



Innovate and accumulate

Article submitted by Camilla Hair

Re-moulding retailing for the digital age is key to maintaining sales in locally-based stores. Visitors to Totally DIY & Tools 2017, taking place at the Ricoh Arena in Coventry from 14-15 February, will find a host of innovative products plus digital and other forms of marketing support available from suppliers. Additionally, BHETA will again host its Innovation Zone at the show.

“As a nation we’re an inventive lot,” says BHETA DIY Sector Director Paul Grinsell, “None more so than product innovators in our sector, who strive to come up with saleable answers for day-to-day problems. Bringing those ideas to market can be a difficult journey. In the BHETA Innovation Zone, we give inventors and fledgling companies a platform to talk to potential manufacturers and retailers.” The zone also gives retailers a glimpse of future profitable sales.

The winner of last year’s BHETA Best New Product award, Stuart Saunders at Tileution with his ‘Peel then Stick’ tile adhesive product, was once on BBC TV’s ‘Dragon’s Den’, but has found that winning the BHETA award has taken his business ambitions to the next level. BHETA’s Paul Grinsell reinforces the supportive nature of the award: “Ours is not a ‘Dragon’s Den’ approach. We’re here to encourage and foster product development and good business for the next evolution of entrepreneurs.”

New exhibitors, new technologies

Amongst the new exhibitors at the 2017 Totally show are Pryor Marking, with the latest in product marking tools. “Our firm started in Sheffield in 1849 marking cutlery,” says sales director Alastair Morris. “Our marking technologies are now used in industries at home and abroad, including aerospace and the automotive sector. We’re bringing our hand-held marking tools to the show, which range upwards from a £10 hand stamp to the latest technology in laser marking and engraving.

“Our hand-held kits can be used by manufacturers for part-number or security number marking, or by merchants and retailers to stamp their brand details against theft and fraud. Merchants can also use the date and number marking kit to offer a security marking service to their customers,” Pryor’s Alastair Morris adds.

Pryor Marking offer a range of videos on their You Tube Channel which retailers can link to or embed on their own websites. According to figures featured by inbound marketing specialists HubSpot, the inclusion of video on your website’s

landing page can increase sales conversion by 80%, and some 64% of consumers are more likely to purchase a product after viewing a video. At Totally DIY & Tools, as a dedicated trade-only show, visitors can take time to discuss video and wider marketing needs with their suppliers.

One-touch retailing

Viewing product videos on mobiles prior to purchase is part of the 'one touch retailing' trend identified by analysts Retail Economics in their whitepaper on 'Ten Trends that are changing the landscape of the UK retail sector'. In response, many Totally exhibitors are now offering product videos, including Draper Tools, SnapitScrew and Tite-Fix, who showed at Totally for the first time in 2016 and are returning for 2017.

The demonstration videos available on the Tite-Fix website illustrate their approach to product development, as outlined by their strategist Holly Wilkinson: "We develop our products by understanding the problems that woodworkers have and developing precise products to overcome those problems."

Visually demonstrating the advantages of a product is a central facet of retailing all kinds of products, agrees returning Totally exhibitor SnapitScrew: "In line with the video age, we're supporting retailers through videos on our YouTube channel that they can stream direct to their own websites. We also have a stockist locator on our website to make that essential commercial connection between retailer and consumer," says SnapitScrew's director Stephen Linnecar.

Long-standing Totally exhibitor Draper Tools also uses video to support customers and consumers with in-depth information on which to base purchasing decisions. Speaking of their Totally DIY & Tools stand for 2017, marketing director Chris Bartlett, says "We're keen to tell visitors about our range, our supporting materials including videos demonstrating our tools, and our web based stockist locator, all of which help to make the vital sales connection between the end user and our trade customers."

Totally connected

Joining the dots between producer and marketplace extends well beyond video and websites. Facebook, as a social media marketing arena, has created a groundswell of interest in new Totally exhibitor TrigJig. Said to be the world's first digital and fully adjustable mitring tools, TrigJig Coving and Skirting tools are being launched to the trade at Totally DIY & Tools 2017. "Millions of people have now seen TrigJig and our videos, and it's created a lot of interest," says Marketing Director Karenza Soanes-Brown. "We're exhibiting at Totally 2017 to launch the product to the trade and establish a wider network of distributors."

Invented by a former plasterer, the TrigJig tools are ideal for when corners are not a perfect 90°, for awkward angles such as around bay windows, and old houses with uneven walls and imperfect plasterboarding. TrigJigs can be used by all manner of trades, from builders and plumbers in boxing off areas to professional joiners and seasoned DIYers.

From abrasives and adhesives to washers and workbenches, the Totally show demonstrates the latest products alongside the wide-ranging marketing support offered by suppliers and manufacturers. Exhibitors also appreciate the support for the show from visitors across hardwares, homewares and lightside DIY retailing. Over 1,500 visitors attended the 2016 show, and 82% of them had purchasing influence and authority in their organizations. Some 75% of visitors said their main purpose in visiting Totally was to connect with new and alternative product suppliers.

A W Tools' director Fraser Walker says exhibiting at the show has enabled them to launch a number of innovative new products from their European partners: "Over the years that we have been participating at Totally DIY & Tools we have found it to be the best platform for meeting the important contacts in our industry, and for launching award winning new products. Additionally the Ricoh Arena is both exhibitor and visitor friendly from a location and ease of access perspective. For 2017 we will be introducing the PACK-BAG, an exciting new product providing a second pair of hands around the home, in the garden, or in the work place," Fraser Walker concludes.

Market views 2017

Will consumer spending in 2017 favour the introduction of such new products at Totally DIY & Tools? Lingering uncertainty linked to Brexit negotiations may well promote more consumer spending on products and tools for DIY. CEO of analysts Retail Economics, Richard Lim, sees reasonable prospects ahead: "We don't expect a collapse in consumer spending, but for growth rates to moderate to c.1.5% in 2017."

BHETA partner, analysts Verdict Retail, also see good potential ahead: "The online DIY & Gardening market grew by 2.6% over the last five years and is expected to grow by 2.4% over the following five," says Anish Dosani, Senior Analyst at Verdict Retail. "However, the instore channel continues to dominate with 93% of DIY shoppers buying instore and taking home, compared to 24% of DIY shoppers buying online and having products delivered."

Making the in-store experience enlightening and worthwhile is the reason behind many Totally exhibitors demonstrating their marketing support materials at the show, as Kirstie Cooper, marketing manager at Totally exhibitor Bond-It, relates: "We provide our customers with a varied range of POS and literature depending on what's most suitable to the type of product."

Totally supportive

Gorilla Glue also invest in supporting retail customers, showcasing the support they make available to retailers at Totally 2017. "We support retailers with the latest technology in digital displays, such as our Gorilla Island with inbuilt DVD player, ready to use. We also have a retailer location app to direct buyers to their nearest retailer," says marketing manager Jake Witherington. "For 2017 we expect people to do more up-cycling, recycling and repairing rather than replacing and that's where our products come in."

Also responding to consumer market drivers on saving cost is new product Fix-A-Floor from Electrics Warehouse, being launched at the 2017 Totally show. "If you have any loose or hollow tiles it can be difficult and costly to remove and replace them, with the added expense of a Tiler to complete the job to a high standard. Fix-A-Floor makes it easy for any DIY enthusiast. Just by drilling a few small holes around the grout of the affected area and injecting Fix-a-Floor adhesive using a caulking gun the problem is solved. Fix-a-Floor spreads out filling the entire void underneath the tiles," affirms director Adrian Cox.

Whether it's finding new products, assessing new marketing support, or investigating new suppliers, Totally Tolls & DIY draws the sector together in the shared ambition of expanding business. Summing up, Bond-It's Kirstie Cooper reflects the motivation of Totally exhibitors and visitors alike and is in no doubt as she concludes: "We're in a competitive marketplace and we need to be present at Totally DIY & Tools."

For more details please visit www.totallydiy.co.uk and follow @totallyshows for live updates and news. If you are interested in exhibiting please contact Lucyanne Matthews on l.matthews@hgluk.com or 020 7973 4639.