



PRESS RELEASE

sparkeology

DATE
MEDIA CONTACT
PHONE
EMAIL

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Robin Hendrick Lane
616.403.2561
robin@sparkeology.com

199 EAST 17TH STREET
HOLLAND, MI 49423
P 877.318.7661 F 888.334.7107
SPARKEOLOGY.COM
TWITTER.COM/SPARKEOLOGY

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For Immediate Release

New Furniture Company Sparks Innovation in Public Spaces

HOLLAND, MI – Starting this spring, there's a new way to make sparks. It's an innovative line of furniture for public spaces created by West Michigan startup Sparkeology.

This independent company is a collaborative venture by library furniture maker The Worden Company, architecture and design firm Via Design, Via's sister company Viable, and graphic design firm Square One Design. The partnership began when Worden asked Square One to help it expand into the architecture and design market. Lin Ver Meulen of Square One explains, "We dove into the market trends and found some significant changes in the way people are using libraries and public spaces. Beyond the obvious impacts of wireless networks and portable devices, we noted that these places are becoming community hubs and connection points. Those behavioral shifts indicated a need to rethink product design and business strategy, not just marketing."

Robin Hendrick Lane, VP of Marketing at Worden, agrees. "We were already looking at how Worden could expand into other marketplaces," she says. "The idea of starting a new brand to do that made sense. It allows us to focus on new things without taking anything away from Worden."

While Sparkeology will operate independently, it has the advantage of drawing on Worden's strengths, including over 60 years of manufacturing expertise and strong distribution channels. Branding and marketing will be handled by Square One, while Sparkeology's design and engineering will be led by Valerie Schmeider of Via Design and Scott Sikkema of Viable.

Delegating these functions allows Worden to maintain its own focus instead of burdening its designers and engineers with a new product line. The process is made even more efficient by the close relationship between Via and Viable,





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according to Sikkema. “Whenever there’s a road block, other designers and production companies have to schedule meetings to work through it,” he says. “I can just walk across the room and talk it through with Val. That gives us a huge advantage in terms of time to production, with far fewer prototypes and iterations.”

The first Sparkeology products will launch this summer at NeoCon and the American Library Association convention. Offerings include new-to-market ideas like a backpack holder and basic components that work in diverse ways, such as displays, tables, and seating. Created with flexibility and mobility in mind, the individual pieces are minimalist in design, but able to support multiple functions and infinite configurations, according to Schmeider. “The mix of materials provide a casual and very tactile feel,” she says, “while the finish options give designers enough flexibility to create unique color palettes. I am especially excited about the details that add a touch of playfulness and whimsy into the line.”

All Sparkeology products will be made of strong, lightweight materials, making them long lasting and ideal for easy, on-the-spot configuration. Materials and processes are specifically chosen to minimize environmental impact, and the majority of materials are locally sourced, according to Sikkema.

The products introduced this year are the first of many that Sparkeology plans to bring to market on an ongoing basis. Ver Meulen explains, “We want to start a conversation with the A+D market, seeking their input and quickly responding to their needs.”

That two-way conversation is just one component of Sparkeology’s commitment to uncomplicated, straightforward customer service. The young business is also seeking ways to engage with others who want to do good. “We believe strongly in local community,” says Hendrick Lane. “As a company, we’re always looking for ways to give back to our own, and we felt that it was important for Sparkeology to do something like that for our customers as well.”

Learn more about Sparkeology at www.sparkeology.com

About Sparkeology:

Founded in 2010, Sparkeology is a new company that creates flexible, uncomplicated furniture for public spaces. It is a collaboration of creative minds at The Worden Company, a Holland, Michigan based library furniture manufacturer with 60+ years of experience; architecture, interiors, and furniture design company Via Design; product development company Viable; and graphic design firm Square One Design, all based in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

(Additional product images available upon request.)