

- CCIG -

print 

## First in Europe

*CCIG: using Intercept warm edge to build the Ultimate brand*

Most businesses evolve their people, their premises, their ways of doing things, and the products they make, over a fairly lengthy period of time, usually several years, if not decades.

How refreshing then to start off with a new factory, which, if not exactly purpose-built, is however, a perfect fit for the job, with experienced people who all know what they are doing, and a product which although new to the market in this country, does have a long and successful track record elsewhere? And not only that, has several key advantages that you know are going to find ready acceptance with customers?

A pipe dream for most, but one company in Manchester has pulled it off in a big way.

Located in a secure business estate off a wide thoroughfare and blessed with easy access for even the largest articulated lorries, Cash & Carry Insulated Glass (CCIG), is established in premises found vacant, but in 'as new' condition, with an open 75,000 square foot sealed unit production area, and an additional huge free space which creates the necessarily large showroom for their Ultraframe conservatory roofs.

The business didn't exactly spring up overnight however, Principals Andy Price and Chris Mercer come with a twenty-odd year industry pedigree and 12 years experience manufacturing high volumes of frames and glass and five years of manufacturing conservatory roofs using products including Rehau frames and St Gobain glass.

With the impending EN1279, now introduced, the opportunity to create the Ultimate brand of sealed units manufactured "using only the finest ingredients" was not only seen, but taken.



These units are argon-filled as standard, comprise St Gobain self-cleaning glass a 1.1 U-value and incorporate PPG's Intercept warm edge system, fabricated using the first Intercept i-3 manufacturing system in Europe. This new generation of world class high-tech automation from GED Integrated Solutions means quality units that are even more consistent than ever before, offering years of worry-free performance for the homeowner – and zero call backs for the window or conservatory fabricator.

The patented U shape design of the Intercept spacer provides the strongest spacer system with warm edge thermal performance. Since introduction, Intercept has passed all the stringent tests in North America's harsh Winter and Summer conditions.

Unlike most manufacturers, who will offer both standard float glass and more superior coated units, CCIG are striving to only make specialist units, eliciting from St Gobain the comment, "It is exciting that someone has taken

the initiative to move away from standard float glass production especially as there are so many high performance coatings available today.”

Andy tells us that in their previous business they always tried to stay at the forefront of window and glass technology – they were one of the first window companies in the North to offer internal beading, for example, were very early with manufacturing to Document L standards, saw warm edge, saw self-cleaning, and thought: “That’s the way to go.”

Having found the premises, the next step was to get the factory layout just right, and so CCIG engaged a time and motion consultant from the aerospace industry, giving him a brief to make the factory as lean-running as possible – a philosophy that exactly matched that of GED, who as well as manufacturing state-of-the-art glass processing machines, also create the LeanNet software to help achieve this aim by tying together glass cutting, spacer production and order scheduling.

The consultant went to the US, and, working closely with GED and by visiting other glass processors, successfully fulfilled the brief. CCIG representatives also spent time in many US factories and at GED’s production facility. The very production line which was to be installed in the UK was showcased on GED’s dramatic 35,000 sq foot exhibition stand at the 2006 Atlanta Glass show.

Perhaps uniquely, all the CCIG production staff were experienced in the industry and already familiar in handling ‘soft coat’ products when they were hired, the result is that the CCIG set-up is being described as “One of the best integrations of soft-coat seen. A near-seamless transfer.”

Chris Mercer, the Production Manager at CCIG, with 25 years experience in glass processing including at Interpane, has to take much of the credit. Chris is confident in knowing the capabilities of machines and people in order to push capacities to the limit.

With a background as something of a trouble-shooter, he says that it was an exciting opportunity for him “... not to have to come in just to cut out the dead wood.”

“From the outset we have established a better calibre of employee.”

And with the advantages of the automated GED i-3 sealed unit production line, the current capacity of CCIG is currently a “very comfortable” 1500 units per 8-hour shift.

Real advocates for glass, CCIG is actively promoting better performing glass roofs for conservatories in place of polycarbonate. CCIG could have offered a 1.5 U value for the manufactured units, but deciding to offer the best U value possible, increased their investment to go to 1.1 U-value, true self cleaning antisun product branded ‘ultimate’ roof glass.

With a 5000-plus customer base they have successfully converted all their existing customers, finding that “People when offered a glass roof at near-polycarbonate prices do want glass. Homeowners want their new conservatory to be flooded with natural light – a glass roof is the sure way to achieve this.”

Our full customer base has embraced the Intercept U channel low-sightline bar, Andy explains that there has been “Consistent growth of our customer network and due to the low u-value self cleaning product many are reporting that their lead conversion rates have considerably improved which is essential in the current competitive market climate”, says Andy.

As well as the benefits of self-cleaning and low U value, the units do have particular advantages over other spacer systems that would certainly qualify them for the apt brand name Ultimate, and these are almost entirely due, explains Andy, to using the Intercept system.

These advantages are: warm edge, superior flexibility and strength and thus long-term reliability, shapes, and Georgian bar.

Intercept is automatically and precisely cut to the exact angle required for joins in the shape to present a far neater appearance. The units are then baked and pressed to form a fantastic consistent seal (wet out).

Georgian bar inserts are precisely located with Intercept as the grid locations are computer-controlled and pre-punched into the spacer; the bar is then accurately fixed into position with locking clips so that there is no possibility of migrating out of position and in 3 or 4 frame window assemblies this is essential if the window is to work aesthetically.

Georgian bar used with foam spacer is clipped-on manually and is not always exactly located. The result, where the bar does not line up in these multi-frame assemblies, looks so awful that most users of foam spacer do not bother to even try.





The flexibility and strength comes from Intercept being a U channel metal spacer insulated from the glass by a special sealant that bonds with the glass, instead of a hot melt butyl which relies on mechanical adhesion alone, and which due to the pumping action of the unit over temperature variations, is more likely to be compromised.

Intercept will flex with the window, reducing the pressure on the seals to create a more stable, longer-lasting unit.

Because of all this, most Intercept sealed unit manufacturers in the USA offer a standard 25-year

guarantee (Intercept units have been tested to the equivalent of 40 years). In some cases a life time warranty is offered.

CCIG currently offer a guarantee that matches the frames and conservatories to which they are being fitted, and have absolute confidence in this warranty.

Last word to Chris Mercer: "With Intercept, we are now producing the finest units I've seen in my 25 years of manufacturing 2,000 a day."

And with Intercept's exemplary track record of 600 million units in the world today, it was an easy choice.

For more information about GED Integrated Solutions and Intercept Spacer Systems please contact Chris Wale.

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For information regarding CCIG's exciting product range and Ultraframe launch please contact Andy Price.

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