

# LBM JOURNAL<sup>®</sup>

FEBRUARY 2025 | \$15 U.S. | LBMJOURNAL.COM



## DEALER OF THE YEAR 2025

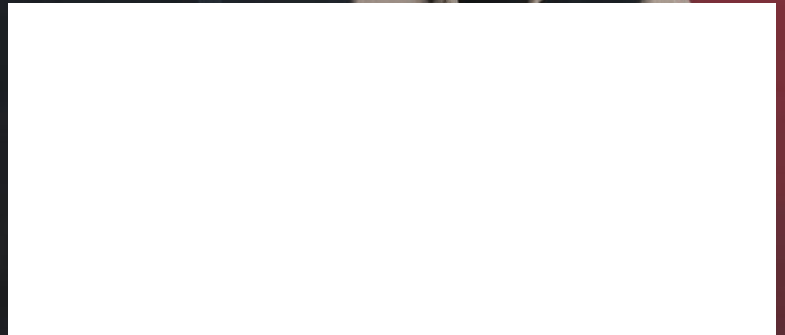
CATEGORY: \$50MM-\$100MM

**ARNOLD LUMBER**

HOW LBM DEALERS ARE  
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AND MOULDING

MATT SEMONIK, COO OF ARNOLD LUMBER COMPANY



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**Kory Hobbs**

Sales Manager, Griffin Lumber & Hardware Perry, Georgia

**G**riffin 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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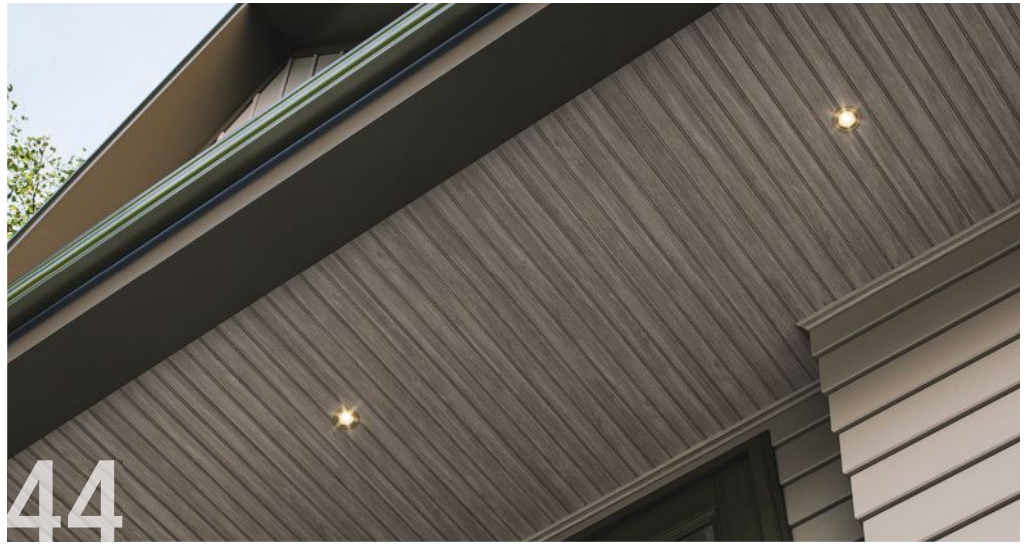


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LBM JOURNAL VOLUME 23, NO. 2 (ISSN#1930-5516) is published monthly with the exception of the combined November/December issue by Custom Built Publishing, LLC. Copyright 2025 by Custom Built Publishing, LLC, 10880 175th Court West, Ste. 240, Lakeville, MN, 55044, 952.892.7793. All rights reserved. Annual subscription rate: \$48 U.S.; \$60 Canada; and \$120 all other countries. Single copy price \$15 + S&H. Periodicals postage paid at Lakeville, MN, and additional mailing offices. Printed in the USA.

U.S. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to LBM Journal, 10880 175th Court West, Ste. 240, Lakeville, MN, 55044.

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**DEALER OF THE YEAR 2025**

CATEGORY: \$50MM-\$100MM

## DEPARTMENTS

## 8 THE BUZZ

LBM updates, news, and events. Plus, the latest from lumberyards across the country, and responses to our November/December issue Tough Call survey.

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## FROM THE PUBLISHER

**AS I WRITE THIS**, we're exactly one month away from the 2025 International Builders' Show (IBS), which will run Feb. 25-27 in Las Vegas. I don't believe I've missed an IBS for decades, and each year, more members of our team attend as well. Why does LBM Journal, a media company serving dealers and distributors, make a point to cover an event owned by NAHB ... one created primarily for builders? That's a great question. The answer is even better.

Dealers and distributors are among the largest block of attendees at this annual event. There is no other single event in the U.S. that brings together so many manufacturers and products. For 2025, more than 1,700 brands and companies will occupy more than 720,000-sq. ft. of exhibit space. Not only is this the place to be to see the latest product innovations, it is also one event that's attended by the leadership of many manufacturers. If you want to talk with someone at the top, this is the place to make it happen.

In our most recent LBM Readership Study, we ask, "What action is your company taking to boost its sales and margins?" The survey lists 15 options, including adding salespeople, expanding existing locations, updating showroom, expanding marketing initiatives, updating ERP/computer system, leveraging latest tech tools, and more. For the past few studies, here were the top three answers, in order:

1. "Evaluating new products from existing vendors."
2. "Evaluating new products from new vendors."
3. "Eliminating/replacing underperforming product lines."

To put it simply, it's all about products. We're passionate about attending this event because LBM pros are looking for products that will make a difference in their markets. This is also the reason for the heavy editorial coverage of new products and product category trends in *LBM Journal*.

Not coincidentally, this is the reason why I'm proud to once again serve as one of the judges for the Best of IBS: Most Innovative Building Products awards. This year, there were 65 products entered, which has been narrowed down to eight finalists. Some products represent incremental improvements over existing products, others represent a completely fresh take.

During our many visits to manufacturers in late February, we'll be looking at products through the lens of what would help builders work more effectively and create better projects. Because those are the products that we want to share with you. If we can help you win with your customers, then we've done our job.

— Rick Schumacher  
Executive Editor & Publisher



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'R. Schumacher'.

HAVE A QUESTION FOR RICK?  
RICK@LBMJOURNAL.COM

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



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# 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

Managing rebates, contracts, and payments in roofing and siding businesses is complex, time-consuming, and error-prone. But with BisTrack, it doesn't have to be. Epicor automates rebate calculations, payments, reporting, and compliance checks, eliminating inefficient, error-prone manual processes.

Because our BisTrack solution is curated for the building supply industry, Epicor prepares your business with predictable margins, data-driven decision-making, and error-free incentive payments.

Through close collaboration within the roofing and siding ecosystem, we build best practices directly into BisTrack—it becomes the brains behind rebate management so your teams can focus on nurturing customer relationships and pursuing new business.

***Why not reach out for a BisTrack demo from the number one building supply software provider? Contact Epicor today to learn how we can simplify and manage your rebate process and boost your revenue.***



GARRIS EVANS LUMBER DONATES TO STORM RECOVERY



FRENSCO BUILDING PRODUCTS OPENS NEW LOCATION



MEAD LUMBER CELEBRATES RENOVATIONS

## BY THE YARD

In the wake of the recent hurricane that devastated communities across Western North Carolina, the **Garris Evans Lumber** team has come together in a meaningful way to support recovery efforts. The company provided each employee with \$500 to donate to an organization of their choice. The response was overwhelmingly generous, with two-thirds of their team choosing to support Samaritan's Purse, an organization at the forefront of hurricane relief in the region. Their collective generosity resulted in a \$50,000 donation to Samaritan's Purse, helping to fuel ongoing recovery efforts and provide critical assistance to those in need. Many of the team members also directed their donations to other vital organizations in North Carolina.

**Arnold Lumber** announced the company is launching a multifamily and commercial division. Steve Rendine has been appointed as Vice President of Multi-Family/Light Commercial, which will serve Rhode Island, as well as parts of Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Kansas City, KS-based **Premier Building Supply** announced the company is celebrating five years of business. Premier Building Supply is an independently operated company under Kodiak Building Partners.

**84 Lumber** has been recognized by Forbes on its 2024 America's Top Private Companies list, ranked No. 100 out of 275 companies. The company has regularly made the annual Forbes list since at least 2018.

Queens, NY-based **Frensko Building Products** has opened a new location in Piscataway, NJ. Founded in 2009, the company serves the metro New York area, offering lumber products, insulation, steel, roofing, masonry, and more.

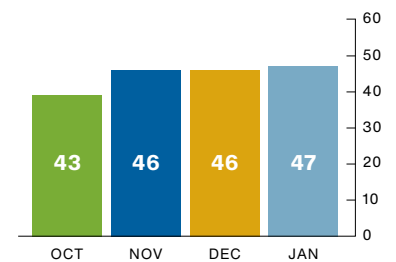
**Mead Lumber's** location in Liberal, KS hosted a grand reopening celebration to mark completed interior and exterior renovations. Mead Lumber has 54 locations across Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

Boise, ID-based **Franklin Building Supply** announced in December the company has launched a new podcast, "Ain't That Somthin'." This podcast, hosted by Levi Smith, CEO of Franklin Building Supply, highlights the inspiring stories of Idaho-based companies—their challenges, triumphs, and the people behind their success.

## DISTRIBUTION NEWS

**Orgill** has added a new vendor partner to its line-up with **Broan-NuTone**. Broan-NuTone designs and distributes residential ventilation products that enhance indoor air quality, with products including range hoods, ventilation fans, heater/fan/light combos, balanced ventilation systems, built-in heaters, and attic ventilators.

**Weyerhaeuser Distribution** will extend its footprint of **AZEK Building Products**, a wholly owned subsidiary of The AZEK Company, to two new markets: Easton, PA and Richmond, VA. Weyerhaeuser Distribution offerings in these markets will include TimberTech decking and railing, and AZEK Exteriors products. With the expansion, Weyerhaeuser now carries AZEK products at 13 distribution centers across the U.S.



## Builder confidence ticks upward

Builder confidence in the market for newly built single-family homes was 47 in January, up one point from December, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI).

Builders are facing continued challenges for housing demand in the near-term, with mortgage rates up from near 6.1% in late September to above 6.9% today. Land is expensive and financing for private builders remains costly. However, there is hope that policymakers are taking the impact of regulatory hurdles seriously and will make improvements in 2025.

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## PEOPLE IN LBM

**Snavelly Forest Products**, a wholly-owned subsidiary of MacArthur Company, and a leader in the wholesale building materials industry, has announced the promotion of **Bill Georgelis** to the position of vice president of its Eastern Operations.

**Kodiak Building Partners** has promoted **Cliff Shimer** to executive vice president of business transformation and **Mark Garboski** to executive vice president of the Southeast region.

**McCoy's Building Supply** recently announced the promotion of **Joshua Whitley** to senior vice president and chief financial officer.

Pennsylvania-based **Lezzer Lumber** announced the company has made several promotions: **Josh Kroell** has been named operations manager. **Andy Reich** is now regional sales manager for the Eastern region. **Paul Cavalier** has been named regional sales manager for the Western region. **Bo Hackney** has been promoted to store manager of Lezzer's Pennsdale location. **Mike Ashcroft** has been promoted to assistant manager of Lezzer's State College location.

**Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual Insurance Company** made several leadership changes and promotions: **Steve Firko** will assume the role of executive vice president and chief operating officer. **Rich Hall** has been appointed as executive vice president. **Steve Hicks** has been appointed as vice president of underwriting. **Lindsey DiGangi** has been appointed as vice president of field operations. **Sean Briscoe** has been appointed as vice president of loss control. **Erin Selfe** has been appointed as senior vice president of information technology. **Harold Jamison** has been appointed as general counsel.

**ABC Supply Co., Inc.** has announced that **Mike Jost** has been promoted to president and chief operating officer of the company. In his expanded role as president, Jost will continue as chief operating officer of ABC Supply, leading the performance of company locations across North America.

**Do it Best** has announced **Skiler Lehman** as the company's new director of e-commerce. Lehman brings a wealth of experience in digital product management and customer-focused solutions to this leadership role.

**LMC** has announced the appointment of **Rodney Bullion** as its new Northwest regional manager. Bullion brings over three decades of comprehensive experience in the LBM industry to his new role.



## TOUGH CALL SOLUTIONS

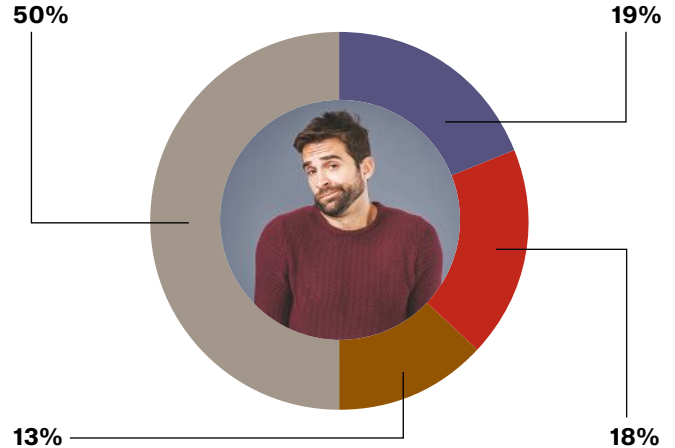
THE NOVEMBER/DECEMBER ISSUE SURVEY RESULTS FROM LBMJOURNAL.COM AND LINKEDIN.

### (Un)friendly Fire

A colleague at your lumberyard seems determined to cause problems for you and customers, and to add another challenge, he's also the owner's son. Here's how readers responded to this Tough Call.

**Document.** Instead of talking, do all communications with Don via text or email. That way you have a record of his misdirection. He may realize that he's not going to win.

**Move on.** With your skills and your resume, you'll have no trouble finding work with another LBM company. No sense fighting a battle that you just can't win.



**Get Dad involved.** It's time to call in the owner and let him know the issues his son is causing. If he doesn't believe you, at least you tried to warn him when things go south again.

**Ask why?** Sit down with Don and ask him, point blank, why he's sabotaging your work—and your company's relationships with its customers.

### FEEDBACK FROM READERS:

"Man up. Do not run to his daddy. IF indeed Don is a jerk, daddy already knows it and does not need you to remind him. Raise a stink about anyone in the owner's family and the stink from this will stick to you. Blood is thicker than water, always will be.

Own it. If you don't you will always be a victim. Did you check the shipping schedule to see if your order was on it? There is probably a procedure for this, and Don expected you to follow it. Look in the mirror and figure out how that guy could have done a better job. His are the only actions you can control 100% of the time.

Document. If the conversation is of any importance, send a recap email or text.


Move on. You could move on, but something tells me that you will find the same issues at your next place of employment."

— Bill Hofius

WANT TO SEE MORE TOUGH CALLS? CHECK OUT PAGE 56 OF THIS MONTH'S ISSUE, OR FIND MORE AT LBMJOURNAL.COM/CATEGORY/TOUGH-CALL.

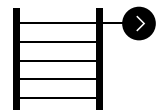


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\*Claim based on a 12'x18' deck with 8 posts and 7 panels (RDI Elevation Rail installed 49 minutes faster than competitive cable railing install of 129 minutes)

38%  
Faster Install

## MERGERS + ACQUISITIONS

**Sunpro Corporation**, a subsidiary of Clyde Companies, Inc., has acquired **Building Services Group**, expanding the company's insulation operations in Utah and extending services into Colorado. Building Services Group and its six member companies will operate under the Sunpro name.

**Beacon** acquired **Ryan Building Products** in Westwood, MA and **Fairway Wholesale Distribution** in South Hadley, MA. Additionally, to better serve customers in the St. Louis and Nashville markets, the company opened greenfield locations in Arnold, MO and Lebanon, TN.

**Builders FirstSource, Inc.** has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire **Alpine Lumber Company**. Founded in Englewood, CO, by the Kurtz family in 1963 and subsequently converted to a 100% employee owned and operated company, Alpine has 21 locations serving homebuilders and contractors in the Front Range of Colorado, western Colorado, and northern New Mexico with a broad product range including prefabricated trusses, wall panels, and millwork.

**Building Products Inc. (BPI)** has completed its acquisition of **Heartland Millwork**, a premier custom millwork manufacturer based in Larchwood, IA. The acquisition strengthens BPI's position in the millwork market and expands its manufacturing capabilities.

**Kodiak Building Partners** announced the acquisition of Minnesota-based **Kendell Lumber**, further advancing Kodiak's strategic growth in the region. This move brings together two Minnesota companies—Kendell Lumber and Simonson Lumber, both part of the Kodiak family—to enhance operations, drive efficiencies and deliver greater value to builders, contractors and homeowners across the state.

**Wincore Window Company, LLC**, headquartered in Parkersburg, WV with operating facilities in Parkersburg and Swainsboro, GA has been acquired by **Fernweh Group LLC** and its affiliates. Wincore is a manufacturer of vinyl windows, impact windows, fiberglass entry doors, and sliding patio doors primarily for the residential market.

## INDUSTRY EVENTS

### 2025

**FEB 5-6**  
BMSA ANNUAL LEARNING EXCHANGE & LBM EXPO  
Hickory, NC | mybmsa.org

**FEB 18-19**  
BLD CONNECTION-BIZCON SOUTH  
Altoona, IA | bldconnection.org

**FEB 25-27**  
INTERNATIONAL BUILDERS' SHOW  
Las Vegas, NV | buildersshow.com

**MAR 6-8**  
LMC ANNUAL 2025  
Phoenix, AZ | lmc.net

**MAR 10-12**  
LBM ADVANTAGE 2025 ANNUAL BUYING SHOW  
Lake Buena Vista, FL | lbmadvantage.com

**MAR 21-23**  
DO IT BEST SPRING MARKET  
Orlando, FL | doitbestonline.com

**APR 27-30**  
LBM ADVANTAGE NEXTGEN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE  
Grapevine, TX | lbmadvantage.com

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

**Ossian Hardware** has acquired **Markle Hardware & Rental** in Markle, IN. This strategic acquisition expands Ossian Hardware's operations to three home improvement and rental stores in Northeast Indiana, enhancing the company's ability to better serve the local community with a broader range of products and services.

**Omnia Exterior Solutions** has announced its partnership with **James & Whitney Company**, one of the premier residential roofing and exteriors companies throughout Maine and New Hampshire. The partnership marks the eighth addition to the Omnia Exterior Solutions platform this year, and the 11th since its inception in May 2023.

**White Cap** has acquired **Site Supply, Inc.**, a distributor of construction materials specializing in stabilization, stormwater and erosion control, serving non-residential end markets. Site Supply has four locations across Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

**Woodgrain Inc.**, a millwork and building products company, and **JELD-WEN Holding, Inc.** have finalized an asset purchase agreement for the sale of the Towanda, PA plant to Woodgrain. Woodgrain previously held an ownership position in the Towanda facility from 2002-12.

**MANS Lumber & Home**, a supplier of lumber and building materials serving southeastern Michigan, announced the acquisition of **Michigan Timber & Truss**, a manufacturer of custom roof trusses based in Flint, MI.

**PrimeSource Brands** has acquired **CityPost**, a provider of cable railing systems for decks, patios and lofts used in residential renovation applications. Based in Spokane Valley, WA, CityPost provides patented cable railing systems through multiple channels, including CityPost's own website, wholesale distributors, and big box retailers.

## CO-OP & BUYER'S GROUPS

Founded in 1935, **LMC** is celebrating its 90th anniversary. The organization now represents over 430 members with more than 1,800 locations across all 50 states. In 1935, 35 lumberyards joined forces and founded LMC with James L. Buckley appointed as the first general manager.

**LBM Advantage** has announced the recipients of its 2024 "Vendor of the Year" awards. These awards celebrate exceptional partnerships and acknowledge vendors whose contributions have significantly enhanced the success of LBM Advantage members over the past year.

2024 VENDORS OF THE YEAR:

**Commodities:** CertainTeed Gypsum

**Specialties:** QUIKRETE

**Millwork:** James Hardie

**Kitchen & Bath:** Cabinetworks Group

The awards will be presented during the LBM Advantage 2025 Annual Buying Show, which will be held March 10–12, 2025, at the Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando, FL.



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## **FOR DEALERS WHO SET THE STANDARD**

For dealers who set the standard, Select Cut® delivers. When quality matters, Select Cut® stands strong, giving you reliability your customers trust, making it **the smarter choice for your yard.**

### **WHY CHOOSE SELECT CUT®?**

With greater efficiency, quality, and a dedicated support team ready to assist, Select Cut® is the smart choice for dealers who demand the best. Every project should start with quality you can trust.

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- HIGH-QUALITY APPEARANCE** 

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## INDUSTRY UPDATES

**Western Window Systems**, part of the MITER Brands portfolio and a leader in designing modern windows and doors that blur the boundaries between indoor and outdoor spaces, recently unveiled its new design studio in San Diego, CA, which will serve as a collaborative hub for architects at any stage of their projects.

**Envision Outdoor Living Products**, manufacturer of Envision composite decking and Fairway Railing collection, is launching E-Fit Railing Innovations, a series of new aluminum and vinyl railing products with pro-focused innovations designed for efficiency and speed.

**Marvin** opened its newest distribution center in Windsor, CT. This expansion will enhance the efficiency of Marvin's distribution network and create additional jobs while providing a larger operating footprint.

**Feeney's** DesignRail Modern cable has been selected by Building Design + Construction as one of the 75 Top Building Products of 2024 in the Structural Products category. Recognized for its cutting-edge and user-friendly assembly, the DesignRail Modern cable has garnered praise as one of the most valuable building solutions of the year.

**Arbor Wood Co.**, a U.S. manufacturer of high-quality thermally modified wood products, has announced it has entered into an agreement to purchase a new thermokiln from Finland-based Jartek, a global manufacturer of wood thermal modification technology. Jartek's thermokiln utilizes state-of-the-art, open-system technology to modify wood and underscores Arbor Wood Co.'s commitment to environmental responsibility.

**James Hardie Building Products Inc.** has announced its 2025 Color of the Year for exterior siding—Evening Blue from its Statement Collection line of products. The calming and tranquil hue aims to bring peace and serenity to homes, reflecting the need for relaxation and tranquility.

Credit expert and LBM Journal columnist **Thea Dudley** has launched her newest book, "**The Credit Overlord: Credit Advice Unleashed**," the first in a must-read series by Dudley. With over 35 years of experience in the building materials and construction industry, Dudley, known as the "Credit Overlord," shares a decade's worth of her popular advice columns. This book offers sharp-witted guidance, practical solutions, and real-world answers to the most pressing credit and collections questions.

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A photograph of two men in a hardware store. The man on the left is wearing a dark jacket and safety glasses, looking towards the other man. The man on the right is wearing a dark vest over a blue shirt and safety glasses, holding a yellow and black power tool. The background shows shelves with various tools and equipment.

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## CUSTOMER SNAPSHOT

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**Mark Shugart**  
Co-owner of Monument Lumber  
Freedom, California



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## ASK THE EXPERT WITH PLM

PLM'S MIKE SEIWERT ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT

# LUMBERYARD SAFETY AND BEST PRACTICES

### **What are some of the biggest hazards/risks in an average lumberyard?**

From a general liability standpoint, equipment, machinery, and inventory can be a threat to public safety. For example, too often we see claims related to lumber and product displays falling and injuring people at retail locations.

Forklift and delivery truck safety is another source of claims. We have seen significant claims arise from accidents caused by forklifts and trucks striking pedestrians. We also often see loading/unloading issues where products fall and injure people or damage property.

On the property side, wind and fire are two leading hazards. In 2024, our data found that the average cost per fire-related claim was around \$1.4 million. Fires can ignite due to dust accumulation, equipment, electrical maintenance issues, and more. Strong windstorms can lead to significant roof damage. We've seen claims totaling millions of dollars from roof damage alone. And if the damage itself wasn't enough, the business interruption issues that accompany the damage can be costly without the right coverage.

### **What safety measures should yard managers be regularly monitoring for?**

Safety managers should regularly monitor for exposures that could put employees or visitors at risk. They should ensure training is conducted regularly and routine maintenance checks are performed.

To encourage a culture of safety, all employees should wear high-visibility vests. This can help limit employee injuries. Staff should also be asked to perform regular walkthroughs around the retail area and lumberyard to identify trip and fall hazards and to secure all retail displays.

On the fleet safety side, all drivers should be trained to secure loads safely. We have had several claims where poorly-secured loads have fallen off trucks and damaged other vehicles on the highway. Telematics are also a critical tool to monitor vehicle operations and driver performance. At least once a week, a safety manager should review telematics reports for company drivers to check for alerts. If a driver has several safety alerts, use this information as a tool to counsel the driver to improve safety on the road. It is less costly to retrain a driver than to hire a new driver.

For property safety, we recommend regular maintenance and inspections. Roofs should be regularly inspected by professionals and any deficiencies should be addressed quickly. Staff members should be required to regularly conduct housekeeping measures to reduce dust and limit fire risks. These safety measures can greatly reduce your risk exposure and keep damages down in the event a claim arises.



### **What kind of technology is emerging to improve safety measures?**

New tools such as telematics systems for vehicles with cameras should be utilized at all lumber businesses. The dash camera video footage telematics provides can serve as critical educational material for customer drivers. It can also protect the business owner from a claim. We have had insureds provide footage from their telematic systems that has revealed their driver was not at fault in an accident, saving them from the financial and reputational implications of a claim. This is one of the primary technologies we would recommend for lumber businesses.

### **How often should yard managers conduct safety training?**

Safety training should always be conducted at hire. We also recommend conducting training if there are any changes in operations, such as adding new equipment. Lastly, training should be conducted after any accidents with all staff so they are aware of what caused the incident and understand how to respond accordingly and prevent reoccurrence.

### **How often should lumberyard owners reassess their insurance coverage?**

Lumber prices are constantly fluctuating, so insureds should regularly be updating their insurance company on inventory changes, at least quarterly. Anytime a business adds on a new building, that should also be reported within 30 days. You don't want to find out you're underinsured and pay the penalty, particularly with increasing building and material costs. If your lumber business has not conducted an appraisal recently on the buildings, we would recommend conducting one as soon as possible.

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Mike Seiwert, CSP, ARM, is a senior loss control representative with Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual Insurance Company (PLM), the oldest and largest mutual insurance company dedicated to the wood products and building materials industry. He can be reached at [mseiwert@plmins.com](mailto:mseiwert@plmins.com). To learn more about Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual Insurance Company, visit [plmins.com](http://plmins.com).

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(see also: **financial confidence**)

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## RUSS KATHREIN

**LBM Journal columnist and vice president of lumber and building materials for Do it Best answers questions on the company's recent acquisition of True Value and how it will impact both companies going forward.**

### **What made True Value attractive to Do it Best for an acquisition?**

True Value's strong dealer network, many of which are well-positioned in LBM, perfectly complements our core strengths and growth ambitions. Current Do it Best members will benefit from expanded buying power. Current True Value retailers now can purchase lumber and building materials on a much grander scale than ever before and are being serviced by a much larger team of experts.

True Value's strong retail brand, extensive unprompted consumer awareness (measured at more than 75%), and its legacy of serving independent retailers made it a compelling opportunity. The acquisition presented Do it Best with the ability to expand scale, enhance negotiating power with vendors, and improve operational efficiencies through a more dense distribution network. Additionally, Do it Best was able to secure the True Value assets at a price that ensured long-term strategic gains without taking on legacy liabilities.

The acquisition underscores our commitment as the champion of independents to delivering unmatched value and support to Do it Best members, ensuring their long-term profitability and growth.

### **How has the transition so far been when talking with True Value retailers?**

True Value retailers who sell lumber and building materials are hungry to work with our team. Our LBM Field Sales team has been out visiting True Value LBM dealers in order to answer any of their questions, while showing them how easy it is for them to take advantage of working with an LBM team that is 20 times larger than what they previously had, and that sells over \$3 billion in LBM products annually.

Overall, the sentiment is relief and reassurance. LBM dealers are reassured by Do it Best's commitment to transparency and its servant-led culture, while being able to take advantage of the buying power and strong industry relationships that Do it Best has developed.

### **What can True Value retailers expect when they attend their first Spring Market later this year?**

True Value retailers attending their first Spring Market in Orlando can expect an expansive and collaborative experience. They'll be welcomed as part of the larger Do it Best family and have access to best-in-class education, exclusive deals, and opportunities to engage directly with leadership. The event will feature a special kickoff tailored for True Value retailers, highlighting the benefits of their new partnership and the resources available.

Specifically for LBM dealers, we'll provide an industry update, more information on our LBM programs and services to make our customers more profitable, and hold planning and strategic meetings with our team.

### **What new resources will True Value retailers gain from working with Do it Best, and conversely how will Do it Best benefit?**

True Value retailers will gain access to Do it Best's expertise in operational efficiencies, industry leading rebate, and innovative tools like our ecommerce platform and enhanced data-driven strategies for purchasing and pricing. They'll also benefit from improved supply chain capabilities and access to a deeper offering of products like LBM.

Conversely, Do it Best benefits by doubling our member count which will enhance our buying power, and secures a competitive edge in the market. The integration also offers learning opportunities, fostering stronger solutions for all members through collaboration and combined resources.

### **What are some of the long-term goals or hopes for the future following the deal?**

The True Value acquisition represents an exciting opportunity to accelerate long-term growth for our members, strengthen the independent channel, and solidify Do it Best as a leader in the hardware, lumber, and building materials industry. By combining the strengths of both organizations, we aim to provide even greater value through enhanced purchasing power, improved supply chain efficiencies, and an expanded network of member-owned locations.

Looking ahead, we're committed to leveraging this acquisition to elevate the independent retailer experience. Programs like replenishment buying, lumber futures, and reload centers, combined with our advancements in ecommerce, and education courses enable members to stay competitive and maximize profitability.

Our long-term goals include further expanding our footprint, fostering innovation in operational support and technology, and continuing to enhance the programs that empower members to thrive in a dynamic market. This acquisition isn't just about growth—it's about strengthening the partnership with our members to ensure their sustained success for years to come. ■



BY RICK DAVIS

*“My name is Joe (not my real name) ... and I’m an order-taker.”*

*“Hiii, Joe!”*

That’s how my confession started at OTA, Order Takers Anonymous. “At first, I felt okay about it. I picked up the phone and met with some builders. Many didn’t talk with me. I was naïve, so I persisted until I had several meetings with those who said they were interested in doing business with me because I seemed so interested in them.”

Fellow order-takers leaned in and nodded sympathetically. They know the slings and arrows we suffer. People demean us, and sales managers shout at their salespeople to not be one of us.

## ORDER TAKERS ANONYMOUS

*“How did it start?”* one fellow OT asked.

On the verge of tears, I confessed that Charlie Lewis gave me an order and I was addicted immediately. Not only did Charlie give me an order, but he told me he was going to continue to do so. He said that the other salesperson took him for granted and that I made his orders easy for him.

I started needing to make cold calls all the time. One led to another. Failure pushed me to chase the high of success. Success made me want more. I admitted shamefully I had become an addict.



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](http://buildingleaders.com).

As everyone nodded, one courageous OT asked, “Yes, but didn’t you have to overcome objections and really sell?”

I admitted that objections and the theories to overcome them felt overblown. If someone gave me a flat-out reason not to buy or expressed mild concerns, I learned to accept it. Strangely, the concerns often dissipated. If they didn’t, I figured I could call someone else in the market to find a better opportunity. One fellow OT laughed and reiterated, “Overcoming objections is overblown.” Everyone laughed, but I couldn’t. I was still accused of being an order-taker.

Sally (not her real name) said, “I have the same problem. If someone doesn’t want to buy from me, I figure there are a lot of other opportunities in the market, and I just keep calling people to try to take an order from someone else.” Everyone nodded.

I confessed how naïve I was. There are CRMs and spreadsheets and a host of methods for tracking your sales leads. My system was merely a list I kept in the visor of my truck. Every time I got a new lead, I wrote it down. My boss didn’t like that because he wanted everything documented in a way that he could see on his computer. I told him that an honest piece of paper is more effective than a fictitious spreadsheet.

My boss accepted my answer because of my huge sales volume, and fortunately for me, showed me how much easier it was to track my leads on a spreadsheet, which I now use. “It’s funny though,” I told the OTA group. “My boss later told the other salespeople he’d be happy if they would at least track their activity on a piece of paper honestly.”

Then he snapped, “We don’t need order-takers around here. We need salespeople like Joe!” I shuddered and felt the shame we order-takers feel. Yes, we’re getting the business and, yes, it’s profitable and, yes, we’ve achieved levels of income we didn’t expect. Wait! That’s when it hit me—every salesperson should aspire to become an order-taker, someone the customer should feel comfortable giving orders to!

Salespeople complain that our market is different or that it’s all about price. Some complain that there aren’t enough leads to go around or that service is costing them business. While all this happens, I just keep building my list of targets in the market and making the calls. I get the first appointments, and then listen to understand what my prospects are all about.

Then, after a few interactions, and sometimes on the first try when I’m lucky, they just give me an order. So ... I take it!

I wish I could overcome the stigma, but it’s not easy. In the meantime, I’ll just keep making the calls and taking the orders. That’s my story. I’m Joe and if someone gives me an order, I take it, and you should too!

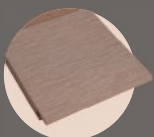
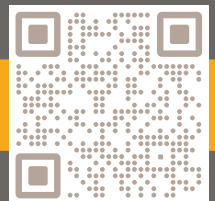
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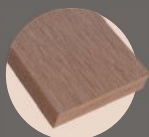
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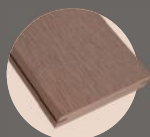
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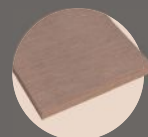
Siding



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Millwork and More!

BY BILL LEE

**THERE ARE ALWAYS GOOD** reasons why salespeople sometimes allocate their time poorly.

No one is 100% in control of their time, but if salespeople expect to increase their customer base and do more business, it's a good idea to examine some ways to get more done.

A good place to begin is to remind yourself of the Pareto Principle. You may know the Pareto Principle by another name: the 80/20 rule, meaning that 80% of outcomes come from 20% of causes.

All customers deserve to be treated fairly and ethically, but all customers don't merit the same amount of a salesperson's time. So by categorizing your customers, it's a lot easier to determine how and where to concentrate your selling time.

Let's begin by listing your prospective customers in the *Target Category*. Not all contractors in your market are viable prospects. Some of them are not creditworthy. Some are simply too small to justify the time it takes to cultivate them into full-blown customers. Some need to be pruned like deadwood.

It's an effective time-saver to establish clear-cut criteria for a prospect to be placed in your Target Category.

## CATEGORIZING CUSTOMERS CAN SAVE TIME



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

### From prospect to customer

Before the prospect makes an initial purchase, you are on the outside looking in. Your goal at this point is to earn the prospect's respect and trust. Because without the prospect's confidence, you are highly unlikely to get an initial order, regardless of the competitiveness of your pricing.

But just as soon as you earn your first order from a prospect, your strategies and tactics should change. Don't make the mistake of believing that your incredible sales skills have eliminated the competition. Just the opposite may be the case. The builder may be merely using you to get your competitor's attention.

However, once a prospect does make an initial purchase, he or she should be moved into a different category—the *New Customer Group*. But you do have your foot in the door, which is an essential first step.

### World-class service sells

Consider the following sales tactics to transition the New Customer into the next group:

1. Explain to the yard foreman that this is a New Customer. Ask him to make sure he goes the extra mile to ensure that there are no backorders and that he makes certain that the company lives up to its delivery commitments.
2. Coordinate with your dispatcher or yard foreman the timing of the initial delivery so you can arrange your schedule to arrive on the job at the same time as the delivery. It shows the New Customer that you're not taking lightly the opportunity he or she has given you. I recall one salesperson who actually accompanied the driver to make the first delivery to let the customer know how much he appreciated the opportunity to serve him and how committed he was to excellence.
3. Especially during the first few months of the new relationship, take time to personally go over each of your new customer's invoices. You might gain extra mileage if you attach a Post-It Note to each invoice, to show your new customer that you have checked that invoice for accuracy. I hope by now you are beginning to see why categorizing your customers is an effective time-saver.

Once the customer begins to purchase from you routinely, it's time to move him or her into another new category—*Established Customer*. These are the customers who have learned to trust not only you, but your entire company to take care of their product and service needs. You have proven yourself, so now you are an "insider."

It has been my experience that categorizing your customers is an effective time-saver for salespeople.

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in the Box



BY THEA DUDLEY

# JOINT CHECKING CONUNDRUM

Hey there Thea,  
We have a new customer with a not very good credit report and we could use some advice on if we should go the joint check route with our customer and the general contractor. Would that be a good option or not?

— Double checking

Dear Double Check,

“Not very good” is a leap-of-faith way to say, “Maybe this will turn out ok.” I bet you were that kid who got a bucket of horse poop and started digging proclaiming, “I know there’s a pony in here somewhere.” Nicely spun.

But I commend your quest to find a way to say yes to a sale. Is a joint check agreement a good option? Depends. It might be a great solution—IF.

If you can answer a few questions to make the decision based on information and using this tool to solve one problem, only to create another situation, then perhaps.

1. Is the general contractor creditworthy? Have you done any investigation on the GC? Pull a quick credit report and see what comes up. Google them. Any insight there? If the GC has good credit, then you have one company to build strength from. If the GC’s credit is weak or the credit report is one page of nothing, that joint check agreement is a non-starter.

2. Do you have a well-crafted joint check agreement? One that makes the trip worth the ride? Does it address what happens if the GC and your customer get into a money-stopping tiff? How does this peacock feather fluffing event effect your payment? Are the terms of payment with your customer the same for the joint check? The list goes on, but you get the idea. The cashflow stopper is in the details. Your objective is to get paid.

If you can answer “Giddy up” to both of those questions, then yes, the joint check may be the option of choice. If one or both of those is a showstopper, you have decisions to make. You can’t fix the GC’s credit, so if that is an issue, it’s a NO. This is not your stop on the credit solution ride. No matter how quality crafted your joint check agreement is, nothing overcomes crappy credit history, times two.

If the GC’s credit history is good but your joint check agreement is not up to par, this is your golden opportunity to amend that. Craft a document that addresses your main goal: getting the company paid regardless of what is happening between the other compadres in this adventure. Be specific. If you don’t know where to start, ask some credit managing buddies if they like their agreement and are they willing to share. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

A joint check agreement is only good if the check actually gets cut. Your job is to make sure your agreement addresses the key issues: payment terms, when the payment is made, that other people’s problems are not yours, and issue payment direct to us and on time in case of squabbles. Get it signed by all parties. In this case, it is all about you.

Considering options on how to make the sale happen and setting yourself up optimally for payment is always the goal. Don’t get seduced by the easy fix. I applaud your willingness and effort to find a way to yes. The yes may not be the way they expected. Depending on the quality of the mechanics lien laws in your state, that may be an option. You could consider one shipment/project at a time supported by lien rights. It could be that COD is the only option at this point. Credit is a privilege, not a right. If the customer did the crime, they have to do the time in trade credit jail.



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](mailto:theadudley@charter.net).

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BY JOHN D. WAGNER

**BY THE TIME THIS** column runs, the M&A transactions I reference below will be old news, but the acquisition trend they illustrate will remain in the news for 2025 and beyond.

In a string of recent acquisitions, Builders FirstSource acquired Kleet Lumber, a new addition to third-quarter 2024 acquisitions including High Mountain Door & Trim, Reno Truss, Sunrise Wood Designs, Wyoming Millwork, Western Truss and Components, and CRi (an installer of windows and doors). Clearly, Builders FirstSource is adding companies to its portfolio that are not traditional lumberyards.

Another example can be seen in the recent acquisition by Kodiak Building Partners of Liberty Doors & Windows. Kodiak continues to buy straight-up lumberyards, and that won't slow down. But Kodiak, like Builders FirstSource, has also made multiple acquisitions in door/millwork, gypsum, and interiors, including appliances.

What gives?

Well, acquirers like Kodiak and Builders FirstSource are "buying margin." And it doesn't take an MBA from Stanford to see why. Let's take a deeper look.

## BUYING MARGIN

Say you run a traditional lumberyard, but you lack a door and millwork shop and a truss/component manufacturing plant. You also sell truckloads of windows, but you have no installed sales.

Let's also say that you have built up a solid pro customer base that has rewarded you with loyalty for your fair treatment of them and your error-free, on-time deliveries. With that goodwill, you could sell them into more product categories, if you only had those additional categories to offer. You see your customers' architectural plans during take-offs, and it's killing you that they are buying necessary items that you don't offer.

In other words, you're leaving money on the table and someone else is picking up the margins (GPM and EBITDA percentage) on products that you know your customers are buying—just not from you.

Let's do some math. Say that your current gross profit margin is 20%. That blends in the relative lower gross profit margin you get from commodity lumber, while seeing higher gross profit margins from items you sell, like insulation, shingles, and EWP. Assume your sales are \$30 million. Your gross profit would be \$6 million. After you factor in OPEX, which we can assume you have well under control, your EBITDA margin is 10%, meaning that your EBITDA is \$3 million.

Now, let's say you add a truss/component plant, and millwork/door shop. Since these are higher margin products—items that you are now selling—let's assume that your gross profit margin for the new lines is 30%, and you are enjoying \$5 million more in sales revenue with your added products; now it's a 16.6% increase in sales. Now your sales are \$35 million, and you are operating at a higher gross profit margin. Your gross profit dollars tick up to \$7.5 million. That's the \$6 million at the lower GPM, and the \$1.5 million from the incremental higher margin sales.

For now, assume that your OPEX as a percent of sales doesn't change. In this case, your EBITDA margin would increase to 13% from 10%. Your resulting EBITDA dollars will increase from \$3 million to \$4.5 million, a 50% gain, because you captured the margin you were losing to others.

This is exactly what Builders FirstSource and Kodiak are doing. They know they have customer goodwill, and they are leveraging that to capture the sales in product categories that their core lumberyards aren't always offering. Since these companies don't have to be actually housed within the core lumberyards' locations, companies like Builders FirstSource and Kodiak can shop that business across town, only this time it's "to themselves," and not to a competitor. They have captured those dollars, millions of them, by packing complementary businesses around their core offering.



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

	Base KPIs	Improvement	New Total	Increase
Sales	\$30MM	\$5MM	\$35MM	16.60%
Gross Profit Dollars	\$6MM	\$1.5MM	\$7.5MM	25%
Gross Profit Margin	20%	30%	21%	
EBITDA	\$3MM		\$4.5MM	50%
EBITDA %	10%		13%	



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# ALLIED BUILDING STORES

## CELEBRATES 60 YEARS

Monroe, Louisiana based Allied Building Stores, Inc. celebrates 60 years of business as a premier lumber and building materials co-op. What began in 1965 as a cooperative effort to create competitive advantages for small lumber yards has grown into a trusted network that empowers its members to thrive in a dynamic marketplace. Today, as ABS honors its legacy, it also looks ahead: expanding its distinctive impact to dealers across the United States.

### Six Decades of Service and Innovation

ABS was founded on the belief that collaboration creates strength. A group of forward-thinking dealers from Texas and Louisiana recognized the value of pooling resources to reduce material costs and stay competitive in the face of emerging big-box retailers. Over the years, that vision has remained at the heart of ABS's mission: "To create

success for our members by reducing the costs of doing business, sharing our expertise, and fostering a cooperative community culture."

### What ABS Offers

Today, ABS continues to deliver services that align with its founding principles, while embracing modern challenges. Some of those services include:

- **Strategic Vendor Partnerships:** Partnerships with trusted industry suppliers and manufacturers give members access to a wide variety of products and exclusive deals. By leveraging collective buying power directly with manufacturers, ABS ensures members access to the best prices on high-quality building materials.

- **Market Intelligence:** The ABS teams of buyers and traders provide expert insights on market direction,

*"Celebrating 60 years is not just about looking back—it's about building forward,"*



emerging trends, and strategies to help members navigate ever-changing commodity markets.

- **A Collaborative Community:** Members benefit from being part of a cooperative that fosters connections and knowledge-sharing through trades-hows, corporate events, and social platforms.

## Looking Ahead

ABS's 60th year marks a milestone in its commitment to its members and the industry it serves. "Celebrating 60 years is not just about looking back—it's about building forward," says Dale Mercer, President of ABS. "We're proud of what we've achieved with our members and are excited to share our vision for the future." For independent dealers seeking a partner that values integrity, innovation, and community, ABS offers a tremendous legacy of success and a strategic vision for the future. 



BY RUSS KATHREIN

**I RECENTLY RAN ACROSS** a meme on LinkedIn by a man named Dave Kline. He listed four underrated career skills and it really hit home for me because it listed some subtle traits that I have found to be helpful in my career. It also reinforced a lot of what I have preached about being an effective team member. So with his help, let's explore those career skills and maybe throw in a couple of our own.

**Raise the energy in the room:** Be a positive force and put yourself out there. Walk in the room like you know everybody. Even if you disagree, make each interaction productive and purposeful. While it is easy to find fault or put people down, expend the energy to lift people up. There is a great Maya Angelou quote that touches on this: *"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."*

**Be enjoyable to work with:** Make people look forward to being around you. Be someone that focuses on solving problems, rather than complaining about them. Don't get caught up in the drama, and do not create drama. While it can be helpful to be a devil's advocate, people would much rather be around a Tigger, than an Eeyore. Make things fun.

**Keep your commitments:** Focus on execution rather than making excuses. Don't overpromise and underdeliver. Be the person your leaders and team know will deliver in the end. Trust is the foundation of all relationships. In the workplace, trust is like gold. Once you have it, you never want to lose it or give it up.

**Lead regardless of title:** I call this using implied leadership. You do not need to have a title to make things happen. One of the best things that happened to me was owning a business early in my career. Ever since then, I treat every job like I am an owner and make my decisions through that lens.

Take initiative and make things happen. You will be surprised how people will start to look at you differently.

**Be present:** In today's world, there are many distractions, and we are encouraged to multitask. When you are meeting with people, set your phone down and focus your attention on the person who is talking. Turn on your camera on a video call. When it is off, we all know that you are doing something else and not paying attention. Show interest in what they are saying, and don't think about what you are going to say next while they are talking.

**Respect people's time:** Don't schedule a meeting if it can be handled with a quick conversation. End meetings early once you have accomplished what you set out to do. Don't hold everyone up because you still have time on the clock. Don't bore people with a huge PowerPoint or spend the first 10 minutes of a meeting going over what you are going to be talking about in the meeting. Ask kindly for the information you need. Don't ask for a bunch of extra information because maybe it would be nice to have. Find a way to simplify a process. How many of us have filled out multiple forms at a doctor's office where they ask you for your name and all of your detailed personal information over and over on every form? Why can't they use it from the first form and just tie it to your name on every other form?

**Communicate in the most personal way available:** A text is more personal than an email, a call is better than a text, and an in-person conversation is always the most effective way to connect with another individual.

What other underrated career skills are you aware of? Send me your thoughts to [russ.kathrein@icloud.com](mailto:russ.kathrein@icloud.com). Maybe we will get enough ideas to put together Chapter 2 of Underrated Career Skills.

## UNDERRATED CAREER SKILLS



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



**LBM** JOURNAL  
**DEALER**  
OF THE YEAR  
**2025**  
CATEGORY: \$50MM-\$100MM

# Congratulations Arnold Lumber!

Rooted in the Rhode Island community for over a century, Arnold Lumber Company has grown from a small wood lot in North Kingstown into a cornerstone of the state's building industry. Established in 1911, the company has built lasting relationships with builders, contractors, and homeowners by consistently delivering quality products and exceptional service. With a steadfast commitment to innovation and customer satisfaction, Arnold Lumber continues to uphold its tradition of excellence, meeting the evolving needs of the communities it proudly serves.

This award recognizes Arnold Lumber as a high-performance independent dealer in the \$50MM-\$100MM category, committed to best practices, a tradition of integrity, and giving back to the community.

Backed by the strength of the LMC network with 1,800+ locations and billions in buying power, Arnold Lumber leverages its connections to offer customers unparalleled value, premium products, and trusted expertise. There is no limit to what they can do.

Learn how you can too!

[www.LMCDifference.com](http://www.LMCDifference.com)

**LMC**  
Building Business Together.®

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

# CULTURE IS KEY AT ARNOLD LUMBER

BY MIKE BERGER

**F**or Arnold Lumber Company, headquartered in West Kingston, RI, success has been built over the past 110-plus years by not being afraid to embrace change. With three other locations in Wakefield, Bristol, and Westerly, RI, the fourth generation family-owned lumber dealer had humble beginnings. “We originally started off as a sawmill way back in the day,” Matt Semonik, COO of Arnold Lumber Company reminisces. “We were taking rough cut lumber, or taking trees and then cutting them into rough cut lumber. It wasn’t until the early 70s, when Art Arnold Jr. took over the business from his father, that we really became a building materials company. Nine years ago, he shifted and got out of the day-to-day operations and handed it over to his daughters, Kate and Allison. So it’s Allison Arnold and Kate Arnold Carret, who are the two managing owners in the business and their sister, Liz Arnold Siddle. And so the three women actually own the business now, and Kate and Allison are co-CEOs.”

**At Arnold Lumber Company, hiring the right person that’s a fit for its corporate culture is just the beginning. The company feels it’s important as well to invest in its people’s education, both in the industry and from a leadership standpoint.**

Today, the company has its eyes on growth, as it has since its founding. It’s biggest percentage of annual sales—just shy of \$90 million—now comes from special orders that include windows, doors, and special decking orders. And that financial success Semonik credits to an aggressive embracing of technology. “In the past nine years, we have gotten really, really aggressive at leveraging technology to help us run our business on a day-to-day basis. We haven’t been afraid of it. We’ve embraced it around every corner,” he says.

“We are actively involved with BisTrack with Epicor, and we leverage Epicor Warehouse Management Software pretty heavily. We haven’t been afraid to try different things from a technology standpoint, and I think that’s given us an edge.”

Semonik is quick to add, however, that technology is only part of what differentiates Arnold Lumber from the competition. “We’ve embraced technology, but the focus was, how do we become everlasting? How do we ensure our viability into the future?” he says. “Part of that was embracing technology. The other part was attracting talent that’s going to take us into the future. When I got into this industry nine years ago, I heard so much about how this is an industry that’s graying out, how this is an industry that doesn’t necessarily have that next generation to be able to take it into the future, and didn’t necessarily have the means to be able to develop and grow those people.”

“So as we went down this technology shift, knowing technology was going to give us some efficiencies, we also knew technology was going to give us the ability to be able to attract talent that didn’t necessarily have the background in the industry, and allow them to become successful quicker.”

## Attitude first

Arnold Lumber has a true culture of hiring first for attitude, Semonik points out, constantly looking for the traits that it wants in people. “I feel we have a great culture, but a culture can also grow and become better over time. And so I challenge the leadership of the organization when they’re looking to hire people that they put culture first,” he recommends. “Does the person have the right attitude? Does the person have the right drive? Does the person want to be successful? Does the person fit in with who we have? Are they going to make us better, or is it going to be a challenge to bring them up to speed? And that has allowed us to really excel in the marketplace with people that didn’t necessarily have 30 years of lumber experience and allow them to be successful.”

Part of enabling success comes from putting a heavy emphasis on training, Semonik stresses. “We have opened up avenues for people to train. So we put a heavy emphasis on ensuring that the people have the access, whether it’s to spend time with our suppliers’ and manufacturers’ training on the products that they sell us, whether it’s to spend time in different departments within our organization, or say,



'Hey, I found this class that I would like to take,' or 'I found this seminar that I think would be beneficial.' We look at that and we invest in our people's education in the industry, and from a leadership standpoint. We feel that's extremely important. And for us to step into the fifth generation, it allows that fifth generation to come into the organization. We need to be bigger and better and more profitable, and have the reputation in the state and in the region, and for that matter, in the industry, of being a great place for people to come and have a career."

All of this doesn't mean that Arnold Lumber doesn't have challenges it needs to face. "Growing the way that we grew this year," Semonik explains, "knowing what we have on the horizon in the upcoming years, we know that we have to continue to build our employee base and build the culture we still have. We've got a good proportion of very, very successful and dedicated employees that are probably within that three to seven year retirement range, and ensuring that we balance being aggressive and getting the right talent in with maintaining a profitable business becomes tricky."

### An eye on the future

Arnold Lumber has growth in mind that they need to be strategically planning for. Along with expanding existing properties in 2023 and 2024, Arnold Lumber will soon be starting up a new division focused on multifamily and commercial construction. Additionally, it is in an active search for property in the northern part of Rhode Island to continue expansion northward towards Boston. "And so the challenge continues to become, how do we ensure that that pipeline continually gets filled? How do we position ourselves in the marketplace so our customers know what we're doing, our vendors know what we're doing, and the people that we're trying to attract know what we're doing."

With the adaptation of technology, Arnold Lumber has taken a similar forward-thinking approach towards staying top of mind with its customers to support its growth plan. Historically, the company had relied heavily on

As the first successful hire for the executive team by sisters Allison Arnold and Kate Carret, Matt Semonik, now Arnold Lumber's COO, has been instrumental in shaping and executing the vision of collaboration and fostering culture.

print advertising, but it realized that approach was getting very stale, says Semonik. "A lot of our competitors do a ton of radio commercial ads. They do some TV ads. We've toyed with that in the past, and we really found that we weren't getting the traction that we needed."

Instead of those traditional methods, this year, the company's push has been social media. It launched a YouTube series entitled, "Breaking Ground," where the company partners with local contractors to show the best products and practices in construction. It also utilizes Instagram with short 15-45 second clips along with Facebook and LinkedIn posts to help push its messaging. ►

“It has been ultra-successful for us, and our suppliers and manufacturers have truly embraced it. They see the value in it, of being able to get directly to the consumer in a market, which I think they’ve struggled with in the past. So when you do things like ‘Breaking Ground,’ it ties everything together. It helps educate the homeowner. It helps educate those contractors out there that may not necessarily know what product X or product Y actually does or how to install it. And it gives that manufacturer the ability to be in front of a local audience, which they absolutely adore. Then to top it all off, it just really helps paint and reinforce our culture, and allows us to continue to expand our sphere of influence in the marketplace.”

**Community first**

That visibility comes from more than a strong social media presence, Semonik is quick to point out. Giving back to the community is also a vital part of the company’s philosophy. And while it supports local sports teams and the like, Arnold Lumber likes to think outside the box.

“First off, we really like to support the Eagle Scout program,” Semonik explains. “Any Eagle Scout candidate that comes to Arnold lumber gets a set amount of free materials for their Eagle Scout service project. And if they come in

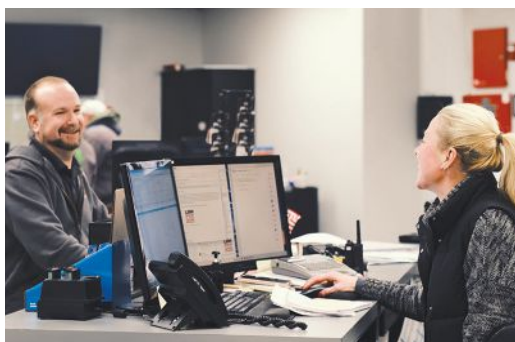
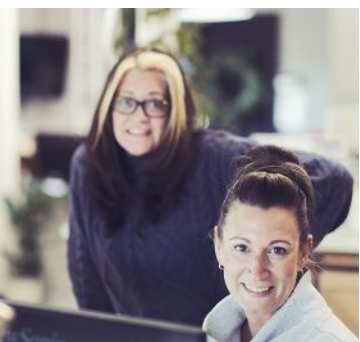
and they do a really good presentation, and it’s something that we stand behind, we will sometimes do more.”

In addition, every month Arnold Lumber hosts a “dress for a cause” event, where for a \$5 donation an employee can wear a shirt or ribbon to show support for a cause (such as Wounded Warrior Project, for example).

“On top of that, there are a couple of really big things that we try and stay involved with every year,” Semonik points out. “There is the Gloria Gemma Breast Cancer Resource, a foundation with which we do a big wing eating contest in late summer to help raise money for breast cancer awareness. We raised over \$12,000 this year—more than double the previous year, and we hope to double it again.”

As well, Arnold Lumber works with the Johnnycake Center for Hope, a local community center that helps underserved families. “We do a massive toy drive every single year in our Wakefield store. We’ve got a sleigh that we put in the front of the window. Contractors, employees, and members of the community alike can donate toys and gift cards. And then on donation day, we take one of our Arnold lumber trucks, we put the sleigh on top of the flatbed. Our employees dress up as Santa Claus, the Grinch, Mrs. Claus, Rudolph. We pile the toys onto the back of the truck on our way to

By implementing a philosophy of hiring first for cultural fit, Arnold Lumber has built over the years a team that prides itself on its reputation.



the Johnnycake Center for Hope. We always stop at the local school and let the kids run out around the truck and see Santa Claus, and see all the toys, and Santa tells them that he's taking those toys to get them loaded up in bags to deliver in a couple weeks to all of them."

By putting company culture first, Arnold Lumber Company has succeeded in steering a path of growth through uncertain times. It's a strategy Semonik is proud of. "With culture being the key focus, especially over the past few years, making sure that prospective employees have the culture that we want is imperative for them joining the team. The Arnold family has always felt that if we do what we can to make the employees, the customers, and our suppliers successful, the company will be successful as well!" Semonik explains. ■

#### GET TO KNOW ARNOLD LUMBER COMPANY

Founded:	1911
Ownership:	Family
Locations:	4
Employees:	155
ERP Software:	Epicor BisTrack
Leading Product Category:	Special orders
Business Breakdown:	Pro 85-90% Homeowner 10-15%



"In our industry, independent lumber yards work hard to differentiate themselves as we are all selling the same products to contractors and homeowners. Arnold Lumber Company has the words "Build Trust" in our brand, and we strive to do that within every aspect of our company. For the past 50 years, it has been an important part of our business to make all of our partners—vendors, customers, employees and the company—successful.



Over the past few years, our investment in the culture of the company, the technology we are implementing, and the focus on making sure that we are servicing every partner in the business is what helps us stand out in our market and grow as a team. While we are growing, we find it important to remain a family business at heart. The values of service and relationship are what lead our company to recognition within the industry such as this LBM Journal's Dealer of the Year Award, and the Arnold Family is grateful to our team for standing out and achieving this award in our name."

Allison Arnold, President & CEO

"Being named LBM Journal's Dealer of the Year Award (\$50MM–\$100MM) is both an honor and a celebration of our entire team's commitment to pushing boundaries, embracing change, and working together to innovate.



This recognition is not only about today's achievements but is deeply rooted in the entrepreneurship, dedication to service, and vision of the leaders who laid the foundation for our success. It reflects the incredible journey that our family, company, partners, and communities have undertaken together.

When Allison and I assumed fourth-generation leadership, we knew we had some big "boots" to fill. The prior generations of Arnold men in our family brought relentless passion and drive, always striving to elevate the company to new heights. Their legacy inspired us to carry forward that same determination and commitment to excellence.

Our father, Art Arnold, Jr., was ahead of his time—and ahead of the competition—in many ways. While there was no Art Arnold III, this never gave him pause. His belief in our ability to lead as women in an industry historically dominated by men gave us the confidence to step into operating the family business with pride and purpose. Of course, this confidence didn't come without some great coaching and life lessons along the way.

Our commitment to building strong connections and embracing change has always been at the core of what makes our company truly special. This foundation continues to fuel our growth and success. I am curious to see what lies ahead for the next generation, but I am also learning to pause and appreciate the successes that Allison and I can celebrate together with our family and team.

We are incredibly grateful to the people who nominated and selected our company for this recognition. Our next goal? To be recognized in the \$100MM+ category in the near future!

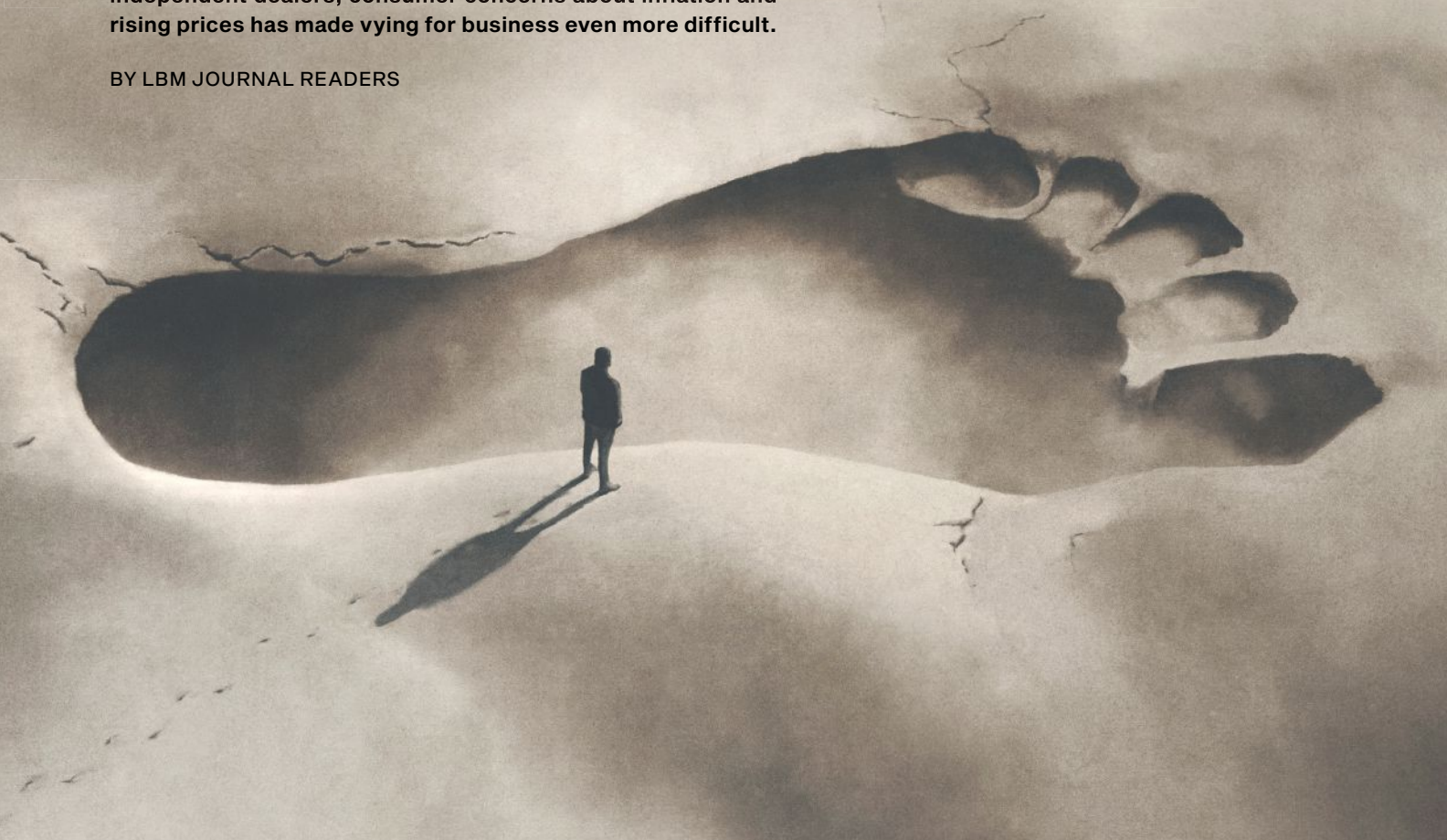
Cheers to Team Arnold and the incredible LBM industry—a community full of amazing people we are proud to be a part of."

Kate Carret, President & CEO

# STANDING UP TO THE BIG GUYS

While competition with large national chains is nothing new to independent dealers, consumer concerns about inflation and rising prices has made vying for business even more difficult.

BY LBM JOURNAL READERS



Nearly 120 readers responded to our Real Issues survey email (let us know at [operations@lbmjournal.com](mailto:operations@lbmjournal.com) if you'd like to be on the list). **THE QUESTION:**



“We face an increasingly competitive environment in our local market. We have the capabilities and the capacity to serve builders, but frequently can't get past the larger, national chains operating locally, taking projects at significant discounts. We'd love to learn how other dealers compete effectively against much larger competitors.” How would you respond to a dealer who posed this scenario?

#### **TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE TOP ANSWERS FROM THIS MONTH'S SURVEY.**

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

“We specialize in post-frame building materials and in that niche we are able to compete with larger suppliers.”

“We are located in a rural area and primarily serve rural and agricultural builders.”

“We have a corporate company culture on customer first service where we try to be legendary in the level of service we give all our customers from the retail stores to our jobsite deliveries.”

“Service!”

“We belong to buying companies, which helps us stay competitive on price, we give great service, and people save two hours of driving time by buying from us.”

“Better service during and after the sale.”

“To stand out from our competition, we strive to make a personal connection, and become an invaluable resource. Utilize technology to be our most efficient and work as a team from sales to yard and delivery.”

“Service levels that offer value.”

“Honestly, we don't try to compete with the larger chains. We do what we do best and that's offer great customer service, stay on top of the most up-to-date technology to benefit our customers and employees, and focus on making lasting relationships. We've never claimed to be the cheapest but strive to live our Service Promise and Value Statement in each situation.”

“There is nothing that Builders FirstSource, US LBM, 84 Lumber, etc. can do that an independent can't do better. You mentioned price in your question. Okay, remember that you have that weapon too ... and sometimes you have to use it.”

“We struggle with that exact same problem, also keeping CDL drivers who are in very short supply.”

“Focus on your strengths or create an advantage. Large nationals aren't known for high quality, just low prices. Don't join the race to the bottom. Spend time sourcing quality material. Don't cut corners. Make every sale profitable. It's okay to make fewer sales at a higher (or more appropriate) margin. Laser focus on quality material and superior service. Then focus on the customers that can appreciate that and offer the same to their customers. Promote this advantage to your market and make sure the end consumers can see it too.”

“Sell in service.”

“Find out all their details: What product(s) are they selling and how do they compare to yours? How are they buying? Do you share wholesalers and would a conversation with your rep help? How do your delivery fees/scheduling/flexibility compare?”

“We stay fairly competitive price-wise with the larger chains, but where we beat them is with delivery and service. We also have very knowledgeable sales people vs not being able to find someone to help you in the large chain stores.”

“Keep quoting and try to sell your service and competency for handling large projects.”

“Better service/expertise and quality products.”

“As an independent gypsum specialty supply location, we compete against the top national chains in the same industry. We lose out on some of the huge projects simply due to national-level price advantages and the sheer volume of material. On all other projects, we can get close to the winning number. To compete with these folks, you have to be better and faster at the things they're good (or not good) at. For example, they have a corporate safety program, so you build yours to match or surpass theirs. Since your competition sends all quotes to corporate for pricing, it takes them 48 hours to get a quote back to a customer. So, you make your window 12 hours. Also, make one of your goals perfection in regards to shipping and billing accuracy.”

“Ask questions of customers to seek if discount dealers have issues with service.”

“Remind your customers about how you're saving them time and headaches when pricing issues come up. As for your vendors, you have to be the squeaky wheel and don't let up. Try to partner with ones your competition doesn't use and don't be afraid to put a longtime 'old reliable' vendor in the penalty box if they're not helping you. My last advice is to embrace being the underdog ... you won't win them all, but the ones you do will be sweet.” ▶

"It's about serving the customer and providing a personal approach to their projects. We get to know our customers and it's not all about price. You have to compete on price to a certain level but if it's close it really comes down to service."

"We are good at our specialty."

"Be more nimble, out-service the competition, and care about your customers. Be the best you can be."

"One of the biggest hurdles we face is not being able to be competitive with the big chains from a price standpoint, but rather the perception that because we are an independent, local lumberyard, people are often under the assumption that we are automatically more expensive than the big guys."

"Offer exceptional service."

"Service, service, service. We do complete take-offs and turn them around quicker than the big boxes can. Most of our deliveries are same or next day on lumber because the big boxes can't react that quickly."

"Any customer that buys on price alone may not be your customer. Focus on customers that are in line with your value proposition."

"When you hear of a job that was lost to another company, be upfront with the contractor and ask what they did that you didn't, was it pricing or service? This will in turn build a relationship with that customer above the big stores. We all know they don't get treated at a 'human' level at the big stores. Also, tell your front counter to greet customers by first name every time they see them. This creates a welcoming feeling, which is also not received at the big stores."

"Superior product knowledge and customer service."

"We offer the builders a lot of customer service and many years of experience to assist them with projects that big box retailers just don't have around here. We do not focus on the discounts that builders get from those places, but on the one-on-one interactions we provide to them. We keep a list of contractors on hand and go through it every fall. We give about 40 contractors a \$25 gift card in a Thanksgiving card to the grocery store closest to them. Then we also give them a hand-delivered Christmas gift with our logo on it, i.e. sweatshirt or this year a sports chair. We choose to spend money on the contractors by thanking them in this way. We have some new builders in the past couple of years who have specifically said how much they appreciated being appreciated by us."

"One of the ways we compete is with higher levels of service, specifically more knowledge about the product and its application. We also buy as strategically as possible to level the margin playing field."

"Know what you are and know what you aren't."

"Just keep trying/find a niche."

"We distinguish our company by providing more services and financing than our competitors. We don't try to compete with the bottom feeders. We have learned that builders who always want the rock bottom price will never be good profitable customers, so let someone else lose money trying to sell to them."

"Our outside sales team prices to where it needs to be to win."

"We definitely rely on our knowledge, prompt follow-up, and expedited delivery capabilities."

"Service, you can't beat them on pricing."

"Pick your battles. Try and go after work that they aren't interested in. Find local builders to work with, partner with them, and service them to the best of your abilities. The big jobs always look intriguing, but no one makes money on them by the time they beat you up on price."

"On-time delivery with no mistakes."

"Focus on custom builders. Focus on homeowners by changing the way you market your business. Look to schools and civic organizations so homeowners know you are present in your community. Make a point to market yourself differently."

"Provide service, have knowledgeable sales staff, and stay in front of the customer."

"There is no silver bullet—it comes down to continually working on building relationships and being ready to jump when an opportunity presents itself. The big guys will mess up eventually. When they do, take your shot and impress the customer. Consistently outperforming and outservicing your competitor is the only way. You will never win on price so don't try, but you have to be close. Almost equally important is evaluating your operation. Make sure you're not beating yourself first. You may have to change how things 'have always been done' to stay competitive."



**Responses from wholesale distributors, manufacturers, and service providers:**

“It isn’t hyperbole to say if the price difference isn’t in the 25-50% range with a big box/national chain, it simply isn’t a better overall value. This is of course true in terms of service but it may be most prevalent when it comes to billing. The time invested dealing with these billing departments can be a hidden expense that often goes unaccounted for.”

“Adapt and change approaches to your strategies. Whether that be alterations to your supply chain processes, adopting new technologies, sales tactics, etc. Overall, becoming more creative will open up new avenues.”

“Relationships backed by products with a proven track record of success and first class service.”

“Lead with value and service first. Price will only be an issue in the absence of those two offerings.”

“We try give the fair prices along with quicker service. Personally as a sales representative, I keep a professional etiquette with the competition.”

“Everyone needs to make a profit. Don’t be fooled by some of the discounts that are thrown around by the large chains, deliver what you promise, more often than not they can’t. Don’t be afraid to go after the big stuff, just don’t let them down and more will beat a path to your door. We have done it too many times to count and we are operating out of one location but are shipping products nationally.”

“Leverage superior service, support, and relationship building, show how you can be more flexible than larger organizations. Stay close and wait for opportunities great or small to service the builders’ needs or be the person that picks up the pieces when others stumble.”



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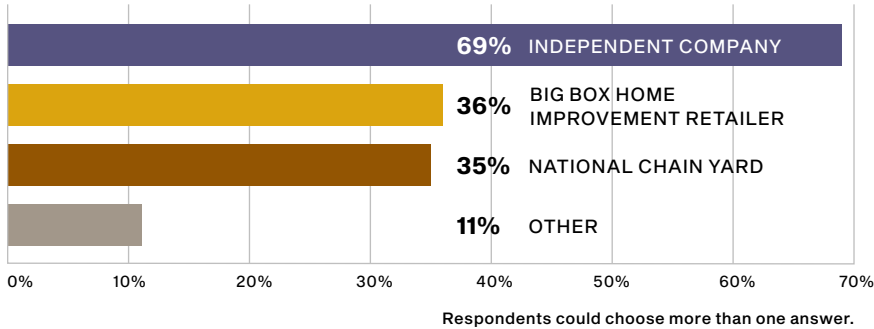
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**Q**

Which of the following best describes your primary competition?



**Comments from dealers:**

“We are the only lumberyard in this town, but we have several big box stores 50 miles away.”

“Amish lumberyards.”

“Two competitors would be Supply houses and White Cap.”

“Specialty 1 Step, Roofing, Siding Deck.”

**Comments from vendors:**

“Equity-owned manufacturers.”

“Consolidation and mills.”

“Other lumber treaters/manufacturers.”

“Technology/POS systems.”

“Other manufacturers.” ■

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## Manufacturers see a bright future driven by the repair and remodel categories

BY MIKE BERGER

**WHEN IT COMES TO** differentiating a home or other structure from others around it, trim and moulding can make all the difference. Our ancient ancestors realized this, and made good use of it. For example, the Great Pyramid of Giza—the only one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World still in existence—was originally trimmed out in smooth, polished white limestone that gleamed in the sun, making it visible for miles around. It was also originally topped with a decorative trim piece called a pyramidion, which was likely covered in gold or a mixture of gold and silver called electrum.

While perhaps not as grandiose as the Great Pyramid, today's homes make just as grand a use of trim and moulding to distinguish themselves from surrounding structures. And while the housing market may be showing continued signs of uncertainty, the trim and moulding segments remain strong players in an otherwise soft economy.

According to a recent report from Grand View Research, the U.S. residential remodeling market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 4.6% from 2024 to 2030, leading trim and moulding manufacturers to predict a strong forecast for the coming year. “The trim and moulding segment is positioned for steady growth, aligning with the overall home remodeling market,” says Steve Booz, vice president of marketing for Westlake Royal Building Products. “While the past year saw a slight dip in spending, projections show an uptick in home improvement activity through the middle of 2025, setting the stage for growth in this category.”

Rick Kapres, vice president of sales and marketing for Versatex Trimboard, also sees a strong future for the trim segment, despite concerns over the housing market. “When you get into trim, whether it's new construction or remodeling, and if the new construction market



The Grove Collection from Westlake Royal Building Products combines the look of stained wood planks and trim with the performance benefits of cellular PVC, ideal for dressing up outdoor living spaces, porch ceilings and soffits. Grove Collection is low-maintenance, long-lasting, and moisture and insect resistant, and it's available in six colors: American Walnut, Charred Timber, Natural Cedar, Oak Ridge, Smoke Grey and Weathered Oak.



is not as strong as we might want it to be, we certainly expect the remodeling segment to be there,” he explains. “There’s some people that are trapped in their homes, but they have lower interest rates. And, you know, the price of housing and rates have jumped dramatically. So they are forced to do some remodeling. A lot of that involves aging housing, and that lends itself to new siding and new trim. And certainly, you know that investment with the exterior and a greater curb appeal does lend itself to a return on investment if and when they do sell. So, whether it’s new construction or not, we still think the trim market is going to be healthy.”

Similarly, Jim Flickinger, group marketing director for Accsys (maker of Accoya trim), predicts strong trim demand, but also sees changing consumer interest as an additional driver as homeowners begin to navigate towards alternative options. “We see the trim and moulding market continuing to experience steady growth next year as economic factors, such as interest rates, stay flat and possibly come down slightly,” he says. “This will drive segment growth in new construction, remodeling, and replacement activities. There is still a strong desire to invest in homes, and factors such as curb appeal, sustainability, durability, and diverse material options are key drivers of this segment.”

“Wood is still the preferred material for trim and moulding, chosen for its aesthetic appeal and real wood beauty, which is the most versatile substrate for craftsmanship,” he adds. “With the growing interest in long-term value and durability, innovative materials are gaining traction, offering greater design freedom and robust performance.”

Likewise, Kim Guimond, chief marketing officer for Modern Mill, also predicts consumer demand for alternative trim materials to be a driving growth factor. “In 2025, the trim and moulding market can expect to experience steady growth, largely driven by the continued shift from wood to more durable, low-maintenance and sustainable materials,” she explains. “Growth in the trim market will also be supported by an optimistic economic outlook, driven by continued remodeling as homeowners ‘stay put’ on account of their locked-in, low interest rates and continue to improve existing properties as well as an acceleration of the multi-family market.”

Steve Conroy, president of Welco Lumber Corporation, also predicts strong demand in the trim and moulding segments, with multi-family construction adding to the growth rate. “I see the trim and moulding segment growing in 2025, driven by strong demand in both the multi-family and residential renovation markets,” he explains. “We are forecasting single-family housing starts to remain steady to 2024 growth trends, supported by economic growth, favorable government policies (such as potential tax cuts and deregulation), and slightly lower mortgage rates. Increased home remodeling will be supported by rising home equity, while multi-family construction will continue to grow due to urbanization, housing shortages and affordability. I expect affordability challenges in the single-family market may push some people toward renting, which will drive even greater demand for purpose built multi-family housing. Demographic trends, such as population growth and household formation, will further drive demand for housing and building materials.”

Made from upcycled rice hulls, Acre trim boards from Modern Mill are a sustainable trim option that the manufacturer says have the look and feel of wood, are water-, weather- and pest-resistant, and guaranteed not to rot or splinter. Its new Acre Rabbeted Trim boards are designed to cover the ends of Acre siding for a clean and uniform finish.

According to Versatex, its Canvas Series of cellular PVC trim delivers the beauty of wood with the durability of PVC. Available matte finish colors include Natural Amber, Driftwood, Turner Oak, Copper, Weathered Gray, Natural Macore, Champagne Oak, and Kitami, while Walnut is available in a semi-gloss finish.



### Bold colors, mixed textures

In the not-so-distant past, trim was available in any color, as long as you wanted white. Granted, trim could be painted, but that meant more labor and upkeep over the years. Today, homeowners are looking for trim options—both in color and in style—that differentiate their homes from that of the neighbors, say manufacturers, and LBM dealers need to be ready to provide them.

“Homeowners and homebuyers are continuing to look for ways to break away from uniform, cookie-cutter houses, opting for eye-catching aesthetics that enhance curb appeal and create a distinctive look,” says Westlake Royal’s Booz. “When it comes to a home’s exterior, trim plays a crucial role in defining a home’s character.



According to the manufacturer, Accoya is an ideal trim choice for coastal areas because of its durability and dimensional stability. Seen here, this coastal home exhibits exterior detail, including custom windows and doors, shutters, siding, columns, exterior trim, and exposed rafter tails, all created with Accoya products.

By experimenting with a variety of styles, colors and finishes of trim, homeowners can achieve a customized, visually striking exterior that complements the home’s architectural style.”

Builders are increasingly blending materials, he explains, using trim and mouldings as key elements to bridging different textures like wood, metal and stone. This approach creates unique, distinctive designs that enhance a home’s character. Trim products that complement a range of siding and roofing materials, such as vinyl and PVC trim, are gaining traction for this reason.

As to colors, whites, creams and neutrals still remain popular for exteriors, providing design versatility and a modern aesthetic that complements a range of architectural styles. However, many homeowners are starting to explore bolder, darker trim colors to add contrast and visual interest. “Contrasting trim—such as black framing around windows—enhances architectural details and creates a striking, dramatic effect,” adds Booz. “Other deep hues like charcoal, navy blue, forest green and rich brown are becoming more popular because they pair beautifully with trending exteriors like white board-and-batten or light stone facades. This trend extends indoors as well. Black trim on interior doors and windows is rising, offering a simple yet impactful way to elevate spaces with a sophisticated, high-end feel.”

Versatex’s Kapres agrees with Booz’s view on color. “We certainly are seeing color become a bigger factor. We manufacture a product that has a wood grain laminate on it, and we now have nine different colors in what we call the canvas series,” he explains. “The other thing that we’re seeing, and I don’t know how long this is going to continue but it’s held on longer than I thought it would, is black. People like black trim, black windows, and things like that. There’s always been a connotation with PVC trim that you can’t paint it dark colors, particularly black. And you know that is true, but we partnered with PPG, and they have a line of paints they developed that are heat reflective so that you can paint PVC trim black as well, provided you’re using the right paints from PPG with the heat reflective values.”

Hand in hand with bolder colors is the growing use of wider profiles in exterior applications, experts say. Wider trim boards with clean, simple lines are growing in popularity, reflecting the trend toward contemporary architecture. Homeowners are using thicker trim to frame



According to SilvaStar, its SilvaWood wood-grain textured fiber cement products offer the natural allure of wood and the robustness of fiber cement. SilvaWood products, available in all standard fiber cement sizes, are factory prefinished in 12 colors that the manufacturer says mimic the look of real wood.

and accentuate key areas, creating bold statements, while reserving thinner profiles for more intricate, decorative details.

Interestingly, classic beadboard has made a strong comeback, say manufacturers, with its narrow vertical planks and signature bead detail. This timeless design trend is expected to continue in 2025, from kitchen backsplashes to wall trim. As Booz predicts, “2025 design trends include the resurgence of traditional paneling styles like shiplap, wainscoting and beadboard, which can add character, texture and dimension to homes. This trend reflects a broader demand for customizable, premium finishes in both renovations and new builds.”

### High performance, low maintenance

Along with the trend of bolder colors and styles, the demand for trim and moulding products that deliver heightened performance, especially in the face of rising severe weather events, remains a driving factor in product choice, say manufacturers.

As Westlake Royal’s Booz points out, “Westlake Royal Building Products recently released its ‘Annual Trends Report: The Best in Home Design,’ offering a comprehensive look at the latest trends shaping the home design and remodeling industry. The experts at Westlake Royal found that the increase in frequency and severity of natural disasters are driving demand for high-performance, weather-resistant building products. Exterior products, in particular, serve as the first line of defense, making resilient choices essential for homes designed to withstand storms, fires and other extremes.”

Alternative trim materials are increasingly being sought out for their resilient nature, says Accsys’ Flickinger. “Modified wood is trending in the market as demand for wood is strong, and performance is key. Products made for modified woods, like Accoya, are being utilized increasingly due to their resistance to rot, decay, and insect damage (including termites), backed by a 50-year warranty that further enhances the cost-effective performance.”

Coupled with the increasing interest in resilient products is the continued demand for low-maintenance options. Contractors are looking for trim options that require less labor to install, and homeowners want products that don’t require constant maintenance. “People continue to want to find products that perform with lower maintenance and have greater durability longevity,” says Versatex’s Kapres.

“So we are seeing a market shift away from wood, which lends itself to more products like Versatex that are impervious to moisture and have little to no maintenance.”

Booz shares Kapres’ viewpoint on the increasing demand for low-maintenance trim products. “More and more homeowners are seeking materials that deliver lasting beauty with minimal upkeep, maximizing ROI for renovations or new builds,” he says. “Durable, low-maintenance products not only reduce replacement and maintenance costs but also align with sustainable building practices.”

These alternative choices can create a challenge, however, for the homeowner and pro alike when it comes to understanding the unique benefits of each option. As Accsys’ Flickinger explains, “Many homeowners still prefer the natural look and feel of wood, and while wood is a traditional favorite, material alternatives like PVC, fiber cement, or composite materials have made that choice selection more difficult. Buyers are weighing in on selecting products with significant environmental impact, evaluating long-term performance and life span, and cost tradeoffs. Understanding all the material properties and impacts on the choices made is challenging. Products made from modified wood, like Accoya, can offer substantial benefits buyers are looking for. Not all modified woods deliver the same performance, so doing homework is crucial to the selection process.”



### Strategies to sell more

With so many available trim options, the question of how LBM dealers can be a better resource, and ultimately sell more trim and moulding, becomes harder to answer. One strategy manufacturers suggest is to take the time to slow down and closely and carefully listen to your customers’ needs, and then just as carefully explain the product options, focusing on their features and benefits. ▶

SilvaPost from SilvaStar is certified for horizontal and vertical use. The kiln-dried SPF finger jointed and/or edge glued and laminated structural posts and beams can be used indoors or outdoors, can be cut and shaped into any design, and are available in smooth or textured. They are available in clear sealed or primed with options for prefinished.

“Make it a priority to listen to your customers, especially your contractors, to understand their challenges,” recommends Welco’s Conroy. “For example, many contractors struggle with finding cost-efficient labor, and that’s where SilvaPost comes in. SilvaPost simplifies installation by allowing it to be installed during framing, which eliminates the need for post-installation wrapping and finishing. This not only saves time and money but also helps avoid callbacks for issues like checked or cracked posts, leading to higher customer satisfaction.”

To effectively suggest product solutions, it’s important for LBM dealers to be as informed as possible about the products they carry. “It’s very helpful to be proactive,” Westlake Royal’s Booz advises. “This includes staying

up on product knowledge to be a true resource to customers about materials, styles and installation strategies. Most manufacturers have a host of materials and resources to support training your sales teams and educating buyers. This also includes recognizing opportunities to sell and up-sell: Trim and moulding are the ideal finishing touch for a room and for the exterior, but may not always be top of mind with buyers. Ensure trim is part of the product selection conversation and offer good-better-best solutions to help achieve the look they’re seeking within their budget.”

It boils down to education, and LBM dealers need to remember they’re not in it alone; manufacturers stand ready to help with product knowledge. “The first thing I think you need to do if

you’re a dealer, is take advantage of the manufacturers training programs,” Versatex’s Kapres points out. “We’ll do product knowledge training at your facility, but then if you really want to take it to the next level, we ask our dealers to send a couple of people to our plant to see all the products made, see all the different things that you can do with it, understand installation, understand value proposition, so that you can better articulate these things to your builders and contractors. The dealers that do that invariably see an increase in sales.”

As well, manufacturers recommend LBM dealers stock products that are known sellers, whether because of price, product features, or performance benefits. “LBM dealers can drive sales and foster customer loyalty by stocking brands that consistently deliver exceptional value to builders and homeowners—we call these fan-favorite products that people get ‘hooked on’ like Trader Joe’s and Stanley water bottles that create a buzz and a ‘hit product’ dealers can be proud to stock,” explains Modern Mill’s Guimond. “By stocking these high-performing brands, dealers can position themselves as trusted suppliers of in-demand products, catering to both professionals and DIYers. This approach not only drives sales but also solidifies the dealer’s reputation as a go-to source for innovative and reliable building materials.”

**IN THE END**, the best strategy for LBM dealers when it comes to trim and moulding is to adapt a customer-first mentality. Absorb as much product knowledge as possible, take the time to listen to your customers, and maintain inventory of popular trim products, and you’re sure to be on a proactive path to success with the category. ■

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**TAPCO TAPE ACCESSORY FOR TAPCO TOOLS BRAKES**

Westlake Royal Building Products has launched Tapco Tape, a measuring accessory that speeds custom bends and cuts on Tapco Tools siding and trim brakes. According to the manufacturer, Tapco Tape attaches easily to a Tapco Tools brake to provide an instant scale for bends and cut-offs, allowing users to measure from the brake anvil and with a 1.5" offset for use with the Pro-Cutoff without using a standalone tape measure. It also has material stops to make repeat bends more efficient. The result is reported to be easier, faster and more precise bending. Tapco Tape clamps to the brake without needing to drill holes. [tapcotools.com](http://tapcotools.com)



**NEW CASTLE BLACK DECK FRAMING**

New Castle Steel has recently launched New Castle Black. American-made from 100% domestically sourced steel, New Castle Black offers a fine-textured black steel finish, and according to the manufacturer, is engineered for ease of installation and backed by a 50-year limited warranty. Other key features include reported quick installation with no specialized tools required, drastically reduced waste, with fewer posts and piers needed compared to wood, exceptional non-combustibility, corrosion resistance, and termite- and rot-proof performance. [newcastlesteel.com](http://newcastlesteel.com)

**TREX RAINESCAPE CLEAN-EDGE BUTYL TAPE**

According to Trex, its new Trex RainEscape Clean-Edge Butyl Tape delivers all the proven performance of the original Trex RainEscape Butyl Tape with design enhancements that ensure a cleaner, more efficient application. Clean-Edge Butyl Tape is designed specifically for use with the Trex RainEscape system. Installed above the joists of a deck's substructure, this system employs an integrated network of troughs and downspouts that captures and diverts water away from the deck to create dry, usable space underneath. The 4"-wide, waterproof butyl tape is applied after the system's troughs are installed and is used to create a watertight seal between the trough overlaps and seals around screw penetrations from the deck boards. The tape also seals around deck screws to hold them in place while preventing rust and corrosion. [trexrainscape.com](http://trexrainscape.com)



**GLASBOND FIBERGLASS REINFORCED PLASTIC PANELS**

Crane Composites has announced the launch of GLASBOND, its next-generation option in fiberglass reinforced plastic panel (FRP) solutions. The product is reported to deliver hygienic wall solutions with a prefabricated adhesive-backed design, enabling installation up to 60% faster than traditional FRP. According to the manufacturer, the prefabricated adhesive backing of GLASBOND is faster and cleaner to apply—a crucial advantage given market-wide labor shortages. In addition to faster installation, Crane Composites says GLASBOND offers a protective Surfaseal finish for superior durability, moisture resistance, and ease of cleaning. The smooth, non-porous surface helps prevent mold and bacteria growth, ensuring a more hygienic environment. [glasbondfrp.com](http://glasbondfrp.com)



**NEW BRAVA COOL ROOF COLORS**

Brava Roof Tiles has introduced new Cool Roof Colors that meet California's Title 24 and Title 31 Requirements. The industry term for "cool roof" results from the development of roofing products that substantially reduce heat absorption. These products have high solar reflectance and thermal emittance, reducing heat transfer and indoor temperatures. Brava Roof Tile's new cool roof product offering includes the brand's CRRC-compliant Cedar Shake tile in Lake Forest (shown), Weathered, Western, and Cool White. Slate profiles are available in Cool Arendale, Cool Atlantic, Cool Light Arendale, Cool Weathered, and Cool White. Spanish Barrel tiles are available in Cool Terra Cotta and Cool French Clay. All options can be used to meet Cool Roof Title 24 and Title 31 specifications. [bravarooftile.com](http://bravarooftile.com)





## LBM CENTURY CLUB HONORS 100-YEAR-OLD BUSINESSES

The LBM Century Club was founded on the simple belief that companies that have been around for 100 years deserve to be recognized. Launched in 2016, the LBM Century Club has grown to over 215 members, with more coming in each month. In all, the companies have provided 27,136 years of combined service to their communities.

By no means does the LBM Journal's Century Club list include every 100-year-old company...at least not yet. That's where you come in. Do you work for, or know of a lumberyard or building materials retailer that is 100 or more years old? Send them our way, so that we can give them the recognition they deserve. Century Club members receive a certificate for their store, window decals for their front doors, free admission to the LBM Strategies Conference where they are guests of honor at a Century Club induction ceremony, as well as recognition in their local media, all free of charge.

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SMITH LUMBER COMPANY Valley City, ND	est. 1923	CHRISTENSEN LUMBER CO. Fremont, NE	est. 1923
PAGE LUMBER, MILLWORK, & BUILDING SUPPLIES Poughkeepsie, NY	est. 1924	CAROLINA LUMBER & SUPPLY COMPANY Atlanta, GA	est. 1900
HAMILTON BUILDING SUPPLY Hamilton, NJ	est. 1924	LEARNED LUMBER Hermosa Beach, CA	est. 1924

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New from Westlake Royal Building Products, Dryroll is a universal ridge vent and weather block. Designed to safeguard the roof from the elements, the ridge vent solution also helps to exhaust heat and moisture from the roof. According to the manufacturer, during installation, Dryroll is unrolled and sealed to field tiles; no additional tools or fasteners are needed, and its aluminum sides may be stretched to conform seamlessly to the roof. Equipped with butyl strips, Dryroll seals the ridge and hip areas of the roof, preventing wind-driven rain and snow from entering the peaks and corners of the roof. The product is reported to also provide superior airflow and attic ventilation.

[westlakeroyalroofing.com](http://westlakeroyalroofing.com)



**E-FIT RAILING INNOVATIONS**

Envision Outdoor Living Products, manufacturer of Envision composite decking and Fairway Railing collection, is launching E-Fit Railing Innovations, a series of new aluminum and vinyl railing products. When used together, the new products are reported to allow for installation times up to 300% faster. According to the manufacturer, E-Fit Railing Innovations comprises three new components: FastFit Posts that feature pre-mounted brackets on Fairway aluminum 3x3 structural posts and quick-mount brackets on Fairway vinyl 4x4 post sleeves; FastFit Panels that come pre-assembled, ready to set in place; LockFit Balusters that reportedly simplify installation of Fairway vinyl baluster kits. The patent-pending design locks end balusters into place.

[envisionoutdoorliving.com](http://envisionoutdoorliving.com)

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REDWOOD AND DOUGLAS-FIR

**Westbury**  
ALUMINUM RAILING  
by Digger Specialties Inc.

**ATLAS**

NAHB **IBS**

**ORGILL**



**feeney**



**LBM STRATEGIES**  
2025 CONFERENCE

# THE MASTER DEMOTIVATOR

After a year of showing mostly solid results, the owner of the company downplayed your accomplishments, telling your team that, “You’re all liabilities.” Now what?

**AFTER WORKING IN THE** LBM industry for the past 15 years, you just completed your first full year as the general manager of a lumberyard/design center. The yard you oversee is the smallest of the three locations your company operates in a mid-sized metropolitan market. Like many LBM dealers, 2024 was not a banner year for topline revenues. While your location didn’t set any new revenue records, you had a standout year in other areas.

For example, despite slightly lower sales than 2023, your margins increased by nearly 2%. Your astute credit manager spearheaded an effort to get customers to pay faster. As a result, your payables came in an average of 10% faster than in 2023. Charged with reducing inventory shrinkage, your yard foreman and operations director put systems in place to tighten controls on warehouse management, product returns, and inventory turns. The result of their efforts cut your shrinkage numbers from the prior year by nearly 50%. The local newspaper named your company a “Best Place to Work,” based on anonymous surveys completed by employees. In fact, yours was the only location company-wide to earn that honor—and to be fully staffed for most of the year.

Considering the positive shifts in your KPIs and operating fundamentals, you were excited when the owner asked to get the entire team together for a Saturday morning meeting. But once everyone settled in to for what you expected to be a motivational lift, it turned ugly.

“Friends of mine who own businesses talk about how their people are their greatest asset. But when I look at all of you in this room,” he said, “all I see are liabilities.” Somehow, his brief remarks got worse from there, describing everyone but the top-performing salespeople as “a waste of space.” He said the simple fact that we fell short of our 2023 revenue numbers was proof that we aren’t competent and don’t deserve our jobs. Then he left.

Despite your best efforts to reassure your team that they are valued, morale has tanked, sick days are up, and someone replaced the “Teamwork Makes the Dream Work” sign in the break room with “We Are All Liabilities.”



You’ve shared all this with the owner, and he allows that he may have been a little tough on everyone, “but they’re big boys and girls, and if they can’t take a little criticism, they can leave.” His insistence that “top-line revenues are the only metric that matters,” has you questioning your future with this company. What would you do?

## CAST YOUR VOTE ONLINE AT: [LBMJOURNAL.COM](http://LBMJOURNAL.COM)

**Accept it.** Instead of working to improve KPIs and overall performance, focus exclusively on growing sales. He’s the boss, give him what he wants.

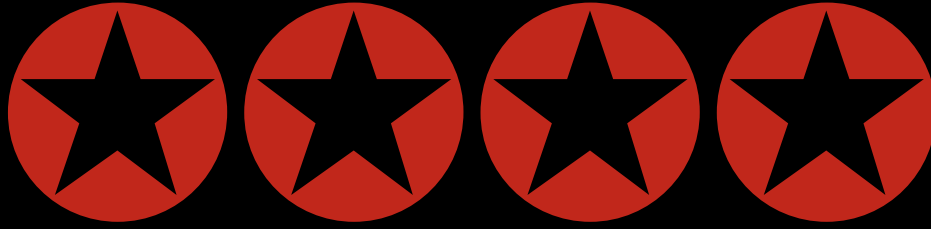
**Educate.** Acknowledge the importance of top-line revenues while showing him how the big changes you and your team implemented boosted the bottom line.

**Move on.** Since your values don’t align with the owner’s, you don’t have much of a future here. There are lots of smart LBM operators. Find one and build your career.

**Effect change.** Since 2024 sales were down company wide, and the other two GMs are dealing with the same fallout, arrange a meeting with the owner and try to work it out.

PHOTO: @ISTOCK.COM/NASTCO

**SOMETHING ELSE?** If you’d take a different plan of attack, email your suggested solution to [Wendy@LBMJournal.com](mailto:Wendy@LBMJournal.com). If we publish your reply, we’ll send you an LBM Journal mug.



## CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER

There's no question that the entrepreneurial spirit is alive in the lumber/building material industry. A hearty congratulations to **LBM JOURNAL'S 2025 DEALER OF THE YEAR** award winners.

**CATEGORY: \$100MM +**

**WILSON LUMBER**

Huntsville, AL

**CATEGORY: \$50MM-\$100MM**

**ARNOLD LUMBER**

West Kingston, RI

**CATEGORY: \$10MM-\$50MM**

**LUMBER KING**

Whitley City, KY

**CATEGORY: \$10MM**

**MIAMI LUMBER**

Paola, KS

**LBM** JOURNAL®  
**DEALER**  
**OF THE YEAR**  
**2025**

**THE PRODUCTS TO DO EVERYTHING. THE POWER TO DO EVEN MORE.**



# BE BOUNDLESS™

We've got the industry's greatest collection of building products to bring any space to life, inside and out. Together, we're just getting started in expressing, adapting and advancing. That's what it means to **Be Boundless™**.