

household furniture. Generally very low to low-middle priced products are sold which are not usually very innovative but definitely appealing to middle American tastes. Mass merchants do sell some KD products (usually referred to as "lifestyle"). These products in the main consist of melamine or paper covered wall systems, with some dining and occasional furniture.

Catalog sales are a main feature of the furniture business for the mass merchants; in fact they have often found it easier to promote KD products through catalogs. Mr Charles Daniels, National Merchandise Manager for Sears, in Chicago feels this is because older more conservative floor staff in Sears furniture departments find it hard to make the switch from selling conventional furniture to selling "take-away" furniture. With the mass merchants as with many conventional furniture retailers a lingering feeling that KD means lower quality still persists. These attitudes date back to the US's early experiences with cheap, poorly designed KD in the early 70s; they are breaking down largely due to the innovative flood of attractively designed products now finding their way to the market.

Mass merchants tend to deal directly with factory sources to achieve the best pricing. Starting orders can be formidably large but mass merchant's credit is always good. Mass merchants will insist on advertising support if goods are to be featured in their seasonal catalogs.

Canadian manufacturers should also be aware that the mass merchants usually like items to be specially designed or are only