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★
**INNOVATION
AWARDS
2026**



MOSCOW & PULLMAN: SIBLING-OWNED, FUTURE-FOCUSED

READERS TACKLE RISING FUEL PRICES
AND JOBSITE DELIVERY COSTS

REPLACE & REMODEL DRIVES
SIDING SALES

SIBLINGS KATIE AND TYLER GARRETT OF
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ARRIS™



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- Pro Plugs: Smooth and Woodgrain



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If your customers made a list of everything they would want in the perfect composite trim, would it look something like this?

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Arris is powered by proprietary Surestone® technology, an advanced mineral-based composite that has already proven its performance in high-quality decking. Now that same innovation is reshaping what builders can expect from exterior trim and providing a material engineered for the realities of modern construction.

Unlike PVC or wood composites, Arris is **inherently resistant to thermal expansion and contraction**. Whether boards are mitered tight or installed end to end, Arris keeps its shape and preserves its clean, finished appearance through scorching summers, bitter winters, and every condition in between. Snow or shine, it simply performs.



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Arris features a durable, scratch-resistant white capstock that provides both protection and aesthetic appeal before it even gets to the lumberyard. With smooth and woodgrain textures available, installers can set it and forget it, with **no painting, sealing, or special preparation required**. The result is a trim solution that saves time today and minimizes maintenance tomorrow.

Builders can stand behind the quality because we do, too. Arris is backed by a **limited lifetime warranty** for real confidence in fewer callbacks and long-lasting exteriors.

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For professionals who expect uncompromising durability, stability, and beauty, Arris is more than another option: it is the new benchmark for exterior trim.

Visit the Edge booth W2567 in the West Hall at IBS to see it in person or get all the details at ufpEDGE.com/arris.

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Get more information on Arris

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INSIDE

JULY 2026



★ INNOVATION AWARDS 2026



FEATURES

- 36 REAL ISSUES. REAL ANSWERS.**
Readers Tackle Rising Fuel Prices and Jobsite Delivery Costs
- 48 PROFILE**
Moscow & Pullman Building Supply works to maintain its strong tradition of customer service while also implementing modern business practices like online shopping and AI.
BY CLAUDIA HOFFACKER
- 52 LBM JOURNAL INNOVATION AWARDS**
These groundbreaking offerings provide solutions to challenging problems, and bring an advanced level of performance to the jobsite.
- 58 IN DEPTH | SIDING**
Replace & Remodel Fuels Siding Category Momentum
BY JAMES ANDERSON

DEPARTMENTS

- 12 THE BUZZ**
LBM updates, news, and events. Plus, the latest from lumberyards across the country, and responses to our May issue Tough Call survey.
- 46 AI INSIGHTS**
The AI Mandate
BY SHANE SOULE
- 68 PRODUCTS**
Our editors' picks that are sure to pique your interest.
- 72 TOUGH CALL**
Your reputation took years to build but can be damaged in a matter of months. When a longtime, trusted supplier's quality slips, how would you respond?

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INDUSTRY LEADERS

24 BUILDING SALES
Diagnosis Before Prescription
RICK DAVIS

26 THE SPORT OF SELLING
Summer Reading: Classic
BRADLEY HARTMANN

28 CREDIT Q+A
Slow Your Bankroll
THEA DUDLEY

30 MERGERS + ACQUISITIONS
Yes, the Big Boxes Are Coming After You
JOHN D. WAGNER

32 LEADERSHIP
What They Don't Know Will Hurt You
RUSS KATHREIN

LBM EXTRA

66 CENTURY CLUB
We spoke with TK Sloan, owner of Sloan's Hardware in eastern Tennessee, about the company's longevity in the community.



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Insulated Vinyl Siding by ProVia®

CedarMAX® foam-backed vinyl siding insulates the entire exterior wall, boosting R-Value, improving energy efficiency, and reducing thermal bridging. The foam enhances impact resistance and minimizes outdoor noise, and the longer profiles install faster and show fewer seams. With authentic Cedar graining, 27 colors, and four styles – including Board 'N Batten – CedarMAX delivers transformative curb appeal, value, and durability for your customers. **Learn more at provia.com/siding/cedarmax**

INSULATED SIDING SAVES ENERGY, SIMPLIFIES INSTALLATION

Material selection plays a major role in the cost, durability, and curb appeal of an exterior remodel. Homeowners want products that will deliver long-term performance, return on investment, and easy maintenance, while contractors value products that are dependable and efficient to install.

Insulated siding offers benefits for both. For homeowners, it improves energy efficiency by creating a thermal envelope around the home, increasing the exterior wall's R-value and helping reduce heating and cooling costs.

The contoured foam insulation bonded to the siding adds structural support, helping panels resist sagging, warping, and impact damage. The insulating foam fills the space behind the siding, reducing areas where pests can nest, and acts as a buffer to outdoor noise, creating a quieter indoor environment.

For contractors and builders, insulated siding simplifies installation compared to fiber cement. It requires no additional wall preparation or sealing, and because it doesn't generate silica dust, there is no need for specialized cutting equipment, ventilation systems, or respirators. The foam adds rigidity to the siding panels, making it easy for a single crew member to handle and fasten.

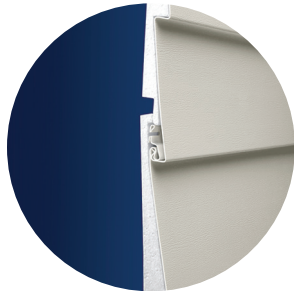
Insulated vinyl siding can be installed over exposed foundation surfaces commonly found along the sides and rear of homes. Because it can be placed close to grade and is resistant to moisture damage, it provides an affordable, durable solution for covering bare foundations while helping reduce maintenance concerns and callbacks.

One-piece insulated vinyl siding is built for jobsite durability and meets ASTM standards for wind-load and impact resistance.

ProVia CedarMAX™ insulated vinyl siding is engineered for long-term durability and energy efficiency. The rigid foam EPS insulation covers the entire exterior wall, including the studs, providing a continuous thermal blanket that helps regulate indoor temperatures.

The siding's advanced super-polymer formulation enhances flexibility, durability, and overall performance, helping maintain its appearance for years to come. Impact modifiers and the rigid foam insulation provide structural integrity and five times greater impact resistance than non-insulated siding.

CedarMAX is offered in several styles and an expansive color palette. Traditional and Dutch Lap siding profiles (Single 7", Double 6" and Triple 4" Dutch Lap) can be used to clad an entire house, or combined with our 8" or new 12" wide Board and Batten style for a contrasting look.



CedarMAX 12" Board and Batten in White.

CONTRIBUTORS



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DAVIS



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KATHREIN



SOULE



HOFFACKER



ANDERSON

Rick Davis

Diagnosis Before Prescription | P. 24

Rick Davis is the contributing sales editor for *LBM Journal* and regarded by many as the leading sales trainer and consultant in the LBM industry. He has been the owner of Building Leaders, Inc. for 20 years and trained tens of thousands of salespeople in our industry.

Thea Dudley

Slow Your Bankroll | P. 28

After working for her subcontractor Dad but realizing manual labor wasn't for her, Thea Dudley moved to the power seat, granting credit and collecting cashflow. With over 35 years of experience, including as a VP of finance, she now hosts the "LBM Talks Credit" podcast, LBM webinars, and has written three books on the subject.

Bradley Hartmann

Summer Reading: Classic | P. 26

Bradley Hartmann has written 15 books and hosts both "The Construction Leadership" and "The Craft of LBM Sales" podcasts. He advises LBM dealers, distributors, and manufacturers across the country and trains thousands of commercial and residential construction leaders annually through his executive coaching and consulting, online training programs, custom workshops, and keynote speeches.

Russ Kathrein

What They Don't Know Will Hurt You | P. 32

Russ Kathrein is vice president of lumber & building materials at Do it Best, based in Fort Wayne, IN. He is passionate about the art of leadership and the human element of business. He has successfully led operations by first getting the people part correct and aligning the team, then focusing on fundamentals.

John D. Wagner

Yes, the Big Boxes Are Coming After You | P. 30

John D. Wagner is a managing director for 1stWEST Mergers & Acquisitions, which has transacted \$1.5 billion+ in deals with a specialty in distribution and LBM sectors. John is the author of 25 books and 2,600+ articles published in several major outlets. His most popular book is "M&A Basics For People in a (BIG) Hurry!"

James Anderson

In Depth: Siding | P. 58

James Anderson is a career journalist who has served as reporter, editor, and publisher of community newspapers and now serves as editor-in-chief of a national business magazine. His work in trade media focuses on manufacturing, entrepreneurship, and the trends shaping small businesses and specialized industries.

Claudia Hoffacker

Moscow & Pullman: Built on Service, Powered by Innovation | P. 48

Claudia Hoffacker is an independent writer and editor with experience producing content for a variety of industries, including health care, education, government, law enforcement, and engineering. She's passionate about storytelling and, over the course of her career, she's led content teams in both the private and nonprofit sectors.

Shane Soule

The AI Mandate | P. 46

Shane Soule has over 25 years of experience in the building component industry. His deep industry knowledge comes from hands-on experience across nearly every role in the business. Today, Shane serves as president of ProTec Panel and Truss. Under his leadership, ProTec has grown its reputation for quality and innovation in panel and truss manufacturing.

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

“IF YOU BUILD a better mousetrap, the world will beat a path to your door.” That timeless quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson is short and snappy, but I also like his original, full-length version: “If a man has good corn or wood, or boards, or pigs to sell, or can make better chairs or knives, crucibles or church organs, than anybody else, you will find a broad, hard-beaten road to his house, though it may be in the woods.”

Whichever version speaks to you, there’s no denying that non-stop product innovation continues to drive our industry forward. And that truth is the reason we created the LBM Innovation Awards. While the 2026 winners (pp. 52-54) include recognized brand leaders like Owens Corning, Weyerhaeuser, LP Building Products, and Typar—they also include inventive solutions from Rapid Rafter, J’d Out Kickout, Advanced Building Products, Killer Rabbit, and MuddSkip. Just as our LBM Dealers of the Year recognize and celebrate excellence among companies of all sizes, our Innovation Awards do the same thing.

That’s just one highlight of this issue. Be sure to check out:

Dealer Profile: Moscow & Pullman Building Supply. Tyler and Katie Garrett, the sibling leaders of this family-owned company (who also grace this month’s cover), share how they and their 100-plus employees generated sales of \$39 million in 2025, and how they’re leaning into technology to continue growing and serving their market.

Real Issues. Real Answers. Rising Fuel Prices & Jobsite Deliveries. This is the exact same topic that launched our Real Issues feature in the July/August 2011 issue. It all started with a conversation at a LAT event with Chuck Pool, from Mainstreet Lumber in Denison, TX. Gas prices were spiking (as they are today), and Chuck asked what other dealers were doing to manage deliveries. I didn’t know, so we surveyed our readers—and the robust response from the LBM community led to one of our most popular sections.

Bradley Hartmann, Thea Dudley, Rick Davis, John Wagner, and Russ Kathrein. As they do issue after issue, our columnists once again deliver insights borne from years of experience, all in their own inimitable voices. Read them here and meet them live and in person at LBM Strategies Conference, Oct. 14-16 in Milwaukee.

— Rick Schumacher
Executive Editor & Publisher



HAVE A QUESTION FOR RICK?
RICK@LBMJOURNAL.COM

SERIOUS ABOUT BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS? WE ARE.



TAL BUILDING CENTERS



HACIENDA HOME CENTERS



HAMILTON BUILDING SUPPLY

BY THE YARD

Vancouver, WA-based **TAL Building Centers** is marking 120 years in business. The company, originally Tum-A-Lum Lumber, was founded May 24, 1906.

Hacienda Home Centers is celebrating the completion of renovations at its Espanola, NM location. The company was founded in 1975 in Espanola and joined Do it Best in 1998.

Michigan-based **Preston Feather Building Centers** is growing in Traverse City with an expansion to its existing facilities. The nearly 30,000-sq.-ft. addition strengthens the company's inventory, delivery, and operational capabilities.

Orgain Building Supply hosted the grand opening of its newly-renovated showroom. The renovation shifted the showroom from a traditional display space into a comprehensive whole-home design center. The updated layout allows customers to explore flooring, roofing, windows and doors, millwork and trim, cabinetry, countertops, paint and additional building materials all in one location.

orgain
BUILDING SUPPLY

New Jersey-based **Hamilton Building Supply** has opened a new showroom for glass door and window projects. This showroom is the first of its kind in the area, fully dedicated to exhibiting window and door glass sizes from Marvin and Andersen.

Following an explosion and fire May 15, officials with **Robbins Lumber** announced company operations have resumed at its Searsmont facility. Donations to support victims and their families are still being accepted at mainstrongfoundation.org.

Cole Lumber Company, Inc., is marking 80 years of business. Originally founded as Cole Lumber and Supply Company, they became 100% employee-owned through an Employee Stock Ownership Plan in 1988.



Builder sentiment remains weak for 14th straight month

Builder confidence remains subdued as rising material costs, elevated mortgage rates and ongoing affordability challenges continue to strain the housing market. Builder confidence in the market for newly built single-family homes fell two points to 35 in June, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI). This is the 14th straight month that sentiment has remained below 40, a streak not seen since 2011-12 during the foreclosure crisis.

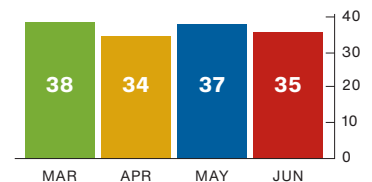
DISTRIBUTION NEWS

ProWood is expanding availability of TrueFrame Joist. Previously available in Colorado and across the Great Lakes and Midwest states, TrueFrame Joist is now available throughout the Northeast and South Atlantic.

Maximo Wood has announced a new partnership with **DesignOneSource**, Hardwoods Specialty Products' architectural specification division.

Russin is partnering with **Maximo Thermo**, a thermally-modified wood collection, and **Aeratis**, PVC-based siding, porch flooring and shutter products, to distribute to 13 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states.

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LEADING THE PACK

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Wolf Outdoor Living™ is the **Pro channel** source for **railing, decking, trim, and exterior finishes**. Trusted products from Keylink Railing, Fortress Railing, CityPost Railing, and Wolf Home Products offer solutions for installations ranging from basic to fully customized.

By simplifying a traditionally fragmented category, Wolf helps dealers and pros reduce complexity while creating opportunities for upselling, streamlined distribution, and consistent quality. As demand for outdoor living continues to grow, Wolf Outdoor Living delivers a more **efficient, cohesive system solution** for dealers and pros.



WOLF OUTDOOR LIVING

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- ICC Compliant

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- Shiplap, Wall, and Ceiling Finishes
- Column Wraps



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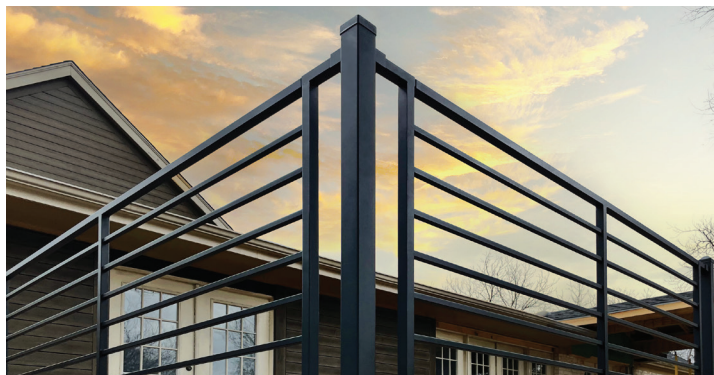
KEYLINK Collection

Known for its **versatility** and **domestic manufacturing**, Keylink offers a wide range of styles, colors, and configurations for design-driven projects. Built from high-quality aluminum with **PCI-4000 certified** powder coating, it delivers lasting durability and visual appeal in demanding outdoor environments.



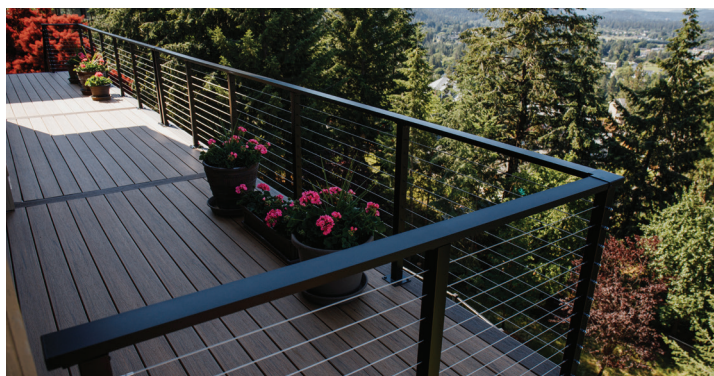
FORTRESS — RAILING PRODUCTS — Collection

Renowned for **speed** and **efficiency**, Fortress Railing features precision-engineered aluminum and e-coated steel **panelized** systems. Offering faster installation without sacrificing durability or aesthetics is a solution that meets the needs of both **commercial** and **residential** jobs.



CITYPOST SIMPLE · AFFORDABLE Collection

CityPost combines premium components with a patented top rail bracket to create a **simple, affordable** cable railing system with flexible options for size, color, and mounting to fit virtually any project. Take out the guesswork with **fixed prices per linear foot** and an easy-to-use quote builder.



WOLF HOME PRODUCTS[®] Collection

Wolf Railing installs easily and provides both design and **budget flexibility**. Our **low-maintenance** PVC railing options will maintain their appeal for the duration. Plus, its strength and durability make it highly desirable for coastal installs.



CO-OP & BUYER'S GROUPS

Do it Best Group and **The Sherwin-Williams Company** have entered into a long-term strategic partnership designed to strengthen the future of paint for Do it Best members and True Value retailers. Under the agreement, Do it Best Group will retain ownership and management of the EasyCare and Best Look paint brands, including quality standards, marketing, promotions, and commercial stewardship. EasyCare will remain exclusive to True Value retailers, and Best Look will remain exclusive to Do it Best members.



LBM Advantage has announced the launch of the **LBM Advantage Women's Alliance**, a new initiative designed to foster connection, professional development and leadership opportunities for women across the co-op's membership of independent lumberyards. LBM Advantage will host its next Women's Alliance program on Thursday, Sept. 3 with a live Teams webinar featuring a panel of respected female professionals who hold various roles at the co-op's member organizations.

Sept. 3, 2026 panelists pictured clockwise from top: Clara Collins, operations manager at S.W. Collins Co.; Donna DiMarco, vice president at Monmouth Building Center; Louise Eddy, owner of Saratoga Quality Hardware; Ivy Su-Johanson, director of purchasing at Spahn and Rose.



LBM Advantage announced that **Alex Ray** has joined the organization in the newly-created role of associate director, building products. The addition of this position reflects LBM Advantage's continued commitment to strategic succession planning and the long-term growth of its building products division.



PEOPLE IN LBM



BROWN



WALSH



BLIFFERT

Bliffert Lumber announced a leadership transition, naming **Josh Brown** as CEO and president, and appointing **Jay Walsh** as chief operating officer. Longtime leader **Eli Bliffert** will transition from his role to serve as chairman of the board of directors. The company has also promoted **Dan Plate** as its newest director of operations.



PLATE



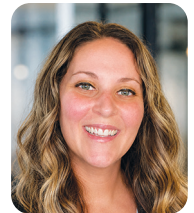
HILLER



HERRON

Builders FirstSource, Inc. announced that as part of a planned leadership transition, **Mike Hiller** has been appointed chief operating officer-designate, succeeding **Steve Herron**, who will retire Dec. 31.

Chelsea Building Products has announced the addition of **Kendra Ramaley** as marketing manager. In this role, Ramaley will support Chelsea's marketing efforts through brand development, content creation, trade show coordination, sales support, digital marketing initiatives, and collaboration with cross-functional teams.



Hawaii-based **HPM Building Supply** shared that Director of Risk Management **Darryl Oliveira** received the YWCA OF Hawai'i Island Hilo's 2026 Remarkable People award. Darryl has devoted himself to serving the people of Hawaii as a firefighter, paramedic, hazmat technician, and interim administrator of the Maui Emergency Management Agency.



Ace Retail Group, owner and operator of more than 260 Ace Hardware stores across 18 states, has named **Robert Massengill** as its new president. Massengill, a 20-year veteran of the company, brings a distinctive blend of operational leadership, strategic development, and legal expertise to the role.





HAUGHIE



HOWALD

LP Building Solutions announced that Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer **Alan Haughie** will retire and that **Aaron Howald** has been appointed as his successor, effective Sept. 1, 2026.

Epicor announced the appointment of **Rachel Barger** as chief revenue officer.

Benjamin Obdyke announced **Austin Tse** as its newest sales associate. Tse will support architects, builders, and dealers throughout the Atlanta area.

The Associated Building Material Distributors of America has elected **Jake Hoffer**, business manager of the LBM division of Bennett Supply, to its board of directors.

WHAT'S TRENDING

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



LBM Journal's 2026 40 Under 40



Do it Best Group and Sherwin-Williams announce strategic partnership



Robbins Lumber releases statement following explosion, fire in Searsmont, ME



US LBM acquires Builders Supply Company in Lancaster, SC



Why More Dealers Are Thinking Like Manufacturers



INEFFICIENT STORAGE IS COSTING YOU MORE THAN YOU THINK.

Storing millwork isn't easy. Size variation, custom orders, and easily damaged products can quickly lead to inefficiencies, wasted space, and slower operations.

Zuern Building Products addressed this by partnering with CT Darnell. By centralizing windows, doors, millwork, and cabinetry into one warehouse and utilizing **Millwork Stack Rack Storage Systems**, they improved organization, increased storage capacity, and streamlined product flow to support faster, more efficient operations.

The results speak for themselves. Thanks to this change, they saw:

- 50% faster pick times
- \$8MM more in deliveries with fewer trucks and drivers
- Maximized inventory efficiency and a SKU count increase of more than 15%

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MERGERS + ACQUISITIONS

US LBM has acquired **Builders Supply Company** in Lancaster, SC. Serving the greater Charlotte market since 1908, Builders Supply Company offers one of the largest lumber and millwork inventories in the Carolinas, with products ranging from framing materials and engineered wood to window and door distribution and installation services.

Builders FirstSource has announced the acquisition of **Precision Design and Trim**, an installation business serving the Boise, ID market. Founded in 2006 by Eric Brant and Frank Knight, Precision Design and Trim provides finish work for new home construction.

Decks & Docks Company announced that it has acquired **J&W Lumber** in Southern California. This transaction represents a significant milestone in Decks & Docks' ongoing expansion, marking the company's entry into the West Coast market through J&W's six retail locations. J&W Owner Clyde Jennings will continue leading the company, which will retain the same brand name its customers have known and trusted since the company's founding in 1958.

MiTek announced the acquisition of **Acer Lumber Retrieval Systems**, a long-time partner in automation solutions for the component manufacturing industry.

ABC Supply Interiors, Inc., formerly L&W Supply Corporation, has acquired the assets of **Wallboard, Inc.**, a Butler, WI-based distributor of drywall, steel framing, insulation, and related building materials.

INDUSTRY UPDATES

ECI Software Solutions, Inc. announced the release of its AvidCX Insights. This AI-powered intelligence layer proactively surfaces buyer sentiment trends and gives builders actionable steps to identify and adjust to challenges in the sales cycle.

Nuvo, an AI-native order-to-cash network, has launched its Accounts Receivable Suite. The release extends Nuvo with onboarding, credit, payments, collections, and cash application now operating as one interconnected system on a single verified trade network.

Culpeper Wood Preservers has completed a multi-phase capital upgrade at its Elizabeth City, NC treating facility and returned the plant to full operation. The location, which was taken offline earlier this year as part of a planned upgrade program, is now producing CCA (chromated copper arsenate) and CA-C (copper azole) marine-treated lumber. The upgraded plant aligns the facility with Culpeper's operational, safety, and quality standards.

C&C Forest Products announced it is investing over \$21 million to rebuild its Coushatta sawmill following a 2025 fire, repositioning the facility as a more efficient, cost-competitive specialty lumber and timber operation.

TOUGH CALL SOLUTIONS

MAY 2026 ISSUE SURVEY RESULTS FROM LBMJOURNAL.COM AND LINKEDIN.

THE SPECIAL-ORDER NIGHTMARE

A homeowner made multiple changes to a special order, but the final updates weren't signed, leading to the wrong product being delivered and a dispute over responsibility. Here's how readers responded.



Talk it out. **58%**
The difference between the cabinet versions is minimal, but the price to make it right is substantial, so offer a 25% discount if they'll live with the installed versions.

Meet halfway. **22%**
Offer to split the replacement cost with the homeowner as a compromise, citing shared responsibility for the confusion.

Eat it. **14%**
Replace the cabinets at no cost to the homeowner and absorb the loss. Use this as a very expensive teaching moment for everyone on your team.

Stand firm. **6%**
Hold the homeowner to the final system order and deny the claim, since they received exactly what they requested on that particularly busy Saturday.

WANT TO SEE MORE TOUGH CALLS? CHECK OUT PAGE 72 OF THIS ISSUE, OR FIND MORE AT: lbmjournals.com/features/tough-call

SEND NEWS AND UPDATES ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION TO WENDY@LBMJOURNAL.COM



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LBM TALKS



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INDUSTRY EVENTS

AUG 27

ALLIED BUILDING STORES FALL MARKET
Branson, MO | alliedstores.com

SEP 14-16

2026 WMA MILLWORK CONVENTION
& TRADESHOW
Orlando, FL | worldmillworkalliance.com

SEP 14-18

BCMC 2026
Columbus, OH | bcmcshow.com

SEP 15-17

LMC LEADERSHIP SUMMIT
Seattle, WA | lmc.net

SEP 23-25

CONSTRUCTION SUPPLIERS
ASSOCIATION 2026 CONFERENCE
& TRADESHOW
St. Simons Island, GA | gocsa.com

SEP 25-28

DO IT BEST & TRUE VALUE FALL MARKET
Indianapolis, IN | doitbestonline.com

OCT 14-16

2026 LBM STRATEGIES CONFERENCE
Milwaukee, WI | lbmstrategies.com

OCT 28-30

LMC EXPO 2026
Philadelphia, PA | lmc.net

NOV 4-6

NAWLA TRADERS MARKET
Anaheim, CA | nawla.org

NOV 9-11

LBM ADVANTAGE FALL PLANNING
CONFERENCE
Everett, MA | lbmadvantage.com

NOV 17-19

DECK EXPO
New Orleans, LA | deckexpo.com

2027

JAN 19-20

BLD BizCon North
Brooklyn Park, MN | bldconnection.org

FEB 1-2

BLD BIZCON SOUTH
Altoona, IA | bldconnection.org

FEB 2-4

2027 NAHB INTERNATIONAL
BUILDERS SHOW
Las Vegas, NV | buildersshow.com

FEB 25-27

ORGILL DEALER MARKET
Orlando, FL | orgill.com

MAR 5-7

DO IT BEST & TRUE VALUE
SPRING MARKET
Orlando, FL | doitbestonline.com

MAR 8-10

LBM ADVANTAGE ANNUAL
BUYING SHOW
Grapevine, TX | lbmadvantage.com

MAR 23-25

LMC ANNUAL 2027
Tampa, FL | lmc.net



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CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY #7

A STORY ABOUT GROWING THROUGH AGILITY

Agri Supply has never fit neatly into a single category. Since opening in 1962, what began as a small operation has grown into a multi-faceted business built around serving the diverse needs of our customers.

At our core, we are a retail and wholesale farm and ag supply company with nine locations across the Southeast, including Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina. Our stores range from 40,000 to 120,000 square feet and carry roughly 40,000 items, with strong assortments in agricultural supplies, trailer and mower parts, fencing and three-point equipment. We've also developed our own brands, like Carolina Cooker, which has become an important part of our business.

Because of the markets we serve, there is no one-size-fits-all approach that works for us. Our growth has been driven by our ability to stay responsive to customers and adapt store by store.

That same mindset is why our partnership with Orgill has become so valuable. What began as a secondary supplier relationship evolved as we recognized the opportunity to strengthen our hardware business.

Working with Orgill, we completed a 10,000-square-foot hardware reset in one store, and the results quickly exceeded expectations. Their team supported everything from assortment planning to execution, creating a department tailored to our customers—not a cookie-cutter solution.

Because of that success, we're expanding hardware into additional locations. Our goal remains simple: stay agile, serve our customers and continue building on the foundation established more than 60 years ago.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry Partlo".

Barry Partlo

President & CEO | Agri Supply | VA, NC, SC & GA



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SASHCO EXACT COLOR TINTABLE SEALANT

THE JOINT THAT DISAPPEARS.

THE GAP PRE-PAINTED SIDING CREATED

Color mismatch in sealant joints is one of those details that separates a finished job from a finished-looking job. On painted siding, stained trim, or custom millwork, a bead that's even a shade off reads as a flaw — and it's usually the sealant that's the culprit.

Contractors have historically had two options: accept an approximate match from a limited pre-tinted line, or paint over the joint and hope the touch-up holds. Neither is a real solution. Pre-tinted lines cover a fraction of the color systems now shipping from siding manufacturers. And repainting over a cured bead is a short-term answer — when the joint cycles with seasonal movement, that topcoat goes with it.

Pre-painted siding compressed timelines and moved color decisions upstream. But it created a precision problem at the joint that the sealant category hadn't answered. Contractors settled for the closest match. Sashco built a different approach.

The match is inherent to the material, not approximated — because the color comes from the same paint already on the job.

HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

Rather than matching to a chip or a color library, eXact Color incorporates the actual paint or stain used on the project directly into the sealant. The contractor adds water-based paint or stain into the cartridge using the included syringe, shakes to incorporate color fully, adds the thickener, shakes again, and lets it sit for 30 minutes before applying. Cartridges can be prepped the night before.



Paint injected directly into the cartridge — two-step mixing, then 30 minutes for the thickener to fully set before application.

PERFORMANCE BEHIND THE MATCH

A color match is only as good as the sealant behind it. eXact Color now carries ASTM C920 certification — the elastomeric joint sealant standard that specifiers and general contractors reference when qualifying products for exterior siding and trim. C920 tests adhesion, cyclic movement, and long-term elasticity. For contractors working in spec-driven markets, it's the credential that gets a product on the approved list.

Because color is incorporated through the full body of the sealant, the joint weathers with the substrate. The match holds as the joint moves.

THE INVENTORY CASE FOR DEALERS

One tintable SKU closes a gap that a range of pre-colored options never could. Every pre-painted siding sale, stained trim package, or painted cabinetry job becomes a natural add-on — compatible with fiber cement, engineered wood, PVC trim, painted and stained wood siding, and interior finish work. Water-based paints and stains only.

Sashco has been making high-performance sealants in Colorado since 1936. Family-owned and operated for nearly 90 years.

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BY RICK DAVIS

CONTENT REQUIRES CONTEXT. Consider the patient who walks into the medical office and, before any diagnosis is made, listens as the doctor offers several options for the patient to consider. “We could try some penicillin, which we’ll avoid if you’re allergic. If so, maybe Benadryl would do the trick. We also have flu shots, neck braces, an x-ray machine and a lot of good stuff that might really help you improve your health.”

Of course, this is silly. No patient would trust a doctor who willy nilly lists a menu of treatment options before the patient is examined. The same could (or should) be said about a salesperson who makes a lengthy presentation before understanding the client’s or prospect’s situation. In fact, too often salespeople ask the customer, “What do you need from me? How can I help?”

DIAGNOSIS BEFORE PRESCRIPTION

The problems are A. the buyer doesn’t know what you can do and B. if they knew what their blind spots were, they wouldn’t need you. As a solution, salespeople too often deliver presentations that are a menu of options. They are truthful and accurate, but frequently not helpful or relevant to the potential buyer’s situation.

Consider the product presentation, a default go-to for many seasoned sales veterans. They blather on about the great features and benefits of the product. They talk about warranties, performance, and aesthetics. Yet there is a problem. The builder is not planning to live in the house they are selling, and the product attributes are not the most salient features for them to consider. The big issue for them is to discover how the product will help them sell the home faster.

A credible sales presentation would simply state that the house being built will sell faster and establish more credibility when a nationally recognized brand name is associated with the components. The sales rep, in this case, would be wise to share survey results about the likelihood of a buyer choosing the home because of the particular brand of products being installed. “If you want to build credibility and trust,” the salesperson would say in this situation, “then choose the product brand(s) that builds instant credibility in your home.”

This is a story about *context*, which is the difference between a mediocre presentation and a great one. The content that a salesperson delivers can all be true, but if it is provided without context, then it falls flat.

Context is, according to Merriam-Webster, the situation in which something *happens*. For example, a lengthy presentation on a company’s ordering software would be highly appropriate in a room full of people because each recipient might value a different aspect of the asset. However, when speaking with an individual, it’s better to identify the exact aspect of the asset that will be relevant. Here are a few key examples:

- An owner will want software that creates efficiencies for the employees and perhaps even reduces staffing needs. Any features that additionally lower total costs or increase profits will resonate in a one-on-one conversation with the owner.
- A project manager will hardly want themselves worked out of a job but instead will want to learn ways the software can help them do their job more efficiently, such as easy access to pricing and delivery communications. In this way, the salesperson becomes a powerful resource for the employee of the buyer.
- An office manager would, of course, most value access to pricing validation between quotes and invoicing, along with easy online payment options.

These are simple ways a salesperson might sell a proprietary offering from their company. Now consider the subtle parenthetical “s” in the sentence, “... choose the product brand(s) that builds instant credibility in your home.” This should be interpreted two ways. If the salesperson offers a brand that is a differentiator, then this is an obvious presentation tactic. Consider also that it would be useful, consultative advice for any builder in need of a way to boost sales.

Just like the doctor who conducts an examination before prescribing a treatment, a first-rate sales presenter listens to understand the situation. The content of your presentation will be more concise, intuitive, and influential when placed within the proper context.

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



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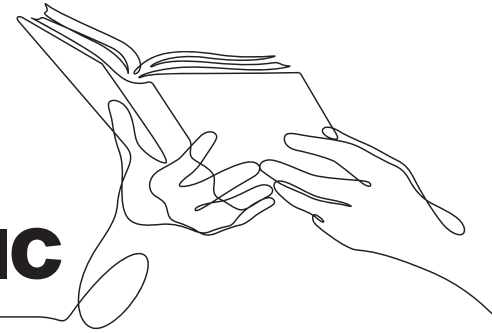
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BY BRADLEY HARTMANN

SUMMER READING: CLASSIC



“BALL FOUR” by former Yankees pitcher Jim Bouton has long been recognized as one of the greatest sports books ever written, yet it sat unread on my bookshelf for nearly two decades because the cover art is terrible and I despise the Yankees.

When I finally cracked it open, I realized it wasn't really about baseball at all. It was about sex, drugs, ego, insecurity, money, and a former World Series champion struggling to remain relevant as his body broke down and the game changed around him. It's a book about teamwork, leadership, power, and the anxieties that plague nearly everyone in competitive environments.

Bouton's innovation—both courageous and controversial—was his transparent examination of *inside baseball*. With humor, candor, and self-awareness, he stripped away the nostalgia around America's pastime. The truth made people uncomfortable.

That's exactly why “Ball Four” still matters to salespeople today. More than five decades later, the book still offers three useful lessons for LBM sales pros: Chronicle what you learn, climb those golden stairs, and communicate with candor.

Chronicle What You Learn

Bouton always kept a pencil and paper in his back pocket, even taking them to the mound. Every day for an entire season, he recorded conversations, observations, negotiations, and drunken postgame shenanigans on a cassette recorder.

That habit of chronicling is a hallmark of great sales professionals. While most salespeople solve problems, great salespeople identify patterns. They turn one customer's problem into another customer's solution. Every interaction becomes a source of intelligence that increases their value to the next customer.

The key is slowing down long enough to study what's causing all the chaos. *What observations are you making on*

the jobsite? Where does communication consistently break down? What recurring builder frustrations are increasing?

Step outside the noise long enough to understand your role within it—and determine how to make things better. Once you do that, you're ready to ...

Climb Those Golden Stairs

Johnny Sain, a six-time World Series champion as a pitcher and coach, once mentored Bouton on contract negotiations with club ownership.

“Now, don't be afraid to climb those golden stairs,” Sain told him. “Go in there and get what you're worth.” What Sain meant was this: Acknowledge the fear and climb the stairs anyway. Advocate for yourself. Ask for what you want.

Great reps build relationships with decision-makers long before bids hit the street. Average reps, meanwhile, wait until the opportunity becomes public and then scramble to compete on price. By then, the game may already be over.

So, climb those golden stairs. Go high and go early. And then ...

Communicate With Candor

Bouton pulled back the curtain on the real culture within professional baseball. He refused to sugarcoat the politics, insecurity, inequality, and the exhausting grind of daily life inside a major league clubhouse.

Every customer has their own clubhouse culture. The rep who spends time observing all this understands how to improve profitability better than the purchasing manager who spends time staring at spreadsheets.

The best salespeople become translators between field reality and office assumptions. The goal isn't negativity or gossip; it's candor and insight about how to make things better. This is valuable because it's rare. It's far easier to put your head down, keep the routine going, and avoid uncomfortable conversations. But that's not how leaders improve organizations—and it's not how great LBM sales pros stand out.

The lasting impact of “Ball Four” is that Jim Bouton understood something timeless: Every competitive industry has a public version of how things work—and then the real one. Chronicle what you learn. Climb those golden stairs. Communicate with candor.

The book cover is still ugly, as are the Yankees, but the lessons in “Ball Four” work just as well for us in the field today as they did for Bouton on the field back then.

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



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SIDING TRIM SHEETS OUTDOOR LIVING SPECIALTY PRODUCTS

BY THEA DUDLEY

Hey there Thea,
How do I handle a longtime customer who's suddenly stretching terms, dodging my calls, and blaming "job delays," but still pitches a fit when I won't rush his next order? We are not his bank.

— Unwilling Bankroller

SLOW YOUR BANKROLL

Dear Rollerball,

Au contraire mon frère, you are the bank. It's in the fine print of "I will agree to anything on your credit application, just open the dang account." Once the orders are rolling and they've got what they need, you my dear, become a bit of a different priority depending on what's going on with their cash flow.

The dirty shame of our business is we all find ourselves the unwilling banker to some of our customer base. Customers don't treat trade credit accounts with the same reverence as they do a mortgage, lease, truck loan, or other financing arrangements. It's our own fault. We may not charge interest—or we write it off if we do—we allow the account to go past due, and we still ship orders. We give "stern warnings" and "this is the last time" with a serious face.

We often don't report our accounts receivable to the commercial credit bureaus—we don't want to offend. We don't send prelims for the same reason. We don't make ourselves a priority. We're worried they won't buy from us anymore if we hold them accountable.

"You're the only one holding up orders or constantly nagging for payment," according to your customer. At least this one is a longtime customer who has a good track record with you and not a freshly opened account that falls down straight out of the gate.

Since this customer is a "lifer" with you, take off the gloves and have "The Talk." Chances are this customer has had some ups and downs with you over the years. Depending on how long you have been with the company, you may have previous experience with them. Reach out to who you know at their company and hit the issue head on.

"The Talk" doesn't have to be a degrading beatdown designed to make your customer feel like warmed-over moose poop. Just make it clear, timely, and human. Resist talking in "textbook" language. "I understand sometimes times are tough, but we can proactively find a way to refresh your account." WTH? That doesn't relate to anyone, if they even understand what you are trying to say.

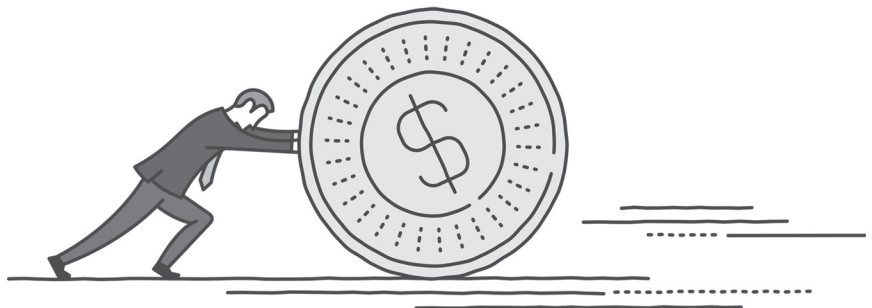
A simple, "Hey Fred, I noticed some slowing payments on your account, what's going on, and here's what I need to keep your account moving." No drama. No beating around the bush. Just a straight-forward conversation. Since it is a longtime account, let them know you're invested in them. If you report your data to the commercial credit bureau(s)—at least one—remind them of that. "We report our data and I am concerned the slow payments will impact your credit rating, which has always been great." The messaging is "slow pay someone who doesn't report, not me." Sound harsh? Not really. It's not mean if it's true.

Everyone talks about partnerships in our industry but rarely when it comes to slow pay. If we are in this together, then my holding the order for payment information is not punishment, it's partnership. It doesn't mean I keep funding you and you keep dodging me. Partnership means we are in this together and we use our resources ... together. We have a conversation and we work out solutions that work for both.

Partnerships rarely survive if one half of the equation feels like they are doing all the heavy lifting. And if you don't know which you are, a bad business partner will tell you. Loudly. If they keep referring to you as "the problem", it's time to reevaluate.

Rip off the band-aid, give your customers the benefit of the doubt and have "The Talk."

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.



LET'S BUILD SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL



Photo: @Bruce Damonte

Premium redwood shines on UC Berkeley campus.

Built on the University of California, Berkeley campus more than 100 years ago, Creekside Center underwent an extensive renovation to become the new home for the university's Disabled Students' Program (DSP). The renovated building is clad in a durable, pre-finished redwood heartwood grade board and batten profile. Help your customers complete their projects with premium redwood boards, pattern stock and timbers. **Let's work together. Let's build something beautiful.**



Humboldt®



Project Case Study

BY JOHN D. WAGNER

WHENEVER I SHOP at my local Home Depot or Lowe's, I have, until now, thought that our clients—family-owned LBM businesses—should not view them as a competitor.

For instance, Home Depot's in-aisle customer care is consistently poor; they are understaffed. Lowe's is only slightly better. And that's just me dropping in for a smoke detector or a tube of caulk.

If I wanted a framing kit for a 2,800-sq.-ft. home, or shingle packs and insulation bundles for that home (or a dozen of those homes), I'd have to serve as my own load builder, pick the sticks and bundles off the shelves, and get them out to my own truck.

Neither Home Depot nor Lowe's offers lot-specific delivery of framing kits, insulation, roofing, etc. Neither offers the digital sophistication of takeoffs and app-driven tracking and control of orders the way, say, Builders FirstSource offers this through MyBLDR, just to cite one example. Neither offer anywhere near the pro-customer experience I'd get from a pro-focused LBM retailer like yours, with your truck fleets, load builders, and pre-dawn delivery services.

YES, THE BIG BOXES ARE COMING AFTER YOU

However, a series of recent acquisitions by Home Depot and Lowe's are beginning to change my mind; *not yet* in terms of service level, but at least in terms of logistics capacity.

Home Depot is clearly building out a strategy to perform like Builders FirstSource for pro customers. The combined network now owned by Home Depot—including SRS and GMS—added a fleet of more than 8,000 trucks serving over 1,200 locations after those acquisitions. Think they did this to sell a tube of caulk to a weekend warrior like me? They are going for the pro-customer base, with a large fleet of trucks to compete with the more traditional “independent” LBM dealers, many of whom are now owned by such acquirers as US LBM, Builders FirstSource, QXO, Nation's Best, ABC Supply, BIP, Spahn and Rose, and others.

If that's not a telling example, note that Lowe's recently acquired Foundation Building Materials (FBM). Its assets include more than 370 branches. Recent Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) filings show FBM operates over 2,700 vehicles in its fleet. Again, Lowe's isn't doing this to sell DIYers a few dollars' worth of materials. They are going after the pros, many of which FBM already counts as customers.

A key differentiator between independent, family-owned LBM dealers and those now part of the BFS, US LBM, QXO, ABC Supply, and others is logistics and delivery capability driven by load-builders in their pro yards. Sure, DIYers can wander in now and then, and repair-and-remodel is often a substantial fraction of their businesses, but where you've carved out your niche is offering a delivery service that sequences building products on a lot-specific basis and in a just-in-time system. These deliveries drop off everything from yard stakes to set up footers to roofing nails.

As Lowe's and Home Depot continue expanding their own pro-focused delivery capabilities, however, independents may need to think carefully about how they maintain that

advantage. Competing solely on price has never been the strongest position for most independents, and maintaining a lead in service, logistics, and customer relationships may become increasingly important. The same is true for

technology, where the largest players can devote substantial capital to developing digital platforms and customer-facing applications. The question isn't whether independents can compete—many clearly do—but rather where they can create and sustain differentiation.

As much as you may value remaining independent, participating in ongoing industry consolidation may make strategic sense for some dealers. Without additional scale, competing across multiple dimensions—product selection, pricing, logistics, technology, and purchasing power—could become more challenging as national players continue to invest in those areas.

That doesn't mean independent dealers are destined to lose ground. Many continue to thrive by leveraging local market knowledge, customer relationships, and specialized service. But scale can provide advantages, particularly when it comes to purchasing leverage and operational investment. The key is to think proactively about where your business will derive its competitive strength over the next decade. As the old proverb says, “See three days into the future, be rich for a thousand years.” Are you looking far enough ahead?

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



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¹On average, MCS screws require 30% less load to start screw into wood compared to competition
²On average, MCS screws require 10% less energy to fully seat fasteners in wood compared to competition

BY RUSS KATHREIN

WHAT THEY DON'T KNOW WILL HURT YOU

ONCE I RECEIVED an email from our company's finance team late in the afternoon during budget season. No preamble. No context. Just a note saying here were my budget targets, time was short, and it was critical that we all hit the targets we were assigned. The email referenced a broader discussion I hadn't been part of, so I had no context.

Then I looked at the numbers. The salary and wages line was cut so deeply that hitting the target would have required me to eliminate more than 20% of my staff. My boss was traveling. I had less than 48 hours.

My team and I spent that evening and the next morning working through the worst-case math. What positions would go? Should we rescind job offers already accepted? We ran scenarios we hoped we'd never need and had conversations we hoped we'd never revisit. The anxiety was real. Not only were we worried about something very unpleasant, but we were worried about our own futures. Our team was delivering promising growth. What could be so bad that the company was asking for such draconian measures?

The next day, I got the full story: Cut-and-paste errors had skewed the numbers. I was actually under target—no action required from me. All of that mental anguish. For nothing.

Here is what I took from it: in an information vacuum, people will almost always assume the worst. It's not a character flaw. It's a human survival instinct. When we don't have the full picture, we fill the gaps with fear. And when a leader sends out incomplete or incorrect information in a hurry, they do far more damage than if they had taken another hour to get it right.

I've been on both sides of this. I've been the person waiting on news that wasn't coming. And I've been the leader who held information back, for one of three reasons I suspect most leaders would recognize if they're honest with themselves.

The first is that we don't trust our people with the truth. We convince ourselves the news is too hard, the details too complicated, the reaction too unpredictable. So, we filter. We soften to protect. Sometimes we just go quiet hoping the issue will go away. It never does, and we rarely grasp the damage caused by withholding the truth.

The second is that we want the message to be perfect before we say anything. That instinct isn't entirely wrong. Poorly-worded communication causes real problems, and I have the budget email to prove it. But "perfectly crafted" is often just a story we tell ourselves. What we mean is that we aren't comfortable yet, and comfort isn't a reason to leave people guessing.

The third reason is the one nobody likes to admit: we just don't think it matters enough to share. The decision is made, the direction is set, and communicating the why feels like extra work. So, we skip it. We treat context as optional.

It is not optional. And James Burke proved it in the most public way possible.

In 1982, seven people in Chicago died after cyanide was placed in Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules. Johnson & Johnson CEO James Burke recalled 31 million bottles nationwide at a cost of \$100 million, even though the contamination was confirmed only in Chicago and the recall wasn't legally required. Advisors warned him the brand might not recover. He proceeded anyway and appeared on television himself to explain what happened and what the company was doing. He didn't withhold information or wait for a perfect message—he communicated everything immediately.

Your people spend eight to 10 hours a day inside your organization and see everything. When change happens without explanation, they don't assume good news—they assume the worst and start talking. By the time you share the real story, you're already fighting the version circulating in the break room.

Leaders are almost always the first to know what's happening. That's both a privilege and a responsibility. When you hoard information, perfect it into paralysis, or simply fail to share it, you're not protecting your people; you're leaving them alone in the dark with their imaginations.

And if there's one thing I've learned firsthand, it's that people's imaginations are a lot more creative than the actual news ever is.

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

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SUMMER RISKS

With summer here, high temperatures are a major concern for worker health. What precautions and coverage should business owners have in place to protect employees?

LBM employees often work long hours in warehouses, lumberyards or outdoor job sites. With soaring summer temperatures, employees are susceptible to heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Consider these tips to reduce risk exposure to heat-related illness:

Keep the team cool: On exceptionally hot days, LBM leaders should ensure employees have easy access to cold drinking water throughout their shifts, along with shaded or air-conditioned areas. Additionally, supervisors should schedule regular, mandatory breaks for employees every couple of hours.

Be alert: Supervisors should be trained to recognize the warning signs of heat-related illness, including excessive sweating, dizziness, and nausea. LBM businesses should have a clear emergency protocol outlining how to cool someone safely, when to call 911, and who to notify.

Pivot when needed: Management should consider adjusting schedules when dangerously high temperatures are forecast. For example, begin projects earlier in the morning or rotate staff between indoor and outdoor tasks.

Employers should review workers' compensation coverage to ensure heat-related illnesses and injuries are properly addressed. Strong heat safety protocols and documented prevention efforts can help reduce secondary incidents such as falls, equipment accidents, fatigue-related injuries, and cardiac events, as well as improve the business's risk profile from the insurance carriers' perception.

Although extreme weather can be a threat year-round, hurricane season takes place during warmer months. What steps should coastal businesses take now to be prepared?

During hurricane season, coastal LBM businesses are especially susceptible to significant damage and business interruption. It only takes one storm to take down an LBM business's operations. Ahead of the season, LBM business owners should:

Conduct inspections of their properties and storage areas to identify possible weak points, such as leaks that could impact the business's ability to withstand a storm. Prior to a storm, outdoor inventory, lumber, pallets and equipment should be moved indoors or secured to prevent items from becoming projectiles.

Create a response plan to establish procedures for initiating storm preparations, evacuations and recovery prior to a storm. Plans should clearly define employee responsibilities, emergency communication protocols, post-storm reporting, clean-up and more to ensure safety and minimize operational downtime.

Don't compromise coverage for cost. When a storm hits and the coverage is not there, LBM businesses can be left with crushing out-of-pocket costs. Prior to hurricane season, leadership should evaluate their coverage with an insurance professional to ensure properties and all inventory are insured to value.



Drought can also be a concern in summer, which brings the threat of brush fires. What can businesses do to minimize risk?

Hot, dry summer weather increases the risk of brush fires, especially for LBM businesses that store combustible materials. Without proper precautions, dry vegetation, debris, and hot equipment can quickly spark costly fires. LBM businesses can do a few things to prevent brush fires and resulting blazes including:

Maintaining space around buildings and storage: Regularly clear brush, weeds, leaves, and debris from around buildings, storage areas, and equipment to create defensible space.

Reduce ignition sources and monitor: Properly store combustible materials, strictly enforce no-smoking policies, and maintain equipment to limit heat sources. Closely monitor hot work—such as welding and cutting—to quickly contain any sparks or flames.

Implement an emergency response plan: Establish clear evacuation and communication procedures, and outline steps to secure equipment and inventory in the event of a fire. In addition, businesses in wildfire-prone areas should review insurance coverage annually.

What unexpected challenges can summer bring that business owners should be aware of?

The period between Memorial Day and Labor Day is often called the "100 Deadliest Days" because roadway accidents increase as more drivers take to the road. For LBM business owners, fleet safety is especially critical during the summer months. Consider the following safety tips:

Ensure drivers meet minimum screening requirements—such as age, experience, and appropriate licensing—**and conduct thorough interviews, background checks, drug screenings, physical exams, and road tests.**

Ongoing training is key. Drivers should be regularly trained on company policies, safe driving practices, and high-risk behaviors like speeding, tailgating, distracted driving, and fatigue—especially after any incident.

Tech tools can add valuable layers of protection. Telematics can monitor behaviors like speeding and hard braking, while Motor Vehicle Report (MVR) monitoring alerts managers to changes in driving records.

LBM dealers with additional questions should contact our team by visiting plmins.com, emailing us at CustServ@plmins.com or calling 1-800-752-1895 to learn more.

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REAL ISSUES. REAL ANSWERS.



BY LBM JOURNAL READERS

RISING FUEL PRICES & JOBSITE DELIVERIES

At the time of this survey, the average cost of a gallon of diesel gas in the U.S. was \$5.60, which was a four-year high. For LBM dealers that have long offered free or low-cost delivery as a selling point, those costs per trip can start to add up fast. How is your company handling these price increases, and what changes would you make to help shoulder the cost?



What insights would you share with the LBM dealer who posed this scenario: “Free jobsite delivery has always been part of our model. We’re not the low-cost dealer in our market, so it’s been a key way for us to compete on service. With fuel prices all over the place (they just topped \$4/gallon here), we’re starting to question how long we can keep doing it. How are other dealers handling delivery charges right now?”

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 charge for deliveries on most of our orders. We have some loyal customers that we don’t charge for deliveries unless it is beyond our regular delivery area. If you get some pushback on fuel charges, you may look at increasing your margin for that account. Our diesel price is over \$5 per gallon. Explain that you may not be able to stay in business with these high costs and that would make prices go up because of lack of competition.”

“Charge a reasonable fee for customer types like remodeling and deck builders as well as all homeowners. Free delivery to job-committed builders’ customers.”

“Built into cost of goods.”

“We use a flat rate to cover the county we do most of our business in. Anything that goes outside of that pays a higher rate based on the extra distance. I’ve been charging for deliveries for over 20 years. Some customers get over it, some don’t and bring their trailer in to get loaded. Either way, they get the best service we can provide.”

“We still have free delivery even when the diesel price is over \$5! You are that important to us!”

“I say look through all of your blind items and see which ones you can raise the price on. Mind your margins.”

“We are just going to wait it out.”

“We added a fuel surcharge based on miles traveled and cost difference of fuel from February 2026 to today. Per mile charge varies weekly with changing fuel cost.”

“There is a reasonable expectation that due to rising fuel costs, deliveries will be more expensive than previously warranted. Customers understand.”

“If eating the fuel cost is becoming unsustainable, it must be passed to the customer in some way. Raising the retail slightly on some of your ‘high mover’ items that are not as price sensitive may offset the cost of delivery of the lower margin items in your bottom line.”

“I thought we were the only ones offering free jobsite delivery. We’ve started charging \$5-\$10 depending on distance (over 5 miles) and size of order (under \$150 or so).”

“I think there is no choice but to charge a fair delivery charge.”

“We are charging modest delivery fees on more and more orders. Most customers seem to be understanding.”

“We have kept prices the same for now.”

“We have always charged for delivery, but the fee has been very minimal compared to the big box stores in the next town over. We have a map with a radius of delivery fees (the further away from the store, the higher the charge). We do this so we can afford to maintain our trucks.”

“We look at each delivery and evaluate if we should or shouldn’t charge a delivery fee. Our local competition does not charge so we have to keep that in mind.”

“Delivery charge is based on size of order and can be waived by the general manager if it’s necessary.”

“We have always charged a delivery fee, but the fee varies by customer and order size. The fee is small and barely accounts for the cost of fuel. But at least we are able to make back some of the delivery cost.”

“We are not charging delivery fees and will not!”

“We are keeping with our original pricing structure. Fuel prices are too unpredictable long term to affect an immediate change in policy.”

“Use a fuel surcharge—just be consistent and firm with all, otherwise it will not be successful.”

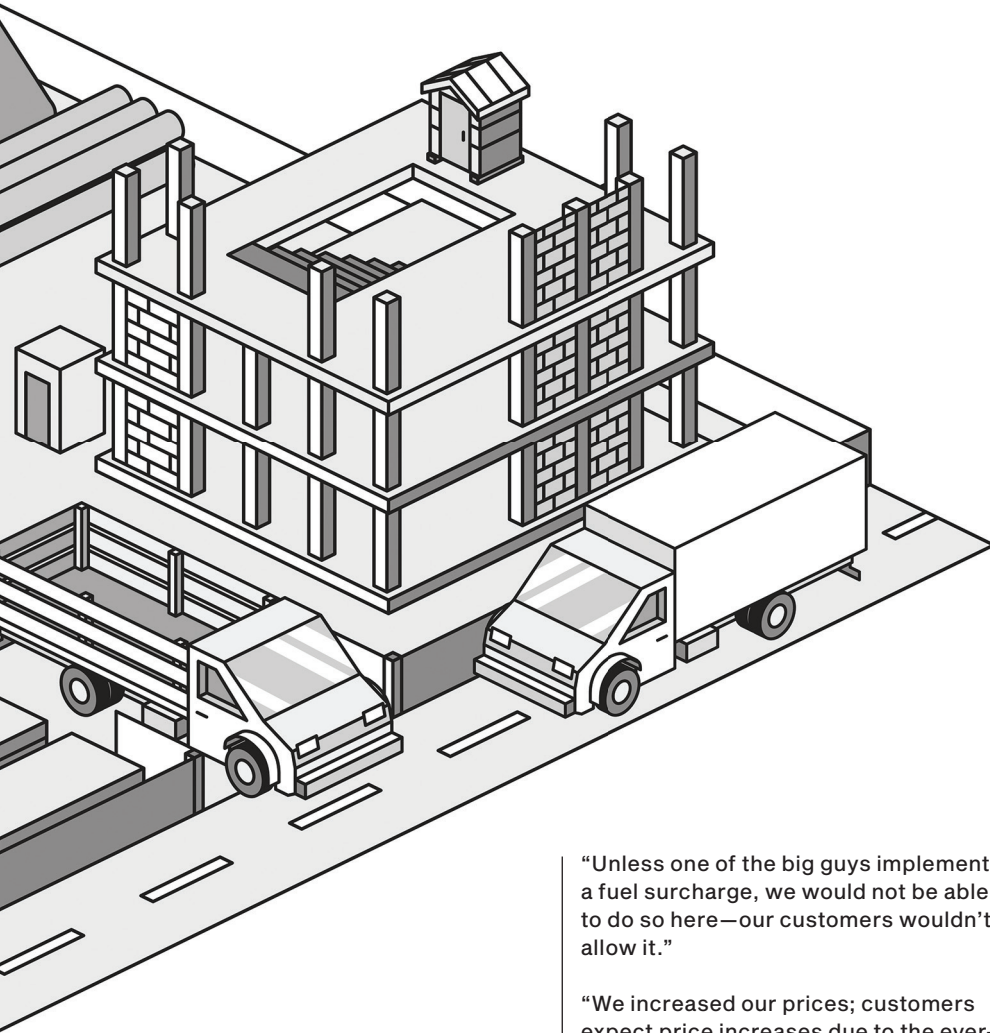
“Free jobsite delivery for local market jobs, and jobs outside our service area do require a small delivery fee. This fee does not cover our delivery cost, but it does offset some.”

“Delivery charges based on dollar and business volume.”

“Jobsite deliveries usually take longer, require specialized equipment, drivers with more training, and reduce the efficiency of the delivery vehicle. Instead of a blanket ‘free delivery,’ look at a pricing schedule based on distance or order amount to help increase efficiency and profitability for the delivery route.”

“Nothing is free. Fuel prices would need to be calculated with the product.”

“We were in the same boat years ago. I calculated with our margin structure, we would not charge until fuel prices exceeded \$1.50 per gallon. We started offsetting the increased fuel cost and now have to deal with large increases with insurance.”



“We started charging all cash customers a minimum \$35 delivery fee, and we added a 1 p.m. cutoff time for next day deliveries to make sure we are sending out full trucks. More deliveries on each truck.”

“We are trying to hold out for now. Hoping prices will drop soon.”

“We had to raise our delivery charge.”

“For years we have added delivery charges for smaller orders or for ‘occasional’ customers. We have never charged our best customers for any deliveries no matter the size. At this point, we have decided to include delivery charges for more mid-sized orders but still withhold those charges for our best customers. This way we can recoup not only some of the increased gas costs but also the new delivery/service fees we’re facing from wholesale distributors.”

“Unless one of the big guys implements a fuel surcharge, we would not be able to do so here—our customers wouldn’t allow it.”

“We increased our prices; customers expect price increases due to the ever-changing tariffs. Adding multiple lines to an invoice for multiple ‘junk’ charges just angers customers. For reference, consider how poorly surcharges and mandatory fees are accepted in the restaurant industry. Adding charges that are waived upon request or complaint teaches customers to complain. And nobody wants that. Other customers may not complain, but when they learn they may have been rewarded for complaining, they won’t come back.”

“We try to deliver to builders for free all the time and to homeowners if the loads are large enough. We are trying to hold out for fuel prices to fall but may have to do something if they continue to stay elevated.”

“This will always be a part of our business model. The ratio that allows for free delivery will be adjusted. This is just not fuel cost-related but also labor and equipment cost to operate.”

“We are doing a fuel surcharge and an extended-area mileage fee now for anything over 30 miles from our location.”

“Customers will understand that you can no longer shoulder the cost of fuel. Be sure to waive the fee for large volume accounts and make sure they know you’re waiving it. Be sure to announce the change to customers and if you’re nervous, give a threshold when you can return to offering free delivery. The charge should be reasonable, not excessive. Target \$25-\$35 per trip (not per invoice).”

“It depends. If it’s a tractor/trailer full load being delivered, I don’t blame you for not charging. We’re a smaller yard and make many smaller deliveries on flat beds, box trucks, and even Moffett trucks. We charge at least \$30 for delivery.”

“Most wholesalers are charging a fuel surcharge. You can’t eat the fuel cost on every delivery. Most of our customers understand the cost of doing business and realize there is a cost for delivery in most cases.”

“As a company, you can only absorb so much before it starts to affect your bottom line. You need to look at the overall big picture and start with a small increase of pricing or add a delivery fee going forward.”

“If the two largest building material dealers (Lowe’s and Home Depot) can charge for delivery, and we offer better service, then why can’t we charge? When we offered free delivery for many years, a 10-wheeler with a truck mounted lift could be purchased for \$150K, drivers made \$12-\$15 per hour, etc. Now those same truck/lift combos are \$300K-plus and drivers are making \$25-\$30 per hour! We can’t continue to absorb these costs and offer the same service. Charging delivery puts a value on the service and forces all of us to be efficient with our takeoffs, planning, logistics, etc. Customers understand that, even if they grumble a little. If you deliver accurately, and on time, they will stay with you.”

“Eat it and separate yourself from the competition.”

“Build the cost into your margin. Contractors expect material delivered so price it as such. All our competitors do not charge, so it’s tough to be the first one.”

“Adding a delivery charge is somewhat understandable right now with the higher gas prices. However, if a customer doesn’t want to hear that, we try to bury in the inventory markup where possible.”

“You have to cover fuel, truck, and driver costs somewhere. A surcharge is a good temporary suggestion—adding to the retail cost just makes you appear even higher.”

“Years ago we were in the same situation, we explained to our customers and staff it was becoming part of doing business. We started at a low amount and kept it that way since.”

“We are still offering free delivery but have started trying to be more efficient with full trucks only leaving the yard. We’re combining as many orders as we can and managing repeat deliveries to the same jobsite more stringently.”

“At present, we have not changed our policy, however we do charge a nominal delivery fee to noncontractors for purchases below \$500. We will probably change the charge in the future and bring up the dollar amount.”

“We started charging delivery fees because of the cost of overhead, fuel, drivers, insurance, etc. We get very little kick-back largely because of the charges that the box stores put on their invoices.”

“It’s never free. Every time you handle something, there is a cost.”

“We have charged a delivery fee for almost 30 years. It is a modest amount for everyone but entirely covers our fuel costs for the year. A small fee for a lot of people adds up.”

“We are adding a \$25 fuel surcharge to cash customers and smaller orders.”

“We just raised ours.”

“We also do not charge outwardly for delivery, but we do monitor our margins to influence pricing as the cost to serve that delivery increases. I would argue that the increase in labor cost, CDL requirements, and the cost to purchase and repair our vehicles of late has made much more of a crunch to our cost to serve than fuel costs do, as the fuel itself is typically only 6-8% of our overall delivery cost. We focus on accuracy and efficiency of trips to help control costs.”

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"We have always charged \$75 even when fuel was cheaper. We have maintained the \$75 while fuel has risen."

"If your customer is not used to seeing a line item for delivery or fuel surcharge, you can simply have your team add whatever you deem as the appropriate amount (\$20, \$30, etc.) to a higher cost item on the invoice and bury the cost. That way you can continue to maintain your model of 'free delivery.' This may give you a competitive edge in your market as you look like the good guy who never charged for excessive fuel costs."

"You can charge a fair price for deliveries or you can raise your prices and margins. Either way works. Otherwise, you drive your profits down."

"We don't charge for in-town, but out-of-town for sure."

"In my experience, especially in today's fluctuating marketplace, it is easier to recover rising overhead cost with margin than a line-item charge. In essence a 1/4% to 1/2% of margin more than makes up for a line-item delivery charge and causes less kick-back."

"For 60 years we did not charge for delivery. Four years ago, we started adding a \$15 delivery fee flat rate—no minimum distance and no minimum amount. This made it simple for the counter people and drivers to have a flat rate. We were surprised we had very few complaints ... maybe three. In 2025, we made 1,374 deliveries. That amounted to \$20,610. Plus it cut back on the 'can you deliver two 2x4x8s' requests."

"We offer free delivery on orders over \$750 with a \$25 fuel charge on all other deliveries."

"The big boxes up the road all charge a fee, we just do about half of their cost."

"We're adding a fuel surcharge."

"We have minimally increased our local and long-distance fees to non-account holders and have asked account holders to place delivery orders for more than \$1,000. We also started charging for return pickups."

"We are now charging for most deliveries. Diesel is over \$5 per gallon. The bigger customer still doesn't pay a fee."

"We are in a small market. A sale over \$800 typically does not have a fee unless it's over 10 miles."

"We're adjusting how we handle delivery in the Prescott Quad-Cities by keeping service strong locally but adding distance-based fees, job size minimums, or fuel surcharges for outlying jobs to protect margin."

"We deliver for free within the county. We charge for deliveries outside of that, unless it's one of our biggest customer. This helps us control range."

"We charge a \$19 fuel surcharge to contractors and builders. For homeowners and cash customers, we have a tiered delivery charge from \$50-\$250."

"We are going to have to continue to offer free delivery to the large customers unless Builders FirstSource, 84 Lumber, or US LBM start to charge, and I doubt they will. The timing of this is horrible. We have no leverage right now. They beat us up on price daily so customers would have a heart attack if we told them we'd have to charge for delivery."

"We're considering a fuel surcharge. Diesel is \$5.25 per gallon in our markets."

"We're minimizing same-day deliveries to reduce fuel usage through efficiently planning routes but weighing the options for a delivery fee."

"Anything over 50 miles is charged a delivery fee." ▶

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Responses from wholesale distributors, manufacturers, and service providers:

"Increases are coming from all directions right now, many due specifically to fuel prices. Why do you feel that your business is held to a different standard? You said you're not the low-cost dealer. Adequately charging for fuel allows you to sustain this statement as opposed to making sacrifices elsewhere as a result of lost profits. Give your customers ample notice, and be confident in the service you provide."

"With many contractors wanting jobsite pickups, I would have a small delivery fee. But I would charge a much higher pickup fee and a higher restocking fee if it needs to be picked up."

"You have to pass the increases onto the customer somehow."

"Price it in, or do a modest, defensible surcharge."

"As a distributor, we don't typically ship to jobsites."

"We are charging a temporary fuel surcharge, which is a percentage calculated based on the gross of the order."

"Depends how much it affects profit margin."

"We increased our fuel surcharge from \$25 to \$35 per jobsite."

"Ask your customers which they prefer, there are two choices: increase the price of your product or add a delivery fee to cover true costs."

"I base fuel charges upon distance to the jobsite. Typically, I build some delivery charges into my installation charges, but I find I'm having to make multiple trips to jobs because other vendors aren't finishing on time. Trip charges may be coming."

"We're staying with our current policy of free delivery for orders over \$2,000."

"For now, we are just riding it out. It's a real cost, but unless it starts shaping up to be a long-term issue, it's not worth the grief of implementing and then having to backtrack in a few weeks/months."

"Don't be afraid to add a delivery charge!"

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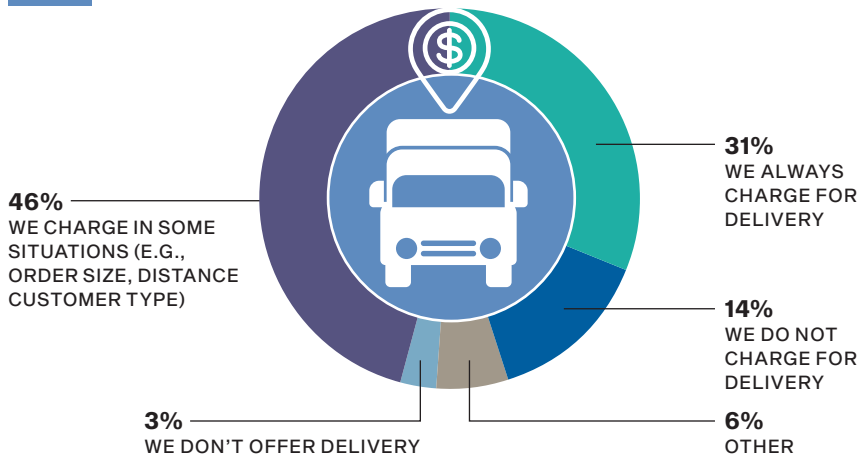
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SCAN TO VISIT WEBSITE





How does your company handle jobsite delivery fees?



Comments from dealers:

“We have a fuel surcharge on all deliveries.”

“We charge all of our customers for delivery except our top customers.”

Comments from vendors:

“We charge for freight based on order size.”

“We deliver to stores/yards only—free but with minimums for non-stocking dealers.”

“As a wholesaler, we do not deliver to jobsites, but do deliver to lumber and masonry yards. We don't charge for delivery. It's included in the price, but with the cost of fuel, we now charge a temporary fuel surcharge.” ■

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Products for Wildfire Resilience

Wildfire risk is top of mind for many Americans. The devastating fires in Southern California's Pacific Palisades and Altadena communities, which destroyed tens of thousands of homes and buildings in January 2025, is one of the most harrowing reminders of the potential destruction — and the need to fortify new and existing homes.

According to NASA, extreme wildfires worldwide have become more frequent, more intense, and larger over the past two decades. The Western U.S. has had the largest increase in extreme fire behavior, the agency said.

The trend isn't slowing down. "Since the beginning of the year, nearly 30,000 fires have ignited across the country — the most in almost two decades," CNN reported in late May. "More than 2 million acres have burned, which is twice the previous 10-year average and the highest loss in 14 years."

And the challenge isn't limited to the West. Already this year, areas in the Southeast and Great Plains are already seeing an increase in wildfire activity.



Fire Resilience for New and Existing Homes

For homeowners, the increasing threat of wildfires isn't just about legitimate fears about their safety and their homes. It's also about the rising costs of insurance.

It's critical that homes, particularly those in any area where wildfires are common, are built and maintained with fire resilience in mind. This includes using fire-rated and -resistant products for roofs, cladding, decking — and deck framing, soffits, gables, and other exterior components as well as using fire-smart landscaping, clearing debris, and other steps.

Weyerhaeuser Distribution offers a number of materials with high fire-resistance ratings. It's important to remember that most products do not stand alone in their fire resilience — designers and contractors must think about the full system and eliminate all areas vulnerable to embers and flame spread. In addition, some products' fire resistance ratings are achieved when installed as part of a system. For example, some roofing will also need fire-resistant underlayments and other features to achieve a Class A fire resistance rating.

Here is a snapshot of some fire-resistant solutions available* through Weyerhaeuser Distribution:

Trex® Refuge Cellular PVC Decking:

Engineered to resist fire ignition, Refuge PVC decking has a Class A Flame Spread Rating and is International Wildland Urban Interface Code compliant — giving homeowners confidence when it matters most.



New Castle Steel® Decking Framing:

A non-combustible steel-framing solution ideal for deck structures in high-fire-risk areas, New Castle Steel has a Class 1A fire rating that may lower insurance premiums.



Benjamin Obdyke® Wall & Roof Systems:

The company's lineup of housewraps and roofing underlayments are Class A fire rated, carry a 250-degree rating, and support fire-conscious wall and roof assemblies.



DuPont™ Styrofoam™ Brand XPS Insulation:

The insulation boards meet UL 723 requirements for flame spread and smoke developed, and there are many listed fire-rated wall assemblies that contain Styrofoam Brand XPS Insulation.



Owens Corning FOAMULAR® NGX 250 XPS Rigid Foam Insulation:

The insulation boards meet ASTM E84/UL 723 Class A requirements for surface burning characteristics, including flame spread and smoke developed index. Owens Corning FOAMULAR® NGX® 250 XPS Rigid Foam Insulation is tested in accordance with these standards and may be used as part of wall assemblies tested in accordance with ASTM E119/UL 263 for fire resistance, as well as in other UL-listed wall and roof assemblies.



*Though product portfolios vary by market, consider Weyerhaeuser Distribution as your resource for local inventory and distribution support, product guidance for fire-resilient construction, and a range of trusted products for building homes that bring peace of mind.

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Weyerhaeuser Distribution is committed to delivering the top brands for reliable, consistent products you can rely on. Connect with your Weyerhaeuser representative today about the fire-resilient solutions available in your market.

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THE AI MANDATE

BY SHANE SOULE

IF YOU'RE STILL “evaluating” AI, you’ve already made a decision. You’re choosing to keep your costs where they are. You’re choosing slower estimates, buried teams, and manual work that could take seconds. And while you’re deciding, other operators are already moving.

This isn’t about whether AI is the future. It’s about whether you’re going to operate differently now.

Fourteen months ago, I made a structural decision at ProTec: AI would not be optional.

I run a multi-branch panel and truss operation across Indiana and Michigan, with design, production, sales, HR, and finance all under one roof. When I started using AI personally, the impact was immediate. Financial analysis that used to take an entire morning came back in minutes. My meeting transcripts from Otter fed automatically into a leadership workspace, and by the time I was back at my desk after a 1:1, I had a summary with decisions, open issues, and who owned each one. Nothing fell through. Decisions got faster because I had better visibility. The problem was that it was only working for me.

Like most teams, mine did what you’d expect. They tried AI once or twice. A few leaned in for a week. Then it faded. Not because it didn’t work, but because it wasn’t required.

Optional doesn’t scale. It never has. You didn’t roll out your ERP by asking people if they felt like using it. AI is no different.



So we changed the structure. We built department-specific AI environments for each function: Sales Indiana, Sales Michigan, Operations, Design, Finance, and HR. Each one has a knowledge base loaded with the documents that actually matter to that role—pricing, customer profiles, SOPs, production schedules. When someone opens their environment, it already understands their part of the business.

Then we set expectations: daily use. Not when it feels helpful. Not once a week. Every day. It's part of the job now, the same way email is. We track it. We talk about it in 1:1s. If someone isn't using it, that's a conversation. Claude Team gives admins visibility into usage by person and by department. I can see who's active and which Projects are getting traction. Accountability requires data, and the data is there.

That structure changed the outcomes. Our commercial estimating prep dropped from three to five hours down to under 30 minutes. The work still requires experienced estimators making judgment calls—AI handles the grunt work so they can focus on accuracy and the edge cases that actually matter. Meeting follow-ups went from inconsistent to structured every time. My controller now runs P&L variance

analysis and flags anomalies before I ask. That used to be a conversation that took place three weeks after the close. Now it happens in real time.

These aren't one-off wins. They're the result of consistent, required use.

That's what most operators miss. AI isn't valuable because of what it does once. It's valuable because of what your team gets better at over time. Daily use compounds. Prompts improve. Context improves. Output improves. That compounding effect does not happen when it's optional.

To be clear, this isn't plug-and-play. We've had outputs that were wrong. We've rebuilt our department instructions twice. There's a real learning curve.

But the math is simple. The friction of learning this is temporary. The cost of staying behind is not. If you don't make this shift, the consequences are specific. Your estimating stays slower and you lose jobs on speed. Your overhead per estimate stays higher. Your decisions lag because your data does. Meanwhile, the companies that required this a year ago are already operating differently—faster cycles, better visibility, more output from the same teams.

This isn't a tool decision. It's an operating model decision. And most companies haven't made it yet. ■

Shane Soule is president of ProTec Panel & Truss, a multi-branch panel and truss manufacturer with operations in Bremen, IN and Battle Creek, MI.



Owner Tyler Garrett took over the store with his sister, Katie, from their father in 2019. The Garretts combined the two former locations into one state-of-the-art store.

Moscow & Pullman: Built on Service, Powered by Innovation

BY CLAUDIA HOFFACKER

AS AN INDEPENDENT, FAMILY-OWNED COMPANY, Moscow & Pullman Building Supply works to maintain its strong tradition of customer service while also implementing modern business practices like online shopping and AI.

“Ten years ago, I wouldn’t have wanted to have the e-commerce site that we have now,” said President and CEO Tyler Garrett. “I thought, ‘We’re brick and mortar and we need to stay that way; that’s what folks come to us for.’ But the world has changed, and we have to be online, or it’s going to pass us by.”

Garrett’s great grandfather started the company in 1958, and he passed it down to Garrett’s father in 1988. In 2019, his father was ready to retire, so Garrett bought the store, along with his sister Katie Garrett, who serves as chief financial officer. At that time, the company had two locations—one in Moscow, ID, and one in Pullman, WA—but in 2024, they consolidated the business into one store.

The store is a state-of-the-art home center with 29,000 square feet of retail space and a 68,500-sq.-ft. warehouse. Products include lumber and building materials, lawn and garden supplies—and everything in between. With 60%

of customers being contractors, their top-selling products are LBM-focused. Other strong categories include installed insulation, cabinet sales/design and installation, rentals, and garden.

Employee retention makes the difference

Garrett grew up working for the company and while he said he’s seen a few ups and downs, one thing that has remained constant and that differentiates them from the competition is the service their employees offer.

“Our people are definitely what sets us apart—their knowledge, experience, and customer service. That’s every small business’s claim to fame, but that is what we live and die by,” Garrett said.

He added the key to that is longevity. About half of the 115 employees have been with the business more than 10 years, and several have been around for more than 30.

Employees stay because, in addition to on-the-job training and promoting from within, Garrett said the company emphasizes work-life balance. MPBS offers employees consistent work schedules, rather than different hours every week, as is common in retail.

Director of Operations Alan Espenschade, who's been with the company for 21 years, said the longevity, combined with the fact that about 80% of employees are full-time, has contributed to a great company culture.

"We've got these teams that have built a legacy around what the foundation of our business is. We work so well as a team because we've all been here forever," Espenschade explained.

However, that doesn't mean staying fully staffed isn't a challenge, Garrett said. Although 50% of staff includes long-term employees, there's quite a bit of turnover among the other half, so the company is always recruiting.

They do most of their recruiting online, but they also scout for talent around town. "I tell all my managers and HR folks, 'When you're out in the community and you come across someone who gives good service, hand them a business card and talk to them about opportunities here,'" Garrett said.

Keeping up with big competitors

With revenues of \$39 million in 2025, it's clear that customers appreciate the service they get at MPBS. Employees get a chance to show off that service even more at events like Ladies' Night Out, Contractor Appreciation Night, and monthly barbecues.

Ladies' Night Out, which started in 2004 with about 50 attendees, now attracts around 800. It includes food and wine, live music, and vendor demos. Plus, "virtually the whole store's on sale," Garrett said. "A lot of ladies look forward to it as just a big gathering to see friends and have a night out."

The company has also invested in the digital world. Their website is designed to compete with the Amazons of the world and, although Garrett said he was reluctant to go that route, it's paying off. They had about \$300,000 in online sales in 2025, including purchases from more than 30 states.

While it's only bringing in a small portion of the sales now, both Garrett and Espenschade said they expect it to grow. "It seems like every day, there's new functionality on the site," Garrett said. "And what goes hand-in-hand with that is AI-enhanced e-commerce. We're exploring AI all the time and keeping in mind where and how we can use it."



The company is using AI for things like inventory management, budgeting, and writing policies. They've even used it to clone Garrett's voice for radio commercials.

Espenschade said he wants to make sure the company is taking advantage of AI to increase frictionless transactions and "continue to captivate or at least be parallel to the market that Amazon has dominated."

In addition to Amazon, the company is now also competing with Home Depot, which came to Moscow about a year ago. So far, MPBS is holding its own.

"I'm happy to report we're doing well. We're staying within our budget," Espenschade said. "We just have to make sure we're focusing on what we need to—whether that's customer service or technology or frictionless transactions. Our challenge is to stay relevant, and I have no doubt that we will." ■

GET TO KNOW MOSCOW & PULLMAN BUILDING SUPPLY

YEAR FOUNDED:	1958
LOCATIONS:	1
EMPLOYEES:	115
CUSTOMER BASE:	60% Pro / 40% Retail
OWNERSHIP:	Family-owned
PRIMARY BUSINESS ERP:	Epicor BisTrack
CO-OP/BUYING GROUP:	Do it Best
TOP PRODUCT CATEGORY:	Millwork (Doors, Windows, Molding)

Ladies' Night Out, which started in 2004 with about 50 attendees, now attracts around 800. It includes food and wine, live music, and vendor demos.



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NewTechWood Composite Wood Siding comes in two profiles—the All-Weather System and the European Style—each available in a range of rich wood-inspired colors, with multiple pattern options to complement any architectural style.

Our cutting-edge technology provides the sturdiness you demand, including:

- **Fade resistance:** The unique formulation of the shield guarantees that it will retain its vibrant, high-quality colors for much longer than regular composite decking products that lack UV-resistance.
- **Splitting and splintering resistance:** The impenetrable layer of the cap prevents the surface from splitting, which sustains longevity.
- **Stain resistance:** **UltraShield**[®] composite wood is stain resistant to the most stubborn liquids, including oil. These composite siding boards will never absorb liquids.
- **Mold and moisture resistance:** No foothold for mold or mildew.
- **Fire resistance:** Unlike real wood, NewTechWood composite siding is engineered to be fire resistant, giving your home an added layer of protection.
- **Pest resistance:** Many insects, including termites, carpenter ants and carpenter bees, like to burrow into wood siding, which can be disastrous. Luckily, **UltraShield**[®] also protects against these invaders.
- **Low maintenance:** **UltraShield**[®] contains multi-chromatic colors, so you won't ever have to sand, oil or paint it.

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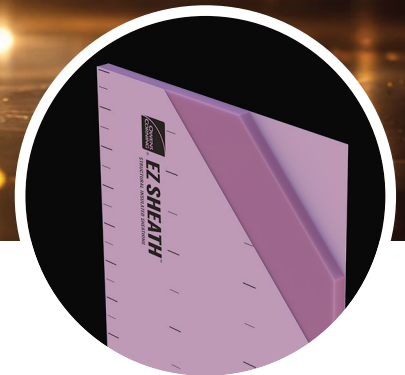




PRODUCTS THAT CHALLENGE CONVENTION AND DELIVER RESULTS

Innovation isn't about being different for the sake of being different. It's about identifying a problem, rethinking the solution, and delivering a better outcome for the people who use the product every day. This year's winners demonstrate that innovation can come from companies of every size—from industry leaders to smaller, inventive manufacturers whose outside-the-box thinking is challenging conventional approaches and creating new opportunities. The nine products featured here do exactly that, earning recognition as recipients of the LBM Journal 2026 Innovation Awards.

— LBM STAFF REPORT



OWENS CORNING

EZSheath

Described as a new type of sheathing, EZSheath™ from Owens Corning combines structural sheathing, insulation, and a weather-resistant barrier into a single panel and a single install. Available in various thicknesses, the system delivers structural reinforcement, continuous R-5 insulation per inch, and a code-compliant air and water barrier in one integrated step.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

Instead of having to install separate layers of sheathing, insulation, and weather protection, EZSheath combines those functions into a single panel, reducing material handling and installation steps. By simplifying the wall assembly process, it helps address labor challenges while supporting energy and building performance goals. The result? Improved jobsite productivity. owenscorning.com

RAPID RAFTER

Rapid Rafter

Invented by a carpenter with an engineering background, the Rapid Rafter is an innovative double-sided square designed for marking ridges, hips, valleys, and rafter tails accurately and efficiently. The patent-pending square features markings on both sides of the tool and folds flat for conventional use. Built-in scales support common roof framing applications and layout tasks.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

Traditional rafter squares require users to flip the tool or reposition it to mark opposite sides of a board. More steps can mean more opportunities for error. Rapid Rafter's dual-sided design allows both edges to be marked in a single motion. This approach streamlines roof framing workflows while maintaining the functionality of a standard square. rapidrafter.com



TYPAR

FlangeFlash

A self-adhered flashing product engineered specifically for non-flanged window and door installations, FlangeFlash™ features a high-performance acrylic adhesive and flexible facer that is said to conform to corners, substrates, and irregular surfaces. According to the manufacturer, the flexibility allows installers to create a continuous seal without the need for excessive cutting, layering, or additional accessories.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

Flashing non-flanged windows and doors can require multiple materials and installation steps, increasing the potential for errors. FlangeFlash streamlines the process by consolidating key performance requirements into a single solution. By reducing installation steps and minimizing opportunities for error, it can help contractors reduce installation time while delivering effective moisture protection. typar.com



AMERICAN FLASHINGS & ACCESSORIES

J'd Out Kickout

J'd Out Kickout is a roof-to-wall flashing engineered to direct water away from exterior wall assemblies. Compatible with most types of roofing and siding—including vinyl, fiber cement, cedar, and more—the product features a built-in J-channel and is designed to integrate with roofing and siding systems to help prevent water intrusion behind sidewalls, which can lead to rot and mold damage.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

Missing or improperly installed kickout flashing is a common source of water intrusion and subsequent wall damage. J'd Out Kickout addresses this issue with a standardized, integrated design that reduces the variability of field-built solutions. americanflashings.com



WEYERHAEUSER

Trus Joist Pro Panel

Trus Joist® Pro Panel is an engineered floor panel designed as part of Weyerhaeuser's Trus Joist framing system. Featuring enhanced moisture-resistance, a high-efficacy edge sealant, fully sanded face and a no-sanding guarantee, the OSB-based panel is designed to deliver consistent floor assembly performance while supporting installation efficiency.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

Weyerhaeuser says Pro Panel delivers higher performance than enhanced floor panels without the premium price point, and is intended for builders focused on quality and cost-control. The panel combines enhanced moisture resistance, stiffness, and durability with a design optimized for compatibility across the assembly. This system-based approach is said to help simplify specification, installation, and long-term performance expectations. weyerhaeuser.com



MUDDSKIP

Muddskip Heavy Duty 3-in-1

When mixed with standard joint compound, Muddskip Heavy Duty 3-in-1 drywall additive is engineered to change how drywall finishing is performed. Muddskip's patented bonding technology is said to allow wet-on-wet application of multiple coats without waiting for full dry times between passes while reducing or eliminating sanding between coats. According to the company, the product increases compound cohesion and bonding, resulting in denser seams and surfaces.

WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

Designed to “resolve the drywall bottleneck,” Muddskip is intended for applications where reduced downtime, cleaner jobsites, or controlled-dust environments—such as healthcare, education, and hospitality projects—are required. By minimizing sanding and accelerating completion times, the technology addresses both labor efficiency and worker exposure to airborne drywall dust. Note: Muddskip won Most Innovative Product and swept the Best of IBS awards at the 2026 International Builder's Show. muddskip.com



LP BUILDING SOLUTIONS

BurnGuard FRT OSB

LP BurnGuard® FRT OSB is a fire-retardant-treated structural panel manufactured with the treatment integrated during production rather than applied afterward. Available in multiple performance categories, the 4' x 8' panels are designed for wall and roof sheathing applications and are approved for various fire-rated construction assemblies.



WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

Unlike traditional fire-retardant-treated panels, LP BurnGuard FRT OSB uses a proprietary, patent-pending technology to incorporate the fire-retardant treatment throughout the panel during manufacturing. This integrated approach aims to deliver more consistent performance while maintaining structural capabilities. Plus, since it installs the same as traditional OSB sheathing, builders can meet fire-resistance requirements without changing installation methods or workflow. lpcorp.com

KILLER RABBIT

Turn-Post

Designed for builders and homeowners who want clean, uninterrupted deck, pergola, and patio designs, Turn-Post™ is a stress-tested solution that hides structural hardware beneath the posts, eliminating the visual clutter of traditional post connectors. Its patented, powder-coated steel connectors elevate posts above the concrete or deck surface to promote water runoff and help protect against moisture damage.



WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

Traditional post connectors often remain visible, creating design compromises for builders and homeowners seeking a cleaner look. Turn-Post conceals its structural hardware under the post while maintaining structural connection. Two-part installation is designed for flexibility and ease of use. turn-post.com

ADVANCED BUILDING PRODUCTS

Insulair

Engineered for residential and light commercial construction, Insulair® is a roof ventilation product that creates a continuous air space between the roof deck and insulation. Made with stable polymers that do not deteriorate when in contact with moisture, its open-core design promotes drying and ventilation while helping prevent condensation-related damage.



WHAT MAKES IT INNOVATIVE

Cathedral ceiling and spray foam roof assemblies can trap moisture against roof sheathing, increasing the risk of condensation-related damage. Insulair addresses this challenge by creating a continuous ventilation channel designed to promote drying. Its open-filament core and integrated filter fabric help preserve airflow while preventing insulation intrusion. advancedbuildingproducts.com

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* Per ASTM E2357 and ASTM E331 air and weather barrier testing- see technical bulletin and installation instructions for details and requirements.

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Cedar Renditions aluminum siding from Westlake Royal Building Products is designed to bring warmth and texture of real wood to sleek exteriors—without the upkeep—blending seamlessly with natural surroundings for a clean, contemporary look.

SIDING

Replace & Remodel Fuels Siding Category Momentum

BY JAMES ANDERSON

In a housing market defined by affordability pressure and uncertainty, siding manufacturers and distributors suggest that it's time to lean into the replace and remodel market. With the average age of the U.S. home at 44 years old, exterior remodels consistently rank among the highest ROI improvement projects a homeowner can make.

Exterior upgrades account for eight of the top 10 cost-recouping projects, states Steve Booz, vice president of marketing at Westlake Royal Building Products. Projects include adding manufactured stone veneer, vinyl siding replacement, and fiber cement siding replacement. LBM dealers who lead with expertise, relationships, and the right product mix will outpace the market, regardless of macro conditions.

“Low housing inventory should continue to drive new home construction, and those homeowners choosing to stay put due to higher interest rates are undertaking exterior replacement and remodeling projects that deliver a high return on investment,” Booz explains.

Demand potential

Today's siding market can best be seen as "relatively stable," says Lynn Cobb, vice president of marketing at LP Building Solutions. Repair and remodel activity will continue to offset slower new construction.

"Affordability pressures and labor constraints remain challenging, but homeowners are focused on resilience, curb appeal, and long-term value, which is creating a strong demand for engineered wood siding," Cobb says.

Abby Huebner, product manager for vinyl siding at ProVia, says she expects the siding market to grow modestly over the next 12 months, with single-digit demand driven primarily by repair and remodel activity.

"The biggest challenges are the soft housing market, affordability constraints, and ongoing cost pressures," she adds.

At CertainTeed, Kara Radcliffe, director of product management, vinyl siding, says she expects modest positive activity in the market over the next few months, again, with the repair and remodel segment lifting losses in new construction. Radcliffe points to the "trade-up" dynamic driving growth within the siding category. Homeowners, she says, are increasingly gravitating toward more resilient, higher-performance products and greater design differentiation, rather than entry-level solutions. "This creates opportunities for dealers that can offer products combining durability, aesthetics, and solutions that work together as a system."

The demand is there, and it varies by region, explains Tina Breen, vice president of sales and marketing at Manufacturers Reserve Supply. "In the Northeast especially, we came out of a very difficult winter, so there is some pent-up demand in the system," she says.

Mortgage rates continue to suppress buyer traffic during the spring selling season, Breen adds, which is typically a strong indicator for the broader industry, including new construction, commercial work, and repair and remodel. "What we're seeing isn't a demand collapse—it's affordability suppression. Projects are being delayed, not canceled. The moment rates ease, even slightly, there's a lot of demand sitting on the sidelines that's ready to move."

What's selling

While product performance is the foremost baseline from a manufacturer's perspective, it isn't always what drives homeowners in the siding category. Aside from appearance, today's



homeowners are also looking for low-maintenance products. Composite, poly-ash, vinyl, engineered wood, and fiberglass are all winning the category because they replicate the aesthetics of wood, but without the upkeep.

"It's an easy decision for many buyers who want to avoid spending time painting and staining," says Booz. "Along the same lines, durable materials are also in demand. And for siding, these considerations should include both the material itself and the fade-resistance of the finishes. We encourage dealers to understand the fine print of what manufacturer warranties and performance promises truly mean over the long term."

Richard Lam, president of NewTechWood America, says there has been an uptick in interest in mixed-material products, which grants builders the opportunity to experiment with unique styles. "The '90s were a decade riddled with sameness; everyone wanted to hop on the next new trend. These days, people wish to stand out from their neighbors, and building with mixed-material products provides the means to satisfy that vision." ▶

LP SmartSide Naturals Collection siding portfolio features six prefinished colors offered in both cedar and brushed smooth finishes. Designed to complement a wide range of architectural styles, the palette captures the appearance of stained wood while providing the durability and consistency of an engineered product.



Edge Vertical Grain (VG) Hemlock, thermally modified wood siding is designed to showcase the natural beauty and warmth of real wood with refined vertical grain characteristics ideal for high-end interior and exterior applications.



Modern Mill's new ACRE Shingle Siding is a perfection-style shingle available in 4-foot panels at 5/16" thick. Available prefinished, ACRE is the only stainable composite shingle on the market, and is designed to deliver the natural warmth of cedar without the rot or maintenance.

Lam cites composite siding as an example of the mixed-material product that has performed well in recent years: "It captures the aesthetic of wood without the maintenance real wood demands."

Even though low maintenance products are important, homeowners and builders are also interested in siding that is visually on trend. Huebner at ProVia says that there's a noticeable shift toward "warmer, more natural tones—soft whites, beiges, and earthy neutrals—and moving away from some of the darker, more saturated colors we saw a few years ago."

"Homeowners are looking for timeless palettes that feel cohesive across the full exterior," Huebner states. "In terms of textures, there's strong demand for more realistic woodgrain and mixed-material looks."

Of course, safety-conscious consumers are also looking beyond look and ease of maintenance. "Other features, like extended warranties and protections against hail, wind, and moisture, are also providing peace of mind and driving brand preferences among both builders and homeowners," says Cobb at LP Building Solutions.

Dom Beaulieu, managing director at Edge, says his company's thermally modified wood product line, ForgeWood, has received a positive response in the marketplace. "Customers are responding to both its aesthetic appeal and ease of installation," he says.

SWISS KRONO TruWood National Sales Manager Brett Bleichrodt, says the board and batten look is popular and is one of the company's fastest-growing siding systems. "TruWood's Old Mill Shingle Lap and Cedar Shake Lap are always popular choices because they provide the authentic, warm look of traditional cedar siding, but with engineered wood technology, that increases durability and ease of installation."

Dealers leading the way

Dealers that truly understand the products they sell, and how to target their sales to each customer, are likely to have a leg up on the competition in the siding category. Getting to know each customer's biggest project needs—whether budgetary, performance, aesthetic, or otherwise—and providing product solutions accordingly not only positions the salesperson as a trusted partner and leader, but also helps drive long-term satisfaction, says Westlake Royal's Booz.

"These types of value-added approaches help salespeople move beyond selling on price and truly being a partner for pro customers. We're seeing some dealers beginning to embrace AI in smart ways; not as a replacement for employees, but as a helpful supplement."

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Booz says AI chatbots and other tools are allowing dealers to better understand the products they sell as well as support customers outside of business hours while still connecting back to a human touch when the time comes.

“For some dealers, AI is helping streamline tedious back-office tasks, optimize delivery routes, analyze and use customer purchasing data to guide stocking decisions, and much more.”

Lam at NewTechWood agrees that knowledge is key and top dealers are leveraging that knowledge to help customers cut through the noise. “These days, customers are inundated with information every second of the day. And while the internet provides a ton of insight, too much can paralyze potential buyers facing significant financial decisions,” Lam says.

At MRS, Breen says their highest-performing dealers are aligning closely with a primary brand and investing in that relationship—



This three-story modern residence features NewTechWood’s European Style Siding applied as dark vertical cladding on the mid-level exterior. The material complements the home’s white stucco facade, black-framed windows, and street-facing garage on a hillside coastal lot.

training their teams, building strong merchandising, and focusing their marketing efforts around that core offering. They rely on distribution for breadth, but they maintain depth in their core lines. That balance allows them to serve their customers while still offering flexibility. ▶



Storage Systems for LBM Dealers

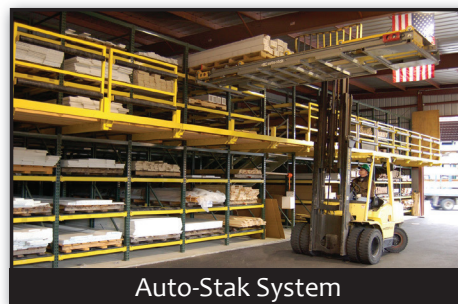
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- Drive-Thru Systems
- Millwork Storage Systems
- Pallet Rack Systems
- A-Frame Systems



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ABOVE: Harbor Mill Shake from ProVia, pictured here in Aspen, and CedarMAX in Timberline, feature the authentic look of Harbor Mill polypropylene Shingle and Shake Siding. The profiles are reminiscent of traditional sawn and split cedar shakes and shingles, a staple in American homebuilding since the 1600s.

ABOVE RIGHT: ProVia's CedarMAX insulated 12" Board 'n Batten siding features a 2" batten, 10" board, and 5/8" reveal.



"The dealers that are winning today are the ones who are going deep with their partners—not trying to be everything to everyone, but being really good at what they choose to carry," Breen says.

CertainTeed's Radcliffe says high-performing dealers that she sees are those who are taking a more proactive, system-based approach to selling siding, moving beyond transactions and positioning themselves as exterior design and performance experts.

"They are focused on homeowner education, showroom experience, and genuine partnerships," Radcliffe says. "From a merchandising and sales standpoint, these dealers invest in engaging showroom experiences that help homeowners visualize the finished exterior rather than focusing on individual samples

alone. Larger format, mixed-material vignettes, and curated good-better-best displays make it easier for homeowners to understand their options and confidently select their future home solution."

Radcliffe says CertainTeed also sees momentum among dealers who embrace digital-first marketing. That includes online inspiration galleries, exterior design tools, and content that educates homeowners early in the decision-making process, often before they ever walk into a showroom.

"These dealers meet customers where they are, helping to guide material selection and design preferences ahead of the sales conversation," she says.

Mark Kleps, vice president, specialty wood products, at IWP, says proactive dealers are leading sales.

"The dealers performing at the highest level are being proactive sellers. They actively market new products and consistently offer customers additional options and solutions. They're investing in product training, hosting contractor events, and creating opportunities for builders to get hands-on exposure to new products. They also make sure samples and literature are readily available when interest is generated," Kleps says.

Product innovations

High-performing dealers are also ahead of the pack in product knowledge, Kleps says. For IWP, that means dealers paying attention to the latest innovations such as the company's focus on fire prevention and changes to local building codes.

RIGHT: ForgeWood in Tungsten from Edge, is thermally modified wood siding engineered to display the authentic character of wood with bold modern styling.



FAR RIGHT: Celect Composite Siding's new coastal-inspired colors from Westlake Royal Building Products include Sea Blue and Sun-kissed Yellow (pictured), introduced to offer bold design flexibility with vertical or horizontal installation.



“We currently inventory Class A fire-treated cedar siding for customers who need quick availability,” Kleps says. “I expect fire-related code requirements to continue expanding, and we’ll continue growing our fire-rated product offerings to meet demand.”

From an aesthetic standpoint, wider profiles are hitting the market to meet consumer demand. At Westlake Royal, Booz says that the Royal and Exterior Portfolio 9” Wide Board and Batten is the widest traditional vinyl board and batten currently on the market.

“This reflects the shift toward wider siding profiles that deliver timeless curb appeal at a scale suited for today’s homes,” Booz says. “Built-in design details, including a 5/8” projection height, gently arched battens and batten accentuator beads, also reinforce depth, wall robustness, and strong vertical lines.”

At LP Building Solutions, Cobb says new products like LP BurnGuard FRT OSB have



been introduced as a response to increasing code and safety requirements in fire-prone and multifamily applications.

“Together, these innovations reflect LP’s continued mission to bring targeted solutions to market that help builders and developers meet high performance, design, and regulatory needs alike,” Cobb says. ▶

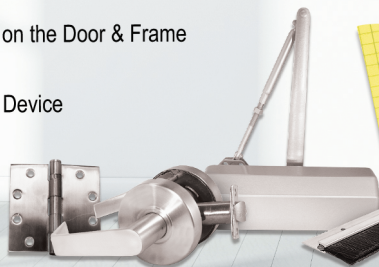
Built to withstand a wide range of climates, western red cedar T&G siding from International Wood Products is engineered to bridge the gap between classic warmth and smooth modern lines. Its seamless profile is designed to highlight rich grain and long-lasting performance.

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SCAN FOR MORE INFO

Edge's Beaulieu says his team is most excited about the recent launch of Arris composite trim, made with Surestone technology.

"Surestone is a proprietary mineral-based technology also used in our industry-leading Deckorators composite decking line. Arris offers limited expansion and contraction and features a durable capstock that is not only weather-resistant but also built to withstand the rigors of transportation and jobsite handling," Beaulieu says. "It's a strong example of how we're investing in innovation that aligns with what the market is asking for: durable, high-performing products that are easier to work with and built to last."

Huebner at ProVia says there is a clear shift toward cleaner, more simplified exteriors. "Homeowners want fewer seams, and contractors benefit from the increased coverage and faster installation that wider panels provide. In response, we launched our new 12" CedarMAX Board 'N Batten panel in early April, which delivers a more modern aesthetic while also improving efficiency on the jobsite."

Colors, patterns, and profiles are recent product changes Lam has added to the offerings at NewTechWood. This year, the company launched Icelandic Smoke White color as well as two new profiles in its Board & Batten and All-Weather lines.

Manufacturers Reserve Supply is focused on higher-end specialty building products, Breen says. While the company doesn't carry vinyl siding, they compete in the category with engineered and composite siding solutions, pointing to a partnership with CertainTeed's RISE composite siding.

"Composite siding is gaining traction because it solves problems on both sides—it's easier for the contractor to install and more durable for the homeowner over time," Breen says.

Planning ahead

Relationships will be key to success in coming years, manufacturer and distributor pros agree. With strong relationships up and down the channel, dealers will be best suited to meet whatever economic winds lie ahead.



SWISS KRONO's TruWood Old Mill Shingle Lap Siding is pictured here in 8" Cottage Lap, Reversible Trim.

Product knowledge is the foundation. Dealers who can confidently navigate vinyl, fiber cement, composite, engineered wood, and specialty wood—and recommend the right product for the right customer—will be indispensable.

"Over the next five years, the dealers who win will be the ones who combine product knowledge with strong partnerships—and deliver consistently high service levels to their customers," says Breen. ■

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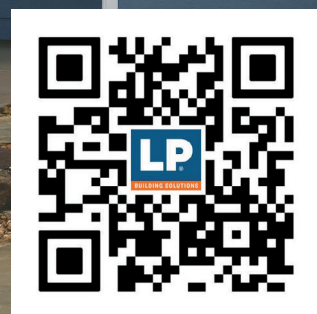


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SLOAN'S HARDWARE

ESTABLISHED: 1901

We spoke with TK Sloan, owner of Sloan's Hardware in eastern Tennessee, about the company's longevity in the community.

What was the company's early history like?

In 1901, Key Anderson Sloan opened a small store in the Gudger community of Monroe County in Tennessee. He and his son, Bill Sloan Sr., operated the store together and extended their reach by taking merchandise directly to surrounding areas of Monroe and McMinn counties through "rolling stores."

Bill Sr. later married Ida Mae "Jack" Williams, and together they established a general store in downtown Madisonville. In those early days, bartering was common. Customers often traded items like live chickens and eggs in exchange for goods.

Bill Sr. and Jack's son, Bill Sloan Jr., married Barbara "Bobbi" Watson in 1963. The two led the business for decades, guiding it through significant growth and overseeing the construction of Sloan Center in 1997. Together, they had four children: Russ, Whitney, Matthew, and me.

The company expanded considerably, opening three additional locations across East Tennessee. Following his passing in 2021, leadership transitioned to me and my wife, Lynne Sloan. Today, our children, Tafton Sloan and Megan Salaciak, also work for the company.

Over the years, Sloan's has grown far beyond its original offerings. In addition to hardware, lumber, and building materials, the company now includes fuel centers, Benjamin Moore paint departments, garden centers, and sporting goods—continuing to evolve to meet the needs of the communities it serves.

What keeps the company going after so many years?

We are driven by a deep commitment to preserve and build upon what our great-great-grandparents started 125 years ago. We lead the company with the mindset that they are still with us today, guiding our decisions and inspiring us to make them proud.

Sloan's has long been known in the community as a "one-stop shop"—the place with wide aisles and friendly smiles. That reputation continues to shape who we are. We remain dedicated to supporting our customers through a broad product selection, exceptional service, and trusted expertise.

What do you see in the future for the company?

We see a continued focus on thoughtful, sustainable growth—both organically and through strategic acquisitions. Our core business of hardware and building materials remains strong, and we plan to keep investing in and expanding those areas while also growing complementary segments.

While we are proud of our history and will always stay grounded in the values that built this company, we also recognize the importance of evolving. We intend to embrace modern retail practices, new technologies, and changing consumer preferences to stay competitive. By balancing tradition with innovation, we're confident in our ability to keep growing while continuing to serve our community for generations to come. ■

A CENTURY OF SERVICE





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 231 members, with more coming in each month. In all, the companies have provided 29,441 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:

ISSAQUAH LUMBER Issaquah, WA	est. 1889	LUMMUS SUPPLY COMPANY Acworth, GA	est. 1925
SCHOLL LUMBER Houston, TX	est. 1845	ATTICA LUMBER CO. Attica, OH	est. 1925
DELAWARE COUNTY SUPPLY COMPANY, INC. Boothwyn, PA	est. 1924	THE HOME LUMBER & SUPPLY CO. Ashland, KS	est. 1905
GEORGE M HALL LUMBER West Homestead, PA	est. 1893	RYAN BROTHERS INC. Apopka, FL	est. 1920
SAN ANTONIO LUMBER COMPANY San Antonio, FL	est. 1923	HASELTON LUMBER COMPANY Wilmington, NY	est. 1901
MILTONVALE LUMBER CO. Miltonvale, KS	est. 1900	GARRIS EVANS LUMBER COMPANY Greenville, NC	est. 1919

Nominate a company for the LBM Century Club:

lbmjournals.com/page/nominate-a-company-for-the-lbm-century-club

Find a complete listing of LBM Century Club members:
lbmjournals.com/awards/lbm-century-club

EACH MONTH, HUNDREDS OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES VIE FOR INDUSTRY ATTENTION. HERE ARE SOME THAT OUR EDITORS THINK WILL INTEREST LBM JOURNAL READERS.



KLAUER STEEL SIDING ACHIEVES CLASS A FIRE RATING

Klauer Manufacturing Company announced that its steel siding has achieved a Class A fire rating following testing conducted in accordance with ASTM E84-25 standards. Klauer says the siding demonstrated minimal flame-spread and smoke-development characteristics during testing, meeting standards associated with high-performance building materials. Designed as a low-maintenance exterior cladding solution, Klauer Class A-rated siding is intended for applications where fire performance and code compliance are priorities. In addition to its fire-resistant properties, the siding offers weather durability and is low maintenance for residential and light commercial applications. klauer.com



HB ONE BACKER CI FROM HYDROBLOK

HydroBlok announced that its HB One Backer CI™ now offers direct-to-stud installation capability for designated non-shear wall applications. HydroBlok says the integrated panel combines continuous insulation, a secondary water-resistive barrier, lath, and scratch coat into a single product for stucco applications. The company states that the direct-to-stud capability allows the panel to serve as the non-shear substrate in approved assemblies and is intended to reduce wall layers, labor requirements, and installation complexity. The product is engineered to be compatible with prescriptive continuous-insulation installation methods for fiber cement and vinyl siding applications. hydroblok.com

NEW FLORIDA COLORS FOR WESTLAKE ROYAL'S NEWPOINT CONCRETE ROOF TILE

Westlake Royal Building Products has added four new color blends—Tidalwood Blend, Cypress Bay Blend, Smoky Bay Blend, and Coastal Dune—to its Newpoint™ Concrete Roof Tile collection in Florida. According to Westlake Royal, the new options aim to provide architects, builders, and homeowners with additional design flexibility while capturing the layered appearance of natural stone. The blends feature combinations of earth tones, grays, and sandy hues intended to complement a variety of residential styles. Available across select Barcelona 900 high-barrel and Saxony 900 Slate profiles, the tiles carry a Class A fire rating and a transferable limited lifetime warranty. westlakeroyalbuildingproducts.com



GROUND CONTACT COATING FROM FASTENMASTER

FastenMaster's new Ground Contact Coating is designed to help extend the life of pressure-treated lumber used in deck and fence posts, stair stringers, and other outdoor applications. According to FastenMaster, the water-based acrylic membrane contains 1% Disodium Octaborate Tetrahydrate (DOT) to help resist insects and fungus while protecting wood from moisture-related ground rot. Applied with a standard bristle paint brush or 3/8" nap roller, the coating goes on white for visibility during application and dries clear to preserve the wood's natural appearance. Available in 1/2-gallon buckets, each container covers up to 40 square feet, or approximately 14 6" x 6" posts. fastenmaster.com



WIND LOAD-RATED GARAGE DOORS FROM HAAS DOOR

Haas Door offers wind load-rated garage doors designed to help protect homes in high-wind and tornado-prone regions. According to Haas Door, the doors are engineered to withstand wind pressures that can compromise garage openings, which can lead to broader structural damage. Wind-rated options are available for different performance levels, including models intended to meet higher wind-speed and impact-resistance requirements. The doors install similarly to standard garage doors, allowing contractors to upgrade protection without significant changes to framing. For dealers, they represent an upgrade option aligned with evolving building codes and homeowner demand for storm resilience. haasdoor.com





NEW FOLDING DOOR SYSTEM FROM NANAWALL
 NanaWall Systems has introduced the NW Aluminum 643, a folding door system within its Generation 4 product family. NanaWall says the system combines a steel-inspired aesthetic with high-performance aluminum construction. The system features NanaWall's Gothic Arch Roller design. With U-values as low as 0.24, double- and triple-glazing options, weather-rated ADA and performance sills, and flexible multi-panel configurations, the NW Aluminum 643 is designed for residential and commercial applications requiring large openings and thermal efficiency. nanawall.com



SOLSTICE MOUNTING SYSTEM FROM CERTAINTEED
 The Solstice® Mounting System from CertainTeed is engineered for pitched-roof solar applications and combines a lightweight, high-strength rail design with compatibility for both portrait and landscape module orientations. CertainTeed says the system can be installed using either rafter or deck attachments and features pop-on universal clamps, single-tool installation, and integrated wire management. The company also introduced Solstice Ground Mount, which provides a pipe-based design for ground-mounted solar projects. certainteed.com

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

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

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LOYALTY VS. QUALITY

Your reputation took years to build but can be damaged in a matter of months. When a longtime, trusted supplier's quality slips, how would you respond?



WHEN YOU LAUNCHED your company 15 years ago, you were determined to be known for quality products. So you established relationships with the quality leaders at the time, which formed a strong, initial foundation for your brand. While your vendor mix has mostly shifted over the years, the one category you've been fiercely loyal to is decking. Due to minimal callbacks, healthy margins, unmatched service, and consistent quality, you've had no problem saying, "Thanks, but no thanks," to other decking manufacturers that wanted your business.

But lately, something has changed with your decking. Customers are reporting more product defects. Installers are complaining, warranty claims are growing, and your team is spending more time managing problems than selling solutions.

The manufacturer confirms some isolated product issues, but insists that the supply chain challenges, raw material shortages, and production upgrades at the core of the problem have been mostly resolved. Just as you've been loyal to the decking brand, they've been loyal to you—offering local exclusives on their latest offerings, extended dating, and aggressive pricing.

Meanwhile, your company's reputation for quality is taking a hit with both homeowners and builder customers.

They don't care about the reasons for the quality issues—they just want products that perform. Members of your team agree and are urging you to bring on another decking brand.

Loyalty means something to you, as do the perks of exclusively selling that one brand. But if you remain loyal and the problems persist or get worse, this will not end well.

What would you do?

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Stay loyal. The manufacturer told you the problems are "mostly resolved." Take him at his word and maintain the relationship.

Test the waters. Stop taking new deliveries from your legacy brand and bring on a couple of competing brands to see how they perform. You can always switch back.

Just move on. The manufacturer is accountable for delivering substandard product. It's time to find your next primary decking brand and negotiate a similar deal.

One more chance. Insist that the manufacturer cover the damage that the products caused to your reputation and your bottom line, then give him one more chance.

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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