

B&Q and Castorama unveil 2014 product innovations at first ever joint product show

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Smoke alarms that send a text to your mobile, dishwasher-proof barbecues, and sheds that can be constructed in around an hour. These are just some of the product innovations unveiled by B&Q and its French sister company at an international product show last week. The event, staged in Lille in Northern France, was jointly organised by B&Q UK & Ireland and Castorama France to showcase new home improvement ranges that will hit the stores in 2014.

Ian Cheshire, Group Chief Executive of Kingfisher plc said: "This event is the physical manifestation of our Creating the Leader strategy, focused on innovation, joint sourcing and sharing expertise across our international brands. Some of the innovation we've seen over the past week has been phenomenal, from simple ideas such as a light on the end of a drill and non-slip golf club grip technology applied to hammers, I've been seriously impressed with the product that will go on sale in B&Q UK & Ireland and Castorama France in 2014."

Ebru Sayilan, B&Q Commercial Director for Seasonal, said: "B&Q is proud to be at the forefront of home product innovation. From simple ideas such as grill plates on a barbecue that will fit in the dishwasher, to a garden shed that can be assembled in around an hour, we are looking forward to introducing new ways in which we can make our customers' lives even easier over the coming months."

Innovations in Kingfisher's own brand ranges have been largely focused on making DIY easier and solving problems with current home improvement projects. Highlights from the show included:

Easy Assembly

For DIY enthusiasts, gardeners, home-workers and those simply wanting a bit of extra storage space, the shed is invaluable but not everyone has the time or inclination to build their own. The Blooma quick-assembly shed has pre-assembled panels which do not require a hammer or nails to construct, meaning the smallest model (2m²) can be assembled in around one hour. It also includes a plastic roof, more hard-wearing and lower maintenance than traditional roof felt, reducing the need for repairs.



Blooma shed - the smallest model can be assembled in around 1 hour

An entire kitchen makeover can be a major project, but many kitchens can be transformed simply with new kitchen cabinets. New Cooke & Lewis quick-assembly kitchen cabinet units are set to revolutionise the kitchen upgrade with a unique 'uniclick' system which requires no screws or glue – simply click and connect the cabinets together. The record for a single unit assembly at the Lille Product Show was 14 seconds.

Clever Design

B&Q is launching a new 3D kitchen planner which will allow customers to create a CGI of their ideal kitchen in less than 2 minutes. With our in-store interior design team, customers can plan the layout of their new kitchen, choose appliances and try out different design schemes. It previously took around 2 hours to model a kitchen.

Lamps are available in a wide range of styles and shapes but not always one that suits a particular space. The unique mushroom-shaped Colours Milly lamp, available in a range of bright colours, is made from silicone and so can be shaped into different sizes. What's more, it packs flat, so is easy to transport from the store, be stored away or packed up when moving home.

Customers can shape the Colours Milly lamp themselves



Everyone loves a barbeque, but cleaning and storage can be difficult once summer is over. The new Blooma Camden barbeque range offers a removable work top and foldable shelves to make storage simple. In addition, the porcelain enamel grill panels, work tops and drip trays are all designed to fit in the dishwasher.



The Blooma Camden barbeque has grill panels that fit in the dishwasher

Safer Homes

The Nest Protect smoke and carbon monoxide alarm, developed by some of the brains behind the iPod and iPhone, uses voice alarms to tell the user what and where a problem is and what to do about it. It will also send notifications to the user's phone for complete peace of mind while away from home (www.nest.com/uk).

The MacAllister cordless drill, with a light in the end, ensures that it is easy to see in confined, poorly lit spaces. It also has a component that makes changing to different bit sizes a breeze.



MacAllister's cordless drill with a light in the end to aid drilling in confined spaces

Anyone who has hit his or her thumb with a hammer will appreciate the new MacAllister hammer, which has a magnetic groove in the head which is designed to hold nails in place. Additionally, while traditional hammers can slip in the hand, this hammer utilises the same technology used on golf club shafts to prevent slipping.

These and other pioneering new products were showcased last week at Kingfisher plc's 2014 Product Show in Lille France and will be available in Kingfisher's two largest Operating Companies - B&Q UK & Ireland and Castorama France - from early next year.

The joint product show is the first time Kingfisher's Operating Companies have assembled their new ranges together under one roof.

For one week, buying colleagues from around the group assembled 10,000 of their newest, best and most innovative products for 2014. The Product Show therefore highlighted how B&Q UK & Ireland and Castorama France are increasingly working together to deliver newness, innovation and exclusivity for customers by leveraging the Group's sourcing capabilities and designing more own brand and common products (products that are stocked in more than one Operating Company) in-house.

As well as highlighting product developed in-house or direct sourced, around 400 suppliers showcased their own products that have been selected by B&Q and Castorama for the 2014 ranges. They were also invited to pitch new, innovative products that they hope will be listed in future.

More than 6,000 employees from around the Group came to learn about the new product and to take part in group activities designed to engage, inspire and broaden the knowledge of store colleagues, as well as increase knowledge sharing around the Group.

Link: www.kingfisher.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=55&newsid=1023

In pictures: Kingfisher unveils innovations at first product show in Lille

Author: Nicola Harrison - Retail Week

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Kingfisher held its first product show this week in Lille, unveiling innovations including a smoke alarm that texts you when it detects smoke and a shed that can be assembled in 60 minutes.

The Kingfisher One Team Product Show brought together 10,000 products, 400 suppliers and 6,000 store staff from across B&Q and Castorama France in a 200,000 sq ft conference hall.

Unveiling the event to analysts on Wednesday, Kingfisher group chief executive Ian Cheshire said: "This is the physical manifestation of the Creating the Leader strategy. It starts with product and people. This is the thing that delivers the numbers. It's the birth of the future of Kingfisher."

The retailer unveiled many innovations at the event. Here are a pick of the best:

Nest Protect Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm



Created by four Apple employees who developed the iPod, the system sends a text to the homeowner's mobile telling them what the danger is, where it is and what to do. "It's exactly why you bought the iPod when it first came out," said Cheshire. "It's so intuitive."

The Milly Lamp



Falling under the Kingfisher own-label Colours brand, the Milly lamp is made from silicone and can be shaped into different sizes and packs flat, making it easy to transport from the store or when moving house. It also makes it easier for the retailer to stock and display.

Mac 1 Cordless Drill



Kingfisher own-brand MacAllister has designed a cordless drill with a light in the end, making it easier to see in confined, poorly lit spaces. It also has an 'intuitive chuck' making it easier to change to different bit sizes.

Hammer



It's hard to add value to a hammer, but MacAllister has achieved it. After repeated use or being outside in rain, traditional hammers can slip in the customer's hand. Using the same technology found on golf club shafts, MacAllister has applied non-slip material to hammers. The hammer also features a magnetised groove on top that holds different sized nails so users do not have to risk painfully hammering their thumb.

Camden Barbecue



Research showed customers wanted barbecues that were easy to use, clean and store. The new range of Kingfisher own-brand Blooma barbecues features porcelain enamel grills that can go in the dishwasher. Shelves are foldable, making it easy to store.

Quick Assembly Shed



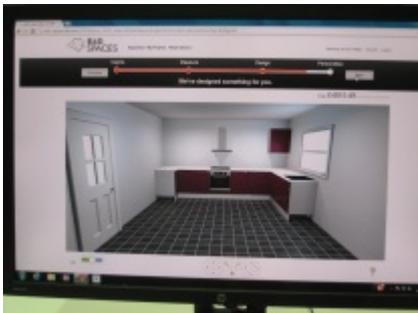
This product is designed to appeal to those consumers who are afraid to assemble a shed. The smaller of the designs takes just 60 minutes to erect. It's easy to put together because the panels are preassembled and it uses a stapling system rather than hammer and nails. The plastic roof is hard-wearing and requires less maintenance than traditional roof felt and can be fitted from the inside. The door and window can go on anywhere in the structure.

Quick Assembly Kitchen Units



Quick-assembly kitchen units – Kingfisher’s Cooke & Lewis brand cabinets can be assembled in less than a minute. The units use a uniclick system, requiring no screws.

Kitchen 3D Planner Tool



The Spaces Planner technology has cut virtual kitchen planning down from two hours to about two minutes.

The shopper only has to wait moments before getting an exact quote and a full shopping list of the items needed.

The benefits to the customer are obvious, but the speediness also helps B&Q as it frees up time for sales people to sell.

Last year 260,000 kitchen plans were created and never bought, meaning staff wasted 520,000 hours that could have been better spent. With this system, staff will know within two minutes if they are on to a sale or not.

Link: www.retail-week.com