



## Specialty sleep gets permanent space at Las Vegas Market

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Specialty sleep, once a niche mattress market, has come a long way in recent years, largely due to the marketing success of Tempur-Pedic and the rising interest in green products. As a consequence, the Specialty Sleep Association — which represents retailers, manufacturers and suppliers of a variety of specialty sleep and sleep-related products — has seen both its membership and mission grow.

The association recently attracted big-name members such as Leggett & Platt Inc., 1-800-Mattress and Englander, and SSA President Dale Read told *Furniture Style* that the organization is in talks with a few other very prominent mattress brands.

“When you get to the upper part of the market,” Read explained, “you see Tempur-Pedic, Select Comfort, Simmons, Sealy, Serta — virtually everybody — going into the specialty market in some way. We estimate that specialty sleep represents about 20 percent of total dollar sales for the mattress market.”

That market share will only increase. “I’ve seen estimates as high as 40 percent by 2012,” said Read, adding, “though that estimate was made before the economic downturn.”

The association’s expanding role will be on display during the July Las Vegas Market, July 28-Aug. 1, on the 13th floor of World Market Center Building C. The 15,000-square-foot space will include a variety of companies, including:

- High-end, organic mattress manufacturers, such as Magniflex and Suite Sleep.
- Pressure-mapping technology companies, such as Xsensor Technology Corp.
- Retail support and technology companies, such as Tyler Retail Systems and Homeowner’s Marketing Services.
- Mattress-protection companies, such as Ultra Shield and FabricTech 2000 LLC.
- Bed frame manufacturers, such as Glideaway sleep products.
- Adjustable-mattress manufacturers, such as Hollandia Intl.
- Inflatable-bed manufacturers, such as Aero Products Intl. Inc.
- Retail chains, such as 1-800-Mattress, which are looking for independent retailers interested in joining their network of retail partners.

The SSA also is promoting a new marketing campaign, "The Future of Sleep," to emphasize the broadening of the industry's understanding of specialty sleep to include any exceptional sleep product, from cutting-edge innerspring to all-natural cotton and wool mattresses.

And what is the future of sleep, according to the association? Read sees growth potential in new takes on old materials. "I hope to see a resurgence in certain niche markets, such as water," he said. "Today's waterbeds are nothing like that sloshy, bladder-in-a-box of years past."

But the SSA president was most enthusiastic about the potential of gel. "If gel takes off, then we have a new paradigm in sleep, and it gives our manufacturers and retailers another option to offer people in terms of cooler sleep and different performance," Read explained. "Every time we see a new technology, we see growth in the market."