2019 REPORT

Do it Best Corp.



FIRST CHOICE. BEST CHOICE. Building the best customer experience.









If you want to stand out from the crowd in today's competitive marketplace, delivering a superior customer experience is an absolute necessity. This year's report features success stories from a diverse group of member-owners who teamed with Do it Best to create that experience. You will discover how Do it Best provides members with the resources, programs, and advice they need to establish their business as the first and best choice for every customer they serve.





PRESIDENT'S LETTER



You have heard it before — Do it Best is committed to being your first and best choice.

It's a continual process of asking the right questions, formulating the right answers, taking the right steps, and making those answers a reality. In 2019, we took major steps forward in that process.

We invested in enhancements for transportation management, order management, and product information technology, cutting millions of miles out of our distribution routes, improving forecasting accuracy, and optimizing our replenishment systems.

Warehouses and equipment were added or upgraded to fortify our supply chain, and we began the work on our warehouse management system to keep it all running smoothly.

Finally, Do it Best recruited additional proven performers to boost the horsepower of our team in order to add greater value to the member relationship, while growing sales and expanding new member business.

Our newly strengthened infrastructure gives Do it Best the momentum to enter a new business year with great confidence, empowering us to direct our focus and resources to finding new answers including helping members ensure that the Do it Best experience consistently meets the expectations and demands of today's well-informed, highly connected customer base. Today, a superior customer experience requires so much more than an inviting storefront, well-stocked shelves, and a friendly, attentive staff. It requires meeting customers where they are, whenever they're ready to shop, with exactly what they need. It means building strong community relationships and differentiating yourself from other local and national options.

In this edition of the Do it Best report, we'll introduce you to member-owners who are successfully growing their businesses through superior customer experiences. From unique store environments and product mixes to marketing and merchandising strategies, they will share their winning formulas for growth, and how Do it Best provides them the independence and support they need to help them grow. I am confident you will be inspired to perfect your own customer experience. I invite you to take full advantage of every opportunity Do it Best has to offer. Join us at the Do it Best markets. Talk regularly with your territory sales manager. Reach out to fellow members. Our peers, and our competition, are watching—let's make sure they all know without a doubt that Do it Best is the first and best choice in the home improvement industry.

DAN STARR, PRESIDENT & CEO



2019 DO IT BEST REPORT

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



As chairman of the Do it Best board of directors, I have the opportunity to meet member-owners of all types, from large, multi-location businesses to third-generation neighborhood hardware stores. With every encounter, I recognize three traits that every Do it Best member seems to share: an entrepreneurial spirit, clear business savvy, and a deep knowledge of our industry.

In my opinion, these traits are our most valuable assets. After all, who understands the unique needs of customers in their community better than the member who serves them on a daily basis? That's why Do it Best is committed to giving each member the freedom to choose the programs, products, and services that will work best for their unique customers and markets.

It's a commitment you can see in the investments Do it Best made in 2019. Enhanced technology. Expanded warehouse and transportation capacity. Intensified talent recruitment. In the short term, it's easy for these investments to be a distraction from the solid gains and healthy rebate we achieved in 2019, in spite of the short recession. But, because each of us who sits on the board of directors is a member-owner ourselves, we recognized that we were making investments to protect and increase our ability to choose how to grow our businesses on our own terms.

This report is a celebration of our freedom as Do it Best members. You will hear from fellow members who are saying, "Here is what I tried, and it worked for me." As you read through this report, take a moment to notice the incredible flexibility we have to leverage the entrepreneurial spirit, business savvy, and industry knowledge we all share as Do it Best members.

BRAD McDANIEL, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD McDANIEL'S DO IT CENTER[®], SNOHOMISH, WASHINGTON

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

BUILDING A CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE WITH A DISTINCTLY HOMETOWN TOUCH.

As a local business, you have something the big box stores don't—you're *local*. You have first-hand knowledge of your community's unique personality and distinct needs. As a Do it Best member-owner, you also have the freedom to choose the programs, products, and services to deliver exactly what your customers need, when and where they need them. FRANK HERRERA | FISCHERS DO IT BEST[®] HARDWARE

TOOLS



OUTDOOR LIVING

NE RECORDIL ALINEING

La Porte, Texas, is a no-nonsense, blue-collar community in the middle of a bustling industrial center. For the busy people in this town, convenience is king — and that's exactly what Frank Herrera gives them.

Frank is the general manager of Fischers Do it Best Hardware, a three-location business that serves communities from Houston to the Gulf Coast. For more than 20 years, he has worked with his Do it Best co-op team to achieve a have-it-all shopping experience tailored to the unique demands of his customers.

"Do it Best allows us to be flexible. Not everyone out there in the industry will allow you to be as flexible with your inventory," Frank says. "Do it Best makes recommendations but lets us decide what we bring into our stores—it really is our store."

LA PORTE, TEXAS

Fischers' Baytown location is a perfect example. The original store enjoyed a reputation as the community's go-to hardware resource, but the 6,500-square-foot leased building simply wasn't big enough for Frank's have-it-all philosophy.

FISCHERS DO IT BEST HARDWARE HAS ENJOYED A 30% INCREASE IN TOTAL RETAIL SALES.

"When you're a smaller store, every department is restricted. Expanding one product offering forced us to remove another product that might have sold well but was simply less popular. Typically, in a larger store you could keep both," Frank explains. "We resorted to hanging products from the ceiling, but we still couldn't provide all the products customers were asking for because we simply didn't have the room for them."

Frank knew that the lack of space was hurting his business' potential. "When you're growing, eventually you're going to hit a wall—and if you're not moving forward, you're moving backward," he says. "We were falling behind."

The ideal opportunity presented itself when a 12,000-square-foot building became available just five blocks from their current location. Frank acquired it immediately and got to work. With guidance from the Retail Performance team, Frank was able to quickly and efficiently establish the floor plan and design for his new location. "They are always a great help," he says. "This wasn't my first store improvement project, but there are always things you forget. Do it Best was there to make sure no detail was overlooked."

Staying true to his philosophy, Frank worked closely with Do it Best to stock the new space. He started with a complete inventory of the products offered at the original store, including core categories like plumbing, electrical, hardware, and paint, as well as power tools and accessories.

The additional space gave him the opportunity to become one of the few businesses in the area to offer popular brands like STIHL[®] outdoor power equipment, Traeger[®] grills, and YETI[®] coolers. "You can't sell a Traeger in its box," states Frank. "People want to touch, feel, open, ask questions—and now we have the floor space to let them do that."

Finally, he filled exclusive niches in the local market by adding outdoor living, lawn and garden, and an RV parts department. The outdoor living area was an immediate success, selling many statues, fountains, and outdoor décor. RV parts also do a brisk business. What started as four bins has grown to two fully stocked aisles of product.





But that didn't mean he sacrificed a shopper-friendly atmosphere. "We don't want our customers inconvenienced in any way," notes Frank. "We like everything to flow smoothly—even if there wasn't an associate in the store, you could still find what you needed." He also located the service desk at the center of the store so that every department is just steps away from help.

Customer reaction to the new layout has been more than enthusiastic. Year to date, Fischers Do it Best Hardware has enjoyed a 30% increase in total retail sales. This result has Frank looking for the next opportunity. "If we can find the right spot, we will definitely add at least one or two more locations," he says.

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As an energetic entrepreneur, Aaron Diaz is constantly looking for the next untapped

opportunity. He already runs a successful printing and signage business, as well as Barnichol Hardware, a thriving Do it Best store in Boca Grande. So it's no surprise that the local True Value store caught his attention long before it was available for sale.

The more than 60-year-old store was in a prime location, and while it held its own, Aaron knew it could do much better. So when he got the opportunity to acquire it in 2016, he grabbed it.

ENGLEWOOD, FLORIDA

The store turned out to be a diamond in the rough. The existing staff was knowledgeable, experienced, and good with customers. "Our team was glad to see someone putting money into the business," says Aaron. With their help, the store was virtually self-sustaining, leaving Aaron free to work on the business, not in it.

Aaron and the Do it Best team set to work rebranding his new store with his own personal stamp. They completely reworked the 20,000-square-foot interior of the store, utilizing previously empty spaces and improving traffic flow. They also assembled more comprehensive assortments, bringing in products like Pratt & Lambert® paints and Milwaukee Tools[®].

Next, Aaron turned his attention to his seaside community's large seasonal tourist population. He expanded the marine department, adding more than 300 linear feet of displays, along with a brand new bait and tackle section. Through his other store, Barnichol Hardware, Aaron was already known as one of Florida's largest YETI[®] dealers, so adding those products to the mix was an obvious choice. He even installed a Hallmark[®] store to complement the small gift department that he carried over from the old business.

Finally, Aaron freshened the look of the store, introducing lighter, beach-friendly colors to the interior and signage. "We just tried to lighten up the place. It was dark and dingy," he recalls. "I think just by doing that, our staff was happier, and it put an immediate buzz in town."

I COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT DO IT BEST. THEY'VE MANAGED PROJECTS LIKE MINE MANY TIMES, SO I REALLY RELIED ON THEM FOR GUIDANCE AND **KNOWLEDGE THROUGHOUT THE** ENTIRE PROCESS TO IMPROVE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE.

Aaron is quick to point out that he didn't accomplish this on his own. "I couldn't have done it without Do it Best," he says. "They've managed projects like mine many times, so I really relied on them for guidance and knowledge throughout the entire process to improve the customer experience."

Now, Gulf Coast Hardware is considered one of the most attractive stores in Florida and has even helped him become well known in the community. "When I'm out at dinner, people will go out of their way to compliment me on the changes in the store," laughs Aaron. "They can see that I'm re-investing in the community—it's definitely a positive influence here in Englewood."

What's next for Aaron? He's planning a remodel of Barnichol Hardware to capture the feel of a local beach shack, and is already working with the Do it Best team to find his next local acquisition opportunity.





STERLING HUDGINS & KATHRYN TATTERSON | M & M BUILDING SUPPLY





Sterling Hudgins and Kathryn Tatterson have always been dedicated to the community.

MATHEWS, VIRGINIA

As a matter of fact, they met when Sterling and his father opened a building supply store across the street from Kathryn's family's greenhouse business. Since that time, they have worked hard to become a home improvement power couple, with two successful stores in Virginia's Middle Peninsula. Their Port Haywood location is a contractor-based lumberyard, and they have a 7,000-square-foot home center in nearby Hartfield.

"When we first started our business, we had every intention of staying with our original distributor," says Kathryn. "But we quickly learned so many of the advantages of being a Do it Best member. We switched to Do it Best and have never looked back." As an additional investment, Sterling and Kathryn



became the landlords of the local grocery store where they did their weekly shopping. When they learned that the store owner was going to retire and close his doors, the couple bought the grocery business in order to keep it running. "We didn't want to see the hometown grocery store go away, so we decided to buy them out," says Sterling.

"I grew up shopping there," adds Kathryn. "It was the grocery store that most of the people in the community knew and trusted—we just didn't want that to go away."

They soon came to the same conclusion as the previous owner: local competition from the big box grocers and maintenance costs made the little grocery business inviable. "We tried to do the grocery business for a few years, and it just wasn't us," says Sterling. "We bought that business with our hearts, not our heads." Sterling and Kathryn decided that they needed to stick to their strengths—hardware, building materials, plumbing, and lawn and garden.

Their first call was to Territory Sales Manager Steve Marion and the Signature[™] Store Design team. Steve helped kick off plans for a full remodel of the former grocery store into a more dynamic home improvement powerhouse.

Over the next several months, Sterling and Kathryn worked closely with Store Designer Matt Soper and the Retail Performance team to create an entirely new customer experience. "The Do it Best team was with us from the start," says Kathryn. "They were great at listening to what we needed, revamping the design numerous times and letting us be us."

The final design features new flooring, lighting, and fixtures, as well as an exposed ceiling and attractive signage inside and out.

Sterling and Kathryn embraced the fishing, crabbing, clamming, and oyster harvesting heritage of their Chesapeake Bay community, incorporating watermen's tools of the trade into their décor. They even custom-built the front counter to look like the stern of a locally built deadrise workboat—a once-common sight in their seafaring community.

WHEN WE STARTED OUR BUSINESS, WE HAD EVERY INTENTION OF STAYING WITH OUR ORIGINAL DISTRIBUTOR. BUT WE QUICKLY LEARNED SO MANY OF THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A DO IT BEST MEMBER. WE SWITCHED TO DO IT BEST AND HAVE NEVER LOOKED BACK.

The new location is more than just a great-looking store. The final 11,000-square-foot space is a fully loaded home center complete with hardware, electrical, plumbing, seasonal, cleaning, The Color Bar[™] paint department, a full outdoor garden center, and more. "Our goal was to provide an excellent shopping experience for everyone in our county," says Kathryn. "We wanted to create a local store with all the products and pricing of a national box store, but with the uniqueness and originality of our area."

Why put so much effort into creating this unique customer experience? "Today, online shopping makes it easy to get products delivered to your front door, but people choose to go into a store to have an experience," explains Kathryn. "It's a social and tactile experience that we want to be enjoyable and fun—we want people to feel good shopping here. And they do!"





EARLESS.

RDEN

PAINT

TOOLS

ADDING A LOCATION WITHOUT LOSING SLEEP.

At some point in your business career, you are likely to have an opportunity to expand into a new location. While the prospect of a larger customer base and increased revenue is exciting, the challenges and unknowns could keep you up at night. But as Do it Best member-owners Scott and Tammy Moore discovered, you have a powerful partner ready to help you every step of the way.

SCOTT & TAMMY MOORE | MOUNTAIN VIEW HOME & HARDWARE





KING, NORTH CAROLINA

THE OPPORTUNITY

To say that things were going well for Scott and Tammy Moore of Westfield, North Carolina, would be an understatement. In just five years, they acquired a lumberyard, rebuilt it from the ground up, and, with the help of their manager, Tony Martin, turned it into a successful lumberyard and home center. Their reborn Patrick Building Supply was so successful that Scott was recognized as a 2017 Dealer of the Year by *LBM Journal* magazine.

Encouraged by their success, in 2018, the Moores began working on the next step in their master plan—expansion. The community of King, North Carolina, presented an amazing opportunity.

"Not only were we already familiar with the demographics there, but we would be the first market entry—we knew there wasn't another hardware store within 12 miles," says Scott. "For us, it was 'Business 101.' Being first-in-market is a unique opportunity to get in and build customer relationships," adds Tammy. "It gives us a chance to put quality people in place and establish a reputation for great service. That way, when and if the big box store comes along, we can deliver something they can't: an outstanding customer experience." **RUNNING THE NUMBERS**Based on their own knowledge of the King community, the Moores recognized that their new location would be serving an entirely different demographic than Patrick Building Supply.

Rather than selling commodities and hardware to contractors and professionals, the new store would have to be more focused on offering retail products for homeowners and DIYers. But before they committed to this bold change in direction, they needed solid research to eliminate any lingering doubt.

They engaged Do it Best to conduct a thorough market and demographic analysis. The results not only confirmed what Scott and Tammy already suspected, but also identified four specific groups most likely to shop the new location: women, millennials, affluent consumers, and seniors.





"Partnering with Do it Best gave us the confidence that we had it right," says Tammy. "It showed us that we had the potential to have two different stores serving very different types of consumers and achieve success with both."

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The Moores christened the new location Mountain View Home & Hardware, and Scott shared his vision with the Signature[™] Store Design team. A new store was built from the ground up. Once the building was complete, Do it Best worked with the Moores to give their newest location its own identity.

"Fixture layout, floorplans, signage—they led us through all of it," says Scott. "Do it Best has a really good team that leads you through the process and really takes the pressure off."

Based on what they learned in the demographic survey, Scott and Tammy chose to carry a loaded hardware department and a full rental center, both featuring the Stihl® power equipment line. This would be complemented by large outdoor living and home décor departments, including The Color Bar™ paint department, to take advantage of Tammy's deep experience and knowledge of home décor.

"Do it Best takes a lot of the work out of it because they put us front and center with the contacts," says Tammy. "Products, merchandising, point-of-sale—their whole process is based on efficiency, saving us a lot of time and money."







The new Mountain View Home & Hardware opened in November 2018 with strong in-store traffic, and it continues to thrive. The Moores knew that expanding to a new location was not risk-free—but with Do it Best on their side, they never had a doubt.

"They were as committed to our expansion plans as we were, and it was clearly important to them that we do well," says Tammy. "And that's great peace of mind."

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Lauren Melancon and Vanessa Melancon Pierce have always been a dynamic duo. They grew up helping their family run Offshore Liftboats, a successful service vessel company serving the offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico. As third-generation owners, Lauren and Vanessa could have maintained a steady course, continuing business as usual. But the sisters simply refused to settle for less than what they knew was possible.



LAUREN MELANCON & VANESSA MELANCON PIERCE | MELACO SISTERS HARDWARE & SUPPLIES

CUT OFF, LOUISIANA

Of course, four years of a down oil market had already convinced them to look for ways to bolster their business, but there was a stronger force at work. "We were bored," laughs Vanessa. "We had been running our family business for at least 10 years, and we wanted to do something more exciting."

They soon recognized that the answer was right down the street. Their liftboat company had been doing business with Kief Hardware, the local Do it Best store, for years. Now the store was up for sale—and the sisters took the plunge.

"It started almost as a joke. 'We should buy Kief Hardware,'" says Lauren. "But then we realized that our liftboat company could save a lot of money by owning the store, and we could revitalize a landmark store that had been serving our community for more than 70 years." After months of negotiations, the sisters bought Kief Hardware. The seasoned service industry veterans were now absolute beginners in the retail world. What they lacked in experience, Lauren and Vanessa more than made up for with imagination, common sense, and a little bit of swagger.

WE REALIZED WE COULD REVITALIZE A LANDMARK STORE THAT HAD BEEN SERVING OUR COMMUNITY FOR MORE THAN 70 YEARS.

They rebranded their new business as Melaco Sisters Hardware & Supplies and worked with their Do it Best design team to create a new logo and establish brand standards for signage and promotions that gave the store its own unique identity. For example, they chose to incorporate contemporary color photos of their community into the design, rather than the traditional black and white historical photos.

"We were coming at this from an angle of being a new store with a new generation of owners," says Lauren.



"Do it Best partnered with us and were more than willing to work with our design ideas."

The new store layout removed walls to open up the 23,000-square-foot space, making room for an ambitious array of new merchandise.

Lauren and Vanessa began by installing an industrial/ commercial department through the Do it Best INCOM Supply[™] program with pallet racks in the back of the store. While this new department was initially designed to primarily service their liftboat business, it also brought bulk industrial and commercial supplies to the community for the very first time.

Next, they added hardware, electrical, and plumbing departments, along with The Color Bar™ paint department. They even hired a dedicated paint expert to help customers with ideas and projects when they visit The Color Bar. At this point, the new Melaco Sisters Hardware & Supplies was technically finished; however, the Melancon sisters were just getting started.

THE TWO RETAIL ROOKIES HANDLED THEIR BUSINESS LIKE PROS. DURING THEIR FIRST TRIP TO THE DO IT BEST SPRING MARKET. THEY PLANNED TO USE THE OPPORTUNITY TO FIND INNOVATIVE NEW PRODUCTS THAT THEIR CUSTOMERS COULDN'T FIND ANYWHERE ELSE-IN ADDITION TO LOOKING FOR GREAT PURCHASING OPPORTUNITIES.

The nearby community of South Lafourche is known as a sportsman's paradise. To take full advantage of this, they devoted three full aisles of their new store to sporting goods, including offshore and inshore tackle, as well as hunting supplies. The tackle section features original, high-quality tackle, handmade right in the store. A comprehensive marine and RV department was added to serve the many tourists traveling to campsites on nearby Grand Isle. The store even features one of the area's only drive-up propane refilling stations.

The two retail rookies handled their business like pros. Their first trip to the Do it Best Spring Market[™] as owners is a perfect example. They had visited several markets before and knew how the whole process worked. Now, they planned to use the opportunity to find innovative new products that their customers couldn't find anywhere else — in addition to looking for great purchasing opportunities.

Prior to the market, Vanessa utilized the Market Savings Builder and Sneak Peek[®] Pre-Planner to create massive shopping lists on her laptop. By doing their homework, the sisters were able to make the most of the 90-minute Sneak Peek event and had more time to spend talking with vendors and Do it Best staff about additional growth opportunities.

To promote their new venture, Lauren and Vanessa turned to the power of social media. They tapped the talents of one employee, Gabryell, assigning her the role of full-time social media manager. Gabryell creates regular posts on Facebook and Instagram, promoting new products and specials or just sharing ideas. She also engages with customers who respond to the posts, acknowledging their suggestions and answering their questions. At the front of the store, a traditional request box gives customers a chance to ask for the unique items they want to see.

Looking back at their whirlwind entry into the retail world, the Melancon sisters know that Do it Best was the right co-op partner for them. Just a week after they had signed, Territory Sales Manager Roy Jones was meeting with Lauren and Vanessa, helping them prepare their new store. "We were less than 30 days into making our decision, and we were already on our way to Indianapolis for our first market," says Vanessa. "On the way there, I told Lauren that we hadn't even looked at any other co-ops—we have no idea what this is about. But at the market, we talked to so many people coming from other co-ops that by the end of the day we knew we were staying with Do it Best and never leaving."



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MEGA-STORE HARTVILLE HARDWARE IS GROWING, ONE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AT A TIME. Best

THE MILLER FAMILY | HARTVILLE HARDWARE 2

TALLMADGE, OHIO

Hartville Hardware and Do it Best have a long history of doing big things together. After a decade of consistent growth, the two teamed up in 2010 to build a massive 305,000-squarefoot home center in Hartville, Ohio, which opened in 2012. Acknowledged as America's largest independent hardware store, this two-floor facility boasts seven acres of indoor retail space. It is large enough to hold the Idea House, a life-size, fully finished, equipped, and decorated 1,830-square-foot home featuring hundreds of products readily available in the massive store.

Like any business, Hartville Hardware is always looking to grow, but duplicating a store of this magnitude would be challenging. So family owners Wayne Miller and Scott Sommers once again turned to Do it Best and Territory Sales Manager Tom Bird to come up with a new plan. Their next big idea? Think smaller. Wayne, Scott, and Tom were more than willing to share their innovative approach.



Q&A

WHEN DID YOU JOIN DO IT BEST?

WAYNE: We have been with Do it Best since 2001. We are actually a conversion—up until then we had been with True Value since 1972.

WHAT DROVE YOUR DECISION TO SWITCH TO DO IT BEST?

WAYNE: At the time, we found that Do it Best was a more cost-effective provider for us—True Value had too many inventory challenges.

SCOTT: And we also found that the cultures of both our companies went so well together. It doesn't feel as corporate. Business is based more on relationships.

SO TELL US ABOUT YOUR MAIN STORE.

WAYNE: Sure, we have some signature departments — including one of the largest individual John Deere* stores in the northeastern United States. We sell about 800 John Deere mowers a year. We have a large tool department with two annual tool events that people come from all over Ohio and surrounding states to attend. We also have outdoor living, including a 3,000-square-foot grill zone; home décor; and seasonal—we have a huge Christmas decoration section every year. Then we have a 40,000-square-foot drive-through lumberyard as well. And, of course, we have a 1,830-square-foot home built right in the middle of the store.

SO WHEN YOU CONSIDERED EXPANDING HARTVILLE HARDWARE, YOU CHOSE TO FOCUS ON A STRATEGY OF CREATING SMALLER SATELLITE STORES RATHER THAN DUPLICATE ANOTHER MEGASTORE?

WAYNE: Absolutely. We realized that we had pretty much maxed out the customer base in Hartville. We





had to go out to where the new customers were, but to build another 300,000-square-foot store somewhere else presented too great of a financial risk. Small satellite locations that could sell everything we have in Hartville through ship-to-store seemed like the better opportunity.

HOW DID YOU EXECUTE THAT APPROACH?

WAYNE: We looked at a number of opportunities that Tom, our Do it Best territory sales manager, brought to us over the years, looking for just the right fit for our needs. He persevered and identified one that met all our criteria.

There was a Do it Best store in Tallmadge, Ohio, that said they were closing the hardware portion of their business. They were doing hardscapes and masonry supplies and wanted to close the small 10,000-square-foot footprint committed to hardware. They came to us for advice on how to close just that part of their business down. That turned into a conversation and we said, "Hey, maybe we could run it."

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SCOTT: Plus, it was just twenty minutes from our store and felt like a good opportunity to expand with a small satellite location. We consider this as research and development—working to understand how this model will fit into our overall plans. It doesn't make sense for us to have a single convenience hardware store. We want to test the waters—and then we can commit to more stores.

WAYNE: One of the biggest challenges we have, being a 300,000+-square-foot store, is that we are committed to pricing like the big box stores. Our margins are much less than a 10,000-square-foot hardware store, but we have to have the same price at both locations. We have to maintain enough margin to make a decent profit.

WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED WITH A SMALLER SECOND STORE?

SCOTT: First of all, the Do it Best warehouse product assortments are critical for the smaller store. We cannot buy direct at the satellite store like we do in Hartville because we don't have the back-stockroom space—so the

Do it Best warehouse is our warehouse. The assortments Do it Best has are more important for the new store.

WHEN EVERY SQUARE FOOT IS CRITICAL, HOW DID YOU DECIDE WHAT TO CARRY AT THE SMALLER STORE?

WAYNE: We used all of the Do it Best assortments and planograms. They were a big help.

SCOTT: Knowing the existing staff and understanding the flavor of the store, Do it Best Retail Performance Manager Ken Potter helped out a lot to get the assortments aligned with what we all believed would be the right mix for those customers. And we picked some key categories that are outside the standard convenience store assortment, like Stihl[®] power equipment. We also added major appliances.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM THIS WHOLE PROCESS?

SCOTT: I cannot say enough about our staff. We took three existing people from our Hartville location to be the manager, assistant manager, and appliance sales associate at the Tallmadge store. They did a great job of instilling our culture into the new store. I learned that in order to do this, you have to have enough leadership resources to pull someone out without weakening your existing operation.

WAYNE: Yes, and because we closed the satellite location for a couple months, we were able to bring the employees we were retaining up to our main store to get them acclimated to our culture.

ONE LAST QUESTION — WHEN TOM BRINGS YOU THE NEXT OPPORTUNITY, ARE YOU READY TO TAKE IT?

WAYNE: (laughs) When Tom brings another opportunity? He's already brought us several! It's still early, but so far, this looks promising—ask us at the next Do it Best market.



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SHARONA & CECIL EISERER | WOOD SHED LUMBER & HARDWARE SUPPLY



They assumed that the lumberyard was servicing the small collection of local contractors and a larger contingent of farmers. But after completing a Do it Best customer survey, they discovered something completely different.

CARROLLTON, MISSOURI

"Until the survey, I would have told you that the lumberyard was contractor-driven, but when the results came back it showed more do-it-yourselfers," says Sharona. "They say you only see who you're around all the time — my husband is a builder, so I only saw the contractors."

Digging deeper into the survey data, Sharona realized that the existing 2,000-square-foot store and the accompanying lumberyard were simply uninviting. A large chain link fence around the property limited access to a gated entrance to a small gravel parking lot. Inside, the store was crowded and poorly lit.



At first, she tried to entice her newly discovered demographic by adding a UPS station to the store. Still, few customers made it past the front counter after dropping off their packages. Soon she realized that it was going to take something more—much more.

She enlisted the help of the Signature[™] Store Design and Retail Performance teams to completely reinvent the business. They boldly reimagined the new Wood Shed Lumber & Hardware Supply, building a brand new 22,000-square-foot facility from the ground up and turning the existing yard into a full-service, drive-up lumberyard. When finished, the new store greeted customers with a generous paved parking lot and a sunlit glass entry.

Inside, Sharona and the team went past the limits of traditional merchandising and design. Using products from her nearby Do it Best warehouse in Sikeston, she decked out the interior with shiplap, lighting fixtures, and more. An antique wagon, similar to ones used by local farmers, was repurposed as part of an in-store display.

SHARONA RECOGNIZED AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE ANOTHER UNDERSERVED CUSTOMER BASE – WOMEN. A CLOSE LOOK AT THE SURVEY REVEALED THAT FEMALE SHOPPERS OF ALL TYPES WERE COMING INTO THE STORE ON A REGULAR BASIS.

Sharona also recognized an opportunity to serve another underserved customer base—women. A close look at the survey revealed that female shoppers of all types were coming into the store on a regular basis.

"We have young ladies who are pushing into their 90s coming in, and then we have moms with their kids, wanting to redo their bathrooms," says Sharona. "Since our community is so small, there are only so many contractors. If we wanted to grow, we would have to find ways to serve these other customers coming in."

Sensing the opportunity, Sharona moved to embrace the female demographic. Wood Shed Lumber & Hardware Supply added shopping carts at the front of the store and highlighted popular brands like OXO[®]

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housewares and Mrs. Meyer's[®] household cleaners, all sourced from Do it Best.

The store is also loaded with home décor ideas. She tapped into vendors such as Diamond® cabinetry, Karran® sinks, and Mid-Am® doors to outfit the store so customers can see the products at work. The paint department is anchored by The Color Bar™, giving aspiring interior designers a chance to engage with Wood Shed's paint experts.

So far, Sharona's investment in the new store has paid off. From the time she and Cecil closed on the purchase of the lumberyard to just before the grand opening of the new location, sales have more than doubled—and the modern store promises to be even more profitable.

By taking a closer look at who her customers are and crafting customer experiences to meet their needs and interests, Sharona has turned Wood Shed Lumber & Hardware Supply into the community's go-to lumberyard and hardware store.

Does she have her eye on any other customer groups? When asked, Sharona just smiles and says, "Well, we're putting in a new hitching post—our friends from the Amish community do like our store."







SHAWN & SUSAN EVANS | LANDRUM HARDWARE

LANDRUM, SOUTH CAROLINA

After more than 100 years in business, Landrum Hardware was showing its age. The store itself took up only 3,000 square feet. The nails were still displayed in rotating metal bins. Almost every plank in the old wooden floor was squeaky. And customers loved it. For many member-owners, knowing that your customer base is in love with your store wouldn't be a problem. But for Shawn Evans, owner of Landrum Hardware, it was a very big problem indeed. "The ROI was fantastic for the square footage we had — we experienced double-digit growth every year," says Shawn. "But the logistics were horrible. We had stuff just everywhere, and frankly, the floor wasn't built to support everything we put on it. Plus, parking was always an issue. When people admitted to me that they didn't come in because they couldn't park, I knew I was losing business."

Shawn also knew that he was already pressed to support the demands of the growing Landrum, South Carolina, hardware market. In addition, three competing hardware stores in the area were going out of business. The market would be wide open for any store big enough to handle the demand. It was the perfect time to expand.

"When we first bought our store, there were a number of small hardware stores between Landrum, Tryon, and Columbus," says Shawn. "But as those business owners retired or closed their stores, it got down to a feed store, a lumberyard, and us."

Shawn chose to build a new 15,000-square-foot store in a pasture near the interstate. The new location was conveniently close to the local grocery stores, and best of all, it had plenty of room for parking.



The biggest challenge? How to recreate the beloved squeaky wooden floor. "The old floor had a history and a romance to it," says Shawn. "I was taking out the last bastion of the classic hardware store in the area—I knew I had to bring some of that to the new store."

Shawn's solution was to recreate the squeaky wooden floor in the store's power aisle. "I built it because it was my solution," he said. "We just laid down some deck boards and put half-inch plywood on top of that and then a single-layer oakwood floor. I didn't finish it, just put linseed oil down so it'll wear out—over time it will only get squeakier."

With more space, Shawn was able to expand his

inventory. He was able to build fully stocked plumbing and electrical categories, two of the strongest departments at the old store, and he also expanded lawn and garden. The new space allowed him to add some of the more popular brands his customers were asking for, and he now offers more seasonal choices. During one of South Carolina's stronger-than-normal winter storms, he helped his customers prepare for the snow by stocking extra ice melt and other winter necessities—and even sleds for the fun-loving.

For the building itself, Shawn knew exactly what he wanted. "I wasn't going to build up a plain metal building," he says. "It had to be something that the community would be proud of."

The Do it Best Signature[™] Store Design team integrated Shawn's ideas to give the new store the historic flavor of Landrum Hardware's original location. The final layout featured a single-slope roof and a smooth transition between the store and the parking lot. A large, welcoming front porch and metal roof with cedar beams were incorporated to reflect the store's historic past. How has the community responded to the new store? According to Shawn, Landrum Hardware has retained the title as the local hardware store. "Although customers say they miss the old store, they appreciate the convenience and expanded offerings of the new store. And it draws in new customers every day," he says. "Landrum Hardware is still a destination, that has whatever you need to fix the problem or get the job done."

HAVE IT ALLBY HAVING

BREAK OUT OF THE COMMODITY PACK BY OFFERING SOMETHING MORE.

Let's face it — the home improvement marketplace is pretty crowded. Hardware stores, lumberyards, home centers, big box retailers, and even online businesses are all competing for your customers. So how do you get their attention and establish your business as their first and best choice? Meet two Do it Best member-owners who have explored ways to differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace by offering their customers something more.





Sunpro, formerly Sunroc Building Materials, is an LBM giant, and they are still growing. With 13 locations in Idaho and Utah, Sunpro regularly sets the bar for performance and profitability, earning recognition as an *LBM Journal* Dealer of the Year in 2019.

IDAHO & UTAH

President Greg Templeman attributes Sunpro's success to the outstanding customer experience they provide. "LBM is a commodity, so price is paramount," he says. "But we know professionalism and reliability are key drivers for our customers, so we focus our differentiating efforts there."

It was this commitment to professionalism and reliability that brought Sunpro to Do it Best in the first place. Up until 2017, Sunpro had relied on another large distributor in the lumber market to supply their inventory. While price and selection were competitive, service began to slip, and Greg began to search for a more responsive partner. He found exactly what he was looking for in Do it Best. "In the pro lumber space, our former co-op was seen as the preferred choice, while Do it Best owned the retail space — but all of that has changed," says Greg. "Do it Best has the capability and experience to support all of our pro-focused LBM inventory needs, and they helped bolster our position in retail. Monthly promotions and ecommerce capabilities, the spring and fall markets, the Digital Dashboard, OWL (orders without labor) overnight deliveries — Do it Best definitely gives us what we need to manage and maintain our inventory and serve our customers even better."

As a Do it Best member, Sunpro combines objective pricing profiles with a strong rewards program to build relationships with customers that foster trust, loyalty, and enthusiasm.

"Do it Best provides us the flexibility and independence to run with our own ideas, too," says Greg. "We can develop strategies that truly differentiate us from the competition, and that is invaluable."

Sunpro offers a blended pricing model to strategic customers that helps to mitigate lumber market volatility.

Sunpro's most popular strategy is an incredible customer rewards program. For every dollar a customer spends, they are awarded a "Sunpro point" that can be redeemed for incentives like Sunpro signature rewards trips.

SUNPRO COMBINES OBJECTIVE PRICING PROFILES WITH A STRONG REWARDS PROGRAM TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH CUSTOMERS THAT FOSTER TRUST, LOYALTY, AND ENTHUSIASM. "The rewards program reduces the need for payment follow up because the customer is incentivized to pay on time," says Greg. "It also goes a long way toward building loyalty."

Together, Sunpro and Do it Best have created a professional, reliable, and rewarding customer experience that keeps customers coming back and keeps Sunpro moving forward.



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Malibu. Hollywood. West Hollywood. West Los Angeles. These communities rank among the most glamorous in California, and shoppers here expect more from their customer experience. That's why many of them choose to shop at Anawalt Lumber. ROLANDO ROBLES | ANAWALT LUMBER CO.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

"Customers here value service and are less concerned about price," says Rolando Robles, Anawalt Lumber's president and CEO. "They've always looked to us for the full customer service experience."

For Anawalt Lumber, store appearance and aesthetics play a major role in delivering that full customer experience. The most recent revamp of their Hollywood store is a perfect example. It had been 17 years since the long-time Do it Best store had been remodeled, and Rolando knew it no longer reflected the excellence Anawalt Lumber customers expected.

"The store was starting to lose its luster," he says. "The tile floors and shelving were worn, and the décor was dated. With the customers we serve, we needed the store to be more welcoming." With hands-on guidance from Do it Best, Anawalt Lumber decided to go all in on a comprehensive remodeling plan. The entire store was renovated from the inside out. The layout was reconfigured to improve traffic flow. The dingy tile floor was torn up and replaced with contemporary, polished concrete. Aging shelves were updated with new gondolas. The addition of The Color Bar[™] added a modern design workstation to the paint department. New fixtures and signage—including archive photos dating back more than 90 years to the earliest days of the historic store—were incorporated into the new interior.

BEFORE WE STARTED, THE JOB OF REMODELING WAS OVERWHELMING. WE COULDN'T SEE HOW WE WOULD GET IT ALL DONE. BUT ONCE WE DECIDED TO PULL THE TRIGGER, DO IT BEST REALLY EASED OUR MINDS.

Rolando worked closely with the Do it Best team, taking full advantage of the Signature™ Store Design and Retail Performance programs. "Before we started, the job of remodeling was overwhelming. We couldn't see how we would get it all done. But once we decided to pull the trigger, Do it Best really eased our minds," says Rolando. "Design, layout, merchandising, scheduling— Do it Best helped us with all of it."

Customer response has been very enthusiastic. Every day, Rolando hears comments from customers regarding the ease of shopping, beauty, and inviting atmosphere. Results have been so positive that Anawalt Lumber has already begun a similar overhaul of their West Hollywood store.

For anyone considering an update of their own, Rolando has this advice: "Go for it—I was timid and scared of starting a project like this, but the support and expertise of Do it Best made this project go super smoothly. I am 100% glad we did it."





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A MOVING STORY

A COMMUNITY RETURNS THE FAVOR.



Rathdrum Trading Post Hardware August 9, 2016

The good news is that we are making great progress on being able to open this week! The bad news is that it won't be today. I Rest assured that we will open the first moment possible and will anounce immediately Thank you all so much for being patient during the move!



C 44			9 Comments 3 Shares	
	() Like	Comment	A Share	
Oldest	-			
2	Lika Pennia Looking good. Can't wait to explored			
٩	Catherine Paye You are All Amazing! We loyal customers glad wait for you!			
	Like - Reply - Jy		01)	
5	Micheline Riley Thanks for the update. Do what ya'll gotta do to Gir R Done			
	Like - Reply - By	ke - Reply - Jy		
16	Wanda Butler Keep on truckin, we'll stick with ya.			



Relocating is stressful for any business. But the prospect of multiple moves in a matter of months is downright terrifying. That was the situation member-owner Matt Smith and his business, Trading Post Hardware, were facing. Matt and his team were months away from finishing a brand new store location just down the street from their current location in Rathdrum, Idaho. In the meantime, a switch in ownership had resulted in an unexpected 60-day eviction notice. Matt and his team would have to vacate their current store before their new store was finished — Trading Post was suddenly without a home.

Fortunately, Trading Post had always been there for Rathdrum, sponsoring "Golden Ticket" holiday gift shopping for elementary students and Student of the Month lunches for middle school students. These, as well as many other outreach and donation opportunities, were a regular part of the store's annual investments in its community.

So when Matt posted the dilemma on Trading Post's Facebook page, the result was immediate. In just 12 hours, the post had received more than 9,000 views and had been shared more than 100 times. "We had multiple offers on Facebook. 'Whatever we have to do…'" says Matt. "They volunteered time, trucks, talking to the press—the response was overwhelming."

In typical Matt Smith fashion, he refused to let volunteers work for free. Instead, for several weeks, he unofficially bolstered his staff to include paid volunteers. Both the move to a temporary location and the eventual move to the new building went as smoothly as possible. With help from the Rathdrum community, Matt and the Trading Post Hardware team survived both moves — and became more deeply connected to the community.

"This is not how I would have chosen to move a store," laughs Matt. "But this whole experience has shown me how special this community is—we are thrilled to be a part of it."

REBUILDING PARADISE

DO IT CENTER[®] DOMINICA BRINGS A MUCH-NEEDED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE TO THE ISLAND.



Even though Karl Nassief was not a part of his father's building materials business on the Caribbean island of Dominica, Karl kept the Do it Best business card he had received. He would hold on to that card for more than seven years.



"My father sold steel, lumber, and concrete but was not part of a co-op." says Karl. "But I kept that card because I knew that someday I wanted to be a part of Do it Best."

In 2017, Hurricane Maria battered the island with sustained 170 mph winds for more than 12 hours, leveling everything in its path. "The hurricane wiped out the entire GDP," says Karl. "Ninety percent of the buildings lost their roofs, there was no electricity—everyone had to rebuild."

IT WAS ALL WORTH IT IN THE END. IF WE DIDN'T HAVE THAT SUPPORT, IT WOULD'VE TAKEN US MUCH LONGER.

At this time, his father was in his 90s and quit the business. Karl immediately recognized an opportunity to not only help his community rebuild, but to bring a totally exclusive customer experience to the island. "There was a big need for the business to come in," he says. "Many people had to go off the island to find building materials, and it was quite frustrating to find products for your house—there was definitely a void."

Karl made his call to Do it Best. Through Retail Performance, he worked with the Do it Best team to develop plans for a new steel and concrete building to house a new home improvement experience on the island. "We spent hours going over planograms—it was actually quite intense," laughs Karl. "But it was all worth it in the end. If we didn't have that support, it would've taken us much longer."

In just eight months, his community had a full home center where they had never had one before. "You have to realize how hard it was before the store was finished," says Karl. "Just being able to go into a store and find 80% of the things you need, instead of going to ten different little shops, is glorious!"

Since the opening, the new Do it Center Dominica has been doing steady business. Karl is already planning to use the store as a springboard to add two additional locations on the island. Through his hard work, and with full support from Do it Best, the people of Dominica have begun rebuilding paradise.





THE INSIDER

VIEWING A SUPERIOR B2B CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE EYES OF INCOM DISTRIBUTOR SUPPLY⁵⁰.



JESSE GRIFFIN | COLDWATER ELECTRIC MOTORS & WELDING SUPPLY

COLDWATER, MICHIGAN

Coldwater Electric Motors & Welding Supply (**CEM**) may be new to INCOM Distributor Supply^{**}, but they are proven industry veterans. Since 1977, CEM Supply has been solving electric motor and power transmission problems for their industrial customers, keeping them well stocked with all the day-to-day supplies they need. Over the years, CEM Supply has built a strong reputation for knowledge, service, and a lightning-fast response time. For member-owner Jesse Griffin, consistently maintaining this superior customer experience is no small feat — it takes the right partner to make it all happen.

In an effort to find that partner, Jesse put his long-time co-op up against the services of INCOM. After a thorough comparison, INCOM won him over. He appreciated that the website and catalog were more user-friendly and easier to navigate. He was impressed by the high degree of product relevancy, along with the prepaid freight and drop ship options.

But most of all, Jesse was impressed with the responsiveness of his INCOM support team. He had finally found a partner that matched his sense of urgency for getting orders to his customers.

"Speed and service are vital to us," says Jesse. "Being part of INCOM makes it easier to fulfill orders and ship the same day —it's all about getting the right product at the right time."

Since joining INCOM, Jesse has also enjoyed the flexibility the network provides—CEM Supply is not confined to repair

and service. Leveraging INCOM's vast network of vendors, he's been able to transform CEM Supply into a broad line industrial supplier.

He has also added a large rental fleet through INCOM, making skid steers, excavators, floor sanders, and more available to his customers. INCOM even sent a trainer to CEM Supply to help with the program, showing Jesse and his team how to operate, maintain, and market their new equipment.

Now that Jesse has fully explored his INCOM membership, he knows he has found the right partner for his business. "The culture of INCOM Distributor Supply is very impressive," says Jesse. "They share our midwestern values of hard work and honesty—and are always in tune with their customers' needs."



MEMBER AWARDS

Do it Best member-owners are among the top performers in the home improvement industry and are regularly recognized by trade associations and publications for their business excellence.

BEACON AWARDS

THE HARDWARE CONNECTION



ERIC & ROBIN SMITH AND DENNIS & SHERRY BISHOP

Petersburg Do it Best®Hardware Best New Store (over 20,000 SF) Petersburg, Indiana



JIM LEHRER Brownsboro Hardware & Paint Retailer of the Year Louisville, Kentucky

DEALERS OF THE YEAR

LBM JOURNAL



GREG TEMPLEMAN Sunpro Lindon, Utah



KEN & KIM FISH Taylor's Do it Best® Building Supply Eastpoint, Florida

YOUNG RETAILERS OF THE YEAR

NRHA



TREY HAMILTON Arab Lumber & Supply, Inc. Arab, Alabama



SAMANTHA POST T & M Hardware & Rental Bellevue, Pennsylvania

EXCELLENCE AWARDS

PROSALES



TOM BARCLAY Ganahl Lumber Los Angeles, California



SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENTS AWARD

NRHA & Independent We Stand



SAMANTHA POST T & M Hardware & Rental Bellevue, Pennsylvania

TOP GUN

HARDWARE RETAILING



CHARLIE GILLMAN Gillman Do it Best[®] Home Centers Batesville, Indiana

PRO DEALER OF THE YEAR

NLBMDA



CRAIG BRADSHAW Mead Lumber Columbus, Nebraska

HARDWARE STORE ALL STARS

HARDWARE + BUILDING SUPPLY DEALER

A2Z Home Center Chico Valley, Arizona

Building Solutions Tulsa, Oklahoma

Coastal Hardware & Rental Kiln, Mississippi

Deale Hardware & Home Center Deale, Maryland

General Hardware Winfield, West Virginia

HPM Building Supply Hilo, Hawaii

Jones Home Center Upton, Kentucky

Lavallette Hardware Lavallette, New Jersey

Lumber Barn Bradford, New Hampshire

Lumber Mart Grand Forks, North Dakota

Mount Pleasant Hardware Providence, Rhode Island

Norfolk Hardware Boston, Massachusetts

Russell Do it Center[®] Alexander City, Alabama

Sunpro Springville, Utah

Trio Hardware Plainview, New<u>York</u>

Wagner Hardware Wilmington, Delaware

Waters Hardware Wamego, Kansas

Westmart Do it Center[®] West Yellowstone, Montana



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(From left to right)

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Vice President of Human Resources and General Counsel

RICH LYNCH Vice President of Marketing

JOHN MERGY Vice President of Information Technology

DAN STARR President and CEO

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DOUG ROTH

Vice President of Finance and CFO

NICK TALARICO

Vice President of Sales and Business Development

GARY NACKERS

Vice President of Lumber and Building Materials

DENT JOHNSON

Vice President of Merchandising

STEVE MARKLEY

Executive Vice President of Operations

TIM MILLER

Vice President of Logistics



MIKE ALTENDORF

Vice President of Information Technology – Retired 2018



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(From left to right)

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Modern Home & Hardware Woodsfield, Ohio

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PHILOSOPHY

Serving others as we would like to be served

MISSION

Making the best even better

GOAL

Helping our members grow and achieve their dreams™



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