

Glass Wall

- Frameless Glass System
- ½" Thick Tempered Glass
- Discreet Glass-to-Glass Joint
- Minimal Framing
- Up to 10' High
- Anodized Aluminum
- Scratch Resistant Finish
- Seismic Approved

Modular Wall

- 3-1/2" Thick
- Vertical and Horizontal Tiles
- Tight Seams
- Glass Wall Transition
- Recessed Base and Top Track
- Modular Power/Voice/Data
- Furniture Integration
- Exceptional Sound Privacy



866 634 1001



Drew Nagel drew@smartspacellc.com 212 226 6642

NYC Sales & Technical Advisor

- ✓ Sales and Technical Support
- ✓ Drawings and Renderings
- ✓ Budget and Price Quotes
- \checkmark Project Management Assistance



WHOSE WALLS ARE THESE?

Modular Architectural Interiors (#1056)

by Brad Powell

Mark Bassil has been in contract furniture for a while. His close to 40 years of experience in the office furniture industry included positions with major manufacturers such as Herman Miller and Hauserman before striking out on his own. With partners in South Korea, he created, beginning in 1993, first DRG, then MAIspace, winning Best of NeoCon recognition in 1997 and 2002. Within the past couple of years, Mr. Bassil and his local partner bought out their foreign partners and renamed the company **MAI** turning their attention to a number of new products that fall under the category of Modular Architectural Interiors, especially the segment that features higher end spaces. In addition to MAI's high quality line of office systems, the company's primary focus now is on moveable or demountable walls and his initial introduction was the **ALUR** wall system consisting of frameless glass and modular dividing walls, which took a Best of NeoCon Silver for Moveable Walls in 2010.

Mr. Bassil's value proposition, he says, is to offer high quality products at an affordable price, in a sense, bridging the markets of affordable pricing and high-end design. It appears that MAI seems to reaching its objective, and it now has showrooms in New York, New Jersey, LA, Chicago, and is about to open in Dallas.



MARK BASSIL

Times have changed markedly since 1993, including the configuration and product mix in commercial and institutional spaces and the emphasis on sustainability and LEED certification. The focus on moveable walls speaks for itself, and MAI is particularly aiming at the very popular storefront glass part of this market. Here, it is squarely



DREW NAGLE

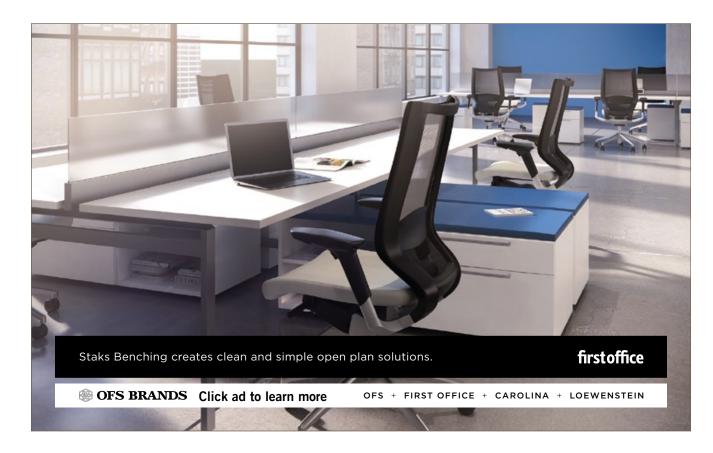
focused on the most demanded architectural details of ½" butt-glazed, with polycarbonate "dry joints," very low profile framing and refined hardware and detailing. To better meet sustainability concerns, MAI has moved most of its Alur wall production to the U.S., including sourcing glass panels locally.

The sales process for wall products differs substantially from that of contract furniture sales, and one wonders how a small company such as MAI has structured its marketing and sales efforts, especially in the context of many, perhaps most, large dealerships creating their own architectural products divisions. (See officeinsight 5.20.13, *DID with Desks' Architectural Products*, http://www.officeinsight.com/1842)

Mr. Bassil seems to have developed a promising strategy. Recognizing the swing to moveable walls and that many dealerships might have the prospects but not the resources, he has created a turnkey opportunity for this sector and begun to roll it out. New York City is a great market especially for cost-effective demountable glass wall solutions. To exploit the opportunities, MAI has created a long-term working relationship with industry veteran **Drew Nagel**.



BUTT-GLAZED CONFERENCE ROOM



Mr. Nagel's experience includes Northeast Regional Manager HON Industries, Eastern Regional Manager Allsteel, North Eastern Vice President Sales Inscape, District Manager Kimball Office Furniture. His organization, NIRIG, LLC, has been a single line manufacturer's representative for MAI in the NY/NJ market for over a decade.

To work the wall market, Mr. Nagle created a new organization, Smart-Space, LLC, co-located with MAI at 16 East 40th Street, NYC. There, he and his team are the out-source for select dealerships that do not have architectural interiors capabilities, such as developing front-end design intent with architects and designers, providing drawings and renderings, assisting with specifications and quotes, and helping with technical sales presentations and showroom visits, basically, a value-added service providing all of the project management requirements, as well as discussing the accelerated depreciation benefits of this type of product.

officeinsight sat down with Mr. Bassil and Mr. Nagle recently in NYC to get a better feel for their business.

OI: What was the turning point for you?

MB: We saw that systems were, to a large extent, becoming a commodity, and the office was turning in new directions. We narrowed our product focus to the collaborativetype furniture, benching – retaining some systems - but making a major push into moveable walls, something I've been involved with for almost 40 years. In the early days, the modular walls couldn't compete with drywall on pricing - it's still an issue - but reduced cost, total cost of ownership, daylighting, sustainability, flexibility and aesthetic preferences have created many more opportunities for modular walls, particularly storefront glass, which, for us, includes all abutting glass panels.

MAI is aiming for the market for high-end frameless glass, with slim frame, European style storefronts, but at an affordable price and avoiding any complications or delays that might arise with some of the very nice, but more expensive, European products.

OI: What are your lead-times?

MB: Our effective lead-time is two - three weeks because we stock the aluminum framing and source the glass locally. We operate more like a glazier, fitting well into construction schedules, which the architects and contractors really appreciate.

DN: ALUR's quick delivery is a key feature and provides a clear advantage over longer lead-time products. Orders can be placed in advance of the hardwalls or completion of floor and ceilings because the framing is oversized and field cut; all we need is the architect's plans to begin. Once the site is ready, we take measurements for the glass fabrication, which runs approximately two weeks, depending on the size of the job. Invariably, a project's construction schedules continue to be pushed out, but the occupancy date doesn't change; we have the flexibility to deal with that, something that is often difficult for the competition.

OI: What are the other characteristics of your products?

MB: The focus is on architectural walls and then the compatible furniture. The ALUR glass wall was specifically designed as a storefront wall, rather than a repurposed moveable wall with thinner glass, bulky framing and large bases. We can customize the ALUR dividing wall with acoustical fabric panels and markerboards, and we can put a piece of furniture on the walls too. This is all done horizontally with no vertical seems, a big plus with designers and architects.

ALUR uses ½" tempered glass, up to 10' high, polycarbonate "dry joints" that are 93% clear, and will not shrink or fade when exposed to UV. The unique tongue and grove design of the glass panels and joints provide a secure glass-to-glass connection and self corrects the natural tendency of glass to bow, especially in larger pieces.



SLIDING GLASS DOORS

The ALUR framing has minimal top and bottom channels and attractive hardware, including full height sliding glass door mechanisms that are fully integrated into the top frame a key feature of the system and the most elegant in the market because it's completely concealed on the back side of the frame. The low profile aluminum framing is bead blasted to prevent fingerprints and for a scratch resistant finish. There are no vertical posts,

and glass edges are flat polished and chamfered to a precise angle forming a virtually seamless fit when combined with the dry joint.

Another important point is that many wall products do not work with a drop ceiling because they hang from the ceiling and can't bear the weight of the glass panels. ALUR doesn't have this problem because it is designed as a gravity-based system in which the load all goes down to the floor.



INSTALLED OFFICE



INSTALLED OFFICE

OI: We are sitting in a conference room three quarters of which is glass, more than just a storefront.

MB: We use the term generically to refer any to thin profile, butt-glazed, single pane, ½" glass wall. So for us whether it's used as an office front wall or around a conference room it's all "storefront." In addition, our ALUR dividing wall totally integrates with the storefront so it doesn't look like an afterthought as with some other systems. The dividing wall can also be made with a variety of tiles, including thermofused melamine, fabric wrapped, marker board, veneer and tackable-acoustical options.

OI: How do you handle the leveling problem, the irregularities in the walls, floors and ceilings?

DN: With our system, the low profile framing simply follows the contour of the floors, walls and ceiling, which offers greater flexibility than the usual leveling adjustability found in most demountable wall systems. Once measurements are captured, we fabricate the glass accordingly, while still maintaining a fair degree of on-site adjustability. The dividing walls have a unique recessed base with only 1" exposed at the base, perfectly matching our glass wall base.

OI: And tell me about how you control sound transmission through the wall?

MB: Half-inch tempered glass has a 36 STC and our laminated glass option has two quarter-inch pieces of annealed glass with a piece of .030 white or clear vinyl in between. If you use it with the white vinyl, the glass panel becomes a writeable surface on both sides, but you can also use a clear interlayer. Also, half-inch laminated glass is rated at 38 STC, which is equivalent to five-inch thick drywall with sound insulation. The perfect seal of the connection also prevents any sound leakage through the glass wall. Our dividing wall is only 3 ½" thick yet we get a 42

STC because there are less seams and excellent seals at top and bottom.

MB: Another thing that designers love about our product is that our glass doors are frameless, single pane glass up to ten feet. The doors, of course, have a closer to provide a soft and firm closing and brush gaskets for excellent sound seal.

OI: What is your focus for NeoCon?

MB: We are showing something new. We have a display in which the top frame is embedded in the soffit and completely disappears and the bottom track is cut into the floor. The posts by the door and the ends disappear, using our new polycarbon-

ate joints with integral brush gaskets. It's about minimizing the amount of aluminum framing to produce a really elegant look at the same time preventing sound leakage around the door. The end result is an illusion of a vast section of unsupported glass and is absolutely stunning.



Prepare to be tempted.... The next generation of the Ascend Sit/Stand Desk

"Solid Wood, Sleek, Transitional..."
Visit our NeoCon Showroom 10-164

Click ad to visit

HARDEN contract

315 / 675-3600 Fax 315 / 245-2884

contract@harden.com **a hardencontract.com**

WE MAKE COMMERCIAL

FURNITURE

LIIMAN

Welcome to People Space

The last thing we think about when we're creating new products, or refining old ones, is furniture. Because furniture is designed for people. So we start with them.



psfurniture.com 800.762.0415 Space 8-8086 The Merchandise Mart

Click ad to learn more

