



# A New Angle on Integrated Branding

The TCF Bank Stadium Project, Minneapolis, Minnesota



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## Company overview



Plumbing Products Division

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<b>Industry</b>	Plumbing Products
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## Company profile

For more than 89 years, ELKAY has been an innovative manufacturer of stainless steel sinks and faucets for residential and commercial use. ELKAY expanded its commercial offerings more than 37 years ago to include efficient water coolers and drinking fountains. ELKAY, which is ranked 57th in *Crain's Chicago Business* list of Chicago's Largest Privately-Held Companies, has more than 3,600 employees in facilities across the United States and select international markets. ELKAY is also a member of key industry associations including the U.S. Green Building Council [USGBC], the American Society of Interior Designers [ASID], the National Kitchen & Bath Association [NKBA], and the Plumbing Manufacturers' Institute [PMI].



Headquartered in Oak Brook, Illinois, ELKAY is comprised of three divisions serving numerous channels: the Plumbing Products Division, the Cabinet Division and the Decorative Surfaces Division. ELKAY Plumbing Products Division is the parent company of E.B. Tecnica Mexicana<sup>®</sup>, Phylrich<sup>®</sup> International and ELKAY China; ELKAY is America's number one selling stainless steel sink company. The ELKAY Cabinet Division is the fourth largest cabinet manufacturer in the U.S. with its Yorktowne<sup>®</sup> Cabinetry, Medallion<sup>®</sup> Cabinetry and Mastercraft<sup>®</sup> Cabinets holdings. The newest division, the ELKAY Decorative Surfaces Division has two holdings: Badolato Granite and Chesapeake Stoneworks.

## Business situation

Historically, residential and commercial customers of plumbing products have been limited in the design, material, and configuration of plumbing products by what manufacturers offer. Often, interior designers, architects and spacial planners simply look through sink and faucet product catalogs, trade magazines and special interest publications to select plumbing products that would fit the spacial vision; the elements of custom design and personalization were historically missing from the plumbing products market at-large, namely from sinks.

## Technical situation



The typical timeline for introducing new plumbing products is 12-18 months, potentially longer, when truly innovative designs or new materials are part of the equation. Stainless steel sinks, for example, have been traditionally square, oval or D-shaped designs; the tooling cycle for these iconic styles, which usually begins at the end of the design process, could be nine to 12 months

alone. In addition to being time-consuming, the process of developing a sink bowl draw die tool is costly, with the price tag for a basic new bowl shape and geometry in the \$100,000 to \$250,000 range. As would logically follow, industrial designers have stayed with conservative stainless steel bowl and rim designs, and focused on mass-market appeal which promises more volume to offset the heavy up-front tool and die costs. Until recently, there was no manufacturing solution for low volume, shortened lead-time, and highly customized, out-of-the-box industrial design for stainless steel sinks.

## Solution

In 2007, seasoned ELKAY Engineering, Finance, Operations and Marketing personnel pioneered a project initially known as the Rapid Production Center [RPC]. The goal of the RPC project was to transform the



company's existing Broadview, Illinois sink production facility into a state-of-the-art "technology center," and thus enable the company to achieve new, far more aggressive metrics - going from sink concept to prototype in 90 days, at 40 percent of the typical cost of conventional, hard tooling methods (lofty goals indeed).

From January 2007 through April 2008, ELKAY invested millions in the latest tooling and equipment technology, and transformed one of its oldest and least automated facilities into what is now known as the ELKAY Technology Center [ETC]. The ETC features the latest in cellular manufacturing, laser technologies, robotic finishing, flex-forming metal handling equipment, and a host of other proprietary tooling and equipment that is designed to support complex steel fabrication.

## Technology in action – a team effort

When the ELKAY Technology Center came online in April 2008, one of the first major orders produced by the new sink facility included custom sinks, water coolers and fountains for the



\$288.5 million TCF Bank Stadium in Minneapolis, Minn. The TCF Bank Stadium, an iconic open-air, horseshoe-shaped venue for the University of Minnesota is opening in September 2009 for a Big Ten pre-season game, hosted by the Minnesota Golden Gophers.

The authorized ELKAY representative sales team of Bongard Corporation, represented by Pete Mayer, Kathy Schug, Ron Bongard, and Mike Sides worked with the local Ferguson Enterprises Outside Sales Rep, Brian Vivier to win the customized sink, cooler and fountain job for ELKAY.

In June 2008, Vivier and Mayer took customized sink concept renderings created by ELKAY Industrial Designer, Jonathan Chong and contract designer, Rachel Julkowski to Bruce and Kelli Akins of Innovative Surfaces, members of the firm installing the countertops for the TCF Bank Stadium project. Later that month, ELKAY custom sink concepts were passed to the official interior designers for the Stadium, and a meeting was held.

Project interior designers for the TCF Bank Stadium project, Shawn Gaither and Anne Olsen [Studio Hive; upper levels and suites], and Bob Zakaras [Architectural Alliance; lower levels] wanted fully integrated branding that would prominently display the U of M team logo in new, complementary ways. Chong was instrumental in fulfilling numerous



concept drawings for the Stadium designers, which ultimately led to the *final design concept*, the *University of Minnesota* “M” logo etched into the sinks.

In late June 2008, Gaither, Olsen and Zakaras took the final sink design concept to Mortenson Construction, official construction contractor for the project, and the University Board of Regents for approval. After the “M” sinks were approved, additional conversation also ensued about emblazoning water coolers and drinking fountains with the “M.” Shortly thereafter, the new concepts for cooler and fountain customization were brought to the U of M Board of Regents, who approved this brand-building idea as well.

As with any project of this caliber, a number of resources were involved to ensure a seamless execution. In July 2008, ELKAY Plumbing Products Division President, Steve Rogers, along with



ELKAY Senior Vice President of Sales, Mark Whittington, ELKAY Regional Sales Manager, Steve Embree, and the Bongard rep team met with the Stadium design team, Harris Mechanical and Mortenson Construction to confirm delivery arrangements for the 149 customized ELKAY products. Subsequently, Vivier of Ferguson worked with ELKAY Technology Center engineers, Harris Mechanical staff, and Schug of Bongard to coordinate all details for the production, transportation and installation of the job’s 111 customized ELKAY sinks, and 38 customized ELKAY water coolers and drinking fountains.

In October 2008, Ferguson Enterprises officially entered the purchase order for the TCF Bank Stadium job. During the winter months of 2008-2009, the sinks, water coolers and fountains were produced, shipped and installed in the Stadium.

As stated before, the entire TCF Bank Stadium project encompasses 149 customized ELKAY sinks, water coolers and fountains. Following is a breakdown of the models and placement within the Stadium.

- Stadium bathrooms, suite level
  - [56] ELKAY ELU1511 “M” sinks; oval; undermount style



- Luxury suites, including the Athletic Director's suite and the visiting athletic director's suite
  - [42] ELKAY ELUH16FB "M" sinks; round, undermount style



- Locker rooms + training facilities
  - [13] ELKAY LR17202 "M" sinks; square, top mount style





- Stadium corridor fountains
  - [24] ELKAY EDFP214C fountains; Soft Sides® ADA style



- Stadium locker rooms + band room
  - [8] ELKAY EZSTL\*LC water coolers; ADA, Barrier Free style



- Hallways, suite level, outside press area, luxury box area and locker rooms
  - [6] EDFPB117C water fountains; Swirlflo® ADA style



The design cycle time for the TCF Bank Stadium project, from presentation of the final concepts to confirmed models for production was 45 days. The production time for all 149 customized sinks, water coolers and fountains was accomplished in 40 days. The 85-day timeline was well within the ETC's stated goals of compressing prototyping to production and tooling cycle times.

## Conclusion

"Our team is proud that we were able to achieve our cost targets, provide unparalleled product variety, and accomplish all of this well within the 90 day cycle time promise," comments Mike Mestousis, plant manager for the ETC in Broadview, Illinois.

ELKAY notes that onsite design and technical consulting services are available for customized, commercial ETC projects.

Mayer of Bongard reflects, “Everyone, from the project manager to the designers has been extremely satisfied with not only the final products, but the process involved for the design and manufacturing of the sinks, water coolers and fountains. Not a deadline was missed.”

The 900,000 sq. ft. TCF Bank Stadium is on the northeast side of the Minneapolis campus, near the site of the former Memorial Stadium. For more information on the TCF Bank Stadium, visit:

[http://stadium.gophersports.com/about\\_quick\\_facts.html](http://stadium.gophersports.com/about_quick_facts.html)

## Future vision

Applications for such creative, enthusiastic use of customization tools for truly differentiated products are limitless. Below are a couple of additional custom sink concepts by ELKAY’S Industrial Designer, Jonathan Chong.



[On left: “surfs up” surfboard sink concept with coordinating, removable white cutting board; on right: “rock and roll guitar” sink concept with integrated fret detailing.]

Currently, ELKAY is in negotiations with leading associations and hospitality corporations to create one-of-a-kind sink statements for forthcoming projects.

## Colleague information [in order of appearance]

### **Bongard Corporation:**

Our sales agency is committed to providing unwavering quality and service that exceeds our customers' expectations. Success comes from the efforts of all our people. We recognize that our customers make it possible for us to be and stay in business. To learn more, visit [www.bongard.com](http://www.bongard.com).

### **Ferguson Enterprises:**

Homeowners, builders, contractors, engineers and other trade professionals trust Ferguson to provide exceptional service, quality products, and the detailed knowledge required to make their projects successful. Whatever your project requires – we are here to make it easy for you. To learn more, visit [www.ferguson.com](http://www.ferguson.com).

### **Innovative Surfaces:**

The selection of your countertops is critical to the look of your project, but many people think that with the material and color selection made, they can rest easy. We'd like to point out that the fabrication and installation is just as critical. For over 30 years, we've made a point of pleasing customers in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area with quality and customer service. To learn more, visit [www.innovativesurfaces.com](http://www.innovativesurfaces.com).

**Studio Hive:**

Studio Hive is an architectural and interior design firm with a focus on the design of the interior environment. They perceive space as a business tool that expresses brand identity, inspires and motivates its' occupants, and influences the working, learning, and living experience. To learn more, visit [www.studiohive.com](http://www.studiohive.com).

**Architectural Alliance:**

Architectural Alliance is an architectural design firm with architects, interior designers, planners and support staff. Established in Minneapolis in 1970, the firm provides planning, architectural and interior design services and has received international recognition and design awards. To learn more, visit [www.archalliance.com](http://www.archalliance.com).

**Mortenson Construction:**

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We believe better tools and techniques lead to better outcomes. That's why ingenuity has always been the cornerstone upon which we build. By employing state-of-the-art tools to our work, we're able to anticipate obstacles and optimize productivity. Which means a better building experience. And better buildings. To learn more, visit [www.mortenson.com](http://www.mortenson.com).

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