

THE TOP THREE HOTTEST PRODUCTS AT EXPO 2010

THREE ACCESSORIES GRAB THE SPOTLIGHT

BY TOM WADSWORTH, EDITOR

Once again, Door & Access Systems conducted a nationwide poll immediately after Expo 2010 to determine the dealers' choices for "the hottest new products* at Expo 2010."

- This year, none of the top three products were carriage house doors, though many attractive doors were displayed.
- The hottest new products did not come from any of the industry's major manufacturers, though they all featured excellent booths and products.
- None of the top three products was invented by a professional engineer with a college degree. Actually, none of the inventors hold a college degree.

Each of the products is the brainchild of good old American ingenuity, the product of a motivated tinkerer seeking a solution to an industry problem or the fulfillment of a consumer need.

HOT PRODUCT #1: THE BREEZY LIVING SCREEN GARAGE DOOR

Far and away, the top vote-getter in the 2010 Hottest New Products Survey was the Breezy Living Screen Garage Door at Arrow-Tru-Line's exhibit. Ken Wise of Arrow Tru-Line says the exhibit was constantly surrounded by a crowd at Expo and generated a lot of inquiries from dealers.

The product features a unique sliding pass door that lets people enter or leave the garage without opening the entire door. Wise says the door avoids the high cost of electric retractable doors and eliminates the problems of the floor track on sliding doors.

He adds that the Breezy Living product is affordable, easy to install, and simple to use. Plus, the door should be acceptable to many HOAs (Home Owner Associations). Expected options include different types of screening, frame colors, and imaging on screens.



▲ CARL HURST -
TECHNICAL SUPPORT MANAGER FOR
BREEZY LIVING SCREEN SOLUTIONS

BEHIND THE SCREEN

The door's primary inventors are Brian Hughes and Brian Jones of Advanced Screen Works, a small Florida company that does screen installations. Like many entrepreneurs, the two Brians do not have college degrees. They simply saw a need in the market and devised a way to meet the need.

Several months ago, Advanced Screen Works approached Arrow Tru-Line for assistance in designing the track assembly. Patent applications have been submitted, and Arrow Tru-Line is now the exclusive worldwide licensee to manufacture, market, and sell the product.

Wise says the product should become available in July 2010, and literature should be ready for the July launch.

HOT PRODUCT #2: THE E-Z WEIGH GARAGE DOOR SCALE

Tying for second place, with considerably fewer votes than the screen door, were the E-Z Weigh Garage Door Scale and the Balance King spring assist.

“It’s about time!” According to Nelson Herschberger, a former garage door installer and the brains behind E-Z Weigh, that’s what dealers visiting his booth at Expo were saying.

“A lot of guys wanted to be distributors,” he adds. “The last visitor was from Service Spring. He said 99 percent of his callers ask the same question: ‘What does your door weigh?’” Herschberger’s product is designed to provide the answer.

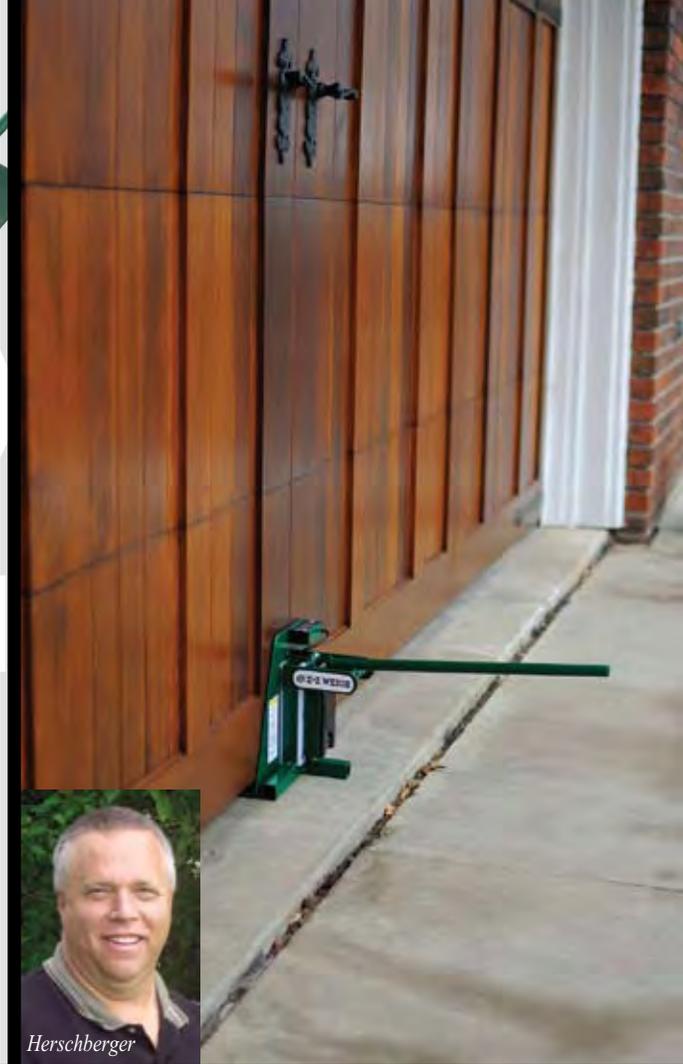
BETTER THAN BATHROOM SCALES

He came up with the idea about 15 years ago. While working on a house as a contractor, Herschberger had a garage door technician come to him and ask for help in weighing the garage door on the house.

After disengaging the door, they manually picked up the door while the door guy slid a bathroom scale under the door. “That seemed like a cheesy solution,” says Herschberger. “That stuck in my mind and I kept thinking about it.”

Armed with an eighth-grade education and 20 years of contracting experience, Herschberger finally decided to get serious. He ordered a scale on eBay and proceeded to make several prototypes. Working away at his Arthur, Ill., plant, he gradually refined the product by making it smaller and easier to use.

His final E-Z Weigh (www.e-zweigh.com) can weigh a door up to 660 lbs. and allows a door technician to weigh a garage door without assistance. To weigh a door, the tech positions E-Z Weigh under the door, presses down the handle, and reads the weight. He’s now working on a commercial scale that goes up to 3,000 lbs.



Herschberger



Lundahl

HOT PRODUCT #3: INDUSTRIAL SPRING’S BALANCE KING

“The problem has been out there ever since they started installing doors,” says Karl Lundahl, the inventor of Balance King. “If the top section is heavy, you can have a poorly balanced door.”

Today, due to a flood of heavy carriage house doors on the market and many three-section doors with a heavier top section with large windows, the problem has only been getting worse.

So, about two years ago, Industrial Door asked Lundahl to work on the problem. Like our other inventors, experience was his teacher. Lundahl describes himself as a self-learner who grew up on a farm, went to vo-tech school, and just learned how to fix things.

In his 27 years with Industrial Spring, he’s done everything from sweeping the floor to being plant manager. Now, entrusted with the role of company project manager, he tackled the age-old problem of imbalanced doors because of heavy top sections.

THE AHA MOMENT

“I just kept pondering and pondering, and it finally clicked in my head one night,” he says. “I came to work the next day, put some parts together, and it seemed to work.”

That was about two years ago. Since then, he’s been building



prototypes, engineering the parts, and designing them for safety, durability, and economy. Finally, last fall, the first Balance Kings were ready, designed and tested for 50,000 cycles.

“Everyone who has used it loves it,” he says proudly. Once Balance King creates a well-balanced door, other benefits stem from that. “You get less wear and tear on the operator, fewer call-backs, and happier customers,” he adds.

Balance King, an auxiliary spring system, works with the standard hardware for all manufacturers for a wide range of the residential market. It’s advertised for 7’- and 8’-high doors, but can work with higher doors.

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*ABOUT OUR SURVEY

Invitations to our online survey, conducted immediately after Expo 2010 from April 24 to May 3, 2010, were sent to 2,071 dealers throughout the United States and Canada. Of the 431 dealers who completed the survey, 91 had attended Expo and responded to our question about the hottest new products.

The survey asked, "In your opinion, what were the hottest new products displayed at Expo 2010?" We did not provide a check-box list of specific products. Respondents had to draft their own responses from their memory of all the products at the show's 155 exhibits.

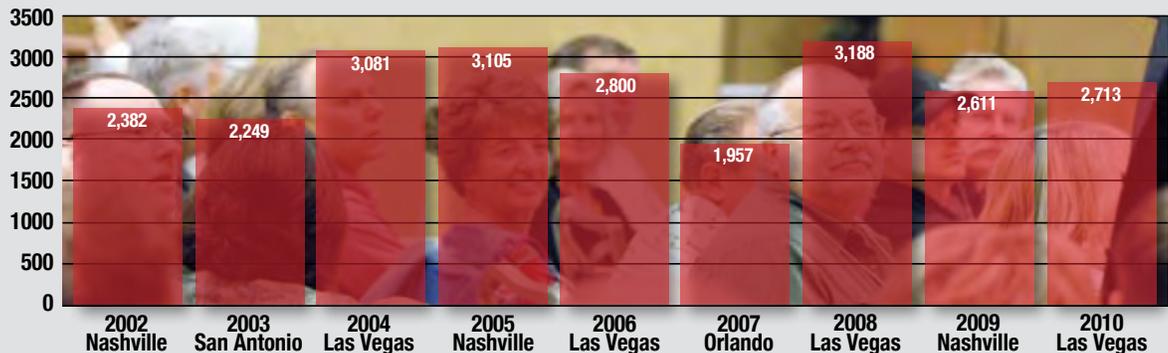
The 91 respondents identified 44 different products. Some mentioned more than one product, while 24 said nothing was new. The Breezy Living Screen Garage Door was specifically mentioned by 15 respondents, while five dealers mentioned E-Z Weigh and five others mentioned Balance King. ■

TOP 10 EXPO WORKSHOPS

Workshop	Speaker	Attendance
1.The Economy Isn't Down – It's Different	Jim Mathis	344
2.UL 325 for Commercial Operators (2 sessions)	Joel Hawk & Dan Dombkowski	258
3.Effective Pricing Strategies	Chuck Colton	208
4.How Accountability Leads to Large Results	Bob Davies	141
5.Getting #1 on Google	Brian Kraff	129
6.New Rules for Selling in Today's Economy	Flossie Mohler & Earl Rivard	114
7.Making a Good First Impression	Jim Lett	113
8.It's Spring Time	Mark Daus & Garry Stewart	109
9.Ethical Gray Areas	Randy Oliver	94
10.Selling Higher Margin Products	Vickie Lents	90



EXPO WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE



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