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Editor's Message

Market Your Company as THE Solution

by Barry Dixon

Let's give a warm welcome to the new president of WTCA...Barry Dixon!

What an exciting time to become president of WTCA! Not only have we had a great year—a special thank you to outgoing President Don Groom for his dedication and leadership in helping advance the industry—but this is truly an exciting time for component manufacturers. Indications that the market is cooling down may temper some people's enthusiasm, but truth be told, I see this as an amazing opportunity for our industry. With the challenges of the current marketplace and all of the new and useful programs WTCA is creating, including the new testing facility, the opportunities for advancing the structural building components industry are infinite.

Let me introduce myself. I started in the industry in 1984, when my father opened his first truss plant in Jacksonville, FL. A homebuilder and developer, he got into the truss business to meet his needs for structural building components. Through my high school and college years, I worked as a general laborer, truss builder and finally as a saw operator when a third shift was added to meet demand. Upon graduation from Florida State University in 1989, my father asked me to help grow our company by developing a sales and marketing strategy. Seventeen years, two truss manufacturing facilities, one wall panel facility, and a whole house design firm later, you could say I'm pretty passionate about this industry.

I believe, together, we can improve the overall marketplace by making our customers, the builders, more effective, which will in turn allow us to surge into a new era of manufacturing success.

My first years in the industry remind me of today's market conditions in a number of ways, particularly in terms of the lack of new home starts. Back then, manufacturers really had to find a way to differentiate their companies in order to make sales. During the strong economic growth of the last decade, I believe our industry became a little lax in finding new ways to market ourselves. When demand is high, we can easily fall into the role of order takers, but that carries the serious consequence of passing responsibility for advancing the industry onto either our suppliers or customers.

But there is good news as I see it. We have an opportunity to change all of that and capture more market share than ever. How can we do it? We as an industry can become the leader in developing new manufacturing processes—we can push our own companies, suppliers and competitors to new heights by creating better—more efficient and economical—application solutions. Our efforts in this area will have a big impact on advancing the structural building components industry.

Now when I talk about marketing, I'm not suggesting the conventional advertising approach you see on TV, but rather a more comprehensive approach by branding your company as "The Solution" for ALL of your customers' needs. It's simple yet entirely comprehensive. Many of us no longer only manufacture single components. We have added wall panels, engineered wood products, steel trusses and

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at a glance

- ❑ Indications that the market is cooling down may temper some people's enthusiasm, but I see it as an amazing opportunity for our industry.
- ❑ During the strong economic growth of the last decade, I believe our industry has forgotten to find new ways to market ourselves.
- ❑ To market our industry, the value we provide as manufacturers needs to be understood and effectively communicated to the customer.
- ❑ Use WTCA's work in creating a support system for component manufacturers to convert it into a unique approach to marketing your company to builders.

Editor's Message

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turnkey labor, as well as engineering design services—or we have plans to add these products and services to our business offerings in the future. Through our technical advancements, we are not simply manufacturers but innovators that have streamlined the ordering, permitting and construction process. We have become the technical framing solution for our customers. We are their most valuable resource in the construction industry, and it's time we let them know it.

To market our industry, the value we provide as manufacturers needs to be understood, and that story needs to be effectively communicated to the customer. Another key to advancing our industry is working with architects, engineers and building officials, to help streamline the front end of the construction process and be able to value-engineer structures. Together, we can create a more cost effective solution for the builder, when compared to the typical process of today.

Understand that in becoming the builder's "solution," profits should rise but a manufacturer's risks and liabilities can increase sharply. We must understand these risks in order for the industry to continue its success. The risks and liabilities of providing our products and services must be identified and addressed through comprehensive training and education.

The WTCA Marketing Committee recently developed a plan that can help all component manufacturers prepare for these challenges. Known as SCORE Certification (Structural Component Operations Reaching for Excellence), this new program helps manufacturers market and brand their company by showing how they use WTCA products and services to educate their workforce and market, manage risk and stay current on industry advancements. The program helps companies define themselves as industry leaders who are quality conscious, while also defining their unique brand in the market. Turn to the **WTCA Update** on page 38 for more details about SCORE.

With the help of new programs and a mindset toward growth into the next decade, I believe we can vault the industry to greater market penetration in everything related to the application of component technology. If we accomplish this, we will enjoy even more exponential growth than we have seen in the past. I believe, together, we can improve the overall marketplace by making our customers, the builders, more effective, which will in turn allow us to surge into a new era of manufacturing success. That's pretty powerful stuff!

Throughout the next year, I'm looking forward to seeing our industry meet challenging market conditions head on. The innovations our industry creates will result in more market share for our companies, and I am proud to be a part of that. **SBC**

SBC Magazine encourages the participation of its readers in developing content for future issues. Do you have an article idea for a future issue or a topic that you would like to see covered? Email your thoughts and ideas to editor@sbcmag.info.

STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS™

THE FUTURE OF FRAMING

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The mission of *Structural Building Components Magazine (SBC)* is to increase the knowledge of and to promote the common interests of those engaged in manufacturing and distributing structural building components. Further, *SBC* strives to ensure growth, continuity and increased professionalism in our industry, and to be the information conduit by staying abreast of leading-edge issues. *SBC's* editorial focus is geared toward the entire structural building component industry, which includes the membership of WTCA – Representing the Structural Building Components Industry. The opinions expressed in *SBC* are those of the authors and those quoted, and are not necessarily the opinions of Truss Publications or WTCA.

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"MiTek is very pleased to have announced the purchase of Robbins Engineering this summer. Robbins will continue to operate as a separate, independent company, but will offer MiTek's complementary product and services to its customers.

In addition, Robbins Engineering will continue to maintain its brand, software, and engineering support services. The Robbins organization will stay in place providing ongoing support for its customers, and the Robbins sales force will provide expanded market exposure for MiTek component manufacturing and material handling equipment in the United States."

Gene Toombs,
Chairman and CEO
MiTek, Inc.

Gene Toombs provided a warm welcome to customers at the Robbins booth at BCMC and assured them of MiTek's continuing support of the entire suite of Robbins software products.



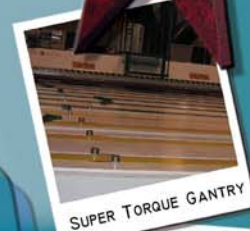
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