

## Glossary of Best of NeoCon 2026 Product Categories (46)

### ACOUSTICS & PRIVACY

#### –Acoustic Solutions

Acoustic Solutions absorb sound and improve office and learning-environment acoustics by reducing both visual and auditory noise with acoustic panels, wall tiles, living walls, and fibrous ceiling and floor materials. Acoustic panels or other sound dampening materials such as workspace partitions provide employees with much-needed privacy.

#### –Panels/Partitions/Screens/Space Dividers

Panels/Partitions/Screens/Space Dividers are designed to support user privacy. They can be freestanding screens or partitions or modular panel systems that divide spaces and sightlines. These products may or may not contribute to acoustic quality.

#### –Work Pods

Work pods are additions to existing open plan offices and are located on the floor plate creating a dedicated refuge for isolated tasks. They remove acoustic interference while ensuring office tranquility. Employees can pop into work pods for private calls, quick in-person or virtual meetings, or distraction-free sessions of solo productivity. Offering sound-proof privacy, people can converse confidentially without locating a conference room or travelling from their regular workspace. Technology integration is important to most users seeking a sound-proof environment.

### FLOORING

#### –Carpet: Area Rugs, Broadloom & Modular

Area rugs for commercial, hospitality, and institutional environments. A collection of area rug patterns is a single entry. Entrants can upload multiple images revealing the patterns and colorways.

Broadloom carpets for commercial, hospitality, and institutional environments. A collection of broadloom carpet patterns is a single entry. Entrants can upload multiple images revealing the patterns and colorways.

Modular/tile/planks of carpet. A collection of patterns is a single product entry. Entrants can upload multiple images revealing the patterns and colorways.

#### –Hard-Surface Flooring: Healthcare Vinyl/LVT/Specialty

Healthcare and commercial hard-surface vinyl tiles and luxury vinyl tiles (LVT).

Specialty flooring includes poured concrete, polymeric poured seamless floors, solid-surface epoxy, synthetic, recycled rubber, raised flooring systems, and terrazzo.

### **–Hard-Surface Flooring: Natural Materials & Wood**

Hard-surface flooring created with natural materials such as cork, linoleum, and wood, not synthetic materials. Wood and simulated-wood tiles and planks.

## **FURNITURE**

### **–Benching & Furniture Systems**

Benching furniture is oriented along a plane facilitating communication and collaboration with a reduced footprint compared to furniture systems. These products tend to make great use of vertical planes while also providing storage and extensive cabling and wire management. May also have sit-stand capability.

Furniture Systems—also called modular furniture or systems furniture—refers to a type of furniture with component parts that have portability and can be assembled, disassembled, and reassembled in different ways as needs change. They include panels, worksurfaces, shelves, and storage assembled into a system for layout providing a solution for organizing the workplace. Technology management is also part of most systems' solutions.

### **–Casegoods/Desks**

Casegoods are furniture items including desks that are modular and freestanding including desks that are built with interior compartments for storage and overhead shelving and cabinets that complement the main desk system. Casegoods generally refers to furniture made of hard materials—such as wood, metal, glass, or plastic components—ranging from use in traditional to contemporary/modern office environments and conference rooms.

### **–Collections for Collaboration**

Seating and furniture combinations with attached or pull-up tables that allow for spontaneous collaborations or conferencing in work or learning environments. They can be soft surface or hard surface, provided they enable user-directed or organized collaboration. Collections can adapt for seated or standing meetings or a combination of both and are useful for informally conversing with a team or gathering for tasks. Pieces usually include sofas, ottomans, stools, tables, chairs, and whiteboards for one-on-one or team use.

### **–Education Solutions**

A variety of learning environment solutions that include:

- Seating with tablet arms and storage racks attached specifically for use in K-12 or higher-education environments
- Seating that teams with desking and can be integrated or connected for multiple configurations or pairings and with elements of stacking to aid maintenance
- Active seating solutions targeting classrooms
- Configurable soft lounge systems for classrooms or corridors
- Dormitory furniture with built-in workstations

### **–Healthcare: Guest & Lounge Seating**

Healthcare reception, waiting room/lounge furnishings including seating, tables, cabinets, plant stands, and accessories. *NOTE: This is not for seating designed for use in delivery of direct patient care/support/treatment.*

### **–Healthcare: Patient Room**

Patient care chairs, recliners, overbed tables and other furnishings that facilitate treatment and recovery in hospitals, medical facilities and clinics, including bedside tables, storage units, and cabinets that are designed to be durable, easy to clean and comfortable to use. They should be mobile or move easily to accommodate medical equipment and overbed tables.

### **–Healthcare: Senior Living**

Senior Living contract furniture that bridges the gap between clinical safety and residential comfort. It is purpose-built to accommodate the physiological changes associated with aging—such as reduced mobility, diminished bone density, and sensory decline—while maintaining a non-institutional, hospitality-inspired aesthetic.

Unlike standard furniture, every design choice in this category is a deliberate "mobility assist" or "safety feature" disguised as decor. "Clean" is a technical specification for the senior living furniture to survive 24/7 use and aggressive disinfection.

- **No-Hurt Shapes:** Every corner is eased or "bullnosed" (rounded). This prevents skin tears (common in elderly patients with thin skin) and minimizes bruising from accidental bumps.
- **Liquid Barriers:** Upholstery is often backed by an integrated moisture barrier. If an accident occurs, fluids stay on the surface and cannot seep into the foam, preventing permanent odors and bacteria growth.
- **Faux-Wood (metal with wood-grain):** These look like warm oak or walnut but are actually aluminum frames with a heat-transferred wood grain. They are lighter to move, can be bleached, and won't scratch or splinter like real wood.

### **–Lounge Furniture Collections**

Lounge Furniture Collections are versatile seating pieces that can be arranged in multiple configurations. They may include single-seat, double-seat/loveseat, and sofa-size dimensions, along with ottomans and tables that respond to reconfiguration. Power-integration for charging mobile technology is a hallmark of design innovation.

In other applications, the elegance and simplicity of well-designed lounge furniture without technology integration is still welcome for many environments. Functionality, flexibility, and craftsmanship are expected.

*NOTE: If the product is a single lounge chair or sofa, rather than a collection, please enter it in the Seating: Sofas & Lounge category.*

### –Seating: Benches & Poufs

**Benches** are open, armless, and often undulating with high-back, low-back, or no-back options that come in varying heights and can be single or joined. Benches can seat one-, two- or three- or more people with wood, metal, or cushioned surfaces.

A **pouf** (pronounced *poof*) is a versatile, low-slung piece of furniture that sits somewhere between a large floor pillow and a soft ottoman. Unlike a traditional ottoman, which often has a wooden frame and visible legs, a pouf is generally **frameless**, solid-packed with stuffing, and sits directly on the floor.

- **Shape:** Most commonly circular (drum-shaped) or square (cube-shaped).
- **Construction:** They are essentially oversized "bean bags" but with much denser filling to maintain their shape under weight.
- **Portability:** Because they lack heavy frames or legs, they are lightweight and easy to move from room to room.
- **Materials:** They range from rugged leather and woven jute to soft velvet, wool, or even outdoor-rated synthetic fabrics.

### –Seating: Conference

Conference Seating is mostly used in the conference setting, available in fixed arm, armless, and upholstered or hard-surface seat and back. Chairs can be straight-up or sculpted solutions, mesh-back or soft upholstery to engage users in conference rooms. Chairs can swivel to 360 degrees and come with or without casters.

### –Seating: Ergonomic Desk/Task

Seating: Ergonomic Desk/Task applies to executive, task, desk, or workstation seating. It specifically addresses the ergonomics of good posture. It employs mechanical and passive tools to provide the most support for the users. Seating tends to conform to and support the body with lumbar support solutions, seat-height and depth adjustment, removable headrests, and innovative approaches to sitting.

### –Seating: Guest

Seating: Guest is intended for visitors to a space and may have articulated or static support. Designs and finishes vary widely with upholstered or hard-surface seat pans and backs, with or without arms and casters. Finishes include wood, cushion and fabric, metal, and plastic, with bases and frames of wood, chrome, steel, aluminum, or plastic.

### –Seating: Modular

Modular seating is a dynamic and flexible furniture concept that comprises individual seating units designed to be interchanged, rearranged, and combined according to preference and spatial constraints. Unlike traditional contract sofas and chairs, which come in predetermined sizes and configurations, modular seating provides the freedom to assemble seating arrangements that suit specific needs and style preferences. Individual units in a modular seating system can stand alone or be linked together to form cohesive configurations that fit seamlessly into various room layouts. Modular seating systems typically consist of a

combination of elements, including corner pieces, chaise lounges, armless chairs, ottomans, and more.

#### **–Seating: Sofas & Lounge**

Soft seating collections for lobby/reception/waiting spaces that may be designed in a modular fashion to create or adapt to any environment. Each unit may be standalone and come in various configurations to enable the user to add arms and corners to suit their needs. Sofas and single lounge chairs that are part of a collection or a singular piece. Entrants can upload multiple images that show single pieces and collections from multiple angles.

#### **–Seating: Stacking**

Stacking chairs are used in multipurpose environments and office settings. Commonly, the stacking is cantilevered and takes up little space. It is usually fashioned from hard, durable, cleanable surfaces that strive to be comfortable; some versions offer articulation. Stacking chairs tend to be lightweight yet engineered for structural support and to withstand the rigors of stacking. Colors abound and designers usually have great freedom with color combinations.

#### **–Seating: Stools**

Regular-height to bar-height stools that are separate from Seating: Guest. They are specified for workplaces where there are cafes, lounges, and informal meeting areas with high tables.

#### **–Storage**

Storage solutions that are wall-mounted, freestanding, or mobile for papers, files, folders, and technology accessories such as file cabinets and carts, credenzas, pedestal drawers, lockers, and bookcases.

#### **–Tables: Café**

Café tables are designed to be lightweight and moveable, most commonly found in coffee shops, and can easily be moved and arranged by customers and staff. Café tables come in a variety of sizes with heights set between 28 to 30 inches (71-76 cm) from the ground.

#### **–Tables: Conference**

Specifically designed to be the focal point of the room and are used for meetings among the staff as well as clients. Tables range from basic meeting needs to high-end boardroom designs, offering technology integration including a wire management trough or a power/data access port to host in-person and virtual gatherings with A/V and teleconferencing support.

#### **–Tables: Height-Adjustable**

Tables: Height-Adjustable respond to multipurpose workplace training needs. Height-adjustability, reconfigurability, and flexibility are hallmarks of training tables. Cylinder, pneumatic, and electric height-adjustment varieties can compete here. When training sessions are not taking place, they adapt to other work needs. Tables also can be used for work away from a traditional workstation or bench in order to commune with others for tasks or hold small meetings.

### **–Tables: Occasional**

Occasional Tables are for formal and informal needs, coming in many shapes, usually smaller in scale, and moving easily. They work well independently but often are part of an ensemble of several furniture items or complement a seating collection.

### **–Tables: Task**

Task tables can have many uses and work well as touchdown points separate from workstations. They come in a variety of sizes and shapes and often have privacy screens, modesty panels, and power components to support individual needs in open workspaces. The tables can be arranged solo or discreetly linked.

## **INTERIOR PRODUCTS & SOLUTIONS**

### **–Architectural Products**

Architectural Products are defined as prefabricated, engineered components that serve as the "permanent" or "semi-permanent" infrastructure of an interior space. They sit in the sweet spot between raw construction (like studs and drywall) and loose furniture (like desks and chairs).

These products are often "system-based," meaning they are designed to be integrated, reconfigured, or moved, providing a level of agility that traditional construction cannot match. They can be categorized as:

#### **A. Vertical Systems (Walls & Dividers)**

These are the most common architectural products. Unlike drywall, which is demolished to change a layout, these systems are "demountable."

- Glass Storefronts: Frameless or slim-profile glass walls that maintain acoustic privacy while allowing light to penetrate the "core" of a building.
- Movable Walls: Solid or glazed panels that can be reconfigured overnight to change an office into a conference room.
- Acoustic Baffles & Wall Panels: Engineered felt or timber panels designed to manage sound reverberation in open-plan spaces.

#### **B. Horizontal Systems (Ceilings & Floors)**

Products that define the top and bottom of the "spatial volume."

- Access Flooring: A raised floor system that creates a hidden "service zone" for power, data, and HVAC, allowing for easy maintenance without tearing up the floor.
- Specialty Ceilings: Suspended "clouds," linear wood slats, or metal mesh systems that hide mechanical systems while providing aesthetic character.

## C. Integrated Tech & Utility Systems

These products bring the space to "life" by embedding utility directly into the architecture.

- Power & Data Spines: "Plug-and-play" cabling systems that run inside walls or floors.
- Smart Glass: Electrochromic panels that transition from clear to opaque at the touch of a button

### –Surfacing Materials & Finishes

Surfacing Materials & Finishes means any porous or nonporous substance common to the interior of a building or structure, including but not limited to ceilings and walls, window coverings, counters, and furniture surfaces made in laminate, stone, marble, quartz, porcelain, and sometimes textiles and fabrics.

### –Wall Treatments

Wall Treatments range from paint to wallpaper, fabric, wood paneling, molding, plaster, and tile. A wall treatment includes wallcoverings that adhere flat on walls or can be 3D modular wall covering systems. Wall Treatments employ patterns, textures, and colors to give dimension and an enhanced visual experience to a space.

## LIGHTING

### –Lighting: Architectural

Architectural Lighting includes luminaries used to illuminate/define spaces, influence mood, and highlight the structural character of a building. Includes:

**Ambient "general" lighting** such as cove/downlights/linear fixtures.

**Accent** to highlight architectural features, textures, or artwork. Usually, accent lighting is at least three times brighter than the surrounding ambient light to create contrast.

While task lighting can be included here, please see the separate category for Lighting: Desk/Task.

### –Lighting: Decorative

Decorative Lighting covers all the traditional kinds of light fittings (floor lights, pendants, chandeliers, etc.) and differentiates them from technical or architectural lighting (downlighters) or task lighting. The basis for the difference is that the decorative light fitting can be seen as accent lights, ceiling-hung pendants, wall-mounted fixtures/sconces, torchieres, table lamps, or panel-infused lights. Illumination sources can be incandescent, LED, or alternatives.

### –Lighting: Desk/Task

Task lighting illuminates a particular area and makes the completion of a task easier, as opposed to ambient lighting that illuminates a general area or mood lighting that illuminates for atmospheric or effect purposes. Task lighting provides targeted or solution-based lighting that is

key to visibility with desk lamps or highly adjustable and flexible fixtures for user-directed applications. Task lighting avoids glare and enhances the effectiveness of traditional ceiling-mounted overhead lighting.

### **–Lighting Technology**

Lighting Technology recognizes breakthrough innovation in how light is engineered, shaped, materialized, and sustained. This category honors measurable technological advancement celebrating progress in material systems, human-centric performance, environmental responsibility, controls, and optical precision. Eligible submissions must demonstrate clear innovation supported by technical documentation.

Areas of innovation may include:

**Material Advancements:** Functional material systems such as integrated acoustic lighting, wood, recycled or bio-based materials, and additive manufacturing.

**Human-Centric & Spectral Systems:** Lighting designed to support biological response and well-being through spectral tuning, circadian strategies, and dynamic performance.

**Sustainability & Lifecycle Strategy:** Low-carbon materials, modular or serviceable construction, lifecycle transparency, and circular design thinking.

**Optical & Beam Engineering:** Advanced lens, reflector, and diffuser systems that improve glare control, efficiency, and beam precision.

**Controls & Intelligent Systems:** Networked lighting platforms, sensor integration, interoperable controls, and adaptive energy management.

## **OUTDOOR**

### **–Outdoor Furniture: Seating**

Outdoor Furniture: Seating is for individual and lounge seating and seating collections designed to withstand the elements. NOTE: For tables, see Outdoor Furniture: Tables.

### **–Outdoor Furniture: Tables**

Outdoor tables are waterproof and are usually made of materials such as mahogany, teak, cast aluminum, PE wicker, plastic, and PVC wicker. These materials are durable and can withstand the elements. Another material for modern outdoor furniture is synthetic resin because of its low-maintenance, lightweight, and extremely durable all-weather properties.

### **–Outdoor: Shade/Structures**

Awnings, canopies—fixed and retractable—motorized shades, pergolas, pergolas with shades, sailcloth, rooftop structures, umbrellas, artificial trees, among others.

## TECHNOLOGY

### –Accessories & Support Devices

Accessories and devices that support the use of technology such as monitor arms, power and cable management solutions, and charging stations.

### –Integrated Solutions

Technology that is an integral part of the furniture and furnishings is changing office and education environments with device management and power solutions. Audio-visual-ready lecterns, workstations, and tables can accommodate office workers, students, and instructors.

Integrated solutions can be used to solve a problem or improve upon previous solutions. In some cases, new technology enables earlier technology to work better, transforming the useful solution into something even better.

## TEXTILES

### –Healthcare: Textiles

Healthcare textiles are a specialized branch of technical textiles designed specifically for use in medical and hygiene environments, including high-tech materials.

- **Coated Fabrics (the "Gold Standard"):** These are high-performance textiles surfaced with film-forming polymers like **Polyurethane (PU)** or **Vinyl**.
- **CFFA-HC-201 Certification:** This is the critical benchmark. It subjects fabrics to 16 rigorous tests, including resistance to "pinking" (bacterial staining) and chemical degradation from hospital-grade cleaners.
- **Bleach Cleanability:** Fabrics are now designed to withstand a **10:1 water-to-bleach ratio** without color loss or surface cracking
- **Moisture Barriers:** Featuring an integrated, breathable membrane that prevents liquids from seeping into the foam, which is the primary cause of odor and internal mold.
- **Antimicrobial & Antiviral Fabrics:** Modern textiles are now permanently embedded with silver, copper, or zinc ions. These don't just "resist" bacteria; they actively destroy the cell walls of microbes on contact, reducing hospital-acquired infections (HAIs).

### –Outdoor, Performance & Specialty Textiles

Made from a wide variety of synthetic fibers, polyester, acrylic, and even cotton blends, outdoor fabrics are woven textiles that undergo a chemical treatment during manufacturing. This process allows them to repel water and resist soiling and rot, while impeding mildew growth.

Performance textiles are fabrics that provide additional functions such as repellency and/or resistance to or protection from a specified element; such fabrics include those that resist wrinkles, soils, or odors and/or protect from environmental conditions.

Specialty fabrics are designed and manufactured with a specific purpose or application in mind. As a result, they offer better performance than non-specialty, standard fabrics when used for that purpose or in that application. They can demonstrate a variety of properties depending on the fibers from which they are made, along with strength, weight, durability, and more.

*NOTE: Healthcare Textiles have their own category.*

#### **–Upholstery**

Fabrics and textiles used mostly as upholstery for seating, sofas, other furniture, and panel fabrics. These textiles help define a space and set a tone through colors and patterns that aid branding and messaging.

2.25.2026