

Household equipment

Fragile products, demanding manufacturers



With the boom in the private house construction market and the home decorating frenzy, the household equipment sector is experiencing high growth. Consumers are spending a large part of their budget on the sector, and are well informed about what they are buying thanks to new media, such as the Internet. The market is highly competitive and transport demands are extreme: service quality, and above all brand image.



It's not easy to present figures for the household equipment market due to the extent of its products: kitchens, chimneys, light work (inside and outside joinery, windows), washroom facilities, heating, electrical appliances, etc. Not only is the market wide-ranging, but there are many different brands too. Furthermore, consumers are well-informed and know what they want, often making their first selection on the Internet before doing the rounds of the brands.

They are looking for choice, good value for money, impeccable finishing, and on top of that, they want quick delivery!

Manufacturers have to offer extensive ranges, via multi-channel distribution (specialist DIY stores and craftsmen). But companies in the household equipment market cannot have a factory for each type of product. As a result, they have to organise their supply chain thoroughly, with flexible industrial



tools and optimised logistics plans (storage, flow management). Hence their search for service providers that can meet the specific features of this market.

The manufacturer's image is at stake

"We make kitchens, bathrooms and dressing rooms to order. We have to optimise the logistics chain by combining the four weeks of production and our trading activity (washroom facilities and electrical goods)," explains Pascal Bert, Industrial and Logistics Manager with Fournier. *"Vehicles are filled to the maximum; items are loaded one by one because they are all different sizes and weights."* That's the major constraint in this sector, because the products are bulky and fragile at the same time. Distributors work to order and the notion of service is essential. Products must arrive on time, in excellent condition, to meet customers' immediate expectations.

"When drivers deliver to our customers, it's our image that's at stake."

Kitchens, bathrooms and dressing rooms are marketed under the brand names Mobalpa and Pérène.

With 25 years' experience in this sector, Norbert Dentressangle has followed the development of this market and knows how to meet manufacturers' needs: optimal filling (bulky products), handling (fragile packages), and delivery timeframes (logistics chain). *"The fleet of trailers belongs to us, but half of the transport is handled by external service providers, particularly Norbert Dentressangle, with 12 contracts, states Pascal Bert. The Group meets our needs in terms of product handling, and its staff knows our sector of activity well. We expect a real customer culture from them; when they deliver, it's our image that's at stake."*

The company FIMA, manufacturer of external joinery, has the same demands. *"Norbert Dentressangle provides vehicles according to how the rounds are organised",* explains Michel Pichon, transport manager with FIMA. *"The contract includes physical characteristics as well as quality requirements, such as vehicle cleanliness. The goods are loaded by our staff, but when the customer exchanges with the driver, he's dealing with FIMA."* Breakages and disputes are rare, proving the Group's customer service skills. The end customer is satisfied as he knows his order has been carefully looked after!

Mobalpa and Pérène

Fournier makes and sells kitchens, bathrooms and dressing rooms under different brands, notably Mobalpa and Pérène. *The company, based in Thônes (Haute-Savoie, France), employs 1,040 people and its turnover is more than 200 million euros. 200,000 product references are proposed to more than 500 distributors in France and abroad. In 2005, 500,000 kitchen furniture items and 80,000 bathroom furniture items were dispatched.*

FIMA

Based in Lissieu (Rhône, France), the company makes external joinery items, windows and doors, notably in PVC (60% of turnover), wood (25%) and aluminium; a very wide range and made-to-measure products. *Transport makes use of 50 semi-trailers each week and FIMA guarantees its 150 major customers a fixed delivery date.*



The head office of FIMA in Lissieu (Rhône, France).

