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JULY 2024 | \$15 U.S. | LBMJOURNAL.COM



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TO EDUCATE FUTURE
GENERATIONS OF MAKERS**

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AND
PRODUCTS
THAT
EPITOMIZE
THINKING
OUTSIDE
THE BOX**

**NEW SIDING PRODUCTS BRING
SOLUTIONS IN A CHALLENGING
MARKET**

**HARD WORK SPURS GROWTH
FOR R.P. LUMBER CO.**

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ACROSS GENERATIONS**



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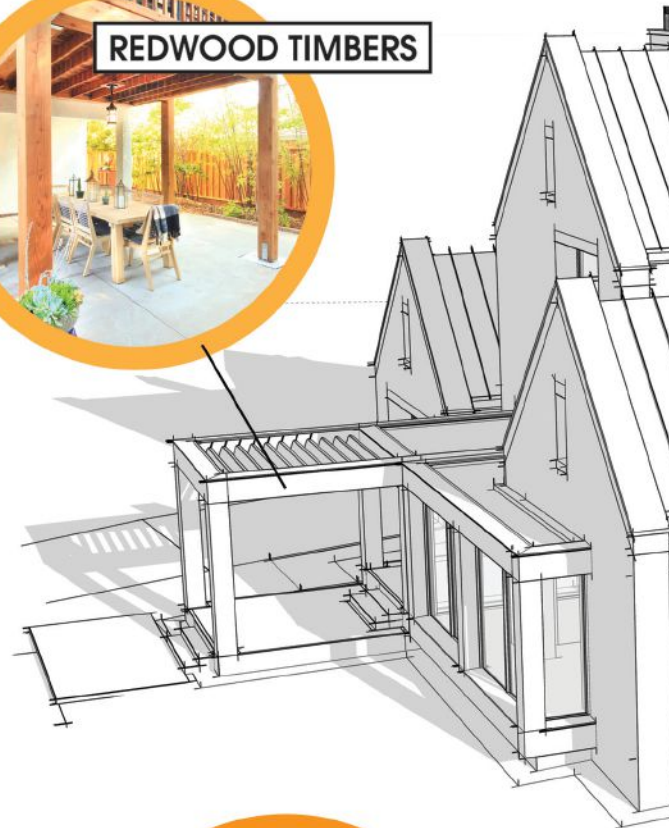
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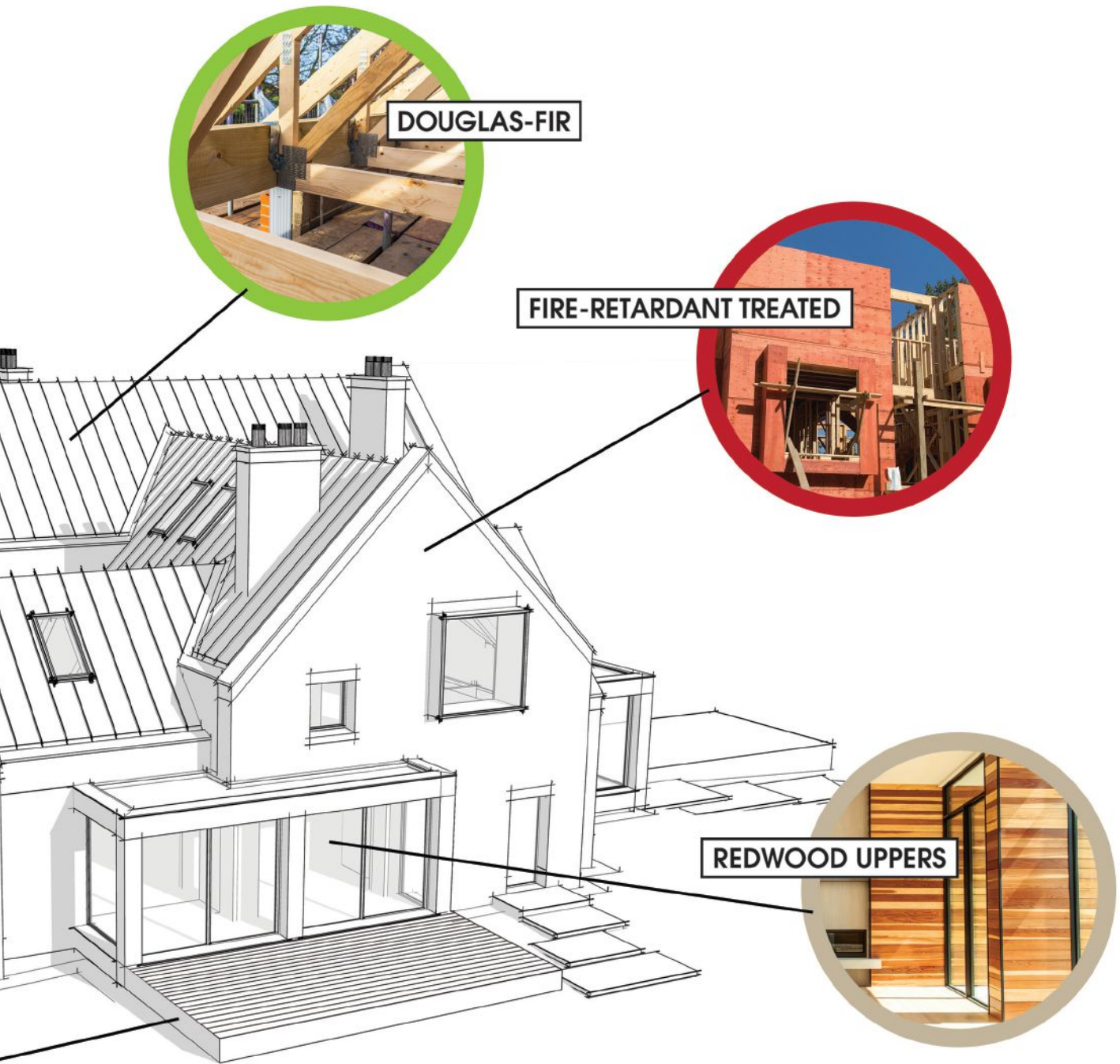


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JULY 2024



LBM JOURNAL ★ INNOVATION AWARDS 50 2024



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FROM THE PUBLISHER

FOR THOSE OF YOU who wonder how I select a topic for the monthly Publisher's Letter ... you're not alone. In fact, I often wonder what I'm going to write about. Therefore, in the spirit of full transparency, here are the three very specific (and seemingly random) inspirations that are this month's letter.

Cirque du Soleil's BAZZAR. It's not every day that Cirque du Soleil travels from town to town, setting up its tent in a parking lot to put on one of its amazing shows. So, when that happened recently near my Minnesota home, we scored four seats near the stage for an afternoon matinee. Due to its limited size, this was not the big elaborate affair like one would see in Las Vegas. But because of its condensed area, the seemingly impossible feats that the artists performed, on something as simple as a bicycle or roller skates, were that much more mesmerizing.

Takeaway: it's not the size of the show (or the company). The magic lies in how fluidly the team works together toward a common goal.



Thermostat in my office. LBM Journal's sprawling world headquarters occupies a suite on the top floor of a two-story bank building in Lakeville, MN. The three offices on the east side of the building all share one single thermostat, which just happens to be in our office. This week, when a fellow tenant commented about us having control over all three offices, I let them in on a little secret. While it's true that we have the only thermostat, the reality is that it effectively does nothing. At that time, the thermostat read 73.5 degrees, so we turned it down to 70—as low as it would go. Within an hour, the temp was up to 74.5 degrees.

Takeaways: We don't always have as much control as we think, or that that others believe we have. And illusion of control is a thing.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Schumacher'.

Starbucks. I often drive by two different Starbucks, both of which have what appears to be a perpetual line of cars in the drive-through. Interestingly, the time of day doesn't matter: the lines don't seem to end. I wondered why, so I asked Google. Multiple media reports explained Starbucks' long lines were due to understaffing because of an algorithm used to determine how many workers should be at each location and when. According to Bloomberg, Starbucks disputes that it's understaffed, but acknowledged that longer wait times contributed to its first quarterly sales decline since 2020.

Takeaways: A line of customers wanting to buy your product is good but serving them before they buy from the competition is better. And always have a human supervise your algorithms.

— Rick Schumacher
Executive Editor & Publisher

HAVE A QUESTION FOR RICK?
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McCoy's opens Lockhart, TX location



Carter opens new full-service lumberyard



Mains opens in Kenner, LA

BY THE YARD

McCoy's Building Supply opened its newest location in Lockhart, TX. The new store features 15,000-sq.-ft. of inside retail space and a paved, drive-thru lumberyard and carries high-quality building materials for a wide range of projects as well as home maintenance supplies, available in-store and online with ship-to-store and delivery options.

LeNoble Lumber Co., Inc. opened a new distribution center in Edison, NJ. Strategically located to enhance service capabilities and better serve customers, the new distribution center boasts brand new rail access and enhanced logistics capabilities.

Harrison Lumber celebrated its grand reopening in Harrison, MI. Working closely with their co-op team at Do it Best, the Harrison Lumber Board of Directors planned the new store redesign, ensuring each detail was carefully thought out to provide the best possible shopping experience.

Hamilton Building Supply, an independent supplier of lumber, building materials, and expert residential construction advice to custom home builders, remodelers, and renovators, is celebrating 100 years of business in New Jersey.



Carter Lumber opened its newest full-service lumberyard in the Louisville, KY market. This expansion marks a significant enhancement of the company's capabilities and service offerings to professional builders in the region.

Mains Hardware Supply is now open at its new location in Kenner, LA. Mains Hardware Supply is a locally-owned family business supplying contractors and DIYers with building materials, home improvement supplies, heating and air conditioning products, and is backed by the strength of its status as a member-owner of Do it Best.

Lumbermen's Inc. opened a new distribution center located in Cottage Grove, MN, offering building materials service to customers in the Minneapolis market. Currently operating in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky, Lumbermen's will be providing stock from over 20 vendor partners, including TimberTech by AZEK, Certainteed, LP Smartside, Quality Edge, and Evolve Stone.

INDUSTRY UPDATES

Cameron Ashley Building Products opened its newest distribution center in Milwaukee, WI. This is the third Cameron Ashley distribution center in Wisconsin. The Milwaukee distribution center will stock fiberglass batts, blow and board, cellulose, spray foam, insulation accessories, and mineral wool.

Keylink Fencing & Railing has announced a strategic realignment, marked by changes to the company's branding and leadership. Consequently, Keylink has embraced a streamlined, hyphen-free iteration of its brand identity.



FED HOLDS INTEREST RATES, EXPECTS JUST ONE CUT IN 2024

The Federal Reserve's monetary policy committee held constant the federal funds rate at a top target of 5.5% at the conclusion of its June meeting. In a statement, the Federal Open Market Committee noted that recent indicators suggest that economic activity has continued to expand at a solid pace. Job gains have remained strong, and the unemployment rate has remained low. Inflation has eased over the past year but remains elevated. Projections include a consensus expectation of just one rate cut in 2024, consistent with NAHB's current economic forecast.

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And send us your feedback to Rick@LBMJournal.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

LET'S GET GROWING

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

Do it Best is partnering with Ryan and his team to re-envision the Cascade store brand.

”

First CHOICE.
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Do it Best

Our merchandising and LBM expertise, distribution, retail insights, store design, and growth-driven mindset have propelled member-owner Ryan Ringer's family business into an eight-location powerhouse.

Join a company that's committed to taking your business as far as you can dream it.

▶▶ Read about Ryan's success story at doitbestonline.com/GoldBeach.

PEOPLE IN LBM

Anaheim, CA-based **Ganahl Lumber** announced that **Brad Satterfield** has been named as the company's newest CEO. Satterfield previously served as chief operating officer and has been with Ganahl for more than 40 years.



US LBM has named **Russell Tiejema** executive vice president and chief financial officer of the company. Tiejema succeeds Patrick McGuiness. Most recently, Tiejema was executive vice president and CFO with Masonite International Corporation.



Ward Lumber Company brought on **Josh Travis** earlier this year as the new general manager for their flagship location in Jay, NY. He is already implementing new initiatives and product lines, starting off with a greater focus on the building sales department.



Ambassador Supply has named **Michelle Brundige** as the company's regional human resources manager. Brundige's career includes over 20 years in the human resources manufacturing industry, with a proven record in leading teams to maximize productivity.



Do it Best appointed **Jared Hufford** to director of strategic initiatives effective immediately. Hufford brings a wealth of experience to his new role, with a demonstrated history of success in the wholesale industry. His expertise spans various areas, including sales, retail, industrial distribution, sales operations, and sales management.



Envision Outdoor Living Products has promoted employees **Joe Stubler** and **Mikhail Mikhailov** to the positions of division manager and senior regional manager, respectively.

PWT has announced the arrival of four new sales leaders who will support sales growth. **Bishop Biddix**, **Keith Graves**, **Sean Nuedling**, and **Mark Thompson** will serve as Business Development Managers across the Mid-Atlantic, Southwest, Southeast, and Northwest, respectively. They will support the company's growth goals from coast to coast.

Jacobs Private Equity II, LLC, led by **Brad Jacobs**, announced the appointment of **Ihsan Essaid** as incoming chief financial officer of **QXO, Inc.**, a publicly traded company Jacobs intends to lead in the \$800 billion building products distribution industry.

Simpson Manufacturing Co., Inc. announced **Udit Mehta** has joined the company as chief technology officer.

DISTRIBUTION NEWS

Snavelly Forest Products has teamed with **Trex Company** to expand service into Oklahoma City and surrounding service areas. The longtime Trex distributor will supply Trex products to this flourishing market through wholly-owned subsidiary Mid-States Wholesale Lumber.

Capital Forest Products has announced an exclusive strategic partnership with Copper Cat, an industry leader in innovative copper-based roofing solutions. This exclusive distribution agreement continues Capital's mission to be a solution provider and supply the finest building products to their customers.

Superior Outdoor Products and **Keylink** are celebrating 30 years of partnership with **Tri-State Forest Products, Inc.**

TOUGH CALL SOLUTIONS

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

The arrogant young sales star

A young sales rep does a great job with customers, but his invincible attitude is rubbing colleagues the wrong way, with some threatening to quit. Here's how readers responded to this Tough Call.

MAKE IT WORK

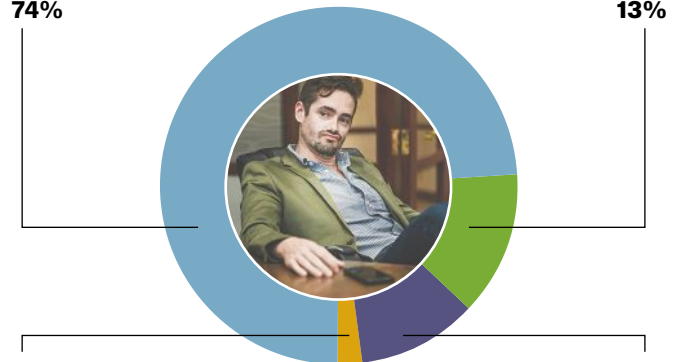
Sit down individually with your new sales star and the unhappy existing members of your team, learn what it would take to get them all to work together, then make that happen.

LET HIM GO

It doesn't matter how good the new person is. If top performers on your team are willing to leave because of him, you have no choice but to let him go.

74%

13%



2%

LET THEM LEAVE

If people on your team are making you choose between them and the new guy, wish them well.

COUNSELING

Bring in an employment counselor to work with your team, individually and as a group, to try to get them all on the same page.

11%

WANT TO SEE MORE TOUGH CALLS? CHECK OUT PAGE 72 OF THIS MONTH'S ISSUE, OR FIND MORE AT LBMJOURNAL.COM/CATEGORY/TOUGH-CALL.



Windows & Doors

AWAKEN



Awaken to renewed design with the new **StyleView® Classic** series from **YKK AP**. Created with the modern builder and homeowner in mind, StyleView's precision-welded corners and modern frame design bring you the perfect blend of style, durability and performance.

NEW **StyleView**
CLASSIC
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TRUCKEE-TAHOE ACQUIRES ASSETS OF NVO



COOPER LUMBER ACQUIRES THOMASVILLE LUMBER

MERGERS + ACQUISITIONS

Truckee-Tahoe Lumber Co. & Design Center announced the acquisition of the assets of **NVO Construction Components**, a leading manufacturer of floor and roof trusses, as well as prefabricated wall panels, panelized floor and roof cassettes and prefabricated stairs. The transaction marks the creation of the Truckee-Tahoe Lumber Co. Truss and Component division.

Cooper Lumber announced the acquisition of **Thomasville Lumber Company, Inc.** The sawmill facility that became Thomasville Lumber in 2001 was developed in 1966 as a small lumber mill under R.R. Bedwell. The facility continued to expand operations until 1975 when Bankhead Hardwoods, Inc. acquired the facility. In 1979, Coastal Lumber Company acquired the location and converted it to a pine mill in 1988.

The Lester Group has announced an expansion of its businesses with the addition of **Custom Builder Supply Company** in Williamsburg, VA, and James City County. With the acquisition, Custom Builder Supply will continue to operate under its established name.

US LBM has acquired **RAKS Building Supply**, a top provider of building products and manufactured components to professional builders and contractors throughout central New Mexico. Founded in 1986, RAKS offers an extensive portfolio of home building supplies, such as lumber, floor and roof trusses, windows, doors, and hardware.

HPM Building Supply has acquired Maui's leading building component manufacturer, **Truss Systems Hawaii**, creating a new division known as Truss Systems by HPM. All 33 Truss Systems Hawaii team members have become HPM owner employees, and operations are continuing to produce locally made wood roof trusses, metal trusses, floor trusses, wall panels and ShedPro Hawaii custom sheds.

Schoeneman's Building Materials Center, has been acquired by **Builders FirstSource**. Schoeneman's has been operating in South Dakota and Iowa since 1888.

R.P. Lumber Co., Inc. is acquiring **Thorne Lumber Company**, an independently owned retailer of hardware and building materials with three locations in northwestern Missouri. This acquisition will bring R.P. Lumber's total location count to 87, including 20 in Missouri.

Lugbill Supply Center has acquired **Affiliated Lumber** in Swanton as part of an aggressive growth strategy, expanding its operation to two locations in northwestern Ohio.

Kodiak Building Partners has acquired **Simonson Lumber** in Minnesota, marking a strategic partnership that enhances its ability to serve the state's burgeoning construction market.

MASTERGRAIN, a manufacturer of premium fiberglass exterior doors and components in North America, announced the acquisition of **Fibercraft Door Company**, based in Hanover, Ontario.

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 5-6

WESTERN BUILDING MATERIAL
ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Hillsboro, OR | wbma.org

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

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

Pipeline LBM builds the estimates, so our sales team can build the business.

Kory Hobbs

Sales Manager, Griffin Lumber & Hardware Perry, Georgia

Griffin Lumber faced a challenge driven by its own success. The building materials supplier had expanded rapidly, but was still writing takeoffs and estimates by hand. Across seven lumberyards and two truss plants, it was difficult to find a process that worked well for everyone. That's why Griffin turned to Pipeline LBM™. This powerful estimating software creates a bill of materials for nearly real-time, automated takeoffs. In short order, Griffin centralized takeoffs to a single estimator, eliminated extra paperwork, and streamlined data processing and plan set delivery. Now they generate accurate estimates up to 14 times faster. Best of all, Griffin salespeople have time to do what they do best — serve customers and continue growing the business.

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Learn more about Pipeline LBM at
go.strongtie.com/lbm or call (800) 999-5099.



CO-OP / BUYER'S GROUPS

LMC Components announced a partnership with **Hundegger U.S.A.**, the United States branch of Hans Hundegger AG headquartered in Charleston, UT providing United States manufacturers with the high-quality and innovative equipment known globally. All equipment manufactured by Hundegger U.S.A is available through a discounted program with LMC Components Team.

At the culmination of its fourth annual Fore the Cause charity golf tournament on June 10, the **Do it Best Foundation** announced a new fundraising milestone. Through this one-day event held across four of the Midwest's top golf courses, the foundation raised over \$1,031,000 to further its mission of supporting health

and wellness and youth enrichment nonprofit initiatives. This is the largest amount raised to date at the Fore the Cause event, beating last year's total by 54%. The Do it Best Foundation is the philanthropic organization formed in 2019 by Do it Best, the international home improvement member-owned

co-op headquartered in Fort Wayne, IN. Nearly 500 attendees participated in the tournament and reception activities, with hundreds traveling to Fort Wayne for the event. In just four years, the Do it Best Foundation has awarded over \$1 million in grants to nonprofit organizations nationwide.



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Storing millwork can be tough. Size variation, custom orders, temperature sensitivity—all can add to the challenges suppliers face as they seek efficient onsite storage solutions.

That's why Greg Zuern decided to try something completely different. Together with CT Darnell and Sunbelt Rack, Zuern Building Products consolidated all their millwork into one reimagined building for maximum efficiency. The results speak for themselves. Thanks to this change, they saw:

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- \$8MM more in deliveries with fewer trucks and drivers
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» Scan for the full story and video

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LBM Journal

MORE TO COME!

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EPICOR

Improving Rebate Management for Roofing and Siding Companies with Epicor ERP Solutions



EPICOR FOR BUILDING SUPPLY

Optimize your rebate management process

Rebate management may seem like a mundane financial process, but for roofing and siding businesses, it's a crucial one. How contractors navigate the administration of complex contractual agreements with customers and vendors can significantly sway profitability and cash flow.

Yet rebate mismanagement is all too common, needlessly leaving money on the table or even jeopardizing future business. Intricate calculations and complex contract terms frequently lead to manual inefficiencies, errors, and blind spots. These challenges are compounded by the dynamic nature of prices and other market forces.

Fortunately, there's a solution—*enterprise resource planning (ERP) software*. Modern ERP solutions can streamline your rebate management, optimize your financial processes, and ultimately unlock greater profitability and efficiency in your roofing and siding business.

The Problem with Traditional Rebate Management:

Traditional rebate management *can be complicated*. Gathering, reviewing, cross-referencing, and organizing relevant data from various sources like invoices, purchase orders, and sales reports is time-consuming. Complex agreements with varying rates, tiers, and conditions make it easy for anyone using manual calculations to unknowingly make errors. And monitoring compliance with these agreements requires constant attention.

Enhancing and Automating Rebate Management with ERP Software

ERP software helps provide the holistic visibility and seamless automation needed to overcome persistent rebate management challenges. It integrates and documents data across different systems using a centralized cloud-based platform.

Epicor ERP solutions help transform rebate management from a complex, error-prone process into a streamlined, efficient, and accurate operation:

Automating Cumbersome Processes

Epicor ERP solutions automate tedious and error-prone rebate management processes like data entry, manual calculations, and payment processing. Automation standardizes rebate calculations according to agreed terms, accelerating processing and payouts to strengthen customer relationships.

Gaining Real-Time Insights

Epicor ERP gives your business up-to-the-minute visibility into rebate management operations, enabling you to track rebate performance as transactions occur. This offers on-demand insights into profitability and cash flow, while *advanced analytics tools* help forecast future trends to optimize rebate programs. At Epicor, our approach is proactive. We equip roofing and siding companies with tools to manage rebates and address issues before they escalate.

Bolstering Compliance and Audits

ERP systems facilitate better adherence to contracts and regulations by supplying a clear audit trail for all transactions. This transparency simplifies compliance verification while recording retrieval during audits, reducing non-compliance risk, and strengthening overall governance.

Some 29% of businesses choose to adopt ERP solutions to support their compliance processes, including tracking contractual and regulatory rebate responsibilities. At Epicor, we prioritize supporting accuracy and compliance in rebate management, so roofing and siding companies can do business with confidence and precision.

Improving Rebate Management with Epicor BisTrack

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BY RICK DAVIS

LAST MONTH, I ASSERTED that selling is one-on-one coverage. It's the role a salesperson plays to grow market share. This means outselling the lone person or two calling on the same prospect as you. That being said, it's not enough in any competitive endeavor to have only one strategy; you need more. This month, the subject is zone coverage.

What is zone coverage? It's the team concept managing accounts within your branch organization. It's a pivotal concept in selling and a strategic necessity for success. I know this from a history of hiring practices in our industry that have failed, specifically the idea that a company hires a veteran salesperson with the expectation that the salesperson will bring their book of business along to their new employer.

It almost never happens ... unless the previous employer is in distress. However, more often than not the salesperson claiming to "own" relationships discovers that the ownership is something the customer actually perceives is shared with all members of the salesperson's team. In other words, zone coverage.

The most successful salespeople get this. They recognize that facilitated dialogue between associates is the key to customer loyalty and profitability. This occurs as an accident for many salespeople who are incredibly successful

because they do it by instinct. When asked, they agree that certain practices lend themselves well to creating successful team (i.e. zone) coverage with customers.

Zone coverage means that outside salespeople act as leaders and work within the limitations of production and service capacity. They understand that the definition of economics is essentially the allocation of scarce resources.

While some salespeople constantly tax the capabilities of the organization by pressuring for hot deliveries, emergency service, and alarmist warnings, top performers recognize that the assets of an organization are limited. Rather than perpetually dumping on inside salespeople and operational supervisors, they manage expectations proactively and define the best methods to help customers navigate the ordering and delivery process.

A good salesperson is a natural leader, not based on a title but instead by the practices of helping and influencing others in their careers. If you want to emerge as a top sales leader in your organization, here are three tips I recommend highly:

Host regular "huddles." This has become a favorite term of mine in business. Short huddles are a great way to keep on track with important tasks of the day, address communication errors, and build a cohesive plan of sales and service attack. Instead of long, drawn-out meetings after which much momentum is lost, a regular cadence of brief huddles proves highly effective. I host huddles regularly as a quick method to share insights between associates and establish a cadence of consistency.

Give credit where credit is due. Praise is one of the most underutilized assets in business. On more than a few occasions, managers have told me their job is not to praise people "just for doing their job." In fact, that is the job of leaders. Praise can create enthusiasm, reinforce behaviors, translate to happiness with customers, reduce the need for monetary incentives, elevate service levels and more ... and it's free. When you consider the economic value of praise versus the cost (i.e. zero), the value of praise is infinite!

Generously coach teammates to their career potential. True leadership means having the ability to allow others to grow to their highest capabilities. I've always appreciated leaders who try to surround themselves with people they believe are smarter than they are. If you want others to help you succeed, help them succeed.

Sales and customer acquisition is one-on-one coverage. Retaining loyal and profitable customers is zone coverage. Leadership starts with you.

ZONE COVERAGE



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

THIS TOPIC IS A highly controversial subject, and not an easy one to discuss. However, I do believe that both sales and credit personnel are teammates and cannot afford to operate independently. The ability of a company to collect its outstanding credit balances determines the long-term viability of the business.

I am a member of a group who has spent their entire careers in the building supply industry. I have also been an overseer of both sales and credit, so I believe I am in a position to see this controversial issue from both points of view.

THE LBM SALESPERSON'S ROLE IN COLLECTIONS

It's almost asking too much for a company to require its salespeople to build a sufficiently strong relationship with a customer so that one day they will trust them with their business and then have the salesperson turn around the next day and become a collection agent.

Scrutinizing a customer's credit history, approving credit, and establishing credit limits is the "accountability" of the credit manager. Achieving sales goals is the "accountability"

of the sales force. But this doesn't mean the two should be on different teams.

I believe credit managers are wise to seek the advice of salespeople. Salespeople can be a credit managers' eyes and ears. Salespeople are in a position to see how builders run their jobs, have conversations with subs on a routine basis, and get a gut feeling as to a builder's level of profitability. And when the credit manager has exhausted all efforts to collect from a past due account, I believe it is wise to ask for the salespeople's help and advice, even to the point of getting them personally involved.

As a salesperson, I remember not wanting any part of collecting; my job was to sell. But when the credit manager suspended the credit privileges of one of my customers, I was in essence out of business with that customer. So unless I was prepared to lose the income I was earning on that account, I knew I had to get involved.

Over the years, I realized that in many respects a salesperson was actually in a better position to collect than the credit manager was. Salespeople can see the job in progress and can talk with the subs. If material is flowing onto a job and the subs are continuing to work, salespeople know that the builder is paying someone. The salesperson is highly motivated to persuade the builder to get their account current.

Should salespeople lose commissions on uncollected accounts? One of the reasons this issue is so controversial is because most companies would never even think of docking the pay of a salaried salesperson because a customer didn't pay their bill.

I'm guilty of feeling strongly both ways on this issue, but I do lean in the direction of asking salespeople to repay out of future commissions the money they earned as a direct result of selling a customer who can't or won't pay the company the money they owe.

My logic is that a manager who is paid a bonus tied to the bottom line will certainly suffer if a customer either can't or won't pay their bill. I don't believe salespeople should be any different; that is, if the salespeople are commissioned. It sends a clear message that salespeople—as members of the business team—must participate in credit losses.

For the same reason, I encourage our clients to tie a portion of the credit manager's bonus to the company's sales goal; again, to send a clear message that sales are critical to the company's success; that is, that the company must have a top line in order to have a bottom line.

Credit and sales personnel are interdependent. Both professionals are necessary to the effectiveness of any building supply organization.



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

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BY THEA DUDLEY

OVERCOMING FEAR AND EGO

Hi Thea,
I have read your column for years and agree with you on many topics, but I have to disagree with you on remote workers. I am old school. I want to see my employees in the office, working. I want to be able to see and monitor the work. How do I know they are not slacking off while they are “working from home?” I had to share my viewpoint, there are many of us old school credit managers that feel this way. I feel we are underrepresented and need to be heard.

— Respectfully agree to disagree

Dear Respectful Disagreement,
I live on a golf course. I live on a golf course and I don't golf. I don't want to golf and I don't want to learn. About once a week, usually when I am strolling into the club for lunch, some wisenheimer tells me I should learn to golf. That I would love it, and everyone stinks when they start.

Like you, I like “my way.” I bought the house because I like having a well-manicured yard with a great view that I was not responsible for. Not because I golf, or ever wanted to learn. I am pleased with my POV and the more neighbors pushed me to golf, the more I dug my heels in.

Eventually, a neighbor asked me why I was so set against it. Why was I not even willing to entertain the idea? What's really the issue? Much as it pained me, and you may not believe it, I had no answer. I quietly skulked away. Over the next few days, I replayed the convo over and over.

I had to finally admit the reality is/was: I was afraid. I had only golfed a few times in my life and to say I did not excel at it is kind. Learning something new, being open, or accepting a challenge makes you vulnerable. You have to want to be open, listen to people, accept that you may not be awesome right out of the gate. To learn, change your view or thinking.

Same with remote work. It's fear, baby. Fear of loss of control, fear of trusting your team, fear of acknowledging they don't need your hovering over them, fear that you will not be needed. Could the heart of it be your leadership style? I am throwing down the challenge to ask yourself these questions and honestly answer them:

1. Can you measure the work being done?
2. What accountability have you put in place?
3. Do you have the right people in place?
4. What kind of leader are you?

The last question will be the hardest and most introspective. You should already measure the AR results and be holding people accountable. That leads us to, is it you or your people? Do you “need” to see them because you don't trust them? Are you a micro manager? Do you have the right people in place? If not, it doesn't matter if you stare at them all day; if the fit isn't right, it's not right. Do you think your role as a leader is a micro-managing eyeballer of people?



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

FIVE COMMON ROADBLOCKS TO A DEAL CLOSING

THERE ARE FIVE (potential) roadblocks that we commonly see as an acquisition moves to a closing, when documents are signed, and ownership changes hands. Let's review them, so you can work ahead of time to reduce the friction between you, as the seller, and the acquirer on these key deal features.

1. Definitive Purchase Agreement: The definitive purchase agreement ("DPA" or contract of sale) is a long, heavily legalistic document that is signed by the seller and acquirer at closing, transferring the company ownership. Accompanying the DPA are the disclosure schedules, representations, and warranties. Like the DPA, these are heavily legalistic documents that provide supplemental information about the seller's company, all focused on limiting or defining seller and acquirer liabilities. All three documents are negotiated paragraph by paragraph at substantial legal expense to both the seller and acquirer. Typically, the acquirer presents the first draft of the DPA. As soon as you sign an LOI (letter of intent), your investment banker should be requesting the DPA from the acquirer, so that your legal team—often working at \$1,000/hour—can start the change request process (a.k.a. "redlines"). The exchange of redline lines can take weeks, so get started early in the process. Pro tip: Be seated in a sturdy chair when opening your lawyer's invoices. This puts you closer to the ground, thereby lowering your risk of injury when you pass out and hit the floor.



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

2. Net Working Capital: The NWC (e.g. how much cash is left in the business) is calculated right up until the day of the closing. It is dynamically updated with items such as the latest inventory value and the cash on the balance sheet, among other factors. Even though the NWC model is empirical and driven by a large excel file, there are points to negotiate, e.g. what's included among pre-pays or accruals. Negotiate early on what's in/out of the NWC figure. This can get very fairly detailed; we've seen last-minute delays at the closing because of disagreements over a few thousand dollars, even when the deal was valued in the tens of millions.

3. Non-compete: Acquirers rightfully expect that owners of the seller company (whether they stay on as employees or not) will sign non-competes, typically five years. Many acquirers ask for employees to sign them too. But non-competes for employees are almost always unenforceable, mainly because many state laws require an employee who did not receive "consideration" (money) as part of the acquisition to be exempt from non-competes. Clear this issue up early.

4. Negotiating as a group: Lawyers are essential to a successful closing, but we have found that lawyer-to-lawyer conversations rarely resolve contentious issues. The seller's lawyer will redline the offensive language in the DPA. Then the acquirer's lawyer signals non-acceptance of the proposed change. This commonly goes back and forth at great expense to the seller and acquirer. The cure? We have seen the process expedited when the business leaders of the seller and the acquirer all get on the phone with the two law firms. There the business leaders can mutually insist that the hot-spot items be solved in real time, right there on the call.

5. A spirit of compromise: Discussions over contentious issues can get quite testy now and then. But compromise ("splitting the difference") is the common result of even the most-heated conversations. At the risk of sounding pedantic, we urge our clients (who are almost always sellers) to assume the best intentions when an acquirer requests a deal point. And vice versa. After all, the seller has to answer to their board and their shareholders, very much as an acquirer has to answer to their investment committee, covenants in their bylaws, or risk thresholds that are set as corporate policy. A spirit of compromise is key to any successful closing. It's a matter of finding common ground that accommodates the genuine concerns of both parties.



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BY RUSS KATHREIN

SO YOU JUST GOT promoted to a leadership position or you are newly hired into one. What are the things you can do to be a successful leader and get your new team to want to follow you? Well, there are a few things you should do, and quite a few that you shouldn't. Here are some of the things I can share:

Do the things right off the bat that are easy and don't require any advanced knowledge or training. Be the first one in and the last one to leave for the first few months. Make yourself available to your new team. Study up on your job alone in your office after everyone leaves or over the weekend. When in doubt, put a smile on your face and laugh in front of your team. Say, "Please" and "Thank you" when engaging with your team. Ask your people how you can help them be successful or make their job easier.

10 Things That Require Zero Talent (Author Unknown)

1. Being on time (or even a little early)
2. Work ethic
3. Effort
4. Body language
5. Energy
6. Attitude
7. Passion
8. Being coachable
9. Going the extra mile
10. Being prepared

START OUT ON THE RIGHT FOOT



Russ Kathrein is the Vice President of Lumber & Building Materials at Do it Best based in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Don't try to impress anybody to show you deserve the position. Just because you have a title and have been on the job for 2-1/2 weeks, doesn't mean you have everything figured out. I was newly promoted to run a region, and one of the first things I did was send an email to one of my new managers detailing all of the things I wanted to look into when I arrived. I wanted to show my team, and my boss (the president of our company who I copied on the email) that I meant business and was going to hit the ground running. After arriving, my boss called me into his office and asked me how I would feel getting an email like this from my new boss before I had even met him and he had even gotten to know me. I visibly shrunk in the chair as I realized I was not trying to win over my team, I was trying to impress my boss. I never made that mistake again.

Do show you are no better than anyone else on your team. Roll up your sleeves and help with the hardest tasks. Take on the same burden you are asking your people to take on. As a newly hired vice president, we were figuring out who would be the leader and come into work the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and New Year's Eve. I told them which days I would take, and my whole team looked at me and informed me that they had never had a vice president offer to take on one of the holiday work days. I told them that when I need them to cover for me I would ask, but if I could cover for them, I would do it every time.

Don't think getting your people to like you will make you successful. Leadership is not a popularity contest. Just because your team thinks you are a nice person, does not mean they will follow your lead. We all want to be liked, but that should be because of our character and our natural actions, not because of something we purposely did to gain attention and affection.

Do try to earn the respect of your people. Respect is not given as part of a title. It is earned over time. The best way to get respect is to give respect. Respect the people that were there before you. If you find something that seems odd and want to question it, do what one of my truss managers shared with me. He would call the process in question "silly" instead of dumb or stupid. Once you earn your team's respect, that's when you can start being a high-performing leader and team member.

Remember, you only have one opportunity to make a first impression. Use that time wisely and remember the KISS method (Keep It Simple, Silly).

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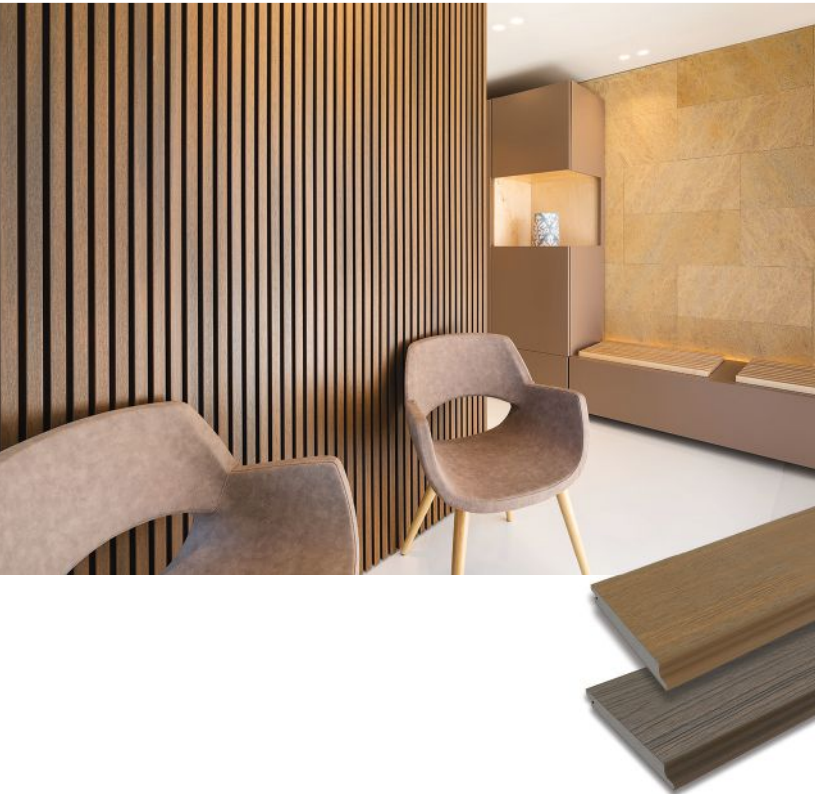
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A 46-YEAR INDUSTRY VETERAN SHARES HER WISDOM ON THE EVER CHANGING TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

VALERIE HANSEN

FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN
BUYMETRICS INC.

With continuing economic uncertainties, what do you see as the greatest potential opportunity for LBM dealers?

Every market is a local market, whether you're an independent or part of a larger organization. Every business grows market share on its areas of strength, cost structure, and culture. Successful dealers evolve over time—the industry stands still for no one. LBM dealers, particularly independents, are fiercely customer driven. It's your superpower. Be nimble.

The flipside of that question: what's the biggest challenge?

Taking cost out. Across industries, efficient low-cost providers have captured market share. The challenge confronting every dealer is how to reduce your cost of goods, your cost to operate. Size alone does not bring efficiency. Sometimes efficiency is driven by economy of scale, sometimes by diseconomies of scale (think Uber). Efficiency is almost always enabled by technology.

Many LBM dealers may be apprehensive about making technology changes. What would you say to dealers who haven't upgraded because of those fears?

I'd say their fears may be feeding into, deepening, big/small bifurcation of the channel. In 2024, technology scales in the cloud, not the enterprise. In many ways, low-cost, cloud-based technologies level the playing field for all dealers, but only if you use them. The big guys have largely embraced tech, and they're harvesting returns. It's not just their size that's making their commodity prices hard-to-beat; it's the effectiveness of the technology they use.

To cautious LBM execs, I'd say, summon your inner entrepreneur. Trust your own intelligence. Don't be intimidated by technology—you don't need to build the engine and hydraulics to know a forklift makes material handling dramatically more efficient. Whether you're looking to leverage mechanical power or information power, it's a matter of optimizing operations (run results) or new value creation (change results). Get started. The return (ROI) from best-of-breed technology is now measured in days/weeks (not years).

How can technology tools help LBM dealers grow business and better manage costs?

The sweet spot: technologies that enable you to automate and optimize core functions of your business help your employees do their jobs better, help you manage better and deploy working capital more efficiently. Freeing employees from routine tasks/calculations that slow them down creates more time for analysis and improving business outcomes (the skills you pay them for).

With technology being such a rapidly-evolving space, what new features and capabilities should LBM dealers keep their eyes open for?

The real magic happens when your people stop thinking of technology as something they do on a computer, and start viewing it as an opportunity to pass off some of their work to a digital assistant that they get to train (double win!). For decades, workflow automations have been hard coded in software—users were “trained.” The big change is now the user gets to train the software, to configure their own workflow automations, execute their own logic. That's a *big* deal for productivity, for creativity, for a vibrant (entrepreneurial) future.

As the founder and chairman of BuyMetrics Inc., Valerie Hansen is a 46-year industry veteran and the former owner and CEO of Big Buck Building Centers Inc., Custom Components Company, and ProMillwork in Racine, WI. From 2000–19, she earned 21 U.S. patents for inventions in the technical areas of finance and data management. Privately serving industry-leading LBM dealers since 2000, the BuyMetrics procurement platform automates and informs the purchase of lumber and other volatile commodities.





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JOIST TAPE

NEEDED INSURANCE OR UNNECESSARY HASSLE?

As a relative newcomer to the deck building segment, joist tape has quickly gained a foothold in standard construction practices, and many deck board and deck fastener manufacturers now offer their own brand and formulation of tape.

While many deck builders swear by its usage, citing benefits that include rot prevention and improved deck fastener hold, others are just as quick to shoot down joist tape's necessity, ultimately leaving LBM dealers feeling confused as to this product category's ultimate benefits and how best to present it to their customers.

We gathered from social media channels this collection of arguments both for and against joist tape from LBM dealers, deck building pros, and DIY enthusiasts. Rather than arguing either side of the coin, our goal is to give LBM dealers a better understanding of both the reluctance against and the acceptance of the use of joist tape.



POINT

- “When I demo old decks I notice that moisture usually enters where the fasteners were placed and have rotted the joists straight down the middle. I'd rather water sit on top of the joist tape than seep into the fastener holes.”
- “While I can't say one way or the other conclusively, it seems like something is better than nothing when you are in an area that gets lots of snow and ice. It's cheap insurance.”
- “Adding joist tape extends the life and provides customers with more value for their money.”
- “Joist tape is a necessity. Because the new pressure treated lumber is so warped, crowned, and often poorly dimensioned and milled, grading and planing joists has become a necessity on almost every job for me. However, this opens the grain, and often pares enough material away that it comes close to reaching the penetrative depth limit of the treatment agent.”
- “Joist tape is a positive for the health of any pressure-treated framed deck structure. It prevents water from sitting in and causing rot in notoriously vulnerable places like fastener penetrations and the seam created by doubling up band boards or joists.”
- “Most customers would appreciate you adding \$100 to the bid for joist tape even if it means you get only another year out of the deck, and chances are you'll actually get another 5+ years—well worth the money.”
- “Joist tape is essential for flat blocking and end grain facing up (stair stringers). I will also use it on two-ply beams and joists, and glulams, and also ledgers under aluminum flashing, as newer treated lumber chemicals and aluminum flashing don't like each other.”

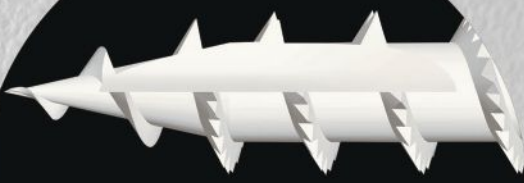
COUNTERPOINT

- “When I puncture joist tape with decking screws, how can I then guarantee it will still seal the screw holes?”
- “I use asphalt fence post paint in place of joist tape. In a recent project, I had about 800 feet in joist tops, and a gallon of fence post paint easily covered the joist tops and then some. Plus it's a lot less expensive and easier to apply.”
- “I do marine construction, and I never use any kind of tape on any of our joists or stringers. The only time that tape is used is when pressure-treated materials comes in to contact with aluminum, i.e. boat-lifts, fish cleaning tables, ladders, or any other accessory where electrolysis could cause corrosion.”
- “Remember when the government banned the use of arsenic and chrome in treated lumber? The original formula was chromated copper arsenate (CCA). The ‘solution’ to the arsenic ban was to increase the alkalinity and triple the dissolved copper in the treatment formula, which in turn can dissolve metal deck fasteners. That's where the real rot problem has come from.”
- “I've never seen a properly built green treated deck fail due to lack of tape. It feels very forced on my trade, and that's not helpful to me or the customer. I know I can build a very long lasting deck without it.”
- “Joist tape is just another chore. I sold building materials for 20 years, and I do not use tape. Over the years before and after CCA lumber, I never saw failure from the top down.”
- “Joist tape should never be used. Covering the top edge of your joist only traps water/moisture and speeds up the rotting process by diverting the water down the flat sides to soak into the joists you're trying to protect in the first place.”

PHOTO: ©ISTOCK.COM/DMITRIYMOROZ

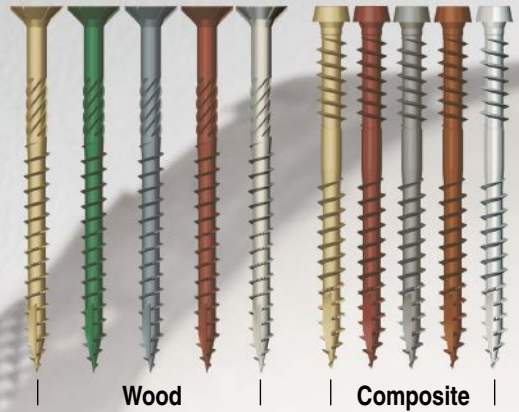
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Gray		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
Red		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
304 S.S.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
316 S.S.		✓			✓			✓	
Tan/Comp.			✓			✓			✓
Red/Comp.			✓			✓			✓
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The LBM Century Club was founded on the simple belief that companies that have been around for 100 years deserve to be recognized. Launched in 2016, the LBM Century Club has grown to over 200 members, with more coming in each month. In all, the companies have provided more than 26,000 years of combined service to their communities.



We asked two companies why they believe their businesses have had staying power in their community.



WARD LUMBER

JAY, NY | wardlumber.com

LOCATIONS: TWO

ESTABLISHED: 1890

“Remaining at the forefront of building technology, customer service, and reliability in our region has kept us relevant and the go-to yard for contractor clients. With new innovations in building materials happening all the time, we keep an eye on what’s next. For example, Ward Lumber was the first yard in our region to stock mineral-wool products. What was seen as new and alternative by some at the time was adopted by many of our clients once the benefits were clearly communicated.

Customer service is a buzzword for many industries but I can’t help but highlight our employees, the great job they do, and the value they have always brought to our clients. Good customer service is really about having great employees and investing in their knowledge and confidence, something we’ve always prided ourselves on. Now that we’re a worker-owned cooperative we have that much more reason to commit to investing in each other.

At the end of the day, keeping quality materials in stock and ready to roll out at a moment’s notice is the bottom line in this business. With recent investments in our fleet, and a new development program for training staff to become CDL drivers, Ward Lumber is looking forward to continuing its legacy as the keystone independent building materials dealer in our region.”

— CJ Young, operations manager

HPM BUILDING SUPPLY

KEA’AU, HI | hpmhawaii.com

LOCATIONS: 19

ESTABLISHED: 1921

“If you look at the roots of our business, we were really sticks-and-nails people. Hawai’i Planing Mill was a milling operation; we were contractor-founded and contractor-oriented. As the needs of our community grew, we were fortunate to expand in the retail and DIY-oriented suite of products.

In our industry, the pace of change is dramatic, yet we remained relentlessly focused on our team, customers, and community. What HPM is today far exceeds my wildest hopes and dreams for the company.”

— Michael Fujimoto, chairman emeritus

“HPM is grateful for the support of generations of customers who have chosen HPM as their main source for building supply materials over the last century. We look forward to continuing to grow and innovate our business to help others build and live better.”

— Jason Fujimoto, chairman & CEO

Do you work for or know of a lumberyard or building materials retailer that is 100 or more years old? Visit the Century Club at lbmjournals.com/nominate and answer a few questions.

For a complete listing of LBM Century Club members, visit lbmjournals.com/lbm-century-club.

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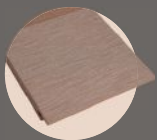
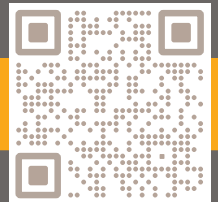
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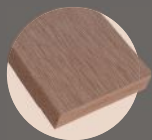
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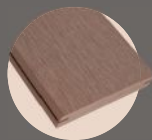
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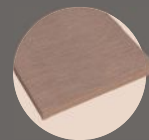
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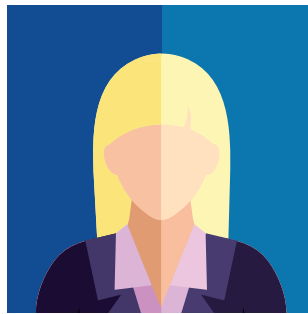
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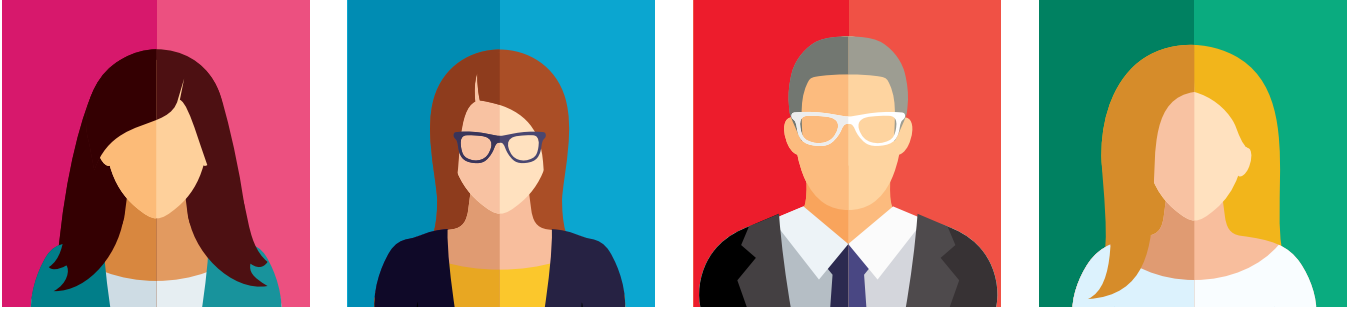
MOTIVATING ACROSS GENERATIONS



BY LBM JOURNAL READERS

With employee retention often topping the list of concerns about the current labor market, keeping employees happy and motivated is more important than ever. However, everyone is different and it can be difficult to know what strategies to try. What works for one longtime team member might not work best for new hires.





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

Q Where should we be with motivating members of our team? While I believe that traditional motivational systems (Carnegie, Covey, etc.) represent solid, timeless values, I wonder how well these 'old school' methods resonate with younger pros. I'd love to learn methods and strategies other LBM dealers and distributors are using to motivate their teams.

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

"We need to make younger people feel like they are part of something bigger. This is really what gives people a sense of purpose."

"Make sure they are able to continue to learn and grow within the organization, and see a clear path to the future."

"The thing with these 50-100-year-old 'timeless values' is that they are saddled with dated methods of delivery and values that are not valid to younger generations. Those values should be stripped down to their core applications and rebuilt until they are meaningful with new tech and systems."

"Tangible motivation seems to work far better than a speaker. While speakers have been a proven success, the 'student' needs to understand that only a fraction of what is said is relevant."

"Interactive training with high energy team members and presenters."

"Stick with core time-proven techniques."

"It's a process."

"I believe in making the project as if it were my own. Give advice as if I owned it. There may be complete differences in opinions on the project, but it shows we are invested in the project."

"Better benefits with potential higher commissions. Having more flexibility in work schedules tends to resonate."

"Bonus perks."

"We use relational needs assessments to meet employees where they are, young or old."

"Make them feel they are doing good and accomplishing things throughout their work week. If you see they need to improve on something, show them and help them with what needs fixed."

"One option we use where appropriate is to have them participate in roundtables. You can't put a value on the experience and the encouragement the employee receives."

"While I'm from the era of the traditional motivation systems, I also welcome strategy and team-building facilities/retreats where you work together with others. This teaches the importance of communication, helping others, and you share the rewards of a job well done. Sales is often looked at as a solo journey, but in reality there are many working parts to that sale, so communication and recognition is important." ▶



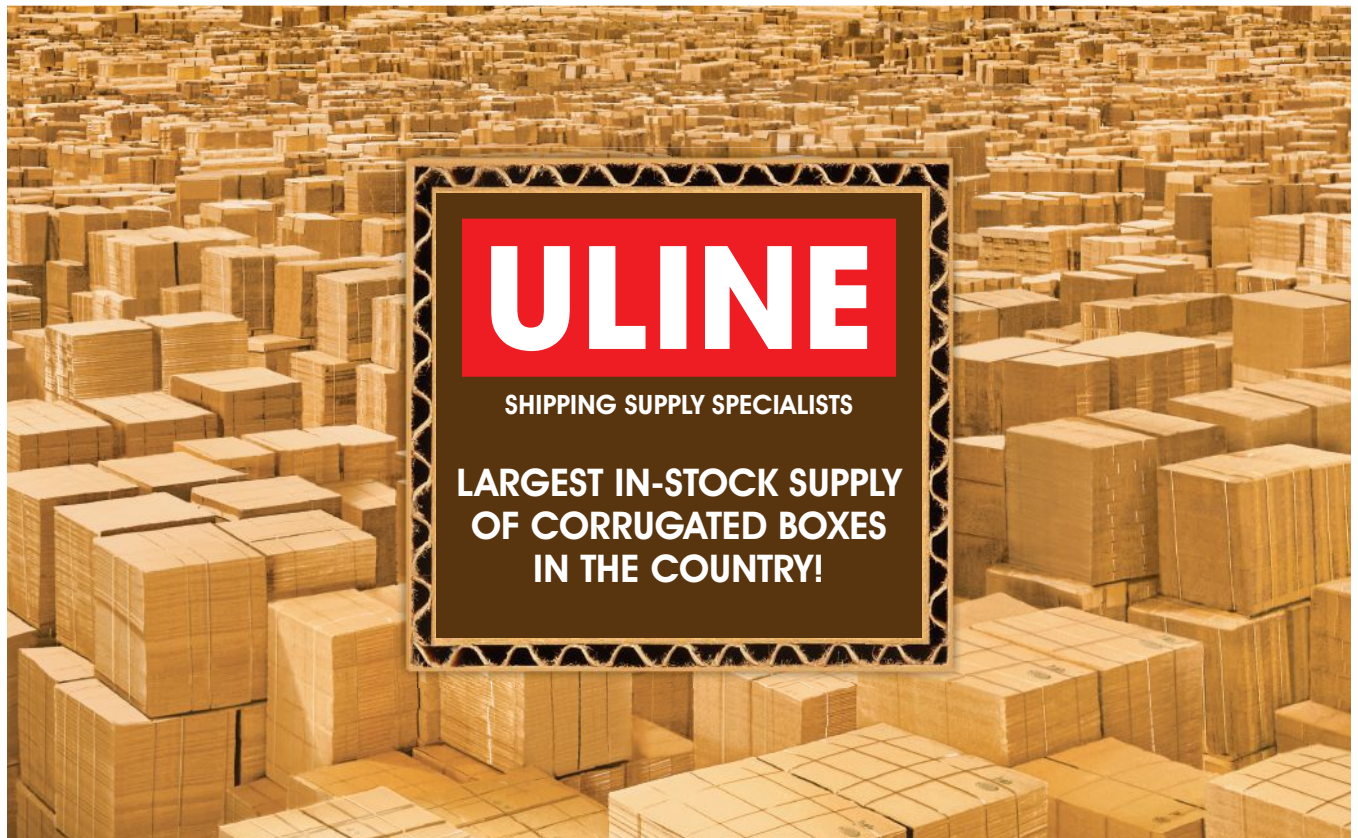


“It is important to first know your audience, and second to balance your initiatives. Mentoring the next generations is very difficult when we grew up as or with boomers as role models. The structure that was provided and is offered in these old school methods is extremely important! But delivery is crucial for the next generations. There is a bit of a sense of entitlement, and they certainly do not like to be ‘told’ what to do. It is very important to show the success of a methodology; even emphasizing it more than the actual methods until they have bought in. Lots of storytelling, real life experiences, and examples need to be used to initiate the connection and then it’s important to ask a lot of questions about their personal experiences and lessons learned.

If they are very young, try to relate a business experience you have had to one they might have encountered outside of business with friends or family. I have found that with the next generation it is most effective to mentor in a small group setting, with 6-7 people.

This allows for them to not feel overwhelmed so they can open up and be humble, but still offers the ‘community’ that they so desperately crave. Your job as a mentor is to provoke critical thinking skills and lead them down the path you want them to follow. I often call this ‘dropping seeds and then returning to water them until they begin to grow.’ The consistency part is by having reoccurring meetings/sessions and driving the point home subtly each time, i.e. watering the seed.

Gone are the days when you can have a single day training session and expect results. This will get them fired up for the first couple of weeks, but humans, by nature, will always take the path of least resistance. They will always return to what’s comfortable for them. Consistent ‘small touches’ are key. We have to be willing to play the long game if we want to nurture their success. And finally, we must be humble ourselves. Talk about our failures and the lessons we learned along the way. We have to humanize ourselves to them.” ▶



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Responses from wholesale distributors, manufacturers, and service providers:

“I think that companies need to have a career path defined now. Something to motivate and drive people to want more. This new generation likes to move up and there are not many people these days that are satisfied doing the same job for 20-30 years.”

“We need to offer different types of training, including the tried-and-true as well as the experimental. It’s OK to try something that doesn’t work. We need to hear employees, and have an environment in which it is safe for them to express themselves.”

“Today, simply one word: ‘MONEY!’”

“Motivation has a direct correlation to passion. Without passion for what you do and how you can help others, the opportunity for a team member to succeed is extremely limited. As an employer, you should approach each staff member individually to learn what ‘gets them going.’ Find what they need emotionally, mentally, and physically to feel passionate about their work. Not everyone will require the same action to inspire motivation, especially in today’s modern workplace complexities. Some successful motivating factors we have used and retained talent are:

1. Consistent validation for good work; everyone loves a good pat on the back by their boss.
2. Monetary incentives (gift cards) for meeting personal/organizational goals.
3. Opportunity for investments in the company.
4. Flexibility in hours and workplace; some people perform better working remotely and should have that option.
5. Encourage out of office social activities with staff, it reenergizes them and allows them to socialize with coworkers.”

“I still think Carnegie is the best training.”

“Offering flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options or flexible hours, acknowledges the need for work-life balance and empowers employees to manage their schedules effectively. Explore creative incentives beyond traditional monetary rewards, such as extra paid time off, wellness benefits, or experiences like team outings or learning workshops. Leverage technology platforms for communication, collaboration, and recognition. Gamification elements or social recognition platforms can make the process more engaging for younger team members.” ■

ILLUSTRATIONS: @ISTOCK.COM/AELITTA

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CONSTRUCTION DEFECTS: TOP RISKS, WHAT'S COVERED AND WHAT TO KNOW

Construction defects claims have been steadily rising since the pandemic. Lumber businesses already have a range of complicated and challenging risks to consider, but what do they need to know about this growing threat?

Construction defect claims are becoming the second most costly claim type, only slightly behind auto losses. The most common losses we see are related to window installation, where we are seeing allegations of improper window installations leading to water intrusion.



As the frequency and cost of defending these claims continues to rise, we are also seeing an increase in Risk Transfer Opportunities to consider. For example, to meet the demands of general contractors, lumber businesses are sub-contracting work out to subcontractors. While this is a common practice in construction, the problem is that we have seen some policyholders unable to locate the contracts they sign when a claim arises. These contracts often carry exculpatory language where the subcontractor agrees to perform the work on behalf of the insured and in most cases, agrees under contract to defend and indemnify the policyholder when a loss arises. When these contracts are lost or misplaced, insurance carriers have no grounds to point towards the responsible party, which makes a proper defense much more difficult when the sub-contractor may be responsible for the loss.

For that reason, it is critical that businesses not only understand their contract terms, but also safeguard these contracts, at least through the Statute of Repose, in their state of operations. Otherwise, they risk significant costs. We saw a claim where a policyholder contracted with five subcontractors on a project. Then, when the claim was presented and the carrier asked for copies of each contract, none of the contracts could be found. This forced the carrier to pay out a costly settlement when no payment at all could have been possible if the insured had kept the contracts on hand. Incidents like this can wreak havoc on the cost and expenses that a carrier has to payout and also has a significant impact on premiums.

With incidents on the rise — many of which could have been preventable — **What do lumber businesses need to know about construction defects to better prepare their operations?** Here at Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual Insurance Company (PLM), we believe it starts with a good insurer, who can help you understand your risk and how to manage it.

CONSIDER THESE BEST PRACTICES:

UNDERSTAND YOUR COVERAGE!

It is important to understand what is covered under your Commercial General Liability Policy. Often times, businesses are not aware of what their policy truly covers, receive some sticker shock or challenges rebuilding when an incident occurs.

For example, a Commercial General Liability Policy (CGL) covers the ensuing damage from a construction defect incident, not the work or product itself. This is an important distinction. In a window installation claim, the subsequent damage caused by the water intrusion would be covered under this type of insurance, but not the actual window damage itself.

CONSIDER THIRD-PARTY RISK.

We recommend insureds take particular caution when working with subcontractors. Understand that when you sign with a subcontractor, you may be assuming their risk if there is legal action and you have not specified transfer of risk.

Before signing any contracts with a subcontractor, take time to vet their business thoroughly and make sure that they have an active insurance policy, and clarify transfer of risk if you would prefer not to assume third party risk. For those that have the resources, we would recommend hiring personal counsel to review agreements. All business partners should also have an active insurance policy enforced and lumber business managers should have a copy of this policy on hand. Keep these documents and all contracts safe. In case of an incident, this will allow your insurance partner to act quickly to support your business.

MEET WITH YOUR INSURER REGULARLY AND REVIEW RISK MITIGATION TACTICS.

Lastly, we recommend policyholders regularly meet with their insurers' Loss Control representatives to ensure that their businesses are properly covered. An insurer can help identify potential losses ahead of time and provide mitigation advice to avoid these incidents, and work through your broker who can review your policy to determine if any other coverage would be suited for your business. For example, one such policy we are seeing being enforced by General Contractors is a Wrap Policies, which is a liability policy that serves as an all-encompassing insurance that protect all contractors and sub-contractors working on a large project over \$10 million. Ask yourself, is this the right policy type for your business. Often, this is a smart option for a particularly expensive project.

Having a good insurance partner is critical to risk mitigation. The right insurance partner will advise your business on how to avoid incurring costly losses, and in the event of a loss, will provide you with steps to rebuild your operation in a timely fashion. For example, here at Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual Insurance (PLM), we have 129 years of experience in this niche market, so we understands the needs of our policyholders and are here to keep your risk down, and in a time of crisis help you become whole after an incident.

As the oldest and largest mutual insurance company serving the lumber and building material industry, we can provide essential support to your business. For more information regarding our services, please visit plmins.com or contact us at CustServ@plmins.com or 1-800-752-1895.

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Chris Moran, Sr. Business Development Representative (right) with PLM customer, Gary Hineman (left) from Delaware County Supply Co.

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Hancock Lumber works to educate future generations of makers

BY WENDY STURGES

IT'S LONG BEEN proven that crafting and creating has a number of benefits for young children. From improving fine motor and critical thinking skills to increasing self-esteem, learning to make things from a young age can foster a love of STEM and the arts and even help inspire future career choices.

Earlier this year, Hancock Lumber posted about the company's sponsorship of a new "Makerspace" exhibit for the Children's Museum & Theatre of Maine (CMTM), located in Portland.

The exhibit is a continuation of a philanthropic relationship spanning more than 20 years, according to Hancock Lumber. For the past several years, the company—which was founded in 1848 and operates multiple locations in Maine and New Hampshire—sponsored the "Tree to Timber" exhibit in the former museum space, an interactive display that educated guests about forestry management, sawmilling, and how eastern white pine sawlogs are used to create boards + by-products.

Hancock has worked with CMTM through a number of transitions, from moving to its original location on Free Street to its current location on Thompson's Point Road, to navigating COVID-19 and reopening to the public.

"Hancock Lumber knew we wanted to continue our partnership with the museum as they transitioned into their new space," said Erin Plummer, Chief Marketing Officer for Hancock Lumber. "Our teams worked collaboratively and landed on the Makerspace WoodWorks exhibit sponsorship. Today, seeing children engaged in the space, working hands-on with various tools and materials, and learning new skills reinforces what an incredible resource the museum is for visitors of all ages."

The new Makerspace features a variety of craft supplies such as fabrics and wood, as well as tools such as safety glasses, pliers, glue guns, and hammers. Children can also wear co-branded aprons provided by Hancock while working in the WoodWorks area. The aim of the space is to foster creativity for children while introducing them to new skills and interests in a safe environment.

Plummer said in many cases, students aren't exposed to these types of tools until middle school during electives like shop class and woodworking. She said allowing children to interact with building materials and get comfortable with those tools early on can help introduce them to skills and possibly careers in the LBM industry they may not otherwise have gravitated towards. Plummer said it's important

to educate students about the trades, such as finish carpentry and construction, to expand their options after secondary education. “Being a professional builder is an impressive trade requiring a high level of skill, creativity, hands-on expertise, building science knowledge, relationship building, and problem solving,” Plummer said.

“Taking plans from paper to finished projects takes a high level of expertise and coordination—the level of pre-construction planning and management of subcontractors, along with running the business itself is impressive. We love to celebrate all the opportunities in the industry and hopefully influence people of all ages in the process. That’s the fun of it for us—planting seeds early on to see what grows.”

The museum also features a number of exhibits designed to help educate about ecosystems in Maine as well as STEM subjects and arts. Julie Butcher Pezzino, executive director for CMTM, said the museum’s partnership with Hancock Lumber has been valuable for both children and the community.

“We are incredibly grateful to the Hancock Lumber team for their ongoing support and creative philanthropic spirit, which truly hits the nail on the head! From sponsoring our Tree to Timber exhibit on Free Street to naming and

Hancock Lumber has been working with the Children’s Museum & Theatre of Maine for more than 20 years, supporting programs like the museum’s Makerspace, which features hands-on activities and exhibits like Tree to Timber and WoodWorks.

WoodWorks

providing resources for WoodWorks in our new MakerSpace at Thompson’s Point, their dedication enriches hands-on tactile experiences for young learners, including our new Art for Tots program. Their recent donation of size-appropriate aprons for makers and volunteers working in the space underscores the importance of fostering a safe and engaging environment for children to explore the wonders of working with tools and wood. Partnerships like the one we have with Hancock Lumber help create the building blocks for a lifetime of discovery and play.” ■

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Hard work spurs growth for R.P. Lumber Co.

BY MIKE BERGER

WHEN WE INTERVIEWED Jason Plummer, vice president of R.P. Lumber Co. headquartered in Edwardsville, IL, he, just minutes before, had wrapped up the final details on a new acquisition and was on his way to a customer's jobsite. In other words, he was busy.

That kind of work ethic is what it takes to grow from a single store to 87 locations spread across Illinois, Missouri, Wyoming, Iowa, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. And when asked what he sees on the horizon, Plummer expresses guarded optimism, even in the face of economic uncertainties. "I would say that we work pretty hard to keep a diverse customer base and a diverse product mix," he said. "So we think that diversification helps. Generally speaking, like a lot of people, I think [the future] is kind of cautiously optimistic."

Of course, finding and keeping employees who exemplify that dedication to service can be difficult, especially in these times. But Plummer sees LBM dealers as positioned in a good place when it comes to attracting talent, provided the dealer has the right attitude. "I think if you treat people well, you set expectations, and you live your values, people will want to work at places like this," he points out. "I think the culture that we work hard to maintain and the kind of family values that drive the business are appreciated by people. We try to be a family-friendly place to work."

Plummer points to the number of people who have worked for 20, 30, or even 40 years at R.P. Lumber as an example. "You know, you're not going to recommend your kid take a job at a place you don't like, and you're not going



It's people and the relationships with them that Plummer sees at the heart of his cautious optimism. "It's really a people-driven business. I think there are always opportunities to deepen our relationships in the markets that we're in right now. I think that we're always looking to hire good people. When we can hire good people, that generally helps us expand the business. So we're always on the lookout for people, and frankly, for acquisitions as well."

With a history of growth and an eye towards the future, you might expect there to be a special playbook by which R.P. Lumber operates. Instead, Plummer says they focus on the thing the industry as a whole is known for—service. "I just think that we've got a lot of great people that work for us, and we really focus on service. And I think a combination of good people and dedication to service has really helped us. It's something I love about the industry—it's just full of salt-of-the-earth people. And I think, culturally, a lot of dealers in our industry operate the same way."

to stay somewhere you don't like for 20 years. Those are things that I take to heart. We're not fancy, and we're not high science, but we must be doing something right."

Part of that "doing something right" says Plummer is working hard to ensure R.P. Lumber has a structure in place that's scalable to support the envisioned future growth and new stores. "We take a lot of pride in our stores," he says, "all of which are 100% hard surface-paved concrete or asphalt. We paint the buildings, we put new fronts on, and we invest a lot of money in our stores. I always joke with some of the guys at the office that, if someone ever bought us, the first thing they would do is slash our capital expense. But you know, we make those investments because we want to be in this industry for generations. You're not going to concrete your parking lot, you're not going to put facelifts on your stores, you're not going to make those massive investments that pay off over 20 years—not two years—unless you're committed to the industry, and we very much are."



R.P. Lumber founders Robert and Donna Plummer outside their flagship location in Edwardsville, IL.



GET TO KNOW R.P. LUMBER CO.

Founded:	1977
Ownership:	Family
Locations:	87 full-line stores + two truss facilities
Employees:	1,000
Software platform:	Epicor BisTrack
Buyer's Group / Co-op:	Orgill, LBM Advantage, Do it Best
Customer mix:	75% pro / 25% DIY

That commitment goes beyond just the LBM industry. R.P. Lumber has made a point of investing in the communities where its stores are located. “We try to be a partner in every community that we’re in, and that might vary a little bit community-by-community in terms of what that community’s priorities are and what the opportunities are. We do a lot with churches, we do a lot with schools, and we sponsor a lot of sports teams and youth leagues.”

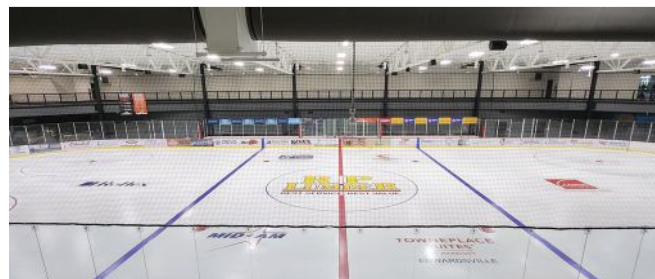
Beyond those hyperlocal investments, R.P. Lumber has made major contributions to much larger investments for community betterment. “We’ve done some significant projects in the Metro East, which is kind of the St. Louis region on the Illinois side. We were the main financial supporters of building a giant ice hockey complex.” Called the R.P. Lumber Center, it’s a regulation-size arena where local high schools and colleges can come to play, and it also includes a running track, community rooms, and additional facilities.

When asked why they make such large investments, Plummer says the answer is simple—community. “The reason why we do it is because we touch a lot of the communities that are here. We also [invested into] the Plummer Family Sports Park, an 83-acre sports park for which we donated ground and money. And they created regulation-size base-

ball fields, softball fields, youth leagues, pickleball, soccer, flag football, a playground, all kinds of stuff. It’s quite the impressive facility and not insignificant donations. We appreciate the support that the communities give us, and we want to be a great partner for the communities as well. We try to put our money where our mouths are. None of this happens without the hard work of our R.P. Lumber team members and the great relationships we have with customers, vendors, and our other partners.”

Plummer is quick to point out, though, that all of this is not about shining a spotlight on him. “To be honest, I don’t mind falling below the radar at all.” And perhaps that’s the great lesson to be learned from R.P. Lumber. When the focus of hard work is on the communities an LBM dealer serves, growth and success are the byproduct. ■

For R.P. Lumber, giving back to the community is vital to how they remain a great community partner. Some of its investments include the R.P. Lumber Center and the Plummer Family Sports Park (below left).



COMPANIES AND PRODUCTS THAT EPITOMIZE THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

BY MIKE BERGER

Steve Jobs, the visionary co-founder of Apple, famously said, “Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower.” As he proved time and again, it’s not about making the product people want; rather, it’s about creating the product people never knew they needed.

Such is the case with the first ever LBM Journal Innovation Awards. Honoring products that do more than the expected, these winners enable the LBM pro to work faster, easier, and more efficiently while bringing an advanced level of performance to the jobsite. And while there is no shortage of truly innovative building products, these stand out because of their unique benefits. So listed in no particular order, we are proud to recognize these truly innovative offerings.





COMPANY

Millboard

PRODUCT

Millboard Decking

The only decking hand-molded from natural timbers including century-old oak, Millboard decking is virtually indistinguishable from real wood, yet the manufacturer says it outperforms wood on almost every level. Unlike timber, Millboard decking resists the elements, requires minimal maintenance, is slip and stain resistant and won't rot from fungal decay or warp.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

Constructed with a polyurethane resin core reinforced with mineral stone, Millboard is supple like rubber but rigid and hard-wearing like a plastic. The boards are capped with what the company calls a Lastane coating that is pliable and provides high slip-resistance compared to timber, even in wet conditions. And with the brand's proprietary Durafix fastening system, there's no need to pre-drill, countersink, or use deck clips. Simply coat the screws in silicone spray, and then screw them straight in to just below the surface of the board. Millboard decking's Lastane coating will then flex back over the screw-heads, virtually hiding the fastener without the use of plugs.
millboard.com



COMPANY

Huber Engineered Woods

PRODUCT

Zip System Rainscreen

As the newest option in the ZIP System Building Enclosures portfolio of products, ZIP System Rainscreen by Huber Engineered Woods is available nationwide and helps builders streamline water and air management in high-performance wall assemblies.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

Engineered to meet 2021 IRC/IBC code-required 3/16" air gap requirements in stucco and adhered stone assemblies, ZIP System Rainscreen consists of a rigid drainage mat covered by a heavy-duty fabric that can be used as a secondary water-resistive layer required for "absorptive" or "reservoir" cladding assemblies. Combining the high compression strength of the mesh drainage mat with the 5-7-perm water resistive fabric layer, ZIP System Rainscreen strikes a balance of durability and effective moisture management for various cladding systems.
huberwood.com



COMPANY

Klaaswood

PRODUCT

U.S.-produced thermally treated wood

A thermally modified wood that is both sourced and modified in North America, Klaaswood uses a 2nd generation hydrolysis technology that allows wood modification to be achieved without the use of harmful chemicals and at lower temperatures, which is less stressful on the wood and, according to the manufacturer, results in a stronger, more stable product.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

Klaaswood is a domestic thermally modified wood, plus its enhanced durability allows Klaaswood to be certified at Class 1 durability, the highest available class that extends the warranty to 20 years.
klaaswood.com



Innovation is a change that creates a new dimension of performance.

Peter Drucker, management expert and theorist



COMPANY

Protecto Wrap

PRODUCT

Triple Guard Energy Sill Sealer

Claiming to be the only self-adhesive air and moisture sill barrier on the market, Triple Guard Energy Sill Sealer offers three adhesive membrane areas for sealing off the cold joint between the foundation and construction framing. According to the manufacturer, a full 3/8" closed cell foam provides 1-1/2 times more protection from energy loss over standard 1/4" sill sealers.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

Triple Guard Energy Sill Sealer's unique and patented design combines the peel-and-stick waterproofing characteristics of waterproofing membranes with a 3/8"-thick closed cell foam sill sealer forming a gasket seal to virtually eliminate any air, moisture and insect/rodent infiltration beneath the sill plate. Triple Guard adheres to the face of the foundation, to the top of the foundation wall, and to the face of the sill plate/skirt board, completely sealing off the cold joint between the foundation and frame construction.

protectowrap.com



COMPANY

GAF Energy

PRODUCT

Timberline Solar Roofing System

The Timberline Solar Roofing System from GAF Energy (a sister company to GAF) is a roof system that directly integrates solar technology into traditional roofing materials. Instead of panels or heavy tiles, the system is made up of shingles that are both water-shedding and warranted to withstand winds up to 130 mph.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

According to GAF Energy, it's the world's first nailable solar shingle and is installed with a nail gun and standard roofing practices, meaning any local GAF-certified roofers can install the product. And because the Timberline Solar Energy Shingles don't require a rack system, there's no drilling through the roof membrane during installation.

gaf.energy



COMPANY

CAMO

PRODUCT

Wedge Universal Deck Clips

CAMO's new grip strengthening deck fastener—Wedge Universal Deck Clips—promises to radically increase the speed of deck building, as they are engineered to wedge into the grooves of any and all deck boards.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

CAMO Wedge Universal Deck Clips allow for one-pass, one-handed installation, even with PVC deck products, resulting in fewer dropped fasteners and overall faster installation. The 316 stainless steel marine grade clip offers the best corrosion resistance for coastal applications or projects in highly corrosive environments such as saltwater pool decks.

camofasteners.com



Innovation is key. Only those who have the agility to change with the market and innovate quickly will survive.

Robert T. Kiyosak,
 finance expert and author



COMPANY

FastenMaster

PRODUCT

Deck Frame Coating

FastenMaster, a division of OMG Inc., has introduced its Deck Frame Coating, a water-based sealant that is reported to help extend the life of decks by creating a lasting moisture barrier.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

The new coating is designed to be rolled or painted onto the top of deck joists, ledger boards, stair stringers, posts, beams, and other framing components, and serves to deter wood rot and decay. After application it's workable in 20 minutes, so it won't slow down decking pros during installation. Once dry, the coating creates a durable seal around deck fasteners. In addition, it is highly effective for use in corners and other hard-to-reach places where joist tapes have difficulty providing full coverage. FastenMaster Deck Frame Coating is available in 1-gallon buckets, which covers up to 450 linear feet of 2x framing. fastenmaster.com



COMPANY

Pacific WoodTech (PWT)

PRODUCT

PWT Treated LVL

New from Pacific WoodTech, its PWT Treated LVL is reported to be the only manufactured treated LVL on the market, offering superior strength and uniformity. Utilizing what the company calls TRU-CORE technology, a proprietary heat press system evenly distributes treatment chemicals throughout the wood.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

According to PWT, the manufacturing process creates a durable LVL that is protected against damage caused by fungal rot, decay, and wood-destroying insects including Formosan termites. Other benefits include less weight compared to traditional lumber along with size and moisture content uniformity. Plus, PWT Treated LVL is suitable for both interior and exterior usage and comes with a 25-year limited warranty. pwtewp.com



COMPANY

Silvermine

PRODUCT

Mortarless Stone Veneer Siding

Featuring a patented flashing and fastening system, Silvermine Stone's Mortarless Stone Veneer Siding create a shingling system on the wall to keep water away from the home's substrate while only requiring a single layer of weather-resistant barrier.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

The 24" x 6" veneer sections attach to the wall with pan-headed screws and do not require lath, a scratch-coat, or mortar. And as Silvermine explains, the shingling effect of the veneers sheds all water to the front, thus eliminating water penetration and minimizing the possibility of insects getting between the stone and the wall.

silverminestone.com



Focus on how the end-user customers perceive the impact of your innovation—rather than on how you, the innovators, perceive it.

Thomas A. Edison,
inventor



COMPANY

GRK Fasteners

PRODUCT

AugerBolt Through Bolt Fastening System

In this day and age of working with too few crew members, every tool or system that can save time and increase efficiency deserves to be in your building arsenal. And with GRK Fasteners' new AugerBolt Through Bolt Fastening System, you can now drill the installation hole and install through bolts in one simple step.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

It simplifies code-approved through bolt installation by combining the drilling of an auger bit and the installation of a through bolt all in one easy step for greater productivity. The patented recessed tip revolutionizes through bolted installation, simplifying the notched 6x6 connection for pro deck builders. The Integrated washer means fewer loose components for you to manage on the job, and the included 9/16" x 7" auger bit provides a fast, best-in-class drilling experience. The bit and bolts are available in one grab-and-go package for a quicker shopping experience and eliminates loose components on the job site. grkfasteners.com



COMPANY

Marvin

PRODUCT

CLiC Glass

The benefits of the natural light provided by windows are undeniable, but sometimes homeowners are forced to choose between that natural light and privacy. Now available from Marvin and its long-standing glass supplier Cardinal Glass Industries, CLiC Glass switchable privacy glass solves that problem by using a proprietary liquid crystal technology to transition between clear views or a privacy setting in less than one second.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

When in the clear state, liquid crystals align for glass that is clear from edge to edge and from any angle. When in the privacy state, liquid crystals scatter to create uniform diffused illumination across the window's glass surface, providing privacy while still allowing light to enter a space. marvin.com



COMPANY

Cutek

PRODUCT

Cutek Extreme high-performance wood oil

Offering powerful stabilizing protection while enhancing wood's natural beauty, Cutek Extreme high-performance wood oil penetrates deeply into the wood to protect it from the inside out, displacing water for long-term dimensional stability and significantly reducing cupping, warping, checking, and splitting.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

Cutek Extreme protective components stay permanently mobile in the wood, migrating to cuts or perforations with a self-healing action, and it will not form a surface film nor peel or flake for easy maintenance. cutekstain.com



There are no dreams too large, no innovation unimaginable and no frontiers beyond our reach.

John S. Herrington,
former U.S. secretary of energy

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New siding products bring solutions in a challenging market

THERE WAS A PERIOD NOT THAT LONG AGO of scientific interest in under-sea habitats for humans. Mostly constructed during the 1960s and 1970s, the experimental structures included the Conshelf I, II, and III habitats which were developed by none other than Jacques-Yves Cousteau, as well as SEALAB I and II created by the U.S. Navy, and Tektite I and II which were funded by NASA.

While each habitat had a specific mission and set of experiments to conduct, they all had to withstand extreme conditions. In the case of Conshelf III, it had to endure pressures as high as about 148 psi (14.8 psi for every 33 feet underwater). Without very specialized equipment, those pressures would crush a human. Think about how strong the wall material had to be to keep the habitat's inhabitants safe.

Granted, siding for today's building and renovation market does not need to meet such stringent requirements. Nonetheless, the siding segment continues to evolve to better protect our homes and the people who live within them. And while the pressures aren't as devastating as those in deep water, there are still a variety of factors that are impacting the siding segment and what LBM dealers can expect from it in near future.

"While factors such as high mortgage rates, steep home prices and low levels of inventory are dissuading potential buyers from entering the housing market, they are simultaneously driving homeowners to invest in improving their existing properties rather than pursuing new purchases," says Steve Booz, vice-president of marketing for Westlake Royal Building Products. "Home renovation spend has significantly increased and the remodeling outlook for 2024 is trending up. We expect homeowners to continue with their renovation plans over the next year but with a more strategic approach."

BY MIKE BERGER



Modern Mill has launched its Acre Edge and Center Bead siding. Made in the U.S. in a zero-waste manufacturing facility from upcycled rice hulls, the siding is 100% tree-free and recyclable. Acre resists water, weather, rot, and pests. It can be painted or stained without primer, and it is suitable for ground contact without sealing.



Cedar Renditions Board & Batten has been added to the Cedar Renditions line of aluminum siding from Westlake Royal. According to the manufacturer, Cedar Renditions is a non-flammable product, moisture-proof, and virtually maintenance-free.

The Thermally Modified Wood Collection from UFP Edge comes prefinished with an end-matched design, thus streamlining installation, saving builders valuable time, money, and stress.



Kim Guimond, chief administrative and marketing officer at Modern Mill, also sees optimism in the growth potential for siding. “Our optimism is driven by the opportunities we see across diversified segments (residential and commercial construction) and product innovation that is inspiring a faster conversion from wood and subpar composites to superior, greener choices,” she points out.

This isn’t to say that there aren’t concerns among industry experts. Economic uncertainties have manufacturers keeping a close eye on what the market may bring.

“With interest rates staying high and inflation still wreaking havoc with disposable income, I think 2024 will be a challenging year for the building industry,” says James Alpeter, marketing manager of siding, roofing, and stone at ProVia. “We are seeing forecasted declines in both new construction and remodel segments. Until the cost of borrowing money lowers it will be hard for the consumer to make many of these larger purchases such as a home remodel. We are optimistic that the industry will only see slight declines in spending as the Federal Reserve works to try to eliminate fears of a possible recession.”

Bold aesthetics hold sway

So while the overall opinion for siding sales is optimistic, what, exactly, are consumers purchasing? While it’s not new for 2024, the trend towards bold, darker colors still seems to hold sway over the purchase decision in regard to color. Contrasting extremes of black and white, as well as darker, bold colors with a wide profile remain as popular now as they have been for the past few years.

“The allure of darker paint for home exteriors has surged in recent years, fostering a trend towards more dramatic and eye-catching color palettes,” explains Chris “CJ” Johnson, director of product and marketing for siding at Westlake Royal Building Products. “These deeper hues not only add a sense of sophistication but also provide opportunities for creative manipulation of lighting and accents to enhance architectural charm. A high-contrasting trim against a darker siding can be used to create a more contemporary style. While the timeless appeal of light or natural-colored siding persists, 2024 sees a fusion of classic and modern aesthetics, as dark window frames and deeper-toned accents are embraced to cultivate depth and dramatic effect in residential exteriors.”

SIDING

And while the farmhouse look is still very hot, variations on that theme are starting to appear and influence color choices. “There’s an emerging preference for what’s dubbed the ‘black and tan look,’” explains Amanda Hall, brand marketing manager for UFP-Edge. “Departing from the ubiquitous white and black modern farmhouse style, this trend embraces darker, moodier exteriors accentuated by the warmth of natural, light brown wood cladding.”

Hand in hand with color is siding style, and also as in the past few years, wider profiles along with board and batten siding remain hot purchase choices. “In 2023, one of the predominant trends was the adoption of board and batten siding, a style that is expected to persist in 2024,” Westlake Royal’s Johnson predicts. “Fueled in part by the enduring popularity of modern farmhouse designs, board

and batten siding effortlessly combines charm with a modern edge, enabling traditional aesthetics to lean toward a more contemporary and fresh feel.”

ProVia’s Alpeter agrees. “Vertical siding has been trending over the past several years and there is no sign of it slowing down. Wider profile board and batten styles are very much in demand in both remodel and new construction.”

Material choices

When it comes to product choices, there are a myriad of options to choose from, and it can be difficult to know what is best to offer customers. Naturally, each siding manufacturer will gravitate towards the benefits of their specific material. Still, there are overarching trends in consumer product choice that LBM dealers should keep in mind as they analyze what to stock.

For example, Westlake Royal points to a rising demand for low-maintenance materials such as vinyl siding. Says the company’s Booz, “Vinyl siding remains a top choice for exterior cladding, prized for its combination of easy upkeep, resilience, design versatility and cost-effectiveness, all of which enhance both the value and visual appeal of homes. With an array of textures, colors, and profiles available, vinyl siding stands out as the ideal solution for homeowners seeking an economical, low-maintenance option without sacrificing style.”

As well, Westlake Royal points to the increasing impact of climate change leading to severe weather conditions, thus creating a growing demand for high-performance, weather-resistant building products that require minimal maintenance or replacement. As Westlake Royal’s Johnson explains, “One category that has shown significant growth is Westlake Royal’s insulated siding segment which tends to be popular with remodelers. These products offer beautiful aesthetics, strong performance and insulating power that help reduce energy costs in the home.

In addition, more homeowners are increasingly interested in sustainable, environmentally friendly material choices. For example, wood has long been a popular siding option, and new technology is enabling it to have an increased sustainable life cycle. “Architects and builders are being asked to design more unique structures utilizing different materials and elevations,” says Alaina Trowbridge, director of enterprise business for Klaaswood. ▶

ProVia’s Harbor Mill Shake siding combines the look of authentic cedar shake with the low maintenance, durability, and weatherability of polypropylene. To preserve this authentic look, the shake profile was modeled after hand-picked cedar pieces using highly accurate laser scanning to ensure even the finest details were incorporated.



Composite siding from NewTechWood features a co-extruded cap that protects all sides of the board from staining, fading, scratching, cupping, swelling, mold and mildew. As well, a composite core made by mixing high-quality recycled materials with dense hardwood and softwood fibers provides strength and durability while being 100% recyclable.



DESIGNED WITH THE INSTALLER IN MIND

HARBOR MILL™ SHAKE & SHINGLE SIDING



ProVia engineered Harbor Mill siding with the installer in mind, so you can get the job done quickly and safely and move on to the next one. The lightweight polypropylene shake and shingle siding panels include built-in features that simplify installation. Drop guards, stagger marks, and alignment guides make it easy to position and fasten, which is a huge advantage when you're 20 feet high on a ladder.

It's the right thing to do.



DOORS | WINDOWS
SIDING | STONE | ROOFING

Check out all the
details that make
Harbor Mill an
installer's dream



According to Trex, its cladding system that uses Trex Transcend deck boards delivers a modern aesthetic while providing a worry-free protection for any rainscreen assembly. Trex cladding can be applied vertically or horizontally to either a ventilated rainscreen or open-joint facade system, using conventional tools and methods.



“They are asking for choices that deliver aesthetic properties but also serve strong functionality. Klaaswood Thermally Modified Wood is the segment the industry has been asking for. The concept of thermally modified wood is not new, as it’s been used in Europe for the past 40 years with great success, but the adoption is just starting in the North American Market.”

Richard Lam, president of NewTechWood America, also points to the increasing demand for eco-friendly options. “In the siding segment, builders may face challenges such as increased demand for eco-friendly materials, stricter building codes, and labor shortages,” he says. “Our product offerings address these challenges by providing durable, environmentally friendly materials that meet or exceed building regulations. Additionally, our innovative installation techniques streamline the construction process, helping builders save time and labor costs.”

Beach House Shake from Tando Composites blends natural color variations, intricate grain patterns, and genuine saw cuts of natural cedar shake to create the appearance of individual cedar shingles. Additionally, the siding is approved by Miami-Dade County for use in High Velocity Hurricane Zones and severe weather conditions.



Adaptability is key when providing siding solutions

Thanks to certain market challenges with the siding segment, LBM dealers face familiar pressures that impact meeting customer needs—first and foremost is labor restraints. Almost every manufacturer interviewed reported similar concerns regarding the workforce and how it is impacting builders and remodelers. “Crews are pushed out many months for installs of new siding in many areas of the country, ProVia’s Alpetter reports. “Even finding someone to do proper estimates and take-offs has proven difficult and time-consuming for many contractors.”

Klaaswood’s Trowbridge also sees the need for efficiency solutions for a siding market that’s plagued by a reduced workforce. “Another main challenge of the industry continues to be labor restraints and having to fill the demand gap for homes that the 2020 pandemic revealed to the industry,” she says. “To streamline production, we need to find solutions that allow for easier installation and, more specifically, easy-to-train installation.”

It’s because of these challenges that LBM dealers need to be able to quickly pivot and provide multiple options to customers. As Modern Mill’s Guimond explains, “Helping homeowners and the design community choose the right siding material can be challenging, with many factors to consider including compatibility with the local climate, maintenance requirements, and aesthetics that honor the home’s architectural style.”

Siding manufacturers also point to the need for LBM dealers to offer product that is easy to install in order to mitigate the impact of diminished labor availability.

Speaking about ProVia’s vinyl siding as an example, Alpetter says, “All of our siding profiles are designed with the installer in mind and engineered to the highest standards, greatly reducing call backs and warranty issues. For take-offs and quoting we have partnered with companies like Hover to expedite the estimating process. After taking a few photos of the home, Hover will not only provide measurements of the areas, it also provides a materials list of ProVia products including any needed trims. The homeowner can even take their own photos and the contractor gets alerted when the measurements are ready, saving hours of back and forth. In this market, time really is money.”

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SO WHAT CAN LBM dealers generally expect with the siding segment? With a stability in aesthetics and the introduction of new materials to withstand harsh environments, LBM dealers will have more options that ever to present to their customers. New product lines that promise faster and easier installation will require dealers to sharpen their product knowledge so that they can effectively offer the solutions their customers need.

“There is a rising demand for stylish yet low-maintenance materials, both in new construction and remodeling projects. Homeowners seek beautiful materials that stand the test of time, allowing them to enjoy their homes without constant upkeep,” Westlake Royal’s Booz points out. And while that may feel as if the pressure is on, it won’t require a deep dive on the part of the LBM dealer to succeed when it comes to siding. ■



Westlake Royal’s new Select V-Groove profile cellular composite siding can be used both horizontally and vertically to create a clean, modern look. Additionally, three new colors have been added to the Select line: Imperial Red, Deep Pewter and Timberland.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MANUFACTURERS

BRING ON THE HEAT

COMPARED TO OTHER siding materials, thermally modified wood is a relative newcomer. While it’s been available in Europe for decades, it’s a somewhat new player here in the U.S. Generally speaking, thermally modified wood is wood that has been modified by a controlled process of being heated in an oxygen-free atmosphere, thereby changing the chemical structure of the wood’s cells which increases its durability.

“Siding is a significant, long-term investment for homeowners, so the material selected must stand up to whatever the environment throws at it—now and for decades to come,” explains Laura Keily, head of marketing for Accoya. “Modified wood is an ideal choice as it is resistant to rot, decay, and insect damage (including termites). It can be installed vertically, horizontally, or in patterns. Because it is dimensionally stable, joints stay smooth for a tailored look. Accoya can be coated or left untreated, so it weathers naturally. It is also available in wood-colored grey from



New from Accoya, Color Grey is reported to be an ultra-high-performance siding product that combines the beauty and benefits of 100% natural wood without drawbacks. Colored completely from surface to core.



Klaaswood is modified in the U.S., not treated. Through modification, wood’s natural tendencies to seek out water, rot, mold, and fungi are changed on a molecular level to eliminate those concerns.

surface to core, eliminating the need for coatings. It’s a cost-effective choice for lasting performance. It’s guaranteed for 50 years above ground and 25 years in ground or fresh water.”

Alaina Trowbridge, director of enterprise business for Klaaswood, points out the sustainable benefits of thermally modified wood. “Seeking out sustainable building products that also meet energy and building code changes, along with providing cost-effective and beautiful options to more involved homeowners, becomes a challenge and balancing act for builders in 2024,” she explains. “Builders are being asked to do a lot more with less, and it requires strategic decisions in their product choices. Klaaswood Thermally Modified Wood is stepping up to give builders a functional siding product that meets their needs. It is a sustainable product choice, utilizing zero chemicals, and is made in the U.S., providing a much lower CO2 footprint for the North American market. Klaaswood provides a 20-year warranty against rot and decay, giving builders and homeowners the product functionality they need.”

As well, thermally modified wood is often an ideal choice for modern aesthetics, manufacturers point out. “Modern elevation styles are on the rise, which typically involve contemporary architectural styles that prioritize clean lines, geometric shapes, and minimalist aesthetics,” says Amanda Hall, brand marketing manager for UFP-Edge. “These designs often incorporate elements such as flat or low-sloped roofs, large windows, asymmetrical facades, and a mix of materials like concrete, steel, glass, and wood. Our Thermally Modified Wood Collection stands out in this landscape, seamlessly integrated with other materials to create a distinctly modern aesthetic when installed vertically. Whether adorning covered ceilings, entryways, or accent areas, the addition of wood instantly elevates the home, giving a sense of luxury and sophistication.”

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Fred Small, Ashburn, VA
Sunburst Construction Inc.,

As a deck/sunroom contractor who constantly strives toward delivering low-maintenance with high aesthetic value to his clients, Fred and his team at Sunburst were seeking ways to properly finish the trim detail on their projects. They discovered VERSATEX, and our wide variety of cellular PVC trims, sheets, and tongue and groove products. Including our patented, one-piece, VERSAWRAP post covers, all of which require no paints/stains or maintenance and carry a life-time transferable warranty. Learn how VERSATEX was discovered by this contractor at

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UNIFIED STEEL STONE COATED ROOFING

Westlake Royal Building Products' Unified Steel Stone Coated Roofing has received a Class 4 and a Very Severe Hail (VSH) rating in accordance with ANSI FM4473 American National Standard for Impact Resistance Testing of Rigid Roofing Materials by Impacting with Freezer Ice Balls. According to the manufacturer, the durable, lightweight roofing system, which benefits from the structural strength of steel, is the first stone coated steel roofing product on the market in the U.S. to obtain the VSH rating. The roofing is offered with a 50-year limited and fully transferable warranty. westlakeroyalroofing.com



VOIDFORM "SACRIFICIAL FORMWORK"

VoidForm offers an extensive list of products that are all focused on "forming voids" for concrete walls, slabs, and piers, as well as below-grade utility isolation. VoidForm's products address a simple but enduring problem: In areas with expansive soils, void forms provide temporary support during concrete placement. Once the concrete is self-supporting, these forms provide a cavity where soil can expand, preventing the transfer of uplift pressures into the structural slab or beam above. voidform.com

WESTBURY SORRENTO ALUMINUM AND STAINLESS STEEL MESH RAILING

Digger Specialties Inc. (DSI) has introduced its new Westbury Sorrento Mesh Railing. According to DSI, this new railing is the ideal choice for home and commercial property owners that wish to transform their outdoor living spaces with a railing system that combines safety, functionality, and curb appeal. Sorrento Railing comes in a choice of 4', 5' and 6' preassembled sections in either 36" or 42" heights that combine aluminum posts and rails with 2-3/8" stainless steel mesh infill. Accessories include a variety of residential or heavy duty Commercial IRC and IBC approved posts and base plates. Westbury Sorrento railing is available in 12 colors with the option of textured or non-textured surfaces, and for those who wish to display a stainless steel look, a clear powder coated mesh infill is an option. The finishes are backed by a lifetime limited warranty, fade warranty, and salt and abrasive environments warranty. diggerspecialties.com



MODERN STEEL ULTRA-GRAIN PLANK GARAGE DOOR

Clopay has added four new colors—Barnwood, Cedar, Natural, and Espresso—to its popular Modern Steel Ultra-Grain Plank garage door line. The 2"-thick polyurethane foam insulated doors feature digitally printed horizontal planks with a wood-look appearance on insulated flush panel steel. The planks vary in length with no repeating grain pattern. According to Clopay, plank doors are a perfect way to warm up light and dark exteriors with eye-catching patterns and texture. The versatile style complements mid-century, farmhouse, coastal cottage, and transitional home styles with clean horizontal lines, simplistic pattern and a nice tonal variation for visual interest. The garage door is available with or without windows in sizes up to 20' wide and 16' tall. clopaydoor.com



SIMONTON MAXVIEW MULTI-SLIDE VINYL PATIO DOOR

Cornerstone Building Brands recently unveiled the new Simonton MaxView Multi-Slide Vinyl Patio Door. As contemporary design trends like dark patio door color options and transitional living design continue to rise, the newly enhanced MaxView patio door creates a high-contrast appeal. Its new features include black and bronze co-extruded exterior color options, alongside expanded sizes of up to 10' in height or 30' in width and design pressure (DP) ratings for select sizes of up to 70 to meet HVHZ requirements. The DP ratings determine a product's ability to withstand various external forces such as wind, water and air pressure. simonton.com





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THERMOCLIP HIDDEN DECK FASTENER

Because thermally modified wood decking can be brittle due to its modification, the ThermoClip Hidden Deck Fastener from DeckWise is made without sharp groove tangs or teeth that can dig in, gouge the board, and cause breakage. This deck fastener clip has a smooth polyethylene shell the manufacturer says allows the wood to move freely without the worry of board breakage or screws snapping. Available in black or brown clip colors to enhance hidden characteristics, it includes an automatic spacer leg to ensure consistent 1/4" board gaps. deckwise.com

EVOTRIM

UFP-Edge has launched EvoTrim, a revolutionary new trim product that the manufacturer says is engineered for exceptional performance and durability. Crafted from finger-jointed and edge-glued Radiata pine and spruce, and unlike traditional trim products,



EvoTrim undergoes a proprietary TRU-CORE treatment process that infuses five EPA-registered preservatives deep into the board's core. This ensures protection against rot, insects, mold, and termites, and is backed by a 40-year warranty. EvoTrim is available in two distinct finishes: Smooth (S4S) and Smooth & Resawn (S1S2E), available in 1x, 5/4, and 2x thicknesses, in widths up to 12" and lengths up to 20'. Additionally, EvoTrim comes factory-primed for consistency, saving valuable time during installation, and ensuring a beautiful finish with any quality topcoat. ufpedge.com



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FLYWHEEL FRAMING NAILERS

DEWALT has released two new cordless framing nailers—the 20V MAX XR Brushless Cordless 21° Plastic Collated Framing Nailer (DCN920) and the 30° Paper Collated Framing Nailer (DCN930). Designed with a flywheel, the nailers help minimize downtime between shots by allowing the tool to stay active after the trigger is released. According to the manufacturer, the nailers allow pros to install up to 530 sq. ft. of subflooring and complete up to 100 ft. of wall framing per charge for enhanced productivity. Each model also drives nails up to 72% more sub-flush than previous nailer model. Users can align and drive up to 3-1/2" nails at aggressive angles with the redesigned nose that is engineered for toe-nailing applications. dewalt.com



EVANSTON WORK BOOT

According to KEEN Utility, its new Evanston work boot offers the protection of a traditional work boot with the athletic feel and flexibility of a sneaker. The company’s proprietary responsive KEEN.ReGEN cushioning is reported to provide up to 50% energy return with every step, and carbon-fiber safety toes are unobtrusive and 15% lighter than steel. Other features include a KEEN.DRY waterproof, breathable membrane and full-grain Barnyard Resistant leather upper to keep the wearer shielded from jobsite messes. A tough worker with an energetic sole, the Evanston is available for both men and women. keenfootwear.com

BLUESKIN VPTECH

Henry, a Carlisle Company, has recently released a new product for residential construction that is reported to deliver energy efficiency and labor savings in one integrated solution. Blueskin VPtech combines a weather-resistant barrier (WRB), continuous insulation (CI), and seam sealing in a single, integrated panel, improving energy efficiency and reducing installation time and associated labor costs by up to 30%. Featuring a lightweight 4' x 8' integrated panel that combines Henry’s Blueskin VP100 self-sealing and drainable weather-resistant barrier, Type II R5 graphite polystyrene (GPS) continuous insulation, and patent-pending vertical and horizontal seam-sealing overlays—each Blueskin VPtech panel fully seals against adjacent panels creating a uniform, continuous air barrier. henry.com





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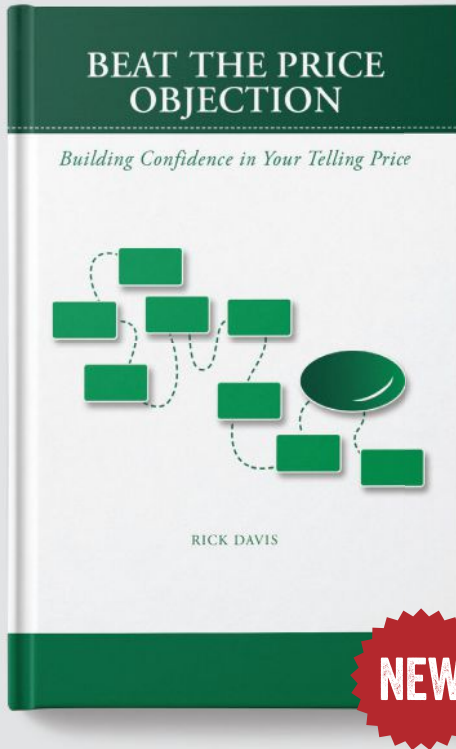
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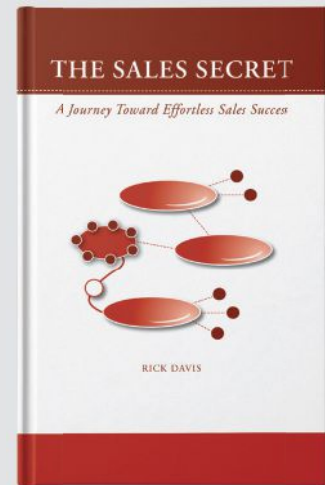
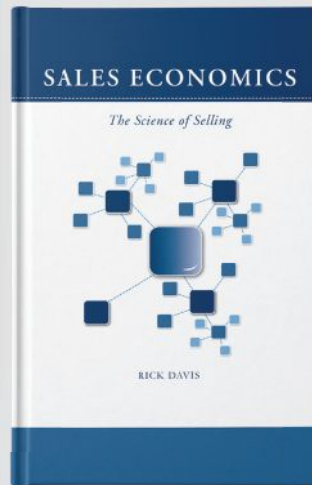
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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



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DEALING WITH POACHERS

A large competitor known for poaching talent from existing yards is coming to your market and wooing your key people. What would you do?

IT'S AMAZING how radically the LBM world has changed in just 15 years. Though you had solid experience and a proven track record as an LBM pro back in 2009, most LBM dealers and distributors were cutting back—if they weren't closing their doors—due to the Great Recession. That's why you decided to pool your meager savings, the credit limit available on your credit cards, and the positive reputation you'd established with area suppliers to launch your own company, the aptly named Shoestring Lumber.

Somehow, you managed to recruit two others, and the three of you proceeded to do what it took to make sales and earn customers. Today, the company is still small, but with the number of employees in the double digits (!), it's bigger than it's ever been, and has built a reputation as the go-to LBM dealer for serious builders, remodelers, and DIYers.

Despite grumbling among customers and staff about an impending recession, and how the government is trying to put everyone out of business, and how young people just don't want to work, and the world's going to hell in a handbasket, etc., the future looks positive for Shoestring Lumber. Or at least it did, until Beast Lumber announced plans to open a location right down the street from you.

It's not that you're afraid of competition. You and your small-but-mighty team have done just fine by remaining laser-focused on serving your customers. The crucial element in that sentence, 'your small-but-mighty team,' is a key to your success, and also the very thing that your new competitor is targeting.

Beast Lumber has earned a reputation for entering small-to-medium sized markets, then crippling existing yards by poaching their key staff members. As much as you disagree with the ethics of their approach, you understand why they do what they do. After all, what better way to take out a competitor than by hiring away its best people?

You happen to know they're using this strategy in your market, because two of your top people have shared with you that they've received very generous employment offers from Beast Lumber. Both offers were compelling—more money than you're offering complete with a solid benefits package. The two team members who talked with you are the two other original members of Shoestring Lumber, so you're confident that others are being approached as well.

If you're going to act to keep your team together, now is the time. But you're torn on how to proceed. What would you do?



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Do nothing. You know your team is paid above market, and they know how flexible you are to work with. If they really think the grass is greener, that's a lesson they need to learn.

Match/beat offers. On a case-by-case basis only, match or beat the offers made to members of your team who you absolutely don't want to compete against.

Fight fire with facts. Research the facts on how Beast Lumber treats their employees once they're onboard. Share those insights with your team members who may be tempted.

Strategize. Talk with dealers who've been through this to learn how it played out. Once you understand how serious the threat is, then decide on how best to respond.

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