



IN BRIEF

■ CompuSoft's Winner Design kitchen CAD now boasts the 2016 Blanco UK catalogues, including it's a la Carte Studio Collection and Undermount Sink Studio Collection. It now sees the software offering 3,059 items which can now be used in kitchen retailer's designs. It is the 18th year Blanco has worked with CompuSoft.

■ British Ceramic Tile's recently launched Retailer Club now has 590 dealers signed up to the reward and loyalty scheme. Retailers who participate in the scheme experience a range of benefits including a better trade price, free display boards and a link on the British Ceramic Tile's website 'Where to Buy' page. In addition, rewards are offered to selected members in the Retailer Club with points earned for every pound spent.

■ Caple has just published its latest sink and tap brochure, which has been designed to be more 'consumer-friendly' and easier to navigate. Similarly to its appliance brochure, the 144-page catalogue is divided into colour-coded sections and features lifestyle photography. It also includes colour swatches for its granite sinks, as well as an explanation of its Hygiene finish available on selected ceramic models.

■ Villeroy & Boch has introduced a range of online planning tools to help consumers plan their bathroom. These include The Bathroom Planner, an online CAD system and Augmented Reality App so they can see how products will look in their own home. In addition, there is also interior advice in the form of The Bathroom Inspirator, which helps consumers co-ordinate furniture and accessories as well as a Style Finder to help choose products that best suit the client's design tastes from similar fields, such as architecture.

Space to allow manufacture of larger formers

On The Level invests £100,000 in HQ

Following an expansion of wetroom manufacturer On The Level in 2013, the company has invested a further £100,000 into its head office in Leighton Buzzard by expanding into an adjoining business unit.

The additional 3,000sqft space will be equipped with machinery to manufacture larger shower formers up to 7 x 3m.

In addition, the company reports it will allow products to be made more

James Clark, managing director of On The Level



quickly, improving service to its customers, as well as house improved facilities for staff.

Managing director at On The Level James Clark said: "Wetroom floors are now firmly established as the attractive, safe and reliable choice for a wide range of projects. The expansion will allow us to focus even more on our USP which is to produce shower floors of virtually any size and shape to suite our customers' needs."

Breaking the £3billion barrier

Kitchen sales at historic high

Kitchen sales are forecast to pass £3billion for the first time in 2017, according to a report from MTW Research.

Based on kitchen industry, the research found sales in 2016 are already at an historic high, influenced by 30% growth in housing transactions over four years, low unemployment and new kitchen trends.

The 160-page report cites consumers are demanding more space for their homes, with a growing need for kitchens to offer living, working, dining

and socialising space.

Research executive for MTW James Taylor commented: "Whilst average UK kitchens are shrinking, demand for higher value kitchens with uncluttered, clean lines, is strengthening."

According to MTW, the trends are translated into demand and margin growth for products such as wider pan drawers, wall-hung base units, boiling water taps, integrated appliances and narrow solid surface worktops.

The Internet of Things (IoT) was also identified as offering growth

opportunities within the kitchen sector. It forecasts growth from IoT devices and beyond as consumers increasingly demand more 'connected' kitchens.

However, the report also issues caution, pointing to challenging market conditions with the rise of online retailers sustaining price pressure in the mid-to-lower value end of the market.

MTW found 55% of kitchen product manufacturers experienced sales growth in the last 12 months.

Joining with electrical associations

iKBBI announces partnership with electrical bodies

The Institute of Kitchen, Bedroom and Bathroom Installers has teamed up with NICEIC and ELECSA to promote consumer safety within these rooms.

The NICEIC and ELECSA represent more than 37,000 registered companies in the electrical contracting and wider construction industry.

Technical services manager at NICEIC and ELECSA Paul Collins said: "We are pleased to be working alongside the iKBBI to look at ways that the NICEIC and ELECSA can support the iKBBI and help achieve its aims. Many NICEIC, ELECSA and iKBBI registrants will already be undertaking

work in the kitchens, bedrooms and the bathroom sector so it makes sense to come together and look at ways that we can support installers and promote consumer safety to ensure that work is completed to a high standard by competent installers."

Chief executive of the iKBBI Damian Walters commented: "The safety of our members and their customers is of paramount importance to our organisation and something we are passionate about. Our latest strategic partnership with NICEIC and ELECSA is another important milestone and a relationship we are incredibly proud of."



He continued: "Our members can operate in potentially dangerous environments on a daily basis, often working with a combination of gas, electricity and water. It therefore makes perfect sense to partner with those whose specialist subject is safety in the home."