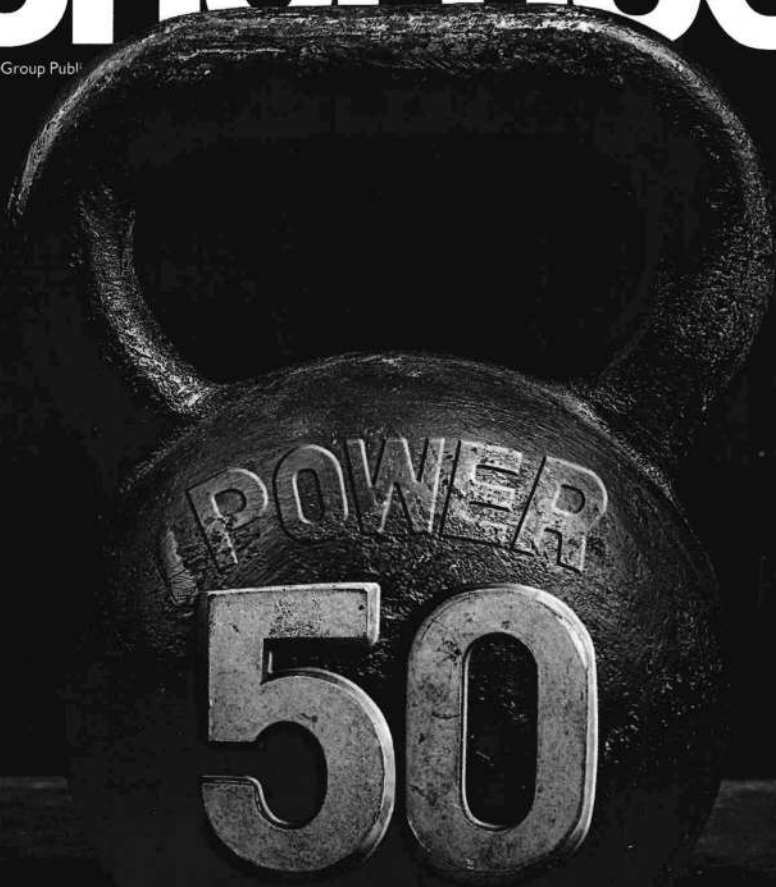


COMMERCIAL

Interior design

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THE HEAVYWEIGHTS

Who made it on to our power lists for designers,
suppliers, fit-out firms & young talent?

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The future of UAE's interior design industry is safe, sustainable and tech-driven

By Sherif Nagy, general manager, The FITOUT



Across the GCC, UAE is leading the interior design market with a total share of about 40 per cent. This is driven by innovative architecture and interior design projects, as well as sustainability in the market. Back in 2019, Dubai announced its largest budget, which includes the construction of megaprojects. There is also a notable increase in commercial and affordable housing projects, particularly in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, as a part of the initiatives to reduce the gap between upper and lower-income people and to accommodate the booming population. This growth has further bolstered the demand for interior

design projects. These market demands, the need to ensure the safety of building occupants, along with sustainability and innovations bring a wave of change that reshapes the UAE interior design industry.

Technology-driven

In order to cater to the growing market, the industry has been employing digital tools, software, and other smart solutions to reduce operational costs and enhance process flow in designing. There is increasing utilisation of Building Information Modelling (BIM) software to enhance function, proper documentation and coordination with interior designers

and mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP).

The pandemic also played a big factor in this increasing reliance on technology in buildings and workspaces. Architects and designers have become more aware of their responsibility in ensuring the safety of occupants. With this in mind, fit-out spaces are now being designed and retrofitted to integrate the concept of smart buildings.

A smart building utilises technology for sustainable, safe and efficient occupancy, and fit-out designers are adopting the same. Smart building technologies such as touchless sensors and automatic switches for heating, lighting and air conditioning systems are attracting more employers to avoid contact surfaces and ensure the safety of their staff. Integrating smart unified communications technology in the workspace also facilitates efficient communication, especially in this new work setup, where videoconferencing has become a prerequisite.

There is also the rise of remote monitoring 3D visualization and augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR). Fit-out designs will be more automated and data-driven to enhance efficiency, improve operations while ensuring safe and secure commercial and workspaces.

Sustainability is a key player

The UAE construction and interior design industries are coming to the frontline to help address the challenges brought about by climate change and global warming. With more businesses and consumers

About the author



SHERIF NAGY

With more than 20 years of international experience in building and optimising organizational processes and infrastructure, Sherif Nagy leads the management of The FITOUT LLC as general manager of the Dubai-based interior solutions company. Nagy earned undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in marketing from the University of Nottingham, UK.

shifting to sustainable practices, we are also seeing increased adoption of sustainable fit-out from the use of natural and biodegradable materials, energy-saving methods, and solutions to reduce carbon footprint, and creating fit-out installations from recycled materials.

Biophilic or integrating natural elements in a fit-out continues to be a leading trend. Aside from using eco-friendly materials, more commercial and office spaces are leaning towards designs that have a touch of nature, open ventilation, natural lighting, earthy tones and more. This concept seeks to give occupants a sense of connection with Mother Nature.

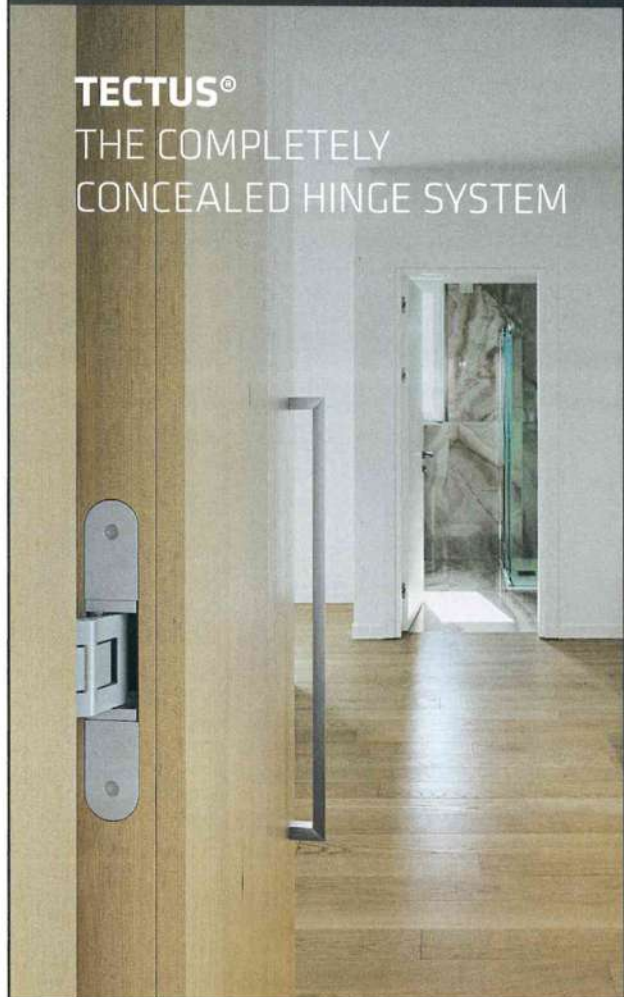
Employees' safety is a top priority

As the working community adapts to the post-pandemic world, we are witnessing the creation of exclusive unified communication zones. More businesses are prioritising the wellbeing and safety of their employees through enhanced technology infrastructure and an improved work environment. Safety measures such as built-in social distancing, flow management, handwashing stations, and hand sanitiser points, are being considered in retrofitting and designing spaces.

As we go back to normal or adapt to a 'new normal,' businesses will further invest in commercial and workspaces that are safe, sustainable, and innovative. The future of interior design will see a blend of eco-friendly, high on functionality, and aesthetically pleasing designs because sustainability and technology are here to stay.

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