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June/July 2023

Vol. 4, Issue 3

**DIVERSIFYING YOUR
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It Only Starts With a Shed

First, Gary Reichert (owner and publisher) suggested that we write an article teaching builders how to branch into chicken coops.

Then columnist Matthew Black wrote about adding products lines, including not only coops but also furniture or anything else that you can sell to somebody while you have their attention. See that article on page 32.

The teaching point is worth repeating here: Once you've spent the time and money getting somebody to buy your core product, whether that be at an on-site lot or a website, you might as well sell

them the stuff that goes in and around that core product. I found a great example on a subscriber's website. They sell sheds for a living, but their website and their enormous shed lot (in the Northeast) offer all kinds of upsells, including:

- Poly Furniture
- Chicken Coops
- Picnic Tables
- Pet Enclosures
- Run-In Sheds
- Horse Barns
- Lighthouses
- Cupolas

Expanding your product lines won't be easy, logistically, but the first step is creat-

ing the mindset that you can and should, and that is the point.

You don't want to expand before your space, financial resources, and staffing levels are ready, and you don't want to add product lines just for the purpose of adding them. But related products like chicken coops are not a stretch for a business owner who is already supporting a shed-building business. If somebody asks "do you sell that, too?" it can be beneficial if the answer is Yes.

— Rocky







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Gary Reichert,
Publisher, Shield Wall Media

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Garage, Shed & Carport Builder (ISSN: 2834-085X) (Vol. 4, No. 3) is published six times per year (March, May, July, September, November and December) by Shield Wall Media LLC, 150 Depot St., Iola, WI 54945. Periodical postage paid at Iola, WI, and at additional mailing offices. Canadian Agreement Number: 40665675. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Garage, Shed & Carport Builder, Barb Prill, PO BOX 255, Iola, WI 54945. Copyright 2023 Shield Wall Media LLC. Names and logos referred to or displayed in editorial or advertising content may be trademarked or copyright. Garage, Shed & Carport Builder assumes no responsibility for unsolicited materials sent to it. Publisher and advertisers are not liable for typographical errors that may appear in prices or descriptions in advertisements. Mailed free to rural contractors and their suppliers throughout North America.

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On The Cover:

Chicken coop with Onduline's Ondura Premium Series roof panels. PHOTO COURTESY OF ONDULINE

Cover design by Tom Nelsen and Kevin Ulrich.





Palram SUNTUF® corrugated polycarbonate panels used on a chicken coop (top of the right roof).

How to Build a Chicken Coop

Helping Your Customers When They Want to Grow Their Own Food

BY ROCKY LANDSVERK

There are many reasons why a person might consider adding a chicken coop to their backyard. Perhaps the most inspiring is the most obvious — when eggs skyrocket in price, like they did in 2022, mostly because of the worst case of avian flu in U.S. history.

There's also a general “back to nature” movement afoot that might have some practical roots but is also trendy. The president of the American Poultry Association recently confirmed the trend to NPR, saying backyard poultry has been on an upswing for five to 10 years, in part because “it’s become a lot more fashionable to do it.”

The challenge and opportunity for builders and contractors is that a lot of

people have a lot of ideas, but they don’t always know how to execute them. That’s where their builder or contractor comes in. Here’s how to help somebody when they ask, “Do you know how to build a chicken coop?”

Job #1: Keeping Out Predators

There are a few keys to raising chickens, including light control, ventilation, and the expected challenges with cleanliness, but the #1 challenge that most people do not consider is predators. If you don’t take this into account, you won’t be feeding eggs to your family, you’ll be feeding chickens to your local raccoons and foxes.

“The most important thing about keeping chickens is predator protection,

so keep things like raccoons, foxes, hawks, owls, rats and even skunks in mind and can your design keep them out no matter how persistent the predators are,” said Buddy Pullen, regional sales manager for AmeriLux, which sells products for chicken coops including the panels that can be used for walls and roofs.

The Oregon State University Extension Service created a great list of tips for keeping your chickens safe in its “Backyard Chicken Coop Design” document, created as part of its “Living on the Land” series. It offered some practical advice, including:

- Design a coop that closes the flock inside at night. Relatedly, enclose the coop with 1” by 2” mesh fencing, and make sure to fence it over the top.

- Raise the coop at least 1 foot off the ground. Rats, snakes, raccoons, and skunks won't like that.
- Secure the flooring with a concrete slab, solid wood, or similar (not gravel or dirt that a critter can dig through).
- Bury fencing at least 6" into the ground, because coyotes, foxes, dogs, and rodents are not afraid to dig.
- Add a motion-detector light.
- Do not place large plants near the coop. Predators can use them to hide while considering their options.
- Consider building it as close to the house as you're willing. Some predators won't like that proximity.

Planning for the Floor

Will Hunter of MW Hunter Custom Woodworking is an expert in building chicken coops. He uses products from Onduline, which produces Ondura Premium Series panels and color-matching ridge caps and fasteners. He points out that you want to start with a "level, dry location on your property. This will save you time in setup and maintenance in the future."

Next comes the floor, which most experts stress should be solid, both for the reasons noted above related to predation but also for ease of cleaning. "They will want to consider how they will retrieve eggs daily and how they plan to clean the floor and nesting boxes," Pullen said. "Good design can make these much easier or harder depending on the thought that goes into the planning. Placing HDPE (High Density Polyethylene) in the floor will protect the wood subfloor from damages caused by waste and moisture."

HDPE sheets from companies including AmeriLux come in thick versions for such uses. If you can't picture it, think of a cutting board.

The coop should be cleaned weekly. Have the doors open to the outside because it makes cleaning easier, and slope the floor so you can simply hose out the coop.



Onduline roof panels used on a coop made by MW Hunter Custom Woodworking.

Raising Up the Roosts

You'll need to use roosting poles, typically made of wood because that is easy for chickens to climb on, and somewhere below those, you'll build nesting boxes. The poles can be painted for ease of cleaning, but they should be made of wood or something that allows for climbing, not a slippery substance like plastic, and not so small that the chickens can't grab it, meaning at least 1 to 2 inches wide.

The boxes themselves should be about a foot wide and tall, or you can use 5-gallon buckets.

Always remember that the roosting poles should be higher than the nesting boxes. The chickens are going to sleep as high as they can, so put the roosting poles at the top. Yes, they'll be defecating on the top side of the nesting boxes/pails, but the alternative is that they'll sleep in their nesting box and defecate in there.

For the same reason, either angle the top of the nesting boxes, or use pails so they aren't inclined to sleep on top of

them and rather sleep on the roosting poles.

Doing the Math

Hunter said one of the things that newbies in chicken coops often get wrong is the size, and they can err in both directions — too big or too small.

Typical math is one box or bucket per four birds. More numbers: About 3 square feet of coop space per bird.

Hunter said to plan for a coop size that leaves room for the future, not just the current flock, but don't simply build an overly big coop in case of growth if you're not sure you'll need the space. You don't want to be powering unnecessary heat and ventilation or having to clean more space than necessary.

More typically, though, the homeowner builds too small, often forgetting that if or when you add birds, you're typically offered batches of four or more. "So, the next batch will be the same, four, and 4+4=8," and suddenly your coop is undersized, he said.



Raising Chickens for Meat

Most people are only interested in the eggs. If you have a client who wants to eat chickens, and therefore create not only eggs but also more chickens, they need to plan for that.

First, it's not as obvious as it seems, so we'll literally give the "birds and bees" talk as it relates to chickens. Hens will create eggs without a rooster, but that egg can't turn into a chicken without the rooster. For more detail, use the Internet as this is a family magazine.

So do you need a rooster? No, you don't need a rooster if you're only creating eggs; in fact, you don't want one — they only cause problems, including their crowing noise. If you want to raise chickens for meat, and therefore you want to breed them to re-create the cycle, that requires additional planning and a second coop for the roosters. You don't want the roosters able to reach the chickens, or you'll have chaos of many kinds. Remember that some colleges still don't have coed dorms.

If somebody wants to raise chickens for their meat, they will also want to learn what chickens should eat, in the vein of "you are what you eat," similar to grass-fed cattle. There are articles about that topic online.

Planning the Roof: Ventilation and Daylight

Ventilation can be active or passive.

Chad Hensley and his fiancé wanted chickens but learned that predators require a closed coop, so they built this coop. Notice its front-facing nesting box that can be accessed from the outside.



You rarely need active (powered fans) except in very hot climates. If you use fans, do not point them directly where the chickens will roost. Pullen advised that while predation control is key, you shouldn't design the coop so securely that the ventilation is restricted. Closing off the predators' vision can be helpful but not at the expense of ventilation.

Daylight increases a bird's laying capacity, so commercial growers use a combination of clear and softlite polycarbonate on side walls. "Clear on the inside

and softlite on the outside," Pullen said. "This combination will allow about 85% light transmission but doesn't allow the birds a clear view of the 'outside world,' which keeps them calmer, leading to better production. This application lends itself well to tunnel ventilation, supplying plenty of fresh air."

One of the themes that you hear from chicken coop experts is that the chickens need to be comfortable in order to produce eggs on a regular basis, and that includes having natural light. So the best coops have a roof that allows for light, like a Palram SUNTUF® corrugated polycarbonate panel. Learn more about daylighting and polycarbonate panels in the May 2023 issue of Rural Builder magazine (download it and subscribe free at ruralbuildermagazine.com). You'll want to learn how to install polycarbonate, if you're not experienced in that already.

One chicken coop expert on the website thegardencoop.com said which tint of



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BY JANUS INTERNATIONAL

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SUNTUF® to use depends on the environment and placement. They like the look of the Solar Gray tint, but said to consider White if the coop is in the sun all day, and only use Clear if the coop is in the shade most of the day.

Cold Climates: Heat and Light

You are more likely to need power in colder climates. In areas that often dip below 40 degrees F, you'll want to plan for both heat and light. Hens create eggs on pace with their energy and comfort level, and also in conjunction with light levels, so in darker seasons, you'll want to influence their laying schedule with artificial light. Chickens can survive in the cold, but in a near-freezing coop, their energy will go toward survival and not eggs, so you're going to want power to keep the coop at 40 degrees F or higher. You also don't want their water freezing.

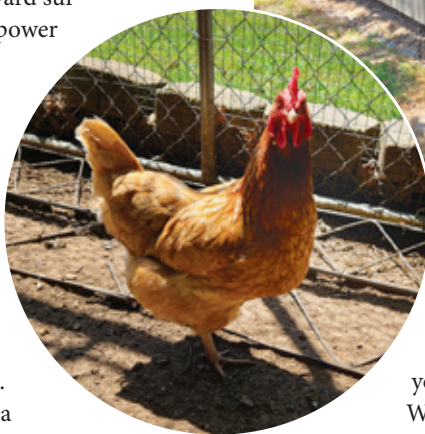
Quality Materials

A newbie who is merely trying to create cheaper eggs might have cost reservations about building this the "right way" and might instead be inclined to build cheaply. After all, if they're simply after inexpensive eggs, a large investment in a chicken coop might defeat the purpose.

But plywood and gravel do not make for a good chicken coop and your customer is likely to regret it if they're truly invested in this idea and they skimp on the materials. Hunter stressed that you should emphasize durability and endurance of the products used. "Selecting the correct parts now will save you time and work later," he said. For him, that means Onduline's Ondura Premium Series. He said that product is perfect for chicken coops because of the noise- and heat-reduction capabilities, and the lightweight and waterproof materials help keep the coop cooler on sunny days and quieter during storms, which matters to hens.

Hunter also strongly suggests that people not simply buy a chicken coop kit and build it themselves, which as a builder you can use in your marketing. Hunter advised that you help your customers "choose quality versus a box kit from a store. Building your own chicken coop allows you to customize it and make it your own. This will always be a better coop."

Leo Vildosola manages U.S. and Canada sales for Klar, which produces PVC ribbed corrugated panels. He also strongly rec-



ommended that as the builder, you suggest to your buyer that they choose quality materials, and for literally meaty reasons, not just for your marketing.

Wood will rot and metal will rust, so upgrading to PVC is something your buyer should consider. PVC is more expensive than wood or metal, but something like Klar's "Thermo-acoustic" Rigid PVC panels should at least be price-

checked given its lifespan versus wood or metal and its noise and insulation properties. "They are great for chicken housing because they are great thermo-insulators to protect the chicken from temperature (high and low), as well as being a noise

absorption material as supposed to metal sheets that are not only a poor insulator for temperature, but also the noise bounces around instead of being absorbed," Vildosola said.

In other words, it's not just because the coop will be more maintenance-free in the future, but it's also because even the chickens care. "First of all, it is important to know what kind of chicken you are farming (meat chicken, egg layer, etc.)," Vildosola said. "But in all cases, factors like noise and temperature affect chicken growth and health (high stress of the animals), so the R-value and insulation properties of PVC panels will help keeping a stable environment for your chicken which means more growth and less stress to lay more eggs per year." **GSCB**

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Home Additions

Trends & Possibilities

From One Contractor to Another

BY LINDA SCHMID

Everywhere you turn, it seems you hear people predicting a slowdown in the economy, if not an actual recession. Many have postulated that home additions and renovations are a safe market because people will simply fix what they already own rather than spending more money to get something new. Is this, then, a good avenue of expansion for builders who see their workload starting to thin? Or for builders just starting out?

Travis Pruett at Badgerland Restoration, a Wisconsin business, says there is a lot of opportunity in this work right now. “There’s a good market for additions and renovation right now, the market is wide open,” he said. “It’s a great niche.”

He believes the amount of renovation work is more of a reaction to the lack of houses on the real estate market than to the changing economy. “Whether you buy a house or renovate the one you are in, you are paying high interest rates,” he said. “So people who need more space just add on to their existing

home.”

He is seeing a lot of demand for three-season rooms and basement living space renovations and remodels, which he attributes to people spending more time at home ever since the COVID-19 pandemic first hit. He believes that people are also looking for ways to enhance the resale value of their homes, maybe as a reaction to the lowering valuations across the real estate market.

“People are investing in ways to expand the square footage, whether that’s an addition or putting existing space to better use,” Pruettt said.

The Trends

Pruett sees these trends in the central Wisconsin area that Badgerland predominantly works in:

- Vinyl plank flooring has replaced laminate as the favorite flooring. It is resilient and waterproof.
- Beside the traditional drywall, lots of carsiding is going on the walls.
- People are choosing value-conscious vinyl windows instead of the big name brands.
- Gray continues to be a Hot Color, both dark and light. Very dark colors and contrasting white are other popular choices.
- Three-season rooms tend to feature electric wallboard heaters. (Other additions are tied into the existing furnace.)
- The tendency is to work with the space they already have.
- People are more cost- and time-conscious.
- Adding solar or other energy sources has softened since



the big federal rebates have expired. You can still get tax credits, but generally not rebates. Though popularity may also be a function of climate.

Addition Basics

A typical job begins with a call to the local lumberyard, Pruettt said. They work mainly with Torborg’s Lumber and Noffke Lumber, local lumberyards. “The draftsman renders specifications and CADs it out,” he stated.

Then they use Exactimate, a pricing software database, to estimate the cost of every component. It can also add in labor, overhead, profit, and sales tax if you require it. This estimate makes it easier to work with the customer to trim down if the cost is over budget.




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Badgerland usually takes the permitting piece out of the customers' hands and pulls a permit, including electrical, plumbing, and HVAC, with all subcontractors and their license numbers listed. That way they know it is done, it's done right, and the customer doesn't have to deal with it.

Pruett advises that when it comes to components like wood trim, lighting, and other aesthetic pieces of the build, send the customer to the box store, or offer them samples and let them figure out what they prefer. You don't want to influence them because if you do, they may blame you personally if they experience buyer's remorse.

Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Time plotting is a common mistake made when planning additions. For example, in cold climates, you need to ensure you have a warm enough day to pour cement.

Further, the build will run more smoothly if you allow enough time for each phase of the build. For example, trying to do drywalling while the electricians are still doing their part makes everyone's job harder. Create a plan that provides sufficient time for each piece of the job. Of course, the best laid plan can be subject to unexpected delays and changes, but you are likely to experience even more delays if you have no plan or an unrealistic one.

Proper footings can be a real problem when building additions; without a proper foundation how can anything else work out right? The best way to avoid problems in this quarter is to have an inspector (often required by the city or state) check that the footings are sufficient for the project before you proceed.

The Financial Side

Downpayments on construction work are pretty standard. Pruetts says that they request 50% down due to the high costs at the front end, such as trusses and other materials.

They offer financing through third party vendors which can help close the deal. However, Pruetts warns that you want to advise the client to look at the rates. Sometimes people can get better deals at their local banks or credit unions.

A Piece of Advice

There is no doubt that additions, remodels, and renovations offer great opportunities to companies who need work. However, before you jump in feet first, you may want to consider a couple of things.

First, what kind of administrative resources do you have? Additions require a lot of planning including timing the various phases and working around subcontractors and you will likely need to work on more than one job at a time in order to keep



your crew busy while subcontractors do their piece.

Speaking of subcontractors, do you have relations built with some good subcontractors? They are very busy at this point in time and you are going to need some who show up when they say they will and know what they are doing.

What about relationships with lumberyards and other suppliers? There are a lot of parts, moving and otherwise, involved in this undertaking.

If your answers to these questions are not positive, Pruetts advises that you start out with a piece of the puzzle, such as installing siding, doors, and windows. Build relationships and grow from there. It's better to start small and build on it, rather than jumping into something and potentially ending up over your head, he said. That sounds like good advice for most any undertaking. **GSCB**



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Metal Paints & Coatings 101

BY LINDA SCHMID

When people talk about paint systems, such as fluoropolymer resin-based coatings, they are referring to the resin system incorporated in the paint. This resin system determines the properties and performance of the paint. The breakdown of a typical gallon of liquid paint is 10% pigment and 20% resin in a 70% solvent base.

Liquid coatings are made with solvents that contain VOCs. The VOC content is off-gassed at the factory before materials are delivered to the jobsite.

Choosing Paints

There are many paints used in metal construction. They include alkyds, urethanes, acrylics, epoxies, polyester hybrids, polyesters, siliconized polyester, urethanes, and polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF) formulations.

All of these formulations have their place; for every project there is a balance between performance and price. Other considerations when choosing a paint for architectural building products include climate, condition, and use of the building.

Often polyesters will work well for sheds, while silicone modified polyesters (SMPs) are commonly used for agriculture and utility structures. Residential projects are often completed with PVDFs and some SMPs. PVDFs are ideal for commercial and architectural exteriors, also.

PVDFs are recommended for exterior use only. While SMPs may be used inside, they are usually used on exterior surfaces.

Polyesters or SMPs are often the paint system of choice for metal coils used in sheds, agriculture, residential and commercial buildings.

A summary of what's popular, by structure type:

- **Sheds:** Polyesters.
- **Ag and Utility:** SMPs.
- **Residential:** PVDFs.
- **Commercial, Architectural:** PVDFs.
- **Metal Coils:** Polyesters or SMPs.



White Liquid Rubber Coating. PHOTO COURTESY OF INLAND COATINGS

Choosing Roof Coatings

Metal roof coatings create a whole new waterproofing substrate on the roof with extra surface protection. They come in four basic chemistries: liquid rubber, silicone, acrylic, and polyurethane.

Liquid rubber is arguably the most popular as it has great adhesion, UV reflectivity up to 87%, and corrosion inhibitors. It's air-cured so when it's in sprayer lines, you can stop spraying, go to lunch, come back and start from where you left off. It is flexible and advantageous in climates where the weather vacillates between hot and cold causing metal to expand and contract.

Silicone is a seamless, breathable membrane that seals against leaks and severe weather. It provides high solar reflectance and UV resistance for lasting strength and performance.

Acrylic is easy to apply and has great UV protection. In fact, this roof coating was originally developed specifically for roofing materials.

Polyurethane has high impact-resistance and is great for withstanding pooling water and a lot of foot traffic.

In addition, formulations and application methods can vary, so before choosing a coating, examine the manufacturer's material data sheets to determine which product is the best match for your project.



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Preparation for Paint

A quality metal paint job always requires preparation. It is estimated that around 80% of coating failures are due to improper metal surface preparation. The surface must first be well cleaned; any extra material left on the metal may be a deterrent to good paint adhesion.

The next step is chemically pretreating the substrate to help with adhesion and add extra corrosion protection that paint alone cannot provide. Zinc phosphate is generally the pretreatment of choice, unless cost is the overriding consideration, in which case iron phosphate may be used.

Finally, primer is required for most paints. Galvanized or other rust-inhibiting primer is the best choice.

Metal preparation and painting is often done in the factory where the environment is controlled and the best outcome is possible. Proper pre-treatment includes cleaning, chemical treatment and usually primers, which stabilize the surface and improve adhesion. Pre-treatment steps may include:

- High temperature acidic solution rinse for cleaning
- High power clean water rinse
- Amorphous chromium phosphate conversion coat serves as a primer and improves adhesion and rust resistance
- Neutralizing clean water rinse

UV & Weather Exposure

Ultra violet rays penetrate nearly every surface, and this excess energy causes degradation. Painted surfaces have no way to emit the captured energy and it begins breaking down the pigments and bonds that hold the paint resins together.

UV exposure can affect:

Gloss retention: A paint's ability to reflect light without scattering can be diminished by UV exposure causing loss of luster.

Chalking: As the resins break down, the particles take on a

Garage, Shed & Carport Builder Thanks Our Contributing Experts

- Industrial Coatings: Douglas Viuhkola, PPG Coil Technical Service and Warranty Claim Manager
- Inland Coatings: Zak Schneider, Director of Business Development
- AkzoNobel: Chris Bradford, Marketing and Product Management Director, Industrial Coatings
- Linetec: Tammy Schroeder, Director of Marketing & LEED Green Associate

white hue and pigment particles lose adhesion.

Fading: The UV radiation dries out the paint, causing discoloration and leaving the substrate beneath unprotected.

Blistering: Loss of adhesion caused by heat, moisture or both, causes paint to lift up from the surface, peeling and corroding.

Cracking: As the paint resin dries up, it can lead to fractures in the paint which peels away from the surface.

For all of these reasons, it is important to check the recommendations of the manufacturer regarding the ability of a metal paint's ability to stand up to UV exposure and other elements. In fact, test data on field performance should be available.

More Paint & Coating Tips

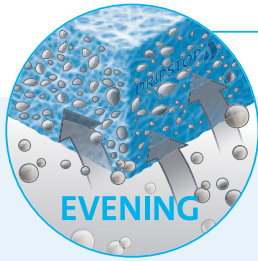
- Caution is advised in regard to adhesives. Check with the manufacturer to see if there could be a negative reaction between the adhesive and metal coating.
- Sealers are usually not required on pre-painted metal, but check with the manufacturer.
- Fasteners need to be compatible with the substrate itself.
- Acrylic adhesives are best for use with architectural aluminum as rubber adhesives can be difficult to remove.
- Environmentally conscious finishers capture and destroy the VOCs to avoid negative environmental impact. **GSCB**



Inland Coatings products were used in this project. Here are the Before (left) and After photos.



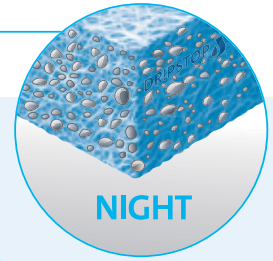
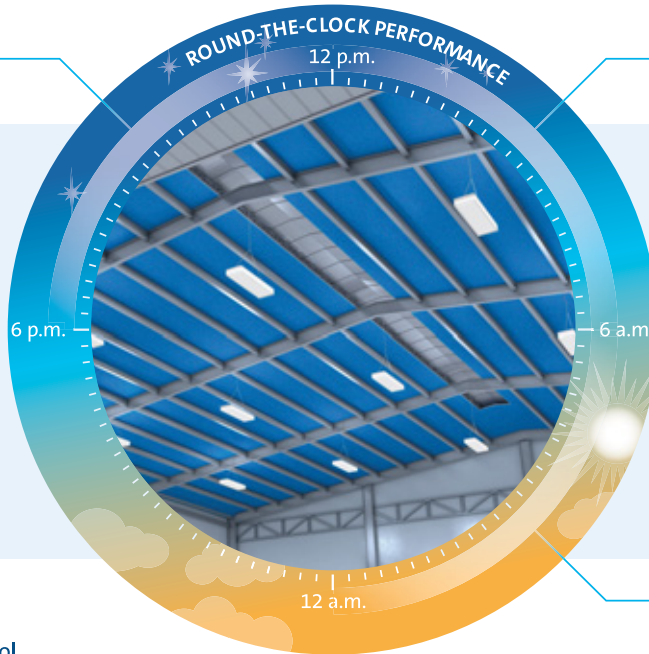
CONDENSATION CONTROL WHICH INCREASE PROFITS NOT LABOR COSTS



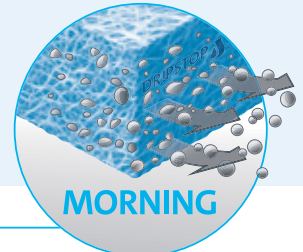
EVENING
Water vapor is absorbed into the fibers



Effective condensation control requires good building ventilation



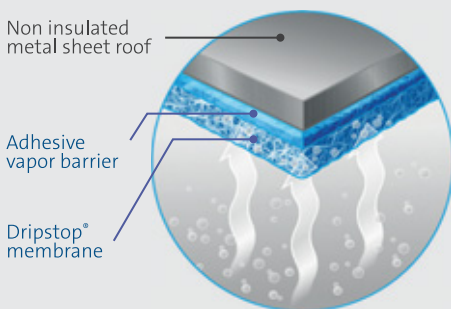
NIGHT
Moisture is trapped in the fibers



MORNING
Water evaporates through the roof opening

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The Kevmar Way

Work Hard, Improve
Constantly, and Do It
With Gratitude

BY LINDA SCHMID

In 1996, Willis Miller began creating metal stampings and forming metal components for garage doors. Miller had worked in the garage industry since 1981 and he saw the demand and decided he could create a company that could meet it. At first the components were built for C.H.I., a local garage door manufacturer.

In 2008, during a lull in the industry, Miller was able to pick up equipment including a rollformer, panel stamping press, and metal punches; machinery that enabled them to expand into door fabrication. They began producing shed doors along with high-end molded fiber glass (that they had been producing earlier) and all-glass doors for C.H.I., which is still a primary customer for the company.

The Company Today

The company consists of the Miller family along with a much-appreciated group of production personnel. They feel privileged to be working with an exceptional group of employees and customers and they have experienced great growth in the last few years.

The area they are in is a good manufacturing area, Miller says, a hardworking community where you can get help if you need it.

“We rely more and more on the know-how and experience of the production personnel as the growth of door models adds to manufacturing complexities,” Miller said.

Miller is happy with the niche Kevmar is filling; they fairly typically sell to accounts that are not serviced by major manufacturers.

“The shed industry overall is vibrant and healthy. We sell direct to the shed manufacturer as well as post-frame supply houses and to door installers as an add-on line,” Willis said.

One of the great advantages of shed doors is that many doors are interchangeable, and they



Molded Fiberglass Garage Door.

are shipped in 5-pack stackable packs that are fork-lift friendly. This makes deliveries and handling by the customer as easy as possible. Tracks and springs are wrapped up in one bundle for added convenience, and doors are delivered on curtainside trailers.



Fork Lifiable Shed Doors.

Kevmar is located in rural Illinois and their regular route includes most of the Midwest: Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Kentucky, Iowa, Wisconsin, and part of Tennessee. The company will ship items beyond the Midwest depending on volume.

They have been gradually adding more colors, more window options, and are in the process of adding a new model to a current series of doors.

Difficult Times

“The pandemic was obviously tough on everyone,” Miller said. “Our biggest concern was the huge uptick in demand, yet the materials were hard to come by, particularly springs. We were working with three different vendors and they were having severe lead time issues. We were forced to turn potential customers away.”

Turning people away goes against the grain

🏠 BUSINESS PROFILE 🏠

for Miller. They took names and contacted those prospective customers once lead times had improved. They have opened many new accounts, and between those and their previously existing customers, business is booming.

Blessings

Kevmar customers and employees have been a blessing, helping the company determine what improvements are needed and aiding in their growth, according to Miller.

“Perfection is a worthy goal, if unattainable,” Miller said. “We enjoy trying to produce better products and processes to make things easier for everyone.

The future of the door industry looks good. Miller says that shed door sales are solid; not as strong as pandemic levels, but they are back to pre-pandemic levels and conventional door sales are picking up as well.

“We thank the Lord, Kevmar employees, and our customers for bringing us this far,” he said. “Although challenges pop up



Shed Door Assembly.

daily, if we follow the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12), blessings often follow.” **GSCB**



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Opening Opportunities

Trac-Rite Offers Vertical Doors and Technology To Go With Them

BY GSCB STAFF

Since 1901, Trachte Building Systems has offered a full line of pre-engineered steel buildings and door/hallway systems. The 100% employee-owned company helped pioneer steel self-storage buildings in the 1970s. Trac-Rite, a division of Trachte, has been a trusted brand for manufacturing steel roll-up doors for a variety of applications, including self-storage facilities, for more than 40 years.

Headquartered in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, Trac-Rite serves all of U.S. and Canada, and parts of Central America and Mexico. With recent expansion this past year to accommodate growth, a new distribution center opened in Sun Prairie. In addition, Trac-Rite doors are now manufactured and shipped from the south in Vernon, Alabama. This new capacity reduced logistics costs and shortened lead times, which led to becoming one of the largest door manufacturers in all of North America.

Trac-Rite's entire line of doors provide great wind ratings and warranties. Their product leader, the 944 Door, features a live axle, crushed ball bearings, and Teflon-coated dual springs that don't need greasing or oiling. The 944 Door is currently available up to 12' x 12' but will be expanding to 16' x 16' this year to meet market demand.

Performance, Value, and Service

Kellen Anderson, Director of Sales for Trac-Rite, is proud of their success in developing customer loyalty. He contributes this to their attentiveness to providing high quality customer service. Finding good service in the business world is dis-



appearing, so this competitive advantage presents their customers with unmatched value. Anderson states that the quality is reflected in their warranty. Doors have a 3-year warranty on materials, a 10-year warranty on springs, and 30 to 40 years on paint. At one great low price, the doors are available in 24 different colors. With a drop in material costs, Trac-Rite announced a 5% markdown on their prices at the start of 2023.

Technology Advances

A great new product introduced this spring continued a long history of advancements and improvements.

Trac-Rite Door was founded in 1981 and launched with its first product, the 940 Door, which was available from 3' by 3' up to 10' by 10'. Manufacturing moved to Sun Prairie in 1985. Insulated roll-up doors were introduced in 1990, and industrial steel slat doors came along in 2000. The company bought a roll former in 2003 and moved into offering door panels with a flat (versus rounded) configuration.

Since that time, advances have in-

cluded the WL models ("windlock" to withstand high wind loads), EP3 coated springs (eliminating the need for regular lubrication), and improved bottom seals.

The constant search for improvement led to a leap forward in the spring of 2023 when Trac-Rite introduced the Passport Lock, a smarter locking solution for self-storage facilities. This new secure and reliable ecosystem is designed to meet your customers' needs. With so many advantages for both owners and tenants, this smart lock provides the extra convenience to take their facility to the next level, giving builders a sales opportunity.

The new technology offers builders an upsell on either a new project or an existing building. Features include:

- Install and operate with ease without any new doors, wires, or drilling.
- Provide access credentials from off-site and automate move-in and overlock processes.
- Grant or revoke access at any time, and track all access, attempts, and activity with audit trails.
- The system offers an extra level of security for vacant units.



The compact, easy-to-install lock is designed with the installer's time in mind, and qualified technicians can use an on-line portal to install, manage, or troubleshoot Passport locks.

The After-Effects of COVID

When COVID hit, business was expected to slow down initially. Despite their projections, a flood of customers came looking for doors when usual suppliers couldn't meet their needs. Trac-Rite gets their steel within the U.S. and the rest of the process is produced in-house. With enough material secured, they were able to meet and exceed expectations. The after-effects of COVID allowed Trac-Rite the opportunity to gain momentum and they prospered.

Company Culture

Anderson believes the company's strongest asset is their personnel. The benefit to being employee-owned is that his team truly cares and is invested in providing a superior product and service.

"If you came through our facility and talked to the people, you would know that all of them care. It's a trait that becomes instilled in you when you work here; you are part of something bigger," he said. "You care about everything ... no one is above picking up garbage. Everyone cares that every door is wind-graded. We care that you are satisfied with your purchase. On-boarding salesmen are taught to care in the same way as they start out by learning how to make doors on the factory floor."





That passion and innovation led to automation. Robots and robotic engineers are able to take over processes that are usually heavily manual to ensure better quality control. The doors are all made exactly the same and a lack in labor doesn't slow the process down because they pride themselves on great consistency in quality and service. **GSCB**

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Pro Cut Metals

‘We’re in the People Business’

BY SHANNON LATHAM, THE SHED GEEK

Andre Yoder is the President and co-owner of Pro Cut Metals of Easley, South Carolina. At PCM, Andre and his father Harley Yoder have put together quite an interesting business. According to Andre, his father has owned and been involved in offering building supplies for a while. This has led to them owning “the largest independently owned building supply location in the nation, and the fourth-largest yard of any major retailer that provides building supplies.”

The property is comprised of an 18-acre retail location, and they are currently moving to a distribution center / wood truss plant

that will add an additional 35 acres. The company purchased a roll former in April 2021 which added the motivation needed to begin expanding into the metal roofing market and opened possibilities in the shed, carport, and post-frame industries.

The company is a one-stop-shop for the consumer and is creating a thriving business model that reaches across the aisle from one industry to the next. All of this is done with an intense focus on taking care of their base customer and providing an excellent customer experience without fail, each and every time.

We asked Andre to provide us with some thoughts on his company and the industry.

What products and services do you provide?

“All metal roofing and accessories. We provide three different roofing metal profiles, including Tough Rib, PBR panel, and Standing Seam panels. We also provide all the trim components that accompany those profiles, as well as accessory items such as screws, caulking, and other necessary items for finishing. We’ve also started providing post-frame building kits, and can provide entire post-frame building designs, and full turnkey buildings for customers.”

What is your current territory?

“We currently service all of South Carolina, northeast Georgia, and southwest North Carolina. We are near Greenville, South Carolina, so there is an influx of business in that direct area.”

What is the current business climate in your area?

“Our territory is a bit of a unique area that is seeing lots of new customers. Greenville and the surrounding area are growing and hasn’t slowed down. With the addition of new people moving to the area, business is ripe for growth.”

What is your primary customer base?

“We primarily operate in the residential roofing area. However, with the addition of the roll former, we have found some B2B customers in the shed industry who use metal roofs and metal side panels, but also added some commercial customers to our portfolio. It has also made the transition into providing post-frame metal panels, which goes very well with the wood truss shop.”

How do you differentiate yourself from your competition?

“There seems to be a roll former around every corner you turn. However, we have set a focus on offering a superior, high-quality product. Our tag line is ‘a roof that lasts a lifetime’ and we mean it. We make sure not to overpromise and under-deliver. We want our customer service to be a staple to our brand, and we lead with a servant’s heart first.”

Similarly, to what do you owe the success of your business?

“When we started, we were a traditional start-up small busi-



ness with a small team. We experienced rapid growth and therefore also experienced growth pains. Going through something like that builds some grit among your team. When you grow too fast it exposes all your weaknesses, especially in customer service. We owe a lot of success to sticking with it, and making the adjustments necessary, even the tough ones.”

What would you tell yourself five years ago if you could?

“To not give up. I would tell myself to just keep pushing forward and that hard work will get you further. When you feel like quitting, just reevaluate, and push forward. Hard work works.”

What is your advice to somebody who is new in this industry?

“Work hard and take care of the customer. Have integrity and do what you say. Not doing what you say will cost you way



more than you realize. Also, find a way to differentiate yourself for the customer. Find something unique to offer and make yourself the obvious choice to purchase from. See the value in every customer. How you treat the customer who spends just a little says a lot about how you will treat the customer who spends a lot.”

Where do you see the biggest opportunities in the coming months? Coming years?

“Being one of the only roofing metal companies in our area that has the unique connections we have provides a lot of opportunity. More and more people are moving to this area, and they have needs that we can service. I think our specific territory is one of our best opportunities. Many people are wanting barndominiums or post-frame kits, and we can provide those as a less expensive alternative sometimes to traditional housing.”

Where do you see the biggest challenges in the coming months? Coming years?

“Because we’re still seen as a small business, we must instill confidence in the customers that we are able to meet

their needs. Like all trade jobs, we often struggle with labor shortages and finding skilled workers. We need to work with builders who fit our vision to take the experience from the introduction to the finished product with the right attitude. We need workers who love what they do and care about the whole process. Delivering a WOW experience through the whole process is what we aim to do each day.”

What are the things that you would love to get better at?

“I would like more experience in leadership. We’re two years in, and new, so I don’t want to develop a ‘my way or the highway’ mentality. I need to learn more about my peers and what drives them. I need to learn more about my employees and what drives them. It’s important to not just build a business but rather a culture of success. I think that is done through leadership.”

What are your Three Keys to Good Business?

“The first is absolutely taking care of the customer. If you take care of them, they will take care of you through referrals and ways you didn’t expect.

The second is having integrity, and being someone the customer can trust. Sometimes that image can be tough to the customer if you are in construction. The third is providing the customer with a great product, and really believing in your product, and then educating the customer so they feel good about their purchase.”

What are your business goals for the future?

“I think it’s best to just be still and watch for now. There are so many different directions we could go. We’re thankful for all the opportunities but it’s important to take the right ones. We feel like the best thing to do is to watch the market and focus on the areas we can provide good products and good customer service and meet the demands of the public. We don’t plan to jump at every opportunity, but we are keeping a careful eye on what exist.”

Tell us about your company culture and business philosophy.

“We are unashamedly a Christian-based organization. Our goal is to be a light to the world and lead with our values, and our morals intact in the business environment. We like the way Chick-fil-A had presented themselves as a Christian organization to the public. Truett Cathy said it best: ‘We’re not just in the chicken business, we’re in the people business.’ That is the same with us, we are in the people business, and we just so happen to sell construction materials.” **GSCB**

Shannon Latham is a 6-year veteran of the shed industry. He has served as sales manager, quality control, and RTO dealer support specialist, among other roles. He hosts the Shed Geek Podcast [shedgeek.com/] and has a desire to help move the shed industry forward.



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ADMIT 1

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Active Ventilation

Why a Garage or Shed May Need Solar-Powered Airflow

BY ROCKY LANDSVERK

Whether you have a customer decide they'd like to turn their garage or shed into an art studio or work-from-home office, or if you're building a project that includes one, homeowners are increasingly creating secondary living and working spaces next to their primary residence. "We're starting to see a lot of mancaves, and art studios out in little sheds," said Steve Winters of Brighter Concepts LTC.

The list of uses for these spaces seems endless. Certainly work-from-home has made an impact, but that's not the entire reason. It can be "people working on cars or small engines. Garages are becoming an extension of the house," he said.

Brighter Concepts is the exclusive dealer in Wisconsin for Solatube, which offers active (meaning "powered") ventilation solutions for attics, garages, and sheds, with both solar-powered and conventional electricity options.

Solar-powered solutions are getting better each year, making them more attractive financially, so that's part of the reason why that product is gaining in popularity. But first and foremost, the surge relates to the fact that people aren't only storing things in their outbuildings anymore. They're often spending a significant amount of time there.

So the financial decision is no longer about comfort for 10 minutes at a time, or even about whether or not something



The Solatube RM 2400 solar fan works this way (graphic by Solatube). It's powered by a 35-watt solar panel.

might melt if there's no air movement in the building. Rather, it can be a true health issue because the homeowner might be spending hours there, or even overnight.

Is Ventilation Optional?

Erez Halfon of Mobeno Solar Solutions, who developed and patented a solar-powered ventilation system, said all buildings need ventilation. The level of active or powered ventilation depends on the use. "The garage, shed, barn, whatever the building is — today it could be a home office, or maybe it's a gym," he said.

"If it's not only for storing your yard tools or boxes, then you need to consider it"

There are three aspects to the decision. One is your comfort if you're going to be in that space for an extended period of time; another is whether fumes from whatever is being stored there need to be evacuated; and thirdly, you have to determine if what's being stored there can withstand heat.

Why Ventilation Matters

Ventilation solutions sound optional to most homeowners. It's not until they have mold or some other significant calamity

that they realize the builder and/or salesperson had a point.

“I came from the restoration world, where we saw issues like mold and ice damming,” Winters said. “There are usually two causes. One is not enough airflow, period. You should constantly have airflow, every day. You don’t even need a thermostat (to create airflow on hot days); you need airflow every day.

“And the other problem is not enough insulation. The recommended amount right now is R50.”

When all these systems are properly working together, the benefits include shingles lasting longer, healthier air in the home and attic, and energy savings.

How Powered Fans Work

One of the key aspects that people forget is that moving air needs to be replaced; a fan in a closed room isn’t doing much good. There are two steps involved with installation: Powering a fan (solar or electric), and then creating a vent. “You have to have fresh outside air,” Winters said. “You need places to draw the air from, whether that’s extra soffits, or on the bottom panel of the garage door. You can just put a small vent panel on the bottom corner, or with a shed, you can put it on a swinging door.”

Each situation requires a different solution. If you have an enclosed ceiling in this garage or she-shed, typically meaning there is drywall and not exposed rafters, sometimes the builder and client will want to go with a two-part solution. “The solar power attic fan runs during the day, and if they’re working at night, a whole-house fan runs on traditional electric,” Winters said.

Typically, sheds and garages that aren’t going to be used as working spaces are given gable vents and what’s called a passive ventilation. If the customer is buying a shed package, there’s typically a roof vent in it. “There will be *some* air movement, like you’re opening a window at home,” with passive ventilation, Halfon said. “If there’s a mechanical aspect, you’re actually moving the air, you’re circulating it.”

Options and Upsells

Solatube has a lot of options; it’s not only a single-use solar exhaust fan system. They can be temperature-controlled and run based on that, but as noted earlier, Winters recommends a system that simply runs daily. “The solar-powered units can come on automatically,” he said. “When the daylight comes up, it starts running during the day.”

And given that there’s no electricity involved, the fact that it’s running daily is not costing anything. But his larger point is that the air needs to move a lot more than we ever thought it did, especially in today’s newer homes, which can be almost dangerously airtight.

You can also get Solatubes that provide natural daylighting,

which is a benefit in situations where the homeowner converts a closed space many years after it was built to store lawn mowers.

Halfon said his Zula system is designed to be added any time, even to an existing outbuilding, but the earlier you make that decision during the building stage, the better. He said that can matter not just from an expense standpoint (doing things twice costs more money), but also remember that you don’t want mold getting into the building *before* you decide to add the ventilation.

“People will say that ‘I’ll get to it later,’” Halfon said. “Later becomes too late if there’s already mold. I look at this as just like buying insurance for your car. You can’t really say ‘I’ll get to it later’ because chances are you probably won’t even remember.”

Options with the Zula system, which is 630 cfm, include a filter. “We have the homeowner come back to the builder of the shed to buy those air filters every quarter or buy quantity across different quarters,” he said. “You really keep that relationship.”

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their local authorized dealer; in the case of Wisconsin, Brighter Concepts is the only authorized dealer in the state. Professionals get a discounted price.

Winters said most builders/roofers/contractors have Brighter Concepts do the install “because then we take the liability of cutting that hole and they don’t have to worry about it. We put a 10-year liability warranty on our labor, which is a great selling point. The roofers really appreciate that we take the liability of cutting that hole.”

The Zula system was sized to standard garage-door window panels, though it’s modular to adapt to other locations. “It installs like a garage-door window and can even use the same screws,” Halfon said. “The installation process is very simple. In a garage door, you use the same window frame screws; in a shed, it replaces the gable vent hole with few screws.”

Halfon said builders can be resellers and sell the system as-is, or install it at the time of the build while charging an installation fee. Many of his resellers are garage door installers, he said, and he has units on display at some shed builder lots. You can also add a maintenance package that will allow you to revisit the homeowner, which is always a good thing for anybody selling products and services.

Do You Need a Fan?

You might be wondering when you should include an actual fan, not an exhaust device but a fan to move the air. David Rose, Senior Manager of Technical Strategy and Innovation at Big Ass Fans, said his company also has smaller residential and commercial fans. He said among the biggest factors is if the homeowner “plans on spending prolonged time in there, it’s not just for simple storage. That’s where the fan can make it significantly more comfortable. Using circulating ceiling fans ensures that no pockets of stagnant air exist in the space and that the fresh air being brought into the space is being distributed evenly and completely.”

The one thing a builder might be surprised about related to fans is that they use almost no power. As you’re running the electrical calculator, especially in a solar-powered scenario, you might think that the fan would “cost” too much. But they’re

remarkably energy-efficient. “Even the largest, most-industrial fan has, at max, a 2-horsepower motor on them,” Rose said. “The smaller-diameter residential products are going to consume, at maximum, 40 watts. The commercial stuff only tops out at 250-300 watts. The laptop plugged into the wall uses up more load.”

Attic fans are also quieter than they used to be. “They actually kind of hang in the attic,” Winters said of today’s attic fans. “The fan part is hanging on a stabilizing arm, so they don’t make the noise like they used to. And the cfm’s are still higher than they used to be.”

Modern Building Improvements & Changes

Winters said many people don’t realize that solar power and the devices that use them are better than they were in the past. Today’s solar systems are “a lot quieter because it’s brushless, some are rated up to a 2,400 square feet of attic space, and it comes with a 10-year warranty.”

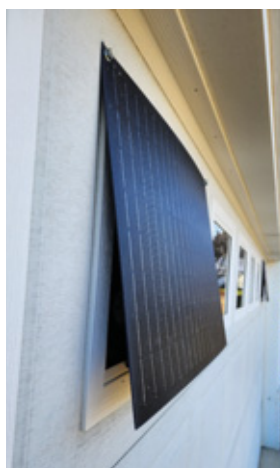
And the Solatubes come with a 10-year warranty that wasn’t possible with solar power of the past. Winters added that solar power isn’t exclusively for situations in which there is no corded electricity. Consumers are sometimes choosing solar even if electricity is available. That’s not driven only by people who are trying to be environmentally friendly; they often like the idea of not having to pay a bill again for at least 10 years.

Winters pointed out that newer homes need ventilation more than in the past when the ventilation was mostly accidental. “They are so tight that you should consider opening windows or refreshing the air maybe once/week,” in the winter, he said.

Also make sure you investigate whether the homeowner is qualified for a 30% tax credit; typically, they will be. “Both the Solatube and the solar-powered attic fans qualify for a 30% tax credit, which can be a huge benefit for the consumer,” Winters said. It makes something a lot easier to sell when somebody else is offering a tax credit on your product.

Halfon’s systems typically qualify for the tax credit, also. He said solar solutions are not only practical for the homeowner, they’re also a selling point for builders and contractors.

“Where the trend is going, bringing a solar energy solution puts them on top of their competitors,” he said. “You’re not the cheaper solution; you separate yourself by having that unique solution.” **GSCB**



Photos of the Mobeno Solutions system.

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Expanding Horizons

Diversifying Your Shed Business

BY MATTHEW BLACK

As a storage shed seller, your business model rests on providing valuable, convenient storage solutions to your customers. However, as the industry evolves, it's worth considering how you can enhance your business by expanding your offerings to include complementary products like carports, chicken coops, gazebos, animal shelters, and poly furniture. Selling these complementary products can have a huge impact on the success of your business.

1. Diversification and Revenue Growth

The first, most obvious benefit of selling a broader product range is the potential for increased revenue. More products mean more opportunities for sales, especially if these items align well with your customers' needs and lifestyles. Each of these products — carports, chicken coops, gazebos, animal shelters, and poly furniture — caters to different aspects of outdoor living, offering solutions for storage, vehicle protection, sustainable living, outdoor entertainment, animal care, and comfortable outdoor furniture.

2. Enhanced Customer Experience

By offering a wider product range, you can provide a more comprehensive, convenient shopping experience for your customers. Rather than visiting multiple stores or websites to find what they're looking for, customers can find every-



If they need a shed, they often will often need a chicken coop (above) or another type of animal shelter (right).

thing they need in one place. This not only saves them time and effort but also fosters a sense of loyalty towards your brand. They're more likely to return for future purchases and recommend you to others, helping to increase customer retention and attract new customers.



3. Cross-Selling and Up-Selling Opportunities

With a diversified product range, you

can leverage cross-selling and up-selling strategies to maximize profits. For instance, a customer buying a storage shed might also be interested in a carport for their vehicle, or a gazebo to enhance their



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outdoor entertaining space. You might also persuade a chicken coop customer to add some durable poly furniture to their outdoor space, or convince an animal shelter buyer to consider a shed for a tack room. By linking these products in the minds of your customers, you increase the likelihood of multiple product purchases.

4. Mitigating Business Risks

Relying on a single product for your income can be risky. Changes in market trends, shifts in customer preferences, or even seasonal fluctuations can impact your sales. By offering a variety of products, you can mitigate these risks. If one product's sales dwindle, you can rely on the others to maintain a steady revenue stream. This can provide financial stability and resilience for your business.

5. Building a Strong Brand

Offering a broader product range can enhance your brand's image and reputation. It shows that you understand your customers' varied needs and are committed to providing comprehensive solutions. This can help to position your brand as an industry leader and go-to source for all things related to outdoor living, which can boost your credibility and appeal in the eyes of customers.

6. Greater Market Appeal

By selling a diverse range of products, you can appeal to a broader audience. For instance, carports might attract vehicle owners, chicken coops might interest sustainability enthusiasts, gazebos could attract homeowners who love entertaining, and animal shelters could appeal to pet owners or hobby farmers. This wider appeal can help you to reach new customer segments and expand your market share.

While there are clear benefits to selling complementary products, it's important



COURTESY OF CARPORT CENTRAL

If you sell a shed or a carport like the one above, you have their attention, and they might want or need a nice poly table and chairs (left).



suppliers and managing larger inventory levels.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while introducing complementary products like carports, chicken coops, gazebos, animal shelters, and poly furniture into your storage shed business requires thoughtful planning, the potential benefits are significant. From revenue growth and risk mitigation to enhanced customer experience and brand strengthening. Diversification can propel your business to new heights, ensuring you continue to thrive in this ever-evolving market. **GSCB**

Matthew Black is owner of My Shed (myshed.io), which offers a software platform and business management products to help shed business owners succeed. If you have any questions or topic suggestions, email him at Matt@myshed.io.

to approach this strategy with careful planning. It's essential to understand your target market, their needs, and the demand for these additional products. Diversification should not dilute your brand's core focus but rather enhance and expand upon it.

Furthermore, it's crucial to provide adequate training for your sales team to ensure they can confidently and effectively sell these new products. They should be able to explain the features and benefits of each product and how they can add value to the customer's outdoor space.

Finally, consider the logistics and costs associated with expanding your inventory. This might involve finding reliable

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October METALCON Registration Now Open

Registration is now open for METALCON 2023, the only global event dedicated exclusively to the application of metal in design and construction. This year's conference and tradeshow takes place at the Las Vegas Convention Center from Wednesday, October 18, through Friday, October 20, with pre-show workshops beginning on Tuesday.

Industry experts will present key topics in the show's education program, and companies representing the entire spectrum of metal in construction will showcase the latest products, solutions, and technologies covering everything from A to Z: accessories; building systems; coatings; construction technology; contractor tools; doors; fasteners; fenestration; framing; in-plant accessories; insulated metal panels; interior metal products; manufacturing equipment; ornamental/custom fabrication; metal roofing; rooftop products; solar; substrate material and walls.

New for 2023 is the METALCON Training Zone centrally located on the show floor and sponsored by Sherwin-Williams. Led by John Sheridan of Sheridan Metal Resources and his team of experts, the training zone will provide hands-on training featuring demonstrations and education (both in English and in Spanish) using a variety of mock-ups and materials including painted steel, aluminum, zinc, copper and other exotic materials. Training will focus on proper detailing and utilization of the



right tools to enhance skills.

Also new this year is a Mergers & Acquisitions Essentials Workshop presented by PSMJ Resources, Inc., expert Karl Wolker. Topics include: Interested in growing your business through acquisition, but aren't sure where to start? Could merging or selling your business be the perfect exit strategy for preserving your hard-won equity and legacy? Geared toward business owners and executives, this foundational workshop will cover the core principles driving the most successful transactions.

Admission prices range from \$110 to \$440, depending on how many workshops you choose to attend. Architects have a special arrangement called The Architect's Experience.

For more information, visit www.metalcon.com.

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ICC Code-Development Process Changing for 2027 Version

The International Code Council is revising its rigorous code development process. The changes will take effect in 2024-2026 for the development of the 2027 International Codes (I-Codes) and will move the development process to an integrated and continuous three-year cycle.

In the new timeline, year one will include two Committee Action Hearings for Group A Codes; year two will include two Committee Action Hearings for Group B Codes; and year three will be the joint Public Comment Hearings and Online Governmental Consensus Vote for both Group A and B Codes.

The addition of the second Committee Actions Hearings in year one and two will foster a more in-depth vetting of code change proposals, allowing an opportunity for the committee members to review and evaluate the original proposals and consider the submitted responses. This also provides more opportunity for proponents to build consensus for their code change proposal and ensure the best version of their intended improvement to the existing codes.

Additionally, with combined Public Comment Hearings in the third year, voting members are able to vote on all suggested changes to the next edition of the I-Codes at one time. The updated process also provides more opportunity for proposed new referenced standards to be developed and finalized on a consistent timeline regardless of the group (Group A or B) with which they are associated.

As part of the new process, volunteers on code development committees will now preside over the two Committee Action Hearings, one in the spring and one in the fall.

McElroy Metal Announces It Is Now an ESOP Company

In the midst of celebrating its 60th anniversary, McElroy Metal announced the transition to an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP).

“The one constant trait during our 60-year history is the influence and support of employees,” said company president Ian McElroy. “Throughout the country, McElroy Metal is blessed to have loyal employees, including many that have dedicated decades of service to the company. As a show of appreciation to those employees, I am proud to announce McElroy Metal has transitioned into an ESOP company. McElroy Metal employees are now employee owners of McElroy Metal.”

While the ESOP represents a change of ownership, there is no change in management or leadership. Ian McElroy will continue to serve as the president of McElroy Metal. For more information on ESOPs or how to convert your company to one, visit one of the many online resources, including www.esopassociation.org.

AISI Standards Council Working Toward New Metal Building Standards

The Standards Council of the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI) has formed a new group that will be primarily responsible for the ongoing development of AISI S250, North American Standard for Thermal Transmittance of Building Envelopes With Cold-Formed Steel Framing. The new Committee on Energy Standards falls under the administrative oversight of the AISI Standards Council, which also oversees the Committee on Specifications and the Committee on Framing Standards.

The new group is recognized as a consensus body by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). It is comprised of AISI staff and experts from the steel construction industry, and will develop and maintain methods for determining heat transfer through building envelopes for assemblies containing cold-formed steel and other materials; develop prescriptive and performance solutions for code compliance, construction details, and installation quality standards; and address other similar issues that impact cold-formed steel in the

energy codes and standards arena. The first meeting of the committee was held in March.

“Thermal performance is increasingly influencing material selection in building design and construction,” said AISI Vice President of Construction Robert J. Wills, P.E. “The work of this committee will ensure that cold-formed steel is a viable option for those targeting advanced or net-zero buildings by 2030.”

AISI S250-21 is a single source for calculating the thermal transmittance (U-factors) of walls and ceiling/roof envelope assemblies that contain cold-formed steel framing. The advantages of AISI S250-21 over all previous calculation methods include the ability to analyze wall assemblies that have framing members spaced from 6 inches to 24 inches on center, framing member steel thicknesses from 33 mils (0.0329 inch) to 68 mils (0.0677 inch), and wall assemblies with insulation in the cavity, partially in the cavity or no cavity insulation.

The standard is intended for adoption and use in the United States, Canada, and Mexico and is available for free download at www.aisistandards.org.

The Bradbury Group Employees Complete Leadership Development Program

Over the last year, participants from The Bradbury Group have completed the leadership development program. Throughout each class, participants were challenged with learning the philosophy of leadership and how they can grow both professionally and personally. The skills they have gathered will be directly related to The Bradbury Group’s Vision, Mission and Values & Beliefs.

The following participants completed the course: Colin January, Jalonna Ross, Courtney Swanner, Charles Dye, Marcus Gaeddert, Jeremy Moore, Nathon Daniels, Mason Kukuk, Nathan Dewitt, Gavin Lopata, Rod Rinker, Adam Wulf, Evan Esau, Brant Boswell, Zach Beck, Clark Nichols, Shaun Fields and Jamie Schultz.

Maze Nails Marks 175-Year Milestone

Just 30 years after Illinois became a state, Samuel Maze started his lumber company along the Illinois River. It eventually grew to include making the nation's largest selection of Specialty Nails.

To this day, Maze's company is still going strong. Maze Lumber is the state's oldest lumberyard, Samuel's great-great-grandson, Roelif Loveland is president of Maze Nails, and Maze Company proudly celebrates its 175th anniversary this year. "We have been blessed with many generations of great associates — both non-family and family employees," Loveland said. "A huge part of longevity is having quality people...and the other part is having quality products that are continually demanded in the marketplace."

"As my brother, Jim, said on the anniversary of his 150-year-old home in Spring Valley, Illinois, we are all simply caretakers of old businesses and old houses. It is our job to nurture them and make certain that they survive for the next generation. I am very proud to be spending my years doing exactly that."

He also said he is impressed by his ancestors' ingenuity, which set up Maze Nails for longevity.

"It seems like entrepreneurship was the rule rather than the exception back in those days," Loveland said. "Family owned and operated store fronts and small businesses sprang up everywhere. The Maze boys were pretty clever fellows and built a very strong business for future generations."

Over the years, Loveland said there have been steady changes to the family business.

For example, Loveland said nails were once made entirely of zinc purchased from Illinois Zinc and M & H Zinc, but in 1916 nails started to be made of steel and dipped in zinc.

That was done by hand at first, but in 1955, Loveland said brothers, James and Hamilton Maze, designed a dipping machine to do the work. "The only thing that has stayed the same is that both types of nails were highly dependable and became demanded by contractors nationwide," Loveland said.

SRS Distribution Expands With Purchase of Marsh Building Products

SRS Distribution Inc. announced it has acquired Marsh Building Products, Inc., a leading distributor of residential and commercial building products.

Headquartered in Fort Thomas, Kentucky, Marsh was founded in 1989 by brothers Ken & Mike Middleton and is run today by President Patrick McNickle. The company operates out of eight facilities across Ohio and Kentucky and currently employs a team of about 130 people. McNickle will stay aboard and the Marsh name will, too.

SRS Distribution is a building products distributor with more than 700 locations across 44 states.



Maze Nails' first delivery truck: a 1923 "Federal." PHOTO COURTESY OF MAZE NAILS

Carlisle Spray Foam Insulation Publishes EPD

Carlisle Spray Foam Insulation (CSFI), a manufacturer of spray polyurethane foam insulation products, announced the publication of a third-party verified Environmental Product Declaration (EPD), for its complete spray foam insulation product portfolio. A first for the spray foam industry, this product-specific TYPE III EPD assesses the total lifecycle environmental impact of open-cell spray foam insulation and closed-cell spray foam based on hydrofluoroolefin (HFO) and hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) blowing agents as well as CSFI's new ultra-low global warming potential (GWP) products: SealTite™ PRO HFO and SealTite ONE.

EPDs equip specifiers with an objective, independently produced report that analyzes the energy use and environmental impact of all phases of a product's life—from raw material extraction to end-of-life. Key findings include:

- New ultra-low GWP products SealTite PRO HFO and SealTite ONE have a GWP that's 84 percent lower than HFC products and 33 percent lower than the spray foam industry average for low GWP alternatives.
- The manufacturer's open-cell products have GWP values that are up to 79 percent lower than select mineral wool products and 98 percent lower than extruded polystyrene.

EagleView Unveils Geospatial Platform

EagleView Technologies, Inc., a leading aerial imagery, software, and analytics provider, is opening its platform for strategic customer and partner access. The EagleView Platform will provide customers and partners the capabilities to access interactive experiences, improve current workflows, and create services and solutions with the same core capabilities and tools that power EagleView's products and services.

The platform includes the capability to leverage EagleView's library spanning multiple decades and 20 million+ square miles of geospatial images and data captured using EagleView's technology. This native access to the multi-decade imagery database includes high-precision aerial captures of properties and rural and city landscapes tools to extract unique data. [GSCB](#)

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Submission is not a guarantee of publication. We reserve the right to edit content.

If you have any questions about the Project of the Month, contact the editor:

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Marketing vs. Sales

Delivering Exceptional Customer Service in the Shed Industry – Both Online & Offline

BY JIM MOSIER

First, I want to challenge your idea of “marketing.” Most companies think of marketing as “What can I do to get my name out there?” or “How do I get more people on my lot?” I fell into that same line of thinking myself, and I now realize how incredibly wrong I was. I want to share with you a few insights I have picked up along my journey and from some of our many beloved clients in the shed industry.

The reality is that marketing and sales are two different things. Sales is the act of pursuing a transaction, while marketing shows people how you do business and lets them get to know you. In fact, your entire persona in the industry is determined by how you interact with your customers. That includes when you have happy customers as well as when you have unhappy ones.

In my business, I operate in the realm of “digital marketing,” which translates to online. Most of you are probably thinking that you understand what that is. Get an ad on Google, post some buildings to the Facebook Marketplace, and you’re marketing, right? There is a significant flaw in that line of thinking, and I want to give you an example.

Imagine you deliver a building to a customer. Your driver gets there and discovers that even after all of the conversations you have had with this customer, they still don’t understand that a 12-foot-wide building can’t be delivered through a 5-foot gate in their fence. Your



driver does what he knows to do and asks them, “How did you expect me to do it?” Now, just for a second, let’s imagine that customer has just suffered an unfortunate life event, and in their emotional state, they take extreme offense to that question. Where do you go from there?

By the way, I bring this up because it is a scenario I have dealt with multiple times for multiple clients. It is common. We can all argue that it was an innocent question, and the driver didn’t mean it the way your customer took it, and that’s probably 100% true, but here you are on the phone with an angry customer. You’ve got to resolve it. Or worse yet, they don’t

even bother to call; they just decide to be a keyboard warrior and bash your company on Google, Facebook, or anywhere else they can find it listed.

If you’re like most of us, your immediate response is to get your back up and defend yourself. You can prove that the customer exaggerated the situation, and you need to set the record straight. Unfortunately, when this happens, you’ve just lost sight of the overall concept of marketing.

I would argue that your response to the situation is 100% marketing. We all know you can’t control if or when a crazy problem will occur. What you can control is

your reaction to it. Sometimes that means you need just to suck it up and take ownership of the customer's complaint, even when you know they are wrong.

It's a bitter pill to swallow and tastes nasty, but when you keep your head in the long game and not the short game, you realize that people don't always pay attention when you do everything right. People just tend to pay more attention when things go sideways. I think it is human nature. Navigating those "side-ways" moments will always significantly impact your reputation more than having a dozen more 5-star reviews.

In fact, those moments are when you build trust. Those moments are when you earn referrals. Those moments are when you can finalize someone's buying decision in your favor. Think about this: Have you ever come across a company (or a product), for that matter, and you see it might have a 4.7 or 4.8 instead of five rating? What do you generally do? If you're like me, you poke around to see what the complaints are.

Like I said earlier – people are more likely to trust a potentially negative review than they are a 5-star review, especially if they don't personally know the person leaving it. As I said before, it's just how our minds work. If I see a review that reverts blame to the customer, or even just plain rude or hateful, I know that's how they will likely treat me if I have a bad experience. However,

if the business provides a reasonable (but non-accusative) explanation, an apology, and a desire to resolve, I know they will at least try. That is an essential thing for a buyer.

So far, I have focused so much on online reviews, that's what you might think this article is about, but it's not. It's about consistency. It's about congruency. It's about integrity.

Speaking of integrity, it is one of the more abused words in our language. The word, when most people think of it, makes them think of esteem or some kind of honorable act. In truth, integrity means that you act with principle and consistency. That principle and consistency should be across the board. Online, offline, in public, in private, and everywhere in between. I hate to take this here, but if you're a serial killer and keep killing, you still act with integrity. Integrity in and of itself is not good or bad; your thoughts, actions, and motivation are what make it up.

Think about it this way: Your reputation is your integrity, no matter where people discover it. It is also your marketing. The consistent way you handle things will become apparent. Not just online, but to people in your community and others who know you.

People will start to learn whether you act with integrity or not, and they will learn what you will likely do in any given situation. If you're nice to someone when

they walk onto a sales lot, but you don't tip your waitress at the restaurant or belittle a convenience store clerk when they're having a bad day, you might want to investigate that.

In closing, I hope the purpose of this article was clear. If not, I will sum it up for you: Good customer service is being you consistently, in all situations. You never know when that random person you encountered the other day will step on your lot or need something you're selling. If you were polite and friendly, they will recognize you. If you were a jerk, they're REALLY going to remember you.

My goal is that all of us (including myself!) strive to deliver good customer service and act with integrity in everything we do. I don't care if it is online, at a restaurant, at your child's school, or a political rally. You never know how the dots will connect in business moving forward, but you can always spot the missed connections after it is too late.

Jim Mosier is the founder of Shed Marketer, a digital marketing agency for the industry, and the author of the book "Selling Sheds Online: The complete guide to digital marketing for shed builders and portable building manufacturers." Learn more at shedmarketer.com.





High-End Garage & Shop

Bonaire, Georgia

Varco Pruden • www.varcopruden.com

The Jenkins Family Garage is a pre-engineered metal building using Varco Pruden's Rigid Frame system. It was built by

Renfroe Construction of Macon, Georgia and designed by SDH Design Solutions.

The Varco Pruden package supplied most of what Renfroe Construction needed for the project, including the

metal and the framing, which is described as a "rigid framed gable building with a rigid framed bump-out gable."

The other key component came from Thermal Design, Inc., and its Simple Saver System, which provided much of the insulation along with its interior finishing system.

The building is basically metal but actually has conventional framed walls (stick-built). The Varco Pruden rigid framing system allowed for the massive clearspan to hold the big doors and create the open space for equipment and a shop.

Most of what the builders needed came from Varco Pruden, including the fasteners, all of the framework, and the girts and purlins. Much of the rest came in that aforementioned Simple Saver System. What was added to those included Hardie Plank siding, natural stone wainscoting, and big overhead doors from Overhead Door Corp. There are no windows.



The Details:

Builder:

Renfroe Construction, Macon, Georgia

Specs: 40'8" x 78'6"

Roof Style:

Varco Pruden SLR II (metal)

Roof Pitch: 8:12

Frame: Varco Pruden

Siding: Hardie Plank

Insulation: Varco Pruden and Thermal Design, Inc., Simple Saver System

Doors: Overheard Door Corp.

Windows: None



Renfroe Construction President Jimmy Melton said the Simple Saver System and the Varco Pruden package help the builder to more easily achieve the building code. “If you’re going to do a pre-engineered building, and you’re going to meet the Georgia Energy code, it’s the best or even only way to meet the code, in a prescriptive method,” he said. “If you follow what the code says, then this is the way to do it. The other option

is to do some calculations and then do some offsets, but then you have to have an engineer involved.”

The Simple Saver System has metal banding that goes behind the interior metal panels. The insulation gets pushed up against that banding, which holds it in the cavity.

The roof panels are Varco Pruden SLR II. The company says the system is a “low-slope, concealed-fastener metal

roof that meets many architectural performance specifications. Using factory-installed sealant, pre-caulked galvanized clips, and field seaming, this metal roof system provides unsurpassed performance and leak resistance.”

The building has overhangs on all four sides, including a lean-to and the gable bump-out. The unconventional shapes were orchestrated by a Varco Pruden team led by Earl Blink. [GSCB](#)





S-5! Unveils New Clamp for Riverclack Profiles

S-5!, the inventor of engineered, manufactured, metal roof attachments, introduced its new S-5-RC™ clamp for attaching a wide range of rooftop accessories to the Riverclack® metal roof profile.

The two-piece design of the S-5-RC interfaces with the rib geometry and creates a mechanical interlock strong enough to mount most rooftop applications with certified holding strength, protecting the roof from corrosion and preserving the metal panels' thermal cycling characteristics.

Applicable for small- and large-scale industrial, commercial and institutional projects, the clamp can be installed anywhere along the seam for placement flexibility. Installers can utilize the S-5-RC with rails or pair the clamp with the S-5! PVKIT® solar solution for streamlined rail-less and penetration-free solar mounting to save time and money.

Made of high-tensile structural aluminum to match Riverclack's long-lasting performance, the S-5-RC requires no maintenance or reinspection and is warranted for the life of the roof.

New Stanley® Control-Lock™ Tape Measures

Stanley has released the new Control-Lock tape measures that feature an integrated finger brake, providing users with maximum control and protection when extending and retracting the blade. Coming in lengths of 12, 16, 25, 26, and 30 feet, they're made to reach out to 12 feet.

Features listed:

- An integrated finger brake that provides improved control of the blade when measuring and retracting



- Pro-grade performance 1-In. blade width and 12-Ft. max reach
- Protective rubber over-molded casing
- BladeArmor coating treated to the first 3 inches.



Malco Products Expands Line of C-RHEX Drivers

Malco Products, SBC, one of the nation's leading solution developers and manufacturers of a variety of high-quality tools for the building trades, today launched an extension of its line of award-winning Cleanable, Reversible Magnetic Hex Drivers: the Building Construction Series, which features deeper sockets for installing fasteners with higher head heights such as concrete anchors, pole barn screws and other common fasteners for roofing, siding and gutter applications.

The C-RHEX Building Construction Series models are available in six lengths from 2" through 12". Reversible 1/4" and 5/16" hex sockets allow for quick changes between sizes, and the Building Construction Series drivers are designed to work effectively with painted fasteners, as specialized polish in the internal sockets prevents fastener sticking.

End-users can save valuable time and effort by having access to two reversible hex sizes in one driver with color-coded grooves for easy identification. These drivers are built with S2 hardened steel

for long life and superior durability, and the protected heavy-duty magnet is easy to clean and doesn't contact the screw, so the fasteners spin true. The magnet will retain its strength for years to come.

These new models join Malco's existing C-RHEX portfolio, which includes 6 mm and 8 mm; 7 mm and 8 mm; 8 mm and 10 mm; 5/16" and 3/8"; 1/4" and 5/16"; and award-winning SAWTOOTH C-RHEX drivers.



Bosch: New Cordless Rotary Hammer Has Corded Power

Bosch has released a new cordless rotary hammer that it says has the power of a corded tool. The concrete rotary hammer is called the Profactor 18V SDS-max 1-5/8" Rotary Hammer (GBH18V-40C) and outperforms its corded counterpart, the Bosch 11264EVS, according to Bosch.

Features listed:

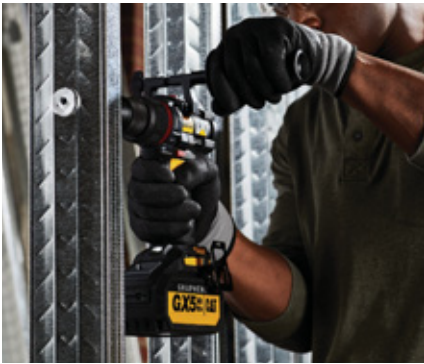
Cordless Design: Delivers corded hammer performance, with 6.7 Ft.-Lbs. of impact energy (EPTA) powered by a single 18V CORE18V 8 Ah or 12Ah battery, making concrete work easier.

KickBack Control: Reduces the risk of sudden tool reactions in binding conditions.

Soft Start and Controlled RPM: Adjusts the tool rpm and bpm for more controlled drilling and chiseling applications when working with softer materials like brick and tile.

Anti-Vibration System: Helps to reduce tool vibration due to the longer air cushion built into the hammer tube and dampeners added in the handle.

Lock-On/Lock-Off Button: Keeps the tool running when locked on (hammer mode only) and helps prevent accidental activation of the tool trigger when locked off.



Cat Launches New Hammer Drill With Graphene Battery

The New Cat 18V ½-inch DX13 Brushless Hammer Drill claims the distinction of being the first portable power tool to feature a graphene battery. This state-of-the-art 18V, 5.0Ah graphene battery delivers twice the power, charges three times faster, and provides four times longer life cycles than conventional lithium-ion batteries.

“Imagine the ability to fully re-charge a 5Ah battery in 20 minutes and have twice the amount of power to tackle some of the toughest applications on the jobsite without being connected to a cord,” stated the press release. The graphene battery provides four times the amount of life cycles, which translates to 1200 charges on a single battery. The batteries come with a 5-year warranty.

All cordless tools on the Cat 18-volt platform are compatible with the 18V, 5.0Ah graphene battery. The Hammer Drill features 25 percent more power, provides 50 percent longer runtime, and adds 10 percent longer life compared to traditional brushed motors.

Zircon Stud Finders Their Most Advanced Ever

For decades, stud finders have been designed based on capacitive technology that identifies changes in density behind the walls. While this technology can indicate the location of wood stud framing, it also discovers metal, plastic, wiring, and other objects in walls just as easily, often creating “false positives.”

For professionals and DIYers, this innovative technology will provide a more accurate representation of what is



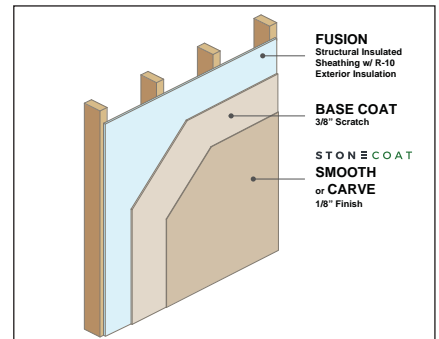
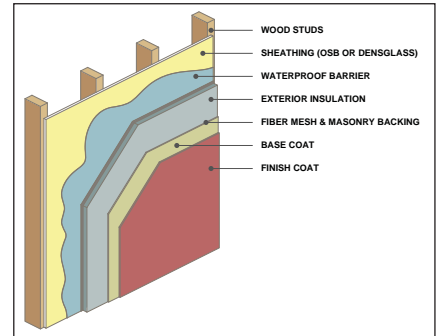
behind the wall and significantly improve confidence that what is detected is truly a wood stud. The benefits are significant: minimized rework, less damage created, and increased safety. The latest invention is Zircon’s Wood Stud SuperScan® with Target Control® Technology + FILTERz™. By analyzing the complex data streams from multiple sensors and controlling the result using sophisticated intelligence, the stud finder finds wood studs and filters out metallic objects, such as plumbing, conduit, straps, brackets, screws, protector plates, or ductwork in the wall. Additionally, the technology alerts the user to the presence of other low signal-strength, non-metallic targets, like plastic pipe, PEX tubing, and wiring.

A new and improved user interface provides an intuitive “go/no go” indication in response to what is being sensed. With a new haptic vibration and a patented SpotLite® Pointer that shines an arrow-shaped beam on the wall, users can clearly understand the target’s location and areas to avoid.

New StoneCoat Panel Replaces Four Layers

StoneCoat has debuted a new FUSION system showcasing a single panel that replaces four layers of materials used in traditional exterior wall systems — exterior insulation, OSB sheathing, waterproof and vapor barriers, and metal lath.

FUSION’S structural insulated sheathing and integrated masonry backing are



The traditional wall or panel, top, and the new StoneCoat FUSION system, above.

compatible with most exterior claddings. Their R10 insulation helps meet new energy code requirements, and FUSION also offers up to R30 insulation with 6-inch thickness. The panels also resist cracking, rotting, and mold compared to traditional building materials.

The panels are lightweight, making installation faster and easier. FUSION is also a sustainable, carbon-neutral product, as the laminate is made from recycled petroleum products, making it easier for builders, developers, and architects to meet environmental requirements and gain LEED points.

The FUSION panel is part of the StoneCoat building system. StoneCoat cladding products are engineered to bond directly to the FUSION panel, eliminating the need for metal lath or other masonry backing. This makes it easy to get the timeless look of stucco with StoneCoat SMOOTH®, or the elegance of stone veneer with StoneCoat CARVE®. Add StoneCoat SHIELD water-repellent coating to maximize performance. All StoneCoat products are environmentally friendly, made from natural or recycled materials. **GSCB**

Defining Your Sales Process

What to Ask and Expect When You Advertise

BY GARY REICHERT

A blessing and a curse of having magazines, websites, and trade shows is we have a large cross section of advertisers and exhibitors with whom we interact. Our advertisers range from new companies launching a venture to huge multi-national companies working through big city advertising agencies. Watching the dialog develop as advertisers progress through a buying process provides a great education of both what to do and what not to do.

One of the keys to successful advertising is asking yourself and the media company the right questions. Deciding how you ask the questions and why you ask the questions is often the most difficult part of the process. A corollary is that sometimes how the question is answered tells more than the actual answer.

Step 1: Decide on Your Objectives

Objectives for an advertising campaign will vary depending on the audience and type of product. The objective for a campaign is like a destination on a trip. If you don't know your end point, you will probably never get there.

DON'T: Select a broad or general objective. A goal stating "I want to sell sheds" is self-defeating.

Sales proceed in a process. Most advertising should target moving a prospect one step in a sales process. A full-page ad, 30-second commercial, or sponsored post online represents an extremely small nugget of information. Unless you are selling a commodity on price, one ad cannot take a prospect through the entire sales process.

DO: Pick a specific objective. For retail advertising, it should be measurable.

Business-to-business or large-scale consumer advertising is vastly different from most retail consumer advertising. B2B or Fortune 500 companies often have subtle objectives. They might focus on branding, product awareness or education. Most of the prospects for these businesses will remain prospects for years, so there is time to develop a message. If you build carports and need 1½" screws with an EPDM washer, next year, if you are still building carports, you will still need screws.

If you are targeting retail prospects for your carport, once they buy a carport they are out of the market. The objective is to have them buy a carport from you before they buy from someone else. These type of campaigns focus on lead generation. The ad



needs to feature a call to action with a reason to act now. The objective can be measured solely by the number of leads. Tracking the leads through the sales process is better. For retail marketing, where the customers buy once, data is king. How far did the prospects get through the sales funnel? What was their average spend? What size, color, or type? More detailed information allows you better control of your results.

Step 2: Decide on Your Audience

DON'T: Be afraid to narrow your audience. Most advertising rates are based on reach. Print advertising has a metric known as CPM, representing cost per 1,000. A magazine with 500,000 subscribers will naturally charge more than one with 20,000 subscribers. How many of the 500,000 subscribers are actual prospects?

DO: Get a clear picture and deep understanding of your prospect or target audience. This will make Step 3 much easier and more effective. Sales and marketing is about solving other people's problems. The better you understand your audience, the better you can provide solutions.

Step 3: Craft a Message Specific to Your Audience and Your Objective

DON'T: Try to cram as much random information as possible into limited space. This makes the ad less visible and creates confusion about what information matters.

DO: Tell a story. Pictures and emotional imagery make people act and take the next step. A happy family enjoying a pool house will generate calls better than details like 28 gauge, 10' x 12', or

GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PRODUCTS & SERVICES SEEN IN THIS ISSUE. HERE'S HOW:



If you are looking for more information from companies featured in this issue, fill out this form.

Mail the completed form to us, and we will have those companies get in touch with you. There's no need to fill out multiple forms; we'll do the legwork for you.

Name (please print) _____

Signature (required) _____

Company _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (_____) _____

E-mail _____ Date _____

Please check one or more boxes to subscribe FREE/Renew for 3 years:

Garage, Shed & Carport Builder Magazine *Frame Building News* *Metal Roofing Magazine*

Rural Builder *Rollforming Magazine* *Roofing Elements Magazine* *Metal Builder*

I would like to receive my subscription: By Mail Digitally

Check this box if you wish to receive our Construction Express newsletter and offers from our partners.

Email address is required to receive newsletter.

CONTACT NAME & EMAIL (OR) NAME & PHONE NUMBER ARE REQUIRED. WITHOUT THIS INFORMATION WE WILL NOT PROCESS THE REQUEST.

CHECK WHICH TITLE APPLIES TO YOU:

- President
- Owner
- Partner
- General Manager
- Sales Manager/Rep
- Engineer/Architect
- Vice President
- Foreman
- Installer
- Other _____

PLEASE CHECK THE PRIMARY CATEGORY THAT DESCRIBES YOUR BUSINESS:

- Builder, Dealer, Remodeler or Installer
- Roofing Contractor
- Metal Roofing Contractor
- Building Material Dealer/Distributor
- General Contractor/Remodeler
- Manufacturer/Rep of Manufacturer
- Architect/Specifier
- Construction Consultant/Engineer
- Building Owner/Developer
- Other (Please Specify) _____

ENGAGED IN THE FOLLOWING APPLICATIONS:

- Gutters/Accessories
- Institutional
- Residential
- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Industrial

SELECT A MAXIMUM OF 5 COMPANIES TO REQUEST INFORMATION FROM:

Company Name: _____ PAGE: _____

Company Name: _____ PAGE: _____

Company Name: _____ PAGE: _____

Company Name: _____ PAGE: _____

Company Name: _____ PAGE: _____

I understand that by providing the above information I hereby consent to receive communication regarding my subscription via US Mail, telephone, and e-mail sent by *Garage, Shed & Carport Builder Magazine*.

GSCB JUNE/JULY 2023

Kynar metal roof. A happy family is the benefit, and benefits help people make decisions now. The exception is in some business-to-business advertising. Builders typically are looking for a specific product or solution; in this case sometimes the specifications matter.

Step 4: Find the Right Delivery Methods

DON'T: Try and make one ad do everything. All media has strengths and weaknesses. Avoid trying to force media to do something it cannot.

DO: Take advantage of the strengths and complementary properties of different media types. Print is excellent at delivering information and prospects can refer back to the ad. How many times have you asked “Where did I see that?” and start flipping through a magazine or newspaper? Voice and video ads are great at communicating emotion. Digital ads allow a quick and easy way to follow up [click here]. Use the different forms of media to reinforce your message in different ways.

Step 5: Verify the Information and Capability Before Committing

DON'T: Automatically assume everything is exactly as represented.

DO: Verify the information. Ask for data and audience metrics. Print magazines need to run a Statement of Ownership (SOO) once per year where they reference the number of magazines printed. These typically run in October issues. A SOO is required to qualify Periodical Status with the U.S. Postal Service. Other requirements include over half of the subscribers having renewed within three years. Not having Periodical Status translates to significantly increased postage rates. If a magazine doesn't run that Statement and can't easily produce it for you, there is usually a reason. The SOO is the simplest way to verify circulation in non-audited publications.

Relatedly, you'll want to know the media company's digital reach.

- If a magazine has a digital version, how, when, and where do your ads run?
- If a digital or email distribution, where and how did they get their audience?

Step 6: Track Your Results

This refers back to having specific objectives. For retail sales these are often easily quantifiable. How many calls or clicks? What is the conversion rate to the next step? For branding or educational based/awareness advertising, tracking often requires an additional step, such as a followup survey.

DON'T: Make the assumption that results will be instantaneous. Many products have a long buying cycle, so responses may be delayed until the prospect develops that specific need.

Print and direct mail have a longer shelf life than radio or digital ads. I have been in situations where people have held onto a direct mail piece for over a year before trying to claim the discount.

DO: Measure as many steps in the process as possible. The desired end result is generating a sale. A large number of calls or clicks does not always translate into conversions to appointments or conversion to sales. By tracking prospects entering the funnel and progressing through stages, you can identify the quality of leads from a source and sometimes identify sticking points in your sales process.

DO: Use the data you generate to establish baselines and metrics. Having data on the number of calls or conversion to appointments can help you identify issues in sales and marketing before they impact your bottom line.

Step 7: Adapt Your Message, Audience, or Type of Media

Once you have data, use it to your advantage. A/B test everything you can. When you advertise for something with a short buying/response cycle, isolate one variable and compare results. Many email programs can automatically test Subject Lines. They send a percentage with each of two different subject lines. Then the majority of the email blast will send with the Subject Line that generated the most opens. By continually comparing options, you are able to determine what works best for your product and your audience.

DON'T: Change more than one variable at a time. If you create two different emails with different Subject Lines, different colors, a different audience, and a different call to action, you will have no way to determine why one performed better, and subsequently no idea what to change.

DO: Make sure your time constraints fit the product and type of advertising used. Many of our advertisers offer capital equipment for manufacturing. One advertiser of ours is expanding their production capacity and the expansion is taking 3-5 years for completion. If a buying cycle requires years, measuring a printed media response in days or weeks will obviously not accurately represent the success of one ad.

There are obviously a lot of moving parts to any advertising campaign. Remember that advertising and marketing is telling a story. Social media, radio, television, magazines, newspaper and direct mail are only different ways to deliver the same message. Different types of media fit different types of stories and different audiences. Understanding your audience and choosing the right method to deliver the message contribute to a successful campaign.

Gary Reichert is a 30-year veteran of sales and media and is the owner of Shield Wall Media and its magazines, websites, and shows, including Garage Shed Carport Builder.



CSI: Mid-Year Survey

Shield Wall Media, with help from METALCON and the MCA, has completed the mid-year State of the Industry Survey. The purpose of the mid-year survey is to measure changes in market sentiment from the previous survey. Rather than focus on an entire year, this survey focused on year to date and predictions for Q3 and Q4 2023.

With a few exceptions, the general expectation is still positive, but slightly less so than in the October 2022 survey.

The number of shed and carport builders/sellers predicting an increase in units of over 25% dropped from 16% to 0%. The number predicting similar sales increased from 34% to 40% and the number predicting a slight decline increased from 14% to 20%. This is reflected, but not as dramatically, in both gross sales and profitability.

Interestingly the perceived worsening of all sales metrics did not translate to a view of the general economy. The percentage of shed and carport builders/sellers thinking the general economy is improving increased while the number predicting it staying the same or decreasing declined. **GSCB**

If you like the CSI columns or find the information useful, help us help you. Shield Wall media sends a State of the Industry Survey in fall and a mid-year State of the Industry Survey in Spring. Please complete the survey and share it with your colleagues. A larger survey sample generates more reliable information. Visit our website and sign up for our emails to learn how to help.

Percentage of Respondents Predicting Future Increased Gross Sales	October 2022 Survey	May 2023 Survey
All respondents	52%	45%
Shed & carport builder or Sales	58%	39%
Residential Single Family	49%	57%
Retrofit or Remodel	33%	44%
Garage, Shed & Carport Builder Subscribers	57%	49%

Percentage of Respondents Predicting Future Increased Units Sold	October 2022 Survey	May 2023 Survey
All respondents	45%	41%
Shed & carport builder or Sales	49%	36%
Residential Single Family	42%	49%
Retrofit or Remodel	33%	36%
Garage, Shed & Carport Builder Subscribers	50%	37%

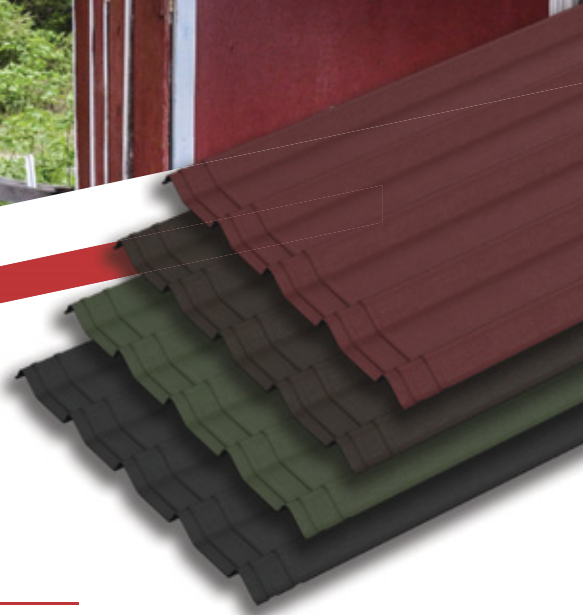
Percentage of Respondents Predicting Future Increased Profitability	October 2022 Survey	May 2023 Survey
All respondents	43%	39%
Shed & carport builder or Sales	45%	36%
Residential Single Family	43%	45%
Retrofit or Remodel	33%	36%
Garage, Shed & Carport Builder Subscribers	44%	37%

The General Business Climate in the U.S. Will Improve	October 2022 Survey	May 2023 Survey
All respondents	24%	16%
Shed & carport builder or Sales	26%	33%
Residential Single Family	43%	31%
Retrofit or Remodel	0%	24%
Garage, Shed & Carport Builder Subscribers	28%	29%

The General Business Climate in the U.S. Will Decline	October 2022 Survey	May 2023 Survey
All respondents	35%	25%
Shed & carport builder or Sales	33%	33%
Residential Single Family	45%	40%
Retrofit or Remodel	33%	34%
Garage, Shed & Carport Builder Subscribers	32%	38%

Simplify Your Roofing Project with Onduline!

ONDURA[®] EDGE
PREMIUM SERIES



EASIER INSTALLATION

The embossments featured in the Ondura Premium Series Edge roofing panels act as an installation guide making your projects even quicker and easier than before.

Embossment benefits:

- Overlap between panels is minimized, resulting in less material use and lower project costs.
- Embossments create better waterproofing between panels.
- This new feature also provides an improved visual aesthetic.

Ondura Premium Series will not resonate noise or radiate heat like metal!

Enjoy all the embossment perks plus a unique lightweight profile specially designed to resemble metal without the sharp edges or risk of corrosion.



For distribution opportunities, orders, and customer service call 540-898-7000 or email us at customerservice@onduline-usa.com

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