VOLUME 138 NO.5 SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2008

Special Features

SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE WHY CREATE A SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE SCRIPT FOR CONSUMER SEMINAR - FABRICS

URNITURE

JR

•What Drives Store Traffic Now? •Customers Judge You In The Blink Of An Eye •Top Ten Store Lighting Cost Saving Tips •Use New Technology To Boost GMROI - Part 2 •Same Day Service Call Experiment •What Are Those Crazy Store Owners Thinking?

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Cover: Featured is the White Diamond Sleep System from the Precious Gems Collection by luxury visco memory foam-bedding manufacturer **Joya Sleep Systems**. Joya Sleep Systems uses soy-based PureForm visco memory foam and high resilience core foam that include a minimum of 15% soy, and feature the latest in environmentally friendly technology. The TV show, "Designing Spaces" selected this Sleep System to be featured in their "Living Green Sleep Solutions" segment in October. Based in High Point, NC, Joya Sleep Systems by Garme, is the North American division of Garme Colchones of Valencia, Spain, one of the largest bedding manufacturers in Europe. See the Joya Sleep Systems ad

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When you go to pbteen.com (pottery barn teen), click on the "Visit Stylehouse" section to see how teenagers can upload their room designs, vote on the best designs, register to win prizes and much more. The pbteen.com website can give any marketer or visual display person great insight into what kids like and find interesting.

What You Need To Know About Solidify your customer base, energize your sales force,

attract a new buyer generation & generate revenue.

Internet Marketing By Leslie Carothers

hat is social networking? Can furniture retailers use it to drive real and "virtual" traffic? If so, how do you implement it and what factors do you need to take into consideration before setting up a social networking area on your website?

Wikipedia-www.wikipedia.org (a free online encyclopedia managed and developed collaboratively by volunteers) defines social networking as "the building of online communities of people who share interests and activities, or who are interested in exploring the activities and interests of others."

There are now over 200 social networking sites in daily use by millions of people around the world and thousands more niche social networks (also known as vertical social networks) made possible by services such as ning.com and KickApps.com.

To give you some idea of the valuations of these sites, Facebook has been valued at \$15 billion, Bebo at \$850 million and LinkedIn at \$1 Billion. If you doubt this, Bebo was sold recently for this amount and Facebook and LinkedIn raised capital at those valuations. The last valuation of MySpace was \$850 million back in 2005 when it was acquired by News Corp. This is big business and could represent a significant new revenue stream for brick and mortar or multi-channel furniture retailers. You are probably asking yourself about now, "What is the revenue model?" Here is the answer:

- Manufacturers and suppliers of products you sell or related products such as window coverings for instance, will pay to advertise on your social networking site if the metrics show that you have a dedicated, core group of returning users. This can easily be tracked through Google Analytics. If you are not familiar with Analytics, see "Revenue Opportunities With Free Website Analytics" in the May/June 2008 issue of FURNITURE WORLD (posted to the marketing article archives on www.furninfo.com).
- Advertisers will pay a premium to gain access to consumers who frequent your site if they have demographic profiles that match the advertiser's marketing targets.
- Loyal site users will pay for premium level of "connectedness" on your site. LinkedIn has a revenue model based on these "value-added" services.
- Successful social network sites add



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What is the revenue model? Here is the answer.

value to organizations that provide them. In addition to boosting long term customer loyalty and sales for your organization, there is the possibility that someday a major media outlet may want to buy you out in order to gain access to your user base. Think HGTV, O at Home, etc. They are all searching for ways to more tightly align their advertising with "opted in" consumers (consumers who have chosen to receive content and be part of your network).

I imagine that in the future, other revenue models will sprout up as social networking sites become even more popular.

If you're still not convinced, think of it from this point of view. Let's assume that a manufacturer or distributor needs to market its products in your local or regional area. Their product, perhaps a non-furniture home improvement item, has the same target customer as you. If you have a robust SNS (social networking site) reaching 1500 engaged, active users who share information about their rooms, furniture, decorating tips, etc., you will certainly be a promising advertising outlet for this company.

Here are two excellent examples of social networking websites. One is www.pbteen.com. When you go to pb teen (pottery barn teen) you will be able to see how (in the "Visit Stylehouse" section) teenagers can upload their room designs, vote on the best designs, register to win prizes, etc. Are the kids doing it? Go see for yourself. It is inspiring and exciting to see how engaged they are. This website can give ANY marketer/visual display person great insight into what kids like and find interesting.

Another must-see site for home furnishings marketers is HGTV's "Rate My Space." If you haven't seen it yet, go to www.hgtv.com and take a look. They get 11 million visitors a MONTH and it was launched a little over a year ago! So, if you doubt that consumers will take the time to upload their pictures, post comments, share tips and information, think again.

So, what is the typical structure of a social network and how do you create one?



Social networking sites typically include the following applications:

- Profile creation for the users
- Ability to be "friends" with other users or get "introduced" to other users.
- Ability to PERSONALIZE profile pages. A great example of this can be found at the extremely successful free weight loss website www.sparkpeople.com.
- Privacy controls so users control who sees what information about them.
- Ability to upload albums of their favorite pictures, videos, podcasts or webcasts.
- Ability to create a blog within the site.
- Article sharing between users.
- Ability to rate content, so that users control the flow of information to other users. Imagine the wonderful implications of this. Your customers will tell you what they think is valuable about the furniture they've seen in your store and about the shopping experience they've had at your location(s). No more guessing. And you will get a different perspective on your customers thoughts than you might get from online or written surveys. When consumers feel in control and understand that you are changing in response to their needs, you have the ability to create a truly engaged and loyal community that sees your store brand as a "lovemark." This means they love you beyond what is reasonable, and work very hard to tell everyone they know

The www.avaliving.com site (far left), is a social networking site for interior designers that allows users to search for a room, post member profiles, start their own blogs (that clients can read), form topic groups and post ratings and reviews.

HGTV's "Rate My Space" (near left) at www.hgtv.com has 11 million visitors a month and they just started it a little over a year ago! how great you are! Think Mini Cooper, Harley Davidson, Apple and other expensive, consumer durables. Furniture retailers need to be in this game.

• Ability to hold discussions in group forums and Instant Message with other users who are online at the same time. Imagine creating an online forum where you can invite (via email) everyone to come together for an online chat about your latest introduction of a designer collection or a seminar about universal design and what furniture best fits the needs of people with disabilities and/or the elderly. Then, imagine everyone talking about it afterwards in an online discussion thread. For an example of this in action, visit Oprah's website at www.oprah.com. She is the queen of discussion forums and threads. Millions of women post

to these discussions every day.

There are other applications you might develop on your social networking site that would be especially valuable to your primarily female furniture shopping audience. One that comes to mind is an application that allows them to share favorite color combinations with other users so they can get an idea of what colors go together. Another possibility is to show small color tiles and allow users to arrange and share them. You could also create an application that allows users to "drag and drop" products into their own "mini-collections" and share them. This kind of information is immensely popular. These are great examples of how you can encourage existing consumers to teach future new consumers how to design their rooms. Maybe some of them will become salespeople for you?

This type of information could be



shared with your brick and mortar sales teams. Not only would it be highly motivating, it would also be instructive as it gets them thinking about the "what goes with what" design conundrum. With the



Wendy Liddle is a professional illustrator who also works in retail furniture sales. Comments? Email wendy@furninfo.com.

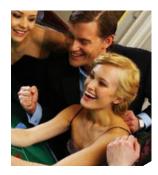


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Create a social marketing website for free by going to...

rise of eclecticism and personalization of spaces, this application could become very valuable.

How do you get started and what does it cost? You can create a niche social marketing website for free by going to www.ning.com or www.kickapps.com. There are also many companies that can customize social networking platforms based on your particular needs. For good information on those suppliers, google the following: "custom social networking sites for retailers" (include the quotes so you get the exact order of the keywords you enter in your results. Without the quotes, you will get non- relevant responses).

For a glimpse into what consumers think about social networking, let's look at a survey conducted and compiled in February of 2008 by TNS, a global provider of consumer intelligence data. The study collected responses from 4,600 primary household shoppers in eight countries - the US, China, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Spain and the United Kingdom.

- 73 percent of UK consumers predict that group buying through social networking sites online will be prevalent in 2015, as consumers seek to increase their group buying power.
- More than three quarters of consumers expect to be actively involved with the development of new products and brands by 2015. 78% of UK shoppers predict that the next generation of social networking sites will result in widespread collaboration between manufacturers and consumers. This has very important implications for retailers who MUST understand consumers' need for engagement and develop a strategy that keeps them a part of the overall development process.
- In China, a massive 95% of consumers questioned expect to be

actively engaged in collaborative shopping communities within the next seven years. If you are a retailer contemplating an overseas presence , establishing a social networking platform for your stores now could be an excellent way to introduce your brand to an international audience.

CONCLUSION

Social networking sites are here to stay and are a rapidly growing force with consumers. For the most part, with the exception of premium services users pay for, social networking sites are also free for consumers to use. They provide the ever increasing numbers of home based workers and stay-at-home moms and dads a way to still feel connected with other people with similar interests. Now people can find out what others are doing, thinking about purchasing, and buying.

Now is the time to develop your own social networking tools to unlock vibrant, loyal, collaborative and transparent relationships with our consumers which can be monetized and capitalized upon.

One last word: remember the tipping point. Social networking , according to the TNS survey, is only seven years away from mass adaptation by retailers. Be prepared to win.

Leslie Carothers, is a 25-year veteran of the home furnishings industry and the principal of The Kaleidoscope Partnership - a national company that helps retailers and manufacturers leverage the internet and their websites to powerfully and profitably impact their businesses.

Her areas of expertise include: Online reputation management; use of analytics to drive profitable growth through different business units; content writing for retail and manufacturer websites; phone and email inquiry conversion rate enhancement; and website layout for ease of consumer and consultant use and functionality. Questions on any aspect of internet marketing including how to easily manage your online reputation, can be directed to Leslie at leslie@furninfo.com. She can also be reached directly at 713.705.2482.



You can create a niche social marketing website for free by going to www.ning.com or www.kickapps.com. Take a look at the small but growing social networking site for modern furniture (pictured above) http://moderndesignsource.ning.com to get an idea of what you can do starting with ning.com.

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Decorating School Crash Course CHOOSING FABRICS

Lesson #7a: Script for a design seminar that will help your customers to make knowledgeable color, pattern and texture choices.

Editor's Note: This is the seventh article in our Decorating Crash Course series. The text is written so that you can easily use it to put on a customer seminar on fabrics in home decor. It can be presented "as is" but you should add additional elements to give your seminars a personal touch as outlined in the December/January 2007 issue of FUR-NITURE WORLD Magazine, "Simple but Sensational Seminars: Keys to a Memorable Presentation," posted to the article archives on www.furninfo.com. Decorating seminars are a fantastic way to get quality leads and referrals. They help customers to solve decorating problems, and they position you as a home furnishings expert.

"Love is a fabric which never fades, no matter how often it is washed in the water of adversity and grief." -Unknown-

SCRIPT FOR YOUR SEMINAR: THE FABRIC OF OUR LIVES

hat a fantastic quote. Too bad our sofas, chairs, and custom upholstered headboards can't keep from wearing out. The grief of rough kids play, happy and excited pets, and general family use seem to rip at the hearts of our soft home fashions. Well, we all probably know we can't keep it from happening completely, but maybe we can try to slow down the process of the Basic Skills by Margarett DeGange, M.Ed.

wear and tear on our furniture investments. Armed with knowledge about fabrics, we can make good buying choices when it comes time to replace what we have. These choices should be based on how long a piece will last, as well as on the fabric weaves, patterns, colors, and textures that will really please us and beautify our spaces too. So let's begin our "fabric education".

FABRIC IS A STYLE SETTER

Fabric is more than just a basic supply staple attached to our interior furnishings. Fabric offers many opportunities to design our homes with purpose and intent. Strategically using fabric in our interiors is one of the best ways to add style, color, pattern, texture, and overall beauty to a space. Fabric gives life to a room, and adds a sense of warmth and comfort unlike anything else.

Get ready to learn both how to use fabrics and how to identify them. Of course it is not really ESSENTIAL to know how to identify types of fabrics and types of fibers. After all, you are homeowners and not professional decorators. Still, there is a certain satisfaction in knowing that we had a part in the planning of our home fashions, and that we cared enough to learn some of the basics regarding the materials used in our home. In this session, we will first learn how to select and use fabrics in interior spaces, and then we will do a little "fabric vocabulary" so you can easily identify many common fabrics used in interior

design, and become the savvy "fabric expert" among your decorating enthusiast friends.

USE FABRIC AND PATTERN IN YOUR INTERIOR DESIGN

As you probably know, much of what you will build in the way of room design will involve fabrics. Fabrics add elegance and sophistication to a space, and they soften hard lines. They can add visual warmth to heat up the design, or visual coolness to calm it down. Everything from upholstery and slipcovers, to bedding, window treatments, table accessories, and throw pillows involves fabric. Here are a few concepts that will help you to expertly design your spaces by choosing the right fabrics for your home.

DECIDE WHAT WILL STAY AND GO

When trying to decide on a room style or theme, fabric can be the best place to start. Look at the room you will be working on, and make a decision on which pieces will stay in the room and which will go. Of course, starting fresh when designing your space is ideal, and will give you many options for creating a completely new and exciting style and mood. You may want to purchase all new pieces. More than likely though, you may have a piece that you must keep in the newly designed room such as a sofa, chair, or pair of draperies. If you know you will be working with an existing upholstered piece or with fabric window

Fabric can be the best place to start...

treatments, for example, use this fabric as a starting place to decide on other fabrics and elements for the room.

MAIN & ACCENT FABRICS

If you love the fabric on the piece you are starting with, then find accent fabrics to compliment it (more on how to approach this task a little later). If you do not care for the fabric piece that will stay in the room (such as a spouses favorite chair), use it as an accent fabric and find another fabric to focus on, such as a solid, a subtle jacquard, or a textured chenille that blends well with that accent piece.

WALL PAINT COLORS

It is always easier to select fabric first, and then paint. It is much simpler to match the paint to the fabric than the reverse, especially since paint is readily available in custom colors that can be mixed in just about any paint store. You can even bring a swatch of your fabric (or a finish from a surface) to a paint store to coordinate or match paint, since most paint stores have an electronic "color eye" used to make a match. You can select your fabrics, and paint your walls while your furniture is being ordered or upholstered.

FABRIC COLORS IN DESIGN

Before you actually begin choosing and putting together your selection of fabrics, you need to know how the fabric colors you choose will be represented in your design.

Warm vs. Cool Colors: Warm colors are active, upbeat, exciting colors such as red, orange, and yellow that "advance" or "step out" into a space and let themselves be known. They are the "extroverts" of the color wheel, powerful and inspiring colors that can dominate the space if not controlled. With warm fabrics, a little goes a long way.

Cool colors are passive, soothing colors such as purple, blue, and green that "regress" or "hide out" in the background, not allowing themselves to be too obvious. They are the "introverts" of the color wheel. They are quiet and soulful colors that can help to calm and restore the emotions and spirit. The darker shades of cool colors can be depressing if they are blatantly overused.

Light vs. Dark: Light colors tend to make a room seem open, airy, and expansive. This is why people typically use lighter colors in small rooms. A darker tone of the right color can, however, give great impact to a small room and make it feel very inviting.

Dark colors can help cozy up a space, and make an overly large room feel smaller. Dark and light fabrics used directly together add contrast to design.

Using Contrast: Many of the most expertly designed rooms that exhibit amazingly pleasing color palettes, involve contrast, a noticeable division of line. Rooms that provide contrast are interesting, and we don't tire of them quickly. There are a number of ways to get contrast in a fabric palette. One is to use light against dark such as black and white. Other examples include light teal with deep rose, or light tan with rich, dark blue. Dark against light creates this noticeable division of line we call contrast.

Contrast adds interest to design. Three ways to bring contrast into a room through your fabric choices include:

- 1. Light vs. Dark.
- 2. Complementary Fabric colors.
- 3. Split-Complementary Fabric colors.

Another way to get contrast is to use colors on the color wheel that are either directly across form each other, called





Warm colors are the active, upbeat, exciting colors such as red, orange, and yellow that "advance" or "step out" into a space. Cool colors are the passive, soothing colors such as purple, blue, and green that "regress" or "hide out" in the background.



Color Wheel/ Light Undertones

Velvet

Ticking

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Shown left is a color wheel with dark undertones. The next issue of FURNITURE WORLD Magazine will provide more detail on how light and dark undertones can be used to make striking displays. The November/ December 2008 issue will also include the second part of this article and a comprehensive glossary of fabrics.



Primary/ Secondary Fabrics



Tapestry



Chintz

Consider... scale, contrast and pattern.

COMPLEMENTS, or colors that are one away from being directly across from each other, known as SPLIT COMPLE-MENTS. Such color palettes give the greatest amount of contrast and therefore keep us interested. Some examples of complementary palettes are the use of red with green, purple with yellow, or blue with orange. Split complement examples include red with either teal (blue-green) or lime-green (yellowgreen), indigo (blue-purple) with either yellow or orange, and gold (yelloworange) with either blue or purple. The undertone (derived from white, brown or black added to the original color on the wheel), or the lightness and darkness of the color doesn't determine whether or not it is a complement or split-complement. True red coupled with true green for example are just as much complements as are apple red paired with olive green (these are complements with brown undertones) or cranberry red and emerald green (these are complements with black undertones). When using a complementary or split-complementary palette, you can still throw in a hint of a third (or even fourth) fabric color here or there.

A good rule of thumb for a single room or space, that includes paint, fabrics, furniture and room accessories, is the 60-30-10 rule. This means that 60 percent of a room's color should be represented by a main color family, 30 percent of the room's color should be represented by a second color family, and 10 percent of the room's color should be represented by still another color or color family. You can use various shades, tints, and undertones within each of the three color families. Factor your fabrics into this general formula. Keep in mind though, that the 60-30-10 rule is a GENERAL GUIDELINE and not a design law! Color palettes of 70-25-5 work just as well. Again, the 60-30-10 rule is a guideline to get you started. This means that you can get spunky and throw a hint of a fourth color family somewhere into the space if your "gut" agrees it looks good. Have fun with this, and trust your instincts.

FIND YOUR KEY FABRIC

It may feel overwhelming to find the right fabrics for a space you are redecorating. Even just selecting fabric for one piece such as a new sofa or chair can be intimidating, especially if you don't understand how they fit into an overall fabric palette. How many patterns should you use, and in what amounts? You may question which patterns will work together. Even when a professional guides your choice, you might be unclear regarding which direction to go.

I suggest that you first find a main fabric, also called a "key" fabric, for the largest piece in your space, such as a sofa, upholstered headboard, or set of dining room chairs, and then begin to build the design around that fabric. This key fabric should be one that you really love. Ideally, it should also be a solid texture, tone-on-tone, or subtle weave in either a deep, rich, or neutral color that will ground the space and become a backdrop for other, more decorative fabrics that can add "punch" or make a design statement without taking over the space. Don't make the mistake of making your largest upholstered piece the focal point of the room by using a loud or heavily patterned fabric. Large upholstered pieces are the room's anchors that give stability to the overall design. They can remain even when the less permanent small furnishings and accessories around them are changed out over time.

NEXT ISSUE

The next installment will give you additional seminar material on choosing supporting fabrics, using pattern, color, texture and scale... plus a useful illustrated glossary of terms. If you absolutely can't wait, email editor@furninfo.com to get the text via email.

Margarett DeGange, M.Ed. is a Business and Design Coach in the Home Fashions Industry. She creates and delivers custom training programs for managed businesses and their sales consultants to help them communicate better with customers and increase sales and profits. Margarett is a Writer and Professional Speaker, and the President of The DeGangi Group and The DeGangi School of Interior Decoration, with both on sight and on-line courses in Interior Decorating, Marketing, and Redesign.

For almost 20 years she has helped individual and managed business owners in the interior fashions and decorating industries to earn more while fully enjoying the process. Her website is www.DeGangiGroup.com Questions about performing in-store seminars and related design topics can be directed to margarett@furninfo.com Serence Circle Solutio

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What's Working Now TO DRIVE TRAFFIC

It isn't time to do blanket price promotion or a large-scale top of mind advertising awareness campaign. So what should you do?

Retail Traffic by Ethan Kapp & Brett Kitchen

his is the beginning of a new series to help furniture retailers increase traffic and sales amidst an increasingly difficult economy.

Many of you have seen traditional advertising effectiveness waning. This includes branding messages delivered by TV commercials, Top of Mind awareness campaigns, circulars shouting "sale, sale, sale" and product and price ads. That's why it is time to pay careful attention to making your advertising work.

In this article we will look at an ad that you can copy and paste into your own advertising program and I'll walk you step by step through what makes it work. But first we need to lay the groundwork. Why is the advertising of the past not working like it used to? There are many reasons. The most obvious is the state of consumer confidence. With TV channels scaring people to death with irresponsible reporting, talk of the end of the world as we know it, of course people are going to be a little tighter with their spending.

However, even amidst all the turmoil with the real estate market, credit problems, rising food costs, and incredible energy increases, there is a silver lining. The American economy is stronger than the "media" wants you to know.

According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Real gross domestic product -

- the output of goods and services produced by labor and property located in the United States -- increased at an annual rate of 0.9 percent in the first guarter of 2008."

So before we pack it in and close the doors, lets just take a step back and strategically plan on how we can overcome this difficult economic situation.

Of course there are some real challenges, but the truth is that people are still out there spending money... on furniture. They are still making money and spending it, and the question is, "Are you the one that is capturing the lions share?"

So how do you do it? It all starts with



This ad calls out to people who are in the market for sofas and are going to be buying. It also helps to move potential customers who aren't in the market for furnishings right now, into the buying population. The ad has a great headline, promotes value, has personality and is different than ads that simply tout cheap prices and financing.

Do You Really Want To Make A \$2100.00 Sofa Mistake?

It really should be the \$4100.00 sofa mistake, because you will eventually buy a good sofa, and by then it will cost at least another \$2000.00. Especially after a decade of sitting on a bad one. Save the \$2000 and just buy a great sofa now. We offer you bench made, classic American made upbolstered furniture, with over 800 high quality, luxarious fabrics to choose from !!!



doing the right kind of advertising that brings "would be buyers" into your store, and not to someone else's.

We often hear statistics about the number of buyers that are in the market at any given time. For bedding this buying population might be 2% of the market, for furniture 3%, and for flooring less than 1%.

If these industry numbers are in fact accurate then we learn two lessons:

 We shouldn't be advertising with product and price ads to 100% of the marketplace when 97% of them aren't interested in buying now.

2. Moving people from the 97% to the "buying now percentage" manually, with education and information creates a dramatic advantage in your favor.

LESSON #1.

It's obvious from these stats that everyone is NOT your customer. In fact most people aren't your customer. So why spend advertising dollars on those people? Some advertising sales people will tell you that it's because you want to have top of mind awareness.

These days, that just doesn't cut it. The top of mind awareness program doesn't pay you back fast enough to justify itself. Especially right now. For years consumers were able to take out equity lines of credit, buy home furnishings, remodel their homes, spend money they didn't have, and keep furniture buying at record highs.

Obviously this has changed, so now, more than ever, everyone is NOT your customer.

So it's the job of your marketing to call out to those folks who are in the market, and capture their sales.

In the sample ad above you'll see elements of an extremely effective advertisement. It is an ad that calls out to people who are in the market for sofas and are going to be buying them. More on that in a minute.

LESSON #2

Use marketing to move people into the buying population who aren't currently part of the small percentage of buyers.

Depending on your product offering, there is at least 20% of the population that will never be your customer. There is another 20% who made recent purchases and won't be in the market for a while. The remainder, over 30% can be persuaded to buy if given a compelling reason.

Now, as we mentioned in lesson #1 you should be reaching out to potential customers who are in your market and ready to buy, but you should also use a new strategy... The Strategy Of Concentric Buyer Circles to move these folks into the buying population. This strategy reaches out to those consumers you can't effectively "hit over the head" with financing offers, giveaways, and great prices.

Instead, you have to educate them into buying. You must show them why buying furniture is the best investment they can make with their dollars.

You aren't just up against the other home furnishings retailers in the market.

Remember you are selling against a new fuel efficient car, a new ipod, flat screen television, family vacation to Disneyland... plus high gas prices, and poor consumer confidence.

The best way to accomplish this "education-selling" is by offering a valuable report that is of interest to homeowners in the innermost circle, the Future Buyers ring. Consumers don't pay cash for this "free" information, but they do give you, the retailer, their contact information and permission to educate them into buying from you. Here's an example of a report title:

Headline: "The Briarwood Community Fall Design and Furnishings

Fashion Report."

Subhead: "How To Make Your Home

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With more than 50,000 registered attendees and the grand opening of Building C, Summer 2008's Las Vegas Market exceeded all expectations!

- Largest opening day attendance in Las Vegas Market history
- Strongest Summer market attendance at Las Vegas Market in three years*
- 15% more retailers and 93% more designers in attendance**— defying the challenging environment in which the industry is currently operating
- Welcomed 320 New Exhibitors and 120 Expanded Showrooms at World Market Center Las Vegas
- Presented 5 million square feet of integrated, inter-connected showrooms on one campus delivering the most efficient and productive buying experience

To the thousands of exhibitors, buyers, designers and industry professionals who joined us for this incredible event, we THANK YOU for your continued support of Las Vegas Market.

*compared to July 06 and July 07 Markets **compared to July 07 Market

THE COUNTDOWN TO WINTER MARKET HAS BEGUN!

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LAS VEGAS MARKET

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"Our written business at Market was up well over 20 percent, and it was our most successful Summer Market thus far."

- Lee Fautsch, Flexsteel Industries

"I think Las Vegas is going to be the Mecca for certain industries and certainly the furniture industry. It's going to become very, very important."

- Nicole Miller, Nicole Miller Collection/Excelsior Designs

"Provasi has showrooms all over the world, and we are making this our headquarters in the U.S. We believe Las Vegas Market will be the future, the center point of the high-end in the U.S."

- Gina M. Fard, Provasi

"Tufenkian realized that Las Vegas Market was the future. Our dealers were here twice a year. We decided that we needed to be here, too."

- Greg Duncan, Tufenkian Artisan Carpets

"We are writing many, many new customers here in Las Vegas, so it's been really good for us—increasing business for us in a new category and a new section of the industry."

- Lendell Glassco, Paragon

"The quality of traffic we've had, has been excellent. The major re-launch of Pennsylvania House alone has made it a great Market."

- Dave Pinamonti, Universal Furniture

"World Market Center Las Vegas and Las Vegas Design Center provide an incredible resource to buyers and designers."

- Roger Thomas, Wynn Las Vegas

"It was the most wonderful week of lectures, concerts, dinners, design stars, rock stars, showrooms and new products I've seen in a Market."

- Larry Laslo, Larry Laslo Design

Elements in this ad that make it extremely effective are...

The Envy Of The Neighborhood, Without Spending A Fortune."

Of course use your own community name, and make it intriguing so the average homeowner will be interested in learning what's "in" in their community.

Use this strategy to generate leads from interested future buyers, then nurture them, educate them, and turn them into customers.

FOUR ELEMENTS OF A GREAT HEADLINE

Let's look at the ad in Figure 1 that has the headline, "The \$2100 Sofa Mistake".

There are four important elements in this ad that make it extremely effective.

Element #1 - The Headline: The headline of any ad is the MOST IMPOR-TANT piece of the puzzle. If you don't get your prospects' attention, you lose. If they don't read your ad, then they obviously aren't going to be responding to it.

The same goes for radio and TV. The first thing they hear must be an engaging and interesting line, or they are gone.

Here's a quick checklist on headline creation called, "The 4 U's of Headline Creation".

For every headline you create, you must rate each of these criteria on a scale of 1-4. If you don't have at least 3 of the 4 rating with a 3 score or higher, you've got a weak headline.

Rate each of the following criteria on a scale of from 1-4: Urgent, Useful, Ultra-Specific, Unique.

Here's an example of how you might critique the furniture ad headline, "Crazy Tax-Relief Sale." Of course this is a subjective exercise, but based on the 1-4 scale, I come up with the following analysis: Urgent: 1, Unique: 2, Useful: 2, Ultra-specific: 1.

Obviously it's a bad headline, as it scores below 3 on every single criteria. So here's how it can be improved. "Save \$1,795.31 On New Sofas This Weekend Only... With Our Crazy Tax Relief Sale!"

Now as you go through the formula you can see it is:

- Much more useful for the reader, "Save \$1795.31 on sofas."
- Uniqueness could still be improved.
- More urgent "this weekend only".
- Ultra specific, we talk about the product, the exact amount of savings, and this weekend only.

Use this formula for every ad, tv or radio commercial to make sure you get maximum impact from your ads.

Element #2 - Value Sell. Instead of shouting about how cheap the prices are, here the ad focuses on the fact that we are saving the customers money in a different way, by offering a good value instead of cheap price. This is done with a nice demonstration in the graphics. They don't just shout product and price.

Cheap prices are demonized by showing or inferring that buyers can save money and be much happier by buying better quality and not having to live with broken down cheap furniture that needs replacing so often.

Element #3 - Personality: You see in the bottom corner a picture of the owners, a personal guarantee. This lets the reader know that this isn't just a nameless, faceless organization, but real people, just like them.

Putting personality in your copy is critical in today's market. For more on this subject read, "Double Your Store Traffic -Part 3" that ran in the June/July 2007 issue of FURNITURE WORLD Magazine (posted to the marketing management article archives on the furninfo.com website).

Element #4 - It's Different! Being different is critical. A famous advertising man once said, "To be successful in business, all you have to do is look around at what all the competition is doing and do the exact opposite." Truer words were never spoken.

If your competitors are giving away the farm on free financing, free delivery, cheap prices and free giveaways, then why would you want to do the same? You wouldn't.

Be different in your advertising. Look different, educate the consumer, help them feel like they can trust you and like you. Let them know you are a real person, with friends and family, and you care about them.

Offer them some real value, instead of shouting at the top of your lungs that you are the "dirt cheapest, lowest price, nobody lower, we'll give you your furniture for free then pay you to take it out of the store."

In today's economy it's our responsibility as business owners to educate our customer base. Share with them the "good economic news." Heaven knows, they aren't getting it from anyone else. You need to encourage and uplift people. Be the leader, not the meek follower.

Play up the fact that their home is their best investment, and if they decide to save a little money and not take that expensive vacation they were thinking of, now is the perfect time to spend some time and money to make their home as nice as they would like it to be.

Educating of the consumer is of paramount importance. Even though the web has all the free information they could ever need, it's now become too much. No one knows who to trust, or where to go to get quality information.

You can become that trusted advisor, the expert who helps them make the right decisions for their homes, families and design tastes.

NEXT ISSUE

Next time I'll show you a letter that has proven to be a big winner for retailers in the USA and Canada. It deals with 3 very important pieces of the persuasion formula. "Reason Why Copy," "Belief and Credibility" and "Effective Direct Response Copy".

Brett Kitchen and Ethan Kap are Cofounders of Traffic Guys Publishing, and are commonly known as the "Traffic Guys." Brett and Ethan run a retailer Marketing Mastermind Group to help retailers increase store traffic and sales, while cutting the fat and waste from current advertising. They also provide Done-For-You ads and promotions along with other systems to help retailers consistently drive in paying customers.

Questions on any aspect of their programs can be sent to Brett and Ethan care of FURNITURE WORLD Magazine at bretk@furninfo.com or call them direct at 1-800-393-2054. If you would like more information on the Traffic Guys, you can visit their free resource center for home furnishings retailers at www.hfplatinumclub.com.



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Pictured are Roomful Express furniture craftsmen and a customer service person.

Build Loyalty Before 5PM With... HE SAME DAY SERVICE CALL Roomful Express Furniture improves key operations metrics with new program.

ur number one priority at Roomful Express Furniture is to build customer loyalty and earn repeat business. We, therefore, regularly look at every point of contact a customer might have with our organization and evaluate ways we can make it better, easier, or more valuable for our customers.

The economics of running a retail business in a non-growth region requires us to find new ways of servicing and exciting our existing customer base.

This task is as important for the operations side of our business as it is for sales and marketing. After a sale has been completed and the delivery made, there are additional opportunities to create or lose customer loyalty. Such is the case when the customer calls us and requests service on their furniture.

BUILDING LOYALTY THROUGH SERVICE

The Same Day Service Program is the newest customer loyalty-building program at Roomful Express Furniture. When customers who need service contact our call center, we offer them the option of having a craftsman come to their home THAT DAY, at no cost to them. Although it seems counter intuitive, this program actually provides an operational cost savings while boosting customer satisfaction! Even with by Michael Bowman, Roomful Express

the additional service expense, this program has generated a cost savings to the company by providing a 20% reduction in exchanges.

Dan Bolger, in his September 2007 article "Delivery Survey 2007", published in FURNITURE WORLD Magazine, stated that, "An exchange costs five times the original delivery cost and frequently exceeds the margin on any given order. Returns and cancellations can devastate your bottom line because you lose the sales revenue but incur logistics costs for the initial delivery, return costs and the wrath of the unhappy customer who looks elsewhere. In the worst case scenario, the product is damaged along the way and has to be scrapped." We completely agree with this statement.

Most importantly, this program has had a measurable positive impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. However, getting to this position wasn't easy. The company had to change its way of thinking about service, costs, and operations. We also had to educate our customers about the value they would be gaining by utilizing our crafting services.

GETTING STARTED

Before the Same Day Service Program was instituted, when a customer called in to report, for example, a split sofa seam, our customer support representatives would have an exchange delivered to the customer's home within 3 or 4 days. This addressed the fact that customers didn't want to wait the week it took to have a technician come out to fix their problem. The exchange was faster, but turned out to be a more costly option.

For that reason, we insisted that our service company provide us with service that was no more than 48 hours out in our core business area. That challenge eventually led to our Same Day Service Program.

CUSTOMER OBJECTIONS

As part of the new program, we found that we needed to address a frequent objection expressed by customers whose new furniture needed service. Many felt that they wanted new furniture, not "used" furniture that had been repaired.

Customers needed to be convinced that they would actually be getting more value out of the service call then they would from an exchange. Therefore, in-house customer service representatives were taught that service team members are professionally trained, furniture builders and craftsmen, with years of experience. These craftsmen do not repair furniture. They "deluxe", "correct", and "upgrade" furniture. They add value to the furniture. They are able to make the furniture "better than NEFEST MOON

The voyage of discovery is not in seeking new landscapes, but in

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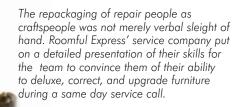
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Take a close look at making additional in-home service calls.

new".

This repackaging of repair people as craftspeople was not merely verbal sleight of hand. Our service company put on a detailed presentation of their skills for the team. Broken and damaged furniture was put on display, and some of our representatives inflicted even more damage. They were shown the tools and materials they use to restore furniture. They then spoke about the different scenarios they run into at our customers' homes. This visual presentation did more to change our representatives' opinions about service than anything else. At the end of the presentation they truly believed the "deluxed" furniture looked better than new! They were now ready to convey that information to our customers with confidence.

"SELLING" THE PROGRAM

There are two key reasons why customers ask us for an exchange to begin with. First, furniture that we receive from our suppliers is shipped at "industry standard" and is deemed "commercially acceptable for resale". Unfortunately, many of our customers expect furniture that is much more than "commercially acceptable for resale". This often leads to a request for an exchange.

Second, the showroom experience is much different from what our customers' see in their homes. The quality of lighting and accessories, the size of the display area, and arrangement of the furniture can skew their perception of what to expect from purchased furniture. During the delivery, or soon after, customers may find fault with delivered furniture because it doesn't auite look, work, or feel the same as it did in the showroom environment. This also leads to the request for an exchange.

A craftsman can solve both of these issues. At Roomful Express Furniture we call it "deluxing". Our craftsman can take a manufactured furniture piece and make it look or work a little bit better than it did right from the assembly line. Key selling point: an experienced craftsman can often add value to your furniture and make it "better than new".

OTHER BENEFITS

We found that many companies have decided against the idea of same day service because they only looked at the initial cost of the service order without fully analyzing the true cost of exchanging furniture. Yes, it costs more to send a craftsman out on a same day service call, however, the true cost of a product exchange is much higher than we originally thought. The new program also creates a good deal of customer goodwill by resolving the problem that day and saving their time.

In our company the only person involved in completing the service call is the craftsman. Yet, as stated by Dan Bolger in his article there are many more "logistical costs" that come from reworking exchanged furniture.

CONCLUSION

Our initial evaluation of same day service cost vs. exchange cost showed that processing an exchange costs much more than completing a same day service call.

Our company measures both the number of exchanges and their retail dollar value. After 2 months of being on this program our same month (2007 vs. 2008) exchange number decreased by 20%. Knowing the actual reduction in exchanges is important, but even more crucial is the cost savings.

There are other benefits as well. For instance, fewer exchanges result in lower fuel surcharges billed by our delivery company. First time service completion rates are up, and with fewer returns coming into our distribution center, productivity is much higher.

Most importantly, our customers are happier. The customer satisfaction scores show that. The same day service program has become one of the most important "after sale" loyalty building tools we have used.

Mike Bowman began working with Roomful Express Furniture (owned by R.H. Kuhn Company) in 2004 as Customer Support Manager. In 2007 Mike was promoted to Director of Customer Support overseeing the call center / customer support offices, repair, and delivery operations of Roomful Express Furniture and Home Store East (Ashley Home Store).

In his current position with R.H. Kuhn Company Mike focuses on business initiatives that build customer loyalty, including programs that measure and control delivery effectiveness, first time answer rates, first time repair completion rates, and the quality of customer interactions. Recently, he managed the startup of the company's same day repair service operation, mystery caller program, and the training and development of representatives, craftsmen and delivery personnel to create positive customer experiences.



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5 – 7 p.m. **Blues in the Courtyard** 220 Elm invites all Market attendees to enjoy live music, complimentary beverages and appetizers.

Tuesday, October 21

5 – 7 p.m. **Blues in the Courtyard** 220 Elm invites Market attendees to enjoy live music, complimentary beverages and appetizers.

Wednesday, October 22

5– 7 p.m. End Your Day on Elm 3rd Floor Happy Hour Travel the floor and taste the world. Enjoy complimentary beverages and appetizers from around the world in our 3rd floor showrooms. Market public welcome.

Thursday, October 23

6 – 9 p.m. Withlt Competitive Intelligence/ Trends Forecast Showroom 311. Hear the trends forecast for the industry in a panel discussion sponsored by Withlt. Hosted by 220 Elm, Outer Limits, and Seco. Join us forcomplimentary appetizers and beverages.

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SUPERIOR SELECTION, LOCATION AND AMENITIES

Spotlight On 220Elm



The Driver's Role In PERFECT DELIVERIES

Now is the time to look at your delivery systems, in-home service/ sales calls and driver education.

Operations by Dan Bolger

igh Performing Furniture Retailers consistently complete 97-plus percent of their deliveries successfully. This figure assumes that problem deliveries are within the control of the operations

department, and that they are not held accountable for customer sales errors or hidden manufacturers' defects. To achieve this high level of customer satisfaction, all previous steps in the supply chain have to be done correctly. Nevertheless, there will always be some problems. Michael Bowman and his associates at Roomful Express should be commended for their unique same day service approach described in the previous article.

Working to minimize post delivery service calls is critical for maintaining overall customer satisfaction

One of the key steps to becoming a High Performing Retailer is to recognize the role of the delivery drivers. Making a perfect delivery is the last step in completing a sale, and the first step toward another sale to this customer and her friends through the power of word of mouth advertising. It is your responsibility to provide delivery drivers with appropriate training and tools to do their job professionally.

Most employees want to do a good job and will do so when provided with an easy to understand job description and training. Many furniture retailers have



used the job description shown on the following page successfully. You can modify it to fit your specific operation. Limit job descriptions to ten points and one page. If possible, let your employees see a draft, and allow them to comment before the job description is finalized. This will increase their motivation to achieve perfect deliveries.

Note that this format provides signoff

for both the employee and supervisor, and becomes part of the employee's personnel file. It can then be used to coach or as backup for discipline or termination. Obviously the goal is to get every employee to provide uniform gual-

> ity performance and minimize turnover, a costly and time-consuming process.

> Using this approach will reduce stress throughout your organization and largely eliminate customer service hassles that may end up at the Better Business Bureau or on the Internet. And, if you do get negative comments or complaints, make sure you post them, along with your response where they can be seen by all departments so that everyone can work to improve customer satisfaction (see Leslie "Online Carothers' article Reputation Management" in the July/August 2008 issue of FUR-

NITURE WORLD posted to the furninfo.com website).

To achieve maximum customer satisfaction and profitability, it is necessary as well to prevent problems that arise farther up on the supply chain from getting dumped on the delivery department. It all starts with the salesperson properly completing the order and noting any special conditions such as a third floor

TRUCK DRIVER JOB DESCRIPTION

Employee Name

I will be successful as a TRUCK DRIVER when I do the following:

- 1. Responsible for checking product and loading the truck with the merchandise to be delivered.
- 2. Review paperwork (manifest and sales folios) associated with the day's deliveries and be sure everything is understood.
- 3. Drive the truck safely and responsibly to the various deliveries by following these guidelines:
 - a. Stay alert for road hazards and road conditions.
 - b. Drive for fuel conservation. Shut off engine rather than leave idling at stops.
 - c. Follow the guidance of your teammate to back into the customer's driveway.
- Introduce yourself and teammate to the customer upon arrival and review the items in the delivery and their placement in the home. Check pathway through home to prevent damage to home or merchandise.
- 5. Unload the merchandise from the truck and carry it into the customer's home carefully by following these rules:
 - Communicate with your teammate about how you will remove the furniture off the truck, onto the ground, and into the customer's home.
 - b. Wear gloves to protect your hands.
 - c. Carry the furniture with your hands on the corners of the pieces to protect doorways, walls, etc. from being scratched or dented.
- 6. Call for guidance by a Manager if a problem was encountered on delivery.
- 7. Provide the customer with the warranty packet which includes business cards, a feedback response card, and other informational literature.
- 8. Record any problems encountered on delivery that will require further attention or follow up.
- 9. Notify the designer of any major problems or difficulties to make them aware of the situation.

Date_____

Date

10. Other assignments or duties may be assigned.

I have received training on each of the above and understand the requirements.

Employee Signature _____

Supervisor Signature ____



walkup or other impediments to getting merchandise into the home. Sales and service staff need to be aware of the consequences of, and made accountable for, clerical errors such as the transposing of a number that can result in receiving the wrong fabric or even a completely different piece. The warehouse staff also has to do all the right things. Every warehouse employee should be supplied with a written job description similar in format to the one shown. Managers must also show commitment by visiting the shipping dock and looking over the staged furniture. Each sofa, table and mattress that gets loaded on the truck carries with it your reputation. Customers remember their entire customer experience from the greeting through delivery for many years to come.

Daniel Bolger P.E. provides operations consulting services to clients throughout North America. You can contact Dan at bolger@furninfo.com or call 740-503-8875. For more information on this or other transportation, logistics and furniture warehousing topics, go to www.furninfo.com to read all of Dan's articles.

Top Ten Things Furniture Retailers Need To Know About

Ten ways to improve your displays, save on your electricity costs and avoid the most common lighting mistakes.

Illuminating Technology by Monte Lee

1 The rate per kilowatt-hour that shows on your utility bill is meaningless because all charges need to be considered and paid. Determine your real electricity rate by dividing the bottom line, how much you owe, by the number of kilowatt hours you used. That is the blended rate and the only one that matters. The examples that follow use 10 cents per kilowatt-hour because it is an easy number to adjust to any rate.

2. If your electric bill is \$100.00 then \$20-\$25 is due to lighting. That 20-25% for lighting is easily addressed to reduce direct and indirect lighting costs. One watt of electricity in a furniture store costs 40 cents per year assuming a rate of 10 cents and 4,000 operating hours.

3. Each watt of electricity used by a light bulb generates a watt of heat. Heat needs to be handled by the HVAC system so there is an indirect cost. It follows that If we reduce the heat generated, we can lower the load on the HVAC. A 40-watt fluorescent tube generates 40 watts of heat. A 40-watt light bulb in a table lamp generates 40 watts of heat. A 40-watt halogen generates 40 watts of heat. Watts is watts.

4 .change a light bulb. Even when

replacing the bulb in a table lamp, one has to consider the time it takes to recognize the problem, get the bulb, make the change, and dispose of the failed lamp. Getting the ladder to change a fluorescent in the ceiling, including moving and repositioning merchandise adds more time to the process.

Fluorescents should be changed all at once, a technique called group relamping, to reduce labor cost by 30-50%.

5. Fluorescent light can (and should) ambient or background lighting. Fluorescents now have excellent color rendering and service life. Modern fluorescent light scores about 85 for color rendering on a scale of 0-100. The old tubes, cool white-warm white, score 60-65. We can see a big difference in color at 85 compared to 60. The difference between a fluorescent at 85 and a fluorescent at 95 is hardly noticeable.

6 Incandescent light scores 100 for color rendering on the 0-100 scale. It may seem strange but the crisp, white light of halogen gets 100, as does the dirty, yellow light of a 130-volt incandescent. The reason is that color rendering, the scale of 0-100, is determined by the color temperature of the light source. Halogen is about 3000 degrees Kelvin and the incandescent is at 2700 degrees. On the Kelvin scale, 3000 is cooler than 2500. This has nothing to do with heat. Warm light contains proportionately more red while cool light contains more blue.

7 The color temperature thing in #6 . is really important. Just as with the different appearance of halogen and incandescent light, fluorescent bulbs can have the same color rendering (0-100) but colors will appear different. A fluorescent at 3000 degrees has more red than a fluorescent at 4100. Think of a blacksmith heating iron. As the iron gets hotter it goes from red to blue to white. The Kelvin scale is based on that concept. Incandescent light, including halogen, heats a filament, same as the blacksmith, so incandescent color temperature matches the Kelvin scale. Fluorescent light has no filament so color temperature is more difficult to determine. Fluorescent light is correlated to the Kelvin scale. When we say a fluorescent is 3000 degrees we are really saying, it falls into a range called 3000 degrees rather than giving an absolute value of 3000.

8. Years ago stores had only fluorescent light. Then we switched to incandescent reflector floods to improve the color of products. The next switch was to halogen because it was more effi-

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Replace downlights with fluorescents and save \$24.80 per can, per year...

cient than incandescent. Stores were track only at this point. Efficiency was a consideration because electricity rates were increasing. Halogen bulbs cost more than incandescent reflectors but use less electricity and last longer. Fluorescent light with improved color rendering was added back into the lighting mix because track only stores are very dark compared to most shopping experiences.

 $Q_{{\scriptstyle \cdot}}$ Clearly there are differences in light sources. You can make shadows with halogen light because it is a point source. Light (and lots of it) is generated at the single point of a filament.

Fluorescent light is generated along the entire surface of the bulb and is a diffuse source. You cannot make a shadow with fluorescent Light. For this reason fluorescent light should not be used in track lighting to accent merchandise. There will be no accent. The appearance of a fluorescent only store is like an old K-Mart.

10. The best practice for a good looking store is to provide an adequate accent lighting from track to provide visual interest to the sales floor. The amount of ambient light and accent light should depend on the price points and the type of merchandise. The rule of thumb is, The higher the merchandise price, the lower the ambient light level. Merchandise appearance is the key issue.

TOP FIVE ENERGY SAVING IDEAS

1 Replace every incandescent bulb on the sales floor with a compact fluorescent. The typical bulb in a table lamp is a 40-watt, standard incandescent. All it needs to do is illuminate the shade and a little of the tabletop. Replacing one lamp, 40 watt incandescent to 9-watt compact fluorescent, saves 31 watts, worth \$12.40 per year. The payback on this investment is less than 3 months and your merchandise displays will look the same. If you like the brighter look of 60-watt bulbs in table lamps, then use a 13-watt compact fluorescent. Savings: 47 watts or \$18.80 per lamp, per year.

2. Replace every downlight with a fluorescent. Downlights are typically recessed cans in the ceiling that provide general illumination to an area or hallway. They may have reflector or halogen bulbs. Don't replace those with the compact fluorescents that you used in table lamps (twists or spirals). Downlights call for a reflector style compact fluorescent to direct light out of the fixture and withstand the heated environment inside the can. Savings are typically 62 watts or \$24.80 per year, per can.

3. Audit your track lighting. Take a good look at (1) the placement of track heads, (2) bulbs being used and (3) whether the bulb is aimed proper-

Replace old T12 fluorescent fixtures for a 3-year payback

ly. Heads should NOT be evenly placed on a track. Heads should be moved as necessary to illuminate each display. Some displays take more heads while some need fewer heads. You will probably find that 10% of your track heads are underemployed and can be removed. My rule of thumb is to use 4 or 5 track heads per room group. If you are using more than that, check the bulb. You may have 130-volt bulbs, which do last longer but have lower light output than the 120 volt bulbs. Often, retailers will ad more bulbs (read that as more cost is added) to compensate. The result is that a long lasting 130 volt bulb



costs more money, heat and labor.

Replace incandescent reflectors or 4 .conventional halogen bulbs with Infrared Coated (IRC) bulbs. The incandescent reflector went out of favor because it is inefficient and produces a yellowish light. The incandescent reflector replacement was halogen. Halogen was an improvement, but IRC technology makes it even better. Inside every halogen bulb is a capsule about the size of the tip of your thumb. That capsule contains a filament and halogen gas. By coating the inside of the capsule with a material that reflects infrared heat back onto the filament, the filament becomes hotter and produces more light. By recycling waste heat, more light for less energy is produced. Service life is 4,200 hours on the Philips bulb we recommend so that means fewer changes compared to the standard, 2,500-hour lamp. More light, less labor, and a savings of \$10-\$12 per year per track head.

5 Audit your fluorescent lighting. If you find fixtures containing T12 fluorescents in your store it is time to upgrade your lighting. T12 fluorescents are 1.5 inches in diameter and will be stamped with F40T12 or F34T12 if they are four feet long or F96 if they are 8 footers. The time has come to replace T12 fixtures because they are inefficient and are no longer allowed in new construction. A typical 2x4, four-lamp, T12 fixture will use between 160 and 180 watts and can be replaced by a three lamp, T8 fixture using 82-87 watts. Your investment in a new fixture is paid back in less than three years.

Monte Lee is a Regional Manager for Service Lamp Corporation, a distributor of lighting products and services. Inquiries on any aspect of furniture store lighting can be sent to him at mlee@furninfo.com. See all of Monte Lee's articles on store lighting posted to the www.furninfo.com website. Monte can be reached by contacting Service Lamp's home office at 800-222-5267.

A Typical Furniture Store Owner Can Make \$5,260 Just By Waking Up!

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40 Watt Standard Frost to a 9 watt spiral: Annual Savings \$12.40 per lamp

Replace Your Recessed Downlights

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Replace Your Track Light Bulbs

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100 Table Lamps x \$12.40 =	\$1,240
25 Downlights x \$16.80 =	\$420
300 Track Heads x \$12.00 =	\$3,600
Total Annual Savings*	\$5,260

* Savings calculations incorporate: Average hours per day lights on, Average days per week lights on, Average kilowatt hour rate, Average cost per lamp change, Rated average Lamp life, Lamp cost.



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Customers Judge You IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

That's good news if your store exterior and front entrance convey your brand identity and set the stage for the shopping experience to come.

Store Design Magic By Martin Roberts

o matter how you encourage customers to decide to visit your store, once they arrive you need to get them to move past the front door. Your store exterior and the initial sights, sounds and even smells they encounter once they take a few steps inside, set the tone for the rest of their shopping experience.

Customers judge your store very quickly as they view it from the outside and again when they first enter. If you are thinking of redesigning or renovating the exterior or entryway, you will, of course, want to add elements that attract attention and make your store seem inviting. In addition, you should also take a step back and consider what impression these changes will convey to your customers. Ideally, the architectural, graphic, lighting and color elements you add will immediately start to tell a story about your brand and give clues to shoppers about what kind of experience they can expect. We humans are story-making creatures, so if you fail to tell the story you want customers to hear, they will make up their own story about you.

EXTERIOR

First things first: create a welcoming exterior. If you don't, your potential customers will never know how wonderful the inside of your store may look, because they'll be off shopping at your competitor. It is true that you never get a second chance to make a first impression. What your store looks like on the outside communicates worlds to your customers on both a conscious and subconscious level about what they'll find inside, whether you're speaking their language, and whether you're the kind of store they want to shop in.

Many exteriors look dated and stuck in the 80s with architectural details like porticos, arches, metal roofs or stucco. Others just lack a cohesive look. One large furniture retailer, for example, operated four distinct buildings along a



The store pictured (top left) has no obvious entrance, weak signage that isn't visible enough, no graphic to tell a merchandise story, outdated architecture, a dull color palette, disorganized landscaping and no eye level signage for drivers. All of these deficiencies have been corrected in the store pictured below.

40 FURNITURE WORLD September/October 2008

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One large East Coast furniture retailer, created a map of the store in rubber flooring. This helps customers sort out where to go and allows salespeople, placed behind a one-way mirror, the time to get out front and make their approach without being overbearing.

Mealy's occupied an older building that lacked an obvious entrance. The new store exterior designed by GRID2 brings in natural light and was painted a strong blue color to attract attention. Note the prominent graphic marking the store entrance.

street, the result of gradual expansion. This exterior presentation was confusing to customers. Painting the exterior a solid blue color solved this problem. This unified the four spaces, made the store look bigger, more attention grabbing and identified it as a retail destination. Other exterior elements to consider are signage and logos. Logos should be simple, clear, and in a customer's line of sight as she's driving past your store. A monolith sign at eye level, three to four feet in height and illuminated, makes for easy way-finding. Anything that's too high up can get lost in the landscape. Also consider putting more space around letters to make them visible from further away. And make sure that your logo appears above your entrance, to identify it and keep customers from getting confused.



City of Hope's National Home Furnishings Industry's new *LIVING GIFT* program offers a way to honor loved ones while advancing medical discoveries that have brought hope to people everywhere.

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The Case Against The Traffic Guys

Recently you may have received emails and other communication from Brett Kitchen and Ethan Kap, who are known in the home furnishings industry as The Traffic Guys.

Many have expressed disbelief in what they offer...Some have asked:

"Are they really helping retailers during this difficult time?" or "Could it benefit me and my store?"

The answer may startle you... Maybe, maybe not. For example, you may have received an offer by email or mail and felt disappointed when the materials arrived. You might think to yourself...

"If the material xyz company promises to send me in the mail-- for \$1-- is no good then how can their additional information help me?"

When you receive a package like that in the mail, you possibly feel swindled ... and you quickly throw it out in the trash.

I know....I have also felt that way before. For that reason, The Traffic Guys want to make the first package you receive from them worth it. They don't want you to feel like you are wasting your time...They understand that you have limited time and you need what's working today.

I imagine you are not interested in theory or bait and hook switches to get your money. No one wants to feel that way...The Traffic Guys definitely don't want a retailer to feel that way. Yes they market aggressively, but they know their stuff works. The Traffic Guys have decided to be completely transparent and give you a no risk free trial... So until November 30th, The Traffic Guys have put together a 2 Month FREE test drive of their Elite Gold Membership. It is quite valuable, so they are only offering 67 of these memberships until November 30th.

The reason they only want to offer 67, is because it does cost to ship you out the first package in the mail and get you set up in the Elite Gold Member's website full of marketing ideas. After November 30th, there will be an upfront fee for the Gold Program.

The 2 month test drive of the Elite Gold Membership is FREE. That way you have two whole months to decide if it is right for your store. The only cost is \$1 for shipping and handling for all the traffic building strategies they send you.

Some feel that the Traffic Guys "don't care." Again, for that reason they want you to have the chance to receive their information -- 2 Months FREE -- and you can decide for yourself like hundreds of other retailers have. After that it is \$99 per month if you like what you've seen. If you don't, you can still keep all the traffic building material they sent you.

Again, You can see "for yourself" -- at no cost-if they really care about retailers and if they want to help independents thrive and survive today. You can also decide if it will benefit you and your store right here.

www.trafficguyswebstore.com

**Click on the RED button on top left-hand side of the screen and watch a 7 minute video about everything you'll receive in the Elite Gold Membership.



Cardi's in Rhode Island, is an excellent example of story telling that begins as soon as customers enter the store. They used the history of the three Cardi brothers — Nick, Ron and Pete, otherwise known collectively as NiRoPe — to tell their story both through written signage and a mural in the café.

Customers should get the message from 100 yards away...

While you're focusing on your entrance, celebrate with canopies, awnings, 3D elements that stick out and create shadow lines — anything that draws attention. Many of these elements do double-duty by sheltering customers from wind, rain or snow. Graphic elements on the outside of your store, such as murals, friezes or windows create a unique look and can easily communicate the type of merchandise your customers can expect to find inside.

Changing the profile or silhouette of

the building can also make it more memorable. Simply raising the parapet, changing lighting or painting the store a fresh, light color gives you a new and updated look. Get rid of, or cleverly hide, eyesores like rusty air conditioners, telephone poles, or dumpsters.

Creating green space outside your store also makes it more inviting, and these days, landscaping doesn't have to cost a fortune. Pampas grasses or zebra grasses can be used to create a sense of serenity but don't cost much, and they also blow in the wind, creating movement and attracting customers' eyes to your storefront. If you don't have the space for landscaping, a few nice planters by the entrance with some color in them can make a world of difference as well.

Changing your message to better reflect what kind of store you are and what you have to offer can be done from the outside in. No matter how you communicate your message, customers should it from 100 yards away.

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If you fail to tell your story, customers will make up their own...

INTERIOR ENTRYWAY

Once inside your store, customers should find a continuation of the message you revealed to them outside; it's not enough to do a few simple tricks to freshen up the outside and then disappoint customers once they cross the threshold.

Video research shows that customers take three to four steps into a store and then pause, taking in the experience you present. They take stock of what you have, and determine in an instant what they should expect based on neatness, cleanliness, lighting and navigational cues. In an instant they also judge the price points they can expect to find, and the path they might follow if they decide

to continue into the store. This is why a thoughtfully designed decompression zone at the front of your store is so very important. Any help you can offer customers at this point will be appreciated. One large East Coast furniture retailer, created a map of the store in rubber flooring. This stops customers in their tracks upon entering, and helps them sort out where to go. It also allows salespeople, placed inconspicuously behind a one-way mirror off to the side, the time to get out front and make their approach without being overbearing.

Your welcoming area can include an index of displays and visual cues that will not only tell customers the type of store you are, but also explain what you carry and how to find it. Signage in this area that explains about in-store events, specials, sales, and the brands you carry will also give customers a sense of what's bevond.

Graphics, lighting, architectural elements and color used on the outside of the store and in the entry area can be used in a thoughtful way to present an idea or story that can be expanded upon throughout the shopping experience. Think about your own story and what it is you want your store to communicate. Every retail outlet has its own unique personality, history and image, but often in medium or large size outlets, that message can get lost in all the space.

Consider new ways at the very beginning to clue your customers in to your extraordinary displays, especially in

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Chris Ehgoetz and Carrie Hemme Michael Alan Furnishings Lake Havasu, AZ

IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

medium to large size stores where you have the freedom and the room to do so. If you display by lifestyle rather than category, then this "story" can be presented early on. This will get your customers predisposed to making purchases in your store that are attuned to their style of living, such as small apartment, empty nesters or young couples.

Cardi's in Rhode Island, is an excellent example of story telling that begins as soon as customers enter the store. They used the history of the three Cardi brothers — Nick, Ron and Pete, otherwise known collectively as NiRoPe — to tell their story both through written signage and a mural in the café. Consistent signage employed the three brothers theme throughout. For interior signage they focused on what each brother is concerned about; one brother is focused on price, one on value, and one on selection. Color coded signage was used throughout the store so customers could easily see what each brother said about a given piece. Not only did this provide consistency of materials and added value to the customer, it communicated the information in a very human way that was easy to understand and relate to, and was also memorable.

This is story telling at its most ideal — a human connection that your customers can make with your store. But if you've done your job right, that story-telling began for your customers before they ever set foot in your store, with an introduction through more subliminal means; the color you've chosen to paint the outside, your use of landscaping, and your signage. And this message should be reinforced the moment they stepped foot inside, through the way your merchandise is displayed. Every store has a story to tell — what's yours?

Martin Roberts is an internationally acclaimed design industry veteran, with over 40 years of credits for retail and product design.

With his staff of brand strategists, retail planners, art directors, graphic designers, web designers, environmental and industrial designers, Roberts leads his firm in interpreting brand DNA to the target consumer. The results can lead to increased customer loyalty and improved sales. GRID2's projects with Borders, American Leather, TUMI, and Pathmark, are only a few examples of the success of Roberts' tenets to empower customers to buy more, more often.

Roberts' previous works included such nationally and internationally renowned corporations and brands as Bank of Boston, Barnes & Noble, Cartier, Chase Manhattan Bank, Coach, Duty-Free Shops, General Foods, Johnson & Johnson, K-Mart, Marriott International, Nestle, Perrier, Samsonite, Thomasville Furniture, Timberland, and Wal-Mart.

With a BA in Industrial Design Engineering and an MA in Design Systems, Roberts has also served as an adjunct professor of Design Management at Parsons School of Design.

Questions on any aspect of retail branding or store design may be directed to him at mroberts@furninfo.com. He can also be reached directly at 212-432-4834.

Store Exterior & Entry Checklist

Exterior

- Create a welcoming exterior.
- Bring the logo to line of sight.
- Celebrate the entrance.
- Graphically create a merchandise story.
- Increase apparent size of retail presence.
- Hide or eliminate eyesores.
- Improve planting.
- Change logo and change message.
- Add illuminated exterior, including signage.
- Use a memorable color.
- Install a color-coded way-finding map or directory.

- Create informational signage, policy signage and history signage.
- Illuminate logos and graphics.

Entrances

- Create a decompression zone.
- Use an attention getting color in the entrance and a strong story in graphic terms.
- Create an index of merchandise.
- Light up your atrium.
- Celebrate the seasons, brands and merchandise.
- Focus on pathways and circulation.
- Create full disclosure customers should experience the whole store.

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Personal Sales Tips For

A small attitude adjustment and a few reminders of important sales do's and dont's can get you back on track.

"Human beings have an inalienable right to reinvent themselves." -Germaine Greer-

ore than a few home furnishings retailers saw lower traffic and sales this summer. How did that make your sales and design associates feel? Well, their attitude in this tight economy probably depends on their personality type.

Gerhard Gschwandtner publisher of "Selling Power," points out five personality types that are particularly vulnerable to changes that often accompany economic downturns.

Approval Seekers: Managers have to readjust during a slow economy. "Seekers" get less attention. They feel more inadequate, and their performance falls.

Perfectionists: During these stressful times, perfectionists suffer from depression. They tend to equate uncertainty with anxiety. This personality needs to now work harder & smarter.

Worrywarts: They are doom & gloom. They create disaster scenarios in their minds. These people need to focus on each step of the sales process. They need to concentrate on goals & monitor their sales. Worrywarts also need to find a way to disengage from their thoughts of doom and gloom. One way is to go on a media diet.

Managing "Me Inc." - By Cathy Finney

Stop watching cable news and reading newspapers for the week. Instead, take this time to do something positive for yourself. Don't engage in negative conversations either. Going on this kind of diet just may improve your outlook... and you don't need to give up carbs!

Pathological Optimists: They delude themselves into thinking that they don't need to change the way they approach the sales process.

The Easily Frustrated: These sales associates complain that they've been working too hard and that life is not fair. They need to be reminded that everyone may be in the same boat, but they are in control of their own sales volume.

If your people are having a hard time staying "up" for their "UPS," just get them to follow these simple steps:

- Get out from behind the desk, counter, or station area.
- Do not sit, stand, or meander anywhere near the front door.
- DO NOT FLUFF (They know what you're doing!)
- Misery loves company, but not your company!

Yes, I know it can be very hard on your ego, your morale and on your wallet when all the financial experts speak of doom and gloom. Yes, the cost of filling up your tank keeps getting higher, the world situation seems dismal and the stock market bounces like a yo-yo. It becomes increasingly difficult not to "BUY IN" and then... you may come down with a case of Excusitis. You know that you have a particularly bad case when you hear yourself saying...

- "We don't have any traffic. I only had 2 "ups"all day!"
- "We're not running any advertising."
- Everybody's just wants to "browse."
- "They're all rude!"

So, Where are those 2 opportunities? What did you do with them? Why did they come in to the store? What did they want to buy for their room and when did they want it? If traffic is slow, get into your follow–up files. Pick up the phone, get those be-backs back. Remember that close rates on return customers can be 80% or more. Pros create their own traffic.

If advertising budgets are squeezed and face diminishing returns, do your own advertising. Get on the phone, contact old clients, send out mailers and emails, ask for referrals and prospect for new customers. Conduct your own in-store events.

Don't worry about browsers. Of course people want to browse. They don't know if they want to own anything you have in your store. They are not there to have fun. They simply want to see if you and your store can help them to create beautiful and useful rooms.

And the rude ones... they are probably as worried as you are about the economy... so change your perspective, your approach

Pros create their own traffic...

and win them over!

JUMP-START YOURSELF!

In his book, "Time Power: A Proven System for Getting More Done in Less Time Than You Ever Thought Possible." Brian Tracy proposes a five-step solution to ignite you and get you to the finish line.

- Create a detailed plan of action. Label each item in order of importance. (A, B, C, etc.). Put your ideas in writing. Detailing your plan in black and white gives you a blueprint and "seeing it" this way makes it come to life.
- Clean it up. Cleaning up your workspace is a great motivator.
- Separate the urgent from the important. Start on tasks that require immediate action -- large important tasks with con-

siderable future value.

• Practice creative procrastination. Tracy says that, "The difference between effective and ineffective people is that effective people procrastinate on the things that don't really matter."

When you play to win. Prepare to win. Prepare, and then prepare some more. How many times have you literally thrown a presentation together as your client is pulling into the parking lot! Including personalized details in a presentation shows "Ethel" that you care about her room and her business. Showing that you care builds trust and may just cause her to care about giving you her business.

Chet Holmes, author of "The Ultimate Sales Machine: Turbocharge Your Business with Relentless Focus on 12 Key Strategies" says that, "Too many people don't prepare. They don't think through all the strategic objectives. As a result, they achieve only a tenth of their objective." One-tenth?

To kick yourself into high gear, and get the other 9 tenths, he says that:

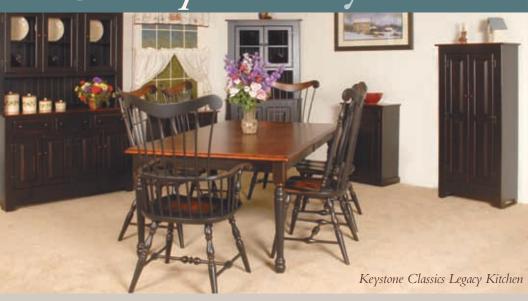
• You need to school yourself. "Preparation," he says, "can be summed up in one word: education... go in and demonstrate an expertise in, and an understanding of, the challenges the client faces everyday." The really smart people never graduate. They read, study, learn, and grow. They also sign up for People Skills #101. They know the competition. They know their strengths, their weaknesses, and how they conduct their business. They've analyzed their pricing, selection, and services that they offer. They develop

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HFIA salutes our distinguished President, Mary Frye, for earning the prestigious President's Award from Withlt. Well done, Mary!





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SLOW DAY SALES TIPS

product specific knowledge and design skills. They enter the "University of Ethel." They know her likes, her dislikes and the name on every branch of the family tree.

- You should ask the questions that build rapport. This simple act takes them to the next level in the relationship, setting them apart from the competition.
- Comparison shopping should be on your to-do list every week. Know your furniture foe, and not just where they live. Selection, pricing structure and availability are all investigated and analyzed. Become a student of sales. Watch the "selling styles" of other associates, noticing how they turn browsers into buyers... or not!

Mr. Holmes sums it up this way: "Be a partner... and be in for the long haul." That means that you shouldn't throw out their card, because all they bought was a lamp! Even if they browsed and left without buying, it is important to remember that the furniture buying process is a long one that requires nurturing through intelligent follow-up.

GO ON THE OFFENSIVE

P.T. Barnum once said, "Without promotion something terrible happens – NOTHING!" So how are you marketing "Me, Inc.?" What creative ideas have you been implementing? If the answer to that question has you staring at your shoes, it's OK. That's why you're reading this!

And finally, your sales will soar when you collaborate with your clients. Too many companies focus 99% of their energy on creating new and only 1% on collaborating and co-creating with their clients. Reach out to your customers for innovative ideas.

Read more about how customers can contribute to your business in "Outside Innovation: HOW the Customer will co-design Your Company's Future," By Patricia Seybol.

That's all for this installment. So get out of the Fort, take steps to engage customers, improve your attitude and make the most of every new opportunity.

Cathy Finney is President of Ancell Affiliates\"T 'N T." She is a noted motivational speaker, sales trainer, and management consultant. Questions on any aspect of sales training or sales management can be sent to Cathy care of FURNITURE WORLD Magazine, at finney@furninfo.com or call her toll free at (877-FINNYFX). See all of Cathy's articles on furninfo.com in the Sales Skills Index. Call 877-235-3095 for more information on her audio learning courses: "Pass the Power, Please!" on retail management; "House Calls" on how to do more and more profitable house calls; and "The Marketing of Me Inc." on how to follow-up to turn retail customers into clients for life. COME VISIT US AT THE SHOW October 20th - 26th NHFA Retailer Resource Center IHFC-Main • 12th floor • Space 8



Modern Ways To Increase

Part 2: Old school ways to increase this critical measure are just not enough anymore!

By David McMahon

Editor's Note: In the last issue of FURNI-TURE WORLD Magazine, the first part of this series discussed ways to boost GMROI by applying technology to improve business at the point of sale, in purchasing and receiving. Part 2 will conclude this discussion by looking at additional GMROI boosting

DELIVERY & PICK UP

strategies.

elivery scheduling should be fast. Typically, operations rely on a delivery clerk or the salespeople to call when they "feel" it is time to call the customer. Or, worse, they wait for the customer to call them. Messages are left and phone tag is played. This is a waste of time for both customer and retailer. The process can be improved by using modern tools to manage the process more effectively.

The first tool is to implement automation software to proactively send your manager a list of customers that need to be contacted immediately for scheduling. Don't wait for someone to print your "complete for delivery report" once a week. Have this important info sent without a thought. Take the people factor out of running major reports.

Once you have the information, email and call your customers. This is more professional, more convenient, traceable and a huge time saver. In the age of online shopping, Blackberry's, and IPhones, your customers expect this. They feel more comfortable shopping with businesses that are technically "up with the times."

Finally, the best retailers use routing sys-

tems so that they can fill trucks faster, maximize the number of stops per day, save on fuel, and wage costs, by taking an efficiently set route. Once the route has been established by the manager the data can be uploaded to GPS devices, or maps can be printed. This can result in a 20% delivery

CUSTOMER FOLLOW-UP

cost savings!

One of the most pressing issues for home furnishings retailers is the customer follow-up process, especially on special order merchandise. Salespeople, on average, have poor follow-up skills. Whether it's bad information, being afraid to call the customer, or just plain old laziness, followup rarely gets done professionally. Customers deserve better. They expect it.

Online purchasing has raised the expectation bar. Most of your customers are experienced internet shoppers. When they buy anything online, they immediately get an order acknowledgement with an ETA date, a receipt, and a thank you email. When the merchandise is shipped, they get another email so that they know exactly when to expect their order, along with a link to track its progress. Finally, after they receive the product, customer satisfaction surveys are emailed. This is done by the retailer online for a fraction of the cost and time of traditional calls and letters.

Guess what? This is the standard of proactive communications you should hold your business to. Proper execution will increase your GMROI by lowering cancellation rates. And – additional sales will be generated via positive word of mouth amongst your customer's peers.

If you are a traditional brick and mortar store with a sizable customer direct mail data base, you will need to focus your efforts on adding emails as well. Similar to accessing your database for a direct mail campaign or with special order follow-up letters, you should be able to extract specific customer data to be used for email follow-up. By mapping your data to an online email marketing agency, you can now send special order updates, thank you's and shipping notifications professionally via email.

MODERN WEBSITE USAGE

When you look at your retail Website, ask two questions: "What do I want my customer to do?" and "What do I need to change to do it?"

Most brick and mortar retailers want their customers to contact them or physically come into the store. A Website is meant to drive traffic to the store. To do this, think of your web pages as paths where customers gather information along the way. The paths must be easy to follow, if not... bye-bye. At the end of the path, it is always - you. Here are some components:

- Easy and complete contact links.
- An online room planner that can be saved and emailed to your designers.
- Product by category, sub category, and item; updated fast.
- Full item detail with all specs including price and warranty information.
- Real time merchandise availability.
- Designer profiles.



- Room ideas: before and after projects.
- Video of value added in home design process.
- Contact links for appointment requests in home or in store.
- Real time Q&A and product support.
- Clearance section to help move dogs.
- Best seller section to highlight what other customers like.
- New item section to test and track interest before buying commitment.
- Online newsletter and special promo sign up via email.

It's easy to see how utilizing these components can increase GMROI – if you focus on customer contact, you will increase ups and average sale. More gross margin dollars are produced via high turns. Winners are displayed. Dogs are moved faster. New items are tested.

MODERN WAYS TO ADVERTISE

Only three percent of furniture retail advertising budgets are spent on internet. Ask yourself this: "How much time do you, your family, and friends spend looking at a computer compared to looking at a TV?"; enough said.

Email marketing is the modern key to increasing your ROI on advertising. As previously mentioned, you can extract various customer follow-up information. Along with this you can establish traffic building campaigns through monthly value added newsletters and targeted special promotions.

It is very important to be professional in your email advertising as you do not want to alienate customers. Unlike direct mail, a customer can simply mark your emails as spam and they will never receive another from you. So, DO IT RIGHT. Use an e-Marketing agency (preferably one specializing in our industry) to act as your portal for distributing content to your customers. Agencies and e-Marketing portals are the easiest and most cost effective ways to send and track campaigns. This is basically how it works:

• Decide on your traffic building marketing campaign. Some examples: monthly newsletter, next purchase follow-up, past purchase follow-up, private sale, special promo, customer appreciation, clearance sale.



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Online purchasing has raised the expectation bar....

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- Upload pictures, promotions, or newsletters. (with links to your web site).
- Upload any text and contact information.
- Edit prior to sending.
- Send final product to your customers.
- Track the results: use the e-Marketing portal to check the results of the email. You can see who opened it, what they liked (clicked on), who forwarded it to a friend and who opted out.
- Develop targeted campaigns based on

the results (for example, by product or zip code).

This can all be done for pennies per email and by working with an agency. You do not have to reinvent the wheel or add to your current staffing. Cheaper – Faster – Better – Advertising is traceable and produces greater GMROI.

As I am writing this I just received newsletters from Crate and Barrel and FUR-NITURE WORLD Magazine. I choose to subscribe to these, because they are providing me with great ideas and valuable information. Do this for your customers and you will go ahead of your competition.

Today is the time to use the many new tools out there to help your business

increase its GMROI. Embrace technology and use it for its intended purpose: to make your customer's life, and your life, easier.

David McMahon, is a Business Coach for PROFITconsulting. PROFITconsulting assists retailers in increasing GMROI with traditional and modern methods.

Questions about the topics covered in this article or on any other operations management issue can be sent to David McMahon care of FURNITURE WORLD Magazine at davidm@furninfo.com. You can also call him direct at 800-888-5564. Read all of David McMahon's articles posted to the operations management article archives on the furninfo.com website.



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-Don Olsen, Owner

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What Are They Thinking, Those Crazy STORE OWNERS?

Sometimes furniture store owners say and do things that defy reason. Three examples.... more to come.

Sales Management Magic by Joe Capillo

s a long-time observer of the retail side of our business I find myself asking, with greater frequency and incredulity, "what are they thinking?" Here are some of my favorites, and they're general enough to apply broadly to a lot of readers' businesses. Maybe even yours.

THOUGHTS ABOUT TAKING OWNERSHIP OF "THE JOB"

What are owners thinking when they say they want their managers and employees to "take ownership" of their jobs and their stores?

What they really mean to say is that they want their employees to handle difficult situations and take initiatives in exactly the same way as their boss, without the benefit of being told what to do. In other words, they want their employees to act like their mental clones – which wouldn't be such a good idea in most cases.

Asking employees to take "ownership" makes the big assumption that the employee knows which things she can take ownership of, and which things she can't, again, without being told. When solving a tough customer problem, for example, wrong decisions about how to handle difficult customer issues are fraught with danger for the employee who "takes ownership" and does the obvious right thing. That's because the "right thing" may not be in line with the owner's way of thinking which is often self-serving and based on "the realities" of our business. Such things

as long delivery times, fabric outages, credit holds, internal errors, quality or service issues – anything that might cost the company money to fix – all fall into the realm of the employee being expected to "take ownership" around how the customer is handled.

Sales associates and customer service people are the most likely people to square off face-to-face with angry customers while the owner stays cozily cloistered in his office. Owners, however, often think that customers should understand their side of a problem. Employees are, of course, in the middle of this dilemma.

I use the word "dilemma" instead of "problem" because there is a distinction that has to be understood: problems have solutions; dilemmas don't. The answer to a dilemma is most often to cut everyone's losses and get out of it. Leaving dilemmas or problems open and unresolved in an organization for long periods actually costs far more in both dollars, morale and customer satisfaction than an immediate resolution would have. Let's say that a service tech is sent out to inspect an obvious problem with a piece of furniture in a customer's home. Using an Ocam's Razor approach and taking the simplest route to a solution will, in practically all cases, be the cheapest and most effective way of resolving the problem. Replace it. No service trail, no service order tracking system, no tech costs with gas prices at the highest level ever. Replace it and fix the bad one in the shop for resale. Granted, custom order goods are a different issue in most regards,

but not in the customer satisfaction one.

Interestingly, most managers will almost always take the Ocam's Razor approach of "get it done, make the customer happy, and off my plate". Interestingly enough, they would most likely be chastised for doing so by an owner who is focused on the organization's protective processes and procedures or on this month's financials. Just what are they thinking when they ignore the long term, hidden, cultural, market, and organizational costs? The answer is – not much.

THOUGHTS ABOUT PURCHASING

Another favorite "what were they thinking?" situation is that often wacky world of purchasing in the furniture business. I have met dozens – no, hundreds, of independent furniture retailers who can point to operating profits on the income statement, but who have no cash on hand. Today that is a deadly situation because of the difficulty of finding financing for inventory. It's not just difficult, it's nearly impossible for marginal retailers without very strong balance sheets.

There are only a few places that operational "profits" can be found; in the bank, in the warehouse in the form of inventory, or in the owner's bank account and other personal assets. Mostly though, it's found in the warehouse. I recently met a retailer with several stores in a major metro market who had over \$2 million in dead inventory in his warehouse, and no cash on hand. All

Send us your favorite "what are they thinking" issue.

of it was stock purchased at speciously large discounts from overseas vendors in container quantities. "I've got 60 points on that stuff" he said.

What he failed to consider is that the cost of carrying one dollar of inventory for one year is 30 cents. That's 30%! This is the most important business expense a furniture retailer should control, but it's also the most difficult, because it doesn't appear on the financial statement as a line item. Instead it's found buried in other expense categories such as warehouse rent, insurance, interest expense on an inventory loan, plus borrowed funds for operating cash (because it is all tied up in inventory), gross margin (where markdowns live), warehouse salaries, and off-the-income-statement costs to your

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business such as lost sales because you have no inventory of your best sellers because you have no cash to buy them. You get the idea...

THOUGHTS ABOUT GMROI

We all know it is not possible to live long on Earth if you believe you can negotiate with gravity. Most of us wouldn't have lived beyond the fist tree-climb if we didn't learn this truth early on in life. Well, there's a gravity-like rule in the business world, too. It's called Praeto's Principle otherwise known as the 80/20 rule, or the Law of Imbalance. It says that 80% of all outcomes will be generated by 20% of all causes – or something like that. In our business, the metric that is used to "negotiate" with Praeto's Principle is GMROI. It's amazing

that a large number of buyers in our industry know little to nothing about their GMROI. What are they thinking? - Not much.

If you have a favorite "What are they thinking?" issue, send it to FURNITURE WORLD at joecapillo@furninfo.com.

Joe Capillo is a furniture industry veteran with 35 years combined experience as a retail consultant and retail industry executive. He is a contributing editor to FURNI-TURE WORLD and a frequent speaker at industry functions. Joe makes himself available for private consultations on any aspect of retail sales management and sales education. He can be reached at joecapillo@furninfo.com. See all of Joe's articles on the information packed FURNITURE WORLD website furninfo.com.

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Sustainability Update G-R-O-W-I-N-G GREENER

For these retailers, sustainable retailing is more than a marketing slogan. It is an ongoing process of self improvement.

Furniture Trends by Janet Holt-Johnstone

n spite of our economic thrills and spills, calamitous happenings in the housing sector, political triumphs and tragedies and even that new spectre called "greenwashing", the drive to create a better, more sustainable planet continues to grow. But it takes pretty powerful (organic, of course!) fertilizers and weed killers these days!

ROOM AND BOARD AGGRESSIVE INITIATIVES

It's a matter of deciding one's level of commitment. Last year, Steve Freeman, Room And Board, and Standards Co-Chair of the Sustainable Furniture Council, told us that at the San Francisco store, "We have solar power and we've actually sold power to the grid!" This year, his customers can't help but see Room And Board is, "Using more and more CFLs (compact fluorescents) for display lighting." The purpose, to encourage consumers to utilize CFLs in their own homes. The Room And Board family of stores is located in California, Illinois, Colorado, Minnesota and New York.

He's made great strides at his Distribution Centre, too. "We now recycle more than 99 per cent of all packaging. Our manufacturers have worked with us to make sure they get the product to us safely, but the packaging used can be recycled. Not only are we saving money and actually creating a small amount of income, but also we've reduced what was sent to landfills by over 50 per cent.

"We've installed many motion

detector switches on lighting in our offices so lights go off and turn on only as needed. To reduce fuel consumption, we have incorporated new routing software in our trucks. We're encouraging everyone to use car pools, bikes and scooters to get to work. We have lunch clubs at work so people think about bringing their lunch and not driving to a store or restaurant at lunchtime to eat.

"Every meeting with vendors includes a conversation on sustainability. Hopefully, they always leave knowing there is still more to do. We've seen all of our vendors inspired and making changes in their businesses. This is a primary Company Priority and gets discussed at every quarterly review. It has been a Company Priority for many years now. Each (store) location has a copy of "An Inconvenient Truth"; the staff has viewed the film, and had numerous discussions about what we can all do to help.

"The SFC has highlighted some manufacturers and their processes and products as suppliers of sustainable product lines. We still rely on our group of manufacturers and just educate and work with them on making product greener but, most importantly, with higher quality and timeless design so the product will last and not need replacing.

"We also source the vast majority of our products locally and from U.S. manufacturers. This year over 80 per cent of all furniture sold will have been produced in the U.S. from U.S. materials. These energy savings alone will greatly reduce our impact on CO2 emissions, and our use of fossil fuels.

"There has definitely been an upsurge in consumer interest, but I'd say more from a health aspect than from the green aspect. In other words, they want to be sure the product will be healthy for them and their family in their homes. They ask about chemicals, formaldehyde and other details about the materials and finishes."

When consumers make the decision to subscribe to monthly and special emails from Room And Board's website (www.roomandboard.com), they are asked if they choose to submit a personal profile. What a great way to add to a definitive knowledge of your store's demographic! "The Internet is a huge resource for our customers to access information and details on our products. Our customers use the Internet to educate themselves about us and our products, as well as purchase products from us." There's plenty of well-presented and interesting educational material about bamboo, wood and joinery, as well as design.

Steve's popular catalogue is produced only once each year, another energy saving, "printed on 30 per cent recycled paper with vegetable based ink. It's mailed to customers right after the Christmas holiday season and is good until the end of the following year, no price changes."

NEW GREEN RESEARCH FROM THE SFC

Said Jeffrey Hiller, one of the

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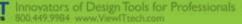




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John Grant, author of "The Green Marketing Manifesto" believes that green marketing is the next economic and social revolution after the Internet.

JOHN GRANT

Board members and Marketing Chairman of the Sustainable Furniture Council, "We're encouraged to find that about half of the consumers describe themselves as very interested in global warming, and started doing what they can, which usually means buying green products... cleaning supplies, compact fluorescent light bulbs, paper and plastic products. They have purchased little to no green home furnishings, largely due to their perception that they do not yet exist. However, when asked if they would be interested in buying these types of products if they were available, if they liked the style and if they cost about the same as other options (up to 10 per cent more), trial interest was 30 per cent, a very healthy number. This suggests that it is up to

founding

Room And Board Recycles 99% of its packaging...

manufacturers and retailers to catch up by bringing more acceptable choices to market."

SFC has just changed its name from Sustainable Furniture Council to Sustainable Furnishinas Council, "better to reflect the diversity of its growing membership," said Susan Inglis, Executive Director, and principal of From The Mountain. "The non-profit coalition of suppliers, manufacturers, importers, retailers and designers is now approaching 300 members, representing every facet of the home furnishings industry." The SFC wants to make it clear they are capable of servicing the needs of such a diverse group. The results of their broad-based consumer study of awareness, attitudes and interests re green issues reveal that even though "The economy is not in the best

STARTING A GREEN PROGRAM

•Set goals and assign responsibility.

- Hire or appoint a Director of Sustainable Practices. Giver her/him the job of working with operations managers, buyers, sales and marketing people in your organization to implement and oversee your new program.
 - •Ask managers in each area of your business to take inventory of their current operations in light of sustainable business practices, so that you'll be able to track your progress.
 - •Increase the percentage in dollars of "sustainable" home furnishings products sold by your organization over the next five years.
 - •Decrease your carbon footprint by a defined percentage each year for the next 10 years.
 - Develop a rating scale to evaluate and manage your suppliers on the basis of their degree of commitment to sustainability, healthy products and the humane treatment of workers.

And, friends, if you have additional ideas, please share them with us at editor@furninfo.com. We'll post them to our message board string on the furninfo.com message board to be published in a future issue.

shape at the moment", there is a market for green home furnishings that will continue to grow over time. (Contact Susan at susan@sfcgreen.org if you would like to buy a copy of the study.) She is "excited about all we have in the works!"

And SFC President Gerry Cooklin, South Cone, adds, "True sustainability is a long way away from where the general consumer is today. It will take a long while to gradually guide the regular consumer (as opposed to the early adopters that have already jumped on the wave) to more sustainable consumption. I always use the analogy of the transatlantic liner and how it takes a long while for it to turn. But the turning has definitively already started. The SFC has already catalyzed the beginning of the turn of our industry, a huge step for us and we are proud of this. Now we are getting more and more attention from industry participants, we have an important and large job on our hands, but we have a team of passionate and diverse leaders who are very excited to take on the challenge. There is much work to be done fast, and we are very hopeful that the resources needed to execute our work will be provided along our journey."

It would certainly seem that the 28 exhibitors of the Living Green Pavilion at the Las Vegas Market are off and running! Andrew Maiden, World Market Center, told us, "We had great participation, the largest residential ecofriendly pavilion in the country. And high quality traffic including many of the top 100. The participants reported strong sales, including notable success for Las Vegas first-time exhibitors like Harden Furniture and Eco Exotic."

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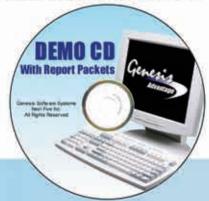
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SEC CONSUMER RESEARCH

SPECCONSUMER RESEARCH ustainable Furnishings Council is commit-tion of the providing our members with not only ine best practices, education, and training, but also the best information on the market today. We recognize that green products are not just also, but aleguitamie market truted that continues to excite higher levels of interest at every level of the supply chain all the way down to the consumer. To help understand this important but sometimes con-tising topic, we commissioned a proprietary study to quantify and clarify the opportunity from a consumer point of view. This is the first in what we plan to be a series of surveys to give us continuous tracking of consumer awareness, attitudes and interests related to green issues in the furniture industry.



The broad-based consumer study of awareness, attitudes and interests about areen issues is available for \$50 for SFC members or \$100 for non-members by contacting the Sustainable Furnishings Council at susan@sustainablefurnishings.com.

Cole's ABC Carpet and Home contin-Now their environmentally ue. responsible packaging system uses starch based popcorn for small shipments. "It dissolves in water, and can be disposed of in the sink. We also recycle bubble wrap and use it only when necessary." And furniture blankets are used rather than disposable packaging for furniture pieces in transit. ABC's website asks consumers for "any suggestions you might have for environmentally

responsible packaging", a super touchy-feely way to remain in synch with customers on a vital issue. Now, collaborating with Real Goods.

ABC offers help to "solarize your home or office using clean, safe, reliable and cost-effective power from the sun". This Manhattan, New York and New Jersey legend in carpets and home furnishings has a 'commitment to help its customers enhance how their homes reflect

their values." The creation of ABC Solar, operating as ABC Real Goods Solar, "brings full service solar system installation to consumers in both New York and New Jersey." They hope, in a few months, to also "support the solar aspirations of our Connecticut customers". ABC's website describes how the consumer can take advantage of the States' rebate programs saving up to 65 per cent of the cost. If you

are intrigued, go to their website, www.abcrealgoodssolar.com. Retailers with vision!

ABC also launched, in honour of

Earth Day, the "goodwood plant a tree" project. With each "goodwood" furniture sale within their store, ABC will plant a tree with The Green Belt Movement's Carbon Poverty Reduction Program. The hope is to "measurably reduce global warming by planting five billion trees in the next 50 years".

And you must read John Grant's "The Green Marketing Manifesto", hot off the press! A dedicated and knowledgeable environmentalist and marketer, Grant believes that green marketing is the next

economic and social revolution after the Internet. Further, "Green marketing requires you to act with integrity. You must be absolutely sure that your business can and will live up to any standards you set for yourself because others will be watching you. Sustainability is complex. It's also a moving target," he stresses. "If you want to become a green marketer, you must be constantly up-to-date on the twists and turns in evaluating green claims." His advice covers every market segment including, of course, home fur-

SUSTAINABLE RETAILING IDEAS

- Use routing software and energy efficient/size appropriate trucks for delivery. Each gallon of diesel fuel burned puts about 26 pounds of CO2 into our atmosphere.
- Suggest employees handle flextime tasks from home. Each gallon of gasoline consumed while commuting puts about 20 more pounds of CO2 into the atmosphere.
- Install energy efficient lighting in offices and warehouses. A 60-watt incandescent bulb over 24 hours puts almost two pounds of CO2 into that crowded atmosphere.
- Recycle packaging and buy products with recycled content.
- Teleconference more and cut down on air travel. It's been estimated that air travel has about the same effect on global warming per passenger as driving a car the same distance.
- Make a real effort to verify that your suppliers buy and use lumber products from sustainable sources.
- Identify and provide customers with a choice of fabrics and cushioning materials that are not derived from petrochemicals.
- Set up a rating system by vendor or collection that pegs the degree of "sustainability" or "environmental friendliness".
- Create marketing tools to tell your customers what your company stands for, and what kinds of sustainable choices you are offering that other retailers don't!

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nishings.

All this sounds a bit daunting. But he argues we should "go for it", and provides nine "pathways" in his book to help us "get there". Worth the \$34.95!

GREEN TIPS FROM BODY SHOP

Body Shop has been around for a long time and they're now up-dating their image. Their plan involves, "outdoing the competition and being that much more green and ethical." Marina Strauss for The Globe & Mail says, "That's not a big change for a company whose blood runs green!" This cosmetics and toiletries icon offers tips to us all:

- . Don't exaggerate your green attributes. Make sure you can back up any claims you make.
- . Be specific about what you do that is green. Being generic holds no credibility. Don't just paint your packaging green. Everyone's doing that!
- . Don't oversimplify the issues. Provide context for consumers.
- . Make sure the environmentally correct product is priced well. Most people aren't yet ready to pay a big premium for their eco-views.

"Greenwashing" is getting plenty of ink and airtime and the product range focused is astonishing, from household cleaners to, dare we say, home furnishings. But we're dealing with it. Said Susan Inglis, "Certified sustainable products, from furnishings to food to buildings, continue to grow in brand value way faster than the average increase. Consumers are confused by many things about our move-



Pictured are pages from the Room & Board and ABC Home websites. The ABC Home page lists words that describe their corporate culture. These include: good wood , organic, fair and square, beautiful, handmade, cruelty free, sustainable and recycled.

The Room and Board page touts the strength and sustainable benefits of bamboo wood.

ABC launched the "goodwood" plant a tree project.

ment, but they are also savvy to greenwashing and look (to us) for assurance. That's why the SFC is of great value. It can clarify and educate."

Certainly it's gone international with spats popping up between furniture designers in New Zealand, a few scattered home furnishings retailers here closer to home, and golf course designers, believe it or not! And even revered wildlife organizations, food and biotechnology, personal care products, energy providers, car companies and, of course, the oil and gas industry, appear to be part of the greenwashing mix.

Steve Freeman has a healthy attitude.

"I guess I am an eternal optimist and have lots of confidence in America's ability to solve any problem. I just wish everyone would have been paying attention sooner, but it's good that the issue has people's attention now. We have 'areen teams' in our business that encourage everything from riding a bike to work, to using reusable bags for shopping, CFL lighting, etc., etc. We have events that bring people together to talk about green initiatives and raise awareness and offer solutions and alternatives. If everyone takes a few small steps every month, we can make a huge difference in the world. Everyone brings good ideas of what they have done in their work and personal

lives to share and inspire others."

As does Jeffrey Hiller. "Every major product innovation across most categories face the same challenge, hybrid or high mpg cars, diet soft drinks, light beers, fluorescent bulbs... but in all cases, the concern proved to be invalid. Consumer behavior is a pretty deep-seated thing, and people are generally very understanding. They appreciate having the option, and applaud those who are at least trying to make a difference, just as they see themselves."

"Things they are a-changing." And for the better!

-JHJ

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This TV console with stylish innovative steel bracket allows flat panel TV's to be suspended above the cabinet surface. It pivots left or right and is height adjustable. Contact information on index page 86.





Keystone

The Keystone Classics Lancaster Cabinet is shown here in Harvest finish with a Wheat Punched Tin design. Each piece in this furniture collection is available in a variety of finishes and hand-painted designs. Manufactured in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Contact information on index page 86.

Newton Furniture

The Georgetown dining room is a classical design available in 5 types of premium kiln dried woods with 20 different stain options. Table features 1¹/₄ thick top and is available in single or double pedestal. Sideboard is available with unique wine bottle storage or drawers. Chairs come in camel or straight back with 10 leather colors and 50 fabrics including microfibers. Contact information on index page 86.

Design

Easels by Amron

This easel is one of over 250 pieces. They are 58" tall, made of wood, are adjustable and available in silver, gold, cherry and black finishes. Contact information on index page 86.

Flexsteel

Grandover is a Spanish casual traditional metal and glass table collection. The signature of this group is the hand crafted wrought iron scroll shelves and twisted metal leg post. This handsome table is finished in hammered antique pewter and topped with beveled glass. Contact information on index page 86.

Perri Fine Furniture

Manufacturer of fine upholstered furniture made in Canada. Contact information on index page 86.



Tradewins

This group gives the ultimate in freedom of choice to your customers. It can be customized with choice of finish, fabric, legs or base size and shape. Contact information on index page 86.





This TV console with stylish innovative steel bracket allows flat panel TV's to be suspended above the cabinet surface. It pivots left or right and is height adjustable. Contact information on index page 86.





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Design

Eco Exotic This simple yet

elegant design takes it's inspiration from the cozy eighteenth century reproductions and designs found in the rooms of the Hampton's Sag Harbor Inn. Contact information on index page 86.





Naturescast

The new Club Furniture Set is made from agro-forest waste using an innovative process. Comes in a variety of colors and includes a sofa, chair, footstool, ottoman and side table. Contact information on index page 86.



Dinec

Table from the new Prestige Collection of solid birch wood, features inch top tables, buffets, and occasional tables. This attractive group is shown with new fully upholstered chairs. Contact information on index page 86.



Bermex

This traditional dining group is available in 86 finishes which can be combined. Shown is a five leg table with 3 leaves, available with option of self-storage for 2 leaves. Matching chairs can be upholstered with over 140 fabrics plus genuine leather. Buffet comes with a concealed dove-tail drawer mounted on easy glide "Quadro" and lined with felt. Matching hutch features a 3way touch lighting system, fixed glass shelves with groove, curved glass doors and a mirror back. Contact information on index page 86.





Bugatti

This This European modular contemporary leather sofa has memory foam seats and feather back cushions. Also available in fabric. Contact information on index page 86.

Huppé

The Palermo collection is made of Birch and is available in 18 different finishes. Shown here in Charcoal finish. A different version of the bed is also available.Contact information on index page 86.



Design



Classic Flame

Constructed from highquality solid Birchwood, The Glendale Corner Unit surrounds a 23" remote control operated Classic Flame Electric Fireplace, featuring a convenient insert area for the audio/video component. The Glendale Corner Unit's regal modern styling and unique corner design will make it an ideal fit in any living area. Contact information on index page 86.



Dutailier

"Zazz", a new addition to the Comfort Recliner Collection is now available in a wide selection of fabrics. Contact information on index page 86.

Laurier

Made of maple veneers, this exclusive contemporary sculptured design is complimented by traditional Made in Canada quality and precision. French dovetail drawer front construction, ultra smooth Quadro ball bearing glides and European slat platform bed complete this series. Contact information on index page 86.

Harden

Rope turned legs and bread board top combine to create this elegant small scaled table that could function as a night stand or end table. Contact information on index page 86.



Hellenic Rug The Kontempo collection is an assortment of fun and fashionable area rugs. These rugs are hand tufted and hand carved in India of 100% new wool. Contact information on index page 86.

Darafeev

"Transform Your Customers Home into a Resort" with Custom Gaming tables and Bars with matching Chairs and Barstools all manufactured from American hardwoods in the USA since 1959. Contact information on index page 86.

Design

Home Trends and Design

The Colonial Plantation collection is traditional in style, with pieces constructed from Plantation grown mango wood and finished with a water based lacquer. Shown is the 84" round dining table, 76" sideboard and Barcelona Chairs in the Chestnut Leather. Table also available in 60" and 72". Contact information on index page 86



Sterling Furniture

The Anatole table features beautiful metal scroll legs and a European-inspired skirting with an MDF top. Table measures 27.5"x 27.5"x 29.75". Contact information on index page 86.

Elran

"Lily", transitional styled living room group features a dressmakers skirt targeting urban spaces. Shown here in embossed velvet fabric. Contact information on index page 86

Kathy Ireland Home by Omnia

The "City Loft" Two Arm Bench offers 130 different styles ranging from very traditional to ultra contemporary. Available in over 150 leather colors, 30 different types of leathers, and many microfibers and fabrics. Manufactured in the USA. Contact information on index page 86.

Midi

The Urban Collection is made of solid birch and is available in many styles, fabrics and finishes. Contact information on index page 86.

Fashion Bed

The Stratford daybed is made of an Asian hardwood and finished in a deep Mahogany color. It can accomodate an optional trundle unit, for additional sleeping. The curve of the tops of the arms stretch the back to 91", and the height of the top of the back is 44". The arms are a standard 40" wide to house a regulation twin mattress. Contact information on index page 86.

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SUNDAY - FRIDAY Chelsea House - 104 South Court Wine and Hors d'oeuvres - 4:00PM until 6:00PM

SUNDAY - FRIDAY The Elyseé Collection - 108 South Court Champagne, French Wines and Hors d'oeuvres 4:30PM until 6:00PM

SUNDAY – SATURDAY Emerson Et Cie - Suite 110 South Court Wine and Hors d'oeuvres - 4:30PM until 6:00PM

330 North Hamilton Daily Events

SUNDAY - WEDNESDAY Hamilton Properties Champagne Breakfast - 8:00AM until 9:30AM

MONDAY - SATURDAY Friedman Brothers - 1st Floor Wine and Cheese - 4:30PM until 7:00PM

SUNDAY - SUNDAY Payne Street/Breece Collection - Suite 200 Cocktails and Hors d'oeuvres - 4:30PM until 7:00PM

SUNDAY - FRIDAY West Bros. Furniture - 3rd Floor Complimentary Buyers Lunch - 11:30AM until 1:30PM

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