

A door to greener shipping and wrapping

by Erik Rosenblad

Situated in the densely forested north-eastern part of Skåne, the door company MinDörr sells and ships doors to customers all over Sweden. Now, managing director Stefan Johansson is undertaking the odyssey of minimizing the environmental toll of production and shipping. And perhaps nudging faraway costumers to look elsewhere for doors.

- In my view, it's neither financially nor environmentally justifiable to send a door 1000 kilometers north when there are companies up there, producing doors from locally sourced materials. So we're going to drop the flat rate shipping and charge the actual freight costs. This will make it more expensive for some customers, but it will allow us to sharpen our offer to the more nearby ones, Stefan Johansson explains.

He has only been at the helm of MinDörr (*transl.* MyDoor) for about two years, but is already working on several fronts to find ways to reduce the environmental impact of the firm and pushing the bigger players and distributors to become locomotives for a green transition of the door business.

- Unfortunately, the construction industry is quite conservative and there is a large portion of passivity when it comes to sustainability, Stefan Johansson says.

His own wake-up call to the topic of resource efficiency and ecological footprints came during his university studies in project design, where he realized how improvements in the design stage of a product could make a huge difference in reducing its environmental impact.



Classic solid pine wood inner door sold by MinDörr.



Stefan Johansson in front of a pine wood door.

- But it wasn't like I was born with an "green gene" or something, Stefan laughs. But I've grown to really appreciate the severity of where we're at as a species, and I want to do my part in turning things around, he continues.

Right now, Stefan is zeroing in on the plastic wrapping that each door is covered with, prior to dispatch, to cushion and protect it against shocks and careless treatment.

- It's such a waste of resources, all this wrapping that is only used once and also difficult for the customer to dispose of, Stefan Johansson points out.

In collaboration with a Swedish company in the packaging industry, MinDörr is working to develop a cellulose based wrapping that not only has a much lower environmental impact at production, but is also designed to be reused rather than thrown away after unpacking.

Another idea that is brewing at MinDörr, and hopefully will materialize within the coming years, is the plan to systematize the return handling and add an assembly line for doors that have been brought back from

customers and need to be repaired. By doing this in a more standardized fashion, the company would gather valuable information about manufacturing defects and unsatisfactory product specifications that could be provided to the maker of the door. Probably, this "circular" information flow would lead to less waste and happier customers.

- It's crazy, many returned doors are ground to chips and incinerated. But to make this work, we must grow the business and maybe do some return handling for other companies, Stefan Johansson says (the yearly turnover is €1,5-2 m). Looking in to the future of the door business and construction industry as a whole, Stefan sees that a lot has to change in terms of sustainability and resources, and he emphasises the need of a long-term perspective.

- When you're erecting, say, a large complex of six hundred apartments there are still no requirements for the builder to show how the materials will be taken care of and recycled if the building is torn down in the future. If they had to present that and it was mandatory to use more eco-friendly materials, well, that would really put things in motion, Stefan Johansson concludes.

