

Spotlight

on a Member

Mark De La Rue
Window Service Centre Ltd

No Member is an Island

In the GGF Members Satisfaction Survey 2012, many GGF Members commented that they couldn't attend GGF Group and Regional meetings because of inconvenient locations and the time they have to take out of their businesses to travel and attend. One such Member is Mark De La Rue, Managing Director of Window Service Centre Ltd, a leading manufacturer, fabricator and installer based in Guernsey in the Channel Islands. Glassi caught up with Mark during his visit to mainland Britain for the FIT Show in Telford. Mark and his company have been Members of the Federation for over 15 years and in this article he expresses the frustration of being a Member company that can't easily attend meetings but outlines how his company does benefit from being part of the GGF.

So what are frustrations you find with the Federation?

Working on an island, it is easy to feel cut off from the Federation and sometimes it feels like we don't get the same support as Members on the mainland simply because we can't make many meetings and contribute to the discussions. It is doubly frustrating because we operate to different rules and regulations as Guernsey has its own Government and Building Regulations. So the political influence the GGF has on issues such as CE marking and Green Deal, doesn't directly affect our business. That said, we do work to the highest standards, for example the U Value in Guernsey is 2 but we're fitting A rated windows in PVC. We also work to

the GGF Codes of Practice and the technical specifications in the GGF Glazing Manual.

What are the advantages of being a GGF Member?

Working to GGF technical standards is a real selling point and we use the logo at every opportunity. It definitely adds credibility and being the only GGF installer on the Island of Guernsey is a big advantage. Of course the other major advantage is having full access to the GGF technical data and use of datasheets can be invaluable. The other back up services such as the Conciliation Scheme and the general business support is also useful to lean on from time to time.

What are main issues affecting your market?

Competition is fierce at the moment and profit margins are down because of the economic slowdown. To compound the competitiveness, more mainland companies are bidding for and gaining work.

Locally, we also have an issue with some unscrupulous companies such as those who take large deposits, start the job and then leave it half finished. While other companies fit inferior products causing dissatisfaction and mistrust with homeowners. Quite often, we are asked to replace and repair other companies work because their guarantees aren't honoured. In Guernsey, homeowners are very price orientated and companies generally compete on that in the first instance, but often homeowners are let down by the work.

What can the GGF do to help you more?

It would be great if the GGF could push the benefits of using a GGF Member to homeowners. Making consumers more aware of what the GGF is and what members do and what the levels to which they operate would be a great benefit. On a personal note, I'd also like to see the Conservatory Association promoted more. It's been a struggling market for a few years and in my opinion needs a boost.

What changes have you noticed at the GGF over the last 15 years?

In the last few years, the change in communications has improved with a much better website and more professional looking brochures. I would like to see the geographic searches on the website being a bit more accurate and easier for consumers to find a Member in their area.

What message would you give to Members who like you are fairly remote and not able to participate at GGF Meetings?

My advice would be to use the website, communicate with GGF staff if you have any issues and get your voice heard. Just because you can't attend meetings doesn't mean you are invisible or a lesser member. The GGF is there to help your business so use the benefits where you can.

www.windowservicecentre.com

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