



Go back far enough and Britain was a colourful place. In medieval times, even the insides of cathedrals were a riot of colour, not the dull grey we're used to today. More recently, the Georgians and Victorians decorated every inch of their houses and buildings with bright, strong colours and patterns writes Chris Jones, sales and marketing director at Deceuninck

By the 20th century our housing stock was in a sorry state. The aftermath of depression and two world wars left dull, grimy houses with rotting timber windows and doors with faded, peeling paint colours.

By the 1980s, homeowners couldn't wait to replace their rickety timber windows with shiny white PVC-U. Clean, fresh, and maintenance-free, white PVC-U windows transformed the face of Britain.

In recent years colour has been making its way back into our homes – it's no longer all white and magnolia. It started with leading paint brands such as Dulux promoting off-the-shelf colour and paint mixing services to let homeowners create whatever new colours they want in their homes. Then the trend really took off with aspirational, luxury paint brands like Fired Earth, Farrow & Ball and Little Green. Give homeowners the choice, and they'll go for colour!

Colour is back, big time!

That includes the outside of our homes and over the past five years or so foiled windows and doors have taken off. Colour, along with heritage-style windows, is a growing and important trend. I say important because colour is sold at a premium, and this top end of the market is growing fast. It's thriving thanks to a growing group of mostly older homeowners, who we call 'The Haves'. Their homes have appreciated dramatically in value. They are mostly mortgage free, and account for most of the UK's housing wealth and savings. The Haves want the best products to enhance and add value to their properties, and they love colour. Looks and performance come first, and they're prepared to pay for what they love. At a time when the mass middle-to-budget market is shrinking, this is a huge opportunity for fabricators and installers.



Chris Jones

Is your supply chain colour-enabled?

Just under 30% of the market is colour, but many fabricators are selling much more than that. How much colour are you selling to your installer customers?

Maybe you want to offer your customers colour but are put off by long lead times and incomplete deliveries. For fabricators to meet the growing demand for colour, their supply chain needs to be colour-enabled. And that starts with the systems company (SysCo). But most SysCos aren't rushing to invest in stocks of colour because of the huge cash implications. Whatever money they have sunk

into stocking white needs multiplying by the numbers of colours they stock. For Deceuninck that's now 30!

Any SysCo can make colour to order of course, that's not what I mean by colour-enabled. Colour-enabled is having a wide range of colours permanently in stock, ready to supply, along with colour matched ancillaries and trims. So if you order, it comes. No surprises, and no to-follows.

Not having colour in stock means having to make to order, and in a fast growing market that puts pressure on SysCos, which significantly increases the likelihood of late deliveries, incomplete orders and errors to fabricators.

These supply problems make it almost impossible for fabricators, and their installer customers to sell lots of colour to homeowners. And as the demand for colour is increasing, the disruption and frustration caused by SysCos making to order will only get worse.

Removing the barriers to colour

Not long after our MD Rob McGlennon and I joined Deceuninck we made a strategic decision to supply a wide range of colourways across our range, along with all the matching trims, cills, end caps and accessories that fabricators need. And to supply them from stock. We looked at the strong demand for colour in Ireland and parts of the continent and saw the potential for the UK too. We recognised colour was an opportunity for our fabricator customers to stand out and sell more.

So, we invested in a state-of-the-art foiling plant, a world-class foiling team and a vast warehouse to supply 30 colourways from stock. Our 140,000sq ft warehouse is filled to the brim with foiled profile, and matching foiled cills, end caps, trims and mouldings. So, whatever they order, from a stillage to a single piece of profile, it is guaranteed to arrive on their next delivery – because it is already in stock – which is why our OTIF (on time, in full) delivery record is consistently over 98%.

The investment has accelerated Deceuninck's colour sales, which are now 60%, more than twice the market average. Our top 20 fabricators sell over 50% colour, and customers tell us it gives them a great sales advantage. Glen Cain, owner of Mr Windows says: "Colour is the future. Our sales are flying because we listen to customers and give them what they want. That, plus Deceuninck's quick turnaround and guaranteed availability – a service



no one else seems able to match – is what's setting us apart from the competition."

Mike Parczuk, MD at Sternfenster says: "We are in a competitive market and customer demand is becoming more about the aesthetics of a window as it helps homeowners change the look of their properties and enhance their homes. Colour plays a huge part in this and Deceuninck's colour range, product quality, service and deliveries are very good. Our ability to respond quickly to customers, knowing that whatever we order from Deceuninck will arrive on our next delivery, gives us a big sales advantage."

From September we will be supplying 30 colourways from stock, plus 20 colours in 15 working days.

We reckon we are already No.1 for colour but this September we're making our colour offering even better by supplying 30 colourways from stock across the full Heritage Collection, available on your next delivery. We're also launching 20 additional colours on a 15 working day lead time to give our customers an even bigger sales advantage. □

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