

Bedding Benchmarks

Study: Dressed beds have higher perceived value

By David Perry

HIGH POINT — A consumer study commissioned by Colonial LLC found that well-dressed display beds have a significantly higher perceived value than the same mattresses when left undressed.

The study also found that how a bed is dressed has a significant impact on the consumer in terms of appeal, perceived quality and the consumer's willingness to stop and take a look at the bed.

The study, conducted by Bellomy Research for Colonial — a branding and display specialist serving the mattress industry — found that one bed, dressed with three pillows and a foot protector, was perceived by consumers to be worth 27% more than the same bed without those appointments. It added \$186 to the bed's perceived value. And the consumers' appeal rating for the dressed bed rose 25% while the quality perception jumped by 68%.

Another bed, this one with a dual pillow design in a different colored fabric and a foot protector, was deemed to be worth an additional \$209 or 30% more than the same mattress displayed in an undressed format. This bed's appeal rating increased by 42% while its quality rating rose by 79%.

The undressed mattress, an ultra-plush, knit tight-top model, was perceived by consumers to have a value of \$697.

"This study demonstrates conclusively that well-designed top-of-bed displays will boost the perceived value of a mattress and add to its perception of higher quality," said Mark Hobson, Colonial's president. "When coupled with greater appeal, this can encourage the consumer to stop, look and try out the bed. If the customer likes how it feels and discovers that the price is actually less than they had perceived, they are more likely to buy."

However, the study also found that some style, design and color combinations

can have a negative impact on the consumer.

"While the majority of the results were positive, the study proved that some designs can actually reduce the bed's perceived value, appeal and quality perception, relative to other dressed products," Hobson said. "One sample studied declined in perceived value by \$24 and its quality score fell by 37% versus the undressed mattress!"

Hobson said the study gives Colonial officials another tool to use in designing business-building programs for their customers.

"Imagine how valuable it would be to know, before launching products at retail, if the designers of your top-of-bed displays are going to increase or decrease the perceived value, quality and sales appeal of your beds," he said. "We have heard this concern before from our customers. Now we have an actual consumer study to provide guidance and data to maximize our client's return on their product launch



In a study done for Colonial, consumers were asked various questions about how they perceived uncovered and dressed mattresses. The study found that dressed beds, like the one in the bottom photo, have a higher perceived value than an undressed bed.

investments."

In this national study, the same undressed mattress was shown to hundreds of consumers across the country, and then dressed in dozens of top-of-bed styles, colors and designs.

"We tested enough different combinations to ensure the study was statistically sound, to a 95% confidence level, and that it gave us a read on the broad spectrum of available design and color options," said Hobson. "All mattress branding and logos were removed from the products first, to ensure that the consumer ratings were not biased by brand perceptions. Participants also had to have shopped for or pur-

chased a mattress in the past 12 months."

Hobson said he believes that this is the first study of its kind that provides data to support the value provided by custom top-of-bed displays and that quantifies the impact that variations in design and color choices can have on consumer perceptions.

"Colonial's primary mission is to help our clients sell more mattresses," he said. "Our investment in this study is another tool that supports that mission. We do not plan to publish the findings but will use the learnings with our clients, as a part of Colonial's unique, consultative design process."