

available to them on an exclusive basis. Staff changes can be a problem particularly if a program is in mid-development when the change occurs. At least one of the big three, J.C. Penney, has recently planned to drop furniture as a major category according to Mr Don Odell, Merchandise Manager for furniture.

#### Independent Retailers:

The independent retailers are the backbone of the retail furniture industry in the US. There are some 13,000 independent furniture retailers in the US. Collectively they control more than 26,000 retail stores. Independents range from single store, "mom & pop" operations to the large publicly or privately held store chains. It is estimated that independent retailers control as much as 75% of the total household furniture sold in the US. Industry estimates indicate that the number of independent retail stores is shrinking progressively while the number of smaller "specialty stores " and larger "full-line" stores are increasing.

Independents include the full gamut of furniture store types. Many stores specialize, selling primarily styles such as traditional or contemporary furniture; others specialize by price either as high, low, or medium price operators. The full-service stores which sell both traditional and contemporary carry furniture to cover all categories. The following Table shows the top 20 independent furniture retailers in the US.