

CASHING IN ON DAILY DIRT

With a frequent shortage of accessible cleaning facilities on-site, Corinna Palin, international marketing manager of Big Wipes, explains why industrial strength wipes provide a significant sales opportunity for merchants.

It's unavoidable: workmen get their hands dirty all day, every day. Despite hands being their most valuable tools, thousands of workers spend their days with their hands covered in dirt or harsh substances without having access to the facilities to clean them up. Even when soap and water are available, they just won't shift the majority of modern construction and maintenance products. PU foam, silicone and varnishes are nasty stuff to get on your hands, and without the ability to remove them quickly, can cause debilitating skin problems.

For merchants, this presents a clear opportunity for sales. Tradespeople need easy access to high-quality hand cleaners and industrial strength wipes are the answer. Stored in tubs, they are highly portable and those in handy sachet packs can be kept in pockets or glove compartments. They can remove dirt and construction materials from hands and tools swiftly and more thoroughly than soap and water.

Hundreds of tradespeople will walk through the doors of a builders' merchant every month in need of wipes they can use on-site. It is estimated that there are around 150,000 decorators, 125,000 builders, 80,000 electricians and 78,000 plumbers in the UK today. To put the potential sales opportunity wipes offer in context, if an average merchant customer got through one tub of wipes a month, that's a potential 5.2m tub sales each year.

Companies such as Big Wipes understand that wipes will be an additional but crucial purchase alongside the major materials a tradesperson visits the merchant for. Therefore, the point-of-sale produced for the merchant counter should be bright and eye catching. Brands like Big Wipes make excellent displays to encourage add-on sales while the tradesperson is picking up their usual building and plumbing materials.

To encourage pull through sales, companies such as ours will market heavily to merchant customers, attend tradeshow, advertise and make sure the brand is instantly recognisable as a must-have for their toolbox.

Wipes are a convenient way for tradespeople to clean up on-site or on the move. And it's important they do –

according to Health & Safety Executive (HSE) figures, there are over 20,000 people suffering from work-related skin diseases with around 7,000 new cases diagnosed every year. Solvents, cement, resins and cutting fluids are some of the most common causes of irritant contact dermatitis, so it is no wonder construction workers have one of the highest rates of developing this skin disease – something that can severely affect a person's ability to work.

One of the best ways to avoid contact dermatitis is to wash hands and apply a moisturiser after washing, so it is important to point out that the best wipes will include moisturisers that protect hands. For example, Big Wipes 4x4 formulation is not only preservative free and mainly water-based, but also has four powerful cleaning agents and four dermatologically tested skin conditioners: Aloe Vera, Lanolin, Vitamin E and Glycerine – all helping to nourish and protect the skin.

The Big Wipes range has also been assessed to the latest EU Regulation 1223/2009 for cosmetic products with zero levels of irritation recorded during controlled testing by dermatologists. The range also offers >99.9% antibacterial protection for skin.

The best wipes manufacturers will also produce different types of wipe materials. With Big Wipes 4x4, for instance, there are three different types to choose from: red top Heavy-Duty are double sided with an abrasive side to remove stubborn grime and a smooth side to soak up the dirt; the black top Multi-Purpose wipe is made from a three layered, non-woven quilted fabric, which makes it tear resistant and tough; and the green top Multi-Surface wipes, which are ideal for cleaning all surfaces, and are absorbent.



■ Industrial strength wipes are a convenient way for tradespeople to clean up on-site or on the move.

FEIN AND BOSCH LAUNCH NEW STANDARD TOOL MOUNTING SYSTEM

FEIN and Bosch have jointly developed a new tool mounting accessory for oscillating power tools called the Starlock mounting system, which is designed to offer users even better performance in the form of faster work progress and more precise results.

The motion of oscillating multi-function tools means they can be used in a wide range of applications, with the technology now accepted as a standard way of working.

Thanks to their oscillating movement, they can be used to drive accessories for sawing, sanding, scraping and polishing. But they only work reliably and economically if the motor's power is transferred to the saw blade or backing pad with as much contact as possible. Therefore, the way the tool is mounted is crucial to rapid work progress and precise results.

Willi Fellmann, responsible for the joint venture project at Bosch, said: "These days there are numerous mounting systems available for oscillating power tools. The number of products from different manufacturers is confusing. Users also have to accept reduced performance when using an adapter. This is where the new Starlock tool mounting comes in.

"FEIN and Bosch are establishing one common standard and ensuring maximum power transmission."

The Starlock mounting works reliably with oscillating power tools from FEIN and Bosch and tools with a 12-point mounting from other manufacturers. This makes the accessories compatible with most tools on the market.

Rainer Warnicki, head of product development at FEIN, added: "Through its three-dimensional geometry, the Starlock accessory achieves even better results than previous systems. When developing the Starlock tool mounting, we were looking for a new approach: the joint project combines the know-how of both brands. We firmly believe that Starlock will become the system standard."

Accessories with the Starlock tool mounting are now available under the FEIN and Bosch brands. FEIN and Bosch are offering three performance classes: Starlock, StarlockPlus and StarlockMax. These performance classes ensure that only the accessories suited to the tool's output can be clamped on.

Over the next few months, FEIN and Bosch will also be presenting new power tools with the Starlock mounting.

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January 2016

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MARKET INDEX

In the first of a new series, BMN hosts the Builders' Merchant Building Index

14

NMBS CONFERENCE

NMBS looks ahead to the theme of this year's All-Industry Conference in June

24

TOOL AND FIXINGS

How brushless power tools can help drive increased sales for merchants

38

GOVERNMENT TO COMMISSION NEW HOMES

The government is to directly commission the building of thousands of new affordable homes as part of a "radical new policy shift" to build at a faster rate using smaller developers.

Ministers want to break the stranglehold on the country's building industry, where eight developers are responsible for more than half of the homes built every year.

Under the new plan, the government will arrange for planning permission to be granted at five publicly owned areas of land in England, and then offer the sites to developers.

This, according to the government, will lead to quality homes being built at a faster rate by smaller building developers who are currently unable to take on big projects.

Prime Minister David Cameron said: "[The] package signals a huge shift in government policy. Nothing like this has been done on this scale in three decades – government rolling its sleeves up and directly getting homes built."

The new measures will also be backed by a £1.2bn starter home fund to prepare underused brownfield sites for new homes for younger people under the age of 40 for at least a 20% discount.

This will help the government achieve its pledge of creating 200,000 starter homes by 2020, by fast-tracking the creation of at least 30,000 starter

homes and up to 30,000 market homes on 500 new sites over the next five years.

Mr Cameron added: "It shows we will do everything we can to get Britain building and let more people have the security that comes with a home of their own."

The construction of the first wave of up to 13,000 directly commissioned homes – 40% of which will be starter homes – will begin this year in Connaught Barracks in Dover, Northstowe in Cambridgeshire, Lower Graylingwell in Chichester, Daedalus on Waterfront in Gosport, and Old Oak Common in north west London.

Brian Berry, chief executive of the Federation of Master Builders, welcomed the government's plans. He said: "The availability of small sites is the greatest barrier that small- and medium-size housebuilders currently face when delivering new homes. The government clearly recognises that we need to bring more small housebuilders back into the market if we have any hope of addressing the housing shortfall."

"It is also encouraging that the majority of these sites will already have planning permission in place as obtaining permission is all-too-often a lengthy and protracted process – avoiding this time delay should help housebuilders increase their supply much more quickly."



Meanwhile, Jeremy Blackburn, head of policy at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, added: "This government has already introduced a great many initiatives that we believe will slow current high rates of house-price growth. [The recent] announcements will further help to bring much-needed new developments swiftly to market."

Michael Ankers, chairman of the Brick Development Association (BDA), concluded: "It is encouraging to see the government make this commitment to helping young people get onto the housing ladder."

"Using brick as a durable and sustainable building resource will ensure that newbuilds are of the highest quality, and maintain the nature of the built environment with which we are

so familiar for housing in this country."

The BDA said this investment in building on brownfield sites would help kick-start regeneration and enable planning permission to be secured more quickly, rejuvenating disused or under-occupied urban sites so building work can begin quickly.

In December 2015, it emerged that Britain's biggest housebuilders possess enough land to create more than 600,000 new homes, raising questions about why they were not building more properties to meet the housing shortage.

The nine housebuilders in the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250 hold 615,152 housing plots in their landbank, according to financial disclosures. This is four times the total number of homes built in Britain in the past year.

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