

INTERVIEW

Steelcase: Workspace furnishing with impact

For a typical 9-to-5 office worker, the majority of indoor time is spent sitting, be it for brainstorming or for a meeting, or just resting. Not every office furnishing company out there is able to address functionality with well-being, while addressing global concerns as well. And yet, Steelcase Inc., with over 100 years of expertise in this area is going strong with their continuously improving line up of products.

On March 14, 2019, it opened its doors to the office furnishing scene in Dhaka to create better, impactful workspaces that not only inspire and promote well-being of the people involved, but also to create a workspace that adds value. Speaking to Praveen Rawal, Steelcase Asia Pacific Managing Director, India and Southeast Asia, we get to know the brand and its journey so far.

Naturally, the question of challenges so far in the market came up. Rawal spoke of the team that was finally in place, as well as the import of products into this market, plus getting the designers in place.

"We are ready to go, ready to fight!" he said.

Steelcase, being a workspace furnishing solution, caters to variety of offices, banks, FMCG companies and many more. Rawal particularly mentioned the export based garments and apparel design offices, where



the investors arrive for initial discussions. It is certain that if a creative design centre is not up to the mark, global investors will start thinking of shifting their interests. As designing and creative work require a different flow in the workspace or office, it is evident that both the back-offices and the front-offices need to be able to provide a space for output, while keeping up appearances that can attract and retain potential investors.

When the products were being demonstrated, the set included the Steelcase's

Turnstone Buoy – which is designed to combat the negative effects of the typical sedentary workstyle, as it allows one to swivel and tilt as they prefer.

The showroom showcased even larger modules of workspace seating and meeting solutions. Meetings and collaboration work are no longer limited to the stiff backed chairs. Also, global office spaces need to incorporate mobility for better collaborative output; that does not mean that not all of these have to remain in an office. The Media: Scape Teamtheater, for example, can easily have its place in a home based work space that requires both online and offline connectivity.

Every product can be customised with a variety of colours and combinations of modular pieces to fit any space.

Rawal drew attention to their iconic 'Think chair'. It not only provides lumbar support as well as height and width adjustments, it consists of up to 28 percent recycled material and is up to 95 percent recyclable. Even the glue that is used, is environmentally friendly.

Indoor air quality improves with Steelcase's products as they do not use any carcinogenic elements. For a global company, environmental sustainability is a key concern, and Steelcase is addressing this

head on.

Speaking of the designers, Rawal encouraged local designers to step in. Feedback is necessary for a global company to address local issues.

"After all, if you want to be a global player, you have to play locally," Rawal reiterated.

The brand itself is a performance brand in Rawal's eye and he believes that Steelcase is a must-have for professional spaces.

Speaking of the displayed products in the showroom, Rawal mentioned the research that is key to Steelcase's global success so far. Extensive research went into figuring out elements that delight people and surfaces that automatically draw in people to collaborate.

Workspaces too now need to be able to provide areas for creative thinking as well as for self-reflection. Rawal underscored the importance of these and also added that a space had to be able to provide various levels of privacy based on specific needs.

"Technology and space are merging and the lines are blurring," he said. "Space shapes behaviour, and behaviour over time becomes culture."

His observations for Bangladesh is that since the furnishing scene is growing up very well, it is evident that the local scenario will have to step up globally. International investors need to create spaces that will promote a convincing presence.

Ultimately, Praveen Rawal wishes to see the brand to have a proper market presence. His expectations are that when the concept of office furnishing, seating and ergonomics come up- Steelcase should be the first brand that comes to mind.

By Iris Farina

Photo courtesy: Steelcase

The Steelcase Inc. Dhaka showroom is at Ventura Triveni (Level 8), Road 27/20, House 22, Block-K, Banani.

For more information, visit: www.steelcase.com/countries/bangladesh



NEWS FLASH

Domino's Pizza Now in Bangladesh

Domino's Pizza was officially launched on 15 March, 2019 with the grand opening of its first restaurant in Rangs Fortune Square, Dhanmondi, Dhaka.

Domino's Pizza entered Bangladesh via a joint venture between Jubilant FoodWorks Limited (JFL), India's largest food service company, and Golden Harvest QSR Limited, a part of Golden Harvest Group. The brand will operate under the JV named Jubilant Golden Harvest Limited.

Domino's Pizza comes to Bangladesh with a menu that is a unique combination of some top international favorite pizzas, along with pizzas that were developed

specifically for Bangladesh. Customers will soon be able to enjoy hot and fresh pizzas, either at the restaurant or in their homes, where the pizzas would reach them within 30 minutes.

Speaking at the launch, Hari S. Bhartia, Co-Chairman, Jubilant FoodWorks Limited said, "Bangladesh is a key strategic market for us with immense potential for growth in the food service sector. We are delighted to launch Domino's Pizza in the country in partnership with Golden Harvest, and are confident that this will go on to win consumer acceptance and become a successful business in Bangladesh." Commenting on

the development, Pratik Pota, CEO and Whole-time Director, Jubilant FoodWorks Limited said, "We are pleased to launch the first Domino's Pizza restaurant in Dhaka today. We have done extensive research over the last twelve months to develop a menu keeping the needs and preferences of Bangladeshi consumers in mind, while also offering the best of the brand's international menu. We will also be launching an app that will help to redefine the pizza ordering experience of customers in the country." According to Rajeeb Samdani, Managing Director of Golden Harvest Group, "We are delighted in launching

Domino's in Bangladesh today, partnering with Jubilant FoodWorks. Domino's Pizza is one of the largest pizza brand recognised for its quality and delivery expertise- we are confident that Domino's is going to be one of the most loved Pizza brands in Bangladesh with unique products and service offerings for pizza lovers of the country."

Domino's Pizza will bring a strong focus on ensuring value for money for its customers and towards that, it has an aggressive, value pricing starting Tk 149.

For more information, visit www.facebook.com/dominospizzabn/