



## Consumer Decisions For Buying Furniture

Price does not always indicate quality when it comes to furniture. Good quality, long lasting furniture comes in various price ranges. To get the maximum value for your money, take time to do your homework before you go to the store. By doing this, you'll be more apt to end up with good quality furniture that fits your decoration plan.

### Before You Buy...

Take time to plan and make pre-shopping decisions. Impulse shopping may have a place and be fun, but it's not a wise practice with major purchases such as furniture. Planning ahead will help you get the best value for the money spent through longer wear, more attractive surroundings and increased comfort. You'll have furniture that works for you whether by adequate storage, attractive display, effective work areas or ease of use.

First, measure carefully! Use pencil, paper and a tape measure to draw a scaled floor plan of the room. Be sure to include doors, windows, heating and electrical outlets and any unusual architectural features that might influence your furniture placement. Take this floor plan with you as you shop so that you and your sales person can "see" how pieces of furniture will fit in. It also helps to take a small tape measure with you so that you can measure furniture as you are shopping. Be sure that the furniture is not too large to fit into a given space...or to pass easily through doors and hallways as you move it into and out of room!

Second, think about price. Do you want to buy high end, medium or low end furniture? If buying high end furniture, be prepared for sticker shock! A beautiful piece of beautiful solid hardwood furniture which can last for generations is the creation of dozens of craftsmen. Consider buying two or three pieces a year rather than a room full all at once.

#### Selecting A Furniture Style

Consider these factors:

- ✓ Lifestyle
- ✓ Room Setting
- ✓ Comfort
- ✓ Colors and Patterns
- ✓ Mood desired

Take time to browse in several stores in order to find out what's available, analyze trends and compare prices. Study the store displays and room settings for ideas in decorating and to see how various styles of furniture are treated.

## Shopping Options...

Many choices are available when shopping for furniture. Some larger communities have more alternatives than others. Mail order and electronic shopping opportunities are popular with many at-home consumers who have busy schedules. Several different shopping options include:

- **Catalogs and Mail Orders.** Advantages include a wide variety of brands and products that can be considered at your convenience. A major disadvantage is the fact that you can't actually see the product until it is delivered.
- **Electronic.** Many manufacturers have web pages and e-mail addresses. Television home shows, the home and garden television channel and general home shopping channels give decorating advice along with showing products and are gaining in popularity.
- **Furniture Showrooms and Manufacturer's Outlets.** Some businesses require that an interior designer accompany customers into a showroom.
- **Full Service Furniture Retailer.** Stores offer a full line of products, personal services, interior design assistance, delivery, payment alternatives and installation.
- **Furniture Chains and Warehouses.** Chains offer a variety of products but usually have no decorating assistance or free delivery. Warehouses focus on value-oriented products and offer few "frills" in the way of service. Merchandise may be in shipping cartons and sold as "cash and carry."
- **Department Stores.** Larger stores feature attractive displays of latest furniture trends, decorating assistance, convenient store credit and delivery service.
- **Specialty Furniture Stores.** Some shops show samples of styles and fabrics and then make custom order sofas and chairs to fit your needs. Other examples of categories in specialty stores include unfinished furniture, bedding and home accessories.
- **Discount and Membership Stores.** It's possible to save money but examine each piece carefully for quality and make sure you can live with any defects.
- **Interior Design and Custom Design Services.** They are usually small, exclusive and run by designers who are knowledgeable about quality merchandise in all areas. Customers will pay more for their expertise and full one-stop service.

## As You Shop...

Select a reputable store that you feel you can trust. If you're new to an area or don't know where to begin, ask friends or neighbors where they have shopped and why. Also check the yellow pages in the telephone book and the advertisements in a local newspaper.

Read tags and labels. Check quality guidelines to see how well each piece is made. Compare prices from at least three different stores. Find out what's included on warranties and guarantees. Compare prices, delivery charges and installation costs before making a final decision. Consult your floor

### Factors influencing the cost of furniture

- ✓ Design. Is it an original or copy, antique or adaptation?
- ✓ Materials. Genuine materials are more costly than embossed or imitation.
- ✓ Manufacturing Method. Has it been mass produced or handcrafted?
- ✓ Detailing. Is carving handcrafted or done by machine?
- ✓ Size. Is it full scale or smaller in size?
- ✓ Shipping and Storage. Assembled furniture is more costly than assemble it yourself.
- ✓ Services. Possibilities include cash, credit, carry-home or free delivery.

plan and measure furniture to be sure that it will fit into your room. Bring paint samples and swatches of carpet and fabrics with you to help in the selection of upholstery fabric colors and patterns. Check colors in both natural daylight and artificial lighting.

### **When You Buy...**

Write down all information about brand, style numbers, finishes, delivery charges, special treatments (spot and stain resistant finishes, etc.), method of payment, time payment information, interest rates, who to contact if service is needed, what the warranty covers, sales person's name, store name and purchase/delivery dates. Keep in a file for future reference. Inspect furniture immediately on delivery. Your complaint may be referred on to a district manager or manufacturer's representative, and he or she will then contact you about the problem.

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