

# THERE'S STEEL A CHANCE

Steel offers an opportunity for companies to take advantage of current market conditions.

"The PVC-U market tends to be dominated by a shrinking number of major players who fabricate and install. Those not into fabrication may well be suffering as the market is going through something of a tough time at present," says Crittall Windows managing director, John Pyatt.

According to John, there are a number of factors that are contributing to this harsher marketing climate. See-sawing petrol prices, a slowing down of the market in areas such as conservatories, and growing concerns about the sustainability credentials of PVC-U — especially where public sector contracts are involved — have all contributed to a trimming of margins.

On the other hand however, steel windows are enjoying a resurgence, especially in parts of the country where they were used in considerable volumes between the 1930s and 1960s.



"We believe that if the right firm is looking to diversify into the steel market, they will be able to do very well. There's a growing interest in steel replacement windows where homeowners and landlords want to retain the character and value of a property. A full-service company, measuring up, supplying and installing, could find attractive margins if it served an area where there was a preponderance of properties where steel was specified originally," says John.

Modern steel windows offer the same high level of aesthetic appeal as those produced in the past, and are available as like-for-like replicas, but with many significant advantages. Modern steel windows are designed to meet the requirements of the revised Part L of the Building Regulations, they are durable, they will not rust, maintenance is not a worry, and the modern steel window should last the life of your home.

"We have a lot to offer firms that see the potential in this product," says John.

"Crittall currently covers the country from a network of around a dozen distributors, so any PVC-U firm showing interest would find the market place a lot less crowded."

Crittall also offers full marketing support to its distributors with a new range of customer-driven literature, alongside a technical brochure on the requirements of revised Part L



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