

M  
MEGA

# POWER

FEBRUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER

Introducing

THE **MEGA**  
SELLING GUIDE

**Vision for  
2021:**

industry leaders  
identify strategies  
that will separate  
winners, losers

**UPCOMING  
EVENTS**

**The AVB Summit**  
March 23 - 25, 2021



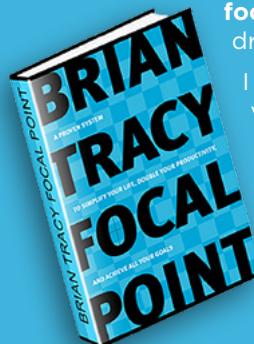
# From the Desk of our CEO Kim Yost

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,  
Our theme for the month of February is **Critical Thinking**. I have chosen Brian Tracy's book **Focal Point** to best support this theme. Brian has been a mentor of mine for decades. I first started my journey of self-development and critical thinking by reading and listening to Brian's work called "**Thinking Big**".

Several of his books and seminars are directly focused on how we think which determines and contributes to our success or failures in life. His book, **Focal Point**, spells out several thought processes, behaviours, and habits that will help you **think and more importantly act more critically**.

This book will change your thinking about how important it is to be focused and how being **critically focused** will change your life and dramatically increase your productivity.

I would like to share a condensed version of Brian Tracy's **The Seven Rs of Simplification** as a way to help your critical thinking. Keeping it simple and focused is a great skill to command. Use one or more of these steps to simplify and focus every goal of both your personal and professional life.



**1) The first R is rethinking.** Whenever you find yourself overwhelmed with too much to do and too little time, stop and think about your work. Stand back and ask yourself, "Could there be a better way?" Especially when you face resistance, stress, or difficulties of any kind, stop pushing and driving. Instead, put yourself in the position of an outside consultant brought in to evaluate your own situation and give yourself objective advice on how to handle it. Remain open and receptive. Be willing to consider the possibility that your current approach is wrong.

**2) The second R is reevaluating.** When you get new information, stop the clock, and reevaluate your situation based on the way it is today. Jack Welch, president of General Electric, calls this the "reality principle." The reality principle requires that you be absolutely honest with yourself and deal with the situation based on the way it really is today, not the way you wish it were or the way it might have been in the past.

Kim Yost  
CEO, Mega Group



**3) The third R is reorganizing.** The purpose of reorganizing your life or work is to ensure a greater level of outputs from the same quantity and quality of inputs. In times of rapid change and turbulence, you must reorganize continually. Be prepared to reorganize your workspace, your schedule and your order and priority of activities. Be open to the possibility that there is always a better way to do the job.

**4) The fourth R is restructuring.** In restructuring you channel more of your time, energy, money, and resources into the top 20 percent of activities that generate the most revenues and the greatest profits. Companies restructure by focusing more of their resources on the products, services, and activities that customers value the most highly. When you restructure your own activities, you continually focus and refocus your time and energy on the few things you do that account for most of your results. You concentrate single-mindedly on your most valuable tasks.

**5) The fifth R is reengineering.** This is one of the most powerful practices for simplifying your work and your personal life. In reengineering, your entire focus is on process improvement. You constantly look for newer, better, faster, cheaper, and easier ways to accomplish the task and achieve the desired result. You begin reengineering your work by making a list of all the steps in a particular work process and reduce the number of steps on the list by 30 percent the first time through. You will be amazed at how easy it is to accomplish this task the first time you do it.

**6) The sixth R is reinventing.** Here, you re-create yourself completely. In times of rapid change, you should be reinventing yourself and your job every six to twelve months. Imagine that you are starting your job or your career over again. Is there anything you would do more or less of? Is there anything you would start doing that you are not doing today or stop doing altogether? You are going to have a variety of different jobs and positions throughout your life. Keep looking ahead and thinking about what you might like to do. Ask yourself, "What is my next job/career going to be?" If you do not ask and answer these questions for yourself, someone else may come along and answer them for you.

**7) The seventh R is regaining control.** In this step, you set new goals and create new plans. You make new decisions and commit yourself to new actions. You accept complete responsibility and take charge of your life. You don't wait for good things to happen to you. You go out and make them happen. You take charge of your time and your life.

As a last reminder, what we think in our inner mind shows up in our outer world. Your thoughts guide your actions. Guide yourself on a path of endless success. **Cheers to Critical Thinking!**



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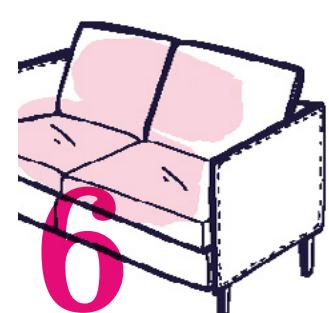
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## In this issue...



### MEGA NEWS

#### Cover Story

Introducing

#### THE MEGA SELLING GUIDE

page 4.

### FURNITURE

#### Vision for 2021:

industry leaders identify strategies that will separate winners, losers page 6.



### BEDDING

#### The Sleep Expert

page 8.



### MARKETING

#### How to grow your email list

page 16.

### SALES

Welcome to our  
**New Mega  
Members**  
page 18.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### The AVB Summit

March 23 - 25, 2021

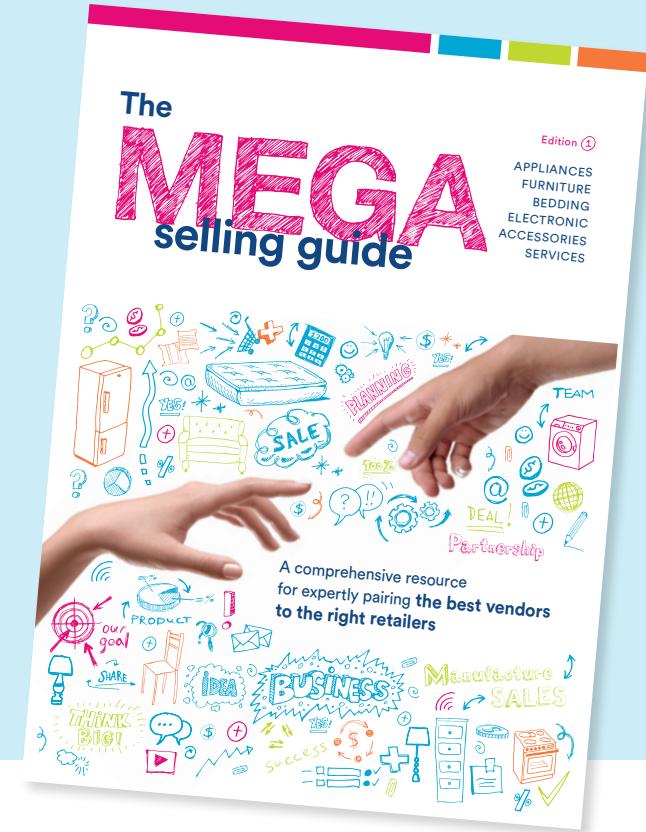
#### Mega Spring Buy Fair

March 23 - 25, 2021  
page 19.

Save the  
Date!

# Introducing THE **MEGA** SELLING GUIDE

A comprehensive resource for expertly pairing the best vendors to the right retailers.



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We're excited to be providing a new collaborative advantage to our industry by launching our **Mega Selling Guide, an easily accessible and resourceful document for all!**

▶ PLAY VIDEO

As Canada's number one selling group, Mega created the first edition of this impactful tool. An ingenious toolkit designed to find the perfect match for your day-to-day needs, available right at your fingertips. Accessible online via [megagroup.ca](http://megagroup.ca) or available as a physical, easy-to-browse hard copy, the **Mega Selling Guide** will satisfy all your vendor reference needs.

Be sure to reach out to your local representative for your copy of the **Mega Selling Guide**, or feel free to browse and explore this great tool for yourself online right away! Mega is ALL IN to help its retailers and vendors connect in the new age world of today.

# Vision for 2021:

## industry leaders identify strategies that will separate winners, losers

by Furniture Today Staff - Staff Editors



*Wendy Youds, vice president of product and merchandising, Article*

AS WE CONTINUE TO SCALE AND THE PANDEMIC-INDUCED DEMAND CONTINUES TO SURGE INTO 2021, WE'RE DOUBLING DOWN ON SUPPLY CHAIN EFFICIENCIES.

We've diversified the number of manufacturing partners we work with to take more control of the design process and introduce more original equipment manufacturer (OEM) designs. We're also developing exclusive raw materials for our products, including upholstery fabric and leather.

These efforts ensure our products are readily available to consumers and improve manufacturing lead times while maintaining our quality standards across our catalog with competitive pricing, which ultimately makes the furniture-buying experience easier for our customers.

66



**Editor-in-Chief's  
PICK**



*Todd Wanek, CEO, Ashley Furniture Inds.*

THE BIGGEST FOCUS FOR US AND EVERYONE IN MANUFACTURING AND RETAIL IS FIGURING OUT THE SUPPLY CHAIN AND GET BACK TO EXECUTING AT A HIGHER LEVEL IN 2021.

We need to gauge consumer demand and put together a plan that meets that demand. 2020 was a year of learning for everyone because the entire system was stressed. It showed us and everyone else the flaws.

We're expanding our physical infrastructure with more warehousing, more new trucks and more capacity. We're re-inventing the flow of information, from manufacturers to retailers, from retailers to consumers, all the touch points.

2021 is a year of challenging everything that was constrained in 2020, from manufacturing to distribution to supply chain. We're identifying everything that went right in 2020 — and there was a lot — and everything that went wrong, and (we're) refocusing to improve execution and flow of information.



*Roy Calcagno,  
CEO, Craftmaster  
Furniture*

THE OPPORTUNITY IN MY MIND IS REDUCING OUR LEAD TIMES... EVERYONE HAS 12-WEEK, 14-, 16-, 22-WEEK DELIVERY RIGHT NOW, AND (MANUFACTURERS) ARE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT. THE FIRST GUYS TO COME BACK TO NORMAL LEAD TIMES ARE GOING TO BE THE WINNERS.

If we can be one of the first to reduce our lead times back to normal, we can pick up slots and permanently lock in these great gains in business we've had this past year. When the economy opens up and people start traveling and dining out again, a lot of this disposable income will dry up, and where once we had, say, five slots on a floor, we want to have 10.

The biggest way to achieve that is expanding capacity. ... We believe our Lenoir plant that opened in September will give us an additional 25% capacity, and we're adding a line in each of our three plants in Alexander County, so we're talking about a total of 40% expansion in capacity this year.

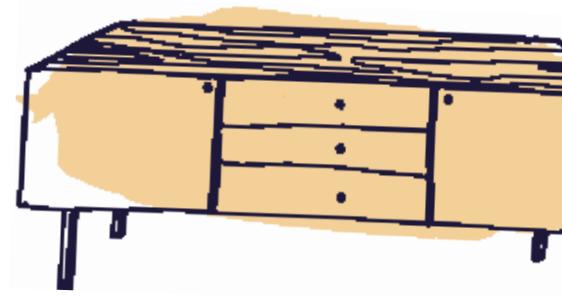


*Jonathan Johnson,  
CEO, Overstock*

OVERSTOCK WILL CONTINUE TO LEVERAGE NEW AND IMPROVING TECHNOLOGY TO HELP OUR TARGET CUSTOMERS FIND THE PRODUCTS THEY LOVE AND DELIVER THOSE PRODUCTS TO THEM QUICKLY.

We are focused on the online retail blocking and tackling to continue our sustainable, profitable market share growth.

them quickly. We are focused on the online retail blocking and tackling to continue our sustainable, profitable market share growth.



*Farooq Kathwari,  
chairman, president  
and CEO, Ethan Allen*

OUR FOCUS FOR 2021 REVOLVES AROUND STRENGTHENING THE WAYS THAT WE COMBINE TECHNOLOGY WITH PERSONAL SERVICE.

These are our main priorities: employee safety, continued investment in digital design and interactive communication technologies, growing our business and continuing to generate cash, refining our product offerings to reach a large client base, and leveraging our vertical integration, including continuing to make 75% of our products in our North American workshops.



*Jerry Dittmer,  
president and CEO,  
Flexsteel Inds.*

Flexsteel plans to accelerate growth investments focused on building a differentiated and highly compelling customer experience, rapidly expanding our supply chain capacity and agility, and integrating our omnichannel and digital experience with all our customers.



*Terry McNew, CEO,  
Klaussner Home  
Furnishings*

MY MAIN GOAL IS TO  
CONTINUE TO EVALUATE  
THE BUSINESS IN TERMS OF  
PROCESSES, BOTH IN SUPPLY CHAIN AND  
INTERNALLY.

We have a number of changes underway that we'll continue in 2021, and they've only been accelerated by COVID-19, which has impacted the supply chain all over the world the same way it impacted us with things like absenteeism and quarantines. We've been working on ways to eliminate waste, and we've been able to increase our through-put by nearly 70% per employee in the past 10 months, but we'll still be working on that.

First, we're reducing transportation waste within the production process. When you cut wood in one location, ship it to another to turn it into frames, and walk those frames 50 yards to another place for assembly, that's not a lean process. We've reorganized to put all the processes beside each other. We're about 80% of the way there. Since we have 2.5 million square feet of production space in five main campuses with multiple plants on each campus, it takes a while to fully implement.

We're also on a march to rationalize our product line, and we've already begun reducing the number of non-productive SKUs. We've discontinued slow-moving pieces; people forget how to build them if it's only a few times a year, and you end up with excess supply of materials due to minimum order quantities. That's increased our through-put, and our SKU count is down 30%, but we still have a long way to go.

A big key in the year ahead is President-elect Biden's tax policies: Mr. Biden tends toward higher taxes, and that reduces economic activity. ... If one party controls Congress and the administration, higher taxes are more likely. To me, that's the last piece of the puzzle for forecasting 2021.



*Kurt Darrow,  
chairman, president  
and CEO, La-Z-Boy*

OBVIOUSLY, TECHNOLOGY  
IS GOING TO PLAY A  
LARGER ROLE GOING

FORWARD IN PUTTING CONTROL OF  
THE PURCHASE PROCESS AND BUYING  
EXPERIENCE IN OUR CONSUMERS' HANDS.

Today our customers not only shop and do research online but can schedule and track their own delivery from our distribution centers. Another technology area is personalization. In the past, we'd run ads and always the same message to every customer, but now we are able to get targeted messages to targeted customers utilizing all the data we have on what they've bought and what they're looking for. That will become the norm rather than the exception. [...]

From the distribution center, we are working toward a system where we'll send a picture of the delivery team to the consumer in advance. And our system allows the customer to schedule their own delivery times and, once it leaves the distribution center, track the timing to her home so she isn't waiting for a call. The more information you put in the customers' hands, the more control you give them, and that's where we're making significant progress.

A second issue is supply chain, and given the increases in volume, everyone's supply chain is stressed, and everyone's re-thinking it. With the industry's experience with tariffs and the pandemic, a number of questions are being asked: How many different partners do you need, how do you strategically spread your country risk? How can you remain agile and have flexibility when volume goes up or down? [...]

A third consideration is our employees. What do they need coming out of the pandemic to continue to feel safe in our plants and in our stores, and what can we do to help them enhance their performance with things like technology, processes and workflow in both our factories and stores. [...]



*Michael Campbell,  
CEO, Leather Italia*

FIRST IS A CONTINUED FOCUS ON  
OUR FORECASTING AND MAKING  
SURE THE FLOW OF OUR PRODUCT  
AND OUR PRODUCTION SCHEDULES  
ARE CONSISTENT AND TRUE TO DEMAND.

It is critical that our company look at product needs and make sure we are supporting those needs for the retailers.

To that end, we'll increase pre-purchases of raw material, in particular leather, which has become very polarized with this growth and demand we experienced in 2020. In order to be consistent and perform at an extremely high level, keeping more material on hand is a very clear need, and it's become a very high-action item we'll be concentrating on.

Also, at our main motion facility in China, Shae Motion, we've added four more production lines to support more growth in 2021 and to ensure consistency of flow with respect to our current and future product obligations.



*Steve Oblak, chief  
merchandising  
officer, Wayfair*

WE KNOW OUR CUSTOMERS  
HAVE HAD A HARD YEAR, AND IF  
ANYTHING, HAVE AN EVEN DEEPER  
CONNECTION TO THEIR HOME AND COMMUNITY.  
They are going to be much more inclined to shop  
online to renovate, decorate and create their own  
unique home space than before. The acceleration to  
online isn't necessarily changing our plan as much  
as we're fast adjusting to heightened expectations  
around quality of merchandising, financial and  
in-home services, inventory availability, speed  
to customer and of course price to value in this  
economic environment. So, the biggest change here  
for us is we're moving even faster on our ambitious  
plan to deliver the best home experience for our  
customer anytime, anywhere.

Another big change is for our supplier partners. One of our top priorities is to be the best home platform for our suppliers. We want our supplier interface, Partner Home, to be as good as the consumer experience we have for our customers. Our suppliers should expect significant upgrades this year on the ease and quality of the tools and analytics we provide them to optimize their business with us.



*Luis Ruesga, CEO,  
Zuo Modern*

EVERY YEAR THERE IS A  
NEW CHALLENGE, AND  
THIS YEAR WE THINK IT  
WILL BE IN THE LOGISTICS  
AND MANUFACTURING SIDE.

Thankfully, we have a great team overseas and our leader in production, Steve Poon, has many years of experience to minimize the overpaying on freight, delays on manufacture and QA, thus giving us a strong advantage to keep supplying products to our partners with an aggressive price and a prompt delivery.

Our focus for the first two quarters of the year will continue to be on the residential side with dropship as a priority as we see end consumers continuing to shop from home. We also see a possible fast recovery on the hospitality and event side by the end of the third and fourth quarters, with demand for hospitality items because of the reopening of new restaurants, bars and hotels.

[read more](#)



# The Sleep Expert

by Tania Dionne



Dear members,

It is a pleasure for me to be able to address each one of you in this month's edition of The Sleep Expert.

This section, I hope, will be used to inform, and inspire you.

Over the next few issues, we will be going over the new BrandSource Sleep program.

It includes our 5 steps selling process to help you maximize the sales in your bedding department.

Step 1: Pick your pillow

Step 2: Pick your comfort

Step 3: Pick your mattress/technology

Step 4: Pick your base

Step 5: Pick your protection

Last issue, we explored Step 1: Pick your pillow. This month we are moving on to Step 2: which is Pick your comfort!

**2** COMFORT

BRANDSOURCE  
Sleep

## Let's start with a basic fact!

A firm mattress for me and a firm mattress for you is probably not the same thing. Comfort or impression of comfort is as personal as it gets.

To talk about firmness, we need to understand it, please see article excerpt from Sleep Advisor.

[read more](#)

## MATTRESS FIRMNESS IS ONE OF THE KEY CHARACTERISTICS

to consider before you make a purchase. Finding the right level is critical for your good night sleep. If you select a unit which is too soft or too firm, you are unlikely to sleep well, and you could even start experiencing issues with your back.

Luckily, there are quite a lot of excellent mattress companies which offer different levels of firmness. The challenge is that to determine it; you would have to be aware of a lot of different things, especially if you do not have the option to try it.



## WHAT IS MATTRESS FIRMNESS?



Obviously, the first thing you would like to account for is the essence of the characteristic. Believe it or not, there is a lot of misconception out there amongst potential mattress buyers. **They tend to believe that mattress firmness ratings and support are the same things.**

While the former directly correlates with the latter and they are mutually dependent, **there is a difference.** The firmness of the bed is its hardness, put in a very simple way. Is it soft or is it hard? That is the type of question that you need to ask yourself. It is subjective and different sleepers will have a different feel.

However, this has become a critical characteristic, and it is an important metric which is accounted for by every buyer. After all, it determines the overall level of comfort as well as the support that the entire thing is going to offer. Have in mind that mattress size should not impact your overall firmness feel.

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?



The firmness of the mattress is a fundamental characteristic which is quite critical for the decision-making process. Not only will it determine the overall level of comfort, but it is also going to have a serious impact on the support of the bed as well.

This is something quite critical. The firmness has an impact over almost every important characteristic that your mattress is defined by. From the comfort and support to the overall performance of the unit, everything could be associated with its firmness.



So, as you just read, there is a little more to firmness than meets the eye. In the 5-step program, step 1 is Pick Your Pillow (please refer to last month's article) and step 2 is Pick Your Comfort. To do that, the customer must decide on their own what comfort they like.

**Having the same collection of mattresses available in 3 different comforts is the best way to go.** Having the same structure inside the mattress will ensure that the customer will only think about the feel. Start with your highest priced collection.

Your customer with their pillow guides them to your mattress collection that has the 3 comforts. Ask them to try all 3 and then tell you which one they prefer. This part is all up to the customer, your input at this point should not be a factor in their decision.

Once they identify the feel they like; only show them the level of firmest chosen and go slightly down in price each time around.

The goal is to take control of the process to eliminate doubts and uncertainty in the process.

The customer should not try more than 4 mattresses once comfort is picked. **The more options they have, the less confident they are.**

Good luck!



# Appliance Update

by Sandy Mahoney

## E-commerce

**The year 2020 brought its share of challenges but it also quadrupled the number of transactional sites by allowing 20 new members to add an e-commerce platform to their websites.**

Obviously, with the arrival of these new players, we have gathered 6 times more orders in 2020 while **increasing the average order value by 2%** compared to 2019.

Unsurprisingly, freezer sales exploded in 2020. While freezers represented only 7% of all online sales in 2019, they accounted for nearly 25% of sales in 2020.

## Web Traffic

As you know by now, 2020 has been one for the books! With only a 9% increase in product pages, **we have seen a 99% increase of views** (an 83% increase with an adjusted number of pages).

For December, category pages were down 0.9% but keep in mind that, year-on-year, it is a 54% increase!

In terms of individual product pages for December compared to the previous month, this is a decrease of 9% but an increase of 13% compared to December 2019.



NOTE: The following data is based on all Mega Digital Services Websites (including BrandSource.ca). Category pages refers to the pages found under the "Appliances" tab. Product pages refers to individual product pages, one per SKU.

CATEGORY	Previous Month %	Previous Year %
Refrigeration	-12.9%	13.2%
Cooking	-1.6%	20.9%
Dishwashers	-10.2%	-5.7%
Laundry	-7.1%	2.9%
Microwaves	-6.5%	-6.5%
Ventilation	-6.4%	6.4%
	-8.4%	10.8%



**Freezers  
25%  
of online sales**

## Facts and Figures

December 2020 compared to the 2020 average.

Category pages	Product pages	Brands
Ranges +83%	Wine cooler/ cooler +27%	Samsung +4%
Laundry Pairs +1%	Breakdown -31%	KitchenAid -40%

## Flyers on Reebee

Since February 2020, 19 BrandSource flyers have been featured on the Reebee platform. Since then, the platform generated almost 150,000 views from 77,000 individual users. This number represents the conversion rate (number of clicks) from the Reebee application to a product page or to the retailer's website.

December was 19% above the 2020 average for page views. May and June have been the best performing months representing 24% of all the 2020 views.

## 2021 The New Normal

The holiday season is over, the year 2020 is behind us, time for balance sheets and new resolutions. What will be the factors to keep in mind for your business plans as businesses prepare for the new normal?

## Revenge of the Wallet

Among the countries, such as Australia, that quickly mastered the pandemic, we can optimistically observe a growth rate in goods and services of almost 8% in the third quarter of 2020. This trend is also likely to benefit Canadian consumers as sales of appliances, furniture & mattresses, and decorative accessories for Q3-2020 were 15% above the average of the last 10 years.

Consumers who have been able to work from home are currently sitting on their vacation budget (and on their uncomfortable couch) since 81% of Canadians are not ready to make travel plans (Google/Ipsos, August 2020). Restaurant meals, that are now only shared virtually, are pushing novice cooks to enhance their culinary skills and consider buying new appliances worthy of their new passion.

Between teleworking, home schooling, and meal prepping, consumers are constantly trying to reduce time spent doing laundry and cleaning. The most recent sanitary measures will push the undecided of the first wave to change appliances, furniture, and mattresses in the coming months. **As a retailer, it becomes essential to have a digital presence to win a share of this pie!**

## The Digitalization of Services

Necessity is the mother of invention: entrepreneurs who have chosen to quickly adapt their business plans by digitizing their consulting services, sales and delivery/pick-up methods are getting by today without too much damage. A McKinsey study published in the fall of 2020 estimates that entrepreneurs are now three times more likely to conduct at least 80% of their operations digitally.

[read more](#)

According to Google Trends, "Shop + Local + Canada" keyword searches jumped 190% over last year. **It is all about proximity, origin of goods and availability of inventory.**

Globally, two-thirds of consumers have tried new ways of shopping since the beginning of the pandemic, and 65% of them say they want to continue using this new type of shopping. In north America, "the first half of 2020 saw an increase in e-commerce equivalent to that of the previous ten years".

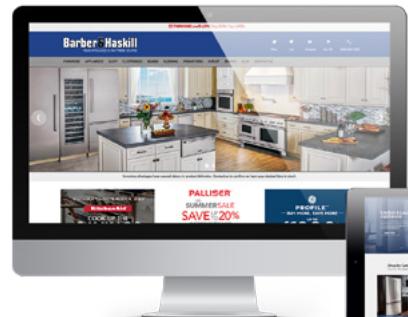
[read more](#)

You cannot put the vaccine back in the syringe; these changes are here to stay. Few would have believed the historic turnaround of the past year; your 2020 business plan has probably undergone several changes in the past few months.

As you write your new year resolutions, think about how you want to incorporate this new normal into your goals and how Mega Group will help you get there faster.

## New Alta Website

The integration of the catalog is progressing well: the information is rich and relevant, thanks, among other things, to the content coming directly from the manufacturers. Navigation is simplified by the presence of sub-categories and tags, and filters also improve its usability. The comparison tool is complete and intuitive, and the suggestion of compatible products or useful add-ons is very useful. The price list integration will be completed and revised very soon, which will be a major step towards the launch of the new Alta site.





# Terry's Tips

by Terry Helliker



## SEO Trends for Retailers In 2021

**The world was turned upside down in 2020, as consumers turned to online shopping for more than just groceries. Let's face it, behavior and intent have changed forever.**

Consumers are doing more research, as available stock diminishes, and manufacturers are forced to temporarily halt production. Retail locations are shut down, as they are deemed non-essential.

If you don't use your website to its full potential, **you are missing out.**

Don't worry, it's not too late. We are just seeing the tip of the iceberg, as online sales for home goods will continue to grow.



That said, there is more to it than just offering products for sale on your website. If you want to get an edge over the competition and get more traffic and sales in-store and online, you must have a solid SEO plan.

### Here is my list of Search Engine Optimization trends to follow in 2021:

#### 1. Optimize your digital presence.

Use the same branding across all your social media including **YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and of course, Google My Business.** Post content regularly and bring all these medias together by referring to them, linking to them from your website and so on. Be sure to keep your website up to date. This includes your About us and Contact pages as well as any other pages, such as your home page, where you can provide the latest updates and most relevant information to your site visitors.

#### 2. Content Creation.

Create various forms of content, such as video, written content, pdf downloads and more, that meets your users' questions, concerns, and needs. Be sure to place it so that it can be found easily on your website. When creating written content, try creating **long-form content**, meaning 1500-2000 words per article.

#### 3. Business Reviews.

Don't be afraid to ask a customer for a review. With more people shopping online than ever before, reviews will help bring those customers to your store. There are many ways you can request a review, but the easiest ones are to include a link in your emails and newsletters, as well as reaching out to **anyone that makes a purchase from your website.** If you have chat enabled on your website, sending a link to your Google My Business, Facebook Business page or Yelp listing is simple. Before you know it, your reviews will start adding up, which will help potential customers choose you over the competition.

#### 4. E-Commerce.

If 2020 has taught us anything, it's that people are willing, now more than ever, to buy appliances, furniture, home décor and even mattresses, online. To increase sales for 2021 and beyond, **having an e-commerce enabled website is a must.**

#### 5. Analytics and Data.

If you want to get ahead of the competition, you must analyze your data. Be sure you are using Google Analytics and log in regularly or look over your monthly reports to see how your site is performing. Your data will tell a story of how your website is ranking, how customers are finding you and what they are doing on your website. Knowing this information, you can update your tactics and outrank the competition.



If you have any questions or comments related to this or any other Terry's Tips articles, please reach out to me, **thelliker@megagroup.ca** I'd love to hear from you, and I will be more than happy to assist you in any way I can.

## Benefits of Virtual Appointments to Increase Sales!

by Terry Helliker

**COVID-19 HAS SHIFTED HOW CONSUMERS INTERACT WITH RETAILERS. NEW RULES AND REGULATIONS KEPT CONSUMERS AT HOME AND FORCED RETAILERS TO TEMPORARILY CLOSE THEIR STORES TO THE PUBLIC.**

Retailers across Canada and around the world scrambled to find ways to stay in business. Those without ecommerce-enabled websites found it the most difficult. With no way to sell products, how do you stay in business? The answer might be easier than you think.

The implementation of virtual appointments (online consultations) has proven to be so beneficial that many retailers will continue to use it even after their brick-and-mortar stores reopen. For retailers with ecommerce websites, adding the virtual appointments' option is another tool in their arsenal to get engaged customers to Buy Now.

By using virtual appointments, retailers can show products to their customers through live videos and demonstrate certain product features that cannot be seen through a simple image or on your website.

**1)** Scheduling appointments in advance allows the customers to plan their outings.

**2)** Retailers can reach more customers through their digital channels and increase sales as a result.

**3)** Using video or pictures of their homes, customers can provide insights about what exactly they are looking for, while designers can suggest appropriate ideas according to the customers' needs and provide them with specific assistance.

**4)** Get valuable customer feedback, instantly! Find the needs and wants of your customers faster.

**5)** Use various free video platforms to have a human video conversation and walk the customer through your store or website.

**6)** Decrease negotiating and increase margins.

**7)** Improve overall customer experience.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about Virtual Appointments, please reach out to your Mega Group representative or by emailing **mborecky@megagroup.ca**

# How to grow your email list

by Marcy McCallum

**Email marketing is a must-have within your digital strategy when it comes to gaining new customers and ensuring previous ones are kept engaged and profitable.**

Customers choose to receive and read your content through email which results in high click through rates. Having and growing an email list is an effective way to generate leads, build awareness and ultimately increase sales! A quality email list is a vital component of email marketing and for this reason, I'm sharing a few tips to help continuously grow your email lists the right way:

## 1 Ensure email content is engaging and provides value.

Subscribers sign-up to receive emails for a reason and will quickly opt-out of lists if content received is uninteresting and/or non-relevant. Engaging content is literally what they are expecting in return when they subscribe. Email engagement is measured by CTOR (Click to Open Rate), calculated from: the total # of clicks, divided by the total # opens from an email campaign. A highly engaged email campaign will provide CTOR results of at least 20%.

## 2 Include a call-to-action button on your social media pages.

Be sure to add a CTA button on your social media pages and link to your website's newsletter capture form. This is an effective method to encourage your social media followers to sign up! The key to this list building technique is the destination page containing an email subscription form and highlighting the benefits of signing up.

## 3 Make subscribing to the list easy.

Subscribing to your email list should be easy. Ensure your email subscription form is highly visible and can be found in more than one location on your website: homepage visibility is key while "contact us" and "about us" pages are recommended secondary locations as well.

## 4 Keep email capture forms short.

Avoid overwhelmingly lengthy forms when asking customers to provide their information. Keep it simple and stick to the basics: their name and email address is really all that is needed.

## 5 Offer in-store customers a digital receipt.

This is an ideal time to offer receipts digitally as a means of reducing physical contact while encouraging list growth. It is also eco-friendly and allows customers to file and find receipts more easily.

## 6 Encourage your sales team to promote benefits of joining your email list.

Regardless of whether customers opt for a digital or paper receipt, train employees to request customer email addresses by informing them of the benefits of joining your list: exclusive events & promotions, new trends, tips & tricks.

## 7 Submit collected email addresses monthly to ensure they are added to your list.

Ensuring in-store customer email addresses are imported into Mega Group's email marketing platform is essential. Setting a reminder to submit POS lists monthly is a great way to ensure newly acquired addresses begin receiving email communication in a timely manner.

## 8 Host a contest.

Hosting a contest requiring an email address and opt-in for entry provides incentive. Post about the contest on your social media pages while directing your followers to the contest landing page to further grow your list.

**SALES**

# NEW MEGA MEMBER

by Nathan Hawes

Jerome Curran has worked in the appliance industry for over 30 years. In 2007, he felt that there was an opportunity in the Calgary market to create a store that had a WOW factor from the front door.

He wanted the store to feel like home, with live kitchens, an on-staff chef cooking 7 days a week and a gathering place in the center of the store. Jerome shared his vision and business plan with Janice Kendall and a week later a store was in the making!

Jerome knew to have a successful and competitive business he needed to come up with a store that

was unique and different from any of the local competitors. Jerome's branding philosophy of the store was for customers to receive an experience that none of the competitors could offer. Quality people were the key to bringing this opulent experience to life, so they hired the best staff, some of whom are still with the company today.

Jerome's is a locally owned and operated company; owned by Jerome Curran and Janice Kendall, Jerome's daughter, Jessica Curran is general manager, Janice's daughter, Devon Kendall is the executive marketing and accounting manager, and son-in-law, Mark Ulak, manages the purchasing department. Jerome's is a true family enterprise!



Their showroom is now 10,000 square feet of luxury, high end appliance retail space. All appliances are built into their own live kitchen displays. Their key brands include Sub Zero, Wolf, Miele, Thermador, Fisher Paykel, Jenn Air, Monogram, and many other brands that will accommodate most people's budgets.

Jerome's Appliance Gallery donates to many charities and facilitates many charity events. For charities that need to host events Jerome's Appliance Gallery will provide the space, chef, and food.

As their business continues to thrive and consumer preferences continue to evolve so does Jerome's Appliance Gallery. They decided to join Mega Group after seeing how the ALTA website design, functionality and online marketing would add to their exceptional customer experience. They also saw how working with Mega Group would help them grow their business and increase profitability.

**Please join us in welcoming Jerome, Janice, and the family at Jerome's Appliance Gallery to our Mega Group family!**



Welcome to our  
**New Mega  
Members**

## **Jerome's Appliance Gallery**

Jerome Curran & Janice Kendall - Calgary, AB

## **Triangle R.V. Centre**

Sylvia Thistle-Miller - Sidney, B.C.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

summit21

# DOUBLE DOWN

by Michael Vancura

You already know that Mega is All IN for 2021.

**The AVB Summit**, set to take place from **March 22nd to 25th**, will **Double Down on all our goals and objectives**. We are ecstatic to get you in on the excitement as the weeks roll closer.



**The AVB Summit: Double Down**'s virtual format allows you the flexibility to stay local, get inspired, and access a wealth of information from the comfort of your own home. Attending this virtual conference is also easy on the wallet, as the real costs and opportunities lie in the value and knowledge you will walk away with.

You spoke, we listened! This year, we will have **Canada-only EXPO showrooms** aimed to help retailers learn more about the range of new and improved services Mega has to offer. From our showroom designs, Expert-Accounting, BrandSource, and the new ALTA 360, Canadian Mega representatives will be available to speak to you directly and answer any questions you may have. Our EXPO rooms will have information from all our major vendors to our new products.

We are eager to connect with all our members during the **State of the Nation**, delivered by our Chairman of the Board, **Richard Wall**, CEO, **Kim Yost**, and CFO, **Kevin Leier**. For a comprehensive rundown of the latest updates within our brand, be sure to take part in our **BrandSource Canada meeting**. You will also have access to all the great content around the Mega universe, such as the infamous Furniture Town Hall and its conference speaker, Marcus Sheridan.

The world may be without a playbook during this pandemic, but we at Mega have you covered! We are happy to make this conference **complimentary to all members**. Together we are stronger. **Mega Group is Doubling Down - because we are ALL IN TO WIN!**



## **MEGA SPRING BUY FAIR**

APPLIANCES - FURNITURE - BEDDING

March 23 - 25, 2021



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March 23 - 25  
2021

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\*Limited time offer

**Look out for our  
NEW feature**  
in next month's issue!



**Every month**, we will be highlighting a few of our Mega vendor partners! Stay connected and learn more about our vendors through the **Mega Selling Guide!**



**SEE IT NOW!**



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the Mega portal