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WOODS LUMBER & HOME CENTER FINDS SUCCESS IN ITS PEOPLE AND PRODUCTS

INSIDE THE GROWTH IN SIDING

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MARK AND KATHY WOODS OF WOODS LUMBER & HOME CENTER, INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS

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²Or as long as the warranty of the adjacent roof cladding. See *GAF MasterFlow™ Ventilation Products Limited Warranty* for complete coverage and restrictions.



LBM JOURNAL INNOVATION AWARDS 2025



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You made a handshake agreement to buy the lumberyard where you got your start, before discovering problems that will cost a small fortune to fix. What would you do?

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

IN LATE 2014, *LBM Journal* magazine was growing, and we needed more content. Bill Lee suggested I reach out to a writer who had a bright future ahead of him in our industry. As it turned out, this young pro grew up working in a lumberyard and spent the past few years gaining a builder's perspective, as an area purchasing manager for a large national homebuilder. Based on that experience, he'd recently authored a book called, "Behind Your Back: What purchasing managers say once you leave the room and how to get them to say yes."

Here's how I introduced our new column, "Behind Your Back," in the January 2015 Editor's Note: "This new column is written by an industry pro who spent years in purchasing for Pulte Homes. In that role, he worked with great LBM salespeople, and some who were something less-than-great. [In this new column], Bradley Hartmann shares what he learned, and provides insights that can come only from being on the other side of the desk."

Bradley stopped writing for us at the end of 2016, but since our missions are aligned, we kept in touch and continued working together. I'm happy to announce that with this issue, he's back to being in each issue of *LBM Journal*.

Other highlights of this issue include:



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "R. Schumacher". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a white background.

LBM Innovation Awards 2025 (p.40). Now in its second year, this program spotlights companies and products that epitomize thinking outside the box. The nine products on these pages have been singled out by our editors as truly innovative and potential game-changers for the new homes and remodeling projects in your market.

Woods Lumber & Home Center (p.30). Writer Katy Tomasulo talked with Mark and Katy Woods, fifth-generation owners of a lumberyard proudly serving the residents of Independence, KS.

Real Issues. Real Answers. Managing Market Uncertainty (p.34). Readers weigh in on a question posed by a midwestern LBM pro who is optimistic about the future, but is navigating an uncertain present.

In Depth: Siding (p.44). For this feature, Senior Editor Mike Berger interviews leading siding manufacturers for the market trends driving this dynamic category.

— Rick Schumacher
Executive Editor & Publisher

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MARCUS LUMBER



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BY THE YARD

Marcus Lumber has officially opened a new sales office and product showroom in Sioux City, IA. This expansion is centered around serving more contractors, remodelers, and design pros with the same dependable service, deep product knowledge, and trusted brands Marcus Lumber is known for. The new location brings the company's team closer to job sites in the Siouxland area—making it easier to spec, quote, and source materials.

The **Millard Lumber** crew from Omaha, NE, rolled up their sleeves to help fight hunger, packaging sausage crumbles for the Food Bank for the Heartland Strike Out Hunger campaign. Together with other volunteer teams, a total of 4,480 pounds of food was sealed and made ready to serve to those in need.

J.C. Snaveley & Sons recently joined team members from LMC at the J.C. Snaveley & Sons' yard in Lancaster, PA, to celebrate 90 years of partnership. J.C. Snaveley & Sons is the final founding member of LMC. It has been serving professional builders since 1878, founded by Moses Snaveley. The business evolved when his son Jesse C. bought the mill in 1894 and formed J.C. Snaveley & Son. The company expanded through the decades, joining 35 original stockholders to form LMC in 1935, officially becoming J.C. Snaveley & Sons, Inc. in the late 1940s as Jesse's sons joined the business.

Great Lakes Ace announced it has signed an agreement to open a new store in Cincinnati, OH. The store will feature more than 13,000 sq. ft. of retail space. Renovations to the space will begin later this year, with a soft opening tentatively planned for the first quarter of 2026. Great Lakes Ace currently owns and operates six other locations in Ohio, including Cincinnati, Bellevue, Clyde, Celina, Fostoria, and Tiffin.

84 Lumber has added another component plant after its latest location opened in the Detroit market. The 75,000 sq. ft. building sits on 11 acres in Northwood, OH. 84 Lumber associates will build wall panels, roof trusses, and floor trusses that will cater to market demand in northwestern Ohio, northeastern Indiana, and southeastern Michigan, with the primary focus being the Detroit area.

WHAT'S TRENDING

These stories topped the charts in the past month. To see these stories and more, head to LBMJournal.com, and sign up for our daily newsletter.



TOP 100: DEALERS EXPECT GROWTH IN 2025 AND BEYOND DESPITE MARKET



WHAT 18 HOUSING CEOS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE CURRENT MARKET



MEETINGS, MEMOS, AND EDICTS. OH MY!



LBM JOURNAL'S 40 UNDER 40 CLASS OF 2025

MERGERS + ACQUISITIONS

Spahn & Rose Lumber Co. has entered into an agreement to purchase **Whit Davis Lumber Plus**, a family-owned lumber and building materials supplier with three Arkansas locations in Jacksonville, Cabot and Greenbrier. The acquisition was set to close on June 20, with stores reopening under the Spahn & Rose family on June 23. The Whit Davis name and local management will remain unchanged.

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PEOPLE IN LBM



FLORES



WELCH

Kodiak Building Partners has named **Mike Flores** president of **Zarsky Lumber Company** and **Vince Welch** president of **Sun Mountain Doors**. With more than 30 years of experience in the LBM sector, Flores has held multiple leadership positions providing him with valuable insights from managing both high-volume locations and smaller home centers. Welch brings nearly 30 years of industry leadership experience, entrepreneurial insight and a forward-thinking vision to Sun Mountain's continued success.

Builders FirstSource, Inc. announced the appointment of **Gayatri Narayan** to president, technology and digital solutions. Narayan will be responsible for the continued development of innovative digital products and launching digitally enabled business models. She will also lead the company's Paradigm subsidiary.



Hampton Lumber and affiliate, **RedBuilt**, announced the appointment of **Ted Osterberger** as CEO of RedBuilt, effective June 1, 2025. Osterberger succeeds Don Schwabe, who will retire later this year after 10 years of leadership.



The Engineered Wood Association Board of Trustees welcomed **Gabriel Farias** as its newest member. Farias is vice president of OSB manufacturing at LP Building Solutions. He brings extensive experience in operations and a passion for innovation to the Board.



MINER



HUFFORD

The Do it Best Group announced the appointment of **Tony Miner** to director of strategic initiatives, effective immediately, along with **Jared Hufford** as director of member care. Miner's focus will be the continued development of the company's sales operations, data analytics, and member growth programs, while Hufford will lead the newly-formed member care team. This newly established team is designed to streamline member support across the company and serve as a strategic partner to Do it Best members.



DAME



PRADO

Todd Dame will assume the role of CEO of **Woodgrain** by September of 2025 making a seamless transition to third-generation leadership and reinforcing the company's long-term vision for continuity and growth. In addition, **Steve Prado** has been promoted to vice president for the southwest region of the distribution division. This newly established region includes the Woodgrain and Kelleher distribution centers in California and Hawaii.

Benjamin Obdyke has added **Joe Burdge** as the new market development manager serving California and northern Nevada. In his new role, Burdge will support design and building pros, dealers, and distributors with product resources, training, and education.

Culpeper Wood Preservers has announced a series of personnel promotions and changes:

Cristen Surrat: Plant Manager, High Point location.

Wendy Farmer and **Jerry England:** co-Plant Managers, Sweetwater, TN, location.

John Blake: Plant Manager, Hebron, MD, plant.

Connor Newman: Outside Sales, Culpeper, VA.

DISTRIBUTION NEWS

MoistureShield has announced a new distributor partnership with **Timberstone Distribution in Western Canada**. This will expand the manufacturer's composite decking portfolio throughout Western Canada, including British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and parts of Northern Ontario. Several of MoistureShield's wood composite decking product lines are now available through this partnership with Timberstone Distribution, including the Vision, Meridian, Elevate and Vantage lines, which feature the Solid Core Difference.

Woodtone announced the expansion of its partnership with **Specialty Building Products (SBP)** to now include **DW Distribution** in Texas. The addition of DW Distribution significantly increases product availability and support for dealers and builders throughout Texas.

Cameron Ashley Building Products announced the opening of its newest distribution center in Fort Pierce, Florida. This location will stock a comprehensive range of fiberglass insulation, mineral wool, spray foam, rigid board, sheathing, and all related accessories. The Fort Pierce distribution center is part of Cameron Ashley's strategic expansion throughout Florida, with additional locations planned in Jacksonville and Fort Myers.

CO-OP + BUYER'S GROUPS

LBM Advantage held its sixth annual NextGen Conference on April 27-30, at the Gaylord Texan in Grapevine, TX. This leadership development gathering welcomed rising professionals from across the cooperative for an agenda of industry insights, exclusive site tours, peer networking, and social outings. This year's highlights included behind-the-scenes tours of Simpson Strong-Tie's innovative facilities and the Cameron Ashley Distribution Center, providing attendees with first-hand exposure to cutting edge products, industry-leading operations and supply chain strategy.

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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

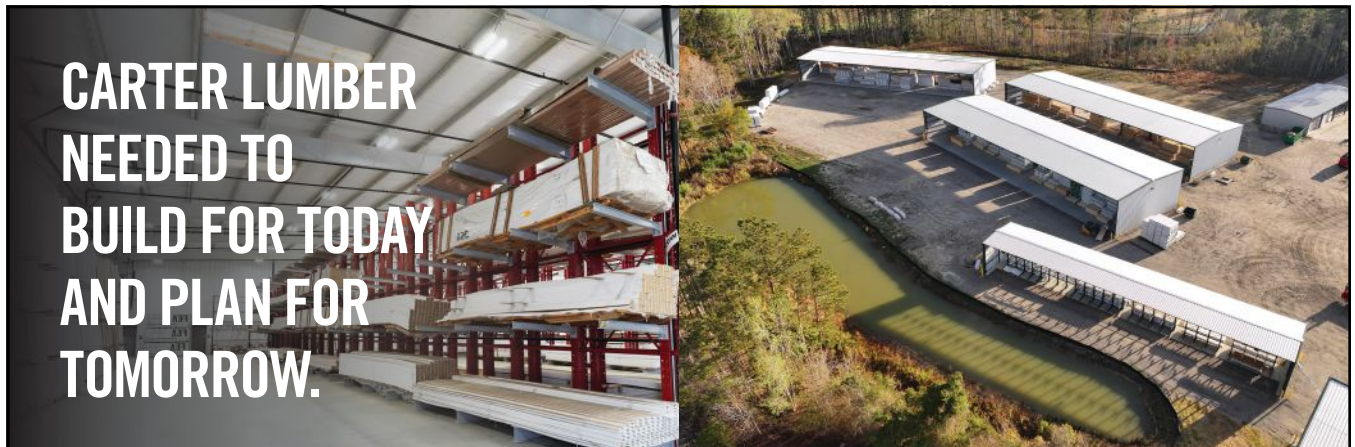
OCT 26-29
2025 WMA CONVENTION & TRADESHOW
Cleveland, OH | worldmillworkalliance.com

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

2026

FEB 11-12
2026 ANNUAL LEARNING EXCHANGE
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Hickory, NC | mybmsa.org

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INDUSTRY UPDATES

MITER Foundation, the charitable arm of **MITER Brands**, recently announced a \$200,000 donation commitment to the new Ronald McDonald House in Tampa, FL. The donation will take place over the course of five years, with gifting of \$40,000 annually. The opportunity to support the organization was proposed to the MITER Foundation and championed by Steve Rehman, long-time team member of MITER Brands and member of the MITER Foundation board.

GAF and **Myerstown Borough** recently teamed up to bring colorful and protective pavement coatings to help transform the Myerstown Recreation Area in Lebanon County, PA. This project will improve the resilience of the community space by applying GAF's StreetBond pavement coatings to beautify, protect, and preserve several recreational spaces for residents to enjoy.

Simpson Strong-Tie is expanding the benefits of its StrongPro builder community with the introduction of SkillBuilders, a comprehensive training and education series for backyard builders. The SkillBuilders training library, comprising live, online and on-demand sessions, is designed for the various specialized aspects of deck, pergola and fence building. StrongPro members can access an array of resources, including an expert Simpson Strong-Tie support team.

Culpeper Wood Preservers is expanding its FlamePRO fire-retardant lumber product offerings into the Northeastern U.S. The availability of Culpeper fire-treated wood will help serve the multifamily and commercial construction sectors across the region by making faster delivery times available. Culpeper's plant in Lancaster, MA., is the first of the organization's Northeast facilities to stock fire-treated lumber.

Buildxact launched an enhanced version of its platform which includes three AI-assisted features to empower small-to-medium residential home builders, remodelers and contractors, to manage projects more efficiently and more profitably. Those three features are delivered by Blu, Buildxact's new AI-powered building assistant, and include Blu: Takeoff Assistant, Blu: Estimate Generator, Blu: Estimate Reviewer, and Blu: Recipe/Assembly Assistant.

CertainTeed has announced an expansion to its serviceable geography for its offsite construction solution, **ONE PRECISION ASSEMBLIES (OPA)**, into the southeast region, one of the fastest-growing regions for new home construction. Launched in 2023, **ONE PRECISION ASSEMBLIES** is a panelized construction system that brings greater speed, precision, and performance to the residential construction industry by delivering fully assembled wall, floor, and roof panels manufactured in a controlled environment. With this expansion, **ONE PRECISION ASSEMBLIES** is now available across all states east of the Mississippi River.

Manifest Collective, a ground-breaking merging of industry leaders, is set to be introduced at the AIA Conference on Architecture and Design 2025 (AIA25), as the new collective of brands that will revolutionize the designer experience. Manifest Collective is a merger of Therma-Tru doors, Fiberon cladding and decking, Larson storm doors and retractable screens, Fypon decorative trim, and Solar Innovations glass structures.

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TOUGH CALL SOLUTIONS

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



To be supplier of choice for a new housing development requires guaranteed lumber pricing. If you gamble and win, you're set. If you lose, you're sunk. Here's how readers responded.

Research. 71%
First, find experts on lumber, futures and options contracts, minimizing risk, and just buying smarter. Weigh the risks, then decide whether to roll the dice.

Skip lumber. 16%
Ask about supplying the non-commodity materials only. That would sharply limit your risk, while also providing higher margins.

Go all in. 7%
Trust that the shifting tariff proposals are merely negotiating tactics, and when the dust settles, lumber supply will be strong, and prices will stabilize.

Take a pass. 6%
You've worked too hard to build your company. If serving as supplier of choice means guaranteeing lumber pricing and availability, it's not worth the risk.

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PLM'S MIKE ZDROJEWSKI ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT

FLEET SAFETY AND BEST PRACTICES

Why is fleet management and driver safety important for companies to stay ahead of?

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, there were 5,572 people killed in traffic crashes involving large trucks in 2023, and drivers of large trucks involved in fatal traffic crashes in 2023 had the second highest percentage, 19.4%, of previously recorded traffic crashes compared to drivers of other vehicle types. Considering the risk to human life and the potential consequences businesses with large fleets face, having uncompromising standards of safety and training is critical.

Beyond the human element, there are business incentives to adopting best practices for driver safety and fleet management. Fewer accidents and fewer claims mean safer employees and a lower likelihood of business interruption. Owners should also consider the other indirect costs of vehicle accidents such as lost productivity, overtime pay to meet customer demands, erosion of customer confidence, reduced employee morale, and reputational damage.

Drivers are often one of the hardest job positions to fill; any suggestions on how best to recruit quality drivers?

Recruiting quality drivers should remain a key focus of any expanding fleet operation, but as there is an ongoing driver shortage, businesses may have to look at other sources of talent. Consider recruiting from within and offering incentives and training opportunities to team members who may be interested in obtaining their CDL.

What recurring safety checks or training are recommended for drivers?

Regular training on common road threats like distracted driving and speeding can reinforce good driving behaviors while also insulating a business against liability in the event of an accident. Additionally, any telematics devices or safety technology, like lane monitoring sensors and automatic braking systems, should be tested at least once per quarter.

Feedback and one-on-one instruction between the driver and supervisor/fleet safety manager has always been the gold standard when incidents are identified through telematics. With ongoing technological improvements, consider newer telematics tools that use AI to provide in-the-moment feedback.

What tools or technology options are available to enhance driver safety and avoid driver distractions?

Modern telematics technologies provide data on hard braking, hard acceleration, speeding and other unsafe driving practices. Some telematics devices also offer phone distraction reminders. However, telematics is only meaningful when fleet managers talk with their drivers about the data.



Fleet managers should work with their insurer to ensure they have access to the most up-to-date telematics technologies. Modern tools often work with smartphones, eliminating the need to purchase additional hardware.

These tools will provide real-time alerts and data that fleet managers can take advantage of to build a culture of driver safety. Fleet managers should have access to a personalized dashboard that organizes real-time data to identify drivers who are doing well and those who may need additional training.

Any recent changes to driver safety laws that companies should be aware of?

Each state is different, and fleet managers will want to remain up to date on any pending regulations or legislation that may impact their business. Fleet managers should also stay current with any regulations that could impact the technologies they use. For example, if the data from telematics devices is stored on a central server, businesses need to ensure the system complies with data privacy laws.

What considerations should companies make when making sure they have adequate insurance coverage for their fleet?

Even the best telematics solutions, backed by comprehensive training, will not eliminate distracted driving risks. Fleet managers who work with a specialty insurer will have access to business insights tailored to the unique risks in the wood niche. For example, a specialty insurer can provide the most up-to-date risk management solutions, telematics technologies and customized coverages for large fleets in the lumber industry.

Once a knowledgeable insurer is identified, fleet owners should work with them to fully analyze a fleet's risk potential and ensure those risks are properly covered. For more information about PLM's customized policies and specialized knowledge, please visit plmins.com or contact us at CustServ@plmins.com or 1-800-752-1895.

Mike Zdrojewski is a loss control consultant with Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual Insurance Company (PLM), the oldest and largest mutual insurance company dedicated to the wood products and materials industry. He can be reached at 267-825-9152 or by email at mzdrojewski@plmins.com. To learn more about Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual Insurance Company, visit plmins.com.

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BY RICK DAVIS

ROSSER REEVES WAS one of the pioneering Madmen who changed the landscape of modern advertising when he coined the term “unique selling proposition” (USP). His innovation was the idea that brand recognition came down to a singular point (which he also called a “unique selling point”).

He coined many USPs including the M&M’s tagline, “Melts in your mouth, not in your hand.” Today, abundant examples of USPs exist that you readily know. “15 minutes will save you 15% or more.” “Even a caveman can do it.” “Just do it.” “The ultimate driving machine.” And so on. For our older readers, note that the famous line “Where’s the beef?” hasn’t aired on television in more than 40 years!

In the 1970s, this became known as “positioning” when companies started to address market positions catering to targeted audiences—e.g., safety in an automobile versus performance or outdoorsy ruggedness, healthy fast food versus economical, etc. Whether you call it proposition, position, promise, or elevator pitch, the power of a USP is hard to deny. Personally, my preference is to make an audacious promise.

While the concept of the USP is typically applied to company brands, there is significant impact for the salesperson who crafts an audacious promise to differentiate them from the competition. Yet, if I ask salespeople to define their brand, one might say, “I return my calls and am dependable.” Another boasts she is “honest.” A multitude promise better “service.” Yawn.

A unique selling promise must first and foremost be ... unique. Otherwise, there is little differentiation or competitive advantage. Every salesperson can promise great service,

the return of phone calls, and dependability. A competitive advantage is a value provided that is very difficult for the competition to emulate.

If you want to distinguish yourself as a salesperson, create your own unique selling promise. Here are a couple of ideas that might help you get started:

1. “I get your product there on time and complete, perfectly every time.” An industry study once proved that the number one reason a contractor chooses a supplier is on-time delivery. They’ll tell you it’s all about price because that ploy so easily gets salespeople to cave in a negotiation. It is up to the crafty salesperson to recognize that a price which comes with excess operational costs to the contractor is not a value at all.

So, promise perfect delivery to become the lowest “total cost” supplier. While this may seem like an unattainable promise because contractors are so often disorganized and late in ordering, this promise should come with a caveat. The caveat is that the salesperson needs to explain how orders are processed, deadlines to achieve the product arriving in a timely manner to the jobsite, adequate lead times for successful manufacturing, staging and delivery, and a strong working relationship to ensure optimum communication that helps the contractor plan future orders.

2. “I help you increase profits.” There are literally dozens of ways in which you can help your client create profits, but only two categories by which you can do it. You can help the contractor a) operate more efficiently to reduce costs or b) help them increase profits with more sales or greater margins.

This is an area in which most salespeople feel unable to impact a client’s business. After all, what can a salesperson do to increase a customer’s sales growth? Some ideas include training seminars for salespeople; regular meetings to discuss future projects to ensure proper allocation of materials, delivery resources, and ordering timeliness; referring a startup company to valuable resource providers of websites, accounting, and more; providing sales leads from walk-in consumers; cultivating a network of close working associates that might include designers and subcontractors as referral sources; and so on.

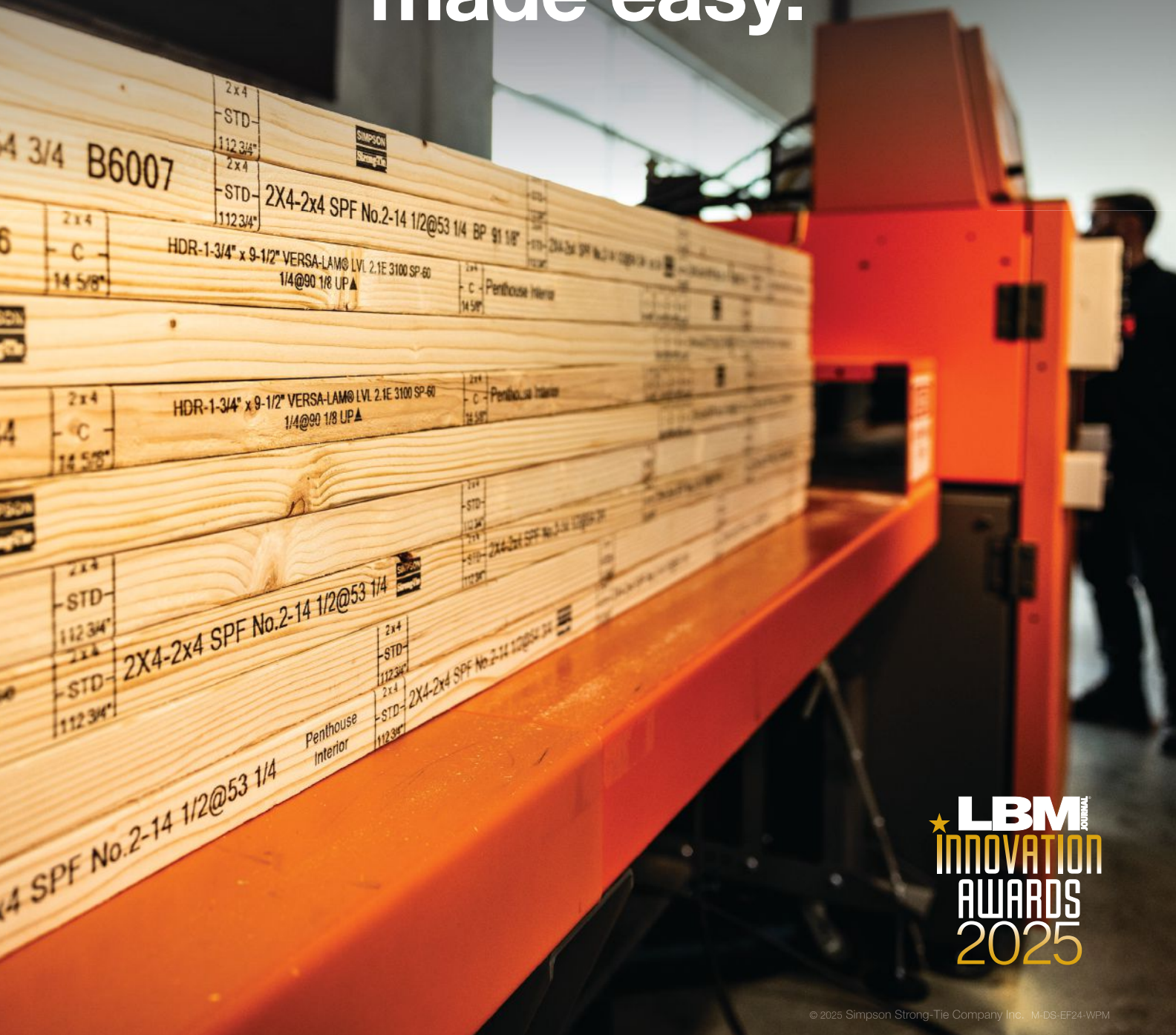
During these evolving times where technology and speed minimize the time for a human touch, it’s more important than ever to create your personal value. This begins by first being truly unique in an industry that has historically been slow to evolve. It mostly means going beyond being a product peddler with a price and becoming someone noticeably different than your competition. Strive to be different and you will gain a bigger slice of the pie.

THE UNIQUE SELLING PROMISE



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

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BY BRADLEY HARTMANN

LEARNING FROM THE SHEDEUR SANDERS MESS

EVEN THE MOST CASUAL sports fan has likely heard the recent headlines about Shedeur Sanders. For much of the 2024 football season, the Colorado quarterback was considered a top NFL prospect. As the 2025 NFL Draft approached, rumors circulated that Sanders might slide out of the top ten picks, but no one expected him to slide all the way to No. 144.

The website *Grinding the Mocks* analyzed more than 2,400 mock drafts. The consensus slot for Sanders was 20.7—essentially, the 21st overall pick. Coincidentally, the Pittsburgh Steelers held that pick and needed a quarterback.

Everything lined up. Until it didn't.

Here's a key takeaway—and it has nothing to do with Sanders, and everything to do with the person hyping him.

Lose the ego. Update your forecast.

Mel Kiper Jr., the OG Draft analyst, has been evaluating prospects since 1984. He had Sanders ranked as his No. 5 overall prospect—a first-round lock. But as each round passed, and each team passed on Sanders multiple times, Kiper refused to update his assessment.

He doubled down. He barked at the camera.

"The NFL has been clueless for 50 years when it comes to evaluating quarterbacks! Clueless!" he said.

"No matter your opinion, the draft has spoken," said ESPN analyst Louis Riddick.

"I don't think yelling at the NFL is the answer," added Rece Davis.



Bradley Hartmann was raised in a lumberyard, worked in area purchasing at PulteGroup, and is passionate about helping LBM sales teams make it easy for builders to buy. You can email him at bradley@bradleyhartmannandco.com.

Kiper wasn't supposed to be this wrong. But instead of accepting reality, Kiper shifted the blame: the league, individual teams, general managers—anyone but himself. Any assessment but his own.

Here's how to keep Mel Kiper's breakdown from becoming your own. Lose the ego. Look at how YOU lead. Then adjust your sales leadership. Data isn't emotional—it's directional. Your sales don't measure effort or intent; they reveal what's working and what isn't. The sooner you accept what is, the faster your team can improve.

This Month's Tip on the Sport of Selling:

Forecast your August sales—with a confidence interval. Coach your sales reps to document the following three numbers for August:

1. Sales goal (dollars)

At the beginning of the year, what was their sales goal for the month of August?

2. Sales prediction (dollars)

Have each sales rep—knowing what they know right now—jot down how much they think they'll sell in August.

3. Confidence interval (percentage)

Have each rep, on a scale of 0-100%, specify how confident they are in their ability to hit their sales prediction.

When done, it should look like this for each sales rep:

- Sales goal = \$500K
- Sales prediction = \$523K
- Confidence = 75%

That's it. Then help your sales reps stay focused on their top opportunities. Help them track their time and eliminate as many non-sales activities as possible.

As the calendar turns to September, schedule a 20-minute RPA Meeting with each sales rep. First, focus on **Results**: Revisit the three numbers the sales rep documented last month and ask: How accurate was your forecast? What can you learn from this and apply in September? Then move onto **Pipeline**: Does this month's sales pipeline support this month's sales goal? Then close with **Activities**: What critical sales activities must be prioritized this month?

Your sales leadership report card arrives monthly in the form of your team's sales numbers. Their performance is a direct reflection of your ability to coach them up and hold them accountable to achieve their sales goals.

Do this—if for no other reason—than to avoid sounding like Mel Kiper on draft day.

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BY THEA DUDLEY

Hi Thea,
I hear all the time about creating a sales and credit relationship, how the company would be better served if we all “just got along.” Sounds great in theory but doesn’t seem to work out most of the time. Salespeople chase sales from any potential avenue. How can I make this happen when I am working with people who aren’t worried about how this sale will pay?

— Working with the unwilling

SETTING EXPECTATIONS

Dear Willing,

The age old credit and sales conundrum. How do we build relationships with each other? A while back, I was at our local voting location, which happens to be held in an elementary school gym. As I waited my turn, I noticed a series of signs hanging on the wall.

1. I will treat you with respect so you will know how to treat me.
2. If you feel something is unfair, tell me, in a calm voice, and we will talk.
3. Feel free to do anything that doesn’t cause a problem for anyone else.
4. If you cause a problem, I will ask you to solve it.
5. If you can’t solve or choose not to solve the problem, I will do something.
6. What I do will depend on the special person and the special situation.

I read that series of signs multiple times. Brilliant. Simple. Clear. Kindergarten through fifth graders could understand the expectation, the actions, and the consequences. If it worked for them, why not grown adults?

I recreated that series. I hung it up in my office. I emailed a copy of it to all the people I work with, so it was clear where I was coming from. I can’t control other people, I can control how I react and how I move forward with them.

Does it always work? No. Did it help? Absolutely. I use the 80/20 rule as my guide. If that “expectations guide” works 80% of the time, I consider it a win. There are some people you will never get through to and it is a complete and utter waste of your time and resources. I still follow the series above for those people, but have learned to accept we are not playing by the same rules. Chances are everyone in your organization already knows who and how they are.

Recreate that series of expectations anyway you like. Hang them up in your office. If nothing else, it will spark a conversation. I guarantee you will get asked about these “expectations.” The one that really gets the most attention? “Special.” “What do you mean by special?”

“Every situation is different,” says I. It really does depend on what the issue is and how the rep is working, or not, with me on how “special” we get. To build a relationship you have to have conversations. You may never be besties with some of your creative commission cowboys, but you have laid out clear expectations of what they, and everyone else, can expect from you thereby eliminating the “you just don’t like me” war cry.

If all else fails remember, in every relationship there is one person who stacks the dishwasher like a Scandinavian architect and one who stacks it like a raccoon on Red Bull and free donuts. Accept that you are the architect in this relationship. Stocking a supply of Pepto Bismol and Tylenol are optional.



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



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



BY JOHN D. WAGNER

SHOULD YOUR gross profit margin rise or fall with sales revenue? Normally, this column takes 600 or so words to fully address one topic. But I honestly could end the column right here by flatly saying: No, gross profit margin should not rise or fall with sales. It should maintain a steady state (or, ideally, rise over time) no matter what your sales revenue turns out to be.

Quick review: Gross profit margin (GPM) is the difference between revenue and the cost of goods sold (COGS), divided by revenue. The resulting figure is expressed as a percentage. If your sales are \$5 million and your COGS are \$3 million, the GPM would be calculated this way: $\$5,000,000 - \$3,000,000 = \$2,000,000$. Now, divide $\$2,000,000$ by the revenues of $\$5,000,000$, and your GPM would be 40%.

SHOULD GROSS PROFIT MARGIN RISE OR FALL WITH SALES REVENUE?

Most well-managed companies will see their GPM rise over time, because they work to regularly update pricing and drive down COGS. As prices rise and/or COGS drop, GPM will increase. In the example above, if COGS were lower, say $\$2,500,000$ instead of $\$3,000,000$, the GPM would rise to 50% instead of 40%. COGS as a key performance indicator can be viewed as a dollar amount, but also expressed as COGS as a percentage of sales. COGS as a percentage of sales is a closely watched indicator, just behind GPM and EBITDA percentage in importance.

We've done analysis for companies whose GPM dropped over time. When asked what explains it, we've sometimes

heard, "Our sales went down, so our GPM dropped too." What is more likely is that the GPM dropped for one of all of three main reasons: 1. COGS increased but the company did not increase product prices to compensate; 2. Whether COGS went up or down, there was price erosion, as the sales team, over-eager for a "win," dropped prices to get sales; 3. The product mix shifted focus to lower-margin items for sale (e.g. a disproportionate percent of sales were for commodity lumber), when the dealer should be blending in higher-margin items (e.g. millwork, windows, EWP, manufactured components). By focusing on these three scenarios, and maintaining your focus on controlling/reducing COGS, and hold (or increase) your prices, you will see a rising GPM. This of course drops more dollars to EBITDA.

Almost by accident, we saw a broad-based case study of rising prices passed on to customers, where the LBM dealers held the line of their GPMs. This was during the COVID spike in lumber prices that peaked at almost $\$1,700$ per 1,000 board feet in late April 2021. The LBM dealers we worked with universally held the line on their GPMs, and enjoyed higher gross profit dollars, because they adjusted retail pricing to account for the increase in COGS (e.g. the higher prices they were paying for lumber). This resulted in higher EBITDAs, even for some companies that were selling the same volume of lumber in, say, April 2020, when lumber was at $\$257/1,000$ b/f. In this case study, if the LBM dealers had not passed along price increases to reflect their higher COGS, their GPM would have fallen.

Let's put that lesson to use in an example with less drama. Let's say you're surprised to see GPM erosion from 30% to 27% over recent months. How to get the GPM back up to 30%? You first need to determine the root cause of the slippage, which, as shown above, is either underpricing, higher COGS, or both.

Note there is a positive correlation between GPM and prices. If you want to increase your GPM by 3% to compensate for, say, higher COGS like increased labor costs, or rising insurance premiums, you can increase prices by 3%. I can hear it now, "A 3% price increase, all at once? In my competitive market? We'll lose customers!" Indeed, that 3% lift may be a shock to the system, which only underscores the importance of spotting trends like GPM erosion soon, and making micro adjustments to keep pace, rather than recognizing margin slippage after the fact and trying to correct it all at once.



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



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BY RUSS KATHREIN

THIS IS THE THIRD in a series on taking on a leadership role. Previously, we discussed doing your homework before you assume the role, and then we planned out the first 100 days. Now let's tackle the personnel challenge.

The most important areas to address when starting a leadership position are people and process. Process is more about observing and then implementing continuous improvement. The challenge with people is that there are no cookie-cutter solutions because every situation is different, and people are unique.

First, get to know your people and figure out what camp they fall into. It might be an oversimplification, but generally there are three:

The Evangelists: These are the people who will embrace change. Chances are, they have been looking forward to new leadership because they recognize the problems and the need to change. These people will represent 10%-15% of your staff.

The Fence Sitters: These are the people who do not like change and have possibly been hurt by new leaders coming in, or worry about how change could negatively affect them. The book "Who Moved My Cheese?" is a great summary of the habits and anxieties these people have. They will represent about 80% of your staff.

The Doubters: These are the people who probably have some sort of indirect power (top salesperson, longevity in the company, key person to prior leadership). They do not like, want, or accept change, and they will let you know it either directly or through their actions (or in some cases non-action). They will represent 5%-10% of your staff.

PART 3: TAKING ON LEADERSHIP THE PERSONNEL CHALLENGE



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

The ones that will let you know what camp they fit into will be the Evangelists and the Doubters. The Evangelists will enthusiastically greet you and immediately look for you to guide them. They will tell you about problems in the organization, but do so in a way that looks for the problems to be addressed. They will likely have their own suggestions.

The Doubters will also seek you out early. They will either want to tell you all of the problems that primarily revolve around their world, or they will start staking out their territory. This will be done by words, usually in the form of a challenge, by their actions, or by their noticeable inaction when they ignore your directives. The Fence Sitters are hanging back and quietly observing. They want to see where things land before they start considering the idea of buying in. They may have seen previous leaders come in and fail, so they are sitting in the cheap seats, eating popcorn as they watch what they feel is the next iteration of failure.

So, where to start? You need to try to meet your people and listen. Don't get hung up on performance or promises to perform. Judge and rank your people on who your gut says you can trust. This will help you sort people into what camp best fits them. Your first instinct may be to try to focus on converting the Doubters. Don't waste your energy and goodwill that you have in your honeymoon period. Remember that if you terminate a Doubter too soon, they can become a martyr in the company. But if you wait too long, they will become cancer. You have to address these people just right, but this system will help you do that.

Start with the Evangelists. They are open and enthusiastic. Listen to their ideas, as they listen to yours. Use this group to implement your ideas and gain some initial successes. The fact that they are already believers makes it more likely you will have success, and with this success, you will start to convert some of the fence-sitters. As more time goes on, you will win over the fence-sitters, and you will start to form a culture that they all want to be a part of. Once you reach this point, you can start addressing the Doubters.

Granted, some of the Doubters will start buying in or reading the tea leaves and realize that you are here to stay, so they better toe the line. The remaining Doubters, you can start "training them up, or training them out." If they are a top performer, give them parameters they have to operate within, or they are gone. I call this "live on an island, and you will die on an island." You can put up with a few misfits who perform well, but realize that everyone is watching and that these people can start to become a cancer that will corrupt everything you are trying to build. Stick to the plan and "execute" promptly and when necessary.

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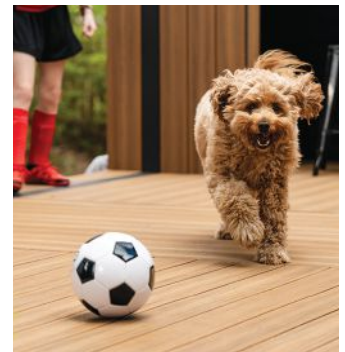
Developed specifically for the challenges of outdoor environments, decking made with Surestone technology goes beyond aesthetics to offer real-world performance where it counts. With industry-leading heat and slip resistance, 35% less weight,* and a 50-year structural limited warranty,† decking made with Surestone technology gives contractors an undeniable edge.



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Summer heat has always been a pain point for traditional decking. Surfaces can become scorching hot under the sun, forcing homeowners to reach for sandals—or worse, to stay inside. Decking made with Surestone technology changes that. Thanks to a unique cap with infrared-reflective materials, decking made with Surestone technology absorbs less heat, staying cooler and more comfortable to walk on—even during peak afternoon sun.**

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Decks are more than platforms—they're places where life happens. Whether during poolside hangouts, backyard barbecues, or impromptu dance parties, wet feet are part of the equation. That's where the exceptional slip resistance of decking made with Surestone technology truly stands out. With a textured surface that delivers up to 34% better traction than other leading brands in wet conditions,‡ it's a safer surface for all—including kids and pets.

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Jason Alloway New Castle Steel

What should LBM professionals know about steel framing when choosing construction materials?

New Castle Steel's framing offers distinct advantages for distributors and builders. Manufactured in Marietta, GA, our American-made steel emphasizes strength and supports the domestic economy. Triple-coated galvanized steel ensures durability, resists rot and termites, and provides flat surfaces for longer spans, surpassing lumber and other materials.

With a Class 1A fire rating, WUI certification, and ignition resistance, it's ideal for safety-focused projects in fire-prone areas. Backed by a 50-year warranty with zero claims, our steel reduces callbacks, enhancing distributor margins. Compliant with CCRR-0186 for exterior use, it simplifies installation and meets modern construction needs.

Our products allow distributors to provide builders with a reliable, high-quality framing product that strengthens their reputation, ensures customer satisfaction, and drives repeat business in a competitive market.

What benefits can LBM dealers gain by adding steel framing to their inventory?

Incorporating New Castle Steel's framing into your inventory delivers measurable advantages. Our steel offers higher profit margins, allowing distributors to provide superior quality while improving financial flexibility. Responsive customer service provides prompt pricing, custom framing plans, and comprehensive support, from inventory management to design assistance.

The durability of our steel minimizes warranty claims compared to wood, freeing resources for sales growth and customer service, while building trust that fosters repeat business and referrals. By offering American-made steel, distributors position themselves as market leaders, capitalizing on the industry's shift toward domestically-sourced alternative framing solutions. This strategic partnership enhances profitability and strengthens builder relationships, ensuring long-term success in a dynamic market.

Providing New Castle Steel sets you apart, meeting builders' demands for reliable, innovative products and reinforcing your reputation as a trusted supplier.

How does steel framing support green building, sustainability, and resiliency?

New Castle Steel's framing meets the growing demand for sustainable, resilient construction materials. Made with a minimum of 25% recycled American steel and fully recyclable, our products contribute to LEED points and reduce environmental impact. Unlike lumber, which often includes unusable pieces, every piece of our steel is usable, minimizing waste and jobsite trips, thus lowering carbon emissions. Scraps are recyclable, reinforcing eco-conscious practices.

Jason Alloway, a builder with over 30 years of experience, is the owner of New Castle Steel, a company specializing in high-quality steel deck framing. Raised in a construction-focused family, he excelled in various trades, notably deck building, before championing steel-framed decks as a durable alternative to declining pressure-treated lumber. In 2022, his commitment to steel led him to acquire manufacturing capabilities, founding New Castle Steel.



Our chemical-free steel framing, unlike pressure-treated lumber, avoids harmful environmental effects. Engineered with a triple-coated galvanized finish around a carbon steel core, it ensures decades of durability, reducing material usage over time. Sourced and manufactured domestically, our steel maintains a low environmental footprint.

Attract sustainability-focused builders by providing eco-friendly, long-lasting steel framing materials that enhance project resiliency and reduce maintenance costs, aligning with green building trends.

How does steel framing help builders work more efficiently amidst labor shortages?

New Castle Steel's framing optimizes builder efficiency during labor shortages. Unlike wood, our steel eliminates time-intensive tasks like grading, culling, planing, or taping. Precise engineering ensures flat surfaces, preventing issues such as twisting or crowning, which reduces waste disposal trips and rework. This streamlined process allows builders to complete projects faster, maximizing productivity with smaller crews.

The exceptional strength of our steel supports longer spans, simplifying construction and reducing labor hours. Distributors offering New Castle Steel provide builders with a solution that accelerates project timelines and improves jobsite workflows.

How does steel framing enhance fire safety in construction projects?

New Castle Steel's framing provides essential fire safety benefits, particularly in wildfire-prone regions. With a Class 1A fire rating, the highest standard, our steel resists ignition and does not contribute to flame spread, slowing fire progression to give firefighters critical time to protect structures. Compliant with Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) standards, it's vital for hardening homes in high-risk areas, enhancing safety, potentially reducing insurance costs, and increasing property values. ■

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Woods Lumber & Home Center finds success in its people and products

Woods Lumber has been a fixture in the community since its founding in 1889. Mark Woods is the fifth-generation owner, and his wife, Kathy, manages cabinet design and sales.

BY KATY TOMASULO

WITH A POPULATION OF JUST 8,500, Independence, Kansas, can certainly be considered a small town. But Woods Lumber & Home Center is anything but a small-town dealer.

Not only does the company's reach go far beyond town limits, Woods Lumber has built a foundation of products and services that cater to a diverse clientele, helping contractors and consumers alike get nearly everything they need without having to make the lengthy trek to a larger city.

It's not at all surprising when you consider that the company has been in business for more than 135 years and is currently on its fifth generation of family ownership, with the sixth generation close at hand.

A focus on family and community

Woods Lumber has been a fixture in the community—and the Woods family—since its founding in 1889. Mark Woods is the fifth-generation owner, and his wife, Kathy, manages cabinet design and sales (along with filling in wherever things need to be done). Mark and Kathy's sons, Tommy and Kyle, are continuing the family legacy, and their daughter-in-law, Katy, manages marketing and social media.

Not surprisingly, Woods Lumber is an active supporter of the local community and its causes. "We have been in the community for a long time, and we continue to be the faces of that," Kathy says. "We're supporting this community because they help us thrive. It's hand in hand."

A diverse product mix

One of the keys to serving the rural area is offering products that meet nearly any need—from a clientele that's 60/40 pros and consumers to projects ranging from custom residential to light commercial and industrial.

Along with a stable of typical LBM products, including lumber, plywood and OSB, engineered wood, decking, shingles, drywall, and insulation, the company operates two ready-mix facilities and offers equipment rentals. The ready-mix plants not only provide a much-needed service for the area, they generate leads for the lumberyard and vice versa.

Woods' cabinet showroom is a store-within-a-store, complete with design services for both pros and consumers. "Being an independent for 136 years, we've developed great relationships with our customers, and we try to cater to DIYers [as much as pros]. They're a fantastic part of our business," Mark says. "We don't want a DIYer walking in our door and being intimidated. We want them to be comfortable just like contractors are."

A few years ago, the dealer expanded its inventory mix even further with fun (yet still on brand) products like Yeti coolers, Turtlebox speakers, and Muck Boots that have cross-customer appeal.

"Our meat-and-potatoes will always be building materials, but it's fun when a contractor comes in and buys a speaker," Mark says, noting that often pros use their reward points for such items.

The critical role of dedicated people

Woods Lumber's success is about far more than products though—it's built a reputation for service. And like many LBM owners, Mark is quick to give credit to his staff for making that happen. "We are in a people business. That's the biggest thing," he says. "My mantra with our team is 'Do what you say. Follow through. Do the right thing.' It helps solidify our relationships that contractors know we have their back."

"It's a total team effort on the employee side," adds store manager Randy Dixon. "It takes everybody. There's no job more important than the other."

As with much of the industry, finding employees is often a challenge, particularly due to Woods Lumber's remote location, but the company recognizes that the right combination of benefits and thoughtful management can make a difference. "We pay at industry standard or above, we have a great 401(k) program, profit sharing, bonuses. But more than anything, I think we treat people with respect," Mark says. "Hire good people, give them the tools to succeed, and then get out of their way."

Dixon's three decades with the company (and the recently retired contractor sales manager's 25 years) is perhaps the biggest testament to the success of that approach. "The Woods family is wonderful to work for," Dixon says, noting in particular that the company emphasizes a work-life balance. "If you're happy outside of work, that makes a better employee."

Showcasing people and community is also a central part of Katy Woods' social media strategy. "We engage more with audiences when we have employees showing what they do on a day-to-day basis," she explains. "The audience can say, 'That's my neighbor, my friend, my uncle.' They want to connect with people behind the post ... they want to know who they're buying from, and I really try to include that in every post we make."

"I think being a family-owned operation all these years is important," Dixon says. "Everyone knows the name. We have a lot of longtime customers. They feel comfortable and know us on a personal level. Service and pricing have to be good, but on top of that, you get the personal interaction with people you know."

Always looking ahead

Though it was born in the 1800s and is rural in locale, Woods Lumber has never been out of touch. From social media to an ever-expanding e-commerce offering, complete with same-day delivery options, the dealer keeps a steady pace with the latest trends and shifting needs of its customer base.

"If you're content, you're going to lose," Mark says. "You have to always be looking at new things."

The company credits its affiliation with Do it Best for helping to evolve its marketing, merchandising, product mix, and much more. They also are a member of the Allied Building Stores cooperative, leveraging group buying for most of their commodities.



"Being part of Do it Best and Allied, we're not just operating as a small-town hardware store. It's more full service," Kathy says. "I'm proud of the fact that we have continued to be successful in an ever-changing world and business."

For Mark, the effort starts at the top with an approach that carries on tradition while refusing to rest on their success. "If I'm going to come to work every day, I need to be productive," he says. "So every day I try to come up with at least one, if not more, thing that will help us do our business better. Maybe it's lowering a price or buying a new piece of equipment. But every day I try to challenge myself to do something to make the company better." ■

GET TO KNOW WOODS LUMBER & HOME CENTER


FOUNDED:	1889
OWNERSHIP:	FAMILY
LOCATIONS:	1
EMPLOYEES:	26
ERP PLATFORM:	EPICOR
CUSTOMER MIX:	60% PRO / 40% DIY



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REAL ISSUES. REAL ANSWERS.

MANAGING MARKET UNCERTAINTY

2022

This month's Real Issues. Real Answers. question deals with today's uncertain market environment. Many readers, including the midwestern LBM pro who suggested this question, are bullish on the future. It's the present that they're working to navigate.

BY LBM JOURNAL READERS

Q

What insights would you share with the LBM dealer who posed this question: "My company started the year optimistic about the promise of a more robust economy. Instead, we're hearing about the possibility of an impending recession, which has builders and their customers feeling less-than-confident about moving forward with big investments in new construction. We're bullish about the future, but it's the present that we're wrestling with. How are other dealers managing today's market uncertainties?"

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

"We are charging ahead, increasing inventory, maintaining marketing plan. Not getting caught up with the negative waves. Our sales are actually up."

"We saw this for a couple of months, but the tides have turned in most of our markets."

"We put our Greenfield facility build-out on hold."

"Focusing on strengthening our customer relationships so when things turn around, they remember we were there for them."

"At my age and all of the ups and downs I have worked through, I try to explain to our customers that you need to move ahead with what you do best because it always turns out to the good. Don't try to overthink the market. As far as I'm concerned, there are no experts out there that know what they are talking about. I have a better track record and my portfolio proves it."

"Our company has expanded the area we bid jobs to."

"We need consistency of activity and policy from our new administration."

"I think we all expected a better year than seems likely at this time. We need to manage our people and expenses closely and continue to attack competitor's good customers more than ever, we all need to keep moving inventory and it's getting bloody."

"Focusing on remodeling and second homes, where interest rates don't seem to matter as much."

"Trying to minimize risk as much as we can. We are focused on maintaining inventory levels to the business we are currently doing, and maintaining the appropriate supply. We are trying to avoid getting caught with too much on hand should it suddenly collapse. We are also focusing on paying attention to our AR to spot accounts that are showing signs of having issues and trying to get ahead of that."

"Take advantage of this time to button up your processes."

"We will optimistically allow the president's agenda/process to evolve."

"We are closely watching overtime hours and holding off on any capital expenditures until we have a better understanding of this year's business."

"We are in a heavy building market both for growth as well as custom home building. The year has been steady, not bad, and we are seeing the growth starting."

"One opportunity at a time. Smaller pie means you need to make the most of every chance you can find."

"There are always uncertainties. This isn't new."

"In our market, large expensive condos and homes are on hold. We are finding opportunities on smaller jobs and mini renovation projects."

"Same as always. We focus on the things that don't change. We don't have to look very hard to find at least a dozen things that we can improve upon that would benefit our customers. Yes, we have an ever-changing list of uncertainties, and that's pretty common in our cyclical industry."

"Coming off of five good years, we are finding things more normalized but there is an uneasiness with tariffs and trade. Americans are cautious."

"We're just taking things one day at a time. Don't go too crazy on inventory and watch the margins like always."

"To protect ourselves from getting caught with overpriced commodities, we're buying lumber just-in-time."

"We're bullish about the future but I never bought into the promise of a robust economy. Even if you agree with the current political climate, any changes will take time to take effect. This should be apparent especially to anyone who has been around for a moment, but surprisingly it's not."

"We are focusing on the things that we can control. Customer service, deliveries, building relationships with customers and vendors, employee training. Staying grounded—not over-extending inventory or credit positions and focusing on our core competencies (vs. new products)." ▶

"I would caution everyone on who they are listening to for this advice. The mainstream media has a factual bias against this president and administration and that is affecting people's mindset, which is unfortunate. The tariff issue will clear (this is part of the administration's plan), interest rates will come down, and sentiment will change. The country was propped up on government spending for the last several years, there will be pain to change that and that will take some time."

"Focus on those who don't follow the news on a daily basis. Most people care about what they see on TV, and are focused on their own daily lives. If they need a building, the economy doesn't change that fact."

"Business as usual. It's all local. Same old, same old."

Responses from wholesale distributors, manufacturers, and service providers:

"We're staying lean on inventory and cutting capital expenditures. Setting expectations with staff that overtime isn't happening much."

"Do not carry excessive inventories. Rely on suppliers that you trust and who are easy to work with."

"Stay in the market. Instead of being 60 or 90 days covered, shoot for 45-60 days. The downside risk on many things right now is low with lumber, and OSB too."

"We have our 'best crystal ball' out and are struggling to make decisions on our imports. Working with our import brokers have helped, but they too are struggling. Information changes daily and isn't complete."

"It is a market-to-market situation. I have spoken with dealers who are having record months and others who are struggling within the same zip code. I think dealers who are waiting for their existing customers to get there are the ones struggling. Go get more customers now, and when things are good for everyone, look out for explosive growth."

"Unfortunately, until interest rates drop somewhere near 5% and the trade wars and tariffs smooth out, we are all going to be in a wait and see situation. Things will get better, look at the history of the early '80s, mid-2000s, and today. Earth shattering no, just proceed like in the past with caution and things will correct themselves. They always do."



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“Good question; it is hard to stay optimistic when our city has water shortage issues, and the U.S. economy is now becoming increasingly unpredictable. We want stability in our U.S. business world which we had in 2024.”

“Keep moving forward. Watch accounts receivables closely and bring in some virtual assistants to help build bandwidth.”

“Our business hasn’t slowed or shifted. Dealers are ordering as frequent as they have done in the past.”

“Short term perspective—ride it out. We’ve been here before.”

“We’re taking a wait and see approach, especially on extension of tax policies and restoration of full deductions for capital equipment.”

“Stay aggressive with pricing, greed and uncertainty do not mix well. Make enough to keep fluid, just don’t expect this to be the heyday we all had in 2022. Smother customers in service, it will pay dividends. We all need to do our part to lower costs for the everyday man to get back in the housing game. If it stays out of reach too long the industry will crumble and fall.”

“No one knows right now.”

“I recommend dealers consider using lumber futures.”

“With all the unknowns, our playbook is to free up cash and move to a neutral position. There is little benefit to speculate when changes are going to happen and more to conserve in order to be ready for when things do. Building dry powder for the next large move in front of us.”



“None of this is unexpected. We will need to take a difficult pill to fix America for our children and grandchildren.”

“We know our market. We are expecting a great year and it’s off to a good start. The future looks strong, with dealers and contractors still pulling the same amount of building permits. Most people aren’t buying into the fear mongering and gloom and doom by the media. A bit of correction is going on, but it’s long overdue.” ▶

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Q Is market uncertainty impacting your business?

65%
YES, SOMEWHAT

25%
YES, VERY MUCH

10%
NO, NOT AT ALL



Comments from dealers:

“Yes, but not to do with tariffs. It’s all about interest rates, monthly payment amounts, and disparity between income and cost of homes.”

“Not sure how a tract builder new to our market will affect us.”

“It hasn’t impacted us on results currently, but there appears to be a slowdown coming soon based on the uncertainty.”

“It’s a little early to tell here in the Northeast.”

“A good bit of my inventory comes from Canada.”

“The real answer lies in Q3 and Q4.”

Comments from vendors:

“It hasn’t slowed down sales. The 2nd quarter looks good.”

“We are struggling with our imports. Prices are so volatile!”

“People are worried about tariff impacts and are afraid it will cause pricing escalations like in 2022.”

“No one knows, they are getting work until the last minute. That makes it hard to plan lumber purchases and pricing with much confidence.”

“We are small with a very small market share. So, we can still grow with new customers, even though our existing customers are not performing the way we expected.”

“Tariffs mean everyone stops spending.”

“We need to purchase two forklifts and have put that on hold until we see what direction the U.S. economy takes.” ■

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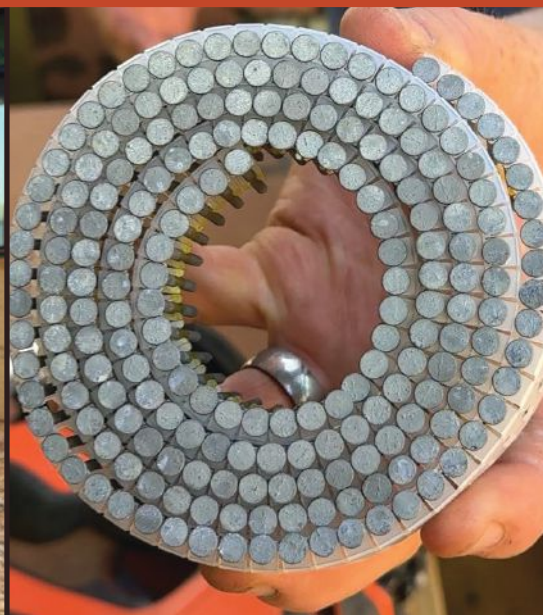
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PRODUCT PAGE



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COMPANIES AND PRODUCTS THAT EPITOMIZE THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

The ground-breaking offerings on these pages provide solutions to challenging problems, and bring an advanced level of performance to the jobsite. And while there is no shortage of truly innovative building products, these stand out because of their unique benefits. So listed in no particular order, we are proud to announce the winners of the LBM Journal 2025 Innovation Awards.

BY MIKE BERGER



ATLAS ROOFING

EnergyShield XR

Atlas recently introduced EnergyShield XR Continuous Insulation for both residential and commercial projects, the only polyiso continuous insulation board designed for both above- and below-grade applications. It is reportedly manufactured using environmentally responsible processes and formulations, containing no CFCs, HCFCs or HFCs, resulting in Zero Ozone Depletion Potential (ODP) and Negligible Global Warming Potential (GWP). EnergyShield XR is GREENGUARD Gold certified and contributes to LEED credits.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

As the only above and below-grade continuous insulation board according to Atlas, this one single product allows for a more simplified and continuous insulation strategy while providing more versatility than XPS, with a strong sustainability profile, and a higher R-value per inch, allowing builders to provide better thermal protection and streamline wall profiles. xr.atlasrwi.com

TYPAR

Clear Acrylic Flashing

TYPAR Clear Acrylic Flashing was developed in response to evolving builders' needs and emerging building code changes requiring better visibility of the nail and screw fin patterns on windows during window installations and inspections. The premium, advanced acrylic adhesive is described as waterproof, self-sealing, able to be applied even under cold conditions, and offers nine months of UV resistance.



WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

Unlike opaque alternatives, TYPAR Clear Acrylic Flashing allows the pattern on the window nailing fins to be completely visible upon installation, ensuring proper attachment and preventing costly callbacks. This is especially advantageous on large-scale multi-family and commercial projects where approval of numerous window openings is required. typar.com

DECKORATORS

Surestone Technology

Surestone from Deckorators utilizes mineral-based technology to create a truly unique decking product. According to Deckorators, Surestone technology is made from a blend of plastic polymers and durable minerals, with zero organic materials. During the manufacturing process, the polymers and minerals are combined and then stretched, changing the internal structure.



WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

According to Deckorators, mineral-based technology provides superior strength at nearly 35% less weight than traditional composites. It also features a unique surface design for increased traction in wet conditions, exceptional stability and performance with virtually no thermal expansion or contraction, and it's warranted for installation in the ground or water with virtually no moisture absorption. deckorators.com

PASLODE

Cordless CSF Siding & Fencing Nailer

Paslode has long been known for cordless nailers, and the Cordless CSF Siding and Fencing Nailer is the company's newest addition to its lineup. Its high capacity 200ct. magazine features easy side loading. The Li-Ion battery works with all Paslode cordless nailers, and the Battery Quick Charge delivers 200 extra nail drives in 2 minutes.



WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

According to Paslode, the Cordless CSF Siding and Fencing Nailer is the first cordless tool for siding and fencing applications. It utilizes Paslode's 0° siding platform, which reportedly jams less than 15° siding nailers—76% fewer jams than competitive nailers. It also reportedly offers 12x faster set up and tear down, drives 800 shots per full fuel cell and 4,500 nails per full battery charge. paslode.com



SIMPSON STRONG-TIE

EasyFrame Automated Marking System

The Simpson Strong-Tie EasyFrame automated marking system is an advanced way for wall panel manufacturers, LBM dealers and component manufacturers to produce wall, floor or truss assemblies. A combination saw and printer, the Simpson Strong-Tie EasyFrame automated marking system cuts detailed wall panel framing members that are pre-marked for fast, accurate assembly. EasyFrame prints framing plans directly onto lumber, including location of boards, connectors, wiring and more. It can be paired with a manual or automated saw.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

Driven by a powerful linear optimization algorithm, the EasyFrame automated marking system prints precision framing layouts for a structure directly onto the framing members themselves using high-resolution ink jet technology. According to Simpson Strong-Tie, EasyFrame reduces construction timelines and addresses labor shortages by using automation to optimize materials efficiency and increase cutting accuracy. strongtie.com

SASHCO

eXact Color Tintable Caulk

There are some jobs where a classic white or clear caulk just won't cut it—you need a custom color to match the surrounding material or paint color. That's where eXact Color tintable caulk comes in. According to the manufacturer, eXact Color tintable caulk from Sashco Sealants is a high-performance caulk that allows builders to customize the color to match specific jobsite needs. It's described as ideal for use in a variety of indoor and outdoor applications, such as sealing around siding, filling in gaps in baseboards and trim, caulking cabinets, and more.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

Rather than being limited to white, brown, or clear, users can create caulk that matches any paint or stain color. Mixing paint or stain with the eXact Color caulk is a very simple process, with no special mixing tools needed. Plus, it's mess-free. The supplied syringe is used to inject the desired color into the caulk. It takes only three minutes to mix and then it's ready to be applied. With eXact Color, users can match any paint color in minutes, as opposed to waiting several weeks or even months to get a custom caulk made. sashco.com



HUMBOLDT SAWMILL

Allweather Wood Class A Exterior Fire-Retardant Treated Redwood Siding

Allweather Wood Exterior Class A Fire Retardant Treated Redwood Siding offers the beauty of real redwood and the enhanced safety and fire protection of a Class A rated product. Designed for exterior applications, the product is available in 1x6 and 1x8 siding profiles in a redwood BEE grade, and treated with a clear fire retardant formulation from Hoover Treated Wood Products.



WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

According to the manufacturer, the treatment from Hoover ensures that the siding not only retains the natural beauty of redwood but also offers enhanced safety and fire protection. With its Class A rating, the fire-retardant-treated redwood meets the highest standards for durability and performance, especially in wildfire prone areas. allweatherwood.com

HENRY

Blueskin VP Tech Panels

Henry, a Carlisle Company, released its Blueskin VP Tech as a building envelope for residential construction that is engineered to deliver energy efficiency and labor savings in one integrated solution.



WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

The product combines a weather-resistive barrier (WRB), continuous insulation (CI), and seam sealing in a single, integrated panel, which the manufacturer says significantly improves energy efficiency, and reduces installation time and associated labor costs by up to 30%. Featuring an airtight thermal envelope, Blueskin VP Tech assists in lowering a home's HERS (Home Energy Rating System) Score and contributes to ENERGY STAR and Zero Energy Ready Home (ZERH) program requirements. henry.com

IG RAILING

IG Switch Glass Railing

IG Switch railing system from IG Railing is a low iron glass that carries light in a unique and saturated level through the opaque white glass. IG Switch glass allows users to power their view with a touch of a button from opaque white with 88% privacy to 88% visual light transmission (VLT), allowing unobstructed views.



WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

According to the manufacturer, IG Switch leverages advanced Polymer-Dispersed Liquid Crystal (PDLC) technology that enables with the flip of a switch an effortless transition between privacy and clarity, seamlessly integrating with IG Lighting and other IG Railing components. IG Switch glass can even be used as a video projector screen in its natural opaque white state. igrailing.com

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SIDING

Despite slower home construction, growth is expected in the siding category

BY MIKE BERGER

There was a time not that long ago in our country when siding wasn't a needed component of home construction. For example, log homes utilized the logs themselves as the weatherproof exterior barrier against the elements, with chinking (traditionally made of clay, mud and sand) filling the gaps between the individual logs. Some log structures were crafted so carefully, such as with Finnish log cabins, that the logs fit so tightly together no chinking was even required.

Times have changed. Except in rare cases, we're no longer relying on hewn logs as defense against nature, and modern siding including vinyl, steel, and milled wood (along with other alternative materials) now keep homes safe against Mother Nature. These siding products are an inventory staple of LBM dealers, but that's not to say they're a stagnant product category. To the contrary, siding continues to evolve to match changing aesthetics and deliver increased performance.

Repair and remodel leads growth

When taken as a whole, manufacturers seem to express a sense of modest optimism when it comes to what the next twelve months may bring for the siding segment, despite the slowing of the housing market. One area they point to as driving growth is the repair and remodel (R&R) segment. "Despite ongoing economic uncertainties, Westlake Royal Building Products remains optimistic about the siding segment's outlook for the coming year," says Steve Booz, vice president of marketing for Westlake Royal Building Products. "This momentum is largely driven by the continued strength of the home improvement market, supported by rising homeowner equity and limited



options to move due to higher interest rates. As a result, many homeowners are choosing to stay in place and reinvest in their properties through meaningful remodeling projects, such as siding, that improve functionality, elevate aesthetics and deliver lasting value.”

Statistics seem to bear this out. According to the 2025 Remodeling Impact Report from the National Association of Realtors and National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI), Americans spent an estimated \$603 billion in 2024 on remodeling their homes. Among NARI members, 42% found a greater demand for contracting in remodeling work during the last two years, while 57% cited that the scale of the projects increased, resulting in a larger project.

“Interestingly,” Booz continues, “while housing affordability remains a challenge, it hasn’t been a primary motivator for remodeling. Instead, many homeowners are leveraging their built-up equity to invest in home transformations that enhance their living experience and long-term property value. The 2025 Remodeling Impact Report found that 64% of homeowners expressed a greater desire to be in their homes following a remodel, and 46% reported increased enjoyment of their living spaces.”

This isn’t to say that siding manufacturers aren’t paying attention to new housing as a growth driver. Despite recent downswings in new housing construction starts, experts see potential. “The siding segment is poised for steady demand, driven by a persistent housing shortage,” says Kim Guimond, chief administrative and marketing officer for Modern Mill. “As of May 2025, the U.S. is facing a lack of housing supply, which will continue to fuel construction activity. However, international supply challenges, particularly tariff-related disruptions, are expected to create uncertainty in the siding segment. These challenges present not only obstacles but also opportunities for customers to explore new options. By pivoting to American-made lumber alternatives like Modern Mill’s products, dealers, builders, and homeowners can bypass tariff-related hurdles. This shift isn’t just about navigating the current trade climate—it’s about making strategic choices that strengthen the American economy and promote a greener planet for future generations.”

Richard Lam, president of NewTechWood, also sees new housing as a growth area for siding. “I believe the siding segment is going to continue to grow regardless of the market



ABOVE: According to BlueLinX, GP Vinyl Siding featuring Compass lap siding in Shadow, paired with white board and batten and cedar shakes, captures the essence of today’s clean, contrasting exterior trends.

LEFT: According to ProVia, the Harbor Mill product line now includes enhancements that are aimed at cutting down on installation time. The panels now include built-in drop guards, stagger marks, continuous and seam locks, and updated spacing indicators that make it easy to position and fasten.

because we are still behind a ton of houses that began even before the pandemic, and it was further exacerbated by it,” he explains. “The demand for new housing remains strong, and one of the primary ways to address housing affordability is through new construction. As a result, I anticipate continued investment in residential buildings, with siding demand growing alongside it. This lever—the need to build—will likely remain a constant driver for the foreseeable future.”

Contemporary colors and design

For the past few years, tactical use of dramatic, bold siding colors has been on the upswing, reflecting a growing interest in contemporary design. For 2025, siding experts see that trend continuing, and LBM dealers should expect product demand for those darker colors to increase. “Dark colors like black and deep grays and blues continue to gain popularity as bold, modern siding choices,” says Abby Huebner, vinyl siding product manager for ProVia. “However, we expect timeless classics—such as white, tan, and light gray—to remain top picks among homeowners and builders alike. This blend of trending tones and enduring favorites reflects a market that values both contemporary style and traditional appeal.” ▶

OPPOSITE PAGE: Cedar Renditions from Westlake Royal now features five new colors in the U.S.—Aluzinc (shown here), Ironstone, Charcoal, Frost and Black Silk—along with a new premium woodgrain color in the U.S. and Canada—Natural Whitewash. Cedar Renditions is reported to be easy to install and is made from recyclable aluminum that resists rust, water, insects and harsh climates.



Earlier this year, Modern Mill expanded its product line with the introduction of two new ACRE siding profiles: Nickel Gap and V-Groove. Like the rest of Modern Mill's ACRE products, these new siding profiles are made from upcycled rice hulls in a zero-waste manufacturing facility.

Chris (CJ) Johnson, director of product and marketing for siding at Westlake Royal Building Products, agrees with that assessment. "While bright whites and contrasting black trims dominated the market in recent years," he says, "we're now seeing a noticeable shift toward darker blues, grays and weathered neutrals that bring sophistication and depth to a home's exterior. These hues complement a range of architectural styles and regional aesthetics, making them versatile choices for remodelers and builders alike."

"We're also seeing a rise in homeowners embracing bold accent colors to personalize their spaces, whether it's through vibrant entryways, gables or mixed-material facades," he continues. "And as biophilic design continues to influence exteriors, the concept of 'green drenching,' which layers natural greenery and earthy textures, is also becoming more popular. This trend ties into the broader movement

NewTechWood has expanded its product line with the launch of its new Board and Batten siding, available in three distinct colors. The board and batten siding uses the same clip system as the company's existing product lines, meaning there's no steep learning curve, resulting in faster, more confident installations.



of designing homes that foster well-being and connect more deeply to nature."

This trend towards dramatic use of color is part of an overall shift toward more modern aesthetics, especially with darker color palettes gaining popularity, explains NewTechWood's Lam. "Deeper tones bring a rich, bold look that consumers are gravitating toward. For example, our Indian Ebony color has become a standout choice among homeowners, thanks to its ability to complement and enhance other building materials. This demand for darker, contemporary finishes is a clear direction the market is moving toward."

Mix and match textures and profiles

In today's market, the days of bland lap siding are a thing of the past. Homeowners today are more design savvy, and when it comes to the exterior of their homes, they're looking for combinations of profiles and textures to create truly distinctive exteriors that stand apart.

"One of the most prominent trends heading into 2025 is the mixing and matching of siding styles and sizes to bring depth, dimension and visual contrast to the facade," explains Westlake Royal Building Products' Johnson. "Combining siding profiles like classic board and batten with textured shakes, or integrating stone veneer accents, allows builders and remodelers to highlight architectural features and break up wall planes with purpose. This approach not only delivers eye-catching curb appeal but also provides greater flexibility to meet individual homeowner tastes. To support this trend, Westlake Royal continues to expand its product offerings, including next-generation Board & Batten panels for Royal and Exterior Portfolio, and new color options across Royal, Exterior Portfolio and Versetta Stone."

Tess Sarich, marketing communications manager for Woodtone, also sees a growing interest in a multi-textured approach for siding. "Vertical siding continues to gain momentum as a sought-after aesthetic, often paired with warm, neutral color palettes that bring a natural, modern feel to the exterior," she says. "We're also seeing strong demand for multi-textural finishes—think wood grain lap siding complemented by solid color panels for added depth and contrast. On the installation side, clean-finish techniques like blind nailing and metal channel strips remain popular, offering a sleek, contemporary look that aligns with today's design preferences." ▶

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XCEED by VERSATEX is durable PVC siding that adds beauty and elegance to any home or building's exterior. According to the manufacturer, its wood-like appearance in 10 colors provides a high-end look coupled with durability and maintenance-free features. XCEED is backed by a limited lifetime warranty.



Getting back to nature

As mentioned earlier, the principles of biophilic design are having an impact that goes beyond mere color as far as what siding products consumers are choosing. If you're not familiar with the term, biophilic design is a concept used within the building industry that strives to increase the connectivity of a building's occupants to the natural environment through the use of direct nature, indirect nature, color, texture, material choice, and space and place conditions.

"In 2025, earthy, natural-toned siding will be top of homeowner wish lists. These wellness-focused tones, paired with biophilic materials, reflect a growing desire for living spaces that foster personal wellbeing," points out Modern Mill's Guimond. "Sustainability remains a



RusticSeries siding from Woodtone has been enhanced with advanced coating technology in collaboration with Sherwin-Williams. The result is a reported greater color longevity, improved weather resistance, and a 30-year warranty. RusticSeries is available in Lap, Shake, Panel, and Trim profiles.

core driver of product choice, with increasing demand for tree-free, low-maintenance materials that are made in the USA and support a reduced environmental footprint. For LBM dealers, offering products that align with these values and continue to deliver on the enduring demand for beauty and easy upkeep, will be essential to meeting customer expectations in the year ahead."

Siding manufacturers report seeing a growing preference for more traditional styles with natural wood becoming more desirable across regions and designs. "Warmth and organic textures have been on the rise for the past few years as wellness and comfort in our physical surroundings has become more important," explains Demetri Kotiadis, director of marketing and product development for Edge. "Lap, vertical, and shakes are the preferred profiles with neutrals like white, grey, and black being some of the most popular color choices, most commonly complemented with either white or black trim."

Westlake Royal's Johnson also sees growing interest in the natural on the part of the consumer. "Biophilic design also continues to drive demand for natural stained wood looks, and products like Westlake Royal's Cedar Renditions and Grove Collection meet this trend with modern performance."

Dealing with labor shortages

While siding manufacturers envision growth over the coming year, that growth doesn't come without challenges. For example, the persistent problem of labor shortages will continue to be an obstacle for LBM dealers' pro customers, and siding products that can help alleviate that challenge will be in high demand.

To that end, siding manufacturers have recommendations for LBM dealers. "One concern facing single family and multi-family construction in 2025 is availability of well-trained professional trade workers," says Trevor Baggett, senior category manager for siding and trim at BlueLinx. "When it comes to installing and finishing exterior siding, prefinished options help mitigate the availability of painters; especially when deep colors are specified."

ProVia's Huebner also sees labor shortages as being an obstacle to overcome, and has her own specific recommendations. "Although material prices have come down since peak 2022/23 levels, labor shortages and cost may deter projects for the remainder of 2025. ►

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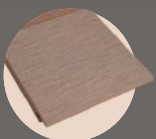


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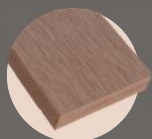
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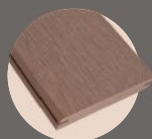
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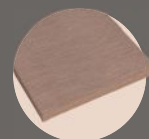
Siding



Trim Boards



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Sheets



Millwork and More!

We're excited to share a series of improvements to our Harbor Mill product line, designed specifically to make installation easier and more efficient for contractors and installers in the field," she explains. "We've introduced updates aimed at reducing installer frustration and cutting down on installation time—helping crews work smarter and faster. The panels include built-in drop guards, stagger marks, continuous and seam locks, and updated spacing indicators that make it easy to position and fasten."

Westlake Royal Building Products' Booz recommends products that are easy and quick to install. "The construction industry today is also facing an ongoing labor shortage, driven by a wave of retirements and a lack of enough younger workers entering the trades," he explains. "As a result, builders and remodelers are prioritizing materials that are not only high-performing but also quick and simple to install. Westlake Royal's Versetta Stone is a great example of a solution that reduces labor time and complexity on the jobsite. Now available in three new colors, it delivers the aesthetic of traditional stone masonry without the need for mortar or specialized masonry skills. The panelized system features an integrated nailing fin and interlocking design, allowing installers to attach the lightweight panels with just nails or screws. This straightforward process helps crews work faster, stay on schedule and achieve consistent results."

Edge's Kotiadis also sees ease and speed of installation as key product differentiators to meet pro customers' needs. "We design our siding products to

have a high-quality finish with reduced installation and waiting times to help builders manage everything that goes into a project," he points out. "All Edge siding products are end-matched, which allows for easier and quicker installation onsite with a simpler furring solution required to complete the project versus traditional siding profiles. We also offer many of our siding products prefinished with factory-applied two-tone finishes, which are challenging to replicate onsite and reduce a project's time as the siding does not need to be field finished, meaning both time savings and added value."

Prefinished products is also a recommendation from both BlueLinx's Baggett and Woodtone's Sarich. "The continued evolution of prefinished siding is gaining traction due to labor challenges, instant curb appeal, and a higher quality finish that exceeds what can be achieved on the jobsite," says Baggett, while Sarich explains, "In 2025, builders are navigating tighter timelines, labor shortages, and the growing demand for dependable, high-performance materials. What they need most is reliability—and that's where we come in. With over 45 years of expertise in prefinishing and coating, we deliver consistent, quality-driven solutions that help simplify the build process without compromising on design."

Coping with rising costs

One other challenge for both LBM dealers and their pro customers is rising costs. With tariffs still dominating headlines, material costs can change on a daily basis, and LBM dealers need to be able to offset that instability. Siding manufacturers point to product features as providing such solutions that LBM dealers can offer to their customers.

"Builders can expect to face challenges like rising material costs and supply chain disruptions due to international tariffs in 2025," says Modern Mill's Guimond. "Opting for innovative wood alternatives unimpacted by these issues can enhance resilience. Modern Mill's ACRE products, made and sourced in the USA, offer a ►

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“Another challenge builders are facing is rising labor costs from complex installation and job-site hassle,” she continues. “ACRE addresses these by requiring no primer, is compatible with standard woodworking tools, and produces no harmful dust or breakage, eliminating PPE needs. Available in various profiles, ACRE ensures stability, helping builders navigate market volatility and boost job-site efficiency.”

NewTechWood’s Lam also sees the continued rise in construction costs as a big challenge. “To help address this, our products are engineered for efficiency. Our innovative installation clips and fastening methods reduce labor time significantly, allowing builders to

complete projects faster and take on more jobs annually. By simplifying installation without sacrificing quality or aesthetics, we help builders stay competitive in an increasingly cost-conscious market.”

WHILE TIME MOVES forward, some things about siding remain the same: it’s expected to enhance curb appeal while also offering long-term durability and minimal upkeep. Today’s siding products deliver on those requirements, and offer benefits that, if leveraged properly, give LBM dealers the ability to provide their customers with products that meet modern demands while delivering design-forward materials that ease the continued strain of labor shortages and increased costs. ■

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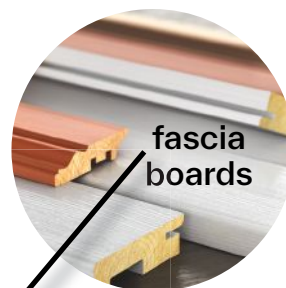


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BUILDXACT AI-POWERED SOFTWARE

Buildxact has launched an enhanced version of its platform that now includes AI-assisted features to empower small-to-medium residential home builders, remodelers and contractors to manage projects more efficiently and to earn more profit. Those features are delivered by Blu, Buildxact’s new AI-powered building assistant, and include Blu: Takeoff Assistant, Blu: Estimate Generator, Blu: Estimate Reviewer, and Blu: Recipe/Assembly Assistant. Blu: Takeoff Assistant allows the user to upload plans that can be automatically scaled. Additionally, the tool automatically names the pages based on information from the uploaded plan and includes the precise area of the project, then provides a hands-free measurement of the spaces. Blu: Estimate Generator gives the user the capability to generate labor and building items based on local data. The first iteration of the feature can generate kitchen renovation and bath renovation estimates, with expanded options such as whole-of-house builds, common extensions, and other common renovation type estimates launching in coming months. Blu: Estimate Reviewer can audit an estimate, giving suggestions on any missed items along with recommendations on how to improve an estimate. buildxact.com

PLY GEM 1500 VINYL COLLECTION IN BLACK

Cornerstone Building Brands has introduced black interior and exterior options on Ply Gem 1500 Vinyl Collection Windows and Patio Doors. The collection features a coextruded black interior and exterior. According to the manufacturer, this coextrusion technology provides UV protection and exceptional durability, along with proven color retention and weather resistance, as the color is integrated directly into the vinyl during manufacturing. Beyond color, Cornerstone reports that the Ply Gem 1500 Vinyl Collection is designed to contribute to overall energy efficiency with a range of glass packages, from Low-E for solar heat deflection to HPMax triple-pane for thermal efficiency. The 1500 Vinyl Collection can be ordered with ENERGY STAR certification for any climate zone. New all black windows and patio doors are available through the AccuQuote ordering system. plygem.com



TERAPRO PUR DECK COATINGS

Siplast’s new Terapro PUR Deck Coatings are designed to provide protection for decks, parking garages, and parking spaces, as well as other surfaces such as balconies. The product line comprises polyurethane or a combination of polyurethane and polyurea—liquid, synthetic polymers that Siplast says forms a protective barrier when applied to surfaces. These chemistries help protect surfaces from corrosion, weather, and abrasion. Reported to be formulated for project flexibility, users can customize the level of durability their project demands by adding additional layers. According to the manufacturer, Terapro PUR Deck Coatings provide long-lasting waterproofing, concrete protection, and UV resistance, functioning as a topcoat over epoxy priming to prevent UV degradation. Customization options allow for multiple surfacing and color finishes to meet aesthetic and performance needs. siplast.com



FASTENMASTER CORTEX PLUGS FOR NEW TREX DECKING

In support of Trex’s latest deck board launch, FastenMaster now offers matched Collated Cortex plugs for three new colors in the Trex Select line: Millstone, Malted Barley, and Whiskey Barrel. These new Cortex colors are available in a variety of packaging options, including 100 LF and 300 SF kits with screws, plugs, and setting tools, fascia kits, and plug-only packs. Made from the same composite material as the deck boards, Collated Cortex plugs are reported to deliver a 100% color and texture match, backed by a ProjectLife warranty, and can cut installation time by up to 50% compared to loose-plug installation. fastenmaster.com



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QUIK DRIVE PROJECT PRO

Simpson Strong-Tie is expanding its Quik Drive lineup of tools and fasteners with the addition of the Project Pro screw driving tool. Reported to be affordable and easy to install on nearly any cordless drill or driver without an adaptor, the Quik Drive Project Pro is touted as an ideal screw driving tool for building or repairing decks, fences, porches and flooring up to four times faster. Though a lower-cost option, the Project Pro uses some of the same designs, patents, and manufacturing channels as Quik Drive pro-grade solutions. The auto-feed technology drives screws repeatedly—just squeeze the trigger and apply pressure to drive. The Quik Drive Project Pro fastening tool is designed for use with 1-5/8" – 2-1/2" Strong-Drive WSV and Deck-Drive DSV wood screws collated for Quik Drive systems. It includes a depth-of-drive adjustment dial and comes with a battery strap and T-25 6-lobe bit. strongtie.com



EDGE POPLAR SIDING

Edge has launched Poplar, a curated expansion to its Thermally Modified Wood siding collection. According to Edge, Poplar is durable with a versatile wood grain and performs exceedingly well after thermal modification for a naturally rot-resistant and long-lasting product. The initial Poplar offering will include five natural and prefinished options, available in Raw, the unfinished option, and four wire brushed two-tone prefinished colors: Brass, Tungsten, Steel, and Coal. ufpedge.com



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For its 80th anniversary, ODL, Inc. has introduced an expansion of its fiberglass door offerings in its Flush Glazed, Estate, and Shaker collections. The Estate Collection now features 12 new flush glazed doors in both 6'8" and 8' sizes, featuring 25"-wide glass panels and complementary sidelights. The Shaker Collection introduces three new opaque door styles available in 6'8" and 8' sizes, as well as a new 3/4-light flush glazed door with 25" wide glass. odl.com

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LARSON 60 MT MAXIMUM VIEW STORM DOOR

Larson Manufacturing has announced the launch of the 60 MT Maximum View storm door. According to the manufacturer, the door is designed for simple installation, performance, and ease of use. Blending minimalist design with premium durability, the 60 MT Maximum View storm door with heavy-duty aluminum frame is reported to offer 5% more glass area than similar models in its category, for optimal natural light and unobstructed views that can be swapped with an included screen for seasonal fresh air. Larson says the door's SureLatch magnetic technology perfects a hands-free, soft-open and consistent, reliable close. The 60 MT Maximum View storm door is backed by a lifetime limited warranty and comes in six colors, three glass models (Clear, Low-E and Bevel), and four standard sizes and customizable options including French doors. larsondoors.com



POWER PRO SCREWS FROM HILLMAN

Engineered to make fastening solutions easier and reduce call-backs, the Power Pro Screws from Hillman are designed with an all-new thread design and self-starting tip that is reported to provide 30% faster engagement into wood, less wood splitting than standard wood screws, and a 30% faster installation time from start to finish. According to Hillman, users will be able to drive more screws per battery charge, and no pre-drilling is required. The Power Pro screws feature higher pullout values and are corrosion-resistant certified ICC ESL01284. power-pro.com



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Simpson Strong-Tie	17	800.999.5099	strongtie.com
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Sunbelt Rack	11	800.353.0892	sunbelt-rack.com
Sure Drive USA	55	800.951.2222	suredrive.com
* TruWood Siding Trim	13	800.417.3674	truwoodsiding.com
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Uline	38	800.295.5510	uline.com
Versatex	57	724.857.1111	versatex.com
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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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AS CAN HAPPEN to someone who worked their way through school at the local lumberyard, you got sawdust in your veins. After starting your career with a manufacturer, then a wholesale distributor, you decided to go into business for yourself and opened Shoestring Lumber just hours from the market where you grew up.

One day, after leaving work, you decided to take a road trip and drive to your old stomping grounds and visit the yard where you learned to build loads and help customers. Walking around the yard and into the showroom brought back fond memories, when suddenly someone came up and said, “Jack, is that you?” The someone was Bill, the owner of the company and the person who hired and trained you for your part-time job during school. “Let’s sit down and catch up!”

You told Bill that you were inspired by your time working for him and followed in his path by launching a lumberyard of your own. He congratulated you on your success, then got a faraway look in his eye and said, “Y’know, I’ve been thinking of retiring and selling this place, but haven’t put it on the market yet. Any chance you’d be interested in taking over as owner?”

Wow. This was the last thing you expected when you stopped by. But you had tremendous respect for Bill and what he’d built and loved the idea of building your company while carrying on your friend and mentor’s legacy in a market with a healthy appetite for new housing.

The financials looked sound, so you agreed on a price range that worked for you both and shook hands. Only when you started doing your due diligence did it all start to fall apart. An environmental assessment revealed an old oil tank buried underground—a red-flag with unknown



financial and legal risks. That was just the tip of the iceberg. Resolving existing issues and bringing the property up to your standards was going to be a serious investment.

After doing the math, it was clear that even the low-end of the agreed upon price range was far more than the company and property were worth. In fact, the most you could realistically pay was less than half of what you believed would be a fair value. However, you did shake hands with your friend and mentor on a price range. What would you do?

CAST YOUR VOTE ONLINE AT: LBMJOURNAL.COM

Walk away. As much as you like the idea of acquiring the yard where you got your start, it’s shaping up to be a bottomless money pit. Handshakes aren’t enforceable.

Negotiate terms. Share what your due diligence has revealed and ask him to work with you on the payment terms so you can honor your handshake and move forward.

Company only. Instead of buying the business and the property, offer to buy the business and lease the land, provided he agrees to take care of the underground tank issue.

Start over. Own the fact that shaking hands before you had all the facts was wrong. Begin again in good faith, and see if you can forge a fresh win-win situation.

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



LBM Century Club honors 100-year-old businesses

The LBM Century Club was founded on the simple belief that companies that have been around for 100 years deserve to be recognized. Launched in 2016, the LBM Century Club has grown to over 223 members, with more coming in each month. In all, the companies have provided 28,203 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:

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
LEARNED LUMBER Hermosa Beach, CA	est. 1924	DELAWARE COUNTY SUPPLY COMPANY, INC. Boothwyn, PA	est. 1924
CLARKS LUMBER Herington, KS	est. 1925	GEORGE M HALL LUMBER West Homestead, PA	est. 1893

Nominate a company for the LBM Century Club

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

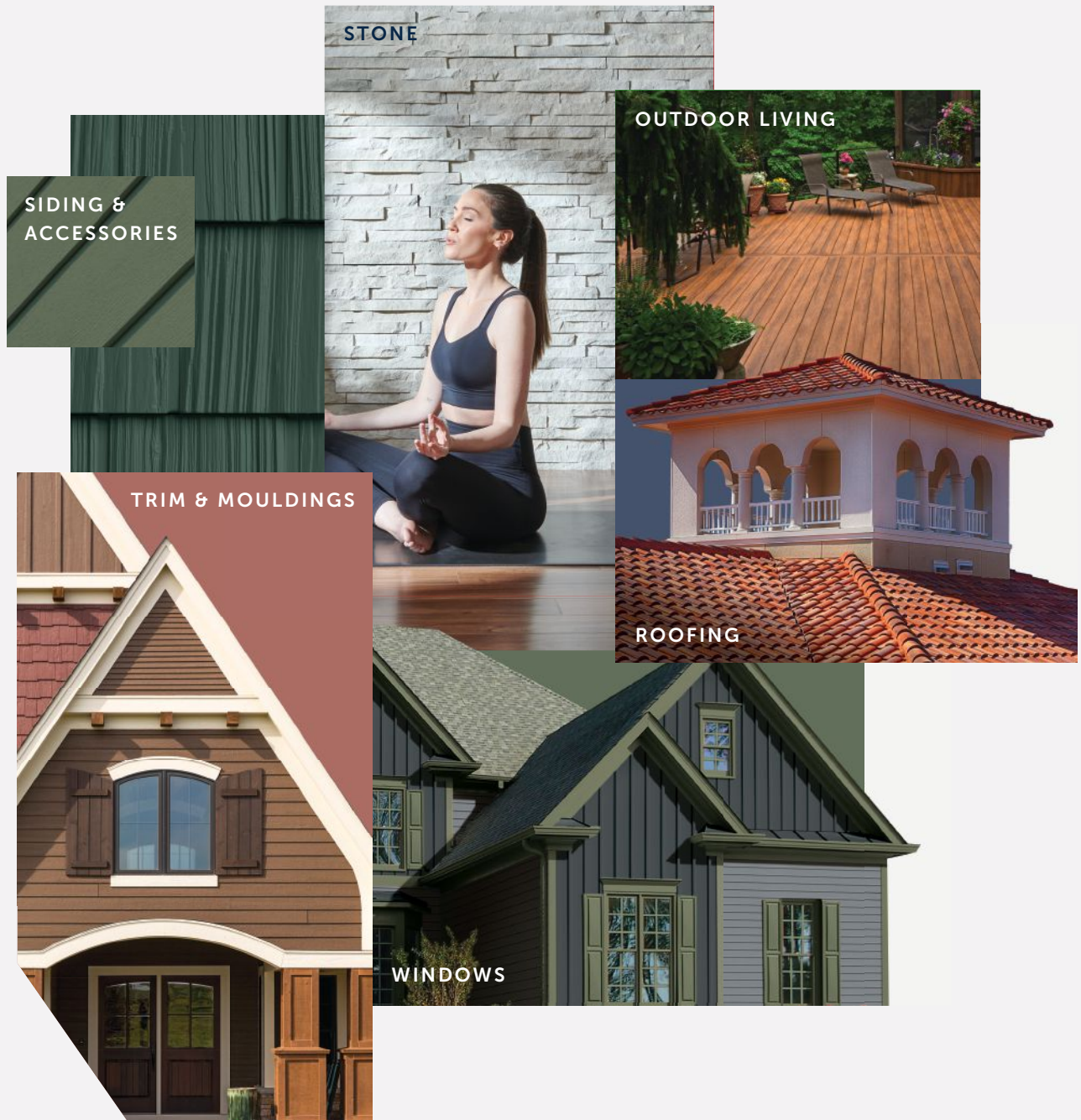
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