

# factorydesign

FOR PUBLICATION

Corporate wash slabs  
6.4 product professional  
Lovair Ltd  
Factorydesign  
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design consultancy  
date of entry

Design Effectiveness Award entry 2014

## Executive Summary (253 words)

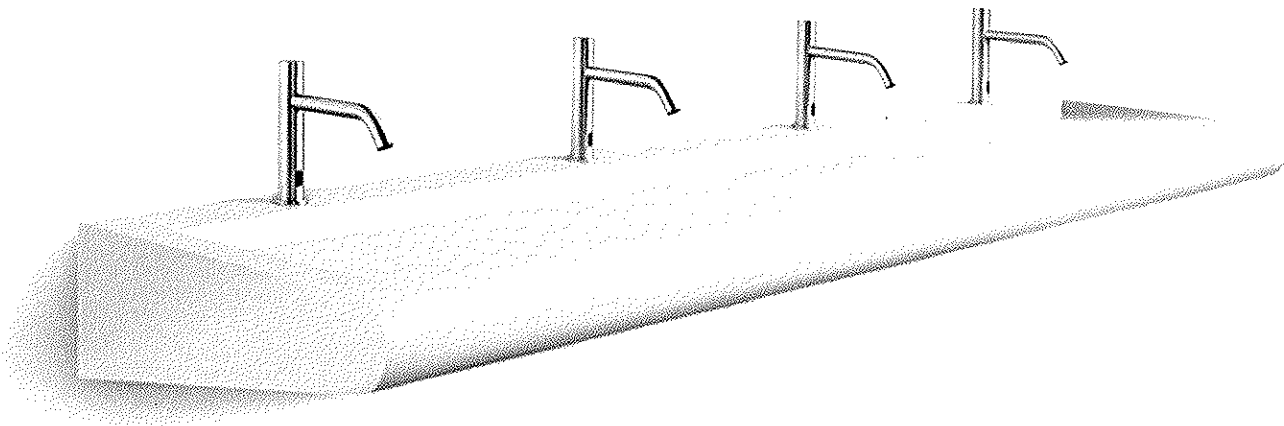
Lovair Ltd is a family-owned British company with an international presence and with over 20 years experience in supplying the construction industry and architectural practices with washroom fittings. Built on the pillars of quality and service, Lovair sought to embrace innovation as an additional core attribute.

Factorydesign were selected as the design partner and commissioned to design a range of solid surface material Corporate Slabs (wash basins). This is a new market and product sector for Lovair who previously sold only stainless steel products.

Through the success of the design, supply and final realisation of the Corporate Slab range, Lovair have been able to set up their own manufacturing facility. Having previously had to buy in product and sell on with a margin, ownership of the production of these products has led to a dramatic increase in turnover and profitability.

The corporate slab range has been widely embraced by the architectural world, in some cases provoking the specification of bespoke products, in others, leading to sales of other peripheral fittings such as taps and hand-dryers.

**Factorydesign created a completely new product range for Lovair which enabled them to enter a new market. From a start in 2010, these products significantly increased turnover and gross profit margin by 2012. Corporate Slab sales have led to additional business with other Lovair product ranges being specified by Corporate Slab customers. Notably, this has all been achieved without any advertising spend.**



# Project Overview

## 1. Outline of project brief

Lovair identified an opportunity to develop a new range of wash basins primarily aimed at corporate washrooms. The educational wash basin market was growing and it was believed that demand for similar products in the corporate sector could be identified.

Using a live project requirement as a driver, Lovair used the opportunity to create a bespoke slab for a specific customer. In addition, they wished to create a range of standard corporate wash slabs based on the same design. As such, the output from this project included the design solution for the bespoke product, plus a design solution for Lovair to take forward as their own production item and catalogue range.

Lovair commissioned Factorydesign to design and engineer the entire basin product from visual appearance through to design refinement and technical detailing (such as design of concealed drainage etc.). The product was required to complement Lovair's existing catalogue and establish Lovair as a strong player in this market through a modern design aesthetic and thoughtful functionality.

## 2. Description

Lovair Corporate Slabs create a unique hand washing experience using a solid surface material, ergonomically detailed with a modular bracket system and a concealed stainless steel drainage tray. Corporate Slabs are available in a range of colours and compatible with Lovair touch-free sensor taps, both wall-mounted and deck mounted. Using non-porous, hygienic, highly-versatile Solid Surface material, they create welcoming washroom environments. Modern crisp lines or organically rounded edges aid cleaning and maintenance.

## 3. Overview of market

The corporate washroom market is highly competitive with many products available. The architectural procurement process is demanding and a combination of architects seeking unique products for their construction projects and the high levels of competition, make this a difficult market to sell to and in which to succeed.

## 4. Project launch date

June 2010

## 5. Size of design budget

Factorydesign and Lovair agreed a monthly retainer for the provision of design services and future support, calculated on an hourly basis dependent on workload.

## 6. Outline of design solution (334 words)

The Corporate Slab basin achieves a sophisticated design aesthetic within the practical constraints of the washroom environment. Made from CNC-cut solid surface material and precisely assembled by hand, the slab appears to be carved from a single piece of material. The sleek external design conceals intelligent engineering beneath. Water drains into a discreet channel to the rear and collects in a concealed drainage tray below. The tray is connected to waste water plumbing using completely standard fittings and can be removed quickly and easily.

Designed in close collaboration with specialist Solid Surface fabricators, the design is rationalised to use the minimum of material, whilst maintaining sufficient strength so no additional structural parts are necessary. By sharing components like the drainage trays and wall brackets, the entire Corporate Slab basin range is comprised of a very small kit of parts. This keeps manufacture costs to a minimum and simplifies management of stock.

Ease of installation is paramount so a unique mounting system was devised. The basin fastens directly onto hidden cantilever brackets via a rib mounting system. This system provides generous tolerance during installation which is a major step forward. The brackets can be positioned to avoid existing plumbing or to align with structural fixtures. This means that standard brackets can be used where previously an expensive bespoke solution would have been necessary.

The design is also about customisation. Offering tailored basins is a powerful sales tool in the architectural market and the Slab's modular design platform enables Lovair to offer bespoke dimensions and faucet configurations, without affecting production lead times, as the core assembly remains common. By integrating custom accessories e.g. paper towel dispensers, Lovair frequently sell add-on products further increasing their profits.

Ultimately, the design allows Lovair to offer an appealing bespoke product with the convenience and practicality of an off the shelf solution. To date Lovair have produced over 30 variations of the Slab basin and have supplied units to prestigious construction projects including many in the City of London.

*“The creative input from Factorydesign has enabled Lovair to quickly carve a quality brand in the architectural construction sector.”*

*Fraser Lovell, Marketing Director, Lovair Ltd*

## Summary of results (2 pages)

### **Increase in sales and strong profit margin**

Not for publication.

### **Increase in market share**

No market share data is available.

### **Increase in reliability**

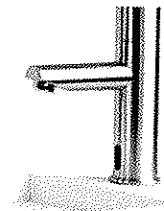
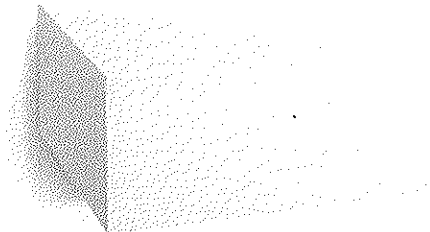
Not one single product has been returned since launch. Should damage occur repairs can be made easily on site.

### **Reduced part count**

The modular design allows components to be shared across basin ranges (e.g. the same concealed drainage assembly can be used for Maxi, Midi and Mini slabs). All wall-mounting brackets for a Slab are identical resulting in a low part count and an easier to manage supply chain. For example, a three metre long basin with provision for five users would have 17 components but only 4 different parts. This also means Lovair only need a small stock of spares.

### **Bespoke product installations**

A by product of the creation of the solid surface Corporate Slab catalogue range is that of the bespoke market. Initially drawn to Lovair by the catalogue range, the flexibility and easily adapted manufacturing process has encouraged many customers to buy bespoke products.



## Summary of results (continued)

### **Reduced manufacture time**

The fabrication has been designed to avoid thermo-forming and the slow production cycle times associated with this process. The solid surface material used in construction has been carefully designed to avoid requirement for additional structural parts and the modular design minimises the number of jigs required.

### **Established a manufacturing facility**

The above manufacture methodology enabled Lovair to bring the solid surface parts production in-house with the minimum of investment in machinery, increasing their profit margins.

### **Reduced installation time**

The design features a unique flexible wall-mounting system. This provides increased installation tolerance meaning the unit does not need to be adapted on-site and the minimum of finishing is required in situ resulting in quicker and more accurate installation.

### **Local supply chain**

The limited number of materials means a local (UK based) supply chain has been created. More choice of local suppliers means a more competitive supply of components which reduces costs.

### **Improved maintenance**

All parts are mechanically fastened so individual components can be replaced using standard tools.

### **Impact on Market / competitors**

Copycat products have started to appear, however, they lack the attention to detail of the Lovair products, tend to have inferior designed installation solutions unlike Lovair's unique system and have poorer support systems.

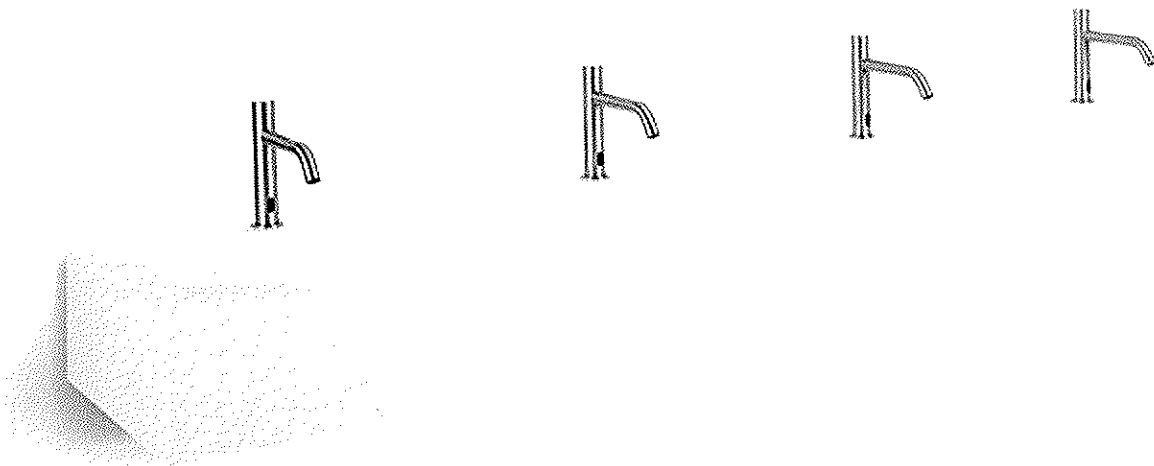
*“The Corporate Slab was the perfect solution for one of our major clients for their building refurbishment giving us a solution for a multi-tenant building. We have utilised a variety of versions of the Corporate Slab across several corporate and high profile clients. We will certainly be working with Lovair on future projects.”*

*Kevin Goldsmith, Associate & Head of Sustainability,  
Pringle Brandon Perkins+Will*

## Other influencing factors

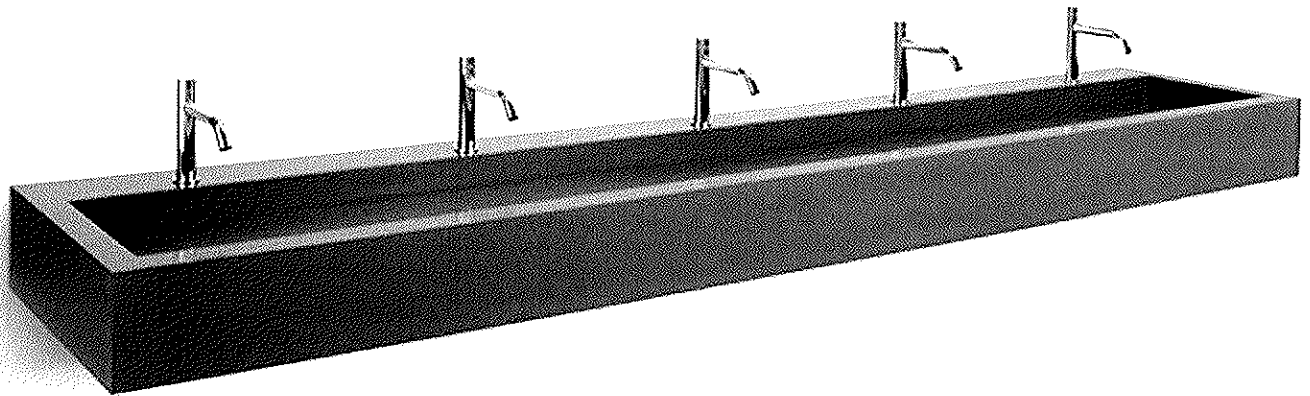
### Advertising and promotion

There has been no advertising spend.



*Between 2010 and 2012, Lovair's sales turnover increased significantly...*

*...from zero% in 2010, solid surface products (Corporate Slabs) are now responsible for a significant percentage of turnover...*



*...with an increase in gross profit margin.*



Devonshire Square



*The Corporate Slabs catalogue products have attracted customers and provoked a huge increase in bespoke product installations...*

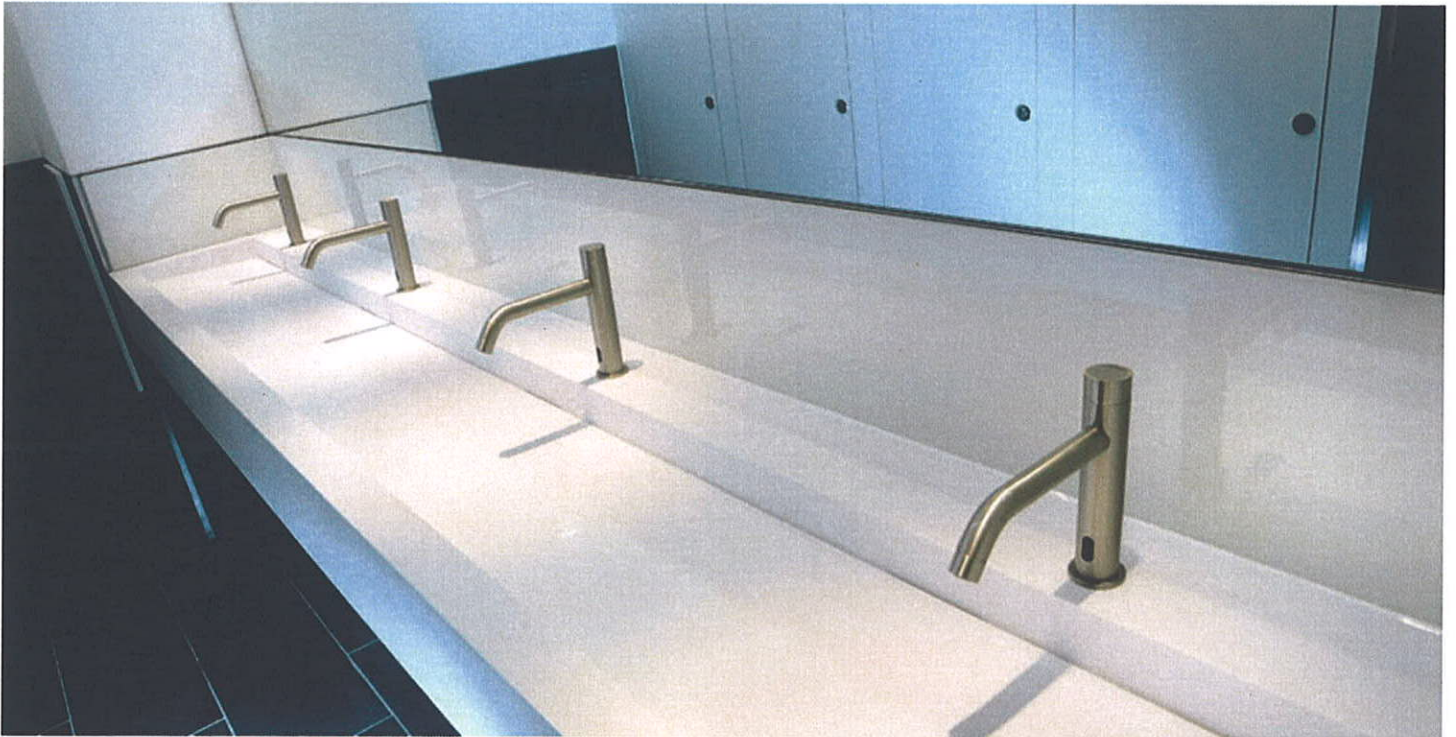
Siemens Crystal



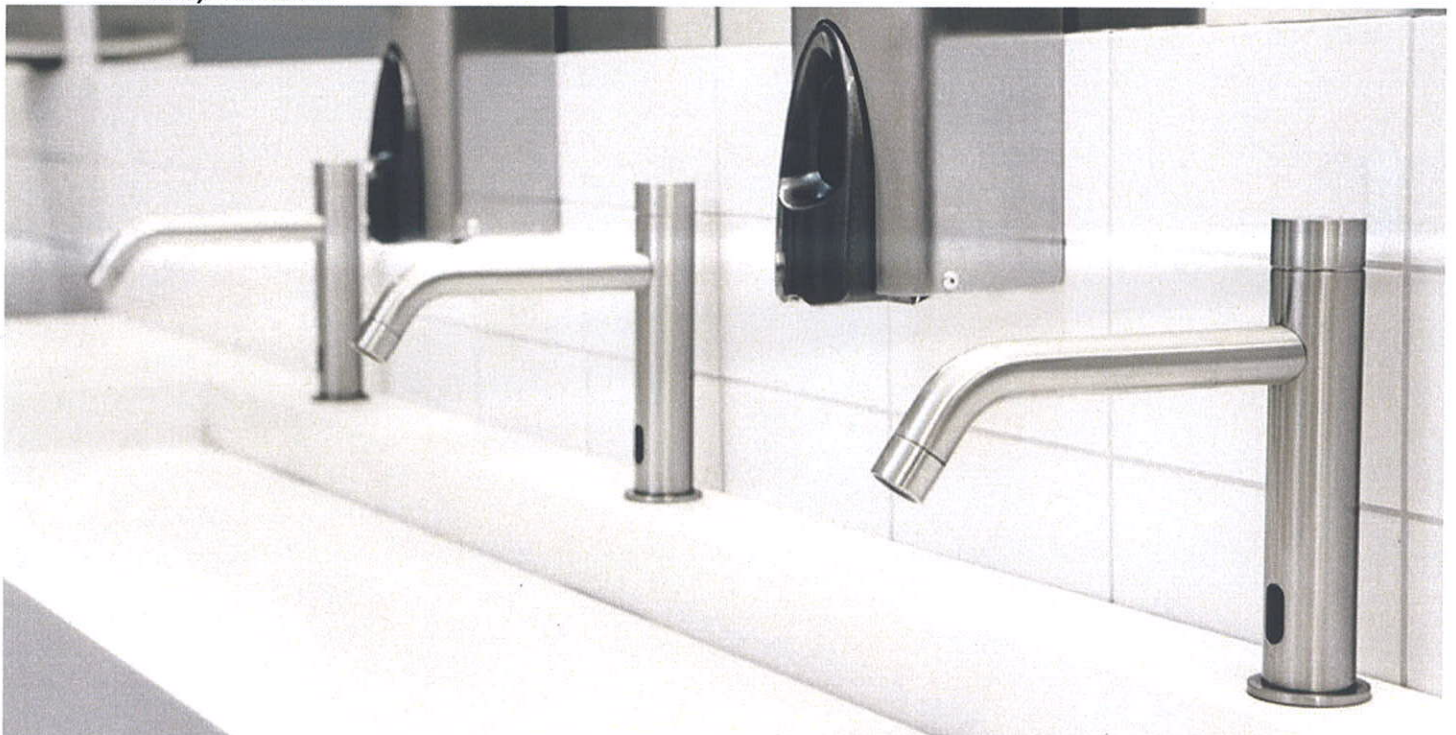


*...ease of manufacture has enabled Lovair to set up in-house production capabilities, thereby increasing profit margin...*

Exchange Tower



DSV, Sweden



DSV, Sweden



*...corporate slab sales have led to additional business with other Lovair product ranges being specified increasing sales turnover.*

# Thank you

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