

Everything you need to know about software for timber joinery ...

Are you software savvy?

Do you know what software has to offer?

A KEY FEATURE of the timber industry which makes it stand out from other joinery manufacturing materials is the word 'bespoke'. It is amazing the number of joinery manufacturers who think that because they make 'unique' joinery that a standard software package can't deliver!

While timber joinery is more commonly made to custom sizes than not, and there is seldom a standard moulding or section size, this misconception holds joinery manufacturers back from embracing the future and finding out what the benefits of software really are.

Software can not only be used for 'bespoke' joinery but can actually improve both the design and production process of one off items. Where each item manufactured is different it is even more important to be efficient in both process and costing. Vague pricing and timing of production can jeopardise profits, while the accurate calculations required for custom joinery production can lead to costly mistakes and wastage. Software can help with all of this.

In the past 18 months CE marking for external windows and doors has been introduced in the UK and potentially increased costs for timber joinery manufacturers who need to ensure compliance for 'each' section size and type of window they produce.

These increased costs, though unpleasant, may be easier to swallow for larger joinery manufacturers but how is the smaller manufacturer supposed to cope?

Testing of each window is costly and unrealistic where no two windows are the same! The answer is software yet again.

Not only can software provide the calculations for u-values that are an essential part of the CE mark but it can also prove compli-

ance with documentation and certification that removes the need for testing and limits expense. Joinerysoft is just one such package that provides complete u-value and CE marking compliance. There are other solutions available within the industry, however these usually involve paying a fee per window.

Another advantage of software calculating the u-value at the design stage is that you can advise your end client how to comply with regulations, amending section sizes and materials where necessary. Also no matter how many windows you produce, the fee is the same.

Even if you are already winning more orders than you can cope with, improving efficiency in design and quoting can free up more time to get back into the workshop.

Software can also ensure that you accurately know your costs and avoid undercharging for jobs, protecting your profit.

Providing a professional impression is also critical these days with increased competition, so having clearly laid out quotes which include diagrams and full details of the order, makes you look good and prevents disputes later.

About the author



Alan Turner is Managing Director at Joinerysoft. He has visited over 1,500 joinery manufacturers producing timber windows & doors in the UK and overseas. He regularly attends the technical meetings at the British Woodworking Federation and the Wood Window Alliance. Joinerysoft has worked closely with British Standards Institute (bsi) to verify their thermal calculations. The company provides software for all size of joinery manufacturers including the 1 man band and those with 20+ joiners or larger providing CNC machine links with their software.

If you are already using software for design and quoting, the benefits do not have to stop there; accurate materials ordering, based on jobs won can keep stock levels to a minimum, while automatically calculated cutting lists or production worksheets can improve efficiency in the workshop, allowing joiners to get on with production and removing the risk of error.

The time savings can also improve production times, allowing you to schedule more work and further boost turnover and profits.

There are many other benefits of software, too numerous to mention. What you need to ask yourself is what is holding you back?

Fear of technology is a mental state that does not hold much water these days. With software designed specifically for the tim-

ber joinery industry available on the market you do not need to understand computers to use it, simply joinery terminology.

Is cost the issue? Time and cost savings produced by software help it to pay for itself in a very short period of time and subsequently increased profits can allow you to invest further in the business, even funding additional tooling or machinery.

Final words of advice:

1. When choosing software it is important to have a demonstration, to see how easy it is to use.
2. Speak to other users and see what customers say.
3. Invest time into the software: what you put in is what you get out.

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