

How Knockout Doors Can Dazzle Your Customer

Case Study

Impactable Doors Help Grocer Reduce Damage, Downtime, and Energy Loss

By Josh Brown



Dock door manufacturers have developed an innovative solution to combat door damage and energy loss on loading docks. That solution is the knockout door, a sectional garage door that withstands impacts and easily resets itself back in the track.

Ironically, some door dealers are not interested in promoting a knockout door because they feel it takes away from their service business in terms of repair and replacement of panels and door hardware. However, knockout doors also require maintenance. Maintenance costs are certainly reduced with knockout doors, but they still require spring adjustments and other regular service check-ups that are similar to those on standard sectional doors.

Knockout doors help you differentiate your company from your competition, and they give you an opportunity to build a stronger long-term relationship with customers. In effect, these doors reduce competition because you are providing a better solution than short-sighted dealers who are thinking only about ongoing service calls.

Impressing the Customer

The knockout door solution certainly grabbed the attention of management at Associated Grocers in Baton Rouge, La. This massive facility incorporates over 100 dock positions in 820,000 square feet, supporting more than 210 retail outlets across the southeastern U.S.

Matt Fuqua, director of facilities, has been with Associated for over 16 years. In spite of the large size of the facility, he says there is not much room in the actual dock area to maneuver forklifts, pallet jacks, and product loads.

“Bottom line, our new employees were training in our refrigerated dairy storage area and were damaging the doors,” says Fuqua. “We needed doors that could withstand the constant impacts, maintain their shape, and operate the way they were supposed to.”

Even the best-run facilities experience door damage from forklifts running into door panels and tracks. As a result of these impacts, panel and track damage are common and can lead to expensive repairs, replacements, and energy loss. Fuqua, after many frustrating experiences with this damage at Associated Grocers, worked with his team and a local door dealer to develop solutions.

Knockout Doors to the Rescue

They elected to install impactable knockout dock doors for the regular cold storage areas. These doors feature a rugged 12-gauge track and thick insulated foam core panels with damage-resistant interior facing. These knockout doors proved to be the perfect addition to guard against forklift impacts and help maintain facility temperatures in the hot Louisiana summers.

In the dairy cooler area, Fuqua replaced the existing standard freezer doors with knockout doors that include thick, moisture-resistant, insulated panels for superior thermal protection. In addition to the insulated panels, a tight perimeter weatherseal incorporates a double-loop seal to prevent energy loss. On these particular doors, the seal is attached to the door rather than mounted to the door jamb, keeping the seal out of the way of forklifts and trailers.



Knockout doors used in busy dock areas offer maintenance and cost reductions for customers.

A smaller area of the facility houses only dry goods. In this section, insulation was not a priority for Fuqua, who chose to install non-insulated knockout doors with additional brush side seals. TKO non-insulated knockout doors have an aluminum exterior and a fiber-reinforced plastic (FRP) interior surface. Both surfaces are laminated to a wood core.

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These models offer an impactable design that utilizes retractable plungers in lieu of standard metal rollers inside the door track. When a forklift collides with the doors, the plungers retract, releasing the door from the opening, thus minimizing panel damage.

Doors That Pay for Themselves

“Our main concern from a maintenance perspective was the damage

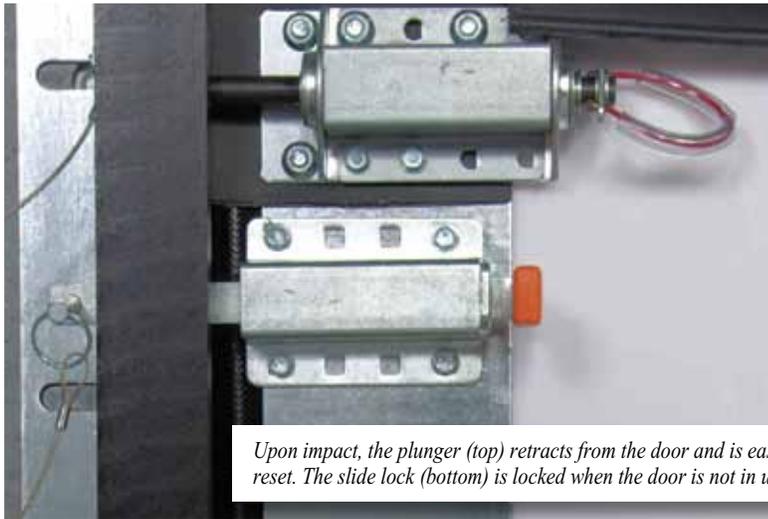
that we were experiencing from the impacts on our standard metal overhead doors,” says Fuqua. “Once we installed the knockout doors, our maintenance issues were virtually eliminated.”

When a traditional sectional door track is hit, it bends out of shape, making it harder for rollers to operate. This entices dock workers to leave the doors open between loads, making the facility vulnerable to the exterior environment.

“The impactable doors we installed have more than paid for themselves in reduced maintenance, downtime, and parts,” adds Fuqua. Motivated by the success of these doors, he has contracted to replace 10 doors each year until all the dock doors at Associated Grocers are knockout doors.

The reduction in maintenance costs has allowed Associated to take the savings they realized on the loading dock and incorporate it into other areas of the facility. Thanks to knockout doors, maintenance and downtime have been reduced so drastically that Associated Grocers is able to pass the savings along to its customers. ■

Josh Brown is national sales manager for TKO Dock Doors of Sussex, Wis.



Upon impact, the plunger (top) retracts from the door and is easily reset. The slide lock (bottom) is locked when the door is not in use.

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