

Help Your Customers Turn the Latest Trends into Timeless Designs

When it comes to helping your customers find the right wallcovering, it helps to try and identify why they are decorating or redecorating. Many people want their surroundings to match their lifestyles and with their idea of lasting beauty. Others may simply want to keep up with the latest trends. Knowing who your customers are will allow you to ask the right questions and show options that align with what the customer has in mind. It will also help you and customers achieve the ultimate common goal: to be happy with the designs that are chosen.

Your store's wallcovering displays and samples are likely organized by factors such as brand, color scheme, price, and other features common to customer interests. If you haven't already, consider organizing your displays and samples according to lifestyles, and demographic preferences.

For instance, if you find that a specific customer segment - say, young families - tends to buy a certain style of wallpaper, you can drive success with future young families by grouping together options that are popular with that demographic. Don't worry about getting too granular with your segments. The best thing to do is to create general categories that describe your most common customer segments: recently retired couples, first-time home owners, families, retail stores, offices, etc. Then start tracking what they tend to buy.

You'll always have outliers who don't fit the mold of the categories you create, but having them will provide you with an easy way to guide customers through the selection process once you identify what category they fit into. As you build each of the categories with popular designs, you'll be able to start placing new fashions into the categories you have developed.

From multi-function wallpaper to movable decals, new technologies and manufacturing processes allow the latest wallcovering trends to be limited only by our imaginations. As with every industry, it's important to introduce new styles and concepts into your mix. However, there is no need to throw out all older designs to make room for the latest fashions. If one design consistently appeals to a segment over time, be sure that it is displayed just as prominently as this year's designs.

It's important to remember that when people decorate a room with wallpaper, they are doing two things: altering a space to fit their lifestyle; and visually communicating who they are, to their guests and to themselves. Whether it's with the latest fashions or a tried-and-true longstanding design, organizing and presenting the right products to the right segments is a valuable selection tool for you *and* your customers.



For more advice on helping people find the latest trends, visit the Wallcoverings Association Web site, at <http://www.wallcoverings.org>, where you'll find even more resources. For quick ideas on how to sell more wallpaper, check out the WA retailer Web page, at <http://retailercentral.wallcoverings.org/>. We also recommend you subscribe to *On A Roll – Highlights of Wallcoverings' Latest and Greatest Consumer Press*. It's free to subscribe (email info@wallcoverings.org) and allows you to see the latest media trends and stories that your customers are viewing today.

WA's column in the April 2010 Paint & Decorating Retailer Magazine
http://www.pdra.org/magazines/pdr_magazine