Vendor Spotlight: DoorKing

The Origin Story

For over 77 years, DoorKing, one of the leading gate operator and access control manufacturers, has been supplying quality products to the industry. The founder of DoorKing, M.K. "Rich" Richmond, served in World War II. Following his discharge, he moved to Los Angeles (L.A), where he began working for George Varnum, automating bank vault doors. He then took his experience working for Varnum and entered the garage door opener business.

Working out of a garage that was converted to an assembly line, the first door openers were built in 1947. Rich officially started DoorKing in 1948 when he began building and also installing garage door openers.

As the garage door opener market expanded, larger corporations started to move into the L.A. market, driving down the price of the openers. Rich realized that he could not compete with these mass merchandisers and still make a decent profit. So, in the early 1970s, he started an ornamental iron installation company, installing fences and gates.

Rather than purchase other companies' gate operators for his fence and gate business, Rich decided to build his own gate operators. The first DoorKing swing gate operators, Models 480 and 600, were built in 1971. The operators had a cast aluminum housing and were similar in appearance to Varnum and Customline gate operators.

Current DoorKing President Thomas "Tom" Richmond began working for the family-owned business in the mid-1970s. Early on, he realized that the garage door opener business was becoming very competitive and that the profit margins were shrinking. On the other hand, the fencing and gate automation business was growing. Tom said, "I convinced my dad that the fence and gate automation should be the primary focus of the company."

So, they took all the garage door opener parts and tooling to the dump (they didn't want to be tempted to maintain that side of the business). Instead, they focused on expanding their gate operator line, introducing new models with solid-state circuit boards in 1977. In the 1980s, they decided to start selling their gate operators to other fence and gate installers.

Tom said, "We continued to introduce new innovations into our gate operators, like plug-in loop detectors, magnetic limit settings, and our first microprocessor-based control circuit in 1981." Their first telephone entry system, Model 1801, was launched in 1983. The company also started manufacturing keypads. The access control product line has grown considerably since then.

In 1995, the company's business model transitioned from that of a manufacturer and installer to only manufacturing. Since its foundation, DoorKing has remained in Southern California. As of 2026, all of DoorKing's operations have been consolidated in the Glasgow Ave. Inglewood location.

And the rest, as they say, is history.













DKS DOORKING

Q&A with Lamar Jackson

In July 2026, Lamar Jackson celebrated his 25th anniversary with DoorKing, making it the perfect time to shine a spotlight on this industry veteran. Lamar is currently a Regional Sales Manager for DoorKing in Northern California. Encon has had the good fortune of having Lamar serve as our DoorKing representative for 25 years - his entire career with DoorKing.

As part of our DoorKing Vendor Spotlight, we interviewed Lamar to get his insights on the industry, along with some interesting facts about him personally. Keep reading to learn more about Lamar and his impressive tenure with DoorKing.

Company and Industry Questions

1) What is one fun fact about DoorKing that you wish people knew? "DoorKing started out as a manufacturer of garage door openers."

2) What is the craziest thing you've seen on a job site? A 9100-slide gate operator mounted upside down on the ceiling of a parking garage.

3) Best tip for an industry professional? Care and support others and their success. Always tell the truth, the good, the bad and the ugly.

4) Favorite product that DoorKing manufacturers? The 9100-slide gate operator. It's a powerful, work horse of a machine.

5) What DoorKing product do you think doesn't get the recognition it deserves? The 1800-500 Wi-Fi/Bluetooth relay. It turns any old gate installation into a modern, sexy, phone App controlled system. It's inexpensive, easy to install, and has no monthly fee.

6) What's the coolest feature DoorKing has added to a product recently? The new and improved low-light camera on our Video Entry system.

7) What's something that happens behind the scenes that customers never see? DoorKing ownership. They continue to work extremely hard every day to deliver for our customers.

8) What's your favorite success story involving a customer? While walking a housing complex in a depressed part of town, there were no children playing in the playground. There was a dangerous element hanging around. After the installation of our DoorKing gate operators and telephone entry/card access systems, I saw an amazing difference. There were children laughing and playing outside in the playground. To me that was success. Providing an access control solution that makes a difference in the quality of people's lives and improving what is "home" for them is a success in my book. This customer has been able to duplicate these results with over 100 DoorKing systems installed.











Q&A with Lamar Jackson - Continued



9) If you could change one thing about the industry overnight, what would it be? I wish builders and developers gave the same priority to their access control, as they prioritize their electrical and fire detection systems. We are too often an afterthought, which makes doing our jobs much harder.

10) What's one skill you're currently trying to learn? At this stage of life, I'm trying to retain the skill set I have and keep up with all the new technologies that we will soon be introducing.

11) Who has had the biggest influence on your career? There have been many positive influences along the way. The late and great Ed Curry. He was the DoorKing representative in New Jersey and recommended me for this job. Dusty Beeding, our Director of Sales, continues to set an amazing example in truly caring for others. But in truth, I'd have to say my parents have had the biggest influence. They held us to a high standard and had a strong work ethic. They instilled confidence in us, an expectation that we could be and do anything we wanted. They also gave me a solid foundation which gave me the courage to accept a new job, 3000 miles away from home where I knew no one.

"Working with Lamar for the last quarter century has been a privilege. He is one of the most kind, honest and professional people I have ever known. He seems to be perpetually happy and that has led to his success. I look forward to our continued friendship and business dealings."

- Jeff Harris, President of Encon Electronics



12) What's the best career advice you've ever received? When you interact with others, make their day better.

13) What's your favorite part about industry trade shows? As an outside sales representative, I get a lot of, "windshield" time. Seeing my coworkers and customers in such a fun relaxed environment is a joy.

14) Is there anything exciting on the horizon for DoorKing that you can tease? It's not much of a secret, but we will soon be releasing our new "evolve" series of gate operators and video entry systems.



15) Finish this sentence: "The future of our industry is… evolving"."

Rapid Fire Questions

1) Favorite city to visit for business? Baltimore because it's home
2) Early bird or night owl? Early
3) What's always in your travel bag? Toothbrush
4) Favorite road trip snack? Gummy Bears
5) The last book, podcast, or show you really enjoyed? Bible
6) If you weren't in this industry what career would you have pursued? Music

