

# STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE (FORMERLY WOODWORDS)

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## President's Message

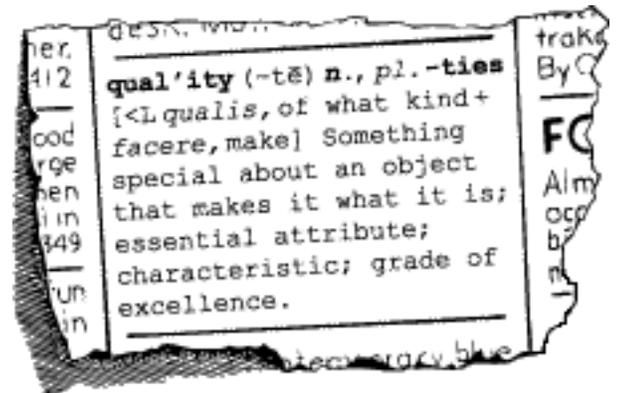


ROGER J. GIBBS

### "Quality in the Big Picture" by Roger J. Gibbs

First, I would like to thank Richard Brown for his leadership as president of the WTCA in 1999. Richard focused on issues that are healthy for the component industry and for manufacturers of these components, both small and large, to think about as we move our industry forward into the next millennium. Congratulations, Richard, on a successful year as WTCA president.

**Quality**—what an interesting word. What does quality mean to you? Does quality in the wood truss industry mean tight joints, properly placed and seated plates or a square truss?



In this issue, you will read about many aspects of quality. One such program is *WTCA QC*. The *WTCA QC* program is a measurable and justifiable program based on the TPI created quality standard, ANSI/TPI 1 Chapter 4, which focuses on quality from a TPI engineer's perspective. It is also a teaching tool for your employees. When you embrace this program and implement it in your facility, you will then meet the minimum prescribed industry QC standard set forward by TPI. The TPI approach to quality will not differentiate between the quality of products produced by you or by me.

The majority of people with whom you discuss quality will tell you their product is of the highest excellence. No doubt, but it could be a matter of opinion. I have been through many truss plants where they say they build quality trusses, but found unacceptable gaps at joints, metal connector plates I could slide a quarter under, tooth rollover and excessive wane at joints. Their definition of quality and mine were different.

Why is a quality control program important to me? I was once asked at a deposition to produce our quality control documentation on a set of floor trusses we manufactured. I showed them the engineered drawing and cutting list for that job because that was all the paperwork we

produced. The plaintiff's attorney questioned me on why we didn't have quality control procedures similar to the steel bar joist industry or precast industry. This matter opened up my eyes and made our company change procedures. (By the way, we did win the case but we had to spend some significant dollars on engineering witnesses.)

Quality goes beyond how we manufacture and produce our product, how good the lumber looks, how the plates are positioned, etc. Quality is a picture of your business and business philosophy.

Quality is a part of the personnel and image of your company. It is found in the people of your organization who take pride in what they produce and their ability to find ways to increase efficiency.

Quality is found in your sales staff—in their communication with customers and staff, in their ability to make sure orders are handled in a timely fashion and in their knowledge of your product lines to meet the customers' needs. Quality is found in your customer service staff—in their ability to give the customer correct information and to do so in a way that exudes a warm, capable feeling that makes your customers especially comfortable with the customer service they are receiving from your company. Quality is found in your delivery staff, dispatch and drivers—in their ability to meet delivery dates, communicate with customers, get the product where the customer wants it and portray a superior image of the company to the installers of the trusses. Your staff can be the heart and soul of the quality and image I am referring to.

Quality is also related to the training of all personnel. The technical department is trained in all aspects of the business it is required to understand so your customers are comfortable with the information generated by that department. But aspiring toward quality as a way of life doesn't stop there. Quality really resides in how you teach your sales staff to sell, how you educate design staff, how you develop effective communication skills in your customer service department and how you train qualified people to cut and assemble your product—these are the basics for establishing quality in your company.

Your company's image is also a part of quality. I may disagree with people on this, but as a customer, I relate to how the company's vehicles (both delivery and sales) look, as well as the cleanliness of the shop and yard. If the company makes the effort to keep its vehicles clean, trailers painted and shop floors swept, then I feel it also takes pride in the product it produces. On the other hand, if I see an unwashed truck with oil leaking from the axle and bald tires or a trailer that is a metal rust tank, then I presume the company doesn't care too much about how the product is produced.

In closing, quality is about a lot more than just building a good truss. Quality is, from start to finish, the service a company provides from the time an order is placed to the time the product is delivered with the goal that the customer is 100% satisfied.

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