

Source material

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Ray Turner explores the benefits of a more transparent fire safety supply chain

The fire safety industry enjoyed robust growth in 2014. According to the [Fire Industry Association Market Condition Review Wave 3 report](#), member companies noted a surge in orders of almost 40% over a 6-month period last year, mainly from the private sector.

The increase is good news, but as the market recovers the industry can expect competition for tenders to grow. This will put additional pressure on manufacturers to demonstrate the performance and reliability of their fire safety technologies while ensuring that they deliver the best possible service to customers.

The key to providing facilities managers and specifiers with the optimum technologies for their development's specific requirements is to ensure that customers fully understand the product supply chain.

... manufacturers can help demystify the supply chain for specifiers ...

The supply chains serving the manufacturers are highly complex and subject to frequent change. As a result, facilities managers and other specifiers may find it difficult to understand where the materials and components contained in their chosen technologies have come from, as well as the reliability of the companies supplying them. It can also make it challenging for specifiers to gauge the suitability of individual products for the needs of their particular building, or how well they will perform over their lifetime.

Failing to take all of these factors into account can result in additional maintenance requirements for the fire safety system, or unforeseen repairs. It may also mean that the product does not comply with the relevant regulations for the proposed end use of the development in question.

Demystifying fire safety

To support facilities managers and specifiers in fully understanding how their chosen technologies benefit their building, it is imperative that fire safety manufacturers do all they can to demystify their supply chains.

This is why *Hochiki Europe* has launched an initiative to optimise transparency and increase understanding of the product supply chain in the construction industry. By demonstrating to customers where the components used in their technologies have come from, and the

testing procedures to ensure quality control, manufacturers can support specifiers in choosing the right products for their project.

The supplier is already working towards this goal with the introduction of a supply chain infographic, which showcases the manufacturer's commitment to product performance. It also depicts the stringent procedures put into practice by the firm, such as individually testing products by hand, rather than in batches, to uphold optimum quality.

To further support facilities managers and specifiers, Hochiki Europe has developed five key considerations to ensure they select the best possible solution for their needs:

- How does the product's development benefit the particular requirements and end use of your building?
- How are the products tested to exceed your expectations ? have they been batch tested or hand tested?
- How are compliance and safety standards assessed to meet your needs ? do the products meet the requirements for your particular building?
- What preventative measures have been taken to reduce your involvement in after care ? have the products been built to reduce maintenance requirements?
- How is the supply chain audited to improve your experience ? does the manufacturer have a short chain to ensure greater supply reliability?

Knowledge is power

In the current market, it is all too easy for facilities managers and specifiers to see fire safety equipment as a simple commodity designed to relieve them of worries related to health and safety legislation. However, there are many more details to be taken into account when installing or reviewing existing equipment, and many start with the supply chain.

Understanding the product development process can be complex but it is absolutely vital in guaranteeing a business' safety. By answering the questions above as comprehensively as possible, manufacturers can help demystify the supply chain for specifiers, equipping them with the tools they need to choose the highest quality fire safety system.

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Further information

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