

Universal's new partnership allows retailers to get into the rug business with little commitment

Bobby Dalheim//Senior Editor of Case Goods and Global Sourcing//November 1, 2023



Universal is introducing 198 total upholstery and case goods SKUs in the company's Modern line for Fall Market.

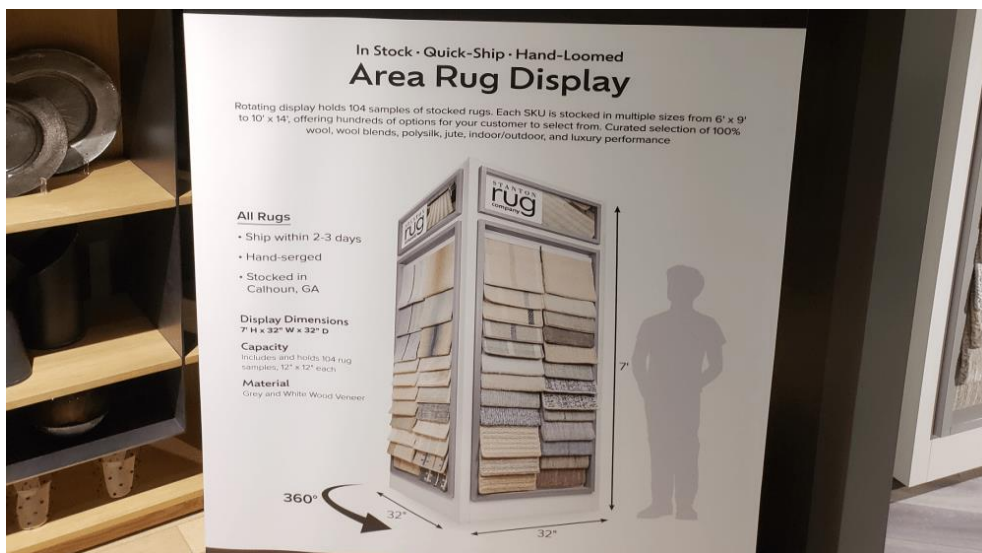
HIGH POINT – [Universal Furniture](#) and [Stanton Carpet](#) showed off their new partnership at the October High Point Market, which allows retailers the opportunity to stock the same pre-sized and hand-serged rugs featured in Universal's newest vignettes.

“This partnership provides retailers with a one-stop-shop opportunity to refresh their floors and generate revenue without carrying inventory,” said Neil MacKenzie, senior vice president of marketing for Universal Furniture. “It’s an easy opportunity for retail stores to present these products just as they appear in the showroom at High Point Market.”

It works like this: Universal gets to feature higher-end rugs with its new Modern furniture collection, while Stanton benefits from that exposure. For retailers, the value lies in new business opportunities and a quick return on investment. They also can more precisely copy Universal's vignettes if they wish to feature them as-shown in their own stores.

“For home furnishings retailers, it’s really attractive,” said Christine Zampaglione, Stanton’s senior marketing director. “A retailer can buy our display and make their money back just by selling two rugs.”

“We’re giving the home furnishings retailer the option to be in the rug business with hardly any of a floor commitment,” she said. “A retailer pays at most around \$1,000 for an 8×10 rug. They can mark it up and sell it two and a half to three times more. They can put the display in their most trafficked section without much commitment.”



Retailers will pay around \$1,500 for the display, which holds 104 12×12 samples. There are around 380 SKUs in total, with many color combinations and material options. Rugs are made by hand overseas before being imported and inventoried at a warehouse in Georgia. They’re in stock and ship within 36 hours of an order being placed.

Right now, interested retailers must become a customer of Stanton to buy the display or a rug seen in the Universal showroom. But an upcoming portal on the Universal website will allow for only one transaction. That should be coming the first quarter, Zampaglione said.

Zampaglione and McKenzie were the force behind the partnership, with Universal’s market vignettes being designed with Stanton in mind from the get-go. The furniture goes with the rug, and the rug goes with the furniture.

“Really, it was two marketing minds that came together and helped each other,” she said. “The response from Universal was great. They had some retailers who expressed interest. We opened up some accounts. Lots of designers loved it. We don’t sell direct to designers as our customer is that flooring retailer. But a good chunk of our retail customers have a large percentage of designer business. Our goal is to market to designers and push the business toward our retailers.”

The partnership hasn’t run its course, she said, with more planned for the coming spring market.