

Design for Interaction Graduation Project

Enhancing Happiness in Office Surroundings

Introduction

Office workers spend a substantial portion of their time in an office environment. This environment should be designed to be safe, efficient and comfortable. But can it also be deliberately designed to have a positive impact on their well-being? According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the workplace is “a priority setting for health promotion”. However, whether the design of offices is limited to promote physical health or whether it can also affect an office worker’s happiness remains to be explored. Can offices be designed to support the flourishing of the people who work in it? These questions inspired this graduation project, which is a cooperation between BMA Ergonomics and the Delft Institute of Positive Design.

BMA Ergonomics

BMA Ergonomics is a production (assembly) company specialized in office seating. It originated from a Bio-Mechanical Advice agency in 1988, to a self designing, developing and assembling company from 1996 (introduction first BMA Axia chair) on. BMA Ergonomics is an international organization which operates in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, the UK, and Ireland. Also, BMA has a sister company called Martela in Finland, that sells BMA Axia chairs under their own company name.

The combination of medical and technical know-how forms the basis for BMA Ergonomics. For many years, we have conducted and supported research, for example in cooperation with TUD department Applied Ergonomics and Design. The knowledge thus gained on biomechanics, ergonomics and work physiology is translated into applicable information for our dealers, for occupational health services, ergonomists, architects and end users. BMA Academy is responsible for translating science into office design.

Ninety-five percent of this translation goes into seating design. This means that BMA, first of all, is an expert on ergonomic seating in office surroundings. Therefore the main focus of BMA is to maintain that expert position, and to carry out the fact that we are the authority in the field of biomechanics. Current ergonomic knowledge of BMA focuses merely on the subfield ‘physical ergonomics’. BMA is looking into ways of expanding this knowledge in the direction of ‘positive design’; hence, knowledge on how their products can promote positive experiences and well-being. BMA feels that this will lead to interesting new insights and product/market development possibilities.

Current BMA portfolio can be divided into four main categories. Most important being ‘office chairs’, but BMA also sells ‘24/7 chairs’, ‘ESD / Cleanroom chairs’ and ‘Custom chairs’. The newest innovation of BMA is the Axia SmartChair. You can visit our website (www.bma-ergonomics.com) for more information on our products.

Delft Institute of Positive Design

The DIOPD represents a research group at the Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering of TU Delft that initiates and stimulates the development of knowledge that supports designers in their attempts to design for happiness, for human flourishing. The central question is: how can we deliberately design products and services that increase the well-being of individuals and communities? To this aim, several approaches and design frameworks have been developed.

Assignment

The assignment is to design a happiness-enhancing office environment. The first step is to make an overview of available ‘positive design’ approaches and frameworks. The next step is to select one (or more) of these frameworks that is best suitable for application to BMA Ergonomics. The selected framework will be applied for designing a happiness-enhancing office environment. In the project, it will be decided with BMA Ergonomics if the design should be focussed on one or more products or on a general office environment. The final step is to test the design and to formulate recommendations for happiness-driven design in the context of BMA Ergonomics.

Location

BMA Ergonomics in Zwolle and Studiolarb at TU Delft.

Start project

To be agreed upon (flexible).

Contact and further information

Interested Dfl students should send a brief letter of motivation, their CV and portfolio to Pieter Desmet (p.m.a.desmet@tudelft.nl) and Anna Pohlmeier (a.e.pohlmeier@tudelft.nl)