

WOODNEWS

MAY - JUNE 2020
Vol. 30 • No. 1



30
YEARS

Pioneer in the
service of the
woodworking
industry

ROAD TO RECOVERY

Furniture manufacturers, material and technology suppliers
talk about dealing with pandemic disruption **P.24**

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Furniture surfaces in the
time of Corona-virus **P.48**

TECH UPDATE

Upholstery that can re-circulate
human energy **P.60**

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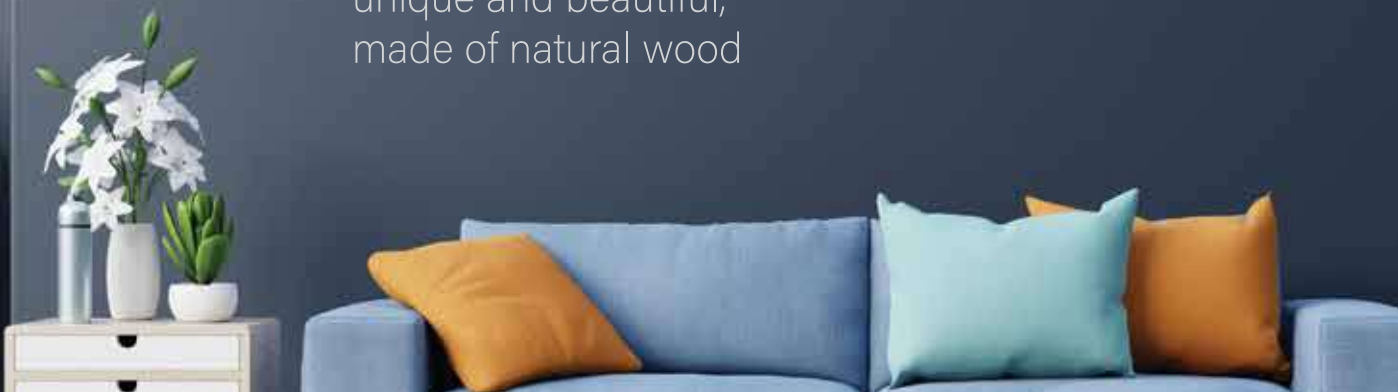
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Plywood Manufacturing Opportunity

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03 ◀ Indian plywood units in production
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Gabon...Land of Opportunities

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EDITOR
DHANANJAY SARDESHPANDE

It's 'Unlock-2', of promise and potential

Dear Readers,

We at WoodNews hope that you have utilised the time during the recent Covid-19 lockdown and the gradual "unlocking" of social and business restrictions to do some thorough introspection on your product line and marketing strategy;

Or cleaning up the cobwebs of habit, dusting off hard-wired dogmas, and removing the dirt off your machines and factory floor;

Or rearranging your priorities, finances, contracts and projects, supply chain and marketing collaterals (website, brochures, advertising);

Or re-energising your contracts with existing and potential suppliers and customers.

It was a time to attend to the

several such small and big things – make amends for mistakes, lubricate business relationships and replace broken links – for which most of us never got time in the "normal" (pre-Covid-19) run of things!

The furniture manufacturing ecosystem is limping back to an as-yet-undefined "normal", but with the vigour of a youngster and the wisdom of one who has burnt his fingers in the pandemic's fire.

Many factories and workshops are off the blocks, even with a lot of restrictions. And the market is ready – even though, at this point of time, it is susceptible to the ravages of the new contagion. We continue the series of articles on this topic, with industry insiders airing their problems, solutions and inspirations. But if hope is in the air, can success be far behind?!

At this point in time, it would be difficult to gauge what socio-economic changes

and market consumption habits will persist after the Covid-19 crisis is over. Permanent shifts cannot be easily discernible through mere observation and analysis. Heightened awareness about family security, social hygiene and personal health, and home improvement are a given. But remote working, decentralised supply chains, financial crisis preparedness and existing systems of production and governance are still to be tried and tested for resilience.

I think this once-in-a-lifetime crisis comes with a redeeming feature – like the American philosopher, Henry David Thoreau said: "Not until we are lost we begin to find ourselves." During the lockdown, we at WoodNews took the time to come up with a new cover design and page layouts – did you notice?! Do let us know what you think about it (editor@woodnews.in). Until next time, stay safe, and never say die!

STAYING IN TOUCH

In keeping with the times and for ease of communication, WoodNews has discontinued the printing of Business Reply Envelopes with each issue of the magazine.

However, we continue to welcome your views and reviews of happenings in the industry, your contributions to and suggestions for the magazine, as well as business proposals via email.

Now follow us on:



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We look forward to hearing from you soon!

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This low-rise tambour credenza (L) is inspired by the process of Ikat weaving, creating the illusion of unrolling fabric (R) at the corners.

Celebrating Indian design in American hardwoods

INDO-, an award-winning contemporary furniture and home ware design studio based in Providence, Rhode Island (US) and New Delhi, was founded by Urvi Sharma and Manan Narang, both of whom grew up in the Indian capital and met while studying at the Rhode Island School of Design.

INDO- came about as a product of their inquiries into identity and craft. Urvi was working on how to create an interaction between Indian and American furniture, while Manan was focused on how to apply craft in new and interesting ways to revive dying art forms.

Manan, an architect, furniture

designer and maker, completed his B.Arch from the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, before doing his MFA in Furniture Design in the US.

Urvi is a furniture and product designer based in Providence, who completed her BFA in Furniture Design at the Rhode Island School of Design and has worked with several furniture and product design companies in the US, UK and India.

India effect

Through their designs, Urvi and Manan have used Indian craft to put a unique spin on a range of furniture pieces, including barstools, tables, benches, chairs, rugs and other items.

The duo has successfully created modern furniture pieces that reference traditional

dyeing and weaving methods, and designed nine different products across four collections.

Experimenting with traditional craft processes and modern manufacturing methods to create contemporary objects, they produce work that is both innovative and acknowledges the places and people who inspire it.

Through INDO- the duo has embraced the Indian qualities of things being handmade, meaning each piece is one-of-a-kind, and merged it with the forms present in contemporary American furniture.

They also understood the importance of creating an identity and origin for each of their products, given that quite a lot in Indian design and the products made are

related to the places and people who make them.

The Collection

The Pillar Collection is a nod to simple, functional contemporary design with a beauty inherent in the handmade, absorbed layer upon layer into its surface. A series of solid wood dip-dyed coffee and side tables that reference the technique of glazing ceramics, the Pilar tables are inspired by the rich use of coloured tiles and mosaics in Gaudi's architecture.

Available in American maple, white oak or walnut with varying tops, and with the ability to work in clusters or by themselves, they serve a wide range of demands, from accent to statement pieces.

In addition, the Mooda mirror is also available in maple, white oak or walnut and is made of hardwood dowels stitched together to create a beautiful geometric edge. The glass reflects the dowels,

completing the form of the Mooda.

The Ikat credenza is a low-rise tambour credenza inspired by the process of weaving Ikat fabrics, in which each warp end is dyed individually with the desired pattern before weaving the final product.

The result is a pattern that has a slightly fuzzy appearance, a distortion inherent in the fabrics, yet shows the skill that is involved in such a labour-intensive process.

Each slat of the sliding door is treated as a warp end and hand-dyed before assembling them to create the tambour surface. The uneven quality of the lines creates an enhanced sense of movement as the tambour turns a corner, creating the illusion of unrolling fabric.

Char Quarter is a contemporary take on the humble *charpai*, an archetypal Indian rope bed, literally meaning four legs. The name borrows from the split turning method employed to create a subtle reference to the spindle turned legs, the method of wood measurement which is peculiar to the US (in quartered board feet instead of cubic feet), and the Indian pun for a full measure of a liquor bottle.

American hardwoods

Urvi and Manan work primarily in solid wood, but also incorporate other materials or composites wherever appropriate. Their focus currently is on using high quality and accessible American hardwoods, such as maple and white oak.

However, they also offer their current range in walnut or other species if a customer requests for it.

"We choose to use American hardwoods for their durability, appearance, availability and sustainability. Every species has unique characteristics and the same product rendered in hard or curly maple or white oak can look vastly different," said Manan.

"We pride ourselves on our resourceful and judicious use of hardwoods, which are probably amongst the most natural and sustainable materials available to us today. Yet, because they have a long growth cycle, it is important

The Mooda mirror (L), made in maple, white oak or walnut, is made of dowels stitched together to create a beautiful geometric edge reflected in the glass (R).





INDO- co-founders Manan Narang (L) and Urvi Sharma live on the convergence of identity, craft, quality and finish.

to be mindful of where and how much we use of this amazing resource”, he notes.

‘Brown’ furniture

Both Urvi and Manan are very positive of the potential for their pieces in India. Indians still love ‘brown furniture’ and hardwood furniture is highly sought after.

In light of this, they are working on

establishing a manufacturing supply chain of pre-finished furniture parts and home decor products between the US and India.


“Since we started, we have become a part of a growing movement of designers and makers that have emerged in the last few years in America. Discerning clientele now want to know the designers who create good work and where their furniture comes from, rather than just

picking up something readily available,” notes Manan.

This convergence of identity, craft, quality and finish is where their work lives. It is for this reason that INDO- was featured as a part of the Dwell 24 Emerging Designers of 2019.

“We have also received multiple awards and nominations including the 2019 NYCx Design Emerging Product Designer ▶

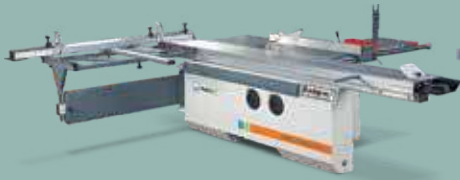


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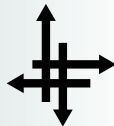
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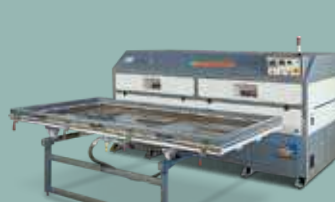
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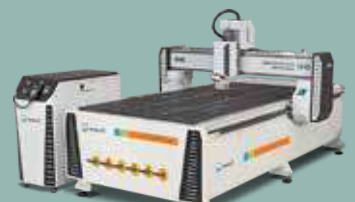
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Award and the Providence Design Catalyst Grant 2019," says Urvi.

Viable alternative

Aggressive deforestation over the last three decades has resulted in shortages and inflated pricing for CP teak and thus opened the market for plantation teak from African countries, these woods are available at lower costs.

But because of the way these trees are harvested (grown to an 8-inch girth, chopped and sized to a 6-inch square with a prominent water line in the centre), the quality is highly suspect.

The search for alternatives has led to people accepting American hardwoods such as ash, maple and oak and this transition has been steady over time. In general, red oak has been more easily accessible compared to white oak.

However, ash remains one of the most commonly used American hardwoods in the Indian market owing to its dramatic open grain structure and its ability to accept different stains uniformly.

INDO- has recently received an order for 40 rooms at a luxury hotel in Sri Lanka, which will allow them to further explore manufacturing in India, while also supporting traditional crafts. (www.indo-made.com)

The American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) is the leading international trade association for the US hardwood industry, representing committed exporters and all major US hardwood production trade associations.

AHEC runs a worldwide programme to promote American hardwoods in over 50 export markets, concentrating on providing architects, specifiers, designers and end-users with technical information on the range of species, products and sources of supply. It also produces a full range of technical publications. (www.americanhardwood.org).



The Pillar Collection (L) is a series of solid wood dip-dyed coffee and side tables. They are inspired by the rich use of coloured tiles and mosaics in Gaudi's architecture (R).

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SCM's live link-ups with its branches around the world have resulted in more than 24 hours of original content in nine languages.

Hi-tech in action at SCM 'Live Show'

More than 4,000 "on-line" guests from 100 countries took part in the live streaming event from 30 June to 2 July in Rimini

A television show with more than 24 hours of original content was broadcast live worldwide in nine languages, spread across three days (30 June to 2 July) to present SCM's latest technologies for 2020.

These would have otherwise "taken to the stage" at the various international trade fairs that have been postponed or cancelled since February due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This was a genuine challenge for SCM, the multinational group with its headquarters in Rimini, leader in the wood machining industry since 1952. With the 'SCM Live Show', the company decided to use innovative multimedia channels and

tools to “open the doors” to its headquarters in Italy via web.

The headquarters and the group's other production sites around Italy were transformed into television studios to achieve the vast show schedule of live link-ups, webinars and talk shows.

Thirty product webinars saw more than 50 technological solutions take centre stage to represent the vast range of SCM products and services, starting with the 'Smart & Human Factory', the well-known human-friendly digital factory for the furniture industry.

SCM's 18 directly managed branches operating on the most strategic markets in the wood industry around the world, in Europe, Asia, West Asia, America and Oceania were also involved with live link-ups.

Good response

The response from industry businesses was even better than expected – a look at access data to the streaming platform set up by SCM showed over 4,000 registrations from 100 on every continent,

with an average daily audience of 1,500 individual viewers.

The customers took part actively, constantly using the various channels made available during the event to interact with SCM experts and discuss the latest products and key industry trends.

Over 100 SCM employees were involved in the preparation and creation of the show. More than 50 professionals were hired for this unique “digital trade fair” including cameramen, technicians, writers, director and presenters.

The numerous technological new entries displayed integrated stand-alone cells and machines; upgrades on the wide range of machining centres and panel drilling; machining centres for solid wood and timber construction; flexible and j-shape industrial edge banding; integrated surface treatment with pressing, sanding and finishing.

Besides the exclusive launch of a new App for artisan workers, SCM presented specific technologies for windows and doors and integrated lines for doors; squaring, tenoning and profiling; joinery machines, with a new cell for sizing, drilling and edge banding.

New products

The packaging is the ideal solution for furniture kit manufacturers and includes two machines: the Cut C-200 automatic

punching machine for the just-in-time cutting and production of an open cardboard box, and the Pack C-100 for packaging with hot-melt glue.

A flexible painting cell displayed its versatility of the finishing effects by the DMC Eurosystem sanding machine, integrated with the Superfici 'mini' sprayer.

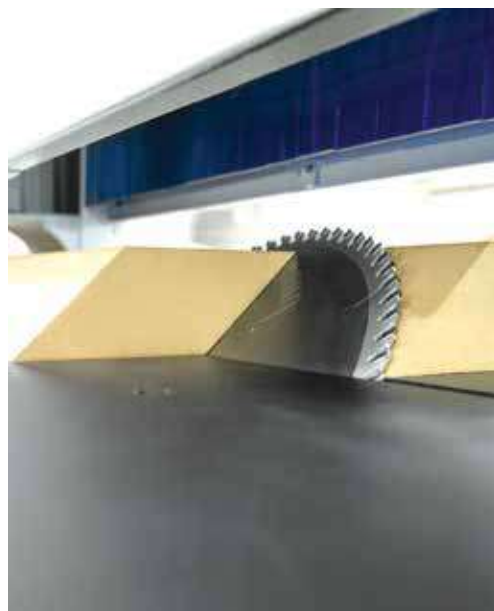
The Superfici Valtorta F1 roller and Magnum spray painting systems make possible painting of panels with the latest 3D effects and super opaque finishing.

The all-in-one Morbidelli M-100 machining centre for drilling and routing evolves further with the new ultra-compact, reduced bulk solution, that makes the 5-axes machine the smallest on the market.

For nesting, the Morbidelli X-200 and X-400 range makes its mark by cutting pieces, even shaped ones, in a variety of forms and sizes with production levels once considered inconceivable for this kind of machining.

The Gabbiani A2 and Gabbiani GT2 angular panel saw is designed to meet all demands of panel machining, from mass production

The Accord CNC machining centre (L) and Gabbiani angular panel saw (R) are suited to large-scale and Batch-1 production.



to 'Batch-1', and particularly suitable for companies that are more conscious of machine cleaning and the working environment thanks to the innovative "zero-dust system".

Timber construction

The SCM event closely examined the latest trends in the door industry and engineering solutions for an intelligent, integrated production. Solutions with different levels of automation and productivity up to 1,000 doors per shift were presented for pressing.

The Celaschi range of solutions for profiling and squaring for any kind of flooring showed through the 70-year-old experience of SCM in this category. Turnkey lines, from automatic loading to packaging, can handle a wide variety of formats and guarantee state-of-the-art productivity of 100 pieces per minute.

Also in the limelight were SCM's machining centres for the timber construction industry and their applications in the construction of

vast structures (bridges, covers, multi-storey buildings and skyscrapers).

Of particular note, the Oikos X and Area machining centres, are 6-axes models for machining structural beams, X-lam/CLT wall panels and large scale columns.

The Balestrini range of machining centres for chairs, tables and furnishing accessories has been entirely redesigned to optimise safety, ergonomics and ease of use. These include the Balestrini Pico FJ for producing complex joints such as miter doors, face frames and French joints on doors and shutters.

Cabinet cells

This cell to create cabinets, whose strong point is its highly competitive price, offers stand-alone solutions specific for both custom designed productions and small series, for the evolved artisan.

With a production capacity of around 30 pieces per shift, the cell is made up of the PX 350i mobile carriage circular saw with a tilting blade, the ME-4 edge bander with exclusive rounding unit, and the Startech CN-plus automatic drilling-routing machine.

At the forefront of the show was also the 'Digital Integrated Woodworking Process',

which demonstrated how software and digital services can assist the customer at each stage of the process in creating the piece of furniture: from the planning and preparation of data, to machine production and monitoring, maintenance and after-sales service.

In response to production planning needs, SCM presented an MES solution integrated into its machines to assist customers with programming and managing the production flow.

In support of the production monitoring stages, machine maintenance and after-sales service, the new digital services enabled by the Maestro Connect platform were also presented.

With a turnover of over 700 million Euro, the SCM Group is a global leader in technologies for machining a wide range of materials: wood, plastic, glass, stone, metal, composite materials and industrial components.

There were 30-odd webinars and more than 50 technological solutions representing the vast range of SCM products.



Where there's durability there's also style



OTS:Bison: July2020

Bison Panel gives you the best of both worlds – toughness and attractive looks. That's what makes it ideal for good looking kitchen shelves and durable furniture. Besides a host of other applications including wardrobes, office partitions, cabinets, ceilings and floorings. No wonder, Bison Panel is India's most trusted panel and the world's biggest name in cement bonded particle boards.



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Jai Industries offered an unparalleled array of products that include woodworking and panel processing machinery and electric motors, all of which are well known for its engineering quality, technology and innovation.

IndiaWood 2020 was a huge success story for the company with the launch of its Optimus premium panel processing machines. The prestigious event saw record-breaking orders and enquiries, including many overseas ones, for Jai Industries.

WudPro range of solid wood machinery.

A steady stream of visitors at the Jai Pavilion were able to witness live demonstrations of an unbeatable wide range, varied machines in variable models; from basic entry level to feature-rich high-end models, in all the three sections.

Jai's team of professionals supervised and supported the live demos, thorough information, informative and impressive communication display/ catalogues and leaflets, while guiding customers with the selection of machines, according to requirements and budget.

In addition, Jai's dealers and distributors from all-over India representing various states and cities were also present, making customers' present and future deals very convenient and friendly.

Jai's Optimus is a success story



With one of the biggest stalls at this event, the Jai Pavilion had a large exhibit floor and business area that was divided into three sections for displaying the major range of machinery. The three display sections included areas for the Optimus range of premium panel processing machinery, the Modula range of panel processing machinery and the

Customers got a full range of options to select from and what helped them in making decisions and concluding deals was the quality and cost comparability ratio of Jai machines. This, combined with the company's record of 6,00,000 machine installations, and its reputation as a reliable service provider, made it their obvious choice.



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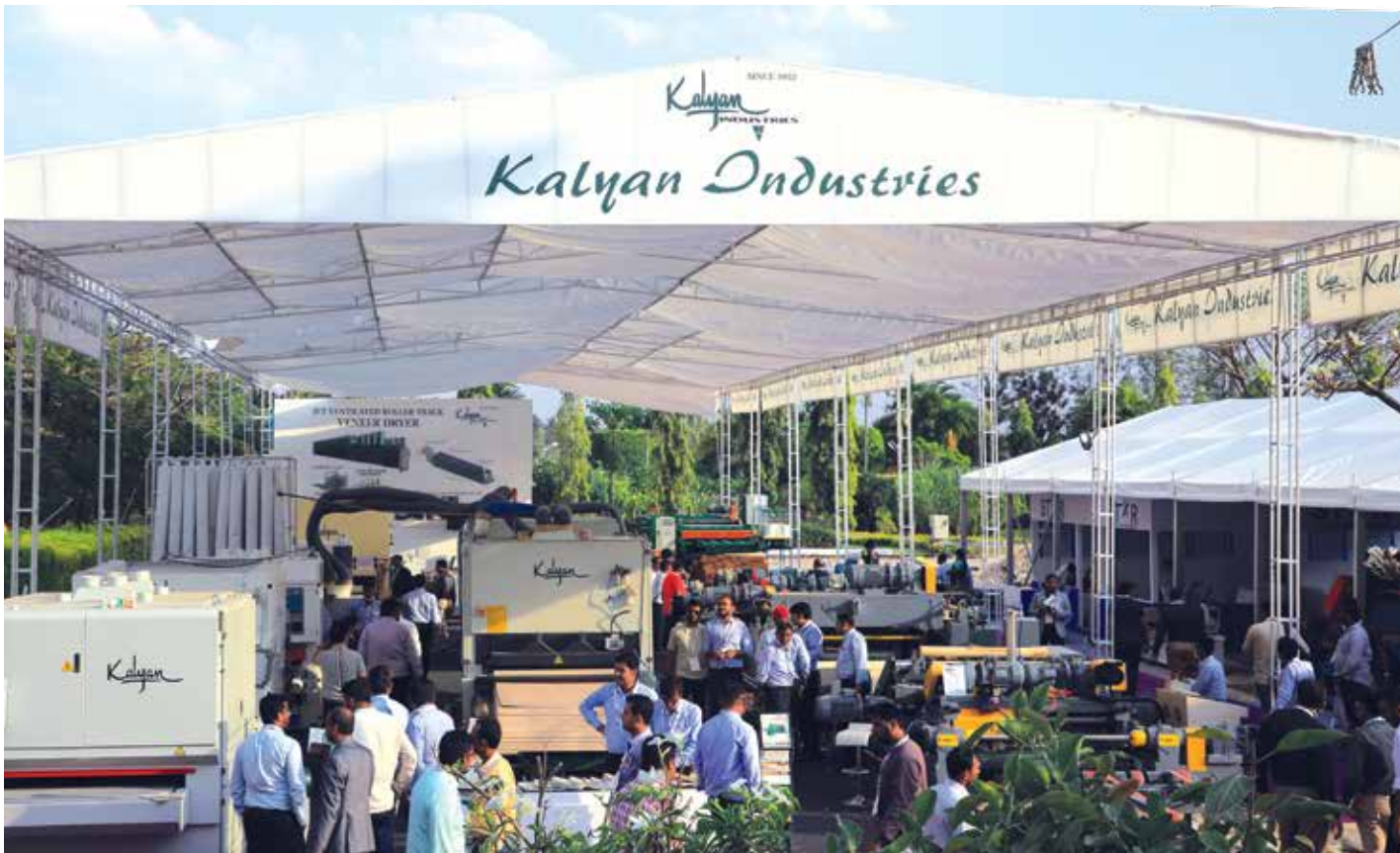
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Kalyan Industries makes a mark with sales

Kalyan Industries, which participated in IndiaWood 2020 exhibition in Bengaluru earlier this year, bagged “substantial” orders during the 5-day show.

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- Multiple rip saw machine

- Straight line rip saw machine
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- Spindle moulders

Kalyan Industries, whose name means “welfare”, was incorporated in 1952 as a family owned business, focusing on quality, efficiency, honesty and reliability. It began with manufacturing saw mills, spindle moulders, combination machines, surface planers, thicknessers and rip saws.

Its popularity led to the company manufacturing plywood manufacturing machinery as well. In 2004 Kalyan Industries initiated the import of furniture

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Pic courtesy: Wooden Street.

Road to recovery

Online furniture start-up WoodenStreet has rolled out measures like touch-free store policy, virtual reality and 3D services and a sanitised supply chain to consumers. With an investment of US\$ 5,00,000, it has introduced virtual reality walkthroughs of customer's homes and contact-less services via smart phones. It is regulating its supply chains, training artisans and delivery teams to meet sanitisation standards, and ensuring physical distancing at its stores, Mr Lokendra Ranawat, WoodenStreet's CEO, was quoted as saying in Business Insider.

We at WoodNews hope that you have utilised the time during the recent Covid-19 lockdown and the gradual "unlocking" of social and business restrictions to do some thorough introspection on your product line and marketing strategy;

Or cleaning up the cobwebs of habit, dusting off hard-wired dogmas, and removing the dirt off your machines and factory floor;

Or rearranging your priorities,

finances, contracts and projects, supply chain and marketing collaterals (website, brochures, advertising);

Or re-energising your contacts with existing and potential suppliers and customers.

It was a time to attend to the several such small and big things – make amends for mistakes, lubricate business relationships and replace broken links – for which most of us never got time in the "normal" (pre-Covid-19) run of things!

The furniture manufacturing ecosystem is

limping back to an as-yet-undefined "normal", but with the vigour of a youngster and the wisdom of one who has learnt from the pandemic's lessons.

Many factories and workshops are off the mark, even with a lot of restrictions; and the market is ready – even though, at this point of time, it is susceptible to the ravages of the new contagion. We continue the series of articles on this topic, with industry insiders airing their problems, solutions and inspirations. But if hope is in the air, can success be far behind?!

'New normal' can be incredibly challenging

By S. Sundar

Dovetail is a Bengaluru-based 35-year-old furniture company driven by design. We develop new products for our customers to their requirements and manufacture them in the required batches, mostly for projects in the retail, education, and hospitality sectors.

While we have a good woodworking facility, we also have an equally good metalworking division, and are always experimenting with new material combinations in developing furniture.

There are two reasons for our longevity – we are clear about our values and are agile and adaptive about our business. When we started our business in 1985 it was to focus on design-led furniture manufacture. We were also early to invest in a good plant and machinery.

Our people were going to be our strength, so we invested in training, mentoring, and retaining them, and this has continued through subsequent generations. So we have a culture of quality and openness to new designs and practices.

Our business, however, has gone through many changes. We began with institutional furniture projects, moved to retail shop-fitting and rode the retail boom in the '90s. When the recession impacted retail in 2009, we expanded the institutional furniture business.

Lockdown 1.1

We got into the home furniture business with our own retail showrooms in the year 2000, but exited the business after

15 years and turned it to B2B supply. Our design strengths and organisational flexibility have helped us adapt quickly to changes in business and the economy, and we are active in shop-fitting, educational furniture, and in furniture for home, hospitality, and co-working spaces.

We closed our factory in March this year, two days before the first one-week lockdown was announced. This decision was taken out of safety concerns for our employees.

When that was followed by a month-long lockdown, we knew we had to take some unusual measures, because there was a good probability of business not coming back to normal soon. We immediately stopped all non-essential expenses and cut down on senior management salaries.

It then became clear that liquidity was going to be a problem as customers were unable to clear their dues, so we took further measures to bring down our break-even point, because business as usual would not be the case for many months.

When the lockdown was lifted in May, we spent two days sanitising our factory and setting the procedures in place, before calling in our workers. As most orders were on hold, we called in only as many workers as required to complete the orders that could be freighted.

However, we decided to keep all our employees, both permanent and contract, on the payroll. We realised that business as usual was unlikely to resume because many of our regular customers were affected by the lockdown. ▶



Most customers want reduced costs, so value engineering and purchase prices on materials will become critical.

– Mr S. Sundar, Managing Director,
Dovetail Furniture.



Changing tack

We came to terms very quickly with the fact that business was going to be quite different, and we had to generate vastly different strategies to adapt. We threw out all projections and forecasts and simply focused on finding new leads and following them through.

Our sales and design teams went into overdrive looking at opportunities and started engaging with many new customers. We decided to be open to all kinds of orders, both in size and in the product, because we had the design expertise to learn fast and be effective in new domains.

So, while our regular orders were on hold, we started landing new orders from new customers. Meanwhile we retained communication with our regular customers for future business.

We usually do not keep large inventories of finished goods, and this practice has helped us immensely to survive these bleak months.

But payment delays from customers have made things difficult; and while the bank has stepped in with additional loans, liquidity is still an issue and will be back to normal only when customers start paying and orders resume their normal levels.

We hope to come out of this stronger on many fronts: our costs have been trimmed; our people have been retained and are working together much better.

Our regular customers will resume business, while we will have a set of new customers. Cash flows are managed better; and cost sensitivity is higher across all functions.

Long haul

It is going to be a long haul and this year is all about survival, not business expansion. As the pandemic continues, our regular customers are adapting their strategies and communicating their scenarios, so we know that their business will be less than normal for the next few months.

While it is too soon to talk about the new normal, we can see some trends in the domains we are present. Retail stores will not expand much and design development

on new retail models that integrate online-to-offline will be fast forwarded.

Most customers want reduced costs, so value engineering and purchase prices on materials will become critical. With educational institutions increasing their online presence, classroom designs will change.

Hospitality will need new criteria of distancing leading to changes in furniture design and space design.

In a way all this is incredibly challenging. New designs will have to be prototyped, improved, or discarded. Materials will have to be revisited; processes recalibrated.

Sales and design will have to quickly learn about requirements in new domains. Costing methods must be reconsidered. The organisation must forget about going back to business as usual and look forward to the new.

Once that new normal is clear, we can start making expansion plans and obtaining the required capital to do so. Till then, no normal is the new normal.

Digitisation holds the key to bouncing back

By Mahesh Nilakh

Ours is a Mumbai-based architectural design consultancy started more than 10 years ago. Down the line, we decided on backward integration and also turned furniture manufacturers. This helped us offer turnkey solutions in the office, residential, hospitality and retail segments.

After the nationwide lockdown was lifted, we started our production in the first week of May, implementing all precautions mandated by the state government to ensure the safety of all our employees.

The idea behind resuming operations was to complete the line item work that went on hold due to the sudden announcement of the lockdown. Obviously, it was an absolute shock because we were never prepared for such a contingency.

Our major factory operations are for our projects, and hence we were not that concerned about the progress of work. Rather than panic, we analysed the situation project by project; and each department gave us feedback on the situation before we came up with a strategy to resume production.

Since we largely work on projects, we did not face any cancellation of orders. Certainly, we were forced to re-schedule our deadlines, but it was done in

consultation with our clients across India.

Going online

Considering the slower growth in the commercial market in the coming months, Wiseart Design Studio has decided to focus on residential furniture with innovative ideas on affordable terms. While strategising on the sales and marketing fronts, we are also focusing on expanding our operations in metal and solid wood.

Our focus is currently on building a cohesive operations model to supply custom-made furniture for homes. But we also realise that product and service need to go hand in hand.

Therefore, the focus has shifted to quality installation rather than mass production. Our factory operations are an extension of our design workshop, which gives us flexibility of continuous innovation.

At the macro level, e-commerce platforms will be essential to do business in an orderly and professional manner. Sourcing will become easier and transparent for manufacturers, obviating the confusion and unethical practices that exist in the current scenario.

Businesses will rely on optimisation to reduce the burden of raw material and product inventories. This stands to benefit

both, the buyer and seller, and shift the focus to quality.

I expect many more e-commerce platforms emerging to take advantage of this need. They will help bring clarity about products to the end consumers, along with assurances of quality, reliability and after-sales service. It could eliminate players of dubious reputation in the market and assist in the survival of the fittest!

We at Wiseart Design Studio already have plans to get on to e-commerce platforms and launch our own e-commerce website. This will include our commercial furniture for offices, retail spaces, the hospitality industry and institutional requirements.

Sustain & consolidate

The entire supply chain, be it domestic or international, has taken a hit and will take time to stabilise. Upon introspection, we have found many opportunities of manufacturing parts in-house, which we earlier outsourced. ▶

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A lot more attention must be given to developing industry-specific “clusters” across the country, just as China has successfully done in the past.

– Mr Mahesh Nilakh, Co-Founder & CEO, Wiseart Design Studio.



Similarly, furniture manufacturers need to re-examine sourcing of material, machinery, consumables and components. But we must realise that no one country can become 100% self-sufficient in all aspects.

As can be expected from the sudden social lockdown, businesses are experiencing disturbed cash flows. While inflows have dried up, outflows cannot be stemmed if fixed organisational expenses and operations are to be kept alive. The key is to understand the overall cash flow and plan objectively. We have been working out a priority model for each of our expenses, whether fixed or variable.

One needs to really work out customised solutions as per one's focus areas of operations and business expansion. Right now the focus must be on sustenance and consolidation, rather than upgrading or expansion.

In the case of Wiseart Design Studio, we are taking this

opportunity to add a few processes, as mentioned earlier. We have always received good support from our public sector bankers and our transactions have always been smooth.

I think the market will surely change, but it will be short-lived. True, there will be cost-cutting in projects, with the focus on essentials and functionality rather than aesthetics. My clients will look for durability, reliability and cost. However, I expect trends to revert as soon as the danger from the contagion has passed.

Govt. assistance

So far as industry expectations from government are concerned, the list has always been endless! A lot more attention must be given to developing industry-specific “clusters” across the country, just as China has successfully done in the past.

To do this, governments must better understand each sector and its manufacturing, market and trade dynamics. This will enable them to draw a balanced roadmap for extending support for infrastructure, finance, sourcing and marketing – not only for domestic consumption but for exports as well.

It will also lead to a judicious platform to determine the extent of subsidies and incentives to each entity in the manufacturing and trading sectors. Major incentives must be planned for participation in trade exhibitions in foreign countries, and international-level exhibition centres must be built across India to attract foreign customers and make India a major sourcing hub.

Another area of assistance is importing cutting-edge technology and incentivising innovation within the country. This way, we could make a beginning in replacing our dated machinery and production methods and graduate to high quality and global standards, to compete with rest of the world.

That said, many newly introduced regulations will be of a temporary nature. I personally think many issues relating to staff, processes and product hygiene must remain and must become law for all industries. This will inculcate discipline and bring in accountability in factory operations. It will help us adopt best practices and prepare to compete at the global level.



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It's time for ready-to-assemble furniture!

By Abhinav Tewari

Lucknow-based Bantus Interior has been serving three generations of clients, offering an exquisite range of furniture in timbers like teak, mahogany, oak and walnut. Our collections range from the classics to the most contemporary trends.

We have a 16,000-square-foot showroom for home furniture; but we also design, manufacture and install furniture for offices and commercial spaces, as well as modular kitchens.

We started working once the Uttar Pradesh government permitted all factories and industrial units to resume work, following all precautions and specified standard operating procedures.

Our top priority was executing pending orders; as well as advising new customers of revised completion dates. Since we kept alerting our customers to the unforeseen delay throughout the lockdown, we didn't face any cancellation of orders. Fortunately, our clients were supportive enough!

Now, with the temporary fall in demand for Chinese products and scarcity of labour in metro cities, we are trying to establish contact with other wholesalers and e-commerce platforms to try and meet the demand.

Online-Offline

As a manufacturer our biggest priority right now is to go online. Getting online not only increases our customer reach, it is also the need of the hour, considering the fact that retail footfalls will not be how they were in the past.

Consumers have spent a lot of time at home during the lockdown and are now looking to add new furniture to their

décor. Online furniture shopping is expected to be on the rise – and those with children and the ones who have moved into new houses are more likely to shop for furniture on the internet.

I also think knock-down and semi-knock-down furniture should see a rise in sales in India. There will be greater acceptability of ready-to-assemble furniture, especially when online purchases see an uptick.

With 'work from home' becoming increasingly common in some sectors of the economy, investing in home office desks, children's furniture and essential wooden kitchenware could also see a rise in demand in the coming months.

We are working on a new range to offer customers the ability to make a variety of choices online. We feel that standardised product development and inventory management are the keys to a successful online furniture business. We wish to have a separate product line for our own portal, and also join existing e-commerce giants with a separate design portfolio.

Sourcing locally

Global disruptions on account of the pandemic did lead to a lot of people reaching out to local or domestic raw material, machinery and component manufacturers.

That said, I feel a lot of domestic raw materials and components need to be on par with international standards and price points. It needs to be seen how this will affect the manufacturing sector in the longer run.

Our major import is timber. Fortunately, we use a lot of Indian indigenous species as well. Apart from that, most raw



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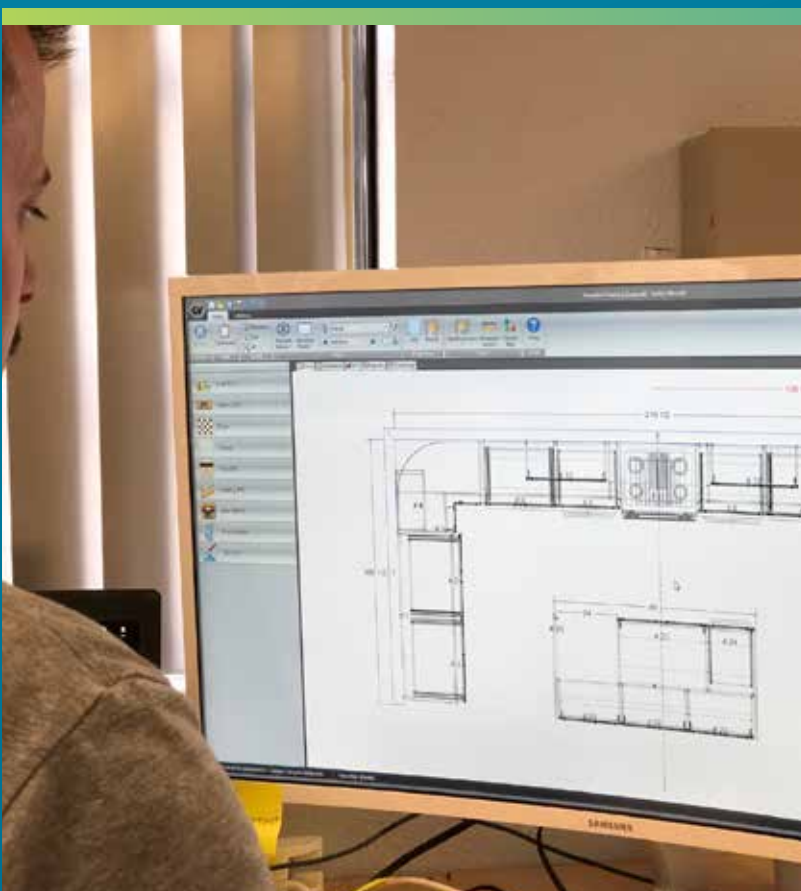
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This crisis might bring about a lot of local manufacturing to cater to local demands, at greater scale and with more automation to reduce lead times. One can expect more customisation in the products too.

– Mr Abhinav Tewari, Director,
Bantus Interiors.

materials like glue, hardware and finishing material have been in regular supply.

There is news of reducing taxes and rates of Indian timber, and removal of unnecessary paper work and taxation, and ease of inter-state movement of timber.

Reduction of import duty on timber can help us use more sustainable and certified timber that comes from abroad. Component manufacturers from India can emerge too.

Most consumables (adhesives, coatings and finishes) and component manufacturers have their manufacturing units in India and I'm sure a lot more can be accommodated because the demand will increase in the coming years.

Cash concerns

We at Bantus Interiors are evaluating the working capital flows in our business and avoid adding a lot of inventory and operational costs and non-essential expenses. We are renegotiating with our suppliers and also keep regular contact with our clients to meet their demands.

Yes, availability of capital will be an impediment to investing in retooling, capacity building or capability enhancement as of now. But the government has promised to give out collateral-free loan, which is a big step to

aid the recovery of the MSME sector in the country.

This is an addition to already existing schemes for micro, small and medium enterprises. A recent survey has shown that almost 70% of MSMEs had approached the government for collateral-free loans offered at the end of the lockdown.

Govt. aid

But there is still a lot that can be done. There are indications that the government might reduce import duty on logs and sawn timber. There is also news of creating furniture manufacturing hubs across India. All this is possible only if the government seriously thinks about giving more support to manufacturers.

There has been serious competition to the Indian furniture industry from countries such as Vietnam and Indonesia. These countries have surpassed Indian furniture manufacturing capabilities, in terms of mass production and the sheer scale of manufacturing standardised products.

Land, infrastructural support, logistics, legislation and electricity tariffs are factors that can act as catalysts in the smooth running of businesses. The government can help us by reforming these rules in the best interest of the MSMEs.

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Prepare to seize the opportunity

By Jikesh Thakkar

As the Covid-19 pandemic unfolds, it brings with it new challenges – as well as opportunities – for businesses to tackle and to outsmart uncertainty. Members of the Indian Laminate Manufacturers' Association (ILMA) have also had to reflect and restructure their integrated business models, ranging from raw material management to supplying end users of laminates.

After lockdown some state governments permitted certain industries to run in addition to essential services, but it took a month to resume production. Some members of ILMA in Gujarat and North India partially commenced production by the beginning of May.

As state governments allowed carpenters, plumbers and electricians to resume services, many ILMA members were in a position to complete pending orders. OEMs and furniture factories managed to restart their work as relaxation norms kicked in.

To boost the manufacturing process, ILMA coordinated with raw material suppliers to rectify market channels preparedness. It also organised a series of webinars with members and other manufacturers with their distributors and dealers to reshape the demand, supply and payment cycle.

The association has decided to keep a close watch on the demand-supply scenario by remaining in touch with its members, to reduce unethical market practices.

Course correction

Global disruptions in supply have taken a toll on the laminates industry in India, which depends on import of 70% of its raw materials and 25% of exports.

The association has plans to encourage its members to identify and source more components and raw materials from within the country than they did earlier. This will be in line with the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' programme launched by the Prime Minister of India. ILMA has also bridged the gap for credit issues by organising meetings with the Laminate Raw Material Suppliers' Association.

Raw materials such as Kraft paper, methanol and melamine have wide networks of distributors and dealers within the country. But regional suppliers will have to revamp their scale of production to fill the void.

Domestic transportation and logistics remained largely unaffected during the lockdown; and supply of chemicals also reached consistency by 'Unlock 1'. Even large players in the laminate industry could achieve 50% of their productivity.

In the days after easing of lockdown restrictions, production was affected due to shortage of paper, adhesives and chemicals. But a bigger problem was the scarcity of casual and semi-skilled migrant workers, who had left for their homes.

Implementation of Covid-19 standard

operating procedures mandated by the government has, therefore, come as a blessing for the safety of migrant workers and their families.

New opportunities

With rapid urbanisation in India, the growth of the real estate sector and increasing demand of Western style high-end furniture is anticipated to boost demand. This demand will bounce back with vigour as soon as the threat of Covid-19 subsides.

The ease of doing business in India will also give rise to new businesses, thereby fuelling more suppliers of furniture. With government policies facilitating 100% foreign direct investment in 'smart'

and exporter of laminates in the world. Government interventions in promoting exports are urgently called for and will allow industries to recover from the effect of the pandemic.

This will open the way for future business with global players and help attract foreign investments. The Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry needs to review the Merchandise Export India Scheme which gives export incentives to the laminate industry.

Cost of manufacturing, which also includes engineering activities, has to be curtailed. This calls for greater focus on individual R&D efforts by the industry, as well as greater sector-academia association and collaboration.



The ease of doing business in India will also give rise to new business, thereby bringing in more suppliers of furniture.

– Mr Jikesh Thakkar, Executive Director, Indian Laminate Manufacturers' Association.



townships and settlements, development projects which increase the quality of residential apartments will thrive.

Several studies have projected incremental growth for the furniture industry between the years 2018-2023. Another study shows a 46% growth in the furniture market in the Asia-Pacific region.

Online presence and website experience is now more important than ever, and can even future-proof the business. For the furniture industry the Covid-19 outbreak has confirmed the importance of engaging in B2B e-commerce.

Govt. assistance

India is one of the largest manufacturer

Some raw materials – such as phenol, methanol and melamine – have high anti-dumping duty, which needs to be reduced.

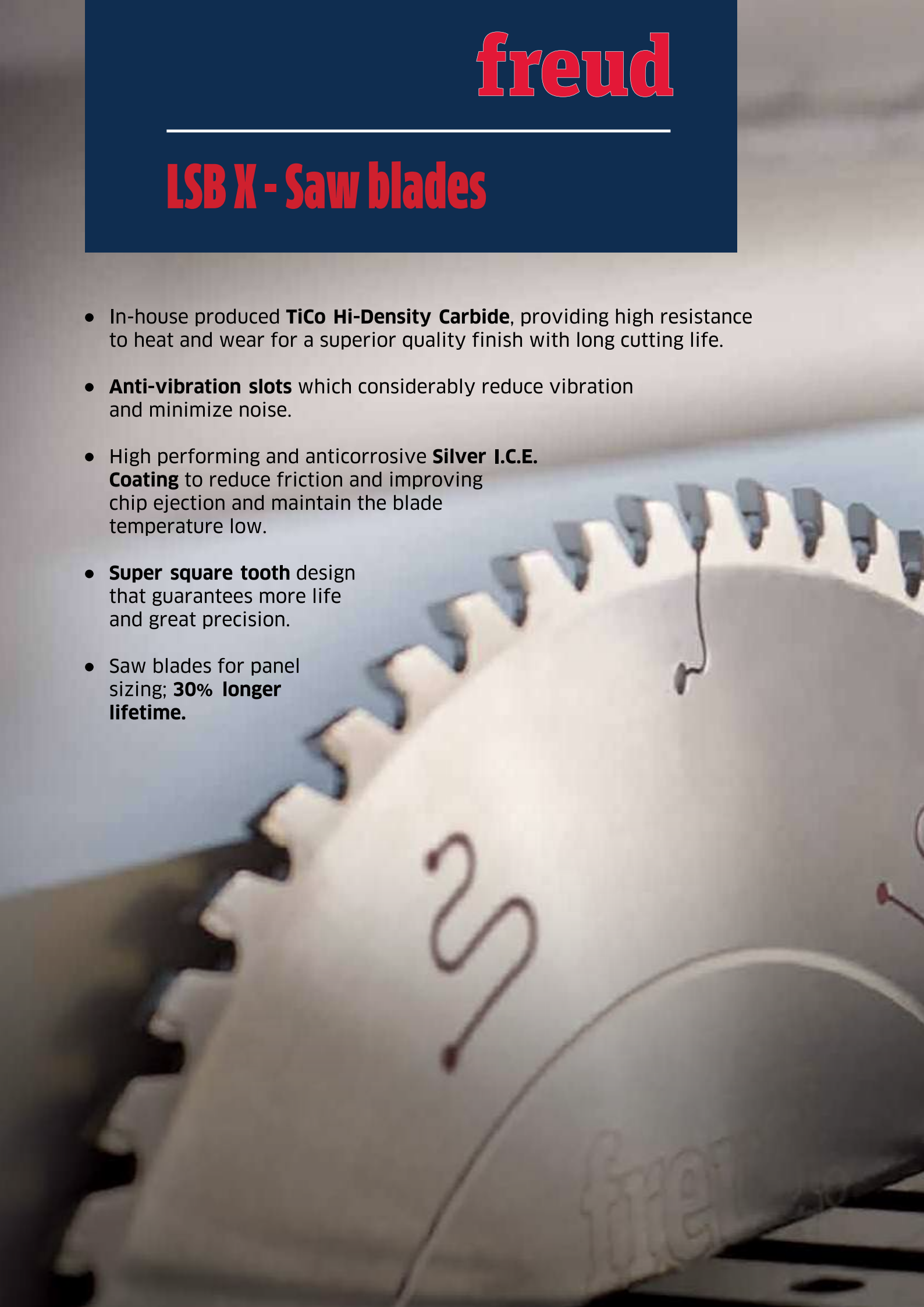
Since furniture can be considered a basic necessity, the government could support the laminate industry with interest-free loans for 2 years; reduced GST rates; or some other schemes for production enhancement.

Collective powers and years of learning of ILMA members have enabled a strong network with their markets. They think businesses have to prepare quickly and evolve to identify and seize opportunities. After the initial hours of pandemic-induced uncertainty, ILMA members think the dawn has just begun!

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Furniture making may shift to workshops

By Giridhar Seetharam

Pidilite Industries has fully resumed its production after taking the requisite permissions from the local authorities as per government guidelines. We are taking all necessary safety precautions for our staff and workers.

All social distancing and hygiene norms are being followed. Business is also slowly resuming in various parts of the country after the lockdown imposed on account of the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

As we reopened business, there has been an increase in demand for a few of our products. Production has been planned to fulfil the existing orders at the earliest; and we are working towards ensuring that our customers do not face any issues in terms of material supply.

But we anticipate that certain parts of the country and certain economic activities will take longer to return to 'normal'. There are, however, places which have resumed operations. Our priority will be to ensure we don't lose out on such opportunities.

Apart from this, we have formed internal teams to look at newer

avenues of growth and ways to save costs to minimise the effects of the economic slowdown.

Pidilite's distribution network has always been an area of strength. In these uncertain times, the width and depth of our reach will play out in our favour. Our field teams and channel partners have been in constant touch with our customers throughout this difficult period. Now that business has reopened, we are confident that we will be able to service every open customer in both urban and rural areas.

Market changes

There will be many attitudinal and behavioural changes for both the final consumer and the users (carpenters) of our products. Given the increased focus on hygiene and safety, some part of the furniture making process is likely to shift to back-end workshops.

There will be a higher consumption of home-office furniture as a large part of the population will work from home for the time being. These changes in trends will most likely lead to increased automation in the furniture making industry.

A big impact of the pandemic is the economic difficulties owing to loss of jobs and irregularity of incomes. As a result, the consumer spending priorities would have changed.

Furniture and renovation requirements will take a back seat in the near future. This will be the biggest challenge for the industry.

After the country went into lockdown, many carpenters went back to their villages due to lack of work and regular income. Now that work is resuming, there is a sudden shortage of labour in various industries.

As the situation keeps improving, trains and inter-state bus services will open up, and the carpenters will start returning to work. This has already started happening in the 'green' zones. We are hopeful that steadily, construction and renovation of homes will resume.

There have been a few disruptions in the sourcing of raw materials and goods. A robust and cost-effective supply chain is the need of the hour. In the current global turmoil the most agile companies will get ahead by looking at multiple sourcing options to continue servicing their customers.

This can be looked at as a win for both sides. There will be opportunities for suppliers to enter new spaces and garner more customers. Buyers will also relook at their needs and requirements, leading to better quality goods and prices.

Pidilite has always stood by its employees and partners. Even during the pandemic we have been regular in our payments to employees and vendors. But in tough situations like this, it is very important to conserve cash.

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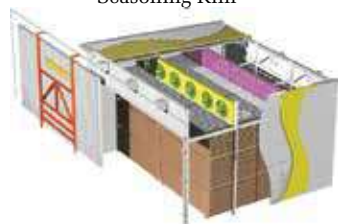
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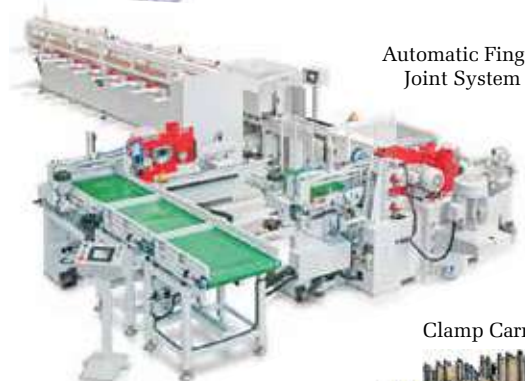
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To continue supporting our extended Pidilite family, we will look towards more efficiency and effectiveness in our processes and policies. We will explore newer ways to do our business in a cost-effective manner.

New 'normal'

There will be a need for products that address the needs of the current situation and at competitive prices because consumers will look for savings and suitability; and B2B consumers will be looking to improve productivity and efficiency.

It will be important for companies to focus on their core strength while looking out for low hanging fruits that fit in with the business strategy of the organisation.

Right now factories are unable to operate with 100% work force, thus efficient production with minimal wastage is a must. The health and safety of the factory

workers will be a priority to keep the factories operational. We will need to be very flexible in our production process to accommodate sudden and frequent changes in demand – for product range and quantities.

So far as the markets are concerned, tough situations always bring out better and innovative solutions to existing problems. There will be a change in the type of substrates, manufacturing processes and go-to-market strategies. I believe it will lead to newer, better products and solutions for the consumers.

Client care

Since the safety of our partners and customers is of paramount importance, we have given out personal protection kits to our distributors and dealers. We have also extended Covid insurance to carpenters, dealers, distributors and their staff as well.

We have enabled the conversion of reward points accumulated by our users to cash on their Paytm wallet to help them out financially. Our employees have

gone out of their way to help our users and customers by arranging medical care, food, etc.

The volumes purchased by customers will be a factor of the demand in the market. We may see a rise in requirement for more economical products. However, we do not expect lowering of quality expectations.

I foresee certain limitations in spending by organisations. That said, certain investments made now might be beneficial in the long run, such as machines with better productivity, relevant innovation, etc. Organisations with limited debt on their balance sheets will come out stronger in the long run.

The government and the Reserve Bank of India have been working towards financial stability of the manufacturing industry and financial institutions. These are welcome steps that will help in the financial needs of companies. Collaboration will be the key to overcome the hardships being faced worldwide.



Certain investments made now might be beneficial in the long run, such as machines with better productivity, relevant innovation, etc.

*– Mr Giridhar Seetharam,
President of Fevicol Division,
Pidilite Industries.*



Watch for demand from niche areas

By Ashok D'Souza

"Post-Covid -19" is a misnomer; there is no post-Covid-19. The virus is here to stay, either in its present or in a mutated form. The issue for individuals, businesses or industry is one of how to live with and manage a globally changed situation, in what is referred to as the "new normal".

Never in history has a pandemic impacted the whole world as Covid-19 has done. International travel accelerated the global spread of the virus at a speed that took experts by surprise. Governments locked down countries in an effort to slow the contagion and flatten the peak of casualty graphs.

While this definitely saved lives and bought time to come up with solutions, the lockdown had other effects:

- Millions of jobs were lost, and the migrant crisis happened in India
- Economies worldwide practically shut down in the face of the contagion
- Industrial units, offices and a large spectrum of the economy was forced to close
- Air, rail and road transport came to an abrupt halt; sea-faring became a high-risk undertaking.

'Unlock' India

Governments did whatever they could to mitigate the suffering of those affected and to stimulate demand and the economy. These measures have had

limited success. India went through four phases of the lock down that lasted 10 weeks.

This drastic measure had to end, and the effort to find a balance between lives and livelihood has begun. It is now up to industry and businesses to pick up and manage what is left in a forever changed situation.

Conditions vary from industry to industry, place to place and country to country. To generalise and suggest a common remedy would be inappropriate and incorrect.

Solutions that apply to the airline, automobile or hospitality sectors are not applicable to furniture manufacturing or the woodworking industry in general. The woodworking industry can, by definition, be considered to encompass furniture, machinery, raw materials and fittings.

Each of these areas is confronted by varying conditions created by the lockdown and the state of the economy in our country. To a large extent, the industry is dependent on demand that stems from the real estate sector. Unfortunately, this sector is one of the worst affected.

According to media reports, the sale of residential properties across the top seven cities has dropped by 81% (April to June, 2020) as compared to the same period last year. New launches are negligible. This will directly impact the woodworking industry and possibly delay

the recovery over a longer period of time.

Obstacle course

Not all is bleak, however. The need for goods and services still exists. Unexpectedly, the demand for furniture, which can kick-start manufacturing, has come from niche areas such as WFH (work from home) furniture and e-commerce retailers.

Winding back a few months to the second half of 2019, the industry – machinery, joinery, furniture and related products – was already stagnating due to a sluggish economy and suppressed demand.

Great hopes were pinned on IndiaWood 2020 exhibition as a platform that would stimulate demand and lift the industry. In fact a majority of exhibitors closed multiple orders and generated numerous enquiries for machinery and materials.

This was expected to carry the industry forward. Then came Covid-19 and the social and economic lockdown.

Back to the present and 'Unlock Phase-1'. The uncertainty still persists. Some businesses and manufacturing units (machinery,



Rural India will develop faster than the metros. It is up to businesses to find opportunities in new pastures.

– Mr Ashok D'Souza, Director,
Altendorf India.

furniture, etc.) have opened and others are in the process of doing so. But these units are faced with various obstacles:

- Lack of orders: demand for domestic interiors is down and retailers are holding back
- Working capital: funding issues have worsened with banks and non-banking financial companies becoming tight-fisted
- Labour shortage: deprived of jobs, salaries and shelter migrants returned home in the millions
- Market scene: customers are now pushing for unrealistic prices, citing lack of demand.

'New normal'

Lack of modernisation and innovative designs, coupled with lack of quality control in the domestic furniture industry has encouraged the growth of imports.

Over the last few years favourable market conditions have boosted the demand for imported furniture. This has encouraged foreign brands as well as large home-grown organised players to

enter this segment.

One estimate puts the total import of furniture at US\$ 603 million in 2018-19, out of which US\$ 311 million was from China. It is estimated that there are over 10,000 importers of low-end furniture mainly from China and Vietnam.

The woodworking industry in India, to a large extent, still operates in the unorganised sector. The small and medium industries are, in general, inefficient and used to small volumes of business with large margins.

In the "new normal" this will not work. Factory owners must reshape their businesses in ways that can help them survive and even prosper. Some options to consider for the short and longer term are:

- Strengthen ties with existing customers
- Do not compromise on quality of end product
- Don't undervalue/discount your products
- Invest in mechanisation and skilled labour
- Be open to opportunities and new products
- Use various media for marketing, brand building.

Mixed signals

Many small and medium furniture manufacturers are finding it difficult to re-start or are even shutting shop. On the other hand, there is no shortage of enquiries from potential investors at this stage.

But large start-ups, either for the manufacture of furniture or raw materials (MDF, etc.), have put their plans on hold.

Import of furniture and related products may take a hit. The Indian government is likely to impose restrictions with a view to boost domestic manufacturing. Higher import duty, revaluations of declared import prices, 100% inspection of cargo are some conditions importers may have to contend with.

Woodworking, including machinery, furniture, raw materials and fittings, is still a growth industry and will continue to be so in the years ahead. The greater demand will come from Tier II and Tier III towns and smaller cities.

Rural India will develop faster than the metros. It is up to businesses and the industry to find opportunities in new pastures. Quality products and flexibility are the keys to overcoming the difficult times and finding success.

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Knife: 30 x 12 x 1.5 x 35°



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50 x 12 x 1.5 x 35°
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Changeable Knives / TCT



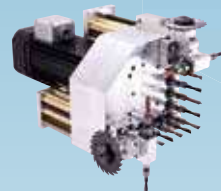
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with Changeable Knives
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15 x 15 x 2.5 x 30°
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Malaysian industries up and running

By Wong Kah Cane

The Covid-19 pandemic brought much of the world economies to a grinding halt. It was tough for businesses to keep their financial wheels turning and the impact of lockdowns were particularly brutal for companies with little reserves for managing sudden slumps.

Malaysia was not spared as the economic indicators showed a worrying trend during the Movement Control Order (MCO) when it was first implemented from 18-31 March, 2020, to contain the pandemic.

As many companies faced mounting challenges to survive as supply, and demand for both overseas and domestic markets were disrupted, the government of Malaysia had promptly rolled out the 'Prihatin Stimulus Package' of over US\$ 61 billion to weather the financial crisis.

Numerous consultation sessions among the various ministries, government agencies and the private sectors took place throughout the MCO to discuss and fine-tune the implementation of the regulations and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for businesses that were given approval to operate during the MCO.



It's a digital push we are looking at now. We simply cannot ignore this fact and businesses must now consider operating on e-platforms.

– Mr Wong Kah Cane, Acting CEO, Malaysian Timber Council.

Taking stock

As many industries were contemplating a shutdown, the timber sector received special approval from the Ministry of Health through the Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities (MPIC) to operate under strict adherence to the SOPs during the MCO.

More than 500 timber-based companies were granted approvals of which over 70% were furniture and moulding manufacturers.

The Malaysian Timber Council (MTC), together with many public and private sector organisations, played a key role in facilitating the smooth operation of the timber sector by analysing and channeling feedback from the industry players to the government through consultation sessions.

MTC had also conducted an industry-wide survey. Among the findings of the survey were concerns over the slowing global and domestic demands, cash flow management, order fulfilling issues and workforce sustenance.

The MCO was extended in stages, and on 4 May, 2020, the government implemented the Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO), which is effective till 9 June, 2020, and allowed most economic sectors, including the timber sector, to operate based on regulated SOPs.

Swift action

One of the primary hiccups during the MCO involved the supply disruption of timber raw materials, which was swiftly resolved during the CMCO when the government granted permission for the transportation of logs from the landing

sites to the respective factories.

Since then timber-based manufacturers are assured of regular supply of raw materials for their operations. The timber sector has been literally up and running during the MCO and CMCO with 90% of manufacturers having resumed operations and more than 60% resuming exports.

These timber-based manufacturers are also revisiting their business plans and actively relooking at digitalisation and automation options to further fortify their operations.

The timber industry is an important contributor to the Malaysian economy and provides employment to more than 50,000 local workers.

The timber sector in Malaysia has been largely operating unhindered, thanks to the quick response and strong support from the government, which has indicated further assistance to stimulate the economy to enable businesses to weather the pandemic storm.

MTC, too, in line with its role and obligation to the timber industry, has taken the necessary steps to transform its operation model and activities to suit the current and post-Covid-19 business needs.

The MTC's main objectives are to promote the Malaysian timber trade and develop the market for timber products globally, to promote the development of the industry by upgrading the industry's manufacturing technology base, to augment the supply of raw materials, to provide information services and to protect and improve the Malaysian timber industry's global image. (www.mtc.com.my).



Towards a sustainable 'Circle of Life'

*IKEA joins movement to
share, repair, reuse,
refurbish, re-manufacture
and recycle*

A circular economy is an economic system aimed at eliminating waste and the continual use of resources. The system employs reuse, sharing, repair, refurbishment, re-manufacturing and recycling to create a closed-loop system, minimising the use

of resource inputs and limiting the creation of waste, pollution and carbon emissions.

By contrast, the linear system that is currently the adopted lifestyle all over the world, practices the "take, make, dispose" model of production. In the process it uses up limited reserves to

create products with a finite lifespan, which end up in landfills or incinerators.

The circular economy, often referred to simply as "circularity", aims to keep products, equipment and infrastructure in use for longer, thus improving the productivity of these resources.

All “waste” should become “food” for another process: either a by-product or recovered resource for another industrial process, or as regenerative resources for nature (compost). This is a regenerative approach in contrast to the traditional linear economy.

Profitable system

Proponents of the circular economy suggest that a sustainable world does not mean a drop in the quality of life for consumers and can be achieved without loss of revenue or extra costs for manufacturers.

The argument is that circular business models can be as profitable as linear models, allowing consumers to continue enjoying similar products and services. Intuitively, the circular economy would appear to be more sustainable than the current linear economic system.

Reducing the resources used, and the waste and leakage created, conserves resources and helps to reduce environmental pollution. However, it is argued by some that these assumptions are simplistic; that they disregard the complexity of existing systems and their potential trade-offs.

The circular economy can cover a broad scope. Findings from the literature show that researchers have focused on different areas such as industrial applications with both product-oriented and services, practice and policies to better understand the limitations that the CE currently faces, strategic management for details of the circular economy and different outcomes such as potential re-use applications and waste management.

It includes products, infrastructure, equipment and services, and applies to every industry sector. It also covers ‘technical’ resources (metals, minerals, fossil resources) and ‘biological’ resources (food, fibres, timber, etc.).

Most schools of thought advocate a shift from fossil fuels to the use of renewable energy, and emphasise the role of diversity as a characteristic of resilient and sustainable systems.

Rental model

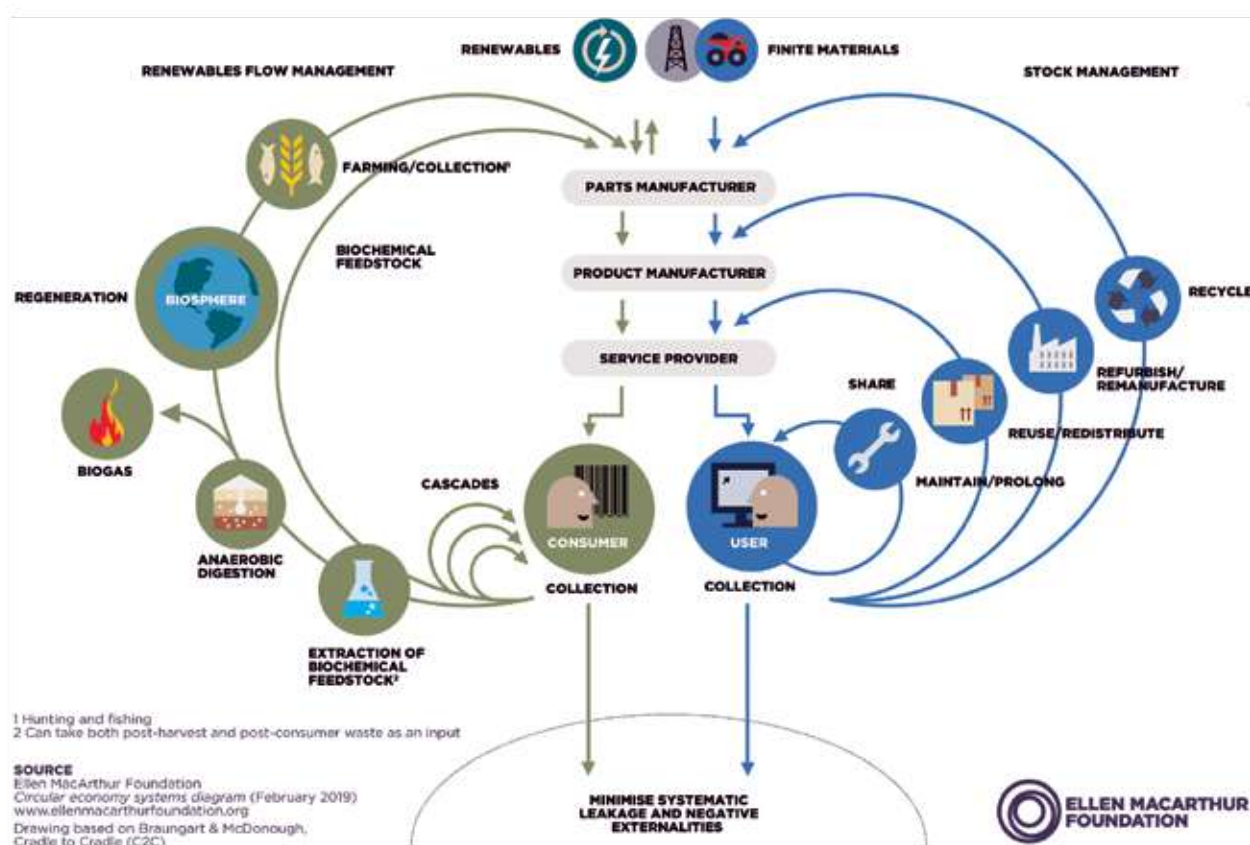
One example of a circular economy model is the implementation of renting models in traditional ownership areas like electronics, clothes, furniture, and transportation.

Through renting the same product to several clients, manufacturers can increase revenues per unit, thus decreasing the need to produce more to increase revenues. Recycling initiatives are often described as a circular economy and are likely to be the most widespread models.

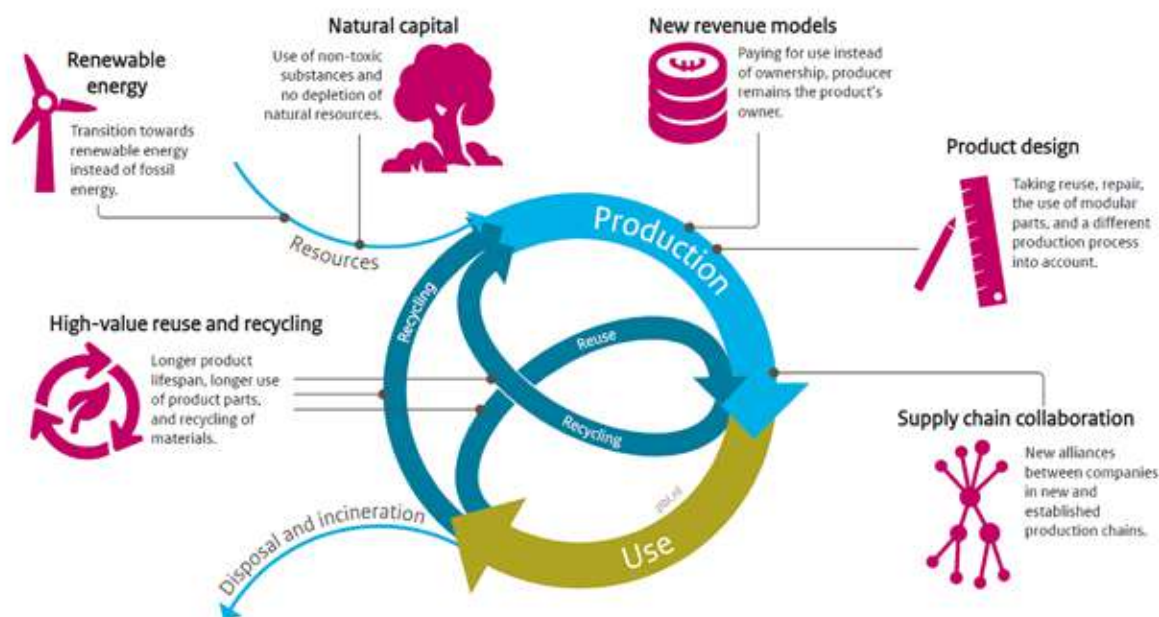
Circular business models can be defined as business models that are closing, narrowing, slowing, intensifying and dematerialising loops, to minimise the resource inputs into and the waste and emission leakage out of the organisational system.

This comprises recycling measures (closing), efficiency improvements (narrowing), use phase extensions (slowing), a more intense use phase (intensifying), and the substitution of products by service and software solutions (dematerializing).

These strategies can be achieved through the purposeful design of material recovery processes and related circular supply chains. ▶



Elements of a circular economy



Furniture industry

When it comes to the furniture industry, most of the products are passive durable products, and accordingly implementing strategies and business models that extend the lifetime of the products (like repairing and re-manufacturing) would usually have lower environmental impacts and lower costs.

The European Union (EU) has seen a huge potential for implementing a circular economy in the furniture sector. Currently, out of 10,000,000 tonnes annually discarded furniture, most of it ends in landfills or incinerators.

There is a potential of €4.9 billion increase in GVA from improved circularity in the furniture sector in the EU by 2030. Besides 1,63,300 jobs could be created by shifting to the circular model in the EU furniture sector.

A study about the status of the Danish furniture companies' effort on circular economy states that 44% of the companies included maintenance in their business models, and 22% of them had take-back schemes.

Besides, 56% of the companies designed for recycling. They concluded that although the

circular economy is gaining momentum, it is still lacking some knowledge for it. Besides, the need to change the business model could be another barrier.

Another report in the UK saw a huge potential for reuse and recycling in the furniture sector. The study concludes that around 42% of the bulk waste sent to landfills annually (1.6 million tonnes) is furniture. They also found that 80% of the raw material in the production phase is waste.

Enter IKEA

IKEA is one such company that is committed to becoming a circular business by 2030. It is now proactively working towards achieving this goal and has entered into a strategic partnership with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation to accelerate the transition.

The Foundation aims at accelerating the transition to the circular economy and has emerged as a global thought leader, putting the circular economy on the agenda of decision-makers around the world.

The strategic partnership focuses on putting the home furnishing business on the global circular economy map and

accelerating the transition within IKEA and beyond. The shared ambition is to create a lasting impact on a global scale and drive the transformation towards a circular society.

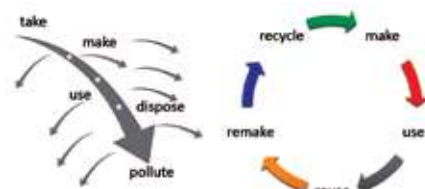
The goal is to give products and materials a longer life through reuse, refurbishment, re-manufacturing, and, as a last option, recycling.

IKEA has made progress towards becoming a circular business and the first refurbishment tests took place in 2019. Sofas were refurbished and re-sold, providing knowledge for future scaling potential.

The company is also exploring services enabling customers to acquire, care for and pass on products in circular ways. It has also developed circular product design principles for the development of all products, with the ambition to only use renewable and recycled materials by 2030.

Today, more than 60% of the IKEA product range is based on renewable materials, like wood and cotton, and more than 10% contains recycled materials.

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation was launched in 2010. The charity's work focuses on seven key areas: insight and analysis; business; institutions, governments, and cities; systemic initiatives; circular design; learning; and communications. For further information visit www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org.



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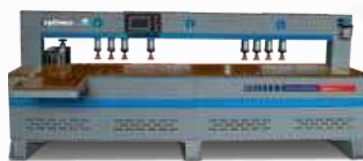
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A scientist from Catas Academy lays out samples for anti-bacterial tests.

Surfaces in the time of Corona-virus

By Franco Bulian

The characteristics of surfaces in relation to the "chance of contamination" have never been a burning issue like today. If, in the past, we looked at anti-bacterial properties of surfaces with great interest, today they could even represent a new global standard, in a world challenged by the Covid-19 pandemic.

An extremely touchy topic, where labels such as "anti-bacterial" or "anti-microbial" surfaces could represent a fundamental motivation for the market. But what are we really talking about?

How the world of furniture can and must deal with materials presenting such new potential?

The term "contagion", which often occurs in our conversations during this period, has an interesting etymology deriving from the Latin words *cum*, meaning "together", and *tangere* meaning "to touch".

Indeed, the simple act of touching a surface can be the source of many infections and some studies testify, for example, that the door handles or the elevator buttons of crowded places are among the primary causes of the transmission of many viruses.

Contracting infection

These strange "biological entities" are, in fact, able to easily pass from the surfaces we touch to our hands and from the hands to our mouth and eyes, which represent a kind of open door through which they are finally able to enter into our body.

In this regard, an Australian study published in 2015 proved that people are used to touch their faces very often (on average 23 times per hour) and viruses take great advantage of such gestures, even unconscious, to considerably spread their diffusion.

The transmission of the virus through the surfaces is evidently based on a first contact deriving from an infected person, mostly through the well-known "droplets" (saliva droplets transmitted through a sneeze, a cough or simply by speaking to another person) followed by the ability of the virus to survive on the contaminated surface.

Recent studies, applied precisely on

Covid-19, described a fairly prolonged survival of this virus on plastics (up to 72 hours) and on steel (48 hours), while it is more limited on cardboard or copper.

The most interesting data regarding the interior environments is probably that relating to plastics considering that many of the surfaces around us are coated or in any case covered with laminates or other polymer-based materials that represent the primary constituents of plastics.

Containing spread

Apart from all these theoretical considerations, many practical things have changed in our daily lives as a result of the dramatic effects of Covid-19 and we have learned that besides the mutual distance, the hygiene of our hands and of all the surfaces surrounding us is also crucial.

These new needs and habits are determining significant consequences also for the world of furniture and finishes. There is, in fact, an increasingly requests of anti-bacterial surfaces and, on the other side, it is considered rather fundamental the ability of furniture surfaces to resist to frequent cleaning and disinfection operations.

In this regard, Catas has recently started specific studies collaborating with various partners of our sector.

The anti-bacterial effect of furniture surfaces is normally achieved thanks to the addition of particular additives (for example silver base substances) which perform a biocide and/or inhibitory action towards their proliferation.

Catas carries out specific tests to study the anti-bacterial action of plastics and other non-porous materials by contaminating the surfaces under investigation and verifying their effects on bacteria survival.

The reference methods are those described by ISO 22196 and JIS Z2801, as well as internal methods specifically created to adapt the test to materials which, due to their intrinsic properties, could not been tested according to the standardized methods.

However, these tests do not consider viruses and in particular Covid-19, which our institute obviously does not have inside the laboratories! As mentioned above, frequent cleaning and disinfection of surfaces are recommended actions at all levels to counter the spread of Covid-19.

Deleterious effects

Among the products declaredly effective

Alcohol tends to cause the softening of some coating films; and oxidising agents may be responsible for discoloration or "fading".

against the virus, there are alcohol-based preparations and those containing oxidizing agents, such as sodium hypochlorite or hydrogen peroxide.

Alcohol is certainly an agent to be taken into due consideration, as it sometimes tends to cause the softening of some coating films. On the other hand, oxidising agents may be responsible for discoloration or "fading" even if there are not currently much data available to be able to present a real case study.

Finally, particular attention must be paid to the colouring agents that are sometimes added to these cleaning products. If these substances penetrate deeply into the surfaces, they could be difficult to remove, resulting in the formation of coloured areas.

In this regard, Catas has developed a specific investigation protocol (based on EN 12720) to verify the ability of the surfaces to resist contact with cleaning products and commonly used disinfectant liquids.

In addition to assessment of the sole contact of a liquid with the surface under test, Catas has also developed a test method for assessing the combined effect of contact with rubbing, simulating a real cleaning operation.

The combined effect can in fact be very deleterious, causing various types of damages on furniture surfaces. The tools made available by Catas can undoubtedly represent a valid and ready-to-use aid for the whole market hoping, in any case, that also the standardisation world begins to consider and work on these new needs and present challenges.

– The writer is Deputy Director of Italy-based Catas Academy, the most important European laboratory for the wood-furniture sector. For details write to formazione@catas.com.



Handle with care! Did you hear the 'crack'?

Furniture that looks damaged beyond repair, but is fully functional? That is what an imaginative and experienced woodworker from New Zealand is up to for the past few years.

His designs and work have gone viral on Facebook, after Henk Verhoeff's daughter published them on the social media platform.

The joints appear seamless, but his dressers look like they have been cracked open from some other dimensional force. Some of the smaller drawers even have a natural separator for small items!

Large cracks, splinters, holes, and warped sides and edges mark his furniture pieces, looking like they have stepped out of a cartoon strip. But each piece is fully functional.

When asked about his style, Henk told *Bored Panda*: "I describe my style of furniture as broken and weird. I like making weird furniture, something that you don't see in a shop."

Henk says that all of his creations come solely from his twisted brain. "It's hard to say how long each piece takes – it could easily be 80-100 hours. Sometimes details or angles don't work and I have to start again," he says.

Henk mostly uses recycled New Zealand pine. Before he retired, Henk was a joiner and cabinet maker for 53 years. "Now it is just my hobby and passion," he says.

For now, Henk's dressers are not for sale; they will decorate his home and woodworking studio in Auckland.

Woodworking is a tough skill to master, requiring plenty of patience, knowledge, and the right tools and practice. All of these are eminently visible in Henk's work. He seems to have truly succeeded in bringing the weirdest creations of his imagination to life!



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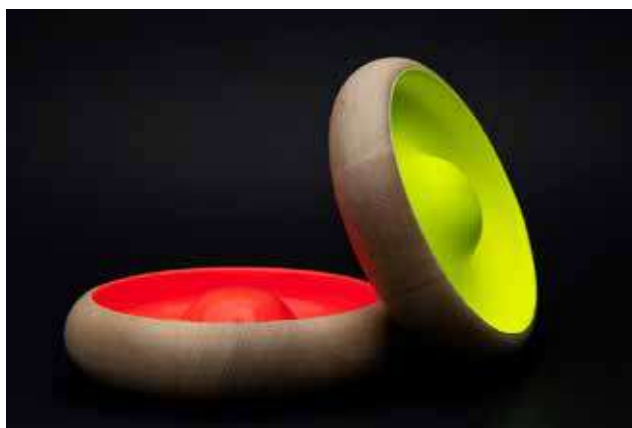
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Shape+ Colour+ Finish= perfect plate!



(All pics: Manuel Cafini, ICA Group).

Plates by (L-R) Erica Malegori, Cecilia Borettaz, Giulia Muscatelli and Clara Guimbretiere.

What is shape without colour? The ICA Group met students of the Master in Colour Design & Technology of the Politecnico di Milano recently for a special workshop.

They were asked to design a set of wooden plates and to choose colours and finishes. ICA supplied them water-based coatings. The polytechnic course aims to provide training to colour professionals in the creative and industrial fields.

Cecilia Borettaz's plate was influenced by an ancient Japanese technique known as Shou Sugi Ban. Here is how she describes her

project. "I explored the shades of black on wood through a special Japanese treatment that preserves the quality of wood. The technique consists in burning the wood surface, making it water-proof and resistant in an outdoor environment."

The colours chosen by Clara Guimbretière ranged from very different palettes that blend harmoniously on her plate. Clara uses the delicate colours of nature and the artificial colours of the make-up world.

"For the shape of the plate, I took inspiration from a blush compact to create a bowl surrounded by a flat ring. I chose delicate tones such as peach, pale pink and beige. These colours come directly from the world of make-up," she said.

Erica Malegori's plate has a concave, cozy shape. She chose three different finishes: the soft touch of the flowers; natural wood for the trunk; the super glossy for the shine of the orange peel.

Giulia Muscatelli focussed all attention on the plate's internal surface: at its centre stands a small dome, the external surface has been left natural, while the internal one features neon colours that help create a strong contrast.

The students were able to demonstrate how colours or a specific surface finish can complete and enhance the meaning of a design object.

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There is a positive view of wood in the home, including in Modern (L) and Country (R) interiors.

Wooden interiors becoming trendy

A new study of opinions on interior pine products conducted as a research project within the Swedish strategic innovation programme, Biolnnovation, revealed that modern style, light colour and visible knots is how consumers want to decorate their home with wood.

The organisers of the study are industry organisation Swedish Wood, Linköping University and

Luleå University of Technology.

The purpose of the study was to create a clear picture of market requirements and expectations when it comes to interior wood products. The results are drawn from a questionnaire in seven European countries: Sweden, Norway, the UK, Poland, Germany, France and Spain, and are based on over 7,000 responses.

The results clearly show a positive view of wood in the home in all countries, irrespective of the interior style (Modern,

Scandinavian, Classic and Country).

Wood also reinforces a positive attitude towards each interior design style, so people become more positive towards a style if it has exposed wood than if there is no wood. The respondents prefer wood for flooring, wall cladding and furniture, once again irrespective of the style.

With the right style, colour, finish, function and design, there is enormous potential for pine in even Classic (L) and Scandinavian (R) styles.



A large group particularly prefers pine wood flooring, and light colours are more popular for both wood flooring and wall cladding. More want visible knots in wood flooring and cladding than knot-free alternatives.

For consumers, ease of cleaning, help with installation and the option of home delivery are all key factors for their purchases. Broadly speaking, price, quality and look/design are of equal importance when purchasing home furnishing products.

According to Olof Broman, a lecturer at Luleå University of Technology, the main takeout from the study is that wood is very much 'on trend' and with the right style, colour, finish, function and design, there is enormous potential for pine in both furniture and interior design.

For wood flooring, around 70% of the respondents prefer a light colour palette, in this case, pale brown and grey. The same also applies to wall cladding, with white wood another popular choice.

The respondents in the study were also asked their view of statements regarding the environmental impact of products, with the majority saying that they value a product having a low environmental impact, and over half also stating that, from an environmental point of view, wood is a better material than the alternatives.

There is an increasing trend for interior architects and designers to choose pine because of its environmental credentials and because it can be used to create so many different looks, conclude the researchers.

BioInnovation is a strategic innovation program funded by the Swedish Forest Industries Federation, IKEM (Innovation and Chemical Industries in Sweden) and TEKNO (the Swedish trade and employers' association for companies working in the textile and fashion industry).

Its mission is to increase the added value and competitiveness in the Swedish bio-based sector by creating the best possible conditions for developing new bio-based materials, products and services. For details, email info@swedishwood.com

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How AR can revolutionise furniture industry

The world over, the Covid-19 pandemic has led industries to look for new ways to continue the business. Appville Softwares, a Coimbatore-based company focused on innovation and delivering next-generation XR solutions, smart IoT and digital twin solutions, is now studying how augmented reality (AR) can be utilised to improve operations in various areas of work.

The carpentry and wood industry, one of the oldest and most traditional businesses, urgently needs a makeover and the company has identified three important changes that can be

effected in its working.

Since the visit of the customer to the physical showroom has drastically reduced, it is difficult to experience the product before purchasing. This can greatly affect the purchasing decision.

Thanks to the latest developments in AR technology, however, the end product can be experienced right in the customer's house through their mobile phones. Although this facility was provided by IKEA a few years back, it required an App to visualise it.

Now, thanks to the development of WebAR tech in Google Chrome and Apple Safari, the end product in 3D can be visualised via the browser itself. The

lighting on the model and shadows cast by them will match the customer's environment and will blend with real objects in their surroundings.

In the upcoming higher-end models of Android and iOS, depth sensors are also included. This enhances the possibility of the end product being placed in the room without jostling with other items for space.

To achieve 3D modelling, either USDZ or GLTF of the artefact has to be designed and published on the web.

Trouble-shooting

Over-the-shoulder support is the latest trending buzzword in the industrial sector to make the trouble-shooting and

servicing of industrial machinery possible. These support Apps are video conferencing Apps with an additional layer of AR that connects an operator on one end and an expert on the other.

The expert guides the operator to perform his/her task efficiently. The magic of AR allows the expert to mark over the

physical object in real time and enhance the ability of the operator to understand the steps to be taken.

The same concept can be used by carpenters to collaborate over the AR-enabled video call to discuss and guide co-workers on accomplishing their task.

Training a newcomer virtually is now

possible with virtual reality (VR) technology. The end user can just wear a head-mounted device and be guided with step-by-step instructions on a specific task.

In this manner, the learner can quickly understand the concept. The performance of the person can be monitored by keeping track of the score obtained and the time taken to accomplish that task.

With the upcoming new haptic sensor-based gloves, the learner can touch and feel the virtual object as if it is real and make the decision.

Courtesy: Appville Softwares, a Coimbatore-based company focused on innovation and delivering next-generation XR solutions, smart IOT and digital twin solutions to its customers in India and abroad (www.appville.com)





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Will wood stop the virus?

As healthcare facilities grapple with personal protective equipment shortages, West Virginia University researchers are going against the grain by looking at wood as an earthy, unorthodox resource.

At the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, Gloria Oporto, associate professor of wood science and technology, had researched woody biomass for food packaging and pharmacy novel applications. Woody biomass are timber-derived products that can be converted to energy through combustion or gasification.

Increasingly concerned about reports of the lack of PPE for medical professionals, the researchers started looking into the prospect of using renewable materials, such as wood derivatives to supplement the PPE. Rakesh Gupta, a chemical engineering professor, was roped in to assist with his expertise in the field.

Rapid grants are awarded to researchers tackling quick-response projects supporting severe or urgent situations like the Covid-19 crisis and with the aid of a National Science Foundation award for nearly \$200,000, the team will develop and test antimicrobial, renewable mask constructed of composite

bio-materials.

The goal is to produce a prototype - a reusable, environmentally-friendly bio-filter to serve as a filtering, face piece respirator that enhances the safety of masks currently used in the medical setting. Because the project is funded by the award, the team is aiming to develop and optimize the fabrication of these filters by the end of the year.

According to the developers, the three key components of the mask filters are polylactic acid, a biodegradable plastic derived from agricultural and renewable resources; nano-cellulose, a nontoxic, lightweight substance produced from wood pulp; and nano-copper, which contains antimicrobial properties.

The required materials, which will be biodegradable and reusable, have been collected and the team is working with mechanical engineering to produce these with 3D printers.

By incorporating small-sized antimicrobial/antiviral nano-copper particles, the filters will likely prevent not only Covid-19, but other viruses and microorganisms, from penetrating a mask.

Developed filters will be tested to demonstrate that they have all the properties required for masks to be worn by medical personnel. If the research is successful, it will result in the development of a reusable medical mask that is superior to the single-use mask that is currently in use. The filters will undergo heat tests and researchers will examine the most effective ways to clean and reuse them.

The project could even lead to innovations around the development of surfaces and other antimicrobial products resistant to the novel coronavirus. These materials are going to be antimicrobial and antiviral, so there is that level of protection where, ideally cleaning or using chemicals on surfaces is one possibility that may emerge out of this.

Another objective to the project is to promote collaborations across different fields, such as wood science, health science, engineering, chemistry and biology which, in turn, will support training and education of students in these fields.





Otis moves to higher caution

The US based entity Otis, is the world's leading company for elevator and escalator manufacturing, installation and service.

After the lifting of the lockdown in most countries consequent to the pandemic, it is helping the safe reopening of high-rise offices, metro stations and airports through touch-less elevator technologies, purification products including ultra-violet (UV) and other germicidal lighting, predictive maintenance and other innovations.

The eCall Smartphone app allows passengers to call elevators directly from their phones, creating a fast and touch-less experience and significantly reducing the number of physical touch points.

Bluetooth technology enables an even more seamless experience and the App can be integrated with a variety of different equipment.

Otis has worked with RMZ Corporation in India to integrate the eCall app with elevators at RMZ Infinity in Bengaluru. Otis also worked with Godrej Industries to integrate eCall app at their Godrej One facility.

Reducing the number of passengers per elevator, assigning passengers to specific elevators, and creating shuttle solutions to limit the number of stops or floors all help to promote the safe flow of tenants through buildings.

Otis has brought in purification products to promote hygiene in elevators and on

escalator handrails. A plasma purification fan for elevators uses an anion generator and UV lamp to kill germs and other micro-organisms.

For escalators and moving walks, anti-microbial handrails and a UV-C light handrail sanitiser have been introduced.

Otis' remote elevator monitoring (REM) technology and the Otis One IoT service improve elevator uptime. The technology analyzes data from sensor-equipped elevators to forecast trends and recommend proactive, predictive maintenance, resulting in fewer shut downs. By keeping elevators running, the possibility of overcrowding is reduced.

To find health and safety tips for elevator and escalator passengers, as well as a downloadable resource kit for building managers to support onsite communications, visit www.otis.com/corporate/stay-well.



WOODNEWS

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Upholstery to re-circulate human energy!

Can upholstery recycle a person's energy to provide a boost to well-being? US-based Designtex and Hologenix, inventors of Celliant, have announced the launch of Designtex Celliant upholstery, a proprietary textile backing to do just that!

Celliant fibres are embedded into the textile backing and won't wash off or wear out even under the most rigorous cleaning protocols. It has no negative side effects and the technology is non-invasive.



Celliant is a blend of naturally occurring, thermo-reactive minerals that are applied as a nonwoven backing to four fabrics across 50 colours and is ideal for a variety of applications: offices, waiting areas, lobbies and guest rooms.

According to the designers, the minerals work to capture and convert body heat (about 100 Watts every second) which acts as fuel to power the upholstery. The Designtex Celliant upholstery absorbs the body's energy and converts the wavelength to infra-red energy, which triggers vasodilation (the widening of capillaries). Put simply, more oxygen is available to the body cells.

Improved circulation can increase energy, speed recovery, and improve the body's ability to regulate its temperature, which has been clinically shown to increase local circulation and improve cellular oxygenation.

In addition, it helps regulate body

temperature, all of which means more energy, endurance, comfort and well-being.

According to Ms Susan Lyons, Designtex President, "The technology provides health and wellness benefits for sedentary moments, like an office worker in his/her chair, or a person sitting in a waiting room. It really is a human solution and we are proud to be a part of bringing wellness to the built environment."

Celliant is used in popular products already in the market like athletic apparel, sleep wear and bedding. It is a prominent developer of infra-red responsive textiles, which the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has determined are medical devices.

Celliant is a proprietary mixture of safe, naturally occurring thermo-reactive minerals embedded in fibres and the minerals used in Celliant are non-conflict and sustainably sourced. They include

titanium dioxide, commonly known as an ingredient in our sunblock and toothpaste, silicon dioxide that helps reflect and absorb energy, and aluminium oxide that helps reflect energy.

The minerals are ground into a powder with polyester resin and extruded into fibre, which is used to create the non-woven backing found in Celliant textiles.

In clinical testing, Celliant has been proven to temporarily increase oxygen levels in the body, which is widely recognized to aid in comfort and healing. Celliant-backed textiles boost well-being through increased local circulation, improved cellular oxygenation, temperature regulation, and faster cell recovery.





Visionary votary of skill development

Karl B. Zehnder, who spearheaded the India Skill Development (ISD) initiative, passed away in Switzerland on 1st June, 2020, after a cardiac arrest. He was 52 years old.

A visionary, who realised that learning a profession was still a big challenge for many people in India, Karl was looking at tying up with the woodworking industry to implement and introduce high-quality training in the furniture manufacturing ecosystem of the country.

He independently developed modules for skill training based on the dual system of skill development in Switzerland, a world-class skills development system.

Karl worked as the principal of the Bharatiya Skill Development University (BSDU) in Jaipur, the first pure-skills university in the country incorporated by the government of Rajasthan.

During this time he was able to study and get first-hand knowledge of the challenges that faced the industry.

An active participant in the recently concluded IndiaWood 2020, he tirelessly worked at finding industry partners who could join hands with him in realising his mission.

In spite of the setback, India Skill Development (ISD), an Institute from Karl B. Zehnder Consulting, will continue its mission and are looking for partners who share his vision and are willing to take the project forward.

Those interested may message (WhatsApp) his widow, Cornelia Zehnder, on +41-796478487, or write to her on cornelia.zehnder@gmail.com.



A 'Novel' alternative to marine plywood

Pune-based Sleek Boards has introduced 'Novel Board' a cost-effective alternative to plywood in India. The major shortcomings of engineered panels – such as particle board and medium-density fibre (MDF) boards – of thickness swelling, is now overcome by using Novel Board.

Now furniture and door manufacturers can get the benefit of an engineered panel product which is far superior to any PB or MDF/HDF boards, and yet meets the functional properties of boiling water-proof (BWP) grade plywood.

The ongoing COVID19 pandemic has generated a challenging situation which dictates the use of cost-effective, high mechanical performance engineered panel solutions.

What exactly is a Novel Board? It is a wood panel solution from Europe for the furniture and door manufacturing sector that has passed the 72-hour boiling water and high moisture resistance tests.

It is a panel that offers 50% cost savings over BWP/marine plywood. Additionally, it is a low formaldehyde emission grade panel that is suitable for internal use in residential and commercial furniture with PEFC or FSC certification.

It is available in thickness of 9 mm to 30 mm, and carpenter- and OEM-friendly sheet size of 2440x1220 mm. Customised sizes are also available to reduce wastages for large volume purchases.

Novel Board comes in the following varieties: sanded and un-sanded for direct HPL and veneer lamination; HDF-faced for lacquering and short cycle press; anti-skid facing for container and truck flooring and roof sheathing; and phenolic

Use of Novel Board for door frames is excellent for PVC foil, CPL, melamine paper wrapping and lacquering.



Novel Board panels offer 50% cost savings over BWP/marine plywood.

film-faced for formwork and shuttering.

Novel Board finds extensive applications in furniture (shutters, carcass, shelves and cabinets), door frames (excellent for PVC foil, CPL, melamine paper wrapping and lacquering), stiles and rails (high performance alternative to softwood or hardwood timber).

It is a low formaldehyde emission grade panel that comes with PEFC or FSC certification.



It is also well suited to partition panels, formwork and shuttering, truck and container flooring; as well as packaging for exports – especially Australia, Germany and the US insist on low emission grade materials.

OEM manufacturers, dealers and distributors can contact Sleek Boards to know more: sleekboards@gmail.com.

Finnish lab has coating to kill Covid-19



quaternary ammonium molecules (silane quats) in a highly effective manner. Positively charged nitrogen particles then actively attract viruses and bacteria, penetrating the membranes and killing them within minutes.

Testing has shown Si-Quat to adhere to almost any surface, performing as the most durable surface treatment commercially available. Due to its incredibly

Leading chemical binding expert, Affix Labs, has harnessed its global experience in disease prevention to create the first long-lasting surface treatment proven to kill Covid-19.

Si-Quat combines a safe and well-established disinfectant and a proprietary chemical binding technique, so that the active ingredient can kill viruses, including SARS-COV-2. Testing at Portugal's bio-chemistry institute at the University of Lisbon proves that Si-Quat effectively kills Covid-19 pathogens that it comes into contact with.

According to Mr Tom Sam, CEO of Affix Labs, "By killing the Covid-19 pathogen on surfaces before it can infect people, the Si-Quat solution is a game changer. It can provide increased security and peace of mind to your communities, as well as your customers."

Si-Quat has been tested to kill 99.99% of microbes within

minutes, while still being fully safe to touch. Proven to be effective for about a month on frequently touched surfaces, it is the longest lasting anti-viral surface treatment available to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The product is non-corrosive, free from silver salts and heavy metal nanoparticles, and perfectly safe to touch.

Several major agencies around the globe have already accepted quaternary ammonium, the main ingredient in the surface coating, to be an effective surface treatment against the novel coronavirus, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the US Environmental Protection Agency, the American Chemistry Council (ACC) and the European Chemical Agency (ECHA).

Si-Quat was invented in January 2020 by the Affix Labs' Repeltec development team in Finland to specifically help combat the Covid-19 outbreak.

The product is based on the trusted and safe disinfectant quaternary ammonium, which is chemically bound to align silane

strong layer, the solution only wears down on surfaces after thousands of touches or multiple cleaning cycles.

This means that on heavily used surfaces, such as door handles and counters, Si-Quat will be effective for about a month. On rarely touched surfaces like walls, it has the potential to protect for years.

Since the product is incredibly easy to apply, technicians require minimal training and only basic protection. They simply have to brush or spray Si-Quat onto the surface and allow it to dry for 6 hours.

The project leading to the development of Si-Quat included funding from the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, a body of the European Union, under the Horizon 2020 Framework for Research and Innovation.

Affix Labs has begun to roll out the distribution of Si-Quat across the globe, with new regions being serviced every week. It is currently looking for distribution partners in various markets. Check out www.si-quat.com or www.affixlabs.com.



Wood Rich exposes hidden beauty

Surfa Coats Paints has introduced exquisite wood coating finishes for the India market, labeled Wood Rich. This is the outcome of years of technological research with a well-known wood coating brand in West Asia.

This range of quick-drying two-pack polyurethane wood coating finishes provide long life without yellowing and chalking, is UV-resistant, and highly resistant to physical and chemical environments, confirming with DIN 68861-I B standards.

These coating solutions are designed to give wooden fixtures and surfaces the ultimate care, bringing out the real hidden beauty of wooden furniture, in interior and exterior applications, that will last for years to come.

Surfa Coats Paints was established in 1979 with the vision to bring alive new dimensions in colours. Since its inception, the company has been driven by a strong sense of purpose to protect and preserve nature while delivering world-class products and solutions at affordable

prices to the masses.

The pioneering vision, collective passion, shared values and impeccable quality imbibed at the heart of every product, backed by a strong dealer network and customer-centric approach in delivering solutions have made Surfa Coats Paints one of the leading paint manufacturers and the primer choice of millions when it comes to crafting breath-taking spaces.



Pollution, air handling equipment from Axcent

Bengaluru-based Axcent Air Flow Technologies is a leading manufacturer of centrifugal fans, dust collectors, fume-extraction systems and paint spray booths.

It is involved in the design and manufacture of air pollution control and air handling equipments and systems. It also executes turnkey projects related to air pollution control and HVAC.

The company has a wide variety of products suiting all applications and industries. Its range of products and systems include axial flow fans, AHUs, centrifugal blowers, air washers, dust collectors, rotary airlocks, spray-paint booths, screw conveyors, industrial man coolers, dampers and wet scrubbers.

It also manufactures dust extraction systems (individual and centralised), ventilation and dust-proofing systems, evaporative cooling systems and clean rooms.

Axcent specialises in making equipment specially suited to the wood industry and manufactures a highly efficient range of dust collectors that suit machines of all makes and applications. These machines

are continuously upgraded through R&D to meet the industry's growing requirements.

They include portable, modular and customised dust collector ranges (matching to individual, 2-3 or a group of machines) and also basic hand-shaking (portable type), manual-shaking, vibrator-shaking dust collectors and high-end, highly efficient, pulse-jet dust collectors.

Also on offer are modular and customised spray paint booths – both dry and wet type, and open or pressurized. (www.axcentairflow.in).



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Sanding edges for best price

Felder's Hammer HS-950 oscillating edge sanding machine offers maximum flexibility when sanding edges at the best price. Its open design is ideal for sanding oversized work pieces.

The table height can be adjusted using a hand wheel; and an additional table is available for cylindrical sanding. What is more, the sanding table tilts from 0°–90°; and the connectible sanding belt oscillation is for optimal utilisation of the entire sanding belt surface.

The Hammer HS-950 is the perfect entry-level machine for demanding edge sanding. Together with the height-adjustable cast iron sanding table, the HS-950 achieves maximum sanding belt life.

The oscillation can be switched on and off, generating individual sanding patterns. Together with the height-adjustable sanding

table clean sanding results are ensured and the service life of the sanding paper is increased enormously.



The sanding unit can be swivelled from 90° to table level and up to 0° to table level. There are preset end stops at the stop positions.

The set angle can be read on the side swing scale and a grip facilitates the operation. For oversized workpieces, the sanding surface can be easily increased.

The solid cast iron working table can be conveniently adjusted manually by 150 mm in height. Thus, the sanding belt can

be used over the entire height. The table has a T-slot over the entire length of the table.



On the left side of the machine there is a supplementary table for sanding radii (> 60 mm). The table can also be adjusted in height.

Standard features include a work piece stop. In addition, the mitre fence can also be mounted into the T-slot of the work table. (www.felder-group.com).

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Auto-latching sliding door lock from Inox

Inox is introducing the PD-96, the industry's first commercial-grade sliding door lock that combines a built-in auto-latching and auto-locking feature with the ability to accomplish the five most common lockset functions of passage, privacy, entry/office, classroom and storeroom.

It is a complete locking solution for sliding doors that allows architects, planners and designers to more easily incorporate sliding doors into their projects and increase the amount of usable space within a floor plan.

A sliding door can save up to 30 square feet within a space, as compared to a swing door. With the complete locking solutions of the PD-96, architects can increase the overall value of a project for their clients by specifying sliding doors.

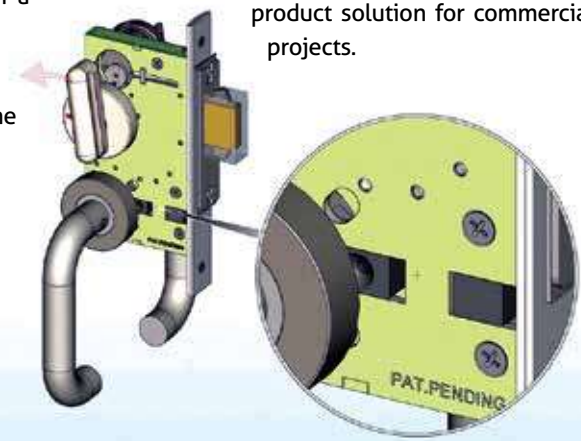
The device uses the same basic lock case for the passage, entry/office, classroom and storeroom functions and the trim determines each function. Only the privacy function

requires a different lock case.

This flexibility makes the entire process, from specifying to installation and replacement, simpler and allows for the application of a customised function per passageway.

The sliding door lock is ADA-compliant, provides emergency egress and is designed from 304-grade stainless steel to withstand commercial construction and applications.

It is available in several trims and comes in satin or bright polished stainless steel as well as CeraMax ceramic coating finishes, and provides a one-product solution for commercial projects.



Activating thumbturn locks outside hub and activates red indicator



Jowat has new adhesive for window profiles

Jowat SE, the adhesives specialist, has introduced its first non-hazardous and certified PUR adhesive for window profile wrapping.

Jowatherm-Reaktant MR 604.90 is the first PUR hot-melt adhesive with reduced monomer content that has hazard-free labelling certified according to RAL-GZ 716 for the wrapping of PVC window profiles.

Jowat supplies the industry with specialised and certified high-performance adhesives that match the

process requirements of the furniture and wood industry.

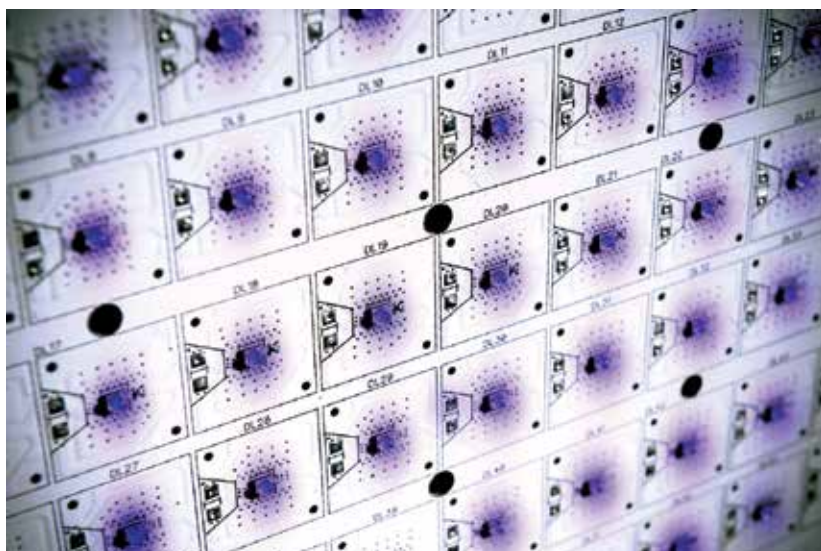
Coupled with a certified and optimally adapted Jowat primer, the adhesives facilitate a reliable laminating of PVC or aluminium profiles with decor foils.

A wide range of adhesion, good initial strength and fast chemical crosslinking are key-characteristics of those tried and trusted adhesive systems which can be processed on profile wrapping units established on the market.

The new PUR hot-melt adhesive with

hazard-free labelling, combined with a non-hazardous, VOC-reduced Jowat primer, not only facilitates optimum results as per the technical appendix to RAL-GZ 716, but also promotes the protection of employees and the environment under sustainability aspects.

Apart from solutions for window profile wrapping, the adhesives manufacturer has also launched a comprehensive product range of D4 dispersions and EPI adhesives from the Jowacoll series for laminated window scantlings and door frames made from wood.



Ultra-violet LEDs suppress bacteria, viruses

C-LED offers a versatile, ecological response to the need to sanitise rooms, surfaces and machines, with researchers hard at work to meet the market's fast-changing needs. Ultra-violet (UV) light produced by LED lamps can be used to stop the spread of bacteria, spores and viruses without using any chemicals.

C-LED, a research-focused Cefla company, specialises in the design and production of personalised lighting solutions that respond to customer requirements and focuses on developing solutions with UV-C technology.

It operates in the lighting sector and is pushing ahead on the innovation front by developing specific UV-C LED modules to help make rooms, machinery and production facilities safer.

C-LED-developed technology is designed for numerous fields as it has the characteristic of being easily integrated into existing

systems and, at the same time, it gives new projects added value. For example, UV-C LED modules by C-LED can be integrated into household appliances,

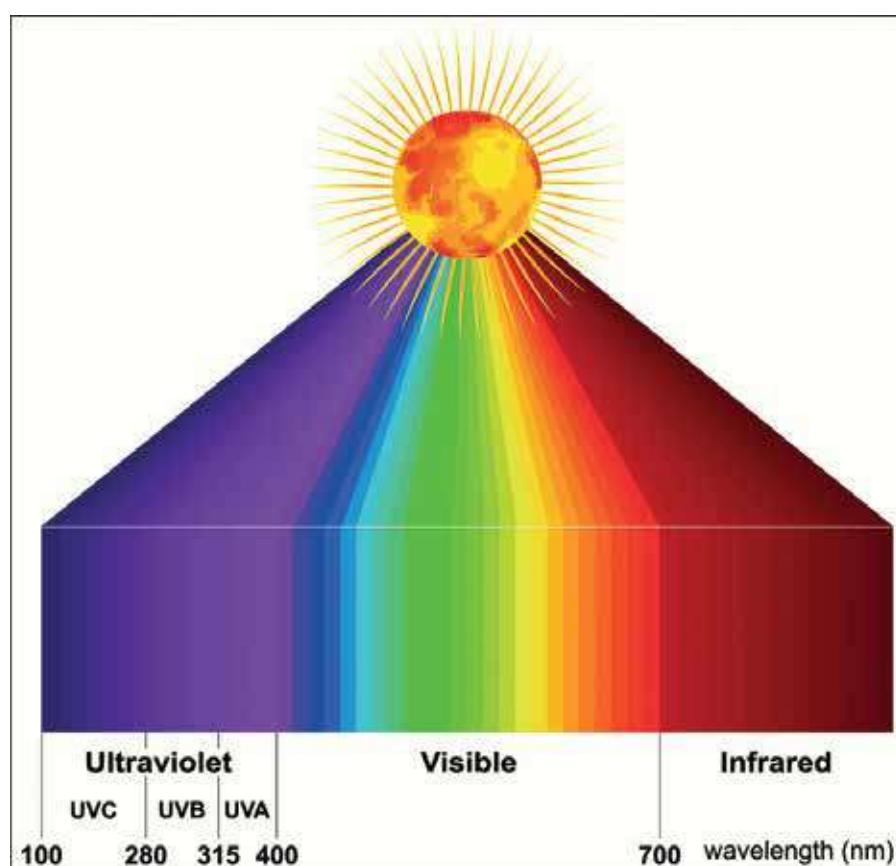
shared equipment (e.g. dishwashers) or specific sanitizing cabinets.

They can protect us from contamination by irradiating surfaces, when, for example, we use an ATM, when we use a pay machine at the car park, when buying a metro ticket, when grabbing a snack from a vending machine or when we take the lift. Last but not least, they can also be used extensively in lighting design or on production lines.

The UV-C LED modules are extremely versatile. They can be integrated into a great many applications being developed, and especially now, in the health sector.

UV light is already used in a few restricted areas for sanitizing instruments. Now, a study published in *ASC Photonics* (a scientific journal published by the American Chemical Society) confirms its effectiveness on air, water and surfaces. The study was conducted by a team from the Solid State Lighting & Energy Electronics Centre at the University of California.

C-LED's researchers explain, "Germicidal irradiation with UV rays appears to be an effective method for sanitising and disinfecting air and the surfaces of materials."



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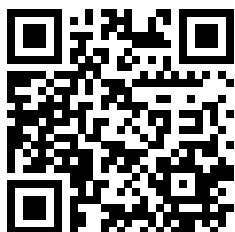
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CPWD lifts ban on timber in construction

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, in a notification dated July 1, 2020, has directed the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) to withdraw the ban on timber in construction.

The Union ministry hopes that this would encourage afforestation and create a demand for wood-based industries that would, in turn, create large-scale

employment and encourage farmers to bring degraded areas under tree cover, and help in the government's efforts to mitigate climate change.

The CPWD had, in 1993, discontinued the use of timber across various applications in the institutional, housing and infrastructure sectors. The organisation of the Central government is a large consumer of raw and semi-finished material, which it uses in large-scale construction and maintenance projects.

The Federation of All-India Timber Merchants, Saw Millers and Allied Industries, which has been actively promoting the use of sustainably sourced and grown timber across various applications in government departments, welcomed the removal of the ban after 27 years.

It said that this is a right step towards becoming a carbon-neutral country.

India is a signatory to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which targets the creation of an additional sink of 3 billion metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent through additional forest and tree cover, by the year 2030.

It is hoped that the lifting of the ban will go a long way towards achieving this goal.



Acimall's new President, Mr Luigi De Vito (R), with the new Vice-President, Ms Marianna Daschini (L).

Luigi De Vito is new Acimall President

The general assembly of Acimall, the association of Italian manufacturers of furniture and wood technology, approved the appointment of Mr Luigi De Vito (SCM Group, Rimini) to President for 2020-23.

Ms Marianna Daschini (Greda, Mariano Comense) will be the new Vice-President. The assembly accepted the nominations by the managing board and approved the financial statement of one of the most difficult years for Acimall and the entire world economy.

With a business management degree from the Luiss University in Rome, De Vito is currently wood division Director at SCM, in charge for production, product development, sales and after-sales service.

He mentioned the key topics of his term: promoting open dialogue among the member companies and with other associations; focusing resources on strategic projects (credit access, business development, supply chain initiatives); supporting and developing the brands of member companies.

IFMAC, SICAM postponed to October 2021

The next edition of IFMAC (the International Furniture Manufacturing Component Exhibition), one of the most important trade fairs for woodworking machinery in South-East Asia, will be held in Jakarta from October 12 to 15, 2021.

The event, which was planned for September this year, had initially been postponed to October 2020. However,

due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, this date could not be realised.

It is organised in cooperation with Deutsche Messe AG and is supported by the Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Indonesia and several local and international associations, including Eumabois, the European Federation of Woodworking Machinery Manufacturers.

The 12th edition of SICAM, the International Exhibition of Components, Accessories and Semi-finished Products for the Furniture Industry, will be held at the Pordenone (Italy) from 12 to 15 October 2021.

This event too had to be postponed after the occurrence of the pandemic. The world of components and international accessories will meet again at the most strategic time next year and will be an edition full of ideas, products and materials.

IWF to go online in October

North America's biggest trade event in its sector, the International Woodworking Fair (IWF) is to go online in Atlanta from October 26 to 30 this year. Attendee registration opens on September 1 at <http://iwfconnect.com>.

'IWF Connect' is the new virtual trade show for the American woodworking industry that, over 5 days, will bring attendees and exhibitors together in a virtual market featuring the global

woodworking industry's newest products, technologies and innovations in one easy-to-navigate online experience.

For attendees, complimentary 'IWF Connect' registration affords direct exhibitor access through live chat and meetings; live product demonstrations; webinars; exclusive show-only pricing, and a custom show experience organised through the 'My IWF Connect' show planner.

For exhibitors, the 'IWF Connect' online exhibit hall delivers direct access to one of the woodworking industry's largest audiences; a virtual booth brand showcase featuring images, videos, brochures, white papers, news releases and links; and a virtual new product gallery.

BIFMA names new CEO

The Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers' Association (BIFMA) recently appointed Ms Deirdre Jimenez as its CEO and first president. She will succeed Tom Reardon, who is retiring after 22 years as the executive director of the organisation.

Jimenez will be responsible for leading the organisation and partnering with its Board of Directors, membership, and advancing the industry's common interests through a period of disruption and growth.

Jimenez is an architect and interior designer with more than 25 years of

leadership experience, serving in executive and ownership roles in corporate real estate and national consulting firms. Most of her career focused on the workplace environment, where she developed an understanding and appreciation of the role furnishings play in the emerging practice of workplace strategy.

Founded in 1973, BIFMA is a not-for-profit US trade association for business and institutional furniture manufacturers. It has been the industry leader in developing furniture safety, durability, and sustainability standards that ensure



product performance and inspire confidence and has been the voice of the commercial furniture industry.

Xylexpo now slated for 2022

This year's edition of Xylexpo, the biennial world exhibition for woodworking technology and furniture supplies in Italy, will now be held in the year 2022. Its organisers, Cebra-Centro Promozionale and Acimall, said conditions were not conducive to holding it this year on account of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Postponing the exhibition to

November 2020 seemed the best possible solution, but the efforts of our organisation in recent months and the constant monitoring of all the conditions required to offer a successful exhibition have clearly shown that the situation in November will not be favorable yet" Acimall said in a statement.

With its global scope and more than one out of three exhibitors and visitors coming from abroad, "Xylexpo has an

international soul and vocation that would be seriously jeopardised by sanitary and economic conditions that are still unsolved in many world regions," the statement read.

The exhibition team is already working to design a Xylexpo event that takes into account new ideas and recent changes to create a new and more modern "digital oriented" showcase, deploying a strategy that will be supported with proposals and initiatives in the coming months.

Homag completes Weinmann takeover



Homag GmbH has acquired the remaining 24% of the shares of Weinmann Holzbausystemtechnik GmbH to strengthen its competence and commitment in the solid wood sector.

As a leading provider of high-performance machines and systems for timber construction,

Weinmann develops innovative and customised solutions for carpenters and pre-fabricated house manufacturers.

Mr Josef Zerle, head of the surface technology business unit within the Homag Group and expert in solid wood, will join Weinmann's management on July 1, 2020.

In addition to Zerle, the management

The management of Weinmann Holzbausystemtechnik GmbH (L-R): Mr Josef Zerle, Mr Hansbert Ott and Mr Sven Schempp.

consists of Mr Hansbert Ott and Mr Sven Schempp, who will also become management spokesman on July 1. After 28 years, Mr. Ott will step down as managing director of Weinmann.

Giardina Group acquires De Stefani

Giardina Group, one of the best known international brands for finishing solutions, has acquired De Stefani Valerio based in Gussano (Italy), a small but lively manufacturer which has been operating for over 40 years all

over the world, thanks to the artisan quality of its sanding solutions.

The deal was signed right in the days of the global lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Mr Stefano Mauri and his brother, Mr Riccardo, owners of the

Giardina Group said, "We believe that in complex times like the one we are experiencing, companies must demonstrate that they have the strength to look ahead without waiting for interventions from governments and institutions."



Mr Alessio de Stefani and Ms Sara de Stefani will continue to operate from Giussano. But the acquisition defines Giardina Group's strategies to face the markets with an increasingly articulated range of solutions.

, but above all with the skills and knowledge necessary to design and build machines and plants in the many sectors in which the group operates, from wood to glass, from plastic to automotive, from composites to aerospace.

Mr Riccardo Mauri, Mr Alessio de Stefani, Mr Stefano Mauri and Ms Sara de Stefani.

Wood engineering courses at Rosenheim

The industrial advisory board team at Rosenheim TU.



The Technische Hochschule Rosenheim (Rosenheim Technical University of Applied Sciences) is offering Bachelor and Master degree courses in Wood Technology, Interior Engineering, Wood Building and Construction, and Civil Engineering with focus on sustainable and energy-efficient construction using wood.

The wood technology study programme is initiated an industrial advisory group that comprises of advisors from Siempelkamp, Egger, Kronospan, Homag, Hülsta, Leuco and Binderholz.

The University's infrastructure comprises of 26 professors and 22 laboratories. Applications for admission will be

accepted till August 14.

The start of studies is scheduled for October 2, 2020, and is also prepared for digital teaching. Information on the courses is available at www.th-rosenheim.de/technik/holz-energiebau/

Eurotech starts new company building

Eurotech Vertriebs GmbH from Geislingen (Germany) is investing €3.65 million in its new building, construction of which is scheduled for completion in mid-2021. The new production and storage space and a two-storey office building will be established on the 7,700-square-metre plot in the Dornbrunnen industrial park in Rosenfeld.

Eurotech specialises in vacuum, lifting and transport technologies. The company develops customer-specific vacuum systems and components for automated handling tasks.

Ms Tina and Mr Thomas Schulz, Directors at Eurotech, at the ground-breaking ceremony in May 2020.



Automatic waste collection in cities

MariMatic, a technology company that markets vacuum pipe conveying systems in more than 40 countries, has developed an automatic waste collection system (AWCS) for urban residential areas.

Using its unique energy-efficient

MetroTaifun technology with non-corrosive pipe networks, the AWCS can cater for up to 5,500 homes and include schools, shops and offices.

Waste is collected and transported directly from the buildings through an underground pipe network by using vacuum conveying to a waste transfer

terminal, eliminating noisy and polluting traditional waste trucks from the area.

Four different waste fractions are collected to separate containers located in the waste transfer terminal. The containers are picked up for further distribution to recycling centres.

The waste transfer terminal is designed with high sustainability in mind, including solar panels, rainwater collection, and even a charging point for service vehicles.

MariMatic is known for the usage of 300-mm diameter "composite piping", instead of the commonly used 500-mm carbon steel piping systems, achieving technical life cycle of 60 years.

Interruptions of possible blockages are minimised, as the waste easier fills up the pipe, giving higher vacuum force for conveying. (www.marimatic.com).

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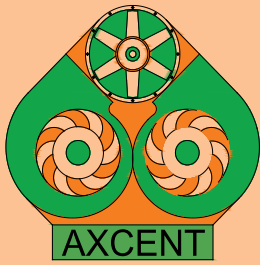
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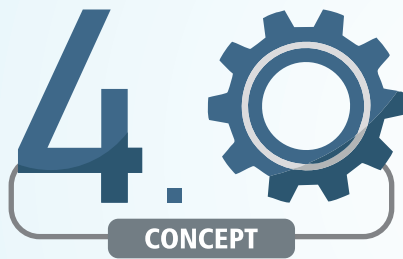
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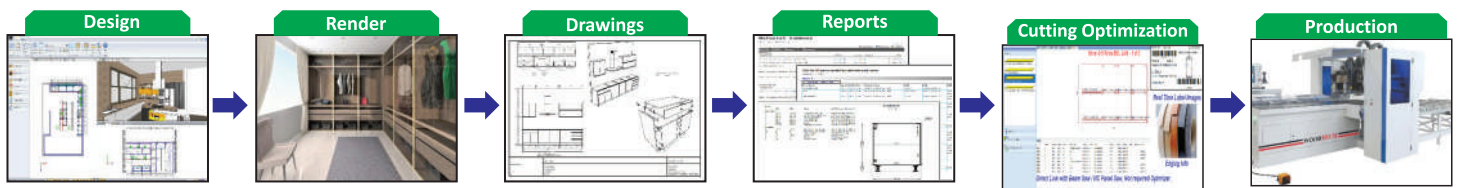
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