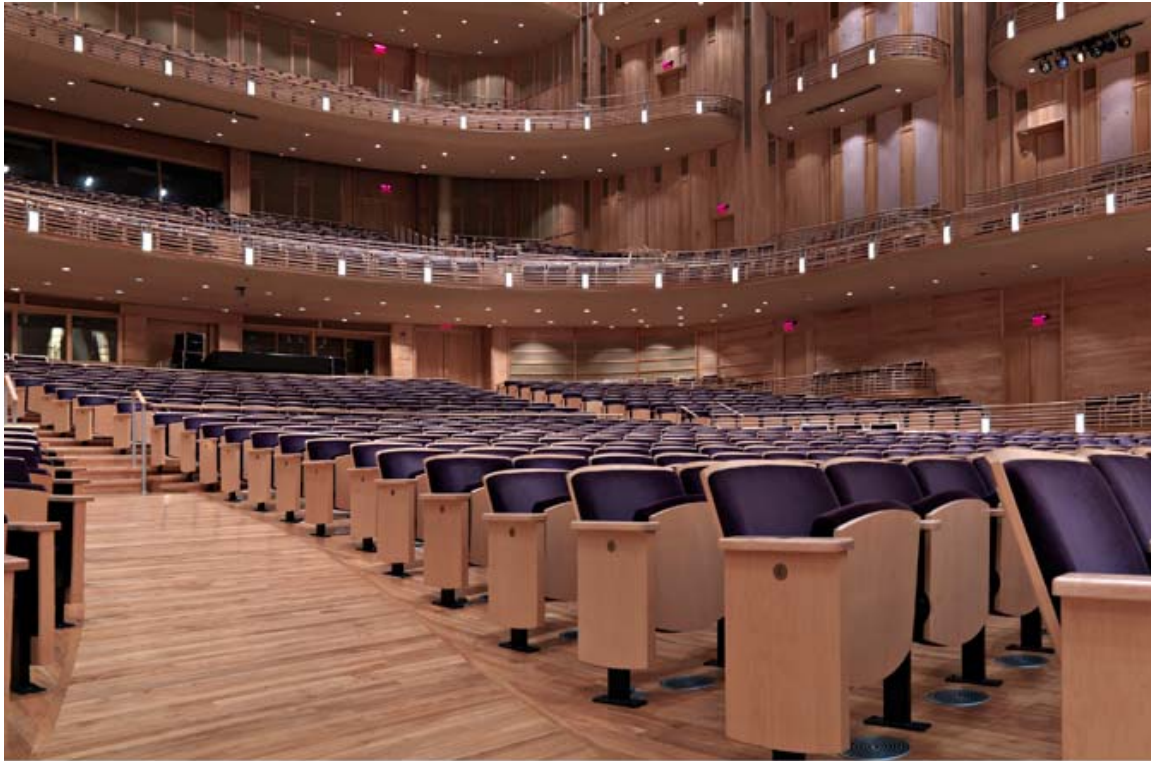


CASE STUDY – INTERIOR MILLWORK



THE MUSIC CENTER AT STRATHMORE BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

MODEL: 27.17.17 ALLEGRO

© Irwin Seating Company

Irwin Seating Company headquartered in Grand Rapids, MI is the world's leading manufacturer of public seating products. This 3rd generation family owned business is over 100 years old and has earned a reputation for producing quality seating and servicing industries such as education, worship, movie theatre, stadium, and performing art centers to name a few.

Product and Environmental challenges.....

Irwin Seating Company wanted to make a change to eliminate potentially harmful chemicals from their wood finishes. However, they found it difficult to find “greener” water based materials that matched the high grade finish quality that their customers required. For example, many of the dyes used in their stains contained chromium. When spraying these stains, the filters that trapped the excess chromium overspray were required to be disposed of in hazardous containers and sent to a special dumping site. This was a costly process, and was in direct conflict with Irwin's Environmental Policies.

Timing.....

Becker Acroma became involved with Irwin Seating Company initially with a cold call just as they were grappling with product performance using new more environmentally safe materials relating to their whole family of wood finished products. The Becker Acroma representative thoroughly assessed the operation and recommended a complete line of waterborne finishes to test.

With the support of the Becker Acroma service and technical team, Irwin and Becker's began testing finishing systems that provided better flow which drew a highlight to the wood. Once the topcoats were in place and working well, a waterborne stain program was finalized and approved. Becker's waterborne stain system and colorant line from pigments that did not contain chromium and displayed a brilliant grain definition unlike any other product Irwin Seating had tested in the past. The Becker products were solving quality and environmental issues and giving Irwin Seating Co. the market desired look to meet customer requests. Based on these results, Irwin switched their stains and top coat to the Becker Acroma brand.

Support through the conversion.....

In addition to the Becker Acroma products providing solutions to Irwin Seating Company's operation, one of the driving forces that helped the team at Irwin to make the switch was Becker Acroma's support. Irwin was impressed with the Becker Acroma Team's overall finishing knowledge.

The Becker Acroma field Sales Representatives provided product support from dealing with the conversion issues, to application recommendation and operation process standards to inventory controls. Irwin's management indicated that Becker's patience to work with the production group through the transition was a tremendous help because their group had more than finishing matters to oversee within their operations.

Developing a partnership.....

Irwin Seating Company also had the opportunity to visit and experience first hand Becker Acroma's manufacturing, technical and full scale application facility in Brantford Ontario. This resulted in a strong relationship with the Becker Acroma technical and applications support team, easing the minds of Irwin's management group that Becker Acroma was capable of handling their entire finishing requirements and technical issues today, and in the future.

Additional recommendations and support.....

Becker Acroma's field sales and service representative worked closely with Irwin Seating Company's finishing team and management to evaluate the finishing process of their operation and made recommendations to standardize and upgrade the finishing application equipment. The purpose was to increase productivity and reduce overall finishing costs.

As a result these upgrades have led to a more productive well educated group of finishers who work with fewer finishing issues on a daily basis.

Success for Irwin and Becker Acroma.....

Irwin Seating Company's management acknowledges how hard it was for them to convert because finishing is just one part of their entire operation. Irwin acknowledges because of the time and patience the Becker Acroma team took to work through it all with their group, a great partnership has emerged and both parties are reaping the successful benefits.

Acknowledgements.....

Becker Acroma would like to thank the management at Irwin Seating Company for sharing this successful story and special thanks to all the folks at Irwin who work in partnership with the Becker Acroma team!