

3.0 RETAIL FURNITURE MARKETS IN THE UNITED STATES

In a country the size of the United States it is not surprising that the market is not homogeneous. The country is divided into four main market areas shown on the map below. These four main market areas: The Northeast, the North Central, the South, and the West have developed certain specific market characteristics and requirements of their own. Distance was one reason for separate market development, climate, tradition, and emerging different lifestyles are other reasons.

The map also shows the relative sales growth in the main US market areas. The national average was 10.7% in 1984. The West showed a marginally stronger growth than Central and Southern markets. The Northeast performed substantially better but retailers in this region had been worse hit by the recession and had more ground to recover.

The North Central, Northeastern, and the top portion of the Southeastern markets are inherently more conservative than extreme southern and West Coast markets. For example by far the greater portion of antique reproduction and US "country styled" furniture is sold in these areas. The South and the West developing later than the North, blessed with warmer climates and not confined to traditional thinking, are far more receptive to casual, flamboyant styles and materials.