



Building a Market: The Rise of the Home Improvement Industry, 1914-1960 (Historical Studies of Urban America)

Richard Harris

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Each year, North Americans spend as much money fixing up their homes as they do buying new ones. This obsession with improving our dwellings has given rise to a multibillion-dollar industry that includes countless books, consumer magazines, a cable television network, and thousands of home improvement stores.

Building a Market charts the rise of the home improvement industry in the United States and Canada from the end of World War I into the late 1950s. Drawing on the insights of business, social, and urban historians, and making use of a wide range of documentary sources, Richard Harris shows how the middle-class preference for home ownership first emerged in the 1920s—and how manufacturers, retailers, and the federal government combined to establish the massive home improvement market and a pervasive culture of Do-It-Yourself.

Deeply insightful, *Building a Market* is the carefully crafted history of the emergence and evolution of a home improvement revolution that changed not just American culture but the American landscape as well.

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