

## **Bernie & Phyl's Furniture Overview**

Bernie & Phyl's Furniture (B&P) was founded by the Rubin family in 1983 and has since grown into one of the fastest growing furniture retailers in the country with six stores, over \$100 million in revenue in 2005, and over 500 employees. With a focus on honesty, integrity, high quality furniture at great prices, and unparalleled customer service, the family-run business has created a highly successful niche in an extremely competitive marketplace.

In May 2000, *Furniture/Today* called B&P a “from-out-of-nowhere story” when the retailer debuted at 100 on their list of Top 100 U.S. Furniture Stores in the country. But the truth is that the company has been strategically building a successful business since it's founding. Under the guidance of co-founders Bernie and Phyllis Rubin and sons Larry and Rob Rubin, B&P has earned a stellar reputation in the industry. Every facet of the company is infused with the philosophy that its founders learned as children – be honest and treat people the way you would want to be treated.

### **B&P's Business Model**

At B&P, the business model is straightforward. Give customers a shopping experience that is second to none. Create and foster a happy and productive workplace where employees want to exceed your expectations every day. Build strong and mutually beneficial relationships with vendors. Use cutting-edge technology to build a solid and efficient infrastructure. Give back to the community. This is what Bernie & Phyl's does best every day.

At B&P, customers won't find high-pressure sales tactics or phony sales with trumped up prices that later get “reduced.” The company has never had a “sale” and never will because the goal of the company is to give customers beautiful, quality furniture at a price they can afford every day. B&P works closely with well-known manufacturers to purchase the best furniture at the best value. By making deals with American and imported furniture vendors, buying in large quantities, and buying direct on imported goods, B&P is able to give customers the lowest prices all the time. The retailer also has special relationships with its vendors (due to the high volume they purchase), which allow it to offer customers next day delivery on in-stock merchandise and 30-day delivery on special orders.

B&P encourages customers to shop around because they know customers cannot find the same quality furniture for less anywhere else. The company can sell their furniture for less because they work on smaller margins than many competitors, but make up the difference in volume of sales, internal efficiencies, and overall business operating strategies. For example, B&P has made *Furniture/Today's* Top 10 lists in the important “sales per square foot” category and “average stock turns” category every year since joining the ranks of the Top 100 Furniture Stores in the country in 2000.

Contributing to the company's success has also been its strategic decision to buy retail sites rather than leasing properties. The company owns all of its six store sites as well as its corporate headquarters/distribution center in Norton.

In 1995, B&P bought its current headquarters, warehouse, and land in Norton to support its ambitious future growth plans. In 1997, the company purchased a 42,000 s/f building and 26,000 s/f warehouse on Rt. 9 in Westboro, which marked a major transition for B&P. The Westboro store was their first store where the “presentation of the furniture” became an important part of the sales strategy. It was a spectacular success. A prominent 50,000 s/f building on Rt. 1 in Saugus went up for sale and the company bought it and opened their second major furniture showroom in January 1999.

In August 2001, the company purchased another high profile site – a 41,000 s/f building on the Daniel Webster Highway in Nashua, NH. The Nashua store opened in September 2001, while plans for a new three-story 86,000 s/f furniture showroom were developed. The new store was constructed in two phases, so that the showroom never had to close for business.

In June 2003, the company purchased a former Ames store with 55,000 s/f on Route 44 in Raynham and opened a store there in August 2003. In October 2004, B&P purchased a 50,000 square foot building in Braintree and opened its new store there in February 2005.

Along the way, B&P has garnered numerous awards. In 2004, the company was awarded the Better Business Bureau’s coveted Torch Award, which recognizes remarkable businesses committed to promoting ethical business practices. In 2003, B&P was selected as one of ten international retailers to receive the Executive Technology Retail Community Service Award, which honors businesses that are building a better world for people through their community service efforts. B&P was the smallest retailer to have ever received this award. In 2002, B&P received the highest honor in its industry – the National Home Furnishings Association’s Retailer of the Year award. The company was also chosen in 2002 as the recipient of the Home Furnishings Association of New England’s prestigious Robert E. Richmond Award of Eminence, which is given to companies who exemplify strong ethics and professionalism and has been given out only 12 times since 1977. In 2000, B&P was named 2000 Retailer of the Year by the Retailers Association of Massachusetts.

### **Charitable Giving**

As a successful business, B&P is serious about giving back to those that are less fortunate. Their *Friends In Need* program regularly donates furniture to charitable organizations across the region. In the last six years, the company has donated over \$3 million worth of furniture to Morgan Memorial Goodwill and Teen Challenge New England – organizations that it donates to on a regular basis – as well as to other charitable organizations in need. For several years, B&P worked closely with Habitat for Humanity to help furnish the homes they built and has donated furniture to over 25 Habitat houses across Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

The company is also involved in many other community initiatives outside of furniture donations. These include holding annual Red Cross blood drives in its stores, the annual Bernie’s Baseball Buddies program that takes underprivileged kids to see a Red Sox game and tour Fenway Park, sponsoring youth sports teams in local communities, and many public service television sponsorships.