







be a market for it – but there was a real strategic requirement here to capture a new slice of the market, so it needed to be focused.

‘I think the focus, direction and involvement we had at those early stages were very unique to Burgess – and if we’d done this brief for somebody else I think other conditions would have applied. In my view it is the job of a designer to work closely in this kind of relationship to make sure you have a clear sense of purpose. The brief said ‘Meeting room table system’ – therefore this is not just a table, it is a system. We wanted, to develop more than a nice looking table, but instead develop a product that had genuine system capabilities – so there were useful features that would attract potential users.

‘Clearly, it’s a table, so generically it’s a top and legs – but beyond that precondition of what a table should be we wanted to find areas where we could add value, add some distinction and really work it. 90% of this table is very closely related to any other table, so it was right that, at the start, the brief was very specific.’

‘I think we knew what we wanted,’ Simon takes over, ‘but what we didn’t want to do was to design it for Barry. We knew the market that we were aiming for and we knew what we wanted to achieve – and we were also aware of what we were capable of producing.’

‘These points are absolutely central to a good brief,’ Barry continues. ‘You need to focus it down – so this product is entirely >>>>>>

>>>>>>business. When InterContinental moved to their new offices in Denham, from Windsor, they decided that, rather than fit-out their new meeting space with traditional office furniture, they’d use our hotel meeting room furniture instead. They felt it was perfectly good for their brand new headquarter offices. It was a fairly simple leap of faith from there – if they’re prepared to use our products for their offices, then why aren’t we looking more into this?

‘This is a logical extension of what we do,’ Simon explains. ‘We’ve been manufacturing chairs and tables for our core market very well, we believe – and we’ve been doing that for 52 years now. What we wanted to do was to make sure that the product was right for the market that we were looking at. To take our existing hospitality product forward would be quite difficult. It would work in some circumstances – and Jeremy’s highlighted

one example where it did – but this is a client who understands what we do and how our products work. We really felt we needed to build on top of this and take this extremely seriously.

‘We didn’t want the hospitality signature on Burgess Works as such – and certainly not on our launch product. That’s really when we started to think about the idea of external design influence. We went forward and shortlisted three designers, and Barry was the one who won the day.’

We move on to discuss the design brief. ‘I firmly believe that to achieve successful design output you really need collaboration between a client that knows where they are going commercially, and a designer who understands the market,’ Barry begins. ‘There is plenty of scope for people to design things speculatively, and not quite get it right. It may be a good design. If you design it, make it and sell it, then there may





rapid prototyping, the new Meet-U meeting table system includes simple features to allow for agile working and modern technology. Meet-U has, as the guys have already explained to us, been carefully designed with the user in mind.

The system itself encompasses a variety of top shapes, including rectangles, squares, triangles and quadrants, which can link together to form layouts for any meeting room environment.

The full range of tables can be further complemented by bridging units, minimising the number of table legs needed, providing system flexibility and saving storage space when not in use. An integral rotating corner plate, neatly concealed within the frame, supports the bridge tops; this allows for bridge tops to be used on

two adjacent sides of the table simultaneously. Furthermore, a neatly designed channel on the underside of the table allows insertion of a multi-function clip that can be used to secure and support a modesty panel, link tables together and can support power cables in the form of a cable tidy.

Before we head back into the heat of London, Jeremy shows us an original Burgess brochure. Now you may be intrigued to know that we are currently looking at new and exciting developments for the look and feel of Mix. A couple of these 'new' ideas are right here in this vintage brochure. So Burgess has clearly been at the cutting edge for over 50 years – and, judging by what we've seen today, shows no sign of stopping ●

►►►informed by the brief as unique to Burgess. Everything about it is informed – the way the leg works, the way rails work – they all inform one another. It has been designed with quite a lot of rigor.

'We knew from the start that we were very much part of a drive to help create this new brand, but we were really focused on the product development. What was really clear was that this was a different sector product, so needed more of a commercial, corporate feel to it rather than a hospitality feel – and we were very comfortable with that because this is our core market. We saw Burgess as a new client with ambitions and a brief that was very clearly mapped out – and we responded accordingly.'

'We knew we wanted a flagship product to spearhead the launch of the brand,' Simon tells us. 'We felt there was a definite gap in the market for a meeting room table system – as opposed to, say, a chair. It was a logical progression for us and we felt it was the right move, the right decision.'

'Dare I say, we were also more comfortable with the development of a meeting room system in so much as we already do make various meeting room table systems, albeit for a different market. We already have that comprehension of what meeting room systems should be able to do,' Jeremy adds. 'I think this progression is a natural evolution for us. From the reaction we have had so far, I am confident this will be very well received in the marketplace.'

Two years in the making, starting with initial styrofoam models and progressing to

