

SO, LET'S TALK FRAMES

May 2022



lancashirepvcutradeframes.co.uk

What's inside?



2. The LTF Gold Rush continues with PAS 24:2016
3. We've been shortlisted
4. New Customer Installations
5. ICYMI Price Increase
6. Lancashire Trade Frames General Manager Gavin Stoddard tells us why best practice principles are the best thing for a crisis



There's no place like home



Who would have thought a pandemic would change our relationship with our homes so dramatically? We've got a whole new relationship with bricks and mortar, creating great spaces to live, work and play. It's affected the whole construction industry and fabrication is still enjoying one of its busiest ever periods.

Of course, it's not just the pandemic. Rising heating bills mean well-insulated homes are a priority, and in case you haven't heard, our A-rated products reach the Gold standard.

Last year we were awarded the GOLD CMS Mark for our windows. Now we've got the same superb accreditation for our double doors and composites. That's all the British Standards, PAS 24:2016 and Approved Document Q, across the range.

Thank you for your continued business, we hope you all enjoy the Jubilee celebrations 🎉

Mark Rowland
Managing Director

THE LTF GOLD RUSH CONTINUES WITH PAS 24:2016



In 2021, Lancashire Trade Frames announced the successful completion of an independent audit of its manufacturing processes and the award of several accreditations relevant to the construction industry. Foremost amongst those was the Gold CMS Mark awarded by CENSolutions for the company's windows. Now the company is celebrating the same top-level award being granted for its composite and double door products which have attained the PAS 24:2016 standard.

PAS 24:2016 is one of the most important standards. Covering enhanced security considerations and weather testing, it is keenly sought by those in both the domestic and commercial markets. With specifications exacting, buyers enjoy both superb performance and enhanced confidence.

Mark Rowland, the fabricator's Managing Director, is delighted to have secured this new award and has thanked the whole LTF team for their efforts. But he stresses that the company is not simply in the business of collecting certificates for the sake of it. He said,

"The wider construction industry demands proof of quality and certifications are required when tendering for contracts. Key specifiers such as the NHBC and Secured by Design demand exacting standards that are embedded in a business's culture. This is a challenging accreditation to achieve, but it's also its strength. It's not a flimsy piece of paper. It carries weight."

PAS 24:2016 is a widely recognised standard, but its achievement is perhaps even sweeter given the CENSolutions rigorous auditing process. Every three months the company must prove its products and processes remain up to the coveted gold standard. Mark Rowland said,

"If I was buying windows and doors rather than making them, I'd trust an operation that had their seal of approval."



The company's commitment means it now has proven Gold standard compliance with BS EN 14351-1: (CE marking), BS 6375-1:2015 (weather testing), BS 7412 (PVC-U windows and doorsets), BS 8529 (composite doorsets), PAS 24:2016: (Enhanced Security) and Approved Document Q for its windows, composites and double doors. With Window Energy Ratings derived using BFRC approved simulators, Lancashire Trade Frames' Kömmerling products are now verified to meet B and A.

FAMILY
BUSINESS
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WE'VE BEEN SHORTLISTED

FAMILY
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FAMILY BUSINESS
OF THE YEAR
AWARDS
2022

3

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NEW

CUSTOMER INSTALLATIONS



Please send all your pictures to joanna@lancstrade.co.uk and we'll give you a shout out on social media!

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ICYMI PRICE INCREASE

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Thursday 28th April 2022

Re: Price Increase

Dear Customer,

Firstly, thank you for all your custom and support over the past year, we are grateful for your continued loyalty.

It is with sincere regret I must inform you that we are having to put a 15% surcharge on all our PVC products due to increasing costs from our suppliers and resin prices. The 15% came into force for us on the 1st April 2022 and having looked at this in great detail, it is simply impossible for us not to pass this on. This said we still believe we remain competitive in our market as we always have been.

I can confirm that with effect from **Tuesday 3rd May 2022**, all orders will increase accordingly.

This decision has not been taken lightly but is out of our hands. As a valued customer of Lancashire Trade Frames, I would like to personally thank you for your understanding and co-operation at this time.

If you have any queries regarding this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Rowland
Managing Director
Lancashire Trade Frames

LET'S
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FRAMES



Lancashire Trade Frames General Manager Gavin Stoddard tells us why **best practice principles are the best thing for a crisis**



I don't believe there's a business in the construction industry that hasn't faced serious challenges in the past two years. We have seen a perfect storm of problems: labour shortages, snarled up supply chains, rising prices and rocketing demand. What's more, we don't yet know when this storm will blow out. Many organisations are still engaged in daily firefighting.

It might seem strange therefore that amidst all the new challenges we face, I remain a huge fan of keeping going with the basic principles of best practice. When research and experience show us the most effective way to do something, we should adopt it. The trick is to make that work when we don't have certainty.

Best practice for testing times

For example, just-in-time principles make perfect sense when you have confidence in your supply chain. But when you don't, and your supplier is facing similar issues to yours, a more flexible approach is required. It's not about ditching just in time and throwing caution to the wind on stockholding, it's about finding the best answer for the situation you're in.

Some best practices principles become even more important at times like this. Take preventive maintenance. When chances of getting hold of a specialist engineer are slim and spares are hard to come by, taking steps to avoid machinery breakdown is a sensible strategy. Similarly with shortages of skilled workers and the chance of another 'pingdemic,' supporting your existing staff shouldn't be ignored. Training, apprenticeships, performance reviews and genuine two-way conversations all need to continue.

As well as the diverse range of day-to-day best practice subjects, there are big decisions that businesses need to make: the timing of investments, adoption of automation, implementation of new technology, changed routes to market. It isn't possible to achieve long term success without considering the strategic issues. In March 2020, many organisations put their plans on ice. Those that didn't are the ones most able to respond to the challenges they face today.



Getting on with it

It's not easy to summarise how we're managing this new business climate at Lancashire Trade Frames, but I'm giving it a go. It's a mix of three elements:

- Awareness of the issues
- Flexibility
- Swift, sound decision making.

That last one is key. There's a time and a place for postponing decisions, but there comes a time when that tactic results in paralysis.

As an example, with demand at unprecedented levels, it could be argued that we did not need to pursue further accreditations in 2022. But we did, fully aware of the demands this would place on us. That's because the move was in alignment with our best practice principles around Quality Management, standards and compliance. It was part of our ongoing commitment to meeting ever higher standards in fenestration. We were delighted to achieve the Gold CMS Mark, the highest level that CENSolutions awards. That this award demands bi-annual auditing, and annual testing as required by key specifiers, including the NHBC and Secured by Design is more evidence of our long-term commitment to excellence.

Sticking with the subject of best practice, working to achieve this award paid dividends on the continuous improvement front. The detailed inspection provided many insights which we've now adopted.



There are several initiatives now in place within Lancs Trade: from Health and Safety actions to repurposing idle equipment, from the passing on of consumer leads to enhanced communication. All are the direct or indirect consequences of choosing to adopt best practice.



Can best practice deliver?

As a concept, best practice is simple. Much of it is common sense, but it has become heavily associated with mystical sounding business techniques, many with Japanese names or expensive routes to become 'official' practitioners. But if you go back to the why of your business, those best practice principles shouldn't need to be justified. They should ultimately direct a business to the delivery of customer satisfaction.

The question then is whether these best practice principles are adequate. After a year when customers across the entire construction sector have experienced frustration, delay, rising prices, restricted choice, it would be easy to say they are not. But I would argue that when maintained they have done much to alleviate the impact of Covid 19 on our operation. Furthermore, by continuing to use these tools and methods, I believe we will move on from this disruption more rapidly. We will be in a stronger position to build a resilient, high quality, business able to stand proud in the construction sector.



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