

New products make household cleaning easier

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US consumers are working longer hours and leading increasingly busy lives, which means that they have less time to devote to cleaning, especially unpleasant tasks such as toilet and floor cleaning. With this in mind, manufacturers have started introducing products that are designed to make even the most hated household chores easier.

Bucketless systems make mopping easier

The introduction of "bucketless" mopping systems, designed to replace the mop-and-bucket approach to floor cleaning, has been a key development in the household care market. Consumers, who despised the spill-prone heavy bucket and the less-than sanitary mop head, have happily traded up to these new systems. In consequence, more traditional floor cleaning products experienced a 6.8% decline in sales between 2003 and 2004, according to Euromonitor International's research.

Toilet cleaning devices win over consumers

Following the success of easier to use floor cleaning systems, manufacturers also saw a gap in the market for similar devices to make toilet cleaning less of a chore for consumers. Toilet cleaning is probably the most despised cleaning activity among Americans, and even after the cleaning process itself, consumers are worried about the possibility of germs on the toilet brush.

In late 2003, Prestige Brands introduced the Comet Clean & Flush Flushable Toilet Cleaning System "a wand with a disposable head, which comes pre-loaded with toilet cleaner and can be thrown away after use. Following the success of this product, other companies, including SC Johnson, 3M Home Care and Clorox Co, quickly followed suit with similar products. As a result, toilet cleaning systems experienced a remarkable 5,880% increase in value sales between 2003 and 2004, which helped boost the overall toilet cleaning sector by 16%.

Bathtub cleaning gets easier

After the success of toilet cleaning systems, manufacturers turned to the bathtub. Americans consider cleaning the bathtub to be backbreaking work, and therefore do not clean it as much as they should. In 2005, Procter & Gamble introduced Mr.Clean MagicReach "a product that has an attachable telescopic pole with a disposable scrubbing head. This product has been designed so that consumers can clean around the tub without straining their backs. Two months after this introduction, Clorox followed suit with the Clorox BathWand.

With the aim of reducing the unpleasantness of cleaning, manufacturers are expected to continue innovating in the bathroom-cleaning category. Despite a dismal outlook for the overall surface care market in the US, Euromonitor International forecasts that the one bright spot will be the bathroom cleaners sector, which is expected to grow by 12% between 2004 and 2009.

While players such as Clorox and SC Johnson introduced their own bucketless mopping systems to compete with Swiffer WetJet - the originator of this type of product - other players started to introduce new products designed to make floor cleaning easier. For example, Reckitt Benckiser introduced Lysol One Step Floor Cleaner in 2002, which is designed to be squeezed from the bottle directly onto the floor. This product requires no water or rinsing, dries quickly and allays consumer fears about bacteria by claiming to kill 99.9% of bacteria in 30 seconds.

Household Care in the USA is a new report from Euromonitor International. Its analysis presents an in-depth picture of trends and developments impacting the industry. This report includes detailed coverage sectors including: laundry care, dishwashing products, surface care, chlorine bleach, toilet care products, polishes, air fresheners and insecticides

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