



Crystal Blinds clearly a good move

Just a year ago Crystal Blinds moved to new premises. Even though it was less than a mile away from its existing premises, it has made a significant impact and now reflects the standard to which they operate.

James Nash, who now manages Crystal Retail, founded in 1999 by his father and mother Alan and Jan Nash, explains, "Our former site was in the centre of an older industrial estate, away from the main road and did not really provide the right environment to develop the company in the way we wanted to. We needed somewhere that would really highlight the differences between Crystal and our competitors"

A brand new building, situated in the recently built Axiom Business Park on the outskirts of Poole, was the perfect answer. The Axiom provides a more professional working environment than the previous site. "Even though we are restricted by local planning rules as to the size and nature of our signage, we have been able to attract considerable passing traffic and of course it is much easier to find us," says James.

In addition to a comprehensive range of shading options, Crystal also retails soft furnishing items such as curtains, bed coverings, pillows, cushions etc. to compliment the blind range. Customers relish the opportunity to have total window treatment solutions available all under one roof. The emphasis of the

showroom is distinctly style and quality with spacious displays, comfortable relaxed consulting areas and well-balanced lighting combined with a pleasant businesslike atmosphere. Cleverly, the whole space has been divided between office and showroom by large elegantly shaped plantation shutters that make a striking feature for customers as they walk in.

"Shutters are a product which we do exceptionally well and we are investing heavily in its development," says James. "We provide an excellent personal service. Shutters are the ultimate in window shading and each one is custom-built to customer's requirements. Our service is also available to other specialist retailers who may want to get into this developing market."

Further expressions of quality are reflected by the choice of suppliers. Crystal is an appointed Luxaflex premier dealer, awnings are supplied from Markilux and on the commercial side the systems and fabrics used are predominantly Silent Gliss. "We are always looking for opportunities to offer more at the top end of the market. Currently we are in advanced discussions with lighting and AV companies so we will be able to offer customers

a home management system, integrating the control of our shading products with security and home cinema," adds James.

The strong family feel has been retained. James works along side several other family members, together with eleven other employees who cover showroom sales, fitting and surveys, administration and looking after the commercial customers. A manufacturing facility caters for customers who require bespoke products and services, not available through mainstream retail outlets.

Crystal is fortunate to be in a relatively affluent area that responds well to the latest developments in home decoration. However the right decisions have to be made to service this market properly and profitably. Crystal has clearly made several of them.

