



the office is no place for  
musical chairs.

How to select and buy office furniture...  
real answers. real simple.

**HON**<sup>®</sup>  
Smart now. Smarter later.

## Sometimes it's smart to be simple.

This guide is intended to provide practical advice on what to consider when selecting and ordering office furniture. It walks you through a process of assessing the needs of your business, and then translating those needs into furniture that works for you. In addition to this guide, your local HON dealer is an excellent resource to help evaluate specific needs. They can advise you on product choices that will satisfy your employees, reflect your company image, and meet your financial needs.

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## about HON

The HON Company is one of the largest providers of practical, professional office furniture, and is committed to sustainable design, superior customer service and quality.

The company possesses an attitude of individual and corporate integrity with a deep respect for its customers and channel partners, as it continues its quest to provide responsive, industry-recognized customer service.

The HON Company's focus on unsurpassed customer satisfaction includes providing practical and professional office solutions to consumers, as well as rapid, continuous improvement programs that help its channel customers improve operations, from managing inventories to reducing product damage.



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## Step 1: Basic Considerations

Research says that office furniture purchases for most small and mid-sized businesses are handled “part time” by someone who has many other responsibilities. This means that most purchases are made by a person who is not an expert at ordering office furniture. However, as long as you follow a few simple guidelines, the products you buy will keep your employees productive and will last for years to come. Some basic questions to get started are listed below, along with some guidance on what to consider for each question. A checklist at the end of this guide provides a place for you to convert these answers into the furniture you need.

### FAQ (frequently asked questions)

- 1 » What space or spaces am I trying to furnish? What type of furniture will best meet the needs for each of these spaces? These spaces generally fall into one of several common categories, and there is furniture designed to meet the needs of each.
  - Reception area or lobby
  - Private office
  - Records area (for keeping files)
  - Group work or attached work area environment (office space cubes)
  - Specialty/Other – lab area, call center, etc.
  - Conference room
  - Break room or cafeteria
- 2 » How many employees will be using the furniture and how much space am I trying to fill? This will obviously affect how much furniture you have to purchase. Be sure to provide adequate working space for each employee – they are most efficient and productive when they have room to get their jobs done. Your local office furniture dealer is a great resource for information on standard space allotments for workers performing different jobs.
- 3 » Are there any special needs for the employee user groups or their environment? For example, some user groups may spend several hours a day at the workplace, making chair comfort a key consideration. There may be shared workspace, making the adjustability of seating necessary to accommodate multiple employees. Consider how much time employees spend working together on projects. This means buying furniture that promotes easy communication and collaboration. Finally, are there any work place regulatory or compliance considerations such as privacy (HIPAA), cleanliness (LEED), or environmental (“green”)?
- 4 » What furniture do I have today? Do I need to match what I have in the office now, or does the space I’m trying to furnish let me create a new look? The variety of choices today makes it easier to buy new products that match your existing furniture, or at least coordinate with it. When looking at new purchases, however, you should ask what future upgrade or coordinating products exist.

## Step 1: FAQ (continued)

- 5 » What image do I need to portray? Often, this question has two components.
  - a. What image does my company need to convey? For example, a law office may wish to convey professionalism and success. A physician's office space may need to show a clean yet comforting atmosphere. Your atmosphere can be influenced by the design of the furniture you choose, but also by the colors, fabrics and finishes you select.
  - b. What image does the user of the furniture need to convey? Am I furnishing executive space that perhaps requires richer textures and fabrics, or am I furnishing engineering space which needs to emphasize comfort and functionality?
- 6 » What is the budget? Often, this can be computed by employee or employee space. Your office furniture dealer can provide guidelines on what other businesses spend per employee work space in different industries.
- 7 » What are the growth prospects for the business? Do I need to select products that can be easily expanded?
- 8 » What resources do I feel most comfortable using during the purchase process? Do I feel confident in using online sources for information and purchase, or would I rather use the services of a dealer who can help me with space design and product selection? Research shows that 84% of office furniture buyers research manufacturers and products online before purchasing. However, many buyers utilize the services of a local office furniture dealer to take advantage of their office layout capabilities and wide product selection.

## additional points to ponder

### 1 » **Look for versatility**

Buy furniture that can be moved and reconfigured easily, and that you can adjust as new needs arise. This will give you the flexibility to change your floor plan, plus integrate new pieces into existing furniture arrangements.

### 2 » **Always buy quality**

When buying office furniture, you should ask if products have been tested for durability and meet office furniture performance standards, commonly referred to as ANSI-BIFMA.

### 3 » **Ergonomics**

Good ergonomics make employees feel better, they're more productive and more energetic as well. Ergonomically friendly work environments pay off.

### 4 » **Feel confident about your choice**

Research and compare warranty options before purchasing.

## Step 2: Desktop design

A desk is more than a place to put papers – it also can signal rank or prestige in the office. However, it is important to consider both the functionality and appearance when selecting desks for your office space.

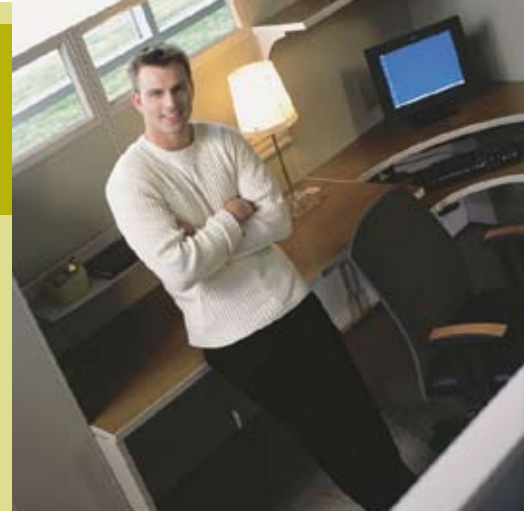
1. Executive offices typically have a desk and matching credenza, and often a small conference table with side chairs. Most manufacturers offer office furniture suites in a wide range of price points.
2. Mid-level managers often have an L-shaped or U-shaped desk configuration.
3. Steel desks are also popular because they are light and durable. They can be “dressed-up” with a laminate top.
4. Mobile desks or work surfaces are suitable for both private offices and open office situations. In a private office, they offer the user the flexibility to customize the office configuration. In an open environment, desks with casters allow the user to easily change work configurations.

### Key concepts:

- A. Upgrade options: For many situations, laminates in wood grain patterns look just as professional as wood and are more durable. You can enhance the prestige value of laminate furniture by adding real wood accents on the edges.
- B. “Clutter” management: To keep everything neat and efficient, make sure desks come with a range of options for wire management and paper management systems.

## work surface definitions

- 1 » **Desk**  
Your primary work surface
- 2 » **Return**  
Extra work surface placed at right angles to a desk
- 3 » **Credenza**  
Secondary work surface used in conjunction with a desk
- 4 » **Peninsula**  
Work surface with generous leg space for meetings
- 5 » **Bridge**  
Work surface used to link two other work surfaces
- 6 » **Corner unit**  
Work surface that links returns and bridges at right angles to create an ideal computer corner



## Step 3: Pick out your seat

Chairs are the most personal piece of furniture – and the most complex – because they must adapt to all kinds of people and many types of work. Although style and materials are important, the first thing you should consider is how long the person will be sitting in the chair and what functions they will perform.

1. Employees who sit six to eight hours a day performing multiple tasks should have high-performance chairs with ergonomic controls that let the user adjust the chair to suit his or her body size and work style. Many chairs now use passive ergonomic adjustments that maintain a comfortable configuration as the user moves.
2. People who use computers should have adjustable armrests to maintain a comfortable position at the keyboard. The chair's tilt feature should allow users to look at the computer screen at a comfortable angle no matter how much they lean forward or back.
3. Executives may not need all the performance features as they spend less time sitting down, but may require leather, wood or more high-tech materials to project a strong, professional image.

### Key concepts:

- A. Warranty: A quality chair should have a lifetime warranty on the frame and mechanical parts and a 5-10 year warranty on fabric.
- B. Conference room chairs usually are not good for general office tasks. They are intended to be used by many different people for relatively short periods of time.

## selecting chairs

### 1 » Executive Office/Conference

Present a professional image with sophisticated executive/conference seating selections. Modern design and exceptional comfort combine to create stylish, durable chairs that enhance any office setting.

### 2 » Personal Work Area

Work chairs look, feel and function in unique ways to suit a variety of work tasks. Computer chairs should be stable and easily adjustable from a seated position. It should provide good support for your body, especially your lower back.

### 3 » Specialty Intensive Use

Generous proportions and user-friendly controls ensure around-the-clock comfort. Specifically designed with exceptional durability.

### 4 » Guest/Public Space

Designed with welcoming comfort and style in mind, guest chairs and tandem seating should make a good impression and offer an inviting spot for visitors in offices and reception areas.

### 5 » Stacking/Nesting

Consider attractive alternatives to plain folding chairs. Stacking or Nesting chairs are offered in a variety of visually appealing designs molded to fit the body for maximum comfort.





## Step 4: On file

Proper storage helps keep employees organized and work flowing more efficiently. There are four main types of storage: vertical files, lateral files, pedestals and towers. Towers and pedestals are especially popular where space is a problem because they are flexible and combine multiple functions. Towers combine a closet, file drawers and open shelves. Pedestals may be used under a work surface or free standing with a cushioned top for occasional seating.

1. The trend today is toward filing solutions that use space more efficiently.
2. If filing cabinets will be used frequently, choose a commercial-grade cabinet that has been tested for durability. It will be a better value in the long run.
3. If your office doesn't allow for rows of storage, use mobile storage solutions that can slide under work surfaces or use overhead shelving.
4. Make sure two- and three-drawer lateral files have counterweights to resist tipping.
5. Leveling: File cabinets that are not level will not work properly. Ensure bottoms of vertical and lateral files are reinforced and should have leveling glides so you can accommodate an irregular floor.
6. Warranty: All quality file solutions should have limited lifetime warranties.

## storage solutions

### 1 » Pedestals/File Centers

Durable pedestals provide a place to get organized and store important files and supplies - keeping all the things you need close at hand.

### 2 » Lateral Files

Flexible combinations of lateral files and storage cabinets hold books, binders, reference materials and personal items, and tolerate heavy use.

### 3 » Vertical Files

Think "up", not "out" when you need to store a lot of files and paperwork. Vertical files provide the most efficient approach to maximum storage capacity with a minimal footprint.

### 4 » Steel Bookcases/Cabinets

Eminently practical and useful, steel bookcases are also a great value, with their long-life, heavy-duty construction.

### 5 » FlameSafe™

We know it's smart to protect the things we value. To keep legal documents, financials or personnel records safe consider fireproof or waterproof cabinets.

### 6 » Track Filing

This innovative filing system increases your filing capacity while reducing the amount of floor and wall space you currently use.



## Step 5: Divide and conquer

Panel systems today are more sophisticated than they have ever been, delivering affordable, flexible office solutions that save space with a wide variety of stylish and functional features. Many panel systems have sliding or swinging doors for additional privacy and offer a variety of different work surfaces for an alternative configuration to the stereotypical “cube.”

1. Paneled environments don't have to be square. A 120-degree work surface grouped into workstations can actually increase workspace density and efficiency, while avoiding a “box-like” look and feel.
2. Look for panels that are easy to order and install. Some systems have connectors that add “panel creep,” making your measurements come out wrong.
3. While panel systems have long accommodated computers, printers and phones, in the past few years, panel systems manufacturers have added power and wire management solutions to support wireless and mobile communications products like Blackberrys, cell phones and laptop computers.

### Key concept:

- A. Wire management: If you plan to run wires through the panels, make sure the wiring raceways meet local building codes and can handle the quantity and type of equipment you plan to install. A dealer is an excellent resource when researching local requirements.

## panel systems

### 1 » Panel Systems

Varying panel heights create private as well as collaborative areas. Panel-mounted work surfaces attach to systems easily.

### 2 » Hinged or Sliding Doors

Moveable panels allow for privacy when needed.

### 3 » Storage

Panel-mounted overhangs keep books and binders within easy reach or choose pedestal storage.

### 4 » Wired

Power in the panel base is a streamlined economical choice for power and data access. Power poles enable power routing from the ceiling to stations. Check options with pull-up electrical outlets.

### 5 » Accessories

Paper management tool bar keeps active files organized and within arm's reach. Keyboard platforms help employees work in a supported and comfortable position. Under and overhead task lights and freestanding desk lamps give users control over their work environment.





# Step 6: Summary – The Office Furniture Buying Checklist

The checklist below should provide you with a road map toward determining what office furniture you need to purchase. Other resources you may want to consider as you go through the checklist include:

**www.hon.com** – provides information on The HON Company’s full line of office furniture products, including dimensions, colors and finishes

**www.askhon.com** – the “Personal Shopping Assistant”, or PSA at askhon.com, can answer many questions regarding simple office layout and product choices

**Your local HON dealer** – these specially trained resellers of HON office furniture are experts at office space layout and choosing products best suited for your needs

## ORDERING CHECKLIST AND PRODUCT SELECTIONS



Complete this form to help prepare your order. You can fax it to your PSA at 800.466.1865 or simply refer to it when speaking with your local HON dealer.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_  
 Company Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

### Office Space Planning

Number of Office Employees: Executives \_\_\_\_\_ + Staff \_\_\_\_\_ = Total \_\_\_\_\_

Projected New Office Employees, Next 12 Months \_\_\_\_\_

Select the words you want your office environment to be:

- Modern
- Efficient
- Adjustable
- Professional
- Cool
- Progressive
- Contemporary
- Comfortable
- Warm
- Cozy
- Casual
- Traditional
- Fresh
- Peaceful
- Tranquil
- Unique
- Exclusive
- Comprehensive

Please Review Product Areas of Interest and Check All Areas that Apply

### Where do you need chairs?

- Executive office .....
- Conference room .....
- Work areas/cubicles .....
- Reception area .....

### How do you use tables in your office?

- Conference room .....
- Training .....
- Reception area .....
- Hospitality/lunch room .....
- All-purpose and utility .....

### What items do you need to store?

- Files and paperwork .....
- Office supplies .....
- Personal items .....
- Binders and reference materials .....
- A variety of items .....

### When are you considering purchasing office furniture?

- Now .....
- 1-3 months .....
- 3-6 months .....
- 6-12 months .....

### What types of desks are in your office?

- Freestanding, office .....
- System/cubicle worksurfaces .....

SKU #	Quantity	Description or Item Name	Color/Fabric Notes	Page Number	Price Each	Price Total
Notes:				Total:		