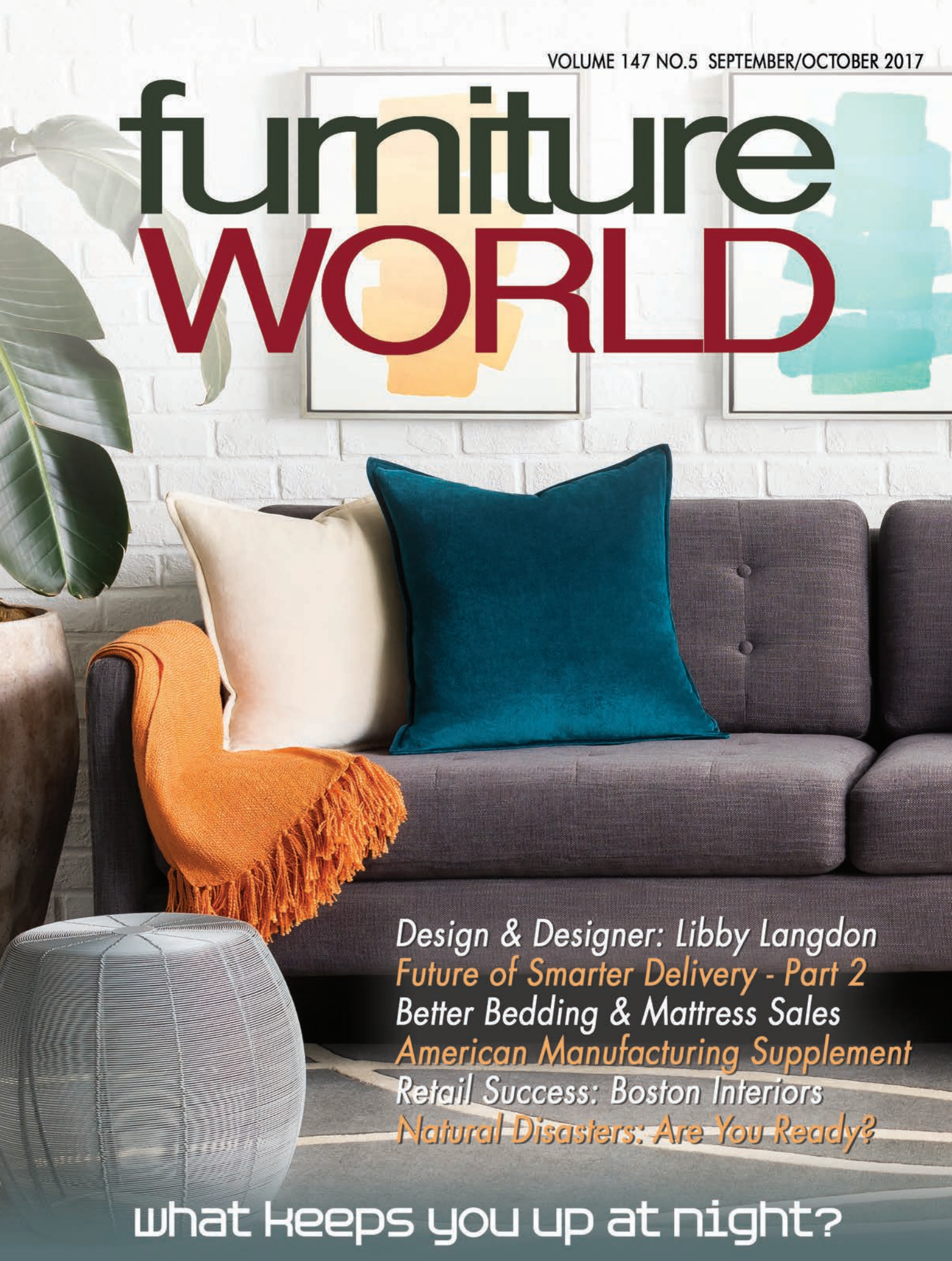


VOLUME 147 NO.5 SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2017

furniture WORLD



Design & Designer: Libby Langdon
Future of Smarter Delivery - Part 2
Better Bedding & Mattress Sales
American Manufacturing Supplement
Retail Success: Boston Interiors
Natural Disasters: Are You Ready?

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FURNITURE WORLD MAGAZINE

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COVER: The October 2017 cover features a comfortable, modern living space appointed with Surya's hand-tufted Forum rug in charcoal, woven Cotton Velvet pillows in teal and taupe, Tidal throw in coral, Rory side stool, and two printed art pieces. See more about Surya on pages 6-7 in this issue, or visit <http://www.surya.com>.

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Furniture Industry: Then and Now

Furniture Shows Then: In 1895, Furniture World quoted manufacturers who complained about the time, effort and money invested to attend multiple furniture exhibitions in New York, Boston, Chicago, Rochester, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Indianapolis, Rockford, St. Louis, Grand Rapids, Jamestown, etc.

Furniture Shows Now: Same conversation. The exhibition names have changed.

Transportation Then: In 1895, Furniture World republished an excerpt from a New York Herald article about a new mode of transportation. "It may be some time before the perfect horseless carriage becomes a thoroughly familiar object on our streets and highways."

Transportation Now: In 2017, Furniture World reported on the new mode of transportation; driverless carriages. An industry expert said it might be 10 or more years before driverless trucks will become a familiar sight, but once they do, furniture will be moved around faster and more efficiently, reducing the number of DCs and changing where and how the last mile is served.

Retail Lifestyle Then: July 1895, Furniture World reported that B. Frank Wainright, furniture dealer, became "violently insane" while in a carriage on his way to NY's Grand Central Station. At the court house he threw a diamond ring from his finger, and money from his pocket, at a court attendant. It was thought the sudden derangement was caused by overwork.

Retail Lifestyle Now: A 2017 Furniture World issue noted that overwork in the furniture industry is still, and probably always will be in style.

The more things change, the more they seem to stay the same!

Russell Bienenstock
Editorial Director/CEO

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Note: We no longer report on insane behavior as a courtesy to our friends, readers and FW co-workers.



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Part 2

by Russell Bienenstock

Discussion of self-driving vehicles, commingled delivery model possibilities, augmented reality, delivery pricing strategies and more.

The April 2017 issue of Furniture World included a discussion of the advances in home furnishings transportation and logistics that will change our industry on a fundamental level. Topics included evolving customer expectations for speed and transparency, delivery strategies to meet these needs, the deluxing dilemma, the reverse logistics challenge, and the influence of Amazon and Wayfair. If you missed the article, find it at <http://www.furninfo.com/furniture-world-articles/3674>.

In Part 2, we look at the future of home furnishings delivery with a discussion of commingled models, smart trucks, robotics, augmented reality, innovative pricing models for furniture delivery, and more.

Commingled Delivery Model Possibilities

Christian Lafrance, the CEO of Clear Destination, a company devoted to automating the home delivery process for home fash-

ion goods like furniture, appliances and bedding, envisions a new model for the home furnishings industry. "At the end of the day customers simply want their furniture, appliances and mattresses delivered to their doors by professional teams at a date and time that fits their schedules" he observes. "This has proven to be a huge challenge.

"Our industry has systems that drive everything in the background. These include manufacturers' systems, their supply chains, companies like mine, and others involved in the process. These systems often do not communicate well due to a lack of coordination. It's my view that the way it's done right now, it's not sustainable. There are too many ups and downs in daily volume across the whole supply chain to plan and deliver efficiently. Even if we just consider what's done at the final mile in large markets, it isn't possible for most retailers to maximize delivery efficiency and reduce cost in a standardized way.

"However, individual retailers share the same customers and

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"There's a new delivery model coming.

It won't necessarily change what the big retailers are doing locally, but it will affect what they do nationally. It will also, absolutely change the way smaller retailers do business."

- Patrick Cory

deliver to the same neighborhoods every day. This creates an opportunity because their trucks are not full all the time."

Furniture World asked Lafrance if furniture retailers should adopt a model more like UPS.

"If I order a cover for my phone, from somewhere in the USA and have it shipped to Canada," he replied, "that cover will probably go through seven terminals before it's delivered, so that's not an efficient model either. But there is an opportunity to improve at the

supply chain level, to use common infrastructure to pack and move products in a more integrated and consolidated way.

"Moving towards a model that consolidates shipping to create density where you didn't have density before is the way to go. This model requires that multiple supply chains come together to get home furnishings into customers' homes."

The supply chain of the future he believes, will give up delivery on branded trucks so costs can be reduced by using a larger, standardized network.

"In the supply chain of the future, furniture will be shipped to a consolidator and commingled for home delivery," he suggests.

Lafrance tells us that there has been resistance to, for example, brick and mortar furniture chains mixing their home deliveries up with Sears and BestBuy on white trucks in their home areas. That's because there are real, benefits to branded home delivery. These include "free" advertising on branded company trucks and the ability of individual retailers to use branded last mile delivery to achieve customer service and competitive goals.

Rob Davis, Vice President of Client Solutions at Diakon Logistics explains the resistance to commingled delivery voiced by independents and regional chains. "Many of the retailers we work with are family run, multi-generational, and fairly regionalized. Their core competencies are never on the logistics side of the business. From that aspect alone I think it's important for guys like us to think about how to solve that equation and find efficient solutions for them.

"There are pros and cons to consolidating shipments. Retailers can gain efficiency by creating more efficient routes. But our experience is that most home furnishings retailers are looking for individual white glove delivery solutions. They have different product types and varying needs for set up, installation, delivery windows, the customer greeting, installation, follow-up, and how the guys on the truck should dress.

"With commingled trucks it's difficult to manage how a retailer's customers are greeted or surveyed. From that perspective, white glove home delivery may start to edge toward becoming threshold delivery, depending on what's being

"Individual retailers share the same customers and deliver to the same neighborhoods every day. This creates an opportunity."

- Christian Lafrance

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"If Last Mile Trucks

are full, but first mile trucks are half-full, it's inefficient with added costs across the supply chain all the way to the consumer. " - Rob Davis

commingled on the truck, the price points and volume being delivered for each retailer," Davis concludes.

"For these regional retailers who have doubts about a commingled model," Lafrance adds, "it may make more sense to run their own trucks in areas where they have what they consider adequate density. But, for e-commerce consumers who live far from a store and the delivery density isn't there, using shared trucks for this e-type of supply chain is a no-brainer. For these retailers there is an opportunity to use a mixed model with both white and branded trucks. This kind of mixed model, however, only addresses the last mile. If last mile trucks are full, but first mile trucks are half-full, it's inefficient with added costs across the supply chain all the way to the consumer. To address this problem, we must look at the supply chain as a whole, all the way from China, Mexico or Vietnam to the customer's door. To run full containers and full trucks efficiently at every point along the supply chain, to be full all the time requires scale, and I've never seen any individual company that can achieve that."

A Third Way

Patrick Cory, CEO at Cory Home Delivery, thinks there is a third way coming that will be a game changer for independent furniture retailers. "The commingled model Christian describes tends to work for smaller retailers with one, two or three stores in dense metropolitan markets," observes Cory. "These smaller stores tend to be very good at selling and design, but not very good at warehousing and logistics. So, they may outsource their entire back-end to a third-party company that consolidates perhaps five or six retailers under one roof in one warehouse. Each retailer gets the level of service they pay for, but their products are all delivered on the same trucks. They gain efficiency, productivity and density. If each one of those retailers ran their own trucks, it would cost them at least twice as much to provide the same level of service because individually they don't have enough volume. In places where retailers don't have a lot of volume like Wyoming or North Dakota, it makes sense to combine deliveries to achieve more delivery frequency.

"Right now, the largest home furnishings retailers have enough density, and do enough volume, that they want to have complete control over their supply chains. It makes sense for them to have their own warehouses and distribution centers.

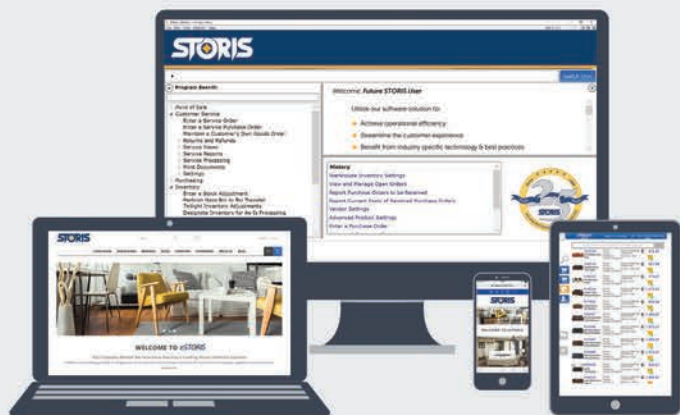
"But, there's a new delivery model coming," Cory forecasts, "It won't necessarily change what the big retailers are doing locally, but it will affect what they do nationally. It will also, absolutely change the way smaller retailers do business. Growth in the industry is not going to be primarily from brick & mortar sales. It's going to be internet sales growth from both brick & mortar and internet-only retailers.

Driving Fundamental Change: Internet Sales

"Companies like Wayfair and Overstock," Cory continues, "can afford to offer millions of SKUs, because they don't hold inventory. And, for the most part, they have delivery networks where products go right from the distributor or manufacturer to a home delivery



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"Moving products

across the country might take five DC's, however, once autonomous delivery vehicles that can drive 24/7 arrive, the economics may dramatically change." - Rob Davis

center. In order for local home furnishings retailers and even larger retailers to compete, especially online, they will need to offer a product selection that's too large for them to hold in inventory. This is going to happen in the electronics and appliance businesses as well. Retailers are going to say to their product suppliers, "Look, we're going to sell your product on-line, but we're not going to inventory it, either because we don't sell enough of it, or we don't want to put it on our floor.

"They're going to rely on home delivery companies and manufacturers to provide what's called end-to-end services. This is what Amazon does, really very well through their Amazon Marketplace. For example, a retailer that wants to expand selection from 1,000 SKU's to 10,000 will be able to send small items, those that are UPS-able, no problem. UPS and FEDEX are the best. Big furniture items that UPS and FEDEX really can't handle, or are just too costly for them to deliver, need an alternative solution. To address this need, home delivery companies are starting to offer these end-to-end services.

"So, third party logistics companies like ours are going to scale up to work with the trans-ocean shippers and with the manufacturers. We're going to provide drayage services from the port to the warehouse. We're going to either hire LTL companies or provide LTL or truckload services to get products from point A to point B, then to our home delivery center. And obviously, third party logistics companies are going to provide last mile home delivery to consumers. Retailers will never touch the product. It will be pulled directly out of the manufacturer's or the distributor's inventory. What retailers will do is to sell online and make a profit. Everything else will be handled behind the scenes, including customer service and reverse logistics with technology that will provide transparency and complete visibility throughout the supply chain all the way to the consumer. That's going to be the future state of our industry."

The Future of Delivery Technology

In addition to changes wrought

by internet sales, cost considerations and consumer expectations, advances in technology are likely to have an oversized influence.

Self-Driving Vehicles

"By 2020 or 2025," notes Clear Destination's Christian Lafrance, "we will see computer-aided trucks that can self-drive. Orders will flow directly to the truck's IP address and it will adjust routing and make stops on it's own."

Diakon's Rob Davis also believes that self-driving vehicles will have an impact, but won't substantially change the nature of final mile delivery. "Driverless transport will disrupt the long haul portion and the way carriers look at this business, especially with regard to the number and location of distribution centers.

"Many traditional, family owned retailers have a single distribution center and are limited by their ability or willingness to invest in additional DC's," he explains. "Of course regional brands strategically invest in DC's that can service multiple markets.

"A big challenge, especially for

independent retailers, is shipping to customers over long distances. For many right now, it isn't worth the capital investment to build out additional DC's, so these retailers tend to focus on saturating their home markets to create delivery density. Moving products across the country might take five DC's, however, once autonomous delivery vehicles that can drive 24/7 arrive, the economics may dramatically change. If products can be moved around faster and more efficiently using self-driving trucks, the necessary number of DCs required to service areas outside of a retailer's traditional market will change, and this will also change where and how the last mile is served."

Patrick Cory believes that other emerging technologies will have more impact than self-driving technologies, especially in the shorter term. "Self-driving trucks are coming, but it will probably take 20 years because infrastructure and regulations will all have to catch up with this technology.

"It's one thing to take a load of furniture from North Carolina to New York on a tractor-trailer. That truck could drive itself from point A to point B. That doesn't really change the local delivery model.

With self-driving trucks you're only covering part of that supply chain. Once products arrive at the local market it may be possible to self-drive the final mile. But unless we develop furniture that will grow the kind of legs that can self-deliver, we will still need people to carry products into customer's homes.

"And of course, it depends on what a retailer's delivery model is, if products going to a home delivery center will be opened, inspected, assembled, touched up, whatever. So, self-driving technology is going to have an impact on the supply chain. But right now the technologies that potentially will have the most impact on our industry are the kinds of warehouse robotics currently in use at Amazon.

"Today we depend on local labor to run warehouses. It's an element that can't be outsourced. Labor is already tight and it could get much tighter. Short term, likely changes in immigration policies, especially in places like New York or New Jersey will have short-term negative impact on furniture warehousing and delivery. Lots of our workers are first generation here.

"Future warehouses," Cory continues, "even those handling items like furniture and appliances will

use much less labor. Self-driving lift trucks will move palletized products where they need to go without human drivers. Potentially this could have as much or more impact on our business as self-driving trucks. A 500,000-square foot warehouse that right now employs 100 people might be able to reduce that number by 50 percent. That's 50 percent less labor costs

"Retailers are going to rely on home delivery companies and manufacturers to provide what's called end-to-end services. This is what Amazon does, really very well through their Amazon Marketplace." - Patrick Cory

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DELIVERY FUTURE

"A 500,000-square foot warehouse that right now employs 100 people might be able to reduce that number by 50 percent. That's 50 percent less labor costs using machines that can operate 24 hours a day, essentially in the dark."

- Patrick Cory

using machines that can operate 24 hours a day, essentially in the dark. This could have a significant impact on costs. So, I think the first impact you're going to see is actually going to be inside warehouses,

not necessarily on the road.

3-D Printing & Delivery

Another other big development on the home furnishings horizon that may affect home delivery are 3-D Printing technologies.

"There's a foreseeable future," suggests Patrick Cory, "where a customer might walk into a store, for example a retailer like Restoration Hardware. Let's say the shopper sees a product that's the right product, but it's not the right color or it needs to be 12 inches shorter and four inches wider. In this potential future, using 3-D printing, instead of having furniture made overseas and waiting weeks for delivery, it will take days to manufacture customized furniture. These machines are going to be inside of distribution centers like ours. And when the product is ready it will be finished, inspected and delivered locally. Manufacturing will shift back to the U.S., not because our labor's ever

going to get any cheaper, because it won't, but because technology will advance. The furniture will still have to get moved from point A to point B, but instead of it making a trip from Asia to the final destination, it will be all local delivery. It's going to allow for much more customization and cut down on the time between ordering furniture and its delivery to the consumer."

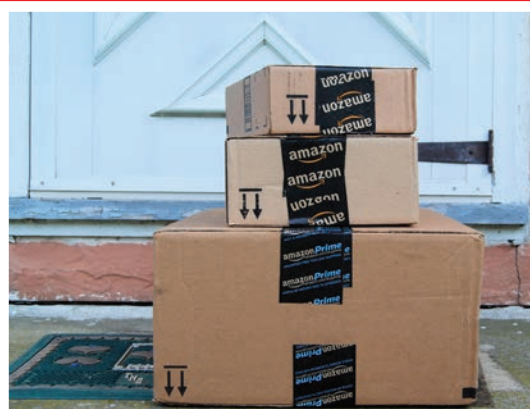
Augmented Reality

Augmented reality will almost certainly impact how home furnishings retailers display and present their wares, but how might it affect delivery?

"A big challenge with home delivery," says Diakon's Rob Davis, "is not knowing what environment we are going to encounter until we're there in the house. Any data we might gather and distribute with augmented reality such as confirming addresses, measurements, stairs, elevators, etc., would be

"A model like UberPOOL's would allow retailers to create delivery efficiencies and pricing flexibility within a single retail operation."

- Rob Davis





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"What we need



is a more dynamic model that takes into account each item delivered in a way that best manages efficiencies and minimizes cost." - Rob Davis

insightful. I can't say how augmented reality would have a huge impact in terms of executing delivery, but it is an exciting technology.

"Augmented reality like Google glasses," adds Patrick Cory, "will have less impact than advances in routing technology, or the ability to have products, inventory systems and delivery trucks integrated in the internet of everything. Right now it's most important that we find the best routes, get faster inventory updates, load trucks for the next day based on what's coming in today. That can be done now through scanning technology, but it's still not 100 percent efficient. The idea of moving to RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) tags or something similar in a much more automated fashion is a more promising technology."

Advanced Delivery Pricing

"It's my opinion that every single customer should be charged a different delivery price," states Rob Davis. "It should be based on the true delivery cost associated with the work that's actually being done. The tendency, however, is for retailers to simplify delivery pricing."

"Today, retailers charge an average set delivery fee, bake it into their cost of doing business, or charge based on a delivery radius."

"What we need in our business is

a more dynamic model that takes into account each item delivered in a way that best manages efficiencies and minimizes cost.

"Such a model would take into account what's being delivered, where it's being delivered, when it's scheduled for delivery and the number of deliveries," he notes.

"Let's say that a retailer only has one delivery to make on a certain day, it might cost \$300. If information on future sales orders to be delivered to that same zip code were available, that same retailer would more easily be able to reschedule, fill the load, and bring down the average delivered price."

"A good way to understand this is to look at what Uber is doing with UberPOOL."

"Riding Uber, the cost for a business traveler to get from an airport to downtown might cost \$35. But using UberPOOL, it's possible for the traveler to pay only 10 bucks. All the rider has to do is to agree it's OK for the driver to take a detour of up to five minutes to pick up another customer going along the same route. The passenger saves \$25 in exchange for a potential five-minute delay. It becomes a communal experience based on an algorithm that can figure out how to make a route efficient."

"So instead of commingling goods from different kinds of retailers on the same truck, a model like

UberPOOL's would allow retailers to create delivery efficiencies and pricing flexibility within a single retail operation."

"Here's another example. A hypothetical furniture retailer has six deliveries scheduled on a particular day, with the first delivery located 80 miles away from the DC scheduled for 9 a.m., and the five remaining customers scheduled for an afternoon delivery window. Obviously this retailer doesn't want to send out a truck 80 miles to make the 9 a.m. delivery, then send out another truck to do the afternoon deliveries. The obvious solution is offer the 9 a.m. customer a later delivery time in exchange for cutting the delivery fee in half or eliminating it. In environmentally conscious markets like California, consumers might also be persuaded to take the offer if it were explained to them that the change would greatly decrease the carbon footprint of their delivery."

Conclusion

From the first mile to the last, furniture delivery will undergo huge changes in the next five to 10 years to become faster, smarter, and more efficient.

Questions about any of the topics discussed in this two-part series can be directed to the interviewees at editor@furninfo.com.



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Ransomware

CYBER SECURITY

Part 2: Backing up your data is not enough – here's why.

by Amitesh K Sinha

Here's how furniture stores can prepare to combat likely large-scale ransomware attacks in 2018.

The threat from ransomware promises to be serious for home furnishings retailers in the coming year. If you've already created data backups, you may believe that you've done all you can to protect your business. Just doing this, however is not nearly enough to protect against ransomware.

Billion Dollar Nightmare

Ransomware is a legitimate threat for virtually every business and organization. First introduced in 1982, malware programs have evolved over the years, with modern ransomware strains having the capability to exploit even minor loopholes on the most secure networks.

Once malicious software breaches a guarded network, it encrypts your files at both the server and the machine levels, restricting access to all the important data on your network. What follows is a demand for

monetary ransom in exchange for a key that will enable you to restore access to your encrypted files. If you don't cooperate, you risk losing every bit of important data and information about your business.

2016 is remembered as the "year of ransomware". The security company Sonic Wall reported a record level of malicious software attacks against businesses operating in a number of different industry verticals. 638 million attacks were reported in total¹, collectively forc-

"Modern ransomware strains can exploit even minor loopholes on the most secure networks."

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ing victims to pay around \$209 million in ransom in the first quarter of that year alone. This is an alarming statistic, one which does not factor in additional losses incurred due to:

- *Operational downtime.*

- *Resourcing of staff to resolve the problem.*
- *The replacement of hardware to restore the system.*

When you do the math, the reported cost rises to more than \$75 billion per year.³

Since 2016, the incidence rate of ransomware attacks in the retailing sector appears to be on the rise.

ued at around \$111 billion at retail by the end of 2019. This growth eclipses many other retailing sectors, including clothing and department stores, with home furnishings predicted to outpace the sales of each by 10.7 percent and 16.6 percent respectively.⁵

"The furniture industry is rapidly working to integrate e-commerce into retail business models, leaving companies exposed at new and vulnerable points of interaction."

Why Will Our Industry Be The Next Big Target?

There are three main reasons why many furniture retailers will be prime targets for ransomware attacks in 2018.

1. The Growth Potential Of Home Furnishings

Ransomware programmers direct their attacks to targets that can both afford to pay and where there are vulnerabilities.

The retail home furnishing industry harbors high-growth potential, with the sector expected to be val-

2. The Rapid Integration of E-Commerce:

The furniture industry is rapidly working to integrate e-commerce into retail business models, leaving companies exposed at new and vulnerable points of interaction. As the scope of a company's on-line operations expands, it acts as an open invitation to hackers to try to gain access.

3. The Industry Is Not Fully Equipped

The e-commerce sector of the home furnishing industry is not mature. As a late adopter of e-commerce and technology, our industry is sadly way behind most other industries in our ability to defend against cyber security threats, both in terms of system resources and

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"Employees are the most vulnerable part of any implemented cyber security program."

user training. This is yet another factor that increases the risk of ransomware attacks.

What is at Stake?

Your all-important data is at stake of course, including:

- *Customer data, prospecting lists, plus information on past purchases.*
- *Private information and financial data you've collected from customers.*
- *Inventory records.*
- *Supplier Data.*
- *Operations Data*
- *Financial & Employee Records.*
- *Sales Data.*

Ransomware Attacks a Brazil-Based Furniture Company

The first part of this series on Cybersecurity (May/June 2017 issue of Furniture World) related the story of a mid-sized furniture retailer lucky enough to restore data following a Cryptolocker ransomware attack. Data was restored from a backup with minimum data loss. Paying a large ransom was avoided.

Not every retailer is so lucky. In 2015, a ransomware attack (RSA-

4096) on a Brazil-based furniture company encrypted the retailer's files. The perpetrators demanded \$3,000.⁷ The company refused to pay and subsequently lost all their important data, incurring a financial loss of \$100,000.

Backups Are Not Enough

Every furniture retailer knows that it's important to insure businesses against physical and liability disasters. It's equally important to take steps to make sure you are protected against virtual dangers. As was mentioned at the start of this article, backing up your data properly is a good start, but it's not all you need to do to protect against ransomware attacks.

Data Backup: Data backup is the most common practice when it comes to preparing against the potential threat of ransomware.

In a survey conducted by Barkly, 81 percent of the respondents believed their data backup would help them to cope successfully with a ransomware attack.⁸

IT managers and companies, create a secondary storage in reserve, where they regularly store the files. In case of a security breach, they then access this secondary storage to restore business operations back to normal. It's simple, convenient, and easy!

However, according to a survey from Knoll Ontrak, 75 percent of IT

managers who had a data backup failed to restore all their lost data after a catastrophic loss, while the other 23 percent failed to recover any data at all.¹¹

The reasons for data backup failure are many, from hardware and software problems to human error and network failures.

Backups alone are just not enough, so retailers must implement additional safety and security protocols to prepare and protect all important data.

A Holistic Strategy

A holistic strategy is required to protect your digital assets from malware. The essential elements, that should form part of every business owner's cyber security strategy, include:

1. Employees, the first line of defense: Employees are the most vulnerable part, of any implemented cyber security pro-

"Use a sandbox environment to detonate emails with bad attachments or content."



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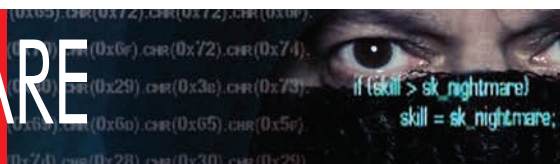
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RANSOMWARE



gram. They often invite ransomware attacks when they click on compromised e-mails. Furthermore, their browsing practices also make them the ideal target of ransomware programmers and cybercriminals. It is important that retail furniture owners provide regular means of training so that the potential attack risks can be mitigated.

"Apply the 3-2-1 strategy when creating backups.

Three copies of data on two different types of storage devices, with one being located off-site."

2. Systems must be continuously upgraded: keeping retail systems upgraded is one of the most effective ways of protecting digital assets against ransomware attacks. This means updating your OS and patching up your drivers with the latest software in a timely manner.

3. Follow right practices when implementing data backup systems: Follow the right practices during the creation and maintenance of data backup

systems. Apply the 3-2-1 strategy when creating backups (three copies of data on two different types of storage devices, with one being located off-site. Also, schedule weekly or monthly recovery runs to ensure that your backup system is functional and running. Regularly monitor and sort the stored data to prevent redundant storage.

4. Invest in a cyber security solution: Investing in a solution that protects you against pernicious e-mails, dangerous internet traffic and monitors threats to internal network security will help thwart or eliminate the possibility of going down when hit by ransomware attacks.

Long-term goals should be to look for a system that includes the following features:

- A sandbox environment to detonate e-mails with bad attachments or content.
- Internet web filtration that takes care of access while working within a corporate network.
- Desktop and mobile device protection strategies to eliminate the vulnerability risk of getting infected.

the lookout to exploit every vulnerability in your computer systems in 2018.

Now is the time to pay attention to insuring your business against data loss. Data backup is an option worth exercising, but it is just not enough as a stand-alone solution. A comprehensive cyber security strategy is required.

About Amitesh Sinha: Amitesh Sinha is a technology consultant based in North America. With over 20 years of experience developing and deploying solutions for retail, Sinha has gained a reputation for home furnishing software solutions, furniture software, POS furniture software, and re-engineering of software with extended features. His company, iConnect offers business technology solutions that integrate with most systems to make them more efficient and user-friendly.

For more information about this article or any technology question contact Amitesh at 703-471-3964, amitesh@iconnectgroup.com or www.iconnectgroup.com.

Sources /Footnotes: 1) <https://www.forbes.com>, 2) <https://www.knowbe4.com/aids-trojan>, 3) <http://bit.ly/2spT3h1>, 4) <http://bit.ly/2sTw1AS>, 5) <http://bit.ly/1Qgx25L>, 6) <http://bit.ly/2rUSSHh>, 7) <http://ubm.io/2rQG6yk>, 8) <http://bit.ly/2sVtSg>, 9) <http://bayareane.ws/2sAKheS>, 10) <http://bit.ly/2sq0LHY>, 11) <http://bit.ly/2m5o9Zo>, 12) <http://bit.ly/2sqhOK7>.

The Bottom Line

Ransomware programmers and cybercriminals will be actively on

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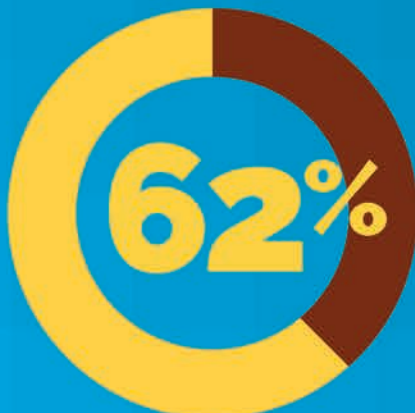


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BOSTON INTERIORS

Retailer stays focused on who they are!

by Janet Holt-Johnstone

Stefanie Lucas wants Boston Interiors' customers to feel like they are "shopping with their best friend".

The City of Boston shares its nickname with Philadelphia, the "Athens of America". Within its environs there's a heady mix of academia, venture capitalists, assorted internationalists and the vibrant presence of hi-tech entities. It is most definitely a global city. In fact, Boston is amongst the top 30 most economically powerful cities in the world.

So challenges abound, and there are those brave souls in the home furnishings industry who truly enjoy challenge, who actually reach out to grasp Boston and the centers within its purview wholeheartedly. Others have discovered it almost accidentally and found their niche.

It was back in 1979 that Boston Interiors' founder Ken Loring found a new career direction in waterbeds. In time, he opened a store in Brookline Village, Massachusetts named Boston Bedroom to reflect product expansion beyond waterbeds. As store selection grew even more, its name evolved into Boston Interiors.

For 30 years, Ken, with his wife, Mal, who directed merchandising, grew the business, created the brand and were great at what they did. They were joined in time by their son

and daughter who stayed with them as Vice President, Merchandising until the sale of the business in 2016.

Growth To Top 100

What had been one store multiplied into seven successful retail out

"This is a challenging time for traditional home furnishings retailers because they must keep up with the way consumers want to shop. Traditional big box retail stores with rows and rows of furniture are not enough."

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RETAIL PROFILE

lets. After Brookline Village, the first in 1985 in the town of Hanover, Natick was opened, then Westboro, Mashpee, Stoughton, Saugus and finally, in 2014, Brookline. That year they hit the Top 100 List with estimated sales of \$44.5 million.

That same year Stefanie Lucas entered the Boston Interiors' scene as its new CEO, and led the launch of their brilliant new catalogue. Ken remained Chairman and a member of Boston Interiors' Board of Advisors. He said of Stefanie, "The company is fortunate to have found and hired such an experienced CEO with an impressive background in both the retail and wholesale furniture business. We feel Stefanie has the talent and skill to guide the company over many years and to build on our success to date."

We were talking about challenges? Early in her career, Stefanie

co-founded an ad agency, affirming her skills in marketing and brand building and working with a wide range of clients. When the agency was sold, she jumped into the role of Director of Marketing with Chico's Casual Clothing. It was a publicly traded women's fashion chain based in Florida and, during her tenure, the company grew from "about 60 stores to about 120" locations across the U.S. "One of the most successful specialty retailers in the industry based on top sales per square foot and overall profitability."

Next in the Boston area, Stefanie joined Reebok International, working her way to the position of Vice President of Global Marketing, the Rockport brand, around the world. She interacted with top retailers like Nordstrom, Macy's and led promotional initiatives, partnerships with Sony Pictures, Nissan, CARE, and

was responsible for marketing in 29 countries.

Ten years ago she was recruited into Rowe Furniture's management group, and fit well into the SVP position, leading all marketing, sales and merchandising. Then Rowe was bought by Sun Capital Partners. Stefanie became President and CEO. She worked closely with many home furnishings retailers during her nine year tenure at Rowe, including Pottery Barn, Haverty's, Scandinavian Design and, Boston Interiors!

Stephanie spent two years with HTL International centered in Singapore, a \$500 million dollar global furniture company. She helped them improve growth and business strategy in the North American market as well as head Domicil, their luxury brand, wholesale and retail, based in Germany.

Boston Interiors was sold to both

Pictured below is a rendering of the new 21,000 square foot Boston Interiors store in Bedford, New Hampshire, their eighth location and the first outside Massachusetts.



"We don't want to carry something just because a competitor does, or try to beat a competitor just on price. We think we have a special kind of store and we stay focused on who we are."



CEO Stefanie Lucas

private equity investors and key management including, of course, challenge-seeker Stefanie Lucas.

Stefanie agrees that "Boston has some of the biggest competition in the furniture category of all the cities in the U.S. I don't mind competition because I think it is good for the marketplace and good for consumers."

Image & Personality

We heard that Boston Interiors had received special recognition. She's proud they've been voted "Best of Boston" in several local publications over the years.

"What we focus on, to stand out, is really our own image and personality and staying true to that. We don't want to carry something just because a competitor does, or try to beat a competitor just on price. We think we have a special kind of store (s) and we stay focused on who we are. Every single customer may not want to shop us and that's

OK, but for the ones we appeal to, we think we are the best."

In February this year, Stefanie announced the opening of a new 21,000 square foot store in Bedford, New Hampshire, their eighth location and the first outside Massachusetts, "We know we have a strong customer base to the north, so Bedford is a great location for us and we feel that the community will love having access to a Boston Interiors store close to them."

This was followed by another new store in Dedham, Massachusetts, 16,000 square feet, in the Legacy Place Shopping Center in the Boston metro area. "This very mature, high traffic shopping center hosts many great retailers and we know we'll be in good company.

"This is huge for us this year! With the new ownership of the company comes a tremendous emphasis on growth. We are very fortunate to be an extremely profitable retailer. Now we want to spread this effort

into new growth and we have the funding behind us to do this. Next year we will be looking for additional growth."

Outdoor Category

And a brand new outdoor furniture line was launched in March, just in time for the busy summer season. Unique, painted designs, customizable in dozens of finishes and colors, the line is made in the United States and ships quickly with roughly a four-week lead-time. Other designs include modern styling with elements like concrete resin, teak and wovens. Said Stefanie, "Our customers have been asking for outdoor furniture, especially in our coastal locations, so we're happy to be able to fulfill this need for them. And because more and more people are using outdoor spaces for entertaining on a regular basis, we also see a need for more unique looks in this category."

Dedication to Sustainability

Yet another announcement, in conjunction with Boston Interiors' sustainability efforts and total design offerings, Stefanie expressed her excitement about their new paint collection. Low-emission, the paint uses recycled, chlorine-free packaging and other environmentally conscious practices. The line, 128 colors, is available to order in all their stores as well as online. "The reason we went into this venture is because we so often help people with the design of their home, and color is such an important part of the mood of the home. It really grounds the design overall. We can pick fabrics, wood finishes, shapes and sizes, but the walls surrounding everything make a huge difference! We often are asked our opinion on paint color, so it made sense to add this to our assortment. We

also wanted to make it easy for our customers to actually get the paint, rather than having to comb through rows of colors at their local hardware store. The beauty of this program is that we have the paint color cards in our stores, customers can match it right to their furniture, then the paint ships directly to their doorstep in a matter of days. So it is very simple. And we are happy to say it's also eco-friendly!

"We became members of the Sustainable Furniture Council a couple of years ago and we are serious about our efforts. Whenever possible we buy from SFC Certified Suppliers and we do things internally to focus on our own responsibility, including major recycling programs, our tie-in to 'One Percent for the Planet'*¹, buying recycled goods for re-sale, mattress recycle programs and printing our catalogue on recycled stock."

Marketing: Boston Interiors

Stefanie's demographic target? "We focus on women ages 35-54 as a traditional advertising target, however, we really see a wider scope to our audience so it depends on where we are 'talking' to them.

"We have a great in-house team of marketers including creative, photography, PR, social media, e-commerce, online marketing and direct mail. We use an outside agency for traditional things such as TV, but our in-house team is closest to our business and can be very proactive in pushing what works for our communications.

"Probably our favorite means to communicate with our customers

Pictured below is the "Oceanside" dining group, private labeled for Boston Interiors.

"More people are using
outdoor spaces for entertaining on a regular basis, we see a need for more unique looks in this category."



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"We often are asked our opinion on paint color, so it made sense to add paint to our assortment. We also wanted to make it easy for our customers to actually get the paint."

is to talk directly to our Boston Interiors' customer base, such as through e-mail or direct mail, to the people who know us and already love us. They are a great group of people who appreciate what we do and offer, and we so appreciate them back!

"Our catalogue is also a top priority for us as it is the best way to showcase our look and feel to people visually. We often have people come into one of our stores and say 'I'll take this grouping just the way it looks in this photo'... and that is the biggest compliment we could get! We mail it, plus we have it online for customers to see on our website.

"Advertising has and is changing so much so I don't think there is one simple answer as to how we

break through the clutter of advertising within the "big city" marketplace. We use a mix of media and have grown things like our online presence to shift with changing consumer habits. To break through that clutter we, as always, try to be consistent with our brand and our personality. We like to think we are friendly, approachable and hopefully inspiring, so we will put everything through this filter before we implement it."

And their website. "Our website was redesigned a few years ago with the help of our ad agency. We do, however, run the majority of it with our in-house team, experts at e-commerce, social marketing and online marketing. We continue to evolve the site and are working on new things now to continue to

make it more and more robust. This is a big growth area for us and we recognize that consumers want to buy furniture in the place that is most convenient for them. We know that most times they come to our stores for large purchases yet, even if they did a store visit, they may choose to make their final decision from home. And that is fine with us. We want to be anywhere our consumer wants us to be.

"We started our online sales efforts quite a few years ago and this continues to grow very rapidly for us. When we sell on-line, we offer to ship anywhere in the U.S."

Customer Service

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The Boston Interiors' team volunteers at Rosie's Place (at left), a women's homeless shelter. This ties in with Boston Interiors' desire to give everyone a place they can call home and feel safe.



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"I do not think there is one simple answer as to how we break through the clutter of advertising within the 'big city' marketplace."

Pictured is Boston Interiors' Burlington store's cash wrap area, with pendant lighting detail. "Boston Interiors," says Stephanie Lucas, "offers a range of levels of help, from in-store assistance to at-home assistance. We have a wide range of people who respond. It is not really a specific demographic but more psychographic, based on who feels comfortable with design and who feels like they want help."

vice. "We do, of course, have a strong customer service team. We have an extremely good record of keeping our quality issues to a bare minimum. As part of this effort, we're one of the few retailers in the country that inspect every single piece of furniture before it goes out the door. We do not just inspect one out of dozens or the first run of product. We check EVERYTHING, and I think this attention to detail allows us to stand out as a leader in delivering top quality products to

our customers. In all of my years in the industry I have never seen this attention to quality."

Inspiration & Display

A quality statement naturally leads to an overall vision. Says Stefanie, "We are a beautifully curated collection of comfortable, livable furniture that will inspire your home. I think that sort of captures the essence of what we do. Hopefully we show this in our stores.

"Our own creative inspiration comes from lots of places, not just one place or one person. But I will say that the gathering of this inspiration is really important to me, personally, in pulling together the vision of our stores and the products that we offer. On the manufacturing side of the business, you have the luxury of being ultra creative in your showroom because it is just that, a short-term show-

room. But when you are working with a store, you have to take all of these creative ideas that you have collected and find a way to pull it all together in an inspiring manner, but also a realistic manner. In a way that someone could actually see it in their home. This means that we start the process at the truly inspirational, trend-defining level. Then we edit it down to our personality and ultimately curate a collection that we see as on-trend, beautiful and also very livable. What I see many retailers do is take the inspiration they may have seen but be very afraid to keep that in their store. And they tend to go down to a very 'safe' level of display. Ultimately, I think consumers coming into your store want to be inspired the same way we, as buyers, want to be inspired, so we are careful not to lose that something special. Or should I say, we are careful to FIND that something special and be sure we show that to our customers."

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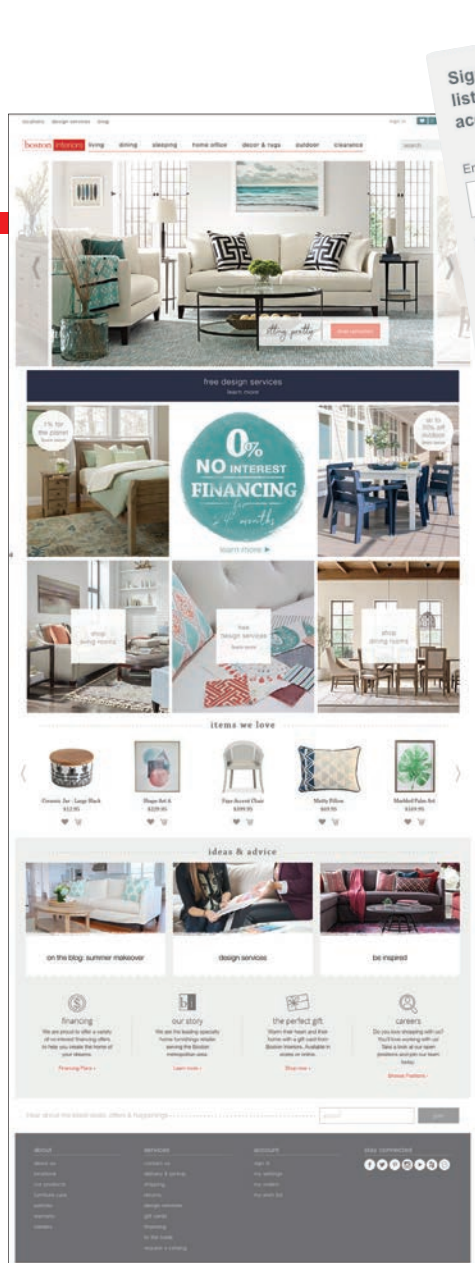
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An invitation (above) pops up on a first visit to the www.bostoninteriors.com site offering a subscription to a VIP email and 20% off an accessory. Customers who respond are put on Boston Interiors' mailing list to receive a catalog and exclusive offers. The home page has lots of information and places to click including information on financing, additional savings, "items we love", "ideas and advice", design services, inspiration and much more.

gram for new sales associates which lasts for weeks of detailed preparation. We have a great internal trainer who works with each person side by side and that follows with in-store training.

"Much of our in-store team has a design background and truly loves interior design and what they do. They are passionate about design and are not just sales people. Our design services are truly important to our store experience. We offer a range of levels of help, from in-store assistance to at-home assistance. We have a wide range of people who respond. It is not really a specific demographic but more psychographic, based on who feels comfortable with design and who feels like they want help. There is a wide range who are also in the middle who just need assistance with ideas or colors, or a specific piece. But we want to

offer the level of help that someone feels most comfortable with, without any pressure. We like to think we can help bring their ideas and their thoughts to life at an even better level than they may have imagined."

Stefanie acknowledges that "We do standardize our product training because we definitely want everyone in our stores to know our products inside and out. As for style, however, that is personal. We encourage our team to be creative and to use their personality to connect with their customers. Often times, that connection becomes a longer term customer relationship or even a friendship which is wonderful!"

Buying & Trends

An up and coming product cat-

Sales & Design Team

"This is a never-ending challenge for our interior design team because we always want to stay fresh. Therefore, what we may have done last year now has to be even better. Accessorizing is critical to us and I think that when I see the growth in that category of sales for us (which has been tremendous!) we are proving we do a good job of this.

"We have a stellar training pro-

"We encourage our team to be creative and to use their personality to connect with their customers. Often times, that connection becomes a longer term customer relationship or even a friendship."

STAYING FOCUSED | BOSTON INTERIORS

egory? "I think that accent chairs are something that may have been underutilized by consumers in the past and that the more people move away from set groupings (matching sets) to eclectic looks, the more accent chairs with pattern or color will come into play. Style trend-wise, I see the definition of media pieces being completely opened up and no longer so defined. What people are using to place a TV on or put under a TV

is so different than it was 10 years ago and I think this is a great thing for opening up creative solutions."

And the exceedingly important role of store buyer. "I think furniture buyers stand out when they are passionate and have a left brain-right brain balance. I know lots of buyers that just buy looking at numbers but, to me, you also have to have a great eye and love what you do. I think everyone on our merchandising team truly has this kind of pas-

"We're one of the few retailers in the country that inspect every single piece of furniture before it goes out the door."



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David Miller
The Man in the Iron Mask (1938)

Brian Griffin was born in Birmingham, UK in 1948. He studied photography at Birmingham Polytechnic. He began his career in 1973 in London as a fashion photographer, moving to his own studio, Iron, Management. He has since won the "Young British Photographer" award in 1993. In 1997 he received "Honorary Citizen of Arts & Design" award and published his book "What's in a Mask" with a foreword from the National Portrait Gallery. "What's in a Mask" was awarded the Best Photography book in the World at the British Museum Photography Awards in 1999. The Grifin Company purchased him to be "The Photographer of the Decade", "Life" magazine and the photograph "The Iron Mask" was one of the most successful photographs of the 1990's.

From 1999 until 2001 Brian Griffin was the TV commercial, music videos, short films, and published contemporary art and fashion magazine, before in 2001 (Griffin) moved to London, UK.



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RETAIL PROFILE



Rendering of the interior of the new Bedford, New Hampshire store.

"The more people move away from set groupings to eclectic looks, the more accent chairs with pattern or color will come into play."

sion for our business and, as they grow over time, it gets stronger and stronger. I hope I can give the team some of that inspiration and vision for our company and where we are going in the future. Right now, with two new stores opening this year, I think everyone is very excited about our future and giving it their all to help us be successful."

Curated Selections

In the highly competitive arena of bedding, Stefanie commented, "We offer bedding in all of our stores because the bedroom cat-

egory is important to us. We may never have as wide a selection as a dedicated mattress store but we have a vast enough selection to give our customers solid choices with excellent quality and very fair pricing. Knowing this, we also can make it very convenient to put the whole package together, furniture and mattress, for our customers, so they do not have to sift through dozens and dozens. Again, a great pre-edited collection, making the process simple and pleasant.

Beyond The Furniture Industry

"As I think about products that we carry and what consumers may want, I often find inspiration NOT in the furniture industry. Fabrics, colors, patterns, often come from what I see in apparel and fashion trends, then we determine how to edit that for your home. I never think your home should be 'trendy', but people want to look current, they want their home to be a current statement on their take on fashion.

"I love to travel and see what furniture retailers are doing around the world. Often you can find inspiration in places like the desert or the sea. Boston Interiors is certainly close to the sea, but we need to find ways of taking coastal influences and making them unique. Everyone does not want to live with overt coastal things like anchors or starfish, but most everyone loves the feeling you get from the beach. We look for things that are airy, serene, fresh. These are things that appeal to everyone, I think.

"I often get asked if I think Boston Interiors stores could be anywhere else, I suppose because of our name. But I think that what we offer goes way beyond New England. Our concept, our product, our environment, I believe is the way people want to shop. So we see the brand certainly having the ability to go beyond our current geographic locations."

Community Outreach

Our conversation with Stefanie



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"Our favorite means to communicate with customers

is to talk directly to our customer base, such as through e-mail or direct mail, to the people who know us and already love us."

turned to Boston Interiors' outreach programs. "We began a relationship with Rosie's Place, a women's homeless shelter, years ago, through our founders. The basic reason for our tie-in to them, aside from them being a very strong charitable organization in the Boston area, is that they help in finding people homes and stability in their lives. As a furniture company, we want to tie into the very basic need of everyone deserving a place they can call home and feel safe. Rosie's focus is on this mission.

"In addition to Rosie's Place, over the last couple of years we have expanded our charitable giving to two other areas. One is with 'One Percent For The Planet'. We feel a responsibility, especially these days, in being aware of our environment and the footprint we leave behind. When we do a promotion with 'One Percent For The Planet' we highlight lots of products that we buy using sustainable materials, recycled materials and things bought from suppliers that are part of these efforts such as SFC Certified Vendors. And then we give support back through this

percent of sales. It is a small effort, but we feel every little bit helps.

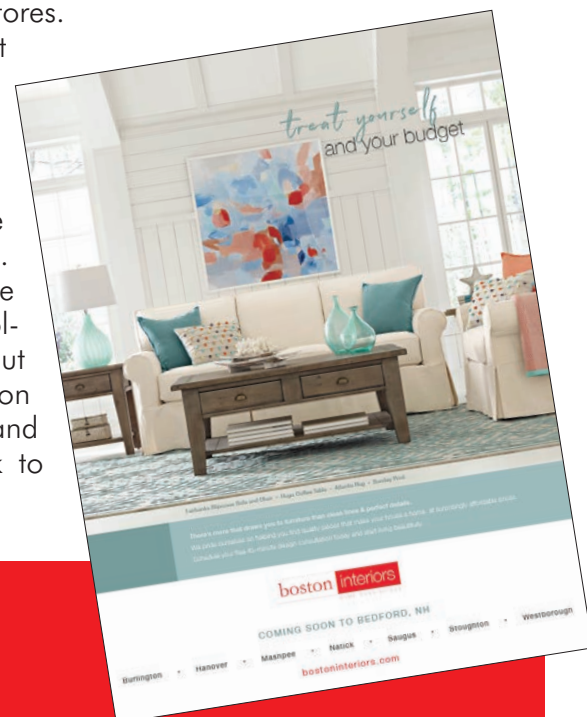
"Lastly, we have begun to support organizations related to cancer research. Sadly, we had several women in our company over the past year who were going through cancer treatment and it really hit home. Cancer touches almost everyone in one way or another and anything we can do to help research or cure-finding efforts we see as an all-important responsibility also."

Corporate Culture

"I cannot say enough positive things about our team in the stores. I was at an event last night and I told someone what I do. They, along with the two people next to them said, 'Oh, I love Boston Interiors!' I get that response all the time and it is because of our team. Sure, our products need to be right and our service and follow-up need to be stellar, but it all starts with the interaction between our team members and the customer and I go back to

what I said earlier... we want it to feel like you are shopping with your best friend. That is not an easy thing to achieve. It is so much about culture and a feeling you get in the stores. That is what makes us who we are and what makes me so proud to be part of Boston Interiors."

We focused on the future of the home furnishings industry. "I think this is a challenging time for traditional home furnishings retailers because they must keep up with the way consumers want to shop. Traditional big box retail stores with rows and rows of furniture are not



Headline for the Bedford, NH store opening reads, "Treat yourself and your budget". The ad offers a free 45 - minute design consultation, plus identifies the featured items; Fairbanks Slipcover Sofa and Chair, Hugo Coffee Table, Atlantis Rug and Sunday Print. Boston Interiors believes in promoting the Boston Interiors name and that their collection is a reflection of our brand, not someone else's."

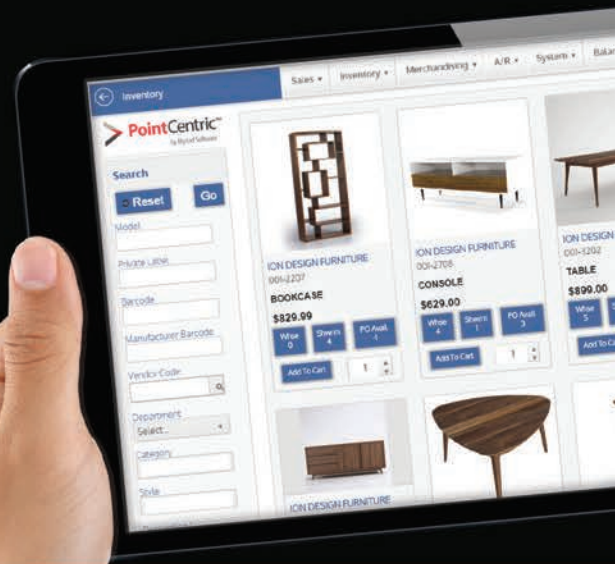
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"Style trend-wise

I see the definition of media pieces being completely opened up and no longer so defined."

enough. Especially with the huge millennial group of consumers who are so used to buying online and buying just the way they want it.

"The days of buying furniture for the rest of your life, with many trips to many stores, may be over. Consumers now think differently about how they purchase and what they purchase. They do not want any less quality, however, they are very happy to mix and match, to continue to 'build' on their purchases, to be always seeking newness and freshness in their home... and they want to be inspired! This is very positive for our category as long as we evolve as an industry.

"I see Boston Interiors' concept as a particular way of shopping that I think many people like/prefer. I think that our footprint, our style, our pre-curated collection, our service, all have the ability to continue

to grow and to attract consumers all over... perhaps into other markets beyond just New England. I think this is an exciting time for us because we are so focused on growth!"

Stefanie laughed, "I came into the furniture industry with an apparel and footwear background, and I have often been asked about the differences. Other than getting my hand slapped for calling a sofa a 'couch', I've been lucky! Yes, there are the nuts and bolts of the furniture 'product' side of the business that one needs to know, but the reality is that there are a lot of similarities.

The Emotional Side

"When I started working in this business I still saw the very emotional side of buying furniture and

sometimes I think manufacturers and retailers forget about this. It is scary to decorate your home. It is a major reflection of one's self on display for their closest family and friends to see and the biggest obstacle we face in getting people to buy is fear of making a mistake. As a retailer, we try to make them feel comfortable with their purchase. That is why the environment, the people helping them, the relaxed experience, is so important. Price becomes secondary. And our industry so often forgets this."

**One Percent for the Planet is an international organization founded by Yvon Chouinard and Craig Mathews in 2002 to "encourage more businesses to donate one percent of sales to environmental groups". Defined "Issue Categories" include alternative transportation, climate change, energy and resource extraction, environmental education, environmental law and justice, environment and human health, food, land pollution, water and wildlife. For more information see <http://www.onepercentfortheplanet.org>.*



Pictured are some of Boston Interiors' private label brands Regatta, Carmel, and Monroe.

The image features a close-up of the rear of a classic car, likely a 1950s Ford, with a white upper body and a teal lower body. The car's rear window, taillight, and a portion of the rear wheel are visible. The background is a large, slightly blurred American flag. Overlaid on the car is the text 'AMERICAN MANUFACTURING' in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. Below this, in a smaller, regular black sans-serif font, is the text 'Special advertising section for retailers looking for the best home furnishings with significant Made In America content.'

AMERICAN MANUFACTURING

Special advertising section for retailers looking for the best home furnishings with significant Made In America content.

CRAFTMASTER: Still Growing and Proud to be Made in America!

Taylorsville, North Carolina-based Craftmaster Furniture recently added more than 100 new jobs as it continues to expand its employee base in recent years. As president and CEO Roy Calcagne is proud to say, all this is possible because the company has made a firm commitment to produce its product line here in North Carolina. "Craftmaster has been building upholstered products here for over 45 years. With a dedicated work force of nearly 700 local residents, we build our furniture with pride and a focus on quality. We are committed to developing fashion forward styles in popular price points, backed by our short lead times and outstanding service."

As a leading manufacturer of moderately priced, custom-order upholstery, Craftmaster continues to celebrate its Made in America status, and use it as a platform for growth.

"There's definitely a shift back to domestically made upholstery products among many of our more than 1,200 retail dealers," Calcagne notes. Domestically produced upholstery offers dealers full custom-order capability with much shorter lead times than imported products. At Craftmaster, they're able to offer consumers a handcrafted upholstered product in over 120 sofa styles, 100 different chair options with more than 1,000 fabrics from which to choose. "Fifty percent of the time an order that

comes through our factory is for a custom fabric," Calcagne explains. "And typically we are able to ship that order in two to three weeks."

"We are proud of the work ethic here in Alexander County, NC. We build a product that is second to none in our price range. The caliber of the workmanship and the quality controls we have put in place make Craftmaster upholstery one of the best values in the industry," Calcagne adds. "Today, the Made in the USA label means a lot to consumers. Many have felt the impact of American job losses directly. When weighing the options in terms of value, look, comfort and style, many prefer to buy American." With Craftmaster



upholstered product, there's the added benefit of having a custom piece of furniture that's actually been made by hand in North Carolina.

"We use all hardwood lumber or hardwood laminates in our frame construction, we utilize a 2.0 density foam cushion now across all product categories (previously only the better collections had this high quality cushion), we are EFEC registered by the AHFA and have Earthcare Inside components, which is a measure of our con-

tinued environmental commitment."

Branded Lifestyle Collections

The company is well known for producing American-made upholstery for the Paula Deen and Rachael Ray Home Collections. These collections represent the better end of the Craftmaster line with higher styled frames and fabrics, blend down and pocketed coil cushioning and the marketing power behind two of the best known celebrity chefs in America.

In addition to their very successful branded collections, Craftmaster segments the balance of their product line by lifestyle. The more fashion forward Artisan Home, New Traditions, and last market's huge hit, the Farmhouse Collection, are targeted to the \$999-\$1299 retail price points. Design Options is the fully customizable sofa and sectional program where the consumer can create their own style and configurations. The Affordable Fun and Craftmaster Essentials Collections are in the more moderate price points but feature the same quality construction features of the upper end lines.

"We proudly call attention to our Made in America distinction on our web site, promotional materials, hang tags, labels and warranty cards," Calcagne adds. "There's a great deal of patriotism out there, and we appeal to those consumers who want to buy American. We humbly consider Craftmaster one of the best custom order upholstery companies in the country at an affordable price point."

For more information, please visit www.cmfurniture.com.

Join us at October market!

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BORKHOLDER FURNITURE: Authentic Amish Craftsmanship Meets Fashion-Forward Design

As You Sow...

"When Ola Yoder hired me as vice president of Borkholder Furniture," remembers industry sales and marketing veteran Tom Halvorsen, "Ola said, 'Tom, I don't want to be the best Amish furniture company, I want to be the best furniture company. Period.' "

Most would have considered such a statement a lofty goal, especially since at the time, solid wood, bench-made, domestically produced case goods had largely disappeared from the furniture industry. But Halvorsen knew that Yoder, the CEO of Kountry Wood Products, a leading kitchen and bath cabinetry maker based in Nappanee, IN, sensed a growing trend. It was one that many larger furniture enterprises had missed in their race to the bottom manufacturing product overseas: A desire among consumers for heirloom-quality, solid wood products made in America.

Halvorsen quickly re-imag-

ined the Amish furniture business model, engaging world-class furniture designers and award-winning marketers to work with Borkholder's talented Amish craftspeople. "The Amish can build anything," relates Mike Lemert, general manager, Borkholder Furniture. "Our approach has been to guide their hands with a fashion-forward direction while retaining our integrity, authenticity and philosophy," agrees furniture designer Catina Roscoe, president of the American Society of Furniture Designers.

...So Shall You Reap

Less than three years later, the approach has paid off with a product line of fresh, transitional and soft modern styles that appeal to a target demographic that understands quality. The industry is taking notice. At the High Point Market, one of Roscoe's designs for Borkholder, the Aero Dining Collection, will be honored as a 2017 Pinnacle Award Finalist in the Casual Dining Category. The Fall 2017 High Point Market also marks Borkholder Furniture's status as an Approved Vendor Partner of the Furniture Marketing Group (FMG); a first for an Amish company.

Also at Market, Borkholder will unveil Roscoe's latest design, the Local Harvest Collection.

Buyers and interior designers who visit Borkholder's showroom (IHFC H1103) will see that Local Harvest plays to the "preference infused throughout today's culture for organic, natural, handcrafted products that support local resources. Rendered in solid Red Oak in a burnished honey tone finish called Barley, and a rich, dark finish called Onyx, Local Harvest interprets the enthusiasm for the 'Farm to Table' movement in a crafted furniture experience for the home. Our collection is an expression of casual contemporary farmhouse with traces of Scandinavian influence. It includes hip, multi-functional pieces like a gate leg table, work island and bookcase crafted in powder-coated steel and Red Oak that are as simply delicious, fresh and appealing as the Farm to Table concept would imply," Roscoe describes.

"In keeping with the theme, Local Harvest features a variety of versatile table offerings, highlighted by the Community Rectangular Table, a longer, narrower version of conventional dining tables inspired by the popularity of communal dining," Halvorsen says. "Like all Borkholder furniture, the collection was created to appeal to a new generation of shoppers with eclectic tastes. Each design builds upon the last with style references that can be expressed as cottage, coastal, rustic, industrial and Scandinavian modern farmhouse to suit. This makes it easy to 'intermingle' the pieces with other Borkholder collections or furniture that consumers already own."



Pictured is Borkholder Furniture's Local Harvest table designed by Catina Roscoe, President of ASFD.

We're Aiming Higher

Borkholder Furniture is different by design. Pairing world-class designers with talented Amish craftspeople, we build heirloom quality, solid wood furniture the old-fashioned way, in the heartland of America. Our aim is not to be known as the leading Amish furniture maker, but as a leading furniture manufacturer by any measure.

This Market, come meet our team and see why we've been named both a 2017 Pinnacle Award Finalist and the newest Approved Vendor Partner of the FMG Buying Group.

Aero Casual Dining designed by Catina Roscoe for Borkholder Furniture



High Point Market, IHFC Space H1103

352 Shawnee Street, Nappanee, IN 46550 • 574-773-4083 • www.borkholderfurniture.com

LEGENDS FURNITURE

A "MADE IN THE USA" SUCCESS STORY

Legends Furniture's "Made in the USA" roots go back to the '80's when, like several other American success stories, its young founder, Rick Schmidgall, started his company in a garage.

In this case, that garage was in Phoenix, Arizona, and rather than computers, the hot new products were water beds. By 1990, demand had fizzled but rather than accept defeat, this entrepreneur determined a new use for his craftsmen and facility, adapting their proven frame-building skills to the production of consoles, stylishly designed to house and showcase the latest in the burgeoning field of entertainment technology.

Flash forward 27 years and Legends' truly American success story includes widespread recognition as a leader in the entertainment category with subsequent expansion into bedroom, occasional and home office lines. With the purchase of 26 acres of rezoned farmland in 2005, they built a manufacturing facility and warehouse in Tolleson, Arizona, which recently doubled in size to 240,000 square feet to accommodate the growth in domestic sales.



Another warehouse in Lexington, NC, with more than 200,000 available square feet, facilitates a quick 10 to 14-day delivery of their domestic products to retail customers on the East coast.

More than 60% of Legends' furniture is made in the USA through a unique "production cell" process. The company gained industry attention when it introduced the "Kaizen" or Toyota Production System over ten years ago as an alternative to the typical production line. Legends' continuous improvement approach empowers multiple teams of craftsmen who work together, one piece at a time, in a system

Legends Furniture is 100% designed in the USA to stay on trend with the styles that generate top sales for their retail partners.

that instills accountability and pride in accomplishment while maximizing quality and improving efficiency. Legends developed an import program in 2001 when so many US manufacturers were moving their operations overseas and maintains a warehouse in Vietnam and a team of QC and operations employees.

Legends Furniture is 100% designed in the USA to stay on trend with the styles that generate top sales for their retail partners. Veteran American designer Stephanie Lena has recently joined the team as Director of Merchandising and Product Development and will be unveiling her new collections and Made in the USA selections at **Legends' new showroom at C-601 in the Commerce Building in the International Home Furnishings Center in High Point this Fall.**





LEGENDS

FURNITURE

Legends Showroom | C-601 | Commerce Building | International Home Furnishings Center | High Point, NC

NORWALK FURNITURE: Whatever it Takes!

Since its founding in 1902, Norwalk Furniture has seen changes in methods, names, locations and ownerships. What has not changed is its dedication to quality craftsmanship, team of fine artisans, strong suppliers, loyal customers and its local community.

Originally called Galpin & Gerken, the company was created to manufacture seats for horse drawn carriages in Toledo, Ohio. In 1919, Ed Gerken moved the company to Norwalk and renamed it Norwalk Upholstering Company. Mr. Gerken's entrepreneurial spirit has lived on through succeeding generations and continues today.

In 2008, 12 extraordinary families came together to make sure that the tradition of excellence continues by purchasing the company. With the mandate to create more jobs in the community and to be a strong industry citizen, Norwalk maintains its national competitive presence by employing over 200 people in its 440,000 sq.

ft. plant and showroom in Ohio and, in trade shows in High Point, Las Vegas, Dallas and Atlanta. Norwalk partners with better retailers and designers who serve the home furnishings market.

Adapting & Changing

Norwalk owes its success to a progression of visionary leaders who have adapted to changing market conditions.

From its humble beginnings making carriage seats, to changing production to create materials for the war effort in WW II, to displaying products in national trade shows, to launching a national franchise system or partnering with celebrity designers, Norwalk has looked for innovative ways to meet changing customer and consumer needs.

"Whatever it takes", the Norwalk motto, is the key to meeting the ever-changing needs, tastes and buying habits of its retail partners and fashion conscious consumers.

Sustainable and Local

The Norwalk team uses sustainable manufacturing practices, striving to source raw materials

as close to home as possible. Reclaimed steel springs come from nearby Indiana, as does its "flame-retardant free" foam cushions sourced from responsible suppliers. Whenever possible, textiles are sourced domestically. And, Norwalk is a proud member of the Sustainable Furniture Council.

Norwalk's Secret Sauce

More than 100 years after its founding, Norwalk Furniture continues to be an innovative producer of trend setting, quality custom-made upholstered furniture. The caring, skill and spirit of the Norwalk Furniture team is the secret sauce. This is evident to anyone who visits the Norwalk facility where observing the hard work and dedication of skilled artisans is like watching the performance of a fine orchestra. It has taken many years and great skill to conduct that "symphony". The effort pays off every day in each unique, handcrafted and stylish piece that is created.

Looking to the future, Norwalk is working to adapt new technologies and innovations to capture the hearts and minds of the 80 million millennials as they reach prime buying age for purchasing better goods, while still striving to create successful solutions for the design oriented customer and consumer.

We encourage you to stop at Norwalk's showroom while at market (IHFC M108), and please visit NorwalkFurniture.com.

Pictured below is a furniture framer, working at the plant in Norwalk, OH. Each piece is unique, handcrafted, stylish and exceptional.



"Staying on the leading edge of design."



NORWALK FURNITURE

100 Furniture Parkway, Norwalk, OH
High Point Market, IHFC Main 108
Las Vegas Design Center, Bldg A, Space 225



NorwalkFurniture.com
419.744.3200

OMNIA: American Integrity - No Boundaries!

Known for high quality American Made upholstery, Omnia Leather crafts an extensive line of motion and stationary upholstery with integrity and family pride. This family-owned manufacturer founded in 1989, is located in Chino, California. Its 180,000 square foot manufacturing facility houses more than 300 multi-talented employees. Many of them have been with Omnia since its inception, creating hand-crafted custom upholstery for retailers and designers nationwide.

Omnia retailers, some who have carried the line for over 20 years, benefit from the value and breadth of Omnia's product line. They find that the line's American-made story is very important to consumers.

"Omnia retailers find that the American-made story is very important to their consumers."



Omnia's headquarters in Chino, CA

Style Is In Our DNA

"The core elements of Omnia's designs are timeless style, high quality components, personalized comfort options and American craftsmanship," says Omnia's President, Peter Zolferino. "These elements are built into the DNA of our entire company." Our extensive array of styles, available in only 100% top grain leathers and fine fabrics, appeal to a wide cross-section of consumers. We give them the freedom to create looks and levels of comfort that speak to their individual tastes and lifestyles."

Power Solutions

Most recently, Omnia has added precision power tilt headrests and power buttons with USB ports. Omnia has responded to the growth of the power motion category with a unique program that integrates a choice of arm and leg styles on Power Solutions sofas, sectionals and recliners. The program also features a very sleek power chaise. These styles are available in stationary as well, making the program attractive to retailers who can maximize their square footage dollars with a small array of SKUs floored.

New Ergo Line

The Ergo Collection, a brand new category for Omnia was introduced at the summer Las Vegas

Market.

Omnia introduced three new chair styles with matching ottomans; Big Sur, Pismo Beach and Santa Monica. The style names bring to mind the California-based company's roots, while the chair's Scandinavian styling, ergonomics and comfort story resonate strongly with dealers. The Ergo chair and ottoman combo are available in all of Omnia's 100% top grain and embossed leathers. Consumers now have the flexibility to add coordinating Ergo chairs to room groupings that include Omnia's sofas and sectionals.

As a founding member of the Sustainable Furniture Council, Omnia's recycling program has saved hundreds of trees as well as re-purposed leather scraps for other commercial uses. Omnia is fully committed to doing its part in preserving the environment.

An American Success Story

A substantial contributor to Omnia's American success story is the ability to manufacture an exceptional number of popular upholstered configurations. Most Omnia stationary and motion styles have up to 50 individual SKUs. Among these are conversation styles, L-Shape, curve and half-curve sectionals, chaises, sleepers, recliners, cocktail and storage ottomans. There really are no boundaries at Omnia, delivering personalized comfort and style to retail customers worldwide.



American Made Motion & Stationary Upholstery



OMNIA[®]

Personalizing Comfort[™]

Huntington House: Time tested craftsmanship meets today's latest home furnishing fashions!

Huntington House, 100% crafted in Hickory, North Carolina, is a family-owned company offering an eclectic mix of beautifully designed special order upholstery, created with the ever-changing needs of today's customers in mind.

Huntington House recently celebrated its 30 year anniversary, but its roots in North Carolina upholstery manufacturing go even further back: for three generations. Company co-founder, Donny Teague garnered industry experience in his family's upholstery company, Clayton Marcus Furniture, named for his father, Clayton Marcus Teague. That business flourished throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Following the sale of the company, Teague decided to try his hand at starting his own business. He partnered with fellow industry veterans Danny Meadlock and Steve Piersall to cre-

ate Huntington House.

Today Huntington House is in its second generation of leadership with Corey Teague as president, Josh Piersall as CEO and Monty Meadlock as VP of Manufacturing. All three have been involved in the business since an early age—from sweeping floors, loading trucks and pushing frames, to data entry, cost accounting and inventory management.

Quality Craftsmanship

Quality craftsmanship has always been at the forefront at Huntington House. Its leaders, therefore, have strategically chosen to manufacture 100% of its products in the foothills of NC, where the most skilled and experienced craftsmen in the industry can be found. Time-tested methods and traditions passed down through the years are valued, so the hand crafted manufacturing techniques used today at Huntington House are very similar to those used generations ago. Being a custom upholstery company, each piece is made to order, one at a time, with deliberate attention to detail, taking no short cuts.

Creating Jobs In Hickory, NC

Starting with six sofas and 30 fabrics, Huntington House has

grown to over 300 sofa and chair styles, over 25 sectional collections and 1,300 fabrics, with retail partners all over the world. To meet the needs of its expanding business and prepare for future growth, last year Huntington House added an additional 150,000 square foot manufacturing facility near its headquarters, bringing more jobs to the Hickory area. Coming full circle, this newly renovated space just happens to be the original Clayton Marcus factory where it all began.

Three Generations

Corey Teague said, "For three generations our family has had the great fortune to be a part of the furniture industry producing the highest quality custom upholstery in the foothills of the North Carolina mountains. As we continue to grow, we proudly honor our heritage by training the next generation of craftspeople to carry on the skills and culture that have been the foundation of our success. Fashion trends constantly change, but our commitment to quality, comfort and value never does. When you invest in furniture from Huntington House you can rest assured that you are buying the best quality available produced by the most skilled craftspeople in the world."

Visit www.huntingtonhouse.com to learn more.

"Being a custom upholstery company, each piece is made to order, one at a time, with deliberate attention to detail, taking no short cuts."

DELIGHT THE CUSTOMER

AND *Everyone* WINS!



 HUNTINGTON HOUSE®

VISIT OUR SHOWROOM AT HIGH POINT MARKET - 610 WEST GREEN DRIVE

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HAND-CRAFTED TO ORDER IN THE FOOTHILLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

huntingtonhouse.com

Made in America*

The Ultimate Power Recliner!

The **Ultimate Power Recliner™** by Mega/Windermere Motion has arrived... and is widely welcomed by retailers everywhere who value maximizing sales dollars, and want to make sure the products on their retail floor are generating the greatest gross margin return-on-investment.

Introduced at the April 2017 High Point Market, the new Ultimate Power Recliner brand is the result of three comprehensive consumer research projects that were conducted with a focus on power recliner/lift option chairs. From that research, it has become clear the consumer is willing to pay for a USA-Made recliner that offers many premium features.

"This new brand of recliners features over 200 custom options, including an exclusive 'Never Cold Again' zoned heating system."

This new brand of recliners features over 200 custom options, including an exclusive "Never Cold Again" zoned heating system.

The "**Never Cold Again**" heating system was developed by Mega/Windermere together with Gentherm, USA after research confirmed customers will pay for a quality heat system.

With twice the heat coverage of a standard recliner, the "Never Cold Again" system also includes heating for the legs, which is revolutionary to the industry.

Mega/Windermere Motion has also partnered with Crypton®, a leading fabric manufacturer, to provide exclusive performance fabrics for the Ultimate Power Recliner line.

Mega/Windermere is leading the recliner retail category by adopting comprehensive marketing strategies to assist dealers in generating maximum dollars per square foot from the space they dedicate to their recliners. Among these are:

- Stocking 12,000 chairs – ready to ship same day/next day.
- Offering a rebate program and advertising assistance

for the **Ultimate Power Recliner** brand to dealers, including a consumer website with "Find a Dealer" function and Dealer Portal (www.UltimatePowerRecliner.com)

- Providing over 200 choices with the **Ultimate Power Recliner** brand, including power-tilt headrests, exclusive Crypton fabrics, as well as 3-position and infinite position recliner options.
- Delivering Quick shipment on all special orders of the **Ultimate Power Recliner**
- Helping facilitate full-e-commerce programs for dealer websites. Windermere Motion is one of the very few suppliers that offers this service.

To learn more about the **Ultimate Power Recliner** visit the brand website www.ultimatepowerrecliner.com to see the complete Ultimate line of recliners with options. The company welcomes you to stop by and experience their new and innovative line at the High Point Market in the Furniture Plaza, Space 100.

*Made in America with Domestic & Foreign Parts



www.ultimatepowerrecliner.com



Pontotoc, Mississippi factory

Manufactured in our state-of-the-art facility in Pontotoc, Mississippi, the Ultimate Power Recliners are built to stringent quality control standards.

A consumer-focused website (pictured far left) with "Find A Dealer" and "Chair Fit Guide" functions make it easy for consumers to select an Ultimate Power Recliner and visit your store.

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ULTIMATE POWER RECLINER™

by Windermere Motion

- ✓ Innovative Dealer Program
- ✓ Easy to Sell
with Over 200 Custom Choices
- ✓ Quick Delivery
- ✓ Faster Turns
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- ✓ Brand Website
with Find-A-Dealer function

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Born in the **USA!**

Like any of the great American companies which industrialized and built this country, Standard Furniture was formed and built right here in America. Unlike many—after all these years, we are still here, strong and proud. Over the past 70 plus years, we have seen a lot come and go: styles, trends, even whole companies. Staying here is important to us, it is important to the industry, and it's important to the community where we employ over 600 loyal hard-working people just like you.

Staying here means we are committed to staying relevant. Relevant on so many levels and in every single department inside our company from the top down and the bottom up. Offering the best possible furniture at a price point people expect. This has always driven us and continues to be our driving force today.

We are investing in ourselves like never before.

We send designers to the four corners of the globe in pursuit of inspiration and forward-thinking designs. Our designers' favorite is the ever-popular Milan Design Week. Embracing progressive design trends, Standard Furniture has transitioned with the times, consistently introducing trending products that sell in your stores.

As the trends have changed over the years, so has the industrial side of the furniture industry. Standard continues to pursue and maintain a modernized facility. As we have grown over the years, our headquarters and domestic manufacturing plant located in southern Alabama has expanded, and the plant now stands at three quarters of a million square feet. Standard's modernized factory keeps costs down, increasing the profit margins for our retail partners.

Quality

Knowing that you will receive a quality product from Standard is vital to us. The importance of quality is so essential that we have a 100% quality control team in place. These trained inspectors thoroughly examine each case piece to ensure a quality product is boxed, shipped and received by

our customers. We've got your back! Any defective products are pulled before packaging and leaving for the warehouse. You can count on Standard to produce the highest quality products possible while meeting the price points you desire.

Staying Involved

Whether we are sending volunteers to local charities, offering our financial support or seeking ways to minimize the impact on our environment. We live in the community where we work, and we're dedicated to making it a better place. We actively partner with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America and the local animal shelter. We continue to help the community in other ways by donating time, financial support, and furniture donations.

Committed to the environment, Standard is focused on reducing waste from our production lines with sophisticated software for cuttings. We have even installed a briquette machine to recycle our sawdust into a firewood alternative to keep it out of our landfills. We are dedicated to our community, the environment and the future of both.

If you haven't shopped Standard Furniture lately, stop by and see Today's Standard.

Leading By Example

Furniture OF AMERICA

America has a long history with furniture, and we don't mean our negative reputation as couch potatoes. Since colonization, American craftsmen had a reputation for building high quality furniture. Furniture of America is set on preserving that tradition and upholding the reputation of quality.

Why go American?

Our philosophy is simple, we place family and community above all else. Working with American manufacturers serves both of those groups. Since its inception, Furniture of America has worked with numerous U.S. manufacturers. That number has grown through the years, with commitments to expand our U.S. partnership base. This is not a belief powered by recent trends or political talking points.

Partnerships with American manufacturers solve many of the concerns of informed and conscious retailers and consumers.

What Customers Want.

Consumer wants and needs are sometimes very hard to determine. But increasingly, consumers have become informed of how they spend, particularly on large purchases like furniture.

Consumers are learning that an investment in a quality American product that will last for years will save them money over time.

Eco and Human Friendly

Growing environmental concerns has made lowering pollution and carbon footprints a powerful factor when purchasing furniture. Laws and regulations, like the Clean Air Act, ensure that U.S. manufacturers comply with standards to secure the health of our air and waterways. Clean technology and no overseas shipping greatly reduce the environmental impact of purchasing American goods.

Human rights concerns are all but eliminated in American manufacturing. Furniture of America products hold true to reliable American standards. U.S. made goods are crafted by expert hands with years of experience, under safe and fair working conditions.

The U.S.' Last Stand

The furniture industry is the last bastion of U.S. manufacturing. While many other factory positions have been moved or automated, furniture manufacturing is returning as the economy stabilizes and the housing market grows. This is leading to an increase in jobs and hiring. Buying American and hiring American are two sides of the same coin that fill the coffers of the U.S. economy.

Every order of an American made product strengthens our nation's economy, giving Americans the opportunity to provide for their families.

"U.S. made goods crafted by expert hands with years of experience, under safe and fair working conditions."

Our Mission

Furniture of America does not shy away from the responsibility held by its name. We are proud to help create jobs and ensure that the American people are the ones staying employed. We are proud to showcase our U.S. made products, tagging with an American flag.

American furniture manufacturing is still a strong industry as evident in our beautiful line of U.S. made sofas. It is the combination of innovative designs and their dedication to hard work that makes for a quality product. The commitment to quality over quantity, where you can tell the difference between a well-crafted piece of furniture and one that was produced quickly off an assembly line.

Furniture of America wants to lead by example, and continue to build relationships with U.S. manufacturers, and customers that want American made products. Our U.S. made furniture line supports this country's economy and preserves a long standing history of craftsmanship.



Furniture of America[®]

Follow this link to witness our commitment to manufacturing in the USA

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Country View Woodworking:

Fashion, quality, value & sustainable design

Located in the heart of Amish Country in Holmes County, Ohio, Country View Woodworking is a family-owned company that takes pride in handcrafting heirloom quality Amish-made furniture. Started in 1993, CVW employs more than 40 highly skilled Amish craftsmen and continues to grow with the addition of Industry veteran Chuck Kuder as Sales Manager. Owner Roy Miller is pleased to be joined by sons, Steven, Wayne, Marcus, and James, and feels blessed to have been able to raise his sons in the furniture industry. He observes, "My family understands what it took to reach where we are today, and embrace the challenges we face to remain an industry leader tomorrow. I believe our retailers appreciate that."

Indeed, they do. Marie Benfatti, owner of Benfatti Furniture in Pueblo, CO says, "We love that they are a family-owned business. CVW puts their hearts and souls into their amazing products and it shows. It's a source of pride for us to present such quality to our clients."

"CVW puts their hearts and souls into their amazing products and it shows. It's a source of pride for us to present such quality to our clients."

Sustainability

Country View Woodworking is committed to being environmentally friendly. Unlike imports often built with composite materials, CVW selects the finest North American hardwoods from suppliers known for responsible forestry practices. Components are sourced from a network of local Amish shops. All stains and varnishes contain low VOCs and are HAPS free.

American-Made

Amish-made products are synonymous with quality, value, and integrity—characteristics that consumers seek when making important purchases. Additionally, the American-made story helps retailers convert furniture shoppers into buyers. According to Marie Benfatti, "the 'Made in America' story is very important to use because being a family-owned business ourselves, we love to help keep American workers busy. We love our country and want to play whatever small part we can in promoting and supporting it."

CVW offers versatile, fashionable, adaptable designs. A broad selection of traditional, transitional and contemporary appeals to all generations. Furniture can be customized to specific size and design requirements. CVW offers a variety of stains and finishes, from flawlessly smooth and traditional, to stylishly distressed. Pieces can be added to a set at a later time, matched to the stain or finish of the original set.

American Modern Collection

The fresh new American Modern Collection by talented New Jersey designer Michael Robinson offers even more opportunities for personalization. Nominated for a 2017 Pinnacle Award, American Modern pairs a timeless American design sensibility with Ohio-made Amish quality construction and beautiful finishes. The collection includes dining and bedroom. Robinson, also an interior designer adds, "The collection is tremendously versatile and gives us plenty of details to talk about like domestically sourced solid wood, dovetails, full extension drawer glides, impeccable finishing and, of course, Amish quality."

A Proven Track Record

CVW's commitment to sustainability, an authentic American-made story, and extensive design options contribute to its highly marketable furniture brand. Leading retailers proudly carry CVW products.

Country View's responsive customer service equips retailers with the tools and information needed to close sales and provide post-sale assistance. An established distribution network throughout the United States enables timely delivery, further contributing to customer satisfaction.

Today's consumer is looking for fashion, quality, value and impeccable service. That's exactly what they find when they purchase CVW's handcrafted furniture.



Country View

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ISUZU TRUCKS: Heavy Haulers Assembled in America with Patriotic Pride

How does a company determine the “best” truck for their furniture delivery needs? One way is by looking at how the company’s needs match up with what the OEM has to offer, like the GVWR, wheelbase availability, cab design, etc. All of that is important, because the right trucks have the ability to improve functionality while increasing efficiency.

The Right Truck for the Job

It’s plain to see why so many companies select Isuzu Trucks for their furniture delivery needs. Isuzu produces a wide range of models, from their 12,000-lb. GVWR NPR to their all-new 25,950-lb. GVWR Class 6 FTR, plus everything in between.

“Three Isuzu model lines including the new Class 6 FTR are assembled at the Spartan Motors, Inc. facility in Charlotte, Michigan.”

“We offer the most complete line of low-cab-forward medium-duty trucks in the industry,” said Shaun Skinner, president of Isuzu Commercial Truck of America. Select Isuzu models also offer a choice of a standard 3-seat cab or a 7-seat crew cab.

In addition, since furniture deliveries can often take place in cramped quarters, drivers appreciate the superior visibility of the LCF design coupled with a tight turning radius. Together, this makes Isuzu trucks easier to maneuver, even under the most demanding conditions.

Isuzu: Assembled in America

Something many people may not be aware of, while the diesel-powered Isuzu N-Series trucks are assembled in Japan, three Isuzu model lines are assembled right here in the U.S. All of the gasoline-powered N-Series trucks (the gas trucks are CNG/LPG capable), the Isuzu Reach diesel van with its Utilimaster body, and the new Class 6 FTR are all assembled at the Spartan Motors, Inc. facility in Charlotte, Michigan.

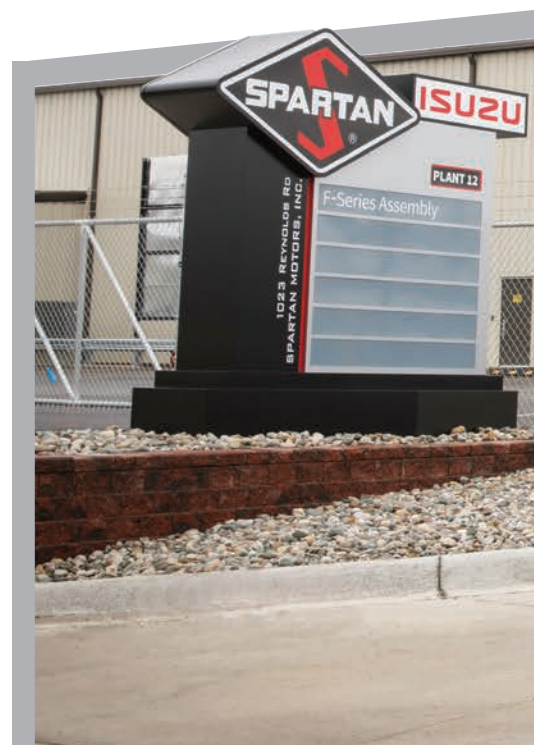
In fact, Isuzu just recently celebrated the 40,000th gasoline-powered N-Series to roll off the line. Assembly of the N-Series at the Spartan plant began in April 2011. Assembly of the 2018 FTR began on May 8, 2017 in an all-new assembly plant that represents a \$6.5 million investment and has created many new jobs for the Michigan workforce.

Payload and Versatility

Most companies in the furniture delivery business require hard-working heavy-duty trucks, and the new 2018 Isuzu FTR is a perfect fit. “This truck’s combination of low-

cab-forward design, Class 6 GVWR of 25,950 lbs. and a four-cylinder diesel engine gives it fantastic maneuverability, the ability to carry more cargo than a conventional Class 6 truck, and outstanding fuel efficiency,” Skinner added.

The FTR is available in eight wheelbase lengths from 152 to 248 inches, and can accommodate bodies from 14 feet to 30 feet. It’s powered by Isuzu’s legendary 4HK1-TC 5.2-liter turbocharged four-cylinder diesel engine, a first in the segment. It carries a B10 durability rating of 375,000 miles, meaning 90 percent of engines should reach that mileage before requiring an overhaul. Plus, the U.S.-built Allison RDS 6-speed automatic transmission further lowers the cost of ownership.



Thanks to its LCF design, the FTR has a smaller "footprint" than a conventional truck, so with a 26-foot body, it is about the same size of a conventional truck with a 20-foot body.

Perfect for Furniture Delivery

When you add it all up, it's clear why Isuzu has been America's #1

"It's plain to see why so many companies select Isuzu Trucks for their furniture delivery needs."

selling Low-Cab-Forward truck line since 1986. For furniture delivery, they offer the right mix of an LCF design that provides improved line of sight and a tight turning diameter for easy maneuvering. The new FTR provides Class 6 capability. And, many of the Isuzu models are assembled in the U.S., creating jobs in the U.S.

So, when it's time for your next delivery truck, start and end your search with Isuzu.

Pictured at right is 2018 Class 6 FTR truck assembly in Michigan, and furniture delivery on Main Street USA.



**THE NEW ISUZU
2018 CLASS 6
FTR**



**ISUZU
TRUCK**

Libby Langdon

DESIGN & DESIGNER

by Melody Doering

Product designer, author, media personality and interior design guru talks about what consumers want, and how retailers can do a better job of connecting with them.

We continue Furniture World's Design & Designers series with an interview with Libby Langdon, president and creative energy behind Libby Interiors, Inc. Besides being familiar as a makeover television personality, Ms. Langdon is an author, product designer, and frequent contributor to leading magazines such as Architectural Digest, Better Homes and Gardens, House Beautiful and others. She also partners with a number of manufacturers to create her own lines of accent furniture, lighting fixtures, outdoor furniture and rugs.

Growing Up In The Business

"We know your roots are in High Point, N.C., did growing up there influence the scope of your design activities?"

"Growing up in High Point, surrounded by the furniture industry, pointed me in a direction towards interior design and product design. My mom is a designer and my dad was in textiles. Mom definitely had a talent for design, color and pulling things together. Dad sold textiles: his job focused more on the commerce side, but still with a focus on the design elements. I

guess that these design and commerce characteristics are just in my blood – a combination that drives my business life.

"What's fascinating is that when I left the North Carolina home-furnishings design bubble, it was an eye-opener to see how people really live.

"It's one thing for a creative person to want to make everybody's house pretty, but as a design professional, it's necessary to pay the bills. When you start an interior design business you have the idea in mind that it's all going to be creative and fun – but you also need to think about the business side.

"I think my early life both piqued my interest to design on my own, to design home furnishings, setting me on the path to what I do now."

A Multi-Faceted Approach

"With all of your activities, how do you balance the various aspects of your design life?"

"There are three components to what I do. The first component is my interior design business. Sometimes we will make over a whole house, and other times we just make over

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"Easy design is approachable,

not too stuffy, fussy or uptight. Designs should be fun – our homes should feed us. A home can be very comfortable and still be 'Elegant', stylish and chic."

somebody's living or dining room. This part of the business is a lot of fun. There's nothing quite like the feeling of leaving somebody's home when the installation is complete. The client is just going crazy, loving the way their home looks, and not believing that they could have ever imagined it on their own.

"The second component to my business is media, which is also fun. I'm a contributor for House Beautiful magazine, and I do makeover television. I started out in makeover television, which had a huge impact on how I approach interior and product design.

"The third component is design-

ing furniture, designing lighting, and rug collections, as well as accessories and accent furniture. Presently I'm working with Bradburn Home, lighting with Crystorama, my outdoor furniture collection with NorthCape, and rugs with KAS. For the last six years I've also designed upholstery for Braxton Culler.

"All three elements of my business inform each other. It's an exciting time."

Three Little Words

"In past interviews with designers we have gotten the sense that some of their designs flow from an underlying theory of how life should be lived. It does not appear that you design that way. Where do your designs originate?"

"There are three words that embody who I am and what I do on all fronts: easy, elegant, everyday style.

"'Easy' design is approachable, not too stuffy, fussy or uptight. Designs should be fun – our homes should feed us. A home can be very comfortable and still be 'Elegant', stylish and chic. 'Everyday' is for my clients' lifestyles. They have friends who drink red wine, have pets, and kids. They like to entertain. Their rooms should reflect their lives and lifestyles.

"Easy, Elegant, and Everyday is

what real people across the country need. I learned about design for real people and real life from doing makeover shows and working with clients. I'm not trying to teach anybody a design lesson; I just want to give them a space that they adore, that they come home to, that gives them a big hug.

"My product design is very much influenced by my interior design work. I'm motivated to create pieces that I can't find for clients in the marketplace. I don't feel like I specialize in one corner of the design world. My clients may need contemporary, classic, traditional or transitional. It's fun and interesting to try and work with lots of different styles."

Learning While Doing

"You grew up immersed in the design world, did you get a classical design education or did you learn on the job?"

"I do have a foundation in color, texture, fabric construction, and so on from FIT in New York. But my real education began when I hosted a show on Fox called Design Invasion. They gave me twelve hours to make over a space I'd never seen in person. I did have some bad cellphone pictures taken by an intern, a few measurements and \$6,000. That's where I really learned about design, and that was where I learned about connecting

"The average consumer can easily become overwhelmed when they visit retail furniture stores. **Their experience convinces them that they can't possible design their own space – so they hire a designer.**"



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LIBBY LANGDON

with people and the consumer.

"It was fascinating to go into people's homes, everywhere from Texas to Illinois to Maryland to Pennsylvania and Florida. That was when I knew that I wanted to design product to give people what they needed. Let's face it, it's makeover TV, you're starting with a place that looks pretty bad, but what was amazing was what a huge difference you could make with a small amount of money, and in a very short amount of time, with just help from a production assistant and a handyman.

"The cool thing about the show was that the people didn't even know I was coming. At 7:00 am I would do what was called a 'knock

and shock,' knock on the door and say, 'I'm Libby Langdon! I'm here to make over your living room!' I scared them to death. Oh, it was so cool, and so mean. But usually everybody was really excited."

Challenges For Retailers

"Turning to the retail aspect, we would like to get your thoughts on where retailers could improve on everything from bringing people into the store to helping them achieve the designs of their dreams."

"The average consumer can easily become overwhelmed when they visit retail furniture stores. Their

experience convinces them that they can't possibly design their own space – so they hire a designer.

"I think there is an underlying thought with retailers that it is best to give consumers a million choices. Yes, there are some customers that know exactly what they want, but most customers don't want to go through 1500 fabrics and try to pick something out. It is my experience that presenting too many choices just locks most people up. I think that trying to take some of the guesswork out of making choices

Below are three story boards that illustrate the kind of displays that retailers could use to engage customers to choose their own look.



"A huge wall lined with different design styles and interesting looks provides an opportunity for retail sales people to point out where in the store those looks, styles, furniture, and accessories can be found."



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is how retailers can boost sales. There are a couple of approaches that help people to know where to begin.

A Picture Is Worth...

"Sometimes, instead of asking people, 'Hey, what do you like?' I ask them, 'What do you hate?' Oh, my gosh, that's a question that's so much easier for them to answer.

"I think retailers could devote one area, just one wall in a store, to display storyboards showing different lifestyles, each linked to a particular place – maybe Santa Barbara, or Siesta Key, or wherever. The storyboard should incorporate the colors, fabrics, and fur-

niture they sell. Consumers can begin making design choices by relating to a location to which they have a connection. That connection helps the sale to get off on the right footing.

"We all know that a lot of people don't necessarily want to talk to a salesperson. They just want to look around – 'Oh, no, I'm just browsing.' But a huge wall lined with different design styles and interesting looks provides an opportunity for shoppers to see, and for retail sales people to point out where in the store those looks, styles, furniture, and accessories can be found. Even if a store cannot fully set up actual vignettes based on the storyboards, there is still a benefit to giving shoppers a strong idea at the start of the sale.

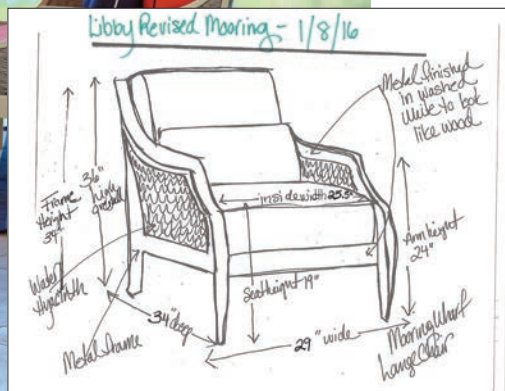
"Consumers are savvier than ever before; they are used to seeing beautiful furnishings shown on

website like Pinterest, Houzz and 1stdibs. So, even if a consumer doesn't want to engage with a staff person right away, they will be able to visually connect with a snap shot that sets the tone for how they might want their room to look.

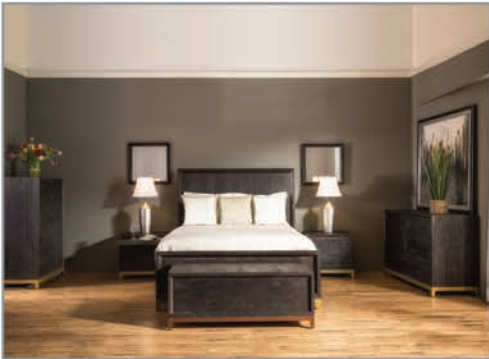
Design Partners

"Another powerful thing a retailer can do is partner with interior designers to create a designer seminar series. This raises the awareness of the designer, connects the designer to the retailer, gives the retailer something to promote and something to talk about. In-store events are a great way to raise awareness, and to also give retail social media promotion teams some pretty good fodder, leading up to an event – and following it, as well.

Below, Libby sits in a outdoor design she created for NorthCape.



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"I can't tell you how many times I've gone into a paint store and have seen people standing there looking at a wall of paint colors, just completely overwhelmed. At all levels, it's important for manufacturers to supply ideas and take guesswork out of the process. Designers are a great resource at this level also. For example, when I show my lines at the High Point Market, I like to show them the way I think retailers will be able to sell them. I explain, 'This is what I've created, this is what your customers want. Just take the ideas and recreate them in your stores.' When manufacturers have a designer collection, they should use the designer, not just show the products.

Telling The Story

"And finally, I would like to see the home furnishings I design be merchandised beautifully. Telling a story is very important. Doing a good job of presenting, even on a modest budget is almost like doing a low-budget makeover. It makes a big difference and gets significant results.

"Often the right kinds of retail product promotions are lacking as well. Right now, because of social media, it's easier and less expensive to promote products and designs than ever before.

"There is business out there. Interior designers are all swamped

right now – we can't take on any more work. That shows that consumers are there and they are looking for solutions, and buying. I believe that there is a big opportunity for retailers to partner with or align themselves with designers. It's a win-win for everybody."

Sales Partners

"What advice would you give to retailers about hiring and educating salespeople?"

"Education is important, but so is motivation. To be successful, salespeople need to have the right tools. In-store design studios, where customers can sit down and can learn about the design process can be very effective. Even if a store doesn't have a licensed designer on staff, having magazine images, samples, and boards raises a retailer's design profile and helps the retail staff as they're working to engage customers and promote products. Customers should be encouraged to bring in images



Pictured are products designed by Libby Langdon including an outdoor rug from KAS, outdoor furniture by NorthCape, magazine rack and table by Bradburn Home, and lighting by Crystorama.





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"Small spaces

are a great way to tap into so many different consumer demographics. It's just incredible."

they've seen online or in magazines, and then the salespeople can just bring the design experience to them on a silver platter. Retailers just have to roll up their sleeves a little bit. Most of these kinds of initiatives really don't cost much."

Small Space, Big Style

"Making a big statement in a small space has become representative of your style. How did that come about?"

"Being a designer on the HGTV

show *Small Space, Big Style*, was an eye-opener for me. I compiled so many small space tips that I decided to write an interior design book on that topic. That process helped me start to focus my story, which is about helping people to live in a beautiful, stylish way.

"The book included, of course small space tips, [see page 84] but also just tons of regular design tips. When the book was about to be published early in 2009, the economy was totally in disarray, and the publisher at the time said, 'This might not be a very good

time to release a book.' And I was like, 'Are you kidding me? This is the perfect time; people are downsizing, they're not able to move into bigger spaces.' Then I did a makeover on the Rachael Ray show where I could only use paint, and timed the launch of the book to when the show aired. It was off and running.

"My philosophy of small spaces is that living without so much doesn't mean living without luxury. Sometimes living with less is the ultimate luxury. We're definitely seeing a trend toward downsizing. Do people really need a cavernous area between their foyer and their kitchen where nothing's happening? In that respect, I think people want to simplify. So, whether we are talking about millennials who would rather spend their money traveling, or baby boomers trying to figure out how to incorporate pieces they love when they move out of a large home, just about everyone can use some help with



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DESIGN & DESIGNER

"People want an eclectic mix, for sure, but I think it's more than that. They are looking to include something classic in their rooms."

creating small spaces.

"For the furniture industry as a whole, small spaces are a great way to tap into so many different consumer demographics. It's just incredible. Most people don't necessarily want to live in a shipping container, but I believe that we're going to see this trend continue."

Layout Is The Key

"What are the challenges that 'small' creates for both manufacturing and retail?"

"Working on a smaller scale is a challenge that can be overcome by using smart design. What most people don't understand is that a good layout makes a room look 500 times bigger than an unfurnished space.

"When confronted with the chal-

lenge of designing a small space, some people will just put in one sofa and say, 'Oh, that's all that can fit in here.' But the space can probably fit two end tables, two well-proportioned chairs and some ottomans – keep it mobile.

"I remember going through one of the most dynamic displays I'd ever seen at an IKEA store. They had literally taped off and furnished different sized areas to show shoppers what 200, 400, and 800 square feet could look like. The rooms looked so much bigger than what shoppers might have thought possible. Any way our industry can find ways to share information about design and good layout in a creative and fun way, is a really good place to start.

"That's how I approach my work. The focus on sharing information has helped me to grow as a business. It works, whether it's doing a TV makeover or writing a book, a column, or giving people tips. And this kind of focus can be brought to the retail level as well – and be incredible!"

Trends To Watch

"Are you seeing any interesting trends with your interior design clients?"

"It's interesting – there is a total mishmash of clients. We have baby boomers, millennials, for sure, and Gen X-ers, definitely. A couple of current trends that may end up

being short-term are the use of bold plaids on larger scale upholstery items and the resurgence of the very traditional Chesterfield sofa style. It's a classic fabulous sofa shape that's reaching a younger audience now. People want an eclectic mix, for sure, but I think it's more than that. They are looking to include something classic in their rooms. For a while we saw Bohemian looks, which now seems to be including different classic cultural elements, such as Moroccan or Mexican.

"Color-wise, we are going to see more slate gray. Let's face it, gray's here to stay. Just like tan never really went away. And more slate blue, a mix of indigo and a gray that both men and women respond to."

Buying For The Long Term

"Do luxury goods still have a place in a decorating scheme?"

"Luxury goods have now become synonymous with quality. People are looking for things that last, if they can afford it. They want things that they're going to really like for a long time and, when they find it, they're willing to pay for it.

"The much younger ones aren't feeling like they need to be attached to purchased items for a great length of time. I think that the younger people, however, who are already spending money and investing, definitely want the design

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Libby focuses on sharing information via multiple media. She says that this kind of focus can be brought to the retail level as well.



to get from people to help them make the smartest purchases for their lifestyles."

to be evergreen and last for a long time."

'Smart' Design

"With so much talk of 'smart' design, do you see smart furniture coming into its own?"

"Technology definitely affects how we live in our spaces, and, without a doubt, smart homes are going to become the norm. But I don't think people really want smart furniture.

"Technology has changed the way we sit in our furniture. I know that sounds crazy, but a lot of my younger clients don't sit on a sofa, they half lie down. Watching screens, big screen TV's, tablets, iPads, and other tech for long hours has changed the way that people sit on their furniture – the way they use their furniture.

"When I meet with a client, I ask

them, 'When you watch television, do you like to put your feet up on an ottoman, or curl them around your ankles and put them up on the sofa? Do you like to lie sideways?

"When people tell me how they sit in their furniture, it allows me to more easily find them just the right piece. If somebody likes to lie sideways on their sofa and watch TV, a roll arm is probably a good idea – a track arm is probably a bad idea. From a sales perspective, this little bit of insight can let customers feel like you're tuned into them, like you're listening to them. Honestly, I feel like I'm a good listener first, a problem solver second, and then third, an interior designer.

"Just getting as much information as you can really, really helps make the best space possible. I may ask, 'Do you like to entertain? Do you have a dog? What color is the dog's fur?' In many retail situations the staff may not want to play 20 questions, but there is information

Three Things A Week

"What haven't we touched on yet?"

"Setting goals. I am a big goal-setter. I set one-year goals, two-year goals, ten-year goals... that's a really big part of what I do, and why I think I'm able to continue

"In many retail situations the staff may not want to play 20 questions, but there is information to get from people to help them make the smartest purchases for their lifestyles."



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moving forward. Goal-setting gets me thinking about what I can do better; where else I can go; how I can grow. The best way to start chipping away at those things is to set goals. My mantra is, 'Three things a week.' That is, if I do three things every week to reach towards a goal, I'm probably going to get there.

"That idea can translate to retailers. Seen as a whole, big issues are overwhelming, but by chipping away at them – three things every week – the tasks become manageable. Retailers can design more and better promotions, increase media exposure, do a major website update, create a design lab....

"I am super lucky with the companies that I partner with: we work in tandem to do outreach to get results. For companies whose audience is not there anymore, the challenge for them is to craft a new story, find a new audience – one that is spending money.

"The work is out there. The consumers are out there. Success is just a matter of getting the story out there as well."

"Watching screens, big screen TV's, tablets, iPads, and other tech for long hours has changed the way that people sit on their furniture."

Libby's Top 10 Small Space Design Mistakes You Can Help Your Customers Avoid

1. **Leaving walls white.** White walls won't technically make your space larger and they lack personality. Spice up your space, have a little fun and paint some color on your walls!
2. **Using large-scale furniture.** Oversized pieces can hog square footage, but using better-proportioned furniture can allow you to create a more functional and comfortable living space.
3. **Lack of light.** Not lighting your space effectively makes it look smaller, if you can't see an area in your room it's as if it's not there! Capitalizing on natural light and bringing in artificial light is imperative.
4. **Using short shelving and cabinetry.** Using full scale shelves and cabinets that go all the way up to the ceiling visually draw the eye upward making the ceiling seem higher and your space feel larger.
5. **Keeping clutter.** Holding onto too much stuff and not throwing away clutter can make even a large space feel small. When in doubt, throw it out!
6. **Using small-scale accessories.** Large lamps, artwork, candles, vases and accessories create the appearance of greater space and more height. No wimpy lamps!
7. **Not using mirrors.** Mirrors reflect light, whether it's daylight or lamplight, and they visually make your space feel larger by adding depth and dimension.
8. **Not capitalizing on your wall space.** Think vertically and get your walls working for you! Mount shelving or storage systems up on your walls to display collections and store items so you don't waste precious table space. This will also help focus your items in one spot so your space feels more organized.
9. **Using all wood furniture.** It makes a room feel clunky and bottom heavy, but by mixing in glass-topped tables with wood pieces you give your room a lighter, airier and more open feel.
10. **Using small area rugs.** A small area rug can look like a postage stamp and make your room feel cramped but using a large rug creates an extended visual line and gives the illusion of more square footage.

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Best Selling DESIGN



Dimplex

The modern simplicity of the Lukas fireplace is highlighted by a backlit surround that provides a 'wow' factor at the touch of its side dimmer. Complete with a Dimplex electric fireplace.

Contact information on page 144.



Himolla

The Mersey chair features both electric and manual reclining options. Available in a variety of leathers, and fabrics.

Contact information on page 144.



Artography

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Klaussner

From the Tifton collection this sectional features seat and back cushions filled with down blend fiber. Shown with two sets of welted arm pillows for color and texture.

Contact information on page 144.



Huntington House

The 7723-50 chair combines sleek lines, quirky angles and hugging curves. Its unique silhouette complements both traditional and contemporary spaces for an updated, eclectic feel. Handcrafted to order, in fabric or leather.

Contact information on page 144.



Kas Rugs

Mediterra Brush strokes, machine woven transitional in 100% polypropylene frisee yarn. Made in Turkey.

Contact information on page 144.



Furniture of America

Redefine casual dining with the "Mandy" table with bold natural wood and contrasting metallic legs. The oak finish and ivory seats add warmth to the rustic appeal, creating a modern, inviting ambiance.

Contact information on page 144.

Agio

The contemporary Aurora Collection is accented by long-lasting handwoven resin wicker weave. Neutral weather-resistant cushions offer beauty and durability. The unique accent lumbar cushions add a pattern and pop of color.

Contact information on page 144.



Best Selling DESIGN



Country View Woodworking

This 42"x72"x90" dining table features brass accents, available with Brown Maple base and choice of Brown Maple, Oak or Elm top. The 60" buffet is available in Brown Maple, Oak or Elm deck, doors, and drawers.

Contact information on page 144.

Muniz

A new slightly smaller version of Muniz's Venetian Dining Table, with 4" cast acrylic legs. This table measures 42"x84" with beveled glass top.

Contact information on page 144.



Jaipur

The James chair is part of a growing upholstery collection that sources locally woven fabrics and utilizes the talents of skilled craftsmen. Many of the pieces feature beautifully carved and finished wood accents.

Contact information on page 144.



Omnia

The Ergo chair and ottoman combo are available in all of Omnia's 100 percent top grain and embossed leathers, making them a perfect enhancement to their long line of stationary and motion sofas and sectionals.

Contact information on page 144.



Feizy

This rug from the Gaspar Collection is amplified by a high-low effect. Balanced by cool shades of blue, silver and gray, it is crafted from a durable polypropylene blend.

Contact information on page 144.

Craftmaster

This generously scaled sofa from the Paula Deen Home upholstery line is available in 88" and 98" lengths, with skirted and non-skirted options. It features Blend Down seats and pillows, plus accent pillows. The body fabric is a washed cotton ticking stripe.

Contact information on page 144.



Best Selling DESIGN



Windermere Motion

The NM-6100 Polaris Ultimate Power Recliner™ offers ultimate comfort with whisper quiet power recliner and lift technology. Features include chaise pad construction and a choice of either stocked cover or exclusive Crypton® impenetrable moisture barrier performance fabrics. Contact information on page 144.



Arthur W. Brown

The Lucia wall unit is available in Maple and Oak, seven moldings, thirteen standard colors, dozens of standard sizes, custom sizes and paint colors. Contact information on page 144.



Cochrane

Dining for Small Spaces, the Jr. Dining collection features an assortment of seven solid wood dining tables in standard and high dining with three chairs and matching counter chairs all in a warm umber finish. Contact information on page 144.



Elran

The Turner collection features modern, contemporary design with oversized arms. Features include lounge seating, power assisted, reclining headrest and power recliners. The headrest can adjust to infinite locking positions. Contact information on page 144.



Style N Living

The Aniqa Bed set features metal posters for a refined classic look. Made of Acacia wood and mild steel finished in Dark Grap/Antique Brass. Available in California king, king and queen sizes.

Contact information on page 144.

TÖV

The Elle Chair features gold stainless steel frame and lumbar pillow. Dimensions are 27" W x 34" D x 31" H.

Contact information on page 144.



Surya

The Romney table lamp has a jute and seeded glass body with a beige linen shade, making it a perfect fit for traditional, transitional and coastal inspired interiors.

Contact information on page 144.

Borkholder

The round Walnut Aero table features a to-the-floor X-stretcher base creating a sculptural form. Inspired by mid-century modern architecture this collection's multi-functional pieces visually stimulate with an interesting play of angles.

Contact information on page 144.



Best Selling DESIGN



Maxwood

The new "M3" Bunk Bed in a Box is made from solid wood at \$599 retail. It is available in 4 colors, various configurations and under-bed options.

Contact information on page 144.



Whittier Wood

This new one drawer nightstand has an open and airy feel complementing both Whittier's platform and Addison Beds. Features include a spacious drawer and cord access hole in the back.

Contact information on page 144.



Norwalk

The Rondo Sofa features a distinctive jelly bean shaped seat and slim track top edge and arm that narrows down to a point on the front to envelope the inside back and tight seat.

Contact information on page 144.



Null

The small scale seven piece 2217 Collection combines a beautifully textured, graphite wire brushed wood finish complemented with pearl gray textured, bamboo inspired laminate. Custom finished antique pewter hardware accentuates the gray finish.

Contact information on page 144.



Nourison

Hand-knotted rug features rich abrash color effects on natural fibers, blending the vintage allure of a Tibetan rug with contemporary patterns that complement any interior design.

Contact information on page 144.

Fashion Bed

The Northbrook bed with black nickel and chrome frame provides a true antique look that is perfect for any old-fashioned or modern home.

Contact information on page 144.

Standard Furniture

With its sculptural lines and Danish styling Insignia has Mid-Century Modern appeal. Notice its sinuous lines and scoop back chairs with slip seats finished in a golden-brown walnut.

Contact information on page 144.



✓ *sleepless*

POINT-COUNTERPOINT

What Keeps You Up At Night?

by Bill Napier & Ed Tashjian

Bill who is sleepless in Arcadia, worries about the future of the furniture industry while Ed sleeps soundly in High Point.

Editor's Note: Here's more from Furniture World's point/counterpoint duo, Bill Napier and Ed Tashjian. This is their third installment, having previously debated celebrity licensing and the millennial myth.

Point: Bill Napier

I don't know what keeps you up at night, but my suspicion is that for many retailers it's often the day-to-day operational and sales challenges that are common to the demanding retail lifestyle.

Retail Destruction

What keeps me up at night is the big issue of watching and witnessing retail destruction. The demise of brick and mortar retail scares me from a multitude of perspectives, primarily as it pertains to present and future employment at retail and manufacturing. It is predicted that 8,600 retail storefronts will close this year. This is probably no surprise to anyone

who is paying attention. Consider the announcements of recent high profile closings of 68 Macy's stores, 138 JC Penny stores, eight Sears stores, 35 Kmart stores, 220 h.h. Gregg stores, plus so many others in sectors from clothing to shoes to office supplies.

How many in the furniture store category? A bunch! Furniture store closings have been steady for a number of years and from my talks with the folks who specialize in store liquidations, there's been an up-tick in their business this summer.

In my opinion, this is what should be keeping you up at night. All retailers **MUST** be aware of this trend and adapt their business

"What keeps me up at night is the big issue of watching and witnessing retail destruction." - Bill Napier

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"The internet & Asian manufacturing

are just effects of deeper problems here in the USA. An even bigger nightmare that keeps me up at night is the dumbing down of the educational system." - Bill Napier

models right now. If the Big Guys are feeling the heat, with all their money and access to technology, what's a smaller retailer to do? The fact remains, consumers want to shop/buy locally, but retailers seem to stay focused on "price" to drive sales, instead of technology to increase efficiency, create content, conversations and connections.

So who's to blame? Store owners and the media tend to blame the internet for the retail debacle, or Asian manufacturing for the manufacturing debacle, but these are just effects of deeper problems here in the USA, an even bigger nightmare that keeps me up at night. It's the dumbing down of the educational system in America.

Our Education System

We don't make stuff anymore and that is because we don't teach STEM – Science-Technology-Engineering-Math. I have a friend and mentor who frequently talks about Sputnik, the first artificial Earth satellite. The Soviet Union launched it into an elliptical low Earth orbit on 4 October 1957.

This shocked our nation into innovation and caused the space race. The launch ushered in a new political, military, technological, and scientific development surge

– the second American industrial revolution.

Our education system is more focused on degrees in "nothingness", with some institutions actually giving degrees in social justice which may be noble to some, but I'm confused how that degree helps us compete in STEM, which is the foundation for forward thinking, problem solving and innovation, ultimately with the goal of innovation and "making stuff".

In a recent Wall Street Journal article, Douglas Belkin wrote, "Freshmen and seniors at about 200 colleges across the U.S. take a little-known test every year to measure how much better they get at learning to think. The results are discouraging.

"At more than half of schools, at least a third of seniors were unable to make a cohesive argument, assess the quality of evidence in a document or interpret data in a table." The article goes on to state; "At most schools in this country, students basically spend four years in college, and they don't necessarily become better thinkers and problem solvers," said Josipa Roksa, a University of Virginia sociology professor who co-wrote a book in 2011 about the CLA+ test. "Employers are going to hire the best they can get, and if we don't have that, then what is at stake in the long run is

our ability to compete."

I have many more nightmares related to education, or the lack thereof. We need apprenticeships, we need to teach STEM, we need to just plain create and make stuff... AGAIN.

Whiners Keep Me Up

A third nightmare is caused by my conviction that many retailers have in many ways just given up. It's summed up for me in this statement, "If you don't want to try it – say it's impossible!"

There are too many whiners who used to be winners in our industry saying, "It's too hard – it's too expensive – it's whatever." This is an excuse and easy way to quit.

I hear this so often and it takes many different forms. I remember when I had my marketing agency in the '90s I prohibited the use of the words "Can't – Won't – Don't". These words, to me, were and still are defeatist and these two words, "It's Impossible," seem to have redefined the words, Can't, Won't and Don't.

Life is hard and the furniture business is even harder because you have other lives that are dependent on you whether they are customers or employees, or both. As Yoda in Star Wars said, "Do. Or do not.



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POINT-COUNTERPOINT

There is no try."

In the home furnishings industry, we have lost over 450 manufacturing plants, over 230,000 jobs, many of these job losses are related to furniture factories and supporting businesses.

In the U.S. furniture retailing industry, pure-play furniture stores include about 24,000 establishments (single-location companies and units of multi-location companies) according to Dun and Bradstreet. My estimates are we've lost over 10,000 pure-play brick and mortar furniture storefronts over the past ten years.

Slow Technology Adapters

When I discuss technology with

"When I discuss technology with retailers and brands, I get "the deer in the headlights" look, usually for two reasons; they don't understand it or they think they can't afford it."

-Bill Napier

retailers and brands, I get "the deer in the headlights" look, usually for two reasons; they don't understand it or they think they can't afford it ... or usually both. They say it's impossible, too hard. But is it really?

A prime example of what I'm ranting about is that Manufacturers don't help their retailers with standardized product data. Why is that?

Everything today is digital and everyone knows that 85 percent of all home furnishing searches start "On the Web", and more than 85 percent of furniture consumers would prefer to shop locally.

To find what consumers want, the product, its information, warranties, dimensions, availability and more MUST be available. For that to happen, all this information must be in one location and available to stream, via API or other means to a retailer's website with the data being updated at least once weekly, preferably daily. I tried to make this happen three years ago, offering to standardize furniture company data for FREE and was astounded that 90 percent of all the manufacturers I approached had no clue how to get the data, much less standardize it.

NO data equates to NO presence, which equates to less than expected sales in the short or long term. I wonder why this is, because it's not impossible, it is required in today's digital shopping environment.

Here's another example. Many retailers refuse to try to understand and engage the new consumer on the web.

Many retailers believe it's too expensive to have a great website and it's too hard to maintain it properly. What's necessary can't be impossible. Eighty-five percent of people that shop the home furnishings category probably won't find what they are looking for on any given brick and mortar website and divert their attention and dollars to websites that do. You know, Wayfair, Amazon, etc. Simply because they don't want to "invest" \$699 to show everything they have open to buy.

Among all the main things that keep me up at night is that so many retailers don't embrace technological solutions to help them show more, tell more and sell more. Of all the industries out there, the home furnishings industry is made up of Neanderthals when it comes to embracing technological and other solutions, preferring to suffer with:

1. Very Poor Search Features: When consumers click on an item on a home furnishings website they want to see the items with that same "LOOK"; the same colors, same frame options, etc. Instead, retailers in our industry embrace "Shop by Style". Today the definitions of style; contemporary, modern, traditional, classic are ambiguous at best and outdated.

2. Non-Existent Business Analytics: Visual recognition that shows accurate store counts, by hour/day/week for staffing/marketing analytics and HEAT MAPS showing where people con-

"Like all things that keep us up at night, they stem from frustration, and frustration often leads us to overstate, overreact and ignore common sense. In general, I'm sleeping pretty well." - Ed Tashjian

gregate so you can see your merchandising successes and/or failures.

3. No Live Chat/Video Chat: Just about every other industry uses video chat because it's proven to increase sales dramatically. Think texting - FaceTime, Google Chat, and so on for your store.

4. Fear of E-Commerce: Look at all the highly successful furniture e-tailers that only do special orders. It's a proven way to sell more.

5. No Pricing On Websites: If a consumer doesn't see a price along with an item on a furniture website, they will likely shop elsewhere. Hardly anyone calls a company today to get a price. It's all done by texting and live chat.

Creative Destruction

In the book "The Good Profit", Charles Koch writes, "If it's not broke, break it, because if you don't do it, someone, or something else sure will." The term



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"Bill opines that the lack of standardized data is hurting our industry. You can't barcode a custom sofa, like you can a box of cereal or a tube of toothpaste." - Ed Tashjian

"Creative Destruction" was coined by Robert Schumpeter, who taught at Harvard during the '30s and '40s.

Creative destruction is all about creating the "new commodity, the new technology, the new source of supply and most importantly, the new type of organization.

Our industry doesn't embrace this theory as it should. Is this happening to your business now because you have resisted change? The new commodity is the internet, the new technologies are everywhere that can help you sell more, by changing how you show, tell and sell.

Creative destruction & disruption is happening to retail brick and mortar retailers every day, and I bet it scares the heck out of you and your operations. If this isn't keeping you up at night, it should be.

Counterpoint: Ed Tashjian

As usual, my friend Bill makes some excellent points. But like all things that keep us up at night, I suspect that his fears stem from frustration, and frustration often leads us to overstate, overreact and ignore commonsense. In general, I'm sleeping pretty well.

Not Worried About Education

Bill highlights lack of education of furniture impresario's as a key frustration. In the words of Will Rogers, "We are all ignorant, just about different things." Furniture manufacturers and retailers are smarter than we give them credit for. The acquisition graveyard is littered with corporate corpses who thought they could apply the rules of packaged goods marketing to make a small fortune in the furniture business. In nearly every case they succeeded, but only by turning a large fortune into a small fortune. MASCO is an illustrative example, but there are many more. Read Mike Dugan's book *furniture wars* <https://www.amazon.com/Furniture-Wars-America-Billion-Industry/dp/1439225109> where he provides many examples.

I have had the fortune of working in manufacturing, retail, and logistics in my furniture career. Until you walk a mile in someone else's moccasins, you can't appreciate the nuances. It's sort of like Mr. Trump's assertion, "Who knew that healthcare could be so complicated?" What appears to be a lack of education from the outside, is often a practical response to a real-world problem. That said, the

world is always evolving and we always need to be learning, but consider this: what other industry still sells stuff that was designed in the 18th-Century? We have plenty of STEM in this country, and I predict that manufacturing is coming back to America. But it won't create jobs. It will be robots and computers. It will always be cheaper to manufacture where the raw materials and customers are. Just look at the BMW plant in South Carolina.

Not Technology Either

Bill opines that the lack of standardized data is hurting our industry. I contend that he is thinking like a grocery store marketer. The reason for a lack of standardized data is that the products themselves are not standardized. You can't barcode a custom sofa, like you can a box of cereal or a tube of toothpaste. Each one is unique.

Share-data in our industry is practically worthless, because the base sizes are so small one can't do the kinds of analyses available in other industries. Most manufacturers collect data which can be mined, parsed, interpreted, trended and projected. In fact, that is how I make my living by helping retailers

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POINT-COUNTERPOINT

"Bill references that not enough retailers do special order business or show pricing on their websites. This does not keep me up at night, but I wholeheartedly agree with him."

and manufacturers to understand that knowledge is power, but only if it is applied. Here is an unabashed plug for anyone who needs help in understanding their data, please call me.

ERP systems were over promised and oversold. Skillful salespeople convinced retailers and manufacturers alike that they were stupid and that their technology would make them smart. I have seen these implementations cripple companies because furniture is a unique business. Even the retail point-of-sale systems offered to furniture retailers are problematic because they try to force someone else's business model into furniture retailing which is a unique animal. I have known many retailers who are quite successful running their business out of a cigar box.

Another one of Bill's frustrations is "Retailers' lack of understanding of web technology." I think a better way of saying this is retailers' unwillingness to collaborate with people who understand how to make the most of the web. His assertion is a generalization and I would postulate that the knowledge of this is more related to age and then industry. The future of furniture retail is not clicks—it is clicks and bricks.

Retailers and manufacturers alike need web partners, but it is a fool's errand to try to keep up with the latest technology. The web should be viewed simply as an alternate channel of distribution and not as a strategy of itself. The overriding marketing question is always, how do we create and deliver value for our customer? Even Amazon is buying retailers and opening stores. Retailers should partner with web firms and specialists, not attempt to do this themselves.

Bill references that not enough retailers do special order business or show pricing on their websites. This does not keep me up at night, but I wholeheartedly agree with him. The fastest way to get a customer to leave your website is to frustrate her by not showing pricing. That said, I understand that pricing furniture is complicated. We start with a ridiculous suggested retail price, which no customer has ever purchased at in the history of furniture retailing. But it is a necessary evil because we use it as a benchmark from which to discount. Regrettably, it is so unrealistically high that retailers fear it will scare customers away. This is what I recommend: for every item of furniture three prices should be shown, suggested retail, our

price as shown, and a starting-at price. It should include a sentence like, "this item can be customized in a myriad of ways which affects its price. Please visit our store to get a custom quote." Many manufacturers are experimenting with configurators that calculate pricing on-the-fly as the consumer creates a one-of-a-kind piece. I think this also holds promise, but custom furniture can be complicated to the inexperienced. Some manufacturers are creating kiosks in the store which makes this easier, where consumers can actually see and touch the finishes, materials and hardware.

Creative Destruction?

Bill is frustrated by his belief that Retailers don't embrace the theory of "Creative Destruction." I think that they do much more than we believe. But the difference between being a consultant and a manufacturer versus being a retailer, is that retailers are forced to play in the present and make decisions in real-time. The question I ask my clients is, if we were going to create our business from scratch, how would we do it, and how can we work towards it? Disruption creates opportunities for everyone. True, there are many stores that have gone out of business, and this trend will continue. I have studied this, and in many cases it was because the real estate was more

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"I have my own frustrations

but they don't keep me awake at night. This is what bothers me..."

valuable than the business.

My Own Frustrations

I have my own frustrations, although they don't keep me awake at night. This is what bothers me

1. Why do furniture manufacturers try to reinvent themselves every six months and lose interest in new introductions just as they're hitting retail? Why is the stuff on the drawing board always more interesting than what is already selling at retail? Why do manufacturers' efforts stop after placement on retail floors? Why don't they spend more time developing programs that help retailers sell through the product to consumers?

2. Why are gross margins so darn low in this industry? Why do retailers cut each other's

throats? Why can't furniture be as profitable as bedding? When manufacturers and retailers conspire to give away the product to the consumer at slightly above cost, it creates no margin for marketing, differentiation and creativity.

3. Why don't retailers and manufacturers collaborate more? In the '90s, manufacturers held the power because there was more demand than supply. The proliferation of Asian production changed all that, and now retailers have the upper hand. There should be no upper hand. There should be synergy, and it should be more than just lip service.

4. Why aren't we counting the blessings? Twenty years from now people will still be sleeping in beds, eating at dining tables, and parking their derrières in front of a screen to watch sports. In what other business will so little change?

Thank goodness, we don't make computer chips or film.

About Bill Napier: Bill Napier is Managing Partner of Napier Marketing Group. He has been the chief marketing officer of several small, medium and large companies throughout his career, most notably Ashley Furniture Industries.

Bill is also a featured writer and speaker in the retail industry. His passion is to help retail brands and brick and mortar retailers grow their businesses by creating, guiding and deploying successful marketing B2B/B2C solutions integrating traditional marketing with the web/social media. He has demonstrated this with his FREE website www.social4retail.com with hundreds of articles and "how-to" strategies for retailers and brands. Bill can be reached at: billnapier@napiermkt.com or 612-217-1297.

About Ed Tashjian: Ed Tashjian is Principal of Tashjian Marketing, a strategic marketing and business development consulting firm based in Hickory, NC specializing in the home furnishings industry. Get more information at www.Tashjianmarketing.com or call (828) 855-0100.



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one sentence

ONE SMALL STEP

by Jeff Giagnocavo

Saying you are the biggest, the best, in business the longest, prices can't be beat and give great service, is the wrong sentence.

"That's one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind."

- Neil Armstrong

"If a man has not discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live."

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Give your customers a shopping experience to behold and be told."

- Jeff Giagnocavo

Each of the quotes above point to a powerful marketing concept that can help you to create an important profit asset in your mattress (or furniture) business. I hope Furniture World readers will forgive me for adding a quote of my own to those of Neil Armstrong and Dr. King. We, as business owners and marketers, often spend too long getting to the point because we spend too little time determining what the main point is.

Yet, in our fast-paced, short-attention span world, retailers must be clear and concise to capture the attention of target customers, and get them to take action.

As French author Blaise Pascal

wrote in 1657, "I have made this letter longer than usual, only because I have not had the time to make it shorter."

Re-read that quote again, because today, more than 250 years after this quote was written, it contains a truth we ignore at our own peril. In this day and age of mass digital media and instant distractions, people who tackle urgent, important issues, do not have time to waste!

Developing a short, concise and powerful message is no easy task and it takes much more effort to create it, then to bloviate everything you know about the products you have on your sales floor. Often less is more.

"I have made this letter longer than usual, only because I have not had the time to make it shorter."

-Blaise Pascal (1657)

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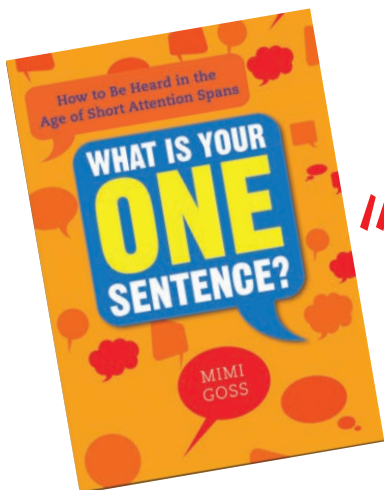
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"Goss does a decent job
of declaring the importance of having laser-focused, 'one sentences' about you, your business, products and services."

Clear & Compelling

When you ramble or fail to give a clear sense of direction to your message, you turn your customers off and any money invested to get their initial attention is wasted. Simplicity, if it is clear and compelling, is power.

Consider Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. It lasted three minutes and 75 percent of Lincoln's words were one syllable. Interestingly, Lincoln delivered his famous, almost poetic speech, after Edward Everett, considered to be the country's best orator at the

time, had spoken for two hours.

No one remembers Everett's speech.

Your "One Sentence"

Recently I came across a book you may want to add to your library. It's Mimi Goss's "What Is Your One Sentence?"

Goss does a decent job of declaring the importance of having laser-focused, "one sentences" about you, your business, products and services. While smart marketers understand the value of unique selling propositions and unique value propositions, I found this book to offer a different perspective in an industry full of retailers who often do a poor job of differentiating their messaging.

My only "issue" with her book is that it doesn't offer a lot of business-oriented one sentence examples, however if you struggle with being able to clearly and succinctly articulate your messages, I recommend using Goss' exercises to create your own one sentences.

To offer you a quick glimpse, here are Mimi's 12 Components of a Memorable One Sentence:

1. Defines the essence of your whole message

2. Inspires dialogue

3. Is about people and for people

4. Includes action or a new way of looking at a topic

5. Captures your message's drama, power or wit

6. Is directed towards achieving your goals

7. Takes into consideration your desired audience members' goals

8. Enhances your message, because it helps you and your audience focus on your message's key point

9. Highlights your message's special, inspiring value

"When you ramble or fail to give a clear sense of direction to your message, you turn your customers off and waste your money."

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10. Has a style authentic to you or your organization

11. Uses concrete examples that people can visualize, or is poetic and soaring

12. Is easy to understand and ideally, to remember

After reading the book, I immediately looked at some of my current marketing efforts and went back and wrapped a "one sentence" around them. I think you will find it a profitable exercise for your business, too. You can find Mimi's book on Amazon.com.

A Powerful One Sentence

At Gardners Mattress & More, our one sentence is made powerful because it frames every conversation thereafter.

"Our unique & personal sleep assessment process is designed to

best fit your sleep needs with premium sleep solutions so you wake up happy, guaranteed."

We use this sentence in marketing materials, on our business card, in video, in articles, in print – everywhere. And it's very powerful when customers ask us, "OK, so why should I buy from you?"

A Weak One Sentence

Compare our one sentence to that of our competition, possibly even your store. Typically, people will answer, "OK, so why should I buy from you?" with...

- WE are the biggest
- OUR purchasing volume is the best
- WE have been in business since 1958
- OUR prices can't be beat

• WE have great service.

See a pattern here? It's all about YOU, not your customer. And every single statement can be outdone with a better adjective to describe the statement point.

Focus your one sentence on your customer and you will see your marketing and sales results improve.

About Jeff Giagnocavo: Jeff Giagnocavo is co-owner of Gardner's Mattress & More and the co-creator of Mattress Retailer Weekly. Mattress Retailer Weekly is shared with subscribers every week so retailers can get a supply of customer acquisition ideas, stay ahead of the competition and increase sales tickets. Get your FREE subscription by visiting www.MattressRetailerWeekly.com or text MRW to 484-303-4300. Questions about this article or mattress retailing in general can be directed to Jeff at JeffG@furninfo.com.



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DISASTER!

ARE YOU READY?

by David Benbow

Lessons from Hurricane Harvey. No furnishings retailer in this great country is completely safe from disaster, natural or man-made.

As I sit here in South Texas with chaos all around us, and with our electrical power finally restored, it was brought to my attention that discussing disaster preparation was an urgent and timely subject. However, I can't take credit for thinking of it. Already late in submitting my "Closing the Sale" article, and with a ton of work ahead of me just cleaning up the damage to my own place, my wife, Deborah, came into my office, and said, "Why don't you write about preparing your store for disaster, before, during and after?" So here we go.

Down here on the Texas coast, we always know, in the back of our minds, that some day we are going to get hit with a hurricane, and hit hard. It's not a question of "if", it's a question of "when." We all know this, yet we are rarely prepared for it when it happens. Why is this? There are several reasons. One, these hurricane disasters, on average, do not happen very often. The last big one to come through this part of Texas was Hurricane Carla in 1961. Hurricane Celia hit Corpus Christi in 1970 and we had a small one, Claudette, in July 2003. So, while future preparation is on everybody's mind right now, after several years of quiet, maybe even decades of quiet, one tends to forget. Second, the

tracks of hurricanes are notoriously unpredictable. I have witnessed several mass evacuations only to watch the hurricane shift paths, leaving the evacuated areas with only hot, dry winds and zero rain.

Do not think you are immune. I'm thinking about the coastal Texas area in this particular disaster of Hurricane Harvey. But the last time I checked, I could not think of a single location in this great country that was completely safe from some kind of disaster, natural or man-made. Floods, windstorms, tornadoes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, ice storms, pandemics, war, famine, hazardous material spills, airline and train wrecks, crime, rioting and insurrection all come to mind, no

*"It's not a question of if,
it's a question of when."*

*We all know this, yet we
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"It is a good idea

have pre-arranged agreements with suppliers so that an emergency order is activated in the event of a disaster."

matter where you look. Each geographic location has its own set of potential problems.

Disasters aren't cooperative, either. They don't give you much, if any, warning. By the time it dawns on you that something is happening, it's too late to do the preliminary work that should have been done last month or last year. When you are in emergency mode, just staying alive becomes the highest priority.

Three Preparation Phases

All events, disasters and emergencies have a before, during, and after. Just preparing for the onset of an emergency is certainly a good idea, but what happens during the emergency and, especially, what happens after? Bedding and furniture store owners must be ready to get back into business as soon as possible with as many resources as possible.

Before It Happens

What warning we usually get does not allow for thorough preparation. So, what should the store owners do to protect their business and the safety of their employees?

This article will briefly go over as many of the important issues as we have room for. But, remember, this article is more of a reminder to do something than a manual of what to do.

The internet is a great source of information on preparedness. Nearly infinite detail on this subject can be found with a simple search; "disaster preparation." I found a useful app from North Dakota State University called "Small Business Disaster Plan." It is free and downloads in seconds to your smart phone. It will work even if you don't have power or internet service. Just make sure you keep your phone charged! It's easy if you have a generator or a few inexpensive, port-

able external phone battery chargers on hand.

Short Checklist

1. Insurance. This is the big one, in my opinion. Study your insurance policy carefully so that you know you will be covered for any contingency. Insurance companies frequently include "exclusions" that store owners might not be completely aware of. Do not assume that all insurance policies are alike. They are not. You may not be an insurance expert. I know I'm not. So, where do you go to find out what you need? Your insurance agent is a good source to start with, but don't rely on them completely. Shop around. You will find different viewpoints from each agent you talk to. Another source that is often forgotten is the Small Business Administration. This agency publishes a lot of useful information on its website about all aspects of business management. Included is "what to look for in business liability insurance." Before signing up for a policy, read this and as much other information as you can find before making a decision on business insurance.

Don't forget, the whole point of

DISASTER

ARE YOU READY?

buying insurance and paying large premiums is to fully financially compensate you should there be a disaster. Don't be the unfortunate individual who finds out after it's too late; "Oh, that's not covered in your policy."

Oh, and be sure and read all those annual policy updates and changes that you get every year. And, pay your premiums on time.

2. Get Ready. Develop an emergency plan and put it where you can find it when you need it. The North Dakota State

University app I mentioned earlier allows you to enter names and contact points for all phases of any event. And, it is right there on your smart phone. Publish your plan so all your employees can read it, and make certain they do. It's also a good idea to have a general employee meeting once or twice a year to remind everyone that there is a plan in place.

3. Vital Elements. A critical part of your plan should be to decide BEFOREHAND which

items you cannot do without. Credit card machines and that sort of thing will be needed when you resume operations. Don't forget business records, customer files, etc. Review the article in this issue of Furniture World on cyber security. Its focus is on ransomware, but the same principles of backing up vital customer and business information with a "3, 2, 1" process apply.

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"During Hurricane Harvey

Gallery Furniture opened its store as a shelter to storm victims while the storm was still in progress."

interestingly enough, were in sunny Southern California. We had a sudden, severe winter storm and we found out that over half the stores in our chain had serious roof leaks. Insurance will probably cover your loss, but any rain-damaged goods means less inventory to sell when

you are back in business. If you lack confidence in your roof, think about keeping some inexpensive tarps on hand to cover floor models and warehouse stock. If you cannot protect your inventory, go through your store and warehouse and do a quick video (on your smart phone)

of all merchandise, floor models and backup stock. You may need it for insurance claims.

How do you protect your building? Whether you rent or own, you want the building to be as protected as possible. Most stores feature large glass enclosed showrooms and these glass windows are among the most vulnerable points on the building. Placing plywood over the windows seems like a good solution, but with the way many buildings are constructed, it is possible to do a lot of unnecessary damage to the building to secure the plywood, only to find that the plywood blows off anyway during the storm. I would suggest, at minimum, to tape your windows with packing tape. Look online for the proper way to do this.

4. Backup Manager. What if you are on vacation observing penguin habitats in Antarctica when an earthquake suddenly devastates much of your market area? You will need a backup emergency manager to take over.

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DISASTER

ARE YOU READY?

5. Evacuation. Some disasters, such as hurricanes, call for quick evacuation from the affected area. In Coastal Texas, we have learned the hard way, that the EARLIER the evacuation, the better. If you evacuate, have multiple routes to choose from, because you never know which direction the problem will come from. And don't wait. As the city of Houston found out several years ago in Hurricane Rita, if you wait to leave town when everybody else does, you might just as well stay home. The Rita evacuation killed TEN TIMES more people than the hurricane itself did. And, in this latest catastrophe, Hurricane Harvey's landfall was over 100 miles from Houston, but the peculiar weather conditions and the storm's wide circulation, caused over four FEET of rain to fall in a town that has been known to flood with a brief afternoon thunderstorm.

"Insurance companies frequently include 'exclusions' that store owners might not be completely aware of.

Do not assume that all insurance policies are alike."

6. Suppliers. Finally, after the event is over, there is almost always an increased need for mattresses and furniture to replace damaged or destroyed items. Don't find yourself short of salable goods, especially the MOST NEEDED ITEMS, such as mattresses.

7. Shelter. If you cannot evacuate, you may need to "shelter in place." This may also include sheltering some or all of your employees. It is smarter to find a potential shelter before the event than during it. Needless to say, the shelter, if needed, should be adequately pre-stocked with



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"If you cannot evacuate, you may need to 'shelter in place.'

This may also include sheltering some or all of your employees."

water, food and other necessities.

8. Communication. You must have the phone numbers and any social media identifiers stored on your smart phone for all:

- Employees
- City, county and state officials you can call for status information
- Suppliers who can quickly restock your store
- Television, radio, newspapers and other news outlets for updates
- Your insurance agent

This is just a partial list. All of this preparation can be done before anything happens. Again, I would suggest searching "disaster preparation" online to make certain that you are not overlooking any important items.

One very important point to remember is that once advance notice of a disaster is given, ALL

necessities of life will DISAPPEAR from store shelves immediately.

While It Is Happening

Most business people like to know what is happening with their businesses when they are not on-site. This is true whether you are on vacation or in the middle of a disaster.

Install Camera Surveillance. Some systems have apps that enable you to watch your business from afar. This capability may be disrupted in certain types of crises, but If you can stay internet connected, you can watch your store from your phone computer.

Talk To Your Neighbors. Fire and police officials usually remain behind. Sometimes friends, neighbors, and local business owners do as well. Develop connections so you can find out the condition of your store.

Contact News Agencies. You

may be able to keep track of things by staying in touch with reporters, weather staff and others who stay behind to report on the disaster.

Use Social Media. In this last storm, we received more local information from Facebook, texting, and other social media than we did from any news organization.

Communicate With Employees. Store owners should know the locations of all employees and their condition. Make sure they are out of harm's way during the crisis. You will need them when you re-open.

If you can find a way to monitor the progress of the disastrous event and its impact on your business, you will be better prepared to take immediate and effective action once you return.

If You Don't Evacuate

In Hurricane Harvey, Gallery Furniture opened its store as a shelter to storm victims while the storm was still in progress. Then they followed up by housing the rescue volunteers. Civic minded deeds such as this have become the norm for this particular business. This type of action isn't just good-hearted, it is also good business.

After It's Over

Most store owners want to get back into business as quickly as possible. In a great many of these events, power outages can continue

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"We received

more local information from Facebook, texting, and other social media than we did from any news organization."

for days, if not weeks. As mentioned earlier, local citizens affected by the event will need your products, immediately, if not sooner.

Before resuming operations, here are a few things to think about:

1. Do a thorough examination of your store to check for damage to the building, inventory, floor models and mechanical systems, such as electricity, HVAC, plumbing, internet and phone service. Remove all damaged floor models before allowing customers in. If part of the building is unusable, carefully restrict customer entry to that area.

2. Use emergency power, if necessary. In South Texas, in August and September, it gets very hot. If your store is operating on emergency power, such as a generator, it may be hard to keep a comfortable temperature. That being said, there are still stores in the hot, humid south that NEVER have installed air conditioning, yet they still do business. Don't wait to open your store just because the air conditioning isn't working. Some customers don't mind a little discomfort to get a good deal. The main thing is to not put them in danger.

3. Let everybody know you are open! Social media advertising is a good way to get a mes-

sage out quickly.

4. Offer a "disaster discount." Be a good citizen. It will earn you a lot of goodwill from the community.

5. Watch out for outlaws. By this I mean looters, scam artists, grifters, con men and price gougers. Disasters are a magnet for these types of people.

6. Have plenty of merchandise on hand to sell. It is a good idea to have pre-arranged agreements with suppliers so that an emergency order is activated in the event of a disaster.

7. Ensure the safety of your employees. Keep them away from any damaged parts of your business that might put them in danger.

8. Restore all the critical pieces of the business that you might have evacuated before the event. This includes necessary mechanical items, vital customer records, etc.

Summary

Just because a disaster arrives without warning does not mean that we should be totally unprepared. I'm sure many who read this article will be able to think of a bunch of other preparations that

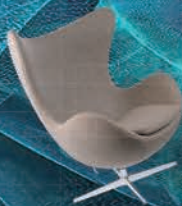
I left out. But, as mentioned earlier in the article, the whole point of the article is not to give you a manual of how to prepare, it is an alarm signal to store owners that NOW is the time to prepare for the next disaster. Don't wait until it's too late.

About David Benbow: A twenty-three year veteran of the mattress and bedding industry and owner of Mattress Retail Training Company offering retailers retail guidance, from small store management to training retail sales associates. His years of hands-on experience as a retail sales associate, store manager, sales manager/trainer and store owner in six different metropolitan areas qualifies him as an expert in selling bedding. David is the author of the recently published book, "How to Win the Battle for Mattress Sales, the Bed Seller's Manual", a complete, text book for mattress and bedding retail sales associates, beginner and experienced professional alike. The book can be purchased on-line at <http://www.bedsellersmanual.com> or www.mattressretailtraining.com. He offers hands-on training classes for retailers on a variety of subjects and on-line classes that can be downloaded from the websites mentioned above. David can be contacted via e-mail at dave@bedsellersmanual.com or by phone at 361-648-3775.



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SWOT ANALYSIS

ACHIEVING RETAIL SUCCESS WITH FOCUS

by David McMahon

Knowing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and the threats facing your business allows you to focus on what's important, instead of what's urgent.

The difference between a retail operation that excels and one that produces average results year-over-year most often comes down to one factor: Focus! There are many furniture retailers that employ the highest paid people and are still unsuccessful because they don't have focus. They may have good intentions, but operate ineffectively because this lack of focus allows them to become distracted by what is "urgent" instead of what is really important. Alternatively, top performing businesses focus on the right things. They do not allow themselves to be distracted by events that take them away from working on the truly important areas of their business.

So, how do you know what to focus on in the first place? Is it possible to achieve a crystal clear picture of where you want to go? And where can you apply resources efficiently to get desired results?

One common way of honing your focus is through a SWOT analysis, or Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats. We use SWOT in our performance groups

and with consulting clients. If you want to benefit by having better business focus, I suggest that you conduct a SWOT analysis as follows.

The Four Parts

First, understand the four parts:

Strengths: List the things your organization excels at doing. These are value-added activities that comprise your competitive advantage.

Weaknesses: List the aspects of your business that detract from your value or place you at a competitive disadvantage.

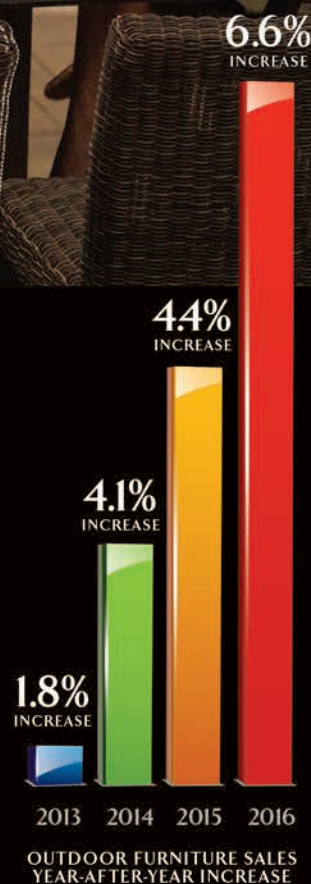
Opportunities: List favorable external factors or opportunities in your marketplace.

Threats: List external threats that place your business model at a risk.

Note that SWOT is broken down into two segments: Internal Strengths/Weaknesses and External Opportunities/Threats. This makes explicit the elements inside the walls



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"It was obvious

That this operation was under-performing when compared to its competitors. Employees had lost focus on their customers with negative effects."

of your operation that add or detract value. Additionally, this allows you to observe factors in the marketplace outside of your operation that may hurt or help the future success of the business.

Once you've listed these internal and external segments, you can work to develop a strategic direction and use your resources more effectively. It helps you to set specific tactics, and direct day-to-day actions, so that your people focus on doing the right things, at the right times, efficiently.

To illustrate this, let's look at an example from an actual consulting

client:

Case Study, Company X

Company X has a two-store operation in a city of 150,000 people. Its annual sales are \$15 million with a gross margin of 48 percent and net income (before tax) of three percent. Company X is a third generation family business selling a mix of stocking merchandise and special orders at a wide range of price points. They have four main physical competitors in their trading area, are the largest advertiser of all the businesses in their market and

the most highly trafficked operation.

A simplified worksheet of the type used to conduct a SWOT analysis is presented in the chart below (top three points presented).

Going through this exercise, a business strategy and specific tactics were developed to help focus the operation on a specific goal.

Strategy Statement

The strategy statement for Company X specified a goal of achieving sales growth of 15 percent in annual sales volume while building margins to 50 percent overall. The key metrics to focus on were sales per guest recorded by salespeople, and actual sales per visual counter traffic. The team was tasked with reducing the discrepancy between these two metrics. Overall sales per guest became the prime focus for improvement of the entire business. This was to be accomplished while holding advertising at the current dollar spend, and shifting the dollar mix to more digital media.

Tactics For Company X

The top three tactics to accomplish this strategy were defined as follows:

1. Hire dedicated sales managers and focus their efforts

Internal	
Strengths (list)	Weaknesses (list)
1. Generate consistent traffic through high advertising spend. 2. Have the widest selection of product physically shown in the marketplace. 3. Have several long-time, loyal employees.	1. There are sales performance issues and in-fighting. 2. Warehousing is near capacity so inventory, service and distribution issues are common. 3. High traffic causes some customers to not receive the attention they deserve.
External	
Opportunities (list)	Threats (list)
1. The local economy and population is growing and local market dominance is possible. 2. The trade area is sizable outside of the local market and has a population of about 500,000 within a one hour drive. 3. 99 percent + of transactions are in stores, while less than one percent are online.	1. There is increased price shopping on the internet and people are leaving the store to shop online. 2. There is a low local unemployment rate, making the it very difficult to find people willing to work for few benefits. 3. The average age of customers is growing, with less traffic coming from people with above average incomes.

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on defining selling systems for the salespeople to execute.

2. Hire the appropriate number of salespeople for the traffic produced, and train them to execute the new selling systems. Eliminate any poisonous attitudes on the current team, and hire for attitude and personality.

3. Invest in employee training and benefits.

Results

There were many other points that came up in the SWOT analysis of Company X, but the aforementioned areas were identified as the key ones that could help the business to make the largest improvements. It was obvious that this operation was under-performing when compared with its competitors. Employees had lost focus on their customers with negative effects. Company X was in a perpetual state of chaos-man-

agement. A refocus on customers with adequate staffing levels and quality attention was determined to be the new direction. Company X is located in a healthy market with lots of growth potential. The only way it could realize this potential was to develop a more highly functioning team and better managed processes to serve customers.

Conclusion

SWOT Analysis is a simple way to open eyes and possibly save businesses like Company X from implosion. Dollar-wise, achieving the new strategic goals added \$1.425 million in gross margin dollars to Company X's bottom line.

If you feel that your operation lacks focus or is confused about which direction to go, try conducting your own SWOT analysis.

About David McMahon: David McMahon, CSCP, CMA, EA is

"This lack of focus allows under-performing companies to become distracted by what is 'urgent' instead of what is really important."

VP of the consulting and performance group at PROFITsystems, a HighJump Company. He holds professional certifications as a Certified Supply Chain Professional and is a Certified Management Accountant. David directs four performance groups, the Kaizen, Visionary, Gladiator, TopLine groups and multiple consulting projects. He can be reached at david.mcmahon@highjump.com.

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Cheryl Bruene, General Manager, Frederick Furniture, Grundy Center, Iowa

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(Be sure to read Larry's timely article in this month's Furniture World!)



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ADVANCE PLANNING FOR 2018

by Gordon Hecht

Sure, it's not even Halloween, but here are some planning tips for a happy and successful 2018!

I know it's a little early, but these months seem to fly by.

Sure, your business ship is afloat and on course, but now is the best time to plan for 2018. Chances are really good that you will not have time this week to plan for next year. And there are two chances, slim and fat, that next week looks any better! Just don't wait until you are taking tinsel off of the Christmas Tree to start the process!

Planning takes a lot of GUESSING! We really don't know what next year, or even what next week will bring. Planning starts with putting two circles around the number 2018. The first is The Circle of Concern. This encompasses everything you have absolutely no control over including interest rates, the economy, housing starts, new competition entering the market, current competition running one of those whiz-bang GOB sales, losing your top salesperson, hurricanes. You know things that keep you up at night!

The other circle is the Circle of Influence. These include actions that you have full or almost full control over. Think about your advertising budget, buying new equip-

ment, hiring new people, moving out poor performing merchandise and employees, getting a better location or painting the current one. You also have control over setting operational standards, sales standards, training programs, relations and requirements with your vendors, retail pricing strategies, charitable donations, finance promotions, floor displays, and succession planning.

Your business is a lot of things to a lot of people. You are a delivery/installation company, a health insurance provider (in the U.S.), a paycheck to some people, and a community member. But, primarily, you are a sales organization. Therefore, start your planning with a sales budget because that is where you derive income to pay for all that other pesky stuff like wages, taxes, and rent.

Budgeting

Unless you are consolidating locations, plan for a sales volume increase over 2017. At this point you can figure what the rest of the year will look like, or you can use Q4 2016 for direction. That will

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"Your shoppers

and some employees believe that you get to keep the rest. Your landlord, insurance company, utilities, and lots of other people think otherwise."

cover increases in the cost of living, which I understand is going up \$2 a 12-pack next year. You can use industry forecasts of about 4.5 percent for Home Furnishings, or get aggressive and go for double digits.

Next, budget that out over a 12 month calendar. Luckily our industry is fairly stable month to month. Your area may differ, so look at July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 to figure what percent of business you do each month.

Advertising

Now that you've determined your rate of monthly business, you can plan your advertising spend. The Furniture Business is **COMPETITIVE!** Plan to spend money to bring people into your store. Your net spend should be around 10 percent **MINIMUM** after any rebates or co-op advertising funds if you want to get your voice heard. There isn't an easy answer to the question of where you should invest your advertising funds. Every market is different. However, it's hard to get beat by the **BIG GUYS** on digital and social media advertising. They can outspend you on TV and ROP, but you can appeal to your local market better on that world wide webby thing. BTW, you don't have to be an expert. You can hire services to do it all for you.

Sales Goals

Once you set your goal and determined the best road to get there, it's time to engage your sales team. Look at your monthly and annual sales goal. Divide that by the number of RSA you have selling for you. Give a half point to any part-timers. For a five million dollar store with six full-time and two part-time RSAs it comes out to \$715 thousand a year, about \$60,000 a month. Part-timers are half of that, so click the calculator on your smart phone and you'll have the answer.

Get real and honest. Is your number per RSA too much, too small, or just right? Understand that our industry has a 50 percent turnover rate, and you will lose some non-family members in 2018. Decide if you need to hire more people, or people with different skills.

Gross Margin Goals

The next step is, as we said in the '80s, totally **GROSS!** It's setting your gross margin goal. You can decide on a **QUEEN** or **KING** sized margin and focus on getting the most money out of every sale. That doesn't always mean raising prices. Adding room essentials like tables, lamps, rugs and wall art or sleep essentials (the 3 PPPs) of protection, pillows, and power bases will natu-

rally raise your margin.

Alternatively you can be the King or Queen of Cheap! Stay within pricing guidelines, but set a goal that you will never be undersold. That's OK, but experience tells us that there are no winners in the race to **ZERO!** Your better bet is to promote and sell a mix of goods while not stepping over dollars to pick up pennies.

Costs

Your planning is almost complete! You have your sales goal, gross margin and advertising spend. Your shoppers and some employees believe that you get to keep the rest. Your landlord, insurance company, utilities, and other people in your posse like landscapers, vehicle repair people, and Uncle Sam think otherwise. Start deducting your cost of doing business and taxes. Whatever is left after paying off the world is yours to keep!

The number should be **BLACK** which means you made money that can be used to reinvest, expand, or just have fun. If the number is **RED** then your friendly local banker makes money. You can avoid this by reducing unnecessary expenses, under-performing assets like outdated inventory, or under-performing associates. An easy rule is, if it doesn't add value, eliminate it.

Relax...



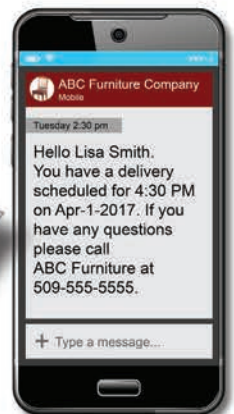
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Looking Backwards To Be Like Amazon

While you are budgeting and looking to the future to compete with the Amazons and Wayfairs of this world, you might also take a look backwards.

I started my retail career in the 1970s, an opportunity to be mentored by salespeople who started

their careers in the '50s. Back then selling WAS a career, not just a job you took until you got a real job. I worked with guys named Mel, Ben, Ron, Len, Bud, and Jay. It seems you had to have a name with three letters to be a true salesman back then. Here is what they all had in common with each other and with Amazon.

They Looked Their Best: Every salesman (they were called that back then) I worked with invested in their wardrobe and personal appearance. Their shoes were shined and their ties, suits, and hairstyles were up to date. Some even wore diamond pinky rings to show their success. Amazon and Wayfair also continually work to make their websites more attractive to shoppers.

They Knew Their Customers: Back in the day, successful salesmen reached out a hand to greet shoppers, memorized their shopper's name, and used it often. They welcomed back returning customers and already had an idea of what they might like. They asked each customer to recommend their store and products to a friend. They even joined animal groups like the Lions Club or the Elks Club to create social connections that would lead to more sales. Amazon also knows my name and greets me when I log in. They already have an idea of the items, styles, and sizes of products I want. Every once in a while they will send me a note to remind me I haven't visited in a while or check if I am

running out of a replaceable product. Amazon also asks me to rate products and occasionally sends me another shopper's question to see if I can answer it.

They Knew Their Competition:

Have you ever heard a shopper say "This is the first place I looked" or "I want to shop a few more stores". The latter is less heard these days, however, people want to shop around when they don't believe you have the perfect product or the perfect price. Salesmen working in the middle of the last century couldn't just go online like we can to find out what other stores were offering, so they took time during their lunch hour to find out! And when shoppers inquired about other retailers, the salesmen could recite what products were out there, including pricing, service and options so shoppers wouldn't have to go down the street. Amazon doesn't want you leaving their site, either. They will give you the PRIME price and then show other lower prices from their site and other distributors. They'll also show the condition of products from those distributors along with shipping charges and delivery times.

They Asked for the Sale: Jay, Bud and the rest of them taught me the ABCs of Selling. It means Always Be Closing. In their day, it was a sin to let a shopper out without asking for an order. Amazon does the same. Their "Add to Cart" icon even assumes that the quantity will be greater than one! Old School

"In their day, it was a sin to let a shopper out without asking for an order. Amazon does the same. **Their Add to Cart icon even assumes that the quantity will be greater than one!"**

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"While you're driving forward, take a peek in the rear-view mirror so you don't lose track of those timely tactics to attract business and create customers for life."

Salesmen also know that the best time to sell somebody something is when they are buying, so they always introduced one more product. Amazon is pretty shrewd too! Choose any item and they will show you different bundles to help you enjoy your product more. We used to call it "One Stop Shopping", now it's "One Click Buying".

They Always Said Thank You:

Back when postage was a nickel and you didn't need zip codes, salesmen sent out hand written and addressed thank you cards. Part of the verbiage included the customer's name, the product they bought, some business cards, and an invitation to come back to the store. Often, if there was a bump in the road between purchase and delivery

it was up to the sales associate to call the customer to let them know. Amazon also sends you a "Thank You" email mere seconds after you place your order, whether the item is \$10 or \$10,500. In that email you'll get a delivery date, and in the rare instance that Amazon can't make that date, you'll get updated information. Although it's automated, it's always cool to get that email from Amazon telling you that your items have shipped.

Conclusion

Retail store owners and managers have a lot of reasons to stay awake at night. It's a good idea to plan for the future with shrewd budgeting plus adding cutting-edge innovation

to drive traffic and sales. And, while you're driving forward, take a peek in the rear-view mirror so you don't lose track of those timely tactics to attract business and create customers for life.

About Gordon Hecht: *Gordon Hecht is a frequent contributor to Furniture World and is the Senior Manager In-Store Concepts for Serta Simmons Bedding Company, introducing and expanding bedding business in conventional and non-traditional venues. He started his 30+ years experience in the Home Furnishings industry in Las Vegas, NV as a delivery helper and driver and later served in sales, retail management and consulting roles. Questions and comments can be directed to him at ghecht@serta.com.*



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Furniture Of America	866-923-8500	rockyy.ca@foagroup.com	64-65	High Point Market	336-884-1884	imcenters.com/highpointmarket	132-133
Country View Woodworking	330-674-1390	rmiller@cvwld.com	66-67	Genesis Software	509-536-4739	crystal@_@genesissadvantage.com	135
Isuzu	866-441-9638	www.isuzucv.com	Inside Back Cover, 68-69	Mexico Int'l Furn. Mkt	+ 52(33)3343 3400	expos@afamjal.com.mx	137
Dimplex	519-667-7026	marketingonline@dimplex.com	71	IMOB (Istanbul Market)		www.cnrexpo.com	139
KAS Oriental Rugs	732-545-1900	hari@kasrugs.com	73	Furniture Training Company	866-755-5996	mikep@furnituretrainingcompany.com	138
Ohio Hardwood Furn. Mkt.	877-643-8824	ohiohardwoodfurnituremarket.com	75	Furniture Hall of Fame	336.882.5900	kmcneill@furniturehalloffame.com	141
Style N Living	917-257-4471	stylenliving@gmail.com	77	Furniture Wizard	619-869-7200	marty@furniturewizard.com	142-143

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