

LBM JOURNAL[®]

APRIL 2026 | \$15 U.S. | LBMJOURNAL.COM

DEALER OF THE YEAR 2026

CATEGORY: \$10MM
ISSAQUAH LUMBER

THE DECK ISSUE

THE LATEST PRODUCTS AND
TRENDS IN DECKING, RAILING,
AND FASTENERS

WHAT DECK BUILDERS
REALLY WANT

CHAD AMBLE, OWNER OF ISSAQUAH LUMBER



A PROUD HISTORY OF ALWAYS HAVING YOUR BACK.



IF IT DOESN'T HAVE THIS **YELLA TAG**, YOU DON'T WANT IT.

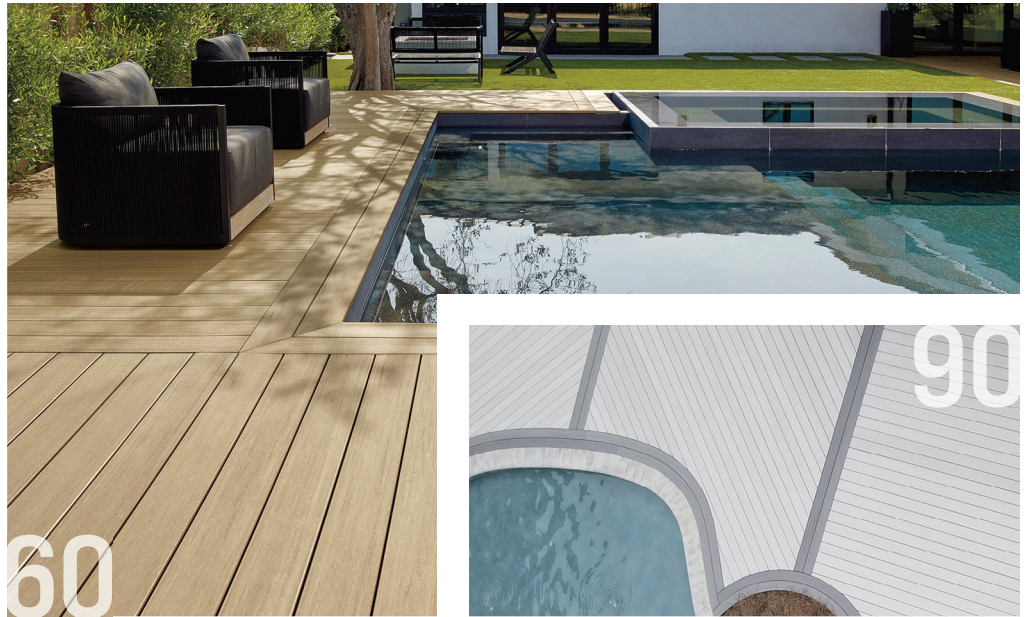


On day one we started with just a truck and a commitment to be the best. When the YellaWood® brand says you can trust us to deliver, those aren't empty words; they're actually proven words. And words we take seriously. Which is why we've been striving to give our very best every day for over five decades now. We can say with confidence that the Yella Tag can deliver like no other because it's been shown to do just that. **See all the other ways the YellaWood® brand has your back. Visit yellawood.com/for-dealers**



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PUBLISHER / EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Rick Schumacher
Rick@LBMJournal.com

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Richard Hart
Design@LBMJournal.com

MANAGING EDITOR

Wendy Sturges
Wendy@LBMJournal.com

SOCIAL MEDIA & PODCAST MANAGER

Sally Lacey
Sally@LBMJournal.com

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS & EVENTS

Michelle Fischer
Operations@LBMJournal.com

DIGITAL COORDINATOR & SALES OPS

Tina Saucke
Tina@LBMJournal.com

JUNIOR ART DIRECTOR

Lindsay Scott
Lindsay@LBMJournal.com

OPERATIONS SPECIALIST

Carey Milesenko
Carey@LBMJournal.com

MEDIA CONSULTANTS

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Jodie Cook Redwood
Jodie@LBMJournal.com
800.324.3492

NORTHEAST + SOUTHEAST

Mike Schwartz

Mschwartz@LBMJournal.com
310.487.2385

CENTRAL + WEST

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Leading Suppliers Council



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF



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104 TOUGH CALL

With decking season heating up,
you could buy your decking/railing
brand of choice at a steep discount
from a different vendor—but with no
training, service, or support.
What would you do?





ProWood combines the precision of a manufacturer with the flexibility of a distributor to keep your shelves stocked and your customers happy. Access ProWood® treated lumber, Deckorators® composite decking, and Edge® siding all in one place, backed by reliable fulfillment and merchandising support that helps you win.

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CONTRIBUTORS



DUDLEY



KATHREIN



MARCHAND



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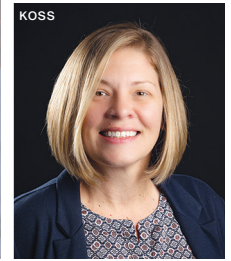
MARSHALL



WAGNER



HARTMANN



KOSS

Rick Davis

Stories Sell | P. 24

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

Thea Dudley

Confidence in Collections | P. 28

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

Bradley Hartmann

Leading Sales Succession With Clarity and Standards | P. 26

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

Russ Kathrein

Leaving Your Legacy | P. 32

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

John D. Wagner

What the Kodiak Acquisition Means to You | P. 30

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

James Anderson

Decks / Railings / Fasteners | P. 60

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

Erin Koss, EI

NADRA Code Update: What Decking Pros and Suppliers Should Know | P. 54

Erin Koss, EI is a senior code compliance engineer at PrimeSource Building Products. She actively supports code and standards work through ASTM International and the International Code Council and currently serves as deck subcommittee chair for the North American Deck & Railing Association.

Heather Marchand

What Deck Builders Really Want | P. 90

Heather Marchand serves as director of national programs and marketing for NADRA, supporting deck builders, lumberyards, and manufacturers through national programs and industry partnerships. With more than 20 years in trade association leadership, she blends strategic execution with story-driven marketing.

John Marshall

If AI Is Just 'Interesting,' You're Already Behind | P. 38

John Marshall has held executive roles in national and multinational corporations, notably leading Wilson Lumber to 500% revenue growth in seven years. Passionate about coaching and mentoring, he is the driving force behind AI Growth Partners, leveraging artificial intelligence to fuel business growth and innovation.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALL OUR EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS



INNOVATION REQUIRES ACTION

ANYTHING ELSE IS NOISE

Hype **RESULTS**

Mandates **MENUS**

Salespeople **GROWTH PARTNERS**

Someday **TODAY**



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Known for setting industry standards, Power Pro® continues to evolve and deliver new and improved product lines to best support the Pro on every job. From its structural screw line expansion to the improved wood screw design, high quality building solutions remains at the forefront. Its evolution now extends beyond fasteners with the launch of Power Pro® Joist Tape, engineered to work in tandem with Power Pro® wood screws for decking projects built to last.

Structural Screw Line

Pro-Grade Connection for Wood-To-Wood Construction

The complete, building code-approved Power Pro® Structural Screw line includes Structural Lag, TimberTite®, LumberTite®, LedgerTite®, TrussTite®, TimberWood and a Coastal and Marine Grade Mix, all engineered for premium performance in any climate. Engineered for large, load bearing connections, Structural Lag Screws provide security for heavy framing and decks, delivering the strength and durability large projects require. Now available in contractor packs, the Power Pro® Structural Screw program leads in superior features with versatile performance, outpacing both the competition and standard, to give every Pro confidence.

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COASTAL & MARINE GRADE



Joist & Beam Tape

Award-Winning Waterproofing

Designed to withstand the elements, the new Power Pro® Joist Tape delivers premium, pro-grade waterproofing that protects pressure-treated lumber, joints, and connections from moisture intrusion. AAMA 711-22 certified, it offers mess-free, long-lasting protection for deck builds, featuring no backing liner and a self-healing design that adheres to wood, concrete, oriented strand boards (OSB), and more. Power Pro® Joist Tape provides a reliable, all-weather sealing solution that extends the life of every deck. Praised for its innovation in every roll, Power Pro® Joist Tape won the Product Tool Innovation Award (PTIA) in 2025, its first year of launch.



Wood Screws (Exterior)

Precision-Engineered Screws That Drive Faster

The Power Pro® Structural Wood Screws build on their high-performance standard, engineered for faster, more efficient builds. Driving 30% faster than the competition and using less energy per battery charge, these precision-engineered fasteners deliver the speed, efficiency, and durability that the Pros demand. The dual-lead thread reduces labor time, while the exterior epoxy coating, approved for use with treated lumber, adds versatility to tackle the job. Available in bulk packs for large-volume installations, Power Pro® wood screws combine the tried-and-true premium quality with code-approved reliability for builders to maximize faster deck builds and enhance project performance.

Power Pro® is a trusted partner in high-quality, exterior upgrade builds, dedicated to offering innovative, high-performance products that meet the needs of today's construction professionals. Engineered to help dealers and contractors win more decking projects by simplifying the most critical part of the building connection.

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The image shows a large wooden deck with a white railing overlooking a lake at sunset. Two lounge chairs with white cushions and pink pillows are on the deck. The background features a lush green forest and a house on a hill. The sky is filled with colorful clouds from the setting sun.

Trex®

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No one does outdoor living like Trex, the industry leader in decking and railing. And, no matter what your customer needs, IWP carries the full line of Trex decking, railing, and accessories at every facility in the West.



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FROM THE PUBLISHER

LIKE PARENTS, publishers aren't supposed to have favorites. Yet, like parents, publishers are human. So, while I'm proud of every issue of *LBM Journal*, I'm particularly proud of our annual April Decking issue. Especially this one. All 104 pages of it.

Obviously, it's fun that it's so big. But the true reason it's a favorite is because of what it's made of. Fully 35 of these pages are focused on the decking category. Here's how it breaks out:

Real Issue: A Bigger Share of the Decking & Railing Market (pp. 40-46). Readers advise a fellow LBM dealer on boosting their business.

NADRA Code Update (p. 54). Written by Erin Koss, a senior code compliance engineer at PrimeSource and deck subcommittee chair for NADRA.

NADRA Deck Award winners (pp. 56-57). These two pages show what's possible when talented, skilled deck builders work their magic.

Decks, Railings, and Fasteners (pp. 60-87). Product trends plus practical, tactical insights driving the three legs of this multi-billion dollar category.

What Deck Builders Really Want (pp. 90-95). In this strong and personal piece, NADRA's Heather Marchand melds data and interviews with leading deck builders who pull no punches when they share what they want and need from their supplier.

If you are unfamiliar with NADRA, it's one acronym you need to know. It stands for the North American Deck & Railing Association, and it was founded in 2004 by Mike and Margie Beaudry to serve and unify the decking industry. As a proud NADRA supporter (and former board member), I appreciate their contributions to our biggest issue of the year. Check out the cornerstone of the outdoor living industry at NADRA.org. And consider joining today.

While we're talking decking resources, I encourage you to mark your calendar for Deck Expo, Nov. 17-19 in New Orleans. I'm honored that *LBM Journal* has been named the official show publication of Deck Expo, the largest gathering of decking and outdoor living leaders in North America. If you want to learn more about this large and growing segment, come for the exhibits and plug into the education.

Lastly, I want to highlight our profile of Issaquah Lumber, our LBM Dealer of the Year in the \$10MM sales category (pp. 48-51). It's a great story of how Owner Chad Amble and his team are reinventing this nearly 140-year old yard in the Pacific Northwest.

— Rick Schumacher
Executive Editor & Publisher



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

HAVE A QUESTION FOR RICK?
RICK@LBMJOURNAL.COM

SERIOUS ABOUT BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS? WE ARE.



DARTMOUTH BUILDING SUPPLY



LEZZER LUMBER



B & B LUMBER

BY THE YARD

Dartmouth Building Supply has launched an original video series titled “Nailed It,” produced in partnership with PMC Media Group. The series features real collaborations between DBS, local builders, and homeowners, showcasing completed projects while giving contractors and homeowners the opportunity to share why they chose Dartmouth Building Supply.

Lezzer Lumber announced that its Pennsdale location has been named the 2025 recipient of the company’s Elite Location Award. This annual recognition celebrates the location that goes above and beyond, demonstrating pride in their work and passion for delivering exceptional results every day.

84 Lumber is launching its Building America250 campaign, a company-wide tribute honoring the past, present, and future of the industry that built America. Building America250 will engage customers, vendor partners, and associates through a series of stories and initiatives throughout the year, commemorating America’s 250th anniversary.

Mead Lumber completed the renaming of its former Knecht Home Center stores when its Cañon City, CO location officially changed its name to Mead Lumber. The move marks the final step in a brand transition that began in October 2025 with the company’s locations in Rapid City and Spearfish, SD, and Gillette and Sheridan, WY.

Kansas-based **B & B Lumber** is celebrating its 50th year in business with a unique souvenir to “mark” the milestone. According to CEO Tom Baalman Jr., to commemorate the occasion, the company selected its own barrel of Maker’s Mark to share with family and friends. The company has locations in Wichita and Newton.

Minnesota-based **Tri County Lumber** is marking 25 years in business this year. Dave and Lori Ables, along with their three sons, David, Sam, and Nicholas, purchased the business in 2024.

Saint-Gobain, through its building product subsidiary **CertainTeed Roofing**, held a ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the completion of major expansion activities at its CertainTeed Roofing manufacturing facility in Peachtree City, GA. The project has doubled the site’s production capacity, enabling the company to manufacture additional roofing shingles for customers in the fast-growing southeast United States.

ABC Supply Co., Inc. announced a new naming structure for how its family of companies will be identified in the marketplace moving forward. The divisions will become:

ABC Supply Interiors
(formerly L&W Supply)

ABC Supply Outdoor Solutions
(formerly Town & Country Industries)

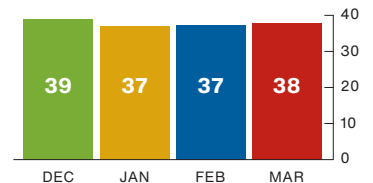
ABC Supply Co., Inc. will remain the same and continue to focus on exteriors

INDUSTRY UPDATES

PrimeSource Building Products announced the debut of the **Wolf Outdoor Living** brand, which includes Wolf Home Products, Keylink, Fortress Railing, and CityPost.

Builder sentiment inches higher, affordability concerns persist

Builder sentiment inched up in March even as builders continue to express affordability concerns stemming from elevated construction costs and shortages of buildable lots and labor. Builder confidence in the market for newly built single-family homes rose one point to 38 in March, following a revised upward one-point revision in February, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI). All responses to the March survey were received after the conflict with Iran started.



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Introducing Coalstone Slate and Bronzewood Shake, bold new metal roofing colors from ProVia. Coalstone is an intense charcoal gray, and Bronzewood is a deep, brindled brown – both shades offering dramatic ambience to any exterior color scheme, and the crowning touch to a stylish aesthetic. ProVia combines the strength and durability of 26-gauge steel with the contemporary curb appeal of deep, dark shades to deliver the long-lasting metal roofing your customers want.



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roof systems



PEOPLE IN LBM



OWENS



PETERSON



CAMPBELL

Members of the **National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)** elected four senior officers to top leadership positions during NAHB International Builders' Show in Orlando:

- Bill Owens:** Chairman of the board
- Bob Peterson:** First vice chairman
- Gary Campbell:** Second vice chairman
- Jim Chapman:** Third vice chairman



CHAPMAN

QXO announced the company has named **Taylor Sommer** as its new chief sales officer. Sommer previously worked as chief sales officer for Republic National Distributing Company in the Dallas-Fort Worth region.



Tando Composites announced that **Taylor Campbell** has been promoted to territory manager covering southeastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey.

Marvin has welcomed **Meghan Elliott** as the company's new senior vice president and general counsel. In this role, Elliott will lead Marvin's legal and risk department and serve as a key advisor to senior leadership. Elliott brings more than 20 years of legal experience to Marvin



ZAMBANINI

Trex Company, Inc. announced that its board of directors has appointed **Adam D. Zambanini**, Trex's current executive vice president and chief operating officer, as Trex's next president and CEO and as a member of the board. **Bryan H. Fairbanks**, Trex's president and CEO, will retire from Trex after nearly 23 years with the company. The company also announced that **Lee Coker** has joined Trex as vice president of corporate development and investor relations.

Two leaders from **LP Building Solutions** are being recognized by The Manufacturing Institute: **Shanda Gentry**, plant manager at LP's Roaring River facility in North Carolina, was named a 2026 STEP Ahead Honoree, and **Ariel Foss**, safety manager at LP's mill in Houlton, ME, was named a 2026 STEP Ahead Emerging Leader.

Benjamin Obdyke has welcomed **Owen Freeman** as its newest sales associate, serving Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Freeman will support builders, architects, dealers, and distributors throughout the region, providing cutting-edge solutions, product training, and building science education.



ECI Software Solutions, Inc. announced the appointments of **Jack Wood** as chief technology officer and **Michael Fahey** as chief legal officer.



CO-OP & BUYER'S GROUPS



BAUER



GOODALE

LBM Advantage has elected two new members to its board of directors: **Adam Bauer**, president and COO of HPM Building Supply, and **Greg Goodale**, vice president and director of purchasing at Riverhead Building Supply.

Do it Best Group announced that it is implementing its distribution center optimization plan, a strategic initiative designed to strengthen its supply chain, support long-term growth, and enhance service for all members and retailers. As part of the optimization plan:

Do it Best is relocating its Montgomery, NY distribution center operations into underutilized distribution center space it already has in Wilkes-Barre, PA.

A new operation, known as Hanover, is being established at that location to support long-term capacity needs and provide greater flexibility as the business grows. In addition, True Value operations will transition out of the Atlanta distribution center earlier than originally planned.

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MERGERS + ACQUISITIONS

ECI Software Solutions, Inc. has acquired **Drypowder**, a financial technology company focused on modernizing accounts receivable, billing, and digital payments for the building materials and construction industries.

Southeast Building Supply Interests announced its expansion into Montgomery, AL through the acquisition of **Alpha Lumber & Supply**. This marks SBSI's 11th location and its second in Alabama, complementing Buettner Brothers Lumber Company in Cullman.

SRS Distribution Inc. announced that it has acquired **LS Building Products**, a wholesale distributor of roofing, lumber, siding, windows and doors, millwork, and other complementary building products. The company also has acquired **Sider Lumber & Supply Co., Inc.**, a wholesale distributor of lumber, decking, roofing, siding, windows & doors, and other complementary building products.

All Glass & Windows LLC announced its acquisition of substantially all assets of **Sarasota Glass & Mirror Inc.**

Decks & Docks Company announced that it has acquired **Pro Deck Supply**, a specialty decking materials supplier serving the Minneapolis metropolitan area. This transaction supports Decks & Docks' continued geographic expansion with the addition of its first Minnesota location and first location in the Upper Midwest.

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TOUGH CALL SOLUTIONS

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

CHASING THE PERFECT HIRE

You've been offered a new opportunity in your company, but first you need to find your replacement—which has turned out to be tougher than expected. One name immediately came to mind: Quinn, the very sharp, up-and-coming GM of one of your largest customers. He would be perfect. However, as a key employee with an important customer, Quinn is also effectively off-limits. Here's how readers responded.

Talk with the CEO. **55%**
Be candid. Explain your position, that you're excited for the VP opportunity but serious about finding the right replacement. Ask for her perspective.

Just do it. **20%**
You've been offered an incredible opportunity, a position created just for you. Hire the most qualified candidate you've interviewed and move on.

Poach Quinn. **18%**
Companies recruit from customers all the time. Plus, maybe Quinn is ready to move up. Let him know you're looking ... and see how he responds.

Trust your gut. **7%**
You haven't come this far by taking shortcuts. The right candidate is out there, and when you meet them, you'll know. Take your time and do it right.

READER RESPONSE

"Another option I would explore: If I considered Quinn the perfect option, I would reach out to my customer and be honest with them. Tell them that you would like to talk to Quinn about the position, but that you do not want to jeopardize the business relationship that your company enjoys with them. If they object, then you will know that Quinn is off-limits. However, if they truly want to see Quinn grow and prosper, they will allow him to speak with you. Who knows? Quinn may not be ready to make a move anyway, but you won't know until you ask."

— Mike Catalina, Preferred Marketing



LISTEN NOW!

DID YOU KNOW LBM JOURNAL HAS A PODCAST? Subscribe today for weekly episodes about credit management and social media utilization for the LBM industry.

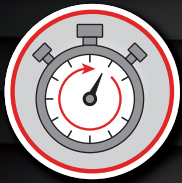
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DISTRIBUTION NEWS

Manufacturers Reserve Supply announced a new distribution partnership with RISE siding and trim by **CertainTeed**. Through this partnership, MRS will bring the innovative composite siding product to retailers across the region with local inventory and rapid fulfillment.

Tando Composites has expanded its partnership with **Palmer-Donavin** across the Southeast. Over the past 12 months, Palmer-Donavin has added Tando Composites' portfolio to its branches in Knoxville, TN; Duncan, SC; Darlington, SC; Raleigh, NC; and Richmond, VA.

The Polymeric Exterior Products Association (PEPA), the trade association representing the wide range of polymeric exterior building products used in North America, announced that **QXO** has joined the association as its newest member company.

IG Railing is partnering with **Material Sales Midwest** to accelerate the category shift to glass railing with dealers and contractors. MSM will initially cover the geography of IG stocking distributor K+R Wholesale in their service territories of Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma.

Amble Wood Company announced its launch as a manufacturer and national distributor of premium wood products, delivering specification- and dealer-ready solutions for siding, soffits, and other architectural applications direct to dealers. The company's products, under the Cascade Collection, includes premium species, custom-milled and finished to meet the evolving needs of modern construction and architectural design.

WHAT'S TRENDING

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



Huskey Building Supply mourns death of CEO Austin Huskey



NAHB announces Best of IBS winners



Do it Best Group announces distribution center optimization plan



Builders FirstSource to partner with Blitzy for AI software development

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CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY #4

A STORY ABOUT REIMAGINING COMMUNITY

We've spent most of our careers in construction, remodeling and local real estate investment, so when we purchased Piscitello's Home Center in August 2022, some wondered why we were entering hardware retail. While the property itself had value, we saw a greater opportunity: not just to acquire an aging 36,000-square-foot building, but to restore a long-standing community institution and reimagine what a local home-improvement destination could be.

For more than 65 years, Piscitello's had served the community, but over time the business struggled with outdated systems, reduced hours, limited assortments, and declining traffic.

Though we had no retail experience, we understood how to identify potential and bring projects back to life. With Orgill's support, we modernized every aspect of the operation—installing a new POS system, redesigning the store layout, improving merchandising, enhancing our digital presence, and completing a full interior renovation while staying open for business.

Our most impactful move was creating a multi-tenant home-improvement community on the property. Today, Piscitello's operates alongside three new pole buildings and a diverse group of local service businesses. Eleven businesses now share the site, driving cross-referrals and delivering a level of service big-box stores simply can't match.

Piscitello's now operates seven days a week, has grown from eight to eighteen employees, and continues to attract both DIYers and contractors. What started as a real estate project became a revitalized community hub—and this is only the beginning.

Dave + Lisa Colver

Dave & Lisa Colver

Owners | Piscitello's Home Center | Easton, Pennsylvania

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APR 26-29

NEXTGEN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
Kalispell, MT | lbmadvantage.com

JUL 23-26

BMSA SUMMER CONFERENCE
Virginia Beach, VA | mybmsa.org

SEP 14-16

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

SEP 14-18

BCMC 2026
Columbus, OH | bcmcshow.com

SEP 23-25

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

SEP 25-28

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

LBM STRATEGIES 2026 CONFERENCE

OCT 14-16

Milwaukee, WI | lbmstrategies.com

OCT 28-30

LMC EXPO 2026
Philadelphia, PA | lmc.net

NOV 4-6

NAWLA TRADERS MARKET
Anaheim, CA | nawla.org

NOV 9-11

FALL PLANNING CONFERENCE
Everett, MA | lbmadvantage.com

NOV 17-19

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2027 NAHB INTERNATIONAL
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Las Vegas, NV | buildersshow.com

MAR 5-7

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From Boards to Buy-In: How Better Decking Displays Drive Sales

Why the Showroom Matters More Than Ever in Decking

Decking has become one of the most design-driven categories in the yard. Today's customers aren't just choosing boards; they're envisioning how they'll live outdoors. That shift has elevated the role of the showroom from a place to *view products* to a place to *experience possibilities*.

A well-merchandised outdoor living display doesn't just showcase options. In-store displays can simplify decisions, build confidence, and help your sales team close with clarity. The TimberTech approach to showroom experience and merchandising is built around one simple idea: **making it easier for customers to say yes.**

From Product Display to Customer Journey

Many decking displays focus heavily on SKUs, samples, and color chips. While those elements matter, they don't always reflect how customers really shop.

The most effective decking showrooms guide customers through a natural decision journey:

Inspiration: What could my outdoor space look like?

Comparison: What's the difference between good, better, and best?

Confidence: Why is this the right choice for my home and lifestyle?

TimberTech merchandising supports this journey by organizing products in ways that align with customer thinking, by material type, performance level, and design aesthetic, rather than overwhelming shoppers with technical details too early in the conversation. To help spark early conversations and guide undecided shoppers, TimberTech offers a Deck Planning Guide and Checklist designed to engage customers who are just beginning their research.

timbertech.com/start-your-journey



Merchandising That Works

A strong outdoor living display should work just as hard for your team as it does for your customers.

TimberTech delivers impactful merchandising that brings clarity and structure to the outdoor living category, emphasizing:

- Clear visual hierarchy that quickly explains material differences, such as composite versus PVC.
- Good-better-best segmentation to support natural tradeup conversations.
- Lifestyle-driven visuals that show realworld applications.
- Side-by-side comparisons that make performance benefits easier to understand.

When displays are intuitive, your team will spend less time explaining basics and more time discussing value, longevity, and design. These are the conversations that drive higher ticket averages and stronger close rates.



Designed to fit your space, TimberTech slatwall displays maximize wall space, open up the showroom floor, and support more productive sales conversations.

Creating a Premium Experience Without a Massive Footprint

Premium merchandising doesn't necessarily correlate with a large showroom. A strong experience is less about square footage and more about intentional design.

TimberTech showroom philosophy focuses on:

- Vertical and modular displays that maximize impact in smaller spaces
- Curated selections instead of walls packed with samples
- Touch-and-feel elements that reinforce quality and realism
- Consistent branding that builds trust and recognition

In many cases, a focused, well-designed display outperforms a larger, cluttered one, especially when it tells a clear story and reduces decision fatigue.

Why Experience-Driven Displays Convert Better

Decking is an investment purchase. Customers want reassurance that they're choosing something that will perform well, hold up over time, and still look great years down the road.

When your showroom experience:

- Educates without overwhelming
- Highlights performance visually, not just verbally
- Reinforces durability, low maintenance, and design versatility

It reduces hesitation and shortens the sales cycle. Dealers consistently see stronger results when customers can see, touch, and compare premium decking options in a structured, intentional way.

The Bottom Line:

Your decking display isn't just a fixture. It's a sales tool.

By investing in experience-driven merchandising, dealers can:

- Increase customer confidence
- Support higher-margin trade-ups
- Improve sales team effectiveness
- Differentiate from competitors who rely on loose samples alone

As decking demand continues to grow, the dealers who focus on how they present the category, not just what they stock, will be best positioned to win.

Interested in elevating your showroom?

Work with your Weyerhaeuser distribution partners to explore TimberTech merchandising solutions designed to fit your space, your customers, and your sales goals.

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wy.com/Distribution

BY RICK DAVIS

THIRTY YEARS AGO, I first told the story about an Oldsmobile salesman who impressed me by differentiating himself from the stereotypical car salesman. It's a story I've told more than 1,000 times and now includes an explanation for young people who have never heard of an Oldsmobile, specifically that it is a big, boxy, boring four-door car similar to a Buick.

I was in the process of buying my first unused car while starting a new job in Chicago. The original car salesman started the conversation by asking how he might help me. Strangely, we were standing in front of the exact model and color of car I wanted. I told him so and he quickly proceeded to the next step (at least in his mind) of negotiating a price by asking me what kind of car I would be trading in.

It turned out that I didn't have a trade-in because I had just given up the use of a company vehicle and had negotiated a car allowance with my new position. Instantly, he began a process of sales pressure. He asked, "If I can show you a way to get behind the wheel of this car in front of us for less than \$400 per month, would that be within your car allowance?"

STORIES SELL

The obvious lesson is that he hadn't remotely understood my situation, nor the implications of a car allowance. The allowance might need to cover insurance premiums, operating expenses, and repairs. More importantly, he hadn't really established the details of my specific product needs. I bolted and apprehensively sought out a different dealership.

Like most of us, I expected the worst when I toured the next showroom and was surprised when a salesperson calmly allowed me to browse before approaching to ask, "Mind if I ask you a question?" I nodded. The salesperson then asked, "Please share with me, what changed in your life that brought you into our dealership today?"

It was a stunning, unexpected, and welcomed question. In fact, he quickly got me talking about my favorite subject—me! This approach provides a valuable lesson every salesperson should learn. The story has more legs and includes



illustrations of presentation strategies, discovery of needs, and a segue into the next step of the buying process. For the purposes of today's lesson, the importance of the story is ... the story.

As a member of the National Speakers Association, I've been privileged to learn from some of the best speakers in the world. The one thing that top earners most assuredly do to keep an audience engaged is tell stories. It is the best method to hold interest and make a point. Thus, for decades, I've used and taught a three-step approach to crafting a presentation that actually influences.

1. Share a concept. In the case of the Oldsmobile story, the idea is to get the buyer talking about their favorite subject. Most people agree that this is the best way to launch a conversation, yet few have actually crafted an icebreaker that works. This story illustrates the power of the icebreaker.

2. Tell a story. Stories illustrate and engage. They bring the listener into a place in which they can relate. In this case, nearly everyone has encountered a high-pressure salesperson. Most in the audience agree that it is not an exception, but rather the expectation when encountering a car salesperson. Thus, the story has impact because of the surprising twist of an engaging question, along with additional lessons learned as the story unfolds.

3. Apply the story to your audience. In this case, this story sets the stage for an entire curriculum by illustrating the power of understanding the buyer's situation. The concept facilitates lectures and exercises on defining ice-breaking questions, deeper discovery or prospect needs, and consultative sales techniques.

Lessons in humor have taught me that the word Buick is funnier than Oldsmobile because "K" sounds are simply funny. I wish it had been a Buick, not only because it's funnier, but having purchased an Oldsmobile horribly dates me. But what are you going to do? If you have a good story that works, stick with it to make your point. It's the winning formula when it comes to making a presentation with impact.

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



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BY BRADLEY HARTMANN

THE “POINT GOD” WAS IN PURGATORY. Well, Atlanta, anyway. Chris Paul, the 12-time All-Star point guard for the Los Angeles Clippers, was left by his team at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. His coaches and teammates had had enough.

In the middle of their East Coast road trip, Clippers’ president informed Paul his run with the team—and most likely his career—was ending there.

“This is no way to treat a legend!” was the consensus outside the team. Inside it, there was relief. Paul constantly questioned the team’s strategy, refused to speak with the coach, and berated teammates. But this isn’t about Chris Paul or basketball; this is about every LBM firm that has an aging sales rep who helped build the company. How you guide these legends into the fourth quarter of their careers is a leadership decision. Done well, it strengthens culture. Done poorly, it fractures teams.

LEADING SALES SUCCESSION WITH CLARITY AND STANDARDS

Sales managers often have deep relationships with these reps. Honoring those relationships—and these individuals facing the undefeated foe of Father Time—while continuing to serve customers better is not easy. But not impossible.

The root cause of the old guard’s pain is simple: One day you’re the MVP. The next day you’re invisible. The response is predictable: grasping for control, bitterness, criticism.

But aging doesn’t give you a license to be mean. During a February sales workshop, a member of the old guard said, “These kids who wear AirPods all day long are idiots.” I said, “That’s not a very nice thing to say,” before noting the CEO seated behind him (age 54) was wearing AirPods.

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

His sales expertise was an asset to the team. His contempt was a liability. When a sales culture normalizes dismissiveness and disdain for teammates, it destroys trust and lowers performance. It puts at risk the very thing we’re paid to do: serve customers better.

On a recent call with a West Coast LBM dealer, a sales manager shared a win. A veteran rep had retired, and the manager brought a young gun to meet a builder who’d been a loyal customer. Once the handoff felt secure, the manager asked, “Could we potentially supply you windows?”

“Oh yeah,” the VP of construction said. “I’ve brought that up for the last two years.” The previous rep never followed up. The conversation uncovered a \$400,000 opportunity—closed three weeks later.

But here’s the gut punch: In September 2025, just months before being dumped in ATL, Harvard Business Review published an article titled “Every Team Needs a Super-Facilitator.”

Guess who the primary example was? Chris Paul. Four times he joined new teams. Four times they posted their best record ever. They called it “The Chris Paul Effect.”

The best veterans don’t cling to the spotlight—they raise the standard for everyone around them. Paul knew this. For years, he mentored younger players, recognized their potential, and helped them improve.

If you want to assist the old guard in retiring with dignity and without limiting growth, here are the three moves that matter most.

First, eliminate confusion about the role. Establish clear goals around revenue, margin, and new business. Document expectations for time in account management versus intentional selling. Closing out a career with dignity does not mean eliminating expectations.

Second, expand your options. Move from commission to salary? Reduce territory? Allocate time to mentoring? Build a phased exit plan tied to customer handoff a year before you think you need it.

Third, enforce We > Me. Legendary NBA coach Phil Jackson said that good teams become great when teammates trust each other enough to “surrender the Me for the We.” Managers can’t “let it slide” with the old guard. Without clear standards of behavior, the culture devolves into gossip and passive aggression—and serving customers becomes secondary.

Your LBM firm isn’t a family. It’s a team. And the best players—regardless of age—are the ones who make everyone around them better. The veterans who finish strong remember that super-facilitators don’t just win games, they change franchises.

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BY THEA DUDLEY

Hi Thea,
We are in the middle of moving to a new ERP system. In the meantime, we have old overdue balances that I am needing to do collection calls on. These are not going super well for me. I will recover, but felt pretty defeated after several calls. I am convinced I can learn to hold my end in these calls, but after an hour or two of it today, I decided to reach out for some coaching. Would you have any tips you could share with me? Some type of script I could roughly follow—ANY advice would be so helpful and appreciated.

— Down, Deflated, but not Ditchin’

CONFIDENCE IN COLLECTIONS

Dear Ditchin’,

Have you ever observed a cat when they are stalking something? They will sit, study, and observe, watching patiently waiting for the opportune time to strike. Bird, mouse, lizard, rat, squirrel, whatever their prey is. They burrow in, keenly plotting, waiting for the right time, not afraid to make the attempt, and if they miscalculate, they regroup, and start the process over. They seem completely unfazed by the process, always anticipating success. That’s your script.

It would be much easier to go the direct route. Something like, “Hey, you’re past due and you and I both know it, so when are you paying us, and no, I don’t care why you’re late, I just need you to live up to your obligation.” But people are sensitive and hard truths upset them. It makes them feel like you’re slandering them or offending them by having the bad form to ask for payment.

When you get ready to make those calls, take some lessons from the cat. Pause a few moments and study the account. Arm yourself. How old are the invoices? What project or product? How many times have you reached out? What have the excuses or promises been? What options do you have? Before you make the call, know what you are talking about. Collecting money is an art. If you’re going to do it well, you need patience, knowledge, confidence in the approach, and to be prepared for the pathways the conversation can go.

How you respond to the pushback or promises—that is where you strike. Don’t be afraid to call out the issues. “We have invoices that are 147 days old that date back to last year. We’ve had multiple promises to pay, and I was told back in May that a check was put in the mail. It hasn’t made it.”

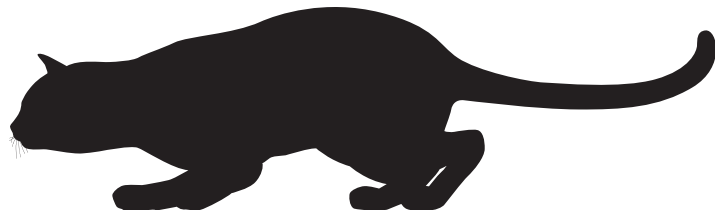
Depending on what the response is, you will need to be prepared to follow that up. “I’ve been promised payment several times, I can take a credit card or check by phone, or send you the link to our payment portal, but I need the payment.” If they still push back, you have choices. Let them know you heard them, but at this point, you may have to move the account forward. Mean it. You’re not begging and they are not doing you a favor by paying you. This was a business arrangement.

They may ask you what that means, they may not say anything except, “okay,” or the classic, “do whatever.” If they ask what you mean, tell them, “We will have to move the account forward, which may include collection action.” “This can’t go on forever.” I like to keep it loose, keep my options open.

Collecting old money is like watching a cat stalk its prey—silent, unblinking, and just patient enough to make everyone else uncomfortable. You move with intention, watch every twitch, and when the time is right, you strike with the kind of precision that makes the sales team back away from your desk. It may not be pretty, but it’s polite and effective—and honestly, a little satisfying.



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





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BY JOHN D. WAGNER

WHAT THE KODIAK ACQUISITION MEANS TO YOU

IT'S AN IMPRESSIVE NUMBER, \$2.25 billion. That's what QXO will pay (in cash and stock) for Kodiak Building Products. QXO picks up 110 locations in 26 states. But business owners thinking about selling shouldn't focus on the sale price, but on the *multiple of EBITDA* that QXO paid, which is TEV/EBITDA. Kodiak's multiple (variously calculated as a multi-year average, or 2025, or trailing 12 months at closing) is about 10.7X EBITDA. (For context, through 2025, Builders FirstSource 2025 total enterprise value/EBITDA was 10-11X; and it is improving so far in 2026.)

Our firm has sold companies for multiples as low as 4X—for commodity-heavy operations and high customer concentration—to well over 7X, for companies firing on all cylinders, meaning strong sales around/above \$50mm, good GP and EBITDA percentages, a diverse product mix, and low customer concentration.

I'm sure you're asking, "If Kodiak gets 10.7X, why would I take less?"

Well, for starters, it's unlikely you have \$2.4 billion in annual sales, meaning size matters. The attributes of the high-achieving companies just mentioned can certainly get a solid multiple, but Kodiak's coverage in 26 states and \$221 million in 2025 EBITDA lifts the Kodiak multiple because there's ample free flowing cash, and their market share gives Kodiak/QXO dealers buying advantages and retail pricing power (which supports GP\$/GPM% and EBITDA\$/EBITDA%).

The good news for sellers is that there is a *multiple arbitrage*—a "spread" between the multiple QXO trades at and what your company would trade at. That spread will keep fueling the roll-up that has created hundreds of "blue collar millionaires" who have taken their companies to market.

Think of it this way: What would be the incentive for a company that trades at 10X EBITDA to buy another company that trades at 10X EBITDA? Sure, there's buying power and

market share, but that's not always the motivating factor in acquisitions. Indeed, the acquisition of a company with an EBITDA multiple that matches the acquirer is not accretive to the acquirer (after accounting for financing, synergies, tax attributes, reinvestment needs, and integration costs). However, when the acquirer trades at a higher multiple than the target company, where the spread has the acquirer at, say, 10.7X and the seller at 7X or lower, makes sense. The deal would be viewed by most boards as accretive and an appropriate use of capital. As that spread decays, there is less justification for the acquisition.

One of the main topics of conversation we have with prospective clients in our firm is what TEV (total enterprise value, or acquisition value) we can obtain in a sale, and what the multiple is. Since our firm has transacted nearly 60 deals and \$1.5 billion in transaction values, we can peg, pretty much to the "half a turn" of the TEV you would attain. We determine this by knowing from experience what multiple your company would trade at, after we examine the KPIs that are health indicators: Sales, COGS\$ and COGS%, GP\$ and GPM%, OPEX\$ and OPEX%, and EBITDA\$ and EBITDA%.

If your company is not in a high multiple range, it's because, against consensus benchmarks among today's acquirers and sellers, you may not be demonstrating top-flight performance. For instance, take GP% and EBITDA%. No matter what your sales, these KPIs indicate the efficiency with which you move from a sales dollar to an EBITDA dollar; and those two KPIs account for both COGs and OPEX. In today's LBM market, for retailers (as opposed to specialty distributors or component manufacturers) if your EBITDA% is meaningfully under 10%, the multiple offered for your company will probably not be in the lofty >7X range; whereas if your EBITDA% is in elite territory, meaning 12% or higher, the resulting multiple offered will reward that performance.

No matter what you are offered for your company, the acquirer is highly motivated to find ways to maximize the spread between what they are trading at and what they will offer for your company. And it's your investment banker's job to make the case that any offer recognizes the quality not only of your KPIs, but also the value of other attributes that may lift the TEV, such as market share, size, location, culture, reputation, quality employees, leadership, and a solid continuity plan for transition to new ownership.

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



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BY RUSS KATHREIN

EARLY IN MY CAREER, I believed that results were the ultimate measure of leadership. Sales growth, margin improvement, expense control, and market share. If the numbers were strong, I assumed I was doing my job well. If they were exceptional, I assumed I was building a legacy.

Over time, I have come to see that legacy has very little to do with numbers.

The scoreboard matters. We are in business to perform. But when your career is over, no one gathers around to reminisce about the quarter you exceeded your plan by 3%. They do not tell stories about your reload optimization strategy or the year you expanded margin by 50 basis points. Those metrics may have earned you a bonus or a promotion, but they do not define your legacy. What people remember is the impact you had on them.

Maya Angelou said it well: *“People will not remember what you said or what you did, but they will remember how you made them feel.”* In leadership, that statement carries real weight. Your team will not recall every directive you gave or every initiative you launched. They will remember whether they felt respected, challenged, supported, and seen.

LEAVING YOUR LEGACY

I once worked with a manager who was intensely focused on short-term results. He was intelligent, driven, and highly competitive. Senior leadership noticed. He earned promotions and increased responsibility.

From the outside, his career appeared to be a success story. But if you looked more closely, you saw something different.

He spent the majority of his time managing upward. He was highly attentive to what his superiors wanted and made sure they saw his accomplishments. Very little of his energy was directed sideways toward peers or downward toward the people who worked for him. He equated leadership with personal advancement and organizational performance.

He did not invest much time in developing his team. Coaching conversations were rare. Feedback was transactional. Delegation was about efficiency, not growth. If someone performed well, he took the result as confirmation of his leadership. If someone struggled, he often replaced them.

Over time, the impact became clear. People did what they were asked, but little more. They met expectations, but they did not stretch. They complied, but they did not commit. They understood that their manager’s primary interest was in how their performance reflected on him. Trust never fully developed. Collaboration was limited. Innovation was minimal.

When he eventually moved on, there was no deep bench of leaders ready to step up. There were no protégés who spoke about how he had shaped their careers. There was no lasting imprint on the culture of the organization. The numbers had been good. The legacy was thin.

That experience forced me to reexamine my own definition of success. As I have progressed in my career, I find that the most meaningful moments are not tied to quarterly performance. They are tied to people.

It is the call from a former team member who has been promoted and wants advice. It is the message from someone who says that a difficult conversation we had years ago changed the way they lead. It is watching someone you once coached develop confidence and competence that exceeds your own. Those are the moments that endure.

For newer managers, this can be difficult to accept. Early in your career, results are visible and measurable. Development is slower and less tangible. It requires patience. It requires you to invest in conversations that may not pay off this quarter. It requires you to care about the aspirations and growth of people whose names may never appear on a scorecard.

But if you want to leave a legacy, you must shift your focus. Ask yourself a simple question: if you left your role tomorrow, who would be better because you were there?

Would your team have grown in capability? Would they have more confidence? Would they trust leadership more because of your example? Would there be people ready to take on greater responsibility because you prepared them?

Results matter. They always will. But results are temporary. People are enduring.

At the end of your career, your title will be given to someone else. Your office will be reassigned. Your performance reports will be archived. What remains are the leaders you developed, the confidence you built, and the culture you influenced.

That is your legacy. Build it intentionally.

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

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CONTRACTUAL CLARITY

WHY SHOULD DEALERS TAKE THE TIME TO CAREFULLY REVIEW CONTRACTS?

One of the most critical features of any contract is risk transfer. Contracts provide a vehicle to appropriately transfer risk downstream to the proper parties within the context of the laws and regulations governing the jurisdiction at issue. For dealers, contract review of risk transfer is especially important for two key reasons:

1. To confirm proper risk transfer downstream. Dealers routinely hire subcontractors and other parties to perform work on their behalf. Contracts should clearly transfer responsibility for that work to the appropriate party. Failing to confirm proper risk transfer within the contracts, or not having contracts at all, will likely result in assuming another party's liability. Inadequate contract reviews can lead to a business taking responsibility for someone else's errors.

2. To avoid entering into overreaching contracts. It is not uncommon for a general contractor (GC) to transfer risk downstream the same way that dealers should to those they hire. However, many GC's start by asking for more than what's appropriate. At PLM, we have seen situations where a dealer enters a contract that has insurance form requirements for forms that have not been available in the industry for years. Ultimately, that dealer opened themselves up to potential liability that would not be covered by their insurance program, and they had significant trouble getting paid for the work they completed. Such an example highlights how important it is that contract requirements be reviewed before signing an agreement.

WHAT GAPS ARE MOST COMMONLY SEEN IN CONTRACTS THAT CAN CAUSE ISSUES LATER ON?

Not having a contract at all. This is more common than it should be. When issues arise, it does not matter how well a lumber dealer knows or trusts the party performing work on their behalf. That party is not typically the one filing a lawsuit. In an increasingly litigious environment, operating without a contract exposes dealers to unnecessary and substantial risk.

Inadequate risk transfer provisions. Just because a contractor is insured does not mean dealers may benefit from that existing insurance coverage in the event of a claim. Adequate risk transfer requires several contractual requirements including a hold harmless/indemnity clause, additional insured status for ongoing and completed operations, waiver of subrogation, primary and non-contributory endorsement, insurance limits at least equal to the hiring dealer, and the requirement for production of certificates of insurance that evidence these items. If any of these items are missing from the contract, risk transfer is inadequate and subject to gaps that may cause serious issues later. Contractual review and the use of standard contract wording for risk transfer can help mitigate this issue.

Failure to review policy exclusions. Even when the contract contains proper insurance requirements, problems can arise if the hired party's policy includes exclusions that eliminate coverage for the work being performed. For example, residential contracting exclusions are common and can



negate coverage in certain situations. Some contracts specifically prohibit such exclusions as an added safeguard. Reviewing the hired party's schedule of policy forms helps identify these issues before work begins.

Poor recordkeeping. A contract cannot be enforced if it cannot be located. Maintaining organized and accessible records is critical. Dealers achieve the best outcomes when the responsibility for contract review and documentation is assigned to experienced internal personnel or outside counsel who can ensure compliance and maintain thorough records.

WHAT SHOULD DEALERS DO IF THEY UNCOVER A CONTRACT GAP?

Contract gaps should be addressed immediately. That may mean revising indemnification language, tightening insurance requirements or implementing a standardized risk transfer checklist. Dealers who wait until a claim is filed will find it is too late to address gaps. Once litigation begins, especially in jurisdictions where tear-out costs may be recoverable as damages, expenses can escalate quickly. While examples of contractual language for adequate risk transfer can be found online, it is recommended that contract wording be reviewed by appropriate counsel.

WHAT INSURANCE OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR ASSESSING RISK IN THESE KINDS OF CONTRACTS?

The best recommendation for dealers is to work closely with counsel and consult their insurance providers to evaluate their contractual risk transfer practices. At Pennsylvania Lumbers Mutual Insurance Company, our experienced team can help dealers to ensure risk transfer requirements are addressed in contracts with installers.

Additional precautionary measures also begin with careful contractor vetting. Reputable contractors should not resist reasonable indemnification or insurance requirements. Dealers that cultivate long-term relationships with qualified installers and properly document those relationships are far less likely to encounter unexpected coverage gaps or disputes later.

LBM dealers with additional questions should contact our team by visiting plmins.com, emailing us at CustServ@plmins.com or calling 1-800-752-1895 to learn more about ensuring contractual clarity and ensuring proper risk transfer.

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DALE MERCER

ALLIED BUILDING STORES

Dale Mercer is president of Allied Building Stores, where he works with independent lumber and building material dealers to support purchasing decisions and operational consistency. His perspective has been shaped by long-term involvement in the building materials industry and exposure to a broad range of market conditions.



What's the No. 1 thing dealers should know about Allied Building Stores?

What truly sets ABS apart is not just purchasing power, but the depth and timeliness of our market intelligence. Our members benefit from ongoing market alerts, analysis, and guidance from long-tenured buyers and traders with deep market expertise who actively monitor conditions across key product categories. This allows dealers to make informed buying decisions based on real market movement, not speculation or outdated information. In an environment where timing matters as much as price, having access to clear and credible insight is critical.

What are the advantages to working with a co-op like Allied Building Stores?

The cooperative model aligns incentives differently than traditional buying groups or corporate structures. In a co-op, members are owners rather than customers. That ownership creates a long-term focus on sustainability, shared success, and informed decision making.

For ABS dealers, this means gaining purchasing leverage without giving up control or autonomy. It also means access to shared expertise and transparent communication. Members are not reacting to directives from a corporate office. Instead, they are benefiting from collective knowledge, including market intelligence developed by experienced buyers and traders whose sole focus is helping members buy smarter.

A co-op also allows dealers to maintain their local identity while still operating with the advantages of scale. That balance is increasingly important as independent dealers face pressure from larger competitors with deeper resources but less local understanding.

ABS recently marked its 60th anniversary. What values have contributed to its longevity?

ABS has remained relevant for 60 years by staying grounded in its founding values while adapting to changing market conditions. From the beginning, the organization was built on cooperation, trust, and a belief that independent dealers are stronger when they share knowledge and resources.

A key factor in our longevity has been disciplined decision making informed by experience. ABS has weathered multiple economic cycles, supply chain disruptions, and pricing swings by relying on seasoned buyers and leadership who understand the long-term implications of short-term market shifts. That experience allows the co-op to provide steady guidance during periods of uncertainty rather than reacting impulsively.

Equally important is the culture of the organization. Strong relationships and open communication between dealers, vendors, and the ABS team have allowed the co-op to evolve without losing its identity or purpose.

What unique offerings does ABS have that members should take advantage of?

While purchasing programs are essential, ABS delivers value through a broader ecosystem of insight, education, and connection. ABS members have access to detailed market information that instructs them when or when not to enter into a particular market. They also have access to timely market alerts, forward-looking analysis, and direct communication with buyers who are actively engaged in the market every day.

ABS hosts two buying markets each year that combine purchasing opportunities with educational sessions led by industry professionals. These events give members direct access to vendors while also providing insight into broader market conditions and trends. In addition, this is where the dealers and the ABS team come together to share information, discuss challenges, and exchange real-world perspectives. This structure reinforces informed purchasing decisions and strengthens peer-to-peer collaboration across the co-op.

Any new innovations ABS members can expect in 2026?

ABS will continue to incorporate technology as another tool to enhance the way market intelligence, purchasing insights, and operational information are provided to our members. ABS, as always, is using the latest technology to support faster analysis, clearer documentation, and more timely communication, complementing our expertise and judgment that define the co-op. ■

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IF AI IS JUST 'INTERESTING,' YOU'RE ALREADY BEHIND

BY JOHN MARSHALL



TAKE TWO YARDS in the same market with the same vendors, customers, and headwinds. One makes decisions in a day, the other takes a week—not because one has smarter people, but because one gets to clarity faster.

That's what generative AI is when used correctly: a speed-to-clarity tool that drives faster decision-making.

In LBM, decisions don't slow down because leaders lack experience. They slow down because inputs are scattered: reports show up late, spreadsheets need cleanup, emails live in too many places, takeoffs have gaps, and contracts take too long to digest. Leadership ends up spending meeting time gathering facts instead of making calls.

AI compresses that cycle—not by replacing judgment, but by accelerating the work that feeds judgment.

Why AI speeds decision-making

It reduces "information drag." A lot of delay is just friction—finding the right files, summarizing the same issue again, turning raw notes into a clear problem statement, or pulling key points out of a long document. AI can organize and summarize quickly, so leaders spend time deciding, not hunting.

It creates a shared starting point. Meetings bog down when five people walk in with five versions of the story. AI can consolidate inputs into one clean summary: what happened, what changed, what's at risk, and what decision is needed. When everyone starts on the same page, discussions tighten up fast.

It speeds up option-building. Decisions stall when nobody has time to lay out scenarios clearly. AI helps structure options—assumptions, tradeoffs, risks, and next steps—so the team reacts to a well-framed set of choices instead of debating in circles. It doesn't make the decision for you; it helps you reach it faster with fewer blind spots.

The mistake: treating AI like a side hobby

Most companies start with scattered usage—emails here, marketing there, and an occasional question in operations—then leadership wonders why nothing changes. AI doesn't become leverage until it has ownership.

The missing role: an AI Champion

Every company that wants AI integrated across departments needs an AI Champion. Not an IT gatekeeper and not a cheerleader—a practical driver.

Their job is to push this into real workflows—sales, purchasing, estimating, operations, finance, and leadership—while coaching people, sharing wins, and standardizing what "good" looks like so results aren't random. They also create an environment where AI is embraced, not shunned. Most resistance is uncertainty: people don't want to look foolish, don't know what's acceptable, or don't know where AI fits.

This takes commitment from the top. If ownership treats AI like a curiosity, the team will too. When leadership uses it openly and expects it to support execution, adoption becomes cultural.

What's a dealer or manufacturer to do?

1. Name the Champion and give them real time. If they don't have time, it won't happen.
2. Pick three workflows—not 10. Start where speed and consistency matter most.
3. Run a 30-day push. Weekly wins, weekly examples, weekly improvement.
4. Standardize tools intentionally. One primary platform and a secondary tool can work—if they're approved and understood.
5. Set expectations from the top. AI isn't a novelty. It's a business tool.

Monitoring was fine when AI was new. Now, the advantage goes to the companies that build an operating rhythm around it—and move faster because of it. ■

John Marshall is a former LBM executive who advises dealers and manufacturers on how to implement practical, non-automated Generative AI in every department to drive faster decisions and stronger execution.

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REAL ISSUES. REAL ANSWERS.

A BIGGER SHARE

OF THE DECK & RAILING MARKET

As the weather grows warmer, homeowners are spending more time outside, and many of them are rethinking their outdoor spaces. According to the National Association of Home Builders, 79% of recent and prospective home buyers rated a deck as an essential or desirable feature. Additionally, decks were the eighth most popular remodeling project of 2025. The challenge and the opportunity for dealers: translating those market realities into sales.



What insights would you share with the LBM dealer who posed this scenario: “We keep hearing that outdoor living—especially decking and railing—is booming. In our yards, though, sales are only up low single digits year-over-year, and we’re clearly underperforming in the market. We’ve invested in decent in-store displays, carry good–better–best offerings from leading brands, and feel competitive on product selection—but the category still isn’t gaining traction. For dealers who’ve successfully grown decking and railing: what made the biggest difference for you? Was it changes to the sales process, contractor/homeowner outreach, merchandising, pricing strategy, or something else entirely?”

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

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

“Train your staff on the treated materials with the help of your supplier. Most people do not know how to use treated lumber and it fails. Be the expert for them to call. Pick the best product by price, color, and warranty for the composite products and be able to ‘sell’ it against the other brands. Learn about the pros and cons of composite materials. Be the ‘go-to’ for advice in your area.”

“Our marketing efforts are geared to educating the customer base on benefits of composite versus treated lumber decking.”

“Committing to a brand and making sure that they are promoting you on their dealer finder is a huge help.”

“We do quite a lot of outreach: We have decking events, we advertise quite a bit, and we spend a great deal of time and energy making sure we know as much about the decking products as anyone around.”

“I found that committing to a brand as your first choice as a seller helps give customers direction.”

“Unfortunately, we are in the same boat as the above dealer. We sell several decks in the year, but not enough.”

“Samples and displays.”

“Have better technicians working for the company. If someone’s been to a big box and then comes to our company, there’s no comparison of expertise.”

“Focus on one brand, the one with the best service and selection. When you give your sales team a product they believe in, it is much easier for them to sell.”

“Social media.”

“Have a knowledgeable sales staff on all brands of decking.”

“This is an entirely different game with different customer segment and marketing channels.”

“Train the sales department. A knowledgeable staff will help sell decking products. Prices in many cases will be close with your competition. Qualified instruction helps.”

“This requires change in product mix, training of staff, and alignment of marketing strategies.”

“Contractor/homeowner outreach.”

“A few of our sales associates are passionate and highly knowledgeable about decking. We let them run with it, in addition to the other categories we supply. They’ve created curated events and trips in conjunction with the vendors to grow the product sector with our existing customers.”

“Offer jobsite consults. Take the time to measure, suggest added products, and educate the customer on their options. Physical literature is helpful.”

“We have no experience in this category.”

BY LBM JOURNAL READERS

“As long as sales continue to climb, it doesn’t matter if those sales are in the single digit (gains).”

“You could increase your advertising budget. It’s also imperative that there are always one or two people around who are familiar with the product.”

“Don’t over-diversify. Too many decking brands could create problems.”

“I feel like that could be me so I don’t really have the solution.”

“Getting our sales folks confident in quoting decking onto jobs and adding any finishing elements has been key to growth.”

“Change in the sales process. We fully committed and became a Trex stocking dealer. We also started reaching out to and pursued decking-only contractors. This allowed us to ask specific questions about their preferences in choosing a supplier and make sure we implemented solutions to those questions.”

“Convenience is critical, so keep a good stock of inventory.”

“Educate on the differences in types of options and price points—initially pricing strategy, then moving towards correct product alignment and in-stock positions.”

“Try leading with the right decking for the customers’ needs and showing one or two other options to keep things simple.”

“It is a combo of all—we have a good base of specialty deck installers, as well as more and more contractors that are offering composites as a baseline for their new construction projects. We also have an annual deck expo in the spring that is targeted to contractors, remodelers, and homeowners to show new category offerings and offer hands on displays as well as the opportunity to talk to manufacturer reps about their products and best practices.”

“Engaging both homeowners and contractors with info when they come in to the store/showroom. This is time consuming, but usually worth the effort.”

“Sales process and contractor/homeowner outreach would be where I would direct them.”

Responses from wholesale distributors, manufacturers, and service providers:

“Education and hands-on training.”

“If I were in your seat, I’d ask one question: Who in our company wakes up every day thinking only about growing outdoor living—and what tools have we given them to win?”

“Invest time in targeting the correct customers/contractors in the outdoor living subcategory.”

“Unfortunately for the next year or so, tariffs will cripple the industry and slow down demand.”

“Disposable income and constructions starts are at all-time lows.”

“Installed sales!”

“The successful ones we see are providing the look/feel of the railing captured right on their house (superimposed on a picture they took). The lumberyard provides the different options with pricing and they get emotional about a certain type and how it looks on their home.”

“Package sales, including dry area under deck. Offer products other sellers ignore.”

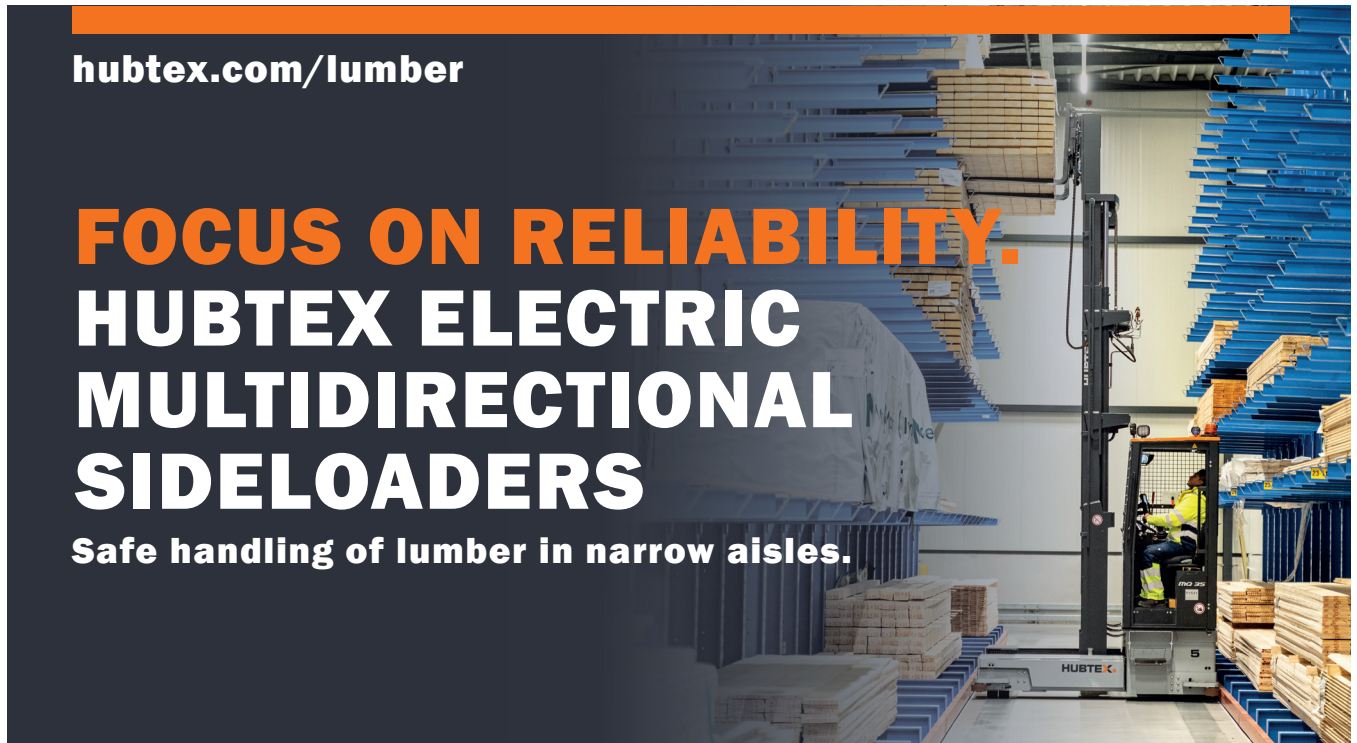
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“These customers have become specialists in their field and drive the product.”

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“I’d start by reframing the problem: decking and railing isn’t primarily a product category—it’s a project category. Dealers who win don’t just sell boards and balusters, they help contractors and homeowners confidently complete an outdoor living project from idea to install. Here are the areas where I’ve seen the biggest impact:

1. The sales process has to shift from ‘SKU selling’ to ‘project selling.’ If your counter team is quoting line items instead of helping design a full package—materials, accessories, fasteners, rail, lighting—you’ll always lose share. The dealers growing fastest have:

- A dedicated outdoor living specialist, not just generalists
- Simple design/estimating tools at the counter
- Standardized bundles that make quoting fast and consistent
- Follow-up systems for bids that don’t close on day one

2. Contractor activation beats showroom perfection. Great displays matter, but influence lives with the builder. The dealers gaining share are:

- Running contractor demo days and install trainings
- Co-marketing with top 20 deck builders
- Offering jobsite delivery and takeoff support
- Creating loyalty programs tied to decking volume, not just total purchases

3. Homeowner demand needs to be pulled through the dealer. Many yards rely on walk-in traffic, but the winners are generating demand:

- Local digital campaigns that drive homeowners to the dealer and their preferred contractors
- Inspiration guides with real local projects and pricing ranges
- In-store consultations by appointment, not just retail browsing

4. Pricing strategy has to match the market reality. Being ‘competitive’ isn’t enough. Successful dealers often:

- Protect contractor margins on the core boards
- Make profit on accessories, rail, and upgrades
- Use tiered good–better–best packages instead of a la carte pricing

5. Operational friction kills growth. If it’s hard to quote, hard to pull, or hard to deliver complete orders, contractors will buy elsewhere—even at higher prices. Speed and reliability are as important as brand mix.

Bottom line: The turning point is when decking and railing stops being treated like another commodity aisle and becomes a managed business unit with ownership, contractor relationships, and a true project-based sales process. Displays get people interested. The system gets deals closed.” ▶

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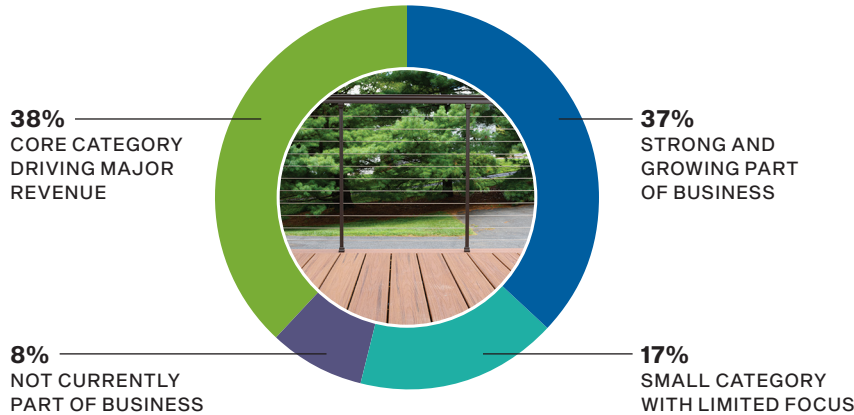
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How important is the decking/railing category to your business?



Comments from dealers:

“We sell treated lumber in an area that is limited to the product. We have a reputation of explaining to the customer the correct treatment for the job.”

“We are currently increasing our stock items in decking, structural composite lumber, and railing.”

“We stock two high-quality brands at two locations. This gives us stocking dealer status on both brands at all our locations. This is the case for decking. In railing, we stock one top quality brand.”

“We consistently sell millions of dollars’ worth of decking and railing products every year.”

“Our location near the Finger Lakes opens up many sales opportunities for specialty decking and railing.”

“Warehouse support is essential. If you have a good warehouse to help keep material available to you this will help keep your on-hand inventory dollars lower.”

“It’s a relatively small category for us but we’re expecting strong growth this year.”

“One of our locations specializes in decking and railing.”

“Our building materials business is an important sector for us. It is always profitable, the market, even if it slows down, it still exists, and with good management you can ensure liquidity and momentum.”

“Buying patterns are changing. Lower-maintenance plastics are changing how younger consumers think about decks. Set it and forget it is the new norm. Regardless of cost.”

“We sell decking and railing, but it is not a primary source of revenue for this business.”

“It is probably 20% of my business every year.”

“There is more attention given to enjoying the outdoor deck space. This lifestyle change came from the COVID years and has continued. What was once a good product became a core product for us.”

“Framing, windows, doors, roofing and trim make up the core. Decking and railing are a small part.”

“Stocking multiple lines/brands of railing and stocking full line of Trex decking.”

“Our store is located near the largest freshwater lake west of the Mississippi River, so naturally people want docks and decks to enjoy the view.”

“It’s currently a small portion of our sales but seems like it should be ripe for growth.”

“Decking materials over the years, with the expansion of the category, have become high ticket items which add mightily to gross sales and the bottom line.”

Comments from vendors:

“Significant volume and opportunity for growth.”

“Kebony wood.”

“Decking/railing is an important part of our business with the Azek line.”

“All outdoor living products, specifically hard woods, have increased in popularity and, as a result, has translated to sales.”

“We sell cable rail and aluminum railing systems mainly.”

“Proprietary deck drainage systems. New and/or existing decks.” ■

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LBM JOURNAL[®] **DEALER** OF THE YEAR **2026**

CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER

There's no question that the entrepreneurial spirit is alive in the lumber/building material industry. A hearty congratulations to **LBM JOURNAL'S 2026 DEALER OF THE YEAR** award winners.



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CATEGORY: \$10MM

ISSAQUAH LUMBER

Issaquah, WA

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Issaquah Lumber Owner Chad Amble said the company has reinvented itself a number of times in its 135-year history, and will keep growing and changing to serve its customers.

ISSAQUAH LUMBER CARVES OUT NEW NICHE

LBM JOURNAL'S DEALER OF THE YEAR AWARDS, sponsored by DMSi, recognize LBM companies of different sizes that epitomize the entrepreneurial spirit. By our definition, a Dealer of the Year describes a company in which leadership excels at identifying underserved—or emerging—markets, satisfying customers, and constantly working to grow and improve business. While these companies represent vastly different operations, the common thread is their fierce commitment to finding ever-better ways to serve their customers and their communities.

BY WENDY STURGES

NEARLY 140 YEARS AFTER its founding in the forests of the Pacific Northwest, Issaquah Lumber has evolved from a regional cedar mill into one of the most specialized wood suppliers in the country.

Located about 20 miles east of Seattle, the single-location lumberyard operates differently than many independent dealers. Rather than competing on commodity volume, Issaquah Lumber has built its business around high-performance wood products, custom milling, and technical expertise that serves builders, architects, and design professionals in the PNW and across the country.

“We’re not trying to be the biggest lumberyard,” said Owner Chad Amble. “We’re focused on being the best partner for customers who need something beyond commodity materials. When we bring in rough lumber and turn

it into custom siding, moulding, or specialty profiles, we’re creating solutions—not just moving product.”

The company still offers the cedar it was originally known for, and a number of other wood species, but it has also expanded to carry a wide range of siding, decking, paneling, trim and moulding, and hardware in addition to thermally-modified wood and custom orders.

But even after more than a century in business, the company is staying nimble. Amble—who has been with Issaquah since 2003—said the company is always growing and changing. “We’re a 135-year-old company that still thinks like a startup,” Amble said. “We honor the legacy that built this yard, but we’re constantly asking what the next chapter looks like—whether that’s new product categories, new partnerships, or new markets.” ▶



The majority of Issaquah Lumber's team has been with the company 10-plus years, bringing a breadth of experience and knowledge to their customers.

A unique approach

Famous for its multiple forests and parks, the PNW is home to a number of quality lumberyards, but what makes Issaquah special is its ability to customize wood for nearly any project, Amble said.

“What sets Issaquah Lumber apart from everybody else is our machinery. About 65% of what we sell, we make here on site. We bring in rough material and then we make custom siding, custom molding, arbors and trellis timbers. If we don’t already have the knife to produce that for you, we can create that knife for you.”

One common theme throughout Issaquah Lumber’s operation is education, from continued learning about new and emerging materials to working with customers and contractors on finding innovative construction solutions.

That also comes through in the company’s outreach and marketing. The company’s new podcast, “The Lumber Lounge,” features talks with industry leaders, architects and manufacturers. The company has also invested in a new website and rebranding to help reach the public that previously only knew them as a cedar mill.

Back at the yard, Issaquah’s expertise in customization comes largely from Issaquah Lumber’s long-tenured team members, Amble said, many of whom have been with the company for more than two decades.

“Our shortest-tenured employee has been here 10 years and I have guys out back that I hired the first year that I was here, 20 some years ago. That was a big reason why I bought the company, is because of how supportive those guys were.”

That commitment to creating a positive culture also extends to the local community, where Issaquah Lumber is an active participant, Amble said. The company regularly contributes donations and materials to local education nonprofits, children’s groups, and the local senior center.

“One of the things that was very important to me when I bought the company, was that not only does this benefit my family and employees, but that this would benefit our community,” Amble said. “It’s really important for us to give back into the community. Those [organizations] helped take care of us as we were growing up. We’re going to try and help take care of the next generation coming through.”

Charting new territory

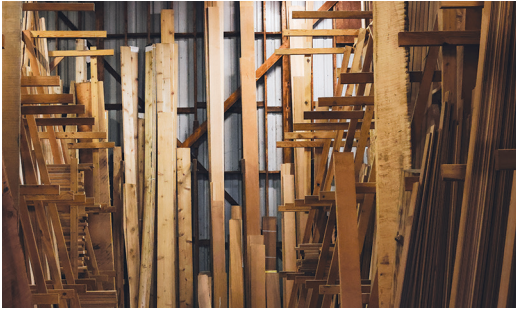
When considering the company’s years of experience curating a selection of high-end lumber products by working with companies like ThermoWood, Accoya, and the GRAD System, Amble said he spotted a hole in the industry.

Many dealers are aware of the growing popularity of thermally-modified wood due to its durability and sustainable sourcing. However, because the products are still relatively underrepresented in the LBM industry and unknown to contractors, many lumberyards don’t yet offer them.

“One of the things that makes us very unique is that we create products, and so it puts us in this space where I have competition on multiple fronts. You need the basic stuff we would buy from a distributor: fascia, decking, bevel siding, materials that any traditional lumberyard

One common theme throughout Issaquah Lumber’s operation is education, from continued learning about new and emerging materials to working with customers and contractors on finding innovative construction solutions.





is going to have. But we also have this custom side, like the Cascade Collection, a product that we're putting on the GRAD rail system. Where we've always run into issues is that we sell that product directly to a customer or contractor, but if that customer walks into another lumberyard for whatever reason and says, 'Hey, I want Cascade Collection,' they're not going to call Issaquah Lumber and ask for pricing because I'm their competitor."

To help make those products more widely available, Amble is launching the Amble Wood Company, a distribution organization that will sell to mid-to-high-end dealers and lumberyards around the U.S.

"We're focusing on quality, not quantity. That's going to allow us to have a bigger footprint in selling our material into other markets that are looking for it, without having to call Issaquah Lumber and feel like [they're buying from competition]. So that's become a real focus for us."

Amble said the new distribution company is a big part of the future; rather than opening

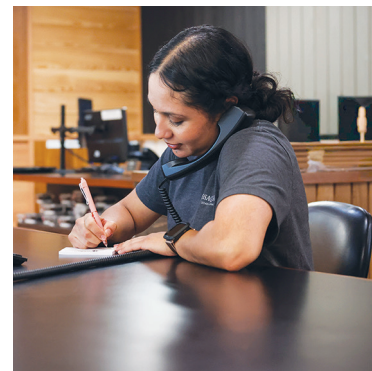
new locations, Amble Wood Co. allows for strategic expansion while giving customers more access to quality materials.

"That's a big growth model for us, and just continuing to push into the modified materials. That, coupled with our milling capacity and our partnership throughout the supply chain for modified material, that's a huge growth process for us going forward, throughout the country." ■

GET TO KNOW ...



FOUNDED:	1888
LOCATIONS:	1
EMPLOYEES:	17
CUSTOMER BASE:	60% Pro / 40% Retail
OWNERSHIP:	Family
PRIMARY BUSINESS ERP:	Epicor BisTrack



SUMMIT DECKING: HELPING DEALERS AND CONTRACTORS WIN BIGGER PROJECTS

In today's outdoor living market, growth rarely comes from simply adding another product to the assortment. Dealers grow by helping contractors win better projects. These are projects that are easier to sell, larger in scope, and more profitable for everyone involved.

The Deckorators® Summit decking line was created with that goal in mind.

Summit decking is an innovative composite deck board that provides contractors with an accessible entry into Deckorators decking made with Surestone® technology. It delivers dependable performance and design-forward looks that work across a wide range of projects. Just as important, Summit serves as a natural starting point. It opens the door to railing, accessories, and other Deckorators products that work seamlessly together to complete the job.

PROVEN PERFORMANCE IN A DEMANDING MARKET

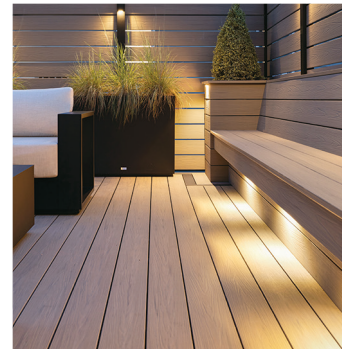
Minneapolis is one of the most competitive composite decking markets in the country. Cold-weather performance matters. Contractors are selective. Homeowners expect durability without sacrificing style.

When dealers in the region led with Summit early in the project conversation, contractors responded. Homeowners followed. Summit became a dependable option contractors could specify with confidence, helping win more jobs in a crowded category. As projects took shape, contractors naturally extended those jobs with coordinating Deckorators railing and accessories. This expanded project scope while keeping the overall solution cohesive.

The result was simple but powerful. Projects grew larger, sell-through strengthened, and more value was captured per job.

INNOVATION CONTRACTORS CAN RELY ON

Summit decking provides benefits contractors can clearly explain to homeowners. These include durability, slip resistance, and heat mitigation for greater comfort underfoot.



Equally important, Summit delivers consistency from board to board. That consistency helps reduce installation challenges and minimize callbacks after the job is complete.

This reliability builds contractor confidence and strengthens the dealer's position as a trusted source for quality outdoor products.

THE VALUE OF BEING A DECKORATORS DEALER

Being a Deckorators dealer means more than carrying decking. It means aligning with a brand built around helping dealers and contractors succeed together.

Deckorators partners with dealers through coordinated product offerings, sales tools, and market support. These resources are designed to help contractors win more complete and more profitable outdoor projects.

The result is stronger relationships, increased opportunity per job, and a brand partnership built around shared success.

YOUR CUSTOMERS **WILL NOTICE**



SUMMIT DECKING IN CLIFFSIDE

Give your customers what they want: high-quality products they can count on. With Deckorators® decking and railing backed by industry-leading warranties, you get more than a beautiful outdoor space. You get innovation your customers believe in, confidence that lasts, and trust that endures.

Learn more at [deckorators.com/dealer](https://www.deckorators.com/dealer).

Dec~~X~~**orators**® **STAND OUT**™

NADRA CODE UPDATE: WHAT DECKING PROS AND SUPPLIERS SHOULD KNOW

BY ERIN KOSS, EI

AT THIS YEAR'S NADRA SUMMIT, one theme came through loud and clear: building codes are evolving faster than ever, and deck and railing pros—along with the dealers who serve them—who stay ahead of changes are better positioned to reduce risk, control costs, and win customer trust.

As we move into the next ICC code cycle, several proposed and adopted changes will directly impact deck design, materials, fasteners, and inspections. While code development can feel distant from day-to-day construction, today's proposals shape tomorrow's jobsite expectations.

Key code trends impacting deck construction

One of the most consistent areas of focus in recent code cycles has been deck safety and performance clarity. This includes refinements—not wholesale rewrites—to longstanding provisions related to guards, connections, and load paths. We are seeing increased attention paid to:

Guard and railing performance, including clearer language around infill limitations and load application.

Connection detailing, particularly at ledger attachments and post-to-beam interfaces.

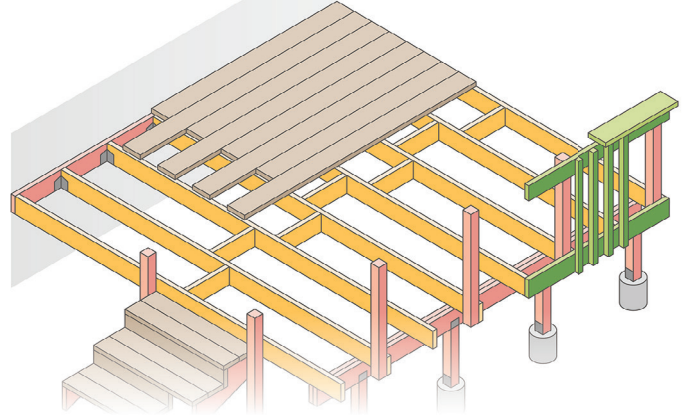
Material qualification and validation, where third-party evaluation reports, inspections, and documented approvals play a critical role—especially for proprietary systems, alternative materials, and salvage lumber.

These changes are not intended to complicate construction. Instead, they aim to reduce ambiguity and improve consistency across jurisdictions. However, they do place greater emphasis on documentation, inspections, and proper system selection.

The growing importance of code visibility

A persistent challenge for deck and railing professionals is not just what the model codes say, but how those provisions are adopted and amended locally. Two jurisdictions can enforce the same model code very differently.

This is where North American Deck & Railing Association (NADRA) has focused significant effort on behalf of the industry. Beyond active participation in ICC code hearings, NADRA has partnered with FiscalNote to make code and policy tracking practical and accessible.



Through FiscalNote, NADRA members can access:

1. Interactive policy maps showing code adoption and amendments by state
2. Deck-focused building code dashboards
3. Customized weekly legislative updates, highlighting changes that directly affect construction

These tools allow members to see what's coming—before requirements show up on the jobsite. For more information, visit nadra.org/code#!form/NADRACodeCommittee.

Why trusted advisors matter more than ever

As codes become more technical, product suppliers, and distributors are increasingly viewed as trusted advisors—not just material providers. Dealers and manufacturers who stay current on code changes, inspection requirements, and product approvals provide real value. They help deck and railing professionals:

1. Select compliant systems the first time
2. Navigate inspections with confidence
3. Reduce delays, rework, and costly field corrections

This advisory role does not replace the authority of the building official; it supports it. Deck and railing professionals benefit from partners who can interpret requirements, provide documentation, and flag potential issues early.

NADRA's role—and why membership matters

NADRA's code work is practical, technical, and safety focused. From guard provisions to material standards and performance-based alternatives, NADRA representatives ensure deck-specific realities are understood during code development.

Equally important is NADRA's educational mission. Through in-depth training, NADRA provides guidance on deck construction best practices, common failure points, and applicable code requirements, while also offering certification programs for deck inspectors. These efforts promote consistency, professionalism, and safety across the industry.

For LBM dealers, suppliers, and manufacturers, NADRA membership offers:

1. Early visibility into proposed code and policy changes
2. Access to technical and legislative tracking tools
3. A direct voice in shaping requirements that affect your products and customers

In today's environment, being informed is no longer optional—it's a competitive advantage. ■

Erin Koss, EI is a senior code compliance engineer at PrimeSource Building Products and currently serves as deck subcommittee chair for NADRA.

SELL DECKING? ALIGN WITH NADRA.ORG

NADRA Leads Deck Safety, Education, and Industry Standards Across North America.

JOIN THE DECKING COMMUNITY

NADRA advances deck safety through code advocacy, certification, continuing education, and industry best practices. Our resources help lumberyards strengthen contractor relationships, reduce liability exposure, and stay ahead of evolving standards.

JOIN NADRA



Strengthen relationships with deck builders and contractors



Stay current on deck codes and safety standards



Support Deck Safety Month[®] and industry initiatives



Position your company as a trusted deck resource



Background Photo Courtesy: DeckRemodelers

One of the most anticipated events among deck builders, dealers and manufacturers is the North American Deck and Railing Association's (NADRA) recognition of outstanding deck, porch, and outdoor projects. This year, NADRA celebrated the winners of the National+ Deck Competition on Jan. 8 in Clearwater Beach, FL. Deck building pros from across North America (and beyond) entered this 16th annual competition. The projects were judged by a panel of experts (including LBM Journal's Associate Publisher Jodie Cook Redwood) based on use of space, functionality, creativity, use of materials, and overall visual appeal. Of the many notable projects, pictured here are an assortment of first place winners. See the complete gallery of winners at [NADRA.org](https://www.nadra.org).

AWARD WINNING DECKS



OVERALL WINNER

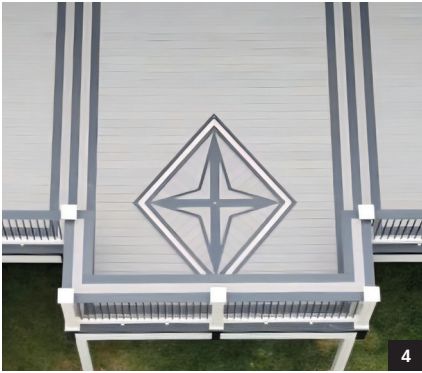
CATEGORIES

Unique Feature
Alternative Deck \$251k-\$500k
Limitless \$201k-\$400k

COMPANY DR. DECKS

PARTNERS

AGS Stainless, FastenMaster,
TimberTech, Regal ideas,
Mitsubishi Chemical America,
CUTEK® North America



1 CATEGORIES
Limitless Over \$400k
Railing on a Deck
COMPANY
California Deck Pros Inc.
PARTNERS
Deckorators, FastenMaster,
33 North Design Collaborative,
Owens Corning Lumber

2 CATEGORY
Hardscape
COMPANY
Decksapces of Virginia LLC

3 CATEGORY
Alternative Deck Under \$35k
COMPANY
Hometown Builders Unlimited LLC
PARTNERS
CAMO, ProWood, Digger Specialties,
TimberTech

4 CATEGORY
Alternative Deck \$36k-\$70k
COMPANY
Casey Fence and Deck LLC
PARTNERS
CAMO, LMT Mercer Group,
Decks & Docks Company, Fiberon,
FastenMaster

5 CATEGORY
Limitless Under \$200k
COMPANY
DeckRemodelers.com
PARTNERS
TimberTech, Haven Underdeck

6 CATEGORIES
Open Porch
Inlay
COMPANY
Hen-House Decks
PARTNERS
CAMO, TimberTech, FastenMaster,
Tru-Scapes Deck Lighting,
Under The Sun

7 CATEGORY
Pool Deck
COMPANY
Fraser Decks and Patio Covers
PARTNER
TimberTech

8 CATEGORY
Wood Deck Over \$50k
COMPANY
SG Construction
PARTNERS
CAMO, Feeney Inc.

9 CATEGORY
Dock
COMPANY
Q-ICE Builders LLC
PARTNERS
CAMO, TimberTech



REDEFINING EXOTIC HARDWOOD: EVA-LAST INTRODUCES PIONEER TRUE IPE AND WEATHERED IPE

Eva-Last has expanded its premium Pioneer decking range with the introduction of two new colors to its Indigenous Collection: *True Ipe* and *Weathered Ipe*. Designed to capture the luxury of rare hardwoods, these additions respond directly to growing demand for high-end timeless aesthetics, delivered in a modern, high-performance composite.

True Ipe captures the deep, rich tones associated with freshly milled exotic hardwood. Subtle tonal variation and intricate grain detailing give the board the warmth and character architects and homeowners expect from natural timber. *Weathered Ipe*, by contrast, recreates the soft, silvered patina that develops as Ipe ages in the elements, offering a timeworn, coastal-inspired look without waiting years for it to evolve.



Both colors are produced using Pioneer's advanced high-resolution digital print technology that captures the depth, grain movement, and natural variation of rare hardwoods with remarkable precision. The result is a surface that is virtually indistinguishable from real wood, while delivering the performance and reliability today's spaces require.

At the core of Pioneer's performance is its bamboo foamed PVC and glass fiber reinforced construction. This engineered structure provides superior dimensional stability, extended span capability, and long-term durability. An advanced wear layer protects against fading, moisture, stains, scratches, and harsh weather conditions. Unlike traditional hardwood, there is no need for oiling, sanding, staining, or sealing to maintain its appearance.



The 8-inch Pioneer profile further strengthens its value proposition, requiring up to 25% fewer boards and fasteners while accelerating installation time. For dealers and contractors, this translates into measurable labor efficiencies and improved project economics.

The launch of *True Ipe* and *Weathered Ipe* comes at a time when the natural hardwood market faces increasing challenges. Ipe, often referred to as Brazilian Walnut or "ironwood," has long been considered the gold standard in premium decking. However, these trees can take more than a century to mature and are harvested primarily from South American rainforests. As global forestry data shows, a significant percentage of commercially traded hardwood species are now classified as threatened. Supply restrictions, export controls, compliance requirements, and freight volatility continue to create uncertainty across the supply chain.

Even when responsibly sourced, real Ipe requires ongoing maintenance to preserve its rich color and structural integrity. Climate-specific installation practices and lifecycle upkeep add further cost and risk for builders and property owners.

In this environment, the market is shifting from harvesting rare timber to replicating it responsibly, and Eva-Last is leading that evolution with Pioneer. With the addition of *True Ipe* and *Weathered Ipe*, Pioneer delivers the depth and richness of one of the world's most coveted hardwoods, backed by engineered performance, supply reliability, and long-term value. For dealers and contractors, it offers luxury aesthetics without the uncertainty.

EVA-LAST[®]
INSPIRED BY NATURE, DESIGNED FOR LIFE.

THE LOOK OF IPE REMAINS. THE RISK DOES NOT.

Contact us today. Become a distributor or dealer: USAsales@eva-last.com



THE BEAUTY OF WOOD IN SUSTAINABLE COMPOSITE



Pioneer

THE ART OF WOOD, WITHOUT
THE IMPACT

GFR | GLASS FIBER
REINFORCED



Apex PLUS

REINFORCED, CAPPED
BAMBOO FOAMED-PVC
COMPOSITE

GFR | GLASS FIBER
REINFORCED



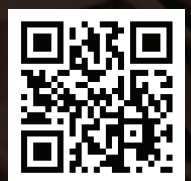
Infinity IS

CAPPED BAMBOO PE
COMPOSITE

DECKING | CLADDING | FENCING | FASTENERS

EVA-LAST®

INSPIRED BY NATURE, DESIGNED FOR LIFE.



Eva-Last decking is leading the composite category with specialized bamboo composite decking that delivers a more natural appearance and a differentiated alternative to conventional composites. Our thoughtfully engineered products are designed with sustainability, performance, and innovation in mind. Partner with Eva-Last and offer your customers the next generation of composite decking.

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DECKS

A look at trends driving the decking market in 2026

BY JAMES ANDERSON

NATIONAL HOUSING DATA SHOWS deck inclusion in new homes remains below 18%, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Construction. For LBM dealers and distributors, that number doesn't tell the whole story. It does, however, set the stage for a stronger, more profitable era for decking—especially in custom home construction and high-end remodel markets.

Custom builds may represent a smaller slice of total housing starts, but they also make up a disproportionately larger share of premium decking materials and system upgrades. And that's where one opportunity lies. In the custom builder market, decks are far from an afterthought. They're often part of the architectural plan from Day 1—particularly in markets with walkout basements, elevated foundations, and building lots with natural views.

Jessica Hewitt, marketing director at Humboldt Sawmill Company, says decking dealers should be aware of "quiet luxury," a term that she says, "emphasizes



Eva-Last has introduced two new colors in the Indigenous Collection of Pioneer Decking. True Ipe and Weathered Ipe (shown), are designed to showcase the high variation in color and texture for an authentic replication of tropical hardwoods. The result is the look of Ipe with all the benefits of Pioneer Bamboo PVC Decking.

timelessness, understated elegance, and natural materials over splashy opulence and potentially toxic man-made products.”

Dealers incorporating this “quiet luxury” into their decking inventory should be sure to focus on “quality materials and tried-and-true colors over new products or colors that are untested in the marketplace. Premium wood decking—in particular, redwood—fits the bill as a natural material that has been used for decades and offers beauty and long-lasting durability,” she says.

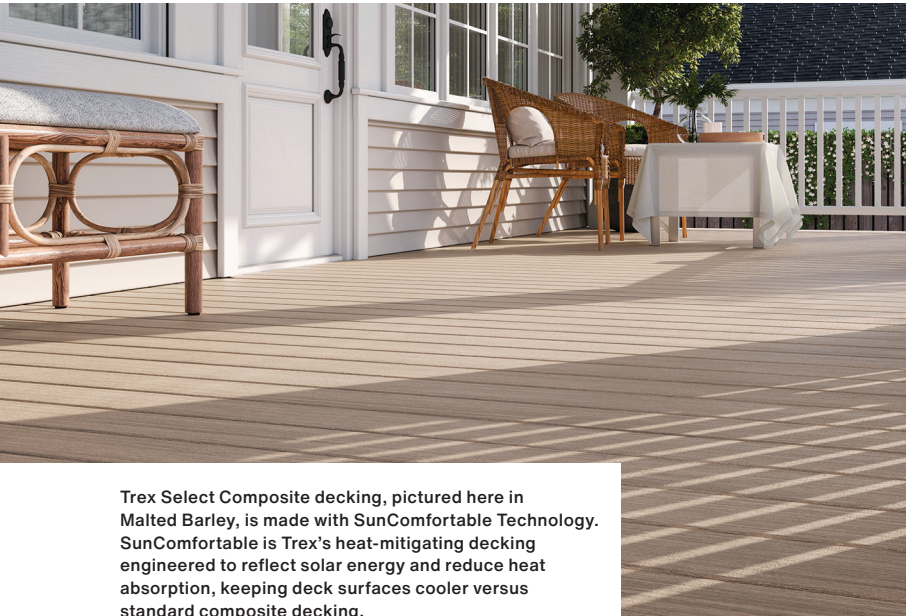
Darren Bennett, vice president of sales and marketing at ProWood, offers a similar perspective. “The industry has gone through a recalibration period, and what’s emerging is a market focused on durability, longevity, and value,” he says.

A strong opportunity for dealers, Bennett says, is to reframe decking conversations around complete systems rather than surface boards alone. When dealers help con-

tractors think holistically about framing, treatment, application, and environment, they increase sales and customer loyalty. “Availability and ease of purchase still matter. Dealers that stock consistent, clearly labeled, jobsite-ready products make contractors’ lives easier, and that keeps them coming back,” Bennett adds.

Ryan Kemp, executive vice president at Deckorators, expects to see growth in the composite decking space. That’s because homeowners and contractors alike in these markets, “see and understand the long-term value in lower maintenance and durability.”

“I believe we’ll see the decking market settling back into steady gains after a period where many homeowners hit pause,” Kemp says. “Much of this anticipated growth is tied to repair and replacement, but we also expect to see homeowners revisit new-build projects that may have been put on hold.” ▶



Trex Select Composite decking, pictured here in Malted Barley, is made with SunComfortable Technology. SunComfortable is Trex's heat-mitigating decking engineered to reflect solar energy and reduce heat absorption, keeping deck surfaces cooler versus standard composite decking.

ProWood TrueFrame Joist is an all-wood, pressure-treated framing solution designed for use in deck substructures. Made with No. 1 Grade Southern Yellow Pine, the joists are kiln-dried after treatment (KDAT) and manufactured to meet UC4A ground contact standards. Available in 2x8, 2x10 and 2x12 lengths of 12, 14, 16, and 20 feet.



Despite sluggish growth in the decking market overall, Kevin Brennan, vice president of Pro Channel Sales at Trex, says consumers are continuing to convert from wood to alternative materials. Brennan said he believes this is driven by the growing demand for more aesthetically pleasing outdoor living spaces as well as constant shifts toward low-maintenance materials.

"History suggests that R&R [repair and remodel] spending will cycle back to a period of growth and, when it does, composite decking will continue to be a key growth opportunity with the decking market overall," Brennan says.

Brennan's colleague, Jodie Lee, senior vice president of marketing at Trex, says the company is investing more and leveraging the Trex

brand to help accelerate demand as the R&R market cycles back to growth. The brand's performance-engineered innovation roadmap is a tailwind for the category in 2026, she says, and is at the center of their communications to address real-world consumer needs across diverse environments.

Strong repair and remodel market

At GWP, makers of TIMBRA, Sales Executive Thomas Cummings said he expects continued growth in the remodeling sector, particularly driven by homeowners who prefer to improve their current homes rather than move, in order to hold onto lower interest rates.

"We are also seeing strength in the high-end market for premium products as the highest earning households are reportedly doing well in the newly dubbed 'K-shaped economy.'" The term K-shaped economy originated in the COVID-19 recovery period to describe an economic recovery in which higher income consumers—represented by the upward angle of the K—gain increased spending power.

Investment in outdoor spaces, especially among those looking at repair and remodel projects, will continue to drive growth, explains Modern Mill's Founder and CEO Chris Guimond. "Industry forecasts show the composite decking market alone is expected to grow at double-digit rates over the next several years."

Projected growth is driven in part by homeowners who are choosing to improve rather than move, Guimond adds. This means focusing on upgrades that enhance how they live day to day, while also boosting home value. "More and more of our customers are adding extensions to their home with outdoor living spaces, which is another indicator towards continued decking growth in the years ahead."

DIY homeowners are key to the continued growth in the repair and remodel segment. While the upward trending homeowners in the K-shaped economy may hire professional remodelers, those who make up the downward angle of the K are more likely to take on projects themselves.

According to David C. Hennington, senior category manager of outdoor living and specialty lumber at BlueLinX, continued innovation in decking and railing products are making projects more attainable to the DIY homeowner.

"New designs are lighter, more durable, and easier to install with simplified fastening

systems and modular components to reduce time and complexity. These advancements lower the barrier for entry for weekend projects while supporting larger, more customized outdoor expansions.”

Additionally, Hennington says, the growing popularity of outdoor living spaces for relaxation and entertainment continues to boost demand. Increased work from home flexibility has homeowners spending more time at home, driving interest in versatile outdoor environments. Continued growth in commercial and hospitality sectors, including hotels, parks, and marinas is also expected to contribute to sustained demand.

Product knowledge is power

LBM dealers can position themselves to sell more decking products by educating their salespeople and customers on the options available, says Humboldt Sawmill’s Hewitt.

“Many manufacturers offer plant tours for LBM dealers and their salespeople to learn more about their products. Humboldt Sawmill Company offers Redwood University, a chance for LBM dealers and distributors to visit our Northern California timberlands and sawmills and learn more about our products. Ongoing product knowledge support and the ability to answer customer questions is also important even after the sale is made.”

Hewitt points to Humboldt Sawmill’s partnership with Hoover Treated Wood Products to offer a redwood Class-A rated decking and siding products designed for exterior applica-

tions in Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) areas. This building code-compliant product, an LBM Journal Innovation Award winner for 2025, features “beauty and durability of natural redwood with the enhanced fire protection of a Class-A formulation.”

Chris Brown, executive vice president at Culpeper Treated Lumber, says LBM dealers can get a leg up in their markets by positioning themselves as outdoor living experts. Brown suggests that dealers create the role of outdoor living specialist in their stores.

“Customers increasingly look for inspiration and guidance, not just materials,” he says. Brown recommends in-store deck displays that incorporate hands-on stations where customers can evaluate deck boards, fasteners, and components as well as offering structured good/better/best product packages to streamline decision-making.

Product-savvy dealers are at an advantage, says Deckorators’ Kemp. “One of the biggest shifts we’re seeing is that performance and design are no longer separate conversations. On the decking side, features like fire resistance, slip resistance, and moisture protection are becoming part of everyday decision-making.”

A significant part of product knowledge is not just performance but understanding consumer trends as well. “From a design standpoint,” he says, “grays remain popular, but warmer browns and deeper, richer colors are gaining ground. Homeowners are pairing these colors with black accents for a bolder and more architectural look.”

TimberTech Vintage Collection Advanced PVC decking in Weathered Teak offers the look of real wood but with moisture and slip resistance along with Cool Touch Technology, making it ideal for water-adjacent projects. The Vintage Collection also offers fire-resistance including a Class-A flame spread rating, ignition resistance, and WUI compliance.





Deckorators Altitude decking, pictured here in Sequoia, features a natural wood-grain finish and a fire-resistant core with a Class-B flame spread rating. The boards are made of 95% recycled plastic and renewable sawdust and are capped on three sides, including through the groove, to provide enhanced moisture protection for outdoor applications.

In late 2025, Deckorators launched its Altitude decking line, featuring a natural wood-grain finish and fire-resistant core with a Class-B flame spread rating. The new line is designed to meet evolving performance and safety standards. WUI compliance makes it suitable for regions with more stringent fire safety codes. Altitude deck boards come in three colors, Sequoia (red-brown), Highland (brown), and Trailstone (gray).

Kemp says he's also seeing the front porch become more of a focal point for homeowners as they work to elevate curb appeal and expand their outdoor living spaces.

At ProWood, Bennett says that one of the biggest shifts he's seeing is increased focus on performance below the surface of the deck.

"Contractors and homeowners are paying much closer attention to substructure because that's where longevity begins. Substructure products that offer greater consistency, dimensional stability, and jobsite efficiency are gaining traction."

He's also seeing growing interest in color-treated options that need very little finish, which reduces steps on the jobsite and delivers a clean look without additional staining. More broadly, consumers are focused on the long term and turning toward materials that last.

"Pressure-treated wood continues to evolve through better preservation, tighter manufacturing standards, and smarter applications, which keeps it highly relevant in today's market," he says.

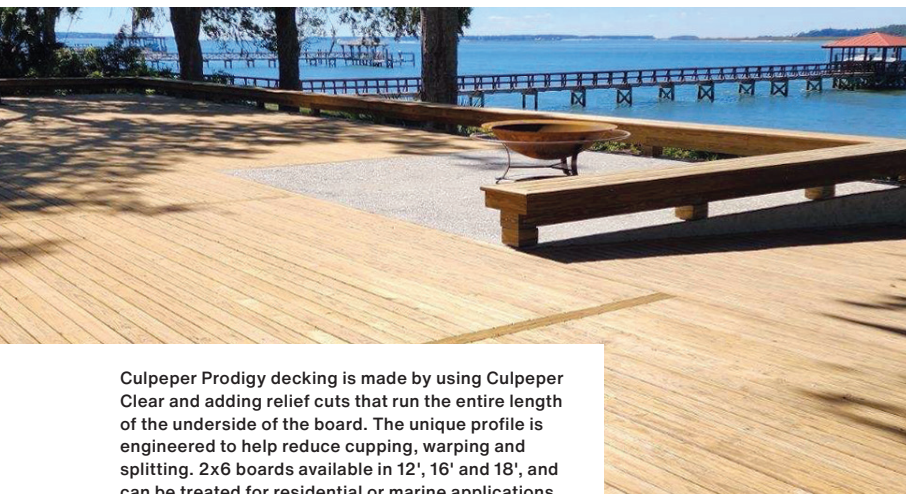
Last year, ProWood launched its TrueFrame Joist, an all-wood, pressure-treated framing solution designed for use in deck substructures.

"We make TrueFrame using No. 1 grade Southern Yellow Pine. The joists feature fewer and smaller knots for improved strength and a more appealing appearance. TrueFrame is kiln-dried after treatment (KDAT), a process that makes the lumber lighter than laminated veneer lumber (LVL) or steel and helps reduce cupping, twisting, and warping for cleaner cuts and less culling. TrueFrame Joists feature our proprietary enhanced treatment delivering greater stability, keeping boards straighter for longer. Paired with factory planing, the treatment ensures flat edges and consistent sizing," Bennett says.

In composite decking, reducing heat absorption is a top feature homeowners are looking for, says Trex's Brennan. "Trex has more offerings with this technology than any other brand today. Boards made with our exclusive SunComfortable technology are available across the Trex decking portfolio, including options within our Transcend Lineage, Transcend, Select, and Enhance lines."

Brennan says that aesthetically, homeowners still gravitate toward deck offerings that deliver the look and feel of natural wood. Recently, Trex has introduced several new, nature-inspired colors within its revamped Trex Select decking line that feature a combination of lighter hues and refined graining that Bennett says is resonating well with customers.

Tim Sandlund, marketing director for Americas at Eva-Last, says he is also seeing homeowners gravitate more toward realistic wood aesthetics.



Culpeper Prodigy decking is made by using Culpeper Clear and adding relief cuts that run the entire length of the underside of the board. The unique profile is engineered to help reduce cupping, warping and splitting. 2x6 boards available in 12', 16' and 18', and can be treated for residential or marine applications.

“Consumers want the beauty and variation of natural hardwoods like Ipe, without the maintenance, cost, or environmental impact. High-definition embossing, multi-tonal color variation, and realistic grain patterns are no longer premium add-ons, they are expected,” he explains.

Beyond pure looks, Sandlund says homeowners are steering toward advanced material technology. Glass-fiber reinforcement (GFR) is gaining traction for its ability to improve board strength, stiffness, and dimensional stability while reducing expansion and contraction, he says.

“Fire resistance, slip resistance, fade resistance, and heat mitigation are becoming key decision factors, especially in regions with stricter building codes or extreme climates,” he adds.

Cummings at GWP concurs. “In 2025 we launched TIMBRA, which is our brand of fire retardant, thermally-modified decking using lesser-known South American hardwoods,” he says. “Thermally modified product offerings and interest continue to grow as consumers look for extreme performance and color consistency. Interest in fire resistance is also growing on the West Coast, mainly.”

As extreme weather events become more frequent, consumers are paying closer attention to the materials used on the exterior of their homes and their outdoor spaces. Fire resistance, in particular, is emerging as a critical purchase consideration and is a trend that Chris Russell, SVP, Global Strategy, Corporate Development, IR at TimberTech, expects to continue to proliferate as both professionals and homeowners seek materials with greater resistance to ignition and flame spread.

At Trex, Brennan says one of the most significant introductions for the company’s 2026 lineup is Trex Refuge, an ignition-resistant composite decking line engineered specifically for regions with elevated fire-safety requirements.

“This cellular PVC offering is third-party tested to the industry’s most rigorous standards, meets ASTM E84 Class-A flame spread requirements and IWUIC ignition-resistant standards, and outperforms traditional wood decking in flame spread testing.”

While safety and resilience are increasingly becoming top-of-mind for homeowners, it is still aesthetics that drive initial interest in a product.

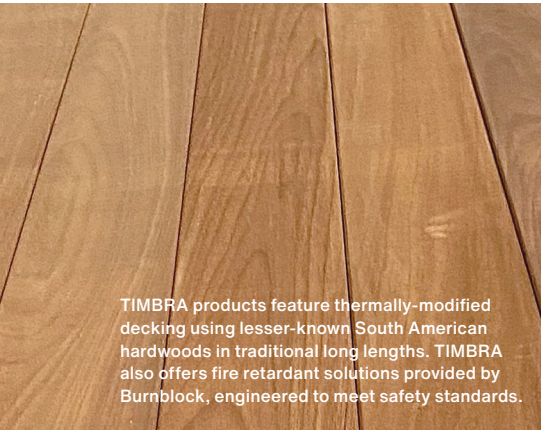


Humboldt Sawmill redwood decking is manufactured from Forest Stewardship Council (FSC C013133) certified, 100% natural materials. The decking features Class-B flame spread and is approved for use in California’s Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) fire hazard severity zones without restriction. Available in 2x4, 2x6 and 2x8 board options in lengths from 6’ to 20’.



“It’s interesting to see consumer’s tastes and preferences evolve over time as the composite decking category has grown and matured,” says Patrick Barnds, TimberTech’s SVP/GM Deck & Accessories. “We are seeing a clear shift away from dramatic, high-contrast colors that can appear artificial (for example, dark streaks of color on a light background) and toward more natural, nuanced and blended color tones. Beyond color, we are also seeing a shift away from the traditional ‘cathedral’ grain patterns on the surface of the boards that you would see on a flat-sawn piece of lumber and toward more closed, straight-grain surface textures (think rift and quarter-sawn white oak, for example). Again, I think that’s also an outcome of the evolving tastes of consumers toward a more subtle and sophisticated overall design aesthetic.” ▶

ACRE by Modern Mill decking stained with PPR proluce semitransparent color match with 897 in Laguna Beach, CA—can be painted or stained without primer in hundreds of approved colors.



TIMBRA products feature thermally-modified decking using lesser-known South American hardwoods in traditional long lengths. TIMBRA also offers fire retardant solutions provided by Burnblock, engineered to meet safety standards.

Challenges and opportunities abound

Even an upward-trending product category is not without difficulties. LBM dealers are in prime position to help solve issues for both the homeowners who select their products and the builders and remodelers who work with them.

The biggest challenge for builders, perhaps, is labor. Nearly all manufacturers pointed toward continued labor shortages as a concern for the decking segment in 2026.

“With construction needing hundreds of thousands of new workers to meet demand for construction services, there’s a big need for products that help contractors focus on efficiency,” said Modern Mill’s Guimond.

To address this, Modern Mill is focused on reducing jobsite frustration wherever possible. That means making materials that are easy to cut with standard woodworking tools, produce no harmful dust, don’t damage tools, and are simple to install, Guimond says.

“When crews can move faster and avoid the hassles that slow them down, it helps offset some of the labor constraints they’re facing. Some types of decking and specific woods may also continue to be impacted in price or availability because of tariffs on imported lumber. Domestically made products like ACRE are unimpacted by international supply challenges and keep projects moving without the uncertainty of tariff-driven price swings or material delays.”

As if labor challenges weren’t enough, the decking segment faces some serious materials restrictions in certain markets, Guimond says.

“Wildland-Urban Interface is a set of rigorous standards designed to mitigate the risk of wildfires in fire-prone living areas. Some regions on the West Coast are taking it a step further. Marin County, CA, for example, banned the use of wood exteriors in future home construction projects effective this year. This is causing a significant shift in product choices for those who are seeking alternatives to wood.”

At ProWood, Bennett says that beyond labor and pricing, higher consumer expectations around customization and performance plus regional climate difference mean the margin for error gets even smaller.

“Because of these challenges, manufacturers are investing heavily in precision, treatment standards, and logistics. The goal is to remove as much risk as possible for dealers and contractors by delivering products that show up ready to perform, regardless of where or how they’re used,” he explains. “Manufacturers are focusing on what they can control, like regional sourcing and distribution to improve availability, tighter quality oversight to ensure consistency, and innovations that reduce jobsite challenges. A renewed emphasis on education helps dealers and pros understand why treatment levels, certifications, and substructure choices matter.”

For LBM dealers and distributors, decking is no longer just a board sale. It is a system sale, a design sale, and a relationship sale. The stakes go beyond just a nice-looking place to sit outside. Today’s builders, remodelers, and homeowners need environmentally sound, code ready, and easy to install materials.

The future of decking may not be about more decks on more homes, but better decks on the right homes, sold through the right partners. That’s a future where LBM dealers are well positioned to win. ■

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CONTRIBUTING MANUFACTURERS



RYAN KEMP
Deckorators



TIM SANDLUND
Eva-Last



KEVIN BRENNAN
Trex



JODIE LEE
Trex



PATRICK BARNDTS
TimberTech



CHRIS RUSSELL
TimberTech



DARREN BENNETT
ProWood



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DECK RAILINGS



The Keylink Chesapeake Series with black vertical cable rail features unlimited rail cap options and functional, practical design suited for entertaining. The Chesapeake series is compatible with under rail lighting and engineered to exceed IRC & IBC compliance. Pictured here with Wolf Haven decking in Honeywood.

Design-driven demand, steady remodel activity, and elevated outdoor living expectations are reshaping the railing category—and creating new opportunities for LBM dealers.

DECK RAILINGS, perhaps more so even than the decks to which they're attached, are a product category in which fashion is often a step ahead of function in the minds of homeowners. For LBM dealers, railings are not only the code-compliant necessity of a new deck build, but also a focus of outdoor living space updates and remodels.

Lawrence Boyts, vice president of sales and marketing at Digger Specialties, says the ongoing demand for outdoor living experiences continues to be a key driver, particularly in the remodel market, where homeowners are investing in upgrades that add long-term value. "Growth is also supported by stronger pull-through strategies that benefit the distribution channel, improved education around proper installation practices, a loyal customer base, and the availability of products that offer both quick lead times and a wide range of choices."

Railing, in many ways, benefits the same trends that are shaping the decking industry, says Deckorators' Executive Vice President Ryan Kemp. "Our contractor partners tell us that railing decisions are happening earlier in the design process, especially on composite decks and higher-end projects," he says. "Design plays a big role here. Black aluminum, cable, and glass railings continue to gain traction because they elevate the overall look of the deck and preserve views. Even when the overall footprint of the deck doesn't change, railing upgrades can increase the value and visual impact of the project." ▶

BY JAMES ANDERSON

Oldcastle's RDI Fusion with AlumiCast water-resistant composite rails are engineered to resist splintering, rot, warping and mold. The satin-black rail and hidden brackets are available in pre-assembled panels designed for easy installation.





Trex has been very active in the railing space with the introduction of numerous new products both in its premium and entry-priced ranges, including the Signature Frameless Glass Rail (shown) and X-Series Cable Rail.

The railing category is an essential element of outdoor living. When railings need a replacement or upgrade, the job needs to be done, either by a professional builder or remodeler, or by the DIY-oriented homeowner themselves.

“Decking and outdoor living have proven to be resilient categories. Even when new construction slows or homeowners pause on larger discretionary projects, replacement and renovation work continues to show up,” says Luke Guittar, vice president of sales and marketing at Absolute Distribution, Inc. “That replacement activity makes up a significant portion of the market, and it tends to be stable. From what we’re seeing, growth in 2026 will likely be steady rather than aggressive. Confidence is rebuilding, but expectations are more grounded.”

RIGHT: Deckorators aluminum railing, pictured here in Bronze with drink rail in Sedona, features welded panels engineered for strength and ease of installation and a powder-coated finish. A rectangular rail profile with square balusters is designed to provide a contemporary feel.



FAR RIGHT: ProWood’s 4’ x 4’ Deck Railing Post Pockets are engineered to provide increased strength and stability to installed 4’ x 4’ wood posts attached to an exterior surface. The product is designed to be low maintenance and easy to install. Structural testing meets IRC and IBC requirements.

Drew Lebo, VP of product and customer experience, outdoor living at Keylink (now part of Wolf Outdoor Living) says that his company also expects to see modest growth in the outdoor living segment this year. “Most of that growth being in renovation and remodel projects,” he says. “The trend is reminiscent of the COVID-19 era when folks locked in low mortgage rates and the price of building materials skyrocketed. With homeowners staying put longer and travel costs continuing to rise, one of the easiest ways to increase enjoyment and add usable living space is by adding or upgrading decks and outdoor living spaces.”

“We expect the railing market to hold steady in 2026, with regional pockets of growth. The boom we saw in certain new-construction markets five to six years ago has softened, but more mature housing markets that are less reliant on new construction are outperforming,” says Luke Snyder, project manager at ProWood.

Homeowners are taking a more active role in shaping and designing their outdoor spaces, says Patrick Ianni, vice president of customer operations and product development at Oldcastle APG. As such, homeowners continue to drive growth in the consumer-facing markets. “This shift creates an opportunity for outdoor living brands to emphasize direct consumer interaction and build lasting relationships,” he explains. “Brands are creating products and services that are more consumer-facing, so when decking projects begin, they are seen as partners who help homeowners through the process with tools such as project guides, find-a-pro tools, and educational videos.” ▶





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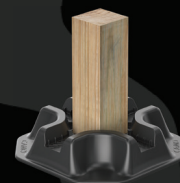
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RIGHT: Westbury VertiCable cable railing from Digger Specialties, pictured here in White Fine Texture, is designed to provide both safety and style, while offering unobstructed views. Code approved for both residential and commercial applications, the railings are engineered for durability and low maintenance.

FAR RIGHT: The Westbury Tuscany Aluminum Railing from Digger Specialties, pictured here in Bronze Fine Texture with Drink Rail, is available in 12 standard powder-coated colors, in a smooth finish or a textured look.



Ianni says consumers are finding that railing systems play a more prominent role in their stylistic choices than anticipated, which creates a stronger demand for more styles, colors, and materials. “Ultimately, industry growth is driven by consumer needs, leaving brands with no choice but to meet them where they’re at. Creating products and services that not only appeal to contractors but also homeowners is essential for success,” he says.

In 2026, builders, remodelers, and homeowners are designing decks, patios, and terraces that are seen as lived-in environments rather than just secondary spaces—places for gathering, wellness, and everyday use, says Kym Nosbisch, senior marketing director at Feeney. “This growth is driven by the desire for indoor-outdoor flow and an emphasis on comfort and materials that feel intentional and elevated,” she states. “As homeowners invest more in these spaces, they need products that balance performance and durability with design, creating outdoor spaces that feel just as ‘homey’ as interiors.”



Feeney DesignRail Modern Laser Cut Aluminum Infill Pisces Coastal Retreat collection features nine laser-cut panels designed to enhance indoor and outdoor spaces. The collection offers customization with a range of frame colors. Feeney says this series, crafted with Kerrie Kelly—award-winning designer and Feeney brand ambassador—is all about bringing innovative style to spaces.

Railings and the deck package

To ensure that deck railings and accessories are in the conversation from the moment homeowners begin the decking search, manufacturers of decking are increasingly including railings and accessories in their product offerings.

“We look at ‘decking’ as a total solution—deck boards, railings, fasteners, etc. We continue to build out our railing designs and technology platforms to offer the broadest design-forward selection in the industry,” says Jodie Lee, senior vice president of marketing at Trex.

She adds, “In a world where homeowners have fully returned to the office [and] parent carpools, and are balancing home remodel and repair needs, a decking project cannot be complicated. There is an opportunity for the decking segment to meet homeowners and contractors where they are and make planning and execution convenient and easy. We all pay for convenience, especially with services. That is an area of opportunity the decking segment cannot ignore.”

At Digger Specialties, Boyts says homeowners are looking for more options and flexibility in design, especially when it comes to color.

“We currently offer 12 standard color options to meet those preferences. There is also continued momentum toward aluminum products, driven by their durability and enhanced powder-coating technologies that deliver long-lasting performance aesthetics,” he adds.

Kemp at Deckorators says cleaner, simpler sight lines are leading design requests in the railing category. “Contractors consistently talk about minimizing visual obstruction, which is why matte black aluminum, cable, and glass systems remain so popular. Homeowners want to look beyond the railing, not at it.”

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Absolute Distribution's Guittar says his company doesn't anticipate a meaningful shift away from these trends in 2026. "This is reflected in the continued strength of systems like ADI's DekPro Prestige, which align with the market's preference for clean lines, durability, and a finished look that feels both modern and timeless across a wide range of architectural styles."

Beyond the visuals, Nosbisch at Feeney predicts that texture is going to be a major driver in trends this year. "Everyone is looking for more dimension, not just flat, uniform surfaces. Materials with texture, woven details, and tactile patterns are becoming increasingly popular," she states. "It's all about how something feels and the emotional response it creates."

Lighting also plays a factor in rail design. Trends are becoming warmer, shifting away from starkness, Nosbisch explains. "Understanding how lighting in different rooms and outdoors impacts our emotions and the way we feel is key. Our lighting and our railing have a diffuser lens, so it's not a sharp, blue LED light. The diffuser lens softens the light to create a beautiful glow ... to capture a feeling of comfort."

Biophilic design, or design that brings homeowners closer to nature, is a consistent focus of remodeling projects. Lebo at Keylink says dealers can expect to see greater demand for wood grain textures and warmer colors and tones in decking in 2026. "Black cable (both horizontal and vertical) is less reflective than traditional silver cable and virtually disappears, leaving your view as the star of the show. Despite the overall lower profile look, systems that offer a sleek, unified look of black posts, black cable, and black fittings (like Keylink) are a standout for people with an eye for detail."

Rod rail and vertical cable are both rising in popularity, he says. "Keylink offers both rod rail and a black oxide vertical cable which are starting to gain a lot of traction. Fortress's Axis Horizontal railing is a modern, on-trend answer to rod rail."

As decks are no longer an afterthought in the initial home design process, how consumers view their deck is evolving from an outdoor add-on to an expansion of their home.

"Homeowners are prioritizing outdoor living spaces with features such as gas fire pits, kitchens, bars, custom ▶

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ADI offers its DekPro Prestige Railing System in both 38" and 42" height options. The system is built with heavy-duty 3" and 4" posts engineered to provide strength and stability. Featuring vertical balusters, railing kits are available in 6' and 8' lengths for both level and stair rail.



Made with carbon steel, the Trex Select classic railing with steel mesh infill panels are used for simplified, pre-designed rail applications. Designed to deliver mixed-material appeal with an industrial aesthetic, the panels are available in sizes 36" x 72", 36" x 92" and 60" x 72".

seating, and ambient lighting that support everyday living, entertaining, and relaxation," says Ianni at Oldcastle APG.

This shift will drive demand for more personalized, functional choices that bring the inside out. Ianni says Oldcastle continues to see a shift in material preferences as well, as homeowners move away from traditional wood toward composites, PVC, and other low-maintenance alternatives. These consumer decisions are driven by durability, aesthetics, and a reduced upkeep.

"With that comes elevated features such as heat-resistant technology, slip resistance, and textures and colors that mimic the look of real wood," he says. "Homeowners are prioritizing railing, as it shapes the entire layout and structure of their deck. Brands are expanding their offerings to meet these needs, with each customer's price point, material, and style choices in mind. From the clean, sleek look of aluminum railing to the weather-resistant properties of vinyl, railing is becoming an essential part of helping decks feel more sophisticated and functional."

At Trex, Vice President of Pro Channel Sales Kevin Brennan says they are continuing to grow their railing program, which includes profiles and price points for every backyard and budget, ranging from the more affordable steel

and classic composite to industrial mesh and premium aluminum, cable and glass systems. "New systems debuting this year include Trex Select T-Rail in longer 10' lengths to optimize sightlines, Trex Select All-In-One Post Kits in Charcoal Black as well as white, and new Trex Select Steel Mesh Panels that deliver mixed-material appeal with an industrial aesthetic."

So, what does this mean for the LBM dealer looking to be more involved in railing sales than just suggesting a product that matches decking? Boyts at Digger Specialties says that creating stronger pull-through demand is critical. Supporting programs and strategies that drive end-user interest can help lumber dealers increase sales and move product more efficiently.

Even as homeowners shop and plan online, decking categories remain an in-store purchase.

"The in-store experience matters," says Kemp at Deckorators. "Touch-and-feel displays, clear comparisons, and knowledgeable associates are strong sales drivers. And the power of merchandising can't be understated: showing decking, railing, and lighting together as an integrated system can drive sales." ■

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CONTRIBUTING
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LAWRENCE BOYTS
Digger Specialties



KEVIN BRENNAN
Trex



JODIE LEE
Trex



RYAN KEMP
Deckorators



LUKE SNYDER
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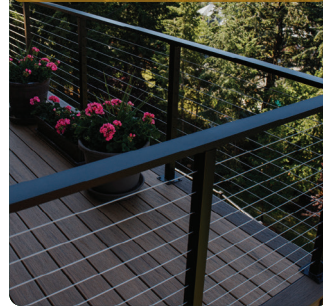
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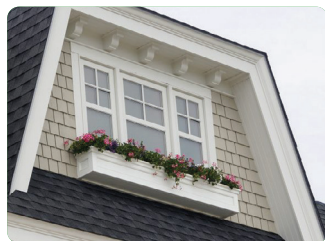


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DECK FASTENERS

Opportunity rises in the repair and remodel market

BY JAMES ANDERSON

WHEN THE OBJECTIVE OF A PRODUCT is to invisibly do its job, it's crucial to explain that product's strength, versatility, and longevity. Deck fastener manufacturers say that in a market that isn't poised for huge growth, it is more important than ever to be able to demonstrate how vital quality fastening products are to a professional deck project.

Indeed, the decking market in 2026 may not be about big expansions, but more about smaller rebuilding and remodeling, says Roderick Kabel, marketing director at DeckWise.

"Homeowners are putting money into outdoor spaces they actually use, not just something that looks good from the yard. A lot of growth is coming from repair and replacement projects as older decks reach the end of their life. At the same time, material choices are changing.

Hillman Power Pro Joist Tape is designed to deliver pro-grade waterproofing to prevent rot and extend the lifespan of decking and wood connections. The tape is engineered to self-heal around fasteners, can be applied to wet surfaces, and is repositionable for up to 15 minutes.

Thermally-modified wood, exotic hardwoods, and higher-performing composites are becoming more popular because homeowners want decks that last longer, need less upkeep, and feel like a long-term investment rather than a short-term fix.”

Fastener manufacturers are cautiously optimistic about 2026 after the year of uncertainty that 2025 brought with economic and global trade concerns. Nick Thies, senior category manager for fasteners at Midwest Fastener Corp. says that as in a post-COVID world, uncertainty has become the new normal.

With affordability as a primary concern, Hillman Group’s Director of LBM Vincent Pantaleo says that continued growth in the decking market will be driven primarily by repair, remodel, and outdoor living investments, rather than new construction alone. “Homeowners are still prioritizing projects that expand exterior living space, and decking remains one of the most attractive exterior upgrades,” he says.

Pantaleo adds that from an LBM perspective, growth will also be driven by professional builders and remodelers, who look for products that install faster, perform consistently, and meet code requirements.

Lower residential new construction starts, and a softer remodeling environment are likely to keep overall market growth muted for much of the year, says Christopher Case, VP of product



development and program management for National Nail/CAMO.

According to Case, demand is shifting. “Rather than large, ground-up projects, more activity is occurring in redecking, repairs, and targeted upgrades to existing homes. Homeowners are still willing to invest in their outdoor spaces, but they’re doing so more selectively and with a sharper focus on durability, performance, and long-term value.”

Homeowners may be cautious on big remodels, says Shaun Jennings, senior marketing manager at FastenMaster, but decks remain high-value projects that improve everyday living and resale appeal. “We’re also seeing strong demand in the repair and upgrade segment, not just full tear-outs, which keeps the category active even in tighter economic conditions,” he explains. ▶

GRK’s Metal Connector Screws are engineered to deliver strong, reliable performance while boosting jobsite productivity with faster installation, a T25 star drive recess, and exterior-rated corrosion resistance. The result is a high-strength solution that supports the industry’s shift toward longer-lasting outdoor structures and evolving building code requirements.



SaberDrive structural screws from Midwest Fasteners are designed to be suitable for engineered wood-to-wood connections, and feature a Type 17 point and serrated threads that eliminate the need for predrilling in most cases. This design is engineered to not only speed up installation but also reduce wood splitting and damage.

At SPAX, Product Manager Brett Katsma cites North American Deck & Railing Association (NADRA) statistics in saying there are 30 million decks that are past their useful life and need to be replaced or repaired. “That means that with labor shortages and materials cost increases, deck builders are looking for smarter solutions to speed up their builds to increase productivity,” he says. “Outlooks are mixed, but report steady growth for the outdoor market in 2026, according to the Leading Indicator of Remodel Activity.”

The fact that a significant share of U.S. homeowners remain locked-in to historically low mortgage rates shows promise for the deck repair and remodel market, says Leeann Starr, marketing communications manager at Grabber. “According to industry data, more than half of outstanding mortgages continue to carry interest rates at or below 4%, contributing to the reluctance to sell and buy another home at today’s higher borrowing costs. This dynamic has weighed residential buying and selling activity as homeowners choose to stay put rather than take on substantially higher mortgage payments.”

As a result, Starr says, many homeowners are now redirecting their housing budgets toward improving their existing properties rather than relocating. “Remodeling activity has remained elevated, supported by sustained spending on home upgrades and maintenance, with outdoor living spaces such as decks playing an increasing role in how people enjoy their homes.”

A challenging market

While the repair and remodel market is seen by many as a hopeful light after a year of uncertainty, challenges still persist. Costs continue to be a headwind, with uncertainty tied to imports and tariffs as well as freight.

Kabel at DeckWise says many manufacturers are responding by increasing domestic production, improving quality control, and focusing on products that last longer to help offset higher upfront costs. “Education is another big hurdle,” he says. “New materials like thermally-modified wood don’t behave the same as traditional lumber and need fastening systems designed specifically for them, such as the DeckWise ThermoClip Hidden Deck Fastener. Manufacturers are

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helping by offering clearer installation instructions, better training, and purpose-built products instead of one-size-fits-all solutions.”

Hillman Group’s Pantaleo points to labor as the most significant challenge facing the deck installation market, along with installation complexity and with increased scrutiny around code compliance. “Contractors are being asked to do more with fewer skilled resources, while still delivering premium results,” he says. “At Hillman, we’re constantly evaluating those challenges through engineering fastening solutions that simplify installation and reduce variability on the jobsite. Power Pro screws are designed to install cleanly and efficiently, helping contractors maintain productivity while meeting structural and code-driven requirements.”

At the same time, manufacturers and dealers are being more deliberate about inventory management in a softer demand environment.

“Carrying too much inventory can tie up cash, while carrying too little risks missed opportunities,” says Case at National Nail/CAMO. “That reality is pushing the industry to be more disciplined and increasingly data-driven in how products are forecasted, stocked, and replenished.”

Demand itself is also uneven, Case says. While new deck construction is down, the growing number of aging decks across the country presents a meaningful opportunity in repair and replacement. Many homeowners choose to upgrade materials and systems when rebuilding, which is why manufacturers are focused on solutions that make retrofits easier, faster, and more reliable for builders and remodelers.



FastenMaster’s PAMFast Autofeed Tool is a two-in-one interchangeable length tool in which the removable extension pole is designed to enable easy long-to-short conversion for a variety of fastening needs. PAMMax Fastener Belts are engineered to hold up to 40% more fasteners for more time driving screws and less time reloading.

An aging workforce and slow influx of new workers into the trades continues to bear down on the market in the form of labor shortages, says Andrew Gibson, senior product manager at GRK Fasteners. “As seasoned professionals retire, contractors are under increasing pressure to deliver projects on time with fewer qualified workers. This reality heightens demand for solutions that simplify jobsite tasks and reduce reliance on specialized skills.”

Manufacturers are responding, Gibson says, by accelerating the development of products and systems that reduce installation complexity and labor hours. “This includes a growing shift toward pre-engineered, modular assemblies that arrive ready for faster, more predictable installation. Companies are also introducing simplified fastening technologies and tool innovations aimed at reducing installation steps, shortening project timelines, and lowering the skill threshold needed to achieve professional quality results.” ▶



CAMO’s Countersinking Deck Screws feature a nubbed countersinking head that sits flush and reverse upper threads to hold boards tight. The screws are coated with a proprietary PROTECH coating engineered to protect against corrosion from chemically treated wood. Suitable for treated lumber, hardwood, cedar, composite or PVC deck boards and available in lengths from 1-1/4" to 4".



The CLIK KIT concealed hook timber-to-timber connector from Holz Technic is designed for fast, repeatable installation with everything included. CLIK KIT is available in three sizes designed for most common applications. A concealed hook mechanism is engineered for fast assembly and self-tensioning to ensure continuous joint pressure.

Chris Chookagian, marketing manager for Holz Technic and Rothoblaas, says that corrosion is a constant challenge, and one that is getting even more complicated. “Between coastal exposure, harsh climates, and certain wood treatments or species, the wrong fastener can fail early. Manufacturers are tackling that by expanding stainless and coating options and by doing a better job guiding customers to the right solution for the environment.”

Chookagian says another challenge is finishing quality and callbacks. Splitting, cracking, or inconsistent installs hurt contractors. “That is why you are seeing more innovation in screw geometry and more emphasis on solutions that make the install repeatable.”

Jobsite solutions

Chookagian points to his company’s CLIK KIT product as a solution to many market challenges. “It speaks directly to what the market

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Part of Grabber's complete fastener portfolio, the UltraPro, XGT and Woody screws as well as DeckMaster, Lag-Master, and Tie-Master products feature galvanized coatings and reinforced materials that are quality tested for use in deck construction.

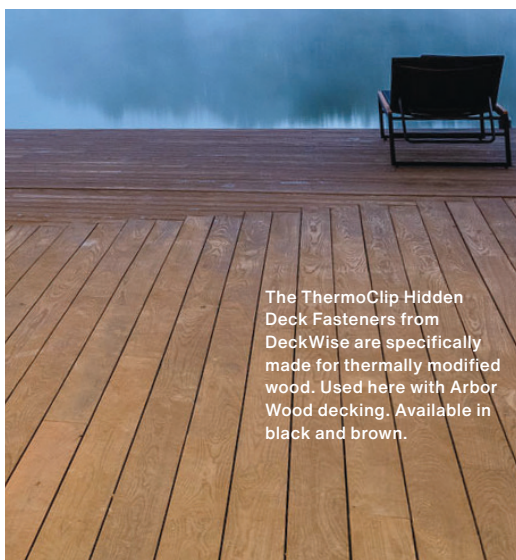
is asking for—fast, repeatable installation with everything included. CLIK KIT is offered as three practical kits in different sizes for common applications, designed for small section beams in structures like gazebos and furniture, and is fastened with one type of screw included in the kit for outdoor use in non-aggressive situations.”

Jobsite solutions are behind most every product innovation in the decking and fastener industry and at DeckWise, Kabel says that includes ThermoClip Hidden Deck Fasteners for thermally-modified wood, joist and ledger protection tapes, siding-specific 3/4" and 5/4" rain-screen fasteners, and wood finishes designed to protect and enhance.

“The goal across all of these products is the same: build decks that last longer by managing moisture, movement, and material compatibility from the framing up, not just the surface,” Kabel says.

Hillman's Pantaleo points to the company's Power Pro series of products. Among them are Joist & Beam Tape; Power Pro Black Colored One Multi-Material Screws designed for a clean, finished look; and Power Pro Coastal/Marine Structural Wood Screws that are code-approved for corrosion resistance in harsh environments. “These additions reflect our dedication to offering innovative, high-performance products that meet the needs of today's construction professionals,” he says. “Ultimately, our goal is to help dealers and contractors win more decking products by simplifying the most critical part of the building connection.”

At FastenMaster, Jennings says the focus continues to be on fastening systems that make deck building faster and more consistent. “That includes innovation in hidden fastening solutions, and new products like our deck frame coating that helps extend the life of the structure itself,” he says. ▶



The ThermoClip Hidden Deck Fasteners from DeckWise are specifically made for thermally modified wood. Used here with Arbor Wood decking. Available in black and brown.



SPAX Deck Joist Tape is engineered to optimize the life of the deck and ensure a long-lasting, professional installation by protecting fasteners and deck joists from water damage. SPAX Deck Joist Tape works on all single board applications including joists, rim joists, ledger board, blocking, etc. and is compatible with the majority of deck materials including pressure-treated wood and composite products.



FastenMaster Deck Frame coating is designed to extend the life of a deck frame by creating a moisture barrier engineered for lasting protection. The product is designed for fast and clean application and dries in as little as 20 minutes.

Decking as a system

One of the biggest opportunities for dealers is selling complete systems, not just decking boards and some screws, says DeckWise's Kabel. When customers understand how boards, fasteners, joist protection, and finishes all work together, the value becomes much easier to see.

"Carrying complementary products, offering simple education at the counter, and supporting builders with reliable solutions helps build trust and repeat business. Dealers who stay current on material trends and can explain why certain products work better for hardwoods, thermally-modified wood, or tough environments will separate themselves from the competition.

Educating customers, whether builders, remodelers, or homeowners, will always be the best way to drive growth, says Thies at Midwest Fasteners. "If consumers understand the importance of selecting quality products and building a deck that lasts, dealers can expand a decking order from just a lumber package and a box of screws into an order with lumber, screws, joist tape, stain/sealer, etc. Ensuring consumers understand the complete deck-building process from start to finish with no skipped steps can ensure dealers more opportunities to sell adjacent products beyond the staples."



Storage Systems for LBM Dealers

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



Bulk Canopy



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Auto-Stak System



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The most successful LBM dealers are the ones who treat decking as a project category, Pantaleo says. He recommends offering complete decking solutions, including structural and finish fasteners, training counter staff to recommend the right fastening for the application, and partnering with suppliers like Hillman to support contractor education, merchandising, and jobsite efficiency. “When dealers help contractors reduce install time, call-backs, and risk, they become more than a supplier—they become a trusted partner,” he says.

In addition to product training, Starr at Grabber says it’s important to educate on total value, not just upfront cost. “As composite decking and premium fasteners gain traction, dealers who emphasize lifecycle value—not just price—are better positioned to drive upgrades. Helping customers understand long-term savings through reduced maintenance and longer replacement cycles makes higher-quality options more compelling.”

Providing pre-bundled, jobsite-ready packages such as decking boards paired with hidden fasteners, color-matched screws, and coordinating rail kits streamlines contractor purchasing and helps reduce errors and returns.

“Stock and promote fastener options,” she says. “As decking materials evolve, fasteners must meet higher performance expectations. Dealers can capture incremental sales by highlighting the advantage of structural screws, corrosion-resistant metal-connector fasteners, and specialty fasteners engineered specifically for hardwoods and composite materials.”

As deck season ramps up for many dealers, it is clear that homeowners are increasingly looking toward decking repair and remodel projects. The savvy LBM dealer is looking toward complete system sales and an educated team on the floor, behind the counter, and in the yard. ■

CONTRIBUTING MANUFACTURERS



NICK THIES
Midwest Fastener Corp.



SHAUN JENNINGS
FastenMaster



VINCENT PANTALEO
Hillman Group



CHRISTOPHER CASE
National Nail/CAMO



ANDREW GIBSON
GRK Fasteners



RODERICK KABEL
DeckWise



BRETT KATSMAS
SPAX



CHRIS CHOOKAGIAN
Holz Technic and Rothoblaas



LEEANN STARR
Grabber

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Trex® Protect
JOIST, BEAM & RIM TAPE

The Hidden Upgrade That Delivers Better Decks and Bigger Orders

Why Joist Tape Belongs In Every Complete Deck Package

LBM dealers play a key role in helping contractors succeed. When pros walk into the yard to price out framing, decking, fasteners and railing for a deck project, they are looking for more than materials – they are looking for the best products to help them deliver durable, long-lasting outdoor spaces.

One small product that plays a big role in deck performance is joist tape. While it may not be visible once a deck is finished, it protects the framing that supports the entire structure. By stocking and recommending joist tape as part of a complete deck package, LBM dealers help contractors deliver longer-lasting results while increasing order value and strengthening customer loyalty.

Why Joist Tape Matters to Your Customers

Most decks are built on treated lumber. Even with treatment, wood is still exposed to the elements like water, snow and humidity. Over time, moisture seeps into screw holes and cracks, leading to rot and decay.

At the same time, composite decking boards, like Trex®, are warranted to last as long as 50 years. Without proper protection, wooden deck frames can begin to break down long before the surface boards need replacement.

Joist tape, like Trex® Protect, is a self-adhesive, butyl-based flashing tape designed specifically for deck framing. It creates a waterproof barrier on top of joists, beams and rim joists, helping shield wood from moisture that leads to rot and decay. The flexible material seals tightly around fasteners and hardware, preventing water from entering screw holes and cracks. It also helps reduce splitting caused by freeze-thaw cycles and supports longer-lasting fastener hold.

Key Benefits of Joist Tape

Joist tape offers clear value for contractors and homeowners:

- Extends the life of deck frames
- Reduces rot and moisture damage
- Protects screw holes and fasteners
- Lowers long-term maintenance costs
- Improves overall deck performance

Because joist tape is affordable and easy to install, it delivers a compelling return on investment. This small upfront upgrade can help prevent moisture damage and costly structural repairs years down the road.

For contractors, joist tape supports longer-lasting decks with fewer callbacks and warranty issues, resulting in more satisfied homeowners and a stronger professional reputation. For LBM dealers, it's an opportunity to support higher-quality builds while reinforcing their role as a go-to resource for contractors.

How Joist Tape Helps Dealers Drive Sales

Stocking joist tape isn't just a smart add-on – it's a smart business move. By offering joist tape alongside decking materials, LBM dealers can boost average order value and encourage contractors to purchase more complete, performance-driven deck systems. The focus shifts from individual components to integrated solutions designed to extend deck life.

Just as important, this strategy elevates the dealer-contractor relationship. Contractors appreciate guidance that helps protect their work and minimize future issues, positioning dealers as trusted advisors rather than transactional suppliers. Over time, that credibility drives repeat purchases, deeper partnerships and long-term loyalty.

Easy to Install, Easy to Sell

Most joist tape products feature peel-and-stick applications and can be installed quickly without special tools. Contractors apply the tape directly to joists and beams before installing decking boards, adding only minutes to the framing process.

This simplicity makes joist tape an easy add-on at the counter and during material takeoffs. Dealers can naturally bundle it with composite decking, pressure-treated lumber, fasteners, joist hangers and other framing hardware to create complete deck packages.

Choosing the Right Joist Tape to Carry

Deck flashing tape typically comes in two types: asphalt and butyl. Butyl tape, like Trex Protect, has many advantages over asphalt-based tape, starting with the fact that butyl tape is a sealant as opposed to a patch. It's "rubberier" than asphalt-based tape with an adhesive that flows around screw holes to create a waterproof seal, keeping water away from the wood. Butyl is also stickier than asphalt tape, has less high-temperature oozing and can be applied in a wide range of temperatures.

Overall, butyl tape has a longer life than asphalt tape, which starts to break down with repeated exposure to sunlight. Butyl tape, on the other hand, can withstand the test of time.

A Low-Cost Upgrade with High Value

For a typical 12 ft. x 24 ft. deck, contractors may need only a few rolls of joist and beam tape. The total cost is usually well under \$150. This makes joist tape an easy product to recommend. It adds considerable value and longevity to a deck without significantly increasing project cost.

The Bottom Line

Joist tape helps contractors build better decks, deliver longer lasting structures to homeowners and allows dealers to develop stronger relationships that lead to larger orders. By stocking and promoting joist tape, building materials dealers position themselves as thoughtful partners.

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25
YEAR
WARRANTY



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EXTEND THE LIFE of your deck

1 ROLL
11" x 50'
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Trex Trex Protect RIM TAPE
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After covering all horizontal and vertical surfaces, cut the tape to length with a utility knife or scissors.
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Warning: Slippery When Dry

Trex Trex Protect JOIST TAPE
EXTEND THE LIFE of your deck

Trex Trex Protect BEAM TAPE 25 YEAR WARRANTY
EXTEND THE LIFE of your deck

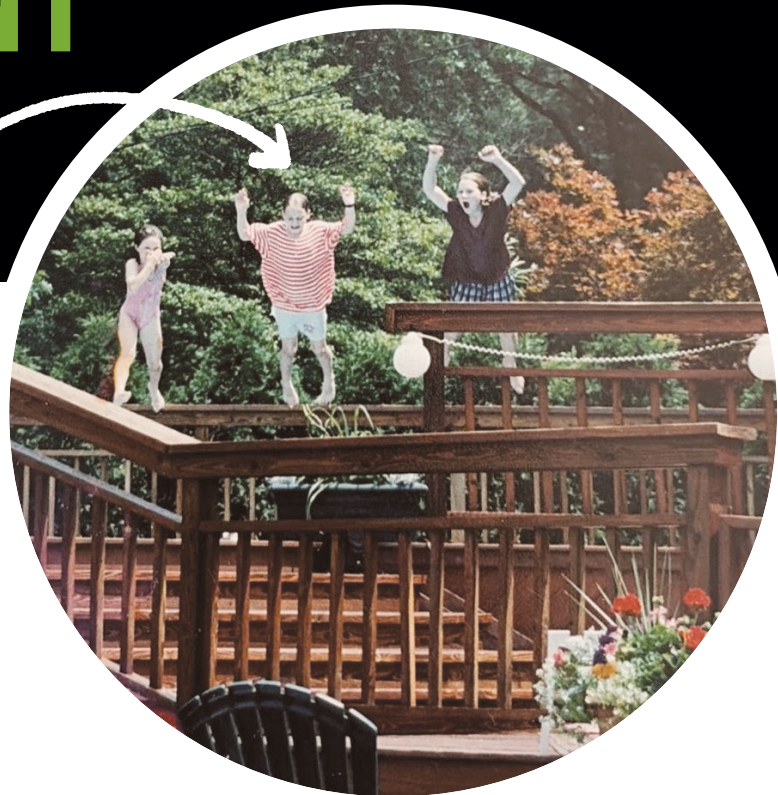


Outdoor living is big business. How big? A 2023 Freedonia Group study pegged the U.S. market for decking, railing, and accessories at \$13.9 billion. The best way to get a bigger share of that large and growing market is to truly understand ...

WHAT DECK BUILDERS REALLY WANT

BY HEATHER MARCHAND

*That's me.
circa-1990s*



The backyard that started it all

In 1992, my parents, Mike and Margie Beaudry, had a decision to make. They had just welcomed their fifth child and were staring down the familiar family dilemma: take a summer vacation or invest that money closer to home? They chose the backyard.

At the time, none of us understood what that decision really meant. We just knew our house became the place. The neighborhood hangout. Bikes piled in the driveway. Shoes kicked off at the edge of the deck. Summer stretching long after the sun went down.

Now, as a mom of four myself, I understand. They weren't just building square footage. They were building space for connection. For family. For memories that quietly shape how we understand home.

That backyard decision came years before decking became what it is today, before outdoor living turned into a full-scale industry, before composite boards and curated railing systems and six-figure projects. Somehow, they saw the big picture early. A deck wrapped around the pool. A hot tub. A grill. Lights that kept the evenings going. A place that brought people together.

Why I'm sitting at this table

Fast forward a few decades, and that backyard still matters more than I ever expected. It shaped how my parents approached this industry and why helping build the North American Deck & Railing Association (NADRA) always felt rooted in family and connection.

Today, my work sits at the intersection of builders, manufacturers, distributors, and dealers. After years of working alongside deck builders of all sizes, I've gained a close view of how their operations truly function.

Over the past couple of months, I gathered input from deck builders across the country through a detailed survey and followed up with one-on-one conversations. One question framed every call: What do you wish your lumberyard truly understood about your business?

No one asked for swag. No one mentioned lunch-and-learns. The answers were about operational pressure, communication, and what it feels like when a job stalls because something small went wrong.

The builders in this article come from different corners of the country and very different business models.

Anna Kaufmann of Rock Solid Builders in Illinois produces more than 100 decks a year with a streamlined system built around planning months ahead and limiting product variables. When you run that kind of volume with a lean team, material availability is not a preference. It is survival.



Sean McAleer of DeckRemodelers.com in New Jersey builds high-end outdoor spaces where details matter and communication cannot slip. For him, the question is simple: when something goes sideways, will someone answer the phone?



Jonathan Moeller of Colorado Custom Covers & Decks works in a climate where logistics, loading, and staging are part of the build strategy itself. He talked about the importance of yards understanding how material is actually handled on-site, not just how it is invoiced.



Jon Benaglio of Deck Masters of South Florida operates in a coastal market where hurricane season, million-dollar hardwood projects, and tight deadlines are real pressures. He told me trust outweighs price every time, especially after seeing which suppliers showed up when storms shut everything else down.



Dan Stendeback of Valer Deck & Patio in Fairfax, VA described himself as relationship-driven with low supplier churn. After losing months to a mismanaged order early in his business growth, honesty and knowledgeable partners became non-negotiable.



Jay Beswick of Majestic Outdoors in Durham, NC builds outdoor living spaces that regularly range into six figures. He has stayed loyal to the same lumberyard for nearly two decades. Not because they are the cheapest, but because they understand design, logistics, and quality at the level his projects demand.



Together, along with 37 NADRA builders who completed the survey, these six deck builders paint a clear picture of what earns an LBM dealer long-term loyalty.

Small teams. Serious volume. Zero margin for error.

If there is one misconception lumberyards need to let go of, it is this: deck builders are not small-time buyers. In the combined NADRA survey of 37 builders, 49% reported having five employees or fewer. At the same time, 44% are building 51 or more decks per year. That combination matters.

These are lean teams running high-output operations. They are scheduling crews tightly, managing inspections, juggling weather, handling homeowner communication, and protecting margins, often all at once.

Anna Kaufmann builds more than 100 decks annually with a streamlined, composite-focused system. “We’ve built our process around efficiency,” she said. “If one item is missing, the entire job can stall.”

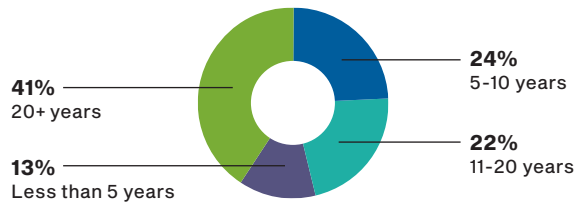
In high-volume environments, small mistakes multiply. A delayed railing shipment does not just push a job back a day. It can trigger crew reshuffling, inspection rescheduling, and difficult homeowner conversations.

Jonathan Moeller sees the same dynamic in a very different climate and market. “Homeowners don’t care whose fault it is,” he said. “If something doesn’t show up when it’s supposed to, we’re the ones standing there.”

Builders are not simply buying product. They are buying continuity. Across the survey, ease of doing business consistently ranked among the highest priorities, ahead of credit terms and breadth of product offering. On-time, accurate delivery also ranked near the top. ▶

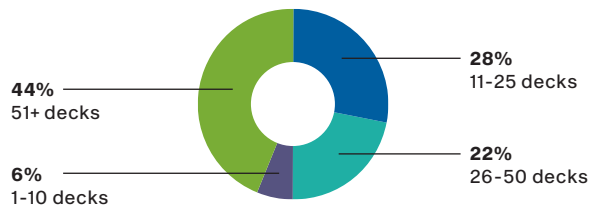
BUILDER PROFILE:

Years in business



63% have been in business 11-plus years. This is a seasoned, relationship-driven contractor base.

Deck volume (annually)



Nearly half are building 50-plus decks per year.

Availability and quality are the baseline. The real difference shows up in the small moments. How quickly someone calls back. Whether an order is staged correctly. Whether a problem gets handled without drama.

Dan Stendeback said it directly. “We don’t have extra hours built into our day. If I leave a jobsite to fix something that shouldn’t have gone wrong, that costs us.” He is not alone. For owner-led teams managing multiple projects at once, time spent waiting at a loading dock is not neutral. It pulls them away from oversight, problem-solving, and revenue-generating work.

Growth opportunity lives here. Not in adding another SKU, but in tightening systems: accurate staging, clear communication, realistic delivery windows, and faster load times. Small efficiencies compound into loyalty.

Relationships rule

In a pricing-sensitive market, it would be easy to assume cost drives every decision. The survey says otherwise: 84% of respondents said relationship and trust earned their lumberyard’s primary role; 86% said strong relationships keep them loyal long term.

Competitive pricing matters. But price alone does not secure the account. Kaufmann is clear about that distinction. “No one can beat our lumberyard on price because of the volume we do,” she said. “But what really mattered was during downturns, when we struggled, they worked with us.”

Sean McAleer sees it similarly. “If there’s a problem, I need to know someone’s going to answer the phone,” he said. “Communication is everything.”

Relationships in this channel are not a soft benefit. They are operational security. A full 70% of builders say they rarely switch primary lumberyards. Switching is uncommon. But once trust is broken, it is difficult to repair. Indeed, 73% said loss of trust would cause them to leave. Other deal-breaker issues included poor communication (63%) and delivery problems (59%).

Price increases ranked lower than communication failures. Builders tolerate market fluctuation. They do not tolerate repeated communication breakdowns.

Operational partnership

Across nearly every conversation, relationship was not described in abstract terms. It was described through moments.

Kaufmann stayed loyal because her yard worked with her during hard seasons.

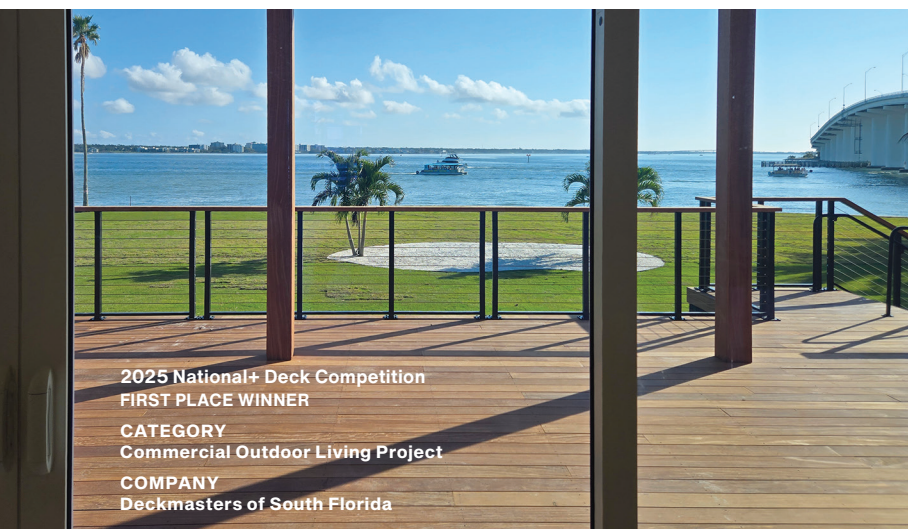
Beswick speaks about specific individuals by name after nearly two decades of partnership.

Stendeback left after repeated communication failures cost him credibility with clients.

McAleer builds long-term partnerships, not purchase orders. In a market where expectations are high and timelines are tight, he expects accountability and proactive communication from his lumberyard. Responsiveness is not a courtesy. It is part of the agreement.

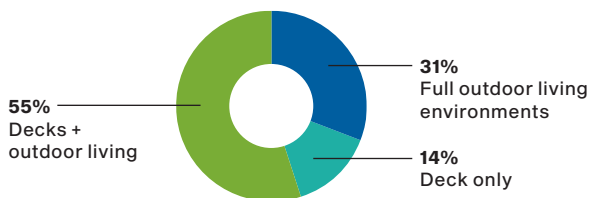
Over time, something else happens. The language shifts from lumberyards to names. Builders describe being close with owners. Attending events together. Celebrating awards together.

It becomes familiarity. It becomes trust. Sometimes, it becomes friendship. Not casual friendship. Earned friendship. Built through jobsite visits when something fails. Through credit extended during tight seasons. Through showing up.



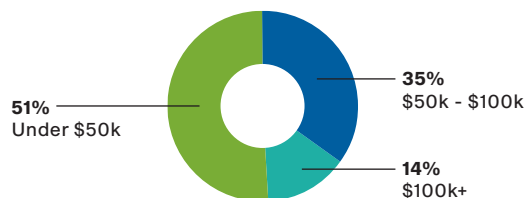
PROJECT SCOPE + REVENUE POSITIONING:

Primary project type

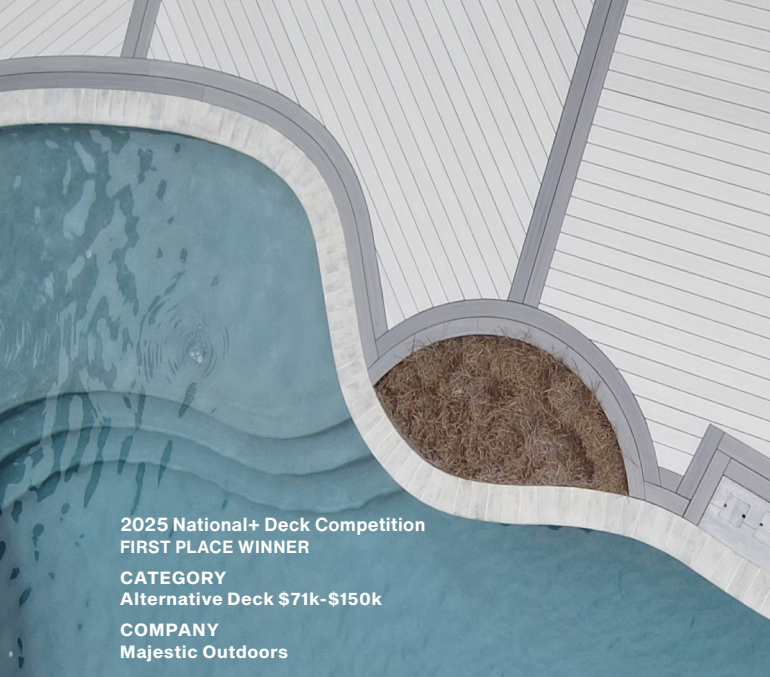


86% are doing more than just decks. Outdoor living expansion is standard.

Typical project price range



49% are regularly selling projects above \$50K. There is meaningful premium market participation.



2025 National+ Deck Competition
FIRST PLACE WINNER

CATEGORY
Alternative Deck \$71k-\$150k

COMPANY
Majestic Outdoors

Switching lumberyards is rare. But when it happens, it is rarely about one invoice. It is about accumulated failures. In this channel, relationship is not networking. It is operational partnership.

Builders don't want more brands

Our survey showed that 59% of deck builders use 2-3 brands; 41% use only 1. Not one builder reported using four or more brands.

That is not accidental. These are not contractors chasing the newest line every year. They are narrowing their product mix on purpose. Training. Inventory coordination. Warranty knowledge. Crew adjustments. Risk evaluation. Every additional brand adds moving parts.

Builders create systems around what they know. Their crews are trained on it. Their sales process is built around it. Their warranty conversations are aligned with it.

In the survey, a lumberyard offering a wide range of products ranked lower than ease of doing business, delivery accuracy, quality, and relationship. That tells you something.

Most professional deck builders do not want endless options. They want the right products, consistently available, with people behind the counter who understand them. When builders feel confident in what will arrive, how it will perform, and how it will be supported, they buy more of it. Not because it is new. Because it is reliable.

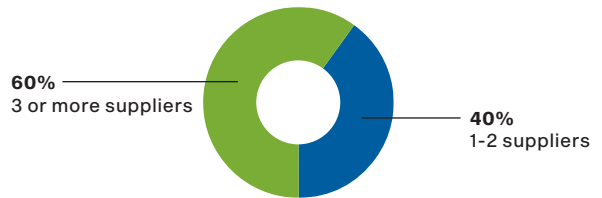
Builders want fewer surprises

If the data and interviews point to one overarching truth, it is this: lumberyards win when they remove unnecessary obstacles. Builders are not asking for more perks. They are asking for fewer surprises. Tighter staging. Reduced loading dock wait times. Realistically confirmed delivery windows. Immediately communicated backorders. Knowledgeable staff.

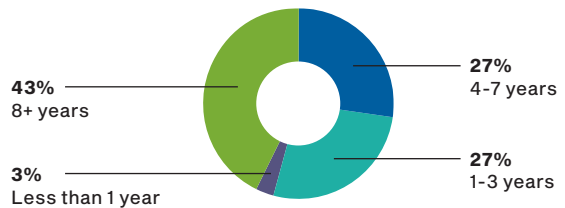
These are operational improvements. For lean teams building 50 or more decks annually, small efficiencies compound. When builders trust that materials will arrive correctly and on time, they can schedule confidently, protect margins, and focus on the homeowner experience. And when they can do that, they buy more. ▶

SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIPS:

Number of primary suppliers

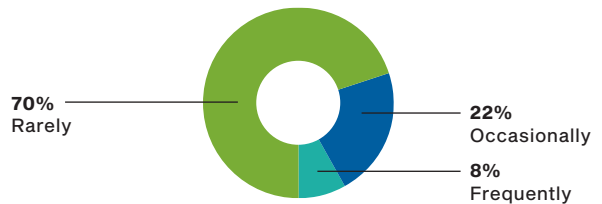


Length of relationship with primary supplier



70% have worked with their primary supplier 4-plus years.

How often do builders switch suppliers?



Once trust is established, switching is uncommon.



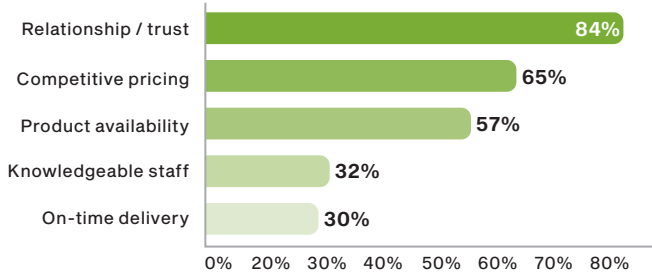
2025 National+ Deck Competition
FIRST PLACE WINNER

CATEGORY
Limitless Under \$200k

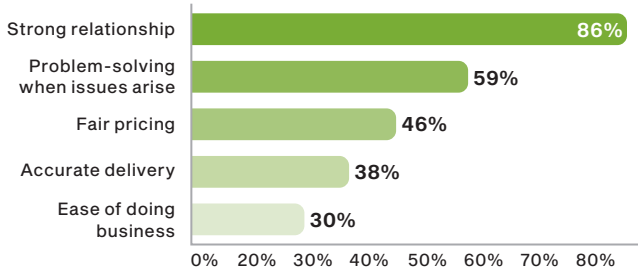
COMPANY
DeckRemodelers.com

BUILDER LOYALTY:

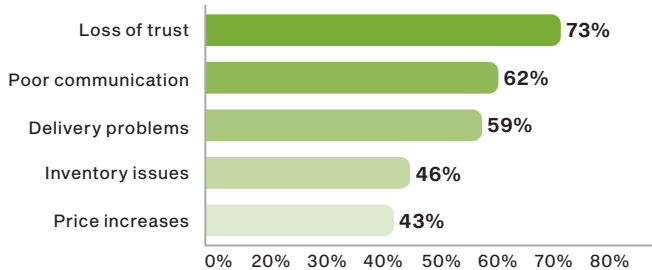
What earns a supplier the business?



What keeps builders loyal?



What causes builders to leave?



RELATIONSHIPS STILL RULE THE CHANNEL

Even in a price-sensitive market, trust remains the primary loyalty driver.



Systems vs. projects

One theme that surfaced quietly in several interviews is how differently builders and lumberyards often think about the same transaction. Builders think in systems. They plan months ahead. They sequence inspections. They coordinate trades. They standardize product selections. They limit brands. They train crews around specific installation details.

Kaufmann talked about ordering materials months in advance and intentionally narrowing product variables to protect workflow. That is not convenience. It is structure.

Moeller described pushing for changes in how materials were delivered and unloaded because jobsite logistics are part of execution, not an afterthought.

McAleer builds around predictability. When he aligns with a lumberyard, he is not just choosing a price point. He is integrating that yard into his process.

Beswick emphasized understanding design intent and quality standards at a level deeper than invoice totals. His lumberyard knows what kind of projects he builds and what that requires.

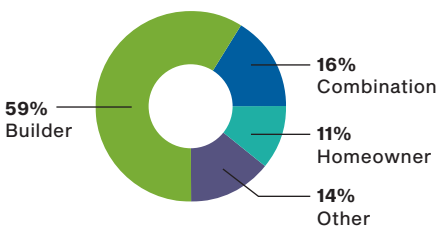
This is where disconnect sometimes happens. Where lumberyards may see orders, builders see sequence. A substituted railing component may feel minor at the counter. In the field, it can disrupt training, design consistency, or warranty alignment throughout a project. When builders limit brands, plan deeply, and build repeatable processes, they are reducing variability.

The lumberyard that understands that system and aligns with it becomes embedded in the operation. The one that treats each order as independent never fully integrates—and doesn't become the supplier of choice.

At the end of the day, yards who succeed in growing sales to deck builders will focus less on stocking more product options and focus more on understanding how their core builders actually build.

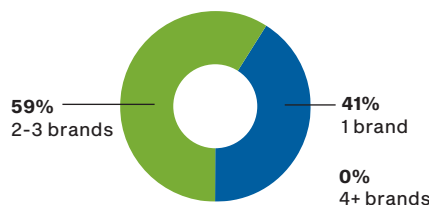
BRAND SELECTION BEHAVIOR:

Who drives brand selection?



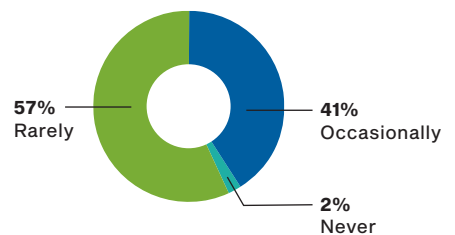
The builder is still the primary decision-maker.

Number of decking brands used



Builders keep brand portfolios tight.

How often do builders switch/add brands?



Brand loyalty is high.

Where trust builds more than decks

Backyards have changed since the early 1990s. Materials have evolved. Projects have grown in size and complexity. Homeowners are investing at higher levels than ever before. But the foundation of this industry has not changed.

Connection is still at the center of it. Connection between families and the spaces they gather in. Connection between builders and their clients. Connection between builders and the lumberyards they rely on.

The survey data makes it clear. Builders do not switch suppliers often. Instead, they build long-term relationships. They stay where they feel understood. They stay where communication is clear. They stay where trust has been earned.

Trust is not built through promotions. It is built through consistency. Through answering the phone. Through honest timelines. Through showing up.

Over the years, I've watched that same principle play out through NADRA. When builders, dealers, distributors, and manufacturers sit at the same table, celebrate projects, and solve problems together, something shifts. The industry feels smaller. More connected. More human.

If you search Instagram for @NADRARocks, you will see beautiful projects. You will see award nights and jobsite photos. But what you will really see is relationships in action. Builders cheering each other on. Dealers showing up. People who compete during the day shaking hands at night.

That culture did not happen by accident. It happened because people chose to treat each other like partners instead of transactions. Lumberyards that adopt that same mindset position themselves differently. Not as order-takers or price sheets, but as part of the builder's extended team.

In the end, growth in decking does not come from stocking more products. It comes from strengthening the relationships that move them. Because long after a project is complete, what remains is not just a deck. It is trust. ■

Heather Marchand serves as director of national programs and marketing for NADRA, supporting deck builders, lumberyards, and manufacturers through national programs and industry partnerships. With more than 20 years in trade association leadership, she blends strategic execution with story-driven marketing. Based in Sarasota, FL, she lives with her husband, homeschools their four children, and has a growing backyard homestead.

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SERIOUS ABOUT BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS? WE ARE.



W.W. STARR LUMBER BUILDS ON CENTURY OF SERVICE BY STAYING LOCAL

BY WENDY STURGES

W.W. STARR LUMBER—founded by Wilson Worth Starr in 1909 with just two mules and a wagon, as the story goes—once had locations across 14 small towns in northwest Oklahoma, providing the region with building materials through more than 115 years of booms and busts.

While many of those small towns have now been absorbed by larger cities, the family legacy continues as Wilson’s great-grandson, company President John Ryerson, has taken over, although he didn’t always expect to carry on the family business.

“I was brought down here grudgingly to do inventory, to stack lumber, dust paint cans, and take out the trash when I was in grade school through middle school and high school. I learned bit by bit, even though I didn’t realize it as much at the time, especially during inventory. I was always here.”

After spending a few years in banking and finance in Houston, TX, Ryerson returned to Oklahoma to rejoin his father, Richard, who had taken over the business from his father before him.

“I wanted to do my own thing, but as time went along, I wanted to move back home and to work with my dad. I was fortunate to get out of banking and come back here and work alongside him for a few years before he passed.”

With four locations in Alva, Blackwell, Enid, and Woodward, OK, W.W. Starr Lumber is thriving as the company works to expand the business while keeping that small-town feeling at the company’s core.

“We’re in smaller communities. We typically know our customers, so we can personalize our service to where they are. It’s not just a number for us, it’s someone who we know.”



Ramping up

Now a long way from its early days of mules and wagons, W.W. Starr Lumber has grown to offer a wide array of materials, from lumber and millwork to doors and windows, plywood and OSB, roofing, insulation, fencing, hardware, and more.

The business also provides take-offs and estimates, cabinet design, equipment rentals, and order delivery to job-sites and homes.

However, even in a small community, the company still faces the same challenges facing most independent lumber dealers today, namely, the rise of online competition.

“There’s a lot of competition out there. Some of them are brick-and-mortar competitors, but you also have Amazon, the internet component that you wouldn’t have dreamed years ago, that has dropped into rural areas,” Ryerson said.

To that end, Ryerson said the company is investing more into local outreach, not only to stay competitive, but to preserve the relationships W.W. Starr Lumber has formed with the community that can’t be replicated online.

Erin Davis, W.W. Starr Lumber’s director of marketing, said the company is increasing its efforts to be more present in the communities that the company serves, both through customer appreciation events in stores as well as local events and charitable giving.

One recent example is a collaborative project with CDSA YouthBuild, the City of Enid, and Stride Bank Center, where W.W. Starr Lumber donated materials for the construction of a new community pavilion designed to host gatherings, weddings, concerts, and public events for years to come.

Davis said projects like these reflect Starr Lumber’s broader approach to growth—investing not only in its business, but in the long-term vitality of the communities it serves.

“Each community is different, so we worked to find different events that we can have a presence with to give back,” she said. “There’s just a difference in



W.W. Starr Lumber is increasing its efforts to be more present in the communities that the company serves, both through customer appreciation events in stores as well as local events and charitable giving.



being boots on the ground and showing that we care about the community.”

Ryerson said the one thing that will always give W.W. Starr Lumber an advantage over large e-commerce is its service. From multiple trips to a jobsite to product education training every staff member is committed to customer experience, he said.

“We’re extremely hands-on with everything we do. We do free local deliveries—that’s not very common in our industry. It always comes back to service, and we just try to do everything to meet the needs of our partners and contractors, and by being a part of the community.”

Future growth

All that is not to say W.W. Starr Lumber isn’t keeping up with the times—the company is currently working to invest more in e-commerce through its website as more pros and retail customers demand online options.

The company is also eyeing more brick-and-mortar options, Ryerson said, but won’t acquire simply for the sake of acquiring.



“If you have a company, I don’t believe you can stand still. You’re either getting better or you’re not. We’re always looking for new locations—but they have to fit. They need to make sense in terms of the market, our business model, and who we are. It’s just got to be right, everything from the community, the competitive angle, the geography—everything needs to make sense.”

At the end of the day, Ryerson said any future growth opportunities are only possible through the company’s strong base of employees.

“It all comes back to service which, really begins and ends with our people,” Ryerson said. “Most people who come into stores like ours, don’t necessarily come in for a transaction. They come in with a project. They come in with a problem, and we are here to partner with them and work with them to come up with a solution. I look at it like helping a neighbor—we communicate with them, we listen to their needs, and we try to work with it. I believe our people are just superior in terms of how they relate to their customers.” ■

GET TO KNOW ...

FOUNDED:	1909
LOCATIONS:	4
EMPLOYEES:	50
CUSTOMER BASE:	65% Pro 35% DIY and Retail
OWNERSHIP:	Family
PRIMARY BUSINESS ERP:	ECI
BUYING GROUP/CO-OP:	Allied Building Stores



MUDDSKIP TACKLES DRYWALL BOTTLENECKS

AFTER TAKING HOME TWO of the top awards at the 2026 International Builders' Show—Best in Show and Most Innovative Building Material—the team behind Muddskip isn't taking time to rest on their laurels, especially if they want to meet incoming product demand.

"We're just super grateful for our customers, and IBS has been with us along the way, and the recognition was surreal, because we have worked tirelessly," Muddskip Founder Sheila Cross explains. "Everything that we've worked toward is happening."



Muddskip is a "revolutionary drywall finishing technology" that works as an additive to drywall mud allowing for wet-on-wet application, which both reduces the waiting time needed between coat applications by 50-75%, and reduces or eliminates the need for sanding.

"People can use Muddskip in many, many different ways," she said. "You can choose to use the technology for time savings. You can choose if you want to use the technology for no sanding. You can choose if you want to use the technology for the quality of finish. It just depends on your circumstances and your needs. There's nobody that won't benefit from it."

Those time savers are not only a benefit for job timelines, but also for worker health, as it means less dust inhalation from sanding. In honor of her late husband and son, the company is also dedicated to improving both physical and mental health for construction workers and tradespeople, who are more vulnerable to addiction, chronic diseases, and mental health issues, Cross said. She hopes to establish entrepreneur scholarships to mentor workers and help them start their own businesses.

"The drywall sector, they work very hard. It's a thankless job, it's an unhealthy job. And that's partly probably why there's such a high rate of alcoholism or drug addiction and suicide in the trades. "It's meaningful, and we want to make a difference, and we are making a difference."

Muddskip is primarily distributed across the U.S. through Orgill, however the company can still take on direct B2B customers. For dealers interested in carrying Muddskip, Cross proposes dealers appoint their own "Muddskipper," someone who can demonstrate product use in-store and provide hands-on contractor education.

"That is absolutely the differentiator, because it's a 'show-me' product," Cross said. "Muddskip is to construction what the Apple iPhone was to communication. And that is not an exaggeration by any stretch of the imagination. We have solved the drywall bottleneck. We are disrupting construction in such a good way and bringing healthy solutions to the market." ■



muddskip.com



LBM Century Club honors 100-year-old businesses

The LBM Century Club was founded on the simple belief that companies that have been around for 100 years deserve to be recognized. Launched in 2016, the LBM Century Club has grown to over 228 members, with more coming in each month. In all, the companies have provided 28,976 years of combined service to their communities.

By no means does the LBM Journal's Century Club list include every 100-year-old company ... at least not yet. That's where you come in. Do you work for, or know of a lumberyard or building materials retailer that is 100 or more years old? Send them our way, so that we can give them the recognition they deserve. Century Club members receive a certificate for their store, window decals for their front doors, free admission to the LBM Strategies Conference where they are guests of honor at a Century Club induction ceremony, as well as recognition in their local media, all free of charge.

The most recent inductees into this exclusive club include:

LEARNED LUMBER Hermosa Beach, CA	est. 1924	GEORGE M HALL LUMBER West Homestead, PA	est. 1893
CLARKS LUMBER Herington, KS	est. 1925	SAN ANTONIO LUMBER COMPANY San Antonio, FL	est. 1923
ORGAIN BUILDING SUPPLY Clarksville, TN	est. 1921	MILTONVALE LUMBER CO. Miltonvale, KS	est. 1900
ISSAQUAH LUMBER Issaquah, WA	est. 1889	LUMMUS SUPPLY COMPANY Acworth, GA	est. 1925
SCHOLL LUMBER Houston, TX	est. 1845	ATTICA LUMBER CO. Attica, OH	est. 1925
DELAWARE COUNTY SUPPLY COMPANY, INC. Boothwyn, PA	est. 1924	THE HOME LUMBER & SUPPLY CO. Ashland, KS	est. 1905

Nominate a company for the LBM Century Club:

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

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



GROVE COLLECTION COLUMN WRAPS FROM WESTLAKE ROYAL

Westlake Royal Building Products has expanded its Grove Collection™, a line of architectural PVC trim and moldings, to include column wraps and a new color. Available in 6" x 6" and 8" x 8" sizes in 10' lengths, Grove Collection's new column wraps are designed to slip easily over existing columns, providing an instant upgrade to porches and exteriors.



Its ease of installation saves time and labor costs, offering aesthetic and functional versatility for a variety of outdoor projects. Originally available in six colors, Grove Collection has been upgraded with the addition of a new color for 2026, Rich Cedar, broadening the line's palette for designers and builders seeking warm, natural wood tones. westlakeroyalbuildingproducts.com

TURN-POST FROM KILLER RABBIT

Designed for builders and homeowners who want clean, seamless decks, pergolas, and patios with no visible hardware, Turn-Post is a new stress-tested connector that securely hides the hardware under the posts, eliminating the unsightliness of traditional post connectors. The patented, powder-coated steel connectors are engineered to elevate posts from the concrete or decking surface enough to allow water runoff. Designed for simplicity, Turn-Post fixtures offer quick installation with minimal tools, suitable for pros or DIYers. Available in two sizes, one for 4x4's and another for 6x6's and larger, Turn-Post connectors are made in the U.S. turn-post.com

ODL KEYSTONE IMPACT-RATED DOORGLASS FRAME

ODL's enhanced Keystone™ Impact-Rated doorglass frame, introduced at the 2026 International Builders' Show, is engineered for coastal and high-wind environments. Constructed from a lightweight uPVC composite, the frame is designed to provide lasting strength and weather resistance without the weight or finishing challenges of aluminum. Tested to meet Florida High-Velocity Hurricane Zone (HVHZ) and Wind-Borne Debris Region (WDBR) standards, it achieves ±65 DP performance for demanding conditions. The low-profile 3/8-inch design fits a wide range of door styles, while ODL's patent-pending Grip-and-Release System is said to allow secure installation and easy servicing without sealants, helping dealers and installers simplify handling and maintenance. odl.com



RB613T REBAR TYING TOOL

The new RB613T from MAX USA Corp. is a high-performance rebar tying tool designed to deliver faster tying speed and maximum tying power. Described as the world's first #9 x #10 rebar tying tool, the RB613T is engineered to help contractors tie faster and work more efficiently without compromising strength or consistency. Featuring a larger jaw size designed to accommodate large rebar combinations tying up to #9 x #10 rebar, the RB613T is said to ensure secure, uniform ties even in heavy-duty rebar applications on applications ranging from commercial buildings, foundations, road and bridge construction, and more. maxusacorp.com

RAMSET-I-F INSULATION FASTENING SYSTEM FROM ITW

The Ramset-I-F Insulation Fastening System is a thermal-break fastener designed to mechanically attach insulation to building substrates. The system fastens insulation materials including mineral wool, extruded polystyrene, expanded polystyrene, fiberglass, and polyisocyanurate to concrete, concrete block, steel studs, wood studs, and other structural surfaces. Fasteners feature a 2-3/8-inch holding diameter, an integrated cap, flanges to secure insulation panels, and a specially-shaped shaft to reduce insertion force. Pins are made of heat-treated carbon steel with a mechanical zinc-plated finish and HDPE washer. Available in lengths for 1- to 6-inch insulation thickness, the fasteners install using the Ramset T3 I-F tool with fuel cells. ramset.com





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Arxada	45	470.504.1300	wolmanizedwood.com
Atlantis Rail Systems	73	800.541.6829	atlantisrail.com
* Biewer Lumber	15	810.329.4789	biewerlumber.com
BlueLinx	43	888.502.2583	bluelinxco.com
Bradley Hartmann & Company	IBC	630.234.7321	bradleyhartmannandco.com
* Capital Lumber Company	87	602.381.0709	capital-lumber.com
* Culpeper Wood Preservers	10	800.817.6215	culpeperwood.com
Deckorators	52-53	800.556.8449	deckorators.com/dealer
Deckwise	84	941.896.9851	deckwise.com
Do it Best	7	260.748.7175	doitbestonline.com
Eva-Last Americas	58-59	325.933.2701	eva-last.com/us
FastenMaster	17	800.518.3569	fastenmaster.com
GRK Fasteners	25	877.489.2726	buygrkfasteners.com
Great Southern Wood Preserving, Inc.	IFC-1	800.251.0836	yellowood.com
Hillman Solutions	8-9	800.800.4900	hillmangroup.com
Hubtex	42	540.898.8636	hubtex.com
* IWP - International Wood Products	10	800.875.9663	iwpllc.com
Krauter Auto-Stak	86	800.992.2824	ks-ka.com
LBM Century Club	99		lbmjournal.com/awards/lbm-century-club
LBM Strategies Conference 2026	21		lbmstrategies.com
Masonite Corporation	33		masonite.com
MAX USA CORP	74	516.741.3151	maxusacorp.com
MFM Building Products Corp.	75	800.882.7663	mfmbp.com
Midwest Fastener Corp	78-79	800.444.7313	fastenerconnection.com
* MI Windows by MITER Brands	BB	800.645.4273	miwindows.com
North American Deck and Railing Association	55		nadra.org
National Nail Corporation	71	616.261.2151	nationalnail.com
NewTechWood America	44	866.728.5273	newtechwood.com
Orgill	19	800.347.2860	orgill.com
Pacific Woodtech	29	360.707.2200	pwtewp.com/products/pwt-treated
Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual Insurance Company	34-35	800.752.1895	plmins.com
ProVia	13	800.669.4711	provia.com
ProWood	4-5	844.529.5882	prowood.com/dealers
* Relyco	82	800.777.7359	relyco.com
* Rollex Corp.	10	800.251.3300	rollex.com
Sakrete	37	866.725.7383	sakrete.com

COMPANY	PAGE	PHONE	WEBSITE
Simpson Strong-Tie	31	800.999.5099	strongtie.com
* Starwood Rafters	87	888.525.5878	starwoodrafters.com
Sunbelt Rack	20	800.353.0892	sunbelt-rack.com
TimberTech	67	877.275.2935	timbertech.com
Trex RainEscape	88-89	877.348.1385	trexrainscape.com
Uline	18	800.295.5510	uline.com
Unified Purchasing Group (UPG)	39	801.784.8744	upg.org
Versatex	27	724.857.1111	versatex.com
Westlake Royal Building Products	OBC	800.521.8486	westlakeroyalbuildingproducts.com
Weyerhaeuser	22-23	800.525.5440	weyerhaeuser.com
Wolf Outdoor Living	77	800.315.6669	wolfoutdoorliving.com

* Denotes regional distribution.

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

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



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THE DISCOUNT VENDOR DILEMMA

With decking season heating up, you could buy your decking/railing brand of choice at a steep discount from a different vendor—but with no training, service, or support. What would you do?



YOU'VE BUILT A REPUTATION in your market as the go-to LBM dealer for all things decking and railing. While you offer several brands, there are two that have done well for your store and for your customers. Both brands are carried by the same wholesale distributor who you've bought from for years. They've proven themselves as reliable partners. If a customer has a problem, they help resolve it. When your salespeople need product training, they make it happen. They provide promotional materials and even help set up displays in your showroom.

Lately, however, an aggressive new competitor has been seriously undercutting your prices and squeezing your margins. That's why a recent phone call from a potential new vendor caught your attention.

They say they can deliver one of the two brands you're already selling—same SKUs, same manufacturer, same everything. The difference that grabbed you is price. Their quote comes in significantly lower than what you're paying today. If you moved your purchasing, you could immediately improve margins—or at least meet the competitor's pricing without taking a loss.

The other difference is service. Instead of a full-service business model that you're accustomed to, this vendor operates with minimal overhead and almost no added services. They sell product and ship orders, but that's where their involvement ends. No sales training. No promotional support. And if something goes wrong—damaged goods, misorders, or a customer return—the policy is simple and firm: no returns, no exceptions.

Their pitch is straightforward. You've been selling this brand for years. Your team already understands the products,

and you likely handle most customer questions yourself. They argue that paying a distributor premium for services you rarely use doesn't make sense.

Still, your current distributor has been a dependable partner. They answer the phone when problems come up, help smooth out warranty issues, and have supported your store over the years. Walking away—or even shifting volume elsewhere—could strain that relationship.

The new vendor says they can ship your first order as soon as you're ready. What would you do?

CAST YOUR VOTE ONLINE AT: LBMJOURNAL.COM

Money talks. Agree to buy the brand you're accustomed to from the discount distributor and accept the lower price in exchange for reduced service.

Stay loyal. There's more to business than low margins. Stick with your current vendor and treat their service, support, and partnership as part of the value.

Test drive. Do a couple of test orders with the new vendor. This way you can discover what they're like to work with, and to see if you can live with the bare bones service.

Negotiate. Share the offer with your current distributor and ask if they can sharpen pricing to keep the business.

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

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