

# 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 Can We Learn From the 2024 Election?

My dad, Emmet, used to always caution that there are two things you shouldn't discuss in polite company: Religion and Politics. Though I do not want to offend anyone with this column, I do think there are some very important lessons to be considered from the recent election whether your candidate was the winner or the loser. If you are mad about the results of the election, this article is not intended to make you more upset, but I understand if you skip this month's column. My intent is to take a critical look at how the election has impacted this year's business and what it may lead to going forward.

By most media accounts, this election was between two highly flawed candidates. Each side was flinging so much dirt at the other that it is no wonder the consumer was not optimistic about buying anything including new houses or furniture. One side spent over a billion dollars in advertising while the other side held massive rallies nearly every night speaking to all the problems in the country. It just wore everyone out.



Pollsters had this race extremely close and the Harris team was to win 3-4 of the "Swing" states. But when the counting was done, the Trump team won an overwhelming amount of the country including all 7 "Swing" states. Here

is a map that shows who won what county. Outside of 15-20 large metro cities, it was no contest.

Here are my thoughts on what we observed from the campaigns that can apply to selling furniture.

1. Trump is a master marketer and whether you agree with his policies or not you have to give him credit for knowing his audience. In a country generally divided 50/50 Trump figured out messaging that resonated with a majority of the population. Democratic strategist James Carville helped Bill Clinton upset George Bush with his focus of "It's the Economy Stupid". Trump's campaign honed in on Ronald Reagan's famous line "Are you better off now than four years ago" when he beat Jimmy

Carter. Trump had lots of messages, but the one that seemed to resonate the most was the average person was significantly impacted by inflation, and he was going to make it better. Furniture retailers and manufacturers need to have a message that connects with their customers with benefits their products deliver. **Does your message connect?**

2. Throughout the campaign, Trump had numerous issues he would try out and deliver depending on the audience. Much like retailers try to slice and dice product offerings for specific audiences, Trump did it at scale. At the end ads that ran in the upper Midwest swing states highlighted parent's rights, which was very important to these voters. **How can you hone your message to different audiences and talk to them about what is important in their lives?**
3. Trump held massive rallies that started with his faithful supporters but morphed into something much larger. They were long winded affairs with lots of speakers, humor, music. He claims his campaign has turned into a movement, but it never would have happened if he didn't have a message that connected with a core group and expanded out from there as people brought their friends to these rallies much like they would go to a concert. And the best part about the rallies for Team Trump was all the publicity was free. Some stations carried the rallies live towards the end. Some messages from the rallies ended up being discussed on the news shows the next day. All free! **What can you do to create events for free publicity?**
4. Trump won the blue collar vote by connecting with their concerns. He did this by working very hard to be everywhere he could connect with them whether it be rallies or podcasts (see Jay column). The last week, Trump carved out time for a 3 hour interview on Joe Rogan podcast, and Rogan's endorsement cannot be underestimated in swinging votes his way. The day before the election Trump did 4 rallies in 4 swing states. **How can you outwork your competition for the business?**

## Bits & Pieces from Around the Industry

With business tough consider increasing your cash flow, sales and profitability with a Positive High Impact Event. Choose the right company and whatever your reason, too much inventory, increased competition, annual slow retail month or just wanting to increase your market share, a Positive High Impact Event will help you achieve your goals. From Top 100's to independents, licensees and franchisees, there's a company for you. You choose the theme of the event; they provide additional staff if needed and provide a guaranteed weekly gross margin and capped advertising to ensure profitability. Ensure brand growth and maintain brand integrity with a Positive High Impact Event. Let us know if you need a recommendation for a good operator to run a high impact sale.



The recent High Point market was a great chance to connect with friends made over the years through IHFRA, the rep trade association. This picture was from the annual Gala and represents a couple of decades of leadership. The five old guys are all Past Presidents while the young lady, Wendy Buzzard, is our current President. I am proud to say the organization is on very solid footing both in the efforts of supporting independent home furnishing sales reps as well as financially supportive of the industry at large.

## Funnies off the Internet . . .

\*I took my suit to the cleaners, who wanted to charge me \$40, so I gave it to the charity shop next door. They cleaned and pressed it and put it in the window. I bought it back for \$15.

\* Growing up, we knew Dad had had enough when we heard the recliner slam down. Kids these days will never know that fear.

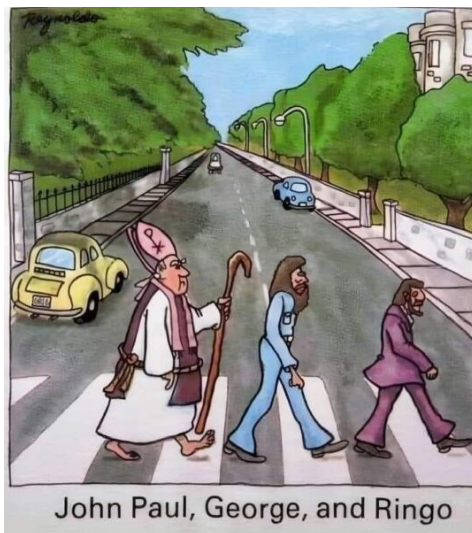
\* My wife said: "That's the 4th time you've gone back for dessert! Doesn't it embarrass you?" I said: "No, I keep telling them it's for you."

\* She said she missed me. Normally that would be good but she's reloading.

\* Being old is when you don't care where your spouse goes, just as long as you don't have to go too.

\* At a wedding reception, someone yelled: "All married people please stand next to the one person that has made your life worth living." The bartender was almost crushed to death.

\* Yesterday I bought a world map, gave my wife a dart, and said, "Throw this and wherever it lands, I will take you on vacation." We're spending 3 weeks behind the fridge.



INSTEAD OF A SIGN THAT SAYS "DO NOT DISTURB", I NEED ONE THAT SAYS "ALREADY DISTURBED. PROCEED WITH CAUTION."

We are not given a good or bad life. We are given a life, it is up to us to make it good or bad.

Apparently we can put a man on the moon but we can't even finish a road construction project



WHOEVER IT WAS WHO DECIDED TO TAKE AWAY THE BENCH SEATS



OBVIOUSLY NEVER HAD A GIRLFRIEND.



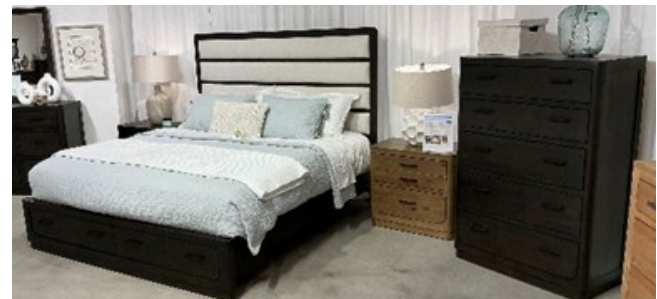
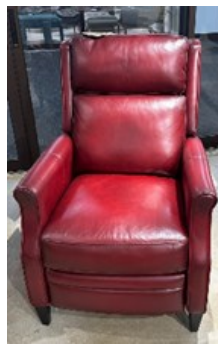
October 2024 Market Highlights. Call Mike or Jay for Info



Newest Intro from H2 Seating is an Ultra Functional dual motor Recliner with zero gravity, massage, power headrest, lumbar, heat and also has lift capabilities

Motion 1nnovations is king of the transformer. If you want gadgets in your sofa they offer power everything, lumbar, power outlets, lights, charging. Leather or PU

Cozzia newest introduction is the Quantum. The newest 5D technology, 73 air bags, new flex track with 26 sensors, 60 Master Massage techniques, 5 colors



Hughes New Updated Wood Trim frame was a hit in multiple colors. Also several new color story options to brighten floors.

Hi-Rock Home introduced a new warehouse program of ten all leather recliners available for quick ship. Great way to offer better recliners

Progressive Furniture leaned into their Mexico bedroom and entertainment factory offering new groups like Dream Catcher made in Alder wood. Step up looks with step up drawer construction



Armen Living had a huge introduction of barstools featuring more quality wood offerings, exotic metal bases, and even a promotional lineup to fill gaps from competitors who vacated the market



## Jay's Jots: Did Podcasts Win the Election?

The election is finally behind us! It certainly felt like the campaign went on for years; now we can adapt, plan and move forward.

We are not going to focus on politics; however, I do want to bring up an interesting trend that played a significant role in the outcome of the election. Mainstream cable news viewership was down 30%+ with the average age for viewership was between 68-74 years old. The younger voting community migrated to a new media platform for their source of information: podcasts.

For those unfamiliar with podcasts, they are talk shows on streaming services (such as Spotify or iTunes). In addition to the audio podcasts, many video record each episode and post those same episodes to YouTube. One episode, content recycled and posted on the platforms where their target audience prefers to consume the content.

There are marketing psychologists that have more insight into why there was such an extreme migration from traditional media to podcasts than I do. I would imagine the convenience of being able to listen to (or watch) them at their convenience on the platform of their choosing plays a role. I also believe there is a trust factor in play: the audience trusts the host is asking questions and providing information

that will allow the listeners to be informed and make a decision for themselves.

This platform is a tremendous way to educate your customers in any stage of the sales cycle. For example, customers can be educated on different grades of leather prior to buying a new sofa; as well as the best ways to care for their leather post purchase.

Another example would be introducing customers to massage chairs through podcast. Talk about the consumer trend in the category, why stores are dedicating space in their showroom for massage chairs; diving into specific features and benefits for each model; ultimately driving them into the store to work with a trained sales professional for test drive.

While I would love to take credit for connecting the furniture industry with podcasts, there are industry-oriented podcasts in the digital marketing space. NFM is approaching 200 episodes with their podcast; there are several interior designers that publish podcasts; as well as furniture industry news podcasts.

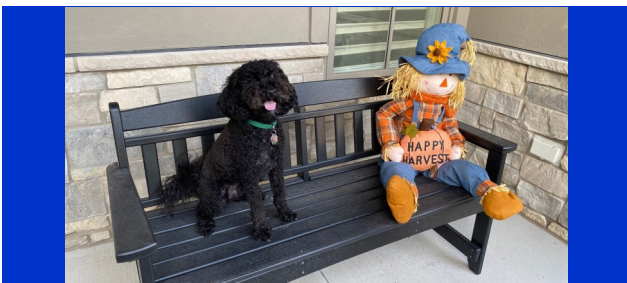
Think of podcasting as another tool in the overall marketing toolbox. The more you inform and educate your audience, the more loyal they will be to you and make buying decisions with you at the top of their mind.

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Murphy enjoying a fall moment on the Sopoly bench with his friend

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