



VENEER QUALITY STANDARDS

Wood veneer is gaining popularity as a rich and elegant surface for office furniture, especially as more organizations seek a traditional, upscale element for their interiors. It's more important than ever to understand veneer issues and become acquainted with its qualities and nuances.

A Natural Product

Many people expect veneer to be uniform in appearance, like laminate. But keep in mind that wood is a natural product. No two trees are identical. Natural characteristics in individual pieces should not be considered defects; there are color and grain variations from log to log, and even within a log. It's those features that contribute to a veneer's unique beauty and an Interior's unique character.

While Herman Miller and Geiger® strive for a consistent appearance among all pieces used in the same office or even throughout a facility, there will be some natural inconsistencies, especially in very large orders. Also, new orders for a space that already has veneer will come from different logs, so there will be natural variation.

Hardness

Veneer does not have the capability of laminates to withstand the rigors of heavy use. However, the veneers offered by Herman Miller do meet strict testing standards for resistance to wear, light, stains, water, and pressure. (For details, refer to the "Finishes Quality Standards" brochure or the link in the "Quality Standards" section of Colors/Materials/Finishes on HermanMiller.com.)

Still, there is one everyday circumstance that can cause concern. When people do paperwork on a veneer surface, extreme pen pressure can cause "denting." Herman Miller and Geiger veneers are designed not to dent under normal writing force, but denting under an especially heavy hand can't be prevented.

So take some common-sense precautions. Use desk pads or blotters in high-traffic areas, like banking and loan offices where paperwork is signed. And get in the habit of placing something under paperwork to absorb writing pressure, such as desk pads or blotters.

Aging and Light Exposure

Wood ages naturally over time. It's always changing because it is always exposed to environmental factors that affect it, such as light.

Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun or artificial sources causes different veneers to react in different ways. Natural veneers and veneers with light stains tend to become darker. Veneers with dark stains tend to become lighter. Natural maple turns yellower over time. Natural cherry ages more dramatically than any other; when it is new, the color is very light, and over time it gains a beautiful gold patina.

Continued exposure to direct sunlight causes veneer to age more dramatically. That should be kept in mind when planning where veneer surfaces will be used. In general, veneer surfaces should not be in direct sunlight.

Metamerism

Metamerism is an effect produced by wood where two similar pieces of veneer look very different based on viewing angle and direction, lighting, grain pattern, and texture.

This phenomenon is also called "flip" because a surface may appear light as you look at it from one angle, but if you move to the opposite angle it reverses and turns dark.

Metamerism is especially apparent when veneer grains meet at 90-degree angles. It may appear that the surfaces don't match, with one surface seemingly darker than the other. So it's important to understand the "flip" effect to relieve any concern.