

# Artisan Design Group Finds Success with the STAINMASTER® Brand Amidst a Buyer's Market



Jaimi Thompson, president of Artisan Design Group, attributes her design center's success to its commitment to quality product offerings and to its customers, despite an uneven buyer's market. Thompson reminds us that although the design center has become a profit center among builders, it originated during a slow market to give builders a competitive edge with home buyers. The design center was established to offer new home buyers variety, choice and the opportunity to customize their home with assistance from trained designers who keep up with current trends and sales techniques.

Artisan Design Group ensures its commitment to quality by only offering STAINMASTER® carpet. Thompson explained, "Today's home buyer feels that products offered at design centers are overpriced and that the selection process is overwhelming. We provide high quality goods and educate the home buyer on the products we offer. Home buyers understand the benefits of an upgrade and what product best suits their lifestyle. Our cornerstone approach to selling is first educating consumers about choices based on value."

Thompson said, "When home buyers pay to upgrade their carpet, they want to see a tremendous difference in quality and have the assurance of a brand such as STAINMASTER® carpet."

Artisan Design Center's choice to offer STAINMASTER® carpet exclusively has resulted in flourishing sales. "Since our design center converted to only offering STAINMASTER® carpet, our average sales have increased, and we have happier home buyers who are educated about the product they purchase," said Thompson.

Artisan Design Group recently presented the "DESIGN CENTER FORUM 2006," sponsored by INVISTA. The forum was designed to create a development opportunity for new home design center managers and design center consultants. "There is no independent arena for design center professionals in this country to interact with each other. We offered two days entirely focused on the design center business, as well as the design center manager's business," said Thompson.

The theme, "Design Centers in a Buyer's Market: Lean, Leverage and Win," equipped attendees with tips on key managerial skills such as hiring practices, coaching techniques, designer showroom planning and merchandising and color forecasting. Design center managers and consultants were able to strengthen their communication skills and deepen the financial advice they often provide to consumers.

Keynote speakers at the forum discussed the recession in the new home market. "Building costs are up, and buyer confidence is down. Consequently, builder stock is down, and the new home construction market has slowed tremendously. The forum addressed the design center's role in a slow market," said Thompson.

"As the once fast-paced market winds down, we have found success educating home buyers on the benefits and quality in STAINMASTER® carpet. Because our customers are educated on the product offerings, they can make the decision to invest in higher quality, because they understand the benefits of purchasing a quality product," said Thompson.

## Light Bulb Moment

*Designing Times speaks with a new home design expert who experience to help other designers work more effectively and increase their productivity. For this issue, Designing Times features Peggy Dias, design director for Creative Design Interiors. STAINMASTER® National Designer Council, who shares your "light bulb moment" and will be featured in future issues.*



When we opened our recent design center a couple of years ago, my team and I reviewed a system that worked for us. The design center layout works efficiently for both designers and home buyers. The facility is 4,000 square feet and allows new home buyers to browse through from one end to the other before they enter their homes.

For the various design stations that wrap around the perimeter of our design center. These stations include living areas, bedrooms, bathrooms, and kitchens and eventually end with window coverings and accessories. With this layout, home buyers can walk from one sectioned off area to another with clear direction. The center area has four design stations to allow home buyers privacy during their appointments with a designer. The design stations are: carpet, window coverings, lighting, and tile. When it came to carpet, we encountered difficulties in creating a system that worked. After trying various products using a numbering system and then a color coding system, we finally had to file by style. Once we address the home buyer's lifestyle, we can easily access the products they need.

Having an organized and compartmentalized design center is very important, I feel. Home buyers enter about the reception home buyers receive. The moment home buyers enter the design center they are greeted by our concierge, where they are offered drinks and then taken to a design station. We strive to give our clients a very warm and friendly experience along with great design options. It's about the total experience from beginning to end.

-Peggy Dias, Creative Design Interiors

