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# YARDSTICK

ISSUE 5 | OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2019



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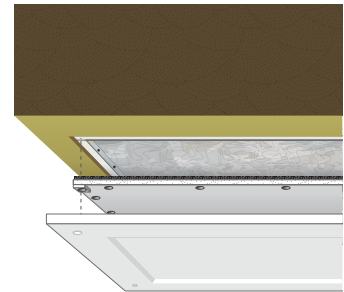
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# YARDSTICK



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# New Challenges and New Opportunities

*By Liz Kovach, President, WRLA*

**AS FALL COMES TO** close, we start looking to a new season, which includes transition and an opportunity to try new things, and focusing on training and education for staff. Business has a tendency to slow down in the fall and winter months, which is a challenge. But every challenge also presents an opportunity.

In this issue of *Yardstick*, we connected with members to talk about some upcoming trends that can be promoted to your customers along with tools provided by the vendor community to help assist the weekend warriors of the DIY club. Keep in touch and let us know how you implement some of your out-of-the-box ideas or promote the products highlighted later in this magazine.

Elections seem to be the theme of 2019. Manitoba went to the polls on Sept. 10, 2019. The federal election is on the horizon and by the time you receive this magazine, the results will be official. I know members in our industry are hopeful that the election will bring with it change. We will continue to follow the outcome and report what the outcomes will mean for our industry and members. We have captured some of the campaign promises made by the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba and have included a synopsis in the issue. Our most recent advocacy bulletin has also been included in case you haven't had a chance to read them as they are sent out.

Don't forget to explore the education opportunities available to WRLA members. We are also launching our webinar series this fall and will be re-starting the Education Grants program (formerly known as scholarship and bursary) in 2020. More information as well as the application will be launched in our post-show magazine in February.

Thank you to all our members who attended and supported the WRLA golf tournaments this year. We have included a save the date for the 2020 tournaments in this magazine. Be sure to watch for member events during the golf tournament weeks.

The more we connect and learn, the better we can be at providing solutions to support your needs.

As we approach 2020, our AGM is around the corner. We are putting a call out for board nominations. If you have been interested in serving the WRLA community and industry, please touch base so we can chat. Serving on a board provides an opportunity to connect, learn, gain mentorship, and be a changemaker, shaping initiatives that give back to the industry that is so critical to our livelihood.

If you have any questions, ideas, or want to get involved with the association, please give me a call at 204-770-2416. **▶**



# WRLA Advocacy Bulletin 5

**DEAR MEMBERS. A COUPLE** of major political developments have taken place since our last Bulletin. At the time of publication, the federal election campaign has officially begun, and the Manitoba election has come to an end.

## FEDERAL ELECTION

- With Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's recent visit with the Governor General, Parliament has been dissolved and as expected Canadians will vote in a federal election on Oct. 21.
- There are 338 seats in Parliament of which a party needs to win 170 in order to form a majority government.
- But if recent public opinion polls are any indication, a majority government is far from certain at this point as polls show a virtual dead heat between the Liberals and the Conservatives. A battle also continues for third place between the NDP and the Green Party.
- With a little over a month to go in the campaign, an avalanche of polls including several daily tracking polls are expected.
- The major parties have started to roll out campaign commitments, some of which would be of interest to WRLA members.
- For example, if elected, Justin Trudeau's Liberals plan to expand its new first-time home buyer program. The program provides interest-free funds to cover up to 10% of the down payment for first time buyers whose household income does not exceed \$120,000. The program is run by CMHC, which takes an ownership stake in the home in return for providing the interest-free funds and shares in future price appreciation until the amount is repaid.
- The same day as Mr. Trudeau's announcement, industry associations representing real estate agents across Canada issued a call for federal political parties to promise to change the stress test that has made it harder to borrow for a new home.

- Mr. Trudeau's announcement came the same day industry associations representing real estate agents across Canada issued a call for federal political parties to promise to modify the stress test, which has made it harder to borrow for a new home.
- While the Conservative Party of Canada has not yet released a detailed platform on housing issues, party leader Andrew Scheer has previously said he would review the stress test and not require people renewing existing mortgages to qualify under the stress-test rules if they are switching to a new lender.
- Meanwhile, the NDP has not pledged to change the stress test, but has promised to expand the mortgage amortizations to 30 years for first-time home buyers.
- The Green Party has yet to announce a platform (at time of publication), but has emphasized helping the homeless and implementing "a National Housing Strategy to provide every Canadian with a place to call home."
- The WRLA has sent letters outlining our members' priorities to numerous candidates in the four western provinces, and as well, we have submitted our priorities to the campaign platform committees for both the Conservative and Liberal Parties.

## MANITOBA ELECTION

- Perhaps not surprisingly, Progressive Conservative Premier Brian Pallister was re-elected with another huge majority despite going to the polls a year earlier than the fixed election date in 2020.
- Of the 57 seats in the Manitoba Legislature, Premier Pallister won 36 of them (down four from the 2016 election), the New Democratic Party won 18 seats (up four from 2016), while the Liberals won three seats (the same as in 2016).
- Once again, the WRLA sent letters outlining our members' priorities to numerous candidates during the election from which we received several positive responses.



- There was a key commitment during the campaign by the Progressive Conservative Party which will be of interest to WRLA members. The new Pallister Government has committed to spend \$25 million (annually) to retrofit homes and buildings for energy efficiencies. The new program is to be carried out by Efficiency Manitoba.
- In making this announcement, PC member for Riel Rochelle Squires said, "Retrofits will make our buildings more energy efficient, reduce emissions and create jobs for hardworking Manitoba tradespeople that will carry out these renovations."
- Once Premier Pallister's new government is sworn in, we will be sending congratulatory letters to he and his government. We will also send one to the minister responsible for this new program seeking an early meeting to learn more details about this important new investment.

I believe that's it for now. Again, I trust you are finding this information useful. Any questions, comments or suggestions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me: 204-770-2416 or lkovach@wrla.org.

Liz Kovach  
President, WRLA  
Director Prairie Provinces,  
Building Materials Council of Canada



# Manitoba Election Result

## What does it mean for you?

By *Liz Kovach, President, WRLA*

**MANITOBA'S PROVINCIAL ELECTION HAS** wrapped up and Brian Pallister and the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba will lead the province once again for the next four years.

What does this mean for the LBM industry and economy in Manitoba?

Among its many campaign promises, the PC Party announced it will spend \$25 million to retrofit homes and buildings for energy efficiencies.

The PCs aim to create a “rebate-type mechanism” to offset costs for insulation, efficient windows, doors, and modern appliances.

The program will be managed and delivered by Efficiency Manitoba, the new

Crown corporation focused on energy efficiency. Both commercial buildings and private homes will be eligible.

Building retrofits were recommended by Manitoba's Expert Advisory Council under the Climate and Green Plan, which will reduce Manitoba's emissions by one million tonnes by 2023.

The PCs say the plan would cut greenhouse gas emissions by 135,000 tonnes over three years.

We will continue to follow the progress and provide information on how the funds will be spent and support the promotion of the program so members can take advantage of the opportunity.

The PCs also eluded to reducing restrictions on Sunday and holiday



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shopping but haven't provided any details yet as to what that will entail.

We will continue to follow the progress of these initiatives and will keep WRLA members informed. **▶**



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# Education Opportunities for New and Long-term Staff

By Erin Lubinski, Member Services and Solutions Manager

**INVESTING IN YOUR EMPLOYEES'** educational growth means you are investing in your company's success.

The WRLA offers various courses for new and long-term staff, and emphasizes industry-related learning to attract new talent and support professional development of staff in our industry.

We offer the following in-class courses taught by Stan Burkholder, highly recognized industry instructor and 2018 WRLA Industry Achievement Award recipient. All of our in-class courses are eligible for course and travel rebates. Visit [wrla.org](http://wrla.org) to view our schedule and registration information for the in-class courses running in October in Winnipeg, Man. and Leduc, Alta.

## IN-CLASS COURSES

### Principles of Yard and Warehouse Operations:

A great course for all membership types as it helps develop human resource and inter-departmental communications skills and practices to help make your staff team and business more efficient.

**Manual Estimating Levels 1 – Estimating Fundamentals – Decks & Garages:** This introductory course teaches basic estimating knowledge for various projects such as decks, garages, and roofs. Students gain a knowledge base of products used within these projects.

*Note: The WRLA also offers Manual Estimating Level 1 online!*

### Manual Estimating Level 2 – Estimating for Residential Construction:

This course is not an introductory course and trains employees who work with contractors and other customers to be able to supply correct materials, provide correct pricing and successfully participate in the sales process. Students learn to produce accurate and professional estimates off residential blueprints. It is highly recommended that students take Level 1 prior to enrolling in Level 2.



**Manual Estimating Level 3 – Advanced Estimating:** Advanced house estimating covers various advanced scenarios that an estimator will encounter in the field. This course gives the student estimators an open forum to discuss “tricky” house plans and general concerns in the field.

## CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

**WRLA Fundamentals of the Lumber and Building Supply Industry Certification:** The WRLA partnered with Mount Royal University to offer an online certification program designed specifically for the LBM industry. It is a four-week program consisting of four courses for new industry hires and to those in career transition. For more information visit [www.wrla.org/education/wrla-mru](http://www.wrla.org/education/wrla-mru).

## OPERATOR SAFETY TRAINING COURSES

WRLA has partnered with Cervus Equipment to help reduce damages and claims and increase productivity and maintenance; ultimately enhancing morale and company safety culture.

WRLA members receive up to 40% off regular prices for a variety of safety

**FUN FACT:** WRLA offers an education and travel rebate to members. If a retail member sent just two employees for training the savings of \$200 already cover the cost of WRLA membership. Travel rebates are also available up to a maximum of \$500.

training – both job site training and at any of the CERVUS Equipment Training Centres.

Please visit [www.wrla.org/education](http://www.wrla.org/education) or contact Erin at [erinl@wrla.org](mailto:erinl@wrla.org) for more information on all available educational opportunities and rebates.

Have some ideas and suggestions for other courses that we can provide? Please send them to [erinl@wrla.org](mailto:erinl@wrla.org) as we would love to hear from you. »



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### BOOTH SALES

Now open – Oct. 31

### RETAIL REGISTRATION

Open now until Jan. 17, 2020

### 2020 AWARD NOMINATIONS

Open now until Oct. 31

### MEMBER NETWORKING EVENTS

Calgary – Nov. 7

Winnipeg – Dec. 5

Edmonton – TBD

### EDUCATION – MRU:

#### Industry Literacy Skills: The Role of the WRLA in Today's Lumber Building Materials Industry

Session 1: Oct. 7 – Oct. 11

Session 2: Nov. 18 – Nov. 22

#### Industry Negotiation Skills

Session 1: Oct. 15 – Oct. 18

Session 2: Nov. 25 – Nov. 29

#### Industry Critical Thinking Skills

Session 1: Oct. 21 – Oct. 25

Session 2: Dec. 2 – Dec. 6

#### Industry Relationship Management: Communication, Active Listening & Customer Service

Session 1: Oct. 28 – Nov. 1

Session 2: Dec. 9 – Dec. 13

#### PRINCIPLES OF YARD & WAREHOUSE OPERATIONS:

Leduc, AB – Nov. 1 (Register by Oct. 14)

Winnipeg, MB – Nov. 4

(Register by Oct. 21)

WRLA Buying Show, Calgary, AB

(The Hyatt) – Jan. 21, 2020

(Register by Jan. 6, 2020)

#### MANUAL ESTIMATING LEVELS 1, 2, AND 3

##### Manual Estimating Level 1 – Decks and Garages

Leduc, AB – Oct. 21 & 22

(Register by Oct. 14)

Winnipeg, MB – Oct. 28 & 29

(Register by Oct. 21)

#### Manual Estimating Level 2

Leduc, AB – Oct. 23 & 24

(Register by Oct. 14)

Winnipeg, MB – Oct. 30 & 31

(Register by Oct. 21)

#### Level 3: Advanced Estimating

Winnipeg, MB – Nov. 1

(Register by Oct. 21)

WRLA Buying Show, Calgary, AB

(The Hyatt) – Jan. 21, 2020

(Register by Jan. 6, 2020)

#### Manual Estimating – Online

Save money – no travel expenses to attend classes in person.

Save time – no need for employees to spend time in a two-day course.

This course can be done online (via desktop, laptop, or tablet). The approximate time commitment is eight hours. There is no time limit to complete the course and no deadline to register by.

**CERVUS Operator Safety Training: visit [wrla.org](http://wrla.org) for full details. Available at the CERVUS Equipment Training Centres, and on your own job site. »**

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## Going Above and Beyond

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# TalentSphere Staffing Solutions Ranks No. 107 on the 2019 Growth 500

**CANADIAN BUSINESS AND MACLEAN'S** have ranked WRLA member TalentSphere Staffing Solutions No. 107 on the annual Growth 500, the ranking of Canada's Fastest-Growing Companies based on five-year revenue growth. Winners are profiled in a special print issue of *Canadian Business* published with *Maclean's* magazine and online at [CanadianBusiness.com](http://CanadianBusiness.com) and [Growth500.ca](http://Growth500.ca).

TalentSphere Staffing Solutions made the 2019 Growth 500 list with five-year revenue growth of 971%.

"The companies on the 2019 Growth 500 are truly remarkable," said Beth Fraser, Growth 500 Program Manager. "Demonstrating foresight, innovation, and smart management, their stories serve as a primer for how to build a successful entrepreneurial business today."

TalentSphere Founder Peter Humphrey said the company is honoured to be on the Growth 500 ranking.

"This achievement enforces our belief that there is a better model for recruitment firms that recognizes the evolving requirements of today's workforce; Recruitment consultants no longer need to endure suboptimal work life balance and can now maximize both their lifestyle and their earning capacity," Humphrey said.

TalentSphere credits the building materials industry for much of its success.

"What we found in 2013 was an under-served recruitment market that needed a recruitment firm that knew what they were doing and were committed to the long-term relationships that the industry is built upon," said Director Stephen Borer. "The industry has been very good to us and we try to return that favour, as best we can, by providing best in class recruitment service."

TalentSphere Staffing Solutions is a Canadian-owned recruitment consultancy providing permanent, temporary, and executive search recruitment solutions across North America since 2013. The business has been associated with the

building materials industry since its first placement – a sales manager for a building materials distributor. TalentSphere has been a member of the WRLA, LBMAO, ABSDA, and BSIA of BC for the past five

years and is the only agency in Canada to have this level of commitment to the building materials industry. Clients include distributors, LBM retailers, big box stores, buying groups, and manufacturers. »



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# 2019 WRLA Golf Tournaments

**AS THE SUMMER ENDS**, so do the WRLA Golf Tournaments. Great connections were made among industry members and funds were raised for the WRLA Education Grants program.

Thank you to all the sponsors, attendees, and members that organized and participated. Your support helps to make the events a fun way to spend time with peers, colleagues, and customers.

In response to member requests, the WRLA held a fourth tournament in Saskatoon this year. The first annual tournament kicked off on Aug. 8 and we are looking forward to next year's tournament at the beautiful The Willows course.

Mark your calendars for the 2020 tournaments:

- Saskatoon: Aug. 11
- Winnipeg: Aug. 19
- Sundre: Sept. 3
- Kenosee: Sept. 9

## WHY SUPPORT AND ATTEND THE TOURNAMENTS?

Our golf tournaments are events with a purpose. They not only provide the opportunity for comradery and create connections with customers and prospects, they also give back to the industry.

Proceeds from the tournaments support the WRLA Education Grants program. Applications for the program open May 1, 2020 and will provide \$20,000 in funding on an annual basis to be divided into a two-tier program:

**Tier 1** – Ten \$1,000 grants will be allocated to children of members to support their educational endeavours.

**Tier 2** – Ten \$1,000 grants will be awarded to students that pursue programs that will help them enter the LBM industry, such as supply chain management programs. The WRLA Fundamentals of the Lumber and Building Materials Industry course through Mount Royal University qualifies for this funding and all other applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Over the past three years, there has been a common theme of challenges faced by our members, one of which is staffing.



TOM BELL

Winnipeg group

To ensure that our industry, which has been a part of our livelihood and communities, can continue, we need to start focusing on promoting it as a fulfilling career path. Our role as an industry association is to support the staffing challenges our members face by promoting the industry as a career path and provide funding that will open the door for students to contribute to the industry.

For more information on the application process and dates please visit our website, [wrla.org](http://wrla.org).

We look forward to having you join us once again next year. The golf tournaments give back to members by creating connections and supporting educational endeavours. »



Calgary Classic winners left to right: Dave Barton, Les Schwartz, Will Cowan, Shawn Schwartz, Mike Doyle (Chair).



Kenosee winners left to right: Liz Kovach (WRLA), Don Kendall, Dave Leonzio, J.P. Martin, Jason Moldenhauer, Mark Westrum (WRLA board).



Saskatoon winners left to right: Daryl Williams, Wade McClelland, Rick Hansen, Terry Chernesky.



Winnipeg winners left to right: Mike Coghill, Chris Le, Errol Blatz, Liz Kovach (WRLA). Missing: Alden Wood.



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# Interior Products for

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**H**ome and business owners in Canada can be limited when it comes to renovating during the winter months. While outdoor renovations slow down, there are still plenty of projects you can recommend to customers who are looking to make upgrades before spring arrives. Here are several products to inspire shoppers who walk through your retail doors itching for a change.

## Alexandria Mouldings

*Q&A with Claude Gallant, National Accounts Manager*



IMAGEFLOW/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

**Outdoor projects tend to come to a standstill as the temperatures drop. What are some of the projects (big or small) that WRLA member retailers can promote to customers that use your products?**

They can upgrade their millwork by installing coffered ceilings, fireplace mantles, modernize their doors and trim, and put up new accent walls with shiplap or other wall coverings products that we offer.

**What is the biggest trend you've seen in the interior home renovation world over the last two years?**

The biggest trend in the past few years has been shiplap and wall accents in general. Following that very closely has been the



use of square stock for casing and base applications for a craftsman type look.

**How have you adapted to the changing market as tastes evolve?**

Our marketing team works hand in hand with our sales team in getting market information and following trends online. We have created a new "Surfaces" program that consolidates all of our wall covering profiles and have created installation videos to help the end consumer complete these easier DIY projects to update their homes.

With our manufacturing capabilities we have been able to customize the stock offering with profiles and sizes that are most in demand as trends evolve. We have also added product lines such as PVC and HB&G columns that can be used on the exterior of a home as well as interior.



CANVASS PAINTING: SWEET ART/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

**In what area of the home can your products be used that may be overlooked?**

Our products can be used everywhere. The most overlooked would be the exterior. We have an extensive line of PVC and fibreglass columns that are rot and maintenance free.

**For homeowners and DIYers who are on a tighter budget but still looking to make interior upgrades, which products are best for these customers that retailers should focus on promoting?**

These would most definitely be in our MDF product line offering. MDF profiles are the same as wood profiles and sometimes bigger with less cost because the product is made from fibreboard.



# Winter Shoppers

## Westman Steel

Q&A with Greg Gardenits, Director Sales and Marketing



Images do not reflect Westman Steel projects or products; for inspirational purposes only.

### **Outdoor projects tend to come to a standstill as the temperatures drop. What are some of the projects (big or small) that WRLA member retailers can promote to customers that use your products?**

The solution is simple; you have to look at your product offering and think outside the box. Two products come to mind for me. The first would be our Clean 16 PVC liner panel, which is typically used in car washes for interior liner, many barn interior applications, food processing plants and much more.

A great place a do-it-yourselfer can use the product and get amazing results is a home garage. Many garages are just wood studs. If someone is looking at upgrading the look and finishing of the garage, the traditional method is drywall. Drywall is heavy, requires taping and mudding to get a finish to paint, and then you need to paint it. Lots of work, messy, and can take longer than a weekend to complete.

With Clean 16+ the panels are made of PVC, they are 16 inches wide and interlock for a smooth seam. Strong corrugation to offer incredible strength. The panels are available in 8, 10, 12, 16 and 18-foot lengths. There is a full complement of trims for all applications. The advantage to this product is that once

you install the panel, you're done; you don't need to go back and finish the surface or joints. In addition, it is water and mold resistant, has UV protection and is Class A fire rated on the correct surface. The finished results are a bright area allowing for reduced wattage for lighting and a garage that never needs painting.

### **How have you seen steel used in interior home renovations in recent years? To what do you attribute these trends?**

The second popular product is any of our steel profiles and colours. Steel has become a design element for architects as it offers a modern, crisp clean look as a design feature. I have seen it used on feature walls, wine rooms, bases on home bars, ceilings, and much more. With all the colours and finishes, steel offers more than any other product can. There are textured finishes, painted metallic finishes, and Corten finishes, which is painted steel that look like rusted steel.

### **How have you adapted to the changing market as tastes evolve?**

If you don't evolve you get left behind and I would like to think that we are a leader and

a trendsetter. If you look at the stats on how much steel is used in houses, the numbers are up 400% over the past five years. The initial trend was for design element on the exterior of the buildings and now we see the complete building envelope finished in steel. The past two years we have seen a major increase on interior application as designers are looking for new styles and surfaces.

### **In what area of the home can your products be used that may be overlooked?**

For steel, interior ceilings, feature wall, bars, and wine rooms. For Clean 16+, residential garage liner and under-deck coverings for walk out basements.

### **For homeowners and DIYers who are on a tighter budget but still looking to make interior upgrades, which products are best for these customers that retailers should focus on promoting?**

Steel and Clean 16+; both are easy to install and are competitively priced at all the lumber and building supply retailers in Canada.

*continued on next page*

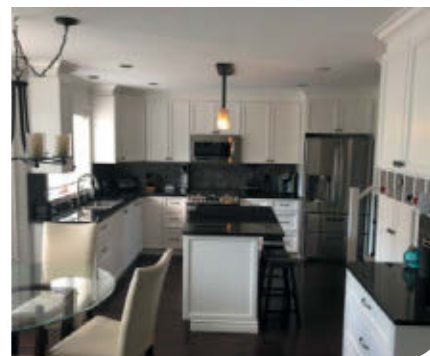
## Interior Products for Winter Shoppers (continued)

# Cloverdale Paint

*Q&A with Wayne Hoogenboom, Dealer Development Manager*



CLOVERDALE PAINT



*Kitchen cabinets refinished using Cloverdale Paint products.*

**Outdoor projects tend to come to a standstill as the temperatures drop. What are some of the projects (big or small) that WRLA member retailers can promote to customers that use your products?**

Interior bathroom renovations, kitchen cabinet refinishing, and other room refresh projects, as well as door colour changes.

**What is the biggest trend you've seen in the interior**

**renovation world over the last two years?**

People are refinishing cabinets, going from old-style yellow oak to white cabinets. We have also seen an increase in furniture refinishing, especially dressers, to recycle furniture that is still in great shape.

**How has Cloverdale adapted to the changing market as tastes evolve?**

New water-based products such as Multimaster target this change in trends. We continue to look for

replacements for oil-based products while improving durability.

**In what area of the home can your products be used that may be overlooked?**

Cabinets, doors, vanities, dressers, tables, and chairs. Customers that may not have enough money to replace their flooring but are looking for a simple way to update their floors may consider painting them.

**For homeowners and DIYers who are on a tighter budget but still looking to make interior upgrades, which products are best for these customers that retailers should focus on promoting?**

Multimaster is a universal 1k epoxy-type product. It is self-priming on most substrates and has excellent durability. It is available in a satin or semi-gloss finish. »

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*Painting furniture is a rising trend that gives older pieces new life.*



# Connecting With Your Local Weekend Warriors

*Help customers looking to remake their spaces in time for the holidays*

*By Alana Trachenko, Dooley Communications*

It's that time of year again – holiday trees, sweaters, and trips to the store to get those interior renovation projects started. The transition in weather is a great opportunity for retailers to connect with their customers who may be feeling the urge to upgrade interior spaces over the winter season.

Many of these homeowners will come into your store with a project in mind, possibly something they've seen on TV or online. They may have a pretty good idea of what they want the finished piece to look like, but they might be fuzzy on the steps required to get there if this is something they haven't done before.

## GET YOUR CUSTOMERS TALKING

Whether it's in store or online, make sure you are asking your customers what they're looking for and what kinds of projects they are working on. Be sure to let customers know that you're there to help and available to answer their questions, especially if they seem to ask.

This is important for two reasons: by answering your customers' questions, you can help instill in them the confidence they need to get the job done well. But just as importantly, knowing what kinds of projects are popular this season will help you to stock up on the products you'll be asked for and highlight any research you may need to do on behalf of your customers.

Weekend warriors are on a tight timeline, and they will want the product they're looking for right away. Be prepared with items in stock so customers don't have to look elsewhere.

## LEARN FROM YOUR VENDORS

To work effectively with your DIY customers, become an expert on popular

products so you can answer any questions they have. Connect with your vendors on new items and procedures so you can convey that information to your customers. This is especially useful when customers have a lot of competing information; many of them will have come across websites such as Pinterest or Houzz or have watched home improvement shows on TV, which gives them ideas of what to do and how to do it.

However, individual products have unique uses and requirements, and understanding those can make a DIY project go a lot smoother. By being an expert source of information for your customer, you can ensure that they will rely on you when their next weekend project comes up.

Consider asking some of your vendors to visit your store to demo a product that could be key for winter projects; this is a great way to get your customers engaged and informed.

## PROMOTE WINTER PROJECT ITEMS

Once you know which projects your weekend warriors are interested in, you can make shopping simple by arranging related products together, creating new displays, or promoting those products online and through social media.

The change in season may be a good opportunity to re-arrange your store to reflect the kinds of projects that can be done over a weekend, such as adding an accent wall, interior columns, trims, and refinishing cabinets.

Highlight your store's unique offerings, whether that is a specialized product or staff expertise on a project or item.



ISTOCK.COM/KNAPE

There are plenty of ways to make sure you're capitalizing on the weekend warrior rush. By connecting with your customers and doing some research, you can use this change in season as an opportunity to expand your customer base and establish your business as a reliable resource for DIYers. »

# Olympic Building Centre: Storefront Merchandising

By Liz Kovach, President, WRLA

ALL IMAGES SUPPLIED BY OLYMPIC BUILDING CENTRE



*Due to an error in the images used to compliment the feature in the previous issue of Yardstick, we have chosen to re-run this feature.*

Customer experience is a concept that continues to grow as consumer behaviour evolves. Customer expectations continue to rise at a fast pace and companies are expected to respond to these demands. Whether the customer is an event planner working with a venue or is a DIYer looking to tackle a weekend project, consumers are expecting an excellent experience from the first point of contact through to project completion.





Customer experience is the heart of the Olympic Building Centre business model. Olympic Building Centre in Winnipeg started out as a traditional hardware retailer, paint store, and lumberyard. This model worked for Olympic for many years. However, as the store's team and customer demands evolved, the business model needed to adapt to the changing needs of the building material marketplace.

"We are focused on being great at what we do and honest with the items where we are not, so paint had to go, for example, to make way for the many options of decking," said Marcel Pelland, General Manager of Olympic Building Centre.

"The evolution came serendipitously as we took notice that our customers struggled

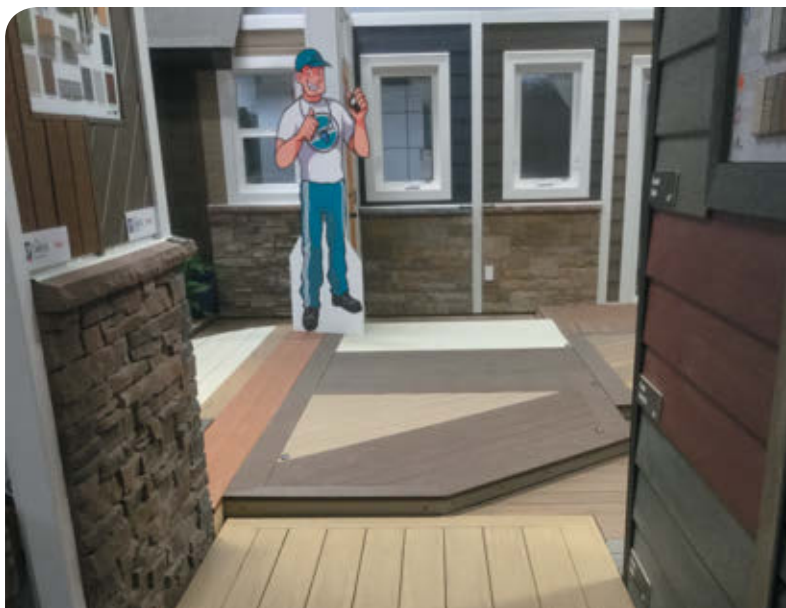
to make very expensive and key decisions on build projects with little-to-no real life display options," Marcel said. "They were asking for displays that gave true-to-life pictures to help them through the wide array of colours and choices for materials. So, we experimented on a small scale and as we gained success, we added more elaborate displays that create an experience for our customers."

Having toured the Olympic showroom, I experienced the maximization of space, which provides displays that help to bring ideas to life and help consumers visualize how their deck and railing, window and door, fencing, siding, or garage project might look. Their display coupled with the expertise of their Product Coaches supports

the continuum of the customer experience by providing a different level of service.

Project Coaches (also known as Customer Experience Specialists) are an important component to the process as they all have hands-on building knowledge and the team continues to foster their education and knowledge from regular product information sessions provided by suppliers.

On my tour of Olympic, I noticed that there were a few Consumer Choice Award symbols and asked Marcel how important these are to the Olympic team. Marcel said, "Yes, we're proud to be recognized and are motivated by doing well in the eyes of our customers and our industry," adding, "Our goal is to exist in our own space and continually outdo ourselves." »



# Bullying in the Workplace

By Barbara J. Bowes



ISTOCK.COM/FERTING

**T**he construction industry, building supply industry, and other trade occupations have a long history of seasoned employees pulling pranks on new apprentices. For instance, how many readers recall a young apprentice being sent to the shop to find a left-handed hammer? Or, have you ever seen supervisors expecting rookies to singularly perform all the cleanup on a worksite? I'll bet you have several more examples.

Traditionally, this behaviour is called "hazing" and was thought to be nothing more than fun and harmless pranks. In many ways, it is like those initiation rites that were common during high school days. Typically, rookies go along and endure this inappropriate behaviour because they want to belong.

And it doesn't end there. Workplace behaviour such as verbal abuse, aggression, insulting comments, the use of vulgar language, hurtful jokes, yelling, calling someone derogatory names, giving an employee a disrespectful nickname, and/or sabotaging someone's lunch bucket or locker are more common than you

think. When it represents repetitive mistreatment, threats or abusive conduct, it is nothing more than bullying.

While rookies and apprentices have endured this common behaviour for years, women in particular are alarmed with its pervasiveness. For instance, even years after it happened, I clearly remember a comment made to me that surprised and shocked me at the time. The situation arose when I raised a critical workplace issue regarding theft of large equipment from the employer. Instead of taking my concern seriously, my client turned around and said, "Oh, he is just blowing smoke up your skirt!" While red faced and taken aback by the sexist comment to be sure, I pushed on and the theft was confirmed. Yes, those were the days when *Playboy* centrefolds were plastered on the wall of the supervisor's office.

Inappropriate workplace behaviour such as that described above is no longer tolerated. It is considered incivility, a disrespectful workplace, bullying, and harassment. This behaviour is now well



known to create emotional trauma and personal stress leading to increased absenteeism and/or resignations. In other words, it is a workplace safety and general human resources concern.

Bullying behaviour also has a corporate impact. Bullying impacts worker productivity and efficiency, destroys teamwork, leads to the increased potential for accidents, and requires increased time dealing with complaints and issues.

Today, Canadian and provincial human rights legislation as well as various provincial workplace health and safety codes speak to the issue of harassment, bullying and offensive behaviour in the workplace. The challenge then for every organization is how to incorporate today's ideal behaviour into its organizational culture.

The British Columbia Construction Association appears to be taking the lead in combating harassment and bullying in the construction industry with its new Builders Code program that defines an acceptable worksite and provides workers with training, tools and resources. The term Builders Code was specifically selected because the construction industry is accustomed to following building codes and so this new initiative is referred to as Safety 2.0.

The new building code program identifies that hazing, bullying, and harassment represents safety issues that can no longer be ignored. As well, they impress upon industry leaders that it is incumbent on the industry to create a workplace culture that attracts and retains successful tradespeople, especially women in the workforce. Construction companies that endorse the code and engage in assessment and training can receive a certification that in turn helps to promote their company as a safe place to work.

The association also points out that site leaders have a critical role to play in creating and maintaining a positive worksite culture, addressing any issues that may arise and acting as role models for expected behaviours.

In order to begin incorporating a code for a respectful workplace into the culture of an organization, companies need to start with an assessment and a training program. This is critical to identifying inappropriate behaviour within a company and unlearning many of the biases, stereotypes, and inappropriate conduct that many workers have grown up with.

In some instances, bad behaviour is so much the norm that people take it for granted. No longer! Once informed, participants are usually surprised at how our old behaviour creates barriers and negatively impacts individuals as well as the workplace in general. In fact, in many cases, individuals are simply not aware of the impact of their behaviour on others until it is pointed out to them.

There are several topics that need to be included in a respectful workplace training program. These range from examining organization culture and behaviour over the years and how society has changed. Workers need to understand today's standard for acceptable workplace behaviour and its benefits to the industry. They need to be made aware of their own role and conduct in contributing to a healthy, safe workplace and be given tools to help make this happen.

While training will take an organization a long way toward building a respectful workplace where bullying is not tolerated, human resource policies and procedures must also be put into place to ensure behaviour is monitored and inappropriate behaviour is dealt with. This includes a definition of harassment

and bullying as part of a respectful workplace, a procedure for confidentially reporting incidents, procedures for investigation and procedures for remedying the situation.

At the same time, training needs to be universal. In other words, all employees need to receive training not only on the concept of respectful workplace but also on the human resource policies that will help employees and managers deal with issues as they arise.

It's not surprising that bullying has moved from the classroom to the workplace, but when nearly half of general workers and one-third of construction industry apprentices reported in 2015 that they were affected by workplace bullying, something needs to be done immediately.

Take advantage of programs available such as the Builders Code, and customize it to your organization. If you need assistance, reach out to an HR and training consultant to help you develop and implement both your policies and your training program. Keep in mind that in this day and age, employees want to work for an organization that values respect in the workplace and prohibits bullying at every turn. ■

**Source:** *Builders Code hopes to combat harassment, bullying in construction*, Canadian HR Reporter, 04/01/2019; *Preventing Bullying in the Construction Industry*, GoContractor, Nov 20, 2015.

*Barbara J. Bowes, FCPHR, CMC, CCP, M.Ed., is President of Legacy Bowes Group, the author of eight books, a radio personality, a speaker, an executive coach, and a workshop leader. Additionally, she is chairwoman for the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council. She can be reached at [barb@legacybowes.com](mailto:barb@legacybowes.com).*

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# Mental Health Resources for the Construction Industry

By Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association

**“**In the construction industry, hazard recognition and control usually refers to assessing the risks on a job site, but business owners and leaders in the industry need to understand that mental health is a safety issue too, and it is probably bigger than they realize,” said Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA) President, Collin Pullar.

The topic of mental health, and suicide in particular, has been the focus of articles, panel discussions and media across the country since a statistic was released in 2018 that suicide rates in the industry are three times the national average.

According to an article called *Suicide in the Construction Industry*, published by RBL Chartered Professional Accountants based in Ontario, “the costs per suicide are even more alarming. A study in New Brunswick found the cost of suicide per death to be \$849,877 (Clayton, 1999) while an American study calculated the number at over \$1 million (Shepard, 2015). More than 97% of these costs are due

In theory, recognizing the hazard and taking steps to prevent a mental health incident should be the same as controlling and mitigating the risk of any other job site hazard but often business owners and leaders are not adequately equipped with the knowledge and resources needed.

to lost productivity, while the remaining 3% are costs associated with provision of emergency medical services.”

In theory, recognizing the hazard and taking steps to prevent a mental health incident should be the same as controlling and mitigating the risk of any other job site hazard but often business owners and leaders are not adequately equipped with the knowledge and resources needed. WorkSafe Saskatchewan offers free online learning related to Psychological Health and Safety in the workplace for Saskatchewan workers and employers. E-learning courses are designed to be self-paced and accessible from anywhere in the province.

The courses were developed by the Canadian Centre of Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) and are being delivered in partnership with WorkSafe Saskatchewan. CCOHS courses are unique in that they are developed by subject specialists in the field, and reviewed by representatives from labour, employers, and government to ensure the content and approach are unbiased and credible. Following is a list of the e-courses\* currently offered:

- Mental Health: Awareness
  - Mental Health: Communication Strategies
  - Mental Health: Health and Wellness Strategies
  - Mental Health: Psychologically Safe Workplaces
  - Mental Health: Signs, Symptoms and Solutions
- To register, visit [www.ccohs.ca/distributors/sask/](http://www.ccohs.ca/distributors/sask/)

\*NOTE: the Mental Health Awareness course is free to anyone, outside of Saskatchewan, the other courses listed are available at a nominal fee. **»**

The Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association is a member of the Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Associations (CFCSA) which works as an umbrella organization for member provincial and territorial construction safety associations. To find a construction safety association in your province or territory, visit: [www.cfcsa.ca](http://www.cfcsa.ca).





# Important Deadlines Quickly Approaching!

*By Tom Bell, Chair, WRLA*

**IT'S NO SECRET THAT** well-trained, skilled employees are important to an organization's success so please be sure to take advantage of some of the upcoming opportunities here in 2019 as well as in winter and spring of 2020.

With the WRLA team finalizing items for the upcoming Buying Show and 2020 WRLA education schedule, they have asked me to send a reminder on some important upcoming deadlines:

1. Retail registration early bird discount ends Nov. 15, 2019.
2. Course offerings at the upcoming WRLA show include Principles of Yard and Warehouse Operations and Advanced Estimating – Level 3. Deadline to register is Jan. 6, 2020.
3. WRLA Fundamentals of the Lumber and Building Supply Industry has started its fall and winter sessions for the 2019 and 2020 seasons. If you have new staff or know of people in your network looking for a career change, the fundamentals course may just help them take their career to the next level. Visit [wrla.org](http://wrla.org) for more information and course schedule.

Continuing with the theme of education and professional development, Stan Burkholder is preparing a session on Building Codes for the upcoming WRLA Buying Show and is looking for your help to create content to make the most out of the session.

Please send your top building code questions that Stan can answer during his session to [buyingshow@wrla.org](mailto:buyingshow@wrla.org).

In addition to the courses the that WRLA offers, SAIT has partnered with the WRLA for the 2020 WRLA Buying Show to provide educational sessions to members and their staff team. Stay tuned for a final itinerary or visit [membersarea.wrla.org/retailer\\_registration/educationsessions](http://membersarea.wrla.org/retailer_registration/educationsessions).

We look forward to seeing you at the WRLA Buying Show in January! **»**



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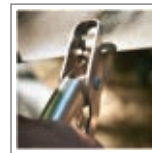
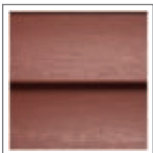
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