

# LBM JOURNAL<sup>®</sup>

CELEBRATING YOUNG LEADERS IN THE LBM COMMUNITY



40  
UNDER  
40  
CLASS OF 2025



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## 40 UNDER 40 CLASS OF 2025



### FEATURES

- 30 REAL ISSUES. REAL ANSWERS.**  
This month's question deals with the impact of proposed and upcoming tariffs. There has been a lot of speculation around how steep tariffs and shifting timelines could affect housing and the LBM industry.
- 40 LBM 40 UNDER 40**  
Celebrating the 2025 class of young leaders in the LBM community.
- 58 PROFILE**  
From its humble beginnings as a family business to becoming a multi-location company employing hundreds, Bloedorns has grown to a household name in the West, while keeping true to its roots.
- 60 IN DEPTH | COMPONENT CONSTRUCTION**  
Roof trusses are just the beginning of this versatile segment.

### DEPARTMENTS

- 8 THE BUZZ**  
LBM updates, news, and events. Plus, the latest from lumberyards across the country, and responses to our April issue Tough Call survey.
- 28 FIVE QUESTIONS**  
LMC President and CEO Paul Ryan answers our questions about the buying group's legacy and future.
- 66 PRODUCTS**  
Our editors' picks that are sure to pique your interest.
- 72 TOUGH CALL**  
A longtime team member is retiring, and he's questioning the fairness of an agreement you both signed 15 years ago. What would you do?

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# Bloedorns



58

72

## INDUSTRY LEADERS

- 16 BUILDING SALES**  
Just add water.  
RICK DAVIS
- 18 SALES + OPERATIONS**  
It's difficult to outperform talent.  
BILL LEE
- 20 CREDIT Q+A**  
Discount dilemmas.  
THEA DUDLEY
- 22 MERGERS + ACQUISITIONS**  
Should you sign a non-compete after being acquired?  
JOHN D. WAGNER
- 24 LEADERSHIP**  
**PART 2: TAKING ON LEADERSHIP**  
The first 100 days.  
RUSS KATHREIN

## LBM EXTRAS

- 38 CENTURY CLUB**  
We asked Big C Lumber (est. 1921), and Issaquah Lumber (est. 1889), why they believe their businesses have had staying power in their communities.

66



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Leading Suppliers Council



## FROM THE PUBLISHER

**EVERY MONTH**, as part of our Real Issues survey, hundreds of LBM pros share the top business challenge they're facing. One answer consistently ranks near the top: attracting, hiring, and retaining young talent. It's an issue that affects so many of us, which is exactly why we launched the LBM 40 Under 40—to recognize and celebrate the next generation of leaders who are shaping the future of the LBM industry.

The 2025 class of 40 Under 40, featured in this issue, represents a strong cross-section of pros from across the U.S. You'll meet operations managers who are streamlining supply chains, sales leaders who are building lasting partnerships, entrepreneurs launching promising startups, and future executives already making an impact. These are people who don't just show up—they take ownership, push for better, and lead by example.

What stands out most is their passion for this industry. For some, it's in their DNA—third- or fourth-generation professionals carrying forward a family legacy. For others, it's a career they discovered and made their own. Either way, they believe in the work we do and are committed to ensuring that our industry continues to grow, evolve, and stay relevant in a changing world.

We're honored to recognize these impressive pros in the pages of *LBM Journal*, and at the LBM Strategies Conference, Oct. 15-17 in Nashville, where they'll be honored from the stage. Plus, Emily Morgan, CEO of Ashby Lumber

and a member of the Class of 2024, will moderate an insightful discussion with members of the current class. If your company is working to understand what talented young pros look for when choosing a career, this issue and that conference are great places to start.

This business has always been about people—and with professionals like these stepping up, I'd say the future looks very bright.

To the 2025 class of 40 Under 40: Congratulations. Your hard work, leadership, and commitment aren't just shaping your companies—they're shaping the future of the LBM industry. We're proud to celebrate your success, and excited to watch what comes next.

— Rick Schumacher  
Executive Editor & Publisher



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

HAVE A QUESTION FOR RICK?  
[RICK@LBMJOURNAL.COM](mailto:rick@lbmjournal.com)



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# SMOOTH TRANSITION. PROVEN RESULTS.

Switching suppliers can make any retailer uneasy—especially when it means replacing brands your customers have trusted for decades. However, for C.C. Gibbs and his team at Gibbs Hardware the decision to partner with a new supplier turned out to be one of their best.

Thanks to Orgill's broad product range, customizable assortments, and reliable supply chain, the Gibbs team made a smooth, confident transition—and the results speak for themselves.

Discover what Orgill can do for your business at [Orgill.com/opportunity](https://www.orgill.com/opportunity).

"One of our biggest concerns was switching from the distributor-branded paint line we'd supported for years. It had been a staple in our rural town, and we were one of the top paint buyers through our previous distributor. **But the change went better than we imagined—our customers embraced the new line, and we didn't miss a beat. Sales have kept climbing ever since.**"

**C.C. Gibbs**  
Owner of Gibbs Hardware  
Grayson, Kentucky



# LBM STRATEGIES 2025 CONFERENCE

OCT. 15-17 • EMBASSY SUITES DOWNTOWN • NASHVILLE

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

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CHRIS MILLER  
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SHANE SOULE  
ProTec Panel & Truss



STEVE SWINNEY  
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## BY THE YARD

The Blackstone Heritage Corridor has received a \$45,000 donation to its Legacy Campaign from **Koopman Lumber**. The Whitinsville-based company's funding will support efforts to complete the Blackstone River Greenway/Bikeway, a 48-mile trail connecting Worcester and Providence. One of Koopman's core values is living faithfully, a principle reflected in its long-standing support of local organizations.

**Jasper Lumber Company** is nearing completion on a long-term investment of more than \$135 million to upgrade their sawmill facility with state-of-the-art equipment that will position the company to be competitive in the marketplace for decades to come. According to the city of Jasper, work on the mill will reach completion in 2026.

**84 Lumber** has opened an 18,324-sq.-ft. store north of Denver in Greeley, CO. The new store, which includes a lumberyard, sits on 9.8 total acres and has seven acres of rail service. The new lumberyard in Greeley will pair with the Denver lumberyard in servicing the Denver metro, the southern Denver area, and northern Colorado. In addition, 84 Lumber has opened a new component plant in Fort Collins, CO. This state-of-the-art, 59,400-sq.-ft. plant will further expand 84 Lumber's capacity to service customers in the market with custom-engineered trusses. 84 Lumber is also working on opening another component plant in Fort Lupton, as well as a store in Colorado Springs.

Leadership and team members with **Parr Lumber** celebrated the opening of the company's newest location in Damascus, OR. PARR Damascus is in a brand-new building and offers a complete line of lumber, building materials, and outdoor living products. The expansive showroom includes a Design Center showcasing windows, doors, millwork and cabinets.

The Mead Family, former owners of **Mead Lumber** and longtime champions of the Columbus, NE, community, partnered with the Columbus Community Hospital to announce the official name of its new, state-of-the-art cancer care facility: the Mead Family Cancer Center. Set to break ground this spring and open in fall 2026, the center is named in honor of a generous donation from the Mead family.

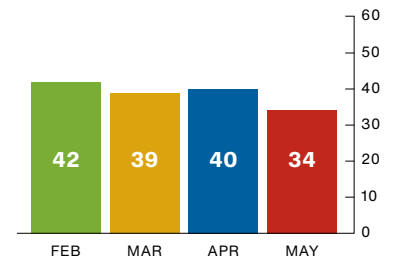
**HPM Building Supply** officially opened the HPM O'ahu Design Centers, launching the first Honolulu location in the company's 104-year history and the first O'ahu location dedicated to HPM's wide selection of products for home interiors.

**Protec Panel and Truss** announced the grand opening of its new branch location in Battle Creek, MI. This new facility is set to significantly enhance Protec's production capacity, improve delivery efficiency, and offer even greater support to its expanding customer base across Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio.

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## Soft spring selling season takes a toll on builder confidence

Builder confidence fell sharply in May on growing uncertainties stemming from elevated interest rates, tariff concerns, building material cost uncertainty and the cloudy economic outlook. Builder confidence in the market for newly built single-family homes was 34 in May, down six points from April, according to the NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI). This ties the November 2023 reading, and is the lowest since the index hit 31 in December 2022.



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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Treated Lumber Brand Satisfaction Survey of Independent Lumberyards, Webb Analytics, October 2024  
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## PEOPLE IN LBM

**Kodiak Building Partners** announced the promotions of **Jerry Slomba** and **Susan Fuller** to presidents at Keys Lumber and Valley Lumber & Rental, respectively.



**Mead Lumber** announced the appointment of **Stephen West** as Region 3 manager. In his new role, West will oversee operations across Mead Lumber locations in Montana, Colorado, Wyoming, and South Dakota, succeeding the retiring Region 3 Manager Jim Sturm.



**Spahn & Rose Lumber Co.** has hired **Mike Elsea** for the newly created position of vice president of operations for Southeastern locations. In this new role, Elsea will be responsible for improving company operations while driving sales growth in Southeast retail lumberyard locations.



**Westlake Royal Building Products** announced that **Paul Burlison**, senior account executive of national remodeling accounts and a recognized industry thought leader, has been named a 2025 Legend of the Home Improvement Industry by Dave Yoho Associates.



**Kebony** announced the appointment of **Hilary Barnett** as marketing director for the Norwegian company's North American operations. Barnett will be responsible for all marketing strategy and initiatives as Kebony continues to expand its U.S./Canada market.



**Benjamin Obdyke** has hired **Drew Dyer** as its new technical field representative in New England. In this role, Dyer will support the company's sales team and pro customers in the region through education, training, and technical assistance; solutions and market research; and new product launches.



**Ace Retail Holdings**, the parent company of Westlake Ace Hardware, Great Lakes Ace Hardware, and several other retail hardware brands, recently announced two key promotions:

**Jennifer Schadegg:** Director of Merchandising

**Alicia Weber:** Senior Director of Marketing

The **Do it Best Group** has announced the promotion of **Shane Burnworth** to the role of True Value divisional merchandise manager. Burnworth is joining the **True Value** team after more than a decade of merchandising leadership experience at Do it Best, where he played a pivotal role in shaping the success of multiple product categories. In his new role at True Value, Burnworth will be instrumental in advancing the company's merchandising strategy.



**Accent Building Materials** has announced a series of key leadership promotions and organizational changes designed to strengthen its operational capabilities and support continued growth across the company:

**Robert Ferrier:** Vice President/GM of the Central Region

**Ross Daniels:** Vice President/GM of the Eastern Region

**Paul Redwood:** Vice President of Strategic Sourcing

**Sam Sprague:** Vice President/GM of Western Region and Key Accounts

**Mark Burger:** Vice President of Finance

## DISTRIBUTION NEWS

**Digger Specialties Inc.** (DSI) has announced the expansion of its distribution network through a partnership with **American Lumber**. Headquartered in Walden, NY, American Lumber has been a trusted distributor of building products to lumberyards and home centers in Northeast markets since 1918. The markets serviced by American Lumber include lumberyards and pro-dealers in select New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey and Pennsylvania market areas. DSI has also announced the expansion of its distribution network through a partnership with **Britton Lumber Company**. Headquartered in Fairlee, VT, Britton Lumber has been an established distributor of building products to lumberyards located in a variety of New England and Northeast markets since 1946.

**MoistureShield** and **RDI Railing**, Oldcastle APG's signature deck and rail brands, have announced an expanded distribution agreement with **Great Southern Wood Preserving**. This will further enable access to railing and composite decking solutions for customers in Hagerstown, MD, Rocky Mount, VA, Fombell, PA, and Millwood, KY.

**Maximo Wood**, a brand of GMX, has announced its expansion into the Western U.S. through a new dealer partnership with **Ganahl Lumber**. Ganahl Lumber, based in Anaheim, CA, will now offer Maximo's Thermowood products through its 10 California locations. Maximo's expansion is further strengthened through its distribution partnership with **Boise Cascade**, ensuring their dealers like Ganahl can easily access Maximo's products through a reliable and established supply chain.

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## CO-OP + BUYER'S GROUPS

In celebration of the 90th anniversary, **LMC** partnered with Habitat for Humanity of Delaware and Montgomery counties for a day of service. On Thursday, April 24, ten LMC staff members volunteered at a residential building site in Pottstown, PA, to support the community. In 2025, LMC celebrates 90 years of strength through initiatives that honor its history, recognize members, and give back.



**Do it Best** has announced that it was named the recipient of the Association for Corporate Growth (ACG) 2024 Deal of the Year Award (Large Cap) for the state of Indiana. The prestigious award recognizes the successful acquisition of **True Value Company**, marking a significant achievement in the home improvement industry. The award was presented at the ACG Annual Awards event, which was held on April 17, at the Ritz Charles Garden Pavilion in Carmel, IN.



## INDUSTRY UPDATES

**ECI Software Solutions** announced recognition across three distinguished award programs: Gold Globe Awards for Excellence, Top 100 Logistics & Supply Chain Technology Provider by Inbound Logistics and the 2025 Manufacturing Leadership Awards Finalist by the National Association of Manufacturers.

**Simpson Strong-Tie** has introduced Sage System DIY pergola connectors. The heart of Sage System are the innovative open-top connectors that simplify installation, adapt to various build methods and handle minor lumber variances; the connectors, available for both 4x and 6x lumber, install quickly and easily with premium, color-matched Outdoor Accents connector screws.

**Kebony North America** has announced the launch of Buck-a-Board, a new sales incentive program for its dealers, according to Kebony North America Managing Director Andy Hehl. This promotion is available to any retail location that designates a Kebony Product Champion. Any Kebony retailer interested in designating a Kebony Product Champion should email [bab@kebony.us](mailto:bab@kebony.us).

**Cornerstone Building Brands** announced the launch of the redesigned PlyGem.com. This fully re-architected website serves as the ultimate destination for professionals seeking information, inspiration and innovative solutions for the Ply Gem, Mastic and Variform brands. Crafted with the needs of trade professionals in mind, the all-new PlyGem.com offers a streamlined navigation experience that makes finding product information, resources and support faster than ever before.

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## TOUGH CALL SOLUTIONS

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

A local company is using your social media channels to take credit for creating a community service program you'd launched years earlier. Here's how readers responded.

**Correct them. 38%**  
Have your social media manager post publicly that you've been doing this since 2016, which predates 2019, and congratulate them on following your lead.

**Delete & ignore. 28%**  
They're poking you to get a public response. Delete their comment, and don't give this any oxygen.

**Do nothing. 23%**  
First Responder Fridays is not a competition about who did it first. It's something positive you do for your community. If they want to compete on this, let them.

**Red flag. 11%**  
If they view doing good for others as something to brag about and poke others, they may not be the kind of company you'd want to work with.



LISTEN NOW!

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**LBM TALKS**



**Fiberon Decking's** New London, NC, facility recently earned the first-place Beam of Excellence award in Augury's inaugural Spotlight Awards. The award recognizes the team as one that is setting the standard in maintenance and reliability excellence.

## MERGERS + ACQUISITIONS

**MFM Building Products**, a manufacturer of a full envelope of waterproofing and weather barrier products for the building industry, has merged with **National Applied Construction (NAC) Products, Inc.**, to strengthen the company's interior flooring crack isolation, sound control and waterproofing products. NAC will now serve as the MFM Flooring Division.

## INDUSTRY EVENTS

### 2025

**JUL 24-27**  
BUILDING MATERIAL SUPPLIERS  
2025 SUMMER CONFERENCE  
Virginia Beach, VA | mybmsa.org

**AUG 27-29**  
ALLIED BUILDING STORES  
FALL MARKET  
Branson, MO | alliedstores.com

**SEPT 5-8**  
DO IT BEST FALL MARKET  
Indianapolis, IN | doitbestonline.com

**SEPT 24-26**  
CONSTRUCTION SUPPLIERS  
ASSOCIATION 2025 CONFERENCE  
& TRADESHOW  
Miramar Beach, FL | gocsa.com

**OCT 15-17**  
LBM STRATEGIES 2025 CONFERENCE  
Nashville, TN | lbmstrategies.com

**OCT 20-22**  
LBM ADVANTAGE FALL PLANNING  
CONFERENCE  
Indianapolis, IN | lbmadvantage.com

**OCT 26-29**  
2025 WMA CONVENTION & TRADESHOW  
Cleveland, OH | worldmillworkalliance.com

**NOV 3-5**  
LMC EXPO 2025  
Philadelphia, PA | lmc.net

### 2026

**FEB 11-12**  
2026 ANNUAL LEARNING EXCHANGE  
& LBM EXPO  
Hickory, NC | mybmsa.org

**MAR 7-9**  
DO IT BEST SPRING MARKET  
Denver, CO | doitbestonline.com



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# Create Profitable Outdoor Living Solutions with Westbury® ScreenRail Screen Enclosures

Homeowners are not just looking for more outdoor living space, they are seeking comfort, usability, and style. And increasingly, they want spaces that offer protection from bugs, debris, and unpredictable weather. For lumberyards, builders, and deck installers, Westbury® ScreenRail Screen Enclosures from Digger Specialties, Inc. (DSI) present a valuable opportunity to meet this demand with a system that combines high performance, design flexibility, and trusted quality.

Whether your customer is planning a brand-new deck or looking to upgrade an existing porch or patio, Westbury® ScreenRail delivers a solution that goes beyond expectations and keeps you ahead of the curve in the outdoor living market.



## A Smart Choice for Today's Outdoor Lifestyles

Westbury® ScreenRail Screen Enclosures turn outdoor areas into year-round living spaces that feel just as comfortable and clean as indoor rooms. The system creates a bug-free, leaf-free, low-maintenance environment that helps homeowners relax, dine, and entertain outdoors without interruption.

But this system is more than functional, it is built to impress. Designed with clean lines, color options, and a modern, streamlined appearance, ScreenRail adds visual value to any project.

## Engineered for Strength and Style

At the core of Westbury® ScreenRail is a premium powder-coated aluminum frame that resists rust, corrosion, and the wear and tear of the elements. Whether the enclosure is installed on an elevated deck, a ground-level patio, or as a porch conversion, the structure provides durability and long-term performance that clients will appreciate for years to come.

The integrity of the Structural Railing option is also backed by code compliance for both residential and commercial applications, giving builders peace of mind and simplifying permitting in many markets.

## Flexible Configurations for Any Project

One of the standout benefits of the Westbury® ScreenRail system is its versatility. Builders and installers can choose from a variety of configurations, each tailored to specific project goals:

**Structural ScreenRail:** Designed for strength, this option includes top and bottom rails, balusters, and mounts for both interior or exterior railing placement.

**Kick Panel System:** Ideal for lower-level installations, the kick panel provides added protection for pets, kids, and lawn equipment.

**Mid-Rail System:** Enhances screen stability while creating a clean architectural detail.

**Frame Rail System:** Offers open sightlines and can be used with Westbury® Support Posts or existing structures for a customized look.

**Doors:** Available in both single and double styles, with inswing and outswing options to suit every space.

With modular components and multiple design options, installers have full control over how they configure and complete the enclosure, delivering tailored results for every homeowner.

## Built-In Benefits for Dealers and Builders

Westbury® ScreenRail is not just easy to sell, it is easy to work with. DSI designed the system with efficiency in mind:

**Modular Construction:** Simplifies the ordering process and allows for quicker, more precise installations.

**Color Variety:** Gives dealers more ways to match customer preferences and home exteriors.

**Low Maintenance:** Makes it easy for homeowners to care for their new enclosure—another key selling point for builders.

By offering Westbury® ScreenRail, lumberyards and pros can provide a high-value product that is increasingly in demand and stand out as go-to experts in outdoor living solutions.

## The Westbury® Advantage

As part of the trusted Westbury® family of outdoor products, ScreenRail upholds the highest standards in quality, engineering, and visual appeal. Backed by DSI's reputation for innovation and support, ScreenRail is a reliable choice for professionals looking to grow their business in the outdoor category.

**Tap into the growing demand for premium outdoor living. Recommend and install Westbury® ScreenRail Screen Enclosures.**





# WESTBURY SCREENRAIL SCREEN ENCLOSURE SYSTEM



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BY RICK DAVIS

**JUST ADD WATER.** It's a great formula when baking a cake or rehydrating instant mashed potatoes. On the other hand, it's not such a great recipe when hiring outside salespeople. Yet this has been a common practice in our industry for decades.

The manager who is searching for a replacement salesperson or merely interested in expanding the sales force starts by seeking candidates from competing organizations. They hire with the belief that sales results achieved in the past will be duplicated in the future. Moreover, the expectation is that the veteran hire will bring a book of business along as a bonus prize.

Two things are likely true that should dissuade the manager from acting on these assumptions. First, the achievement of results by a salesperson is not always an indicator of competence. Second, history has proven time and time again that the promise of a captured book of business almost always fails.

## JUST ADD WATER

On the first point, it is common for many salespeople in our industry to manage large volumes of business they did not create. Consider the many manufacturer sales reps who inherit a large territory with a well-established sales volume. Even when the salesperson is ineffective, they still enjoy the rewards of a dependable eight-figure book of business simply because their client resellers are wholly committed to the product lines. At the dealer level, abundant cases exist of veteran salespeople merely outlasting other salespeople in tenure only to inherit the accounts that produce a substantial volume of business.



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).

On the second point, consider if you agree that many salespeople grow their book of business by inheriting accounts. If this is true, then it proves that customers are typically more loyal to the dealer from whom they buy than to the salesperson. This strongly indicates that it is unreasonable to expect a salesperson to bring a large book of business over with a few simple strokes of a pen.

In short, the fruitful recruitment of successful salespeople must be more than hiring a veteran and merely waiting for exceptional results. It's not that hiring veteran salespeople is wrong; it's more that expecting instant results is passive leadership when the hiring fails to include proper assimilation into a culture and validation of skills after the hire has been made.

All that being said, I believe you should exercise restraint when hiring veteran salespeople, and even more when they come from outside our industry.

I used to believe, like many, that you can teach a salesperson products, but you can't teach them how to sell. I now believe that our industry is so complex that it is better to bring sales recruits up through the ranks. Consider the abundant product offerings, computer processes, and logistics of fulfilling orders. Add to that the challenge of understanding third party apps, scheduling challenges, and learning the nuances of builder expectations. It's a lot!

Hiring salespeople means finding performers with the right DNA for success, specifically the hunger for more business and a willingness to prospect. As noted, many veteran salespeople are not particularly great at (or interested in) prospecting. This is a flaw that is nearly impossible to overcome in an experienced salesperson with a track record of not prospecting. The lack of a desire to prospect leads to service representatives waiting for accounts to be assigned.

In addition to prospecting drive, salespeople with the right DNA are also those who never stop learning. If you have a salesperson who feels they are as skilled as they ever need to be, you have a challenge on your hands. The best salespeople I've met are those who consistently see their career as a never-ending evolution. Thus, when hiring salespeople, experience and the expectation for instant results rarely is a formula for success. The only way to recruit sales talent is with a vision to find candidates with a promise or proof of interest in prospecting and a thirst for long term growth.

While you're at it, skip the instant mashed potatoes. It's a little more work to make them from scratch but the outcome is significantly more gratifying, kind of like hiring salespeople.

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BY BILL LEE

# IT'S DIFFICULT TO OUTPERFORM TALENT

**FROM THE DAY** I was old enough to hold a ball, I loved to play whichever sport that was in season. One of the great things about being a kid was that you didn't have to be great, you just had to have fun. When I was a kid, we didn't even have Little League, so our natural talent was all we had, and often times our talents peaked early.

Today, it seems like kids are receiving almost professional training from the day they arrive at kindergarten.

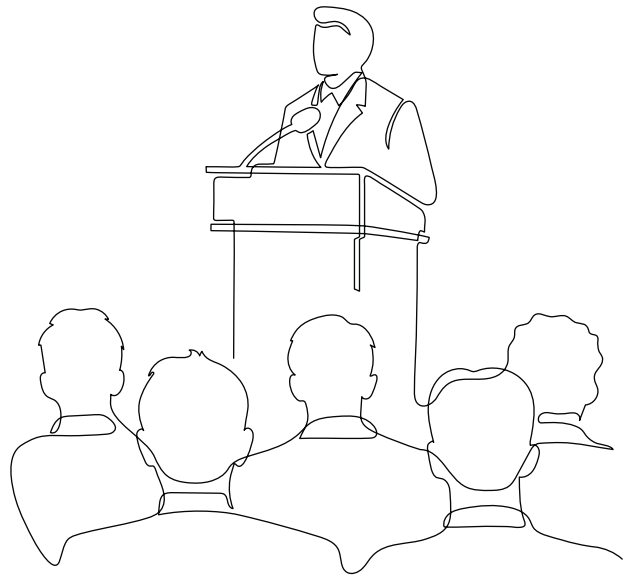
When I was a kid, we all played hard, but not necessarily well. With our fathers as about the only coaches around, kids with natural talent—and a lot of it—were just about the only ones to become high school players, much less make it to the pros.

Now let's look at the similarities between salespeople a generation ago and today. We have always had salespeople but often in title only. In the old days, far fewer salespeople's performance was measured as it is today. Maybe sales this year compared to last year, number of days the salesperson was on the job, new customers this year vs. last year, etc.

In modern times, 50 to 75 new sales training books hit the market each year vs. maybe a dozen or so 20 years ago. But how many of these books are read by our industry's so-called sales pros? For the most part, sales books are written by sales professionals who are offering their advice from their experience. This is especially true of authors from our own industry.



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).



**“My advice: Make a list of books and seminars and after you have read them or attended them, place a marker on the page(s) or on your notes that impressed you and review them at least twice a year.”**

Most of our industry's associations present sales programs that are not only loaded with content but also with salespeople from our own sales teams who freely share what they have learned over their careers.

My advice: Make a list of books and seminars and after you have read them or attended them, place a marker on the page(s) or on your notes that impressed you and review them at least twice a year.

It is difficult to compete with competitors who have more talent than you do. Make sure you set a goal to become a competitor that no one wants to compete with.

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BY THEA DUDLEY

**Dear Thea,**  
**We have a customer who takes discount on his total balance, which includes sales tax. His explanation is if he went to Walmart and bought something that was originally \$50 but it is on sale for \$25 he only pays sales tax on the \$25. The way our system works is it calculates the discount pre-tax and states you can deduct that amount if you pay by the discount date. He does his own calculation deducting the discount on the sales tax too. What are your thoughts on this?**

— Taxed out

## DISCOUNT DILEMMAS

Dear Taxed,

A question this taxing—HA!—always forces a credit manager to explain stuff that should be common sense accounting. Everyone knows you don't get a discount on sales tax. You have to pay the assessed tax in full on the sale amount. Unless it's back-to-school tax-free weekend when you get to skip paying it for a glorious 48 hours (even then it is not on everything). It's state law to collect and the government does not consider it an optional choice. When has the government ever offered anyone a discount?!

Go back to the happy discounter with a blunt explanation: "We can't allow you to take a discount on the sales tax as we are required by state law to collect it in full on the amount of the total sale. If we don't collect it, we are liable and may be subject to fines." Use the Walmart scenario to your advantage. Sales tax is based on the amount you buy, not on

when you pay. A discount is a reduction of the sale amount, based on when you pay. Since Walmart requires both at the same time, that scenario may be making him "confused." Break it down.

Before you have this convo, loop the salesperson in and explain the situation and how you plan on handling it. Are they okay with the approach or do they have another idea? Be aligned because once you call this dude for "the talk," sales will be getting a call about your lack of knowledge. Print a copy of the sales tax exemption law to share. If you have tried and it's a no-go, get someone in your accounting department to take a stab at explaining. Sometimes a fresh voice can make an impact.

Why isn't this customer tax exempt? Most materials would be part of a finished product or for resale. Is this for personal use? Is he building his own home? He can join us mere mortals and pay the tax. Whatever the case, if he hasn't provided a completed tax exemption form, it's due. I once had a customer submit a declaration that he was a "free man and not beholden to any laws of mankind" and "therefore would not be paying any tax." That's cool, you do you, but if you want to buy here, these are the rules we follow and you will play along.

If you can't convince the tax expert he genuinely owes the full amount of the sales tax sans discount, your company has a decision to make. Either absorb the amount, paying the discounted sales tax difference on your filings and let the issue go or get ready for a throw down. My guess is no one will miss the PIA account.

Once the decision is made, execute it and get on with your day. Nothing is more taxing than having the Groundhog Day argument. In the words of Eben Pagan, "You cannot convince anyone of anything. You can only give them the right information so they can convince themselves." Karma or the IRS will do the rest.



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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"I have been able to take concepts like the Weekly Game Plan and implement them with my sales staff. It opens up an understanding for me as a manager, knowing what's taking our sales reps away from their time spent closing new business."



Ian Young of Curtis Lumber  
*Director of Commercial Sales*

"The OSR Academy gave me a shared language to use with my OSRs—like talking about pipeline, RPAs, or dollarization—which has allowed us to apply what we've learned and build a stronger sales culture."



Vince Tague III of Tague Lumber  
*General Manager*

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**BRADLEY HARTMANN** grew up in a lumber yard, trained as a carpenter's apprentice, and built more than 1,000 homes before becoming a purchasing manager at Pulte Group. With his unique perspective working for both builder and supplier, **Hartmann has been helping LBM firms improve their sales performance for the past 14 years.**

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DEVELOPING CONSTRUCTION LEADERS SINCE 1881

BY JOHN D. WAGNER

**WHEN YOUR COMPANY IS** acquired, the acquirer will request that key people sign a non-compete agreement. Some acquirers can be very aggressive in asking a large number of employees to sign these agreements, often focused on sales staff. The reason they make these requests of sales staff is obvious: After a company is acquired, if the salesperson doesn't like the new ownership, the salesperson can fairly easily take a book of business across town. As most of us know, a customer's allegiance isn't always to the company providing materials. The allegiance can be to the salesperson who does the problem solving and passes along favorable pricing. Losing a top salesperson can meaningfully reduce the sales revenue of the company that loses that business.

Before we get into more detail, note that there are three types of employees within most companies: **1.** Company owners who become employees after the company is acquired, and after having received "consideration" (money) for the sale of the business. **2.** Employees who were never owners, but who also received consideration for the sale of the business; this situation is sometimes referred to as "phantom shares," where the employee is promised money in a sale, but never actually owns equity in the company. **3.** Employees who did not receive consideration in the sale of the company but are still employed under new ownership.

## SHOULD YOU SIGN A NON-COMPETE AFTER BEING ACQUIRED?



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).

**For employee type 1:** Owners that sold the business, got paid out, yet stay on—they are almost always subject to a non-compete. Because they received consideration for the business, the non-compete is often a requirement that is broadly outlined in the letter of intent (LOI) and spelled out in detail in the contract of sale, a.k.a. the definitive purchase agreement (DPA).

**For employee type 2:** These employees would likely be classified as "workers" under FTC regulations. Non-competes are probably not enforceable for them.

**Employee type 3:** These are clearly classified as "workers," and they would almost never be forced to sign a non-compete, even though acquirers may request that they do.

If you are subject to a non-compete, note that all non-competes should have a *duration* for how long they are in effect. It's typical in the LBM sector for that duration to be between three and five years. Even if you stop working for the company, the non-compete is still in effect for that time period.

Some non-competes may also define a region where the non-compete is in effect, such as a state or a radius of miles from the company that got acquired; this can be negotiated. Some non-competes will restrict the signer to a specific role that they cannot assume at another company, so a salesperson may be allowed to work as an estimator at another company; this is also negotiable.

No matter what type of non-compete you are asked to sign, note that the state law is often the factor that determines if the non-compete is enforceable. Although each state has various types of restrictions, California, Colorado, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Oklahoma all largely bar the enforcement of non-competes, especially if the person in question did not receive consideration in the sale of the business in question.

As mentioned, it is not usual for acquirers to request blanket non-competes from key employees, no matter their status. Don't take this personally. The acquirers are just doing all they can to ensure continuity of staff and operations under new ownership. Your investment banker should be the one to signal to the acquirer what is likely or unlikely to be accepted and why. But in the few times we have seen even the request for non-competes get to a non-owner employee, you will see immediate push back, and for good reason: The employee would not want to see their ability restricted if they want to sell their services to a higher bidder. And there's nothing more basic than the freedom to move jobs at your own will.

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**Kory Hobbs**

**Sales Manager, Griffin Lumber & Hardware** Perry, Georgia

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BY RUSS KATHREIN

## PART 2: TAKING ON LEADERSHIP

# THE FIRST 100 DAYS

**THIS IS THE SECOND IN A SERIES** about taking on a leadership role. Previously, we discussed doing all of your homework before you assume a leadership position. Now that you are firmly in the saddle, let's discuss what to do in your first 100 days.

### **Have one-on-ones with all of your staff, and if possible, do so on their own turf.**

You will want to get to know your people and understand what makes them tick. If you can meet them in a setting where they will feel comfortable, you will get them to open up more easily. The same holds true if you have multiple locations you are responsible for. Get out and see them as soon as possible. You will become more engrossed in your job as time goes on.

### **Remember God gave you two ears and one mouth.**

Use them proportionally. That is the best advice for a leader stepping into an unfamiliar culture. You will be inundated by people who want to get to know you, influence you, manipulate you, sabotage you, or all of the above. Listen to understand, not to respond. And don't believe everything that you are told, especially about why things are done the way they are or why they can't be done a certain way. Institutional knowledge can be helpful, but it can also be an anchor holding people back from trying new ideas. Also, remember that there will be people who were either turned down for your role or have a vested interest in the way things currently are. They may even go so far as to sabotage you to ensure you fail. You need to be acutely aware of these people as you explore your responsibilities.



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

### **Trust, but verify.**

When people explain how things are done or what the problems are, ask other people for their opinion. Talk to all of the stakeholders (i.e., customers and vendors). Better yet, go see for yourself.

### **Avoid sounding judgmental.**

You will see things you do not understand or processes that you want to change immediately. Take your time and try to understand all of the factors that are influencing the decision or process. I had a truss plant manager teach me that. When he was new to a facility, he had a tendency to call out these things as he saw them, often saying, "Well, that's stupid." He quickly learned that this alienated the legacy staff. Eventually, he figured out that instead of saying stupid, if he said something was silly, it had a much less charged effect. So, identify the things you see that are "silly" and make a note to look into them later.

### **Don't confuse the symptoms with the disease.**

Look deeper into problems. The seemingly quick solution might fix the problem today, but not keep it from recurring. Look for root causes. Employ the 5 Why's technique to determine the root cause problem. Keep asking a revised version of why as you obtain each answer. "Why is the customer unhappy? Why did we not get the delivery out on time? Why don't drivers start before 7 a.m.? Why do we not have any Leads starting before 7 a.m.? Why can't a Lead start at 6 a.m., and leave earlier in the day, and thus not incur overtime?"

### **LAST, BUT MOST IMPORTANT:**

#### **Write down everything you observe, hear, and think about your new responsibilities.**

Keep a separate notebook from your normal notes. In this notebook, write down all of the critical facts that you learn, the silly things that you see, and the critical issues that you know you need to address. Then make sure you refer back to this notebook at a minimum on each anniversary of the day you started. When I started a position leading a company, one of the things I wrote down was that the sales culture needed to be overhauled. As time progressed, I became more and more involved in the company when I looked back at my notebook some years later, and I was still dealing with all of the sales issues I had identified in those first 100 days.

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<sup>1</sup> © 2024 Zonda Media, a Delaware Corporation. Data from the Zonda Media 2024 Cost vs. Value Report can be downloaded free at [www.costsvsvalue.com](http://www.costsvsvalue.com).

<sup>2</sup> Hardie® fiber cement products are noncombustible and/or have a Class A fire rating when tested in accordance with ASTM E84. Fiber cement fire resistance does not extend to applied paints or coatings, which may be damaged or char when exposed to flames. The use of noncombustible siding, combined with other fire mitigation measures, may help harden a home against external fire.



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## PAUL RYAN

### PRESIDENT & CEO OF LMC

In recognition of the organization's 90th anniversary this year, LMC President and CEO Paul Ryan answers our questions about the buying group's legacy and future. Ryan joined LMC in 2016 and has served as president since 2021.



#### How is LMC marking its 90th anniversary?

LMC is celebrating 90 years of excellence with a variety of meaningful initiatives that honor our history, engage our members, and give back to our community. We recently celebrated with our supplier partners and members at our Annual Meeting in Phoenix, and we will continue the festivities at our Expo in November, where even more exciting deals and opportunities will be available.

Community involvement is a key part of our anniversary celebrations. We are partnering with our local Habitat for Humanity chapter for a special build and encouraging staff to utilize LMC's Volunteer Policy with the United Way. We are also honoring our last remaining founding member, J.C. Snavely, by hosting a luncheon at their location.

For our employees and local members, we have a summer 90th celebration planned in August, featuring two of our members who will be coming in to cook for the occasion. As the year winds down, we will express our gratitude through a Dealer Appreciation Day in November, which will include personalized calls and tokens of appreciation.

#### What values or strengths does LMC attribute its longevity to?

At LMC, our longevity is built on a steadfast commitment to our members—they are always our No. 1 priority. As a cooperative, our success is directly tied to theirs, and we have spent 90 years ensuring they have the competitive advantages, resources, and partnerships needed to thrive.

Being customer-centric means listening to our members, understanding their evolving needs, and continuously adapting to support their growth. We foster a culture of collaboration, where independent businesses can leverage the power of our network while maintaining their unique strengths. Our ability to connect members with top-tier suppliers, provide strategic purchasing power, and offer valuable industry insights has been key to our success.

Beyond business, LMC is built on trust, integrity, and long-term relationships. Our members know that we are not just a buying group, we are a true partner in their success. By staying true to these values, we have built a legacy of strength, resilience, and shared prosperity.

#### What are some of the biggest changes the organization has seen in recent years?

The industry has experienced significant consolidation, with public companies acquiring many independent dealers, including some of our own members. This shift has changed the competitive landscape, making it even more important for independent businesses to stay agile.

At the same time, technology has rapidly evolved, impacting everything from supply chain logistics to customer interactions. Our members are leveraging new digital tools to enhance efficiency, improve service, and stay competitive. Whether it's advanced inventory management, e-commerce solutions, or AI-driven analytics, embracing innovation has become essential for long-term success.

#### What are some of the investments LMC has made for the future?

LMC is committed to ensuring our members stay competitive in an evolving industry. One of our most significant investments has been the creation of a new Dealer Technology function, dedicated to supporting our members with cutting-edge solutions. By partnering with technology suppliers or building our own solutions, we're helping independent dealers improve efficiency, streamline operations, and drive growth.

Additionally, we are investing in software platforms designed to enhance our internal efficiency while making transactions easier for our members and supplier partners. These platforms will provide deeper insights into purchasing trends, allowing us to make more data-driven decisions and better support our members' needs in a rapidly changing market.

We're also excited about our new Modular Building Division. Adding these companies to our traditional members not only expands our network, but also significantly enhances our collective buying power, reducing costs for these members and providing growth opportunities for our supplier partners. This strategic expansion further strengthens our ability to support all members and position them for success in an increasingly diverse market.

#### Any new technology or innovative solutions coming down the pipeline for members?

One of the most exciting innovations we're rolling out is a new Product Information Management (PIM) system. This comprehensive product catalog enables our dealers to easily manage and display their product offerings across e-commerce platforms. Designed with affordability in mind, it will empower our members to enhance their online presence without the high costs typically associated with these systems. By providing a streamlined, user-friendly interface, the PIM system helps dealers update product details, improve customer experience, and stay competitive in the growing online marketplace. ■



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# NAVIGATING TARIFF CONCERNS

BY LBM JOURNAL READERS

This month's Real Issues. Real Answers. question deals with the impact of proposed and upcoming tariffs. There has been a lot of speculation around how steep tariffs and shifting timelines could affect housing and the LBM industry.

Nearly 140 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:**



What insights would you share with the LBM dealer who posed this question: "There has been a lot of news recently on higher tariffs between the U.S. and its trading partners, including Canada and Mexico. One concern that is top of mind for many LBM dealers is how these new tariffs will affect lumber and other materials sold at yards and stores across the country. How concerned should I be and what action, if any, can I take to protect my business?"

#### 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:

"Stock up heavy now and ride the wave. Things will straighten up."

"Two things: Buy what you can ahead of time. Second, be vocal at all town hall and other political gatherings."

"All I can say is, 'Roll with the punches.' Keep a sharp eye on inventory levels and don't make any rash moves. Steady as she goes!"

"New home building is slowing down."

"We have ordered material before the tariffs go into effect."

"We have been notified by several suppliers that they intend to increase their prices to us by 5% to 25% in response to tariffs on goods shipped after March 31. The amount of surcharge may vary daily, and will not be disclosed until the day the goods are shipped. This makes it difficult for us to price goods we sell to our customers. Ways to mitigate include: 1. Increase stock; 2. Contractually cap the surcharge we will accept, and cancel orders if surcharge exceeds that cap; 3. Search for alternative suppliers; 4. Increase our prices, as our competitors are also facing this increase in cost of materials."

"We will watch the market and take advantage of offers."

"We are keeping the builders aware of market prices to help them plan accordingly."

"When the tariff goes on, adjust your prices that same day."

"We have no control of tariffs that make no sense and which will increase the cost for custom home builders dramatically."

"Don't quote too far in the future. Quote only subject to tariffs."

"You should be very concerned and working on diversifying your supply chain and instigating pricing for your builder customers that focuses on uncertainty."

"The uncertainty is the challenge. Let's make a decision and move forward."

"Just pay attention and run a great business and stay positioned for whatever comes. This is the same advice I would have given in the past. Some things don't change!"

"Buy ahead when you can and then follow the market up with your pricing."

"We have no idea at this point whether they are going to implement and for how long. It's a waiting game."

"1. Negotiate better costs from your suppliers. 2. Source parts away from China. 3. Pass on the tariff costs to your customers. 4. Source parts to USA."

"Be informed about what's really going on with the tariffs."

"We are getting alerts of 25-45% increases in price."

"Ask every vendor every time what they know. Keep an open mind for changing prices. Quote for limited time frames."

"Honestly, I think everyone is searching for this answer, and no one truly knows. Some quick hits: 1. Open up communication with your vendors so you can have some prediction of when things might happen. 2. If you have products that you are top sellers that might slow with an increase, do you need to make a decision to bulk up and maintain a higher inventory level to help slow down the increases? 3. Are you pricing off market or weighted average (WAVG)? If WAVG, you can stock up and slow down how quickly you need to raise your prices. 4. Decide on the message you are going to put out to your customers when it's time (would avoid politics) but you have to get ahead of the increase and not make it a surprise."

"Communicate with customers and suppliers regularly. Keep things transparent when possible. Listen to what they have to say about their experience and finally take action as a partner."

"Protect your inventory position. Buy before price increases when you can and follow market pricing to protect margins."

"Consumer confidence is low. Demand is soft. Trim unnecessary expenses."

"We are taking the position of building our inventories as able now to soften any future price spikes. Turning tariffs on and off inside of a 6-week contract delivery is a nightmare."

"Watch the market and be upfront with your employees and customers." ►

“The uncertainty and flip-flopping is certainly a reason for concern and will impact business.”

“The market is beholden to the whims of one person that changes his mind every week on the issue. You can’t have a stable society with these conditions.”

“This is definitely an issue that demands attention and will need to be managed moving forward. There are a number of different ways to mitigate this issue, and we will have to make use of them all. First and foremost will be timely buying. Purchasing a reasonable amount of material before the tariff increase can enable you to keep your prices down longer. Maybe just as important is the ability to space out price increases because of the tariffs and not have to make large 25% or more increases all at once. Another avenue will be to look at alternative products that may be able to replace high tariff products at a more reasonable price. Finally educating our contractors and homeowners of the true impact of the situation will be vital. Some people will look at a 25% lumber tariff increase and see a 25% increase in the price to build their house. In a lot of situations, we can show our customers where a price increase on specific product groups while having an effect on the overall price, will not have the impact they may fear it will.”

“Take it as it comes. Do the best you can. Life is a roller coaster.”

“Right size your inventory, staff, and cash on hand. We are in for a rough ride.”

“We are a single location, <\$30M a year lumberyard. The biggest concern is the uncertainty. At some point, when this is called off, we will be sitting on product that is 25% higher than market. A lot of our product that will be affected get <25% GP, meaning we will have to sell at a loss to be competitive. This will hurt us greatly judging the uncertainty of how long this will last.”

“What specific actions to take are very difficult to gauge right now as this continues to be a very fluid situation where the chips get moved in different directions almost every day.”

“Currently, our intent is to just keep the holes filled in the yard and not ‘panic’ buy.”

“Raise your prices well before the increases take effect because when they come off you will have to take them off quickly based on past experience. Given the time of year as well, prices are going up to begin with so don’t let the tariffs erode your margins.”

“Buy early and average purchases into the equation.”

“I believe this will be temporary.”

“We are forced to carry more inventory and push higher margin into quotes since we will not know costs.”

“Quit freaking out, we are in this together.”

“Not a concern yet. If you turned off the political news on TV and social media, you wouldn’t even know tariffs are on.”

“Evaluate the cost increases and pass along what you have to.”

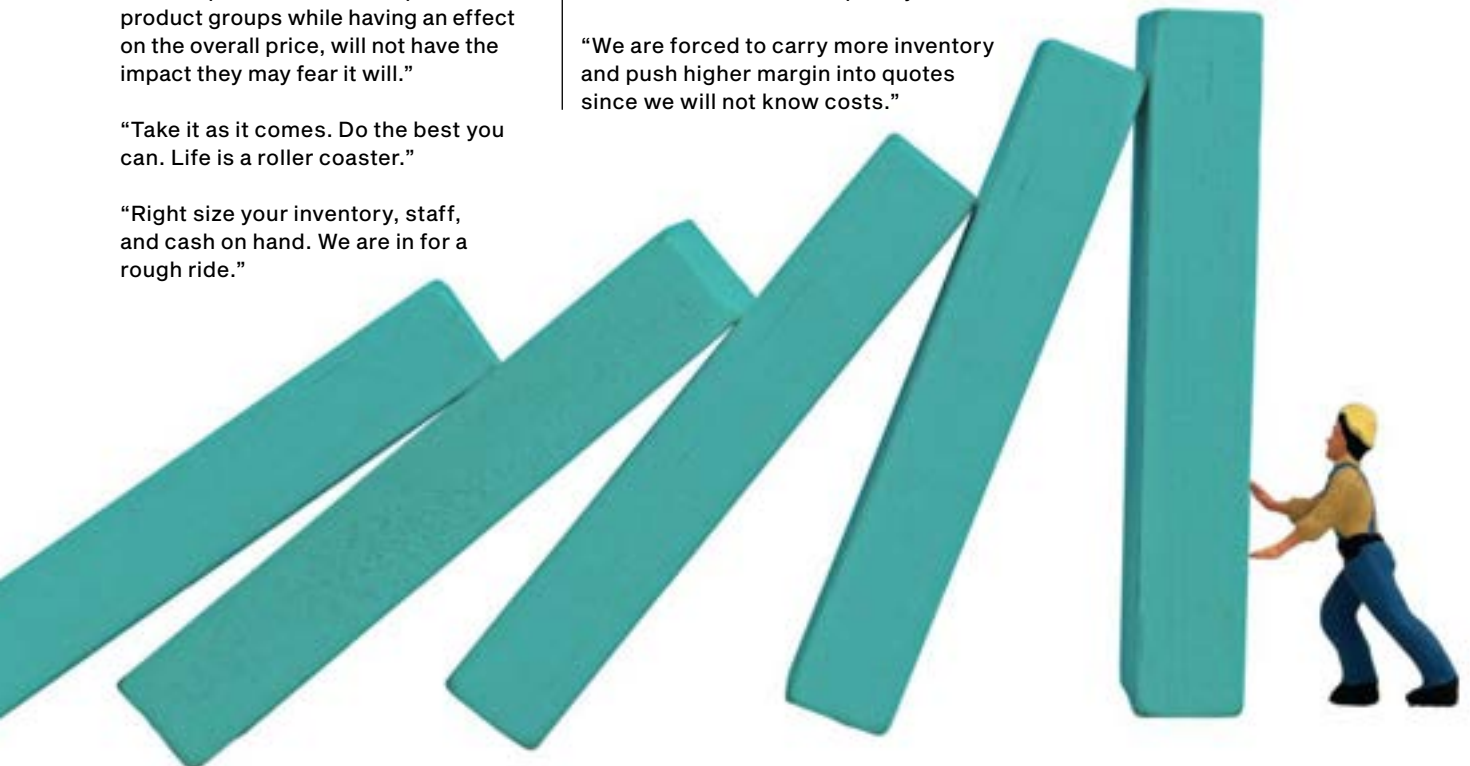
“If we get a commitment on a large project, we buy out the material at that time. Margins are protected, in most cases, as we have used replacement costs as a basis for our pricing.”

“Tariffs will cause our raw goods cost pricing to increase, domestic will also increase along with the import.”

“We are helpless to influence any of these decisions. Even if domestic producers could replace Mexican and Canadian vendors (they can’t), their prices will go up also.”

“Lumber tariffs on both sides should be abolished to increase unilateral trade.”

“This is a wait and see. A lot of noise from the mainstream media. It could shift purchasing to U.S. companies.”



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

“Be concerned. Lumber is the lifeblood of most LBM dealers.”

“Stay as vigilant as possible. Knowledge and timing is important. Be prepared to raise prices. We don’t have enough room in our gross margins to absorb 25% tariff/increase to the products we import so we will have to pass it on.”

“Depends on the demand for housing and remodeling in your particular area as well as affordability (Texas will not have as much of an impact as New England). Buy early, and keep in inventory.”

“Nothing at this point, we will pass additional cost onto consumer. Nails are our primary business.”

“Any business should always be aware of the fact that various trade issues are possible, if not likely, in some way or another to become a concern. The most important thing you can do is to be proactive to mitigate the effects on your business when you face the next supply chain challenge.”

“Action: Build OUT your supplier base. Spread out product availability risk.”

“I have always maintained multiple strong relationships with vendors across multiple supply channels. With an emphasis on always having strong U.S. partners, as either primary or secondary. We all deal with maintaining our competitiveness and profitability, however putting all your eggs in the cheapest import basket you can find is suicide in my opinion.”

“Try to look at domestic manufacturers.”

“Stay focused on your business, and minimize political talk. Take away political banners. You don’t know how your customer votes.”

“Lobby the U.S. government to end the 40-year conflict over softwood lumber. Make lobbying illegal, not logging.”

“At some point you will lose customer confidence and business due to one of the following: poor quality from a bad container, inability to provide product period, or with the threat of tariffs losing your competitive edge and profit.”

“Procurement diversification is now more important than ever. If you are still of the opinion that you are ‘loyal’ and depend solely on a single source, wake up!”

“You don’t need to do anything except shorten your bid time.”

“Price increases are a common occurrence. I view this as just another increase. However, the uncertainty of it can wreak havoc when trying to quote/plan for upcoming larger jobs.”

“There will be price increases and you should make sure you keep up with the retails and move them up.”

“You should be concerned, yet it will ultimately be added to your cost of goods the same as everyone else.”

“Absolutely nothing you can do other than make pricing adjustments as needed. We are all going to suffer the same expenses, just position yourself to take it in stride and not lose your focus.”

“I would be very concerned as in the end prices will go up and frankly the USA can’t supply all needed products.”

“If you had a crystal ball, and ample credit or cash, buy as much materials as possible and wait?”

“The price of lumber fluctuates from season to season and from week to week. Lay in additional lumber inventory or hedge by buying lumber futures.”

“Let things play out. Trump is doing what’s best and fair for America.”

“Manufacture in the USA.”

“We have expected prices to increase with the building season and tariffs will just make those increases much larger and set back any hope for affordable housing.”

“It will cause inflation and slow demand. Brutal all around.”

“Inform your customer base, but don’t raise prices until they are actually in place for a few weeks (when you actually have higher priced goods on hand due to tariffs). When tariff relief is given to other countries, you will be the one with a better relationship than those preemptively pricing in the tariff. Good time to pick up new business while you’re working off of older costs.”

“Control what you can control and be ready to pivot as our government leadership disrupts our industry and supply chains.”

“Stay on top of costs and immediately pass onto customers.”

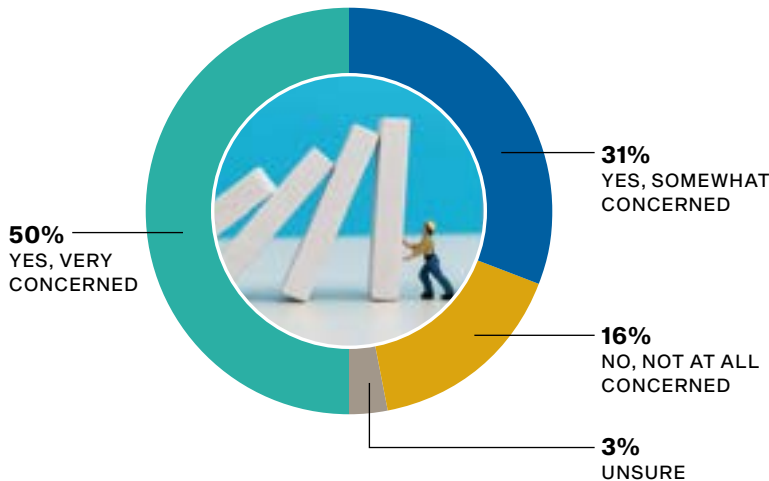
“There is no doubt that tariffs (depending on the level) will impact our businesses. Unfortunately, the lack of clarity in when/if/how much/with whom creates difficulty for those committed to making informed decisions. The only action I recommend is waiting until better information is available.”

“Obviously it will cause some consternation among end purchasers. Please remember though that our own Lumberman’s Association cannot supply a healthy building industry completely. Canada knows this and will just pass the increases onto the purchasers. Had we not been so narrow-minded, we might have had a new lumber agreement in place before this all happened.”

“I feel that you should invest at the possible lower prices, but not too much to hurt yourself. Let your prices be a result of the economy.”



**Are you concerned that new or higher tariffs will negatively impact your company?**



**Comments from dealers:**

“Steel and other commodities are already moving up, raising costs to make all construction higher priced. Housing will become even more expensive for those in middle class, further eroding the American dream.”

“[Existing] tariffs as well as the chaotic rollout of Trump tariffs are potentially very damaging to our business.”

“All of our manufacturers are in Canada, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany. The on-again and off-again for tariffs to Canada, which is 80% of our vendors, makes it impossible to manage our business.”

“I’ll reserve my concerns when all the tariff negotiations are done.”

“Especially with an issue that gets this much media attention, there is always going to be a concern of negative impact. The best thing we can do is educate our customers on the real and immediate issues and make sure they do not panic over the situation.”

“Our fuel cost went up 10% due to Canadian tariffs, which can lower our bottom line by \$30-40k per year.”

“Tariffs will bring higher prices and fewer sources.”

“[It’s] going to raise most prices by 20% and make homes less affordable.”

“The real issue is the U.S. pays way higher tariffs to those two countries then they pay the U.S. on our products. So we’re just making it an even playing field by doing it. Also, Canada flooding our market with their lumber when there’s plenty in the U.S. to sustain the U.S. market is another issue. The tariffs will help even the playing field. The U.S. has been taken advantage of way too long at the expense of our taxpayers.”

“Volatility is a bigger issue than higher prices. I am more concerned with buying the material at the higher tariffed price, and then having it removed a week later allowing competitors that waited to have a significant price advantage.”

“Nothing has changed at this time. The competition around me (including box stores) has not raised any lumber prices since late December.”

“Ask yourself, would an artificial price increase benefit consumers?”

“The only concern is in what form are they going to take? It’s a lot of noise now, people get too wrapped up in the media.”

**Comments from vendors:**

“We’re a service provider. We save companies money when markets go crazy.”

“We import products from Canada, China, etc. We unfortunately imported from Canada on the two days the tariffs were in effect and got taxed the 25% on the product.”

“Impact on overall demand.”

“It will be painful for the short term but in the end will drive growth of manufacturing again in the U.S.”

“Amateurs in government are making decisions they know nothing about. The sad part is we are going to upend [businesses] and reduce inventory and every small town in America is going to feel it. Don’t panic, review your inventory mix, cross train your employees, and maybe go into installed sales. Now is the time to ask your employees for ways to improve your business. Remember, they care too.”

“All the uncertainty and constant changing is the ridiculous part, but it’s understood that it’s most likely a negotiating tool.”

“My supplier just increased the price on one item I buy in volume by nearly 20%.”

“There is a serious shortage of housing (especially in the Northeast) and added tariffs on the cost of the main building component (lumber) will make it more difficult for home building to reach the level needed to impact affordability. Additionally, if exports drop due to increased raw material cost (metals) going into products exported by U.S. it will negatively affect wood crating for these exported products.”

“We are in a global economy. This trade war is extremely unnecessary.” ■

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**HAVE A REAL ISSUE?**

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

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# LBM CENTURY CLUB HONORS 100-YEAR-OLD BUSINESSES

We asked these companies why they believe their businesses have had staying power in their communities.

## Big C Lumber

Granger, IN | [bigclumber.com](http://bigclumber.com)

**ESTABLISHED: 1921**

**LOCATIONS: 16-plus three manufacturing facilities**

“At Big C Lumber, we believe our long-standing presence in the community is built on strong relationships with builders, remodelers, and our valued customers. Providing exceptional customer service is a top priority, and as a family-owned business, we take pride in being flexible, understanding, and committed to meeting our customers’ needs. We also remain dedicated to giving back to our community in meaningful ways such as volunteering and local sponsorships. Big C Lumber strives to be involved with our local communities and will continue to do so for years to come.”

— Caitlin Stone  
finance and communications analyst



## Issaquah Lumber

Issaquah, WA | [issaquahlumber.com](http://issaquahlumber.com)

**ESTABLISHED: 1889**

**LOCATIONS: 1**

“Our staying power comes from our strong connection to the building trade and retail sectors. Our unique ability to mill materials has made Issaquah Lumber a trusted source of high-quality products and creative solutions that others can’t match. We maintain long-term commitments with our suppliers to ensure consistent quality, allowing customers to rely on us today, tomorrow, and even a decade from now.

Beyond materials, we take pride in innovation and continuously explore new ways to address challenges in the built environment while serving as a resource for bringing ideas to market. Most importantly, our success is founded on relationships. We treat our customers how we’d want to be treated, making their projects our own. While we don’t need every sale, we prioritize partnering with our customers to realize their visions and remain their trusted resource.”

— Chad Amble  
president





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.

**THE MOST RECENT INDUCTEES INTO THIS EXCLUSIVE CLUB INCLUDE:**

HAMILTON BUILDING SUPPLY Hamilton, NJ	est. 1924	LEARNED LUMBER Hermosa Beach, CA	est. 1924
KEEP & MARTINSON LUMBER, INC. Tekonsha, MI	est. 1875	CLARKS LUMBER Herington, KS	est. 1925
A. H. ANGERSTEIN, INC. Wilmington, DE	est. 1924	ORGAIN BUILDING SUPPLY Clarksville, TN	est. 1921
CHRISTENSEN LUMBER CO. Fremont, NE	est. 1923	ISSAQUAH LUMBER Issaquah, WA	est. 1889
CAROLINA LUMBER & SUPPLY COMPANY Atlanta, GA	est. 1900	SCHOLL LUMBER Houston, TX	est. 1845

**NOMINATE A COMPANY FOR THE LBM CENTURY CLUB**

[lbmjournals.com/nominate](http://lbmjournals.com/nominate)

For a complete listing of LBM Century Club members, visit [lbmjournals.com/lbm-century-club](http://lbmjournals.com/lbm-century-club).

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# THE 2025 CLASS OF YOUNG LBM LEADERS

**LBM** JOURNAL<sup>®</sup>

**40**

UNDER

**40**

CLASS OF 2025

**ATTRACTING**, hiring, and retaining talented young pros is consistently one of the top challenges reported by LBM dealers and distributors. That's exactly why we created the LBM 40 Under 40—to recognize and celebrate the growing class of strong young leaders in the LBM community.

Inductees to the Class of 2025 are neither “rising stars” or “future leaders.” Instead, they've paid their dues and have put in the work necessary to establish themselves as leaders in their companies, and their communities.

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

Inductees from this year's list have all been invited to attend and be recognized at this year's LBM Strategies Conference, to be held October 15-17, 2025 in Nashville, TN. For more information on the conference, visit [lbmstrategies.com](http://lbmstrategies.com).

For now, we're excited to celebrate and present, in no particular order, the 2025 LBM 40 Under 40 inductees.

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## SADIE HAMMOND BERUBE

DIRECTOR OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
HAMMOND LUMBER COMPANY

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### WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF

**IN FIVE YEARS:** Continuing to grow within the business and learning from all aspects of our operations. Being part of a family-owned business, I have the opportunity to work alongside my dad, grandfather, and sister. Their experience and leadership inspire me to grow and contribute to the company's continued success in my own way, while honoring the legacy they've built.

### ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:

Surround yourself with people and mentors who challenge, support, and inspire you. Work hard, never be afraid to ask questions, and take advantage of every opportunity to gain experience. Enjoy the process—success comes with time, dedication, and passion for what you do.

**FUN FACT:** I played tennis at the University of Tennessee and achieved All-American honors my senior year. I am also currently earning my MBA online from UT. In August, I'll officially be a Vol for Life x2!



## BOWEN CHAPMAN

VICE PRESIDENT  
FOUR CORNERS BUILDING SUPPLY

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### WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF

**IN FIVE YEARS:** I see myself continuing to drive growth and innovation, whether by scaling existing ventures or launching new initiatives. I aim to take on larger leadership roles, mentor emerging talent, and expand my impact within the business community. I also hope to stay engaged in leadership development and community initiatives, building on the experiences and relationships I've cultivated.

### ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:

Learn the business from the ground up. Build relationships and seek out other industry leaders or people you look up to. Embrace change and commit to innovation and technology.

**FUN FACT:** I can barefoot water ski.



## JUSTIN BIGHAM

PURCHASING & PRICING MANAGER  
HT BUILDING PRODUCTS

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**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** I see myself continuing to grow in the industry professionally and personally. Ideally in a role that is vital to growth and excellence within HT Lumber. My goal is to have a large group of other team members focused on learning, serving our customers, and improving each other's lives through our careers. I hope to find more industry opportunities through charities, boards, and associations that are aimed at helping in our industry. Lastly, I aspire to impact people's lives and careers in the same positive way that so many others in this industry have done for me.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** LBM as an industry is so much more than sales and deliveries. There is a pride that comes with helping people build their dream homes, or driving down the road being able to remember you and your company's hand in building them. This is an industry that will never fade away and can continue to bring new challenges. If you want continuous growth and opportunity, then LBM is a great place to spend a career.

**FUN FACT:** I have a wonderful and large, young family. I am a father and husband to two beautiful girls and an amazing wife, while also being the oldest of six brothers and sisters. Close family get-togethers can easily hit 20+ people. Things are always fun and crazy, but it is something I value immensely.



## JON FLETCHER

NATIONAL SALES MANAGER  
ADVANTAGE LUMBER LLC

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**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** In five years, I see myself actively driving the growth of Advantage Lumber, steering the company in the right direction to stay ahead of industry trends and meet evolving market demands. My goal is to ensure the long-term success and stability of the organization while fostering an environment that supports not only my family's well-being but also the prosperity and satisfaction of my coworkers.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** My advice for anyone entering the LBM industry is to stay focused and committed. While this industry is far from easy, the relationships you build with coworkers and clients are invaluable and often last a lifetime. Though it can be highly competitive, it is also driven by passion and a shared dedication to excellence. Success in this field requires hard work, adaptability, and a willingness to evolve with the market. If you bring these qualities to the table, you'll find not only professional success but also deep personal fulfillment.

**FUN FACT:** I am passionate about youth sports. I have the privilege of coaching multiple age groups in both travel and recreational baseball and softball. It is incredibly fulfilling to help children, including my own, discover that with hard work, dedication, and a commitment to improvement, their goals are within reach.



## ASHLEY GUEST

MARKETING MANAGER  
HARBIN LUMBER COMPANY INC.

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**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** I want to continue to grow Harbin's marketing department and have it integrated in every aspect of our business. We're all contributing to the same mission for Harbin's benefit as well as our impact on the communities we serve. I also want to be in the position to "pay it forward" for others, to help others within Harbin as well as our industry improve, to share ideas, and collaborate.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** Be willing to take on tasks and responsibilities that are either outside of your comfort zone or outside the scope of your job description. The more tasks that you are able to perform, the more valuable it makes you to the organization. The second thing I would advise is to embrace that the LBM industry is one ultimately of relationships. Develop, maintain, and protect positive relationships. The third thing I would suggest is to have a "servant's heart." I believe that we exist to serve others, no matter what it is we do in our career.

**FUN FACT:** I was a Tiger Twirler for Clemson University during 2015-2019 seasons. During this time, I was able to travel and perform at four ACC championships, three national championships and received two national championship rings. GO TIGERS!



## ZAC PAGE

REGIONAL SALES MANAGER -  
RESIDENTIAL  
**SIMPSON STRONG-TIE**

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### WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF

**IN FIVE YEARS:** I see myself continuing in sales leadership and elevating my position within Simpson Strong-Tie along with continued growth and leadership within the industry. I aim to not only grow myself as a leader but mentor and help develop the next generation of leaders within our industry that will help carry us all into the future.

### ADVICE FOR THE NEXT

**GENERATION:** My advice would be to find a mentor that is truly invested in your growth and cares about you. This industry is an amazing network and having a mentor that can help you connect the dots, walk through good and hard times and help build your knowledge will open you up to endless opportunities for growth, connection and meaning in your career with the LBM industry.

**FUN FACT:** I'm married with two amazing kids and we love spending time outdoors in the beautiful Pacific Northwest, but before I lived out west I was born and raised in Ohio. I love all sports but have a strong passion for football which I was lucky enough to play in college at Grove City College in Pennsylvania. Now I'm just a big fan of the Steelers and my Ohio State Buckeyes!



## VICTORIA ZIMMERMAN

HR DIRECTOR & SENIOR MANAGEMENT  
TEAM MEMBER  
**SHEPLEY WOOD PRODUCTS**

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### WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF

**IN FIVE YEARS:** I hope to be in a role that continues to challenge and engage me and has true impact. Hopefully, that is still on the Shepley leadership team! I greatly enjoy finding ways to help the business and employees be even more successful and working to create an ongoing vision for the future that people can be inspired by and proud of.

### ADVICE FOR THE NEXT

**GENERATION:** Ask questions and be open to the unexpected. You can always learn from the people around you so ask the questions and in turn be willing to teach. Additionally, sometimes your career takes you in a surprising direction. As you grow your professional self, you learn more about what you are good at and what you enjoy. Look for your opportunities and remain open to the ones you don't anticipate.

**FUN FACT:** I lived in London for ten years with my family (ages 1-11). I learned to speak there and had a strong English accent. Unfortunately, it has disappeared since being back in the States.



## MIKE UNWIN

STORE & PURCHASING MANAGER  
**HAMILTON BUILDING SUPPLY**

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### WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF

**IN FIVE YEARS:** Being fairly new to the industry as a whole, the sky is the limit! I see myself in five years being right here at Hamilton Building Supply. My goal is to help our company continue to grow and have as much success as possible. Every day I learn something new, and I am excited to take on anything that is thrown my way.

### ADVICE FOR THE NEXT

**GENERATION:** College is not for everyone, and this is something I know from personal experience. The LBM industry is a great place to start a career. If you are willing to put in the effort, your success will be extremely rewarding. Don't be afraid to take chances and make yourself uncomfortable.

**FUN FACT:** I am a huge fan of the Green Bay Packers, New Jersey Devils, and Oregon Ducks! In my free time I enjoy playing pool and cornhole with friends.





## MAKINSIE EVANS

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS  
NORTHERN OHIO LUMBER & TIMBER

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** As a 160-year-old company, NORTHERN OHIO LUMBER & TIMBER must continue evolving to stay ahead, and I'm excited to be part of leading that transformation. I see myself still here, contributing to that growth. While we are an LBM company with three divisions, our thermally modified wood lines—particularly in parks and outdoor spaces—have seen explosive growth in recent years. That work is especially fulfilling for me because it aligns with my passion for sustainable and durable building materials.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** Young people entering the LBM industry may be intimidated by its rich history and dedication to tradition. I challenge young people to first become students of the industry: learn by doing, seek mentorship, and absorb as much as possible. Once that foundation is in place, dare to lead in new ways. I've found the most satisfaction in navigating transitions from the old to the new, trudging through the mud, knowing that my hustle and hard work will pay off if I stay disciplined. Forming new paths leads to more fulfilling and profitable results.

**FUN FACT:** I've been a musician and singer my whole life, growing up in a musical family. We love playing bluegrass and folk music together whenever we gather.



## JOHN SIMPSON

GENERAL MANAGER  
BUILDERS FIRSTSOURCE

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** In five years, I see myself continuing to effectively lead sales and operations teams within our company, helping them to adapt and thrive in our dynamic industry and grow our business in Connecticut, and beyond.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** Our industry is a great one, and there are countless opportunities within it for people with a wide variety of skillsets and interests. My advice for younger folks, especially those looking to lead others, is to learn as much as you can by getting your hands dirty. Words of wisdom from more experienced peers undoubtedly have their value, but without getting out there and learning the ropes firsthand, it's hard to develop a healthy respect for what it takes to get everyone's job done. Ask questions, lend a hand (even when it's not asked of you), and push yourself to work harder every day.

**FUN FACT:** My family is my life. When I'm not working, I'm almost always spending time with my wife, three-year-old daughter, and our black lab Georgie. My daughter is obsessed with trucks and construction equipment, so she thinks it's pretty cool to have a dad that knows his way around machinery!



## RYAN SPARTA

KITCHEN AND BATH TEAM LEAD  
& MILLWORK TRADER  
LBM ADVANTAGE

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** In five years, I see myself still at LBM Advantage. I will still be involved with NYLE, MHLDA, and the other organizations I work with. I want to be even more involved with helping to foster in the next generation.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** This is something that I am very passionate about. I have spoken on a panel at the NRLA LBM Expo to high school students about this very topic. The best advice I can give someone that is considering the LBM industry as a career option is that if you decide to do it then really do it. I keep a postcard on my desk that says, "Lick the stamp and send it." It's a quote by F1 racer Daniel Ricciardo. It means that when you do something you go all in, no looking back. You will get everything out of this industry that you put into it.

**FUN FACT:** This piggy backs off the previous question. After about a year of being in the industry I got a tattoo of a tree to remind me that's where this whole industry started. So when I say, "Lick the stamp and send it," and go all in, I mean it.



## BRANDON GOWER

SOUTHPOINT MILLWORK  
PLANT MANAGER  
WILSON LUMBER

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**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** Continuing to grow within Wilson Lumber Company as our Director of Millwork Operations and helping our Millwork Division hit our three-year goal of \$75 million in revenue while leading a team of 150 production, warehouse, and delivery personnel.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** Keep an open mind and explore the endless avenues that the building material industry has to offer. There are many different opportunities and career paths for young individuals to make long-standing careers out of. The industry provides opportunities for individual growth, to be a part of a team, and to have an impact on people's life through the materials we produce.

**FUN FACT:** I played collegiate baseball for the University of Alabama in Huntsville. I'm certified by the University of Tennessee Beef and Forage Center in Artificial Insemination and Tennessee Master Beef Producer Program.



## MEGAN SUMNER

OUTSIDE SALES REPRESENTATIVE  
SAN ANTONIO LUMBER COMPANY

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**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** I see myself continuing to lead and grow San Antonio Lumber as a thriving business that remains a cornerstone to our community. I see myself mentoring my team to achieve both mine and their goals, while fostering trust and a culture of excellence.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** Take your time to learn the materials you are selling. I do not claim to know everything but I do strive to find the answers for my customers. Be honest, customers appreciate honesty and when you earn their trust they will be forever customers.

**FUN FACT:** I live on a farm with small goats, a pig, chickens, a cat, dogs, and occasional turtles that my children find.



## CHRIS STEVENSON

OPERATIONS MANAGER  
BUILDING CENTER STORES

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**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** I see myself continuing to help grow the company and taking on more responsibilities, expanding community outreach.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** Ask so many questions, learn everything you can. There are so many opportunities within the industry, there is no limit to your career path. From management, drivers, sales and marketing, financials, the industry is diverse. The one thing you need is drive.

**FUN FACT:** I have two dogs named Leo and Lily that will be ring bearers in my upcoming wedding.





## ANDREW QUADRINI

BUILDING MATERIALS MANAGER  
WILSON LUMBER

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** In five years, I see myself in an executive position at Wilson Lumber, continuing to lead the LBM division with a focus on innovation and growth. I aim to play a key role in expanding our reach and developing new strategies that drive operational efficiency and community impact. My goal is to help shape the future of Wilson Lumber by fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, and excellence while ensuring that we continue to positively impact the communities we serve.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** My advice for young people considering their career options is to stay open to opportunities that come your way. When I first started, I never imagined working in the LBM industry, but now I find the work incredibly fulfilling. This industry has not only provided me with a meaningful career but also created a great life for me and my family. Helping people build or renovate their homes, and contributing to making their dreams come true, is truly rewarding. Sometimes, the right opportunity might not be the one you first expected, so keep an open mind and embrace new possibilities.

**FUN FACT:** I have traveled to a foreign country to spectate an international e-sports tournament for a slightly obscure video game called DOTA 2.



## CHANTEL JACOBO

DIRECTOR OF HR  
ASHBY LUMBER

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** I hope to continue to grow as an HR professional within the LBM industry. I hope to take on more strategic responsibilities that contribute to building strong, engaged teams, and optimizing HR processes to support business growth.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** Here are a few things to keep in mind featuring "The Ashby Way": 1. Put the customer first. Whether you're in HR, sales, or operations, making the customer the center of everything you do will set you apart. 2. Follow through and take ownership. If you make a commitment, honor it. If challenges arise, be proactive in finding solutions. 3. Seek continuous improvement. Be open to feedback, challenge yourself, and aim to be better today than you were yesterday. 4. Enjoy the journey. This industry is built on relationships, teamwork, and hard work, but there's also space for joy, celebration, and personal fulfillment. If you're willing to put in the effort, you'll find a career that is both meaningful and rewarding.

**FUN FACT:** In my spare time, I love to cook and experiment with new latte creations. As a self-proclaimed coffee connoisseur, I'm always on the hunt for unique coffee beans to perfect my espresso game!



## ANTHONY STEPHAN

HUNTSVILLE MILLWORK MANAGER  
WILSON LUMBER

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** I see myself continuing to grow with Wilson Lumber, contributing to its success through innovation and new opportunities. I hope to take on higher challenges as the company expands. If I remain in my current role, I plan to manufacture insulated glass in-house, expand color options for our products, and introduce new window styles to our lineup.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** Never stop challenging yourself to grow. Learn what you don't know and pursue what you want with determination. You are the only person who can push yourself to new limits, and you'll find success as long as you keep striving and refuse to give up.

**FUN FACT:** I've never grown out of my childhood love for Lego. Now, as an adult with children who share that passion, I've created a Lego city in my home, complete with buildings and working lights. The collection has even spilled over into my office because I ran out of space at home. It seems I enjoy building homes both at work and in my free time!



## JAMES STRATTMAN

BRANCH MANAGER  
YOUR BUILDING CENTERS

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**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** In the next five years, I see myself furthering my career with Your Building Centers. This company has provided me with many opportunities in just the short time I have been here. I want to continue to mentor my team, allow myself to grow personally and professionally, and contribute to the success of Your Building Centers.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** One piece of advice I would give is that nothing in life is given, it is earned. I truly believe if you work hard and put effort into your career, the sky is the limit. There are many different avenues to explore in the building industry and it is OK to look outside of your comfort zone. There is always something new to learn.

**FUN FACT:** The building industry was not my main interest when I was growing up. In high school I wanted to pursue a career in culinary. Both of my parents had careers in the industry and they played a major role in my decision to pursue this path of work.



## BEAU HOWARD

OWNER/OPERATIONS MANAGER  
HOWARD LUMBER AND HARDWARE

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**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** Still very involved in our day-to-day business. Helping our company grow and offer our customers the best service possible. We have been very blessed with what we have, and I plan to continue growing what God has given us. We have done a good job of hiring young people and plan for the future of our company. Hopefully, we will have another successful Greenfield operation within five years as well.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** Learn as much as you can from others that have been in the business for a while. You will never know everything, but surrounding yourself with people better and smarter than you is the best way to be successful. Build a good team that shares the same goals and values as you.

**FUN FACT:** I was blessed with a beautiful red headed girl in 2023, and we are expecting another child in September 2025!



## MIKE LEGINSKI

LOCATION LEADER  
PRESTON FEATHER  
BUILDING CENTERS

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**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** Continuing to grow my career in the LBM industry.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** Don't overlook this industry! There are so many different career paths that you can follow and no shortage of people willing to pass on their knowledge to you. Whether you're a college graduate or someone who wants to enter the workforce right out of high school, you can build a great career and earn a lot of money in this business with or without a degree.

**FUN FACT:** I love the outdoors and enjoying all that Northern Michigan has to offer with my family.





## RYAN AYERS

CO-FOUNDER & CEO  
SUPPLI

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** In five years, I see myself continuing to lead Suppli as a key technology partner for the LBM industry. My goal is to expand our platform's reach where we become a full financial operating system for dealers—from customer onboarding and underwriting to A/R and payments, A/P and rebate management, off-balance sheet trade credit, customer loyalty and more. Beyond Suppli, I hope to continue being an active advocate for industry innovation, working closely with the next generation of LBM businesses to shape the future of technology adoption in this space.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** For those considering a career in LBM, my advice is simple: don't underestimate the impact you can make. This industry is built on relationships, trust, and deep expertise but it's also in need of modernization. By embracing technology, streamlining outdated processes, and thinking critically about how to improve efficiency, young professionals have the chance to shape the future of LBM in a meaningful way. Whether you're in sales, operations, or finance/credit, there's never been a better time to get involved.

**FUN FACT:** Prior to launching Suppli, my co-founder and I spent a year running our own small lumber and drywall supply business in Texas.



## TYLER McFADDEN

PURCHASER  
IVEY'S BUILDING MATERIALS

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** I believe this industry's best days are still ahead of it. With rapid technological advancements and the ever-growing demand for housing, we're poised for a period of dynamic growth and innovation. While I can't say for certain if I'll still be in an operations role, I foresee myself involved in the LBM business in some capacity. Maybe I'll take on a more strategic role within the LBM sector. I'm very interested in how artificial intelligence can automate and handle nearly all data-related tasks. I think we're very close in seeing that become a reality.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** For any career, I'd recommend finding something you're deeply fascinated with. Your passion will naturally drive you to invest more time and energy, which can lead to developing a real competitive edge. When you enjoy what you do and find success in it, your knowledge and value to an organization grow exponentially. It's a win-win situation—you'll be both fulfilled and highly sought-after in your field.

**FUN FACT:** I like to wind down in the evenings by playing heavy metal on guitar.



## CANDICE HUSTON

OPERATIONS MANAGER  
CALAVERAS & SONORA LUMBER  
(NATION'S BEST)

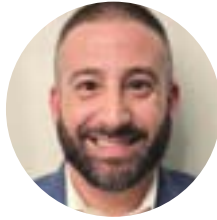
**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** Within the next five years I would like to be helping additional stores in their daily operations. I also plan to continue to expand my knowledge in the industry and seek out opportunities to grow my career.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** It may not be a glamorous career path but an LBM career is one that will exist through any economy. It gives the opportunity to learn home improvement life skills and build a career at the same time. Find someone in this industry and pick their brain for their experience and knowledge; it will be invaluable. Always work at the level of the job you want, even if you don't have it yet, and strive to achieve any goals you continually set for yourself.

**FUN FACT:** I had no intention in making a career out of working at a lumberyard and hardware store. The family-run, small town feeling is something that you can't help but fall in love with and I have been here ever since.



**Sadie Hammond Berube**  
Hammond Lumber Company



**Mike Unwin**  
Hamilton Building Supply



**Victoria Zimmerman**  
Shepley Wood Products



**Bowen Chapman**  
Four Corners Building Supply



**Chris Stevenson**  
Building Center Stores



**Brandon Gower**  
Wilson Lumber



**Beau Howard**  
Howard Lumber and Hardware



**Anthony Stephan**  
Wilson Lumber



**Andrew Quadrini**  
Wilson Lumber



**Chantel Jacobo**  
Ashby Lumber



**Scott Nicholson**  
Dakota County Lumber Co.



**Luke Lightfoot**  
Orange County Building Materials



**Christopher Urso**  
Arnold Lumber Company



**Austin Huskey**  
Huskey Building Supply

# **LBM** JOURNAL<sup>®</sup> **40** **UNDER** **40** CLASS OF 2025

## **CELEBRATING THE FUTURE OF THE LBM INDUSTRY**

We are proud to recognize the outstanding LMC Members who have been honored by LBM Journal as part of their prestigious 40 Under 40 list. These rising stars are shaping the future of our industry with their leadership, innovation, and excellence. Each of these individuals has demonstrated a remarkable commitment to their careers, bringing fresh perspectives, dedication, and a drive for success that inspire those around them. We celebrate their accomplishments and look forward to supporting them as they continue to lead and innovate in the years to come.

**Congratulations to our LMC Members for making an impact on the LBM industry!**

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Building Business Together.



## FAREN HARDING

SALES TRAINING & SUPPORT  
SPECIALIST  
BLIFFERT LUMBER & DESIGN

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**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** In five years, I see myself as a key leader in sales training and development, helping to shape a high-performing team and driving business growth. I aim to continue expanding my expertise in the building industry, mentoring others, and making a meaningful impact through education and strategic support.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** Whatever task is at hand, always give it your full effort. I never envisioned a career in the building industry, but since joining I've experienced tremendous growth. No matter where you start, the opportunities are endless. Approach each day with a positive attitude, be open to learning, and don't hesitate to ask questions. Lots of questions! The building industry is filled with knowledgeable and supportive professionals eager to help you succeed.

**FUN FACT:** I was born and raised in an outdoor-loving family. My favorite hobbies include deer hunting, fishing, and sturgeon spearing. I also have a passion for fitness and running.



## SCOTT NICHOLSON

GENERAL MANAGER/COO  
DAKOTA COUNTY LUMBER CO.

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**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** If I am lucky enough, to still be working at Dakota County Lumber for Sunny Bowman. We have some lofty goals that we want to accomplish so hopefully we have multiple locations and have doubled in revenue and people.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** This industry is special because there are so many examples of people working their way up from a forklift driver, a truck driver, working the city desk or whatever entry level type job to becoming the Operations Manager, Sales Manager, CEO, etc. There is so much opportunity to have an amazing career with awesome earning potential. You just need to be willing to work hard, have a great attitude and learn as much as you can.

**FUN FACT:** I have three children under five years old. I grew up playing hockey and still play goalie in a beer league with a bunch of buddies from high school. I know a lot of useless information that has not helped my career at all.



## CHRISTOPHER URSO

STORE MANAGER  
ARNOLD LUMBER COMPANY

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**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** In five years, I see myself developing great people, helping customers meet their goals, being a part of the growth of Arnold Lumber Company, and continuing a legacy of delivering excellence and investing in the future while giving back to the community. Nothing is more exciting than seeing a long runway ahead and knowing you're going to be along for the ride!

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** Always find a way to say, "Yes!" Whether it be a customer asking for something crazy, a superior asking for you to learn a new skill or process, or just trying a new flavor of coffee. The more you know, the more valuable you are, and the only way to start learning is to say yes. Keep doing the most, and don't stop improving. Once you stop or slow down, it is that much harder to start back up again; keep going!

**FUN FACT:** If I am not counting strokes on the golf course, I will likely be at the beach or trying new things with my growing family.



## LUKE LIGHTFOOT

REGIONAL MANAGER  
**ORANGE COUNTY  
BUILDING MATERIALS**

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**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** I see myself making a step forward into vice president in the next five years, managing most of all day-to-day operations.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** The people in this industry are different, all in good ways. That in itself can drive such a value to a career and enjoying what you do every day. My personal advice would be to focus on forward momentum.

**FUN FACT:** I believe I have a unique passion for what I do. Orange County Building Materials is my family's company, as a young child my dad would take the family on business trips. I was the kid that would rather go to a show or expo than an amusement park. It's led to quite a bit of "absorption" by proximity.



## EMILY FEIRICK

OUTSIDE SALES COORDINATOR  
**BIG C LUMBER**

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**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** In five years, I see myself raising my two girls while continuing to build my career in the lumber industry. There will be a lot of opportunities available at Big C in the near future, so I am excited to see what I will be able to accomplish.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** Take advantage of moving around within your company while learning from everyone around you. Have goals but be flexible because you never know what role you might end up thriving in. Focus on building as many relationships as you can and help build a great culture with everyone around you.

**FUN FACT:** I love skydiving. There is nothing more thrilling than jumping out of a plane at 14,000 feet.



## MATT RAYOL

FOUNDER  
**BRAZAWOOD LLC**

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**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** Enjoying life with family, making sure that we've created something special for the world. And for sure, following my passion for creating and materializing.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** Focus on the cause that you're defending, not on the profit that it could or could not generate. **BE A PROBLEM SOLVER;** eventually you will also solve the "money problem."

**FUN FACT:** I can't pronounce the 'TH' in English. I used to participate in rhyme battles in Brazil, and I still rhyme today (in Portuguese). I'm trying my best to train my brain to rhyme in English too, but most of my rhymes in English are very silly.





## CHRIS ROUTH

VP OF OPERATIONS  
MILLARD LUMBER INC.

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** For my 15th birthday my gift was a ride to work at Millard Lumber. I've never had another job. After 22 years, I've made my way from pricing updates data entry to the executive leadership team. I've enjoyed the opportunity to build a career with a family-owned business in its third generation of leadership. In five years, I plan on leading the next generation of Millard Lumber leadership with a handful of like-minded professionals, pushing Millard Lumber into the future.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** My college degree is in economics and finance. I never expected at that time that I would continue at the lumberyard and in the housing industry. My advice: don't convince yourself you have the rest of your life figured out in your twenties. Work hard. Working in the LBM industry is a fulfilling profession. The LBM industry is a part of the American dream: homeownership.

**FUN FACT:** My side hobby is being involved in politics. In 2020 our vice president of sales was looking to retire but needed a new hobby to keep busy. I convinced him to run for Omaha City Council. He agreed to it with the stipulation that I would be his campaign manager. He won by beating out six other opponents in that race and is running for re-election in spring of 2025.



## DANNY MOE

SALES MANAGER  
IWP

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** I see myself as a seasoned sales professional with a deep understanding of both my industry and clients' needs. I envision being in a leadership position, guiding, and mentoring a team to success while continuing to drive results and build lasting client relationships. My goal is to not only achieve personal milestones but also help my team and company reach new heights.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** Don't overlook the building industry. While it's not the "sexiest" industry to start in, there is so much long-term potential and diverse opportunities available. I'd encourage them to gain hands-on experience, whether through internships or entry-level positions, to truly understand the business from the ground up. Also, never stop learning, whether it's about new trends in the industry or sharpening soft skills like customer service and negotiation.

**FUN FACT:** My father was a pilot in the Navy, and his squadron was picked to fly the jets in all of the action scenes in the original Top Gun. My father was in charge of all navigation and weapons, so every time you saw Maverick and Goose flying in those action scenes, it was Rick "Curly" Moe making Goose look good ... until the ejection scene.



## AMY WALLACE

CREDIT MANAGER  
WALLACE BUILDING CENTER

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** Hopefully still in my position, heading up the credit department over multiple locations. It is mine and my husband's dream to open multiple locations. In five years, I hope we are working on number two.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** I think I would tell the younger generation that it's OK not to know exactly what you want to do after college or high school. Look at me—I started out teaching and wound up being a credit manager.

**FUN FACT:** Something that is a little different about me is that my husband and I have two children and we actually built an office for them right beside our office. We bring our children with us to work pretty much every day. Even though it is not always the most professional setting, I love getting to spend more time with my family while also getting to chase my professional dreams.



## AUSTIN HUSKEY

CEO  
HUSKEY BUILDING SUPPLY

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** Continuing to grow my team at Huskey, expanding into new markets, but always making long term decisions that create sustainability for generations to come.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** There is a world of opportunity in our industry. It is really fun and fulfilling to be a part of, hands on producing and creating the future for our communities.

**FUN FACT:** My wife and I met playing worship music at church and still get to do that together today.

THE LBM  
40 UNDER 40  
REPRESENT A  
SMALL SAMPLE OF  
THE YOUNG PROS  
WHO ARE DRIVING  
THE FUTURE  
FOR THE LBM  
COMMUNITY.

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Big C Lumber

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and commitment to the LBM industry.



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## CHRIS HANSEN

SOFTWARE APPLICATION MANAGER  
OREPAC BUILDING PRODUCTS

---

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** In five years, I see myself as the director of IT, leading transformative change across our organization. My focus will be on driving strategic initiatives that foster business growth, enhance operational efficiency, and ensure robust security. I aim to build a forward-thinking IT department that aligns technology with our business goals, empowering our teams to excel and thrive in an ever-evolving landscape.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** My advice for young people considering a career in the LBM industry is to be a sponge—learn as much as you can from those with years of experience in the field. Build relationships with seasoned professionals, ask plenty of questions, and stay curious. This industry offers incredible opportunities to grow and make an impact, but success comes from a willingness to learn, adapt, and continuously seek new knowledge.

**FUN FACT:** I love traveling the world in search of exciting new places to surf and discovering delicious local cuisines along the way. For me, it's all about the thrill of the waves and the joy of exploring different cultures through their food!



## RACHEL LARSON

DIRECTOR OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT  
EMPIRE BUILDING MATERIALS

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**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** I hope to continue to move up in the building materials world while digitally transforming our space, focusing on continuous improvement, and finding pathways for bringing on a younger generation into an industry that is rapidly aging.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** The world of building materials has numerous different career paths from sales to warehouse management to IT and technology roles to finance. Don't be afraid to take an entry level position that might not be exactly what you want, this industry has a reputation for promoting from within. Be open to new experiences, say yes to opportunities that come your way, and document the knowledge that is shared with you.

**FUN FACT:** I grew up going on the road with my truck driver dad and had visited 45 states by the time I graduated high school. I added my 46th state as an adult but I still have four to go. Any guesses on what those four are?



## STOKELY WISCHMEIER

PRESIDENT  
HOPSON LUMBER COMPANY

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**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** In the next five years, we hope to expand to a third location and continue growing the Hopson Lumber Company brand and commitment.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** Young people have the opportunity to join a dynamic and rewarding industry filled with challenges, growth, and unlimited potential. The LBM industry is incredibly diverse and full of countless career paths. Whether you're interested in supply chain management, sales, technology, or other areas, the possibilities for advancement and success are endless.

**FUN FACT:** I enjoy woodworking and spending time with my wife and two young children.



## ADAM DODGE

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER  
WARD LUMBER

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS:** At Ward Lumber. Continuing to grow the team's capacity and capability, while pursuing our vision and supporting my family and community.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:** New perspectives are welcome in the LBM world. We change with the times. You never know where your talents may take you.

**FUN FACT:** I have four children under four.

THE LBM  
40 UNDER 40  
CELEBRATES  
YOUNG PROS WHO  
ARE MAKING A REAL  
DIFFERENCE IN  
THEIR COMPANIES,  
AND THEIR  
COMMUNITIES.

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## ABEER SAEED

MERCHANDISE MANAGER,  
MILLWORK & INTERIOR SOLUTIONS  
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### WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF

**IN FIVE YEARS:** In five years, I hope to grow as a leader, never stop learning, and expand my team's success. I'm committed to driving change, strengthening my department and community, and setting the best example for my daughter while helping others advance alongside me.

### ADVICE FOR THE NEXT

**GENERATION:** It's important to stay curious, be bold, and embrace continuous learning. The LBM industry thrives on innovation, so seek mentors, ask questions, and speak up even with unconventional ideas. Lead with positivity and resilience, and opportunities will follow.

**FUN FACT:** I speak five languages!



## CODY WALLACE

COO  
**WALLACE BUILDING CENTER**

### WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF

**IN FIVE YEARS:** In five years, I see myself as having opened up a second location, and possibly even seeking out a third.

### ADVICE FOR THE NEXT

**GENERATION:** My advice would be, don't be afraid to ask questions and seek guidance. This industry can be a tough one to get into, but if you lean on people around you and dig in, you can be successful.

**FUN FACT:** A fun fact about me is that my kids come to work with my wife and I every day. We didn't want to have to decide between family and career and found a way to have both.



## TURNER MOORE

OWNER  
**SPRATLIN BUILDING SUPPLY**

### WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF

**IN FIVE YEARS:** I hope to have advanced the store to incorporate both farm and home departments and continue to grow in the product offerings available for our customers and community.

### ADVICE FOR THE NEXT

**GENERATION:** If you are unsure what profession or field to pursue ... choose a skill to achieve. The skill market is in high demand.

**FUN FACT:** I love to quail hunt.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Not surprisingly, we received far more nominees than we could recognize in the 2025 LBM 40 Under 40. It's why each year we'll welcome an entirely new group of professionals to our list of inductees. If your name (or the name of an associate you nominated) wasn't included this year, we encourage you to re-nominate again next year. Thank you for joining us in recognizing and celebrating the young pros who are driving our community forward.



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# Bloedorns



## Bloedorns builds on a century of innovation, retail investment

BY WENDY STURGES

**F**rom its humble beginnings as a family business to becoming a multi-location company employing hundreds, Bloedorns has grown to a household name in the West, while keeping true to its roots.

Founded in 1919 as The Torrington Lumber & Coal Company in Torrington, WY, the company was built by brothers Charles, Alvin, and Howard Bloedorn, along with additional family members. The company later became Bloedorn Lumber and the family spent the next 30 years steadily expanding in the Western U.S.

The company has since grown to 22 locations across Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, and Wyoming and also operates three truss plants, the first of which opened in 2008. Bloedorns offers a wide array of building materials from lumber, decking and railing, and engineered wood products to roofing, siding, trusses, and windows and doors, making it a local go-to for pros and DIYers alike.

However, even with all that growth over the company's 100-plus year history, the reason for Bloedorns' continued success always comes back to its people, President and CEO Mark Yung said. "Our difference lies in combination of multi-store resources and with incredible employees

and local autonomy. This allows us to provide competitive prices and give our staff the ability to make decisions to best serve our customers in that market."

### Core values

Throughout Bloedorns' history, the company continues to come back to its three core values: ownership, which is reflected through local decision-making, responsibility and selflessness; entrepreneurship, the spirit of adaptability, competition, and creativity; and the handshake, a commitment to accountability, honesty, and trust.

"We still believe in the value of a handshake and the significance of your word, which is forefront in our core values and guiding principles," said Director of Marketing Nate Laible.

Those core values have carried Bloedorns through economic ups and downs over the years as well as consolidation and technological advances in the industry. In the last year, the company has revamped its website to be more user-friendly, allowing for growth in ecommerce as demand increases. "The building materials landscape has changed and continues to change more rapidly than ever,"

Yung said. “Through this rapid change, we know we must understand the value that is important to our customers, investing in our people through advanced training and embracing technology are two avenues that are paramount in providing that value.”

While times may change, one thing that stays constant in the LBM industry is the importance of relationship building, which Bloedorns has made a priority in recent years.

“We have made a significant investment in our outside sales staff the past couple of years,” said Vice President and Corporate Sales Director Pat Day. “We are committed to providing a professional sales experience. We are focused on being a trusted resource that our customers can count on each and every day. This effort has been rewarded with new and stronger relationships with our contractor customers. Our people are our greatest asset, and we are committed to them and proud of their growth as professionals.”

### Location expansion, further investments

Although Bloedorns is still headquartered in Torrington, its largest store in Alliance, NE includes more than 40,000-sq. ft. of space and serves as a prime example of the company’s retail experience goals.

“The Alliance store combines the best of high-level contractor experiences and large retail shopping inventory,” Laible said. “Our professional contractor salespeople, expanded display area, and customer experience room create a place that facilitates conversations for material takeoffs, design, and planning, as well as a variety of products where the customer can determine the right product for their needs. We have a whole fleet of trucks from 1- to 2-ton piggy-back trucks that allow us to deliver across a 150-mile radius in rural western Nebraska. We made it a priority to create a retail shopping experience in which we brought items from the drive-through warehouse inside the store for easier browsing for the customer. We also have expanded our categories to provide more products that were traditionally hard to get or purchase in the market area.”

The company is also currently remodeling a handful of its existing stores while keeping an eye open for future locations. “We are always looking for opportunities to expand into new communities as well as investing in our current facilities to improve our assets and infrastructure to put deeper roots into our communities,” Yung said.

That level of investment also extends to the company’s employees. In 2024, Do it Best announced the company re-branded to become simply Bloedorns, which the company said is intended to highlight the company’s employee stock ownership plan (ESOP). Bloedorns also credits its vigorous training and career-building tools for its long-term employees and culture.

“People become invested once they are provided a sense of purpose,” said Lindsey Prosinski, Vice President and Director of HR, safety, and training. “We provide value to our employees with our in-house training portal for required product knowledge and safety trainings; on-site vendor



or outside company trainings and hands-on, in the weeds training between our employees and our specialized sales trainers or leadership team members. When we hire, we aim to hire for culture. Qualifications are always a plus, but when values align, that’s when we see retention.”

It’s that company culture that Bloedorns leadership says will carry the company into its next century of business. “It can’t be overstated, we are only as good as our people and their ability to provide value,” Yung said. “Without them we are nothing.” ■

### GET TO KNOW BLOEDORNS

YEAR FOUNDED:	1919
OWNERSHIP:	Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP)
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:	400-PLUS
LOCATIONS:	22 retail locations, plus 3 truss plants
CO-OP/BUYING GROUP:	Do it Best



## CONSTRUCTION

## COMPONENT

## Roof trusses are just the beginning of this versatile segment

BY MIKE BERGER

Far from being something new, it may surprise you to learn that component construction has been around for thousands of years. For example, the ancient Celtic people utilized components to build Stonehenge in England. The oldest parts of the structure were built from 3000 to 2935 BCE, and rather than being shaped onsite, the very large, upright sarsen stones that make up the bulk of the structure were quarried offsite in the Marlborough Downs more than 20 miles away from the actual build site. These exceptionally heavy stones—some weighing over 25 tons—were then transported to the build site and erected there in place.

In today's construction world, component construction represents an efficient way to increase accuracy of construction while helping to deal with a diminished workforce. As defined by the Structural Building Components Association (SBCA), structural building components are roof trusses, floor trusses, and wall panels that are custom designed and built in specialized manufacturing environments. Components are delivered to the jobsite where framers install them along with permanent bracing to create the overall structural system. Structural building components should not be confused with factory-built modular or mobile home construction, although components can certainly be used in those particular applications.

**C**omponent construction exists in two distinct forms. In one form, the LBM dealer has made the investment to build their own truss plant, while in the other, the LBM dealer sources their components from an independent component supplier. Unfortunately, for many LBM dealers, there persists misconceptions as to what component construction is, no matter which path is followed.

For example, industry leaders point out that a component business is not technically the same as a LBM operation. Rather than simply supplying building materials, the LBM dealer serves more as a manufacturer. “The financials need to be different and have a different approach,” says Jess Lohse, executive director of the SBCA. “Now, the customer base is the same. A lot of the suppliers can be the same. The material is similar enough. But just having that understanding that it is different, they need to have a different business strategy, because I’ve seen some that will apply what worked in an LBM operation, but when that’s applied to components, that’s asking for probably more disruption than what they’re ready to handle.”

As well, there exists a knowledge gap when it comes to the value prospect of components.

“I think that there’s a lack of a clear understanding of just what value is able to be added when the use of off-site labor and off-site components is brought onto a project, points out Stephen Keller, director of design engagements for MiTek, a global company that provides integrated software, services, engineered products, and automated solutions for the building industry. Speed of construction is just one benefit, he says. “Trusses are able to be erected a lot faster than traditional construction, but a lot of the expertise that used to be around with that 30-year framer who knows exactly how to cut, snap and install rafters just isn’t there. And so taking that expertise in design and the manufacturing and embedding it into the software and the automation helps the project and therefore the clients be a lot more efficient and profitable. It’s a great way for LBM dealers to look at adding more to their markets and helping their customers.”

Scott Sanders, building materials sales leader for Preston Feather Building Centers and Design Showrooms, echoes similar thoughts regarding the understanding of value. “There is reluctance, because some of the guys that ▶



Trussmatic is a producer of fully automatic solutions for the building component manufacturing industry. Trussmatic automatic roof truss production technology as shown here is based on patented Smart Robotics Solution. The core invention consists of proprietary process automation systems and smart robotics using patented Internet-of-Things supported technologies with online monitoring capabilities.

Washington-based Louws Truss is an independent truss manufacturer, specializing in roof and floor trusses for residential, commercial, and agricultural projects. BJ Louws took over as president in 2011, going on to become the company's sole owner, overseeing about 160 employees and four locations in Burlington, Ferndale, Cashmere, and Lacey.



have been framing for years still think that they can build it faster, or they're relying on their ability to build a better wall than what they think is going to come out of the panel manufacturing plant, but once someone gets a taste of it, they're finding out that it can be a good experience. I think it's even more that they don't understand how the math works out. We had a couple of customers that we talked to recently who thought that their profit margins would erode because they don't have their crews out there building walls; they're just setting panels, right? So more of the cost is built into the manufacturing of the panels versus the labor of their crew building the wall. We show them how the math works, especially if you're able to build the house faster, you can actually be shortening your build cycles and getting more built in every single year."

### Benefits of components

Despite these misconceptions, experts say, the benefits of component construction are many, especially in this world of diminished workforces and lack of experienced labor.

Speed to market is a big benefit, says John "BJ" Louws, president of Louws Truss Inc. "There was a player in our market who was framing houses in a matter of days," he explains. "They would get their first floor and floor trusses dropped in the morning, and they would get that laid down and sheeted that afternoon, they would get the first four walls the next morning, they would get the second floor that afternoon, then the second floor walls. And the morning of the third day, they would get their roof trusses and be fully framed in three days, on a single-family two-story house. And that's kind of the potential of this off-site componentized way to build."

Another area where the speed of components is a benefit is in markets that are weather-vulnerable. "We've seen components done really successfully, and I think especially in our markets, with weather and other variables such as labor that are challenges," says Rachel Huntman,

president of Preston Feather Building Centers and Design Showrooms. "Being able to use components to button up the house quickly before weather sets in, especially is a big deal for us. Just because you have a really complex or intricate custom build doesn't mean you can't use panels. So that's been something that we've found a lot of success with, actually having or introducing our builders to the panel designer, having them see other builders using the panels successfully, has been really helpful for us."

Along with speed of assembly, accuracy is another strong point for component construction. "The accuracy of the material quote that the LBM dealer can offer via the component software can really narrow the discrepancy and make them much more competitive and accurate," says SBCA's Lohse. "There's still going to be discrepancy there. But I've done projects where you see the difference, the same set of plans, different takeoffs, how the variation narrowing that is an opportunity, and providing that service and just being kind of that vendor of choice for the customer."

"It takes a lot of the guesswork away from the framer when they're 20 or 30 feet in the air, where they're literally making engineering decisions," Lohse continues. "Components take all of that and moves it further ahead in the supply chain with the manufactured component."

One other benefit of component construction that should not be discounted is its ability to serve as a recruiting tool for the LBM dealer. “So as we know, labor is getting harder to come by,” explains MiTek’s Keller. “There isn’t as much of a desire for the new generation to pick up a saw or work out in the field, but there is desire from that new workforce to work more with computers and automation. And so that does make it a desire for high school students or the individual from a technical college to look at working with a LBM dealer to have a future as an automation expert or something like that, to help them expand. We’re moving that expertise away from the field and into an off-site environment.”

#### Differentiate to succeed

Considering the numerous benefits components bring to the market, there are ways these benefits can be used by LBM dealers to differ-

entiate themselves from their competition and create “sticky” customers in the process.

“I think one of the best ways that LBM dealers can set themselves apart is by utilizing the component construction software as a visual aid,” explains MiTek’s Keller. “Show your customers how they can build better, how they can be more efficient, how utilizing the experience of not just the builder, the carpenter, or the utility trades, but bringing them all into the right environment with the truss design software, and helping them design the building as a system versus individual silos, is more efficient.”

It’s not just the big things that matter. Attention to the smaller details of component construction can help differentiate the LBM dealer. “Just do something a little bit more to help out everybody downstream,” says SBCA’s Lohse. “So the walls are an opportunity, but that’s going to be one of the easiest things for the people on site to build, too. They’re not ▶

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Whether on the assembly line as seen below or on the jobsite, components hold the potential to reduce the number of employees needed for assembly, and they can increase accuracy and speed during construction.



going to want to give away part of their pie. That's where the value comes in. And this is where I think LBM dealers might have an easy opportunity to add value, such as with drilling the holes for the electrical wire to go through."

"I think that's another opportunity for components, is taking it a step further, to where some of the mechanicals could be pre-installed," Lohse opines. "Like with the staircase—cutting stairs is one of the most difficult things that you can do on a jobsite. If you can bring in the computerization in this cutting, manufacture that off site, and then deliver it to the jobsite and drop it in, that's another huge opportunity for anybody in the component industry or the LBM operation, because that is such a difficult skill set to replicate on the job."

Be willing to look at every project as an opportunity for components, recommends Preston Feather's Sanders. "Many of our competitors offer panels, but it's just the projects they feel are able to be analyzed. I think that's the difference. Preston Feather is very open to the fact that pretty much any project you look at could be panelized. Our competitors don't think that way, and they're thinking that just maybe multi-family or just certain styles of projects can be panelized. But I think that's what differentiates us a little bit more, is that we will take any drawing to our partner and have him review it. He looks at the design and tells us, is this worth it or not? And we advise our builders accordingly."

### Best practices

In order to achieve that differentiation, component construction experts and fellow LBM dealers recommend a few best practices for success. For the LBM dealer who may be thinking of establishing their own truss or component plant, MiTek's Keller encourages them to talk to their peers, especially those that have been down this journey before. What has their experience been? How have customers reacted to it? "I would encourage them to talk to their own customer base," he adds. "If they're able to discuss the value of components, and highlight what a difference it could make, or has made, with other clients, they might start to see their customers changing their minds, which means that there's a better opportunity in the market for them to have that conversation about moving forward with their own evolution as well."

Matti Lehtipuu, founder and board member of Trussmatic, a producer of fully automatic solutions for the building component manufacturing industry, recommends investing in the best technology possible. "Don't start with old technology, as it's going to be outdated fairly soon," he says. "Go with the latest technology so that you have a competitive advantage when you enter the market. But at the same time, like any new business, you need to do your homework, and you need to work on your business plan."

SBCA's Lohse recommends taking advantage of existing resources such as the SBCA. "Attend events or surround yourself with other component manufacturers, either locally, regionally or nationally, at an event, where you can ask the questions, ask what people wish they would have done otherwise. Go on a fact-finding mission, and understand how many different ways there are to do these things. Talk with as many people as you can, is really the first goal, and then really understand every option that's available. What are all the options? How automated do you want to get? Do you want to just be able to produce trusses? Or do you want to make it to where you minimize labor? Obviously, that comes with investment, and then make sure that you can work through it and pencil out the ROI to determine if it's a good business decision."

For those that are looking to begin or expand component construction offerings with an existing component supplier, Preston Feather's Huntman stresses communication both with the vendor and the end user. "I think it goes back to creating that relationship with that particular panel vendor and asking them what they are offering, as far as options. Having that ability with a panel manufacturer goes a long, long way, especially on products specifying premium materials. I think on the other side of it is the relationship with the builder who is going to use those products. Just because you can buy panels doesn't mean that you can install them the right way, and we've

seen it done the wrong way before, and that can really slow down the project. So I think making sure that they're really aware of what it takes, and making sure that you do your work on the front end, making sure that they're really prepared for it is a big deal, because when it does go right, you'll have somebody who's really committed to using panels in the future. But if it goes wrong, it can be very costly."

To help things go as well as possible, Shane Soule, president of ProTec Panel and Truss recommends hiring a specialist. "Everyone should consider hiring a truss rep that manages all of the trusses, even if they don't build them, that has the knowledge and can do the field visits, that sort of thing, and not have to rely on the vendor, because I see it all the time: for LBM dealers that two step, it's a challenge and a very long uphill battle to take a LBM sales rep that knows how to sell sticks, siding, and trim, and then have them have a very strong knowledge of truss packages. This doesn't work. It's a completely different thing. So if you can, invest in someone that has component knowledge, that can represent things, and can even help shop the two step truss company."

### Looking into the future

Considering market factors such as diminished labor forces and the lack of that old knowledge base that came from veteran framers, it seems likely that the use of component construction will be on the rise, and the smart LBM dealer will be the one exploring how to best take advantage of this trend.

As MiTek's Keller explains, "It's worth noting that over the last five years, there's been increased desire for architects, engineers, contractors, to engage their component manufacturers earlier on in the design process, to lean on 3D modeling and those design tools, and leverage the experience of that truss manufacturer or LBM dealer. And so by opening up yourself to expanding your operations and offering trusses as well, you might also gain a seat at that table earlier on, to be that problem solver for your clients."

LBM dealers who have already embraced component construction understand the benefits, and also see it as a growing trend. "I think there will certainly be a tipping point for the industry to understand the value in it," Preston Feather's Sanders points out. "There are so many who historically have not used components, and trust their methods. But as soon as you have somebody believing in this process, they're not going to look back. There are so many benefits. The cost of what you're doing is a big piece of it, but the time savings, and the fact that your labor market in this industry is not going to be increasing in the long run is a huge factor. So it's a forward thinking move for many builders who are going that route."

**WHETHER AN LBM DEALER** chooses to invest in establishing their own component/truss operation or instead takes the two-step process, it seems clear that component construction will continue to gain ground, and the competitive LBM dealer needs to be prepared. As ProTec's Soule puts it, "I think that's the challenge for everyone; there's a lot of money being spent out there by the nationals to create these systems, and if you don't have them, then you really can't compete if you cannot offer that piece of it. So not to be doom and gloom, but if you are like, Hey, these are on the rise and people are doing these things, it's not out of the realm for your yard to do a little bit of research into that, because it's not a huge investment to have that offering." ■

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**MOISTURESHIELD INSTADECK**

New from MoistureShield, its InstaDeck outdoor flooring system now includes a picture frame tile component. This flooring system comprises heavy-duty plastic tiles that snap together to create a foundation for a freestanding, ground-level deck. MoistureShield's InstaDeck is now available in two new tiles that allow for picture-frame and breaker board designs. Picture framing adds a professional touch and the option of using additional colors. The breaker board eliminates the need for butt joints when the deck length exceeds the board length. [moistureshield.com](http://moistureshield.com)

**DYNASEAL WATERPROOFING**

From Dendritics LLC, Dynaseal is a multipurpose sealant created to waterproof a variety of surfaces including all types of wood, concrete, and masonry surfaces. According to the manufacturer, nanotechnology provides a powerful, protective barrier, and unlike most sealants that sit on the surface and wear away quickly—requiring reapplication every year or two—Dynaseal uses this nanotechnology to penetrate deep into the substrate of the material onto which it is applied. This reportedly creates a breathable, flexible barrier that becomes part of the cellular structure, preventing water from seeping in while allowing moisture to escape. Available in clear or 16 tints, Dynaseal is made in the USA and sold in 55-gallon drums, giving LBM dealers the opportunity to license it, dilute it, and custom label it. [dendriticsllc.com](http://dendriticsllc.com)



**PURDY PAINTING TOOLS**

To celebrate its 100-year anniversary, Purdy is launching three new painting products: the Purdy Altitude Roller Cover, the Purdy POLE+ Extension Pole and the Purdy Pro-Extra High-Capacity Brush. The Altitude Roller Cover is reported to produce a superior smooth finish with 50% more coverage compared to Purdy's WhiteDove roller cover when used with premium paints, allowing painters to complete jobs fast. According to Purdy, the POLE+ Extension Pole features 2x adjustability with a secure pin lock every 3", when compared to the Wooster Sherlock GT Pole, and is available in six different sizes, extending up to 16'. The Pro-Extra High-Capacity Brush reportedly holds 40% more paint compared to the Purdy Pro-Extra Glide brush, when used with premium paints, allowing pros to finish jobs fast by reducing trips to the paint bucket. [purdy.com](http://purdy.com)



**WALL-MOUNT SLIDING DOOR HARDWARE**

Johnson Hardware's sliding wall-mount door hardware reportedly allows greater flexibility around doorways than a swinging door. The Johnson 2610SC wall mount door hardware is designed for the door to slide along the wall which, according to Johnson Hardware, means it can be installed almost anywhere. Wall-mounted doors are reportedly ideal for closing off open doorways or replacing swing doors in areas where privacy or room separation are important, such as closets and dressing areas, home offices, pantries, and mudrooms. The door hardware features an architectural grade aluminum track, heavy-duty 1125 ball-bearing hangers and two different door guide options. A two-door converging hardware set is available for extra wide entryways. [johnsonhardware.com](http://johnsonhardware.com)



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**HARDIE DESIGNER**

James Hardie and Hover are launching the new Hardie Designer, an AI-powered visualization tool that the manufacturer says is ideal tool for homeowners in the early stages of home renovation, allowing them to dream up possibilities and experiment with visual ideas for their home. Homeowners can upload an image of their home—focusing on any portion they want to renovate—and instantly generate multiple styles with AI-powered recommendations. The app uses image renderings of actual Hardie products, so users will be able to see James Hardie’s exterior design solutions as they will look on their real home instantaneously. After finding new inspiration for their home, users can easily share their designs with contractors and LBM dealers, turning the generated images into conversations about renovation plans. [jameshardie.com](http://jameshardie.com)



**FASTENMASTER HEADLOK STRUCTURAL WOOD SCREWS**

FastenMaster has introduced its popular HeadLOK Structural Wood Screws now improved with the TORX ttap Drive System which combines the ease of a TORX drive with a patented ttap stability button. This design reportedly provides superior bit engagement for a stable, wobble-free installation, while preventing fastener strip-out during installation. According to the manufacturer, HeadLOK fasteners feature a large flat head design with chamfer for increased strength, a sharp point for faster installation, and a 3/16" diameter shank that offers higher design shear than 3/8" lag screws. They also come with FastenMaster’s exclusive ProjectLife warranty which guarantees performance for the lifetime of the project. [fastenmaster.com](http://fastenmaster.com)



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Sakrete	1	866.725.7383	sakrete.com
Simpson Strong-Tie	23	800.999.5099	strongtie.com
Starwood Rafters	65	888.525.5878	starwoodrafters.com
Uline	55	800.295.5510	uline.com
Unified Purchasing Group (UPG)	29	801.784.8744	upg.org
Westlake Royal Building Products	OBC	800.521.8486	westlakeroyalbuildingproducts.com
Weyerhaeuser	26-27	800.525.5440	weyerhaeuser.com

\* Denotes regional distribution.

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

IBC=inside back cover, IFC=inside front cover, OBC=outside back cover, BB=belly band, INS=insert, PB=polybagged, WP=white paper.

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## THANK YOU TO OUR PREMIUM PARTNERS



# A CONTRACT IS A CONTRACT. OR IS IT?

A longtime team member is retiring, and he's questioning the fairness of an agreement you both signed 15 years ago. What would you do?

**JUST OVER 20 YEARS AGO**, when you opened the doors to Startup Lumber, your plan was based on what you'd learned as a longtime employee of a lumberyard that unexpectedly closed its doors. You knew the business and what it took to earn builders' trust and give them the service they needed. Having spent your life up to that point as an employee, you also filed away details about managing people. You'd had great bosses, and you had those whose playbooks comprised your "what not to do if I ever own a company" list. Rule #1: be fair.

As you added people to your team, your attorney strongly suggested employment agreements—to protect you and the people you're hiring. That made sense, so he created some general contracts for you to use moving forward. You read them, and they seemed sensible, so they became part of your hiring process.

Fast-forward 15 years. Mickey, a longtime outside salesperson announced that he was going to retire before the end of the year, and had a potential replacement lined up. When the potential replacement didn't pan out, you began searching—knowing that it'll likely take some time to find the right person. As it turned out, you connected with an excellent candidate almost immediately. Solid experience, great energy and attitude, and a top performer who very much wanted to join Startup Lumber. You offered him the position, he accepted, and you let Mickey know that you'd found your new person.

That's when things got complicated. Mickey says that he planned to work for much of the year, and expected to be paid for everything he sold through the year. However, when



you look back on the agreement that both you and Mickey signed 15 years ago, Mickey won't see any of the commission for some jobs that he'd been working on for months.

Mickey is mad. He feels that he did the work, and that it's only fair that he receives the commission. You see his point, but the contract is clear, and a contract is a contract. His attorney says that the contract is not clear, and Mickey may win in court. Your attorney disagrees, and says you're in the clear. What would you do?

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

**Stand your ground.** Mickey has done well for your company while earning a very good living. The time to negotiate was before signing the contract. Wish him a happy retirement.

**Give some ground.** Since you want to part on good terms, go slightly beyond what the agreement requires. Mickey's still not happy, but you're paying more than required.

**Find middle ground.** Sit down together with the goal of negotiating a fair and reasonable solution. Then put that in writing and part on good terms.

**Do nothing.** The best way to deal with a tough situation is to ignore it, and hope it just works itself out.

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**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.



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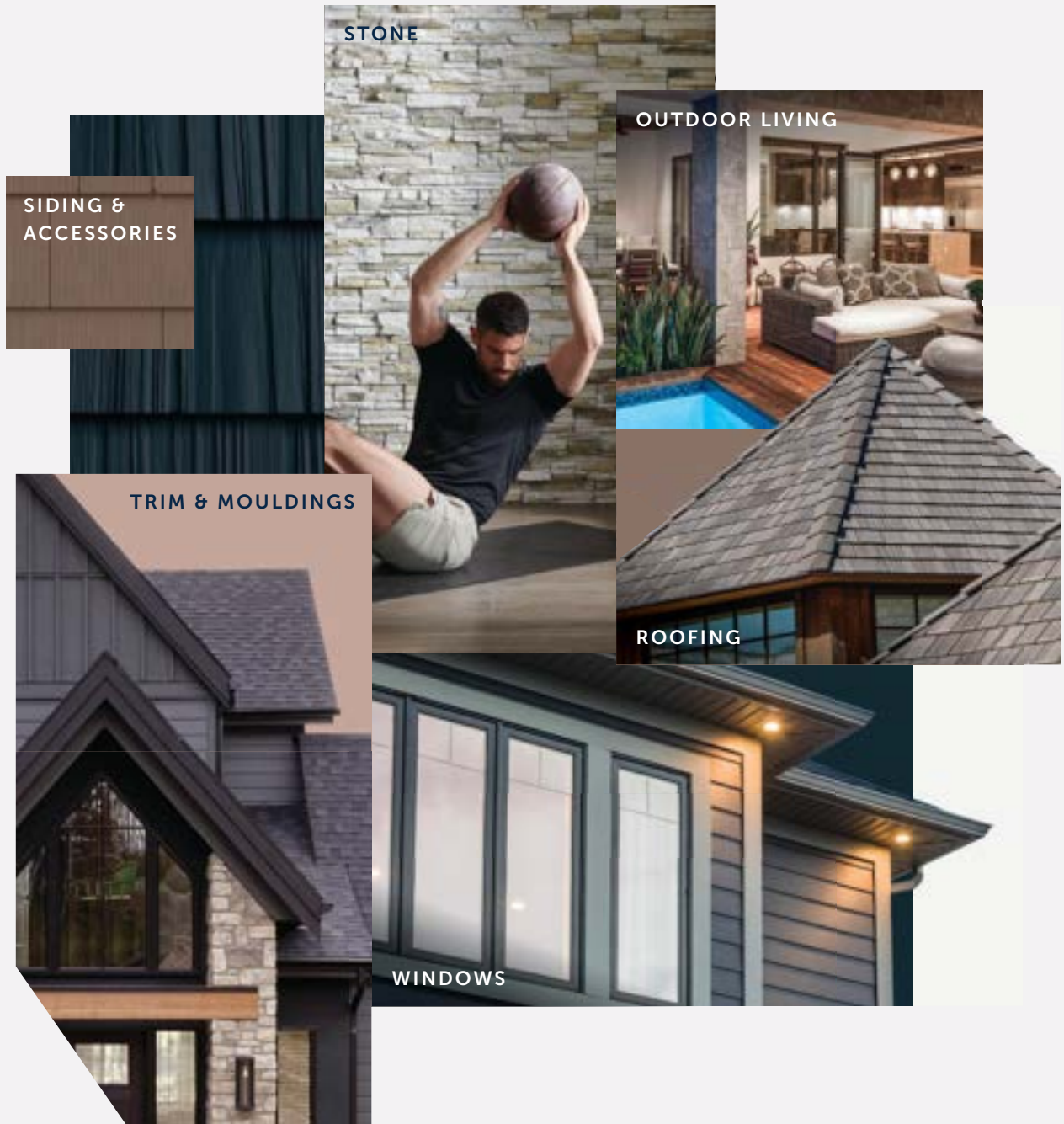
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