

Kwiktuf prepares for further growth

Kwiktuf has made an impact thanks to a management team that combines solid glass industry skills and a heightened level of customer service

The KwikTuf premises on Fountain Road, Hull

In the last five years Kwiktuf has built a significant business supplying toughened glass and insulating glass (IG) units to the Yorkshire area. The Hull-based company continues to grow this core business and is now looking to build a national profile for its glass processing and new laminating capability.

KwikTuf Ltd was registered in November 2003, when Nigel Thomas with 30 years' experience in the manufacturing industry and Paul Myers, formally Operations Director of Bennett Glass and with an engineering background, joined forces to create a glass company which they felt would fill a gap in the local market in terms of glass quality and customer service. They spent the first 12 months, prior to trading, creating a strategy for the next five years and looking for the right property, location, equipment, material suppliers and staff that would help execute that strategy and realise its goals of creating and developing a first class manufacturer and supplier of glass and toughened safety glass products.

By January 2005 KwikTuf Ltd was operating from their present location on Fountain Road, an 18,000 sq/ft factory close to Hull's City Centre.

A crucial factor in the rise of Kwiktuf, which has increased its turnover year on year, has been the company's ability to deliver on time. Their strict adherence to a three day turnaround and delivery in full has gained them local business without the need for a heavy sales drive.

The directors of the company also agreed that it owed a lot of its success to its 46 strong workforce, some of which have over 20



L-R: Paul Myers and Nigel Thomas with the RCN laminating line

years experience in the glass industry, but all of whom have the commitment and enthusiasm needed to help the company continue to move forward.

The factory now operates 24 hours a day, five days a week, using a three shift system. With a fleet of six commercial vehicles it has regular deliveries as far as Doncaster, Manchester, Scunthorpe, Lincoln and Nottingham.

Processing capability

Investment in a Macotec Cutting Table with on-board shape cutting and edge deletion and a Cooltemper convection furnace with an online wrap dispenser for soft coat glass has enabled the company to manufacture single flat tempered safety glass, incorporating various glass types and thicknesses, patterns and coatings. With the addition of the most up to date technology in edging, drilling and an Internac four-axis CNC processing centre,

the company has carved itself a larger place in the construction industry with the supply of balustrade and balcony panels, partitions, splashbacks, shower screen panels, shelving, mirrors and UV bonded display cabinets.

In addition, a purpose built paint booth, incorporating a CADRAM paint system, installed on site in early 2010 allows the company to supply painted glass products in any RAL or BS colour.

KwikTuf Ltd continue to manufacture IG Units and with the combination of Planitherm Total and Low Iron glass with Swisspacer V Warm Edge Spacer Bar and Argon Gas Filling, its 'A' rated Energy Efficient product is rapidly becoming the standard customer specification, with the market's adoption of Window Energy Ratings.

National presence

This year Kwiktuf's management team agreed to delay its growth plans, due to the unpredictability of the market place. However with confidence in its own abilities and its customers, has recently taken the decision to purchase an RCN laminating line, also supplied by Unilam International, along with a second Internac CNC machining centre, in preparation for further growth in 2011.

Structural glass panels, such as balustrade systems without handrails, stair treads and floor panels are expected to be the main application of the machinery, which can laminate with either PVB or EVA interlayers.

Combining the latest technology this laminating line has to offer with the company's present processing capabilities, in effect, allows the potential for a toughened laminated product to be completed fully in-house within a 24 hour period.

Whereas the company deliberately limits itself to regional deliveries of toughened glass and IG units in order to maintain its well respected service levels, Kwiktuf aims to achieve the same reputation on a national scale for processing and laminating work and has already delivered as far as Antwerp, Belgium.

'Kwiktuf' is quite a name to live up to, but the company attributes its success to its service. Paul Myers: "It's our service level that has got us where we are today. We've applied these values locally and now we are ready to apply them nationally on a range of other products."

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