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Market opportunity: Security

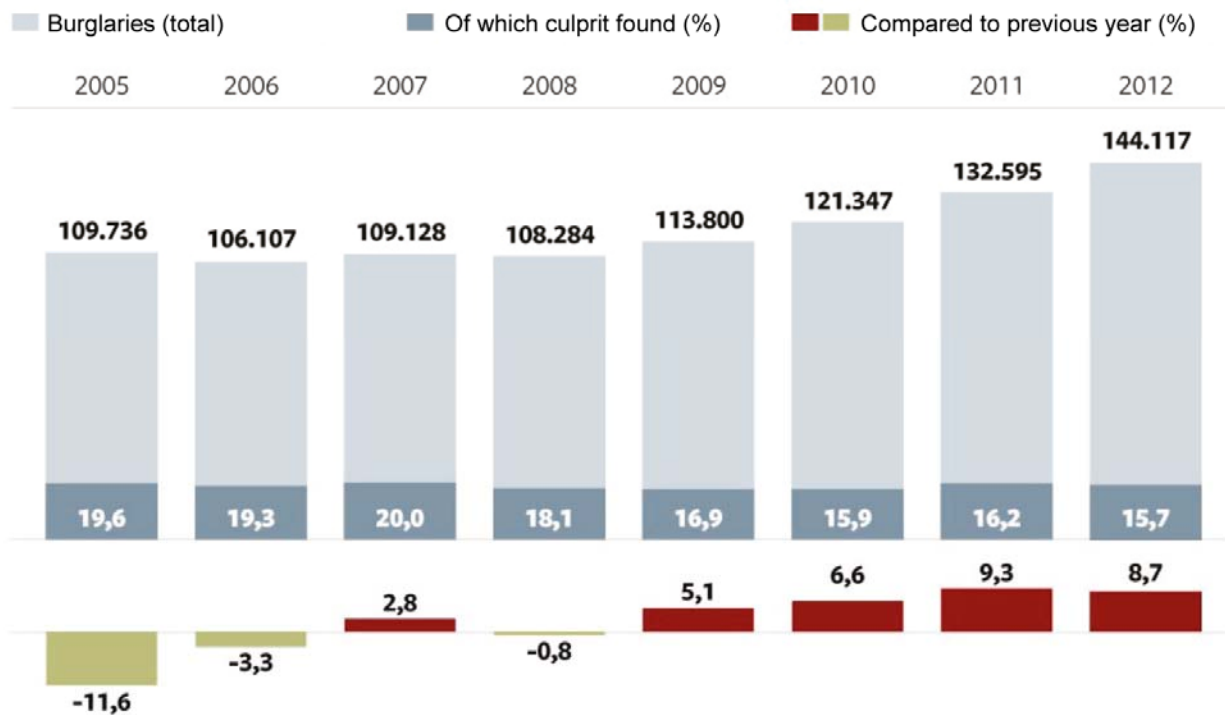
Trend towards burglar resistant building components

1 The status quo

At least from the point of view of the Bavarian State Office of Criminal Investigation, since last autumn the issue of burglaries in private dwellings has been everywhere in the media. Newspapers have been devoting whole pages to it, and it frequently features in television news reports. The reason for this lively interest in burglar-

ies – and the question of what can be done to prevent them – is that they are occurring with ever greater frequency right across Germany. Police crime advice centres are no longer able to keep up with requests for appointments, and companies that retrofit security devices (as named in the lists of approved security installers) are struggling to respond to enquiries and issue quotes within a reasonable time frame.

Increasing occurrence of burglaries in Germany



Source: 2012 German police crime statistics

Fig. 1 Frequency of burglaries in Germany



Discounters with a good awareness of trends in the market have started to offer tested and certified additional security devices in their online shops. These are the products that appear in the police's directories of manufacturers for "Tested and certified additional burglar resistant products". These products are therefore indeed what is needed, but DIYers are not familiar with DIN 18104-1 or the "recommendations for use" contained in it, which state that one security device must be fitted per metre of window perimeter, i.e. four security devices are required on an average window. They will probably be proud if they have fitted even one security device, so will have a very misleading impression of how secure their home is.

2 Integrated, not added-on

A better option would be to integrate security devices from the outset, i.e. offer complete tested burglar resistant windows. As yet some window manufacturers are clearly not capable of doing this; either that, or their sales departments are not succeeding in properly explaining the complex issue of burglary prevention in their consultations with customers. Here is an example of some poor window advice: "Mr Moosreiner, for your renovation all you need is a mushroom head on the window, this isn't Fort Knox." (Said by senior manager during a private consultation).

3 Regional differences in interest in burglary prevention across Germany

Those members of the public who seek advice right from the start are already genuinely committed to burglary prevention and appreciate the police's directories of manufacturers for tested and certified burglar resistant windows and doors (to be found at e.g. www.k-einbruch.de).

However, many others only seek advice once their new "standard windows" have been installed, and are sometimes deeply disappointed that their leaktight windows are not also automatically "leaktight" against intruders as well.

Not all customers are interested in burglary prevention; they should all, however, be allowed to decide for themselves whether they would like their windows to have this additional feature. In the south German region of Upper Bavaria, it still happens that developers give short shrift to buyers' requests for burglar resistant windows, because the window manufacturer supplying the property is not able to provide them, or simply has no interest in doing so. Even before the foundation pit for the building is dug, all the buyer can do is think that at least he can add burglar resistant components to the new windows *after* they have been installed. In contrast, in northern Germany, for example in Lower Saxony, housing associations already frequently contact the police to find out how to burglar-proof their flats and houses to help them sell better.

4 Any manufacturer can offer RC 2

In response to the increasing incidence of burglaries, window manufacturers need to give more attention to the issue of burglary prevention, because they are the people that can make the most difference. Every manufacturer should offer burglar resistant windows of resistance class RC 2 as per DIN EN 1627. Even today mechanical security devices thwart 40% of all attempted burglaries in Germany. Now this percentage needs to be increased further, to keep people even more secure.

For window manufacturers who have always thought they cannot afford the time and money involved in testing components and everything that goes with that – help is at hand. There are a number of possible routes available for achieving a tested burglar resistant component.

5 Routes to a tested and certified window

Clause 4.23 of the product standard EN 14351-1 deals with the burglar resistance of windows and external pedestrian doorsets, referring readers in-



interested in the testing and classification of resistance classes to the series of standards DIN EN 1627-DIN EN 1630. Resistance class RC 2 has become virtually the standard in public tendering processes, and higher classes are no rarity either.

Many manufacturers have their systems tested in order to obtain their own documentary evidence for the desired resistance classes, and hence to put themselves in a stronger position in the market. System houses and profile and hardware manufacturers responded to this development years ago, and are generally able to offer their customers a wide range of system tests. This means that window manufacturers can use the hardware manufacturer's system folders as documentary evidence under licence, on the basis of which they can produce burglar resistant windows.

The manufacture of burglar resistant windows and doors requires a high level of specialist knowledge and expertise. In many cases security devices do successfully prevent burglaries, but it is important also to remember that these devices can fail to do so if they are not fitted properly. There have, for example, been cases where mushroom head locking devices have failed to withstand the force applied to them, because not enough mushroom head cams were used, or they were fitted incorrectly. For this reason, when they sign their licensing agreement, manufacturers are generally briefed on how to fit the devices.

High-quality products and expert manufacturers can thus be certified; to uphold this certification they must be subjected to regular surveillance by a suitable authorised testing body. Certified products are recognisable by a special plate containing the key information about the product (Fig. 2). Once they have been certified, products and manufacturers are added to the directories of

manufacturers published by the offices of criminal investigation in the various German Federal states. When providing their free consultations to planners and developers, the criminal investigation departments recommend the manufacturers and installers listed in the directories.

For the reasons described above, demand for certified products is very high, and certified products are named more and more frequently as a minimum requirement in invitations to tender. Demand for "certified companies specialising in mechanical security devices" is also on the increase, because customers want to be sure that the components are correctly installed, in order to rule out the possibility of any weak links in the security chain.

As part of the certification process, the work done by the company in various properties is monitored to ensure that the security concepts have been properly applied in line with the applicable standards and other documents, at all relevant stages (tendering, planning, design and implementation). Companies can use this additional documentary evidence to distinguish themselves from their competitors, and to consolidate their position in the market.

6 Outlook and conclusion

Burglar resistant components are being fitted more and more frequently in Germany, and indeed the use of these components is gradually becoming a basic requirement. This poses a challenge, but also – and more importantly – it represents a major business opportunity. By offering expert advice, companies not only appear more professional to their customers, but are also more likely to be awarded lucrative contracts, because they will additionally be installing security components.

When most people have new windows installed, they do not particularly think about ensuring that they provide

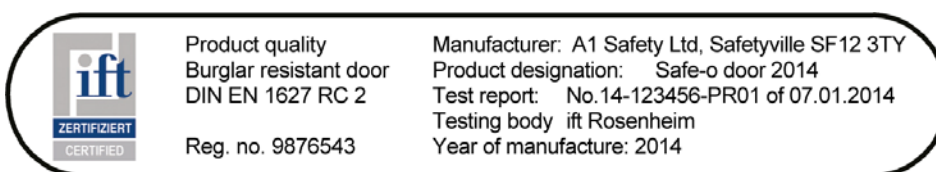


Fig. 2 Plate for a certified burglar resistant product



The screenshot shows the KfW website interface. At the top, there's a search bar and navigation links for 'Anmelden', 'Merkzettel', 'Language', and 'E-Mail-Kontakt'. The main navigation bar includes 'Privatpersonen', 'Bestandsimmobilie', and 'Einbruchschutz'. The main content area features a large image of a burglar and a headline 'Mehr Sicherheit für Ihre vier Wände'. Below the headline, there's a sub-headline 'Einbruchschutz: finanziert mit Krediten oder Zuschüssen der KfW' and a paragraph of text. A list of options is shown with plus signs: 'Einbruchhemmende Haus- und Wohnungstüren' and 'Einbruchhemmende Fenster und Fenstertüren'. The right sidebar contains three promotional boxes: 'Die Polizei empfiehlt ...', 'Interaktives Haus zum Einbruchschutz', and 'Ihr kurzer Weg zum Finanzierungspartner'.

Fig. 3 Financing programme of the KfW (Credit Institute for Reconstruction) (source: kfw.de)

protection against levers; indeed, sometimes customers even assume that their new component will offer this feature as standard. If a house in which standard products have been fitted is burgled, the window manufacturer must on the one hand accept responsibility towards their customer, and on the other hand burglar resistance will be at the forefront of their customer's mind from then on.

A look at forthcoming changes to mandates gives some insight into what the future trends will be in the area of security. The issue of burglar resistance will certainly be given some attention. This

will give another boost to burglar resistant components, and it will no longer be possible to deny the need for them.

Even the state-owned German "Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau" (KfW) is pointing to the importance of burglar resistant components and offering support programmes in response to the growing numbers of burglaries in private dwellings. Are you making the most of these opportunities to offer your customers expert advice and so gain added value for your company?