

Consumers Turn to Digital for Home Improvement Inspiration and Research

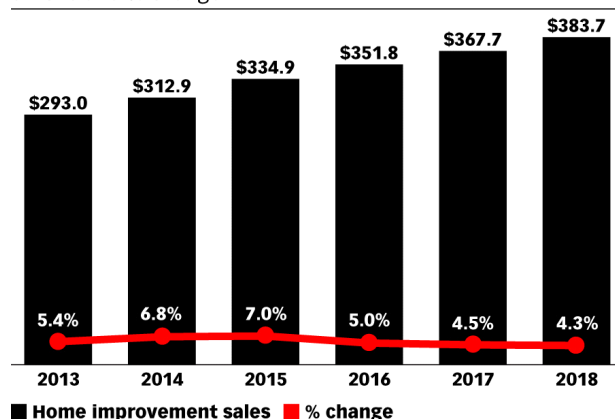
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Social, mobile key digital channels for home improvement advice

For brands and retailers in the home improvement sector, ecommerce was not an option in the initial phase of digital commerce, but improving technology and shifting consumer behaviors are changing that, according to a new eMarketer report, "Home Improvement: The Digital Tool Kit Inspires Do-It-Yourselfers."

Digital transactions for home improvement products remain rare, making up a tiny portion of the whole—albeit one that is growing rapidly. But digital channels play an important role in the research, planning and shopping phases of home improvement—wherever and however a final sale occurs. As in almost every vertical, the path to purchase is increasingly an amalgam of digital and real-world experiences.

US Home Improvement Sales, 2013-2018
billions and % change



Note: represents the consumer and professional market segments
Source: IHS Global and Home Improvement Research Institute (HIRI) as cited in press release, Oct 1, 2013

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Over one-third of homeowners start their home improvement projects online, according to [Zillow](#), a real estate website. In its winter 2013 survey of US adults, 39% said they found inspiration for such projects online.

In a 2013 survey of do-it-yourself (DIY) shoppers by [Compete](#) in conjunction with [Google](#), the majority of respondents were using digital as a resource when looking for information on products for a DIY project. Over seven in 10 used the internet for information or help in starting a project, and 25% researched a specific brand.

How-to videos on YouTube, kitchen remodel projects posted on Facebook, paint samples pinned on Pinterest—consumers are

embracing social media as part of the home improvement planning process.

Data released in March 2013 by [American Express](#) and [Echo Research](#) revealed a large increase—albeit over a very small base—in homeowners who said social media provided inspiration for home improvement. The increase from 7% to 14% between 2012 and 2013 is another indication of social's influence on people making home design and decorating decisions.

**Resources Used for Home Improvement Inspiration
According to US Homeowners, 2012 & 2013**

% of respondents

| | 2012 | 2013 |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|
| DIY & design TV shows | 43% | 39% |
| In-store displays | 33% | 36% |
| Online designs/DIY websites | 32% | 30% |
| Home decor magazines | 29% | 29% |
| Homes of friends/families/neighbors | 26% | 29% |
| Local design showrooms/model homes | 21% | 22% |
| Home decor catalogs | 17% | 19% |
| Social media | 7% | 14% |
| Advice from an interior designer | 5% | 8% |
| Other | 5% | 4% |
| None of the above | 18% | 15% |

*Note: among homeowners who are planning for home improvements
Source: American Express and Echo Research, "Home Improvement 2013,"
March 21, 2013*

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Ecommerce remains a small percentage of home improvement sales—and mcommerce even more so. Yet mobile's role in the home improvement sector is slowly becoming apparent.

[Planese](#), a recent addition to a growing list of mobile apps for home improvement, allows collaboration between home improvement professionals and consumers. The cloud-based application provider polled US homeowners in November 2013 about how they planned to use smartphones and PCs for future home remodels. Nearly all—95%—said they intended to go online via PC to find design ideas; 65% said they would use a smartphone for some of their research. However, when researching products or services, over two-thirds of respondents would use either device.