



Furniture start-up Sparkeology finds success at NeoCon with powered-up pieces

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CHICAGO — Sparkeology, one of West Michigan's smallest and youngest furniture companies, credits NeoCon with helping to grow its profile.

"We're getting everyone aware of who we are," said Robin Hendrick Lane, vice president of marketing and sales. She [debuted the company at NeoCon in 2010](#) before it formally opened.

Last year, Sparkeology took the Best of NeoCon Booth award.

The company is a spin-off of Hendrick Lane's family-owned Worden Furniture, a Holland-based library furniture company.

Returning for the third year, Sparkeology is unveiling furniture at the Chicago trade fair, which opened this morning. Many of Sparkeology's pieces allow people and their gadgets to recharge.

"Like everything else in our lineup, the new designs are uncomplicated but serve an important function in their environment," said Hendrick Lane.

Products launching at NeoCon 2012 include the Sylvie seat, Eddie table, and Stella coat rack -- all designed by the team of Valerie Schmieder, Matthew Maher and Scott Sikkema.

The products build on what the company has launched over the past two years: Ben bench, Manny ottoman, Cupcake stools and Cal conference table.

"Everyone carries phones, tablets or laptops with them, but it seems like there are never enough places to plug in," said Hendrick Lane. "Adding more power options to our designs makes them more functional and flexible, which is exactly what our customers are asking for. And tying it all in with a prize that lets them enjoy these new features is just plain fun."

The Holland company has a showroom on the eighth floor of Chicago's Merchandise Mart.

Launched in June 2010, this West Michigan company is a collaborative venture among furniture maker The Worden Company, architecture and design firm Via Design, Via's sister company Viable, and graphic design firm Square One Design. Worden owns the company and manufactures the products at 199 E. 17th St.

"We are still in our infancy stage, but we are still getting everyone aware of who we are," Hendrick Lane said. "We've had some nice success and we are building on that."

Its goal is to make simple, flexible and fun furniture for corporate, educational and other public spaces. The company targets markets in higher education and community spaces, producing products that can go anywhere from a college lounge to a hotel lobby.

The company's furniture is in Reserve Wine Bar in downtown Grand Rapids, which was designed by Via Design.

"They design a lot of our products for things they can't find anywhere else," Hendrick Lane said.

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