

# ROOTNOTES

News, Commentary, Insight from

## Mike & Jay Root

**FSMA Celebrates 60 Years As the Foremost Authority On Innovative Marketing For The Home Furnishings Industry**

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**Award Winning Salesmen, Marketer & Entrepreneur**

## Mike's Moment: What Was The Attitude In Las Vegas

Cautious, Conservative, Aggressive, Excitement, Opportunistic, and even Hostile (see pg. 3)...

These were just a few of the words I would describe attitudes of my 7 days in Vegas. I went early for the FMG show where I helped with visit with members at Hi-Rock Home and Sopoly outdoor booths. This is a great show for FMG members to network. My sense from most is that business has been tough with many still fighting over inventory issues making it tough for them to get excited about adding anything new. One owner told me he thought their open to buy for new products may start in April, but no guarantees. The challenge with that is retail floors stay stale to those customers who are repeat shoppers.

One of the FMG sessions talked about employees being brand ambassadors for your company. From personal experience recently getting my car serviced at the BMW dealership, this is important in shaping a consumer perception. I reserved a loaner car while my car was to be serviced. My insurance card had expired the week before. I had insurance but did not have the new card in my vehicle. They would not let me take the vehicle until I contacted the agent and got a copy of the new card, allowing me to cool my heels in their waiting room for a half hour. One of the young attendants even told me I should keep my car insurance card on my phone. I politely told him I was an old guy not accustomed to that, but if I am going to drive a nice car I definitely have insurance. Then to add insult to injury when I picked up the car with a several hundred dollar bill, they informed me that I would have to pay a 3% charge if I used a credit card. They knew I was not pleased, nobody cared and I won't be back unless I have to.

Another FMG session was on Artificial Intelligence for Business. Though much of the presentation was to an audience that already had a full plate of responsibility, I thought the "what next?" ending appropriate. Find a Single Use Case to Start, Develop an Experimentation Mindset, and Share Any Success Stories.

Onto market and some highlights. First, Cozzia introduced the New Quantum Massage Chair for the next level of chair doctor. Mark Holmes vision for this chair was to create the ultimate spa experience in the chair. Sound, scent, stretching all are upgraded to move from a massage to a 60-80 minute spa treatment!

Notable: Armen Living doubled their space to introduce contemporary dining. This was well received. Howard Elliott showed why they are one of the largest accent mirror suppliers with cool mirror walls along with a big selection of new accessory categories.

The vibe in the spaces can best be described this way. A cautious customer has created a conservative buying pattern. Put sharp merchants have decided they are going to be very aggressive in their marketing efforts. The sharp vendors are responding with new excitement in their offerings and an opportunistic approach to spur business, as the three vendors above showed in Las Vegas.

Jay and the whole team are working harder than ever to make sure our dealer base has access to the best we have to offer. We have a project underway to upgrade our website to offer a better resource for dealers and sales associates. We will continue to work hard for you to provide the best service, excitement and opportunities for business improvement through value priced product. Let us know how we can help.

## Bits and Pieces From Around the Industry

As reported in the Rodney Johnson Weekly Wrap: “In Britain, it’s tough to get a dental appointment. A recent survey found that 25% of consumers couldn’t get an appointment, with a full 90% of new patients turned away. The problem is not a lack of dentists, it’s that the National Health System (NHS) pays little for service. If Brits are willing to pay for private dental care, they have plenty of options, but that rankles Brits who have paid into the NHS all of their lives just to find out they can’t use it. For those who can’t pay for private care, the options can be ugly. Some live with the pain of rotting teeth, while others resort to pulling them out themselves. As the saying goes, ‘If you think care is expensive now, just wait until the government makes it free.’”

Follow the Money is often used in crime novels to discover the culprit. But it also applies to investing and the economy. Per Kiplinger Letter, venture capital and tech companies are funding artificial intelligence startups in a big way. “Two leading startups looking to raise huge sums: Cohere is reportedly seeking \$500 million to \$1 Billion, and Anthropic is eyeing \$750 million.” Can’t remember the last time someone invested that in our industry.

Another follow the money play is in the digital advertising market. Again per Kiplinger “Rideshare giant Uber is set to land more than \$1 Billion in ad sales this year by showing personalized ads based on location and time both on its mobile app while users search for food, groceries, etc. to be delivered, and on screens in Ubers.” Who will be the first furniture store to advertise in this new Uber marketing universe?

## Goofy Signs and Funnies off the Internet . . .



Anyone caught **EXITING** thru this door will be asked to **LEAVE!**

Just failed my driving test. When the examiner asked me “what sign would you expect to see down a narrow country road?” Apparently ‘fresh eggs for sale’ wasn’t the answer...



**FISHING FOR CHILDREN ONLY**  
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This morning my son said his ear hurt and I said on the inside or outside, so he walks out the front door, comes back in and says both. Moments like this got me wondering if I'm saving too much for college.

I just cleared out some space in the freezer sounds much more productive than I just polished off another pint of ice cream.



**A CAR'S WEAKEST PART IS THE NUT HOLDING THE STEERING WHEEL**

**Funny Quote:** “7 percent of all statistics are made up on the spot.” — Steven Wright

The Las Vegas Punch—A First Hand Account By Mike Root

***This article originally appeared in Furniture Today column From A Rep's Perspective***

Monday morning at the Las Vegas market started like many other Las Vegas market mornings. Walking out of the Plaza hotel with my son Jay to a waiting car ride on the curb at 7:55 AM local time to go over to market. If this was "Forensic Files" the crime scene would be reconstructed like this:

My son got in the back seat and I hopped in the passenger side of the car. As I put on my seatbelt, a silver Lexus sedan pulled up in front cutting off the Bronco we were riding in. The driver got out of his car and came over to my passenger side door proceeding to slam his fist into the window.

He then opened the car door (locks had not engaged since car had not moved yet). He screams at me to get out of the car, and then throws a very hard punch which connected with my lower lip. He throws another punch, which I block, into my chest. A third punch is blocked by the driver. This then causes the assailant to step back telling me again to get out of the car indicating he has a gun and reaching behind his back. Fortunately, by stepping away I was able to get the door closed and my driver was able to merge into traffic. The assailant followed us for several blocks before we were able to lose him in traffic.

This is no joke, and I had a fat lip and a discarded bloody dress shirt at market to prove it. Neither my driver, my son nor I had ever seen this person before. I had walked right out of the hotel and into the car, so there was no way I could have come across his path before I got punched. It wasn't road rage at the driver since the assailant directed all his fury at me. All we can think of is it was either a random act of violence or a case of mistaken identity.

I wanted to tell this personal market story for a couple of reasons. First when we finally got to the market center in the swarm of people, I went up to security personnel directing the rush of morning traffic. They immediately made my

issue a priority. They called their EMT's to come look at the damage to my lip, and they documented the incident even though it was not on their property. They did an excellent, professional job of taking care of this unusual problem.

Second, when I reported this incident to the hotel security, whose property I was in front of when this happened, they could care less. They will not be getting a repeat customer.

Third and most importantly why I am telling everyone about this, starts with a Mike Tyson quote "Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth". The assailant rattled my market presentations for the day, and changed my outlook about personal safety. I have been selling furniture for several decades. Some of my customer's stores are not in the nicest parts of towns. I have never felt threatened when I make a sales call in the daylight hours. In fact I have never really thought much about --- until now.

Monday, morning of Las Vegas market, in broad daylight right outside of my hotel, opened my eyes to the fact that the world is a bit crazy or at least there some crazy people that you may not see coming.

Take care and pay attention to your surroundings, no matter how accustomed you are to the environment, or you might end up with a fat lip, or worse. Be vigilant. People laugh and say "what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas". My response is I hope so because I don't want to go back there any time soon.



## Jay's Jots: A Backseat View to the Fight of the Century

Per the reprint of a Furniture Today article (on page 3) you are now aware that Dad looked at changing professions. Furniture business is difficult so, at the Las Vegas market, he contemplated the decision to migrate to a less safe, potentially more lucrative career of MMA.

While strapped into the car ready to head to market at 7:55 on Monday morning, Mike was approached by a solidly built, hammer fist ed dude. Dad's skill in deflecting a punch proved his mid-ish life crisis moment lapsed after one bout on the way to market. He decided the health risk was greater than risks of fluctuating container rates.

In all the pandemonium that transpired during this altercation, it's curious that not one person asked how I was. After all I was front row and the likely next man up in the ring. After the initial shock, a combination of instinct and endorphins kicked in. My mind immediately went to how to immediately and safely remove ourselves from the situation. Our driver was trying to ineffectively mediate us out of the situation with the Big Dude. I told him directly that he should start driving. As the car started merging into the left lane, I tried to do as much as I could to disrupt the flight patterns of the right fist. Freeing just enough time for Dad to reach the car handle door to shut the door.

Once in the left lane, I strongly suggested that yellow traffic lights mean let's keep going. While I've never personally been involved in a car chase, I've seen enough in movies to know our next goal is to distance ourselves from the assailant. Fortunately there was no further altercations and damage was minimized to a split open lip.

There are a couple key takeaways in this story. First, not all heroes wear capes. Without the calm, level headed guidance from the backseat we were able to minimize the damage from the senseless altercation. Additionally, the rest of the day Dad was shook up. Fortunately his trustworthy sidekick from the backseat was there to help him with presentations and walk throughs during the day. Had I not been Robin stepping up to help the Cape Crusader, who knows what could have happened. My best guess is that Emmet's pricing would have re-surfaced!

The other lesson here is that while business is fairly consistent throughout the country, we remain calm and level headed as we navigate the current waters together. If there is anything that you need feel free to reach out to us, unless of course we sell the rights to the MMA movie.

**Mike's comment: I have no idea if any of what Jay wrote is true. I was too busy fending off punches!**

# YOUR NEWSLETTER IS ENCLOSED

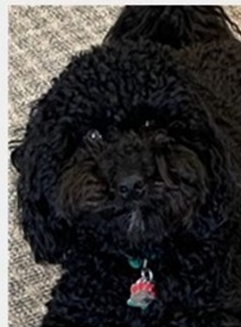


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