

The ADVOCATE

Growing pains

Store expands windows of opportunity

By Harold Davis

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In considering a cosmetic makeover to your home, one idea might be to change your windows or doors. The Window People - A1 Aluminum Products Co. of Stamford has been selling windows and doors since 1932.

Though the company had originally offered more than just windows and doors, owner Ted Davey saw a need to fine tune the business when he took it over in 1983. The business added The Window People to its name.

AN EYE ON BUSINESS

"I transformed it from a siding and roofing business, and streamlined it to focus on windows and doors. This way, there was better control of the project and installation. We thought it was best to focus on one area well," the 46-year-old Stamford resident said.

The Window People specializes in unique wood and vinyl windows, in addition to wood and fiberglass doors and related hardware. Starting as a 240-square-foot office on Belltown Road, the business is now at 42 Magee Ave., where it occupies about 3,100 square feet. About 1,500 square feet is devoted to a showroom for products.

Some of the company's window lines include Peach Tree, Huttig, Harvey Industry vinyl windows. The company carries Peach Tree, Therma-Tru and IWP doors.

Items are made to order. Usually Davey does the measuring for jobs, and the installation is subcontracted to firms with whom Davey has had long-standing relationships.

"They have to answer to me," Davey said, stressing the importance of timely installation. "We have a warehouse for storing things, but we don't like to do that. We like to take these pieces right off the truck and right to the customers. The less handling the better."

Davey was an installer for the company before the last owner approached him about acquiring the business.

"When you're using an installing dealer, you're getting the assurance of dealing with one person. When you deal with lumberyard, someone might tell you it's not my problem if something goes wrong," Davey said.

Installing high-end French sliding doors and specialty windows comes with a price, but Davey said his company delivers a good product for a good price.



For years, service has been a foundation of the business.

"We're competitive for the service. Our knowledge of the window business is pretty vast. I have files from customer from back to 1983. We keep track of what people have from us and if they need parts we can them," he said.

Energy efficiency is a reason why people consider changing their windows and doors, according to Richard Roll, president and chief executive officer of American Homeowners Association in Stamford.

"Windows and doors are a primary source of heat and energy loss. There's been plenty of advances in technology, too, so you can get a cosmetic improvement while at the same time getting those energy conservation elements," Roll said.

Wood windows are being used to outfit newer homes that incorporate older designs.

Because of increased demand for wood windows increased, Roll said companies have improved the technology and material used to seal them.

"A lot has to do with the styles. Some want that rustic and authentic look (with wood) and a lot of people are building new, older style looking homes," he said.

Roll said he has had good experiences dealing with home centers and small businesses, including The Window People.

The choice depends on the consumer's desire, he said.

"There's a lot of business for replacement windows, but each supplier has a specialty to look for," Roll said.