

www.windsordoor.com / HQ: Little Rock, Ark. / Hans Wright, vice president of sales and marketing: "Every door we manufacture, we stand behind and our family name is on it."

SOUTH



WINDSOR DOOR HAS BECOME THE GO-TO RESIDENTIAL GARAGE DOOR MANUFACTURER FOR THE INDUSTRY BY KEEPING ITS PRODUCTS RELEVANT.

DOORS OF QUALITY

WINDSOR DOOR STREAMLINES ITS MANUFACTURING TO MEET CUSTOMERS' NEEDS. BY JANICE HOPPE-SPIERS

As new generations of homebuyers enter the market looking for individualism and uniqueness in one of the biggest investments they will ever make, Windsor Door has become the go-to residential garage door manufacturer for the industry by keeping its products relevant and its manufacturing process agile.

"We are a flat and nimble organization," Vice President of Sales and Marketing Hans Wright says. "When we see a need in the marketplace, we react immediately and start working on design concepts, prototypes and

testing. It's a living process for us." The Little Rock, Ark.-based company began in 1961 manufacturing and distributing residential garage and commercial sectional overhead doors.

For nearly 60 years, Windsor Door has served dealers, national homebuilders, custom and regional builders, and commercial builders from coast to coast. The company distributes its products from seven distribution points strategically located in Arkansas, Georgia, Texas and California.

About 85 percent of Windsor Door's business is residential door

lines and the company launches new products every year to meet market demands. The company recently launched the LP SmartSide Trim door, an insulated flush wood grain door that offers endless design, window and wind-rated options.

The LP SmartSide Full Faced door is an insulated door made with LP trim and panels, which have "v" grooves every four inches. Windsor Door has partnered with Haley Paint, a Lancaster, Pa.-based coating company that has been servicing various markets since 1913. Haley Paint offers a Wilderness Urethane, which contains nanotechnology pigments that offer a full 10-year no fade finish on the Windsor Door LP Overlays.

Earlier this year, Windsor Door also launched model 1800R, a lightweight yet strong modern looking garage



THE COMPANY DISTRIBUTES ITS PRODUCTS FROM SEVEN DISTRIBUTION POINTS STRATEGICALLY LOCATED IN ARKANSAS, GEORGIA, TEXAS AND CALIFORNIA.

door with low maintenance. Builders may choose glass for visibility and natural lighting or substitute for aluminum panels. “We recently came out with the full-vision garage door that has no support braces across the back up to certain sizes,” Wright explains. “There are internal supports built into the door and hidden from view. We developed this completely in-house with our engineering team, put it through numerous stress and cycle tests before launching.”

Depending on the complexity of a product, Windsor Door can develop a new prototype within eight months. “If it’s a small change to a product, we can produce the new prototype and test it within a month or two,” Vice President of Production Dave McMahan says. “If it’s a new product, we are at about six months with a six- to eight-week lead time if it requires tooling or dyes after the design stage. From conception through manufacturing it’s about six to eight months.”

Windsor Door’s customers play a significant role in the development of new products. “We have direct relationships with homebuilders and when they are buying large volumes of a product and can create economies of scale for us immediately, it makes it feasible to create a new product,” McMahan explains. “We discuss what is needed in their region and include customers in the design and testing. They do a prototype test by hanging our door and giving us feedback. It’s a true partnership.”

ALL IN A DAY’S WORK

Windsor Door prides itself on complete traceability of its manufacturing process – from the steel mill the metal came from to who loaded the final product into the truck. “That’s very important in the quality process,” McMahan notes.

“This is a family owned business making hundreds of thousands of doors a year,” Wright adds. Even with its high output, “every door we manufacture, we stand behind and our family name is on it.”

First, the company receives its raw material in metal coil form from vendors based in the United States. The coils are put through the texturizer and put in simulated wood grain before getting to the presses and embossing equipment. From there, it is transferred to the door assembly line where styles are attached and the door is labeled with the shipping information. Finally, the door moves into final inspection where the quality assurance team ensures everything is to the customer’s specifications and then scans as completed. »



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WINDSOR DOOR PLANS TO CONTINUE FOCUSING ON MEETING CUSTOMERS' NEEDS WITH ON-TIME PRODUCT DELIVERY.

» The manufacturing floor runs real-time, which means the 5,000 to 10,000 pounds of metal it receives today will become a garage door ready to ship by the end of the day. "Everything is produced to a specific order and we run a linear concept in manufacturing using Lean Six Sigma principles so it shortens the distance from raw materials to the finished product line," McMahan says.

Windsor Door offers eight different garage door colors, three panel heights and eight stamp designs, which it is able to accomplish in short lead times. "In the past, if you wanted a specific color and door it was ran on a specific day," McMahan says. "With our Lean Six Sigma processes, there are no 'specials' because when you start applying that name and calling it 'special,' it slows down the process. We can produce all the variables in a customer order in one day's time by sequencing orders as they come through."

SMOOTH OPERATIONS

To increase productivity on the floor, Windsor Door monitors the maintenance schedule of its equipment to remain proactive and avoid major downtime. The company also performs root cause analysis on its equipment if there is an issue to ensure it fixes the actual problem rather than putting a patch on the symptom.

Windsor Door's employees also play a significant role in increasing productivity and improving quality. "I'm a big believer that employees on the floor have a major role in the success of the operation," McMahan adds. "I listen to those guys because they are the ones producing the product and can tell me if they are starting to hear something with the bearing, for example."

Moving forward, Windsor Door plans to continue focusing on meeting its customers' needs with relevant products and on-time delivery of its products.

"It's a daily occurrence that a customer will call in and say, 'We screwed up and I have a builder who needs this product now,'" McMahan says. "We are able to react to those demands quickly and it is something to be very proud of because it's unique for our industry. By quickly reacting to those needs, that has helped us grow to where we are today." **mt**

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