

# Distinctive growth

**When Drew Wright imported the first container of composite door panels in 1999 he changed the domestic door market forever. Wright founded Distinction Doors to supply composite door slabs to the replacement industry and 20 years later its doors are now installed in more than three million homes in the UK**

Distinction's business is still focused solely on the supply of door slabs. "We do not manufacture outerframe," says Distinction's managing director Gareth Williams. "That would put us in direct competition with our customers but 40% of our output is prepped so ready for fabricators to hang in their own doorsets."

To maintain this service Distinction has invested heavily in machinery. It has also installed a painting facility and offers four colours from stock but will also supply any RAL colour to order.

"We are looking to develop the prepped slab side of the business further," says Williams, "but this is a mature market so price can be an issue which means that adding value is important."

Distinction has invested £850,000 as just the first phase of infrastructure investment in its 86,000sq ft site. This is intended to develop the company's capacity to handle the growth in demand for prepped door products, as well as the logistics for door blanks sold in volume.



Although growth overall is forecast most recently by Palmer to be modest at .9% (Palmer Market Research: The Market for Domestic Entrance Sets in Great Britain 2017) installed values are increasing by as much as 8% per annum. Distinction Doors' first year sales in 2005 amounted to £1.1, by December 2017 this had reached £40.6m. Annually, the company's products now account for 25% of all entrance doors installed in British homes.

"The difficulties of Brexit prevent any meaningful forecasts for growth in the short term," says Williams, "but by investing in our infrastructure we are removing cost, improving quality and increasing both our capacity overall and ability to cope with fluctuating demand."

"Our relationship with our suppliers continues to be excellent and they are working closely with

us to introduce some exciting new products as well as to continuously improve the quality of existing favourites.

"What we must do is look past this period and assume that British homeowners will, in the long term, continue their enthusiasm for improving their homes and that private and public sector housebuilders and landlords will continue to invest in composite doors for their properties." □

[www.distinctiondoors.co.uk](http://www.distinctiondoors.co.uk)

# Batten the hatches

Carrying out weekly checks on automatic doors in the run-up to the UK's envisaged 'worst winter in 70 years' is being urged by experts from GEZE UK.

Weather forecasters are predicting that a polar cold snap could bring the longest whiteout Britain has seen since the 1950s – not the time to find that automatic doors are no longer working properly

**G**EZE UK's service director Steve Marshall says that ensuring doors are properly maintained and working correctly will help reduce heat loss, reduce the chances of water ingress – minimising the chance of slips or trips – and reduce carbon footprint and CO2 levels into the building.

He advises estate and facilities managers to put in place weekly checks to ensure that doors open and close with maximum efficiency.

"If the doors form a secure entrance, proper maintenance is essential to ensure that the door leaf or leaves close fully onto locks or magnetic locks to maintain security," he says.

He recommends a ten-point plan to keep doors in tip top condition. This includes:

**1** Making sure that any operator running tracks or the path of travel that a door follows is clear of debris including snow and grit

**2** Checking brush strips or sealing strips are present and in good condition

**3** Visually inspecting the operation of the door and ensuring that it opens and closes in a 20-25 second cycle time depending on the application

**4** Ensuring that the door is brought to a full close and if required engage with any locking systems

**5** Making sure that sensors are clean and free from damage

**6** Testing of any push button activation devices to ensure door opens and closes efficiently

**7** Inspect for any loose or damaged drive arms which should be reported immediately

**8** Visually inspect the door for any damage including breakages to glass and report immediately

**9** Listen to the operation of the door, for any unusual 'metal on metal' scraping which may indicate a problem that will result in failure of the door later. Again, this should be reported immediately

**10** Visually inspect the door and identify if there is any scraping of the door directly on the floor

In addition, 'dutyholders' need to prepare for snowy and icy conditions and minimise risk. The HSE's approved code of practice (ACoP) L24 for the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations notes in paragraph 96 that this might include 'gritting, snow clearing and closing off some routes, particularly outside stairs, ladders and walkways on the roof'.

Carrying out risk assessments before the bad weather arrives is the best course of action, it recommends.

Marshall says: "Generally, weather conditions in the UK tend not to be so severe but during the winter months we should prepare for the worst and hope for the best. Carrying out this simple ten-point plan throughout the year should help keep automatic doors working at their best and keep anyone walking over our thresholds safe and secure." □

[www.geze.co.uk](http://www.geze.co.uk)