

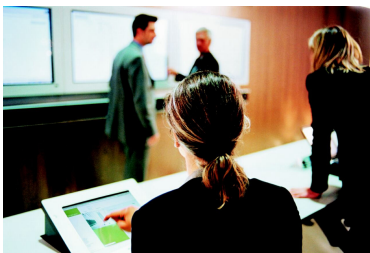
## Press release

### Wilkhahn founds subsidiary company for innovative room concepts and interactive furniture

**In January Wilkhahn, the office and contract furniture manufacturer in Lower Saxony, Germany, hived out the business segment of “future work environments” as an independent company: the foresee GmbH develops and sells innovative roomware elements for conference and seminar environments, project offices, customer service areas and showrooms, which support interaction between discussion partners by means of modern information technology. This includes, for example, project work tables with integrated, interactive plasma monitors (InteracTable), mobile, transparent electronic displays which allow digital presentations to be annotated and edited by pen (InterWall), or also interactive counter elements and consultation tables.**



foresee: the InteracTable® (design: Wilkhahn, Fraunhofer-IPSI, Andreas Störko) specifically promotes participation, creativity and spontaneous interaction.



foresee: at the NoTable® (design: Wilkhahn, Andreas Störko), conference participants can interact with the big interactive wallscreen (ComBoard).

**Bad Münden.** In the past three years, Wilkhahn had built up the business segment of “future work environments”, a special department concerned with intensifying the further development and marketing of roomware elements with integrated communication and information technology. The main aim of such “Roomware® Elements” is to promote interaction between team members, seminar and conference participants or also between consultant and customer. The idea behind this is both simple and ingenious: digital information can be directly incorporated into presentations and discussions by means of innovative integration of interactive communication and information technology into walls, tables and mobile roomware elements. This is possible in a way that is so intuitive that it permits participants to intervene actively and interact. The result is that the cost and time benefits of the virtual world may be used in team processes too.

New developments in the information technology industry towards increasingly simpler, interactive solutions have widened the application spectrum for Roomware® Elements and encouraged Wilkhahn to continue to pursue this innovative concept. In the meantime, successful, international reference projects throughout a variety of industries are generating steadily increasing demand for services in the intersection between furniture, electronic hardware and customized software applications.



foresee, Roomware® presentation at the Cityscape, the leading fair for real estate in Dubai

For Wilkhahn president Dr. Jochen Hahne the founding of the foresee GmbH is therefore a logical and strategically vital step: "Wilkhahn's core competences as an innovative manufacturer of key products for design-oriented office and contract interiors cover a very important part of the Roomware® solutions. In addition to products, this sector does however also require complex consultation services in the field of organization and information technology, as well as flexible network structures with partners to provide solutions tailored to the specific requirements of the premises in question. These are fields which extend beyond our usual business segments. The foresee GmbH thus provides a suitable corporate framework which will allow us to develop further market potential. foresee can avail itself of our design and development output and our established selling channels, but also operate in the market completely independently, for example with partners from media technology and software development".

Frank Sonder and Michael Frankenberger are directors and co-partners of the new company, which had already built up the business segment of "future work environments". Frank Sonder underlines the importance of consultation services to bring together furniture, hardware and software in coherent interior and application concepts: "The potential lies less in the technology than in the new form of its application." The thirty-four-year-old graduate economist joined Wilkhahn in 1998 as project manager for marketing and played a significant role in the Roomware® development from the very outset. His co-director, Michael Frankenberger, 40, represents the technological area of competence. With a technical background and as an electronics engineer, he had held various key positions in the technical services and software industry which led him to Nemetschek AG, for whom he collaborated with Wilkhahn on the Future Office Dynamics project. This cooperation resulted in his changing over to Wilkhahn in 2004 to promote the development of Roomware®.

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The two directors have set themselves the goal of breaking even in their first financial year. They seem to have every chance of being successful: in addition to ongoing projects in Germany, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Dubai, their presence at this year's CeBIT promises to provide a further push in the right direction. foresee will be presenting innovative solutions there at a 250m<sup>2</sup> stand together with Macina, their Hanover software partner.

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## **foresee = 4 C**

“foresee” is a play on words, also indicating the four focal points of the new company: the four “Cs” stand for

- cooperating: for the promotion of project work and teamwork in research and industry. Customer groups include the motor industry, pharmaceuticals, information technology and planning offices, such as the Munich architects’ office, Schnell+Partner,
- coordinating: for the support of management decisions in conferences and meetings. For example, the OECD in Paris already uses a conference room with Roomware® Elements.
- consulting: for consultation and sales support in customer service areas and showrooms. Real estate project developers, such as Eurodomus in Italy, motor manufacturers such as Volkswagen, finance service companies and providers of high-quality, customized products are already working successfully with Roomware®.
- coaching: for the promotion of learning in seminar environments. Businesses such as Kuwait Fund, establishments of higher education such as the ETH Zurich and the University of Zurich, as well as corporate universities are opting for interactive learning environments and seminar rooms equipped with Roomware®.

*foresee™* thus sees its role as a partner for the development of sustainable future visions in the respective industries and fields of application.

## **Review**

It all started six years ago: Wilkhahn founded the interdisciplinary research and development cooperation Future Office Dynamics (FOD) in collaboration with the Darmstadt GMD-IPSI Research Institute (now called Fraunhofer-IPSI) and two other partners, one of which was from the field of software development and the other from architectural and organizational consultation. In the same year (October 1999), prototypes of the “Roomware® Elements” were presented at a jointly organized congress in Berlin. At EXPO 2000, the presentation of the Roomware concept was one of the highlights of “The future of work” exhibition, a worldwide EXPO 2000 project staged at Wilkhahn. The next step was the development of individual components to the serial production stage; parallel to this, the scientific fundamentals were deepened in the course of a project sponsored by the EU (Ambient Agoras). In 2002, after presentation of the initial serial products at Orgatec, the world’s largest office furniture fair, Wilkhahn established the business segment of “future work environments”. The first project to be realized was the “Vireal Lab” at the ETH Zurich. This was followed by additional projects, new products and the further development of the concepts together with network partners in the fields of hardware and software.