Home Improvement Finding Consumer Trends Executive Summary
Background:

In early 2013, the Radio Advertising Bureau and Presslaff Interactive Revenue partnered to provide RAB member stations with a series of Finding Consumer Trend Reports (F.C.T. Reports), national online surveys of local radio listeners’ lifestyle interests and buying intentions. To date, F.C.T. surveys have aided radio stations and advertisers alike by highlighting listener interest and buying intentions in the Automotive and Shopping categories. The subject of this summary is Home Improvement.

The Home Improvement F.C.T. Report is based on responses collected between October 29th and November 19th, 2013, from radio listeners of 31 different broadcast companies, representing 134 individual radio stations. Survey response was driven through multiple platforms: on-air, online, emails to station databases and social media. Listeners were asked to participate in the survey in return for the opportunity to win a $500 gift card.

The survey drew over 12,300 responses from across the country and provided rich insights on home ownership, likely home upgrades, store preferences, and advertising influences.

The information within this report has been adjusted to reflect the U.S. population tabulated by Edison Research.
Radio Reaches Homeowners:

If you’re looking to reach homeowners, with all the needs homeownership portends, this survey shows radio reaches them, and in great numbers. **While the latest Census numbers* put home ownership at 65.3%, over 75% of the radio listeners who responded to this survey own their homes.**

![Bar Chart](image)

Similar national reports show home ownership for those under 35 at just under 37%; our **18-34 year old respondents report a homeownership rate 21 points higher, at 58%.**

*Census data as of November 2013*
There’s Lots of Room for Improvement:

Based on these responses, radio can shower advertisers with bathroom prospects and cook up those likely to upgrade their kitchens. The top five projects for inside the house are: Bathrooms, kitchens, paint and wallpapering, replacing or refinishing floors, and replacing or adding carpet.
There’s Lots of Room for Improvement:

In fact, there’s a great deal of overlap between the top two choices: those looking to upgrade their bathroom and those looking to upgrade their kitchen. More than half of those interested in improving their kitchen are thinking the same about their bathroom; exactly half of those thinking about upgrading a bathroom are thinking about the kitchen, too.

This makes radio campaigns highlighting the strength of kitchen and bath products particularly efficient for these big ticket projects. If an advertiser can get the business for one, they stand a chance of getting the business for both.
There’s Lots of Room for Improvement:

There’s need beyond kitchens and bathrooms: New appliances, new fixtures, window treatment, closet organization, work on the basement, upgraded lighting, tiling and work on the living room are on the “to-do” list for at least 1 in 10 of our homeowner respondents. Women are generally more intent on this work than men, and 18-34 year olds more likely than other age group to do these upgrades.
What’s Going on Outside?

Landscaping is first on the list of upgrades to the outside of the home, noted by over one-third of the homeowner respondents. That’s opportunity for nurseries, home improvement stores, lumberyards and landscape architects to attract customers for landscaping and the high interest category of adding patios and porches (the first choice for those adding to their home).

These homeowners are also interested in painting/power washing, fencing, walkways and driveway repair, and replacing windows and adding skylights. Over 1 in 10 have an interest in adding or replacing gutters and downspouts, doors, roofs, exterior lighting, garages, or siding.
Who’s Adding What to Their Homes:

Continuing the homeowner focus, at least 1 in 5 are planning to add Patios, Decks or Porches and just over 1 in 10 are planning to add a new bathroom.

In all instances, those between 18 and 34 are up to 9 points more intent on adding rooms to their homes, versus all respondents.
How Green Is Their Garden, Home, Products?

Green is good. Environmentally friendly products are an important consideration for just under half of these radio listener respondents. Only 7% are flat out not interested in environmentally friendly products.
**Time and Money:**

Retailers and manufacturers have a steady stream of prospects over the coming 12 months. Of those planning to make home improvements, **30% are thinking about them in the next six months, and 37% in the next year.** Twenty-five percent have yet to set a start date.
Time and Money:

The most popular price point for homeowners who have determined a budget, and plan to start their Home Improvement projects in the next 12 months, is between $2500 and $5000.

Just over 25% have yet to determine their budget, opening opportunities to educate and inform respondents on costs and planning through advertising, workshops for the Do It Yourself crowd, seminars, online tutorials, etc.
Who Does The Work:

Forty-seven percent of all respondents identify themselves as a ‘Do It Yourselfer’, with nearly 2/3 of those 18 to 34 identified as DIYers. Twenty-eight percent split the workload between a contractor and themselves. **With a full 75% doing all or some of the work themselves, advertisers should focus their business as the source for how-to, tools and materials.**
Retail Preferences:

Home Depot and Lowe’s are the top two choices for home improvement projects. Ace was the third choice, with Discount Department Stores and Local Hardware Stores rounding out the top five. There was little difference in shopping preferences based on the type of home improvement project the respondents were planning.

The need for education in product, procedure and pricing would be the opportunity for local businesses. They can use these results to target likely customers and provide information on how to proceed with projects of any size, creating trust and long-term relationships that grow alongside customers’ growing home needs.
Influences:

The F.C.T. Reports consistently uncover useful marketing and media insights. This last section provides important copy points for creating commercials for contractors and wraps up with information on radio advertising’s impact on the home improvement category, as well as the effect of radio commercials done by station personalities.

Contractors:

When choosing a contractor, reputation trumps pricing for all but the 18 to 34 year olds (and then by only 3 points). Pricing ranks second.
Influences:

While *online search* is the number one source for remodeling information, when choosing a contractor, *online reviews* rank behind reputation, pricing, recommendations from friends and family, the contractor being licensed, the contractor’s availability, BBB Accreditation and referrals from professionals. *This information should help shape meaningful campaigns for local contractors.*
Influences:

Advertising:

Fully one third of all respondents selected radio and television commercials as the advertising that influences their choice of home improvement projects. Those were followed by newspaper, online, magazine, and “other.” Social Media was noted by 11%, although it was 6 points higher for 18-34 year olds. Yellow Page advertising was chosen by less than 5%.
Influences:

Advertising:

At least 25% of all respondents said radio station personalities increased their trust in home improvement commercials.

Radio’s ability to marry trusted personalities with informational campaigns, should contribute mightily to its ability to attract home improvement dollars.
In summary:

When it comes to Home Improvement...

- Radio listener respondents own homes at a higher rate than the general population.
- There are multiple major renovations these homeowners will do and products they need. The list of improvement is lengthy:
  - Just under half are looking to upgrade an interior room, with bathrooms and kitchens highest on the list.
  - 1 in 5 are looking to add a room.
  - Just over 1/3 are looking to upgrade the exterior of their home.
  - 18-34 are strong targets for home improvement dollars
- Three quarters of the respondents identify themselves as DIYers.
- While most shop at the big box home improvement retailers there’s opportunity for local businesses to carve out a niche by creating relationships and providing the DIY folks with how-to information.
- Lead time for opportunity is great. Plan ahead:
  - 30% intend to start their projects in the next 6 months.
  - 37% in the next year.
- When hiring a contractor, reputation trumps price.
  - Surprisingly, online reviews are not as impactful as multiple other criteria, including reputation, referrals, licensing and BBB Accreditation.
- When it comes to media choices to reach consumers that are considering home improvements:
  - Radio advertising is highly effective for reaching and influencing this group.
    - Additionally, at least 25% of all respondents said radio station personalities increased their trust in home improvement commercials.
  - Online is important for research.
  - Social media ads barely make an impression.
  - Yellow pages are inconsequential.