

Popularity of tabletop, decorative accessories on the rise

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Though some consumers may still feel cautious about making large purchases after the sting of the Great Recession, vendors of tabletop products say the category is riding high thanks to the status of accessories as affordable impulse purchases. A retail customer may waver about whether to shell out money for a new sofa, but vendors find she won't hesitate to refresh her home with new decorative accessories or tabletop products.

It is definitely an important category, and compared to wall art, it's more affordable and an easy way to make a transformation in one's home. You can have one piece that doesn't break the bank and can add a lot to someone's décor.

According to a study, decorative accessories comprise the largest portion of the home accents universe at 35%. Vendors say they see growth in both accessories, such as vases, candleholders, boxes or sculpture, and functional tabletop, like serveware, glassware and dinnerware. Decorative accessories have a strong outlook as people get back to nesting and refreshing, even if they can't afford to do a total renovation, they can certainly spruce up with decorative accessories. A manufacturer who produces about 44% functional tableware and 13% decorative accessories among other home décor products, reports business is growing fast. They have everything from the soft goods to the dinnerware to the beverage ware that goes with it, the flatware that goes with it, the candleholders, etc.

Trends - Design & Pattern Driven

In functional tableware, solid colours are a thing of the past. Consumers today are drawn to anything design-driven. Interesting patterns are likely to excite consumers, particularly



when they're buying on impulse. Here global artistry is a great design direction as it is a dynamic mix of colour, texture and pattern, but not matching. It's very eclectic and really appeals to younger consumers in particular.

There is also a demand for oversized decorative accessories. Though some customers still gravitate toward traditional styles, there is a movement toward cleaner and sleeker contemporary products. Tableware with a bit of novelty to it tends to grab attention. Dinnerware adorned with geometric and ikat designs are strong sellers. Then, there are manufacturers specializing in Italian design, so pieces embody a more traditional Tuscan aesthetic, but the company plays with shape to suit both modern and classic tastes. These pieces are not 'your mother's dinnerware. The point is, the table is a place for entertaining and expressing one's creativity in the kitchen as well as the presentation on the table. It's sophisticated but not stuffy. Handmade Italian dinnerware, pottery and ceramics are among popular items and so are gold tableware and glassware. Among colours are nice reds and yellows alongside fresh colours like turquoise and coral.

Channels -Independent Retailers, E-Commerce, etc.

Many vendors sell their tabletop and decorative accessories products across a wide array of channels. Independent retailers and specialty stores are major distribution channels. Some sell to interior designers and department stores, and others note e-commerce and hospitality as growing channels. In fact, manufacturers sell all over- retailers, e-commerce, hotels, restaurants and even decorators. Many view the tabletop category to be an opportunity for add-on sales at furniture stores. In addition to entertaining and bridal registries, manufacturers see furniture stores now wanting to set their tables so that when the



customer comes in and sees how it looks, they envision it more in their home than just a plain table.

Vendors also emphasize the importance of display in maximizing tabletop and decorative accessories sales for retailers, be it in-store vignettes or lifestyle photos online. Showing consumers how accessories will look in their homes rather than lining products on a shelf is crucial to establishing an emotional connection between the customer and the product. The bridal market continues to be a sales driver for functional tableware, but that sector too is evolving. The reality of consumer preferences is that people don't formally entertain anymore and they are buying things that are casual, fun and easily consumable and affordable.

Opportunities

Manufacturers are noting the prominence of home entertaining continuing, igniting a need for new, fresh serveware, glassware, barware and accessories to enliven consumers' homes. Even though the economy is starting to come back, people staying at home is still a big factor. People are looking to entertain at home and invite friends over and still feel good. They're back investing in feel-good things for



their home. Accessories are seen as a new growth opportunity category. If you put a decorative piece, whether it's a bowl or a charger or a tray, onto an existing piece in the house, all of a sudden it's got a completely different look. So, people are taking pieces that traditionally would be in a front foyer or a living room and adding them to different areas in the house, with strong possibilities for non-traditional areas of the house.

The marketplace will always need tabletop products, but vendors have to be willing to think outside the box as design tastes change in order to succeed. Dinnerware, serveware, drinkware and barware - the things that drive the tabletop business - are fundamental to the way people live, so vendors have to be positive about that alone. It's always going to be an opportunity. But the market changes, people change, their habits change, and one has to try to be a little bit ahead of them. ■ *Source: Home Accents Today*



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