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NEWS



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The ABSDA Building Supply News is the official magazine of the Atlantic Building Supply Dealers Association and is published in February, May, July, September and December. The Atlantic Building Supply News is distributed to all ABSDA Dealer and Associate Members.

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The energy surrounding our upcoming Expo is off the chart with positivity!



Steve Foran
Chair of the Board

There has been lots on the go for the Association since I last wrote back in September. For starters we recently held a very productive board of directors meeting where we made some big decisions to move our wonderful association forward.

It's time for the Association to staff up again and get back to capacity after a few difficult years during Covid. The Association will shortly be looking to fill a Marketing & Communication Specialist position that will manage all aspects of our marketing and social media relations.

The ABSDA is committed to helping our Members with what will no doubt be our biggest challenge in the future...LABOUR! Our labour force study clearly shows that not only is Atlantic Canada facing the oldest labour demographics in Canada but we also need help with our HR skills.

Our study has given us many clear paths and areas where the association can provide training and support in the human resource space. The Association is so committed to this file that the board of directors has accepted our President's proposal to create a new position within the organization.

I'm happy to report that in the New Year ABSDA will be hiring a Workforce Development Coordinator which will work with our members

to sharpen their HR skills. We're looking forward to enhancing the value proposition of membership and adding increased value for your investment in our Association.

Speaking of HR, the Association held its first ever HR conference on November 2nd in Halifax NS. I have to say it was a huge "homerun"! Our President will go into greater details in his report, but I just wanted to add to the conversation by saying it was fantastic.

Now onto to our next big event...our Expo 2023! I have to say that the energy surrounding our upcoming Expo is off the chart with positivity! People are so excited about seeing each other in person again and I have no doubt that it's going to be a fantastic event.

Our event kicks off Tuesday evening March 7th with our Meet & Greet which will include fantastic entertainment from a great local band – *Shaydid*. The trade show dates will be March 8 & 9 2023, once again to be held at the beautiful Halifax Convention Center.

You can register and purchase function tickets on our website along with securing your hotel accommodations at our two host hotels.

<https://absda.ca/absda-building-supply-expo>

Would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season and all the best in 2023!

See you at the Expo in March.

Steve Foran
Chair

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Are you leading... or managing?



Denis Melanson
President

One of the main objectives of our first ever HR conference was to bring awareness to the importance of our members becoming better HR operators. I'm happy to report that we achieved the impact that we were looking for.

I received many emails from members stating that it's brought to light many areas of challenges in their operations that need improvement. This confirms that we're on the right track with HR.

Approximately 110 people enjoyed a full day of learning. While we were very pleased with the turnout, I could easily name 25 to 30 companies that SHOULD have been in that room!

I would like to share with you some of the powerful takeaways from the day,

Yours truly kicked off the day with some labor force trends and demographics. Maybe the scariest statistic given in my presentation is that 30% of the building supply labor force is 62 years or older.

This statistic also means that we will have to replace more than 4000 jobs in the coming years due to retirements! That's a scary statistic if you ask me?!

Our first keynote speaker of the day was Pierre Battah, an award-winning author of the book *Humanity at Work- Leading for better relationships and results*.

Pierre gave a powerful speech and workshop around employee engagement and spoke about the difference between "Leadership" & "Management".

Leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute to the organization's success. Managing is about making sure the day-to-day operations are being performed as expected.

Pierre shared a real-life story about a fish plant in Cap Pelé NB that ran multiple shifts. The plant general manager was quite confused when out of the blue he began receiving many requests from employees wanting to move to the night shift. The night shift is usually the least desirable work shift, isn't it?

It turns out that the night shift had an incredible manager that excelled at engaging and empowering employees. That manager made sure that every single night he greeted every single employee at the door. "Welcome, it's going to be a great evening" he told everyone. During the shift that manager was available, present, and kept engaging and communicating with employees. At the end of the shift the manager was at the door saying goodbye to every single employee. "Great shift, see you tomorrow" is what he'd say to every employee.

I'm no expert in employee engagement, however the things this manager did in the fish plant doesn't seem like rocket science nor does it sound difficult to do. People respond well to positivity and feeling appreciated.

So I leave you with a final reflection and challenge you to ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I truly present for my team at work?
- Am I leading vs managing?
- Do I show my employees I care every single day?

I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a great Holiday Season and wishing you all the best in 2023!

Denis Melanson
President

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More ABSDA HR Conference takeaways – Employee Onboarding!



One of our keynote speakers at our HR conference spoke in great detail about onboarding new employees and how important it is to contribute to retention.

One of our keynote speakers at our HR conference spoke in great detail about onboarding new employees and how important it is to contribute to retention.

Did you know that new hires will make their decision to stay with your company within the first 3 to 6 days of being hired?

Onboarding new hires is a crucial-and sometimes regularly repeated-process for businesses. Not having a concrete training plan in place can cause anxiety and confusion for both the incoming employees and those tasked with training them.

According to various sources, surveys and studies the following statistic show a clear picture on the importance of proper onboarding.

31%

31% of new employees will quit their job within six months of their recruitment because of the absence of an appropriate onboarding process.

88%

88% of organizations do not run an effective employee onboarding program.

69%

An optimal onboarding process increases the chances of retention of the employee by a whopping 69%.

With the understanding that Rome wasn't built in one day, let's talk about a few simple steps that you could implement and be more mindful of.

1 Cover the cultural aspects – The most stressful part of joining a new organization is not feeling comfortable, accepted and part of the tribe. It is important to share the unspoken office/team expectations, inside jokes and cultural norms for people to be at ease. Perhaps the most important anxiety to quell is “Who

am I going to eat lunch with?” Onboarding for performance is important, but onboarding a new friend is key

2 Put their Role in the context of the big picture

– Onboarding is stressful because we try to get a great deal completed within a short period of time. It takes time and works best when the person has clear goals and knows what they are accountable for in the process.

3 Treat your new employee like a customer

– The key to onboarding is to have a customer mindset, as your employee is really a customer. Key things that customers look for are transparency, expectations of what they are receiving, lifetime value and customer support.

4 Have Multiple Employees Serve as Resources for the New Hire

– New hires need to get up to speed quickly on terminology, acronyms, and important clients, as well as where everyone goes for lunch and the gathering place after work. Creating a diverse team of employees who can be a go-to resource prevents overburdening a single current employee while ensuring new employees have options to get the answers they need.

5 Share the Load and Take your Time

– Many companies and new employees both want to hit the ground running from day one. Instead, pace the onboarding process, and spread out the onboarding to help the new employee not only get to know their coworkers, but also better understand the company. Encourage the new hire to familiarize themselves with the role and the company and then start to introduce responsibilities.

Onboarding is not an easy process but one that we need to be mindful of the fact that we need to be better. In the end let's show empathy, be available, approachable, and patient.

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ABSDA BUILDING SUPPLY EXPO 2023

We are officially launched and ready for your bookings for the 2023 ABSDA Expo at the Halifax Convention Center.

To reserve your Function Tickets for the event, please click on the link below.

You can purchase tickets for our Meet & Greet Networking event on March 7th.

You can purchase tickets for our Annual Banquet on March 8th and you can also purchase lunch tickets for each Expo Day!

absda.ca/absda-building-supply-expo





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The Best Testimonial EVER!

At one point in 2021, I wrote an article about the benefits of Hiring Foreign Workers and the importance of immigration. A few days later my phone rang and the voice on the other end said, *“I read your article and you’re 100 percent right!”* He then proceeded to say *“It’s Stephen Rector from Island Home Hardware in Grand Manan by the way!”*

Stephen went on to tell me that he had embraced hiring foreign workers and that he had seven immigrant workers on staff and that it was the best decision he ever made.

Fast forward one year later... ABSDA decides to launch its first ever HR conference.

We knew that our HR conference would talk about recruitment, retention and of course, hiring foreign workers.

I called Stephen and asked if he would be willing to come to our HR Conference in Halifax and without hesitation he replied, “We would love to”!

It was all set; Stephen and his wife Lynn were going to be present at our HR conference to share their story! Two days before the conference my cell phone rang at 8pm at night. It was Stephen Rector notifying me that he and his wife had been in VERY close contact with someone that just tested positive for Covid.

Just like we must do in our businesses and in life....it was time to adapt and adjust. We decided that we’d Zoom them into the conference. That sounds easy but when you live in Grand Manan Island and the technology is archaic, nothing is simple. After a few technology tests during lunch the day of the conference we figured it would work.

We finally got everything working and Stephen and Lynn ended up closing our day with their Zoom testimonial. It was the perfect ending to a great day of learning.

Stephen and Lynn described the culture in Grand Manan with a total population of 2500 people and how even THEY were



Stephen and Lynn Rector from Island Home Hardware in Grand Manan spoke about the positive impact foreign workers have had on their business.

considered “OUTSIDERS” when they purchased the store.

All the fears and doubts about whether the community was going to accept the hiring of foreign workers at their retail store played heavily on their minds. In the end, they decided they had NO CHOICE...there just wasn’t enough available local workforce to meet their needs.

So they made the decision to embark on the journey of tapping into a global market full of employees and opportunities! A market where people pack all their belongings and move to the other side of the world for a new and safe beginning for themselves and their families. These foreign workers leave EVERYTHING behind and their ONLY desire is to work, settle and integrate in the community. They are ALL-IN! They WANT to work, they NEED to

work and Stephen described that many asked to work six days per week! When is the last time you heard that?

In the end, Stephen and Lynn spoke about how positive of an impact hiring foreign workers had on their business. The community has totally embraced these new immigrant workers in the small community of Grand Manan and many commented to Stephen and his wife that the level of customer service has never been so high at Island Home Hardware.

Co-owner Lynn finished her testimonial with the following statement “If you’ve been thinking of hiring foreign workers, stop thinking about it and start the process now, I promise you that you won’t regret it and it will be the best decision you ever made”!

Thank you, Stephen Rector and Lynn Smith, for sharing your amazing story!



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Industry News

GANDER BAY BUILDING SUPPLIES WINS NATIONAL AWARD



Congratulations to our ABSDA Members **GANDER BAY BUILDING SUPPLIES** for winning an award for “Retail Spirit” at the recent Hardline conference at Niagara-on-the-Lake. Congratulations to **Deb Brinson** co-owner of the business with her husband **Todd**. Also seen in this photo is **Ruth Darlene Purchase** a key employee of the business. The award was presented by Scott Ferguson from Kohltech Windows which were the Award Sponsor. So great to see our Members in Atlantic Canada be recognized! ■

TAIGA BUILDING PRODUCTS DONATES \$30 000 FOR FIONA RELIEF



TAIGA BUILDING PRODUCTS donated \$30 000 to the Canadian Red Cross, in support of the hurricane Fiona recovery efforts in the Atlantic Region. What generous members we have in the ABSDA Membership! Great touch Taiga. Seen in this photo are senior representatives from Red Cross and the man in the middle is our very own **Mark Dill** - General Manager, Atlantic Region. ■

NEW MAJORITY INVESTORS ANNOUNCED FOR THE SEXTON FAMILY OF COMPANIES

The Sexton Family of Companies (“SFOC”), is pleased to announce that the Company is in the process of concluding a transaction that will see an ownership group led by PFM Capital Inc. (“PFM”) obtain a majority share position of the Company. Current SFOC Chair, Brian Kusisto, will remain with the company as a board member and Sexton Investments will retain a portion of the ownership of SFOC. The transaction is subject to certain regulatory approvals and other conditions customary for a transaction of this nature and is expected to close in the fall of 2022. ■



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Industry News

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PACIFIC WOODTECH CORPORATION AND CANWEL BUILDING MATERIALS DIVISION

Burlington, Washington-based **PACIFIC WOODTECH (PWT)** is proud to announce a long-term agreement with Vancouver, British Columbia based **CANWEL BUILDING MATERIALS**, a division of **DOMAN BUILDING MATERIALS GROUP LTD.** to distribute Pacific Woodtech Corp.'s full line of **Engineered Wood Products** in Canada. CanWel operates 15 Distribution facilities strategically located across Canadian geographies and boasts a large and seasoned team of dedicated EWP professionals. Pacific Woodtech Corp. acquired LP Building Solutions' (LP) (NYSE:LPX) Engineered Wood Products (EWP) business on August 1st, 2022. ■

ABSDA HR CONFERENCE WAS A HUGE HIT



Approximately 110 members enjoyed a full day of learning and sharing at this fantastic **HR Conference**. Leadership, recruitment, engagement, onboarding, and hiring foreign workers were all hot topics! Don't be surprised if this becomes an annual conference! Thank you to all the Sponsors that made this happen. ■



49% OF WORKERS FEAR REPERCUSSIONS FOR BEING OPEN ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

According to a survey conducted by Modern Health and Forrester Consulting, only 51% of employees polled feel that their role would not be affected if their mental health status was revealed. While 49% of workers worry that sharing how they're feeling mentally could lead to repercussions including the loss of a job.

Take this as your reflection of the day and ask yourself what type of employer you want to be? ■



TORBSA joins the power, the promise, the partnership of AD

As of July 1, 2022, TORBSA joins Affiliated Distributors (AD), becoming AD Canada – Building Supplies. With a strong commitment to maintaining and growing the Canadian independent spirit, we look forward to engaging with the distributor and supplier community under our new name, while leveraging our size and scale in support of our members.



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Industry News

BMR APPOINTS NEW VP, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS



BMR Group has appointed Claudie Gervais as VP, marketing and communications. Effective immediately, she reports directly to COO Antonio Di Pasquale. Gervais joined the company in 2017 as director of promotional strategy and business intelligence and was promoted in 2020 to senior director of the same portfolio. ■

REGAL IDEAS INC. WINS BEST IN SHOW AT DECK EXPO



Regal ideas Inc., the world's leading manufacturer of Aluminum railing systems, showcased its innovation, technology, and products at this year's DeckExpo in Las Vegas, Nevada. Regal ideas was awarded "Best in Show" in the Outdoor Living category for its innovation and Crystal Rail system. ■

JELD-WEN OF CANADA DONATING \$25,000 TO SUPPORT PEOPLE AFFECTED BY HURRICANE FIONA



Another generous ABSDA Members stepping up to plate to help with the Fiona recovery in Atlantic Canada. Jeld-Wen of Canada has donated \$25 000 to Red Cross to support people affected by Hurricane Fiona. Very nice gesture Jeld-Wen and I'm sure your generosity will go a long way in helping many that need it. ■

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