

i in pa ct

teknion

letter from david feldberg

welcome

AS WE CELEBRATE OUR 35TH ANNIVERSARY, I AM DELIGHTED TO SHARE OUR IMPACT REPORT.

In such a short time Teknion has grown and evolved from a small, scrappy startup to one of the largest manufacturers of contract furniture, with a strong network of aligned dealers worldwide. But some things never change. We are, and always will be, an entrepreneurial company. Despite our size, we remain agile and accessible. As our peers move towards a more outsourced approach to manufacturing, we remain committed to owning our manufacturing and supply chain and growing organically. This vertical integration allows us to continuously bring expertise in-house and provides the perfect environment for us to learn and improve, challenge the status quo

and push sustainability forward. It also enables us to invest in both our employees and the communities in which our facilities are embedded. I believe in the potential of our employees, and as such, I do not provide corporate missives on what initiatives to champion. Rather, I encourage every facility and office worldwide to do what is right for them and their community, to take risks, champion new ideas and, yes, make some mistakes – because I believe we can go further this way.

In the following pages of the report, we share with you the impact we have had on our employees, customers, communities and planet as we continue to evolve our business.

I am proud of what we have achieved, but also humbled by the work yet to be done, but, as always, I believe it is the ingenuity and creativity of our employees that will drive us forward. Thank you for your support and I look forward to another 35 years of success!

Sincerely,
David Feldberg
President and CEO



David Feldberg, President and CEO, discusses relevant issues, fields questions and gets to know new employees in quarterly Fireside Chats.



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about us

WE ARE AN ENTERPRISE OF CREATIVE COLLABORATORS THAT CHALLENGES WHAT IS POSSIBLE EVERY DAY.

Our success is premised upon the cultural values that define us. We are human, connected, bold, curious and ready. We are engaging with our stakeholders to problem solve and, together, approach things a little differently.

Where we can, we are writing a new script for advancing sustainability for employees, our customers, our community and our planet. In this report, we share our activities and document these efforts and the voices of those we impact.

We support and recognize individual ingenuity and creativity because we know the best ideas can come as often from the studio or plant floor as they do from the executive suite.



our employees

WE ARE A COMPANY ANCHORED IN FAMILY AND
COMMITTED TO OUR EMPLOYEES.

Our employees are the heart and soul of our business and to support their well-being and development is to enhance our biggest asset. Our programs and initiatives are geared towards making long-term investments in our employees. We cultivate an environment that recognizes the skills, knowledge, perspectives and cultural contributions different people bring

to our company. We realize that knowledge, innovation and learning can come from anywhere and give our employees room to show initiative and know that their ideas are valued. We create great places to work for everyone, everywhere. Places where people do not just feel included, but places where they feel they belong.

*We create places where employees
can grow and flourish personally
and professionally.*

investing in our people

HEALTH + SAFETY:
promoting safer
environments for
our employees

80%
of panel plant employees
have been at teknion for
20+ years

17 consecutive
years
of 'no time lost' at our
wire and lighting facility



safety throughout the value chain

Fiberglass is contained within all panels. It is standard in the industry. But what is not is the way we treat them. We found a supplier who lines the fiberglass with aluminum via an automated process, ensuring no hands come into contact with this potentially hazardous material, from manufacture to install.



'how I made a difference'

Our Joint Safety Committee Initiative empowers each employee to take the initiative and identify safety risks within their facility via fun and interactive training sessions.



protecting against injury and workplace fatigue

From sit-stand desks in our offices to height-adjustable tables in our factories, we have implemented ergonomic furniture to ensure individual comfort and safety.

ENGAGEMENT
+ FEEDBACK:
supporting learning
and knowledge
at all levels

speak-out sessions

One-on-one Speak-Out Sessions with our employees enable us to capture what large-scale audits and surveys cannot – their voices and individual concerns – which, when addressed, significantly improve overall employee satisfaction.

fireside chats

Each new employee participates in a Fireside Chat with our CEO, David Feldberg, affording them the opportunity for an open conversation on any topic they wish.

employee workshops

Ongoing training via Tek U and Learning Zones advances each employee's personal and professional development.

teknion & you website

This website is curated and shaped by our employees. They share content ranging from recipes to health and wellness tips – all directed at building a stronger sense of community and belonging.

HEALTH
+ WELL-BEING:
a holistic
approach to
body and mind



Clockwise from top: Hockey in Quebec City,
Volleyball and Tai Chi in Toronto.
Not shown: Zumba classes in Malaysia.

INCLUSIVITY + DIVERSITY:
a place for everyone in our teknion family



teknion 'buddies'

More senior employees are matched with new ones to provide mentorship, friendship and guidance.



mental health toolkit

Employee workshops and resources support a healthy work environment for everyone. A range of topics is covered including tools to help identify and relieve stress and anxiety amongst employees, to resources on code of conduct issues and concerns.



57
countries
represented in
Teknion's workforce

Celebrating the diversity and global perspectives our
employees bring to the company.

*Chinese New Year celebrations in
our Toronto Panel Plant.*

our voices: studio tk

rewriting the future

AT 22 YEARS OLD, FRANCISCO MENDEZ, A RAPID CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT SPECIALIST AT STUDIO TK, IS WELL ON HIS WAY TO REWRITING HIS FUTURE.

Studio TK manufactures furniture for social spaces and is part of Teknion’s collection of brands. Francisco joined Studio TK four years ago. He was an 18-year-old high school student with a strong will to succeed. He was working 50 hours a week in a truck wash and a factory that made elliptical antennas but felt he was going nowhere. He explains that members of his community in Garner, North Carolina, all knew about Studio TK, so he felt it was a natural step to apply.

As he tells it, in his final interview he said to Kevin Williams, Vice President Operations, “I’m straight out of high school.

I’d like to be in a place where I can grow and improve. A place where I have a future.” On his swift rise from assembler to Rapid Continuous Improvement Specialist, he says, “A lot of people say that I’m smart. I don’t think I’m as smart as I am persistent.” What’s next for Francisco? He marvels at how he has grown along with the company, which had just opened its doors when he started. He explains, “Every day I am challenged, and I’m often pushed outside my comfort zone. I still have tons more to do. There are a lot of places we can go.” Francisco is now completing a college course in mechanical engineering, funded by Studio TK.

This will round out his skill set and lay the groundwork for his next move in the company. Charlie Bell, President of Studio TK and ‘Chief Mentor’, articulates the company’s approach to employee engagement and advancement. “We don’t hire for today, we hire for tomorrow. Our approach is to find talent from within the community and nurture it. It’s a win-win situation. The community is strengthened and Studio TK doesn’t need to look further than its own backyard to find the right people to drive our company forward.”

*Francisco Mendez,
Rapid Continuous Improvement
Specialist, Studio TK.*



“I’d like to be in a place where I can grow and improve. A place where I have a future.”

our customers

WE DO NOT PRESCRIBE SOLUTIONS. WE LISTEN, OBSERVE THEN SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE GAINED TO ADVANCE OUR CUSTOMERS, THE INDUSTRY AND OURSELVES.

We are engaging our partners, stakeholders and customers in a broader conversation to expand our narrative beyond reducing the environmental impact of the built environment, to also considering how that built environment can be a tool for improving health and wellness. We are the first manufacturer in the world to be WELL Certified™ under WELL v1.

This certification is a demonstration of our commitment to creating healthier spaces for our employees and customers. Using our WELL Certified showrooms as a platform for conversation and education, we are able to share our learnings and knowledge, opportunities and challenges involved in attaining this standard. Beyond our showrooms we are also actively involved in

forwarding WELL through free WELL AP exam preparation courses. We continue to work to understand how we can help improve the future of the workplace, then we share that information with others to raise the bar for the industry as a whole.

At Teknion, we share our learning on the process of attaining WELL certification for our showrooms with customers.

wellness across all platforms

LIVING BUILDING CHALLENGE (LBC)



Declare.

Livello Table
Teknion

Final Assembly: Toronto, Ontario, CA
Life Expectancy: 20+ Years
End of Life Options: Salvageable/Reusable in its entirety. Take Back Program North America Through a Teknion Partner and Third Party Service providers.

Ingredients:
Steel (Hamilton, ON); Particle Board: Wood Dust, Phenol Formaldehyde; Aluminum; Linoleum: Flax Seed Oil, Tall Oil, Gum Resin, Wood Flour, Limestone, Paper, Adhesive (10%); ABS Edge Banding: Acrylonitrile, Carbon Black, Titanium Dioxide, Triphenyl Phosphate, Styrene.

*LBC Temp Exception TO-E3 Composite Green Goods
*LBC Temp Exception TO-E4 Proprietary Ingredients 17%

Living Building Challenge Criteria:
2019-2020: EXIST 01 AHS 2018
2021-2023: EXIST 01 AHS 2020
Declaration Status: ☒ LBC Red List Free ☒ LBC Compliant ☐ Declared

INTERNATIONAL LIVING FUTURE INSTITUTE

faster Declare certification

Working with our suppliers, we are creating a database that will validate the materials we use to meet the requirements for Declare/Red List Free standards. Not only will this allow us to better consider material selection at the design stage by having a preapproved list of materials, it will also create a pathway to help speed up the certification process.



Declare Certified products: Livello and Variable (above), District, Projek, Interpret and Thesis (not shown)

healthier spaces

Teknion has been a supplier and strategic partner in helping customers certify:

10 million sq. ft.
(929,030 m²)
of LEED certified spaces

500,000 sq. ft.
(46,451 m²)
of Living Building Challenge certified spaces

200,000 sq. ft.
(18,580 m²)
of WELL Certified™ spaces

30

Teknion products that are Red List Free

With several Declare labels and the first third-party certified Declare label, we continue to lead the industry in transparency with Declare.

WELL CERTIFICATION:
Attaining WELL certification for our showrooms allows us to better advise our customers on the certification process and share our learnings along the way.



Teknion's Boston showroom is WELL Certified Gold.

educating designers & other stakeholders

WELL AP
We are leading and advancing knowledge for those seeking WELL Accreditation through free WELL AP exam preparation courses for our customers and stakeholders. Attendees of our courses could represent half of all current WELL APs.

CEU Courses
We have moved from a more prescribed conversation on sustainability in the built environment to a broader look at well-being through ongoing education courses such as: Regenerative Design, Biophilic Design and Human Outcomes, Designing for Health, The True Measure of a Space and the Way it Makes You Feel and A Circular Economy – A Tale of Market Transformation.

768

industry professionals
in 3 countries across
47 markets



1st
manufacturer in the
world to be WELL
Certified™ silver
under WELL v1 for
our Collaboration Hub

*Teknion Collaboration Hub,
Toronto.*

our voices: delos

delos: walking the talk

AS THE PIONEER OF WELLNESS REAL ESTATE™, DELOS IS TRANSFORMING OUR HOMES, OFFICES, SCHOOLS AND OTHER INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS BY PLACING HEALTH AND WELLNESS AT THE CENTER OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION DECISIONS.

When it came to the design and furnishing of its new headquarters in New York City, Delos’ primary objective was to ensure that it walk the talk. Janna Wandzilak, Director, explains, “We are constantly engaging in consultations and conversations with our clients and partners so we wanted to make sure our own space would be not only an ideal place for our employees but also a demonstration to visitors of what it feels like to be in a sustainable and health-focused space.”

In the spirit of continuous improvement, Delos constantly tracks the performance of its own space, collecting qualitative and quantitative data to measure and understand its success and possible shortcomings. This includes measuring things like how its

employees use the office, indoor air quality, lighting, acoustics and stair use, all the while feeding data to a large screen in reception where employees and visitors have transparency with the environment they are in.

When it came to furnishing Delos’ new space, finding products that complied with WELL, LEED and Living Building Challenge was not always easy. However, Janna explains, “Teknion was an easy choice. Because they are vertically integrated and not new to the space of healthy and sustainable materials, they were able to present us with the information and products we needed.” Janna continues, “Teknion provided the information necessary to confirm that workstations and task chairs have undergone VOC testing and were compliant with

the Living Building Challenge Red List. They even have Declare labels! Beyond material health, they were able to work with us to create the aesthetic we desired – we were able to modify a sit-stand desk to be more ‘corporate looking’ while also ergonomically beneficial for one of our senior managers.” Tracy Backus, Teknion Director of Sustainability, clarifies that, “Achieving Red List Free status for the furniture provided did NOT entail compromise. Owning our own manufacturing means that we could easily customize the chosen products to meet Delos’ unique aesthetic and functionality requirements at an affordable price without compromising the material makeup of the furniture provided.”

Janna sums up: “We were able to fulfill our certification goals

(WELL, LEED and Living Building Challenge Petal Certification). But ultimately, it’s not just about those certifications, it’s about an opportunity to showcase that healthier and more sustainable products exist in the marketplace. When it comes to transparency, Teknion has led the conversation and through their WELL Certified showrooms demonstrated their compliance with and understanding of the WELL building standards. The industry will catch up, but for the time being, it helps to have partners that can quickly provide you with the information you need as well as quality, beautiful products.”

*Delos Headquarters,
New York City.*

“When it comes to transparency, Teknion has led the conversation and through their WELL Certified showrooms demonstrated their compliance with and understanding of WELL.”



our communities

WE UNDERSTAND THAT DOING GOOD FOR OUR BUSINESS AND OUR COMMUNITY ARE INTRINSICALLY CONNECTED.

Teknion contributes to causes that strengthen the well-being of the communities in which we operate. In keeping with our entrepreneurial spirit, we also encourage employees to work with charities that speak to them on a personal level, as personal engagement is the engine for collective responsibility. Ultimately, as a company, and as individuals, we want to leave a legacy behind that we can feel good about.

While it is not uncommon to have generations of families working here, we are actively recruiting the next generation of employees from the communities in which we operate. Not only does this give us an opportunity to discover new talent, it also allows us a way to reach out to sectors of the community that otherwise would be underserved. Because when our local communities thrive, our business and stakeholders also benefit.

helping our communities thrive

EDUCATION
+ EMPLOYMENT:
creating the next generation
of leaders

travail jeunesse, formaca
and CÉTAL

Our partnership with Travail Jeunesse has grown along with Formaca and CETAL in helping at-risk youth and people with physical and mental disabilities acquire skills needed to attain and keep meaningful work in the communities in which they live.

NCWorks

We work with the State Agency NCWorks on an on-the-job training program to develop the specialized skills needed for employment in the furniture industry.



calgary board
of education
apprenticeship
program

We have partnered with the Calgary Board of Education to provide opportunities for vocational students to train and prepare for apprenticeship programs at Teknion and other manufacturing facilities in our community.



\$20,000 over 5 years
This provides two \$2,000 scholarships per year

donated by Teknion Roy & Breton to fund The Teknion
Scholarship at the Laval University Foundation

VERTICAL INTEGRATION: commitment to local manufacturing

80%
of our component
parts are created
in-house within
North America

Our Approach to Outsourcing:

Our Supplier Code of Ethics includes undertaking on-site inspections where we audit both working and living quarters.

Additionally, we physically check their Bill of Materials against their inventory to verify their suppliers' lists. Taking this extra step ensures human rights, environment and labor standards are respected all the way down the supply chain.

20 km
(12.5 mi)
the radius of
our central
manufacturing
cluster in
Toronto

Benefits of Owning our
Manufacturing:

Well-paid, skilled jobs for
our communities.

More economical use of resources
and energy.

Less transport required =
Less greenhouse gas emissions.

CHARITABLE EFFORTS: engaging within the community

ride for heart

Teknion employees are active participants in this annual event supporting the Heart and Stroke Foundation, winning the Golden Wheel Award in five of the past six years in the Corporate Challenge category for their fundraising efforts.



hurricane relief

\$7,690 raised for the Red Cross by our U.S. offices for Hurricanes Harvey and Irma relief efforts.



blood drives

70 blood donors participated in three blood drives held in New Jersey, potentially saving 126 lives.



swim for life

Eight participants in the 23 km (14 mi) Swim for Life relay in Lévis, Quebec, raised \$8,756 in honor of suicide prevention.



quebec city marathon

Teknion donated a total of \$6,250 over the past two years.



wheels for
the world

This workshop at our New Jersey office challenged employees via fun competitions to design bicycles to donate to local schoolkids.

our voices

their success is our reward

MARIE-FRANCE GOSSELIN, PAMELA BLAKE AND JOY CALLAHAN HEAD UP ORGANIZATIONS THAT PARTNER WITH TEKNION TO PROVIDE YOUTH WITH MEANINGFUL WORK AND A FUTURE THEY CAN BE PROUD OF.

Marie-France Gosselin
Travail Jeunesse
Quebec City, Quebec

In 1999, Travail Jeunesse started small. Dedicated to the successful integration of at-risk youth into the community and workforce, it established a 5,000 sq. ft. (465 m²) manufacturing facility in which it could hire and train at-risk youth (99 percent of whom are homeless when they meet Marie-France and her support team). Youth not only perform contract manufacturing work for local businesses but also gain the necessary social skills to function within the community. At the time, Travail Jeunesse relied

on the government for 80 percent of the funding. It started with simple manufacturing processes like bagging nuts and bolts. But with commitment to social and vocational training, the program grew. It added 15,000 sq. ft. (1,393.5 m²) and has brought many local business partners on-board. Teknion has been involved since the beginning. Travail Jeunesse has diverted production through the facility and expanded the type of work undertaken in the plant to include more sophisticated tasks, like cabinet assembly. It also brings in engineers to train the youth on Kaizen (continuous improvement) providing them with valuable skills

they can use to advance themselves. Today, Travail Jeunesse returns about \$1,000,000 per year in value back into the local economy and is 90 percent self-funded. Forty-five individuals are enrolled in this program each year, and the organization boasts a 75 percent integration rate into the workforce. Teknion is a beneficiary of this success rate beyond just Travail Jeunesse's manufacturing plant. It employs Travail Jeunesse alumni within its facilities, reaping the benefits of a skilled workforce it custom trained.

Marie France (second from left) alongside three program graduates and now full-time employees of Teknion.



Marie-France sums it up for everyone when asked what she is most proud of when looking at the sum total of her efforts – her answer, “their success is our reward.”

our voices



Pamela Blake (center) and her students-in-training at Teknion's Calgary Facility.

Pamela Blake
Jack James High School
Calgary, Alberta

Pamela's days are very busy. They are spent traveling around the community in which her high school is located, identifying opportunities to advance the well-being of youth in her community. This includes bringing at-risk high school kids to Solutions, Teknion's wood plant in Calgary. These kids have faced challenges and ordeals beyond what any young person should have to shoulder and face a very real possibility of no prospect for a good job or future beyond their present moment.

This is where Pamela steps in. She makes the connection between these kids and local businesses that can give them a life chance. Their training hours at Teknion perform double time as credits toward graduating high school, something that seemed like a dim prospect before they joined the program. Kevin Wood, Plant Manager, and his team at Teknion's Calgary plant provide training and mentorship in trades like carpentry and cabinet making, as well as inventory management and logistics.

Neither the organizations, the companies nor the students involved in these programs consider what they do to be charitable activities.



Joy Callahan in a Johnston Community College classroom, ready to co-create the next year's curriculum.

Joy Callahan
Johnston Community College
Smithfield, North Carolina

How do you enrich the fabric of your community? The answer is simple to Joy – provide possibilities for its youth. That translates into practical skills that will lead to employment. Joy understands everything is connected. You cannot strengthen your community without strengthening your local labor pool and you cannot guarantee the future of your community if you do not support local industry. Since the tobacco farming industry has

bottomed out in North Carolina, other industries need to take its place. One of those industries is furniture and Studio TK is an integral part of that growing manufacturing cluster. Johnston Community College partners with Teknion to provide customized educational units that train youth on skills identified by Studio TK as integral for employment within its facility. Co-creating the curriculum in this manner ensures employment opportunities at Studio TK.

All involved understand this is a smart way to invest in the future of local industry and the next generation of young people within the communities in which they operate.

our planet

WE TAKE A LONG-TERM APPROACH TO OUR CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY EFFORTS, AS THEY EMPOWER US TO INVEST IN PROGRAMS AND PROCESSES THAT RAISE THE BAR AND FURTHER SUSTAINABILITY.

As a manufacturer, our priority is to minimize the environmental impact of our activities. Guiding these efforts are a set of Foundation Programs. We have carefully selected these programs based on our ability to use them as tools to raise the bar for our industry and ourselves. They also drive transparency and accountability through the use of third-party

auditing and reporting. We do not chase certifications. Culturally, we are hardwired to flex and collaborate. We use our programs to support our clients' goals, objectives and expectations. We carefully survey new and emerging standards to understand their relevance in helping advance sustainability. We expand our efforts, adding initiatives and programs that


address long-term environmental and social trends, and challenges that will shape the future of our operating landscape. Most importantly, we are then able to challenge our thinking and broaden our understanding and perspective. By doing this we often go further.

Music students at Mayland Heights School enjoy ukuleles made from wood offcuts from our wood facilities.

our foundation programs

ISO 14001:
environmental management system

2.5 million sq. ft.
(232,257 m²)
of manufacturing space registered to ISO 14001
(100 percent of facilities)





FIRST MANUFACTURER IN CANADA:
certified ISO 9001:2015 &
ISO 14001:2015

Five of our facilities in Quebec and one in Calgary were the first manufacturing sites in Canada to be certified by CGSB to the latest ISO environmental and quality management system standards.

From 2010 to 2018, we have saved:

20,550,000 kwh
of electricity
Enough to power 2,055 homes for a year.

2,450,000 m²
(86,520,933 cu. ft.)
of natural gas
Enough to heat 1,290 homes for a year.

127,326 L
(33,636 gal) of propane
Enough to heat 27 homes for a year.

231,592 m²
(8,178,594 cu. ft.) of water
Enough to fill 92 Olympic-sized pools.

90% waste diversion
Our waste diversion rate since 2010.

36,167 tonnes
(39,867 tons) of GHG
The equivalent of removing 7,230 cars from the road for a year.

DESIGN FOR ENVIRONMENT (DfE):
product design guidelines

11 DfE guidelines

we proactively address a product's entire life cycle at the design stage



FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL (FSC):
sustainable wood

70,000

The number of FSC products Teknion has sold since 2010.



BIFMA Level, LEED, WELL:
holistic environmental product standards


100%
of Teknion's products are certified to a holistic environmental product standard


CERTIFIED: low emissions


92%
of Teknion's product offering meets California's Department of Public Health Services (CDPH) standards

other initiatives: minimizing impact on the planet

REDUCING WASTE: diverting waste from landfill

- 

hazardous waste
Switching to a manual spray booth reduced residual hazardous materials by 19 percent, even with a 25 percent increase in sales at our Quebec glass facility.
- 

wood
375 tonnes/month (413 tons/month) of wood offcuts from our Quebec facilities are recycled and used for energy.
- 

fabrics
We developed custom software for our laser-cutting machine at our panel plant with our supplier to nest fabric cutting, thereby minimizing fabric offcuts and waste.



Scrap metal offcuts are recycled into stiffeners for our whiteboards.



making music from scrap

Wood offcuts from our Calgary facility are sent to local instrument makers where they are transformed into ukuleles for budding musicians at Mayland Heights School in Calgary, a multi-cultural school of about 470 students who partake in a busy music program.

RESOURCE REDUCTION: reducing our footprint



relieving pressure on the electrical grid

The Demand Response Group is a joint effort between our production and facilities groups to review and reduce electric load on the grid during peak times, including turning off HVAC systems, adjusting production schedules, reducing lighting and other energy-saving strategies.

620,000 kwh
per year
*of electricity saved through retrofits
of next-generation LED lamp
technology.*

85% reduction
*in energy consumption through upgrades
of our computers to more energy-
efficient models. That is 49,200 kwh
per year of electricity saved for every
200 computers.*

3,492 gallons per day
(16.22 m³)

amount of water saved through reuse of
Meyer cooling tank water at our panel plant



LIFE CYCLE MANAGEMENT: extending the life of our furniture



RBC + Teknion: winners of
the prestigious CoreNet
REmmy award in the
Corporate Citizen category

divert initiatives

Teknion is providing the people, skills and services to ensure maximum financial and social benefit with minimum environmental impact for our customers' decommissioned furniture.

Over the past year, our end-of-life efforts have:

diverted

683 tonnes (752 tons) of furniture from landfill
through donation, recycling and reuse.

donated

4,252 decommissioned furniture items,
supporting 71 charities.

recovered

207.7 tonnes (229 tons) of metal through recycling
of decommissioned furniture – enough to make
40,650 Projek chairs.



2.5 tonnes of GHG
(2.7 tons)

amount saved per
truckload through the
use of double-stacked
wood pallets

*Table and accessories plant,
Toronto.*

our voices: wilsonart

wilsonart: a holistic approach

STEVE LUBOWINSKI, SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW AND MATERIALS ENGINEER AT WILSONART, UNDERSTANDS THAT TRUE SUSTAINABILITY IS A COMPLEX CONVERSATION.

Conversations about sustainability must encompass not only an understanding of what is driving the need, but also an understanding of the correct questions to ask. In the realm of transparency reporting, certification bodies such as the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), International Living Future Institute (ILFI) and Health Product Declaration Collaborative (HPDC) are driving the conversation and expectations around health and wellness within the built environment.

These groups believe having industry reveal their products’ material makeup will ensure better health for the planet and people. This is a timely move that pushes sustainability forward, but also poses some risk to companies such as Wilsonart who are suppliers to furniture manufacturers like

Teknion. Wilsonart is a North American-based manufacturer that creates high-performance engineered surfaces for use in the office, residential, education, healthcare, hospitality and retail markets. While Wilsonart strives to adhere to the built environment certification standards, it is important that its competitive position not be compromised.

Initially, furniture manufacturers simply demanded that suppliers provide their complete ingredient lists for use in certification purposes. Suppliers can be reluctant to do this as it can reveal proprietary formulae to their competitors. To balance the concerns of the supply chain with the evolving expectations of an industry that now expects material transparency, as well as health and wellness certification, Teknion and

Wilsonart reexamined the way they approach product ingredient declarations. Bringing Wilsonart into the discussion enabled it to better understand Teknion’s objectives for product declarations and to collaborate on ways to meet those goals while protecting proprietary information. The result of these conversations has been a more holistic view of a product and its constituent parts.

Looking at the big picture enables Teknion and Wilsonart to achieve something quite significant in terms of transparency reporting – to provide disclosure of a product’s ingredients, without broadly revealing the exact formulae for a supplier’s component parts. Within this reporting model everyone wins. Wilsonart can stay competitive and local in an industry where off-shore suppliers with more lax

standards are vying for space and Teknion can help its customers receive the relevant information required to achieve certifications faster and easier.

Doug Hietkamp, Director of Sustainability for Teknion, explains, “In shifting our focus from individual component parts to the whole product, we have cut through the complexity of this conversation and made it simpler for our customers to achieve health and wellness certification.”

Steve echoes Doug’s sentiment, “I am proud of our part in moving the conversation forward one material at a time.”

Steve Lubowinski (right), Senior Research Fellow and Materials Engineer at Wilsonart, collaborates with Vince DaSilva, Production Manager, Teknion (left).



“I am proud of our part in moving the conversation forward one material at a time.”

our voices: rbc extend

a fresh look at managing resources

WHAT IF WE COULD CONTINUE TO DRAW VALUE FROM OUR FURNITURE ASSETS EVEN AFTER THEIR SERVICE LIFE IN OUR FACILITIES IS COMPLETED?

What if we could save money and, at the same time contribute to the health of the communities in which we operate? Royal Bank of Canada’s (RBC) Corporate Real Estate team was asking these questions, while developing new furniture solutions to meet the evolving needs of its retail branches across Canada.

What came next was the successful implementation of the EXTEND furniture management program, which extended the furniture life cycle, saved money for the bank, gave back to the community and diverted furniture from landfill.

Overcoming Complexities

At the start of the project, RBC was dealing with a complex furniture asset management system. Across Canada, the needs of RBC’s retail branches were continually evolving, and furniture was not being tracked

consistently. RBC’s decentralized furniture management model made it difficult to transform the risk associated with managing small and diverse compilations of furniture from 7.2 million sq. ft. (668,902 m²) of branches across Canada into an opportunity by either redeploying, donating or recycling them. A sustainable approach would further align with the bank’s core values of caring for the environment and the community. It is an unfortunate reality that 68 percent of all commercial furniture ends up in landfill, and RBC wanted to take some tangible steps to distance itself from that statistic. The RBC Corporate Real Estate team knew that if it could develop a cohesive picture of what furniture inventory was present where, it could responsibly manage, redeploy and decommission furniture from

branches across Canada. Zhen Lee, Director of Operations at RBC explains, “When developing this initiative, we realized the potential magnitude of this program and its ability to impact many areas of our business and regions across Canada.”

Thinking Through the Entire Furniture Life Cycle

RBC believed that collaborating with Teknion, their existing furniture partner, was the most effective way to develop and execute a strategy to meet the challenges at hand. Zhen adds, “We knew Teknion had both the vision and capacity to deal with the complexity involved.” Teknion responded by creating a centralized furniture life cycle extension and tracking program that takes on any furniture project, big or small, Canada-wide through a single point of contact. This program, code-

named EXTEND, differs greatly from the standard type of inventory program that focuses on low-hanging fruit with an immediate financial payout: namely, one-off large decommissioning projects in a single building. Rather, the EXTEND program accommodates the needs of any size branch, in any area, remote or central. This includes: inventory management and redeployment, resale and charitable donations to extend the useful life of the bank’s furniture, as well as recycling at end-of-life to ensure diversion from landfill and positive community impact.

Small Acts, Big Impact

Since the inception of this program, every piece of furniture at every branch is inventoried and tracked within the Teknion-administered database. This means that Teknion can undertake trivial tasks such as replacing a caster in a branch as remote as Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, or shipping 11 unused desks from Montreal to Peterborough, increasing the benefits when multiplied nationwide. Additionally, the extensive network afforded by Teknion and its logistics and social enterprise partners, CMI and CSR Eco Solutions, enables RBC to keep its activities local, whenever possible, thus reducing shipping costs, and further reducing its carbon footprint. Since the inception of this program, RBC has experienced an increase in sustainable activity in almost every province and territory nationwide, reaching approximately 120 branches, which equates to 600,000 sq. ft. (55,742 m²) of retail space. In time, the program

will impact all 7.2 million sq. ft. (668,902 m²) within RBC’s retail branch network.

The Success is in the Metrics

By asking “What If?”, RBC and Teknion have written a new script for sustainable and cost-efficient business practices. When commenting on the success of the EXTEND program, Zhen explains, “It’s not just about a supplier-client relationship. It’s the mutual respect and collaboration between two partners that have driven an initiative of this size. Speed, agility, efficiency and care for the environment and community are just some of the values that RBC and Teknion share.”

“Speed, agility, efficiency and care for the environment and community are just some of the values that RBC and Teknion share.”

Zhen Lee
Director of Operations, RBC

Zhen Lee, Director of Operations, RBC (right) and Tasos Dimacakos, Corporate Accounts, Teknion, outside an RBC branch in Toronto.



letter from the sustainability team

next steps

AS WE TAKE THE NEXT STEPS TOWARD A MORE SUSTAINABLE TOMORROW, IT IS IMPORTANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE HOW FAR WE HAVE COME.

When we first came together as a team to further sustainability, it was a significant challenge. We had to deal with resisters to embedding sustainable thinking into our design and manufacturing of products. Our goal was simple: have everyone at Teknion actively support the concept of enough for all forever. With a great deal of work, research and effort, we have challenged ourselves to do better and today feel the satisfaction of advancing sustainability across our company. These days, as a team, we are witnessing new leaders emerging across the company. Our teams are collaborating more with each other, with our customers and partners looking for more sustainable solutions. This is the way it should be.

Our workforce, like the general population, is aging. We are focused on finding the next generation of employees from the communities in which we operate and taking this as an opportunity to reach out to sectors of the community that otherwise could be underserved.

We understand that doing good for our business, the environment and our community creates amazing opportunities for growth and advancement of ideas.

As we progress, we continue to share our knowledge to raise the bar of performance for the entire industry. We have identified health and wellness within the built environment as the next logical opportunity for advancing sustainability for ourselves and our customers. Like we did with LEED, we are educating our teams, the A & D community and other stakeholders, providing free examination preparation courses for WELL AP certification. We have also expanded our efforts to eliminate Red List chemicals beyond our in-house manufacturing to our supply chain and are developing a materials database to educate our partners and help our customers find better ways to identify and eliminate the risk these materials contain. Perhaps as important, we continue to use our Foundation

Programs (BIFMA, Level, LEED, FSC, DfE and CDPH) as a tool to drive accountability and responsibility.

We are proud of how far we have come. We will continue to push ourselves beyond our comfort zone to ask, “Is there a more sustainable way of doing things?” There is lots more work to be done. However, now, unlike when we started, many more people are included in this conversation. Their creativity and insight will drive us forward and serve as a reminder of what really matters – ensuring a positive impact on our employees, our customers, our communities and our planet.

Scott Deugo, LEED AP
Chief Sustainability and Sales Officer

Doug Hietkamp, LEED AP
Director of Sustainable Development Programs

Tracy Backus, LEED APID+C;
WELL AP; WELL Faculty
Director, Sustainable Programs

*From left to right: Tim Baxter
(Vice President, Corporate
Accounts), Tracy Backus, Doug
Hietkamp and Scott Deugo.*



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