

RETAIL STORES

Mexican retail stores play a bigger role in the distribution of textile products than their counterparts in Canada. One reason is that Mexicans are more likely to make their own clothes. In addition, many relatively affluent Mexicans hire seamstresses or tailors to custom-make their clothing. The same points apply to draperies, and other home decoration items.

Much of this fabric, along with linens, carpets and other household items, is purchased from retail stores. About one-quarter of all sales of imported fabrics are made directly to the public by retail stores, particularly the large department stores. The largest of these retailers include the following:

- *El Puerto de Liverpool*
- *Comercial Mexicana*
- *Gigante*
- *Aurrera*
- *El Palacio de Hierro*
- *El Puerto de Veracruz*
- *Almacenes Blanco*
- *Sears de México*

At the higher end of the retail market, department stores cater to the more expensive tastes and stock their lines accordingly. They source from both producers and distributors. Most of their imports are bought through Mexican textile distributors rather than imported directly. However, given the recent constraint in consumer purchasing power, these retail stores are seeking to buy more of their lines directly from producers.

Most of the people purchasing from higher-end retail stores are end users who then take the material to their own tailor or seamstress. The rest are mainly higher-priced tailor or seamstress businesses that buy on behalf of their customers. In this market, about 20 percent of the fabric sold is for household use and 80 percent is for apparel.

The relatively low share for household fabrics is partially explained by the existence of high-end stores specializing in drapery and upholstery fabric. Interviews conducted for this study suggest such specialty stores, catering to upper-income Mexicans, dominate the market for imported home decoration fabrics. An example is *Morel's*, a chain that offers a wide variety of high-quality fabrics for furniture re-upholstering, draperies and other home uses. They buy from distributors.