

Brian Lakin is less interested in celebrating Sigma 3's 35th anniversary, than the business of growing his 120 kitchen retailers – page 31



After being made redundant, bathroom salesman Richard Church took matters into his own hands and set up his very own showroom – page 47



It may have been going since the tail end of the Industrial Revolution, but Lancashire manufacturer JJO is as modern as they come – page 56



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Counting the cost

Industry bosses looking for indications of a growth strategy following the government's Spending Review last month have been hard-pressed to find a glimmer of new business support measures. They have had to settle for moves to accelerate job growth with plans to double the number of apprenticeships to 75,000 a year with a budget of £250m.

KBSA ceo Graham Ball is not impressed. He says: "The government is hoping the private sector will lead the recovery but we would suggest that much more help is needed for SMEs on issues such as promised red tape reform, late payment issues, bank lending, and increasing the tax base."

While kbb retailer businesses may be more heartened by David Cameron's promise to "have a banking sector that is really focussed on small business lending", and kbb manufacturers can anticipate plans for 150,000 new-build homes over the next four

years, Ball asks: "Where are the incentives for small firms to grow and innovate?"

But what isn't factored in – and kbb retailers will be watching carefully – is to what extent consumer confidence is affected. After all, as the government spelled out huge savings through £81bn worth of sobering public spending cuts, consumers also saw their disposable incomes reduced by credit cuts, welfare benefit cuts and plans for a rise in train fares, all in addition to the planned VAT increase to 20% in January, and an NI contributions hike next year.

As David Kern, chief economist at the British Chambers of Commerce, says: "We have not yet seen the impact of the deficit-cutting measures."

KBSA's Ball says: "Everyone in business knows that it is tough, but for many retailers it will be consumer confidence that will be key, especially at this crucial time of year."

Santa Claus is coming to town



Christmas has come early for our sister consumer publication, *The Essential Kitchen Bathroom Bedroom* magazine, with Santa on the front cover of its December issue. Santa – in his seasonal best – appears on the front cover of the magazine being sold as a limited issue to a selected readership and exclusively at Sainsbury's. A different December front cover is on the shelves of other outlets. Both versions are on sale now. But doesn't his face look a tad familiar? Remind you of anyone in our kitchen industry who might just have got in the Christmas spirit early? Have you guessed right? Turn to page 7...

Rumours rife over Bathstore

Bathstore, the 170-strong chain of high street bathroom stores, is rumoured to have been put up for sale by parent company Wolseley, which also owns distributor BCG XL in the UK.

Writing in the *FT*, Mark Kleinman says: "There should not be a shortage of willing private equity buyers, although some may balk at the apparent asking price of £150m."

Founded by Patrick Riley

and Nico de Beer over 20 years ago, Bathstore was sold to the Wolseley Group in 2003. It is rumoured that Riley, owner of Zamori shower trays and Burlington sanitaryware, is one of the potential buyers.

Wolseley says its policy is not to comment on market speculation, and declined to confirm or deny the rumours. "Wolseley are unable to comment," says a spokesperson.

Fifth BMA conference 'best yet'

An electric line-up of inspiring speakers had delegates hanging on their every word at the fifth annual BMA conference, as the vibrant international line-up took to the stage at Chester's Carden Park hotel.

Entitled Customer Service – Making Good Business Sense, this year's event was introduced by Ian Stuart, BMA president and ceo of Aqualisa and JT, who set the uplifting tone of the day by saying: "This year's conference is about looking forward and winning in the market place."

The key drivers at the conference were focus, vision, flexibility, sustainability and the embracing of technology. Highlights included Professor Bob

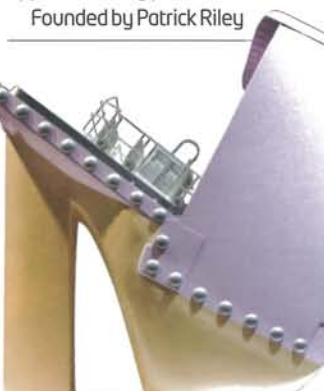
Johnson from Warwick Business School who looked at the buying experience from the customer's perspective, and Larry Hochman, globally recognised expert on customer relationships.

Hochman began his hour-long presentation by quoting from Shakespeare's Coriolanus – "Action is Eloquence" – before stressing that you'll be judged by what you do and not what you say, and that successful relationships are built on trust. "Customer service does not belong in one department. It needs to be throughout the company," Hochman continued. "Companies that have a customer sales department are 10 years out of date."



ekbbusiness editor Gae Ratcliffe, deputy editor Nicola Hanley and publisher Darren Summerfield receiving the Best Bathroom Magazine award from Ian Stuart, BMA president

Ending the conference on a high, the black tie gala dinner included the second BMA media awards, voted for by BMA members. For the second year in a row, ekbbusiness took the award for Best Bathroom Magazine, with editor Gae Ratcliffe also winning the award for Best Trade Journalist.



From the domestic to the sublime: This pink Chanel lookalike is one of several divine footwear creations fronting Selfridges' showcase Oxford Street window. They come in various guises, from dishwashers to ovens, dressed to thrill in surreal killer heels. The head-turning sculptures are intended to win a smile and make shoppers stop in their tracks, turn on their heels and march in for a feast of iconic shoe designs at the store's new Shoe Gallery extravaganza

Bailiffs move in on Pedini as showroom assets seized

The showroom of Pedini UK in Wigmore Street, London, has been locked and a bailiffs' notice pinned to the door.

A spokesperson from County Bailiffs said: "County Bailiffs were instructed by the landlord of 25 Wigmore Street. Assets on the premises were seized."

It follows rumours that md Darren Miller and investors the Teichman family fund – who resurrected the business after it went into liquidation last year – have sold their interests in Pedini UK Contracts Ltd to a private consortium. Jason Teichman declined to respond; Darren Miller was not contactable.



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INSIDE OUT
Corian
Tel: 0800 962 166. www.corian.co.uk
Corian's 'inside out' studio features a planted 'living wall' created with BioTexture

essential exhibition 100% Design 2010

and the winners are...

THE SNAIL
Electrolux

www.electroluxdesignlab.com
Beating seven other finalists in a field of 1,300 entries from students in 50 countries, Peter Alwin, a student at the National Institute of Design in India, won the Electrolux Design Lab 2010 competition, judged at the show. Alwin's design, The Snail, is a portable micro-induction heating and cooking device which looks like a mini-iron and can be stuck to the side of pans, mugs and other kitchenware to heat up the contents. A clever response, thought the judges, to the competition brief to create a home appliance that considers how people prepare and store food, wash clothes and do dishes in shrinking domestic spaces. Alwin wins €5,000 and a six-month paid internship at one of Electrolux's global design centres



PRIMARY
Triflow

www.triflowconcepts.com
The winner of the second annual Triflow Future Talents competition, designed to support emerging talent among students and young designers, was Sammy Bikoulis. His 'Primary' design, shortlisted alongside four other pioneering taps and accessories, received the most votes from visitors to the Triflow stand. The design will be taken into production by Triflow Concepts and wins Bikoulis a cash prize of £1,500.

JUMP THE GAP
Roca

www.jumpthegap.net
Roca launched the fourth edition of Jump the Gap, its bathroom products and solutions design contest, at the show. Open to designers, architects and students worldwide - provided they were born on or after 1 January, 1976 - the winner will be announced in June 2011

SQUARE STRAP

Turnstyle Designs
Tel: 01271 325 325.
www.turnstyledesigns.com

These smart Square Strap handles from Turnstyle Designs are made of leather and come in a choice of six colours. They are finished with contemporary square brass end fixings in six different plated finishes



MISS JACKSON

Johnny Egg
Tel: 01245 364 212. www.johnnyegg.com

There's always a sense of theatre in Johnny Egg's work, and his new Miss Jackson collection is true to form. Influenced by traditional marquetry, the black lacquer sideboard pictured comes with interchangeable flock panels

'IT'S GETTING BETTER, BUT I DO THINK THE BRITISH ARE STILL SCARED OF COLOUR'

Dominic Crinson, designer, Dominic Crinson



GLINK SINKS

Philip Watts Designs
Tel: 0115 926 9756.

www.philipwattsdesign.com

The bold colours of Philip Watts' new Glink Sinks make an interesting change from plain ceramics. Made of the same durable polyethylene as Watts' Gloop urinal, they are designed for both domestic and commercial bathrooms and come in nine colours

GET THINNER RANGE

CaesarStone

Tel: 0800 0421 6144. www.caesarstone.uk.com

Manufacturer of high quality, quartz-based surfaces, CaesarStone showcased its Get Thinner range of 13mm slabs at 100% Design. Designed to complement the existing 20 and 30mm ranges of easily thermoformed durable surfaces, Get Thinner, pictured, is available in six colours and weighs 56% less than the 30mm version. Also on show was the new eight-colour Supremo Collection

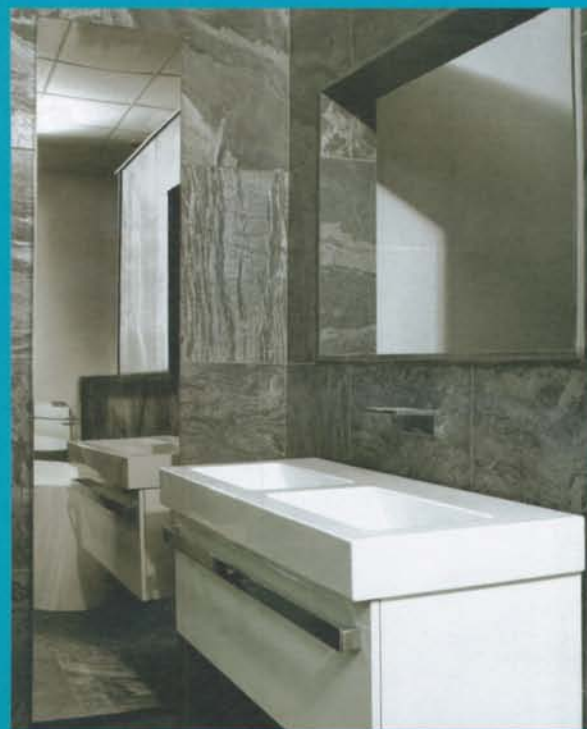


IDENTITY

Vado

Tel: 01934 744 466. www.vado-uk.com

The new Identity range from Vado features touch technology, with both the flow and temperature of the water operated by a digital touchscreen control. The colours of the display also reflect the temperature of the water - blue when the water runs cold, red when hot. It looks good, and it's a neat safety feature



MIRROR RADIATOR

Eskimo

Tel: 0207 117 0110. www.eskimodesign.co.uk

We've seen mirrors with warming elements that prevent misting before, but this Mirror Radiator goes one step further, providing heating for the bathroom. In addition to the mirror and radiator, there's a model with a towel rail too

TF-KTQ 801

Triflow Concepts

Tel: 0845 313 5001.

www.triflowconcepts.com

The TF-KTQ 801 tap has already earned the nickname 'Chunky', and it's not hard to see why. Apart from its striking shape, it also features Triflow's latest technological development, Quadro, a four-way water delivery system. As well as hot, cold and filtered water, it can deliver near-boiling - 98°C - filtered water instantly. Also on display in the Quadro range was an eye-catching piece by acclaimed architect Zaha Hadid

