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8 SECRETS OF TOP RETAILERS

Drop Those Percentage Discounts

Bedding Education - Gel & Foam Essentials

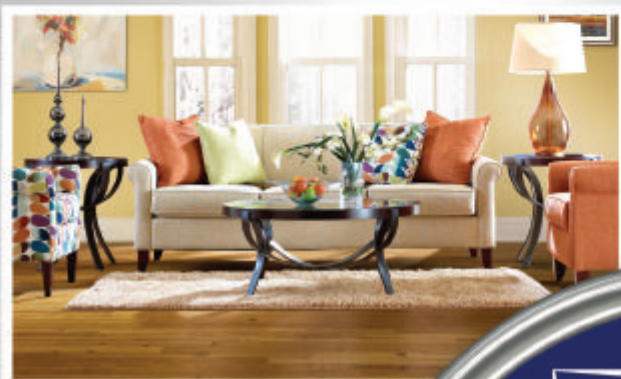
Demographics , Lifestyle Changes & Your Retail Future

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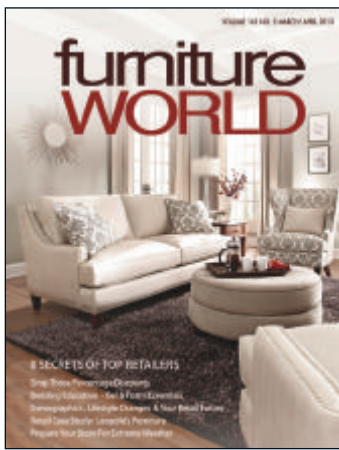
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Cover: This month's cover features the Duchess, style # D40600 from Klaussner shown in Bliss Linen with Sonja Zinc arm pillow. This distinctive collection features a choice of pewter or old spotted gold nail head trim that cascade down thin, track arms and wrap along the sides and bottom of the front border. Back cushions are bordered, welted, and filled with a down blend. For more information see page one in this issue, or visit www.klaussner.com.

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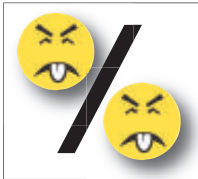
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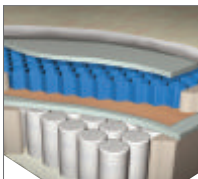
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Welcome Home.



Welcome Home.







EDITOR'S CORNER

Our Industry Is
Coming Of Age

This month we welcome back Jerry Epperson as a contributor to Furniture World Magazine. It's been a while.

In 1980, the year I joined Furniture World, Jerry penned a six-part series our editor brilliantly titled, "The Epperson Report." One installment in the March issue, "Our Industry Is Coming of Age" caught my attention.

The 1980 article has some similarities with his current piece, "Believe In Furniture Again" that starts on the following page. Both have optimistic titles, analyze important demographic trends, and include a bit of humor.

Mentioned in 1980 were topics familiar to today's GenXers, including Iran, Afghanistan and the Redskins. Also, included were items of special interest to Baby Boomers such as 19% inflation, Women's Liberation and the Sexual Revolution.

Urban renewal, divorce, single family households, pornographic movie actors... plus nudists and their impact on the furniture industry were all mentioned.

You can find it online at www.furninfo.com/Series/EditorsCorner accompanied by a mustachioed photo of the author.

I wouldn't like anyone to publish my photo or anything I wrote in 1980, but Mr. Epperson is well known for his good humor, so I thought I would take a chance.

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BELIEVE IN FURNITURE

Again!

Demographics, changing lifestyles, the economy and technology all promise to make our industry's immediate future bright indeed.

by Jerry Epperson

Each of us has a big investment in the home furnishings industry. As a result, we would all like to have confidence that this is an industry with a promising future. I would like to discuss that future.

First, we are in a recovery albeit a slow one. It is now being led by the housing sector which did not perform well in 2010 or 2011. Housing has picked up dramatically since the second half of last year. This is promising, since no post World War II economic recovery has gained momentum without housing playing a leading role.

This long, slow economic recovery has taken a big toll and has greatly changed our industry. We have fewer competitors at retail. Our numbers show that there are 56% fewer smaller stores today than in 2002. Of course, the big have gotten bigger. The top ten furniture stores in Furniture/Today's top 100, were 19.8% of all of the furniture retail business in 2002 and grew to 28.7% in 2011.

At the same time, large competitors have entered the furniture industry. Non-furniture store retailing including warehouse clubs like Costco and Sam's Club, mass merchants such as Target and Wal-Mart, internet retailers including Wayfair and Hayneedle, office superstores like Staples and Office Depot, and any number of other non-traditional furniture store

retailers have continued to make gains. Non-traditional retailers were responsible for 36.5% of the furniture and mattresses sold in 2002. This figure grew to 42.2% in 2011. These retailers find the home furnishings industry increasingly attractive for some of the demographic and lifestyle reasons we will discuss below.

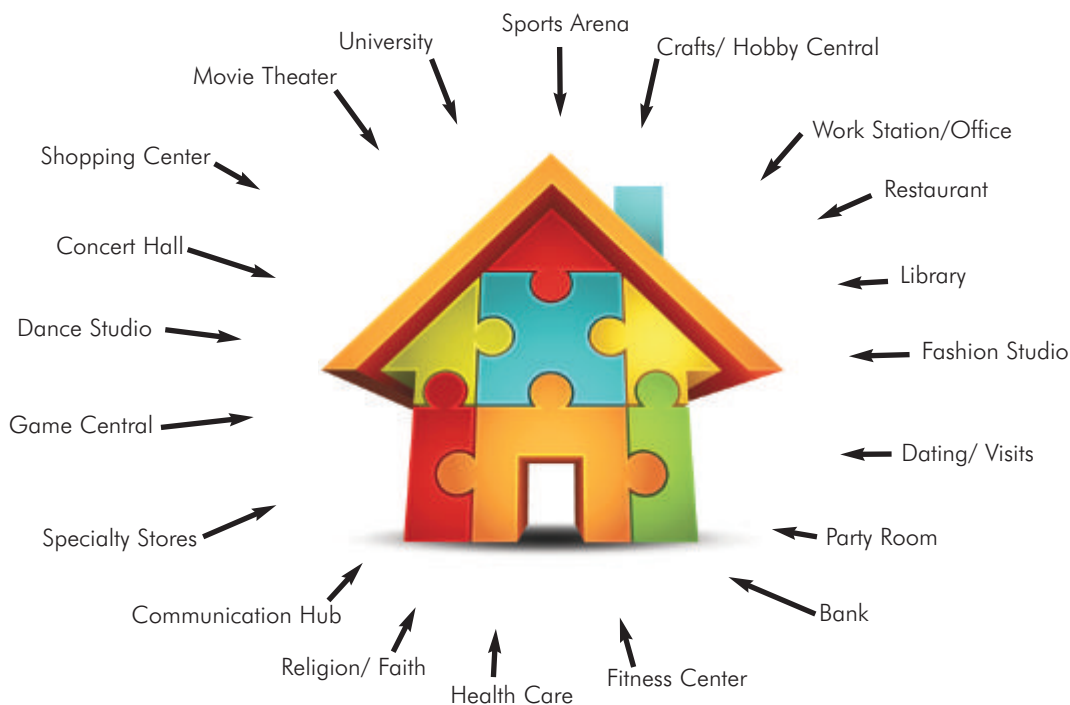
DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Over the last forty years the residential furniture industry has catered to one dominant consumer base, the 76 million Baby Boomers born from 1946 to 1964. This is a huge group, dramatically larger than the 54 million in the prior generation, and they've had a large and consistent economic impact. Our industry has grown with them from their first apartments, to their first homes, to where they live today.

Millennials: The hot new group for our industry are the Millennials, 73 million strong, now 16-34 years of age. This group, the children of the Baby Boomers, are introducing new workers seeking employment into the US economy at a rate of 100,000 per month. Statistics show that 39% of young people 18-34 years old who are sometimes laughingly termed "Back-Homers" now live at home with their parents or other family members. Twenty-four percent never left home,

while 15% left but were forced to return because of the recession and a lack of job prospects. As the economy improves, not only will the natural progression of the Millennials exiting high school, college or the military positively affect the retail furniture industry, we will see "Back-Homers" leaving home, entering the workforce and setting up households.

GenX: The next big group that will affect our industry is Generation X, aged 35-48. There are 48 million of this group, smaller than either the generation before or after them. Most have had all of the children they are going to have but those children are still at home. Spending typically peaks with American households between 35-44 so Generation X now is at its peak vs. other age groups. Because they are fewer in number, this group is having a taxing effect on a retail base that was built to service the 76 million Baby Boomers. The 48 million Generation Xers cannot support that massive retail mass. This is a reason we've seen continued shrinkage in the number of brick and mortar retailers. Gen X is reasonably well educated and is certainly more computer savvy than Baby Boomers, but they are not as computer savvy as the younger Millennials. Of course, the Millennials will not be as computer savvy as their children either, and the technology



The Home Of Tomorrow

In addition to being the major location for most of the above activities, the house of tomorrow will also include:

- **Auto-pantry:** Application that automatically interfaces a refrigerator or other household items with a smart phone listing. Items needed can be viewed on the phone while shopping in a store or when placing an online order for delivery.
- **3-D printers:** Basic models are available in the marketplace for less than \$2,000. Future home-based 3-D printers will allow people to work on different projects (architecture, fashion, home design and almost anything else) in 3D. We will be able to buy apparel online and the 3D printer will make it at home.
- **Spoken typing:** Already available for those who are not comfortable with keyboards; soon computers will also respond to motion, eye movement, voice and eventually thoughts.
- **Virtual travel:** Those who either are limited in their travel or who do not want the risk of airplane flights and traveling can see the sights, hear the locals and enjoy many of the benefits of travel without the problems.
- **Personalized merchandise:** This will be increasingly popular as each of us can now order things that either just fit us, our rooms, our cars or meet the demands of our family. Want your initials or photo on everything? No problem.

cycle keeps on going.

Baby Boomers: The Baby Boomers are now 49-67 and there are 76 million of us. They are buying larger homes, second homes and are at the peak of their earnings. As this group matures past 60 they will save more and spend less. Many will be moving into smaller homes, as their children leave home (eventually).

ETHNIC LANDSCAPE

One of the reasons to be excited about our industry's future is the growth of certain ethnic groups. In the next twenty years, the US population will grow from 310 million people in 2010 to 374 million people by 2030.

Asian Population: During this time, the Asian population will grow from 5% to 6% of the total. Asian households are the wealthiest of all ethnic groups in the US.

Hispanic Population: The best growth will be with the Hispanic population, expected to grow from 16% in 2010 to 23% by 2030.

African American Population: The African-American population will stay a flat 12%, according to most studies, but since the population is growing, they will be too.

Anglo Population: The Anglos will be shrinking from 65% of the total population to 56% in this 20-year period, but the absolute number in the white

population will continue to grow but much slower than other ethnicities. Of course, there are other differences because the Anglo population will be much older than either the Asian or the Hispanic population, so the impact of these population subsets will continue to have greater influence over the next 20 years.

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

There are additional shifts as well. In 1970 17.1% of all households were made up of individuals living alone while in 2010 that percentage was 30.2%. That is a huge change brought about by divorce, people waiting later in life to marry, and lifestyle changes. As you might imagine, large house-



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Again!

holds of five or more have declined from 20.9% in 1970 to 8.4% in 2010.

MIGRATION

Our population is migrating. People move for jobs, recreational opportunities and for comfort. The West and Midwest have been the beneficiaries in recent years with the worst states in terms of incoming migration being Maine, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York.

Migration is also being driven by dramatic shifts in the need for labor. We are in a crude oil and natural gas production boom that is going to create a tremendous number of energy-related jobs in the Midwest and West. Both the plastics and chemical industries are expanding rapidly in the U.S., employing a lot more people. The fastest growing states according to Kiplinger are Florida, Texas, Utah, Colorado, Nevada, Arizona and both of the Carolinas. The Millennials need 100,000 new jobs every month, plus we have nine million people out of work that need to be employed just to catch up with where we were before the recession. Of course, one of the most positive factors is housing. Our sources expect housing construction to add 700,000 new jobs in 2013.

HOUSING GROWTH

In the fourth quarter of 2012, despite negative growth in GDP, residential construction rose 15.3% and it was expected to grow in 2013 by

17.5%. The number of foreclosures peaked, driving a recovery in existing home sales, but now, in some markets, there is a shortage of homes available for sale. The inventory of used homes down is about 20% from where it was this time last year.

Prices: Home prices having fallen 32.5% from 2005 to 2011, bounced back 6.4% in 2012, and we expect them to rise about 5.0% this year. Homeowners seeing this bounce may get an opportunity to finally sell their homes. Home buyers may rush into buying homes before the prices go up further.

Inventory: Most people above 50 never expected to see a mortgage rate below 5%, but today 3.6% for a 30-year mortgage is commonplace. Rates are getting more support because lending is loosening up as well.

There is solid growth in existing home sales, new home sales and starts are booming, especially in multi-

family units last year. Single family starts in 2013 should grow faster. We expect existing home sales which were 4.3 million in 2011 to have reached 4.7 million in 2012 and be approximately 5.1 million this year. New single family home sales which were 307,000 in 2011 and 365,000 in 2012 should reach 469,000 in 2013. Meanwhile, starts are expected to go from 612,000 in 2011, to 781,000 last year, to 975,000 this year. That strong, consistent growth will create new jobs and tremendous demand for home furnishings for the remaining furniture retailers.

The United States has an aging housing base with 41.6% of our homes built before 1970. A new home in 1970 was approximately 1,600 sq. ft. These older homes may be a prime target for home furnishings sales but on a smaller scale. To sum up the housing sector, there will be a housing boom; it is just a matter of when... but it is looking good for 2013.

CONCLUSIONS

Healthy Housing Market: As stated previously, there will be a housing boom, not a fake one driven by investors and unusually generous mortgage terms as in the first half of the last decade, but by fundamental demand within our population.

New Niches: Instead of having the Baby Boomers dominate our population in all retail markets as they did from the late 1960s into this last decade, we will have many new markets and lots more retail niches. This should present an opportunity for all types of retail to prosper and grow. It will be increasingly difficult to service everyone in this broad marketplace.

Entrepreneurial Opportunities: These changes will bring about new, more

"There will be a housing boom, not driven by investors and generous mortgage terms, but by fundamental demand within our population."





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"America is about to see a major shift in the way we work, study, shop and do almost every other major activity because it is moving to be more home-based."



entrepreneurial ways of retailing. For example, we expect retailing in the future to have significantly less on-site inventory with more direct to the consumer delivery, often with the retailers never seeing the delivered merchandise. We expect more auction-type sales, not unlike the eBay culture we have all learned to accept. More personalization of our product will become commonplace and not just the "mass customization" that we have heard about for the last twenty years. We expect more mixing of high-end signature pieces with more popular-priced merchandise to extend the budget and allow American consumers to make more of a decorating statement, again personalizing the home.

Segment Growth: Finally, we see the internet and brick and mortar growing together because both serve a purpose. A recent study by Dimensional showed that a majority of Americans still prefer to buy furniture through brick and mortar stores while that is not true with consumer electronics, for example.

FOCUS ON THE HOME

One way that our economy can reduce its energy costs, reduce pollution, increase worker productivity, reduce wasted time and improve family life, is to focus on the home.

America is about to see a major shift in the way we work, study, shop and do almost every other major activity because all these activities are becoming more home based. In some

cases this trend is being driven by government regulations. In Los Angeles, employers with more than 100 workers downtown have to have a minimum of 10% of their workers working from the home or from remote sites to help reduce traffic and pollution. In 2010, the Federal government created a project to lessen commuting for all of the reasons listed above. The "2010 Telework Enhancement Act" states that "Telework can make employees more efficient, more accountable and more resilient in emergency conditions". The study went on to say that 32% of federal workers should be eligible to telecommute rather than to continue to go to central office sites. This alone could be a major shift in how the home is perceived.

The Associated Press on February 6th quoted a study by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute that said that traffic congestion cost America \$121 billion in terms of energy costs and 5.5 billion hours wasted sitting in traffic.

We are coming to a point where the high cost of energy and pollution are creating an opportunity to make US homes more functional. The technology now exists to allow people to work, participate in meetings and exchange ideas from their homes. Not only does this conserve energy, reduce pollution and save money, it helps cut down on commuting, the cost of apparel, child care, auto repairs and many other expenses. Check out the exhibit on page eight that illustrates many home centered activities driven by techno-

logical change.

In closing, you may ask yourself, "What will consumers do with all the money they save by staying home?" I will leave that up to your imagination but we believe that coming demographic and lifestyle changes will create many opportunities for smart furniture retailers.

About Jerry Epperson: Wallace W. Epperson, Jr. C.F.A, or "Jerry" to his friends, holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia and graduate degree from the College of William & Mary. He is a principal in the investment banking firm Mann, Armistead & Epperson, offering professional corporate financing services to the home furnishings industry.

Mr. Epperson's publishes a monthly newsletter on the home furnishings industry and conducts larger studies on consumer demographics, housing trends, the economy, shifts in furnishings retailing, imports/exports, styling and on specific product trends. He is a frequent speaker at industry events.

His furniture research, investment clients and state department visits gave him reasons to travel throughout North America, Europe and Asia. Recognition for his work has included the Distinguished Service Award from the AFMA Association, the Pillar of the Industry from IHFRA, being named to the American Furniture Hall of Fame and others. Questions about this article or about any related area can be directed to Jerry at wwe@maeltd.com.

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DROP THOSE PERCENTAGES

Observations on how percentage discounts and some sales goals expressed as a percent may be harmful to your furniture business.

by Gordon Hecht

It was the ideal promotional furniture retail concept! I had just joined an established chain of stores in Kansas City, MO that wanted to open up a clearance center. The pricing program was designed to be easy to understand. Every item was tagged with a plain manila hangtag with a SKU on the back and handwritten price on the front. Outlet pricing was simple, 50% off the tagged price.

Promoted as "The Discount That Everyone Understands - See The Price And Take 50% off!", the store was crowded on opening day with each

item displaying a neatly written \$199, \$299, \$399 and up. But there was a fatal flaw that became apparent from the first shopper who landed on a \$399 sofa. "How much is this?" she asked. The reply was our rehearsed line, "It's \$399 but you can have 50% off!" the salesman gleefully responded. The shopper followed, "I know that, but how much is it?" Our man quickly did the math - "\$199.50". Realization set in that the calculations were just too difficult for our shoppers.

Within a few days the entire store was retagged. \$199 became \$200, \$299 became \$300; everything was

retagged to end in "00". NOW we were ready. But history soon repeated itself. We had to calculate selling prices for \$300 recliners, and \$700 bedroom sets. People liked the idea of 50% off; they just didn't know what it meant. Finally, tagging included the regular prices that were X'ed out with the sale price underneath. All at 50% off. As you may have figured, shoppers who saw this still wanted to know, "You can do better, can't you!"

That was two decades ago, and I still see retail stores using percent-off discounts, and shoppers still not understanding the impact of 50% off



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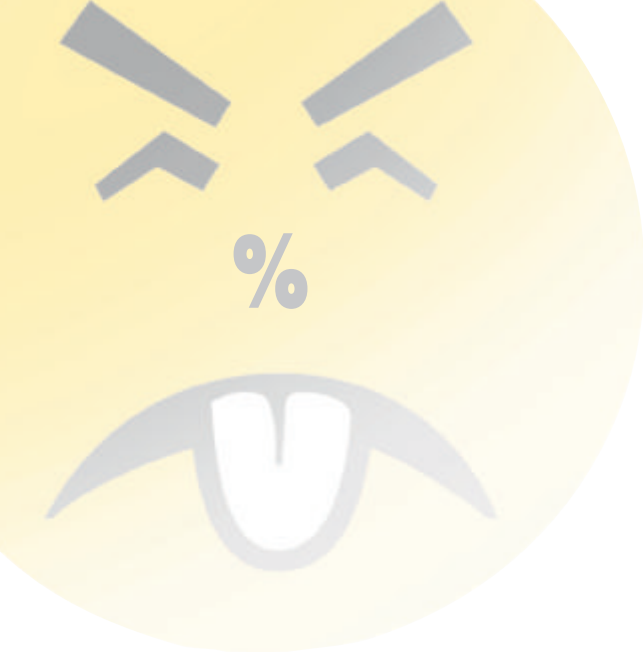
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"If our customers

can't calculate 50% off of a \$400 sofa, can RSAs understand that 15% of \$50,000 has to be in bedding? And, like a regressive tax, the bedding, service and accessory sales figures change with every day's written business."

or 70% off. However, there is a concept in discount pricing that has a definite impact and is easy to communicate. It's Dollar Discounts—simply stated as "Take \$100 Off".

On a recent competitive shopping trip I visited a store celebrating its 17th Anniversary in business. Kudos to them, but their Anniversary Sale Promotion was 17% off everything in the store. I spotted a queen mattress set tagged at \$1088 with a "Take 17% Off" overlay tag. Great idea, but how many shoppers can do that math, or would bother to use the calculator app on their smartphone? Some retailers view this as a positive, as they believe it encourages (or forces) the shopper to engage a retail sales associate (RSA). When I located an RSA and asked the price, she disappeared for 4½ minutes looking for a calculator. Even then she had trouble getting

the price correct.

Next time you are tempted to promote percent discounts, try dollar discounts instead. They can take several forms; instant rebates, coupons, hang tags, or In-store flyers. Use your percent off model, but state it in dollar form. 10% off becomes \$50 off any item priced \$499-899, \$100 off any item \$999-1499, and \$150 off any item \$1500-1999. This is not only easy to understand, but will also result in a 7-8% reduction instead of the 10% you thought you had to give away.

SALES GOALS & PERCENT

Using percent can have another negative effect in your business. Successful retailers become successful by coaching Key Performance Metrics (KPM) for their sales staff. The idea is

to set minimum standards and goals to obtain well-rounded sales performance. Closing is generally measured by Percent. However, there is an error in coaching all sales performance this way. Imagine you are setting monthly sales goals for your RSAs. You start with a written goal, say \$50,000. Then you look at certain profit center categories for production. This should include Extended Service Plan, Bedding, and Accessories. Typical retail goals are stated as \$50,000 written, 5% Extended Service Plan, 15% Bedding, and 5% Accessory Sales. These are great goals, but expressing them in percent leaves a gap regarding how to achieve the category sales numbers. If our shoppers can't figure out 50% off of a \$400 sofa, can our RSAs understand that 15% of \$50,000 has to be in Bedding? And, like a regressive tax,



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the Bedding, Service and Accessory sales figures change with every day's written business.

For example, if your RSA has 15% in Bedding Sales on the last day of the month, and sells a \$10,000 Dining Room, her 15% achievement has dropped. Even if she is skilled enough to add a \$1,299 Mattress set to that \$10,000 Dining Room, normally a good thing, her bedding percent achievement still drops below 15%.

Next month try stating goals as Dollar figures only - no percents; no moving numbers. \$50,000 Written now becomes \$50,000 with \$2500 in Extended Service, \$7500 in Bedding, and \$2500 in Accessories. Your managers will find it easier to explain at the start of the month and easier to coach during the month. The reason is that the category sales goals NEVER change, no matter what sales volume the RSA sells in a month. The \$7,500 Mattress Goal remains at that amount, whether she writes \$40,000 or \$99,000 or more. You can even help your RSA understand that \$7,500 in mattresses is fifteen \$499 promo sets, nine mid-priced sets, or three premium sets. And-your "un-coachable" RSA will enjoy hearing "Once you hit \$7,500, I won't mention mattresses to you for the rest of the month!" If you set realistic sales

volume goals you WILL reach your store category goals.

On the 28th day of the month it's far easier to coach your RSA by saying "When you sell one more \$799 mattress, you've achieved your goal" than "You are at 14.2% in Bedding, and need to be at 15%... Go Get 'em tiger!" If you are like me and love to post performance results in the break room, you'll like graphing every dollar sold, instead of trying to post percentage increases and decreases.

Store Owners can set Store Managers' goals the same way, in dollars for all volume and category goals. Once their store hits the monetary goal, they can concentrate on sale volume and build your business even greater! And, in the end, wouldn't you prefer \$40,000 in bedding sales and \$12,500 in Extended Service and Accessory sales on \$300,000 store volume to 15%, 5% and 5% on store volume of \$200,000? I'll wait 4½ minutes while you get your calculator!

Gordon Hecht: Gordon Hecht is a 39 year veteran of the Home Furnishing business starting as a Delivery Helper in Las Vegas, NV. Following a successful sales, store management, and multi-store management career he joined Ashley



"It's far easier to coach your RSA by saying, 'When you sell one more \$799 mattress, you've achieved your goal' than 'You are at 14.2% in Bedding, and need to be at 15%... Go Get 'em tiger!'"

Furniture Industries. In his role as National Director of Sales for Ashley Sleep Gordon helps Retailers improve Bedding Sales through training, merchandising and display.

If you can't add percentages in your head and need a deal on a used slide rule or abacus, contact Gordon at Ghecht@ashleyfurniture.com.



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RISKY BUSINESS

Part 1: With extreme weather on the rise, take a close look at your store's insurance coverage, especially the policy exclusion endorsement.

by Stephen J. Wisocky

Within a mere seven years, the U.S. has suffered the top two most expensive extreme weather storms in her 236 year history, Hurricanes Katrina & Sandy. The category five Hurricane Katrina in 2005 packed winds as high as 174 mph with 30 foot storm surges and heavy rainfall. It devastated the Southern Gulf Coast at a \$45 billion price tag to the insurance industry. Our most recent hurricane, Sandy, arrived in October 2012 attacking the Northeast. At its peak only a category two, Sandy became the largest Atlantic hurricane

on record with a diameter of over 1100 miles. The final insurance industry price tag is to be determined, but recent estimates are \$20 billion.

INSURANCE POLICIES CHECK THE FINE PRINT

These catastrophes affected many hundreds of furniture dealers. The most common perils experienced were true tests to the 'FINE PRINT' of their property insurance policies.

Damage to stores and warehouses along with loss of income or business interruption were caused by a number

of "perils" during these catastrophes. Commonly reported were fire and explosion, wind and hail, power outage, flood, storm surge, sewer backup and overflow.

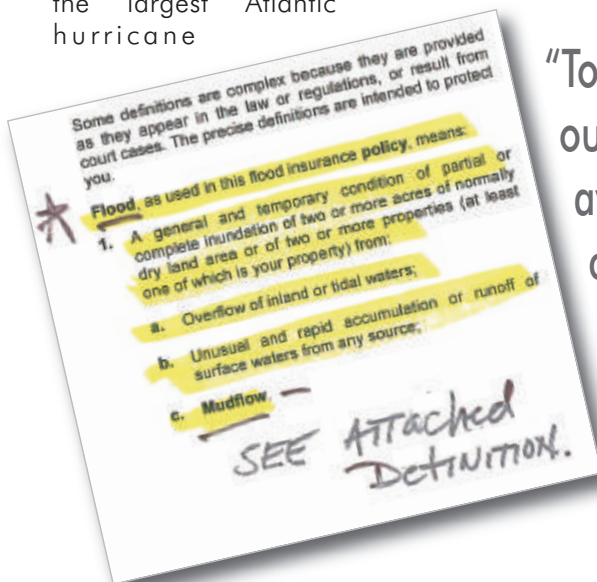
The Special Perils Property Insurance Policy form, which all dealers should have, reads that the "perils" (what you are insured for) are "all risks" (anything that happens) but subject to specific exclusions. If specific damage is not excluded by an exclusion condition or limitation it is covered.

Each of the major perils that occur will be addressed in turn to help give you a better understanding regarding what is covered or not, and how to cover if possible. Please note this is only a short sample and you should refer to your policy for all of the exclusions.

RETAIL STORE PERILS

Fire & Explosion: Fire and Explosion are covered perils no matter the cause. Of course arson by you is excluded!

Wind & Hail: Damage resulting from wind and hail are covered perils under



"To ensure against power outages, carriers make available by rider, coverage for direct damage and off premise utility service power outage."



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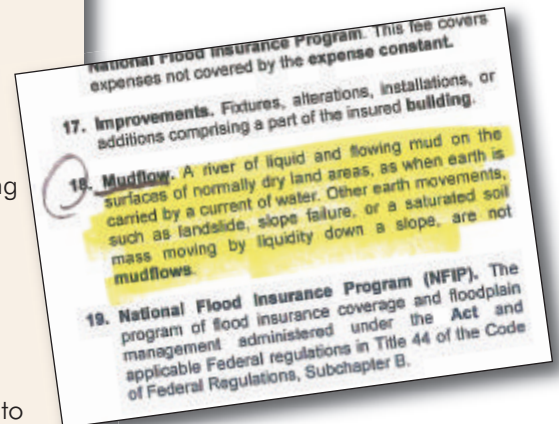
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Water Exclusion Endorsement

B. Water

1. Flood, surface water, waves (including tidal wave and tsunami), tides, tidal water, overflow of any body of water, or spray from any of these, all whether or not driven by wind (including storm surge);
2. Mudslide or mudflow;
3. Water that backs up or overflows or is otherwise discharged from a sewer, drain, sump pump or related equipment;
4. Water under the ground surface pressing on, or flowing or seeping through:
 - a. Foundations, walls, floors or paved surfaces;
 - b. Basements, whether paved or not; or
 - c. Doors, windows or other openings; or
5. Material carried or otherwise moved by any of the water referred to in Paragraph 1., 3. or 4., or material carried or otherwise moved by mudslide or mudflow.

RISKY BUSINESS



most policies. Claims for wind damage, primarily to roofs were by far the most common type of covered claim made during recent big storms. Also covered is rain water damage caused following the failure of a roof due to a wind/hail storm.

Wind/hail claims are often accompanied by business interruption claims, an important topic that will be explained in more detail in a future article.

Be aware that in coastal or wind/hail prone areas, the carrier may insist on a percentage of value deductible. This deductible range can be as low as 1% to as high as 10%. You should understand that a 5% wind/hail deductible does not mean 5% of the loss, but rather 5% of the total value insured. So if your store is insured for \$2 million, the deductible is \$100,000.

Power Outage: Power Outage is an excluded peril of a property policy no matter what the cause. This was the most common not-covered loss encountered during Hurricane Sandy.

Sandy caused local generating plants to suspend operations. Electrical lines were blown down, cus-

tomers and employees were without power, deliveries could not be made and, nobody was out shopping. Repair times were measured in weeks or longer. Loss of income occurred, but since most of the retailers who experienced power outages had no direct physical store damage, the standard business interruption coverage did not apply.

For retailers who want to ensure against power outages, insurance carriers make available, by rider at an additional premium, coverage for direct damage and off premise utility service power outage. Carriers generally limit their exposure on this rider, offering twenty-five to fifty thousand dollars in coverage, and occasionally up to one hundred thousand.

Water Damage: You may think that you are covered for all types of water damage under your policy, but this is not the case. In 2008 in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the insurance industry rewrote its Water Exclusion Endorsement, shown above.

This exclusion applies if the damages specified in paragraphs 1-5 are caused by an act of nature or any other reason. A basic rule of thumb is

that water such as precipitation that comes down from above results in a covered loss, but that water coming up into your store or warehouse from under ground or at ground level isn't covered.

After the failure of the levies in New Orleans during Katrina, exclusion #5 was added to the Water Exclusion Endorsement to exclude coverage due to a situation where a dam, levee, seawall or other boundary or containment system fails in whole or in part, for any reason, to contain the water. If you are in an area where there is a danger of this type of loss, it's not going to be covered.

But, if any of the not covered risks outlined in the Water Exclusion Endorsement results in fire, explosion or sprinkler leakage, insurance companies will pay for the loss or damage caused by that fire, explosion or sprinkler leakage.

Flood Coverage Through NFIP: Flood is and always has been an excluded peril under property insurance, however, coverage can be purchased by furniture dealers for maximum limits to \$500,000 Building, and \$500,000 Contents, through the



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"A 5% wind/hail deductible

does not mean 5% of the loss, but rather 5% of the total value insured.

So, if your store is insured for \$2 million, the deductible is \$100,000."

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), a program administered by FEMA. More information on this program (that does not offer business interruption coverage) can be found at <http://www.floodsmart.gov>. This site has lots of information including assessing risk, commercial coverage, questions to ask your agent and, flood maps for some areas. Premiums increase with risk calculated based on a number of factors, primary among these location.

My experience is that most retailers who are not in a flood prone area, or aren't required to purchase flood insurance due to conditions of a mortgage agreement, don't buy it. And, if they do purchase a policy, it often has the lowest limit and highest deductible. If you aren't insured for this risk or have a minimal policy, now is a good time to get as much information as you can about your specific risks, including the recent history of changing weather patterns.

Sewer Back Coverage: Sewer Backup or Overflow as in paragraph B. #3. is an excluded peril as well under the Water Exclusion Endorsement, but coverage can be purchased through standard carriers as a rider to the policy at an additional cost. Limits available are at the carrier's discretion.

RISK OF UNDER INSURING INVENTORY

In the case of a loss due to extreme weather, It makes good sense to insure buildings and inventory at replacement value to avoid a co-insurance penalty that can be substantial. For buildings, our agency uses the Marshall & Swift/Booeckh

(MSB) system to estimate replacement value.

There are some retailers out there that have, for example, a ten thousand square foot building insured for two hundred thousand dollars when replacement value is five times that amount. An even bigger potential problem, and one that's more widespread, is under-insuring inventory value. Unlike estimating building replacement value with the MSB, the value of inventory and building contents is based on the retailer's valuation. Stating a low value does have the advantage of lowering premiums. The cost of this is an increased risk of having to self-insure inventory should a fire or severe weather strike.

NEXT ISSUE

In the next issue this series will address the topic of business interruption insurance.

About Stephen J. Wisocky: *Stephen J. Wisocky, Home Furnishings Insurance Group President, has over 30 years of experience as a property and casualty insurance broker. He began with the home furnishings industry in 1986.*

In January 2004 Stephen created HFIG whose mission is exceptional service to the home furnishings industry with the most competitive and comprehensive insurance products.

For many years Stephen has been the trusted insurance advisor for National Home Furnishings Association (NHFA), International Home Furnishings Representatives Association (IHFRA), Interior Design Society (IDS) and Tri-State Home Furnishings Association (TSHFA). In 2011 he was named a Dean of

IHFRA, and earlier received from TSHFA their President's Award. Both honors were given in recognition of his accomplishments and dedication to the home furnishings industry.

Questions about this article or any insurance related topic or issue can be directed to Steve at 610-366-0105 or email steve@furninfo.com.

"Flood coverage can be purchased through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), a program administered by FEMA."

(3) Insurrection, rebellion, revolution, usurped power, or action taken by governmental authority in hindering or defending against any of these.

9. Water

(1) Flood, surface water, waves, tides, tidal waves, overflow of any body of water, or their spray, all whether driven by wind or not;

(2) Mudslide or mudflow;

(3) Water that backs up or overflows from a sewer, drain or sump; or

(4) Water under the ground surface pressing on, or flowing or seeping through:

(a) Foundations, walls, floors or paved surfaces;

(b) Basements, whether paved or not; or

(c) Doors, windows or other openings.

But if Water, as described in Paragraphs (1) through (4), results in fire, explosion or sprinkler leakage, we will pay for the loss or damage caused by that fire, explosion or sprinkler leakage.

Policy exclusion

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President, Casey's Furniture

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REINVENT YOUR COMPANY

Part Two: Where to begin.

by Larry Mullins

When John F. Kennedy was President of the United States he was generally heralded as a genius. Yet he reportedly had an IQ of 119. Not bad, but not all that extraordinary either. Even so, in the domain of intellect, Kennedy gracefully held sway over the most brilliant minds of his day and generation. He communicated with precision and clarity as few others have. Just a month before his fateful trip to Dallas in 1963, Kennedy was asked during his final press conference if he enjoyed being President. He replied that he did, and went on to say that the definition of happiness, according to the ancient Greeks, is the "Full use of your powers along the lines of excellence."

In today's world, the demands on a visionary leader are even greater than they were in the days of John F. Kennedy. For this reason, I suggest expanding the ancient Greek definition to be more in accord with my research into the psychology and science of MetaThinking: **The modern definition of happiness is the full use of your powers along the lines of Excellence, Integrity, and Empathy.**

METATHINK PRINCIPLES

This series of articles is less about the tactics of selling furniture and mat-

resses than about the dynamic strategic process of employing your full powers to impact and improve the lives of the people who shop at your store. When your complete influence is engaged toward the benefit of your clients, you will sell more, much more. [I generally prefer the word "clients" to "customers."] You accomplish this supremacy by first mastering and integrating two of the three MetaThink principles.

1. Demonstrate **unparalleled excellence** in each aspect of the client's shopping experience, from the greeting to the pick-up or delivery; on to the follow-up sequences and, if necessary, a service call.
2. Insist on **uncompromising integrity** in all relationships, with clients, vendors, and associates. Finally, by establishing **understanding empathy** for your clients' end-result goals, even if they cannot define and express these aspirations. You must articulate them with clarity and precision—better than any competitor dreams of doing.

However, let's assume you have developed all these powers. Why aren't they working? What happens to your philosophy, why does it get so diluted by the time it is manifested to

your clients? I got a call recently from a savvy furniture retailer who said: "Larry, I get all that. I have established a mission for our company. I tell my executives that we are in the business of improving the lives of our customers. I explain our shorter term goals and vision for the next year. But, how do I get buy-in and commitment? Rather, how do I KNOW I am getting buy-in and commitment? I get lip service, but I just don't get a visceral feeling that my company is truly on board; especially the front-line associates."

"Perhaps you have a compelling Mission. And, you may have a clear vision of where you want to be this time next year. But these are only potential powers until every person in your organization understands and can express them."



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MISSION PAGE MEMO

[DATE]

From _____

TO: ALL TEAM LEADERS
RE: NEW MISSION INITIATIVE

I have formulated a mission statement for our company. I have also developed a shorter form Vision Statement that sets out the goals I wish us to achieve by this time next year. I want every associate to read and understand these statements.

The Mission of [Store Name] Furniture and Mattress Company is to provide products that help our clients and their families improve their environments and have healthier lives."

My Vision for this Company is to Add 10% More Market Share by this Time Next Year.

I will achieve this by providing every associate in our company with a copy of our Mission and Vision statements and by soliciting their ideas. I will also examine every contact area of our client's shopping experience and, with the help of my associates, find ways to improve these experiences.

What I Will Need From You to Help Me Achieve My Vision For 2013-2014

Please meet with your team and solicit their ideas for improving our company this year. Record these ideas on the attached Mission Response Form. Return this by the due date.

I want to know your team's ideas and what you will need from me to make them a reality.

(Sign and Date)

COMMITMENT REQUEST

[DATE]

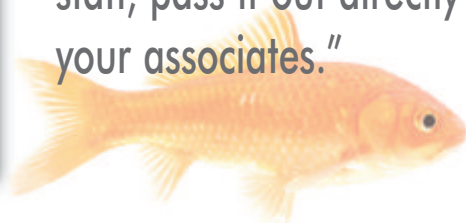
From _____

TO: ALL TEAM MEMBERS
RE: NEW MISSION INITIATIVE

What I Will Need from You to Help Me Achieve Our Vision for 2013-2014:

Attached to this sheet you will find a Commitment Form. Please fill this out for me and return it by the due date. I want to know your team's ideas, and what you will need from me to make them a reality.

"It all begins with the Mission Initiative. This communication goes to all your top executives. If you are a smaller store, and do not have an executive staff, pass it out directly to your associates."



I promised in our last article (posted to the Marketing Management Articles area of the furninfo.com website) that I would explain how one retailer developed a remarkable method to sell his team on his game plan. He was so good at doing this and reinventing his company that he eventually built one of the largest home furnishings chains in America. He also told me that very few CEOs could use his formula, because few would go to the efforts he took to create a fresh vision each year and make sure he got buy-in by associates. Please recall that this is a three-step process:

- Create a compelling mission, and a shorter-term vision.
- Communicate your vision to all your associates.

- Get associate feedback.

Perhaps you have a compelling Mission. And you may have a clear vision of where you want to be this time next year. But these are only potential powers until every person in your organization understands them and can express them.

You have no mission or vision until you commit them to written form: This is true whether you have three associates or three hundred. Let's play a game and you will see what I mean. It all begins with the Mission Initiative. This communication goes to all your top executives. If you are a smaller store, and do not have an "executive staff," pass it out directly to your associates. See the "Mission Page Memo" example on this page:

Not so difficult, right? Chances are, your top management (or your staff) has not seen your Mission or your shorter term Vision goals **in writing**. The exhibits in this article will give you an idea of the format for these supporting documents. Now, let's take this process to yet another level. The next part of this form (Commitment Request) can be seen above as well.

It should be obvious that the Vision of the CEO must address current issues. For example, in times of dire recession, it would be appropriate to have a vision of being more lean and mean. However, a lean initiative need not be so draconian that associates live in constant fear of being laid off.

Perhaps there may not be much in this Mission-Initiative that seems unusual. However, what is especially

REINVENT YOUR COMPANY

unique is the **Mission-Response** form that must be returned to the CEO. This form frames the response (see page 30). The most important part of the Mission-Response form is the paragraph that begins with "WHAT WE NEED".

This process was embellished and improved as time went on. As the program gained momentum year after year the CEO began to add new elements to keep the program fresh and exciting.

Associates and executives were later polled to determine the effectiveness of this system and the results were remarkable. They were asked the following three questions:

- Does your company have a defined mission that is understood throughout the company?
- Does your company have a plan or vision for the near future? And
- Does your company have a plan or vision for the long term future? The results were over 95% in all categories.

More than 95 percent of associates and executives responded "yes" to each of the questions. Compare these results with Brit Beemer's report of a poll of Fortune 1000 companies in which front line associates' highest scores were 36%, and as low as 13%!

EXECUTING WITH FULL USE OF YOUR POWERS

Recall the CEO who told me he had formulated a good Mission Statement and had established short term goals? He agreed that he wanted to demonstrate **unparalleled excellence** in each aspect of the clients' shopping experience, from the greeting to the pick-up or delivery; on to the follow-up sequences and, if necessary, a service call. I cautioned him that even if he got buy-in from all of his associates on this worthy goal, he would need to follow up with a killer plan. At this point he got vague.

I learned that he was overlooking

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"The most important part of the Mission-Response Form is the paragraph that begins with 'WHAT WE NEED'."

MISSION RESPONSE FORM-PART 2

WHAT WE NEED

Is there something your team needs from management to help you improve your team's performance? Is there something you would like changed? Commit your ideas to written form.

Signature _____ Date: _____
Team Leader

MISSION RESPONSE FORM

[DATE]

From _____

TEAM MEMBERS:

RE: NEW MISSION INITIATIVE RESPONSE

We have read and understand the Mission Statement of our company. We have also read and understand the Vision you have for the coming year.

Our ideas for how our team can better contribute to achieving a 10% increase in market share are as follows:

(Please attach additional sheets you need.)



several important details regarding his customers' shopping experience. I called his store several different times and got different greetings from various associates. I called after hours and there was an outdated message on the machine. In this single area of client contact this CEO was already diluting his powers and losing business. Associates must have a scripted way to answer the telephone. One exceptional furniture store answers the telephone with a cheerful: "It's a great day at I. Keating Ashley HomeStore ... how may I help you?" Call anytime and you will get the same sunny message. Some may dismiss this as a trifle, but "Trifles make perfection and perfection is no trifle." If you want a brand that projects preeminence, you must begin to act the part of a pre-eminent store.

When you begin to reinvent your company, review each contact point of your clients' experience with your store. I cannot provide a comprehensive list here, but I can give you some of the most common areas of neglect I often find in home furnishings stores. You may have immense depth of knowledge, unquestioned integrity, and laudable empathy for your clients. But if these powers are being seriously diluted at various points of customer contact, they may as well not exist.

SOME NEGLECTED AREAS OF CUSTOMER CONTACT

The most commonly neglected area of customer contact is the INTERNET, including Websites, Permission Marketing, and Social Networking.

WEBSITES: Your website should include several short action videos. Check www.slumberlandwillmar.com for a good model to follow. Note that the splash page includes a welcoming video. There are several other videos linked to the splash page. For example, instead of a stand-alone, long, dry block of "ABOUT US" copy that no one reads there is an excellent video about the individual store. Likewise, on the COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT tab is another good action video. The "BEST PLACE TO BUY A MATTRESS" tab features more videos. There is a tab for CURRENT PROMOTIONS that links to the corporate website. These are important features because Google likes videos and fresh content. The three most powerful web presences are Google, Facebook, and YouTube. You should

Hello?

YOU CAN'T IGNORE A 46% INCREASE
IN OUTDOOR FURNITURE SALES.



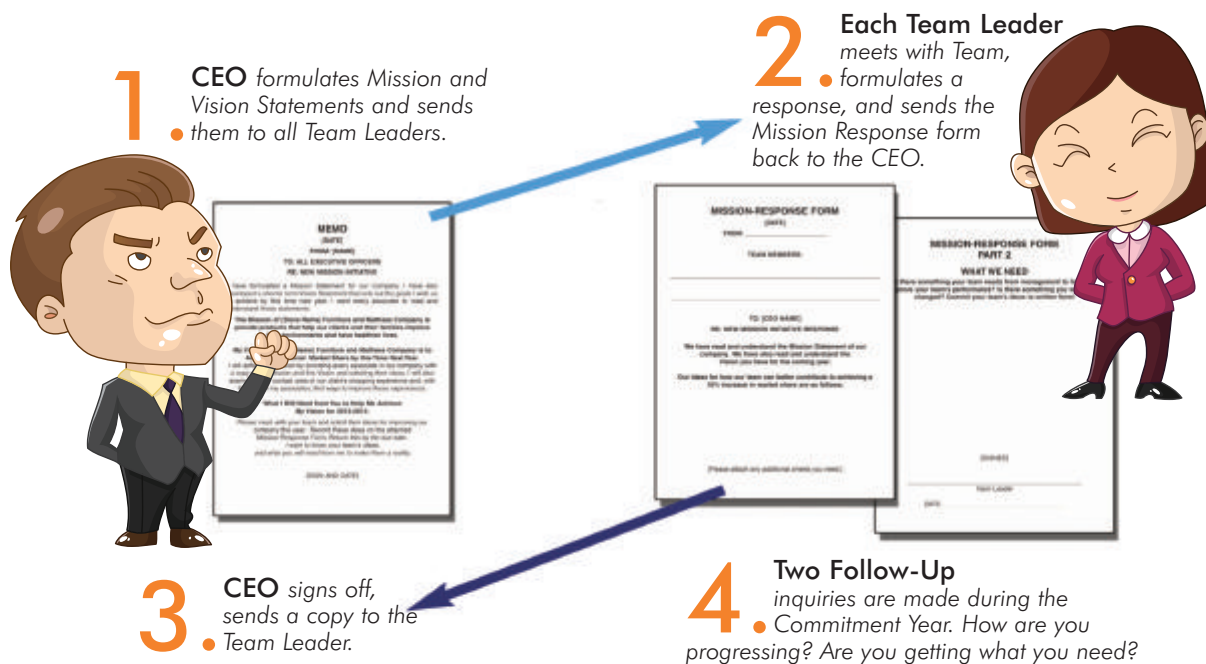
Look around! Outdoor furniture sales have seen the largest increases in the industry - more than any other category you are selling on your floor. That's why more furniture retailers than ever are adding furnishings for outdoor rooms to their mix. Outdoor furniture sales have ballooned - increasing 46% since 2005! If you haven't added Agio® to your product offering, you're missing a huge opportunity for increased sales. See for yourself. It just may get you up and running toward better margins, sales and profits.



For more information on becoming an Agio retailer, visit www.agio-usa.com/retailer today.

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Agio is the registered trademark of Agio International Company, Ltd.
*Source: Independent study produced by Mann, Armistead & Epperson, LTD, February 22, 2012.



have a presence on all three. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, is becoming more important. Potential customers, according to recent polls, are much more likely to support a store that gets involved in helping the community.

PERMISSION MARKETING: Most media is intrusive, and people are less and less likely to pay attention. TV is radically intrusive and expensive. Radio is equally intrusive. Newspaper flyers and ROP are less so, and direct mail can be effective if carefully planned and designed. When you acquire email addresses and send out helpful suggestions as well as special offers, you are engaged in permission marketing. It's a powerful medium that is almost as effective as referrals, or what I call People Media™.

GREETING AT THE DOOR: Script the greeting process. The correct greeting technique can greatly increase your closing ratio. Don't leave it to chance.

HAND OUTS: Never have a customer leave your store empty-handed. You need a flyer, a silent salesperson that reminds guests of your Unique Selling

Proposition, gives your best sales message, and lists your website. When a business card is attached, it will greatly improve the chances of a return visit.

SIGNS: Place signs strategically outside and inside featuring your current event, special credit offers, layaway possibilities, and other information. Truck skins can also be effective in getting your brand and story to the public.

PRICE TAGS: These can help make the sale. They should always show a comparable value or a list price, and unique credit offers.

INTERCOM: When referring to clients on the intercom, call them "guests." For example, "Mr. Smith, you have a guest in the Sleep Gallery." The term "customer" sounds like a commodity. Using first names sounds unprofessional.

CLASSES: Arrange a series of continuing decorating classes. Invite women's groups for a tour of the store, and high school home econom-

ics classes to learn about home furnishings. Manufacturing reps are excellent for doing this. Also, check out the seminar editorial series at www.furninfo.com/DesignSeminars.

DELIVERY AND PICK-UP: Buyer remorse can be avoided by training warehouse and delivery teams to admire customers' selections. One delivery captain told me he was a "second salesman," seeing his role as the final customer contact, and last chance to re-enforce the sale. Good idea.

ADVERTISING: Years ago, in a beautiful studio overlooking the Pacific Ocean, the great Clyde Bedell looked me in the eye and told me the most important secret of successful selling: empathy: understanding the deeper end-result needs of your client. He said, "Larry, when a man goes into a hardware store and buys a 3/8 inch drill bit, what motivates him?" I answered, "He needs a 3/8 inch drill bit." "No," Clyde shook his head, "He needs a 3/8 inch hole. That is the end-benefit he is seeking. The same is

"When a man goes into a hardware store and buys a 3/8 inch drill bit, what motivates him?" I answered, 'He needs a 3/8 inch drill bit.' 'No,' Clyde shook his head, 'He needs a 3/8 inch hole.'"

true of a woman who buys a sofa. The end-benefit she is seeking is beauty and comfort for her home, plus the praise and admiration of her family and friends. This is the end result, the impact of a product that will enhance her life, and the lives of her loved ones." Simple as the benefit-driven principle is, it has been largely lost in the home furnishings industry. Most Big Boxes pump out endless look-alike advertising with item-price offers and label headlines. Learn the principles of Evidence-Based Advertising by reviewing the article on Furniture Word Magazine's website at <http://www.furninfo.com/FurnitureWorldArchives/10563>.

The folks at Tempur-Pedic understand and apply the principles of Evidence-Based Advertising. That is why so many customers come into your store presold on acquiring their mattresses rather than other bedding products.

PRESS RELEASES: Send out press releases to alert the public to classes, events and promotions within the company. Always accompany a release with a photo.

DRESS CODE: Nothing communicates professionalism more effectively than a team of salespersons in smart blazers, ties and slacks.

FRONT DESK: Script the welcome process. Walt Disney mastered the expression of his brand to guests at each area of touch in his parks. He

insisted on scripts.

FOLLOW UP AFTER THE SALE: A card of appreciation is minimal. This is greatly energized by a personal telephone call. In addition, a request for a referral is more likely to be effective at this point. After inquiry about

the purchase and its delivery, I like this kind of appeal for a referral: "Mrs. Jones, most of my business comes from referrals. There is no greater honor for me than to be recommended for my knowledge and skill in helping people select the right home furnishings. On a scale of one to ten, how likely would you be to recommend our store to a friend?"

HOUSEKEEPING: Housekeeping is everyone's job at all times. "Never walk by anything that is wrong."

GEMBA [Workplace Areas]: Visit every part of your operation on a regular basis. Many years ago, during



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"When you refer to clients, call them guests. For example, 'Mr. Smith, you have a guest in the Sleep Gallery.'"



their boom years, I went through a training program at Levitz in Huntington Beach. The owners liked to visit this mega-warehouse showroom frequently. For several days we would prepare the store. All the boxes on the warehouse racks had to be turned so the brand names faced the walkthrough area for guests. The racks were carefully dusted for several feet in. Don't neglect any area of your operation.

CULTURE: The culture of your organization is your responsibility, it cannot be delegated. As far as the guests are concerned, your sales people, your delivery personnel, and your clerks are YOU. When they say something, YOU are saying it. Make sure you know what they are saying.

USP: Nothing is more important than an effective Unique Selling Proposition that is communicated by

every associate in the company at every point of customer contact.

The latest numbers indicate that retail sales have, at glacier pace, crept back to pre-recession levels. Only three categories still lag: Building Materials still down 7.3%; Electronics down 9.7%. Worst of all, home furnishings sales are still down 13.3% from 2007 levels. Our job now will be to lift the perception of home furnishings from a discretionary luxury to products that improve the life and wellbeing of those who invest in them. This can only be done by the full use of your powers along the lines of Excellence, Integrity, and Empathy. And empathy is best demonstrated by benefit-driven communications at all areas of client contact.

Larry Mullins is Marketing Feature Editor for Furniture World and has 35+ years' experience on the front lines of furniture marketing. Questions on this article can be directed to Larry (for a free consultation) at 904.794.9212, or contact him at Larry@LarryMullins.com. His mainstream executive experience, his creative work with promotion specialists, and mastery of advertising principles have established him as one of the foremost experts in furniture marketing. His turnkey High-Impact programs produce legendary results for everything from cash raising events to profitable exit strategies. His newest book is *THE METAVALUES BREAK-THROUGH*. Larry is founder and CEO of UltraSales, Inc. See more articles by Larry at www.furninfo.com or www.ultrasales.com.

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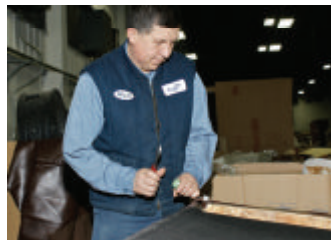


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Balancing The Scales Of Business In 2013

by Ray Morefield, Common Goals

Just as the core concept of balance is critical in our legal, social and spiritual lives, it is as necessary in managing our retail furniture businesses.

Furniture retailers have responsibilities for assigned tasks ranging from sales and management to purchasing and logistics. Each of these areas can and does dramatically effect the bottom line. So, if you think of yourself as a furniture retailer, please keep in mind that your contribution to corporate success hinges on the talents you bring to your job as a financial manager for your furniture business. It's a skill that requires balance.

A BALANCED APPROACH

Many retail managers have a single minded focus on the P & L Statement. A more enlightened approach, I believe, is to practice financial balance, a consideration that will allow you to maximize sales in the competitive world of furniture retailing, maintaining revenues without the adverse impact of modifying margins and profits, vendor and customer relations, the quality and consistency of service, the ability to manage inventories, or cash flow.

Granted, good managers stress sales growth, but the most successful take a balanced approach to managing all areas of administrative, opera-

tional and financial performance. They make sure that there is no exclusivity or independence in the collective cooperation of retail departments.

Further, a focus on sales shouldn't be so dominated by tunnel-vision that managers lose sight of the fact that unless associates, vendors and customers benefit, challenges will manifest.

In planning for the second half of 2013, therefore, rather than just asking yourself what sales goals should be set, a more meaningful approach will be to use current numbers as a baseline and put systems in place that advance continuous improvement, keeping in mind additional practical considerations such as the ten items listed below.

TEN CONSIDERATIONS

Ten areas to consider when seeking to apply "focused management and balanced performance" are:

1. Advance sales volume by adjusting price points that reflect inflation and vendor increases before replacing similar items in inventory.
2. Advance sales without reducing margins or increasing discounts.
3. Advance sales while maintaining a consistent ratio of promotional

expenses in relation to volume.

4. Advance sales while improving inventory turns.

5. Advance sales while reducing write-offs in receivables and returns.

6. Advance sales and maintain experienced employees who know the industry and competition while maintaining direct labor and sales costs.

7. Advance sales without reducing cash flow and increasing indebtedness.

8. Advance sales without sacrificing quality of products and services.

9. Advance sales while eliminating slow moving, time sensitive and outdated inventory.

10. Advance sales with controlled but competitive terms of sales to protect cash flow.

Keeping these ten considerations in mind can help you set reasonable and achievable sales goals that will not compromise your business as a whole. This can also facilitate improvement in other areas of performance leading to a profound and ongoing positive impact on profits.

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"Manage aggressively, but manage with balance and the scales of positive response will continue to tilt in your favor during 2013."

Due to the avalanche of low priced goods resulting in volatile competition, a middle class with less disposable income, and constrained consumer confidence, furniture retailers must be cautious to not use undisciplined discounting, a practice that can have negative consequences.

AN EXAMPLE

I recently came upon such a situation while visiting a store with national name brand recognition. During my two visits to this store, sales personnel offered discounts of 40, 25 and 10%. Needless to say, this creat-

ed a negative impression, bringing into question the validity of the store's suggested retail price points across all of their SKUs.

Our retail world is full of examples of companies like this one that conduct continuous sales and further discount at the point of sale. Instead, savvy retailers might consider generating profits by investing in the continuous improvement of their people, in their product mix, in their marketing and supply chains.

BALANCE IN 2013

Discounting to achieve growth in

unit sales may be a "new normal", but continuing to address solutions to solvency through discounting rather than managing all aspects of finances in a balanced way can be a fast track to its opposite.

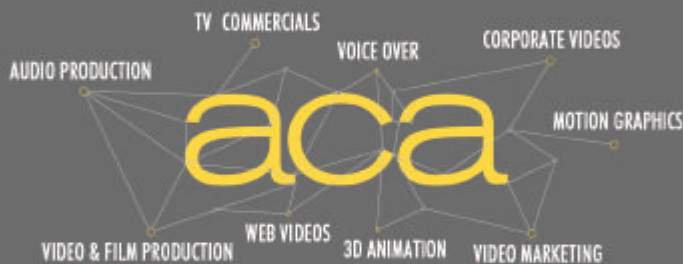
For many retailers there may, therefore, be merit in moderating sales expectations. That principle may not be well received by some high-energy entrepreneurs, but maintaining smaller, well managed enterprises may lead to greater returns on invested time and capital for some.

Such a focus on incremental sales improvement can help independent retailers to focus on building personal relationships at all levels including employee associates, vendors and customers. As repeat sales increase, cost of sales decline and margins increase. Considering balance can free up time to focus on using information and programs offered by the many good collective buying groups in our industry. It can be an opportunity for retailers to consider differentiating brand message to include sourcing from vendors in close proximity as a point of differentiation and to build local brand recognition.

Is managing with balance easy? No. Is managing with balance necessary? Yes.

Manage aggressively, but manage with "balance" and the "scales of positive response" will continue to tilt in your favor during 2013.

About Ray Morefield: Ray Morefield has been affiliated with leading corporations in the furniture, housewares, hardware and coatings industries. He has also served other industries in an advisory capacity through his company Common Goals, Inc. Questions on any management topic, can be directed to him at editor@furninfo.com. See more of his articles at www.furninfo.com.



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8 SUCCESS SECRETS

Successful practices of top home furnishings retailers.

Interview with David McMahon

Furniture World asked frequent editorial contributor David McMahon to speak about practices that separate successful home furnishings retailers from their struggling competitors. McMahon has travelled the world for the past 15 years working with hundreds of retail operations as a Consulting CFO and performance group leader. He analyzes business productivity, determines processes to improve, and trains in specific tactics to accomplish results.

Question: What do you think is the most important factor for retail success?

Success Secret #1 - Attitude: I have seen companies in the same market area producing the same volume with totally different results. Here is an example of two businesses in the same town. Each had \$5 million in sales on average for the past three years. One had huge cash flow, happy employees, and satisfied customers. The other had stressed out employees, upset customers, and eventually went out of business after 25 years. The driving factor that set them apart was attitude.

The attitude came from the top. The successful owner believed in a culture of continuous improvement. He was one of the smartest business people that I have encountered but he did not

think that he was that smart. He continually sought ways to innovate his business and was willing to do things that his competition would not. He kept learning, surrounding himself with people he respected who shared his goal for improvement.

The owner of the other operation thought he knew it all. He believed in the philosophy of, "if it ain't broken don't fix it."

Eventually a gap widened over time between these two businesses. One sank more money into advertising and big sales to produce leads while the other focused on improving sales professionalism, inventory flow, and customer service. Guess who survived?

Question: OK, so for businesses that commit to continual improvement, where do you see the biggest opportunity?

Success Secret #2 - Pricing Policy: I see that many businesses leave too many dollars on the table. Smart managers understand that gross margins are a state of mind. Unless you are selling a commodity and delivering the exact same product and service as your competition, there is price flexibility. Pricing should be based on value perception and filling the price points desired. Those managers that strictly use a cost mark up pricing strategy end up with odd ball pricing ending in .44,

.09, and .75. That's garbage pricing. All new pricing for items of over \$200 retail should end in \$99, in my opinion. Do you think if someone wants something for \$557 they would not pay \$599? Or, what about if you see something priced at \$809? That is not a price – come on - it is \$799 or \$899!

Question: How about sales? What do you see businesses doing to increase sales volume?

Success Secret #3 - No Gimmicks: Most businesses are not "great" businesses. Below average performers just use the latest advertising gimmicks to hopefully increase door swings. Then they close their same percent of leads. That is fine, but the great businesses are the ones who can increase sales while keeping customer traffic the same. When these businesses experience an uptick in traffic, they are very profitable. They do this by focusing on

"Managers that strictly use a cost mark up pricing strategy end up with odd ball pricing. They miss opportunity."



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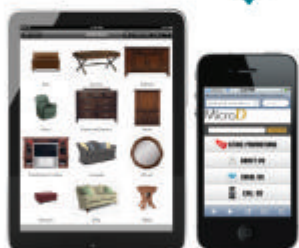
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8 SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL RETAILERS

improving the selling process. They track traffic, selling opportunities, average sale, close rates, and other metrics. They know their numbers so they are able to set benchmarks for sales management. You can't manage sales on volume only. The factors that make up the volume are what matters. Managers who get it are using CRM systems so they can improve the follow-up between salespeople and clients. There is a much greater close rate per customer as opposed to per traffic using this approach.

Question: So, there is no silver bullet then to increasing sales?

Success Secret #4 - Systems: The CRM system is the silver rocket launcher. Many stores need to get off the media cocaine somewhat. It is like a tax businesses pay. I believe in investing some of that marketing money into improving the process and servicing customers more professionally.

Question: Seeing that you are skeptical of media, what advertising do you recommend?

Success Secret #5 - No Fear: I am more skeptical of the general practices out there. There are some businesses that are very successful with media mar-

keting. Do you want to know their secret?

Those that are successful are not afraid to fail! They try over and over again. They fail sometimes but eventually succeed. They play a numbers game. They then become masters, get a formula, and succeed more often. Those that can pull traffic in from TV get good at penetrating the market. Their media has mass. Those that are good at internet, advertise a lot on internet. Those that are good at circulars, advertise a lot with circulars. If they are good with direct mail advertising, it is because they do a lot with direct mail. Radio people are radio people. They also get a better cost per ad due to their volume.

Alternatively those that look for a magic advertising bullet and try something once then go to another media and try something else, never really break into the market, and, they pay more for nothing. They have not failed enough in one place and have not built mass exposure. Also, if you are up against businesses that own the media channel, unless you have some deep pockets, forget about it. Marketers need their niche.

My same theory applies to other things too. Do you want to be good at



"Track GMROI by Category and Vendor. Then track GMROI by categories within vendor and vendors within categories."

selecting new merchandise? Well, you better have good inventory management so you can buy as often as possible. Or, do you want to be great at selling a certain product? Well you better try and try and try until you get it.

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"Successful retailers are not afraid to fail! They try over and over again. They eventually succeed by playing a numbers game."

Question: Other than the top line, which other areas are people improving in?

Success Secret #6 - Focus On Areas That Improve Profitability:

There really are countless ways. It depends on the specific operation. People should seek to improve the area of their business that will have the greatest effect on profitability and be the easiest and least costly to do so. I'll give you a few examples outside of sales and gross margin:

Delivery – some companies are able to offset all their delivery expenses with delivery income. They figure out exact-

ly what the delivery costs them as a percent of sales and then figure out a fee structure that produces the income. The simplest way that I have seen is to charge a dollar amount up to a certain volume and then a percent of the sale afterwards. I would even go so far as to say that if a salesperson needs to give a discount on delivery to make the sale, that's fine, but it comes out of their commission.

In addition, with respect to deliver-







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"Great businesses

can increase sales while keeping customer traffic the same. When they experience an uptick in traffic, they are very profitable."

ies, many are starting to streamline routing and the paperwork process by using mobile products that are available.

Warehousing – Everyone should have 99.9% inventory accuracy. Bar coding is the only way to accomplish this. If you have over \$1 million in annual volume or \$500,000 in inventory at cost, you should make the investment. It pays off easily and quickly. Smart operators invest money to protect their assets.

Purchasing Inventory – this is an area even business veterans continue to struggle with. If you carry too little, your selection thins out and there is less to show customers. If you carry too much, your cash flow suffers. Many see inventory as a double edge sword. But it

does not have to be! Take emotion out of the equation. Intimately know the GMROI (GM\$ Annualized / Inventory Average) of your overall business each month. Track GMROI by Category and Vendor. Then track GMROI by categories within vendor and vendors within categories. This will show you where to buy and where to hold or drop. It will help you create a better mix. For businesses that are over inventoried overall, they need to have a buying freeze on new merchandise but still buy top margin producing items.

And don't be afraid to discount merchandise that does not sell - fast. It is a SUNK cost. That means that the money has been spent and the cost should not really be considered. The non-selling merchandise costs you more in lost valuable floor space.

Would you return it to your vendor for cost, if they would pay you back? I never heard anyone answer "no" to this question.

Profitability – many businesses are so top line focused that their vision is hidden from the bottom line. They need to have one eye on the top line and the other eye on the bottom line. Acceptable standards should be set for operating in all cost areas. A business structure needs to be in place that delivers at least a 5% bottom line during a bad sales month. Anything less than this over time eventually causes liquidity issues. The businesses in the CEO performance groups that I lead strive for double digit bottom lines. That means 10% + of sales in net income. Great performing retailers are getting this profitability.

Question: Are there any areas of people's businesses that they have trouble improving on?

Success Secret #7 - Reporting: There are a lot of independent businesses that have questionable financial reporting. I find this concerning because the ultimate management reports are the Financial Statements. They provide the executive management team with a scorecard each month. They are the basis for future improvement. Without accurate or timely information, businesses lose focus and run by the seat of their



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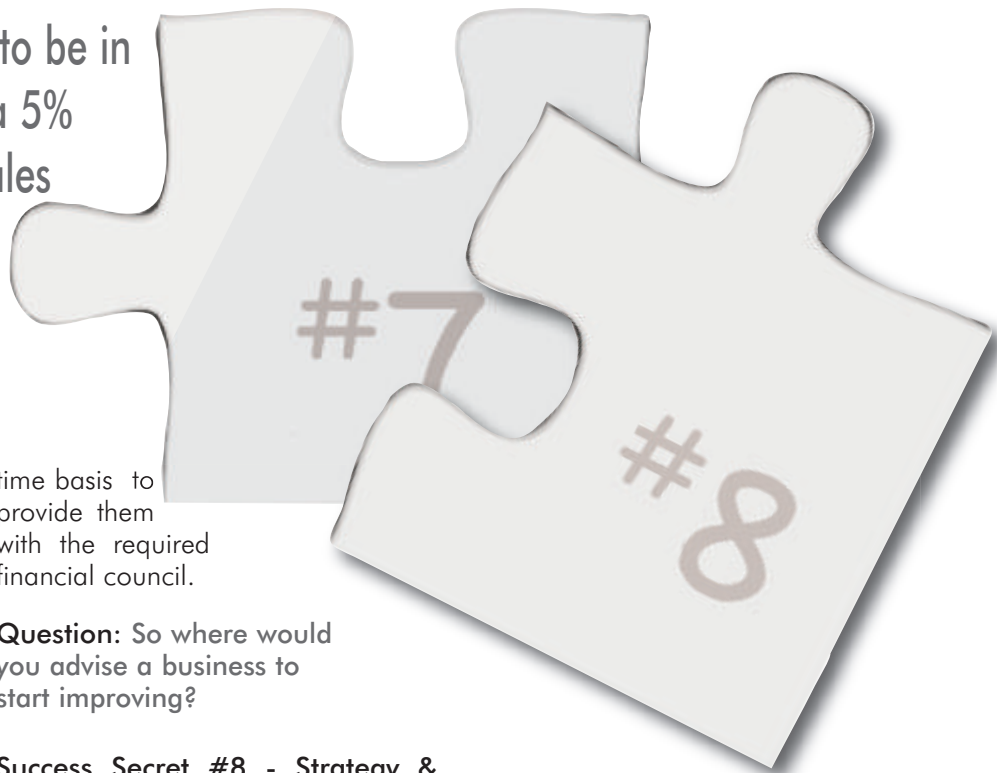


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"A business structure needs to be in place that delivers at least a 5% bottom line during a bad sales month. Anything less than this over time eventually causes liquidity issues."



pants. They become reactive rather than proactive – fighting fires as they blow up. It is the CEO's or owner's responsibility to ensure the best business decisions are being made. If their business is not large enough to afford an experienced Certified Accountant or MBA as a professional CFO then they should get a great bookkeeper or controller. They should contract with a Consulting CFO that works on a part

time basis to provide them with the required financial council.

Question: So where would you advise a business to start improving?

Success Secret #8 - Strategy & Tactics: I believe a business needs to

start with looking at their master management reports: that is, their balance sheet, profit and loss statement, and statement of cash flow. Then, they need to figure their break even and compare their performance indicators with standards. From there, opportunities show themselves. If the opportunity is gross margin, set a strategy and focus tactics on that. If the opportunity is underperforming sales, set a strategy and focus tactics on that. If the opportunity is purchasing practices and merchandise management, set a strategy and focus tactics on that. Track the results – eventually the improvements will show on the bottom line and in your bank account!

About David McMahon: David McMahon is a Certified Management Accountant and Management Consultant with PROFITconsulting, a division of PROFITsystems.

Questions about this or any of his articles archived on FURNITURE WORLD Magazine's information-rich website at <http://www.furninfo.com/Authors/DavidMcMahon/6> can be directed to Davidm@profitsystems.com or call 800-888-5565.

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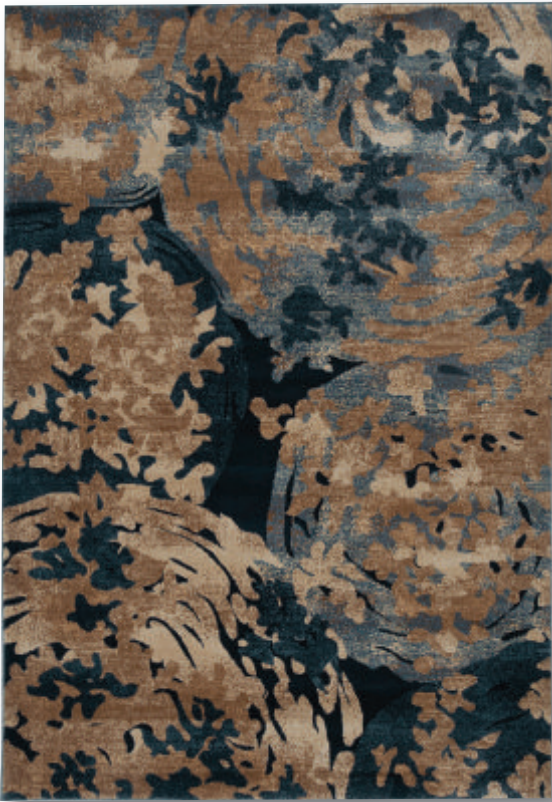


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BEST SELLING DESIGNS



Rizzy Home

From the Bellevue collection, this rug is made in India, power loomed from 100% Heat-Set Polypropylene. Suggested Retail for a 5'3"x7'7" is \$275.

Contact information on index page 100.



Zuo

Inspired by mid-century design, the Winchester armchair is the perfect blend of comfort and design. The body is wrapped in a denim fabric and the base is 100% chrome. Made on America.

Contact information on index page 100.



Klaussner

The Windsor Collection features flared arms that are pleated and paneled with chrome nail head accents that extend down to the flared, wooden legs. The straight front border is button tufted and bordered. Welted seat cushions rest beneath scattered back cushions. Made in America.

Contact information on index page 100.

Copeland

Monterey Occasional Tables are derived from Copeland's popular nightstand design. Available in solid Cherry, Monterey coffee tables, end tables, and sofa tables offer open display storage space. Made in America.

Contact information on index page 100.



Twin Star

Classic Flame Gotham media mantle offers a contemporary bow front design with white metal framed clear acrylic doors and high gloss black finish sides. The top and shelves are crafted of smoked tempered glass. It is designed to hold a 73" TV. The center electric fireplace is flanked by glass front storage cabinets that are ideal for components.

Contact information on index page 100.



Huppé

The Moment Collection features American Walnut veneers plus solid American Walnut components. The back of each piece is completely finished. Features include high quality hardware, and drawers equipped with invisible self-closing slow motion slides. It is available in a variety of UP Walnut colors and microtextured lacquered finishes. Made in America.

Contact information on index page 100.



BEST SELLING DESIGNS



Loloi

The hand-tufted Circa Collection is available in a range of sophisticated neutral hues and bright colors. These 100% polyester rugs have a hint of shimmer for a polished finish. Available Sizes: (3'.6" x 5'.6") (5' x 7'.6") (7'.6" x 9'.6") (9'.3" x 13')

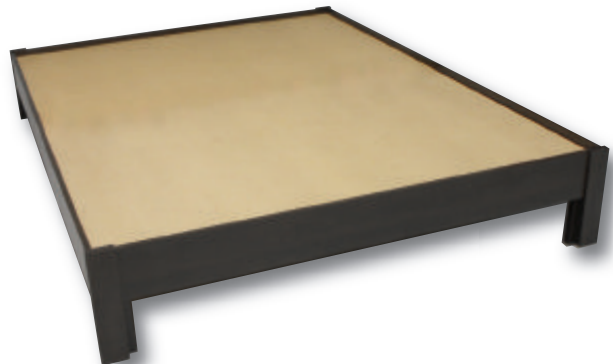
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Bolton

The Woodridge Collection has transitional styling in Chestnut Finish with burnished edges. Features include bronze metal hardware and soft close drawer glides. Pieces include three bed styles, chest, dresser, night stand, media cabinet, desk and hutch, trundle bed and under bed storage options.

Contact information on index page 100.



Nouveau Concept

The Model 613 is the latest addition to the Concept platform bed collection. It is available in 8 sizes and 16 colors. Made in America.

Contact information on index page 100.



Fusion Design

The Trenton Bedroom collection features pullout leather covered bench, two tall nightstands with hidden power outlets, nightlights and two under-bed drawers. Built using solid wood including Oak, Brown Maple, Hard Maple, Cherry, Rustic Cherry, Elm, Quarter sawn Oak, Rustic Oak and Rustic Hickory in over 40 different finishes. Made in America.

Contact information on index page 100.

Wallbeds

The Euro wallbed shown here in white, provides double duty as a guest bedroom. Many styles and finishes are available. Made in America.

Contact information on index page 100.



Borkholder

The Sunset bed has 3" thick solid wood posts and solid wood side rails. Available in Cherry, quarter sawn white Oak, Maple, Brown Maple, and Poplar. Made in America.

Contact information on index page 100.



Acme

The Athena girl's bedroom collection in antique white finish, features shaped and profiled head/footboard with trundle, complementary cases, and reflecting decorative glass knob hardware.

Contact information on index page 92.



BEST SELLING DESIGNS



Surya

The Cosmopolitan contemporary collection is hand-tufted of 100% Polyester. These durable rugs will not shed and are a beautiful addition to any decor.

Contact information on index page 100.



Ron Corl Design Ltd.

"Dragonfly Martini & Wine Bar" has solid Cherry doors and drawers inlaid with a Leopard Wood Dragonfly body and Curly Maple Wings. Features include racks for bottle storage, and drawers with under-mount full extension self closing slides. Made in America.

Contact information on index page 100.



The Itsy Bitsy Ritzy Shop

With its classic back and streamline design, this elegant sofa is one of the smallest profile sofa beds available as a full size or queen size sleeper with a 6" coil mattress. The heavy-duty contract grade mechanism has a 20-year guarantee and is easy to operate. The soft, contemporary fabric or leather is easy to care for. Seat cushions unzip and are machine washable. Made in America.

Contact information on index page 100.

Omnia Leather

The Biltmore with European contemporary influence, features a down and leather seating option for personalized comfort. Made in America.

Contact information on index page 100.



Home Trends and Design

The Tao Dining Collection combines modern styling with traditional craftsmanship. This contemporary collection is constructed from plantation-grown Acacia wood. The eco-friendly water-based lacquer ensures Tao pieces will stand the test of time.

Contact information on index page 100.



Elran

Paige is transitional in style featuring box arm and box seating. Shown here with optional contrast stitching. Options, such as power recline and choice of cover available. Made in America.

Contact information on index page 100.



BEST SELLING DESIGNS



Jaipur

The Foundations collection is contemporary in style and hand tufted with mixed wool and art silk combinations to create texture and surface interest. Made in India.

Contact information on index page 100.

Powell

The International five Drawer Cubby Chest has an antiqued multi-colored finish. This accent piece features five drawers and five cubby shelves, providing an abundant amount of storage and display space. Small round, bronze pulls accent the fronts of each drawer.

Contact information on index page 100.



Whittier

The McKenzie Media Towers with notched top, console and coffee table, are made from certified sustainable American Alder grown in the Pacific Northwest. These hand crafted heritage pieces withstand normal day-to-day living with grace and style.

Contact information on index page 100.

Furniture Traditions

The Safe Chest with fingerprint activated safe has 17.4 cubic feet of storage, two adjustable shelves, cedar-lined backing, and two large cedar lined drawers. Equipped with two electrical outlets and coaxial cable, it holds up to a 40" TV.

Contact information on index page 100.



Horizon Home

New from Horizon Home is the Kali collection, a 65" entertainment console. Time worn solid wood construction is complemented by a unique hand painted finish with custom hardware pulls and hinges. \$699.00 retail. Made in the Americas.

Contact information on index page 100.



Country View Woodworking

The Great Lakes Collection is featured in North American Cherry and finished in Cinnamon stain. The warm cherry finish is blended with rich Black Walnut inlay, drawer pulls, and accents. Made in America.

Contact information on index page 100.



BEDDING ANATOMY 104

Part 10: The features and advantages of latex and gel.

by Russell Bienenstock

This installment of Furniture World Magazine's Better Bedding and Mattress Sales series will expand upon information presented in the last three issues on mattress construction. In the July/August installment we looked at how retail sales associates can successfully introduce information on mattress specifications and technologies into their presentations. The ups and downs of innersprings were presented in the October/November issue and in December/January Furniture World looked at

Conventional, HR and Memory Foam. If you missed these or any of the previous nine articles in this widely read series, please visit www.furninfo.com/series/bedding.

CONFORMING & COOLING

"The latest and greatest thing in memory foam these days is to add gel to it," says Allen Platek, Vice President Marketing at Sealy. "Almost every bedding manufacturer has a gel memory foam offering."

Gel, often tinted with an identifying green or blue pigment can be incorporated into mattresses in various ways.

"A gel foam," explains PFA's Bob Luedeka Executive Director of the Polyurethane Foam Association, Inc. (PFA), "is a foam with additives in it to provide extra features. All kinds of things can go into these beads for different purposes so it's a way to get really creative with foam."

Gel can be swirled into or dispersed as flecks

or beads into foam. It can also be incorporated into mattresses as a solid layer, or molded into honeycomb, waffle or other shapes, sometimes called buckling wall gel.

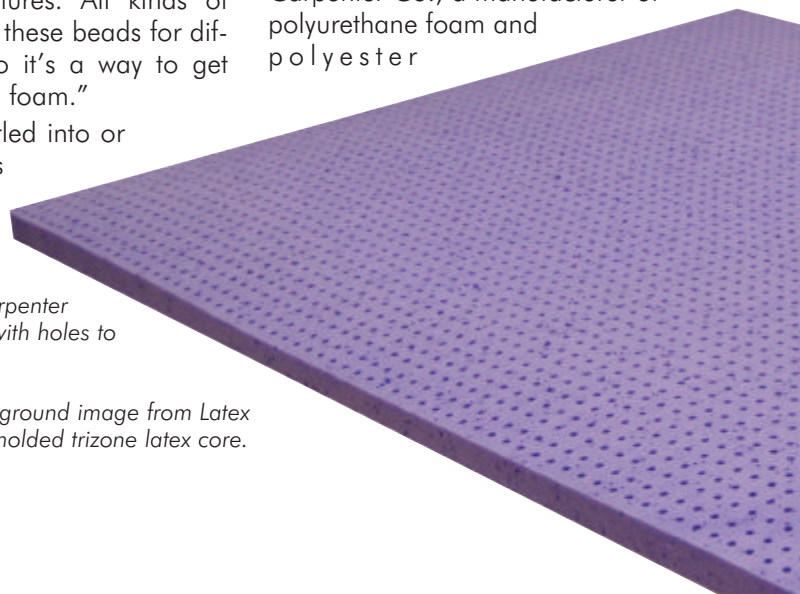
Adding gel to foam gel boosts density measured in pounds per cubic foot and can increase the level of support or IFD, a measure of how much the foam is pushing back at certain depths as it is compressed. A more complete discussion of IFD and density can be found in the "Bedding Anatomy 103" article that ran in the January/February 2013 issue of Furniture World. It can be found online at www.furninfo.com/series/bedding.

"Gel can be described as an amorphous or semi-solid material," notes Bob Steelman, VP Sales and Marketing (Corporate Bedding) for Carpenter Co., a manufacturer of polyurethane foam and polyester

"The introduction of gel into foam really resonated with consumers because of the way companies like Dr. Scholl's had marketed the comfort and support of gel in shoe soles and other products." -Bob Steelman, Carpenter Co.

Image (right) of Theragel® from Carpenter Co. is a gel layer with holes to facilitate air flow.

Above, faded background image from Latex International of a molded trizone latex core.





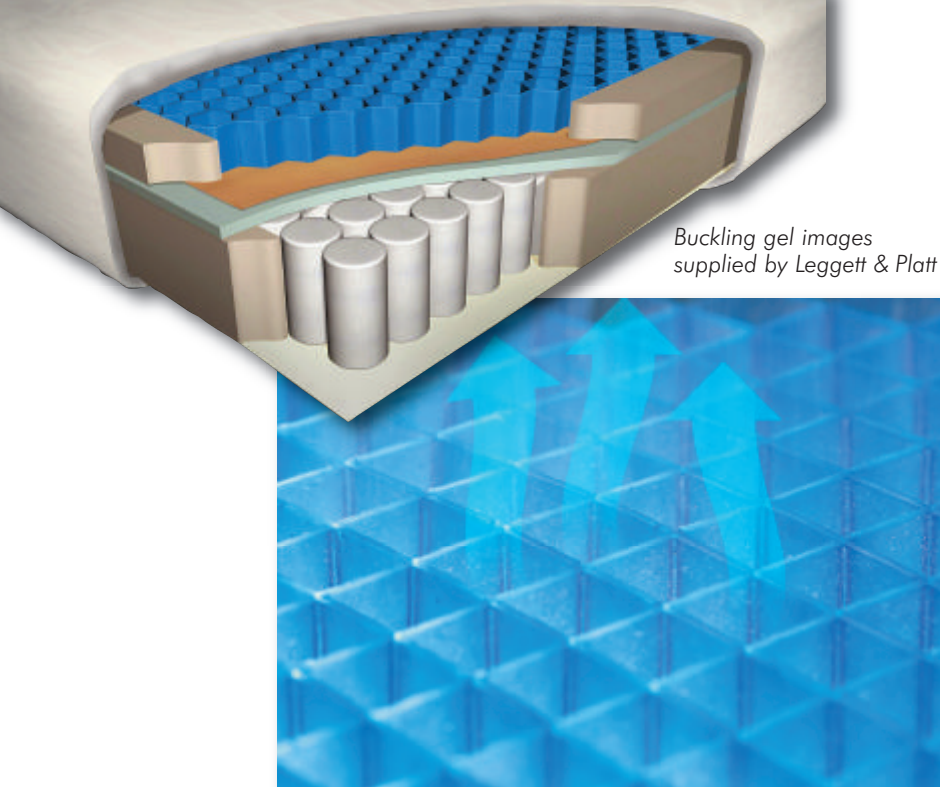
Joseph Ermolenko - Director of Product Development

design · technology · support

To us, design is about honesty. So here's the truth: We design what people want. And we delight in finding design solutions for the many challenges in our industry.

Our product is not just an adjustable base - it's a component that integrates ideas. So we hired young talents with the best ideas in the business. We brought in designers and engineers trained in the high intensity demand and innovation of Detroit's automobile industry. With their visual expertise, education, and fresh new take on product development, we know we're taking design to the next level.

The Ergomotion bed base design combines ergonomic support, innovation, fine furniture aesthetics, and a deep commitment to quality service. We're way beyond the flat bed box spring model and the traditional bedroom setup. Take a close look at our team and what we produce: we design for the future.



Buckling gel images
supplied by Leggett & Platt

fiber with manufacturing plants in North America and Europe.

"Originally gel was very expensive, heavy and difficult to work with. It was sold by weight and only used in ultra-premium mattresses. A layer of gel an eighth of an inch thick could add over 100 pounds to a mattress. That changed when Serta came out with the iComfort mattress line with gel infused into the foam. That innovation made the use of gel much more economical, and marketable. The introduction of gel into foam really resonated with consumers because of the way companies like Dr. Scholl's had marketed the comfort and support of gel in shoe soles and other products."

"Gel is found in bicycle seats, in workout gloves, and in the insoles of shoes," adds Serta's Bob Muenkel. "Infusing gel into memory foam creates a more supportive memory foam combination. So, that's benefit number one. Benefit number two, depending upon the actual chemistry of the gel, is that it can also hold the sleeping temperature of the mattress down."

As was noted in part 9 of this Better Bedding and Mattress series, one of memory (viscoelastic) foam's defining characteristics is its ability to conform to a sleeper when exposed to body

heat. Many consumers find that visco also has the unwanted side effect of concentrating body heat.

Foam chemists can influence the heat conserving properties of visco foams by changing formulations to create variations in foam structure and air flow. Generally, open cell formulations promote air flow and will sleep cooler than closed cell formulations, but adding gel to memory foam has been found to be an excellent way to disperse heat.

"Gel-infused memory foam has really just brought memory foam technology into the 21st Century," remarks Bob Muenkel, Director of Sales Education & Development at Serta International. "By adding an extra support element to it, and also by adding at least to some degree, a cooler sleeping surface. Memory foam is insulating, much like a styrofoam cup. Gel is the opposite. It actually draws the heat away. So, when gel is infused into memory foam, there is a dual benefit."

"In order to provide a cooling effect, gel must come in fairly close contact with the sleeper. Carpenter's Steelman explains. "Specialty beds don't have a quilted, covering layer. Instead, sleepers lay right on top of gel particles underneath the ticking, so heat trans-

"When pressure is applied, gel walls buckle reducing the pressure and dispersing it across the sleeping surface. Actually, sixteen to twenty-two percent of the contact surface is gel. The rest is open-air ventilation."

-Cody Messner, Leggett & Platt

fers through that ticking pretty readily. In addition to gel, manufacturers may introduce additional phase change materials into foam that work toward getting the body to an optimum temperature and holding it there, rather than getting too hot or too cold. The sleeper feels an initial coolness and then the phase change material holds them at an optimum comfort level as far as temperature goes."

To improve the delivery of gel's benefits, manufacturers have recently developed new ways to introduce gel into mattresses.

"Recently," Bob Steelman says, "manufacturers have figured out ways to better deliver gel over the foam. I believe that's the next phase, but it is more expensive to put a solid gel layer on top of the foam, so it's going to be limited to premium products."

"Gel can be skim coated on top of foam, but one drawback is that it is solid gel, and doesn't breathe. We actually punch holes in our skim coat to let the air circulate through. Other

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Hybrids are nothing new. Cars, electronics, even pets have all been lent a helping hand on the road to perfection. And the bedding industry, too, is reaping the benefits of an innovative generation with hybrid mattresses. Visco alone sleeps hot. Solid latex beds are heavy and can cost up to 20% more than other mattresses. But by pairing specialty sleep materials with innersprings, we create a better solution.

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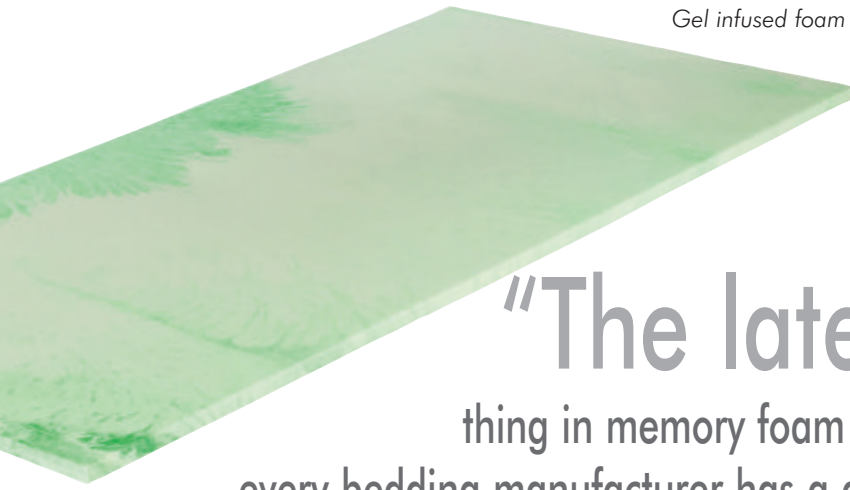


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"The latest and greatest thing in memory foam these days is to add gel to it. Almost every bedding manufacturer has a gel memory foam offering " - Alan Platek, Sealy

companies are working to patent processes that affect the cell structure of the foam so it can absorb the gel into the top layer without closing off foam cells. The benefit is that gel remains close to the surface and close to the body."

Another way to get gel near the surface of the mattress is to introduce it as a comfort layer above a foam or innerspring core.

Cody Messner, Product Manager Bedding Group, Leggett & Platt told Furniture World that if, "Buckling wall gel forms the top layer directly under the ticking, it becomes a comfort layer, that's soft to the touch.

"It's a pure gel product, that's not incorporated into foam as flakes or particles of gel. It's anywhere from

three quarters of an inch up to two and a quarter inches thick, depending on the desired characteristics. The gel is molded into columns of interlocking honeycomb or diamond shapes. Each honeycomb is an individual column. When pressure is applied, these gel walls buckle, reducing the pressure and dispersing it across the sleeping surface. In our product, sixteen to twenty-two percent of the contact surface is gel. The rest is open-air ventilation.

"The benefits of this type of product that retailers can talk about are pressure relief, back support, durability, and ventilation properties that contribute to a more temperature neutral sleeping surface. And, buckling gel can be used with any type of foam core or innerspring unit."

Leggett & Platt's Mark Quinn, adds, "This type of gel can be used to create something we call a hybrid. A hybrid as we define it is the addition of our Comfort Core springs which are fabric encased coils, with any gel, latex or memory foam topper. The gel layer is most often placed right under the tick-

ing so that the sleeper can feel it. The gel buckles in, conforming to the body. Alternatively, the gel layer may also be placed under a thin layer of memory foam, latex or other bedding material."

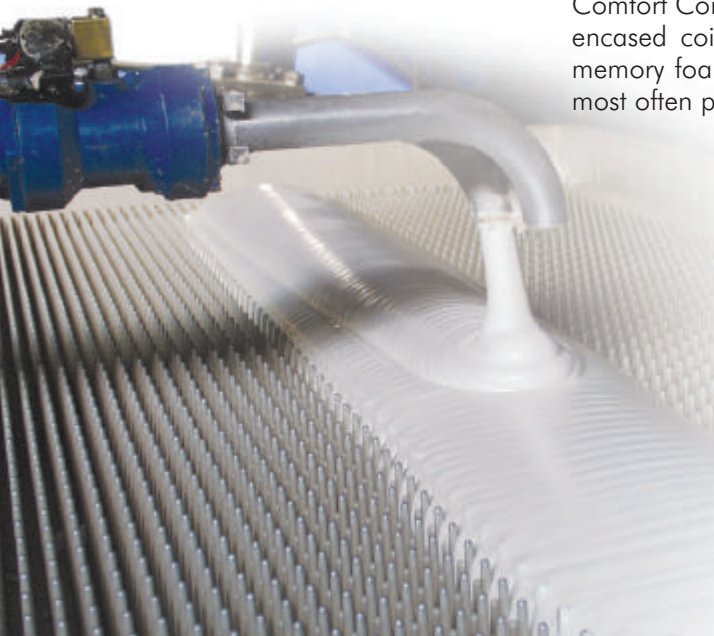
LATEX

According to Kurt Ling, CEO, Pure LatexBLISS, latex is technically not a foam, although this distinction is lost on many consumers, retailers and bedding manufacturers.

Whether the experts interviewed for this article referred to latex as a foam or not, there was complete agreement regarding the positive properties latex brings to a mattress.

"Latex is most widely known to be very bouncy," observes Serta's Bob Muenkel, "also extremely durable; it lasts a long time. It has a very lively feeling, almost the opposite of memory foam. And it's been around longer than memory foam so it has a long, long track record. Plus, it has a tendency to sleep neutral when it comes to body temperature. It's very breathable. And, what's interesting about

Foam robot used to precisely fill liquid latex across mold to create Talalay. Image from Latex International.



"As a support core, latex is a very durable and long lasting component. As upholstery, latex allows the consumer's body to be lifted, be buoyant and provide a floating effect that helps relax muscles and relieves tension." -Kurt Ling, Pure LatexBLISS

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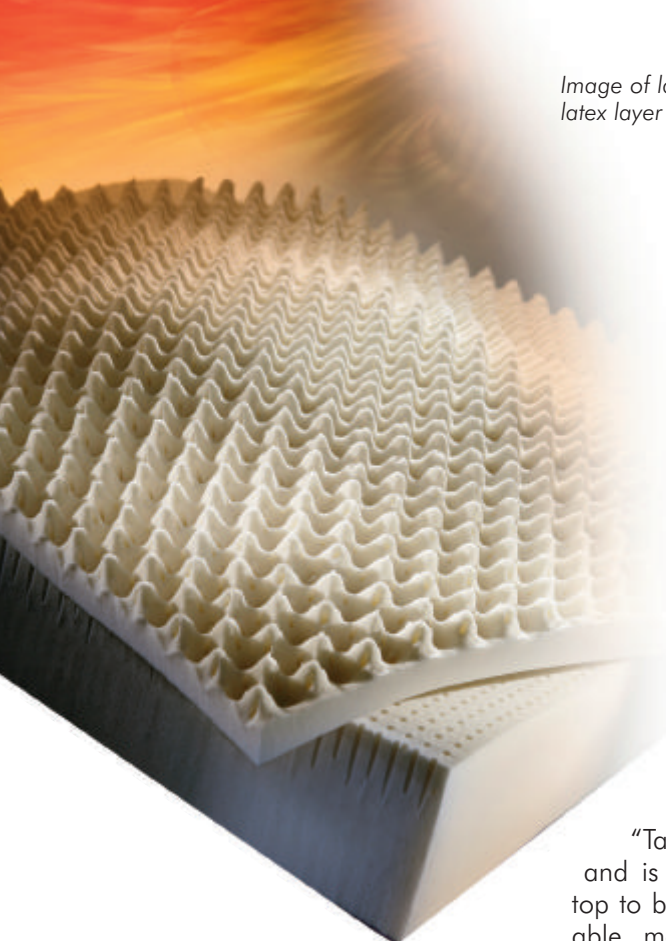
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Image of latex foam core plus convoluted latex layer from Latex International.



“Latex beds have a longer performance life. Latex also has natural properties, and an ‘all latex’ bed is dust mite resistant, antibacterial and antimicrobial if it doesn't have a quilt panel on top made of fiber and foams.”

-Kurt Ling, Pure LatexBLISS

latex foam is that it gives push back support whereas memory foam conforms. Latex is an active support system, while memory foam is a passive support system. That's not to say one is better than the other, they're just very different feels.”

“In Europe,” adds Sealy's Allen Platek, “latex is a huge part of the bedding market, but in the United States for some reason it hasn't taken off. In the 1950s and '60s it was very big and, over time it ebbed. I am a fan of latex, but I think the disservice that's been done to it is that no one has been able to do a good job of defining what a latex bed is. I've seen, manufacturers produce what they call a latex bed that contains only a half-inch of latex. This causes a lot of confusion at retail when the so called latex bed with a half inch of latex sells for \$799, and another one that happens to have 12 inches of latex sells for \$3,299.”

LATEX TYPES

The two basic types of latex are Talalay and Dunlop.

Kurt Ling, CEO of Pure LatexBLISS

tells Furniture World readers, “Talalay Latex, is more expensive and is more consistent in feel from top to bottom. It is also more breathable, more durable and comes in a wider range of feels. Dunlop Latex is less expensive and is poured in a mold similar to the way a waffle is made. Dunlop is poured more like a pancake. Dunlop makes a good core in a latex bed. Talalay can either be used as a core or in upholstery layers.”

“All Natural or 100% Natural Latex,” he says, “is more expensive, although blended latex; natural plus synthetic lasts longer.

Ling told Furniture World that Latex is rubber, not foam. You would not use foam to make a bumper, or soles on tennis shoes or a request ball. The properties of these two specialty sleep components are near opposites. The cell structure of the two are very different, the end benefit of feel is very different, and the performance life is very different.

LATEX ATTRIBUTES

We asked Hickory Spring's Brent Limer if the density or ILD is a useful measure for thinking about latex. “Latex is only sold on ILD as far as the firmness goes, he observed. It starts at about 14 and goes up into the 30s.”

“ILD is the appropriate measure,” agrees LatexBLISS' Kurt Ling. “That

said, the number of inches of latex in the mattress is the key number to focus on when determining value of a latex bed or durability, or ability to relax muscles and relieve tension. Higher ILD numbers represent denser latex appropriate for support cores whereas lower ILDs represent latex appropriate for Upholstery layers.

“Most consumers do not ask about ILD,” he adds. “The numbers are meaningless to them. They want to know more about the overall feel of the bed not the specifics of each layer. They do ask about the number of inches of latex in the mattress. Consumers also ask if the latex is manufactured in the US or imported from Asia.

“As a support core, latex is a very durable and long lasting component. As upholstery, latex allows the consumers body to be lifted, be buoyant and provide a floating effect that helps relax muscles and relieves tension.”

WHAT BUYERS & RSA'S NEED TO KNOW

Furniture World asked Ling the main things retail buyers need to know about the latex mattresses they sell. “The major things they should know” he replied, “are if it's an all latex bed or a bed with latex in it. The easiest way to tell the difference is look at the law tag. Also, know how many inches of latex are in the mattress, if the latex

BEDDING ANATOMY 104

was manufactured in the US or Imported from Asia, if the support core Talalay or Dunlop, if the latex used in the upholstery is Talalay or Dunlop, and if there is foam or fiber on top of the Latex layers in the bed that minimize the feel or performance of the latex.

"The main things retail sales associates should know about latex," he continues are, "first, the benefit for the consumer of sleeping on an all latex bed. Second, that latex beds have a longer performance life. Latex also has natural properties, and an 'all latex' bed is dust mite resistant, antibacterial and antimicrobial if it doesn't have a quilt panel on top made of fiber and foams.

Asked about how retail associates might identify customers who appreciate the feel of latex, he explained,

"The easiest way to identify a latex customer is to find consumers who think they want a memory foam mattress but then discover that they don't like the feel of memory foam. Latex provides a lifting effect that is the opposite of the memory foam sinking effect. If the consumer doesn't like one, they are very likely to like the other. Consumers sleep 'on' latex whereas they sleep 'in' memory foam.

"Occasionally consumers will bring up latex allergies when looking for a mattress. With regard to latex allergies," he notes, "you have to come into contact with it to have a reaction. In case your customer is planning on taking their mattress apart and touching the latex, even with a latex allergy, they can sleep on it without a problem. There are multiple layers of materials between them and the latex in their

mattress including sheets, mattress protector, a cover and an FR layer.

"Also, the mistake many people make is only pitching latex's natural story. Although more natural than many mattresses, the number of consumers seeking natural mattresses is limited compared to the number seeking the feel of latex or want a latex rubber that will last a long time."

Finally we asked him where he sees the market for Latex going.

"Specialty bedding is growing rapidly," he replied, "Just ten years ago it was a very small part of the market. More than one of two consumers say their next bed will not contain springs. There are two options and both are experiencing rapid growth; memory foam and latex. The two compliment each other perfectly."



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SUCCESS STORIES

Leopold's Fine Home Furnishings: Beyond the ordinary since 1859.

by Janet Holt-Johnstone

"This is an all-time record-making month! The very best month for sales that we have ever experienced in our long history."

When you consider that Leopold's Fine Home Furnishings was established in 1859, surely that calls for a way over-the-moon celebration! Mark Lutz, 5th generation President and his partner and nephew, Chad Leopold, 6th generation, predict blue skies ahead.

But what's the secret of their dynasty's success? What inspired Henry Leopold, an 18 year old cabinetmaker and his two older brothers, to leave Essen, Hannover, Germany back in 1853? We do know that it was a time of northern European political crisis when they embarked upon the

often hazardous voyage to the Americas, specifically targeting the city of Cleveland, Ohio, population then just over 18,000.

We learn from Henry Leopold's book, "Glimpses of Greater Cleveland", published by The Edwin H. Clark Company in 1896, 43 years after Henry's arrival, that he "commenced his struggle for existence possessing nothing but a debt of \$41.00, which money he had borrowed in the old country to pay his way to America. Through perseverance

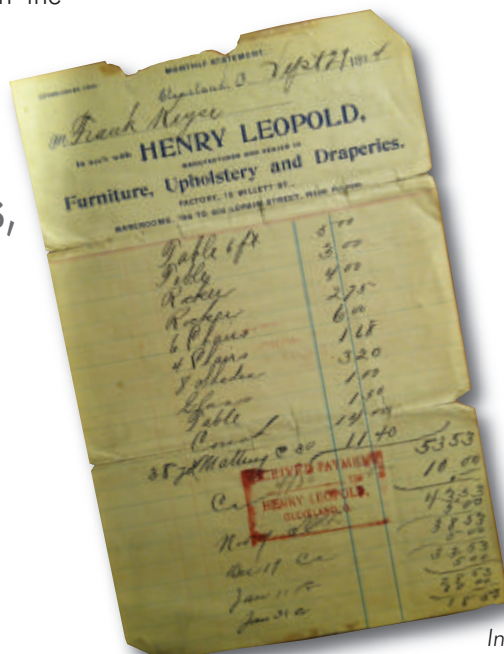
and hard work he saved enough from his small earnings to liquidate this debt, after doing which he considered himself very happy."

Henry found the foresight and energy to apply himself as a one-man-band to his trade so effectively that, by 1859, he had hired 20 other "new-comers" to assist him in the creation of handcrafted furniture. The workshop was in the basement of Henry's first official store, the 540 square foot

First store in 1859 at
540 square feet



Original Store 1859



First Floor 1894

Invoice from 1894. Listed is a six foot table for \$5.00 and six chairs for \$6.00.

"People just can't believe how long we've been in business, it's intriguing to them. There is no greater statement to our credibility than to see our longevity displayed."



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showroom located upstairs on the main floor. The property itself was covered with trees and stumps, "and was purchased at a cost of \$8.00 per foot which was, at that time, considered a big price for a lot on the Lorain plank road". At the intersection of Lorain and busy Fulton Road, on Cleveland's west side of town, there were typically rough dirt roads, no lighting and a multitude of following horses and buggies. Henry's first promotional slogan was "From the cheapest that's good, to the best that's made."

In 1857, Henry had married Maria Gertner, born in Bunde, Westfalia. She had also traveled to Cleveland in 1853, part of that same surge of German immigrants.

Henry, with Maria and their growing family of five sons, survived and prospered during the run-up to the Civil War. Mid-century, the city boasted one of the best harbors on Lake Erie, and the bustling activity of the region was fed by a system of numerous waterways including the Ohio Canal which gave access to the interior of the state. The railways, too, with rapidly increasing miles of track, converged on Cleveland. It had become an important key hub for the surrounding cities and states, a crossroads of trade in timber, coal and iron ore. Industry flourished and Cleveland's population included a growing number of millionaires as the settlement developed from a small town to what was to become an industrial giant.

Ship building escalated around Cleveland's docks, and Henry and his team were already known for the excellence of their craftsmanship. They rapidly became involved in what was to become a long-lasting relationship with lake shipping, constructing the interior wood fittings and finishing and the elaborate, elegant furnishings of the growing fleet of Great Lakes vessels before, during and after the War.

In 1861, a heavily guarded Abraham Lincoln and his entourage travelled by train on the way to his March 4th inauguration in Washington, D.C. They stopped at Cleveland, population now around 43,000, and it's recorded that 30,000 of those citizens lined the muddy streets along the way to the Weddell House hotel. In the pouring rain, Lincoln spoke from the hotel's balcony to a huge crowd, amongst the gathering John D. Rockefeller, future founder of Standard Oil and, without doubt, Henry and his wife.

Lincoln praised Clevelanders for their "courage, pride in industry and love of country" which certainly the Leopold family took to heart. War was declared a little over a month later. (Lincoln's train retraced this journey in April 1865, now on the way home to Illinois after his assassination; his coffin was displayed on Public Square.)

When it had become obvious that hostilities were close at hand, the army quickly constructed Cleveland Camp, a 35-acre site right around the corner from Leopold's store where 15,000 troops were mobilized and trained for battle. Within a few weeks massive casualties sadly created the necessity of adding caskets to Leopold's line.

In Mark and Chad's "treasure sure chest", an ancient leather suitcase, of sepia-toned photographs, ads, promotional leaflets, clippings and tattered invoices, are multiple references to Cleveland's shipping saga. "Uncle Wib", Wilbert A Leopold, third generation, now retired at age 87, but much immersed in family history, said, "We did business with at least three different companies, Cleveland Cliffs, N. A. Hanna Company and Pittsburgh/U.S. Steel. We sold them pilot house chairs for the engine rooms. Leopold's purchased seats



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Photo taken about 1950, the building was once a high school. Leopold's used each school room as a different department.



Undated ad proclaims "We Are Not Going Out Of Business" perhaps circa 1930.

LEOPOLD'S

and backs from certain vendors, and bases from separate sources and then custom built the chairs to the companies' specs using no metal because it would interfere with the compasses.

"Captains received our best quality furniture, some in rosewood, hard rock maple and cherry woods. We furnished their quarters with recliners and bedroom furniture. The quality chosen for the workers was based on their rank... The last trip of the season to dock usually resulted in some of the crew tossing their mattresses overboard to ensure a new set the following season."

Uncle Wib talked of, "Visiting one of the ships now in a museum in Cleveland, the William B. Mather. Some of the furniture was from Leopold's." Mark intends to follow this lead for personal interest and his friendship with the Mather family. "They were very wealthy Clevelanders who lived on Millionaire Row way back when the Rockefellers also had their home in Cleveland."

Wib recalled that his father, Wilbert

H. Leopold, "used to be entertained by shipping executives at Propeller Club parties."

Photos of some of the ships they served are on exhibition in Leopold's newly created History Room, along with many other artifacts that date back to their ancestors early days in the area. Said Mark, "The collection has proved to be very interesting to our customers. I believe the Room adds to their confidence and feeling of security in dealing with us. People just can't believe how long we've been in business, it's intriguing to them. There is no greater statement to our credibility than to see our longevity displayed."

"Glimpses of Greater Cleveland" describes a disaster that occurred in Leopold's second decade. "The business prospered and was on the way to success when, in 1871, the building and stock were completely destroyed by fire. Having no insurance, this loss left us almost penniless, but we at once borrowed new capital from friends who asked no security and we

began erecting a new building, which showed the wonderful demand for our always reliable goods that we had established. We manufactured all our own furniture. In the year 1886, our warerooms became too small and we at once enlarged the store to meet the demands of our fast increasing trade. Two years later, we again saw the necessity for more room when we put in a modern front, tore down walls and partitions and stocked the entire building with our popular furniture."

In 1891, Henry became one of the incorporators of The Lorain Street Savings Bank Company and, when the book appeared five years later, he is listed as a Director of the Bank.

"During the succeeding years, the demand for our goods increased to such an extent that we were again required to provide more room and, in May of 1896, we commenced the erection of our new building which is now completed and stocked up with all the newest designs in furniture, carpets and upholstery. (Square footage had climbed over time, from

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"Customers have come in recently asking us to repair those (Drexel Heritage) cane seats, now 40 years old or more!"

The largest store in Cleveland in 1910, Leopold's advertised this genuine leather \$30 rocker for \$16.50.

Cuyahoga?) with anything and everything they may need in our line at as moderate a price as is consistent with first class work."

The book includes an enlightening addendum: "Mr. Leopold is assisted by his five sons, each of whom has his particular part of the business in charge. Mr. John Leopold is in charge of the shipping department. Mr. August Leopold attends to the buying of all goods. Mr. William Leopold looks after the office and all clerical work pertaining thereto. Mr. Theo Leopold takes charge of the delivering of goods, while Mr. Martin Leopold is at the head of accounts and collection department."

The final commentary was in the form of an invitation: "Mr. Leopold requests the public at any time to call at his store when he will be pleased to show his goods, and a walk through his immense establishment will be appreciated by every lover and admirer of fine furniture."

Said Mark, "It's true that furniture created in the mid-1850s and beyond can still be found in Clevelanders' homes. We have always focused on 'middle to better goods' that, hopefully, people will want to keep for the rest of their lives.

"I love our slogan, 'Beyond the ordinary since 1859!'. It's a statement



of our philosophy. We are occasionally asked to service really old products and one problem we've had is finding parts. It seems we have outlived quite a few of our suppliers!

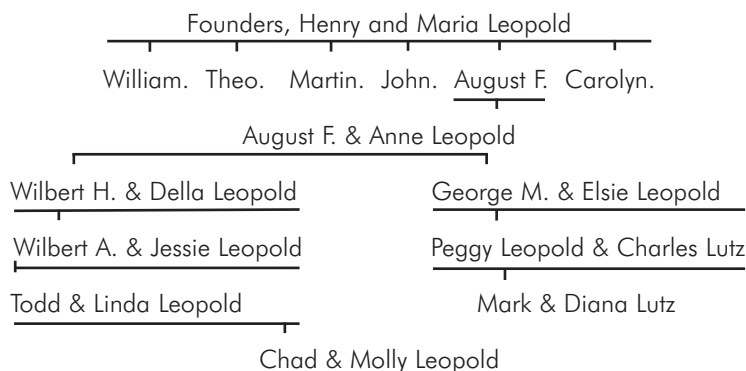
"And there are more recent product lines. In 1973, at the beginning of our association with them, Drexel Heritage had a stand-out collection, an eclectic Art Nouveau marble-topped, round dinette table with cane seat chairs. Customers have come in recently asking us to repair those cane seats, now 40 years old or more! Amusingly, they've said to us, 'We've hardly ever used those seats!' But it's interesting to see actual imbedded footprints in the cane!" Leopold's

540 square feet in 1859, to 62,000 square feet by 1896.) We are now ready to supply the public of both sides of the river (perhaps the

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always obliges, however, and the chairs go home with their owners, good as new.

When Henry passed away in 1898, his five sons continued to operate the business until the era of the Great Depression. Mark has records from meetings of the Board of Directors in the 1920s and 1930s. "The Depression had to be an incredible survival effort for us and anybody else that made it." And it was a critical period for Leopold's.

The family owned five stores over the years, one a five-storey corner structure that burned down in 1932, Leopold's second major fire. It

occurred, fortunately, after the business itself had moved to another location. Three of the brothers left the business then, and August carried on with his two sons, Wilbert H. and George M. who had begun working for Leopold's in their early teens. (George Leopold was Mark's grandfather, father of only child Peggy, Mark's mother, who was Henry Leopold's great grand-daughter.)

"It would appear to have been a necessary reorganization," said Mark. "Reading the notes on how badly business had tailed off during those times you can see it must have been tough to deal with. I promise you

though, in my 38 plus years in business, I'm sure I've felt overwhelmed from time to time as they must have. The sacrifices August and his two sons made were well documented. My grandfather and grandmother, George and Elsie, were raising my mother, Peggy. They managed somehow on only \$30 a week. His brother was paid the same small amount, and August, their father, only took \$5 a week and forgave debt that was owed to him.

"If I were asked today how I would advise a family working to continue their history and business as we have done for 154 years, I believe, that



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Charlie Lutz and Wilbert A. Leopold



George, Wilbert A & Wilbert H Leopold

most importantly, I would suggest they make sure that the people making the important business decisions have the greatest passion for the furniture business itself. They must be both willing

and qualified to do much or all of the work for little or no monetary rewards when the survival of the business is at stake.

"The businesses that I have

observed over the years that struggled and eventually failed, have lacked that essential passion, and the owners were unwilling to reduce their financial rewards. Without passion, perseverance, sacrifice and hard work, the ultimate ending is a Going Out of Business Sale, or bankruptcy.

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Leopold's home page and room planner at www.leopoldsfurniture.com.

"We were inundated with women (and men!) shooting photos on smart phones, emailing, texting, twittering! Signing up for our Presentation Rooms. Buying!"

businesses!

"Both Chad and I focus on opportunity rather than problems, and this relates particularly to customer service. We emphasize our 'difference' by getting back to customers right away, actually going out and seeing people and handling individual 'opportunities'. It means the world to people to receive immediate response, especially today. Our goal is to protect our longevity. It's great

'word of mouth' relationship building!

"August died in 1949, and my father, Charles Lutz, and Wilbert A. became partners. Wilbert semi-retired in the late '90s, but my father worked all the way to when he passed away in 2008."

In 1949, an article in The Cleveland Plain Dealer read, "Leopold's has exceeded one million dollars gross business several times in recent years." And, in that same arti-

cle, "The departmentalization of Leopold's current building, the former John Marshall High School, was accomplished by utilizing the former classrooms for each line, as upholstery, lighting, dining room furniture, etc. Customers declare that decades after attending John Marshall they feel 'at home' shopping where they had once studied mathematics and history!" The Leopold's had bought the school in 1946. In 1968 they added

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Jeff Dralle, Co-Owner, Dralle's Department Store, (641) 816-4158

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5,000 square feet of showroom space at the front of the building, and increased customer parking. They remodeled the interior by tearing out the walls of the old cloakrooms without losing the warm and intimate atmosphere of the school.

"Another special time in the life of Leopold's occurred in 1973, critical to

our moving forward. Drexel Heritage had made the decision to go into stores. My father, Charles, and uncle Wilbert were involved in the negotiations, and Leopold's became the second store in the U.S. to be engaged in the Drexel Heritage plan. (The first was in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.) We found a building in Brecksville, 10

miles directly south of downtown Cleveland, so from 1973 to 1986 we ran two stores. We sold the school in 1986 because we wanted to concentrate on Drexel and the design concept, and the Brecksville store really began to take off.

"At that same time, I graduated with a business degree from Ohio University. Dad had suggested I join the company when I was a sophomore; I'd worked at the stores over the years during holidays. In June, 1974, I both officially joined Leopold's and married Diana, a banner year!

"We have added many other top lines since then and now have 72 carefully structured room settings, furniture, carpet, area rugs, lighting, mirrors, artwork and accessories. We like to partner with family owned businesses that build their product lines in the U. S. Sherrill Furniture, Vanguard, Bernhardt, are all important to us; they share our passion for the industry. We carry many lines with customizable options, thousands of fabric choices and up to 50 wood finishes. Brecksville is a one-stop-shop, everything you need to beautifully decorate any interior at a fair price, transitional, contemporary or traditional."

Leopold's is justly proud of their team of interior designers. Two top talents, with the store for many productive years, Debi Danals and Denise Krejci, are also members of the company's buying group and travel to High Point with Chad and Mark; they have also attended the Dallas

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"We emphasize our 'difference' by getting back to customers right away, actually going out and seeing people and handling individual 'opportunities'."

screens, and pin up boards for fabrics, etc. People sign up for the use of these rooms, and we have half a dozen other work tables in our design area in constant use. Outside designers book with us to come in to utilize our facilities with their clients."

Designs are conceptualized on computer, then projected to the large screen "to bring the design to life".

Leopold's attractive website also offers a terrific, easy to use Room Planner for online customers who then bring their own imaginings to the store for consultation with the designers.

They have no plans to sell on the Internet. "We want to drive customers into the store to see how different we are," Mark explained. A recent promotion produced just the intended result to the point they were almost overwhelmed with customers. "We were inundated with women (and men!) shooting photos on smart phones, emailing, texting, twittering! Signing up for our Presentation Rooms. Buying!

"Our design team is constantly researching, particularly targeting some of our younger clients, finding the best possible way to keep in touch with them and encourage new people to find us. Social media today is obviously key.

"But tried and true direct mail also works wonders! A local, entrepreneurial printer cold-called us a few months ago. We worked out a promotion with

him, a four month shot with an oversized postcard. The results have been fantastic! We are now in the midst of a follow-up which is working equally as well.

"Rarely we use 15 to 30 second TV spots on news programs, early in the morning, at dinnertime or late night before events. But we will buy radio at drive times to coincide with our next direct mail push.

"And there is a beautiful, glossy magazine called 'Currents' in the Cleveland trading area. We advertise in it once a month. And this has brought a large response. It's a very social publication and features local people at events.

"And we never, ever forget the power of word of mouth!

"We try to support as many regional charities as possible, particularly schools and women's groups, providing them with gift certificates. Community involvement is person-to-person with us.

"Our longevity has given us a unique perspective. We are fortunate in knowing who we are and what we want and need to achieve for our customers and ourselves. We know we are unique. We are surrounded by fleets of mega and chain stores, all advertising, pumping, low prices, no interest, pay next year. We are not bankers, although we do have a credit plan available. We sell better goods, better design, better service to our friends and customers. And you can't beat our reputation, credibility, integrity and our remarkable longevity!"

Market solo for accessories. Mark reckons he has attended at least "75 or 80 Markets" and considers them vital to maintaining his and his teams' knowledge of industry and design trends.

There is a Leopold's tale that needs to be told! Some years ago, Uncle Wib was honored by the IRS with a dreaded audit. The officials seemed particularly interested in why Wib found it necessary to take his wife, Jessie, with him on business trips to High Point. "Well," said Wib. "Have you heard of seeing eye dogs? Are blind people allowed to have dogs accompanying them?" The officials agreed that was so. "Then you should understand I have a disability uncommon to home furnishings retailers. I'm color blind! I need my wife with me! I couldn't be a success in this business if I couldn't see what I was buying!" The officials dismissed the audit.

The company's unique design aspect is highly developed, and is handled in a very personal manner with customers. In Leopold's Presentation Rooms there are "complete computer setups with large TV

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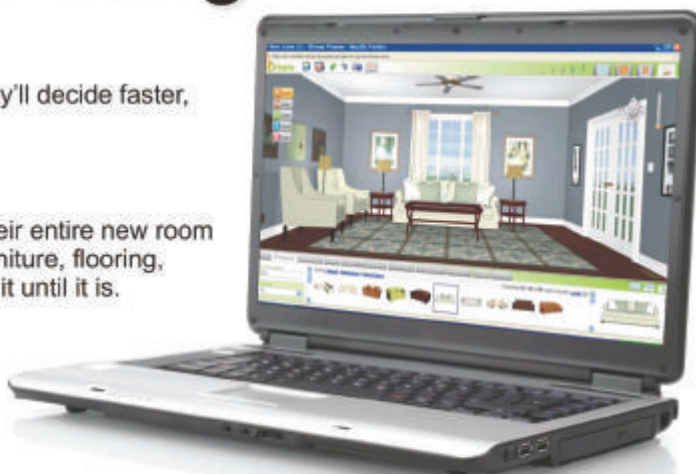
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COLOR TRENDS

Ideas for using color to create eye-catching displays on your retail floor.

by Janet Holt-Johnstone

The 2013 forty-first Toronto Canadian Home Furnishings Market was a whole new world, this year focused on the alchemy of color. The Market's doyen, Jean-Francois Michaud, lives and breathes at the command centre of the Quebec Furniture Manufacturers' Association, his reach extending to both national and international trends. To say that interest in the power of color is global could be an understatement! Canadian astronaut, Chris Hadfield, newest resident orbiting in the International Space Station for the next several months, said he was "dazzled by the ever changing kaleidoscope surrounding Planet Earth. This morning over Africa, my breath was taken away. Unbelievable richness of color and texture. It was a spiritual experience!"

So, color top of his mind, Michaud asked Guru Leatrice Eiseman to address Market attendees, and to work with world class

designers Pierre D'Anjou and Andre Carron, and Janette Ewen, Canada's own lifestyle and décor expert. They developed the Market's color theme together, the D'Anjou/Carron duo skillfully continuing to orchestrate the popular Quality Canadian Furniture Trends Display, and Janette, masterminding her wise and whimsical Pop-Up Vignettes.

When people ask, "Why should I go to Market... any Market? I've got the Internet, newsletters, designer television, social media. Why take time away from business, spend the money for travel, the hotels/food?" The answers are manifold. The past 12 months have been full of experiences, good and bad. Sales results scoot up and down like a thermometer during any Canadian winter... or summer! And with as little apparent reason, like the Dow or the TSX. But Markets are day-and-night essentials. Certainly to see and order new home furnishings. To connect

with old friends and colleagues. We all need that face-to-face encounter, to reach out and touch – and sit on! - fabrics, leathers, woods and metals. And the principal incentive, more than any other factor, is to revitalize our thinking, maybe seek those far horizons out of our day-to-day comfort zones!

Lee's vision reflects The Pantone View Home + Interiors 2013 Forecast.



Pictured are Connoisseur (#1), and Glamour (#2&3).



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Pictured are New Old School (#4), Rugged Individuals(#5), and Extracts (#6&7).



Her credentials, Lee is "America's Color Specialist", author of many books on the subject, founder and director of the Eiseman Center for Color Information and Training, and Executive Director of the Pantone Color Institute. She defined the 2013 theme as "Future Color Trends: and Realities", and described nine palettes that were reflected dramatically in the Trend Display. Her rationale: "In order to create the 'magic' in the marketplace that ultimately leads to sales, colors for 2013 will need to coax and cajole, soothe or astonish, renew and

replenish. At the same time, there will be the consumers' expectation of practicality, what colors have staying power and can be relied upon as a steadying influence in unsteady times. Skillfully balanced color palettes that play to their practical side, while satisfying their aspirations, hopes and needs for something novel will remain key to enticing the would-be consumer or client."

Eiseman's visions are realized as "Connoisseur, Glamour, New Old School, Rugged Individuals, Extracts, Footprints, Sojourn, Surface Treatments and Out of the Ordinary". When Pierre and Andre met to brainstorm the concepts' development, a "small village" emerged, twelve separate "fantasies and realities" that were transformed into integral portraits of living spaces. "Not only color values but a different approach to the 'architecture' of the Display helped to make each of the vignettes even more accessible this year to visiting retailers. The individual exhibits, each with its own wooden structured arch, constitute 12 'homes' within a small village. There is a wide variety of choice that will offer retailers, when creating their own displays, the highlights they need

for their own vignettes.

"The visitors' 'wow' response is not unusual, reactions have always been super, but the enthusiasm factor rose to great heights with the combination of mood, shapes and really vibrant pigments!"

Pierre and Andre revel in flights of fancy, but always with a practical application, to showcase quality furniture. Lee's "Connoisseur" (#1) evolved in their hands as a wine drenched oases in a color-match* to Pantone's Patrician Purple and Violet

"In order to create the 'magic' in the marketplace that ultimately leads to sales, colors for 2013 will need to coax and cajole, soothe or astonish, renew and replenish."

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"Connoisseur evolved in their hands as a wine drenched oases in a color-match* to Pantone's Patrician Purple and Violet Quartz, an upmarket niche in a sophisticated living room."

Quartz, an upmarket niche in a sophisticated living room. Palliser's neutral-tone sofa and ottoman were anchored by two enormous cream-color vases, perhaps brimming with a lush Merlot? both conceptions of Le Present. Said Lee, "It's a fresh approach to celebrating the finer things in life, displaying a sense of history and elegance."

"Glamour" (#2) was presented twice. "Sleek and sensuous," Lee told us, "very much reminiscent of the Art Deco era interpreted with contemporary influences." Pantone's Rio Red and Chinchilla accented Dinec's chic dining room and Pierre found the perfect spark to pull the theme together, a 4' x 4' print of the "Deco Diva" Tamara de Lempicka's signature painting "The Blue Scarf", circa 1930. (Pierre added, "It's important to look and find just the right accessory and place it in the right spot. The right objet or art brings everything together. It's worth it to make the customer stop and look. It makes it possible for the customer to visualize how it would look in her/his own home. . . and adds to the sale!" Another touch, the period chandelier, a Gen-Lite confection.

The second "Glamour" (#3) palette reflects the reprise of "the glimmer of a bygone age", Continental Furniture's curvy Ludovica loveseat, armchair and tables, the statement mirror and lighting by Gen-Lite. The backdrop with a geometric harlequin touch, stars chinchilla and jasper tones. And the disco ball, placed on the carpet next to the table; it belongs to Pierre, is one of his good

luck charms! ("I'm taking it home after the Market!")

"One of the biggest sources of excitement is the wide variety of choice offered in these collections, truly something for everyone," said Andre.

"New Old School" (#4) is something else again! Somehow patriotic, somehow preppy, the color mix is sharp, "The hues found typically in iconic flags and banners," said Lee. The bedroom and ottoman by Trica, the mattress by Zedbed, key paint shade Pantone's TPX micro chip. A striking blend of tartan-like patterns and clean styling, this combination would act like a magnet in showrooms, particularly at special times on the calendar, but fresh and beckoning all year 'round.

Pierre enjoyed introducing two engaging Le Present moose heads into the vignette Lee dubbed "Rugged Individuals" (#5). Lee spoke of the "earthiness of Raw Sienna blending with Vintage Indigo and Stonewash blue jeans." The essence of the vignette, featuring a Jaymar sectional and BG Furniture's occasional table, says Lee, "ranges from out west to the Outback, picking up along the way the 'ole' of the gaucho, cowboy and cowgirl, the natural shadings of the prairie and polished leather, weathered wood and animal hide". Pierre's moose heads add the necessary touch of whimsy that made the retailers viewing the vignette smile. A consumer winner, too!

"Extracts" (#6) is another Lee double-whammy, the spicy tones taken by Andre and Pierre to an enticing high



with Gen-Lite's sparkly cubes of light casting shadows on the dimensional backdrop (the shapes are cardboard, mounted on chrome) and the creamy sofa, enhanced with Pantone's Green Banana and TPX Rain Drum. The Via Brooklyn sofa with its distinctive silver wrapped feet opens surprisingly to a comfortable bed. Lee's color comments, "Flavourful notes of color along with suggestions of appealing scents create combinations that are restful, pleasing, piquant . . . a subtle taste implied in this palette evokes a

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11



Pictured are Surface Treatments (#11), Out of the Ordinary (#12), Gastown (#13), Old Montreal (#14), Sherbrooke Street (#15) and Muskoka (#16).

12



14



13



15



16



somewhat exotic top note."

"Extracts" two (#7), Canadel's High Style dining room collection carries the same ambience, highlighted with shapely green vases by Zuo Modern, riding asymmetrically on double four-drawer buffet chests, each drawer in a different wood finish. Another Pierre surprise, the vases sport two neon tubes that create yet another shadow pattern on Pantone's Spiced Coral wall.

"Footprints" (#8) was a real show stopper, a bedroom vignette far from tranquil! "Vibrant tribal colors", a jolt for any not-quite-awake showroom shoppers! About the striking wall hanging; Pierre framed a dominant piece of textured fabric that reminded him of the Italian verve of Missoni, turquoise and orange, a complement to Pantone's Tangerine Tango. The Billboard bed and Rome armchair, both by Amisco, and bedding by Textiles Gauvin are "bold, forthright and very directional". The hot trend of 2013, "a seductive rhythm of tangerine, peacock blue, fiery pink flambé and a solar powered yellow, cooled by yellow-green Oasis".

"Give retailers, designers and decorators a fun, heady dose of inspiration when it comes to creating successful and memorable window and showroom displays."

"If your clients are looking for laid back, rustic, weather beaten appeal, this Pop-Up in your store (Peggy's Cove #18) would inform them of your empathy."

Another spectacular twosome holds hands in "Sojourn" (#9 & #10), settings that Lee describes as "a bit more magical and intricate in the compelling mixtures of a heady Syrah wine hue, purpled blackish plum, and fuchsia, green and grounded organics". Romano's velour Dakota armchairs and Huppe's Lyrics entertainment unit are drawn together by Trica's Tam Tam table. "A great marriage," said Pierre, "and an invitation to your customer to sit and take possession!"

The "Sojourn" dining room has its own mystique, a series of twining in two Huppe bookcases/ wall units, two statement-making Gen-Lite chandeliers and another bit of great fun, two large pink rhinoceros ready for battle in the middle of the Huppe table! "The rhinoceros came from Home Sense; couldn't resist them," he chuckled.

"Surface Treatments" (#11), another beckoning bedroom, is emphatic about texture, both smooth and nubby, combined with "the liquid colors of ocean, sea and air", an environmental meld with "a vegetal green", as Lee says, "diverse but compatible". Pierre found two arresting mirrors by Zuo Modern, and placed them diagonally against the backdrop. A.P. Industries Sekoya collection, headboard, high chest and bedside table, provided more texture in what Pierre described as a "marquetry look". The Dutailier glider chair is a welcome place of repose. The bed linens, Textiles Gauvin, are a gorgeous blend of tropical seascapes.

The twelfth vignette knocked the socks off viewing retailers... if they'd not already been loosened by the preceding 11! Lee called her color blend

"Out of the Ordinary" (#12), and it certainly is. "Quirky, odd and whimsical, it captures the eye of the beholder, a creative array of colors." Julien Beaudoin's floating bed in the boldest fuchsia/red imaginable, commands the scene. Pierre filtered the glass of the three large wall-mounted mirrors; "I reduced the reflection and the colors became more subtle, an interesting touch". The bed linens pick up both the reds and Lee's "Bonnie Blue" in dramatic style. The crisp white vases

and flowers by Le Present are the vignette's exclamation point!

Scattered judiciously around and about the Market were Janette Ewen's 2013 Pop-Up Vignettes with the look of clever photo-shoots. She said that, as before, they are designed to "give retailers, designers and decorators a fun, heady dose of inspiration when it comes to creating successful and memorable window and showroom displays." Her tasty little tidbits had a different twist this year, in her words,

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DESIGN TRENDS 2013

"weaving a chic and exciting tale about Canadian style that extends from coast to coast." Each Pop-Up is equipped with a brief explanatory commentary. (Retailers note. Your display will attract, the commentary will anchor them and expand buying horizons.)

Janette began her transcontinental safari on the West Coast, the inspiration drawn from Vancouver's first downtown core, the once gritty "Gastown" (#13). Named after "Gassy" Jack Deighton, a seaman and barkeep, the area fell into disrepair following the Great Depression. Now Gastown has been reinvented as home to the city's most trend-setting design stores, restaurants and bars. Janette focuses the consumers' eye using, guess what? vivid color in Zuo accessories craftily reflected in the Plata Décor Shine Cabinet and the fluffy NCA Design Orbit rug.

"Old Montreal" (#14) in true romantic style, fashionable, authentic, quizzical, immerses your customer in the potential of displaying charm, elegance and chic, easily created in their home with your inventory! The transparent NCA Design Poltrona Chair and Plata webstool are perfect for tricking the eye in space-enhancing manner, floating on NCA's Golden Circle Acid rug. Think of downsizers and their new age condos, disposing of family home clutter and acquiring new treasures. To quote Janette, "Not a place for the tacky!"

We're still in Montreal with Janette's "Sherbrooke Street" (#15), back in time the home of some of the largest mansions in the city, now a couture shopping and luxury gallery hot spot. The equivalent of Toronto's Yorkville, the area is again chic as one would expect, high-end and the stamping ground of celebrities. Shopping bags galore (hint, hint, oh consumer!) hanging from the NCA tree in all their

Zuo Lucite glory, perched on Plata Décor dream side table, framed by the Fitzrovia bench by Buhler.

The near north calls again (think Pierre and Andre's moose heads back in the Trends Display!) "Muskoka"

(#16) springs top of the mind for any Ontario (or wannabe!) shopper. (And how about the Adirondacks?) It's been a favourite playground for more than a century and cottagers are always on the lookout for conversa-



Pictured above are Nova Scotia (#17), Peggy's Cove (#18), ByWard Market (#19) and Niagara-on-the-Lake (#20).

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"The individual exhibits each with its own wooden structured arch, constitute 12 'homes' within a small village."

tion pieces to brighten a dull corner. Certainly Janette's zoo, (look for cousin moose, a bear, squirrel, fish and deer antler dotted about the Pop-Up), the woodsy lamp and table, and the functional Springwater Woodcraft locker could all find pride of place!

Now we're off to the seaside, two east coast destinations. Surf's up, and these vignettes put the customer right in the picture. And stops her/him in her/his favourite strip of sand! Instant reminiscence in mid- winter or anytime of the Maritimes many beaches. "Lawrencetown Beach, Nova Scotia" (#17) puts you in touch with some of the best surfing waves in all of Canada. Janette describes a relaxed life style, comfortable, worn, reflective of international sandy vibes with the spiritual quality of "the great wave". Begin with a dominating transcendent backdrop (here from In2Walls) and furnish your favourite customers' dreams with Style in Form's Tulum chair, the white shag rug, the Lumitonic lamp and the blue and white Merben throw .

"Peggy's Cove" (#18) is a depiction of a small rural community remembered for its famous light-house. If your clients are looking for laid back, rustic, weather beaten appeal, this Pop-Up in your store would inform them of your empathy. Furnished with the Amelia accent table, sculptures by Plum, the Merben fringed throw and Dudson soup bowls ... plus beach flotsam and jetsam.

President Obama chose to visit Ottawa's "ByWard Market" (#19) on his inaugural trip to Canada during

his first term in office. ByWard is the nation's longest running farmers' market with a history that spans almost 200 years. Architecture and design range from Queen Anne through Art Deco and the area is now home to many fashion boutiques. Raw steel Union Stools and the theme-happy Ludovic mirror frame the evocative NCA vases. Note the apples and wine/juices and consider inviting your customers to partake! Obama sampled fruit and coffee at ByWard, and bought cookies to take home to his daughters!

In 1792, "Niagara-on-the-Lake" (#20) was the first capital of Upper Canada, located where the Niagara River meets Lake Ontario. Ottawa eventually stole the title, but the town

retains much of the feeling of former days with the Apothecary, the Town Hall (now a theatre amongst several others scattered about the quaint streets), the Fort and the more modern attractions of its many wineries. Surround this Pop-Up with the new trend of older styling, a vintage corner of your showroom. Nostalgia is huge in 2013 and Camien's Royal Fan Back Arm Chair echoes the trend.

Think the wild west tamed just a bit at picturesque "Banff, Alberta" (#21), a mountain community best known for its beauty, turn of the century Banff Springs Hotel and magnificent, jet set spa, and a plethora of tourist-attracting sports opportunities framed by the Canadian Rocky's. Janette wants you to remind your customers of luxury which they can replicate in their own homes, the Mobitol Zoom chair, natural walnut base with white top grain leather, the lavish Starlight Décor mink natural fur throw (100 per cent recycled, of course!) and the Style in Form



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DESIGN TRENDS 2013

wood block side table.

A bit further west "Victoria, British Columbia" (#22), island capitol of the province, has been the home (and still is!) of many top flight artists and artisans, in the last century the legendary Emily Carr with her affinity to the haunting forests and Haida native peoples. Historically fascinating, perched at the continent's Pacific Rim, there is a large Asian population that adds its exotic top notes now in the Year of the Snake. More romance to exploit in your showrooms, not difficult to achieve. A show stopping Jardin Tapestry to back your own Pop-Up, a bronze Deco-Forme mirror in sync with the Gen-Lite lamp, metal based in rust and a CDI International Metal Trunk Cube chest... makes one think of a slow boat to China!

Another top tourist (and business!) destination, "Calgary, Alberta" (#23), famous for the annual Calgary Stampede and regional oil sands, turns everyone into cowboys and girls. At least in their imaginations, persuaded by Janette's choice of the evocative Tapestries' horse and script, and mirror-image Plum Horace horse occupying Zuo's Haxby Coffee Table, great kickers for many themes. (As are the handsome boots!) In showrooms, a perfect accent visual to accompany studded leather settings.

And Janette's "The Junction" (#24) in Toronto, Canada's largest city, replicates New York's Williamsburg Brooklyn district demographically, as an arts community and a growing up-market centre. The Junction is the new home of galleries and cool vintage stores mixed with shabby chic and turn of the century shops and houses. From this has grown an industrial look, metal work, brick, rustic touches and, surprise! pure classic contemporary nuances. Think of some of your

loft people, certainly the art crowd and some imaginative boomer folk.

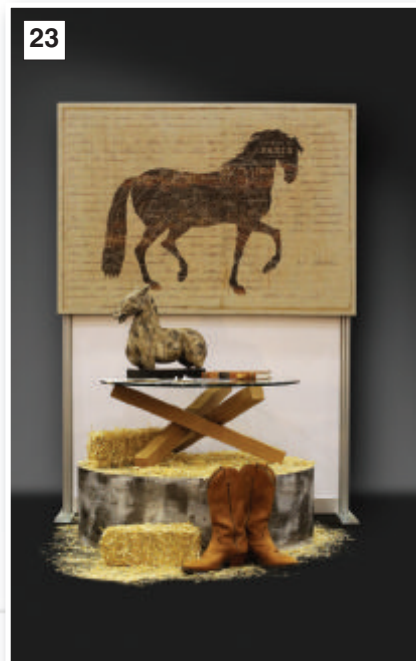
Keep in mind, always, your customers' ethos. Now, 2013, they are ultra-busy, distracted, bombarded with messages, some confusing, even bewildering. You need to help them focus, develop their own lifestyle conclusions . . . and actually enjoy the process!

Market magic is capable of sprinkling fairy dust, all the way to the bank!

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designers.

Gen-Lite lighting and mirrors were shown in most vignettes as were accessories by Le Present. Bedding by Textiles Gauvin.



Pictured are Calgary, Alberta (#23) and Janette's The Junction (#24).



24





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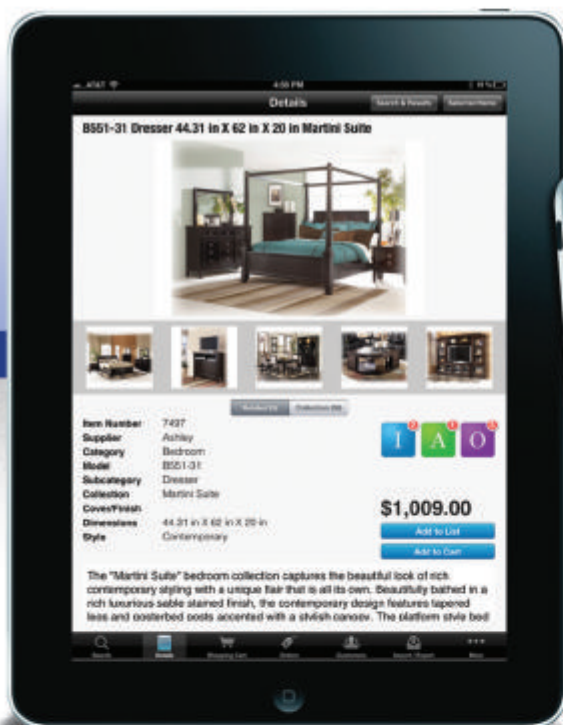
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