

Triple opportunity

Four years on from the original glazing event, Edgetech managing director Chris Alderson revisits 'The Triple Glazing Question'

Four years ago, in April, we brought together 600 key decision-makers from across fenestration for *The Triple Glazing Question* – a conference focusing on the benefits, challenges and future prospects of triple-glazed windows.

We wanted to gauge the industry's mood in relation to triple glazing – and, at the time, we concluded that there was little appetite for it among fabricators, IGU manufacturers, and other vital players in the fenestration supply chain.

There were widespread concerns about the complexity of manufacturing triple-glazed units, about the availability of suitable profiles and other components, and a feeling that, especially given the excellent performance offered by 'clever doubles', adding a third pane of glass might not be the step-change in thermal efficiency that some expected.

In the intervening four years, we've not seen anything to suggest those opinions have substantially changed. But if many in the industry aren't interested in triple glazing, it's becoming increasingly clear that a lot of homeowners are.

Look at retail glazing, for example. When some of the biggest installation firms in the country want to boost sales, the promotion they run offers 'triple for double' – triple-glazed windows for the price of double. They do it because they know it works.

So, is it time for the industry to reconsider triple glazing? Obviously, the challenges remain. It undoubtedly does introduce an element of complexity to your manufacturing operation. But given the demand, it also offers big opportunities.

It's unfortunate but true – the market for double-glazed IGUs is experiencing very little growth. In fact, respected industry analysts D&G Consulting have forecast less than 1% growth until 2020. So rather than sacrificing margin by fighting for bigger shares of a stagnant double-glazing market, companies can use triple glazing to differentiate themselves and add value to each order.

And if you do decide to give triple glazing a try, Edgetech is here to help. It's undeniably true that triple-glazed units are more complex than double-glazed ones – there's more that could potentially go wrong. But choosing an outstanding spacer product like Super Spacer makes triple glazing quick, easy and reliable.

One of the biggest issues affecting triple-glazed units is fogging. The temperature within a triple-glazed IGU can get extremely hot, particularly in direct sunlight – it's recommended that centre panes are reinforced for this reason. But exposed to intense heat, inferior spacer products can give off volatiles, which cause units to fog up.

With Super Spacer, this isn't a problem. Successfully tested in temperatures from -40 to 85°C, IGUs manufactured with Super Spacer have been installed everywhere from Alaska to Dubai.



Chris Alderson

Similarly, it takes the complexity out of making triple-glazed products. Using Super Spacer in combination with high speed automated application machinery, a triple-glazed IGU can be manufactured every 30 seconds. And what's more, Super Spacer offers outstanding aesthetics. During application, Super Spacer references the glass edge, making it a perfect choice for achieving consistent sightlines in triple-glazed units.

While triple glazing undoubtedly remains a small part of the UK IGU market as a whole, and double-glazed units are likely to account for the overwhelming majority of IGU sales for the foreseeable future, it would be short-sighted to dismiss it entirely.

Interest in triple does exist – and, with Edgetech's help, IGU manufacturers can use it as a lucrative way of differentiating themselves from the competition and growing their businesses. □

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