



Bricks, flicks and clicks

For a modern proactive company D&M Tools has remarkably old-fashioned ideas about customer service and after-sales

D&M Tools began life in 1978 as a double-fronted ironmongers and DIY shop that sold tools too. Started by Dave and Mary Dowding – hence the name – today it is still run by the family, headed by their son Paul. As adjacent units became available the showroom expanded until D&M now occupies five of them.

Paul says: “As both a high street business and an internet retailer we have always been constricted by available storage space and balancing the requirements of a large retail area together with adequate storage for stock. We initially tried without success to find a suitable existing retail/storage location within the local area. The next solution was to demolish our numerous external storage units and develop that plot of land into 6,000sq ft of purpose-built storage and office facilities. After two years of planning and preparation we started construction in January 2012 and it was completed in October 2012.

“Business has changed a lot over the last 35 years and the key is to stay ahead of the game. Investment and forward planning are the only way to run a successful business. We invest in our staff, premises and stock profile. The latest technology allows us to keep one step ahead at all times.”

Customer service

Today D&M remains a family business, run currently by four full-time and family and two part-time/retired founders.

Paul attributes much of their success to their passion for tools. “We only stock top-quality branded goods from the leading manufacturers, like Festool, Makita, Bosch, DeWalt and Trend to name but a few. We seek to develop a long-term working partnership with these brands.

“Our sales staff, the majority of whom have been with us for many years, are well-trained and knowledgeable and we pride ourselves on customer service, which is reflected in the numerous positive feedback comments we receive daily to our website. We always try to be proactive in responding to the needs of our customers. We started as a high street shop, then started producing a catalogue [produced in-house] and expanded into mail order, then when the internet arrived we were one of the first to develop an online presence and began to use it to sell in earnest in 2003. We are now a true ‘bricks, flicks and clicks’ retailer. Keep things simple, give the customer what they need with minimal fuss, a great price and fast delivery backed with first-class aftersales service and they will come back. In other words treat them how you would want to be treated yourself.”

The Toolshow



The recently completed new warehouse and offices in the centre of Twickenham

The Dowdings started ‘The Toolshow’ at Kempton Park Racecourse in 2000, and the show is now in its 13th year. Says Paul: “We see the exhibition as a showcase both for our brands and for ourselves. It’s like having the huge tool shop we have always wanted for three days. The last show was our most successful for years and it continues to attract huge numbers of both existing and new customers, providing a unique opportunity for visitors to meet the brands in person, ask questions, see the tools in action and make comparisons all in one place, as well as pick up some fantastic bargains and offers only available to show visitors.”



Top brands enjoy well-laid-out displays, like these shelves of Festool kit...



...and these of Makita tools



Well, what more could a tool buff want?