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OFFICE

anyway

A MAGAZINE BY WJ OFFICE



**'The creation of a thousand forests is
on one acorn.'**

- Ralph Waldo Emerson



anyway

REFLECTIONS FROM AN OLD PENCIL SALESMAN

See what Neville Chaney has to say about his years in office products in his essay from My Desk.

Page 03

A 3,500-YEAR-OLD FURNITURE RECEIPT

It's true. Researchers have discovered that a clay tablet found in Turkey is actually a 3,500-year-old receipt, on which someone recorded a furniture sale.

Page 07

BACKYARD POULTRY WARNING

Public health officials are investigating multistate outbreaks of Salmonella linked to contact with backyard poultry. Always take steps to stay healthy around your flock.

Page 10

COVER: GRAY SQUIRREL (SCIURUS CAROLINENSIS) IS THE OFFICIAL STATE MAMMAL OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA



from my desk

REFLECTIONS FROM AN OLD PENCIL SALESMAN AFTER 50 YEARS

BY NEVILLE CHANEY

"The one thing that we can count on is change."

I don't know who said that, but for me and my career in business, nothing could be more valid. I entered this industry in 1974 when electric typewriters were still being used and just after IBM introduced the Correcting Selectric single element-based typewriter. Office supplies were ordered either from a catalog or from a door-to-door sales rep. No one had ever heard of "ergonomic furniture" and most of the copiers in businesses used electrostatic (slick) paper. Only the largest businesses had a computer, and they were large, mainframe computers that were leased (not owned) from IBM. The Internet was not even a dream yet.

Continued on next page

from my desk

Continued from previous page

Great customer service was the buzzword. However, as big box stores opened in the mid to late 80s, the need for great customer service was certainly challenged. The proof was the packed parking lot of these local big box facilities.

WJ Office began with a 900-square-foot building on a back street in West Jefferson beside the cattle market. Three employees (including me) worked hard to keep up the pace and keep business coming in the door. Our main competition was mail order and a local company (Carolina Business Machines) that was far larger than most folks realized. They were able to buy product directly from the manufacturer at far better prices than we could. We decided to compete in the areas where we could and forgo the \$1 per dozen ball point pens that they were offering.

Moving the business to Boone gave us an opportunity to grow. Most of our commercial business was coming from Boone anyway. Our 1,100 square feet doubled to 2,200. Slowly we expanded our store footprint to extend up Depot Street all the way up to King Street (underground). When personal computers hit the market, we sold computer furniture. As time went on we responded to the requests of the customers. I added a delivery person, a purchasing person, and more retail clerks. We continued to focus, however, on commercial business rather than the consumer side of the business.

After more than 20 years at that location, we had outgrown the Depot Street store

Brendle's, a large discount retail chain, closed and we were able to secure 12,000 square feet in the Greenway Business Park. Retail business spiked. Folks could park in front of the store and we enjoyed brisk retail traffic with a 3,000 square foot space. We expanded into computers and copiers. Furniture also began to grow into a larger percentage of our sales.

Then, it happened – the dreaded big box invasion! Walmart and Staples opened in town within six months of each other. Promotions galore. Lots of the folks who promised loyalty while the Staples and Walmart buildings were going up, succumbed to the lure of those introductory prices. 80% of that walk-in traffic walked in somewhere else. That's interesting, especially when you realize that office products make up less than 1% of the expenses of most businesses. Thankfully, we had several very loyal customers and we never lost sight of the fact that we were a COMMERCIAL office supplier. Business to business was our focus from Day One.

After several years at the Greenway location, we found that we needed more warehouse space. We rented trailers to store furniture that was waiting to be installed. Our business had changed. Furniture was continuing to grow and required more space. In 2005 we moved into our present corporate headquarters just off Deerfield Road about two miles outside of Boone. Now we had almost 16,000 square feet and 10,000 of it was warehouse space that was badly needed.

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from my desk

Continued from previous page

In the late 80s we joined a national buying group for office products and furniture that now combined our purchases with those from more than 500 other office products dealers (which today is over 800 dealers). Our buying power continued to grow. We were now in a much better position to compete with the big box stores as folks were realizing the true cost of driving to the store to pick up goods and became frustrated with communicating via an 800 number and an endless phone tree to get questions answered.

Each area of our business continued to grow. WJ Office became a destination for vendors who were looking for a strong partner to represent their product line. We added copiers in 1992. We added janitorial supplies in 2008. We added food service supplies for the hospitality industry in 2017 and in 2021 we joined a buying group for janitorial supply dealers.

Since moving into our new facility in 2005, we have more than tripled our business despite Staples' presence in town. We have survived and, in many ways, we have thrived!

As I look back, I see many former competitors that are no longer here. Carolina Business Machines, our earliest nemesis, is no longer in business. Many of the contract stationers of the 80s, 90s and 2000s are gone including Boise Cascade, Corporate Express, US Office Products, and several others. Some were acquired. Some didn't adapt to change. Office Depot and Office Max couldn't make it on their own. They merged and it appears that they may not be able to survive together.

The office products superstores have significant overhead with retail facilities, and they have had trouble adapting to the internet economy. It's tough. The local Staples store decided to shrink their store by 50% a few years ago. The Staples stores in Lenoir and North Wilkesboro are closed. Staples was acquired by a venture capital company (Sycamore Partners).

Customer loyalty for all businesses is extremely sketchy. But in an era when our competition is shrinking, WJ is expanding its footprint into new geography and into new industries.

Office furniture has continued to grow. With the relocation of my son (Nate) several years ago, WJ Office now has a sales office and representation in Winston-Salem and the triad. We have been steadily developing a whole new commercial following with many of the leading design and architect firms in the area partnering with us. WJ Office has been counted on to provide them with budget numbers, logistics and products for some of the largest firms in the area. Hard to believe? Go to the furniture portfolio of our website to see some of the installations we've done. We have also expanded our list of secondary and higher education clients. Whether it's a school district or a higher education institution, WJ Office helps them by providing custom tailored options that meet their budget and style.

Change. Sometimes it's painful. Sometimes it's good. During the 50 years I've been in this business I have seen a lot. WJ Office has become the most COMPLETE office supplier in North Carolina. I am excited for the next chapter. We're going to embrace change and see where it takes us. We'd love to have you along for the ride.

ENJOY THE WHITE GLOVE EXPERIENCE OF THE WJ WAY



ENJOY THE WHITE GLOVE EXPERIENCE OF THE WJ WAY! SEE WHY OVER 95% OF OUR COPIER AND MANAGED PRINT CLIENTS CONTINUE TO LEASE OR PURCHASE THEIR OFFICE EQUIPMENT FROM WJ OFFICE. WITH TOP PRODUCT LINES (RICOH, HP, EPSON, AND BROTHER), EXPERIENCED SERVICE TECHNICIANS AND SALES REPS, AND FAST

RESPONSE TIMES FOR SERVICE CALLS; THE WHITE GLOVE EXPERIENCE OF THE WJ WAY PUTS US FAR AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION. 47 YEARS OF REFINING PROCESSES, CREATING A STRONG WORKPLACE CULTURE, AND HIRING TEAMMATES WHO CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER AND YOU - THAT'S WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT - DELIGHTED REPEAT CLIENTS!

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NOW THAT'S AN OLD RECEIPT

Researchers Decipher Cuneiform Tablet and Discover It's a Furniture Receipt



The tablet's list of furniture was written in the extinct language of Akkadian, one of the oldest known Semitic languages, reports Live Science's Kristel Tjandra. It was spoken from the third millennium B.C.E. until the first century C.E., and scholars deciphered it in the 19th century. Akkadian was written in cuneiform, a system invented by the Sumerians that involves engraving pictograms and symbols into clay with a reed stylus.

Akkadian's specific script contained 600 signs; some of the signs stood for entire words, some for single syllables.

Cuneiform is the world's oldest known form of writing. It was characterized by distinct, often wedge-shaped gouges cut into moist clay. Many surviving examples of the practice are—like the recently found tablet—administrative records of sale.

continued on next page 07

an old receipt

Continued from previous page

Another slightly newer cuneiform tablet in the Met's collection, dating to about 2039 B.C.E., documents the selling of some sheep, ewes and goats.

Researchers found the tablet in Reyhanli's Alalakh archaeological site, which was a flourishing city in the second millennium B.C.E.—the Bronze Age—as *Newsweek's* Aristos Georgiou writes. Also known as Tell Atchana, Alalakh was the capital city of the Kingdom of

Mukish and the region's largest settlement, occupied by the Amorite people from western Mesopotamia, per Live Science.

As Ersoy writes in a translated post on X, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism is working meticulously to preserve Anatolia's rich heritage for future generations.

This article by Sonja Anderson was originally published in Smithsonian Magazine.



FREE INFO

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YOUR HEALTH



Backyard Chickens, Salmonella & Hand Washing

Earlier this summer, there was a multistate outbreak of Salmonella linked to contact with backyard poultry.

With the discovery of this outbreak, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) renewed its caution to poultry owners to wash their hands immediately after touching chickens, their eggs or anything in the chicken coop area.

Hand washing is the recommended precaution, but if soap and water aren't readily available, the next option is to use hand sanitizer.

Additionally, the CDC recommends that owners don't snuggle or kiss their chickens or eat or drink around them.

In regards to eggs, it is recommended they are collected often to avoid breakage. Don't wash eggs, as cold water can pull germs into the egg. Instead, rub off dirt with a brush, cloth or fine sandpaper. Cracked eggs should always be thrown away.

Refrigerate eggs to keep them fresh and be sure to cook them thoroughly...no runny whites or yolk.

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FOR MORE INFO CLICK HERE, OR CONTACT SAM HOLMES AT WJ OFFICE.

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ITEM	DESCRIPTION	PRICE/BOX OF 24
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ALPKCUPKENYADARK	Rich, smoky flavor with a hint of white wine and bitterness.	\$12.99
ALPKCUPCOSTAMED	Jasmine, blueberry, fermented mango w/ a good body.	\$12.99
ALPKCUPHAZELNUT	Medium roasted with hazelnut accents.	\$11.99
ALPKCUPBREAKFAST	Rich flavor w/ a deep, wine-like acidity	\$11.99
ALPKCUPCOLOMBIAN	Chocolate, ripe berries, black tea, delightful herbs & spice	\$11.99
ALPKCUPDARKESTAT	Medium-bodied w/ a rich taste & citrus-like acidity	\$11.99
ALPKCUPDONUT	Sweet strawberry & caramel notes, smoky smooth & not bitter	\$11.99
ALPKCUPFRENCH	Very sweet, blueberries & strawberries slightly fermented w/ caramel	\$11.99
ALPKCUPJAMAICAN	Delightful blend of caramel, kabbaa & hazelnut flavors	\$12.79
ALPKCUPKONA	Earthy & layered w/ notes of fresh herbs & spice flavors	\$12.79
ALPKCUPSALTEDCAR	Delightful blend of caramel, kabbaa & hazelnut flavors	\$13.37
ALPKCUPSCREAMING	Toffee, cocoa, butter & vanilla w/ a mellow peachiness	\$12.99
ALPKCUPVANILLA	Caramel w/ rich, buttery smooth notes, lightly sprinkled w/ sea salt	\$12.99
	Smooth, balanced acidity w/ a fruity note to the finish	\$12.99
	100% Arabica beans flavored w/ Madagascar vanilla	\$12.99

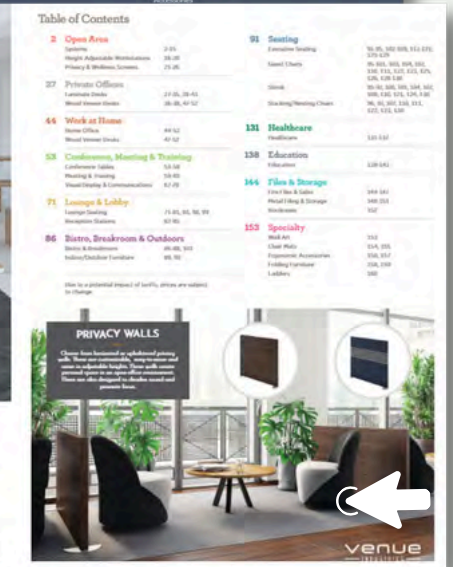
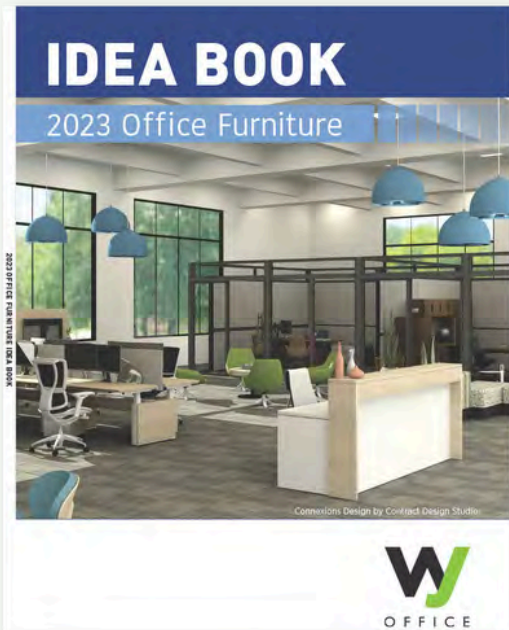
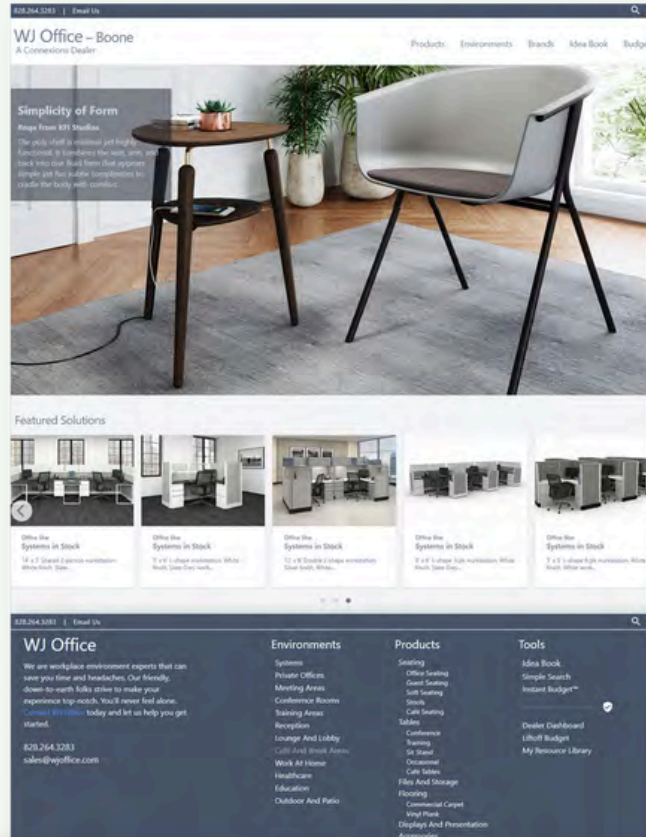
FREE KEURIG BREWER OFFER
Every order for \$60 worth of items on this flyer earns an entry to win this Keurig K-Slim brewer. Purchase must be done between Sept 1, 2024 - Sept 30, 2024 to qualify.

your space

WJ OFFERS A NEW WAY TO VISUALIZE AND FURNISH YOUR WORKSPACE

Shopping around for furniture can be a time-consuming task when you have so many things to do and even less time than ever before. It's also a little difficult to see what's available in style, aesthetics and price without walking around showrooms or flipping through catalogs during your lunch break.

We've changed that with a whole new connection that you can make online, anytime. Just visit our **WJ Connexions** website where you may view the many options available to you depending on your environment or budget. The site offers some amazing tools including a digital Idea Book and Instant Budget builder that can help you narrow your search down based on parameters you set.



FIND YOUR CONNEXION AT WJOFFICE.COM/MID-MARKET-FURNITURE

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our portfolio

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your printing

A MINUTE OR TWO ON MANAGED PRINT
WITH NEVILLE CHANEY

