

Comment

theinstaller

August 2011 Profinder Magazines

Editor

Brian Shillibeer

Assistant Editor

Cathryn Ellis

Editorial Office

PO Box 587,

Herts WD6 1HQ

T.020 8381 5511

F.020 8386 4725

E. installer@profinder.eu

Publisher:

John Roper

E. john.roper@profinder.eu

Advertisement Director:

Steve Anthony

T.07967 585475

E. steve.anthony@profinder.eu

Advertisement Sales:

Tony Bond

T.07767 626786

Email: tony.bond@profinder.eu

Business Development:

Jon Berry

T.07875 000345

Email: jon.berry@profinder.eu

Head Office and

Advertisement Production:

T.01255 673311

F.01255 678364

E. chris.sims@profinder.eu

theinstaller Vol 15 No 8

Published July 2011

Copyright © Profinder Magazines Ltd 2011

**theinstaller is the
official journal of:**


certass

Self Assessment and Auditing Made Easy

Opinions expressed in **theinstaller** are those of the contributors and do not represent editorial policy. The publisher charges for the use of editorial pictures.

Recently I attended a meeting to discuss the 'threat' PVC-U is under from other materials used to make windows, namely timber and aluminium.

Now for the record, I believe there is only a 'threat' to installers if they don't offer all three materials. It is only PVC-U profiles suppliers that might see their market share drop...however with more and more grey PVC-U being sold because it looks like aluminium, who should be most concerned?

A report back from the meeting suggests two factions emerged – one that thinks there is not much danger from competitive materials and that existing industry organisations (of which there are many) ought to put greater effort into lobbying of architects, parliament, press and so on.

The other group believes that there is urgent need to counter anti-PVC lobbying and that not much is being done to tackle bad press and promote consumer awareness.

Again, for the record, I do not believe that two factions emerged. In fact I believe most who attended fell between two stalls.

What I think was agreed is that PVC-U needs talking up.

The timber lobby has done an excellent job in promoting what still remains a niche product. Wood though is too expensive to put into huge developments – the Olympic village for example...where aluminium got the vote from biased architects and planners. Biased in that PVC-U surely would have been cheaper (and more thermally efficient?) but is not well regarded.

PVC-U needs talking up – but just from an environmental perspective?

The three materials in question have their environmental positives but also their negatives – and the aluminium and timber lobbies have been very good at highlighting the positives whilst ignoring their own negatives. And of course they, aided and abetted by the press, architects, planners et al have – been happy to dis' PVC-U at any opportunity.

However, when it comes to aiding and abetting the detriment of PVC-U, one only has to look to PVC-U to find the most guilty – and sadly it is at the installer end where the worst culprits lie.

Why?

Because an impression of a product and an industry does not rely on one factor – you can sell an environmentally unfriendly product with charm and confidence whilst promoting its overall benefits and the mud won't stick. But you can sell an environmentally friendly product dishonestly and it will be damned.

And from here I'll quote from my own response to the aforementioned meeting:

PVC-U windows, doors and conservatories (and composite doors, cladding roofline etc) are superbly engineered products. Generally those not in the industry are unaware of this fact. Ignorance is not aided by installers selling cheaply. Sold cheaply, I believe the message 'PVC-U bad, wood and aluminium good' is subliminally re-enforced. I also believe that mis-selling and poor installation also characterise the PVC-U industry in the mind's eye of the public and the media – one recent story relayed to me involves an installer telling a customer that absolutely no energy/heat would be lost through her new windows; and of course the recent Daily Mail story about the mis-selling of solar panels – with unrealistic claims about pay-back periods being reminiscent of the worst a double-glazing salesman could offer. (It is the double-glazing industry leading the way in solar sales.)

Both of the above stories have an 'environmental' element to them but the underlying message is PVC-U is tacky. If those underlying messages and their causes cannot be defeated, new promotional bodies or old will find they are beaten before they get started.

Brian J. Shillibeer, Editor installer@profinder.eu