

Driving Sustainability Through Industrial Innovation

Crédit Agricole and Steelcase Give 4,700 Office Chairs a Second Life

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Recognizing sustainability as a strategic priority, Crédit Agricole d'Île-de-France made a bold choice: instead of replacing all 4,700 reception chairs across its 273 branches with new ones, the bank opted for Steelcase's **Remade** remanufacturing service. This solution, part of Steelcase's broader circular services offering, involves bringing the chairs back to the factory to restore their original performance and quality. Once remanufactured, the chairs then begin a second life. This approach is a tangible example of how organizations can advance the circular economy in large-scale real estate projects.

It all started with a practical need: after ten years of use, many chairs showed signs of wear and no longer met current aesthetic standards. Crédit Agricole d'Île-de-France initially considered replacing the reception seating and recycling the old chairs through its long-standing supplier. But Steelcase proposed another path: remanufacturing. The solution was immediately appealing. "Remanufacturing resonated with our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) approach while allowing us to control costs," explains Karim Bedr, Head of Occupant Services, Security & Infrastructure.

"Favoring reuse over buying new furniture is a concrete way to reduce the carbon footprint."

KARIM BEDR | Head of Occupant Services, Security & Infrastructure - Crédit Agricole

The Circular Economy as a Driver of Innovation

At Crédit Agricole d'Île-de-France, this choice is part of a global strategy to reduce emissions, aligned with SBTi* objectives to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. The company's sustainability strategy is a reflection of its culture and values. "Our CSR approach is at the heart of our strategy and permeates all departments," emphasizes Karim Bedr. In real estate, this translates into very intentional decisions at every stage: identifying the opportunity to launch a project, selecting local and ethical suppliers, and managing the carbon footprint related to furniture, construction, energy consumption, and recycling.

Tackling an Industrial and Logistical Challenge Together

At the Sarrebourg factory, each chair undergoes a complete overhaul. All worn or damaged parts are replaced with new ones. This industrial process, made possible by returning the chairs to the factory, ensures a uniform upgrade and identical condition for all chairs sent. Each remanufactured chair comes with a five-year warranty.

Beyond industrial performance, the logistical challenge is significant and requires organizing the collection, refurbishment, and delivery of thousands of chairs without disrupting branch operations. A buffer stock of 200 chairs was created to ensure business continuity. Each week, Steelcase collects used chairs from a group of branches, temporarily replaces them with already remanufactured chairs, then returns them once refurbished.

“We had to juggle transport constraints, production deadlines, raw material supply, and branch requirements,” says Romain Bon, Strategic Account Manager for the project at Steelcase. “We needed to collect between 100 and 150 chairs per day, over just four working days a week, while maintaining a constant flow of remanufactured chairs. This required precise coordination between logistics teams, the Sarrebourg factory, and Crédit Agricole branches.”

The success of this project also stems from the close collaboration between the two companies. For Karim Bedr, meeting such a complex logistical challenge required a trusted partner, capable of anticipating needs and reacting with agility. “As the project progressed, Steelcase teams measured stock discrepancies, adjusted orders... They advised us, listened to our expectations, and adapted throughout the process,” he notes.

This project perfectly illustrates how a company can combine operational efficiency and environmental commitment.

“Making new from old is the spirit of remanufacturing. I recommend it whenever possible,” says Karim Bedr. He reminds us that “favoring reuse over buying new furniture is a concrete way to reduce the carbon footprint.” And it’s proof that the circular economy isn’t a limitation; it’s a catalyst for innovation.