

AXOR

hansgrohe



# Showroom Spotlight: A Focus on Bathroom Retailing.

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# Foreword from Jay Phillips at Hansgrohe.

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Hansgrohe recognises the important role bathrooms play in any home, not only as a functional space but as a personal sanctuary to support wellbeing. And, when it comes to helping specifiers, installers and homeowners create the bathroom that meets their budget and ambition, bathroom showrooms are crucial.

Over decades, we have proudly collaborated and established partnerships with bathroom showrooms across the UK. Recognising their expertise and specialism in creating the perfect bathroom, we wanted to understand further the challenges and opportunities they are facing, the expectations of consumers and how manufacturers like us can best meet their needs. We've gathered thoughts from across the showroom sector and summarised them in this report to shine a light on the great work the industry is doing and how it is driving its future success.

What's clear from what we've heard is that not only are many showrooms bringing together technology and customer service in unique ways, but many are also leading the way with a focus on the in-store experience. Not only that, but retailers have also told us how many are meeting the challenge of e-commerce head-on and setting themselves apart in a space where expertise, design inspiration and trust are key for customers.

We hope you find the insight housed in this report valuable, as we showcase the dynamic bathroom retailing sector.

Thanks for your partnership and we look forward to supporting the continued growth of your businesses.

**Jay Phillips**  
Managing Director  
Hansgrohe UK & Ireland





Today's showrooms –  
fit for the future.

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The modern bathroom showroom is more than just a store; it's a comprehensive resource designed to transform bathroom visions into reality. However, in a world of e-commerce and time-poor consumers, how are they keeping pace and meeting the needs of their customers?

**Specialising in the bathroom industry means retailers have in-depth knowledge and expertise.**

With a customer-first philosophy, showrooms are providing personalised guidance, expert design and installation knowledge, with a focus on working in partnership with their customers to deliver a bathroom that meets the needs of the user, their budget and personal taste.

Specialising in the bathroom industry means retailers have in-depth knowledge and expertise. This helps them stay up-to-date on emerging trends, which they say change at pace. They are also committed to showcasing leading, innovative manufacturers, new products and technologies. Crucially, they are sharing this with their customers in a relevant way, to help to make their bathroom dreams a reality.



Mark Derighetti, Zara Davidson  
and Ross Penman from Victor Paris

Carefully curated, bespoke room sets are designed to show what can be achieved in bathrooms of different shapes and sizes. Alongside these, retailers are not just displaying products throughout, but enabling customers to visualise their future bathroom through use of technology such as VR and CAD designs. These bring to life the vision for customers and really add value to the experience in a way only showrooms, and the experienced teams that run them, can do.

Special finishes such as brushed bronze are increasingly popular and some retailers are showcasing them in lifestyle bays, where a consumer can easily fall in love with the complete look and get a true sense of what it would look like in their home.

## **Retailers are not just displaying products, but enabling customers to visualise their future bathroom.**

Alongside the expected opportunity to see and experience a myriad of colourways, finishes and functionality across showers, taps, ceramics and furniture, other areas being brought to life through in-depth customer discussions include accessibility solutions and futureproofing.

The ability to have focused and knowledgeable conversations with customers means key benefits such as the long-term value of products can be conveyed in a way that is prohibitive online.



AXOR and hansgrohe shower display at Kuche & Bagno



AXOR and hansgrohe shower display at ESP Bathrooms

Many customers may have an idea in their head but are not necessarily sure how to make that a reality. Others may be searching for something a bit different that they do not even know exists. Knowledgeable showroom colleagues can help guide them towards solutions that deliver an amazing experience, look great, and offer true value by lasting without compromising on performance.

And it is not only bathrooms that customers are seeking to invest in, increasingly retailers are seeing a focus on the guest cloakroom, with consumers looking to push design boundaries and create a luxe feel in often the smallest room in a property. This desire to make a bold statement to guests and visitors sees some customers want to invest in high-end options, so retailers can find they are involved in shaping these spaces, which may have previously just been viewed as functional, too.

## **“You cannot touch and feel on the internet”**

“You cannot touch and feel on the internet” is a phrase communicated by retailers and it reflects the importance of the showroom experience. When it comes to what can often be a significant purchase for a home, the role of the physical space offered by retailers where customers can get ‘hands on’ with products is clear.

While the experience offered by retailers is crucial, so is the finished delivery of the bathroom. “You’re only as good as your last job” is an important mantra and the combined effort of service on the showroom floor, the design, installation, and final product performance is key to ensure that word of mouth does its job and customers help funnel friends, family and colleagues through the showroom door. It’s why some retailers have their own bank of preferred installers, or offer an in-house fitting service. It’s also for this reason why maintaining partnerships with manufacturers that deliver products designed to ‘fit and forget’ – and on time – is crucial.



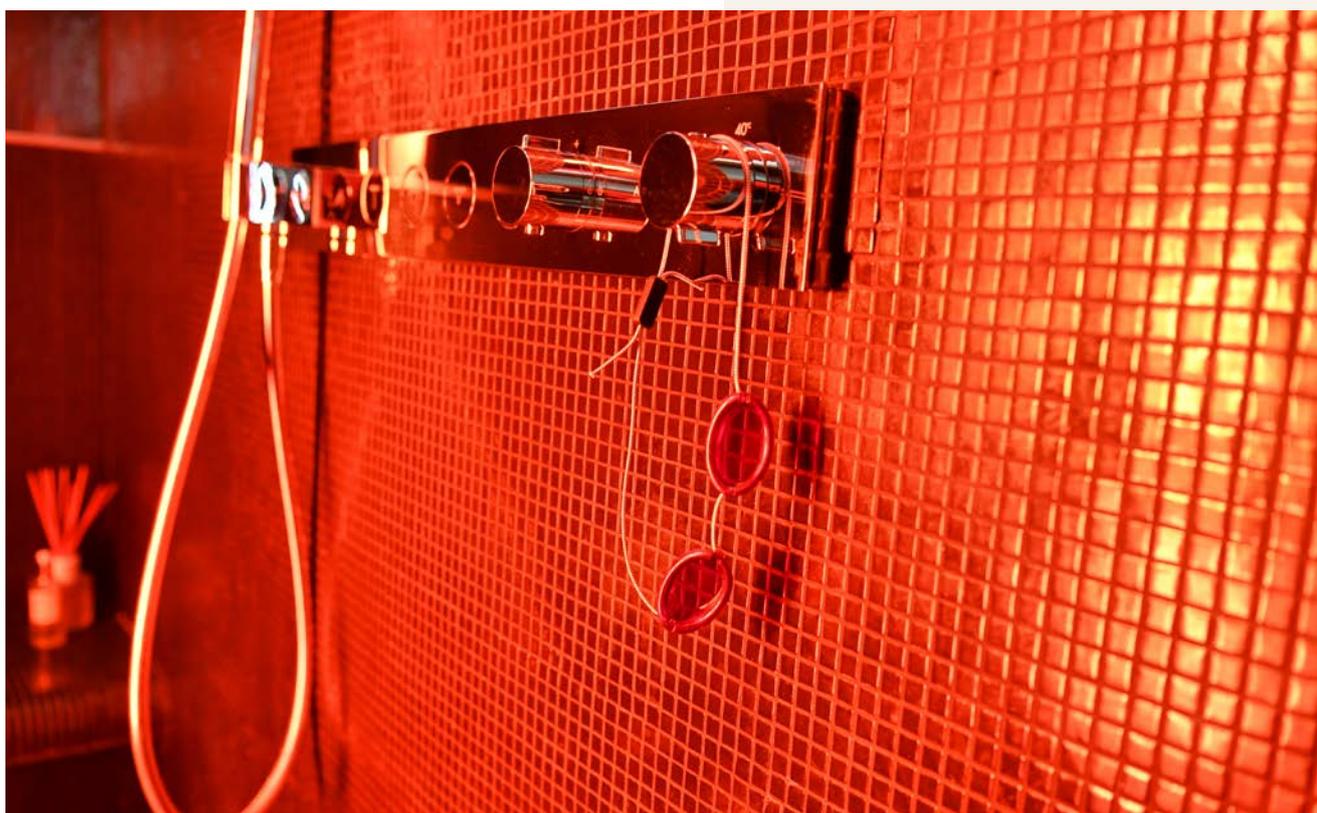
# The experience of a bathroom.

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Another area where retailers are leading the way is truly enabling their customers to experience a bathroom and bringing to life what it can mean for them in their daily lives.

Showrooms are now featuring everything from fully functioning spa rooms where customers can fully immerse themselves in their surroundings, lifestyle bays showcasing colour finishes as a cohesive and complete look, and working water displays, which demonstrate the functionality and spray patterns of showers and taps allowing customers to experience them before purchasing..

When some retailers are selling such installations as infrared showers through to saunas, the importance of customers being able to get up close to these and understand how they will look and feel in their own homes is essential.



Kuche & Bagno



Kuche & Bagno

Products are displayed in situ as holistic room sets where each element blends seamlessly together to create a vision alongside standalone product displays for leading brands. This makes it easy for customers to envisage how their complete bathroom could look, while allowing them to explore the features and benefits of all the individual components, in detail.

## **Bathrooms can truly become a sanctuary for users and a cherished part of the home.**

Health and wellness is more important to consumers than ever, and the daily rituals we perform in our bathrooms are key to maintaining this. Showrooms are responding by bringing to life how the elements of the bathrooms, from the scents, textures and colours – through to the spray options and water feel – can help support this. Bathrooms can truly become a sanctuary and a cherished part of the home, and retailers are helping to sell this vision, and the role bathrooms can play in supporting [‘digital detoxes’](#) for users.



Hansgrohe Green Vision concept wash basin

While digital detoxes within the tranquillity of a bathroom is a key selling point for many customers, technology is an ever moving and advancing area for retailers. It is being used in products in innovative ways to save water without affecting performance, and in new additions that can impact wellbeing. However, customers only know what they know. Without experiencing a new toilet flush or seeing a water limiting shower in action, it is difficult to visualise and understand. Here, showrooms offer another point of difference. Being able to inspire customers and lead them to options they did not even know were available is something that keeps customers coming back time after time.



Concealed valve with overhead shower and slide rail kit

Concealed valve with overhead shower and hand shower holder

Create a modern bathroom for a lifetime of style and function. Infrared technology will save water and money while Silence makes entry into clean of pressure.



Concealed valve with overhead shower and slide rail kit

Modernise your bathroom with this versatile shower solution. Select controls make it easy to switch between hand and overhead shower as well as effortlessly changing between spray patterns.



# Sustainability.

As we all become more aware of the impact of every element of our lives on the environment, retailers are showcasing how the design and ongoing functionality of today's bathrooms have sustainability built-in at their heart. For example, from Hansgrohe's perspective, by 2030, we aim to convert our entire product range across the AXOR and hansgrohe brands to water- and energy-saving technologies.

## Retailers play an important role in supporting customers with informed decision making.

From communicating the water and energy-saving benefits of products and the sustainability impact of the materials used for products, through to guiding clients to eco-friendlier alternatives, retailers play an important role in supporting customers with informed decision making.



Bilal Bhayat  
at ESP Bathrooms



AXOR One at Kuche & Bagno

However, sustainability cannot come at the expense of experience or design, so retailers continue to share their knowledge and expertise of the quality products that balance all three elements.

Leading technologies such as hansgrohe's EcoSmart, which cuts the amount of water – and subsequently, the energy used – by limiting flow or adapting the surface area of each water droplet, are examples of innovations that retailers help showcase to customers through working water displays. Importantly, they do this whilst ensuring customers also understand how a technology such as this does not impact the product's performance or experience, so they can reap the benefits of 'built-in' sustainability and still achieve their desired look and feel.

Another important area of sustainability is longevity of product and keeping products in use for longer. Retailers have a part to play in showcasing products that offer true value. This is due to their engineering and quality, which sees them stand the test of time, and peace of mind offered through guarantees such as Hansgrohe's 5-year guarantee on its products. It is also crucial those products can remain in use for longer through an effective spares programme. For example, Hansgrohe guarantees the availability of spare parts for 15 years after a product has been discontinued.

Retailers are also playing a crucial role in educating consumers on how "buy cheap, buy twice" is often very applicable in the world of bathrooms. For example, AXOR and hansgrohe's PVD coatings are engineered to last, whereas retailers say cheaper coatings can easily scratch and damage quickly, not only ruining the look for the user but also resulting in them being replaced before they should be.

While retailers do not deem sustainability as a leading driver in purchase decision making, it is certainly viewed as an expected product benefit, so to show how their customers can combine both a luxurious experience, beautiful design, and help save costs, energy and precious water is key.

## **Hansgrohe guarantees the availability of spare parts for 15 years after a product has been discontinued.**



AXOR One basin tap in matt white pictured with the AXOR Suite wash basin



Collaborating  
with manufacturers.

hansgrohe display at Victor Paris

Collaboration between bathroom showrooms and manufacturing partners is central to not only support business growth for the retailers but meet and exceed their customers' needs. From technical knowledge sharing and expertise on the latest innovations and design trends, through to accurate supply chain lead time management, true collaboration ensures a mutually beneficial partnership.

This collaboration starts with ensuring alignment on elements such as expected service delivery and communication. These fundamentals are built on when trust in the performance of the products is established alongside the technical support provided.

The performance of products also encompasses their ease of installation. Only if installers can fit products efficiently and be sure they will not be called back to site due to issues, will they become brand loyal and support the sales journey for retailers. Innovations such as Hansgrohe's iBox are simplifying fitting for installers and therefore helping to influence decision making when installers are helping homeowners navigate the choices available.

Retailers recognise the benefits of working closely with manufacturers to help them recommend the right products with confidence. From understanding the sustainability benefits to performance levels, finishes and matching accessories available, their product knowledge is much deeper through the ongoing support provided by manufacturers.

For many, the opportunity to stock new innovations and product ranges is also key. For example, when Hansgrohe launched into ceramics, furniture and mirrors, they were made available for sale exclusively through retail partners, providing them with a holistic solution to offer their customers.

When it comes to showcasing products, working with manufacturers allows retailers to install working water displays and other elements which help to sell the performance and quality of products and the experience they will deliver.

**Retailers recognise the benefits of working closely with manufacturers to help them recommend the right products with confidence.**



Lisa Melvin at Kuche & Bagno

The additional benefits of being able to offer peace of mind to customers through guarantees and spares availability, along with a range of finishes and accessories, are also part of retailers' considerations when it comes to choosing manufacturing partners. Manufacturers who offer 'fit and forget' products are vitally important to retailers when their reputation is often built on word of mouth and recommendations from friends and family, so ensuring products are installed right first time is key.



AXOR Citterio at Kuche & Bagno

# Final word.

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In an incredibly competitive industry, bathroom retailers are increasingly setting the bar for what they offer as a customer experience. From bringing to life a customer's vision through VR and bespoke room sets of different shapes and sizes to ensuring the true power of a shower is felt through a spa room or working water display, retailers are providing customers with the chance to live and breathe their dream bathroom before even a tile has been cut or pipe plumbed.

While they recognise the impact of e-commerce; through a focus on quality products, ensuring technical knowledge and insight into the latest trends is kept up-to-date and reflected in lifestyle bays and room sets showcasing complete looks, and how best to maximise space, retailers are offering much more than can be found on the internet. With such an important purchase as a bathroom, this is proving value to customers, time and again, and this experience and service is something retailers pride themselves on as they shape the future of their businesses.

As sustainability has now become an expected element of any bathroom purchase, retailers play an important role in showing how manufacturers such as Hansgrohe are ensuring this is built-in to products without any impact on performance or design. And, when it comes to working with manufacturers, a collaborative approach is essential for the success of retailers. Choosing manufacturers based on how they can meet the changing needs of customers should not be overlooked in helping retailers to achieve growth.

Retailers talk of the ever changing world they are operating in and how the ability to keep pace is a challenge which proves to be a differentiator for customers who not only need their help, guidance and advice but also want to see and experience their dream bathrooms before they spend any money. The opportunity to get 'hands on' with products combined with the knowledge and partnerships of retailers is sure to keep them ahead as the world of bathrooms and the sanctuary they provide, continues to evolve.



AXOR One Colors in The Water Studio, Clerkenwell, London

# About AXOR.

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AXOR conceives and manufactures iconic objects for luxurious bathrooms and kitchens. Developed in collaboration with world-renowned designers – Philippe Starck, Antonio Citterio, Jean-Marie Massaud and Barber Osgerby among them – AXOR products come in a variety of styles. All AXOR taps, showers and accessories are produced to the highest standards of quality. With an expertise that extends far beyond the products themselves, AXOR inspires and enables architects, interior designers and the design-savvy public. Together with AXOR, they shape water-related spaces that reflect the unique personality of the user. Part of the Hansgrohe Group, AXOR is a forward-thinking brand dedicated to developing distinctive products, manufactured with excellence.



AXOR Montreux featured in Villa Copenhagen, Denmark

# About hansgrohe.

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hansgrohe stands for innovative solutions for kitchens and bathrooms that combine intelligent functionality, outstanding design, and enduring quality. With its many award-winning products, the brand steeped in tradition, shapes the flow of water in the kitchen and the bathroom. Together with long-time design partners PHOENIX Design, Smart Living applications are also part of the brand's portfolio, focusing on enriching people's everyday lives and offering them more functionality and safety in their homes.

Within the internationally active Hansgrohe Group, the premium brand hansgrohe manufactures, markets, and distributes showers, shower systems, bathroom and kitchen taps, and kitchen sinks.



hansgrohe Pulsify S