

# Ready, Set, Integrate, Go!



Ab Initio's Rhonda Ridge looks at what the market holds for installation businesses in 2025 and explains how an integrated CRM will help them to win sales in a highly competitive market.

Pictures: Rhonda Ridge says a CRM with an email campaign facility could be a game changer for installers in 2025.

**As the year draws to a close, it is a good time for businesses to take stock and review what has gone well in the last 12 months, what has not gone as well and what changes could be implemented to drive growth next year.**

So writes Rhonda Ridge who is behind AdminBase from Ab Initio – a customer relationship management system designed for window installers which she believes could make all the difference in making 2025 a success for those now willing to embrace technology to help run their businesses.

## **Housing growth**

There are suggestions that with the Labour Party's first budget, the home improvement industry will start to see signs of growth again in 2025. But with the

market full of particularly hungry competition, installation firms need to be ready with powerful sales and marketing tactics to stand out and win business.

A fully integrated installer management system is a cost-effective way to maximise sales and marketing opportunities as well as improve efficiencies for the entire customer journey, which might make it one of the most important tools for home improvement businesses to have in their armoury next year.

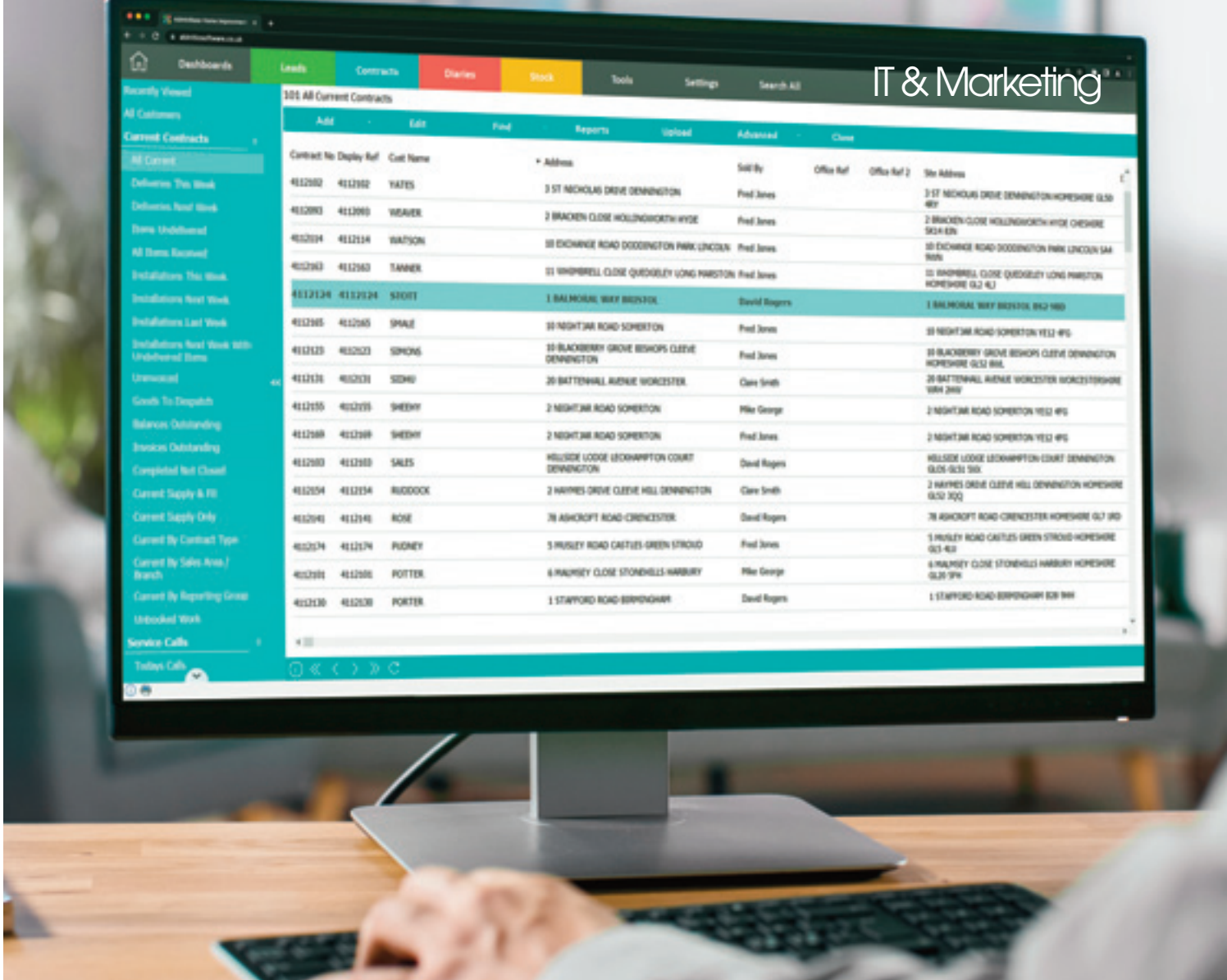
## **Email needs to be targeted**

With e-mail users set to grow again in 2025, there is little doubt that e-mail marketing will continue to play an important role in promotional strategies, yet to achieve tangible results in this area, targeted messaging, integration and monitoring are key.

A lot of installation businesses understand the benefits of e-mail marketing but find the hassle of sending campaigns and managing data too much of a barrier. Pulling out the right contacts from a database and exporting them into mailing software such as MailChimp and then often manually updating any changes to the data back into your system, is time-consuming and off-putting. However, if you can manage your e-mail campaigns within an integrated system, it suddenly becomes an easy and hugely useful tool.

## **Targeted messages win sales**

The AdminBase installer management system centralises data in an installation business so that all updates inform one database. The database holds records of customers and



prospects, with the capability to add leads manually straight into the system or automatically via other programs. Any changes made to a lead or project is live immediately and available to all relevant users. This means you can segregate leads sensibly using the most up-to-date information and easily contact different groups with targeted messages. For example, you might create a limited time offer in January but target that offer to people that have previously shown an interest in specific products. The AdminBase system also makes it easier to send these marketing e-mails with its add-on facility, AdminBase Campaigns.

### AdminBase Campaigns

The AdminBase Campaigns feature can send bulk e-mails to contacts in the centralised database, so that there is no need to

export and import data to a third-party piece of software. Installation businesses can add their own e-mail campaign designs into the system and send it to customers or prospects directly. And when responses come back in from the campaign, they can immediately be updated into the same system to ensure that all records are current. This add-on feature is already proving a huge success for installation businesses across the UK with customers achieving an average open rate of 32.9% and a 1.6% click rate.

### Ongoing support

Once an enquiry turns into a sales appointment, the all-encompassing AdminBase CRM continues to support installation businesses by equipping them with quote documents and sales support in the home, as well as

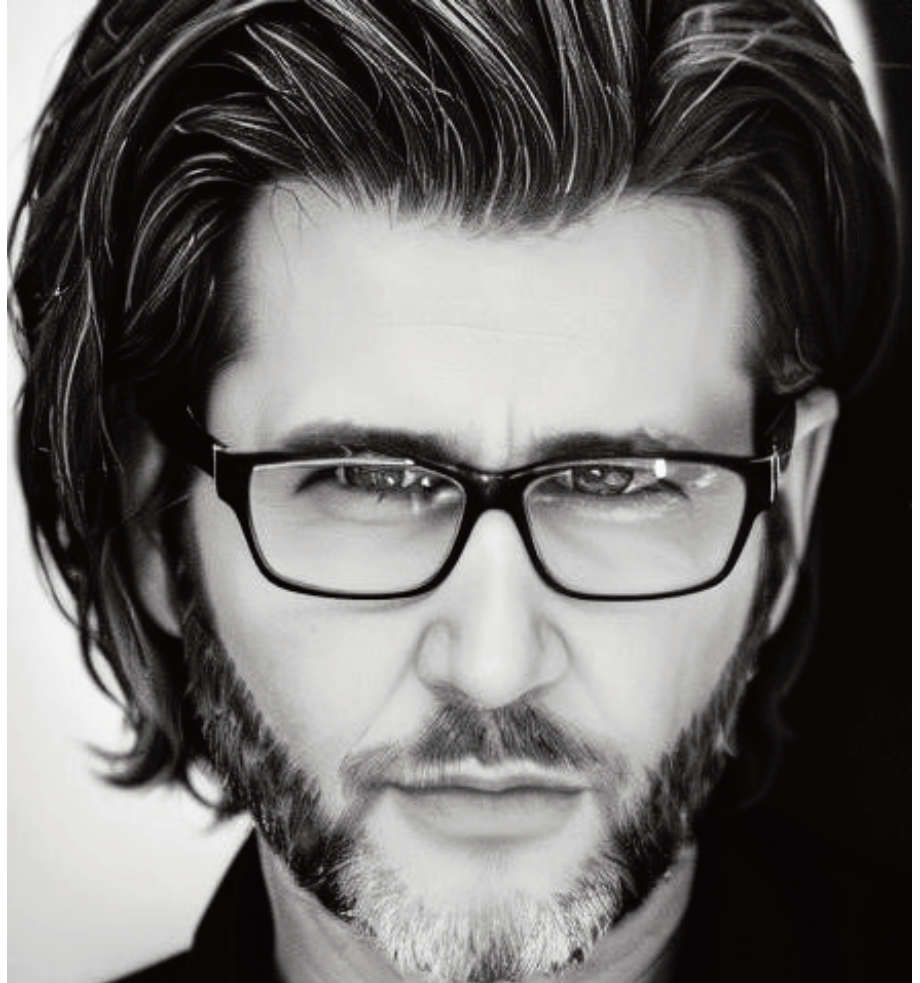
ongoing customer support throughout the life of the project with our Customer Portal and SMS facility.

We are constantly developing AdminBase to ensure it delivers what installation businesses need in the current market context and for the future. Integration and interconnectivity will continue to grow in importance in 2025 and although this has always been a key focus for us, we are already working on new features that take our CRM, even further. Designed and continuously developed with installation businesses in mind, AdminBase is proud to support home improvement companies to maximise their potential. [i](#)

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

# The Smart Horizon

Giovanni Laporta, inventor and creator of Smart Ready, talks to The Installer about how the smart landscape is set to change in 2025 and the exciting opportunities it has in store.



**You hear the word innovation a lot, yet I've always said truly great innovation and product development cannot be rushed, writes Giovanni Laporta.**

It's not about restricting choice and it's not about forcing change when core change is not even required. It's about creating products, testing them, getting feedback, listening to intuition and listening to the market. It also takes real commitment as it is a way of life, not a 9-5. You have to have patience and determination and a mindset that nothing is impossible.

## **Innovation demands change**

When I first came up with the concept of Smart Ready – preparing windows and doors so that they could be made smart anytime – one of the driving forces was the fact I saw the opportunity to sell more hard-

ware/locks. It was a perfect proposition. However, having soft tested the market, spoken to manufacturers and retailers and gone back to the drawing board several times to innovate and broaden the choice of ways in which people can get Smart, my view changed. I now firmly believe that everyone in the supply chain should have a 'lock-free' option to get Smart, leaving them free to choose whatever lock they want. It may have taken longer (and a global pandemic and several wars) than anticipated but by taking the top-level strategy, 2025 is time to hit the market with something that's truly new and truly unique compared to what we see as the current smart options.

## **Three is the magic number**

For those who were waiting to see how the market developed, rather than jump in with the first available stop-gap smart options, which I'm sure didn't work against them but didn't give them the kind of change they banked on, the time has come for a new way to get Smart.

To date, there have been two retrofitting upgrade options to get Smart. One involves some hassle, cost and retesting of swapping to a lock with Smart built in. The second, which is far easier, is to upgrade windows to Smart by simply replacing the handle for example. But now thanks to innovation and viewing the process in a different way, we can announce a third new



Picture: Giovanni Laporta believes that Smart home systems that show the open/shut/locked status of windows and doors will take another boost in 2025 but the Smart element has to be simple to retrofit...such as just changing a euro cylinder.

way to upgrade to Smart on doors – simply replace the euro cylinder. The days of arm-wrestling people who want to be Smart into swapping locks are over. Of course, I'm happy for people to use SAC hardware (my company) but I am not prepared to limit the smart market potential by forcing hands and brands on the industry.

### Make a Smart move

It's not a problem if your business is already using another smart option for windows and doors. I get why these options may have been attractive at the time and understand how committing to 'anything' smart may have felt better than nothing. It's interesting. In the 90s there was a phenomenon called First Mover Advantage, a popular belief

among entrepreneurs that it was important to be first to market with a new product or business model. With the advent of fast-moving tech, this theory has been proven time and again to be ill-conceived and just wrong. Apple iPod was ten years behind all other MP3 players – but look where Apple products are today. Kodak, Nokia, Xerox, Yahoo, Sony Walkman are other good examples of First Mover Advantage experience.

### Smart that's here to stay

The mood definitely changed for me when the over-riding feedback from fabricators and installers was: 'It needs to be as simple as possible' or 'I don't want to change the lock I use'. We've listened and actioned. The ultimate aim for all of us in

the door and window industry is to create and maintain consumer awareness, confidence and desire. That's why we've been patient, not been swayed to rush in. We've listened and we've innovated and not used re-hashed and re-formatted old technology. Our technology partners have created Smart solutions that make things as simple as possible for the downstream supply chain to sell, driven by real innovation and backed up by a credible consumer branding. We've created something that offers sustainable value, is well invested in and ultimately shows respect to installers and retailers who are on the front line looking to sell new Smart solutions. 2025 is looking smart, I hope you are too. [i](#)