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Magazine

Magazine for WPA Members
May 2020

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North American Softwood Prices

Softwood prices listed as of April 20,
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new member companies.

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Joe Flores of Westrux

Joe Flores of Westrux International
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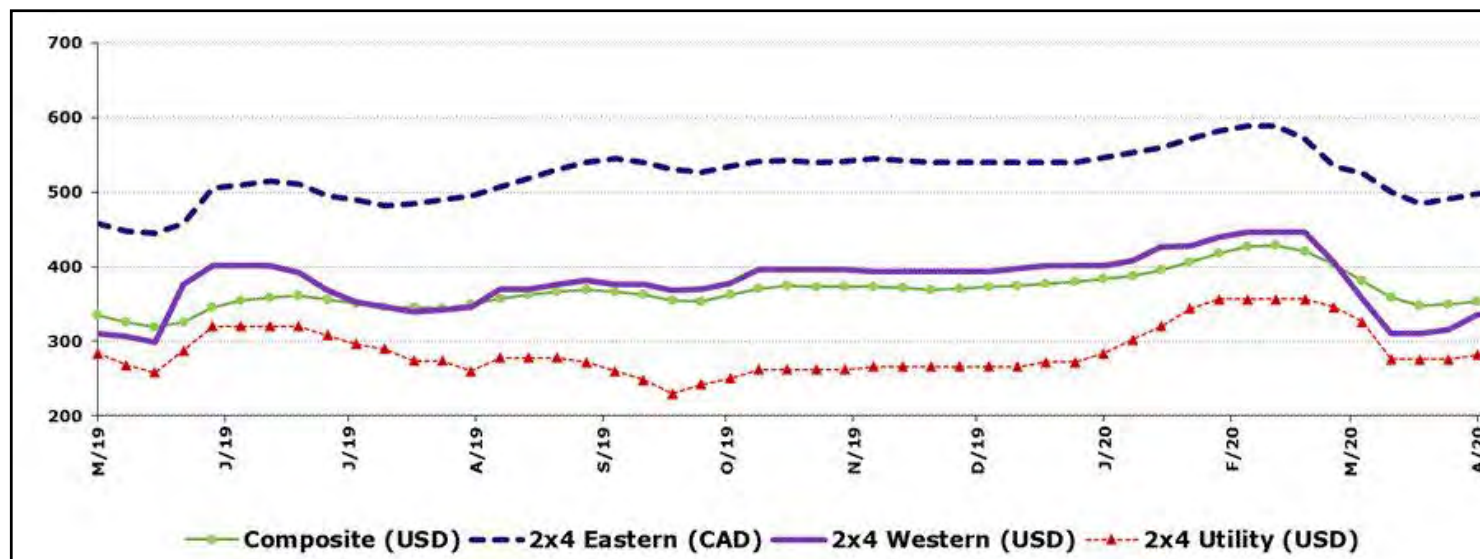
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North American Softwood Prices

Weekly softwood lumber prices to May 20, 2020 are shown below, sourced at <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests/industry/13309>.



WPA Welcomes New Members

The Western Pallet Association is pleased to introduce the following new members:

Joe Flores
Westrux. (New and used truck sales)
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Web: www.westrux.com
Email: jflores@westrux.com
Sponsor: Jason Saunders

Juan Torres
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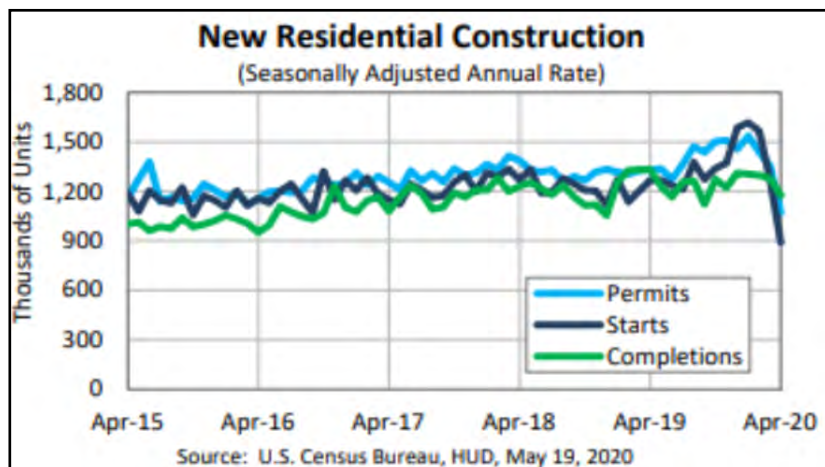


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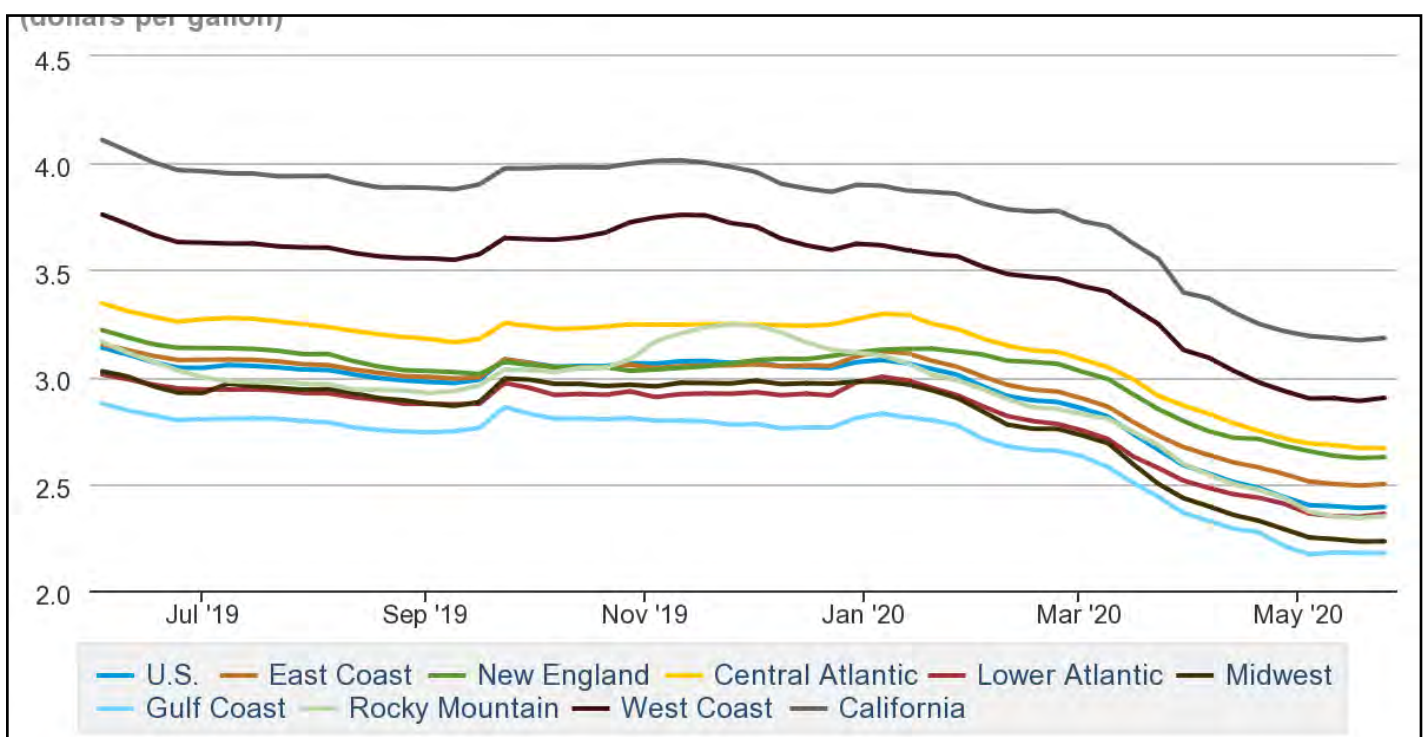
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Housing and Fuel Snapshot



Diesel Fuel: dollars per gallon. Source: <https://www.eia.gov/petroleum/gasdiesel/>



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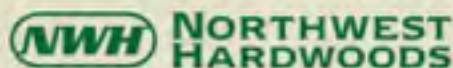
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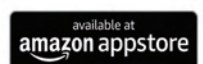
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Joe Flores of Westrux International Joins WPA

One of WPA's newest associate members is Joe Flores, a new and used truck sales professional with Westrux International. Joe is based at the company's Colton, California location. Other Westrux sites include Santa Fe Springs, Montebello, and Fontana, California. Westrux offers new and used truck sales, leasing/rental, and a state-of-the-art, fully equipped service department at all four locations.

Joe explained that he has established relationships with a few pallet companies, and was encouraged to join the Western Pallet Association. His goal is to attend the 2021 WPA Annual Meeting and continue to network with members. He aspires to be the trusted first point of contact for all things truck-related for WPA members.

Westrux, a family-owned business, strives to develop, nurture, and expand long-term mutually beneficial relationships with existing customers, future customers, suppliers, investors, and other firms. Joe explained that Westrux has also grown enduring relationships with members of other industry association groups, including scaffolding and movie production. He is hopeful of growing similar bonds within the WPA.

Westrux specializes in International trucks on the new side and also sells used



Peterbilts and Freightliners in addition to the International line. Its service department works on most all makes and models. One of the services that customers find attractive in maximizing their uptime is mobile servicing. Technicians can perform a service call on the weekend or whenever the customer is closed so that the truck is on duty when needed.

Joe welcomes new and used truck inquiries from pallet and wood products companies small and large alike.

To reach Joe, call him at 909.433.2821 or on his cell at 909.991.4538.



New WPA Member First Alliance Logistics Management Offers Preferred Supplier Program

- *The new Preferred Supplier Program from First Alliance offers an innovative and inexpensive avenue for warm sales leads through online advertising.*
- *This program should prove to be especially interesting as in-person sales have been impacted by COVID-19.*

First Alliance Logistics Management (FALM) recently introduced its new Preferred Supplier Program (PSP), which it believes will be a useful supplement to direct selling by pallet company salespeople. The focus of the PSP program is to generate relatively inexpensive new sales opportunities for member pallet companies. This outcome is achieved through an emphasis on online advertising programs. These target the local pallet market of the participating member as well as nationally through FALM's corporate campaign.

In conjunction with the PSP program, FALM has also become a new WPA member. While it is new to WPA, however, it has a considerable industry track record. The company also celebrated its 25th anniversary this year, having been formed in 1995 by a dozen leading pallet companies, including WPA-member Girard Wood Products.

"We probably should have joined WPA several years ago as more of our business began to stretch out west," commented Glenn Merritt, president and CEO. "I'm happy that we have now joined the group." Over the years, FALM's pallet brokerage

and management business has expanded to become more national in scope, including a strong presence in southern California and "several pockets" up the West Coast.

First Alliance has gained considerable experience in online sales. It operates a national online advertising program with a \$200,000 budget. According to Merritt, it generates around 40 requests for quotation monthly. To participate in the PSP program, members would pay \$1,000 annually, with a total money-back guarantee. That amount would be invested in local online advertising to support that member.

"The cost is minimal compared to common online advertising campaigns," Merritt elaborated. "A marketer will cost roughly \$20,000 annually plus another \$400 to \$1,000 monthly for advertising." For a \$1,000 annual fee, members receive the benefit of both national and local advertising programs. If participants do not make enough money to cover their PSP costs in the first year, they can ask for a refund or reinvest the amount into the program for a second year.

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While national program leads generally have a longer sales cycle - up to 13 weeks, Merritt anticipates that the local program will generate warm leads with a shorter turnaround - more like six weeks. "PSP opportunities are warm leads made up of small, medium and large opportunities," he said. "These are buyers seeking quotes most likely due to service failures, price increases, or quality issues. As a result, the cycle time is considerably shorter than prospecting cold leads."

Additionally, bid packages are thoroughly vetted by FALM staff before being sent to PSP members. "Leads come with specs, volume, accurate species information, and photos. FALM asks many of the upfront questions so that all the PSP participants have to do is bid." He said that junk leads are filtered by FALM and excluded.

PSP members have the option to bid on each lead relevant to their local market. FALM may at times also send the opportunity to non-member companies to ensure competitiveness, but members are always allowed to rebid if a non-member operation has the winning quotation. Another benefit, First Alliance always pays in standard 30-day net terms, so participants do not need to worry about

lengthy 45-60 day terms requested by some customers.

As a broker, FALM operates with a national network of about 225 companies. The goal of the PSP program is to shorten that list to between 100 to 115 select partners across the country. Merritt believes such a structure will be "more manageable," while generating warm, short sales cycle leads for program members. Merritt envisions the program becoming like a club. He anticipates members from various markets participating in scheduled calls and broadening their connections with pallet people in other regions.

This program is especially timely, given the disruptions to traditional selling resulting from COVID-19. "People add us as an extension of their sales and marketing teams," Merritt concluded. "Why not spend \$1,000 and buy yourself an extra 10 or 12 quotes a year. All you need to do is get one, maybe two, and you have easily covered your cost. And you can build off of that year after year."

To find out more about the fully guaranteed Preferred Supplier Program from First Alliance Logistics Management, call (888) 995-6318



Vecoplan Midwest Commits to Donate for COVID-19 Relief

WPA-member Vecoplan Midwest, LLC, a subsidiary of Vecoplan LLC, has established a program to help organizations that are handling the COVID-19 pandemic. The company is offering to donate 5% of the revenue from each order it receives through June 30, up to \$5,000 per order.

Customers who order and pay-in-full equipment from Vecoplan by June 30 may select the charity to receive the donation. The donation will be made in the customer's name or as an anonymous donor, whichever the customer prefers. If no charity is chosen, and due to the fluidity of issues caused by the pandemic, Vecoplan will select a charity on behalf the customer.

Vecoplan has remained open and operating during the pandemic shutdown

in order to support critical infrastructure workers in industries such as logistics, manufacturing, energy, and agriculture. The company implemented in March protocols for its employees and facilities including shelter-in-place and travel bans, regular workplace sanitization, prohibiting visitors, and disinfecting equipment before shipment.

Vecoplan Midwest, LLC is a subsidiary of North Carolina-based Vecoplan, LLC, both of which are part of Vecoplan AG located in Germany. The companies manufacture industrial and mobile shredding systems for size reduction of virtually any material, selling into plastics, wood, recycling, and waste markets. The Vecoplan Midwest office focuses on the wood and biomass business, and sells pelletizing equipment in addition to shredding systems.



Kamps Pallets Expands into Georgia with Key Atlanta Acquisitions

WPA-member Kamps Pallets has announced the acquisition of Green Trip Recycling, located in Atlanta, Georgia. This transaction marks the 26th physically owned or operated location nationally for the company. It is the first location for Kamps in the state of Georgia.

Green Trip Recycling has been in business since 2013. The company manufactures products that mirror the core competencies of Kamps. Products include reconditioned and remanufactured pallets, new custom pallets, and wooden crates. Green Trip

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Cont'd from Page 17

also has a grinder on-site to handle all wood waste generated out of the plant.

According to a release from Kamps, the acquisition checks off multiple strategic goals of the company, including the ability to further build upon the national success of its pallet division, expand into a thriving market, and provide direct support to existing customers in the area.

Green Trip Recycling's 40 employees, including owner and founder John Vander Wiele, will be staying on-board—with John joining the Kamps team as general manager. John has over 18 years of experience in the industry, and prior to Green Trip Recycling served as regional director for a national packaging provider. "We are looking forward to having his expertise and knowledge propel the Kamps Atlanta location into a bright future," the release continued.

"Green Trip Recycling in its seven-year history has a proven record to grow sales and provide sustainable profits while meeting and exceeding their customers' expectations," said Mitchell Kamps, Kamps Inc. president. "These are the standards we place upon ourselves and any business we partner with or acquire."

Along with the acquisition of Green Trip Recycling, Kamps also announced the acquisition of a book of business, along with other assets, in the Atlanta area from a large national broker in the industry. As a result of the transaction, 11 team members will be joining Kamps. After a short transitional period, the company intends to integrate this business and its employees into the newly acquired Green Trip Recycling location.



Lean Transformation Improves Efficiency of Virginia Tech Pallet and Container Testing Lab, Prepares Graduates for Industry



The William H. Sardo Jr. Pallet and Container Testing Laboratory is the most comprehensive pallet testing and research lab in the United States. Here, students can get real-world, hands-on experience in lean management techniques while preparing for careers dealing with packaging, pallets, and supply chain management. We recently

caught up with Dr. Laszlo Horvath, Director at Center for Packaging and Unit Load Design (CPULD), Virginia Tech, to discuss the laboratory's recent lean transformation.

"It is an interesting story," Horvath begins candidly. "University laboratories are not **Cont'd on Page 22**



Laszlo Horvath

Director at Center for Packaging and Unit Load Design, Virginia Tech
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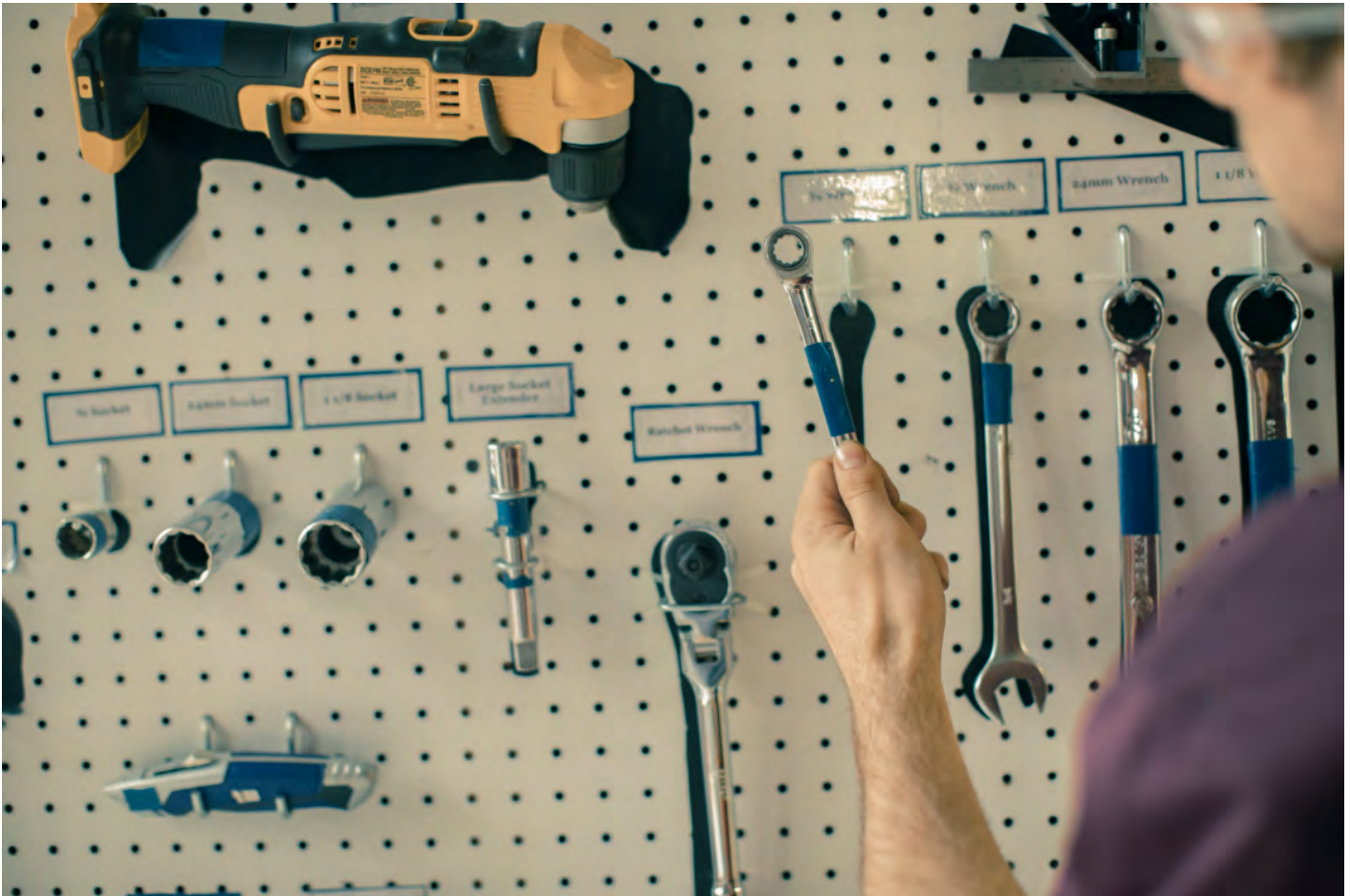
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known for efficiency. We do great work, but honestly, people go into the lab and start working on their projects in an ad hoc manner. It's not like an industrial process where everything is organized, with standard operating procedures."

When he took over as director, the lab had long thrived on the time-honored approach of native intelligence. Highly experienced lab managers knew precisely where everything was - like a veteran mechanic who knows the location of each tool in his hopelessly cluttered shop. For someone new entering the laboratory, however, finding things could be daunting. Horvath says that he was initially frustrated, which culminated in a new approach to organizing and managing the lab.

Things have changed for the better. "We moved a lot of equipment around to create manufacturing cells to support testing," he continues. "We created standardized operating procedures for all significant activities, including energy control procedures and safety procedures." New students now require seven hours of training before they can enter the lab.

The organization of the lab includes standard lean features such as color-coding. Tools and their corresponding locations on the wall pegboard are color-matched with shadow markings to facilitate return of equipment to the correct place. "We make every single process, every single part of the lab



visual," Horvath continues, "so we don't have drawers, for example, to hide things." Finding things is more manageable when everything is visible. CPULD utilizes kanban systems and kaizen rapid improvement events.

Another lean exercise involved utilizing digital data collection. Students now use iPads to collect data, which are synched to the server to eliminate data loss. CHEP, the global leader in pallet rental, was impressed to the extent that it replicated the data collection process for its innovation center in Orlando, Florida.

Training students in a lean mindset is critical. He notes that many companies fail - one study suggested that 80% of companies are unsuccessful in

completing a lean transformation. It can be challenging to sustain. For example, the managers leading the initiative may get promoted or leave, resulting in stalled momentum.

"Sometimes, you can see that the system is falling apart," Horvath observes. "There are companies that we used to highlight as lean examples, and we don't use them anymore because they are no longer lean."

Organizing the facility is only the first step. To sustain a lean culture, training and ongoing management are critical. "We train students," Horvath states. "We build this lean mentality in them, and we

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train for the culture." Students are exposed to lean for four years, so when they leave, it is part of their DNA. "When they go into a facility," he adds, "they need to have this type of structure."

Shortcomings in Horvath's educational journey have informed his approach. "I worked on industrial projects during my Ph. D. research, but I never gained management experience," he says. "I always felt that was a problem." At Virginia Tech, he wanted his students to gain management acumen.

Graduate students manage the day-to-day processes, while undergrads act as technicians in performing the testing projects. "The system works really well," he states. Involving the undergraduates in the lean program has proven to be highly successful. They love being able to "put their own touches" on the laboratory.

"When our graduates enter the workforce," Horvath states, "they don't just have extensive knowledge on packaging engineering and design processes." "With their lean training, they are ready to integrate into lean corporate

settings. Or if a lean culture isn't present, they start pushing for lean documentation. "It is quite unique for a university packaging program to focus on lean," he observes.

Horvath tells the story of one student who went to a cosmetics firm for a job interview. She said to the employer in a straightforward way that their laboratory had a "way to go" to be more organized. While the move might have backfired, it didn't. She was hired. He observes that companies have a feeling about whether or not their operations are at the desired level of performance. They are interested in hiring employees who can move them in the right direction.

"So that's what we want to achieve with the students," Horvath concludes. "We want them to gain experience. And, if we say that we are a state of the art level laboratory doing state of the art research, then we should look like one." Thanks to its lean transformation, the William H. Sardo Jr. Pallet and Container Testing Laboratory is precisely that.

To subscribe to the CPULD newsletter, click here. 

Marketing Focus

The Biggest Marketing Mistake B2B Companies Make in a Recession

by Hillary Femal, Principal, Freshwater Marketing. Hillary was most recently vice president of sales and marketing for 48Forty Solutions

Based on decades of research on business spend and performance before, during, and after past recessions, here's how to avoid making the biggest marketing mistake B2B companies can make during a recession and come out on top.

Don't make the mistake of arbitrarily slashing your marketing budget

As counter-intuitive as it sounds, this is not the time to slash your marketing budget. In study after study of firm performance during the past recessions, it's been well documented that cutting marketing spending only helps profitability in the very short term, while the damage is long-lasting.

It's easy to see why so many companies make this mistake: following a budget cut, a brand will continue to benefit from the marketing investment made over the previous few years. This mitigates short-term negative effects and leads to a dangerously misleading increase in short-term profitability. Eventually, of



course, periods of below-average marketing spend will show up in business results, and there's no quick fix for the damage done.

Gain market share by maintaining your marketing spend

While all their competitors are making the mistake of cutting marketing budgets, firms that maintain or increase their

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marketing during a recession can gain market share and improve the returns at a lower cost. How? When your competition cuts its spending, media companies, trade shows, and agencies feel the pinch like everyone else. It's often possible to negotiate discounts or lock in lower rates in exchange for a longer commitment, simply because so few of your competitors are willing to do so. And because your competitors have gone quiet, you can capture additional share of voice simply by maintaining your current spend.

...but if you must cut your marketing budget, be surgical and strategic

If you absolutely must cut marketing spending, try to maintain the frequency of your communications to maintain awareness of your company and products.

Do this by adjusting your marketing mix to emphasize low-cost, direct channels like email, and social media, which have

more immediate sales impact than

advertising.

Surgically trimming the budget is easier to do during a downturn than in prosperous times. Take advantage of this opportunity to objectively evaluate the performance of each of your marketing tactics and cut loose poor performers, even those "sacred cows". It's much easier to get buy-in for eliminating pet projects and vanity spend during times of economic pressure, and your program will emerge from the recession much better for it.

When faced with an economic downturn, smart B2B firms don't reduce their marketing presence, they use the situation to their advantage. The goal is to make data-driven, case-by-case recommendations about where to cut the budget, where to maintain, and where to increase it. By avoiding the biggest mistake, slashing your budget, you can emerge from a recession stronger and more profitable than before.



How to Connect With and Sell to Your Customers Virtually

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the urgency to replace face-to-face relationships with virtual selling. "Let's be clear," said Shawn Casemore of the Unstoppable Business Network. "You can shift to selling virtually without having to hire technology experts, buy expensive software or invest in expensive online advertising." Casemore provided a free webinar for CWPCA members earlier this May.

Casemore noted that if your customer communications focus on email, telephone and face-to-face meetings, this may be a bad time. Face-to-face meetings aren't possible. Furthermore, unless you know the client's cell number, you might have trouble connecting. Chances are, there is no one in the customer's office to pick up the phone. And then we are left with email. Very likely, he observed, your customers are buried in emails and are not responding in a timely way.

Using a social network such as LinkedIn or others, you can take your customer list, find them online and then ask them to link. With LinkedIn, once you find the customer profile page, you can look at the bottom to find out their interests and gain an understanding of where they spend their time on social media.

Once you have connected with customers,

the next step is to get their attention. By spending some time sharing content and interacting online with them, Casemore said, you can build relationships and create opportunities to sell.

The next step in the process is understanding how to flip your in-person pitch to a virtual sale. The process involves breaking down the in-person sales cycle into steps with an eye to how in-person interactions can be replaced with virtual ones.

Casemore emphasized that it is possible to speed up your virtual sales cycle and provide better consistency through automated processes. When you have multiple salespeople, an inconsistent sales approach can be a concern. "When you use automation and you sell virtually, or at least you start the sales process, virtually, what you're doing is creating consistency, because you're using tools, and you're writing the scripts."

Casemore mentioned some tools that may be useful for online selling. One is the website chatbot, which has been proven to be an effective tool in generating leads, and it is typically

Cont'd on Page 28

inexpensive to add to your website. He cited Tidio (www.tidio.com) as a free

Continued from Page 27

inexpensive to add to your website. He cited Tidio (www.tidio.com) as a free chatbot to consider. Working with one client, they hired an entry-level person, provided limited training, and supported her with appropriate scripts to address customer queries. Another tool he mentioned was Calendly, a free software product for meeting scheduling. Using Calendly (www.calendly.com) can help eliminate

all of the back and forth emails that can be generated in trying to agree on a meeting time. Casemore described it as a great tool you can add to your email signature to allow people to easily schedule a meeting.

To find out more about how Shawn Casemore and his F.A.S.T. virtual sales system, visit <https://theuenetwork.com/>



Ready for Normal 2.0? Recovery Checklist in 3 Steps

*By Per Ohstrom, fractional Chief Marketing Officer with **Chief Outsiders***

As companies emerge from the Covid-19 lockdown into a new business reality, the winners will be those who stay focused on what the market needs.

We know the recession will reduce sales opportunities in many sectors, but there are bright spots. Sales in the grocery supply chain are up, as people have been cooking more at home instead of eating out. At the same time, there are legitimate fears around how the coronavirus spreads, and people must be kept informed about the safety of pallets and reusable containers for supermarkets.

Winning companies need to play to their core strengths, be prepared to pivot to exploit competitor weaknesses, and take advantage of new white spaces as customers go out of business or their needs change. This sounds like a lot, but here is a checklist that helps the navigation. It starts with activities to gain insights, formulate a strategy, and then a sure-fire plan for executing.

For this 3 Step strategy review to have good results, the CEO or leader of the business should work together with all key functions like Sales, Marketing, Operations, R&D, and Finance. Let's look at the steps one by one.

Insight

Rather than just tweaking our current strategy, we need to take a look at the marketplace, and how it is changing. To gather insights we need to:

- talk to customers to get an accurate picture of what they need, how we can help them make money or save on costs.
- watch our competitors so as to gain a good idea of what they are up to.
- talk to our company employees, who have been in the thick of the crisis dealing with customers, suppliers, and channel partners. They know our ability to respond to changing customer requirements
- keep a wary eye on the economic drivers for our business and our customers' businesses.
- stay up to speed on government actions, both those that slow us down and those that help us muddle through.

Strategy

Putting our market insights to work, we can formulate a new or updated strategy that fits the new reality. We need to:

- revisit markets and market segments we serve, changing priority and rethinking ones that no longer make sense.
- look at our offerings, focus on the promising ones, and let go of the others.
- overhaul positioning and messaging of both our company and our offerings.

Are we talking to customers' unmet needs, the way they are in the COVID-19 era?

- consider disruptive moves that could be major game-changers for our business.

Execution

With a Strategy built on solid Insights, the next step is to plan how to get things done. We need to make sure the right resources and go-to-market are in place.

- Do we have the resources needed to carry out the strategy?
- Marketing and Sales need to collaborate on new tactics to reach target buyers and influencers.
- Finally, we know what gets measured gets done, so we put in place metrics for everyone

From a process standpoint, it is a good idea to set aside a day with no other engagements for the exec team to work on this 3 Step checklist. Many companies I work with use an external facilitator to challenge the thinking, keep the meeting on track, take notes, and bring in new perspectives in ideation and brainstorming.

For the results of a strategy review to be good, it is important that discussions are candid and honest, and action items are realistic. This demands a leader that is honest and not afraid of receiving feedback. Are you ready for recovery?



Social Media Roundup

What's new in social? Click on images to check.

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company's social
post, email to
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Andrea Engels • 1st

Head of Public Relations & Marketing bei EPAL

4h • 🌐

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5



Brent McClendon, CAE, MBA • 1st

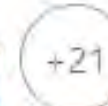
President/CEO at National Wooden Pallet and Container Association (NWPCA)

1d • 🌐

I hit 3,000 connections on LinkedIn today. I've been incredibly fortunate over my 30 years in the forest sector to build amazing relationships and get to know so many great people and inspiring leaders. Thank you for all you've shared with me over the years. Also... for those of you on Twitter, if you'd like to see even more posts on #forestry, #pallets, #associations and yes, #ncstate, give me a follow and I'll follow back (@brentjmcclendon). #forestproud

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Reactions



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Congrats on the addition [Hay Creek Pallet | Hay Creek Companies](#) - it is looking great!



Hay Creek Pallet | Hay Creek Companies

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2d • 🌐

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We have been working on an addition at our main plant! We are installing a new RotoChopper electric grinder this week, which means we will be able to grind pallets at our main location. This will save on handling, transportation, and mess out at our Hay Creek Road location (where we will continue to grind new wood for landscape mulch).



👍 4



John Dye

Friend

...

May 9 • 🧑 • John Dye is a winner in this year's CEO Today magazine United Kingdom Awards 2020 for his work as President of TIMCON....

[linkedin.com](#)

Timber Packaging and Pallet Confederation TIMCON
on LinkedIn: [#ceo](#) [#timber](#) [#pallet](#) | 39 comments



Chaille Brindley, Fred Vrugteveen and 84 others 120 Comments

The Membership Drive Is On!

It's time to renew your WPA membership for 2020-2021. Watch your mail for an exciting updates about the Association and your invoice. You can renew by sending the invoice back by mail or email or even faster - renew online!

WPA welcomed 39 new members last year! This year's membership drive is now underway, and as always, the competition will be intense.

In addition to valuable cash prizes, the winner now also receives the membership plaque, presented at the Annual Meeting. With the highly successful 2020 Annual Meeting now in the books, it is time to work toward 2021. (Be sure to save the date - January 15-19, 2021)

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Upcoming Events

6/12/2020 - 6/13/2020 CWPCA Annual Meeting, Halifax, Nova Scotia
www.canadianpallets.com **As of March 30, this meeting has been postponed.**

10/9/2020 - 10/10/2020 EXPO Richmond, Richmond, Virginia
<https://www.exporichmond.com/>

11/8/2020 - 11/11/2020 PACK EXPO Show, Chicago, Illinois
www.packexpointernational.com

1/15/2021 - 1/19/2021 WPA Annual Meeting, Rancho Mirage, California
www.westernpallet.org

3/3/2021 - 3/5/2021, NWPCA Annual Leadership Conference & Expo, Orlando, Florida
www.palletcentral.com

In case you missed them...

(Click on back issues to read or download)

