For over 40 years, and long before it was fashionable to be “green”, Nienkämper has quietly practiced sound environmental design and manufacturing processes. At a time when we are continually challenged, both as a company and individuals, to be responsible environmental and social stewards, Nienkämper continues to be an industry leader.

And as a 2009 recipient of a Canada’s 50 Best Managed Companies award, we’re clearly on the right track.

Over the past two years since we first issued our Corporate Environmental Report, we have continued our journey towards improved sustainability. Working jointly with our customers, designers and team members, we would like to share our progress with you.

“A furniture company succeeds when it meets human needs while pursuing the highest ideals in design and manufacturing.”
our mission

Our goal is to be the leading source in design and technology by honoring commitment to our customers, promoting the use of responsible materials, recognizing constantly the importance of innovation and providing an environment where people can use their skills in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

our customers

Nienkämper has always held the belief that outstanding customer service will ensure a loyal and long-term customer base. Our commitment to going the extra distance for our customers, at all levels of the organization, is ingrained in our culture. And as our customers have become more cognizant of environmental issues and demands, Nienkämper has responded by obtaining industry certifications and requirements.

certifications

As a member of the Canada Green Building Council, Nienkämper has continued to focus on supporting LEED® principles, both in product design and manufacture. To that end, we have achieved a number of third-party certifications.

In October 2008, Nienkämper’s ability to meet strict purchasing and tracking requirements enabled us to achieve Forestry Stewardship Council (“FSC”) Chain of Custody Certification through the Rainforest Alliance®. This world-renowned certification permits us to produce FSC-certified products through the purchase of FSC-certified veneers and wood products that meet strict forestry management standards.

Greenguard®, a program that promotes healthy interior spaces by stringently identifying and certifying products that meet low-level emission standards on over 10,000 chemicals, also became available on many Nienkämper products in 2008.
waste reduction and diversion

Nienkämper continues to be a member of the Ontario Recycling Council, a not-for-profit organization that focuses on the three R’s—reducing, reusing and recycling. These fundamentals have long governed our environmental vision.

From the inception of each product, our designers “reverse engineer” to minimize waste and maximize the use of environmentally-friendly materials and processes. We continue our standard waste diversion practices including the “closed loop” processing of aluminum, wood waste recovery, and recycling of leather, fabric and foam cuttings. By continually monitoring and measuring all waste streams, we have been able to specifically target areas for continual improvement and achieve the following reductions in 2009:

- **40.7% decrease** in total waste generation
- **29.81% decrease** in total waste sent to landfill

Our Green Team members are now focusing on the development of a composting program, as we work closer to our goal of zero waste.

energy conservation and alternatives

As our Environmental Report went to press in 2008, we began the installation of a roof-top solar panel system that tied to our local energy grid. The system has been fully operational since late 2008 and supports our production facility. When the facility is not in operation, the electricity generated by the panels can be fed directly back to the grid. During the past year, the system has generated sufficient energy to offset the production equivalent of over 2 million batteries. You can see our panels at work at http://nienkämper.solarvu.net.

Having completed a Green Globes building audit and an environmental assessment, we have been implementing many of the recommendations put forward.

Specific initiatives taken include:

- Retrofit of all office lighting resulting in a 40% reduction in electrical consumption
- On-going lighting retrofit of plant manufacturing areas to energy-efficient fixtures
- Employee awareness and education programs

In total, Nienkämper has been able to reduce its energy consumption by over 20% in 2009.
our products

Our products represent who we are as a company. From design, through manufacturing and final delivery to our customers, they symbolize our efforts to bring enduring quality and innovation to life.

By designing products that can be manipulated to meet our customers' needs, while at the same time manufacturing them using the most sustainable methods available, our furniture creations are often handed down from generation to generation, thus minimizing their carbon footprint. Our working philosophy of quality throughout each stage of the manufacturing process evidences pride of workmanship throughout our organization. Quality is an end result, judged at each step of the production process.

The continual development of new and ground-breaking products has been a key stronghold for us. The ability of our skilled staff to adapt and modify products, both in the design stage and during their actual production, while simultaneously using responsible environmental manufacturing methods, enhances our ability to deliver customized products. It is this that sets Nienkämper apart from many traditional furniture manufacturers.
material choices and impacts

Nienkämper works closely with each of its valued suppliers to ensure that they understand the company’s environmental vision. We regularly challenge our suppliers to seek out and provide us with environmentally responsible products, and to develop innovative methods and processes that mirror our own standards. We continually source new materials and technology and incorporate these products and processes where appropriate.

- Our fabric selection has been expanded to include a line of eco-wool options.
- The percentage of soy in our molded foam has been increased to 25%, and most of our leather selection is tanned using chromium-free processing.
- Our aluminum is manufactured using a closed-loop process, where even our aluminum filings are reclaimed. The recycling of aluminum uses 95% less energy and 97% less water than mining raw bauxite for the processing of new material, thus reducing our carbon footprint.
- All stains used in the manufacture of wood products are now water-based, and water-based UV finishes are available on request.
- Medium-density fibreboard (MDF) is certified as 100% recycled and/or recovered fibre, and is available in both formaldehyde-free and FSC-certified options and meets all requirements for CARB compliancy.

We continue to educate and assist our customers in making sustainable material choices. Product information sheets are available that supply component and material details available for LEED® credits to help make informed selections.

Vox® Conference Table
health & safety report

Our Joint Health and Safety Committee members liaise with all areas of our facility and the results speak for themselves. Nienkämper is proud to continue to have zero lost-time injuries for both 2008 and 2009.

Our facility has been inspected by federal, provincial and municipal agencies. In all cases, we have met or exceeded legal requirements for health, safety and environmental compliance.

Nienkämper celebrates Health and Safety Month in April of each year. Staff members undergo a variety of safety training sessions, as well as partaking in many health and wellness initiatives. And apparently, it’s paying off - Nienkämper employees beat the national average by far—taking less than one sick day per year each in 2009.

shipping and packaging

For over thirty years we have been shipping our products “blanket wrapped”. Not only does this reduce huge amounts of waste, it also makes it simpler for our customers. They don’t have the bother of getting rid of the waste packaging.

We have developed an excellent long-term relationship with our transportation company, and they understand our philosophy of quality products delivered via waste-free shipping. Trucks used in shipping our products have emission reduction equipment and on-board generators that allow drivers to use their cabs comfortably, without running their engines overnight.
our people

Our commitment to building a supportive and inclusive workplace is clearly visible in the varied group of skilled team members we employ. Representing over 35 different countries, we proudly acknowledge our diversity and celebrate our many long-service employees.

Nienkämper team members acknowledge the success of their co-workers by participating in the selection of our Annual Spirit Awards recognizing outstanding individual performance in thirteen categories. Staff members regularly mentor students and apprentices and are committed to sharing their knowledge.

Through continuous education, including lunch and learn sessions, Nienkämper engages staff members in reaching their environmental goals and helping to work towards a more sustainable world.

nienkämper in the community

We truly believe that as a company, and as individuals, we are responsible for helping to make our world better.

And we do this in a great many ways. From corporate support of such leading cultural and educational institutions as the Royal Ontario Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario, and the Ontario College of Art and Design to support of our local colleges, schools and shelters, each and every year Nienkämper continues to give generously.

Plant tours and talks are hosted regularly to educational institutions of all types. Elementary and college students are afforded co-operative education opportunities yearly to promote training in skilled trades.

Staff members hold annual events in support of local children’s charities. Parents now sit in comfortable donated Nienkämper furniture while watching their children—including those with special needs—practice skateboarding at a local facility.

At every turn, whether it is manufacturing in an environmentally responsible way, or giving back to the local community and world at large, Nienkämper and its staff are truly committed to caring for the world around them.