

# Did we mention...?

In the current skills shortage, the fenestration industry should leverage its environmental credentials to attract new entrants, writes Ian Ward, sales and purchasing director at PVC-U window recycling specialist CNC Recycling. CNC is collaborating with Building Our Skills in its Making Fenestration, Glass and Glazing a Career of Choice campaign. Ward writes that his company has already begun to make inroads into this area

There are many potential new employees for the fenestration industry who want their career choice to do something positive for the environment. In particular, this applies to the younger generation. We took an active role in the Building Our Skills' industry-bespoke careers festivals earlier in the year, and were blown away by the level of interest we received from youngsters telling us exactly this. They simply didn't know that landfill has been replaced by recycling, and that the main players in the PVC-U window industry take minimising its environmental impact so seriously. With approximately 84% of all new windows fitted in the UK being PVC-U they could see that this is very important. By the end of their visits, youngsters and teachers alike had gained a clearer insight into this aspect of the industry, and went away with a far more positive view of it from an environmental perspective.

I'm not saying that new recruits would necessarily want to work in the recycling sector, simply that they are far more likely to pick the fenestration industry for employment if they do not have negative or incorrect preconceptions about its environmental credentials. We will be continuing this work at next year's BOS careers festivals too and I hope that industry employers get on board with promoting fenestration as a good move for anyone wanting a career in an industry doing its best for the environment.

Speaking to our colleague Mark Handley who is partnerships manager of Building Our Skills he agrees:

"When youngsters are asked to list the issue that they are most motivated by, they usually talk about the environment. For example, the schools' initiative called the Pupils' Parliament, bears this out. So, we are completely in agreement with CNC Recycling when it comes to making this topic a tool for attracting

newcomers into the fenestration industry. Let's really make some noise about this aspect of it. The work that CNC Recycling and others do provides a very helpful backdrop to this whole topic."

CNC Recycling is a Middlesborough-based organisation, which operates on a nationwide basis. We collect thousands of tonnes of old PVC-U windows and doors from installers and fabricators across the UK every year. This enables recycled materials to be fed back into the supply chain as a valuable secondary raw material to produce new windows and doors. The company collects over one million windows each year, and over the last 18 months we have collected from 1,289 window companies nationally. It has been proved that PVC-U, due to its thermoplastic nature, can be recycled nine times without any significant loss of performance (Source: EPPA\*).

Over the past 12 months CNC Recycling has invested approximately £2m in state-of-the-art equipment in order to further improve the process efficiency of its closed-loop system. Closed loop refers to the no-wastage aspect of the process, which enables all parts of old PVC-U windows and doors, including metal and rubber parts, to be re-used. The new sorting and separating equipment recovers clean white and 'jazz' (coloured) post-industrial and post-consumer PVC-U. This recovered PVC-U is now ready for further processing within the fenestration industry and reintroduced into the core of new profile. □

*\*EPPA is the European trade association for PVC-U window system suppliers with its seat in Brussels. It represents the PVC-U Profile industry across Europe.*

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

# Take our word for it

**'It does exactly what it says on the tin.' You can't get a blunter claim than the phrase originally coined by the famous Ronseal advertising campaign. And in many circumstances, this candour is precisely what a customer needs to make a buying decision. They have a problem. This solves it. End of.**

**But not all slogans are equal, writes Apeer's Asa McGillian and it is important to read the small print to find out whether what you are buying actually meets your expectations**

You may have read in the press recently about our concerns regarding the false claims of thermal performance made by a number of different door brands. These claims stated that some door products had a certain level of thermal performance. But we had our doubts. The construction of the door products could in no way fulfil those claims. It was impossible for a hollow monocoque



residential door to meet the same stringent standards on equal footing as our own Apeer 70mm range – yet these were the comparisons allegedly being made.

To prove that our concerns were not just driven by market rivalry but by genuine concern for the reputation of the market as a whole, we invested in the independent testing of a number of different door slab samples, sending them to the TUV Institute Rheinland. There, an impartial team undertook full thermal resistance testing to an approved ISO standard and methodology.

The results that we received back confirmed our suspicions – that there are a number of false claims being made by seemingly reputable door manufacturers that their products met the Irish and British building regulations of a minimum 1.4 W/m<sup>2</sup>K for replacement doors and 1.0 W/m<sup>2</sup>K for new build doors.

The question is, why would a company want to deliberately lead their customers down a false path? What do they gain by it?

## Follow the money

I believe that it comes down to a lack of forward planning and the desire to cash in on a consumer market where there is increasing pressure on homeowners to comply with net zero demands. With governments determined to stick to the pathway towards net zero by 2050, it falls on those of us working within the construction and home improvement sectors to produce solutions that are focused on this goal. If your current products are not up to standard, catching up with building regulation compliance will require significant investment.



Asa McGillian

## Building distrust

If we don't fix this chain of misinformation, there is going to be increasing distrust across the sector. The installers that have unwittingly fitted a non-compliant product in a customer's home. The homeowner who believes their property has been future proofed against statutory requirements. Once they realise that they have been mis-sold, both the homeowner and the installer will turn back to the manufacturer, who, by its very actions, will have tarnished the industry as a whole.

Apeer takes third party accreditation extremely seriously. Having already invested significantly in testing and standards across our range and not just the top performing products, we are committed to ensuring this damaging trail of misinformation is highlighted across the supply chain. □

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