

Industry News

Retailers seek accessories to boost sales in sleep

By David Perry

AT THE MARKET — Retailers are looking for more than just mattresses from their bedding vendors here. Sleep accessories are playing a growing role on

their shopping lists.

The reason for that increasing interest is obvious: Bedding business is tough to come by these days, and anything retailers can do to boost tickets is a big plus. So

they are pushing everything from mattress protectors to bed frames to a wide variety of pillows.

Growing media coverage of bedbug infestations is helping spark brisk sales of mattress and box spring encasement products around the country, and retailers are shopping for those and related products here.

Magniflex is getting a strong response to its new Protecto mattress, which is treated with a solution of lemon and eucalyptus oils to repel bedbugs and other creatures. That mattress "is generating a lot of attention," said Andrea Mugnai, general manager of Magniflex.

Fabrictech International has added a box spring encasement. "Bedbugs tend to migrate to the box spring," said Jeff Bergman, president. "Protecting the box spring is just as important as protecting the mattress."

Also showing encasement products is Protect-A-Bed, which is exhibiting in the Therapedic showroom, Leggett & Platt and Glideaway Sleep Products.

New pillows are featured in many showrooms.

Chili Technology has added a coconut foam pillow, retailing at \$139, which offers improved breathability, and is showing its temperature-control systems in pad, topper and mattress configurations.

LMP Worldwide's pillow line has expanded to five models, including a new latex model. The pillows, which retail at up to \$99, come in contoured and traditional designs. Interest in the line is growing, said Tony Joseph, vice president of marketing and sales. "Retailers need to get every dollar they can these days," he said.

Carolina Mattress Guild is showing memory foam and Talalay latex pillows to complement its new memory foam and latex mattress lines.

Enso Sleep Products, the new bedding unit of Klaussner Home Furnishings, is offering pillows and adjustable beds **see Accessories, p66**



Andrea Mugnai of Magniflex relaxes on a Protecto mattress, designed to repel bedbugs.

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in its lineup, in addition to mattresses. The pillows retail from \$49 to \$79 and offer "the same natural, fresh story as our beds," said Len Burke, director of retail and marketing for Klaussner. "The value is there."

And Enso is expanding its bedding lineup this show with four adjustable bed models, called Enso Power Foundations.

"Our adjustable beds have been very well received so far," said Burke. "These are no longer luxury items. They are offered at price points that everyone can afford. We are appealing to younger consumers."

Hickory at Home is rolling out its Final Touch top-of-bed program, featuring sheets, pillows, down comforters and mattress pads. Retailers who don't carry those sleep accessories are simply "leaving a lot of money on the sales floor," says Niles Cornelius, general manager of Hickory at Home.

Knickerbocker is showing three bed support systems. "Retailers are looking for increased attachment rates in their accessory sales, whether they are bed frames, mattress protectors or pillows," said Frank Tamburelli, national sales executive.

Natura is showing its Sleep Envelope, a package containing a washable wool comforter and a washable mattress protector with a wool cover. It retails at \$399 in queen, and builds on Natura's strong lineup of sleep accessories.

"The recession has been a good thing for driving top-of-bed sales," said Ralph Rosdeutscher, president of Natura. "Retailers have fewer customers and have to sell them more to keep their doors open. Prices are down on mattresses so they have to sell other products to keep their sales up."