



## dollar curtains & blinds stocked for success

QUIET ACHIEVER DOLLAR CURTAINS AND BLINDS HAS GROWN FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS INTO ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S LEADING WINDOW FURNISHING ENTERPRISES, SOMETHING THAT OWNERS PETER AND LYN CROSBY ARE VERY PROUD OF.

WHAT BEGAN AS a small retail space in outer eastern Melbourne is now a fully vertical operation with two large facilities incorporating manufacturing, warehousing and administration and 36 stores, including franchises up and down Australia's eastern seaboard. "My father started the business in 1967, ably assisted by my mum" says Peter. "They chose to specialise in carpets, curtains and wallpapers in their Boronia store, but over the years, curtains became their real strength. This was in the days before blinds became an integral part of the business." As the business continued to grow and succeed, further stores were opened in Ringwood and Bayswater. While these changes were taking place, Peter started to take control of the family business.



"About 30 years ago, we changed the name to Dollar Curtains and Blinds because we wanted to go in a different direction," Peter explains. "At that time, we were stocking and selling fabric by the metre over the counter, as well as providing a quality service of custom-made work. "Following the name change, we started opening up more stores, and soon people were beginning to enquire about franchising opportunities." Soon after this, the first Dollar Curtains and Blinds franchise opened in Bendigo, and before long, there was another in Shepparton. "The franchises are really important to us because they give us strength as a group – it is not just us; it is the franchises and us," Lyn Crosby explains. "With franchises opening up throughout Victoria and interstate, the Dollar Curtains and Blinds name was fast gaining market strength. "However, people can outgrow their name or logo – that is partly why we have introduced DCB Design." With a total name change out of the question, The DCB Designs name has been introduced as part of a dual branding strategy intended to improve the image of Dollar Curtains and Blinds. But to those in the know, Dollar Curtains is the name behind quality custom-made furnishings. "We already have a strong market share with good quality Dollar Curtains and Blinds products, and we did not want to destroy that, so the DCB Designs concept is more about adding something extra," Lyn says. "This new company is proving popular with customers, particularly within the commercial sector." Both Dollar Curtains and Blinds and DCB Designs supply a wide range of window treatment products for new residences, home renovations and commercial properties, customising orders to suit all needs including affordability. "This is an industry that is custom made" Lyn says. "We have the ability and expertise to do quality custom-made jobs costing anywhere from hundreds of dollars through to hundreds of thousands." One of the window furnishing industry's unique businesses, Dollar Curtains and Blinds features manufacturing, wholesaling and retail capabilities. "Nobody manufactures both curtains and blinds like we do," Peter Crosby says. "We also spend a lot of effort and money on store locations, whereas others do business via consultation. "We have set up an infrastructure so that customers can come in and actually see what they are going to buy. "We showcase a diverse range of window solutions including eco-friendly products," he adds. Peter believes the storefront strategy is integral to the company's success. "We believe this works because seeing the displayed products of what you are intending to buy – instead of a picture of how they might look – gives the customers more concepts and confidence with their final purchase. "The staff spends time with the customer so they know exactly what they are ordering. "The samples can also be taken home to see how they hang and look in the home environment." Aside from the visual aspect of the stores, Dollar Curtains and Blinds offers a free measure and quote, and also an interior design consultancy service. "Our staff has a great deal of experience and knowledge and keep up to date with the latest looks and trends," Peter says. "We employ (including our franchises) more than 350



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products

Lyn Crosby - Dollar Curtains and Blinds Owner





people and we have over 40 cars on Melbourne metro roads on any given business day.

"We do it all, from in-house quotes, workroom manufacture through to installation; everything from start to finish."

Over the past five years, the company has gone through a large period of growth. During this time, the couple's three sons have joined the business, invigorating and helping drive the company through this exciting period.

"This third generation decided they wanted the business for their future, and since then, they have been committed to keeping up with continuing changes and developments within the industry.

"They are always investigating new and updated machinery and products, including the establishment of our extensive IT infrastructure.

"This has therefore brought about a greater awareness of our company profile and our extensive range of goods."

In order to maintain the high standards set by Lyn and Peter, the business is continually modernising and investing back in its most important asset: its staff.

"A large proportion of our staff has worked for the company for over 10 years. "The team is committed to providing a quality product, and the growth of the business is evident by the competence of sales, office and manufacturing staff.

"One of the advantages we have with our staff is that we are still a family business."

In the Crosbys' opinion, nurturing a family atmosphere within the company helps motivate workers to get the most out of themselves.

"We are working constantly with our staff and visit our stores on a regular basis.

"It is an asset that we still manufacture in Australia – which is not easy to do at the moment with constant challenges from overseas.

"We train all our staff ourselves and have been doing so for over 30 years." With the continual expansion of the business, it was necessary for the Head Office to move to larger premises, which include better facilities for conducting more staff training on product knowledge, marketing strategies and further ideas to keep the business moving forward.

"Due to the increased demand for blinds, it became necessary for us to move from eight separate locations to two sites totalling over 9000 square metres.

"In doing this, it has allowed us to further expand our blind manufacturing, introducing new products to our range."

Efficient staff, constant expansion, numerous showrooms and a thick spread of franchises mean the Crosbys are able to pass on savings to customers.

"We have long standing business relationships and substantial buying power with our wholesalers,"

Peter says. We get price savings because we buy in bulk and can therefore pass these savings on to the public. " The company's ability to offer competitive pricing, quality products and unbeatable service is the core to Dollar Curtains and Blinds' success. **WFA**

