

Retail selling

Since its preview at Glassex 2009 and subsequent launch, Ultraframe's U-Design software (powered by RoofWright) has gone from strength to strength. As a reflection of U-Design's success, the majority of Ultraframe's customers have now upgraded from RoofWright to U-Design, Mark Hanson Comments.

Recognising its customers need to "sell" conservatories rather than "buy" conservatory roofs, the move from RoofWright to U-Design reflected a shift from the need to stay lean, with simple roof ordering processes and a predominantly internal focus to an external focus which provides Ultraframe's customers with a tool to support their sales process, based on great visualisation of the conservatory, accurate costings, customisable pricing. This latter aspect is crucial as the sales person needs to have confidence in their own pricing (base, frames, drainage etc) - ultimately, the objective is to arm the salesperson with a tool which will help them sell more, and those that are sold are at a higher margin.

A key component of U-Design is its ease of use. Even those who are new to computers can be brought up to speed relatively quickly. That said, Ultraframe have not taken anything for granted. With the launch of U-Design, a range of one day training courses was launched to cover all aspects of using the software. The courses are 'public' so anyone can join, bespoke training is also available by request, either to address a specific subject or range of subjects, or simply to dedicate training to one group from one company.

U-Design users, have access to Ultraframe's dedicated U-Design support team and onsite bespoke consultancy is also available to help them get the most out of U-Design.

U-Design can be a 'lifesaver' offering something no other software on the market has - when you use a consumer's postcode, the system draws on site data provided by Ordnance Survey, calculates wind load at the location, ensuring that the roof is correctly specified with reinforcement or tie bars. A red warning light prevents you ordering something that is not fit for purpose - a 'fix' button then allows the user to upgrade the relevant underperforming parts without having to have knowledge of structural engineering.

As mentioned earlier, consumer pricing is an important ingredient so the software comes with sample costings for bases, frames and of course other useful items like prices for skip hire. Through prudent amendment, the costs can be amended to reflect your own business and the selling prices can be modified to fit your own margin expectations. Ultraframe feels that by using

U-Design, retailers should gain higher conversions and the sales that they do make will make additional contribution. With the market as tough as it is and has been, it's vital that you know where you are making the margin and how much you are making on each element.

You can set your own home page and customise the toolbars. You can create your own views and layouts, have split screens and use 3D views. The project you're working on - be it in the front room of a consumer or back at your showroom - builds up in front of your eyes in 3D, and the 'drag and drop' facility for windows and doors is particularly helpful. Having designed a 4m x 4m Georgian at the click of a button you can turn the project into a Gable style, without re-keying/re-entering all the choices along the way - this makes the system perfect for gaining commitment when in front of a consumer. And finally - there is a series of structured questions that helps the salesperson complete the cost build up, and critically important - makes sure no decisions are missed that influence the final price. Minimal chance of specification errors and an accurate price at a margin you are happy with.

So, how does a retailer get hold of the software? U-Design can be rented from a participating Fabricator/Distributor or direct from Ultraframe. One element of added functionality is the ability to order the roof 'electronically'. If roofs are purchased from a Fabricator/Distributor, then when the conservatory design is complete, the roof design can be saved and emailed then re-opened in the same software before going on to be manufactured. For those customers who enjoy a direct purchasing arrangement, there is even more added functionality. When the roof order is ready to be placed, retailers can look at available manufacturing slots within the Ultraframe operation and book a production slot and delivery.

This type of functionality is very 'lean' and saves time and effort at the retailers and Fabricators/manufacturers.

In summary, U-Design is perhaps the simplest software to use and yet offers the most functionality in a cost effective package - monthly easy terms. For forward thinking Ultraframe retailers, it simply has to be the system of choice. Moreover, there is a commitment to continue investment in new options with an updated version just available that facilitates the design of Orangeries,



Veranda, coloured foil conservatories and bay/bow windows for those selling windows.

Have a look at the case study alongside - and see how Warmseal Windows are getting along with the software.

Warmseal embrace U-Design

Warmseal Windows Ltd, based in Newcastle upon Tyne, are strong advocates of U-Design. Since its release Warmseal have been committed to using the software and it has now become a very valuable and powerful sales, survey and production tool.

The programme has been very well developed and the ease of use, especially with regard to editing the ancillary questions, will suit all companies large and small, when it comes to site surveys and pricing.

One point that does impress consumers, which no other software programme offers, is the structural design element - when entering their postcode it adjusts and confirms the design to be structurally sound (re-pricing the

design where necessary).

Commented Stuart Morrison, Conservatory Manager at Warmseal, "After initial in-house training and with the support of the 'tech guys at Ultraframe', our sales executives are now able to design, present and price both the full conservatory

(including base work) and virtually all styles/designs with the click of a mouse, in the customers home, and have no need for paper notes or costing sheets.

Furthermore stated Stuart, "Office paperwork is also reduced as the files can then be up-loaded to the network on their return to the office and be picked up by the sales and installation department to progress the order further. I would personally recommend all of Ultraframe's retailers to use U-Design software programme".

For more info visit www.ultraframe-conservatories.co.uk



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