

MIMQB

THE BUSINESS OF FURNITURE

3.7.11



hip,
smart,
chic.

the new OM5
by officemaster

M⁵ series

byofficemaster



hip appeal.
smart design.
chic seating.

.....
OM5 series
who says you
can't have it all

OM⁵ series
byofficemaster

Seating the Future

As an industry matures, it becomes less apparent how innovation will happen, especially when it comes to new seating. It seems like everything has been done before. Nothing new can come from a category that has been designed to death, can it? Yet if you ask the industry how seating can continue to evolve (and I did), no one will tell you the category is stale. Innovation continues to move the industry forward and seating, in many ways, is leading the way.



Ask Herman Miller how seating will evolve and they will tell you through the use of new materials. Ask Steelcase how seating will evolve and they will tell you it will happen by the careful study of how people work. Ask Humanscale how seating will evolve and they will tell you through simplicity of form and function.

Though the office furniture industry can appear stale sometimes, it is committed to pushing the limits, especially when it comes to seating. Much of the innovation in seating is being driven by changes in the way people work. Laptops, smart phones and tablet devices are pulling workers away from traditional workstations. That means seating makers need to design products that work at a desk, in a social setting or in a collaborative work area.

Products like Haworth's Very chair, Steelcase's Cobi and i2i, Herman Miller's Setu and Generation by Knoll all are chame-

leon-like chairs that can be used in a variety of settings.

Kimball Office is working on the changing needs of workers in the seating category by focusing on highly adaptable lounge seating. The company also has a close relationship with German seating company Interstuhl. Kimball's Keith Metcalf said the seating sector has not hit its peak. "I tend to think there's different turning points in our work culture," he said. "The different ways that we work demand different attributes in our seating. There are still a lot of things we can do with materials, technological achievements in manufacturing and other areas to improve seating. Our physical being is changing based on the way we work. At one time, a worker would have gone into an office, sat there all day and never moved around. Now you might work in a lobby area and a lounge area and at a desk. That sort of takes the ergonomic challenges into different zones of the office."



Kimball Office Mito

At the same time customers are demanding more from their seating products, they are demanding more for less money as well. “The industry has the opportunity to give the end users all that they want at a great value as well,” said Phil San Gabriel, a seating product manager at Allseating.

“I think you can make a good ergonomic chair affordable to the masses with all the new materials available to us,” he said. “We believe a great ergonomic chair can improve the human condition. But it has to feel good for your wallet as well. Also, we are seeing more people collaborating and sharing chairs. Here at Allseating, it’s mass customization of how a user can tune the chair for their own comfort.

Regardless of how technology affects work, there will always be a need for seating products in an office, Metcalf said. “A lot of ergonomics goes into seating, but we also have to talk about ergonomic advances in tables and work surfaces,” he said. “Those are necessary items as well. Adjustable worksurfaces are definitely one way to achieve this, which allows a worker to sit or stand at work. The other way to improve ergonomics and help support seating advances is in accessory items that can be adjustable like monitor mounts. Instead of having a monitor sit on a desk and take up space, you can mount it to a track system or wall, which allows for adjustable height.”

So innovating seating takes more than innovating the seat itself. The seat must work as part of a larger office system to truly help workers become more productive. The furniture must be able to work in a variety of areas as well. The days of site-specific furniture are, for the most part, over.

For example, Kimball’s Mito (sold through its partnership with Interstuhl) can work in a wide variety of areas in an of-

fice, from a high-end executive setting to a collaborative area to a lounge setting. It is offered in multiple back height options, guest seating and convertible side chairs. The optional ottoman can be used to rest your feet or flipped up to create a work surface or lectern.

“I think we’ve advanced quite a bit (as an industry in terms of seating),” Metcalf said. “There’s been a lot of new technology that has gone into mesh and fabrics that allow seating to be really fluid. Our understanding of ergonomics has changed as well. Ergonomics doesn’t just deal with how a body works with a product, but how our senses respond to it as well.”

San Gabriel said the industry also is advancing seating by responding to the needs of both an aging workforce and Generation Y. “As an industry, we are really in uncharted territory,” he said.

The seating market is much like that for shoes. Shoes have been around as long as people started walking. And yet companies like Nike, Reebok and others continue to advance footwear by using new designs and materials. The same can be said for the office furniture and its advancements in seating.

“I don’t think we’re tapped out until every other industry is tapped out,” he said. “It is just about being comfortable in a seated position, but that means different things to different people. For us it is back to mass customization. You give the customer the choice of four or five different arms on chair. You give them the ability to change the foam. You give them the ability to change the mechanism. We’ve learned that it is hard to get people to agree on the right theory of comfort. We want to give the choice to the customer.”

Functionality Made Simple

Manufacturers are challenged to develop ever more sophisticated – yet simple – ergonomic office chairs that meet demands for comfort, support, and style.



The workplace as we know it is undergoing a radical transformation. The workforce is becoming ever more physically diverse, the work we do is becoming ever more knowledge-intensive, and the expectations we have of our tools is becoming ever greater. We expect them to anticipate our needs and respond effortlessly – from the auto-correct in our word processors to the touch screens on our iPads. And our expectations don't stop when it comes to the chairs we sit in.

As we become more cognizant of ergonomics and its effects on the human body, we've come to realize that sitting is a dynamic activity, best addressed by a chair that recognizes our natural tendency to re-adjust throughout the day. As we continue to expect more for less, and demand even greater responsiveness, the contract seating market is challenged to

provide smarter and more attractive solutions for a range of workspace demands and environments.

Seating manufacturers must respond to these evolving demands by offering the most advanced ergonomics while meeting critical market demands for simplicity. A finely designed chair that can be adjusted for better health and support was yesterday's news. One that does so without the user's constant input is today's expectation. Some of the industry's top players have introduced advanced ergonomic chairs that rely on simplicity: Humanscale's World, Knoll's Generation, and even the Sayl and Embody from Herman Miller come to mind. But would it be possible for some of the industry's smaller, mid-market players to get in on the game? MMQB dug around, and was surprised to find out what's been developing under the radar.

Southern California-based Office Master has been modestly producing ergonomic, mid-priced seating for 25 years. Readers east of the Mississippi may not have heard of them, but with the introduction this year of the OM5 Series ergonomic chair, that should change. Poised to make a commanding splash, the OM5 Series represents the kind of innovative thinking and price-sensitive manufacturing know-how that reminds us there are still fresh ideas to be found in the mid-market seating arena.

“We started by looking at people and how they actually sit,” explains Office Master president Wallace Hwang. “We already knew that producing a well-functioning chair wasn’t rocket science. But using one was another matter. People either love all the controls and make adjustments throughout the day, or more commonly they neglect 90 percent of the chair’s ergonomic features and sit restricted by the chair’s last setting.”

Cue the OM5 Series. Following the axiom that simplicity is best, Office Master engaged multi-talented designer Francisco Romero of Phidesign to create a chair that was simple, chic, and most importantly, intuitive. Originally intending to pare this everyday but critical part of our working lives to its essential ingredients, Office Master’s design brief soon grew even more ambitious. Could Romero eliminate one of the most basic – but restricting – parts of any chair design: the control mechanism?

During a record-setting 18 month process, Romero and the Office Master engineering team conceived and manufactured an entirely new chair from the ground up.

“We knew that building a wholly functional yet truly simple chair was a significant challenge. One of those easier said than done things,” states Office Master’s Manager of Product Development John Bueno. “But we knew we had an opportunity to make something truly unique: doing away with the off-the-shelf controls that would limit our goal of building a chair that had few if any levers, yet didn’t lose the critical ability to respond to users.”

Much like its competition from the industry’s bigger players, the OM5 Series is specifically designed to address the

concerns of the contemporary workforce. As a self-regulating chair, it intuitively responds to a wide range of body weights, sizes, and sitting positions without the need for manual adjustment. Where it really departs from most chairs, though, is its incorporation of a patent-pending user-driven technology that enables the OM5 to learn from and adapt to its user. The design itself completely eliminates the need for complicated knobs and levers and brings simplicity back to the act of sitting. Office Master calls this technology “body-activated motion,” and it is a unique geometry that links the seat and back movement around an ergonomically positioned hip pivot point, resulting in a highly comfortable chair – whatever the user’s position.

“OM5 challenges previously held assumptions about what defines a good ergonomic chair,” explains Wilson Chow, Office Master’s Director of Marketing. “We had to overcome a strongly held perception that the more knobs, levers, and paddles there are, the more ‘ergonomic’ and ‘comfortable’ the chair would be. But why can’t we get everything we need from a chair without having to manually ‘command’ it? We’ve come to expect that responsiveness from computers and cars – the younger generations especially – why not expect it from our seating as well? It takes boldness to question this expectation, but we’ve already seen strong interest in the product, and know our timing with OM5 is right-on.”

Romero, who worked closely with Office Master’s internal design and engineering team, elaborates. “Being given the latitude to explore the ways that form and function could be seamlessly integrated allowed me to focus on interesting design questions: What makes something beautiful? And for me, the answer was simplicity – creating a new generation of seating where reason and beauty connected.”

The real beauty is the evolution of the ergonomic chair from a mechanism-dependent object to a truly simple, intuitive, and good looking chair. The movement toward simplicity is a trend we expect to continue, and we’re eager to see what solutions other manufacturers come up with. As our industry’s creative minds focus more and more attention on these design and engineering challenges, and look to other industries for inspiration, the ergonomic chair will no doubt continue to evolve. †



Office Master OM5

MIMOB

THE BUSINESS OF FURNITURE

3.14.11



hip.
smart.
chic.

OM5 series

a new generation of
simple, ergonomic chairs

M⁵ series

by **officemaster**

celebrating **25** years

The Cheap (and green) Seats

The company wants to creating seating that increases employee morale and productivity while decreasing time away from the job.

By Lauren Folks and Rob Kirkbride

Just because a chair is inexpensive doesn't automatically mean it can't be green. That's the message from many small or mid-market seating makers who rightfully feel they don't get their share of the spotlight for doing what's right for the environment.

While some of the companies might not have the marketing budget to file for the alphabet soup of environmental certification programs, most are just as committed to the environment as their larger competitors.

Office Master, a mid-market seating maker, believes in a program it calls "sustainable environmentalism" -- providing seating that is price effective and cost effective to its customers with a focus on recyclability and use of recycled materials. "As a smaller company, we are very conscious of environmentalism," said Wilson Chow, director of marketing.

The California-based company has worked to introduce recycled content into the back shell of its chairs and other parts that can tolerate higher levels of recycled materials. "In reality, if you go part by part, the materials we use are almost identical to the big boys," said President Wallace Hwang. "We put environmentalism into our every day life. We are not any less than any company in this industry. They can afford to spend a lot of marketing money. We can't afford that kind of big marketing money, but that doesn't make what we do any less."

While no one would mistake Staples for a small company, it faces some of the same misconceptions about its environmental record.

Some large office furniture makers have entire departments devoted to working on environmental certification, said John Bueno, Office Master's product development manager. Companies like Office Master can't afford that kind of specialization.

"I think in some ways all of these certifications create barriers for customers," said Hwang. "We can't afford to go through every certification and that might cause some people to get the wrong impression on what we believe about protecting the environment. For small companies (trying to follow all the environmental certifications) can really be a burden. In a way, it is unfair because we are not doing anything less than our larger competitors."

While no one would mistake Staples for a small company, it faces some of the same misconceptions about its environmental record. It is a big company. And it believes firmly in protecting the environment. Business Interiors by Staples develops and sources low-cost, green seating—something of a hot commodity in the market these days.

A staple of Business Interiors is the belief that what is good for the earth is also good for your wallet. John Michael, vice president and general manager of Business Interiors, spoke on the phenomena of green paired with low-cost. Two forces catalyze commitment to green practices; a consumer demand and the green integrity of the Staples empire. "Five years ago there was a premium for green products, and you don't really see it as much in the market today," Michael said.

That's because the price gap is closing between green and non-green materials. "Part of being a trusted source for customers for furniture

solutions is making sure we understand what they value and providing products that fit with those values," Michael added. "Staples as an enterprise is very socially-conscious and environmentally-aware and has a lot of aspirations around being an environmental steward, through products and the way we conduct our business."

The strategies to uphold the green goals covers various energy sources to the type of truck transportation. Low cost, green seating has been selling remarkably well, even considering the recent economic downturn. Michael referenced the evolution of green products and design. "We are in the second or third generation of green design products for manufacturers," he said. "They are better designed, sleeker and less expensive."

Green products follow a natural continuum: As they are better made they become more enticing and competitive. An aggregation of well-constructed, less-expensive, green chairs include their own Verdesol chair and seating from Global, HON, Allsteel and National. Verdesol, a high-back task chair, contains fabric made from 100 percent recycled plastic soft drink bottles and the potential for LEED credits.

HON's Ceres task chair is certified by Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) and earned level 2 from BIFMA with nearly 100 percent recyclable parts. Allsteel's rubber-based suspension Inspire chair targets the education market, such as environmentally-friendly institutions and earned three certifications through SCS, McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry (MBDC) Cradle to Cradle, and level. Global's Sonic-task chair was assembled with 65 percent recycled content, contributes toward LEED points and is Greenguard certified. National's MIX-IT, a high-back chair level 1 certified by SCS to the BIFMA e3 Standard as well as certified to SCS Indoor Advantage GOLD, is also a top seller.

Material content, design and manufacture process, and packaging and transportation, all factor in to the environmental appraisal of products. Green does not necessitate a higher cost than its traditional materials. "It's pretty close to a level playing field. Design gets smarter and manufacturing gets more efficient. Both those things allow the cost of green products to come down," Michael said.

Moreover, the economic downturn did not specifically affect the cost of green materials. "The downturn obviously reduced demand overall, so the demand for green products went down with everything else, but I don't think as a percentage of our total sales it came down any more or less than traditional products," he said.

Numerous forms of green certifications and rating help companies validate the green aspect of products, but, it is not simplified for the customer. "One of the things I hope will occur in the next five years in our industry is more transparency and simplicity in various certifications," Michael said.

For Office Master, being based in California helps since it is a state that puts a premium on environmental matters. Still, that doesn't make it any easier to keep up with the various environmental certification programs.

"It is hard to know what is important to our customers right now," Chow said. "All of our products and printed pieces are FSC certified. We try to do our best where we can. In our manufacturing process, we have eliminated the need for some cardboard packaging and we recycle. Still, there are no certifications for all the things that Office Master does to protect the environment. We just do it." †

EVENTS

MILAN / April 12-17, 2011

SaloneU cio 2011. Milan, Italy
(<http://www.cosmit.it/tool/home.php?s=0,2,67,71,80>)

DUBAI / May 17-19, 2011

Mideast o ce furniture show,
Dubai World Trade Centre,
Dubai.

CHICAGO / JUNE 13-15, 2011

NeoCon 2011 at Chicago's Mer-
chandise Mart.

TORONTO / SEPTEMBER 22-24,
2011

IIDEX/NeoCon Canada - Can-
ada's National Design Expo &
Conference. Direct Energy Cen-
tre, Toronto.

www.iidexneocon.com

BALTIMORE / NOVEMBER 2-3,
2011

NeoCon East 2011.

Office Master Celebrates
25 Years

Mid-market seating manufacturer Office Master, Inc. of Southern California is preparing to celebrate its milestone 25th year, and the yearlong celebration officially kicks off this coming Friday.

The company plans to mark the event first with an internal celebration thanking its staff and then later this month with the formal introduction of the innovative, new OM5 Series™ chair.

"We're very excited about passing this milestone and will reach out in the coming months to truly thank our customers for entrusting us with solving their seating needs over the years," said company president, Wallace Hwang. "But, relatively speaking, we're still a fairly young and customer-focused company and I would say that this birthday simply reinforces what I've been saying for a while now: That we're still small enough to care about each order, while large and experienced enough to handle any sized order."

Founded on March 18, 1986, the company started by producing value-oriented, ergonomic seating out of a small facility in San Diego. Since that time, the company has experienced steady growth and last year completed construction on an efficient and green 102,000 sq ft. headquarters located in Ontario, California.

Today known as the home of Smart Seating Solutions, the company has developed its line significantly over the years into a broad offering of comfortable and high-quality, situation-appropriate seating that is capable of meeting the majority of today's seating needs.

With an impressive client list that already features many well-known corporate, healthcare, education and government names, the company is poised for even greater success and growth in the years ahead as it continues to push for improvements in both its own line as well as in the contract seating market as a whole.

Now Playing:

Configura launched ConfiguraTV (www.configura.com/tv) with the intent of showcasing CET Designer users talking about why they like the software.

"The videos are short – about 30 seconds each – and focus on a particular aspect of the software that a user especially likes," explained Training & Support Manager Tracy Lanning. "Our users are our best ambassadors about CET Designer. This is a platform to share their thoughts."

Designer Kori Locicero talks about how CET Designer is like three tools in one; she's able to go from concept to completion in a much shorter timeframe using CET Designer.

Designer Seana Turner talks about how CET Designer and its Extensions are continually improved and updated with the most current information from manufacturers.

Currently, there are about a dozen short videos on the "channel" with more to come. Additional videos can also be found on Configura's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/configuraab.

ECi Acquires FMAudit

eCommerce Industries, Inc. (ECi), a provider of industry specific business and ecommerce software solutions, announced that it has acquired FMAudit, LLC, based in Jefferson City, MO. FMAudit's suite of print assessment, remote meter, supply and service data applications provide real time information that allows organizations to automate labor intensive business processes.

"We are excited to include FMAudit's powerful solutions and talented team in the ECi portfolio of companies," says Trevor Gruenewald, COO of ECi. "Adding FMAudit to the suite of solutions available for our customers fits perfectly within our business strategy of providing our existing and prospective customers a "one stop shop" service. Customers using FMAudit have experi-

enced tremendous results by implementing the ability to reduce overhead, automate service and increase sales in their dealership. I think it's clear that the unique and cost effective solution FMAudit is providing dealers and manufacturers is imperative for managed print services success."

"We believe this is a great opportunity for FMAudit to further exceed our goals for aggressive growth and we are excited to become part of the ECi family," said Kevin Tetu, President and Founder of FMAudit. "From the beginning, our mission has been to help our customers build stronger businesses. This transaction will enable FMAudit to significantly enhance our customer offerings by helping us deliver high value solutions to the market faster and with more seamless integration. We're now able to move to

BRIEFING

Fabric Maker Kravet
acquires Brunswick & Fils

European fabric maker Kravet Inc. has acquired Brunswick & Fils through a bankruptcy court auction and should begin operating the business by the end of the month.

Kravet was the highest bidder for the financially beleaguered Brunswick & Fils, which led for Chapter 11 protection in January, citing a business downturn because of the recession. The auction drew significant interest from national and international, financial and strategic potential bidders.

A purchase price was not disclosed. During the Chapter 11 transition, Kravet provided \$4 million in post-bankruptcy financing to ensure that Brunswick & Fils would continue to be a financially sound trading partner. Both companies said they expect the transition to be seamless.

Brunswick & Files is based in White Plains, N.Y., and has showrooms in 21 cities with a design studio in New York's D&D Building. Brunswick has international distribution in 24 countries.

Thank you

for choosing OM.

The “chair geeks” at OM have been focused on meeting your seating needs since 1986, and we take our work very seriously.

We spend a lot of time designing our products to be responsive to your unique working style & environment, so that hopefully you can simply sit back and enjoy your OM in comfort.

So, thank you again for trusting OM. We invite you to interact further with us at omseating.com if you would like to learn more about your chair, or our chair company.

Yours sincerely,

President
OM

LIMITED WARRANTY

OM (formerly Office Master, Inc.) warrants to the original purchaser that its products are free from defects in materials and workmanship for the applicable warranty period, as indicated below.

Should any item fail, OM will – at its sole discretion – repair or replace, with a comparable product or part, any item found to be defective as a result of normal commercial use (i.e., a single 8-hour shift, 5 days per week).

This warranty does not apply to items subjected to abuse, misuse, neglect, alteration, or damage caused by shipment, storage, accident, fire, flood, or act of God.

LIFETIME LIMITED WARRANTY

The OM5 Series® (including the OM5 Active sub-series) and Truly™ are covered by a lifetime limited warranty on all structural components as defined below.

12-YEAR LIMITED WARRANTY

Unless otherwise specified, all models not classified as budget or 24/7 or heavy-duty are covered under a 12-year limited warranty on all structural components as defined below.

7-YEAR LIMITED WARRANTY

Unless otherwise specified, all models classified as budget or 24/7 or heavy-duty are covered under a 7-year limited warranty on all structural components as defined below.

WARRANTY TERMS

Within a given model's applicable warranty period, all structural components, including gas cylinders, wood, metal and plastic parts (i.e., chair frames, bases and control handles) are guaranteed against structural failure when under normal commercial use. All OM seating comes with a default 250 lbs. weight capacity limit unless otherwise specified by OM.

For all models, consumable items (i.e., casters, glides, etc.) are covered by a 5-year normal commercial use warranty.

FABRICS & FOAM

OM in-stock upholstery & foam cushions are covered by a 5-year normal commercial use warranty. Normal wear and tear on fabrics such as wrinkling, dirt accumulation or gathering is not covered. Natural, minor variations may exist in color, surface, grain or texture of upholstery materials. As a result, any such variations are not warranted. COM/OOL and graded-in fabrics are not covered.

CLAIMS PROCEDURE

Should any item fail, contact the Dealer from whom it was purchased. If it is determined that a return is necessary, return that item and its product proof of purchase to the Dealer, whereupon that Dealer will send both to OM, freight prepaid. OM will repair or replace the defective part at its sole discretion and return it to the Dealer, freight prepaid.

RETURNS

Written authorization from OM is required prior to a Dealer returning any failed or defective parts to OM. Any returned defective part(s) will NOT be accepted without this prior written authorization, or a “Returned Materials Authorization” (RMA) # assigned to it.

WARRANTY LABOR

This warranty exclusively covers the repair or replacement of OM parts and does NOT cover any portion of labor or service.

february 2017

How to
care for
your
chair

Adjust
your chair to
take care
of you

what you need to know.

Adjustment Information Online:
omseating.com/adjust



toll free 877 776 5678
voice 909 392 5678
fax 909 392 4567



What is this doohickey?

Keep It Together

OM chairs thrive when treated well. To maintain their good looks and great attitudes, observe these guidelines:

If any parts are missing, broken, damaged or worn, stop using the product until repairs are made using factory-authorized parts.

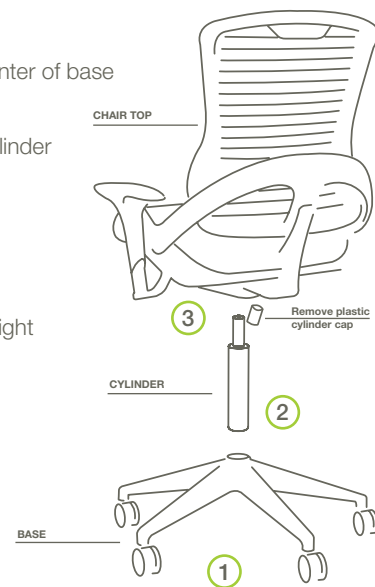
- Occasionally check all bolts, screws and knobs to be sure they are tight.
- Lubricate the gas cylinder every 6 months.
- Avoid prolonged exposure to direct sunlight, or the fabric color may fade.
- For cleaning use water or mild detergent solution only.
- If you have any questions or difficulties, please contact your original OM Authorized Dealer for further assistance and services.

Put It Together

- 1 Place base on level surface
- 2 Insert wider end of cylinder into hole at center of base
- 3 Lower chair top snugly onto top end of cylinder (remove plastic cylinder cap first)
- 4 Activate cylinder to its lowest point
- 5 Sit fully into seat and adjust for desired height

That's it!

Your body's weight will do the rest.



Chair Care

The thingumabob is connected to the whachamacallit . . .

- Be sure the gas cylinder is inserted into the mechanism firmly. Improper connection may cause wobbling.
- Choose correct casters for different floor surfaces. We have specialized casters, but generally suggest choosing Soft or Rubber casters for hard or concrete surfaces, and hard casters for use on carpet.
- Do not stand on foot ring.
- Do not sit on any part of the chair except the seat.
- Do not sit on arms or backrest.
- Improper sitting may cause imbalances resulting in bodily injury.
- Do not use chair as a stepladder.
- Use this chair only for seating one person at a time.
- Use this chair for its intended purpose only.
- Be sure to sit squarely on chair.
- To avoid chair collapse, do not remove knobs or screws.
- Properly dispose of packing materials. Do not use plastic as head covering. It may cause suffocation.
- Do not use chair unless all bolts, screws and knobs are tightly in place.
- Do not use chair on uneven floor surfaces. Always use the chair on flat surfaces to prevent injuries.
- OM chairs are designed for normal commercial use by persons 250 lbs. or less unless weight capacity is otherwise stated. Commercial use is defined as a single shift of 40 hours or less in a week.

This was not a good idea!

