

A large blue circle with a white border, containing the text "2013 ProSales Excellence Awards" in white.

2013
ProSales
Excellence
Awards

Innovation Shines Forth

As we come out of a multi-year recession, LBM companies are preparing for the coming growth. With new facilities, showrooms, exciting marketing plans, and dynamic websites and technology, the winners of the 2013 ProSales Excellence Awards demonstrate to all that they're ready for the future. This year's winners are: Sanford & Hawley for Facility, Mathew Hall Lumber for Marketing; Drexel Building Supply for Website; and Main Street Lumber for Technology.

Congratulations to all.



Historic Makeover



Most lumberyards would have just taken the money and moved if the state said it planned on taking all but about half an acre of the business' functional land—especially if the buildings were old, the layout inefficient, and the neighbors hostile.

But not Sanford & Hawley, a 129-year-old lumber and LBM operation in Unionville, Conn. The company, now operated by the fourth and fifth generations of its founder, stubbornly stuck to its historic roots and pulled out all the stops to stay where it started in 1884.

It took expert help, some powerful persuasive skills, a good deal of ingenuity, and extreme persistence—not to mention more costs—but in the end, Sanford & Hawley created a lumberyard

impressive enough to win the 2013 ProSales Excellence Award for Best Facility Design.

The company operators' goal was to create a new lumberyard that was convenient for customers, palatable to the neighbors, and efficiently designed. Other wants included enough storage for all of its inventory, a space for the company's offices, and accessible modern technology that preserved the site's historic fabric.

Accomplishing their goals was a tall order, considering the obstacles. In the end, it took moving a house, giving a standard metal building the look of a historical barn, building a warehouse without being able to add or subtract fill while working around a stream and a sewer line, hours of meetings and negotiations with

neighbors and town officials, and some complicated construction to connect buildings at obtuse angles.

How It Began

The renovation started in about 2009 after the state announced plans to take a substantial part of the main lumberyard to renovate a bridge over Roaring Creek. The lumberyard was already cramped, operating on a meager 0.83 of an acre, and 20,000 square feet of that was taken up by a creek that bisects the site. After the state took what it needed for the bridge construction, there was just over half an acre of land left after discounting the brook in the middle—not enough for a functional lumberyard.

Sanford & Hawley could have

chosen to sell the state all of its land or keep the leftovers and sell it to developers who were eager to buy it.

“But having just celebrated the company’s 125th anniversary, the Sanford brothers [Bob, Ted, and Frank] would have no part of either,” wrote Bob Sanford in the company’s award submission. “Instead we turned to trusted advisers and others to strategize.”

Overcoming Obstacles

A breakthrough came when engineers at Buck & Buck, out of Hartford, Conn., suggested finding a way to merge the remaining lumberyard land with two other parcels that Sanford & Hawley owned across the dead-end street that together equaled a little more than half an acre. The town agreed to abandon the street and re-deed the land back to Sanford & Hawley, which had donated it to the town in the late 1800s.

Contiguous land in place, neighborhood opposition was the next challenge.

Other than the lumberyard, the neighborhood is completely residential, a quaint enclave of historical homes, most built by one of the lumberyard’s founders, Frank Sanford, during the late 1800s. Before the renovation, neighbors had routinely called police to complain about trucks backing up to squeeze into the yard. They weren’t keen on the idea of the lumberyard staying, much less expanding. Town meetings on the expansion went on for hours at a time and continued to be held for months.

The Sanfords armed with a gaggle of experts—architects, engineers, traffic specialists, building appraisal professionals—began the difficult task of winning approval for the project. “I remember one public hearing that was hours on end. I estimate it was costing us more than \$1,000 an hour,” Bob Sanford recalls.

“Despite the angst and contro-

versy, over time some moderate neighbors came to realize that a new facility with proper landscaping and buffering would be an improvement to the current run-down, dated buildings,” Sanford says.

Reaching that point took months, and three plan iterations, before the project was approved.

Complicated Concessions

After working through a number of issues with the township and neighbors, approval from the neighborhood hung on one final caveat residents required of Sanford & Hawley: They wanted a historic house owned by the lumberyard to be saved.

“That became the deal breaker,” Sanford says. “I didn’t see how it was possible.” But the company’s design team came up with a plan that required the house to be lifted off its foundation, rotated 90 degrees, and moved about 10 yards to where it would be re-installed on a new foundation right in front of the new lumberyard complex. “Oh my gosh, it was a lot of work,” Sanford says. “It sounds simple, but it was hardly so.”

But, in the end, the house—now sitting just 4 inches from the warehouse—became a focal point for the lumberyard and home to the

company’s office, contractor sales center, an employee break room, as well as an emergency response center with generators to power the yard’s computers during a shutdown.

Moving the house was one of several complicated parts of the renovation, which was done in two phases starting in 2009 with the construction of a new warehouse and moving the house, and finishing in 2013 with the interior house renovation and emergency response center.

From Warehouse to Barn

The first and most substantial phase, which started after the town approval in 2009, probably wouldn’t have been possible at all if





it hadn't been in the middle of the recession when business was slow. The lumberyard had to be closed from early October 2009 until June 2010 while the new drive-through warehouse and storage building was built. Fortunately, Sanford & Hawley has three other facilities, which served its customers in the meantime.

The warehouse began as a standard metal-sided building, 54 feet wide and 195 feet long with two levels built by Sunbelt Structures, in Alpharetta, Ga. But it ended up looking more like a barn.

"It became pretty clear really early on that [a plain metal building] wasn't going to go far with the town," Sanford says. "The town takes a lot of pride in its history."

So the company's architect, Jack Kemper, of Kemper Associates Architects, in Farmington, Conn., came up with the idea of selling the warehouse as a barn and making it look like a historical barn on the street-facing ends. The design team took road trips to look at barns in the area, including the old Sanford family barn, to spark ideas about how it should look. "They really gave it a nice look," says Sanford of Kemper's work. "It was much more costly to

do, but [we have] no regrets."

Making the warehouse look like a barn was easy compared with building a foundation for the metal structure. A standard 6-inch slab, the typical foundation for such buildings, just wouldn't work on a site where a stream and a city sewer line lay beside the building.

On the west side of the site, the foundation required very deep, very complex walls that run below the level of the abutting sanitary sewer line. The township wanted to make sure that, if work had to be done on the sewer line, it wouldn't disturb the foundation of the barn warehouse in the future.

The construction of the foundation walls was further complicated because they needed to be poured during the bitterly cold winter of 2009 to 2010. That necessitated expensive additives to the concrete so that it would cure faster. Even then, the curing concrete wore blankets at night to keep the mixture from freezing.

In addition, the new warehouse couldn't be any closer to the brook than the existing buildings had been, and the grading underneath the new building couldn't be changed—no fill could be added or taken away.

Another complication for the

project involved connecting the new drive-through barn with an existing warehouse. Sanford & Hawley had to renovate rather than rebuild the existing warehouse on that side of the property because the foundation was built in the brook itself. Removing the warehouse and rebuilding it would have triggered a whole new set of requirements. So to make the two buildings meet, a portion of the old building had to be cut off to match up with the new drive-through barn. "It was quite a bit of work to fortify one foundation and put another one up to it," Sanford says.

Brotherly Alignment

Despite the difficulty and extra costs of their lumberyard's overhaul, the Sanford brothers have no regrets, nor did they have any disagreements about whether to go on with the process—even during the difficult days.

"There is such a sense of history, heritage, and pride. It's our homestead. There were no second thoughts," Sanford says. —Teresa Burney is a freelancer who writes about the business of building, designing, marketing, and selling homes.

Tech Leaders:
From left, Steve
Linn, Chuck
Pool, and Robert
Pool of Main
Street Lumber.



Main Street Mobile

Product graphics displayed on smartphones simplify the bid and order process



When the housing recession finally slammed into Texas, Main Street Lumber faced a quandary that many other small pro dealers were also struggling with at that time: How could they make themselves look bigger to lure more business?

Main Street was already sending trucks into the Dallas-Fort Worth market, a 45-minute drive from its headquarters in Denison near the Texas-Oklahoma border. But Main Street needed a selling edge to compete on a larger, more crowded stage for customers that were suddenly in scarce supply.

In January 2006, brothers Chuck

and Robert Pool, who co-own Main Street Lumber, hired Steve Linn as a partner to get their fledgling Main Street Millwork business off the ground. In Linn's experience—which included management stints at Hope Lumber and Lone Star Plywood & Door—he found that customers were often befuddled by quotes for millwork, especially for doors. So he came up with the idea to create estimates and takeoffs for bidding jobs using graphical depictions of millwork products.

Those graphic bid sheets were instant hits, recalls Linn, not only with contractors and builders, but also with homeowners who during the recession were becoming more

involved in the ordering process. "It made us look more sophisticated and capable," Linn says.

As a result, Main Street's closing rate spiked upward. The graphic sheet gave the dealer a better chance at winning bids for really high-end homes in Dallas-Fort Worth, too. "It leveled the playing field," Linn says.

Digital Communication

The process still lacked efficiency, however, because it didn't tie into Main Street's point-of-sale system. The partners, with some help from their company's buying group, Do it Best, began looking for a software package that could

PHOTO: MICHAELS PHOTOGRAPHY

provide a solution. That search eventually came upon Canadian company Luxwood Corp., which already had a product for millwork ordering that linked input from tablets to office PCs.

Initially, the plan was simply to digitize Main Street's graphical bid sheet, says Terry Davies, Luxwood's owner and CEO. But Linn had other ideas. He had just purchased his first iPhone and was mesmerized by its functionality. He thought that Davies and Main Street should focus on developing an application that would allow the dealer's salespeople to bid jobs and place orders from the field using smartphones. At first, Chuck Pool and Davies thought it would be better to develop an app primarily for iPads, but they ultimately yielded to Linn's suggestion.

What the team came up with is Mobile Visual Pro, or MVP, which creates a graphic bid that can be emailed to the customer from the jobsite or uploaded to the store's computer system. This innovation earned the company the 2013 ProSales Excellence Award for technology.

The Challenge

Davies recalls that the biggest challenge in developing any process of this kind was keeping the data available to the salespeople up to date with the inventory in the store or warehouse. So what Luxwood developed is a PC that communicates with a Web portal that's automatically in sync with MVP devices. A Quote Generator, which resides on the user company's POS desktop system, is the software that creates the connection with the mobile device. And an On-Site Estimator, also on the POS desktop system, receives and manages incoming estimates and orders.

"The big deal for us was that our people in the field were able to communicate with the home office without having to talk to a person," says Robert Pool, "and for the home office to be able to move that information into the POS however the salesperson wanted it."

While MVP initially was set up to handle millwork orders, Robert insisted that it also have the capability to handle fill-in orders for other products such as lumber. Users can customize the software to

"The big deal for us was that our people in the field were able to communicate with the home office without having to talk to a person."
—Robert Pool, co-owner,
Main Street Lumber

include as many categories as they need, as long as an item has a SKU number. And because this system is cloud-enabled, it can be customized to allow categorization in whatever way the salesperson wants to look at it on his mobile device.

"The software was developed from the bottom up because our first concern was to make it as easy to use in the field as possible," says Chuck Pool. "It's been our experience in all of our businesses that the guy in the field is who makes the sale. But he won't try anything new unless it's simple."

MVP has all but eliminated the need to re-key orders, thereby reducing data-entry errors to a minimum and condensing quote





Smart Idea: Main Street Lumber's app improves the ordering process for customers.



PHOTOS: COURTESY MAIN STREET LUMBER

Technology: Main Street Lumber

Ease of Use:
Product
selections are
delivered to
customers'
smartphones.

BETA BUILDERS 510 LLANO LANE SUNNYVALE, TEXAS												ESTIMATE ONLY GOOD FOR 90 DAYS FROM - 5-13-13	
Your Name Lumber and Millwork													
INTERIOR DOOR UNITS													
Quote # 22013				Terms - Net 10th				Salesperson - John Smith				Page - 1 of 1	
TYPE	HAND	SIZE	STYLE	BORE	JAMB	H. CASING	D. CASING	HINGES	PRICE	QTY	TOTAL	LOCATION & NOTES	
SINGLE	RH	2400 1-3/4	SC CHEYENNE	SGL	4-5/8 FJ	C522 FJ	C522 FJ	OIL RUBBED BRONZE	\$0.00	1	\$0.00	#2	
SINGLE	LH	2600 1-3/4	SC CHEYENNE	SGL	4-5/8 FJ	C522 FJ	C522 FJ	OIL RUBBED BRONZE	\$0.00	2	\$0.00	#3, 10	
SINGLE	RH	2600 1-3/8	#1500 LAUNDRY	SGL	4-5/8 FJ	C522 FJ	C522 FJ	OIL RUBBED BRONZE	\$0.00	1	\$0.00	#4	
SINGLE	LH	2000 1-3/8	#1500 PANTRY	SGL	4-5/8 FJ	C522 FJ	C322 FJ	OIL RUBBED BRONZE	\$0.00	1	\$0.00	#5	
2 DOOR STACK	SR	2600 1-3/4	SC CHEYENNE	SGL	4-5/8 FJ	C522 FJ	C522 FJ	OIL RUBBED BRONZE	\$0.00	1	\$0.00	#6	
SINGLE	RH	2000 1-3/4	SC CHEYENNE	SGL	4-5/8 FJ	C522 FJ	C322 FJ	OIL RUBBED BRONZE	\$0.00	3	\$0.00	#7, 12, 13	
SINGLE	LH	2400 1-3/4	SC CHEYENNE	SGL	4-5/8 FJ	C522 FJ	C522 FJ	OIL RUBBED BRONZE	\$0.00	2	\$0.00	#8, 14	
SINGLE	RH	2600 1-3/8	12 LITE KNOTTY ALDER	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	OIL RUBBED BRONZE	\$0.00	1	\$0.00	#9 STUDY	
TWIN	NONE	4000 1-3/8	2 PANEL VG KNOTTY ALDER	NONE	4-5/8 AWP	C522 ALDER	C522 FJ	OIL RUBBED BRONZE	\$0.00	1	\$0.00	#11	
SINGLE	RH	2600 1-3/4	SC CHEYENNE	SGL	4-5/8 FJ	C522 FJ	C522 FJ	OIL RUBBED BRONZE	\$0.00	1	\$0.00	#15 CUT DR. DOWN TO 76" BORE SFB	
SINGLE	RH	3000 1-3/4	SC CHEYENNE	SGL	4-5/8 FJ	C522 FJ	C522 FJ	OIL RUBBED BRONZE	\$0.00	1	\$0.00	#16	
TWIN	LH	3000 1-3/4	SC CHEYENNE	SGL	4-5/8 FJ	C522 FJ	C522 FJ	OIL RUBBED BRONZE	\$0.00	1	\$0.00	#17 MEDIA HEAD BOLT ONLY	
GENERAL NOTES: Note for Delivery: Stack all doors on east wall in living room.									SUB TOTAL	\$0.00	<div>Door Handing</div> <div></div>		
									TAX 8.25%	\$0.00			
									TOTAL	\$0.00			

turnaround time to a few hours instead of a few days. And an order of any product with a SKU number goes directly to Main Street's dispatcher, who can then start building his loads, Chuck says.

Robert adds that a salesperson can store all of the products he needs to see on his iPhone or iPad, so he

The partnership charges dealers \$99 per device per month, "and we're so confident about it that we aren't requiring long-term contracts," says Chuck, who is convinced that MVP is going to set new standards for accuracy and speed in estimates and orders, and eventually could become as revolutionary

because it's more likely that a dealer will order merchandise from the preferred distributor, and that the distributor will be able to turn around price quotes faster for dealers using MVP.

By the end of this year, Main Street should also have ready an MVP app for Android-operated mobile devices, Davies says.

When asked why Main Street Lumber would want to sell to other dealers what appears to be a proprietary and competitively unique process, Chuck Pool responds that, the pace of technological advancement being what it is these days, his company might as well try to monetize MVP while it can, before someone else comes along and duplicates it.

Until that happens, Main Street is looking for new ways to keep a leg up on the market. Davies says that the partnership is currently working on expanding MVP's suite to include software specifically for siding, gutters, soffit, and fascia board.

"We have a lot of ideas percolating in our heads" about possible spin-offs, Linn says. —*John Caulfield*

"This app should be able to save any yard at least \$100 per salesperson per month."
—*Chuck Pool, co-owner, Main Street Lumber*

doesn't require Internet access to show items to customers or to place orders, which automatically upload to the company's computers once an online connection is established.

Staying Ahead of the Pack

Main Street and Luxwood began programming MVP in 2011, and introduced the product last May. The two companies formed a partnership to develop and market MVP to other dealers, and as of mid October had more than 30 devices in the field with dealers in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Texas.

to pro dealers' operations as the forklift or QuickBooks. "This app should be able to save any yard at least \$100 per salesperson per month," he says.

Hyperbole aside, this fall Main Street Lumber and Luxwood were preparing a national launch for MVP, which the partners plan to market primarily through leading regional distributors across the country. (In Dallas-Fort Worth, for example, they are working with Dallas Wholesale.)

The partners say that these arrangements should be win-win

Marketing
Magician:
Mathew Hall's
Holly Ruether.



Show of Support

Mathew Hall uses its ad budget to boost builder customers



In a bold move, dealer Mathew Hall threw out conventional marketing advice and decided to use its advertising dollars to support its builders.

That decision not only won the St. Cloud, Minn., dealer points from its existing customers, it also brought in more business and helped the yard come in under its already pared-down advertising budget, earning it the ProSales Excellence Award for Marketing for 2013.

In the past, "we just felt like we were throwing things on the wall to see what sticks," says Holly Ruether, Mathew Hall's interiors manager, and architect of the marketing plan.

"We sell so many products, it's hard to advertise everything at the right time. We have gone through

four [advertising] agencies while I've been here," she says, "and the first thing they tell you is that you need to spend more money.

"We finally figured out that we're the ones who know best how to market," Ruether says. "After all, half the battle is knowing who your customer is."

For Mathew Hall, it's builders. The 90% pro yard had gone overboard in the past few years chasing retail customers, she says. "We weren't selling to retail; we were selling the hardware [Mathew Hall added 10,000 square feet of hardware to its yard in 1992] to our builders. Yet we were spending half our [advertising] budget on 10% of our customer base."

With that realization, plus the confidence of owners Loran, John,

and Dan Hall, and input from the department managers, Ruether hunkered down and radically revised the budget for 2013.

Every year, the dealer had dutifully doled out dollars for newspaper and radio advertising, even though figuring out the return on investment was like trying to pin Jello to the wall. The dealer's advertising agency kept touting the merits of Internet marketing, Ruether says, "but I kept going back to [the fact that] 75% of my builders don't have a smartphone; they have a flip phone. And they are everything for their company—the accountant and the cleaner."

And every day, builders were walking into the store with tales of hardship.

PHOTOS: COURTESY MATHREW HALL

"It was making it harder for them to do business, which, of course, made it harder for us to do business," Ruether wrote in her awards entry.

"That was the one fact that helped us decide what to do," she says, of the inspiration for Mathew Hall's "Back to the Builder" marketing program.

DIY Marketing

The dealer gives almost 100% of its advertising budget to its builders, either in "Builder Bucks" that the customer can use to purchase select items in the store or save up to purchase items in a gift catalog the yard produces, or in direct aid, whereby Mathew Hall pays for a new sign for the builder customer's truck, new uniforms for their crew, or a radio advertising campaign.

Ruether and the management team held a roundtable discussion with some of their top builder and remodeler customers to explain what they wanted to do and to find out exactly what their customers wanted from them. Those discussions helped Ruether and her team design the program.

In the process, Mathew Hall dumped its advertising agency, and it now only uses an agency consultant for graphics work, such as the builder's catalog, Ruether says. The dealer does no newspaper, radio, or television advertising. For the past

three years, thanks to the economic downturn, Mathew Hall's advertising budget had been \$100,000, slashed from its pre-2008 budget of \$300,000.

"This year's will be even less," Ruether says, "because I didn't need to spend it to get the results I want."

The linchpins of the program are a scheme to help builders defray their own advertising costs, Builder Bucks, and sponsored fun events and educational seminars for builders and their families.

Boosting Builders

Mathew Hall set aside 20% (\$20,000) of its total advertising budget to directly reimburse builders for their advertising costs. The dealer paid billboard costs for one customer and has paid full-page ad fees in the local Central Minnesota Builders Association Tour of Homes magazine for several builders to help them promote their tour homes.

Depending on the customer and the need, the dealer could be funding a builder's initial website setup costs or covering booth fees for some builders during the local builder association home show. Ruether says that this portion of the marketing budget has had an extremely high return on investment.

One local builder, who used to spread his business half and half between Mathew Hall and a

"We finally figured out that we're the ones who know best how to market." —Holly Ruether, interiors manager

competitor, swung all his business to Mathew Hall—earning the yard \$120,000 for 2013—when the dealer agreed to pay for the builder's radio campaign costs (a request the competitor had refused).

Ruether used to spend \$800 per week on newspaper advertising. But rather than going after the newspaper's general audience, she has figured out a better way to reach the professional builders and remodelers who are Mathew Hall's real customers.

Turning that outlay back to the builders has given her greater power to make a difference for Mathew Hall's builder customers and has turned their gratitude into increased sales for the business. By offering to pay the \$800 entry fee for the local tour of homes to builders who agree to buy the whole package—lumber, trusses, lighting, flooring, and windows—from Mathew Hall, Ruether has already secured an oral commitment from two builders who don't normally purchase all their materials there. "For those who already buy all from us, [the entry fee] is a thank you," she says.

Cash 'n Carry: The dealer's customers can earn Builder Bucks to spend on a curated group of products at Mathew Hall's in-store General Store.





Builder Bucks: Customers can also save up their Builder Bucks and use them to buy gifts from the company's catalog.

Builder Bucks

Builders can earn Builder Bucks—wooden nickels printed with a denomination ranging from \$1 to \$100—for a variety of actions. And sometimes just for the asking. “I have guys who come to me at the lunches and say, ‘Where’s my money?’” Ruether says. “They know they’re going to get a buck.”

Every Wednesday in July, the dealer offered its builders a free lunch, barbecuing brats, burgers, and chops in the parking lot, served up with all the fixings. Or, builders who wanted to, could use their Builder Bucks to buy a steak for the grill. “I also sell a 12-pack of beer for \$50, and they can use Builder Bucks for that,” Ruether says. No surprise—the beer is always a big seller.

“If they bring us a bid from a competitor already priced, we say thanks, and hand them some Builder Bucks,” Ruether says. For Halloween, the dealer planned a big potluck dinner for its builders at the yard, and a pumpkin-carving contest with employee competitors and builder judges. Judges earned Builder Bucks for their service, and



participating employees earned Employee Cash (which they can use to purchase the same items the builders can with their bucks). Builder Bucks were also available at the different service desks, and builders were encouraged to go trick or treating to collect them.

The various departments had different denomination coins available to give out, Ruether says. “It was a way for them to talk to someone in each department, not just their regular salesperson.”

Mathew Hall allocated \$15,000 of its advertising budget to the Builder Bucks campaign. Its General Store—located within the store—offers 100 items that can be purchased using the wooden nickels, and there is also a 40-item catalog of specialty products and services that builders can buy from. Catalog items include everything from a one-week vacation at a lakefront lodge in northern Minnesota to a Weber gas grill, iPad, and countertop wine cooler.

The dealer also used its Builder Bucks as a motivator to solve a problem in the making.

A lousy winter and a wet spring

meant that builders were holding off on truss orders until it looked like the weather was going to turn. At that point, the dealer knew its truss plant would be working overtime, and orders would be delayed. To get weather-idled plant workers busy, Mathew Hall offered any builder who placed a truss order during the last two weeks of April \$500 in Builder Bucks. “I got 17 confirmed orders, so we were able to get through the backlog that we knew was coming,” Ruether says.

The best part about the Builder Bucks program is that it allows Ruether to “do something fun, based on whatever whim I have at the moment,” she says. “The options are endless.”

A chance comment—about staff never seeing the builders—by an employee in the business office led to the sucker promotion; a scheme so popular that Ruether ended up allocating \$4,000 of the budget to it.

She put a bunch of suckers whose hidden tags bore denominations between \$5 and \$100 (to be redeemed in Builder Bucks) in a bowl, and let builders know that if they came into

MATHEW HALL
LUMBER - TRUSSES - PROJECTS - INTERIORS
www.MathewHall.com

WINTER SEMINARS

Register Today!
320.252.1920

The seminars are upstairs at Mathew Hall from 11am-1pm. RSVP for lunch is required.

SEMINAR #1: BACK TO THE BUILDER
FEB 6 11:00
We will be introducing our back to the Builder Program and "Builder Bucks". This will be a short presentation as how the program may benefit you and an overview on upcoming changes and new displays.

SEMINAR #2: GASLIGHT CREATIVE
FEB 20 11:00
Marketing strategist, Kelly Zedda, will speak about crafting an online presence for your business, including websites, social media strategy, email marketing, mobile apps and search engine optimization. Learn what others in your industry are doing.

SEMINAR #3: VERSATEX TRIMBOARD
FEB 27 11:00
At VERSATEX Trimboard we make trim smarter. Our products are created from cellular PVC in the most state of the art manufacturing facility in the industry. This includes windows, cornices, shutters, new piece column wraps, baseboard and molding profiles, as well as, our innovative Smooth Thin System. All manufactured with highest level of quality and featuring a fully transferable 50-year warranty.

SEMINAR #4: ANDERSEN ARCHITECTURAL COLLECTION
FEB 18 11:00
Come learn about the Andersen Architectural Collection. Uncompromising style, variety and performance. The Architectural Collection is an industry-leading, innovative approach to windows and doors that's based not on the type of window or door, but rather on the style of home you want to create. Whether it's a classic Queen Anne, a Craftsman Bungalow or a style all your own, you can now achieve it with ease. Never before has it been as easy to dream, easy to understand your options, and easy to select the windows and doors that fit not just your home, but also your vision.

SEMINAR #5: CALIFORNIA PAINTS
PRESENTED BY PETER RAHNDRICH
MARCH 6 11:00
Introduction and overview on the California Paints line of interior and exterior paints and stains. California Paints exterior paint has been rated the #1 exterior paint for Consumer Reports for 12 consecutive years. The line is new to the Midwest but extremely well known and highly rated nationwide. We will also introduce you to STOPZ, our interior/exterior primer which is the ONLY primer registered with the EPA to stop mold and mildew growth and explain why our TRULIGN colorant system saves you time and money.

SEMINAR #6: MANIONS
MARCH 13 11:00
Pratified LP siding features and benefits, handling and installation.

SEMINAR #7: ARMADILLO COMPOSITE DECKING
MARCH 20 11:00
The new breed of composite decking. New 2013 product overview and trends, railings, fasteners and core/cleaning and installation methods.

Spring Seminars will be announced in March.

MATHEW HALL
SINCE 1889
LUMBER - TRUSSES - PROJECTS - INTERIORS
www.MathewHall.com

We're Giving BACK TO THE BUILDER

Builder's ask your salesperson how our Back to the Builder rewards program can benefit you.

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

Visit www.MATHEWHALL.COM to find out more.

137 6th Ave N, St. Cloud | 320.252.1920 | M-F 7:30am-5:30pm, Sat 9am-12pm

Lunch & Learn: Mathew Hall sponsored lunch and a two-hour seminar on topics of interest to builders, which it held during the off-season.

the office to pay their bills, they could pick up a sucker.

"At first, I thought it was a lame idea, but they love it. Now we have builders who come in religiously and head right down to the basement to pay their bills." Needless to say, the business office staff can now put names to a lot more faces.

Meanwhile, retail manager Mike Leudenbach had noticed that the free popcorn that was always offered in the store, along with coffee, was disappearing at a much faster clip than in the past. They figured out that builders were munching on popcorn as a lunch on the go.

Ruether's brainstorm was to open the Snack Shack—actually a basket of snacks such as potato chips, crackers, beef sticks, sunflower seeds, and cookies—set it up in the showroom, and let builders pay for the snacks with Builder Bucks, at \$5 per snack.

The shack works on the honor system, with a coffee can serving as the till. If a builder shows up with an appetite, but empty handed, he won't have to leave hungry, as the shack's sign makes clear: "And if you don't have your Builder Bucks on you,

take a snack anyway! It's a long time until dinner."

Fun Times

Fun events for the dealer's builders and their families, as well as free educational opportunities for builders and remodelers, round out the dealer's customer-related marketing efforts. Ruether allocated \$30,000 of the advertising budget to this leg of the program, which also includes apparel, Christmas gifts for Mathew Hall's builders, and other customer service-related expenses.

Hearing builders complain about the expense of keeping on top of licensing requirements, building code changes, and OSHA regulations, as well as keeping abreast of new products and their correct use, Ruether decided to sponsor informational lunch-and-learn sessions in the store. The dealer brought in a speaker for a two-hour mini-seminar after the lunch. The seminars proved very popular, with 25 to 50 builders in attendance at each one. Taking into account the builders' work schedules, seminars were scheduled for February and March, and resumed in the fall.

One of the dealer's free fun events for its customers was a ladies' night out for all builder wives and female business partners with a wine and appetizer tasting followed by a concert at a local theater. In the fall, Ruether held a casino night in the store for builders to gamble with play money and to win prizes.

Finally, Ruether set aside a portion of her marketing budget for internal advertising, aka morale-building, among the staff. Employee Cash, which works like Builder Bucks, was the prize.

Staff were split into teams, with each team having members from each department, as well as a mix of new staff members and old-timers. Then teams were given challenges and could win a set amount of Employee Cash and points for each 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place finish.

With so many ideas for ways to connect with builder customers, Mathew Hall's take on marketing can serve as inspiration for other dealers, offering fresh ideas and takeaways from the company's experience. —Kate Tyndall