

# Thoroughly American Made



AMERICAN-MADE FURNITURE has become the standard for today's hospitality industry — and with good reason. An unsatisfactory experience with overseas manufacturing has soured some buyers, designers and owners on foreign-made furniture. Substandard quality, unfulfilled commitments and missed deadlines have hindered a range of projects.

American furniture manufacturer, Sorrentino Mariani, has witnessed first-hand how these issues have placed properties in a bind. One case in particular involved Eva Micklethwaite, a long-standing customer with the company.

Ms. Micklethwaite is President of Direct Consulting & Purchasing in Chandler, Arizona. In 2012, her company had been hired as project manager and purchaser for a renovation on an Albuquerque property.

She was prepared to release the purchase order to one of her client's preferred vendors. Even though it was an overseas manufacturer, she was assured she would receive the product on time and to the design specifications. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

During the final negotiation phase, Ms. Micklethwaite discovered the furniture was being built with the wrong material. The vendor informed her that trying to correct their miscommunication would mean missing the deadline. They also wouldn't be able to meet her budget.

She began calling the other preferred vendors. No luck. No one could make the time line and her bottom line. Ms. Micklethwaite was undaunted. She had made an agreement with her client and she wasn't going to leave any stone unturned.

She immediately thought of Sorrentino Mariani. She had worked with the American manufacturer on previous projects and was impressed with their quality furniture, customer service and pricing.

Still, there were concerns. Could Sorrentino Mariani engineer, produce and deliver the furniture in time? Did they even have line time available? Could they meet her budget for a moderately priced line?

Sorrentino Mariani's vice-president, Felicia Mariani, recalls receiving the call from Ms. Micklethwaite. "It was early July, 2012. We were preparing for the July 4th factory shutdown. Eva told us we had 19 days to get 100 rooms engineered, manufactured and shipped from our Virginia factory to Albuquerque, New Mexico."

The company immediately sprang into action. Sorrentino Mariani's president, Rick Mariani, pulled together his engineers, purchasing staff, plant management and workers and explained the situation. They would be working days, nights, weekends and the July 4 shutdown would be delayed. Everyone committed to the project.

Raw material suppliers and local fabricators were also called. All agreed to delay their July 4 shutdowns as well and work on the project. With approved plans and close coordination between all parties, Sorrentino Mariani began production.

August 3rd came. Ms. Micklethwaite inspected the 100 rooms. Each had brand new, high quality, custom crafted, American Made furniture.

Asked if she'll continue working with Sorrentino Mariani, Ms. Micklethwaite didn't hesitate. "Of course. Sorrentino Mariani builds quality furniture, their customer service is second to none, and they beat overseas pricing on big projects."

While the Albuquerque project was unique, it's not uncommon for Sorrentino Mariani to face quick turnarounds requiring custom pieces. "Whether a client needs one hundred custom pieces or one thousand, we meet our deadlines," states Felicia Mariani. But she quickly adds. "To meet these target dates, there has to be cooperation between all parties: client, vendors, purchasing agents, suppliers...us. You don't get there on your own. That's just another reason it's important to manufacture here. Communication. When deadlines are tight, a project can't afford to get lost in translation."

As Sorrentino Mariani moves into the future, the company doesn't see changing their production model. "Manufacturing stays here," states Mrs. Mariani emphatically. "It's how we control quality. It's how we control delivery. It's how we control costs."

  
Sorrentino Mariani  
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