

SEPTEMBER /OCTOBER 2021

VOLUME 16 NUMBER 5

# Home Furnishings Business<sup>®</sup>

STRATEGY FOR THE FURNITURE INDUSTRY

## STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

A time before the storm?

**2022 Furniture Industry Forecast  
PLUS: Industry Experts  
offer their Perspective**

**Style Directions: Gold Medalists**

**What Sells: Upholstery  
These Best Sellers are  
Worth the Wait**

**New Products in High Point:  
A Bountiful Harvest**

# WORTH *the* WAIT

BY LAURIE NORTHINGTON

**A**s booming furniture sales remain strong, the upholstery category leads the way, accounting for 35% of industry sales year-to-date. However, many retailers and manufacturers are unable to fully bask in the glory of success as they battle shipping delays, foam shortages and short-staffed factories. The shipping delays have led many consumers to face the choice: Do I shop for what is currently in-stock or is that custom sofa or backordered chair worth the wait? Regardless of the choice, most consumers want comfort combined with style and value. Including both motion and stationary, the upholstery category offers a style, price point and solution for every consumer.

Based on the FurnitureCore Industry Model developed by Impact Consulting Services, parent company to *Home Furnishings Business*, research shows that the category has increased steadily since 2019, finishing 2020 with \$43.34 billion in sales and up from \$39.50 billion in 2019. Not surprisingly, upholstery sales for the second quarter of 2021 jumped 41.2% above the same quarter in 2020 as the quarantine period of the pandemic ran through April.



**ANTHONY TEAGUE**  
SVP of Merchandising  
for Jackson/Catnapper

Growth has continued in 2021 with upholstery sales up 8.5% from \$13.09 billion in the first quarter to \$14.20 billion in the second quarter. In a COVID 19 world, consumers

are embracing the comforts of home like never before, leading manufacturers and retailers to find success incorporating style with comfort. “Comfort drives our business,” says Anthony Teague, senior vice president of sales and merchandising at Jackson Catnapper. “One of the most exciting new products to hit the streets for Catnapper in 2021 is the Angelo Power Headrest motion sofa. The features of the power recline and power headrest offer infinite positions for personalized comfort. The seating experience is highlighted by soft top grain Italian leather that envelops the body everywhere it touches.”

Four Hands has also found success with comfortable, cozy pieces geared toward creating a space the whole family can enjoy. Regarding the company’s best-selling Chloe Media lounger, Director of Upholstery Jessica Green says, “This piece was made for connection and creating memories. It’s an intentional, purposeful shape with ample seating, layered toss pillows and exaggerated depth to support the full body, it’s ideal for cozy movie watching.” When consumers were polled during a FurnitureCore survey and asked which look they selected for their most recent upholstery furniture purchase, 56.79% selected plump, overstuffed sofas with deep seating compared to 43.21% who selected a sleek, tight body cover following the line of the furniture.

Now more than ever, consumers are seeking comfort in a variety of styles. Sleeker, more contemporary pieces are gaining in popularity while traditional styles

still hold the majority of appeal. In a survey from FurnitureCore, shoppers were polled on their preferred style of upholstery and found that 44.17% preferred traditional. Second was contemporary at 32.74%, followed by country/rustic at 9.87%, transitional at 4.82%, cottage at 4.48%, and mission/shaker at 3.92%.



**JESSICA GREEN**  
Director of Upholstery  
for Four Hands

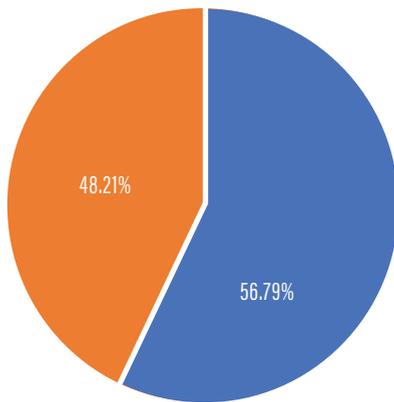
Upholstery demand partnered with ongoing delivery delays has caused frustration for everyone: consumers, manufacturers and retailers. A pre-pandemic survey asked how long customers were willing to wait for a custom order sofa. In what might seem laughable now, the survey found that a majority (40.13%) were willing to wait two weeks to a month, 38.23% were willing to wait one-to-three months, 9.64% were willing to wait three-to-six months, and 0.67% were able to wait more than six months. The remaining 11.32% were only willing to wait less than two weeks. With average wait times now over six months, customers have had to adjust their expectations. The good news for upholstery is that demand is not subsiding and many consumers are deciding that desired sofa, sectional, or chair is worth the wait. ■



### Whittemore-Sherrill's 322-02 Sofa

This sofa is a modern luxe take on a traditional chesterfield style. The full tufting on the inside back, paired with two loose seat cushions and nailhead detail, gives this style a comfortable seating option without a classic design aesthetic.

Which look did you choose when you purchased?



- Plump, over stuffed sofas with deep seating
- Sleek, tight body cover following the line of the furniture

### Four Hands' Chloe Media Lounger

The roomy style lounger has light grey performance-grade upholstery that forms a dramatic U shape for a spacious, sink-in sit. Throw pillows present an added touch of comfort to this sensibly styled media lounger, perfect for movie nights. Suggested retail price is \$1,799.

