



LUMBER CO-OPERATOR

Managing Supply Chains
in 2023 32

15 DIY Backyard
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Special
**IDEAS
SHOW
RECAP!**

REMODELING:

**DIY AND
OUTDOOR
LIVING
SPACES**

MARCH 2023

NRLA
Northeastern Retail
Lumber Association

**WHEN THIS IS
YOUR OUTDOORS...**

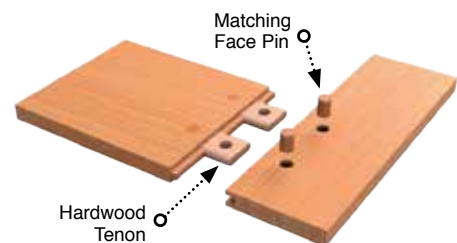
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Lumber Co-operator Mission Statement:

Lumber Co-operator is committed to broadening awareness of critical issues shaping the lumber and building material industry. We promise to equip our readers with the necessary tools to compete in an ever-changing business environment.

Contact the *Lumber Co-operator* at 800-292-6752 or 518-286-1010.



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If you would like more information on how to become part of the Lumber Co-operator's Editorial Advisory Board, contact publications at 800-292-6752 or publications@nrla.org.



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For more details about Wolf Decking or any of our Outdoor Living products, contact your Wolf Sales Representative or go to **wolfhomeproducts.com**.



Rita Ferris
NRLA President

I get it—safety isn't exciting to most people, yet still, there is something very special and interesting about NRLA's Acadia/Eastern Insurance Safety Task Force. This Task Force, chaired by Jeremy Baker, of rk MILES in Vermont, regularly demonstrates the power of humility. When we have a safety topic and ask members how they are doing, they are generous about sharing resources, but they also admit they do not know everything. There is no judgment, just a willingness to grow and improve.

In one year, the size of this Task Force has more than doubled. The new members have already helped strengthen the powerful group. Our most recent meeting covered topics such as fleet safety programs, driver safety trainings, and how to manage customer requests, which could endanger a driver or create company liabilities. We also discussed how to reduce liabilities when holding live store events.

Members of the Task Force reviewed a completed fleet safety program template. If you'd like a copy, please contact me by email at rferris@nrla.org. In addition, we discussed the proper procedures for loading boom trucks and the best forklift practices to build a culture of safety. You can find some excellent information here: www.osha.gov/etools.com.

Auto liability has been the leading driver of claims over the last four years, and customer liability has been led by slips, trips, and falls. By documenting efforts to prevent slips and falls, retailers can help protect their customers, employees, and businesses. It is critical to take note of the location, date, and time of your inspection, as well as take videos or pictures of your cleared areas. Staff members should wear PPE, such as ice grippers on their shoes, when removing snowy areas. Keep a set of ice grippers in the bucket of salt for enhanced convenience.

On the discussion topic, "What do you do for forklift training?" Mike Donahue, senior loss control consultant at Acadia Insurance, shared that in addition to using the member-only online tools in NRLA Connect, there are other items that need to be addressed. A lecture, video, and practical evaluation with guidelines

developed by OSHA is required every three years, and it needs to be documented. If the driver is observed driving in an unsafe manner, there has been a near-miss, or if there has been an incident, retraining is triggered and required for this employee. OSHA compliance officers inspect to ensure that new employee training is done upon hire, and retraining of employees is conducted every three years. It is also critical to document any forklift damage (if not, this can be considered an unreported incident), to always wear the safety belt (if it's shiny, it hasn't been used), to be cautious of safety harnesses, to store any propane outdoors with the relief valve pointing up in the air, and to store forklifts in the correct areas.

As Task Force members discussed their training protocols, one idea that warranted consideration was not having experienced drivers train new drivers because even experienced people can unknowingly pass along bad habits.

Another member shared a waiver form allowing a customer to sign for liability when a driver is asked to do something that is outside of the normal protocol. It is important for all drivers to understand they should not do anything they feel is unsafe and may put them in a dangerous situation. This form requires the contractor's signature and details regarding the request from the driver.

The Task Force also discussed outsourcing load securement training. If you would like to hire a third party to conduct your training, the NRLA has an excellent resource for you!

Last, when planning contractor or public events, be sure to review vendor insurance policies and safety protocols with vendors prior to the event and photograph the safety precautions taken. This Task Force is making quantifiable progress in reducing claims, resulting in less lost time and the ability to earn a dividend from Acadia Insurance, the NRLA's endorsed insurance partner.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you,

Rita



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Nick Kuiken
NRLA Chair, Kuiken Bros., Inc.

There are many segments to the LBM industry and the customers we serve in our everyday business. The remodeling market is one of those segments and is a key component of our business, like so many other LBM dealers.

One of the most rewarding parts of owning a home is making changes to truly make it feel like your own. Whether you're replacing the windows, updating a kitchen, changing the interior doors, trim, and molding packages, or putting on a small addition, a renovation project can have a big impact on how we live at home.

Moving into 2023, we can all agree the pandemic changed the way people live, work, and spend time at home. Over these past several years, pandemic-induced changes in housing and lifestyle decisions fueled remodeling and repair spending as many homeowners were forced to upgrade or change their living spaces to better match the new school and work-from-home requirements.

With people spending more time at home, homeowners are looking to maximize their living space wherever possible. More and more people continue to work from home on a more regular basis, creating a new trend as well as the renovation opportunity of upgrading an existing area to make it more functional for work or building a dedicated office. Once the weather begins to warm up in the spring, you generally see renovations move outside with projects like decks, patios, and outdoor living spaces. People are still continuing to invest in their homes as, for many, it continues to be one of the biggest assets they own. More and more homeowners are focusing on comfort and functionality when they think of their current home and begin to plan to invest in a renovation of that home.

Now more than ever, homeowners need to be prepared to likely face some sort of supply chain challenges and material uncertainty that may cause delays as skilled labor and many building materials are still in somewhat short supply and costs continue to be considerably higher than pre-pandemic levels. Rising interest rates on lines of credit and home equity loans make delays more expensive. Clear communication and flexibility are key to moving a project forward.

Regardless of the current trends, homeowners need to prioritize the projects that make sense for their home and family. Trends come and go, but everyone's home needs to function well for their individual needs and suit their budget.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Kuiken', written over a light blue circular background.



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NRLA Welcomes New Members!

RETAIL MEMBER



Butler Lumber Maynard, MA

We're not big, just better; you can't beat Butler; for the common and unique are just a few of the slogans that new NRLA retail member Butler Lumber has used over its 85-year history.

Founded in 1938 on Butler Avenue in Maynard, Mass., Butler Lumber moved to its current location on Parker Street in 1946-47. Since its founding, there have been four owners. The current owner, Mike Sawvelle, started working there in 1987 and purchased the company in 2019. Sawvelle started out in sales but did a little bit of everything along the way (and still does).

This hardware store and more has a culture that is based on quality products, fair prices, excellent customer service, an old-fashioned atmosphere, and profound respect for customers. They have embraced opportunities to help the community since they were founded by supporting local charities and organizations.

The NRLA would like to welcome new retail member Butler Lumber into the membership!

Pictured above: Owner Mike Sawvelle with his restored 1951 Ford F-1.

NRLA Membership Has Its Benefits!

- Business Services
- Insurance
- Human Resources
- Education & training
- Advocacy on state and federal issues
- Drug & alcohol testing
- and much more!

Visit nrla.org for more information.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS



LOW-E Northeast Distribution Center, LLC • Scranton, PA

Website: low-e-ne.com **Phone:** 570-821-5693

Products: Insulation, housewraps, underlayment, radon barrier, carpet padding, flooring, and pull-down stair kits.



WORLDWIDE
Door Components, Inc.

Worldwide Door Components, Inc. Lutz, FL

Website: worldwidedoor.com **Phone:** 570-821-5693

Products: Door components, millwork, and composite door frames.



Sales Force One West Boylston, MA

Website: sales-forceone.com **Phone:** 508-245-9105

Products: Doors, patio doors, stair parts, columns, door hardware, fasteners, housewrap, wall panel door and stair equipment, decking, and siding.



Nuvo Credit San Francisco, CA

Website: nuvo.credit **Phone:** 415-272-3552

Products: Digital credit application, credit risk assessment, net terms software.



Tom Barclay,
General Manager
Ganahl Lumber



The lumberyard that took 130 years to build.

When Ganahl Lumber opened the doors to its new 18.5-acre location in Torrance, CA, you could tell right away it was special. A state-of-the-art gem.

So, where did the vision come from? A combination of Ganahl's 130 year history of operational excellence and CT Darnell's experience building on over 1,500 LBM facilities. Together, they made a powerful team.



» Scan for the full story and video.



CT-Darnell.com ■ Sunbelt-Rack.com ■ 800-353-0892

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Envision Announces Loyalty Programs for Building Pros and LBM Dealers

Envision Outdoor Living Products, manufacturer of Envision composite decking and Fairway deck and porch railings, is rewarding customers with two new loyalty programs for professional contractors and stocking dealers. Under each program, pros and dealers can earn cash rebates, business perks, and recognition as a thank-you for being a dedicated Envision partner.

The Envision Stocking Dealer Program rewards dealers that stock a minimum quantity of Envision Outdoor Living Products composite decking and/or railing with a one-time end-of-the-year payout. Based on annual amount purchased over \$10,000, dealers can achieve Bronze, Silver, or Gold status, earning up to a 3% rebate. All stocking dealers in the program also will receive co-marketing funds up to \$2,500 and will receive priority listing under Envision's "Find a Dealer" website listing. Dealers can sign up at <https://envisionoutdoorliving.com/become-a-dealer/>.



Beach House Shake Wins Gold Award for Residential Construction Professionals

Beach House Shake, a product by Tando Composites, has won the Gold Award in PRODUCTS for Residential Construction Professionals' 2022 Most Valuable Products (MVP) Awards. Recognized in the Exteriors category, Beach House Shake, the Authentic Composite Shingle, delivers the beauty of natural cedar shingles with the proven performance of a composite. MVP Award winners were presented with their awards during the 2023 International Builders' Show.

Beach House Shake delivers the coveted charm and beauty of natural cedar shingles with natural color variations, genuine saw cuts, and detailed grain patterns of natural cedar shingles. Its architecturally precise 5" re-squared and rebuted lines create individual shingles as unique as they are beautiful. With the proven performance and durability of a composite, Beach House Shake stays looking like the day it was installed.

Visit <https://www.beachhousesshake.com/en/> to learn more about Beach House Shake.



Novo Building Products Announces Exciting New Program

Novo Building Products has introduced Custom Mouldings On Demand, a program offering custom and short-run moulding orders supplied through its Empire Moulding & Millwork and Southwest Moulding & Millwork divisions.

"Our Custom Mouldings on Demand program allows us to make virtually any moulding our customers need," said Nathan McCarty, director of sales – SE Pro Dealer Division, at Empire Moulding & Millwork. "This is one more way that we can be the 'Easy Button' for our dealers and by extension the builder, remodeler, and homeowner customers that they serve."

To learn more, visit <https://www.novobp.com/>.



Barrette Outdoor Living Wins IBS Show Best Product Award

Oldcastle APG and Barrette Outdoor Living's RDI Elevation Rail has won a Best of IBS Award for Most Innovative Building Material at the 2023 NAHB International Builders' Show (IBS). This marks the second consecutive Best of IBS Award for Barrette Outdoor Living after its Decorative Screen Panels took home the Best Outdoor Product Award in 2022.

RDI Elevation Rail was selected as the sole recipient in its category from more than 400 entries that were reviewed by a panel of 26 judges ranging from industry experts to media representatives. Exhibitors with products that show the best combination of design, functionality, innovation, and usefulness to consumers and/or home builders are considered across nine categories.

To learn more about Barrette Outdoor Living's RDI Elevation Rail, go to www.barretteoutdoorliving.com/.

REDWOOD Product Sheet



Redwood Timbers

The use of redwood timbers for timber framing and exposed beam construction can produce dramatic results and lend the natural beauty and strength of wood to building projects, both indoors and out.

Beautiful

The beauty of redwood timbers is timeless. Cut from the center of the tree, redwood timbers are a rich, reddish-brown tone. And, because they are a natural product, each piece has a completely unique grain pattern and characteristic.

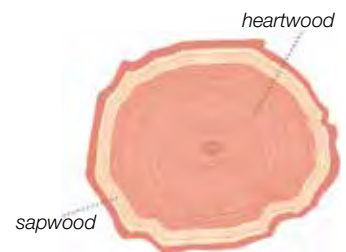
Versatile

Redwood timbers can be used in any application where Western Red Cedar has traditionally been used. Typical applications include:

- Arbors
- Barns
- Beams
- Decorative accents
- Framing
- Headers
- Posts
- Rafters
- Shade structures
- Trellises

Durable

Available in **Construction Heart grade**, redwood timbers possess natural resistance to termites and decay.



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Humboldt Sawmill redwood timbers are harvested from 440,000 acres of Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC® C013133) certified timberlands in Northern California. Proudly made in the U.S.A., Humboldt Sawmill supports hundreds of workers earning family-wages and benefits.

Product Availability

Humboldt Sawmill redwood timbers are available in a variety of stocking dimensions. Additional products are available via special order. Please contact your **Hood Distribution Sales Representative** to learn more.



Ayer, MA 800-752-0129
Durham, CT 800-848-8338
Milton, VT 800-955-2677





Boise Cascade®

Boise Cascade to Distribute James Hardie Building Products

Boise Cascade is pleased to announce a partnership with James Hardie Building Products in its Houston, Dallas, Milton, Fla., and Delanco, N.J. distribution locations.

Boise Cascade is a leading full-line wholesale distributor of lumber and building products to retail lumberyards and home improvement centers.

James Hardie Building Products manufactures the leading brand of fiber cement siding and backerboard, gracing the sides of over 10 million homes across North America.

"Boise Cascade is a premier supplier of high-quality building materials," said John Madson, vice president of sales at James Hardie. "We are excited about the expanded impact that they will have on sales of our James Hardie Building Products in Texas, Florida, and the Mid-Atlantic markets."

To learn more, visit www.bc.com/.

Get Your LBM News!

Scan the QR Code below to sign up and start receiving the latest LBM news straight to your email inbox!



LC Wired

LC Wired is your portal to all association news and event information. Learn everything that's going on within the NRLA, its programs and services, as well as its State and Local affiliates, to help make the most of your membership. **Delivered every Tuesday at 2 p.m.**



LC SupplySide

LC SupplySide offers NRLA's latest associate member news, new products, and personnel moves within the LBM market. **Delivered every other Thursday at 2 p.m.**

IN MEMORIAM

Michael R. Durand, 67, of Coventry, R.I., passed away on Feb. 22. Durand worked for his late uncle Lionel Beauchaine at Coventry Millwork, where he became the catalyst and co-founder of Coventry Lumber in 1978. In 1985, he purchased both businesses from his uncle. Durand also owned the Eagle Lumber Company in Warwick. Durand was RILBMDA's President in 1994-95 and Lumber Person of the Year in 1995.

Ermina Frances Kosnack, 94, of Brewster, Mass., passed away on Nov. 26, 2022. Kosnack was the mother of MRLDA Past President Leah Fennell of Mid-Cape Home Centers. Kosnack is survived by her three daughters, Donna Davis, Leah Fennell, and Andrea Duplesys.

Richard "Dick" Wright, 76, of Swanton, Vt., passed away on Nov. 25, 2022. Wright loved his work as a territory manager for building material wholesalers throughout Vermont and northern New York. He was very humbled when the VRLDA awarded him the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2014, shortly after his retirement.

Timothy "Tim" Walter Johnson, 62, of Hampton Falls, N.H., passed away on Nov. 12, 2022. Johnson was the owner and president of NRLA retail member Johnson Lumber in Salisbury, Mass.

Robert D. Keiver, 89, of Marblehead, Mass., passed away on Nov. 10, 2022. Keiver Lumber Company is where he started his career in 1956. After the business had a fire, Keiver's father reopened the company as Keiver-Willard Lumber Corp. in Beverly, Mass. Keiver became president and remained active in the business until his passing 67 years later. Keiver was also the 2010 MRLDA Lifetime Achievement recipient.

Richard J. "Rich" Lender, 61, of Antis Township, Pa., passed away on Oct. 25, 2022. Lender's hard work and dedication earned him the position as President/CEO of Your Building Centers, as well as his recent election onto the board of Do it Best Corp.

Douglas John "Doug" Bedard, 58, of Pelham, N.H., passed away on October 22, 2022. Doug worked at Pelham Building Supply. With a larger-than-life heart, Doug loved and is loved by many. His favorite moments were with his wife and children. Doug is survived by his wife, Diane, and his daughters, Lindsey Bedard and Taylor Bedard.



Business Coverage that Protects & Pays

We have over 15 years of experience and expertise serving NRLA members. During that time, **Acadia Insurance** has returned over **\$10 million** in policyholder dividends to qualifying members—a testament to the quality of the NRLA organization and its member community.

Contact your local Acadia agent for more information on our endorsed insurance program and for the opportunity to earn policyholder dividends.*



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- ✓ AUTO ✓ PROPERTY ✓ UMBRELLA
- ✓ WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Products and services are provided by one or more insurance company subsidiaries of W.R. Berkley Corporation. Not all products and services are available in every jurisdiction, and the precise coverage afforded by any insurer is subject to applicable underwriting guidelines and the actual terms and conditions of the policies as issued.

*Dividends are based upon experience, are subject to Board approval and the terms and conditions of the Program, and are not guaranteed. The amount of dividends paid in the past are not indicative of what may be payable in the future.



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◀ Benjamin Obdyke Introduces Double-Sided Sealing Tape

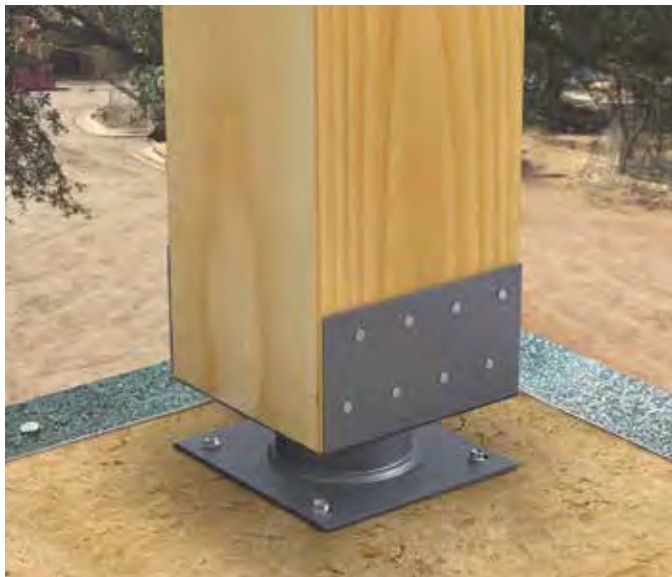
Benjamin Obdyke's new HydroTape DS is an acrylic-based double-sided sealing tape for use with mechanically fastened housewrap. Opting to use a double-sided tape for housewrap seams helps eliminate many of the issues and failure points of conventional seam tapes.

To learn more, visit benjaminobdyke.com.

Westlake Royal Building Products Refreshes the Color Palette of Foundry Specialty Siding ▶

Foundry Specialty Siding, an exterior brand within the Westlake Royal Building Products portfolio, is refreshing its color palette with five new standard hues and four new weathered hues, as well as expanding the availability of colors within its Grayne profile. The new colors reflect the latest trends and consumer demand, particularly toward grays and darker tones.

To see all of the products and colors, visit foundrysiding.com.



◀ Simpson Strong-Tie Introduces Elevated Column Base Ideal for Stacked Balconies in Multifamily Construction

Simpson Strong-Tie has introduced the ECB elevated column base, which features added standoff height that makes it easy to install waterproofing and lightweight concrete topping when connecting column or post bases in multifamily construction.

For more information on the ECB and additional multifamily residential construction solutions from Simpson Strong-Tie, please visit strongtie.com/ecb.

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Keep things moving.

Deckorators Announces New Railing Innovations ►

In direct response to a growing call for a stylish railing system that ensures ease of installation, Deckorators, a leading brand of UFP Industries, Inc., introduced Aluminum Rapid Rail. New for 2023, this novel product features a contemporary design with square balusters and simple installation.

For more information, visit deckorators.com/2023.



◀ CAMO Unveils Structural Screws

National Nail's CAMO brand recently launched its new certified IRC/IBC code-compliant CAMO Structural Screws. Rigorously third-party tested and certified by DrJ Engineering, applications include the deck substructure, internal framing, ledger, and general construction.

Visit camofasteners.com/alp/structural-fasteners to learn more about CAMO Structural Screws.

FastenMaster Launches VersaLOK Structural Wood Screw ►

FastenMaster, a division of OMG, Inc., has introduced VersaLOK, a heavy-duty structural wood screw for use on a wide range of interior and exterior wood-to-wood applications, including angle bracing, retaining walls, and carrying beam connections. VersaLOK is the latest addition to the company's industry-leading LOK line of structural wood fasteners.

For more information, visit fastenmaster.com.



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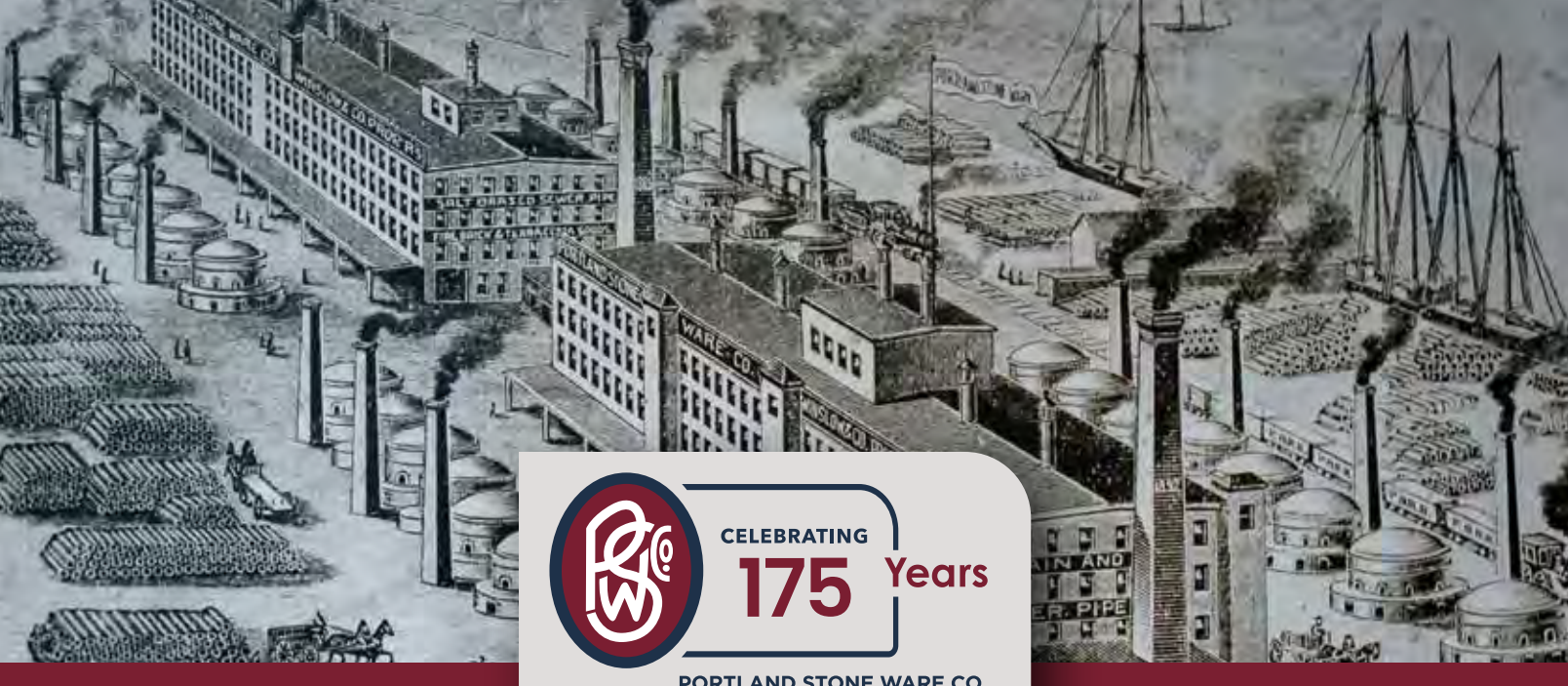


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Portland Stone Ware Celebrates 175 Years of Family Ownership

Founded by the Winslow family in 1847 and sold to the Schuler family in 1970, this year Portland Stone Ware reflects on 175 years as an independent, family-run business.

The story began with a fire that destroyed the grocery store of John T. Winslow in 1847, resulting in his purchase of Portland Stone Ware that same year. At that time, the company made clay pottery, jugs, and pots for food storage and owned a large factory at the salt marsh in the Back Cove of Portland, Maine, that was accessible by rail and sea.

Shortly after the acquisition, Winslow saw an opportunity to capitalize on the factory's capacity and began manufacturing vitrified salt-glazed sewer pipe and firebrick.

Throughout the late 1800s, PSW manufactured all kinds of stoneware and clay goods, and Winslow introduced mechanical methods to lower production costs and improve efficiency.

In 1886 the factory was destroyed by fire. Winslow immediately rebuilt, and it continued to grow in size, capacity, and employees, enabling PSW to become one of the largest manufacturers of clay sewer pipes in the country.

With the market for handcrafted pottery shrinking toward the end of the 19th century, PSW focused on pipe and firebrick production, and in the early 1900s established a Boston sales office. Willis Frank Clark, a family member of

the Winslow family, joined the company as an owner and manager of that office.

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, the company began distributing other products, including importing cement. These shifts and the continued demand for pipe and firebrick allowed the company to maintain operations despite two world wars and the Great Depression. In the early 1940s, PSW began to reduce shipping by sea and expanded their ground transportation capabilities and fleet. In the late 1950s, the Boston office relocated to Cambridge and Ronald A. Schuler Sr. joined the company as a sales representative, eventually being promoted to general manager.

In 1970, the factory in Maine was closed when the federal government took the property by eminent domain to construct Interstate Route 295. That same year, after nearly 20 years as a trusted employee, Ronald Schuler Sr. purchased Portland Stone Ware from the Winslow-Clark family.

Soon after, Schuler made significant strategic decisions, including expanding into nail distribution to capitalize on the housing boom. With the plant closed in Maine, Schuler



saw another opportunity to expand PSW and developed a method to manufacture house columns using cement. This concept of using cement in steel tubing provided strength to support load-bearing needs in buildings. This eventually led to the manufacturing of Portland Concrete Filled Columns.

Schuler would start each day making cement with a small hand mixer to fill the columns. He would then change his clothes to make customer sales calls, meet with vendors, and complete the invoicing and general accounting in the afternoon.

In the late 1970s and early '80s, Schuler's children, Donna Morgan, Ronald Jr., and Robert, joined the business and PSW began distributing stone products to diversify its building material offerings. To meet customer demand, the company added to its fleet of trucks.

In 1986, a fire damaged a Cambridge manufacturing warehouse and, like the Winslow family a century before,

the family rebuilt and PSW continued to grow throughout the '90s. At the end of the decade, the business moved from Cambridge, expanding its footprint to where it remains today in Dracut, Massachusetts.

After working alongside his children for nearly three decades, Ronald Schuler Sr. passed away in 2008 and they assumed ownership of PSW. As the family continued to expand product lines to serve the lumber and masonry industries, there became a need for a larger facility.

To accommodate manufacturing of house columns and bollards, PSW built a new facility in Methuen, Massachusetts. In 2018, PSW acquired Dean Column Co. of Queensbury, New York and began manufacturing products with a patented locking system, known as the Structural Lock System. With the new facility, manufacturing both the Portland Column and the Structural Lock System became more efficient. **LC**

A Legacy of Rock Solid Support – With several clients dating back to the 1900s, PSW's formula for success has stood the test of time. Looking forward, the family continues to be dedicated to serving the needs of lumber and masonry retailers throughout New England by delivering high-quality products and service.



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LAMB & RITCHIE

CELEBRATES 150 YEARS



BY SANDY RITCHIE


“THERE IS A SENSE OF PRIDE AND GRATITUDE FOR THE MANY EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE STAYED WITH US THROUGH ALL THESE YEARS.”

The story of Lamb & Ritchie started with my great grandfather's faithful immigration from Nova Scotia to Boston just after the Civil War. He found employment with a pail manufacturer in Chelsea, Massachusetts, where his work ethic and productivity were recognized. It was here that he developed a concept for a machine to produce a variable-diameter pipe using a spiral lock seam. The owners of his employment allowed him to stay at night and use the machine shop to develop and build his prototype. From there, it was to the patent office, where he was awarded his first of many patents. He referred to that phase as the easy part. The hard part was dealing with the money men. This is where DA Ritchie and Salem T Lamb formed a partnership, earlier than 1872, but that is the date when things started to get up and go.

The first building was an old warehouse on the Mystic River, in front of where Massachusetts General Hospital is today. From there, they moved to another building in Cambridge Port, Massachusetts, until, in 1909, they built a grand factory also in Cambridge Port. This building served Lamb & Ritchie very well until 1972. My father loved to boast that "not a nickel was ever spent on that roof." Real tar, not asphalt, was the reason. The only drawback was that on really hot summer days, people working on the top floor had to watch out for hot tar seeping through the seams of the ceiling. The transition was a bittersweet move, but with an old freight elevator and leather belt jackshafts running many of the machines, the writing was literally on the walls and ceilings. What wonderful engineering those driveshafts were! There was an initial electrical surge at the start-up of the production area. Once the squealing and dust settled down and the inertia from the heavy pulleys reached their designed rpm, you would be able to run five machines on a 5-hp motor drawing one amp at 5:50 voltage. Today, those same machines have a total of 25 hp and draw approximately 100 amps. To be fair, these 5-hp motors are the

size of beach balls. They were bought from Tommy Edison and are still running today, even after being under 18 inches of water during our Mother's Day flood of 2006.

1972 was our 100th year, and our entire crew made the relocation. Multiple property additions followed along with two unrelated product lines: suspended ceiling grids and metal studs and track. These endeavors taught us a good lesson. If you're going to be in a certain business, you better be completely in with all regards to the full product line. The payroll swelled, and at that time there was a labor shortage, which led to the hiring of some less-than-ideal employees. It was not a happy time.

A decision was made, and we retooled the equipment and went back to our core business. With that move, we entered a much smaller and happier shop environment. The people make the difference. It's very rare that we have any turnover. The truth be told, most of the ones who left came back. Lamb & Ritchie has become quite the multigenerational family. Our bookkeeper dealt with three generations of Ritchies. She was followed by her daughter, who was followed by her granddaughter. On the sales end, we had the best, Frank Quinn. Frank stuck with us through all the trials and tribulations for more than 62 years. I can't count how many times he quit while dealing with my father. Although he isn't as active, you can still run into him and his sons at business functions. Following the office and the road, the shop floor is run by the son of my foreman of 45 years. With me being a fourth generation, my position is almost comical. Since 1872, no Ritchie has ever retired; they have all died there. Going forward, another generation is there, and there's still hope for me. There is a sense of pride and gratitude for the many employees who have stayed with us through all these years. My guys know if we do good, they'll do good, and that's the way it should be. A happy shop. 





IDEAS SHOW 2023

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Highlights from IDEAS SHOW 2023!



TIPS FOR

BOOSTING SALES


AT HOME IMPROVEMENT CENTERS

By Lindsey Fox





These strategies will help retailers ramp up revenues, whether selling to consumers or the trade, residential or commercial.



In an age when just about everything you can buy is available online, two crucial things will make a brick-and-mortar retailer stand out: A wide array of in-stock products and exemplary customer service. A top-quality website certainly helps—but in our business, you can't beat a great in-person customer experience.

Show It, Sell It

By offering a comprehensive selection of building materials, home improvement products, and accessories, dealers and lumberyards can attract a broad customer base and expand well beyond their trade clients by appealing to homeowners seeking inspiration. Carrying a substantial inventory might seem like a costly investment; however, by analyzing sales trends, you can stock up on high-demand products to ensure you can close the sale, and your customers won't leave empty-handed—and seek an alternative source.

Partner with local craftspeople and cross-recommend for services you don't provide. This helps build a local network and can result in additional referrals. Such services can include anything from custom millwork to countertop fabrication, painters to window installers. The health of the remodeling market is closely tied to the housing market. Connecting with local Realtors can help generate new customers among those who are preparing to sell or new homeowners who are renovating older properties.

Setting up vignettes that showcase merchandise in use provides inspiration and shows what's possible—potentially stretching a sale beyond “must-have items” to include “love-to-have extras.” Seeing a product in action helps customers visualize how it might work in their project—and that can translate to extra sales for you.

Develop strong relationships with your suppliers. That way, if a product is out of stock, you are more likely to be able to get it quickly to satisfy your customer. In these extraordinary times of supply-chain disruption, it's even more important to lean on a single-source provider with reliable inventory and solid logistics channels. Attending trade shows like LBM Expo, IDEAS SHOW, the International Builders' Show, and other local or regional trade events is a great way to discover resources and build connections across the industry.

Broadening your price points is also a good strategy to gain additional market share. Offering merchandise from entry-level to high-end helps attract a customer who might have been priced out of a costlier project, especially at a time when interest rates are higher and borrowing may present challenges for new or potential homeowners. When these entry-level customers are ready to trade up, they'll know where to come for exceptional selection and service.

Service Pays Dividends

These days, on-site customer service means much more than directing a shopper to the fencing aisle. Investing in training programs will pay back tenfold when sales associates—across all departments—truly understand your full product scope and can demonstrate the advantages of higher-quality materials, newer innovations, or how technology can enhance a project.

Sales associates are invested in you when you invest in them. Offer to subsidize or underwrite classes or programs that will help your team become better versed in all aspects of your business. Many trade associations, like the NRLA, the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), and the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI), offer their members education, certification, and micro-credentialing programs. These tools can help your team gain expertise in fields including design and remodeling, sales, cabinetry, carpentry, landscaping, lighting, sustainability, and more. Having certified advisors on staff keeps customers engaged and learning, increasing the likelihood that they will return.

In fact, offering full design and planning services with qualified staff helps customers understand the scope of their project and learn about products they might not be aware of. Offer technical support and follow up with customers after a project is complete to cement your relationship and encourage loyalty. When your client is happy with the finished job, word-of-mouth is the best advertising. And today's "word of mouth" is most definitely social media.

Provide an Outstanding Online Experience

Seeing products in real-life settings and learning from knowledgeable sales associates in-store can help to seal the deal, but most people shop online first to get a sense of what they need and what's available, and to learn about products they don't even know they want.

It goes without saying that a well-designed, easy-to-navigate, and easy-to-shop website is a must in modern retailing. But the online experience extends beyond your own website to various social media platforms—from Facebook, Instagram,

"A well-designed, easy-to-navigate, and easy-to-shop website is a must in modern retailing. But the online experience extends beyond your own website to various social media platforms—from Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to local "neighbor news" sharing sites, where consumers are eager to share their experiences engaging with local businesses."

and YouTube to local "neighbor news" sharing sites, where consumers are eager to share their experiences engaging with local businesses.

It's a wise investment to hire someone experienced in social media management—either in-house or outsourced to a specialist. Building a strong online presence can be an effective way to engage with customers. Consider establishing a loyalty program where you can offer discounts to customers who provide an email address. This allows you to promote products and services to a targeted audience, boost awareness and drive sales, while fostering a sense of community and generating more in-store traffic.

Speaking of community, it can be beneficial to host events and interactive DIY workshops, offer in-store promotions, and hold seminars to demonstrate new products or explain home repair. Conducting parent-and-child classes to teach kids the basics of woodworking, gardening, or using tools safely is also a great way to foster loyalty.

The Bottom Line

Boosting sales and profits ultimately comes down to one key thing: customer engagement. Clients who enjoy coming to your venue and learning from empowered, well-informed associates, who find the products and materials they're looking for—and know they can count on dependable inventory, service, quality, and delivery—will come back for more. **LE**

About the Author: Lindsey Fox is director of marketing at PrimeSource Building Products. For more information, visit www.primesourcebp.com.

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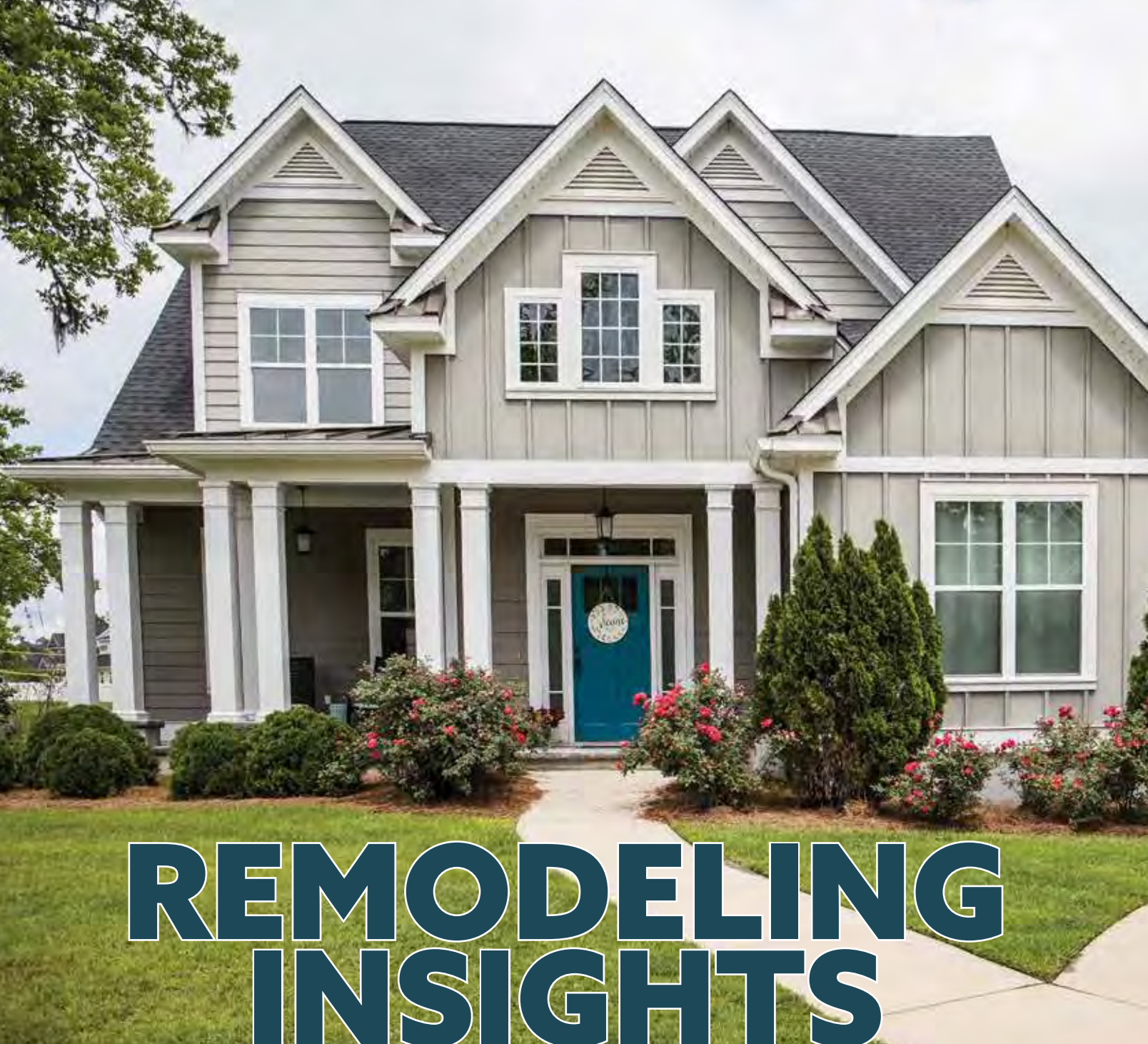


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REMODELING INSIGHTS

for Renovations That are Made to Last

Starting from the outside in, longevity and durability are essential when planning renovations for 2023 and beyond.

By Michelle Hendricks

As homeowners continue to maximize the livability of their properties, outdoor spaces have taken on newfound purposes. Where in years past a house's deck or patio might be an afterthought during home renovations, correlating with recent growth in the outdoor living market, homeowners are investing in their outdoor spaces as true continuations of their homes.

When tackling any renovation, a primary concern for homeowners and professional remodelers is always going to be long-lasting appeal and durability. Dealers offering the latest materials from brands with competitive warranties can help their customers make the purchase for a project that is going to stand the test of time. Sell peace of mind with remodeling insights for renovations that will empower homeowners to imagine outside.



CURB APPEAL

One of the smartest investments homeowners can make is in their home's first impression. Take a step back and think about what parts of the home are visible from the street. Putting money and attention into the front of the house helps set the tone for the home. Being considerate of the home's style and what elements they want to repeat will create a sense of cohesiveness and ultimate impact. A noticeable, but often neglected, area is the space underneath the front porch where the fascia or skirting might be. For a clean and contemporary look, matching deck boards can be utilized horizontally across the fascia and skirting, creating a minimalist design feature that allows the rest of the home to shine.

MATERIAL CHOICE

With the continued diversification of building materials, homeowners and renovators are being introduced to a wider variety of material options than ever before. These are some key questions you would want to consider when choosing which material to go with. For decking and porch flooring, consider composite product lines and brands that offer cohesive options across multiple zones, including porch flooring and those with enhanced technology like mineral-based composite decking. Something that mineral-based composite flooring and decking offer over other materials is ultra-low maintenance—even in contact with the ground or water. Thinking about what elements the porch or deck are going to be exposed to, such as its location, climate, and surrounding environment, makes all the difference. Opting for a mineral-based composite material is also going to offer greater flexibility in varied-width floor patterns, including borders and inlays, a classic interior trend homeowners can now extend to their porches and decks.

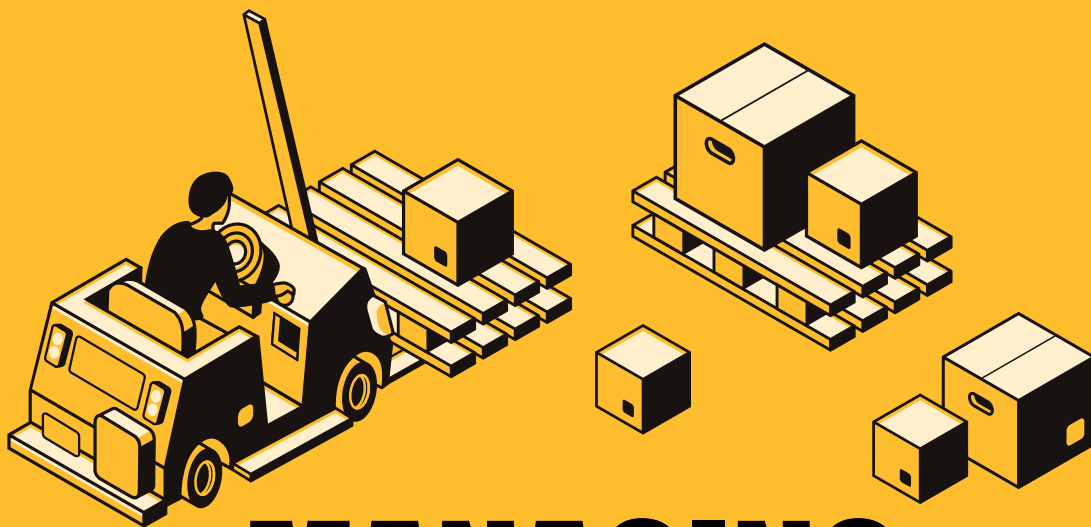
RAILING

While cable rail continues to gain popularity for its clean lines and contemporary style, there are several factors that homeowners and renovators should consider when choosing railing. Beyond trends, much like curb appeal, railing is one of the first decking elements people are going to notice. It can enhance the deck's view as well as change the overall look and feel of the home's exterior. In addition to considering the look and style of the project, it is also important to think about functionality and safety. Current safety standards such as building codes are constantly evolving and updating, and added safety features such as deck gates, secondary handrails, and lighting are becoming a higher priority.

STAY CLASSIC

Design trends come and go, and staying classic with choices can make all the difference when considering the longevity of an outdoor project. Creating a timeless foundation with neutral tones allows flexibility when incorporating changing accessories. When choosing colors for decking, railing, and other accessories, try taking inspiration from nature. Not only will this create a harmonious balance between the project and its surroundings, but you can feel confident that the material choices will not go out of style in five years. Another benefit of composite decking is its ability to give the look and feel of exotic hardwoods in natural colors without the maintenance. **LE**

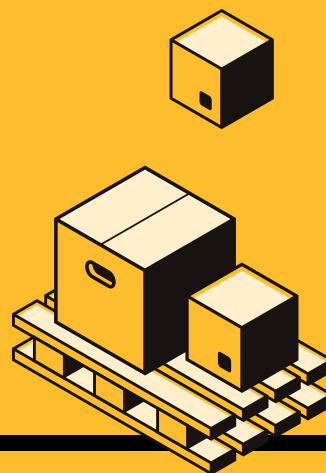
About the Author: Michelle Hendricks is the category market manager for Deckorators, a leading brand of UFP Industries, Inc., and offers insights from the brand's experience innovating new products in the composite decking, railing, and accessories market. Whether homeowners are looking to work with a local deck builder on a deck project or tackle the job themselves, they can visit [Deckorators.com](https://www.deckorators.com) to learn more, get started on a project, locate a contractor, or find out where to buy these and other Deckorators products.



MANAGING SUPPLY CHAINS IN 2023

By Elton Mayfield

Lumber prices have been on a rollercoaster since the start of the pandemic in 2020, and supply chains have been in disarray almost since the beginning of it. The lumber industry was caught off-guard by the pandemic boom for DIY projects and home renovations, but now, inflation, transportation costs, and higher mortgage rates are reducing demand for new home construction and extensive remodels. What's next and how do retail lumber dealers plan for supply chain tangles other than buckling up for a continued wild ride?





WHAT CAUSED SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES?

One problem didn't cause global supply chain issues. While the first supply wave crash was the regional lockdowns at the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, more problems have emerged, including:

- Demand fluctuations that result from varying views of the economy, as some builders fear recession and others race to remodel as new home construction wanes in the face of increased interest rates
- Raw material and component shortages from continued labor shortages and transport issues, including the ongoing truck driver scarcities
- Manufacturing capacity issues brought on by labor shortages and disrupted global fulfillment (particularly if you're trying to get Baltic birch, which, as you know, comes from Russia and Ukraine)

These problems have resulted in higher prices and worker distress, which resulted in essential workers quitting or retiring from their jobs, which restarts the cycle by causing more labor shortages.

Continued on next page. →



HOW DO WE RESOLVE SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES IN 2023?

While we've found ways to live in a world with COVID-19 and the grim reality of far-away war, we haven't resolved many of the issues causing supply chain disruptions. Within the U.S., almost all retail lumber dealers are back in operation (if they didn't close permanently), although many still have labor shortages. So, what can they do to improve, replace, or work around supply chain disruptions?

TAKING THE FIRST STEP FOR THE SHORT-TERM

Start by prioritizing key products, and use that prioritization to inform all your supply chain and labor issues. Acknowledging that segmenting your fulfillment process is a temporary measure, consider value and risk, and include your cross-functional stakeholders in the decision-making. Once you prioritize your own company's processes, you can work with your suppliers to move some supplies to the "must-have" category and defer other supply lines.

Using segmentation as a model requires assessing operational, commercial, and financial parameters, such as lead time, margin, demand variability, profitability, capacity, and service levels. By doing so, you have a holistic view of product priorities. Once in place, this plan will change your procurement, production schedule, and customer service directives.

LONG-TERM SUPPLY CHAIN SOLUTIONS

The pandemic taught us that supply chains aren't as secure as we once thought. Sometimes what we think is the most cost-effective solution can turn into a costly error. Supply and demand can change quickly, and being better prepared to protect supply chains needs to be prioritized. What is the best solution?

1. Make People a Priority

Revamp your procurement model with digitally driven methods and work smarter within your supplier ecosystem, with internal customers and external partners. Remember, also, that communication with people is key. Communicating in-person, if possible, with suppliers, vendors, and customers will make it easier to solve problems as they come up and head off trouble before it gets out of control. Communication allows you to validate the importance of your team and your supply network, which can enhance your relationship with them. They're more likely to relish doing business with you if you communicate early and often.

2. Secure Your Supply Chain and Expand Your Supplier Options

Mitigate supply chain uncertainties by improving your supply chain management with all your vendors, no matter how small. If you haven't already, and your size warrants it, consider adopting a warehouse management system (WMS), which can help your entire team manage physical inventory, find specific product locations, and keep track of product replacement. An investment in technology to track lumber shipments and optimize routes can help to minimize the impact of any crisis on your business.

3. Use Funds Wisely

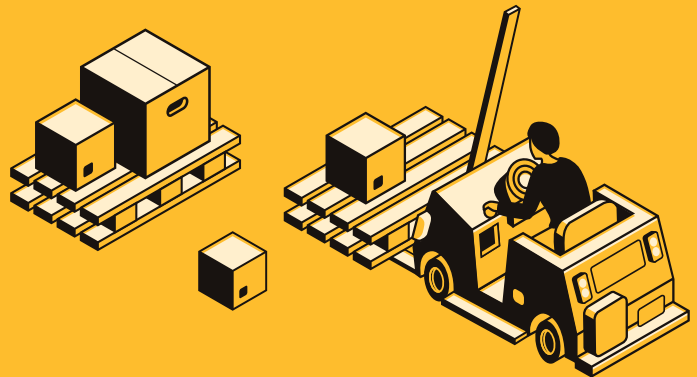
Minimize unnecessary spending to have cash in reserve for future growth and supply chain management issues to lower risk factors.

4. Add Resiliency to Your Supply Chains

Improve risk management strategies with supply chain issues in mind to ensure purpose-led, resilient procurement decisions.

5. Innovate with Goals in Mind

As the economy continues its ups and downs, make customer-centricity a high priority and learn to build trust, offer transparency, and inspire innovation with a purpose-led approach.

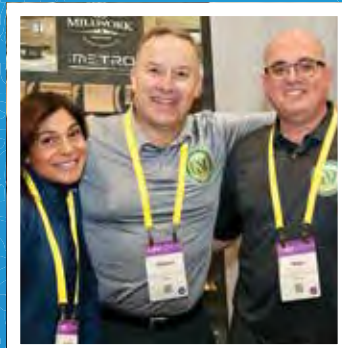


SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES WILL CONTINUE, BUT YOU CAN BE READY

We can expect supply chain issues in the retail lumber business to continue. All it takes is an active hurricane season, a continued far-away war, or your customers being uncertain about whether to invest in building right now or not. But how we respond to these shortages will affect growth, revenues, and profits for our businesses over time. **LC**

About the author: Elton Mayfield is the co-founder of ER Marketing, a B2B marketing agency with a special love for the building industry—quite possibly, because they've been building clients themselves. For more than 18 years, ER Marketing has been dedicated to improving the marketing channel for all things building.

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Moisture Meters

Are Essential

to a Roofing Contractors' Toolkit

After a disaster involving water intrusion, moisture meters are crucial to assess and document the damage prior to replacement or restoration.

By John Bogart

For independent retail lumber dealers that sell to builders and roofing contractors, moisture meters are necessary to assess the extent of any water damage quickly and efficiently when dealing with disasters where water intrusion plays a role. Heavy rainstorms, hurricanes, or fire (due to suppression efforts) can all cause water intrusion, so using moisture meters is vital to distinguish between salvageable and unsalvageable materials in order to cost-effectively expedite needed construction.

Excess water in roofing materials after a disaster can lead to mold growth and material rot long after the initial incident. The ability to provide sufficient documentation to prove existing water damage can also be stipulated for insurance claims or possible FEMA registration.

Although the roofing industry has access to moisture meters, to some extent, these tools typically require calibration, sampling, and specialized personnel. In addition, they are not very portable or flexible in measuring a variety of materials on the jobsite.

Fortunately, a new category of portable, handheld, instant moisture measurement devices is now available for lumber dealers, builders, and roofing contractors that can be used on a wide range of materials with no special training. These "point-and-measure" units can be used at the jobsite wherever moisture is a problem. These new tools are now helping to speed restoration and improve building quality and can be either purchased or leased.

So, today, the typical roofing contractor's toolkit needs an update. For initial assessment and throughout the building or renovation process, contractors involved in work where water intrusion is a problem will need a reliable, portable, instant moisture meter along with other equipment to dry and remove water.

Since not all water damage is visible to the naked eye, using a moisture meter can help roofing contractors determine exactly how much of a structure has been exposed to water, so they can save what is dry and safe, and rebuild only what is necessary.

Storms and Hurricanes

A powerful, slow-moving hurricane can dump up to 2 feet of rain in a short time. A Category 4 hurricane can reach wind speeds up to 155 mph with storm surges up to 18 feet, according to the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale. This can cause serious roofing damage and require substantial repairs to homes as well as commercial and industrial facilities.

Whether the damage is visible or not, a powerful storm or hurricane can loosen shingles enough to allow water to creep in and rot the structure from the top down. A roofing contractor's visual inspection of the roof can quickly assess any preliminary damage. But as they make necessary repairs after a major storm, they will also want to quickly discover any moisture seeping in before it causes too much damage.

Roofs are especially susceptible to wind damage from storms and hurricanes at the corners, perimeters, and joints. A thorough investigation of these areas, along with the areas surrounding any loose or damaged shingles, is a great place to begin locating damage that can allow water to seep in.

A roofing contractor can use a moisture meter to learn whether or not water is working its way through a roof that has been compromised by gale-force winds and heavy rain.

For example, one portable moisture meter that contractors have found to be effective to instantly check a roof for water damage can measure through shingles and deep into the sublayers to evaluate roof sheathing for moisture.

Efficiently Inspecting Roofing Materials

To efficiently inspect the widest range of roofing materials, contractors can benefit from moisture meters that utilize Near-Infrared (NIR) light. NIR light is a highly accurate, non-contact secondary measurement method that can deliver immediate, laboratory-quality moisture readings.

NIR moisture meters follow the principle that water absorbs certain wavelengths of light. The meter reflects light off the sample and measures how much light has been absorbed, and the result is automatically converted into a moisture content reading. Roofing contractors can use the NIR meters on anything where measuring surface moisture is important.

Major Roofing and Structural Damage

If powerful winds, downed trees, or major flooding have caused extensive roofing and structural issues, chances are the home or facility has been exposed to a significant amount of water from rain, flash floods, or storm surge.

When structures are ripped open or flooded, it is important to discover the extent of the damage. Just how far did the water



creep into the structure? Is only one area of the structure affected? What needs to be replaced?


If the building has incurred major roofing and structural damage, the best way to discover what is salvageable is to check what is dry and intact. A moisture meter will provide many of these answers.

Fire

Extinguishing a fire can require using large volumes of water, which can prove to be just as destructive to a structure as the fire itself. So, on first inspection, it can be helpful for a roofing restoration contractor to use a universal moisture meter or a NIR meter to determine the extent of water damage in plain view and behind the scenes.

Is the roof substrate too water damaged to salvage? Wood that has been exposed to water and flooding can be susceptible to dry rot. So, using a wood moisture tester to check that wood has properly dried can prevent losing structural integrity as a result of dry rot.

While initial assessment may be the primary focus of moisture measurement for disaster recovery, it can also be invaluable during the rebuilding process.

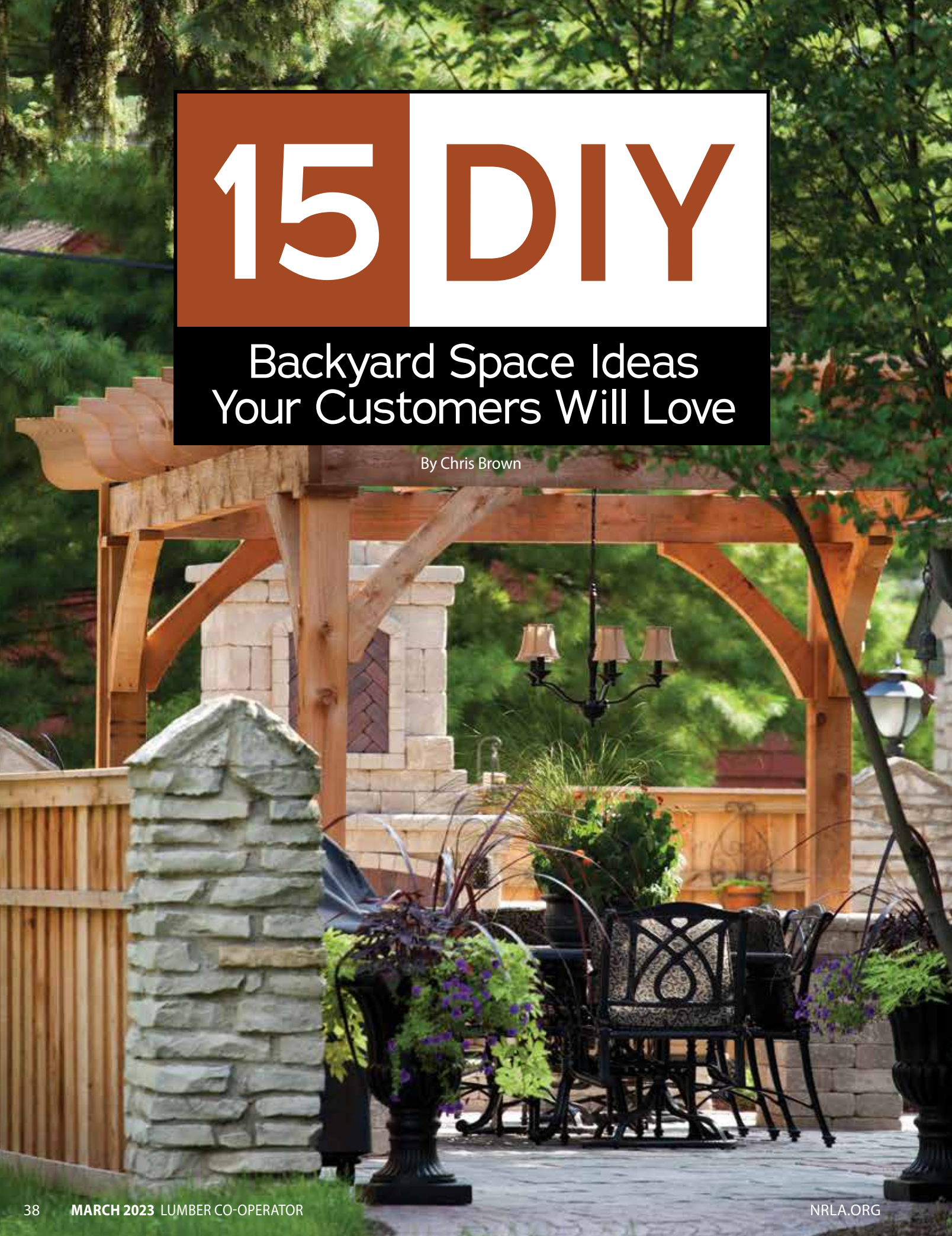
A moisture meter is good to use not only for assessment but also throughout the entire roofing and rebuild process since it helps contractors monitor moisture levels along the way to document building quality and compliance. 

About the author: John Bogart is an expert in moisture and composition analysis and the managing director of Kett US (www.kett.com), a manufacturer of a full range of moisture and organic composition analyzers.

15 DIY

Backyard Space Ideas Your Customers Will Love

By Chris Brown



Homeowners and renters are putting more emphasis on reconnecting with the outdoors and embracing more playful and creative hobbies. Creating a comfortable and inviting outdoor space can also provide an additional area to work from home. There are a ton of high- and low-effort ways to turn an outdoor space into a haven and entertaining area for all seasons and occasions.

Here are 15 popular DIY backyard space ideas to watch for in 2023.

Entertainment & Function

2023 is all about reconnecting with friends and family. To do this, incorporate elements that are great for hosting, like outdoor kitchens and activity areas for the kids. Here are some fun and active entertainment ideas for the backyard:



01 BACKYARD PLAYSET

For families with young kids, there's nothing they'd appreciate more than their own backyard playset. A simple DIY treehouse is also an option. This is an ideal way to get them off their electronics and outside. Many parents are considering playsets built out of pressure-treated wood for their backyards. One question we often get asked is: "Is this material safe for children, pets, and the environment?" The answer is absolutely YES!

02 OUTDOOR KITCHEN

Homeowners can take family dinners outside or host backyard parties with ease with an outdoor kitchen setup. Backyard dining has never been more fun—especially while getting to enjoy a warm summer night. Be sure to include an outdoor dining table and chairs so everyone has a place to sit and enjoy their food.

03 WET BAR

Outdoor wet bars are also trending in 2023. This setup is perfect for hosting and is an ideal way to enjoy beverages in hot summer months (or even in the cold—did someone say hot toddy?). They can also get the look by adding a bar cart with their favorite beverages next to the grilling area. For a wet bar, make sure to consider the costs of installing an outdoor faucet to hook up a sink.



04 ACTIVITY AREAS

Keeping the kids busy and entertained is essential when it comes to building an outdoor space. Consider setting up a craft shed or other structure where kids can store their toys and play. To create longevity, consider making these activity areas a space that the kids can enjoy all the way into their teen years.

Make these areas as modern or traditional as the customer wants—you can even make these areas suitable for

adults as well, providing a perfect quiet getaway to get any tasks or hobbies done.



05 BACKYARD MOVIE NIGHT

Homeowners can mix it up a Saturday night by watching a movie outside with a projector screen or outdoor TV. Set this screen (or even a white bedsheet) upon a flat surface, such as the side of the house. Complete the area with fun, weather-resistant seating options, like bean bags, and other ambient elements such as an outdoor rug, and cozy lighting.

06 GAS FIREPLACES

A cozy gas fireplace, fire pit, or other heating option can carry the outdoor space through multiple seasons. This feature will be the perfect way to incorporate warmth and light in 2023.

(Continued on pg. 38)

07

WFO
(WORK FROM OUTSIDE)

In addition to creating a fun entertainment zone, homeowners can incorporate a cozy office space to make working from home feel like a vacation. For boosted internet connection, they may consider installing a Wi-Fi extender.



Lush Landscaping

A focus on gardening and being green will be big in 2023. Many people picked up gardening during the pandemic, so highlight this new (or longtime) hobby with some lush landscaping features for the outdoor space.

08

EDIBLE GARDENS

Edible gardens are great for adding some flavor, nutrients, and color to not only the plate, but to the garden itself. They can plant vegetables like tomatoes and peppers or herbs such as cilantro, oregano, or lavender. Those wishing to start with a smaller project should try an herb garden first.



09

RAISED GARDEN BEDS

Raised beds are a great way to create an instant garden. The best part— they won't even have to dig up grass or weeds to get started! They simply build the bed, fill it with a mixture of soil and compost, and enjoy.

Raised beds are hugely popular because they're so easy to build and maintain, but a little planning goes a long way toward making them last for years. Great building starts with great materials, so make sure they choose wisely.



10

MORE PRIVACY

Spending more time outside and hosting guests may warrant an increased need for privacy. This can be achieved in a variety of ways, including fences, divider screens, or even tall greenery. Having more privacy in the backyard can be great to keep nosy neighbors out and to create a quiet outdoor office if they choose to work outside. If customers plan to build a privacy fence or wall divider, make sure they check with their local regulations first.

11

VERTICAL GARDENING

Vertical gardening covers the walls of an outdoor space, providing unique wall art and while keeping that outdoorsy feel if they happen to have a small area to work with. Grow vines directly along the side of a wall, or get a ladder garden or stacked planters to achieve the look.

Fill those planters with greenery such as succulents to reduce the amount of water needed to take care of them.



12

RATTAN PIECES

Furniture made from rattan is trending for 2023 and is very versatile, both indoors and out. Rattan furniture is made from an eco-friendly and sustainable material and adds a cool and unique look to every space. Plus, it's more durable and requires less energy to produce than wood material. Incorporate pieces like rattan stools or chairs, lounging couches, tables, and more. Rattan's unique look will surely be a conversation starter at gatherings.

13

BOHEMIAN ACCESSORIES

Achieving this look is easy—all they have to do is incorporate many different textures, colors, and patterns and layer them. This also works great if

they're a plant lover and want to add a lot of greenery to their space. Consider adding elements like a hammock, a hanging swing chair, and fun rugs to achieve the ultimate laid-back feel.

14 CONCRETE FURNITURE

Furniture made out of concrete is trending this year and offers an industrial look. Pieces made out of concrete offer many style options with unique textures and shapes. Consider concrete tables, benches, fire pits, and side tables to highlight this trend in the outdoor space. To soften the hard lines and concrete material, incorporate a comfy throw blanket or plush pillows into the seating area.



15 NATURAL COLORS

2023 is all about natural shades that create a calming and cozy vibe in an outdoor space. Think muted tones like sage green, cashmere, cream, or light beige. These shades work great in a wide variety of designs and match well with other furniture and accessories.

Consider even adding a statement piece with a pop of color here and there, like a bright throw pillow or rug.



Additional Outdoor Decor Tips

There are endless ways to make an outdoor space feel like home.

Here are some tips and additional ideas to help customers make the most of the outdoor living space.

CREATE A SPACE THAT WORKS IN MOST SEASONS

Think about ways to help the outdoor space adapt with the seasons. For example, they can add to existing features, like placing a sun umbrella over the dining area during the warmer summer months. Also, they should take steps to protect furniture throughout the year by using fabric protectors and purchasing furniture covers.

Plus, buying versatile and weather-resistant furniture and accessories will save money in the long run.

ADD A RUG

To bring the indoors outside this year, they can create the same cozy feel as their living room with a rug. Outdoor rugs add comfort to any outdoor space—just make sure it's weather-friendly. You can also try layering your rugs to give your space a more textured feel.

DON'T SKIMP ON LIGHTING

To create the best ambiance possible, customers should invest time into finding stylish and durable outdoor lighting! Budget-minded homeowners can get creative with string lights, pendants, tiki torches, flameless candles, or sconces—the options are endless and can be tweaked based on their style. If they don't have access to an electrical outlet, they can also opt for battery-operated or solar-powered lighting options.


MATCH ACCESSORIES TO THE HOME'S STYLE

When crafting the ideal outdoor space, customers should consider matching to the style they have on the inside their home. For example, they can mirror the color palettes or use similar art motifs. This creates a nice flow between the outdoor features and the interior style and decor of the home.

CONSIDER THE WHOLE FAMILY (INCLUDING PETS)

When putting together or modifying an outdoor space, customers should consider the whole family, even pets. This is a great way to make the outside of the home as enjoyable as it is inside, for everyone.

If they have pets, consider pet-friendly additions, like a designated digging area or a doggy playground. Kids can also keep busy with fun activities, such as a playground, water features like a splash pad, or other backyard games.

We hope this round-up of outdoor living trends and inspirational tips helps your customers create the backyard haven of their dreams. Above all else, the space should work for their and their family's needs. From outdoor eating areas to sustainable and modern design, they'll also be sure to impress any guests that visit. 

About the author: Chris Brown is the director of business development at Culpeper Wood Preservers. He can be reached at 540-825-9720 or via email at cbrown@culpeperwood.com.

Outdoor Living

Still Top of Mind for Homeowners

By Kim Espenschied

“Being in nature can be a place of comfort—and this is a huge reason why outdoor living spaces continue to be so popular.”

— Joseph Raboine

Homeowners continue to look for ways to bring traditional indoor activities — like watching a movie — outdoors. Products like MoistureShield composite decking and railing help families enjoy the benefits of nature in new and exciting ways.



Three years after COVID-19 changed how most people live, work, and play, we continue to see unprecedented growth in the ways homeowners are embracing outdoor living—dramatically impacting outdoor design trends and products.

While homeowners quickly sprang to action during the height of the pandemic creating spaces that extended their indoor living areas, many are now noticing the by-product of those projects—a greater awareness of the emotional, physical, and social benefits that are intrinsically tied to more time spent outdoors.

“Getting outside and existing in a space with fresh air and nature surrounding you is something that is now top of mind for many homeowners as they look at creating or expanding an outdoor living area,” says Joseph Raboine, director of residential hardscapes for Belgard. “Being in nature can be a place of comfort—and this is a huge reason why outdoor living spaces continue to be so popular.”

Following are a few outdoor living trends that homeowners and contractors can expect to see in 2023:

Sustainability

From using long-lasting permeable pavers and masonry to composite decking made of recycled materials, the demand for low-maintenance, durable products that are environmentally friendly is steadily increasing.

“We’ve been seeing a ‘do it once and do it right mentality’ emerging,” says John Lea, owner and founder of Decksouth in Atlanta. “People are taking the time and making the investment to build something that will last for years to come using products that fit the area in which they live.” Homeowners—especially younger ones in their 20s and 30s—are also looking for sustainable and eco-friendly products where materials are locally and responsibly sourced.

When it comes to landscape design, people are thinking more holistically—looking for ways to improve biodiversity and decrease the need for watering and pesticides. Use of native plants, artificial turf, pavers, and gravel—especially in drought-prone areas—is becoming increasingly popular.



The market is responding to more homeowners looking for sustainable and eco-friendly outdoor products. MoistureShield composite decking is made with 95% recycled content, making it an ideal choice for building green.

Belgard permeable pavers combined with artificial turf, gravel, and native landscaping help create a more sustainable landscape design that is less dependent on water and pesticides.



Exploring Mixed Materials, Colors, and Textures

As people spend more time outside, nature serves as the main inspiration for the majority of outdoor designs. “People are moving away from using one product to cover their outdoor space—looking instead to mix materials for greater dimension and elevated styling,” says Raboine. Combining composite wood, metal, and stone products in varying colors and textures can help create a complementary design that reflects the variations of a home’s surrounding terrain.

In composite decking, manufacturers are producing an increasing number of color and texture options that can create stunning two-tone designs with variegated grain patterns. Using darker accent boards to picture frame the perimeter of a lighter-colored deck or as breaker boards to divide sections of a large deck creates strong visual interest.

There is also a noticeable shift to using warm, earthy hues in place of more modern, cool gray tones that dominated the industry for years. A popular choice in interior design, neutral “greige”—offering the perfect balance of grey and beige—is now emerging as a new favorite outside as well.

Lighting

Lighting can play an integral part in the overall design of an outdoor space. When properly designed and lit, a backyard can take on a whole new life, providing a magical transformation from day to night.


By installing lighting on a deck, stair treads, and railing, incorporating lighting into the hardscaping around a fire pit, and adding wash lights to highlight trees or shrubs, lighting is an easy way to add value to and extend the usability of an outdoor space.

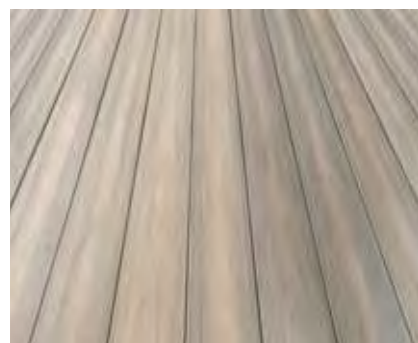
“Traditionally, lighting has been an afterthought, but now people are realizing their yards don’t have to shut down when the sun goes down,” says Raboine. “A well-lit yard can be enjoyed from inside the home as well through a picture window or patio doors—it’s an added bonus that most people don’t consider.”

Use of Technology in the Design Process

Outdoor design professionals are quickly moving away from one-dimensional pencil sketches and embracing advancing technology to produce 3D renderings that provide amazing accuracy down to even the smallest detail.

Cutting-edge software—like that used in video games and CGI movies—can show the exact color and texture of products being installed, the placement of furniture and plants, and where the sunlight falls at a particular time of day, and can even provide animation.

With advances in landscape design technology, it has never been easier for homeowners to visualize a project. “This technology helps establish an immediate emotional connection for the homeowners—they are able to see their actual house and yard in the design,” says Lea. “This allows for better engagement in the design process and also helps ensure that everyone is on the same page before construction begins.” 



Neutral “greige” is emerging as an outdoor favorite, with products like MoistureShield Meridian composite decking in Catalina offering the perfect balance of gray and beige.



Extending the usability of an outdoor space is easy with a little illumination, shown here with RDI Endurance Original Rail Vinyl Railing featuring LED under-rail light and post caps with dome and flush deck lights.

About the author: Kim Espenschied is Communications Manager at Barrette Outdoor Living, a division of Oldcastle APG. A seasoned writer, creative director and marketing professional, she has published articles on topics in a variety of industries, including manufacturing, healthcare and nonprofit.

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DIY & OUTDOOR LIVING

PRODUCT SHOWCASE



Photo Credit: BlueLinX

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BlueLinX Corporation

Contact: Mark Guerra **Email:** mark.guerra@bluelinxco.com
Phone: 508-306-3397 **Website:** www.bluelinxco.com

What DIY & Outdoor Living products do you sell?

PrimeLinX, our line of primed radiata pine products, is perfect for DIYers with styles seen on popular television programming. Our trim boards, pattern stock, and two lines of shiplap products are primed and ready for installation and painting.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Our shiplap lines of Shadow Gap and Vintage Shadow Gap have self-spacing shiplap edges that make installation a breeze and provide a finished professional look. BlueLinX also offers a wide range of moulding products to complete your room renovation.



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A&B Wood Design

Email: info@abwooddesign.com

Phone: 203-888-6017 **Website:** www.abwooddesign.com



What DIY & Outdoor Living products do you sell?

We offer crown mouldings and casings that only require a single top coat, perfect for a weekend project. We also sell Nickel Gap and S4S boards that offer endless combinations for the Modern, Farmhouse, Mid-century Modern or Craftsman look.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Our Nickel Gap is produced from industry-leading finger-jointed, gesso primed materials so a finish can be quickly applied. It also features tongue-and-groove that fits tightly together for greater depth and hides any unsightly nails for easy installation and long-lasting beauty. Changing a room's trim work or creating an accent wall is a cost-effective way to elevate any room in a home or office space.



Britton Lumber Company

Contact: Wolf Tillotson **Email:** wtillotson@brittonlumber.com

Phone: 802-333-4388 **Website:** www.brittonlumber.com



What DIY & Outdoor Living products do you sell?

We stock and sell packaged planking products, including reclaimed wood, cedar closet liner, pegboards, and more.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

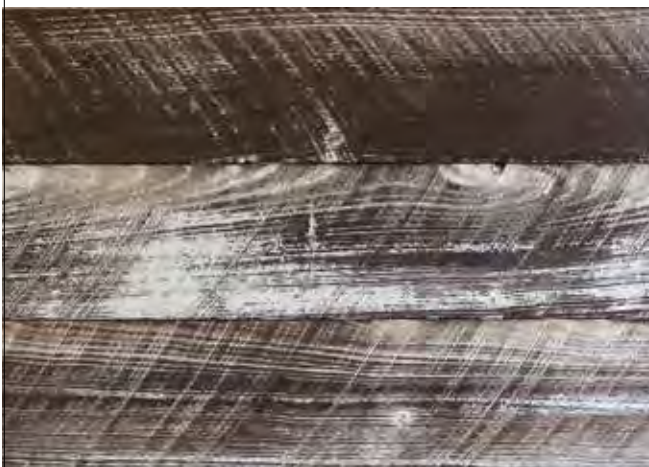
Our reclaimed wood planking is perfect for both your beginner and pro DIY customers! If your customers are looking to add an accent wall or give a room new life, then our reclaimed wood planking is for them! It is easy to handle, and installation does not require any specialized equipment. It can even be installed directly over drywall. Check out gpsincusa.com for more ideas.



American Lumber Co. Inc.

Contact: Joshua Kaye **Email:** jkaye@americanlumberco.com
Phone: 845-778-1111 **Website:** barnwoodarts.com

BARNWOOD ARTS



What DIY & Outdoor Living products do you sell?

Barnwood Arts weathered shiplap for interior accents. Perfect for accent walls, wainscoting, ceilings, and casework.

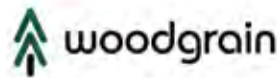
What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Barnwood Arts accent panels are milled, distressed, and finished by woodworkers. Circular-sawn true shiplap profile in six true-grit finishes. Techniques include weather-staining, white-washing, charring, brushing, and sealing. We saw what others were doing with reclaimed/barnwood planks and took it up a couple of notches. Packaged in 25-square-foot boxes for DIY. Complimentary displays for dealers with DIY traffic.



Silvermine Stone

Contact: Selene Byron **Email:** sbyron@huttig.com
Phone: 401-489-5014 **Website:** www.silverminestone.com



What DIY & outdoor living products do you sell?

Huttig Building Products/Woodgrain Distribution is organically dipping our toes into the outdoor living space as our vendor partners increase their product lines in the category. With over 30 vendors, we take pride in our distribution channel providing the Northeast dealer base a one-stop-shop to acquire nearly all products needed to build and remodel a home.



What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Silvermine Stone is an easy-to-install mortarless architectural stone siding with a range of colors and designs to dress up the exterior of a home or commercial building. The game-changer is the patented flashing system, which creates a tight seal on the wall, moving water away from the structure. This system eliminates the need for an additional water barrier or drainage plane. Silvermine Stone siding is the perfect product for exterior kitchens and fireplaces—aesthetically, the look of the stone is beautiful, combined with easy installation (DIY-friendly), and no water penetration; it is a win-win. Silvermine Stone also offers ready-to-assemble pillars and mailbox kits.



DAP Global Inc.

Contact: Mackenzie Saponaro **Email:** msaponaro@dap.com
Phone: 410-980-4478 **Website:** www.dap.com



What DIY & Outdoor Living products do you sell?

Founded in 1865, DAP is a leading manufacturer and supplier of caulks, sealants, foam, adhesives, and patch and repair products with a history of first-to-market innovations. For over 155 years, DAP has provided professional contractors, remodelers, and do-it-yourselfers with trusted, quality, reliable, and long-lasting products.



Pro-Fit Outdoor Living

Contact: Anthony Barbagallo
Email: anthony@profitoutdoorliving.com
Phone: 917-642-3149
Website: www.profitoutdoorliving.com



What DIY & Outdoor Living products do you sell?

We manufacture and supply outdoor kitchens, unfinished or finished. The unique thing about our system is our 3D design software, which is very easy to use and complements the design process very well with the ability to apply any finish.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Our 3D design tool is a complete game changer—an easy-to-use tool that helps design your outdoor kitchen in just three easy steps. You get one-touch access to the major appliance brands and finishing materials, CAD specifics, and complete layouts.

STAIR SHOWCASE



ASSOCIATE MEMBERS: Got Stair or Door Products?

Scan the QR Code for the product showcase you would like to participate in. These showcases will be featured in the May LC.

Participation is only for NRLA Associate Members and is FREE.
Not a member? Contact Donna Berger at dberger@nrla.org

DOOR SHOWCASE





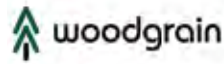
Culpeper Wood Preservers

Contact: Brad Marks **Email:** bmarks@culpeperwood.com
Phone: 800-817-6215 **Website:** www.culpeperwood.com



What DIY & Outdoor Living products do you sell?

Pressure-treated lumber: dimensional lumber, decking and deck accessories, timbers, fence products, heavy timbers, and plywood.



Huttig Building Products

Contact: Selene Byron **Email:** sbyron@huttig.com
Phone: 401-489-5014
Website: www.barretteoutdoorliving.com

What DIY & Outdoor Living products do you sell?

Huttig Building Products/Woodgrain Distribution is organically dipping our toes into the outdoor living space as our vendor partners increase their product lines in the category. With more than 30 vendors, we take pride in our distribution channel providing the Northeast dealer base a one-stop-shop to acquire nearly all products needed to build and remodel a home.



What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Decorative screen panels by Barrette Outdoor Living are the perfect home accent to enhance a room, patio, or garden. Working symbiotically with RDI railings and pergolas, decorative screen panels can be installed up to three high in RDI's aluminum frame kit, creating a divider screen for increased privacy as a wall, divider, or underneath a deck. The Sanibel and Boardwalk styles are in stock in the Newington, Hooksett, and Augusta woodgrains.



Russin

Contact: Jordan Russin **Email:** jordan@russin.com
Phone: 800-724-0010 **Website:** russin.com



EVOLUTIONPLUS
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What DIY & Outdoor Living products do you sell?

Interior paneling options are infinite at Russin! Whether you're seeking contemporary lines or rustic accents, smooth finishes, or deep texture, we can help say yes to all with products that install simply. Let your mind wander with color choices, textures, and the ability to customize—learn more at russin.com!

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Evolution Plus offers a reversible tight shiplap/nickel gap profile in both 1x6 and 1x8, produced from stem to stern by Russin. The nickel gap shiplap look is hot right now—Evolution Plus offers a three-coat finish for the best-looking primed board on the market. Also consider the many options from Thermory!

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—Tammy Hoehman, Mosher Lumber

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ABMA's 2023 is Off and Running

AMERICAN BUILDING MATERIALS ALLIANCE

By Katherine Slye-Hernandez, PhD

The American Building Materials Alliance (ABMA) is off to a great start in 2023. They settled on eight priorities early in January. These priorities focus on business and supply chain issues such as tax deductions, credit card processing, and a few trucking-related bills.

ABMA HAS EIGHT PRIORITIES FOR THE 2023 CONGRESSIONAL SESSION

- 100% Bonus Depreciation Tax Credit
 - Credit Card Competition Act
 - Employer Directed Skills Act
 - LICENSE Act
 - Main Street Tax Certainty Act
- Safer Highways and Increased Performance for Interstate Trucking Act (SHIP IT) Act; and
 - Softwood Lumber Agreement
- Strengthen Supply Chains Through Truck Driver Incentives Act

Work in Congress

Congress has been slow to organize but bills have started to be introduced. ABMA Government Affairs Consultant Pat Rita has been working with sponsors of our priority legislation to get it reintroduced, and plans are coming along nicely.

Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY) and her staff are currently making a few tweaks to the Employer Directed Skills Act and plan to introduce it in her district, likely at one of our ABMA member's yards, in the spring. Two other bills—the LICENSE Act and Strengthen Supply Chains Through Truck Driver Incentives Act—are close to being introduced; however, a new bill has been introduced that combines many aspects of both.

The Safer Highways and Increased Performance for Interstate Truckers (SHIP IT) Act has broad bipartisan support. Sponsor Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-SD) expects this bill to be the center of a comprehensive supply chain package the House will consider in early May. ABMA will be supporting the SHIP IT Act and working to ensure that package benefits our members and their businesses.

ABMA is also talking with multiple representatives and senators about supporting legislation on issues such as the 100% Bonus Depreciation Tax Incentive, which was not extended in 2022 and begins to phase out this year.

Signing on in Support

Given ABMA's strong work and support of workforce development issues, Rep. Glenn "GT" Thompson (R-PA) and his team reached out to ABMA about being an endorsing organization on a resolution recognizing Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month (February). The resolution highlighted the impact of CTE programs on learners at all levels and the role CTE plays in helping industries, like LBM, fill high-demand jobs.


One of the first acts of the new House was to pass H.R. 23, the Family and Small Business Taxpayer Protection Act. This legislation would rescind the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022's billions in funding for the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) expanded enforcement efforts, while retaining funding for the IRS to focus on improving taxpayer services and modernizing operations. ABMA supported this legislation in the 117th Congress and once again was one of the first organizations to sign on to a letter supporting it in the 118th.



NRLA participants in front of the Capitol, 2019.

ABMA Descends on DC

On March 22-24, about 60 ABMA members went to Washington, D.C., to meet with their federal representatives and senators to discuss our priorities. Members will receive an issue briefing from ABMA staff on the 22nd followed by a cocktail hour and dinner at The Lincoln restaurant. Our "Day on the Hill" will consist of meetings with legislators and their staff followed by a debrief to collect feedback on the meetings and a night tour of the Capitol.

Be on the lookout in our May issue for a recap of Advocacy Day and the continued work of ABMA for you in Washington. 



YOUR LBM FEDERAL ADVOCACY RESOURCE

The ABMA actively advocates for Northeastern Retail Lumber Association (NRLA) and Construction Suppliers Association (CSA) members to advance, shape, and influence policy in all branches of government. We work directly with members of Congress, the White House, and federal agencies to impact the legislative and regulatory process as it affects the LBM industry.



Find all you need and more at
ABMAAlliance.org

Legislative

Bill text, tracking, priority issues,
and updates.

Regulatory

Regulations, reforms, updates,
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One-stop shop for advocacy
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Action Alerts

Contact your federal representatives
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Financial Matters Affecting Retail Lumberyards

By Kyle Abrahamovich



Owners of retail lumberyards face many challenges regarding business and financial planning. The risk concentration of the business, illiquidity, constantly changing tax law, and the integration of their business and personal financial planning are just a few of the factors that make managing their wealth so challenging.

Key considerations in doing so include:

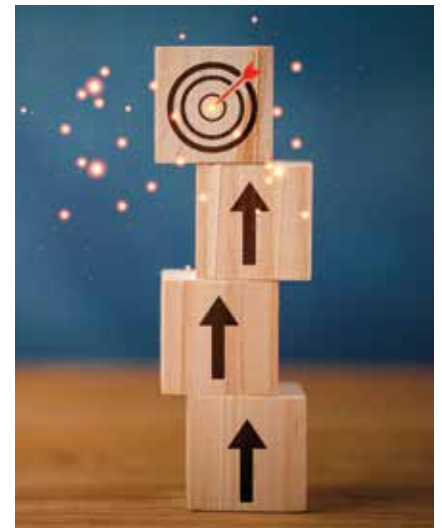
- How will you address gift and estate taxes if your assets are mostly illiquid?
- How will you pass the business onto the next generation of owners in a tax-efficient manner?
- If the business makes up a significant portion of your assets, and you have children who are not involved in the business, how will you leave them a legacy?
- If the next generation of owners are not yet capable of continuing the business in the event of your death or disability, do you have a contingency plan in place to ensure survival of the business until they are proficient operators?
- If you have life insurance for business and personal planning purposes, is it structured in a way to avoid taxes?
- Should you make substantial lifetime gifts while the federal gift and estate tax exemption is \$12.92m per individual considering it's scheduled to sunset to around \$7m per individual in 2026? If the sunset does occur, the excess gift available until 2026 is a "use it or lose it" tax-free gift.
- Or, is it more tax efficient to hold the business until death so the next generation gets a step-up in their tax basis, potentially reducing taxes on a subsequent sale.
- Are your estate documents and planning consistent with your business succession plans?
- If your plan is to pass the business onto the next generation, are you financially independent outside of the business, or do you need to realize business equity to fund retirement?

The industry's distinctive characteristics that make this planning challenging also provide unique planning opportunities, such as:

- Properly structured buy-sell agreements can provide the mechanism to pass the business on in a tax-efficient manner. It can also fix the business value for gift and estate tax purposes.
- The use of trusts, ownership arrangements and beneficiary designations that have been coordinated with any business succession plans can ensure your assets are distributed according to your wishes.
- There are numerous valuation discounts available to illiquid assets that reduce the value for gift tax purposes.
- The ebbs and flows of the industry can create opportunities to make gifts when the business value is in a trough.
- For yards in acquisition mode, the use of debt can provide extremely low asset values for transfer purposes. Debt encumbered real estate for example, provides this opportunity as well as allowing all the appreciation and debt paydown to happen outside the original owner's estate.
- Assets outside the operating business provide a means of providing for children not active in the business, such as investments, real estate and life insurance.
- If buying time to allow future owners to develop, a management team, board of directors, as well as life and disability insurance liquidity can go a long way in operating the business and "buying time" for its continuation until they are ready.
- Life insurance can be structured in an extremely tax-efficient manner, by having it owned by certain types of trusts, business entities, or individuals outside your estate.
- Making large, accelerated gifts prior to 2026 is generally only a consideration for estates that significantly exceed \$7m. Otherwise, you will simply be using what will be available to you under the sunset amount.
- While corporate stock may get a step-up in tax basis at death, the assets owned in the corporation do not. Given most lumberyard sales are asset sales (not stock sales), the tax basis of stock may not be the main

consideration. It's equally important to determine the tax basis of the assets inside the corporation to make an informed decision.

- Achieving financial independence can be accomplished by first projecting the capital required to fund your goals and objectives. In terms of accumulating capital, corporate retirement plans, taxable investment assets, continuing to work for the next generation, selling a portion of the business for an installment sale, or retaining income-producing real estate are some of the options available to owners.



To address the myriad financial, estate, and tax planning considerations facing owners and the business, strategic planning is required to ensure business continuation, the preservation of wealth, and the well-being of the family. **LC**

About the author: Kyle Abrahamovich is the president of Poulos Advisors, Inc. Poulos Advisors proudly offers financial services such as personal financial planning, investment advisory services, wealth management, business planning, and retirement planning in Burlington, Vt. Abrahamovich can be reached at kyle@poulosadvisors.com or 802-862-7361.





How to Expand Your Applicant Pool

By Rikka Brandon

A huge challenge in the building products industry is a lack of quality applicants, especially if you're looking for someone with 5–15 years of experience.

One of the ways to address this is with a bigger pool of qualified applicants. And creating a larger pool requires getting more eyeballs on your job openings—the more people who see your job opportunity, the more people who will act on it and the greater chance more of those applicants will be of the quality you need.

There's a lot of advice out there on how to weed people out of the applicant pool. But we don't have the luxury of having a giant pool right now. So we need to focus on how to get more people into the applicant pool. Having so many applicants to choose from that we would need to think about weeding them out would be a wonderful challenge to have, but it's not one that's likely anytime soon in the LBM and building products industries.

So how do we get more eyes on our opportunities and how do we get them to take action?

The easiest thing you can do is to post your job opening in multiple places. Posting it to your local association job board and calling it a day won't cut it. You need to be posting to your website, to Indeed, to social media, via colleagues and friends—anywhere your target

audience might be looking or accessible. The more people who see it, the more applications you're going to get.

And within that, you need to make it easy for them to apply—click on a link or visit a URL, upload their resume, or fill out a form, and submit. The more steps

they must take, the more likely they are to stop the process.

One of those places you should expand your applicant pool is on social media. Social media, particularly pay-to-play opportunities, not only helps you expand your audience, but also allows

you to target your ideal candidates specifically.

Facebook is an easy tool, and it's one that most people are on. If you pay for ads on Facebook, it's easy to target down to niches and locations to ensure you're showing up in front of your desired audience. But Facebook now skews to the older crowd, so if you're looking for entry-level or similar hires, like Gen Z or younger Millennials, they're less likely to be there. Next-gen applicants favor Instagram, TikTok, SnapChat, and others. Or if you're looking to diversify your employee base to include more women, Pinterest might be a good platform to target.

This doesn't mean you have to become a TikTok or Instagram expert; it means you need to connect with your marketing department or leverage an outside agency to help you use those platforms. Instead of marketing your company or your products, you're going to market your job opportunities to get in front of younger candidates.

Social media is a critical component to reaching potential job applicants. But it's important to recognize that where you're hanging out isn't necessarily where the people you are hoping to hire are hanging out. Take some time to think about your ideal hire—where are they likely hanging out and how can you get in front of them?

The simple fact is: You need more eyes on your openings, you need to be thinking about the right place to reach your ideal hire so you're putting the message directly in front of them, and you need an easy way for them to apply and express interest.

Once the applicants start rolling in, then you can focus on narrowing down your options to the best fit for the company. **LE**

About the author: Rikka Brandon is a nationally recognized LBM recruiting and hiring expert, and bestselling author. She helps building products business owners and leaders solve their recruiting and retention challenges with strategy, best practices, and access to experts. Whether you're looking for in-house training and coaching for your team or an expert to provide consulting, you can learn more about working with Rikka at BuildingGurus.com/NRLA.



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Sales 101

By Mike McDole

Frankly, I have a bone to pick with most of the so-called sales techniques floating around today.

In a real customer-driven organization, everyone should be a “sales-person.” Trouble is, there’s no time to teach everyone the numerous steps to a sale, how to deal with many, many objections, or the various supposed sure-fire closing statements.

You have to keep it simple. That’s why I distilled the sales process into three rules anyone can learn. As always, however, the tough part isn’t learning the rules, but following them.

A while back, one of our drivers was making a delivery into Connecticut. Sal wasn’t 10 minutes over the border when he got pulled over. He sized up the situation and realized he was dealing with an aggressive, fact-oriented personality type.

The trooper barked orders, shouted, and conducted a thorough inspection of the truck. Sal did exactly the right thing: He listened carefully and did not argue. He was sure the trooper would eventually see his side. After all, the truck was only a year old, and it was

in perfect condition.

But when the trooper brought out his portable scales, Sal couldn’t resist making his pitch.

“Check if you want to officer, but the load was weighed on my way out, and the truck is rated for 1,000 pounds more than the load,” he said.

Unfortunately, the load wasn’t balanced over the axles and had too much over the back axle. The trooper happily wrote Sal a \$3,500 ticket.

That’s Rule #1:

Listening is always better than talking.

Naturally, as is my nature, I decided to fight Sal’s ticket. But I wasn’t about to hire an attorney. I didn’t need to—I had Ken. He was my assistant general manager, and he had the “gift of gab” (that’s an understatement). I figured he’d either win the court’s sympathy or, more likely, wear them down.

When Ken got to court, he did both. He told the judge how a lumberyard operates, offered detailed specs on Sal’s truck, and listed the various unit weights of lumber. He explained moisture content, reminded the judge it had rained that day, and calculated

the estimated weight gain from the rain. Finally, he explained the history of our family-owned business.

Ken expertly demonstrated Rule #2:


When you make a sales presentation, always support your case with facts.

The judge took it all in quietly. But as he was about to speak, Ken stopped him. “Wait a minute judge,” Ken said, “I need to tell you one more thing.”

The judge angrily stared and loudly said, “You know, you really need to learn when to quit talking, as it may cost you more money!”

Thankfully, Ken took the advice and shut up. The fine was reduced to \$1,200.

That, of course, is Rule #3:

When it looks like the customer is going to say, “Yes” ... shut up! 

About the author: Mike McDole has 40+ years’ experience on the firing line for pro dealers of the LBM industry and is the principal of Firing-Line LBM Consulting. He’s also partners with Greg Brooks of Executive Council on Construction Supply and his Learning Management System. Mike can be reached at 774-372-1367 or mike@firinglinelbm.com.

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NYLE Winter Outing



The North American Young Lumber Employees (NYLE) held its 2023 Winter Outing at Mount Snow in West Dover, Vt., January 11–12. The event was very well attended (actually the highest attendance to date), with more than 40 NYLE members in attendance. They participated in a board orientation and meeting, an industry leaders' panel, a cocktail reception, and dinner, which was then followed by a day of skiing and more networking opportunities.

Based on the evaluations from attendees, the best part of the two-day event was the industry leaders' panel. This panel, which was scheduled for 90 minutes, ran over time as attendees were thrilled to have the opportunity to ask questions of the following industry experts: Sara Belletete (Belletetes Inc.), Edward Druke (WW Building Supply), Lang Durfee (Bethel Mills Inc.), Jack Stevenson (Mid-Cape Home Centers), and Eric Tucker (Beatty Lumber & Millwork Co.).

Many critical topics were covered by the panel, such as mergers and acquisitions in the LBM industry, creating a positive company culture, and industry recruitment. The next NYLE event will be its Spring Leadership Conference, April 26–28, 2023, at the Kartrite Resort & Waterpark located in Monticello, N.Y. 



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Thank
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THE LC WOULD LIKE TO THANK ITS CONTRIBUTORS! A SMALL TOKEN OF GRATITUDE TO THOSE WHO HELP US HELP YOU.

The NRLA and Lumber Co-operator would like to thank its current contributing writers for sharing their industry knowledge and expertise with all of you. Throughout the past year, they have written on topics ranging from workforce development, remodeling, business operations and leadership, sales and marketing, the latest product trends, and so much more—all to help you do business better. Now, that's teamwork!

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Mark Sweeney

Location: Cohasset, MA

Position: Assistant Warehouse Manager • Hingham Lumber Company



HOW DID YOU BEGIN YOUR CAREER IN THE LBM INDUSTRY?

I was working as the warehouse manager for an office furniture installation company and did not see much more room for growth, so I began looking for a potential landing spot. I reached out to a longtime Hingham Lumber employee, who put me in contact with the current warehouse manager. The timing was right, and I was hired as an assistant manager. It has turned out to be a great fit, and I could not be happier with my decision.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUR POSITION?

My responsibilities include scheduling and supervising a warehouse team of 30+ employees. As well as overseeing the day-to-day operations in receiving, sales, and shipping to make sure all are running efficiently. Every day brings a new challenge that keeps me on my toes!

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU FACE IN YOUR CAREER?

Keeping the warehouse properly staffed has been the biggest challenge of my career thus far. I think this is true for most companies in the industry, and we are no different. We do our best to make Hingham Lumber a great landing spot for individuals who are looking to make a career in the lumber industry.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED SINCE WORKING IN THE INDUSTRY?

I have learned too much to fit in this short questionnaire, but the first thing that comes to mind is how important communication is. Making sure that I have an open line of communication with all my employees is a top priority.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO ANYONE NEW TO THE INDUSTRY?

My advice would be to ask questions—lots of them! Never assume you know something. And also seek out any training that your company offers. Become a jack-of-all-trades so that you can help the team in a variety of ways.

WHAT ARE YOUR PASSIONS OUTSIDE OF THE OFFICE?

I enjoy traveling with my wife when we get the chance, playing golf with friends, and spending time with family. **LC**

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