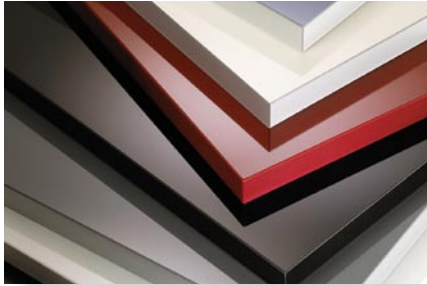


DEMAND GROWS FOR DURABLE HIGH-GLOSS FINISHES

Northern Contours teams up with SSI to deliver contemporary designs.



Northern Contours' Level doors

"High-gloss cabinet doors and drawer fronts first surfaced as a trend two or three years ago," says Lary Skow. "In one instance a customer of ours, manufacturers of very high-end, very traditional cabinetry told us their dealers were seeing growing demand for contemporary and high-gloss kitchens, and were considering taking on other cabinet lines to meet it."

Skow is sales manager for Northern Contours, a specialized provider of kitchen, bath and closet door and drawer fronts, as well as commercial office furniture and store fixture components. With the aid of its materials suppliers, the company helped its customer keep its dealers from jumping ship.

"The trend toward a more European, contemporary look is being led by higher end markets," Skow says. "We've found there are two great ways to achieve this look. First, with high-gloss 3-D laminates, which give us the ability to create soft, seamless edges and interior profiles and designs; second, with panels surfaced with sheets of ABS colors and designs, capped with a high-gloss acrylic."

Northern Contours' ABS-surfaced doors and drawer fronts have matching or metallic edges, and are sold in its new Level collection.

"The materials on our Level collection are StyleLite, an EGR product sold by Surface Source International," says Skow. "We were looking for a flat laminating material for our high-gloss program, and SSI was instrumental in helping us match a whole palette of colors. We're just launching it, but it has already generated huge interest."

SSI is also the exclusive North American supplier of Klöckner Pentaplast 3-D laminates (3DL), and provides many of the standard and high-gloss 3-D laminates Northern Contours uses.

Because of fixed materials costs and processing times, flat and 3-D laminating for high-gloss effects is more cost-efficient than painting or lacquering, which can require additional coats



3-D laminate
high-gloss doors

for surface consistency. Laminated components also offer higher durability, and the ability to combine different designs and colors.

"Many of our customers tend to play it a bit safe by choosing more traditional colors and finishes for the larger surfaces, but they are choosing from a much broader palette of high gloss finishes for their accents. This is a trend that's just starting to take off here, but we think it will steadily grow into bolder colors and more creative combinations of materials and accents."

SSI helps its customers address the high cost of inventory by stocking 17 high-gloss 3DL designs, and making them available in cut-to-any-length and full-roll quantities. StyleLite can be ordered one sheet at a time, with same-day shipping. This allows fabricators to offer more designs and products with minimum investments in physical inventory.

For more information on SSI, please visit www.ssinorthamerica.com. For more information on Northern Contours, please visit www.northerncontours.com.

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