

THE HISTORY OF



Joe Altieri started his career as an independent salesman in the window industry. He sold various pieces and parts to manufacturers, but he had the most success with window screens. Joe convinced many manufacturers to outsource their screens, with his efforts regularly generating over three million dollars in annual sales.

But along with those increased sales came increased headaches. Dealing with the inherent problems of the 100-year-old technology of flimsy, complicated window screens now fell squarely on Joe's shoulders, and customer complaints quickly became overwhelming. He was beginning to feel more like a screen replacement man and customer service liaison than a salesperson.

At one point, one of Joe's biggest customers, the owner of a well-known window manufacturing company, walked into a meeting, dropped a pile of broken window screens onto the table and said, "You're the screen guy – fix this."

This problem was begging for a solution, and Joe was determined to find it. He cleared out a space in his garage, made a list of all the issues that caused people to hate their window screens, and set out to solve every one of them.

The number one problem with traditional screens is the flimsy aluminum frame. It is seemingly impossible to install "a bigger rectangle into a smaller rectangle" without damage to the screen frame, the window frame, and even the customers' fingers and hands. Preflex screens have a variety of complicated hardware that is supposed to help facilitate the process but only makes it worse in almost all cases.

Joe's starting point would be an entirely new frame design that would somehow install and remove without any attachment hardware, and he knew that meant the frame would need to bend or flex and be nearly indestructible. After much time and many failed experiments with different materials, Joe made his first flexible frame using electricians' fish tape, which is made of spring steel.

Confident that he was moving in the right direction, Joe took on the next challenge of how to attach the mesh to the frame. Knowing that traditional glue and adhesives would not be strong enough to secure the mesh for long-term resilience, he had the idea to cover the frame with PVC. This would provide extreme durability for the frame in all weather and handling conditions and supply the ultimate strong bond by "melting" the mesh and the PVC materials together.

With all elements in place and years after setting up shop in his garage, Joe's flexible "bubble gum and duct tape" window screen prototype (as he called it) was finally ready for its debut.

Joe showed his prototype to some industry professionals, and the response was overwhelming. He was advised to immediately patent every aspect of the invention and get it to market as soon as possible. Interest was high, and Joe had a decision to make. Would he go all-in on this new, potentially successful business venture or stay comfortable with his current successful career? After much consideration and discussion with family, trusted friends, and advisors, Joe chose the latter and began to file patents, secure investors, and tool the proprietary equipment necessary to create the newly dubbed FlexScreen.

In October 2015, Joe secured his first customer, Kensington Windows, in New Kensington, PA. They saw the potential for increased sales and fewer customer complaints and jumped on board with FlexScreen. The ball was beginning to roll, and over the next three years, sales steadily but slowly increased as more window manufacturers and dealers got wind of FlexScreen and chose to make it standard on some or all of their products.

But because the window industry is considered an "old" industry, many manufacturers and dealers, although impressed with the product, were reluctant to change. Rather than sit back and wait, Joe decided to keep pushing forward and market FlexScreen directly to homeowners. This move would require a new strategy, so he hired a small marketing agency that built an e-commerce website, created social media accounts on all platforms, and began getting the word out about FlexScreen in the B2C sector.

This move paid off in unexpected ways when, in a dramatic turn of events, Joe received an e-mail from Shark Tank producers in the spring of 2019. They had found FlexScreen as a result of social media marketing, determined that it was a perfect fit to pitch to the Sharks, and reached out to Joe about appearing on the show.

What followed was a whirlwind of excitement and preparation; applications and agreements were signed, videos submitted, a set created and shipped to CA, and a pitch prepared. Just two short months after the first e-mail, Joe was standing before the Sharks filming his segment that would later appear on Season 11, Episode 10, air date January 5, 2020.

Joe went into The Tank with definite ideas of his desired outcome, and he was extremely pleased with the result. After an intense battle between three of the five Sharks, Lori Greiner – the "Queen of QVC" and Joe's preferred Shark from the outset - hooked the deal, forever changing the company's trajectory. Sales skyrocketed, additional investments were secured, and Joe began to hire at all his existing manufacturing plants and open new ones.

The attention also drew interest from the powerhouse entity and Global 500 giant, Saint Gobain. In October 2020, FlexScreen entered into a strategic partnership that grants Saint-Gobain's ADFORS division, the leading international manufacturer of high-performance construction and industrial materials, exclusive rights to sell FlexScreen products within the retail and dotcom

channels. This partnership will guarantee presence in big box stores and propel FlexScreen to household name brand recognition.

FlexScreen also earned a "Shark Tank Update" segment in Season 12, focusing on the company's meteoric growth since the original airing and subsequent partnership with Lori.

One of the most exciting aspects of the business occurred in 2021 when FlexScreen partnered with Erdman Automation Corp. to completely retool and automate the complicated FlexScreen manufacturing process. The genius engineers at Erdman delivered a line that takes a fraction of the space, workforce, and time. They created what is simply the fastest and most efficient window screen line in the world, enabling FlexScreen to finally license their technology to window manufacturers who are quickly jumping on board.

Over the years, Joe's bubble gum and duct tape prototype has undergone significant design, materials, and manufacturing improvements, making FlexScreen the most durable, innovative, simple, and beautiful window screen on the market. He currently holds six patents, with ten more pending, and continues to invest in product development based on customer feedback.

From an idea in Joe Altieri's garage to a multi-million-dollar company - FlexScreen, the world's first and only flexible window screen, is poised to revolutionize the window industry.

To date, there are 6 FlexScreen manufacturing plants in the United States and 1 in Canada.

Current Awards and Industry Recognition for Joe and FlexScreen include:

- Inc. 5000's Fastest Growing Companies list two years in a row
- Edison Awards - Silver Award in Best New Product Category
- Window + Door Awards - Most Innovative Manufacturing Process
- Big Awards For Business - Product of the Year
- Big Innovations - Innovative Products Category
- Door and Window Market Magazine's Readers Choice Award - Favorite New Product
- EY's Entrepreneur of the Year - Joe Altieri Eastern Regional Finalist
- Pittsburgh's Smart 50 Top Executives Award - Joe Altieri 2020 Honoree