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Best Showroom Design

Glass Concepts

SAN RAFAEL, CALIF., GLASSCONCEPTS.NET



The Glass Concepts team. [All images by Fabian Mach Photography]

There are showrooms that do a wonderful job of drawing customers in. And then there are showrooms that provide an experience that makes it hard for customers to leave.

“What Jeff Wilcox at Glass Concepts has done with his showroom is truly remarkable,” Mark Files, Loewen architectural territory manager, tells *Window & Door*. “He has transformed the standard run-of-the-mill window and door showroom into the most innovative showroom concept that I

have seen in over 30 years in the industry.”

What makes the showroom at Glass Concepts so unique, as Files puts it, is the fact that architects and builders can come in and leverage technology that no other showroom can offer, using an oversized glass projection screen. “Clients can literally become interactive with their project before they even break ground,” he continues. “They can address key issues and decisions such as sightlines, window and door heights, and so on. The architect and contractor can

show the actual size of the client’s door and window and where it fits into the space.”

Jeff Wilcox, partner of Glass Concepts, says that when the company finally got a space where they could have a showroom, all of the design considerations were about how to stay relevant in the dynamic field of architecture. “Showrooms have a tendency to get very archaic, very corporate,” he says, which is not at all what he wanted. Instead, Wilcox wanted fluidity and interactivity.



LIFE-SIZE FLUIDITY

The first concept, Wilcox says, was to design a transformable space. He and partner JonMarie Maloney looked at their space as an opportunity to host clients and entertain on a larger scale, which is difficult to do in a crowded showroom.

"One of the things you notice is that my displays are like mannequins," he says. "I wanted displays that you literally could just dress up differently and, as things change, I could just pop in different items, like changing clothes on a mannequin."

The "mannequins" also had to be moveable. "With a little power jack, we can move the mannequins around, wherever we wanted to push them." This fluid nature came from the idea they could put 100 people in the showroom for the screen if necessary.

And this brings up the second innovation—the infamous screen. The company can project customers' plans on a "design wall," a 15-foot by 10-foot piece of StarGlas 60—a high-tech projection system—installed with a rear HD projector. "It also

allows clients to stand in front of the wall to get a feel for their design in full scale. This has given the architects and designers a tool that they have never had before," says Wilcox. "Add in the Lutron shades, climate controls and video with surround sound, and Glass Concepts becomes not just a window and door showroom, but a place where people just want to hang out... and maybe catch a Warriors game on the design/wall screen as well."

Clients can see how windows and doors will fit over a tub, or in a great

The focal point of the showroom is a 15 by 10 foot piece of StarGlas 60 that the company uses to render window and door options to-scale.



room, for example. And, if changes need to be made, they can now be addressed, changed and/or modified at the beginning stages of the project and not during construction where it can be extremely costly and sometimes difficult to do at all.

But does that justify the enormous expense of that piece of glass? Wilcox was able to convince his partner so. “We’re in the range where we’re selling pure lifestyle,” he says. “This is a different experience, and if you don’t understand the organic, the experience of what you’re working through, you won’t get the sale.”

Buz Ashbaugh, the company’s Weather Shield rep, thinks so, too. “It’s brilliant,” he says, clarifying that it’s “*expensive*, but brilliant. The experience really relays the concept of what customers are looking at on a tiny blueprint and gets them into the decision-making process.”

DESKTOP SHOWROOM

What else is so unique about Glass Concepts’ approach to showroom design is accessibility. Doors are open to literally anyone across the globe at any time thanks to the company’s virtual showroom.

Using Google 360 and Dashboard software, Wilcox and Maloney were able to create an interactive online experience. Google 360 leads visitors through the doors, where they can explore the “space” with their mouse, the same way they can explore streets on Google Maps. Dashboard comes in to provide more information on specific products. Little blue icons are planted all around various places in the virtual showroom. When users click the icons, a pop up appears that can take them to more information or even videos of each product.

What Wilcox finds even more phenom-

enal than the virtual showroom is the analytics for it, which show him what people are actually looking at (clicking on) in the showroom. “It’s unbelievable,” he says. Analytics not only show trend lines—i.e., if people are clicking on a lot of sliding glass doors—but also how long visitors are staying in the showroom. “We’ve had over 500 people since January, when we went live,” Wilcox reports. “The analytics show that people are spending about six minutes per visit, which, on a website, is a tremendous amount of time.”

It’s easy to linger in either the physical space or the virtual showroom to be sure. Beyond the technology, what is apparent about Glass Concepts is that, as Ashbaugh puts it, “They are real leaders. They’re very different in the industry. All we can do out here is build trust and credibility. These people really do a good job of it.”

All of the displays in the showroom are easily moved with a power jack. This not only allows the space to be reconfigured, but the displays can also be transported to tradeshow.



“*Doors are open* to literally anyone across the globe at any time thanks to the company’s virtual showroom.”

The company’s virtual showroom leverages Google’s 360 platform to lead visitors through the space. Popups display more information about certain lines, or even display videos about the products on the screen.

