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Freefoam push the boundaries with industry leading GUARANTEES

As 2010 drew to a freezing close Freefoam played its part in warming the hearts of its customers by announcing two new ground breaking guarantees for white roofline products.

- A new extended, transferable 30 year guarantee on white roofline, cladding and rainwater.
- An increase in the Freefoam standard guarantee on white products from 10 years to 20 years.

Aidan Harte, Managing Director, explains the logic.

"Having had many years of trouble free performance in all weathers from Scotland to the South of France with our lead free formulations, our proprietary COLORMAX® technology and our extra TiO2 UV protection, we felt that now is the time to increase our Guarantee and give our customers a real competitive advantage in today's tough marketplace."

Unique Product Guarantees

Product Guarantees have become an essential part of selling. Consumers now choose products that, whilst giving value for money on the day of purchase, also show a long term return on investment and offer true peace of mind.

Many manufacturers are using guarantees to add value to a purchase - a trend illustrated by Vauxhall's recent announcement to give a 'life time' guarantee on its cars.

Freefoam also appreciate the value a unique guarantee can add so we are now passing these benefits on to you. Freefoam stockists will be able to sell a superior product that leads the way in longevity, performance and

stability. Freefoam installers will be the only ones able to offer the complete roofline solution giving home owners roofline protection for the next 30 years.

Pushing the boundaries

PVC formulations have historically changed and improved over time and we are committed to pushing the boundaries of development to bring you the latest technology and most advanced products. While the guarantee on coloured and foiled product will stay at 10 years as we build up the performance record it is our intention, as we announced in January 2010, to revise this upwards as soon as the evidence enables us to do so.

In the meantime, we would like to congratulate Swish Building Products on their membership of the serious guarantee club. It can be no coincidence that they also use tin based formulations.



Freefoam launch new gallows bracket

Freefoam announce the introduction of gallows brackets to their range of PVC building products - a decorative architectural bracket manufactured from tough High Impact Polystyrene offering the look, feel and weight of finely crafted timber but without the maintenance concerns.

A load bearing durable product ideal for use under canopies, bay and oriel windows. The brackets are available in three sizes, 375mm x 300mm, 565mm x 400mm 750mm x 600mm and two styles - straight and decorative.

The Freefoam gallows bracket comes with a number of major benefits - it's easy to install, has high weight loading capabilities and a 10 year guarantee. Coupled with the use of recycled materials in the production process it offers a really low maintenance sustainable solution.

For more information and samples call us on 01604 591110 or email marketing@freefoam.com



Freefoam Plastics sponsors DGCOS Conference

Towards the end of 2010 we were invited to sponsor the DGCOS Conference at the Ricoh Arena.

Headed up as,

"A mission to improve the Industry's reputation"

We felt it was an event not to be missed, so we packed up our exhibition stand, and along with some of our customers we arrived at the Ricoh Arena with open minds.

The decision to be a sponsor was a relatively straightforward matter as we share many of the aims, ideals and objectives of the DGCOS.

The event, hosted by Nick Ross, was well supported despite the M6 and M5 doing their best to prevent people attending.

The message was clear; here is a scheme that surpasses all other trade association schemes.



At its heart are the needs of the consumer with its deposit guarantee and warranty protection but it also offers the Installer support through its free mediation service and lead generation activities including TV and local radio campaigns.

The scheme will not be for everyone, it has teeth, with a qualifying procedure that while being rigid sees a 60% pass rate.

Membership is clearly not a given.

We will be having further discussions with the DGCOS during 2011 to ensure that our customers are kept at the forefront as the scheme develops.

In the meantime, if you want further details contact the DGCOS on

01257 235820 or visit www.dgcOS.org.uk



Central Roofline Systems Ltd top the Freefoam 'League Table'

It's results time here at Freefoam and we're pleased to announce that Central Roofline Systems Ltd is the leading registered installer in the UK this year. It's a great achievement in what has been a difficult year so it's congratulations all round to Sean Rogers, Dave Longden and teams. Central Roofline Systems Ltd is a leading Freefoam stockist of roofline and related building products operating out of Worcester serving the surrounding counties with 5 teams of fitters. Sean Rogers, Managing Director explained "We are delighted to be the foremost installer of Freefoam products in the UK. We use the Freefoam Guarantee as a major part of our service offering and find it reassures customers to know that the products we are fitting are covered for 30 years."

Freefoam launched its registered installer scheme in 2002 and it continues to be a huge success as more installers become aware of the benefits that becoming a Freefoam Registered Installer can offer.

The scheme is a great sales tool for installers as it allows them to issue 30-year extended guarantees on installations where Freefoam products have been used.

To find out more about the Freefoam Guarantee Scheme call 01604 591110 or log on to www.freefoam.com/guarantee



Sean Rogers and Dave Longden

The Toughest Yet

Freefoam UK is preparing its team for the toughest year yet.

Yes, Happy New Year!

Welcome back to the fun.

We believe 2011 will be one of the toughest, most eventful years our industry has known in recent times.

The industry will certainly be facing some testing and very interesting challenges in the coming year. It's not a new situation. We've all been in a battle over one thing or another since the moment Lehman Brothers went down, on 15 September 2008, and almost brought the world's financial markets down with them.

The business landscape changed for us all that day. Everybody seemed to gulp, and we've all had to raise our game ever since. We've had to become more efficient and tuned to react faster to potential challenges and opportunities.

In roofline the battles over recent years have predominantly been about market share and they've been fought out with the weapons of choice being service, price, innovation, sustainability and establishing our greener credentials. The backdrop to these battles has been persistently high raw material prices, and a sterile debate about stabilisers with some members of the old guard insisting stridently that their way is the only way.

Most importantly, we all knew who was a manufacturer, and who was a stockist.

Or at least, we believed we did. Is the game about to change forever?

Last autumn there was a seemingly minor change in direction by one of the leading roofline manufacturers. In fact it might not have registered at all given the lack of publicity surrounding the event. But like some of the triggers for the financial crisis apparently small events often lead to something much

bigger. From little acorns, oak trees grow.

This minor event has brought Vertical Integration back into focus for us all. Vertical integration is a clumsy term for manufacturers owning the stockists who distribute and sell their products. Most people agree that the ideal state of affairs for installers and the end customer is when manufacturers and stockists stick to what they are good at, thus ensuring that installers get the benefit of an open competitive market.

In roofline, a number of manufacturers, Eurocell in particular, abandoned the idea of a clear separation of roles and opted for owned distribution.

It's not a policy that Freefoam has had much time for. We see it as having your cake and eating it, or trying to ride two horses with one backside, as some would say

So, if it isn't a new issue, why are we raising it now?

For obvious reasons, vertical integration in the supply chain has always been an emotive issue.

We have admired from afar the stoic way in which some stockists have successfully navigated their way through the potential minefield of competing with their supplier. Some have achieved a satisfying and rewarding co-dependency, and have yet to suffer the paranoia of wondering what might happen when contracts are really scarce, or when further acquisitions are added to 'own' distribution. Can stockists rely on their supplier treating them on a par with their suppliers' internal distribution outlet?

Many independent stockists are faced with the realisation that their supplier is either competing, or prepared to compete with them for their customers on price and multi-branding to secure market share. In a price sensitive market place, who's going to win? At what point - 30, 40, 50, 80

branches - does an owned distribution chain count as competition for independent stockists?

How acceptable is it that their margins are dictated by their supplier's actions? Their margins might be under intense pressure now, but they could get worse.

What if a multi-branded, vertically integrated manufacturer restricted the supply of its premium brand (a premium brand that has built its reputation and position on the back of their stockists' loyal toil and honest commitment) to 'internal' distribution outlets only?

As if the coming year wasn't going to be tough enough with all the challenges ahead, for some stockists a new weapon is being used in the battle for Market share and it's the strength of your supply chain. Some stockists will be asked the question by their customers how confident are you in your ability to maintain supply of product compared to your suppliers own internal distribution channel.

At what point in this game of Russian roulette would independent stockists be justified in asking what's in it for them?

Colin St John
General Manager Freefoam UK



Are you confused about how to set up a website?

Websites are an essential part of any business and while everyone agrees that it's useful to have one it's difficult to know where to start. We've noticed an increase in the number of you setting up websites so please find below our hints and tips to make sure your site is really working for you.

1. Decide what you want your website to achieve.

It might seem obvious, but think about what you want people to do when they visit your site and focus content on this at all times. In the strange world of marketing we call this a "call to action" and it should determine all aspects of your site. One example of your call to action might be "to sell roofline products".

2. Make a plan.

Building a website is like constructing a building and we all know that means producing a plan. Taking the building analogy a bit further a good website will have

- Strong foundations
- Plenty of room for all the things you want to keep
- Be easy to find your way around

Having a plan will be useful if you are building the site yourself and invaluable if someone else is doing it for you. It will make sure you get the site you need.

3. Develop a list of key words and phrases that relate to your product or service.

Use this list to incorporate the words and phrases into the titles, headers and text of your site which will help increase your chances of being found by search engines such as Google or Yahoo! This technique is called Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and while not quite the holy grail is the backbone of a successful site.

4. Grab your visitor's attention.

The internet is an incredibly quick way of finding information and users make their mind up about a site almost immediately. You have about 8 - 10 seconds to grab their attention. Use the home page to present your products or service as clearly and concisely as possible. If you're selling items build an area on the home page for visitors to start buying straight away.

5. A website isn't just for Christmas, it's for life!

Remember, like a house, your lovely new website needs maintaining. Respond to web enquiries promptly, make sure information is up to date and remove anything that is no longer needed.

FREE Freefoam disc

We want to make it easy for you to set up a website so have produced a CD with all Freefoam product images and brand logos that you will need. Contact marketing@freefoam.com or call Louise on 01604 683864 for a copy.



Strata Homes use Freefoam Colormax range to create a contemporary look

Strata Homes, based in Doncaster, South Yorkshire are passionate about design and quality and put these standards at the heart of every development.

Always keen to drive innovation and embrace new products the technical and design team like to push the boundaries of specification to improve all aspects of their homes. Strata felt that the housing market, whilst putting a lot of creativity into home interiors, often overlooked the exterior of properties. They were keen to build on the developments in coloured windows and create a contemporary look without losing the traditional elements of home design.

It was this progressive ethos that led Strata Homes to choose coloured roofline products for the 'Colours' site at Wath upon Dearne, near Barnsley. They specified both Magnum Square Leg Fascia and General Purpose Board in black from the Freefoam Colormax range.

Andrew Weaver, Managing Director explained "We chose the Freefoam Colormax range for several reasons. First and foremost the colour coordinated perfectly with the window specification. It meant we could achieve a completely new look for our properties creating a strong visual statement. Secondly the added benefits from a virtually maintenance free product and the 10 year guarantee were compelling justifications for our decision. The product is innovative and that's something we hold in high regard at Strata"

Strata Homes are supplied through national Freefoam stockist Highline Building Plastics. Sefa Memetovic, Director summarised "Highline Building Plastics see the sales of coloured roofline products dramatically increasing over the next few years, not just for new development, but for the replacement of either timber products or white PVC where customers want to create a more individual look. Our partnership with Strata has given us a strong platform from which to develop further business using the Colormax range"



Working at height safely

Everyone knows how to use a ladder, you're probably doing it everyday ... BUT did you know every year 12 people a year die at work falling from ladders?

We want to make sure it doesn't happen to you.

Here's some guidelines, as recommended by the Health & Safety Executive, on using ladders so that you stay safe.

BEFORE USE

1. Think about yourself first: Am I fit to work at height?
2. Think about the condition of your ladder. It should have
 - Both feet firmly attached and with a good tread
 - Clean rungs
 - Undamaged stiles (the side pieces that the rungs are attached to)
 - Secure fastenings when extended
3. Think about the position of your ladder. It should
 - Be at an angle of 75° - one unit out for every four units up
 - Not move at the bottom
 - Be resting on a strong upper point (not guttering of a window)
 - Be positioned so that the rungs are horizontal
4. Think about the surface. It should be
 - Firm
 - Level
 - Clear
 - Dry
 - Not slippery

DURING USE

- Only work on a ladder for a maximum of 15 - 30 minutes
- Only carry light materials and tools (up to 10kg)
- Always grip the ladder when climbing
- Do not over-reach - make sure your belt buckle stays within the stiles
- Keep both feet on the same rung or step throughout the task
- Do not work off the top three rungs - leaving you room for a handhold
- Try to keep three points of contact with the ladder



Serving You Right

Perhaps an overused phrase by the 'marketing speak' people but a very real aim for the customer focussed team at Freefoam.

"Customer focused, it rolls off the tongue far too easily" comments Colin St John, General Manager, Freefoam Plastics (UK) Limited.

He recalls that many years ago Unipart once had a slogan

"The answer's yes, now what's the question"

and cringes at the consequences of delivering on such a lofty promise. But he respects the part it played in forming the Freefoam service promise:

"If it can be done we'll do it".

And on that basis there isn't a single process or guideline that's above being challenged in a bid to meet our customers' needs. Sometimes we can't quite reach the heights but it's not for the want of trying.

And our Customers respect that.

"Bloomin Brilliant"

John Aston, Jones Windows Systems,
St Helens

One of our largest and most demanding customers recently commented,

"You have the best service in the industry; your team will always push the extra mile for us".

"Was a perfect delivery!, an early one and everything was there"

Claire Boden, National Plastics, Beaconsfield

When your customers are telling you 'you've got it right' as well as being deeply satisfying, it acts as a spur to drive the bar higher.

At Freefoam we consider every delivery to be a moment of truth, a judgement of how we're doing. As many of you will know we actively seek feedback via daily follow up phone calls.

"Absolutely fine again, the deliveries are always good, never any problems"

Glen Bellamy, Morton & Jones, Wrexham

We value your support by engaging in the call with us, and we find your comments of great value to our team and in some cases truly inspirational.

85% of our delivery follow up phone calls resulted in positive feedback, and we are 101% committed to building on that success in 2011.



New Woodgrain colour swatch

Our woodgrain range has always been popular and we are now pleased to announce the introduction of a new woodgrain swatch. As the colour specialists we are aware of the market developments in coloured window profiles and want to make it easier for you to match or contrast our boards and window trims.

Samples of the foils from the whole range of Mahogany, Rosewood, Light Oak, Black Ash and White are now available in a handy swatch to show customers.

For more information or to request woodgrain swatches please call Louise on 01604 683864 or email marketing@freefoam.com.



Freefoam Wordsearch

As a bit of fun for the new year have a go at our wordsearch to find names of Freefoam products and brands. No prizes this time but look out for our next competition in the Spring 2011 edition.

A	M	O	U	L	D	I	N	G	S
R	A	N	T	I	F	F	O	S	P
C	L	A	D	D	I	N	G	E	O
H	L	F	F	O	R	T	E	X	T
I	E	R	O	O	F	S	D	A	S
T	E	E	S	T	O	R	E	M	A
R	G	E	A	N	D	D	N	R	L
A	O	F	L	F	R	E	E	O	P
V	D	L	M	E	N	E	X	L	S
E	U	O	P	L	A	S	T	O	M
B	A	W	A	M	B	A	L	C	O

Architrave
Bullnose
Cladding
Colormax
Edenex
Fortex
Freeflow
Moulding
Ogee
Plastops
Soffit

We are here to help

Stockists

We have an experienced customer service team to help with any enquiries. Please contact us Monday - Friday 8.30am - 5.30pm

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Installers

If you would like information about our products please contact your local stockist or Freefoam on 01604 591110



www.freefoam.com

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