PRODUCT REVIEW / ÉVALUATION DE PRODUIT

Product: Steelcase Brody

URL: <https://www.steelcase.com/eu-en/products/lounge-seating/brody/>

Cost: \$3,200 US, Final cost varies depending on quality of fabrics, and other options, chosen.

Purpose and Intended Audience

As libraries are renovated to create more flexible spaces for collaboration and for new services, research shows that productivity can decline in open format workspaces [1]. Often libraries are trying to find a balance in the same room between loud group spaces and quiet individual study. A variety of furniture options have become available for libraries needing to meet these competing interests.

The Steelcase Furniture Company has created the Brody model to fit this dichotomy [2]. The Brody provides users needing more isolated study space with a semblance of privacy and has a design that creates a quieter atmosphere for the user. Brody is created to be used within open spaces both in work or educational settings, and for the unit to have no restrictions on where it can be placed within a space

Product Description

The Steelcase Brody is a lounging chair and desk combination [3]. The Brody is designed with a curved bottom that has a built-in ergonomic seat and a moveable, or loose, foot stool. Attached to the seat is a writing surface with a caddy below, and an adjustable desk. The Brody has numerous colour and fabric quality options to choose from to meet the aesthetic needs of various spaces and institutions. The unit has an optional screen that attaches to the bottom portion, providing more privacy to the user. The Brody can be further customized with a task lamp attached to the writing surface, and with electrical outlets in the caddy. The model is available in three different variations.

The model shown in Figure 1 is the Brody Privacy Lounge with Extension.

Fig. 1

One of the other two models is the Brody Privacy Lounge which does not have the rounded end by the user's feet, called the extension. The third variation is the Work Lounge configuration that does not have the privacy screen or the extension.

Several nice features of the Brody can be seen in Figure 2 below. One is the desk surface that is moveable, and which can be brought forward or back and angled as needed. At the top of the desk is an indentation across the surface which can be utilized for storing cell phones or for propping papers to be read. Beyond the desk, there is an adjacent writing surface. This provides the user with space to write, open a book, or spread out other materials. Attached to the writing surface is the optional, adjustable task lamp that can be turned on or off by a touch button on the back of the light.

Fig. 2

Special Features

The Brody comes with a couple of features that stand out and are shown in Figure 3. First, there is a cubby beside the chair seat that can hold backpacks, briefcases, etc. so that they are out of the user's way and off the floor. Attached to the cubby is a space for the always necessary electrical outlet for charging devices. Last, the footstool which comes with the Brody unit, is moveable by the user, and makes the lounge space customizable for comfort.

Fig. 3

Usability

The ergonomics of the lounge chair, which has back lumbar support, allows users to be comfortable working for an extended time. The seat is wide, without armrests that might constrain a user. With a footstool and/or the extension, users have plenty of room to stretch out in the space, and even especially tall users have found the space more than adequate. The adjustable desk and writing surface allow users to

do a variety of tasks from using laptops, to reading, writing, or simply enjoying a minute of quiet.

The Brody is both attractive and comfortable which can be a rare find in flexible furniture for libraries. Often new furniture is eye-catching, but not something you would sit on during a two-hour group project meeting. Other furniture is comfortable but not striking enough for administration. The most important feature of the Brody is that it is functional. It allows for a wide range of work and study uses due to the multiple work surfaces. The screen and extension provide a nice amount of privacy but does not eliminate light. It is welcoming to a wide variety of body types and learning styles.

Strengths

- (1) Available in a wide range of fabric colours, types of upholstery, and combinations of fabric.
- (2) Meets the needs of a wide variety of body types due to the structure of the seat, and the adjustable desk tray.
- (3) Price range is within reason compared to other similar types of furniture options.
- (4) Can fit within most spaces, even in the middle of a room, without needing a specific layout.
- (5) Visually attractive to users and intuitive to use.

Weaknesses

- (1) No USB plugins in the models that I have examined.
- (2) No wheels for mobility. The Brody Lounge with extension does require at least two people to move it.
- (3) Optional task light is not as sturdy as it should be for long term use.
- (4) If the chair has attached power outlets, it will need to be placed near an electrical outlet.
- (5) Depending on fabric colour selected, stains can be obvious, especially with the footstool.

Conclusion

For health science libraries the Brody has several positive attributes that make it a preferred option among the many furniture units being marketed. Within an atmosphere of long hours and high activity,

the Brody provides users with a space that will be comfortable over an extended period, has a modicum of privacy, and encourages users to focus on the tasks at hand instead of being distracted by the bustle around them.

Contact Information

Steelcase may be contacted directly through their ‘Contact Us’ webpage, <https://www.steelcase.com/eu-en/contact-us/>. You may locate authorized dealers of Steelcase products by searching for dealers by location on this page, <https://tinyurl.com/wy4ya7n>.

References

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2. Steelcase Brody – Overview [Internet]. 2020 Feb [cited 2020 Feb 8]. Available from: <https://www.steelcase.com/eu-en/products/lounge-seating/brody/>
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Statement of Competing Interests

No competing interests declared.

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