

Nebraska Furniture Mart History



Nebraska Furniture Mart is a renowned furniture retailer that has earned a commendable reputation for its extensive selection of home furnishings, appliances, and electronics. Established in 1937, the company has grown from a small local business in Omaha, Nebraska, into one of the largest furniture retailers in the United States. This article delves into the rich history of Nebraska Furniture Mart, exploring its founding, expansion, innovations, and influence on the furniture retail industry.

Founding and Early Years

Nebraska Furniture Mart was founded by Rose Blumkin, a Russian immigrant who arrived in the United States in 1911. With a keen entrepreneurial spirit and a passion for furniture, Blumkin started selling furniture from the basement of her home in Omaha. Her determination and commitment to providing quality products at competitive prices quickly gained her a loyal customer base.

In 1937, Rose opened the first official Nebraska Furniture Mart store in Omaha. The store's success was driven by her philosophy of providing customers with high-quality merchandise at the lowest possible prices. She famously stated, "My customers are my best friends," emphasizing her dedication to customer service and satisfaction.

Expansion and Growth

As Nebraska Furniture Mart gained popularity, the company began to expand its operations. The following factors contributed to its growth:

Strategic Location

- The original Omaha store was situated in a prime location, making it accessible to a large customer base.
- The store's success in Omaha prompted the opening of additional locations in the surrounding areas.

Diverse Product Offerings

- Nebraska Furniture Mart diversified its product range to include not just furniture, but also appliances, flooring, and home décor items.
- The company made a name for itself by offering a wide variety of styles and price points, catering to different customer preferences.

Innovative Marketing Strategies

- Rose Blumkin employed creative marketing strategies to attract customers, including advertising in local newspapers and hosting promotional events.
- The store's reputation for low prices and quality products quickly spread, leading to increased foot traffic and sales.

Acquisition by Berkshire Hathaway

In 1983, Nebraska Furniture Mart underwent a significant change when it was acquired by Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway. This acquisition marked a new chapter in the company's history, providing it with additional resources and support for further expansion. Under Berkshire Hathaway's ownership, Nebraska Furniture Mart continued to thrive and grow, maintaining its commitment to quality and customer service.

Expansion Beyond Nebraska

Following the acquisition, Nebraska Furniture Mart expanded beyond its Omaha roots. The company opened new stores in several states, including:

1. Kansas City, Missouri: In 1995, Nebraska Furniture Mart opened its first store outside Nebraska, establishing a strong presence in the Kansas City metropolitan area.
2. Texas: In 2015, the company opened a massive 560,000 square-foot store in The Colony, Texas, which quickly became one of the largest home furnishing stores in the nation.
3. Expansion into Other Markets: Nebraska Furniture Mart has continued to explore opportunities for expansion, with plans for future stores in various locations across the United States.

Commitment to Customer Experience

Throughout its history, Nebraska Furniture Mart has prioritized customer experience. The company has implemented various initiatives to enhance the shopping experience, including:

Store Design and Layout

- The stores are designed to create an inviting atmosphere, with spacious showrooms that allow customers to explore a wide range of products.
- Interactive displays and design centers enable customers to visualize how furniture will fit into their homes.

Online Shopping

- With the rise of e-commerce, Nebraska Furniture Mart has embraced online shopping, offering a user-friendly website that allows customers to browse and purchase products from the comfort of their homes.
- The company provides detailed product descriptions, customer reviews, and virtual room planners to assist customers in making informed decisions.

Exceptional Customer Service

- Nebraska Furniture Mart's staff is trained to provide knowledgeable assistance, ensuring customers receive personalized service throughout their shopping experience.
- The company offers various delivery and assembly options, making it convenient for customers to receive their purchases.

Impact on the Community

Nebraska Furniture Mart has also made a significant impact on the communities it serves. The company is known for its philanthropic efforts and commitment to giving back. Some of the ways it contributes to the community include:

- Charitable Donations: Nebraska Furniture Mart regularly donates to local charities, schools, and organizations to support community initiatives.
- Job Creation: The company's expansion has led to the creation of thousands of jobs, contributing to the local economy.
- Sustainability Initiatives: Nebraska Furniture Mart has implemented eco-friendly practices, such as recycling programs and energy-efficient store designs, to promote sustainability.

Innovations in the Furniture Retail Industry

Nebraska Furniture Mart has been at the forefront of various innovations in the furniture retail industry. Some notable advancements include:

Technology Integration

- The company has embraced technology to enhance the shopping experience, utilizing augmented reality and virtual reality tools to help customers visualize furniture in their homes.
- Nebraska Furniture Mart has also invested in advanced inventory management systems to streamline operations and improve efficiency.

Design Services

- The company offers professional design services, allowing customers to work with interior designers to create personalized spaces that reflect their style and needs.
- In-store workshops and events provide customers with resources and inspiration for home design projects.

Conclusion

The history of Nebraska Furniture Mart is a testament to the vision and determination of its founder, Rose Blumkin, and the adaptability of the company in an ever-changing retail landscape. From its humble beginnings in Omaha to its current status as one of the largest furniture retailers in the United States, Nebraska Furniture Mart has consistently prioritized quality,

customer service, and community impact.

As the company continues to evolve and innovate, it remains committed to its core values, ensuring that it meets the needs of customers while contributing positively to the communities it serves. With plans for future expansion and a focus on enhancing the shopping experience, Nebraska Furniture Mart is poised to maintain its legacy as a leader in the furniture retail industry for years to come.

Frequently Asked Questions

When was Nebraska Furniture Mart founded?

Nebraska Furniture Mart was founded in 1937.

Who was the founder of Nebraska Furniture Mart?

Nebraska Furniture Mart was founded by Rose Blumkin, a Russian immigrant.

What was the original location of Nebraska Furniture Mart?

The original location of Nebraska Furniture Mart was in Omaha, Nebraska.

How did Nebraska Furniture Mart expand after its founding?

Nebraska Furniture Mart expanded by relocating to a larger store in 1957 and later opened additional stores in other states.

What major corporation acquired Nebraska Furniture Mart?

Nebraska Furniture Mart was acquired by Berkshire Hathaway in 2000.

What is the significance of Nebraska Furniture Mart in the furniture retail industry?

Nebraska Furniture Mart is known as one of the largest home furnishings stores in North America, setting trends in the retail furniture market.

How has Nebraska Furniture Mart maintained its relevance over the years?

Nebraska Furniture Mart has maintained its relevance by expanding its product range, adopting e-commerce, and opening new locations, including a large store in Texas.

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