

## Motion upholstery: Merchandising Comfort - Virtually -



Master Motion Studio 54

**\* CHAIR-AND-A-HALF PULL OUT TWIN SLEEPER MASSAGE \***

Master Motion Massage Back

CHAIR-AND-A-HALF-TWIN SLEEPER

**CHAIR-AND-A-HALF PULL OUT TWIN SLEEPER IN FABRIC/FABRIC NAIL COMBOS**

- ❖ CHAIR-AND-A-HALF TWIN SLEEPER \$299 (\$599 RETAIL)
- ❖ CHAIR-AND-A-HALF TWIN SLEEPER WITH A MASTER MOTION AIRBAG MASSAGE BACK & LOWER LUMBAR \$399 (\$799 RETAIL) + \$50 OKIN Battery \$449 (\$899 RETAIL)

**CHAIR-AND-A-HALF PULL OUT TWIN SLEEPER IN 1.4-1.8 MIL THICK HAND RUBBED LEATHER**

- ❖ CHAIR-AND-A-HALF TWIN SLEEPER \$399 (\$799 RETAIL)
- ❖ CHAIR-AND-A-HALF TWIN SLEEPER WITH A MASTER MOTION AIRBAG MASSAGE BACK & LOWER LUMBAR \$499 (\$999 RETAIL) + \$50 OKIN Battery \$549 (\$1099 RETAIL)

Innovation through a little bit of thinking...  
 OFFER MORE IN-STORE THAN YOUR CUSTOMERS CAN FIND ONLINE!

PRICING With All Tariffs Included

**\*Master Motion Studio 54 uses an all-modular approach in its motion line that helps simplify shipping and creates flexibility of configurations. Retail Sofa here is \$1,599 Power Massage Sofa with power headrest, power lumbar, power recline and dual airbag massage backs.**

HIGH POINT — Motion furniture and recliners are all about comfort, and making that story resonate on screens is another challenge of selling the category online.

“In the upholstery and motion category, there is a tendency for consumers to want to touch and feel the product before making such a big investment,” said Josh Walter, CEO of e-commerce sales and marketing firm BrandJump. “Consumers want to feel they are making an educated purchase decision. Therefore, they will gravitate toward brands that offer various detail shots of the products, showing features and specialty details up close.

“They will also want close-up views of any upholstery or fabric options, or better yet, 3D draping tools that let them customize the furniture in whatever cover they are interested in,” Walter added. “Those brands who can’t offer this personalized experience will likely lose the sale, as the consumer looks for another brand that will showcase details openly.

“The solution then is for a brand to make an investment in the types of assets that will best promote the product,” he said. “This will include photography or good CGI imagery showing multiple angles, detail shots and room settings; video that shows how the product works and the functionality of any moving parts; plus detailed enhanced content that tells more of the brand’s unique story.”

## **Telling the story**

That “unique brand story” is why Master Motion spends so much effort reaching out to consumers directly through social media.

“I believe the biggest challenge is how to fully explain your product and features to the retail customer without having to fit it into a one- to two-sentence description modified by the retailer to fit their retail website,” said CEO Michael Nanni. “This e-commerce population is more educated and is looking for far more information than they can get in a short description modified by the retailer for their retail website.

“Advertising on all social media sites has allowed us to get to the retail customer and explain and show our products,” he continued. “The biggest issue is there is so much to say about the detail, workmanship and where the idea and history to develop that item came from, and none of this can be fully explained on a retailer’s website for all the products they carry.”

That can make for too generic a presentation on individual retailer sites.

“You will learn much more about Nike by going to the Nike website and researching the company, their products, their manufacturing standards, their mission statement, rather than going to the Footlocker website and researching ‘Nike sneakers,’” said Nanni. “Going direct-to-customer we are able to fully explain the product, the ideas behind its conception and what the features and benefits are. When they click on the picture of any of our products, a list of retailers will show up, directing that customer to their retail website or retail brick-and-mortar location.”

## **Virtual touch and feel**

Parker House President Chris Lupo and others said communicating quality and comfort is the hardest part about merchandising motion online.

“The subtleties between the appearance and hand of various leather grades and details such as tailoring and topstitching are difficult to convey online,” he said. “We address these challenges by investing in high-quality photography including lifestyle environmental shots and product shots taken from multiple angles. We also provide descriptive romance copy for each item as well as feature and benefit bullets. All of these assets are on our website and updated frequently.”

Flexsteel’s seating and cover quality story are a selling advantage that’s difficult to translate online.

“Expanding our content and enhancing our images will help our retailers reach their consumers to draw them into the brick-and- mortar locations,” said Jenni Jungers, director of product. “Online consumer research supported by enhanced content and images, backed by our dedicated brick-and-mortar retail base (are) a winning combination.”

Franklin Corp. and Kuka North America said the in-store versus online shopping experience for motion furniture is more different for motion than most categories, and it’s all about the lack of “sit-test.”

“We have had to figure out how to convey our premium comfort and quality story when customers aren’t able to physically experience the furniture before making purchases,” said Peyton Passons, vice president of sales and marketing at Franklin. “Using a variety of assets, including videos, photos and graphics, we help the customer make informed decisions.”

“Because motion furniture is all about comfort, the biggest challenge is not being able to sit in the product before purchasing,” said Kuka Home North America CEO Steve Lush. “We keep this in mind as we develop product to make sure the comfort will appeal to the majority of consumers. It also underscores the importance of good photography and detailed information to help the consumer make their choice.”



[Powell Slaughter](#) // Senior Editor

I'm Powell Slaughter, senior editor at Furniture/Today. I returned to the publication in January 2015 after nine years of writing about furniture retail strategies and best practices at a monthly magazine focusing on home furnishings retail operations. Prior to that, I spent 10 years with F/T covering wood furniture, the last five of those as case goods editor. Upon my return to F/T, I developed coverage of the logistical and service aspects of the furniture industry as well as following the occasional, home office and home entertainment categories. In April 2018 I took over the upholstery category, with responsibility for coverage of the fabric and leather stationary and motion upholstery, recliners and massage chair categories.