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2025: CELEBRATING INNOVATION

Whether you're a startup or a legacy company, innovation is at the heart of what makes businesses succeed. Champions of Innovation allows businesses to share their own stories of how they developed new products and processes that allowed their companies to grow. This special sponsored content section will inspire you as your business travels its own innovation journey.



THINK BIG

The Women of Miron Construction
WATCH NOW →



Building Excellence.

Miron Construction recognizes the skillsets and diversity of thought women bring to the workplace, particularly within the construction industry where their talent remains largely untapped. From cultivating an early interest in construction to actively recruiting skilled, diverse talent and ensuring a safe environment for everyone on our project sites, we are invested in building a strong workforce and maintaining a culture that is the right fit for everyone inside of it.

Together, we're **Building Excellence.**



STAY GROUNDED : THINK BIG : RALLY TOGETHER : DIG DEEP : BUILD LEGACIES

Check out MIRON-CONSTRUCTION.COM to learn more about Miron's culture and how we bring our clients' dreams to life!

An equal opportunity, affirmative action employer.



Angela O'Kray
General Manager, Insight Publications
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Innovation isn't just about flashy new products or breakthrough technologies – it's about the people, processes and partnerships that move industries forward. At Insight, we're constantly inspired by the ingenuity of the businesses that call Northeast Wisconsin home. That's why we're proud to present the 2025 edition of Champions of Innovation, a sponsored content section highlighting local companies that are not only adapting to change, but driving it.

From Werner Electric's software solutions for managing data to Fox Valley Wood Products' efficient processes that reduce waste, this edition of Champions of Innovations tells the stories of local businesses breaking new ground in a variety of industries.

Read on to learn more about KI's revolutionary Cogni classroom seating line that was designed to foster active learning, support sensory engagement and promote student well-being. You'll discover how Miron Construction is winning the war for talent by supporting women in the trades. And you'll learn about a new collaboration between New North, Inc. and 10 of the region's higher education institutions that is designed to grow our workforce – music to every business leaders' ears.

I could go on, but it will be better for you to read these incredible stories of passion and grit for yourself.

We hope you're as inspired as we are by the bold ideas featured in these stories. Each one reflects the spirit of innovation that's alive and well across Northeast Wisconsin. At Insight, we're honored to provide a platform for these voices and grateful to the companies who shared their journeys.

Thank you for reading and for celebrating what's possible when innovation leads the way. 🙌

aokray

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145
YEARS

Shea Electric's NFPA 70B expertise helps businesses



NFPA 70B, or the National Fire Protection Association's Standard for Electrical Equipment Maintenance, is a crucial guideline to ensure the safety, performance and longevity of electrical systems and equipment. Previously a recommended practice, NFPA 70B is now the set standard for how facilities should address their electrical maintenance needs.

The rule is used in multiple settings, including industrial plants, commercial buildings and large residential complexes.

Shea Electric & Communications, LLC in Oshkosh has the expertise and specialized training to handle NFPA 70B work, which is designed to improve safety and reliability while helping users carry out effective electrical maintenance programs.

"NFPA 70B provides comprehensive preventive maintenance recommendations for a wide variety of electrical systems from circuit breakers and switches to transformers and wiring," says Dan Shea, Shea Electric's COO and manager of company culture.

"By following these guidelines, facility managers and maintenance personnel work hand and glove with their electrical contractor to identify and address potential issues before they escalate into serious problems. This proactive approach reduces the likelihood of unexpected incidence, equipment breakdowns and costly downtime, improving overall operational efficiency."

NFPA 70B includes several sections including requirements for developing a safety program and guidance on establishing an electrical maintenance plan, assessing equipment conditions and performing periodic maintenance procedures.

Shea says the active standard, which was formally put into place in 2023, contributes to workplace safety. Electrical malfunctions can lead to incidents including fires, electric shocks, injuries and even fatalities. Conducting regular inspections, testing and repairs ensures a company's equipment is operating within safe parameters.

Inspections and maintenance completed according to NFPA 70E and NFPA 70B guidelines also serve as important documentation to demonstrate proper care was taken to meet legal requirements.

"We utilize NFPA 70, NFPA 70E and NFPA 70B to ensure our clients are compliant with the latest rules and codes to create a safe environment," Shea says. "Not everyone is able to offer this service. At Shea, we are committed to staying up to date on the latest industry changes so we can offer the best service to our clients."

Following electrical maintenance standards has an impact on operations. When a facility doesn't conduct maintenance promptly, Shea says it risks unplanned outages or equipment failures. Proper maintenance also extends the equipment's expected lifespan.

NFPA 70B helps ensure compliance with local and national electrical codes, which may vary but generally align with the standard. Inspections and maintenance done according to NFPA 70B guidelines serve as documentation to demonstrate that proper care was taken to meet legal requirements. Compliance is essential not only for safety but also for avoiding legal repercussions in case of an accident.

"By investing in preventative maintenance and upgrading to newer electrical systems, businesses can reduce total operational costs and improve employee safety," Shea says.



Company: Shea Electric & Communications, LLC

Innovation: NFPA 70B expertise

sheaelectricllc.com

They're nailing it!

Fox Valley Wood Products: a legacy of innovation

Pallets, crating and industrial lumber have been critical to the manufacturing sector for more than a century. Fox Valley Wood Product's longevity is attributed to its commitment to innovation. At FVWP, innovation isn't just a buzzword — it's a fundamental part of its ethos. FVWP has set itself apart through an unwavering focus on hiring great people, investing in new technology and continually improving processes. Here's how they do it.

Grit: FVWP was founded in 1963 without any machines, forklifts or pneumatic nailers. Its founders built the business with a pouch full of nails, strong hands and fingers the size of bratwursts. FVWP maintained this generational grit through requiring all new leaders to learn from the ground up. David Elliot, a long-time supplier to FVWP shares his unique perspective of the organization. "I have personally had the pleasure of supplying Fox Valley Wood Products for over 30 years. Throughout this time, as a plywood salesman, I have had the pleasure of traveling throughout the eastern half of the U.S. I've been in a few hundred pallet facilities throughout. I can say assuredly, that the focus from all of the Van Zeeland's and their employees has been a customer-first approach. They train and retain their

employees better than any pallet and crate manufacturer that I have ever known. They are focused on doing things right, the first and every time. To know them and how the company started, how the company operates, and the expectations they have, it makes you want to make sure that we don't disappoint them from our end."

"We receive most custom skids within a day or less of ordering at a very reasonable price. Without a doubt, our relationship with Fox Valley Wood Products has and will continue to help our business react, deliver and grow."

—Pat Keil, senior automation engineer at Tech 4, LLC

Speed: Customers will immediately experience something different when working with FVWP. Customer calls don't go to voicemail. Emails are responded within minutes and orders are fulfilled within 24 hours or less. FVWP commonly receives same day requests for pallets, crates and industrial shipping platforms. Pat Keil, senior automation engineer at



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Tech 4, expressed his appreciation for FVWP's rapid response time. "In our industry we require custom skidding to ship large industrial electrical assemblies. Fox Valley Wood Products has helped streamline this task for us tremendously. Their ability to react to quote requests is second to none. We generally receive quotes within minutes of sending over detailed drawings. Their deliveries are equally as impressive. We receive most custom skids within a day or less of ordering at a very reasonable price. Without a doubt, our relationship with Fox Valley Wood Products has and will continue to help our business react, deliver and grow."

Accountability: FVWP's promise is to provide an excellent experience from inception to completion. In the event a mistake occurs, team members are eager to make it right. Josh Rolfing, VP of manufacturing at Linquist Machine agrees. "The team at Fox Valley Wood Products has done an exceptional job of taking the time to understand our needs and leveraging their experience to drive value. Better yet, when issues arise, and they do in every organization, the team provides a same day response that includes a solution (not excuses) to which they are committed — every time. Well, done FVWP!"



Pricing: FVWP bases its pricing on industry indexes and offers customers market visibility. When the market drops, they proactively adjust prices. This is especially relevant with today's tariff volatility. Tim Daanen, president and owner of B&D warehouse, turned to FVWP during the midst of pandemic supply chain shortages. "I have been working with Jeff and the Fox Valley Wood Products team since 2018. I am forever grateful to them during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 when they continued to provide us high quality pallets at a reasonable cost in spite of the rapidly changing market conditions, especially when other pallet providers took advantage of the situation. Since then, when we or our customers look for savings, Jeff and the team have provided creative solutions in terms of different pallet sizes and configurations to best serve our needs."


Investment: FVWP's growth is generated organically through investing in cutting-edge technology and facilities. Growth is leveraged by taking the long view via investing in technology to become more productive. As capacity increases, they can serve more customers. Continually investing in new equipment from manufacturers such as Go Fast Manufacturing and Viking Engineering are prime examples. Dan Berken, president of Go Fast Mfg., commented, "It's great working with Fox Valley Wood Products. They're always looking to improve processes, open to new ideas and tech, and willing to invest in making operations smoother for employees. Their focus on innovation streamlines operations and makes collaborating with them

a rewarding experience." A recent FVWP investment is a lumber dip tank to apply mold inhibiting solution to keep lumber attributes stable and free of mold. This has proven to be particularly beneficial for their food grade pallet customers.

People: Having the right people is the catalyst to innovation. The pallet industry is commonly pegged as an industry with low skill, entry level people, FVWP takes exception to this. "Our company places extra emphasis on hiring high character, motivated people from diverse demographics and skill sets," says Jeff Van Zeeland, president of Fox Valley Wood Products. This hiring approach results in exceptional productivity and allows FVWP to offer significantly higher compensation than its closest competitors. "We invest in the growth and development of our team to foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement." A recent example is FVWP's decision to incorporate EOS (Entrepreneur Operating System) into the business. "Our launch began by defining our core values and incorporating them into all personal-related decisions," says Van Zeeland. The company's core values are integrity, positivity, teamwork and pacesetter, accountability and extraordinary service. "These values are not based on who we want to be, rather, they are who we are. The purpose of defining these values is to ensure the culture our founders established 60 years ago continues onto future generations."

Process: FVWP is continuously evaluating and enhancing processes to increase efficiency, reduce waste and enhance overall quality. By implementing best practices and

lean methodologies, it is able to deliver quality products that exceed customer expectations while operating in a cost-effective and sustainable manner. FVWP is a strategic partner with Menominee Tribal Enterprises. Jason Swartz currently serves as the lumber sales manager for MTE. "In my career as a lumber salesman I get the privilege of touring many different types of wood manufacturing companies throughout the United States. Simply stated, I would not want to compete in their manufacturing space. Clean, organized, streamlined and efficient are the words I use when describing their operation to others. Not one area in their operation has been overlooked and they manage this while offering same day manufacturing and delivery in many cases. We at Menominee Tribal Enterprises look forward to continuing our relationship with Fox Valley for many years to come."

Innovation is not just a goal at Fox Valley Wood Products — it's a way of life. These testimonials perfectly illustrate how FVWP is different. Pallets and crating solutions are more valuable to manufacturing than many think. Consider joining FVWP on their journey of innovation, and experience the difference for yourself. 



FOX VALLEY
WOOD PRODUCTS

Company: Fox Valley Wood Products

Innovation: Pallets, lumber, custom crates

foxvalleywoodproducts.com



Building a stronger industry: How one construction company is championing women in the trades

In an industry where women comprise merely 11% of the workforce, Miron Construction is thinking differently – and acting with intention – to change the narrative. For this forward-thinking company, innovation is about far more than cutting-edge equipment and technology; it's about building a more inclusive and equitable future for the industry, starting with how they recruit, retain and empower women.

“At Miron, we believe the best ideas come from diverse perspectives,” said Jen Bauer, executive vice president, culture & marketing. “That’s why we’re committed to creating a culture where everyone, regardless of gender, feels empowered to grow, lead and thrive.”



Sparking interest early: Build Like a Girl

Recruiting more women to the trades means starting early, and Miron is leading the charge with its annual Build Like a Girl event. Designed to introduce middle and high school girls to career paths in construction, the hands-on event lets participants explore tools, talk with tradeswomen and envision their future in a field where women have traditionally been underrepresented. This is the ninth year of Build Like a Girl in Neenah, and the company has taken the event on the road to its satellite office locations in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and Eau Claire, Madison and Wausau, Wisconsin, and will add Milwaukee to the list later this summer.

“Build Like a Girl isn’t just a one-day event, it’s a mindset,” said project executive Amanda Manteufel. “It’s about showing girls they belong here, and that there’s a place for their ideas, their energy and their leadership in construction.”

The power of community: Miron’s Women’s Network

Central to Miron’s commitment is its internal Women’s Network, a dynamic group open to all employees, regardless of gender, that focuses on supporting women in reaching their full potential. The Network fosters a culture of inclusion and teamwork through its core drivers – collaboration, advocacy, mentorship, development and improved business outcomes – which serve as a strategic framework for advancing gender equity within the company and across the construction industry.

Members of the Women’s Network work together to volunteer in and support our communities, cultivate strong workplace and/or interpersonal relationships, promote personal and professional growth and development, and educate the women of Miron on the tools and resources available to them.

Whether it’s through peer coaching, sharing experiences or partnering with Miron’s other employee network groups, the Women’s Network is a space where employees connect meaningfully and champion one another’s successes.

A national commitment: Million Women in Construction pledge

Miron is one of the pioneering companies to sign the Million Women in Construction pledge, a national initiative led by the U.S. Department of Commerce. The initiative aims to bring one million women into the construction workforce over the next decade – a daring move to address the labor shortage and gender gap in the trades.

By signing this pledge, Miron isn’t just committing to hiring more women; they’re actively investing

in systemic change. The pledge encourages companies to build inclusive workplaces, enhance outreach and provide training pathways that ensure long-term success for women in construction.

Creating a culture of respect: Be More Than a Bystander

Miron recently partnered with the North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters to offer Be More Than a Bystander training, which equips employees with the tools and confidence to speak up against harassment and bias in the workplace. This proactive training reinforces the company’s zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and underscores its commitment to fostering a respectful and people-first environment.

Building a better future, together

Miron Construction’s efforts are a clear example that companies can innovate not just in how they build structures – but in how they build culture. Through thoughtful programs, national commitments and grassroots engagement, they are reimagining what a supportive workplace looks like and investing in inclusive programming at every level. They are truly leading with purpose.

For Miron, bringing more women into construction is just the beginning. The real transformation happens when we empower, support and set them up to lead. Because when women thrive, so will the entire industry. **i**



Building Excellence

Company: Miron Construction Co., Inc.

Innovation: Championing women in the trades

miron-construction.com

Accelerate your iron casting launch with Waupaca Foundry

In an industry where lead time and precision can make or break a part launch, Waupaca Foundry is setting a new standard in innovation. As one of the few foundries in North America offering five fully in-house rapid prototyping solutions, Waupaca Foundry is redefining what’s possible in iron casting development.

At the core of this advancement is an in-house approach that merges traditional foundry craftsmanship with cutting-edge additive manufacturing. By keeping all prototyping processes under one roof, Waupaca Foundry eliminates delays, quality risks and communication breakdowns. The result is faster speed to market, earlier design validation and production-ready quality delivered with consistency and control.

All five prototyping methods leverage the same materials and processes used in full-scale production. The innovation lies not just in the technology, but in how Waupaca makes it accessible. Each prototyping method is tailored to different project goals, budgets and timelines, offering manufacturers a menu of options that scale with their needs.

Normal prototype pattern & core box

The normal prototype pattern and core box solution uses soft tolling materials with fewer cavities, which offer the flexibility to run multiple part numbers on the same pattern. This option is ideal for higher-volume prototype runs, delivering cost-effective prototypes with lead times ranging from eight to 14 weeks and quantities of 50 to over 1,000 pieces. Casting prototypes are produced using Waupaca’s standard production process for consistent part quality.

Normal prototype pattern & 3D-printed core

The Normal Prototype Pattern & 3D-Printed Core solution combines soft tooling patterns with few cavities with a 3D-printed core. This approach allows multiple part numbers to run on the same pattern. And it significantly reduces lead time to

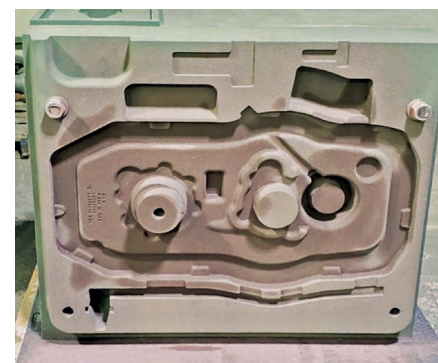
as little as four (and up to 10 weeks) while retaining the quality and repeatability of Waupaca’s standard production process. It’s particularly useful for casting prototype quantities between five and 500 pieces.

3D-printed mold holder

Waupaca utilizes proprietary 3D-printed mold holders to eliminate the need for a tooling investment. This prototype solution offers fast iteration and allows for production-quality iron casting pouring and processing. The lead times is just two to six weeks, and is ideal for quantities from five to over 100. The iron casting must fit in the usable area of the printed mold holder. The printed geometry for the exterior of the casting is contained within the printed sand mold. Printed cores can be added for internal geometry.

Full 3D-printed molds

When speed and complexity converge, full 3D-printed molds offer unparalleled freedom. This method creates both the external mold and internal cores entirely through



Full 3D-Printed Mold

additive manufacturing, eliminating all tooling requirements. It supports low-volume runs – typically between one and 15 pieces – with a lead time of two to four weeks. This option is well-suited for intricate geometries and time-sensitive applications. Iron casting prototypes are poured using a standard production process, but require manual handling after pouring.

Small-scale 3D-printed molds

For early design validation, Waupaca’s small-scale 3D-printed mold prototype solution requires



Small-Scale 3D-Printed Mold

no tooling investment. These iron casting prototypes are hand-poured and manually processed after casting. This solution is an excellence to pursue before committing to other prototyping or production methods. The ideal prototype volume ranges from one to 10 pieces and turnaround in as little as a week.

Innovation that works

Waupaca Foundry’s commitment to in-house prototype solutions delivers speed, reduces design risk and accelerates informed decision-making. Engineering, tooling and production teams work side-by-side to ensure seamless execution and scalability. This not only enhances communication and quality control but allows manufacturers sourcing iron castings to move from concept to full production with confidence.

In a competitive manufacturing landscape, innovation isn’t just about using the latest technology – it’s about integrating it in ways that deliver real value. Waupaca Foundry’s rapid prototyping model is a clear example of that philosophy in action. **i**



Company: Waupaca Foundry

Innovation: Rapid prototyping

waupacafoundry.com

I CHAMPIONS OF INNOVATION

Higher education and innovation go hand in hand

New North, Inc. has been working with 10 of the region's higher education institutions for the past several months to launch a new campaign promoting the importance of education to foster a strong and diverse workforce.

Colleges and universities play a crucial role in equipping students with critical thinking skills to help solve real-world problems with the ability to analyze, evaluate and synthesize information.

Significant research points to the connection between innovation and education, and as technology continues to evolve, universities will remain at the forefront of discovery and transformation:

- A 2023 Brookings Institution analysis found that increased state funding to research universities correlates with higher levels of local patenting and entrepreneurship.
- In 2023, R&D spending by U.S. academia institutions increased more than 11%, fueling innovation and development of a skilled workforce, according to the National Center for Science & Engineering Statistics, Higher Education Development Survey.
- World Economic Forum's 2023 Future of Jobs Survey reveals that more than 70% of companies anticipate a growing demand for creative and analytical thinking skills,



something that higher education institutions continuously foster. Some of the world's most successful companies were founded by university students who were empowered to be creative and curious, while leveraging research and experiential learning.

Innovation flourishes in college environments where students are challenged to explore new ideas, challenge norms and collaborate with others. This cultivates an entrepreneurial mindset among students and the future leaders of our communities.

In the New North, we are proud that collaboration between academia and industry further strengthens this environment. Creating a thriving ecosystem where education, business and community come together to provide the most seamless path for career advancement is something we work hard to achieve.

By investing in education, we're nurturing the next generation of thinkers, inventors and leaders who will shape the future. Next month, we will launch our latest marketing campaign to emphasize the value of college and its long-term impact on the economic vitality of our region. It will incorporate a digital marketing campaign featuring testimonials from business leaders and college alumni who will help tell the story of why New North is the best place to grow your roots and find your wings.

If you or someone you know is interested in providing a testimonial, please contact Renee Torzala at renee.torzala@thenewnorth.com.

Together, we will continue to learn and thrive in Northeast Wisconsin.



Company: New North, Inc.

Innovation: Collaboration between academia and industry
thenewnorth.com



LEARN AND THRIVE IN NORTHEAST WISCONSIN

Innovative youth programming creates new paths for growth

Today's youth are seeking more than just activities – they're looking for places to connect, lead and grow. Across the Fox Cities and beyond, organizations like the YMCA are stepping up with innovative programs that help youth build real-world skills, discover their passions and prepare for the future.

Programs like Esports, Youth in Government and music lessons offer more than just fun. They develop leadership, confidence, creativity and critical thinking – laying a strong foundation for success in school, careers and life.

Esports: where gaming meets growth

Competitive gaming, or Esports, is more than just a pastime – it's a powerful tool for teaching teamwork, communication and strategy. The YMCA of the Fox Cities' Esports Lab, featuring 20 professional gaming stations, gives players ages 8 to 18 a safe, supportive space to sharpen skills and build friendships. Players work together as teams, solve

problems in real-time and practice sportsmanship – skills that carry far beyond the screen.

Youth in Government: building tomorrow's leaders

Through Youth in Government (YIG), students in grades 7–12 take on real-world roles as legislators, judges, lobbyists and reporters. Preparing for a statewide model government assembly, they draft bills, debate policies, argue court cases and learn firsthand how democracy works. Along the way, they build confidence, sharpen critical thinking and develop leadership skills that empower them to shape their communities.

Music lessons: unlocking creativity and confidence

Starting as young as age 5, youth can take private and semi-private lessons in piano, guitar, drums and voice. Music education strengthens creativity, focus, perseverance – and provides a lifelong outlet for self-expression and joy. Students grow their technical skills while building



confidence from the inside out.

Programs like these meet youth where they are – helping them lead, create and thrive for a lifetime.



Company: YMCA

Innovation: Innovative youth programming
ymcafoxcities.org

I CHAMPIONS OF INNOVATION

Industrial refrigeration innovation: Why CO₂ is the future

Innovation in refrigeration isn't always about reinventing the wheel – it means choosing better materials and smarter systems that deliver long-term value. Natural refrigerants like carbon dioxide (CO₂) and ammonia are redefining what "better" looks like in the industrial cooling industry.

Since the 1920s and '30s, synthetic refrigerants have been the industry standard because they're affordable and easy to use. By insulating the atmosphere, synthetics contribute to pollution, making them a "dirty chemical." Their high global warming potential (GWP) contributes to climate change, and regulatory bodies are phasing them out. Synthetic refrigerants carry GWPs up to 3,900, making them some of the most harmful climate pollutants in use.

CO₂, by contrast, has a GWP of just 1, while ammonia sits at zero. These drastic reductions

in environmental impact make a compelling case for change. Europe adopted natural refrigerants a long time ago. But beyond sustainability, there's also a strong financial argument. Properly designed CO₂ systems can reduce operating costs by 30-40%, delivering a strong return on investment while helping businesses avoid future regulatory penalties.

We understand that change brings hesitation. Questions about upfront costs, installation, reliability and long-term performance are natural. Also, many business owners are skeptical of anything labeled a "green initiative." When that happens, we shift the conversation to another kind of green – money. We show them the data on what a switch to natural solutions can do for their bottom line. It's hard to argue with those numbers.

As the deadline nears, businesses face a choice: wait for a pressing need

or take a proactive approach. Planning ahead gives access to better solutions, financial incentives, a competitive advantage in sustainability, and long-term savings in energy and maintenance. And with rebate programs like Wisconsin's Focus on Energy, the upfront investment becomes even more manageable.

At Hurckman, we're proud to help forward-thinking businesses make that transition with custom-engineered CO₂ solutions that perform today and lead tomorrow.



Company: Hurckman Mechanical Industries

Innovation: Industrial refrigeration innovation
hurckman.com

KI Furniture: enhancing student engagement with Cogni™ classroom seating



In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, the demands on classrooms have never been greater. Schools must adapt to diverse student needs and empower educators with tools that drive engagement, inclusion and meaningful learning outcomes.

KI, a trusted leader in educational furniture solutions based in Green Bay, Wisconsin, rises to this challenge with Cogni. Derived from the word cognitive and designed to support young minds, Cogni is an innovative classroom seating solution intentionally designed to foster active learning, support sensory engagement and promote student well-being.

Born from deep research and close collaboration with educators and students, Cogni redefines what seating can do for modern learning environments.

Classroom seating just got smarter

Cogni is more than just a chair — it's the result of extensive research, purpose-driven design and years of meaningful collaboration with educators, students and researchers. Cogni reflects a thoughtful balance of function, comfort and flexibility.

Throughout the product development journey, the KI team of industrial designers, engineers and researchers engaged directly

with school officials, teachers and students to gain an intimate understanding of classroom dynamics.

Observations, pilot testing and user feedback helped shape every detail of the chair. The result is a seating solution that supports the needs of all learners, including those with sensory sensitivities and varied learning styles.

It helps students stay engaged while also giving educators a tool that fits a wide range of teaching styles and classroom layouts. This versatility empowers schools to create more inclusive, adaptable and future-ready learning environments.

Backed by research, built for engagement

KI has long embraced research-driven design as a foundational element of its innovation process. For years, KI has studied the interaction between classroom furniture, student behavior and learning outcomes, consistently leading in innovative, flexible solutions that meet real-world educational challenges.

Cogni builds on this legacy with features that address the deep and varied needs of students and educators alike.

Development research revealed several key insights:

- **Students concentrate better when they can move.** Micro-movements like shifting weight, rocking slightly or changing posture help stimulate focus and improve classroom behavior.
- **Educators need tools that are intuitive and adaptable** — helping them to quickly reconfigure classrooms for different activities without disruption.
- **Schools require solutions that are inclusive, durable and economical** — meeting a range of learning, budget and maintenance needs.

Armed with these insights, the design team set out to develop a product that would feel less like furniture and more like an extension of a student's learning experience.



Intentional features for deeper learning

One of the most unique elements of Cogni is its sensory-friendly seat surface, a feature developed through extensive material and texture testing. Students with sensory sensitivities often find comfort in tactile stimulation, but research indicates that all students can benefit from a sensory release.

The team tested various surface patterns and materials with different populations to determine which textures provided the best experience. The final design incorporates a subtle raised dot pattern that stimulates sensory receptors, helping students self-regulate in a non-distracting way.



Another standout feature is the chair's comfort flex backrest, designed to offer a specific amount of flex to support natural movement and spinal alignment. Combined with a seat shape that accommodates multiple sitting styles, Cogni promotes a healthy blend of comfort and flex, giving students the autonomy to move as needed.

Patent-pending heel-wheel technology on the cantilever chair provides smooth, controlled mobility, functioning like a wheelbarrow for easy repositioning, whether moving a single chair or a stacked set. At the same time, it doubles as a built-in **anti-tip mechanism**, discouraging students from leaning back and balancing on two legs. This smart blend of movement and stability helps maintain focus, supports safe behavior, and still allows for effortless transitions between classroom activities and group interactions.

Cogni, with its abundance of engaging features, plays a key role in supporting modern instructional



approaches. Its lightweight design and mobility allow students to form groups, rotate through stations, or find a quiet corner, get comfortable and work independently with ease.

For educators, this means less time spent managing furniture and more time focused on teaching. It also helps create a more student-centered classroom where learners take greater ownership of their space and learning experience.

An agile, inclusive approach to product development

Cogni was developed using a flexible, iterative design methodology that brings user feedback into every stage. Ideas evolved from sketches to 3D models, with prototypes tested and refined in real classroom environments.



This agile process ensures that each design decision is purposeful, validated, and aligned with the actual needs of students and educators.

Each chair is value-engineered to ensure long-term durability while maximizing user satisfaction. Its lightweight frame makes it easy for students and teachers to move and rearrange, yet it's tough enough to stand up to years of use.

By supporting movement, offering sensory comfort and accommodating a range of needs, it creates a more inclusive and empowering classroom environment.

Whether outfitting a single flexible learning space or an entire school district, Cogni offers high-impact benefits



imperative for today's classrooms:

- **Increased** student attentiveness and participation
- **Enhanced** comfort during long learning sessions
- **Improved** classroom management through convenient mobility and stack ability

A new standard in classroom seating

Cogni is a clear example of the KI commitment to innovation in education. By combining empathy, design expertise and evidence-based thinking, KI delivers solutions that inspire both teachers and learners.

With Cogni, schools gain more than just a seat, they gain a powerful tool for engagement and success. **i**

To explore how Cogni can enhance your learning environments, visit ki.com/cogni or contact a sales representative at ki.com/sales.



Company: KI

Innovation: Cogni™ classroom seating

ki.com/cogni

Accelerating growth with scalable solutions

I CHAMPIONS OF INNOVATION

Data is the new driver of manufacturing progress. Companies that can turn their data into actionable information are pulling ahead. As needs and capabilities evolve, information software has become the core driver of growth.

Werner Electric is expanding its offerings to meet that demand, bringing clients a growing portfolio of information software solutions built to power the future. Tools that provide real-time data and seamless scalability are more than just add-ons; they are crucial in supporting today's business needs by enabling faster decisions, reducing downtime and streamlining workflows.

Data-driven advantage

Tom Wroblewski, general manager of information software at Werner Electric, states, "The decision-making process has become more efficient and effective due to data. Data is at the core of everything we do with these solutions."

Werner Electric's software solutions are helping businesses:



- Improve decision-making by using real-time, contextualized data analytics pulled from a single source of truth
- Prioritize workforce allocation and spare parts inventory levels based on predictive insights, ensuring labor and parts are available where and when needed most
- Reduce waste and inefficiencies in production by using advanced data analysis to drive lean operations
- Scale operations with minimal IT impact through cloud-based deployment

Modern platforms for competitive edge

As a long-time partner of Rockwell Automation, Werner Electric's knowledge, experience and expertise provide a streamlined process for businesses looking to improve operations with information software solutions.

Werner Electric currently offers three key solutions: Fiix, PLEX and FactoryTalk Analytics.

- **Fiix** is a cloud-based, AI-powered computerized maintenance management system (CMMS). Used by more than 3,000 global customers, Fiix can manage work orders, schedule preventative maintenance, maintain parts inventory, manage assets, analyze equipment performance and ensure maintenance teams can respond in real time.
- **PLEX** is a cloud-based smart manufacturing platform that delivers real-time insights to support better decision-making. With more than 2,000 global installations, it helps customers drive continuous improvement, enhance quality, optimize production schedules and maximize productivity.
- **FactoryTalk Analytics** is a comprehensive analytics platform designed specifically for industrial manufacturing. Its features provide clearer visibility into plant equipment performance, resulting in improved overall equipment effectiveness (OEE), less unplanned downtime and increased quality.



Fast to deploy, built to scale

A key advantage of each solution is fast deployment, with some organizations fully operational within six weeks. One example includes a local manufacturing company that transitioned from a 21-year-old legacy CMMS to Fiix. Within two months, the company expanded its usage, demonstrating Fiix's effectiveness and scalability.

Wroblewski emphasizes, "A big part of transitioning into a modern system like Fiix is the migration of the legacy info including work orders, inventory on file and data from components attached to machines. Capturing those very important investments that have been made over the decades and moving all that to the new database is essential. We provide tremendous support to help make it fast and seamless."

Collaborative solutions for long-term success

With 76 years of industrial and manufacturing expertise, Werner Electric is poised to offer information software solutions to solve problems and improve operations. Businesses can schedule a complimentary four-hour workshop led by experienced industry consultants and software specialists to develop a tailored solution.

By integrating information software solutions and utilizing the power of data, industrial and manufacturing companies can maximize productivity, increase quality, reduce downtime and achieve higher profitability. 📌



Company: Werner Electric Supply

Innovation: Scalable solutions

wernerelectric.com



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