



Consistent Quality, **SOLID COMFORT**

After a long day of meetings and hauling luggage in uncomfortable shoes, the weary traveler wants comfortable accommodations, not surprises. Branded hotel properties offer guests the expected, a consistent level of quality, service and amenities that help to make travel of any sort more pleasant. Maintaining a high standard involves significant planning and maintenance for the hotels, because as welcome as travelers are, they tend to have big expectations and little regard for how they treat the space. "Guests are not the most careful," says Brett Rossell, Director of Purchasing for Theraldson Hospitality, a Fargo, ND- based developer, builder and manager of hotels, with over 200 business-oriented properties. "They will do some serious damage." Rossell says this matter of factly, and it doesn't seem to bother him. Rossell's business is keeping properties nice, and he has a lot of experience and resources to help him do that. "We franchise with all of the major brands," says Rossell, "Courtyard Inn, Residence Inn, Hilton Garden Inn, Staybridge Suites and more."



PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEITH TALLEY

In order to develop and maintain attractive, welcoming properties, Theraldson depends on furnishing suppliers that can reliably provide quality and service. "We use [Solid Comfort](#) for all the case goods, furniture for the guest rooms, and the kitchen cabinetry in the extended stay properties," says Rossell. Also located in Fargo, ND, Solid Comfort, Inc. specializes in hospitality furniture, and relies on [Wilsonart High Pressure Laminate \(HPL\)](#) to meet the expectations of clients like Theraldson. "The big thing is not only having attractive designs, it is that working with Wilsonart HPL helps us to service our customers, and the end users," says Jason Larkin, President of Solid Comfort, Inc.

RELIABILITY

Creating products that are acceptable to all the various brands' standards is a big challenge. "The biggest requirement for a case goods fabricator is they have to be able to do what they say they can do," says Rossell. "You have to work within everyone else's system to come up with product that works with them and works with us as well. Solid Comfort is very flexible, as opposed to some places where you have to pick out of a catalog and that is all there is. We may need to tweak a little something on a piece, make it two or three inches smaller or shorter. Solid Comfort will basically do custom work on a stock piece." Because furniture installation for hotel properties, which typically have 80-120 rooms, has to be completed in a tight two- week schedule, timing is also crucial for fabrication and delivery.

To fulfill orders precisely, Solid Comfort practices just-in-time production, fabricating parts as they are ordered rather than to stock. "We specialize in JIT delivery also," says Larkin. "We want to back that truck up at 8 a.m. on day one of the job so the customer can move the furniture right into the rooms, and not into secondary storage."

For fabrication, Solid Comfort relies on suppliers to deliver raw materials on schedule. "[Wilsonart](#) is world class," says Larkin. "There is no other manufacturer out there for laminate that can provide the service and quality that they provide. We can order Wilsonart Laminate today and we'll have it in seven days. It can be one sheet, it can be 1,000 sheets. It is absolutely amazing, orders are always consistent and complete."

Solid Comfort carries that consistency through to delivery via their proprietary RFID tracking process that ensures furniture for a project is precisely expedited. Each piece in every order receives a unique barcode that identifies what the piece is, exactly what time it was finished, who assembled it, when it went into the warehouse and where it will ultimately be installed. "We also have a scan point at our dock doors. When an order is 100 percent complete and ready to be shipped, we enter a pick list into the computer and scan every part that goes onto the truck," says Larkin. "If someone happens to try to put the wrong part, or even the right part but for the wrong location, on the truck,

project:
Case Goods, Furniture and Kitchen Cabinets for Hotel Guest Rooms

principals:
Brett Rossell, Director of Purchasing, Theraldson Hospitality, Fargo, ND

Jason Larkin, President, Solid Comfort, Inc., Fargo, ND

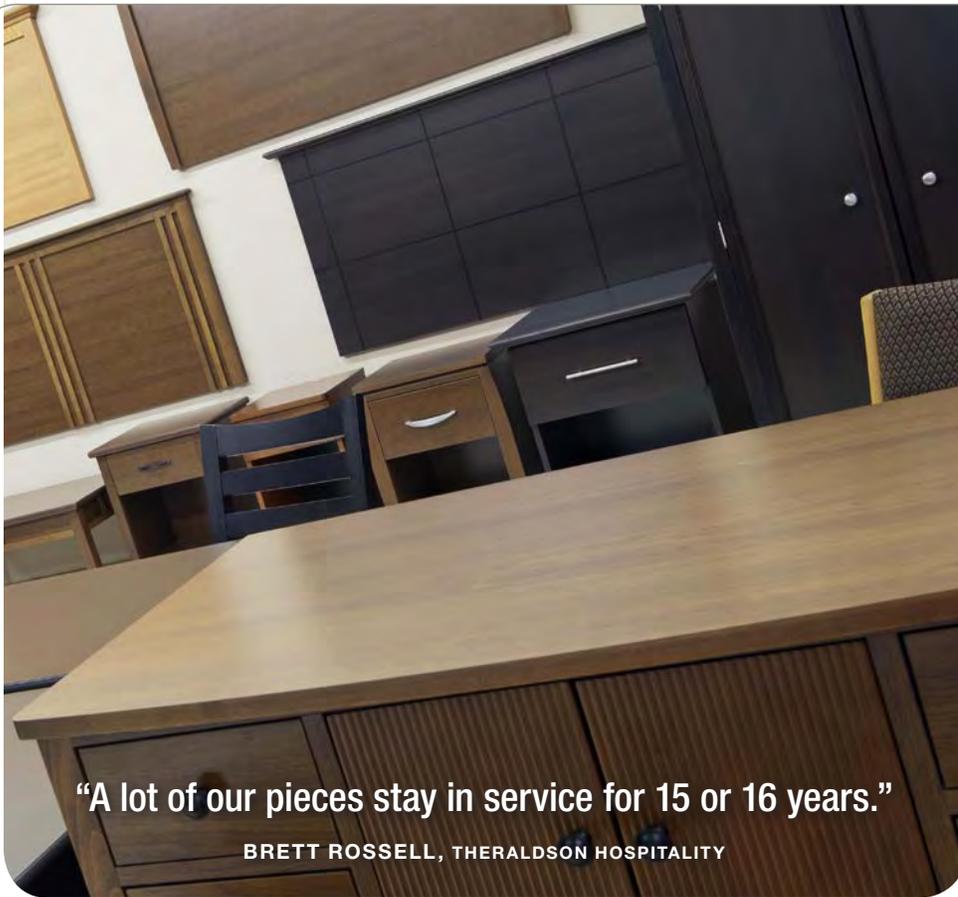
wilsonart contract laminates:
High Pressure Laminate



"The big thing is not only having attractive designs, it is that working with Wilsonart HPL helps us to service our customers, and the end users."

JASON LARKIN
PRESIDENT OF SOLID COMFORT





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BRETT ROSSELL, THERALDSON HOSPITALITY

SERVICE

Sometimes service is only an upfront experience. But in the best business relationships, service is ongoing.

Even in the nicest hotel brand properties, furniture made from high-quality material is occasionally destroyed. And therein lies another opportunity for Solid Comfort to service its clients. “Say somebody opens a drawer and thinks he needs to stand in it, and the drawer breaks. It happens,” says Rossell. “We can get just that drawer. That is another one of the things we like about our Solid Comfort relationship. They are able to make parts. Other places make you buy the whole piece over again.” To enable this, Solid Comfort designs furniture for parts replacement and pre-finishes every component. “We offer replacement for the life of the product in the field, even if it has been discontinued by the franchise, we’ll support that product,” says McArthur. “I don’t believe there is anybody else out there that does that.”

While providing excellent service to customers does not guarantee that Solid Comfort will receive excellent service from all its vendors, it is true in the case of their relationship with Wilsonart. “It is a great quality product, we haven’t had any issues with the HPL. And the amazing thing is that we have had challenges with our processes or the end use of the product, and it really had nothing to do with Wilsonart, but they were right in there helping us solve the problem or devise a better solution,” says Larkin. “That’s a true partnership. In today’s world, those are hard to come by, relationships that you can trust and count on. It is really easy to do business with Wilsonart. We feel good about it in every way, from the quality of the HPL to the fact that it is manufactured in the USA. It is pleasurable to do business with people like that.”

we get a flashing red warning.” This method ensures close to 100 percent accuracy for delivery and eliminates a lot of confusion. “It alleviates the need to have an extra person standing at the job site directing laborers,” says Rossell, “so there is also cost savings.”

QUALITY

Case goods and furniture in hotel guestrooms have an expected life cycle of 12 years, but the way the pieces are designed, and the materials that are used in construction, make it possible to extend that usage. “A lot of our pieces stay in service for 15 or 16 years,” says Rossell, “and they are not even going into the trash after that. We sell them to liquidators who sell them to mom and pop hotels or resorts. The pieces hold up very well, which says a lot in hospitality.”

Solid Comfort is a family owned business that has been in operation for 31 years, the last 27 or so dedicated to the hospitality industry. Larkin has followed the materials and design trends over the years. “Designs for guestrooms today tend to be very simple and contemporary. All of our top surfaces are Wilsonart HPL and the verticals can be veneer, [TFM](#) or HPL, always on an industrial core. It is a very demanding environment. Guests are not the most conscientious users,” says Larkin. “The beauty

with Wilsonart Laminates are they have [a new finish called AEON](#) that gives the product even better scratch and impact resistance. I don’t think there is anything out there competitively that performs as well.” All of Solid Comfort’s products also meet ANSI and BIFMA requirements, and the company utilizes [suppliers that are environmentally responsible](#). “Wilsonart HPL, for example is made from a minimum of 20 percent post-consumer [recycled content](#). They have great initiatives and are always moving toward being a greener company,” says Wayne McArthur, National Sales Manager for Solid Comfort.



**JASON LARKIN, PRESIDENT, SOLID COMFORT, INC.
AND WAYNE MCARTHUR, NATIONAL SALES
MANAGER, SOLID COMFORT, INC.**