



Smart Furniture with the Custom Fit of Home

After receiving a quote that featured the company's free space-planning services and custom design and manufacturing capabilities, Jane Glazer selected Interior Concepts to provide her call center's new furniture.

Background

Home Trends is a Rochester, N.Y.-based catalog company that sells home supplies to satisfied customers, primarily in the United States. The company is the brainchild of former-teacher-turned-entrepreneur Jane Glazer, who in 1983 left her teaching job to do something “different”—something part-time that would engage her for a few hours a day. She didn’t know that her part-time job would turn to a full-time passion, or that she would launch her own direct mail catalog company to rival competitors such as Vermont Country Store, Harriet Carter and Walter Drake. With little more than gumption, a willingness to learn and a latent business spirit, Jane grew her firm from weekly sales of \$54.73 to more than \$50 million annually, with a continued annual growth of 10 percent.

As a result of Jane's business savvy and a lot of determination, the firm grew from a single-person office to a 247,000-square-foot facility in just a few short years. Today there are 72 friendly call center representatives taking more than 1 million customer orders each year.

Jane's background in teaching has fostered a sense of employee involvement during her leadership tenure as Home Trends' president. She's vitally aware of the importance of retaining good employees and staying abreast of their physical needs. Because of this, Jane recognized the importance of investing in workspaces that make her phone representatives and supervisors feel good about work and keep them committed to the belief that they are a critical part of Home Trends' sustained business success.

The Challenge

At Home Trends, it was success that created the challenge. The continued growth of Jane Glazer's company made it certain that her antiquated agent and supervisor workstations were in need of upgrading. In 2005, Jane decided to purchase new furniture for the first time for her call center. "I've always believed the call center department is very important because these people speak to our customers," Jane

explained, "so it was important that the call center furniture, computers, telephones and surroundings were the best." As such, agent and supervisor workstations would have to adapt to the organization's growing and changing business needs. Key issues that had to be addressed included:

PANEL HEIGHT. The existing furniture had panel heights of 72 inches, which made it



extremely difficult for supervisors and agents to communicate.

CABLE MANAGEMENT. The mass of cables underneath the workstations had a "spaghetti effect" that led to tangled wires and easily unplugged cords.

DREARY WORK ENVIRONMENT. A dark color scheme created a closed-in and dingy work environment for employees, which was exacerbated by the tall panel

heights that reduced the radiant light in the office.

SPACE CONSTRAINTS. Since the facility was already established, there was a need to custom-fit furniture that made sense for the existing work environment.

The Search for Expertise

After an exhaustive search that began on Google, Jane decided to call in the furniture solutions experts at Interior Concepts. Her goal was simply to see if they could assist her in finding the right furniture and layout for her existing space. After contacting six different call center furniture suppliers, she chose Interior Concepts for their practical planning ideas. "Their prices were not the lowest, but the best for our needs," Jane said. "I fell in love with the construction concept with the cords obtainable, but hidden. I had seen other setups with cords on the floor—a total disaster for keeping the place clean and people hitting them with their feet at desk level.

"In addition, their color and fabric choices allowed me to dress the place up without spending extra," she added. "And when we learned that assembly was part of the price—and not our responsibility, we then knew that we could buy 'new' with confidence."

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The Solution that Fit

One by one, Interior Concepts provided solutions that were a perfect fit for Home Trends' call center.

PANEL HEIGHT. To create the best solution, Interior Concepts lowered the workstation panels to 48 inches and placed supervisors on the end of the runs. This allowed agents and supervisors to communicate with greater ease, which ultimately enhanced the customer's experience as less time was spent searching for supervisors over high workstation panels.

CABLE MANAGEMENT. To reduce the unsightly web of cables underneath workstations, Interior Concepts used the The Chase™ wire management system. This system provides easy access to cabling yet ensures all cords are stored out of site.

DREARY WORK ENVIRONMENT. Interior Concepts' broad range of colors, materials and finishes played an important role in helping create both a cohesive appearance as well as an open and inviting work environment throughout the Home Trends' facility. The color scheme se-

lected for the furniture coordinated with the facility, transforming the furniture into an interesting and complementary component of the work environment.

SPACE CONSTRAINTS. One of the most important aspects to the Interior Concepts design was the custom-fit approach. The Interior Concepts team employed one-inch custom fit capabilities to ensure Jane made the most of every inch of available



floor space. The design also worked around several load-bearing columns that had created supervisory barriers in the past. Finally, the new furniture layout affords room to add workstations for Home Trends' future expansion needs.

The work completed thus far represents only the first phase of installation. The overall plan was designed to balance current needs with future growth. The smart

and savvy design of the first phase meant that the call center did not embody a feeling of emptiness that can sometimes be evidenced when only short-term goals are addressed.

Jane now gives a ringing endorsement of the firm's expertise. "Interior Concepts offers the best space planning and dimensional drawings in the business," she explained. "Their furniture adapts to any environment. I don't know of another manufacturer that could have customized their furniture to the exact specifications of our space without charging extra or pushing out lead times."

Jane Glazer and her Home Trends employees are very happy with their new furniture and intend to turn again to Interior Concepts for furniture solutions that fit when phase two gets under way. Their slogan "Sure, No Problem" is not only the way Home Trends deals with its customers, but it is the way they want their vendors to deal with them. "Moving into a 247,000-square-foot building with nothing but bare walls has been an exhausting undertaking," Jane said. "Interior Concepts was one of our major suppliers, and our very best. Everything arrived on time, everything worked and everything looked great. They're a first-class operation from sales to installation."

As such, agent and supervisor workstations would have to adapt to the organization's growing and changing business needs.





18525 Trimble Court • Spring Lake, MI 49456 • 800.678.5550 • www.interiorconcepts.com