

Trends, challenges and opportunities for 2014

We asked key industry associations for their thoughts on the market, what consumers are looking for, where the market is moving and what they're looking forward to at kbb Birmingham.



Bathroom Manufacturers Association Members are looking forward to a 'brighter' year and kbb will be one of the highlights.

The return of a number of bathroom manufacturers to kbb Birmingham is a welcome development for an industry keen to shrug off the economic doldrums of the recent past.

Members will be keen to show their latest innovations and prove that with breakthrough thinking, gorgeous and sustainable products can be created to suit every taste and every budget.

Perhaps we'll see a glimpse of the latest in open planning, which puts bath and bed in the same living space?

I'd like to also mention The Water Label: It was a thrilling start to 2013 when The Water Label won two major awards for its innovative approach to the labelling of water-consuming products. The label now has over 7,000 products and is poised to grow further and faster in 2014.

Yvonne Orgill, Chief Executive, Bathroom Manufacturers Association
www.bathroom-association.org



The British Furniture Manufacturers (BFM) has represented the interests of the British Furniture industry for more than 60 years, with membership open to manufacturing companies in all sectors. Mark Brook, Creative Director of McCarron & Co, gives his views on developing themes in kitchen design for the coming year:

- Pale subtle paint colours, often mixed with very similar tones a shade lighter or darker to create shadowing

- A definite move towards a style looking less like an intrinsic kitchen and more like room furniture, especially in open plan projects

- Warm bronze, dark bronze and brass are making a positive comeback in ironmongery and accessories

- Unique veneers as accents to create very individualistic layouts

- Imaginative clients are working with brown/white or grey appliances where possible and shifting away from stainless steel

- Longevity is key as big financial investments are often involved in many projects.

www.bfm.org.uk



2014 looks set to be an exciting year for kitchen design, with some unexpected materials, textures and even colours. Scandinavian-inspired, clean, white kitchens are still very much on-trend for 2014. This minimalist, stream-lined look requires clever built-in storage solutions.

In contrast there is an increasingly popular trend towards colour, pattern and fun. Ornate tiles with exotic designs and gorgeous, rich colours are stealing the show.

Grey is still the new black for kitchen units, but dark, moody blues are also proving to be very fashionable.

Metallic finishes are very on-trend, with designers looking for innovative ways to introduce copper into their schemes.

'All-things-natural' is another big trend for 2014.

As clients increasingly seek the 'wow' factor in their kitchens, innovations in appliance technology are allowing the connected home to become a reality for today's consumers.

Nicola Holden, Associate member, BIID
www.biid.org.uk



It's fair to say that the industry has had a tough old time over recent years. However, early signs in 2014 are encouraging, which is of course good news. And with growth comes challenge!

kbb installers felt the recession bite as much as anyone, which has led to some installers giving up on the kbb industry altogether – some simply retiring and others choosing to apply their skills in different trades. The fact is that good installers and great experience has 'left the building' and that may very well leave a shortfall of quality, reputable installers when the good times return.

The industry does need to take a good hard look at itself, because a valid question that affects us all should be: What exactly is attracting the next generation of professional installers?

Our objective to tackle the challenge of installation standards gathers momentum and we're very much here to support anyone with an interest in professional kbb installation.

Damian Walters, Founder and Chairman of The Institute of Kitchen, Bedroom & Bathroom Installers
www.ikbbi.org.uk



The NTG are delighted to be part of kbb Birmingham, it is an opportunity to see what is new in trends and innovation in the KBB market, what drives consumer expectations and forms the perfect platform to steer the education pathway in developing and delivering industry-specific learning.

The open living room trend is drawing on the talent and inspiration of kitchen designers to produce design solutions that incorporate not only cooking stations but social areas that include sound vision and lighting, lounging and dining spaces. Bathrooms big or small have also become rooms that encompass up to date technologies, rooms to bathe in, relax and unwind in.

Bedrooms are designed to suit current trends and lifestyles. Lighting has become a big focus in the KBB arena and in an effort to save energy and support sustainable design, our education programme needs to reflect these new technologies. We need to encourage new entrants into the KBB sector as a career option and to 'Educate to Inspire'.

Renée Mascari, Chief Executive, Kitchen Bedroom Bathroom National Training Group
www.kbbntg.org



All the signs suggest that we can be cautiously optimistic about 2014 with positive growth predictions for the economy and the manufacturing sector. kbb Birmingham promises to be a fantastic show this year and is sure to give us an insight into some of the great new products that will help drive business growth for the sector.

Technology will be a big theme - not just in terms of new products and materials but impacting on efficiency of production and how we communicate with customers. Consumers will be looking for more individuality in their kitchen and bathroom designs in 2014 and the industry is able to respond with a greater range of furniture, new textured finishes, bespoke patterns and metallics.

Lighting design and LED solutions will continue to be important, and lighting controls using smartphone or android technology will also be more prominent. The app controlled kitchen will also be an important trend for 2014.

Graham Ball, CEO, Kbsa
www.kbsa.org.uk

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