

Digital Innovation in the Glass & Glazing Industry

INNOVATION
ROUNDTABLE



Your Participants

Elton
Boocock
Business
Pilot

Simon
Monks
VBH

Marc
Henson
Kubu

Darren
Pusey
Winmac

Greg
Beachim
Cyncly

Jay Patel
Everglade
Windows

Ryan Breslin
Cherwell
Windows

Ryan
Schofield
Thames
Valley
Windows



Foreword from Elton Boocock

This Innovation Roundtable event was born from a meeting between Business Pilot and VBH GB. Two very different companies, with two very different products, but with one mission in common - bringing innovative solutions to installers to help them get ahead in the market.

We invited representatives from machinery manufacturers, fabricators, installation companies, hardware specialists and software developers to get a clearer picture on the state of innovation in the glazing and what we need to do to take those crucial next steps.

The results are not unexpected. It's no surprise that we need more innovation; that as an industry we are trailing behind other sectors, but we've also grabbed some positives.

There is a clear appetite for collaboration in the industry - as proven with the new product development between our co-host VBH GB and smart home technology specialists, Kubu.

As an inaugural event, I believe this has set us on the right track, to not only recognising where the gaps in innovation are in the glazing industry, but also how the entire supply chain can benefit from collaborative partnerships and shared ideas.

If you want a seat at the table, just drop us line.

Elton Boocock



Foreword from Simon Monks (VBH)

Our industry does have a habit of keeping things quite insular in terms of sharing ideas whether this is a fear of competition or not is debateable, but when it begins to extend to different parts of the chain not even having a platform to address then we should be making some movements to make these changes.

Giving the opportunity to work with the Business Pilot team for VBH GB made a lot of sense. We sit at different ends of the supply chain spectrum and offer completely different services, but what came apparent from even our own discussions was we crossed over much more than we thought we did.

To then be in a position to come together and host a round table discussion where we could explore other businesses who sit at different positions within the supply chain and encourage not only the idea of where innovation is going, but how we can link a lot of this thinking and innovation together was a really welcome day for all.

The results for me were very positive on the day. As we spoke more and more as a group, it became apparent we all see the need for innovation in our sector, but doing this with a much more collaborative approach was absolutely essential.

I hope the first step into this discussion was welcomed by all, but equally sets up the next opportunity for more discussion and more contributors.

Simon Monks



How can we define digital innovation?

1

Using technology and innovation to help create and run more efficient, more profitable businesses.

2

If it's good for the end user, what will happen is people will come in and ask you for it. You don't even have to try and sell it.

3


The user experience. One of the things that can help us build more value in the consumer's mind around our products is actually if they interact with a product in a more meaningful way.

4

Getting things to properly integrate...getting it all to genuinely link together so that the business is more effective, it's a rare thing to find.

5

A lot of innovation, if you think about it, is giving you access to information that you didn't have before or it wasn't at your fingertips.



“When you started saying integration earlier I kind of chuckled a little bit and had a smile on my face because it was so on point. Everything that we try to do, we're always looking at how can we integrate with other people's technologies, how can we integrate with other people's brands, how can we provide a service, a product, a whatever it is, that compliments other things, not takes over from.”

Simon Monks - VBH

“Other people will come in, other competitors will come in, they are starting to come in and they are starting to give us headaches here and there. But that's only a good thing because if we can all be open and sharing and honest with each other rather than fighting and scrapping with each other, it's just going to make it better.”

Marc Henson - Kubu

“I am plugging Business Pilot but I am impartial. Everybody I know who uses Business Pilot, which happens to include a lot of our customers, they run better businesses than they did 10 years ago. Not only because of Business Pilot but in a large part because of that.”

Jay Patel – Everglade
Windows

The Smart Home Opportunity

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As a sector, we are taking inspiration from Smart Home sensations...Alexa, Ring, Hive.

Different age groups are more accepting of technology & innovation.

Baby steps are key - not revolution. Big, fast change can frighten & put people off.

Over the coming five to ten years Smart is going to be a requirement, not a nice-to-have.

Connection is key - our interconnectivity is becoming our natural state - children of today don't remember life without smartphones and the children of tomorrow won't remember life without a smart home.



Our products along with our education pieces and our marketing content is also aimed at helping installers to do their job more efficiently, so further up the chain fabricators to do their job more efficiently and then the likes of the hardware suppliers to do their job more efficiently.

Marc Henson, Kubu



I think very much from the digital innovation side, we've got to get to that point where we remove that barrier of understanding...we make it that it's far more accessible to the end user, whether that be the householder, whether that be the fabricator, whether that be the installer.

Greg Beachim, Cyncly



The more time and effort and energy that we put into training them...we've always had a very hands-on approach to the onboard rather than just download the software and crack on.

Ryan Schofield, as Business Pilot

Collaboration is key to the development of the glass and glazing industry in the next decade, because closer integration of products and services will help drive innovation, improve efficiency and create a better user experience.

Collaboratively you create a much better product together as two specialists.

Collaboration driving innovation

Ultimately, it's the installer, and then even the end user beyond that, who benefit from a better collaborative product.

We have no interest in developing those things (eg. sales and quoting tools) but we'll develop an API with a provider for those things and hopefully collectively we can add value both ways and ultimately it's the installer and then even the end user beyond that who benefit from a better collaborative product.

Other Innovation Drivers

Systems have always been a fundamental part of having a successful business and have certainly allowed us to propel the business forward.

Ryan Schofield - Thames Valley Windows

There is a tendency to look for that next thing to try and position your product better in the market or keep up with or even be ahead of and supply those features that the client might want...whether it's a case of they find it first and then bring it to you or you're bringing it to them.

Ryan Breslin - Cherwell Windows

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Everything we talk about today has to be underpinned by one thing, which is the consumer has to be willing to appreciate and pay for these things.

Jay Patel - Everglade Windows

What's on my radar is what is best for the installer. That's all that it exists on it. That's what drives innovation. I mean, look, we're in business, we're commercial, but...I just want to know how do I make that guy's life easier? And that's where I'm going to innovate.

Elton Boocock - Business Pilot

Advice from the table

Working digitally gives greater insight to how a business performs, evolves - where you are now and where you're going.

Innovation isn't about leaving anything behind...we still sell white windows!

If you embrace technology, you will create more time to spend on innovating and on developing your business rather than the day-to-day firefighting. So, you have to take the plunge.

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Innovation creates industry leaders

Don't turn a blind eye to innovation or think, well, our industry isn't quite ready for that yet, you might be surprised.

Innovate to meet demand

It's not just about innovating products - it's about embracing and using digital tools

Collaboration

Education

User Value

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Is your innovation worth pursuing...?

ONE Will it add value to the end user?

TWO Will it be easy for the end-user to understand and embrace?

THREE Is it an emotional decision or a data-driven idea?

FOUR Is the investment practical?

FIVE Is it worth your R&D time and money or could you innovate through collaboration?



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- Simon Monks



Is your innovation worth pursuing...?



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Your thoughts

What are your thoughts on innovation in the glazing industry?

Do you agree with the comments from our roundtable or do you have a different view?

The Innovation Roundtable is inclusive and if you're pushing the boundaries in your glazing business, we'd love for you to join us for one of our next events...

send an email to lauren.doyle@businesspilot.co.uk to get on the invite list.