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Reverse Supply Chain Logistics

Sweating The Retail Details - Part 2

Leather Education Guide - Part 3

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RUGS

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LIGHTING

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OUTDOOR

AA-001, BDH-501-M, CHT-761-M, ECH-450-L, KLL-846-M, LUA-491-L, LUA-493-S, PA-001, SKE-4007



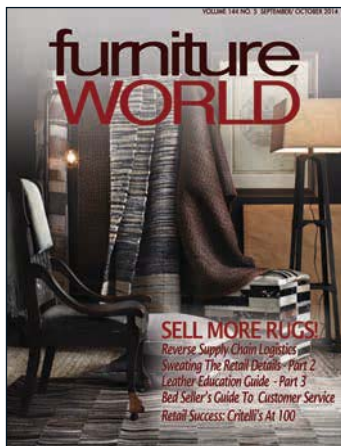
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KID'S

BUD-2008, FA-057, LP-001, POUF-213



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FURNITURE WORLD MAGAZINE

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Cover Image: Featured on this month's cover is Surya. With 5,000 plus rugs from classic to contemporary, Surya offers a huge selection of in-stock rugs and accessories. See more about Surya's drop shop and sample display programs designed to reduce inventory carrying costs on the inside front cover spread and pages 6-7 in this issue or visit www.surya.com.

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Formula For Success
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The Bienenstock Furniture Library in High Point has a talented board of directors and a world class collection of over 5,000 volumes on furniture and design. The Library is lucky to have a core group of designers, students and furniture industry folks who use and appreciate what we do. It's been a successful formula for 45 years.

Today, libraries are struggling for relevance. In the case of the Furniture Library, people come in to look for information. They travel to do research or ask our Library Director for assistance.

Sounds a bit like most furniture stores, right? People visit, ask for help, then buy or leave. For your core customers, like ours, that's fine, but for your other shoppers, it's not a reason to rush back.

In recent years, the Library changed its 1970s era business model to create a "wow" experience for visitors. It's made us more relevant and changed how we interact with, and serve the industry.

Likewise, if your store looks much like it did in 1970, consider taking time away from your routine to re-imagine what your store can be.

If you are going to High Point this fall, please accept my invitation to visit and enjoy the Furniture Library. We will be glad to welcome you.

Russell Bienenstock, Editorial Director

**furniture
WORLD**

EXECUTIVE CONTACTS

Editorial Director, CEO
Russell Bienenstock
russ@furninfo.com

Art/ Design Editor
Barbara Bienenstock

Associate Editor
S.T. Bienenstock

Retail Feature Editor
Janet Holt-Johnstone

Comptroller
Gifford Dorival
gifford@furninfo.com

Publisher
Barton Bienenstock
barton@furninfo.com

Vice President
Thelma Mason Davis
thelma@furninfo.com

Advertising Sales Director
Gary Siegel
gary@furninfo.com

Sales Manager Eastern Region
Mark Testa
mark@furninfo.com

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12 WAYS TO MAKE MONEY FROM REVERSE SUPPLY CHAIN LOGISTICS

by David McMahon

Reverse supply chain logistics is the practice of controlling resources that are returned, repairable, reusable or recyclable. It's a catchy phrase for business activities that turn normally wasteful occurrences into profit.

After service return expenses alone can cost 3-7% of a retailer's sales volume. An operation producing \$10 Million in annual revenue can lose up to \$700,000 in cost of goods increases due to after-service related expenses. Also, normal facility costs, logistics, and general overhead, produce waste and consume resources. These commonly run up to 22% of sales volume - or \$2.2 Million per year for the \$10 million retailer in the example above. Finally, negative cash flow due to overinvestment in inventory can be as high as 10% of sales, in this case

"Normal facility costs, logistics, and general overhead, produce waste and consume resources. These commonly run up to 22% of sales volume."

causing a \$1 Million cash reduction. Businesses that continuously work to improve in these areas by reducing operational inefficiencies and waste, become more profitable and add to their cash flow year after year.

This article will summarize 12 practices you can use to add extra profit dollars to your bottom line, through reverse supply chain logistics.

PRACTICE 1 GOODS FLOW

Maintain efficient flow and handling of customer returned merchandise.

Returns happen. However, many operations totally lose control of this inventory. If the merchandise that comes back into stock is not controlled properly and then acted upon, it just sits. The storage and excess inventory costs, plus the loss of vendor credits is costly. To start to improve in this area, create a reverse logistics flow chart with documented procedures. You have standard operating procedures and a flow chart for business going out, right? Well, you should have one for business coming back too. Here is an example of how returns work:

- a. Return is approved. Credit memo and notes are entered immediately into the management system.
- b. Pick up or return receipt is gener-

ated and signed by the customer and employee.

- c. Merchandise is scanned and located into a specific return location in the warehouse.
- d. Returns manager audits the return location daily. Decides on the action to take, i.e. return to vendor for credit, repair and redeliver to customer, repair internally and resell, scrap, donate, don't repair and sell as-is.
- e. Assign and move the merchandise to a return in-process location to reflect the reason above.
- f. Returns manager regularly audits the return in-process locations.

PRACTICE 2 VENDOR CREDITS

Process Vendor Credits efficiently.

Systems define outcomes. If you want a desirable outcome with vendor credits, put a manageable system in place. The ball gets dropped here in too many operations due to internal disconnects. The manager responsible for returns must communicate effectively with the manager responsible for issuing and tracking vendor credits. If the product is defective due to vendor defect or vendor damage, take the following actions:

- a. Audit the merchandise return-in-



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REVERSE SUPPLY CHAIN LOGISTICS

process area for products for which you are seeking vendor credits.

- b. Enter and email vendor credit requests into the system with all information required.
- c. Review open credits that are 30 days overdue, daily.
- d. Require sales reps to speak with the Service Manager prior to meeting with the buyer.
- e. Enter vendor credits into your accounts payable system so that future invoices are reduced. Track in a separate ledger account so that your total credits are known.
- f. Create internal bonuses for total credits received.

PRACTICE 3 RETURNS DISPOSITION

Sell returns in warehouse. If you have a warehouse or distribution center with extra floor capacity, you may have an untapped Revenue/ Profit Center. Here is what I have seen sev-

"If you have a warehouse or distribution center with extra floor capacity, you may have an untapped Revenue /Profit Center."

eral businesses do:

- a. Create an "Ooops" (As-is) section run by warehouse management.
- b. Move damaged goods or unsaleable floor inventory to this section, immediately.
- c. Mark-down price to whatever level it takes to get rid of the inventory fast.
- d. Buy a small number of SKU's to act as continually advertised items on digital networks: Facebook, Craigslist, Web-site.
- e. Pay flat commission. Charge full pop for delivery.

PRACTICE 4 PERFECT DELIVERIES

Implement a Perfect Delivery System. Many of the businesses in our performance groups have designed incentive programs for the warehouse and delivery staff. The thought is that the best way to control reverse logistics, is to greatly reduce it. If all products go out in perfect condition with complete customer satisfaction there should be no returns due to damages, right? Here is one form of a Perfect Delivery system:

- a. Establish a \$ weekly bonus for product, picking, preparation, shipping, delivery crews.
- b. Track all returns that come back

due to damages, and all complaints that are delivery/shipping related.

- c. Reduce the \$ weekly bonus by a certain dollar amount for each occurrence of damage or delivery complaint.

Alternately, establish a certain % of Perfect Deliveries required. If the team exceeds this % the Perfect Delivery bonus is paid.

PRACTICE 5 CREDITS & REBATES

Offer customer credits or rebates for no returns. Sometimes there may be a minor product or delivery issue. In this case, your service or sales manager should be able to offer a certain percentage of sale credit or a similar cash rebate. When considering the resources it takes to process returns and then repair or resend out replacements, it may make sense to the business and the customer to accept the product at a discount.

PRACTICE 6 WARRANTY SERVICE SALES

Increase warranty, insurance, and protection sales. Businesses that have a high percentage of total sales with extra warranties or product insurance, experience higher gross margin and a reduced risk for return issues. At the





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"There are ways to eliminate negotiating. Trade-ins can work to actually increase overall margins and average sale size, and help recycle used merchandise."

top end, some businesses produce over 10% of total sales volume in warranty sales with over 90% of products being insured. Here are some best practices that make this work:

- a. *The business must have a good extended warranty program that is easy to communicate to salespeople and customers.*
- b. *Salespeople must believe in the warranty program.*
- c. *Sales management must track and train in this area continuously.*

d. *Salespeople must mention the program early in the sales process.*

e. *The salespeople must ask for the sale.*

PRACTICE 7 TRADE-IN PROGRAMS

Accept trade-ins in lieu of discounts on the initial sale. In some stores discounting and negotiating are a part of daily life. Although there are ways to eliminate negotiating. Trade-ins can work to actually increase overall mar-

gins and average sale size, and help recycle used merchandise. For operations with designated clearance areas, here is how it works:

- a. *Have a set dollar rate for various trade-in products.*
- b. *When the negotiation begins, inform the customer that you can discount only 2% if they pay in cash, but you do have a trade-in program where they can receive a \$ discount depending on the item being traded in.*
- c. *If the customer agrees to the trade-in, ask them if there is anything else they wish to replace in their home.*
- d. *Don't bother to inspect the item being traded in. You win some, you lose some. If done right, you win more often than not.*
- e. *Sell the item in the clearance area.*

PRACTICE 8 VENDOR RETURNS

Sell Vendor Returns. Manufacturers get returns from retailers. They too need to figure out how to optimize their reverse logistics supply chain. The most common choice for them is to rework, scrap, or resell to retailers at deep discounts. In doing so, product can be priced attractively and at high margins – i.e. 80%. Like clearance centers and trade-in programs, this practice is not for everyone, but for the right type of operation it can yield decent returns.

PRACTICE 9 ELECTRICITY

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"If your range is between 15% and 17% of sales, STAY THERE. If your range is between, 6% and 8%, STAY THERE. If your range is within 20% and 22%, STAY THERE."

cient power sources. This can be a one-two punch with solar power and efficient internal lighting. Operations can receive these benefits:

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PRACTICE 10 DELIVERY CREWS

Reduce vehicle and delivery crew costs. The biggest causes of inappropriate vehicle expense are not filling outgoing resources to capacity and inefficient routing. Here is how best-practice companies operate:

- Trucks should be at capacity every day. Make sure you are running the proper number of vehicles and crews.
- Ensure they are zoned properly (going to the same area or along the same route).
- Customer delivery add-ons are found to bring trucks to capacity. Add-ons determined by zip code.
- Use a web-based routing and GPS tracking system to help define route, manage remotely and improve communications with customer/crews/management.
- Proper delivery windows must be given to reduce driver idle time.
- Require crews to call customers before delivery, and deliver sooner

if ahead of schedule.

- Consider paying crews by the load, stop or % of sales as opposed to by the hour.
- Charge the appropriate amount to the customer to cover delivery related costs.

PRACTICE 11: RECYCLE

Implement a plan to recycle packaging materials. Efficient companies do not allow cardboard, styrofoam, and pallets to stack up. Machines to compress foam and bind cardboard are readily available. The byproduct of these can then be sold and subsequently used by others as raw materials. Even old pallets can be turned into a rustic/urban material for showroom display props.

PRACTICE 12 INVENTORY CONTROL

Carry the proper amount of inventory. Perhaps the biggest waste of resources is excess inventory, costing money, time, space, materials, and energy to move around and store. If you want to have the biggest impact on the environment and your business, don't be excessive with merchandise.

Figure out a range of what dollar amount is appropriate for your sales volume on average and STAY WITHIN THAT RANGE. If your range is between 15% and 17% of sales, STAY THERE. If your range is between, 6%

and 8%, STAY THERE. If your range is within 20% and 22%, STAY THERE. To stay within your responsible range, you should develop systems and procedures that:

- Use open to buy parameters for new merchandise purchases.
- Flow bestselling items fast.
- Do business with vendors that ship efficiently – lead time, quality, and reliability.
- Use an ongoing inventory reduction system for stagnant items and do not let merchandise remain idle.

CONCLUSION

Take time to review your reverse supply chain. Ask yourself, "Is there a way we can be more efficient with our resources?" In doing so, you will find some hidden profit areas in your business that you can tap through controlling resources that are returned, repairable, reusable or recyclable.

About David McMahon: David McMahon, Director of PROFITsystems, Accellos Performance Groups is a management consultant and certified management accountant. He specializes in helping businesses grow profitability, sales, and cash flow. Contact David if you wish to discuss your business challenges at david.mcmahon@accellos.com. See all of David's articles at <http://www.furninfo.com/Authors/List>.



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SELL MORE RUGS THAN YOU EVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE!

Part 1: Thoughts and success strategies from rug experts for retail furniture store owners, buyers and sales professionals.

By Russell Bienenstock

Rugs are a hot category for furniture retailers and getting hotter. That's because area rugs add color and excitement to furniture store displays, present an opportunity for add-on sales using little or no extra floor space, and allow furniture retailers to present, along with other accessory items, a complete room package.

Area rugs add design pizzazz to your customer's rooms, create visual and physical warmth, and can inject a great

pop of color or pattern. More than any other design element, rugs help to define seating and dining areas. They can also be used to break up large spaces to create visual order in what might otherwise be a chaotic scene.

Rugs add comfort by softening hard surfaces. They absorb and reduce ambient noise, and when used with the proper padding, provide a non-slip surface for floors and stairs.

The category offers lots of upside potential for retailers who buy, present and sell rugs skillfully. Challenges are present as well since furniture stores face increasingly aggressive competition from other channels of distribution including mass merchants and

online retailers.

Furniture World asked experts in the field of rug sales to offer suggestions regarding best practices for selling rugs in furniture store environments. In this issue we look at best rug sales practices with an emphasis on display and on how to create a compelling buying experience for customers. The November/December edition will focus on retail sales training programs, and sales techniques.

CHANNEL EVOLUTION

"Rugs are a really fast growing category," notes Asha Chaudhary, President of Jaipur Rugs. She told Furniture World that the rug business

HW Home's flagship Cherry Creek North store in Denver shows rugs in vignettes, hung on walls and in waterfall type displays (pictured below).



"We organize our rugs on the racks by color, because our store is all about aspirational living and it's very visual. We want people to say, 'Wow, I want to live like this!'"

-Jim Hering, HW Home



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is doing well for several reasons. "Distribution has expanded to include many different types of retailers, ranging from furniture stores with standard displays to beautiful home décor boutiques that curate product selection to their own needs. Obviously, the online segment has grown as well. I don't think six or seven years ago any of us could have known that people would buy so many rugs online. This trend has continued and it's still evolving. Retailers that understand the category and commit to it can do extremely well and make really good margins. Rugs are an accessory item that play a big role in completing the look of the home."

"There is such a mix in the rug business," adds Allen Robertson, VP Sales for Capel Rugs. "You have furniture stores, and gift/ accessory stores now in the rug business, and a lot of other types of distribution as well. It's a

mixed bag. The flooring stores and carpet stores kind of phased out of the business for a while, but it seems that they are looking back at it again."

We asked about elements that must be in place for a furniture store to sell a lot of rugs. The first mentioned was commitment.

HOW TO DO WELL

Seth King, Surya's Vice President Sales told us, "When dealers ask, 'What can you do to help me sell accessories?' I say, 'We have a pretty good plan to get things implemented, but ultimately the only way it's going to work is if you, the owner, gets involved.' First, owners have to push sales managers to sell the product, and sales managers need to push their sales people. The second important factor is to measure sales per associate. If you don't measure, how can you hold anybody accountable? Rugs and accessories become an after thought unless stores focus their full attention monthly, weekly and daily. They need to do it the same way they track their furniture sales, protection sales, and mattress sales.

"Over a couple years," King continues, "we've seen retailers take their accessories business from zero dollars, or nominal dollars, and make it into a viable category. In general, the worst guys are selling accessories at a one, two percent clip, so it's really meaningless to them. The best stores are in the 15 percent range, maybe 20 on the high side. An average furniture store can really aim to get that to seven, eight percent, and they should. Stores can create revenue where there wasn't revenue before. Another way of thinking about this is that without a strong rug program,

they basically have revenue walking out the door."

Likewise, Jaipur's Asha Chaudhary has seen the transformative nature of commitment to the rug category. "What I've noticed that differentiates the best furniture retailers," she says, "is they have a huge assortment of product and they adopt a company-wide attitude that gives importance to rugs. It's not the last category that comes to their minds. Stores that start with a mindset like this are generally a lot more successful. It helps them to stay focused on the price points where they can successfully compete, places where they can differentiate, and how they should merchandize the rugs on their floors."

"Regarding measurement," she says, "We have a retail customer that measures turns by each arm rack. They go through those racks every three to six months and identify rugs that don't turn and replace them. In this regard they treat rugs like any other product category. Retailers should go into as much detail as they can. They might even plan how rugs are displayed to fine-tune the percentage of rugs carried by price point and by style category, traditional, transitional and contemporary. There are some retailers that do a good job in this regard, but most don't go into that degree of detail."

THE FURNITURE STORE ADVANTAGE

Transitioning to a discussion of how furniture stores can leverage their unique assets to sell rugs, Surya's Seth King suggests, "The advantage furniture stores have versus online, or versus a retailer such as Home Depot is simple. It's the service and design

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"In general, the worst guys are selling accessories at a one, two percent clip, so it's really meaningless to them. The best stores are in the 15 percent range, maybe 20 on the high side." -Seth King, Surya

expertise of the sales person. When a customer walks in and is greeted by an old-school salesman in that old suit, who wants to push a sofa, knows all the specs, but has no clue about the importance of design, the sale will likely be lost because that customer is not going to have confidence. But if they are greeted by someone who lives and breathes design, gets passionate about it, is interested in putting a full package together for them, and makes sure to add on pillows, rugs and throws to make their room look great, that's what really wows customers.

"There's no way for customers to coordinate what's in their living rooms with what they see online. Stores have a huge advantage. It's true that consumers can often find a better price online, but there is a downside. There are a million and one rugs and a million and one pillows, and a million and one everything else online but it's pretty hard to curate that selection."

"A consumer in Home Depot," confirms Jaipur's Asha Chaudhary, has to try to figure out how to match a rug and pillows they see with their sofa. Retailers, especially small retailers, as they compete with stores like Home Depot and online merchants, need to discover how to make their services a bit more personalized, their selection more curated, and the buying process a little bit easier.

"Every store needs a point of view. Furniture retailers have an opportunity to package furniture, rugs and accessories to make buying easy for customers. Buyers need to understand their stores, and seek out looks that will differentiate them from other competitors. In that sense it's like buying any category of furnishings. Rugs have

become much more of a fashionable category, and especially smaller furniture stores can successfully differentiate their displays with rugs because they follow current trends, and add a lot of style through the use of colors and patterns.

"Today everybody's trying to do such a brilliant job," concludes Chaudhary. "That makes it difficult for a small retailer to differentiate itself without having that point of view. But once they figure it out, it becomes very easy to merchandize around that idea to create an experience that feels special for customers."

DISPLAY

Part of committing to the category is letting shoppers know that you focus on selling rugs. Display is critical.

Rugs can be integrated into vignettes, shown in piles, racks and on walls.

Although racks are an important part of just about any furniture stores' program, all of the interviewees stressed the importance of showing rugs in vignettes.

"In our concept," says Michael Yaraghi, president of Safavieh Home Furnishings a chain of stores in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, "we find it increases sales when rugs are merchandised in every furniture vignette possible. Rugs help warm up the display and make the furniture more inviting. It

also helps to fully coordinate with pillows and accessories. Furniture displayed without a rug is very cold."

Joyce Lowe, Executive Director of Nourison's Area Rug Division stresses that retailers should, "Utilize vignettes or small room settings to allow the customer to see a rug in an authentic environment. Furniture stores especially can utilize this method to encourage customers to purchase a total concept, rather than a separate accessory."

Merchandising and display play a huge role, agrees Jaipur's Asha Chaudhary. For instance, furniture stores tend to be most successful

Image of swatch display shown below, compliments of Surya.





"Display ads with photos of rugs in a room don't work. They create an image, but don't sell rugs because people think the rug is a prop."

-Michael Yaraghi, Safavieh

when they show rugs in as many vignettes as possible, not just in one or two areas. They support these displays with either a rug rack or, another display solution."

CREATE A SUCCESSFUL RUG BUYING EXPERIENCE

Rugs can be used to create excitement, add color and help customers to create beautiful, comfortable, functional rooms. So why do some stores, as was mentioned earlier, do just a few percent of their volume in rug sales and others do much better?

It's because the best ones do more than put a rack in the back and scatter rugs in vignettes. Retailers that have a commitment to rugs tend to

focus on the sales process and how rugs contribute to a total store experience.

"When you talk to many furniture store owners about the category," explains Surya's Seth King, "the number one thing they say is, 'Oh, I can't sell accessories.' They've tried and they've failed in the past, but that doesn't mean that if they had the right process, they couldn't be successful. So, I ask them to consider companies like Pottery Barn and Crate and Barrel. Those are the guys who have figured out how to sell accessories. Their showrooms are merchandised beautifully. There's a consistent theme. They figured out that to be really successful, they can't just sell a sofa and a dining room table. They need to sell the look and feel, the full vibe. And that's what some of our guys are starting to see, understand and actually try to transition into."

"Displaying rugs in vignettes is most important, because it ties rugs to the furniture. That's where customers shop. And the better stores are leaning towards providing a stepped up experience, a designer kind of experience," continues King. "These stores are starting to realize they need to sell the full concept, including the rug, end table, lighting."

A store that has done a great job selling rugs by delivering a well

From Safavieh's Glen Cove New York store showing rugs showing a prominent rug gallery.

thought-out experience is HW Home. Jim Hering, Vice-President & Co Founder of the three-store, Colorado-based operation, related that his stores average about 8000 square feet each. "Every square foot is extremely valuable and we don't have the space to set up rug displays like some of these like behemoths in the industry do," says Hering.

"Rugs were a low priority for us at the beginning. We showed some wool rugs stacked in a corner. But as our business has grown over the course of the past 16 years, we realized that there had to be another way, and so we set up a display wall with a racking system that's a little bit unique, with rug samples hung so that they look like a kind of a water of color. It takes up no space whatsoever, except for occupying one large wall. We also display some folded rugs in front of it. It costs a little bit of money to make that display happen, and for it to look right, but it really gives shoppers the idea that we are in the rug business, and that we do sell rugs."

"Rather than using big display racks that show 9x10 or 9x12 rugs, we took a different approach showing folded

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Rugs have a distinct graphic element to them that can update and add interest to retail displays. Photo credit: Jaipur.

or rolled rugs in a pile and rugs displayed throughout the store in vignettes. We added a racking system that displays rugs, approximately 2x3 feet in size, hung on a very interesting display system. Shoppers can actually see how the rugs will appear in their homes, and then use the display racking system with the smaller rug size.

"If someone has a question about what the exact pattern looks like, it's very simple then to go online or refer to the catalog and say, 'Okay this is what it looks like in the full eight by ten size.' We use the small sample, to show them exactly what the color



looks like. It's a system that works extremely well because it doesn't take up a whole lot of space in the store, and we are able to hang literally hundreds of samples."

Summing up the challenge of having limited space available in some stores, Cyrus Loloi, Principal at Loloi Rugs adds that, "Retailers who are limited in terms of available space may consider displaying small rugs in different ways. There is a lot of flexibility for displaying smaller rugs in groups up against a wall in a waterfall-type display. It takes up wall space, but very limited square footage. Even if display space isn't limited, we've found that investing in great lighting for the rack area helps rugs show and sell much better. Paying attention to details such as having plenty of rug clips at the top of rack displays helps them hang better without buckling.

TAGGING & SIGNAGE

"Regarding placement of a rug department," muses Capel's Allen Robertson, "we'd ideally like to be on the first level in a multilevel store, as close to the front as we can get. But usually rugs end up in the back. So, since most customers are going to be looking initially for furniture, a key thing stores need to do is make sure they have in-store graphics that show the rugs in a lifestyle setting. And, my opinion is that it should be placed somewhere close to the front of the store to create interest so that consumers know to look for the rug department. This signage should be more permanent than on an easel that may easily get knocked over. The

"Many stores place a rug in a vignette, but then it's so hard to find out the price or any other information. This is a place where many retailers can improve."

- Asha Chaudhary, Jaipur

rug area should also be clearly identified with some type of signage that says this is the way to go to buy rugs."

Nourison's Joyce Lowe agrees, observing that, "eye catching, informative and versatile Point of Purchase display materials such as full color posters and brochures should be utilized as often as possible. They offer the ability to generate interest without creating large, floor consuming displays."

In vignettes as well, notes Jaipur's Asha Chaudhary, "signage plays a huge role. The best stores make it easy for their customers to shop. Many stores place a rug in a vignette, but then it's so hard to find out the price or any other information about that rug. This is a place where many retailers can improve. Good signage makes rugs more visible, easier for customers to get sizes, prices and to make up their minds."

"Some retailers don't merchandise rugs with all the proper tagging in a vignette," adds Seth King. Customers may not even know the rugs are for sale. It's important to have a tag on it that says, 'This rug is for sale at 300 bucks,' or whatever the cost is, then include all of the size options that go with that rug."

Concludes Cyrus Loloi, "It's so important to have proper tags with all the information easily accessible to

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Above, Safavieh's Broadway (NYC) store has ample racking, well lit and tagged.

customers. Again, this seems commonplace but we see a lot of retailers that don't do this well."

MORE BEST PRACTICE QUOTES & IDEAS

Encourage Impulse Buying/ Reorder Immediately. "For display, rug racks are still the best way to go. Large chains often hang rugs and do special order business. But, people do look at rugs and want to buy 'em instantly. So, for smaller stores especially it's a good practice to encourage impulse buys by letting shoppers take rugs with them. Which brings us to a second item which is that these stores need to

"Poor lighting can alter colors and lead to increased returns. Fluorescent lighting tends to give rug colors a washed-out appearance."

-Joyce Lowe, Nourison

have a process in place to reorder immediately. This is something that lots of retailers just don't do well. -Allen Robertson, Capel

Advertise Rugs Separately: "We find catalogs mailed to our customer list work best. And the best way to advertise rugs is to feature them in a separate section of the catalog designated to area rugs. Display ads with photos of rugs in a room don't work. They create an image, but don't sell rugs because people think the rug is a prop. The best time to advertise is the cooler seasons, fall, winter and spring when people are indoors. Summer is not a good time to advertise rugs – except for outdoor rugs." -Michael Yaraghi, Safavieh Home Furnishings

Update Store Displays With Rugs: "Rugs are a really great category retailers use to distinguish the look of a store, because they have a distinct graphic element to them. You may be showing the same brown sofa, but by just changing two pillows and the rug, you can create an updated, fresh feel. -Asha Chaudhary, Jaipur Rugs

Light Rugs Properly: "Paying attention to the position of lighting fixtures is important. Poor lighting can alter colors and lead to increased returns. Fluorescent lighting tends to give rug colors a washed-out appearance. Incandescent halogen spotlights are recommended to help customers see

the true colors of the rugs." -Joyce Lowe, Nourison

Where To Place Racks: "Every store approaches placement differently. Obviously, putting a rack in the back of the store, neglected with poor lighting, it's not going to do as well. If it were up to me, I would put the display somewhere close to the front, with prominent lighting to help show it off the best." -Cyrus Lolo, Lolo Rugs

Catalogs Are Valuable Sales Tools: "Among the most valuable sales tools are catalogs. Catalogs provide a complete look at every design in every available collection. They offer retailers the ability to show each rug even if there isn't room to display them all." -Joyce Lowe, Nourison

Promotions That Bring In Traffic: "For us the promotion that really brings in traffic is cross merchandising. We offer a discount on a rug when we sell a dining room; and a discount on the dining room when the customer buys a rug. We always make the rug an add-on in the sale." -Michael Yaraghi, Safavieh Home Furnishings

Up Selling The High End Customer: "We up-sell by introducing customers to designer's rugs. High-end consumers love licensed branded rugs by top designers. We also introduce certain customers to antique rugs to up the sale. We explain how they are

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Furniture, accessories, colors and décor are thoughtfully synchronized to create visual pathways from ordinary rooms to aesthetically captivating destinations. Each room has the potential to communicate a unique story, so before embarking on a new design project, it's important to ask the questions – What story will this room tell? and What is the best way to convey the story's meaning?

With 180 buildings, 11.5 million square feet of space and over 200 exhibitors, the High Point Market is a nirvana for exploring a project's storyline. However, High Point's endless options can easily transition from an advantage to a limitation by becoming too overwhelming.

Jaipur Rugs is one exhibitor that actively attempts to prevent attendees from encountering roadblocks and limitations. "When attendees feel their creative stimuli diminishing from so many options, it's important to take a step back, which is why we attempt to make each market experience as effortless as possible for each person," says Marketing Director, Candace Clarke. Anyone can visit Jaipur's showroom for a place to rejuvenate with an authentic cup of coffee from an award winning Barista, replenish with a healthy, vegetarian lunch, or revitalize creative inspiration by learning more about the company's mission. In addition, Jaipur has a passion to help

Jaipur's showroom is
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people discover the inspirations that will lead them to answer their design questions and in the process find the perfect rugs, pillows, poufs and throws that will flawlessly fill a valuable role within the narrative they want to con-

struct. Jaipur does this in hope to bring awareness to the fact that by adding a Jaipur product to their home, customers and their interiors become a part of a global story that genuinely makes the world a better place.

“*customers and their interiors become a part of a global story*,”

Above: We recommend stopping by for a gourmet cup of coffee or a healthy lunch **Right:** Don't forget to explore their newest licensee collection, *Traditions Made Modern* by the Museum of International Folk Art

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Advertorial



Rugs on racks should be properly tagged, and organized to help customers choose. Photo from Loloi.

investment pieces, true art and many in our collection are one of a kind. People appreciate the beauty and character of antiques.” -Michael Yaraghi, Safavieh Home Furnishings

Remember That Customers Are Impatient When Choosing Vendors:

“Remember that people don’t like waiting for rugs. So if we need to tell a customer they have to wait six months for a rug, we’re not going to get the sale. But if somebody finds out they can buy it and it’s in stock, and they can have it in less than two weeks, we can close the sale that second.” -Jim Hering, HW Home

Choose Suppliers That Make Life Easy:

“I look for rug lines that make it easy to choose products, which means having an excellent online presence. For example, I was on a supplier’s website for an hour and a half this morning shopping, trying to find the perfect rugs for every single room (in a project for a client). And I was able to do it, very easily and simply because not only was I able to see what the patterns look like and get the exact Pantone coloration number, but also get stock availability and pricing. That kind of interface makes designing, shopping and retailing, so easy that it’s almost difficult to envision

going to anyone else.” -Jim Hering, HW Home

Turn Over Slow Moving SKU's:

“Don’t let a rug sit in inventory too long. Get rid of it, give it away, or give some great deal on a rug that goes with that sofa a customer just purchased. Find a way to blow it out.” -Seth King, Surya

Consider Creating A Separate Rug Gallery:

“A best practice for furniture stores is to have a separate rug gallery. Rugs should be displayed on racks by color or quality or style, traditional, contemporary or casual. Some of the worst errors are not to have a rug gallery, not train sales people, and not to display rugs in furniture vignettes.” -Michael Yaraghi, Safavieh Home Furnishings

Flipping Rugs In Piles: “I’ve never liked seeing piles of rugs in furniture stores. Unless a retailer has people available to constantly flip them, it’s not ideal. A second drawback is that many consumers just want to take their time. Rugs are heavy. If I were a customer and two people were helping me flip through rugs, I might feel pressured to make a purchase. Showing rugs in racks and in vignettes provide a much better experience than displaying them in piles.” -Asha Chaudhary, Jaipur Rugs

Sell The Package: “Furniture stores are well suited for the total concept

“There is a lot of flexibility for displaying smaller rugs in groups up against a wall in a waterfall-type display. It takes up wall space, but very limited square footage.” -Cyrus Loloi, Loloi

approach to selling. Why sell a sofa or a chair when you can sell an entire room. Today more than ever, area rugs are being purchased as a part of a room rather than an accessory to it. The total concept approach offers a number of benefits to both the consumer and the retailer, the greatest of which is increased customer satisfaction and increased revenue. An added benefit for furniture stores is the minimum amount of space it takes to display area rugs. By using the tried and true Swing Arm display method furniture stores can show up to 60 area rugs in the space it would normally take to display one living room. In other words, in the space it would take to sell one living room, dozens of area rugs that complement one or more sectionals, sofas, or dining room suits shown in vignettes across the show-

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room floor can be easily accessed.”
-Joyce, Lowe, Nourison

“Usually rugs end up in the back. A key thing stores need to do is make sure they have in-store graphics somewhere close to the front of the store to create interest so that consumers know to look for the rug department.”

-Allen Robertson, Capel

Product Training Sessions - “Product training sessions can be a powerful tool in the struggle to achieve superior product knowledge. Held at least twice a year, they serve to keep everyone up-to-date on changes and new product offerings, additional promotional opportunities available and emerging trends in the marketplace.”
-Joyce, Lowe, Nourison

Transform Displays: “For the customer, rugs and pillows can transform a beige room, to whatever she wants. Plus changing rugs and accessories every six months help keep displays fresh and encourages customers to come back to see something different. If you switch out a beige sofa or a brown sofa — who cares if the arms are different? It still looks the same to the consumer. But if purple is a hot color, adding in colorful rugs and purple pillows is a great way to update what you have to offer.” -Seth King, Surya

Follow up Cards & Promos: Use rugs as a way to get customers back into the store. Follow up on the sale of dining room or living room furniture with a personalized offer on select rugs at a discounted price.

House Calls: If your store has a house call program, think about bringing some rugs along for the ride to give customers an idea of how they will look in their homes. Close rates on house calls can be 85 percent or higher.

NEXT ISSUE

In the next installment of this rug sales education guide we will explore best practices for selling rugs, from training to the close and beyond.

Below, rugs displayed in a creative design area can focus attention on the importance of rugs in the composition of a beautiful room. Photo credit: Capel Rugs.



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TOP 10 HVT LIST FOR SWEATING THE RETAIL DETAILS

Part 2: The top ten High Value Targets furniture retailers must attend to now!

By Hal McClamma

In the last issue of Furniture World, we discussed how seemingly insignificant changes in a few key performance metrics for your store have an amazing impact on the end results... your store's profit. Amplification happens when you are focused and pay attention to details. That's when your profits skyrocket. Attenuation occurs when you take your eyes off the ball and profits plummet.

This economy is still fragile and retailers must make a very determined

"Deterioration of a retailer's floor merchandise assortment is subtle and it's easy to become irrelevant in one or more categories."

effort to focus on High Value Targets. Part one in this series (in the July/August issue) included a test for readers that proves (plugging in your own numbers) how dramatically profits go up or down with small changes in traffic, close percent, average sale, margin and expenses. When all of these things converge and align in a good way, profits soar. When these things converge in a bad way your profits fall.

If you have not completed this test, please do so. It can be found at <http://furninfo.com/Authors/HalMcClamma/36> and it is a real eye opener.

There are over 100 High Value Targets for home sector retailers that high achieving retailers do every single day without fail.

The law of cause and effect states that if we find a successful retail operation and duplicate what they do, similar results will be achieved.

For this article, I have narrowed the list down to the Absolute Non-Negotiable Top 10 High Value Targets. These are what I call 'Just Do It' items. If you do them you will succeed. If you don't do them, you will

continue to struggle and achieve far less than your company is capable of.

TOP TEN HIGH VALUE TARGETS TO FOCUS ON

Lets take a look at the Top 10 High Value Targets. They are presented in no particular order because being weak in any one of these areas can and will derail your overall effectiveness.

HVT-1A MARKETING

Count Traffic: The goal of marketing and advertising is to drive "Qualified" traffic to your store. Unfortunately, most retailers do not know what their qualified traffic demographic really is, nor do they count store traffic. I have asked many a retailer if their last ad campaign worked, and 99 times out of 100, they go to their computers to look at sales data for the time period in question. This thinking is ABSOLUTELY WRONG.

- The ONLY goal of your marketing efforts is to drive qualified traffic into the store, the phone or your website.

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TOP 10 HIGH VALUE TARGET LIST

- *The goal of the salesperson is to convert qualified traffic to sales.*
- *And the goal of the merchandise department is to have products available for sale in the qualified traffic sweet spot. Start counting traffic today. Count by day and by hour.*

Determine your qualified traffic demographic and relentlessly target it in your marketing efforts.

HVT-1B MARKETING

Where is your traffic coming from?

You must determine your marketing lead sources and sales by marketing method. Be serious about asking your customers how they found out about you, or what prompted their visit to your store. Be diligent. Once you capture sales and traffic by lead source, you can validate a campaigns' effectiveness.

QUESTION: How much does it cost you to have a prospect visit your store by media method? How much does it cost you to acquire \$1,000 in sales by each media method? Rank them today.

HVT-2 MARKETING

Implement 21st century marketing:

Most home sector retailers are stuck in a 19th or 20th century marketing rut. If you are not using managed internet search, social media or pre-roll video marketing, shame on you. You are missing out on some incredibly high

ROI opportunities.

One retailer in a small town of 67,000 is gaining 200 new prospects a week and attributes almost 40% of store volume to Facebook alone! 21st century marketing is easy to validate and incredibly affordable.

Funny thing... most home sector retailers resist spending a few thousand dollars a month on these high ROI 21st century marketing methods but still snuggle in their comfort zone and spend 10 times as much on outdated, difficult to validate, low ROI media methods from the 19th and 20th century.

HVT-3 SALES

Train, measure and hold your salespeople accountable.

Most home sector retail salespeople could use some training and polish to say the least. In most home sector retail stores, there is a huge range of performance with a few salespeople at the top of the sales rankings, a bunch in the middle and a few at the bottom.

A wide range in performance should concern retailers greatly. Many retailers will simply say this variance is due to some salespeople being better. Well duh! WARNING: The most disturbing issue with a wide performance range is that the customer has a wildly different experience in the store depending upon who greets them.

Train and measure your salespeople. Reduce the range of performance. Reduce salesperson turnover.

HVT-4 MERCHANDISING

Shop your competition: I am still amazed at how few retailers actually shop the competition. The normal excuse is... "I cannot go in there, they know me." My reply, "Just do it." You must know what's going on in your marketplace. And I suggest your salespeople shop the competition too. If you do not personally shop your competition often, you may very well make poor decisions based solely upon hunches. Validate what your competitors are doing and if needed make adjustments to your strategic plan. Hold vendors accountable for distribution promises. If prices decline due to competitive issues and your GMROI suffers, consider changing SKUs and/or vendors.

HVT-5 MERCHANDISING

Attain appropriate margins. The really great retailers in our industry sell based upon value, not a formula. This High Value Target is short and sweet... make margins on your product. Don't be scared of obtaining 55-60% margins. Learn to sell. Stop reacting in fear of losing a sale.

HVT-6 MERCHANDISING

Develop a plan. Once you know how your vendors, categories and SKUs are performing, you can build a meaningful merchandise plan. One retailer was facing stalled mattress sales over the last year. The first step in solving the issue was to look at their



"One retailer in a small town of 67,000 is gaining 200 new prospects a week and attributes almost 40% of store volume to Facebook alone!"

mattress lineup on paper. Once the lineup was displayed in a merchandise chart, the problem became obvious. There were many gaps and overlaps. They were under represented at price points under \$1,000. And, foam beds were non-existent below \$1,500. Once these cavernous holes were filled in, sales took off again. Deterioration of a retailer's floor merchandise assortment is subtle, and it's easy to become irrelevant in one or more categories.

HVT-7 MERCHANDISING

Measure your merchandise effectiveness. Most home sector retailers are unable to validate their merchandise assortment's effectiveness. I suggest you measure every SKU, category and vendor. Once you measure the effectiveness of your lineup, you can start augmenting the best sellers and eliminate the slow sellers.

Many retailers can easily spout their top 10 best sellers in upholstery. Then when the actual rates of sale, GMROI and gross margin production by SKU are computed, the real VALIDATED best seller list looks nothing like what they intuited. Intuition is what makes someone a great buyer at furniture markets. Validation is what keeps a SKU or vendor on your floor.

HVT-8 MERCHANDISING

Measure GMROI then augment and cut. GMROI is the best measurement of merchandise performance in home sector. GMROI is an acronym for Gross Margin Return On Investment. (The Investment being Inventory) The GMROI measurement combines two other measurements into one very useful Holy Grail of merchandise measurements. GMROI is a combination of Turn Rate and Gross Margin.

If you looked up your number one selling SKU based upon turn rate it

**"With 50-60 Vendors
you are not important to most vendors.
Companies and reps must make a good living
just like retailers. Pick your top 10-15 high
GMROI quick ship vendors and stick with them."**

would probably be queen bed frames. If you looked up your number one SKU based upon gross margin, it would probably be an accessory piece. However, GMROI combines these two measurements into one phenomenal measurement. The higher the GMROI the better. Find your average GMROI. Watch those SKUs, categories and vendors that are well below average. Cut the lowest 1/4 GMROI SKUs and vendors and augment the top 1/4 GMROI SKUs and vendors.

HVT-9A MERCHANDISING

Reduce back up stock and DEAD inventory. Shift to quick ship vendors.

Rely on their inventory and stock as little as possible in your warehouse. Many retailers have huge dollars tied up in DEAD inventory. DEAD is the bottom 1/4 in GMROI, discontinued, obsolete, mis-matched and damaged inventory.

HVT-9B MERCHANDISING

Reduce your vendor list. I might add, reduce your vendor list. A retailer once complained about a vendor that sold so and so down the street. I asked how much volume he did last year with that vendor and the reply was, "\$8,250." I'm sorry, but with 50-60 vendors you are not important to most vendors. Companies and reps

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SWEATING THE RETAIL DETAILS

must make a good living just like retailers. Pick your top 10-15 high GMROI quick ship vendors and stick with them. Become important to them. Create a real partnership. If you are committed to them, you can and should expect their commitment to you.

HVT-10 EXPENSE CONTROL

Develop a budget & watch every penny. Most retailers do not have an annualized budget for their stores. This is a must. A budget is a translation of your strategic plan into meaningful and measureable numbers. Having no budget is like having no goal. Once you have a budget, cut it by 10% across the board. Sounds difficult and perhaps rash but, "Just do it."

The definition of insanity is expecting different results while doing the same things you've always done. You cannot "wish" your way to success. Wishing is great. Wishing and dreaming helps you create a vision of your business. But at some point you must translate your vision into action.

Just do it. When you implement these Top 10 (HVT) High Value Targets in your operation, you will see amplification take hold and your profits will soar.

- By training your sales staff, your average sale will increase, your number of sales will increase, your margins will increase, your customer service level will increase and delivery issues will decrease.
- By merchandising properly you will increase your GMROI and you can also manipulate your average

sale and margins and your inventory on hand will decrease. Oh, Did you notice how many High Value Targets are related to merchandising? This is a huge area of opportunity for retailers.

- By marketing properly, you will increase qualified traffic to your store at an ever reduced cost per acquired lead.
- And by implementing sound fiscal policies and creating an annual financial budget, you can benchmark your progress along the way and cut unwarranted excess expenses.

FREE Marketing and Advertising Quiz for Furniture World readers: Since several of the HVT High Value Targets in this article have to do with marketing, Integrity Business Coaching is offering a free resource. Go to www.hvtmarketing.com/online-quizzes and take the Advertising and Marketing Quiz. You will receive a free management report detailing your results.

About Hal McClamma: Hal McClamma is the founder of Integrity Business Coaching. He has over 30-years in the home furnishings industry with leading companies like Haverty's, Barrows, Burdines, Maas Brothers and Jordan Marsh.

Integrity Business Coaching teaches: Sales training, sales coaching, marketing, advertising, managed internet search, 21st century marketing, leadership, team building, financial management, business administration, operations, warehouse & delivery, customer service, security, risk management, merchandise plan-

ning, inventory control, merchandise management, business & HR law.

Integrity Business Coaching also helps retailers with cash raising, business expansion, succession planning, retirement, GOBs, selling the business and more.

Questions about this article may be directed to Hal McClamma at Hal@IntegrityBusinessCoaching.com or call 334.470.9999.

"Most retailers do not have an annualized budget for their stores. Once you have a budget, cut it by 10% across the board. Sounds difficult and perhaps rash but, "Just do it."



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HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH BUSY-NESS

by Rene' Johnston-Gingrich

There are quite a few four-letter words that might offend. Perhaps one of the most surprisingly offensive and counterproductive four-letter words is BUSY.

When you find yourself relating to any of these scenarios, you may need to look at what "busy" really means to you and your retail organization.

- Do you find yourself constantly on the run?
- Does it feel like you're putting out fire after fire with no time to catch your breath?
- Are you Running around a thousand miles an hour, stressing everyone else out (including yourself)?
- Do you find yourself choosing to do things yourself because you believe it to be quicker?
- Are you repeatedly on the verge of being late (or actually late) to meetings and appointments?

Do you find yourself having conversations that sound like this? "How are you?" "Busy." "Did you see the latest, movie, book, art gallery?", "Oh I have been meaning to but I'm just so busy".

If you've nodded your head in agreement to any of these scenarios, it's possible that you are one of the many furniture retailers, managers or sales professionals, that are so locked into a pattern of stress and chaos that you

can't see your way out.

The pace in a furniture store can be hectic but this issue is not exclusive to the furniture industry. Help is on the way and knowledge is power. Recently, there has been a tremendous amount of research and discussion on just how to change some of these unhealthy habits and behaviors. You can learn to work in a way that is busy and efficient. That's because when you are just BUSY, you're likely the one keeping yourself and your business stuck (think sales goals).

BUSY IS NOT THE SAME AS PRODUCTIVE

Busy can be good if the busyness is increasing business. It is critically important that your store is busy. In order to sustain and exceed sales goals you must have customers coming through your doors. This means a lot of activity, and most importantly a lot of sales resulting from this activity. In regard to the operations of stores, busy is great, busy or even uber-busy is the goal we are hoping to achieve.

As an individual, though, busyness can impact business and not necessarily in a good way. This is when "busy" can become a four-letter word. How busy are you?

- Are you busy or productive?
- Do the tasks you consistently stay

busy with generate results (increases sales and profit)?

Whether you are an owner, manager, or sales professional, these questions apply. For years in the American business culture it has been pounded into our heads that our success is measured by the length of the hours we work, how little sleep we get, how much we are trying to balance at one time and how irreplaceable we are to the organization. It might be time to throw out that tired measuring stick in favor of a more progressive approach.

Recently much research has been conducted and new patterns of thought have emerged that make a strong case for looking differently at how we perceive work. Let's begin by looking at

"If you've nodded your head in agreement to any of these scenarios, it's possible that you are one of the many furniture retailers, locked into a pattern of stress and chaos."



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"Busy Retail Managers

frequently dismiss other's ability to contribute. They have the 'I'll just do it myself mindset.' Delegate appropriate tasks."

some of the notable findings.

WHAT OTHERS HAVE TO SAY

In her recent book "Thrive: The Third Metric to Redefining Success and Creating a Life of Well-Being, Wisdom, and Wonder", Arianna Huffington describes some of her revelations after collapsing and suffering an injury as a result of sheer exhaustion. The cofounder and editor-in-chief of the Huffington Post Media Group makes a compelling case for the need to redefine what it means to be successful in today's world.

In "Thrive" Huffington explores how our relentless pursuit of the two traditional metrics of success -- money and power -- has led to an epidemic of burnout and stress-related illnesses, as well as deteriorating the quality of our relationships, family life, and even our careers. She suggests that in being connected to the world 24/7, we're losing our connection to what really matters.

In her book, Huffington references the pioneering research and scientific findings in the fields of psychology, sports, sleep, and physiology that show how strategies such as meditation, mindfulness, unplugging, and giving can lead us to embrace a new way of operating. This new line of thinking and operating calls into question our culture, our thinking, our workplace, and our lives.

If Arianna Huffington can run a media empire and maintain a level of sanity, can't we?

Speaker, writer, and educator, Greg McKeown's book, *Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less* details the practice of getting more done in less time. It's about getting only the right

things done. He is adamant that this is not a time management strategy, or a productivity technique. It is a system for discerning what is absolutely essential, then eliminating everything that is not, so we can make the highest possible contribution towards the things that really matter.

He suggests we apply much more selective criteria for what is Essential; that the disciplined pursuit of less empowers us to reclaim control of our own choices about where to spend our valued time and energy. McKeown describes this strategy as a new way of doing everything. Essentialism is about doing less, but doing it better, in all areas of our lives.

WHY BUSY IS SUCH A BAD IDEA

The idea is that in making these behavior adjustments we are working toward becoming our best selves. The concept, however, is not one born out of pure selfishness. Often we don't realize the negative effects our "busyness" is having on others and our organization. Consider some of the negative side effects listed below.

"Busy" people put unnecessary stress on the people around them. Tension and anxieties are contagious.

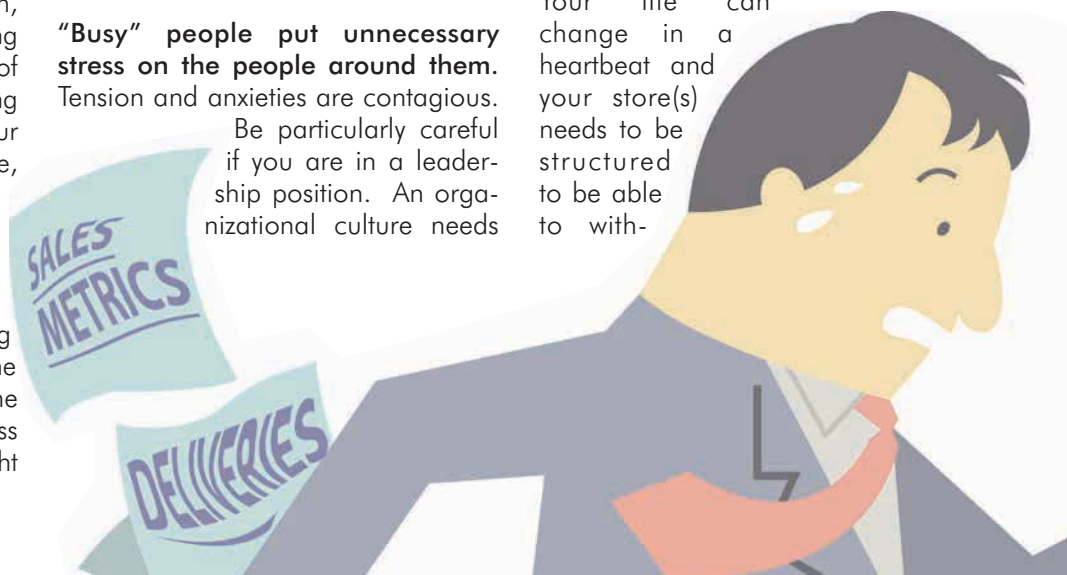
Be particularly careful if you are in a leadership position. An organizational culture needs

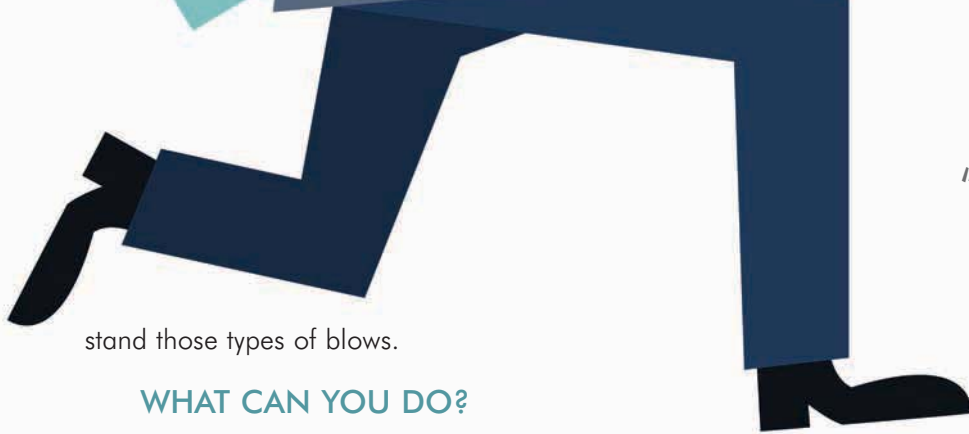
to be built from the top down. Good employees seek to model the values and behaviors demonstrated by their leaders. Managers and sales staff take important cues from your behaviors.

"Busy" people frequently dismiss other's ability to contribute. They have the "I'll just do it myself" mindset. This causes others to feel undervalued and untrustworthy. This also happens when we discount other people's suggestions for change or improvement. Delegate appropriate tasks to management and encourage the sales team to share responsibilities.

But "Busy" is who I am. Who would we be if not this super woman or super man who has it all under control (or is attempting to) and without whom the world (or store) would fall apart. The fact is that we are all replaceable. If you have truly structured your organization to depend on you to such an extreme degree—you have screwed up. An organization needs to stand on multiple legs. Unexpected things happen.

Your life can change in a heartbeat and your store(s) needs to be structured to be able to with-





stand those types of blows.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Are your systems less than efficient?

Examine this objectively and work to make improvements. This may take some outside consulting or you may be able to track and monitor your efficiency and course correct. Invest in systems that track and quantify important metrics such as traffic counts, average sale, and closing ratios. For increased productivity be sure to provide your sales team with good Customer Relationship Management tools and hold them accountable for utilizing those tools. Hint: if you have a hard time asking for help, this might be

"Is your sales staff constantly coming to you with questions when they should, in fact, be equipped to find the answers on their own?"

where you need the most support.

Are you constantly subjected to distractions and interruptions? Identify them and eliminate where possible. Is your sales staff constantly coming to you with questions when they should be equipped to find the answers on their own? This also means paying close attention to your use of electronics including email, social media, telephone and more.

Are you taking care of yourself? Be careful not to confuse scheduled "time out" and distractions. A walk around the block at lunchtime that refreshes you or taking a moment to read an article that stirs creative thought should be integrated into your day, not eliminated from it. The retail environment is often frenetic. Take care to run your store instead of letting it run you.

Are you saying yes when you really want to say no? Establish boundaries, build fences and hold firm. It is better to do fewer things well than sev-

"Are you saying yes when you really want to say no? Establish boundaries."

eral things adequately. It is not uncommon in furniture retail to see co-workers, managers and even owners in the habit of doing someone else's work—or at least a sizeable portion of it. Teamwork is one thing, allowing yourself to be taken advantage of is quite another. Often saying "no" to one thing gives you the room to say "yes" to business building opportunities in such areas as marketing or professional development.

Are you afraid if you slow down you will have to deal with something you are avoiding? Maybe something in your personal life? This is a tough one. Be honest with yourself and challenge yourself to make healthy changes.

It is in great danger of being overused but the old airline analogy regarding the need to put on your own oxygen mask first is applicable here.

BUSY DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A FOUR-LETTER WORD

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TOO MUCH BUSY-NESS

sons. Many of us feel that in today's cutthroat retail business environment, if we don't work around the clock, we will be fired or go out of business. This is a legitimate fear and I in no way want to discount it. I do, however believe there is a better approach and it is worth examining our patterns to see if we have fallen into this "busy" trap.

As with much in life, it is about quality and not quantity. Focused, quality interactions typically achieve better results than scattered efforts. Whether you embrace Huffington's or McKeown's specific strategies or not, the point is to examine, consider and make necessary changes. Even an incremental improvement is an improvement and will begin building a healthier individual and organization.

In closing I'd like you to ask yourself if your busyness is helping or hurting your store and or your personal life.

Some Additional Resources

Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity by David Allen - Audio Book

Think Better: An Innovator's Guide to Productive Thinking by Tim Hurson

How to Reduce Workplace Conflict and Stress: How Leaders and Their Employees Can Protect Their Sanity and Productivity from Tension and Turf Wars by Anna Maravelas

Productive Workplaces: Dignity, Meaning, and Community in the 21st Century by Marvin R. Weisbord

About Rene' Johnston-Gingrich:

Rene' Johnston-Gingrich is Vice President of Training Development for

Profitability Consulting Group, specializing in delivering *Design Trac: Design Skills for Retail Sales People*, and *Sales Trac III: In Home Selling*. Rene' has owned and operated an interior design firm for 17 years and now works with organizations to ensure they have the best possible team environment.

She served as a regular columnist for *The Lewiston Tribune Business Profile* and is an adjunct faculty member of Lewis-Clark State College's Business Division. Rene' has a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Interior Planning and Design and a Master's Degree in Adult Education and Human Resource Development. Questions about this article or any sales/design topic can be directed to her at reneg@furninfo.com or call her direct at 208-790-3594.

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BEST SELLING DESIGNS



Kas Rugs

Slate Grey Plume is one of a number of new designs by Bob Mackie Home Rugs. They are Hand Tufted in a wool and viscose blend (providing beautiful sheen) and are very dense and silky. Made in India.

Contact information on index page 104.



Simply Amish

This Art Deco style chest is from the new Bamboo Frisco Collection. Bamboo is a sustainable and fast growing material. An acre of bamboo sequesters 25 tons of carbon, all while being tougher than most hardwoods. Made in America.

Contact information on index page 104.



Omnia

The sophisticated new "Tratto" sofa features motorized headrests and chaise cushion recliners for ultimate personalized comfort. Subtle contrast stitching and chrome legs add to its refined silhouette. Made in America.

Contact information on index page 104.



Suzuki

Pictured is the new MDG-400 Baby Grand Digital Piano. It's a beautiful piece of furniture with a sensuous shape and hand rubbed lacquer cabinet. Only 4' deep, it is no bigger than a console table.

Contact information on index page 104.



Loloi

Created in collaboration with Kris Ruff, the nine hand-tufted 100% wool rugs in the Nova Collection feature bright colors and graphic motifs. Made in India.

Contact information on index page 104.

InnerSpace

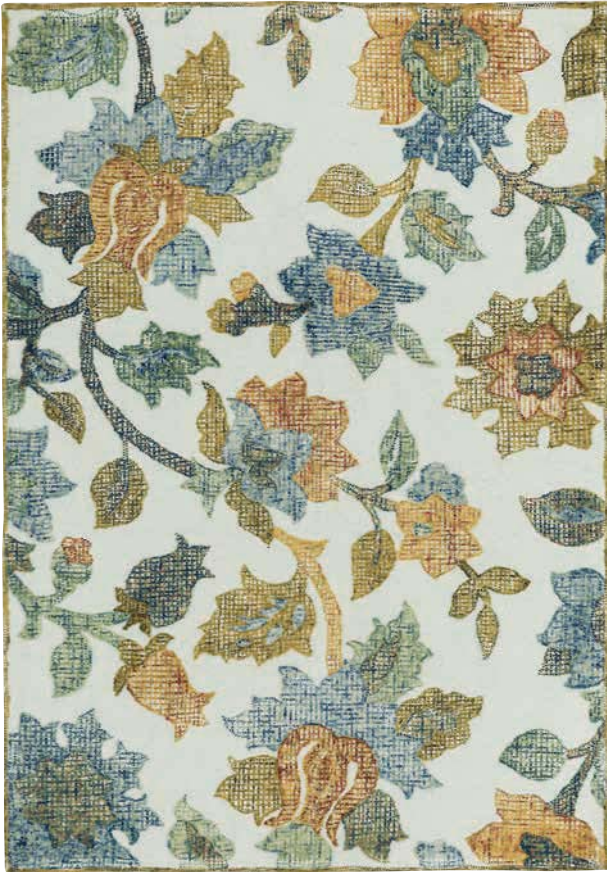
The InnerSpace Luxury Products collection of stainless steel dining chairs, counter and bar height stools are a versatile and durable addition to any contemporary decorating environment. Styles feature brushed and polished finishes. Protective gliders prevent scratches and marring of floors.

Contact information on index page 104



BEST SELLING

DESIGNS



Capel Rugs

Burleigh features a floral motif with a high-low pile and the look of a needlepoint. It is hand tufted and made in India of 100% wool. Suggested retail \$516.

Contact information on index page 104.



Flash Furniture

Massaging Black Leather Recliner and Ottoman with Leather Wrapped Base.

Contact information on index page 104.

Italdivani

The Amalfi collection is contemporary in style. It is available as a sofa, condo, loveseat and chair in a multitude of exclusive fabrics. Made in Canada.

Contact information on index page 104.



Natuzzi

A bed of great stature and luxury that can become the focal point of the room, Dolce Vita is a headboard of regal proportions. The exquisite hand craftsmanship is evidenced by the classic capitonné work, available in both diamond and square patterns.

Contact information on index page 104.



Philips Collection

The Indent Coffee Tables are versatile sand blasted tables measuring 43"x43"x17"h. They can be used inside and out.

Contact information on index page 104.



Borkholder

The Carrington Bedroom Collection is shown in a Brown maple onyx finish. Made in America.

Contact information on index page 104.



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BEST SELLING

DESIGNS



Tayse Rugs

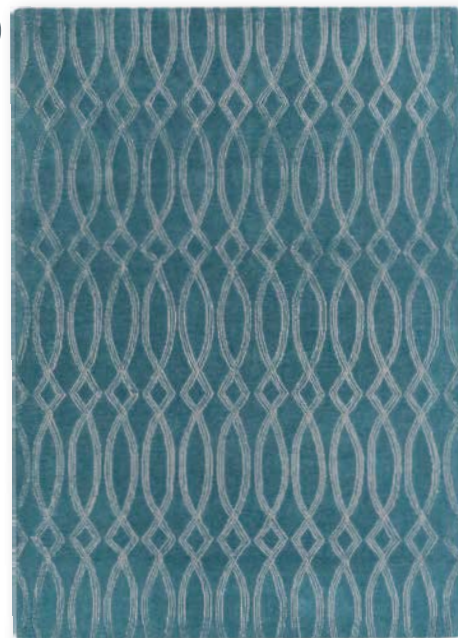
The Antique Treasure Collection is an opulent oriental design, embellished with scrollwork and floral motifs to impart refinement to conventional settings. This traditional area rug is manufactured with 2-ply yarn for a plush feel.

Contact information on index page 104.

Surya

The Vega rug is Hand-tufted in India of wool with metallic thread and features loop accents. It offers a fresh geometric design that will imbue living spaces with rich texture and color. Suggested retail price for a 5' x 7'6" is \$399.

Contact information on index page 104.



Vermont Cedar Company

This chair and matching ottoman features a one-of-a-kind suspension seat. It is made from naturally rot resistant Vermont White Cedar. It should last seven to ten years outside with little or no maintenance.

Contact information on index page 104.



Kincaid

Made of solid New Zealand Pine, Weatherford is a whole-home collection that offers a relaxed casual style. Cornsilk and heather finishes showcase the attractive wood grain. The collection includes special conveniences such as electrical outlets, nightlights and storage footboards

Contact information on index page 104.



Nourison

Luminance Graphite is made of New Zealand Wool and Luxcelle in an intertwining leaf, vine and blossom design. This rug imparts an artful elegance to any interior in sleek shades of slate, silver, white and graphite

Contact information on index page 104.



Surya

The Silva lamp features a resin base with hammered silver finish and a metallic linen shade. This lamp will add warmth and ambience within any living space. 30" Tall. Suggested retail price: \$179.

Contact information on index page 104.

Selva

The Indigo Armchair which is hand made in Italy. It has a fine-structured wooden frame made of Canaletto Walnut along with top-quality seat and back upholstery.

Contact information on index page 104.



Mastercraft

Ovation is a transitional styled bedroom collection that features an Aged Cherry finish over American Alder solids with Cherry veneers and solid Walnut and Acacia accents. The collection features a six drawer storage bed (shown) plus non-storage and platform storage bed options. Additions to Ovation at market will include a media chest and home office pieces.

Contact information on index page 104.



BEST SELLING

DESIGNS



Broyhill

The mid-century modern styling of Mardella™ was inspired by the wildly popular Brasilia™ collection but with a modern twist. Mardella™ features a warm cognac finish, framed matchstick patterns, off-the-floor bases with peg accents and jewel-like round brass knobs.

Contact information on index page 104.



Thomasville

Harlowe & Finch™ is a spirited mix of classic form that includes varied style periods and a diverse array of materials. The result is a curated look that speaks to a layered, casual lifestyle. The collection can be dressed up or down depending on your customers' personal tastes.

Contact information on index page 104.



Agio

Kolea Party Bar modular all-weather wicker pieces include party bar sectionals that feature deep-seating comfort and a unique porcelain-topped serving bar for entertaining.

Contact information on index page 104.



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- 6) Kitchen
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- 8) Home Theater Room

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**Furniture Today*, December 7, 2009.



A BED SELLERS LOOK AT DIFFICULT CUSTOMER SERVICE

The customer is always right. Right?

by David Benbow

We hear the term “customer service” a lot, but what is it, and why is it so important, especially for home furnishings and especially mattress retailers?

Before I started working on this article, I looked up the term “customer service” in both my Webster’s and the big 24 volume Oxford English Dictionary, and oddly, especially for such a fundamental commercial function in our Western consumer culture, the term did not appear in either publication. This was surprising to me, given the vast, almost inexhaustible comprehensiveness of the mighty O.E.D.

We all think we know what is meant by the term “customer service,” but before delving into specific customer service issues it will be useful to define the term.

CUSTOMER VS. PROSPECTIVE CUSTOMER

What is the definition of a “customer?” sounds like a ridiculous question, but it is important to distinguish “customer” from “prospective customer.” They are not the same thing. A

customer is someone who has actually purchased something. A prospective customer only becomes a customer after he buys, not before. Until then, he is the responsibility of the Sales Department. Therefore, customer service, at least in the context of this article, can be defined as a set of policies and actions that respond to a customer’s (buyer’s) after-the-sale enquiries or complaints. Note that I said “policies.” So, often, customer service is just a knee-jerk reaction to an irate customer’s ravings. Everybody, customer included, is happier if a retailer has a policy, in print, on how to handle customer post-sale communications, good and bad.

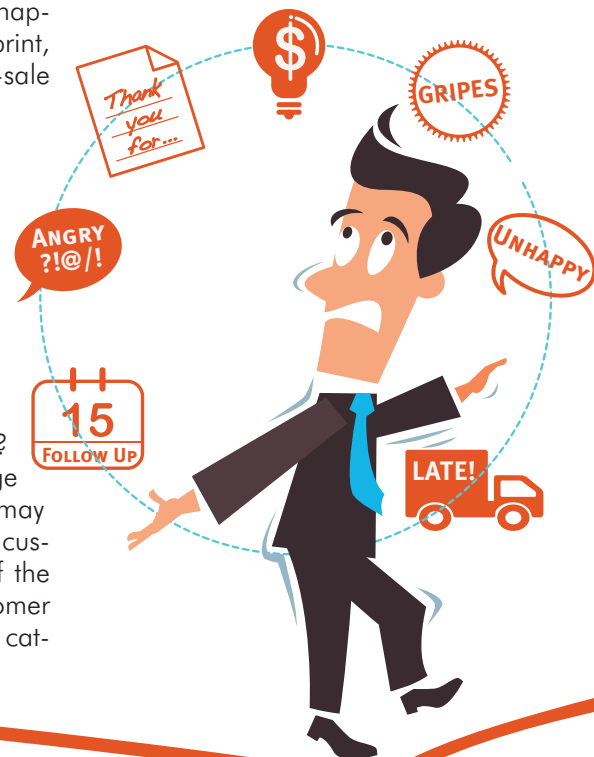
IS THE CUSTOMER ALWAYS RIGHT?

The famous phrase, “The Customer is Always Right,” is believed to have been first uttered in 1909 by Harry Gordon Selfridge, a famous London department store owner.

Is the customer always right? Yes, and no. What Mr. Selfridge meant when he said that, if I may interpret his meaning, is that the customer is entitled to the benefit of the doubt with any complaint. Customer complaints fall into three general cat-

egories:

1. the seller made an obvious error, the customer is offended by it, and the retailer has an obligation to remedy the situation enthusiastically and apologetically admitting error with no questions asked.
2. The seller may have made an error, or maybe not; there is some ambiguity as to where the blame lies. The customer is offended, either way. In this situation, the seller





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**ANGRY
?!@/!**

"This is the situation all retailers dread. The customer is outrageously **WRONG**, and completely unreasonable. He's offended anyway, because, as everyone knows, 'The customer is always right.'"

once again assumes the culpability, fixes the problem, and satisfies the customer, no questions asked. In other words, the customer gets the benefit of the doubt.

3. This is the situation all retailers dread, the one for which it is so difficult to establish a clear-cut, fair

policy where everyone exits happily. It is when the customer is outrageously **WRONG**, and completely unreasonable. He's offended anyway, because, as everyone knows, "The customer is always right." But, what does the retailer do about it? Fortunately, I am retired from retail and no longer have to deal with these types, and I have very little advice on how to handle them. The only thing I can say is to try to minimize the damage as best you can.

GOALS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

The goals of customer service are pretty simple. The main theme is "keep the customer happy," so she will keep coming back. First, get off to a good start. Deliver the customer's merchandise, in good condition, as quickly as possible. I cannot stress this point strongly enough. Deliver the same day, if possible. The quicker the customer gets his stuff, the happier he will be. Will great service reward you with a loyal customer? Not necessarily. Customers are notoriously fickle. Bad service, however, will probably lose you one, forever.

THE PHASES OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

By phases, we mean the time and situation of various customer service functions. These phases break down as follows:

- *After-the-sale but pre-delivery.*
- *The actual delivery, (or, customer pick up).*
- *After-the-delivery – the merchandise is in the customer's house.*

Each of these phases has its own unique preparation and policies.

POST-SALE PRE-DELIVERY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Since mattresses are usually delivered within a day or two of the sale, customer service (in this phase) is mostly just making the call announcing that the merchandise is on the way. With furniture, however, this phase is often all too long and perilous. The customer has the right, in many states, to cancel the sale any-



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time before delivery and legally demand and receive a full refund of the purchase price. Management hates it when this happens. Therefore, the RSA who made the sale must keep the customer up-to-date on his purchase. Many furniture purchases that are not stocked can take six weeks or more between sale and delivery. This can be a very tense interval for both customer and store. The customer is anxious for his beautiful new merchandise, and the store doesn't want the sale to cancel. There are four things you can say and do to avoid problems.

1. Do not create unreasonable expectations at the get-go.

Before the sale is completed and the money collected, make certain that the customer understands that non-stock merchandise has to be ordered. Then, if it normally takes six weeks to arrive, tell the customer that it can take up to eight weeks. Give yourself some leeway. If it comes in within six weeks, you look great. If you say six to eight weeks, the customer hears "six weeks." If you say four to six weeks, he hears "four weeks." Do yourself a favor.

2. Follow up. Stay on top of the order department and the manufacturer to make sure everything is on schedule. Don't be the last to find out that your customer's SKU has been discontinued or is behind schedule.

3. Keep your customer informed. Don't let him sit at home and stew for six weeks, and then tell him that the factory had a glitch and now it will be four more weeks before he begins to enjoy his great new product. It is wise to call every week to give him an update. Call even if you don't have anything new to report. The customer will appreciate your diligence.

4. Don't do this!

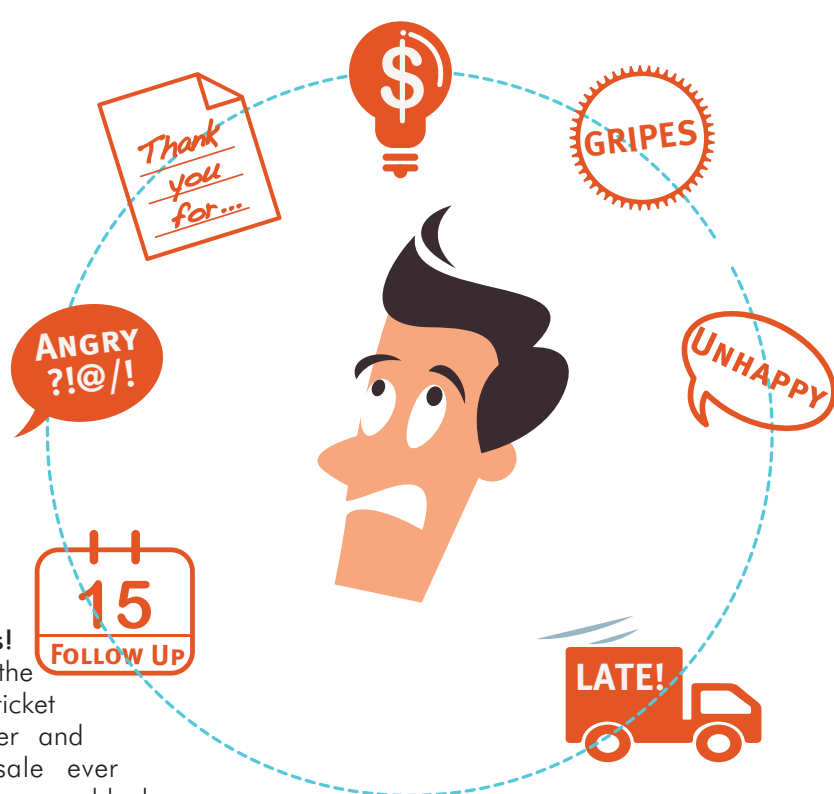
Don't throw the money and ticket in the drawer and forget the sale ever happened. Then, suddenly six weeks later you get an annoyed call from an impatient customer, and you cannot even remember who he is, or what you sold him.

DISPOSITION (DELIVERY OR PICK-UP)

Since this is the Better Bedding Sales series, we will talk about disposition of mattress sets. Urgency is the hallmark of mattress selling. This means that many mattress sales are either delivered or picked up the same day as the purchase. If the customer is "taking it with him" or having same day delivery, the RSA must make absolutely sure that the merchandise is in stock. Here's how to make sure. First, check your inventory list. If there are several listed as available and you have confidence in the list, you may be okay. If, however, the inventory sheet shows only one (1) available, you should double check that number. Either call the warehouse or go lay your hands on it yourself. Even after you lay hands on the merchandise, go to the Sold-But-Undelivered file. Make sure that it has not been previously sold and is waiting for delivery. Never promise a delivery until you have done this check first.

We will only mention a few ideas about delivery. Here is a short list.

- **Your vehicle.** Deliver merchan-



dise in a vehicle that will not embarrass the store. Identify your delivery vehicle with some kind of label. If two rough looking characters pull up to a customer's house in a beat-up truck with no identifiers, the customer might not answer the door.

- **Scary employees.** Beware of delivery employees who will frighten little old ladies. Or, if that's not possible, have them wear a company shirt or uniform that will clearly identify who they are.
- **Bed inspection.** Check and double check all merchandise before loading the delivery vehicle. Don't let damaged or soiled merchandise get all the way to the customer's bedroom.
- **Calling ahead.** Call the customer the day before and then again the day of delivery so the customer remembers you are on the way.
- **Check inside first.** Require that delivery men learn the route through the house before bringing in the merchandise. Then, maybe they will observe and avoid any obstacles in the way. Strictly enforce this rule unless you enjoy a call from the customer saying that your guys knocked a prized

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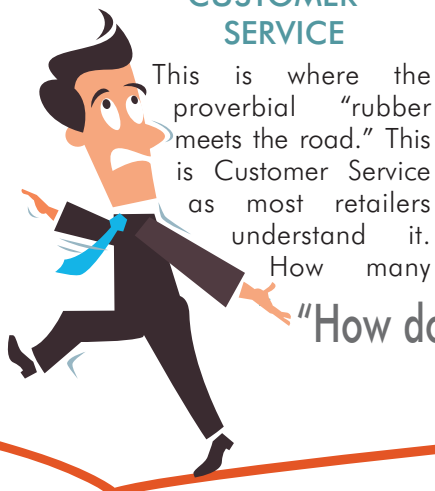
SERVICE

CUSTOMER

picture off the wall or demolished a treasured porcelain ewer on an antique stand in a narrow hallway.

- **Using the plumbing.** Enforce with pain, if necessary, the policy that Delivery Staff NEVER ask to use the customer's plumbing facilities, except possibly to wash their hands. Hand washing may be permissible, even advised, in the following situation. Sometimes, exquisite white ticking is sheathed within soiled plastic bags. This perfect mattress has to be removed from the bags. Only very clean hands should do this. Or, have them handle soiled bags with heavy gauge plastic gloves and then use white, clean gloves to handle the new mattress. The point being: don't soil the new mattress!
- **Carry-offs.** When disposing of the customer's old set, how do you separate that nasty carry-off from the pristine new bed? Take some extra bags to bag or even double bag the disgusting old set, so it cannot touch the new merchandise. Plastic gloves, again, are highly recommended.

POST-SALE, POST-DELIVERY CUSTOMER SERVICE



This is where the proverbial "rubber meets the road." This is Customer Service as most retailers understand it. How many

after-the-sale calls do you get thanking you for the great service and deal? Any? No, they are almost always complainers.

If the retailer or manufacturer is clearly wrong, they are easy to handle, right? What we will discuss are those cases where the customer may be wrong, but still has an understandable gripe (the "benefit of the doubt.") And, after that, we'll share a few moments where you wish you had gone into any business but retail.

BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT SITUATIONS

Most customer complaints are bogus. Mattress complaints are almost always either "comfort" issues or "body impressions." If you could get rid of these two, this business would get a lot better.

Body Impressions: What is described as a "canyon" by your customer usually turns out to be a mere half inch depression when measured professionally. How do you eliminate complaints about body impressions? A better job on the sales floor will certainly minimize them. Educate the customer on these issues. Their bed WILL get minor body impressions. Tell them that. Don't let them discover it when making the bed.

Comfort Issues: A lot of stores offer "comfort exchanges." I personally don't like comfort exchanges. A lot of comfort issues result from a poor sales presentation. Any store that offers comfort exchanges, however, is well advised to publish, in writing, a very clear policy on the rules and regula-

tions and make them known to the customer.

So, when do you fight and when should you give in to the customer? Taking back a mattress in good condition isn't that painful. These "take back" sets, in many states, can be legally treated, processed and re-sold with proper disclaimers. Put them in your clearance area to attract bargain hunters.

CUSTOMERS WHO ARE OUTRAGEOUSLY WRONG

Sometimes you can spot them on the showroom floor, before they make your life miserable by buying something. Here is one example.

I was working the floor one day when a couple, probably in their mid-40s, came in. They didn't look bad, but they were clearly not "one-percenters." I greeted them, and the man immediately began to show aggressively obnoxious characteristics (the lady was quiet.) He asked some vague question about warranty and I explained politely what mattress warranties meant and how they worked. Meanwhile, his wife walked away, to look at other mattresses. I'll admit, I didn't have very good control of the sales process in this case. Neither of them responded to my usual execution of the sales procedure; qualifying questions, etc.) Upon hearing my explanation, his eyes glazed over and sported a fiendish, evil-looking grin. He made one more incoherent comment, and I, again, explained, that the warranty was the policy of the manufacturer, and not the retailer. Then he shouted, "Then, I'll sue!" (For what, I

"How do you eliminate complaints about body impressions?"

"You finally run out of patience with their unreasonable demands, you tell them you cannot help them any further, and so, they sue you."

don't know. He hadn't bought anything.) I asked him if he was a lawyer. He paused for a moment, thinking about the question and then sputtered, "Yes, yes, I am." I highly doubt it, since I've never witnessed a more

un-lawyerly response. I responded politely, "You folks look around all you like." I then turned and walked back to the desk and ignored them until they were gone. The lady never said a word the whole time, but she clearly wasn't happy.

Did I handle this correctly? I don't know. They probably bought a mattress somewhere, but I decided quickly that I did not want their business, period, at any price. Let somebody else deal with this nut.

Most of the time, unfortunately, you learn the hard way.

What if they sue you? I think I was sued four times in my 15 years as a store owner. In every case, I bent over backward to please the customer, but to no avail. You finally run out of

patience with their unreasonable demands, you tell them you cannot help them any further, and so, they sue you. I won every law suit (always representing myself in court), even when they hired a lawyer. Why? Because the plaintiff was so outrageously wrong and some pre-trial preparation enabled me to win the day, every time.

BBB & Social Media Gripes: What about BBB (Better Business Bureau) gripes, or other Social Media slams? My suggestions are to:

- *Do everything first, within reason and common sense, to satisfy the customer, and that failing...*
- *Answer the complaint in the same medium, giving your more reasonable side of story. This policy*

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"Customer Service

is a tough, thankless, sometimes brutal job
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works if you do it right. Don't let an unreasonable "customer" slander you without responding. With social media, I've found that my reasonable responses get a lot more "Likes" than the complaint. It's not bad advertising, either. Turn a negative gripe into a positive message for the other readers.

WORDS FROM FAMOUS CUSTOMER SERVICE REPS

In researching this article, I decided to look up a few comments and maxims spoken by some people you've probably heard of. On its surface, it really is good advice. But, when did these famous people ever work retail or customer service? These quotes were found in an on-line article, entitled "40 Eye Opening Customer Service Quotes" by a Forbes Contributor named Ekaterina Walter, dated 03/04/14 at www.forbes.com/sites/ekaternawalter/2014/03/04/40-eye-opening-customer-service. Forbes disclaims that opinions expressed by Forbes Contributors are their own. Anyway, here are a few of them followed by my admittedly irreverent comments.

Customer Service Quote: "The goal as a company is to have customer service that is not just the best but legendary." ~ Sam Walton, founder of Wal-Mart.

My Comment: Wal-Mart service is legendary alright. The 2013 American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) rated Wal-Mart the worst customer service of any retailer in America.

Customer Service Quote: "Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning." ~ Bill Gates –

founder of Microsoft.

My Comment: How's that Windows 8 working out for you? Has Microsoft learned anything from that? Meanwhile, Bill is playing bridge with Warren Buffett.

Customer Service Quote: "There are no traffic jams along the extra mile." ~ Roger Staubach.

My Comment: What a great aphorism! Of course, this comment could apply to any endeavor, but has anybody ever seen Roger at a Customer Service desk, anywhere?

And My Favorite Customer Service Quote: "A customer is the most important visitor on our premises, he is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him. He is not an interruption in our work. He is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider in our business. He is part of it. We are not doing him a favor by serving him. He is doing us a favor by giving us an opportunity to do so."

My Comment: These are words for the retailer to live by, without question. Who said this profound, meaningful and true statement? ~ None other than Mahatma Gandhi (according to the article). Did Gandhi work retail when he wasn't freeing India from the British Empire? Or, did I miss something?

SUMMARY

Customer service is a tough, thankless, sometimes brutal job. It is frequently performed by the lowest paid employees. All the uplifting quotes, maxims and "atta-boys" by the economic elite (who've never done it) do not make the job feel any better.

Can bad Customer Service break your business? Can wonderful Customer Service make your business? Probably not, in either case. But good Customer Service is important to any intelligently run business. The question is: have the imperatives of customer service changed with the culture of the 21st century? Is Mr. Selfridge still right? Or, does it need a lot of thinking and re-thinking in this modern retail environment? I'd like to know what you think. Please send your comments to me at dave@bed-sellersmanual.com.

About David Benbow: David Benbow, a twenty-three year veteran of the mattress and bedding industry, is owner of Mattress Retail Training Company offering retailers retail guidance; from small store management to training retail sales associates. His years of hands-on experience as a retail sales associate, store manager, sales manager/trainer and store owner in six different metropolitan areas qualifies him as an expert in selling bedding. David is the author of the recently published book, "How to Win the Battle for Mattress Sales, the Bed Seller's Manual", a complete, text book for mattress and bedding retail sales associates, beginner and experienced professional alike. The book can be purchased on-line at <http://www.bedsellersmanual.com> or www.mattressretailtraining.com.

He also offers hands-on training classes for retailers on a variety of subjects and offers on-line classes that can be downloaded from the websites mentioned above.

David can be contacted via e-mail at dave@bedsellersmanual.com or in person at 361-648-3775.

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LEATHER

RETAIL EDUCATION GUIDE

Part 3: Intelligent advertising and sales practices.

by Russell Bienenstock

In the March/April and July/August issues of Furniture World, a panel of industry experts detailed the different kinds of leather, and discussed everything retailers need to know about leather durability, quality, price, repair and service. The entire leather series can be found at <http://furninfo.com/Series/LeatherGuide>.

In this installment Furniture World takes a close look at how furniture retailers can position leather offerings for maximum sales through intelligent advertising and enlightened sales practices.

THE SALES PROCESS

All of the leather specialists we spoke to emphasized the importance of getting good information from cus-

tomers about how they plan to use their leather furniture.

"Some of the bigger box stores," Peter Zolferino, President of Omnia Leather, told Furniture World, "don't spend the time to educate, or want to educate salespeople about leather, and rightfully so in some ways. They might have 100,000 square feet of case goods, leather, fabric and so on, so it's a lot for their salespeople to learn. Even in some of the leather specialty stores, we see a lack of education, and that's an area where they can easily improve. If salespeople feel comfortable with what they're selling, they're going to talk with pride, and they're going to be able to educate with confidence. Otherwise, they're going to shy away from certain products and categories and lose sales."

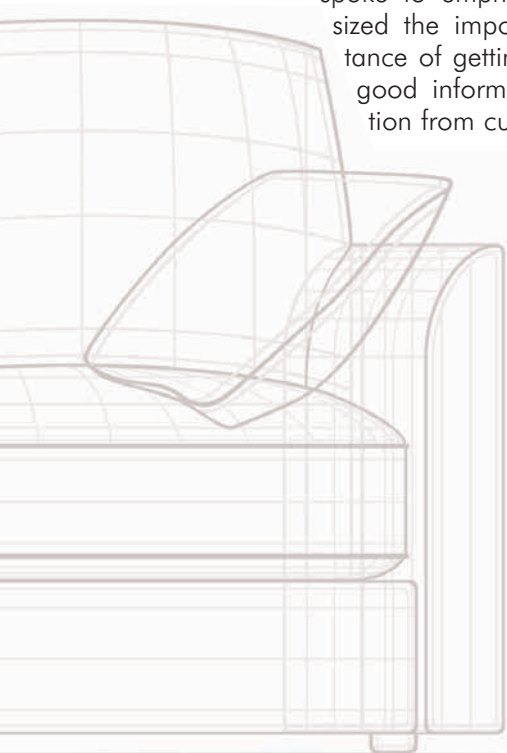
"We qualify the customer by first asking them what they're looking for," says Ramona Freeze, President of California based R&D Leather Furniture. "We also ask them to describe the room in the house they

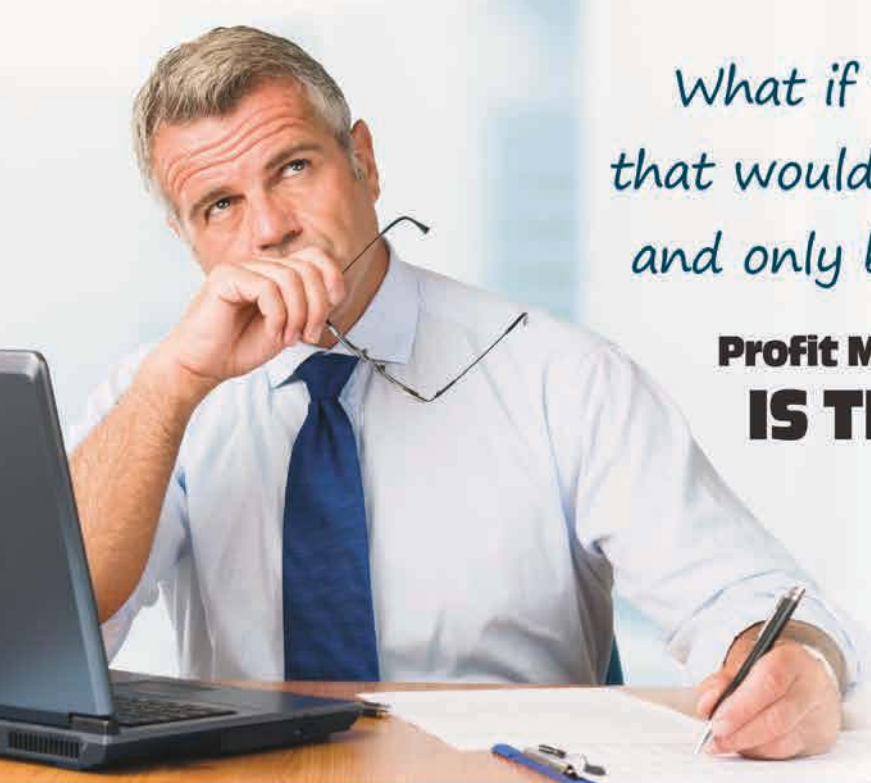
are looking for. Does it see minimal use or do they really live in it? What's their lifestyle, and how many people live in their home. Then we ask, how the item they are shopping for is going to be used. Do they like to eat on their furniture? Do they plant themselves in front of the TV and bring in the buttered popcorn? Finally, we ask them what they're looking for and whether or not they want reclining furniture or stationary. Also, what kind of look they're trying to get for their room.

"Salespeople need to know about the products they are selling," she emphasizes, "explain what they sell, whether it's top grain, full grain, a split or bonded leather. They shouldn't make the assumption that the customer understands that, for example, what a leather vinyl combination means and how much of that product is leather and how much of it is vinyl. We keep track what customers tell us, including if they want to buy something by a certain date. Since 95 percent of our business is special order,

"It's important for us to tell our customers that, we are going to give them service, be here to replace a cushion, and walk them through whatever service they need, in contrast to an Internet site based who knows where."

- Paul Gonzalez, CEO, Texas Leather Interiors





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"We also ask them to describe the room in the house they are looking for. Does it see minimal use or do they really live in it? What's their lifestyle, and how many people live in their home."

- Ramona Freeze, R&D Leather Furniture



we'll make a courtesy call to let them know when the cut off date is to get it ordered and ask, 'Are you still thinking about that piece?' But most times we don't need to make the call. They come back on their own."

Paul Gonzalez, CEO of the leather specialty chain Texas Leather Interiors says his people also ask about the room his customers are shopping for. "Our salespeople ask if customers plan to be eating on their couch, if they have kids and pets that are going to be doing this or that on it. If they need more protection we don't suggest a completely naked vegetable dyed hide because if their kid spills a Kool-Aid, it's going to get stained. We spend quite a bit of time finding out about their lifestyle and their concerns about durability. Then, when we have enough information, we suggest hides that best fit their lifestyle. We tell them which ones are cleanable, can be wiped down, and so on."

Gonzalez also spoke about the poor experiences his customers have had with previous leather purchases. "The tough part in selling mid to high end leather furniture is that we have to describe the difference between the top grade leather, a split and all the bonded stuff that's available at stores selling leather sofas for \$1,299. We really want to serve an educated customer that's been through that process. They might have purchased a sofa that peeled or they couldn't replace damaged cushions. There are retailers who mislead customers as far as what they're getting. I see that all the time. People come in asking if we

can repair leather they bought somewhere else that's completely peeled off, and there's nothing we can do about that. That's why we spend a lot of time educating customers about the different types of leather."

He also told Furniture World about keeping customers. "Great service is the way we keep customers and the referral rate up," he noted. "When I go into a typical store I see salespeople who aren't knowledgeable about what they're selling. I don't blame customers for going online to do their

research and then make an online purchase. We're finding now that customers are looking for a little bit more of that full service experience, that attention. If a salesperson promises four to six week delivery, says that they are going to have it there on Friday, agrees to get them swatch or make a service call, then they have to keep their word. If you don't take care of a customer, that one customer will tell 100 people. A retailer can do everything right, but if a salesperson messes up one small

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- *Modern leather does not crack or peel. It stretches and retains its shape without sagging.*
- *It "breathes", assumes body temperature rapidly and is instantaneously comfortable.*
- *It resists heat and sun damage.*
- *Leather is a practical material, ideal for busy lifestyles. No special solvents or cleaners and no expensive procedures are necessary for its care.*
- *Leather ages well. It will not wear like fabric covers. Instead, fine leather acquires a "patina" and may become more supple with age.*



Living
Kitchen

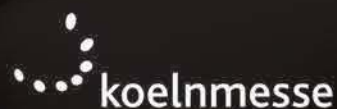
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"Google, is the sniper's approach to advertising. Using it I can find the guy that's looking for me right now, every single time." - Jim Riedl, President and CEO, Arizona Leather Company

thing, it can be really bad for business. So, we stay on top of getting back to customers, keeping them informed through email, and letting them know we're on top of their order. We let them know when we expect to get their merchandise in, or send out a service call or delivery. This is huge in our industry, for those who want to

survive. You want to make that customer experience as enjoyable as possible, always. We try to build customer relationships. I've gone back to sending old fashioned thank you for shopping with us notes. We ask customers to send us referrals, and we hope that customers come back to buy some bar stools or a dining room

based on the experience they had in the showroom versus a store where nobody pays attention to them and they feel like a number."

Regarding his company's sales sequence, Jim Riedl, President and CEO at Arizona Leather Company with 16 locations in California, Arizona and Georgia, notes that, "First our customers select the design that they like. They pick out a particular style because they like the shape of the arm or the seat cushion or the back or whatever it is that tickles their fancy on that particular frame. They could be looking at a sofa, but if they want it built as a sectional with a side chaise, they can do that, and then they can choose from 400 different colors and 50 different kinds of leather. There's a customization process that they go through. Virtually 99 percent of our sales are custom ordered. We're very lucky. We have a very professional sales staff. Selecting the leather is probably the biggest concern for our clients, so it's important to explain all the differences and the types of leather so that they can make a good choice for their usage.

"We've found that American made is definitely a big slice of the pie," Riedl adds. Also, there's not a lot of choice for consumers to go out and get furniture built to fit their room. They have to take what is offered and they have to settle. So when they happen upon us we have to literally explain it two or three times until they say, 'Oh, you mean I can build this as

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"I don't think it's the first factor that women consider when they buy furniture. There are other things that are much more emotional that they consider first."

-Stefanie Lucas, President, HTL International, North America HTL, Domicil and Muse brands



a sectional?"

RETAIL POINT OF VIEW

"There's always going to be retailers that approach customers on price," observes Stefanie J. Lucas, President, HTL International, North America (HTL, Domicil and Muse brands), "But generally when I take a dive into the mind of our target customer and why she buys, price is not always number one. I don't think it's the first factor that women consider when they buy furniture. There are other things that are much more emotional that they consider first, such as, does the style represent them? Or, what's it going to do to the rest of their home?"

"There are plenty of consumers who shop at big box stores for the deal, but there are others who choose independent retailers. These are people who

are looking at a store's image, its look, retail environment and brand identity. In the world of independents it's the ones that choose a point of view that seem to be the most successful.

"Retailers who aren't afraid to display product in an interesting manner," continues Lucas, "will have chance of selling the sofa and also those add on items. I don't think people are afraid to buy bold colors. It's just a matter of the piece they choose. So, they might not go bold on color for a huge sectional, but will consider it for an accent chair or an ottoman."

When asked about the importance of leather specialists having a point of view, Paul Gonzalez at Texas Leather Company says, "I'm not going to try to go head to head against Rooms To Go." Instead he observes, the alternative is to cultivate a firm idea of what his store stands for. "We set the criteria for what we carry, the demographics of the customers we are going

"I'm so glad I decided to work with Larry Mullins"



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Sherri K. Smith, Owner, Comfort Home Furniture, Ocala, Florida

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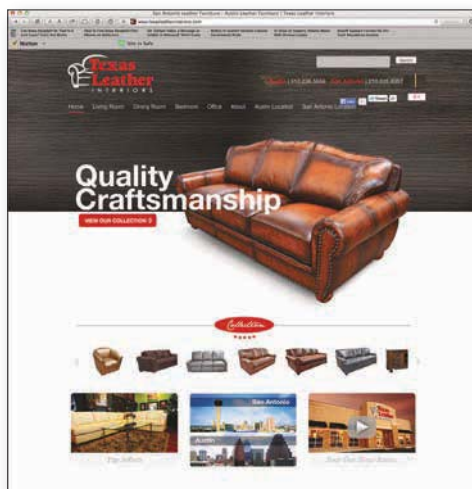
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"We've allocated a big budget for being on top of paid. We pay about \$1.00, \$1.50, sometimes \$2.00 a click, depending on the market. So it's expensive." - Paul Gonzalez, CEO, Texas Leather Interiors

after, and don't make any excuses for it. I'm flexible on my margins and try to give my salespeople reins so we can keep price sensitive customers, but frankly that doesn't always work out and it's not important to get discouraged."

He advises, that as a retailer selling quality goods, "It's important not to loose focus upon seeing a \$599 leather sofa at a furniture show. Instead we go back to what we believe in, our market, our niche. We stay

fresh on our floor, and constantly move samples. When I opened my own store," he continues, "I wanted to make it more than just a sea of sofas. One big thing about Texas Leather Interiors is we merchandise aggressively with tons of accessories and tables. We've added dining rooms and bar stools, so people really can picture the sofa in their home. We merchandise our stores fully and there's very little walking room. We try to buy all American."

ADVERTISING

The leather specialists we interviewed have generally trended away

from print advertising. "From 1995 up to 2008," says Arizona Leather's Jim Riedl, "we advertised in the newspapers, magazines, on radio, and TV. I did postcards and flyers. And in 2008 we all know what happened. I made some severe cuts to advertising, and noticed that my sales, even during the downturn, dropped very, very little. I saved close to a million dollars in advertising, and my sales only dipped 10 percent."

"That's when I started concentrating on Google. I used to take a shotgun approach, sending my message out across a wide swath of people, hoping one or two pellets would hit a per-



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LEATHER

son who was actually looking for my product and my message at the exact time he sees it. Google, is the sniper's approach to advertising. Using it I can find the guy that's looking for me right now, every single time. So that's where I'm spending my advertising dollars. I've pretty much cut print out entirely, and my sales are up, drastically."

"Advertising has changed a lot, reports Texas Leather's Paul Gonzalez.

"Because of this service level, In the second, third and fourth year of doing business in an area, referrals become really big for us."

- Paul Gonzalez, CEO, Texas Leather Interiors

"We do most of our advertising on Google because we don't have another good option. We use Pay Per Click and a lot of SEO to get on top of the search results. The trend towards mobile is up every year, and you've got to optimize your web site to work on the phone, so people know how to get to you." I've tried fliers and newspapers, but the return is hard to calculate. It's like going fishing in a big big ocean. We are trying to grab a customer in a certain price range and demographic profile. Grabbing that fish is hard to do. So, instead of spreading out a wide net to look for that customer, we put ourselves in a position where customers can easily find us."

"Google is constantly evolving," he adds. "We look at our results on a monthly basis. We've allocated a big budget for-being on top of paid. We pay about \$1.00, \$1.50, sometimes \$2.00 a click, depending on the market. So it's expensive.

Paul also notes that the internet is a double edged sword, especially for leather specialists. "The amount of

information that people can get in today's environment is crazy. On top of that, someone can come into our store, see a sofa for which we've created value, then Google it, trying find it online for 200 bucks less. There's a lot of that, and it's not going away. So, it's important for us to tell our customers that, we are going to give them service, be here to replace a cushion, and walk them through whatever service they need in contrast to an Internet site based who knows where. We believe there is a lot of value to that."

Because of this service level, adds Gonzalez, "In the second, third and fourth year of doing business in an area, referrals become really big for us. First we will see somebody's parents, a son, and then the neighbors. Google is my number one source for bringing in customers, and referrals are number two. Store location is also important. We want to be next to a big box, and in a cluster of furniture retailers because together we're giving customers an option to make one trip to an area."



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LEATHER

LEATHER GLOSSARY OF IMPORTANT TERMS

ANTIQUED FINISH: Leather finish accomplished by hand rubbing leather with a dark dye after a lighter base coat has dried, creating dramatic highlights in the finished product.

BATTING: An operation performed on a hide before tanning to remove chemicals such as lime introduced in earlier hide preparation steps.

BICAST LEATHER: See Split Leather. Also known as PU Leather.

BOX EDGED: A square seat front, with either welting or a sewn seam on the top and bottom.

BONDED LEATHER: A fabricated composite material that consists of leather pieces held together on a strong fabric backing united by a pigmented polyurethane coating that is embossed to give a grain patterned effect. Bonded leather may be used to cover entire upholstered pieces or on upholstered sides and backs to reduce costs.

BRAND: A simple easily recognized pattern made by burning the cattle's skin with a hot iron. Used for identification purposes, brands are normally cut out of hides and do not appear on finished furniture.

BUFFING: Hides are often buffed with an abrasive wheel to minimize the appearance of gross sur-

Pictured are examples of character marks such as neck & shoulder wrinkles, scratches & pores. Gross imperfections such as brand marks will rarely appear in the finished product.

face imperfections such as wrinkles, parasitic damage or healed scratches in the finished product. This process makes leather more uniform, but also obliterates the natural grain and markings that makes each hide unique and naturally beautiful.

BUTTON TUFTED: Buttons sewn through an upholstered surface and tied down. The placement of buttons and the resulting folds produce geometric patterns.

CHROME TANNED: Leather tanned with chromium salts resulting in a soft, mellow upholstery leather.

COATED SPLIT: The lower layers which are 'split off' of the top grain layer of a hide can be dyed, finished and embossed to create coated split leather. This product can be thicker and stiffer than top grain leather. Since it is also less expensive, it is often used to cover upholstered sides and backs which do not need to flex and stretch much.

COIL SPRINGS: Wire coils used in quality upholstery to give a desired resiliency and firmness to the seat and back. These are often "tied" or incorporated in a "marshall unit".

CORNER BLOCK: Triangular blocks which strengthen important frame joints.

CORRECTED GRAIN: Top grain leather that has been buffed and sanded to minimize surface marks, then covered with pigment finish layers and embossed.

CROCKING: The physical transfer by rubbing of unfixed dye or loose dyed fibers (especially in suede leather).

DECK: In conventional (coil spring) constructions, layers of padding are added on top of the springs or webbing to complete the "deck" (the area under the seat cushions). In quality upholstery appli-

cations, the deck should be well padded, with no bumps or lumps. The padding should extend to the front edge of the deck, completely covering the spring edge or frame.

DIAMOND TUFTING: An arrangement of tufting buttons which yields a diamond shaped pattern on the back of an upholstered piece.

DOUBLE DOWELING: A construction method where two round wooden pegs are fitted into holes in adjacent frame sections.

DRUM DYED: A dying process accomplished by tumbling leather in a rotating drum to encourage the dye to penetrate fully.

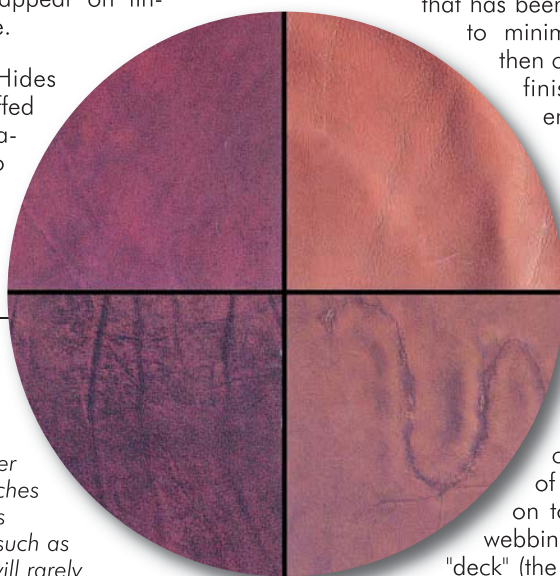
DYED TO SHADE (MILL DYED): A finishing system that produces essentially the same color on the suede side as the side on which the pigmented finish is applied.

EMBOSS: To mechanically imprint unique grain effects under heat or high pressure in order to smooth the grain or give a unique patterned effect (ostrich, alligator, lizard, etc.). Top grain leather that has surface imperfections is often buffed smooth and then embossed to restore natural looking grain patterns. Embossed leather is normally less expensive than full grain leathers that retain their natural markings.

FALSE ANILINE FINISH: Leather that's fully coated with layers of pigment finish that provide antique or tonal effects meant to simulate true aniline finished leathers.

FINISHING: To make leather more durable, clear or pigmented substances are applied to the dyed hide. These provide abrasion and stain resistance as well as color enhancement. The finishing process usually involves three or four coating operations. Generally, the more finish a leather has, the stiffer (boardier) it becomes. Semi aniline leathers tend to be softer than heavily finished leathers, although this can largely be overcome by milling. Other factors affecting softness include the tanning formula and hide quality.

FRAME: The skeleton of an upholstered



piece. The frame gives structural support and determines the basic shape of any piece of upholstered furniture. If a frame is unstable, an upholstered piece will not be durable, no matter how fine or costly its design, padding, cushioning or leather cover. Quality frames are generally made of solid wood, but plywood, engineered wood products, a variety of polymers and metal are also used.

FULL GRAIN: A top grain leather that has not been grain corrected, retaining its natural markings and characteristics. Animal hides are normally split into a top layer (which had hair on it) and one or more leather layers that are 'split off' from the 'top grain'.

GLATT: Smooth finish.

GLAZED FINISH: A finished leather surface polished to a high luster by glass or steel rollers under tremendous pressure.

GLOVE LEATHER: Sheepskins tanned to be soft, pliable and supple.

GLOVE SIDE LEATHER: Side leather that has a garment finish giving it the feel of glove leather, but with the same general durability as upholstery leather. It is soft, pliable and light-weight.

GRAIN: Markings or patterns on the leather surface. Naturally occurring grain is caused by wrinkles, markings and pores in the hide. Grain can also be simulated through an embossing and finishing processes.

HAND: The softness or 'feel' of a leather.

HAND TIED: Single coil springs that are attached to the webbing with links and then "hand tied" to each other and the frame with twine to achieve differing amounts of elasticity in the seat. Two, four, and eight way hand ties may be used. The more ways the spring is tied, the harder the seat.

HARDWOOD FRAMES: Frames made from hardwoods such as ash, oak or birch. These woods are usually kiln dried and resist splitting.

HIDE: A raw or tanned pelt taken from a

large, adult animal. Cattle, buffalo, sheep, goat and pig hides have been used to make upholstery leather, but cattle hides are by far the most common.

LEATHER: A hide that has been tanned to render it resistant to decay, as well as relatively soft and pliable.

LOOSE PILLOW BACK: A pillow treatment that can be removed from an uphol-

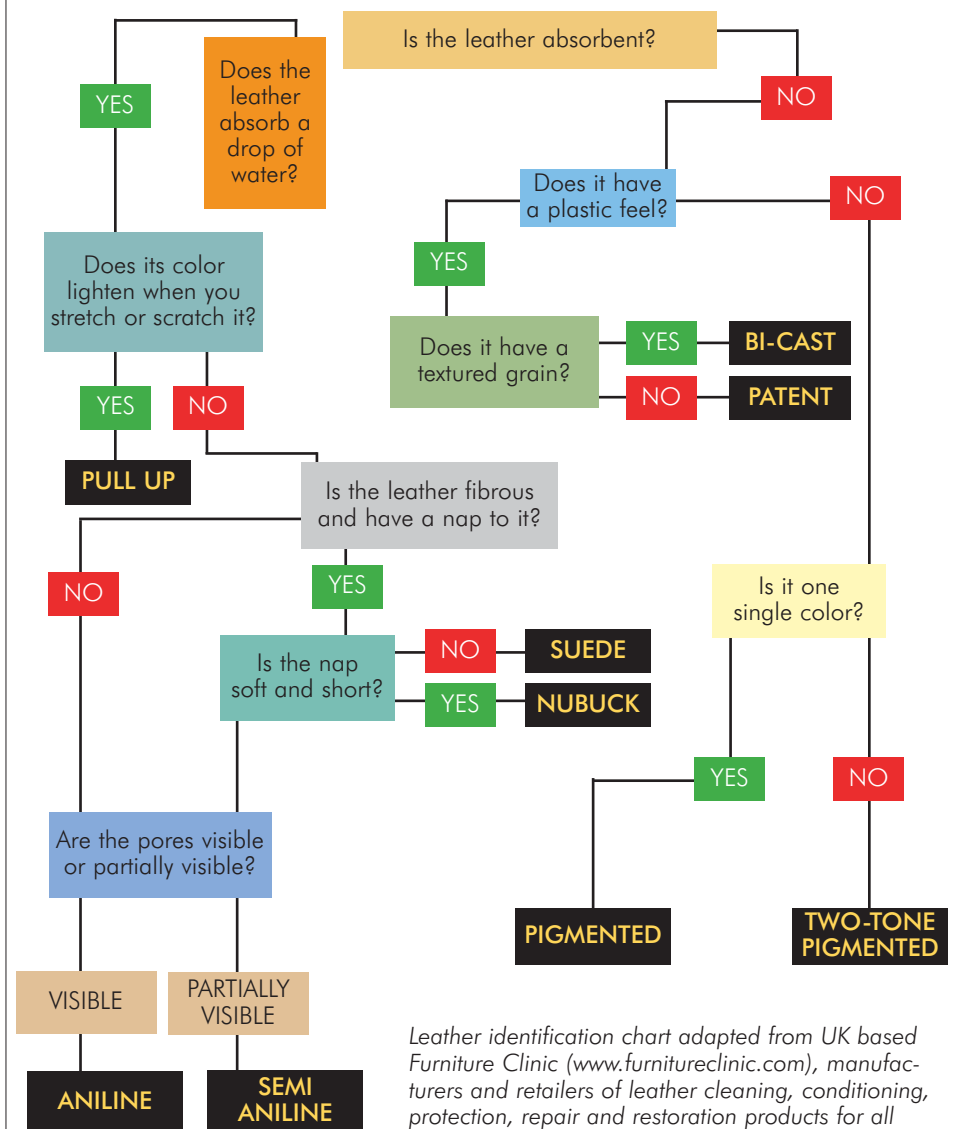
stered piece.

MARSHALL UNIT: Coil springs inserted in separate pockets and then joined together to form cushions.

MATTE: Dull Finish.

MILLING: A natural softening process that is achieved by tumbling leather in a drum.

Leather Identification Chart



LEATHER

MINERAL TANNED: Leathers tanned with any of several mineral substances, notably the salts of chromium, aluminum and zirconium.

MOTTLED FINISH: The result of blending closely related colors to achieve a spotty or splotchy appearance.

NATURAL MARKINGS: The subtle markings on leather are analogous to fingerprints. They distinguish genuine leather from man-made materials. Other marks appearing on the surface of leather are healed scratches, barbed wire marks, wrinkles, brands and insect holes. Gross imperfections are normally cut out of the finished product. Lower priced leathers tend to have many more markings than premium leather.

NU-BUK LEATHER: A pure aniline leather that has a slight nap, but is not a suede. Nu-Buks are top grain leathers that are more durable than suede (made from the split flesh side of the hide). They are aniline dyed, but since they have no pigmented top coat, they may be treated with a chemical that promotes water and stain resistance. Nu-Buk

leather should be maintained by occasionally fluffing the fibers vigorously with a suede brush. A damp white cloth can be used to clean spills, which can then be blotted dry. Specialized cleaners are available. Soaps should be avoided.

NUDE FINISH: A leather that is usually vat dyed, but has little or no protective top coat to prevent creaking, cracking or staining.

PATINA: A luster that naturally occurs when uncoated leathers age.

PIGMENT FINISH: The coloring of a hide using a coating containing opaque pigments. The use of pigment finishes insure uniformity of shade and resistance to fading as well as enhanced stain and soil resistance.

PLATING: The process which smoothes the finished surface of leather or produces embossed surface effects.

PROTECTED ANILINE: Protected aniline leather is less expensive and more common than pure aniline or semi-aniline leather. Its coloration is more consistent because it has been coated with protective pigments. The leather's natural markings are less noticeable. These protected leathers are more heavily pigmented than semi-aniline leather and are actually easier to clean than pure aniline leather because surface pigments repel water and stains... standing up well to heavy use.

PU LEATHER: See Split Leather.

PULL-UP: Aniline dyed leather with an oiled or waxed finish that is pulled tight during the upholstering process, developing areas that become lighter as they are stretched. This result is known as pull-up.

PURE ANILINE: Leather that is aniline dyed but has not been coated with pigmented finishes. It shows all the natural

character and markings.

SAUVAGE: A two-tone effect that adds depth to the leather.

SEMI-ANILINE DYED: Term used to describe dyed leather which contains only a small amount clear or pigmented coating (finish). It is a premium product which allows the natural character of the leather to show through.

SIDE LEATHER: Grain leather which has been cut in half forming two "sides" in order to better accommodate tannery equipment and maximize the use of hides with flaws.

SNUFFED: Grain leather which, in addition to hair removal, has had the outer surface lightly removed by buffing.

SOAKING: One step in the processing of raw hides. Soaking restores moisture to newly received cured hides. This process involves soaking the hide in water, wetting agents and disinfectants.

SPLIT: The term 'split' refers to the underneath layer of the hide that's been split off from the top grain. Splits are usually given a suede or pigmented polyurethane finish, embossed and used for shoes or garments. Split hides are generally thicker and stiffer than top grain leather and may also be used in less expensive upholstered furniture applications on backs and side panels.

SPLITTING & SHAVING: After hides are tanned and excess moisture removed, they are fed through a machine to cut the hide into a valuable top grain portion and split layer. After splitting, the hide is put through another machine to shave it to a uniform thickness.

STRUCK THROUGH: The dyeing of leather can be controlled by the manufacturer to either fully or partially penetrate it. Since full penetration requires more dye, leather that has been fully penetrated is more costly to produce than leather that has only been superficially (the flesh and grain surfaces) penetrated. Leather that has been fully penetrated with dye is known as fully struck through leather. If it has only been superficially dyed, it is called partially struck through.



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LEATHER

SUEDE: Leather finished by buffing with an emery wheel to produce a napped surface. Suede is made from layers split off from the top grain portion of the hide.

SUEDED SPLIT: See suede.

SUEDED PIGSKIN: Sueded pigskins are available in garment weight and upholstery weight. The upholstery weight is probably the most durable suede on the market.

TABLE FINISHING: A full pigment finishing system applied on top of a neutral or contrasting color back.

TANNING: A chemical process that converts a raw hide into a stable product. This process is often accomplished in large vats or drums.

TANNING AGENTS: Today's upholstery

leathers are tanned with soluble chromium sulfate. Synthetic tanning and vegetable materials derived from plants and wood (bark tanning) may also be used in combination.

THICKNESS OR WEIGHT: Measured in millimeters which, when divided by 0.4 is quoted in ounces.

TOP COAT: Synthetic transparent polyurethane resins applied as a protective coating.

TOP GRAIN: Leather that includes the top portion of the hide... the part that had hair on it. The top grain portion can be processed into full grain or corrected grain leather. The top grain portion of the hide is approximately 3/64" or about the thickness of a penny.

TRIMMING: Trimming, siding and fleshing are operations performed on the hide which remove excess tissue.

TUFTING: See "button tufted".

UNHAIRING: After soaking hides, hair is removed. Unhairing destroys the hair root so it comes free from the hide and loosens the outer skin that covers the grain.

WAX FINISH: Full aniline leather treated with a wax or oil finish that can give it a worn look. See Pull Up.

WEBBING: Interwoven natural (or synthetic) strips that provide a foundation for many upholstered arms, backs, seats and wings.

WELTING: Cord wrapped in fabric used to trim upholstery seams and places where the fabric meets exposed wood.

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100 YEARS DONE RIGHT

Success Stories: Critelli's makes a big deal of its centenary celebration.

by Janet Holt-Johnstone

When an entrepreneurial organization reaches its century mark there's a sneaking suspicion that its principals might just tend to coast a little, quiet afternoons at the golf course, sleepy weekends at Key West, wherever their fantasy takes them... just let the business run itself.

But try spending time with Critelli's fourth-generation president, Joe, and any such notions rapidly disappear! Sparks fly when Joe addresses the future. He actively utilizes every nuance of the past's dynamic momentum, his energy sweeping you aboard Critelli's magic flying carpet for a thrill-a-minute ride!

Joe, with his Team, plotted the strategies surrounding the activities for their centenary celebrations with all the skill of a latter-day Sun Tzu and his nimble cohorts.

Then, at High Point Market, he hired a consulting group. Their mission, to maintain the trajectory and

initiate an educative process, reaffirming effective past and current practices. The topspin, to introduce inspiration and direction to cope with and transcend the movements of our rapidly-evolving marketplace.

"After 100 years, there are clearly more than a few things all our people do very well indeed," affirmed Joe. "But we've always been vitally interested in how to do it better. Basically, how to guide and encourage our clients and prospects to find the very best possible furniture and accessory choices for their homes, offices, cottages or any project important to them. To help them capture their dreams.

"We've spent much of our professional time within the ambience of our two stores (Critelli's Fine Furniture and

Transitions) with furniture brands we know and understand intimately. We have been able to improve our sales team's ability to successfully connect with our clients to some degree. Profitability Consulting Group will train all departments of our staff on best industry practices. We've already experienced three intense training weeks (as of the last weekend of July) and at least seven more weeks are tightly scheduled from August 2014 forward.

"Other, larger operations, many having multi-store locations in more urban markets, have been exposed to so many challenges and have benefitted from their greater experience. Working now with our consultants, who've been observing us closely for several weeks, we have the same opportunity here on home ground to learn from larger companies that understand 'best practices' in every aspect of their operations. We intend to isolate the weak areas in our operation and improve upon them with the knowledge of what other good operations have learned.

"I hired PCG as an investment in the compa-

"Clients engaged in buying traditional/transitional furnishings at Critelli's will walk over to Transitions to choose something in European contemporary."



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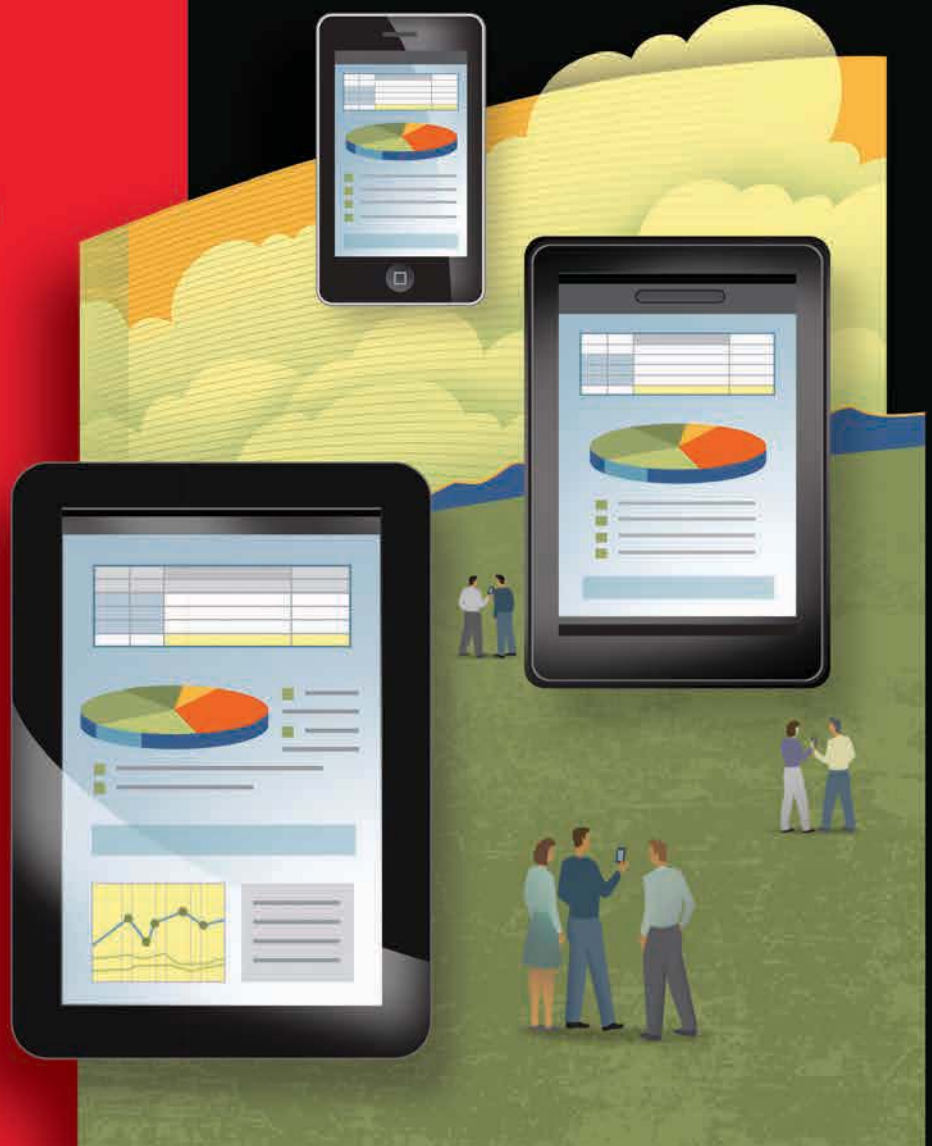
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Baroque Masters, Inc
Berg Furniture USA
Bolton Furniture
Bramble Co, The
C.R. Plastic Products
California Kids
Camaflexi
CDI International Inc
Chandra Rugs
Clayton Marcus
Coast Lamp Mfg
Copeland Furniture
Creative Accents Area Rugs
Dimplex North America Ltd
Dynasty Gallery

East Enterprises Inc
Eleanor Rigby Leather Co, The
Elementary
Elements International Group, LLC
F.C.I.
Forever Green Art
Four Hands
Furniture Classics, Ltd
Hallmart Collectibles, Inc
Hammock Source, The
Hinkle Chair Company
Home Texco,
a division of Rizzy Home
Home Trends & Design
Hommax Furniture
IMG USA
Inada Massage Chairs
Indian Art Place / Trade
International
India's Heritage, Inc
Jaipur
Jozefina Art Glass, Inc
Kaleen Rugs, Inc
Lauren Galleries, Inc
Lifestyles USA, Inc
LR Resources
Maxwood Furniture / Maxtrix
Mercana Art Decor

Muniz
New Pacific Direct
One World
Orian Rugs Inc
Panama Jack Outdoor
Pelican Reef Wicker
Pinestone Furniture
Plexi-Craft
Positive Posture
Red Horse Signs
Rizzy Home
Robin Bruce
Rowe Fine Furniture, Inc
RuffSawn
Rug Factory Plus
SAMS International
Sheex
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MAGNOLIA CASUAL
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Asian Loft USA
Barbara Barry
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Big Fish Art
Bokara Rug Co., Inc.
Brunschwig & Fils
Busbin
Capel Rugs
Carvers' Guild
Century Furniture, LLC
Curations Limited

Drexel Heritage
Due Process Stable Trading Co
Feizy Rugs
Habersham
Henredon
Hickory Chair
Highland House
Iconic Pineapple
Kalaty Rug Corp
Kravet
Kravet Fabrics
Kravet Furniture
LaBarge
Lane Venture
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Joseph Critelli founded the store (top left photo circa 1902, Niagara Falls, Ontario) that carried general provisions & groceries. In 1912 he financed the first Critelli's store that stocked furniture in Thorold, Ontario run by his son, Thomas (top right).



Thomas H. Critelli is shown standing in his store in 1949 (bottom left). Critelli's store in downtown St. Catharines showroom is shown in a photo taken in 1961 (bottom right).



ny and in our people. And in providing better service to our clients here and now and in the future. We ask ourselves relevant questions. For example, if we're only dealing with furniture as a commodity we are not emphasizing what's so very different about us from the box stores! So, what is it that's different? We're not interested in one-and-done selling; we're interested in creating totally satisfied lifetime clients.

"We're examining specific strategies used over the past decade to remain relevant to volatile markets. What have we been doing right?" Joe, obviously enjoying himself, said, "Well, this exercise is not at all work to me, it's partly reveling in my truly fascinating occupation and partly it's my favorite hobby! And I believe that to be true of every member of our Team."

Let's backtrack a bit. How did the previous three generations of highly moti-

vated Critelli's accomplish so much? What's the foundation and philosophy that led to the conception of Critelli's Fine Furniture, Canada's Niagara Region's most notable source of "classic traditional to transitional contemporary" styling? And Transitions, "classic contemporary to European and urban modern" design?

Back 10 years ago, at the time of Critelli's 90th anniversary, Joe traced the family's history for us. He told us about that other energetic, assertive young man, also, coincidentally named Joe Critelli, who arrived with a bit of a flourish in Niagara in the bustling early 1900s. A successful contractor, he didn't come to Canada from Italy by himself, but "brought with him his own workers from Italy to help create the vast new hydroelectric projects at the Falls on both sides of the border between Canada and the U.S." The group flour-

"We're not interested in one-and-done selling; we're interested in creating totally satisfied lifetime clients."

ished and Joe's great-grandfather made the decision to put down roots, call Canada home and raise a large and happy family.

In 1914, as was tradition, he set up his son, Thomas, in business. He chose the village of Thorold, and a retail establishment inventorying hardware, groceries and, because Thomas boasted a genetic creativity and feeling for design, fine furniture. The business thrived and 12 years later Thomas opened a second

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100 YEARS DONE RIGHT

store with his brother, Frank, this outlet at the town of Niagara Falls. Thomas preferred to concentrate on Thorold, partly because of the business growth implicit in the exciting construction boom along the Welland Canal. Canada, like the Critellis, was in expansion mode.

Three years later, the Critellis opened a third store, this in downtown St. Catharines. Their optimism and energy encouraged rapid growth and, a few years later, in order to concentrate on the new, swiftly blossoming enterprise, Thomas sold the Thorold outlet to a group of employees.

In 1946, Thomas's son, Thomas Joseph, Joe's father, joined him in the venture. Fifteen years later with four showrooms and an on-site warehouse, the family knew that expansion was vital, so by 1963 they had built the King Street location, closed the Niagara Falls store, and "everything came together under one roof".

Warm memories surfaced when Joe remembered "the early days of the store. It was truly a family business. My father worked in the store and raised a family of six kids. We all had a taste of the business early in our lives, participating in every aspect. My grandfather enjoyed the operation tremendously and worked with us until he was 89." (In turn, again following familial genetic exuberance,

Joe's father and third president, Tom, now at 87, while confessing to occasionally working on his golf game, still takes a very active interest in the business!)

Joe officially became a member of the company in 1980 and in, 1989, claimed ownership. That same year, his sister, Misette, strengthened the executive Team and, three years later, as a major thrust in Joe's search for new ways to meet customers' needs, he launched nearby Transitions, the beautiful store Misette ably manages.

Critelli's Fine Furniture and Transitions complement one another perfectly. "It often happens that clients engaged in buying traditional/transitional furnishings at Critellis will walk over to Transitions to choose something in European contemporary to suit another aspect of their project. It works wonderfully well."

It stands to reason that Joe "Just loves going to Market!" Along with other recent adventures, he met the principals of his consulting firm there. He also heard Jerry Epperson's always timely Market message. Jerry noted that "Over 50 per cent of stores open 10 years ago are now closed." A startling revelation and a warning flag for retailers.

Said Joe, "For some of us the industry seems in fine shape at least superficially.

Critelli's at this point in time couldn't be better, we're enjoying the game!" Correctly optimistic, but flags should always be examined and acted upon.

Positive action incorporates "The celebration of our centenary with our clients and our community. I guess it's pretty obvious that we're all very proud to be a small part of what we are convinced will be an even better city and region very soon."

The Events, Sales, Campaigns, Milestones and Projects Marking Critelli's 100th Anniversary.

- "We opened our seventh showroom and fourth building in downtown St. Catharines in preparation for our Anniversary on November 1st, 2012, adding 80 feet of King Street frontage and great client parking for our existing two buildings at Critelli's main store location.
- "CritelliFurniture.com and TransitionsFurniture.com websites were completely rebuilt, becoming a better resource for our clients and prospective clients, April to October, 2013. In January/ February we received 20,000 and 21,000 unique visitors to the two websites combined each month.
- "At the Greater Niagara Home and Garden Show, the Scotiabank Centre March 21-23, 2014, we were featured as Critelli's Designer Show Home. We



Critelli's third store in downtown St. Catharines, Ontario 1961 (left) and Critelli's today.





CRITELLI'S

FURNITURE

furnished 600 square feet of fully decorated room settings and won Best of Show!

- "The CFUW, Canadian Federation of University Women's House Tour. We were the Title Sponsor, helping to raise funds to further the post-secondary education of young women here in Niagara. And we had a blast, hosting the House Tour After Party at Critelli's, Sunday, May 4th, 2014, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., with 300 guests and volunteers." Joe laughed, "We had just 250 wine glasses and my wife, JoAnne, and our daughters had to wash two or three dozen to keep up with the traffic! (More about this!)"
- "Profitability Consulting Group came on board to professionally train all departments of our staff!"
- "Two YWCA Friend Raising Evenings will be held at Transitions, September 16th and 18th, 2014, to help the YWCA find community volunteers to assist in raising capital for an important new YWCA community investment. Missette Critelli is a member of the YWCA Board and is hosting these evenings."
- "The Critelli Furniture and Meridian Credit Union Community Fund Raising Program, dates tentatively November

1st, 2014 to January 31st, 2015.

Critelli's will help by providing several Stressless Mayfair Leather Office Chairs to Meridian Credit Union's Branch Offices across Niagara and Hamilton. The Meridian Centre and other Meridian Branch Offices have been considered, details to be determined in follow-up meetings. Meridian Credit Union marketing will assist us in driving this fund raising program with 100 per cent of the funds collected by Meridian ear-marked for local charities, also to be determined. The Meridian Centre, a new spectator facility, is a fabulous addition to our downtown and we are excited to be involved with Meridian in their fund raising program and future community initiatives.

- "Critelli's 100 Years' Celebration Anniversary Sale, September 12th to October 25th. Each of our valued suppliers will be participating to help us build this event into our greatest sale in 100 years! We're preparing for weekly draws, unprecedented savings on all our brands and even some free furniture giveaways. Our store will be closed to the public after Labor Day for about one week to prepare for the sale. One of my jobs is to price and move furniture! We will run a few private sale days for our valued clients

providing them with the first opportunity to shop our sale while the store remains closed to the public. Added staff that know our products and have worked with us in the past from across Canada will help us run this sale. Naturally, there will be a spike in our advertising across Niagara and into other adjacent markets in Southwestern Ontario.

- "The Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce. Critelli's will be hosting their 'Business After Five' event, Tuesday, November 4th, 2014, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. We'll be celebrating business and community and enjoying some great social networking with business friends, local and regional political friends, clients, staff and family."
- "We'll co-host with the Niagara Community Foundation, headed by Liz Palmieri. It's a great opportunity to present their initiatives to the business community."
- "We are also co-hosting with M. K. Rittenhouse & Sons, family owned and operated here in St. Catharines, also celebrating their 100th anniversary. Surely it's rare that two companies in the same city reach that milestone in the same year! Rittenhouse manufactures and distributes fine horticultural

"We want our customers to feel so relaxed that they feel they can call us for help in five days or five years after their purchase. Whatever their problem, they will get good help from us."



The House Tour After Party at Critelli's showroom.

equipment and tools to green industry. Their expansive e-commerce website and outstanding customer service have made them one of the leading companies within their industry across North America. Both Critelli's and Rittenhouse are active supporters of the Niagara Community Foundation and, of course, the Chamber of Commerce. Liz, Mark Rittenhouse and I will plan a great and fun event together. Our favorite Niagara wineries and catering will be an important part of our planning to help make this an evening of fun and fellowship.

"With each occasion where we've had the pleasure of hosting a large group of well-qualified individuals in our stores, it has generally had a very positive and fairly immediate impact on our sales results."

Now, some more detail on the very popular annual Canadian Federation of University Women's fundraiser! Not only is the cause notably both worthy and timely, it also provides plenty of energetic fun for volunteers and participants alike. The CFUW is one of Canada's oldest organizations, founded in 1919, the membership across Canada about 10,000 strong. Two hundred and forty of those numbers are members of the St. Catharines's branch, an extremely active group. The House Tour is their main fundraiser to award scholarships to graduating women in area high schools, as well as four scholarships at Brock, and two at Niagara College. And this year just happened to be the fortieth anniversary of the Tour. It's focused on community entirely, community members open up their homes, is totally volunteer-run, and businesses in the area heavily support the event. A thousand bright, highly noticeable posters were hand-colored by kids from schools in the area. Local photographer Ian Ransberry photographed the homes' exteriors for the tickets, and local artist, Chris Liszak created a water color of each home as a

Pictured (l-r) is Thomas H Critelli (2nd generation) and Thomas J. Critelli (3rd generation)..



gift to the homeowners for opening up their homes to the public.

Said Joe, "As title sponsors this year we really hoped to get out the message. A lot of people participate because they get to see some beautiful houses, but they can also feel great about helping to sponsor young women advancing their post-secondary educations.

"Tickets are \$25, there were five houses to view, the visitor was provided with a map and capable volunteers manned each home and discussed their

unique features. Every year there is a big "after" party, this year at Critelli's." Joe said, "It was a great finish to a wonderful day. We staged a presentation on decorating your home. One of our designers, Verna Allan, was both mastermind and presenter. And Sarah Lanigan, Curator and Director of The Stickley Museum of Fayetteville, New York, gave a virtual tour through the history of Stickley, one of the world's most well-known manufacturers of fine furniture."

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Spring sale brochure features Critelli's 100 year logo. Also, 4th generation Misette Critelli who joined the company in 1989 and President, Joe Critelli.



A moment of history came alive for Misette when she, "Received a yardstick from our customer Peter Theriault, a retired engineer with the City of St. Catharines. Years ago my grandfather gave this yardstick to Peter's father. It originally came from the St. Catharines's Standard, our local newspaper. I remember our father using this same yardstick to measure the size of daily ads. Our Critelli store name, the old five digit telephone number and original downtown James Street address are embossed on the yardstick that now has come full circle, a measurement of our time in the business.

"Our 100th Anniversary for me ties in with another 100th family anniversary that we recently celebrated as founding members of St. Ann's Catholic Church which still stands in operation today on Buchanan Avenue in Niagara Falls, Ontario. The Critelli family brought their first parish priest from Italy to help start St. Ann's Church. It was a busy year for the Critelli family, 100 years ago." And now!

Joe acknowledged how much pleasure both family and staff are experiencing as a result of the promotions and happenings marking the 100th anniversary. But he is realistic that, "Nostalgia is not what the next client or potential client is considering when crossing Critelli's or Transitions' thresholds. She/he is naturally focused on their own personal project. All of us in the business recognize that today's consumer is now far more 'educated' than in the past. Our job is to constantly be on the learning curve, too, improving our craft, finding better ways to provide information and service when they come into the store. Gathering information from them,

then being able to say, 'Can I show you this example or price range?'

"The way furniture is being purchased on a daily basis is different from prior to the coming of the Internet. In fact, the Internet has given power to the consumer and we need to earn their trust. It could be said that we are 'selling' on the Internet now, not literally, but with the tools of the constantly changing scene of our website, we send weekly reminders to key people about happenings at the stores, not just sales but events, new inventory, anything newsworthy. We are making our messages friendly, fun, educational, not pushy. We use very frequent e-mails.

"There is old media and new media and we are, like everyone else, adjusting to changing times. The old media is still very important to a very important segment of Critelli's demographic! But the new media is quickly becoming the most vital place to be. The life and breath of our company is based on the ability to convert prospects to new clients.

"There's no doubt at all that we have to have our feet in both 'boats' and at some point you will know you have to get into one of those boats. Time will tell when we make the decision to embark in the new boat, embracing the new media! It's both the greatest competition and the greatest opportunity.

"We have been and are making improvements in small things, for instance, delivery by appointment. It is so important to call and tell clients if you are going to be late. They must perceive that we understand their needs and respect their time.

"And we must exceed their expectations. Perhaps a customer has ordered a piece of furniture over the 'phone. That

It was one of those gratifying happenings when everyone benefited. And had a wonderful time.

Misette Critelli is justifiably proud of Transitions participation in the anniversary events. "The two YWCA Friend Raising events are unique to Transitions and are close to my heart. And, of course, we're involved in conjunction with Critelli's in the 100 Year Anniversary Sale. As well as the Professional Staff Training that we're currently experiencing company wide.

"I returned full time to the business in 1989. I'd looked after the accounting in Critelli's business office for many years, and when Joe had the idea to expand we decided I would manage our new Transitions store."

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"With some training she was able to jump right in and do what great sales managers do. That is, provide feedback, measure results on a consistent basis."

particular item is available in four sizes. Then the one they receive doesn't quite fit. Even though it is the one they ordered! So we put the piece of furniture back on our truck and tell them, not to worry, we will sort it out. They will get the piece they really want and need.

"We are devoting a week of staff training to mastering the art of helping people make the right selections and this can involve home visits. The question, how best to work with customers. Even if we are just selling a sofa here in the store, how we might help them make the best choice.

Furniture World asked Profitability Consulting's CEO John Egger about his experience working with Critelli's. "Joe has a very good business," he told us, "and after 100 years in business he decided to get even better, take it to the next level. And, as it turned out, he needed some help in the back end to save money, in the office, and also with the sales team.

"The sales team we found at Critelli's was very experienced and traditional. They were good quality people with designer training who had never been exposed to a proper UP system or a true selling process. Their performance ranged from excellent down to below average. There were large performance variances that called out for some sales training but, more importantly, they needed quality sales management of the process we were training. I really believe that sales training is worthless without good sales management.

"We found a unique situation at Critelli's because there was a person on staff who wasn't involved in sales management but had the perfect profile for being a great sales manager. And it happened to be Joe Critelli's sister Misette who has the discipline, intelligence and respect of the entire team. With some training she was able to jump

right in and do what great sales managers do. That is, provide feedback, measure results on a consistent basis so every team member knows how they are doing and how they compare to the store's averages. Over time sales will increase.

"From there we trained the sales staff on basic in-store selling as a unified process.

"They didn't need design training, but they did benefit from proper house call instruction so they could work a system that's developed and measurable, so that no matter which member of the team waits on a customer or does a house call, the store will get a similar result and the customer will get a consistent level of service."

Speaking of service, Joe followed up with the question, "What creates customer service issues? A multitude of reasons! And we want our customers to feel so relaxed that they feel they can call us for help in five days or five years after their purchase. Perhaps they made a

mistake in their selection. Maybe there was an accident in their home with a piece of furniture. Whatever their problem, they will get good help from us."

Here's an example from Transitions' files, clients Marsha and Ted. "Hi, Misette and Melanie, I've been meaning to drop you a line to tell you how great the chair cushions worked out! Forgive me for getting distracted and taking so long to email you about this. The chair is MUCH more comfortable! We're not sinking into it with our arms way up on the arm rests, like the King and Queen of Apsley, Ontario! The higher seat also looks like more of a match with the couch now, so all in all I think it worked out great. Thank you for your concern with this problem and for your efforts in working with Harden on our behalf to make sure we were happy with the result. It is very much appreciated."

Not to be outdone, Joe provided a story from Britney, of Hamilton, Ontario. She was eager to see and try the Stickley Eastwood chair prior to a possible pur-



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CRITELLI'S
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100 YEARS OF STYLE

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To celebrate the 40th Annual CFUW House Tour, we welcome all ticket-holders and volunteers to join us for an After Party.
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Critelli's is a proud sponsor of the 40th Annual House Tour which, through funds raised, helps young women in our community achieve success in post-secondary education and also helps local women & children in need.

CRITELLI'S
critellifurniture.com

In 1914, Thomas H. Critelli opened the family's first retail store, selling groceries, hardware & furniture in the town of Thorold. His natural creativity and design instincts quickly lured him to the finest furniture available.

The company thrived through the years, and through succeeding generations (Thomas H.'s son, Thomas J. joined in 1946, and his son Joseph joined in 1980). In 2002, Critelli's opened a second store, "Transitions New Lifestyle Furniture" which is managed by Joe's sister Missette.

Critelli's Furniture features a variety of fine furniture brands including Stickley, Barrymore, Stressless, Harden, American Leather, Stanley, and West.

"Every year there is a big 'after' (House Tour) party. This year we staged a presentation on decorating your home and The Stickley Museum gave a virtual tour through the history of Stickley."

25 years in sales myself, I appreciate this fine balance!) You can be sure that we will be back to Critelli's when we are looking for our next pieces. Now I have to pry myself out of my new chair and go to work! Britney."

Over the past decade some of Critelli's and Transitions' suppliers inevitably have changed. "Gibbard*, of course, has gone. We handled the whole Gibbard line. Now we have Stickley, similarly very fine furniture that you can be proud of. There is a group of people who collect Stickley and we have lots of Stickley clients. We deal with West Brothers, Dinec, Stanley, Our House, Hancock and Moore, Jessica Charles, Henredon, Woodbridge, Bermex, Harden, Jonathan Charles, Nichols and Stone and Barrymore. And Magniflex Mattress, an amazing line. It's totally 100 per cent green, no chemicals, built just outside Florence, Italy, compacted and air-shipped to our store.

"In accessories our prime suppliers are Theodore Alexander, Maitland Smith, Wildwood, Christopher Guy for hand-carved mirrors, Art and Frame Source and Left Bank Art."

At Transitions, Missette "has added Stressless, American Leather, Calligaris, Dinec, BDI, Thayer Coggin and Copeland Furniture".

To reach their much expanded customer base, Joe initiates warmly-crafted, informative direct mail three times each year, "and probably should be doing it more often. We purchase lists of better

neighborhoods. And we use CHCH-TV, Hamilton, two or three times a week, radio for special events and sales and definitely print since an important part of our demographic still likes to hold a newspaper!"

Ninety-five per cent of Critelli's and Transitions' sales are centered in the Hamilton/Burlington/Oakville area with occasional forays across Canada and to Europe.

Looking ahead, Missette commented, "My projection for the future of fine furniture is that while it remains an art to encourage new purchases of furniture that will become family heirlooms, it will always be a fine balance of science and art. We will be keeping up with modern technology and continuing the 'touch, feel and sit' that are so important to keep the furniture and the furniture shopping experience unique. All that while we continually improve to keep the staff and clients engaged for the next generation."

Missette talked of "Joe's wife, JoAnne, and daughters Julia and Marisa" who "help out at special events when they get the opportunity to".

Joe added, "JoAnne truly has been key to any success the company has enjoyed. She has been the best mother, raising our three girls, enthusiastically coordinating the needs of our children plus a few of their friends all along the way. Our planned company events are very special thanks to JoAnne's ability to organize well, and her attention to the

chase since she had a history of back problems. She asked if it would still be available at sale price since the sale date had passed. Joe encouraged her to visit the store and, a few days later, received this email. "Joe and Verna! I just wanted to let you know how thrilled I am with my new chair. This is a dream I have had for many years and you both have made it a reality! Verna was an exceptional saleswoman. Her knowledge of the furniture and her balance of being there to answer any questions without being 'pushy' in sales makes her a terrific sales person for this line. (With

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"No matter which member of the team waits on a customer or does a house call, the store will get a similar result and the customer will get a consistent level of service."

details that make it fun for our clients and staff. It has been a pleasure thinking about the future of Critelli's while confident the family and home has always been well taken care of by JoAnne."

We remarked on Joe's seemingly unstoppable energy and vitality and wondered how he and his family continued to maintain the pace. His response, "Our parents certainly gave us a great example of eating well. I'm sure, like so many others, I'm always aiming to

improve my diet along with intended regular exercise. But, just like business, sometimes it all works out well. And other times a good movie, some Niagara wine and a pizza (on a comfortable sofa!) provides us with a better perspective for tomorrow!"

"The immediate future? November has always been our strongest month for sales over the past four years, and I certainly expect the same or better results this November with all of our events and

programs in place.

"This business always provides us with a constantly changing future that is guaranteed to challenge us every single day!"

**Note: Gibbard Furniture Shops, Napanee, Ontario, an iconic Canadian firm founded before Confederation in 1835, were manufacturers of high quality beautifully hand finished solid wood furniture, their president, much-honored Bruce McPherson. The company closed in 2008.*

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BIENENSTOCK FURNITURE LIBRARY DEBUTS...

The High Point, North Carolina based Bienenstock Furniture Library, announced that it will debut the Hadley Court Center For Design Collaboration during the October High Point show.

The collaborative space designed by Christy Spangle, ASID includes state-of-the art audio/visual equipment and interactive furnishings.

Made possible through a generous gift by Leslie Hendrix Wood, founder of the award winning design blog, HADLEY COURT (<http://hadley-court.com/blog>), the Center is available for use by appointment for the

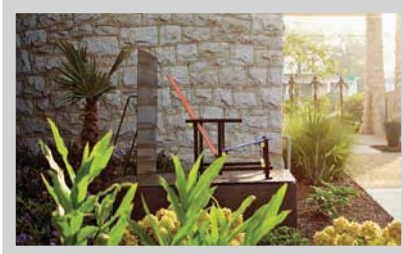
following purposes.

- *Classes, presentations and seminars that can be streamed/recorded.*
- *Moderated events/ round table meetings.*
- *Design meetings.*
- *Product launches.*
- *Brainstorming sessions.*
- *Marketing/ design presentations.*
- *Collaboration sessions with or without off site participants.*
- *Board meetings.*

Russell Bienenstock, President of the

Board of Directors of the library said in his announcement: "It is our intention to make The Furniture Library accessible to anyone who has an interest in design, collaboration and connection regardless of where they live or work. The Hadley Court Center for Design Collaboration is a high tech meeting room that makes this possible. It will be used by designers, students, manufacturers, academics, industry associations and local High Point civic/ cultural organizations for projects, seminars, meetings and educational events. The facility now has the ability to bring in off site partici-

Pictured at right is the Hadley Court Center For Design Collaboration, first edition Chippendale, and view from the Pat Plaxico Garden.



High Point's Furniture Library adds state-of-the-art facility during the October High Point Market.



THE HADLEY COURT CENTER

pants to share an on-site experience."

In making this contribution, Leslie Wood noted, "the furniture and design industries are so fortunate to have an invaluable resource like the Bienenstock Library. The Library is an integral part of preserving the history of furniture design for future generations. Hadley court is honored to be able to be a part of making the library accessible to anyone and offering technology where collaborative efforts can be fostered. She added, "the best designs are practical and come from the heart. What's important are relationships and new technological tools that have the potential to connect like-minded souls across the world."

The Library will kick off the Hadley Court Center with it's first "Speaking Volumes" presentation. Well known interior designer Mary Douglas

Drysdale (<http://www.marydouglas-drysdale.com>) will speak about how to implement effective furniture and interior design collaborations. Seating is limited to 25, but visitors will watch the presentation in real time or view it later via an online link.

About Bernice Bienenstock Furniture Library: A worldwide center for research, design and collaboration, the Library holds the world's largest collection of rare and significant books on the history and design of furniture dating from 1640. Founded in 1970 by the Bienenstock family, the Library is devoted to the advancement of knowledge with an emphasis on design, furniture, interiors, architecture, textiles, finishes, and constructions.

The Library's exceptional facilities include the Vuncannon seminar room, the Pat Plaxico Garden, and Hadley

"A high tech space to collaborate on projects, hold seminars, meetings and educational events, the facility now has the ability to bring in off site participants to share the on-site experience."

Court Center for Design Collaboration Most Library services are free, and donations are welcome. For more information or to use the Library's facilities for an event, contact Karla Webb at 336-883-4011. Visit the Library at 1009 North Main Street, High Point, NC, just a mile north of the Market's center, or go to www.furniturelibrary.com.

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