

A New Way to Treat Children's Oncology: Princess Máxima Center in the Netherlands

One of the biggest struggles in the healthcare industry is knowledge sharing and patient coordination within and between hospitals. A new children's hospital in the Netherlands is doing what many leaders in healthcare want but don't have the resources to execute: once the hospital opened, all healthcare, research and training in the Netherlands related to children with cancer were concentrated in one place," The **Princess Máxima Center** was designed by the experiential design office **MMEK'**. The new hospital completely reimagines what a care experience feels like.

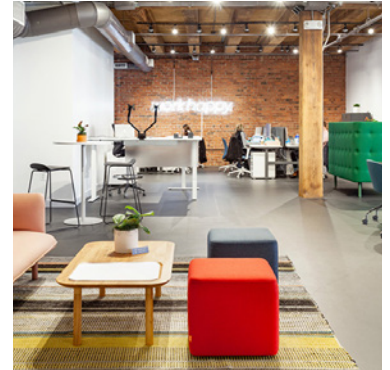
FULL STORY ON PAGE 3...



Poppin 'Works Happy' with Punchy Office Furnishings & Customer-Friendly Buying

Poppin, a young workplace furniture and supplies manufacturer, is driven by the simple, yet powerful belief that "everyone, everywhere deserves to work happy." It entered the contract furnishings market in early 2015 with hopes of simplifying the ordering process, minimizing costs, and dramatically reducing delivery times for offices of all sizes. Its meteoric growth indicates its success in doing all of the above.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 14...



IIDA Debuts Index: A Categorization of New Interior Design Projects

The **IIDA** recently published their inaugural issue of **The IIDA Index**, an indicator of economic health for the commercial design industry. Officeinsight contributor offers insight on the new resource.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 26...



CITED:
"TRUE FRIENDSHIP CAN
AFFORD TRUE KNOWLEDGE.
IT DOES NOT DEPEND ON
DARKNESS AND IGNORANCE."
—HENRY DAVID THOREAU

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Poppin 'Works Happy' with Punchy Office Furnishings & Customer-Friendly Buying

by Mallory Jindra

Poppin, a workplace furniture and supplies manufacturer, has seen explosive growth in its short history.

Driven by a belief that “everyone, everywhere deserves to work happy,” its client list includes the NFL Network, Harry’s, LinkedIn, Kate Spade New York, Squarespace, Warby Parker, and Rent the Runway. Headquartered in New York City, and operating showrooms in NYC, San Francisco, Santa Monica and now Boston, Poppin’s growth has been swift; its sales in 2018 alone jumped a whopping 70%.

Poppin’s entrance into office interiors began in office supplies; more specifically, it got its start by offering a reimagined take on the humble stapler.

“It all began with the simple stapler,” notes the Poppin bio. “A humdrum office workhorse, its design remained untouched for decades. What would happen, we thought, if you reimagined that ordinary artifact of the office into something absolutely extraordinary? Poppin is designed to be the effortless one-stop solution for your entire work-

space. Our breadth of colors lets you express yourself in your favorite shade or brand your office in your company color. Best of all? Our dedicated team of Account Executives is here to help you every step of the way.”

In early 2012, entrepreneur **Randy Nicolau** acquired an ownership interest in Poppin and assumed the role of Chairman and CEO. Under Mr. Nicolau’s direction, Poppin accelerated growth by 75% from 2015 to 2016, and the Poppin team has expanded from 8

people in 2012 to 135 employees today.

Mr. Nicolau holds an impressive resume that includes successful leadership positions in advertising and media, at companies including Demdex, a first-of-its kind data management platform acquired by Adobe Systems; AzooglesAds, the global advertising network now called Epic Advertising; and Playboy. As President of Playboy.com, he led “the turn-around of the company’s internet, e-commerce, and wireless businesses which created

work happy.™



Poppin CEO Randy Nicolau



QT Privacy Lounge Chair. Photography: courtesy of Poppin

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more than \$200 million of equity value in just two years (a 40% increase). Shortly thereafter, he was promoted to President of Worldwide Distribution and added the company's Television and Home Video business lines to his list of responsibilities.

In an officeinsight interview, Mr. Nicolau shed light on Poppin's origins, market strategy, design point of view, and more.

"The plan was always both office furniture and office supplies – everything that completes the office," said Mr. Nicolau. "We saw furniture as the foundation of the office, and the office supplies piece as the cherry on top. The office supplies side was easier to move into first."

The jump from office supplies to office furniture kicked off in late March 2015, when Poppin launched the **Poppin Furniture Collection**, comprising a benching system, task chair, storage locker, and six-piece modular lounge collection.

"The Poppin Furniture Collection is a natural extension to Poppin's wide range of reimagined office essentials, which includes everything from notebooks and pens to desk accessories and organizational products," notes the launch press release.

In entering the contract furniture market, Poppin sought to develop a customer-first model that streamlines what Mr. Nicolau describes as an unnecessarily complex commercial

furniture buying process.

The company believes strongly that it can simplify the ordering process, minimize costs, and dramatically reducing delivery times for offices of all sizes – and its meteoric growth indicates its success in doing all of the above.

"The furniture world has always frustrated me, for many reasons," said Mr. Nicolau. "The wait times, both in getting information and in shipping the furniture, frustrated me. And how hard it can be to get the dealerships' attention. We wanted to create a much more in-demand experience. Within 24 hours of contacting us, customers are hearing back from us with quotes and solutions."



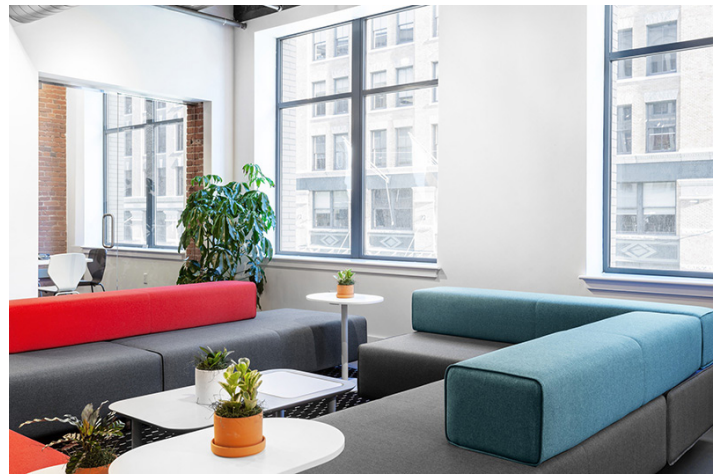
QT Privacy Lounge Chair in environment

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In Poppin's words:

"Stakes are higher than ever to create a workspace that attracts talent and fosters a great corporate culture. With millennials recently taking over as the largest generation in the U.S. workforce (45%), the definition of a 'great workspace' has evolved. Creating such an office environment historically required navigating a frustrating mix of furniture manufacturers who control timing, local dealers who control discounts and installation fees, and interior designers who have to source numerous destinations to 'complete the look.' Poppin has simplified this process by designing an agile furniture line that is always in stock, assembles



Poppin opened its new Boston showroom, its fourth in the U.S. in October 2018. "The new space, located at 285 Summer Street, will showcase Poppin's growing collection of commercial furniture to the Boston community. The company aims to capitalize on its startup roots, identifying markets that align with the creativity, ingenuity, and accessibility that is embodied by Poppin's line of modular furniture. As Boston is one of the most prominent hubs in the United States for innovation and entrepreneurship, a presence in Bean Town was a strategic move for the brand."

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in seconds, and includes standardized volume discounts across its furniture and office accessories lines.

"Today's workforce prefers open floor plans with flexible work zones for different uses such as informal meetings and connecting with co-workers," explained Poppin CEO Randy Nicolau. "Companies vying for this dynamic workforce need new options for what and how they buy. The stagnant solutions and middleman-driven process perpetuated by today's commercial furniture industry is not customer or employee-friendly."

Hiring and training people to help turn the contract furniture selling process on its head presented a significant challenge.

"We found we couldn't hire people within the industry because they were so tied to how things had always been done," said Mr. Nicolau. "We were able to really thrive by hiring people with zero experience in the contract furniture industry. Of our 135 employees, maybe three have any type of contract industry experience."

Poppin's focus on simplifying the furniture buying process has been extremely well-received by a fast-growing base of customers.

"80-90% of our customers come directly to us," said Mr. Nicolau. "We do partner with a few dealers and work with them on occasion, but when we partner directly with a designer, they're

usually kind of blown away at how easy the process is. The industry has historically thrived on the misconception that the process of buying furniture is somehow complicated and opaque. But it's not – it doesn't have to be either of those things."

"We have 30,000 BTB customers, but we work a lot with interior designers, too. Interior designers tell us that Poppin is light a pair of really nice Levi's – you can dress us up or dress us down, and the look and functionality work both ways. The reception from designers has been fantastic."

"The measure that really speaks to us the most is that 70% of our sales are repeat sales. To me, that is staggering."



Print materials wall in Poppin's new Boston showroom. "The Boston showroom will accommodate both pre-scheduled appointments and walk-ins...With many brick-and-mortar retail stores suffering, Poppin has found success in scaling its showroom model and allowing customers to view and test its modern furniture and branded desktop accessories before purchasing them online or through a dedicated salesperson."

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Poppin's Loft adjustable height desk

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115
AMAZING
EMPLOYEES3,500+
WHOLESALE
LOCATIONS64,542
FILE CABINETS
SOLD SINCE 201216,939
BUSINESSES
WORKING HAPPY627
ORIGINAL POPPIN
PRODUCTS12,602
SQUARE FEET OF
OUR NYC OFFICE4,000
SQUARE FEET OF
OUR SF OFFICE*Poppin by the numbers*

Poppin's in-house design team is led by VP of Design **Jeff Miller** and based in New York City. Design and development are focused heavily on offering simplicity, ease of use and flexible components. And for the foreseeable future, Mr. Nicolau says the in-house design team approach will remain.

"We're designing for fast, agile companies," said Mr. Nicolau. "All of the pieces we've designed are patented tool-free assembly. Everything can be reconfigured in a couple of simple clicks and levers. We're paying attention to 'Day Two' customers – people who will want to be able to adjust their furniture as their company grows."

Poppin has developed a little bit of everything for the office, from the basic nuts and bolts of desks, tables and storage units, to extensive lounge collections that speak to the residentially inspired spaces in high demand today. But, the brand keeps its footing by offering fewer, more streamlined options.

"We've always had a very disci-

plined, very distinct design point of view in what we're offering," said Mr. Nicolau. "For us, it's not about having 50,000 SKUs. I think we have fewer than 200 SKUs. For example, our

desks have two base leg colors – white and black – and if you want bamboo, you'll need to go somewhere else.

"Everything from notebooks to our file cabinets and larger pieces – all of these items originate from the same design palette, and they will look and feel as if they belong together."

Poppin's products have a strong color identity, and Mr. Nicolau noted that the brand uses color to address important shifts it sees happening in the market.

"Our color palette really began with these big, bold, bright colors – cool blues and emerald greens. Now, we've

seen the interior design world move to a more muted, Scandinavian palette, and we've adapted to that. Instead of a cool blue, you'll see a slate blue; a brick red in place of a classic bright

red; a Millennial blush pink instead of a pop pink."

With the opening of a new showroom in Boston – its fourth in the U.S., Poppin

aims to "capitalize on its startup roots, identifying markets that align with the creativity, ingenuity, and accessibility that is embodied by Poppin's line of modular furniture. As Boston is one of the most prominent hubs in the United States for innovation and entrepreneurship, a presence in Bean Town was a strategic move for the brand.

"This showroom opening marks an exciting time of growth for Poppin as we make our way into another thriving market," said Mr. Nicolau, in

"Building our collection like a family, with a common elemental aesthetic, we design quintessential products that perform and feel at home in any environment," – Jeff Miller, Poppin VP of Design, at Poppin.com

Our Core Values



Be a Customer Hero
Make the Ordinary
Extraordinary
Be Yourself + Create Fun
Care + Connect
Take Ownership + Be
Humble
Evolve + Get Smarter
Work Scrappy



The Poppin design team, led by Jeff Miller, at center

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Meredith Meeting Chair in grey



the Boston showroom opening press announcement. “Our target customers are high-growth companies who value corporate culture and branding as means for attracting top talent. Boston is one of the leading cities for venture capital investment, and our Seaport location will allow Poppin to partner with all the exciting companies who call this town home.”

Using its new showroom, Poppin hopes to connect to Boston’s strong focuses in diversity, cultural institutions, schools, medicine and technology.

“Taking residence on the building’s second floor, the Boston showroom

will accommodate both pre-scheduled appointments and walk-ins,” notes the Boston showroom opening press announcement. “The 3,547-square-foot space, which includes a distinctly Northeast exposed brick wall, will be outfitted similarly to its New York, San Francisco, and Santa Monica counterparts. With many brick-and-mortar retail stores suffering, Poppin has found success in scaling its showroom model and allowing customers to view and test its modern furniture and branded desktop accessories before purchasing them online or through a dedicated salesperson.”

Where tool-free assembly, fewer options, and reasonable pricing used to call forth a smaller-budget client, Poppin has opened a door to projects of all budgets, sizes, markets and flavors.

“Whether you’re a startup or a Fortune 500, the 2015 Poppin Furniture Collection was designed with the changing workspace in mind,” notes Poppin’s website. “Every piece of furniture is simple to assemble, effortless to scale with your growing team, and ready to ship at a moment’s notice.”

Mr. Nicolau sees this change as a sign that Poppin’s vision for changing the contract furniture industry was on point.



QT Chair Booth in blush



QT Chair Ottoman in blush

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*Cleo Credenza in natural ash**QT Chair – electric detailing*

“A big trend we’re seeing is the willingness of Fortune 500 level companies – companies that would normally have real estate and procurement departments handling projects – are willing to work with younger companies like us and newer models, a new way of doing things. There’s a desire out there that’s not being met by contract manufacturers, and people are turning to companies like Poppin that have a new way of doing things.”

Indeed, a new, disruptive way of selling contract furniture, and one that is being welcomed by clients and designers alike. In the near future, Mr. Nicolau says Poppin will continue to expand its furniture lines, including new lounge pieces as well as phone booth solutions. We wish them the best of luck. ■