Smart & Safe : Automated Window Furnishings

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The “Remote Control” Moment

We recently sat down with Clayton Sceats, Director at Lahood with more than 30 year's experience in window furnishings, to discuss the significant shift towards automation in the window coverings market and what is driving it.

“I often tell clients we’re approaching a ‘TV remote’ moment,” Clayton says. “Years ago, we had to get up to change the channel. Today, you would never consider buying a television without a remote. Window furnishings are heading the same way.”

For many new builds and high-end renovations, automated blinds and curtains are no longer viewed as a luxury upgrade. They are increasingly specified as a standard feature in a well-designed, functional home.



Beyond Convenience, Why the Rise in Popularity?

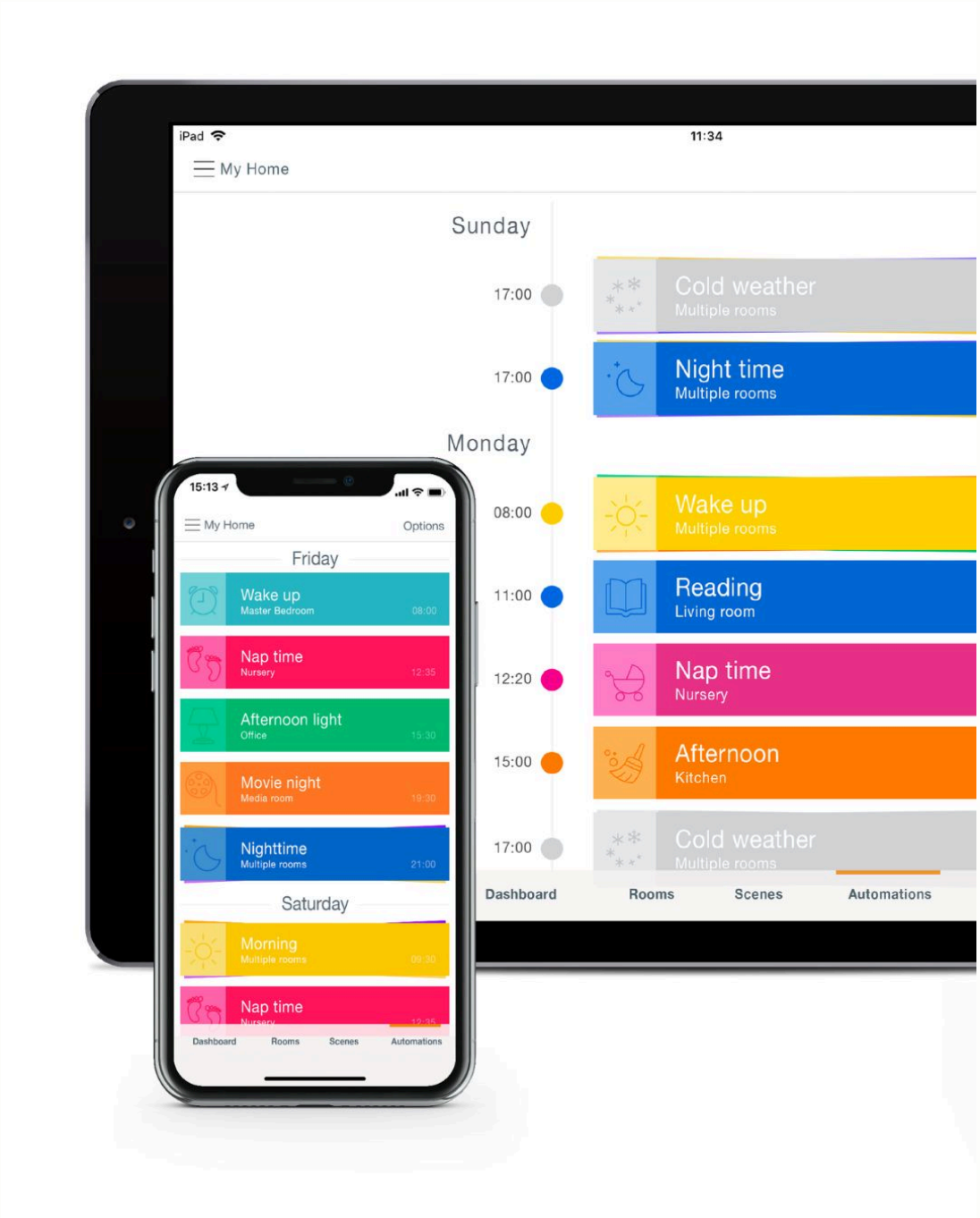
According to Clayton, three key factors are driving this growth: the rise of smart home technology, increasing awareness of energy efficiency, and child safety.

When people first think about automated blinds, they often picture the convenience of operating multiple rooms at once from the sofa. While that is certainly appealing, Clayton says the real value goes much further.

“Convenience is what sparks interest,” he explains. “But once clients understand the broader performance and design benefits, it becomes a much more compelling decision.”

Smart Home Technology is now Mainstream

"Five years ago, a smart home was something you saw in tech magazines," Clayton observes. " Today, most New Zealanders have some level of smart home automation in their homes, so the infrastructure - the apps, the ecosystems, the Wi-Fi - is already there. The rise of platforms like Apple HomeKit, Google Home, and Amazon Alexa has made controlling your home with your phone or your voice feel completely normal.



Safer for Children and Pets

One of the most important advantages of automation is safety. "This is one I feel strongly about," says Clayton. "Traditional corded and looped-chain blinds present a genuine strangulation risk for young children and pets. It's a tragic and preventable risk. Motorised blinds and curtains eliminate dangling cords and chains, removing manual control hazards and creating a safer environment for families with young children and pets. We've had parents specifically come to us asking for motorised options for this reason alone."



Increased Security

Automation can also enhance home security. Curtains and blinds can be scheduled to open and close at specific times while you are away, creating the appearance that your home or premises is occupied. “It’s subtle, but creates reassurance, says Clayton



Improved Energy Efficiency

New Zealanders are more energy-conscious than ever and window coverings have a bigger impact on household energy use than most people realise. "Your windows are responsible for a significant amount of heat gain in summer and heat loss in winter," Clayton explains. "Automated blinds that respond to the sun and temperature throughout the day can make a real, measurable difference to your power bill, as well as protect your furnishings and flooring. That's become a very compelling reason to invest."

Consumer NZ Testing has shown that fitted and used correctly, blinds such as our Luxaflex Duettes provide up to 33% more thermal insulation than double-glazing plus can reduce solar heat entering a room by 60%.



Essential for Hard-to-Access Windows

Contemporary architecture increasingly features skylights, stairwells, high voids and clerestory windows. These architectural features create stunning light-filled spaces, but they can be impractical to operate manually.

“In many modern homes and commercial spaces, automation is not a luxury. It is a necessity,” Clayton says. “If you cannot comfortably reach the blind, it needs to be motorised.”

Automation ensures that beautiful design features remain functional and easy to manage.

Clean, Discreet Aesthetic Adding Value

Today’s motors are discreet and highly engineered. They usually sit inside the roller tube or above the track, often concealed in ceiling or wall cavities. “Clients appreciate that automation does not compromise design,” Clayton says. “In fact, it enhances it.” The

result is a minimal, refined aesthetic that aligns beautifully with contemporary interiors, adding value to the home.



Understanding the Levels of Automation

While “automated” is often used as a general term, Clayton explains there are varying levels of technology depending on requirements:

Motorised: The Power Level

This replaces manual cords with an electric motor. Operation is via a handheld remote, wall switch or simple app. “Imagine floor-to-ceiling block out drapes in a media room” Clayton says. “You tap a button on your remote and effortlessly enjoy the perfect viewing conditions for your favourite movie.”

Automated: The Intelligent Level

This level introduces programmable intelligence, such as timers and light sensors. “This is where automation starts working for you without you thinking about it,” Clayton explains. “Via Remotes and Smartphone apps you can programme the blinds to automatically work to your schedule and lifestyle.

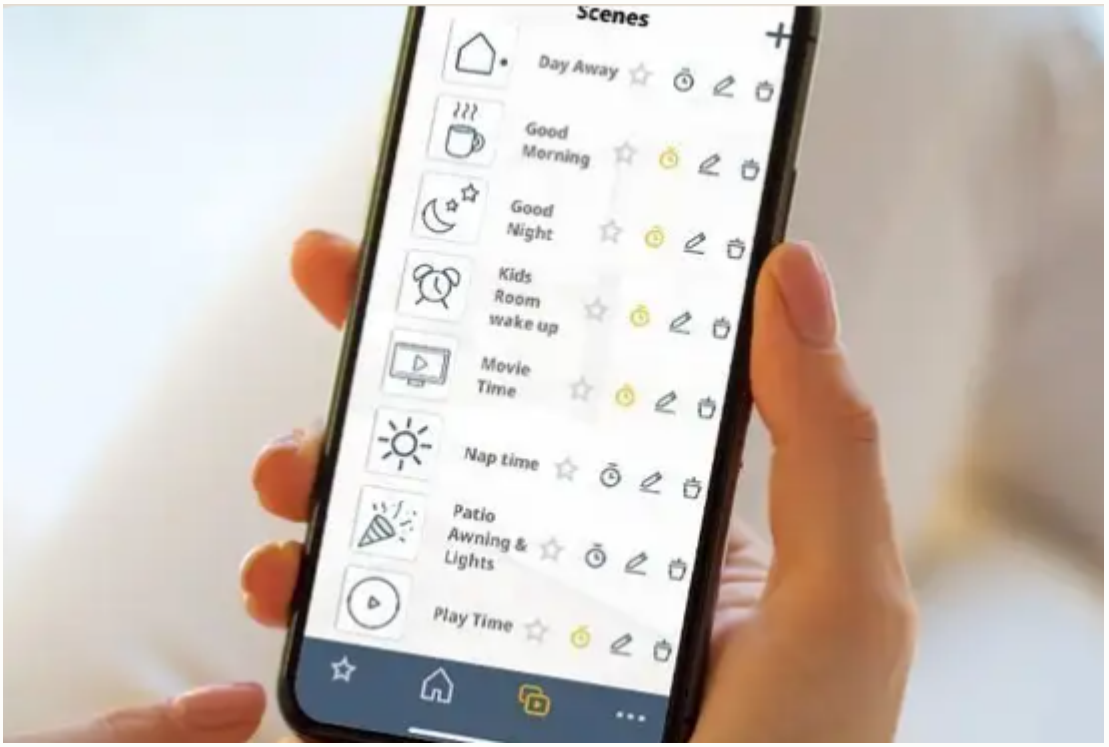
Smart Integration: The Connected Level

For fully connected homes, automatic blinds and curtains can integrate with platforms such as Apple HomeKit, Google Home and Amazon Alexa. Lahood uses Somfy’s TaHoma Switch to connect window coverings with lighting and security systems for example, or integrating the Somfy Systems directly into professional Building Management Systems (BMS) for larger projects.

The Technology Behind the Scenes

Reliability is critical. “We use Somfy for the majority of our automated curtains and blinds because of its proven performance,” Clayton says. For Luxaflex Duette Shades and their premium Soft shades, we utilise the Luxaflex PowerView Gen 3 system, which offers an intuitive user experience.

Solutions can be hard-wired for seamless integration in new builds or battery-powered for straightforward retrofitting in existing homes.



Hardwired or Battery Powered?

"Both options are good - the right choice depends on your situation," Clayton explains. "For a new build or major renovation, we almost always recommend hardwiring. It's integrated during construction, there's no battery to think about, and it's the most reliable long-term solution."

"For smaller refresh projects where hard wiring isn't an option our battery-powered motorisation is perfect. Modern rechargeable batteries last between three and six months under typical use, and some systems will even alert you when a charge is needed via the app."

Which Lahood Products can be Automated?

Automation is available across almost the entire Lahood range:

Roller Blinds
The motor sits invisibly inside the barrel. With a flush installation, the result is exceptionally clean and discreet.

Curtains
Motorised tracks, with motors typically concealed in the ceiling or walls, allow curtains to glide smoothly and quietly.

Luxaflex Duette Shades
Combining cellular insulation with programmable shading creates one of the most effective ways to manage heat gain and heat loss in a New Zealand home.

Venetian Blinds
Venetians can be motorised to control lift and tilt for precise light filtering.

Roman Blinds
Motorisation maintains the soft, tailored aesthetic while removing cords.

Shutters
The slats on Luxaflex PolySatin shutters can be automated to open and close - ideal for large areas where manual adjustment panel by panel would be impractical.

Exterior Screens and Awnings
For large-scale outdoor products, automation is often essential, particularly where manual operation would be physically demanding.



Are Motorised Blinds Worth the Investment?

When you consider the energy savings, UV protection for flooring and furniture, and the ' priceless' peace of mind that comes from a cord-free, child safe and secure solution, automation quickly proves its value as a considered long-term addition to your home.

15% discount on Automation, March 2026

If automation has been on your mind, now is a great time to act. Lahood is offering 15% off Somfy and PowerView Gen 3 motorisation on Luxaflex blinds and shutters throughout March.*

Discount applies to motorisation only, not the blinds or shutters themselves.

Book a complimentary Consultation at lahood.co.nz



Key Takeaways

A Modern Standard: Automation is now a baseline expectation for new Kiwi builds.

The Drivers: Smart home adoption, energy efficiency, and child safety.

Varying Levels of Automation: From simple Motorised (remote) to Automated (sensors) and Smart (full integration).

Versatility: Lahood can motorise almost their entire range of Window Furnishings, from rollers to shutters.

Installation: Options include hard-wired (best for new builds) or battery-powered .

Common Questions

Can I control different products from one app?
Yes. Whole-home automation allows you to manage roller blinds, curtains and more from a single app using the TaHoma Switch or a Building Management System

Are battery-powered blinds reliable?
Extremely. Somfy motors typically last three to six months between charges, with app alerts when power is low. Recharging is simple via USB.

What happens during a power cut?
Battery-powered blinds continue to operate. Hard-wired systems can include battery backup for continued functionality.

When should I consider automation for a new build?
“As early as possible,” Clayton advises. “If you are hard-wiring, conduits need to be included in the plans before construction begins. Early planning gives you the best outcome.”