

Shower Manufacturers Need to Look After Plumbers

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Showers are one of the most dynamic sectors in the plumbing industry and keeping ahead of the field demands timely knowledge of the opinions of installers.Â Business research specialist, B2B International, runs a twice-yearly survey, the Shower Brand Preference Monitor, which canvases the opinions of 500 installers throughout the country, comprising 40 questions, some open ended and some nominated by manufacturers.

This monitor provides information on the UK shower market to help a shower manufacturer grow their business and is extremely useful to indicate where suppliers need a deeper understanding of market dynamics and to establish how trade and professional intermediaries influence product selection.

Research shows that installers are the key to the market, having three quarters of the influence on the brands of showers that are installed.Â “Installers play a crucial role in directing the consumer’s choice,” explains B2B director Matthew Harrison.Â “In the two years that we have been running the survey, we have seen how brand preferences have moved and how new developments such as the emergence of digital showers have impacted on the market.”

The subscribers to the survey include the three leading UK brands, which account for around 75 percent of the market.Â The survey looks at all types of showers and provides feedback on the pivotal issues that affect the installers’ recommendations.

The shower market is highly fragmented (electric, standard mixer and power shower) but three brands continue to dominate “Mira is the installers’ favourite with Aqualisa and Triton as the next favourite brands.Â Reasons for choice of shower have changed since the previous Monitor in 2006 from recommendation, reliability and performance to good availability and aftersales.

Installers remain relatively positive about the future, with the move away from baths to showers seen as the key reason.Â Consumer preference for showers is attributed to current contracts and installer advertising, conservation of water, and home-owners spending more on their existing properties.Â The recommendations installers would make to improve showers would be ease of installation, better looking showers and price.Â Installers continue to receive most information about showers from merchants and less from trade journals and literature from manufacturers.

B2B believe the same panel can provide key data on other major plumbing decisions, such as boilers, fires and bathrooms.Â “Matthew observes that such Monitors can be useful for other areas of building and construction.Â “Wherever suppliers have a common need for deeper understanding of market dynamics and the detail behind the issues that direct product choice, monitors provide a means of tracking opinions and understanding the pivotal issues.”