



+  Podium

# LA Furniture finds a new approach to engaging customers and selling furniture.

## Background:

"We have to be thinking about consumers of the future," Madeline Sweeten of LA Furniture told us in our recent interview. "They are the young people who grew up with cell phones and computers... they are very efficient with their time, and we need to be aware of that."

LA Furniture is a family-run furniture retailer based in Los Angeles, California. With two retail locations and two warehouses, they ship their products nationwide.

"I think our biggest triumph is that we're offering these high-end items at costs that are more affordable for just anybody, Madeline told us. "You're not going to pay \$1,200 for a dining chair, if you don't want to. You can, but we offer options, and I think that's what makes us so special."



Madeline is responsible for merchandise marketing at LA Furniture, which entails maintaining product lines, ensuring everything is accurately depicted on the website, and overseeing their small Marketing team.

Madeline and her team had historically relied on email to communicate with customers, but that was resulting in low response rates and some customer dissatisfaction.

## Key Results

- 4.2 - 4.8 change in average star rating
- 5,000+ inbound Webchat leads in 9 months
- 1,547 SMS subscriber opt-ins in 2 months





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“Far too often our emails would go to a spam folder and customers would never read the email,” Madeline told us. “And they wouldn’t know that they needed to agree to the delivery terms or wouldn’t get the memo that their item was out of stock. This led to a lot of customer dissatisfaction.”

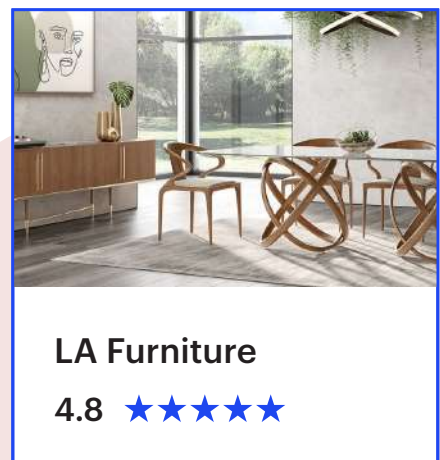
Some of those customers would then leave reviews reflecting that dissatisfaction. And because LA Furniture had only a handful of reviews at the time, the negative ones carried more weight. Their average star rating wasn’t bad, but Madeline knew they’d need a lot more reviews if they wanted their ratings to reflect reality.

## **Transforming LA Furniture’s online reputation.**

At the time, Madeline and her team were relying on email to send review invitations to customers, so most of them were going to spam or getting lost in customers’ inboxes. They started searching for a better way to collect and respond to reviews. They shopped around and ultimately decided to go with Podium.

“We went from a 4.2 average star rating to now we’re at a 4.8,” Madeline told us. “And that’s really because we’re able to so easily send review requests through Podium.”

Madeline had transformed LA Furniture’s online reputation, but she still needed to find a better way to handle general customer communications.



## Connecting instantly with online shoppers.

Since texting was working so well for collecting reviews from customers, she figured it was worth trying for other customer interactions. That's when she realized that Podium had solutions for virtually every part of the customer journey. Her team started using Podium's Inbox and Webchat to bring in more leads and connect with them almost instantly through text. In the first nine months, they generated more than 5,000 new leads through Webchat.



**"With Podium, our average response time is less than a minute.  
That's crazy time savings."**



"I think about how long it takes to make a phone call," Madeline told us. "You're not going to get out of a phone call with a customer in under five, six minutes, at best. With Podium, our response time is less than a minute. That's five times less, if not more. That's crazy time savings."

Since Madeline's team was using text messaging to gather more reviews, connect instantly with online shoppers, and communicate with customers, she immediately thought of Podium to solve her next challenge: she had realized that LA Furniture could do a better job of marketing to and re-engaging past customers, or those who had abandoned their carts.

"Prior to Podium we used a mix of social media and website," Madeline told us. "And we were finding that past customers weren't being reached by this approach."





## Re-engaging past customers with SMS marketing.

When Madeline heard about the launch of Podium Campaigns, she thought it looked like a promising alternative—or even addition to—social media and email marketing. The first promotion she ran with Campaigns was a two-day flash sale offering customers a 10% discount on items in one of their warehouses that had been overstocked with one of their bestselling sofas. Thanks to Podium Campaigns, her opt-in list was already built—and growing. In just under two months, LA Furniture’s opt-in list included 1,547 potential buyers, making an SMS promotion a no-brainer.

“So we created a PDF of the discount pricing, created a link on our website, and used that link to attach to our Podium campaign,” Madeline told us. “And we sent it to all of our subscribers.”

That two-day flash sale promotion ended up being more effective than LA Furniture’s past efforts in email and social media marketing. The SMS promotion had an 8.4% click rate, significantly higher than the average email click rate<sup>1</sup> of 2.6%. They also got responses much faster, and that helped them make room in their overstocked warehouse for new inventory. Plus, they saved their team a significant amount of time and resources.

“If we were in a similar situation with too much inventory in the past, we would send that out to our email list,” Madeline told us. “And we would probably put something up on social media saying, ‘We have these items if you’d like to purchase them.’ And we wouldn’t have any real way of measuring how many people that reached, how many people engaged with it, and how many people made purchases from it. That would have taken four hours, maybe five. And with Podium, we’re able to very quickly send that message out, know who it went to, know who responded to it, who engaged with it and know if it led to sale. And building it took 15 minutes.”

Now, LA Furniture gives customers the chance to opt in to SMS promotions when they leave a review or reach out via Webchat on their website. Madeline and her team are continuing to build their SMS subscriber list and are looking forward to using Campaigns in the upcoming summer sales season.

We are now offering an EXTRA 10% on some of our best sellers! Add this extra 10% to our existing sales for a limited time! Click Below: <https://www.lafurniturestore.com/sale/now.jpg>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.campaignmonitor.com/resources/guides/email-marketing-benchmarks/>





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"Before Podium, we were bogged down with the inability to communicate with our customers efficiently and effectively," Madeline told us. "Now that we're using Podium, we're able to effectively communicate with our customers in a way that's personal and saves the company and our customer time. We couldn't do what we do without Podium."



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