

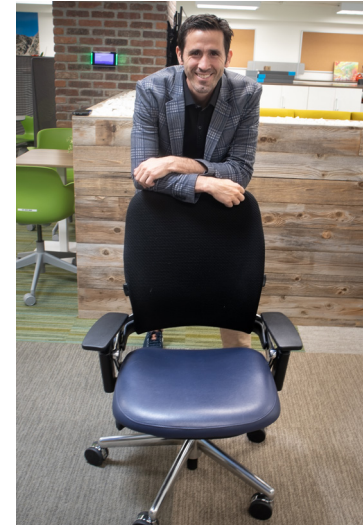
spaces

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Message From The President

The Chair That Saved My Business

A decade ago, sometime during the great recession, I owned a computer repair company. After having a modestly successful year, I treated myself to a new "executive" \$99 chair from Office Depot. The chair had one adjustment—up and down. Life was pretty good. I had a private office, an executive chair, and a growing business. At some point during the next year I started to get sore legs.

After about 20 minutes of sitting, it would feel like the blood was getting cut off and my legs would start to tingle. I'm not talking about the good kind of Chris Matthews "thrill going up my leg" tingle. But rather a sharp stinging that was very uncomfortable and painful; so much so that I could only sit at my desk for an hour or so a day. My ability to do the necessary work at my business started to suffer. Around this time my brother, Jason, purchased a business in Boise by the name of Office Environment Company. He mentioned to me he could help my leg problem with a new chair. I came to look at the chairs and was shocked at a \$799 price tag for a chair. "What in the world is in this chair? Is it lined with gold foil or something? How could a chair possibly cost this much!" My brother convinced me it would be worth the price and soon I found myself driving home a brand-new Steelcase Leap chair. Simple transition, we ended up making the right adjustments that relieved the pressure and voila, I was able to sit without pain again. With a proper task chair I was now able to sit and work for eight plus hours in a day. Being able to increase my office productivity from one hour to eight hours a day was life and business saving. I have since sold the business, but I did keep the chair. A special thanks to my brother for convincing me to spend money on a good chair and to Steelcase for making the chair that saved my business.

Scott Galloway
President

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Cordova Outdoors
Nampa, Idaho
Meeting Room



Cordova Outdoors
Nampa, Idaho
Meeting Room



OEC Showroom
Boise Headquarters
White Clouds Meeting Room



Juvenile Correction Center
Nampa, Idaho
Wall Mural



Saltzer Health
Meridian, Idaho
Curtains & Tracks

Reviving The Trades

Passion for your work will follow your working hard at something and achieving mastery in it. – Mike Rowe from Dirty Jobs



Mike Babbitt
OEC Furniture
Superintendent

For years, students preparing to graduate high school have heard “Work Smarter, Not Harder!” disparaging trade work and promoting a four-year degree with touted higher earning potential. While college life is exciting and developmental, the reality is many students will leave with high student debt and a job unrelated to their field of study. All the while, plumbers and electricians are in high demand with few replacements. So where did we go wrong and how can our cities, counties, and states revive the trades?

Developing Tangible Skills For Tradespeople All Over Idaho



Clay Long
Idaho CTE
Administrator

Clay Long, the state administrator at Idaho Career & Technical Education (CTE) knows well the challenges facing Idaho trades. He guides Idaho's six educational regions toward developing youth and adults for the workforce. “We want

to focus on the broader spectrum of career exploration. When someone sees where they are headed, it makes all the difference in the world. I would attribute that to the fact that a student feels connected, and it is not a guessing game on where they are heading.”

The CTE programs available range from traditional ag to the medical field, and the CTE's major focus right now is apprenticeship programs. While there may not be a complete welding program within a district, the CTE can partner with a local employer so that a student can go through an apprenticeship model. “If we don't have businesses, then we won't have successful programs. It doesn't do a student, parent, community, or employer any good if students complete a program and the skills are not directly aligned to what the labor market needs.”

Perhaps the biggest problem facing the trades is the underlying push toward attending a four-year university. “There is still this stigma that CTE is for those students that aren't 'academically inclined,' and I would argue that when I think of academically inclined, I think of students that can read and write, do math, and apply it. Every one of our programs does that. For example, a student who takes part in our CTE program and ends with a CAN certification after their first two years of school will have an easier time getting into an RN program than a student who takes multiple AP and dual credit courses. With the CTE program, the student has already been exposed to medical for four years and is committed to what they are doing, so it gives them a leg up on the competition. So, when we see an oversaturated market of four-year degrees, it is because they don't have any tangible skills to accommodate what employers are hiring for.”



Wayne Hammon
Idaho AGC
CEO

Painting A Tailored Path To Success

Wayne Hammon, the CEO of Idaho AGC, the state's largest network of commercial contractor professionals, has been working hard to solve the labor problem as

well. With 600 companies in the Idaho AGC and 60% of them located in the Treasure Valley, helping supply these businesses with skilled labor is a tremendous task. After 18 years working in the government, Wayne was happy to work with the hardworking community of tradespeople who just want to solve problems. While he and his team are great at their administrative jobs, please don't ask them to hang a picture!

The AGC understands the importance of education in reviving the trades and is making in-roads with educators. “We have reached out to high school and junior high guidance counselors to educate them on a path forward [in construction].”

“Being a craftsman requires a lot of skill and thinking, and not every kid needs a four-year degree to be successful. [Students] can have just as successful careers in construction. So, let's paint them a path to success tailored to their individual needs.”
– Wayne Hammon

Fortunately, the AGC has excellent school districts that are supportive of their work. For example, in the Boise School District, students can take a bus out of town to the Dennis Technical Centers for CTE classes. The AGC paid to take all 8th graders (10,000-20,000 students) in the district to see what the CTE programs had available when enrollment was dropping. After that brief field trip, enrollment doubled. The following year, the district asked if the students could bring their parents on a Saturday, and enrollment doubled again. With higher enrollment levels, the AGC is asking contractors around the area to tell them exactly what they want at the end of the pipeline to make these programs successful. Once they know the exact skills employers are looking for, they have schools ready to develop programs to teach them.

However, what really lies at the heart of trade work is a passion for the job and the assurance of stable employment. The AGC recognizes this and is trying to educate individuals on the perks of being a tradesperson. “Most tradesmen and women set their own schedule, and many of them own a business. That is a great way to run your life. You can live anywhere you want because there is a job in construction for you, no matter where you are. It is also a great way to make a really good wage with good benefits without college debt. It is a fast track to a rewarding, lifelong career.”



Aaron Brown
OEC Construction
Superintendent

Getting Paid To Learn

Minimizing debt was important for OEC's Construction Superintendent, Aaron Brown. Despite being pushed towards college by family, Brown knew early on that he wanted to do hands-on work. “I knew school wasn't for me. I wasn't going to pay for it, and I would rather get paid to learn what I want to do.” While his friends went off to college, and the inevitable debt, to discover what they wanted to do, he took a year off to travel before eventually connecting with a carpenter's union. Through an apprenticeship, he was able to work and earn his AA in civil engineering over four years.

Brown's enthusiasm for the trades has even extended to encouraging his nephews to pursue them as well. “I am always learning new things, and the industry is always changing. I like problem-solving, and with what we do, there is always a problem to solve.” Because Aaron learned about the trades after he graduated, he sees the importance of teaching students about them early. “I think if schools preached the trades, it would change things a lot. The stability of having a job that will always be there with good pay is important. I keep telling the guys we hire that if they get good at this and take pride in their work, the sky is the limit on how far they can go.” [oec](#)

Keys To A Successful Hybrid Workspace



Steelcase
Office Café

Many people can't wait to return to the office and work side-by-side with their colleagues again and organizations are taking every precaution to make sure workplaces are safe when people do come back. But what if these precautionary measures make the office feel sad and even more isolating than working from home? Below are a few things organizations should consider when introducing a hybrid work style to their offices.

An Office Café

Can you have culture without coffee? You might be

able to bring people together virtually to work on a problem, but you don't get people bumping into each other, coming across diverse perspectives or walking around and seeing what's going on in another meeting. With that in mind, Cafés are spaces that often sit empty most of the day because they are typically used just for dining, individual work or small meetings. By looking at underutilized spaces in new ways, cafes can be redesigned as social hubs that will inspire people and provide high-performing settings where they can reconnect with their colleagues, as well as collaborate effectively.

Braid The Digital And Physical Experience

There are three key factors to consider when creating a space: Equity, Engagement, and Ease.

Equity: How do we make this a great experience for people in the room and for people who are remote? Mobility is the key. People in the room should be able to move around while they take their screens with them. Angled conference tables help remote team members see everyone while those in the room can also see the screen.

Engagement: How can our space help us engage with one another? Movement increases brain activity so physically using tools like whiteboards or digital tools make it easier to co-create from afar.

Ease: How do you make space and technology easy to work with? You should be able to walk in and join a session as simply as possible.

Setting Guardrails

Organizations should set clear expectations moving forward. While they must acknowledge the autonomy and flexibility employees are looking for, they also must set some guardrails. Too much choice can be overwhelming and stifling. Organizations should set

parameters around expectations and consider creating social contracts with their employees.

Safe & Connected

Culture, innovation and growth are exactly the things leaders globally are worried about. That's why contrary to what we read a year ago about the office going away, the opposite has actually happened. Whether or not our future workplace is bigger, the same size or smaller, or is made up of an ecosystem that includes home, the places where we come together matter more now than they ever did because we have a year to make up for. [oec](#)

Digital Conference Room
Microsoft Surface Hub



Designing Interiors That

INSPIRE



KovichCo Interiors
Cloud Condo
Photo by
Gabe Border

Design creates culture. Culture shapes values. Values determine the future.
- Robert L. Peters

As we have learned over the last year and a half, the spaces we live in matter. They matter to our productivity, our creativity, and overall, to our wellbeing. We have learned that things like color, ergonomics, and flexibility are essential to helping us be successful. At OEC, we asked four designers from different firms to tell us what they are doing to create spaces that inspire, whether that be encouraging people to return to work with confidence or striving toward personal transformation.



Jordan Yankovich
KovichCo Interiors

At KovichCo Interiors, inspiration has always been at the heart of the business. Led by its principal, Jordan Yankovich, the 4-and-a-half-year-old firm has skyrocketed in popularity through its various commercial and residential projects. "Inspiration is something that we really take to heart. It is a part of our process, and we never neglect it no matter what the project is." But in a world of recycling and regurgitation, finding real inspiration is difficult.

Because Jordan tries not to repeat herself, except for the occasional mohair, she has to foster a creative spirit. "As designers, you want to be inspired all the time, so one of our mantras here is to be continually digging a deeper well that you have to draw on when you meet a client. Curiosity is one of our core cultural values, so everyone is expected to go down rabbit holes and share things with the team." Recently those rabbit holes have come to include anything from design books to Antiques Roadshows.

For KovichCo, the idea of trends does not even register. Instead, they find inspiration by working very closely with their clients to discover what they need to accomplish in the space. "I love building the concept and reaching into the depths. I've pulled poetry out of clients or pictures, and they'll have this look of, 'Aren't you going to pick carpet?'" By diving deep into what their clients want, KovichCo can create a more robust vision that appeals to all the senses. In some cases, they will even reselect a chair before they change a fabric. "Textiles are incredibly important both in color and pattern stories, and getting that tactile feel is really important because you want to hit people in all senses. I also believe strongly in the emotional side, not just functionality. I want to know what the space is doing for me emotionally." While KovichCo may not be the perfect designer for everyone, they certainly are fun, thanks to one of Jordan's important policies. "If it scares you a little bit, go for it!"



Megumi Haus
CHSQA

Similar to KovichCo, Megumi Haus at CSHQA also starts with the vision of the client. Because CSHQA has a diverse portfolio with everything from government, aviation, and hospitality, to retail and office, beginning with a substantial client vision is extremely helpful. "Discovering what the cli-

ent wants is definitely a great place to start. Then it is our job to guide them and give them other options." However, if left to her own devices, Megumi prefers to pull inspiration from nature by using muted, neutral colors with a bit of color popping throughout. "I tell people; you don't see a huge orange field in nature. When you walk in the park, you'll see browns and grays and a little bit of green. So, I try to give a nice neutral palette that they can accessorize."



Jordyn McKnight
Kieffer Design Group

Jordyn McKnight from Kieffer Design Group (KDG) designs mainly hotels with some commercial and multifamily projects. With the hospitality industry taking a big hit this past year, creating spaces that inspire people to travel is top of mind for the firm.

For one of their recent projects in downtown Boise, they pulled inspiration from the surrounding foothills. "With the foothills in the background, we took this idea of home and incorporated the hill colors, which are pops of blues and indigo." One of the exciting ways the firm achieved a homey feel was by creating a wall of recycled leather belts. The belt wall is unique in that it immediately puts guests at ease. From there, creating the rest of that feel comes down to spatial layout. "If you design something well, it makes people want to go to that space. Giving them an opportunity to decide if they want to sit in a grouping of four where they can be social, or by themselves helps them feel like they are a part of something."



Catie Buck
Babcock Design Group

For Catie Buck at Babcock Design Group, she likes to push clients a little bit out of their comfort zone. "I feel like pushing the envelope amplifies the customization of the space for the client." Starting with the client's branding and culture as a foundation, Catie plays with color, texture, and lighting to create an inspirational space. "If there is one thing I could push as a designer, it would be lighting and chairs. They need to make a statement while being comfortable and functional. For me, furniture is like the icing on the cake."

These designers all have something in common. They are being invited to design in workplaces and homes like never before. People are beginning to realize that designers provide a holistic approach that fosters community and leaves them inspired. [oec](#)



BP Energy
Conference Room
Design by
Catie Buck

Spokane Conservation District

In 1935, a black blizzard descended on Washington D.C. just as Hugh Bennett, the Director of the Soil Erosion Service was testifying before Congress about the need to continue funding the program. As the dust cloud enveloped the city with its clay-colored veil, Congress saw first-hand the importance of implementing the Soil Conservation Act. The aftermath of the Dust Bowl that ravaged the Great Plains in the 1930s has had lasting effects today. One of those effects includes the creation of nearly 3,000 conservation districts nationwide. These districts operate under state law as non-regulatory, non-enforcement entities that help farmers and landowners make decisions about how to best utilize their natural resources. So why the history lesson on the Dust Bowl from an office furniture company? Because everyone needs the right furniture to effectively do their job, especially the Spokane Conservation District (SCD). Authorized in 1941 to operate in Spokane, the SCD is celebrating its 80th birthday with the addition of a beautiful 12,350 s.f. building on its new 50-acre lot in the heart of Spokane Valley.

Their new location is a 50-acre parcel of land that is a sanctuary among numerous housing, urban, and industrial developments. Vicki Carter, the director of SCD, came across the land by chance and could not get over it. In its former life, the land was a rock quarry and gravel mine as well as an asphalt batch plant that made and hauled asphalt. The community absolutely hated it because of the smell, noise, and traffic so the company eventually left, and Vicki found it. "It certainly has its history and scars from its former life, but with all of that, I find great beauty, because we're a conservation office and

we can reclaim that and bring it back to something beautiful and important again.

All the while we are honoring what it was and how it provided for us as a community. So, I don't look at it as this ugly place, but rather an opportunity to do some

of our best work, and I really feel like this building exemplifies that. It is unique to this

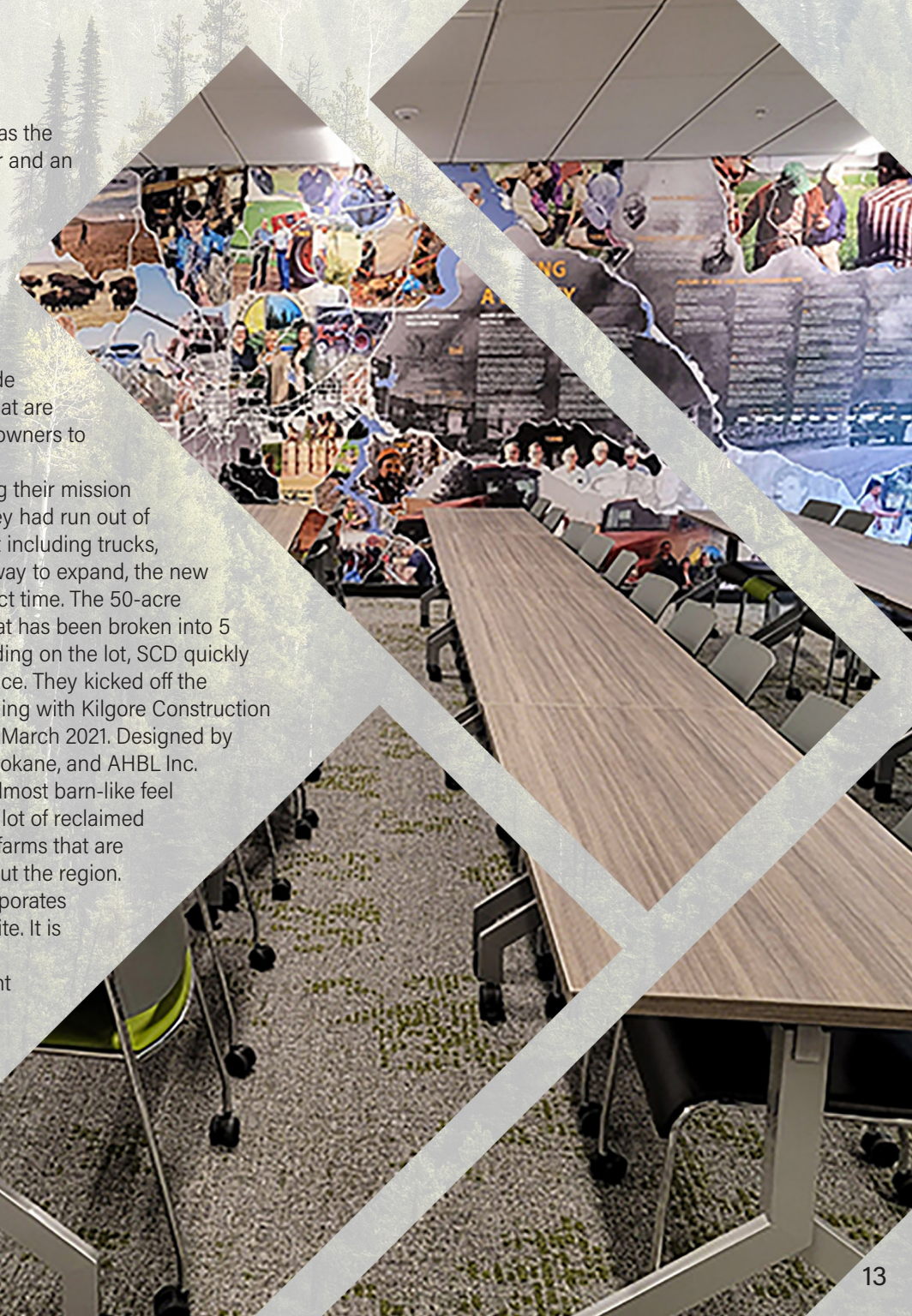
site and this setting shows the integrity of us as an organization, of the hard-working landowners we work with, and the kind of communication and relationship that we have."

At SCD, their work covers everything from the backyard to the back 40 and beyond. Because they are

non-regulatory, they often act as the liaison between the landowner and an enforcement agency by connecting landowners with resources that are available to them. The SCD has a variety of projects it works on from dealing with erosion in nearby lakes, to growing trees. Their mission is to provide viable solutions to problems that are economically feasible for landowners to implement.

In their old building, fulfilling their mission was becoming impossible. They had run out of space to store their equipment including trucks, trailers, and tractors. With no way to expand, the new property came up at the perfect time. The 50-acre campus is a 10-year project that has been broken into 5 phases. With one existing building on the lot, SCD quickly planned out the rest of the space. They kicked off the construction of their new building with Kilgore Construction in May of 2020 and opened in March 2021. Designed by Integrus Architecture PS, of Spokane, and AHBL Inc. the building has an agrarian, almost barn-like feel to its exterior. Inside, there is a lot of reclaimed wood used to reflect the rural farms that are historically scattered throughout the region. Additionally, the building incorporates rock that was existing on the site. It is also completely energy efficient, utilizing the placement of windows in relation to the sun to maximize natural heating and cooling.

"This building really tells the story of the SCD and



we are excited about what we can offer to the community!" Through demonstrations on the property, the SCD can show every aspect of who they are in terms of programming, and the projects and resources they have available.

One of the projects Vicki is most proud of is their program called "Vets on the Farm". This program was created five years ago to help veterans transition into civilian life while also addressing the dwindling number of farmers in the U.S. These veterans are often looking for their next mission so the SCD provides them with training opportunities to become farmers. The program has been wildly successful because the veteran community is so strong. Since it started, the program has brought hundreds of veterans into the fold of the conservation district and is changing lives in a very positive way.

"For the 30 years that I've been here, I've watched these incredible projects and people meld together, and it has really been one of the most rewarding things I think I could have ever chosen or done as a career."



Vicki Carter
Spokane Conservation
District Director

The new building supports planning programs like "Vets on the Farm" with its extensive amount of collaboration space. With plenty of natural light from every vantage point throughout the entire building,

meeting rooms are large and welcoming. "When things are beautiful, you feel good. The collaboration spaces are where we have a lot of the OEC furniture, that, and the multipurpose room. We wanted it to be comfortable, specifically our meeting room chairs where you could be sitting for six hours or with height adjustable desks at the workstations. We wanted to let people choose how they wanted to work based on how they were feeling that day. We have four to five different seating choices that are beautiful."

The next phase of the development plan will be building a regional conference center that can host a small to mid-range conference from 50-200 people. Because a lot of businesses are decreasing their office space due to Covid, Vicki sees an opportunity to help fund the SCD by renting out their space for company get togethers. "Downsizing is great until you need to bring all your staff together and your building no longer has the capacity."

For now, the SCD is looking forward to settling into its new space, developing their land with public nature trails, and continuing to help the landowners in the surrounding counties. None of it would be possible without the help of the incredible staff at SCD. "Our whole staff played a part in getting that building built, whether it was literally sitting on a front-end loader moving 13,000 cubic yards of asphalt or something else, my staff busted their butts. So, every single person has a sense of ownership and pride over there." When it comes to their line of work, those are exactly the kind of people that will help make the farmers and landowners of the Spokane area successful. The days of the dust bowl are long gone, and the excellent work the SCD is doing will make sure it stays that way for years to come. [oec](#)



Hopper Table by Extremis

The Hopper picnic table re-imagines the traditional picnic table with easy entry points to get yourself seated





Outdoor Furniture by Blu Dot

Left: Perch Outdoor Lounge Chair
Perch makes every day look like vacation with rectangular teak slats and a matte aluminum frame.

Right: Low Fade Outdoor Lounge Chair
Solid teak and a tidy, resilient cushion dole out soft shapes to form a supportive sidekick in any setting.



Cordova Outdoors
Nampa, ID
Reception

EXIT



We create amazing spaces
where employees love to work



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