

A sales system that limits itself to waiting for customers to walk through the door that may have been merely open to criticism once is now absolutely untenable today. Consider the experience of the Casa Bambus Company.

Selling floors (and more) in Romania

For this article, we went in search of a leader in a certain nation, Romania, to be exact, in order to offer our readers more than just ideas and hypotheses for commercial agreements as well.

The current crisis imposes the search for new channels; the article below provides a response.

Company experience

We interviewed Anca Buta, Marketing Manager at the Casa Bambus Company with headquarters in Targu-Jiu but its biggest showroom and largest warehouse (2000 m²) in Bucharest, the nation's capital.

How many articles do you sell in your showroom?

Our offer is cantered around wood: parquet, doors, and other complementary products. We import parquet from South Africa, South America and Africa. In Europe, we distribute through the German Haro and the Italian Gazzotti.

How many showrooms do you have in Romania?

We're present in all Romania's biggest cities (Bucharest, Targu-Jiu, Cluj-Napoca and Costanta) with our showrooms and agents who work as employees and are supported by the stores.

Do you mean to say that in addition to showrooms you also have your own sales force?

Of course! A sales system that limits itself to waiting for customers to walk through the door that may have been merely open to criticism once is now absolutely untenable today. This means assigning sales representatives to the showrooms (at least 2 per store) who also work externally, visiting clients and making appointments for them to visit us here.

In addition to these two sales representatives per store, there are



others in varying numbers who work especially with larger customers or supervise major projects underway at hotels, entire work-sites, and so on.

Each sales rep has his or her own office and passes a lot of time around the coffee machine talking to visitors and clients. The informal atmosphere makes relationships with customers less strictly "business".

How big is one of your showrooms?

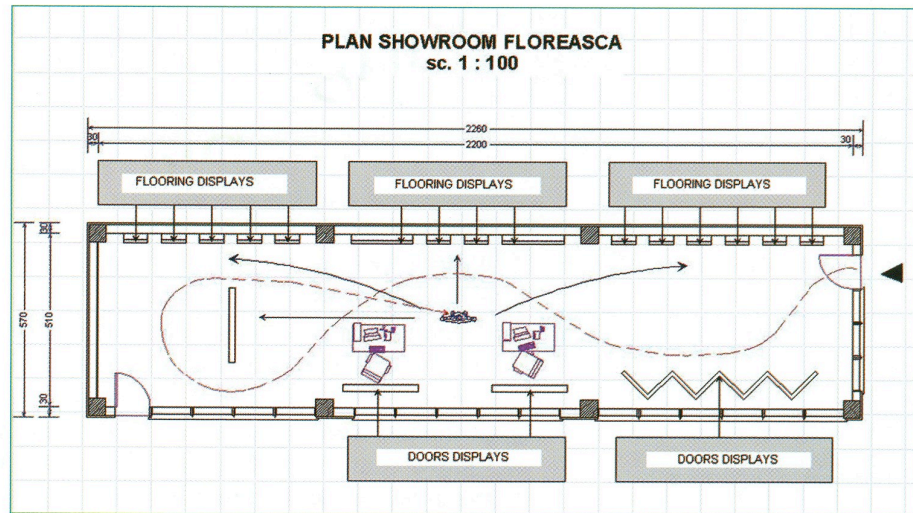
Our largest store is located in the center of Bucharest and occupies 130 m²; the others in smaller towns are even bigger.

Variable geometry

What is your "showroom formula"?

We believe that a showroom should showcase the company's identity and style through its organization and product assortment. For us, the showroom is synonymous with elegance in presenting solutions, and this has rewarded us with a faithful clientele at the medium-high end.

As for layout, our "variable geometry" lets us organize ourselves as required by theme or particular and "exotic" forms. This implies continuous revision: our showroom must renew itself regularly in order to constantly maintain seasonal appeal and capture the interest of the clients who stop in. Knowing that we change window dressing and more every 40-45 days, many customers come pre-



cisely for this reason. They may not necessarily buy anything; they look around and maybe mention some of the novelty and new things they see to a friend. This is a very important form of advertising for us: we think that the "grapevine" generally works better than a billboard.

To complete the picture, we give a lot of priority to colorful and provocative décor that we change often, even if we have a preference for pastels.

The entrance is big, and features glass doors.

The parking lot outside is also indispensable, and this one we made ourselves. Wherever we can, we set up a terrace at the back that completes the showroom with all our various types of wood on display that can be appreciated better in natural light.

How are things with you competitors?

The other showrooms in our area handle different types of product. What's more, they don't vary

The Casa Bambus Company's main showroom in downtown Bucharest showcases wood floors, doors, and accessories.

their display as often as we do. We are reassured by these two factors, also because we are years of experience ahead of them.

How many people visit your showroom?

We get around 60 - 80 visitors each month, 54% of whom end up making a purchase; we doubt that we'll be able to maintain the same flow in 2009 in light of the current economic crisis.

I know that I'm not saying anything new. In this moment of diffi-

culty we're looking for solutions that are more successful in capturing attention of the people passing by our windows, even provoking them.

In the context of expanding our activity to face the crisis firstly, and with an eye on our future positioning secondly, we are very interested in the possibilities offered by synergy and alliances with European and Italian operators in particular, with whom we also have a long tradition of working together.

Conclusions

Putting ourselves in the shoes of a reader of Professional Parquet International, in addition to providing specific reasons for "picking up the phone" and talking with a distributor positioned in the Eastern Europe market, the following objective data emerge from this study:

- The effect on the 2009 balance sheets of all the operators in the market will leave little room for illusion, and will amount to a drop ranging from 20 to 25% in total sales;
- In order to manage this crisis situation destined to continue after 2009, new strategies and completely rethought battle plans are required;
- In this context, in addition to agreements with easily-reached nations and markets, the showroom must be considered in terms of its "entertainment" value. This means continuously alternating the presentation of products, colors, and geometry while following the evolution in sales techniques

The 4 showrooms around the nation currently receive an average of 60-80 visitors a month, 54% of whom leave the store with a purchase.

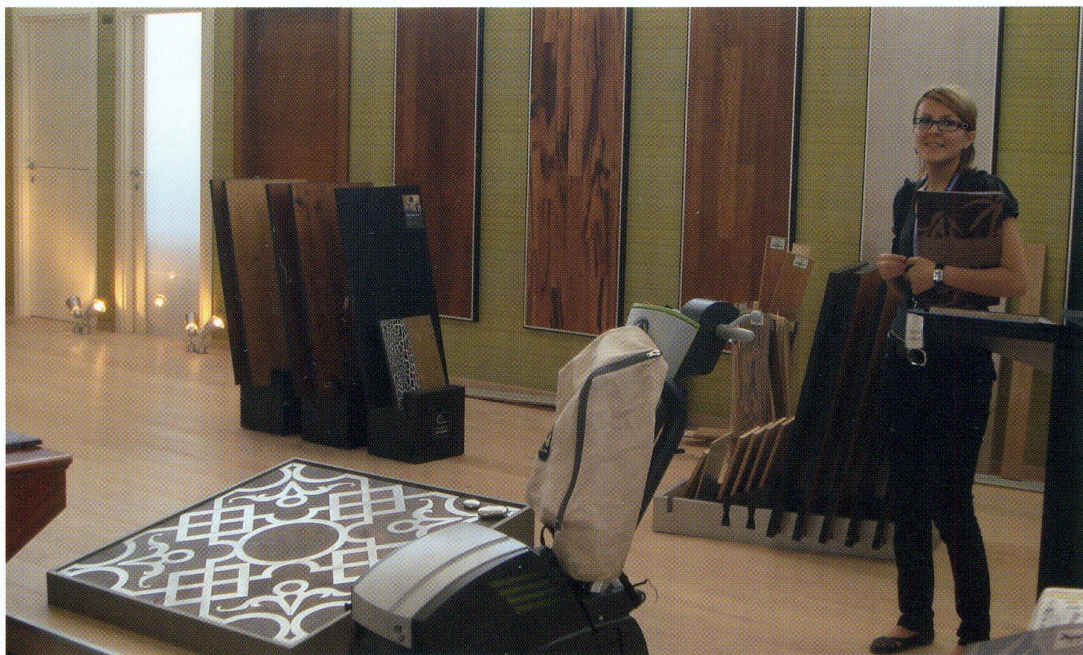




The layout is distinguished by its "variable geometry", that is renewed every 40-45 days to capture "seasonal" customer interest.

that capture customer attention even outside the sales outlet without waiting for him or her to step in spontaneously;

- It's not the space that makes a showroom, but its organization. In our case, we've seen that 130 m² with the right organization are enough to be the national leader;
- The idea of maintaining a presence in different cities around the country makes a name and gives credibility to a brand. The consumer gets the feeling that she's dealing with a widespread network instead of some isolated dealer struggling to stay in the market;
- Lastly, the degree of cooperation possible between the sales outlet and the sales representatives who work everywhere outside and rely on showroom structures for support is well worth bearing in mind 🌐



The secret to Casa Bambus success is a sales system that limits itself to waiting for customers to walk through the door that may have been merely open to criticism once is now absolutely untenable today. This means assigning sales representatives to the showrooms (at least 2 per store) who also work externally, visiting clients and making appointments for them to visit us here.