

Spotlight

on a member

Stephen Byers, Ritec shares his views on GGF membership

An Enduring Partnership

Ritec is the pioneer of systems for glass surface renovation, protection and maintenance, and the key to its success is arguably the opportunities it creates. There is no doubt that technical expertise has a large part to play, but in terms of making that technology appropriate, and marketing it properly, creating and identifying opportunities has been the driver.

One major opportunity that came managing director Stephen Byers' way in 1987 was the chance to join the GGF. Ritec had been operating as a company since 1981, involved in the marine industry specializing in renovating and protecting windows on luxury yachts and ships - a market sector it still dominates.

Norman Reynolds, managing director of Doulton Glass (which was to eventually form part of Solaglas) invited Stephen to attend a technical meeting of the GGF. "It was held in the Russell Hotel in London," Stephen recalled, "and it was such a success that I told Norman, who was my mentor at the time, that it was our duty to support the industry's trade body. Norman has since passed away, but he is still fondly remembered."

And so began a fruitful relationship. However, Stephen explained it was not just a sense of duty that has encouraged him to keep renewing his membership;

the GGF is uniquely placed to provide exclusive opportunities.

"Take the technical seminars as one example," Stephen said. "They bring together the distilled knowledge from the key people from within the industry - they provide priceless information that would be difficult to get elsewhere. Furthermore, our membership of the GGF offers excellent commercial benefits. For example many of my customers are members and other GGF members are potential customers, the networking opportunities are endless."

For Ritec, these opportunities have manifested themselves in targeting a new business sector - glass processors and fabricators. Alongside the marine work, Ritec has developed a business in renovating and protecting existing glass. GGF membership provided new opportunities whereby the company could offer its treatment to new glass, before it became damaged with age.

"In the early days, the knowledge and networking offered by the GGF made a big impact on our business," Stephen explained. "The GGF would also exhibit at the major shows, which gave us a platform that we shared with other members. That association gave us a real stepping stone in the industry."

Another advantage that the GGF offered was its unique position as industry watchdog. About five years ago, the GGF was able to clarify a number of issues regarding self-cleaning glass and this helped many members including Ritec.

Stephen recalls. "At the time, there was confusion surrounding what people meant by 'self-cleaning' and 'low maintenance' glass. So the GGF created two data sheets on glass surface modification that set the record straight. A well-balanced committee, chaired by an independent consultant and consisting of ten people from a range of disciplines across the industry, spent about a year exploring all the issues to produce these data sheets. These can now be used confidently pending the publication of national or international standards. No other organization in our industry could have achieved that!"

For Ritec, the GGF is a relationship that has helped them create and optimize opportunities for 25 years. But it works both ways, much of the GGF's strength is drawn from the involvement from its leading Member Companies such as Ritec. It's a winning formula that shows no sign of ending any time soon.

www.ritec.co.uk



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