

october rising

The latest event to make its way into the calendar is Context – which takes place at Earl's Court from October 11 to 13. In the wake of those exhibitions that didn't quite work (and even those that didn't quite ever materialise), we are eager to see something new and exciting, and the organisers tell us it will be like no exhibition ever before.



Directcase



Supporto

The reason they say this is that it can't be, otherwise it will not work. "The issue is that buyers can easily do at least some of their own product research these days," explains Event Director Chris Fountain. "The internet makes finding this sort of information easy, if you know where to look. But we still know, according to all the research, that the two most used sources of product information for buyers behind the internet are magazines and events. And what the exhibition gives you that the internet can't is the ability to meet up, touch the product, talk and come together. So what we have to do is change the format and content of the show to build on what people want from it nowadays."



Avenon Group



Klassons

The most obvious change that Context has introduced to the format of the show is in the floorplan, which has replaced the traditional aisle layout with a series of zones and show stands. Chris Fountain believes that the new shape of the show will help people to get more out of the event. 'We believe we have developed the perfect platform for the industry to talk to a wider audience and in particular a general management audience,' he says. 'Everybody talks nowadays about the business case for design, return on investment, staff retention and so on. Well, we know that the business case for these issues has never been stronger, so what we have tried to provide is the platform for people to discuss it and carry the message to the world.'

Context also claims to have the strongest intellectual programme ever formulated for a UK exhibition in the workplace sector. The programme has been formulated alongside such heavyweight organisations as The Work Foundation, the Helen Hamlyn Research Centre, the BIFM and RIBA and in partnership with exhibitors, commentators and the UK's most important media titles.

The same commitment to intellectual content is evident on the Context exhibition floor itself. The main floor will feature a theatre which will show a specially



Skandium



Eurotek



Delta Furniture



ACF

commissioned film that will explore the various factors needed to create a 'Utopian Office' based on work practices, design, technology, legislation, facilities management and other critical success factors. There will also be a special feature called Design Icons, which will look at the history of furniture design going back to the early part of the 20th century and also present the results of the online poll into the products that have done most to shape workplace design over the years.

The exhibitors, we are assured, are equally committed to focusing on the business and intellectual case for the workplace. Kinnarps, who has sponsored a Helen Hamlyn Research Centre report into inclusivity, will be exploring that theme on its stand and extending the idea to individual choices about where and how to work. Kinnarps is also staging a special feature on acoustics in partnership with Screen Solutions. Steelcase will be presenting its 'Inspiration Office' concept, which explores the idea that offices not only represent a considerable investment in terms of capital expenditure but are also a source of important potential and opportunity as the visible framework for people, processes and the company's culture.

Morris Office Furniture will be launching no fewer than six new products at the show including its aptly named Expo system and



IG



Kinnarps

Art seating ranges. Expo is a beam based office furniture system which addresses the contemporary need for highly adaptable furniture. Another company using Context as the platform for a product launch is Eurotek, who will be launching its new beam based system Stretch as well as Access, which is designed to integrate furniture with e-business systems and ICT technology.

Context will also see the full launch of Touch, the latest design from Arcenson Group that was previewed earlier in the year at Prima. Touch chimes with the theme of Context, badging itself as 'the next generation office' by addressing the most pressing of modern concerns for flexible, intuitive and technologically sophisticated office design.

Wallis too will be launching new products at the show. As well as its Classic collection of chairs and tables, it will present Scan, a Norwegian designed collection of chairs, sofas, meeting chairs and tables. Meanwhile, Bucon will be showcasing its new Las Reflect system of chairs, tables and other



Trumpf



Morris



Morris



Walls



Osmond Group



Orangebox

elements which the company claims can be adapted to meet the needs of almost any environment.

Scandinavian design is well represented at the new show; with RH Form, Prima Office and Kinnarps alone representing Sweden. Prima Office will be presenting its latest storage and display systems called Qubiq.

Seating ranges on display will include Baron from Arenson and a new chair from ACF called SP2. One well known name back in a new guise is Supporto, a newly formed company that will make and market Fred Scott's classic chair (on show elsewhere in the hall as part of the Design Icons feature) and its supporting system of furniture and tables.

Flexibility will continue to be one of the main themes of the show. Two Italian companies will be addressing the issue in characteristic style. Methis will be showcasing its Delta system, which has cool ceramic worksurfaces. Della Rovere will be launching its Life Collection, developed in partnership with Venetia architects Kairos.

The theme of inclusivity explored in the intellectual programme will find an echo in several products, especially sit-stand workstations from both Kinnarps and Osmond Group who will be launching the Danish designed Orient at the show. Bring it on guys.