



An American Home Furnishings Alliance (AHFA) Guidelines for Inventory Management

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**An  
American Home  
Furnishings Alliance  
(AHFA) Conventions**

(Formally know as the American Furniture Manufacturers  
Association [AFMA])

**For  
Inventory Management**



# Inventory Management Workgroup

February 23, 2005

## Summary

The "Furniture Industry Conventions" were developed by a technical workgroup sponsored by the American Furniture Manufacturers Association (AFMA) Information Technology Board of Directors in the spring of 2002. John Perry of Century presented them to the Furniture Industry Data Exchange (FIDX) group on May 17, 2002 for discussion and approval. They were approved. They were then approved by the AFMA Information Technology Board of Directors in August of 2002. A presentation summarizing the approved e-Commerce standards and the Furniture Industry Conventions was given to FIDX on September 20, 2002.

### Summarized Conventions:

1. All products (casegoods and upholstery) will carry the UPC label on the product as well as the carton in conformance with UCC Standards. (see the American Furniture Manufacturer's Association (AFMA) Convention for Bar Code Labeling)
2. For stocking items (as defined by the manufacturer or the retailer) a unique UPC number will be assigned by the manufacturer (in accordance with UCC standards) to each SKU. The UPC numbers will be the foundation for the electronic catalog.
3. For special configuration, made to order product (i.e. special order upholstery) the frame or base unit will be assigned a UPC number. The uniqueness of the product will be defined by the UPC plus the serial number.
4. All products (casegoods and upholstery) will carry a serial number (assigned by the manufacturer) on the product as well as the carton in conformance with UCC Standards. (see the American Furniture Manufacturer's Association (AFMA) Convention for Bar Code Labeling)
5. For trading partners that support e-commerce:
  1. An ASN (Advance Ship Notice) will be transmitted via EDI (ANSI x12/VICS) or XML (FIDX)
  2. A SSCC-18 (Serialized Shipping Container Code) label will be included on the shipping container. The SSCC-18 is used in conjunction with the ASN.
  3. Other electronic transactions will be in conformance with:
    1. EDI – ANSI x12/VICS standards
    2. XML – FIDX (Furniture Industry Data Exchange) standards
6. For products that require more than one carton for packaging (i.e. Dining Room Table Top and Base) each cartoned item will be assigned a unique UPC number.



### **Problems:**

1. There are not enough GTIN (UPC) numbers available to uniquely number each combination of upholstered product elements (fabric, foam, finish, pillows, skirting, etc.) It is simple to assign UPC numbers to preconfigured stocking items. How do you assign UPC numbers to special order product?
2. Retailers need the ability to uniquely identify each piece of furniture. This is both in the warehouse as well as on the retail floor. Who assigns the serial number and how is it applied to the furniture?
3. Manufacturers often identify the “end” product rather than identifying the various cartoned (and as a result inventoried) elements. An example would be a bed that was sold as a bed but packaged and shipped as a headboard, a footboard and rails. Another example is when a manufacturer puts multiple products in the same carton (chairs) and the quantity is *assumed* to be two (2). Each piece (whether in the carton or not) needs to be uniquely identifiable for inventory management and transportation management purposes.

### **Description**

The six (6) inventory management conventions have been discussed at great length at furniture industry meetings, conventions and conferences. Their application will bring into line furniture practices with UCC/EAN international standards, VICS standards, American Production & Inventory Control Society practices, etc. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact the American Home Furnishings Alliance (AHFA) at (336) 884-5000.

### **Conclusion:**

The American Home Furnishings Alliance’s (AHFA, formally the American Furniture Manufacturer’s Association) Information Technology Council is dedicated to:

1. Identifying furniture industry processes and practices that are problematic to doing business in an effective and efficient way
2. Searching for international, multi-industry standard solutions to those problems.
3. Communicating the solutions to the industry.