

Carpets and Floorcoverings - UK - May 2011

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What is this report about?

The market for carpets and floorcoverings has been depressed in recent years because of the economic squeeze and subsequent slump in the housing market. The times when consumers move house often trigger a spree of refurbishment and redecorating as people update their homes and inject their own style into the property. So the dramatic slowdown in the housing market has been a key factor behind the fall in demand for carpets and floorcoverings.

What have we found out?

- Demand for carpets and flooring fell in 2009 and remained low in 2010, depressed by a slowdown in the number of house moves. A weak housing market, low levels of consumer confidence and depressed mortgage lending has precipitated a reduction in demand for carpets and floorcoverings.
- In 2010, consumer spending on carpet and flooring was £2.41bn, 2.6% lower than 2009 but 17% lower than in 2007, the year before the banking crisis. This translates to some £90 per household per year. Over the next five years, 2010-15, sales of carpets and floorcoverings are to fall to £2.13bn. The market is expected to remain weak because of the expected low level of housing transactions in the outlook period.
- When we look at the frequency and volume of purchases the issues facing the industry become very stark. Between, 2007 and 2010 the number of purchasers of carpets fell by some 30%. In 2007, the highest in recent years, 2.7 million households bought carpets, but by 2010 this had fallen to 1.9 million, a drop of some 800,000.
- Consumers are mostly interested in practical considerations when choosing carpets and flooring. Besides looking for a good deal on a price, they want flooring that will be easy to clean, resist staining and will be durable.
- UK manufacturing of carpets is fairly fragmented with a large number of makers and suppliers in the market place. For them sustainable manufacturing and materials are moving higher up the agenda, but according to Mintel's research for this report UK consumers appear to have a low interest in such environment matters.
- Retail distribution is dominated by Carpetright and independent specialists. Allied Carpets was dramatically slimmed down in 2009 following its emergence from receivership and this has contributed to specialist retailers losing market share overall.

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