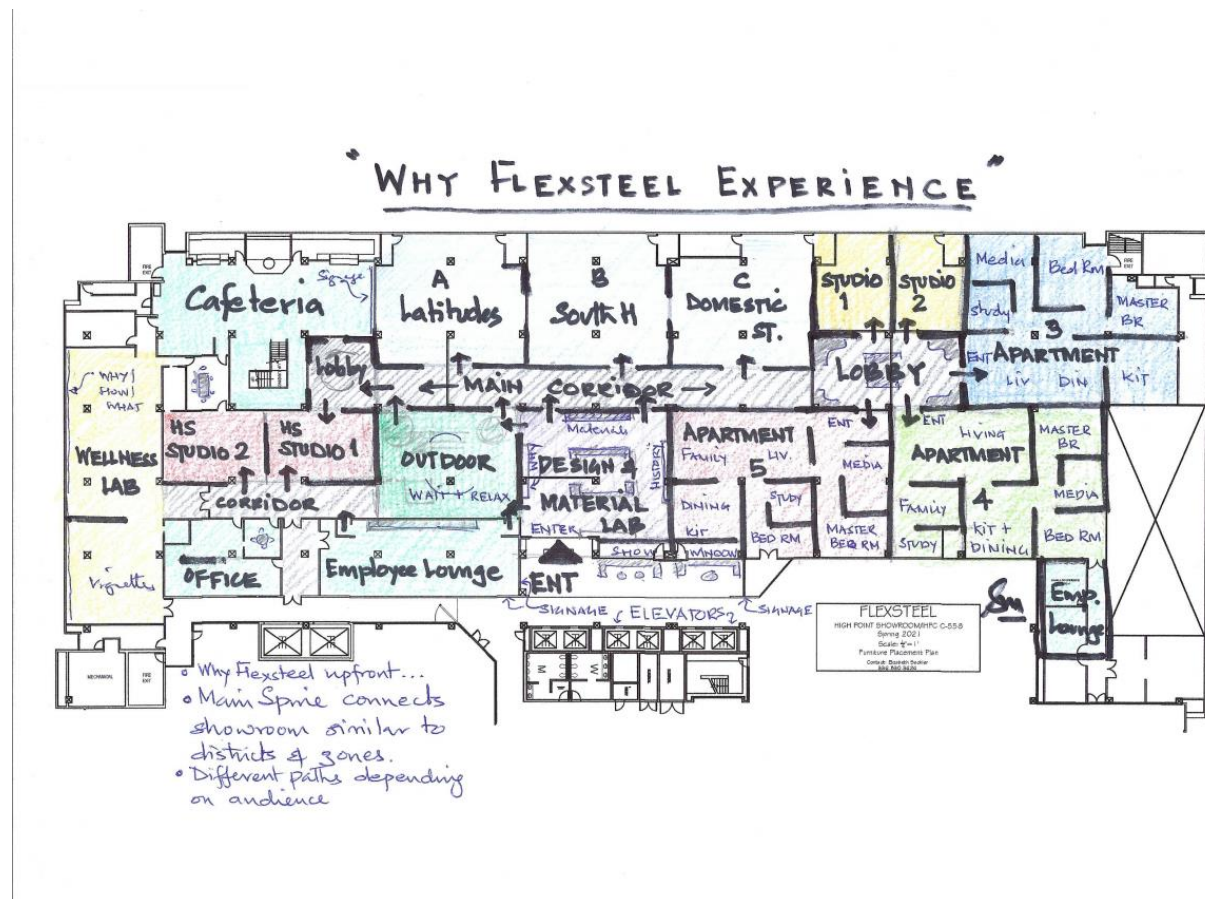


FLEXSTEEL IS IN THE HOUSE

Entirely New and Elevated Showroom Presentation Reflecting Brand's Transformation
Set to Wow in High Point



Dubuque, Iowa—October 5, 2021—With barely two weeks to go, [Flexsteel](#) is readying to take center stage at the High Point Market with an entirely new showroom presentation that reflects the company's transformation into a whole-home, omnichannel, lifestyle brand well positioned for the digital age. Prepare to be wowed.

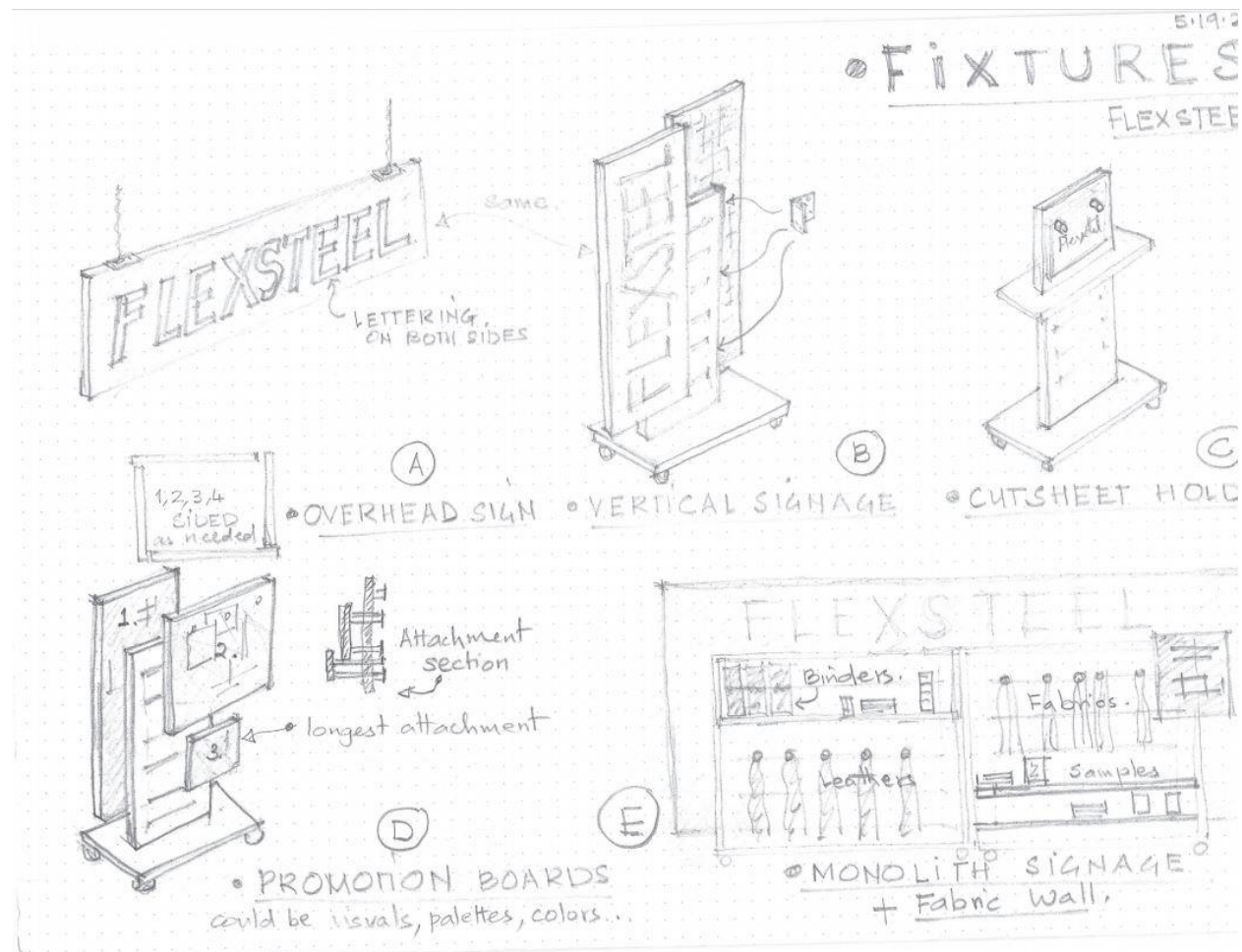
According to Sharad Mathur, vice president of marketing, the showroom should be a revelation for any Market attendees who still perceive Flexsteel as a legacy manufacturer producing durable upholstered goods aimed squarely at Middle America. Suffice it to say, anyone who continues to think of the company in these terms is strongly encouraged to consider a visit to Space C558 on the fifth floor of IHFC's Commerce wing this Market to learn more.

As background, Flexsteel has been steadily evolving on multiple fronts since a new executive team assumed the reins of the [brand](#) about three years ago now. Most noticeably on the product side, the company is producing fashion-forward products not just in upholstered furniture, but in multiple categories across the whole home spectrum. A series of strategic moves pre-pandemic coupled with a new gated product development process and significant investment in inventory means they have also managed to maintain healthy in-stock positions in a time of industry-wide supply chain disruption, pleasing dealers to no end.

At the same time, while the clearly defined, blue steel spring quality story that brought the brand to the party in the first place remains solidly at the core of the brand, the marketing team has been working overtime to broaden and enhance Flexsteel's appeal to a new generation of shoppers. See, as example, Flexsteel.com, the company's recently [revamped website](#) loaded with digital goodies designed to engage, and until now, the most obvious, outward-facing indicator that something big is happening here.

Though for every Market season showroom refreshes are the norm for leading manufacturers, few will be as dramatic as Flexsteel's major reset. For one thing, Mathur, who led the showroom revamp project here is a trained architect in addition to his marketing chops, and his visual acuity is clearly evident in the new presentation, which begins via large windows at the entrance that offer a peek inside, much like a retail store. "When we walked into the old showroom, it was nice enough, but there was no storyline driving it," the executive relates. "Nothing about it said, 'Hey, come on in; let us help you discover who Flexsteel is.'"

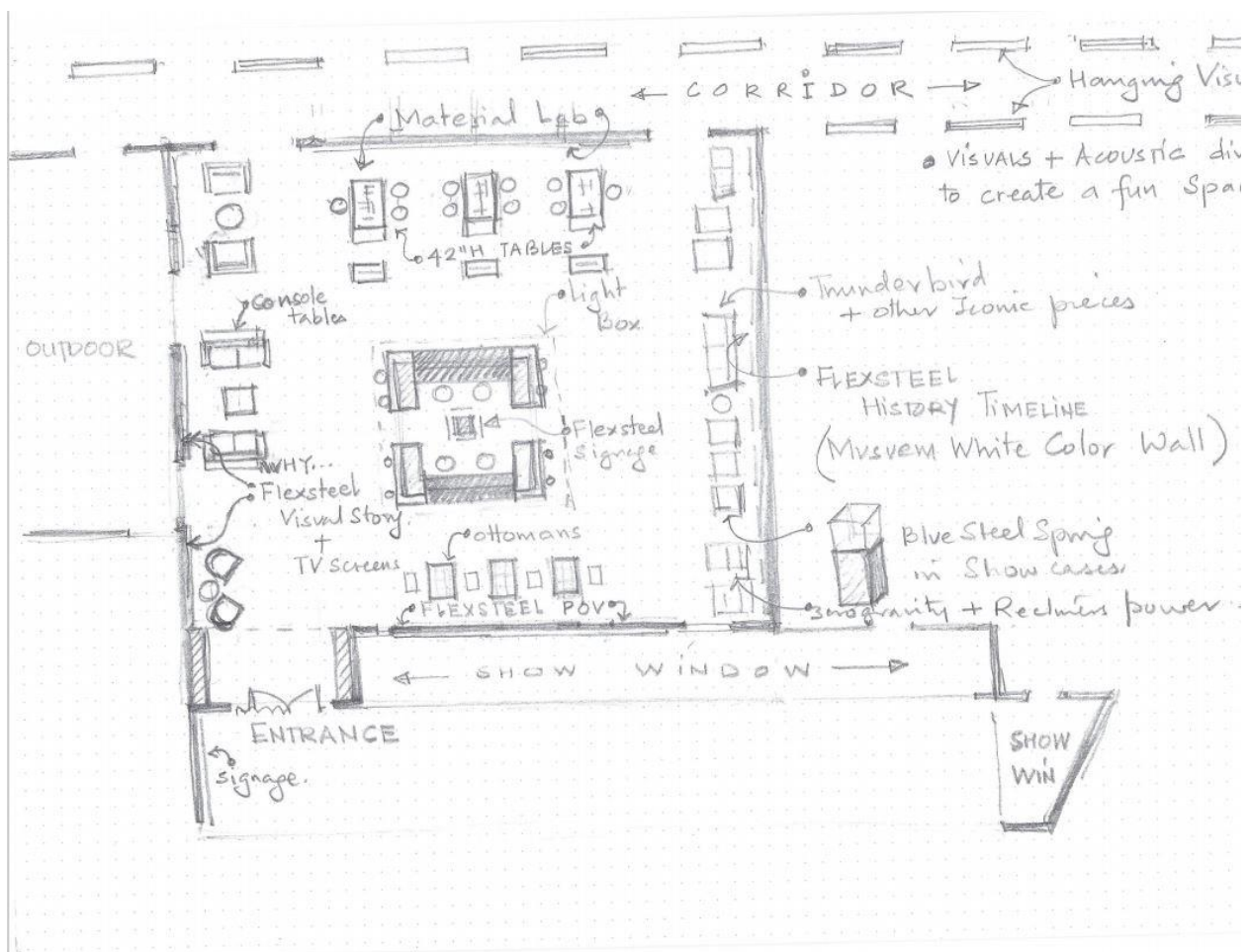
Subhed: This is Where We Live



Now, the look is open, welcoming, beautifully accessorized, and well lit, and designed to be a physical expression of the company's remarkable transformation. "We envisioned the space as a district inside an urban area, and as visitors enter, they first encounter the district's information center," Mathur describes. "That's where we begin sharing the 'Why Flexsteel' story, via signage and screens, and a historical timeline, before we start showing them any products, other than iconic designs like the Thunderbird sofa and the blue steel spring that are integral to our story."

Thanks to Mathur's architecturally driven design influence, the layout is clean and modern, with a gallery-like feel. Signage is minimal and wayfinding signals are clear, but unobtrusive. Visitors are expected to naturally gravitate toward the tables and chairs and fabric wall that make up the Material Lab workspace at the rear of this area, "where we want people to come together to collaborate," he says.

A main corridor off the Material Lab, lined with hanging visuals featuring engaging messaging, leads to three multi-room homes and two studio apartments decorated to suit a series of buyer personas and their needs. The "inhabitants" range from active suburban families to homebodies and empty nesters, to first-time buyers and those living in small spaces, to remodelers and those shopping for second homes. Each of the apartments incorporates both in-line and new products from across all categories that Flexsteel offers, right down to the cabinetry from the company's sister brand Homestyles that is used in each of the apartments' kitchens.



Each home is entered via a front door in a style that hints at the decor to be found inside. Among these are a contemporary door, a globally inspired door, a farmhouse door, a coastal cottage, and a rustic warehouse. Once inside the experience is immersive and designed to instill a sense of discovery. Visitors are invited to move freely about the rooms, though each of the vignettes is numbered and the path forward is obvious. As Flexsteel interior designer Elizabeth Sechler says, “no one will feel as though they are going to miss something.” Again, signage is minimal and clean-lined, with new product denoted by “fun, little nameboards on the corner of the product in the manner of a hip, lifestyle retailer,” she adds, noting, “people don’t visually overcrowd their homes with signage, and we didn’t want to do it here either.”

Most importantly, Mathur reports, is that the focus throughout this portion of the showroom is on bringing the Flexsteel lifestyle to life. Each of the homes feature multiple living areas, and everything is presented through the talented eyes of Sechler in a way that exemplifies how consumers really want to live and decorate today.

Motion furniture, for example, is not segregated, but integrated throughout the rooms with stationery pieces. Leather furniture is shown with fabric-covered silhouettes, while casegoods are displayed in varying complementary finishes and freely mixed together. Nothing feels canned or collection-driven, although all of the company’s best-sellers are incorporated throughout. As an example, homes include multiple bedrooms, with both a Master and Second, one decorated in a way that speaks to overnight guests, which becomes the ideal setting to integrate sleeper sofas. From dining and entertaining, to rest and sleeping, playing, and working from home, the homes’ displays are designed to speak to all of the ways people actually live (or aspire to) in their spaces, and everything feels well thought out and connected.

The overall flow and sense of connectivity “is a marked difference from how we have displayed our individual collections in the past, which was really a series of vignettes that did not necessarily relate to one another,” says Sechler. Her own, large-scale, hand-painted artwork decorates more than one wall in the homes’ rooms (watch for the Flamingos!) and are emblematic of the kind of heightened attention to accessorization employed throughout. In no uncertain terms, in her work here, Sechler has moved the company well beyond the typical lamp, area rug, wall art and throw pillow combinations of the past that were designed to keep attention solely on the furniture.

“Our goal is that retailers will find this new presentation eye-opening, not only inspiring them and making it easy to visualize how the ideas might translate in their stores, but also in terms of their overall perception of Flexsteel,” Mathur says. “We want them to see Flexsteel in a new way.”

Indeed, the marketer has used the showroom as an opportunity to visually re-frame the perception of the company. “A lot of dealers don’t think of us first as an option for bedroom groups, because they have pigeon-holed us as an upholstery, or recliner resource,” he says. “Mainly, because we’ve never shown all that we do in this light before. For this reason, I think it’s extremely important for dealers to experience the entire space this Market, and when they do, our hope and expectation is that they will relate and say, ‘Yes! This is Us!’”

In fact, Mathur acknowledges that the showroom feels like a modern lifestyle store waiting to happen. “We’re trying to show dealers how much we can make a customer feel at home, and how much we can offer to help them on their own journeys toward becoming lifestyle specialists,” he says. “We believe

that's the direction necessary to effectively compete today...to be able to demonstrate that your store is much more sophisticated and in tune with what consumers want than the average traditional furniture store down the street."

Underscoring this point he notes, "The use of the Homestyles product in the apartments was intentional. Rather than put somebody else's kitchen cabinet in them, we want to reinforce the idea that we are a whole home resource, and that retailers can have access to these products through brick and click, and we can help them build their eCommerce capabilities. We want retailers to come with us on this journey of understanding of all the ways their customers buy, and that's part and parcel of our omnichannel approach."

Subhed: Any Way You Want It

Beyond the homes is what Mathur calls the Buyer Showroom area, which dealers will find comfortable, familiar, and organized to make quick work of ordering since everything is grouped by factory location. "It makes it really easy for our dealers to differentiate domestically produced goods and to create their containers," Mathur says. Even here however, the presentation is a bit more elevated than it has been in the past. Signs attached to products in this area also clearly denote the two words that are music to retailers' ears now: In Stock.

The remaining space in the expansive 60,000-square-foot showroom is devoted to showing off the company's burgeoning outdoor category, and another play on small-scale living featuring Homestyles products. There's also a Wellness area, a new theme that Mathur hints will be exploded in the Spring, which spotlights the company's Zero-G recliners, lift chairs and the other reclining furniture for which it has been long known.

Of course, by this point in the showroom tour, it's likely time to gather thoughts and grab a bite, and dealers will find that even the café area has been freshly revamped. As might be expected, the places to sit are all dining groups from the company's collections to better support the brand, which is reinforced one more time by the clear message on one wall: Flexsteel Live Your Lifestyle.