

CATEGORYREPORT

H•B•E
REPORTS

INTERIOR & EXTERIOR COMPOSITE MOULDINGS

• Industry & Financial News
• Market Trends & Views

Maintenance-Free Items Reduce Callbacks

Interior and exterior composite mouldings are gaining in popularity among home builders and homeowners, with several factors contributing to increased usage.

"Builders and homeowners are searching for products that require less maintenance," says Kaye Evans, marketing manager at Royal Mouldings. "Cellular vinyl PVC outperforms other building products because it's 70% more energy efficient than wood and also more efficient than aluminum. Composite mouldings are also easy to cut and install, are mold and mildew resistant, come pre-finished, increase curb appeal, and promote fewer callbacks."

According to Bob Simons, vp sales & marketing at Gossen Corp., lower-maintenance requirements and increasingly stringent durability regulations are major factors driving sales of composite mouldings.

"Cellular PVC products are satisfying builder and homeowner demands," says Simons. "They're easy to work with and protect against mold and rotting, making it callback-free."

According to Linda Kerechek, brand manager at LP Corp., moulding is valued as a relatively quick and affordable way to add a finishing touch or beautification to a home.

"The popularity of DIY home improvements continues to drive consumer purchases of building materials," says Kerechek. "More often than not, moulding is part of remodeling, particularly with the addition of decorative details such as crown moulding, casings, and chair rails. Moulding is viewed as a fashion accessory for the home; it's an extension of the homeowners' sense of style and design."

Technological Advances Further Category

Advances in technology have allowed manufacturers to present new products and applications to the market.

Gossen Corp. recently introduced Select Trim PVC Boards; every board is individually extruded.

"The extrusion process seals all sides

of the trim; as a result, there are no open cells on the sides to attract dirt and mold," explains Simons.

Gossen is in the midst of introducing its Quick Response program for distributors and dealers.

"Quick Response is designed to educate builders and contractors on the life-cycle benefits of cellular PVC trim and meet their product availability and durability needs," says Simons.

Ornate mouldings are gaining popularity in Northeast, Midwest, and Southern markets, with more simplified profiles in Western states, says Evans.

"Moulding size is also important, and all sizes are selling well," Evans adds. "Generally speaking, the popularity of decorative exterior trim mouldings has increased over the past two years, followed closely by interior crown moulding. With crown moulding, every room in the home serves as a palette for design; rooms become richer and low ceilings appear taller."

LP mouldings are pre-finished and ready to install in a variety of materials, profiles, and colors. Additionally, LP mouldings' polystyrene substrate make

them an excellent product for use in damp areas, such as bathrooms, laundry rooms, and kitchens.

Suppliers Expect Continued Growth

Overall, manufacturers anticipate continued category strength, particularly as awareness builds and new technology leads to new-product introductions.

According to LP, independent research indicates that in the composite and plastic lumber category, moulding and trim is expected to grow from \$443 million in 2004 to \$1.4 billion by 2014, with most gains at the expense of wood as a material.

Evans believes the uses for cellular vinyl PVC will continue to increase with technology.

"Professionals are traversing a generation of change in the building industry, where technology has enabled us to manufacture products that perform better than wood," Evans concludes. "Cellular vinyl PVC products will someday surface as the products of choice from a sustainability standpoint, thereby validating our philosophy: do it once, do it right, and never go back to wood."

Tools Available to Increase Consumer Awareness on Benefits

Manufacturers have several tools available to assist builders and contractors in educating consumers on the benefits of composite mouldings.

LP Corp. researches preferences in design and color to satisfy consumer tastes and help dealers increase sales, says Linda Kerechek, brand manager. "LP also advertises to target audiences through e-media to leverage the Internet as a primary source of information. We also offer promotional support to dealers."

Gossen Corp. provides display racks for showrooms and model homes, as well as samples of all finishes and profiles to assist in product selection and ordering. The company also guarantees builders that stock orders are filled within seven working days by its distribution centers, with custom orders completed within 21 working days.

According to Kaye Evans, marketing manager at Royal Mouldings, marketplace education is the best tool for future sales.

"It's important that builders, remodelers, contractors, retailers, and OEM understand the sustainability of the products and how using performance-rated mouldings help achieve higher profit margins," Evans says. "Because professionals want partners who value their business, Royal Mouldings seeks to stay ahead of the curve in design, technology, extrusion, sales, and shipping for our customers." Royal's Builder Awareness Program is designed to meet the unique requirements of new home builders. The program promotes solid distribution, product warranties, and one-stop shopping convenience with a manufacturer.