

BY GARRY UPTON

Over the course of 2009, this space will identify opportunities within customers' homes that you may not have observed in the past. The opportunities are based on a recent homeowner survey conducted by Decision Analyst, Inc.

**Q Homeowners will have limited access to outdoor air during the colder months. What can we learn about their need for improved indoor air quality (IAQ)?**

**A** In a survey of 30,060 U.S. homeowners, the issue of residential indoor air quality (IAQ) continues to be important. Only 15% of all homeowners live in homes that don't require improved air quality. Some homeowners have already modified or otherwise improved their home IAQ, some don't know they should or that they can, and three in 10 would like to improve their IAQ. The desire for better indoor air quality is similar across homeowners regardless of income, home size, or community.

- Most homeowners (85%) mentioned having smokers, asthmatics, excess

dust, or pets in the home, which signals the need for better IAQ products.

- Only 26% of homeowners rated their home air quality as "good/high," while 22% believed their home air quality is "poor/low."

- Nearly one-third of U.S. homeowners agreed completely that IAQ is as important as energy efficiency.

- Nearly three in 10 homeowners desired better IAQ in their homes in 2008, as in past years.

- Retailers seemed to get closer to the issue with homeowners than contractors. Portable IAQ equipment was found in significantly more homes than the central system product (39%), which was up slightly from previous years. Portable units had the highest penetration of all IAQ equipment.

- U.S. homeowners were willing to

spend an average of \$636 to improve their indoor air quality by 25%, more than a 10% increase compared to 2006.

The study reveals a significant market for IAQ products. This unfulfilled interest in indoor air quality provides an opportunity for manufacturers, contractors, and retailers to offer homeowners an effective air quality solution, but only if marketing and sales efforts are better focused and relationship selling becomes the rule and not the exception.

It's important to identify and compare solutions offered by portable and whole-house air quality equipment, so that homeowners have the total picture to make the best decisions about their own homes. **GB**

**Garry Upton**, of Decision Analyst, Inc., based in Arlington, TX shares his interpretations of its American Home Comfort Study of homeowners, and explores what customers look for in HVAC contractors. To learn more about this study, or to purchase it, contact Garry at [gupton@decisionanalyst.com](mailto:gupton@decisionanalyst.com).