



DOOR**DEALER**DIALOG

Doors Galore, Clayton, Ohio...

...Making Customers Their Number One Priority

By Chris Long, Editor,
International Door & Operator Industry

I didn't travel far for my visit with the people of Doors Galore as the company is located only a few minutes from the IDA offices. In mid-May, Jim McGrath, president of the firm, Tom Stubblefield, General Manager, and I sat down at their office and spent the morning talking about their business, the economy, the IDA, sports, and even shared a few war stories. It was an enjoyable interview, and one that I believe you'll enjoy reading.

The company was founded 22 years ago by Jim and the firm's Vice President, Brian Black. Jim was serving as a full-time firefighter, and Brian had just returned home from being on active duty during the Gulf War. As many firefighters do, Jim had a part time maintenance business that he operated on his days off. The two joined forces and while working maintenance jobs began to incorporate garage doors. Today, Doors Galore does about 95% in garage doors and 5% in maintenance, employ 14 people, and in 2010 had an impressive sales volume of \$1.4 million.

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As I've stated many times before, each time I meet with an IDA member, I gain not only an insight into their business operations, but more importantly, I learn more about the individuals who make up the workforce. Our association and industry can take great pride in the fact that the IDA membership is comprised of hundreds of quality, customer-focused, professional door dealers. Please enjoy this interview with one of these.

Chris: Jim, does your company have a Mission Statement?

Jim: Absolutely. Doors Galore is committed to making our customer our number one priority. We devote ourselves to great customer service, fair prices, and providing a polite, knowledgeable staff. This is our commitment and guarantee to our customers.

Chris: Today's business climate has created many obstacles for dealers to overcome. Care to share your thoughts?

Jim: With gasoline exceeding \$4.00 per gallon, the phones quit ringing. As a result, some great employees had to be laid off. We actually did better when the economy crashed than what we are doing today. Rising cost of goods coupled with increases in fuel prices are currently setting the stage for doom and gloom. Our residential customers are simply restricting their spending to the bare essentials.

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**"Doors Galore
is committed
to making our
customer our
number one
priority."**

Jim McGrath, President



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In 2008, when many dealers were struggling, we grew 58%. In 2009, we were basically flat, and right now, after a strong first quarter, we've never experienced this level of quietness in the market. The phone doesn't ring as often, and it is taking a strong, concerted sales effort to turn leads into sales.

Tom: Last Christmas gas prices were under \$3.00 and now they are above \$4.00. Many of our customers with two people working and operating two automobiles are simply being overwhelmed with fuel expenses. Some are experiencing an added \$30.00 or more per week in fuel costs alone. Add that to the fact that the costs of groceries are up, and it doesn't paint a very attractive picture. Many people won't consider a new or upgraded garage door or opener unless they are broken and not operating.



Brian Black and Jim McGrath and their first service van.

Chris: I noticed from your list of product providers, you are quite diversified in your product offering.

Jim: We love the garage door side, are very good at what we do, and control our destiny in a large way when it comes to the residential garage door market. When entering new markets, a business has to properly adapt itself to the uniqueness of that market. For example, when we decided to add residential entry doors to our product line, we had to add entry door techs. We understood going in that removing and installing a residential entry door is much different than doing the same to a garage door. We are an employee-based company, and don't use subs, and because of that we employ our own door installation specialists.

I would also add that we are fortunate here at Doors Galore to have Tom in the position he is. Tom came to us from Lowe's and has an extensive knowledge of entry doors.

Because of that it makes it much easier for me to default to him. I remember the first entry door I did 25 years ago. I told the lady that this is the first one I'd ever done, but she had been a maintenance customer for years so she trusted me. Fortunately, the work we did was good and the customer was pleased with the installation. The most challenging part of entry doors is actually the interior work as most homeowners are quite particular, and rightfully so, about how the work is finished.

With the awnings, we've had some very good years. We actually added awnings to our product line because we simply got tired of providing individuals inquiring about these products the names of companies that do. We investigated the product and ultimately partnered up with Sunsetter. This day and age, a business just can't afford to send a customer to another

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company. Many buyers are creatures of habit, and whoever they worked with last is the first company they call when needing a related product. We plan to diversify further, but will do so slowly and methodically.

Chris: A number of IDA dealer members are in the automatic pedestrian door business. Have you investigated this product and its applicability to your specific business?

Jim: As a matter of fact we do offer commercial entry doors sales and service, and it has been a good market for us. However, dealers should be totally aware that it takes a well-trained door technician specialist to install and service automatic doors.

Chris: What industry changes are you seeing – good or bad?

Jim: Technology in our industry improves each year. This not only assists the local door dealer in simplifying their work, but it also allows the “Do it yourselfer” to work on their own product. When we began our business 22 years ago, all we had to worry about was the local home owner going to Sears to buy an opener. Today, we have to compete with the big box stores that stack product high and let it fly!

Tom Stubblefield,
General Manager



Chelsey McGrath,
Office Manager

These stores are buying product from our suppliers at discounted numbers and margins. Customers go there because they are convenient and they are made to feel comfortable when making a purchase. They are not being told “this is what you want” from three different sales reps. We all know that the professional line product is better than the retail line, but how to get that message across is today’s challenge for us.

Chris: Has anything amusing happened to you or your personnel as a door dealer?



Tom: This wasn’t amusing at the time, but we now look back on it and laugh. One Christmas day we dispatched crews to a national food chain’s pork processing facility because the door was damaged in the closed position. Because of FDA requirements, they had to get a semi-truck filled with pork entrails out of the building. It took several hours to get the rolling steel door down and out, but we got the job done and were paid. However, we were not offered an opportunity to bid on the replacement door. It went to the guy who spent Christmas with his family and would not respond to emergency pages for his assistance. Guess you just don’t win them all.

Another humorous moment happened when Jim and I were working a home show. A man and his wife came into the booth and she reached over touching a working door we had on display. When she

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touched the door, Jim clicked a remote from across the room and the door began to rise. She was really taken back by what appeared to be a touch sensitive activated product. We later shared with her the facts (her husband was aware of what was transpiring). I'm not sure if I would recommend dealers doing this, but it was very funny at the time.

Chris: What have you recently implemented in your company that you can readily say was an excellent change or addition?

Tom: That's an easy one to answer. In an effort to get away from the negative, we changed the verbiage of a "call back" to "return visit". We strive to have under a 3% return visit ratio and pride ourselves in this accomplishment.

Something we've done for quite some time is to verify why a person calls on us. How did they find out about us? Was it our website, Yellow Pages, television, radio or a customer referral that influenced them? What we know is 80% of our calls come from past customers or referrals from a satisfied customer. In my opinion, that is no doubt the biggest compliment a business can have.

Another strong indicator of this is what we learn during home shows. If we had a dollar for every time someone comes up to us and says "you did our door and we're very happy with it", it would pay for our booth cost.

All of this goes back to our Mission Statement, and that is to make every customer our number one priority.

Chris: Please describe your company's advertising program.

Jim: During the past five years, we have decreased our print advertising and shopped radio and television deals. As a result, we have become much more recognizable to our customers. We've also done a few public service announcements. *Continued on page 26*

"...take the early payment discounts."



"Sponsor of the Tri-County North baseball team (Lewisburg, Ohio), Doors Galore participated in the 2011 opening day parade."



"We try to make our customers laugh."

In addition, we sponsor a fun function during minor league hockey games with the Dayton Gems. As fans arrive they have the option of purchasing a special puck that is thrown into the ice toward our banner and a container of prize money. If a puck goes in, the person pitching the puck wins the money. There are other prizes for closest to the pot, etc. It's a fun event, we receive lots of publicity, and the net proceeds from the event go to support various community charities set up by the Gems.

Chris: What do you do in your business that is unique?

Jim: We try to make our customers laugh. We have a sign in our office that says "Friends Gather Here". We want our customers to enjoy their experience with our company. People need to feel comfortable with the company and persons they are counting on to provide them with a garage door. We don't believe in high pressure selling.

We strive to provide 100% satisfaction to all of our customers, and we offer a money back guarantee to support our efforts. If, after all is said and done, a customer is dissatisfied with our door, I tell them to purchase a door from someone else and I'll come out and remove the one we installed and give you your money back. In 22 years of business, we've removed doors perhaps two or three times.

Chris: Tom, care to share a sales tip with the readers?

Tom: I would highly recommend that dealers always take the high road when doing a sales presentation. Badgering a competitor's product, service or business plan doesn't go over well with the majority of buyers. As I stressed in my workshop during the

Indianapolis Expo, the majority of our customers today are computer savvy. They have already done their homework and know what they want when they come to your office and showroom. In many situations, they are asking questions to see if you really know your own products. If a salesperson tries to "BS" a customer these days, they're going to see right through it.

During a recent home show, Jim and I were listening to the person next to our display as he sold a special floor mop. When describing his product, he referred to it as a regular mop on steroids. Following that, a lady came to our booth and asked me what the difference was between our door and one of our competitors. I quickly responded, our door is basically their door on steroids. She looked at me and chuckled as she asked me to explain the differences. The humor broke the ice, and I ended up selling her a top-of-the-line door.

It amazes me that many dealers are not salespeople...they are just order takers. Many dealers sell their cheapest products and hang a lot of doors... but at what cost, I ask? I'd much rather sell higher quality products at a higher margin. In the long run it is better for the customer and for the door dealer.

Chris: Jim, how about sharing a business tip?

Jim: Perhaps this doesn't apply to everyone, but for small companies with 5 to 25 employees, I think they should investigate employee-leasing opportunities. Employee-leasing businesses manage the Human Resource part of a dealer's business including payroll, workers' compensation, and unemployment benefits. By outsourcing this business function, it allows one to concentrate on managing the door company.

In addition, I highly recommend that dealers take the early payment discounts. If you can save 2% by paying within 10 days, do it. If you don't, it is money you are giving away!

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Chris: Has your company received any recognition awards?

Jim: We have been nominated for the Better Business Bureau Eclipse Award several times. Also, the local area recognizes us annually for the contributions we make to the Brookville High School scholarship fund, and the local Chamber of Commerce acknowledges us for our participation in the community picnic car giveaway.

As a company, we have our employees actually vote quarterly on the Employee of the Quarter. In general, we live in a negative society. I highly recommend that dealers be positive to your personnel, and don't be afraid to show appreciation or recognition to them.

Chris: What do you think the next major change in our industry will be?

Jim: The iPad. As our industry grows and as more people become tech savvy, the iPad is going to become a necessary tool for our service technicians and sales personnel. Just as the cell phone is used today, computers and hand-held devices will change this aspect of our industry.

Tom: I totally agree with Jim. Since coming over to the dealer side of the door business from Lowe's, one observation I have is that many dealers are way behind when it comes to technology, and it is dearly costing them business. As an example, my BlackBerry holds our price lists and can be changed by simply updating the multiplier.

Chris: If you could select three attributes of your company that have made you successful, what would they be?

Jim: I served as a United States Marine for 7 years and a firefighter for 25 years. Both professions require: Honesty, Dependability and Loyalty as well as having a quality work ethic. Applied and enforced by our company, these qualities are definitely our platform for success. *Continued on page 30*



...we changed the verbiage of a "call back" to "return visit".



Dealer Snapshot

Doors Galore

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Clayton, Ohio 45315
937-832-9797
Fax: 937-242-7314
Email Address:
doorsgalore@doorsgaloreofdayton.com
Website:
www.doorsgaloreofdayton.com

Primary Personnel:

Jim McGrath, President
Vice President, Brian J. Black

General Manager: Tom Stubblefield

Operations Manager:

Chelsey McGrath

Number of Years in Business: 22

Sales in 2010: \$1.4 million

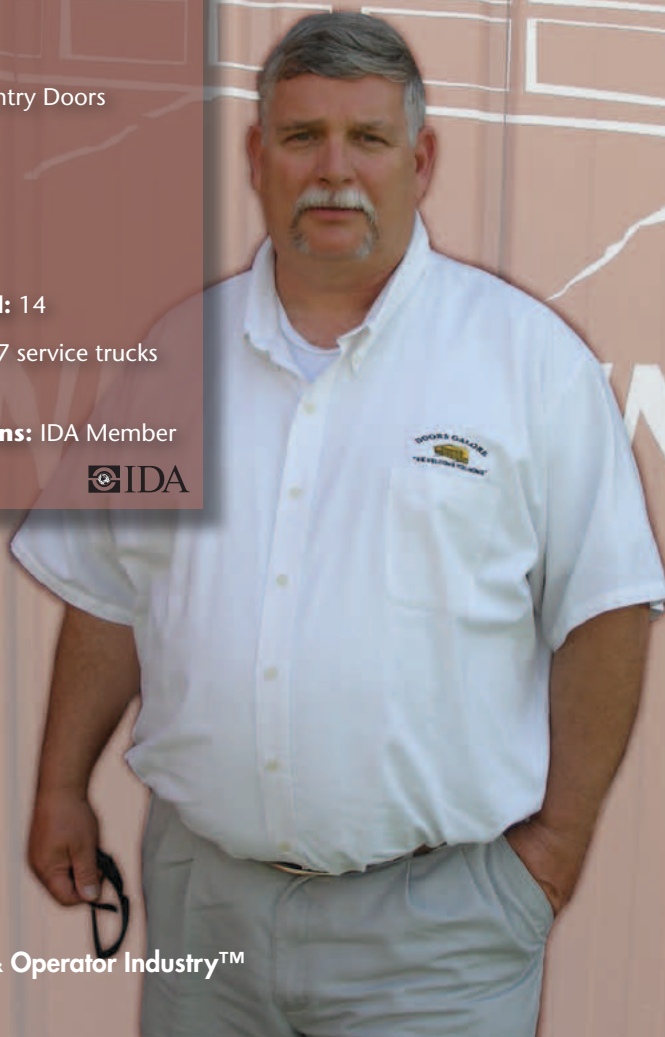
Primary Products Providers:

Amarr
Safe-Way Garage Doors
Wayne-Dalton
Janus International
Linear
Genie
Sunsetters Awnings
Masoite and Polaris Entry Doors
Larson Storm Doors
Service Spring
Denco Marketing
Re-Source Industries
A-tech

Number of personnel: 14

Number of Vehicles: 7 service trucks and 2 sales vehicles

Company Recognitions: IDA Member and IDEA Accredited



"We strive to
provide 100%
satisfaction
to all of our
customers."