

Ireland is *how* big?

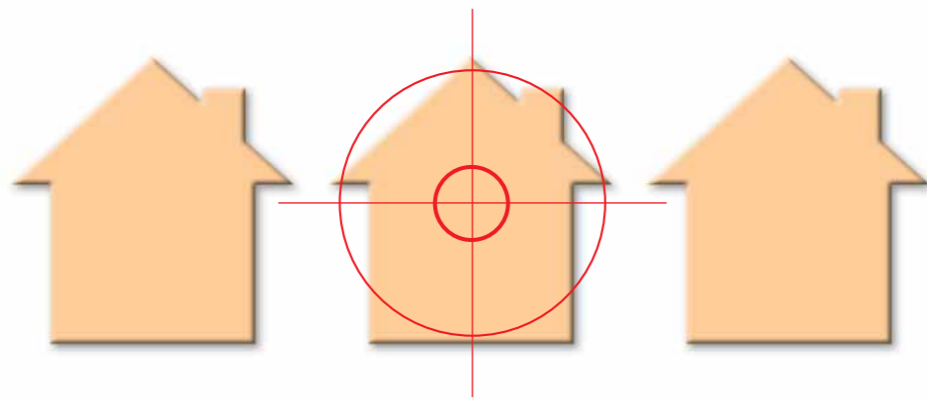
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windfall. It's an easy bet that a large proportion of that will go on improving their homes and their wealth.

Whether the housing market cools or not this year - quite likely - or those savers decide to spend rather less on home improvements than they have in previous years - perhaps - the close proximity of such a boom market must surely enter into UK sales managers' plans. But sending one or two sales reps to hire a car and knock on doors is not very productive if they don't know which doors to knock or where to find them. Those that do go on spec, discover that picking up freely available lists and locating prospects is no easy matter, which is why many return empty-handed.

Fortunately Windowbase has the answer, a database of up-to-date contacts you can use to mail or call prospects and do your research before you go. So when your reps do drop in they get a warm Irish welcome and return with a share of a fast growing market. Windowbase has over 1,100 window, door and conservatory companies to help you find your next customers in the Republic or Northern Ireland: 850 of these are in the Republic. 687 are fabricators, 948 install. 768 do conservatories, 682 use PVC, 352 aluminium and 379 use timber. All the information is there at your fingertips: names, positions, telephone numbers, addresses plus what they make and what they use. **They are busy... are you?**

House-builders



How about some real housing targets?

Our Government is always coming out with optimistic targets for house-building in both the public and private sectors. Recent reports on the house-building industry show that, while private builders are embroiled in take-over wars (which is of course, more about land banks than operational rationalisation), Social Sector housing continues to grow (and grow and grow).

As we go to press, the Government construction statistics have reported on the first month of this year: "Private house-building orders in the 12 months to January 2007 fell by 3% compared to those in the previous 12 months . . . Public Housing and Housing Association orders rose by 31% in the same 12 months compared to the previous 12 months." We are warned not to jump to too many conclusions because of "the relatively small size" of the social sector compared with the private sector.

Although gloomy noises continue to be made about the private house-building sector, no one can deny it seems that, on every small plot of land, some enterprising builder has squeezed in a few more houses with pocket handkerchief gardens, and old ramshackle larger houses are being acquired for demolition so that their larger plots

may be exploited to serve this ever-growing demand for new houses.

But that's business and, for those of us in the building materials and services industries, there are plenty of opportunities to offer our skills and wares to those active in this sector. But changes in house-builders (whether they build for the private of public sectors) continue, and that's why Windowbase continue to track both the building companies themselves - including the regional buying offices - and those in the social housing sector responsible for specifying services and materials in new-build, refurbishment and maintenance of the dwellings.

This information is available in the Windowbase Housebuilders database with some 2600 active Housebuilders - PLUS the Social Sector housing specifiers database with some 1000 housing associations, trusts, ALMOs and the remaining Local Authorities that still manage their own housing stock. Size and other information is available to help users target their markets accurately and carefully. Ask for **Data Sheet 4** for the Public sector information and **Data Sheet 10** for the builders.

Now that's what we call house-building targets! And you can truly be optimistic about them!

windowBASE®
...the sales builders

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Contacting specifiers

Busy, busy, busy

IT'S THAT TIME of the year again. There's a sense of purpose. Everyone's rushing about - places to go, people to see. Orders to be won. Production runs to be scheduled or stock to be shifted. Exhibitions to be manned, hands to be shaken. Is it like that in your office?

Or are you worried that you're going to be struggling this year? If you are, you might be one of the lucky ones, because there's more than enough guys out there, rushing about with places to go and people to see. A lot of them won't be rushing about at all. They'll be stuck on the M6, like everyone else, talking into a Blue Tooth and hoping to retrieve the situation.

"I was hoping to show you our new . . ." The new whatever-it-is that's shown in the literature, on the passenger seat. It could take



the world by storm, and everything else that every Sales Manager promises the team. Well, it isn't going to take the world by storm, if only a small proportion knows about it. Every year, there's a huge order that goes down the drain because fog causes a multiple pile-up, and

there's three hours, wasted, listening to Radio 2.

Meanwhile, thousands of maintenance teams and development managers, the length and breadth of this country, with money to burn, might be

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"You can mailshot, regularly, a few thousand specifiers, with your sales effort based in the office"

Tell me about it

Mailing labels

WE ALL WANT RESULTS, but we're not always thrilled about having to try new ways to get them. More of the same is what we like, except when "more of the same" starts producing less of the same . . . sales going down, not up. Somebody's going to have to do something, before it's too late. Somebody else, preferably.

It's okay for big companies, with their big budgets: they can try all sorts of sophisticated ideas. What one company spends on an agency, to create a magazine advert, could be as much

as your entire year's budget, so what chance do you have?

Don't be so gloomy!

All an advert does is put one message, or image, on one page. If it's a free magazine, who's to say it even gets opened - let alone read? That identical, A4-format colour image could be on thousands of desks, *this time next week* . . . for a few hundred quid.

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The success of Windowbase means that we are expanding our premises.

With effect from April 23rd, our primary contact number and address will be: **01453 845717**
7 Market Street, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire GL12 7AE, where Mandy and Abel will be pleased to help you. Our database manager, Farida, will remain in Rochdale with Mike. **More in the next Issues.**

For further information, please fill in your details and tick your area of interest below and return to:

Reader's name: _____
Company: _____
Telephone: _____
Email: _____

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FREEPOST OL5525
3 Spring Bank Lane,
Rochdale,
Lancs OL11 5ZZ

Email: info@windowbase.info
Website: www.windowbase.info

windowBASE®

Windowbase Ltd, 7 Market Street,
Wotton-under-Edge,
Gloucestershire GL12 7AE

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House-builders DLOs Specifiers Conservatories Ireland Window Companies

Busy, busy, busy

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dying to hear about the answer to their problems. Where's the sense in wasting time, money and petrol, when your message could be guaranteed to be on someone's desk in a couple of days? Instead of hopefully chasing a handful of possible leads, surely it's better to put your message in their hands, give them a couple of days, then make that follow-up phone call.

Twenty calls (on spec) a week, one or two of which might come to something, isn't as practical as ten appointments. An expensive sales stand isn't going to pay for itself unless people walk onto it. A couple of guys - the Maintenance and Development Managers of a major housing association, say - could walk past without realising there was something they should have known about. That's because they didn't receive your mailing before the show.

And what about the thousands of competitors that don't have sales stands this year? You might be one of them. Housing specifiers, with millions and millions to spend, but without time to spare, need to be kept informed of what's on the market this year. They're not mind-readers. They might be specifying a few hundred thousand items of something they don't particularly like, because you haven't told them there's something better, or cheaper.

We're not supposed to be flying away on our holidays any more (in your dreams!), so it's only a matter of time until annual mileages go under the microscope. You can mailshot, regularly, a few thousand specifiers, with your sales effort based in the office . . . or your people can be out there, being paid to listen to Wogan, while they do their bit towards climate change. It won't be long before some government agency wants to know the ratio between your emissions and your orders. Something's got to change, and it needn't cost the earth. "The Earth", that is.

Take a look - www.windowbase.info and click on Specifiers.

Value for money

Lowering the bar

LIMBO DANCING - you lean a little way back, put your head even further back, and scuffle under the bar to the music.

On the next circuit - limber up a little more, shake your arms and legs with the rhythm, and line up to get under the bar again. And so it goes on. Eventually you're in a real sweat, and decide you can't get under the bar any more, or you fall over, unable to move, because someone is more lithe, or more flexible, than you.

Occasionally, because that's how it is, someone gives you a little shove at your critical point, so that you collapse, exhausted, with nothing to say.

Limbo dancing? No - just today's competitive world. The drum beat is provided by your hoped-for customer and, each time around, your competitor lowers the bar. 2006 saw many big names related to the building industry either go under (but not under the bar) or be forced into mergers to survive.

Need it be this way?

We have two problems - there's the customer who doesn't understand the benefits you are offering, and the competitor who is unaware of the real costs. Then there's the sales forces who are really order-takers (glorified order-takers, someone said recently, but there's nothing glorified about order taking)



whose only response to a competitive price is an even lower one.

What an insult to the customer. Most companies work hard in specifying, procuring, manufacturing and delivering a product of controlled quality to the customer, to perform a given task . . . yet all this is taken for granted, and price becomes the only basis for comparison.

Are you dancin'? Are you askin'?

Windowbase was created to help our customers avoid this trap: we provide information so that individual customers, with individual needs, can be

identified, for appropriate offers of quality, performance and function to be made, at a sensible price - a price that benefits both parties, not one that leaves the supplier crippled and unable to deliver the all-important after-sales service.

It could be your own sales force that's lowering the bar for you. Someone has to remind them of the key benefits that the customers want, and tell them to convey that message. When the buyer says s/he can get something similar, but for 10% less, then's the time to use the magic words: "at least our competitor knows what his product is worth."

Tell me about it

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"Come and see us at Glassex", for example, might go unnoticed by 90% of a magazine's readership. And how much did that cost? Stuff it into an envelope, with a mailing label, and your success rate is not only higher but it costs far less.

If you need people to get the message - **right now** - all you have to do is bung it in the post. **Mailing labels are the answer. Child's play. For a little extra, you can have the follow-up phone numbers, too.**

All you're asking for is someone's attention. So was Jade Goody. In-your-face, as we've seen, isn't the way to do it. So, if the big companies, with their smart adverts that you see, every time you open a magazine, are starting to get on your nerves, just remember who won Celebrity Big Brother. A simple message, as part of a smart campaign, can get just as much attention as a pig with a mouthful of marbles - only the *right* sort of attention.

Yes, of course Windowbase specialises in data. Take a look at the website and you'll see how much we've got covered. We've always claimed to know the name of your next customer because, unless you're in the retail market, it'll be in there. Whoever you're looking to target, we have it covered. But, if you don't need a co-ordinated campaign, year after year, don't be put off by the cost of signing up for more than you need. If all you want is to get a simple

message, once or twice, across to a particular sector of the industry, mailing labels will do it for you. We know they've already done it for plenty of our customers. . . who might be your competitors. For some of them, mailshots were so successful, they came back to us and signed up for the data. We're not saying you have to, or need to. What we are saying is that all you need is one order - just *one* order - and your mailshot pays for itself. Then you decide what your next message is

going to be, to make the one-that-got-away think again.

Whether you're looking for companies in a particular part of the country, or dealing in only one sector of the market, or of only a certain size, we can provide them.

Nobody's offering you a free lunch. All we're saying is there's a range of choices between a free lunch, at the bottom, and a gourmet meal, at the top. Fast food, maybe. It's quick, it's cheap. And it might be all you need.

Bon appetit!

Conservatories - Everything you need to know

IT'S TWELVE YEARS since Windowbase launched its first product. **For the fenestration industry, it was the PVC-U fabricators database. It then expanded into window, door and conservatory installers, and the recent research into conservatory roofs has now become a separate database.**

The companies that used to make windows also made doors, and the same applied to installers of windows and doors. One field did the trick. . . but that was then.

The new Conservatory Roof Manufacturer database identifies some 2100 fabricators - rather more than was expected. Virtually all timber conservatory manufacturers make their own roofs, buying in glass, polycarbonate, ventilators, sealants, flashings and rainwater goods. These comprise about 1500 companies, though without brand names, usually.

More significant are the aluminium and PVC-U roofs, made from branded systems - 600 companies, of whom nearly 80% were able to give details of the system they used. Each company was asked for the number of roofs per week being made at the time of the interview. Some make only for their own use, some are trade fabricators, and others make their own simple roofs but buy in the more complex designs.

In response to customer feedback, and discussions about how the market is moving, here's a run-down of the changes:

- 1 **Single flat table** containing **all** data for your selection and ease of use - whether the selection is Conservatory Installers, Door Fabricators, Roof Makers or all combined. Open it as a spreadsheet in your program of choice or in Microsoft Access, with all your chosen data in one form.
- 2 **DOOR** fields (amke and/or install) now separate from windows information
- 3 **MATERIAL** field, now more specific for 'other materials' used
- 4 **OFFICE** field, to distinguish between head offices, factories and other activities
- 5 **SUPPLY ONLY** field, to cover companies that 'deal' in products but neither fabricate nor install
- 6 **BUY-IN** fields to show where fabricators buy-in some products but make others (e.g. making casement windows but buying ready-made sliders)
- 7 **LARGER** field sizes for many fields to show more information, avoiding truncation or unnecessary abbreviation.

Selling to Ireland



Ireland is *how* big?

As the Irish roars of delight died away over Dublin, and the England Rugby team limped home to reflect on one of its biggest defeats to Ireland of all time, it was Ireland's hour, without a doubt.

On the rugby field and off it, Ireland has been setting new records. In barely a generation, Ireland has transformed itself into one of the world's strongest performing economies. Low corporate taxes, EU assistance from Brussels and the influx of large pharmaceutical, computer software and hardware

companies, many from the US, and the growth of a significant financial centre has powered the economy over the past fifteen years or more. Planes that once transported generations of Irish to find work elsewhere have brought many back to fuel the growth of the Celtic Tiger, and now bring large numbers of workers from Eastern Europe and other countries to keep the wheels of commerce turning.

According to the Bank of Ireland, Ireland is now second only to Japan in net wealth per head of population, having increased fourfold in the ten years to 2005, ahead of the UK and US, Germany, France and Italy. Much of that wealth, created in the past decade, is based on

residential property values. The stock of Ireland's property has risen more than five-fold, from €92bn in 1995 to €542bn in 2005.

Ireland's Construction Industry Federation (CIF) estimates that 90,000 new homes were built in the Republic during 2006, for a population of 4 million, and they expect it to rise marginally this year. To put that in perspective, compare it with the UK. Approximately twice that number of homes is built annually in the UK for a population of 60.6 million.

One in eight of Ireland's two million employed people works in construction. While this proportion will moderate in the next few years, the construction sector will continue to be a mass employer.

As you might expect, with such wealth in existing residential property, investment in home improvement has been booming. This year, Ireland's savers will see €16bn worth of the Government's special savings investments mature and more than 1 million people will receive an average windfall of €15,000. A recent survey found that 27 percent of those people intend to make a big purchase with their

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