

Design Innovation and Market Promotion Strategies of Smart Bathroom Hardware Products

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Abstract: The rapid development of smart home technologies has driven significant growth in the smart bathroom hardware market, encompassing products such as smart toilets, sensor faucets, intelligent showers, and smart mirrors. This review examines design innovation and market promotion strategies within this sector, highlighting user-centered design, functional and technological advancements, aesthetic and material improvements, and modular customization. Market strategies including brand positioning, multi-channel distribution, digital marketing, and after-sales service are analyzed to demonstrate how they enhance consumer engagement and adoption. Challenges such as high R&D costs, supply chain complexity, consumer awareness, and regulatory compliance are discussed alongside opportunities from urbanization, sustainability trends, and expanding smart home adoption. Case studies of leading brands illustrate successful integration of design and marketing strategies. Finally, the review provides insights for future research, emphasizing human-computer interaction optimization, eco-friendly materials, and integrated IoT ecosystems to support sustainable growth and user-centric innovation.

Keywords: smart bathroom; design innovation; market promotion; IoT; user experience

1. Introduction

The rapid development of smart home technologies has significantly transformed the way people interact with their living environments. Among various segments of the smart home market, smart bathroom hardware products have emerged as a particularly dynamic and fast-growing category. These products, which include intelligent faucets, sensor-activated showers, smart toilets, and multifunctional mirrors, integrate advanced technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), and energy-efficient systems to enhance user convenience, hygiene, and water conservation. The global smart bathroom market has witnessed remarkable growth over the past few years, driven by rising consumer awareness of hygiene, increasing disposable income, and the growing adoption of smart home ecosystems. According to market research, the worldwide smart bathroom hardware market has expanded at an annual growth rate exceeding 15% in recent years, reflecting both strong demand and ongoing innovation. Table 1 presents an overview of the global market size and growth trends for smart bathroom products over the past five years, highlighting the rapid expansion of this sector [1].

Table 1. Global Smart Bathroom Hardware Market Size and Growth (2019–2023).

Year	Market Size (USD Billion)	Annual Growth Rate (%)
2019	8.2	12.5
2020	9.5	15.8
2021	11.0	15.7
2022	12.7	15.5

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2023	14.6	14.9
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Note: Data are based on aggregated market research reports.

The significance of design innovation in smart bathroom hardware cannot be overstated. As consumer expectations evolve, merely incorporating advanced technology is no longer sufficient to gain a competitive edge. Modern users demand products that seamlessly combine functionality, aesthetic appeal, and intuitive user experience. Innovative design not only enhances the usability and efficiency of these products but also strengthens brand differentiation and market competitiveness. Companies that successfully integrate design thinking, user-centered development, and cutting-edge technology are better positioned to capture a larger share of the growing smart bathroom market. Furthermore, design innovation often drives new trends in the sector, influencing both consumer preferences and industry standards.

This review aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of design innovation and market promotion strategies in the smart bathroom hardware industry. The objectives are threefold. First, it seeks to classify and examine the current types of smart bathroom products, focusing on their technological features, design approaches, and functionality. Second, it aims to explore effective design innovation strategies, including user experience enhancement, material and aesthetic innovation, and the integration of intelligent technologies [2]. Third, it evaluates market promotion strategies, encompassing brand positioning, distribution channels, marketing campaigns, and post-sales services. By synthesizing existing literature, market reports, and case studies, this review provides insights into best practices and emerging trends that can inform both product development and strategic marketing decisions.

The structure of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides an overview of smart bathroom hardware products, summarizing the different product types, technological characteristics, and market status. Section 3 focuses on design innovation strategies, analyzing approaches to enhance user experience, technological integration, and aesthetic appeal. Section 4 addresses market promotion strategies, examining methods for brand development, market penetration, and consumer engagement. Section 5 discusses the challenges and opportunities in product innovation and market expansion, including technological, regulatory, and consumer-related factors. Finally, Section 6 concludes the review and proposes future directions for research and practice in smart bathroom hardware design and marketing.

2. Overview of Smart Bathroom Hardware Products

2.1. Types of Smart Bathroom Hardware Products

Smart bathroom hardware products have evolved rapidly in recent years, encompassing a variety of devices designed to improve convenience, hygiene, and water efficiency. The primary categories include:

Smart Toilets: Equipped with automatic flushing, heated seats, water jets for cleaning, air drying, and self-cleaning functions. Some models integrate health-monitoring sensors that track vital signs or detect urine composition to provide health feedback.

Sensor-Activated Faucets: These faucets use infrared or motion sensors to automatically control water flow, reducing water wastage and improving hygiene by minimizing physical contact. Advanced models allow temperature adjustment, preset flow rates, and integration with home automation systems [3].

Smart Showers and Thermostatic Showers: Intelligent showers provide precise temperature control, water-saving settings, and digital displays. Some systems offer programmable shower routines, voice control, and real-time energy consumption monitoring.

Smart Mirrors: Mirrors equipped with LED displays, touch or gesture control, and integration with IoT devices. They often provide real-time weather, calendar, news updates, or health tracking. Anti-fog technology and adaptive lighting further enhance usability.

Other emerging products include smart bidets, automated towel dispensers, and integrated bathroom control panels, all contributing to a connected and user-centric bathroom environment.

2.2. Technological Features and Innovation Highlights

The innovative capabilities of smart bathroom hardware largely stem from the integration of advanced technologies. Key technological features include automation, IoT connectivity, energy and water efficiency, AI-driven customization, and material innovation. For instance, smart toilets and sensor faucets incorporate infrared and ultrasonic sensors for contactless operation, improving hygiene. IoT-enabled showers and mirrors allow remote control and data analytics, enabling personalized experiences and energy savings. High-quality materials, such as anti-bacterial coatings, corrosion-resistant metals, and tempered glass, are widely used to ensure durability and aesthetic appeal [4].

2.3. Market Status and Key Brands

The global smart bathroom hardware market is highly competitive and expanding rapidly. Key markets include North America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific, with Asia-Pacific showing the fastest growth due to urbanization, rising incomes, and government initiatives promoting water-saving technologies. Leading brands in this sector include:

TOTO (Japan): Advanced smart toilets and bidets with health-monitoring features.

Kohler (USA): Sensor faucets, intelligent showers, and smart mirrors integrated with IoT platforms.

Hansgrohe and Grohe (Germany): Focused on eco-friendly smart showers and thermostatic mixers.

Moen and Delta (USA): Sensor faucets, smart showers, and connected bathroom solutions.

Chinese Brands (Xiaomi, JOMOO, Huida): Affordable smart products integrated with mobile apps and smart home ecosystems.

Market growth is fueled by consumer demand for convenience, hygiene, and energy efficiency. Companies compete not only through technological innovation but also via design, user experience, and brand reputation. The diversity of features across product categories, as summarized in Table 2, reflects the evolving preferences and expectations of consumers worldwide.

Table 2. Comparative Features of Different Types of Smart Bathroom Hardware Products.

Product Type	Key Features	Connectivity	Smart Functions	Material/Design Highlights
Smart Toilets	Automatic flushing, heated seats, bidet	Wi-Fi/IoT	Health monitoring, auto-cleaning	Anti-bacterial coating, ceramic
Sensor Faucets	Touchless, adjustable flow and temp	Optional IoT	Water-saving presets	Stainless steel, chrome finish
Smart Showers	Thermostatic digital display	Wi-Fi/IoT	Voice control, programmable routines	Corrosion-resistant metals
Smart Mirrors	LED display, touch/gesture control	Wi-Fi/IoT	Calendar, weather, smart home integration	Tempered glass, sleek frame

3. Design Innovation Strategies

3.1. User-Centered Design (UX)

User experience (UX) has emerged as a central driver in the innovation of smart bathroom hardware. Modern consumers increasingly prioritize products that are intuitive, efficient, and tailored to their habits. UX-oriented design emphasizes ergonomics, ease of operation, and emotional satisfaction. For instance, sensor faucets are often calibrated to respond to varying hand positions and distances, minimizing water splashing and reducing accidental activation. Smart mirrors incorporate gesture recognition and voice commands, allowing users to interact seamlessly without touching the surface, which is particularly important in maintaining hygiene standards [5].

Designers also rely heavily on user research methods, including ethnographic studies, surveys, and usability testing, to understand the needs of different demographic groups. Older adults, for example, may require higher-contrast displays or simplified control panels, while younger users might favor app-based customization and aesthetic versatility. The integration of UX principles ensures that devices not only perform efficiently but also create a sense of comfort and personalization, increasing overall satisfaction and adoption.

3.2. Functional and Technological Innovation

Functionality and technology are the backbone of smart bathroom product innovation [6]. Products are designed to improve hygiene, conserve resources, and enhance user convenience. Key innovations include:

Sensor-Based Automation: Infrared, ultrasonic, and pressure sensors enable contactless activation, reducing contamination risk. Advanced toilets can detect user presence, automatically adjust seat temperature, and even perform self-cleaning.

Water and Energy Efficiency: Thermostatic showers and smart faucets often include adaptive flow control and preset temperature profiles, reducing water and energy consumption while maintaining comfort. Some products feature real-time monitoring, providing users with insights into usage patterns and resource savings [7].

Intelligent Connectivity: IoT-enabled devices allow integration with mobile apps and home automation platforms. Users can remotely monitor toilet usage, schedule shower routines, or receive maintenance alerts. AI algorithms can learn user preferences over time, automatically adjusting device parameters to enhance convenience.

As summarized in Table 2, each product type emphasizes different functionalities. For example, smart toilets focus on health monitoring and hygiene, sensor faucets prioritize water efficiency, and smart mirrors provide information-rich interactions. Leveraging these features enables manufacturers to differentiate products and deliver tangible value to users.

3.3. Aesthetic and Material Innovation

While technology defines functionality, aesthetics and material innovation significantly influence consumer perception and purchasing decisions. Contemporary designs emphasize minimalism, clean lines, and harmonious color schemes, integrating seamlessly with modern bathroom interiors. Beyond appearance, material selection ensures durability, hygiene, and sustainability. Anti-bacterial coatings, corrosion-resistant metals, and high-quality plastics are widely used, reducing maintenance and extending product life.

Sustainable design has become increasingly important. Many manufacturers employ recycled or low-environmental-impact materials, addressing consumer demand for eco-friendly products. Lighting elements integrated into smart mirrors or faucets not only enhance usability but also create a visually appealing atmosphere, highlighting the intersection of functional and aesthetic innovation.

3.4. Modular and Customizable Design

Modularity and customization are emerging as key strategies to balance production efficiency with consumer personalization. Modular systems allow components to be upgraded independently—for instance, a smart shower panel may be expanded with LED lighting, Bluetooth speakers, or additional thermostatic controls without redesigning the entire unit. This flexibility reduces manufacturing costs and simplifies maintenance while allowing users to adapt products to their needs.

Customization extends beyond hardware. App-controlled profiles enable users to pre-set preferred water temperatures, spray patterns, and even lighting conditions. By offering modular and customizable solutions, companies can target multiple market segments simultaneously—from luxury consumers seeking premium experiences to cost-conscious users desiring functional efficiency [8].

3.5. Case Studies of Leading Brands

Several leading companies exemplify successful integration of design innovation strategies:

TOTO (Japan): TOTO's Neorest series combines health-monitoring sensors, automatic flushing, heated seats, and adaptive bidet functions with a sleek ceramic design. Their focus on hygiene and comfort has positioned the brand as a market leader in high-end smart toilets.

Kohler (USA): Kohler integrates IoT connectivity into faucets, showers, and mirrors, offering programmable routines, voice commands, and real-time monitoring of water usage. Their designs blend technological sophistication with aesthetic appeal, emphasizing the harmony of form and function.

Xiaomi (China): Xiaomi demonstrates how affordability and innovation can coexist. Its smart toilets, sensor faucets, and app-enabled showers provide IoT connectivity, personalized routines, and energy-efficient functions, making smart bathroom technology accessible to a broader audience.

These case studies illustrate how combining UX design, technological advancement, material innovation, and modularity results in products that are functional, visually appealing, and highly adaptable to user needs [9].

3.6. Synthesis and Insights

Overall, successful design innovation in smart bathroom hardware requires an integrated approach. User experience, technological functionality, aesthetics, material selection, and modularity must be aligned to meet diverse consumer expectations. Products that effectively balance these factors achieve higher adoption rates, stronger brand loyalty, and competitive advantage. As reflected in Table 2, different product types prioritize distinct features—highlighting the importance of context-specific innovation. By continuously monitoring user feedback, investing in R&D, and adopting flexible design strategies, manufacturers can remain at the forefront of an increasingly competitive and dynamic market.

4. Market Promotion Strategies

4.1. Brand Positioning and Market Segmentation

Effective market promotion begins with precise brand positioning and market segmentation. In the smart bathroom hardware industry, positioning strategies often reflect product quality, technological sophistication, and target demographics. Premium brands, such as TOTO and Kohler, emphasize high-end design, advanced functionality, and health-oriented features, appealing to affluent consumers and luxury market segments. Mid-range and cost-effective brands, like Xiaomi and JOMOO, prioritize affordability, essential smart functions, and ease of use, targeting mass-market urban households [10].

Market segmentation further enhances promotional efficiency by tailoring marketing efforts to consumer characteristics, including age, income, lifestyle, and technological literacy. For instance, younger, tech-savvy consumers are more receptive to app-controlled showers or IoT-integrated toilets, while older users may value ergonomic design and simple interfaces. Understanding these distinctions allows manufacturers to develop differentiated campaigns that resonate with specific audience groups, thereby increasing conversion rates and brand loyalty.

4.2. Channel Strategies

Smart bathroom hardware products rely on a multi-channel distribution strategy that integrates both online and offline channels. Online channels, including e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Alibaba, and regional online home improvement stores, enable brands to reach a broad audience with minimal overhead costs. Product pages are often enhanced with detailed specifications, instructional videos, and interactive 3D models to simulate user experience.

Offline channels remain critical, particularly for premium products that require hands-on experience. Flagship stores, home improvement retailers, and showroom collaborations allow consumers to interact directly with smart toilets, sensor faucets, and intelligent showers, assessing usability, aesthetics, and performance. Some brands establish experience centers that replicate full bathroom setups, demonstrating IoT integration, app control, and modular customization.

Furthermore, strategic partnerships with home builders, interior designers, and real estate developers can embed smart bathroom hardware into new construction projects or renovation packages. Such collaborations not only increase product exposure but also position the brand as a standard of modern, smart living.

4.3. Marketing Tactics

Marketing strategies for smart bathroom products leverage digital media, influencer partnerships, and experiential campaigns to enhance brand visibility and consumer engagement.

Social Media Marketing: Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, WeChat, and Facebook are widely used to showcase product features through short videos, tutorials, and interactive content. Visual storytelling highlights both design aesthetics and technological advantages, appealing to lifestyle-conscious consumers.

KOL/Influencer Promotion: Collaboration with key opinion leaders (KOLs) or industry influencers boosts credibility and trust. Influencers often demonstrate installation, operation, and daily usage, which helps potential buyers visualize product benefits.

Experiential Marketing: Brands create immersive experiences by organizing product demonstrations, pop-up exhibitions, or in-home trials. Consumers can test sensor-activated faucets, experience programmed shower routines, or interact with smart mirrors, which enhances satisfaction and reinforces purchase intentions.

Integrated marketing communications that combine digital campaigns, offline experiences, and PR initiatives are particularly effective in bridging consumer awareness with action, thereby accelerating adoption in a competitive market.

4.4. After-Sales Service and Reputation Management

Robust after-sales service and user reputation management are crucial for sustaining brand loyalty in the smart bathroom hardware industry. High-tech products often require technical support, warranty services, and timely maintenance, especially for IoT-enabled devices. Many brands provide app-based support, remote troubleshooting, and online customer service channels, reducing friction and enhancing user confidence.

Customer reviews and word-of-mouth play a pivotal role in shaping brand perception. Positive reviews on e-commerce platforms and social media enhance credibility,

while timely resolution of complaints prevents negative experiences from spreading. Some manufacturers implement proactive feedback systems, encouraging users to report functionality issues or suggest improvements. Such initiatives not only improve product quality but also foster a sense of community and brand engagement, reinforcing long-term loyalty.

4.5. Case Studies of Successful Market Promotion

Several brands exemplify effective market promotion strategies:

TOTO (Japan): TOTO's market campaigns emphasize premium positioning and health benefits, highlighting water-saving technologies and hygiene-focused features. Showrooms and experiential centers allow customers to test Neorest toilets and smart bidets, creating direct engagement and reinforcing brand authority.

Kohler (USA): Kohler combines multi-channel marketing, including social media storytelling, influencer endorsements, and luxury home collaborations. Their experiential events showcase integrated smart showers and IoT-enabled mirrors, emphasizing both aesthetics and technological innovation.

Xiaomi (China): Xiaomi employs aggressive digital marketing, leveraging app ecosystems, live-stream sales, and social media KOL partnerships. Their campaigns highlight affordability, smart features, and IoT integration, effectively reaching young, tech-savvy urban consumers.

These cases demonstrate how aligning brand positioning, channel strategy, marketing tactics, and after-sales service can maximize market impact. Each strategy is adapted to target consumer segments, regional preferences, and competitive landscapes, highlighting the necessity of a holistic, multi-dimensional approach to promotion.

4.6. Insights and Recommendations

A strategic approach to market promotion in smart bathroom hardware must balance brand differentiation, consumer engagement, and service excellence. Key recommendations include:

Clearly define brand positioning and tailor marketing messages to segmented consumer groups.

Employ an integrated channel strategy combining e-commerce, offline experience, and strategic partnerships.

Leverage digital marketing, influencer campaigns, and experiential engagement to enhance product visibility and perceived value.

Invest in comprehensive after-sales support and actively manage online reputation to reinforce trust and loyalty.

Continuously monitor market trends, consumer feedback, and competitor activities to adjust promotional strategies dynamically.

By implementing these practices, manufacturers can not only enhance market penetration but also establish enduring competitive advantages in a rapidly evolving industry.

5. Challenges and Opportunities

5.1. Technology R&D Costs and Supply Chain Challenges

The development of smart bathroom hardware requires substantial investment in research and development (R&D). Advanced features such as IoT integration, AI-driven personalization, and sensor-based automation necessitate sophisticated electronics, software development, and precision manufacturing. High R&D costs can pose barriers for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), limiting their ability to compete with established brands.

Additionally, supply chain management is a critical challenge. Components such as sensors, microcontrollers, and high-quality materials must meet stringent quality standards. Disruptions in global supply chains—such as semiconductor shortages or delays in

raw material procurement—can increase production costs and delay product launches. Efficient supply chain coordination and strategic partnerships with reliable suppliers are essential to mitigate these risks.

5.2. Consumer Awareness and Acceptance Issues

Consumer perception and acceptance play a vital role in the adoption of smart bathroom products. Many potential users are unfamiliar with the benefits of sensor faucets, smart showers, or IoT-enabled toilets. Concerns over complexity, maintenance, and data privacy can hinder adoption, particularly among older demographics or in regions with limited smart home penetration.

Education and marketing efforts are essential to address these issues. Demonstrating the practical benefits—such as water and energy savings, hygiene improvements, and personalized comfort—can increase acceptance. Clear, user-friendly interfaces and reliable performance further enhance consumer confidence.

5.3. Regulatory and Standards Constraints

Smart bathroom hardware products are subject to a variety of regulations and technical standards, including safety certifications, water efficiency norms, and electrical compliance. Compliance with local and international standards can be both time-consuming and costly. For IoT-enabled devices, additional considerations include data security, privacy regulations, and interoperability requirements.

Non-compliance can result in fines, product recalls, or restricted market access, posing significant risks for manufacturers. Therefore, companies must invest in thorough regulatory research, certification processes, and ongoing monitoring to ensure products meet evolving legal and industry standards.

5.4. Market Potential and Future Development Trends

Despite these challenges, the smart bathroom sector presents substantial opportunities. Global urbanization, rising disposable incomes, and growing environmental awareness are driving demand for energy-efficient, intelligent bathroom solutions. The integration of AI, IoT, and predictive analytics is expected to further enhance product capabilities, enabling health monitoring, adaptive water management, and personalized experiences.

Emerging markets in Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and the Middle East are poised for rapid growth. Companies that successfully combine innovative design, effective marketing, and regulatory compliance are well-positioned to capture these expanding opportunities. Moreover, sustainability trends and eco-conscious consumer preferences can be leveraged as selling points for water-saving and energy-efficient smart products.

5.5. Summary Table of Challenges and Opportunities

As illustrated in Table 3, each challenge presents a corresponding opportunity. Firms that effectively address R&D, consumer education, regulatory compliance, and market positioning can transform potential obstacles into strategic advantages, driving long-term growth in the smart bathroom hardware industry.

Table 3. Design Innovation and Market Promotion Challenges vs. Opportunities in Smart Bathroom Products.

Category	Challenges	Opportunities
Technology & R&D	High development costs, complex electronics, component shortages	Advanced functionality, differentiation, competitive advantage
Consumer Acceptance	Lack of awareness, usability concerns, data privacy issues	Education, UX optimization, market expansion

Regulatory & Standards	Compliance costs, varying local/international regulations	Market trust, early-mover advantage in standard-compliant tech
Market & Trends	High competition, fragmented market	Urbanization, smart home adoption, sustainability demand

6. Conclusion and Future Directions

This review has examined the landscape of smart bathroom hardware, emphasizing design innovation and market promotion strategies. Analysis of product types—including smart toilets, sensor faucets, intelligent showers, and smart mirrors—revealed that technological advancement, user-centered design, and aesthetic innovation are key drivers of market competitiveness. Functional features such as touchless operation, IoT connectivity, water and energy efficiency, and AI-driven personalization significantly enhance user experience, while modular and customizable designs provide flexibility for diverse consumer preferences. Case studies of leading brands such as TOTO, Kohler, and Xiaomi demonstrate how successful integration of these design strategies can strengthen brand identity and market penetration.

Market promotion strategies were shown to be equally critical for commercial success. Precise brand positioning, targeted segmentation, and multi-channel distribution—combining e-commerce, offline experience centers, and partnerships with builders or interior designers—facilitate product visibility and accessibility. Digital marketing, influencer collaborations, and experiential campaigns enhance consumer engagement, while robust after-sales service and reputation management foster trust and long-term loyalty. The alignment of design innovation with effective marketing strategies is essential to capture both premium and mass-market segments.

Despite significant growth, the smart bathroom industry faces challenges, including high R&D costs, complex supply chains, varying consumer acceptance, and regulatory constraints. However, these challenges are accompanied by substantial opportunities. Urbanization, rising disposable incomes, increasing awareness of hygiene and sustainability, and expanding smart home adoption create fertile conditions for further innovation and market expansion. Manufacturers that successfully navigate technical, consumer, and regulatory challenges while leveraging emerging trends are poised to achieve sustainable growth and competitive advantage.

Future research should focus on optimizing user experience through human-computer interaction studies, exploring novel materials for sustainability, and developing integrated IoT ecosystems that enhance interconnectivity between bathroom devices and broader smart home platforms. Market strategies should prioritize personalized marketing, digital engagement, and education to accelerate adoption. Additionally, continuous monitoring of global regulatory developments and technological advancements will be essential to maintain compliance and market relevance. By addressing these areas, both researchers and industry practitioners can contribute to a more intelligent, efficient, and user-centric smart bathroom ecosystem.

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