

January 12, 2011

World Premiere of Most Innovative Educational Furniture Platform

Grand Rapids, MI, Vanerum•Stelter and VANERUM Group are pleased to announce the global launch of the inventive Opti+ seating and desking platform. On January 11, 2011 the partners celebrated the worldwide virtual launch of the Opti+, which will be followed up with its European premier on January 24, 2011.



For the first time in the history of educational furniture design, all of the elements required to reach the ideal ergonomic posture within the classroom are being incorporated into one comprehensive product line. Opti+ combines a forward sloping chair with unique front contoured edge and a patented desk with integrated footrest, which increases adjustability and comfort. Opti+ is the perfect solution for the 21st century classroom setting.

"Today's educational environment is shifting away from the traditional approaches of sitting in rows, facing forward and listening to lectures to a more dynamic and collaborative social environment. Now students are expected to work in groups, express their ideas and thoughts and learn alongside the instructor. This changing paradigm creates new demands upon the furniture within the classroom. Increased mobility, adjustability and durability are at the forefront of these demands" says design team leader Johan Heyvaerts.

Design and Ergonomic Support

Traditionally ergonomics was looked at with the idea of creating 90-degree angles from the spine to the hips and the hips to the floor; it is now known that sustaining that posture for more than a few minutes is very hard and now that movement is such an important aspect of the 21st century classroom maintaining that traditional ergonomic approach is even more difficult. Opti+ approaches ergonomics from a different point of view; it uses the balanced seating philosophy, which brings users closer to the "natural resting position". The Opti+ transforms the traditional classroom chair and desk from a hindrance into a tool that is not only comfortable but also inspires lifelong learning, collaboration and integration.



Johan Heyvaerts

The Balanced Seating philosophy of ergonomics was created decades ago and has been used in various applications, but has never before been applied to a comprehensive family of classroom furniture, until now. The design team lead by Johan Heyvaerts was influenced greatly by the Open Angle Philosophy as well as the belief that creating the same eye level between both students and teachers breaks down the barrier between them and enhances the learning process.

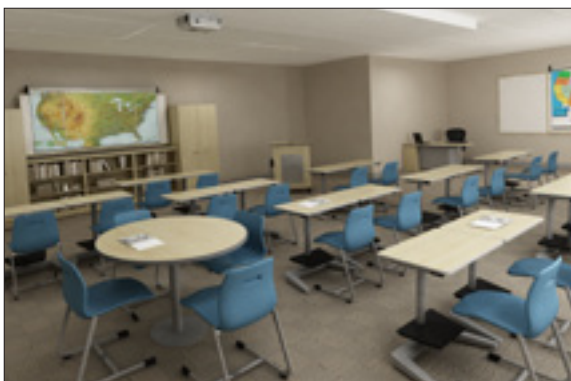
The design concept is simple; Designer Johan and his team added a patented adjustable footrest to the desk. Adjusting the desk height does help relieve back strain, but by adjusting the height of the footrest, the user is able to achieve the natural resting position of the spine easily. By lowering the height of the feet the spine is closer to achieving the "natural resting position", whereas only adjusting the desk height makes reaching that ideal posture impossible. The "natural resting position" allows the spine to carry the body's weight comfortably. We see this position when people are standing upright or sleeping on their sides. Johan and his team took this position and applied it to the Opti+. The desk combined with the unique chair is what makes the Opti+ so different.

Opti+ platform is divided into two collections, the Opti+.move and the Opti+.be.

The Opti+ .move desk integrates an adjustable height footrest that slides up and down the central pedestal leg. There is an elastic O-ring that moves and fits into grooves located at various heights along the central leg; the footrest fits over this O-ring and secures the footrest into place at the desired height (patent pending). The adjustable footrest is a crucial component of optimum seating posture. The central pedestal is made from hydro-formed steel tubing, cut to size onsite, reducing the costs and impacts of transportation. The footrest is made from a reinforced plastic that is extremely durable and can handle daily classroom abuse.

The Opti+.move desk features an elevated frame that comes in two different heights, the Opti+.be desk is available in three different standard heights—which not only allows for stadium seating options and numerous arrangements within the classroom to increase student viewing ability, and also puts the student and teacher on the same plane. Eye-to-eye level creates a more comfortable less intimidating atmosphere, perfect for collaboration and learning.

The Opti+ chair features an extended seat and a state of the art front contoured edge that promotes circulation and allows for a variety of ergonomically correct positions, the extended waterfall edge follows an open angle to be created in the hips that mimics the “natural resting position”. The blow molded one-piece shell acts as an air cushion providing comfort, while the curvature of the back gives continuous lumbar support. The Opti+.move chair is available in two shell sizes, at the two frame heights and a variety of colors.



The entire line is eco-designed: not only is hydro-formed tubing highly sustainable, but also the powder coating, the blow mold manufacturing process, the screwless attachment clips, the interchangeable frames, the interchangeable glides, the height adjustable approach and the recyclable polypropylene shell.

Vanerum•Stelter and VANERUM Group pride themselves on delivering products that enhance their i3 philosophy of creating inspiring environments by integrating technology and fostering interaction (i3). Opti+ is no exception; the Opti+ platform is suited to all levels of lifelong education: K-12, Higher Education and Adult Continued Education.

About Vanerum Stelter

Vanerum•Stelter passionately seeks to find a balance between traditional business objectives and their social/environmental responsibilities. Driven by innovation, creativity and a lot curiosity the group is dedicated to developing and bringing exciting new products to the North American marketplace. They strive to create environments that support their i3 philosophy. Vanerum•Stelter works hard to collaborate with award winning designers and manufacturers from all over the world.

Vanerum•Stelter is an organization dedicated to providing customers with outstanding products and services for their interior environments. Our goal is to enhance how people learn and work by making a connection between people, furniture and technology. This approach lives in the development and implementation of what we call i3 environments—environments that are interactive, integrated and inspiring. To learn more please visit www.vanerumstelter.com.

About VANERUM Group

The VANERUM Group companies manufacture, distribute and/or install products and solutions which help create i“ environments—environments that are interactive, integrated and inspiring. These environments result from the application of advanced classroom and office furniture, interactive and audiovisual ICT solutions, intuitive room control systems, digital signage software and static signage solutions. Among the outcomes are more efficient meetings, stimulating learning environments for youth and adults alike, remote interactive collaboration,... Our mission is accomplished when learners of all ages consider their educational duties as a right to develop.

For more information on Opti+ and to experience it for yourself, please visit: www.vanerumstelter.com and contact your closest Vanerum•Stelter dealer.