

CIRCUIT PROTECTION & SWITCHGEAR

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A BRIGHT FUTURE: SAFETY, STOCK AND SERVICE ALL IN FOCUS FOR FAMILY FIRM

A look at what's new and what's next for electrical component supplier, **Niglon**.

They're four generations and almost eight decades into supplying electrical products across the UK, so family owned and run company Niglon could be forgiven for maintaining the status quo. But here, the team explains how they're calling for better safety standards across the industry, constantly increasing its product range, and developing new ways of working to ensure better service and stock availability.

Safety above all else

The safety of electrical circuits and the components within them should not be left to chance, given the potential for harm if a product is faulty. This is one of the principles which guides all Niglon does – meaning the company has invested a great deal of time and resources into ensuring its products are certified and that it partners with businesses that have matching high standards.

The team firmly believes in third-party independent testing for these important devices, but also that there should be total transparency around which products have been tested to this standard. This enables not only the wholesalers buying products from suppliers, but also the contractors and the end-users to have the utmost confidence in the components that they are either selling or buying.

Niglon's commitment to transparency means circuit protection devices in the catalogue and online are clearly marked as being accredited by SEMKO, VDE or TUV, ensuring their customers know the quality claims have been independently verified.

It's not something which can, or should, be left to chance – and there are huge risks to life and property in homes or businesses where untested products are installed. Clearly, this potential for loss of life is primarily the reason to call for better testing and more transparency, but by raising standards to the point where the entire industry is openly declaring certification,



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there is also the secondary effect of building trust between supplier and customer, and raising the reputation of those companies who are only dealing with tested products.

Paul Dawson, Niglon's Commercial Director, explains: “Individuals and businesses rely on contractors to install electrical devices in their properties, and they place a great deal of trust in those contractors that those devices are safe. Worryingly, there are thousands and thousands of products out there which don't carry any third-party certification – and there is no way of knowing when or if they may fail.

“Given the devastating consequences that could occur when you're talking about electrical components, we want to educate end consumers and remind contractors and wholesalers that they should absolutely be asking to see proof of certification, rather than assuming the products they're buying have been independently tested.”

When the introduction of surge protection devices came into the 18th Edition of the Wiring Regulations (BS7671), Niglon was faced with a choice of sourcing an untested low-cost surge protection device, or partnering a European manufacturer with over 70 years' experience in this field; Niglon chose to stock the latter because it knew the products were certified – especially important in this case due to the limited ability installers have to test a surge protection device once it's placed within a home or business.

Dawson continues: “Circuit protection devices are life-saving electrical equipment and this can sometimes be forgotten in favour of products with a better price point. We believe it's a signifier of a higher-quality brand when the time has been taken to do the due diligence and get the certification in place to give peace of mind to the wholesaler, installer and end users alike.”

ENCLOSURES

MOTOR
CONTROL
GEAR

RELAYS

ENCLOSED
SWITCHGEAR



Distributing Distribution Boards

Niglon's Three Phase Distribution Boards are an example of a range of products which have the certification needed to prove that they have been thoroughly safety checked by an independent third party.

The 125A B-Type Boards that are offered in a range from four to 24 TPN ways are certified by Intertek and meet the compliance standard BS EN 60439-3. They are not just safe – they're also designed to be user-friendly and meet the needs of those installing them, wherever they're being used. They are supplied complete with a wall mounting kit and are packed with time saving features such as removable top and bottom gland plates, half DIN rail for speedy fit-out and a reversible door.

The boards are all offered with or without a mains incomer, to save unnecessary expense for those who would be using one with a different rating or protection requirement to the 125A four-pole isolator supplied as standard.

Alongside the distribution boards themselves, Niglon's 125A TPN three phase product range also includes a comprehensive range of devices and accessories including single phase and three phase miniature circuit breakers (10kA), single phase 10kA RCBOs and extension boxes including one with a pre-installed multi-function energy meter.

Switch to one supplier

The Niglon team is committed to being a one-stop shop for everything electrical, negating the need for customers to spend time and effort sourcing products from multiple suppliers. New product lines are added regularly – with a catalogue of more than 4,500 products meeting the needs of a huge range of customers. This not only reduces the hassle of using multiple companies at the point of order, but throughout the entire process including management of delivery and invoice processing.

The new Control and Automation range, launched in July's edition of *Electrical Contracting News*, features enclosed switchgear including switch disconnectors, fused switches (up to 800A) and changeover switches (up to 1800A). Customers can choose from polycarbonate, mild and stainless-steel enclosures and can be fully assured of quality, as with all Niglon products.

The switchgear is fully EN60947-3 compliant and capable of AC23A switching of motors/highly inductive loads. Also, Niglon's commitment to continually improving availability means a vast array of products are in stock – leading to quicker turnaround times, and a better service every time.

Stock surge

Transforming the systems in place to monitor and order stock has seen Niglon's product availability rise dramatically over the past 18 months. This has involved a significant increase in the amount of stock held at the company's Midlands headquarters, and an intensive testing period to ensure the new systems were working well and improving service.

The investment in higher stock levels has meant the company is now consistently recording stock availability in excess of 99%, month-on-month.

Director Oliver Hinley explains: "The new computer system we have implemented has meant a service decision was taken to carry around £1m of additional stock. We are one of the first in the UK to be using this type of system, and we have closely monitored the process to ensure all changes have seen us provide a better, more accurate, faster service for our customers.

"Tweaks to finesse the system are undertaken regularly as part of our pledge to continually improve service – and I'm confident our long-standing customers will have seen a huge difference in our On Time In Full (OTIF) order fulfilment rate since the middle of last year.

"These smart buying decisions meant the Niglon team was able to continue providing a high level of service, despite the unprecedented changes in demand during the COVID-19 lockdown. In practice, this meant continuing to supply many product lines where sales were several times higher than normal over consecutive months, including one item where the company sold 12 months' worth of stock

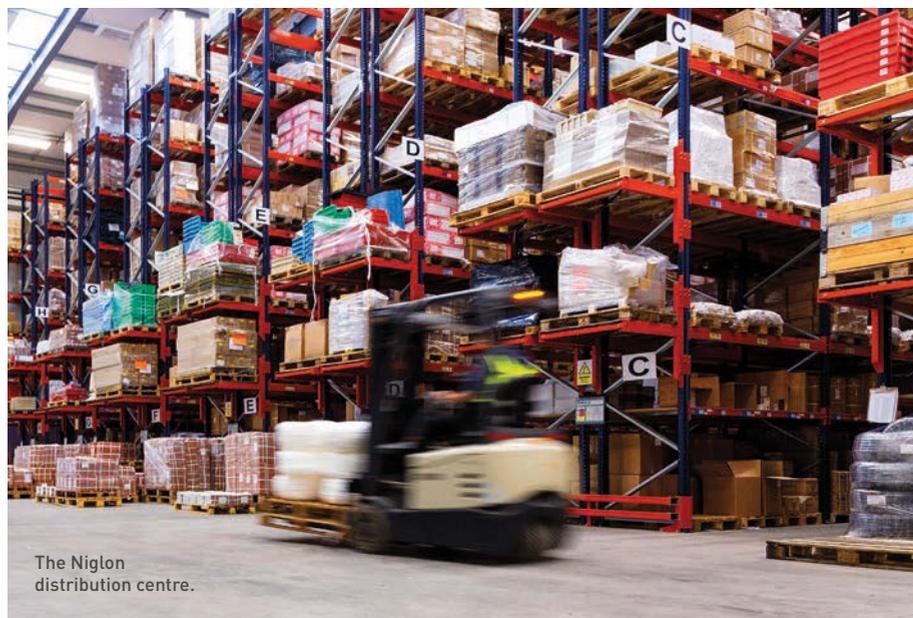
in two and a half months. Competitors who didn't invest in stock were struggling to keep up with demand, so smart buying decisions and stock availability led a number of wholesalers to move their order books over to Niglon, and to stay with them because they appreciate the value of a reliable service being provided, and the catastrophic effect it can have on their own businesses if their customers cannot buy what they want from them, when they want it."

Hinley adds: "Despite an unforeseen level of demand, this pandemic's test of our stock analysis systems has seen us able to help customers who were struggling to get products from their previous supplier.

"Our deeper stock position definitely contributed to us having an all-time record month in July. That's not to say we haven't faced challenges as a result of coronavirus, which has naturally impacted the industry just as it has the entire business world; but already having that stock ordering and analysis structure in place meant there was less of an impact for our customers and staff. We have proudly retained our very hard-working team in spite of these challenges.

"The statistics from the past few months are also clear evidence to us that as things return to some semblance of normality, the systems we have put in place will mean our customers get a very good level of service in terms of stock availability – among the best in the industry, and a huge step up from where we were only a few years ago." ☺

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The Niglon distribution centre.

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ENCLOSED SWITCH DISCONNECTORS

IP65 polycarbonate, mild steel or stainless steel construction, 20A-800A rated



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IP65 polycarbonate or mild steel, 63A-800A rated



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World class products with UL approval, our contactor range has a compact design and a wide range of accessories for ease of installation.



RELAYS

A general purpose, universal relay range with LED and flag indication, including slimline and terminal relays for space saving.



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