

Bathroom January 2010



International Market Strategy

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Albania: Local MEGATEK Opens DIY Store

The local retailer MEGATEK, owned by Albanian entrepreneur Dionis Teqja, opened its DIY retail store located in City Park Tirana on 30th December 2009. The hypermarket is spread over more than 62,000 m², including 14,000 m² for retail area, 10,000 m² for wholesale and warehouses and about 4,500 m² for restaurants and offices. MEGATEK will offer to its clients some 30,000 different products grouped in six categories such as house decoration, lighting and electricity, construction materials, tools, gardening, as well as heating and cooling. The store create a total of 380 full time jobs as well as additional 150 part time positions. The total cost of the investment is estimated at €40 million, of which €23 million have been provided by local Tirana Bank and Greek Alpha Bank. The German home improvement and do-it-yourself chain store PRAKTIKER opened its first outlet in Tirana two months ago. Another foreign DIY chain, French MR. BRICOLAGE, also plans to enter the local market in 2010.

Source: Albania Today

Poland: UOKiK Fines CERSANI

Office of Competition and Consumer Protection (UOKiK) has imposed an over €2.18 million fine on CERSANIT, a bathroom fittings manufacturer. According to the regulator, CERSANIT's subsidiary, OPOCZNO, headed a price cartel and set minimum sale prices for ceramic and milled rock tiles with its business partners. "Evidence collected during the proceedings shows that the company obliged its wholesale partners to sell its products no cheaper than 25% lower than the suggested price; otherwise, they had to inform OPOCZNO in writing about what was happening," reads a communiqué issued by the UOKiK. The institution goes on to say that the establishment of the cartel had a negative effect on price competition between the distributors. Apart from fining CERSANIT, the regulator imposed fines on five distributors involved in the cartel; its decisions regarding the matter are not binding, with the fined firms able to lodge an appeal.

Source: www.nexis.com

Romania: OBI to Open Two New Stores in 2010

The German DIY retail chain OBI has announced plans to open two new stores in Ploiesti and Sibiu cities in 2010, increasing its total number of outlets on the local market to six units. The investment in the two stores will reach €10 million.

Source: Ziarul Financiar



Russia: DIY Market is Disappearing

House building in Russia is expected to fall by around 25% in 2009. What is more, the population's purchasing power was sinking drastically, so that the DIY sector reckoned with sales down by at least 30% at the end of 2009.

According to this assessment, the Russian DIY retailers are not seeing further growth but at best concentrating on maintaining their existing network of stores. More than 30 stores of nationally significant DIY chains were forced to close down in 2008. Only the international giants such as like LEROY MERLIN, CASTORAMA, K-RAUTA and OBI succeeded in expanding further in the first half of 2009, when they opened the occasional new store in Russia.

Source: www.diyglobal.com

Russia: CASTORAMA Expanding

CASTORAMA is one of the anchor tenants of 'Golden Babylon' in Moscow, the biggest inner-city shopping mall in Europe. Opened in mid-November, the mall has an overall floor space of 241,000 m² spread over two galleries, 170,000 m² of it space for letting to accommodate 450 shops altogether.

The new CASTORAMA store is the company's tenth outlet in Russia. It stocks more than 35,000 products over two floors totalling around 10,000 m². Two more CASTORAMA stores are due to open soon in Nishni Novgorod and Krasnodar.

Source: www.diyonline.de

UAE: RAK CERAMICS Introduced Energy-Efficient Tiles

RAK CERAMICS, a leading ceramic manufacturer, has introduced a facade system with its RAKSLIM tiles, which features reduced energy consumption and noise transmission in the interior of the building. The new tiles, introduced recently at a conference at the Atlantis The Palm, Dubai, also improved indoor air quality, a statement said. RAK CERAMICS, in collaboration with its joint venture, LATICRETE, showcased the various installation techniques for the RAK CERAMICS facade with RAKSLIM tiles, including direct adhering, spot bonding or with metal anchors secured through epoxy adhesive. This awareness event was organised in line with RAK CERAMICS' efforts to complement the UAE Government's green building programme and support developers and contractors in securing LEED-certification for their projects.

Source: www.rak.com



Ukraine: PRAKTIKER May Leave Market

The German chain of DIY hypermarkets PRAKTIKER may leave the Ukrainian market because of falling sales and devaluation of the national currency. At present, the chain comprises three stores in Ukraine. The first outlet was opened in Makeevka, the Donetsk region, in late 2007. The other two outlets are located in Nikolaev and Lvov. Before the crisis, the company announced its plans to open no less than 35 outlets over two or three years investing about € 11 million in each.

Source: ESMEK

United Kingdom: BLANCO's New Showroom

The 2,800 square feet BLANCO showroom is now open at the 41,000 square feet purpose-built new HQ in Radlett to which BLANCO moved in May 2009, after more than twenty years in North London .

Source: www.blanco.co.uk

United Kingdom: HOMEBASE Introduces Free Prepayment Insurance

HOMEBASE is aiming to boost consumer confidence in the kitchens, bathrooms and bedrooms market by becoming the first UK retailer to provide customers with free prepayment insurance on these investment purchases and is encouraging other retailers to follow suit.

One year on from the collapse of MFI, HOMEBASE have announced that customers who buy a kitchen, bathroom or fitted bedroom from them will automatically receive independent insurance cover, completely free of charge. The move comes following an independent research carried out for HOMEBASE which shows that more than a third of people are less confident about making prepayments than they were 12 months ago.

A recent report has shown that one in ten people have failed to receive goods they had paid for. The insurance is aimed in particular at reassuring financially vulnerable customers who are often hit the hardest through prepayment losses, which can be much greater in proportion to their disposable income. The HOMEBASE research also shows the average amount lost on major purchases was close to £2,000. The retailer aims to encourage consumers to have more confidence in investing in larger home improvement purchases by providing peace of mind for free.

Source: www.gms-uk.co.uk



United Kingdom: TOTO in London

The Japanese bathroom brand, TOTO, has opened its first UK office in the heart of London. The new office, which is located in Hatton Place Clerkenwell, is headed up by TOTO's General Manager for the UK, Jill Player-Bishop.

On display within the office are products from TOTO's technologically intelligent bathroom ranges including the 'Washlet'. The 'Washlet' is a supremely enhanced product which represents the luxurious unity of form and function with hygienic technology. The three Washlet integrated toilets on display have their cover plates removed so visitors are able to view the innovative features first-hand, such as automatically opening and closing toilet lids, an automatic power deodoriser, heated seats and automatic flushing system.

Source: www.eu.toto.com