

# SCALABILITY, COMPETENCY AND GROWTH

Showhome sat down with Matthew Weatherill, Head of Contract Installations at Wren Contracts, to discuss how the company maintains high standards

As the UK's number one kitchen and bedroom retailer, Wren is no stranger to scale. But delivering at pace means nothing without quality, consistency and sustainability to match. Matthew Weatherill, Head of Contract Installations at Wren Contracts, explores how the company maintains high standards across the country, the digital tools transforming the installation experience, and how Wren's in-house model is driving progress in fleet emissions, sustainable materials and future-focused innovation.

## CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR ROLE AT WREN CONTRACTS AND GIVE US AN OVERVIEW OF THE BUSINESS?

I look after the operational and installation



side of our Contracts division. I've been with the business for over six years, originally supporting our retail installation operation, and I've been here from the very beginning of our move into the Contracts market.

Wren was founded in 2009, but our knowledge of the industry runs much deeper than that. Our founder and owner Malcolm Healey has been in the kitchen sector for more than 50 years, and that experience has been fundamental to our growth. We've established ourselves as the UK's largest kitchen retailer, and we're now seeing that success echoed in the U.S. through our expansion into standalone showrooms and our recent collaboration with The Home Depot.

## HOW DOES WREN CONTRACTS ENSURE A CONSISTENT STANDARD OF INSTALLATION ACROSS ITS NATIONAL NETWORK OF CONTRACTORS?

Consistency is absolutely essential when you're working at scale. That's why we've built a structure that keeps our standards high, no matter where we're working in the country. Our team of dedicated Installation Managers are regularly on-site, auditing work, engaging with our fitters and resolving any potential issues before they become delays.

We also work closely with BiKBBI, who provide a live, interactive system that keeps installer compliance documentation up to date 24 hours a

day. This includes insurance and other key credentials, helping us reduce risk and protect our clients.

Before any installer starts work with us, we carry out a Previous Works Visit to ensure they meet our high standards. That's followed by a face-to-face induction covering our processes and expectations, so the onboarding is smooth, and installers feel fully prepared from day one.

But what really sets us apart in the Contracts sector is our FIRA Gold certification. It's a robust, independently audited accreditation that not only reviews our internal processes but also includes physical site visits to assess the quality of our installations in real homes. Many of our competitors are yet to achieve FIRA Gold, and it gives our customers real confidence in our delivery.

## WHAT INNOVATIONS OR DIGITAL TOOLS ARE HELPING YOU TRACK OR IMPROVE INSTALLATION QUALITY IN REAL TIME?

One of the things I'm most proud of is the CRM system we've developed in-house. It's fully interactive and used across desktop and mobile. That means our teams can raise, track and resolve issues on-site instantly. For example, if a remedial part is needed, we can process the request and confirm the delivery date before the installation manager has even completed their site visit. That makes life



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easier for us, and more efficient for our customers.

We also recently launched our first kitchen visualiser tool on a Taylor Wimpey site. It lets homeowners preview their future kitchen interactively, experimenting with different colours, handles, worktops and styles, without relying on physical samples. It's a more immersive, accurate and user-friendly way to choose a kitchen, and it's already proving popular.

More broadly, we take a digital-first approach across our entire process, from tender enquiry through to aftercare and extra unit requests. Technology isn't just a nice-to-have; it's fundamental to delivering efficiently at scale.

## CAN YOU OUTLINE THE TRAINING OR ACCREDITATION PROCESS WREN CONTRACTS REQUIRES FOR ITS INSTALLERS, AND HOW THIS TIES INTO CUSTOMER SATISFACTION METRICS?

We've built a rigorous onboarding process that we believe goes further than many in the industry. It starts with an application form, followed by a Previous Works Check, a full induction and an initial installation check. Only then does an installer become fully approved to represent Wren on-site.

But it doesn't stop there. We continue to audit our installers regularly. These checks cover quality, safety and tool condition to make sure everything remains up to standard.

We also work closely with BiKBBI to maintain our installers' ongoing compliance. And it's worth saying that our FIRA Gold certification is a reflection not just of Wren's internal standards, but also the pride and professionalism of our installers. They're a huge part of what helps us deliver at the level we do.

## WREN HAS COMMITTED TO CARBON REDUCTION ACROSS ITS OPERATIONS. HOW HAS THIS INFLUENCED YOUR MATERIAL SOURCING OR MANUFACTURING METHODS?

Sustainability is something we take very seriously. We source all our raw wood materials from the UK. Given that wood makes up the majority of our product, this local sourcing significantly reduces transport emissions. On the logistics side, we've developed a triple trunking system, where one truck transports three full loads. These are then distributed locally, with each delivery separately accredited to FORS Gold to ensure the highest standards throughout. This approach reduces the number of trucks on the road, cuts mileage, and lowers emissions.

Within the Contracts division, we plant a tree for every kitchen we sell. Across the wider business, we've transitioned our



entire company car fleet to hybrid or electric vehicles.

## WHAT SUSTAINABILITY TARGETS ARE IN PLACE FOR YOUR TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS FLEET, AND HOW CLOSE ARE YOU TO ACHIEVING THEM?

We've been measuring our Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions for several years now. The biggest challenge is Scope 3, because it includes factors like appliance end-of-life data, which can vary widely. If we focus purely on our fleet emissions, we're already ahead of most industry benchmarks.

Comparisons can be difficult, because many competitors outsource manufacturing or delivery. But our vertical integration is also our strength, it gives us full control and allows us to lead the way in fleet efficiency and safety. As a multiple Motor Transport Award winner, we know where we stand in terms of performance and innovation.

## HOW DO YOU BALANCE CUSTOMER DEMAND FOR DURABILITY AND LUXURY WITH THE PUSH FOR MORE ECO-CONSCIOUS MATERIALS AND SUPPLY CHAINS?

We're working closely with our supply chain partners to develop more sustainable product options. One we're currently exploring is banana board as an alternative to traditional wood-based materials.

We're also working with Hull University on a full cradle-to-grave lifecycle analysis of our kitchens. This will allow us to calculate the exact CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of a kitchen, giving customers the ability to see the environmental impact of their choices at a glance. It's an industry first, and we believe it will reshape how buyers approach kitchen sustainability.



OFFLOAD DELIVERY IS OFTEN AN OVERLOOKED PART OF THE KITCHEN JOURNEY. HOW HAS WREN CONTRACTS OPTIMISED THIS STAGE FOR BOTH SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY?

We've spent years perfecting our offload process, and it's something no one else in the Contracts market currently offers. That alone shows you how difficult it is to master. It takes training, passion and a strong culture of service and teamwork.

Our delivery teams provide a white-glove, room-of-choice service to the Contracts sector. Delivery trucks are loaded in reverse fit order, ensuring items are offloaded in the exact sequence required for fitting. The first unit available to the installer will be unit 1, the base corner unit that must be installed first. This efficient process allows fitters to begin work immediately without the need to sort components, helping projects run smoothly and reducing overall lead times.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN LOGISTICAL CHALLENGES INVOLVED IN OFFLOAD DELIVERY AT SCALE, AND HOW DOES WREN'S MODEL MITIGATE THEM?

Wren's fully vertically integrated model is one of our biggest strengths, but it also brings a unique set of challenges. Because we own our entire supply chain, every member of our delivery team needs to meet the high standards we set internally. That includes everything from FORS Gold training and ISO accreditation to Manual Handling Certifications, Earned Recognition approval and First Responder First Aid training. We can't simply bring in agency drivers or offloaders and expect them to meet that standard overnight.

And that's exactly why our service stands out. We don't outsource the final handover moment, because that's where customer experience can so easily fall short. By keeping that in-house, we maintain complete control over the delivery journey, resulting in fewer



damages, fewer remedials and faster project completions. This is made possible through our rigorous QA standards, which include scanning each item at multiple stages. From loading at our factory, to unloading from the truck, and finally scanning into the designated delivery room. All our vehicles are equipped with 360-degree recording systems that capture the entire journey, and each delivery is photographed at its final location no fewer than five times to ensure complete accuracy and accountability.

We also benefit from operating across more than just the Contract kitchen market. Our scale, and our ability to flex resources across Retail and Bedroom operations, gives us agility that more traditional contract-only providers simply don't have.

ARE THERE ANY PARTICULAR SUSTAINABILITY OR PACKAGING INITIATIVES IN PLACE THAT REDUCE WASTE DURING DELIVERY AND OFFLOAD?

Yes, sustainability runs through everything we do. All of our solid wood waste is recycled into new boards for use within Wren. Waste quartz is repurposed

for road surfacing. Over half of our raw wood materials come from recycled sources, and our plastic components, like legs, sockets and clips, are all made from 100% recycled material. We've also reduced acetone use by around 72% since 2022 by switching to water-based paints and cleaning chemicals. And our transport routing, with a solid Hub and Spoke model and efficient delivery patterns, continues to drive down CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

LOOKING AHEAD, WHICH AREA—INSTALLATION, SUSTAINABILITY, OR LOGISTICS—DO YOU SEE OFFERING THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT AT WREN CONTRACTS, AND WHY?

The truth is, we don't see it as a choice between one area or another. Innovation and improvement is embedded across everything we do.

We're exploring Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) for every product we make. We're looking at geothermal energy to power our factories. We already use HVO fuel to reduce our fleet's emissions and are progressing towards an all-electric fleet. Wherever there's room to improve, we'll take it. **sh**

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