

DIY Stores Increasing Focus on the Female Customer

DIY stores have long been the domain of men, but Britain's DIY multiples are increasingly focusing their marketing efforts on women, having identified the 'female home improver' as a relatively untapped consumer group which could bring significant growth to the industry.

Homebase is looking towards women and home improvers as opposed to the traditional target of men and DIY, and is hoping its female focused strategy will boost performance. At a September 2011 presentation Homebase MD, Paul Loft, explained that the company was keen to build an 'age diverse workforce with more female colleagues available to advise customers', highlighting the importance of appealing to the female shopper.

Jo Kenrick, marketing director at Homebase, told Marketing Week that the future of DIY retailers will be driven by female consumers pursuing home decorating rather than the male DIY segment it has been modelled on in the past. She says: "Growth is more likely to come from female shoppers and interiors than from men and DIYers, and Homebase is very clear on its understanding that its most important customer for growth is female 'home improvers.'"

B&Q has also increased its focus on female consumers in recent years, and an interesting statistic taken from the Kingfisher corporate website indicates that nearly half of B&Q's workforce is female. In August 2011, the results of a study of 2,000 women, commissioned by B&Q showed that around 70% of women were happy to do DIY around the house and around three-quarters consider themselves to be just as competent at basic DIY skills as men.

Katherine Paterson, B&Q's marketing director, said: "Our findings show that DIY is no longer just a man's game. More women are recognising that with the right skills anyone can try their hand at tiling, putting up a shelf or taking on a bigger refurbishment project." She added that over half of those enrolling in DIY classes in B&Q's stores are now female, with the most popular classes being plumbing, shelving and tiling.

B&Q's recent press day, held at The Hospital in Covent Garden London, saw the launch of several new brands and products within the home improvement, furnishings and gardening ranges, all of which appear to have been well received. The images below show a selection of the home products which were launched at the event, after which one blogger has since remarked:

"I've looked at these photos loads, and I still can't quite believe all this beautiful stuff is from B&Q. Nice, isn't it? What a lot of luscious brights to perk up your January. Shame none of this stuff will be in the shop for a few weeks (it's launched in Feb). But not long to wait. Meanwhile, it gives to time to decide what to buy (particularly love the pink/gold cushion, bottom left, and the squishy pink floor cushion)..."

This product launch may well encourage more female visitors to B&Q, but ultimately the whole shopping experience must be addressed if this discerning consumer group is to provide the growth the industry craves.

Images below courtesy of B&Q:



