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NuBax and IBM Economic, Environmental and Sustainable Ergonomics

When the time came to refurbish their flagship auditorium at Bedfont Lakes, Heathrow, in the UK, the thoughts of IBM were focused on how to combine comfort with the Group's stance on environmental sustainability. The answer came from the Geneva Motor Show.

Some months earlier, key IBM staff had been at the show and were intrigued by a concept vehicle on show from Lotus Cars. The car was the Eco-Elise with panels made from sustainable hemp fibre instead of glass fibre. The finish was exquisite and the idea of using hemp panels in the auditorium seats was the starting point for the project.

The current IBM sustainability campaign encourages businesses and individuals to re think the way they do things and depart from conventional established methods towards some greener more sustainable solutions; solutions that will only come about with some out of the box thinking. The campaign covers energy, transport and the establishment of smarter supply chain thinking.

The IBM team approached Lotus. "We were happy to get involved with the project and expand our experience with crafting hemp panels, but seats are not our area of expertise" said Paul Sills, Executive Engineer – Materials and Manufacturing Engineering at Lotus. "However, we put a call in to our contacts at NuBax."

NuBax Limited is a Surrey based advanced seating technology company which has worked with Lotus on seats for the Exige and Elise vehicles since 2005. "The ProBax foam technology developed by NuBax made a real improvement to the comfort and feel of the seats in our cars," Sills added, "so we naturally turned to them following the call from IBM".

"We wanted something befitting our sustainability campaign in our theatre but the over riding consideration was comfortable, attractive seats", said Gerry Whelan, Team Leader IBM Forum Centres UK. "The more we learned about the ProBax technology, its increased comfort levels, its ability to reduce muscle fatigue and fidgeting and its ergonomic benefits the more excited we became".

Over the following weeks a seat specification was agreed with an emphasis on sustainable materials. The seat panels would be made of hemp fibre and supplied by Lotus. The Eco-friendly theme would be extended by using upholstery made from specially grown stinging nettles and pure new wool. Even the IBM logo on each seat was to be from recycled glass. NuBax was responsible for co-ordinating the project and, importantly, ensuring a high comfort rating for the seats.

The ProBax technology uses dual density foams to encourage an anatomically correct posture in the seat occupant. This in turn leads to reduced back ache and lowered muscle fatigue. Improved blood and oxygen flow as a result of these postural changes helps aid concentration levels. Above all the technology dramatically increases the comfort experience for the seat user,

NuBax work with manufacturers worldwide to incorporate the foam based technology into existing or new seat designs. European hotel chains such as the Postillion Group in the Netherlands and the Accor / SofiTel / NovoTel chain in the UK and France all carry seats containing the ProBax technology in its establishments. Prestigious venues in the US such as the vast Peabody Convention in Hotel in Orlando Florida have also opted for seats incorporating the patented ProBax design. Later this month, ProBax containing seats make their West End debut in the Fortune and Comedy theatres run by the Ambassador Theatre Group. For the IBM refurbishment project NuBax called in Race Furniture from Gloucestershire to install the 250 seats.



“We were pleased to help co-ordinate this project, a departure from our normal procedures, as it compliments many of the other areas we work in,” said Ian Moore, NuBax CEO. NuBax currently supplies seat technology to the automotive and aviation industries as well as a number of office and healthcare seating companies. Last December NuBax were awarded an Innovation Award from the UK’s Furniture Industry Research Association, (FIRA).

Summing up, Gerry Whelan commented, “At the end of the day we wanted a very comfortable auditorium which did away with some of the more conventional ideas. The end result has been fantastic. Not only do we receive rave reviews about the look of the seats but importantly, when you watch an audience now there is no fidgeting at all so we know they must be comfortable.”

Combining the ProBax foam technology, the design flair of Lotus and the willingness of IBM to look at things from a different angle have truly delivered sustainable comfort at the Bedfont Lakes Auditorium.

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**For further information on NuBax Limited or the ProBax[®] technology please visit:
www.nubax.com or email info@nubax.com**

NuBax Limited: NuBax Limited was formed in 2004 to develop and commercialise technology patented in the late 1990’s. NuBax is a privately owned British company owning all rights to patents and trademarks relating to the technology. In 2010 the Company won an Innovation Award from the UK’s Furniture Industry Research Association (FIRA).

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