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**Store gallery: Topps Tiles creates hybrid store to enter new catchment areas**

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*The store has two entrances to allow customers to load tiles straight into their cars*

Topps Tiles will open the first of its new hybrid stores next week as it rolls out a new format it hopes will help it reach new catchment areas.

The tiles specialist is opening the 2,500 sq ft store in the affluent town of Knutsford in Cheshire as it seeks to find a balance between its boutique format and larger warehouse stores.

Topps Tiles commercial director Brian Linnington said: "We have really made a step forward with this format. Previously we were coming across properties that were too big for a boutique store but too small to squeeze our larger format into. We developed this format because 2,500 sq ft properties were coming up in areas where we wanted to enter."

The Knutsford store is located next to a McLaren garage and will have 1,600 sq ft of floor space and a 300 sq ft warehouse, while the rest of the space is dedicated to back-office functions.

The warehouse has enough room to store the retailer's top selling tiles to allow customers to take them away straight from the store, and will also stock adhesive, grouts and trims.

The store has two entrances to avoid the need to wheel pallets of stock through the store and will allow customers to load their cars straight from the warehouse.

Topps Tiles has also introduced tablets across its entire estate to let staff help customers navigate its website.

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As part of the initiative the retailer has introduced wi-fi into all of its stores. The wi-fi is only available to staff, who will only be able to access the Topps Tiles website on the devices.

However, Linnington said the business is considering allowing staff access to other creative websites such as Pinterest.



*Topps Tiles' best-selling tile ranges will be available to buy in-store*



*The interior is designed around the retailer's boutique format*

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*The store has 1600 sq ft of floor selling space*



*The hybrid store has a 300 sq ft warehouse attached to it*

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*Topps Tiles has now rolled out tablets to its entire store estate*

Link: [www.retail-week.com](http://www.retail-week.com)