



**BSI Case Study: The Window Company
(Contracts) Ltd**

Certification: BSI Kitemark™



The Window Company (Contracts) Ltd's BSI Kitemark™ for survey and installation is pivotal to its efficiency and strategy for growth

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David Thornton,
The Window Company (Contracts)

The Window Company (Contracts) in brief

The Window Company (Contracts) has achieved certification to the BSI Kitemark for the survey and installation of windows and doorsets, based on the industry standard BS 8213-4. The Essex-based family business is the first to complete the process as a new applicant since the publication of the 2016 version of the standard. This BSI Kitemark demonstrates the company's commitment to providing a quality service, with continual improvement. And certification has inspired enhanced training and staff motivation too.

BSI Kitemark benefits

- Offers proof to customers of a premium quality survey and installation service
- Meets industry and client requirements through third-party certification
- Complements business ethos of continual improvement and a path to excellence
- Drives a better trained and more motivated workforce
- Increases business efficiency and access to new opportunities
- Provides a prestigious quality mark on company vehicles and literature
- Creates competitive advantage.



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Customer background

Chelmsford-based The Window Company (Contracts) is a leading supplier and installer of PVC-U and aluminium windows, doors, and curtain walling across London and the South East. Clients include local councils, social housing providers, and schools in the public and private sectors.

With a turnover of around £5m and a total of 14 fitting teams, the company's close working relationships with the UK's main fabricators enables it to offer clients a complete tailor-made management package, providing them with whichever window system they require.

The company has won numerous awards, including the G-Awards Installer of the Year in 2014 and 2015. At the time of going to press, it is a finalist for both the 2017 G-Awards: Installer of the Year, and Commercial Project of the Year.

Why the BSI Kitemark?

The Window Company (Contracts) embarked on its certification journey several years ago, starting with international management system standards ISO 9001 (quality) and ISO 14001 (environmental management), followed by further standards for energy efficiency and health and safety.

The next logical step, in 2016, was to go for BSI Kitemark certification based on BS 8213-4, the code of practice that gives guidance on survey and installation procedures. The Kitemark covers a variety of issues, including design, surveying, installation practice, staff training, property care, building regulations compliance, materials quality, and inspection. As an independent mark of quality, it proves that the installation of windows or doors has met critical quality requirements, not merely compliance with Building Regulations.

Chairman David Thornton explains: "We wanted our training programme for 2016 to culminate in BSI Kitemark certification, to show our customers we were on a path to excellence. The Kitemark symbol is usually associated with products rather than services, and there are very few fitting companies that have this installation Kitemark, so we wanted to be one of them."

Thornton continues: "In my view, there are two approaches you can take towards certification – you can view it as a bit of a nuisance, or you can be more positive. We saw it as something that would genuinely make our business better and more efficient. And if we're more efficient, we're likely to win more business."

As a family business, The Window Company (Contracts) has a strong desire to secure the future, reinvesting profits for the next generation. "We've found the best way we can do that is to be as fully trained and well qualified as possible," says Thornton. "We've always sought to be training and qualification-led because that's how we win contracts."

Benefits

Director Katie Thornton, who is responsible for administering the company's training programme, says that, although a comprehensive training programme was already in place, applying for the BSI Kitemark helped unify the training framework and standardize the training language used throughout the business. "The Kitemark is very much the gold standard for installation training, so to be the first new recipient of the 2016 revised version is an incredible honour," she says. "It has helped us create a continuing professional development programme for every member of staff, which I think will lead to even better performance and improved staff retention."

By achieving the BSI Kitemark, the company now belongs to a select group of installers, and sees the business edge this gives it over competitors as integral to its future success. "We have never needed to advertise our services, as business has always come from word-of-mouth recommendations," says David Thornton. "But we love good publicity! And the Kitemark gives us an excellent PR opportunity – on our marketing literature, our emails and invoices, and most importantly, on the sides of our vans."

He adds, "It certainly proves to our customers that we work to a high standard. But for me, the number one benefit is that it shows we're constantly striving to be better."

Implementation

Although the path to the Kitemark was tough, that was one of its attractions. "We knew we were good fitters and we knew what to expect, but this was the most rigorous certification we have ever undertaken. BSI was very, very thorough. But that's a good thing – we're pleased that only those companies that genuinely deserve the Kitemark actually get it."

Most of the required processes were already in place, so it was largely a case of adapting to BSI's "different dialect" and putting systems in the correct order for assessment. When it came to staff, "We had no issues bringing people on board," says Thornton. "They knew it was part of their training plan for 2016, indeed it was the pinnacle – so much so, that the fitters chosen to be inspected were pleased to be asked."

Communication was key, and every member of staff was included. "Buy-in comes from the top and cascades down," he continues. "We see virtually every fitter every day, when they come in at 6.30am for their briefing for the day's work. There's a proper structure for training days, and we run a series of well-planned 'toolbox talks', but it's the day-to-day contact that's a constant."

BSI's role

Although Thornton describes the certification process with BSI as "strict", it was also "positive and helpful". He expands: "We could build on BSI's comments and refine our processes. And our BSI assessor had an eagle eye for detail. For example, he highlighted an issue that resulted in us monitoring stock on our vans as well as at head office. In other words, we refined one of our processes so that it works even better."

The strength of the BSI brand has been a key factor throughout, first in the choice of BSI as certification partner and later in communicating The Window Company (Contracts)'s achievement to customers and prospects. Thornton concludes, "We don't miss any opportunity to tell people, because it's such a recognizable award. Everyone understands the importance of a BSI Kitemark."

Contact us to find out how BSI certification can help your business make excellence a habit.

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