



HAWORTH®

GROUNDBREAKING INTERDISCIPLINARY DESIGN
WORK IMPROVES PRODUCTIVITY AT WORK

Sleeping on the job? Surely no employer would approve. Yet numerous scientific studies have actually highlighted the beneficial effects of a short nap at the office, especially in the early afternoon when it can combat fatigue, reduce stress and enhance cognitive performance. But how can such a short nap be practically organised? A young French designer is delivering some answers with her groundbreaking interdisciplinary work.

Marie-Virginie Berbet (32) is a most unusual designer. She first studied neuro-pharmacology and even completed the first year of a PhD in this field before switching tracks and studying design at ENSCI, a famous French college. While still a student, she started employing her neuroscience know-how in her design work. Her diploma design project, Analeptic (from the Greek word for restorative), involved designing two devices that would help create optimal physiological conditions for recuperation at the workplace.

Narco is a cocoon-like cell designed to make short but effective naps possible. The hammock-style interior consists of a series of strips that provide audio-visual insulation from the occupant's surroundings. Narco detects the exact moment when the occupant falls asleep and ten minutes later (the ideal length of a restorative nap), starts emitting a soft but stimulating light. Cyclo is a desk blotter with behavioural and physiological sensors and a rotating light with interdependent strips that switch on and off in sequence. The

light intensity and the speed of switching and rotation vary in line with the user's activity levels. If the user is extremely active, the light rotates quickly and then slows down to induce relaxation. If the user is feeling tired, the light stops turning but the intensity of the light increases to arouse the user.

These design studies were turned into practical workplace devices in a pioneering project Marie-Virginie Berbet undertook for France Telekom. Inspired by Narco and Cyclo, Marie-Virginie proposed a number of devices for resting and recuperating at work and France Telekom selected the two most innovative for its project. As no such products existed on the market, Marie-Virginie turned to Haworth France to build the prototypes because she knew of the company's expertise in creative innovative products:

- The **CALM CHAIR**, a module consisting of a chair and a light, helps the user relax through a specifically configured dynamic light.
- The **CALM SPACE** is a customised micro nap and rest space that is ideal for short, recuperative naps at the workplace.

What Marie-Virginie Berbet calls the "realistic versions of the design work I did before" have now reached the stage of close collaboration with Haworth to determine the viability of series production of these devices. And that is most certainly good news for everybody who feels the need for a recuperative nap at work!