

MARKETING TO THE NORTH AMERICAN DESIGN PROFESSIONAL – INSIGHTS FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE FENCE

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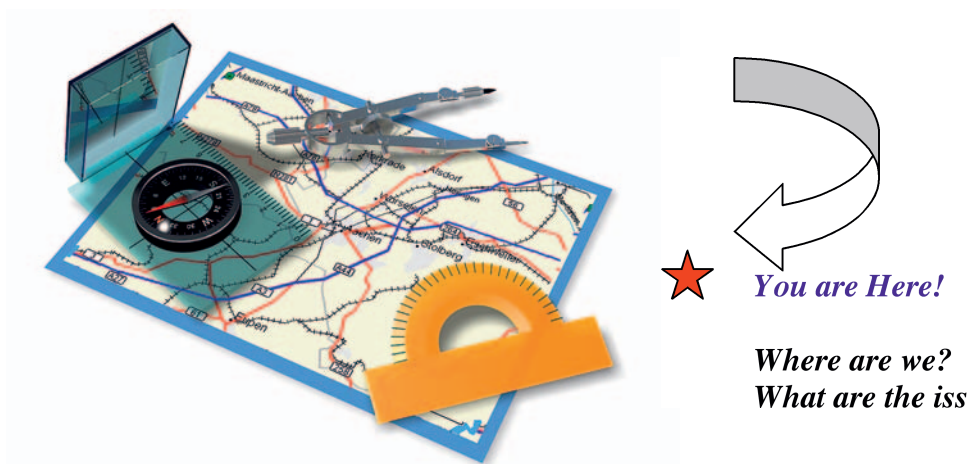
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ABSTRACT

Efforts to increase visibility and knowledge within the design community are paramount if growth in ceramic tile applications is to expand. Manufacturers, distributors and architectural sales personnel must find more effective sales and marketing techniques if we hope to impact: when, how and why architects and designers (A/D) seek to use more ceramic tile on future projects. Technology in the ceramic industry has revolutionized this age-old building material, yet many professional firms remain unaware of the dramatic technical and aesthetic advances made to date. Industry products continue to be judged as imitative, faux and not “honest” by architects and designers. As such, ceramic tile is often selected as a second choice material when natural stone exceeds the clients’ budget. This prevailing attitude puts pressure on pricing, relegating ceramic tile to a cheap alternative rather than promoting quality, higher price tile programs which in fact, offer a more practical, user friendly and environmentally attractive solution. Analyzing current methods used to influence this target market reveals some illuminating truths about how effective or ineffective our tactics have been.

While monumental growth has occurred in the USA due to the industry’s commitment, we cannot rest on our laurels. The door to architectural acceptance of our products has yet to be unlocked. We must: constantly seek innovative paths; measure and question current strategies; be brutally critical of mediocre results; and test new directions. Our discussion paper offers no quarter and spares no feelings in revealing areas of marketing where we have been less than stellar. Breaking through the barrier and reaching the design community with effective tools and modes of communication may place “ceramic tile technology in a unique position to evolve and mature with the technical revolution. It could play an important role in 21st century architecture.” ^[1]

1. INTRODUCTION



Many architects hold negative viewpoints and judgments about tile:

These judgments were formed many years ago and persist today. While these assumptions exist, it is difficult if not impossible to open the minds of the A/D community to a point where they are willing to re-consider the material, form new judgments and evaluate the parallel technical and aesthetic advances the industry has accomplished in the last two decades.

A/D judge tile to be faux and imitative:

Obviously, the tremendous improvements in the style of superior programs, is not well understood, recognized or valued by today's professional specification writer.

Ceramic tile is not first in the minds of Architects & Designers:

Ceramic tile is often not the premium or first choice material in architectural specifications. Stone is the preferred finish due to its exclusive, natural and monolithic appearance. The simplistic non ornamented face of cut stone appeals to architectural sensibilities and modes of expression.

A/D sample libraries are horrendously small:

Because both visual and tactile stimuli are important, it would be opportunistic to have individual samples of all tiles in the A/D library. However, cumbersome heavy tile samples are usually given very limited space. Comments from architects on single tile samples can also reveal a level of frustration. The color variation inherent in ceramic tiles and the speed of changing fashions can limit the effective time span and appropriateness of the sample selection.

Architectural folders (AF) have limited impact:

AF's don't offer immediate visual stimulation and require the architect to search for an appropriate tile. When factory folders are utilized, it is not uncommon to find them relieved of color chips and tile samples. Ripping out the tile from the folder is

rationalized by the designer in order to specify the product. However, productive future use of this expensive tool becomes virtually useless.

AF's are also more likely to represent non-stocking commercial programs and may prove frustrating if, full sample pieces are not readily available for final selection by the architect. When samples cannot be provided in a timely manner, other coordinating finish selections are delayed and an alternate tile is likely to be substituted.

Product presentations can be a problem rather than a solution:

If A/D teams met with every product representative they would never have time to design or make a profit. In this age of consumerism and competitiveness each product category has literally hundreds of reps. It is a full time job fielding calls from every Tom, Dick and Susie begging for five minutes to introduce the architect to the latest, greatest building material. While professionals need to be familiar and informed about a vast number of construction and finish materials they do not want the minute details on every product and it is likely that they only want to see a product when they are actually looking for it.

A/D offices prefer to work with one favored "Go To" sales representative:

Although samples from every manufacturer, distributor and retailer may be present in design libraries or personally presented to the design team, the 80/20 rule of business applies. Eighty percent of the business goes to 20 percent of the sales reps. Consider the massive amount of product specified for every project and it will become crystal clear that each professional will, of necessity, narrow their network of product reps to the barest minimum.

When A/D's are ready to specify tile they chose to deal with a trusted rep who is technically trained, ethical, and knows where to locate any and all ceramic tile on the market and is willing to direct and advise the designer regardless if the product is supplied by them or not. If a sales representative does not have a working relationship with the A/D team, they are likely seen as a hindrance to practical time management schedules.

The value/cost equation for ceramic tile is unclear:

In order to create a compelling reason for increased ceramic tile use the specifier must be able to calculate the value. To date we have not been convincing in creating a logical case for: best price (low life cycle cost); best functionality (superior to natural stone); best aesthetics (multi-screen realism, shape, chromatic diversity, texture.); best environmentally (superior health, hygiene, durability & maintenance); best emotional attachment (history, culture, "the story")

In fact a common assumption made by architects creates a catch 22 situation. The value of ceramic tile is more easily recognized when there is substantial cost savings compared to stone and yet advanced quality ceramic tiles that provide an aesthetic equal to stone, may not provide the expected budget reduction.

The cost of untrained sales personal:

Inaccurate technical information and a lack of manufacturing data on individual tile programs, suggests a lack of professionalism and reliability. Sales representative

often do not have a clear understanding of: their own product; competitor's ceramic tile; alternate products; or how architectural offices work and the limited time frames available.

We are not even on the map- we lack visibility:

Over the past 25 years ceramic tile has completely re-invented itself. We must ask: why do architects continue to see ceramic tile as a dishonest imitation; why do the superior technical and maintenance characteristics of tile not create an argument for its use as an alternate to stone; why is a lower price necessary in order to create a compelling reason for an architect to select tile over stone; why is the premium cost of ceramic tile compared to alternate non-durable finishes seen as excessive or valueless in light of sustainable design concepts. While more information is being disseminated from industry sources, little of it has percolated down to the architect and any shift in perception has been minimal.

Current strategies need re-evaluation. Stagnation is one definition of insanity:

Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.^[2]

At Qualicer 2004 Javier Sastre Martin posed an interesting question, "Do we (not) know exactly what marketing is or what it is for?" His closing statement may be the most prophetic: "The sector may not be suffering from myopia, but, and this is worse, it may not know what (malady) it has."^[3] While the sector may not be ill, it seems to suffering from an appalling lack of curiosity concerning the reality of how North Americans view ceramic tile and their interpretation of industry advertising.

It is our hope to shine a strong light on the above realities. By looking back on the evolution of architecture in North America, sharing some insights into the psyche of American design professionals and making suggestions on alternate approaches we believe the industry can move closer to unlocking the door between A/D and begin to form a better appreciation for ceramic tile.

Architectural evolution did not favor ceramic tile:

In the past 75 years ceramic tile has not played a significant role in global architecture. While some of the reasons can be traced directly to the evolution of construction, extenuating circumstances may have had a greater impact on North American design professionals.

Historically, ceramic tile was used as an exterior cladding finish especially on preeminent public buildings. From Christopher Columbus to the turn of the 20th century, Americans copied the building form, expression, methods and materials from their European forefathers. Of note, US companies such as Gladding McBean produced architectural terra cotta facades and quarry tile from 1884, supplying some of the most significant historic landmarks. With references to the Art Nouveau style prevalent in Europe, terra cotta, stone and tile facades were used extensively for decoration and ornamentation of color, texture and detail. As in Europe, LIFE WAS GOOD FOR THE TILE INDUSTRY in North America.

One cannot reference American architecture without noting the 1871 Chicago Fire. This is likely the single most important event leading to the birth of the skyscraper and the development of a new form of construction and architecture. Following this

devastation, Chicago and on its heels countless other cities, states and provinces adopted a guideline stating that buildings over ninety feet in height had to be of fireproof construction. This edict opened the way to replace existing structures with taller buildings. The skyscraper was born and the slow downhill slide of tile as the cladding material of choice began.

World Trade Center Twin Towers, New York



At the same time a radical change in style was about to transform architectural expression. In the 20's the "International Style" in architecture gained momentum. Structural steel and reinforced concrete construction were perfected. With masonry walls eliminated, the outside wall became an enclosure versus a support structure. The very structure that required cladding was being replaced. Architects were in search of regularity. Simplicity was adopted and with the exception of color contrast, an avoidance of decoration was embraced.

In 1923 Walter Gropius can be heard saying to his students at the Bauhaus: "We want to create a clear, organic architecture, whose inner logic will be radiant and naked, unencumbered by lying facades and trickeries; we want an architecture adapted to our world of machines, radios and fast motor cars, an architecture whose function is clearly recognizable in the relation of its form." ^[4]

Around the same time, Mies Van De Rohe coined the saying "less is more"^[5] which became the mantra of every design school from that time forward.

Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1959, Frank Lloyd Wright



In the quest for maximum light and reflection, architects turned to glass. Buildings were sheathed in a glass skin suspended from a steel structure. The ideologies of the New World culture put North America at the forefront of this architectural revolution.

American architecture had entered the new age of modern experimentation. The Bauhaus, International style and the Chicago School principles became entrenched in the vernacular of architecture and decoration was stripped away. At the time ceramic tile could not present a viable option to the glass curtain wall and ceramic cladding fell out of fashion for exterior building treatments. Interior tile programs suffered a similar fate. Non-stone inspired tile decorated with screens, decals and patterns were unanimously viewed with disdain as non-functional ornamentation.

2. INSIGHTS

Understanding the origin of negative viewpoints and judgments:

Architects growing up in America do not have the historic or cultural appreciation for ceramic tile Europeans possess. With limited exposure to century old installations, it is little wonder they do not attach values such as quality, exclusivity or status to ceramic tile. Without this imprinted preference, ceramic tile is often viewed as a low status, questionable taste level finish. Social acceptance has been further eroded by questionable aesthetic applications.

It is imperative to bridge these cultural differences and appreciate where tile fits in the hierarchy of material finishes. Existing impressions of any product may be: positive; neutral; or in the worse case scenario – negative. Working from either a neutral or positive market perspective is a building process. When the initial impression is negative, marketing must develop a strategy to educate and re-build the image by reversing negative beliefs and judgments.

To a large degree the industry has ignored this vital step and instead concentrated on production oriented marketing. In essence professionals are expected to: forget what they believe; ignore what they've been taught; and abandon their judgments. Do we really believe that it is simply a matter of developing a new tile or introducing the perfect stylistic design that will finally win the architectural community over? You have to want to use ceramic tile before you can be impressed by the marketing of a specific brand.

We should be addressing perceptual differences in unison with product oriented marketing. We need to do much more to celebrate the cultural richness of the birth, evolution and language of ceramic tile. The romantic story is known by few outside Europe and Asia. We need to share the journey from ancient Artisanal craft, through the growing pains of the industrial revolution which sacrificed artistic excellence in favor of mass production in order to make an exclusive material attainable to all.

We have worked in virtual isolation with the exception of advertising and preaching to our own industry. Too often articles and advertisements are geared to industry insiders and those involved in distributing, retailing and installing ceramic tile. The industry must acknowledge and deal with the attitudes lurking in the design community. Otherwise they will continue to operate in the background making current marketing tools far less effective.

Ceramic tile is not seen as an excellent example of Biomimicry – it is seen as imitative

A large percentage of this generation of architects and designers were introduced to ceramic tile during the 70's and 80's when single screen decoration and non-modular programs were rife. Other than expensive hand decorated lines recognized for their artistic beauty, the bulk of tile dating from this period attempted to mimic stone. Unfortunately early designs were static, repetitive and unnatural. Any resemblance to stone was coincidental at best. Most ceramic tile of this era was derogatorily rejected as faux, dishonest and aesthetically unsuccessful.

Although multi-screen design technology such as Rotogravure has successfully resolved this aesthetic claim the fact remains virtually unidentifiable when a single tile sample is considered. Unfortunately, architectural presentations and folders often feature one sample. Comparison of a single tile provides little visible distinction between high end advanced tile and single screen or low technology tiles available in the market place. Therefore, initial reaction by the architect to any stone inspired tile is to assume all are poor aesthetic substitutions for stone regardless of the convincing reality new design methods achieve.

TESTIMONIALS



- Purism in decoration is often at odds with functionality.....ceramic tiles contain a wealth of possibilities that we cannot overlook. *Eradio López, interview from Azulejo.*
- If we want to talk about limitations, it must be said that Ceramic tile have achieved extremely artful replicas that faithfully reproduce their natural counterparts, & which cannot be distinguished from them, even by experts, once installed. *Oscar Castro, interview from Azulejo.*

Ceramic is a poor man's stone:

To date an architect would be challenged to convince a client to pay the same amount or even more for a ceramic tile compared to natural stone. Yet their opinion is pivotal in their role as design professionals, personal consumers and "influencers" of commercial and residential clients. When the architect finds a material aesthetically inferior, that material is rarely championed despite the value other features and benefits may offer end users. It is the single most compelling reason why we must work to shift the stylistic appreciation and knowledge of ceramic tile in the A/D community.



Specific characteristics important to consumers should be marketed directly to the consumer. We must present the characteristics of ceramic tile in relation to higher priced materials. The superior qualities of glazed tile over porous materials such as wood and natural stone reduce the time, energy and money consumers are obliged to spend on upkeep and ongoing maintenance. There is also a relaxed livability afforded by the stain resistance of an impervious glazed surface. It will be the end user - over worked and time stressed who will demand this feature from the A/D community

and champion increased ceramic tile use in lieu of higher maintenance alternate materials.

Ceramic tile is the runner up:

In the 70's, pre-environmental sentiments assigned little value to technical qualities such as durability, life cycle cost, scratch and impact resistance, hygiene, health and ease of maintenance. Architects had little product knowledge and no arguments to justify the premium cost of ceramic tile. Although environmental concerns have now placed a spotlight on these attributes, we have not capitalized on the advantages ceramic tiles exhibit. Consequently, the value equation for ceramic tile has not been significantly raised. Once installation cost is added to material cost, ceramic tile is more expensive than alternate materials that meet both functional and aesthetic goals. This has left ceramic tile languishing in a state of limbo between high cost noble finishes such as stone and wood and initial low cost floor and wall alternatives such as: carpet; linoleum; plaster; paint and wallpaper.

Life Cycle, Life Safety, LEED – What song should we sing?

Without comparative life cycle assessments (LCA), the environmental assets of ceramic tile are quickly discounted by the architectural community due to the high embodied energy required to produce and transport imported tile and the lack of claimed recycled content deemed to be the most recognizable flag by which sustainable products are judged. Therefore, a general and widely held opinion regarding compliance to LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) designed projects, does not particularly favor the use of tile. Nor has the sustainable validity of non-durable finishes been questioned especially if the products are locally produced and include recycled content. The green equation for ceramic tile has not been well documented.

In order to create a clearer value argument for ceramic tile we must develop a concise, scientifically based challenge to materials that: have a high replacement frequency; create a repeated burden on landfill resources; and require chemical or solvent based maintenance, sealing and refinishing products that are consistently flushed into our ecosystem. Financially and environmentally the initial low cost of alternate materials represents a false economy when replacement and maintenance costs are factored into the lifetime cost of the product.

A/D professionals increasingly want to address health and safety issues. They are seriously adopting LEED certification. This is an opportunity for the manufacturers to show their awareness of their target market by providing additional information on product and production.

Are Industry tools the right tools?

The value of Design Library Samples:

Single tile samples found in a design library may be: discontinued; out of stock and not available within the time frame of the project; a substantially different color (dye lot) compared to current stock; not representative of the wide variation of color in a range; not labeled or incorrectly labeled regarding size-price-type or finish; and lacking information regarding the best use or application. These situations have created an attitude of distrust in design offices regarding the accuracy and validity of

tile samples. Consequently, many professionals use samples for inspiration only and are ambivalent to the original sample source. Once a sample is chosen it is likely to serve as a style reference while the ultimate tile choice is supplied by the preferred sales representative.

Other specification tools placed in architectural offices, such as brochures, may be rarely utilized. In fact sales representatives who have never got past the receptionist (gatekeeper) and personally met the project architects, tell stories of faithfully placing new product information in the A/D library hoping to generate interest in their ceramic tile programs. In order to confirm if the architect has reviewed the information, they insert a \$20.00 bill into the binder only to return months later to retrieve their untouched hard earned cash.

Architectural folders modified to work:

Architectural Folders (AF) with complete technical data and application images can provide more reliable specification information. However, they are as susceptible as single samples to the problems listed above. We can do a much better job with the tools the industry has been using for the past 25 years simply by asking the design community what they like about them and what they would change to make them more effective.

Any number of suggestions could be made to increase the effectiveness of these architectural tools. Color chip sets separated into floor & wall samples similar to boxed stone sets; utilizing Velcro for AF's instead of permanently gluing in samples; factory labeling single sample pieces; color variation coding; intended use of the tile clearly noted on the AF spine, immediate and direct sample shipments from the manufacturers website. But the best results will be achieved when manufacturers ask their International clients what value, preferences and characteristics they need. Knowing: how an architect would prefer to use a tool; what their purchasing behavior is; and what their expectations are is invaluable.

Focus must be on what the user needs and then on the product that is showcased by the marketing tool. When considering copy, it is irrelevant who the seller is, what the seller is doing, why the seller is doing it, how long the seller has been doing it, and so on. Marketing tools should not be self-centered or filled with "marketing fluff". Copy filled with superlatives and buzzwords that fail to state what the product does, how it's different and why a buyer should care, does not differentiate the product nor convince the professional.

The Value of Qualified Representation & Sales Training:

The value of a sales representative is not how many times they visit the architectural office or how many samples and architectural folders they place in design libraries, or how many building starts they track down but, how many architects and designers consider them to be the only ceramic tile expert worth consulting.

Successful field representatives understand the almost love-hate relationship between architects and product salespeople. They know what the architect needs and respect the limited time available. They rarely call unless the architect has called them, and when they're called they respond as soon as possible with the information requested.

Manufacturers must recognize this invaluable relationship and dedicate far more resources to train front line sales personal not only on the technical, historic and aesthetic side of the product but also on sales skills centered on working with design professionals. We must brainstorm to create innovative strategies and tools that require less face time with the architect and provide a broader spectrum of information on ceramic tile.

Imagine how refreshingly appealing a new approach would be. Consider the benefits to the architect if they received the following introduction letter from a new ceramic tile representative.

Dear Mr. Architect,

As your industry representative, I propose to:

1. Ask you what you want and then deliver what you need, when you need it!
2. Send you email images of dynamic ceramic tile settings and applications. I hope these will serve as inspiration and keep you informed of new product and installation ideas. I will not include product copy information unless requested. I normally send a monthly image, however frequency can be modified according to the needs of your office.
3. On a quarterly basis I will prepare and email a review of current trends in the world of ceramic tile. Significant technical achievements, new installation products and methods, color, texture and size trends and unique applications for ceramic tile will be highlighted. I will also feature projects done by yourself and your peers in our regional area.
4. I will keep you informed about all educational activities in our vicinity including seminars and presentations offered by our company. I will review these programs to ensure they are generic, informative and provide professionals with an overall working knowledge of the topic that can be applied across the board to ceramic tile and not just specific product.
5. On your request, I will review any draft specification to ensure that pertinent industry standards regarding material and installation methods are met. I will suggest deletions of any redundant or unnecessary sections in the Master Specification that do not pertain to your individual project. This will enable an accurate and tight bidding process that does not include lump sum contingency costs for confusing or unnecessary items on your specification.
6. Although my company represents some of the top quality ceramic tile lines on the market, I will not request a meeting to review the product nor will I place samples in your library. I understand your interest in ceramic tile will vary depending on current projects and the needs of your clients. Therefore, when you call to request a meeting and we have discussed the technical and stylistic goals of your project, I will respond immediately, with a viable selection of products.
7. At any time you can also visit our comprehensive website at:
www.ceramicexpert.com

Product is categorized under ceramic use, (floor / wall/ interior / exterior) as well as by project type (commercial, residential, institutional, hospitality) for easy access. Samples can be ordered directly from our website and are normally delivered with 24 hours. Our image file includes copies of all email jpegs and can be downloaded from the site.

Technical contact numbers are available for each time zone to improve our response time and reflect the needs of A/D offices from the West coast to the East coast.

8. I will keep myself informed regarding your firms preferred type of project. In this way I can more accurately judge the product selection and technical information required to meet the needs of your office and project specialties.
9. I will carefully research ceramic tiles available in our region and direct and advise you to the correct source whether supply is from my company or a competitors company. With the assistance of industry manufacturers, I will investigate reliable installation methods and materials to provide viable solutions for innovative applications of ceramic tile envisioned on your projects.
10. Should you currently be working with a top ceramic tile consultant, I respectfully request to be included on your "Go to" list as number 2.

Increasing Visibility: New Directions

Do you know how the average professional describes ceramic tile and what areas they commonly think of using tile? Would knowing this information change how and where you advertise your product? What is the industry's visibility quotient in the architectural community and are we lacking insight into what inspires creative innovation?

The most common words used by architects and designers to describe ceramic tile are:

- Interior finish
- white, cream, beige and any other shade of boring
- 12-inch format or smaller

When asked where architects & designers immediately think of using tile, the top responses are:

- Kitchens & Baths
- Public & garage lobbies
- Pools

It should be evident that the industry has made little headway penetrating the vast field of architectural applications for ceramic tile. With what the industry is capable of, it is a pity that we are not more commonly associated with: wall cladding systems, rain screens, exterior floor & wall tiling, balconies, pool decks, al fresco kitchens, large

format floor & wall tile, rectified, polished and textured surfaces, diverse chromatic effects, blends, patterns, urban spaces, parks and public art.

Ceramic tile should be seen in communal spaces rather than just kitchens and baths.

Although our advertising focus is slowly changing, the limiting message we're sending to our audience may not be readily apparent. Images are too often: interior spaces; staged to look like a bathroom or a kitchen; and resoundingly beige. When a beautiful wall and floor are photographed the set designer somehow feels compelled to add a bar of soap, bottle of shampoo, or a glass container of pasta to the scene. The appearance of these staged props only serves to limit the imagination and firmly entrench the idea that ceramic tile belongs in kitchens and baths only.



Instead, the industry should seize every opportunity of showing ceramic tile in unique applications in addition to kitchens and baths. Using dramatic colors, patterns and textures done with taste will capture more attention than featuring the best selling beige tile. The advertisement should be memorable. Taking out advertising space in consumer, architectural, interior design magazines and home improvement magazines will reach the A/D community and the consumer.

Advertise in the right place:

It is consumer oriented magazines that architects and designers scan daily. They access literally hundreds of sources and have an innate ability to mentally file ideas. They are avid readers and keen observers. Inspiration is piqued daily by images they see in print, on the net, in showrooms, from the designs of their peers and through experiencing different cultural and philosophical approaches to design in their travels.



Synergistic Showrooms:

While the industry benefits greatly from exclusive ceramic tile and floor covering showrooms, it would be advantageous to expand our reach and form synergistic relationships with non-competing material suppliers. Ceramic tile displays should be seen in every type of showroom where designers shop. Tile panels or vignettes should be combined with hardware, appliances, millwork, lighting,

cabinets, upholstery, computer equipment, fixtures, art & sculpture, doors, fireplaces, textiles, office furniture, etc. Architects and designers need to see more tile in-situ and in combination with other material.

It is time to revolutionize our message and our image

The industry has several design and educational tools intended for use with design professionals. Most have not been created specifically for the North American market regarding their culture, preferences, language and values. We should not expect a Spanish brochure, created to target the European market and translated into English, will meet the needs of the North American market. We may all be familiar with the marketing flop of the Ford Nova in Spain – no one wanted to buy a car whose name (no va) translated to “no go”. This caliber of marketing tool may have served a purpose when ceramic tile imports were low and tile was sold only through specialty tile shops. However, it is inconceivable to imagine that this lack of marketing professionalism and skill has a positive impact on the design community or the well informed consumer today.

Every arm of the ceramic tile distribution chain should re-evaluate their current plan to reach the design community. Our efforts should be concentrated on programs that will attract, educate and inform. Users will tell us the impact –negative and positive, we are having on their decision making process. Asking and listening to their suggestions and criticisms requires time, energy and money.

MEASURING results and the return on investment from present strategies begs us to answer:

- Can we increase the value of architectural samples in the professional design library?
- Do building professionals need individual salespeople or can the information highway and high-tech websites replace many office sales calls?
- How can we train ceramic representative to become a valuable asset to design teams?
- Can we change the reality of the designer who “rarely has the time to see a new product presentation” but demands immediate attention when “they decide they want to use tile and need to see all of the samples”?

The Challenge

For the past 30 years the ceramic tile industry has invested millions of dollars re-inventing itself. There is no area of product development that has not been overhauled and improved from a technical, functional, budgetary and aesthetic viewpoint. The industry has also made impressive strides increasing the market in North America and throughout the world. However, a successful business always challenges itself to do more. This overview of the industry’s marketing strengths and weaknesses is intended to inspire our industry to “think outside the box” and capture the enormous opportunities available if we are willing to question, dissect and re-design areas of our business that have not served us well. Effective marketing is the prime function that will produce results.

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