

For window finish, white on the outside with a natural look on the inside is preferred. One wooden window manufacturer stresses the importance of Canadian wood for windows. According to him, compared with U.S. woods, Canadian woods have a finer grain because they grow in more northerly regions.

For outside doors, a gloss finish in dark colours (e.g. oak, ebony, rosewood and other dark coloured wood) is preferred. Interior door colouring must be co-ordinated with total interior design. Oak colour, light brown and white are preferred.

Finishing or the assembly of doors and windows is also important. All connecting parts should be cleanly assembled so that doors and windows appear as if they are made from a single block of wood.

Another concern in entrance doors is that imported doors from North America and Europe are not suitable for Japanese climate and house design. Japan is relatively humid and the humidity changes considerably every season. As well, entrance doors are usually installed where sunshine, rain and temperature directly affects them.

To increase door exports to Japan, it might be necessary to establish a contact who can refinish and provide maintenance service. A company called Homax has successfully imported Sauder doors by refinishing them in Japan to meet local climatic conditions.

Packaging is also important especially for doors. Many importers complain about poor or lack of packaging. In the JIS standard, at least paper or other packaging for every door and window is required.

Priority Market Segments

Market segments are considered from the following viewpoints:

- . types of houses in which imported doors and windows might be installed;
- . type of buyers; and
- . geographic market.

Types of Houses

In types of houses, the custom built house market has the highest potential for imported doors and windows as the owner of the house usually makes the decisions. The next highest market potential is for 2 x 4 houses, then top-of-the-line prefabricated houses.

The 2 x 4 house system is especially interesting since the market has been growing. Further, as they are factory-produced houses, the quantity per order is larger than for custom built houses.