Press Information

**Press Contacts:**

Heather West, Heather West Public Relations

E-mail: [heather@heatherwestpr.com](mailto:heather@heatherwestpr.com); 612-724-8760

Angela Dickson, marketing manager, AAMA

Email: [adickson@aamanet.org](mailto:adickson@aamanet.org); 714-596-3574

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AAMA Hears from Experts on Trending Fenestration Choices and Future of Housing

SCHAUMBURG, IL - Two experts led a discussion on home trends and the future of housing at the American Architectural Manufacturers Association (AAMA) 2016 Annual Conference. Mollie Carmichael ([John Burns Real Estate Consulting](http://realestateconsulting.com/)) and Nick Lehnert ([KTGY Architecture and Planning](http://ktgy.com/)) shared information on trends and design solutions as they pertain to a range of generations and other demographic information.

“We're always looking for what consumers want and will pay for,” said Carmichael of her consulting company’s most recent builders survey, in which there were more than 29,000 survey responses, mostly in terms of new homes. “The more info you have, the better decisions you can make. We love to brainstorm real solutions.”

Carmichael said demographics are very specifically detailed in her company’s study.

“Boomers are the number one shoppers in the market looking for a home, and Gen X is number two,” she said. “However, Gen X is the number one buyer, since they're in family mode.”

Gen Y, or Millennials, are the number three shoppers, “but they're going to be buying more down the road,” Carmichael said. “Only one percent of today's shoppers are under 25.”

Carmichael offered up five top trends from the study, with design being number one.

“Design will matter even more in 2016 than it ever has,” she said. “Function first!”

The second trend shows that there is currently a high percentage – 58 percent – of non-family shoppers, which is defined as single couples with no children present at home. That said, added Carmichael, the third trend indicates that families are still buying.

Fourth, multigenerational housing is more in demand.

“Millennials and Gen X are more likely to accommodate parents,” said Carmichael.

And fifth, she said, modern interior preferences rose by 10 percent from her company’s last survey.

“Consider niche opportunities for a rising trend,” said Carmichael. “Top styles are still traditional but modern is winning out. This fluctuates throughout the country.”

In terms of fenestration trends, she noted that solid core doors and wood windows, especially higher end ones, are trending, along with customized, color decorative garage doors. Additionally, she stated that one in two consumers reported that they would pay extra for solar options.

Carmichael said that what appears on a shopper’s next home wish list varies by generation.

“All shoppers want more of something,” she said. “Gen Y is coming from apartment living, and Gen X have growing families. Boomers want smaller homes. Elevators are also wanted, for places in vertical, great locations.”

She added that, all around, lighting is huge, but that shoppers also want privacy.

“Lots of glass along the back of the home is desired, so lots of modern architecture,” said Carmichael.

Along those lines, she said 73 percent of consumers will pay another $4,000 for a retractable slider for that back-of-the-house glass option. Outdoor time is valued, she implored. Corner glass enclosures in homes can also help expand space.

Lehnert then went into some design solutions, also reflecting on generational wants.

“10,000 people turn 65 every day,” he said. “Boomers are a huge demographic. But also, 12,000 people turn 30 each day, even if not for much longer.”

He emphasized shoppers’ wish to “disconnect to connect,” meaning to unplug from technology and connect with family at home.

“That's what all consumers want across demographics,” he said.

Lehnert stressed the importance of privatized indoor/outdoor spaces and noted that the back section of the home can double as an outdoor room. He also suggested allowing those popular gourmet kitchens to boast easy-to-maintain super islands, and counter space that can easily access and serve that outdoor space.

Finally, he concluded that open floor plans are growing in popularity.

“They’re not just a west coast trend now,” he said. “All over the nation, these plans are in demand.”

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