

## **Cross Performance at Work (Excerpt)**

**The following is an excerpt from the Herman Miller Research Summary:  
Cross Performance at Work: What New Roles Mean to the Chairs We Sit In (2001).**

“Companies today are faced with adjusting their office environments to the activities and demographics of a changing work force. The people responsible for making these adjustments may soon be speaking in terms of “cross performance.”

“**Cross performance**” is a simple way of referring to the complex flow of movements and duties that a person goes through in the course of a workday. It conjures up images of employees undertaking a variety of tasks as they work, either in their chairs or away from them. In picturing cross performance, one might see someone leaning forward to read a computer screen, sitting upright or leaning back to use the keyboard, relaxing to take a phone call, moving to the side to retrieve a file, getting up to attend a meeting, or going out to develop business. The imagined person doing these multiple functions might be a petite woman from Thailand or a large man from Tulsa; a market researcher, a customer service representative, or a corporate executive. No single image can encompass the multiplicity of tasks nor the diversity of people doing them”

And later in the same article:

“Needing both technological and interpersonal skills, today’s employees are expected to move naturally from computer-intensive activities to people-intensive interactions. But while the number of employees may have been reduced, the forces of attrition require continual replenishment of the work force. And skilled or trainable, cross performers are coming from a contracting pool of applicants, one that contains more women, more Asians and Hispanics, more people at middle and older ages, and more people with disabilities. Given a work force that has more physical dissimilarities and a greater range of body types than ever before, progressive companies no longer expect their employees to fit the work environment. As they have learned from complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), there are overall benefits to be gained from making the environment fit the employee. Adjustable furniture helps someone in a wheelchair as well as someone who is short; a drawer that’s easy to open helps someone with arthritis as well as someone whose arms are full. Although the ADA does not specify standards, equipment, or furniture, those who have embraced the Act are supporting cross performance.”

**For the complete text of this research summary, please CONTACT Thomas Interior Systems.**