

Product: Office Furniture



Overview: Remanufacture, refurbishment and simple resale are all valid forms of reuse and should all be considered. The nature of the products mean that in many cases, no repair work is required to bring the item to as-new (or very close to new) condition.

All wooden products must be produced using legally harvested wood from sustainably managed forests. Modular designs allow for future upgrades or a change of purpose. Suppliers must be able to provide spare components for the expected life of the furniture and should operate a take-back scheme. Classic designs should be selected to avoid early obsolescence due to changes in fashion.

Environmental Impact	Cost Effectiveness	Market Availability	Competitive Market	Resource Savings	Potential for Increased Procurement to Affect the Market
1) Production and transportation energy, and use of hazardous substances. Materials extraction has the major environmental impact. 2) Usage phase. 3) End of life disposal.	Used or remanufactured office furniture usually costs between 30%-50% of new price. ¹ Increased demand for this type of furniture would increase competition and so help to reduce prices.	Used furniture is readily available, either through furniture reuse networks or suppliers of bulk office furniture, who usually also supply new items.	The furniture industry is highly competitive, with cheaper imports putting pressure on European manufacturers. The remanufacturing industry is operating at a very low level, where as reuse of high quality office furniture is popular.	A reduction in the production of steel and aluminium offers significant CO2 savings. ² Similarly, a reduction in the use of VOCs (volatile organic compounds) that are "off gassed" (evapourated) during painting and foam production would help to reduce photochemical smog. ³ Remanufacture completely or largely removes this stage. Removing wood and natural fibre waste from going to landfill, prevents methane production.	As well as specifying remanufactured furniture, the environmental impact can be further reduced by opting for furniture that is well suited to reuse or re-configuration as simple re-use is the least energy intensive method of entering products into a second usage phase.

¹ Oakdene Hollins Ltd

² Besch. K, 2004

³ FIRA, 2002