



How The Burgess Group benefits from certification to the BSI Kitemark for window and door installation

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Edward Burgess,
Managing Director, The Burgess Group

The Burgess Group at a glance

Ten years ago East Anglia-based home improvement business, The Burgess Group, achieved certification to the BSI Kitemark for the survey and installation of windows and doorsets, based on the industry standard BS 8213-4 (for which a revised version was published in 2016). The Burgess Group regards the Kitemark as a key component in its drive for quality and excellence. The stringent criteria the company has had to meet to achieve and maintain its certification provides customers and prospects with assurance that it works to the highest standards.

BSI Kitemark benefits

- Independent endorsement of quality of work
- Customer reassurance
- Differentiation from the competition
- More streamlined internal systems and documentation
- Snag-free completions
- Regular assessments, proving ongoing high standards
- Increased potential for business growth.



Business background

Managing Director Edward Burgess established The Burgess Group in 1996 at the youthful age of 24. Having previously worked for a national home improvement company, Edward saw an opportunity to develop a niche brand offering premium quality replacement windows and doors to the residential sector.

With showrooms in Woodbridge, Bury St Edmunds and Chelmsford, The Burgess Group's core business is supplying and installing factory-finished, high performance timber windows and doors. It also always offers a range of high quality aluminium sliding and bi-fold doors and premium PVCu windows and doors.

The company's core product is sold via a nationwide brand, Timber Windows, which sources enquiries and deals with manufacture of the windows and doors, while The Burgess Group installs them and offers aftersales care throughout Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Essex. As Edward explains: "The partnership works well – Timber Windows provides a top quality product, while we offer customers reassurance that their purchase is being installed by a reputable local company."

With a staff of over 20, the company has built an excellent reputation, with a significant proportion of business generated by customer recommendation. It has experienced sustained growth, with annual sales of around £1.8m.

Why the BSI Kitemark?

With its focus on premium quality products, going for a certification that recognizes a corresponding quality in installation made perfect sense. "Achieving the BSI Kitemark in effect 'legitimized' our message to customers, for whom installation is just as important as design and performance," says Edward. "Bespoke timber windows and doors represent a big investment for homeowners and it is so important the products are installed with care and attention to detail. Having the independent endorsement of a BSI Kitemark on our installation process provides homeowners with reassurance."

Edward was also keen to differentiate his company from competitors. "This industry is

BSI Case Study: The Burgess Group

largely unregulated, and although there are thousands of window companies, few hold the BSI Kitemark," he says. "As a marketing tool it helps us stand out from the crowd, while we also have the satisfaction of knowing that, internally, we're doing things the right way."

Implementation

Edward found the certification process relatively straightforward. It began by inviting BSI to conduct a thorough 'Gap analysis' to identify where systems and processes needed to be put in place. These covered a variety of aspects, from design, surveying and installation to staff training, property care, and building regulations compliance.

In common with other small businesses, The Burgess Group faces the challenge of keeping up to date with regulatory requirements and best practice in areas as diverse as health and safety and administration. "We don't have the infrastructure of a large corporate, but because the Kitemark certification process is all-encompassing, covering the admin side of the business as well as the technical, it gave us valuable insights and really professionalized our approach," says Edward.

Implementation meant a certain amount of "cajoling of employees", as some of the more established teams tended to stick with old ways initially, but the structure and rules that have come with the process have provided tangible boundaries, making it easier for staff to do what's required of them.

Edward adds, "We've also invested in training our staff and also in an up-to-date database with order tracking, which enables them to provide a seamless process for our customers."

The benefits

In the age of the Internet, where unregulated reviews of products abound, Edward sees value in the Kitemark and in the integrity of the BSI brand that underpins it. "Customers have told us that, when contemplating spending thousands of pounds on premium windows for their home, our BSI Kitemark has been a reassurance. It has given them confidence that the quality of our workmanship during installation will match the quality of the product."

Certification: BSI Kitemark™

He adds: "I certainly believe the Kitemark adds credibility to our customer offering, and the instantly recognizable symbol can only serve to strengthen our brand."

As well as the marketing impact of the Kitemark, the certification process also helps streamline internal systems and audit trails. "It has helped us focus on certain key areas of the business," says Edward. "The team gains great satisfaction from that external acknowledgement that the company has achieved a high level of competence."

BSI's role

From first contact, followed by information provision, Gap analysis, guidance, assessment and final award of the Kitemark, the relationship between The Burgess Group and the team at BSI has always been positive. Edward is grateful for the flexible approach that has sometimes been required. Indeed, in the early stages of the application process, he says, "It was something of a challenge initially for the assessors as they were more familiar with PVCu products than our timber frame doors and windows, and they had to build on their existing knowledge. Although some adaptation of checklists was required, it didn't present a major obstacle to the certification process."

For Edward, the presence of the BSI brand on the Kitemark is a clear strength that, in turn, helps the Kitemark differentiate his company from the competition. The Burgess Group intends to highlight the quality symbol in the future, through more informative displays in showrooms and by explaining the relevance of the BSI Kitemark directly to customers.

He concludes: "Through our commitment to the BSI Kitemark we've aspired to, and achieved, a level of service over and above the norm."

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