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Introducing HAT Collective

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HAT COLLECTIVE WILL BUILD UPON THE “EASY-TO-DO-BUSINESS-WITH” PHILOSOPHY, A HALLMARK CARRIED OVER FROM ITS LEGACY PRODUCT LINE BRANDS.

THE COLLECTION OFFERS A “ONE-STOP” SIMPLIFIED PURCHASING AND ORDERING PROCESS FOR DEALERS, ALONG WITH COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES FOR SPACE PLANNING, DESIGN AND INSTALLATION.

by Rob Kirkbride

There is strength in unity. That’s the thinking behind HAT Collective, a brand that unifies a range of office product solutions from several well-established industry brands, together into one cohesive offering.



Though the brand is new, the origin of Innovative, the first of the brands that came together to create HAT Collective, has been around since 1986, according to David Fox, chief executive officer of Innovative Ergonomic Solutions, the parent company of HAT Collective. Innovative was founded as a monitor mount company that was agnostic in terms of industry. For the first 30 years, it worked to supply the office, but also created health care monitor arms and those for retail. In 2015, the company first started a dedicated contract office group that included a few monitor arms and desktop risers.



HAT Contract

It was a limited offering and Fox said the company wanted to take its ergonomic roots and go deeper. So a couple of years later, in 2018, Innovative acquired the HAT Contract brand, which added sit-stand desks and some accessories. “That really kind of catapulted us with some scale into the contract office market and enabled us to broaden our sales team,” Fox said. “In the beginning of (2020), about 10 minutes before COVID hit in February, we acquired the SiS Ergo brand,” he said of the company that produces more stylized, height-adjustable bases along with some accessories.

“Really, our goal here with HAT Collective is to pull all of these brands — Innovative, HAT and SiS Ergo — under one banner with a comprehensive go-to market strategy to maximize the value to the customer,” he added.

As a brand, HAT Collective is designed to bring together sophisticated design and a focus on ergonomics, both of which support worker health, productivity and happiness. Product lines range from height-adjustable workstations and ergonomic monitor arms to storage units, safety and noise-cancellation dividers and accessories, all available in fixed, adaptable or mobile formats. Competitively priced, available for quick-shipping and with easy customization capabilities, HAT Collective provides customers with an array of options.

HAT Collective will build upon the “easy-to-do-business-with” philosophy, a hallmark carried over from its legacy product line brands. The collection offers a “one-stop” simplified purchasing and ordering process for dealers, along with complementary services for space planning, design and installation. It also offers an e-commerce solution called HomeWork, which is tailor-made for dealers to address and offer products for their customers’ work-from-home needs. Product design, manufacturing and fulfillment are supported by operations in Easton, Pennsylvania, San Jose, California, Denmark and Asia, along with warehouses on the East and West coasts.





While any of the names of the three companies could have worked, they picked HAT Collective for several reasons, said Libby Ferin, vice president of marketing, who joined the company in 2019 after working in marketing roles at Herman Miller and Steelcase.

“I think HAT, as in height-adjustable table, it’s kind of the core of what we do in ergonomics,” she said. “When we start talking a little bit more about the ethos of HAT Collective, it’s this idea of, I can sit, I can stand, I can be ergonomically correct, but I have choices, too, and I’m kind of empowered on how I want to sit or stand. So that’s the guts of HAT. And then the Collective part came from the idea that we have a multitude of brands that come together collectively, but on top of that, it’s this idea that collectively with our dealer and design partners out in the community, we’re stronger together. And that to me is even more significant. So there is this core ethos ... collective not only from a brand and product portfolio perspective, but also from a relationship perspective.”

The HAT Collective brand logo, while uniquely distinct, pays homage to the SiS Ergo and HAT Contract product lines. Clean, thin lines speak to the efficiency of the Scandinavian design, a nod to SiS Ergo’s Danish design roots. The logo itself is an abstract image composed of the letters that form the word hat.



Dealers and the company's relationship to them is core to the branding efforts and the way it relates to an important part of the sales process. Ferin said the company is dedicated to making life easier for its dealers by being "the easiest to do business with." The goal of HAT Collective is to take the complexity out of the process and make the brand a one-stop shop for them.

"So we're not only adding all the things that they've loved that they might've known with HAT Contract or SiS Ergo, depending on who they are or both, but we're taking this idea of quick and affordable and a value-oriented product. And now we've got this idea of custom-made quick, which is almost an oxymoron, right? We are able to do custom quickly and efficiently underneath one umbrella," she said. "So no matter what their needs are, they still have this idea on top of all of that that we're delivering great service, which we're always known for."

To get word out on the new brand, HAT Collective is taking its products on the road, meeting with dealers across the country and pointing them to the new HAT Collective website, www.hatcollective.com, which allows them to explore all product and service offerings. The website's configuration product tool, paired with a variety of inspirational images, helps end users envision the solutions they want. To celebrate and support its launch, HAT Collective will be introducing new products, educational webinars, continuing education unit presentations and other initiatives throughout 2021.





As safely as possible, HAT Collective is also inviting industry professionals to visit its six showrooms, which are in New York City, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Irvine, California, and Santa Clara, California.

It isn't easy differentiating between height-adjustable furniture companies, but Ferin said she believes HAT Collective stands out for several reasons. First, SiS Ergo has a strong design heritage born in Denmark with its own designers and ability to customize a product.

"If you want a different size top, you can get that quickly," she said. "If you want it to fit into system furniture and attach to panels in a certain way, we can design it, customize it, produce it and ship it and have it here from Denmark in as little as six weeks which nobody can do as quickly as we can. Plus, we do it with high design and at very affordable prices. And we'll do smaller projects; a 50-position project is great for us. There are a lot of big companies that can customize a lot, but it's not quick, it's not a small quantity, and it's not inexpensive. So we feel we have the only business in the country, quite frankly, that can do that."

HAT Collective also has a number of products that help with the idea of collaboration and quick-change workplaces — products that are flexible that can be easily moved around and reoriented to different needs in the office.

“HAT Collective is revolutionizing the contract office market,” Fox said. “The pandemic has proven how much the marketplace needs well-designed, price-accessible, commercial-grade workplace solutions that enable individuals of all generations to choose how and where they want to work. At the same time, our customers want a partner that is quick to respond, solutions-oriented and easy to do business with on all fronts. With HAT Collective, we are creating a new experience with a diversity of products and services — all under one new exciting brand.”

While HAT Collective has grown 20% a year, it expects to add more to the collective down the road with more acquisitions, according to Fox.

“We feel with each one of the acquisitions, our internal mantra is 1+1 has to equal 3,” he said. “We don’t want to just buy companies for the sake of buying them. We want them to be able to come on board, and we make them better, and they make us better. That’s really been the case with SiS and with HAT. So I think that it’s very likely that we’ll see more of that. I think right now for the next six months, we’ve probably got some digesting to do and get HAT Collective launched. But where do we go from here? One of the advantages of the acquisitions is that we’ve acquired a lot of really good talent in terms of people.

“We’ve got a great infrastructure now from a company that five years ago, didn’t have a contract office business, to today where we’ve doubled and tripled down. We’ve got the infrastructure; we’ve got really good talent.” **BoF**

