

Color My World

Threats of global trade wars have far-reaching economic and social repercussions including, of course, impacting what has become a cornerstone of contemporary consumption-driven society: product selection.

Just the other day, while walking up and down the aisles of one particularly favorite, yet unnamed retailer, I stopped for a brief moment to reflect upon the almost overwhelming amount of options I had to choose from; it was at the borderline between reasonable and daunting. I had simply wanted to go in, make my purchase, get out, and back onto my travel day. Alas, to no avail.

I had run in to purchase a teal-colored shirt with my goal being to grab the first that met my criteria for the event I was to attend, including size and appropriateness for the agenda. Then in one swift motion pay and get out. There couldn't have been that much to choose from...I originally thought.

My quick in-and-out errand turned into a moment of observation and consideration. As I tend to do quite often, I engage my almost thirty years of business knowledge and apply it to my current environment. So, there in the store, I immediately launched into former business executive mode to help make sense of what I had been observing.

I stopped in the first three men's sections and found almost twenty-four versions of the same colored shirt. Each was extremely different from the others, save for the only true similarity being the color teal. They ranged in varying styles from short sleeve to long, from slim cut to big and tall, from

cotton to synthetic, from collared to v-neck, from pocketed to sleek, and from breathable fabric to warming wool. My business head of mind was spinning like a child's top. How the hell did we get here in terms of now being so fortunate to have so much variety?

The answer to the question is really quite simple; as a modern, consumption-driven society we tend to constantly seek out items to purchase which satisfy our own individual tastes. Collectively, we also embrace cultural styles and differences reflected in the works of others. It makes no difference if seen in clothing, automobiles, or the rug industry—variety has truly become the spice of our lives. And with variety, comes many choices. With choices, come incremental sales, which then open avenues to other products, goods, and services to follow suit.

Think about how truly boring the world would be if our lives were limited in such a way whereby, we all wore the same clothes, drove the same automobiles from the same manufacturers, and experienced all of our individual memories on the very same rugs beneath our feet. If we didn't have open trade borders, it is safe to assume this observation might be fact. Our lives would cease to be enriched by color, character, quality, integrity, and ingenuity brought about by the diversities seen in the hard work of others.

Consider this in terms of music. Imagine a world whereby the only songs you could listen to were recorded and available within your own borders. The gift of song from bands such as the Rolling Stones and the Beatles would never have been able to have been shared with other lands. Thankfully, we are blessed to have a system of trade which grants us breadth in the availability of product selection for our enjoyment.

"One size" does not and has never "fit all." Thankfully, we do not need to worry about any of this in our day and age. We have an abundance of differences available to us in most items which we purchase today. At one point in time "one size" was all we had. However, this was before we opened our eyes to the skills and craftsmanship of other lands. Just imagine a world without this calculus. How far we have come...what a wonderful world.

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In the music example, if you don't like a song—don't listen to it. But at the very least, someone else in the recording business might take a small piece of one original work and craft a new masterpiece to unleash upon an unsuspecting public at large. We all still benefit from it being available to have at the very least been heard, or more.

New designs are created daily from existing ideas, too. Many of which are not "homegrown" by their very nature, but still have longevity and viability to others. They first must be seen. The only way for them to be seen is through the concept of assortment from here and abroad.

If your business is not ripe with variety and selection carefully crafted and created by the fruits of labor from other cultures, you are doing your customer base a disservice. The benefits of trade are clear. Take a stroll through any clothing store as I did. Walk across the parking lot of any supermarket and notice the vast assortment of automobile makes, models, and colors, not to mention style differences. Each with their own identity, and each possessing yet another exciting "choice" to the consumer. Flip through the pages of Rug Insider Magazine and see the incredible differences contained therein offered by each manufacturer and designer. And also take note of the similarities which hint at the aforementioned imaginary banal homogeneity of design.

The next big idea in retail and wholesale has already been conceived. Where it goes and how it evolves is truly the essence of its long-term consumer benefits. As a society we have become a land of selection, variety, and choices. No more are the days of cookie cutter black and white designs. Those days are long gone. Here to stay are the ones strategically positioning product options and choices to meet the varying demands of a fickle public.



Whether it is an impromptu and potentially ersatz clothing purchase or a more deliberate and permanent purchase of a hand-knotted rug or carpet, the plethora of selection made available to today's consumer is a direct result of global trade.