

Bliss starts fast in a slow market

By Janet Herlihy

Early reports on Bliss by Beaulieu attest that the company's approach to the residential carpet consumer is working. Even in a slow retail market, dealers report that the Bliss line is closing sales.

A Complete Bliss dealer, Cottage House Interiors, Norcross, Ga., has had its display up for about a month. "We've already had quite a few installations of Bliss," said Julie Kerr, president and owner. "It's been well received by our customers. It has good price points and the consumer perceives a value."

The system of displaying the carpet styles backed up by small samples is a hit, according to Kerr. "Customers are comfortable with the displays and are very happy to be able to take home a small piece of carpet to decide what color works best," Kerr noted. The fashion-forward appeal to women is on target. "About 80 percent of our female shoppers come in by themselves," she added.

Bliss has only been on the floor a couple weeks at Columbus Flooring, Columbus, Ga., which is a Beaulieu aligned dealer, a Complete Bliss dealer and a Carpet One member. "It's attracting attention," said Al Gaston, co-owner. "Bliss shows much better than previous displays and is easier to understand for consumers. It also makes it easier for our salespeople to engage the consumer. We've already had some sales. It's a soft market, but Bliss is a good family of products at a strong value. The reaction from our sales force is extremely positive."

Patricia Flavin, senior vice president marketing, Beaulieu of America, explained that Bliss is setting records for the company. "Since June, which marked our first five months of Bliss, we have shipped more than 5,000 displays," she said. "That's 30 percent more than anything the company has ever done with new displays."

The program is succeeding across channels. "Our Complete Bliss aligned dealer program is now up to 60 retailers and growing," Flavin said. "We just landed Haynes Furniture and we'll be up and running there [this month]."

Bliss launched at Surfaces '08 with three product lines: Healthy Home, with six styles made



Top: Julie Kerr shows off Bliss at Cottage House Interiors, Norcross, Ga.; Bottom: Al and Barbara Gaston, co-owners of Columbus Flooring, Columbus, Ga., are pleased with the shades of Bliss.

with Green Smart P.E.T. polyester; Ultimate Home with 10 looks tufted in Permasoft Plus Ny-

lon; and Natural Comfort, which includes four offerings in Fibersessence BCF P.E.T. polyester.

Healthy Home has proven to be the biggest hit so far. "Healthy Home, featuring our silver release anti-microbial technology, is setting sales records for us," Flavin said.

This fall, the line has added Bliss for Kids. "It's a collection of bold, fun colors just for them," Flavin added. "To any mother I say, if you want them to stay in their room a little longer to get some much-needed rest, create the room and space they want with Bliss for Kids."

Beaulieu will have even more Bliss for retailers in time for Surfaces '09. "Expect to see some pretty fashionable statements made by Bliss," Flavin said. "It's shaping up to be an exciting fall for us."

Bliss was made to appeal to the female consumer who makes 85 percent of all purchasing decisions for the home. Bliss was designed to connect with consumers through images that inspire and inform, paired with displays that allow shoppers to make carpet choices from good/better/best selections. The Complete Bliss product line is priced to retail from about \$15 to about \$35 per square yard, excluding installation. **FCW**



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