

A day in the life

Windows Active investigates the working lives of some of the industry's leading executives. This month we take a look at the working day of **Tony Chadwick**, Group Managing Director of leading hardware company **Trojan**



A working day that covers east and west: As well as our UK head office and manufacturing base, we also have Trojan facilities in China and Vietnam, which means that my working day is a global one! I tend to spend the 8 – 5 part of the day working with our UK team. Outside those hours I liaise with China and Vietnam. I try to stay as close to our Chinese and Vietnamese divisions as I am to our UK division, so that means lots of evening, night and weekend working.

A wide-ranging remit means lots of variety: As Group Managing Director, I think it's important to have a real understanding of all areas of the business, so much of my working day is spent catching up with people. A typical day will include conversations with the sales, accounts and admin teams, meetings with our designers and engineers to discuss new R&D ideas and seeing how production is going on the shop floor. When it comes to China and Vietnam and I can't have that face-to-face contact all the time so I find Skype invaluable!

Focusing on the core business: The key part of my role is to focus on the core business and strategies to enable it to deliver growth. Quality is key for our customers, but remaining competitive is also essential. I spend a lot of time looking at the business and seeing where we can improve efficiencies so we protect our customers from price rises in other areas such as raw materials.

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Tony Chadwick Group
Managing Director of Trojan

We invested in Trojan China in 2005 to benefit from manufacturing efficiencies and enable us to take advantage of any opportunities that come along. Likewise, opening Trojan Vietnam last year (and commissioning the expansion due to open this year) was in direct response to the likelihood of Chinese manufacture losing some of its economic advantages in future years.

Delivering what our fabricators, installers and end users need: Trojan was created as a hardware company to deliver tangible feature benefits for fabricators, installers and end users. That's still what drives us today. Every member of the team is close to the market, so they understand what our customers need. Our design team, using their expertise and experience, can then come up with the solution.

The perfect example of this is our stainless steel range of hinges, handles, letterplates, door knockers, numbers and letters. Callouts and replacements on zinc-based products that were failing due to salt, acid erosion or damaged surfaces

were starting to impact on fabricators' and installers' bottom lines. In response to this, we developed our stainless steel range. Every item in it exceeds the requirements of BS EN 1670 Grade 5 standard for corrosion resistance and we're so confident of this that every product comes with a 25 year guarantee. The feedback we had from our customers was

incredibly positive but it also helped us to take the product range further. Our customers told us that an all stainless steel solution is perfect for the premium installations, but it's harder to justify it on budget ones. That's why we introduced the Combi range alongside the Elite option. The Standard option has a stainless steel external face and standard white inner face while the Premium range has a stainless steel external face and zinc chrome or gold PVD inner. The end result is that every project can benefit from stainless steel and the range has proved incredibly popular, with sales up 300% in the past year.

Relaxation time is key: My working days tend to be very hectic, so it's important to have a life outside work where I can switch off and relax. I enjoy a round of golf with friends and colleagues. I've been learning Mandarin for seven years and now Vietnamese, which will help me in my working day, as well as being an enjoyable and challenging process. I also find reading about various business strategies fascinating and try to implement many of these techniques daily.

Let the products speak for themselves: My goal is to make Trojan the leading name in window and door hardware. I am very proud of our products and believe in making them front and centre of everything we do. I'm not one for extravagance, but I am very proud of our products and I am happy to let them speak for themselves. And if our sales growth – 700% in five years – is anything to go by, that's a good call!

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