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Nailing Down ***Best Business Practices***

MARCH/APRIL 2025

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March/April 2025 | Volume 109, Number 2

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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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Rita Ferris
NRLA President

I am pleased to announce that, for the third year in a row, our endorsed property and casualty insurance program with Acadia Insurance and Gallagher Insurance has earned a dividend! This year, we will return $912,884 to qualifying members! This significant dividend is a testament to the collective efforts of the NRLA membership and our partners supporting safety and risk management.

As you know, a dividend, or a strong safety record, is never guaranteed, and that is why NRLA's Safety Roundtable was created to improve our chances of achieving both. The Roundtable, chaired by Jeremy Baker of rk MILES, provides members with data about workplace injuries in our industry and professional advice and strategies to avoid similar claims. Acadia Insurance and Gallagher Insurance actively support the Roundtable by providing professional resources and education on risk reduction.

Our Roundtable also provides the opportunity to collaborate with peers who share best practices and insights to enhance safety protocols. The group meets quarterly, is complimentary, and is open to NRLA members interested in creating a safer workplace. This includes NRLA members who are not currently insured by Acadia Insurance. Please contact me if you would like to join!

NRLA also impacts regulatory issues through the American Building Materials Alliance. Join us April 7-8 in Washington, D.C., for our Advocacy Day where we will lobby to make CDL licensing more feasible and crane certification testing more relevant to our industry. We will also advocate for the passage of the Main Street Tax Package, the Credit Card Competition Act, and support for workforce development. You don't need to be a technical expert on these issues; your real-world experience in any of these matters is most important. I hope to see you there!

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you,

Rita


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Doug Ford
NRLA Chair, Curtis Lumber Company

Many are familiar with the efforts I've dedicated to educating students, school counselors, and parents about the valuable opportunities within the building materials industry and the trades. However, that's just the first part—retaining the talented individuals we manage to attract is the next crucial step.

Recruiting and retaining employees in home centers or lumberyards is challenging, especially with a workforce spanning multiple generations. Each generation has distinct values, work styles, and expectations, which can create tension if not managed effectively.

Each generation brings its own priorities and challenges. Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) seek stability, loyalty, and long-term growth, often preferring hands-on roles. Gen X (1965-1980) values independence and work-life balance, favoring flexible roles that allow for productivity without compromising personal time. Millennials (1981-1996) want meaningful work and development opportunities, often seeking flexibility and alignment with their values, along with technology integration and feedback. Gen Z (1997-2012) is the most digitally savvy and prioritizes mental health, social causes, and purpose-driven work, but may struggle with traditional methods that rely on in-person interactions.

Balancing these needs can be difficult, as younger generations seek dynamic, adaptable work environments, while older generations may lean toward more structured, stable roles.

Home centers and lumberyards, which often rely on traditional practices, face the challenge of integrating technology into established processes. Gen Z and Millennials push for digital solutions, automation, and efficiency, while older employees may prefer manual tools and face-to-face service. Striking a balance between innovation and tradition is essential to keep all generations engaged.

Generational differences in communication styles can also lead to misunderstandings. Older employees may prefer face-to-face conversations or phone calls, while younger workers favor texting, emails, or digital messaging platforms. Managers need to adapt to these preferences to ensure clear communication.

Training programs that work for one generation may not be as effective for another. Baby Boomers typically prefer hands-on, in-person training, while Millennials and Gen Z lean toward digital tutorials or self-paced learning. Offering diverse training options tailored to various preferences can help employees feel more confident and engaged.

Retention strategies should include a blend of traditional benefits, such as healthcare and pensions for older workers, alongside modern perks like flexible hours, remote work, and professional development for younger employees. Fostering a positive company culture where all generations feel valued is key to long-term retention.

Tensions can arise from differing values, work habits, or technology preferences, with younger employees sometimes seen as lacking experience or work ethic by older workers, and older employees viewed as resistant to change by younger ones. Open communication and team-building efforts are crucial to bridging these divides.

Successfully managing a multi-generational workforce in a home center or lumberyard requires more than just understanding the unique needs and values of each generation. It's about creating a culture where all employees—whether Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, or Gen Z—feel engaged, respected, and motivated to succeed. By fostering mentorship, offering flexibility, adapting communication and training approaches, and promoting inclusivity, businesses can overcome generational challenges and create a cohesive, high-performing team. When employees feel valued and empowered, they're more likely to stay motivated and loyal, ultimately driving long-term business success.

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Jon Baker
NYLE President, Mid-Cape Home Centers

The North American Young Lumber Employees (NYLE) recently gathered for a memorable Winter Outing in the charming, Olympic-themed village of Lake Placid, New York. With 26 attendees, the event mixed professional development with fun, fostering growth, networking, and team building. Turn to page 62 to see photos and more from this event.

Sales expert Matt Gambino treated NYLE members to an insightful session after our board meeting, sharing strategies for transforming sales approaches. Gambino's "Turning Order Taking into Up Selling" session focused on key tactics to maintain momentum in B2B sales, ensuring that deals don't stall. He also introduced simple tech tools that can help scale sales, making it easier for employees to drive success in a competitive market.

After the session, members enjoyed a lively group dinner where they tested their knowledge of the Winter Olympics during a spirited trivia game. The event concluded with a fun-filled Lake Placid bar crawl, allowing attendees to unwind, network, and reflect on the day's insights in a relaxed atmosphere.

The Winter Outing in Lake Placid was a resounding success, combining professional growth with unforgettable experiences. NYLE members left the event not only with fresh knowledge to enhance their sales strategies but also with strengthened relationships and a renewed sense of community.

NYLE will have its next event May 7-9 in Portland, Maine. We look forward to seeing you there.

Jonathan W. Baker

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**We encourage everyone to play in print or online, but note that the prize packs are intended for retail lumber dealers.*

Your Name ____________ Company Name ____________ Valid Email Address (to notify you if you win) ____________

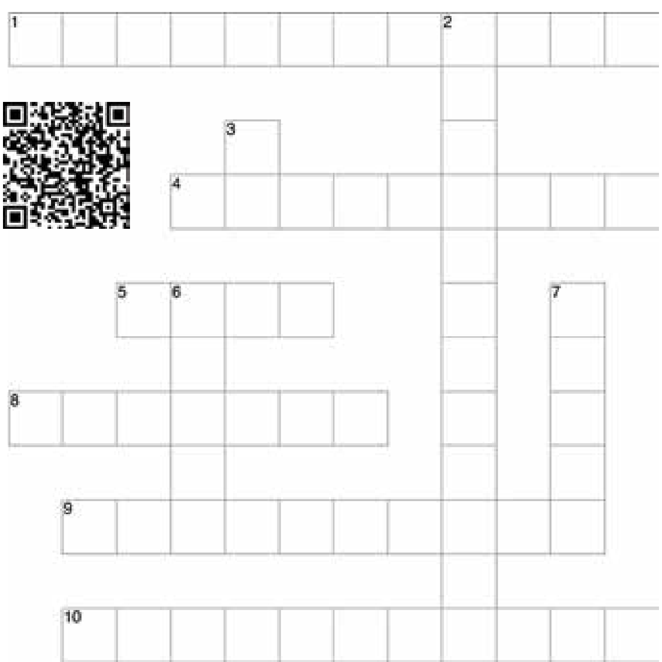
BEST BUSINESS PRACTICES *(All answers can be found within this issue.)*

ACROSS:

1. Set this, on first day on the job
4. Another term for HR, for short
5. Performance review mistake, number 2
8. List of materials and quantities
9. Strictness
10. Integrating messaging across all mediums

DOWN:

2. Critical business coverage
3. Improvement Depends on ____
6. Tradeshow in King of Prussia
7. Why people buy



https://nrla.org/crossword-march-25

HOME ENVELOPE

Words can be found in any direction.

BARRIER	MOISTURE	SIDING
CLADDING	ROOFING	TAPE
HOUSEWRAP	SEALANTS	UNDERLAYMENT
INSULATION	SHEATHING	VENTILATION

U	R	N	R	R	O	U	T	I	A	R	P	H
N	O	I	I	O	T	G	E	U	A	F	E	U
D	S	G	P	N	O	H	I	A	R	R	T	S
E	H	N	A	T	E	F	U	D	U	I	E	H
R	E	I	R	R	A	B	I	T	L	A	G	G
L	A	D	W	D	U	O	S	N	L	I	N	A
A	T	D	E	S	E	I	S	A	G	I	M	G
Y	H	A	S	L	O	P	N	E	D	T	E	G
M	I	L	U	M	I	T	A	I	S	G	G	Y
E	N	C	O	E	S	O	S	T	C	D	A	R
N	G	T	H	A	W	N	N	G	E	N	L	I
T	L	N	O	I	T	A	L	U	S	N	I	P
V	E	N	T	I	L	A	T	I	O	N	S	W

https://nrla.org/home-envelope-mar-25

January/February's Winner!

Congratulations to Chad Miller of Eastern Engineered Wood Products (EEWP)., for being the winner of the LC Games Prize Pack which was featured in the Jan/Feb. issue.

Each LC publication has games you can play:

LC Wired:
Get your mind buzzing with WordroW, the LC's word/phrase guessing game just like NYT's Wordle. Check each week for a link to play!

LC SupplySide:
Test your knowledge of all things NRLA with the LC's NRLA Trivia Game. Check every other week for a link to play!

WNYLDA Assists with Disaster Relief for North Carolina

The WNYLDA Board members loading the truck: Steve Ciccone, NRLA, Jamie Fox, Genesee Reserve Supply, Dan Klips, Stockham Lumber, Glenn Stahl, honorary member, Nick Tomidy, Envision Outdoor Living.

Residents of Rutherford County, North Carolina, received much-needed support from the Western New York Lumber Dealers Association (WNYLDA) in December. In a remarkable display of generosity and teamwork, WNYLDA sent a full tractor-trailer load of donated materials to aid the community following the ravages of hurricane Helene.

WNYLDA members from across the region contributed materials, which were collected and staged at Genesee Reserve Supply. On the Monday following the LBM Expo, WNYLDA board members came together to load the truck bound for Rutherford County. The materials, which included windows, doors, building materials, and other miscellaneous supplies, were delivered on December 16.

The truck was received by Habitat for Humanity in Rutherford County just in time for Christmas, to support ongoing recovery and rebuilding efforts. This initiative highlights the power of association collaboration and the meaningful impact of industry-led relief efforts.

IN MEMORIAM

Frederick Norman Indermaur, 87, of Port Charlotte, Fla., formerly of Tolland, Conn. passed away on February 11. Frederick worked for NRLA as a Regional Manager and Lobbyist to represent the industry in Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Long Island, N.Y. from 1976 until his retirement in 1997.

Michael "Mike" James Hubbard, 65, of Westhampton Beach, N.Y., passed away on March 1. For 30 years, Mike was a dedicated employee at Speonk Lumber, where he was a trusted colleague and a valued member of the community he served.

PrimeSource Brands Acquires Keylink

PrimeSource Brands, a North American provider of specialty branded building products backed by Clearlake Capital Group, L.P., announced that it has acquired Keylink.

Based in New Holland, Penn., Keylink provides aluminum railing and other outdoor aluminum products for residential and commercial installations. The addition of Keylink further bolsters PrimeSource Brands' existing outdoor living product portfolio by adding more than 3,000 SKUs.

US LBM Acquires Walker Lumber & Supply

US LBM, a distributor of specialty building materials in the United States, has acquired Walker Lumber & Supply, a building products distributor in Nashville.

Founded in 1949, Walker Lumber & Supply offers an extensive line of specialty lumber and hardware to residential and commercial builders, contractors, and DIYers across Central Tennessee.

LMC Welcomes Franklin Homes to its Modular Division

LMC is thrilled to welcome Franklin Homes, a premier manufacturer of high-quality manufactured homes, to its Modular Division. This partnership marks a significant step in LMC's mission to expand the division across the United States.

"We're excited to welcome Franklin Homes to the LMC Modular Division," said Jay Wilson, V.P. of LMC Modular Building Division. "Franklin Homes has an exceptional reputation for quality and craftsmanship. Together, we share a commitment to providing innovative and affordable housing solutions that meet the evolving needs of families across the country."

For all of these stories and more, visit nrla.org/news.

Belletetes, Inc. Announces Recent Groundbreaking at Their Newest Acquisition of Bingham Lumber

Belletetes, Inc., a 5th-generation family-owned and -operated lumber and building materials company headquartered in Jaffrey, N.H., has acquired Bingham Lumber in Brookline, N.H. Mike Shea, president of Belletetes, says, "The present Bingham Lumber location is nothing like the rest of our business model; it is a complimentary business, manufacturing custom wood flooring and processing reclaimed lumber, which we plan to scale up through our existing business channel."

Belletetes recently broke ground at their latest acquisition in Brookline, N.H., with plans to build a new 20,000 sq. ft. building that will house a 15,000 sq. ft. hardware store, offices, and a lumber counter. Another addition to the site will be a 30,000 sq. ft. drive-thru lumberyard while continuing the current production of flooring, mouldings, etc. The store is expected to employ approximately 40 additional employees.

Belletetes is excited to begin construction of its new store in Brookline and can't wait to offer services and products to their new friends and neighbors. Belletetes, who is familiar with acquisitions, is endeavoring in uncharted territory by building a lumberyard from the ground up. It is a very exciting time for the Belletetes' family and its team members. The prospective grand opening is scheduled for September 2025.

UFP INDUSTRIES

UFP Industries Celebrates 70 Profitable Years

UFP Industries marked 70 years in business on February 9, never failing to turn a profit in each of them. Founded in 1955, its leaders say the keys to success in all these years are its ability to recruit and retain high-achieving employees, its down-to-earth company culture, and its unique incentive system that aligns employee interests with shareholders.

"Our 70-year history is a testament to our stability and ability to generate consistent returns. We've consistently pursued excellence and achieved above-market results through economic cycles," said executive chairman and former CEO Matt Missad. "Our commitment to employee ownership has been a fundamental driver of our success, fostering a deep sense of personal responsibility and personal reward for the company's performance."

To read the full press release, go to nrla.org/news.

Curtis Lumber Acquires JAY-K Independent Lumber Corp.

Curtis Lumber is excited to announce the acquisition of JAY-K Independent Lumber Corp., located at 8448 Seneca Turnpike in New Hartford, N.Y.

JAY-K has served its local community for 87 years through three generations. Being family-owned and -operated, providing quality products and professional services, makes them a great fit to join the Curtis Lumber team.

Curtis Lumber and JAY-K have had a friendly and mutually respectful relationship for years, which will aid in a smooth and successful transition for employees and customers alike.

Kylie Holland, executive V.P. for Curtis Lumber, states: "Our Curtis team is looking forward to expanding our business with JAY-K's well-established foundation. Both companies share similar values with a focus on the employee experience, customer experience, and our commitment to our communities, so we are confident that this acquisition will be very successful."

The inclusion of JAY-K allows the company to make a strategic consolidation with its Waterville, N.Y. location just 15 miles south of what will be the New Hartford store, which will be closing amidst the acquisition.

"This is a strategic decision to consolidate two stores located in close proximity, allowing us the opportunity to be more efficient with our inventory, fleet, and staffing," says Holland. All employees at the Waterville location will have the opportunity to join the New Hartford store or another Curtis Lumber location if they wish.

IDEAS SHOW

For the Lumber & Building Materials Industry **2025**

"Having the opportunity to see all the new products coming in is something you can't trade in, especially as a dealer and contractor."

HIGHLIGHTS

IDEAS Show 2025 was a solid gathering of more than 1,700 LBM professionals from five states, that brought energy, innovation, and peer-to-peer connection to the Valley Forge Casino Resort in King of Prussia, Pa., on February 20. With 107 exhibitors showcasing the industry's latest and greatest products and services, attendees enjoyed a full day of industry-specific education, valuable networking opportunities, fantastic food, and an abundance of fresh IDEAS.

See more highlights on YouTube!

https://nrla.org/go/IDEAS25

"I always want to see what these guys have new, and it always seems to show. I always come away with all the right stuff."





"I like learning about all the new products; the more I can take on the road with me, the better off I am."









THANK YOU IDEAS SHOW 2025 SPONSORS

THANK YOU IDEAS SHOW 2025 EXHIBITORS

As of 2/10/25 NRLA Members Listing in **Bold** * indicates new exhibiting company

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AZEK Building Products/TimberTech
Bateman Bros. Lumber Co., Inc.
Benjamin Obdyke Inc.
BlueLinx
Boise Cascade
BWI Distribution by Masonite
Capital Forest Products, Inc.
CertainTeed LLC
CORUS Fastening
Culpeper Treated Lumber
CUTCO Sales & Service
*__DAP Global Inc.__
Delavue Management
DURATION Moulding & Millwork
Durawood Products Inc
*East Coast Lumber
East End Cedar
Eastern Engineered Wood Products
*Falkenstein NA
Federated Insurance
Fimbel Architectural Doors
FLW International Inc.
*__Form Solutions/Logix__
Franklin International
Garden State Lumber Products
Goodfellow
Great Southern Wood Preserving
*Gutster Tools
Harvey Windows and Doors
Home Improvement Systems
Hood Distribution - McQuesten Group
Hoover Treated Wood
Huber Engineered Woods
Ideal Roofing
Interstate Window & Door Co.
Intex Millwork Solutions
James Hardie Building Products
Johnson Lumber Company, LLC
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Landmark Lumber Group
Spartan Forest Products
Lehigh Structural Components
*__LP Building Solutions__
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Marino – Ware
Mariotti Building Products Inc.
Marketing & Sales Associates
Marvin
MDI Building Supplies Inc.
Metrie
Modern Mill-ACRE
Moso North America/
Thielsen Lumber and Millwork Inc.
National Nail Corporation
NOVO Building Products
NRLA - Northeastern Retail Lumber Assn
Old Castle APG
OMG, Inc. DBA FastenMaster
*Otter-Tech
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Quikrete
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*__Regal Ideas Inc.__
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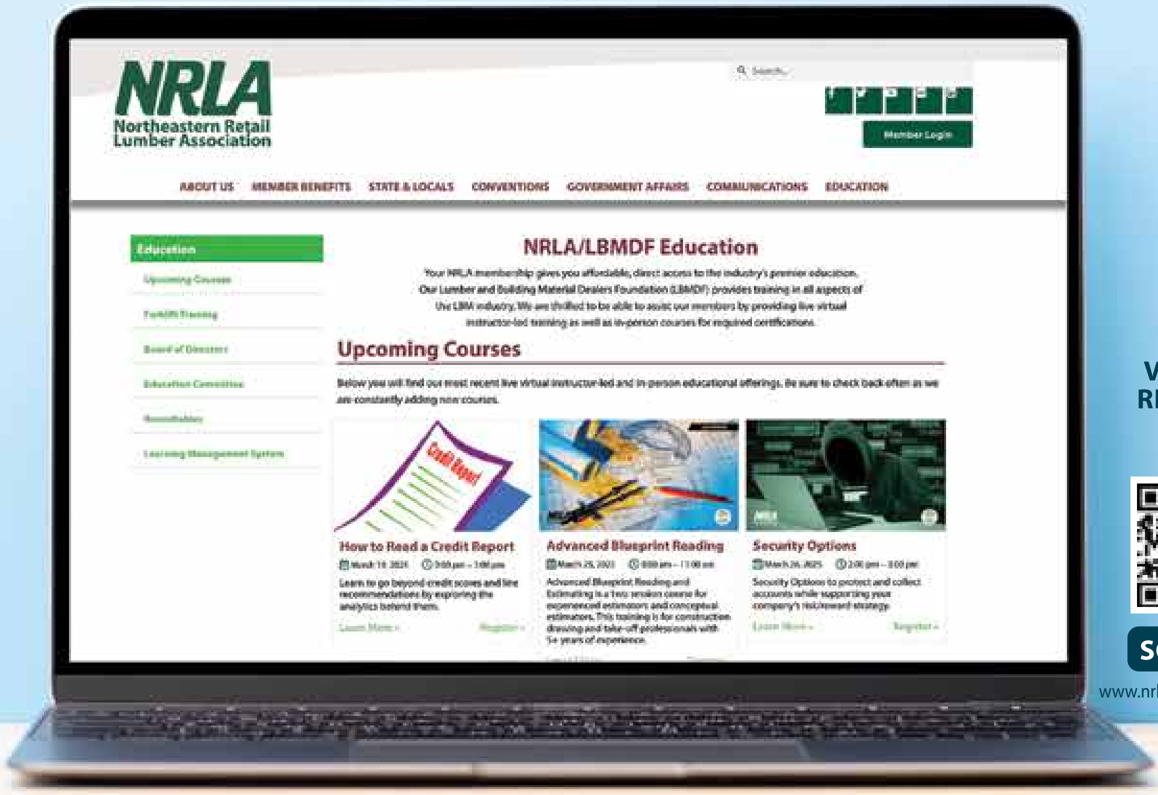

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March 19

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March 25 & 27

Credit Management Series: Security Options
March 26

Nat'l Accredited Crane Certification (Jaffrey, NH)
April 23-25

Introduction to Building Materials
May 20 & 22

Basic/Beginner Blueprint Reading
June 3, 5, 10, 12

Intermediate Blueprint Reading
June 17 & 19

Advanced Blueprint Reading
June 24 & 26

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>>> Contact Erin O'Connor at 518-880-6348, or eoconnor@nrla.org with questions or to learn more. <<<

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Making Workplace Safety

PART OF YOUR COMPANY'S CULTURE

By Ted Clark

When you develop a work plan for the day, what do you think about? If you're like most people, you probably spend the majority of the time considering what needs to be done in order to produce. "A machine needs to be moved here." "This operator is out sick." If you're like most people, safety is rarely the first thought you have when you get started in the morning. In my years of doing risk management professionally, I have noticed that there is a tendency across all industries to only discuss safety once a year at the annual safety training, once a month during a required tailgate meeting, and/or following a severe incident that took place. While well-intentioned, this practice does not set us up to successfully create a safe workplace because it has the unintended consequence of making safety appear as an option.

While no one will argue that safety hasn't always been important, the spotlight on safety the last 20 years has brought it to the forefront as a cultural shift that needs to take place. Because of this focus, we have seen a significant evolution in the way safety is handled by companies, with the best companies recognizing that it's not enough to just follow the regulations; instead, safety needs to be a culture.

The idea of developing a safety culture is one most of us can get behind, but we stall out when we see what a daunting obstacle it is. Here are some key points to consider when you make the decision to shift your company's culture:

1. **It won't be easy.** Changing the culture of a company is going against the grain of years or decades of learned behavior. Employees will resist. You will be frustrated. But employees will adapt. Like the Theodore Roosevelt quote says, "Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty…"
2. **Lead by example.** Years ago, I was standing on the landing with an owner when his employee pulled up and got out without a hard hat on. The owner proceeded to yell at his employee for not having his hard hat on. The ironic part is that the entire time I was there, the owner never once wore a hard hat. I'm not even sure he owned one. When I brought this up to him, he explained he didn't need to wear a hard hat because he wasn't covered under the workers' comp plan, so if he gets injured, it's his problem. Employees look to management for leadership, as management needs to set expectations around safety. Lead by example.
3. **Discipline is key.** A key component of a risk management plan is setting up consequences for unsatisfactory performance. Unfortunately, this is a part that is missing from most safety programs. This could be for various reasons: fear of the person leaving, you care about the person, or you shy away from hard conversations. While these are all understandable concerns, consider what it would look like if you raised a child without consequences for their actions. While we love our children more than anything, most of us recognize that part of showing that love is disciplining them. The same goes for your employees.
4. **Set expectations on day 1**. The first day for any employee is a key time for the owner to set expectations. Take time with the new employee to onboard them and set up expectations like schedule, attitude, and safety. If you're a large employer, a formalized orientation program is probably necessary, but for smaller employers, this may be a conversation at the garage or in the truck on the way to the first job. Regardless of how you bring a new employee on board, it's easier to set clear expectations from the get-go rather than try to change a learned behavior.

For the last year or so, I've been looking at the roof on my house, knowing it needs to be replaced. I don't think about it every day, but when it starts raining, I hold my breath and pray it doesn't leak. The fact is the roof is hanging by a thread, and it's only a matter of time before it starts leaking if I don't address the problem. I've been lucky.

Have you been lucky? Is your risk management program like my worn-out roof? Do you hold your breath every time something out of the ordinary happens? Changing the culture of your company takes baby steps. Allowing safety to permeate your everyday conversations will be the first key step in shifting your company's culture toward a safer future. LC

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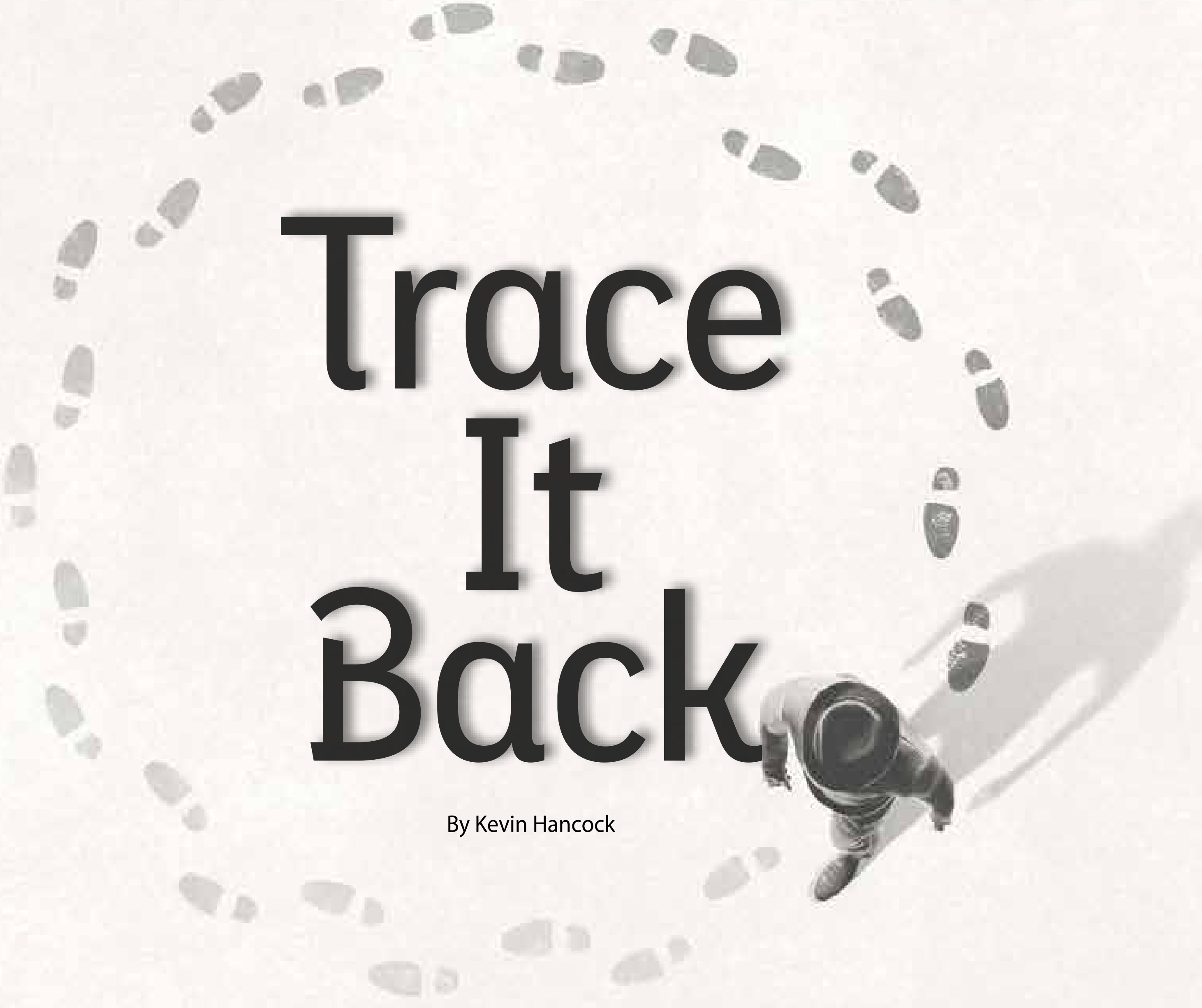
Trace It Back

By Kevin Hancock



"To be accountable is to care for the well-being of the whole and act as if this well-being is in our hands and hearts to create."

—Peter Block

> "Improvement only depends on me becoming the change I wish to see."
>
> *—Kevin Hancock*

There is nothing that happens at Hancock Lumber in the way of a problem that I can't trace back to myself as the senior leader of the organization. I can connect every challenge we face to something I did that I shouldn't have done or something I didn't do that I should have done. In this way, I never see a problem at work as anyone's responsibility other than my own.

This self-accountable view is liberating because it's always actionable. Improvement only depends on me becoming the change I wish to see. And my hope in living and modeling this behavior is that everyone around me will share this view and take their own self-designed action to help make the company better. This is the essence of shared leadership and dispersed power.

This approach also eliminates blame. It eliminates looking externally and waiting for someone else to create change. It's an empowering perspective that invites everyone to only look inward. Let me give you but one of many possible examples: In our retail stores, our number-one goal is to get to the point where we are making a delivery. Everyone on the team has a job that leads to, or involves, this amazing moment. A customer has given us an order for building materials, and, literally, it's time to deliver.

To celebrate this critical milestone, we created an app that allows anyone in the company to take a picture of a loaded truck and, with the click of a single button, send an e-mail to the entire company, subject line "Freighted," with a photo of that delivery attached. The task takes less than thirty seconds to complete, and the victory of a delivery is shared.

Recently, despite both the ease and importance of the task, many drivers have not been taking this step before departing the yard with their delivery. In the old management model of always paying attention to what others are doing, one might say, "Why aren't those drivers taking and sharing pictures?" because their logistics managers aren't asking about it regularly and celebrating their photos when they send them. Furthermore, the logistics managers aren't taking that step because their general managers aren't regularly asking about it and celebrating those same pictures when they see them. And furthermore, the general managers aren't taking that simple step because their regional managers aren't consistently asking about it. And furthermore, the regional managers aren't doing that because the COO isn't asking about it and regularly participating. And furthermore, the COO isn't doing that because the CEO isn't asking him about it. And finally, the CEO isn't asking the COO about the topic regularly because I am not asking about it regularly.

In this way, it all flows back to me. And me means anyone in the system. Anyone in the system, at any point, can break the chain of inaction by simply acting themselves and becoming the change they wish to see.

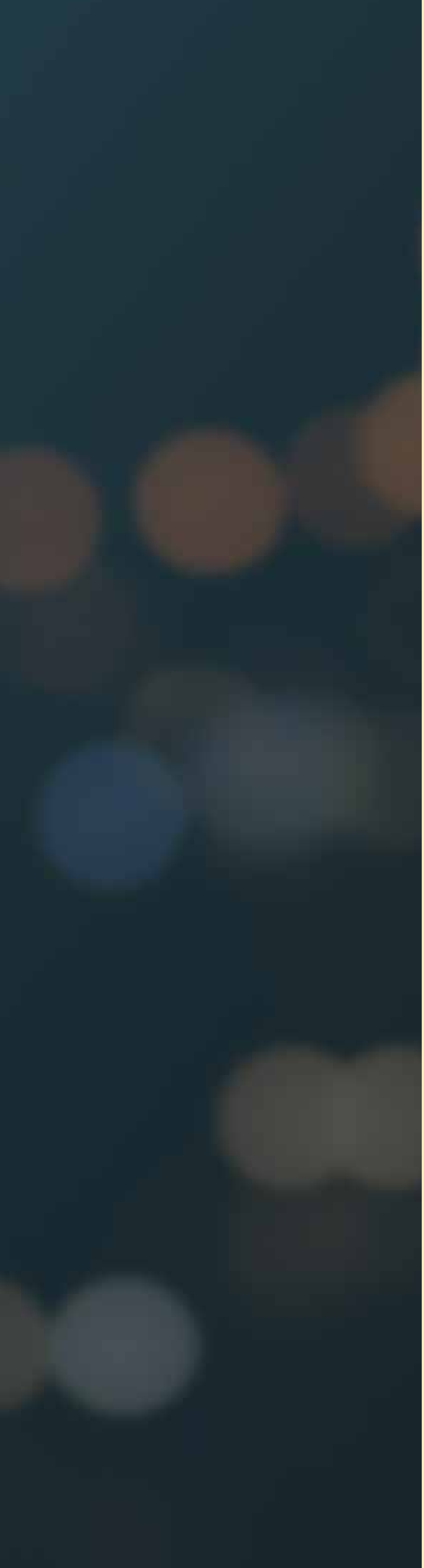
We are the truth we seek to know and the solution to the problems we face in our work and in our lives. This is both a blessing and an invitation to act today—like, now. We never have to wait for anyone else to "make it right" again. LC

Kevin Hancock is an award-winning author, speaker, and CEO of Hancock Lumber, one of the oldest companies in America, which has received the "Best Places to Work in Maine" award for the eleventh consecutive year. Kevin can be reached at khancock@hancocklumber.com.

What Is PEOPLE OPERATIONS?

By NRLA Connect

Many organizations continue to retool the role of HR. While "people operations" may be a new term interchangeable with HR at some organizations, others may use the term for a team within or next to HR designed to supplement and improve a workforce. In general, people operations is a forward-thinking approach to rethinking the role of people in the workplace. Larger companies, including Google and IBM, are rolling out people operations teams with a more holistic business approach.



People operations, often shortened to people ops, is a strategic business function that focuses on creating systems and strategies to maximize employee value and engagement. It's about putting the employee first and humanizing impersonal systems. Successful people operations cultivate a company culture that makes employees feel happy and proud to work at the organization.

While traditional HR focuses on administrative tasks such as payroll, compliance, and employee relations, people operations takes a more holistic and strategic view. Key responsibilities of people operations include the following:

- Managing the employee journey and lifecycle, including interviewing, orientation, onboarding, performance reviews, learning and development, change management, and exit interviews.
- Supporting employee reward and recognition systems, which can provide a sense of accomplishment and make employees feel valued for their contributions.
- Engaging employees continuously by connecting with them to understand their experiences and any pain points.
- Developing employees through skills training, career pathing, and other types of learning and development opportunities.
- Connecting individual performance to overall company goals by reinforcing how critical and meaningful employee contributions are.
- Connecting HR goals and objectives to organizational goals by making HR a strategic partner instead of a cost center.
- Championing company culture, mission, and values.

Overall, people operations aims to engage and empower employees while facilitating their day-to-day work experience. The focus of people operations is people.

The Benefits of People Operations

People operations is all about humanizing impersonal employee systems. Organizations often expect the following advantages of embracing people operations:

Improved employee satisfaction: People operations help create a more satisfied and motivated workforce by prioritizing employee experience and engagement.

Enhanced employee productivity: A positive work environment and effective performance management lead to higher productivity and better business outcomes.

Increased employee retention: Engaged and fulfilled employees are more likely to stay with an organization, reducing turnover and associated costs.

As workplaces continue to evolve, so does the role of HR. People operations represents a forward-thinking approach that prioritizes employee experience, data-driven decision-making, and strategic alignment. By embracing the concept of people operations or developing a separate department, organizations can create a thriving workplace that drives the success and growth of their people and the business.

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Performance Review Toolkit

By NRLA Connect

Receiving performance feedback is a fundamental part of any job. Without some sort of reflection, how would your employees know what they're doing well or what needs improvement? They likely wouldn't—at least not in any formal capacity.

Although most employers agree that performance reviews are important, the reviews themselves become trickier when put into practice. It's easy to say that an employee must be reviewed, but when? Based on what criteria? How often? These aspects are often debated by employers.

Surveys show performance reviews are one of the most disliked features of any workplace. Not only do employees not want to endure them, but neither do their managers. This toolkit examines why this is, explains how to determine the right review process for your company, and offers resources for ensuring neither party wastes their time.

REVIEWS AT-A-GLANCE

What does the term "performance review" mean to you? To many people, it means sitting down at the end of the year with a manager to discuss how you conducted yourself over the past 12 months. To others, it might mean chatting with a manager every quarter. To some, it could mean a biweekly conversation to discuss personal goals.

The point is, not all businesses approach performance reviews the same way. This section details those variations and suggests guidance for deciding the best approach for your business.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Every business has its own way of conducting performance reviews. What works for one company will not necessarily work for another. With this in mind, your business should consider its culture and how employees best receive feedback. What communication methods worked well in the past? What kind of rapport do managers have with employees? How much is your company focused on personal development versus stats and metrics? How often should reviews be conducted?

Reflecting on these questions will help you determine the kind of performance review that will resonate most with your employees. Or better yet, you could solicit feedback from employees about how they prefer to be reviewed. Consider sending a survey or asking employees individually during their current performance reviews.

Keep in mind the below examples are merely a starting place. Pick any aspects you would like to include in your own review process. Most importantly, you want to devise a system that works for your employees.

Self-Assessment

This type of review involves an employee identifying how they view their own performance. For instance, the employee might be asked to rank various job responsibilities in order of proficiency. This kind of review empowers employees to take an objective look at their performance and make their voices heard.

Self-assessment can be paired with manager assessments as well. This means an employee and manager would both complete assessments of the employee and then compare how those assessments align. Pairing the two assessments allows both parties to candidly discuss any discrepancies and determine areas for improvement.

Rating Scale

This review process focuses on preset criteria and offers a score for each. The criteria can be based on company or department goals, certain metrics, individual behaviors, or anything else you wish to assess. In this method, the criteria and rating standards are the same for all employees.

Having a consistent set of criteria and ratings allows you to effectively judge employee performance against one another. This allows you to see who is doing well and who needs improvement and in what specific area. Some organizations even tie their reward systems into their rating scales. In other words, receiving a low score would mean getting fewer rewards.

360-Degree Reviews

This form of review solicits feedback from everyone who interacts with a given employee, not just managers. This means peers, direct reports, and supervisors all submit feedback, which is then compiled and sent to the employee. The idea is that diverse feedback will help employees get a better sense of their performance.

The 360 review also allows the employee to submit their own personal assessment, then speak about the results with their manager. All the feedback is used to help develop the employee and identify any improvement areas. It can also be used to record problem behaviors noticed by co-workers that persist between review periods. Conversely, it can also highlight exceptional behaviors if multiple people praise the employee for the same reasons.

Personal Development

This review style zeroes-in on employees' personal goals and then assesses them based on the goal progress. Setting personal goals makes employees feel more engaged and gives them a "purpose" throughout the year.
Goals should be aligned with both company and employee interests. For instance, an employee's goal might be revamping a training curriculum for new hires. After a predetermined period, their manager would check in on their progress and offer an assessment.

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS: ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST

Despite their good intentions, performance reviews have their flaws. Some estimates suggest over a third of U.S. employers have done away with traditional performance reviews, according to the Harvard Business Review. Others are using traditional reviews, but their employees are not feeling the benefits.

This section offers brief arguments for and against traditional performance reviews.

Pros

Evaluating employee performance is critical for many reasons, not least of which is determining raises and promotions. Employers must have at least one method for assessing how well an employee is faring at the company. Without one, where is the accountability? How do you identify poor performers?

Traditional rating scale reviews may not work for every organization, but they can be the best option for employees in sales or other metric-based roles. Rating scales are objective and look solely at whether an individual hit a particular mark. Based on that, employers can dole out rewards to top performers and work with poor performers to up their game.

Cons

According to management research firm CEB, 95% of managers are not satisfied with their company's performance review process. What's more, 90% of HR leaders believe the information isn't always accurate. Even employees are dissatisfied—42% said annual reviews are ineffective, according to a WorldatWork survey.

The biggest reason for dropping annual reviews is the time it takes. Beyond meeting with each employee and compiling all the individual feedback, the time between "performance" and "review" can be months. How effectively can you assess performance on a task that an employee finished 10 months ago? How useful would that information even be at this point? Considerations like these are making employers rethink when and how they review employees.

Deciding What's Best

You should consider what would be most effective for your employees before committing to a particular review process. In fact, you may want to include elements from several different approaches. For instance, using a rating scale review but conducting it multiple times a year.

When deciding what is best for your organization, the two big questions to ask are, "What do I hope to accomplish with this review?" and "How can I make this useful for employees?"

17 BEST PRACTICES FOR PERFECTING YOUR PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

1. **Perform formal evaluations at the same time for everyone each year.** While this increases the workload of managers and supervisors during review time, it forces direct comparisons of employees and establishes a nonbiased system.
2. **Have regular meetings with supervisory staff.** Supervisors will learn from each other's experiences. Provide adequate training and insist on candid observations.
3. **Clearly communicate to employees what their duties are and what satisfactory performance is.** Accomplish this through periodic reviews of job descriptions, training, and both formal and informal reviews.
4. **Tell employees the criteria upon which their performance will be reviewed.** Develop standards and establish reasonable goals for employees. Make sure that employees understand the consequences of their failure to improve.
5. **Don't wait until the annual evaluation to provide feedback; offer it throughout the year.** Give both positive and negative feedback regularly.
6. **Document poor performance in writing.** This can be done in the form of coaching, training, discipline, or assessment.
7. **Ask employees to complete a self-assessment in addition to the review completed by the manager.** This can identify areas where the employee and manager disagree on performance or expectations.
8. **Give employees the opportunity to review, challenge, and comment on the evaluation.**
9. **Meet with employees to discuss all evaluations and expectations.** Keep a record of the meeting and what was discussed.
10. **Have employees sign the evaluation.** While the employee may not agree with their evaluation, it provides evidence that the employee has seen it and has been given a copy. If the employee refuses to sign it, the individual giving the evaluation should sign it along with a witness noting that the employee was given a copy.
11. **Establish a review process for evaluations.** This will keep managers honest and ensure that supervisory staff is performing reviews consistently.
12. **Give employees time to improve and offer resources and assistance if appropriate.**
13. **Follow established procedures strictly.** Apply all procedures and standards equally to all employees.
14. **Use other supervisory personnel in the process, if possible, to mitigate claims of personality conflict.** This will enhance credibility if all evaluations point to the same conclusion.
15. **Make sure employees understand the consequences for failure to perform at an acceptable level.** There should be no surprises in employee supervision and evaluation.
16. **Hold managers responsible for helping subordinates develop and improve.**
17. **Maintain confidentiality in employee performance evaluations.**

AVOID THESE TOP PERFORMANCE REVIEW MISTAKES

There are a variety of common issues that supervisors should be aware of when evaluating employees. Training supervisors properly is an essential step in avoiding lawsuits and other problems.

1. Rating Inflation
Oftentimes, supervisors give employees inflated performance reviews because they are afraid that honest evaluations will damage their working relationships. Evaluations should be comparative and reflect reality. Inflated performance reviews give employees a false sense of security, deprive them of an opportunity to improve, and create litigation risks for the company.

2. Prejudice or Bias
Management should be alert to possible bias when performing evaluations. Bias can be based on race, sex, age, religion, educational accomplishments, past jobs, or anything else that is not job-related, even if subtle or unintentional. If the employee is a favorite or well-liked, they may receive a higher rating than their performance justifies. Reviewers also tend to overlook certain weaknesses that are similar to those that they personally possess.

3. Failure to Use the Full Rating Scale
Supervisors often give employees an average rating because it is the easy thing to do. The midpoint avoids the difficulty of making and justifying a more accurate assessment. Supervisors don't do anyone a favor by not using the rating scale accurately and completely.

4. Inconsistencies in Scoring Weighting or Defining Factors
Supervisors frequently fail to understand the rating system, often providing comments that are inconsistent with the rating. This creates a credibility problem for employers in litigation suits.

5. Unrealistic Goals or Objectives
Evaluations may reflect the shortcomings of management. If a supervisor establishes unrealistic goals and then negatively evaluates an employee because they have not met the goals, the supervisor is creating problems for the company.

6. Inadequate Observation
Those evaluating employees must be completely familiar with all aspects of the employees' jobs to ensure complete and accurate evaluations.

7. Inappropriate Time Span for Review
Reviews should cover the complete period of time since the last evaluation, and supervisors should be familiar with prior evaluations for goal setting and review. However, reviewers should not repeatedly look backward and bring up problems that existed in the past, nor should they focus only on very recent improvement.

8. Allotting Insufficient Time
The reviewer often does not set aside sufficient time to allow for a meaningful performance evaluation. Careful planning and scheduling will enable the reviewer to conduct a more effective evaluation.

9. Lack of Comments
Meaningful and constructive comments and explanations are critical not only if an evaluation must be defended in court but also for employee improvement.

10. Misleading Comments
It's much easier for a supervisor to say that an employee is "improving" than to say that the employee's performance is not at the expected or desired level. The evaluation should say explicitly that performance is substandard. Evaluations should focus on identifying deficiencies and developing an improvement strategy for them.

11. Too Much or Too Little Detail
Find an appropriate balance. A general comment begs for supporting details, while being too specific makes it seem like the employee is being picked on.

12. Acting Like a Psychologist or Psychiatrist
One of the main purposes of an evaluation is to identify deficiencies and develop a plan to correct them. Employee assistance programs (EAPs) may provide an opportunity for the employee to address problems outside of work that are affecting workplace behaviors and performance. Instead of trying to provide support for problems that are not work-related, suggest that the employee make use of the EAP, if one is available at your company.

13. Focusing on the Employee Instead of the Issue
Stay focused directly on the problem, not on the person.

14. Not Following Through
Reviewers often do not follow through with suggested corrective actions, decreasing the effectiveness of the performance evaluation.

15. Explain Feedback Thoroughly
Regardless of whether comments and ratings are negative or positive, they should always be explained to the employee. Discuss with the employee how to improve on issues or encourage the person to keep up the good work. LC

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How Business Interruption Coverage Can Restore Your Business

By Chris Moran

The most recent data from the Greater Los Angeles Wildfires estimates between $135 and $150 billion in total economic losses and up to $20 billion in insured losses from this disaster, setting the stage for the largest wildfire insured loss in U.S. history. This comes shortly after Hurricanes Helene and Milton, which ravaged homes and businesses in the Southeast U.S.

The frequency and severity of natural disasters are on the rise. As a leading insurer in the lumber industry, last year we saw a 200% increase in losses caused by natural disasters, a trend that we have seen reflected nationwide and across all sectors. These losses have had a trickle-down impact on business owners, with higher premiums for insurance customers.

Going without insurance is not the answer. A lumber business without an insurance policy risks total loss and potential bankruptcy in the event a hurricane or wildfire strikes its location. To start, safety should be a year-round investment. Lumber businesses should be conducting regular equipment and building maintenance, such as roof inspections, to ensure they are structurally sound, well ahead of any storms. Other risk mitigation tactics, including managing defensible space around structures and training staff members on disaster response plans, are valuable as well.

Even with the best risk mitigation tactics in place, a potent natural disaster can still cause major damages. Business owners need to be prepared to move forward in the event of a loss to start the recovery process quickly and efficiently. Business interruption coverage is one important place to begin this recovery process.

WHAT IS BUSINESS INTERRUPTION COVERAGE?

Business interruption coverage is a critical component of disaster recovery. It provides ongoing net income and operating expenses after a covered property loss. This does not include uncovered losses, such as COVID-19-related claims, but would include damages from hurricanes, wildfires, or wind and hail. If your lumberyard is knocked out of operation for several months, a normal insurance policy will cover the building repairs, but what about the lost revenue? Business interruption is the answer.

Business interruption ensures cash flow can continue despite property losses. This includes more than just lost revenue. This policy can also help lumber businesses continue to pay vendors, payroll, health insurance, and other operating expenses.

We had a sawmill client burn down in early 2024. We immediately went and assessed the damage, working with the business owner to determine their next steps. A few months later, they were operational again, and the first comment they had was gratitude for their business interruption coverage. While their business was down, the coverage enabled them to continue paying staff members and vendors so they would have an operation to return to when the building was rebuilt.

There are a few key components to consider with this policy, including:

- **Extra Expenses:** Business interruption also covers unusual expenses specifically tied to the loss, such as renting new office space or replacing vehicles.
- **Period of Restoration:** This begins 72 hours after the covered loss and runs until the property is restored to pre-loss conditions. Often, there is a 12-month limit on this period, but there are endorsements that can extend the coverage.
- **Endorsements:** There are a few endorsements that can enhance business interruption coverage. A dependent properties endorsement can cover business income losses in the event a lumberyard's vendor is shut down. A utility service endorsement would cover a lumberyard in the event their utility company is unable to provide power.

Business owners may not know all the ins and outs of a business interruption policy, and that's where the right insurance partner proves critical. A specialty insurer who knows the industry can help businesses find the right combination to ensure their operations are protected against potential disaster losses.

We recommend business owners meet with their insurers annually to review their policies. In this meeting, alert your broker of what your income would look like if you were to suffer a loss in the year ahead so they can confirm the limits on your business income coverage are correct and your business will be covered in case of a loss. Your financial outlook will likely change annually, so reviewing these details every year is critical. To expedite this process, keep a record of all bills and invoices. This record should also be saved off-site so it will not be damaged in the event a disaster strikes.

Natural disasters continue to rise in frequency, and lumber businesses need to be prepared for the reality that one could strike their business at any time. Investing in a business interruption policy can offer a business owner the peace of mind that their business will be able to rebuild and return to work even if a major disaster strikes. LC

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TAKEOFF PREPARATION:
Going Beyond Ordinary Sales Training

By Dave Smith

You've hired a new salesperson. They are very professional, organized, and well-spoken. You've provided company training, including basic product knowledge, internal operational procedures, and shipping parameters, and given them basic blueprint reading training. They have driven with the sales manager and gotten the green light to take over existing accounts that need a rep and bring in new accounts. Should be like shooting fish in a barrel, right?

Sixty days later, your new salesperson is underperforming. They are not bringing in many new accounts or increasing sales with your existing customers. Everyone at your company likes the new rep. The customers you've polled also like the new rep; however, they don't feel comfortable enough to trust their business to them yet. You reason that you've provided all the proper training, and this is a very complicated and demanding industry. You will just have to give them more time to gain experience and knowledge in the field, and they will succeed.

This is a very typical scenario in the lumber and building materials industry. Salespeople are hired with no practical construction experience very often. It may take two to three years for an entry-level salesperson to obtain the experience and confidence necessary to gain the trust needed to "talk the talk" with builders, framers, and developers. Let's face it, trying to conduct business on a jobsite with project managers and subcontractors that have years of industry experience is not for thin-skinned novices, and turning them loose on potential customers without the proper training may cost you future sales opportunities.

The fact is, over the last few decades, construction has become much more complicated and technical. Thirty years ago, entire developments were shipped and built with very little thought into what materials would be required. Units of dimensional lumber and plywood were delivered and used as needed. There were very few choices as far as sheathing, and engineered lumber products were rarely used. Joist hangers were about the only hardware needed. Subcontractors would provide takeoffs for their builders as part of their services. Material overages were returned or used up on the next project. Shortages were shipped on "fill-in" deliveries and considered part of the cost of doing business.

Today, things are quite different. Most floor, wall, and roof systems are engineered, and the materials provided must be precise. There are now many product choices. For example, several types, thicknesses, and sizes of sheathing may be used on the same project to meet complicated energy, shear, and fire ratings. Many types of hardware are required for today's wind- and seismic-conscious codes and can be quite expensive. Energy-efficient systems are complex and require specific materials that are compatible with each other to avoid moisture and mold issues. In addition, plans for projects typically fail to provide enough information to produce accurate material lists, even for bids, much less orders. Plans are usually loaded with conflicting and inaccurate details and information, and schedules read like word puzzles. Products specified are often inconsistent and incompatible with each other, and rarely do structural plans match the architectural plans they were produced from.

All these issues and many more create a situation where bids and budgets are easily underestimated, costing builders and suppliers a great deal of money. The cost of expediting "fill-in" orders and replacing products ordered in error is much more expensive today. Today it's rare to find a subcontractor or builder that has the expertise and product knowledge and is willing to take the time to produce accurate takeoffs. Most depend on their suppliers to accurately bid on materials for their projects. These are among the reasons why your customers may be hesitant to trust your new sales rep.

While training has evolved and improved immensely in our industry in recent years, it still has many shortfalls. It's rare for a lumberyard or building material supplier to have trainers with the expertise needed to train new salespeople to understand the issues their customers deal with. Basic blueprint reading is not near enough training to provide the skills necessary to understand most projects and determine if plans are adequate to be used for a final bid/order or rough budget only or advise the customer of potential issues that may arise with product incompatibility and availability.

A dedicated trainer who is knowledgeable about construction and estimating practices should be retained, or this training should be outsourced to a qualified party. That person or party should have a proven record of providing the knowledge necessary to train quality salespeople to advise their customers on technical matters such as blueprint reading, identifying problems and issues, understanding the difference between plans that are adequate to provide an accurate takeoff and those that are not, etc.

This training is the difference between a sales rep who makes it through each day managing chaos and driving up costs that lower margins, or a sales rep who can impress potential new customers, retain existing customers, and charge what they are worth. LC

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HOW CAN A CUP OF Coffee INCREASE YOUR Sales...

By Tom Zimmerman

"Put that coffee down!" If you have been in sales for a minute or several decades, odds are, you know what is coming next. "Coffee is for closers only." These iconic lines came from the 1992 movie "Glengarry Glen Ross," where Alec Baldwin's character forever cemented the importance of coffee to the sales profession. In addition, these lines reinforced the illustrious distinction of being a "closer."

Closing the sale is often revered as a key skill for a salesperson and is considered the pinnacle of sales success, as it's the last thing that happens during the ***sales process***. Closing = Selling. As a result, salespeople, managers, and executives place their focus, effort, and conversations on closing. In reality, salespeople face rejection at a higher frequency than closing the sale. More often they hear their prospects say, "no," or the softer, kinder, but equally loathed words, "I will keep you in mind."* If the majority of the time pushing for a close ends in rejection, the more you try to close, the more you get rejected. The odds are against us, so closing isn't the solution.

When a prospect crosses the threshold to become a customer, it's not because the salesperson so eloquently asked them for the sale or made a profound "close." It is either a stroke of luck or the result of a *successfully facilitated sales process*. "Successfully facilitated sales process." That sounds way too deliberate, formal, confusing, and intimidating; not to mention, nobody has got time for that…

How do we simplify this? Consider why people buy. They buy because they perceive the value or importance of what the seller is offering as greater than what their current situation can offer. In other words, the customer believes they will be better off changing to a new product than they are with their current product, or that transferring their business to you will improve their business in a way that their current vendor can't, or at least hasn't.

As a salesperson, it is your primary responsibility to help the buyer understand how your offering will improve their situation. Simply telling the customer how your product or service will help them is not enough to inspire them to change. (When was the last time you bought something simply because a salesperson told you how great it was?)

Henry Ford is credited with saying, "People know what they want but do not know what they need." Often, the customer must be guided to recognize or gain a realization of their current situation. Then they need to explore the challenges and costs associated with the current situation and gain an understanding of what improvement would look like.

Having this type of conversation with a prospect or a customer can be challenging for a salesperson. When you ask someone too broad of a question like, "How can I help you?" there are too many options to consider and weigh out, and the customer will struggle to answer the question. They will either deflect the question with "I don't know" or "I don't need anything," or give you some answer that doesn't harness any value. If you ask them a question that is too specific, they will likely find it too intrusive and opt not to answer, or the question may come off as unsolicited advice, which doesn't work.

To help the customer identify their needs and guide you on how to bring them value, ask the customer a situational question that they can answer, such as, "If we were to meet for coffee six or 12 months from now and you were to say to me, 'I am glad that we started doing business together,' what are two or three factors that would be different in your business versus today?" Often the customer can tell you things that they want changed in their business or headaches that they want to go away. With this type of question, you have narrowed the focus for the customer to a few relevant items that they can share with you that will bring them value.

Revealing this type of information from a customer is the type of opportunity that you are looking for to turn the prospect into a "buyer." It's almost like having the customer call you up and say, "Hey, can you help me solve these problems with my business?"

Next time you are looking to sell a new product or convert a prospect into a customer, focus on asking them questions that are easy for them to answer and reveal value that you can deliver for them by asking them to meet you for a cup of coffee. LC

* "I will keep you in mind" is code for one of two things: 1. "I see no value in you or what you are offering, so please leave my office, and thank you for wasting my time," or 2. "I am not the decision-maker and do not have the authority to say 'yes,' but I am not going to say that because it bruises my fragile ego; you're welcome for wasting your time."

Want more insights on how help your customers recognize your value? Or take your company's performance to the next gear? Tom Zimmerman, principal of SHIFT Sales Training & Consulting, has helped many companies better position themselves as valued-added partners for their customers, which has resulted in increased revenues and customer loyalty. Tom can be reached via email at tzimmerman@shift-stc.com. To learn more about SHIFT Sales Training and Consulting, visit www.shift-stc.com.

A BLUEPRINT FOR CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

By Jack Leary

In recent years, the LBM industry has not exactly taken to adopting customer engagement as quickly as other industries, nor as fast as the customer wants. Many dealers think of customer engagement in terms of customer service. Some clients we talk with confuse customer marketing with customer engagement. While engagement is a popular buzzword today, it is often misunderstood in commerce as an event rather than a state of being. LBM dealers need to recognize that there are different requirements that pertain to marketing to their customers in 2025.

WHY IS CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT SO IMPORTANT TO YOUR BUSINESS?

Customers have more choices than ever before and can react quickly to your business or your competitors—positively or negatively—through online, mobile, or social channels. The danger of not having a customer engagement program is that if your competitors do, and they engage with your customers, making them the preferred source, you could lose your share of their wallet! This is the "me-tail" age, where customers can shop anytime and anywhere for everything, putting them clearly in control of how they interact with businesses. In this digitally connected world, they are multitasking with multiple devices, and as a result, they expect businesses to operate the way they do, in real time.

Your customer is more in charge and high-tech than ever.

Every second of each day there are:
99
thousand web searches received by Google
500
hours of new video uploaded to YouTube per minute

59%
of online sales were mobile on Cyber Monday 2023
28%
of online consumer use a tablet for shopping online

By the end of 2025, the number of mobile devices will exceed
18.0
Billion
2.8
is the number of mobile devices per capita

People check their mobile phone
159
times per day
72%
of shoppers use their mobile phones while in-store

Average person spends
2.5
hours on social media per day
510
thousand comments are posted on every minute on social media

CUSTOMERS WHO ARE ENGAGED HAVE:
50% Higher Revenue/Sales.
34% Higher Profitability.
55% Higher Share of Wallet.

FOR THE BUSINESS:
It costs five to seven times as much to attract a new customer versus keeping an existing one.
1% retention improvement = 5% in profit improvement.

THE TRADITIONAL MARKETING FUNNEL IS NOW OBSOLETE

It was developed when customers were passive and received messages while sitting on the couch or listening to the radio in their vehicle, and they could be moved over time from awareness to consideration to desire, and ultimately, to purchase. The marketing funnel still exists, and marketers still need to move a customer through the various stages of the path to purchase—they just have to do it on the customer's terms.

In the past, the only way an organization could define engagement was through transactions. This traditional way of thinking about engagement is driven by a lack of insight about what's happening across a company's customer base regardless of time, channel, or segment.

That is not the case anymore. With new technologies, options are unlimited for businesses that want to understand, predict, and monitor engagement levels—not just transactions—and connect those disparate data points together to create a real-time picture of the way various types of engagement affect the business.

HAS YOUR MARKETING MOVED FROM A ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL APPROACH?

The explosion of digital channels has created unprecedented complexity for brick-and-mortar businesses. There are more ways to connect with customers in more targeted channels in real time and with more relevant content! All this has caused marketers to shift from a push to a pull approach.

Technology has shifted the power away from businesses and created new marketing requirements that pertain to today's more complex marketing environment. At a high level, these programs need to be:

- **Insight Driven:** Using big data to uncover insights driven by customer behavior, moving from hypotheses to predictive data-driven models.
- **Relevant:** Moving from one-size-fits-all to 1:1, moving from push to ongoing engagement, and moving from episodic/batch to real-time.
- **Embracing Digital:** Moving from silo-channel to a customer-focused strategy, pursuing a tactic-agnostic approach.
- **More Measurable:** Tracking engagement along all points of the customer journey, driving impact, engagement, retention, activation, and sales.

It is not just about the channel; it is about how you are engaging customers and how they want to buy from you.

WHAT DOES CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT LOOK LIKE IN THE REAL WORLD?

It is customers who know your business; they purchase regularly from you and are your business ambassadors. They consistently recommend you to family and friends, and they willingly share feedback on your business, products, services, or performance … especially via social feedback!

Forrester defined customer engagement as "how customers perceive their interactions with your company." Paul Greenberg, sometimes referred to as the Godfather of CRM and the father of social CRM, defined customer engagement as "the ongoing interactions between company and customer, offered by the company chosen by the customer."

Today you must understand how customers behave on the path to purchase. The risk of not always keeping the customer in mind is that we lose the long-term loyalty, lifetime value, and share of wallet, and the long-term relationship, after all, is what we are all aiming for.

Customers have blurred the line between online and offline interactions. Today's customers are no longer just a postal or email address. They are now a cookie ID, mobile number, IP address, Facebook ID, X (Twitter) ID, or a house account number, and they expect a seamless experience no matter how they choose to connect.

Today's customers have high expectations for businesses. Every decision you make must be based around the customer. Understanding how and when they want to be communicated with, what types of offers they want to receive from you, and via which channels are keys to successful customer engagement.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

Customer engagement requires a well-defined strategy to balance the goals of the business with the expectations of your customers. It involves integrating technology, data, analytics, tools, and measurement, to understand which channel will be the most effective in reaching and engaging customers to support your marketing objectives.

To develop the optimal approach to engage customers, you need to understand that they are on 24/7. True customer engagement marketing is omni-channel, integrating all messaging across all mediums harmoniously. It encompasses web, email, social, and mobile in addition to brick-and-mortar, TV, radio, and direct mail.

As we think about the relationship between our business and our customers, data always matters. It is where we get our information about the behaviors, intent, and preferences of our customers. Only 31% of companies can say they have a complete view of their customers. Analytics are key to that complete view. What also matters is building and retaining an emotional and personalized connection with each individual customer.

IMPLEMENTING CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT MARKETING AND THE CORE COMPONENTS TO SUCCEED

I can't do justice to this portion of engagement in a paragraph; it could be an entire article of its own (maybe I will write it!). But at a high level, to create an end-to-end, seamless experience for your customer target, you need to understand all of the potential interactions along the path to purchase, as well as the financial impact of each interaction, while making sure all of your customers' preferences are considered. Keep in mind, not all interactions are meaningful!

To successfully engage your customers:

1. **Understand:** You need to research your customer/target to understand what matters to them.
2. **Deploy:** Determine which technologies should be deployed

to efficiently optimize and execute omni-channel marketing campaigns (many dealers already have the tools, such as BisTrack, which contains many robust features for customer engagement).

3. **Connect:** You need to connect all data, online and offline, to understand who, what, when, and where you should target customers.
4. **Reach:** You need to reach the right audience with the right message at the right time, with the right value exchange.
5. **Engage:** You need to engage via multiple channels with content that will resonate with them.
6. **Measure:** You need to be able to measure the results. If you can't measure the results, it is not going to satisfy your business goals.
7. **Optimize**: You need to evaluate your results, optimize, and repeat! You can't do it once and expect a home run. This is a marathon, not a sprint.

ENGAGEMENT BENEFITS FOR THE BUSINESS

When the business is engaged with your customers and they are engaged with the business, you will have an understanding of which channel(s) will be most effective in reaching and engaging customers. Keep in mind that each customer's needs, wants, and available spend will be unique.

- Companies with extremely strong omni-channel customer engagement see a 9.5% year-over-year increase in annual revenue (Aberdeen Group).
- Marketing campaigns perform 300% better when using four or more digital channels than those campaigns using either one or two channels (Gartner Research).
- According to other studies, engaged customers can have a greater lifetime value and are five times more likely to remain loyal to your business.

ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONS AND CHECKLIST:

- [ ] Can you define engagement in the customers' terms, not in your terms?
- [ ] Do you have a strategy to manage engagement at all touchpoints?
- [ ] Have you defined and quantified your marketing business goals?
- [ ] Do company tools help to understand the customer and deliver the expected level of engagement?
- [ ] Do you have a data collection strategy?
- [ ] Can you attribute the majority of transactions to a customer record?
- [ ] Do you have a customer segmentation?
- [ ] Are you getting actionable insights from your data?
- [ ] Can you give salespeople a 360-degree view of the customer?
- [ ] Can you track customers from first interaction all the way through the entire customer lifecycle?
- [ ] Do you understand how your customers interact with your business? What channels do they use? Would they use it?
- [ ] Do you have a customer feedback loop?
- [ ] Do you know your customer preferences? What types of offers do they want from you?
- [ ] How is your business relevant to your customers?
- [ ] Are you able to tailor offers to individual customers?
- [ ] Can you personalize the experience based on a customer profile?
- [ ] What metrics have you established to measure engagement and ROI?

This list is far from all-inclusive, but hopefully it helps your thinking and process.

SUMMARY

Customers are demanding more from businesses. To market and engage them successfully today, businesses need to use all data, insights, technology, and creativity to connect with their customers in the moments that matter, with content that is relevant to them.

Nurturing a customer relationship requires that you truly pay attention to what and how your customers respond to your efforts. You can do that by creating marketing campaigns that will keep your loyal customers and community members interested in what you are saying, in what you are sharing with them, and/or in what you are asking from them.

Effective customer engagement does not have to be hard; it must, however, be a top-down initiative across your entire organization, so you need buy-in from leadership. All parts of the business need to work together to provide customers and prospects with the experience that they want. With all the channels your customers are interacting with, you need the ability to develop well-grounded multi-channel engagement strategies to maximize the customer experience every day. Your customers are interacting with lots of businesses; you want to make sure they are engaged with yours! LC

Jack Leary of Impact 180 Consulting Group has 40+ years of industry experience in key leadership roles working in retail, manufacturing, and professional services. Jack can be reached at 216-408-9306 or leary.jack@impact180group.com.

LinkedIn's Top 3 Hiring Tips for Small Businesses in 2025

If you're a small business owner, you may be looking for top talent. A new survey by LinkedIn finds 66% of small businesses in the U.S. are planning to hire more in 2025 than they did in 2024. It signals good news for the market, and for your business, but with an increase in hiring comes increased challenges.

That's because hiring the perfect fit for a small company is crucial and time consuming. It's not just about finding the right skills and experience for the job, but culture fit, too. It takes time to source candidates, sift through resumes, schedule and conduct interviews, and handle all hiring-related tasks, on top of managing the day-to-day demands. As a small business owner, you know that on any given day, you can be operations manager, accountant, marketing pro, and one-person HR department all rolled into one.

"We know every hire a small business makes is critical to their business goals," says LinkedIn's Director of Product Management Andrew Chimka. "They need simple, time-saving solutions that are intuitive to use and help them find qualified candidates fast, and with confidence."

Here are LinkedIn's top tips to help small businesses find the right candidate so they can focus on growing their business.

1

Showcase What Makes Your Company Unique

Showcasing your brand is critical to attracting top talent. Emphasize why job seekers should choose to work for you by highlighting your unique company culture, flexible work hours, or perks like employee discounts. You know what makes your company a great place to work. Potential hires need to know it, too.

Demonstrating benefits like skills development opportunities or online learning programs will also help hirers attract candidates in the new year. New LinkedIn data find that opportunities to learn new, in-demand skills is the No. 1 factor professionals say will help them grow in their career.

One of the ways you can stand out is through LinkedIn's new Premium Company Page offering, which helps small businesses grow their audience and credibility on LinkedIn. Premium helps companies like yours grow page followers 6.7 times faster to stand out to prospects.

2

Consider a Skills-Based Hiring Approach

Today, the skills needed to do many jobs are changing. More businesses are recognizing the need to adopt a skills-based hiring approach: hiring for skills and abilities, not only degrees and past job titles.

A skills-based approach allows you to widen your pool of applicants to include candidates who may have slipped under the radar due to factors like whether they have a degree. This allows you to find new, untapped talent, lessening the need to compete with other companies for the same candidates.

Taking a holistic approach to skills by hiring for technical expertise and soft skills, such as communication and collaboration, also enables small businesses to identify well-rounded candidates who can support various business needs.

Just because the size of a business is small doesn't mean its talent pool needs to be.

3

LinkedIn's New AI Hiring Tools To Help Post a Job and Hire

LinkedIn finds that 72% of hirers at small businesses in the U.S. say they are spending up to 15 hours a week just sifting through applications. That's a lot of time not devoted to growing and running the business.

This is where AI can come in—as a tool to take on some of the heavy lifting that comes with hiring the right candidate.

LinkedIn is launching an AI-assistant within LinkedIn Jobs, built on its unique professional platform insights of more than 1 billion members, 69 million companies, and 41,000 skills. Hirers can get help with tedious hiring tasks using the AI-assistant, such as drafting job descriptions, posting a job, identifying qualified candidates, and inviting them to apply.

The AI-assistant then helps evaluate applicants based on the hirer's qualifications and creates a shortlist of the most qualified candidates for the hirer to review so they can make the right hire with confidence.

Visit linkedin.com/smbhire to express interest in joining LinkedIn's beta program.

In today's fast-changing work landscape, small businesses face numerous challenges—but hiring shouldn't be one of them. LinkedIn, with the largest engaged professional network in the world, is uniquely positioned to help. In fact, 86% of small businesses globally get a qualified candidate within 24 hours of posting a job on LinkedIn. By leveraging innovative strategies to attract top talent, from highlighting your brand to using new AI tools, your small business will be better positioned to thrive in 2025. LC

NRLA CONNECT— KEEPING YOUR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS RUNNING SMOOTH & EFFICIENTLY.

YOUR ONLINE RESOURCE FOR STATE & FEDERAL REGULATORY COMPLIANCE, OSHA, AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS.

Below is a small sampling of FREE services available in the NRLA Connect Toolbox for NRLA members :

Compliance:
- *OSHA Log*
- *Multi-State Laws Comparison Tool*
- *FMLA Advisor*
- *Federal Poster Advisor*
- *And more!*

Human Resources:
- *HR Hotline*
- *Employee Handbook Builder*
- *Custom Job Description Builder*
- *In-person Interview Question Builder*
- *Performance Review Builder*
- *And more!*

Learning Management System:
- *Safety Training*
- *Sexual Harassment Prevention Training*
- *Active Shooter Attack Survival Training*
- *Adjusting Workstations & Postures*
- *And more!*

Learn more or sign up for this free service: nrla.org/member-benefits/nrla-connect

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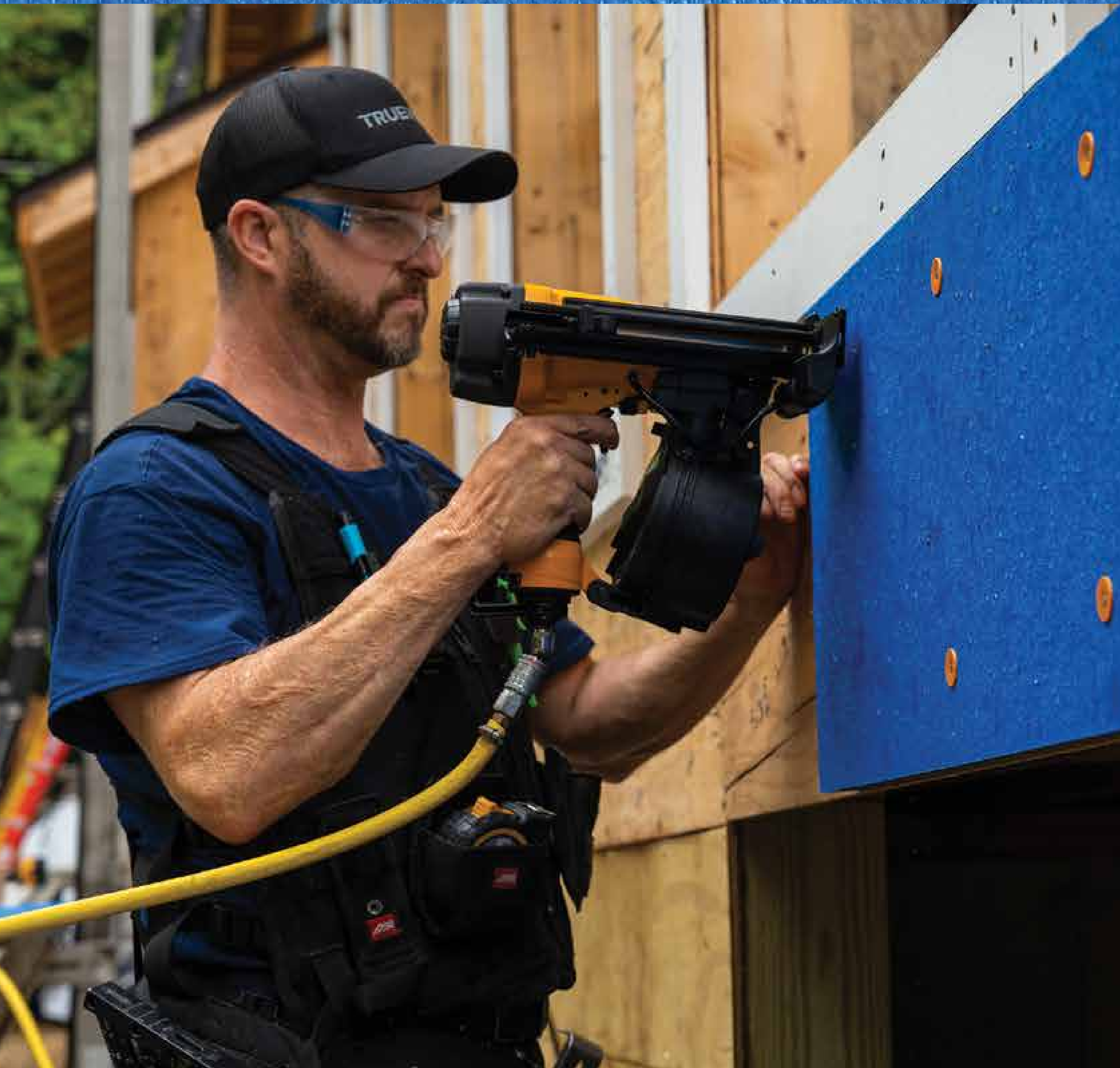


WRB, Continuous Insulation and Seam Sealing: Can One Product Do it All?

By Kate Desormier

Imagine this: One product that combines a weather-resistant barrier, continuous insulation, and an innovative pre-applied seam-sealing solution to save time and money on a jobsite. This tactful combination of solutions delivers everything a builder is looking for today in one SKU.

Continuous insulation is currently being brought into the home envelope conversation more and more. The three main benefits of continuous insulation are energy efficiency, moisture control, and comfort. (While there are other benefits, let's focus our attention on these three.) Additionally, continuous insulation comes in various forms, and selecting the best solution can be overwhelming for a residential home or a commercial project. A product that covers all three major benefits while having a built-in seam tape to save tremendous amounts of time and effort on a jobsite is exactly what the market needs.

As compliance with continuous insulation codes (IECC 2018 and 2021) becomes more difficult, manufacturers and suppliers have been challenged to think fast and come up with ways they can help the everyday builder and homeowner meet building code requirements that is not only budget-friendly but will stand the test of time and truly weatherize a home. While there are many products available on the market today, few combine all the necessities that make sense and live up to their marketing over time. Many of these products meet the code requirements but miserably fail to truly protect the building from a bulk water holdout. As a result, builders are forced to use two separate products or a product that simply "meets code" and isn't taking care of all the expectations when properly enveloping a building.

The next piece of the conversation is time. For example, consider how long it takes a builder to install traditional insulation on a residential job. Two to three passes must typically be made around the building. The builder must make sure everything is sealed with tape, gaps are closed, and any nail holes are sealed. Having a product that has a built-in seam tape and a semi-vapor permeable weather-resistive barrier would reduce the total number of passes around the house. The speed of construction could be reduced by as much as 30%! Time is money, and now more than ever, money means a great deal to people. Helping a builder achieve a proper home envelope system while simultaneously saving them time and reducing the number of products needed on the jobsite is in everybody's best interest. In other words, SKU rationalization is a very important piece of continuous insulation conversation to think about.

In closing, the idea of continuous insulation combined with a high-end weather-resistive barrier with a built-in seam tape is no longer just an idea. It is a reality, and it is a true need for the various markets our industry services overall. Builders and homeowners should do their research and ask all pertinent questions when selecting a building envelope system. Is your insulation just meeting code or could it do so much more? The conversation has just begun, but we have so much more to explore and learn with the evolution of time and the building materials industry. LC

Kate Desormier is the product manager at Holden Humphrey Company. Kate can be reached at kate@holdenhumphrey.com or at 800-777-1053.

HOME ENVELOPE
PRODUCT SHOWCASE

Photo Credit: Holden Humphrey Co. and Henry, a Carlisle Company

holden humphrey

Holden Humphrey Co.

Contact: Lance Humphrey **Email:** lance@holdenhumphrey.com
Phone: 800-777-1053 **Website:** www.holdenhumphrey.com

What home envelope products do you sell?
James Hardie siding, Henry Building Envelope, Kebony cladding, Wolverine vinyl siding, StoneFacade cladding, CertainTeed Cedar Impressions, Ambara wood siding, IKO roofing, CertainTeed roofing, StarWrap roofing underlayment, and Titebond sealants.

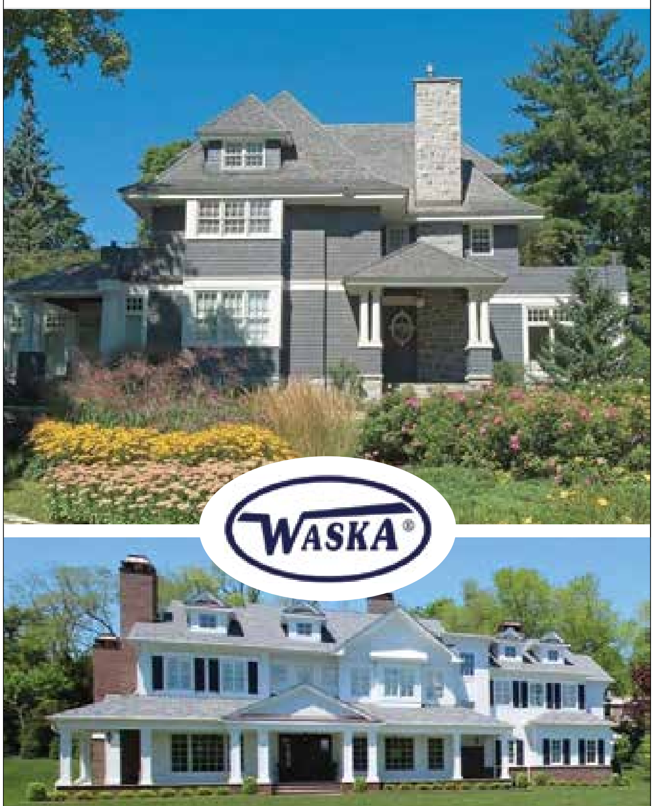
What is one product you'd like to highlight?
Blueskin VP Tech panel is an innovative new product combining a weather resistant barrier, continuous insulation and seam sealing solution, saving time and money while building to code.

PARTICIPANTS

Advanced Building Products, Inc. 49
American Lumber 55
Benjamin Obdyke 50
Boise Cascade Company 57
Britton Lumber Company 48
Cameron Ashley Building Products, Inc. 52
DURATION Moulding & Millwork 52
Grip-Rite 50
Holden Humphrey Co. 44
Mataverde Premium Decking and Siding Solutions 54
Nutmeg Forest Products 46
Parksite 56
RA Graham 55
Rex Lumber Company 46
Russin 56
TimberHP 48
Warren Trask Company 54
Westlake Royal Building Products 57

Nutmeg Forest Products Inc.

Contact: Bill O'Brien **Email:** billobrien@nutmegforest.com
Phone: 800-695-3864 **Website:** www.nutmegforest.com



What Home Envelope products do you sell?
NFP sells cedar shingles: Western red cedar, Alaskan yellow cedar, and Eastern white cedar shingles in natural, treated, and factory-finished for all of your roofing and siding needs. Our mills: A&R , G&R, Teal Cedar, Watkins cedar, and Waska. We also sell Keene Viper CDR vent—a roofing drainage and ventilation mat.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?
NFP is your No. 1 distributor for Waska Eastern white cedar shingles, a name synonymous with the highest quality product. Through our long-standing partnership with Waska, we are able to offer: natural or factory-finished R&R shingles in both A grade and B grade; one-coat and two-coat stock colors and custom colors; and distribution areas including Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Jersey. With NFP and Waska, you can be assured of getting a top-quality product at a competitive price.

Rex Lumber Company

Contact: Ed Godek **Email:** information@rexlumber.com
Phone: 800-343-0567 **Website:** www.rexlumber.com

What home envelope products do you sell?
We sell many exterior hardwoods and softwoods that are great for exterior cladding, including Accoya, Accoya Color, and Kebony, which are all sustainable woods that are modified using environmentally friendly processes. We have the ability to run these woods and many others into standard or custom profiles that meet your customers' needs. In addition to running custom profiles, we also have partnered with Grad Concepts and can run custom grooves for Grad Rails on many of the species and cladding profiles we produce.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?
Grad Rails and Grad Grooves provide a hidden fastener system for exterior cladding that maintains a flawless look for every customer project. They utilize pre-mounted clips on aluminum rails, enabling the board to be securely attached without visible fasteners. With the custom grooves and the fixed rails, the cladding just snaps into place. Using the Grad system has been shown to use up to 10x less screws and clips, and cladding installs up t o3x faster. Grad Rails carry up to a 20 year warranty and are light and easy to transport.

REX LUMBER COMPANY
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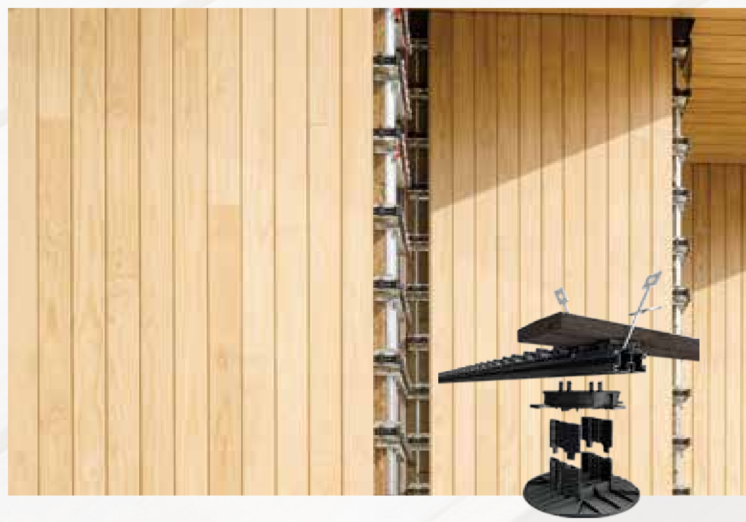
Efficient, Discreet Fastening Solutions!

Now Offering the Grad® System Featuring Custom Grad® Grooving & Grad Rails

grad®

Grad® System is a 100% hidden fastening system that makes decking and cladding projects a breeze with:

- 50% faster installation
- 10X fewer screws and clips
- Mouldings that maintain a flawless look for every customer project
- A pedestal system for rooftop and platform decks



Scan the code to learn more!

Grad® System is designed to work seamlessly with many species, including Accoya®, Accoya® Color and Kebony®.

accoya®

accoya COLOR

kebony Natural wood Made to last

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TimberHP

Contact: Alex Donnelley **Email:** info@timberhp.com
Phone: 855-755-1359 **Website:** www.timberhp.com

What home envelope products do you sell?
Wood Fiber Insulation, made from abundant, renewable Maine wood. Proven performance in the toughest conditions. Technology has been perfected for more than 20 years in Europe. Safe to touch and breathe. All-natural TimberHP building envelope solutions create healthier living environments and make sustainable construction more affordable and accessible.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?
TimberBatt is a flexible, press-fit batt insulation composed of refined FSC-certified softwood fiber treated with borate. Borate is a flame retardant that also inhibits mold and mildew growth and deters insects. TimberBatt offers R-4 per inch with a density and composition that reduces air infiltration for vapor-open assemblies with industry-leading sound dampening. TimberBatt is an ideal thermal and acoustic insulation to replace fiberglass and mineral wool batts. Batts come in 3"; 3.5"; 5.5"; and 7.25" thicknesses for wood assemblies framed at 16" and 24" on center.

Britton Lumber Company

Contact: Brian Moses **Email:** bmoses@brittonlumber.com
Phone: 802-333-4388 **Website:** www.brittonlumber.com

What home envelope products do you sell?
We proudly offer a wide selection of roofing materials, including ABC Roofing, IKO Roofing, and CertainTeed Roofing, along with a variety of roofing underlayments. For siding, we provide various wood clapboards and Exterior Portfolio Vinyl Siding to complete your project with style and durability.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?
Louisiana-Pacific WeatherLogic is a high-performance structural 1 sheathing with a built-in weather-resistant barrier. It not only enhances structural capacity but is also carbon negative, and it comes with a 30-year warranty.

ADVANCED
Building Products Inc.

Advanced Building Products, Inc.

Contact: Keith Lolley **Email:** klolley@abp-1.com
Phone: 800-252-2306
Website: www.advancedbuildingproducts.com

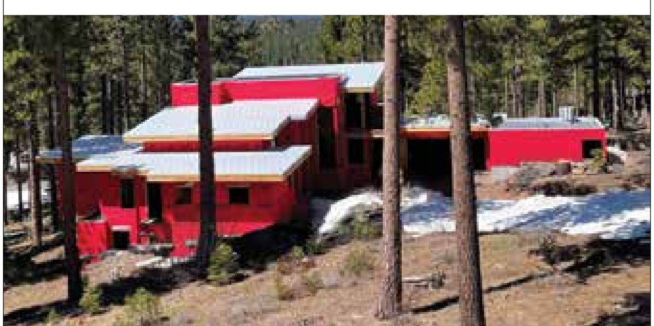
What home envelope products do you sell?
Advanced Building Products, Inc. is a leading manufacturer of entangled net technologies that are installed from the foundation to the rooftop. First, we start with Advanced Drain, which is an entangled net with a heat-bonded filter fabric covering both sides of the entangled net. Advanced Drain prevents hydrostatic pressure from building up in the soil and working its way through cracks in the foundation. Next up is our Mortairvent, which is installed above grade over the sheathing and housewrap. Mortairvent is a drainage and ventilation mat that helps turn a face-sealed wall assembly into a pressure-neutralized rainscreen wall system. Finally, our R-Vent and CedAir-Mat products. These products are installed on top of roofing felt and provide drainage, ventilation, and sound-deadening qualities that protect the roofing deck from the harsh elements throughout the year.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?
Since 2007, Mortairvent, by Advanced Building Products, Inc., has been used throughout North America to assist in creating rainscreen wall designs in single-family and multifamily construction. Our drainage and ventilation mat creates a capillary break between the weather-resistant barrier and backside of the cladding, which allows a direct path for moisture drainage and proper ventilation to occur. Along with our Mortairvent, Advanced Building Products, Inc. is completing the rainscreen wall system by introducing Veneer Vent. Veneer Vent creates the proper gap at the top and bottom of the wall for convective airflow and drainage. Mortairvent meets the requirements called out in Section R703.7.3.2 of the 2021 International Residential Code and Section 2510.62 of the 2021 International Building Code.

Grip-Rite

Contact: Charles McCarthy
Email: mccarthyc@primesourcebp.com
Phone: 781-737-8364 **Website:** www.grip-rite.com

What home envelope products do you sell?
Grip-Rite offers a wide range of home envelope products, including underlayment, housewraps (woven and non-woven, self-adhering, and mechanically attached), housewrap tapes, flashing tapes, EIFS mesh, and more.



What is one product you'd like to highlight?
Grip-Rite ProWrap-SA is a revolutionary self-adhering spunbonded polypropylene weather resistive barrier engineered to be vapor permeable, moisture protection barrier, and air barrier for use in residential and commercial sidewall construction. Grip-Rite ProWrap-SA offers a permeability rating of 60 perms, striking the perfect balance between breathability and durability. With a 180-day exposure time, this housewrap ensures lasting resilience against the toughest UV conditions. Plus, no primer is required, and it can be installed in 20-degree weather. No more tools and hoses or time-consuming mechanically attached installations—simply unwrap, apply, and let ProWrap-SA do the rest.

Benjamin Obdyke

Contact: Bill Warfield **Email:** bwarfield@obdyke.com
Phone: 475-245-9322
Website: www.benjaminobdyke.com

What home envelope products do you sell?
Benjamin Obdyke offers proprietary roof and wall products designed to improve the durability and performance of the building envelope, including flat, drainable, self-adhered, and UV-resistant housewrap; self-adhered and liquid-applied flashing; rainscreen systems; self-adhered roofing underlayment; and ridge vent. Benjamin Obdyke promotes a systems approach to the building envelope, combining weather barriers, flashing, and drainage to meet the specific needs of each project's design, location, and budget.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?
VaporWise Vapor-Variable Interior Membrane offers innovative, optimal moisture control for cold climates, adapting to seasonal changes: During the winter, it acts as a Class 2 vapor retarder, effectively preventing moisture from entering the wall cavity; in the summer, the membrane's permeability increases, allowing moisture to escape and ensuring a dry, healthy wall cavity year-round. It features Tri-Laminate construction, with a reinforced mesh that adds strength and resilience, and a translucent outer layer that provides clear visibility for precise installation and monitoring. VaporWise can be used for roof and wall framing, and it can be detailed to function as an air-control layer.

DURATION Moulding & Millwork

Contact: Keith Coleman **Email:** info@durationmillwork.com
Phone: 888-388-7852 **Website:** www.durationmillwork.com

What home envelope products do you sell?
Manufactured exclusively from Westlake (formerly BORAL) TruExterior trim, DURATION Moulding & Millwork products combine the benefits of real wood, engineered wood, PVC, and cement-based options without the drawbacks associated with each of those options. No other material can match DURATION's combination of features, benefits, versatility, and performance: Exceptionally stable, will not rot or decay, no clearance restrictions, can be painted any color with standard paint, easy to cut, sand, patch, and repair, no need for back or edge priming or sealing, 70% recycled content, indistinguishable from wood when painted, Class A fire rated.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?
Although virtually any profile of siding is available from DURATION in short order, we've recently introduced 3/4 x 10 beveled siding as a stock item. With a smooth, subtle, vertical grain face, the material has a full 3/4" butt dimension and a true "beveled" shape—unlike any other composite siding material. The result is exceptionally handsome shadow lines and an 8" reveal. All 16' lengths, no finger joints, no cupping, curling, or checking—just an easy-to-install product that looks just like wood but far outperforms it.

CAMERON ASHLEY BUILDING PRODUCTS

Contact: Scott Dionne
Email: scottdionne@cameronashleybp.com
Phone: 864-281-3385 **Website:** www.cameronashleybp.com

What home envelope products do you sell?
Cameron Ashley Building Products' exclusive Canopy Roof Underlayments and Housewraps give LBM retailers multiple performance levels and price points to serve any customer. From a woven price-fighter housewrap (PRO) to advanced, non-woven monolithic water and air barriers (Max and Premium Drainable), Canopy offers control layer solutions for most homes and siding materials. With Canopy's family of roof underlayments, customers can pick the right product that matches the application, roofing type, climate demands, and budget. Three mechanically fastened synthetics (SAFEDECK C20, PLUS C30, and SUPREME C50) offer three tiers of warranty and UV protection. Canopy Super Tack HT self-adhered roof underlayment solves just about any demand and offers added peace of mind backed by a limited lifetime warranty.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?
Canopy Super Tack HT Self-Adhered Roof Underlayment meets the performance requirements of an ice and water shield while providing the slip resistance, installation ease, and long-term durability of a high-value synthetic. Removing the easy-peel, split-poly release backer exposes an advanced modified bitumen adhesive engineered for forgiveness during installation but lasting adhesion and high-wind performance once positioned and secured. The synthetic facer supports active foot traffic while guarding against UV degradation for up to 180 days. Super Tack HT meets ASTM D1970 for nail seal and ice dam protection and is rated for use under multiple roofing types, including shingles, metal, tile, slate, and shakes. It comes in a true two-square net coverage roll backed by a limited lifetime warranty.

Coverage from Locals Who Know the Lumber Business & You

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.*

NRLA
Northeastern Retail Lumber Association

- ✓ GENERAL LIABILITY
- ✓ EQUIPMENT
- ✓ 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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Warren Trask Company

Contact: Paul Burnham
Email: pburnham@warrentraskcompany.com
Phone: 781-352-0263 **Website:** www.wtrask.com

What home envelope products do you sell?

We sell various types of siding, including natural wood, composite PVC, and treated and modified wood. Tru-Side by Claymark is a treated and primed radiata pine, ½ by 6 bevel siding. It is available in both F/J or solid and in 16-foot lengths. Exceed by Versatex is a PVC bevel siding with a 4-1/2-inch reveal. It is offered in 10 unique, heat-reflective colors. The Accoya product, a modified wood, allows us the ability to custom mill siding in a variety of different patterns, resulting in a dimensionally stable product with a 50-year warranty.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Accoya brings new levels of performance and design flexibility to what can be achieved with wood siding. Accoya's modification process results in a highly stable board that withstands weather and climate challenges. This stability is ideal for coatings, offering high performance and long-lasting applications. Customizable profiles and ultimate design freedom offer endless possibilities. Accoya Color Grey—colored from the surface to the core—gives you the beauty and benefits of real wood without the need to paint. FSC and Cradle to Cradle Gold certifications, along with a 50-year warranty, ensure a high-quality and sustainably sourced product.

Mataverde Premium Decking and Siding Solutions

Contact: Chris Nolan
Email: chris@generalwoodcraftinc.com
Phone: 860-444-9663
Website: www.mataverdedecking.com

What home envelope products do you sell?

A full range of rainscreen siding and fasteners. The Climate-Shield Rainscreen System is the leading rainscreen fastening system, featuring all the components for a successful residential or commercial project. Choose from many Mataverde wood siding species or Pura NFC to beautify and protect your building envelope. Looking for real wood cladding with the beauty of red cedar at a lower cost? Discover Mataverde ThermaWood T&G Hemlock siding. Readily available in A&BTR vertical grain and long lengths. Full range of rainscreen siding options and rainscreen hardware.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?

Pura NFC by Trespa. Elevate your building's exterior with enduring elegance with premium exterior siding. Pura NFC clads buildings in enduring elegance—maintaining its beauty and smooth surface in the face of the elements. This excellent facade solution is designed to be durable, low maintenance, and easily installed. Pura NFC by Trespa is a high-quality HPL (high-pressure laminate) cladding with the great looks of real wood in a low-maintenance format. Pura is available in 12 decors.

RA Graham

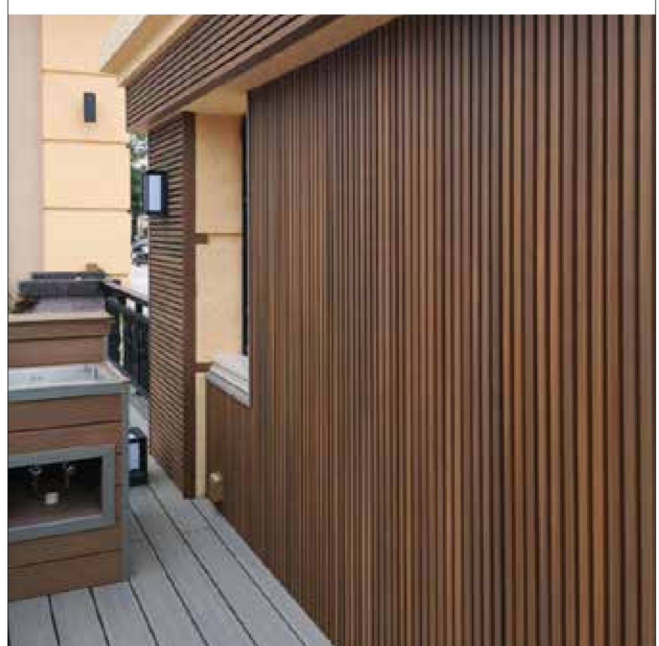
Contact: Director of Marketing
Email: :jnagle@ragraham.com
Phone: 518-755-5815 **Website:** www.ragraham.com

What home envelope products do you sell?
Soudal foams are high-quality expanding polyurethane foams designed for insulation, sealing, and bonding applications in construction and home improvement. These foams provide excellent thermal and acoustic insulation, helping to reduce energy costs by preventing heat loss and minimizing noise infiltration. They also create an airtight and waterproof seal, protecting your home from moisture, drafts, and pests. Soudal foams are easy to apply, expanding to fill gaps and cracks in walls, windows, doors, and roofing structures, ensuring long-lasting durability and enhanced home comfort.

American Lumber

Phone: 800-277-0222 **Website:** www.americanlumberco.com

What Home Envelope products do you sell?
Real wood siding, including cedar, pine, thermally modified Ambara®, tropical hardwoods, bamboo, in a range of profiles, as well as capped composite rainscreen siding by NewTechWood.

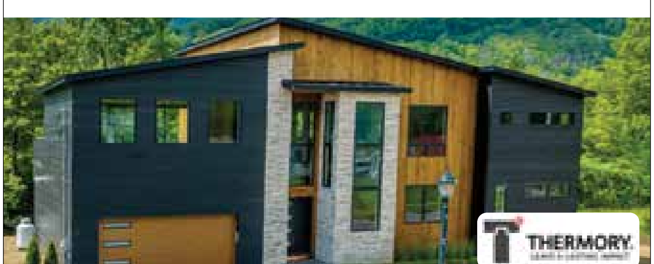


What is one product you'd like to highlight?
NewTechWood siding featuring traditional and contemporary styles from channel to castellations, along with NEW Board & Batten profile!

Russin

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

What home envelope products do you sell?
Russin understands that the right siding can make all the difference. That's why we offer an extensive range of high-quality siding options designed to meet the diverse needs of homeowners, contractors, designers, and builders alike. From the rustic charm of pine siding to the modern resilience of AZEK Captivate, Russin has the perfect solution for every aesthetic and functional requirement.



What is one product you'd like to highlight?
Thermory interior and exterior cladding offers unequaled rot resistance and dimensional stability while bringing the sophistication of real wood to your walls. Each board is carefully thermally modified using only heat and steam, then meticulously milled to ensure it arrives straight, flat, and ready to install. From the classic elegance of Benchmark Ash and Pine to the bold look of Ignite or the rugged outdoorsy style of Kodiak, Thermory cladding is made to make your projects stand out.

Parksite

Contact: Paul Genest **Email:** pgenest@parksite.com
Phone: 860-214-6102 **Website:** www.parksite.com

What home envelope products do you sell?
We offer DuPont Building Envelope System products for residential and commercial applications, including Tyvek Wraps—Tyvek HomeWrap, Tyvek DrainWrap, Tyvek StuccoWrap, Tyvek CommercialWrap, and Tyvek CommercialWrap D—and DuPont Flashing Systems—DuPont FlexWrap, DuPont FlexWrap EZ, DuPont StraightFlash, DuPont VersaFlange, DuPont Flashing Tape, and Tyvek Tape. Products in this system help make buildings more durable, comfortable, and energy efficient by controlling airflow through walls while holding out bulk water and allowing moisture vapor to escape.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?
When you choose Tyvek from Parksite, you and your customers get the support of our ParksitePRO team at no cost. This group of 60+ highly educated DuPont Building Envelope Specialists is dedicated to working in the field with builders and contractors on proper building envelope installation techniques to ensure buildings are properly wrapped, flashed, and sealed for long-term performance. In addition to installation training, ParksitePROs assist with project weatherization strategies, project evaluations, special details, local building code counsel, pre- and post-construction meetings, mock-wall trainings, certified installer classes, and more.

Westlake
Royal Building Products™

Westlake Royal Building Products

Website: www.westlakeroyalbuildingproducts.com

What home envelope products do you sell?
Westlake Royal Building Products is a leader throughout North America in the innovation, design, and production of a broad and diverse range of exterior and interior building products, including siding and accessories, trim and moldings, roofing, stone, windows, and outdoor living. Westlake Royal Building Products manufactures high-quality, low-maintenance products to meet the specifications and needs of building professionals, homeowners, architects, engineers, and distributors while providing stunning curb appeal with an unmatched array of colors, styles, and accessories.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?
The new V-Groove profile for Celect Cellular Composite Siding adds effortless elegance with its clean, modern look, ideal for both horizontal and vertical applications. Its distinctive 12-foot length makes it perfect for vertical installations in homes with high ceilings and contemporary designs. Beyond aesthetics, Celect delivers unmatched durability, featuring a patented interlocking system for a seamless, moisture-resistant finish that prevents warping, buckling, and shifting. Its gravity lock design withstands winds over 210 mph, while fade-resistant Kynar Aquatec provides exceptional UV protection and energy efficiency. Made from cellular PVC, Celect resists dirt, staining, and insects, offering long-lasting performance and curb appeal.

Boise Cascade®

Boise Cascade Company

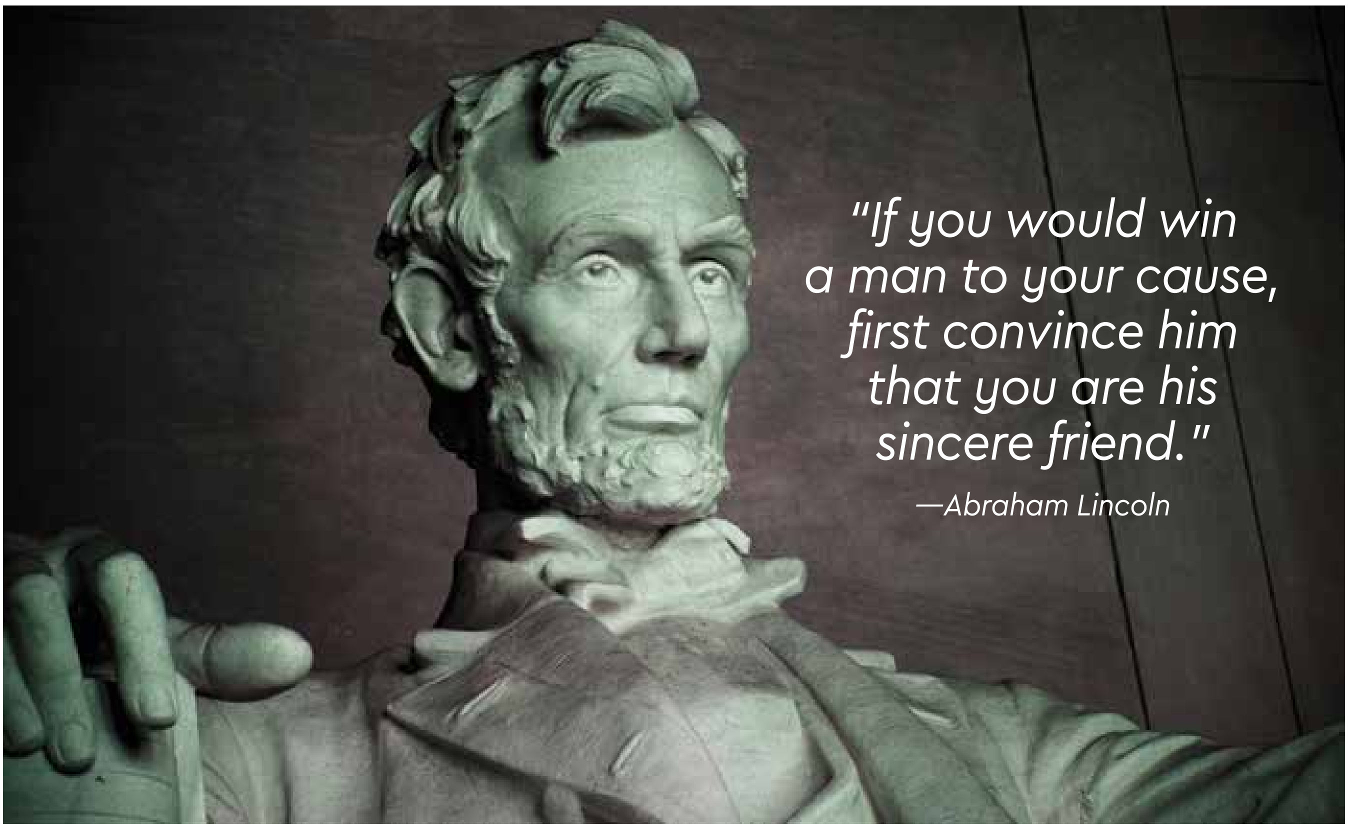
Contact: Dan Morgado—Westfield, MA; Chip Wood—Greenland, NH
Email: danmorgado@bc.com, chipwood@bc.com
Phone: Westfield: 877-462-6473, Greenland: 800-962-9961
Website: www.bc.com/distribution

What home envelope products do you sell?
SBC Cedar Shingles, Grayne Engineered Shingle, James Hardie Fiber Cement Siding, Versetta Stone Panelized Stone Veneer Siding, Grace Vycor Ice & Water Shield, Grace Vycor Ice & Water Shield HT, Tri-Flex XT Synthetic Underlayment, Vycor Plus & Vycor Pro Flashing Tapes, Vycor enV-S House Wrap, Henry Products, ToughSkin 20 & 25 Synthetic Underlayment, Inspire Synthetic Slate Roofing Tiles, DuPont Insulation Products, Huber Zip System Sheathing, Tape, and Peel & Stick Underlayment.

What is one product you'd like to highlight?
VYCOR enV-S represents the next generation of weather-resistive barriers and is designed to provide superior weather protection and improved energy efficiency for the building. The membrane brings together the weather protection benefits of a self-adhered membrane with the breathability of traditional housewraps. The unique adhesive coating bonds strongly to the sheathing but remains vapor permeable. It resists damage in windy conditions, leading to less rework and a high-quality appearance. It requires no mechanical fastening or taping of seams. The membrane bonds to the sheathing, self-seals at overlaps, and seals around fasteners used to install siding and other wall elements.

Abraham Lincoln and the Importance of Advocacy

By Jacob LaChapelle



"If you would win a man to your cause, first convince him that you are his sincere friend."

These words were spoken by Abraham Lincoln, 16th president of the United States, 183 years ago this week. They were said while Lincoln was still a member of the Illinois General Assembly and a practicing lawyer, nearly 20 years before he first took the presidential oath of office, but they still ring true today.

Lincoln knew the significance of building genuine relationships and trust when advocating for a cause and regularly met with the public at the White House during his presidency. He implemented an open-door policy that was more accessible than his predecessors. Lincoln abolished the practice of requiring prior introductions or letters of introduction for White House visits and held public receptions called "levees," where the public could meet him.

Lincoln referred to these public meetings as his "public opinion baths," considering them essential for staying connected with the average citizen. The open-door policy was so popular that during his first levee, the line of visitors extended down Pennsylvania Avenue, with some reportedly climbing through windows to see him.

Despite eventually implementing restrictions on public visiting hours, Abraham Lincoln frequently disregarded his own rules to accommodate visitors, and the White House remained crowded. The public meetings were so popular and so impactful that Lincoln's staff struggled to manage the constant flow of visitors, even with the imposed restrictions.

Lincoln viewed these interactions as crucial, stating that no hours of his day were better employed than those bringing him into direct contact with the public. This approach, while taxing on the president and his staff, allowed Lincoln to stay in touch with public sentiment throughout his presidency.

The 16th president of the United States will look on from his seat at the Lincoln Memorial as ABMA members travel to Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. for our third annual Advocacy Day on April 7-8. We urge you to join us in meeting with elected officials to make a lasting impact. Whether in business or government, nothing is more powerful than face-to-face conversations. We encourage members to share who we are as an industry, what we do, and why it matters. Advocacy is about building relationships, and elected officials want to hear directly from their constituents. When our members show up, we see results.

Learn more about Advocacy Day, and register to attend today at ABMAlliance.org.

Join us for ABMA's Advocacy Day 2025

April 7 & 8 in Washington, D.C.

ABMA Advocacy Day: Schedule of Events

Monday, April 7

Issue Briefing (2:30-5 p.m.)
Join us in the Hamilton Ballroom to kick off Advocacy Day with a deep dive into logistics and priority issues. Hear from ABMA staff and fellow members as we prepare for impactful congressional meetings. And yes, there will be coffee and brownies!

Cocktail Hour and Welcome Dinner (6–9 p.m.)
Let's toast to the incredible work we'll accomplish together in the days ahead!

Tuesday, April 8

Day on the Hill
Start your morning with a hearty breakfast before heading to Capitol Hill for your scheduled meetings with Congressional Representatives and Senators. After a successful day of advocacy, regroup with your peers for a debrief over appetizers and cocktails. The evening will be yours to explore the city at your leisure!

Wednesday, April 9

Departure Day Head home knowing you've made a meaningful impact on behalf of the industry.

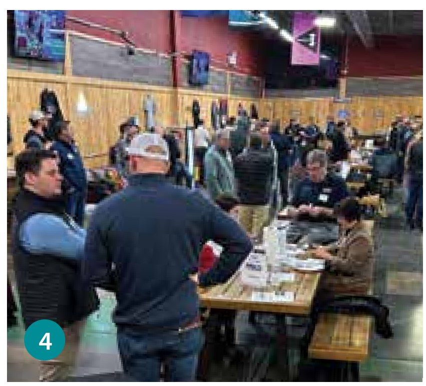
Special Thanks to ABMA's 2025 Sponsors:

(as of 3/5/25)

REGISTER FOR ADVOCACY DAY!

Scan the QR code below with your smartphone or visit, www.abmalliance.org/advocacy-day

EBMDA Axe Throwing Event



Bury the Hatchet, located in King of Prussia, Pa., was the highlight following another successful EBMDA Board meeting led by Chair Kathleen Knappman.

The event was sponsored by Philadelphia Reserve Supply Company (PRSCO), and the venue did not fail to provide excitement, plenty of camaraderie, and a vehicle for great networking. To enhance membership engagement, the EBMDA has chosen to provide a unique approach to their meetings, and this year exceeded expectations for more than 90 attendees. With dealer and associate members from their organization, all were treated to "Axe Master" guidance, plenty of food, beverages, and a desire to have bragging rights and be the recipient of the "Golden Hatchet."

An anxious group of competitors formed teams, chose throwing lanes, and received expert guidance from the Bury the Hatchet Axe Masters. Once the crowd was warmed up, they got down to serious competition with a reminder to focus on the targets ahead and not on anyone in the audience. While everyone was having a spirited time, it was clear from the outset that only one would succeed in becoming the 2025 top axe person.

When the targets were fully pounded by the throwers, only one competitor would rise to the top: Jason Thomas with Weyerhaeuser. Proudly accepting his award with a huge grin on his face, Thomas offered a challenge to the group: "Who is a person enough to attempt to wrest this golden axe from my hands to dominate in 2026?" Stephanie Fromm (Federated Insurance) and Carl Krajcer (PRSCO) made a special presentation of the EBMDA Golden Hatchet.

Special thanks were given to the EBMDA board of directors for their help with the event and PRSCO for their continued support and sponsorship of the event, along with Federated Insurance, WindsorOne, Raymond James, and Culpeper. LC

__1.__ Axe Master winner Jason Thomas (Weyerhaeuser) with presenters Carl Krajcer (PRSCO) and Stephanie Fromm (Federated Insurance). __2.__ TJ Shaheen (Builders' General) and Rob Bicknell (Bicknell Building Supply). __3.__ EBMDA Board Members Dan Chelli (Huber Engineered Woods), Kathleen Knappman (Luzerne Lumber Co.), and Jim Argerakis (Shoemaker Lumber Co.). __4.__ Attendees networking prior to axe throwing. __5.__ EBMDA's board of directors.

NYLE Winter Outing 2025

This year's North American Young Lumber Employees (NYLE) Winter Outing took place in the beautiful, historic winter village of Lake Placid, N.Y. (home to the 1932 and 1980 Winter Olympics).

Employees from 14 retail and associate member companies traveled from seven different NRLA states to participate in this event.

After a morning of board orientation and the NYLE board meeting, the afternoon was dedicated to a Sales Skills Workshop provided by Matt Gambino of Propel Skills. Gambino covered core topics for the group ranging from how to turn "order-taking" into "up-selling" to techniques to maintain momentum to how to use tech tools to scale sales.

The group continued networking during a cocktail reception and dinner, and the event concluded with some "friendly competition." Once divided into teams, all participants enjoyed an Olympic Trivia Tour where each location challenged them to answer Olympic and NYLE-themed questions. The team comprised of members from Curtis Lumber Company, Inc. (Giuseppe Bucciero and Kylie Holland) and GNH Lumber, Inc. (Alex Vincent, Matt Howard, and Matt Oliveri) "edged" out the competition with only two incorrect answers to claim victory!

Please keep an eye out for details for our 2025 Spring Leadership occurring May 7–9 in Portland, Maine. LC

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www.acadiainsurance.com

Advancedd Building Products 49
www.mortairvent.com

BlueLinx .... IBC
www.bluelinxco.com

Boise Cascade 1
www.bc/com/distribution

BROSCO .... IFC
www.brosco.com

Cleary Wholesale 5
www.clearywholesale.com

CT Darnell - Sunbelt Rack 3
www.ct-darnell.com / sunbelt-rack.com

Delavue Management 33
www.delavuellc.com

Form Solutions 13
www.formsolutions.ca

Holbrook Lumber 7
www.holbrooklumber.com

Holden Humphrey Co. 45
www.holdenhumphrey.com

Krauter Auto-Stak 13
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NRLA: Drug Testing Program 51
https://nrla.org/member-benefits/human-resources/
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Rex Lumber Company 47
www.rexlumber.com

SoftPlan Systems 63
www.softplan.com

US Lumber Group .... OBC
www.uslumber.com

Wolf Home Products 9
www.wolfhomeproducts.com

Keegan Safford

Location: Jaffrey, NH
Position: Purchasing Agent • Belletetes Inc.

HOW DID YOU BEGIN YOUR CAREER IN THE LBM INDUSTRY?

I began my career in the industry in 2016 with the same company I work for today, Belletetes Inc., a family-owned retail lumberyard based in New Hampshire. I started as most would—in the lumberyard, assisting with pulling orders and helping customers.

Through the first four years, I had short tenures in positions as a delivery driver, inside sales staff, and lumberyard foreman, ultimately settling in at my current role as a purchasing agent in 2020.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUR POSITION?

Being a purchasing agent for Belletetes, we have a wide variety of responsibilities. From quality control, market research, inventory management, and vendor relations, we work closely with all other departments to make sure we are aligning our purchasing strategy with the goals of our company as a whole.

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

Some of the biggest challenges I face as a purchaser in the LBM industry is keeping up with the continued growth and demand of our customers. Since I started in 2020, we have seen an incredible amount of market change and disruption that has proved difficult to consistently supply the quantity and quality of product our customers expect.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED SINCE WORKING IN THE INDUSTRY?

My mentors have always taught me to keep an open mind and continue to expose myself to all aspects of the industry. There is so much out there to learn and experience.

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

My advice to someone new is to put yourself out there and be eager to learn! The LBM industry is an aging industry with endless institutional knowledge to be passed along; in the next decade, there will be great opportunities for anyone looking to advance their career.

WHAT ARE YOUR PASSIONS OUTSIDE OF THE OFFICE?

From golfing to snowboarding or just spending time with family and friends, I enjoy anything that helps keep me grounded in this fast-paced industry! LC


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NUMBER ONE IN DECKING
Discover why Trex is #1 in Complete Decking Systems
Only Trex has a full suite of outdoor living products that gives builders and consumers everything they need to create low-maintenance, high-design spaces from top to bottom.
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