

Bow-Front Desks – Pro Tips

1 The bow-front curve adds 10–12in of usable center depth compared to a straight desk

This extra center depth is ideal for dual-monitor setups, reference materials, or a large laptop alongside desktop peripherals. It is the primary functional advantage of the bow-front form.

2 Room clearance behind a bow-front chair must be 48in+ -- not the standard 42in

The curved front positions the user's chair slightly further from the desk center. The 6in additional clearance requirement is frequently overlooked, leading to tight exits and non-compliant layouts.

3 Bow-fronts are placed with the curve facing the user -- the back panel is flat

This is the most common misconception. The desk installs exactly like a straight desk against the wall. The bow is on the front, user-facing side only.

4 Do not confuse a bow-front with a kidney desk -- they are not the same shape

A bow-front has a gentle outward (convex) curve on the front edge. A kidney desk has an inward (concave) curve. Bow-fronts are for private offices; kidney desks are typically for reception.

5 Two-tone finishes require ordering from the same manufacturer's curated combinations

Designer two-tone desks pair specific surface and pedestal colors that the manufacturer has selected for visual harmony. Substituting colors from different series breaks the design intent.

6 The double-pedestal configuration on bow-fronts provides both file types in one desk

The standard double-pedestal bow-front includes a File/File pedestal and a Box/Box/File pedestal -- covering both high-volume filing and general supply storage in a single unit.

7 Bow-front surfaces are often thicker than standard straight desk tops

Premium bow-front models feature 1-1/8in thick work surfaces versus the 1in standard on many straight desks. The extra thickness reduces flex and improves the premium feel of the surface.

8 3mm edge banding on bow-fronts must wrap the curved front edge cleanly

The curve of a bow-front makes edge banding application more technically demanding than a straight edge. Verify that the manufacturer applies edge banding on all exposed edges including the bow.

9 Bow-fronts pair naturally as the main desk in a U-shaped executive suite

The bow-front is the most common primary work surface in a U-shaped desk configuration. The bridge and credenza connect to the back corners of the bow, creating the full U.

10 Ask if the configuration is reversible before ordering

Most commercial bow-front double-pedestal desks are reversible -- the pedestal positions can be swapped for left or right return configurations. Confirm this before ordering rather than assuming.