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GLENNALLEN HARDWARE AND LUMBER SERVES AS AN ALASKA LIFELINE

2025 SALES COMPENSATION +
BENEFITS EXCLUSIVE REPORT

USING TODAY'S TECH TOOLS TO
WORK BETTER AND SMARTER

LBM STRATEGIES 
2025 CONFERENCE

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LBM INDUSTRY'S PREMIER EVENT

ERNIE AND RHONDA CHRISTIAN,
GLENNALLEN HARDWARE AND
LUMBER

EXCUSES FOUND CLOGGING SALES PIPELINE — MANAGERS DEMAND ACTION

From tariffs to takeoffs, the excuses stack higher while managers scramble to unclog the pipeline.

BY SHELDON LEVENE

Sales managers across the country are reporting the same problem: they are drowning. Not in opportunities, not in orders, but in excuses. Every pipeline review becomes an echo chamber of rationalizations. One rep insists, "Our prices are too high." Another swears, "Mortgage rates have frozen the market." Still another shrugs, "Nobody wants to talk to salespeople anymore." The excuses pour in like water, faster than managers can mop them up.

The themes change week to week, but the tune stays the same.

Tariffs, takeoffs, lumber prices

operations delays, tight bank

outside team cost the work

it's impossible to get the supply

quota and blames the CRM. Another loses a deal and blames the competition's rebates. One explains, "I could sell more if I didn't have to come to all these meetings." Another sighs, "The leads are bad." What managers hear is not accountability, but a flood of alibis.

The excuses swirl together, clogging forecasts and stalling momentum. Managers joke that the pipeline has become less of a funnel and more of a backed-up sink. Some reps even reach into

history—"They're still mad about that incident in 1998"—while

others search for sympathy—"This

constant pressure makes it hard to

work."

they really need is not another meeting, not a new comp plan, not a shinier CRM. What they need is a drain. Something powerful enough to suck out the excuses once and for all. But for now, that drain is missing. Managers are left searching, desperate for a way to clear the backlog, while the excuses keep rising higher.

One veteran VP put it this way: "I'm not asking for miracles. I just want someone to stop telling me why they can't sell and start showing me how they will." Until then, the

flood of excuses continues to



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Eliminate production bottlenecks
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Streamline your processes



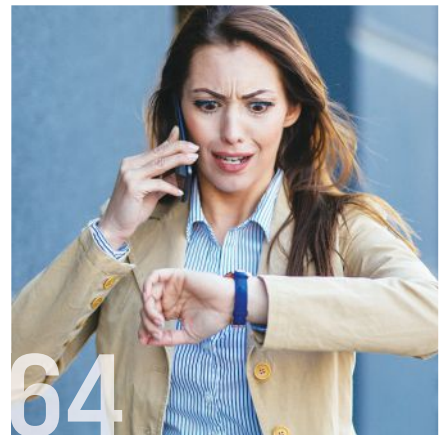
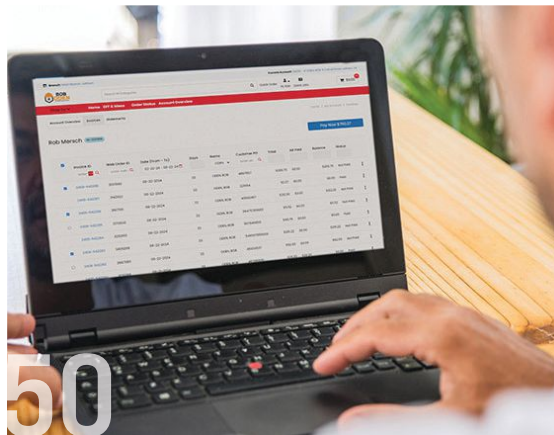
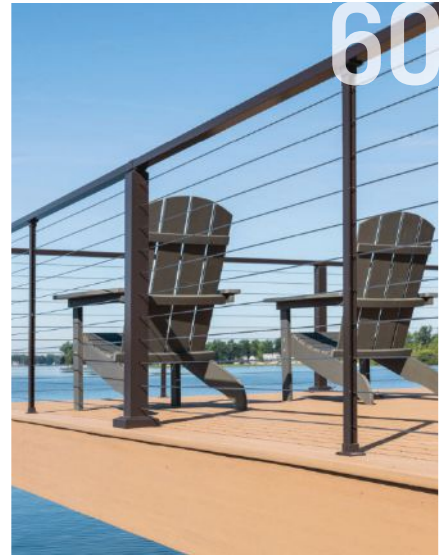
Talk to your Do it Best
LBM field sales manager



Lumber &
Building Materials

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NOV/DEC 2025



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FROM THE PUBLISHER

THIS IS OUR final issue of 2025, and the LBM Journal team and I recently returned from the LBM Strategies Conference in Nashville.

One conversation, with a first-timer to the event, really resonated with me. He's new to the LBM community, after spending the past 10 years in a different industry—and he was genuinely shocked at what he was experiencing. “All these leaders from successful companies are actually willing to share what they do and how they do it. This would have NEVER happened in the industry I came from.”

We launched LBM Strategies in 2016 because something was missing from our community. What was missing was the magic that happens when dealers and distributors get together to learn, share, and connect. As I've learned from attending many events since joining the LBM world in 1990, that magic gets diluted or destroyed when the attendee mix is off. The tipping point that led to the launch of LBM Strategies was a conference where the energy was just ... *off*. A quick look at the list of registrants revealed the problem: sponsor personnel outnumbered dealers by nearly 5-1. Sponsors were unhappy, because they were there to connect with potential customers. Dealers were unhappy because they weren't able to connect, share, and learn with their peers.

We knew how to run a magazine, but live events are an entirely different animal. The one thing we knew for sure, if we were to succeed, we'd need to flip the ratio so that dealers and distributors outnumbered sponsors. The big question mark was whether an event like that was financially feasible. As it turns out, limiting sponsorships may not be the most profitable model. But that's what we do. And it works because it maintains a healthy mix between dealers and sponsors.

To be very clear: LBM Strategies' success and growth has little to do with LBM Journal. Instead, it has EVERYTHING to do with the people and companies who bring the passion, the curiosity, the genuine desire to connect with others from our community to learn, share, and grow. We create the space. That's all. The magic is in the hundreds of LBM leaders who take time away from work to refuel, re-energize, and reconnect with other top pros from across the U.S.



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

Enough from me. Here's how one attendee sums it up: “The LBM Strategies Conference in Nashville delivered exactly what our industry needs ... timely insights, relevant strategies, and practical takeaways we can apply right away. It was an outstanding event in an exceptional setting, with even better people in attendance.”

On behalf of the LBM Journal team, thank you for the opportunity to be part of the amazing LBM community. We hope to see you at your next LBM Strategies Conference, Oct. 14-16 in Milwaukee.

— Rick Schumacher
Executive Editor & Publisher

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R_x

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DECK EXPO 2025 HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SHOW FLOOR

BY SALLY LACEY

Deck builders, suppliers, and manufacturers gathered in Las Vegas, NV Oct. 22-24 for Deck Expo, the ultimate show for decking and outdoor living pros throughout North America and beyond. Sponsored by NADRA (North American Decking and Railing Association), the event showcased the latest in industry trends, building code compliance, and business longevity for decking professionals.

Held jointly with the International Pool, Spa, & Patio Expo, Deck Expo 2025 featured exhibits from leading manufacturers that showcased products and technologies to improve efficiency and customer satisfaction for deck builders. The show floor was a hub for connecting with current and future partners, learning about new opportunities and trends, and networking with other industry professionals.

In addition to innovative products and services on the show floor, Deck Expo hosted daily educational sessions. Each morning, Legacy Decks Academy, in collaboration with NADRA, delivered interactive training on industry-specific strategies proven to help deck builders improve their business operations—to work more efficiently and more profitably. Plus, the “Decks Done Right” stage on the show floor featured live demos, code updates, and a Q&A with Simpson Strong-Tie specialists and other industry pros.

Each morning offered a keynote session for the combined outdoor living event featuring experts from within and outside the industry to deliver fresh perspectives on topics like economic trends and projections, leadership, and business advice. Visit LBMJournal.com for more NADRA news. ■





Members of the Deckorators team accept the 2025 LBM Innovation Award for its Surestone Decking. From left, Bryan Hoexum, Jamie Hossink, LBM Journal's Rick Schumacher, and Michelle Hendricks.



MANS LUMBER & HOME



MEAD LUMBER



LaVALLEY BUILDING SUPPLY

BY THE YARD

MANS Lumber & Home is celebrating its 125th anniversary as a member of the southeast Michigan community in 2025. Founded in Trenton, MI, the company was formally established in 1900 by Nick Mans—known then as “N.A. MANS,” in honor of Nick’s father Nicholas August Mans.

Rhode Island-based **Arnold Lumber** has been recognized as one of the best places for women to work in the medium employer category. Best Companies Group reviewed various data points and benchmarks, as well as employee feedback data they gathered directly from current employees to find organizations that are elevating, growing, and supporting women in their workplace.

The Taylor’s Do it Center and Pleasants Hardware family of stores will open a new Pleasants Hardware location in Chesterfield County, part of the greater Richmond, VA area, in spring 2026. The 15,000-sq.-ft. store will be the 11th Pleasants Hardware store and the 22nd location overall for the combined Taylor’s/Pleasants family of stores.

Capital Lumber has relocated to a new, upgraded facility in Donald, OR. The move represents Capital’s continued growth and commitment to better serving customers throughout the region. The new location offers approximately 110,000 square feet of warehouse space on over 8 acres, featuring a modern office, spacious break room, and a pristine warehouse.

Mead Lumber has completed a major remodel of its Beatrice, NE location. The renovation is part of the company’s ongoing program to modernize two to three locations each year. The remodel includes an expanded showroom, improved layout, better access, new signage, and a dedicated Milwaukee tool area.

Knecht Home Center, a cornerstone of the Rapid City market since 1928, officially changed its name to **Mead Lumber** effective Oct. 16. The company also operates under that name in Spearfish, SD, Gillette and Sheridan, WY, and Cañon City, CO.

LaValley Building Supply has officially opened the doors to its newly expanded kitchen design center at their West Lebanon, NH location. The 5,000-sq.-ft. space is dedicated to kitchen displays, offering a hands-on experience with 25 unique kitchen vignettes representing five trusted brands.

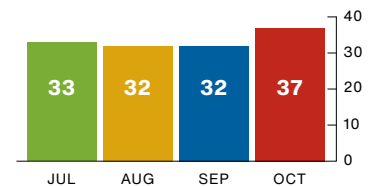
Great Lakes Ace has signed an agreement to open a new store in Perrysburg, OH. The store will feature more than 12,000 square feet of retail space. Renovations to the space will begin in early 2026, with a soft opening tentatively planned for the second quarter of next year.

CO-OP + BUYER’S GROUPS

Orgill has unveiled its new Innovation Center, which officially opened in October and sits alongside Orgill’s headquarters, creating a one-of-a-kind campus where the distributor’s collaboration with channel partners is on full display. The 553,000-sq.-ft. Innovation Center serves as a year-round facility designed to test new retail concepts, merchandising strategies, and technologies.

Amid market challenges, builder expectations rise

Even as builders continue to grapple with market and macroeconomic uncertainty, sentiment levels posted a solid gain in October as future sales expectations surpassed the 50-point breakeven mark for the first time since last January. Builder confidence in the market for newly built single-family homes was 37 in October, up five points from September and the highest reading since April, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI).



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PEOPLE IN LBM



HAYES



FLOOD

Kodiak Building Partners announced the promotions of **Beau Hayes** to senior vice president of channel strategy and **Mike Flood** to chief operating officer.



COOK



ROYALL

Lakeside Lumber has announced two recent changes to its store teams. **Mitch Cook** is the company's new sales manager at its Tualatin location. **Zach Royall** is now general manager of its Prineville/Bend location.

Tart Lumber Company announced the promotion of **Virginia Lewis** to the role of president. Lewis, a third-generation member of the Tart family, most recently served as vice president, overseeing operations, sales, point of sales transition, showroom management, and vendor relationships.



Astro Buildings appointed **Jack Tarr** as its new general manager. In his new role, Tarr will oversee operations and strategy as Astro continues expanding across its service area.



LMC has announced multiple promotions: **Charles Johns** to director of special wood products; **Lauren Brady** to director of corporate meetings; **Steve Evans** to director of East/West Commodity Lumber.

The National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association (NLBMDA) honored **Scott Yates**, president of Denver Lumber Company, with its Distinguished Lifetime Service Award.

Trex Company named **Prithvi (Prith) Gandhi** as senior vice president and chief financial officer. Gandhi brings over 25 years of financial leadership experience, having served in CFO, FP&A, strategy and corporate development roles across the building products, manufacturing, basic materials, and IT sectors.



ECI Software Solutions announced the creation of its new Payments Division, dedicated to advancing the company's fintech strategy and helping customers optimize cash flow, improve profitability, and drive growth. The company has appointed **Andres Ricaurte** as Payments Division president.



Woodgrain has announced **Darin White** as its new vice president of sales for the door division. White will lead the sales team in shaping strategy, driving execution, and accelerating growth across the division's product lineup.

JELD-WEN Holding, Inc. announced the appointment of **Rachael B. Elliott** as executive vice president, North America.

MERGERS + ACQUISITIONS

Preston Feather Building Centers announced its acquisition of **Barden Lumber**, a Boyne City-based supplier that has served contractors and homeowners since 1922. Together, the companies bring more than 200 years of combined experience, relationships, and regional commitment to the building industry.

Builders FirstSource announced two acquisitions in the Las Vegas area: **Builder's Door & Trim** and **Rystin Construction**.

National Lumber Company has acquired **Fisher Lumber** in Rockville, MD. The move expands National Lumber's footprint in the Washington, DC metro area and reaffirms its position as a growing independent supplier.

Petaluma, CA-based **Golden State Lumber** has acquired **The Window and Door Shop**, located in Sacramento, CA.

RoMac Building Supply has announced the acquisition of **Thomas Lumber**, a family-owned supplier serving the Orlando construction market for the last 100 years. This strategic move strengthens RoMac's presence in Central Florida and continues the company's commitment to partnering with companies that share its values.

R.P. Lumber Co. Inc. acquired **Dye Home Improvement**, a hardware store and lumberyard brand with locations in Monticello and Monon, IN. These stores will become the company's 91st and 92nd locations, and its first stores in the Hoosier State.

North Atlantic Corp. announced that it has acquired **Mountain High Appliance**. A leading appliance retailer with five locations in Colorado, Mountain High offers a full range of major appliance brands and professional delivery and installation services, and employs approximately 120 people.

Specialty Building Products announced that it has signed a definitive agreement to acquire **OrePac Building Products**, a regional distributor of specialty building materials. Founded in 1977, OrePac is a second-generation, family-run distributor of building materials serving customers from 13 locations across the Western U.S.

INDUSTRY EVENTS

NOV 19-21

EPICOR INSIGHTS 2025 FOR BUILDING SUPPLY & RETAIL
National Harbor, MD | epicor.com

DEC 9

2025 MID-AMERICA CONNECTION CONFERENCE
Olathe, KS | bldconnection.org

DEC 10-11

LBM EXPO 2025
Uncasville, CT | lbmexpo.net

DEC 11

2025 NEBRASKA CONNECTION CONFERENCE
La Vista, NE | bldconnection.org

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

2026

JAN 20-21

2026 BIZCON NORTH
St. Cloud, MN | bldconnection.org

FEB 3-4

2026 BIZCON SOUTH
Altoona, IA | bldconnection.org

FEB 11-12

BMSA ANNUAL LEARNING EXCHANGE & LBM EXPO
Hickory, NC | mybmsa.org

FEB 17-19

2026 NAHB INTERNATIONAL BUILDERS' SHOW
Orlando, FL | buildersshow.com

MAR 7-9

DO IT BEST & TRUE VALUE SPRING MARKET
Denver, CO | doitbestonline.com

TOUGH CALL SOLUTIONS

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

AGGRESSIVE ACQUIRER VS. FAMILY STARTUP

One offers a bigger but uncertain payout, one is smaller but guaranteed. Which suitor would you sell to? Here's how readers responded.

Back the dreamer. 47%

Choose the hobbyist even at a lower price. Supporting passion and craftsmanship builds goodwill in the community and ensures the shop stays true to its roots.

Renegotiate terms. 27%

Push the acquirer for stronger guarantees. Larger up-front cash or fewer performance-based payments could reduce risk and still leave you positioned for a higher overall return.

Reposition shop. 26%

Keep the business in-house, but scale it to focus only on high-margin specialty items that complement your yard. This way, you preserve assets without letting it distract from core operations.



Bigger gamble. 0%

Accept the acquirer's offer for potential upside. If they hit revenue targets, your payout could be much larger. But their reputation makes collecting those payments far from certain.

WANT TO SEE MORE TOUGH CALLS? CHECK OUT PAGE 64 OF THIS ISSUE, OR FIND MORE AT: lbmjjournal.com/category/tough-call

INDUSTRY UPDATES

Boise Cascade Company recently announced the results of its companywide philanthropic campaign benefiting St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. The company raised \$423,128.56, surpassing its original goal by over \$150,000.

Saint-Gobain, through its building product subsidiary CertainTeed Interior Products Group, completed a major expansion at its CertainTeed Gypsum manufacturing facility in Palatka, FL. First announced in 2023, the project has doubled production capacity at the facility and will create 110 new jobs in the greater Jacksonville area.

Owens Corning has announced the grand opening of its new Foamular NGX manufacturing plant in Russellville, AK. Announced in February 2023, construction of the 150,000-sq.-ft. facility with state-of-the-art technology was completed in August and will be fully operational by year-end. The facility has created over 50 new jobs in the local area. The capacity will meet the growing demand for Foamular NGX insulation, which spans the non-residential and residential markets.

WindsorONE announced the launch of a dedicated Research & Development (R&D) division to support its three U.S.-based manufacturing facilities. This strategic expansion solidifies WindsorONE's commitment to advancing domestic innovation, wood science education, and sustainable product development.

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LBM TALKS





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02

Pro & DIY Concept Stores

DISTRIBUTION NEWS

ODL, Inc. has partnered with **Dyke Industries, Inc.** to expand distribution of ODL Entry Doors across the Southeastern U.S., with a strong focus on the Florida market. Dyke Industries will offer the full suite of ODL Entry Door systems, including premium fiberglass door systems with decorative and clear doorglass options, enhanced by high-performance, impact-rated engineering designed to meet High Velocity Hurricane Zone (HVHZ) and wind-borne debris (WBD) region requirements.

Woodgrain has announced the completion of its distribution headquarters expansion with the addition of a second building. Woodgrain now operates over 318,000 square feet of total space at its Lawrenceville facility. The new facility includes narrow aisle racking and product storage up to 33 feet high along with a modern office space.

International Wood Products has announced its exclusive distribution partnership with **Benjamin Obdyke**. IWP has been a distributor of Benjamin Obdyke products in the Northern California and Nevada markets since 2020, and this new agreement marks a shift to exclusive distribution of Benjamin Obdyke's complete portfolio, including HydroGap Drainable Housewrap, HydroGap SA, Cedar Breather Ventilated Underlayment, InvisiWrap, Slicker Rainscreen, BenWrap Housewrap, and accessories.

Accoya USA is entering the Mexican market through Klinai, its first distributor in the country. Accoya is now directly distributed in all three of North America's largest markets: the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Envision Outdoor Living Products welcomed a new distributor, Evansville, IN-based **Lensing Building Specialties**. Lensing will sell the complete line of Envision composite decking as well as skirting and fasteners. The company also added **Genesee Reserve Supply** as a new distributor. Genesee Reserve Supply will sell Envision's Distinction and Ridge Premium capped composite decking and vinyl railings through both of its locations in Rochester and Buffalo, NY.

Cameron Ashley Building Products has opened three new distribution centers: Ontario, CA; Fort Myers, FL; Omaha, NE.

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SOMETIMES WHAT'S ON THE OUTSIDE DOES MATTER



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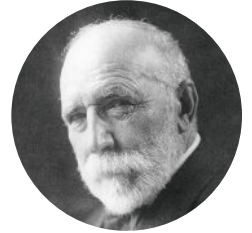
WEYERHAEUSER AT 125:

A Legacy Rooted in Sustainability and Innovation

Still guided by the vision and values of its founder, Weyerhaeuser celebrates more than a century of sustainable forestry and industry leadership.

On Jan. 18, 1900, Frederick Weyerhaeuser and 15 associates purchased 900,000 acres of Washington state timberlands from the Northern Pacific Railroad. In establishing their company, Frederick said: *“This is not for us, nor for our children, but for our grandchildren.”* Today, Weyerhaeuser stands as the largest private owner of timberlands in the U.S. and one of the largest wood products manufacturers in North America, but that ethos of stewardship and sustainability remains central to how the company operates.

This year marks Weyerhaeuser’s 125th anniversary — an opportunity to look back on the many contributions the company has made to the forest products industry and reflect on the innovations and impact that continue to shape its future.



FREDERICK WEYERHAEUSER

A LEGACY OF INNOVATION AND IMPACT

1915 — Early All-Electric Sawmill

Weyerhaeuser opened Mill B in Everett, Washington — one of the first all-electric sawmills in the U.S., built entirely by the company.



1921 — Expanding Distribution

The first distribution center opened in Baltimore, Maryland, laying the groundwork for a national footprint.

1928 — 4-Square® Lumber

The launch of 4-Square® brand lumber set a new standard for quality and consistency, reinforcing Weyerhaeuser’s reputation for “square dealing” with select grades of product cut to exact dimensions, precisely squared and neatly wrapped.

1937 — “Timber Is A Crop”

A national ad campaign reframed forestry as a renewable resource, promoting responsible forest management and challenging prevailing perceptions about managing commercial forests.



1941 — Clemons Tree Farm

Weyerhaeuser established the nation’s first certified tree farm on 200,000 acres in Washington state, helping launch the American Tree Farm movement.

1956–57 — Southern Expansion

Acquisitions in the U.S. South expanded the company’s reach into packaging and diversified wood products.

1960 — Weyerhaeuser Canada

The company began managing Canadian forestlands, now covering approximately 14 million acres.

1967 — High Yield Forestry

The introduction of innovative forestry practices, such as planting seedlings within a year of harvest, soil fertilization, thinning, and tree improvement through selective breeding doubled growth rates in the West and quadrupled yields in the South.

1978 — Technology Center Opens

A 450,000-square-foot R&D hub advanced forestry science, pollution control and wood product innovation.

1980 — Mount St. Helens Recovery

After the eruption of Mount St. Helens in southwest Washington state devastated 68,000 acres, Weyerhaeuser replanted the blast zone — by hand — with over 18 million seedlings.

1986 — Two Billionth Seedling

Weyerhaeuser planted its two billionth tree, underscoring the company’s commitment to reforestation and sustainable forestry.



1990–2000 — Environmental Leadership

The company embraced ecologically based forestry, pollution prevention and public environmental reporting.

2000 — Engineered Lumber Expansion

The acquisition of Trus Joist International added TJI® Joists, Parallam®, TimberStrand® and Microllam® to the product portfolio.

2005 — Sustainability Recognition

Weyerhaeuser was listed on the Dow Jones Sustainability North American Index (now the Dow Jones Best-In-Class North America Index) for the first time.

2008 — Safety Milestone

Achieved a recordable incident rate of less than one — an industry benchmark for safety.

2016 — New Headquarters

The company moved into a new corporate headquarters in Seattle, Washington.

2020 — 10-Year Sustainability Strategy

Weyerhaeuser launched a bold plan to integrate sustainability into business priorities and climate solutions.

2024 — TimberStrand® LSL Plant Announcement

Announced plans for a new TimberStrand® facility near Monticello, Arkansas, set to open in 2027.



A NAME THAT STANDS FOR TRUST

“Weyerhaeuser will have some advantage, in that it will insure a knowledge in the public mind that they are to be treated as Weyerhaeuser customers, or in other words fairly.”

W. L. McCormick, secretary, on choosing the company name

For 125 years, Weyerhaeuser has built its brand on trust, innovation and stewardship. As the building materials industry continues to evolve, Weyerhaeuser remains a steadfast partner, offering high-performance products, sustainable practices and a legacy that builders can count on.

Photos courtesy of the Forest History Society.



Delivering the elements that **elevate your business**

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Weyerhaeuser is the distribution partner you can count
on to get you the best building materials available.



 **Weyerhaeuser**

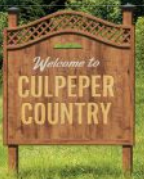
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BY RICK DAVIS

I HAVE NEVER been a fan of role play as a sales training exercise, mostly because it is usually poorly conducted, can create detrimental effects, and is a contrivance that fails to create realistic scenarios. More importantly, it is improperly used as a management tool for evaluation rather than as a learning asset.

Role play is usually a setup where the salesperson is supposed to achieve an objective. The first common problem is that the fictional “prospect” doesn’t play along. Instead of creating realistic responses, the participant strives to make it difficult for the salesperson. Thus, the role play quickly deteriorates into a series of behaviors that fail to mirror reality or accomplish the goal.

Problems are magnified when the manager, in the role of training facilitator, uses the situation to deliver constructive feedback to the salesperson. Several leading authorities assert that this is an ineffective time to deliver criticism. Negative fight-or-flight chemicals that prohibit learning—adrenaline and cortisol—are released and, instead of learning, the performer ends up being humiliated.

ROLE PLAY SAFETY

In their profound books on the subjects of leadership and training, Robert Magers (“What Every Manager Should Know about Training”) and Simon Sinek (“Leaders Eat Last”) both assert that the critical component for successful learning is safety. It is intimidating enough for those who fear public speaking to be put on a role play stage. Adding criticism in front of one’s peers makes the environment as unsafe as possible.



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.

If role play lessons are your cup of tea, know that success requires a facilitator who leads participants to the desired outcomes for the exercise, which creates yet another problem, specifically proper curriculum design. Too often the role play objective is the right outcome but applied to the wrong tactic.

As an example, consider the “cold call” role play: A salesperson reaching out to a target account for the first time should strive for only one outcome, an appointment. Yet, many managers presume that the goal of the cold call is to gain information about the prospect’s purchasing practices and business model. It’s the wrong objective for an initial call that could very well be an interruption to the recipient’s day.

In order to create a safe environment, the facilitator must be skilled at managing comments and feedback in the room. As a general rule, I ask observers (i.e., co-workers) what they liked about the performance. Any comments that lean towards criticism are quickly quelled so the participant in the role play gains positive reinforcement of behaviors and, more importantly, the group can focus on the desired behaviors being taught.

If there is any constructive feedback to be offered, it should be from a trained facilitator to help everyone in the room learn while ensuring that the participant in the role play feels safe.

This means first praising the participant for the courage to stand up in the room and, furthermore, reminding that person and the room that it was a fictitious setting and not what the participant might have actually done in a real-life situation.

A good facilitator also recognizes that scripting can be dangerous. Some salespeople operate better with an outline of notes, while others prefer to have a written script of words. Each individual also possesses their own vocabulary, sound, gestures, and facial expressions. The goal of role play is to magnify the existing voice of participants, not manipulate their words.

The single most important rule for managers to understand is that safety is paramount. A role play exercise is not the time for a manager to exert influence and criticize while relying solely on the authority of a title. A good role play facilitator relies instead on the credibility of their knowledge, mastery of the subject matter, and the ability to make the entire group feel safe and valued.

As a general rule, it is risky for the inexperienced facilitator to engage in role play if you want to build confidence and trust in performers. That being said, if you’re going to do it, do it safely.

BY THEA DUDLEY

Hi Thea, One thing I've seen in my years as a credit manager is when a business changes hands, they never notify the creditor. Have you had to deal with this? How did you handle it if the old owner's account is being used and not being paid by the new owners without notifying you that the transaction had taken place? What can be done to help avoid this from happening?

— Playing Catch and Release?

PASSING THE BUCK

Dear Catchy, Salespeople and customers—they are going to give you a popcorn trail, all you have to do is follow it. Or at least that's how they see it. "Didn't I mention that?" says my dear sales rep. No, that did not come up in any of our chats. I would have remembered that ear-catching nugget and walked you through what needed to happen. We are placing the account on do not sell; notate the sale and get a final statement to them. The new owners get a hearty welcome and a credit application and a new account set up, terms subject to credit approval.

Sounds like you found out when you called for payment. I would have loved to hear how that call went. "No, not our bill, we just continued to place orders, which showed up and not our responsibility. Sorry about your luck."

I am feeling lucky and I have gifts for everyone. New owners get a credit application and no further shipments until this situation is sorted out. Old owners get a shiny statement with a balance due. Sorry boys, you never notified me you sold the company and instructed the account be closed, take any part of this statement that are not your charges and direct your attention (irritation) to whoever you

sold to. Mentioning it to my sales rep doesn't count, and if that did happen, it is not enough.

Before you start throwing down (but right after you move the account to NSA) take a moment to refer to your most important account document: your credit application. What does it say about closing an account, sale of company, change in ownership, etc.? This could be a straightforward conversation with "Team Old Owner, a.k.a. Holder of the Debt." If it outlines something to the effect of, "unless we are notified in writing of any sale, changes in ownership, current owner is still responsible." I am paraphrasing. If you have not addressed this in the holy grail document, take this as an opportunity to remedy it, avoiding any future fuzziness.

Even without the "account changes expectation" clause, everyone involved is on notice. The conversation is the same to both entities, with a different twist. Old: "Do you really want to end our relationship in court?" New: "Is this how you want to start our relationship?" Which isn't going anywhere. Can't we all be adults and own our stuff?

You will get it worked out, but it always takes way more time and effort than it should have. All because the communication wasn't there and everyone wants to bow up.

A way to avoid this? You will never be able to avoid this completely, human nature being what it is, BUT you can put in place as much defense as possible to curtail and protect your company. Education and a clearly-crafted condition on your credit application addressing the sale, changing of company name, entity type, ownership, and how the notification is required by you. Be clear and concise. Run it by an attorney to make sure you didn't miss anything.

Educate the credit team and the sales team. Make it a point to bring this up in meetings. ANY change that impacts the legal structure of a customer is a trigger. The famous, "they only changed their name, so nothing is different," is a myth.

You can lead a horse to water but you can't make them drink, or should it be, you can lead a human to knowledge, but you can't make them think?!



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



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BY JOHN D. WAGNER

TO PREPARE FOR SELLING your company, it's good advice to start assembling the information that your investment banker will need for the "deal book" (the CIM, or *confidential informational memorandum*). You'll likely be surprised by the depth of data and company background needed to write a good CIM, and even more surprised by what's required during due diligence.

So, start the process early. Here are the essentials:

DUE DILIGENCE CHECKLIST

1. **Monthly statements:** You will need monthly income statements and balance sheets for three prior years, and monthly statements YTD for wherever you are in your fiscal or calendar years. Monthly statements are essential for calculating an accurate new working capital "PEG." These statements need to be updated throughout the deal offering process, which easily lasts 5-plus months.
2. **Employee census:** Assemble a list of all employees, with hire date, rate of pay (salary or hourly), commissions (if applicable), and date of last raise. Have Form I-9s (and CDLs if applicable) ready for each employee.
3. **Leadership succession:** Work with your investment banker to articulate a plan for leadership continuity. Even if you as the owner are leaving soon after the deal closes, you must present the leadership that will remain in place under new ownership. Lack of preparation here can seriously ding your acquisition value.
4. **Rolling stock:** Create a spreadsheet with all rolling stock, including VINs, license plate numbers, make, model, year, and status of the loan or lease for each. List the mileage or hours on each item.



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

5. **DOT:** When the company changes hands, all the rolling stock will have to be re-registered by the new owner with the department of transportation.

6. **Product sales by category:** Run a report that shows what percent of all sales are represented by the following super categories: cabinets, decking, doors, EWP, fasteners/hangers, lumber (dimension, commodity, sheet goods, treated), masonry, millwork, roofing, and windows.

7. **Customer concentration:** Run a report that shows gross profit margin percentage and sales as a percentage of all sales for your top 20 customers. Discuss your relationships if any one customer represent more than 5% of all business.

8. **Software:** List all the software you use, from ERP/POS to window and door design. List the software versions and the number of seats you hold for each.

9. **IT:** Generate a schematic of your IT system and explain your IT security.

10. **Real Estate:** Get fair market value (FMV) assessments for the monthly lease values you expect to charge the new ownership, if you become their landlord. BTW: If you are not paying yourself FMV lease amounts, start doing so ASAP. Underpayment of FMV will be negative adjustment to EBITDA, and overpayment a credit. If you have not separated the real estate and the business into two corporations, do so in advance of offering your company for sale. If you intend to offer the real estate for sale when the business is sold, get 3rd party value assessments now.

11. **EPA Phase 1:** Whether you are selling or leasing the land, you will need an EPA Phase 1 report. Get it commissioned going into the deal offering. That report will be shown as a companion to the CIM.

12. **Competition:** List your top five competitors. These won't always go into the CIM, but your investment banker needs to know the names.

13. **Buying Group:** Your buying group will be shown in the CIM, but if your company sells, you will dissolve your membership, as the new owner brings the business into their buying group.

14. **Target list:** List out who might want to buy your company, and who's a no-go.

15. **"Cap Table":** List out all owners of the business, by percentage of shareholdings. Do you have sign-off for the sale from every meaningful shareholder?

16. **Why are you selling?** There is no wrong answer to this question, but work with your investment banker to explain why. You can't just write: "I'm sick of working"... as much as you would like to say that!



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BY RUSS KATHREIN (WITH PETER GANAHL)

I RECENTLY wrote an article about establishing company culture. In response, I received some great feedback from Peter Ganahl, the president of Ganahl Lumber in Southern California. He shared an article he had written for his team. His perspective offers an important reminder about what culture is—and, just as importantly, what it isn't.

Before answering the question of what kind of culture they want at Ganahl Lumber and how they establish it, Peter laid out what culture is not:

- Plaques on the wall with lofty words.
- Giving someone “culture” in their job title.
- Virtue signaling in ads or press releases.
- Buzzwords like sustainable, family, or diversity—unless you define them clearly with specific behaviors.
- Mixing conflicting ideas: You can't have a culture of meritocracy and a culture of equal outcomes at the same time. Pick one.
- It's not goals. Goals are future-oriented. Culture is lived every day.
- And above all, it's not about us. Culture isn't “best in class,” “most admired,” or “fastest growing.” Those may be nice aspirations, but they don't define how people behave.

Peter summed it up this way: A successful culture is one that creates benefits for customers, shareholders, employees, and communities, in that order, over the long term. But even a strong culture can't do all the heavy lifting. You also need an achievable strategy and disciplined execution.

CULTURE: WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT ISN'T



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

I think that's a powerful warning. Too often, leaders let culture messaging become about feeling good or chasing trends. That's not culture—that's marketing.

I saw this firsthand years ago when I served on a local school board. We decided to create a mission statement for the district. After eight hours of workshoping, we produced three sentences that I can't even recall. What I do remember is one board member insisting we include the phrase “Global Village.” Why? Because Hillary Clinton had just released “It Takes a Village,” and the phrase sounded impressive. Never mind that it had nothing to do with our suburban elementary schools—yet it made the cut.

That's the danger. When leaders let their mission statements or cultural principles be driven by what's trendy, the result is meaningless. Core values should be a north star. They should guide you through challenges and changing environments. They should not shift with the mood of the country or exist to impress outsiders. They're for your people—your employees, customers, vendors, and stakeholders.

At Ganahl Lumber, culture is spelled out in clear, practical terms:

- **Performance Driven:** Reinforced through compensation.
- **Skin-in-the-Game:** Supported by their ESOP, growth, and rewards.
- **Hospitality:** Go positive, go first.
- **Relationships over Transactions.**
- **Housekeeping:** Take pride in your environment.
- **Subsidiarity:** Decisions made at the lowest possible level.

At Do it Best, we boil it down even further to three guiding points:

- **Our philosophy:** Serve others as we would like to be served.
- **Our mission:** Making the best even better.
- **Our goal:** Helping our members grow and achieve their dreams.

Notice what's missing. There's no “world-class,” “changing the world,” or vague promises tied to social trends. It's not that ideas like sustainability or diversity are wrong. But unless they're defined by specific behaviors, they don't give your people direction.

At the end of the day, culture isn't about slogans, titles, or glossy marketing. It's about how people behave when no one is watching. As a leader, your credibility depends on whether your team sees consistency between what you say and what you do. If you want a culture that lasts, stop chasing the perfect phrase. Instead, live the values you expect from your people.

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Why Deck Builders Prefer Westbury® Aluminum Railing

Since entering the aluminum railing market in 2007, Westbury® Aluminum Railing by Digger Specialties Inc. (DSI) has become a standout choice for professional deck builders nationwide. With aluminum rapidly gaining market share over wood, composite, steel, and vinyl railing, Westbury has distinguished itself by combining durability, low maintenance, and timeless design with installer-friendly engineering.

Jeff Woods Construction: A Standard of Quality

In Crossville, Tennessee, Jeff Woods Construction has built a reputation for excellence across three divisions: roofing, custom homes, and outdoor living. Rick Sells, outside sales consultant and team leader, described how Westbury became their railing of choice:

"In the past we used other products on our decks, but when we were introduced to Westbury Railings during a screen rail installation, we immediately noticed the difference in the quality of the powder coat. Since then, we almost exclusively offer Westbury in all our deck designs and screen rooms. Clients who expect quality and white-glove service can see the difference immediately. The product speaks for itself."

Sells emphasized that Westbury also makes life easier for installers and sales teams.

"Our installers love how stress-free Westbury has made the installation process. From a sales side, I appreciate that they don't just stick with two or three colors they offer 12, and Speckled Walnut is my personal favorite. Their customer support and training also stand head and shoulders above the rest. Chris and Ariana have always been responsive and top-shelf in every way."

The company recently opened a new showroom with a full Westbury railing display, allowing clients to see and feel the product in person. "That's been a great addition," said Sells. "We wanted to standardize our outdoor living offerings with only the best products, and that's why Westbury railing, paired with TimberTech decking, is what we lead with. Our clients value the look, warranty, and reliability. For us, it just makes sense."



Twin Brothers Construction: Precision and Design

In Minnesota, Twin Brothers Construction, Inc., led by Andrew and Ben Schoonover, has become known for crafting award-winning decks and outdoor living spaces. The third generation of builders in their family, the Schoonover's have built more than 300 decks in just seven years, earning over 250 five-star reviews and multiple industry recognitions.

"At Twin Brothers Construction, we've worked with a wide range of railing systems, and Westbury continues to be our top choice for aluminum railings," they said. "The Tuscany series, in particular, stands out for its strength, clean design, and long-term durability. The quality and precision engineering allow us to deliver consistently excellent results for our clients."

From the builder's perspective, installation is another reason Westbury stands out.

"The system is incredibly well thought out. Components align cleanly, allowing us to install with accuracy and efficiency. That precision means we can maintain high visual standards with tight, consistent lines that elevate the overall finish of every project."

Twin Brothers also appreciate the flexibility of Westbury's expanded product line. "We occasionally use VertiCable when clients want more open views, and Veranda when they want glass-panel elegance," they explained. "Both provide the same thoughtful design and durability. Our clients frequently comment on the refined look and low-maintenance appeal. It is a product line we are proud to use and one that adds lasting value to the decks we build."

From Tennessee to Minnesota and beyond, professional contractors agree:

Westbury® by DSI is not just a railing system, it is a partner in delivering outdoor living spaces that stand the test of time.



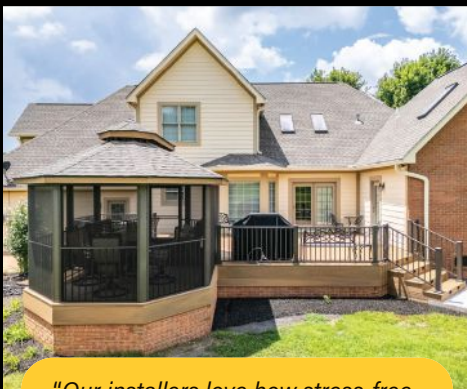
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QUICK FACTS

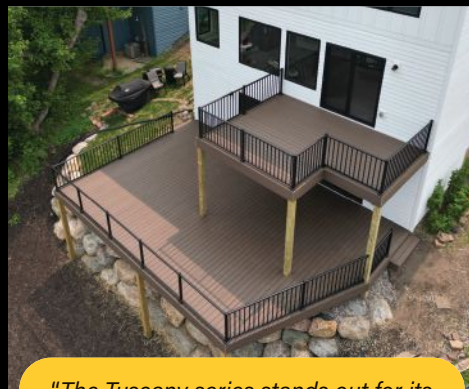
- 8 models / 22 styles
- 12 standard colors + custom options
- Proprietary 10-step AAMA 2604 powder coating
- Horizontal & vertical cable railing options
- Lifetime limited warranty

WHAT WESTBURY INSTALLERS ARE SAYING



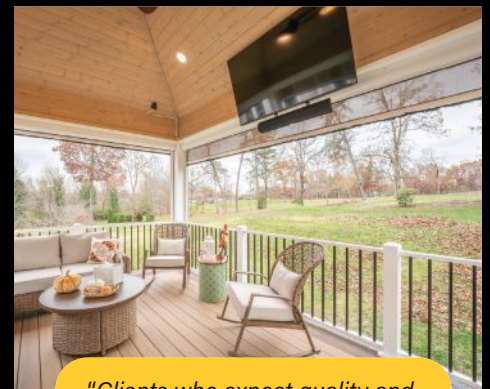
"Our installers love how stress-free Westbury has made the installation process."

Rick Sells
Jeff Woods Construction



"The Tuscany series stands out for its strength, clean design, and long-term durability."

Andrew & Ben Schoonover
Twin Brothers Construction



"Clients who expect quality and white-glove service can see the difference immediately."

Rick Sells
Jeff Woods Construction

Did You Know?

When installed by a **Westbury Certified Master Pro Company**, customers receive not just the **lifetime limited warranty** but also a **7-year labor warranty**.



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CONFERENCE RECAP

IN THIS YEAR'S sold out event, more than 220 LBM professionals travelled to Nashville, TN for the 10th annual LBM Strategies 2025 Conference to learn about trends in the industry and connect with peers from across the U.S.

The event featured leaders in the industry sharing their knowledge across a variety of subjects, including technology, team management, data trends, hiring, sales and more, while celebrating some of the best and brightest in the LBM world.

“Since launching in 2016, LBM Strategies has grown every year. I’m proud of that, but cannot take credit for it,” said LBM Journal Executive Editor and Publisher Rick Schumacher. “This event has very little to do with LBM Journal—and everything to do with the LBM community. It’s all about you and your business.”



BY WENDY STURGES | PHOTOS BY LIGHTSAIL VIDEO

LBM STRATEGIES 2025 CONFERENCE

DAY ONE of the conference kicked off with a tour of Walker Lumber, led by company President Ray Hayles. Attendees had the opportunity to see Walker’s showroom, lumberyard and drive-thru set-up, one of the efficiencies the company implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The day continued with a session on artificial intelligence from Shane Soule, president of Protec Panel and Truss, who has implemented a number of programs to help his company work more efficiently, such as data analyzation, meeting notes, project tracking, and more.

“I was blown away when I dropped a sales report in [ChatGPT]. It broke down trends, it broke down customers, it broke down areas to focus on,” Soule said. “It’s only a matter of time that I’ll hire a Director of AI before I hire a CFO, because I think that’s how important it is that this person knows how to use [this technology.]”

That session also featured a presentation from John Marshall, co-founder of AI Growth Partners, who broke down how widespread AI technology is in the LBM industry and how it can be leveraged.

“My first experience with AI was about 20 months ago. I realized I was talking to it like I talked to my executive assistant, because what I did if I wanted her to do something, I told her what I wanted, gave her context, I told her what the outcome was going to be, and I taught what performance should be. It’s exactly what you did with AI. It’s just a virtual assistant that pretty much knows everything, and it’s right about 85 to 90% of the time. But AI isn’t a technology story, it’s a business story. Users who understand it will gain the most. It helps you work smarter, not just faster.”

The first day wrapped with a recognition of LBM Journal’s 2025 Dealers of the Year, 2025 40 Under 40 class, LBM 100 companies, and Century Club members.



During the conference, Executive Editor & Publisher Rick Schumacher took time to recognize the achievements of several LBM dealers and professionals.



LBM 40 Under 40 class of 2025 attendees:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Abeer Saeed | Do it Best |
| Amy Wallace | Wallace Building Center |
| Andrew Quadrini | Wilson Lumber |
| Anthony Stephan | Wilson Lumber |
| Ashley Guest | Harbin Lumber Company Inc. |
| Austin Huskey | Huskey Building Supply |
| Bowen Chapman | Four Corners Building Supply |
| Brandon Gower | Wilson Lumber |
| Candice Huston | Calaveras & Sonora Lumber (Nations Best) |
| Chantel Jacobo | Ashby Lumber |
| Chris Stevenson | Building Center Stores |
| Chris Routhe | Millard Lumber Inc. |
| Chris Hansen | OrePac Building Products |
| Christopher Urso | Arnold Lumber Company |
| Cody Wallace | Wallace Building Center |
| Danny Moe | IWP |
| Emily Feirick | Big C Lumber |
| Faren Harding | Bliffert Lumber & Design |
| James Strattman | Your Building Centers |
| Justin Bigham | HT Building Products |
| Luke Lightfoot | Orange County Building Materials |
| Matt Rayol | Brazawood LLC |
| Megan Sumner | San Antonio Lumber Company |
| Mike Unwin | Hamilton Building Supply |
| Mike Leginski | Preston Feather Building Centers |
| Ryan Sparta | LBM Advantage |
| Ryan Ayers | Suppli |
| Sadie Hammond Berube | Hammond Lumber Company |
| Scott Nicholson | Dakota County Lumber Co. |
| Stokely Wischmeier | Hopson Lumber Co. |
| Victoria Zimmerman | Shepley Wood Products |



Century Club members who were in attendance, including two first-time attendees:

FIRST-TIME ATTENDEES

Building Center, Inc.	est. 1903	122 years
Congleton Lumber & Design Center	est. 1905	120 years
Hancock Lumber	est. 1848	177 years
Gilcrest/Jewett Lumber Company	est. 1856	169 years
Morsches Builders Mart	est. 1871	154 years
Siewers Lumber & Millwork	est. 1884	141 years
Ward Lumber	est. 1890	135 years
Bliffert Lumber & Hardware	est. 1904	121 years
Mead Lumber	est. 1910	115 years
Arnold Lumber Company	est. 1911	114 years
Burton Lumber	est. 1911	114 years
The Keim Company	est. 1911	114 years
Preston Feather Building Centers	est. 1915	110 years
Henry Poor Lumber Company	est. 1918	107 years
National Lumber Co.	est. 1919	106 years
Marcus Lumber	est. 1920	105 years
Big C Lumber	est. 1921	104 years
Hamilton Building Supply	est. 1924	101 years

Total: 2,229 years

2025 LBM 100 companies in attendance:

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Builders FirstSource | Irving, TX |
| 2 | US LBM | Atlanta, GA |
| 4 | Kodiak Building Partners | Englewood, CO |
| 8 | Parr Lumber | Hillsboro, OR |
| 10 | Mead Lumber | Omaha, NE |
| 13 | Hammond Lumber Company | Belgrade, ME |
| 16 | Nation's Best Holdings, LLC | Dallas, TX |
| 19 | Hancock Lumber | Casco, ME |
| 20 | Erie Materials, Inc. | Syracuse, NY |
| 24 | Bliffert Lumber & Hardware | Oak Creek, WI |
| 27 | Lezzer Lumber | Curwensville, PA |
| 28 | The Keim Company | Charm, OH |
| 30 | TAL Building Centers | Vancouver, WA |
| 32 | The Building Center, Inc. | Pineville, NC |
| 38 | Star Lumber & Supply | Wichita, KS |
| 40 | Friedman's Home Improvement | Petaluma, CA |
| 42 | Harbin Lumber Company, Inc. | Lavonia, GA |
| 43 | Big C Lumber Company | Granger, IN |
| 48 | Yoder's Building Supply Inc. | Fairplay, SC |
| 55 | Your Building Centers Inc. | Altoona, PA |
| 60 | Wilson Lumber | Huntsville, AL |
| 65 | Beisser Lumber Company | Grimes, IA |
| 67 | Ashby Lumber | Concord, CA |
| 68 | Garris Evans Lumber Company | Greenville, NC |
| 75 | Arnold Lumber Company | West Kingston, RI |
| 76 | Preston Feather Building Centers | Petoskey, MI |
| 85 | HT Building Products | Houston, TX |
| 89 | Morsches Builders Mart | Columbia City, IN |
| 92 | Hamilton Building Supply | Hamilton, NJ |
| 94 | Building Center | Gloucester, MA |
| 96 | Dakota County Lumber Co. | Farmington, MN |
| 100 | Protec Panel and Truss | Bremen, IN |



DAY TWO featured a packed schedule that kicked off with talks from Venveo's Beth PopNikolov and Farnsworth Group's Grant Farnsworth, Star Lumber's Patrick Goebel, and PARR's Carl Moyer and Michelle Rose.

A number of LBM Journal's 40 Under 40 class were in attendance and were a topic of conversation during a panel discussion with members Sadie Hammond Berube (Hammond Lumber Company), Bowen Chapman (Four Corners Building Supply), Justin Bigham (HT Building Products), Victoria Zimmerman (Shepley Wood Products), and Scott Nicholson (Dakota County Lumber Co.), moderated by class alumnus Emily Morgan (Ashby Lumber).



The group discussed a number of challenges and opportunities that the next generation of LBM leaders are facing from hiring and retaining to mentoring and what they're excited about for the future of the industry.

Zimmerman, who works in HR, discussed some of the unique aspects of Shepley Wood Products' hiring process that has helped attract new talent.

"We have [potential hires] shadow for the day. They get to spend the time with the team, see what their job would look like, and they give them a real sense of people they'll be working with. I think what is really important is that the culture is one of belonging," she said.

Bigham talked about how HT Building Products maintains a singular company culture despite having two locations hundreds of miles apart.

"Houston and Dallas are 200-plus miles separated, so the big focus that leadership is really worried about is developing these two different cultures. We're not being able to physically be in the same place with every employee consistently so we really focused on building a singular culture."

The day continued with a panel discussion on mergers and acquisitions where John D. Wagner and Ted Rieple from 1stWest M&A talked about how to maximize your company's value before considering a sale.

Thursday ended with concurrent roundtable discussions on timely topics, before heading downtown for a night of live music, dinner, and fun on the rooftop of Ole Red on Broadway.

DAY THREE featured a keynote speech from Bradley Hartmann, “The DAM Problem with Salespeople,” during which he discussed how even the best sales reps Drift to Account Management (the DAM problem), spending their days babysitting existing accounts instead of prospecting.

“In the last two years, we’ve seen folks who say, ‘I’ve got all these accounts, who has time to prospect?’ You have multiple salespeople that are all saying, ‘I’m really busy on time.’ What we see is companies shrinking, and salespeople are largely saying they’ve got a lot to do. They’re busy beavers that are working hard, and this is what we call DAM problem, we see this drift toward account management. When we have salespeople who are responsible for money management, constrained by time management, [that’s what] they predictably and reliably drift to.”

After the keynote, attendees had the chance to hear directly from builders about their day-to-day pain points and what they need in a partnership from LBM dealers.

The conference wrapped with a selection of hot topic roundtables with *LBM Journal* columnists Thea Dudley and Bradley Hartmann, along with Westline Capital Strategies’ Michael Wisnefski. ■



Next year’s conference will be held Oct. 14-16, 2026 at The Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee, WI. Register now at lbmstrategies.com or scan the QR code on this page.



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COFER BROTHERS

ESTABLISHED: 1919

We spoke with Katie Cofer Irvine, a fourth-generation family member and daughter of CEO Chip Cofer, about her family's business in Tucker, GA.

What was the company's early history like?

Over a century ago, when Tucker was little more than a stop between Lawrenceville and Atlanta, brothers Kelley and Reid Cofer hauled produce from their father's Snellville farm to Atlanta, dreaming of success. In 1919, they borrowed \$500 to open a small store on Tucker's red clay Main Street, swapping butter, eggs, and chickens for goods while creating a hub for local farmers. With merchandise ranging from horse collars to overalls, their slogan—"Trade elsewhere and we both lose"—captured the spirit of their business. Over time, the store grew into seven locations, adding groceries, dry goods, and eventually building materials. In 1968, Gene Cofer became president, steering the company toward construction supplies as its core. By the 1990s, sales topped \$30 million, and in 2000 Chip Cofer led the third generation into a new era. Today, with the fourth generation on board, Cofer Brothers Inc. continues to thrive, supplying modern building materials for a diverse trade.

What keeps the company going after so many years?

What has kept us going all these years is the foundation of family and community. From the very beginning, our business has been about more than just building materials—it's been about building relationships. Each generation has carried forward the same values of hard work, integrity, and service, and that consistency is what creates trust with our customers. We've been fortunate to serve not only repeat customers, but also their children and grandchildren, which is a testament to the relationships we've built over time. At the heart of it all, it's our people—our family, our employees, and our loyal customers—who keep us moving forward year after year.

What do you see in the future for the company?

Looking ahead, I see our company continuing to build on the same foundation that has carried us for more than a century—family values, strong relationships, and a commitment to quality. The building materials industry is always evolving, and we are embracing innovation while staying true to the personalized service that sets us apart. Our future lies in blending tradition with progress: investing in technology and sustainable practices, while also making sure that when our customers walk through the door, they feel the same sense of trust and community that has defined us for generations. Ultimately, we want to ensure that the next 100 years are just as impactful as the last, not only for our family but for the families and communities we serve. We are most excited about the fourth (and potentially fifth) generation taking over the business and continuing for another century! ■

A CENTURY OF SERVICE



CEO CHIP COFER AND KATIE COFER IRVINE



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

lbmjournals.com/nominate

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

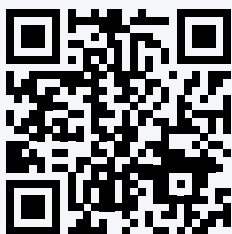
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Glennallen Hardware and Lumber serves as lifeline in remote Alaska

BY MIKE BERGER & WENDY STURGES

For the majority of the U.S., a trip to the hardware store is often a quick errand, maybe a 30-minute drive to get supplies for a project or job. In many parts of Alaska, a trip to the store requires a bit more time and planning.

Run by Ernie and Rhonda Christian, Glennallen Hardware and Lumber is located in the Copper River Valley, approximately 180 miles from the nearest town, making it an oasis of supplies for local pros and customers for nearly 30 years.

“We are the only hardware store here, so the community does rely on us,” Ernie Christian said. “I’m more than willing to go the extra step to make sure that our customers are helped in the best way we can.”

Creating a community hub

Although the Glennallen area is home to less than 500 residents—according to 2020 Census data—the store is a draw for hundreds more in the region. Christian estimates more than 800 active Do it Best Rewards members in the company’s system, giving the couple a much wider range of customers to serve.

As a result, the Christians—who took ownership of the store in 2014—have worked to build a wide array of inventory from building materials and hardware to sporting goods and housewares, aiming to create as much as a one-stop shopping experience as possible.

“I stock a good variety of product, and we try to keep a little more on the shelf than probably most stores because when somebody’s driving 70 miles one way to shop us, we need to have [what they need], because otherwise they can’t finish their project.”

While a good portion of the business is seasonal, the store still operates year-round, even in the winter, when snowfall averages 10-11 inches a month and the temperature dips below zero almost daily.

“Our market up here is real short, usually it starts towards the end of May and goes through September, [but] I still sell lumber year-round, amazingly, even when it’s 20 below



outside,” Christian said. “People kind of move inside and do indoor projects, whether it’s sheetrock, insulation, remodeling a bathroom, stuff like that.”

The company offers curbside pickup for convenience, and a number of in-store services, like custom pipe cutting and threading, and special orders. Glennallen Hardware also recently launched an equipment rental program, an idea that quickly took off with customers, Christian said. The couple is also looking into other ways to provide more services in the future to make each visit to their location even more worthwhile.

“One thing I always say, in retail, and even in life, is that success becomes stagnant without new ideas. We try to build in that extra foot or extra mile for our customers the best we can.”

Adding value through service

Operating in a town like Glennallen comes with its own unique challenges. Due to the cost of transporting goods to Alaska, prices are often higher than pros would see in the Lower 48.

“All that costs money, something that we deal with up here in Alaska,” he said. “For anybody that has a business in Alaska, freight is a big issue. You become your own basic logistics person.”

Add in inflation and passed-on tariff costs and the prices only go higher, Christian said, although he remains optimistic the economy will improve. Despite those challenges, the couple—along with their five store employees—works to keep prices low and add value wherever they can through the store’s customer service.

“I deliver to a wide-ranging area. I end up doing deliveries all the way out to McCarthy, which is about 130 miles each way. Or people will call in and place an order, and we’ll put it out by our gate after hours, because sometimes they’re not going to get here during regular hours. And then, of course, we’re always willing to stay a little longer.”

That dedication also helped the business navigate through challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the couple focused on keeping critical supplies on the shelf when many other local retailers could not. Additionally, the Christians have recently made improvements to inventory management, allowing customers to see in-stock items via the company’s website through co-op group Do it Best.

In return, Christian said the business has been rewarded with a strong customer base that will support Glennallen for years to come.

“We see our regular customers, pretty much in here every single day and we definitely get to know them. Our staff knows everybody by their name,” he said. “We’re very appreciative of our customers and our community, and we have some really good customer friends. I’ve always been in the business where the money is a benefit [but] the relationships you build up with your customers, is by far more important.” ■



Get to know Glennallen Hardware and Lumber

FOUNDED:	MID-1980's
OWNERSHIP:	FAMILY
LOCATIONS:	1
EMPLOYEES:	7
CO-OP/BUYING GROUP:	DO IT BEST
CUSTOMER MIX:	70% RETAIL / 30% PRO
ERP SOFTWARE:	EPICOR

How does the tax bill impact your valuation?

BY SAM BROWNELL

IN OUR OPINION, the tax bill that was signed into law on July 4 provides numerous benefits for dealers to grow their businesses. If tax strategy is handled well, there are also valuation implications. Below we summarize what we believe are eight critical parts of the tax law that dealers need to plan for to maximize their value and protect their net worth.

1. Income Taxes

Summary

- The bill retains the current seven income tax brackets and the top marginal tax bracket remains at 37%.
- The standard deduction is increased to \$15,750 for individuals and \$31,500 for joint filers.
- C Corporation tax rate remains at 21%.

Valuation implications

If you are an S Corporation or LLC, wider tax brackets could mean lower tax liability and higher after-tax income. Increased after-tax income can increase company value.

2. State and Local Tax (SALT) Deduction

Summary

- SALT cap is increased to \$40,000 in 2025. The cap will increase by 1% annually through 2029. However, in 2030, the cap will revert to \$10,000.
- The passthrough entity tax is not limited.

Valuation implications

Paying state and local taxes through the business will continue to be an important strategy to reduce your tax liability, including prepayment of 2030 taxes in 2029. Some of these strategies are likely to be considered non-recurring, which means they will be added back to your cash flow, thus increasing your valuation.

3. Overtime Pay

Summary

- Overtime pay now qualifies for a taxpayer deduction of up to \$12,500 for individuals and \$25,000 for joint filers.
- Taxpayers can claim this deduction even if they do not itemize. However, the deduction is only available in tax years 2025 through 2028.

Valuation implications

This deduction is taken by employees and therefore does not impact the payroll taxes paid by the business. However, employers who educate their employees about this benefit could see increased productivity, which can impact valuations positively.

4. Qualified Business Income (QBI) Deduction

Summary

- The QBI deduction will remain at 20% and is excluded from itemized deductions.
- There is no expiration date for the QBI deduction.

Valuation implications

Work with your accountant to maximize your QBI deduction. Reducing your tax liability frees up cash for higher return on investment (ROI) products and services. Higher after-tax cash flow and the potential for higher growth can be a net positive for your company's value.

5. Bonus Depreciation and Expensing

Summary

- Allows 100% depreciation of assets put into service after Jan. 19, 2025 (Section 168).
- Increases the Section 179 expensing allowance to \$2.5 million, with a dollar-for-dollar reduction for assets over \$4 million.
- Allows up to a 100% deduction for Research and Development expenses paid or incurred after Dec. 31, 2024.

Valuation implications

Every owner should be looking to use these tax rules to invest in high ROI products like technology. From a valuation standpoint, one-time investments are added back to cash flow and high ROI products can increase your margins.

6. Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)

Summary

- 12% increase to each state's allocation starts in 2026.
- The private activity bond threshold for receiving the LIHTC was reduced from 50% to 25%, potentially making it easier for affordable housing projects to access tax-exempt bonds.

Valuation implications

Dealers who help educate their builder customers about the changes to the LIHTC can build deeper relationships and increase their sales. Higher sales with stable margins lead to higher net cash flow and higher valuations.

7. Savings Accounts for Minors

Summary

- These are IRA (pre-tax) accounts for individuals under age 18. The maximum contribution is \$5,000.
- Currently, contributions can be made starting in July 2026. Distributions can be made only after an individual turns 18.
- Employers can make contributions of up to \$2,500.

Valuation implications

If you have employees with children or who are looking to start a family, helping them build their family's net worth reduces your tax liability and can help with retention. More productive employees can increase margins and valuations.

8. Estate and Gift Tax Exemption

Summary

- The lifetime estate and gift tax exemption will be set at \$15 million for individuals and \$30 million for joint filers starting in 2026.
- These limits will be adjusted for inflation starting in 2027.
- There is no expiration date on the exemptions.

Valuation implications

Even with no expiration date for the higher estate tax limit, the value of your business and property is likely to increase faster than inflation. Therefore, get your business valued every 2-3 years or when a material event occurs so you can make sure your wealth preservation strategies are up to date.

With so many potential strategies to invest in your people and your other assets, all dealers need to work with their advisors to grow revenue, increase margins and boost valuations. ■

Note: This summary is provided for informational purposes only. As some of the amended rules are still being written, it is important to stay informed since updates are likely. Stratus Business Advisors provide services to independent dealers, which include valuation, succession planning, financial planning and risk management. Stratus does not provide accounting or legal services. Please consult your CPA or tax attorney to determine your specific needs.

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



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A photograph of two men in a lumber warehouse. The man on the left is younger, wearing a grey t-shirt and blue jeans. The man on the right is older, wearing a dark blue polo shirt and a tool belt, holding a yellow clipboard and a pen. They are standing in an aisle between tall stacks of lumber on red metal shelving. The lighting is bright, and the background shows more stacks of wood.

TRAINING NEW HIRES TO SUCCEED

This month's question has to do with setting up new employees for success in the LBM industry. For some time now, LBM dealers have reported that it has become increasingly difficult to hire and retain new staff, especially as older employees retire. That makes it all the more important that when dealers do find good staff, they train them right the first time.

BY LBM JOURNAL READERS



When seasoned LBM pros announce plans to retire, many of us are caught off guard, wondering how we'll manage once that experience walks out the door. The obvious answer is a strong, intentional training process that keeps knowledge flowing to the next generation. But too often, that doesn't happen. The old "learn by osmosis" approach doesn't work for everyone. If we want new hires to follow in the footsteps of those who've dedicated their lives to this industry, we need to equip them with the tools to succeed. How are other dealers training their new hires and positioning them for what we all hope will be long, successful careers in this great industry?

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 recently implemented training sessions for new hires with all employees across all platforms. So even if you aren't the Salesforce (program) 'expert,' you train with several different people to glean the important info from each."

"I think there needs to be preplanning. From the experiences at this business, people tend to let others know their intentions to retire six months or more before they actually retire. This should mean that training someone to take on that specific role should start a minimum of three months prior to the retirement. You can train someone all day on the typical job duties, but they need to see how something is handled when everything isn't as it should be, if there is a hiccup in the normal duties, or whatever it may be that is out of the norm. Giving someone a minimum of the three months means they will most likely get to experience those hiccups and see how they are handled. This isn't what seems to be the norm though, it seems that someone retires and then the person that takes the role had either minimal training or no training before taking over. This causes more issues than it would have given the proper amount of training."

"Mentoring."

"Training for outside sales involves shadowing and working alongside outside sales team members as well as estimating and quoting with direct training from management."

"Unfortunately we are one of the companies that isn't thinking outside of the norm to get others trained in advance."

"Our company is great at training new hires and old hires with refresher courses all year round."

"Leadership is geared toward mentorship: observe others doing, doing with close supervision, doing with collaboration, doing with less supervision. It still assumes interest on the part of the mentee, and committed leadership by the mentor."

"We are committed to supporting our employees' long-term growth and career goals. To do this, we regularly meet with team members to better understand their desired career paths, as well as connect with those approaching retirement to help us plan thoughtfully for the future. While we are never looking to rush anyone's transition, early conversations and proactive planning allow us to prepare more effectively."

"To further support our employees, we have a dedicated in-house Talent Acquisition Specialist and Employee Development Specialist who are dedicated to recruiting top talent and providing guidance and resources across career planning, training, and development. Additionally, we've launched our Aspiring Leadership Program, a nine-month intensive training initiative designed to identify and develop the future leaders of our company. These are just some of the steps we have taken to set our employees up for success."

"Initiate the tough conversations early and get onboarding new talent. The cost today is a fraction of the cost tomorrow, make a plan and hold up your end of the bargain."

"Mentorship works some, passing on knowledge acquired over decades helps. Allowing them to be creative within reason seems to help. Basically integrate them into the organization."

"In my experience, the key is moving away from 'shadow and absorb' training and instead building a repeatable system that balances practical hands-on learning with structured checkpoints. At our yard, we treat training the same way we approach building projects—plan, measure, and adjust. For example, we've broken roles into skill sets (product knowledge, systems/processes, customer interaction, and logistics). Each new hire is paired with a mentor, but we don't just leave it open-ended—we map out what they should learn week by week. We also use cross-training across departments so new hires see how purchasing, sales, and yard operations connect. That builds broader understanding and prevents silos. Just as important, we've found you can't only train 'what' and 'how.' You need to explain 'why.' Veterans know instinctively why certain products are pushed, why loads are staged a certain way, or why certain customers require a different approach. Documenting those unwritten rules and making them part of training materials has been huge for us. Finally, we don't wait until someone is retiring to start knowledge transfer. We identify top performers early and have them teach or lead training sessions—passing down their habits while they're still in the thick of it. That not only prepares the next generation but also gives the veterans pride in leaving a legacy." ▶

“Creating a more structured training approach with ongoing check-in from HR to assess their progression (instead of osmosis in the deep end).”

“We have a structured HR department who works with the new employee to learn our company handbook and our culture. They then work in the millwork shop for a day or two and also in the lumber area, pulling and delivering products. Next, we have department heads who train the employee on product knowledge and sales training. It is important that the new employees feel welcome and understand that they are an important part of our company’s success.”

“We have a structured training program for new hires who will eventually be OSRs. This training lasts from 18-32 months, depending on the knowledge and how fast they pick up the training.”

“With our last five retirees, we’ve been lucky to get at least a year’s notice. This has enabled us to hire a replacement and create a training and transition plan for both the new hire and the retiree.

All of the retirees have been open and willing to train in their replacement and are invested in their success because they care about the customer and the relationship they’ve built over the years (often decades). They have been able to retire with ease, the transition with the customer is smooth, and the new employee feels supported while they are learning the ropes.”

“Many of our veteran employees have opted for part-time, and while it isn’t the best practice for continuity with the customer experience, it allows the veterans more time to impart knowledge on the newer, younger employees while the new employees assist the veterans with the new technology.”

“We’ve utilized some training put on by colleges as well for frontline leaders and utilized sales and management coaches.”

“Shadowing training employees, product knowledge training, industry networking, hands-on manager training.”

“Companies need to plan for the future. When you have an employee that is obviously approaching retirement, you need to plan for that day. Find the person who will one day fill that position. Have them work together to learn the position, let the new person experience the job. Have the senior employee mentor and oversee how the new person interacts with others. This person should be allowed to make decisions as if they are already on the job. This lets management see what the future looks like while having the experience to fall back on.”

Responses from wholesale distributors, manufacturers, and service providers:

“Part of the challenge is that industry know-how often lives in the heads of experienced employees as tribal knowledge. By moving that knowledge into your operating procedures and software tools, you can de-silo it and make it easier/faster for new hires to pick up.”

“Create an environment of sharing all knowledge; no one should have all the answers and be the keeper of how to do everything. Everything should run well like you’re there even when you’re not there. Also, create an environment where people are empowered to make their own decisions. Do what you think until I tell you not to. I’m old school—I have had to learn everything on my own; shadowing different people with different styles will allow you to mold your own style. You have to find the right people quickly and also give the new person time to learn from the one retiring. There are many different ways to complete a task and arrive at the same conclusion.”

“Start early with new hires on cross-training with experienced associates. Continual training should be a focus.”

“We have plans to make growth and development of our people a priority in 2026, and for a lifetime after. Those new to the industry are hungry to grow and eager to know about their growth paths. We aren’t great at developing most of our people (not including superstars) beyond their current positions. We recognize a need to grow in this area.”

“As a younger professional in the industry, I’d say the torch will be difficult to be passed unless those with the torch pass it with intention. I believe hoping the next generation will do the right thing is ignorant and they need leaders to guide them.”

“Having been at different levels as a retail, wholesale, and manufacturing rep, I would say cross training is especially important and valuable to new people and gives them insights into segments they might not know exist. Also inviting them to meetings and networking opportunities with regional, national, and even local organizations within the industry; this also promotes self-confidence and personal strength to do the job!”

“Training has to be part of your culture at all times. Even seasoned people need refreshers, and those sessions can spark some collaboration between experienced people and new people.”

“I believe we need to utilize the seasoned employees as mentors. Have a true mentor program. You can have a formal onboarding but there are some things that are not taught well in those scenarios. There is a reason people did so well in this industry and that they earned the respect of your partners and customers, use that as the best part of your training process. Maybe even designate people who are not that close to retirement but still could provide a long-term mentor/mentee relationship.”

“Being an 80-year-old company, we are starting to see this more often than not. We have been fortunate to find young employees who can be mentored by aging staff long before they retire. It is still a struggle to find the right people, just don’t wait until the last minute. About 20% of our staff has been with us more than 30 years! It’s difficult to find commitment like that these days.”



How does your company train new employees?



NOTE: RESPONDENTS COULD CHOOSE MORE THAN ONE ANSWER.

Comment from a dealer:

“We are a small, fast-paced independent and tend to hire seasoned LBM personnel when needed. Expectations are high and there is no time to spend training—either you know it or you better put the time in to learn it. Employees are expected to use the resources at their disposal to problem-solve. Don’t be afraid to ask questions of the experienced employees, but don’t ask the same thing more than once. Utilize the vendors and the internet, maybe even read some books. Take responsibility for your career and don’t expect others to do it for you. We veterans learned the hard way and those of us who are still in the industry are successful, not because we were coddled or necessarily exposed to endless training and seminars. No, not through osmosis, but through hard work and a savvy understanding of your market. Put in the time and do the work, this is a great industry that offers great opportunities if you do.” ■

HAVE A REAL ISSUE?
Send it to Rick@LBMJournal.com.

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Storage Systems for LBM Dealers

- The Auto-Stak System
- Cantilever Rack Systems
- Metal Buildings
- Drive-Thru Systems
- Millwork Storage Systems
- Pallet Rack Systems
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HOW COVID EXPOSED THE FLAWS IN LBM SALES COMPENSATION—AND THE SMARTEST MOVES LEADERS ARE MAKING NOW

BY BRADLEY HARTMANN

Evaluating compensation plans for salespeople is a journey not unlike Charles Darwin's exploration of evolution. Along the way, you'll find yourself talking about herding cats, hunting lions, and giving the side-eye to a few sacred cows grazing inside your organization.

That's what I discovered in interviews for this article.

If you're a leader, you know compensation isn't just about money. It reveals nothing less than your firm's values, priorities, and understanding of human psychology. The right comp plan organizes a group of individuals—each motivated by their own self-interest—into a cohesive team pulling in the same direction.

OF COURSE, even the best-designed plans can be upended by forces outside your control. That's exactly what leaders faced in the summer of 2020. The sales metrics our industry had long relied on to align behaviors and rewards mutated seemingly overnight.

Here is how three leaders characterized their insights during this period of change:

"The key assumption was that commodity prices would always be stable—and they had been for a long time. Then COVID hit, and salespeople did less work selling OSB at \$50 a sheet than they did when it was \$15."

— Sales Manager, Northeast

"Our top salesperson doesn't bring in new business. I land it and hand it off. He's great at account management, but we pay him like he's great at sales. But I don't have the time to manage it, so what am I supposed to do?"

— Owner, Midwest

"We pretend that paying on gross margin motivates reps to push margins higher. But reps develop margin ruts and use these rules of thumb they haven't questioned in years. Purchasing makes a great buy and sales gives it away."

— Owner, Northwest

During COVID we could only react to the changes facing us. Never had the role of the salesperson been less central to driving transactions; never had their compensation been higher. Leaders, understandably, chose not to change comp plans then: Profitability was at record highs, reliable labor was scarce, and changing plans mid-crisis felt reckless. But the aftershocks that, frankly, the entire industry knew were coming, exposed structural weaknesses we can and must fix now. Here's how:

Step 1: Invert; Step 2: Build from first principles

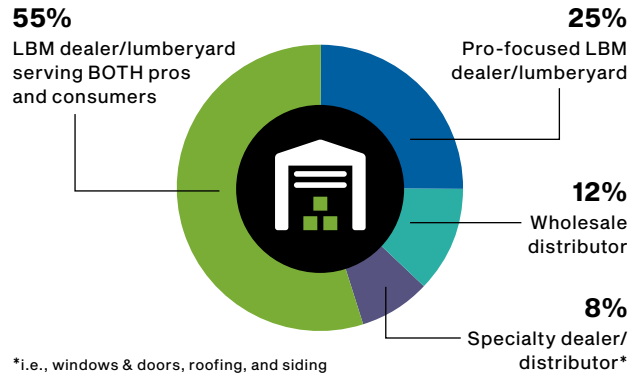
We should all follow the advice of the late Charlie Munger, Warren Buffett's right-hand man at Berkshire Hathaway for 45 years. "Invert the problem first," he said. "Start with the outcomes you wish to avoid."

So, in 2026, what *don't* you want?

- You don't want overpaid reps who are comfortable not selling at the very moment you need new business.
- You don't want your best people to leave.
- You don't want complacent underperformers consuming disproportionate time, attention, and overhead dollars.

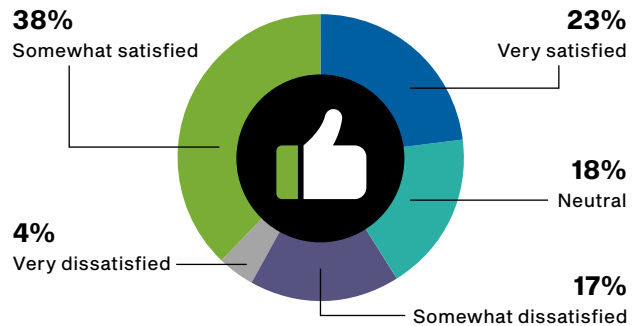
Second, Munger stressed **first principles thinking**: Break your problem into its basic truths, then rebuild the system to align with them. Here are five first principles for LBM sales compensation that I believe will work for you. ►

Which of the following best describes your company's primary business?

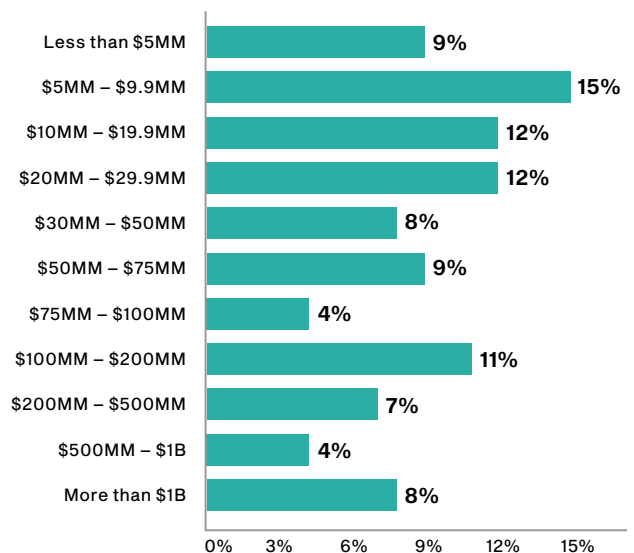


How satisfied are you with your current sales compensation plan?

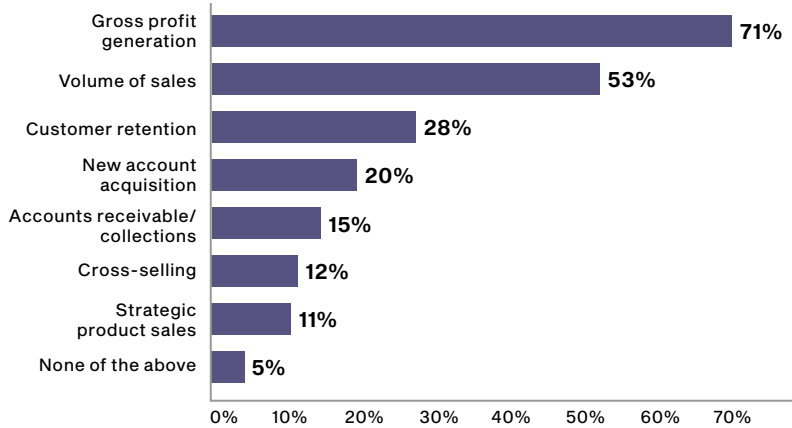
(in terms of motivating performance, fairness, and business alignment)



Which one of the following best describes your company's total sales volume in 2024?



Which sales behaviors are most rewarded by your current plan?

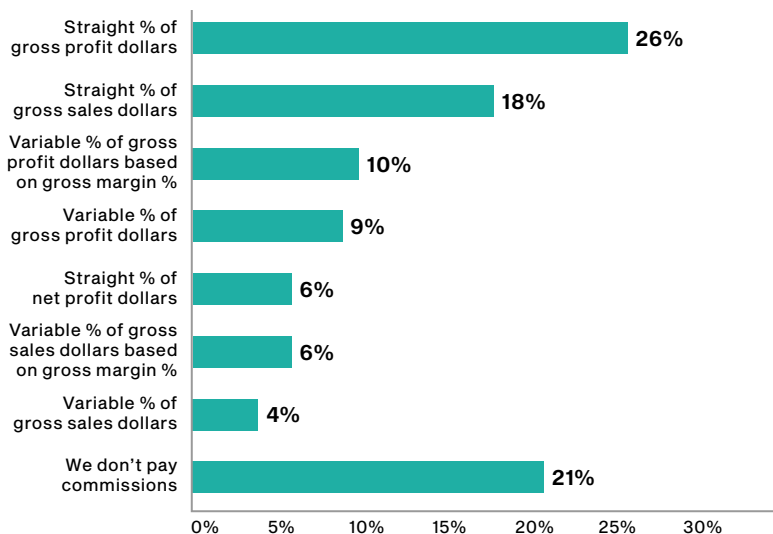


How effectively does your current compensation plan drive the specific sales behaviors your organization values most?

(e.g., prospecting, margin protection, retention, etc.)

EXCELLENT	Strong alignment and clear impact on behaviors	18%
GOOD	General alignment with positive influence	50%
FAIR	Some alignment but limited impact	26%
POOR	Misaligned or no measurable impact	5%

If you pay commissions, what is the basis by which you pay those commissions?



FIRST PRINCIPLES OF LBM SALES COMPENSATION

1. Effective compensation plans make the desired behaviors clear and aligns them with strategy.

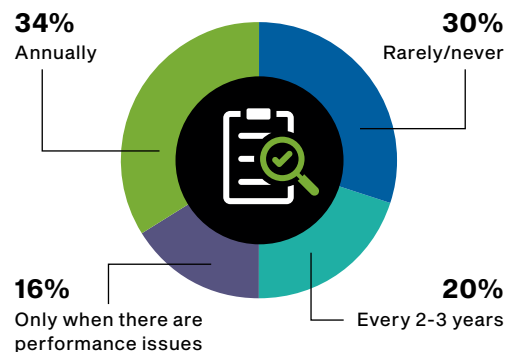
When you change the **what** (goals) or the **how** (strategy), compensation must change in lockstep—or you risk losing market share as top reps insist they “can’t prospect” because they’re herding cats: chasing down information, completing their own takeoffs, and taking last-minute trips to hand-deliver forgotten joist hangers at a jobsite 37 miles away. This behavior isn’t a character flaw on the part of the sales rep. It’s the logical outcome of an owner or manager’s plan that pays for the maintenance of existing accounts the same as hunting for new ones.

Here’s the key question to ask: If your goal this year includes taking market share, can sales reps earn more money by winning net new business rather than babysitting their best customers? If not, your goal is at odds with your comp plan.

2. Personal self-interest will drive salespeople to maximize their total compensation with the least effort.

Humans are expert puzzle-solvers when it comes to effort and reward. If your team behaves in ways that undercut your goals, it’s far easier to change the plan than to change human nature. The best comp plans make what’s best for employees also what’s best for executing your strategy.

How often do you review or revise your sales comp plan?



3. True lion hunters are scarce—and should be paid like it.

Very few people enjoy picking up the phone, interrupting a busy stranger, and converting a non-customer into a customer. Those who can do it reliably are scarce and valuable, especially in soft markets like ours today.

Closing **incremental** (new) and **accretive** (profitable) net new business—converting non-customers to customers and selling new product categories to existing accounts—is a different activity than account management and customer service.

Your favorite football team doesn't pay its quarterback and middle linebacker the same. Different activities impact winning in different ways. And some positions are harder to replace than others.

The same principles apply to constructing your own sales roster.

4. In a cyclical industry, net new business drives above-average returns and must be incentivized.

One-size-fits-all plans seem fair, simple to administer, and predictable. But beneath the surface, that simplicity stifles top performance as tenured reps with mature books of business adopt an annuity mindset and abandon the prospecting your company needs to grow.

Consider a few common patterns:

- A rookie in pure prospecting mode has the same comp plan as the 35-year veteran who refuses to prospect at all.
- A rep flips a competitor's crown-jewel account after three years of work and then earns the same commission rate as a colleague who was handed a new account from the owner who closed a new deal on the golf course.
- A Boomer sales legend's self-managing, high-volume accounts are parceled out across the team—and you pay hunting wages for maintenance work.

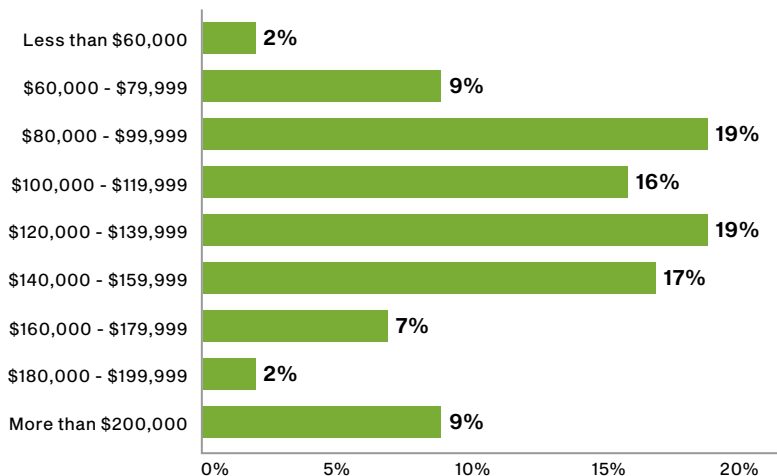
Feels rather socialist, doesn't it?

5. Time is a salesperson's primary constraint.

When time gets tight, reps do whatever pays the fastest. If a dollar from an old, bourbon-drinking buddy's account pays the same as a dollar resulting from intentionally interrupting a busy builder who buys from your competitor, who do you think the salesperson is going to call? This is why the constant pursuit of **net new business** must be incentivized. ▶

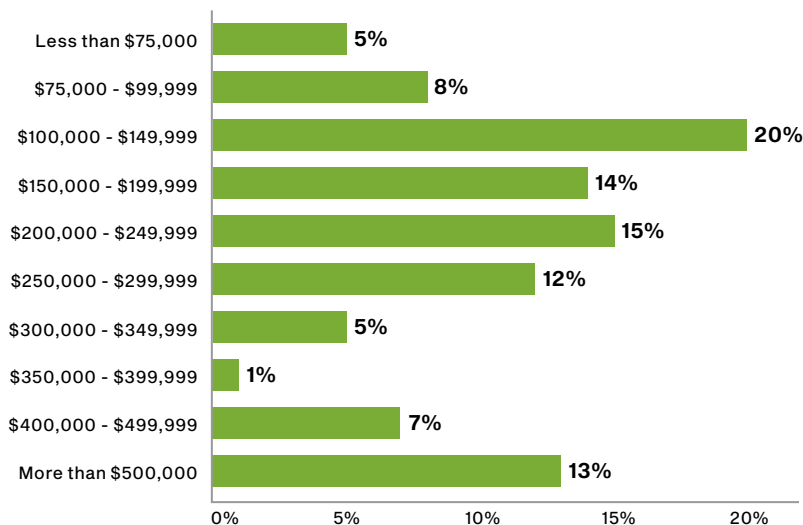
How much, on average, did you pay outside salespeople in cash compensation in 2024?

(Includes base, commission and bonuses)



How much did you pay your highest-paid outside salesperson in cash compensation in 2024?

(Includes base, commission and bonuses)



Which one of the following retirement plans does your company offer?

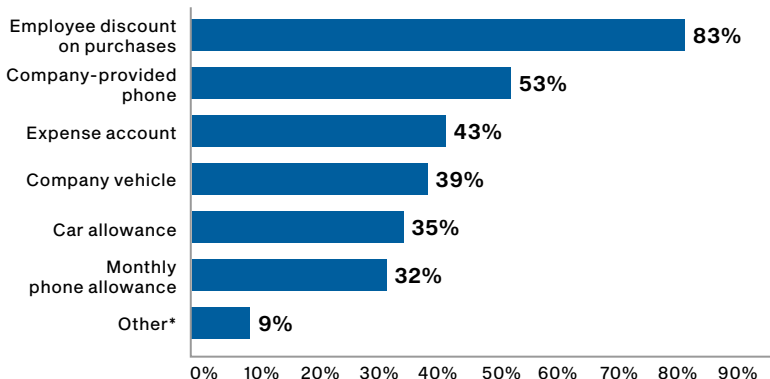
401(k) with company match	66%
401(k) without company match	7%
SIMPLE IRA (Savings Incentive Match for Employees)	7%
SEP IRA (Simplified Employee Pension)	2%
Company offers a different retirement plan	7%
Company doesn't offer a retirement plan	10%



Does your company offer health insurance coverage?

Yes, and company pays part of the monthly premium for employee + family coverage	55%
Yes, and company pays part of the monthly premium for employee-only coverage	20%
Yes, and company pays 100% of the monthly premium for employee + family coverage	3%
Yes, and company pays 100% of the monthly premium for employee-only coverage	9%
Yes, but company does not contribute to monthly premium	3%
No, company does not offer health insurance coverage	8%

What perks does your company offer its salespeople?



FROM PRINCIPLES TO PRACTICE

The following suggestions can improve both your compensation plan and your sales results. They've been invaluable in the LBM compensation projects my team and I have led in recent years.

1. Reward contribution, not attribution

Too often we pay a rep simply because their name is on the account. A builder places an order at the sales counter and an oblivious sales rep is paid a commission. That's attribution, not contribution. Ask the essential question: Did this order come in because of the rep's effort and skill? If yes, that's contribution. If no, that's attribution.

Here's what paying for contribution looks like:

- Pay hunting rates for lion hunting (e.g., a higher commission during the first 18 months of a new account or for selling new product categories within existing accounts).
- Pay maintenance rates for maintenance work (e.g., a lower rate for mature, self-managing accounts).
- Tie maintenance comp to product mix and margin, not just volume.

Next step: Review each rep's list of accounts monthly. Most reps can't add real value to 75-100 customers, so right-size their book (50 or fewer is a good target for most dealers). Then align pay with actual contribution—wallet share growth and opening of new accounts—not just account volume.

*** Other includes:**

- Bonuses
- Gas Card
- Mileage reimbursement
- Plan printing, supplies
- Provide lunch everyday
- Training reimbursement
- Trips

2. Clarify your ideal customer

“Sell everything to everyone!” is mediocrity’s tagline. Strategy begins with focus. Tracking gross margin is a start, but calculating net profitability by account shows which customers drive growth. Cost-to-serve varies widely, and high-touch, poor-fit accounts can erode profits.

Next step: Define your ideal customer by segment and use a simple net-profitability calculator to help reps spot the attributes of your most profitable accounts. Then make sure each rep has an individual sales pipeline—quantified and prioritized monthly—and track their prospecting efforts (for example, at least two face-to-face meetings per week with qualified prospects) aimed at new customers who fit that profile.

3. Tame the Black Swan

A “Black Swan” event is characterized by its extreme rarity, severe impact, and it being “predictable” only in hindsight. COVID checks those boxes. No LBM leader anticipated the pandemic and adjusted their comp plan accordingly then. But you can model future volatility now.

Next step: Build a financial model that stress-tests your comp plan against commodity swings. Cap windfalls from price spikes unrelated to effort and redirect those dollars into incentives for new business.

4. Courage over capability

Changing compensation is hard and leaders of lion hunters must display the courage to lead. You’ll need to challenge some sacred cows within your organization and the objections are predictable: “Now’s not the best time”; “This is gonna upset the old guard”; “But this is the way we’ve always done it.” This is why leadership requires selling an internal vision, too.

Charlie Munger put it best: “The most important rule in management is this: Get the incentives right.” One leader did just that and the result was incremental, accretive sales growth.

“As soon as COVID ended and things leveled out, we changed comp. I put real dollars on new business and took dollars away when they don’t sell new. If you’re just going to sit back and be an order taker, you’ll earn the minimum. And it’s worked. The last two years we’ve exceeded our double-digit net-profit goals.”

— VP of Sales, West

Design a plan that rewards the behaviors your strategy depends on. Pay for contribution, not mere attribution. Differentiate hunting for new accounts from maintaining existing ones. And above all, make the most profitable path the same one that captures additional market share.

As Darwin observed (cats, lions, and cows included): It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most adaptable to change. ■

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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. He is the host of The Craft of LBM Sales Podcast, available for free on all podcast platforms. You can email him at bradley@bradleyhartmannandco.com.

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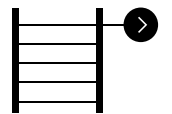


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TECH TOOLS

As the world changes, technology makes it easier to keep pace

BY MIKE BERGER

BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION writer Arthur C. Clarke once famously wrote in the 1973 revision of his *Profiles of the Future*, “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic,” meaning that when technology becomes so advanced and sophisticated that it is beyond the understanding of an average person, it appears to be miraculous, supernatural, or magical.

Luckily for the LBM dealer and their staff, today’s technology offerings for the LBM industry, while very advanced, can be understood and put to good use to help the dealer and his or her business stay competitive in an ever-changing world. From managing inventory to tracking delivery to customer-facing interactions, technology can help LBM dealers run more efficiently, especially in the face of diminished workforces and a volatile economic environment.

It’s because of the rapid evolution of the digital world, industry experts say, that it’s more important than ever for LBM dealers stay atop the technology curve and pay attention to how it can impact all aspects of business. “As the lumber and building materials industry looks ahead to 2026, dealers are increasingly embracing digital transformation to stay competitive and meet evolving customer expectations,” advises Nicole Molczan, senior sales manager of building supply for Epicor Software. “Ecommerce is gaining traction, with more dealers offering online quoting, account management, and delivery scheduling. Automation is streamlining operations—from takeoffs to GPS-enabled delivery tracking

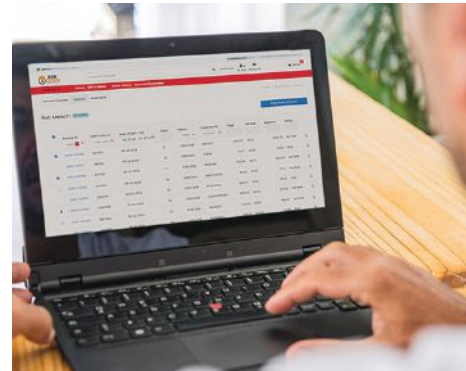
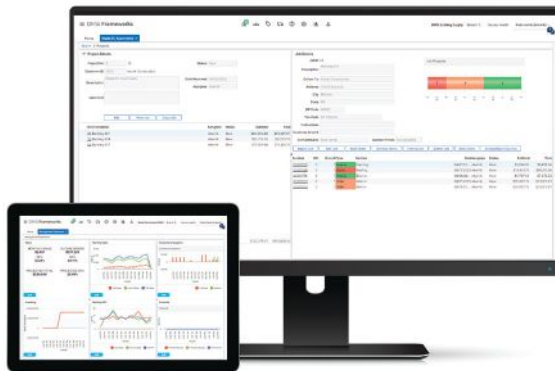
—while modern ERP systems are integrating AI-driven forecasting and dynamic pricing. Inventory optimization and warehouse automation are improving efficiency, and mobile-first customer portals are becoming essential for contractor engagement. Epicor eCommerce platform is helping dealers expand their digital footprint and attract new customer segments. These trends signal a shift toward a more agile, tech-enabled future for LBM dealers.”

One technology trend that’s been all the buzz is artificial intelligence, otherwise known as AI, and what it can deliver for the LBM industry. It’s more than a trend, say technology leaders; rather it’s become a fixed part of doing business. “LBM dealers should be paying close attention to the maturity of AI and customer self-service tools, including ecommerce,” Chris Fisher, vice president, LBM Division for ECI Software Solutions, points out. “When connected with ERP and point-of-sale systems, these tools do more than streamline accounting, inventory, or delivery scheduling; they create the time and space for dealers to do what they do best—deliver exceptional service and build lasting relationships. Ecommerce, in particular, has become a powerful growth engine, not just for selling more, but for tailoring customer experiences in faster, more personalized ways. By automating everyday processes, these technologies allow dealers to focus on value, advice, expertise, and trust, which is exactly what they’ll need to prioritize to continue to win in 2026.”



COURTESY OF GENETIQ

DMSi has launched a visual analytics solution for Frameworks that enables real-time monitoring of key metrics with seamless integration to existing Frameworks screens for immediate action by users. By leveraging streaming technology and a dedicated reporting database, DMSi says that businesses gain instant data access and can automate critical processes, transforming static reporting into actionable intelligence.



LBM dealers need to look beyond the flashy promises of AI, explains Cort Silliman, vice president of agility/frameworks, North America, for DMSi Software, and instead focus on how the technology can impact ROI. “The speed at which agentic AI technology has progressed in recent months has been the fastest we have seen in the software space,” he says. “There is a ton of hype and sales pitches around AI, but LBM dealers should look past the initial flashy AI sales pitches and ask how the AI tools presented will improve their operations and efficiency, ultimately turning into ROI. Additionally, AI is useless without clean, accurate data to generate from. Compiling accurate and clean data is the first step to leveraging AI in any useful fashion, and a modern ERP system is THE core to generating this clean data.”

The LBM yard is a place of paradoxes: heavy, awkward materials stacked in long rows; high-touch manual work alongside digital order systems; tight margins despite seasonal spikes and sudden project booms. Distributors still win or lose, caution experts from Klipboard, a designer of field service and job management software, on the operational details—whether that 16-ft. plank is easy to find, whether a mixed pallet is picked correctly, or whether a delivery route is mapped efficiently and arrives on time. It’s those day-to-day details where margins are made and wasted time quietly eats away at profit.

Until recently, most yard decisions have been guided by experience through supervisors who know the site, the best lanes to store long lengths, and which suppliers show up on time, according to Klipboard. It points out that this experience remains critical. But with market volatility, tighter labor pools, and the increasing complexity of mixed orders, distributors need to pair that knowledge with real-time, data-driven insight. AI aims to play that role in LBM, it goes on to say, not by replacing expertise but by amplifying it so decisions are faster, safer, and more profitable.

Software delivers solutions

The LBM world continues to be a changing, and sometimes volatile, world. With higher interest rates, unstable tariffs, and the continuing challenges of labor shortages, determination to succeed isn’t enough on its own—having the right technology tools to lean into can make all the difference when it comes to success. One of the foundations is to have a robust ERP platform for your LBM business, say technology leaders, along with specialized tools that enable the dealer to better compete.

“In today’s unpredictable market, LBM dealers need more than grit—they need smart technology that works for them,” says Epicor’s Molczan, pointing to utilizing cloud-based platforms to uptake emerging technologies like generative AI, creating efficiencies across the business to offset tariff costs, and leveraging financial forecasting tools to guide strategic decisions. ▶

ECI continues to enhance its Spruce platform and expand its customer support so dealers can get the most from their systems. The company’s focus remains on guiding successful implementations and driving long-term value.



Epicor Financials is the financial management suite from Epicor that includes a financials core that reportedly gives full control and visibility of financial transactions and process (GL and AP), plus add-on solutions.

“In today’s volatile economic landscape, marked by shifting tariffs and unpredictable market conditions, Epicor IP&O (Inventory Planning & Optimization) stands out as a strategic asset for sales teams,” she points out. “This cloud-based solution empowers businesses to make smarter inventory decisions by leveraging AI-driven forecasting and automated stocking policies. It enables precise demand planning, minimizes stockouts and excess inventory, and supports scenario modeling to navigate cost fluctuations and supply chain disruptions. For sales leaders, IP&O is not just a tool—it’s a competitive advantage that aligns inventory investment with customer demand and financial goals, helping teams respond with agility and confidence in uncertain times.”

To address the challenges of doing more with leaner teams, Molczan highlights how technology is stepping in to fill the gap. “Cloud-based ERP platforms like BisTrack are streamlining operations with real-time data, mobile access, and automated workflows—reducing manual tasks and freeing up staff to focus on high-value work,” she explains. “Integrated tools for POS, dispatch, and delivery optimization help speed up order fulfillment and minimize errors,

while mobile apps enable remote access to inventory, delivery proof, and expense tracking. With barcode tagging, smart dashboards, and flexible user interfaces, dealers can maintain efficiency and customer satisfaction without increasing headcount.”

ECI’s Fisher recommends technological tools that can help LBM dealers protect margins and stay competitive. “That’s where Spruce eCommerce stands out, by putting data behind pricing strategies, helping dealers analyze which products can bear increases, identifying bundling opportunities, and segmenting customers by value so decisions are made with insight, not guesswork,” he says. “Too often, pricing is treated as across-the-board increases or discounts. With Spruce eCommerce, dealers can take a more strategic approach, adjusting where customers are less sensitive, holding firm where value is clear, and protecting margin without risking relationships.”

“To ensure widespread resiliency, integration is vital,” he continues. “Through Spruce eCommerce’s integration into Spruce ERP, users can access real-time visibility into inventory, prices, orders, invoices, and statements. The outcome is an interconnected ecosystem that integrates ordering,

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account management, and commerce operations. In turn, dealers can make smarter decisions that better prepare them to weather economic turbulence.”

In the face of doing more with fewer people, Fisher stresses how efficiency is critical. “Spruce ERP helps streamline the essentials, automating purchasing and inventory, reducing duplicate data entry, and giving employees instant access to purchasing history and vendor information. This not only saves time but also improves accuracy across operations, from reorders to deliveries.”

DMSi Software’s Silliman acknowledges the chaos today’s tariffs have caused for the LBM world, and he recommends digital solutions to help the dealer navigate the chaos of current economic upheavals. “Tariffs are not new to the building materials industry, but 2025 has seen a sharp rise in both their number and rate of change, creating market uncertainty,” he laments. “For example, one of our customers cited purchasing several shipping containers from the same country on the same day, yet paying three to four different tariff rates by the time they cleared customs. DMSi’s ERP and digital solutions connect the building materials supply chain, enabling real-time tracking of tariffs from import to consumer sale. Our systems offer transparency and flexibility, by tracking these charges in real-time and providing reporting insights into tariff trends. These functions allow customers to manage and apply these charges in the way that works best for their operations.”

And while there’s no such thing as a one-size-fits-all technology solution, Klipboard recommends utilizing AI tools to increase efficiency, as it has the potential to work at the intersection of the physical and the digital, recommending where to put that awkward 20-foot bundle so it’s accessible for today’s jobs but doesn’t block future access. AI, it says, can predict when demand for a particular grade of lumber will spike so the LBM dealer can lock pricing or split orders across suppliers, or it can flag that a quoted pack price won’t deliver the margin you expect once freight and import tariffs are included.

With higher interest rates, unstable tariffs, and the continuing challenges of labor shortages, determination to succeed isn’t enough on its own—having the right technology tools to lean into can make all the difference when it comes to success.

Overcoming fear

Making any technology change or add-on can bring a level of fear. From the costs of rocky go-live launches to integration with existing software, plus employee buy-in and training, there are legitimate concerns for the LBM dealer. Technology leaders recognize this, and have recommendations for the LBM dealer who may be sitting on the proverbial fence when it comes to implementing these tools.

Epicor’s Molczan recommends starting small. “You don’t need to overhaul your entire operation overnight,” she reassures. “Begin with one area—like delivery tracking or mobile access to inventory—and build from there. The goal isn’t to replace your team or your values, but to give them tools that make their jobs easier and your business more resilient. This advice resonates especially well with dealers who are doing more with fewer people. Cloud-based ERP platforms like BisTrack, for example, streamline operations with real-time data and mobile access, reducing manual tasks and freeing up staff to focus on high-value work.” ▶

TECH TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

Along with the technology providers we interviewed for their insights, there is an array of tech options that bring unique solutions to the table for building materials distributors. Each brings a unique toolset to the LBM table, and they should stay top of mind for LBM dealers looking to stay ahead of the game.



GenetiQ | At its heart, GenetiQ from Intact Software is built for the LBM industry. It takes care of POS, rebates, CRM, delivery, and financials, all in one system. But the real benefit, the company says, is how it connects everything together. It has been built to integrate easily with a LBM dealer’s suppliers, manufacturers, and trading partners so it doesn’t get bogged down with manual steps, mistakes and delays. And because everything is connected, you also get analytics that make sense of what’s really happening in your business, helping you make faster, better-informed decisions.

“GenetiQ is more than just technology,” says Tim Singleton, director of business alliances for North America for GenetiQ. “Our U.S. team is expanding, backed by over 30 years of hands-on experience in the building materials supply sector. We put that expertise to work by helping you manage costs, proactively identifying variances that impact margins and service levels, and guiding you toward proven best practices. We know what works—and what doesn’t. Our role is to ensure you get the maximum value from GenetiQ today and position your business for success well into the future.”
[intactsoftware.com](https://www.intactsoftware.com)

ECI's Fisher recognizes that it's natural to hesitate when it comes to technological changes. "Operational disruption feels like a major risk, but the reality is that the right systems, integrated and used accurately, pay for themselves many times over," he points out. "What's more, the right technology validates that things are being done in a way that meets the needs of the customers and market. An ERP gives you structure and reliable data to guide decisions, while ecommerce connects you directly to customers and extends your reach beyond the yard. Together, they help you respond faster as prices and demand shift, protect margins with data-driven pricing, and free your team to focus on what really sets dealers apart—service and relationships."

DMSi Software's Silliman agrees that change can be hard, but points out how a technology partnership in this age of AI and rapidly changing technological capabilities is now more critical than ever. "There is, and will continue to be, a large influx of AI specific products and technologies that may accomplish one or a few business cases, but partnering with a software company that can provide a holistic and industry-specific approach to their business operations, including the use of AI and the cybersecurity required to keep their technology safe is critical," he stresses. "As a second generation family-owned, U.S.-headquartered software company wholly focused the building materials industry, DMSi is partnering with current and future customers to provide the most technologically advanced and industry-specific software on the market, allowing the LBM dealer to stay competitive." ▶

TECH TOOLS FOR SUCCESS



Buildxact | Technology is making it easier to manage accounts, which is critical at a time when good, reliable labor is hard to find. Buildxact has launched Blu, a new AI-powered building assistant, that offers Blu: Takeoff Assistant, Blu: Estimate Generator, Blu: Estimate Reviewer, and Blu: Recipe/Assembly Assistant. Blu: Takeoff Assistant allows a user to upload plans that can be automatically scaled in an instant. The tool also automatically names the pages based on information from the uploaded plan and includes the precise area of the project. With the Blu: Estimate Generator a user can create a list of labor and building items based on local data, pulling pricing from supplier catalogs. As of now, users can generate kitchen and bath renovation estimates. In the next couple months, users will be able to do whole house builds, common extensions, and other common remodels. The new Blu: Estimate Reviewer feature can audit an estimate, giving suggestions on any missed items along with recommendations on how to improve an estimate.

"What is the bottom line for the dealer? Fewer returns and better inventory management," says Steve Miller, director of enterprise programs at Buildxact. "Your customers, the small and medium businesses, need more support than ever. So, Buildxact also launched a customizable pricing structure to be more accessible to more of the industry and to set users up on a pathway to success. Initial pricing gives them basic tools and also allows for instant upgrades as their business necessitates and grows. Plus, each plan offers unlimited users and customer training and support." buildxact.com

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Kory Hobbs

Sales Manager, Griffin Lumber & Hardware Perry, Georgia

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

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



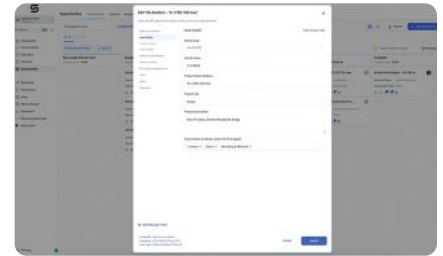
IN TODAY'S WORLD change can feel daunting for the LBM dealer, but standing still carries more risk, warns ECI's Fisher. "The key is to be deliberate: set clear goals, roll out in phases, and equip your staff with the training they need. Dealers who lead with this approach not only see fewer errors and stronger margins but also gain the confidence that comes with knowing their business is built on a system that can adapt with them." And when implemented with a clear plan, those rewards will seem less like magic and more like a well-planned strategy.

After all, LBM dealers contend with unique physical challenges that general warehouse software often overlooks, experts at Klipboard point out, as long planks, awkward bundles, loose bagged materials, sheets of plywood, and flammable or moisture-sensitive stock require special storage patterns. Units of measure aren't uniform. Inventory might be stocked by plank, length, pack, thousand board feet, or individual piece. Those mixed units of measurement complicate ordering, replenishment, and quoting.

Combine these intricacies with outdoor storage, weather exposure, forklift congestion, and multi-source orders, and the result is a complex logistical puzzle that few other industries face. These pain points are precisely why effective ERP and warehouse practices have been a focus for LBM operators and technology solutions providers. ■

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MANUFACTURERS

TECH TOOLS FOR SUCCESS



SalesJack | As a CRM for building material retailers, SalesJack aims to help LBM dealers find and close more leads. The platform combines all your lead sources and adds new ones, like permit data. The software surfaces the best leads and assign them to the right sales reps for faster follow-ups and better conversion rates. In addition, it quickly identifies which product categories are being sold by customer/project and flags opportunities for sales reps to drive incremental sales. Plus, users can gain a complete view of sales rep performance (activity metrics, conversion rates, deal velocity) so they can coach underperformers and improve overall team productivity. SalesJack recently integrated permit data into its platform. It pulls together building permits from various sources to get the full picture of a dealer's service area, then integrates the permit data with the dealer's ERP data, so it can identify which contractors and which projects they are already selling to.

"In a time when many dealers are facing revenue declines, we focus on creating new, efficient sources of growth," Ryan Dempsey, co-founder of SalesJack, comments. "Our platform helps dealers unlock more value from existing customers by growing share of wallet across product categories, and reengage churned customers with timely insights and automated messages. Many customers cite having their highest new customer numbers ever after starting using the SalesJack platform. The result is higher revenue with less waste, helping dealers protect margins and strengthen resilience against economic and tariff pressures." salesjack.com



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TECH TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

4Ward Solutions Group | Moducore and 4Ward aim to transform disconnected data into actionable decisions. At the core of their offering is a purpose-built ERP and production planning suite designed specifically for offsite manufacturing and LBM operations. It recently released Lifecycle Templates and WBS-linked production tracking letting LBM dealers standardize units, automate bills of materials, and assign labor estimates down to the workstation.

“You can’t manage what you don’t measure and the LBM sector has too much ‘dark data’ in spreadsheets and siloed systems,” explains Ben Hershey, CEO of 4Ward Solutions Group. “Moducore centralizes this operational intelligence into one live platform, allowing dealers to forecast material demand based on actual project schedules, lock in pricing, plan buy-aheads with vendor-specific lead time data embedded in every material line, and identify excess inventory or delays through our Project and MREQ dashboards, pinpointing where action is needed before it hits the jobsite.”

4wardconsult.com

BuyMetrics | As a focused solution purpose-built for the buyers of commodities, BuyMetrics goes beyond automating workflow to bring the power of data-driven intelligence into the purchase process, providing the on-the-fly information buyers need in fast-moving markets to shape outcomes. BuyMetrics promises to enable lumber buyers to work faster and smarter, to leverage data for competitive advantage, re-focus on tactics and strategy, and improve return on investment on your most difficult to manage inventory.

“The COVID-19 pandemic provided a lesson in just how dramatic even a small imbalance in supply can be,” says Val Hansen, chairman and founder of BuyMetrics. “In what was perhaps the ultimate stress-test, BuyMetrics’ users cranked productivity, sourced more wood from more vendors, and found opportunity amidst the chaos, capturing twice their normal CoG savings. Volatile

markets reward quick and accurate price discovery—a market dynamic BuyMetrics was created to address for commodity buyers.”

buymetrics.com

Flitch | Flitch’s cloud-native point-of-sale system addresses the challenges of clunky interfaces, time-consuming back-office tasks, customers demanding access to their accounts, and management teams lacking real-time visibility into their operations and inventory. According to Flitch, the company’s Smart Search functionality allows staff to quickly find items, customers, vendors, and transactions as if they were searching on Google, without requiring precise search criteria that exactly matches the record they’re searching for.

“At Flitch, we believe lumber and building suppliers deserve technology that works as hard as they do, and better software doesn’t need to carry an astronomical cost,” David Mellstrom, founder and CEO of Flitch, points out. “By combining best-in-class cloud software with deep expertise and an authentic partnership, we’re helping dealers across the country simplify operations, grow their businesses, and build stronger customer relationships.”

flitch.com

NCS Credit | Its platform automates the entire notice and mechanic’s lien process, from gathering project data and sending preliminary notices to managing lien waivers and lien deadlines. It integrates with A/R systems to provide real-time project visibility. With API integration, users can view live A/R balances and quickly generate waivers using customizable templates.

“Our technology reduces risk and boosts efficiency by automating critical credit protections,” says Jennifer Readence, director of marketing for NCS Credit. “It eliminates manual tracking of notice and lien deadlines and paperwork, helping credit teams stay lean while managing higher volumes.”

ncscredit.com

NetNow | NetNow digitizes the entire credit application process—from form submission to approval—eliminating manual work, chasing trade references, and back-and-forth with sales teams. According to NetNow, dealers using the platform see 3–5x faster credit approvals, 75% reduction in manual admin time, and fewer errors and lower bad debt risk.

“Margins are tight, teams are stretched thin, and slow credit decisions mean delayed sales,” says Nauman Hafeez, co-founder of NetNow. “NetNow helps dealers operate leaner and smarter by automating what used to take days. With built-in AI agents, NetNow handles trade reference verifications, detects fraud patterns, and flags high-risk accounts—all in real time.”

netnow.io

ACCEO Home and Building Supply Industry Solutions | Its TransActPOS is a complete point-of-sale and retail management solution designed for LBM dealers. Key benefits include dimensional selling with built-in calculators for board-foot, cut lengths, and variable units, contractor pricing and job accounts, quotes and sales orders modules, and integrated vendor communication.

“TransActPOS gives dealers the tools to stay efficient and profitable even in volatile markets,” says Scott Janke, ACCEO’s VP of operations. “Thanks to eCatalog Price Control, you can efficiently update retail prices from vendor catalogs, ensuring margins are maintained when costs shift. Purchase Order Management streamlines ordering and receiving, reducing errors and saving staff time during replenishment. Sales Order Tracking and Management links quotes, sales orders, and purchase orders giving clear visibility of material flow for both the store and contractors, and electronic shelf labels update prices instantly and accurately across the sales floor, eliminating manual relabeling and ensuring customers always see the correct price.”

acceo.com

TECH TOOLS FROM MANUFACTURERS

Software makers aren't the only ones providing technology solutions to the LBM industry. Building materials manufacturers are just as invested in creating tools to help both the dealer and the product end user. Some leading manufacturer technology tools include:



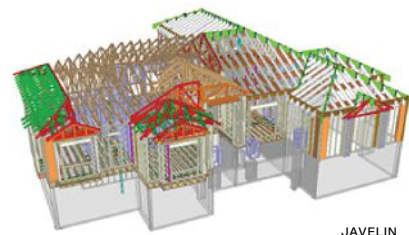
Simpson Strong-Tie | Pipeline LBM is a web-based construction estimating solution from Simpson Strong-Tie for lumberyards that it says transforms takeoff quantities into data to drive business. This solution enables LBM dealers to standardize estimating logic, automate customer and location preferences and streamline the estimating process to produce an accurate, detailed and consistent bill of materials (BOM) for every job. One of the main benefits of Pipeline LBM is the ability to centralize your estimating logic to produce consistent and accurate BOMs. Customers realize this with our built-in logic that allows them to customize their rules, calculations and preferences that automate their workflows. This allows for even shorter turn-around times and creates greater efficiencies in the work production.

Additionally, Simpson Strong-Tie is currently working on a new feature to the Pipeline LBM estimating software solution that will reportedly bring greater efficiencies in drawing and laying out a structure. This new feature will reduce the time it takes to create an accurate estimate. The tool is not yet available, but should be launched in the first part of 2026.

strongtie.com



Boise Cascade | Boise Cascade's trainers and software support team help EWP distributors and dealers leverage tools like BC Framer, a critical tool for providing design and analysis services to builders. Improvements to BC Framer were recently rolled out so the platform could better handle significant data models and rendering issues users encountered while working with large multifamily projects. A feature within the application, BC FloorValue, uses a collection of deflection and vibration calculation methods applied to entire floor systems. Designers can identify potential problem spots via heat maps, make changes to address the problem areas, and compare solutions to improve the floor's performance to meet customer expectations, all within a few clicks. As well, Boise Cascade has invested in providing in-person training and a free online learning management system. The LMS takes users through step-by-step training for programs like BC Calc, which is a single member sizing software and free for anyone to use. bc.com



JAVELIN

Weyerhaeuser | Weyerhaeuser offers a suite of software that helps dealers and their customers implement high-quality structural framing solutions and optimize material use while reducing construction cycle time, cost, and waste. For example, Javelin is Weyerhaeuser's software solution for full-house modeling and design. It provides comprehensive material lists for both basic take-offs as well as full design verification and/or initial specification. Javelin can create complete cut lists for floors, roofs, and field-framed or panelized wall systems. TJ-PanelMate is Weyerhaeuser's software solution for prefabricated floor panels. While Javelin software is capable of handling floor panelization projects, TJ-PanelMate takes your completed Javelin model and more efficiently breaks your floor system into cassettes, complete with unique labeling, sheathing layouts, individual cut lists, and lifting hole placement according to center-of-gravity design. And NextPhase Site Solutions incorporates the use of Stellar software to provide scalable services that are adaptable to any yard setup and overall dealer goals. This solution can incorporate traditional yards where material is picked or cut manually or even cut using automated methods, while NextPhase InSight reporting provides transparency to production analytics. Available for both Stellar software and NextPhase saw equipment, this tool allows you to see up-to-date production information and inventory usage trends, for all your products, regardless of manufacturer.

weyerhaeuser.com



MARVIN VIVID WINDOWS & DOORS

The Marvin Vivid™ collection, a new line of windows and doors from Marvin, addresses the demand from builders for more design flexibility. Available in large format sizes, with heights of up to 10' and performance grades to PG50, the collection features a proprietary composite material engineered exclusively for the Vivid window interiors. Paired with Marvin's Ultrex® fiberglass on the exterior, the Vivid collection is said to meet or exceed ENERGY STAR® 7.0 standards. Available in Texas, Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon, the collection features a streamlined design to suit a range of architectural styles and includes three window types and three door types, with additional products to be released in 2026. marvin.com/vivid



IG ARMOR FROM IG RAILING

Best known for its award-winning IG Switch™ glass railing, which allows users to change their deckside view from clear to opaque with a flip of a switch, IG Railing has launched IG Armor. Using a patented three-step application process, the product is said to create an ultra-low maintenance glass surface. In addition to allowing dirt, insects, and grime to be easily washed away, the company says that IG Armor improves clarity and visibility; allows snow, ice, and sleet to be removed with minimal effort; and helps protect against acid rain, corrosion, and mineral buildup. igrailing.com/ig-armor

WESTBURY BELLA CAVO HORIZONTAL CABLE RAILING

Bella Cavo™, the latest addition to Digger Specialties Inc.'s Westbury cable railing systems lineup, offers a sleek upscale design with thin horizontal stainless-steel cables framed by durable aluminum posts. This design maximizes views while providing a modern aesthetic appearance. Bella Cavo aluminum and stainless-steel cable railing comes in a choice of 4', 6' and 8' sections in either 36" or 42" heights and is available with matching adjustable 36" and 48" wide gates. In addition to distinctive architectural elements, Bella Cavo incorporates labor-saving installation features engineered to speed installation and lower cost. diggerspecialties.com



TRUEFRAME JOIST FROM PROWOOD

ProWood, a leader in premium pressure-treated lumber, announces the launch of TrueFrame™ Joist, a performance-driven deck framing solution. According to the company, TrueFrame allows contractors to spend less time culling boards and planing down joists on the jobsite, and more time building. Said to be lighter than steel and LVL, the product features ProWood's new enhanced preservation and is available in 2x8, 2x10, and 2x12 in lengths of 12', 14', 16', and 20'. The TrueFrame Joist is now available in the Denver Metro area and is coming to new markets throughout the Great Lakes and Northeastern regions in early 2026. prowood.com



PASS-THROUGH AWNING FROM WINDOOR

Designed to enhance the connection between indoor and outdoor living spaces, the new Pass-Through Awning Window from WINDOOR is said to offer smooth, effortless operation while ensuring safety and security. The window features a continuous top hinge and stainless concealed gas springs, an anti-drift feature engineered to remain completely hidden when closed, a single-point locking mechanism, and inline ladder pull handles to add convenience. Plus, the company says the Pass-Through Awning has received High Velocity Hurricane Zone (HVHZ) Florida Product Approval, meeting the stringent standards required for use in coastal and hurricane-prone regions. The Pass-Through Awning is offered in a wide range of standard frame colors, including Bone White, Bermuda Bronze, Clear Anodized, Black, Southbeach Silver, Velvet Gray, Patio White, Southern Bronze, and Woodgrain finishes. windoorinc.com





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UNDER

The day before your team was set to deliver a flatbed loaded with materials, the client changed their mind—and cancelled the order. What would you do?

THE 11TH HOUR CANCELLATION

A COUPLE OF months ago, a longtime client introduced you to a builder from a nearby community looking to establish a presence in your market. After several conversations, his needs and your capabilities seemed to be a great fit, so you assigned Jillian, one of your outside sales reps, to work with their project manager, Andy, on this initial home.

Everything went smoothly. Most of the materials were products you carried, and you had no problem sourcing the remaining millwork, trim, and siding that his project required. Credit was not a problem, as his company had a stellar payment history. Andy and his crew worked well with Jillian and your team. From all indications, you believed that this could be the beginning of a strong new business relationship.

That all changed at 4 p.m., the afternoon before the first delivery was set to go out. “I just got off the phone with Andy. He said that coming into our market was a mistake and told me to cancel everything. Plus,” Jillian added, “he said not to invoice them, since they didn’t move forward with the project.” After putting many hours of work into this project—only for it to disappear at the last minute—the very frustrated Jillian said a few more things which you’ve opted not to repeat.

While it’s true that Andy pulled the plug before the first delivery, by that point, Jillian had invested serious time on the project. Your team sourced and purchased materials that you don’t typically carry. And to make sure this new relationship got off on the right foot, your yard manager had the flatbed loaded early, so the delivery could happen first thing the next morning.

You’ve got a terminated project that your company has invested time and money into, a flatbed loaded with materials for their initial project sitting in your yard, and an almost-client who changed their mind and doesn’t want to be billed. What would you do?



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Bill ‘em. They can’t cancel an order of this size with less than 24 hours’ notice and expect to just walk away. Ask where they’d like their materials delivered, and bill ‘em.

Let ‘em walk. Work with them on this, and let them cancel, because when they change their mind and realize that your market is a perfect fit, you want to be their supplier.

Enforce restock fee. Let them cancel, but enforce the 15% restocking fee, per the signed/dated purchase agreement. They won’t like it, but a deal’s a deal.

Dig deeper. There’s more to the story than your market was “a mistake.” Ask and learn what’s really going on. Maybe you can save the sale and still move forward together.

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



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