

2. Sigma3

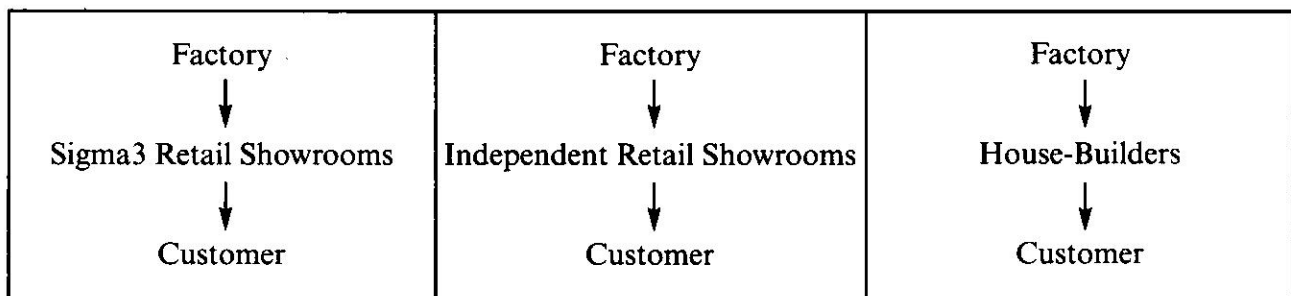
Sigma3 is the largest manufacturer and supplier of fitted kitchens and bedrooms in Wales, employing more than 160 people at its headquarters in Llantrisant. It has built up a reputation for quality since it first started in 1975 and operates at the more expensive end of the market.



Currently it has a total of eleven prestigious retail showrooms across South Wales, Lancashire, Surrey and Sussex. It also has a well-designed website and some impressive brochures for potential customers to read.

In addition to its own retail operation, Sigma3 kitchens and bedrooms are sold nationwide through a variety of independent retail showrooms. The company also sells through well-known house builders and distributors, such as Charles Church, Bellway and Barratt Homes. Its products may also be used in the show homes that these builders use.

Sigma3 Distribution Channels



'With free design as part of the service, the company prides itself on delivering truly made-to-measure furniture and creative solutions for every lifestyle need. Quality is central to the company's success. Customer service remains a top priority, along with a high-quality product offering. Together this provides the cornerstone upon which Sigma3 has been built and continues to grow'. (www.sigma3.co.uk)

Bethan Banfield, Sigma3's marketing manager states 'I want to ensure that our product range, service and technical support are among the very best in the industry'.

- (a) (i) What is a distribution channel? [2]
- (ii) Explain the possible benefits to Sigma3 of the distribution channels that it uses. [6]
- (b) How can a business, such as Sigma3, ensure that it maintains its reputation for providing 'quality' products and services? [9]
- (c) Evaluate the view that the provision of quality goods and services is by far the most important element of Sigma3's marketing mix. [8]