

EPCH makes a presentation on the Council's role in exports at MSME's Sensitisation National Workshop on Export Marketing

EPCH was invited to present a lecture on its role in exports at the National Workshop on "Export marketing" organized by MSME-Development Institute, Agra. This was a two days program from 24th to 25th October, held at Hotel Bhawana Clarks Inn, Agra. The EPCH representative made an informative presentation on the Council's history, its organizational structure and functions. He



informed the gathering about membership pre-requisites and fees and explained about the various benefits of being a member. EPCH's overseas reach, through participation in trade and marketing platforms abroad as well as its b2b shows in India like the IHGF Delhi Fair, Home Expo India and Indian Fashion Jewellery & Accessories Show were highlighted. The presentation also included information about the Council's website, online presence, its print and digital publications, etc. ■

CPSC looks to raise tipover test weights

Testing requirement increase from 50 to 60 pounds recommended

The US Consumer Product Safety Commission is recommending that the test weight for a voluntary tip-over standard be increased from 50 to 60 pounds in order to cover a larger segment of the youth population up to age six. The recommendation was presented in a Sept. 30 staff briefing on furniture tip-overs compiled by CPSC staff. It primarily addresses ASTM F2057-14, the voluntary standard for tip-overs. Intended to cover children up to and including age five, this standard applies to free standing clothing storage units more than 30 inches high such as chests, door chests and dressers. According to the standard, an empty unit shall not tip over when the drawer is opened to the stop and a 50-pound weight is applied to the open drawer. The standard also requires the case have a warning label about the dangers of tip overs. A 2009 version of the standard also addressed the need for tip-restraint devices (TRDs), a requirement that in 2014 was moved into a separate standard, ASTM-3096-14. CPSC's recent testing of clothing storage units (CSUs) found more than half of the units tested, 31 out of 61 samples, do not comply with ASTM F2057-14, the voluntary standard for furniture tip-overs. The report also noted that 34 of the 61, 56% of the CSUs, contained a warning label related to tip-over hazards. And of the 61 samples, the CPSC found that 18, or 30%, did not include tip restraint devices.

The CPSC report estimates that tip-overs over furniture occurring from 2000 to 2015 resulted in 2,600 emergency department treated injuries and 97 fatalities involving chests, bureaus and dressers. In addition to the 60-pound testing requirement, it recommended that tip-restraint performance requirements need to be reintegrated into ASTM F2057-14. Currently this is covered by ASTM F3096-14, which CPSC believes is a very limited standard with one test that can only address one type of test restraint device (TRD). It also recommends the development of system-level testing methods that allow for the "innovation of alternate or integrated TRDs," including versions that ultimately can withstand the 60 pound test weight. CPSC also recommends the modification of warning labels on or inside case pieces to address issues raised in its report. Among its labeling recommendations are to:

- ❑ Strengthen requirements for permanency of the label on the piece.
- ❑ Identify a conspicuous location on the case for the warning label.
- ❑ Allow for the customization of the warning label based on the design of the unit so that the label specifically addresses and applies to specific pieces.
- ❑ Compare warning messages with incident data to make sure that known hazardous situations are identified.
- ❑ Revising the message panel text in a way that it is easily understood and does not contradict typical clothing storage unit use and that also motivates consumers to comply with the warning. ■ *Source: Furniture Today*

Toys tied to experiences, family time & healthy living

Propel industry growth through the holiday season

US toy sales grew by 6% from January through September 2016, according to retail sales data from global information company The NPD Group. NPD expects several trends to drive the toy industry to continued growth through the remainder of 2016, including consumer movement towards experiential purchasing, the popularity of collectibles, the drive toward healthier living, and higher price-points during this holiday season. For the year, NPD estimates toy sales to be up approximately 6.5%.

Seven of 11 toy supercategories have posted year-over-year growth through September. Of the seven, the fastest growing is games and puzzles, up 16%, followed by dolls and action figures & accessories, both up 12%. Within games and puzzles, every type of game is fueling growth, from family strategy and board games, to brainteasers and adult games, as well as pre-school games. With the pie face game and UNO card game both among this year's top 10 selling items year-to-date, it is highly likely that toys tied to family fun experiences will be on many people's wish list this holiday season.



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The trend in games is definitely one to watch, and it will continue to flourish as families look for more together time. The collectibles craze has built significant momentum heading into the fourth quarter. Sales of collectibles, which fall under playset dolls and action figures, were up 64%, or over \$220 million, through September. Approximately one-quarter of the \$220 million is tied to blind bags, which are estimated to have grown about 80% so far this year. Within collectibles, there are a lot of new choices, and blind bags especially are expected to make great stocking stuffers this Christmas.

The healthy living trend is a likely growth driver in many non-toy categories NPD tracks, from athletic footwear and activewear, to digital fitness and fresh food consumption. It is also tied to 9% year-to-date growth in outdoor & sports toys, the largest toy supercategory with dollar sales representing about a quarter of all toy industry sales. On a dollar-basis only, Outdoor & Sports is the industry's strongest growing thus far in 2016. While collectibles such as blind bags may be popular stocking stuffers, higher-priced toys are likely to be the presents wrapped under the tree this holiday season. ■ *Source: NPD*

When physical stores work

Several channels like off-price and home improvement retailers do better in brick-and-mortar formats

While no one denies that e-Commerce is a critical part of retail, there are times when brick-and-mortar locations have



proven that they have the winning formula. When consumers are on the hunt for limited, off-price products, for example, or items for home improvement projects, they prefer to do that in store, evidenced by off-price and home improvement retailers that have been posting stellar financial results lately. Targeting online customers to shop in-store with coupons can also drive sales, according to new research from Temple University recently published by Harvard Business Review.

In the off-price retail channel, the home category has been especially strong, up 12.8% last year, according to a recent in-depth sector report from Moody's Investors Service, compared to growth of 3% for overall retail. The star in the group is TJX with its HomeGoods division reporting 14% sales growth last year. Off-price retailers' off-mall locations are also more convenient for consumers, being closer to their homes. It's a difficult model to replicate online.

Because of that, brick-and-mortar stores are the key to this channel's growth. While department stores have built their e-Commerce business to counter traffic losses at their physical stores, along with closing stores, off-price retailers—the top four being TJX, Ross Stores, Burlington Coat Factory and Nordstrom Rack—are set to add another 4% of square footage this year with new locations. Home improvement retailers are also experiencing strong growth. For its second quarter, Home Depot broke its own records tallying net income up 9.3% on sales that were up 6.6% compared to the same period last year. Home improvement retailers shine in certain areas at the store level. The research found that online-only customers who were sent online-only coupons and lived farther away were more inspired to buy online. ■ *Source: HFN*