

# EUROPEAN TISSUE SYMPOSIUM

The European Tissue Paper Industry Association



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## **Press Information**

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### **With hygiene top of mind, according to Intermetra study, Europeans prefer to dry their hands with paper towels!**

**A recent survey<sup>1[1]</sup> in 4 major European markets (Germany, France, UK and Sweden) demonstrates that for consumers the facilities of public restrooms are of high importance, especially when it comes to the device for drying hands.**

**Even as washing of hands is considered mandatory, 28% of the users of public restrooms do not wish to dry their hands if they do not find a "suitable" hand drying device. Hygiene is considered the most important inductor for finding a hand drying system "suitable". And paper hand towels provide the highest hygiene perception by almost all respondents (96%).**



#### **Likes and dislikes questioned**

Managers of companies or restaurants do not normally question their customers, staff or visitors on what facilities they want in the premises' toilets. However, the perception of the venue may be greatly influenced by these basic facilities. The Intermetra survey demonstrates that a washroom with the 'right' solution is highly appreciated by all and is seen like a 'nice business card': it helps build a correct perception of the venue. When it comes to washing and drying hands, almost all users have an outspoken preference for a clear hygienic solution; they prefer tissue hand towels above any other system.

#### **We all wash our hands, don't we?!**

The new survey confirms that people always are in a hurry, consequently do not want to queue in front of a dispenser and they wish to leave the washroom with a dry and clean feel.

The very recent consumer survey by Intermetra on behalf of the ETS<sup>2</sup> (June 2008), provides some very interesting insights. The survey was conducted among 2000 citizens, male and

<sup>1</sup> [1] Intermetra, June 2008 – Users preferences in hand drying systems.

<sup>2</sup> ETS – European Tissue Symposium is a trade organisation representing the majority of tissue paper producers throughout Europe and about 90% of the total European tissue production.

female of all age ranges, and this in 4 large countries: France, Sweden, Germany and the United Kingdom.

The objective was to find out whether, why and how consumers wish to dry their hands after a visit to toilets in public places.

Washing hands after a visit to a public toilet fortunately has become almost normal practice everywhere in Europe. Question is though: do we also always dry our hands?

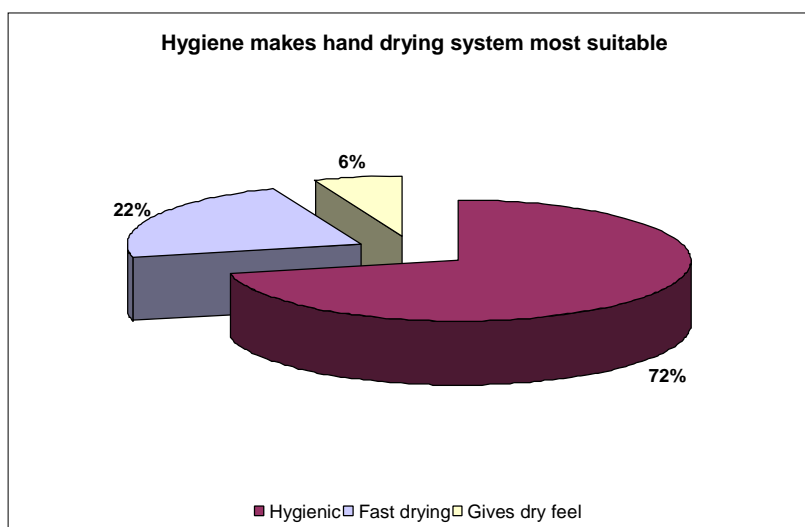
The survey found that an exceptional 1% never does. Germans however reconfirm their profile of being the most rigorous Europeans: 88% will always dry their hands, whatever drying system is available. The different countries confounded, however, it is remarkable that more than a quarter (28%) will first look whether what they call 'a suitable hand drying system' is available before they decide to dry their hands. Women are slightly more outspoken in this than men, especially in Sweden (42% vs. 27%) and France (41% vs. 29%).

### Tissue towels give highest hygiene perception

If the availability of the "right" device is mandatory for almost a third of the users, when then is a hand drying system considered "suitable"?

Astonishingly, it is not for the dry feel: only 6% of all respondents think this is the most important attribute of a hand drying device.

The largest group, almost three quarters of all respondents (72%), put hygiene as highest requirement on their list, whereas speed of drying is a priority for a much lower 22% of the interviewees.



Overall, hygiene is considered the most important inductor for the liking or not liking of a drying device by almost all (95%) respondents.

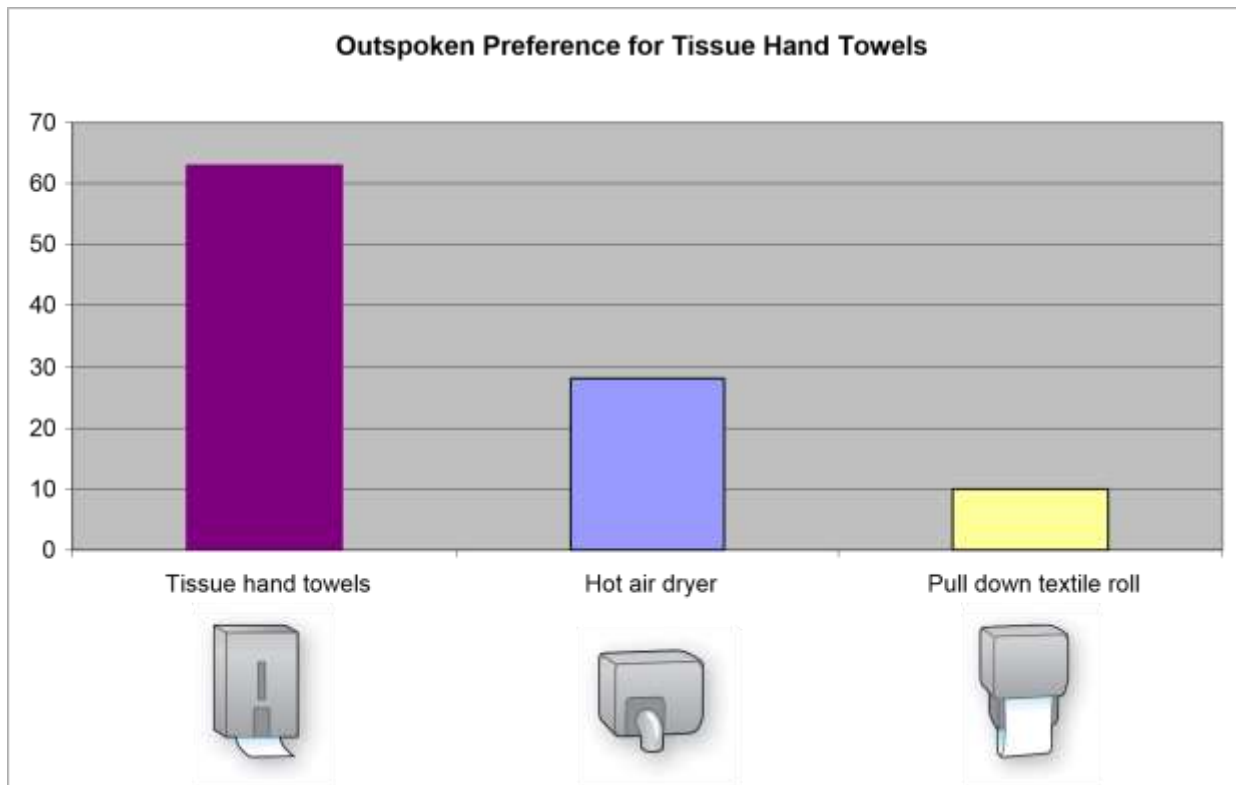
They do consider totally unacceptable textile towels that have already been used by others (72%) or devices that are unclean (59%). **Tissue hand towels are perceived as giving the highest hygiene level (96%).**

These preferences are reconfirmed when they choose the systems they would want their children to use in schools.

After this very outspoken preference for hygiene as a key condition, two thirds (68%) of the people experiences that tissue hand towel dries their hands fastest, this is three times more so than pull down textile and five times more than hot air dryers. The driest feeling they again get from paper towels (50%); in this hot air dryers (30%) are considered more efficient than pull down textile (18%).

**Tissue hand towels by far the most favourite system**

The bottom-line question as to what system users prefer by far and overall, confirmed that 63%, when offered the choice, will definitely put tissue hand towels first. Less than half this percentage (28%) opts for hot air dryers and 10% for textile rolls. When taking 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> choices together, paper towels lead with almost all (98%) of the respondents; pull down textile rolls are considered least suitable.



**European cultural variety confirmed**

There is no surprise in the fact that Germans (88%), more than other nationalities (average 66%), stick to the rules and will dry their hands regardless of the device they will find.

Whereas three quarters of the Swedes (73%) and Germans (75%) are outspokenly in favour of tissue towels as their preferred option, the English voices are much less so, and are somewhat divided between tissue (48%) and hot air dryers (46%).

Last but not least, females have the most outspoken preference of all for tissue hand towels; in this Swedish women score highest of all (74%).

About ETS

*The European Tissue Symposium (ETS) is a trade organisation. Its members represent the majority of tissue paper producers throughout Europe and about 90% of the total European tissue production.*

Information provided by the ETS / European Tissue Symposium

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