

What is Vitsoe?

50 years and counting...

For fifty years Vitsoe has created and evolved a modular shelving system designed by Dieter Rams that allows its customers to live intelligently and responsibly by buying less, that will last longer.

Vitsoe's ethos: live better, with less, that lasts longer

Since the company began in 1959 Vitsoe has developed a clear sense of purpose – commitment, trust, integrity and longevity have always been at its heart. The inordinate power of good design is prevalent in every aspect of the business: generating thoughtful, responsible and intelligent design for the company, its customers and those who share a profound interest in a sustainable future. Rooted in these values, Vitsoe's dedicated intent is to avoid built-in obsolescence by making furniture that is discreet, adaptable, timeless and of the highest design integrity.

Vitsoe encourages us to start by buying less furniture so that it can be added to, rearranged and repaired when needed, thereby encouraging continual reuse. The result of a passionate adherence to this ethos has been the evolution of a company that is now viewed as an exemplar by institutions such as the Design Council, Cranfield University and the University of Cambridge – not only of the true meaning of good design but of sustainability, too.

This single-minded, avowedly long-term, philosophy takes on physical form as the 606 Universal Shelving System: a product that is a flexible and faithful servant in the face of a turbulent world, one that minimises its inevitable impact on the world's environment and resources by being useful for as long as possible. It is a furniture system made to transcend temporary interpretations of fashion and style and instead offer a neutral canvas on which to paint a colourful life.



606 Universal Shelving System



Designed by Dieter Rams in 1960 and produced continuously ever since, the 606 Universal Shelving System was conceived to be timeless. Functional and refined, it is a handsome set of components that allows you to start small and add to it as life demands. An enduring and innovative design that can be combined and re-combined in a multitude of ways for use across generations; it has passed the test of time to become a humble design classic in its own right.

Free of ostentation, a small number of simple components allows easy assembly and rearrangement. At the core of the shelving system is the aluminium E-Track that is attached directly to the wall. Shelves, cabinets and tables are hung from the E-Track by slipping aluminium pins into place. If no wall is available the E-Track may be attached to an aluminium X-Post. The system can then stand on the floor and avoid obstructions allowing it to be installed in a wide variety of environments.

The understated elegance and clean lines of the shelving system are produced in a limited range of colours and materials. This helps to ensure supply for the future but it also helps the system to remain out of sight and subtly disappear within every conceivable interior. Originally designed for use in the home, today single shelves for toothbrushes are sold alongside entire libraries for universities, yet the system used in both instances is exactly the same: strong enough for one and simple enough for the other.

“You are buying a lineage. You are buying into design in its purest sense, which means a design that is time-tested and future-proof”

Hugh Pearman

“...an engaging experiment in the possibility of obsolescence-resistant design”

Building Design

“If Apple ever designed furniture, it would probably look a lot like this”

Fast Company

“Here is understated beauty, doing a job responsibly and profitably”

The Times

“Vitsoe’s 606 shelving is the best shelving system in the world...[and] is as much a design classic as a Corbusier recliner or an Eileen Gray table, except that it escapes cliché”

Design Week

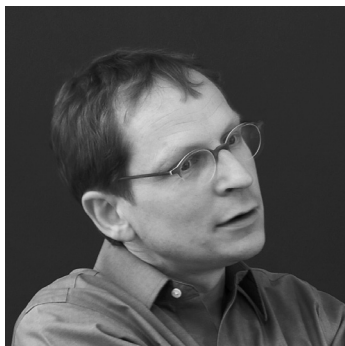
“Adaptable to a myriad of interiors, both commercial and domestic, the “606” is unobtrusive... An enduring favourite with designers, architects and artists”

Penny Martin

“This shelf is a ticket that gains you admission to a better, gentler world”

Deyan Sudjic

Mark Adams (1961) Managing Director



Mark Adams is the managing director of Vitsø, a company that passionately believes that we can all live better with less that lasts longer. For the past 50 years, the company has manufactured, distributed and sold the modular 606 Universal Shelving System designed by Dieter Rams that transcends temporary interpretations of fashion and style. Over the years, Vitsø has carefully evolved and enhanced the design of this system – always ensuring it is completely relevant to today and seamlessly compatible with past iterations. The system allows customers to start small, add to it, take it with them when they move and reconfigure it, as life's circumstances demand.

Good design, seamless efficiency and a singular focus extends beyond the product at Vitsø. It is the guiding ethos around which Mark Adams transformed this modest shelving operation into a global enterprise synonymous with excellence, simplicity and service.

Shortly after graduating from university, Adams became associated with Vitsø identifying it as a product line with unrealised potential. In 1986, at the age of 24, Adams established Vitsø UK and became the sole importer and distributor of Vitsø products in the United Kingdom. Under Adams's leadership, Vitsø UK quickly became the largest retail account for Vitsø.

Adams established himself as a trusted advisor to the company's founder Niels Vitsø and designer Dieter Rams consulting on issues related to production, sales and marketing. In 1987 he facilitated the move of some of the production aspects of the 606 Universal Shelving System to the UK to cut costs and boost efficiencies for the overall business. In 1993, when Niels Vitsø retired, Adams was invited to join the German entity and began the process of streamlining the company and positioning it to realise that potential.

Identifying the 606 Universal Shelving System as the company's best-seller and primary asset, Adams put his attention into enhancing, refining and re-engineering the shelving system. He focused on improving the performance of the product while making it quicker and more efficient to produce and deliver to customers. By 1995, Adams had moved all Vitsø production and operations to the UK.

In order to transform the organisation from simple furniture manufacturer to a genuine service business, Adams cultivated a talented team of design professionals with a deep understanding of the product and a true commitment to customer service. He built a lean, well-trained staff of planners and a network of suppliers who knew the "ins- and-outs" of the Vitsø product – how it was to be designed, how it was to be made, how it was to be delivered and explained to the customer; and how it was to function in daily life.

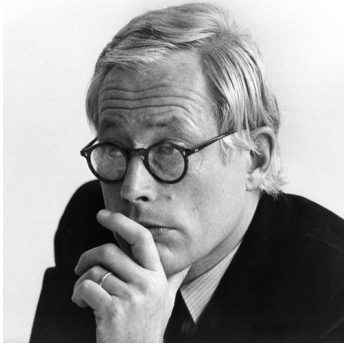
Adams connected the front-end planning team with the back-end systems to create fully integrated processes throughout the organisation with quality control at every stage. He invested in the development of powerful, easy-to-use software and technology that enables customers to take part in the design process and interact with

Vitsø planners online, enhancing customer communications and relationships. Today, 100% of Vitsø customers interact with the company online where the vast majority of the company's transactions take place. The Vitsø shops serve to support the web-based operations. By aligning the entire process from customer interaction, to design, to production and delivery, Adams created a business model whereby each and every customer benefits from personalised service and the creation of a unique product tailored to their life now and tomorrow.

In 1997 Adams forged a partnership with New York design dealer Murray Moss to develop the US market and expand the company's global influence. The move proved to be very successful and in 2009 Vitsø opened its own shop in New York on Bond Street. That same year Adams relocated Vitsø's London flagship shop to a larger space on Duke Street near Manchester Square. Today, Vitsø's web operation gives the brand a global footprint and the company regularly conducts business with customers in more than 50 countries.

Mark Adams attended Oundle School in Northamptonshire, England where he was introduced to carpentry, metalworking and other crafts that cultivated his innate love of the way things are made. At the University of Exeter he studied Zoology giving him a keen appreciation of the workings of the natural world, most especially the process of evolution. Adams is a fellow of the Royal Society of Art, where he both lectures and judges awards. Adams works closely with Dieter Rams to this day and is a key member of the team that organises Rams's exhibitions and appearances worldwide.

Dieter Rams (b1932) Designer



Dieter Rams helped change the face of the post-war domestic landscape throughout the second half of the twentieth century.

He came to the attention of Niels Vitsoe and Otto Zapf in 1958 as a young employee of Braun in Germany when he was involved in the design of a revolutionary new record player, the Braun SK4 (nicknamed 'Snow White's Coffin').

In 1959 Vitsoe+Zapf was formed to realise the furniture dreams of this rising star who would become the head of design at Braun from 1961 to 1995.

Best known for his work for Vitsoe and Braun, Rams and his team designed many of the seminal domestic electrical products of the twentieth century alongside the timeless furniture systems created for Vitsoe, both of which are now widely exhibited and used across the world.

Niels Vitsoe (1913–1995) Founder



In 1970, Niels Vitsoe set out his company's aims:

"To develop and manufacture furniture based on down-to-earth design. Products that show honesty by scrapping all that is superfluous – not to save money but to underline the essentials.

"Furniture that moves with you; furniture that is in complete harmony with itself and can be adapted to its surroundings at will. A collection with its own character, still open to anything, and neutral enough to leave the owners' individual taste a lot of scope. Distribution of this collection in cooperation with friends who share our enjoyment in timeless products of consistent quality."

Aims that Vitsoe humbly abides by to this day...