



(Main) distinctive orange club seats designed for the Houston Dynamo stadium; (inset) modular system seating at outdoor stadium

## Continental shift: Using European influence to tackle the seating challenges in American stadia

A year on from the opening of the renovated BC Place in Vancouver, the owners have had the opportunity to fully appreciate the stadium's ability to transform a soccer field into to a football field within a short amount of time. BC Place's seating system is a great example of a cost effective solution that has enabled a downtown venue (that has high taxes) to achieve its full potential. The system makes what was once a complicated process very simple. BC Place can now store units of up to 25 rows within the facility, creating adequate floor space for trade shows and other types of events.

### Solution drive

The company behind the flexible system at BC Place – Seda Seating – prides itself on its ability to create innovative solutions that make seating systems as adaptable as possible, as well as storage-friendly. For example, for outdoor stadia that want to host concerts and spectator events, Seda has designed a retractable system that is completely weatherproof. Combining

effective engineering with extremely durable materials, the outdoor seating systems provide the the same level of durability and versatility as the company's indoor solutions.

With its roots in Europe, Seda systems have been tested and certified by the toughest fans in the world – the European soccer fans. The systems use more steel than is standard, which both re-enforces durability and makes the seats more comfortable, because they do not feel like they are on a retractable system.

Seda has recently installed seating solutions at five MLS stadia: At BMO Field, Toronto, Seda supplied a range of seats, including a solution that avoids aluminium benches. Further east, the company provided a cost-effective solution for the Saputo Stade in Montreal, which unified general and press sector seating with a clever design. The owners of the Rio Tinto stadium in Salt Lake City were inspired by the seating solutions at BMO Field and chose to install flip-up seats for all of their stadium's general seating. At BC Place in Vancouver, Seda installed fully automated units that retracted, lowered, and

used air cushion systems to store within the facility, combined with a variety of general and club seating. The bright orange seats at the Houston Dynamo BBVA Compass Stadium were also from Seda. The company designed four different types of seats for the club, suite and general seating sections.

### Further afield

Stadia are not the only venues that utilise retractable systems. Entertainment spaces, such as theatres and conference centres, benefit from the ability to extend and decrease their stage, as required. Seda has designed a curved, retractable system that facilitates this requirement. Designing the system to be extremely sturdy and durable is not only important in terms of safety, but also for the comfort of the spectator, as the floor does not feel temporary.

Most recently, Seda developed a modular fixed seating system, which enables stadia to build a roofed grandstand quickly and cost effectively. The systems can be installed all at once, or in phases, depending on the individual needs of the stadium. ■

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