk
Location: Helsinki, Finland
Number of employees: 47
Area: 820 m²
Completed: 2023

THE OFFICE is now designed as a circle, with a variety of flexible spaces, designed in calming colours and featuring beautiful details. Previously, all employees had a dedicated workstation, whereas now there are a variety of different spaces to share, including a total of 30 workstations.

A lot of focus has been placed on staff well-being and the ability to vary working positions. Height-adjustable tables allow staff to switch between standing and sitting positions.

"In an activity-based space, you change your working position more often during the day. You can also use the company's education centre one floor down, which is sometimes accessible," reports Jessica Jokinen.

THE FURNITURE FROM KINNARPS has been carefully chosen to ensure that the interiors are as pleasant and flexible as possible. In the Nordic-inspired entrance, you're greeted by a light colour scheme and the cosy *Rho* sofa group. The workstations have been equipped with the ergonomic *Plus* and *Capella* task chairs, and the conference room features *Primo* meeting chairs.

A pleasant acoustic environment has been achieved with the help of the *Vibe* desktop screen and the *Fields* sofa group, with a high back, ideal for separate meetings. Plants help to ensure well-being and a better acoustic environment and have been allowed to take up a lot of space in the office. They have been placed in strategic locations in the *Allé* room divider.

So what do the staff think about the new office? Jessica Jokinen reports overwhelmingly positive reactions.

"Even people who didn't spend much time in the office before have found their way back. It has been wonderful to see people engaging in spontaneous discussions and eating lunch together - above all, they energise each other! I'm happy and proud that, with the help of Kinnarps' professional expertise, we can offer such a fantastic working environment." ✸

80 years of success



Henry and Sibylla.

For more than 80 years, Kinnarps has been synonymous with high quality, ergonomics, sustainability and innovative design. But how did the success story of this family business actually start? Two of the heirs, Henry and Sibylla, share the inside story.

TEXT: FIA FJELDE PHOTO: KARL NORDLUND

"Curiosity and problem solving are what drive us forward. Always with customer needs in focus."



Sibylla, youngest member of the family and chairman of the board Kinnarps Holding AB.

Since 1942, Kinnarps has been delivering successful interior design solutions. Nevertheless, it has a long history of overcoming challenges. Like the tonsillitis that struck down founder Jarl, which affected his kidneys and threatened chronic impairment. Or the time cash flow issues meant they couldn't afford to pay their workers' wages. But an old wives' cure put Jarl on the road to recovery and the wages were paid by selling the dining room furniture. As Jarl always said: "Standing still is moving backwards", so struggling on in spite of setbacks was just as obvious as involving children, cousins and other relatives to keep the company going.

"At first, it was about survival and all resources were put to good use, not least us young children, were a good help. Every day after school, my brother Assar and I were at the factory helping to glue the compartments to the drawer fittings and preparing the factory for the arrival of the workers the next day," recalls Henry Jarlsson, chairman of Kinnarps AB and former CEO.

As the youngest member of the family, little sister Sibylla tagged along on visits to suppliers and recalls family holidays with the dual purpose of developing the business. It's fair to say that the family lives and breathes Kinnarps, and although Sibylla worked as a teacher for a while, she has also been an engaged board member for many years now.

"This farmer's mentality – being frugal, finding solutions and never giving up – is the foundation of the company. And these are values that still exist today," says Sibylla Jacobsson.

IN 1942, Jarl and Evy Andersson founded the furniture company Kinnarps, which was originally a carpentry factory. Their sons Henry, Ola and Assar were instrumental in developing production, data and transportation in the following years. And daughter Sibylla has always taken a special interest in safeguarding corporate culture and communication.

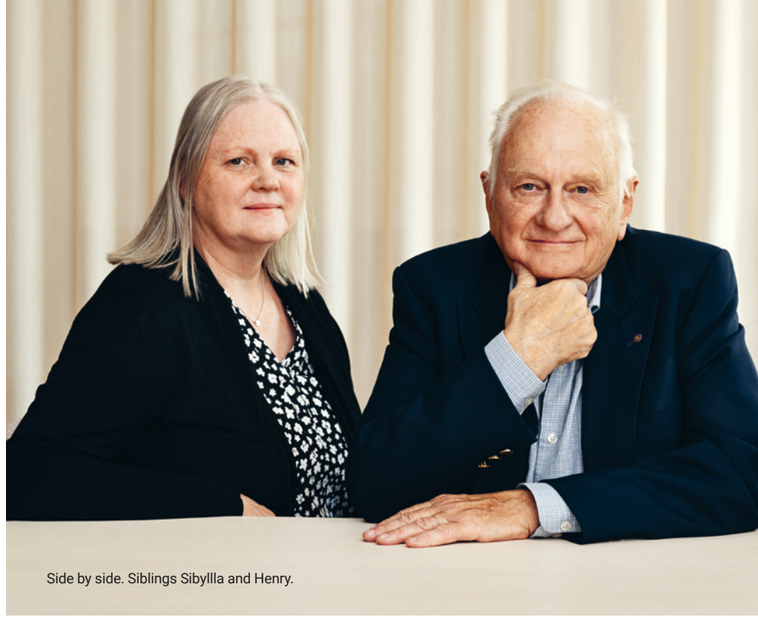
CELEBRATING
Eight Decades
OF INNOVATIVE DESIGN
EST. 1942

Kinnarps is Europe's leading supplier of total interior solutions and workplace design for offices, schools and care facilities. The furniture is characterised by high quality, innovative design, low environmental impact and long life cycles. The company has been family-owned since the start in 1942, with manufacturing in Sweden and operations in more than 40 countries.



Henry Jarlsson, chairman of Kinnarps AB and former CEO.

"Our environmental awareness has been in our DNA since the beginning."



Side by side. Siblings Sibyllla and Henry.

But in order to understand Kinnarps' history, we need to look at some crucial events in the company's development. In 1952, Jarl and Evy implemented a strategic change by focusing on office furniture, launching a catalogue and a dedicated product range.

"If you're not competitive, you won't be successful, so Jarl and Evy shifted focus from craftsmanship and made-to-order goods to serial production. And the reason for this was that they lost a government contract and had to rethink. This resulted in hundreds of orders that ensured the survival of their company," says Henry.

"This also led to the development of the production line and the purchase of machines." It took a few years, but eventually we were more efficient than all our competitors and won the government back as a customer," adds Sibylla.

BY TAKING on more work and solving problems internally instead of relying on external consultants or solutions, Kinnarps has always been at the cutting edge and found innovative ways to optimise its operations. That stubbornness is a recurring theme throughout the company's history. Another important milestone was reached in 1959, when Kinnarps began using its own vehicles for transportation instead of the railways. This not only made deliveries more reliable and faster but also provided a significant competitive advantage.

"We simply flipped things around and let transportation determine production, so that we could always deliver in five days. It was incredibly complex to make that work, but it was eventually possible and no-one else has a similar system," notes Henry.

Early environmental awareness also led to new innovations. As early as the 1970s, they realised that emissions were unsustainable in the long run and started testing different methods in order to develop a solvent-free lacquer.

"Not many people know this, but we managed to develop a method whereby we reduced our emissions from about 160 tonnes to 10 tonnes of solvents per year. This technique went on to become the industry standard, but not until the 1990s, so we'd switched long before it eventually became a requirement. That says something about our drive to constantly develop," says Henry.

How have you succeeded in meeting new needs, requirements and trends over the years?

"It has a lot to do with being responsive, and we've been that right from the start. Jarl was an excellent salesman who was phenomenal at listening to his customers, and this has evolved into the more complex task we now carry out with the help of our Next Office®, Next Education® and Next Care® analysis tools. Instead of starting with the product, we've always started with the needs and the solution, and then set up good production that's as efficient and economical as possible."

What sets Kinnarps apart from its competitors?

"In my opinion, there aren't many similarities. Our competitors mostly buy products outside Sweden, and assemble and deliver them here. We have our own factories and production in Sweden, so we have control over the entire chain," says Henry.

Kinnarps is still a family business, on a much larger scale, of course. But rest assured that it is still run with the same authentic entrepreneurial spirit of independent strategies and continuous development.

The rest, as they say, is history. ✸

Kinnarps timeline

1942
Evy and Jarl Andersson start their company in Kinnarp, Sweden.

1974
Established in the UK. New markets were gradually added to the Kinnarps portfolio in the following decades. Now operating in over 40 countries.

1980
Kinnarps launches a solvent-free UV lacquer to be able to offer hard, durable surfaces without harming the planet.

2000
The Next Office® service is launched. This enables Kinnarps to offer a needs analysis that helps the customer map out their needs and work patterns.

TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE
Kinnarps is continuing to develop furniture and interior design solutions that make a positive difference to people's lives.



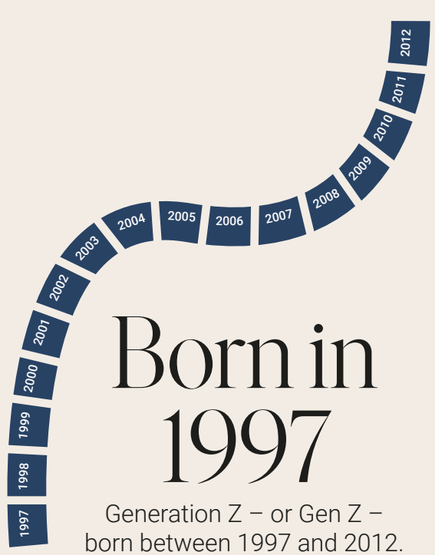
THE FIRST DIGITAL GENERATION

Gen Z is the first generation to grow up with no memory of a world without the internet. They've never used analogue camera film, a CD player, a paper map or a floppy disk.

New kids on the block

Gen Z's entry into the workplace has brought new expectations, hopes and needs. What does this actually mean for today's employers?

TEXT: ELIN AF KLINTBERG ILLUSTRATION: MAJA NORRBY



Born in 1997

Generation Z – or Gen Z – born between 1997 and 2012.

THE FIRST GLOBAL GENERATION

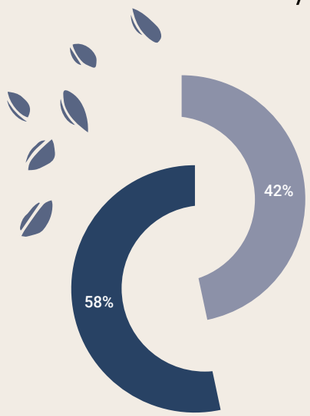
Gen Z has been called the 'first global generation', growing up in a society where global content and information is generally accessible and you're just one click away from shopping goods anywhere in the world. This results in nomadic careers and new ways of earning money online.

27

Generation Z will account for 27 per cent of the workforce by 2025.

50/50

While pay has been the most important factor in the labour market for previous generations, Gen Z places a lower value on pay. When faced with a choice between accepting a better-paid but dull job or a more interesting job that pays less, Gen Z was split evenly.



Around 42 percent of Gen Z workers value work-life balance.

A SUSTAINABLE WORKPLACE

Diversity and inclusion mean a lot to Gen Z. They also want their employers to care about the environment, and demand high standards for ethics and transparency. They despise greenwashing and require a genuine commitment to fight climate change and protect the planet.

MOVE AROUND

Based on a survey of US students, Gen Z will change jobs at least 10 times between the ages of 18 and 34, which is higher than previous generations. Creating attractive working environments will be more important than ever for employers.



Workplaces with a balanced noise level promote well-being and success. It's a matter of knowing how noise works and how it affects us.

Work peace with the right sound environment

A poor acoustic environment not only leads to frustration but can also affect both productivity and creativity in the workplace. We guide you on how to furnish for good acoustics, regardless of the layout or type of office.

TEXT: JOHANNA WALDEN PHOTO: LINUS HELLSTRÖM

The sound environment in the office affects both how we feel and perform. Everyone has probably been in a situation where disturbing ambient noise made it difficult to concentrate. A poor acoustic environment not only leads to frustration but can also affect productivity and general well-being at the workplace. So investing in good acoustics is an important part of the whole when designing office interiors, regardless of the layout or type of office. Workplaces with a balanced noise level promote well-being and success. It's a matter of knowing how noise works and how it affects us.

THE BEST PROSPECTS FOR a good acoustic environment are achieved by focusing on room acoustics at an early stage of the planning phase. Equipping the premises with acoustic ceilings and sound-absorbing flooring is always a worthwhile investment. You can further enhance the acoustic environment with upholstered furniture, sound absorbers, curtains, rugs, sound-absorbing tabletops and furniture with castors. Choosing soft materials also helps to ensure a cosy feel and promotes calm behaviour.

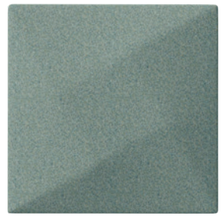
In rooms with hard surfaces, the sound bounces back and forth, with a long reverberation time. Reverberation time is a measure of the echo in a room and can be measured by, for example, clapping your hands loudly and then measuring how long it takes for the sound to fade away. People talking are the main cause of high noise levels and depending on what a room is used for and how it is designed, different reverberation times are recommended. A reverberation time of 0.4–0.6 is a good benchmark. Generally speaking, the more important it is to understand speech, the shorter the reverberation time should be.

Many office spaces should be able to function for different types of activities, both solo and collaborative work. This means that you need to be able to customise the interior design to maintain a good acoustic environment for all activities. It's also important to divide the office into zones for different degrees of focus, with clear rules on how to use these different areas. Open spaces can be divided into smaller zones using screen walls, storage solutions, furniture with high backs or textiles to limit the propagation of sound. ✱

Different ways to influence sound

A poor acoustic environment can be caused by several factors. Noise from inside the building, such as talking and bustle from surrounding areas, scraping noise from furniture, or cupboards opening and closing. Other distracting noises can be the humming of fans, technology and lights, or the sound of lifts. Disturbing external noises may include traffic noise.





Oktav sound absorber

Diffuse

FRAGMENT AND CHANGE THE DIRECTION OF THE SOUND WAVES. By using bookshelves, plants, screen walls or storage solutions with irregular shapes.

Reduce

REDUCE OR BLOCK OUT NOISE. By using sound-absorbing tabletops, rugs, curtains, castors on furniture, screen walls and soft-closing drawers.



Monroe meeting chair



The *Vibe* family includes sound-absorbing and noise-suppressing partition, wall, ceiling and desktop screens that offer endless opportunities for good ergonomics and a harmonious whole.



Space range of storage is available in a wide choice of modules, colours and materials, which can be combined as needed. Shown here with added sound absorbers.



High-focus zone. *Vibe* booths, together with ceiling-mounted sound absorbers and screening storage units, signal that this is a space for high-focus solo work.

Absorb

DECREASE NOISE. Sound absorption is an important concept in room acoustics. Sound absorbers, such as upholstered furniture, as well as wall, ceiling, table and partition screens, are used to prevent noise spreading further in the room. This shortens the reverberation time in a room, which helps to ensure a better acoustic environment. When the energy in asound wave is absorbed due to heat losses,the sound is muted. In order to absorb human speech, a sound absorber needs to be at least 40 mm thick.



Deep Forest sound absorber

Fields range of easy chairs, pouffes and sofas in different finishes help to ensure a good acoustic environment. A high back creates a personal calm zone.



"Good acoustics in the workplace are not about creating an absolutely silent office, but rather about balancing noise levels and finding suitable sound environments for all types of activities."

Block

BLOCK SOUND FROM GOING FROM ONE LOCATION TO ANOTHER. Through walls in a room or walls blocking traffic noise from outside.



A place to sit down. An oasis in shades of blue offers several different seating options.

Design & ergonomics

Join us on a visit to Tour Alto, a unique glass skyscraper in Paris. Fujitsu's elegant office has an interior design solution courtesy of Kinnarps, a choice that matched the high specifications for design and ergonomics.

TEXT: MORGANE GUILLEM FERREIRA PHOTO: ALEXIS PAOLI

Tour Alto is a 38-storey skyscraper in the La Défense district of Paris. An in-demand location with an unrivalled range of services and spaces for hosting, meetings and entertainment. The building, with a curved facade of 3,800 glass panels, has been environmentally certified to the best standards and was completed at the height of the pandemic. The Japanese IT company Fujitsu moved its head office here in July 2021.

Fujitsu occupies one and a half floors in Tour Alto, with a total area of 2,220 square metres. When choosing the interior design, the criteria for design and ergonomics were high on the agenda, and the spaces were carefully designed to suit the company's way of working. 123 desks and several other types of work areas were needed for the 220 employees – which led Fujitsu to contact Kinnarps.

"The project started at top speed. The very next day we visited Kinnarps' showroom in Orgeval," says Anne Talagrand, HR Manager at Fujitsu France.

The Fujitsu teams in charge of the project's interior design choices were assisted by Kinnarps through guided visits to its showroom in Orgeval. On two separate visits, company representatives tried out chairs, armchairs, desks and much more in their quest for comfort. In the selection, great emphasis was placed on the choice of fabric, materials, colours, aesthetics and overall design.

For the upper floor, which mainly consists of collaborative spaces, fabrics in ochre and terracotta hues were chosen – colours that give a modern, dynamic impression. On the lower floor, Fujitsu wanted the interior design to have the feel of a zen garden with plants, as a nod to the company's Japanese culture. These spaces are intended for working in smaller groups, with interior design in shades of blue and green.

AT THE NEW workplace, Fujitsu has been able to organise evening events with its customers. These customers have been full of praise and admiration for the interior design from Kinnarps.

The employees themselves were given the opportunity to explore the new office during an opening week at the beginning of July 2021 and their feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Above all, they appreciate the homely and cosy atmosphere, the choice of colours and materials, as well as the furniture. The warm colours and wood elements were especially popular.

The solution of sit-stand desks is also appreciated by employees, as it helps them to work ergonomically and change position throughout the working day.

"The support from the Kinnarps' sales team has been top notch throughout the project! We've really appreciated their availability and responsiveness," says Anne Talagrand.

"It was a really good decision to work with Kinnarps. We're very pleased with the result." ✱

FACTS

Client: Fujitsu
Location: Paris, France
Number of employees: 220
Area: 2,220 m²
Number of workstations: 123
Completed: 2021

"The upper floor has been furnished for different types of meetings and collaboration."

Informal meeting space furnished with the *Jeffersson* armchair, *Mr T* stool and *Pond* coffee table with magazine rack.



An informal, open, colourful and bright space to share ideas. Different playful items of furniture come together, such as the *Avant* bench, *Boullée* balance ball and *Mr T* stool.

3x products

Furniture for attractive interior design solutions.



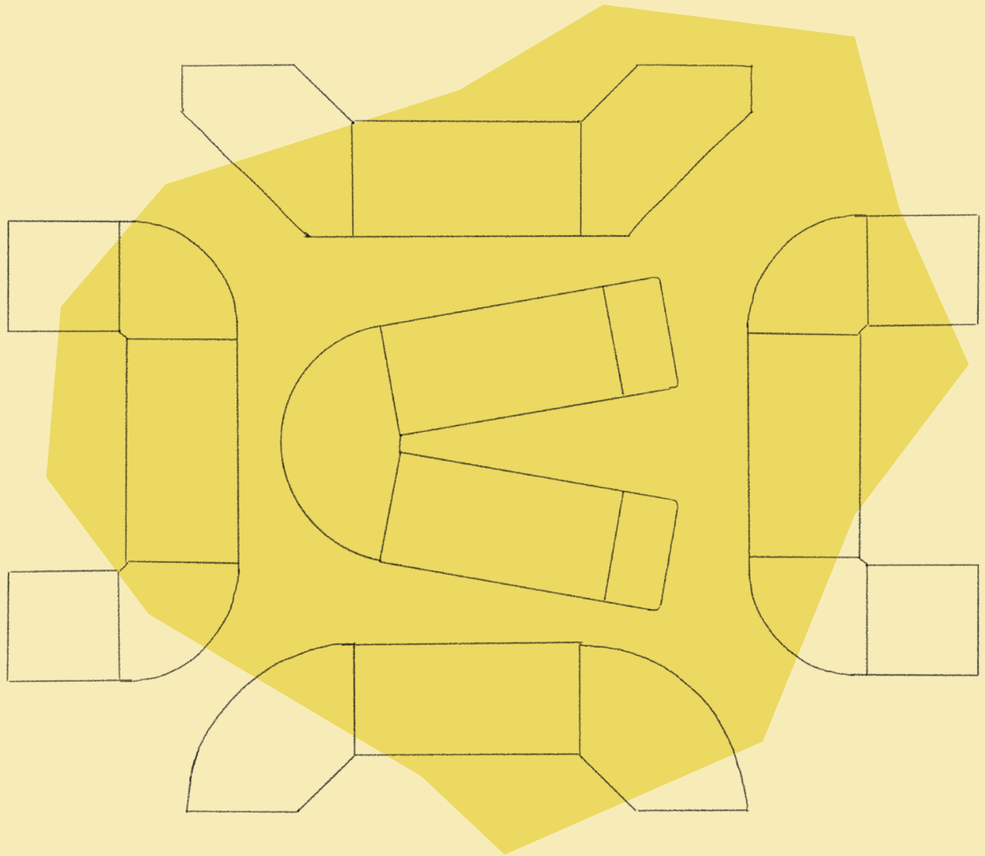
Jeffersson armchair



Avant bench



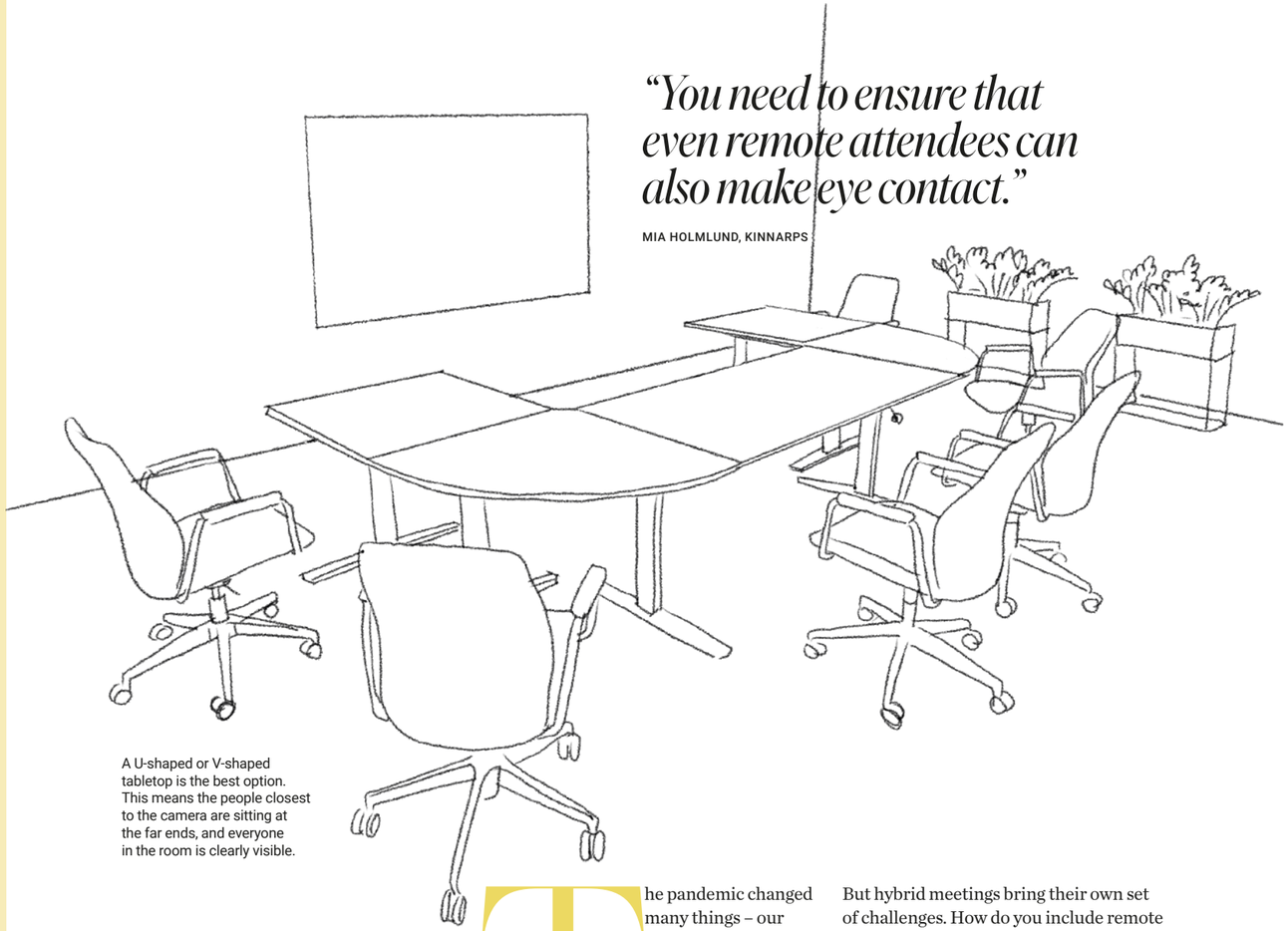
Mama armchair



Design for hybrid meetings

Hybrid meetings are here to stay. But how do you create an inclusive meeting culture with some participants attending in person and some attending remotely? We spoke to two experts on the subject: Mia Holmlund from Kinnarps and Nina Rapp from Microsoft.

TEXT: KALLE DIXELIUS PHOTO: JOHAN HULTMAN ILLUSTRATION: TINNA AHLANDER



"You need to ensure that even remote attendees can also make eye contact."

MIA HOLMLUND, KINNARPS

A U-shaped or V-shaped tabletop is the best option. This means the people closest to the camera are sitting at the far ends, and everyone in the room is clearly visible.



Mia Holmlund

The pandemic changed many things – our meeting culture in particular. Almost overnight, it became completely normal to participate in remote meetings. Teams, Zoom, Google Meet and a number of other digital tools suddenly became standard. Would we always work like this? Remotely? No more commuting, complaining about the coffee or yawning your way through a morning meeting?

That hasn't happened. When the pandemic ended, we discovered that the rumoured death of the office was greatly exaggerated. We need to meet each other in real life sometimes. Just not as often as before? Some days it's better to work from home.

Suddenly the 'hybrid meeting' concept was born. In other words, meetings where some people are in the room, while others connect via Teams or some other solution. But hybrid meetings bring their own set of challenges. How do you include remote participants? How do you maintain a creative and constructive discussion?

MIA HOLMLUND IS in charge of the office segment at Kinnarps. She underlines that the most important aspect is to make sure that all the attendees can see each other.

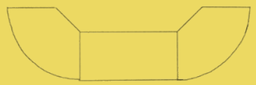
"You need to ensure that even remote attendees can also make eye contact. We don't just communicate with our voices but also with our body language, which is why it's really important that everyone attending can see each other," she explains.

Here's a situation that everyone who's attended a hybrid meeting is sure to recognise. Someone places a laptop at the short end of the table. While people attending remotely appear as giant heads on a large screen, they can only see a tiny swarm of heads along a long table. It's hard to make out exactly who's saying what. Discussions mostly involve those present in the room – the remote participants have difficulty getting into the conversation.

4x table shapes

adapted for hybrid meetings

1



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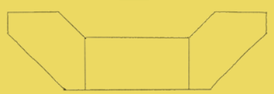

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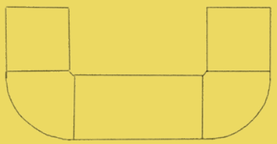

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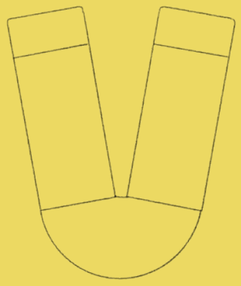


"If you can't be seen or heard, it's very difficult to be included. We talk a lot about the 'front row' concept."

NINA RAPP, MICROSOFT



BUT THERE ARE a few simple tricks. Nina Rapp is Business Area Manager for "Modern Work" at Microsoft in Sweden. This means that she's responsible for Microsoft's workplace solutions, including Teams. She agrees that the inclusion of remote participants is a major problem.

"A lot needs to be done to improve the hybrid meeting experience. We know that 43 per cent of all participants in hybrid meetings do not feel included," she notes.

According to Nina Rapp, the one essential thing that employers need in order to make sure that hybrid meetings work is technology! While it may sound simple and basic, it's overlooked by far too many employers – a staggering 90 per cent of meeting rooms in the Western world are not equipped for modern collaboration.

"If you can't be seen or heard, it's very difficult to be included. We talk a lot about the 'front row' concept. This places the remote participants in the front row, so that they're at the same level as everyone in the room and are at eye level with those on the other side of the screen. So you actually feel as if you're sitting round a table together – to avoid a 'them and us' feel."

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? As long as the technology works, is it all plain sailing? No. The interior design in the meeting room is just as important for creating a good hybrid meeting. Mia Holmlund reports that something as simple as the shape of the table matters a lot.

"A U-shaped or V-shaped tabletop is the best option. This means the people closest to the camera are sitting at the far ends. This makes it easier for remote participants to have eye contact with those sitting in the meeting room," says Mia Holmlund.

And what's the next step for ensuring the interior design is as good as possible for hybrid meetings?

"There are lots of aspects to consider. The light, for instance – what shadows it casts on the participants at the table. If the light is coming from behind, you'll hardly be visible. And think about what kind of ceiling lights you have. Recessed lights in the ceiling are good, they usually provide sufficient general lighting."

She continues:

"And what kind of chairs do you have? It's important to be able to move around the table silently to minimise distractions during the meeting. Chairs should preferably have castors. Good acoustics in the meeting room are important for the meeting. You can achieve this with the help of wall absorbers and upholstered furniture. Also look at the walls. They should be as neutral as possible – walls that are too 'busy' will steal focus."

NINA RAPP FROM Microsoft agrees that furniture and interior design play a major role in successful hybrid meetings – furniture with the right shape and functionality, combined with the right technology, goes a long way towards ensuring a good meeting for both in-person and remote participants.

"But then there's another challenge. Even if you have good technology and well-thought-out interior design, you also need to apply inclusive working methods and ways of using the tools at hand. If you have good interior design and fully functional technology, then you've set the bar higher from the start. It's then time to discuss how the meeting is conducted and which meeting culture is inclusive. We mustn't forget the human being." ✸



Nina Rapp

At Kinnarps' factory in Skillingaryd, Sweden the fabrics circulate efficiently around the ceiling and stop at several stations to undergo different stages.



PHOTO: JESPER GEORGSSON

Made in Sweden

Full control of the entire chain and proximity to product development. We visited Kinnarps' factory in Skillingaryd, Sweden, which guarantees both quality and flexibility. High-tech meets craftsmanship.

TEXT: KALLE DIXELIUS PHOTO: KARL NORDLUND



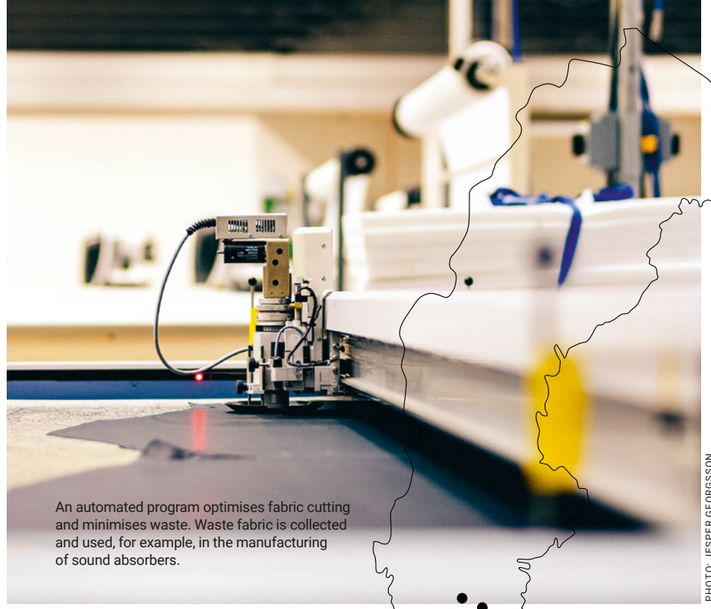






A chair takes shape. Everyone at the factory has their areas of responsibility on the journey of the different parts into a finished product.

"If we want to make updates, improvements or efficiencies, we can do it much faster."



An automated program optimises fabric cutting and minimises waste. Waste fabric is collected and used, for example, in the manufacturing of sound absorbers.

PHOTO: JESPER GEORGSSON

Made in Sweden. Kinnarps' factories are located in Sweden: Kinnarp, Skillingaryd, Jönköping and Vinslöv, as well as two units in Tranås.

Kinnarps has always chosen to concentrate its production in Sweden – something that feels particularly important in the current climate crisis. This gives full control over the entire chain and ensures decent working conditions for all employees. But there are other advantages too. This was particularly evident during the pandemic, when the transport chains caused major problems for companies with production in distant countries.

"We can manufacture in closer alignment with the actual genuine need. We don't need to take a gamble on getting a big order. If our order intake increases, we can scale up our own manufacturing process relatively quickly," says Thomas Wilsson, factory manager at Kinnarps' Skillingaryd factory.

Another advantage of having production in Sweden is the flexibility. If a product needs to be changed, we just do it. We don't need to wait until existing stock has sold out.

"If we want to make updates, improvements or efficiencies, we can do it much faster. We don't have loads of products in our warehouse which we need to sell before we can make improvements," he continues.

WORK AT SKILLINGARYD MAINLY INVOLVES upholstering furniture. There are facilities in Kinnarp, Jönköping and other locations for other production stages.

"We supply each other. We like to say that our three factories are planned and run as one. They're just geographically scattered between Jönköping, Skillingaryd and Kinnarp.

As you might expect, large parts of the factory are now automated. But at the end of the day, it's still all about genuine craftsmanship," reports Thomas Wilsson.

"Most importantly, we've automated our internal logistics. We have automated trucks, as well as systems that handle and distribute the material to the right person, at exactly the right time. But there's still a lot of what I like to call industrial craftsmanship."

He continues:

"People are needed to produce the quality that's in demand. There are no robots that can sew or upholster the details. You need human expertise and experience."

How do you view sustainability and circular processes?

"As early as the product development phase, we select materials and designs that ensure a long life cycle. Our products should be manufactured in a way that means they can be refurbished. For over a year now, we've had a department where we re-upholster our own products. This gives the product a 10-to-15-year longer life cycle." ✸



Thomas Wilsson

FACTS

Skillingaryd mostly manufactures upholstered products. The factory area is 28,000 square metres. The workforce is 240 people, about 200 of whom work on the factory floor.

Circular = sustainable?

When does a piece of furniture qualify as circular? Johanna Ljunggren, Sustainability Manager at Kinnarps, explains how a circular economy can be used for a more sustainable future.

TEXT: JOHANNA WALDEN PHOTO: JESPER GEORGSSON

Circularity is an important tool for acting resource-efficiently, but this concept is too often automatically equated with sustainability. For an item to be truly sustainable, it needs to be designed from the start to be used for a long time. For example, buying a garment, wearing it once and then donating it or driving your car long distances to visit a recycling station may be circular but not necessarily sustainable. Johanna Ljunggren, Sustainability Manager at Kinnarps, explains how circular economy can be used for a more sustainable future if used correctly.

WHEN DOES A PIECE OF FURNITURE qualify as circular? Does it qualify once it's had several owners or users? Is it most sustainable for an item of furniture to have several owners for ten years, or is it preferable for the same owner to care for and use it for fifteen years? It's important to avoid the trap of assuming you're making a sustainable choice just by choosing reused interior design. We regularly see specifications in various contracts and procurement for a certain percentage of the interior design to consist of reused items. The intention is good, but unfortunately not enough to ensure sustainable use of furniture. To make a truly sustainable choice, you need to look at a number of parameters. Firstly, it's important to ensure that the quality and material of the reused interior design are suitable for use in the specific space. Where does the furniture come from? What kind of material does it contain? Has it been refurbished and in which way? You also need to look at how long the furniture has left, for example, can it be updated, renewed or renovated further when the need arises?

FURTHERMORE, YOU NEED to question where the furniture is produced and how it's been transported. Will it be packaged in single-use material and which fuel will be used for transport? Furthermore, you should find out whether the facility that produced or renovated the furniture affords its workers decent working conditions, i.e. take social sustainability into account.

In order to ensure consistency and harmony in the interior design, it's also important to carefully plan how old and any new interior design should work together and avoid a 'musical chairs' solution that does not contribute to a healthy and pleasant working environment. Last but not least, you also need to set sustainability requirements for new interior design. This is something that all too often is overlooked! Require that the new interior is produced in a sustainable way with non-toxic materials, that it is designed to live a long life and is prepared to be updated, renewed or renovated when the time comes.

In other words, equating circularity with reused interior design is taking the easy

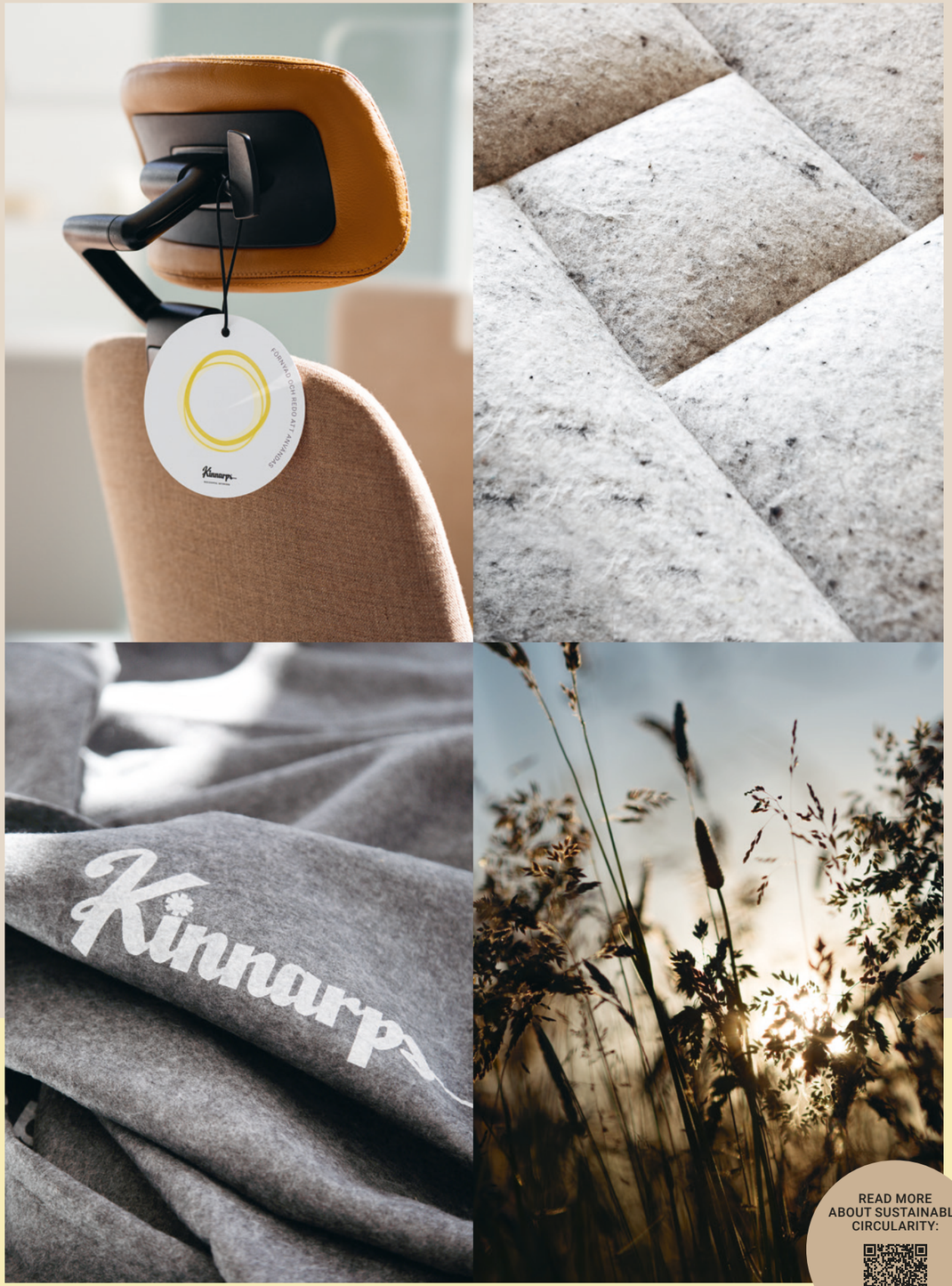
"The longer the lifespan of a piece of furniture, the lower the environmental impact from a usage perspective. That's why we focus on creating furniture with the potential for a long life."

Sustainable circularity
BY KINNARPS

Kinnarps' circular services are gathered under a concept for sustainable circularity. Each circle symbolises a key to choosing sustainable interior design all the way.



Johanna Ljunggren, Sustainability Manager at Kinnarps



READ MORE ABOUT SUSTAINABLE CIRCULARITY:



Kinnarps' trucks are packed like a game of Tetris, with the furniture wrapped in reusable blankets. This saves 270 kilos of packaging per truck cabinet.

way out. But if you know which questions to ask and how to set specifications, reused interior design can be one way to choose sustainable circularity.

LOOKING AT the price here and now is a short-term way of choosing interior design. To get the best and most sustainable return on your investment, you need to look at the life cycle cost of your interior design. How long will the furniture last, in my or someone else's operations? How easy will it be to source spare parts and renew the furniture when necessary? And how will the furniture work for and support the people using it in our organisation? You need to study all of this in order to know if you're choosing the most affordable and sustainable product. Imagine that chair X costs EUR 80 and chair Y costs EUR 100. Chair X breaks after three years and can't be repaired, or causes work injuries due to poor ergonomics for the user, forcing them to take sick leave. Chair Y, on the other hand, provides good ergonomics for the user and lasts for ten years, and spare parts are available so that the chair can be updated and last for another ten years and so on. Which chair works out cheapest?

KINNARPS' APPROACH to a sustainable circular economy starts with a long lifespan.

"The longer the lifespan of a piece of furniture, the lower the environmental impact from a usage perspective. That's why we focus on creating furniture with the potential for a long life. Quality is crucial for longevity, so in that sense quality is also a sustainability issue," explains Johanna Ljunggren.

We also design our furniture so that it can be renovated and updated to further extend its lifespan when necessary. And we offer a range of services to help our customers extend the life of their interior design, for example through inventory, furniture cleaning and updating. We also offer circulated furniture that is quality-assured through our webshop. We make it easy for our customers to make sustainable choices by gathering all our circular services under one concept we call Sustainable Circularity by Kinnarps.

Sustainable interior design also needs to be flexible and adapted to meet the actual needs of the organisation. This provides the best conditions for long-term use. With our Next Office®, Next Education® and Next Care® needs analyses, we can help our customers map out their needs and create a solution based on them.

We also work with circular flows in our own production and logistics chain. For example, we recycle the packaging material we use when delivering our furniture. This consists of blankets and cardboard sheets that we take back after delivery and reuse again and again. We collect waste material from production and create new products with our fabric waste and heat the factories with waste from our wood processing. Our factories are located in Sweden, close to our head office, which means we can have full control over the entire chain. We have our own trucks, which mainly run on fossil-free fuel, and we pack them like a game of Tetris using our packing method with blankets and cardboard sheets, which means that we avoid driving around air. When others need three trucks, we can manage with two, and we save 270 kilos of packaging per truck cabinet with our packing method. ✱

9x tips

to make sustainable choices all the way

1. Map and analyse your needs for a long-term solution that suits your organisation.
2. Choose high-quality furniture designed to be able to be renewed.
3. Look for ecolabels and certifications, such as FSC®, Möbelfakta and OEKO-TEX.
4. Ensure quality and safety – through e.g. European standards.
5. Choose suitable materials and colours adapted for your spaces.
6. Question how and where the furniture is produced.
7. Find out how the furniture is transported and how the interior design is implemented.
8. Select evaluation parameters with great care.
9. Set qualitative sustainability requirements for both new and reused furniture.



Design for health

By consciously working with ergonomic office design, you can achieve health-promoting effects for increased productivity. More sustainable in both senses of the word.

TEXT: JOHANNA WALDEN PHOTO: ALEXIS PAOLI AND STYGN STUDIOS

People are the most important assets in any organisation.

When entering the office, what makes employees feel welcome, safe, inspired and motivated to start their working day?

A variety of factors affect your mood and performance – so it's important to consider holistic ergonomics.

Holistic ergonomics is about the total physical, organisational and social experience of a space. No one aspect compensates for any other – all must be in harmony for people to perform at their best.

Research from Chalmers University in Gothenburg, Sweden shows that the user experience in flexible offices is shaped individually and collectively, and is affected by the overall – rather than isolated – design qualities of the spaces. This means that:

1. The group's collective use and my individual use affect how I perceive the office.

2. The overall design qualities of the spaces, i.e. the total range of spaces and how they interrelate (if there are enough of the right types of spaces, their position in relation to each other, etc.) have more of an effect than individual design qualities, e.g. the effectiveness of acoustic screens in quiet areas.

By consciously working with ergonomic office design, you can achieve health-promoting effects that help to increase productivity, efficiency and creativity. This results in staff members who are happy and remain at the workplace. Thriving offices also attract new talent. In other words, a more sustainable organisation.

Designing your office space on the basis of holistic ergonomics essentially involves three areas: encouraging movement, minimising negative distractions and creating a positive working climate.

OUR BODIES ARE NOT MADE to sit still. That's why it's important to create spaces that encourage movement and variation, so we can adopt different positions throughout the day. Most people are aware that good sitting ergonomics, with an adjustable office chair, a height-adjustable desk and an external computer monitor, help to ensure good health.

But other factors in the physical environment affect our mood and performance. One crucial factor is preventing static working positions by offering furniture that allows micro-movements. Standing up to work at certain times during the day is positive, but even sitting doesn't have to mean sitting still. Choose task chairs designed to either encourage or support movement. Conference chairs on castors, a balance ball, stools with a tilting function or chairs with springiness in the back are other examples of furniture with built-in movement. A well-thought-out office layout ensures a good workflow and encourages movement. The layout influences behaviour, facilitates navigation and is an important factor in shaping a healthy working environment.

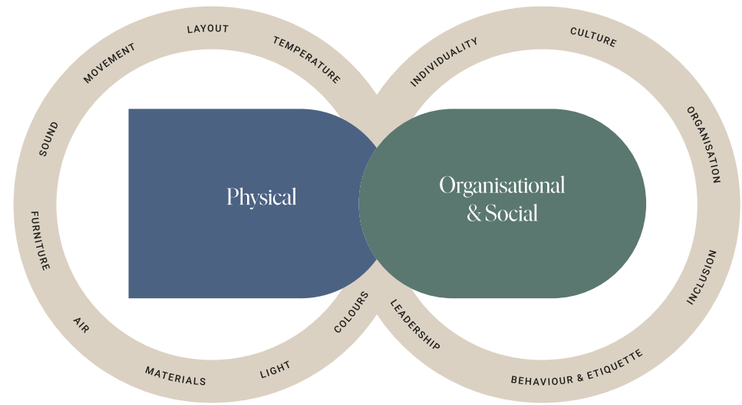
ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR for good holistic ergonomics is minimising negative distractions. Noise, bright colours, cluttered visual impressions, uncomfortable furniture, poor air quality, insufficient lighting or unclear rules in the office can affect employee performance negatively. By creating a



Sitting doesn't have to mean sitting still! All task chairs from Kinnarps are designed to support or encourage movement.

HOLISTIC ERGONOMICS

Holistic ergonomics consists of several different elements that work together in the physical, social and organisational space. It's all about understanding the interplay between different elements and how together they affect well-being, productivity, success and lots of other aspects.



Good ergonomics pay off!

1

INCREASED WELL-BEING
By encouraging movement and investing in your physical, organisational and social environment, you get healthier and happier employees.

2

HIGHER EFFICIENCY
A work environment designed according to mapped activities and working methods creates better flow and conditions for people to carry out their tasks more efficiently.

3

LESS SICK LEAVE
By preventing physical problems and mental health issues, people will take fewer days off work due to pain and anxiety.

4

IMPROVED EMPLOYEE MORALE
Give people the opportunity to influence their working environment in order to carry out their tasks in the best way. They will feel more motivated, appreciated and respected.

5

ATTRACTIVE EMPLOYER
Health and well-being increase employee satisfaction, help you retain staff and strengthen your organisation's brand.



Sound-absorbing screens contribute to a good acoustic environment, reduce visual impressions and create focus, even in open-plan offices. Plain fabrics in tone-on-tone earthy shades make a consistent and harmonious impression.

3x FACTORS FOR BETTER WORKSPACES

ENCOURAGE MOVEMENT
It's essential to create spaces and tasks that encourage and accommodate movement. Movement optimises human performance and improves both physical and mental health. Your next position is your best position.

MINIMISE NEGATIVE DISTRACTIONS
Many factors can interfere with your ability to focus on your current task. It can be distractions like annoying noise, visual distractions, insufficient light, poor ventilation, the wrong interior solution for your way of working, and so on. Minimise or remove them altogether.

CREATE A POSITIVE WORKING CLIMATE
A positive working climate reduces stress, improves collaboration and supports both workflows and your employer brand. It's an important aspect of every attractive organisation and employer.

supportive work environment, you can ensure that brain capacity is not being drained by the wrong things during the working day.

Clear zones create better workflows
How you furnish the work environment depends on the type of activity. A good starting point is to divide the office into different focus zones with clear rules. In active zones with medium or low focus, it can be positive to have a certain level of cross talk between colleagues or music, while in high-focus zones it should be quiet. Remember to separate places for highly focused solo work from collaborative areas or pathways. In other words, the layout is the foundation. A well-thought-out workflow allows employees with different tasks and needs to perform their work under optimal conditions.

A good acoustic environment contributes to focus
Did you know it takes up to 20 minutes to regain concentration after an interruption? What might disturb us and how can we minimise these negative distractions in order to create high-focus spaces? Noise is one of the greatest sources of negative distraction. Upholstered furniture, rugs and textiles in your interior design are a very good way to create a good acoustic environment. Sound-absorbing partition screens on castors, screening storage solutions, sofas and easy chairs with high backs, or textiles suspended from the ceiling also make it easy to divide an open space and minimise visual impressions.

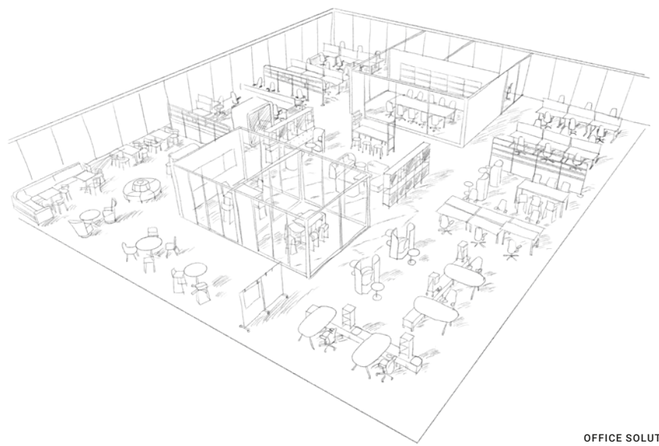
Colours affect how we feel and perform.
Choose colours based on the activity or behaviour you want to support – not on personal taste or trends. The wrong colour in the wrong place can be a distraction. Earthy, close-to-nature colours have a positive impact on us humans and a timeless quality that makes them sustainable. They also create a harmonious overall impression and make it easier to rearrange furniture from different parts of the office into new constellations as needs change. Colours help with navigation, demarcation and zones. Avoid patterns on large surfaces or too many storage solutions with open shelves, which can easily distract the eye.

A HEALTHY AND CLEAR WORK CULTURE lays the foundation for employee safety, trust and engagement. It allows staff to develop an emotional connection to their work and their workplace. In other words, a company's brand must be just as strong internally as externally. Happy and motivated employees become ambassadors for their organisation and facilitate new recruitment.

To achieve a good work culture, the management team needs consensus on the organisation's vision, working methods, values and priorities – and drive the work continuously. They need to agree on rules and approaches for how the office should function and plan for a well-considered implementation of these. Inform, involve and engage employees within the set parameters, and have structured onboarding for new employees. Does everyone know who to turn to with questions or problems? Is it clear how work processes are carried out and who is responsible? Do staff know the company's journey, development and way forward? All employees must be given the conditions to understand the business, the possibilities of the office, how different spaces should be used and how the workplace can be utilised in an ergonomic and optimised way. ✱

"Carefully considered, well-planned working environments that meet the needs of both the organisation and employees promote everything from well-being and creativity to efficiency and productivity."

JENNY HÖRBERG, DIRECTOR GLOBAL RANGE & DESIGN, KINNARPS



Invest in employee experience



How do you get your employees to go in the same direction, when they're around 10,000 spread all over the world? Katarina Berg, Chief Human Resources Officer at Spotify and Susanne Engdahl, Director People & Organization at Husqvarna Group, explain how they work with employee experience.

TEXT: SALKA HALLSTRÖM PHOTO: NILS ODIER

Few concepts have been discussed as much lately as employee experience. From productivity and retention to innovation and customer satisfaction, the way in which your employees experience their workplace has been shown to have a direct impact on organisational performance. By prioritising and investing in employee experience, businesses can create a working environment that ultimately helps to ensure their long-term success.

We spoke to two big names in HR, Katarina Berg from Spotify and Susanne Engdahl from Husqvarna, about how they view the concept

There's an age difference of over 300 years between tech giant Spotify and outdoor power product manufacturer Husqvarna. The two companies are similar in their status as national treasures, with both having around 10,000 employees and offices all over the world. And also that they work with employee experience at a global level.

What does the term employee experience mean to you?

Katarina Berg: "We call it 'people experience' and it can be summarised in three words: before, during and after. Everything that our employees experience from joining, onboarding, taking on challenges and trying new roles to hopefully enjoying a rewarding time with us."

Susanne Engdahl: "Everything that managers, supervisors and HR do in some way or another leads to that concept, from onboarding to offboarding. I would sum it up in the word 'inclusion'.

Can you give examples of how you work with employee experience?

KB: "One thing that everyone appreciates is the 'listening lounge', where artists come and play live in the office. Another is our 'intro days'. We also have an internal marketplace for talent, where AI is used to match you with relevant services. Whether you're in Sydney, São Paulo or New York, you won't be forgotten."

SE: "We've recently renewed our culture programme, which all of our 14,000 employees have been involved in via focus groups. This is a huge project that we're proud of, especially since our employees have been involved all the way."

How do you evaluate employee experiences?

KB: "We conduct employee surveys twice a year. When we launched 'work from anywhere' in 2020, we started working with external researchers to look at the effects – parameters such as creativity, innovation, intrapersonal energy. To follow up, we also launched a quarterly survey."

SE: "We do this continuously – through our annual employee surveys, one-to-one meetings or focus groups. We usually work in networks, where we come together around a topic."

So, what works and what doesn't?

KB: "In our surveys, there were two things that everyone came back to: flexibility and freedom. The message was clear – don't take it away. That's why we introduced 'work from anywhere'. Many people loved working from home, others hated it. We may not be able to offer complete freedom, but we can make life easier for our employees by offering a choice."

SE: "During the pandemic, we realised the importance of culture – and of being an attractive workplace. That's something we may have taken for granted previously. Since then, we've had a completely different focus on that aspect of 'employee experience'. At Husqvarna, we have many different spaces to take into consideration, but we still need to work to make them attractive."

Are employees able to have an influence?

KB: "They have enormous opportunities for this, especially when we're rebuilding. We have architects and behavioural scientists who specialise in health and the environment, and employees get a say in every relocation or expansion."

SE: "When we implement major change projects, we set up working groups with representatives from each department. It doesn't have to be the manager or supervisor, it can just as well be an employee. Decisions are made jointly."

What role does the physical office play for you?

KB: "We've been a digital business since birth and have a toolbox that allows you to work wherever you are. About 50 per cent currently have a 'home mix' and 50 per cent have an 'office mix'."

SE: "We offer hybrid working to employees who have tasks that can be performed remotely, but decisions are taken in the team. Some departments work from home from time to time, while others work full-time on site or remotely. The important thing that's happened is that time in the office has become more focused. As an employer, we need to think about how we create a space that invites collaboration." ✱

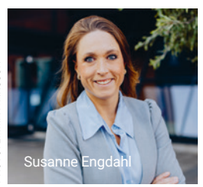


PHOTO: EMMA IVARSSON

Susanne Engdahl



PHOTO: SIMON KALLIN

Katarina Berg

"Everything that managers, supervisors and HR do for an employee leads to the concept of employee experience – from their first to their last day at the company."

SUSANNE ENGDAHL, DIRECTOR PEOPLE & ORGANIZATION HUSQVARNA GROUP



Castors on meeting chairs encourage micro-movements that help maintain concentration, even during longer meetings. Here the *Pax* chair is joined by the *Colt* table in a medium-sized meeting space.

Multi-level flexibility

Sustainability, functionality and aesthetics – these were a few of the guiding principles for the new ABB office outside Oslo. Helene Günther Merg, head of the Fornebu office, shares her thoughts on this successful project.

TEXT: THERESE HULBERG PHOTO: STINE ØSTBY



In the common areas, the pathways are well used and adapted for sitting down for a while, either with a laptop or a coffee mug.





Technology that paves the way for the future. That's a good way to sum up ABB's business. The company is now one of the leading providers of electrification and automation in Norway. When the company was set to move to new premises on Snarøyveien in Fornebu outside Oslo, Kinnarps was engaged. The assignment was to create a sustainable and attractive working environment in collaboration with Scenario Interiørarkitekter.

"We have modern premises with pleasant, light colours, functional furniture and good equipment," says Helene Günther Merg, Country Communications Manager and Site Lead Manager Fornebu.

THE PREMISES ON SNARØYVEIEN consist of six floors where the different departments are located together or in close proximity. Each floor contains a number of well-planned spaces, both open and closed, where you can retreat, talk on the phone or conduct informal meetings. There are ergonomic workstations, as well as smaller flex rooms, social zones, food zones, touchdown places and meeting rooms.

The interior design from Kinnarps includes the *Monolite* sofa with a high back, which creates a room-in-room and screens off disturbing noise. The *Uni* range of tables is available in a compact version and as a larger project table. The *Deli* seating family is also well represented in the building, as bar and café chairs, as well as comfortable lounge armchairs.

The *Capella* task chair works as both a meeting chair and a project chair, finished with a low back without armrests. The seat can be adjusted to suit individual preferences, while maintaining a cohesive look. Indoor plants in holders have been incorporated into the layout, and *Vibe* sound absorber is suspended from the ceiling, which also creates visual separation in the landscape.



Helene Günther Merg, Country Communications Manager and Site Lead Manager Fornebu, describes the assignment to create a sustainable and attractive working environment.

An area at the end of the open-plan office on the fifth floor is furnished for different kinds of collaborative work. The *Uni Large* project table with *Capella* task chair are shown here.

"The choice of Kinnarps as a partner was due in no small part to the alignment between its sustainable solutions and ABB's profile."



3x products

A variety of sustainable spaces. Here are some of the key items of furniture that created ABB's new office.

Capella task chair



Deli armchair



Space storage unit



"With so many open spaces, the acoustic environment has been an important consideration. Sound absorbers and sound-absorbing materials have been a key element of the interior design," explains Helene Günther Merg.

"The plentiful green plants give the room a wonderful feel and, most importantly, a better acoustic environment." The employees have also been provided with a wide choice of quiet rooms and good meeting spaces.

SCENARIO INTERIØRARKITEKTER developed the project basics, including layout, colours and materials. Kinnarps has advised on furniture, textiles and the final layout. The choice of Kinnarps as a partner was due in no small part to the alignment between its sustainable solutions and ABB's profile. Other decisive factors were the design and range, the flexible way of working, sales and project management. ABB also has many years' favourable experience of Kinnarps as a supplier.

"The collaboration has been excellent. Kinnarps has very skilled, knowledgeable and efficient project managers who have been creative, fast and flexible. Everything went according to plan, and all deliveries were carefully coordinated. It's been a great pleasure," says Helene Günther Merg and concludes:

"We're delighted with the result and are getting nothing but positive feedback from our employees." ✱

FACTS

Client: ABB AS
Location: Fornebu, Norway
Number of employees: approx. 700
Area: 14,000 m²
Number of floors: 6
Completed: 2022



Although digital communication has come a long way, physical meetings are still crucial for fostering a strong culture, developing relationships and creating engagement.

Beloved offices

Remote working is fantastic – sometimes, for some people. But the office will continue to play an important role in the future. As a carrier of culture, a hub and a place where the organisation's image and values are reflected.

TEXT: KALLE DIXELIUS PHOTO: JOHAN HULTMAN ILLUSTRATION: MAJA NORRBY

Many work routines were questioned during the pandemic, not least the office. Almost overnight, video meetings became part of everyday life. Office workers all over the world started wondering why they needed to go to the office at all. Writing emails, using Excel, PowerPoint and Word, making calls, reading reports – these are all things you can do from home.

But as the pandemic dragged on, they started to change their tune.

Even employers – who were looking forward to slashing their overheads and a workforce that could be located anywhere in the world – began to see the downsides. It's harder to be innovative if you never meet up in person. There are no informal meetings around the coffee machine, in the lounge or at lunch. And they are more important than previously thought. The rumoured death of the office was greatly exaggerated.

IN A SURVEY by Axiom Insight, office workers in Sweden, Denmark and Finland were asked for their views on the office. The conclusion is clear – the office is here to stay. For many people, the office means social interaction and somewhere to meet new friends. As many as 62 per cent of respondents state that the most important feature of the office is their colleagues. Nine out of ten Nordic office workers are in the office for at least half the working week.

The song remains the same in the rest of the world. For example, a study conducted by *The Economist* on behalf of Aruba found that the ability to choose where you work is the most significant factor in how creative you feel. In the same study, 42% said that they are more productive when they have easy access to the skills and know-how of others. It's worth a lot to just be able to ask your colleagues for advice.

ANOTHER ADVANTAGE of the office is for onboarding new employees. Everyone who's arrived at a new workplace knows how difficult it is – all the new names and faces, learning new tasks, getting to know the business and keeping track of who does what. All of this is twice as difficult when done remotely. A research study from the University of East London determined that successful onboarding of new employees is aided by 'a significant amount of human encounters' – which is a lot easier in the office.

It's also been shown that some employees feel working from home is a better alternative when their office has shortcomings. It lacks high-focus areas, meeting spaces and digital meeting rooms that promote the activities you're carrying out. If you have a well-planned office that supports your organisation's activities and ways of working, your employees will want and be able to work at the office. And it's worth remembering that what may be positive for the individual employee may be negative for the organisation as a whole. The employee may feel they can just as easily tick off their to-do list at home, but the team as a whole will miss out on innovation, problem solving and creative spontaneous meetings.

CHANGED WORKING PATTERNS and new ways of working in a hybrid world are placing new demands on the workplace. The office needs to be a value-creating, attractive and sustainable place, where people feel good, thrive and have the opportunity to perform at their best. It's growing increasingly important not only to retain employees but also to attract new ones.

And finally: yes, your manager notices you and your work more when you're in the office. This is revealed by a study conducted by Envoy. As many as 96 per cent of U.S. managers admit that they pay more attention to their employees' efforts if they're in the office. ✱

"For many people, the office means social interaction and somewhere to meet new friends."

From coffee corner to work lounge



Vagabond project table with *Motus* stool on castors make the ideal place for a short work meeting, while high-back *Fields* armchairs create room-in-room privacy for conversations. *Cone* with *Mr T* stool offers an accessible place to either stand or sit.

Our offices were radically changing even before the pandemic. From traditional desks to a softer, more varied and homelike interior design. Our workplaces have evolved into more than just somewhere we go to work. And the work lounge has emerged as a vital space in the modern office.

TEXT: JOHANNA WALDEN PHOTO: KINNARPS



Launched in 2016, Kinnarps' *Fields* modular system was a direct response to the growing trend for homelike office spaces.

It starts in the entrance, the first impression and the feel of the office. Anyone who steps in should immediately get an idea of the organisation's vision and brand. Here, the interior design solution should contribute to everyone feeling welcomed and included, and it should be clear how to navigate further in the office. The experience is enhanced by a carefully considered colour scheme, music, and possibly the scent of freshly brewed coffee and fresh flowers.

The entrance can also be extended into a work lounge, similar to a hotel lobby. The entrance together with the work lounge has become an increasingly important and identity-carrying space for organisations in the modern office, especially as the struggle for talent intensifies. This is not just about attracting new workers but also about retaining existing ones. The work lounge, which can also be located centrally in the office, best reflects the brand, image and values of the organisation.

It also serves as a creative space for brainstorming, spontaneous chats and collaboration. An informal and relaxed space helps people feel more free to share ideas and think outside the box. This naturally encourages innovative solutions and increased creativity. The space evolves into so much more than just a passageway – it becomes a vibrant, energising and social hub where you can wait, meet, network, enjoy a coffee or work. The organisation's culture flourishes here.

THE INTERIOR DESIGN IN THE WORK LOUNGE has a great impact on how the space is perceived and what it invites. In order to achieve dynamism and functionality for a wide range of activities, you need variation in the heights of seating furniture and tables. Sofas and other lounge furniture should preferably have a slightly higher seat height (45cm) and a somewhat firmer seat, enabling you to sit more actively yet still comfortably and relaxed. Higher

tables with stools make it easy to sit down to work on your laptop for a while. Tables and the bases of lounge furniture can be fitted with the all-important power sockets for charging various devices. A longer table in a larger size can be a central feature in a work lounge, offering plenty of room so you can choose a seat as close to or as far from the people already sitting there. A long and deep table divided in the middle with acoustic screens or plants, and equipped with multiple power sockets, creates the feel of personal space in a group setting.

The work lounge may vary in size, but as it tends to be a larger area, it will be particularly important to think about furnishing for good acoustics. Partition screens on castors can both absorb sound and act as room dividers to create a calmer space with less visual impressions. Sofas or armchairs with high backs placed opposite each other create natural room-in-rooms where you can chat to a colleague, while contributing to a good acoustic environment. Generally speaking, upholstered furniture always helps to improve the acoustics.

Indoor plants are another important feature, not only because they enhance well-being but also because their foliage diffuses sound, thereby creating a pleasanter acoustic environment. Plant storage units are also a good way to partition off part of the work lounge and place desks for individual work.

With the right technology and flexible interior design, the work lounge can also be transformed into the ideal place for larger presentations and events, a smart way to optimise office space. With larger conference rooms and auditoriums largely phased out of modern offices, you still need somewhere to hold presentations for a large audience. The work lounge can be a good alternative! Stackable stools and tables on castors that are easy to move in and out of storage, and drop-down technology are just a few of the features that make this possible.

MORE AND MORE ORGANISATIONS are seeing the value in offering places to meet up informally as well. There are many advantages to face-to-face meetings in the workplace. They create engagement, develop relationships and ultimately strengthen the corporate culture. Research* reveals that face-to-face requests are more than 30 times more effective than those sent by email.



Would you like help designing a work lounge or other spaces at your office? We're happy to help you! Contact your nearest Kinnarps showroom.

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Data from Kinnarps' Next Office® workplace analysis shows that the work lounge is one of the three most in-demand spaces in modern offices, alongside separate workstations for high focus and small meeting spaces.

3x tables for work lounges

A range of tables available in many versions.



Sumo range of tables



Nexus range of tables



Hal height-adjustable range of tables

"A well-functioning work lounge is a place you happily spend time during your working day. It's where you're energised and meet colleagues from other departments – it becomes the hub of a workplace."

HENRIK AXELL, HEAD OF WORKPLACE STRATEGY, KINNARPS

Although digital communication has come a long way, physical meetings are still crucial for developing relationships, and encouraging problem solving and innovation. In spite of all our technological advances, human beings are inherently social and need companionship. When we meet face-to-face, we can read each other's body language, and feel connection and empathy in a way that's difficult to replicate virtually. Small changes in our facial expression, how we use our voice, move our hands and make eye contact all help to get our message across.

This trend affects the functionality and design of the office in general. As the importance of physical meetings has become clearer, the focus on social spaces and more homelike office spaces is intensifying. The work lounge is a vibrant space and hub, where you can work alone, discuss with your colleagues in a more informal space, meet colleagues from other departments or just enjoy a cup of coffee. Nevertheless, an office cannot only consist of social areas: spaces for focused, solo work or team collaboration are extremely important. A workplace analysis helps you to map and analyse your activities and needs in order to determine the distribution and size of the spaces in your office. ✸

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