



GRANT GIBSON ON THE MOVYIS3 CHAIR

Distinctive without being too loud, Interstuhl's new task chair has all the elements you'd expect from a well-made mid-market product. But does it really have the power to banish office hierarchies, as it claims?

In the past 20 years only a handful of chairs can be said to have genuinely shifted the paradigm. Herman Miller's Aeron, created by Don Chadwick and Bill Stumpf and launched in 1994, is most definitely one and, more arguably, Chair One, designed by Konstantin Grcic for Magis in 2004 is another. As with any risk-taking design they both have the power to polarise opinion. I remember having a heated conversation with a world-renowned designer who fervently believed Aeron was a piece of military fetishism. Likewise, a judging panel I was chairing one year at 100% Design almost ended in complete deadlock when the merits of Grcic's piece were debated. We were only saved by the fact that it was still in prototype form and therefore ineligible for a prize.

Echoes of both can be found in the chair I'm currently sitting in, the bizarrely titled MOVYis3 by German manufacturer Interstuhl. The Aeron influence, of course, isn't hard to detect – and the vast majority of workplace chairs now feature a variation on the mesh Miller pioneered. But what separates this Andreas Krob and Joachim Brüske design from the soup of other competently made, functional, affordable products, is its angular, ever-so-slightly awkward lines – particularly notable in its cantilever incarnation – that undoubtedly carries a hint of Grcic's form making.

Launched earlier this year, the MOVYis3 contains all the benefits we've come to expect from our office chair. Tension, height and the armrests are all adjustable; the seat pan slides in and out; and the backrest can be locked. All of which helps ensure a huge variety of body types can find their optimum seating position. The various levers, knobs and buttons are all visually unobtrusive and intuitive enough to use, although I found the arm

adjustment mechanisms a little stiff, while the synchronous movement provides a pleasant floating sensation.

The version I was given to test came with a lime-green fabric seat, a white frame and mesh back, and black castors on its five-star base, but other options are available too, including one with an upholstered back. The company has also come up with a conference edition and a visitor chair available in three different bases, including that cantilevered stacking version. Interstuhl envisions MOVYis3 as a mid-market, "democratic" product suitable for the office junior and managing director alike, describing it with a flourish in its marketing spiel as "an end to class barriers". Hyperbole aside, the list price for the task chair is £460, which seems reasonable enough.

Another German designer, Dieter Rams, once famously opined that "a good product should be like a good English butler. They're there for you when you need them, but in the background at all other times." In our age of supposedly flattened workplace hierarchies (the very same ones that MOVYis3 has been specifically created to cater for) comparing a product to a servant might not be politically correct, but Rams' sentiment is still pertinent. With an important deadline looming, the task chair I was sitting on – once I'd discovered how to adjust it properly – was the last thing on my mind. Which is exactly as it should be. Comfortable, well made, distinctive and yet not too loud, it might not be a game-changer, but the MOVYis3 remains a pretty good product.

ILLUSTRATION BY EDGAR HOFFMANN



Backrest Comes in a mesh or upholstered version

Synchronous mechanism Provides a comfortable "floating" sensation

Base Hard or soft castors available, depending on floor surface, or a fixed glide base

Shell Available in black or white polypropylene

