



.....still going strong when other shops have been and gone!

Background

Owned and operated by brothers John (49) and Stephen (44) Craggs who took the business over from their father Geoff in 1997 35 years after he started up.

We operate from 3 stores in North Yorkshire, retailing and installing brown and white goods over a thousand square mile area and attracting over 200 brand new customers a week. We are also proud to boast that 85% of customers make repeat purchases within six months.

In the county that spawned Comet, Miller Bros and Empire, electrical retailing has always been challenging in these environs and we have no hesitation in using our tag line at the top of the page in just about all our advertising!

Expansion

1992: 800 sq ft store in Boroughbridge with 2 staff
500 sq ft store in Easingwold with 1 part timer £825k t/o
1997 Additional 2000 sq ft store in Boroughbridge with 3 staff
1000 sq ft store in Easingwold with 2 staff £1.1m t/o
2002 New 3000 sq ft store in Ripon with 4 additional staff £1.3m t/o
2009 New workshop facility built in Boroughbridge. £2.3m t/o

Friends and Colleagues

10 sales staff, 3 installers, 2 TV engineers, 1 aerial engineer, 1 admin, 2 Directors

We are proud to say that (with two exceptions.. more of which in a minute) our staff team enter the business “untainted” by working elsewhere in the industry. This means they are not jaded or coming to us with bad habits which as we know, are hard to break. Instead, we can all learn from their practices and experience gained elsewhere and they remain excited about working in an aspirational and fast-moving industry.

We can boast a chef, a motorcycle salesman, a 19 year old dad, a firefighter, a double glazing salesman, a florist, a night club bouncer – you get the picture!

Barry, our Ripon store manager is one of the exceptions – he had just been made redundant by Jones of Oakwood when they went out of

business and having run Andrew Jones's customer contact centre was able to bring many skills and processes into G Craggs. Barry has also been able to learn the art of closing a sale from Kevin our ex-double glazing salesman!

Brendan, a TV engineer, is the latest addition who came to us after another local retailer went out of business – he in turn has passed on his expertise to our other TV engineer, but is also earning commission on accessory and aerial sales because for the first time, he has been incentivised to sell.

For one hour every week, we ALL get together for a Craggy Chat – installers, sales people and engineers for product training, technique training and for a free-for-all chat where customers' praise and grievances are aired.

One important factor but easy to forget is that people turn up to earn a living, not just because it's a nice place to spend the day so we pay well. Incentives and commission add to their earnings and 1% of the company's turnover is put into a pool fund. Avoidable mistakes (torn kitchen lino, dropped washing machines and the like) are paid for out of the fund the balance is shared out every quarter. This reduces the mistakes, increases customer satisfaction and keeps all staff on-side because the disciplinary action is unnecessary – cock-ups cost everyone money.

Continued expansion and promotion from within gives everyone an incentive to work hard. No member of the team has left G Craggs in 5 years.



Customer Service

Customer Service is a way of life at G Craggs and everything we do is designed to ensure that customers will return, tell their friends they came back, and why.

The result of this is that we have a board in all stores containing thank you letters and cards (none older than 3 months) on display near the counters.

Last month a satisfied customer wrote a letter singing our praises to the local press which was published.

Everyone is welcomed into the stores then given time to browse. We will introduce ourselves then ask about their requirements, advise them on their choice of products and our selection of services and ways to pay.

We guarantee a free next day delivery which is easy to advertise, positioning us better than the multiples. In store we offer a range of installation options explaining that there is nothing more frustrating for the customer, or for us to have a product sitting in their home which is not being used to its maximum potential. Consequently, we offer a premier installation service where for a small premium we will not only

install the product and show how to use it but will return once at the customer's request to go through it again and answer any questions that have cropped up with use.

The key factor is that it is the salesman who performs the follow-up call. No commission is paid on any sale until the salesman has ensured this follow up call has taken place but it also gets him (or her) into the customer's house where further opportunities for sales arise. The next time the customer comes in or phones up, they have a trusted friend in store they can rely upon for quality advice.

Customers are encouraged to telephone the store with any failures so we can take ownership of in or out of warranty problems. Brown goods repairs are undertaken by ourselves with a free loan product offered to all customers and an average completion of 2.5 days on TV.

The expansion of our workshop has enabled more volume throughput and from a loss of £15 - £20k per annum we are projecting a profit of £12k this financial year.

Under warranty white goods repairs are reported to the manufacturer and chased by the original salesman. We have built exceptionally good relations with service managers at Indesit, BSH, Whirlpool, Miele, Glen Dimplex to name a few. They know we'll only raise genuine non-hysterical problems with them and customers are oblivious to the machinations of the call centres.

Out of warranty work is passed to 2 local independent repairers who are issued with discount vouchers to give to their customers redeemable in our stores. We plan to have our own engineers, one Gas Safe inspected within the next year so we can take control of this aspect of the business just as we did by training an installer as an aerial/satellite rigger 2 years ago.

Similarly we employ Richard, a trained joiner as an installer who now uses his skills to do custom TV installs and kitchen alterations for built in appliances and range cookers.

This all makes us a one-stop-shop for our customers.



What Next?

A Panasonic Store in York is our next project – a departure from multi-brand but the same core values and principles will be in place.

Our fully transactional website will go live in October this year. All deliveries and installations will be in-house, orders will only be able to be placed on products that are actually in stock and customers will get the same level of service as they do in-store.

2010 will see our fourth multi-brand store when we open in Harrogate in a former car sales showroom.

Sadly, in the geographical area we operate in, thanks to the almost total dominance of DSG, Comet and Empire there are now just two other independent electrical retailers.

After the demise of Clydesdale and Rumbelows all those years ago we decided to remind people of this on a daily basis and our whole marketing strategy is based on this:



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