

LBM JOURNAL[®]

STRATEGIES FOR LUMBER/BUILDING MATERIAL DISTRIBUTION PROS

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MARCH 2023 \$10 U.S.

HOT PRODUCTS

EDITORS' CHOICE

2023 INTERNATIONAL BUILDERS' SHOW



2023 DEALER OF THE YEAR
HENRY POOR LUMBER OF INDIANA
ANNUAL SALES OF \$10-\$50 MILLION

**DESPITE ECONOMIC WORRIES,
GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES
ABOUND FOR ROOFING**

**SHOULD DEALERS TAKE
OPERATIONS ONLINE?**

CEDAR RENDITIONS BOARD & BATTEN SIDING
BY WESTLAKE ROYAL BUILDING PRODUCTS.
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Not just for builders

NAHB's International Builders' Show (IBS) has evolved into our industry's premier showcase for the latest, greatest building products. Feedback from readers tells us that our annual roundup of Hot Products from the show is one they look forward to as they strive to source innovative new offerings, and we look forward to it with just as much anticipation, in no small part because I was honored again this year to serve as a judge for the "Most Innovative Building Product" category in the Best of IBS Awards.

Prior to the show, my fellow judges and I are shown the nominees for the award and asked to evaluate each online. When the show starts, we visit the finalists on the exhibit floor to see them in person. This year, the four finalists included two products by Huber (ZIP System Peel and Stick Underlayment and EXACOR Magnesium Oxide Panels), RDI Elevation Rail by Oldcastle APG, and Barrette Outdoor Living, and the CTI Mobile Carpenter Trailer (which was also a finalist in the "Most Innovative Construction Tool" category). Those four products—along with dozens more—are all featured in our Hot Products roundup beginning on page 52 of this issue, and each one merits a look.

And while reporting on new and innovative products is one of our main reasons for attending IBS, it's far from the only one—educational opportunities are equally important. Following the opening ceremonies featuring Mike Rowe, IBS offered a full slate of educational sessions. Not only did they give show attendees insights into the pain points and concerns of the builder community, they were packed with information delivered in presentations such as, "Trends, Forecasts & Key Indicators: What Custom Builders & Remodelers Need to Know in 2023," and "The Outlook: A Complete Guide to Housing Trends, Forecasts & Insights for 2023."

And let's not forget networking. As it happens, IBS also attracts a sizable number of LBM dealers and distributors. In fact, in recent years, this segment of the LBM community has been second only to builders in those who attend this event. While that may seem surprising, it makes a lot of sense when you stop to think about it. After all, there is no single event that brings manufacturers together with their current suppliers.

Of the LBM dealers we spoke to, each had their own reasons for attending IBS. For example, one was there with members of his team to primarily learn about new products. Another was there with her team, as well as some of her builder customers, for the networking opportunities. Both are rock solid reasons, which got us thinking...

If you're among the hundreds of dealers who typically attend IBS, would you be interested in a breakfast, lunch, reception (or some other type of networking event) that would bring you together with your fellow dealers and *LBM Journal* readers? If yes, let me know. Next year, IBS will be back in Vegas from February 27-29, and if you want to connect with your tribe while there, we'd love to help make it happen. After all, we've seen what happens when LBM dealers get together at our LBM Strategies conference, and it's a powerful thing. Why limit it to a single opportunity?



Rick@LBMJournal.com

— Rick Schumacher
Executive Editor & Publisher

LET'S GET GROWING

“ We have an aggressive growth strategy, and Do it Best makes it happen.

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Avoiding failure and finding success

SHORTLY AFTER THE NEW YEAR I began re-reading James Clear's book, "Atomic Habits." It was the season of resolutions, and to borrow from another well-known self-improvement book, it was time for me to "sharpen the saw," and assess my capacity for, and sincere interest in, personal growth. In the process of reading Clear's book, I signed up for his email newsletter and explored some of his blog content.

In a blog post on the topic of inversion thinking (a manner of thinking in which you consider the opposite of what you want), a sub-title stood out so much that I jotted it down in my notebook and eventually tore the top of the page where I had written it out and taped it to the desk in my home office. I'm not sure why I saved it at the time, maybe because I didn't understand it, or I just wanted to think about later. Here's what it said:

Success is Overvalued. Avoiding Failure Matters More.

Clear lays it out simply by saying, "Avoiding mistakes is an underappreciated way to improve." Inversion, he says, is particularly valuable in the workplace. "Leaders can ask themselves, 'What would someone do each day if they were a terrible manager?' Good leaders would likely avoid those things."

Indeed, it sounds simple and even a bit sarcastic. But, how often are we so focused on what success looks like that we don't recognize failure when we see it in the distance?

I bring this up because so often in the LBM industry, the folks that I talk to who we all would

likely deem successful have a fairly basic, yet motivating way of going about their daily work. Namely, they show up and do it the best they can. I see this in the dealer profiles that I write each month for our magazine, and I'm seeing it now in the nominations arriving for our 40 Under 40 program.

Consider this month's Dealer of the Year profile on page 40. Here, Jay Andrew, president and co-owner at Henry Poor Lumber Co. and Flooring Express, says his team's formula for success is "Clear, consistent communication, feedback, and interactions with everyone."

Jay is a very smart guy. In fact, he's smart enough to know that success, while involving a lot of hard work, is actually quite simple. Be open, honest, and consistent with everyone. Not doing so would be a failure in Jay's mind.

Here at LBM Journal, we often hear a similar mantra from our Publisher and Executive Editor Rick Schumacher. "We run our race," is what he likes to say. We know there are others running similar races of their own, and we know what failure might look like. As such, we've been quite successful.

As I mentioned, I see a lot of this same philosophy in the nominations coming in for our 40 Under 40 Program (learn more at LBMJournal.com/40U40...the nomination period closes on March 31). Many of the nominees have said that they don't know what their secret of success is, other than they show up, do their work, and be nice to other people. In my mind, anything less is failure.

Here's to avoiding failure...because it leads to success.

— James Anderson
Editor



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UPDATES

PEOPLE

Do it Best has promoted **Allison Flatjord** as the company's new vice president of ecommerce.

Simpson Strong-Tie has announced the appointment of **Mike Olosky** as CEO.

ODL has announced the promotion of **Andy Arnsman** to director of sales – pro channel.

Cornerstone Building Brands CEO **Rose Lee** has been named to the **National Association of Manufacturers** board of directors.

Roseburg has named **Cory Boydston** to its Board of Directors.

Marvin has hired **Rick Johnson** as its new chief digital officer.



ALLISON FLATJORD



MIKE OLOSKY



ANDY ARNSMAN



ROSE LEE



RICK JOHNSON

INDUSTRY

Fiberon Wildwood composite cladding has earned two design awards: a Good Design Award from The Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture and Design, and a Product Innovation Award from *Architectural Products* magazine.

Higharc, an all-in-one homebuilding platform for design, sales, and construction, has announced a \$1.3 million strategic investment from **Simpson Strong-Tie**.

Boise Cascade will open a new 150,000 square-foot door shop in Kansas City in June.

Simpson Strong-Tie has donated \$25,000 to the International Rescue Committee in response to devastating earthquakes in Turkey and Syria.

Simpson Strong-Tie was recognized by the Building Talent Foundation as a 2022 Industry Champion for its commitment, contribution, and collaboration in building a sustainable workforce in residential construction.

DISTRIBUTION

Wolf Home Products now distributes **Benjamin Obdyke** Wall Systems.

Vista Railing Systems is partnering with **Minnesota Vinyl and Aluminum** for distribution in the Minnesota market.

Tando has named **Mid-Cape Home Centers** its newest flagship dealer for Beach House Shake.

Palmer-Donavin has announced that **Holmes Manufacturing** is the Manufacturer Partner of the Year and **Mark McNabb**, of **CertainTeed**, has been awarded Manufacturer Representative of the Year for 2022.

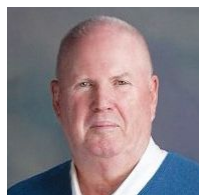
Nova US Wood Products was named exclusive U.S. provider of **Rhino Wood**.

Cameron Ashley has opened its third distribution center in Louisiana.

Tractor Supply has opened its largest distribution center to date. The Navarre, Ohio facility is the company's first distribution center to open since 2018.

IN MEMORIAM

Larry Adams, former president of the **Southern Building Association** for 36 years, passed away Feb. 16, 2023. Adams was president of **Robinson's Builders Mart**



for nine years, and had also served as president of the Home Builders Association for the Hickory/Conover Region.

BUILDER CONFIDENCE SHOWS CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM

Two consecutive solid monthly gains for builder confidence, spurred in part by easing mortgage rates, signal that the housing market may be turning a corner even as builders continue to contend with high construction costs and building material supply chain logjams.

Builder confidence in the market for newly built single-family homes in February rose seven points to 42, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI). This is the strongest reading since September of last year.

"With the largest monthly increase for builder sentiment since June 2013, the HMI indicates that incremental gains for housing affordability have the ability to price-in buyers to the market," said NAHB Chairman Alicia Huey

Noting that the most challenging part of the home building market remains construction of entry-level homes, Huey called on policymakers to "help by reducing the cost of developing lots and building homes via regulatory reform."

The average 30-year fixed rate mortgage rate peaked at 7.08% in October, according to Freddie Mac. Although rates declined to approximately 6.1% at the start of February, the 10-year Treasury rate has moved up more than 30 basis points during the past two weeks, indicating an increase for mortgage rates lies ahead.

And while builders continue to offer a variety of incentives to attract buyers during this housing downturn, recent data indicate that the housing market is showing signs of stabilizing off a cyclical low: 31% of builders reduced home prices in February, down from 35% in December and 36% in November.

The average price drop in February was 6%, down from 8% in December, and tied with 6% in November. 57% offered some kind of incentive in February, down from 62% in December and 59% in November.

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UPDATES

BUYING GROUPS & CO-OPS

LBM Advantage 2022 Vendors of the Year are: **Certainteed**, **Simpson Strong-Tie**, **US Lumber**, and **The Stock Market** kitchen and bath.

Orgill welcomed thousands of retailers to its 2023 Spring Dealer Market at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center Feb. 9-11.

Do it Best has broken ground on a major expansion of their Woodburn, Oregon distribution center. The multi-year project will grow the space by about 50%.

Do it Best has received the 2023 **Northwestern Lumber Association** Supporter of the Year award.

MERGERS & ACQUISITION

SRS Distribution has acquired **Marsh Building Products**.

TOUGH CALL ANSWERS

LBM JOURNAL'S JANUARY SURVEY

TYLER TEXTER

YOUR NEWEST SALES REP SEEMS TO COMMUNICATE ONLY BY TEXT AND IT'S CREATED A PROBLEM WITH ONE OF YOUR BIGGEST CUSTOMERS. HERE'S HOW READERS WOULD HANDLE THIS TOUGH CALL.

SURVEY RESULTS FROM LBMJOURNAL.COM

3.1%

NO TEXTING. Tell Tyler that texting is too new and causes too many problems. No more texting with clients.

38.9%

SIGNED P/O. Texting didn't cause this problem, Tyler did. Explain that a signed, dated P/O from an authorized purchaser is required before an order is official.

51.1%

SET SOME RULES. Tyler is clearly onto something. Meet with your entire sales team, and talk about Tyler's successes, and brainstorm and agree on ground rules for texting as a sales tool.



6.9%

LESSON LEARNED. You clearly need to handle Builder Brian's account personally, but since that's the only problem, there's no need to restrict Tyler with his other accounts.

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Tom Barclay,
General Manager
Ganahl Lumber

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BY THE YARD NEWS FROM LUMBERYARDS AROUND THE COUNTRY

Drexel Building Supply named among nation's top workplaces

Drexel Building Supply, based in Campbellsport, Wisconsin, has been named to Energage program's list of Top Workplaces. The award, announced annually, recognizes organizations across the country that have built exceptional, people-centric workplace cultures.

New Koopman Lumber location under construction on Cape Cod

The 2023 LBM Journal Dealer of the Year has announced that renovation is underway at the former Antique Center of Cape Cod in Dennis, with an anticipated opening in April. The new location will feature an 8,759-square-foot store including a window and door showroom, as well as retail space for standard and seasonal hardware; a 9,030-square-foot drive-through lumber yard with auto stack racking; and two warehouse buildings totaling 4,759 square feet.

Nation's Best acquires East Texas Hardware

East Texas Hardware will maintain operations under its existing name with its key leadership team overseeing company operations alongside Nation's Best.

Gulfeagle Supply opens Southwest Florida location

The branch will share a property with its sister-company Kimal Lumber, and will support contractors as they rebuild areas most impacted by Hurricane Ian. The location brings Gulfeagle's Florida presence to 25 branches across the sunshine state. The Englewood branch will also fulfill a need for material supplies between Gulfeagle's existing Sarasota and Fort Myers locations.

Spahn & Rose foundation donates \$175,000 to local charities

Continuing a tradition of charitable giving that spans more than seven decades, the Spahn & Rose Charitable Foundation donated \$175,000 to 72 organizations in communities Spahn & Rose serves during 2022.

Drexel Building Supply expanding

Drexel Building Supply is expanding to Kewaskum, Wisconsin after the recent announcement of its acquisition of McMahon & Co., a custom door manufacturer. Construction will include a 200,000-plus square-foot building that can be expanded in the future.

Detering Company named among top workplaces in Houston

The Detering Company announced that it was named a *Houston Chronicle* 2022 Top Workplace. The award recognizes the top organizations in Houston that provide great benefits, compensation, and a unique company culture.

Niel Crowson retires from E.C. Barton

E.C. Barton and Company has announced that long-standing Chairman of the Board and past President Niel Crowson retired as chairman. Crowson served as president and chairman of the Board for E.C. Barton and Company for more than 25 years, a role he returned to in 2020 following his retirement in 2018.

Lumber Mart named Northwestern Lumber Association Dealer of the Year

The Grand Forks area dealer was nominated by retail and supplier members of NLA as a company that stands out as being ethical, committed to their industry and community, and respected by their peers.

US LBM selling three operating divisions to L&W Supply

Feldman Lumber, Rosen Materials, and Wallboard Supply Company, and their subsidiaries Coastal Roofing Supply, Eastern Wallboard Supply, and Richardson Gypsum are included in the transaction.

Bliffert's Chris Hegeman elected chair of WRLA

Chris Hegeman, manager of Bliffert Lumber & Hardware, has accepted a two-year term as chairman of the board of the Wisconsin Retail Lumber Association, part of the Northwestern Lumber Association.

LA's Anawalt Lumber celebrating 100th anniversary

Anawalt Lumber, one of the oldest family-owned businesses in Los Angeles, celebrates its 100th Anniversary in 2023. The company will host special events, sponsor anniversary specials, and giveaways throughout the year. Events will include workshops for gardening, DIY house-building instruction, and partner campaigns with local builders and nonprofits serving the Los Angeles community, the company announced in a press release.

Leadership changes at Siwek Lumber

Jason Pranghofer has been promoted to vice president and joins the ownership group, while Samantha Siwek has been named secretary/treasurer.

84 Lumber announces this year's first Team Headquarters Award winners

The Rising Star award was awarded to Andy Fossick, senior manager-Traffic and Logistics, and the Business Excellence Award was given to HR Manager Heather Kovaly.

84 Lumber announces expansion plans

84 Lumber, currently operating 234 stores, 14 component manufacturing plants, 28 engineered wood product centers, and 34 door shops, has plans to open new facilities and make improvements to 54 existing locations to increase its market share by the end of 2023.

EVENTS | 2023

MAR 8-10

LMC 2023 ANNUAL
Charlotte, NC | lmc.net

MAR 11-13

DO IT BEST SPRING MARKET
Orlando, FL | doitbestonline.com

MAR 16-19

TRUE VALUE SPRING REUNION
Chicago, IL | truevalue.com

SEP 8-11

DO IT BEST FALL MARKET
Indianapolis, IN | doitbestonline.com

OCT 11-13

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Star Lumber shares how its many technology tools work together to help overcome business obstacles.

Q & A WITH ERIC CHIPPEAUX OF STAR LUMBER



Eric Chippeaux is the Commercial Sales Manager at Star Lumber, which serves the Kansas and Oklahoma regions.

Q: With the ever-changing landscape of the LBM industry, ERP platforms have become more important than ever. How are you leveraging this technology to solve problems?

A: Five years ago, Star Lumber & Supply decided to upgrade our ERP system to one that was not only reliable for our current day situation, but one that could scale and grow as we did. Like many other businesses in the LBM Industry, we needed to overcome obstacles like the COVID-19 pandemic, pricing issues, trucking issues, and more. Being on Epicor BisTrack has not only helped us deal with those day-to-day issues, it has allowed us to expand our business as well. Star Lumber grew tremendously over the last two years and that would not have been possible without Epicor.

Q: How does Epicor's technology tools help manage pricing issues?

A: Star Lumber utilizes many of the tools available to us through Epicor BisTrack—making our pricing model extremely custom and complex—but one that software can easily manage. We have a variety of customers with different expectations and exceptions, and through the program, we can make those quick price changes or lock in pricing for specific customers or jobs to meet those needs. Maintaining our core mission statement is a top priority, so being able to meet customer expectations quickly has been vital.

Q: With labor shortages continuing to be a struggle, how do your technology tools help streamline your business?

A: As with every company in every industry, labor shortages have been an obstacle for us. Epicor, however, has helped make it more manageable through a variety of available programs and tools. It is easier to onboard a new employee and get them up to speed with the help of the self-guided training program in the Epicor Learning Center. Additionally, the Epicor Warehouse Management System allows us to pull and deliver more orders than in the past. This allowed us to grow our business without having to hire as many people. Overall, Epicor allows Star Lumber to drive efficiencies within our business, giving our people time to focus on revenue-driving tasks.

Q: Inventory can be difficult to manage, especially with today's supply chain issues. How does Epicor help with real-time inventory challenges?

A: As we face supply chain issues, it has become more important to be able to manage current inventory while also making data-driven decisions to predict your future needs—while also managing turns and margins. Our inventory has increased over the last two years and Epicor has made it easier to manage that by utilizing the suggested order reports and the Warehouse Management System. Both of these tools have allowed us to stay on top of the inventory while not sacrificing our margins and turns.

Q: How does Epicor's technology tools help with logistical/long-distance challenges?

A: With the help of Epicor, we have been able to eliminate many of our logistical issues while also enhancing our customer experience. For example, delivery pictures attached to orders help our customers stay in touch with the status of their order and also help our drivers and loaders feel confident in their delivery. Additionally, WMS allows us to attach Unit/Cart numbers to the delivery driver's manifests to ensure they are dropping the correct product at the correct job site. In the past, we used OTIF (On Time, In Full) as our guide, and today we can use as many pulling and delivery metrics as needed to help manage the success of our logistics teams. We believe that the roadmap of tools Epicor is looking to develop for the future of our business will allow this relationship to get stronger with time.

ERP with 331% three-year return on investment: Epicor BisTrack

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Servant selling

BY BILL LEE

DO YOU HAVE A philosophy of selling? I'm not referring to a philosophy like the early Greek scholars made popular, but rather I'm referring to a system or an approach to selling that works for you.

You may have noticed that I frequently criticize salespeople whose initial approach to selling focuses primarily on price. One of the reasons I have adopted this stance on price-centered selling is because it is so harmful to a salesperson's gross margin. Plus, I see it as a pretty lazy approach to sales.

In my first sales job, I received nothing from my company but product training. I never heard a word about how to open conversations, how to prospect or how to earn the right to a prospect's business. Today, I look back at those times as the dark days of selling for me because I knew that I was of little value to my customers and prospects.

There are salespeople today who have had a totally different experience in the sales profession than I had when I started out. The ones who have achieved the highest levels seem to be the ones who adopted the sales philosophy known as "servant selling." The idea is to approach the profession of selling just like servants might approach their profession.

If you have a mentor who can model selling like a servant to you, I believe this concept will make a lot of sense, especially when so many of the products we sell are identical to the products our competitors are selling, and in many cases, our service is also difficult to differentiate.

Servant selling is all about doing things for your customers and prospects that they perceive to be of value. Sometimes your value solves some

of the problems the principles of the business are struggling with, and other times it benefits the business itself.

In the Nov./Dec. 2022 issue of *LBM Journal*, there was an enlightening article about the problems building supply dealers are facing with regard to excessive jobsite returns. If you haven't read this article and if you don't work in a LBM business, you may not be aware of how big a problem excessive returns are to owners and managers. One dealer reported that his company's goal was to control credits not to exceed 2% of sales, but they are currently running 4.5% of sales.

You have to wonder how much the additional 2.5% of sales is costing this LBM dealer in dollars and cents. To put a plug in for servant selling, I also have to wonder what value the dealers in our industry would place on a solution. Bring even a partial solution to your customers and watch your value skyrocket.

Servant salespeople spend a lot of time introducing customers and prospects to other LBM executives in businesses outside their trade area who are more accomplished in their ability to achieve their key corporate objectives.

I believe you will find it relatively easy to persuade an owner to take a one-and-a-half-hour drive to visit a non-competing dealer's location in a town a 100 miles away because the owner has everything to gain and nothing to lose. You spend no time on the trip selling; all of your time is spent exposing your prospect to money-making ideas.

As time passes, you will begin to feel more and more confident in your own ability to teach these business principles yourself. ■



Bill Lee is a respected sales and business consultant in the LBM industry. For more information, contact Bill at leeresourcesinc@gmail.com

GOOD READS

There are many books full of ideas written for the benefit of decision makers in our industry. Invest in yourself by taking the time to read a few, and you'll increase your value to every customer and prospect. One of my favorites is, "The Real Business 101: Lessons From the Trenches," by Jim Sobeck.

It's all about your beliefs

BY RICK DAVIS

LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT. Your market is one of the toughest in the country. You can't pin down builders and contractors to meet you at specific times. Your market is the most price sensitive market in the country. The home office doesn't "get it."

Welcome to my world. As a speaker, trainer, and consultant, I've been privileged to work in almost every state in the country along with six Canadian provinces and, with certainty, can tell you that the toughest market of them all is...wait for it...the one I am in on any given day. I know because everyone tells me so while attempting to convince me of their unique victimization. The reality is not that markets are different, but instead that you behave what you believe.

If you believe your price will be too high, you deliver a starting point with fear instead of expected consideration. If you believe buyers won't meet, you instead spend a career driving to jobsites hoping to "catch" prospects and customers at the right time. Conversely, if you believe you can truly help your customers succeed and are worth every penny you charge, then you perform with confidence.

My career has taken me down many learning paths, perhaps the most important of which is the power of training the brain. In "The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force", Jeffrey Schwartz highlights his work with OCD patients and demonstrates how intentional thought literally rewired the brains of his patients and disabled a flawed signal emanating from the limbic system to the cortex.

In "Train Your Mind: Change Your Brain", Sharon Begley (who co-authored Schwartz's book) shares the remarkable study of Buddhist monks who produced elevated gamma brain waves during meditative states. A later study with a test group of students from the University of Wisconsin proved that similar meditation could induce the same gamma brain wave function. The story gets even better when the

PhDs conducting the study realized that the gamma brain wave function of monks became a permanent state of their being.

We live in a world of 24/7 news that feeds the brain a steady dose of garbage. Allowing oneself to be exposed to this constant brain deluge is akin to binging on cupcakes, Twinkies, and McRib's as "nourishment" for your body.

So where does this leave us relative to sales performance and mindset?

- Turn off the news because it's not news. It's a TV show with performers who pose as experts while being fed the slant dictated by their employers.
- Check your beliefs at the door. In fact, buyers make appointments with doctors, dentists, building inspectors, and other valued professionals; they will make appointments with you given the right incentive. In fact, nearly every competitor of yours in the market buys commodities at nearly the exact level as you and, consequently, sells at very similar prices; the difference between vendors is not price, but is instead the value and total cost of doing business that the salesperson creates. In fact, bad stuff happens like lost orders, delayed shipments, and clerical errors; great sales leadership is the ability to calmly cope without escalating customer anxiety.
- Practice mental toughness. Crap happens. Expect it and cope. Listen to the interviews of top performing athletes between periods. They never complain, and instead emphasize the game plan they will persistently pursue.

Your market is not different. The "differences" in your market are the perceptions of the various competitors on your playing field. The only victimization one can feel is the perception proactively chosen in one's own mind. The confidence, power, and belief in your future success, however, begins with the vision to achieve every goal you put into your brain. ■



Rick Davis is the Sales Education Leader for ABC Supply and the President of Building Leaders. You can buy his books or learn more about his online sales training platform at buildingleaders.com.

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Is critical thinking part of your company culture?

BY DENA CORDOVA-JACK

RECENTLY, GOOGLE COMPLETED a multi-year study of team performance within various cultures. Unsurprisingly, the findings of the study reflected that teams performed at their highest levels while in a learning culture where they felt safe to take risks and share ideas without fear of repercussion. These teams were successful in an environment where critical thinking was highly valued, and the process was a foundational norm.

High-performing individuals and teams exhibit critical thinking skills in their highest form, and because this thinking model was part of the day-to-day operation, the team utilized “group think” to find solutions to their challenges. Additionally, the highest-performing teams were comprised of intelligent people with varying skill sets and inter-personal communication styles. All possessed a high degree of humility, and held a core belief that “all of us are smarter than one of us.” Both individually and collectively, they were able to find unique ways to solve issues.

As leaders, you have developed a decision-making model or process that doesn’t rely on intuition or muscle memory. According to Psychology Today, the three core skills for critical thinking are analysis, evaluation, and inference. When we evaluate our employees and our culture, creating a learning environment that encourages associates at all levels of the organization to learn and utilize critical thinking skills will put your company light years ahead when searching for solutions to issues. If you want to increase your company’s critical thinking process and practice, here are some suggestions you may find helpful.

When individuals and teams utilize critical thinking, it may be helpful for them to have an opportunity to explain how they arrived at their conclusions. If you lead with questions, you will quickly see how they arrived at their findings,

whether through a rational thought process or in a more subconscious way. They may have made that decision through cognitive dissonance and/or confirmation bias. If they cannot explain their thought process, they may become frustrated when asked the following:

1. How did you arrive at this solution?
2. Have you considered other options?
3. Do you foresee any risks?
4. What are your goals, and what do you hope to achieve?
5. Have you completed your objectives, and if so, how?
6. Is there anything that you would have done differently?
7. What are the most important things that you have learned?

If you experience frustration from your team when you integrate critical thinking at a higher level in your culture, that is a normal response. Give it time, keep the focus, and your team will eventually default to this method of thinking when faced with challenging situations.

Unless you enjoy being the Oracle of All Things, train your associates in critical thinking and create a learning culture. You don’t want your employees (or your customers) to run to you every time a decision needs to be made. Make critical thinking a required part of any decision-making process at your company, whether you are meeting one-on-one or with a group. Creating a culture where critical thinking is a foundational process in decision-making will significantly reduce costly errors in judgment and have an overall positive benefit to the bottom line.

Empower your employees, set the tone that critical thinking should be a part of every decision at any level of the organization, and free yourself to focus on future state and strategy of your company. ■



Dena Cordova-Jack built her 30+ year career with GP, Boise Cascade, Foxworth-Galbraith, and most recently as VP of Organizational Development for Kodiak Building Partners. She currently serves as Vice President for Misura Group. Reach Dena at dcordovajack@misuragroup.com.

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Establishing your credibility

BY RUSS KATHREIN

SOMETIMES WE FIND OURSELVES in a new setting and want to let the group know that we belong or that we know what we are talking about. One tactic you can use is to name drop—talking about someone famous or well-known in the industry that will help you find common ground or make you look credible. The problem with name dropping is that it seldom works.

In the past year I've interacted with three people—a salesperson, an industry veteran, and a consultant—who were prolific name droppers. These three all had a lot of experiences to share that would have made talking with them interesting. Instead, they continuously dropped names of people and companies I had never heard of, leaving me lost. Here is how one of their conversations might have sounded.

"When I worked for ABC company, the owner was John Smith, who came from Texas where his father was friends with Biff Carmichael who invented the left-handed monkey wrench while he was serving in the 82nd Airborne in WWII. John previously worked for Ted Snodgrass at Generic Distribution, who was the first successful importer of palm plywood to the indigenous people of the Falkland Islands. It was at ABC company that I first learned the lumber business."

I would sit there confused about the point he was trying to make, bored out of my mind, wondering if there really was a plywood product made from palm trees. Was he just trying to tell me in an interesting way about the company where he first learned the lumber business? If so, it achieved the opposite effect, leaving me uninterested. To avoid this, here are a few things to keep in mind when calling out names:

-If you're going to drop names, make sure your audience would have heard of them. (Most of the people and companies those three individuals would talk about were way before my time,

were now deceased, and their companies were no longer in business.)

-Make sure the name and the purpose behind sharing it add value to your story. Going off on a tangent about some famous individual not only makes you look like a narcissist, it confuses your listeners.

-Be observant of your audience. If they start rolling their eyes or don't seem interested, you've lost them because you made the story too much about you or what you think would make you sound good.

-If you're new at a company and want to talk about something your previous company did, you can get away with calling them out by name for a day or two. After that, every time you start out a conversation with, "Well, at Warped Lumber, we did it this way," your listeners will tune out as soon as they hear the company name. A better approach is to start out saying, "In a previous life, we tried doing it this way." You will have better luck keeping people's ear.

-If you really want to establish credibility with a new audience, ask questions of the people you are with and get them to lead the conversation. Then you can interject when you find common ground or experiences on a topic.

They say God gave us one mouth and two ears for a reason. Use them in that proportion. Otherwise, you may end up feeling like I did early in my career when I took one of my important vendors out to lunch. He nodded and smiled as I spent the first 30 minutes talking about everything that was important to me and my business until our waiter came to take our order. The waiter asked the vendor a question, and the vendor held up his hand and responded with, "Hold on a second. Let me turn my hearing aids on." ■



Russ Kathrein is with the LBM Division of Do it Best Corp. based in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

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Do I need to explain myself?

BY THEA DUDLEY

Dear Thea,
I recently turned down a customer for a credit account with my company. They were not happy and demanded to know why. I told them based on their credit report we were unable to extend credit at this time, thinking I was being nice. The customer flipped and demanded to know who said bad things about them on the report, where did we get it, and that it was all lies and we needed to provide documentation that shows bad credit reported.

— Trying to let them down easy

Dear Easy Downer,
Accountability feels like an attack when someone is not ready to acknowledge how their actions—good or bad—impact them. You didn't mention how you responded to that attack, so let me remind you that you did not create their credit history. This is their legacy, not a story you put together.

People often confuse the rules of B2B credit, which is governed completely differently than consumer credit. As a creditor in B2B, you don't have to share your sources. The customer does not have the right to demand a copy of the credit report(s) you pulled or communicate directly with your reporting agency. You do not have to share it.

If you like a challenge (and what credit manager doesn't) see if you can get the customer to calm down long enough to have a conversation that goes beyond, "Your credit report looks like something my cat threw up."

Start with, "I have a few concerns; can we talk about them?" Ask them about what you are seeing that is causing you concern such as tax liens, judgments, or any other item that

catches your eye. I have told customers before that it appears from their credit report they pay trade creditors 40 days past terms—what's that about? There are no names, only categories, so you have autonomy.

I encourage them to request a copy of their commercial credit report. Same as monitoring your personal credit report for mistakes, your current score, and assorted other data, a company should be doing the same thing. D&B, Credit Safe, Experian Business, and Equifax Business will all provide a company with one yearly report. They will even monitor it for you and alert you if a report is pulled on your company. Some are free while some cost, but the tools are available.

On occasion, if the customer is professional (as in non-abusive) I will send them a copy, review it with them, and offer to help them get information corrected. We are, after all, salespeople at heart with trust issues. I want to find a way to say "yes" as much as anyone.

Most companies know if they have shoddy credit. The louder they protest, yell and threaten, the worse their credit usually is. Stereotypes exist for a reason and this is no different. If they truly don't agree with your decision, they usually will have a conversation and want to know more without doing the "quién es más macho" (literally, "who is the toughest?") dance.

We all want something. Customers want a line of credit to help support their business. Sales people want to make the customer happy and get the sale. Credit managers want to make the sales person and customer successful, get the sale, and get paid. We may not create their story, but we can help them navigate it and improve it, if they let us. ■



With more than 30 years of credit management experience in the LBM industry, Thea Dudley consults with companies on a wide range of credit and financial management issues. Contact Thea at theadudley@charter.net

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Adjustments to EBITDA revisited

BY JOHN WAGNER

READERS of this column know that adjustments to EBITDA are one of my favorite topics. Those same readers also know that the Adjusted EBITDA line on a profit-and-loss statement is a non-GAAP item. (GAAP stands for Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.) Accounting professionals know that the Adjusted EBITDA is something that plays a central role in mergers and acquisitions; indeed, it's in every single deal we do. So why are accountants so weary of the Adjusted EBITDA figure? It's because the credits and debits that are used to generate the Adjusted EBITDA figure are subject to negotiation, opinion, and subjective analysis. Yet the Adjusted EBITDA figure is widely used and accepted when a company is valued for acquisition, and it is not controversial to rely on it for that purpose.

Why is the Adjusted EBITDA my favorite M&A topic? Well, our firm works "the sell-side." We are the seller's representative in a merger, recapitalization, or acquisition. Any credit to EBITDA is additive to the adjusted EBITDA. And since companies are purchased as a multiple of Adjusted EBITDA—let's say that multiple is 5X—any \$1 added to Adjusted EBITDA is worth \$5 on the company valuation.

Most companies we sell have owners who want to retire. If they retire at the closing of the transaction, and the acquirer won't have to pay them under new ownership, doesn't that mean their entire salary and benefits package is a positive credit to EBITDA? If one of the owners who is walking away makes \$250,000 all-in, can't that \$250,000 be a positive EBITDA adjustment for the seller? And at a 5X, doesn't that mean a \$1.25 million lift in purchase price? Possibly.

Let's say the owner who is leaving is the lumber buyer. If he intends to leave, the acquirer will rightfully ask who is going to take his place.

If the seller says, "We are promoting a fellow from estimating to do that job," then the seller won't get the full \$250,000 credit to the Adjusted EBITDA. The seller will get only a partial credit, which is the difference between what the new owner is paying the new lumber buyer and what the seller was paying himself for that same job.

Let's say the new lumber buyer will be paid \$100,000, all-in. (Remember, the seller was \$250,000, all-in.) So that \$150,000 difference is a valid credit to Adjusted EBITDA. $\$150,000 \times 5 = \$750,000$ lift in company value.

But what if the seller who was making \$250,000 is staying after the closing and will continue in his old job? Owners often pay themselves more than "fair and customary" salaries for the jobs they do. Let's say that the "fair and customary" salary under new ownership for a lumber buyer is \$100,000; that's what the old owner (who will become an employee after the deal closes) will get paid. In that case, the difference between \$250,000 and \$100,000 is a credit to the Adjusted EBITDA line. That \$150,000 differential is a valid credit to Adjusted EBITDA.

Adjustments to EBITDA are always the most discussed line item in a profit and loss statement, and there can be some real horse trading that goes on, e. g. "OK, I'll give you the \$100,000 salary for the lumber trader's compensation, but in exchange, we have to move to fair and customary for your son-in-law in the door shop, because he is clearly making a 'friends and family' wage."

Lastly, when you are tallying up the credits for Adjusted EBITDA, knowing that it could be 5X to your benefit for every dollar you add, don't go crazy. Don't add "ash and trash" (items below \$5,000), because they will likely be ruled out by the acquirer anyway. ■



John Wagner is a managing director at 1stWest Mergers & Acquisitions, which offers a specialty practice in the LBM sector. Reach John at j.wagner@1stwestma.com

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DECKING-AS-CLADDING 101

WHAT IS DECKING-AS-CLADDING?

One of the up-and-coming trends of the moment is cladding made with PVC or composite decking. Decking in this application is often installed as “open joint cladding” with wider spacing up to 3/4” to create a strong, linear design pattern for a more modern look that is increasingly popular with designers and architects. Alternatively, “closed-joint” decking-as-cladding applications allow for a more subtle look with traditional spacing.

Whether closed-joint or open-joint, the material delivers the look of sought-after exotic hardwoods like ipe, garapo, or cypress without the maintenance requirements. While whites and grays are trendy for exteriors, many homeowners are drawn to the warmth of wood, for the entire façade or accent areas.

Installing Open-Joint Cladding

At about 30% lighter than capped composite, TimberTech® Advanced PVC Cladding is highly workable and easy to install. It installs similarly to wood, using traditional face-fastening techniques. Installers can use Cortex® for Composite hidden fasteners, which include plugs made from the same material to achieve a seamless appearance.

When used as cladding, TimberTech deck boards should be installed over a rainscreen to ensure an adequate drainage plane for moisture to escape. Open-joint cladding should use a black housewrap to preserve the aesthetic of shadow lines; due to the increased exposure from the open joints, UV-resistant housewrap should be chosen.

Open joint cladding is the most talked about look of the moment, with spacing of up to 3/4” between boards. But for projects desiring a closed-joint look or in areas prone to bouts of heavy rain or persistent bugs, tongue-and-groove boards interlock together easily, creating a solid barrier with a more subtle linear design and smoother finish. Designers using TimberTech Cladding can stagger boards as they wish, ensuring the most authentic look.

Why Use TimberTech Cladding?

TimberTech Advanced PVC Cladding is one of the few alternative decking materials made with PVC rather than a capped composite. The high-performance polymer delivers ultimate durability and low maintenance alongside beautiful, authentic looks. Plus, TimberTech Cladding carries a Class A Flame Spread Index, meaning it is most likely to minimize the spread of an active flame. This can be especially important in multi-family construction or for building in fire-prone areas.

The TimberTech proprietary color blending and texturing processes capture the look of exotic hardwoods, while the advanced PVC construction ensures decades of low-maintenance, enduring



PHOTOS COURTESY OF AZEK COMPANY

good looks. Color, board width, and open- and closed-joint profile options open unlimited design possibilities for both residential and commercial applications.

Colors and textures match TimberTech deck and porch boards, allowing users to create a unified aesthetic across the home and outdoor living space. Two widths are available for tongue-and-groove boards, three widths for square-shoulder boards.

TimberTech Advanced PVC Cladding carries a lifetime limited product warranty and 50-year limited fade and stain warranty for residential and a 30-year limited product warranty and 30-year limited fade and stain warranty for commercial.

Is Selling Decking-as-Cladding Much Different Than Selling Traditional Siding?

Well the answer isn't as simple as Yes or No — Here are a few things to keep in mind when selling decking-as-cladding:

Raise awareness: Though the look of decking-as-cladding, particularly open-joint styles, is growing, it's still relatively new and often found in architect-designed homes and buildings. Creating displays or hosting lunch and learns, among other educational opportunities, may be needed to draw interest in your area.

Determine the look they're going for: An open-joint format using traditional square-shoulder decking boards provides a strong, linear look ideal for modern homes that still desire the warmth of wood looks. But when a more subtle closed-joint look is desired, tongue-and-groove boards easily achieve the required spacing.

Consider sustainability messaging: If you work with designers and builders focused on green building practices, keep in mind that many PVC and composite decking brands are made with recycled content. TimberTech Advanced PVC, for example, includes about 60% recycled material.

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In a world where ecommerce has become a consumer expectation, why do you think the LBM industry has been slow to embrace it?

The LBM industry has largely enjoyed steady growth since World War II, and until the pandemic, there was insufficient motive to explore modified and perceptively riskier business models. This is confounded by most LBM dealers not having a deep understanding of what an ecommerce-enabled vertically-specific business looks like.

Historically, the LBM industry relied heavily on the hardware co-ops to provide a national ecommerce presence for a dealer-based percentage of individual respective sales and fractional percentages of product offerings or select SKUs. As a result, most dealers have not prioritized recruiting skilled people to create and manage an ecommerce-enabled business strategy.

Another issue has been with dealers viewing technology as a function that only sits under the remit of the IT and finance departments. Ecommerce is, at its heart, a service, sales, and marketing proposition aimed at customers. Therefore, it is an investment area for business growth instead of a cost base to be reduced, so it has typically needed different leadership to make projects successful.

In light of economic worries, LBM dealers may feel reluctant to invest in a new ecommerce platform. What would you say to ease their concerns?

Many businesses decide to be careful with cash when recessions happen, and often the first cuts made are in marketing and technology. This has the impact of reducing sales and efficiency-creating opportunities, leading to a more difficult recovery afterwards. Countless case studies show that this strategy makes recessions not only worse, but almost self-fulfilling. Well-run businesses increase marketing and technology investments to gain market share when their competitors are cutting back. As a result, they can become more resilient and come out of a recession stronger.

While an ecommerce platform may seem like just another sales path, what efficiencies can it bring to the table for an LBM dealer?

The efficiencies are enormous. It allows customers to research and buy products, schedule deliveries and in-store pick-ups, pay invoices, and access customer service whenever they like. It also provides a global shop window to attract new (and often younger) builders, other trade customers, homeowners, and DIYers to the business. Furthermore, it can aid recruitment, as younger potential employees prefer working for companies that utilize the latest technology.

An ecommerce platform can also reduce the need to manually process orders, invoices, and other customer interactions. Additionally, ecommerce interactions generate massive amounts of customer data that can be used to make predictive business decisions that allow the LBM dealer to have the right product in the right place, at the right time, and at the optimum price.

Speaking specifically about eCommonSense, what solutions does the platform bring to the LBM dealer.

The eCommonSense platform delivers the business model of the traditional LBM dealer online, where everything previously done in-store with labor-intensive processes can now be delivered much more efficiently. As we evolve the platform, customer experience continues to be top of mind for future features and functionality. I thoroughly believe “convenience is the new loyalty,” so we will continue to deliver more convenience to dealers and their customers through our platform with the latest technology.

Looking forward, what do you predict the next 12 months might bring to the market?

My prediction for the next 12 months is that early adopters of new technology will have strong resilience to the effects of a recession and subsequently outcompete competitors who fail to embrace change. Additionally, high-quality product data will be a crucial pillar of success for every part of the industry value chain. Those progressive product manufacturers who invest in high-quality product data will make it easier for customers to make buying decisions and for LBM dealers to sell their products. In five years, I predict nearly every LBM business will need to be a data business because if they are not, they will not be able to compete with those that are.

Andy Scothern is the founder of eCommonSense, ECI’s market-leading ecommerce and product information management (PIM) solution specifically designed for lumber and building materials, hardware, home center and related home supply dealers. He is the chairman of the Builders Merchants Federation (BMF) Digital and Technology Forum, the Building Materials Building Index (BMBI) expert on ecommerce and PIM, and holds an MBA from Nottingham University. He currently resides in Southwell, England.

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TAKING OPERATIONS ONLINE

BY LBM JOURNAL READERS

First, we asked our readers whether their customers are allowed to access product pricing online. Just over a quarter of respondents said that they do offer product pricing for customers to access online.

We followed up that question with one about account access. More than 40% of readers who participated in the survey indicated that they allow their customers account access online.

Finally, we asked readers to respond with how they may directly address this month's Real Issues question. How would you advise this dealer?

"We don't currently offer online pricing or accounting functions for customers to log into. We're considering it, because we can see the potential upside in time-savings for our team, and the ability for our pro customers to access their account 24/7. But before we pull the trigger, we'd like to make sure that the plusses outweigh the negatives. We'd also appreciate any insights from dealers who've taken this step, with any advice on obstacles to avoid along the way."

RESPONSES FROM LUMBERYARDS, FULL-LINE BUILDING MATERIAL DEALERS, SPECIALTY DEALERS, AND DISTRIBUTORS:

"Great question! We are in the same boat as you, in that we email invoices and statements. But, we do not have online pricing or accounting functions via the web. I am curious if our business software offers this or if we would have to use another."

"We do not currently offer such online pricing or accounting functions, but absolutely see this as a next logical step to keep our business relevant. Obstacles will include internal and external pushback to change historic behaviors. Be ready to train your workforce to adapt to such technology and be prepared that some of your staff may not opt into such changes and decide to move on. It's hard, but it's part of keeping the business sustainable."

"As a company, we are in the same mindset. Our system definitely is not up to today's standards. Knowing this information would really be helpful in making future decisions."

"Do it. We're in the process of implementing those functions within our system and we believe it will help streamline our interactions with customers in a big way."

"If you are a small LBM dealer as a lot of us are, plan on a fulltime IT person to run it."

"It would be another list to keep pricing current."

"It's a great way to offer value-added services to your customers and if your ERP platform supports it, it really makes sense. I think the biggest concern most have is the safety and security of the data. Before you allow a lot of outside access to your system, you need to be adequately protected from hacking."

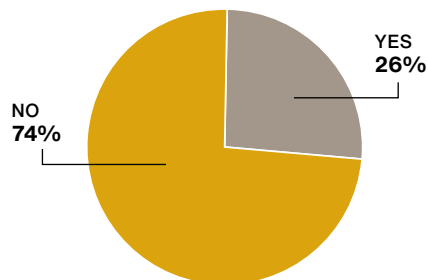
"Think about self-checkouts, it saves payroll dollars, but it loses the personal touch/relationship. The accounting piece is a no-brainer in my opinion. That being said, we still answer questions weekly that are right there if our customers would just log in and look. To me, the online pricing depends on your product mix. I spent 26 years in a big box, for lumber and building materials, there were really only a handful of items people would look at and we know what they are from our quotes, OSB, 2x4, 80# concrete etc., but if your product mix has other home building items like plumbing, electrical, and paint, then online pricing along with being able to put an online order together will place you competitive in your market."

"Limit accessibility."

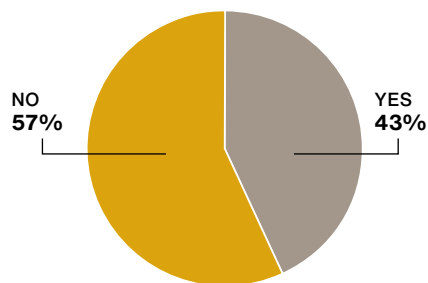
"Do it. Everything is going that way, as it is being driven by the way we use our personal charge and banking accounts."

"A team that oversees pricing would pay for itself through convenience to customers." ▶

DOES YOUR COMPANY ALLOW CUSTOMERS TO ACCESS PRODUCT PRICING ONLINE?



DOES YOUR COMPANY ALLOW CUSTOMERS TO ACCESS THEIR ACCOUNTS ONLINE?



"I am very curious about this myself. We recently purchased a lumberyard that has been a successful business for over 30 years. However, they run on zero technology. I think it would greatly help my company."

"It is nice for the dependable customers that keep track of their accounts to see the total of the accounts and be able to pay ahead of the end of the month if they are wanting. Some of our customers call directly in the office and never receive a copy of the receipt. Using the online access will make it easier for them to see what their bill is. Do lots of training for your team and your customers so all know how to use the online access."

"Online pricing is selling by price only. If you want to sell to a future or to a repeat customer, you will need to find a way to get them in the door and let service sell your customer."

"To be competitive in today's market, materials suppliers need to be more communicative, so that customers can quickly make decisions, sometimes even outside of business hours when we can answer questions directly. Online pricing would be standard pricing with any accommodations or deals only available by speaking with the account manager."

"At this time, we have no plans to implement this online access."

"Online access to invoices and emailing statements are necessities in today's world. Our smaller customers do much of their bookkeeping after we are closed, and our larger customers want to eliminate as many phone calls as necessary. The plus is reduced customer questions to our accounting department."

"Eventually this will likely become the norm, but I believe it is best to hold off on this as long as possible. The infrastructure required to maintain up to date and/or live pricing and invoicing will be enormous. Those costs will have to be pushed along somewhere down the line."

"Must assure pricing and inventory are accurate for success."

"We don't currently offer this, but I think we probably should. I think I understand most of the negatives of doing this but unfortunately this is just where customer expectations are shifting to. I think most customers would see this as a significant benefit. In this case, I would rather be an innovator than a follower."

"Invoices must be selected by customers for online payments. Avoid partial payments with no remittance info."

"We do not allow this at this time."

"Analyze then implement."

"We have portal access to view invoices, job totals and make payments. We are not currently offering pricing or quotes online. We do this for two reasons. First, it's impersonal and we may not know how the information is being used or if we're losing orders. Second, we deal with primarily independent custom builders and remodelers, so we want to be personally involved with that aspect of the business."

"We do not do this for many reasons, and we also understand how this could be a valuable tool. Security, and constant updating due to market fluctuations could be labor intensive, not to mention the cost to implement."

"Good luck."

"We have only been doing it for a short time, but the customers who take advantage of it do love it. If a customer was going to share your pricing with a competitor, he was doing it already."

"Just do it!"

"You need to make sure that what they offer you in an online store is what will fill your needs. It is easy to open a web store, but to get what you want to work for you is not that simple. Invest the time to make it the way you want, not what they offer you."

"We have an online store, access to our pricing online, the ability for builders to do their own quotes, and to pay their account online. We also have an app which is used to access their information on their cell phone. Having this has been a lot of work, so we ended up hiring an outside company with knowledge of our software to finish up a couple things with the online store. What has worked the best is being able to receive the ACH payments. We send out statements on the first of the month, and by 10:00 a.m. that day we will already have received several payments. We feel that it was well worth doing, but was a lot of work."

"The system needs to update in real time to maintain margin."

"The pluses and negatives cancel each other out. You're really steering culture. The last thing anybody needs is another login and password. I'm in this industry because I want to work with my hands (not on a keyboard). But I personally also enjoy conversing with others. Lastly, part of your job is knowing your products, services, and your customers. Why do I now need to look it up myself? Sell me on it! And why do I need 24-hour access? Are you an international company? No? Then give it and everyone else a chance to rest. This constant need to produce more and more and have everything at your literal fingertips is dumb and creates an entitled culture. I'm sincerely over it."

"The online accounting is a great tool for people who choose to use it."

"We offer online access for our credit customers. So far, there have been no big issues. As far as pricing, we offer different accounts different pricing based on volume and product use."

"Eventually we will all be there!"

"I'm an old-timer and things are changing in the way we conduct business. More and more of the younger generation want to be able to be mobile and have access when they want it. I think the pros far outweigh the cons."

“As long as you have procedures in place to price product accurately on a timely basis and have ability to display pricing (including any special pricing) to the customer, I'd go for it. If those processes aren't in place and strong, I'd start there first before you bring that information online. Many customers will appreciate the freedom to put together estimates on-the-fly and after hours without personally contacting a salesperson, but if the information isn't accurate and timely, you'll cause significant aggravation to the customer. It goes without saying, be sure that you have the right infrastructure for this kind of system activity and have a plan for the sales team to engage the customer in ways other than preparing pricing.”

“I would like to see it happen, but the sales staff feels like they would lose control. This discussion has highlighted some inconsistencies in our bidding process which need to be fixed before we can have this level of transparency. There is an additional concern that publishing prices would bring new customers who are focused on price rather than service. This would take up our capacity with sales that are less consistent.”

“We are in the same boat. I think the best strategy is to start slow and allow just a few key customers access for a few months to get feedback and work out the kinks prior to going completely live.”

“I would begin with adding account access. Overall, it would be difficult to weigh the expense savings, if any, to this program, but every other aspect seems to be positive from our experience with the transition. It improves clarity and customer service for your customers and will reduce touches that your AR team will need to have with the accounts that would utilize the system. You will have some customers that will be early adopters of the change, and some that will still prefer to handle their accounts as they always have. If you can somehow incentivize customers to use your system (even on a trial basis), you may see increased adoption of the new service.”

“You are missing out on potential sales. Ask question of dealers who have it now.”

“There are no negatives.”

“Your competition is working on doing it already!”

“We offer one price across the board for customers to get rough pricing, even when an order is placed online it is still reviewed by a salesperson.”

“We would love to incorporate it.”

“We have given our customers online availability of pricing, inventory, and their account for almost ten years with zero problems. Over 10% of our sales are online now.”

“I would be interested to hear what the negatives are, other than appearing daunting and time-consuming to set up. That is the issue we are facing now, but in the long run I would rather spend time and effort to get the ball rolling than lose a customer to a competitor that offers this service. Because ready or not, offering services & managing accounts online is becoming expected and is here to stay.” ▶

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RESPONSES FROM WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTORS, MANUFACTURERS, AND SERVICE PROVIDERS:

“Having online pricing and accounting information would be a plus for those times when your office is closed and I either need a price on an item or for whatever reason need to see my account balance. Also, it would be a bonus to be able to look at pricing when working with a customer either at their office or on the job site.”

“Pricing, no. Access to certain account details, maybe.”

“Unfortunately, the workday is no longer an 8-5 day, and the work week is not limited to Monday through Friday. By not offering your pricing or accounting functions online, you are limiting your ability to service their needs and likely losing their business to competitors who can service their needs when it is most convenient for them.”

“I’d lay out the need for online pricing citing competitors that may already offer it and then how it will make you a lower cost-to-service customer.”

“It’s the future, you have to make the move!”

“For us, it’s been more than worth it. It was a lot of time and money to create a site like that. It’s always being tweaked. It’s been almost a year and we’re still getting all of our customers to use it and on board. Some guys still like to hold things in their hands such as catalogs, pricing sheets, etc. I understand that (being older myself) but in this fast-paced world where inventory and prices change on the dime, this is a much better way for us to do business. We’re always happy to take a phone call with one of our inside sales reps too.”

“Online pricing requires constant upkeep. You have to be committed to it. You also lose the opportunity for feedback. It requires follow up and customer contact to keep informed.”

“Our company is very customer service-oriented; we answer our phones and have very experienced staff which can field almost all questions and pricing. We don’t feel the need to have everything exposed—most of all to our competition!” ■

Hundreds of readers share their insights for this every-issue feature. Have a Real Issue? Contact Rick@LBMJournal.com.

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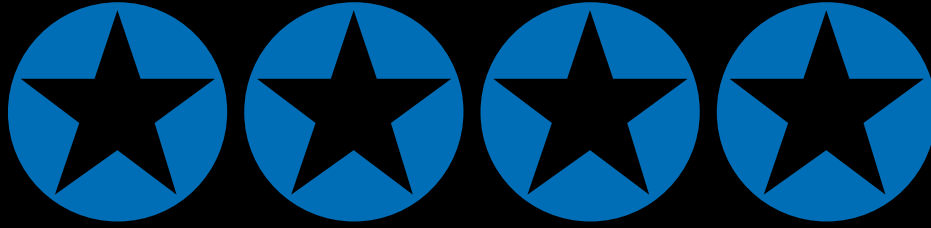
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LBM JOURNAL DEALER OF THE YEAR 2023



LBM JOURNAL'S DEALER OF THE YEAR AWARDS, sponsored by Epicor, recognize LBM companies of different sizes that epitomize the entrepreneurial spirit. By our definition, a Dealer of the Year describes a company in which leadership excels at identifying underserved—or emerging—markets, satisfying customers, and is constantly working to grow and improve business. While these companies represent vastly different operations, the common thread is their fierce commitment to finding ever better ways to serve their customers and their communities.

BY JAMES ANDERSON

HENRY POOR LUMBER

For a company to succeed in its market for 104 years and counting, Jay Andrew, president of Henry Poor Lumber said the formula is quite simple: “Clear, consistent communication, feedback, and interactions with everyone.”

It could be a lesson from Robert Fulghum’s classic book, “All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten.” For Jay and his entire team, it’s a lesson learned in the yard and behind the counter at Henry Poor Lumber, the business he owns with his father in Lafayette, Indiana.

INDIANA HISTORY

Founded by partners Henry Poor and Ed Munger in 1918 and originally known as Ed Munger Lumber Co., the company was renamed to Munger and Poor Lumber Co., and eventually Henry Poor Lumber.

Over the years, the company was purchased by Frank Taylor, who had married Marge Poor, daughter of Henry Poor. As a close family friend of Frank Taylor, Jay’s father, Jim Andrew, worked for the company during high school, and, after a brief career in urban planning, joined the business full time in 1972 and eventually purchased it in 1983.

Jay’s path was similar to that of his father’s. He worked at the lumberyard growing up, and after graduating from Purdue University he gained experience working outside of the industry before returning to join his father’s team.

Today, Jay and his father are partners in the business. Jim is celebrating 51 years with Henry Poor Lumber. “To me, he’s our Ambassador of Good Will,” Jay says, referring to his father’s role in the company. “He’s always interested in what the team’s doing. He prides himself on knowing people’s names, their family, and what they’re up to. He also has done a tremendous amount for the local community.” ▶

PHOTOS BY FOCUS ON STUDIO





About half of Henry Poor's employees have been with the company for at least five years, and 20% have been on board for over 10 years. "It's a total team effort," says president and co-owner Jay Andrew.

SECOND CENTURY

The company has continued to grow since passing the 100-year mark in 2018. While the bulk of the company operates out of the main lumberyard location in Lafayette, Henry Poor also operates a satellite sales office with three outside sales specialists about an hour away in Kokomo, Indiana.

At the main lumberyard, Henry Poor recently invested in expanding its yard and outdoor storage areas with concrete, making it easier to run forklifts and load trucks. The resulting 50,000 square feet of staging area is complete with racking storage.

The company also operates a standalone flooring store called Flooring Express, which it opened in 2011. Jay says that business at Flooring Express increased dramatically during the pandemic while homeowners were looking to remodel and reconfigure their homes. “A lot of lumberyards saw deck and remodeling sales increase. For us, we also experienced an increase in flooring.”

Operating under the same corporate umbrella, the standalone flooring store allows the company to expand relationships with current builder customers and also connect with new customers who may not venture into a lumberyard. Flooring Express is housed in a refurbished sporting goods store, where the 31,000 square-foot facility is the area’s largest in-stock floor covering showroom. It is set up to show customers the latest design styles and trends and give them the opportunity to step foot on their future flooring experience.

About 70% of the flooring materials sold through Flooring Express are sold installed. That installation experience has also transferred to the Henry Poor side of the business, where the company is increasingly involved in the multi-

family segment, turnkey framing, siding, roofing, trim, inside doors, and fireplaces.

The company has also added a full-service door shop that General Manager Jeff Renie was integral in bringing online, Jay says. “No other independent lumber dealers in our area have done that and it really has helped us earn more business. We handle it all here in house and we can control quality and lead times and help stabilize price.”

TOTAL TEAM EFFORT

The overall company customer mix is 50% new home construction builders, 25% multifamily and general contractors, and 25% retail walk-in, the majority of which comes from the flooring store.

In all, there are 64 team members supporting the lumberyard and flooring store, of which Jay says, “It’s a total team effort. Our team is our number one asset. Number two is our inventory and number three our customers. As a leadership team we are reminded to take care of our team first. If we take care of our team, they will take care of our inventory and our customers.”

About half of the company’s employees have been with Henry Poor for at least five years, and 20% have been on board for over 10 years. Several team members that started in entry level positions have worked to join our delivery team, our sales team, and our leadership team.

“We do something called the Hammer Club,” Jay explains. “Every five years people become part of the Hammer Club, and we say they’ve been ‘hammering out excellence’ for five years, 10 years, etc. We have plaques at all facilities showing who is in the Hammer Club. We give out jackets for Hammer Club members at 10 years. They wear those here, at home, on



Henry Poor Lumber also operates a stand-alone flooring business called Flooring Express.





the weekends in the community, and it shows pride in who they are and who they work for.”

Team members like the general manager at Flooring Express and the director of accounting started in entry-level positions and worked their way up in the company. The top salesman joined on while in college and the yard manager, who first started at 15 years old answering phones and helping with accounting, just celebrated her 10th anniversary with the company, Jay says.

“Each team member is critical to the success of our business. Jim Andrew reminds the team that they all ‘hold the steering wheel at some point.’ The Andrew family gives the team the opportunity to take ownership of their work and lead the charge when the time comes.”

That team effort has pushed revenues to the top of the \$10 to \$50 million category in which the company has been named Dealer of the Year for 2023. “We just came off a strong year and we’re cautiously optimistic about the next few years,” Jay says. “By taking care of the team and continuing to develop and recruit new team members, we are positing ourselves for future success.”

The Henry Poor and Flooring Express teams participate in many local initiatives to get students and young adults interested and excited about the building materials industry, including field trips to the lumberyard and jobsites for the local career academy along with speaking at local high schools. They also actively engage in the C2E (Construction Careers and Education Expo). This annual expo established by the Builders Association of Greater Lafayette shows area students the endless career opportunities in the construction industry. The 2023 Expo had 550 students in attendance.

“We’re always looking for good team members that are high-energy, aren’t afraid of a little hard work and learning something new,” Jay says. “We’re looking for people with a willingness to learn, who want to be part of a winning team and are solution-focused. We’re presented with people’s problems every day. We are the technicians who can successfully help them through that situation.”

Which brings Jay’s story back to his company’s practice of “clear, consistent communication, feedback, and interactions with everyone.”

“We hope that helping customers with their problems means that, ideally, they’ll buy products from us. But if not, we’ll refer them to the best place for help. That’s what we do to take care of our customers and help them grow and grow the right way.”

Helping customers “grow the right way” also means that Henry Poor is posed to grow the right way. For the Henry Poor Lumber and Flooring Express teams, that means growing



smarter rather than faster. “We’ve got a lot of good momentum right now, and momentum is expensive and hard to create. If we found an opportunity with good momentum behind it, we’d take a look, but as we continue to grow, our goal is to continue to support our team and our customers and make sure that growth is right for them.” ■

GET TO KNOW HENRY POOR LUMBER

FOUNDED:	1918
LOCATIONS:	LUMBERYARD FLOORING STORE SATELLITE SALES OFFICE
OWNERSHIP:	FAMILY
EMPLOYEES:	64
BUYER'S GROUP/CO-OP:	DO IT BEST LBM ADVANTAGE
SOFTWARE PLATFORM:	ECI SPRUCE
TOP THREE BRANDS SOLD BASED ON REVENUE:	PLY GEM GAF METRIE

Jay Andrew and his father Jim, are co-owners in the family business.





ROOFING SYSTEMS AND PRODUCTS

DESPITE ECONOMIC WORRIES, GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND FOR ROOFING.

BY MIKE BERGER

HAVE YOU EVER STOPPED TO THINK ABOUT HATS?

From Indiana Jones' signature fedora to Sherlock Holmes' deerstalker to Abraham Lincoln's stove-pipe top hat, head-covering caps have been used as a critical element of weather protection for centuries. In fact, the oldest known example of hat wearing goes back to ancient Egypt and a depiction found in a tomb in Thebes dating back to 3200 BCE of a man wearing a conical straw hat. The first hat we know of to have a brim of sorts comes from ancient Greece. Known as a petasus, the hat's wide brim protected the wearer from the sun and rain while a strap allowed wearers to secure it under the chin.

Just as hats protect our heads from sun and wind, roofing products also protect our homes from the environment. Unfortunately, the roofing industry has suffered its share of turmoil over

the last few years, due in no small part to the COVID-19 pandemic that brought material shortages, transportation woes, canceled jobs, and layoffs. Enter 2023, and national economic worries are adding even more uncertainty to the mix.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, new authorized building permits in November 2022 for privately-owned housing units were at an annual rate of 1,342,000—that's 22.4% below the same time in 2021. Similarly, housing starts in November 2022 were at an adjusted annual rate of 1,427,000, a statistic that's 16.4% below November 2021. Considering these statistics, it's no wonder LBM dealers are scratching their collective heads trying to figure out what's to come over the rest of the year. But according to manufacturers of roofing products and systems, there's much more to the story.

SLOW BUT STEADY WINS THE RACE

While the numbers don't lie, they also don't tell the entire story. While roofing product manufacturers agree with the potential for sluggish growth, they also see opportunities in 2023. "While the single-family segment may see a dip in growth, several forecasts anticipate repair and remodel to be strong in 2023," says Casey Smyth, OSB/EWP brand manager for LP Building Solutions. "Also, the multifamily segment has really been one of the strongest markets in 2022, and models anticipate that it will continue to grow in 2023. Regardless of demand, housing remains underbuilt in this country. The National Association of Realtors estimates that there is a shortage of 5.5 million homes in the U.S. Despite the challenges of the industry, LP is optimistic about the growth of the market and will continue to provide builders with solutions that will allow them to build homes they are proud of."

Bobby Byrd, director of OSB sales and marketing for RoyOMartin, also agrees with the potential for slower growth, but sees bright spots in the forecasts. "While we do expect things to be slower over the next year, the fact remains that nationally we are still in a housing deficit with the latest numbers indicating that we are only at just over three months' supply," he explains. "A balanced market is six months of supply. Another trend that we are seeing is that many sellers are holding back on listing their existing homes because they aren't real excited to trade in their sub 3% mortgage interest rate for the now 6+% rate. We can't blame them! Demand is still there, and it has to be filled somehow. While we won't see the level of starts that we've seen over the last couple of years, people will still build homes, and builders/investors will still build multi-family housing. We will

see an increase in multi-family and modular home builds over the next year, and those are the segments we will see grow."

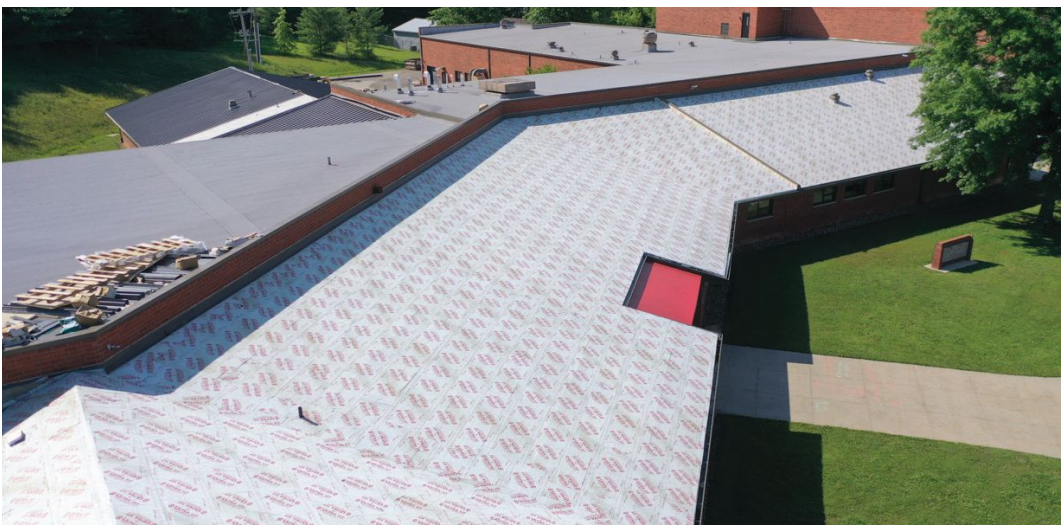
Another bright spot in the repair and remodel arena can be chalked up to record levels of homeowner equity, says Doug Sloane, director of product management, building materials group, for PrimeSource. "While the market will soften in 2023, Americans have never had as much home equity built up as they do currently. With that in mind, we think the repair and remodel segment is headed for significant growth. As homeowners upgrade or paint their exteriors, there will be a need to ensure the roofing color matches up with the color of the home. Overall growth will be down, but there is absolutely an opportunity for sales in the LBM channel to increase."

Unfortunately, some growth will be coming from less than positive factors—namely, severe weather. According to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) 2023 report entitled "U.S. Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters," there were 18 weather/climate disaster events with losses exceeding \$1 billion each that impacted the United States in 2022.

"Interest in advancing roof design in materials continues, we believe, in part to historic levels of storm-related damage," explains Kristin Michael, growth marketing manager for Huber Engineered Woods. "We anticipate continued demand to learn and try better approaches to storm-proofing this critical area of the building envelope. Our integrated sheathing, tape and peel-and-stick underlayment line continues to grow in interest and adoption as builders look to meet quicker rough dry-ins balanced with long-term durability." ▶

OPPOSITE PAGE:

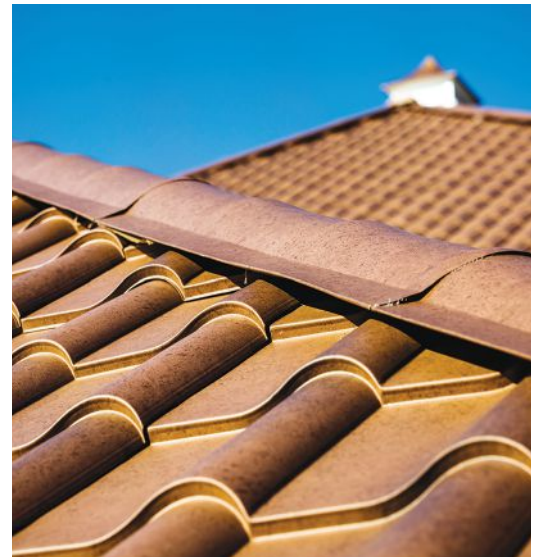
GAF has reengineered and relaunched Timberline UHD (Ultra High Definition) shingles as Timberline UHDZ shingles. This new premium laminate shingle offers the company's patent-pending Dual Shadow Line which, according to GAF, creates shadows that mimic sunset all day long, as well as 10% more of GAF's Time-Release Algae-Fighting Technology.



MFM Ultra HT Wind & Water Seal is a 45-mil, self-adhering roofing underlayment composed of a white, non-slip, cross-laminated polymer film, laminated to a high-temp rubberized aggressive asphalt adhesive. According to MFM, it can be used under shingle, tile, shake, and metal roofing systems. It bonds to the substrate and seals around fasteners to limit damage caused by water penetration or leaks.

RIGHT: Huber Engineered Woods' new ZIP System peel and stick underlayment features a pull cord, split-liner application. It meets ICC-ES AC48 and ASTM D1970 requirements as an ice barrier and roof underlayment, and when applied in combination with ZIP System sheathing and tape, eligible projects can register for a Leak-Free Guarantee.

FAR RIGHT: According to ProVia, its new metal Barrel Tile (or Spanish Tile) style metal roof is a certified system that not only provides the beauty and curb appeal of authentic clay tile, but significantly improves the longevity and durability of the roof while providing cost savings on insurance and utility. Available in four colors, the barrel tile profile complements Mediterranean and Spanish architecture in warmer climates like Florida and the Southwest.



Alex Barrego, product manager of proprietary building materials for PrimeSource Building Products, also sees weather events playing a hand in the growing demand for advanced roofing products. “Relative to PrimeSource Building Products and the response we’ve already witnessed to new roofing products—specifically Grip-Rite ShingleLayment-HT—we expect the roofing accessories category to remain strong,” he says. “Reroofs and natural disasters are market drivers. Severe storms, as well as hail, hurricane and tornado season (not to mention ice and water damage) are all constants that drive the market on an annual basis, so annual repair of some sort is guaranteed.”

This year, sadly, has already seen its share of severe weather, and LBM dealers in disaster-prone areas of the country should make plans to deliver in the wake of those events, especially as those repairs aren’t tied to economic fluctuations, says Ann Iten, director of marketing for Westlake Royal Building Products. “Despite the

current state of inflation and the economy, we continue to see growth in the re-roofing market. Specifically, we are witnessing a significant number of older or worn roofs that will require replacement. Additionally, the growing frequency of severe weather events is driving demand for our roofing products, which provide weather resiliency benefits.”

RESILIANCY ON THE RISE

In part because of the increased occurrence rate of severe weather events, more builders and homeowners than ever are turning to resilient roofing products, particularly because of their ability to withstand extreme environmental conditions. In part, resilient design—the intentional design of buildings, landscapes, communities, and regions in order to respond to natural and manmade disasters and disturbances—focuses on the ability of structures to not only withstand extreme conditions but do so while delivering energy efficiency to help fight long-term climate change. It’s a concept, industry expert say, which is only going to increase.

“Resiliency is the operative word in sustainability within roof deck design and construction,” says Huber’s Michael. “We see a growing interest every year, particularly in coastal regions, but also as an element of building science conversations throughout the country, in which building teams are exploring the best way to manage control layers in the building envelope for a more durable structure overall.”

With the ever-growing impacts of climate change and increasing frequency and intensity of weather events, says Westlake Royal’s Iten, a resilient roof makes sense in durability and

RoyOMartin’s new OSB roofing product is designed to withstand the snow loads that roofs experience in the winter, but without adding any weight or additional costs. According to the manufacturer, the panel is 7/16" thick, so it’s lighter than the full 1/2" that is currently required. The product meets the same testing requirements and installs the same as the typical 1/2" OSB roofing panel.



energy efficiency for both heating and cooling. “Energy efficient roofs also reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which are a major contributor to global warming,” she explains. “Likewise, the ability of the roof to better withstand inclement weather conditions and events has become critical. At this point, many consumers are aware of the importance of both energy efficiency and resiliency. Thus, demand for these solutions is much more prevalent among the end user today.”

Organizations such as The Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS), the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH), and The Weather Channel are actively working to spread the message and benefits of resilient design, and LBM distributors should be prepared to answer the increasing need of such products. “We are seeing a general trend towards resilient design and material consideration in roofing applications, coupled with interest in education for proper installation,” says Huber’s Michael. “Resiliency is all about reducing risks, and in roofing, this comes down to preventing leaks. Having the right combination of products and best installation practice to meet each project’s design and location needs is crucial in creating a high-performance building envelope.”

SUSTAINABILITY STAYS VITAL

If resilient design is one side of the trend coin that LBM dealers need to be prepared to flip, then sustainable design is the other. In short, sustainable design seeks to reduce negative impacts of a building on the environment and on the building’s occupants by increasing a structure’s performance and comfort while reducing waste and the consumption of non-renewable resources.

“We often have builders asking about sustainability solutions because energy efficiency is becoming more and more top of mind not only for builders but also for homeowners,” LP’s Casey Smyth points out. “Builders have told us about an increase of homeowners opening the conversation about sustainable building, rather than the other way around. LP’s approach is that sustainability starts with resilience. The suite of LP Structural Solutions products works to target key industry challenges to create more resilient homes that are built to last. Each product of the portfolio is engineered to stand up to both the normal wear-and-tear of everyday life—like heat and moisture—as well as more severe weather conditions.”

James Alpeter, marketing manager of stone/siding/roofing for ProVia, agrees with that

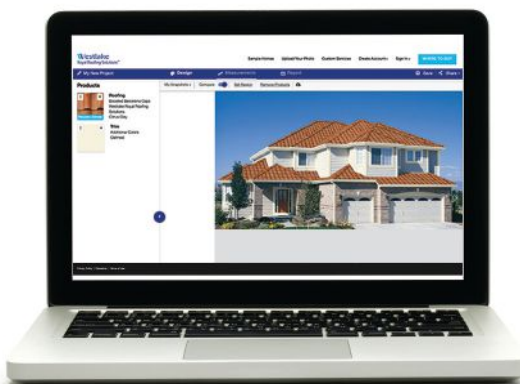


LP TechShield Radiant Barrier helps block radiant heat in the roof panel from emitting into the home’s attic, which LP says will reduce attic temperatures by up to 30° F. The panels feature proprietary technology to prevent moisture buildup during and after construction, while an aluminum overlay blocks up to 97% of radiant heat. In addition, LP is also working on a product that allows retrofitting its TechShield Radiant Barrier into existing attic spaces.

assessment. “I believe that sustainability is becoming more top-of-mind for all consumers, not just specific age groups as it has been in the past,” he says. “Customers are looking for alternatives to traditional roofing materials that typically produce more waste and are difficult if not impossible to recycle. I think the market is starting to see a slightly less price-conscious consumer; one who values the integrity and longevity of a product and manufacturer over just the bottom line.”

AESTHETICS ALWAYS A PLAYER

All the interest in resiliency and sustainability doesn’t mean color and style aren’t vitally important. In fact, they remain some of the most important factors in the purchase decision. Manufacturers point to cool gray color palettes, dark and light brown hues, and natural shades of blue and green as continuing to grow in popularity, and roofing product manufacturers are going to great lengths to make sure their product lines mesh with consumer desire. ▶



The Dream Home Visualizer by Westlake Royal Roofing Solutions is an interactive design tool that allows builders, remodelers, and homeowners to visualize the exterior of a home with different roofing material and trim options. According to Westlake Royal, the tool matches the user with available roofing materials, allows them order product samples, and can generate a comprehensive design report.

ShingleLayment-HT from Grip Rite is an all-synthetic 8-layer lamination underlayment that combines a non-woven non-skid walking surface with high-performance hot-melt butyl. According to the manufacturer, ShingleLayment-HT is for use on sloped roofs to protect against moisture infiltration from ice buildup, wind driven rain, and under primary roofing materials as a secondary water shedding device. By moving from traditional asphalt (bitumen) adhesion to a butyl adhesion, ShingleLayment-HT is described as half the weight per roll and has twice the performance ratings of many similar products in the market.



“Westlake Royal Roofing Solutions recently commissioned a professional study about trends related to home architecture and roofing,” explains Iten. “What we found was that, unsurprisingly, the pandemic greatly impacted how we utilize our homes, but also influences design and roofing preferences that, of course, include color.”

According to Westlake Royal’s study, the three key macro influences to design and roofing trends were naturalism, disruptions, and ease. As Iten describes them, naturalism represents a shift toward rural-inspired and contemporary escape homes, with two- and three-color palettes in hues evoking weathering by nature (for rural-inspired homes) and darkened and refined hues (for contemporary escapes).

In the case of disruption, Iten describes it as an architectural style that evokes what she calls the new glamour of opposites. “Two sub-styles emerge from this influence and include homes firstly in the clean traditional and secondly in the merged aesthetic styles,” she says. “Clean traditional homes are often presented in two-color palettes showcasing hues that are high-contrast opposites, while homes in the merged aesthetics style are often presented in two-color palettes in true traditional tones.”

BELOW RIGHT: LP Building Solutions recently expanded the accessory offerings of its LP WeatherLogic Air & Water Barrier system to give builders more options to meet their specific building needs. Its LP WeatherLogic Seam & Flashing Sealant seals the seams between panels, material transitions, and penetrations of any shape. The sealant joins the new Generation 3 LP WeatherLogic Seam & Flashing Tape that seals for protection against air and water infiltration.

FAR RIGHT: Ox Engineered Products’ new ToughSkin HT Ice and Water Guard is a self-adhered, slip-resistant roof underlayment that features a rubberized asphalt adhesive base layer, woven and non-woven reinforcement layers, a UV-shielded waterproof layer, an anti-slip top layer, and a lightweight split-release liner made from siliconized film for easier installation.

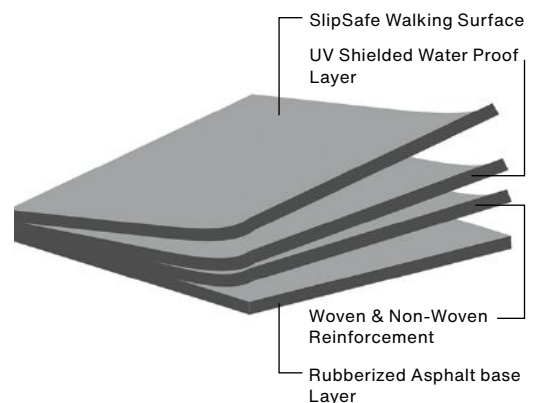



Lastly, the study identified ease as the third macro influence, a design style that has led to a shift toward a more quiet, calm approach. Two types of quiet design homes—quiet transitional and quiet modern—are presented in one- and two-color palettes of easy muted neutral toned hues.

SOLUTIONS FOR LABOR SHORTAGES

The ability to identify trends is one thing; being able to deliver products that meet those trends is another. The continuing labor shortage, along with long lead times for raw materials, is impacting manufacturers’ ability to get product out the door. “This is a big problem right now, says David Delcoma, operations manager for MFM Building Products Corp. “Some raw materials are still on allocation or have extended lead times. With the recent storms, some items may become even more difficult to find and stock. Our lead times have remained relatively short, but some items have been pushed out like 3-4 weeks. In terms of the labor force, there is a big lack of tradesmen and people willing to work in a factory setting. We continually advertise for production people and if they have a decent level of skill, we’ll hire them.”

Huber’s Kristin Michael points to a dedication to clear communication and relationship building as a key to overcoming those manufacturing labor shortages. “We are fortunate to partner with some of the hardest-working men and women in the industry to meet building teams needs nationwide,” she says. “We are committed as ever to leaning into the strong communications and relationships established with our network of dealers, distributors and suppliers as we move into the next year. True to our innovative spirit, we have a steadfast focus on planning and adapting to landscape shifts and pursuing trusted solutions to keep pace with our industry’s changing needs.”





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LP's Casey Smyth agrees with the need for clear communication—both internally and externally—to help offset labor shortage challenges. “While there are a lot of unknowns involved in the supply chain, LP remains proactive in our approach of making sure builders have the products they need when they need them,” he explains. “We work closely with our rail and trucking partners to stay updated regarding transportation of our products. We also have close communication with our internal team on the raw material procurement side. The bottom line is that proactive communication is critical for all parties when it comes to supply chain management, and LP strives to be a transparent partner to the folks who buy and build with its products.”

Of course, the lack of available labor is impacting contractors as well. “The roofing industry is certainly facing an ongoing labor shortage within its

contractor base,” points out Westlake Royal's Iten. “A segment of the industry's labor force is aging and retiring, while simultaneously, there's an ongoing struggle to recruit enough new contractors to replace those retiring and to meet demand.”

As a result, roofing manufacturers are striving to create products that offer solutions in the form of ease of installation. “Labor shortages will drive the use of more user-friendly products,” says PrimeSource's Barrego. “Lighter weight rolls like Grip-Rite ShingleLayment are less labor intensive to install, as are peel and stick products that a single installer can easily manage, as opposed to teams of installers.”

Billy Webb, structural solutions product manager for LP Building Solutions, points to efforts the company has taken to make builders' lives easier. “One way that we do this is by making building products that can

add resiliency and eliminate added installation steps,” he explains. “Both LP TechShield Radiant Barrier and LP WeatherLogic Air and Water Barrier panels install just like normal sheathing but boast added benefits that are tailored to the builder's climate.”

Manufacturers also point to strategies LBM dealers themselves can put in place. “The shrinking labor pool of skilled installers is a growing obstacle the industry will need to work hard to overcome,” says ProVia's Alpetter. “One way for building professionals to help is to work closely with local trade schools to educate students on what type of salary a roofing crew member, leader, and business owner can expect to make. Train and develop talent early; nurture relationships at every level. Crews may also find good summer help when labor shortages are at their worst,” he stresses.

“Have a clear vision of what products *have* to be on the floor,” reminds MFM's Delcoma. “No product equals no sale. Purchasing needs to find out lead times for items and order accordingly. For MFM, we have become multi-sourced for each component and always ensure product is on the floor.”

In looking at what may be in store for the roofing segment over the next twelve months, the potential for a sluggish environment is very real. Fannie Mae expects a modest recession to begin in the first quarter of 2023. This doesn't mean, however, that LBM dealers can't find significant wins. Through opportunities in the repair and remodel market, coupled with the ability to informatively educate and communicate with their customers, LBM dealers can come out ahead in roofing despite economic fears. As ProVia's Alpetter stresses, it's all about selling the benefits. “Any time there is talk of a recession and inflation, consumers are going to be reluctant to make large purchases. Sales of higher-end roofing products will require a focus on quality, long-term benefits, and cost savings. The industry needs to get consumers to think beyond current economic fears and show them that a roof is a smart long-term investment that will increase their home's value.” ■

SCHWEISS

DOORS

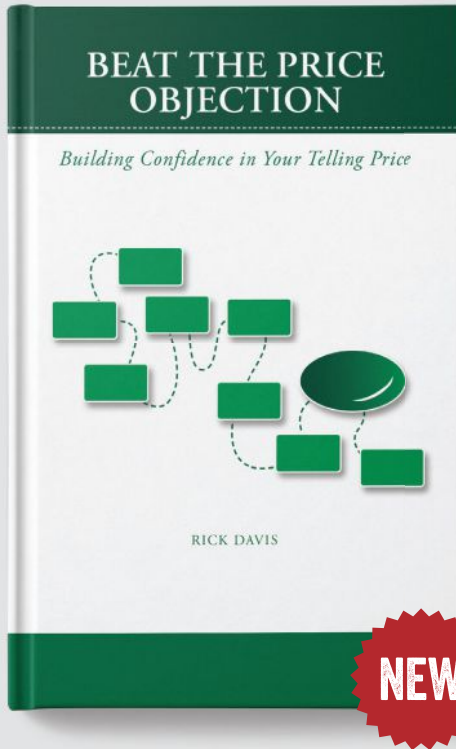
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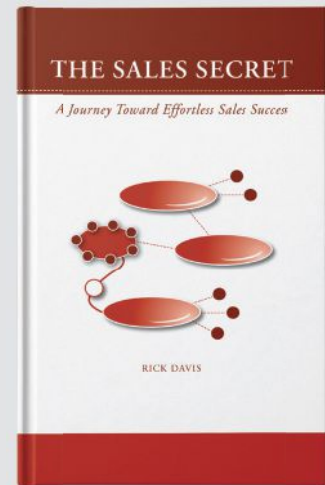
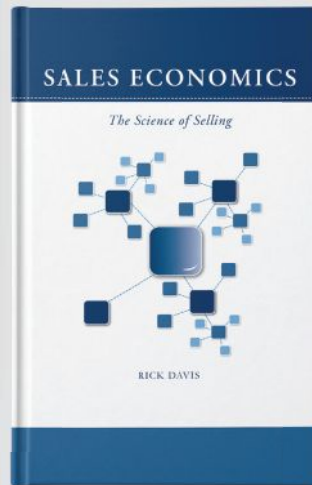
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

RICK DAVIS, CSP, CDT is a sought-after speaker, trainer, sales consultant, and the president of Building Leaders, Inc. He is also a world class magazine columnist who has been awarded gold and silver medals from the American Society of Business Publishing Editors.



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HOT PRODUCTS

EDITORS' CHOICE

2023 INTERNATIONAL BUILDERS' SHOW

The 2023 International Builders' Show (IBS), held January 31 through February 2 in Las Vegas, Nevada, featured more than 1,300 exhibitors and covered more than 600,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space. Judging from the strong attendance, IBS 2023 delivered on its reputation as the place to see all the latest and greatest building products, tools, and technologies. While the majority of the 70,000 attendees are builders and contractors, IBS has also become known as the single biggest event for LBM dealers to connect directly with manufacturers and to learn about the latest product innovations. As we do each year, the following pages include a sample of products that our team believes may help make a difference for you and your company moving forward. The listings are in no particular order.

— The Editors





BEST IN SHOW

Door Stud by Door Stud LLC

Winner of the “Best In Show” award at this year’s IBS, Door Stud enables installers to easily and single-handedly move and install 1-3/8” and 1-3/4” pre-hung or slab doors up to 300 lbs. According to the manufacturer, Door Stud is ideal for all interior and exterior door applications including residential, commercial and multifamily. As well, it reduces the risk of injury, increases productivity by reducing labor, and prevents damage to the wall and door. thedoorstud.com



Westlake Royal Cedar Renditions Board & Batten

As part of its Cedar Renditions by Royal aluminum siding line, Cedar Renditions Board & Batten siding has a unique woodgrain look that can be used as an accent to enhance any exterior facade. The Board & Batten profile can also be a complement to the existing Cedar Renditions siding, together with the trim and accessories. According to Westlake Royal Building Products, Cedar Renditions offers

several unique benefits including traditional woodgrains and premium multi-tonal woodgrain designs, PVDF paint technology in woodgrains for exceptional fade resistance and durability, and a 25-year prorated limited warranty. westlakeroyalbuildingproducts.com



FINALIST

EXACOR Magnesium Oxide Panels

A finalist of the IBS 2023 “Most Innovative Building Product” award, Huber Engineered Woods’ new EXACOR panels are specifically engineered with the structural, acoustical, fire-rated and dimensional stability performance needs of today’s jobsite in mind. Made of magnesium oxide (MgO) and an integrated mesh core, EXACOR panels offer a smooth base for floor coverings. Because EXACOR panels are installed by framers, it can eliminate the need for gypsum underlayment applications, so there is no need to schedule that additional trade to complete

installation. EXACOR panels can be used as both a subfloor underlayment over traditional OSB or plywood (UL 263 L528) and as a structural subfloor (UL263 L601). huberwood.com



WINNER

RDI Elevation Rail

Winner of the IBS 2023 “Most Innovative Building Product” award, Oldcastle APG and Barrette Outdoor Living’s RDI Elevation Rail is a pre-assembled cable rail kit that requires no special tools or fasteners to install. With pre-strung continuous stainless-steel cables and adjustable panels that span up to 6’ wide, RDI Elevation Rail features a patent pending OneTen built-in centralized tensioning system that the manufacturer says speeds installation by up to 38% and eliminates the need to tension each cable individually and decreases the need for seasonal adjustments. barretteoutdoorliving.com



ECB Elevated Column Base

New from Simpson Strong-Tie, the ECB elevated column base features a 2” standoff for installing waterproofing under solid or hollow-wood posts, or for the addition of lightweight concrete fill when installed over wood surfaces. Available in two sizes to accommodate both 6x6 and 8x8 hollow columns or solid sawn posts, the design allows for four-corner-hole installation in wood or single-center-hole installation in concrete, and is load rated, making it ideal for building stacked balconies on multistory, multifamily buildings that use a post to support an awning or roof. strongtie.com

Deckorators Venture Decking

Deckorators will be offering two new colors—Saltwater (a warm smoky-taupe shown) and Sandbar (a classic medium-brown)—with its new Venture Decking product line. Venture Decking is a maintenance-free wood/plastic composite product that is backed by 25-year structural, stain and fade, removal and replacement limited warranties. The 5-1/2"-wide x 15/16"-thick boards are available in 12', 16' and 20' lengths in solid- and grooved-edge profiles, and feature a scratch-resistant polyethylene cap over a dense composite core. deckorators.com



United Gutter Guard from Gutterglove Gutter Guards

United Gutter Guard from Gutterglove installs directly on top of existing gutters and is designed to work with any gutter or roof type. It features Type 304 Stainless Steel for rust and corrosion resistance, along with a 30 Mesh design (meaning it has 900 holes per square inch) for optimal debris blocking and water filtration. According to the manufacturer, they're ideal for areas with dense tree coverage or heavy debris, as they block out leaves, pine needles, roof grit, rodents, and insects while handling heavy downpours. gutterglove.com



CT1 Mobile Carpenter Trailer

Winner of the IBS 2023 "Most Innovative Construction Tool," the CT1 Mobile Carpenter Trailer from On-Site Building Solutions was designed as a convenient, self-contained work trailer with an on-board vacuum dust collection system. Each of the CT1's seven tool stations feature a vacuum valve and dedicated receptacle which activates the vacuum when tool is powered on. In addition, the CT1 features two power sources and can be housed in a residential garage or fits easily in a parking space.

on-sitebuildingsolutions.com

WINNER



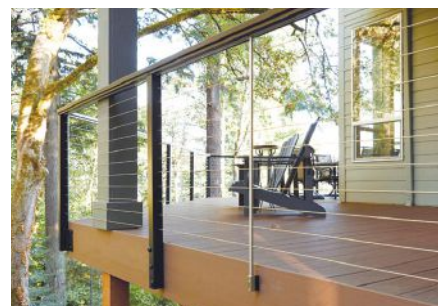
ACRE Siding from Modern Mill

Made with upcycled rice hulls in Mississippi, ACRE siding from Modern Mill is a sustainable, durable alternative that the manufacturer touts as having the look and feel of real wood. It's an ideal material for outdoor applications since it is water-, weather- and pest-resistant and guaranteed not to rot or splinter. Available in either shiplap or board and batten styles, Modern Mill says ACRE is lightweight, easy to cut and can be installed and treated just like wood. It accepts paint or stains, and it allows for blind fastening. Opting for one pallet of ACRE saves one acre of rainforest or hardwood species. ACRE has other environmental benefits, like being 100% recyclable and produced in a zero-waste manufacturing environment. modern-mill.com



Stainless Steel Intermediate Pickets from Feeney

Feeney, Inc. has recently introduced Stainless Steel Intermediate Pickets for its DesignRail aluminum railing systems. Offering a sleek alternative to square, powdercoated pickets, the new pickets provide a lower profile alternative for DesignRail with CableRail infill where posts are spaced more than three feet apart. Available in three configurations including 36" Level, 42" Level, and Universal Stair, the 5/8"-dia. 316 stainless steel tubes are available pre-drilled for 1/8"-dia. cable at 3" spacing, and are field trimmable for quick installation. feeneyinc.com



LP WeatherLogic Seam and Flashing Sealant

LP WeatherLogic Seam and Flashing Sealant from LP Building Solutions is a liquid-applied flashing material certified to AAMA 714-19 and is reported to be the only liquid-applied sealant approved to seal the panel seams between LP WeatherLogic panels as part of the LP WeatherLogic system. The sealant can also be used to flash window and door openings, material transitions, and penetrations of any shape. According to the manufacturer, the product boasts quick tooling and cure time to better service the fast-paced environment of a construction site. The sealant has a 10-15-minute tooling time, 110-minute surface tack time and, depending on conditions, will fully cure in 24 hours. Other benefits include being VOC compliant and having joint movement of $\pm 50\%$ for added flexibility. lpcorp.com



ClipStone ProPanel

New from Cornerstone Building Brands, ClipStone ProPanel is a new large-format, panelized mortarless stone veneer series that is ideal for both residential applications as well as more substantial multifamily and commercial projects. These large-format panels are mechanically fastened to walls with patented mounting clips, and according to the manufacturer, the panels deliver superior drainage through a built-in water management system that results from the installation clips holding the stone off the wall, allowing it to breathe in exterior applications. ProPanel is packaged as a mix of two panel sizes (large, 20" x 7.25", and small, 12" x 7.25"), a combination of sizes that helps hide seams and add more variation to installations. myclipstone.com



LBM JOURNAL[®] 100

THE LBM JOURNAL 100 listing highlights the industry's leading companies. But it's more than just a list. Along with ranking LBM dealers and specialty distributors by revenue, we will spotlight companies large and small that are setting new standards for operations and innovation.

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Boise Cascade's Sawtek Cutter Plus

The SawTek Cutter Plus is an automated EWP processing system developed to meet a wide range of pro dealer needs. According to the manufacturer, it provides many of the benefits of the more sophisticated SawTek Pro system while doing so as a lower entry point. The base system provides the ability to position EWP material to +/- 1/4" for precision cutting and hole routing and includes standard features such as integrated safety interlocks, Versa-Saw operator interface, SawTek production analytics, and more. Boise Cascade's BC Connect and BC Framer software integrates with the SawTek system to streamline and manage the entire process. Designed to be modular and flexible, SawTek Cutter Plus allows dealers to start with a system that meets current needs and can add capabilities as their business evolves and grows. bc.com





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Specializing in providing design solutions for architects, designers and builders, Axolotl utilizes a sustainable chemical and mechanical bonding process to integrate an extensive range of authentic metal, concrete, terrazzo and terracotta surfaces to virtually any substrate. Axolotl is also a supplier of solid surface, timber veneers, stone, paint, sheet metal and architectural glass. With the ability to 3D print almost any design onto their doors and other surfaces, the manufacturer makes it simple to achieve a highly personalized statement entry-piece that can include intricate or unadorned designs as well as aged or polished semi-precious metals, rust, stone or concrete. axolotl.com.au



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www.capital-lumber.com

Evolve Stone Monument Gate Stone Veneer

Evolve Stone's new Monument Gate stone veneer (shown below in Winter Valley color, which is also available in the company's National True style veneer) expands the offerings from Evolve Stone, a mortarless, color-throughout stone veneer that is a fraction of the weight of the competition and designed to install up to 10 times faster. Evolve Stone is the only mortarless, color-throughout manufactured stone veneer that installs with a standard finish nailer. The proprietary material was developed to hold its color throughout, like real stone, so it can be cut to fit on-site while maintaining high appearance standards. evolvestone.com



ZIP System Peel and Stick Underlayment

A finalist of the IBS 2023 “Most Innovative Building Product” award, Huber Engineered Woods’ new ZIP System peel and stick underlayment is a high-performance, self-adhered rubberized asphalt product that seals around nails. It features a slip-resistant surface for easy application and an embedded pull cord that splits the liner on demand, and it meets ICC-ES AC48 and ASTM D1970 requirements as an ice barrier and roof underlayment. When applied in combination with ZIP System sheathing and tape, eligible projects can register for a Leak-Free Guarantee. huberwood.com



Tantimber ThermoWood Oak

Distributed exclusively by G Wood Pro, ThermoWood Oak is the newest product offered by Tantimber. Sustainably sourced, this hardwood is manufactured using an exclusive and eco-friendly process unique to ThermoWood that is both chemical-free and non-toxic. According to the manufacturer, the process results in a dimensionally stable and durable Class 1 wood product that can be used in most extreme environments. Tantimber ThermoWood Oak is available in various decking or cladding profiles and sizes. gwoodpro.com



Trex Signature Decking

As a new top-of-the-line product for Trex, its Signature Decking duplicates the appearance, graining, and color of wood in a composite material. According to Trex, Signature Decking is crafted with the natural look of interior hardwoods but engineered to withstand the elements and demands of the outdoors. It’s available in two colors: Okracoke (a dark brown) and Whidbey (a soft grey shown). The new line is backed by a 50-year limited residential warranty and is complemented by the full range of Trex Signature railing, including numerous design options such as mesh rail, rod rail, and glass panels. trex.com



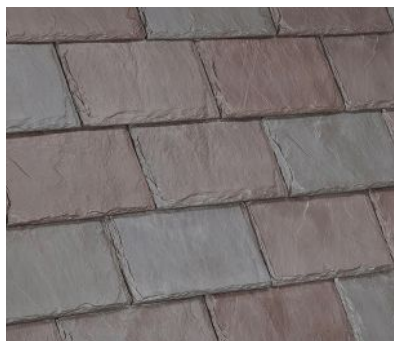
RailFX Express Mount Cable Rail System

New from PrimeSource Building Products, RailFX’s Express Mount Brackets for cable railing eliminate the need to drill holes through each deck post for the cable. Instead, installers simply screw the bracket to the outside face of the end, corner, or intermediate post, after which the cable is fed through the bracket and then tightened. The brackets are only viewable from the outside of the deck, creating the illusion of “floating” cables and improving sightlines to the scenery beyond. railfx.net



DaVinci Roofscapes Province Slate Roof Tile

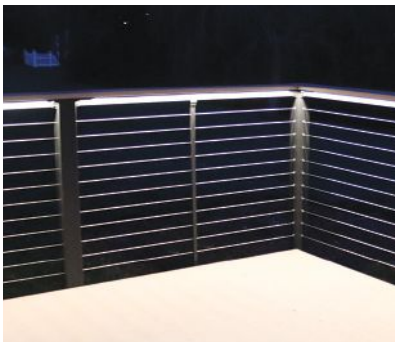
DaVinci Roofscapes, a division of Westlake Royal Building Products, has introduced a new single-width composite slate roofing tile. Province Slate, a 12”-wide tile with a fixed 8” exposure evokes a historical nature with authentic natural slate appeal. Modeled after actual slate, the manufacturer says the tiles have a natural, non-repeating beauty that complements a variety of home styles. The Class A fire-rated and Class 4 impact-rated tile can also be used on commercial projects, and they resist severe weather, high winds, insects, algae and fungus growth. Available in six colors and manufactured in Kansas, each tile has an enhanced backside rib structure and self-aligning ledge for ease and speed of installation. davinciroofscapes.com



Key-Link Underrail Lighting

Key-Link Fencing and Railing (part of Superior Plastic Products) unveiled its new Underrail Lighting for its Chesapeake Series drink rail (which has channels in the profile to hold it). The LED strip clips into the underside of the drink rail (clips are provided), while a lens diffuses the light. The plug-and-play lighting strips come in 4', 6', and 8' lengths, and clear marks indicate where the strip can be trimmed to length.

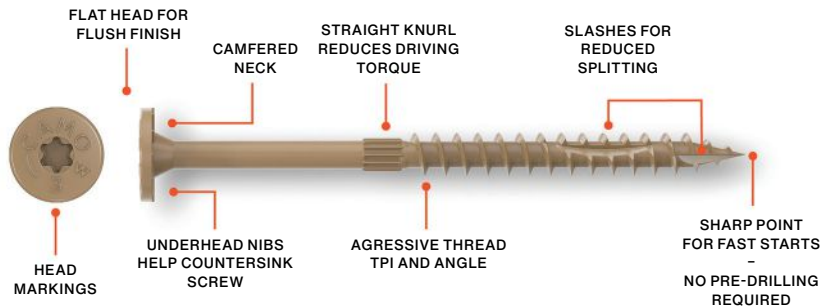
keylinkonline.com



Tando Beach House Shake Composite Shingle

New from Tando, its 5" architecturally precise Beach House Shake is designed as a low-maintenance alternative to natural cedar shake. According to Tando, these shakes won't discolor, fade or stain, never need painting, and are significantly faster to install when compared to natural cedar shakes. As a 5" re-squared and rebuffed shingle, Beach House Shake is available in four natural cedar shades that include white cedar Sandcastle, silver gray Atlantica, deep gray Hatteras, and western red cedar Pacifica.

beachhousesshake.com



CAMO Structural Screws

Fastener manufacturer CAMO's new full line of code-compliant structural screws are engineered to start fast, drive smooth, and hold strong. According to CAMO, the screws feature a flat head for a flush finish, a chamfered neck and underhead nibs that reportedly help with countersinking, along with a straight knurl that reduces driving torque, aggressive thread TPI and angle, and slashes for reduces splitting. The structural screws require no pre-drilling and feature proprietary coating for superior corrosion resistance. As well, CAMO's structural screws have been third-party tested, audited, and certified as IBC and IRC code-compliant. camofasteners.com

Silvermine Stone Siding

Silvermine Stone's new Belterra Collection expands the company's offerings of mortarless stone veneer siding. Featuring a patented flashing and fastening system, Silvermine Stone products create a shingling system on the wall to keep water away from the home's substrate while only requiring a single layer of weather resistant barrier. As Silvermine explains, the shingling effect sheds all water to the front, thus eliminating water penetration and minimizing the possibility of insects to get between the stone and the wall. The 24" x 6" veneer sections attach to the wall with pan-headed screws and do not require lath, a scratch-coat, or mortar. silverminestone.com



ZIP Systems Rainscreen

Engineered to help meet new code-required 3/16" air gap requirements in stucco and adhered stone assemblies, Huber Engineered Woods' new ZIP System Rainscreen drainage and ventilation mat (coming soon in 2023) consists of a rigid drainage mat covered by a heavy-duty fabric that can be used as a secondary water-resistive barrier, required for "absorptive" or "reservoir" cladding assemblies. According to Huber, Rainscreen combines the high compression strength of a mesh drainage mat with a 5-7-perm WRB layer to create a balance of durability and effective moisture management. huberwood.com



NewTechWood All Weather Siding & Cladding

UltraShield Composite Siding from NewTechWood is a composite wall cladding that features a co-extruded cap and a composite core made from a mix of high-quality recycled materials with dense hardwood and softwood fibers. According to the manufacturer, because the siding utilizes tongue and groove boards and fasteners, its All-Weather system creates a true rainscreen system that prevents water from penetrating between the boards while still appearing to create a 1/4" gap between the boards.

newtechwood.com



CertainTeed Landmark Pro Shingles

New from CertainTeed, its Landmark Pro shingles are engineered with two laminated layers to replicate the dimensional appearance of true wood shake at an affordable price. Available in a wide array of colors, Landmark pro shingles are classified as UL 2218 Class 3 Impact Rated and carry a Class A fire-resistance rating. According to CertainTeed, the shingles' NailTrak wide nailing area has three separately defined lines to guide nailing, while CertaSeal—a high-grade adhesive made from a proprietary blend of asphalts and polymers—seals shingles together on the roof to safeguard against wind uplift, shingle blow off, and moisture infiltration. Landmark Pro shingles come with a lifetime-limited warranty and a 15 year StreakFighter algae-resistance warranty. certainteed.com



QuietWarmth Radiant Heat Film

MP Global Products' QuietWarmth radiant heat film for under subfloors is designed as a retrofit solution for subfloor heating. Installed between the floor joists, the film can be used under any existing flooring including nail-down wood floors and carpet. Because QuietWarmth is an electric product, there are no hot water pipes to install, thus simplifying installation. QuietWarmth comes in 120v and 240v versions in a variety of lengths, is also available for floating and tile floors, and can be cut to length. mpglobalproducts.com



Fypon Raised Panel and Louvered Shutters

Raised Panel and Louvered Shutters from Fypon are now available in sizes that match common entry door heights. The expanded size offering allows homeowners to create an elegant, on-trend look for their home's entryway by installing polyurethane shutters next to the entry door in lieu of sidelites or other trim options. The new shutter sizes include 6', 6'8" and 8', and are available in widths measuring 16" or 18". fypon.com



Fiberon Concordia Astir Composite Decking

While Fiberon's Concordia Symmetry and Horizon Collections of PE composite decking have been in the market for some time, its new Concordia Astir Collection expands the product line with decking that the manufacturer says is influenced by the aesthetics of outdoor landscapes. Available in three nature-inspired colors—Mountain Ash, Seaside Mist, and Prairie Wheat—the boards feature a rustic cathedral grain with four-sided embossing. fiberondecking.com



Armadillo Evolution Decking

New from Armadillo, its Evolution Composite Decking features a core made of recycled plastic and wood fibers, and is fully-wrapped on all four sides with a polyethylene coating for fade resistance and to prevent stains. Available in six colors and domestically made, Armadillo says Evolution decking features sophisticated, nuanced colors and richer, deeper grain for premium appearance and performance. It also comes with a limited lifetime warranty for residential applications. armadillodeck.com



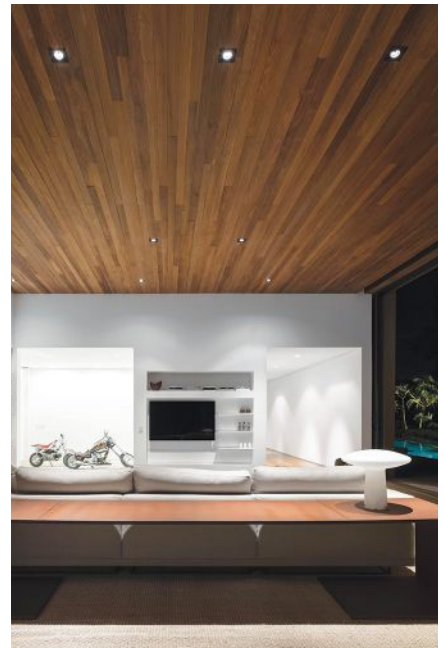
Georgia Pacific ForceField Integrated Weather-Resistive Barrier

The ForceField Weather Barrier System from Georgia-Pacific is a water-resistive barrier (WRB) sheathing system for use on walls and sloped roofs across wood-framed residential structures. Consisting of three primary products—ForceField Panels, Force-Field Premium Tape to seal joints and seams, and ForceField Flex Flashing Tape for wrapping around windows and other curved openings—Georgia Pacific says the system simplifies construction and reduces the number of trips around the building compared to traditional systems. buildgp.com



Black Label Sustainable Lumber

Tropical Forest Products' Black Label brand of 100% legally sourced, sustainable tropical hardwoods provide a rich look for architectural millwork, decking, cladding, deck tiles, and soffit. Black Label tropical hardwoods are certified sustainable by the Forest Stewardship Council, with a selection of Ipe, Cumaru, Jatoba, Garapa, Bulletwood, and Tigerwood, as well as thermally modified Black Label Kebony and Black Label ThermoWood. According to the manufacturer, Black Label hardwoods delivers excellent strength and performance, and each board must be Premium Architectural Grade or superior to earn the Black Label title. blacklabelwood.com



ChamClad Shadowline Series Exterior Siding & Soffit Panels

ChamClad, a manufacturer of laminated rigid PVC for interior and exterior applications, showcased its Shadowline Series exterior siding and soffit panels at this year's IBS. According to Chamclad, the Shadowline panels are modern, affordable, and lightweight—produced from 100% recycled rigid PVC. They are easy to install, Leed Compliant and readily available (1-2 weeks leadtime + shipping). Chamclad's production facility is located in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada and distributes premium architectural panels throughout North America. chamclad.com



Millboard by Outlive Decking

New from Outlive, Millboard decking combines the natural beauty of real wood with the performance of polyurethane. Hand-molded from natural timbers, Millboard decking features a polymer core reinforced with fiberglass. According to the manufacturer, these boards require minimal maintenance, are slip resistant, and won't warp or rot from moisture decay, algae, or insects.

Available in a variety of colors and textures, each board is hand-colored in the realistic tonal shades and grains in three collections: Enhanced Grain is molded from actual oak boards for a textured look and feel; Weathered Oak is molded from oak boards that are over a century old; and Lasta-Grip combines the appearance of the Enhanced Grain collection with the addition of a unique slip-resistant texture. outlive.info





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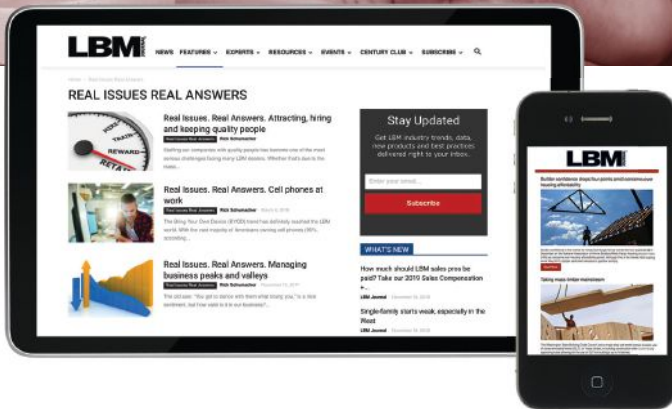
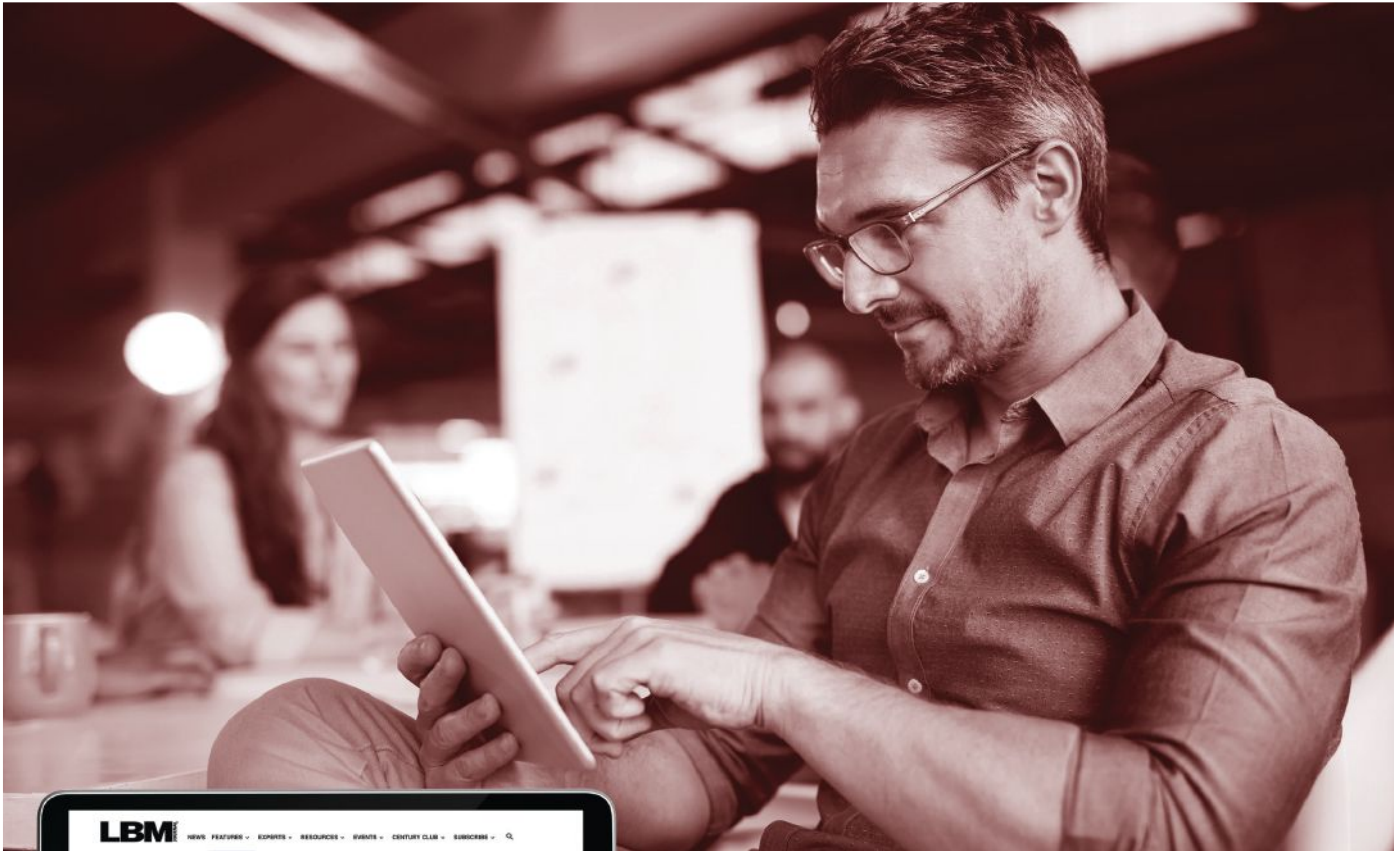
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Note: last-minute changes will affect the accuracy of this listing.

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THE WAGE DEBATE

RECENT POSTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA SHOW JUST WHAT YOUR EMPLOYEES THINK OF YOUR COMPANY'S PAY STRUCTURE—AND IT'S FAR FROM POSITIVE. WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

RECRUITING AND RETAINING quality employees isn't a new struggle in your market. While the talking heads on TV seem to think this is a problem only brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, you have verifiable proof that finding and hiring top talent is a problem that goes back as far as your 30-year-old company. Maybe it's the market you serve. As the only building supply distributor in a fourth-ring suburb that houses mostly big box discount stores, you've just never had folks knocking down your door to work at a lumberyard. But thankfully, over the years you've kept a loyal skeleton crew intact and happy enough to develop some long-term employees.

Now, however, you worry that may change. Your general manager, Dan, texted on a recent Sunday evening, asking if he could meet with you first thing Monday. While you have a standing meeting with him every Monday mid-morning, he wanted to make sure to get on your calendar early. You felt dread in your stomach immediately as you suspected he was asking to meet with you to give notice of resignation.

Your initial fear proved baseless when Dan said he was more than happy in his current role and has no plans to leave the company. Others, he said, are planning just that. Dan explained that over the weekend, his wife found some social media posts from one of her old high school classmates who works for you. This classmate said that they were frustrated at their job and asked for recommendations on where else they may find work in the area.

Just one person (especially this one in particular) venting on Facebook didn't mean much to Dan, he said, until his wife showed him that other employees had commented on the post. Dan then produced his cellphone from his pocket and showed you screenshots of several of your employees trash-talking their wages and sharing job postings from a nearby big box discount store's distribution center. Sure enough, forklift operators, order packers, CDL drivers, and

managers all started at a significantly higher rate than you currently offer.

In the past, it has been easy to point out the significant role your company plays in the community, the family-like atmosphere you've built, and the fair wages you offer as a means of keeping most any team member. Now it's apparent you'll have to cross wages off that list of positives. Even more concerning is that employees on the comment thread who you'd never guess were unhappy were blabbing about your pay structure. You ask Dan to forward you the screen shots of the comments and tell him you'll address it. What you don't tell him is that you're not sure how to tackle the issue.

What would you do?

CAST YOUR VOTE ONLINE AT: LBMJOURNAL.COM

- **TALK IT THROUGH.** These employees need to know that you have evidence they are disparaging your company. Bring them into your office and talk about the issue. Hear their side.
- **GIVE WARNING.** Each person on this thread needs fair warning that talking publicly about wages will not be tolerated. Let them know they've been warned, and you won't stand for it again.
- **EVALUATE WAGES.** Clearly, they're on to something. While they went about it in the worst possible way, they have brought a serious issue to light. Maybe it's time for a wage review.
- **GIVE THEM A BUMP.** Get ahead of this distribution center's hiring spree and match their wages...or top them, if possible. If people are unhappy, at least it won't be because of low pay.

SOMETHING ELSE?

If you'd take a different plan of attack, email your suggested solution to James@LBMJournal.com. If we publish your reply, we'll send you an LBM Journal mug.



LBM CENTURY CLUB HONORS 100-YEAR-OLD BUSINESSES

The LBM Century Club was founded on the simple belief that companies that have been around for 100 years deserve to be recognized. Launched in 2016, the LBM Century Club has grown to 171 members, with more coming in each month. In all, the companies have provided 21,501 years of combined service to their communities.

By no means does the LBM Journal's Century Club list include every 100-year-old company... at least not yet. That's where you come in. Do you work for, or know of a lumberyard or building materials retailer that is 100 or more years old? Send them our way, so that we can give them the recognition they deserve. Century Club members receive a certificate for their store, window decals for their front doors, free admission to the LBM Strategies Conference where they are guests of honor at a Century Club induction ceremony, as well as recognition in their local media, all free of charge. Nomination is easy! Just visit LBMJournal.com/nominate and answer a few questions. We'll take it from there. For a complete listing of LBM Century Club members, visit lbmjournal.com/lbm-century-club.

THE MOST RECENT INDUCTEES INTO THIS EXCLUSIVE CLUB INCLUDE:

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BARDEN LUMBER Boyne City, MI	est. 1922	BIG JOHNS BUILDING SUPPLY LLC Cedaredge, CO	est. 1904
MAZE LUMBER Peru, IL	est. 1848	POWELL ACE HOME CENTER Covington, IN	est. 1886
PARKES LUMBER CO. Lawrenceburg, TN	est. 1896	INTERSTATE + LAKELAND LUMBER Greenwich, CT	est. 1922
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