

Door hardware: Highlight it or hide it

Door hardware is inevitable. You need it to ensure the safety, security and egress of your facility. But that doesn't mean you can't use it to complement your design. Architects generally have one of two goals with door hardware:

Goal #1: Make a statement with it. Use it as a design element to enhance the aesthetics. After all, door hardware is the one of the primary ways you come into physical contact with a building.

Goal #2: Minimize it. Make it unobtrusive so it doesn't detract from design. A door opening provides your first impression of a space.

T.J. Gottwalt, Strategic Architectural Account Manager for Allegion, shares some ways that architects can accomplish both goals.



Make a statement

When it comes to using hardware to make a statement, Gottwalt says there are four primary ways to do that:

- **Finish:** "The finish on door hardware is just that—the final touch that turns a functional piece of hardware into an attractive design element," he says. "It can really punctuate an opening and add another dimension to the color décor." All of Allegion's leading brands—Schlage®, Von Duprin® and LCN®—offer the standard architectural colors. Additionally, custom finishes can be ordered. In fact, many architects are choosing to add custom colors to exit devices to provide more entertaining, engaging looks for schools or universities, museums and even hospitals.
- **Design:** Decorative levers—like the Schlage M Collection or Fusion®—can be as much a part of the décor as they are the door hardware. Additionally, Gottwalt says, pulls can be used to add a design emphasis. Instead of standard, 10-inch high, one-inch round door pulls, he encourages architects to specify full-height decorative door pulls to match the style of the space.
- **Specialized door accessories:** Special tips on the hinges (such as those from Ives®) as well as unique doors (such as barn doors) can add real uniqueness and beauty. One of Gottwalt's favorite doors is the Steelcraft® GrainTech. "It has the strength of steel but the beauty of wood," he says, "and it can be stained to match a finish of the architect's choosing."
- **Functionality:** "It's often the look of a door that makes a statement, but sometimes it's what that door can do that really makes it stand out," says Gottwalt. He points to pocket doors, which slide into the wall, as an example. Executive doors equipped with automatic closers that are operated via a button under the desk is another way to make a statement about function.



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Minimize it

Sometimes architects prefer that door hardware follow the “less is more” philosophy—the less it is seen, the more it adds (or at least doesn’t detract) from an opening. Gottwalt says there are a number of options to minimize the presence of hardware:

- **Hanging hardware:** “The hardware used to hang a door—pivots and hinges, for example—can be an eyesore to some architects,” he explains. Their appearance can be lessened with innovative components like pocket pivots, center hung pivots concealed hinges and continuous hinges. “All of these features can be used to give the door a very clean appearance,” Gottwalt says.
- **Closers:** Obtrusive closers can interrupt the design flow of a room. Alternatives include LCN concealed closers (mounted in the head or the top rail) or floor closers that are carefully coordinated with the floor construction and finish flooring.
- **Operational hardware:** There are several options to decrease the look of required door hardware involved. For example, Von Duprin crossbar exit devices (instead of much bulkier touchpad exit devices) may be used on doors where there is an aesthetic preference. Another option is recessed exit devices, like the Von Duprin InPact, which are embedded into the door to maintain a low profile. Concealed overhead stops—instead of wall stops—are another less obtrusive option.
- **Locking:** “The lock itself can be diminished with a minimalist design in the lever,” says Gottwalt. Other ways to achieve decreased footprints include using a flush rose and flush pulls.



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