sugar cubes

Cubes created from acoustic foam are great in many contexts, including large and small team interactions. The intrinsic properties of the foam cubes—such as significance without weight, abstract form, stackability and general compactness—help people imagine and describe 3-dimensional space at scale. For example, the cubes can quickly shift function as short-term, dynamic seating to help set contexts in more specific applications: a foam cube dark room as “blind man’s house” simulator; foam cube “castle” for brainstorming on the topic of “security”; and foam cubes as a bed.

What to buy:

We look at two criteria in sourcing foam: the density and the IFD (indentation force deflection). The “gut-feeling” translation from someone picking up or sitting on a cube might be weight and stiffness. A good range for density is 2.0 to 4.0; less than 2.0 might feel too light; greater than 4.0 might feel too heavy. A good range for IFD is 70 to 90; less than 70 is often too squishy or soft; greater than 90 is too stiff or rigid.

Our most recent cubes have a density of 2.0 and an IFD of 70.

Current Sourcing:

Bob’s Foam Factory: 4055 Pestana Place, Fremont, California 94538 // (510) 657-2420 // www.bobsfoam.com/
Foamorder: 1325 Howard Street, San Francisco, California 94103-2612 // (415) 503-1188 // www.foamorder.com
Foam ‘n More: 1925 W. Maple Road, Troy, Michigan 48084 // www.foamforyou.com

It is important to hit that happy medium between too tall and too short: 16” has worked well for both seating and building.

The relatively low weight of the foam allows for easy construction of forms at a human scale. What would it be like to make a wall here? Build it!

Cubes have proven critical for creating experience prototypes, including enclosures. They vary effective at incorporating subtle variables in prototyped scenarios: sound, light vs. dark, intimacy, sensory isolation.

The d.school uses approximately 150 cubes for a 50 student class. Twenty (20) cubes is a good starting quantity for maximum cube utilization.

16”

RED or GRAY?

Gray! The lack of ornamentation in the cubes has been critically important for their use as abstract “building blocks”. Multiple colors and shapes have proven less successful... even with very young students!

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The Campus Campfire, directing a group interaction in a circular seating configuration has proven an excellent tool for focusing the attention and energy of a team. Cubes have performed exceptionally well as low, dynamic seating in this context. Facilitating a posture at low height, close to the floor, fosters a playful and non-threatening environment; all participants sitting at identical eye-level supports that atmosphere.

Seating comfort: 25 minutes MAX. Plan your activity accordingly!

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