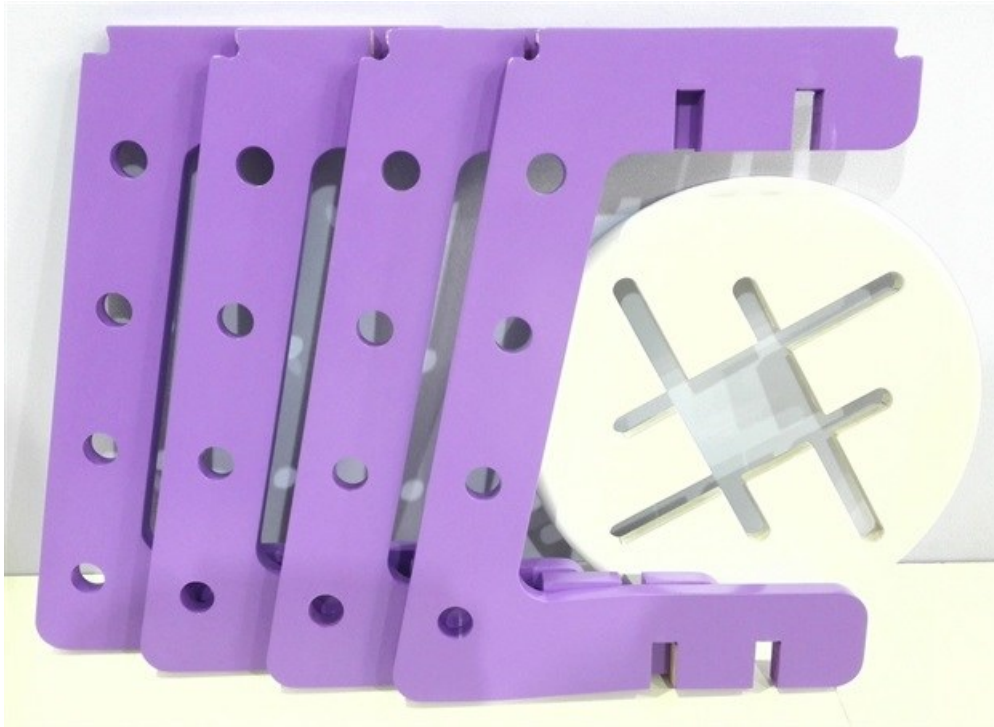


# Sets Drapes Screens has nothing to lose but waste, making furniture from offcuts

Many sets are destroyed and thrown away as soon as an event is over. Gearhouse Group's Sets Drapes Screens (SDS), in looking to address this unsustainable reality within the live events industry, has been active in finding ways to recycle the waste associated with set manufacture.



SDS furniture designs

The SDS branches have initiated recycling programmes in the immediate vicinity of each of the workshops and the scrapped set pieces are donated at designated drop off points for use by the community who use the materials in their own homes. Recently the Cape Town branch of SDS has taken things a step further.

According to Thomas Wood, draughtsman at SDS's Cape Town facility in Bellville, the offcuts he saw in the factory kept nagging at his conscience and he couldn't help but feel that the solution could be taken to another level. "While walking in the factory, I would constantly see off-cuts of board being thrown into the skip. It is impossible to keep all the off-cuts as the pile builds up so quickly that it takes over the much-needed manufacturing space. I decided to come up with a new idea to proactively make use of the off-cuts. After a brainstorming session with branch manager Burger Smith, I created a 3D drawing, some CNC layouts and the first chair "# tag" came into being. The natural progression was, of course, 'why not create a table as well?' Once I had come up with a plan, I made the stool and table components interchangeable using a flat pack design."

## Stools and tables

At the moment, SDS is moving forward with the idea of creating stools and tables using predominantly 16mm MDF offcuts but the longer-term aim for Wood is to come up with a set of five unique designs. "We also have a lot of thinner 9mm and 6mm offcuts and I am thinking about moving into designing some modular lighting fixtures, with a similar look and feel."

The first orders are in production and are attracting a lot of attention. "The materials are off-cuts so we are able to keep the pricing low. That won't change unless clients need a large volume order which necessitates the purchase of specific



Thomas Wood, draughtsman at SDS Cape Town, designs furniture

materials. These pieces are creative and different and are being taken up by clients for both offices and exhibition stands but at the moment the uptake by our own staff has been phenomenal, we can't make them fast enough," he laughs.

For the moment, the SDS offcuts are assuming a life of their own but they may well become a part of the SDS offering nationwide. "This method of cutting down on waste will most likely become part of the SDS ethos," adds Wood. "Being the creative people we are, this could lead to other opportunities. Who knows where it will end up? As Edwin Land says, 'An essential aspect of creativity is not being afraid to fail.' And we have nothing to lose but waste."

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