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NEWS






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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HR is Everywhere



Peter Merrill
Chair of the Board

I write this article having just attended the 2nd Annual ABSDA HR Conference in Halifax. This was an excellent conference and the Keynote speakers did a great job of involving the audience, which resulted in a very interactive event.

I trust that everyone who attended the HR Conference, will have some key takeaways, that will help them navigate the HR component of their respective businesses. That is the primary purpose of these type of industry events, to get us thinking about a particular facet of our business, and develop practices that will help us improve that part of our business. I strongly encourage our membership to attend these industry events, and attend them with an open mind as there will always be something or somebody, that will provide a spark to help push us forward.

I recently had the pleasure of attending the 2023 Hardlines conference in Whistler BC. The best part of this conference for me, is that I get to meet Building Supply industry members, that I don't regularly see in our region. The other interesting takeaway from this years event is that, whether it was intended or not, I seemed to be able to intertwine an HR component into most of the Keynote presentations.

One presentation in particular, resonated with me, as it provided great insight into the generational differences in our workforce.

Zaida Fazlic, Vice President, People & Culture, Taiga Building Products Ltd. Zaida's presentation highlighted some of the key differences and unique qualities of the different generations that we hear so much about; Baby Boomers, born 1946 – 1964, Gen X, born 1965-1989, Millennials or Gen Y, born 1981-1996 and Gen Z, born 1997 – 2012 . While a lot of the senior positions in our industry are currently held by Baby Boomers and Gen X, it will be our ability to work with and develop Gen Y and Z, that will have the greatest impact on the future of our industry, and business in general. My two key takeaways from this presentation, are that we, the older generations, need to clearly communicate with the younger generations, and that communication is the biggest key to bridging generational gaps. The second key is adaptation – again, the older generations need to be more open and flexible to adapting to the things that are important to the younger generations, and putting policies in place that help these younger generations flourish within their respective workplaces.

As a Baby Boomer, this presentation really opened my eyes, and provided great insight into the fact that Millennials and Gen Z are wired differently than I was at their age. There is nothing wrong with this, the reality is that Baby Boomers and Gen X, simply have to be aware of this, and realize that the younger generations will act differently , and will be motivated by different factors than we were at their age. As I stated earlier, the younger generations are our future, and as hard as it may be, we need to adapt to their way of thinking when we make decisions that impact our future, not vice versa.

Peter Merrill
Chair



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Procrastination is the thief of time!



Denis Melanson
President

When I was hired at ABSDA in September 2014 (yes, it's already been 9 years) my predecessor Don Sherwood had a common saying "Procrastination is the thief of time"!

Procrastination is a common obstacle that plagues business owners in their quest for success. It's all too easy to put off important tasks, make excuses, and let valuable opportunities slip through their fingers.

For the past few years, I've been listening to Members and their challenges with hire and retaining employees. Everyone is aware of it however only a select few are taking charge and implementing or working towards change. For the second year ABSDA has organized an excellent HR Conference and unfortunately not enough are taking advantage of the learning opportunities and have a gambit full of excuses.

"I don't have time."

"Not this year, maybe next year"

"It's not the right time."

"We're short staffed."

I could go on, but we'll stop it there. The conference date was announced many months prior to the event and only lack of planning and prioritization can be blamed for the list of excuses provided.

You're all partially right when you say "I don't have time"...you don't have time to waste on not improving your HR skills.

The time is now, the challenges are real.

Our industry demographics tell us that 33% of our employees are over 62 years old and we will need to hire more than 4000 employees in the coming years in Atlantic Canada. If you think you're short staffed now....wait it's about to get worse!

That might all sound a little preachy and harsh but hey it's time to get real and get serious about HR.

Procrastination can be a silent killer for businesses. It leads to missed goals, lost revenue, and can even tarnish your reputation. As a business owner, time is a finite resource, and the longer you delay taking action, the further your goals move out of reach. The cost of procrastination is high, but recognizing its impact is the first step toward change.

One way to begin overcoming procrastination is to set clear goals, define your objectives and break them down into smaller manageable tasks. This will make your goals feel less daunting and more achievable. A well-defined roadmap gives you direction and focus.

Remind yourself of the long-term benefits of taking action. Keeping the big picture in mind can motivate you to overcome procrastination.

In conclusion, making excuses are common pitfalls for business owners, but they don't have to be roadblocks on your path to success. By recognizing the cost of procrastination, identifying common excuses, and implementing best practices for change, you can break free from the cycle of inaction. Embrace the power of taking action and watch your business thrive as you overcome procrastination one step at a time.

Wishing you a great Christmas Holiday and make sure to spend quality time with your families.

Happy New Year to all of you from the team here at ABSDA!

Denis Melanson
President



Theresa Handel
Home Store Owner
Campbell River, BC

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Navigating Employee Compensation: Is it all about the money?

As we stand on the cusp of a new year, we find ourselves at a crucial crossroads in employee compensation planning. The perennial question arises: Is it really about the money? There's no debate that "money", aka compensation, remains in the top 5 significant factors in employees' overall job satisfaction. In an era where high inflation rates and interest rates, the incremental salary increases we've seen over the last few years aren't keeping pace with the rising cost of living. However, a deeper dive into the industry's compensation landscape reveals a multifaceted challenge that extends beyond mere monetary considerations.

As the industry grapples with a shortage of skilled labor and struggles to fill open positions, the stakes for retaining experienced employees have never been higher. While a competitive salary remains a crucial factor in attracting and retaining talent, the landscape is shifting. In the face of an aging workforce and an ever-tightening labor market, the question of whether it's truly "all about the money" takes on added significance.

The traditional paradigm of compensation as the sole driver of employee satisfaction is evolving. In an industry where workers are in high demand, employees are seeking more than just a paycheck. They crave a workplace that values their contributions, fosters professional growth, and promotes a positive and supportive culture. As we approach the annual review season, building supply dealers must reflect on these intangible factors that contribute significantly to employee engagement and satisfaction. Employers must recognize the importance of honestly assessing their work environment, organizational culture, and the leadership skills of management.

The impact of an organization's work environment and culture cannot be overstated. A positive workplace culture enhances employee morale, fosters a sense of belonging, and ultimately contributes to increased productivity. Creating a workplace where employees feel valued and appreciated goes a long way in retaining experienced talent.

Equally critical is the role of effective leadership in shaping the employee experience. The management team's people-leading skills are paramount in a landscape where the average worker has decades of experience. Strong leadership that understands and appreciates the unique strengths of each team member fosters a sense of loyalty and commitment. Investing in leadership training and development can pay dividends in terms of employee retention and satisfaction.

As the new year unfolds, building supply dealers must recognize that employee compensation is a multifaceted challenge that goes beyond the bottom line. While competitive salaries are essential, a holistic approach that prioritizes a positive work environment, a supportive culture, and effective leadership is equally crucial. In a time where the battle for talent is fierce, the ability to attract and retain skilled workers hinges on the industry's ability to provide a workplace that employees are proud to be a part of, where they feel seen, heard, and valued.

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ABSDA HR Conference Recap

Valuable insights and strategies on how to Attract, Retain and Engage your most valuable asset, your people.

The heartbeat of the conference revolved around critical themes that resonate deeply in our industry.

Discussions surrounding employee engagement and retention took center stage, recognizing the pivotal role of an engaged workforce in an organization's success. The speakers guided us through the intricacies of attracting, recruiting and retaining top talent as well as exploring innovative ways to create an environment where employees feel welcome, valued, supported, motivated.

The atmosphere at the conference reflected a collective commitment and seriousness in addressing the pressing challenges faced by our collective organizations. The participants showed a shared determination to recognize the vital role of cohesive and forward-thinking HR strategies in shaping their workplace.



Our presenters from left to right: Patrick Goguen (ABSDA), Jordan Remedios (ISANS), Julie Melanson (JMC), Pierre Battah, Gabriela Martin, (ISANS).

Pierre Battah's Sessions on Employee Engagement and Retention highlighted the vitality of engagement as a potent recruitment and retention strategy. Attendees delved into the core of people leader's role in forging an engaged team and its impact on an organization's bottom line. He explored effective strategies for its assessment and enhancement. Emphasizing management team's influence on the organization's engagement and ability to attract top talent, Pierre's insights were a catalyst for fostering an authentic human centered culture where people are valued and, in return, contribute meaningfully.

- Key learnings:**
- Job satisfaction is closely tied to employee relationship with their manager
 - Things we focus on and work on will improve
 - The importance of regular 1 to 1 check-ins are critical

Julie Melanson unveiled the ABSDA HR Tool Kit, offering crucial tools essential for organizational performance. With the Employee Handbook Template, the Performance Management Guide and a deeper dive into the Recruitment Guide, Julie empowered attendees to streamline processes, enhance workplace culture, and set standardized practices that resonated with, and aligns how the organization interacts with its people.

- Key learnings:**
- Importance of crafting an engaging job posting to attract candidates
 - ABSDA HR tools are great place to increase structure and consistency
 - HR tools and strategies need team buy-in and continuous attention

Gabriela Martins' session on the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP) was a game-changer, especially for businesses struggling to fill positions locally. Gabriela guided participants step-by-step through the process and provided in-depth understanding of the program. The AIP program emerged as a beacon of hope, offering a pathway to recruit skilled professionals where local talent pools faced limitations.

- Key learnings:**
- AIP offers strong employer supports through the process, throughout Atlantic Canada
 - There are many forms and administrative steps but it can be done
 - Creating a welcoming place to work is critical for retention

Jordan Remedios' Insights on Creating a Welcoming Workplace unpacked strategies to foster an environment that not only welcomes foreign workers but also cultivates an inclusive culture that embraces diversity. Attendees gained insights into overcoming biases, fostering cultural integration, and preparing a multicultural workplace, aligning their organizations with the changing dynamics of a global workforce.

- Key learnings:**
- The importance of embracing diversity, we can all learn from different perspectives, skills and ideas
 - Recognizing the positive impact of culture in the workplace, all workplaces have biases may they be conscious and unconscious
 - Cultural diversity fosters innovation & productivity and also needs strategies like mentorship and cultural exchanges to overcome integration challenges

TIME TO GET
SERIOUS
ABOUT HR!

absda

ATTRACT

RETAIN

ENGAGE





HR Insights – Mental health

Mental Health - Burn out in the workplace!

According to mental health statistics back in 2020, 1 out of 4 people suffer from mental health issues. Some data now speculates that post-pandemic the percentage is closer to 40% of the population is suffering from mental health issues.

We estimate that we have close to 18 000 employees in the building supply industry in Atlantic Canada which means we could have as high as 7200 employees suffering in silence.

Employees are struggling with stress, burnout and loneliness like never before. Our industry has been going 100 miles an hour for the past 3

years and operating with an understaffed crew.

Burnout is a stress-related mental health condition. According to a Ceridian Pulse of Talent report – 84% of surveyed Canadian workers have experience burnout, with 34% reporting high or extreme levels.

The top three catalysts of burnout among survey respondents were increased workloads, insufficient compensation and mental health challenges.

Of course, mental health affects men and women equally. The problem with men's mental health is that we think we're too macho to talk about it! The topic of mental health has long been seen as taboo.

In Canada, only 30% of people who use mental health service are men. Everyone has reasons

for seeking help, but the staggering number of men who seem to avoid it can be attributed to societal factors. Historically, men were expected to be seen as strong and able to handle anything. The notion of masculinity not being compatible with feelings and emotions causes some men to think they can't suffer from mental health issues. Instead, they take on a "tough it out" mentality and sweep their feelings under the rug.

Lately, ABSDA has been noticing some public social media posts from our Members talking about or supporting mental health! One example is the team seen in the picture from The Elmwood Group are combining their efforts to raise awareness of prostate cancer and men's mental health and suicide prevention. And congrats to the Natacha, the one woman in the group, for supporting her male co-workers and their ugly Movember mustaches! Most of the guys in the picture are sporting beards, only Richard has the "real" ugly Movember stache, he's a Bruins fan so that really explains it all doesn't it?!

Getting back to being serious here, congrats Team Elmwood on your fundraising and awareness efforts.

Whether you're concerned for yourself or some you love, it's essential to know the warning signs of mental health disorders. Here are some signs of mental health issues you can look for in your employees or loved ones:

- Changes in mood, including anger, sadness, or irritability.
- Unusual or out-of-character behavior
- Memory loss
- Withdrawal from their usual routine
- Increased dependence on drugs or alcohol
- Sudden weight gain or loss

Let's start paying attention to mental health issues but more importantly let's start talking about it!

ABSDA cares about all its members and employees and we're committed to creating awareness.

Expect to hear a lot more on this topic in the near future.

Let's support each other.



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2018

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81%

2019

247 locations

83%

2020

253 locations

2023

257 locations

84%

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Gala & Industry Awards - March 6th

The Debaters Live is coming to ABSDA Expo 2024! It's the conference version of the popular comedy format made famous on CBC Radio. Hosted by award-winning comedian, Steve Patterson, The Debaters Live features Canadian stand-up comedy stars going toe-to-toe on a debate topic that will be tailor-made for ABSDA! It's an interactive show where our live audience will vote to pick the winner! *This live production is not affiliated with CBC*

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ABSDA INDUSTRY AWARDS

Our Industry Awards are always a special part of our Gala night. Don't miss your opportunity to nominate someone great in our Industry. You can download the simple nomination form on our website at www.absda.ca/events

NETWORKING
EVENTS

Industry News

ABSDA Members were recently recognized at the Home Hardware 2023 Homecoming event and were recipients of a “My Home Achievement Award”. Congratulations to all winners as Atlantic Canada continues to shine bright in all banners across the board.

Allen’s Home Building Centre Recognized with Regional Award

Allen’s Home Building Centre Recognized with Regional Award
Allen’s Home Building Centre has been named Best Home Building Centre – Atlantic Region. This was one of eighteen awards handed out at Home Hardware’s 2023 Homecoming event in Toronto on September 13.

“We are honoured to be recognized with the Proud of My Home Achievement Award for Best Home Building Centre in Atlantic Canada,” said Donnie Woodworth, Manager at Allen’s Home Building Centre. “For almost 20 years, our store has provided best-in-class customer service to our community thanks to our knowledgeable, dedicated and friendly staff and the continued support of our Home family.”



Representatives from Allen’s Home Building Centre and Home Hardware Stores Limited at the Proud of My Home Achievement Awards.
Photo by Jason Gordon.

Pictou County Dealer-Owners Named Best Young Retailers in Atlantic Canada

Jim Proudfoot and Joe Proudfoot, brothers and Dealer-Owners of two Home Hardware Building Centre locations in Pictou County, have been named Best Young Retailer – Atlantic Region. This was one of eighteen awards handed out at Home Hardware’s 2023 Homecoming event in Toronto on September 13.

Dealer-Owners since last year, Jim and Joe credit the stores’ continued success to the time spent building and nurturing their teams at both locations. “We focus on being a good place to work and creating good jobs for people,” said Joe Proudfoot, Dealer-Owner of the Proudfoots Home Hardware Building Centres in Stellarton and Pictou. “In turn, our staff care about our company and take good care of our customers.”



Jim and Joe Proudfoot with representatives from Home Hardware Stores Limited at the Proud of My Home Achievement Awards.
Photo by Jason Gordon.

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WRLA Celebrates 30 Years

We would like to congratulate our Western Partner Association the WRLA on their upcoming 30th Anniversary of their trade show. Their milestone 2024 Building & Hardware Showcase will be in Winnipeg MB from January 17 to 19. Congrats again on 30 years and we wish you a successful event



Industry News (cont’d)

Wilson’s Home Hardware Wins Store of the Year

Congratulations to Wilson’s Home Hardware Building Centre in Nova Scotia’s Barrington Passage for being the recipient of the Walter J. Hachborn Store of the Year. The award was presented to Mike Wilson, Dealer-Owner, for upholding the values on which Home Hardware was co-founded by Walter J. Hachborn nearly 60 years ago-value, service, and dependability.
Congratulation to Mike and their entire Team!



Shediac Store Recognized as ‘Best Home Hardware’ in Atlantic Canada

Shediac Home Hardware has been named Best Home Hardware – Atlantic Region. This was one of eighteen awards handed out at Home Hardware’s 2023 Homecoming event in Toronto on September 13. “We are honoured to be recognized with the Proud of My Home Achievement Award for Best Home Hardware in Atlantic Canada,” said Eugene Brydges, Dealer-Owner at Shediac Home Hardware for eight years. “We pride ourselves on our friendly and resourceful customer service, so it is gratifying to receive this honour from our Home family.”



Representatives from Shediac Home Hardware and Home Hardware Stores Limited at the Proud of My Home Achievement Awards.
Photo by Jason Gordon.



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Industry News (cont'd)

TOOLWAY Open House

Congratulations to our Member TOOLWAY for hosting a great open house event in October. It was quite impressive to see that this company gives our dealer members access to more than 8000 products right here in Atlantic Canada. The distribution center is located in Dartmouth NS.



Taiga Celebrates 50 Years

Congratulations to our member Taiga on celebrating their 50th year in business! ABSDA was happy to be able to join the celebration at their Dartmouth branch. Congratulations to Mark Dill and the entire team on a job well done and thank you for being such a great Association supporter!

Outstanding Retailer of the Year Award

Congratulations to our Member Nova Scotia Building Supplies for winning the award for Best Building Supply Store under 15 000 square feet. The award was presented in Whistler BC at the Outstanding Retailer Awards which is always a prestigious part of the National Hardlines Conference. Congratulations again to our longtime Member Nova Scotia Building Supplies.



From left: Susan Albizre, JELD-WEN (award sponsor); Alison Briand, Nova Scotia Building Supplies; Andrew Mills, Nova Scotia Building Supplies; Adrienne Burgess, JELD-WEN (award sponsor)

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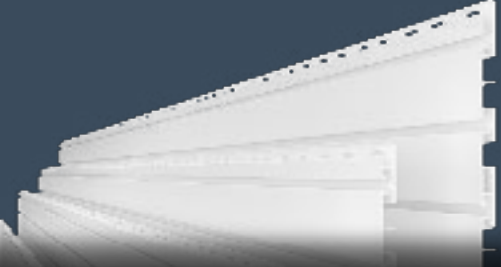
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