A Shift at the Top

By Jennifer Marks

It was a push-me/pull-you year for top of bed in 2017, with opportunity expanding here and shrinking there.

It's a situation that impacted many product categories last year, but seems to have had an especial tug on top-of-bed suppliers: an expanding number of off-price doors (good), and exploding number of on-line skus (good/bad) and a reduced number of department store doors (definitely not good).

E-commerce has become a more expensive proposition for suppliers. The more goods they put up online, the more inventory they have to hold. As online stores bulk out their assortments, suppliers need to latch licensed name brands to rise above the din.

The digital shift is having an impact on merchandise stocked in physical retail stores as well. Ensemble counts are coming down for goods bound for in-store assortments, and many retailers are narrowing the range of piece counts in the assortment to two or three put-ups. More heavily loaded ensembles are mostly confined to online.

"Stores don't want to use so much space," said Bryan Parker, vice president of design and merchandising, Indo Count. "You can put [big ensembles] online – and they ship from the vendor, not the retailer's warehouse."

He believes the ascent of Millennials as target consumers is affecting piece-count decisions as well.

"They're not looking to buy the big multi-piece ensembles," he added. "And to be honest, I don't think they care about shams."

There's also a divide between microfiber constructions vs. cottons and/or blends. Sometimes it's a price-point factor. Sometimes it's a matter of what best resonates with a particular retailer's shoppers.

"This is a great question and one that the entire industry struggles with. As cotton and man-made fiber prices fluctuate, as they have often over the past few years, we have tried to address both," said Kevin Wadhwani, CEO, Amrapur Overseas. "We have addressed this with good quality cotton at lower thread counts. Others are happy with man-made fibers. They love the hand feel, and more importantly the price point."

Whatever the price point, textures and fabric manipulation are rating high with retail buyers this year.

"The flat prints will always be there for retailers who want seven-piece microfiber sets at $39 or $49," said Jerry Donza, vice president of sales and marketing, Nanshing America. "Buyers are concentrating now on different cloths and textures. That's where they're showing value."

Ron Batroff, executive vice president at JQueen NY, concurred. "It's driven by perceived value," he said. "We're finding the more surface interest you provide, the more unique weaves and constructions, those seem to be more successful." **HTT**

MERCHANDISE MIX, 2017

	2017
Comforter, filled bedding sets	58%
Comforters	18%
Quilts	15%
Bedspreads/coverlets	7%
Duvet covers	2%
Other	$107
Total	**$5,065**

Source: PBM Strategic Insights, April 2018 Home Textiles Today study

TOP OF BED

Distribution Channels

2017 total retail sales: $5,065 million up 02% from $5,055 million in 2016

	2017	2016	% CHANGE
Discount department stores/supercenters	$2,380	$2,360	0.8%
Specialty stores	$1,274	$1,274	0.0%
Specialty stores	$807	$833	-3.1%
Direct-to-consumer	$418	$402	3.8%
Warehouse clubs	$80	$79	0.2%
Other	$107	$107	0.2%
Total	**$5,065**	**$5,055**	**0.2%**

Other includes gift/home accent/single-unit specialty textiles stores, home improvement centers, warehouse clubs, interior designers, furniture stores and military exchanges among others.
Source: PBM Strategic Insights, 2017 Home Textiles Today study All figures are estimates and are rounded.

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CEO
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TOP OF BED

$5.065B Total Top of Bed Sales in 2017

$28.6B 2017 Home Textiles Universe

Up 1.8%

$28.1B 2016 Home Textiles Universe

About the Numbers

Home Textile Today's Top of Bed Database report reveals 2017 and 2016 market share product data through key distribution channels. All retail sales figures are estimates and are for the U.S. only. All figures are rounded.

DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

Department stores are full-line operations carrying a variety of merchandise, including national and regional stores. Examples include Macy's, JCPenney, Bloomingdale's, Sears, Belk, Dillard's, Kohl's and The Bon-Ton Stores.

Direct-to-consumer includes retailers with primary distribution through the Internet, catalogs, television and/or home parties. Examples include Amazon, BrylaneHome, Cornerstone Brands, Hanover Direct, HSN, Lands' End and Overstock.com, among others.

Discount department stores/supercenters include discount, off-price and dollar stores, such as Walmart, Target, Kmart, T.J. Maxx/Marshalls, Ross Stores, Big Lots, Tuesday Morning, Shopko, Family Dollar and Dollar General.

Specialty stores include retailers that specialize in textiles, as well as stores that carry textiles at full price and may or may not carry housewares, small appliances, gourmet foods, apparel, jewelry and personal care items. Examples include Bed Bath & Beyond, Ikea, Home Goods, Pier 1 Imports, Restoration Hardware and Crate & Barrel.

Other includes gift and home accent specialty stores, furniture stores, home improvement centers, military exchanges and designers, among others.

Warehouse clubs include Costco, Sam's Club, BJ's Wholesale and local and regional warehouse clubs.