

The Buyer's Dilemma

Is It Possible to Buy a Really Good Steak from a Produce Stand?

by John Linder

Earlier this year, I wrote a brief article for this magazine concerning the bad rap given to door closers (see *USGlass*, January 2001, *Glaziers Guild*, page 20). While I professed my utter lack of literary ability, this article must have touched close to home for many readers. We received countless letters commending us for our "forward explanation," "simplicity" and "for taking some of the mystery out of the door closer world." Quite frankly, this surprised me, but I would like to thank you for all your comments.

There is another ancillary topic that, like the bad rap, touches close to home, and seems to have caused a great deal of consternation among many of our glazing and hardware customers.

A GOOD DEAL?

Every one of us knows that you can always find a good deal. You can get a pretty good deal buying plants and shrubs from the local do-it-yourself home center, or even a great used car from the "little old lady from Pasadena," but are you really getting a "good deal?"

Please don't get me wrong ... I'm as cheap as the next guy, and I truly love a good bargain. But I am also somewhat of a realist. When I re-landscaped my home I wanted healthy plants and trees that would survive, and I wanted a professional nursery person's advice and experience. I wanted someone who was an expert, and who could take care of me if things went wrong.



Cheaper isn't always better, even in the glass industry.

they are gone, they always leave their problems behind.

FINDING RELIABLE SUPPLIERS

As a prudent businessperson you need to know and trust your supplier. You need to know that your supplier is involved with the product he furnishes and fully understands its intricacies. You need to know that he is prepared to back it up with technical support. You need to look for stability in pricing so you can control your job costs. Just as important, you need a reliable supplier who gets you the material when you need it and who will be around for the after-sale service.

CHEAPER ISN'T BETTER

This past year, we have seen some very unrealistic prices for door closers. It brings to mind the old adage that if something seems too good to be true, it probably is. Today you can buy cheaper over and over again, or you can purchase once-and-for-all from a knowledgeable supplier who, with years of product-specific experience, can help you make excellent choices and provide you with solid after-sale support.

The successful glazing contractor aligns himself with value-added suppliers—there is no dilemma. ■

GLAZIERS BEWARE

Your door closer distributor should be considered no differently. From time to time the glazing contractor has special job considerations and needs to seek out advice. This counsel may be hard to come by from a general merchandiser whose catalog resembles a telephone book, and who seems to be a jack of all trades, a master to none. Worse yet is the new kid on the block who has managed to import a couple of hundred door closers (sight unseen) and now must sell them quickly in order to pay for the next couple of hundred due in next month. This supplier offers no support, no longevity and he probably won't be found when the problems start. But his prices were so cheap!

I have worked with my company for 18 years, and the company itself has been specializing in door closers for more than 33 years. There are several companies like ours that also have chosen to specialize in what they know and do best. We have seen others come and go in their attempt to make a quick dollar. They do whatever they can to tempt the customer with unrealistic prices and empty promises. And when

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