

12 WINDOW-SELLING BUZZWORDS

Know what you are buying
BEFORE you buy.



Don't start shopping for replacement windows until learning the reality behind the

12 window BUZZWORDS and SALES TACTICS.

If you're considering replacing the windows in your home, but aren't actually employed in the residential window replacement industry, then this little bit of information may become your best friend when you get ready to go "window shopping". Written by the owners of a "modern" window replacement business (that is, they do not follow the "old school" method of selling windows to homeowners), they have revealed the most common industry secrets, tactics and closing tools employed by many window companies today. Don't fall into the traps set by slick window companies and their salespeople. Knowing what to ask a company before you invite them into your home can save you many headaches and thousands of dollars in the long run.

1. "Lifetime warranty" - SOUNDS GREAT!

...actually ALL vinyl replacement windows carry a "lifetime warranty", unfortunately most homeowners find out after they purchase their windows that it is often only used as a marketing ploy, not as an assurance that the windows will actually last a lifetime.

Reality is... Window manufacturers are pretty smart...they know the average American family moves into a new / different home every seven years, and they write their warranties around the issues they know that they'll encounter. In most cases lifetime warranties are only valid to the original purchaser, so once you move out of your current house the window manufacturer is no longer responsible for any potential warranty related defects. Having a transferable lifetime warranty that cover the installation as well as the window will become an asset when you put your house on the market. Better yet, purchase windows that are manufactured in such a way that they won't have warranty issues!

2. "We sell the BEST windows" - SOUNDS GREAT!

...go to a local home show and see how many window companies tell you that they sell the best windows available on the market. How can a dozen (or more) companies all have the "best" window? Simple answer: they can't!

Reality is... Part of the "old school" way of selling windows involved the salesperson making claims about their windows that not only weren't true, but the average homeowner really didn't have any way to verify the claims that they were told. Fortunately the internet has changed a lot of this (even though everyone still claims they have the best window!). The average homeowner can pull up more accurate information about windows that wasn't readily available 10 years ago. If energy efficiency is your primary concern, you don't have to trust a salesperson telling you that his window is the most efficient...ask him what the u-factor is, then go to the NFRC website and verify it.

3. "Both husband and wife MUST be present to receive price quote" - HUH?

...many window companies now days won't even consider setting up an appointment to give you an estimate unless you commit that both the husband and wife will be present. If the salesperson arrives at your home and only the husband or wife is present, they often times will ask for you to reschedule your appointment and refuse to give you an estimate until BOTH spouses are present.

Reality is... Many commission paid salespeople are required to sell you windows on their very first appointment. If they don't succeed their commissions are usually either greatly reduced or they earn nothing at all. It's no wonder the average salesperson puts so much pressure on the homeowner to sign a contract NOW! The more consumer-friendly window companies would prefer, not require, both spouses to be present for the estimate for two very simple reasons; 1) Often times each spouse will have different, but equally important, questions or concerns that they are interested in. 2) Assuming you like what you see and hear (company story, product information, pricing, etc.), and everyone involved would like to move forward with the purchase, it actually saves the window company money by not having to make an additional trip to your home to do a second presentation. (Hint: if you do decide to purchase during the first appointment ask for an additional hundred dollars off the quote since you're saving them a trip back out!)

4. "Financing available" - SOUNDS GREAT!

...is simply another closing tool for the salesperson. When the salesperson is told that the project is just too much money, he /she will then try to sell you the same exact job based on a monthly payment that you can afford. It's the same exact offer, but fed to homeowners in much smaller bites!

Reality is... If you are interested in saving money on your purchase there are usually less expensive ways to finance your purchase than going through a window company. Give your

personal banker or credit union a call, their rates are almost guaranteed to be more attractive. Window salespeople don't want you to do this though...they're afraid you banker will know someone "in the business" that can make you a better deal, and then you're gone forever. One exception may be that occasionally a window company (like many other retailers) will offer a "same as cash" financing option where you will have no payments and accrue no interest for a specified period of time... assuming that you're dealing with a reputable finance company this is a great way to use someone else's money for a short period of time.

5. **"Replacement windows: \$189 installed"**

- SOUNDS GREAT!

...can you say "snake oil salesman"? Do the math: take the \$189 price back out the labor cost to install the window (typically \$55-75), advertising, general overhead and a reasonable mark-up and you're looking at a window that cost about \$75 to manufacture.

Reality is... The replacement glass for most windows cost more than that, yet you're expected to believe they can manufacture a "quality" window for this? Perhaps a window more suited for a shed or a mobile home, but not for your home! Often times companies that are advertising replacement windows installed for less than \$200 are selling their windows "a-la-cart" style (there are additional costs for things like wrapping the exterior trim, warranties, disposal fees, etc.), or they are employing one of the oldest tricks in the book...the bait and switch. In this case remember the old saying, "if it's too good to be true then it probably is".

6. **"I'll let you talk to someone in our wholesale department"**

- HUH?

...is what you may hear from the sales manager several days after you wouldn't sign the contract when the salesperson came to visit.

Reality is... This is referred to in the industry as "re-hashing", meaning that they're going to send a different salesperson to your home to try and get you to sign on the dotted line. Often times the price is no different than it was the first go round, it's just a way to get a more experienced salesperson back into your house so they can try once again to get a commitment from you.

7. **"Win a house full of windows"**

- SOUNDS GREAT!

...is simply an inexpensive supply of "leads"...homeowners that would like to have their windows replaced. They claim that there is "no obligation", which is usually true as long as you don't consider being hounded by telemarketers being obligated!

Reality is... These types of contest usually run for a period of one to three years and only one person wins the major prize out of thousands that enter. If you're not in the market to purchase windows, or you aren't interested in signing up to have a salesperson give you a demonstration and price quote, then don't waste your time signing up to win the grand prize! Once again, if it's too good to be true then it probably is. I've heard a lot of complaints from homeowners about this tactic, and even had one couple tell me they changed their phone number because the window company would not take NO for an answer...and yes, this was after the Do Not Call law.

8. **"We can't give you an estimated price at the home show (or over the phone)"**

- HUH?

...this is simply because they need to have an experienced salesperson be there to justify the asking price by giving you a 3-4 hour demonstration.

Reality is... Every window company has made a conscious decision about what price target they are selling their windows for...granted, there may be some unusual circumstances that will have a minor effect on the final price, but most companies know within 10% of what price they'll be selling their windows for BEFORE they even get to your house...so why can't they tell you this right up front? It's just because they're afraid they'll scare you off before they get a chance to get inside your home.

9. **"Guaranteed hurricane proof"**

- SOUNDS GREAT!

...yet another sales ploy, this time it's focused on your concern for the safety of your family and property. No window available on the market is "hurricane-proof"...yes, there are "impact resistant" windows that have passed the Miami-Dade impact testing requirements for use in residential construction in hurricane zones, but there is a difference between a window that is "guaranteed hurricane-proof" and one that has passed the large missile impact testing.

Reality is... Some window companies are actually selling their standard window and calling it "hurricane-proof", hoping that you won't know what the difference is. They figure that if a window fails in a hurricane that they will simply replace it at no charge to you...it does you little good if your windows fail in the event of a hurricane and your entire house collapses because of the failed windows. The second leading cause of building structure failure in hurricanes is due to high winds and / or flying debris causing windows and doors to fail, in which case the sudden rise in pressure within the home typically causes the roof to lift off the structure, resulting in catastrophic failure of the structure. If a window company is claiming that they are selling "hurricane windows" be sure to ask to see the Miami-Dade Notice of Acceptance (NOA) which is issued to every building product manufacturer upon completion of all required testing.

10. **“You don’t need triple-pane windows in our area”** - HUH?

...almost every window salesperson will tell you that triple-pane windows are over-kill in VA. Could their primary reason for stating this be because they don’t have a triple-pane window to sell?

Reality is... Windows are the single most energy inefficient building product in your home. As per the building code, most exterior walls are required to be insulated to a level of R-13 or better. A single-pane window has an R-value of 1, and it jumps to a whopping 1.7 if you have a storm window. Most double-pane windows have an R-value of 4 - 4.5, whereas a triple-pane window has an R-value of 9.1 in most cases. Knowing this, a triple-pane window is the closest to the insulating value required for the walls in your home...you wouldn’t think about removing some insulation from your walls “because it doesn’t get that cold around here”, would you? If you ever turn on your heat or air-conditioning, you are going to loose some of this energy through your windows...how many energy dollars can you afford to throw out of your windows?

11. **“Let me call my manager”** - HUH?

...is what you’ll likely hear after the salesperson gives you the initial price on your new windows. The “old school” window companies still sell their windows similar to the way most car dealerships operate...start off with an inflated price (which they’re hoping you’ll agree to – results in a bigger commission check), and assuming you give a negative reaction to the price they’ll usually ask permission to give their sales manager a call to see if they can get you a better price.

Reality is... If you don’t accept their second offer they’ll usually call you back in a few days with a new approach, see #6 above. Very few window companies have adopted a bottom line / no haggle pricing strategy, like some of the car dealerships have in recent years. They’d rather play “pricing games” with homeowners, hoping to cash in on additional profits from uneducated and unsuspecting homeowners. Unfortunately this strategy has proven especially profitable with senior citizen purchasers over the years.

12. **“Easy cleaning feature”** - SOUNDS GREAT!

...virtually all modern replacement windows come with four basic features...windows tilt in for easy cleaning, they’re energy efficient, maintenance free and carry a lifetime warranty. Everything you could ever ask for in a replacement window, right?

Reality is... These are only the very basic features a window should have in its favor. Quality vinyl windows should have some sort of reinforcement within the frame in order for the vinyl to maintain its structural integrity over a long period of time, or at the very least it should have a complex multi-chambered extrusion design to provide support. What is the thickness of the vinyl? What type of spacer system is used in the insulated glass unit? What type of vinyl does the manufacturer use in the frame...recycled, virgin or unplasticized virgin? The quality aspects of replacement windows lye below what you can touch and feel, and most manufacturers / salespeople don’t want you to know what’s on the inside of their windows and the only way you’ll find out is to ask.

Now that you know the 12 most common tricks of the trade that window companies and salespeople have in their arsenal you’ll be better prepared when you actually start shopping for windows. Don’t allow yourself to fall into their traps and play their silly selling games...let them know that you’re aware of how the game used to be played and that you’re now playing by a new set of rules...leave the gimmicks at the curb and make honesty and integrity the primary selling tools. Purchasing windows doesn’t have to be a difficult and uncomfortable experience...just don’t let them make it that way!

For additional information on what consumers should actually look for in replacement windows (features, benefits, materials, manufacturing techniques, etc.) visit our website www.progressivewindowco.com and download or request our *Consumers Guide To Replacement Windows* and our list of *Questions To Ask Every Window Salesperson*.

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OFFICE 757.216.6850
TOLL FREE 866.963.6971
FAX 757.417.8887
560 Central Drive, Suite 104
Virginia Beach, VA 23454

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