



Universal Wood Products: Moulding the Future

Universal Wood Products Ltd (UWP) have been specialist manufacturers of primed MDF mouldings for over 20 years. We invited Martin Cossington to talk us through the fascinating history of this innovative firm and how it came to achieve the success it enjoys today.

UWP business was formed over 100 years ago as a trading division of Swedish Match who owned many timber and allied companies. The firm was one of the first businesses to act as agents on behalf of the first European producers of MDF such as Intamasa of Spain and several European MDF moulding producers in the 70's and 80's, before the business moved from importation into manufacturing in the 1990's. Martin outlines the firm's service offering and discusses how the company works to ensure clients receive the very best products which meet their needs when they work with his firm.

"Here at UWP we have been supplying to our wide and diverse customer base built over the previous 30 years. Our clients include the major merchant groups, independent timber merchants and major joinery contractors. For these discerning

clients we produce on two main production lines and a dedicated 'made to order' line. We specialise in short run made to order requirements and immediate availability on standard common profiles and sizes.

"In addition, we often deal directly with many Architect and Interior Design practices whose clients are always looking to diversify and incorporate new design and contemporary themes in their interiors, or are attempting to match an existing profile with a modern substrate ie MR MDF. For these client we are able to assist by offering ideas on previous profile patterns, thickness options and ensure the architect or specifier is fully aware of the limitations of the material. We are also able to have TCT cutters produced to meet specific architects' drawings or to match a specific profile sample that the client may already have.

"Our approach revolves around always expressing the inherent benefits of using high quality

moisture resistant MDF profiles. This commitment to educating our clients and providing them with the highest possible quality has led us to secure high profile projects through our trading partners. These have included The Shard, The British Library and the Hilton Hotel Wembley."

Overall Martin is excited for the future, which will provide UWP with many invigorating opportunities to build upon its current success.

"Moving forward there will be some significant changes within our particular industry which will provide our firm with some great opportunities. With the major producers of primed MDF profiles purchasing other producers for market share and greater capacity in production, W Howard Ltd based in Manchester have recently purchased Balcas moulding business in Ireland and SAM of Northern Ireland purchasing Select Timber Ltd. New production lines for Arbor Forest Products Ltd also add further capacity to the market.

"With all of these changes within our sector and extra capacity coming on stream we are excited and look to 2017 eagerly as we can already anticipate a greater call for the service that we provide, as our service meets the ever changing dynamics and site requirements of tomorrows second fix market. In addition, the need to support both the timber trade sector and the environmental groups that police our industry whether that be the FSC or the PEFC auditing bodies will be a great new challenge for our firm.

"Despite the various social, political and economic challenges faced by our industry and others over the coming months and years, fundamentally, the joinery and construction sector that we all rely upon is in great shape. I am a firm believer in not worrying too much about how hard or soft our Brexit landing is, as ultimately we shall continue to be of service and continue to provide our customers with the products they need."

