

Press Release

Hamburg, 13. January 2015

OTTO and TNS Infratest present Living Study 2015: home furnishings and feeling comfortable – furniture buying in Germany

Who calls the shots when buying furniture? How important are price, function and looks to the Germans? What role do over-the-counter retailers and online shops play when it comes to furniture? And how do preferences differ across age groups?

Together with Joachim Bacher, Senior Director TNS Infratest, and Uwe Linke, home-environment psychologist and author, Dr Michael Heller, Vice Spokesman and Member of the OTTO Management Board, Category Management presented the core results of the OTTO Living Study on 13 January at the Floating Home in Hamburg.

Here's an overview of the key results:

- Feeling comfortable at home (90%) is more important to the Germans than driving a prestigious car (15%).
- Germans prefer to make home-furnishing decisions together with other people – their friends or family for singles, or with their partner and children for couples.
- Women prefer a cosy home, whereas men prefer a clearly structured dwelling.
- The way people live changes throughout different life stages. In terms of home furnishings young families redesign the most. Older couples, however, invest the most money.
- The price of furniture only matters to every second person. When buying furniture, Germans place particular emphasis on good-looking products that are functional and durable.

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- Children have a strong influence over the determining factors in selecting furniture: functionality takes precedence over looks, and criteria such as ensuring furniture is free of toxic substances are more important if there are kids at home.
- Online shopping is growing in popularity – and 24 per cent of Germans consider it likely that they will buy furniture online in future.
- The reasons for this are mainly the convenience of shopping from home and the associated time and cost savings. The improved comparability of furniture on the Internet and the greater selection on offer are also seen as advantages.
- Compared to over-the-counter retail, when shopping online customers miss being able to experience the furniture for real, as well as the opportunity to see and feel the quality for themselves. Uncertainty about potentially having to return goods also means the Germans are (still?) quite hesitant.
- Besides free delivery, the most popular approaches to resolving this issue include simplified furniture returns as well as dimension and weight descriptions that are as accurate as possible.

"As a leading German online retailer for Living assortments we need to know consumers' needs day in, day out. We know our customers. With the help of this representative Living Study we have now got to know German consumers as a whole and will use these findings to further improve the presentation of our Living and Home Furnishing offerings at otto.de, schlafwelt.de, crouch.de and naturloft.de", explained Heller at the presentation of the findings.

In addition, OTTO intends to raise customer awareness and communicate more strongly the services they can depend on – from qualified expert advice, through free fabric swatches and wood samples, to assembly and straightforward returns collection if something doesn't fit or is missing. Heller went on to add: "Our explicit goal for the Furniture and Home Furnishings segment is to generate additional revenues in the triple-digit millions by 2016. We believe we're on the right track and will continue to invest."

The single company OTTO commissioned the independent market-research institute TNS Infratest to carry out the representative OTTO Living Study 2015 in three stages. "We spoke to experts, visited consumers in their homes and ran a representative online panel survey of the German population", explained Bacher to the journalists at the event. When analysing the results, the respondents' respective life stage was also factored in for the first time.

The linking of qualitative and quantitative results produced a well-formed picture of what matters most to Germans when buying interior furnishings and furniture. The fact that women and men have different home-furnishing preferences is explained from a home-environment psychological perspective, such as with different home-furnishing types: "Proximity and Distance types become apparent when furnishing a home. In principle, both types are diametrically opposed. And of course, there is also a magical attraction between the two", explained Linke in Hamburg.

Besides Linke, interior furnishings designer Christina Bendig, consumer-behaviour psychologist Michael Schiessl, interior designer and blogger Jasmin Gühlich, and trend-expert Birgit Gebhardt participated in the realisation of the OTTO Living Study.

See our dossier OTTO Living Study 2015 for the Study Booklet, a summarizing infographic and further details on the topic.

Further information about TOPIC is available at www.otto.de/unternehmen.

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