

Window and Door Preferences

Quality and energy efficiency are the top factors for picking windows, while price rules when it comes to door selection

By Mike Beirne, Senior Editor

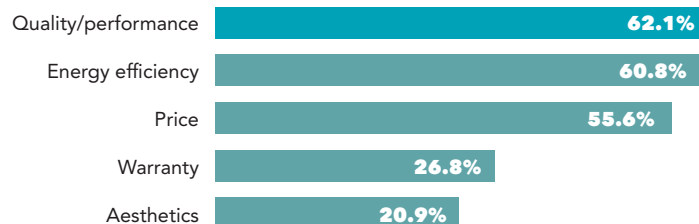
Of course, money matters to the new-home buyer. So when customers evaluate the trade-off between paying more up front for a better or best window against the potential for lower utility bills in the future, most clients opt for the standard energy-efficient selection, according to builders and architects who participated in *Professional Builder's* Window and Door survey. Almost 40 percent of respondents offer window upgrades, but just 17.4 percent said that the majority of their clients buy them, which is down from a quarter of builders who indicated—in both last year's and the 2015 survey—that they were able to sell better and best options to most of their buyers.

Almost two-thirds of builders and architects noted that they are specifying the same number of windows per home as they did three years ago. That figure ranged between 10 to 15 windows for a third of respondents and 16 to 20 for another third. Also, 34 percent of survey participants said that the average size of window units is larger compared with what they designed or installed three years ago. Picture/fixed windows have been the first or second most popular window type since moving up from the No. 3 slot in the 2013 survey.

In the door category, innovation has gone beyond the typical swing door, with pivot doors, barn doors, and multi-slide stacking doors now being available, as well as a wide variety of styles and colors. However, price is the main consideration for doors, with 71 percent of respondents picking price as the leading factor influencing door selection. More findings about window and door decision-making are in the charts that follow.

METHODOLOGY AND RESPONDENT INFORMATION: This survey was distributed between Jan. 26, 2016, and Feb. 10, 2017, to a random sample of *Professional Builder's* print and digital readers and to members of Builder Partnerships. No incentive was offered. By closing date, a total of 153 eligible readers had returned surveys. Respondent breakdown by discipline: 29.6 percent custom home builder; 19.7 percent production builder for move-up/move-down buyers; 18.4 percent diversified builder/remodeler; 13.2 percent architect/designer engaged in home building; 6.5 percent luxury production builder; 5.3 percent production builder for first-time buyers; 1.3 percent manufactured, modular, log home, or systems builder; 0.7 percent multifamily, and 5.3 percent other. Approximately 38 percent of respondents sold one to five homes in 2016, and 9 percent sold more than 100 units.

WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE CONSIDERATIONS WHEN SPECIFYING WINDOWS FOR YOUR NEW HOMES?



BASE: 153; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 WINDOWS AND DOORS SURVEY

Aesthetics cracks into the top five considerations, while last year's No. 4, "manufacturer's reputation," dropped to No. 9 behind "helps meet energy code," "availability," and "loyalty with retailer/distributor." A Maryland remodeler and home builder wrote that 90 percent of the time even affluent customers decline to pay for "name brand products such as Pella."

WHAT TYPES OF WINDOWS DO YOU SPECIFY FOR YOUR HOMES?

	ALL PROJECTS	SOME PROJECTS	DO NOT USE
Picture/fixed	26.0%	69.9%	4.0%
Single hung	27.8%	55.6%	16.7%
Double hung	26.2%	55.6%	18.3%
Casement	13.6%	71.2%	15.2%
Transom	10.4%	73.6%	16%
Multi-slide glass door (window wall)	10.2%	56.5%	33.3%
Skylight/clerestory	9.8%	62.5%	27.7%
Glider	8.7%	53.9%	37.5%
Bifold glass door	7.8%	29.1%	63.1%
Bay	4.8%	59.1%	36.2%
Arched	4.5%	76.8%	18.8%
Awning	3.9%	57.3%	38.8%
Tilt and/or turn	3.1%	36.7%	60.2%

BASE: 153; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 WINDOWS AND DOORS SURVEY

New window products are featuring narrower profiles and frames to answer the demand from consumers who want to let in more natural light and have greater connection to the outdoors. Picture windows and transoms are products that satisfy that consumer preference, while single-hung, double-hung, and casement windows round out the top five most popular window types.

[EXCLUSIVE RESEARCH]

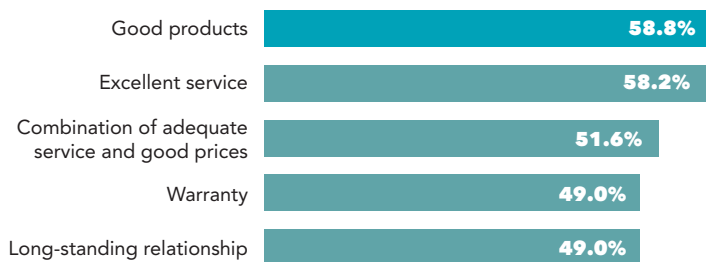
WHAT TYPES OF WINDOW FRAME MATERIALS DO YOU SPECIFY FOR YOUR HOMES?

	ALL PROJECTS	SOME PROJECTS	DO NOT USE
Vinyl	40.7%	50.7%	8.5%
Wood	11.5%	67.2%	21.3%
Aluminum	7.6%	45.7%	46.7%
Fiberglass	2.1%	45.3%	52.6%
Composite	2.2%	44.4%	53.3%
Steel	2.1%	14.9%	82.9%

BASE: 153; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 WINDOWS AND DOORS SURVEY

A Home Innovation Research Labs survey also found that vinyl is the leading material overall, though luxury homes are more likely to have wood windows. Large builders favor vinyl and aluminum frames, while smaller builders use wood and composites.

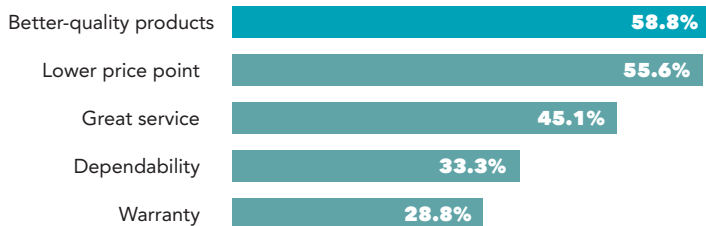
WHY DO YOU BUY FROM YOUR CURRENT WINDOW SUPPLIER?



BASE: 153; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 WINDOWS AND DOORS SURVEY

New to the top five reasons why builders chose a particular supplier are "combination of favorable service" and "relationship." Those two factors pushed out "range of products and options" and "warranty" from last year's top five.

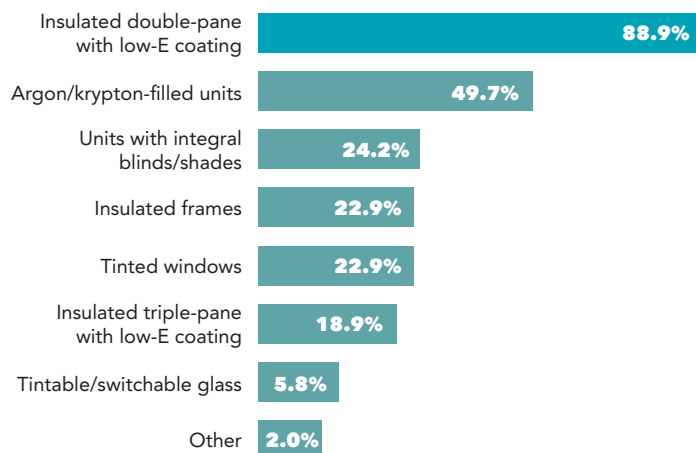
WHAT IS THE BEST WAY FOR A WINDOW SUPPLIER TO GET YOU TO SWITCH YOUR BUSINESS TO THEM?



BASE: 153; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 WINDOWS AND DOORS SURVEY

Performance and price were attributes that would get respondents to reconsider their window source. "A wider range of products and options" was pushed out of the top five.

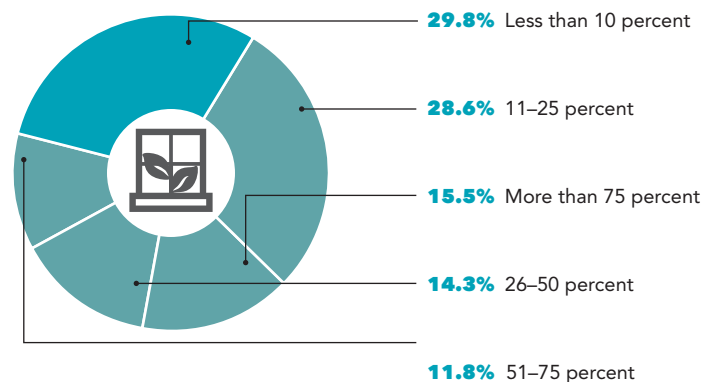
WHICH TYPE OF ENERGY-EFFICIENT WINDOW TECHNOLOGIES HAVE YOU SPECIFIED IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS?



BASE: 153; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 WINDOWS AND DOORS SURVEY

Windows with blinds or shades between the panes maintain the No. 3 spot after being as far back as No. 6 in the 2013 survey. A builder/remodeler noted that his company has a wrap process that achieves the R-value benefits of an insulated frame without having to buy prebuilt insulated windows.

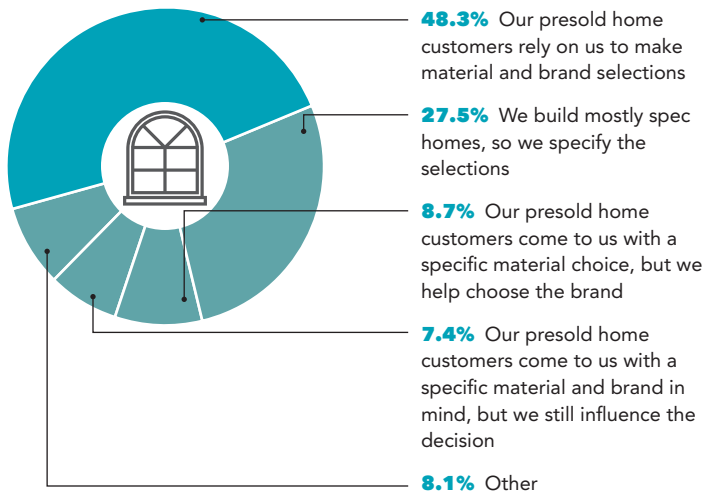
IF YOU OFFER ENERGY-EFFICIENT WINDOWS AS AN OPTIONAL UPGRADE, APPROXIMATELY WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR BUYERS CHOOSE TO UPGRADE THEIR WINDOWS?



BASE: 84; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 WINDOWS AND DOORS SURVEY

Seventy-six percent of survey respondents offer high-performance windows as a standard amenity or as a standard with options for upgrades. Almost three-quarters of builders and architects indicated that less than half of their customers buy better or best window upgrades.

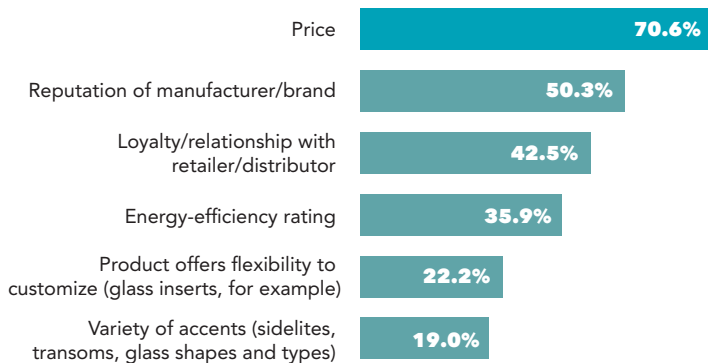
WHAT BEST DESCRIBES THE WAY YOUR WINDOWS ARE SPECIFIED AND CHOSEN FOR MOST OF YOUR PROJECTS?



BASE: 149; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 WINDOWS AND DOORS SURVEY

Builders, for the most part, pick the windows. A Midwestern architect wrote that windows are specified to achieve quality and competitive bidding. A Louisiana architect added that the windows specs are based on the firm's experience with the manufacturers and local suppliers, while a Texas architect who designs houses on both coasts noted that windstorm requirements determine the product type and manufacturer chosen.

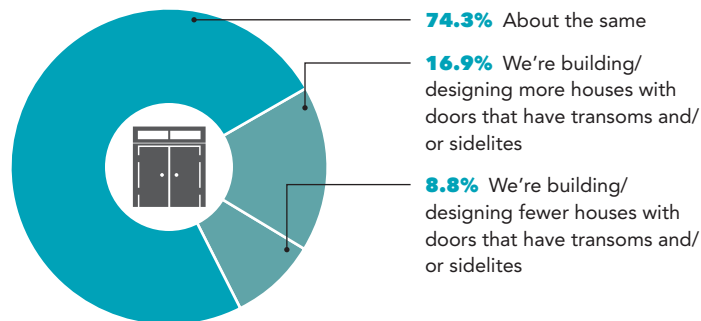
WHAT ARE YOUR TOP CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHOOSING DOOR PRODUCTS?



BASE: 153; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 WINDOWS AND DOORS SURVEY

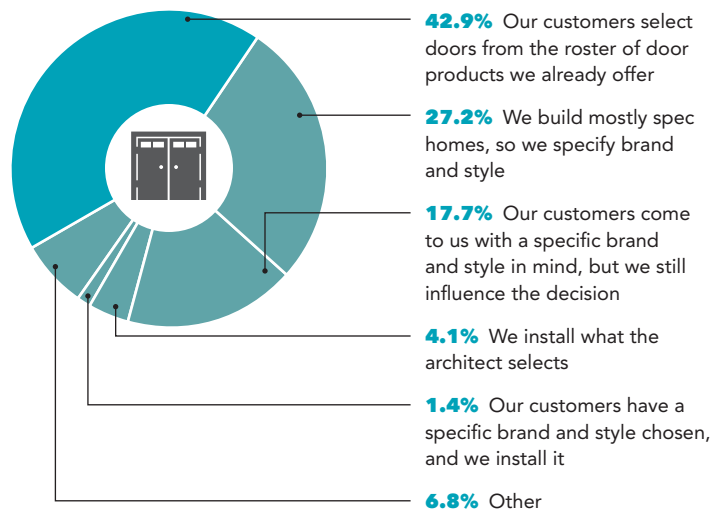
Price, by far, was the top factor in choosing doors, which is to be expected given the rising cost of materials and labor.

COMPARED WITH THREE YEARS AGO, IS YOUR COMPANY BUILDING/DESIGNING MORE OR FEWER HOMES USING DOORS WITH TRANSOMS AND SIDELITES?



BASE: 148; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 WINDOWS AND DOORS SURVEY

WHAT BEST DESCRIBES THE WAY DOORS ARE SPECIFIED AND CHOSEN FOR MOST OF YOUR PROJECTS?



BASE: 147; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 WINDOWS AND DOORS SURVEY

Builders predominantly serve as the doorkeepers, although there are variations to that role. A New England remodeler specifies the brand and the customer picks the style. A Washington custom home builder designs and specs most of the design elements "with some customer input," and a coastal region architect picks an architectural style available within the windstorm rating.