

BIG DIFFERENT DOORS

WHEN AND HOW TO RECOMMEND BI-FOLD DOORS

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You already know about sectional overhead doors, but what about bi-fold doors? When does it make sense to install a bi-fold door, and how do you know which one is right for your customer?

Traditional overhead doors work great for a wide range of buildings, but they have their limits; most can only be constructed as wide as 40'. If you have customers who move large equipment, such as airplanes or agricultural equipment, 40' may simply be too narrow.

This is when a bi-fold door is a better solution. Bi-fold doors feature a unique truss system that keeps them stable up to as wide as 90' to accommodate some of the largest equipment.

Liberating interior space

Bi-fold doors also allow full use of the opening from the floor to the bottom of the building rafter. A sectional door typically requires 18" to 24" of headroom on the building's interior

because it is mounted on the inside of the structure. Bi-fold doors, however, are mounted on the exterior of the building, providing optimal clearance.

For example, let's say the customer has a 60'-wide post-frame building with a 4:12 pitch roof and 18' side walls. They want to install a 40'-wide door. With a traditional sectional overhead door, the customer would only get 40' x 16' of clearance unless they raised the

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WIDER: BI-FOLD DOORS CAN BE MADE AS WIDE AS 90', IDEAL FOR OPENINGS THAT ACCOMMODATE LARGE EQUIPMENT SUCH AS AIRPLANES AND AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS.

EXTERIOR MOUNT: SINCE BI-FOLD DOORS ARE MOUNTED ON THE BUILDING'S EXTERIOR AND OPEN OUTSIDE THE BUILDING, THEY ALLOW FULL USE OF THE OPENING FROM THE FLOOR TO THE BOTTOM OF THE BUILDING RAFTER.



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building to accommodate the 24" of headroom needed for the sectional door. With a bi-fold door, on the other hand, the customer can maintain the same building dimensions and have the full 40' x 18' of clearance.

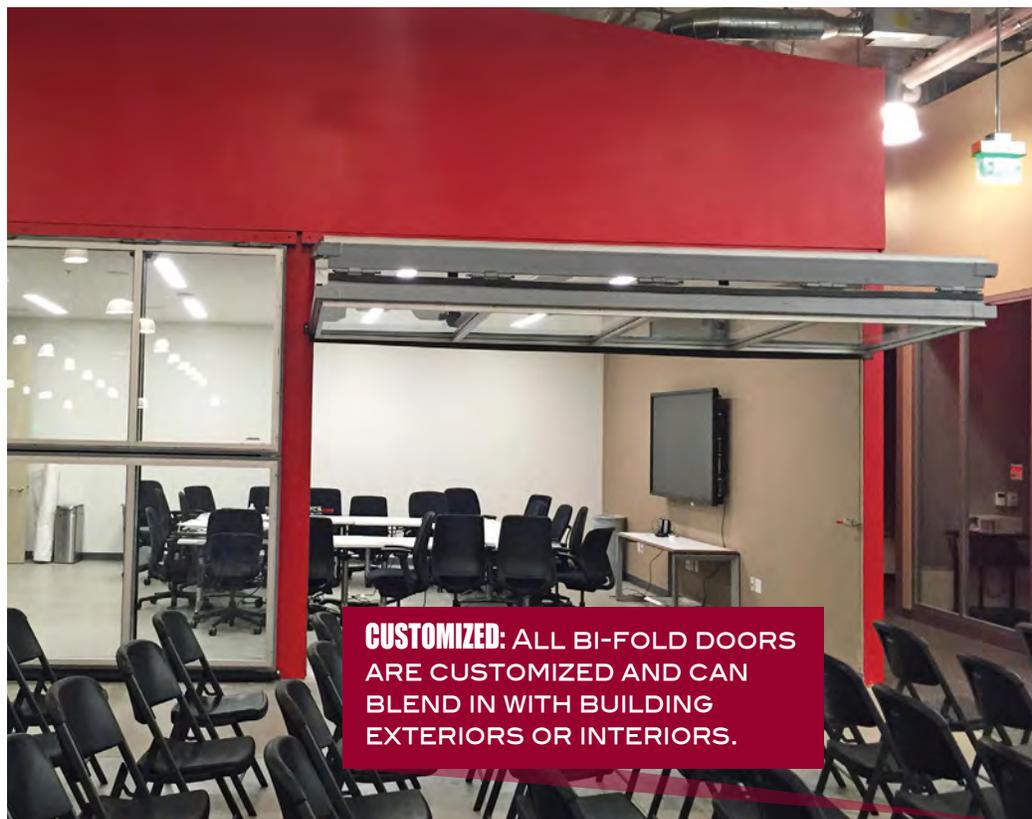
For some customers, that extra headspace may not matter, but for others, it may be critical to a building's operation or necessary due to interior obstructions. In addition, customers may have aesthetic reasons for not wanting the door to open into the building.

Also, if a customer has an existing opening that will not accommodate a traditional sectional door, bi-folds can easily be retrofitted into the structure while maintaining the full opening height.

Seamless exteriors

Bi-fold doors are also ideal when customers want a seamless look on the building's façade. Bi-folds can be custom made with the same material as the rest of the structure, such as glass, aluminum, or cedar siding, which allows the door to blend into the building's exterior.

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CUSTOMIZED: ALL BI-FOLD DOORS ARE CUSTOMIZED AND CAN BLEND IN WITH BUILDING EXTERIORS OR INTERIORS.



SINGLE LATCH: BI-FOLD DOORS THAT HAVE JUST ONE LATCH TO LOCK THE DOOR CAN SAVE TIME.

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Once you've determined that a bi-fold door is the ideal solution for your customer, there are a few things to look for to ensure that they get a high-quality door that is safe and easy to use.

Latches and switches

Consider units that come standard with just one latch for locking the door closed. A single latch ultimately saves customers time because they won't have to go to each doorjamb to lock and unlock the door, which is required with a double-latch system.

In addition, look for doors having a safety switch, which eliminates the risk of damage that can be caused when a user forgets to release the latch. An automatic latch is even more convenient. It allows operators to open the door with the push of a button — even from the comfort of a vehicle.

Durability is key

Customers also value durability and longevity. An all-steel door, one built with heavy-gauge steel tubing and a robust truss system, provides optimal strength and durability, even in harsh weather. Cold-formed steel hinges welded to the door's frame and linked together with cold-formed hinge pins also enhance a door's durability.

Another way to ensure that your customers are getting a rugged door is to look for solid welded construction. Solid welded doors offer a strong frame design with minimal chance of parts loosening over time, meaning virtually no maintenance.

Work with the manufacturer

If customers need a new door for an existing building, component strength is especially critical. This is where having a

good relationship with the manufacturer is important. The manufacturer should inspect the structure — from the jamb and steel header to foundation — to ensure that the building is suitable for a retrofit.

Upon inspection, the manufacturer will design a new steel header and jamb to mount to the face of the building. From there, the manufacturer should work closely with the contractor to ensure that the support frame jamb and header system are adequately sized for the existing structure. A heavy-gauge steel frame structure allows the building to handle the stresses exerted by the door.

While no frame is truly self-supporting, when a manufacturer and contractor work together, an effective solution can be developed for any type of building. The building structure and location of the opening (end wall or side wall) typically determine the best option.

When bi-fold is the right call

So, when is a bi-fold door the right recommendation?

1. When the opening is larger than the common sectional door can accommodate.
2. When the customer needs to maximize the use of the width and height of the opening.
3. When the customer does not want the door to open into the building (for appearance reasons or because of obstructions on the interior of the building).
4. When the customer wants the door to look like the rest of the exterior. Bi-folds can be made to match any façade.

If a bi-fold is the right solution, choose a manufacturer that is willing to work closely with you and your customers to build a door to exact specifications — on time and on budget. It helps to find a company that will take charge of the entire process, from design to manufacturing to installation and finish work. This ensures that the door is done right the first time. And if warranty work is needed, a good manufacturer partner will make sure that it gets completed quickly.

Bi-fold doors can be an excellent solution and a useful alternative to sectional overhead doors. The learning curve for the installing dealer can be overcome by working with the manufacturer, who can help you every step of the way. In the end, you gain new business opportunities and more satisfied customers. ■

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