

Case study

About Wilkinson

Wilkinson is one of the UK's fastest growing independent retailers. The company offers a huge range of over 30,000 items covering home and garden, DIY, kitchenware, pet-care, household disposables and confectionery.

Wilkinson's aim is to offer exceptional standards of service and customer care at the lowest possible prices. Employing more than 23,000 people, Wilkinson is currently pursuing an ambitious

expansion plan to increase its current network of 270 high street stores to 370 by 2010.

GK Industrial has worked in partnership with Wilkinson since 2003 implementing effective climate control and energy efficiency solutions covering store ventilation, store environment and energy efficient lighting.



Wilkinson

The challenge

Wilkinson and GK have worked in partnership to address specific issues relating to the existing comfort cooling and lighting systems across Wilkinson's network of stores.

Firstly, the current comfort cooling system was in need of review. Wilkinson's aim was to provide an even more comfortable store environment, leading to an enhanced shopping experience for customers whilst providing a superior working environment for staff. The solution would also need to consider how to significantly reduce energy costs and address energy efficiency legislation.

Secondly, the lighting system across the stores was becoming obsolete in Europe, causing difficulties when sourcing replacements. A more durable, energy efficient lighting system was therefore sought to reduce costs and the maintenance lead times. The ultimate aim was to improve the ambience across all Wilkinson stores.

The solution

GK's constant drive to enhance the business relationship resulted in considerable resource being devoted to research energy efficient solutions and to make appropriate and commercially viable recommendations to Wilkinson.

Two solutions were proposed that would be subsequently integrated across Wilkinson's stores through a planned programme.

Free Cooling

The first solution was to install Free Cooling into existing Wilkinson stores. Whilst the majority of retailers use refrigerated air handling systems where air is constantly filtered and cooled with compressors working virtually 24 hours a day to maintain store temperatures, Free Cooling offers vastly improved air quality. It is triggered when the external ambient air is at a lower temperature than indoors, drawing 'fresh air' into the store through the ventilation system. This results in significant energy savings, reduced energy bills and lower maintenance. The improved air quality would subsequently deliver a more positive experience for Wilkinson's customers. From August 2006, GK started a 24-month programme to modify and retrofit 140 existing Wilkinson stores with Free Cooling.

Replacement Lighting

Since January 2000 all new Wilkinson stores were fitted with low energy, high frequency light fittings, replacing the conventional fluorescent fittings that were in use over the last twenty years. GK was appointed as one of a select number of companies to replace the sales floor lighting within all remaining Wilkinson stores, a true testament to GK's experienced team of lighting engineers. Since May 2006 GK has embarked on a programme to replace 15,000 light fittings for 42 Wilkinson stores over a 10-month period.

The success

Through its association with GK, Wilkinson has embarked on an objective to become one of the most energy efficient retailers on the high street, not just in response to increasing energy costs and impending legislation, but as part of its ongoing commitment to protect the environment.

The Free Cooling and replacement lighting initiatives are estimated to deliver multi-million pound savings to Wilkinson over the next ten years with a very healthy payback on the investment in less than four years. In addition, a better ambience will inevitably lead to an improved customer experience and employee working environment.

David Pflasterer, Property Maintenance Manager for Wilkinson commented: "GK has delivered to Wilkinson what can only be described as a first class service both in the maintenance environment and in new store installations. I have often thought that actions speak louder than words - GK actually delivers what it promises. This has resulted in Wilkinson awarding GK the contract to replace ventilation systems as part of store refurbishment, alongside a major programme of works in 42 existing stores installing energy efficient lighting. We see GK as a long-standing partner for the years ahead."

About GK Industrial

As a specialist installation and maintenance provider of environment managed solutions, GK Industrial Ltd aims to manage climate control and energy efficiency issues on behalf of its many national clients in the retail, food, commercial, industrial and public sectors.

The company's portfolio covers the entire spectrum of installing complete air conditioning, heating, ventilation, refrigeration and energy efficient lighting systems, to providing service maintenance contracts for both GK installed and client adopted systems.

For more information on how GK can benefit your business contact our Business Development Team on:

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