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Rick Sterzer, Rize

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Premarket we had 17 items that retailers already had seen, approved and ordered. Almost every one of our introductions now will ship in late August or early September, which dealers loved.

Dealers were mostly looking for goods that were already sold; that seemed to be the dominant conversation. But being able to tell customers that these were new goods, goods that will ship in 90 to 100 days, was a game changer.

That was the best market, not Premarket, but the best market we've ever had.



**Peter Zolferino**  
CEO

*Omnia Leather*  
Last January, we introduced some new styles

and leathers that didn't get a fair shake, due to the pandemic, so we will show them again in High Point. We are not in the new product development mind-set right now. We must support our dealers by concentrating on producing only sold orders.

We were pleased with the turnout in Las Vegas in April and with the relocation of our new showroom in High Point, we feel our products will look and feel new due to the larger, enhanced environment. We're honestly not worrying about new introductions right now. Most likely, we'll be in a better position to focus on showcasing new styles this fall at the October market.

The tremendous influx of business coupled with the delays in raw materials has been very challenging, but the situation has given us a chance to re-evaluate and grow our production in different ways.

We soon realized that in order to meet the steady demand for goods, it was essential to open an

additional production facility. This included searching for new skilled labor and equipment which was quite a process, but we are confident that this substantial investment will soon lessen the huge backlog of orders. In addition, we have put more emphasis on the cross-training of our current employees, so we have flexibility to keep the production flowing.



**Rion Morgenstern**  
CEO  
*Pleasant Mattress Co.*

Our plan is to stay the course we set out at the beginning of 2020. We will maintain a steady flow of new products for our dealers with new collections on both ends of the spectrum: value and luxury.

To serve more value-oriented customers, we introduced our 10-bed Spring Air branded line. It gives our independent dealers a nationally branded line that will help differentiate them from larger bedding chains that carry other major "S" brands, but stays within more modest price points to meet the needs of those customers. At higher price points, we launched our AirFlex brand earlier this year. Designed around the concept of understated luxury, the four-model premiere line of dual-sided mattresses appeals to young consumers who want high-quality, hand-crafted beds made with natural materials. We are also bringing our flagship McRoskey brand beyond the San Francisco market, where we have concentrated the marketing of the brand until now, to other parts of the country where the distinctive collection will start to roll out this year.

To support these efforts amid a challenging supply-chain situation, we are constantly looking for alternative raw materials suppliers so that we're as prepared and as flexible as we can be.



**Scott Tesser**  
CEO

*Precision Textiles*  
What's happening with the current supply-chain difficulties

is as challenging a situation as I've ever experienced. Manufacturers are under greater pressures to increase production and reduce dependency on sources that are perceived as risky due to supply-chain shortages.

This has definitely presented us, a supplier, with an opportunity to help our customers. For example, we introduced our EcoLoft product line, which does double-duty as both an FR sock and comfort layer than can reduce the amount of foam a producer needs in a mattress. We will continue our research and development efforts to find new solutions for customers.

We are executing this strategy even though we are facing some of the raw material challenges that are persistent in the industry and a reduced appetite from our customers to explore new product introductions at this time.

But the horizon looks bright. We anticipate the strong demand to continue, which means more volume for our customers and some easing of material shortages. We believe there will be a progressive pick-up in tradeshow activity in the second and third quarters of this year, and most likely a return to more aggressive new product development toward the end of the year.



**Rick Sterzer**  
executive vice president  
*Rize*

As always, we're staying nimble and flexible with the changes the industry is encountering in overseas production, raw material and freight

price changes, and the shifting of the trade show dates when we would usually launch product.

We've focused on the diversification of suppliers for both new and current product and invested heavily in our purchasing and supply chain systems and people.

This has allowed us to catch up with inventory and make the introduction at April market of our new upholstered platform beds with headboards that ship in one box. Although we have had to move the date a couple of months later than originally scheduled, it will be worth the wait once the beds hit in mid-summer.

Knowing the April and August Las Vegas markets were going to be light, we're really gearing for January as the breakout market for us with new introductions of pillows, mattresses and more. So while dates have changed, we've been able to keep our planned new product introductions in the forecast.



**Cindy Hall**  
vice president,  
merchandising  
case goods  
*The Sherrill Cos.*

Sherrill has chosen to focus all of our resources on taking care of our fulfilling customers' orders instead of building many truckloads of furniture for market. As we know, lead times have extended out many, many weeks. Even, with the recent foam issues, Sherrill is still outperforming most all of the upholstery companies.

At first, we weren't sure what our customers would think about Sherrill not showing at market, but the response we received was quite different. They are thanking us for making this tough decision and putting them and their customers first.

Our management team

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We love the shift in the tradeshow and market cycles. This is an incredible opportunity for showrooms to be open throughout the year, and for designers and design enthusiasts to travel to High Point and experience great design whenever they can.

Brandon Snyder, Verellen

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is spending lots of time actually visiting customers in their stores, building those relationships, and providing opportunities to get product to their customers quicker. We are working on our new samples for October 2021 market now and will have lots of new, exciting product at the October 2021 market.



**Joe Paviglianti**

*executive vice-president of sales Southernland*

The good news is that both situations are improving. The material shortage is beginning to ease, and the industry seems to be returning to a more stabilized market schedule. Based on this positive news, we do have plans to introduce new products in the back half of the year.

We made the decision early on in the pandemic to delay our new product introductions, like many others in the industry, for the past two market cycles. While the continuing concerns about market attendance certainly created a lot of uncertainty, for us raw material shortages are the main factor in this change to our product development strategy.

By focusing on the products we have in our lineup, it enables us to better serve dealers who are already carrying them, which is always our first priority. That strategy assures that we are using the raw materials we have for existing orders, rather than diluting the supply for new product.



**Nick Bates**

*president Spring Air International*

We made a key change in our product introduction strategy at the beginning of this year when we decided that we would no longer follow a tradeshow model for introducing new products. Also, we continue to communicate with our retail partners about their product needs, and we have committed to introduce new products when they ask for them, rather than waiting for the next market.

When we launched our Breathe by Spring Air program in April 2021, we did it via a YouTube video. This digital multimedia tool has empowered our partners to help them make informed product selections for their businesses and has been a great success. As a result, we made the decision to launch all of our products digitally.

Looking ahead we're taking a more deliberate, thoughtful approach to product development and introductions that will allow us to better fill our customers' merchandising gaps on their schedules, not those of a market.



**Adrian Parker**

*CEO Temple Furniture/Parker Southern*

We at Temple and Parker Southern are still moving forward with new product and design. This is not a good time to let our companies go stale. The problems we are having with allocations and price increases will not last forever. We're still looking ahead for a great year.



**Gerry Borreggine**

*CEO Therpedic International*

The trade show/market cycle is definitely going to look and be different going forward. We may begin to use our market showrooms with greater frequency by bringing in dealers for private showings of new products that will be introduced on a limited or private basis. We can do this either at High Point, Las Vegas, or even in exclusive, off-market locations.

It's been a challenge to introduce new product with the current volatility of the supply chain. However, that challenge has provided us with opportunities to be creative by tweaking some current in-line products that are selling well with a casual refresh.



**Doug Bassett**

*president Vaughan-Bassett Furniture*

As the largest made in the U.S. bedroom supplier, Vaughan-Bassett has been very fortunate to suffer from relatively few supply chain issues. Our bedroom shipments are up about 90% year to date.

Our biggest advantage is we are delivering well while the Asian suppliers have struggled. We're determined to maintain this advantage as long as possible, so we have drastically reduced our line-up from 24 collections last summer to just 12 active collections today.

We have only one introduction this spring and summer,

and if our business remains strong, we probably will introduce only one new collection this fall.

In the past, we have introduced three new collections each market cycle or about six new groups per year. But why flood the market with new product when it's a challenge to quickly deliver your best-sellers?



**Brandon Snyder**

*vice president of business development Verellen*

We love the shift in the tradeshow and market cycles. This is an incredible opportunity for showrooms to be open throughout the year, and for designers and design enthusiasts to travel to High Point and experience great design whenever they can instead of only having access during a 'special' show or when tens of thousands of people are all present. This is a great benefit to all the other businesses through High Point for obvious reasons too.

As far as supply chain, it has certainly had an impact on the industry as a whole. This has a mixed blessing though. It has driven us to look far and wide for alternatives in component sourcing, which will no doubt open us up to a whole new world of greener and healthier options, which is great.

Not being limited to just two times a year to release new introductions is great, too. We can sort of pepper them in throughout the year and keep it even more unexpected and exciting. 