

LBM JOURNAL[®]



40 UNDER 40

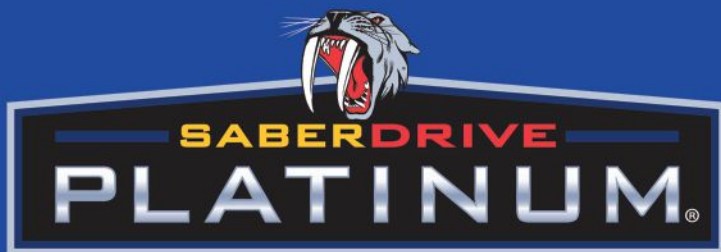
CELEBRATING THE 2024 CLASS
OF YOUNG LEADERS IN THE LBM
COMMUNITY



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JUNE 2024



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FROM THE PUBLISHER

SOME THINGS never change. For example, our Real Issue surveys always include this question: “Is there a business challenge you’re wrestling with?” With few exceptions, the number one answer has always been attracting, hiring, and retaining young talent.

When you talk, we listen and work hard to find someone with answers.

This approach works great with many topics.

That’s why we’re so proud of our lineup of columnists, each of whom not only has vast experience in their topic area, but they’re also incredibly effective communicators who are at the top of their game. With consolidation changing the LBM landscape, nobody demystifies the world of mergers & acquisitions better than John Wagner. When it comes to getting paid, no one is better at managing credit than Thea Dudley. Bill Lee, the first-and-only recipient of an LBM Lifetime Achievement Award, has forgotten more about sales and operations than most of us will ever know. Russ Kathrein’s thoughtful columns are packed with insights on leadership. And sales trainer extraordinaire Rick Davis shares his proven sales insights in every issue.

As it turns out, I’m not sure that one person has the answer to attracting young talent. However, the 40 LBM pros on the cover are uniquely qualified to address this issue. For the second time, LBM Journal’s 40 Under 40 recognizes and celebrates young leaders who are making a difference in their companies and their communities.

Here’s the process: companies were encouraged to nominate a young leader on their team, and individuals could choose to throw their hat in the ring. Nominees completed an online form detailing their qualifications, work experience and community involvement. Then, the panel of judges (members of the 2023 LBM 40 Under 40), weighed in.

For anyone who believes there’s no hope for Millennials and Gen Z’ers, I beg to differ. The indisputable proof begins on page 34 in this issue, with photos and brief descriptions of strong pros who are making a difference in our industry. Having already

been judged worthy by their peers, these pages focus on sharing who they are as people: where they see themselves in five years, advice for the next generation, and a fun fact.

The one downside of this program is limiting it to just 40 awardees. Competition for this recognition is fierce, and there were many nominees not shown here who are building strong careers and making big things happen.

If you want to learn more about what makes these young leaders tick, they’ve all been offered complimentary registration to LBM Strategies 2024, to be held October 16-18 in Costa Mesa, CA. Plus, a handful of those in attendance will take the stage for a panel discussion—moderated by a member of 2023’s 40 Under 40. Learn more at LBMStrategies.com.

— Rick Schumacher
Executive Editor & Publisher



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Schumacher', written in a cursive style.

HAVE A QUESTION FOR RICK?
RICK@LBMJOURNAL.COM

First we went above.

Now we **GO BEYOND.**

Meet AdvanTech™ X-Factor

Introducing a subflooring panel with a built-in barrier for jobsite durability.

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Request a sample at [AdvanTechXFactor.com](https://www.AdvanTechXFactor.com).



FROM THE EDITOR

“WHAT IS ONE TO SAY about June, the time of perfect young summer, the fulfillment of the promise of the earlier months, and with as yet no sign to remind one that its fresh young beauty will never fade.” This famous quote from noted British horticulturist, garden designer, writer, and artist Gertrude Jekyll so perfectly describes the month of June. Full of life, promise, and vitality, June is imbued with so much energy and growth.

This feeling of robust energy makes June the perfect time to reflect on the power of youth and the world-changing accomplishments of famous young adults. For example, by the time he was 18 years old, Alexander the Great had already begun to establish one of the largest ancient empires that spread from Greece to India.

When she was 17, Joan of Arc led an army against English forces, freed the besieged French city of Orléans, and became a national hero. And Alexander Hamilton was only 21 when he served as General George Washington’s chief staff aide, and by the age of 32, he was appointed to the New York delegation of the Constitutional Convention. He would go on to author the Federalist Papers, which helped secure the ratification of the new, stronger United States Constitution.

In our LBM world, we have equally accomplished young role models to celebrate—this year’s inductees to the LBM 40 Under 40 represent outstanding professionals chosen by a group of their peers. While they may not be leading armies against the English or crafting the Constitution, they are nevertheless leading by example and serving as inspiration to their team members. You’ll find the complete listing of these exemplary young LBM professionals starting on page 34.

There is much to be learned and appreciated from these 40 inductees. From their advice to the next generation of LBM professionals to their insights on what the next five years may bring—and let’s not forget their fun facts that illustrate their zest for life—these individuals all embody the energy and growth that we have come to associate with this month.

Need more inspiration? Look no further than Bladen Builders Supply, the subject of this issue’s Dealer Profile on page 52. This small-town LBM dealer puts the emphasis on the personal touch, both with its customers and with its staff. It’s an example of how important relationships are in the midst of growth, and how one feeds the other.

I’m excited to see what June will bring. As a time of abundant growth and re-birth, the month of June and the many examples of outstanding leadership in this issue remind me of the phrase “Carpe Diem,” or seize the day. Make the most of this time, use its abundance to your advantage, and take a moment to learn its lessons and apply them to yourself and your business.

— Mike Berger
Editor



Michael J. Berger

HAVE A QUESTION FOR MIKE?
MIKE@LBMJOURNAL.COM

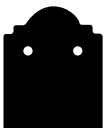


Fresh ideas for home improvement.

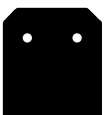


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Outdoor Accents



Mission



Avant

Strength and selection go together with Outdoor Accents® decorative hardware from Simpson Strong-Tie. We're always expanding our Mission Collection® and Avant Collection™ lines with new products and accessories, making it easy to enhance outdoor structures and living spaces. Both feature an innovative hex-head washer and fastener combo that looks like a bolted connection but installs as simply as a screw. It's the only approved fastening solution for Outdoor Accents connectors. Plus, our code-listed connectors and fasteners are rigorously tested for performance. So whether your customers are building a planter box or a pavilion, it will be strong, safe and beautiful for years to come.

To see our complete lines of Outdoor Accents decorative hardware, visit go.strongtie.com/outdooraccents or call (800) 999-5099.





TAGUE LUMBER BREAKS WORLD RECORD



McCOY'S RECEIVES CORPORATE CHAMPION AWARD



84 LUMBER RELOCATING HQ TO DALLAS

BY THE YARD

Tague Lumber announced its official recognition by Guinness World Records for the most people simultaneously “knocking on wood.” The event, held in Plumstead Township, Doylestown, Bucks County, and surrounding areas, saw an unprecedented level of excitement from across the region.

McCoy's Building Supply has received the Corporate Champion Award as recognition for their years of service in their Texas communities. McCoy's was nominated for the award by TEXSAR: Texas Search and Rescue. Award presenters OneStar commended the company's commitment to volunteering.

84 Lumber announced the relocation of its Western Team Headquarters from the Phoenix, AZ area to Dallas, TX. This strategic move is aimed at enhancing the company's support for its stores in Texas and beyond. The decision to relocate was driven by the need to better serve 84 Lumber's operations as the company continues its expansion plans on the West Coast.

Virginia-based lumberyard **Stoneburner Inc.** celebrated its 60th anniversary. Stoneburner Inc. has been operating in Virginia since 1964, and at its current location on South High Street since 1976. Since then it has grown from a lumberyard with two employees to a full building materials company with 50 workers, said Jonathan Bucher, third-generation co-owner of the business.

MERGERS + ACQUISITIONS

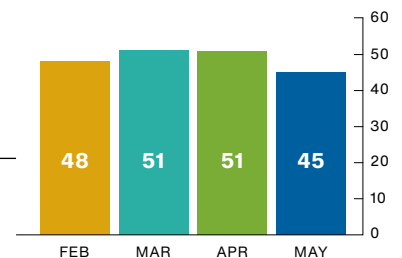
US LBM has acquired **Better Built Truss**, a manufacturer and supplier of structural roof and floor components in Northern California. Founded in 1964, Better Built Truss operates two facilities in Oakdale and Ripon, CA.

Kodiak Building Partners announced its acquisition of **Valley Lumber & Rental**, a prominent provider of hardware and building supplies in Victor, Idaho, and surrounding areas. Established in 2003, Valley Lumber & Rental has been a cornerstone business in Teton Valley, ID, for over 20 years.

Culpeper Wood Preservers acquired Pleasant Garden Dry Kiln Company in Pleasant Garden, NC. With this acquisition, Culpeper Wood Preservers adds additional drying capacity for hardwoods and softwoods. This further enhances the capabilities and distribution coverage area for its pressure-treated wood into markets that stretch from the southeast to the northeast and through the Midwest. Culpeper Wood Preservers now has 18 facilities within its footprint.

R.P. Lumber Co., Inc. is set to acquire **Custer Do it Best Hardware & Lumber**, an independently owned retailer of hardware, lumber, and building materials in Custer, South Dakota. Current employees will transition to the R.P. Lumber team and join nearly 1,000 R.P. Lumber team members. The company will also acquire the **Mount Carroll Home Center**, an independently owned retailer of hardware, lumber, and building materials in Mount Carroll, IL. All current employees will have the opportunity to join the team.

Nation's Best added its 57th location, and second in the state, with its acquisition of **Gambles Hardware** in Hotchkiss, CO, adding to its growing national footprint of locally-focused home improvement stores.



HIGHER MORTGAGE RATES HAMMER BUILDER CONFIDENCE IN MAY

Builder confidence in the market for newly built single-family homes was 45 in May, down six points from April, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI). The market has slowed since mortgage rates increased. A lack of progress on reducing inflation pushed long-term interest rates higher in the first quarter. The last leg in the inflation fight is to reduce shelter inflation, and this can only occur if builders are able to construct more attainable, affordable housing.

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PEOPLE IN LBM

Ward Lumber announced **Bryan Mellick** as its new CEO, who will succeed longtime CEO Jay Ward.

Bliffert Lumber & Hardware announced Vice President **Josh Brown** has been honored as a 2024 Notable Leader in Construction, Real Estate & Design by BizTimes Milwaukee Business News.

Kodiak Building Partners appointed **Robert Gordon** as the new President at **Direct Lumber and Door** of Colorado, and **Jim Miller** as President of **Premier Building Supply** of Kansas City.

Beacon has appointed Prithvi (**Prith**) **Gandhi** as Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer.

Superior Outdoor Products announced the hiring of **Brandon Ray** as Senior Territory Manager based in Columbus, OH. Ray has worked in building materials sales for more than 20 years and in the fencing industry for more than a decade. His territory for Superior includes the Midwest.



International Wood Products has hired **Amy Warren** as Vice President of Marketing. Warren brings extensive industry experience to her new role. She succeeds **Edy Schaller** in this position, who has taken on a new role as Sr. Vice President – Special Projects to drive key organizational initiatives.



LBM Advantage has appointed **Rodline Smith** as its new controller. Smith brings well over a decade of invaluable accounting and leadership experience, further solidifying Advantage's commitment to excellence in fiscal management.



Do it Best has made following the additions to its team:

- **Curtis Dale:** Integration Support Specialist
- **Fran Edmondson:** EDI/Direct Correspondent
- **Erin Lenardson:** Forest Products Purchasing Specialist
- **Ryan Lenehan:** Associate Building Materials Trader
- **Ben Schwartz:** Forest Products Trader

The company also recognized the following promotions:

- **Mike Barley:** Manager of IT Integrations
- **Mike Beerens:** Manager of the Enterprise Project Management Office
- **Todd Bussen:** Manager of IT Systems Administration
- **Devin Hoepfner:** Network Systems Operator
- **Jasmine McClanahan:** Communications Project Manager
- **Micahel McCoy:** Outdoor Living Merchandise Manager
- **Will Stanley:** Vendor Compliance Specialist
- **Micah Swerens:** Network Systems Operator
- **Rene Thompson:** Manager of IT Network Operations
- **Eric Knox:** Director of LBM Sales

LMC announced in late April the company will add two new members to its board of directors: **Eddie Crosslin** of **Crosslin Supply Company** and **Matthew Kuiken** from **Kuiken Brothers**.

Boise Cascade announced the promotion of **Chris Forrey** to Vice President, Finance and Investor Relations. Chris joined Boise Cascade in 2005 and was promoted to his most recent role of Senior Finance Director in March 2022.

4Ward Solutions Group announced that **Michael Ruede** has been appointed Chief Operating Officer for all 4Ward Solutions Group companies.

Simpson Manufacturing Co., Inc. announced **Roger Dankel's** retirement from the company effective June 30, 2025. Dankel will continue in his role as Executive Vice President, North America Sales of Simpson Strong-Tie Company Inc. through December 31, 2024.

Garnica appointed **Álvaro Gonzalez** as the company's new CEO.

TOUGH CALL SOLUTIONS

THE APRIL ISSUE SURVEY RESULTS FROM LBMJOURNAL.COM AND LINKEDIN.

Discontinued decking and the aspiring DIYer

A well-connected customer—but inexperienced deck builder—worked through your entire stock of a discontinued decking product, and their project is only 95% complete. Here's how readers responded to this Tough Call.

GET CREATIVE

Determine if a complementary color decking could be incorporated as a design element to complete the project. Then pay to have the work done right.

LOOK EVERYWHERE

Call the manufacturer, explain the situation, and ask them to help you cobble together enough boards from other dealers' old inventory to complete the job.



PLAN A COUNTEROFFENSIVE

While it's never ideal to battle a customer—especially a well-connected one—get your ducks in a row in case the battle comes. Craft social media and PR messages in the event she decides to go public in a nasty way, but gamble on her bluster being nothing but noise.

BRING IN A PRO

Hire a deck-builder customer to visit their home and sort through the excessive volume of discarded boards and see if the project can be completed with the waste.

LBM STRATEGIES

2024 CONFERENCE

OCT 16-18 • WESTIN SOUTH COAST PLAZA • COSTA MESA, CA

Ready to outperform the competition? Join other LBM industry leaders from across the U.S. to learn, share and network, then get back to work armed with fresh ideas and actionable insights to grow your sales, your business and your brand. Breakfasts, lunches, networking breaks and cocktail receptions—all included with your registration—offer an ideal opportunity to connect with old friends and make new ones.

REGISTER TODAY!

RESERVE YOUR SPOT BY JUNE 30 AND SAVE \$200

2024 SPEAKERS
(MORE TO COME)



RICK DAVIS
Founder and Principal
Building Leaders, Inc.



JENNIFER CASTENSON
VP of ambassador &
industry partner programs
Buildxact



DAN DELANEY
CFO
Ganahl Lumber



PETER GANAHL
CEO
Ganahl Lumber



BRAD SATTERFIELD
COO
Ganahl Lumber



THEA DUDLEY
Credit Overlord &
Cashflow Specialist
Pocket Protectors LLC



JEFF DUNN
President & CEO
Mill Creek Lumber &
Supply Company



BRADLEY HARTMANN
CEO
Bradley Hartmann & Co.



RUSS KATHREIN
VP Lumber & Building
Materials
Do it Best



RICK KYSER
Division Operations
Manager
Gilcrest-Jewett Lumber



LANCE LATKIEWICZ
Director of Operations
Mans Lumber



BETH POPNIKOLOV
CEO
Venveo



TED RIEPLE
Managing Partner & Founder
1st West M&A



JOHN D. WAGNER
Managing Director
1st West M&A

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International Wood Products



Weyerhaeuser



LBM Advantage
Better. Stronger. Together.



Stratus
Business Value & Ev. Strategies for LBM Dealers



NetNow



iUPG



SPAX



Do it Best



GRABBER
Construction Products

HILLMAN



4Ward
Solutions Group
Where Businesses Come for Solutions



feeney



TOOLBX



PARADIGM

ACRE™ BY MODERN • MILL



NCS CREDIT

BuyMetrics



MIDWEST



Fritch



PALADIN



SELJAX



**WorkSafe
WorkSmart**

INDUSTRY UPDATES

James Hardie Building Products celebrated the ribbon cutting and grand opening of a manufacturing plant in Westfield, MA. The 200,000-sq.ft. site commenced operations in January 2024. The \$50M investment in the world-class facility will employ up to 65 full-time employees.

YKK AP America Inc. opened its first greenfield residential manufacturing facility in Macon-Bibb County, GA.



YKK AP AMERICA INC.

Feeney has introduced DesignRail Modern—a sleek, modular aluminum railing system designed with the modern homeowner in mind. Engineered for simplicity, DesignRail Modern's components easily snap and screw together.

RoyOMartin will invest more than \$30 million to install technologically advanced production equipment at its Allen Parish plant that produces OSB for the housing industry. The company will retain its 232 full-time employees.

Cameron Ashley Building Products opened its newest distribution center in New Haven, CT. The New Haven location will stock drywall, insulation, roofing, as well as all the associated accessories.

Digger Specialties Inc. introduced Westbury Sorrento Mesh Railing. Designed to provide a sophisticated, contemporary style that enhances the visual appeal of decks, balconies and porches, Westbury Sorrento Mesh Railing features long-term durability and resistance to the elements.

Roseburg Forest Products announced that construction at two new plants in Dillard, OR, is underway. Dillard Components will be the first of the new plants to come online, with startup expected in late summer 2024. The plant will convert specialty medium density fiberboard panels manufactured at Roseburg's MDF plant in Medford, OR, into Armorite Trim.

SEND NEWS AND UPDATES ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION TO WENDY@LBMJOURNAL.COM

INDUSTRY EVENTS

2024

JUL 25-28

BMSA 2024 SUMMER CONFERENCE
Chattanooga, TN | mybmsa.org

AUG 14-16

ALLIED BUILDING STORES
FALL MARKET
Grapevine, TX | alliedbuildingstores.com

SEPT 6-9

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

SEPT 25-27

CONSTRUCTION SUPPLIERS
ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE
& TRADESHOW
Miramar Beach, FL | gocsa.com

OCT 6-8

WORLD MILLWORK ALLIANCE
59TH MILLWORK CONVENTION
& TRADESHOW
San Antonio, TX
worldmillworkalliance.com/2024-exhibitor-info

OCT 16-18

LBM STRATEGIES CONFERENCE 2024
Costa Mesa, CA | lbmstrategies.com

OCT 23-25

LMC EXPO 2024
Philadelphia, PA | lmc.net

OCT 28-30

LBM ADVANTAGE FALL PLANNING
CONFERENCE
Boston, MA | lbmadvantage.com

NOV 13-15

NAWLA 2024 TRADERS MARKET
Phoenix, AZ
nawla.org/events/tradersmarket

DEC 11-12

LBM EXPO
Uncasville, CT | lbmexpo.net

2025

FEB 25-27

INTERNATIONAL BUILDERS' SHOW
Las Vegas, NV | buildersshow.com

MAR 6-8

LMC ANNUAL 2025
Phoenix, AZ | lmc.net

DISTRIBUTION NEWS

Envision Outdoor Living Products has entered an agreement with **Detroit Forest Products** to distribute composite decking and accessories. The Westland, MI-based distributor serves lumber dealers, manufacturers, door and window plants, and industrial accounts throughout Michigan, northern Ohio, and Indiana.

Atlantis Rail Systems has partnered with Simbul Sales to support their partners in Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, and Utah.

Coffman will distribute **IG Railing**, an established brand of frameless glass railing from its Texas and Georgia warehouses.

Tando Composites has partnered with **Kellogg Supply Company** to sell Beach House Shake, the Authentic Composite Shingle, from its four premier home centers serving eastern North Carolina and the Outer Banks.

FlexScreen, a pioneer in flexible window screen technology, announced a partnership with **MITER Brands**.

SEND INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR COMPANY'S EVENTS TO WENDY@LBMJOURNAL.COM

Introducing Culpeper Column PLUS!

Culpeper 6x6 Column
5 1/8" x 5 1/8"



Culpeper 6x6 Column PLUS
5 1/2" x 5 1/2"



Hollow core to hide connections & wiring.

End sealed with a hybrid emulsion product.

Treated to 0.23 retention for UC4B ground contact.

Paint, stain, or seal immediately.

PICK YOUR COLOR!

Nominal Size	Type	Actual Size	Nominal Length <small>(Actual length 1/2" less than nominal)</small>	Design Load	Actual Load
4x4	Solid	3 1/8" x 3 1/8"	8', 10', 12'	6k lbs	26k lbs
4x4	Hollow	3 1/8" x 3 1/8"	8', 10', 12'	6k lbs	38k lbs
6x6	Hollow	5 1/8" x 5 1/8"	8', 10', 12', 16'	12k lbs	56k lbs
NEW! 6x6 PLUS	Hollow	5 1/2" x 5 1/2"	8', 10', 12', 16'	12k lbs	56k lbs
8x8	Hollow	6 3/4" x 6 3/4"	8', 10', 12', 16'	24k lbs	110k lbs
10x10	Hollow	8 3/4" x 8 3/4"	8', 10', 12', 16'	24k lbs	110k lbs

USE YOUR SIDING & TRIM INVENTORY TO MEET DEMAND FOR BOARD-AND-BATTEN EXTERIORS

Board-and-batten siding looks are one of the biggest trends in exterior home design. But while it's hot right now, the style actually dates back nearly 200 years. And that may be part of its appeal to homeowners.

One of the biggest things for dealers to know about board-and-batten siding is that it's not just siding—it's typically created with a combination of siding and trim. Working with a siding manufacturer that can offer both products in the same material can make it easier for you to sell and more straightforward for your customers to install and maintain.

WHAT IS BOARD-AND-BATTEN SIDING?

The board-and-batten style evolved in the U.S. as a more efficient alternative to the log cabin. Barns and houses with board-and-batten siding were inspired by Nordic European buildings and gained popularity in America in the mid-19th century.

Traditionally, board-and-batten started with wide vertical planks (boards), which were then joined together by thin vertical trim strips (battens) to cover the seams. Homesteaders and farmers would use sawmills to cut the long boards, and the battens were put in place to make the structure as airtight as possible.

Today, wide panels are used as the primary siding and the batten strips are typically decorative, which gives home designers lots of creative license.

Hardie® Panel Siding and Hardie® Trim Batten Boards offer the following benefits:

Aesthetic appeal: Board-and-batten siding adds a touch of traditional warmth and rustic character to any home. Its vertical lines produce an eye-catching texture that goes well with farmhouses and modern kinds of architecture.

Design versatility: With options for wider panels and decorative battens, homeowners and designers can play with spacing, colors, and siding profiles to achieve a personalized and unique look.

Durability and longevity: Board-and-batten made with Hardie® fiber cement siding and trim boasts exceptional durability. It can withstand the harshest weather conditions, including heavy rain, snow, and UV rays. Its ability to resist warping, cracking, and shrinking adds to its longevity.

Low maintenance: Unlike wood siding that may require more frequent upkeep, fiber cement board and batten needs minimal maintenance, and it is resistant to rot, pests, and weather.



HOW TO GET THE BOARD-AND-BATTEN LOOK WITH HARDIE® PRODUCTS

Board-and-batten siding was traditionally made of wood. But wood siding is vulnerable to moisture damage, invites insects like termites, and requires more ongoing maintenance.

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BY RICK DAVIS

THIS MONTH, I'd like to talk about the elephant in the room ... or the mouse in the corner, depending on your perspective. Two months ago, The Home Depot (THD) agreed to purchase SRS Distribution, one of the largest roofing and siding dealers in the U.S. The price was an astounding \$18.25 billion, making the deal the largest acquisition since ... um ... ever!

ONE ON ONE COVERAGE

There are several ways of looking at the deal. First, it's possible that the addition of new capital resources and technology will strengthen the effectiveness of the wholesaler. Perhaps the footprint of THD will give contractors easier access to pickups and deliveries. Perhaps the professional sales force of SRS will introduce better business-to-business capabilities for an organization traditionally focused on the consumer.

Mostly, my response is, "Meh. Nothing much has happened." The sales profession is one-on-one coverage. It's as simple as that. Your competition isn't the other company; it's the other salesperson.

In fact, sometimes the other salesperson is the one sitting across the desk from you at your branch. Countless times in my career, I've heard from salespeople who discovered that they gave a price to a disgruntled contractor who shopped the price and received a better one from the salesperson's co-worker.

Countless other times, salespeople have been told their price is as much as 10% too high compared to a competing supplier. Rather than verify the metric, the reactive sales-

person is quick to take that information back to the branch with the plea for better pricing. Instead of seeking details and verification of the discrepancy, they presume that the competing organization is simply "more competitive."

I've never worried all that much about competing supplier organizations, although I've always tried to know which salespeople are calling on my prospects and customers.

I've never studied what they do, although I listen carefully to the comments of prospects and customers to discover weakness or strengths they reference; these

comments are a great opportunity to capitalize.

Most certainly, I never, ever denigrate a competitor, for many reasons. Most notably, it's an insult to the prospect by implying they're making a bad buying decision. It also is a sign of weakness that a salesperson, criticizing or fearing a competitor, is revealing insecurities about their own performance.

The best salespeople are leaders, not chasers. They recognize that selling is not zone coverage where a team of people are prospecting together. Acquisition of new customers is a one-on-one challenge where two salespeople, likely with near identical resources, must illustrate why their offer is the better one. In the modern age, this means providing resources, advice, and support that enables the buyer to gain a competitive market advantage.

My 2018 articles for *LBM Journal* (search: "Concierge" on our website at LBMjournal.com) promote a new role for salespeople in the 2020s and beyond. It's not enough to simply peddle products and expect to gain a competitive advantage. The products you sell are available at a multitude of locations in your market. You can also bet that the difference between your buying price and your competitors is close to nil. Therefore, your competitive advantage can only be one thing: You!

The real competition you face is obsolescence. As the industry evolves, expect more technology to replace the need for transactional assistance from a salesperson. There is no industry immune to ecommerce and simplified transactional relationships. To thrive in the future of the sales profession, your competition isn't the big company across the street—i.e., the elephant in the room. It's the competing salesperson at the job site or in the offices of your prospects and customers—i.e., the mouse in the corner. Sales success is one-on-one coverage. The bad news is that it's up to you whether you will outshine the competition. The good news is the same! It's up to you whether you will outshine the competition.



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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BY BILL LEE

YOU DON'T EARN THE long-term benefits of bringing in a new customer by leading with price. If you do, your image will be that of a nonprofessional. Salespeople who are insecure about either themselves or the products they sell know little else to do but to use low-ball pricing as a prospecting tool.

Prospects have the highest attraction to salespeople who reek of professionalism, salespeople who have more value to offer than the salesperson they are presently buying from. Salespeople who have acquired the kind of value I'm talking about are difficult to say no to because they are so rare.

So the first step for a salesperson who wishes to take customers away from the competition is to acquire some knowledge the prospect will perceive to be of value. Take the two strategies below as examples:

1. Take photographs of one or more ongoing problems the contractor is experiencing and may even be unaware of, i.e., excess material on the jobsite after that phase of the construction process is complete.
2. If your competitor's driver dumps the material in a mud hole, snap a photograph. Next, snap a photograph of one of your deliveries where the material is stacked neatly around the jobsite and use the comparison to illustrate the extra value your company offers.

WIN THE PROSPECT'S FAVORABLE ATTENTION



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

Ask for a short meeting. Offer evidence to the contractor—such as photos—and then explain how your company prevents excess, wasted, or damaged material on your customers' jobsites. Again, evidence is helpful: photos or multiple copies of reference letters you have received from current customers, etc.

Wait to quote. Unless the prospect asks for pricing, resist the temptation to quote prematurely. Try to avoid quoting a prospect until you believe the prospect is willing to at least consider making a change. You don't want to appear overly anxious, so relax and let nature take its course. When you quote prematurely, you are also inviting a price negotiation. Rarely is the timing right to get into a pricing discussion on the first call.

Look for opportunity. Keep your eyes open for subtle signs that the prospect's present supplier may be dropping the ball. For example, if you see foam sheathing in the same holes in the wall where two special order windows should be at the current stage of construction, odds are the contractor's salesperson somehow failed to get the special order windows on order in time to receive them when they were promised.

I believe it's important to remember that while you may be in desperate need of a new customer, your prospect is concerned about what they need, not about what you need, so resist letting on how badly you need an order. If you're starving to death, keep it to yourself.

Your prospect needs for their jobs to progress smoothly, and they need a supplier salesperson who can make their life easier and make sure material is on the job on time. If you keep your eyes open, you can spot opportunities to get your foot in the door.

When either you or your prospect decide that the timing is right to discuss price, be prepared to explain why you are quoting the specific brand names or products on your quote. And when it's time to offer the price, the words I recommend you use are: "The price is \$____." Have resolve in your voice when you quote your price.

Remember to keep your prospect's needs uppermost in your mind. Talk with the prospect's subs to learn where your competitor is dropping the ball. Scrutinize your prospect's jobsites thoroughly and you're bound to spot opportunities to improve on the job your competitors are doing.

Salespeople who live by the sword, die by the sword. The same is true for salespeople who believe they have to have the lowest price.

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BY THEA DUDLEY

TRACKING AR HEALTH

Hey Thea,
What is a healthy percentage over 90 days? I have tried to find good benchmarking information for our industry, but have come up short. Not much on benchmarking of what “healthy” looks like in our industry for over 90 as a percentage in comparison to total AR. Can you help me?

— Benched in Marking

Dear Benched,

One look at social media makes it very clear that everyone’s view of “healthy” is different. Everyone’s got a different opinion and viewpoint based on their experience, industry knowledge, and company culture. Benchmarking in our industry is a tough find. The Credit Research Foundation (CRF) puts out some of the best data you can find, along with the National Association of Credit Managers (NACM).

Looking for detailed, industry-specific data gets dicey. Every credit manager I know has some set of numbers in their head, and it may change based on where they are working, the economy, the directive, and how detailed and energetic they are in information gathering.

Having added the disclaimer that acceptable is subjective and taking a number of factors into account—payer mix, litigation, unresolved claims, how quickly you write off bad debt or how reactive you are to customers who can’t figure out how to pay within terms—15%-20% of total AR is considered “acceptable,” and 5%-8% is considered “good” for a very healthy AR as a standard.

“Really?” you may say, “That sounds high.” I equate 15%-20% as “acceptable” to generic red wine at a conference. Yes, it may be drinkable and I may accept it, but as soon as I get the latitude to change it, I am making adjustments to improve (in my case, going out-of-pocket at the hotel bar).

If 20% of my AR, for whatever the reason, is in the 90+ column, what does that do to the remainder? What story do those columns tell? How “healthy” is that really?

Your overall bucket numbers are another indication of how well your AR portfolio is performing as a whole. If 20% is “acceptable,” then every other bucket has to be zero for my team to achieve 80% current. “That’s acceptable,” said no CFO or self-respecting credit person EVER!

Looking at the process or procedures around your collection and bad debt practices definitely factors in. If you never write anything off or accept that something is not collectible, then it is occupying a permanent place on your AR in the land of “hope as a collection tool,” which is collected in the month of Never-ary.

The challenge is drilling down to industry specific solid benchmarking numbers that are useful. Why is that so hard to get? Benchmarking numbers come from companies (this means you) sharing their accounts receivable data with an organization or company that specializes in this data. Think credit bureaus, CFM or NACM. They can only work with and report on what data has been contributed. The end result is group sic code reporting, or blanket data. And there are caveats: all industries are lumped in together; you may have to pay for it; those organizations aren’t non-profit; you have to be a member or pay to play.

Where does that leave you? Take a quick poll of your credit buddies, and look at your historical data, factor in the size of your AR dollars, the quality of your AR (that means how much garbage is on it—unresolved claims, unaccepted bad debt, etc.) Get data from your local NACM and create a benchmark to use against your goals.

You can’t get what you won’t give. Contribute. Participate. Read that again. Now go take benchmarking action.



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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BY JOHN D. WAGNER

IN A WIDELY REPORTED incident, a public company's executive officers accelerated receivables and delayed vendor payments, so they could shift cash into their fourth quarter to meet year-end "free cash flow" targets. Those targets were communicated publicly, and determined the executives' annual stock and bonus awards. A whistleblower reported the malfeasance, the corporate officers were suspended, and the stock immediately dropped by 42%.

ESTABLISHING A NET WORKING CAPITAL 'PEG'

If you own a private company, you can accelerate receivables with spiffs and discounts. You can delay vendor payments, too. Obviously, these are considered bad practices, even though they may create a "sugar high" in increased cash proceeds. But, as with sugar highs, the benefits are temporary.

On the other hand, if you are a private company in the midst of being acquired, or seeking acquisition, accelerating receivables or delaying vendor payment is a really bad idea.

Here's why: Every acquisition has a Net Working Capital "PEG"—a target dollar amount—established at close. The NWC PEG is essentially current assets (inventory, AR, etc.) minus current liabilities (accounts payable, etc.). The NWC is commonly used to gauge the short-term health and liquidity of a business. It also historically tracks what levels of current assets and liabilities are required to operate.

Since our industry is seasonal, the NWC figure used when a company is acquired is calculated at close on a TTM (trailing twelve month) basis. The TTM perspective averages out the high inventory levels you bulked up on, say, at a buying show, while accounting for low inventories when you sell down in busy months.

During an acquisition, the NWC is calculated right up until the day of the closing. At the close, if you, the seller, are under the twelve-month average—maybe you sold down roof shingles because of a recent hailstorm—you owe the acquirer the difference between the TTM NWC and the NWC "PEG" at closing. That's because the reduced shingle inventory (exaggerated by a burst of activity) dragged the inventory value down below the TTM average. Sure, the sale of the shingles added to your earnings, but you have to account for the replacement cost of the shingles the acquirer will spend to bring levels back to the TTM average.

On the other hand, if you, the seller, are over the TTM NWC vs the NWC PEG—maybe because you bulked up just before the closing on shingles for thunderstorm season—then the acquirer owes you the difference. The reason: the acquirer is getting inventory above the TTM average. Those are extra shingles you paid for, and you are not obligated to give to the acquirer without compensation.

You can now see that spiffing receivables to goose the cash line on your balance sheet is unfair to the acquirer, because you artificially reduced receivables by moving receivables to cash on your balance sheet; that's cash that you keep in a cash-free/debt-free deal.

At an acquisition's closing, since the NWC is dynamic and changes by the day, both the seller and acquirer agree that the NWC figure used at close is provisional, since it might not contain every last item, (e.g. tax refunds, sales tax accruals, insurance prepaids). So, almost all acquisitions have a "true-up" that takes place around 90 days after the closing. The true-up looks back to the at-close NWC, and—with all the at-close credits and debits flushed through the system—makes sure the NWC figure was indeed correct. If it were under the TTM average used at close, the seller would owe the acquirer some money. If the NWC were over the at-close TTM NWC average, the acquirer pays the seller that difference. You can now see why the NWC and NWC PEG are so central to making sure the obligations of the seller and acquirer are both treated fairly and equitably.



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

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BY RUSS KATHREIN

THE PERILS OF IGNORING A CHANGING INDUSTRY

THEY SAY CHANGE IS inevitable, but when you look at the lumber and building material industry, change has been miniscule and comes in fits and starts. Who can forget how the modular home builder Katterra was going to transform our industry by relying on technology?

Unfortunately, they failed. Lumber dealers will say it was because they were tech people and didn't understand our business. Builders will say they didn't see the value.

Regardless, our industry is full of naysayers who want to think we are already doing things the best way possible. That, "our market is different." Or we have sufficient barriers to entry to keep out any companies that may try to disrupt our business model. Sometimes to see the flaw in one's logic, it helps to look at something similar and make an analogy. So let's look at the taxi industry.

Taxis dominated transporting people to custom destinations for well over a century. The cost of buying and maintaining a taxi was a large barrier to entry, and in most big cities, local governments limited the number of taxis by requiring that you purchase a medallion. In 2014, New York City medallions were auctioned off for over \$1 million each. This was a protected and profitable industry. Then along came Uber and Lyft.

So, what were the factors that disrupted the taxi industry and how can we relate those to LBM?



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

Ease of use and convenience: Uber's app-based platform allows customers to book rides with ease, view the location of their ride in real time, receive estimates on arrival times, and pay automatically through the app. This convenience is different from the traditional taxi model, where rides often have to be booked over the phone, or a taxi must be hailed on the street.

Takeaway: How easy do you make it for your customers to interact with your business?

Transparent pricing: Uber provides fare estimates before the ride begins. This transparency contrasts with taxis, where fares can sometimes be unpredictable until the end of the ride.

Takeaway: What if someone could take the commodity price volatility out of our business model? How disruptive would that be?

Wide availability: Uber's platform has enabled it to amass a large network of drivers, often providing wider coverage and shorter wait times than traditional taxi services.

Takeaway: Deliveries are often first come, first serve because of people and equipment availability. How can this barrier be overcome?

Quality control: The Uber app allows customers to rate their drivers after each ride. This helps maintain high service standards. Taxi services are mostly dependent on the individual driver to provide a clean vehicle and good service.

Takeaway: Are you fanatical about keeping your trucks clean? Do your drivers wear uniforms and have their own business cars to promote your company?

Flexible workforce: Uber's model attracts drivers due to the flexibility the schedule offers, enabling Uber to scale its workforce rapidly to meet demand, a flexibility that traditional taxi companies with structured employment models cannot easily replicate.

Takeaway: What other options can you explore to solve the bottlenecks in your production and delivery schedules?

Disruption will come. The question is will you ignore it or embrace it? Today, medallions in NYC are up for sale for \$100,000, and that is if you can find a buyer. Yet some markets have adapted. In Pittsburgh, the cab companies united and created their own app called zTrip which offers the convenience of Uber's app, but uses the existing taxi fleet.

You can sit and wait for customers to come to you, or you can get involved with new opportunities that will add value to your business. Change is coming. Are you going to be in the driver's seat, or are you going to be run over by it?



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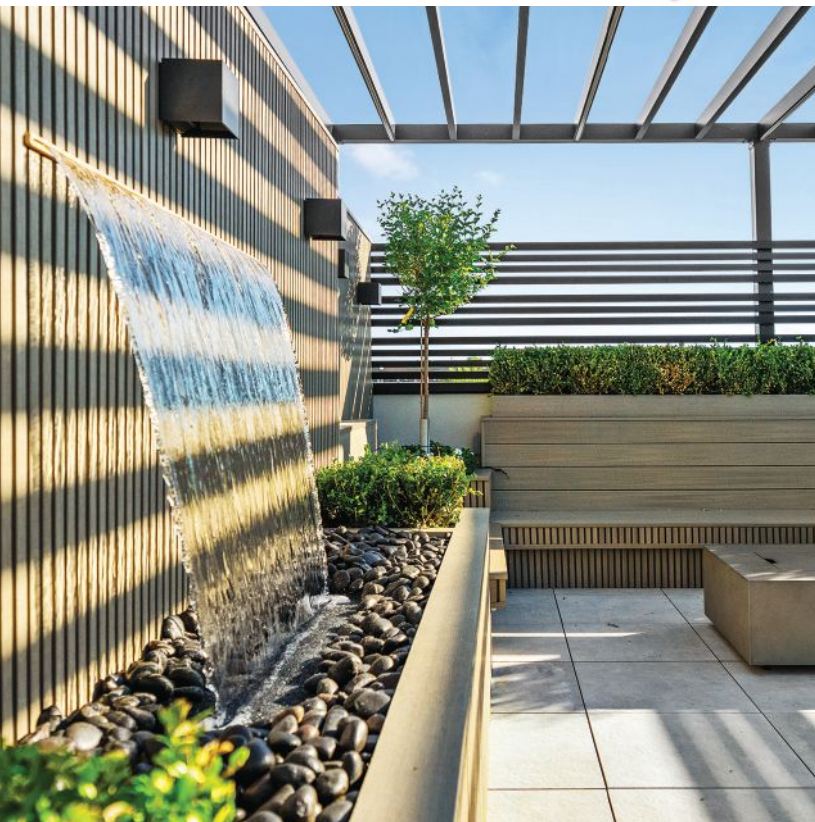
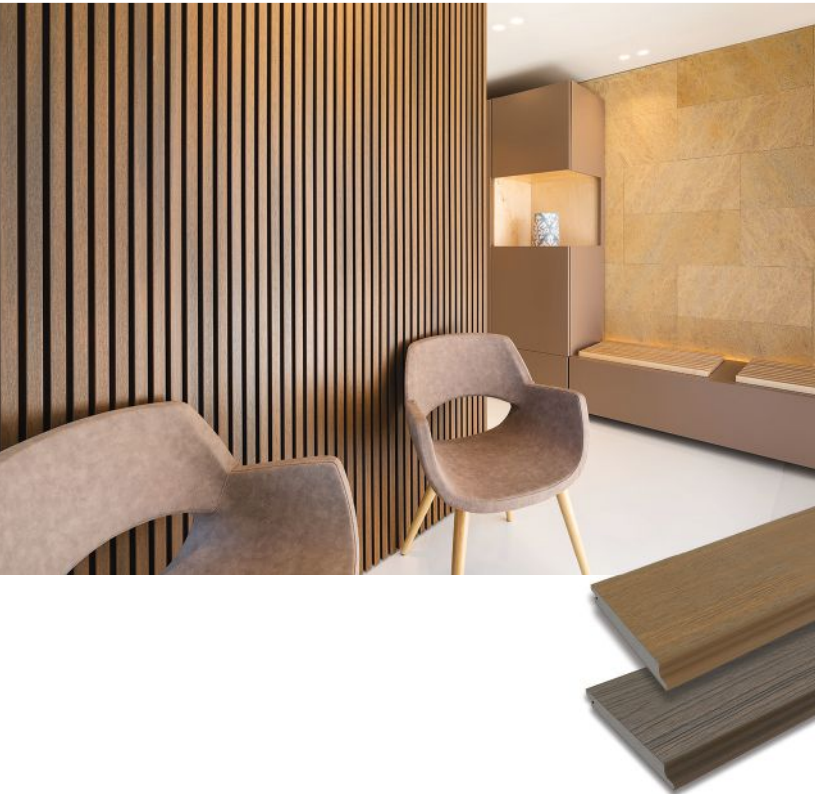
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GETTING STARTED IN E-COMMERCE

1



From groceries and clothes to furniture and even cars, it seems like there's no limit to what you can buy online these days—so much so that an online shopping experience is what many customers now expect. According to a recent survey from Forbes, about 20% of all retail purchases are expected to take place online in 2024, and that number is only expected to rise. With that in mind, many LBM dealers are utilizing—or considering—e-commerce for their businesses.

BY LBM JOURNAL READERS



Nearly 80 readers responded to our Real Issues survey email (let us know at operations@lbmjournal.com if you'd like to be on the list). **THE QUESTION:**

Q What insights would you share with the LBM dealer who posed this question: “We are currently wrestling with getting into the e-commerce game. We know we need to be in it, but it’s overwhelming to know where to start. Seems all of the buying groups have a program but not knowing anything makes it difficult to know who and what to trust, especially when it costs so much. Is there a better way to get started without making a huge commitment to another company? I feel like we’ll be putting all of our eggs into one basket.”

TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE TOP ANSWERS FROM THIS MONTH’S SURVEY.

Responses from lumberyards, full-line building material dealers, and specialty dealers/distributors:

“E-commerce can be daunting, especially if you are not familiar with how it works. Although the buying groups can be expensive, it’s important to consider the value of knowledge that you gain by choosing an established company to help you create a well-functioning website. If you don’t have expertise in mechanics, you wouldn’t try to fix your car on your own, right? You would call in a professional. That’s what you get by choosing an established company to help you with your e-commerce website. You could also consider hiring someone to create a website for you, but that still means you are committing to another company. The beauty of e-commerce is that it’s measurable, so you can try it out for a while and see what results you get.”

“Sit down with your buying group and have them explain the benefits of e-commerce until you fully understand; they should have several options.”

“It depends on what size of business area you have and how much online or additional business you can handle.”

“100% agree. These are questions that we have as well.”

“We went through the same thing in 2018 and started looking at new ERP options that fulfilled our current needs and supported our 10-year vision.”

“You have no option. Try to find something that integrates with your ERP.”

“Trust the experts, find a good partner by talking to other LBM dealers who have one. Identify your internal expert. Look at the e-commerce as part of your advertising budget.”

“Start with your POS provider. It has to integrate with POS or won’t be successful. Negotiate hard on costs. It’s expensive and will not pay for itself right away.”

“[Start] slow & steady.”

“Reach out to companies in your network that started to go with e-commerce and interview them on the platform they use—pros and cons, etc.”

“If you think e-commerce will bring you greater share of wallet and/or more market share then, yes, you need to commit. It’s a business decision first. Then a technology question. The market has plenty of e-commerce talent looking for new homes.”

“If you start first with a robust POS system on all stocked items, assign a special class to represent non-stocked items. Buying groups have suggested retails. Go with those until you can program in your own retails based on whatever method you use to price (Target GM, or comps, for example.)”

“[Be prepared to] get a few broken eggs.”

“Doing it ourselves has been unsuccessful. Should have partnered with someone successful.”

“We are wrestling with the same decision(s). While there are multiple platforms that offer a piece of e-commerce (i.e. customer account access, products/pricing online, live chat, etc.), it doesn’t always mean your ERP or other systems will play nice. That said, I feel like it needs to be something that we don’t rush into ... even though we get plenty of sales calls pushing for it!”

“Doing it yourself is not the way to go. Now co-ops or services have it figured out. [It’s a] mistake not using them.”

“I cannot think that without multiple stores in multiple cities and broad brand recognition, e-commerce will succeed.”

“Know what parts are important to you: Buy online/pickup in store, pricing online only for hardware, pricing online for all stock items offered. Then, evaluate what company matches up with what you are looking for currently and also what your road map shows for future growth.”

“My previous business was all online. It is a difficult game that you always have to be on top of. Is there a reason you feel the need to be in it? Do you have the manpower to work in this space?”

“A lot of people, including some shareholders, think online marketing is very easy. I know for a fact the content and that skill set are very time-consuming.”

Start Small, Scale Gradually:

Instead of diving headfirst into a complex e-commerce program, consider starting small and gradually scaling up as you gain confidence and experience. Begin by setting up a basic online presence, such as a website or a presence on established e-commerce platforms like Shopify or WooCommerce.



Explore Low-Cost or Free Options:

There are numerous low-cost or even free e-commerce solutions available that cater to small businesses. For example, you could leverage social media platforms like Facebook or Instagram to showcase your products and engage with customers without the need for a dedicated e-commerce website.



Consider DIY Solutions:

Consider building your own e-commerce website using DIY website builders like Wix or Squarespace. While this approach requires more effort upfront, it provides greater flexibility and control over your online presence.



Focus on Customer Experience:

Regardless of the e-commerce solution you choose, prioritize providing a seamless and enjoyable shopping experience for your customers. This includes optimizing your website for mobile devices, streamlining the checkout process, and offering responsive customer support.



“Whether you start by adopting one of the “a la carte” options out there and slowly build up to full on e-commerce...or take as much time as you need with the ‘inclusive’ programs, doing your due diligence through lots of demos and Zoom calls to make sure you fully understand what you’re getting into...I think we have to make sure we don’t rush into it. Wish I had a better answer, but like I said, we’re in the same ring!”

“Well, we struggle as Amazon is so good at it. I would like to see a partnership between companies to form a company to compete with Amazon. Offer it at a low cost to all small businesses.”

“If you have a branded hardware store, like True Value or Do it Best, there might be an easy model to launch that side. Also need to factor in your POS software and determine if that limits your options.”

Responses from wholesale distributors, manufacturers and service providers:

“Your co-op’s mission is to leverage group purchasing power (volume) up channel, vis-a-vis the supply side (vendors). Here, the LBM dealer appears to be asking about “sell-side” e-commerce, looking down channel, to your customers. I’d suggest you start by asking your key customers what you could do to improve THEIR purchase efficiency/productivity (vs. your sales efficiency). Sales is always about meeting the needs of customers. Every market is local, every LBM dealer has their own customer mix, their own competitive environment, their own go-to-market strategy. Retail consumers may well benefit from a digital catalog. Pro yards, especially those serving big builders/general contractors, need to be digitally ready to work collaboratively with the builder’s software (the customer’s chosen e-commerce solution). Do your customers want to ‘browse’ or do they want fast and precise answers to their queries? E-commerce is about digitizing your supply chain, up-channel and down-channel. It’s more about efficiency and collaboration, less about flashy marketing.”

“It’s smart to enter slowly and to try to get a proof of concept before a full implementation. I think you could first learn from other dealers on their experience. Start asking your peers. Start poking around online for any comments and reviews. Start looking at other dealers’ sites for functionality that makes sense. Also, make sure that any new technology plays well with what you already have in place.”

“We feel your pain. We are in the same position. It’s overwhelming and we just don’t have the knowledge or the staff.”

“Only send emails when you have something to offer, and not every week! Don’t waste your customer’s time!”

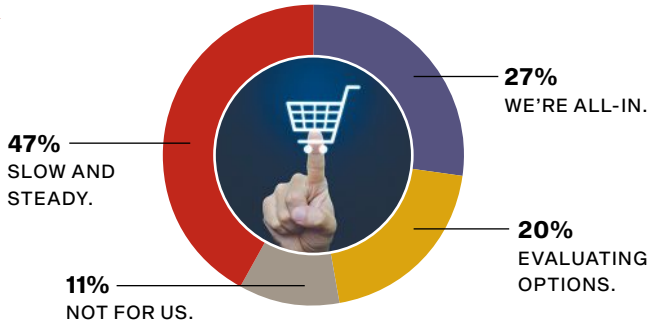
“With the amount of tech-gear and marketing college graduates, you may find it beneficial to bring in a marketing department that focuses on building a website, and knows where to spend the money to get your platform off the ground. Then again, there are off-site companies that offer these services that do cost a good bit of money, but it is less headache than going through the employment process and not knowing what you are getting. Get references from these companies and do your research before diving into the first one, or the lowest price.”

“We have decided that we do not want to enroll in e-commerce. We are a 2-step distributor covering eight states and business couldn’t be any better. Why rock the ship when it’s rolling steady?”

HAVE A REAL ISSUE?

Send it to Rick@LBMJournal.com
The reader who suggests the “Real Issues” topic will receive an LBM Journal prize pack.

Q Which one of the following best describes your company's view on e-commerce?



"We know that it is something that we need to look into in the future, but we aren't quite ready to start investigating just yet."

"We are a month or two away from going live. We're starting with a few hundred SKUs and slowly growing from there."

"We have expanded special order SKU offerings significantly and adjusted retails to be aggressive. All stocked items are online with on-hand quantity."

"We are looking at platforms that will be easy to work with and tie into our software."

"We understand the lean towards e-commerce and being relevant in an everchanging digital world. While our market doesn't have as big a demand for it, we do recognize that it would keep us in the ring with our big box competitors."

"Our focus is local, pro builders. They make up 98% of our business. With our location and local population, e-commerce hasn't made a ton of sense for us."

"Our management is resistant to adopt new technologies. We are facing other companies that make the order process easier and more efficient. E-commerce provides the ease, efficiency and transparency that pros demand."

"We need to get in the game, we just have to figure to all out. Where do you start?" ■

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game chang-er
noun
: a newly introduced element or factor that changes an existing situation or activity in a significant way.

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**THE
2024
CLASS
OF
YOUNG
LBM
LEADERS**

LBM JOURNAL[®]
40
UNDER
40

IN CONVERSATIONS with dealers and companies throughout the year, we often hear that finding young, dedicated talent can be difficult given the present labor market. However, this year's LBM 40 Under 40 class proves that task may be difficult, but not impossible.

We received more than 100 nominees for the 2024 class, which were narrowed then down by members of the inaugural 2023 class, resulting in the list you'll see in the following pages. We're proud to share a list of outstanding professionals chosen by a group of their peers.

From growing up in the industry to joining later in their careers, this year's class comes from a variety of backgrounds and positions at organizations across the U.S. Many of them are leaders in their respective companies, and we've asked them to share not only their goals for the future, but their advice for the next generation of LBM employees.

Inductees from this year's list have all been invited to attend this year's LBM Strategies Conference 2024, to be held from Oct. 16-18 in Costa Mesa, CA, and a select few will take the stage to share how they've succeeded in the industry, and tips on how to attract other employees like them. For more information on the conference, visit lbmstrategies.com.

For now, we're excited to celebrate and present, in no particular order, the 2024 LBM 40 Under 40 inductees.

SPONSORED BY



EMILY MORGAN

PRESIDENT & CEO
ASHBY LUMBER

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: I will most likely be doing the same thing but in a larger capacity—serving more employees, more customers, and having more involvement in our community.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Keep an open mind and ask a lot of questions. We all tend to be impatient early in our careers and there are a lot of great opportunities in our industry if you focus on learning and adding value—one day at a time!

FUN FACT: I studied Psychology and Interior Design and never thought I would work at Ashby Lumber. I started working part-time when I was 22, fell in love, and never left!



BRANDON GOLLADAY

PRESIDENT
MIDWEST LUMBER

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: Our industry has ever-changing market conditions, so being able to adapt by continuing to grow and develop our team will be key. I believe the sky's the limit for our company, because we truly have exceptional employees that make our company successful through their hard work and dedication. I see Midwest Lumber expanding to other locations and continuing to gain market share, all while keeping our unmatched culture.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: I believe the LBM industry has the best of the best people. As someone who grew up in the industry, I would say all you have to do is ask for help. I was fortunate to encounter and learn from some amazing mentors over the years which included other owners in the industry, vendors, and colleagues. Every time I asked for advice, they were more than willing to extend me their time and wisdom from their experiences. As a member of the LBM industry, I believe we need younger people coming into the industry and we want them to succeed.

FUN FACT: I love spending time with my family and friends. I enjoy coaching my kids in sports and watching them grow up.

KEVIN JESTER

OWNER
TK BUILDING SUPPLY LLC



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: I feel blessed enough that in five years I see myself doing much of the same things that I do now. We have built a company that has a relatively stress-free environment. We have a good staff around us and I have a great business partner. We continue to grow at a very steady rate. I could see us purchasing more equipment to increase our manufacturing abilities and we are also considering opening a second location.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: My advice would be, sell yourself. This industry allows you to sell a product that is tangible and has a real demand, but don't forget to create relationships. People buy from people they like and trust. If you say you will do something, DO IT! Your word in this industry is everything!

FUN FACT: I am very active and competitive. I continue to play any sport I can. I coach 3rd grade basketball and softball. I love karaoke and playing cornhole.

CHRIS PETERS

CORPORATE SALES MANAGER
MORSCHES BUILDERS MART



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: In the next five years, I see myself continuing to grow our market share in our region and hopefully adding more locations to the five locations that we currently have.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: My best advice to the younger generation is to work as hard as you possibly can. Be the first to arrive to work and the last to leave. My goal was to learn and consume as much information as possible to set myself apart from others. To be successful in this industry doesn't mean that you have the highest of academic accolades or even a college degree—hardworking and dedicated individuals are the most successful people of this industry.

FUN FACT: I enjoy playing golf with my free time. I find peace from the stress of everyday life being on the golf course with friends. Golf really challenges me from a mental standpoint.



CLARA COLLINS

OPERATIONS MANAGER
S.W. COLLINS COMPANY

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: In five years, I see myself remaining active in our industry as well as my local community, and working every day to find new ways to grow and best serve the needs of our community. I envision myself continuing to play an active role in the operations side of the business as well as working on strategic, big picture initiatives to help our company work toward achieving our vision and goals.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: My advice to someone who is considering their career options is to be open minded to different industries. If you focus on finding a work environment that you thrive in, work that motivates you, and values of the people and company that align with yours, you could be surprised where you may find your fit. One of my favorite parts of my work and this industry is the relationships that I've developed and continue to grow with vendors, contractors, and coworkers.

FUN FACT: I love doing water sports in the summer, especially water skiing and wake surfing! When I was younger, I even did water ski pyramids!

DARIUS McCURTY

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, CONTROLLER
KODIAK BUILDING PARTNERS



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: My team and I will undoubtedly continue to help Kodiak realize its vision of growth and success over the next five years and beyond. Making myself available to everyone within the company, I hope to be a sounding board and mentor helping others to achieve their full potential.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: I believe one important way to give back is to expose others who might not have the means or opportunity to expand their circle of knowledge through experiences. I work hard to share information and find teachable moments that can better the lives of young people. Being able to help others that might go down a similar career path, sharing my experience and lessons learned is a big motivator for me. I want to give the next generation the tools and experiences I've gained to help lower the hurdles they might face.

FUN FACT: I love playing sports and have volunteered as a tackle football coach for kids for more than five years, in addition to other volunteer activities I'm quietly passionate about supporting.

BRANDON MAGOR

DIRECTOR OF IT
BIG C LUMBER



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: In five years I see myself contributing to the longer-term business strategy and helping lead the company as a member of the executive team, with a focus on developing our next generation of leaders.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Embrace the culture—when you find a company where you feel like you belong, then plant your roots and begin to invest in your future by seeking out opportunities to learn and grow. Keep in mind, like any good investment, the dividends will take time to accumulate, but the more you invest the sooner you will begin to see the benefit. And remember that there are countless ways to be a leader regardless of your position.

FUN FACT: The biggest leadership challenge I have ever faced was coaching my five-year-old daughter's soccer team.



HANNAH BALDWIN

HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR
WALKER LUMBER & SUPPLY

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: Continuing to grow and thrive with Walker Lumber. I'm anxious to see where our 2nd Chance employee program will be in the coming years.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: The advice I would give to other young people considering their career options would be to find mentors in the industry and develop a relationship with them. Become a sponge and soak up every bit of knowledge. I truly believe if you keep an open mind, the possibilities are endless.

FUN FACT: This is always a fun question for me ... I was struck by lightning at the age of 14! My family has a small farm and I was picking up hay for my father and a storm rolled in sooner than expected and BAM! I was struck and lived to tell the tale.

LBM JOURNAL

40 UNDER 40

AARON COX

MARKET MANAGER
HIGGINBOTHAM BROTHERS



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: In five years, I see myself still working for Higginbotham Brothers/US LBM and giving my all to my team and my community, no matter the capacity or location of my role.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: The possibilities are endless. You can build your career from the ground up. I started as a part-time yard guy in 2008, loading lumber in vehicles and pulling deliveries. Don't let any role in this industry scare you. I've worked in numerous roles: Yard Associate, Commercial Sales Support, Assistant Store Manager, Store Manager and now Market Manager, and to this day, I love everything about this industry. Build your career and you will reap the benefits!

FUN FACT: A few years ago, I started collecting shot glasses. When traveling to other states/towns, a shot glass—or four—always come back home with me. My goal is to have a shot glass from every state in the country.

ANDREW BOYD

OPERATIONS MANAGER
84 LUMBER



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: In five years, I see myself as a general manager of one of our stores. This has been my goal during my whole journey in this industry. I am in a great position now to learn all of the day-to-day responsibilities of running a facility/yard, and I will be ready for the opportunity once it presents itself in the future.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: There is more to the lumber industry than selling 2x4s—there are jobs that focus on market fluctuations, purchasing, selling, dispatching, estimating, and the list goes on. The industry will be ever-growing as the demand for building will never perish. It is a great industry to get into if you are looking to surround yourself with highly motivated, smart, and good-hearted people.

FUN FACT: I enjoy being outdoors in my free time—hunting, competition shooting clays, fishing, camping, and hiking.



EMILY HOLTSHOUSER

REGIONAL SALES MANAGER-RESIDENTIAL
SIMPSON STRONG-TIE

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: I see myself in an elevated sales leadership role at Simpson Strong-Tie and continuing to grow my involvement and leadership in the LBM industry. As I've seen my Dad grow in this industry, it has become clear to me that if you work hard every day and do what you say you're going to do, you will be successful. I also intend to make significant contributions to the industry through my role.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Be curious. The LBM industry is a long and historic industry, and this industry has so many people with decades of experience. My advice would be to recognize how important networking is. There are so many different avenues that you can pursue in this industry and everyone has a different journey. While networking, ask questions and be curious.

FUN FACT: I'm the middle child in my family and grew up watching my brother play ice hockey. My dad tricked me into playing, and fast-forward 18 years, I had the opportunity to play college hockey at Utica College in New York. I'm also an avid skier and try to get to the slopes as often as I can. I also have a mini Bernedoodle puppy named Tito that I adore.

ROB RILEY

GENERAL MANAGER
HANCOCK LUMBER



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: In five years, I see myself being an impactful leader in my current company. The largest impact I aim to have on the company and LBM industry as a whole is helping develop the next generation of leaders.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: The LBM industry is full of endless growth possibilities. With opportunities in sales, management, and more, this sneaky industry can quickly become a great lifelong career.

FUN FACT: I am a father to two beautiful girls. On several occasions I have traveled across the country and have been fortunate to see over half of the states.

SARAH DURKALSKI

FOREST PRODUCTS BUYER-SPRUCE
CARTER LUMBER



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: Five years from now, I will have strengthened my skills through experience in the lumber industry. I expect to be in a leadership role and continue to drive innovation and creative solutions as I bring a new mindset from a new perspective and way of thinking to the industry.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Keep your options open; the potential roles in the LBM industry vary widely. There is an opportunity for quite literally everyone, no matter what your background is. From field jobs, helping customers or working in a lumberyard to main office jobs like what I do in purchasing and everything you can imagine in between. I would suggest researching a few options that pique your interest and seek out a mentor. For women specifically, think big and don't put a limit on the options you explore. We can do everything the men can do.

FUN FACT: I've been an athlete all my life, so I enjoy staying active by doing CrossFit every morning before work. It helps with my mental well-being along with feeding my competitive nature. I also have a three-year-old lab mix I rescued two years ago, and we enjoy going on walks every day after work.



JON TIMMERMAN

PRODUCT SALES MANAGER,
LUMBER AND BUILDING MATERIALS
DO IT BEST

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: Over the next five years I want to continue to grow professionally and help our team grow as well. We have a great core of people here at Do it Best and over the next five years I would like to keep my focus on growing our team. We need to continue to get young professionals into the industry and show them how much opportunity there is within the industry.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Ask questions. There are a lot of experienced individuals in the industry who have a wealth of knowledge and you can't be afraid to ask questions.

FUN FACT: I am a big Cubs fan. I actually met my wife while watching the Cubs World Series run in 2016.

JANSON THOMAS

VP OF OPERATIONS
SWIFT SUPPLY, INC.



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: In five years, I expect to be in a role where I can leverage my experience and passion as a people-leader to help teams achieve their goals.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: My advice is the same regardless of industry: 1. Be curious. 2. Seek feedback. 3. Take initiative.

FUN FACT: I am the proud father to a rambunctious 3-year-old named Miles and husband to my wife of 10 years, Marissa. We live in beautiful Navarre, FL where we enjoy all things outdoors and beach-related.

JOSH FOWLER

SENIOR OUTSIDE SALES REP.
WILSON LUMBER



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: One goal I aim to achieve within the next five years is to be nominated for the Young Professional of the Year award. Winning is not the sole focus, but rather having the qualifications and experience to be considered for such an accolade. This aspiration reflects my commitment to personal and professional growth in the industry.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: The real world is shaped by genuine life experiences. Actively pursue apprenticeships or on-site experiences in your field of interest. Attain as much real-world exposure as possible, recognizing that many workers in the building industry are over the age of 50. The current trade industry represents the last of a diminishing workforce, leading to a significant demand for skilled workers in the coming decade. Always do more than you get paid to do, and never look down upon a situation or person. You never know when that next doorway for your career can present itself.

FUN FACT: I was in high school when I was hired on at Wilson Lumber Company. The millwork manager was looking for students wanting to work a few hours in the warehouse. We simply needed to be able to show up and be willing to work. The irony of how I was hired, and my whole career starting here, came down to literally the flip of the coin since I was one of three people applying for two jobs.



SARA TOMASSON

MARKETING MANAGER
SEIFFERT BUILDING SUPPLIES

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: In five years, I hope to still be a part of the Seiffert Building Supplies family. I feel like I have searched a long time for an organization that aligns so closely with my values. I hope that we are able to grow this business to something that we can all be even more proud of than we already are. I also have the greatest honor of being mommy to my one-year-old son. I hope that by the time he is six years old he is moving confidently throughout the world as a kind, respectful human, that others love having around.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Be a HUGE nerd! Learn as much as you can. Soak in everything. Be curious about all aspects of your business, not just what you are responsible for. Understand how all the parts of your business interact and influence each other.

FUN FACT: As a child, I was on the chase-crew for the Happy Joe's Hot Air Balloon. My dad was the pilot, and my mom and I would chase the balloon, in the truck, while they flew.



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LBM JOURNAL 40 UNDER 40

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Emily Morgan	<i>Ashby Lumber</i>
Chris Peters	<i>Morsches Builders Mart</i>
Kylie Holland	<i>Curtis Lumber</i>
Araina Hyatt	<i>Golden State Lumber</i>
Mike Linden	<i>Hamilton Building Supply</i>
Rob Riley	<i>Hancock Lumber</i>
Darius McCurdy	<i>Kodiak Building Partners</i>
Katie Katrinic	<i>Mortimer Lumber</i>
Sara Tomasson	<i>Seiffert Building Supplies</i>
Janson Thomas	<i>Swift Supply</i>
Hannah Baldwin	<i>Walker Lumber & Supply</i>
Josh Fowler	<i>Wilson Lumber</i>

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LBM JOURNAL

40 UNDER 40

DAVE LeBLANC

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT MANAGER
ARNOLD LUMBER COMPANY



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: Continuing to expand my career at Arnold Lumber, helping the company and industry grow and improve.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: I would encourage individuals to start where they feel comfortable and to keep their options open because there will always be challenges and opportunities around every corner. Be passionate about doing things in a smart way that makes other people feel like it's possible to excel. Take advantage of networking opportunities within our industry, there are many lessons to be learned from the knowledge of the experts.

FUN FACT: I am married with a 5-year-old son. It is always fun to watch him learn and grow. Fun fact—I'm an avid Jeep-lover, having owned 10 Jeeps under the age of 40!

MIKE LINDEN

VP OF SALES & PURCHASING
HAMILTON BUILDING SUPPLY



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: In five years, I see myself continuing to grow in the LBM industry, recruiting talented people to our team, helping the people around me grow, and continuing to grow as a leader. New products and services are constantly being developed and released so we need to continue to evolve, learn, and grow with the environment around us.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Over the past several years, the shortage of labor, combined with increasing college tuition prices, have made our industry a viable option for a career path. The LBM industry is structured, no pun intended, to assist all types of people looking to either build their career from a young age or for people looking to change career paths. A young person coming out of H.S. can immediately enter the workforce, demonstrate their work ethic and build a full career out of working in our industry. I always and will continue to recommend young people to join our industry, or the trades in general.

FUN FACT: I'm a huge NY Football Giants fan, NJ Devils fan and 8x AWL. I get to spend majority of my summers at the Jersey Shore.



KELLIANNE LUNDGREN

HR DIRECTOR
LBM ADVANTAGE

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: I see myself continuing to support our industry by ensuring that LBM Advantage has top-tier talent that will boost industry growth, challenge norms and make innovations that drive success and profits. I believe in the value of continuing education to stay relevant and ahead of current developments. To that end, I will continue to explore additional HR or management credentials. Finally, I plan to work alongside some of the top female talent in the industry developing mentorship programs for other women who wish to forge careers in our business.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: There is a tremendous amount of opportunity in our industry whether it be with a retailer, distributor, manufacturer or co-op and there is room for growth if you have the desire to learn. In no other industry will you find such kind, generous, and smart individuals who care about their communities, their employees, co-workers, and LBM families. It may seem cliché, but being in the lumber and building industry is truly like coming to work with friends and family.

FUN FACT: My dad has ten siblings, and my mom has eight. As a result, I have almost 50 first cousins. My motto is always, "The more, the merrier!" I was an Irish step dancer for seven years as a child. Also, I have extremely neat handwriting. People have told me that I should create my own font!

AARON McGREAN

BUSINESS ANALYST
BEISSER LUMBER COMPANY



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: In five years, I envision myself as an industry leader, navigating the evolving challenges brought on by technological advancements and changes in the workforce. I am particularly excited about leading the integration of artificial intelligence within our industry, aiming to revolutionize operational efficiency, and safety standards.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Seize every networking opportunity. The connections you forge early in your career can provide invaluable support and opportunities throughout your professional journey. Networking is not just about building a career; it's about building a community.

FUN FACT: I have rescued six animals with my wife (five cats and one dog). In January of 2024, we welcomed our first child into the world!

JOEY POLINGO

SALES ASSOCIATE
TRI-COUNTY LUMBER



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: At Tri-County Lumber, being a person that creates a spark in people's lives professionally and personally, much like a mentor of mine did for me. In addition, I look forward to having balance and focus on being a great husband and father to my four daughters. I hope to be enjoying the challenge and joys of raising teenage daughters that everyone seems to warn me about.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: There is an abundance of opportunities in the LBM industry. If you prove you are willing to work hard and have an eagerness to learn, in my experience, people in this industry are willing to pass on their knowledge. Create those relationships and the LBM Industry starts to feel like a huge family of lumberyard team members, suppliers, vendors, and contractors all working together to succeed. For me personally, the people I have met are what makes the LBM industry a great career option.

FUN FACT: I learned what great teamwork can accomplish while I was on the Saint John's University (MN) golf team that won back-to-back Division III National Championships in 2007 and 2008.



GRADY WOLFORD

CONTRACTOR SALES
MIAMI LUMBER, INC.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: In five years, I see myself continuing to help lead Miami Lumber and hopefully exceeding expectations for the owners that came before me.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Learn from the bottom up. As I've grown in my career, I wish I had the opportunity when I first started to work really closely with our outside specialists. Hindsight is always 20/20, but immersing myself in all the aspects of the yard from the very beginning would have helped me gain a better understanding faster. My No. 1 tip for young people: don't ever be afraid to ask questions.

FUN FACT: I majored in Marketing and Advertising in college and didn't grow up around the building industry.

LBM JOURNAL

40 UNDER 40

PHIL TIESZEN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
THE KEIM COMPANY



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: In five years, I see myself taking on more leadership opportunities as our company continues to grow. Ideally, the role would be focused on strategy, new initiatives, and partnerships.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Working in the LBM industry provides a strong sense of satisfaction because you are meeting the real needs that people have. You also get to build long-term relationships with some quality people. Over time, as you learn more about the industry, you can become a valuable resource to others because of your experience.

FUN FACT: I take ice baths.

MATTHEW SPINKS

ASSISTANT MANAGER
LUMBER KING BUILDING SUPPLIES



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: In five years, I hope to be actively participating in the role of a store manager at one of our five locations in the company. I hope to have gained more knowledge and many positive and influential experiences. I truly believe that an impact can be made at any level, whether it is an entry level position or a senior executive position. That being said, at the end of the next five years, I hope to be competing for a corporate position where I feel I can make the most impact.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Having grown up in an LBM environment and now worked with an LBM company for 12 years, I can absolutely say that the industry is worth all serious considerations among young people today. Most companies and establishments are willing to train and develop individuals to become successful and key players within the industry. I think young people today will be impressed by how quickly their careers will move along if they dedicate themselves and invest in their skill sets.

FUN FACT: A fun fact about me is that I am a cat dad! We have rescued four cats; three of them were rescued from the lumberyard in which I work. Their names are Leo, Toby, Graycee, and Rocky.



KYLIE HOLLAND

EXECUTIVE VP/CO-OWNER
CURTIS LUMBER

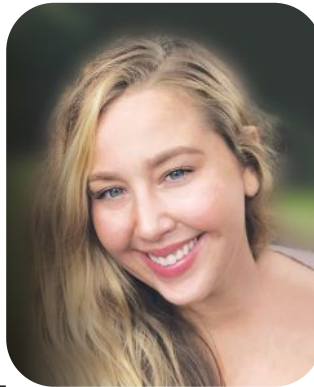
WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: I hope to still be surrounded by the amazing leadership team here at Curtis Lumber that is equally dedicated to our own successes as well as to making an impact within our industry. We push ourselves to do things differently and to learn from and share with others.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: The people you work with are the most important component to any job or career. The money, the fulfillment, the skillset, all the other aspirations will all come organically when you are surrounded by people who you enjoy being with. People who encourage you, embrace you, and challenge you are going to be what propels you towards success—and this industry is full of amazing people that do just that.

FUN FACT: I love videogaming! My husband and I have a 4-screen set up next to each other and enjoy spending our free time (when our kids are asleep!) gaming on our computers.

ARAINA HYATT

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE SUPERVISOR
GOLDEN STATE LUMBER



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: Striving with the same company, with some more dogs and maybe even a family.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Do something that you are passionate about. I have always loved numbers from a young age, and building lasting relationships.

FUN FACT: I am an OG video gamer, it gives me a way to connect with my nieces and nephews.

DAN MAGNO

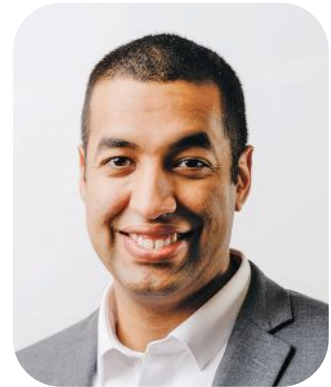
GENERAL MANAGER
BUILDERS FIRSTSOURCE



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: I envision myself as a transformative leader within the LBM industry, recognized not only for driving operational excellence and sustainable growth, but also for cultivating a culture of innovation. My goal is to be at the forefront of embracing technology that enhances efficiency and customer experience. I see myself leading initiatives that not only contribute to the bottom line but also set new standards for our future leaders.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: This sector is not just about lumber and building materials; it's a vibrant community of incredible individuals and a hub of untapped potential and innovation. Now, more than ever, it's an exhilarating time to be a part of this world. From technology and sustainability to design and customer service, there's a niche for every passion. It's an ecosystem where you can make a tangible impact on the way we live and interact with spaces. It's a chance to be at the forefront of change, to grow with a sector that values contribution and innovation, and to be part of a community that feels like family.

FUN FACT: I'm an avid gamer with a deep appreciation for the classics. My love for retro games runs so deep that I have a tattoo of an NES controller on my left hand as a tribute to the countless hours spent mastering the classics.



GARAD DERIE

MANAGER-VANCOUVER
PARR LUMBER

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: Coaching people is one of my greatest joys, and I hope to continue to do so. In five years, I would like to be a regional manager whose focus is helping more leaders develop in our industry.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: I honestly never gave it much thought growing up. I met people in the LBM field who really enjoyed their jobs, and I wanted to enjoy my work as well, so I joined them at Parr Lumber. Sometimes, we picture the LBM field and imagine just materials ... but there is so much more to it. The behind-the-scenes planning, details, and opportunities are substantial. We need people in IT, Logistics Planning, Data Analytics, Human Resources, and the list goes on. It's a great field and very fulfilling.

FUN FACT: When I started working at Parr Lumber I didn't know the difference between a 2x4 and a 2x6.

LBM
JOURNAL
40
UNDER
40

THE 40 UNDER 40 IS A CHANCE TO SHOWCASE SOME OF THE TOP YOUNG TALENT FROM ACROSS THE LBM INDUSTRY, AS CHOSEN BY THE 2023 CLASS.



MATT MICHAEL

COMPANY WIDE OPERATIONS MANAGER
YBC

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: Working at Your Building Center, this is the best company I have ever worked for and I love getting to be part of this team.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Be patient when it comes to career advancement. There is a lot to learn in the industry, but that knowledge doesn't come to you overnight.

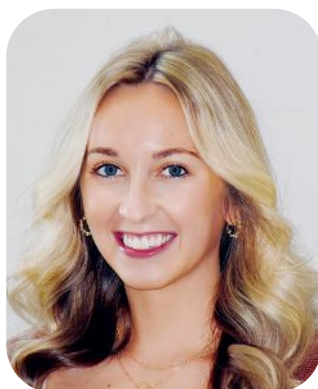
FUN FACT: My favorite thing to do outside of work is coaching my kids in their after-school sports.

Congratulations!
on being named to the prestigious **LBM Journal** 40 Under 40 list

Clara Collins S.W. Collins	Todd Henning Wieber Lumber	Jason Cohen Northeast LLC
Matt Michael YBC	Brandon Magor & Caitlin Stone Big C Lumber	Joey Polingo Tri-County Lumber
Kellianne Lundgren LBM Advantage		Alyssa Richter Bliffert Lumber

We're proud of your remarkable contributions and commitment to the LBM industry.

LBM Advantage
Better. Stronger. Together.



CAITLIN STONE

FINANCE AND COMMUNICATIONS ANALYST
BIG C LUMBER

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: It's hard to say exactly where I see myself in five years, but a goal of mine would be to hold a management position, contributing to decision-making processes that positively influence Big C Lumber and promote company growth.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Find a company where you genuinely enjoy working with your colleagues and feel encouraged to reach your full potential. Surround yourself with a positive culture and a work environment where you're motivated to contribute and make a difference. When you find yourself excited to get involved, supported by your coworkers, and inspired to help improve the workplace, you'll know you've found the right fit.

FUN FACT: I was on the co-ed cheerleading team at Indiana University Bloomington, where I had the privilege of cheering at a bowl game and several Big 10 tournaments, including one held at Madison Square Garden.



JASON COHEN

PRESIDENT & CEO
NORTHEAST LLC

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: First, I see Northeast getting closer to achieving our vision—to be the first choice in the Northeast region for premium, customized building solutions and home products. Second, I anticipate expanding our geographic footprint for all three business segments. Most importantly, I will continue to proudly be at the helm of a company that has created a place of purpose for its people.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: If you're a family member in a multi-generational building supply business, work somewhere else for some time. If you're just starting your career, don't sleep on the breadth of roles within this industry. If you're already working in the industry, practice ground-up thinking by finding solutions to everyday challenges and presenting them to your leadership team.

FUN FACT: I've lived in London, traveled solo extensively through South America, and spent a few months in Southeast Asia. My experiences throughout the world have shaped me.



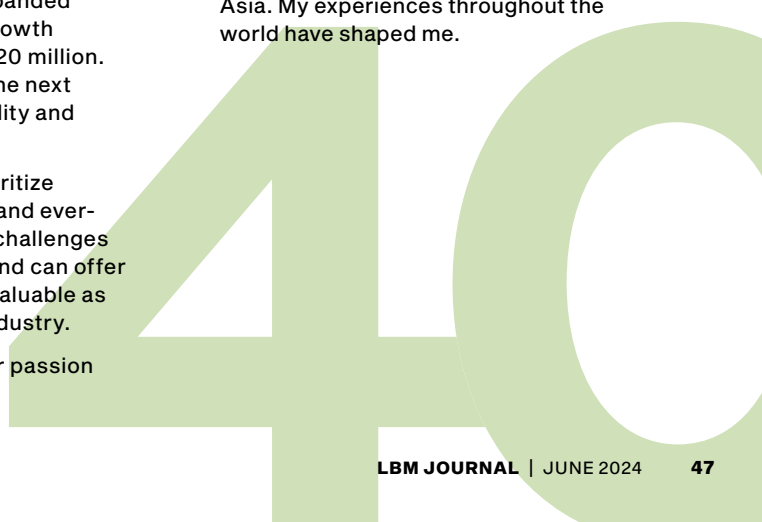
TODD HENNING

MANAGER
WIEBER LUMBER

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: I envision myself continuing to play a pivotal role within Wieber Lumber, perhaps even in an expanded capacity. My goal is to contribute significantly to the company's growth trajectory, helping to double our annual sales from \$10 million to \$20 million. Alongside driving sales, I aim to focus on cultivating and training the next generation of employees, instilling in them the same values of quality and standards that have defined this family business for generations.

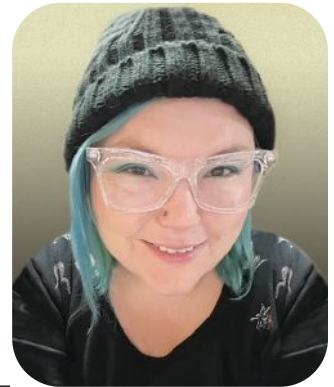
ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: My advice would be to prioritize adaptability, resilience, and mentorship. This industry is dynamic and ever-changing, so it's crucial to stay flexible and resilient in the face of challenges and changes. Seek out mentors who have experience in the field and can offer guidance, support, and valuable insights. Their wisdom can be invaluable as you navigate your career path and strive for success in the LBM industry.

FUN FACT: My wife and I have five adventurous kids who share our passion for hiking and exploring the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.



LBM
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40
UNDER
40

THIS YEAR'S CLASS WAS CHOSEN FROM A LIST OF MORE THAN 100 NOMINEES, SUBMITTED BY THEIR FELLOW EMPLOYEES AND PEERS.



KRISTEN GILCHRIST

OWNER
KINGSTREE HARDWARE

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: In five years, I would love to be able to expand our building to allow for an even larger sales floor as well as have my daughters working in the store with me.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Definitely explore it! The LBM industry will be around because things always need to be built. It's a solid industry to look into due to the rewarding nature and expansion possibilities.

FUN FACT: Growing up, as I worked in the store, I swore I would never come back to this place. I've now been back home in this rural community with a small farm at home and couldn't be happier!



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KRISTIN PETERSON

MARKETING MANAGER
NATION'S BEST HOLDINGS



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: I envision myself leading a dynamic and forward-thinking marketing team, steering the ship towards new horizons. I see myself championing marketing strategies that break the mold, where we're not just following trends but setting them.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: For those diving into a career in the LBM industry, my advice would be to embrace the wisdom that comes from those who have not only been in the game for decades, but have grown up with the industry. There's an invaluable wealth of knowledge among these seasoned professionals, and the art of asking questions is an important part to understanding it. The LBM industry, like any other, is ever-evolving. So, as you gather insights from industry veterans, challenge yourself to infuse a fresh perspective. How can the traditional methods be enhanced or reimaged? What innovative approaches can be applied to address current and future challenges?

FUN FACT: I don't have any hidden talents but I try to travel to a new country every year and cross them off my bucket list! Last year was Portugal.

JAVAN LAPP

CEO
LINDEN GROVE INDUSTRIES:
KEYLINK, SUPERIOR OUTDOOR PRODUCTS, ARTIFEX



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: My goal is to grow a sustainable, transformational, organizational culture where people thrive and mentor the next generation of leaders.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: I watched my father succeed in the LBM industry, but by the time the Great Recession happened I was convinced that I wanted to pursue a career in a different industry. I was looking for something more exciting, more high-tech, and more socially impactful. Everything I was looking for was right here in the LBM industry all along. The opportunity to do meaningful work, that literally builds communities, improves neighborhoods, and makes a difference in people's everyday life experiences is right here in LBM.

FUN FACT: Fun isn't usually the first thing people think about me so this one was a bit tougher to answer. I'm a father of three. I'm an avid reader. I grew up Amish Mennonite (no tv or radio allowed).



NICK ZIMMERMAN

REGIONAL PURCHASING LEADER
WHITE CAP

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: I like to think that I will have impacted enough people in a positive manner and that I will continue to grow into different leadership capacities within the building materials industry and for White Cap. I would like to run my own department or category in a director role.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Be a sponge. They should ask a TON of questions. This industry is filled with people who want to have a lasting and positive impact on people. They are eager to help train and educate young people with their knowledge and experience. If you are a person who is willing to work hard, listen, and ask questions, then your options within the LBM industry are truly limitless.

FUN FACT: I am heavily involved in youth sports within my community. I coach soccer, basketball, baseball and volleyball for both my son and daughter and their friends at the youth level. I love teaching kids about sports and how sports can relate to everyday life. Not too many days go by where I am not on a sports surface of some kind!

LBM JOURNAL

40 UNDER 40

KATIE KATRINIC

HR & OFFICE MANAGER
MORTIMER LUMBER



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: In five years, I hope to see myself wiser than I am now.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Don't be afraid to make mistakes, try a little bit of everything, and choose a path that makes you happy.

FUN FACT: I love to dance. I've been dancing since I was very little (ballet, tap, jazz, lyrical, hip-hop, and contemporary) and now teach dance at a local studio on a part-time basis and occasionally perform in local community theatre productions.

ALYSSA RICHTER

ASSISTANT MANAGER
BLIFFERT LUMBER



WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: I hope to be continuing to grow in this industry by advancing my knowledge of building materials and customer service.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: The building materials industry is very fast paced and exciting. I did not go to school for anything construction-related, but I very much enjoy what I do and it is something to consider if you ever have the opportunity to take a position in this field.

FUN FACT: My life goal is to visit all 30 Major League Baseball stadiums. I have already been to 18 of 30!



ADAM THOMAS

NATIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGER
NATIONAL NAIL

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS: Five years from now I see myself here at National Nail celebrating our 2028 mission that we have set out to achieve. I see myself transitioning to the executive team alongside several other great young leaders with the same aspirations and drive for success.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Choose an industry that respects and values people first. Choose a company that sees you as a future leader, has a plan for your growth, and is willing to listen and learn from its youth.

FUN FACT: I have played hockey in 10 different countries and golf in 30 states, but pickleball is my newfound love outside of work and family!

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Not surprisingly, we received far more nominees than we could recognize in the 2024 LBM 40 Under 40. It's why each year we'll welcome an entirely new group of professionals to our list of inductees. If your name (or the name of an associate you nominated) wasn't included this year, we encourage you to re-nominate again next year, when this year's winners will serve as judges. It is our sincere hope that everyone will continue their influential work that serves to influence and inspire other young LBM professionals.



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Carla Corrado, Manager of Talent Development
Sydney Stenson, CPCU, Project Associate
(Started as a PLM intern in 2019)

At Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual Insurance Company (PLM), one of our greatest strengths is the team we have built to support our customers and their businesses. We have been committed to our continuing education efforts for all our employees, as well as identifying and nurturing the rising stars in our organization.

Similarly, we also place a heavy emphasis on supporting the industries that we work in and serve. We know that our ability to continue serving our policyholders requires the ongoing success of the lumber industry. In our 129-year history, we have continuously sought to promote its advancement through sponsorships and partnerships with organizations focused on education, next generation development, support of women, legislative issues, and industry awareness.



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Lane Greene, president and CEO of Bladen Builders Supply, is the 4th generation of the family to own the business, which was founded in 1946.

The personal touch brings success for Bladen Builders Supply

BY MIKE BERGER

It's becoming increasingly rare in today's world to find a business that puts its operational emphasis on the personal touch. In Elizabethtown, NC, that's exactly what you'll find at Bladen Builders Supply. Founded in 1946 by A.H. and C.W. Greene, Bladen Builders Supply is located in the heart of Elizabethtown, a small community in Bladen County with a population of just 3,265 as of 2022. Bladen Builders Supply is the epitome of a small town, one-stop service center for most residential, home, and agriculture needs. Today, Lane Greene, who has worked there full-time since 2017, has taken on leadership and ownership.

A humble man, Greene isn't big on comparisons with other LBM dealers, but he attributes the company's growth over the last few years to personal touch. "I have noticed that where we've grown so significantly, a lot of it is because the competition didn't have anybody [that customers] could call directly, a good steady resource to be able to get help when they need it. And that's our bread and butter. Everything is really personal," he points out.

The personal touch

Greene credits a lot of that personal feeling to the staff, some of whom have been with the company for as long as 47 years. "It's really, really crazy, but we have no turnovers, zero attrition rate whatsoever, unless somebody dies. Once you have an opportunity to start working with somebody here, they can help you throughout the whole process. It doesn't matter

what it is, and it doesn't matter where you're from—we have general contractors we work with from Louisiana, Texas, and Philadelphia who are doing commercial work around here. They're all super smart, and in tune with what's going on. It's just an awesome, awesome team."

That team member longevity Greene speaks of has spared him the staffing headaches many other dealers face. "I haven't had to hire anyone new yet, but I do think about it and have heard about the process from other owners. And I see the turnover of other companies every day. It's a shame, and I don't know if it boils down to the money, but the leadership aspect of it is bigger. I see guys that have a lot of potential and seem eager to learn, but they're gunshy because some guy with a title is treating them like crap.



But 99% of the time, with these circumstances I'm seeing, these are just generally good people that aren't given the right opportunity from the higher-ups to make a mistake or two and learn along the way. They're just reprimanded, and this is not good. It's just not a good way of approaching things in a workforce that seems to be super fragile."

Greene points out, however, that the personal touch is a bit of a two-edged sword. While it has boosted growth, maintaining the same level of customers expectations and core values can be challenging. "Right now, with exponential growth in business, trying to maintain it can sometimes feel like we've created a monster. We always try to stay proficient and stay on top of everything, like we did when we weren't doing as much business as we're doing now. But that's something that I think about more than anything else—at what point is enough, enough? Really, at the end of the day, monetary gain is cool, but you only get to live once. So my main priority is to make sure that everybody's happy and not worried about all the overhead and everything else that can come with growth. Just dealing with that growth factor—it's a blessing and a curse at the same time, really."

An eye on the future

In looking back at the success Bladen Builders Supply has experienced, Greene's humbleness shines through again, especially when identifying any specific changes that have led to the company's success. "I'm really just kind of following the same plan," Greene says. "I guess I'm a little bit more aggressive, but not nearly as smart as the people before me. So maybe I've taken a couple steps that may have seemed a little too risky to my dad or my granddad, but those steps wound up paying dividends for us. It's just worked out. I mean, I'm not comparing myself to the people who came before me at all. I just think it was kind of lucky that I just happened to meet the right people."

When it comes to attracting future customers, Bladen Builders Supply is in an enviable state, but one that requires special attention. Because of the nature of his small community, Greene hasn't needed to invest in much advertising or special events. "It's funny where we are with our clientele," Greene explains. "It's super personal. I mean, it's like you're either in church with them or your kids go to school together. So in terms of marketing, outside of customer appreciation days and stuff like that, we haven't needed much beyond a couple of billboards. It's kind of like Mayberry," he jokes, referencing the classic, "The Andy Griffith Show" television program. "It's, uh ... it's interesting. It's something that I looked at when I was just getting out of college, thinking how can I get the hell out of this place? It seems like there's no privacy. But now, that's the best about it."

Community, employee support

Part of that personal touch that seems to infuse everything Bladen Builders Supply does extends beyond the company's doors and out into the community. They work with organizations that build ramps for those with limited



mobility, and they help fix homes that otherwise would be condemned so people have housing until they can transfer into other options. "And we help different church organizations that really kind of fall in the same line," Greene explains. "Essentially, with all the groups we support, this is such a poverty-stricken area, and there are so many people that need help that it's unbelievable."

While Greene acknowledges that Bladen Builders Supply may operate in different circumstances than many other LBM dealers, there's a common lesson that he believes is important for everyone to keep in mind. "It's something I always think to myself. In terms of my biggest recommendation to other LBM dealers, it's empathy and forgiveness. That's retention. You can get a lot of people who would work for free if they felt you cared about them. I mean, genuinely care about them. That's big, that's huge." ■

GET TO KNOW BLADEN BUILDERS SUPPLY

FOUNDED:	1946
OWNERSHIP:	FAMILY
LOCATIONS:	ONE
EMPLOYEES:	20
BUYER'S GROUP / CO-OP:	DO IT BEST
TOP PRODUCT CATEGORY:	TREATED LUMBER
CUSTOMER MIX:	75% PRO / 25% DIY



TECHNOLOGY

Improving the digital experience yields wins for both retailer and customer.

THE BEINECKE RARE BOOK & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY is one of the world's largest libraries devoted entirely to rare books and manuscripts. In its collection resides The Voynich Manuscript, an ancient book that many consider to be the strangest in the world. The hand-written and hand-drawn tome contains hundreds of bizarre drawings and pages full of a language that cannot be deciphered. Scientists, researchers, and engineers have attempted to make heads or tails of the manuscript, and theories of what it contains include a phonetic transcription of a Turkish dialect or an ancient Proto-Romance language. Sadly, none of the theories have been proven true, and the book remains as mysterious today as when it was rediscovered in 1912.

BY MIKE BERGER

Luckily for the LBM industry, its information and data are far easier to translate, thanks in no small part to the tools created by today's technology providers. This isn't to say that there aren't ongoing challenges. The last year certainly brought technology changes to the LBM industry. Developments such as the growth of e-commerce and the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), all after coming out of the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising interest rates, and an unstable housing market have caused LBM dealers to re-think how they do business.

No surprise, the next twelve months are poised to be even more transformative for both the customer and the dealer, especially as more pro customers expect to interact with their buying experience like they do in other retail environments.

"The last 12 months have highlighted the need for LBM dealers to create a strong digital experience for customers," says John Carrico, vice president of product management for Epicor. "We continue to see a consumer-like demand when it comes to technology, meaning dealers increasingly need to create a strong online presence, provide self-service account management options, and even give customers the ability to view orders, delivery, and sales through mobile apps."

Epicor BisTrack offers a comprehensive ERP system designed to navigate the complexities of an LBM dealer's business, streamline operations, and boost bottom lines. According to Epicor, BisTrack is a scalable solution that offers facilitation of omnichannel sales through features like mobile capabilities, a customer portal, and integrated online stores.



Grant Morrow, director of e-commerce for Orgill, agrees in regard to how the purchasing experience and expectations are evolving for the pro LBM customer. "Customer expectations have evolved, driving the need for enhanced customer experience (CX) strategies," he points out. "Dealers may be investing in technologies like customer relationship management (CRM) systems and personalized marketing tools to deliver better services and drive customer loyalty. Loyalty programs are at an all-time high right now."

Part of the evolving experience includes not just an e-commerce option but also the availability of virtual sim-

ulations, technology experts say. Not only does it lead to a more satisfying end result, as the customer will know exactly what the project will look like, but it adds up to significant increased revenue. “Another trend we are seeing emerge is virtual configuration—the technology that allows customers to interact with 3D models of products, like building materials, customizing them in real-time,” explains Epicor’s Carrico. “This tech can make the configuration process faster, easier, and more engaging for customers. In some cases, it’s leading to a 40% increase in conversion rates.”

Harnessing big data

The machine that makes an improved technology experience is big data. Just those two words alone are enough to set fear in some hearts, but rather than being a tool of Big Brother, big data is what enables an LBM dealer to provide services that are customized to the individual customer.

Generally speaking, big data refers to sets of information that are too complex to be effectively analyzed by traditional data-processing applications. Ask the experts, and they’ll say big data is defined by the three “Vs”—anything that can analyze data that contains high levels of variety that arrive into a system in high volumes in increased velocity.

In other words, big data is larger, more complex data sets, derived from new data sources. What does this mean for the LBM dealer? In short, when properly analyzed, big data gives dealers valuable insights into consumer preferences and behavior by analyzing vast datasets, allowing dealers to customize their offerings more effectively.

“I wouldn’t say it is a new trend, but data is at the forefront of many conversations,” points out Jason Niemi, vice president of product strategy for DMSi. “There is a lot of power in your data. Savvy managers use data and reporting to find patterns in customer behavior, opportunities for up sale, operational inefficiencies, and more. Now,

combine the raw power of data with the daily improvements in artificial intelligence where computers are identifying patterns and trends not typically recognized by humans. Suddenly these efficiencies and opportunities increase by an order of magnitude.”

Steve Yates, executive vice president for Buildxact, also sees the potential power of big data for LBM dealers. “One of the most immediate technologies that dealers need to invest in is big data,” he advises. “That investment has a couple of components. First, it means having data captured in the right way, and then it means giving it the right context to learn from it. Finally, it means taking both parts together to then make more informed strategic decisions. This is an incredibly difficult thing to do but has tremendous pay off.”

Yates goes on to explain how creating dashboards can help dealers be more efficient and better service the pros they serve. “Part of creating that ideal customer experience is providing e-commerce tools,” he says. “The pros that dealers serve are looking for labor savings and efficiencies, so dealers have to find ways to deliver seamless, fast, easy experiences for pros, including online ordering and jobsite delivery. After ecommerce is put in place, data will again be able to dictate future investments and resource allocation to strengthen the parts of the business as needed, to reduce inventory, and to reduce wait time.”

Specific LBM solutions

While many of the technology needs of LBM dealers are similar, there is no such thing as a “one size fits all” solution. Fortunately, technology providers have gone to great lengths to understand the unique needs of not only the LBM industry as a whole but also of the individual dealer.

“The reality is, LBM dealers have unique workflows and documentation requirements that will never be addressed by generalist solutions,” explains Ryan Ayers, co-founder of Suppli, a technology provider that ►



Frameworks ERP is the newest offering from DMSi. Frameworks is a fully web-based ERP/point-of-sale solution specifically designed for pro dealers. It offers retail POS, pro desk/contractor sales, e-commerce, inventory control, accounting, and reporting from a single, streamlined system. Because Frameworks is a web-based application, there’s no need to install special software or version upgrades.



According to ECI, Spruce eCommerce allows users to build a sleek, professional storefront website and customer portal without needing any experience in coding, web development or managing a technology project—which means users can design their site with simple, intuitive drag-and-drop functionality.



Suppli helps dealers and suppliers build differentiated, stickier relationships with modern construction material buyers. From a customer portal designed for the jobsite, to text-based payments, to automated collections tasks, Suppli is purpose-built to redefine the construction materials transaction experience.

According to BuyMetrics, its business intelligence tools create multi-layered visual representations of data, automatically comparing purchase dollars to quoted market dollars, quoted price spread, and measuring the depth and breadth of market coverage.



helps dealers and suppliers build differentiated, stickier relationships with modern construction material buyers. “In the credit world for example, generic A/R platforms like Billtrust and VersaPay don’t account for construction-specific tasks like managing lien waiver requests or designing customer

interfaces to work seamlessly from a jobsite. Industry specific solutions let dealers use software that works with their native processes, rather than having to change their workflows or customer experience to fit into generic tools.”

Nauman Hafeez, co-founder of NetNow, a technology solution used by credit and finance professionals to streamline and automate credit applications and credit accounts, sees a massive technological shift happening in the LBM industry. “Business leaders in the industry are starting to shift their attention to emerging technologies that can help them run their business more efficiently,” he comments. “We’ve seen the key areas for technology adoption have been ERP systems, E-commerce, Digital Payments, Accounts Receivables, and of course Credit Management. We expect this trend to accelerate over the next few years as more dealers, owners, and C-suite leaders realize the cost-savings and productivity benefits of adopting key technology for the finance, A/R, and operations departments.”

Echoing Hafeez’s comments, Connor McCarra, director of customer marketing for TOOLBX, sees a noticeable shift in the LBM industry towards technology that aligns with the advanced operational complexities and tech proficiency of today’s pros. “These builders, who are deeply embedded in technology for their business management, prefer suppliers whose digital tools integrate seamlessly with their workflows,” he says. And in speaking about e-commerce solutions, he notes, “We see the emergence of customer-first e-commerce as being key for digital adoption in the LBM industry. These solutions are built from the ground up with the dealer’s unique operational needs in mind, ensuring they are not only functional but also engaging for users. The aim is to provide an online experience that contractors are not just willing but eager to use, fostering greater digital engagement and streamlining business processes.”

THE BENEFITS OF AI

IF YOU’VE EVER SEEN any of the movies in the “Terminator” franchise, you’re well aware of the hypothetical threat posed by artificial intelligence, specifically from Skynet, the fictional super-intelligent AI that serves as the antagonistic force against humanity.

Needless to say, Skynet is nothing more than a work of fiction, and while the capabilities of AI can cause many people to be fearful, experts say that the benefits to the LBM industry are many. “Honestly, there is no end to how AI will impact the LBM industry—it’s as important as the launch of the internet 30 years ago,” says Buildxact’s Steve Yates. “Generative AI holds infinite possibilities that can be intimidating but shouldn’t be. More than intimidating, they represent a huge opportunity for our industry to evolve, become more efficient, more data-centric, and that can help dealers service pros at a next level.” Some of those opportunities include:

REDUCING OPERATIONAL COSTS

Generative AI could replace or create the value of a part-time position, and the more it is used, the more it learns from the user and can provide better responses in tune with the user’s business objectives.

PROVIDING BETTER CUSTOMER SERVICE

AI can help service customers by answering design questions, by giving input on building codes during the takeoff, or just answering general questions.

INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY

Many mainstream applications already have embedded AI tools that help with tasks like generating emails, creating workflows, and pulling insights from large collections of emails or documents.

STREAMLINING PROCESSES

ChatGPT and other generative AI tools can write job descriptions, write offer letters, construct interview questions, write blogs that include relevant keywords, and maintain ecommerce content.

MANAGING CREDIT

Some initial uses, experts say, include credit risk assessments and automated decision making as well as fraud detection and collection optimization.

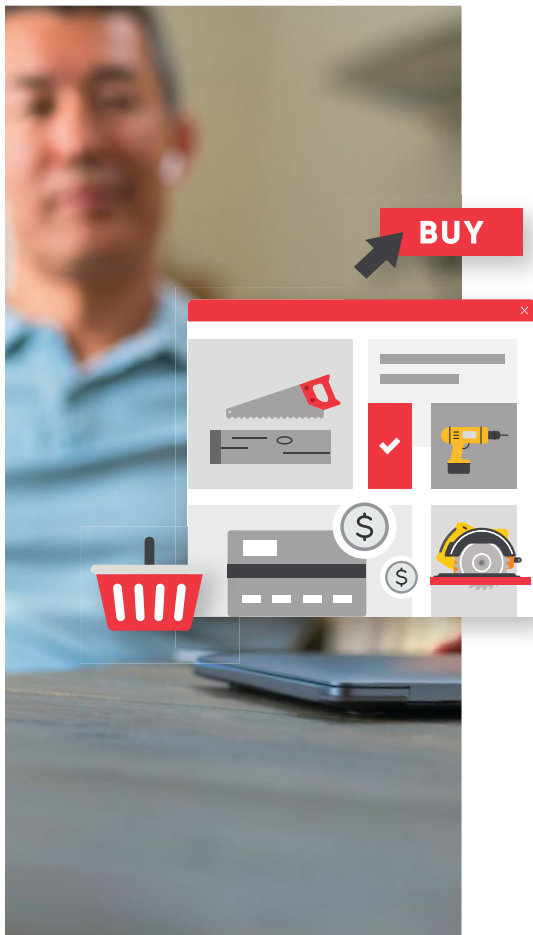
“Don’t be intimidated by technology—you don’t need to build the engine and hydraulics to know a fork-lift makes material handling dramatically more efficient,” advises Valerie Hansen, founder and chairman of BuyMetrics Inc. “Whether you’re looking to leverage mechanical power or information power, it’s a matter of optimizing operations or new value creation. The technology you employ, its connectivity to your supply chain, your ERP system, and other parts of your company creates a new ecosystem of best-of-breed solutions for your business.”

These customized solutions provide independent LBM dealers the tools to compete with the big box stores, says John Maiuri, division president of LBMH for ECI Software Solutions. “The retail industry, especially within the traditional LBM sector, is facing major changes that are reshaping how small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) work and compete in a world tied to internet connection and mobile devices,” he reports. “In the last year, e-commerce has skyrocketed as an opportunity to meet modern customer expectations, compete on a level playing field and thrive in this digital era.”

The bottom line, Maiuri says, is that cloud, AI, and e-commerce technologies remove the burden of having to manage software infrastructure,

security, integrations, and upgrades onsite, allowing business owners to remain focused on core business functions and their customer engagement. “This means unlocking the ability to service online customers with the same vertically specific functionality in the ERP solution extended outward to customers web presence. Features—such as delivery or in-store pickup, browsing products, and vendor catalogs with enriched content—create an endless aisle experience, provide B2B account management, as well as the ability to build self-service quotes, pay by invoice and more. For LBM businesses, these technologies can level the playing field in a competitive landscape where historically the chains, big boxes, and online platforms are dominant.”

AT TIMES, the technology landscape for the LBM industry can seem as indecipherable as an ancient book. Thankfully, technology providers—and the ones highlighted here are only a fraction of the options available—can help make what seems a daunting challenge more like a business win. As ECI’s Maiuri puts it, “The rise of retail technology is not a threat but an opportunity to meet modern customer expectations, compete on a level playing field and thrive in the digital era. LBM dealers are no longer tied to the store to get work done because their system is in the cloud, which is accessible securely from anywhere that has an internet connection. This not only provides freedom unknown before, but it also improves quality of life for dealers.” ■



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KEYLINK DISCOVERY SERIES RAILING

Designed for high-volume builders and any contractor who needs a quick installation, the new Keylink Discovery Series railing has a sleek, modern design and is engineered for a quick installation. Discovery Series railing comes in textured black with square balusters. For brand-new installations, aluminum posts come fitted with factory-installed brackets, while aluminum post sleeves and brackets are available to upgrade already-existing wooden posts. keylinkonline.com



NEW LP NOVACORE THICKNESSES

LP Building Solutions has announced a significant expansion in its LP NovaCore Thermal Insulated Sheathing line, with two new R3 and R7 thickness options. With these editions, builders now have three foam thickness options: 1/2" foam (R3), 1" foam (R5) and 1-1/2" foam (R7). Featuring Owens Corning FOAMULAR NGX XPS foam, these panels are reported to strengthen thermal resistance and help shield homes against fluctuating temperatures, thus providing potential energy savings for homeowners. LP NovaCore sheathing's installation mirrors traditional OSB structural sheathing and utilizes standard 2x4 spacing so that builders can seamlessly integrate these panels into their projects without the need for extensive framing adjustments. This streamlined approach enhances construction efficiency to help save time and money. lpcorp.com

DECKWISE 1X RAINSCREEN HARDWOOD SIDING FASTENER

The new DeckWise 1X (3/4") Rainscreen Hardwood Siding/Cladding Fastener is fabricated from high-quality marine grade aluminum for a burly and durable siding fastener that withstands the harshest of environments. According to DeckWise, this rainscreen siding fastener system eliminates the need for furring strips altogether and also serves as the starter clip as well.

Rainscreen fastener clips install directly over plywood or OSB exterior sheathing—with a single stainless-steel screw—providing a 3/4" standoff for ventilation for proper moisture management. And because the fastener leg replaces the furring strip, there's no need to worry about water being trapped behind traditional furring strips. deckwise.com



STACOOOL VEST

The StaCool Vest Core Body Cooling System from StaCool Industries is an adjustable over-vest which is reported to provide all day comfort, keeping workers cool and productive despite the summer heat. Velcro straps at the shoulders, chest, and stomach provide a comfortable fit for wearers of all body types and sizes. Advanced cooling technology provided by the ThermoPaks keep core body temperatures at safe levels for hours of use. A spare set of ThermoPaks are included with each StaCool Vest to extend cooling time when the initial set thaws. A thermal barrier is built in to ensure the wearer does not get too cold. Weighing just 6-1/2 lbs. when fully hydrated, the vest weight is evenly distributed across the wearers body. Stain resistant StaCool Premium Industrial Vests are available in black, safety yellow, orange, and green. stacoolvest.com



FRAME-REINFORCED STAINLESS STEEL MICRO-MESH GUTTER GUARD

Gutterglove is expanding its LeafBlaster Pro portfolio of premier gutter protection solutions with the introduction of its new Frame-Reinforced Stainless Steel Micro-Mesh Gutter Guard. According to the manufacturer, this new offering is built on a proven product design optimized to withstand the heaviest of debris. The material is designed with maximum strength and protection in mind to withstand the elements, and patented technology allows for superior performance, even in the worst weather conditions. Ideal for homes in densely wooded areas or harsh climates, this new gutter guard is made with a patented T6-treated aluminum slotted-frame design and stainless-steel micro mesh, allowing rainwater to flow freely into the gutter while blocking heavier storm debris, branches, leaves, and pests. leafblaster.com



**TIMBERTECH
COMPOSITE TERRAIN+
COLLECTION**

Through proprietary technology, TimberTech material scientists have developed more sophisticated aesthetics now featuring multi-color variegation and more realistic emboss patterns for the Composite Terrain+ Collection, while still maintaining the scratch-resistant durability of the original Terrain Collection. Featuring protective 4-sided capping, the Terrain+ Collection will, according to the manufacturer, continue to stand out as a superior choice in scalloped-back decking for contractors, dealers and consumers. The palette includes three new on-trend colors, including Weathered Oak, Natural White Oak, and Dark Oak, and TimberTech's Composite decking is sustainably manufactured with up to 85% recycled content. timbertech.com



FASTENMASTER COLLATED CORTEX PLUGS

FastenMaster's Cortex hidden fastening line is now available in 12 new colors of collated Cortex Plugs for TimberTech's composite deck boards in their Premier, Reserve and Legacy lines. According to the manufacturer, pre-aligned and collated Cortex Plugs have shown to be up to 50% faster in independent time studies compared to loose plug installation for improved jobsite productivity and time savings. The new collated Cortex Plugs for composite TimberTech boards includes all the full profile deck colors including Ashwood, Espresso, Mocha, Pecan, Tigerwood, Whitewash Cedar, Antique Leather, Dark Roast, Driftwood, Reclaimed Chestnut, Dark Teak, and Maritime Gray. In addition, all Cortex Plugs are made from the same composite material as the deck and are warranted for the life of the project. fastenmaster.com





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MONARC WALL PANELS

3A Composites USA has launched MONARC, a range of new composite wall panels for interior spaces that it says will deliver an elegant aesthetic. Three MONARC collections, consisting of 19 original designs, have been developed to enable designers and developers to elevate interior spaces with ease. According to the manufacturer, MONARC is an ideal choice for commercial interior applications, offering versatility to customize interior spaces. It is made from two sheets of .012" aluminum bonded to a fire-retardant mineral core in a continuous extrusion process, creating a rigid and durable aluminum composite panel, with the core material consisting of mineral components and is 100% recyclable.

3acompositesusa.com



KEEN UTILITY KENTON WORK SNEAKER

New from KEEN Utility this spring is a retro-inspired work sneaker reinvented with lightweight protection for all-day workflow. With a wide toe and snug heel, the Kenton shoe boasts a responsive KEEN.ReGEN cushioning that the manufacturer says provides up to 50% energy return to keep your feet and legs feeling fresh, even during long workdays. In addition to all-day energy-returning comfort, the Kenton features low-profile protection including carbon-fiber safety toes 15% lighter than steel and a slip-resistant rubber outsole to help the wearer stand strong through all the movement of the workday.

keenfootwear.com



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DEWALT POWERSHIFT

The DeWalt Powershift equipment system optimizes the workflow of concrete jobsites through electrification. The system includes a battery and high-rate charger that can charge the battery in less than one hour, plate compactor that provides 3,370ft lbs. of force through its 15.7" plate, and a rammer that features 2,660 ft. lbs. of impact force with antivibration insulators. It also includes a backpack vibrator that weighs in at only 25 lbs. with the battery installed, powerpack vibrator that can be activated remotely through DeWalt Wireless Tool Control, power screed, core drill and stand that features anti-rotation technology, and adaptor that allows the use of DeWalt Flexvolt batteries for additional runtime when using DeWalt Powershift equipment.

dewalt.com



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A young man who did a great job for your company part-time during high school is underperforming as a full-time employee. What would you do?



MANAGING AN UNDERPERFORMER

MANY PEOPLE spend their entire adult lives trying to figure out what they want to do when they grow up. You were lucky. After landing a part-time job at a local lumberyard during college, you were hooked, and you set your sights on building a career in the LBM industry. The owner, wisely, recognized your drive and determination, and offered you a full-time position. Twenty-years later, as you run the company's day-to-day operations, you appreciate being part of an industry that isn't going anywhere—and that truly makes a difference in people's lives.

The past two decades have had no shortage of challenges, including the ever-present problem of attracting, hiring, and retaining good people. Post-Covid, managing new hires seems to have changed—and you're not sure what to do about it.

Tim, an able and personable young pro, is an excellent example. He worked for your company part-time during high school and was well-liked by customers and coworkers. He reminded you of the younger version of yourself—with a solid work ethic and a real desire to learn the business. After earning a degree in construction management from a local college in 2022, you didn't hesitate to offer him a position.

The problems started soon after he came onboard full-time. The young man who had always been punctual began arriving a few minutes late. When you let him know how important it is to show up on time, he apologized and said he'd do better. Which he did consistently for a few weeks,

before the chronic lateness returned. Then he started asking to leave a little early. He always had a good reason, and you assumed he was getting his work done, so you said sure.

As it turned out, he hadn't been getting his work done. He's well-liked by his coworkers, so they were covering for him. But they were tired of it. Tim is a nice young man, and he's got a solid history with you, so you want it to work. You're not sure if it's a post-Covid thing, as some other business-owner friends have discussed, or if he's not ready for the responsibilities of full-time employment. What would you do?

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Give him time. He's new to the world of full-time work, so cut him some slack. Once he realizes that he's letting his coworkers down, he'll step up his game.

Reinforce the rules. Sit down with Tim and go over the attendance policies and what's expected of him. Make sure he understands it and is willing to commit to it.

Adjust to fit. If full-time isn't working, sit down and discuss a schedule and workload that he can manage and that also works for your company.

Probation. Let him know that he's falling short of your expectations and give him 60 days to be the team member you both know he can be, or he'll be done.

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