

Retailers vs. the 'big boxes'

As a consumer, I must admit that I frequent my local glass shop only when I have a major home renovation planned: a new shower enclosure, a replacement window, a mirrored wall. And even then, there is the temptation to cross the street to Home Depot. However, thanks to Mark Pritikin, president of Creative Mirror & Shower in Addison, Ill., that's about to change. As he pointed out in an interview for the "Showrooms as Sales Tools" article on Page 94, retail glass shops have two main advantages over the big box retailers:

"One, we buy directly from the source, and a lot of times if you buy a custom shower door from Home Depot, [it's supplied] by another glass company," Pritikin says. "It creates a situation in which the homeowner has to pay an additional markup for the home-center middle man. Two, we feel that product knowledge is a massive advantage for us. When you come into our stores, you talk with qualified, knowledgeable people. In a home center, your salesperson may have limited knowledge and is selling everything from toilets to sinks."

Better pricing and better customer service? I'm sold. The next time I need a framed mirror, bath enclosure or even glass cleaner, I'm headed to my local glass shop. Educate my fellow consumers, and they'll do the same. **g**



Jenni Chase, *Senior editor, retail and auto glass*