

Efficient By Design: Contract Design Associates lands downtown

Move provides central setting, better space for work, display

Samantha Peone

March 30th, 2023



Spokane-based Contract Design Associates Inc., a 43-year-old commercial furniture dealership, has relocated recently into a 16,000-square-foot space in the former Spokesman-Review production building, at 1 N. Monroe downtown.

The move comes after CDA had been located for 24 years at 402 E. Sprague, where the company occupied 17,000 square feet of space, says Gwen Guenzel, principal and co-owner.

Although the move was completed in late February, plans to relocate the business and its warehouse operations began late last year in anticipation CDA's lease ending, Guenzel says.

Several factors, including lighting and layout of the space went into choosing CDA's new location, she says.

"I was really attracted to the lighting and the character of the building inside," she says.

East-facing windows line the walls of the main office. Upon entering the space, clients are welcomed by a reception area, a customer lounge, and a coffee bar. A nearby conference room features a sample library with a variety of textiles showcasing a broad selection of office furniture and accessory possibilities, she says.

"Our main office is very linear, based on the original footprint of the printing press," says Guenzel.

Beyond the welcome area are employee workstations and a “war room” where personnel can go to focus on specific tasks, she says.

Additionally, a wellness and quiet room allows workers to have a calm spot that can be used for breastfeeding, health breaks, and reducing stress, she says.

The upper level contains a large showroom that displays “a gallery of classic pieces” from MillerKnoll furniture brands, she says. The building also features warehouse space with covered bays to make loading and unloading materials easier.

Although its new location is slightly smaller, the space is configured more efficiently, says Guenzel.

“Our space is more open,” she says. “We have more room for collaboration, meetings, and head-down focus time.”

Her husband, Carl Guenzel, of Spokane-based commercial real estate brokerage Kiemle Hagood, handled the lease negotiations. Yost Gallagher Construction LLC, of Spokane, handled the tenant improvements, which include new windows, a raised floor, and new concrete, she says.

Angie Cashen, of Spokane-based DS Studio, handled the interior design.

Along with its enhanced office layout for staff, the new location is more convenient for many of CDA’s clients, and the location is near downtown amenities and attractions, Guenzel says.

The new office is also a locked facility, with client meetings arranged by appointment only. It offers security personnel, a potentially helpful amenity in case employees have to deal car troubles or similar situations, she says.

Guenzel says the space still needs some finishing touches. Although a date hasn’t been set, an open house is anticipated this summer.

The move also has brought extra energy to CDA’s employees, she says.

“It’s an exciting move for the company,” she says. “Everybody’s anxious to get to work, and everybody’s excited to show it off to the community.”

Established in 1980, CDA today has 17 full-time and three part-time employees here. The staff includes multiple interior designers to help clients envision and plan furniture for their workspaces. Guenzel declines to disclose the company’s annual revenue or how it’s trending.

Guenzel says CDA is the only authorized seller of MillerKnoll furniture in its market area, which encompasses Eastern Washington, northern Idaho, and Montana.

CDA has two additional offices in Montana—one in Bozeman and the other in Missoula.

Guenzel says the company works with a variety of customers in both the private and public sectors, including customers representing K-12 schools and higher education facilities, government offices, and other spaces ranging in size from small home offices to entire commercial buildings.

When it comes to working with clients, she says, “We can go from very small to very large.”

Of all the furniture CDA sells, Guenzel says her favorite piece would have to be Eames model lounge chair and ottoman, which she likes for its history, design, and materials.

“You just melt in the chair,” she says.

The set comes in a variety of colors and is made with a wood-laminate frame and mohair or leather upholstery. Prices vary depending on the style chosen. For example, the Herman Miller website shows a standard-sized set with a rosewood-style shell and black leather upholstery retails for nearly \$8,000.

Guenzel says, however, that CDA carries office furniture in a variety of price points.

Zeeland, Mich.-based furniture design and manufacturing company MillerKnoll Inc. was founded in 1905 when it was named Star Furniture Co. The business became Herman Miller Inc. after Herman Miller purchased a majority share of the company in 1923 and became its first president. In July 2021, Herman Miller acquired Knoll Inc., making Herman Miller a legacy brand of MillerKnoll.



- **Samantha Peone**

-  e-mail

-

Reporter Samantha Peone joined the Journal in 2015 as research coordinator before later transitioning into a reporter role. She covers real estate and construction.

Read More