

Trope Group Inc.



"We're leveraging technology to create workspaces that allow flexibility and collaboration to increase productivity." —Charlie Nicholls

By Karen Hart

Trope Group is in the business of providing creative workplace solutions for businesses in the North Bay. The company represents some of the most innovative manufacturers of "open plan" and conventional office furniture, and is the only authorized dealer of Herman Miller furniture in the area. Winning for the fourth year in a row, Trope Group specializes in designing and creating efficient workplace solutions for health care, education and corporate offices.

What's the secret to its success? The company's team is comprised of experienced project planners, designers and installers who have a passion for what they do. "Everyone takes pride in their work and is focused on understanding and addressing each of our individual customer's needs," says Principal Charlie Nicholls.

Trope Group (originally known as BB&T) was founded in 1980 by Bettie Trope and two partners. When the partners left the business, Bettie's husband, Al Trope, joined the company and they continued to offer workplace solutions with their staff for 10 years. In 2000, the Tropes sold BB&T and retired to the Virgin Islands, but many of their employees continued on under new ownership. Their retirement, however, was short-lived. Two years later, the new owners went out of business, and Bettie returned to Santa Rosa and assembled a new leadership team with former BB&T employees Christina Pratt, Charlie Nicholls and Candy Patocka. A new business was formed and named "Trope Group." Today, the company is located on Circadian Way in Santa Rosa and has 16 employees. Some of its clients include Agilent, Exchange Bank, Santa Rosa Junior College and Traditional Medicinals.

What's new in the business of creating effective workplaces? Today, businesses are taking more of an interest in custom-designing workplaces that better accommodate employees and the type of work they do—and Trope Group helps create those environments. A dramatic change is coming, says Nicholls, to accommodate innovations in technology and to draw a younger



Christina Pratt, president, and Charlie Nicholls, VP, discuss a project in their newly designed office.
[Duncan Garrett Photography]

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Leading the way to change, Trope Group is currently updating and redesigning its own office environment to better support the way its team works and to showcase for clients how it can help them create their own unique environments.

The trend in workplace design is moving away from cubicles and "cube farms" toward environments that enhance team collaboration, lounge areas and open cafés for more relaxed work environments, as well as more innovative private settings for meetings and video conferencing. What's more, the company offers a variety of "green" furnishings to accommodate businesses that want to create a planet-friendly environment.

What's on the horizon for Trope Group? "We're always pushing the envelope to provide innovative workplaces and continue to be the best office furniture resource in the North Bay for our customers," says Nicholls. ♦

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