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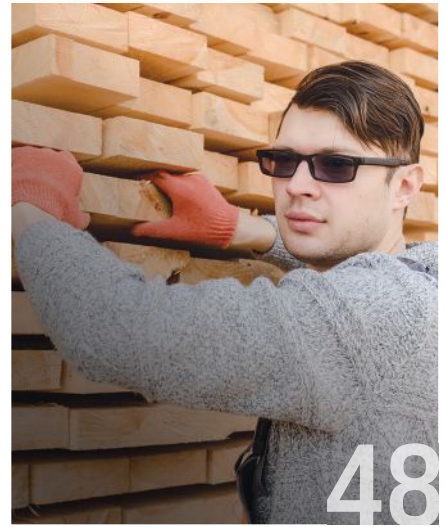
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INSIDE

AUGUST 2025



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Leading Suppliers Council



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FROM THE PUBLISHER

I'M EXCITED TO SHARE some big news: *LBM Journal* has been named the official publication of Deck Expo.

Since our start in 2003, it's been our mission to serve the LBM community with useful insights into the products and materials that your builder and homeowner customers' demand. That includes a special focus every spring on the fast-growing decking and railing market. In fact, our annual April decking issue—which stands as our biggest issue of the year—has long been a go-to resource for LBM pros looking to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to serving the outdoor living market. That's why this new partnership with Deck Expo just makes sense.

Deck Expo, co-located with the International Pool Spa Patio Expo, is the largest event that serves this growing market. Held October 22-24 in Las Vegas, this experience brings together the pros who design, build, and sell the outdoor living experience. This collaboration is at the heart of a goal that we share with the teams at Deck Expo and NADRA: helping our industry thrive by connecting the people who build and the people who supply with many of our industry's leading decking, railing, and fastener manufacturers.

What does this mean for you? If you're a dealer, wholesale distributor, or manufacturer serving the outdoor living category, it means *LBM Journal* will bring you even closer to the trends, opportunities, and players driving this space. And if you use the promo code LBMEXPO when you register at deckexpo.com, it means you can explore the exhibits for free.



Meanwhile, I'd like to point out some notable features in our current issue.

Real Issues: Resistance to Change (p.26). In these pages, readers weigh in on navigating the friction that's inevitable when some team members are impatient at their company's rate of change.

In Depth: Selling Hardware (p.36). While hardware can be an underappreciated category at many LBM dealers, this feature quotes industry pros who say that a thoughtful approach can lead to high-margin results.

Mohler Lumber & Building Materials (p.30). Speaking of hardware, this shares the story of a century old, two-location company in northeastern Ohio that thrives as both a full-line lumberyard and full-service hardware store.

— Rick Schumacher
Executive Editor & Publisher

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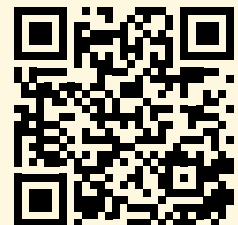
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Shane Soule | John Marshall

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WELCOME NIGHT RECEPTION

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16

KICK-OFF KEYNOTE:

Turning Insights into Results: What Your Pro Customers
Really Want

Grant Farnsworth | Beth PopNikolov

How to Make Your Company a Great Place to Work

Carl Moyer | Michelle Rose

Sparking Your Team & Fanning the Flames!

Patrick Goebel

Creating a Workplace Where People Thrive

Chris Neumann | Theresa Thoryk

Smart Buying: Southern Yellow Pine Futures

Mike Wisnefski | Alison Coughlin

PANEL DISCUSSION:

Attracting Next Gen Pros: 40 Under 40

Moderator: Emily Morgan

Bowen Chapman | Sadie Hammond Berube

Justin Bigham | Victoria Zimmerman

PANEL DISCUSSION:

M&A Insights: Tips on Driving Up Your Company's Value

Moderators: John Wagner & Ted Rieple

Steve Swinney | Jim Hooper | Andrew Whitcomb

Jason Blair | Chris Miller

HOT TOPIC ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS:

Recruiting Next Gen Pros TBD

Mergers & Acquisitions led by John Wagner & Ted Rieple

Leveraging AI led by John Marshall & Shane Soule

Second Chance Program led by Ray Hayles

Sales Management led by Bradley Hartmann

THURSDAY NIGHT DINNER & RECEPTION

The Rooftop at Ole Red

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17

(Programming ends at noon)

KICK-OFF KEYNOTE:

The DAM Problem with Salespeople

Bradley Hartmann

PANEL DISCUSSION:

Straight Talk from Builders: Pain Points & Partnership

Moderator: Bradley Hartmann

HOT TOPIC ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS:

Sales & Sales Management led by Rick Davis

Leadership led by Russ Kathrein

Credit Management led by Thea Dudley

Succession Planning led by Sam Brownell

PROGRAM AGENDA SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

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Stratus Business Advisors



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Building Supply



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Kodiak Building Partners



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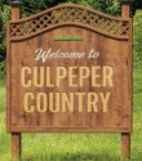
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AWARD WINNERS

Arnold Lumber Company has been named one of Providence Business News' Best Places to Work in Rhode Island for 2025. This recognition reflects Arnold Lumber's long-standing commitment to fostering a positive and purpose-driven workplace culture, investing in employee development, and making meaningful contributions to the local community.

Hamilton Building Supply is proud to announce that it has earned its first ever Top Workplace recognition throughout New Jersey for 2025, awarded by NJ.com.

Builders Supply has been named Omaha's Choice for Building Supply Company in the 2025 Omaha Choice Awards.

Lansing Building Products has officially been named a Great Place to Work for the 7th year in a row. According to the company, this recognition is a testament to the incredible people who make up their team—those who lead with heart, build with purpose, and show up every day to create a culture of care, collaboration, respect and excellence.

McCoy's Building Supply was recently named a 2025 National Preferred Partner in the field partner category by David Weekley Homes. McCoy's is a first-time recipient of the award. The Preferred Partner award recognizes field and manufacturing partners who have consistently operated at world-class levels, as determined by the home builder's supplier evaluation platform.

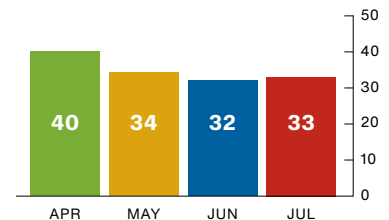
BY THE YARD

When Hurricane Gilbert, a category five hurricane, struck Jamaica in 1988, the damage to the land and infrastructure of the island was catastrophic. Floyd Yoder of **Yoder's Building Services** felt a call to help those affected by the tragedy. This moment sparked the founding of Jamaican Relief Ministries (JRM). Today, Yoder's Building Services continues this mission to uplift communities and improve the lives of children in the Montego Bay area by building homes, supporting a local preschool, and reuniting families.

Kodiak Building Partners announced the launch of Kodiak Interiors Group, a new, stand-alone business formed through the sale of Kodiak's appliances and interiors portfolio. The new entity will operate independently, enabling a more focused strategy in the appliances and interiors market while supporting long-term growth for both organizations.

Hancock Lumber's Bethel Sawmill hosted a family day for employees and their loved ones. Over 100 family members joined Team Hancock for a day of tours, games, food, raffles, and more. Bethel Sawmill General Manager, Keith Trask, created an opportunity to bring families to the mill for a first-hand look "behind the scenes" of the operations that happen on site every day.

Hampton Lumber announced plans to build a new, state-of-the-art sawmill in Allendale County, SC. This facility will expand Hampton's presence in the U.S. and support the company's long-term vision to become North America's preferred source of wood solutions. The new mill will specialize in producing high-quality Southern Yellow Pine framing lumber. This will be the company's first new sawmill on the East Coast and once fully operational, will provide 125-140 new jobs in the area.



Builder Confidence Edges Up in July

Builder confidence for future sales expectations received a slight boost in July with the extension of the 2017 tax cuts, but elevated interest rates and economic and policy uncertainty continue to act as headwinds for the housing sector. Builder confidence in the market for newly built single-family homes was 33 in July, up one point from June, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI). Builder sentiment has now been in negative territory for 15 consecutive months.

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PEOPLE IN LBM



BERGER



KUIKEN



WOOD

Kuiken Brothers introduced three Regional Managers—**Matt Berger, Michael Kuiken, and Jeff Wood**—as an essential step in strengthening engagement, collaboration, and communication across the company’s nine locations throughout New Jersey and New York.

Revol Building Solutions has announced the promotion of **Jason O’Brien** to vice president of operations. This appointment reflects Revol’s commitment to operational excellence and growth within the multi-family and production builder segments.



Reuther Material has announced the appointment of **Michael Glowacki** as its new director of sales and business development. Glowacki brings deep industry expertise and a strategic vision to help lead Reuther into its next phase of expansion.



QXO, Inc. announced that **Eric Nelson** has been appointed chief information officer, effective July 14. Nelson will execute the company’s IT roadmap as QXO becomes the tech-enabled leader in the \$800 billion building products distribution industry.



LBM Advantage announced the appointment of **Jason Plummer**, president of R.P. Lumber Co., Inc., to its Board of Directors. A second-generation leader in the building materials industry, Plummer brings a wealth of experience and insight to the cooperative.



Kraig Dunlap has joined **LBM Advantage** as its new member sales manager for the mid-Atlantic region. With over 25 years of experience in the building materials industry, Dunlap brings deep expertise across all facets of the business from yard operations to sales, management, production, and shipping. He most recently served as an outside sales representative at Ideal Roofing Company.

Lumber King, Inc. has named **Donevon Storm** to its Board of Directors. Storm is a highly skilled Agency Manager for Kentucky Farm Bureau Insurance, a Board Member for the State of Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, and an Executive Member of the London Laurel County Chamber of Commerce. He brings years of high-level experience in team leadership, strategic planning, and business development to the table.



ASSOCIATIONS

The Structural Building Components Association (SBCA) has restructured and expanded its Professional Membership program to provide targeted value to engineers, architects, code officials, draftspersons, and others whose work is critical to the success of structural framing.

The Lumbermen’s Association of Texas (LAT) announced that the Honorable **Allan Ritter**, Chairman and CEO at Triple R Brothers, is its 2025 Texas Unity Dinner honoree. “Allan’s commitment to our industry has elevated and strengthened our voice,” said Kate Borroni,” president of the LAT Board of Directors and a principal at Woodson Lumber Company in Caldwell, TX.



MERGERS + ACQUISITIONS

Bliffert Lumber is proud to announce its merger with **Jauquet Lumber Co Inc.**, a respected, family-owned business based in Green Bay, WI. Founded in 1905, Jauquet Lumber has served Northeast Wisconsin with excellence in customer service and quality materials for 120 years. Owned and operated by third-generation brothers Jim and Joe Jauquet, the company has built a strong reputation in the region by focusing on long-term customer relationships, trusted expertise, and community involvement.

PrimeSource Brands has acquired **Fortress Railing Products**, a leading provider of railing systems designed for performance and ease-of-installation. The transaction represents PrimeSource Brands’ ninth acquisition since partnering with Clearlake in December 2020.

Carlisle Companies is pleased to announce the acquisition of **Bonded Logic**, which consolidates the assets of Bonded Logic, Inc. and Phoenix Fibers, LLC. Bonded Logic is a U.S. manufacturer of sustainable thermal and acoustical insulation products.

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CO-OP + BUYER'S GROUPS

The Do it Best Foundation is proud to announce the distribution of over \$93,000 in grants to organizations dedicated to creating brighter futures for kids and families in the communities where Do it Best team members live and work. "In our brief history, the Do it Best Foundation has worked to build the best communities and these grants bring our impact to nearly \$2 million to more than 150 organizations, thanks to the generosity of our donors and the commitment of our grant recipients," said Executive Director Curtis Smith. "These grants represent a wide range of impact and tackle essential issues like housing, food security, health care, and education, while also supporting initiatives that enhance the lives of children and families, creating a lasting positive impact."

INDUSTRY EVENTS

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 23-25

LMC LEADERSHIP SUMMIT
Denver, CO | lmc.net

SEPT 24-26

CONSTRUCTION SUPPLIERS
ASSOCIATION 2025 CONFERENCE
& TRADESHOW
Miramar Beach, FL | gocsa.com

OCT 15-16

MBSA CONNECT 2025
Michigan City, IN | thembsa.org

OCT 15-17

LBM STRATEGIES 2025 CONFERENCE
Nashville, TN | lbmstrategies.com

OCT 20-22

LBM ADVANTAGE FALL PLANNING
CONFERENCE
Indianapolis, IN | lbmadvantage.com

OCT 22-24

DECK EXPO
Las Vegas, NV | deckexpo.com

OCT 26-29

2025 WMA CONVENTION & TRADESHOW
Cleveland, OH | worldmillworkalliance.com

OCT 28-30

WCLBMA ANNUAL CONVENTION
San Diego, CA | lumberassociation.org

NOV 3-5

LMC EXPO 2025
Philadelphia, PA | lmc.net

NOV 5-7

NAWLA TRADERS MARKET
Kansas City, MO | nawla.org



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DISTRIBUTION NEWS

Weyerhaeuser Distribution has announced its Inland Northwest footprint expansion with the addition of two new distribution centers; one located in Spokane, WA and the other located in Billings, MT. With this growth, Weyerhaeuser will operate from 21 distribution centers throughout the U.S. For the Spokane location, it has acquired Wausau Supply Company's (Wausau) Spokane facility. Weyerhaeuser will begin distributing to customers throughout Eastern Washington, Northern Idaho, and Western Montana from the new Spokane distribution center this July. And following a warehouse and sales office remodel, Weyerhaeuser Distribution anticipates servicing customers across Montana, and Northern Wyoming from the Billings location beginning in January 2026.

Tando Composites has partnered with **Woodgrain** to expand distribution in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Woodgrain will carry the full line of Tando Composites' products, including Beach House Shake and TandoStone. Additionally, Tando Composites has partnered with **Dixie Plywood and Lumber Company** (DIXIEPLY) to expand distribution in Texas. Headquartered in Savannah, GA, DIXIEPLY will distribute TandoStone and Beach House Shake from three Texas locations—Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio.

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INDUSTRY UPDATES

MITER Brands has announced the sale of its Eze-Breeze Porch Enclosures brand to Bob Keller, the current president of Eze-Breeze, in partnership with Jewell Hollow LLC and its Managing Partner, Zach Coopersmith. The sale reflects the commitment of MITER Brands to streamline its business operations and concentrate resources on its core products and brands. This divestiture will enable MITER Brands to more effectively and efficiently allocate resources to increase production capacity in its other Florida-based window and door facilities.

Simpson Strong-Tie has been recognized by David Weekley Homes as a winner of the builder's 21st annual National Preferred Partner Survey. The award honors partners that have exceeded expectations during the previous year and have consistently operated at world-class levels for quality and customer service. As well, Simpson Strong-Tie announced the winners of its 2025–2026 Student Scholarship program, a part of the company's Strong-Tie Undergraduate Fellowship. The company awarded \$3,000 scholarships to 120 college juniors and seniors studying architecture, structural and civil engineering, or construction management.

CertainTeed has announced that several products in its residential roofing portfolio have earned the GreenCircle Certification for Recycled Content for the fourth consecutive year. This continued achievement underscores CertainTeed's commitment to sustainable manufacturing and the continued goal to divert waste from landfills. Endorsed by the U.S. Green Building Council, the GreenCircle certification is one of the most trusted and recognized environmental credentials that can be achieved by a company.

TOUGH CALL SOLUTIONS

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

A CONTRACT IS A CONTRACT. OR IS IT?

A longtime team member is retiring, and he's questioning the fairness of an agreement you both signed 15 years ago. Here's how readers responded.

Find middle ground. 89%

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

Give some ground. 6%

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

Stand your ground. 5%

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



Do nothing. 0%

The best way to deal with a tough situation is to ignore it, and hope it just works itself out.

LISTEN NOW!

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Do it Best
GROUP

BY RICK DAVIS

THE CONTRACTORS AND builders gathered amid the din of side conversations and last-minute phone calls before the speaker appeared. After the introduction, Charlie, the negotiation trainer, began his presentation. “Test the waters,” he said. “Always test the waters. The responses are comical.”

Charlie went on to explain that salespeople never deliver a real price, “It’s just an asking price,” he said. “Salespeople don’t expect to really get it. They’re not telling you the price; their asking you to verify it.” He asserted that every professional buyer should always challenge the price. It works so often that he claimed any buyer who doesn’t at least try once to get a better deal is leaving money on the table.

TEST THE WATERS

One class attendee said he always tests the water and has found that most of the salespeople squirm before saying, “Um ... let me check with my boss and see what I can do.” A builder in the room said, “I got a price from a salesperson who told me to ‘take a look and let me know where we stand.’ It was like he was telling me I was supposed to negotiate!” A third attendee said, “My frustration is that some salespeople drop the price so quickly that I wonder first why they didn’t give me their best price up front and, worse, am left wondering if maybe I should have negotiated for more after they dropped their price.”

Charlie nodded in agreement and began his lecture on negotiation skills. His philosophy was that every salesperson was anxious to take advantage of the buyer and therefore tried to gouge them on pricing. A builder raised his hand and noted that he wanted a much more cooperative relationship with his salesperson and felt uncomfortable, always challenging the price. Another stated that he was from a small town, wanted his supplier to be successful, and felt that reducing their profit could jeopardize service levels.

The conversations continued with no clear conclusion until the only thing the contractors agreed on was that most salespeople react in fear in the face of even the most casual negotiations. Meanwhile, the negotiation seminar for salespeople on the other side of the hall sat empty.

I published “Beat the Price Objection” four years ago with the belief that salespeople rarely, if ever, attend a seminar on negotiation skills. Salespeople learn to prospect, build rapport, deliver presentations, overcome objections (without clear guidance on the price objection), and finally how to close the deal by “asking for the order.”

Meanwhile, contractors and builders have enjoyed so much success with the price objection that many feel it is a mistake not to test the waters, even if it means stretching the truth about competing bids.

To this, I suggest salespeople consider the abundant reasons a builder might not buy. It’s possible the salesperson has bad breath. It’s possible the buyer had no intention of buying at all but was using the salesperson to keep a competing supplier honest. Or perhaps the builder just wanted to get the salesperson off their back. Maybe the buyer had a prior bad experience with the salesperson’s organization. Often the salesperson requests or pressures for an opportunity to “bid,” thus volunteering for the role of a price-only, commodity salesperson. Maybe the buyer felt like the salesperson didn’t do their due diligence. Maybe the price was better, but not enough to alleviate the discomfort of switching suppliers.

One thing is certain when it comes to pricing strategies for salespeople. You will never know the joy, power, and satisfaction of holding your price and winning a sale until you’ve held your price and lost one. That statement is not merely a clever use of words; it’s a law. It’s a rite of passage for every salesperson in their career.

Instead of delivering an “asking price,” try delivering a “telling price,” the actual price at which you’re willing to do business. You might like the results.



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

AS CHRISTMAS 1978 approached, the old man couldn't quite explain to his wife why he wanted the gift of a rusted metal press. Yes, money was tight. No, he wasn't leaving his job at the radiator factory. But something about the hulking press spoke to him. "It's got potential," he whispered. "I can see it."

Soon, the man whose life had been so unremarkable in every way was crafting high-quality brass window hinges. Then came the shower curtain rods he produced, which were so well made, the government called: "Think you could manufacture field knives?"

"Yes," the man replied. And soon the army had remarkably high-quality blades, and at a lower total cost.

Two years later the old man found himself in the chambers of Congress. He overheard two police lieutenants discussing a new handgun contract within the government. The old man inquired about the bidding process. They laughed in his face.

"Aren't you the knife guy?" they asked. Yes, he was the knife guy and no, he didn't know the first thing about guns, but he'd figure it out.

And he did. He tinkered with guns in the same manner he'd once tinkered with knives and the pistol he ultimately made held twice as many bullets as the market leader. It was also 27% cheaper, with 35% fewer parts, and a trigger that was 60% faster.

The old man, Gaston Glock, named the gun after himself. His Glock 17 outperformed every competitor by every measure in Austria and across Europe. But in America, Glock's innovation alone wasn't enough. For that, he needed Karl

Walter: an ambitious salesperson, two decades younger than Glock, who knew how to sell to U.S. government agencies. Walter built trust, curiosity, and a sales strategy that opened doors in America—doors Glock couldn't have opened on his own. Together, they formed an unlikely but powerful cross-generational partnership: innovation and wisdom paired with youth and street-smarts.

Soon, the Glock 17's growth curve had no curve at all—it went straight up. By 1994, Glocks were the handgun of choice among the military, police, and gun enthusiasts. Gaston Glock was a billionaire.

So, what's the takeaway here? It's cross-generational teamwork that changes the world.

Today, every company has an underleveraged roster, often overlooked and full of potential: the "old guard." These are your tenured veterans, who've weathered market cycles and carry the tribal wisdom that defines your culture—the stories, the values, the hard-earned victories, and the gut-wrenching losses.

And yet, the old guard is often sidelined, viewed more as an obstacle than an asset. We hand them one-size-fits-all training material (if we hand them anything at all) and mistake hesitation for decline. When they struggle with learning the new ERP system—taught the exact same way to the 23-year-old and the 63-year-old—we don't adjust our teaching. We blame the student. After all, "you can't teach an old dog new tricks," right?

This kind of thinking is a leadership mistake. Because just like Gaston Glock, the old guard may hold one of the keys that could unlock new value.

Like Glock and Walter, what you can do is facilitate partnerships—small teams of two—who must work together to deliver new value and convert more sales. Make the objective clear. Hang a scoreboard in plain sight and make it simple and bright.

Let the 23-year-old rep demonstrate the magic of ChatGPT to generate fifty non-obvious, interesting questions to ask

a top prospect. Let the 63-year-old demonstrate how to frame the most relevant questions to sell on value—not price—in that first face-to-face meeting with a busy builder.

You may already have your Gaston Glocks, sitting in silence in the back of the room, seeing something others don't. Now give them a Karl Walter.

Great teams don't choose between old and new—they build with both. The old guard is still on duty. Pair them up with the young bucks, set a clear target, then get out of the way and let them go hunt.

PULL THE TRIGGER ON PARTNERSHIPS, NOT MENTORSHIPS



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.

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BY THEA DUDLEY

**Hi Thea,
Do most dealers charge interest on late paid invoices?
We haven't been charging interest on late payments but
we have recently discussed that we would like to start. Is
there anything we should know before we pull the trigger?
— Late to the party but still willing**

TO CHARGE, OR NOT TO CHARGE

Dear Partying Late,

There is no data on the percentage of our kind that charge late fees; the guesstimate is approximately 65%. Some yards, such as yours, haven't or don't charge for various reasons, but none of these well-intentioned reasons make business sense. Before you say it: YES. I understand you are afraid of ticking off customers.

That logic would make sense if the “loan” was to one of your kids. But it's not. These are customers. They are fully grown and own a business. You appreciate them. You want to treat them well. You need them, but let's be clear: this is a business transaction. You lived up to your end of the agreement. You shipped the product at the agreed upon price, delivered it as agreed, in the timeframe that was agreed on. The second part of the transaction should happen the same way. The customer's payment arrives in your bank account in the agreed upon timeframe. Transaction complete and everyone has lived up to their part of the agreement.

If it were that easy, everyone would want to play credit manager. But it is not. If you haven't been charging interest or late fees—same thing but late fees clearly drive home why the charge is being assessed—the payment was late. Unlike your delivery, which was not or said customer would have been screaming their head off.

Let's be honest: you didn't marry them and you didn't give birth to them. The transaction should not cost you money you didn't factor into the sale. Carrying costs are a “real thing.” The agreement was for XX days, usually 30; anything beyond that starts to add costs to the transaction.

It's called cash flow. For the “flow” to work as it should, the rate it flows in should be as fast or faster than it flows out. If it isn't, then it is costing you money, in one way or another. Now that we are both riled up, let's arm you with how to go from discussion to implementation.

Start with your credit application. Does your app address late payments? Does it spell out what interest rate will be charged? If it does not, you have a little work to do. Generally, late fees or interest must be agreed upon in the terms and conditions of the sale/account agreement. Slapping charges on after the fact could be legally questionable. Check with your friendly local attorney for specifics in your state.

If that is your stumbling block, you will need to update your credit application. Consider this a great opportunity to update those credit files and get to know your customers better. Getting an updated credit application with the extra T&C's ensures clarity and enforceability. Looking for another option? Consider an addendum to the existing application. If that is the only item on the addendum, it will be as obvious as a zebra in a herd of horses; consider adding a few additional items.

If you have not been charging, you have some options: 1. Pull the trigger on your ERP and allow the system to do its job. A bit passive aggressive but the customer's will notice it, then either pay it, ignore it, or call sales or credit to investigate the new option. 2. Send out notifications on your statements and invoices announcing you will be enforcing late fees starting on a particular date. This gives everyone a heads up that the fees are coming.

In a relationship driven business it's about balancing, each side upholding their obligations. It evolves with circumstances and need.



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

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

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



BY JOHN D. WAGNER

CLEAN DEALS, LEVERAGED DEALS

LET'S SAY YOU GET AN Indication of Interest (IOI) or Letter of Intent (LOI), and the Total Enterprise Value (TEV) offered for your company by an acquirer is \$20mm. A quick review of the offer structure will reveal the type of acquirer you are dealing with. Some offers are super clean: Cash-at-Close, with a 5% 12-month escrow, and no financing contingency (e.g. the acquirer doesn't need to access capital markets after making the offer, which would lock a seller up for 60-90 days in exclusivity if the LOI is signed). These "clean" offers tend to come from acquirers who are backed by private equity.

But offers may come from an acquirer characterized as a *Merchant's Bank* (or more broadly a "leveraged buyer"), where the purchase price is paid out over time, after the Cash-at-Close portion is released to you. Beyond Cash-at-Close, these offers may include deal elements that leverage you, like Rolled Shares, Earn-Outs, and Seller's Notes, along with an escrow (which is a feature of every deal). From an accounting perspective, only a Seller's Note is considered leverage, strictly speaking. But all of these deal elements beyond Cash-At-Close require you, the seller, to delay payment for, or put at risk, some portion of the purchase price.

Merchant's Banks make leveraged offers so they risk as little of their own cash as possible or—with a Seller's Note—even borrow some of your money to buy your company. What portion of a Merchant's Bank's offer can be counted as "money good"? Let's break down a \$20mm offer with, say, 60% of the deal—\$12mm—as Cash-At-Close. First, escrows are unavoidable. Assume 5%. So, reduce that \$12mm to \$11.4mm, just 57% of the initial total offer. How is the remaining \$8mm allocated?

Of the \$8mm, assume \$3mm is a Seller's Note. Because it's subordinated debt, acquirers pay 7% to 10% interest (5-year term; interest-only; balloon on the 5th anniversary).

Is that money good? Yes, if the acquirer doesn't bankrupt the "Hold-Co" making the acquisition. But it is at risk.

An Earn-Out is often used as a bridging mechanism if the seller and acquirer don't agree on the purchase price. Let's assume it's \$3mm in our sample deal. Easily the least-desirable deal element, Earn-Outs are paid to sellers after you achieve financial objectives by future dates, such as targets in sales, gross profit dollars, or EBITDA. A three-year Earn-Out typically pays \$1mm/year. (Some Earn-Outs are tiered; some are all-or-none.) This is highly at-risk money.

With \$2mm remaining of the offer, acquirers may ask sellers to invest \$2mm into Rolled Shares, an investment in their company (or the NewCo created by the acquisition), so sellers become equity shareholders. You'll want to examine the financials of the portfolio to ensure it's solid, but even then, acquirers rarely guarantee a future "liquidity event," when you'd get your \$2mm back, ideally with a premium earned. The table below shows how our deal breaks out.

Total Enterprise Value	\$20mm	
Cash-at-Close (pre-escrow)	\$12mm	
5% Escrow (held 12-15 months)	\$0.6mm	Likely Recovery
Net Cash-at-Close	\$11.4mm	Money Good
3-yr. 7% Seller's Note	\$3mm	Subordinated Debt
3-yr. Earn-Out Year 1	\$1mm	At-Risk Money
3-yr. Earn-Out Year 2	\$1mm	
3-yr. Earn-Out Year 3	\$1mm	
Rolled Shares	\$2mm	
Potential Future Payments	\$8mm	

Do leveraged offers ever win deals? Yes. Sometimes leveraged acquirers are the only ones bidding for you, and you really want to sell. Other times, the TEV that is offered is a premium, a figure above the market acquisition value, in open recognition that the acquirer is using multiple funding sources to make the deal happen: 1. Some of their own cash, 2. Bank debt (often 50% or more of the cash-at close portion), 3. A Seller's Note, 4. Rolled Shares, and 5. Earn-Outs that delay (or maybe reduce or entirely eliminate) the money the acquirer would owe the seller in the years after the closing.

How do you navigate these offers, so you can build in as many layers of protections as possible? That's the role your investment banker plays.



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 FOURTH in a series on taking on a leadership role. Peter Drucker famously said, “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.” You may arrive with a sharp new business plan, but if you don’t get the culture right, your strategy won’t stand a chance.

Culture is not what’s written on the wall—it’s what people actually do when no one’s watching. It’s how teams respond to pressure, how they treat each other, and how they make decisions. As a new leader, your job is to understand the existing culture quickly and then guide it into alignment with your goals.

STEP ONE: Identify what needs to change

One red flag to watch for: “We do it this way because we’ve always done it this way.” That’s not a reason, it’s an excuse. Legacy habits may be deeply embedded, but if they no longer serve the company or the customer, it’s your job to challenge them.

Start by observing how people actually behave, not just what they say in meetings. Are employees empowered to speak up? Do they take ownership? Do they collaborate—or compete? These are the moments where culture reveals itself.

Also, don’t underestimate the power of subtle saboteurs. People who say all the right things in meetings but quietly resist change behind the scenes. Left unchecked, they can poison morale and kill momentum.

PART 4: TAKING ON LEADERSHIP

GETTING THE CULTURE RIGHT



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

STEP TWO: Set the cultural tone

Your people take their cues from you, especially early on. Everything from how you dress, to what you emphasize, to what you let slide contributes to your cultural brand. This is your opportunity to establish your uniqueness.

Find something that sets you apart, a signature phrase, a consistent practice, even a small quirk—and use it to create a sense of identity. Just like a great brand, leaders who are memorable tend to be consistent, authentic, and slightly unexpected.

But more than anything, lead with generosity. Give more than you take. Get out from behind your desk and be visible. Be helpful. Be human. When people feel seen and supported, they’re far more willing to follow your lead.

STEP THREE: Involve your team

Don’t impose a new culture from the top down. Invite your team to help shape it. Ask questions like: “What kind of company do we want to be?” or “What behaviors should we be known for?” When people have a voice in the culture, they’re far more likely to uphold it.

Summarize your vision in simple, memorable terms. A short phrase or story that captures your desired culture can be incredibly powerful. You’re not just trying to build consensus, you’re trying to create a movement.

STEP FOUR: Protect the culture ruthlessly

Once the new culture starts to take shape, you must protect it, even if it means making hard personnel decisions. That might mean parting ways with someone who is technically competent but culturally toxic.

There’s a delicate balance to strike here. Give people a chance to get on board. But once it’s clear someone is dragging the team down, you owe it to the rest of your organization to act.

Remember: not everyone is going to fit in, nor does everyone need to stay. Some people are really nice people. They would make great neighbors, but that doesn’t mean they belong on your team. If people are not buying into the culture and team you are creating, either through their actions or inaction, you need to take action swiftly and decisively. Sometimes it is coaching, but often it means letting them know they need to find a different team to play for.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Culture isn’t a one-time fix. It’s a daily discipline. You shape it through every conversation, every decision, every reaction. So be intentional. Be clear. And be courageous.

Because getting the culture right isn’t just a nice-to-have. It’s the foundation for everything that follows.

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GAF ROOFING ACADEMY OFFERS OPPORTUNITY TO THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST

BY MIKE BERGER

ACCORDING TO SOME national sources, there are over 1,000,000 unfilled skilled trade jobs in the U.S. That's where GAF and its GAF Roofing Academy comes in. Since the program started in 2020, GAF has trained over 4,000 individuals and placed about 2,500 of them in roofing jobs. Of particular interest, GAF has made a point of using the program to provide second chances to numerous justice-involved individuals to help them secure entry-level positions in the roofing industry. In fact, from 2023-2024, the percentage of justice-involved students in the program increased by 70%.

"We go inside of correctional facilities, minimum security prisons, where once we get all the details worked out and the security things managed, we set up a training and we bring material inside the prisons," says Rod Colvin, the unofficial Second Chances Officer of GAF Roofing Academy.

Rod knows the value of the program intimately. While in prison years ago, Rod supported fellow inmates as a trauma trainer and mentor, and he's continued that mission in his professional life as a career specialist for a non-profit organization in the city of St. Louis. "One of our huge successes with the prison partnership, as it relates to the GAF Roofing Academy is in South Carolina with a roofing company called Aqua Seal, managed and run by an in-

dividual named Mills Snell," Colvin explains. "Mills was very, very interested in hiring from a group of individuals who were justice-involved. That led to us going into the South Manning Correctional Facility in South Carolina."

"Inside the prison, in partnership with Aqua Seal, we provided training to individual inmates, and Aqua Seal offered each and every last one of those individuals a job opportunity when they were released. Those individuals had to be within 30 to 120 days of release, because the idea was to give them an opportunity to hit the ground running with employment in order to impact what is referred to as the recidivism rate."

GAF began the Roofing Academy in part because its parent company, Standard Industries, is passionate about giving back to communities across the country. It had a vested interest in going inside of communities that were depressed and offering opportunities to individuals who come from those backgrounds or those demographics, and put them in a position to realize financial upward mobility.

But it's not just prisons that GAF Roofing Academy works with. It partners with certified contractors and LBM dealers across the country to host training programs, and then host job fairs afterwards with different contractors. So not only do the training participants receive the

skills they need, they are able to obtain a position immediately in many cases, giving people who might not have had these types of chances new opportunities where they are able to grow and be very successful in very meaningful jobs.

As Colvin explains, “We have territory managers which handle the accounts of over 10,000 contractor and LBM partners in our network. There is a question that is raised by the territory managers with their clients, and that question is, ‘Is there anything else that we can help you with?’ And typically that answer is always, ‘Could you get me some laborers?’ That’s where the GAF Roofing Academy comes in. The territory manager will share with that contractor that the Roofing Academy exists. We will start logistically planning for an event, and if the contractor is willing to host us, they can get a front row seat of individuals that they could evaluate and offer job opportunities to.”

The kind of opportunity GAF Roofing Academy offers isn’t just a benefit to the roofing industry; it’s life-changing for the individuals—especially the justice-involved participants—who take advantage of the program.

“There are three individuals that I promote highly, because they came from a justice-involved background,” Colvin tells. “One of those individuals is John Harris. Right now, he’s in Tennessee working with a traveling roofing crew, and he says that connecting him with the GAF Roofing Academy, giving him an opportunity to get trained, and introducing him to a contractor is something that saved his life.”

“There’s another individual that we highlight named Demetrius Pernell,” Colvin continues. “His story is similar. He was two weeks out of prison and didn’t know what direction to go in. He wasn’t socially skilled up, but we got him practically skilled up, and then we presented him to Cozier Tech Contracting, and he is still working there today.”

“The third individual is David Freeman. I just recently got him introduced to the roofing industry about two weeks ago with Cinemark, which is one of North America’s largest commercial roofing installers. They love him to death.”

If an LBM dealer is interested in hosting a GAF Roofing Academy training program, all they need to do to start the process is to contact the GAF representative who manages their account. As Colvin explains, “They would inquire what it is that they would have to do in order to get a Roofing Academy so that they can populate their shops with laborers, and that GAF



territory manager will communicate directly to the Roofing Academy.” And of course, all of this is at absolutely no cost to the participants. All they’re required to do is show up for training every day, on time, and most importantly, to bring a positive attitude with them.

“What those students receive is a certificate of completion when they are done,” Colvin says. “That certificate is impactful in the roofing industry. It’s highly recognized because GAF is stamped all over it, and those contractors know that they are potentially going to onboard an individual who has at least a level of competency as it results to products and installation, whether it’s commercial or residential.”

One of the things worth mentioning, Colvin points out, is the relationship that was forged between the GAF Roofing Academy and the United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers, and Allied Workers. “I was able to convince them to erase the lines and think more along the lines of offering opportunity to justice-involved individuals, and they realize that it just made sense,” he says. “We train them on an entry level. They take them into an apprenticeship program, and at the same time, they’re offered to contractors as employees. And the biggest thing out of it is that we impact the lives of those individual career seekers. And that’s what I get out of it. That’s where my passion runs. I never thought that I’d be such an individual to be able to impact lives the way I do, and I just love it.” ■





REAL ISSUES. REAL ANSWERS.

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

BY LBM JOURNAL READERS

A company that's survived and thrived for decades is obviously doing many things right. This month's Real Issues. Real Answers. survey explores what happens when key employees feel that their company's leaders are too slow to change.

More than 100 readers responded to our Real Issues survey email (let us know at operations@lbmjournal.com if you'd like to be on the list). **THE QUESTION:**



What insights would you share with the LBM dealer who posed this question: "The leaders at our company are stuck in the 'we have been doing it this way for 30 years' mindset. This is holding us back from adopting new processes, as well as new products and technologies. I believe that if we stay on this path, we're going to lose our market leadership to competition that's open to working better and smarter. I love our company but am concerned about the future. Would appreciate any advice."

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

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

"We come across this issue often. Some of the apprehension relates to spending money in our areas we haven't needed to in the past, such as technology. My advice is to reach out to peers in your industry that have implemented the items that you are thinking of and get their feedback. Then present that feedback to your leaders as proof of concept. It has worked for me in the past and I wish you luck!"

"Suggest visits with some non-competing LBM dealers who are not in your area of competition, or other dealers who have made changes to their operations and get their feedback. Hopefully seeing how other dealers are doing things differently will start your company's leaders thinking."

"That company is dead in the water. Find a place that values you and your opinion."

"Don't discount your leaders' years of knowledge. If they've been doing it successfully this long, they have a good idea of what they are doing."

"Our leadership team meets annually to discuss new ideas, and we follow up monthly on those we have chosen to pursue. We quickly evaluate if we are making progress or not, which allows us to experiment and try new things without regretting a change that might turn out not to be good for our company."

"Leave the company. If you don't see it changing, and you've done what you can, it's time to take care of yourself."

"Generally, senior management at our company has initiated and accepted change frequently. Senior staff has been the group most difficult to adapt, more often."

"Our owners have all retired and now the kids have taken over and they are open to change and keeping current with technology and keeping an open mind on new products and ideas."

"As a leader, it's tough to break out of my comfort zone, but understand the importance of moving forward. I am hoping to be pushed into change and the future."

"In my experience, my best advice is to be patient but continue to push. You definitely have to show them real cost and efficiency benefits to major changes, or the idea of change will never get off the ground. Stay respectful of the current processes that have carried the company all of those years but also point out the changes and updates that happened over those 30 years. In most cases, you really haven't been doing it this way for 30 years, but 30 years of modest changes and updates have got you to where you are today. Make it a point that progress cannot stop but also keep in mind changes come easier in small increments."

"Change is good. Have confidence in the people that report to you and encourage them to seek ways to improve."

"List the areas your competition has changed and how that affected your sales in those categories."

"This is definitely a challenge! If you're not in a labor-competitive market, you can ignore this for a longer period of time. Gather facts and data to help show how this can affect long-term profitability. One example we had that took two years to implement was changing from using three spreadsheets for pricing trusses to doing everything in one software. Keep asking, 'what can we change to help our customers succeed?'"

"Generational shifts are difficult, and a plan must be in place to progress the company forward."

"Change is inevitable. While adopting new processes can be temporarily difficult for the company, it makes the customer's process smoother and easier, fostering loyalty."

"Present new processes and products to your leadership with examples of how they will save money or open a new market."

"Grow or die. Keep the core values but embrace technologies and be attentive to trends."

"A wise man said that the best way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time. Keep chipping away, even if it's small steps, and you will see results."

"This is a leadership issue. Maybe you have not done a good job of explaining the 'whys' and the benefits. If it's localized in just a few people, deal with these people and don't broadcast to all your other folks." ►

“Start with something small. Show them the benefit of what you are changing to make it better. It often takes multiple attempts to show how you can make a change and show how it will increase the bottom line by savings of labor. Time is money!”

“You are correct. If leadership won’t change, you are headed down an ugly path. Watch for competitors who get left in the dust and use them as examples of what’s in the future if you don’t adapt.”

“Involve the younger members on your team in a roundtable discussion with leadership about the importance of new technology and processes to their generation.”

“It is necessary to evaluate process, technologies and products regularly. It is not necessary to take large daunting ‘leaps’, but small incremental changes make a difference over time. (One process, one product, etc. done regularly leads to effective manageable change.)”

“I truly need this advice. My thought is to be persistent, without being pushy. Poll customers to see what products and technologies would make them want to stay on as customers and recommend us to other people.”

“You can provide real world data to lead them to change.”

“Start taking note about what has affected your ability to win business. Testimonials from customers that would love to stay with you but are considering other options. Present the information to ownership.”

“Start with small things and test out on a smaller scale. A lot of vendors will let you do a trial period of take-off software, request for bid software, even equipment. Be realistic and set a timeline to see results and stick to it. If it doesn’t work, learn from it and move on. Do not be afraid to take a calculated risk and fail. Even the greatest innovators fail sometimes.”

“It is scary to make changes but when complete, you will be thankful you made the upgrades.”

Responses from wholesale distributors, manufacturers, and service providers:

“It’s okay to be concerned about the future, but working for a 30-year-old company is commendable. They’ve probably outlasted many local competitors, as clearly, they’re doing a lot of things right. Voice your concerns in relatable terms to them (i.e. growth, acquiring more buyers, market share, etc.). Just saying you want them working better or smarter is an insult. Also, wanting more processes, products and technologies sounds more like a possible solution to a problem you haven’t yet identified. Remember, being stuck in old ways may just be why they lasted as long as they have. Dig deeper to make sure your suggestions are practical and relevant.”

“The challenge for the leadership versus employees is perhaps not understanding the cash required to modify or change. It also may be the leadership is tired and ready to move on and don’t wish to invest to expand. This may be time for employees to have a frank discussion with ownership.”

“All lumberyards, manufacturers, and distributors need to be open to new solutions and ways to be valuable partners. What got us here will not take us to the next level.”

“Irony is, new tools/technology actually enable employees to focus more time on value-add activity—exactly where independents shine. Few leaders refuse to listen to a well presented/ documented business case, to support their employees. If change isn’t happening from the top, build the case for change from user/customer point of view. ‘How can you be more efficient? What would you be able to accomplish with extra hours in your day?’ Put numbers around the story, then make your case. I think you’ll be pleasantly surprised.”

“Sometimes, it’s about timing. When leadership talks about obstacles and ways to overcome them, that’s when you bring up ideas to working better and smarter. Also, make them feel like they are a part of the strategies for growth rather than opponents to change.”

“You always need to be innovating. That does not mean forgetting who you are or what got you to where you are. However, if you don’t look forward you will get left behind. This business is competitive, and we need every advantage we can get.”

“We are putting organized systems in place to help facilitate change, and to make sure that parties affected by change are part of the conversation.”

“Change the ‘little things’ right away and show the impact of those changes. Then address the more detailed, impactful, substantial changes one by one to see what should and/or can be done.”

“I feel your pain. Our company is technologically behind by 15 years and counting. While we do our best to please our customers with competitive pricing and timely delivery, we are losing the Millennials and Gen-Zers with our antiquated approach to the digital age they have grown up with. If we don’t make a change quickly, all we have fought for the last eight decades will be lost!”

“One must invest in a company’s future with equipment, technology, people, etc. or else we can’t keep up with customers’ needs. We need to be able to work smarter, not harder.”

“In business, change is inevitable. If you continue to resist change, like adopting new products, your growth will be stagnant.”

“Private family business may have reasons for their approach to running the business. We see a lot of companies that sell out or close down and lease the building as an exit strategy (cashing rent checks takes little overhead). If this is not the case, then I would suggest to my employees or coworkers to write a comprehensive business plan for new products and/or services to show the owners the business case is sound. Also include an exit strategy as this will show the owners you have viewed the proposal from an ownership approach not just as sales growth campaign.”



Do you feel that resistance to change is holding your company back?

Comments from dealers:

“I am not afraid of change, but our aging sales force hates it.”

“Our company embraces change but drops the ball on follow-up communication and training.”

“I think this situation will always exist to some degree. Long-time management and employees will always resist changes.”

“We are looking at every new process and product we can to make sure we do not fall behind.”

“It’s not holding our company back, but there are some people inside the company who are very resistant to change, and we do our best to bring them along. Some make it, some don’t.”

“Don’t try to streamline too much too quickly. One step at a time. Legacies are a marathon, not a sprint.”

“We are a lean company, and continuous improvement is part of our culture.”

“When things have worked for years, it’s tough to innovate. It’s the classic battle of being comfortable with sustained growth and innovation.”

“We have moved too slowly in the past with regard to change but now understand the importance of staying current with technology and processes.”

Comments from vendors:

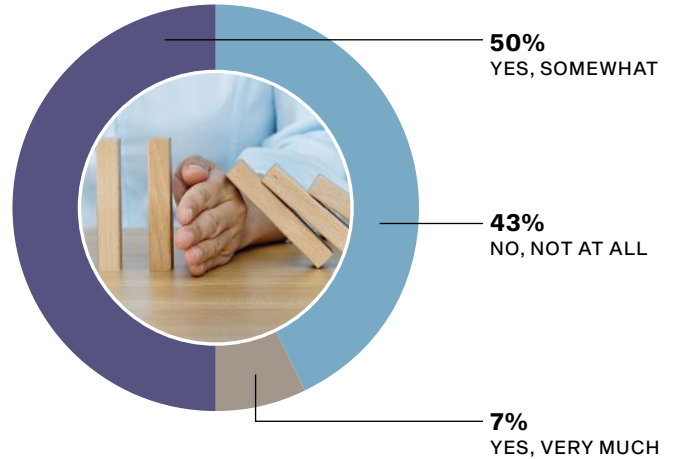
“We try to remind ourselves that the old saying of ‘that’s the way we’ve always done it’ isn’t going to cut it. However, we fall back into our comfort zones often.”

“We are putting organized systems in place to help facilitate change. Making sure that parties effected by change are part of the conversation.”

“As customers’ needs change, we need to respond/adjust where we can.”

“Outdated technology, equipment, and lack of marketing tools are all holding us back.”

“Employees resist change especially in our aging industry. The migration to technology is speeding up as we hire the next generation of employees.” ■



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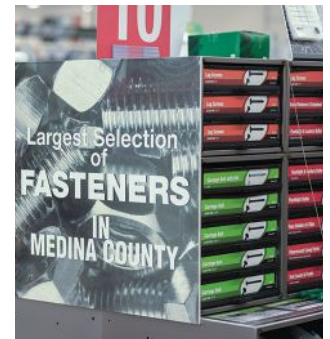
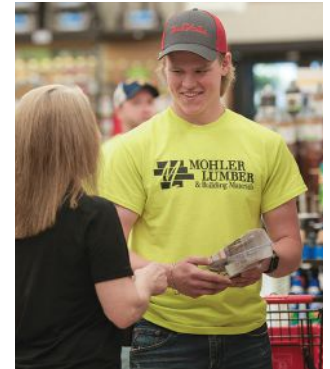
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MOHLER LUMBER & BUILDING MATERIALS ADAPTS AND GROWS

As owners of Mohler Lumber & Building Materials since the early 2000s, Jeff and Jenn Peck are building on the company's northeastern Ohio legacy.



BY WENDY STURGES

AFTER MORE THAN A CENTURY of business, Mohler Lumber & Building Materials is continuing its legacy of providing quality service and materials to Northeastern Ohio.

The company was founded in 1911 by the Mohler brothers, who first operated the business by delivering lumber via horse-drawn wagon and ultimately helping build the foundation of Stark County, Ohio. For generations, the company remained with the Mohler family, until the early 2000s when Jeff and Jenn Peck became owners.

While the operators of the business may have changed, the Pecks said they are committed to keeping the spirit and the history of the Mohler family alive by keeping the name of the company intact. The couple has even hired their children, Meghan and Carter, to the team, adding to the family aspect of the business. “We feel like we are the stewards of the Mohler family and it’s important for us to appreciate their legacy,” Jenn said.

Now with two locations—one in North Canton and another in Brunswick—the company has long been partnered with True Value and has worked to make Mohler Lumber a one-stop shop for builders and homeowners in the area by creating not only a well-stocked inventory, but a welcoming atmosphere.

“We’ve worked really hard to evolve the business from kind of an old school lumberyard to more of a modern lumber and building materials dealer, as well as establishing ourselves as a full-blown residential hardware store,” Jeff said. ►

The Pecks have worked to differentiate Mohler Lumber as both a full-service residential hardware store and an LBM dealer serving builders and industrial/commercial customers.

Adapting through diversification

One major change the Pecks have made over the years has been differentiating themselves from the local competition by going the extra mile, the couple said. “We’re a full-service lumberyard as well as a full-service hardware store, and that’s rather a bit of a rarity in the business,” Jeff said, pointing out that there isn’t much crossover from lumberyard to hardware store in his market. “We really bring the whole package to the table, and that makes us different.”

The company sells a wide range of building materials from flooring, windows, and doors to roofing and custom trusses. Additionally, the business also has an on-site mill shop, specializing in hardwood, cedar, and other hard-to-find products, the Pecks said.

“Special orders are something we excel at; if a customer needs something, we will find it,” Jeff said. “And for other things specific to the lumber side of the business, we’re not about low-quality products at a cheap price. The legs that



we stand on are quality and service. We have quality lumber at a good price and the best service around.”

After the Pecks became owners of the business, it wasn’t always smooth sailing. From issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, to later supply chain challenges, keeping the stores stocked was difficult to navigate, the couple said. However, the Pecks took those challenges as opportunities not only to create a stronger business during those times, but for the future as well.

“We have, over the years, built a huge network of auxiliary suppliers, so we were able to keep ourselves better stocked compared to a lot of our peers,” Jeff said. “COVID forced us to develop a much larger network of suppliers, and we’ve stuck with that. We have backup after backup, and alternative suppliers for products that the others don’t stock. We’ve broadened our product offerings, and on the lumber side of the business we’ve really expanded our network of LBM suppliers.”

“I think that because we were flexible and quick to react, we saved our business from potential missed sales and lost revenue, because we were able to quickly fill the gap and keep our inventory levels, both in the store and in the lumberyard, at the levels we needed,” Jenn said.

In addition to diversifying suppliers, the Pecks have also worked hard to broaden and deepen their customer relationships. “We cater to everyone—home builders, industrial, commercial, as well as residential folks in the lumberyard—but we’re really focusing much more on our commercial and industrial business. A homebuilder builds a house one time, whereas our industrial business is continuous business, 52 weeks a year, regardless of weather and other environmental issues.”





Forging ahead with Do it Best

In the near future, the company plans to remodel its North Canton store and is looking to continue growing, especially as a new member of Do it Best.

When news broke in 2024 that Do it Best would acquire True Value, saving the brand from Chapter 11 bankruptcy, the Pecks began the transition process with dozens of other businesses across the U.S. and quickly found a number of advantages to Do it Best's expanded team and services.

"We've always been very happy with the relationship with True Value; [however] they weren't as strong in the lumber and building materials aspect of the business we'd built through some of our lumber vendors," Jeff said. "And now transitioning to Do it Best, we're still a True Value branded hardware store, and we're getting to know the ins and outs of Do it Best's LBM team, the lumber traders and such. I was just blown away by the depth and experience of that side of their operation, and it's been nothing but a good experience for us. It's almost like we were missing support for half our business and now we're complete." ■

GET TO KNOW MOHLER LUMBER & BUILDING MATERIALS

Year founded:	1911
Ownership:	Family
Number of employees:	40
Locations:	2
Co-op/buying group:	Do it Best / True Value
ERP software:	ECI Spruce



Since Do it Best's acquisition of True Value from Chapter 11 bankruptcy, the Pecks are retaining the True Value brand while adding breadth and depth to their LBM offerings.



In 2025, Succession Planning Isn't Optional. It's Essential.

Tom runs a successful LBM business that's been in his family for two generations. He always assumed his transition to retirement would be smooth—maybe hand things off to his son, spend more time at the lake, and check in on the business now and then. But today, with rising costs, labor challenges, and economic uncertainty, he's wondering: "Is this still the right time? Am I really ready?"

BY SAM BROWNELL



IF YOU'RE LIKE TOM, you're not alone. We are talking to a lot of business owners who feel stuck. The market feels shaky. Interest rates are up. Buyers are more hesitant. And on top of that, you are dealing with increased supply chain headaches, higher insurance premiums, and finding (and keeping) good people.

It's a lot. But here is the good news: planning ahead, even when the future feels unclear, can give you more control.

The external environment has changed (and keeps changing)

Whether it's tariffs, immigration policy, or the ongoing challenges of a post-COVID world, the LBM industry has been through a whirlwind. The workforce is aging, it's harder to attract young talent, and many business owners are working harder than ever just to maintain the margins that came easily a few years ago.

All of this affects how your business is valued. Buyers are more cautious, and many are applying higher discount rates to reflect all this uncertainty. If your margins are volatile or you are heavily dependent on commodity products, that can drag your valuation down, too. Plus, money is more expensive these days. Financing a deal through a bank is harder now than it was during the COVID M&A boom.

What else does this mean for your business?

Uncertainty doesn't just affect your cash flow; it hits your operations, which ultimately impacts your bottom line and overall business value.

Currently, we are seeing LBM dealers face a range of challenges such as:

- Volatile fuel costs, adding pressure to margins that are already tight.
- Ongoing supply chain issues, disrupting customer service and project timelines.
- Employee turnover, leading to staffing gaps and increased training costs.
- Increasing insurance premiums, raising fixed overhead costs.
- Inventory management challenges, causing business owners to decide if they should use extra cash to stock up now, or stay lean and risk running low on inventory in the future.

Given these challenges, we encourage dealers to ask the following questions to ensure they are properly managing risks:

- When was the last time you reviewed your buy-sell agreement and/or estate plan?
- Are your business and personal documents aligned? Or do they tell two different stories?
- Are your contingency and succession plans documented, or do they only exist in your head?

Now is the time to get ahead of these foundational issues before uncertainty turns to crisis.

What you can do now:

- Don't wait for perfect conditions: start planning now.
- Clean up your financials to ensure your data is accurate, verifiable, and decision-ready.
- Stress test your budget: plan for sales dips or key personnel changes.
- Strengthen vendor relationships; consider consolidating for better pricing.
- Build your leadership bench—identify and mentor future leaders.
- Invest in technology to boost efficiency and attract next-gen talent.
- Delegate responsibilities so you can focus on strategy and margins.
- Benchmark your performance: compare payroll, capital expenditures, and inventory to industry averages.

Even if you do all this, should you wait to sell?

It's a fair question. We hear it all the time: "Is now really the right time?"

Well, that depends. If you have a strong team and you are open to creative transition options, you may not need to wait. Many internal transitions like selling to family or to key employees, or even a sale to an ESOP, a Coop or a Perpetual Purpose Trust, can be just as financially rewarding as an external sale. And these options often offer more flexibility, like selling part of the business now and staying involved while it continues to grow in value.

The key is knowing your options and getting clarity on your personal and professional goals.

Even during these periods of intense uncertainty, succession planning does not have to be overwhelming. With the right team and a clear plan, you can move forward with confidence. Therefore, don't be paralyzed, reach out to an advisor who can help you chart a proactive course forward. The sooner you start running your business like you intend to sell it, the sooner you will be able to sell your business. ■

Led by Founder & CEO Sam Brownell, Stratus Business Advisors helps independent dealers by quarterbacking a comprehensive succession planning process to provide clients with essential data and advice to make the best decisions for their company and their family. sbrownell@StratusBusinessAdvisors.com



THE CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY OF HARDWARE

A thoughtful approach can lead to high-yield results



BY MIKE BERGER

For the LBM dealer, selling hardware as well as the usual selection of lumber and other building materials means more than simply placing more boxes on shelves. Besides the task of adding potentially thousands of SKUs to inventory, to sell hardware successfully requires developing in-depth product knowledge of the hardware itself along with a thoughtful approach to their customers' needs. The benefits, however, can far outweigh the challenges, as hardware can be a margin-rich resource. In this article, we talk with industry experts and hardware manufacturers about how LBM dealers can best leverage hardware to bolster the bottom line and set themselves apart from the competition.

Position yourself to win

When it comes to selling hardware, one question came up more than any others when talking to industry experts—what separates an LBM dealer who does well with hardware from one who doesn't? According to the experts, it's mindfulness.

It's an easy pitfall to view hardware as just a conglomeration of shelf fillers. Understanding your customers, however, and building your hardware offerings around that understanding can make all the difference.

"It comes down to intentionality," says Russ Kathrein, vice president of lumber and building materials for Do it Best. "Dealers who treat hardware as a strategic part of their business—rather than just a space filler—see the results. They merchandise purposefully, keep shelves clean, price competitively, and carry the items their customers actually want. They don't let dead inventory linger, nor do they let shelves sit empty. They make it easy for contractors to find what they need, and in doing so, they position themselves as more than a lumberyard—they become a one-stop solution."

ABOVE: Johnson's USA-made hardware, with features like heavy-duty box tracks and ball-bearing hangers, is reported to ensure durability, building customer trust in an LBM dealer's offerings.

According to David Mobley, executive vice president of sales for Orgill, it comes down to how well the dealer understands their customers and uses that insight to guide their hardware strategy. “Most professional lumber dealers have a strong understanding of their customer base and the products those customers need,” he says. “The most successful dealers are those who leverage that knowledge to shape their assortments accordingly. If your core customers are tradespeople—such as roofers, millworkers, or drywall installers—your assortment strategy should focus on the products and tools essential to their work. It’s about making sure every item adds value and helps your customers do their jobs better.”

Jeff Capstran, corporate accounts manager for Midwest Fastener, points to what an LBM dealer stocks as to being critical to success. “Wide, in-stock product selection in mostly construction fasteners,” he recommends. “Having some specialized, hard-to-find items greatly benefit the store as well.” He also recommends maintaining good shop-ability in aisle with attractive merchandising.

Successful LBM dealers often share several key traits, says Vincent Pantaleo, director of lumber and building material for The Hillman Group: strong partnerships with reliable suppliers, in-depth product knowledge, a commitment to offering building code approved fasteners and anchors, and a focus on delivering exceptional customer service. “They work closely with suppliers to educate staff, ensuring team members are knowledgeable, responsive, and helpful,” he says. “Additionally, they prioritize inventory efficiency, keeping high demand items in stock while regularly introducing new products to meet evolving customer needs and stay ahead of the competition.”

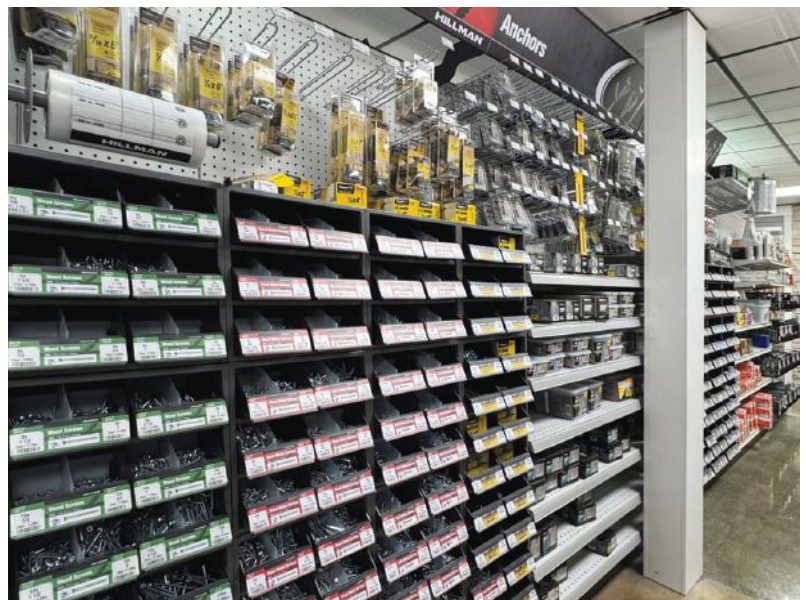
When it comes to meeting those customers’ needs with hardware, Nathan Johnson, sales and operations for L.E. Johnson Products, Inc. (a maker of specialized products such as pocket door frames, sliding bypass hardware, and bi-folding door systems), points to strategic alignment with customer needs and operational excellence. He cites a variety of successful practices utilized by LBM dealers who sell Johnson Hardware components:

- Targeted product knowledge is vital, he says. “Successful dealers train staff to understand their product lines. They can guide customers on specific applications (e.g., soft-close pocket doors for residential use). Dealers who don’t

invest in training struggle to differentiate these products from generic hardware, losing sales to competitors.

- As well, top dealers stock high-demand items, while avoiding overstocking niche items unless demand is clear. Less successful dealers may carry mismatched or low-turnover products, tying up capital.
- “High performers build relationships with contractors and homeowners by offering easy-to-install kits and accessories like edge pulls or flush pulls,” he explains. “They provide solutions for specific projects, such as retrofitting non-soft-close pocket doors. Struggling dealers treat these as commodity items, missing opportunities to upsell or cross-sell.”
- Successful dealers use manufacturers’ resources, like installation videos and application guides, to educate customers in-store or online, Johnson points out. “They create displays showcasing sliding barn door tracks or pocket door tracks with soft close to inspire purchases. Dealers who don’t promote these products fail to capture interest, especially for trendy items like wall-mount barn door hardware.”
- It’s not all about price. “Top dealers leverage manufacturers’ reputation for quality and USA-made products to compete with retailers selling foreign made products of cheaper quality, emphasizing superior service or custom kits,” he says. “Less effective dealers rely solely on price, losing to larger retailers with broader reach.” ▶

To ensure a consistent stock of high-quality products, The Hillman Group recommends building a strong relationship with reliable suppliers. LBM dealers should take the time to train their staff so they can provide insight and recommendations to customers. As well, consider using endcaps and off-shelf merchandisers to enhance visibility of new products or top performing categories.





A one-stop-shop mentality should be something that LBM dealers should be thinking about, says Midwest Fastener. Fasteners are a key component for any building project, and having a large selection that is merchandised effectively can keep customers coming back.

That mindfulness about hardware and intentionality in how it is leveraged is evident in a story shared by Nathan Harvey, senior director of marketing at Kwikset. “Kwikset has long standing partnerships with so many great LBM dealers across the country. A story I recently enjoyed hearing at a Spring Show from a dealer was how their team had put a renewed focus on a full project solution,” he describes. “Relaying that when a consumer was picking interior paint, they made it a point to ask them about ‘weekend fun.’ What’s the project? Some were touch ups, others were moves, but his team had started to attach more door hardware, by just learning more about the DIYer’s needs, and that it even led to a few special orders on the next phase of their updates.”

Set a strategy

For the LBM dealer who is contemplating adding more hardware into their mix, there needs to be a thoughtful approach about how to proceed, say industry experts. This isn’t simply a strategy of putting more hardware on your shelves, they warn. Rather, it all comes back to a deep understanding on the part of the LBM dealer of what their customers need.

“Don’t fall into the trap of ‘build it and they will come.’ An expansion into hardware needs to be guided by what your customers truly need,” Do it Best’s Kathrein points out. “Talk to your contractors. Find out where they’re currently getting their accessories, fasteners, or adhesives—and whether they’d rather buy them from you. Look for local gaps in the market. And then start small, smart, and strong: focus on a few high-demand products and build from there. And remember, it doesn’t have to look like a DIY store—it needs to function for pros.”

Midwest Fastener’s Capstran agrees. “Study the market and region and learn about trends,” he recommends. “Be selective; it’s important to tailor your product offering to the appropriate customers while having well-known items that customers expect. Ideally a good selection caters to both professional and average consumer.”

Orgill’s Mobley echoes those comments. “Take the time to carefully consider your target customer and collaborate with your Orgill sales representative to evaluate the product assortments that best meet their needs,” he advises. “Orgill offers more than 5,000 tailored assortments across all retail categories, each customized to the specific segments we serve.”

“Once your assortment strategy is in place, ensure your retail pricing aligns with your overall business objectives,” he continues. “From there, build out supporting promotional activities—such as power tool demos and contractor

or tradesperson events—to drive engagement and sales.”

L.E. Johnson Products’ Johnson recommends a methodical approach when it comes to increasing hardware offerings. Begin by assessing market demands, he advises, and then start with versatile, high-turnover core products. After that, lean on the support from your suppliers for training, marketing materials, and installation guides, and make sure to train your staff thoroughly.

Understanding local and regional trends will help guide an LBM dealer in knowing what hardware to stock, says Kwikset’s Harvey. “Kwikset always recommends understanding the local market for finish and styles of door hardware that is popular in that area. In certain markets a satin nickel knob and a matte black lever may be the common lock installed. In this situation, it’s critical to the success of an LBM dealer to have those locks stocked in the assortment. Door hardware replacement due to moving or lock failure makes up over half the ‘why behind the buy’ in this category, so knowing what builders specified for after-market sales helps to become a destination for pros and consumers.”

Best practices of selling

Once an LBM dealer makes the decision to invest more heavily into hardware, there are certain best practices that hardware and industry experts recommend. “First, prioritize merchandising,” says Do it Best’s Kathrein. “Whether it’s bulk stacking key consumables or creating planograms tailored to pro use, presentation matters. Second, price competitively—don’t assume your customer will pay a premium just because it’s convenient. Third, make sure the products you stock align with what your customers use every day. This could mean cases of subfloor adhesive, bulk nails, or Simpson Strong-Tie hangers. And finally, make it seamless. Whether it’s grabbing from a warehouse or pre-loading items with a lumber order, think about how to integrate hardware into the full service experience.”

Understanding the product in relation to the market is very important and the starting point, says Midwest Fastener's Capstran. "Keeping products organized, a full section, and great merchandising, creates a positive experience for all levels of consumers. Another best practice is having a specialized and knowledgeable person in the fastener section that can help answer questions and provide a good customer experience. Lastly, market and promote that you carry fasteners, especially in SEO."

The Hillman Group's Pantaleo agrees that understanding your customer base and aligning your product offerings with what drives your business is vital to hardware success. "Implement a clear inventory management strategy, whether through a dedicated service team or internal inventory management process, to ensure efficiency and availability," he recommends. "Collaborate with your vendors to deliver regular product knowledge sessions for both staff and customers, keeping them informed and confident. Prioritize offering products that are code-compliant, high performing, easier to use, and faster to install than traditional solutions, adding value and convenience for customers."

Understanding both your customers and their unique needs is the starting point of success when it comes to hardware. From there, says Orgill's Mobley, an LBM dealer needs to define the right assortment that meets those needs. "From there, develop and implement a market-specific retail pricing strategy, along with a clear promotional plan," he advises. "The most successful dealers consistently take time to review what's selling and what's not, making adjustments as needed. Equally important is the willingness to introduce new products. Keeping your assortment fresh signals to customers that you're staying on top of trends and continually looking for ways to better meet their needs."

It's a level of awareness, says L.E. Johnson's Johnson, that requires a focus on education, accessibility, and customer experience. As best practices,

he recommends creating engaging displays, educating customers and staff on hardware options, bundling products when possible, and catering to contractors and DIYers by offering bulk discounts and by staying on top of aesthetics and quality. "Emphasize modern features like soft-close operation or barn door aesthetics, which align with residential trends," he recommends.

Standing out from the competition

In the end, carrying a robust selection of hardware can do far more for the LBM dealer than bolstering the bottom line with high-margin sales. That hardware selection can differentiate yourself from the competition by positioning your business as a one-stop-shop and offering better service.

"When done right, offering hardware transforms an LBM dealer into a complete solutions provider," Do it Best's Kathrein points out. "It's not just about selling more—it's about serving better. Contractors save time when they can source what they need all in one place. They appreciate the added value of expert advice, bundled delivery, and well-merchandised assortments that anticipate their needs. It's also a way to build loyalty. If you're the dealer who makes life easier on the jobsite—by throwing in the right caulk, nails, or fasteners with their siding or window order—you're not just a supplier. You're a partner." ▶

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As Kwikset points out, the best practices time and time again for LBM dealers to follow when it comes to selling hardware is to stay curious about the trends and projects that are bringing people into their stores.



Midwest Fastener's Capstran shares the viewpoint of the value of service. "Fasteners are a key component for any building project," he says. "Having a large selection of fasteners, being merchandised the right way, can keep customers coming back. A one-stop-shop mentality should be something that owners are thinking about."

Orgill's Mobley agrees. "Every home improvement project requires a variety of hardware products and tools," he points out. "By ensuring these items are readily available for your pro customers, you not only reduce the likelihood of them turning to competitors, but also deliver a level of service that saves them time and money—ultimately strengthening your relationship as a trusted supplier."

By offering a comprehensive range of hardware, LBM dealers can become the go-to destination for customers seeking convenience, reliability, and quality, says Hillman's Pantaleo. "This all-in-one approach not only saves cus-

tomers valuable time but also strengthens loyalty by meeting all their project needs in one place. A well-curated, diverse inventory attracts everyone from weekend DIYers to seasoned pros, boosting foot traffic, increasing sales opportunities, and solidifying the dealer's reputation as a trusted and dependable resource in the market."

Whether it's screws and other fasteners, or door hardware and locksets, LBM dealers stand to make big wins when they invest in hardware, say industry experts. By positioning themselves as not just a "stick seller" but as a one-stop service partner, LBM dealers can create a loyal customer base that returns time and again for both the planned jobs and the unforeseen projects.

PERHAPS KWIKSET'S HARVEY sums it up best when he relates, "We have LBM dealers that have over 60 feet of assortments, from entry level Kwikset Security up to luxury brands like Baldwin, and other dealers with only 4 feet. Each local market has their own nuanced needs of grading, finishes, styles, brands, electronics, and service parts that can lead to the aisle approach; but the one thing that is not nuanced is that when a consumer has a lock that needs to be replaced they are not willing to wait a day to get one on a door to secure their home. We have a saying on our team that when ideas tend to linger, 'the gym is neutral territory.' For any LBM dealer still in the gym, put door hardware in the game ... it will put up points for you." ■

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MANUFACTURERS

Hardware by the numbers

When it comes to analyzing the number of LBM dealers who are carrying hardware, there's no universal percentage. Most dealers stock some form of hardware, while others maintain a large inventory.

"A significant portion of our members carry at least some level of hardware, but the depth and breadth of inventory varies widely," explains Do it Best's Kathrein. "Among larger pro lumber dealers, the hardware assortment is typically more targeted—focused on convenience items like power tool accessories, bulk fasteners, and construction adhesives. These assortments aren't usually full-line hardware departments; instead, they're curated to meet immediate contractor needs. That said, a growing number of LBM dealers are realizing the missed opportunity in under-merchandised, under-promoted hardware assortments—and are starting to rethink their approach."

Says Orgill's David Mobley, "Orgill supplies products to hardware stores, home centers, lumberyards, and farm & home retailers. Almost all the dealers we work with carry hardware in some form. While the breadth and depth of the product mix may vary by retailer type, all include hardware in their offerings. We collaborate closely with our customers to gain a deep understanding of their operations and target markets, allowing us to jointly define an effective assortment strategy for each store.

"Some stores choose to stock a broad range of hardware, while others take a more focused approach. What matters most is working closely with each store to determine what makes the most sense for their customers. We help build the right product mix—one that is competitively positioned and strategically aligned with their business goals."



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

lbmjournal.com/nominate

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

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ECOSMART STUD

The EcoSmart Stud from ViCa3 is a 1-to-1 replacement for a standard exterior wall stud. According to the manufacturer, it provides better R-values, less weight, and increased wall strength compared to traditional wood studs. The EcoSmart Stud places strategic thermal breaks in solid 2x6 and 2x8 wood studs to reportedly allow higher R-value insulation to fill in those breaks. With insulation filling the thermal breaks, the R-value of the 2x6 EcoSmart Stud reportedly achieves over 100% better R-value than a standard solid 2x6 wood stud. EcoSmart Studs are engineered to work with both 16" and 24" spacing, cut down thermal bridging for better insulation, speed up installation with built-in grip handles, and deliver stronger, more efficient wall systems. ecosmartstud.com



XB-BRACKETS FOR BATTS

The new XB-Bracket product line from InSoFast is launching this fall and is reported to be specifically engineered for use with batt insulation. Designed to enable true continuous insulation (CI) using readily available batt materials, the XB-Brackets can be used on walls, roofs, and floors—without framing cavities. According to InSoFast, these brackets are non-conductive and reduce thermal transfer by a factor of 250 compared to steel fasteners—making them a high-performance alternative in CI assemblies. insofast.com

HIGH VELOCITY HURRICANE ZONE (HVHZ) APPROVED ENTRY DOORS

ODL, Inc. is expanding its protective product offering with the introduction of High Velocity Hurricane Zone (HVHZ) approved entry doors. Combined with ODL's impact-rated doorglass and frame solutions, the offering now delivers more than 1,000 tested and approved configurations to help dealers, remodelers, and builders meet stringent coastal code requirements. The expanded offering includes flush glazed doors, addressing market demand for this style. According to ODL, the doors are designed to perform in the most extreme weather conditions, offering Design Pressure (DP) rating of up to 65 for 6'8" configurations, and DP rating of 50 for 8'0" configurations. odl.com



EASYSEAL RETROFIT ROOF DRAIN

TRUFAST has recently released a new 8" size to its EasySeal Retrofit Roof Drain product line. Engineered to handle demanding re-roofing applications, the new 8" model offers the same durable, feature-rich design with expanded capacity to meet the needs of larger commercial roof systems. Constructed from heavy-duty spun aluminum (.081 gauge), the EasySeal drain body is reported to be designed for strength, ease of installation, and long-term performance, with a flow capacity of up to 278 gallons per minute. Each drain includes a mechanical rubber seal to protect against water backup and a specialized seal-tightening tool. According to the manufacturer, the drain is designed to accommodate a wide range of roofing systems, and is available with multiple flange options, including plain aluminum, TPO clad, and PVC clad. trufast.com



ASCEND COMPOSITE CLADDING ACCESSORIES

Associated Materials Innovations is expanding its ASCEND Composite Cladding line with a full suite of color-matched accessories engineered to help contractors make full-system installs more efficient and visually unified. According to the manufacturer, the new J-channel, trims and outside corner post profiles create a high-end finish with no caulking, sealing, or painting required. Now available to order, ASCEND accessories are a professional-grade solution for worksites navigating today's labor crunch. Offered in a wide range of classic and contemporary colors, the new accessories are color-matched to ASCEND 7" Plank and 12" Vertical Board & Batten cladding. Built on the same technology platform as ASCEND's lightweight, weather-resistant composite panels, the new accessories are reportedly designed for longevity, low maintenance and simplified on-site use. ascendcompositecladding.com



RB823T TWINTIER REBAR TYING TOOL

MAX USA Corp. has launched the RB823T, the newest addition to its TWINTIER platform, with a reported largest jaw size of any battery-powered rebar tying tool available. According to the manufacturer, the RB823T delivers approximately 0.5-second tying speeds, maximizing productivity without sacrificing tie strength or consistency. Weighing only 6 lbs. with the battery, the tool offers powerful performance in a compact and maneuverable design, making it an essential solution for large-scale rebar tying. With its large jaw size, applications include footings, caissons, drill shafts, columns, cell phone towers, water treatment plants, and binding rebar/cables. The RB823T is capable of completing approximately 4,100 ties per charge depending on the rebar combinations. maxusacorp.com



JOINTFLASH

According to the manufacturer Evergreen Wholesale, JointFlash is a fast, easy-to-install flashing solution that slides conveniently behind siding and stays securely in place as you nail, eliminating the need for on the job cutting, while improving the durability of fiber cement and wood lap siding. JointFlash is a type of junction flashing made entirely from carbon black high density polyethylene (HDPE). To use, as JointFlash explains, simply install the first pieces of lap siding without nailing the end near the butt joint. Next, tuck the piece of JointFlash behind the loose end of the previously installed siding, making sure the JointFlash is centered on the joint and is overlapping by at least 1". Install the next piece of siding and nail down the butt joint as usual to hold the JointFlash securely in place. jointflash.com



Storage Systems for LBM Dealers

- The Auto-Stak System
- Cantilever Rack Systems
- Metal Buildings
- Drive-Thru Systems
- Millwork Storage Systems
- Pallet Rack Systems
- A-Frame Systems



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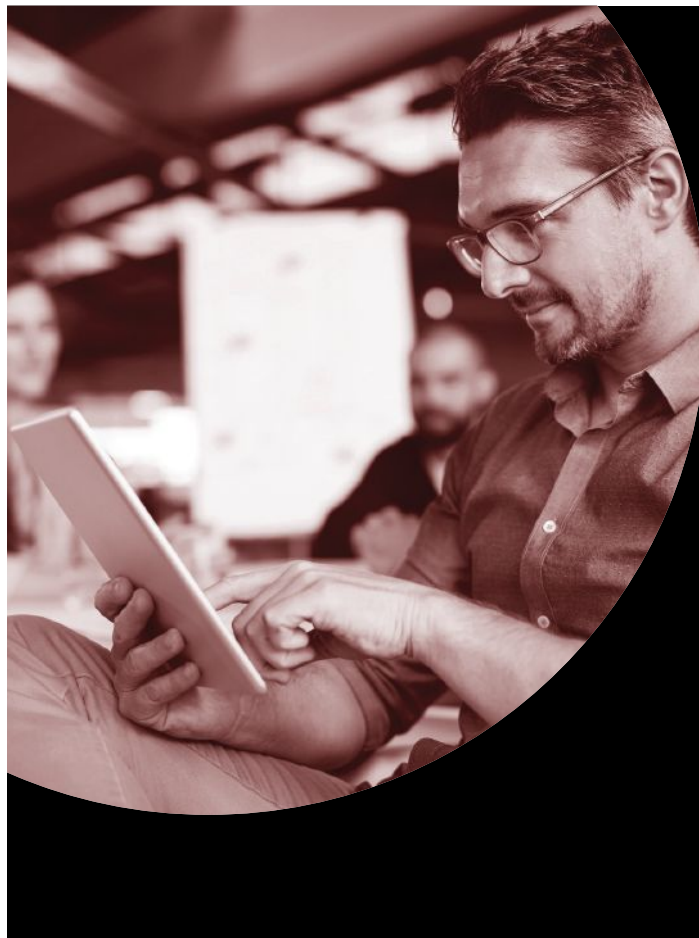
MULEHIDE SELF-ADHERING EPDM

Now available in compact 5' x 40' rolls, MuleHide Self-Adhering EPDM membrane is reported to be ideal for use on smaller and harder-to-access low-slope roofs. According to MuleHide, the rolls are narrower, shorter and lighter than the existing 10'-wide rolls of Self-Adhering EPDM, making them a convenient and efficient option for residential and urban low-slope roofs, confined or challenging-to-reach spaces, and high-rise buildings. The rolls weigh approximately 80 lbs. each and fit easily in the back of a standard pickup truck. A 3" selvage edge (non-adhesive) along one of the 40' factory-length edges allows quick, hassle-free seaming with 3" EPDM In-Seam Tape. End laps and cut sections are easily stripped in with 6" Cured Cover Tape. mulehide.com



KLAUER STEEL SIDING

According to Klauer Manufacturing Co., its Klauer Classic, Klauer Elite, and Klauer Prestige steel siding are created with exceptional strength that withstands harsh environments such as hailstorms and sleet to fires. This resilience reportedly reduces the need for costly and time-consuming home repairs, repainting, or replacement, which frees up homeowners to enjoy their downtime instead of working. Environmentally-friendly steel siding from Klauer Manufacturing is backed by a limited lifetime no-rust, -crack, -blister, -chip, -peel, -flake, -chalk or -fade warranty. It's available in seven popular profiles, and an extensive range of colors for both rural and urban settings. klauer.com



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WHEN LOYALTY MASKS THEFT

After looking into increasing inventory shrinkage, you discovered that trusted, longtime customers are part of the problem. What would you do?

AS THE SECOND-GENERATION owner of your family-owned lumberyard in a mid-sized market, relationships are at the core of your company's success. Your family and your team have served your community for more than 40 years. Over that time, many of your pro customers have become more like family than clients. You share the trust that comes from working side by side for decades.

That's what makes the situation you're dealing with so unsettling. Here's the story:

After a routine inventory count, a member of your team noticed that the numbers were off by slightly more than normal. You've learned over the years that in the LBM business, it's unusual if physical inventory counts are all exactly as you expect them to be. So, you chalked it up to the cost of doing business. Then one of your yard workers mentioned something that stopped you in your tracks: "I've noticed that some of our longtime customers are leaving with more than they purchased."

At first, you didn't want to believe it. But once you put your team on notice to watch more closely—and to carefully check everyone's trucks when leaving the yard, they started to catch customers "accidentally" helping themselves to an extra box of nails, or roll of housewrap, or few sticks of lumber. The customers inevitably apologize and claim to have no idea how it happened. But with it happening again and again, it's clear you have a problem.

Confronting them could damage relationships and cost you business. But ignoring it would send the message to your team—and other customers—that it's okay to steal a little, as long as you buy enough. What would you do?

CAST YOUR VOTE ONLINE AT: LBMJOURNAL.COM

Quiet confrontation. Directly but respectfully, approach the known offenders one-on-one. Give them the benefit of the doubt, while making clear you know what's happening.

Tighten security. Make it clear that the yard is being watched by installing cameras, posting signs about theft prevention, and improving your check out process.

Cut ties. End the relationship with the worst offenders, along with a letter explaining why. This is drastic, but it will send a strong message to your team and your customers.

Reset expectations. At your next contractor appreciation event or lunch'n'learn, explain that the rising costs of shrinkage affect everyone's prices, and let the message spread.

PHOTO: @ISTOCK.COM/CUCURUDZA

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.



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