

## Center Stage Member Spotlight

*Chris Karman - Daniels Amish Collections*



Business is Booming for Daniel's Amish Collections, a North American furniture manufacturer located in Wayne County. Over the past 12 years, Chris Karman, President of Daniel's Amish Collections, has taken the company on a remarkable journey of growth and prosperity. Up until the COVID-19 pandemic, Daniel's Amish Collections had experienced steady growth year after year. Like many business owners during the coronavirus shutdown, Karman hit his first major 'bump in the road.' Fortunately, only after a short time in limbo, things opened back up and now, business is better than ever. Karman knew there would be a surge in demand after consumers had been sitting at home for several weeks, but he never expected to see it as high as it is right now.

Karman started his stint in the Amish industry back in 2003 after working for Zinsser Corporation, a Fortune 500 company based out of New Jersey. After several successful years at Zinsser, Karman was ready to trade in the expensive East Coast cost of living for a more comfortable midwestern lifestyle. Born and raised in Hudson, Ohio, Karman was looking for an opportunity to move home and in 2003 he found just that. Alongside his dad and brother, Karman bought County Curios, a small company that handcrafted Amish curio cabinets. Not long after, Karman ventured into his second Amish business acquisition and purchased Daniel's Amish Collections in 2009.

Daniel's Amish Collections is a company that produces high-quality hand-crafted bedroom and dining room furniture by combining proven, traditional Amish methods and modern facilities. Today, Daniel's Amish Collections has three factories spread between Wayne and Holmes County with a combined 175,000 square feet and 200 employees. The hometown company sells to retail stores nationwide and has become one of the leaders among North American furniture manufacturers. Their products are sold in high-end retail locations such as Levin's Furniture, Nebraska Furniture Mart, Gardner-White, and Steinhafels.

Since taking over the company, Karman has implemented a strategic plan that has allowed Daniel's Amish Collection to not only survive but thrive in today's highly competitive furniture market. Since the reopening of the market, the demand for high-quality American-made products is at an all-time high and Karman has set the company up for continued success. We had the chance to talk with Karman about his company and we received some key insights into what makes their company tick. Karman emphasized that Daniel's line of customizable products, timely delivery, and company culture have put them a step, or two, above the rest.

Karman explained that Daniel's unique line of personalized products gives them a competitive advantage over their foreign competitors.

"Usually when you buy from Asia, you can have any color as long as it's black. You can have what's on the floor and that's it. As where with ours, we can offer choices. We have probably 15,000 combinations of different things. You can pick the wood, you can pick the color, and you can pick the hardware."

In addition to their customizable products, Daniel's continues to differentiate itself with timely deliveries. Karman values honesty and is upfront with all his business partners, which creates a high level of trust and customer satisfaction.

"We are honest with our customers. We give people accurate lead times. We're an open book, we tell them the good and the bad and they appreciate it."

Daniel's excellent products and customer service didn't just happen overnight. So how does Karman make all this happen? Two words. Company culture.

Karman refers to Daniel's Amish Collections as a "clean" company and their golden rule is nothing complex – treat people how you want to be treated.

"I've worked for a lot of factories where you wouldn't want to take your mother or grandmother. And this one, you can take your pastor or priest. We are a nice environment for people of all ages. We try to keep a comfortable workplace and we really let people do their jobs."

Karman has also established a decentralized workforce that flourishes on trust and stimulates innovation.

“We hire the best people we can find, give them a good work environment and let them do their job. I’ll walk into one of my factories and I might see a new hole in the wall for a new door and no one has asked my permission, but I trust them. Everyone is brilliant at their jobs, and they are the best ones to make those decisions.”

He also attributes the company culture to Wayne County’s exceptional community.

“People in the Wayne County area are really smart and practical. I am constantly amazed at new and efficient ways people come up with to make everything more efficient. It’s a real can-do area – that’s just the mindset here. They are constantly figuring out how to make things better, complete tasks quicker, and add quality. ”

Perhaps one of Karman’s most satisfying endeavors with Daniel’s Amish Collections is their community outreach. Daniel’s donates to over 50 charities throughout the year and helps support several causes. Recently the company supported a local church in their mission work that involved members bringing chickens to Kenya to help establish businesses and villages. They also donated a custom-made medical bed to an epileptic boy and bedroom and dining room furniture to a disabled veteran.

In the next three to five years, Karman says he would like to double the size of the company. And with the high demand for American-made furniture, that shouldn’t be a problem.

To learn more about the company as well as view all of Daniel’s beautifully handcrafted furniture, click [here](#).

