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## Advertorial: Fellowes Brands

Editorial, 03 July 2018

*A real entrepreneurial drive remains at the heart of Fellowes as it continues to evolve and innovate to meet the demands of today's customers.*



Starting with the humble Bankers Box in 1917, then evolving into the shredder category and now also comprising a wide range of wellness products, Fellowes Brands is a company that is defying the challenges in our industry and facing them head-on. Fourth generation CEO John Fellowes speaks to OPI's Heike Dieckmann about what makes this ever-evolving vendor tick.

**OPI: You're in your 101<sup>st</sup> year now – that's a long time in business. Please describe Fellowes as a company.**

**John Fellowes:** Fellowes fosters a culture which embraces the strong principles and values that were established by my great-grandfather in 1917, but is also evolving to ensure that we are offering relevant solutions to those we serve.

Over the past five years, we have gone through an accelerated transformation in view of the significant impact of how technology and social trends have reshaped the professional society and behaviour.

We have taken a fresh look at our organisation, our products, our brand and many of our approaches and processes – making meaningful adjustments where it has made sense.

Today, we are experiencing building momentum from many of these changes. Fellowes is both growing and investing in its future, and the energy that this has created inside and outside of our organisation has been palpable.

**OPI: We talked about your 'expansive initiatives' in the past. Which of these have grown into fully-fledged categories for you?**

**JF:** Our expansion initiatives continue to focus on workplace well-being. Fellowes has always strived to help professionals obtain the optimal state of mind through the benefits of organisation, productivity and peace of mind. As we move forward, we are extending this commitment to helping professionals with their state of physical health and well-being in the workplace.

Our goal is to transform the primary workspace experience and the perception of it being 'the enemy' to a place that invigorates and embraces motion. Many people have heard that "sitting is the new smoking". Based on tangible evidence, eliminating stagnancy in our working day helps promote a positive state of body and mind.

In 2017, we started to launch our wellness strategy, debuting the Lotus Sit-Stand Workstation Series. We also acquired ergonomics operator ESI, which represents a new capability to serve the contract furniture channel in the US. Later this year we will be rolling out new and distinctive sit-stand desks and an active seating chair. This will debut our new proprietary Omni-Kinetic Suspension Technology – an innovation that we have been working on for almost five years.

**OPI: How does Fellowes manage to remain innovative at a time when traditional office products are in decline and there are so many challenges to contend with in the industry?**

**JF:** We recognise that innovation and product solutions are at the heart of our value proposition to the marketplace. As such, this area of our business is one of our most important investment zones.

We have also made meaningful changes to our organisation over the past 4-5 years which have brought new capabilities and experience to our product development team. For example, our in-house design centre of excellence is comprised of various disciplines from research and design to engineering, and unifies key factors in the product development process. As a result, we are nimbler to develop new-to-world innovation that delivers on consumer needs.

**OPI: Talking of consumer needs, how are you responding to the trends that affect your target audience – which presumably now is wider and more comprehensive than ever? And what does that mean for your route to market and your marketing initiatives?**

**JF:** We're passionate about designing products that are inspired by our target audience's desire to feel and work better. We're offering a healthier way to work – which brings movement, activity and alertness into their day.

From a marketing perspective, as consumers increasingly turn to digital means and learn about well-being, we are engaging them in a conversation – whether that's on social media or through other digital channels. We strive to provide valuable content and information for consumers seeking to learn about holistic workplace well-being.

We're also excited to have recently launched our largest single advertising campaign in the US. It encompasses broadcast, outdoor and digital, and communicates our core values as a family business.

**OPI: Fellowes is perennially in lists of 'best companies to work for'. Tell me a bit about the culture at Fellowes.**

**JF:** Our company purpose is to help people be their best. This comes to life in our product solutions, but also through our commitment to our people and culture.

We understand the role of the workplace, enabling productivity as well as creating a sense of purpose. As such, we recently invested in the renovation of our Itasca, Illinois, headquarters. The new environment has a modern feel and a more open format to enable collaboration. We have also paid close attention to all of our peoples' new workspaces, equipping them with furniture and tools that promote wellness.

**OPI: What's next for Fellowes?**

**JF:** Well, we have covered all the major business themes of our future I believe. What I would like to add is that we continue to bring greater purpose to our organisation through prioritising our GIVE programme.

This autumn, we will sponsor our third annual GIVE impact trip to one of Fellowes' supported charities working against global poverty. This year's trip is to Maria's House of Hope in China which cares for orphan children who are suffering from life-threatening illnesses.

Last year, Fellowes outfitted Maria's facilities with 70 commercial air purifiers and the impact on the recovering children has been tangible. This year ten Fellowes employees from around the world will visit this project and offer their services for a week to support this important cause.

*Tags:* John Fellowes, Fellowes

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