

Carpets and Floorcoverings - UK - May 2010

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What is this report about?

Having such a strong link with moving home and being a relatively large item of household spending, the floorcoverings sector has suffered since 2007 from the economic downturn and housing market slump. Flooring purchases are triggered by a number of factors, including a house move or redecorating a room, as well as general wear and tear. So with fewer housing transactions, the focus needs to be on encouraging those not moving to improve their homes with new flooring.

What have we found out?

- Retailers of floorcoverings need to look beyond the product in isolation and market carpets as part of a complete home interiors look. One in ten adults pay a lot of attention to samples ('Matchers'), so staff need to be able to advise customers accordingly, and showrooms need to develop an interior design feel to demonstrate the latest products more effectively.
- More imagination needs to be encouraged with rugs to make them one of the focal points of a room. Half of homes have laminate flooring and one in five real wood flooring, but consumers still have a strong desire for comfort and warmth, as well as the added style that rugs can provide.
- More links between flooring products and decorating ranges could be developed, particularly at DIY stores where stores and websites could combine the two to produce a complete home interiors look. Three in ten consumers only replace flooring if they are redecorating.
- With well-known brand names not being a major factor in determining choice, multiple retailers could assert their dominance in flooring. A link up with a major manufacturer could benefit both parties.
- More people might be encouraged to fit flooring themselves if they felt confident enough to do so. DIY stores could better demonstrate to customers how to fit flooring such as tiles or laminate flooring.
- The benefits of good flooring - lasting longer, better insulating the home and sound proofing - should be more strongly promoted. The savings in household energy bills by using thicker carpet and underlay could be easily demonstrated by suppliers.

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