



MARKETING MAGIC:

By Liz Fernandez

CONTRACT FURNITURE AND THE ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN MARKET

Marketing your furniture division

Your supplies buyer is most likely not the furniture buyer, so you are targeting a different purchaser when marketing furniture. Often, furniture buyers are facility managers or in purchasing. A buyer might also come from human resources for new hire and high-volume staffing workplace configurations. Many dealers have also worked on projects with the architecture and design market, as these buyers source product for their clients' newly designed spaces.

Your competition is most likely different from the supplies side too. While you may be competing with other office supply dealers, you are also competing with interior design and architectural firms (they are sometimes your buyers and sometimes your competitors). Buying furniture for an entire workplace is a much more involved process than procuring pens and sanitizer, and the marketing has a higher-end look and feel.

Separate interior website or just one website?

You may be asking yourself if you should have a separate interiors website or just one website that has furniture in the navigation. This is a question that comes up a lot; but ultimately, that decision is up to you and what works best for your team. Here are some things to consider:

- **What is your budget?** The bottom line is that two websites (supplies and interiors) are more expensive than one. If you don't have the budget, it may not make sense to create a separate site right now. You can always revisit down the road. If you do have the budget, then having a separate interiors site makes sense given the vast difference in target customers and the look/feel they are wanting to see in their search.
- **What is your marketing team's capacity?** Do you even have a separate marketing team or are you doing everything yourself? It is not only more expensive to have

a separate interiors site, but also more time consuming. Websites are not something to set and forget. To maintain relevance, you should update your website on a consistent basis—from what you offer to blog content to search engine optimization (SEO). If you are currently struggling to find the time to update one website, having two might not be the best option.

- **Do you have a furniture division?** Are there furniture specialists and interior designers on staff? Office supply reps selling transactional chairs are different from certified interior designers working on large-scale projects. If you create a separate interiors website that you are getting traction on, do you have the capacity and expertise to handle the projects?

Realistically evaluating these questions can help your team decide if it makes sense to create a separate website. Be realistic with what you have, but don't »

be afraid to put some budget behind marketing furniture if you are looking to grow it.

Just remember, even if you do not create a separate interiors website, you can still create and push out marketing content to target and grow your furniture business with SEO, social and paid search.

Furniture SEO, social and paid search

Furniture projects come down to one specific thing: staying local. For large projects, you need to be on site. From initial consultation to installation, furniture projects are easier when they are local. In addition, 46 percent of all Google searches are looking for local information. Ensure that your site SEO, social content and paid searches reflect this specific need, and make them local. Don't waste money paying Google to share your site with businesses across the country.

Start with SEO

If you have never worked on any of these three things, SEO can go a long way in getting your company in

front of local businesses, schools and government entities.

Here are a few tips to get you started:

- Ensure your Google My Business is claimed and optimized.
- Optimize your landing pages with local keywords.
- Utilize customer reviews and create local case studies to showcase your work.
- Focus on localized link building (Chamber of Commerce is a great start for this).
- Ensure your name, address and phone number are consistent across the internet. Slight name variations can hinder your SEO.

Get business social with LinkedIn

While other industries are gaining followers on Instagram, that may not be the best place to start for your business. For local business, start with LinkedIn. You can use the paid side of things to target local decision makers, but you can also use it to network locally. Join local groups, connect with local businesses and individuals, and share your company's wins and

successes. If you have a professional presence, you will be top of mind when those decision makers are looking to start a furniture project. You can also see what your target businesses are doing. Are they growing? Get in front of them before they make plans to open a new office building! Have they announced a new request for proposals? Make sure you are seeing these opportunities!

Paid searches

You may not have a large budget, but start small and consistent. You won't see leads overnight; but if you focus on local, your target keywords and your ideal customer, they will eventually come. With paid search, you do need to give it time—don't do it for a week and proclaim it didn't work.

Looking to grow your furniture business, but need some marketing expertise? The Fortune Web Marketing team would love to get you rocking!

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