

# Roomba®

## ROBOTIC FLOOR VAC

### THE MARKET

Americans spend hours each week on household chores. It's time-consuming, labor-intensive, and for those with physical challenges, potentially frustrating and painful. The vacuum cleaner market is a \$5 billion-a-year industry, and every year new models are introduced with minimally innovative features: a new light here, a different handle configuration there. Over 50 brands are represented in this market, and the category price ranges from \$19.99 to upwards of \$1,000, often from the same retailer.

In 2002, iRobot introduced Roomba® Robotic Floorvac, the first affordable robotic floorvac in the world. By revolutionizing the chore of home floor care, Roomba has simplified the lives of users around the world and created a new category in the home floor care marketplace.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

Roomba Robotic Floorvac has set the standard for effortless floor care in the United States, an accomplishment that hasn't gone unnoticed. In 2002 *Time* magazine, *Business Week*, and *USA Today* named it one of the Year's Best Products. It was one of Oprah's Favorite Things, is currently the seventh-most searched-for brand on Google, and is listed as the 51st of the top 100 gadgets of all time in *Mobile PC* magazine.

But that's not all. iRobot takes tremendous pride in the fact that Roomba has made life easier



for thousands of users worldwide. iRobot strives to create technology that will help people every day, and Roomba is doing just that. Phone calls, emails, and letters arrive daily from users who explain how Roomba has made their lives easier. Whether they have physical challenges that make cleaning difficult or busy lives that prevent them from cleaning as often as they'd like, Roomba helps them have cleaner homes with less fuss.

In early 2005, Roomba® Robotic Floorvac became the first consumer robot to sell over a million units. This far exceeded the UN Report on Robotics prediction of 400,000 robots in homes by 2006. Roomba is clearly not only setting the standard for a new level of convenience in home floor care, but is also creating a new level of acceptance in the marketplace for robotic appliances.

### HISTORY

iRobot Corporation was founded in 1990 when Rod Brooks, Ph.D., professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Artificial Intelligence Lab, and his students Colin Angle and Helen Greiner decided that robotics needed to move out of academia and industry and into the real world. iRobot initially sought and won numerous government contracts, creating robots designed to go places too dirty or dangerous for people. These were one-of-a-kind machines, carefully handmade

and rarely designed for production. While the technology was extraordinary, these robots were not yet ready to move from the theoretical to the practical. Still, they remained an important part of the iRobot vision.

The company continued to look for product ideas that would be marketable, practical, and affordable. In 1997, two engineers came up with the idea of a small, affordable robotic floorvac. They presented a prototype to company management, and were granted two weeks and \$10,000 to prove that it could be marketable and manufacturable. It took more than two weeks and more than \$10,000, but they were able to prove their point, and a design team was assembled. This talented team of software, mechanical, and electrical engineers worked together to develop the best robotic floorvac in the world.

On September 17, 2002, after many prototypes and extensive testing, Roomba was introduced to worldwide acclaim. Home floor care would never be the same. In May 2003 Roomba Pro and Pro Elite were introduced, with expanded cleaning features and remote control capabilities. The Discovery line of Roomba products was introduced on July 12, 2004.

### THE PRODUCT

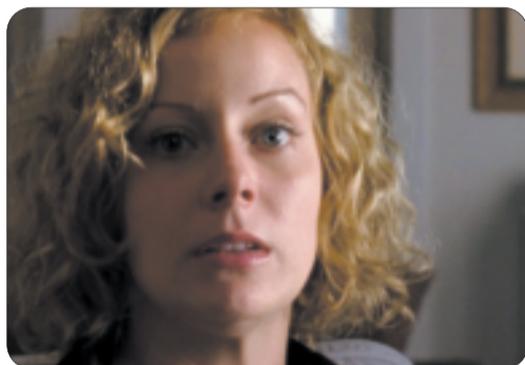
Roomba Robotic Floorvac uses state-of-the-art technology to keep floors their cleanest. Its unique three-stage cleaning system utilizes (1) a spinning side brush to sweep debris away from walls and corners into the cleaning path, (2) two counter-rotating cleaning brushes to pick up large debris,

and (3) a vacuum to suck up dust and fine particulates. Its proprietary localized navigation algorithms mean Roomba will cover the entire floor surface of a room several times before it's done, even though it may not move in the same patterns that a person would while vacuuming. Its low profile — barely three inches high — means Roomba can get under most furniture where traditional vacuums just can't go. Roomba Robotic Floorvac also has a self-adjusting cleaning head, so it can travel effortlessly from hard floor surfaces to





most carpets. All Roomba models also come with at least one Virtual Wall®, a self-contained accessory that emits a beam of infrared light that Roomba senses and treats as a wall, so customers



can block Roomba from going into areas they don't want it to go.

Best of all, because Roomba cleans by itself, all users have to do is turn it on and press Clean. They don't have to push anything, they don't have to drag cords around, they don't even have to mess with vacuum bags because Roomba has a bagless bin and a rechargeable battery.

#### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Because iRobot believes that the customer, who uses the product every day, knows at least as much about it as the company does, iRobot listened to customer suggestions and implemented many of them for the improved Roomba Discovery line, which includes Roomba Red, Roomba, Roomba Discovery, and Roomba Discovery SE. Among the improvements stemming from customer input were a larger debris bin, new sensors that actually detect dirtier areas so the robot focuses its cleaning power, a significantly shorter charging time, and a self-charging Home Base that the robot finds and returns to when cleaning is finished. These new features mean that Roomba Discovery cleans longer, better, and more effectively than ever.

The new Roomba Discovery line also gives consumers more choices in iRobot products. By expanding the breadth of features and accessories, Roomba is better able to meet a broader range of customer needs and expectations. Roomba Red has all the cleaning power most customers need at a very reasonable price point, while Roomba charges in just 2.5 hours for only a slight increase in price. Roomba Discovery, the flagship product, charges in 2.5 hours and comes with the innovative self-charging Home Base. Discovery cleans floors at the push of a button, then finds and returns to its Home Base and charges itself so it's ready for another cleaning mission, all for under \$300. Roomba Discovery SE has all the features of Roomba Discovery, and includes a charging wall mount for convenient storage.

#### PROMOTION

As a small company with a limited media budget, iRobot spends its media dollars carefully. The initial ad campaign, designed by Brand | Content, ran through 2002 into 2003. It was designed to familiarize the consumer with the product, because robotic vacuums were an entirely new entry into the marketplace. The first campaign used simple,

clear imagery to highlight Roomba's capabilities and ease of use. The second ad campaign, again designed by Brand | Content for the Roomba Discovery series, ran through 2004–2005 and showed off some of the new features, this time using a little bit of humor to get the point across.

Because it is such a newsworthy product, Roomba Robotic Floorvac has benefited from wonderful public relations. Roomba has appeared

- On television: *Friends*, *Oprah*, the *Today* show, *Good Morning America*, *The Early Show*, *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, *The Late Late Show with Conan O'Brien*, *The Tonight Show*, *Saturday Night Live* (spoofed), *60 Minutes*, *the American Music Awards*, and *VH1's Big in '03*, and on CNN;
- In major print publications: *Good Housekeeping*, *Real Simple*, *Self*, *Wired*, *Playboy*, *Maxim*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Business Week*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Financial Times*, and many others; and
- In the Fidelity Investment Funds ad campaign.

Best of all, Roomba has generated the all-important word-of-mouth excitement. What other vacuum would someone show off at a dinner party?

#### BRAND VALUES

Smart. Simple. Clean — because iRobot and Roomba believe that keeping one's home clean doesn't need to be a tedious, painful chore.

#### THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT ROOMBA

- iRobot supports the community by donating Roombas monthly to nonprofit organizations for fund-raising events.
- Many customers give their Roomba a name. "Robbie" and "Rosie" are the most common.
- iRobot has partnered with the Susan G. Komen Foundation to support breast cancer research with the Roomba Pink Ribbon edition, sold at special events and at select retailers, with the tagline "There for you." Twenty percent of proceeds are donated to the Susan G. Komen Foundation.
- Roomba outperforms most traditional vacuum cleaners in independent tests in single-pass cleaning.