

Beyond Computer Desks—SMARTdesks Shows Exchange Collaboration Furniture at School & College Building Expo, Chicago Navy Pier, April 12-13, 2011

Universities are clamoring for Exchange™ Collaboration Furniture because the modular system lets different table shapes be assembled from the same Exchange Element™. Different shapes promote the flow of human interaction, and these shapes can be chosen based on the types of team building appropriate to the pedagogy of the collaborative teaching style, blended with the use of lecture. The computer tables are multi-use, designed with flipIT® for computer desks or flipIT Laptop Safe® for Laptop Tables. SMARTdesks® offers classroom interior design floor plans as part of its online collaboration with customers at no additional cost or obligation.

Baltimore, MD (Vocus/PRWEB) April 02, 2011 -- Beyond [Computer Desks](#), SMARTdesks will show the [Exchange Element™ Collaboration Furniture](#) at [School & College Building Expo](#), Navy Pier, Chicago, April 12-13, 2011 at booth 301. The Exchange system combines the positive attributes of [multi-use, flip up computer desks](#) and [laptop tables](#) with collaboration shapes that promote communication flow in the classroom. Since the launch of Exchange only a few weeks ago, [SMARTdesks Interior Design Support Team](#) has been inundated with design requests. Exchange has many options for shape that responds well to the diverse range of needs in the marketplace. This shape shifting system is being adopted by many prestigious institutions world-wide.

The Exchange Collaboration Furniture System evolved from collaboration with Ivy League schools who have developed collaborative learning studios and faculty who are comfortable mixing the “sage on the stage” teaching style with the “guide on the side” who becomes the architect for learning discoveries based on students interacting, reaching out for understanding and consensus building to achieve shared goals for assignments.

The Exchange Element™ is a triangular table, produced in mirror image to enable configurations of hexagon, pinwheel, triangle, and linear offset for collaboration in the classroom; and delta reflex for collaborative teleconferencing. Each Element™ is functionally a stand-alone workstation with enough personal work space to spread out materials, use a computer, laptop or mobile device. The Element™ has a wire management system in the leg and fabric mesh modesty panel, plus USB power, AC and options for power and data ports. The Element™ is typically outfitted for use with flipIT® [pop-up work stations](#) (US Patent 7,784,412), supporting most 20” wide screen monitors. For use with laptops, the flipIT® [Laptop Safe](#) (US Patent 7,757,612) is specified to secure and tether institutional equipment. flipIT® products enable multi-use learning because they can bring technology to the work space, or stow it completely out of the way in an instant.

The Exchange Collaboration Pinwheel™ comprises six Elements™ to create a flow of understanding between people. Each work station is situated with a return, like office furniture, which, with the turn of the shoulders, becomes a common conference area for two or three collaborators. There are no parallel sides to this shape, so confrontational body posturing is avoided. This table helps those who sit at it focus, individually or in groups, using a mix of text and technology. The unique shape inspires creative problem solving and underscores how important each member’s contribution is to the group.

The Exchange Collaboration Triangle™ is made up of six Elements™ in mirror image. Students naturally gather around the corners for meetings, but have enough privacy for independent focus simply by turning the



body squarely with the laptop or computer workstation. The workstation locations also make it easy to share on personal laptops placed between computer monitors or at the corners. For multi-use capability, the flipIT® workstations bring 20" LCDs into play as needed, and lets users flip them back into the desktop, completely out of the way when text materials take priority. flipIT® Laptop Safes may also be specified to stow laptops under lock and key, allowing instant access and connections to power and data. This shape is for "joiners," promoting freedom of flow and arrangement of people around the table for ad hoc discussions.

The Exchange Collaboration Hexagon™ brings six Elements™ together with its internal hexagon shape out of phase with the work station edges. The internal diagonals create a visual flow that makes this distinctive from a simple hexagon with solid center. The hexagon shape divides equally the power of each seat. It does this even more effectively than King Arthur's round table because the territories are defined. Because each person is seated directly opposite to another, there is potential for confrontational body language; however, the visual cues of the Exchange Collaboration Hexagon counter the confrontational body positioning by introducing diagonals. The result is that people tend to angle their bodies to each other and tend to open themselves to those across the table. This choice is good for equal contributions to the collaboration. Each speaker is empowered as soon as they have the floor.

The Exchange Linear Offset Collaboration Table™ may have parallel sides, but people are not seated in a confrontational way, head-to-head. They are offset, so they are either side-by-side or at a diagonal across the table. The Linear Offset configuration may be continued in Exchange Element™ sets of mirrored pairs to fill the interior space, or may be set up in a U shape with bridge sections. When work groups are teams of two or three, the Linear Offset is a great choice. If the plan is to mix lecture with collaboration activities, set the tables in rows that radiate from the instructor's position in the room. All turn to the speaker and keep their work areas for taking notes.

The Exchange™ Teleconference Collaboration Table is like the Collaboration Triangle with one leg replaced by a video screen. The effect is to have the tables appear to be mirror imaged across from the panel seated on camera. Just as the Collaboration Triangle permits meetings around the corners, the corners are expanded to include the entire group from both locations. Each group requires only one screen and camera to make video teleconferencing affordable and practical. Data to support meetings appear on flipIT® pop-up monitors and stow out of the way, and out of camera shot, when not needed. The effect of having the data monitor in the shot is good because when direct to look at something on the screen, people can see the other focusing their attention there, rather than looking away from the camera as if in a distracted state. The flipIT® positions the monitor below the horizon line of the camera, so faces are not obscured. The SMARTdesks® Presence Theater b7 is a perfect complement, holding screens up to 60" width at variable height and rack mount equipment bays for AV storage in lockable vented cabinet with rear access doors.

SMARTdesks® innovates, designs and manufactures computer furniture for education, corporate and government clients world-wide. Classroom and conference room design services are available by request online, provided at no additional cost and without obligation. Receive a floor plan and proposal according to the needs of each client's purchasing protocol, including shipping, delivery and installation. Products are made in the USA using Green Manufacturing Methods. For more information visit www.smartdesks.com

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