

Kbbreview Industry Awards 2007

CATEGORY: Master Retailer Award for Bathrooms

FINALIST: Nicholls & Clarke, Romford, Essex

The N&C Group of Companies has a history of selling all types of building materials since 1875. With distribution sites throughout the UK we felt the demand for showrooms to be built at these sites so that the public were able to enjoy and view our ranges in pleasant surroundings.

Since we started to grow the Tilestyle group, as it is known now, we have been able to develop our showroom's based on what our customer's have asked for and continually look to enhance the experience for our customers.

Because we have such a broad range of products that include; ceramic wall and floor tiles, glass tiles, natural stone and porcelain ranges, sanitaryware, taps and showers, own brand adhesive, grouts and sundries, tools and trims, independent living products to name a few we have tried to develop the showroom's into areas that will not only cater for retail customers, but also our large trade base, architects, designers and developers.

In order to do this we have designed the showrooms so that all customers who enter our stores are easily able to view the products we have to offer and above all see them in a way which will allow them to visualize and create their dream and also to have the products displayed in way where they can be "touched" and seen in a more personal way than you would normally expect.

We have developed a range of bathroom "pods" , that are similar in size to the standard bathrooms and so will allow the customer to stand within their proposed room and in turn feel more confident in their choice.

All of these settings have been fully tiled and include a full choice of suites, taps and showers that are displayed in the most appropriate way within the room sets to show different designs and themes to expand the customer's choice. We ensure that each "room" is also accessorized in every way to make the customer feel at "home".

Within these bathroom areas we have ensured we show bathroom settings that cover products from our Phlexicare range, all are designed to show those less able that support doesn't have too have a clinical feel to it or require support from another person, our bathrooms aim too show everything as beautiful but above all practical for everyone.

The Tilestyle showrooms are designed to display all products and make everything easily accessible, for this reason we have large display areas of all our tile ranges and ensure the stock is close to the display so that the customer can easily "touch and feel" the tiles and carry samples around to other areas freely should they wish too.

We have developed stands for other products such as bathroom accessories, taps, showers, glass upstands and shower panels all of which can be seen and used to give the customers more choice and that chance to see the real product as it will be in there own home rather than just a sample or a page from a catalogue.

The showrooms are all developed to ensure that the customers , whether retail or professional, can feel comfortable and confident in their experience and that they can spend as long or as little time choosing and can have as little or as much help from our staff as they require.

In our opinion it is the personal side of shopping that can make the difference to our customers so we ensure that all our staff are fully trained, have an excellent product knowledge and above all the desire to help the customer in every way possible, our motto is not to gain customer satisfaction but to achieve customer delight!

We are able to check this service and to develop future training strategies to improve where we can by the use of mystery shoppers and customer surveys; this allows us to focus on any weak areas before they develop and to give our staff all the training they need to achieve the customer delight that we strive for.

Because of our customer split between trade and retail we need our staff to have the confidence to go from helping a customer choose a £10K bathroom to a builder who needs technical advice on fixing, so we have and will continue to develop and invest in our best asset - our staff.

We have further enhanced this by looking at the customer who may not be a part of the buying process we include an area for the children so they can draw or colour in a totally safe environment and offer hot and cold drinks to all customers and a place to sit, relax or discuss their ideas. We also have developed, after requests from customers and staff, an area that we call the “adult creche” where partners of customers can sit, have a coffee and read a magazine allowing the other partner to choose! This has proved particularly popular!

We make use of information signage throughout the store at every opportunity but make sure that the customer never feels bombarded with it, each new item is made as personal as possible and we try to ensure that it is written in plain text without being too technical - we constantly review this within our stores to ensure that the customer is getting the most from each piece of marketing and that above all they understand the message and that it does actually help them!

We constantly strive to improve the business as a whole and have regular retail, management and staff meetings in which we discuss areas that need attention, all staff are encouraged to voice their opinions so that we can develop and further enhance the experience for both our customers and the people assisting them.



