Circular Design

Furniture, partitions, and finishes fill the spaces where we work and live—the spaces we experience every day. Each choice surrounding these interior elements—from design and specification to use, reuse, and what happens at the end of a product's useful life—may seem small, but together they add up to be extremely impactful on people and our planet. Today, through initial construction and tenant improvements, these interior elements account for over 50% of the lifetime embodied carbon in buildings.[1] Our goal is to change that.

Design for Our Future

Right now in the furniture industry, most pieces have a life cycle that begins with the extraction and processing of raw materials and ends with landfill. This linear economy mindset has promoted harmful global reaching impacts of climate change. In a circular economy, products, materials, and systems support circular material flows and full lifetime unit economics.

As a manufacturer committed to sustainability, Haworth has developed a holistic circular design philosophy, with three key principles that are applied throughout the design process: sustainable materials, product use extension, and responsible end of life. This philosophy is applied to the design of all of our new products, which helps us create innovative solutions, close loops and transition toward a more responsible, sustainable future.

[1] Fischer, Simona, Lauren Gardner, Emily Gross, Veronica Mccracken, and Java Nyamjav. 2023. "Embodied Carbon in Commercial Furniture." MSR Design. https://msrdesign.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Embodied-Carbon-Footprint-of-Commercial-Furniture.pdf.

From Our Global 2025 Commitments

Circular Design
100% of new products using Circular Design Principles

End of Life Program
Expand and improve circular services

Sustainable Packaging
100% renewable, reusable, recyclable, or compostable packaging

Our Circular Design Philosophy

Our approach is holistic and supports a circular economy at every stage of a products' life. We use this philosophy when designing every new Haworth product.

Sustainable Materials
We are committed to providing our customers with products that support safe, healthy, sustainable environments.

This means we:
- Exclude harmful substances
- Prioritize the use of sustainable materials
- Invest in sustainable packaging

Product Use Extension
We are committed to designing high-quality products with features that extend the time they spend in the use phase.

We design for:
- Flexibility
- Upgradability
- Repairability

Responsible End of Life
We focus on increasing the likelihood that products find their way to a circular material flow rather than a landfill at end of life.

This means we:
- Design for disassembly
- Offer circular services

Linking Our Activities to the SDGs

The Sustainable Development Goals are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. The 17 goals were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Haworth's Circular Design strategy aligns with six of the 17 goals.

By creating sustainable and healthy workspace solutions for our clients, free of chemicals of concern and supporting indoor air quality, Haworth promotes well-being in the workplace.

Our sustainable product certifications support the conservation of forests and the use of healthy materials, which contribute to clean water cycles.

Through research and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders, we diligently work to implement our circular design philosophy, which leads to offering new, innovative, sustainable products and solutions.

We are committed to circular design and developing circular business models. We aim to minimize the environmental impacts of our business and promote responsible consumption.

Our strategies to combat climate change address the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions along the entire value cycle. We are committed to near-term and net-zero science-based targets, supported by our circular design philosophy.

Haworth helps to promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems. Using sustainably sourced materials, materials with high recycled content, and those free of problematic chemicals, we contribute to conservation of natural resources, habitats, and biodiversity preservation.

Want to learn more?
Learn more about our sustainability commitments and download our Corporate Social Responsibility Report.