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In addition to kitchen textiles, valances and accent rugs are other big sellers. At The Ivy Trellis in Farmville, Virginia, owner Rosa Mann displays about 15 to 20 different valances on a large wall and showcases other valances and drapes throughout the shop above and beside various vignettes. The Ivy Trellis makes all of its own window treatments. "We used to sell only ready-made items from lots of companies," Mann says. "Through the years, most have closed or moved production overseas, so as business changed, we had to redefine our niche, so that's when we started doing our own." Producing its own textiles allows The Ivy Trellis to carry merchandise that isn't available at every home decor store in the area.

At Susie's Bittersweet Treasures in Rochester, New Hampshire, owner Susie Gordon says she does well with kitchen and bathroom textiles as well as bedroom items. "When I purchase a textile for the shop, I try to make it work for any room," she notes. "For example, when I purchase a popular print, I will carry the valance, tiers,

Dairy Fresh kitchen towels from Moda Home, top, each measure 28" x 17". Heritage Lace's Fancy Free line, right, comes in four colors: grass (shown), coral, sky and sun. French Notes' flour sack towels, left, feature designs based on original watercolor paintings.



TOP ADVICE FROM KEY VENDORS

Padma Creations Offers Advice on Ways to Sell More Soft Goods

As with furniture, selling textiles often requires a space commitment on the part of the retailer. It's important to display various styles and patterns, but does showing more options always equal more sales?

According to Ratna Vangara, marketing manager for Padma Creations in Glendale Heights, Illinois, it's essential for retailers to do the most with the space they have. "As location is paramount to real estate, display is essential to sales," he says. "It's an easy sell if the customer can see and touch the product. Window treatments take up such a small amount of space. Every retailer should have these displayed, as it will definitely increase sales."

To help retailers with this display dilemma, Padma Creations includes a full room colors display board in each of its bedding and curtain packages. This allows customers to clearly see the colors of the product packed inside, and it allows retailers to display many of the products on the shelves without opening the packages.

Padma Creations, 866-997-2362, www.padmacreations.com.