

Retaining Your Competitive Advantage

>> **Savvy homeowners demand more out of their window purchases**



Leave your smoke and mirrors at the office when making sales calls. Today's homeowner is smart, educated and prepared to ask all of the right questions. Whether it's because of the Internet, the green revolution or tax credits, this game-changer has caused window manufacturers and dealers to reexamine and redefine their sales techniques to stay competitive.

What are consumers looking for?

The short answer is that they want the entire package – tax credits, energy efficiency, durability, condensation resistance and aesthetics.

To break it down even further, there are some who are interested in energy efficiency for environmental reasons but, according to the recent "Eco Pulse" 2010 study by the Shelton Group, majorities are more interested in saving money on their energy bills. Respondents indicated that 17 percent of them purchased green products to save money, compared to 10 percent who were concerned about saving natural resources.

The type of consumer can also vary geographically and companies must cater their advertising messages accordingly. Knowing which type of consumer you are working with – the environmentalist or the accidental environmentalist who is more interested in saving money – is the first step toward effectively communicating your value proposition. Secondly, how and

where you are advertising must also be reexamined.

"How companies advertise has definitely shifted – many dealers are taking a more active approach rather than print and broadcast, which puts the onus on the consumer to respond," said Erin Johnson, marketing director for Edgetech I.G. "They are making more cold calls than ever to qualify leads and to get an audience in the home."

After the in-home presentation is scheduled the real work begins. Sales representatives must be prepared with the tools and messages to create a point of differentiation versus the competition.

How do you prepare?

Preparation begins with proper training. Because consumers are so much more prepared and educated, your sales team must always be one step ahead – and that begins with management focusing on ongoing training programs. Weekly or monthly sessions, at a minimum, are often necessary to keep up with changing regulations, tax credits, product enhancements and best practices for selling energy efficiency in the home.

"The sales person must be highly versed in all things happening in the industry to avoid a potentially embarrassing situation," Johnson said. "If the homeowner senses that he or she knows more than the sales person, it will not bode well for closing the deal. This includes expertise in all of the components, including the spacer, that go into energy-efficient window systems." According to Johnson, the spacer has become highly important to closing the deal. Performance differences between spacer systems are understandable to consumers.

"Having the proper tools to explain the differences in a meaningful way is one of the keys to selling efficiency in the home," Johnson said. "This can be anything from Edgetech's Super Spacer® Thermal Conductivity Test Kit and brochures, to cross sections and measurement devices that demonstrate window performance."


To assist dealers on sales calls, the company recently introduced the portable Edgetech Test Equipment powered by EDTM designed to accurately measure the energy performance of existing windows during in-home sales calls.

Among the Edgetech Test Equipment devices is the Window Energy Profiler, which provides real-time measurements for solar heat gain coefficient (SHGC), ultraviolet light, visible light and infrared transmission values.

"Sometimes homeowners have to see it to believe it," Johnson said. "The Window Energy Profiler shows tangible results that reaffirm the need for energy-efficient replacement windows."

In addition to the Window Energy Profiler, Edgetech provides other valuable sales demonstration tools, including the BTU Solar Power Meter and the Solar Transmission Meter, as well as technical test equipment for manufacturers.

Looking Ahead

Energy efficiency will continue to be a big business that will only grow more demanding. Dealers and manufacturers must anticipate the trends and reacquaint themselves with today's consumer. Differentiation is key, and no one wants to be left behind. 

Edgetech Test Equipment Powered by EDTM

Visit www.edgetech360.com/Products/Test-Equipment.aspx to learn more.



AVAILABLE SALES DEMONSTRATION TOOLS

- Edgetech Window Energy Sensor - #WP4500
- Edgetech BTU Digital Solar Power Meter - #SP1065
- Edgetech Solar Transmission & BTU Power Meter - #SP2065

AVAILABLE TECHNICAL TOOLS

- Edgetech Low E Coating Detector - #AE1601
- Edgetech Solar Gain Low E Coating Detector - #AE4600
- Edgetech MIG Glass & Air Space Laser Gauge - #MG1500
- Edgetech Non-Contact Thermometer with Laser Pointer - #MT1575
- Edgetech Tin Side Detector - Lamp - #TS1300
- Edgetech Digital Tin Side Detector - #TS2300



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