The Detail Is In The Margins

We discover how enhanced customisation and installer-focused marketing support are helping Apeer's partners stand out and protect their margins.

As installers head into 2026, the ability to differentiate in a competitive market has never mattered more, writes Apeer's Asa McGillian.

We are helping partners by extending the promotional campaign we built around 'ultimate customisation' – a concept that gives homeowners more choice and installers tangible ways to add value without cutting prices.

The campaign launched at the end of last year and includes a free premium colour upgrade (worth up to £300), an upgrade bundle including A++ energy rating and a Secured by Design package (worth up to £1,250) and a free wreath magnet (worth £250).

The decision to now extend these promotions through Q1 2026 following strong uptake from installers.

From price to benefits

As soon as we launched the campaign installers quickly realised how effectively it helped shift conversations away from price and towards real benefits. What stood out wasn't a rush for discounts but a much stronger appetite for custom options and thoughtful details.

This momentum reflects a broader trend Apeer has been tracking in that homeowners are more willing to invest when they feel they're getting something noticeably better, not simply cheaper.

"When installers focus on value rather than price they win higher-margin work, satisfy discerning customers and set themselves apart from competitors," says Asa McGillian. "It's about giving installers a compelling proposition to sell, backed by products that perform and support that delivers. That's the ultimate way to win higher-value work in 2026."

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Value over volume

Our aim is to give installers strong, credible reasons to command the price their work deserves. Reasons based on design, performance and craftsmanship. That's how they stay competitive without sacrificing margin. Central to Apeer's philosophy is the idea that sustainable success comes from value, not volume. In a market where price wars can erode margins quickly, we are taking a different approach: encouraging installers to enhance the perceived value of every sale.

By incorporating bespoke options that genuinely elevate the homeowner experience, installers can differentiate themselves and justify a premium. Homeowners increasingly expect doors that reflect both style and substance and are happy to invest a little more if it means their door is safer, more energy-efficient or tailored to their taste. Installers who can offer this aren't then competing on price, they're selling confidence and quality.

ApeerXclusive

Apeer's marketing support for installers reinforces the campaign's value-led approach. Through its ApeerXclusive programme, installers gain access to protected sales territories, free qualified leads and a suite of professional marketing materials. From showroom displays and sample doors to digital tools like online door configurators, the aim is to give partners the resources they need to impress homeowners and close more orders.

Marketing has never been more important, yet installers don't always have the time, budget or in-house expertise to run professional campaigns. Our job is to provide tools that make the process easier and more effective so they can focus on selling, not just promoting. By combining bespoke options with professional-grade marketing, installers can highlight the features that matter most to homeowners and make a premium proposition feel accessible and justified.

Partnership beyond the sale

Our systems, including a streamlined customer service portal and technical guidance, are designed to help installers maintain high standards and respond quickly to homeowners. This isn't just about selling doors. It's about helping installers build a business that's sustainable, profitable and respected in their local market. And for us that means giving our partners the tools to deliver excellence at every stage, from the first enquiry to aftercare. By combining customisation, upgrades, marketing support and robust customer service systems, Apeer is giving installers the means to thrive in a challenging market.

Quality & Partnerships Are Key To 2026

According to Gregory Kelly, it will be the quality of doors, their compliance with standards old and new – and working in partnership with suppliers that will ensure installers are in a strong position in 2026.

Composite door maker Entrance Composite Door Solutions has outlined its strategic vision for 2026.

The strategy emphasises quality and installer partnership over price-led competition as the sector navigates evolving regulatory demands and ongoing market uncertainty.

Despite fiscal pressures affecting the housing market, the company reports continued strong demand from home-owners investing in high-specification entrance doors that deliver energy efficiency, security and kerb appeal.

Value over volume

"The composite door sector remains resilient, yet we're seeing a clear divide emerging between manufacturers committed to genuine value and those chasing volume through price cuts," says Gregory Kelly (pictured), the MD at Entrance CDS. "Our focus is unambiguous – we're backing quality, compliance and the installer partners who depend on us to deliver consistently good products."

Future Homes

With the Future Homes Standard driving stricter building regulations, Kelly emphasises that Part L and Part Q compliance has moved from competitive advantage to essential baseline. "These aren't selling points anymore – they're minimum standards," he says. "Manufacturers who've been treating them seriously for years will naturally separate from competitors still positioning compliance as a premium feature."

The company's commitment to security compliance is evidenced by its range – Entrance CDS now offers the widest range of doors tested to Part Q and PAS24, including single doors, double doors and stable doors, giving installers comprehensive specification options across all project types.

Expanding range

Entrance CDS's 2026 strategy centres on controlled expansion of its product portfolio while maintaining the manufacturing standards that have built installer confidence across its network. The company is continuing investment in design tooling, operational infrastructure and workforce development.

"Uncertain markets reward businesses that demonstrate stability and genuine partner support," Kelly adds. "Our installer network needs to know we'll be there with quality products, technical backing and operational consistency and not just marketing promises. That's what builds lasting relationships and sustainable growth.

"We're not interested in short-term gains at the expense of long-term reputation. Quality manufacturing, regulatory rigour and absolute reliability for our partners – that's our commitment for 2026 and beyond."

A Smarter Alternative To Timber

Universal Trade Frames has taken the new Residence Timber-Alternative Door to the next level, combining heritage detailing with smart functionality and the precision of CNC fabrication in one standout product.

Since its launch at the FIT Show 2025, The Residence Timber-Alternative Door (example pictured) has established itself in the premium residential market.

Universal Trade Frames Limited (UTFL) has added its own specification to the system, including its HeritageWeld jointing method, optional Yale SensCheck smart security and a range of hardware options.

"This door gives installers a new route into the premium market," says Richard Hamond, the sales sirector at UTFL. "It's not built around a slab, which means greater flexibility on size, layout and finish."

Designed for flexibility

The door is fabricated in Residence 9, Residence 7 and Residence 2 outerframes. It is available in a combination of glazed and panelled infill and in single or French door configurations. With Stormguard low-threshold formats.

A large mid-rail, optional stackable deep bottom rail and patented panel trim all contribute to the door's traditional look. The trim conceals gasket lines for a cleaner finish. When used with Residence 7, the door can also achieve a fully flush (inside and out) finish.

Glass

Partnering Regalead has opened the door to composite style glass choices. "Composite doors are still restricted by slab sizes and can be difficult to customise," Hamond explains. "This door gives installers a more adaptable option, with a genuine heritage look, modern fabrication and formats that go beyond what composites can do."

Smarter doors

UTFL also offers the option to include Yale SensCheck. This smart sensor system monitors door status in real time through the Yale Home App, with alerts for open, closed and locked positions. It integrates with Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant and is part of the Yale Smart Living product range.

SensCheck also holds Secured by Design accreditation, recognising its physical and cyber security standards.

"Smart technology is no longer a niche," says Hamond. "Yale is a brand homeowners already know. SensCheck is a simple, recognised option that adds value to the sale without introducing complexity."

The system can also be specified with Yale multi-point locks and the Ultion ALPS 3-Star cylinder, certified to SS312:2024 Diamond Standard. It's tested to withstand snapping, picking, drilling, bumping, thermal manipulation and twist attacks.

A cleaner way to fabricate

The door is manufactured using

UTFL's HeritageWeld process, which creates a fully welded 90-degree joint inside and out. This method is supported by a Haffner MAC 345 CNC machining centre and dedicated tooling.

"We're working to tolerances of 0.1mm on these joints," says Hamond. "It's a much tighter finish than the 0.5mm you might typically see and it gives a more consistent result across foiled or complex profiles.

"This version of the Residence Timber-Alternative Door gives installers more choice. It brings together design flexibility, tested performance and the option to include smart security, all in one offer."

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From Afterthought To Centrepiece

With European influences and expanding colour and glazing options fuelling the increasing consumer appetite for entrance door personalisation, Hurst says it's well placed to help its customers take advantage. We report.

From the rise of social media to the 'Grand Designs effect', the consumer appetite for uniqueness continues to fuel the ever-increasing personalisation of our houses.

As the gateway to our living space, the entrance door has evolved alongside this trend over the last two decades. No longer just a functional point of entry, these practical products have become a true design statement that says as much about the homeowner as the home itself.

"Twenty years ago, entrance doors were an afterthought with respect to window sales," says Mark Atkinson, the sales director at composite door and door panel manufacturer, Hurst. "But today's homeowners are selecting the door first, not last. Doors have become instrumental in creating positive first impressions, channelling personal expression and creating that all-important kerb appeal."

Good looks

As design has taken centre stage in the home, the entrance door has followed suit. Homeowners are increasingly driven by style, colour and glazing choices, with aesthetics often shaping the decision long before they consider the technical details.

"I think aesthetics are probably the primary driver for the sale of our products" says Atkinson. "Whilst security and specification

Pictures: Offering a unified, versatile and competitive offer for today's style-conscious homeowner also allows installers to widen their pitch, achieve higher margins, and cover all the bases in an increasingly choice-driven market

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understandably remain a key consideration, emphasis is on style, colour, glass and individuality. Homeowners ultimately go for what they think will look good on their property."

European influence

With Continental trends such as bold colours, premium glazing and minimalist styles capturing the UK's attention, demand for bespoke designs and statement entrances is greater than ever.

"I think perceptions have changed," Atkinson continues. "Going back a couple of decades, it was very much glazing companies saying, 'I'll sell you a house full of windows and by the way, I'll throw in a door too'. But in Europe, the concept of the door as a focal point has always been more prevalent. Slowly but surely, over the years it's come through to the UK and that's what we're really seeing here now."

Infinite options

Recognising its significant impact but also acknowledging that an entrance door is cheaper to replace than a house full of windows, Atkinson outlines how Hurst has been among those companies leading the charge on personalisation and customisation. He says: "Our GRP and solid core composite door ranges offer a multitude of choice. Homeowners can choose colours, glass, hardware and styles, delivering unique and high-performing doors at reasonable prices.

"We offer bespoke products that can be tailored with almost infinite options. It creates a real opportunity for homeowners to demonstrate individuality through strong, stylish doors that enhance kerb appeal – and that's a concept that sells."

A solid option

Combining a solid timber core with elegant designs, a durable CoolSkin finish and solid security, the recent introduction of the S-Class range means installers can buy both GRP and solid core composite door options from one supplier.

"At the moment, the entrance door market is incredibly competitive, with lots of manufacturers offering different product types," continues Atkinson. "That's why we've recently launched our S-Class solid core range in addition to our GRP composites, as we know that installers are out there selling both. We wanted to give our customers that choice and ensure they can get everything they need from us, without having to go elsewhere.

"Consumers are increasingly looking to smaller, high-impact upgrades like doors to ramp up kerb appeal and add value to their homes, without the expense of more extensive home improvement work," says Atkinson. "Our design-driven range of GRP and solid core composite products provide the means for them to do just that".