

What Are New Home Buyers Looking For

New home buyers are looking for a comfortable environment in which to live. In finding that match it is important that their surroundings fit as well. In today's market, designing to sell and bringing the prospective buyer back is the winning strategy. First, we must be sensitive to the lifestyles of the buyers in order to merchandise effectively. There are first time buyers, move-up buyers and empty nesters. Values held by these buyers are used as measuring tools to help target our markets:

Affluent America Values: Their accomplishments and success are centered by the work ethic. Material goods are symbols of their accomplishments and they are status oriented in the things they do and buy.

Environmental / Social Values: This group is concerned with self-affirmation and self-expression. Very individualistic yet genuinely concerned about their community and the environment, as well as the effects of urban society and the social agenda. The symbols of their achievements are not as material as with the Affluent America values.

Middle America Values: Family-oriented and conservative. These values are found mostly in the Midwest and South. They are striving for the comforts of the past in today's fast paced society. They prefer things simpler, easier and safer.

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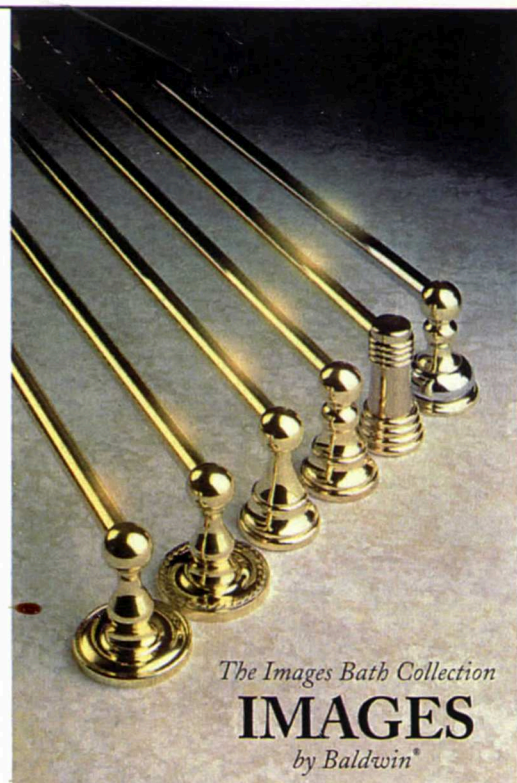
A useful kitchen (above) is an important value to our Environmental/Social Value buyer. The stove has its own cove and the kitchen has been merchandised to create a sense of warmth and comfort.

Bathroom Art

Each of the distinctive designs from The Images Bath Collection by Baldwin is a beautifully detailed work of art.

The collection offers six functional accessories: Towel Bar, Towel Ring, Toothbrush and Tumbler Holder, Soap Dish and Robe Hook.

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Our Middle America buyer would find themselves comfortable in this room with large overstuffed wing chairs, tailored drapery, character wood chest and the simple, clean lines of the two-story fireplace with bookcases on each side.

These values do not create just three types of consumer, rather they develop unique influences. These are guidelines when entering a new market to maximize profit of new home sales by understanding the buyer's needs. This is used to develop a new product from the

builder, to the architect, to the design merchandiser and on to advertising as a team effort. This will equal success.

HOW DO LIFESTYLE VALUES EFFECT MERCHANDISING?

Affluent America are the classic business people. Their home is their castle and their measurement of success. In order to merchandise effectively, we must understand their needs. Starting from the facade the house is trendy (i.e. stucco, stone, brick) with a volume foyer and an unconventional floor plan with perhaps lots of niches, bonus rooms and a fancy study at the entry. They

have arrived and want all to know.

Environmental / Social values are more concerned with life experiences and personal growth than owning material possessions. Their home is their haven personalized to their individual taste. It is not showy like the Affluent America

style, but rather what is valuable to them is behind closed doors. Generally they convert rooms into "real" living spaces including hobby rooms such as sewing/crafts and libraries centered around reading, not necessarily a working "study." They tend to lean toward a simple facade and a usable interior.

Middle America buyers are conservative for whom the simple house is just fine but a need for a safe environment around their home is important. The typical facade would be brick or siding with a conventional foyer featuring the living room on one side and the dining room on the other, a good size family room for gathering and a workable kitchen for family dinners.

ADVERTISING FOR LIFESTYLES VALUES

It is essential to follow up with good advertising to reach your target market. For example, if Affluent America is most present in your market, you may want a flashy and showy brochure with shiny pages, beautiful scenery and people. If the Environmental / Social value group is more

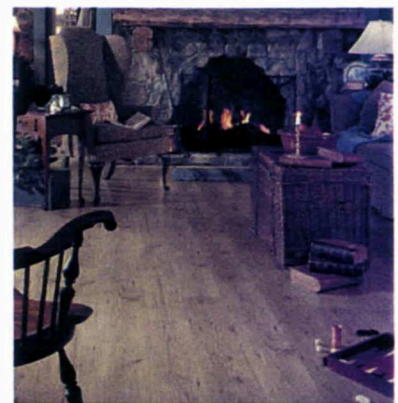
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heavily saturating your market, keep it clean and natural with recycled paper and line drawings. When the Middle America value is present, a brochure showing family, nature and a sense of a safe community is important to keep their interest. Advertising can turn your market on or turn it away. Homes are a reflection of who people perceive themselves to be and what values they hold.

As our demographics change, we must merchandise to attract the largest market and adjust to a variety and combination of values and desires. As America ages, people return to city life in lofts and condominiums; empty nesters downsize; baby boomer values become our strongest market; and more people relocate corporately or desire to move-up. Fewer people purchase a home and live in it their entire life. The market for new homes is growing as the economy remains prosperous.



The draping on the canopy bed (left), the use of bouillon fringe on the drapery and pillows add drama to this Affluent America buyer bedroom.

All of the buyers have common links which are comfort, safe surroundings, good value, quality and affordability. The price of a home will target a specific market. Merchandising helps visualize for the buyer how comfortable and attractive the home can be. Through interior design, the

placement of furniture, uses of color, fabric, wall hangings, and accessories demonstrate the livability of a home.

In interior merchandising, using themes and targeting a specific family type creates a lived-in feeling and memory points the buyer will relate to. The desirability of the design of the home as it fits their needs and values comes from researching who will shop that particular market and eventually settle into their new found community. □

The professional staff of Kathy Andrews Interiors is headed by LeAnne Indrieri, Director of Design, who has been an ASID Allied member. LeAnne has been involved in designing and merchandising model homes, working in a number of states across the country servicing a wide range of clientele with homes priced from \$79,000 to \$950,000. Kathy Andrews Interiors has provided award-winning merchandising services since 1976. The firm can be reached at their Web site: www.kathyandrews.com.

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