

**Table 23**

**Beading and Moulding Imports**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Quantity (kg)</b>	<b>Value (million ¥)</b>
1982	103	156
1983	184	197
1984	193	171
1985	321	255
1986	238	183
1987	591	310
1988	959	441
1989 est.	1 459	566

Source: Ministry of Treasury.

This category explicitly excludes moulding for picture frames.

In 1988, the United States was the largest exporter of beading/moulding to Japan. Most imports from North America are of the decorative variety with scrolling, which are not commonly used in Japan.

**Demand Trends**

The best-selling products are those of Japanese design; very simple with no decorative work such as scrolling. The materials used are primarily particle boards covered with vinyl or plywood veneer. The base mouldings in commercial and public buildings are mainly plastic.

The potential demand for hardwood mouldings is from western-style houses and commercial buildings such as boutiques, restaurants and coffee shops.

**4 Business Practices**

**Purchasing Criteria**

Homeowners are showing increasing interest in the selection of housing components, but the decision still primarily lies in the hands of the contractors. Although contractors have their own sources of supply for building materials, each supplier carries only a limited number of brands.

Even in cases where the end user chooses components of a particular brand, if the brand is not handled by the contractor and supplier, the end user is usually persuaded to accept the contractor's choice.

Price is the most important factor in product selection because budget control is usually a crucial consideration for both the end user and contractor.

Colour, style and material selection are based on what is commonly referred to as "total interior co-ordination."

In general, Japanese preferences lean towards simple line workings for all millwork products. "Scrolling," which is often a prominent feature of imported mouldings and staircases, is not commonly acceptable to the average Japanese.

The Japanese have no significant colour preferences. Light brown, brown and dark brown colours are common choices.

Another important factor is quality workmanship, which includes measurement accuracy, fine finishing and product uniformity.

**Distribution Channels**

Distribution channels for millwork products in Japan are complex though not as much as those of other Japanese industries. The several types of companies linking manufacturers and importers to end users are:

- building material wholesalers;
- building material retail shops;
- 2 x 4 house manufacturers;
- prefabricated house manufacturers;
- general contractors (architects);
- carpenters; and
- specialists.

Distribution channels vary from company to company, and most do not depend on only one. However, the majority of their products are sold to wholesalers, and, in some cases, directly to housing construction companies.

Wholesalers are sometimes divided into several stages depending on the scale of their operations; for example, a primary wholesaler may have a number of secondary wholesalers.

Products handled by relatively small importers are distributed directly to contractors, architects or carpenters.