

ZIP FASTENED BLINDS ON TRACK

Subtle innovations are ensuring track guided blinds remain a strong seller in the local market, while the category is increasingly making headway overseas, writes Belinda Smart.



ZIPSCREEN external screen solution by Acmeda

Given the sometimes punishing extremes of Australian summers, growing interest in alfresco living on those more temperate days, and increasing awareness of the need to reduce energy consumption, it appears the zip fastened or track guided blind category will remain an industry staple for the foreseeable future.

It's certainly a view held by Adam Licciardi of Acmeda, who believes the outlook for external track guided products is promising.

"Demand for external sun shades and control for outdoor areas and entertaining areas is growing, driven by interest in these types of applications from both the residential and hospitality sectors."

Interest has also been given extra buoyancy thanks to a number of innovations currently hitting the market, he adds, including cassette boxes that offer a design-conscious solution for housing the blinds, wide width systems and a range of new fabrics.

Key factors influencing the market include aesthetics, durability and versatility, Licciardi explains. Aesthetic requirements are met through a "neat square profiles (with all fittings hidden and enclosed) and colour coded hardware"; durability increasingly means weather and wind resistance and product longevity and adaptability. Versatility is defined by the continually evolving designs that enable zip fastened blinds to be used in a growing number of applications.

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Acmeda, which showcased trademarked z-LOCK and Zipscreen lines at the recent R+T Stuttgart trade exhibition, remain confident of strong continued growth in the category, Licciardi says

"Demand is increasing as awareness of such solutions rises, and as a result systems become further refined allowing reach to a wider range of customers."

Tony de Maaijer, designer and owner of the trademarked Ziptrak track guided blind system, attributes the system's success to the requirements of living down under.

"We Australians are well noted for our love of the outdoor lifestyle. The demand for an innovative and easy blind system as an all-year-round proposition for the customer was obvious. Consequently the Ziptrak system has taken the Australian blind market by storm."

Ziptrak clear PVC and shade blinds' innovative features continue to garner strong sales, he says.

"Specially designed tracks on both sides enable the Ziptrak blind (clear PVC or High-Tech Shade Cloth) to lock into the tracks and glide smoothly when pushed up or down without any physical effort."

The Ziptrak trademark's innovations are also influenced by environmental awareness; the blinds assist energy use reduction by keeping areas warmer in winter and cooler in summer, while further 'green' innovations have also recently come on stream.

"Ziptrak blinds are easy to use, versatile, and environmentally friendly. They can be motorised using a solar powered electric motor; SolarSmart, a trademark of CW Products. The Solar Motor was specially designed for the Ziptrak system."

Meanwhile another enhancement of the trademarked Ziptrak system has just been completed, with a central release mechanism in the process of being patented and set to be introduced to the market in March, he confirms."

"It is innovative and its unique design makes for ease of operation."

With the blinds being exported to New Zealand, New Caledonia, Thailand and increasingly to Europe, the next step for Ziptrak is a concerted effort to "seriously export to Europe and the US which are as yet untapped markets for this type of product."

"To that end Ziptrak Pty Ltd exhibited at the R+T Stuttgart at the end of February, where we will also showcase Ziptrak's new development of an internal blind system."



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