

Mobile Manufacturing Delivers Convenience to IG Suppliers and Consumers

>> Inst-I-Glass makes house calls with proprietary glass fabricating fleet

The imaginary crowd waits in anticipation as little Billy steps into the batters' box, the pitcher winds up and the fast ball whizzes toward the plate – Billy makes contact – going, going gone – and straight through his parents' bay window. As Billy makes his victory lap, his parents know they can't just run to the hardware store and buy replacement glass for the window. So, what do they do next?

Typically they make a phone call to their window dealer or local glass supplier, who then schedules a time for a representative to visit the house, assess the situation and make measurements. The representative then goes back, enters the order, which is then processed, manufactured and shipped. The entire process takes weeks and a boarded up reminder of Billy's grand slam decorates the family's great room.

Had Billy's parents called Inst-I-Glass immediately, they could have had their replacement IG in one service call within 24- to 48-hours – saving weeks of waiting.

Louisville, Kentucky-based Inst-I-Glass was founded on a slogan: Deliver the best product on the market, faster than any other provider, and at a competitive price. Around that slogan they built a process, and around that process they built a company.

Today, Inst-I-Glass operates in Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Virginia and Tennessee, making house calls with its proprietary fleet of mobile manufacturing trucks designed to enable the fabrication of high-quality IG right on the consumer's doorstep.

"Customer satisfaction is the most important factor," said Larry "Butch" Parrella, Inst-I-Glass founder and CEO. "That means fabricating the best product available onsite and same day – all at a reasonable price. This includes using only the best materials for performance and durability, especially Super Spacer from Edgetech."

Each Inst-I-Glass truck is a self-sufficient IG manufacturing facility in which technicians can build replacements for both residential and commercial clients on the spot and in a variety of settings.

"We are ready to roll and to be productive in the middle of the night after a break-in, when the power is out, or if a homeowner can't close the sale of their house until seal failures are dealt with," Parrella said. "We build relationships because of our ability to act and act fast – word of mouth and referrals are the best marketing."

Word travels fast as Inst-I-Glass and its technologies have become a go-to resource for consumers, real estate agents and property managers – but it doesn't stop there. Inst-I-Glass has also made a name for itself among IG manufacturers and dealers.

Why IG manufacturers should get to know Inst-I-Glass

"The idea for Inst-I-Glass came from two sides of the same problem – the first was the consumer side," Parrella said. "The flipside was what this business could mean to manufacturers who are faced with the challenges and costs of servicing their own warranties. Our mobile manufacturing delivers a unique benefit to this market."

According to JD Power and Associates 2009 Windows and Patio Doors Satisfaction Study, the overall satisfaction with the industry has dropped and the importance of warranties has risen. To help offset costs and time associated with servicing warranty claims, manufacturers are turning to Inst-I-Glass as an outsourcing provider. The company estimates that each seal failure could cost the manufacturer as much as \$400, sometimes more depending upon its complexity.

According to Parrella, "Most manufacturers find it difficult to provide a reliable assessment of hidden costs because they infringe on so

many aspects of their businesses. The manufacturer that chooses to outsource warranty services to Inst-I-Glass can more easily identify and control costs, which not only saves money and increases efficiency, but also improves the consumer's perception of the level of the manufacturer."

Additionally, outsourcing can relieve the burden of warranty services, enabling manufacturers and dealers to focus on their core business – making new windows and doors – instead of diverting the line to produce replacement glass to fulfill warranty obligations.

Currently, about one-third of Inst-I-Glass's business is warranty repair for manufacturers and window dealers. Outsourcing agreements are varied depending on the manufacturer's needs. One agreement might be on an as-needed basis, while others will provide extensive work orders on an ongoing basis.

And, Parrella clarified that Inst-I-Glass does not sell, distribute or install windows and doors.

"We are replacement glass fabricators and installers that provide the original manufacturer with professional, courteous, uniformed installers who are dedicated to providing excellent customer service," Parrella said. "Our relationship with manufacturers is mutually beneficial, so it is important to us that they are satisfied with our services. Our objectives are to enhance the manufacturer's reputation with a world-class warranty service program, control costs and provide their clients with the fastest turnaround possible."

There are a number of manufacturers that have been so satisfied with their Inst-I-Glass outsourcing agreements that they are giving consideration to taking it a step further by starting their own franchises.



Inst-I-Glass franchising: an option for some manufacturers

While each seal failure might cost in excess of \$400 to repair, that number increases dramatically if things don't go as planned along the way.

"The customer might provide incorrect information; the plant might make Low-e instead of clear glass, grids might be installed when they should have been left out; or the unit might break during transportation or installation," Parrella said. "Not only does the process start again, but it starts with an unhappy customer."

With ownership of an Inst-I-Glass franchise, a manufacturer will receive a three-fold benefit:

- Control over the warranty service and costs
- Increased customer satisfaction with the improved response time
- A new source of revenue generated from non-warranty work within the franchisee's designated market area

"Inst-I-Glass isn't dependent upon renting or owning a brick-and-mortar facility. This is a great advantage because launching new operations is so streamlined with no site studies, no build-out and no rental of prime real estate. This is a turnkey process, from the truck and industry connections to the advertising and operational support Inst-I-Glass provides," Parrella said.

Interest in franchising is high in North America, and the company is also laying the groundwork for European operations. A typical start-up program includes the manufacturing truck, tools and equipment, glass and other raw materials, training and the technology needed to ensure the success of the franchise.

Production, safety and quality control in a truck? Really?

To most, it is difficult to fathom that an entire production facility can fit into one of Inst-I-Glass's mobile manufacturing trucks. How does one ensure the quality of product and safety of technicians manufacturing IG in the field?

The simple answer is safety and productivity go hand-in-hand in any business. Because Inst-I-Glass trucks are essentially facilities on wheels, the company mandates stringent quality and safety guidelines that must be followed by technicians.

"At the most basic level, quality comes down to the professionalism of the

individual glass technician and the customer," Parrella said. "When the job is complete, the customer has inspected and accepted the new glass and the installation. One of our biggest sources of leads is referrals from previous customers."

Parrella continued, "Edgetech's Super Spacer is important to our quality. With its ease-of-use in the field, we are able to create a top-quality piece of glass. Our business isn't based on volume – it's based on taking the time to do each unit right."

Inst-I-Glass used Super Spacer on its trucks from day one and it is used in every unit the company fabricates.

"The quality of Super Spacer is vital to Inst-I-Glass. No other spacer comes close to providing the performance and durability of Super Spacer, and that quality is what we want to represent our company to our customers. The product plays a role in every aspect of customer satisfaction – the performance and ease-of-use enables our quick turnaround, our warranty and our ability to stay mobile. All of these factors help drive costs down and keep profits up."

The company also touts the use of double strength rather than single strength glass, and a dual-seal design for both double- and triple-pane units. These factors give the company confidence to offer a 10-year standard warranty on its units, as well as a 20-year option.

Ready to play ball?

It is clear that the Inst-I-Glass concept is filling a need for consumers, manufacturers and dealers with its "call and install" process.

Needless to say, with Inst-I-Glass at the ready, Billy's parents can cross their fingers that he hits it out of the park. The time savings, cost savings and convenience are revolutionizing the way the world looks at glass breakage and seal failure.

To learn more about Inst-I-Glass warranty outsourcing programs or franchise opportunities, e-mail franchise@instiglass.com or call 877-70-INSTI. 

Radiant Glass: A New Heating Alternative

>> Busick Insulated Glass steps outside the box with Power*e™ glass by Radiant Glass

A well-made insulating glass window will block heat from passing through to provide energy-efficiency and comfort. But what if the window acted as a heat-source, too? Unconventional? Yes. Impossible? Absolutely not.

Denver, Colorado-based Radiant Glass Industries (RGI) and its sister company Busick Insulated Glass have taken this idea and turned it into an energy-saving reality. Led by general manager Mike Tibbitts and plant manager Gino Figurelli, the companies are creating windows that far exceed all energy efficiency regulations with the patented Power*e™ Glass that not only blocks heat transfer, but also contributes to warmth and comfort.

"Traditionally, windows have been responsible for the greatest amount of energy loss in buildings causing high energy costs and discomfort due to drafts," Tibbitts said. "Power*e Glass solves this problem with safe, low voltage DC power that warms the entire inside glass pane, while insulating the space from outside elements."

According to third-party testing, Power*e Glass uses up to 40 percent less power than conventional heating systems and is practically 100 percent efficient because of its combined insulating value and radiant-heating capabilities. As a result, according to www.rgiglass.com, Power*e Glass:

- Eliminates or reduces the size and need for other heating systems
- Improves comfort by increasing the radiant heat in the interior space
- Enables lower room air temperature without losing comfort
- Insulates the interior against outside heat during warmer months
- Virtually eliminates condensation and fogging

"By touching the glass pane, you can feel the warmth of the thermal barrier created by Power*e; however, the electric current flows safely and invisibly," Tibbitts said. "But, at its core, Power*e is a proven double-paned insulating glass unit that can be washed and treated just like ordinary windows."

High-performance to the core
RGI's sister company Busick Insulated Glass was opened by Steve Busick in 1989 with the mission of providing high-end IG and specialty designs. Today, the company continues this mission, specializing in low-e glass, shapes and grids.

Known for quality and service throughout the Rocky Mountain region, Busick uses Edgetech's Super Spacer® in all units fabricated with Power*e.

"We originally used Super Spacer for specialty shapes because of its

flexibility," Figurelli said. "We quickly began seeing its many other benefits. There's no cut-off waste and its all-foam, dual-seal design provides exceptional energy efficiency." Figurelli continued, "In 1999 we began using Super Spacer in most of our units and saw a dramatic reduction in seal failures. So much, in fact, that we offer a 20-year warranty on all products made with Super Spacer, rather than our standard 10-year warranty. We are that confident in the product."

According to Tibbitts, the company's founder Steve Busick is highly focused on green products. "Power*e windows made with Super Spacer are easily the most efficient and durable windows available and we are always looking for ways to further improve efficiencies," Tibbitts said. "Homeowners and businesses can expect significant energy savings."

A case study in comfort: the Campbell residence

The Keystone ski area is one of Colorado's most picturesque locales, attracting droves of snowmobilers and skiers each year.

In 2007, one of Keystone's residents lost her original home in a fire. Local companies, including Busick, immediately came together to help her rebuild the "Campbell Residence."



"Gas is not available in the area, so electric heating has been in the only option," Figurelli said. "To help reduce heating costs, the home was designed to be heated solely by our Power*e windows."

The 2,800 square-foot home has 33 windows, 19 of which are Power*e. The windows contain temperature sensors and are controlled by a thermostat.

"It's what we call an intelligent technology," Figurelli said. "Even in the coldest months heating bills are generally below \$100 per month. The homeowner is so happy with the saving and the comfort of Power*e. She owns a restaurant and is considering adding Power*e to augment her existing heat source there. It's a versatile product that can be used in both residential and architectural applications."

RGI works with developers, architects, engineers, contractors, glazing companies and other specialists to produce and install Power*e products suited for each application. For more information, visit www.rgiglass.com or www.busickig.com. 