

STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE

September/October 2002

BCMC 2002

www.bcmshow.com

BCMC Educational Sessions: Get on the Right Track for Building a New Tomorrow by BCMC Staff

There is a Chinese proverb that warns: "Learning is like rowing upstream; not to advance is to drop back." The inherent truth of this statement is what drives the need for continuing education—both in business and in life. And it is this need that motivates the BCMC Committee to provide quality educational programs each year as a vital part of the show. As always, the primary mission of BCMC is to provide a diverse forum for component manufacturers to learn about state-of-the-art techniques that will make their businesses more successful. Each year the BCMC Programs Sub-Committee reflects on participant feedback and determines the best way to improve our educational programs so that we meet the needs of all attendees.

The morning breakout sessions boast the biggest change for this year's show. In an effort to better meet the needs of all component manufacturers, the BCMC Committee is excited to offer "Total Component Manufacturing Management—How to Analyze and Improve Your Bottom Line." Instead of numerous sessions on numerous topics, this concept is made up of four different educational tracks that focus on several of the key management tasks that are faced every day in a component manufacturing operation. The four tracks (each of which will be broken down into three different sessions) will be moderated and/or presented by experienced component manufacturers that have a proven track record of tackling the topics outlined in the summaries below. Each of the three sessions will include a 45-minute presentation and a 30-minute question and answer discussion, and each will address issues faced by all component manufacturers—from small to large and everything in between.

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT TRACK

The first session of the Production Management Track, moderated by Don Groom of Stark Truss Company, focuses on production efficiencies. A qualified panel of presenters will grapple with issues surrounding scheduling, batching, tracking production, and determining the cost benefit and performance of various types of equipment. Plus, they will consider all that's involved in the expansion of a small truss plant from a production perspective. The second session on hiring and retaining production employees will look at staffing a truss plant, including suggested techniques for interviewing and recruiting potential employees. The session will also cover WTCA's Wage and Benefit Survey and the challenge of retaining production employees. Finally, session three of this track is entitled "Managing the Small Things" and covers maintenance and shipping management, buying parts, owning trucks versus out-sourcing, buying new versus old equipment, and the storage and delivery process.

SALES MANAGEMENT TRACK

Moderated by Ben Hershey of Imperial Group, the sales management track is comprised of three sessions that analyze the issues that may arise in a component manufacturer's day-to-day relationships with customers. Session one, "Becoming My Value-Added Supplier," looks at the challenges builders face and how truss manufacturers can help, thereby developing long-term relationships and building loyalty. Session two focuses on determining the challenges and defining solutions for overall market relationships with framers, builders, specifiers, building officials and fire officials. Session three narrows the focus of relationship management specifically to customer relationships, with a look at both one- and two-step distribution as well as some thoughts on where the market is headed.

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TRACK

"Maximizing Design Time While Minimizing Mistakes," the first session in this technical management track moderated by Barry Dixon of True Truss, will explore ways to ensure that your technicians are doing what they are trained to do, as well as ideas for managing backlogs and internal relationships between the technical and production departments. The second session, "Design to Increase Profits," delves into optimization, expected output times for design personnel, cost effective design, and quality control in the technical department. The third session ("Retain Technicians Through Training") deals with recruiting technicians, WTCA's Truss Technician Training™ (TTT) online, plate company training, in-house programs, out-sourcing, and much more.

RISK MANAGEMENT & INSURANCE TRACK

Moderated by Steve Yoder of Stark Truss Company, the three sessions of this track break down the responsibilities of component manufacturers as they relate to risk management and insurance. Some of the questions that the panel of presenters for this track will cover include:

- What should the component manufacturer's responsibility in the construction process be?
- How do you handle a builder's request for indemnification?
- Why are my insurance costs rising so dramatically despite a relatively clean track record? (An insurance representative will be on hand to help interpret this issue.)
- How far should we go in the area of engineering responsibilities and where should we draw the line?
- How much information should we provide for contractors for proper erection and bracing of the truss systems?
- How do we insure we are building a quality truss?

As you can see, the goal of these educational tracks—created by component manufacturers, specifically for component manufacturers—is to foster in-depth discussion on key industry issues and really learn from the process. The BCMC Committee suggests that you consider sending at least one person from your company to each of the four tracks to fully maximize the benefit of this unique educational opportunity. Again, each track will cover the topic from the perspective of small, medium and large manufacturing operations, so there will be valuable information for

everyone in addition to the opportunity to learn from one another.

As you prepare to attend BCMC 2002, be sure to ask yourself, "Is this training something my company could afford to pull together all by itself? And if I had to pay to send my employees to get trained on these topics, would it cost me less than attending BCMC?" The answer will likely be a resounding no to both, as it is only when an industry comes together for an event like BCMC and draws on the wealth of experience and perspectives it possesses that this amount of information can be efficiently compiled, disseminated and built upon. British academic Sir Moser Claus made an observation that is entirely applicable to BCMC and the theme of "Building a New Tomorrow." He said, quite simply, "Education costs money, but then so does ignorance."

We look forward to seeing you in the classroom that is BCMC 2002!

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