

Speaker 1 00:00:05 Welcome to the Clear Impact Podcast brought to you by PGTI University. Thanks for joining us today. My name is Sherri Connor, and I am your host.

Speaker 2 00:00:20 I was thinking from an assessment standpoint, now we have the ability to request information from the learner. Yeah, so if we choose to do so, I mean, it depends on how mean we want to be.

Speaker 1 00:00:31 It's not mean. It's not mean it's all done with the spirit of what's best for the learner.

It's easy to keep up with changes, right? Sometimes. And that's what this miniseries is all about. Jim Shank and I sat down to share about the newest improvements our team has been working on. This includes a new training platform and our groundbreaking certification program. Listen in as Jim turns the tables on me for this fun and informative conversation.

Good morning. We're here on the Clear Impact Podcast. And I am sitting with Jim Shank, the Senior Manager of Customer Education and Innovation.

Speaker 2 00:01:09 Good morning.

Speaker 1 00:01:10 Good morning. That's really your title. I just said it without even looking.

Speaker 2 00:01:14 I know, but you were thinking pretty hard there.

Speaker 1 00:01:15 Yeah. Did you see the wrinkles on my forehead? I'm glad this is just an audio podcast. So what are we going to talk about today?

Speaker 2 00:01:24 I got a lot of things going on. I mean, this is the end of March, 2022. Ooh. I had to think about that. Yeah, but it's the end of March. So we're obviously going to be quickly getting into April and that is Q2 of this year. Time is flying. We've got a lot of things going on. It's been, you know, fast and furious. We're rolling out new things. And, uh, we had talked about what the University offers several months ago and what we were going to be offering beginning in January. I thought it'd be kinda cool to sit down together again and just talk about where we are in that launch and some new things coming up.

Speaker 1 00:02:04 Okay.

Speaker 2 00:02:05 And I had a crazy idea.

Speaker 1 00:02:06 What's that? Oh no, you do this to me all the time.

Speaker 2 00:02:12 Got to, got to keep everybody guessing. I had a crazy idea since you're so involved in the rollout and design of our learning management system and all the different things that we're doing, I thought it'd be cool if I asked you some questions on this podcast.

Speaker 1 00:02:27 Oh, well that's fun.

Speaker 2 00:02:29 Well, yeah. What if we just kind of turn, turn the tables here a little bit and have you tell the folks what we're doing? Okay. So a couple of questions that I was just thinking about. We launched our learning management system, the new environment, along with some of the new capabilities, beginning in January of this year. So we've had the first quarter that we've rolled some

things out. So can you just take a couple moments and talk about some of the features of the new system that we've been enjoying over the last quarter, and maybe some of the successes that we've seen, and maybe even touch on some of the new things. How's that that's like five questions in one. Wow.

Speaker 1 00:03:04 Wow. Okay. Yeah. Um, so that's where I live and breathe these days. So I'm very excited about the new platform. Basically, there is some clarity for our learning audience. Previously, the system just had all of the PGTI products in one giant library, and there was not really any rhyme or reason. A lot of times customers would come in and they would be like, where do I begin? And the new system is structured in such a way that people have a clear path. So we have learning plans, not paths, learning plans, and those are all organized by the family brand. So when WinGuard Aluminum has a plan, a path, I'm going to edit this.

Speaker 2 00:03:49 I'm the one who always gets that mixed up.

Speaker 1 00:03:51 Yeah, I know. Well, I'm feeling all this pressure now that I'm the one giving the answers. All of the products that pertain to WinGuard Aluminum are in one learning path. WinGuard Vinyl, same thing, ClassicVue Max, and then EnergyView. So any time that you're looking for a specific product now, you know where to go for that product. So the product courses are all within that. And then the services tracks are the same. So we have vinyl and aluminum because as we know, or maybe we don't know, maybe people are still figuring this out. The main difference between those two different aluminum products is just the glass packages. So when it comes to the installation side, the frame is the frame is the frame. It might be heavier if it's an impact product, but the process of installation is the same. So the services side has two different tracks.

Speaker 1 00:04:41 It has the aluminum track and the vinyl track. And then that's the Associate level and that's for PGT. So the other brands also have product courses and services courses, and those are also organized by the family. So CGI Associate level is all up and running and that is Sentinel, Scout and Sparta. Sparta. And then they have just the one services track, which is Aluminum, because CGI is primarily an aluminum manufacturing company. So, so it's just a much easier way to navigate through and find what you're looking for. And then the really great thing is that there is a credential at the end of it. So this was kind of your brain child. You hatched this idea before I came along and then said, here we go, let's make this happen. So now there are associate level certifications. We're about to embark on the professional level certifications.

Speaker 2 00:05:36 The next one up.

Speaker 1 00:05:36 Which is the next one up. And so the courses accumulate, the Associate level is all online. You don't have to show up and you don't have to be anywhere at a specific time. You can do all of that at your own convenience, but the Professional level, and then the next level up, Masters and then Expert, those all require a little bit more, and those are cumulative. So on the Professional level, we have an Impact Professional level. So that is WinGuard Aluminum and WinGuard Vinyl. So if you want to have your Professional certification around that particular...

Speaker 2 00:06:07 Type of product.

Speaker 1 00:06:08 Type of product, then you'll know all of that. So you will have taken all of the courses on the Associate level for both family products, and incorporated some instructor led courses,

you know, learning more about fenestration, learning more about water mitigation. And then as you go up, now, you're going to start getting into building codes and energy and things like that. So we're really a university now. We have an actual program and an actual course plan and an actual path for people to follow.

Speaker 2 00:06:37 And our certifications kind of mimic an actual academic university, correct. Where you have your Associate degree, a Bachelor's degree, we call it Professional. And then your Master's degree, we piggyback on that, we call it Masters. And then the final, your PhD at a normal university, on our side, we call it Expert. So yeah, that's the way it's all designed.

Speaker 1 00:06:56 And so we have over 50 certifications earned so far. Yes. Some of our learners are very ambitious and they've attained several. My suspicion is that they're new to the industry and they're like sponges, like I was. And like everyone is when they first get in here, they're trying to figure it all out. We do have a little bit of competition going on amongst our own sales team,

Speaker 2 00:07:16 Which is fun

Speaker 1 00:07:17 Which is fun. And so they're all getting in there as often as they can. And, and the nice thing is, is if you've been around for a bit, you don't actually have to take the course. You can just take the assessment and if you know your stuff, then you're going to pass it with a 90% and keep going well,

Speaker 2 00:07:34 But you bring up an important point. Uh, and that is, that it is an investment in time. It's an investment in the effort and so forth, just like at an, again, a normal academic university, there's an investment, but there's a payback.

Speaker 1 00:07:47 Right? The other nice thing that I really like about the system is that the certifications and the credentials stay with the learners. So if they have to relocate into a different environment and they walk into a potential new employer and say, Hey, I know PGT products, or I know CGI products, well, you can say that, but do you really know it? And now there's some evidence, there's some actual proof of that. That has to feel good as a learner. You know, like I can say, Hey, I have a Bachelor's degree in this field, but in the fenestration industry, there isn't really that same kind of thing. So I love that we're blazing the path in this area for our audience.

Be sure to tune in for upcoming episodes to help you understand the fenestration industry, what you need to know when buying windows and doors and other related topics, you can find out more about us at pgtiuniversity.com. You can also find us on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Speaker 2 00:08:46 And from the learner's perspective, what tangible evidence do they have of their effort that they made in the past, with regard to certification?

Speaker 1 00:08:53 So that's where the system comes in very nicely. So there are badges that are connected to their profile, and there are leaderboards and some gamification involved in that as well. Um, at the associate level, they get a badge and a certificate, and then as they move up, depending on which area they're studying, if they're a product professional at the second level, they will receive a pin and this is a fancy pin and they can put that on their backpack or wear it on their lapel, or it's affix it to a name tag or whatever they want to do with it. But it really shows that they have received that designation, as well as the certificate, as well as the badge on their profile. And then if they're on the

services track, they get an embroidered patch that they can then attach to their work uniform. And then at the next levels, we're still developing that, they'll get, they'll get a pin and a patch.

Speaker 2 00:09:43 There's more stuff,

Speaker 1 00:09:44 There's more stuff. So they're going to get some fancy swag as they reach those upper levels. So more to be revealed on that.

Speaker 2 00:09:52 Fun stuff. So what's next, what's coming.

Speaker 1 00:09:57 Well, I forgot about a couple of things. Hold on. We got to go back. Yeah. So for those listeners that are brand new, we've created some intro level courses, because if you've never been involved in a window or door product setting, then just learning about a WinGuard Vinyl 5500 single-hung is going to be a little overwhelming. If you don't understand vinyl, if you don't understand the mechanics of a single hung, if you don't even understand what glasses are, laminated glass or insulated glass, we have designed some introduction courses to just kind of create a little bit of a softer on-ramp for people who are new to the industry. And we've actually been able to incorporate a couple of podcasts into the curriculum, which is nice. Yeah. And so it's just helpful to have that reinforcement. Um, it's kind of baby steps into the pool that is fenestration, which is huge. And so I'm very proud of that. Um, that came directly from my being overwhelmed when I started like, oh, I know how people feel now, I get it. Like, this is hard...

Speaker 2 00:11:02 Well. And that leads me to think of, of other folks. I mean, we live in Florida and Florida is a destination location for a lot of people. Even those that work historically in the fenestration industry from, you know, the Midwest or the west coast or, or wherever. And when they move to Florida, things are different here with regard to fenestration. You know, there's a lot of different types of materials that are used for windows and doors throughout the United States that may not be appropriate for Florida, right. And for our weather and climate and so forth and our bugs. So providing these introduction courses, those that you've created and others is important because it spells out why we don't use wood products for the most part in Florida. Right. And that type of thing. So I think it's, it's well positioned. It's a great area that we've never been able to cover before.

Speaker 1 00:11:49 Yeah, no, it's fun to be a part of that. And already, you know, hearing that people are benefiting and, and really appreciating what we're providing, because you know, the growth here is just explosive. And if you're a dealer you're having to hire from outside the norm, and that means training and lucky them, they can take advantage of the university and all that we offer and we don't even charge them for it. So that's the difference between us and a real university.

Speaker 2 00:12:17 Well, and quite honestly, that's also the difference between us and some of our competitors from a national perspective. Right. Because we have the unique opportunity to have the University PGTI University, you know, it's enjoyed, as you said, free of charge by our customers. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:12:33 Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:12:33 So it's cool.

Speaker 1 00:12:34 It is cool.

Speaker 2 00:12:35 So we've been talking about what we've been doing over the last three months, but again, I ask you what's next?

Speaker 1 00:12:40 What's next. Oh my gosh. Well, what we're currently doing is we are working fast and furiously to create those same learning paths and those same certifications for all of our brands. So soon to come is the PGT Professional level certifications, which people are working on. But the end of that learning path assessment is going to be a doozy. We're raising the bar a little bit, because it needs to have some weight to it. You need to feel like you've actually proven yourself when you take that test and when you sport that pin or that badge or that patch. So, um, so we're busy working through what do people really need to walk away with? What do we really want them to understand? So it's not just regurgitating, what's the design pressure for this window, or what is the maximum size for that door? It's more of understanding. Why would someone recommend a vinyl product over an aluminum product? Why would you upsell an impact product in a non-impact region? So things like that. So WinDoor is coming, CGI is coming, uh, we already have the four different certs on CGI and we have six on PGT. And so those next levels are coming. So WinDoor is coming. Eco is coming, Eze-Breeze is coming,

Speaker 2 00:13:57 Western is coming.

Speaker 1 00:13:58 Western's coming. So there's a lot...

Speaker 2 00:14:01 Anlin is coming

Speaker 1 00:14:02 Anlin is coming. There's just, there's so much fun for us to help put all of this in a manner that people can really jump in and grab a hold of.

Speaker 2 00:14:11 From the perspective of visuals, are we going to be doing anything new and exciting in the future?

Speaker 1 00:14:18 We already are. So with our new system, we have the capacity to incorporate photos and videos into the test questions. And we've already been incorporating video into the curriculum and that's where all the services come from, but we've never been able to put a photograph in a question and say, which roller is the one that's used in the 5570? Is it this one or this one or this one? And so to actually incorporate some visuals, which based on my limited understanding, there's a thing called cognitive load when people are, and when people have to read questions or read texts, it's a higher cognitive load. But if you can watch a video or look at pictures, it lessens the cognitive load, which makes learning easier. You can absorb it a little faster and with a little less stress. So, and most of us are visual. I mean, the fenestration industry is a visual space. Construction is hands-on visual, and they might not be able to touch it in an online learning environment. But a picture is much easier than reading a description of what that picture is.

Speaker 2 00:15:26 A picture is worth a thousand words.

Speaker 1 00:15:27 It is.

Speaker 2 00:15:28 Somebody said that. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:15:30 Who said that?

Speaker 2 00:15:31 I don't know. It was before my day.

Speaker 1 00:15:33 Yeah. I don't know either. We'll find out it's probably an artist.

Speaker 2 00:15:37 I just said it.

Speaker 1 00:15:39 Oh! It was you, there you go. It was Jim Shank who said that. Uh, so, so that's been a fun thing for us to play with. And then we have some different styles of questions that we've been able to incorporate. So it's a really fun space to have some creative ability. And then just to also again, improve the experience for our learners.

Speaker 2 00:15:55 Yeah. And I do want to throw out one other thing that we now have the ability to do, and that is to request information from our learner.

Speaker 1 00:16:03 Right. So when they sign in, so yeah, we're asking them, what's their experience level. What is their position? Um, who do they report to? And, and that's another fun feature too. We didn't talk about that. So we have a Teams feature. If you're telling your six people that report to you, that they need to take some classes. What it used to look like, is you would ask the sales rep and then the sales rep would ask me, and then I would go run a report and then I would send it to the sales rep. And then the sales rep would send it to the manager. Now it's all there. All right there. So the manager can go on to their profile and see who's on their team and see the activity. They can assign courses and run reports and just kind of keep an eye on things.

Speaker 2 00:16:47 So accountability is built in. Yes.

Speaker 1 00:16:50 And it doesn't require too much from us, which is nice. Yeah. When we're talking about thousands of learners, that's, you know, that just becomes busy work and we don't have time for that.

Speaker 2 00:16:59 I was thinking from an assessment standpoint, now we have the ability to request information from the learner. Yeah. So if we choose to do so, I mean, it depends on how mean we want to be.

Speaker 1 00:17:11 It's not mean. It's not mean, it's all done with the spirit of what's best for the learner. It's not about, it's not a power trip on our part. It's what's really going to show, oh, maybe it is no. Um, but we can actually, when we get into the higher levels of certification, we can ask, especially on the install side, we can ask for them to upload a video

Speaker 2 00:17:35 Of their work

Speaker 1 00:17:36 Of their work. Like, let's see if you really do know how to install a window?

Speaker 2 00:17:40 Or we can ask open-ended questions. Right. Like an essay type question and things like that.

Speaker 1 00:17:45 Right. And it's all graded by artificial intelligence. No, just kidding. It's graded by us. We do have to have our hand in that. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:17:52 The instructors.

Speaker 1 00:17:53 Yeah. Yeah. But wouldn't it be nice if it was artificial intelligence. Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:17:57 Yeah, some day...

Speaker 1 00:17:58 Yeah. And then the mobile app, um, we did not have that before. And so you can experience your learning on the go. So if you're stuck at the airport or if you're waiting for something and you just have some time to kill and you want to learn a little bit more, you can go online and do it that way too.

Speaker 2 00:18:16 Yeah. This has been really fun. It's been fun for me to ask you questions.

Speaker 1 00:18:19 Gosh.

Speaker 2 00:18:20 Yeah. So is there anything else that you'd like to share with our customers?

Speaker 1 00:18:23 I'm excited about homeowners getting a hold of this at some point. And the podcast is really serving that well, but you know, no one is spending the money in this price range without doing some research on their own. Nobody steps onto a car lot without going online first and researching, you know, do I need this? Or is that feature really worth it? I'm not going to just take the word of a salesperson. And so when a homeowner walks into the construction office or the remodeler's office or the dealer's showroom, or wherever they're going, they should walk in knowing a few things before they start talking to someone. And so I think that's a really cool thing, is that we are another voice of authority as the manufacturers. Like, this is why we're designing it this way. This is the benefit to you. And then it's just lending that credibility to the dealership. So it's not just the dealer's word. It's, we're the ones who invented these products. And so now you can feel really good about your decision when you dropping, you know, 10 or 20 or \$30,000 on a window and door package, you can say, wow, I did my research, I did my homework. I know that this is the right product for me.

Speaker 2 00:19:31 Yeah. That's fantastic. You're doing a great job.

Speaker 1 00:19:34 You're doing a great job.

Speaker 2 00:19:35 We do hard work.

Speaker 1 00:19:37 We do hard work well and wait, but we have fun with it too. We do.

Speaker 2 00:19:40 Absolutely. And this is part of it.

Speaker 1 00:19:41 This is part of it. I get to be in this podcast studio and interview really smart people and have fun with that. And, and hopefully it's all making a difference. Yeah, I think

Speaker 2 00:19:51 So. I think so, too. Awesome. Thank you, Sherry.

Speaker 1 00:19:53 Oh, well, thanks for joining me.

Speaker 2 00:19:55 It's been great having you on the Clear Impact Podcast.

Speaker 1 00:19:58 Ah, have an awesome day. You as well. Alright. Take care.

Speaker 1 00:20:02 PGTI University is the Customer Education Team for an entire family of brands. We began with the original EZBreeze porch enclosure line, then became PGT, America's leading brand of impact resistant windows and doors. We then added CGI, CGIC, WinDoor, Western Windows, New South Windows, Eco Windows and Doors, and our latest acquisition, Anlin Windows and Doors.

We create products built to withstand major storms, keeping people safe, secure and prepared. Our exceptional brands give you the protection you need without compromising design or functionality.

PGTI University is here to educate YOU, our listener, so that you can be more informed about window and door products.