

# KBB REVIEW INDUSTRY AWARDS 2009



## CATEGORIES

MASTER RETAILER AWARD FOR BATHROOMS, SHOWROOM AWARD FOR BATHROOMS

**NAME:** BURGE & GUNSON, LONDON

### **How would you describe your business to the judges?**

Established for over 40 years, Burge & Gunson is a family business which started life as a plumber's merchant. We are now London's largest independent bathroom specialist and take enormous pride in our unrivalled offer of quality bathrooms, furniture, showers, accessories, tiles and radiators. Specialists in cutting edge products, we provide our customers with the ultimate choice in sophisticated luxury bathrooms. The showroom is dedicated to the latest in bathroom concepts, tastefully displayed to inspire and delight the visitor.

We also have maintained our trade counter business supplying bathrooms as well as plumbing and heating solutions to a number of different specifiers from installers to house builders. Our longstanding expertise and experience in the trade sector has helped us become a very successful retail showroom.

### **What specific evidence can you give that your business is successful?**

Continual growth year on year with a constantly improving turnover - June 2007 ended at £ XX million and June 2008 ended at £ XX million.

### **What strategy do you have for the future?**

Our main point of difference is sheer breadth of range - cutting edge design and the latest in product development and technical innovation. Burge & Gunson is aspirational and inspirational and this uniqueness has to be maintained. To do this we have an on-going responsibility to keep the showroom looking fantastic.

We will continue to lead the way in terms of providing new and exciting products, backed up by a second-to-none customer service commitment.

Our strategy for the short and long term future has to be flexible in line with the current

economic downturn. Plans to expand are in the pipeline, however, we have to consolidate, maintain growth as well as to market ourselves effectively to maximise whatever business potential there is.

- We intend to continuously improve the quality of our design and supply service as well as our customer relations to ensure recommendations as well as repeat business.
- Maintain marketing/advertising levels to ensure our showroom is the first point of call for anyone in the greater London and South East areas looking for a bathroom.
- To further develop our website and exploit the potential of the internet to widen our customer base with the objective of selling on-line in the future.

### **What is your overall showroom strategy?**

1. To provide an inspirational showcase for customers looking for something cutting edge in bathrooms in an environment that is professional yet friendly.
2. To be recognised for innovation and the ability to translate a customer's requirements into a stunning yet practical bathroom.
3. To run a showroom that is renowned for its customer service, helpful and skilled staff who will always go that 'extra mile' to ensure complete customer satisfaction. Teamwork is our watchword, we all work together to ensure that our customers are not only satisfied but delighted with their Burge & Gunson experience.

Staff training is key to this – we regularly send our people to our supplier's factories and their workshop training schemes. We also invite our key manufacturers to the showroom to train the team in-situ.

We have 2 training sessions per month. Extra to this regular test sheets are devised for the sales staff. These are marked and then any wrong answers are explained in a de-brief. Everyone has found this really useful and put a real effort into answering these questions correctly.

4. To support our showroom through our website to encourage prospective buyers to come in to store.

Our website perfectly reflects the ethos and innovation of our showroom and provides potential customers with a real in-sight into what to expect when they come in as well as to refer back to when making a purchase decision.

5. Through our close and mutually beneficial relationships with all the best manufacturers,

set the standards in our industry for displaying and supplying the most exciting bathroom products on the market for today and tomorrow.

How have you considered the customer's journey through the store?

In line with everything else we do, the customer's journey through our showroom is meant to inspire. We have a large frontage and in each window we have a 'wow factor' display leaving customers in no doubt that they are going to see the best in bathrooms. This display philosophy is reflected throughout the showroom.

Our helpful staff are always there to help but always give people time and the freedom to wander around at their leisure. Customer seating areas allow people to sit down and digest what they have seen as well as look at product samples.

### **What innovative ideas have you come up with that set your showroom apart?**

As well as what is considered today's industry norm, i.e. computer aided design and planning, customer satisfaction commitment, the provision of recommended installers and a willingness by the best showrooms to embrace complete accountability, we believe that we also offer something very special.

The purchase process for a new bathroom is long and complex and our type of customer needs to know that they have access to and have seen the latest and most exciting products.

Our showroom is large and filled to capacity with luxury products. Our website is therefore a reflection of this. Both aspects of our business perfectly complement each other. People can re-visit what they have seen in the showroom on the website and vice versa. They can look again at our displays as these have been recreated on our website. They can then click through to our manufacturers' websites to access any other information they might need.

Our customers can also see and experience the very latest in bathroom technology such as entertainment systems.

To sum up Burge & Gunson has a proven reputation of business integrity and we deal openly and honestly with suppliers and customers alike. Our showroom is inspirational, our staff are happy and so are our customers. We love the bathroom business and last but by no means least, we are successful and profitable.

