

Canadian furniture manufacturers, especially the smaller firms, should carefully evaluate their capability to service a national chain before embarking on a program to sell this high-volume purchaser. National chains frequently require large quantities of a particular furniture item in a relatively short delivery time span. Also, special packaging and almost simultaneous delivery at many different retail locations are prerequisites for a lasting business relationship. Those manufacturers who do not comply with the rather rigid requirements of the national chain are in jeopardy of losing the account. However, in reality, firms that do not appear to have the capability and resources to adequately service the account, never secure a place on the approved list of suppliers.

2. Smaller Chains

For the most part, smaller chains function much like their larger national-chain-brothers. Purchasing is centralized and the service requirements are similar to those enumerated above for the national chains. Of course, the magnitude of the delivery problem is lessened by two factors. The geographic area served by a given smaller chain is significantly less than the entire U.S. and there are fewer retail outlets in total. Among the smaller chains located in the Northwestern U.S. are: