

# 'case of 'well being

So it's already 2008 and it's comforting to know that the jungle drums are banging louder than ever. It appears as though the festive break has given the gossip mongers out there the opportunity to invent a whole new series of wild and wonderful industry tales.

The problem for us is that, like a gold speculator at the Klondike, we have to sieve through tons of rubbish before we spot something shiny and glittering.

In the top 10 of repeated stories to hit our ears over the past few years has been the one that goes 'Steelcase are moving into Clerkenwell'. So, if you repeat something enough times it does come true!

Towards the tail end of 2007 the global leading furniture manufacturer's London operation did indeed vacate its Eversholt Street premises and join the marvellous merry-go-round that is the EC furniture trail. And they did so in some style.

The impressive new WorkLife London space on Farringdon Road is the result of an exciting collaboration between Steelcase and that dynamic design duo PearsonLloyd. Hardly a typical corporate move, we muse aloud. Steelcase Design Manager Emma Mitchell and Marketing Director Karin Gintz agree, but then again they probably would. This is, after all, new

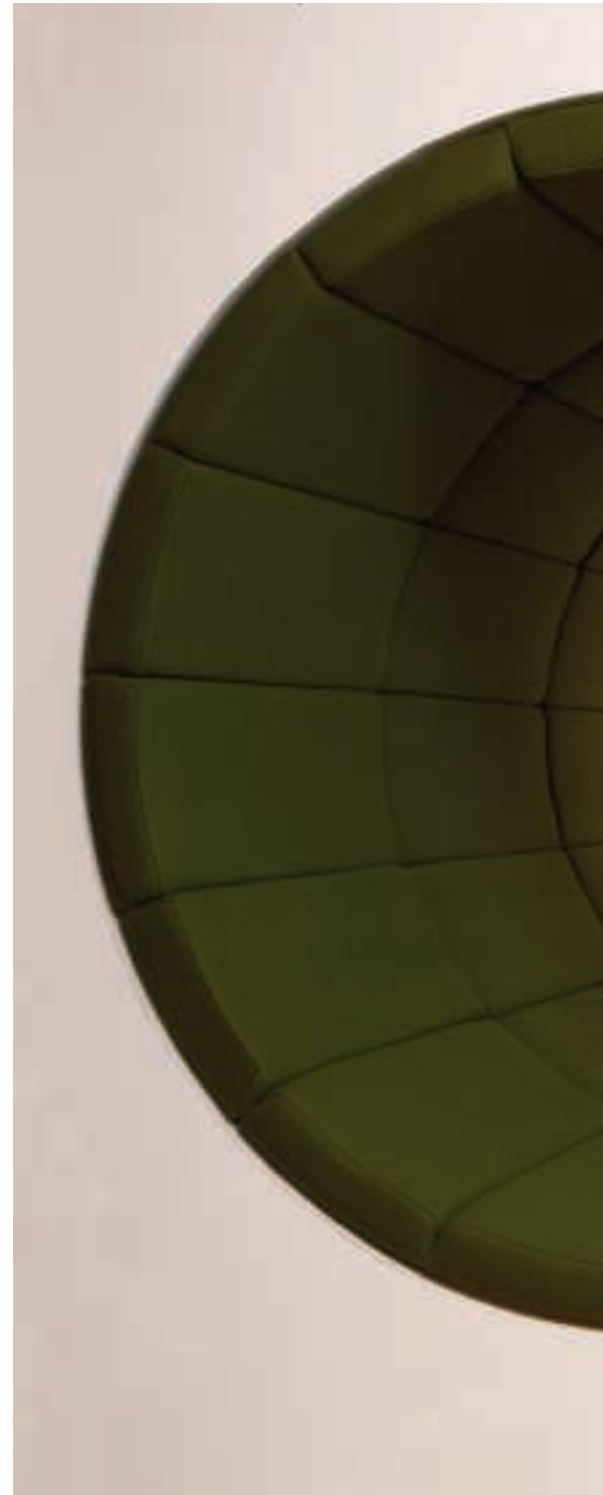
Steelcase. This is a forward-thinking, energetic, visible and doing-very-well-indeed-thanks-for-asking kind of operation, and the new home has been developed to represent this.

We discover that there has been some truth to the rumours for quite a time now. 'Our lease was coming up on our Eversholt Street space,' Emma confirms.

'That always gives you an opportunity to think about how to move forward. We saw the opportunity to relocate and we looked around various buildings in London. It was important for us as a company to have a shopfront, with regards to the retail side of things, which we had never had before.

'Finding a property in London with that shopfront was quite a challenge, so when we did find this building it essentially gave us a timeline.'

'This was approximately two years ago,' Karin reveals. 'Euston was not the best place for us to be. It was inconvenient for customers and we didn't have a shopfront. It was also a very impractical space, it had ▶▶▶▶









►►►back with the ideas on how to deliver this absolutely spot on.

‘It was interesting that, because they also do interior design as well as product design, they really understand products and space. That really came across when they executed the initial design brief. They really understood what we do and what we were trying to achieve with both this space and our products within the space. It was a great marriage of disciplines. They also, through the work that they have done, have a great network of people they deal with when it comes to areas such as technology, lighting and acoustics. That was a real positive for us.’

‘The lighting display we have beyond reception, for example, is from the same people who did the lighting for the London Eye,’ Karin tells us. ‘We are the first to use this software so we’ve really been able to push some boundaries. Also, we didn’t want to enclose spaces, so we have space pockets on the ground floor which work without fully enclosing the areas, and they have been very smart by using different lighting and acoustic levels, which provides a completely different environment and private space without it being closed off.’

‘They totally respected the architecture of this building,’ Emma adds. ‘That was

another positive for us because it is a stunning building and we weren’t looking to completely transform it.’

The new Steelcase London WorkLife spans three floors, with the most interactive space being the middle, street level floor, where, during our meeting in one of the smart pods, we are aware of constant movement and, well, worklife without ever feeling prying eyes on us or that interruption was inevitable. The space features a series of fantastic graphics, smart and subtle branding and a variety of touchdown spaces incorporating the latest Steelcase offerings.

The floor above is the heart of the operation, offering both Steelcase and Steelcase Solutions clean, open, interactive office space, discrete meeting facilities and hot desking options. The lower ground floor features the company’s storage, seating and desking collections, while still providing further breakout zones and private working spaces within its stunning, vault-like enclosures.

We can’t even come close to doing the project justice in these few words, so we recommend you take a look for yourselves. Rumour has it that you’ll all be welcomed with open... actually, it’s best we leave the rumours to others! ●



