

This new state-of-the-art showroom uses innovative design and merchandising concepts — including making the most of its own restrooms — to help visitors deepen their understanding of both product style and performance



American Standard's new display space brims with smart ways to create an environmentally-sensitive showroom cost effectively — while also highlighting the sophisticated engineering it takes to be a performance leader. Housed in the company's Piscataway, N.J. Product Design Center, the showroom is designed to help residential and commercial building professionals experience the reality of American Standard Brands® "total bath and kitchen solutions". The flexible display space demonstrates a solution for cost-efficiently keeping showrooms changed and updated, while effectively meeting marketplace demands.

American Standard
Style That Works Better.

Case study:

New American Standard® Design Center Showroom Tells the Story of Style That Works Better

Designed to sell complete solutions of style and performance, the new American Standard Brands® to-the-trade showroom gives visitors a complete view of the company's extensive offerings of bathroom and kitchen products. Housed in the company's Product Design Center in Piscataway, N.J. the newly-renovated design center brims with ideas, from luxurious new product offerings to the smart ideas for creating a flexible environmentally-sensitive showroom cost effectively. In addition, the new showroom, which primarily targets showroom



managers and sales consultants, highlights the sophisticated engineering required to produce plumbing products that work consistently well, even after many years of active use.

"We set up our showroom within the Product Design Center because we truly believe that once people see the tools, time and effort it takes to develop bath and kitchen products, they will come away with a better appreciation of what it takes to design high-quality, high-performing products and why American Standard is a leader in the industry," says Jeannette Long, the company's chief marketing officer. "Helping our showroom operators understand the product design and engineering — as well as the style — is important to the sale."

Traditional, Transitional & Contemporary

Key to the setup of the new American Standard showroom space is the way it displays fixtures, faucets and furniture in style families: traditional, transitional and contemporary, as well as grouped into solutions for vertical markets such as hospitality and education. As choices proliferate, grouping like-style toilets, sinks and faucets into solutions-oriented display modules helps to clarify the attributes of each style and facilitate the selection process. The showroom includes products from the American Standard, Jado®, Porcher®, Fiat® and Safety Tubs® brands.

“Showroom design and merchandising today requires retail thinking,” explains Long. “We created displays that both highlight the latest in style trends and demonstrate the ways our partners can help enhance the customer experience in their own showrooms.”



Among the hottest product trends in the bathroom today is the move to freestanding soaking tubs, as well as air-baths with chromatherapy. “We capitalize on the consumer appeal of these tubs by displaying a model in the front

window to draw buyers in with the product they most desire,” says Long.



A major goal of the American Standard showroom is to demonstrate how the end-user can experience the reality of the finished product, while assuring a flexible display space that can cost-effectively change with the marketplace. To showcase the next generation of showroom design and merchandising ideas, the American Standard Piscataway showroom includes these key customer takeaways:

Eco Design: "We asked ourselves: how do we create a green showroom?" says Carter Thomas, American Standard's senior director, design and brand management. "We design water-saving products to help save the earth's resources, so why can't we employ the same thinking in showing them?"

To that end, the new display space is outfitted with renewable and recycled materials: fabric on the wall, bamboo on the floor, energy efficient lighting – all of them environmentally-sensitive choices that align with the company's product development efforts.



Flex Space: The plumbing industry provides consumers beautiful spaces to shop for plumbing products – but at great cost. Fully outfitted vignettes create the dream spaces that inspire shoppers, but these spaces also require an investment that prohibits regular display updates.

"Today's economy requires a new model," says Thomas, "a cost-effective display strategy that makes it easy for a showroom operator to change out products as new models come on line." One option employed in the showroom is photography hanging in the displays to reflect the finished bathrooms, so visitors still get the "Wow", yet it is easier, and less costly, to change the photos frequently to update the look.

In addition, in the new showroom all displays are built on freestanding bases that can be moved at a moment's notice. "Nothing is locked down or tiled in," says Thomas. "We don't have to live with them for years, and any time we want to shift the product displays for a special event, we can. This approach offers the flexibility and affordability every showroom manager needs."

Create a Path: A swath of yellow-flecked carpet zigzags through the showroom, while track lighting in the ceiling follows this path, highlighting the products along the way. "I call it our own yellow brick road," laughs Gray Uhl, design director for American Standard. Beyond the decorative



addition, the recycled-fiber carpet literally sets the direction for visitors. "We help to organize the shopper's experience, even before a sales person is available to give a guided tour," Long adds. "Smart space-planning, combined with thought-filled decoration, is a critical tool in showroom design."

Daylighting: Nothing brightens a space or creates an airy, spacious feeling like natural light. Large windows bring plenty of sunlight into the new showroom while providing generous viewing portals to today's hottest products.



Working Water: Flowing faucets and bubbling tubs are synonymous with kitchen and bath showrooms. So are expensive recirculating pumps and potentially clogged drains: the downside of delivering the expected customer experience. American Standard's designers found a better way. All working faucet and shower displays reside against walls that back up to the restrooms, where supply piping and drainage lines already exist. "This is the simplest, most economical way to create working displays in a showroom," explains Thomas. "We would recommend this to anyone."

Design the Restrooms: What had been conventional, uninspired office bathrooms are now mini-showrooms of their own. The front restrooms, featuring striking Jado, Porcher and American Standard faucets and furniture, colorful contemporary pendant lamps and private water closets behind shuttered doors, have the feel of a chic upscale club or restaurant. Two restrooms in the rear of the design center showcase solutions for commercial settings, including walk-in barrier-free showers.



"Our thinking in designing these type of bathrooms was, 'If not us, who?'" says Uhl. "These newly renovated restrooms effectively expand our display space."



Learning Environment

Innovative product displays tell only one part of the state-of-the-art story at the new showroom. American Standard customers also receive fascinating product training, viewing the product development process from design concept through to testing finished products. On guided tours of the product development facilities and extensive testing laboratories located in the same building, visitors view first-hand the vigorous procedures used to ensure the high performance of American Standard Brand products.

Adjacent to the display space is a conference room that can readily morph into a fully automated classroom with projectors, reflecting the organization's determination to create a state-of-the-art learning center for its customers. Two office cubicles nearby allow guests to plug in their laptops and take care of business back home.



"Our goal is to deliver on style that works better in every part of our business," says Long. "It is up to us to explain the performance story, while showcasing the look. Our goal is that every customer who spends time here leaves able to understand and convey to their customer the total story about the inherent value of American Standard Brand products."

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