



Getting Through Unpredictable Times When They Come.

David Hurwitz Originals is a one-man custom furniture business located in Randolph, VT. David's work is done in contemporary and modern styles. He employs hand carving and traditional methods of construction and joinery. David specializes in custom work and most of his pieces are made-to-order. He has been doing woodworking professionally for 33 years and began his own business in 1993. He has shipped his work to customers all over the US, and to Canada, Mexico, and Europe. David's customers come from all walks of life; however, most are middle aged, have a disposable income, and are looking to add a unique piece to their home. Throughout the years David displayed and marketed his work at galleries, craft shows, and some of his work has also been exhibited in museums. He has been selling his work online since 2004, but online sales become his main focus in 2013, when he stopped selling at craft shows.

Much of 2020 was "terrible" for his business according to David. For a large portion of the year there was little to no work being commissioned by his business. David has noticed over the years that he tends to get more orders when the stock market is doing well, and he got a bunch of new orders in late October into late November. He is now busy again with orders booked into June. David remained busy and productive earlier in 2020 by upgrading parts of his business. He did a great deal of maintenance and repairs on his machinery and caught-up on projects he had been meaning to complete. For instance, he installed a new knife system in his planer and is working to update his website.

New Coronavirus work guidelines have not affected David's business because he is the only employee. Like others, he does exercise more caution when working. His shop is in a rented building that includes other businesses, so he does come into contact with others in the building. The pandemic has not caused any new infrastructure needs nor has it hindered the ability to get materials for his work. He did experience one major delay when a critical part he ordered for his planer was held up in the US Mail for 2 weeks when the mail system was being slowed down. That was problematic, as the planer could not be used until that part showed up.

As commissions start to come back for David, he is not seeing any changes in the items customers are seeking at this time. Other woodworkers have been seeing an increase in desks and other office related items, but this has not come to David's business at this point.

David's experiences through the pandemic so far have taught him the importance of having a "rainy day fund." Businesses should have money set aside or a means to get through unpredictable times when they come. That helped, but he also benefited from a grant which helped him get through the slow times. He has also seen the importance of online marketing during the pandemic.

One of David's strengths is his design skills. He has a background in design, and some engineering which he employs readily in designing and crafting one-of-a-kind pieces. David served on the board of directors of the VWWC for over 10 years, as the representative from the Guild of Vermont Furniture Makers. He has been a member of the Guild since 2007. He has also been a juried exhibitor at Frog Hollow Vermont State Craft Center since 2004, and he has taught at Vermont Woodworking School, in Cambridge, VT; Studio Place Arts in Barre, and at Alliance for Visual Arts (AVA) in Lebanon, NH.

David is willing to share his own knowledge and skill set with other VWWC members, in particular start-ups. David has an interest in helping new businesses get off the ground by instructing and advising on how to do things like work with clients, write contracts that protect the craftsman, documenting your work to build a portfolio, getting into a craft show or gallery, etc.

David joined the VWWC in 2006 as way to get more connection within the woodworking field in Vermont. He said that being a one-man shop he is isolated, so it is beneficial for him and his business to connect with fellow woodworkers, to share knowledge and build camaraderie. Throughout his time in the Council, he has enjoyed the networking events and workshops which are not just informative, but sociable too. He also got much exposure from the Vermont Fine Furniture Show and Design Competition that the VWWC used to organize each year. He is pleased with what the Council has done throughout his time in the group and he feels it is beneficial for members to be active participants saying, "You get out of it what you put in." The more members show up, the better it is for the organization and its members.