

MATTRESS WARS II

A special preview of a timely new Furniture World article by

LARRY MULLINS

MATTRESS WARS II

And the Winner is ... [Not the One You Expected]

"iComfort is outselling Tempur-Pedic."

The young saleslady smiled confidently. "Are you interested in a memory foam mattress?" she asked. I explained that I wasn't going to buy anything, that I was researching an article for *Furniture World*. She was a bit disappointed, but with no other prospective customers in sight, she seemed willing to continue to visit with me.

I learned a great deal that cold day in northern Minnesota. I was in a medium size city, and the 80,000 sq. ft. store was one of the largest and most beautiful I have ever seen. The saleslady explained to me that Tempur-Pedic customers had always come to the store pre-sold

on the product. She said people already understood the many benefits that a Tempur-Pedic memory foam mattress would provide. They expected unique pressure-relieving comfort, and an ability to conform to each person's body. They knew about the durability and quality of the product, and its outstanding motion isolation. So, even though it is an expensive sleep system, selling a Tempur-Pedic product was a relative breeze.

Then Serta *iComfort* comes along with a new story. On their website they used a soft-sell but very effective strategy. *iComfort* experts are telling customers that traditional memory foam technology hasn't changed much since it was invented more than four decades ago. And while it has been the perfect bed for many people, others had issues with it. Some felt sleeping on a memory foam mattress was too hot. Others felt they sink in too deeply and this made it hard to adjust sleep positions. Then *iComfort* asked the killer question: Isn't it about time that someone reinvented memory foam? This sounded more and more like a good idea, especially since Serta's *iComfort* was priced at about half the price of Tempur-Pedic.

iComfort branded itself as "the world's first memory foam infused with the support and cooling touch of Micro Support gel." The brand declared it was a revolutionary new memory foam Sleep System featuring Cool Action Gel Memory Foam.

This new, ground-breaking memory foam promises to deliver superior pressure relief and more targeted support while sleeping cooler than ordinary memory foam. Plus, it is antimicrobial and dust mite resistant to help protect the mattress from potential allergens. *iComfort* offered a longer warranty and a longer in-home free trial. So, at a lower price, what is not to like?

THE MISSING LINK IN MATTRESS SALES

The missing link in retail mattress sales is the disconnect between the competence and marketing expertise of the mattress manufacturers and the weakness of the retailers.

Let's examine the Tempur-Pedic strategy. How did Tempur-Pedic achieve the ability to pre-sell customers on their products to an unprecedented degree? After a decade of relative obscurity, the company became an overnight success when they applied the principles of evidence-based advertising. First, they developed a compelling story and a U.S.P. [Unique Selling Proposition] for their website and print media. "In the early 1970s, NASA developed a pressure-absorbing material to help cushion and support astronauts during lift-off. The material was temperature-sensitive and it evenly distributed body weight. NASA released this material to the public in the 1980s. Another set of scientists ... continued development on NASA's creation. After nearly a

decade and millions of research dollars, these “Swedish scientists” perfected TEMPUR material for use in mattresses.”

This “Tempur material” is their key product feature. But so far it is a “so-what?” story. The marketing brains at Tempur-Pedic then did something that other home furnishings manufacturers and retailers continue to fail to do. They took the next step and elevated their story into something compelling for potential customers. They explained the benefits that their product provides and answered the prospect’s ever-prevailing question: “So what? What’s in it for me?”

Every savvy salesperson knows that you should never describe a product feature without explaining the benefits it provides. Yet look-alike retail furniture ads generally use price-item features, label headlines, and are almost bereft of benefits. Moreover, even the Big Boxes fail to establish and localize their brand. Tempur-Pedic experts know this, so they get around retailer incompetence by pre-selling prospects with their own benefit-rich presentations. Rather than provide CO-OP, Tempur-Pedic sells their unique brand directly to the customer.

The other top mattress brands do offer CO-OP dollars to retailers and offer attractive preprinted flyers. However, manufacturer flyers sell their own

brand, not the retailer’s identity and distinct advantages. There is little dealer identification other than a logo. So, when a dealer runs a preprinted flyer from Sealy, Simmons, or Serta he sells their products for every other dealer in his area as well as for himself. The ultimate selling proposition would do both. It would sell prospects on the manufacturer’s products, and also present compelling reasons why they should buy from this particular dealer.

Tempur-Pedic promises continued product innovation in their web presentations. But Serta’s *iComfort* politely suggests that Tempur-Pedic hasn’t changed its product much in forty years. They state that Tempur-Pedic has a great product but: “Isn’t it about time that someone reinvented memory foam?” The strategy seems to be working.

SOMETHING ODD IS GOING ON AT RETAIL

Although many retailers have brushed off the idea that a Serta product could threaten Tempur-Pedic’s market dominance, smart retailers do not. If you carry both Tempur-Pedic and *iComfort* it will be difficult to exploit the changing market conditions. For example, Mattress One, the largest mattress retailer in Florida, now features equal space in their weekly flyers for Tempur-Pedic and *iComfort*. These two brands usually are collectively granted half the advertising space in Mattress One

THE UNUSUAL PRICE COMPARISONS OF MATTRESS ONE

Mattress One, the largest mattress retailer in Florida, now features equal space in their weekly flyers for Tempur-Pedic and iComfort. The five models of each brand are priced in an unusual way, by the cost per day for owning a Tempur-Pedic or an iComfort sleep system. In this article, Larry Mullins demonstrates how Mattress One costs “per day” seem to be skewed to favor Tempur-Pedic.

0% INTEREST UNTIL 2015!
No interest if paid as scheduled.
*MAP/WAC. See store for details.

MATTRESS ONE

RECEIVE UP TO \$200
in Mattress One GWPI
See details.

MATTRESS ONE!! THE LARGEST INDEPENDENT MATTRESS RETAILER IN FLORIDA! 90+ Stores



The most highly recommended bed in America.

TEMPUR
ERGO
COLLECTION

SAVE UP TO
\$200



<p>TEMPUR-Contour Queen Mattress <small>Firm contouring support, unmatched value.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 54¢ A Day!</p>	<p>TEMPUR-Cloud Queen Mattress <small>Workaholic "floating on clouds" softness.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 54¢ A Day!</p>	<p>TEMPUR-Contour Select Queen Mattress <small>Firm contouring support plus pressure-relieving comfort.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 68¢ A Day!</p>	<p>TEMPUR-Contour Signature Queen Mattress <small>Pressure-relieving comfort, incredible contouring support.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 75¢ A Day!</p>	<p>TEMPUR-Cloud Supreme Queen Mattress <small>Fillicy-soft feel, along with body-aligning support.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 82¢ A Day!</p>
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Mattress One has the lowest prices . . . GUARANTEED!



Sleep System by Serta!

featuring the latest in technology . . .

Cool Action™ Gel Memory Foam

Plus experience the Serta
Motion Perfect® Adjustable Base



<p>iComfort Insight Queen Set <small>Advanced Comfort, Cushion Firm Support.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 35¢ A Day!</p>	<p>iComfort Genius Queen Set <small>Plush Comfort, Extra Firm Support.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 44¢ A Day!</p>	<p>iComfort Revolution Queen Set <small>Supreme Comfort, Advanced Support.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 55¢ A Day!</p>	<p>iComfort Prodigy Queen Set <small>Luxuriously Comfortable, Yet So Supportive.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 68¢ A Day!</p>	<p>iComfort Renewal Refined Queen Set <small>A new level of cooling comfort and deep down support.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 82¢ A Day!</p>
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GRAND OPENING BONUS DISCOUNT! THE BEST BRANDS AT THE LOWEST PRICES!

\$500

Elegance you can see. Comfort you can feel.

Buy now. Save now.

Save up to
\$300

On Select Tempur-Pedic Mattress Sets
Tempur-Pedic, Inc. © 2013

Mattress One has the lowest prices . . . GUARANTEED!

<p>TEMPUR-Contour Queen Mattress <small>Firm contouring support, unmatched value.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 27¢ A Day!</p>	<p>TEMPUR-Cloud Queen Mattress <small>Workaholic "floating on clouds" softness.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 27¢ A Day!</p>	<p>TEMPUR-Contour Select Queen Mattress <small>Firm contouring support plus pressure-relieving comfort.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 34¢ A Day!</p>	<p>TEMPUR-Contour Signature Queen Mattress <small>Pressure-relieving comfort, incredible contouring support.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 38¢ A Day!</p>	<p>TEMPUR-Cloud Supreme Queen Mattress <small>Fillicy-soft feel, along with body-aligning support.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 41¢ A Day!</p>
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Sleep System by Serta!

featuring the latest in technology . . .

Cool Action™ Gel Memory Foam

Plus experience the Serta
Motion Perfect® Adjustable Base



<p>iComfort Insight Queen Set <small>Advanced Comfort, Cushion Firm Support.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 18¢ A Day!</p>	<p>iComfort Genius Queen Set <small>Plush Comfort, Extra Firm Support.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 22¢ A Day!</p>	<p>iComfort Revolution Queen Set <small>Supreme Comfort, Advanced Support.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 28¢ A Day!</p>	<p>iComfort Prodigy Queen Set <small>Luxuriously Comfortable, Yet So Supportive.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 34¢ A Day!</p>	<p>iComfort Renewal Refined Queen Set <small>A new level of cooling comfort and deep down support.</small></p>  <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0070C0; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px;">Just 41¢ A Day!</p>
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GRAND OPENING BONUS DISCOUNT! THE BEST BRANDS AT THE LOWEST PRICES!

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flyers. The marketing people for Mattress One have elected to present five models of each brand. They are priced in an unusual way, by the cost per day for owning a Tempur-Pedic or an *i*Comfort sleep system. In very small print they explain this cost per day in this way: “Daily cost of ownership is based on a 10 year Full Replacement Warranty of Mattress.” For example, the starting price point for a Tempur-Pedic is 54 cents a day based upon their 10 year full replacement warranty. *i*Comfort starting price point is listed as 35 cents a day based on the same 10-year disclaimer.

But hold on! *i*Comfort actually has a fifteen year full replacement warranty. Based on this, the *i*Comfort price point should be 29 cents a day, not 35, making it almost half the price of Tempur-Pedic. Perhaps this was simply an oversight by Mattress One, but it went on for months. Then Tempur-Pedic introduced new lower priced models, and the Mattress One changed their ads. They decided to base their per-night cost for both brands on Tempur-Pedic’s “20 year warranty life of the mattress” [this is a limited prorated warranty] instead of Tempur-Pedic’s ten year full replacement warranty. Their new presentation does mitigate to some degree the price differential, and perhaps mollifies the price-comparison concerns of Tempur-Pedic.

But hold on again! *i*Comfort has a twenty-five year life of the mattress limited warranty. Using

a twenty-year warranty obviously skews the price comparisons in favor of Tempur-Pedic. Why Mattress One does this is anyone’s guess.

MEMORY FOAM IS CHANGING THINGS

In another retail development, the Wall Street Journal recently reported that an 800 store chain, Mattress Firm, reports that as much as 40% of their sales now come from memory-foam and other non-innerspring mattresses. I know that for some retailers, their memory foam sales actually surpass their innerspring sales.

The rise of memory foam sales has resulted in a consumer shift toward more platform beds. Memory foam mattresses do not require the box spring foundations that generally support traditional innerspring mattresses. The WSJ reports that platform beds are now being designed with a more traditional look, and they are commanding impressive price points. Now it is easier to find retailers who are willing to sell a traditional mattress without the box spring, and offer a warranty for it. The story concluded with this observation:

“Choosing between a platform bed with a single mattress and a bed with box springs and a mattress involves more than aesthetics. ‘People who have spinal problems or herniated

MINNESOTA SHOPPING SPOTLIGHT



Larry Johnson says the top memory foam mattress brand is "just too expensive"
 Larry Johnson believes that many people are paying too much for mattresses. He is especially focused on memory foam mattresses. "The top brand is good for some folks, but it is just too expensive and its technology is 40 years old. I believe our iComfort Cool Action Memory Foam is a better sleep system, and it cost about half as much." Johnson's store is Duluth's headquarters for Serta's new iComfort Memory Foam Sleep Systems.

GOOD DAY DULUTH!

iComfort Memory Foam Mattress rocks the top brand with cool modern technology and much lower prices

Furniture and Mattresses 4 Less offers the complete iComfort Cool Action Gel Memory Foam Sleep System product line at guaranteed lowest prices



What makes iComfort technology better than old fashioned memory foam?

Users report that Serta's new Cool Action Gel Memory Foam feels like traditional memory foam... only better! The difference is MicroSupport Gel, which is infused into premium quality memory foam to create an extremely comfortable, more supportive and cooler sleeping surface.



By Don Huber, Duluth's Best
 DULUTH, MN

The Sleep FoundationSM urges us to get better sleep at the top of our priorities for the new year. And today's big news about more healthful sleep is Serta's revolutionary iComfort Cool Action Gel Memory Foam Mattress. According to some experts, iComfort technology is the most important sleep advance in decades. The leading brand of memory foam mattresses has been around for about 40 years. No such change has taken place since memory foam was first introduced. But now there is a new kid on the block: iComfort sleep systems, offering what many believe is a better product for as



SAVING
 "The most revolutionary sleep advance in decades."

little as half the price. Plus, for a really remarkable bedroom experience, you can choose an iComfort adjustable foundation which allows you to adjust the head or foot of the mattress using a wireless remote. This advanced foundation also has a massage option with varying levels of intensity, so you can relax your body and soothe before you go to sleep. The iComfort adjustable foundation features an adjustable-grade cover system that attaches the adjustable base directly to the mattress, using no bulky or unsightly metal bars. Furniture and Mattresses 4 Less is Duluth's headquarters for iComfort sleep systems. See all the sleep system models there.

Would you pay 24¢ a night in a hotel or motel to sleep on the latest and greatest technology rather than an ordinary mattress?



It's true. Based upon iComfort's 15-year full replacement warranty, your cost per night for enjoying the remarkable comfort and restoring quality of this mattress is only 24¢ a night. Not only will getting your extra help prove moneywise, but it may also be a critical factor in your health, weight and energy level.SM

Please see store for Warranty Details. *Please see www.sleepfoundation.org for additional information.

"Why pay twice as much for 40-year old technology?"

DULUTH, MN

"Clock" Gettes, the General Manager of Furniture and Mattresses 4 Less, believes the new iComfort sleep systems are a "game changer" for memory foam mattresses. "More people find lots of things to like about the



CLOCK
 "Believes we have a winner."

Every Mattress at Guaranteed Lowest Prices! No Exceptions!

NEED PHOTO

SERTA MOTION PERFECT ADJUSTABLE BASE
 Compatible w/ iComfort
 OUR PRICE: **\$1700**

NEED PHOTO

SERTA PERFECT SILFEPER QUEEN MATTRESS SETS
FROM \$388

HOME OF THE 200% LOWEST PRICE GUARANTEE

THERAPEUTIC QUEEN PILLOWTOP MATTRESS SETS
 AS LOW AS **\$377**

More than we can list!
 35 Famous Brand Models on Display!

FURNITURE AND MATTRESSES 4 LESS

19th Ave. W & Superior St.
 in Downtown Duluth
 Exit Highway 26 at 255A (22 Ave West)
 AMPLE FREE PARKING

Only Open Four—That's How We Save You More!

FURNITURE AND MATTRESSES 4 LESS

IS THE NORTHLAND'S HEADQUARTERS FOR

icomfort
 Sleep System by Serta



Some retailers are using the iComfort advertising strategy to successfully establish themselves as the preeminent source for memory foam sleep systems. One Serta dealer in Duluth is using print media, radio and in-store signs that claim iComfort sleep systems superiority over the "40-year old technology."

disks might prefer a platform bed for extra support and stability,' says Marta Maczaj, co-director of the Sleep Disorder Center at St. Charles Hospital in Jefferson, N.Y., 'People who have fibromyalgia or arthritis and have lots of aches and pains may want a softer bed.'

... AND THE WINNER IS ... ?

The jury is still out.

It has been said that the only thing that simultaneously creates destruction and growth is change. And change is inevitable. If you are a manufacturer or a retailer, how can you benefit from these changing mattress retailing trends? By embracing them.

If you are a manufacturer, you could become the winner if you are willing to step out of your comfort zone and consider the situation of the mattress retailers. They need help. Few of them know how to create a unique identity and stand out among the crowd of other retailers. Your marketing experts could help them. Instead of focusing exclusively on your own product, give them some help in building their own brand. You both will do more business. I have written here that the missing link in retail mattress sales is the disconnect between the competence and marketing expertise of

the mattress manufacturers and the weakness of the retailers. The first manufacturer who understands this—and helps the retailer develop a unique identity and stand out from the crowd—will be the winner.

If you are an independent retailer, there may be an opportunity here to capture a larger market share of memory foam business. Here is one way to do it. If you do not carry Tempur-Pedic, you are probably not getting your fair share of memory foam business. Consider your options. All of the leading brands have copied the *iComfort* strategy and have their own version of an advanced memory foam product. (Including a new, lower priced Tempur-Pedic!) In the exhibits of this article you will see how some retailers are using the *iComfort* advertising strategy to successfully establish themselves as the preeminent source for memory foam sleep systems.

One Serta dealer I know is using print media, TV, radio and in-store signs that feature *iComfort* sleep systems over the "40-year old technology." A Restonic dealer is doing the same thing with Restonic TempaGel Healthrest Memory Foam sleep systems. (TempaGel is Restonic's entry into the "new, advanced," lower cost memory foam market.) It is likely that Tempur-Pedic, with its sophisticated evidence-based marketing methods will continue to dominate memory foam sleep systems for the

iComfort
Pierce Furniture by Serta®

Advancing the field of technology.
Cool Action™ Gel Memory Foam

FREE LUXURY BLANKET
with any iComfort® Mattress purchase.

Insight \$1299
Genesis \$1599
Revolution \$1999
Prodigy \$2499

Plus experience the **Next Motion Perfect® Adjustable Base**

Next Motion Perfect™ \$2999

FREE Set Up, Removal and Disposal
Up to 24 Months FREE Financing See store for details.

Serta **LIMITED TIME ONLY**

FREE LUXURY BLANKET EVENT

Get any Serta® Mattress or Mattress Set \$500 and receive our new Free Luxury Blanket to match! (Limit 1 per household)

Retail Value up to \$124.99

perfect sleeper Starting At Low As **\$400**

The flyer at left is a look-alike product prepared by Serta. All dealers will look the same. If a dealer runs it, it will sell the product, but equally well for all dealers.

MATTRESS TRUCKLOAD SELLOFF!

HOME OF THE 90 DAY COMFORT GUARANTEE

Best Buy **Official Mattress** **National Sleep Foundation**

Comfort, and Mattress 1st Sleep Systems! are guaranteed.

Lowest Prices! No Exceptions!

Serta perfect sleeper

SUPER PILLOW TOP QUEEN SET Compare at \$1199⁹⁹ **SALE \$888**

PREMIUM PLUSH TOP QUEEN SET Compare at \$1499⁹⁹ **SALE \$1088**

So Comfortable. You'll Never Count These Guys Again.™

i Comfort Memory Foam Mattress rocks with cool modern technology and much lower prices

Pierce Furniture Company offers the complete iComfort Cool Action Gel Memory Foam Sleep System product line ... no one can offer iComfort for less, *PERIOD*.

HOME OF THE 25 YEAR WARRANTY **HOME OF THE 120 RISK-FREE IN-HOME TRIAL**

Advanced Comfort Cushion Firm Support
INSIGHT QUEEN SET Just **24¢ A Day!**

What makes iComfort technology better than old fashioned memory foam?
Users report that Serta's new Cool Action Gel Memory Foam feels like traditional memory foam ... only better! The difference is MicroSupport Gel, which is infused into premium quality memory foam to create an extremely comfortable, more supportive and cooler sleeping surface. *Why pay more for other brands' 40 year old technology?*

The Superior Comfort of Memory Foam infused with the Support and Cooling Touch of MicroSupport Gel

GENIUS QUEEN SET Just **29¢ A Day!**

RENOVATION QUEEN SET Just **36¢ A Day!**

PRODIGY QUEEN SET Just **45¢ A Day!**

RENEWAL QUEEN SET Just **54¢ A Day!**

24 MONTHS FINANCING

*Daily Cost of Ownership is Based Upon iComfort's 15 Year Full Replacement Warranty.

Pierce FURNITURE A Great Place to Get Comfortable Since 1900

124-141 Colorado Street
Muscatine, IA 52761
563-263-8873
www.pierce-furniture.com

Map showing location at Colorado Street and Muscatine Mall.

Hours:
Mon 10am-8pm
Tue & Wed 10am-6pm
Thurs & Fri 10am-8pm
Sat 10am-5pm
Sun Noon-4pm

This flyer, on the other hand, does double duty. It sells the Serta product and includes several unique factors that make it special for Pierce Furniture. It is also loaded with benefits for the consumer. If a factory helped dealers create ads like this, ads that sold their products and helped the dealer brand himself at the same time, it would jump to the front of the pack.

foreseeable future. Even so, you could double or triple your own share of this market with an aggressive marketing strategy.

A key factor in your success will be your ability to load your messages with benefits. Remember the simple, basic principles toward overcoming the “So what?” reaction to your advertising messages.

Product features support benefits. People do not need or want a memory foam mattress. They want

better sleep. When they sleep better, they will be happier and healthier. The ever prevailing question of the consumer is always, “What’s in it for me?” This will be followed by: “Why should I buy from you?”

If you are an independent retailer, you can be the biggest winner in the mattress wars if you can answer these questions with clarity and confidence.

**Want exclusive rights to dominate your iComfort Market?
Email Larry Mullins for a no-obligation Information Pack!
Larry@LarryMullins.com**

Larry Mullins is a contributing editor for Furniture World and has 30+ years experience on the front lines of furniture marketing. Larry’s mainstream executive experience, his creative work with promotion specialists, and mastery of advertising principles have established him as one of the foremost experts in furniture



marketing. His turnkey High-Impact programs produce legendary results for everything from cash raising events to profitable exit strategies. His newest books, *THE METAVALUES BREAKTHROUGH*

and *IMMATURE PEOPLE WITH POWER ... How to Handle Them* have recently been released by Morgan James Publishing. Joe Girard, “The World’s Greatest

Salesman” said of this book: “If I had read Larry Mullins’ book when I started out, I would have reached the top much sooner than I did.” Larry is founder and CEO of UltraSales, Inc. and can be reached directly at 904.794.9212, or email him at Larry@LarryMullins.com. See more articles by Larry at www.furninfo.com or www.ultrasales.com.

