

# BuildingSupply

N E W S



*Expo* 2024

INSIDE

Exhibitor  
Listing &  
Floor Plan



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# Building Supply

## NEWS



### ABSDA Serving the Industry for over 65 years

It will come as no surprise ABSDA currently has over 550 active Member Retail Building Supply and Associate Supplier Members.

ABSDA is the collective voice and liaison for the independent Building Supply and Home Improvement Industry.

Since 1955 this Association has focused on industry specific needs to our Members.

## features

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The ABSDA Building Supply News is the official magazine of the Atlantic Building Supply Dealers Association and is published in February, May, July and September. The Atlantic Building Supply News is distributed to all ABSDA Dealer and Associate Members.

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# The Pinnacle of our Industry



**Peter Merrill**  
Chair of the Board

One of my fondest memories from 1994, was attending my first ABSDA Show at the Moncton Coliseum. While I was 6 months removed from university, and struggling to learn the difference between a Castle, a Home and an AWARD, I was lead to believe that this Show was the Pinnacle of our industry.

The show was a full week's event if you were a vendor. Some manufacturers erected 10 and 20 foot assortment of their products, which meant 2 days for set-up and the Show was 3 days long.

Fast Forward 30 years, and there have been significant changes. The ABSDA Show is now The Expo, pop up booths and pull up banners are the norm, we have migrated from Moncton to Halifax, and to the Lower Deck and Durty Nellies from Club Cosmopolitan and the Rockin' Rodeo.

*One thing remains unchanged, the ABSDA Expo is still the Pinnacle of our Industry, and not just in Atlantic Canada, but nationwide.*

I think we can all agree that the 2023 Expo, was one of the very best of all time. Expo Sponsorship was at an all time high – thank you sponsors. Dealer participation was also at an all-time high, with 84% of Dealer Member locations present at the Expo – thank you dealers. As an Association, ABSDA has migrated into version 2.0. Every Association event in the past

10 months has been outstanding. I expect and anticipate that this trend will continue with the 2024 Expo, and we will be calling the 2024 Expo the best of all time and the new standard.

## *How do we make this the best expo ever?*

Denis Melanson has been using/overusing the words engagement and being engaged, for the past 2 years. Miriam Webster defines engagement as; emotional involvement or commitment, and the state of being in gear. I will go back again to 1994 and my first ever ABSDA Show – a Sales Manager named Thom Palmer from Bay Mills, a manufacturer of drywall repair products – Thom was the self proclaimed Drywall Doctor, and unless he was engaged with another customer, he did not let anyone walk past his booth, without engaging them. Whether it was to ask if they were familiar with Bay Mills, had they tried Fiba-tape or had they tried the new drywall sanding shop vac tool, nobody went past his 10 foot booth without being engaged. Nobody was more involved, committed or in gear than the Drywall Doctor.

The moral of this story is that if we can all be as engaged as Thom Palmer was in 1994, we can all reap rewards from the Expo. Vendors who come prepared with an appealing booth, new products, new displays and promotions will have an easy time engaging retailers. Retailers come prepared to ask questions and learn what is new and exciting for the coming year. Bring new store associates so that they can meet and talk to vendors they may have contacted through the ABSDA App. Yes there is an ABSDA App.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the Expo, aka the Launch Party for the Kiln Dried Studs 2024 World Tour. See you in Halifax.

**Peter Merrill**  
Chair



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# Failing to plan is planning to fail



**Denis Melanson**  
President

I would like to take a moment to wish all Members a Happy and Healthy New Year along with much success in 2024!

As the new year unfolds, businesses are presented with a golden opportunity to set the stage for success by embarking on the journey of strategic planning. Strategic planning is the compass that guides your organizations toward your goals, helping you navigate the dynamic and competitive business landscape.

Below are some important reasons why you want to focus on creating or reviewing your Strategic Plan:

## **1. Direction and Focus:**

Strategic planning provides a roadmap for your organization, defining its vision, mission, and long-term objectives. This clarity ensures that everyone within the company is aligned with a common purpose, fostering a sense of direction and focus.

## **2. Resource Optimization:**

Efficient allocation of resources is a key benefit of strategic planning. By identifying priorities and allocating resources accordingly, your business can optimize time, money, and manpower, ensuring that efforts are concentrated on activities that contribute most significantly to your success.

## **3. Adaptability:**

The business environment is constantly evolving, and strategic planning equips your team with the tools to adapt. Through regular reassessment and adjustments, you can stay nimble, responding effectively to changes in the market, technology, or regulatory landscape.

## **4. Enhanced Decision-Making:**

Informed decision-making is a byproduct of strategic planning. Having a comprehensive understanding of the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and

threats empowers leaders to make decisions that align with the overarching strategic goals.

In the process of strategic planning, it's extremely important to engage employees in the Planning Process and here's some tips on how to approach the process:

Transparent Communication, encouraging open discussions, addressing concerns while fostering a sense of inclusion and shared responsibility is very important. Consider holding brainstorming sessions where employees from various departments can contribute their insights and ideas.

*And finally make sure to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of employees during the strategic planning process.*

Recognition and rewards create a positive feedback loop, encouraging continued engagement and commitment to the organization's strategic goals.

Makes sure that strategic planning is the cornerstone of your organization and with an engaged team you're sure to achieve your goals. Another great way to kick the year off on the right foot is to bring some team members to upcoming ABSDA Expo.

What a great way to look at new products, build new relationships and strengthen existing ones.

Sounds like a win-win to me. Hope to see you all in Halifax in March.

**Denis Melanson**  
President





**Marcel Preville**  
Home Store Owner  
Hinton, AB

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**Patrick Goguen**  
Director, Training and  
Workforce Development

# HR Insights

## *The Transformative Power of Language in the Workplace: Fostering Unity through words*

As we were reminded at the HR Conference last November, the power of language cannot be overstated. Whether spoken or written, shared privately in the lunchroom, in 1:1 check-ins or at staff meetings with the entire organization, the words we choose play a pivotal role in shaping the culture and atmosphere in the workplace. This is more than just semantics—it's about fostering a sense of unity and cooperation, breaking down barriers, and creating an environment where everyone feels valued and included.

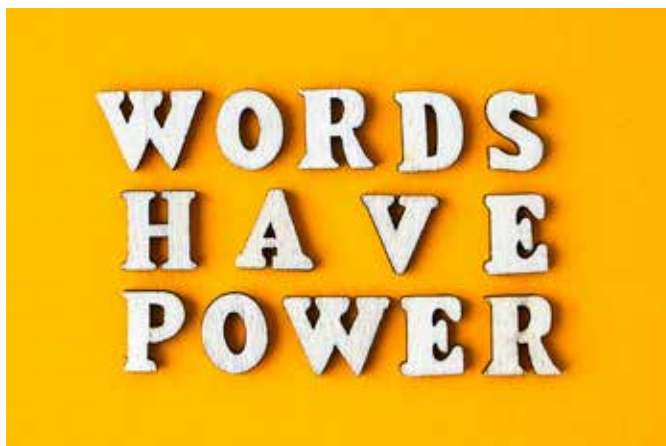
Let's go back to a great question asked at the HR Conference considering the difference between the terms "Policies and Procedures Manual" and "Employee Manual", one might even suggest the term "Employee Guidebook" to demonstrate this point. On the surface, these may seem like interchangeable phrases, but the choice between them can have profound implications for the workplace culture. They just don't feel the same! The former conveys a sense structure and organization, emphasizing the rules and regulations that govern the workplace. However, the latter feels warmer and a more approachable alternative that conveys guidance and support for employees. Read them again and ask yourself which one might contribute to fostering engagement and collaboration; and on the other hand, which one might feed on the barriers of the 'us versus them' mentality between management and employees.

Language has the power to shape perceptions and influence behavior. When crafting any messaging or communication material, it's crucial to consider the tone and terminology used. Choosing inclusive, welcoming, and collaborative language fosters a culture of teamwork and mutual respect.

Moreover, the importance of language extends to written communication, including emails, memos,

and official documents. Clear, concise, and respectful language enhances understanding and minimizes the risk of misunderstandings. When addressing sensitive issues, such as changes in company policies or restructuring, the careful choice of words can help mitigate anxiety and apprehension among employees.

All people leaders, whether they have HR in their title or not, are the custodians of employee relations. They should be aware of the impact of language on workplace dynamics. The use of inclusive language in team meetings, job descriptions, performance evaluations, and everywhere else helps create an environment where diversity and individual contributions are celebrated.



Ultimately, the power of words lies in their ability to shape culture. As organizations strive to build diverse and inclusive workplaces, the language we use becomes a critical tool

for change. Leaders **MUST** set the tone... I mean, Leaders hold the power to set the tone by using language that reflects the values of collaboration, respect, and shared goals. Don't forget... I mean, Remember, that Employees are leaders too; they contribute to a positive workplace culture by choosing words that uplift and inspire their colleagues.

The language we choose in the workplace is a potent force that can either unite or divide. We all have a role to play in fostering a positive and inclusive culture at work, in our communities and at home with our families through our words. By being mindful of language choices, organizations can build a workplace where communication is a catalyst for collaboration, innovation, and shared success.





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# Sneak peek: Early results from the Dealer Training Needs Assessment Survey

ABSDA Dealer Members have spoken! We just completed a Dealer Training Needs Assessment Survey before the holidays and are happy to report a commendable 28.6% participation rate. Over 70 Dealer Members made their voices heard, sharing their training priorities and suggestions.

We had a robust representation of our Dealer membership across our Atlantic Provinces and of all dealer sizes. We extend our gratitude, and a big high-five, to all who participated. Your insights will play a pivotal role in shaping our training initiatives for the upcoming year.

The clear consensus among respondents highlighted three key pillars crucial for their team's professional development: Skills Development, Customer Service, and Sales. These overarching themes underline the industry's commitment to enhancing both customer-facing and internal competencies. At a high-level, here are the top 5 overall training priorities that emerged:

## Sales Techniques:

Unsurprisingly, honing skills for retail and contractor sales came out as a top priority overall for ABSDA members. In a dynamic market, staying adept at the art of persuasion, negotiation, and relationship-building is essential for sustained success.

## Customer Experience:

The emphasis on providing exceptional customer experiences echoes throughout the survey. Members recognize the pivotal role customer satisfaction plays in building lasting relationships and fostering brand loyalty.

## Effective Communication:

Communication emerges as a cornerstone for success, ABSDA members acknowledge the significance of clear, concise, and impactful communication within their teams and with clients.

## Product Knowledge:

In an industry where product expertise is paramount, members underscored the need for product knowledge to enhance customer interactions be better informed advisors. Moreover, Members also expressed the importance to accelerate product knowledge training when onboarding new employees.

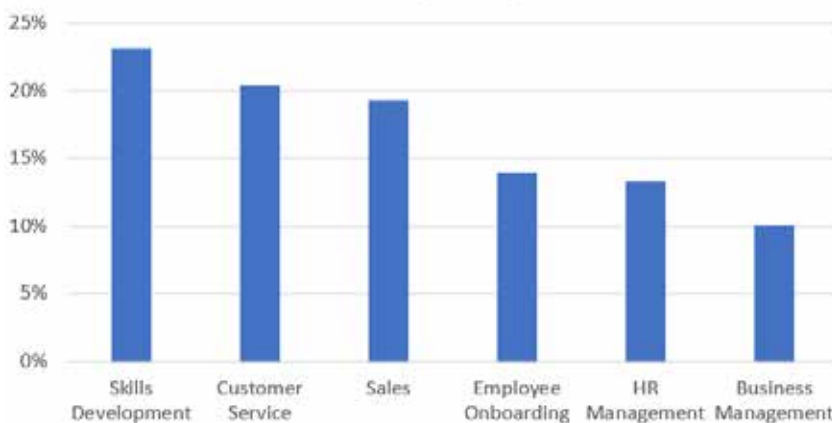
## Time Management:

Recognizing the value of time in our fast-paced industry and with the workforce shortage pressures, members are eager to refine their team's time management skills. Efficient allocation of resources and streamlining processes are essential for productivity.

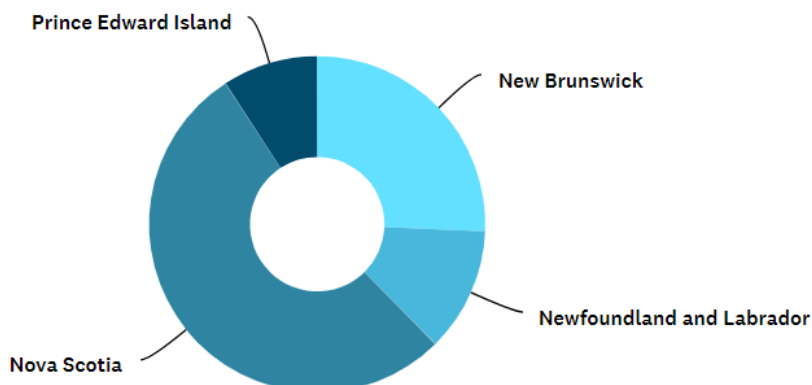
Looking ahead, it is clear that virtual training programs are on the horizon. Virtual training, live and pre-recorded, will open new avenues for learning, ensuring that geographical constraints and employee mobility do not limit participation. In tandem with this initiative, we are actively exploring new technology to streamline the registration process for the tech savy folks, but rest assured we'll still take registrations the old fashion way too.

As we move forward, we remain focused on our commitment to providing relevant and impactful and timely training. This survey aims to validate that our training programs will align with the specific needs of our Dealer members. This Needs Assessment Survey not only serves as a roadmap for our future training initiatives but also reaffirms the collaborative spirit that defines our ABSDA community.

Top Training Categories



Participation by Province





# WE ASKED OUR TEAM WHAT IMAGE BEST DESCRIBES **ogasys**



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*Band members from left to right. Steve Foran, Terry Ferris, Kyle Crook, Kevin Guest, Mike Amiro.*

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Hosted by award-winning comedian, Steve  
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*This live production is not affiliated with CBC*



## ABSDA INDUSTRY AWARDS

Our Industry Awards are always a special part of our Gala night.



The 2023 winners were:

Young Leader of the year - Luc Leger, The Elmwood Group  
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# Exhibitor Strategies to Boost Attendance and Engagement



Over 150 exhibitors are gearing up for the ABSDA Building Supply Expo next month! Many of you already know how important it is to prepare, not just a visually appealing booth, but also a plan to drive traffic, boost participant engagement and ultimately drum up some business.

Here are some quick strategies to help you make the most of your Expo experience.

## 1. Create a Marketing Strategy

The success of your booth begins long before the expo even starts. Leveraging digital and print marketing offerings such as this pre-show magazine, the monthly newsletter, and a targeted email strategy create anticipation and draw attention to your offerings. Launching new products, exclusive promotions and contests will encourage potential visitors to mark your booth as a must-visit destination.

Exploring opportunities for creative signage at the Expo will drive brand recognition, the more visibility you generate, the higher the likelihood of attracting a steady stream of attendees at your booth.

## 2. Always be Engaging

We have seen it before, the attendees walking down the aisle of booths avoiding eye contact, and exhibitors sitting down or on their phone, waiting for attendees to magically appear at their booth... Give them a reason to stop and visit your booth. Sure, everyone loves cool swag and prizes, but that alone won't be enough. Create clever ways to allow your audience to interact with you and your product or service, the more interactive the better.

Bring the right employees and prepare them well! They must be both knowledgeable and approachable, they need to know how to engage with new people and build

relationships. The Expo is one big networking event, and for two full days, they are the face of your organization.

## 3. Interactive Booth Design

A visually appealing booth is a great start, but an interactive one is even better. Create an immersive experience that encourages attendees to spend time at your booth. Incorporate hands-on demonstrations, product samples, or interactive displays that allow visitors to engage with you and your products or services firsthand.

Incorporating technology like touchscreens or virtual reality can showcase your offerings in a memorable and innovative way. The more interactive and engaging your booth is, the more likely attendees will remember and talk about it.

## 4. Engaging Events and Demonstrations

Host live demonstrations or mini-events within your booth space. This not only attracts attention but also provides valuable insights into your products or services. Consider organizing workshops, product launches, or informative sessions that align with the interests of your target audience.

By offering valuable content or entertainment, you not only stand out from other exhibitors but also create a positive association with your brand.

## 5. Networking Opportunities

Take full advantage of the networking

functions, such as the Meet & Greet and the Banquet & Awards Ceremony. Prepare a concise elevator pitch that highlights your unique value proposition and be proactive in initiating conversations. Networking is a powerful tool for long-term business growth. These events provide an excellent opportunity to establish and strengthen relationships with potential clients and industry peers in a more relaxed and personal way.

These events have a history of selling out fast, so make sure you have your tickets!

## 6. Post-Expo Follow-Up

Use the data gathered during the expo, such as contact details and expressed interests, to tailor your follow-up communication. The expo doesn't end when the booths are packed up. Send personalized thank-you emails to attendees who visited your booth, shortly after the Expo, providing additional information, special offers, or exclusive promotions.

Success at the ABSDA Building Supply Expo is not just about the physical presence at your booth but also the strategic planning that goes into attracting and engaging attendees.

Having a successful Expo isn't just about having a physical presence at a booth but the strategic activities that goes into attracting and engaging attendees. Trade show planning takes a lot of work, but it's well worth the investment.



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# Let's talk about Customer Experience

With Jeff Mowatt

## Don't be Better, be Different

Admit it – your customers can find a supplier somewhere in the world with cheaper prices than you. That means that trying to compete based on price is rarely a viable option. What likely differentiates you from others is not your prices, but your service. The logical question then becomes is your service really that different from others. Most managers think great service means their employees are nice. But your competitors know how to be nice too. What distinguishes service as being different is when you focus more on creating trust than merely trying to be nice. Who would you rather do business with – the friend who's nice, but unreliable, or the professional who makes service commitments and then keeps them consistently? In this economy, nice is average, trust-worthy is different.

## The Downside of Good Service

No doubt you've observed that your customers are busier and, thanks to smart phones, more distracted than ever. The problem therefore, with providing customer service that is merely 'good' or 'friendly', is that it doesn't stand-out in the mind of the customer. In other words, average service goes largely unnoticed. To earn your customers' attention, ask yourself, "What are we doing for customers that comes as a surprise?" That's why many business owners and manager, who think their teams are providing good service, are missing the whole 'customer experience' point. Good service has become part of your customer's background noise. What are you doing for customers that's unexpected?

## When Nature Calls

On a recent family vacation, the sign for a roadside ice-cream shop surprised me.

The sign facing the highway featured in large letters, "PUBLIC RESTROOMS". I also noticed the place was packed with customers ordering-up their 14 flavours. Interesting how by offering their restrooms to the world, the world was rewarding them. Yet so often businesses have negative signs like, "Restrooms for customers only", "No refunds w/o receipt", "Cancelled appointments will be charged", etc. I believe too many managers cling to an attitude of scarcity. They are so afraid of minor losses and incidental costs that they literally post signs that annoy customers. There are costs of doing business. Rather than fighting them, maybe we should do the opposite – embrace an attitude of abundance and create policies and signage that errs on the side of generosity. Sometimes, as with the ice cream store, nice folks do finish first.

*Jeff Mowatt is a customer service strategist, Hall of Fame speaker, and bestselling author. For more tips, training tools or to inquire about engaging Jeff for your team visit [www.JeffMowatt.com](http://www.JeffMowatt.com)*

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Bursaries and Scholarships will be presented in June 2024. Contact the ABSDA office at 506-858-0700.

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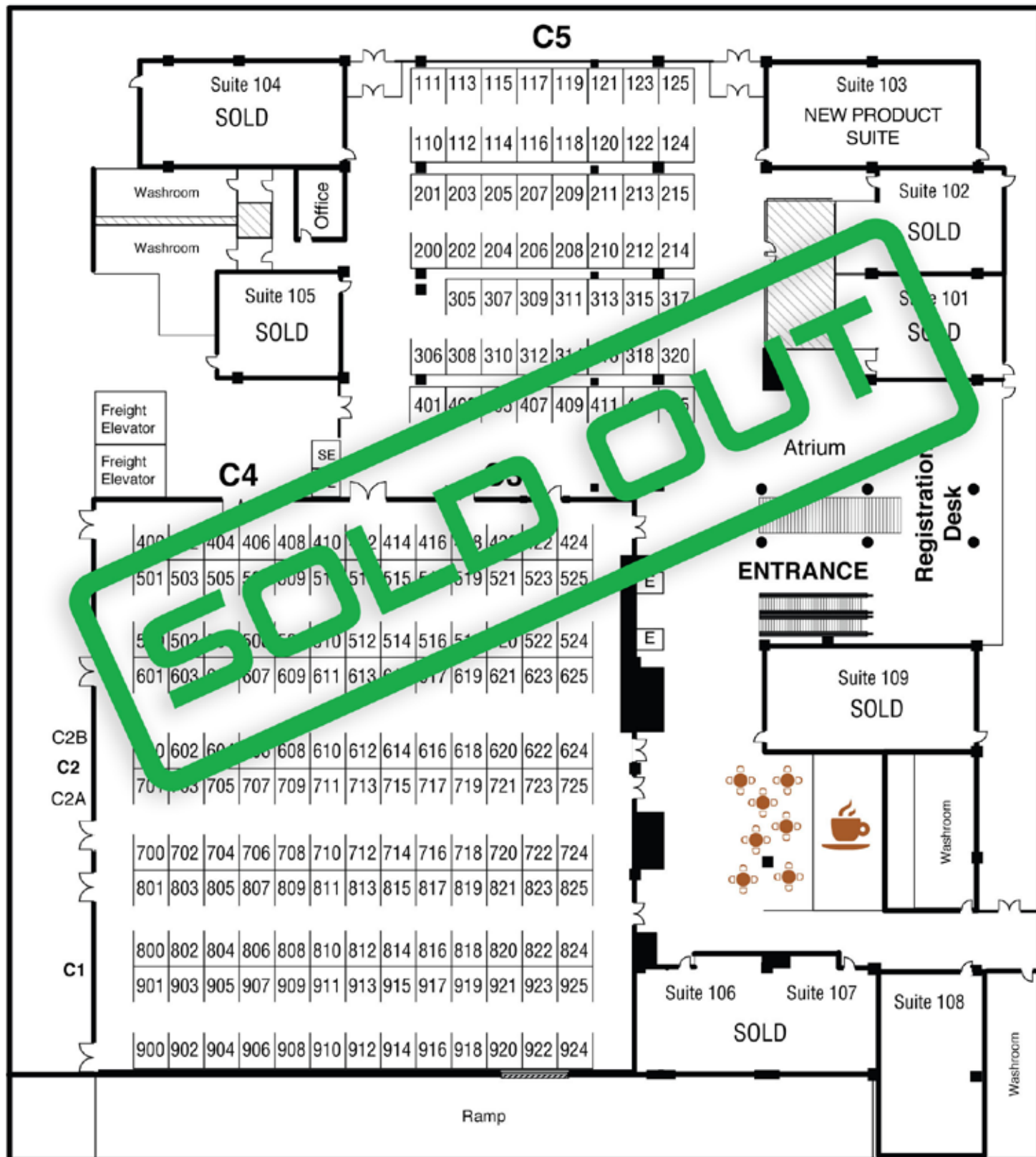


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## 2024 ABSDA BUILDING SUPPLY EXPO Floor Plan







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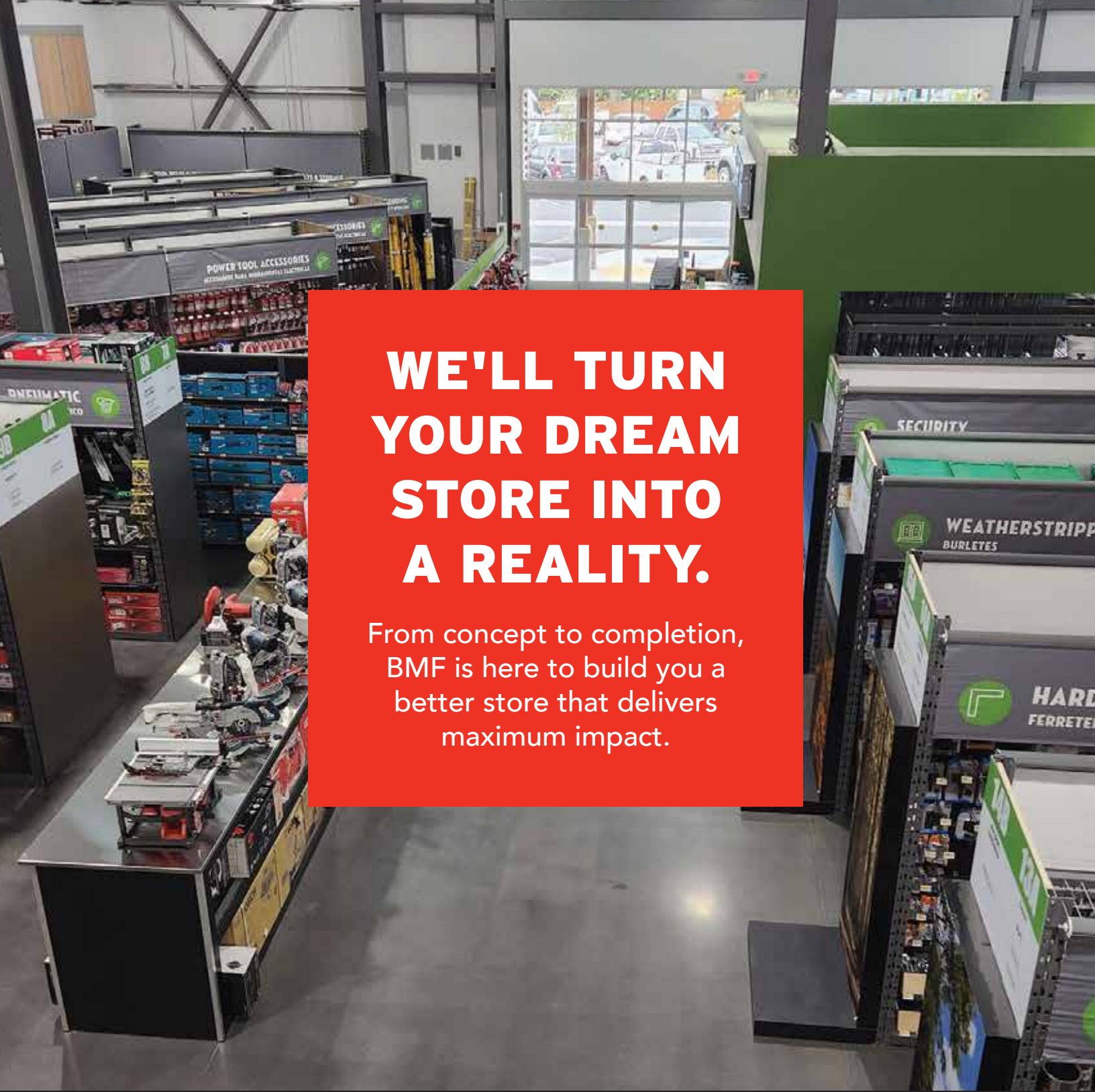
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# Industry News

## SEND US YOUR INDUSTRY NEWS

If you have industry news you want to spread around our network – send it in to us.

New appointments or retirements; new acquisitions or expansions, anything that's important to you is probably important to our Members. Pictures are always great too. Email Terry at [leblanc@absda.ca](mailto:leblanc@absda.ca).

## BP Canada launches Signature shingles

BP Canada has launched Signature, a new line of nature-inspired, multi-toned shingles. The colours from BP Canada's Chroma Colour Lab range from nuanced blacks and greys to multi-toned browns and neutrals. The lab's proprietary new Profusio design patterns create customized roofing by combining selected Signature shades. Profusio merges two shingle colours and alternates them over successive rows to create a third colour that produces a complementary or contrasting visual effects.



## BMR's Simon Gouin promoted to VP role

BY Michael McLarney Published: December 19, 2023

At BMR Group, Simon Gouin has been promoted to the position of vice president, business development, effective Jan. 8, 2024. Gouin joined BMR Group in 2021 as senior director, business development – eastern Canada. He brings over 17 years of business development experience in the industry, including nearly a decade managing hardware stores.

In his new role, he will oversee the expansion of BMR Group's network in eastern Canada and maintain relationships with existing dealers. Gouin will continue to report to André Lavoie, BMR's executive vice president, shared services.



## Regal ideas Inc. Wins National Deck Competition

Regal ideas Inc., the world's leading manufacturer of Aluminum and Glass railing systems joined forces with top Deck Builders Baxter Construction, Ridgeline Deks, Decks Unlimited and Northern Outdoor Living to create some of the winning entries at the 14th Annual North American Deck and Railing Association (NADRA) National Deck Competition in Clearwater Fl.

Regal Ideas went home with a total of 9 awards and during the Summit Andrew Pantelides, Executive Vice President of Regal ideas was presented with the 2024 Terry Award, which recognizes an individual who has made a significant impact on the industry leaving an incredible mark of positive change.

## Marianne Thompson Leaves Home Hardware

Marianne Thompson, chief commercial officer at Home Hardware Stores Ltd., is leaving the company effective Dec. 22. The news was revealed to the industry in a letter to Home Hardware vendors that went out in December.

The letter, signed by Thompson, expresses “a mix of excitement and nostalgia” over the move, and adds that she is leaving “for new opportunities.” The letter goes on to share a list of accomplishments at head office under Thompson's leadership (she reports directly to Home Hardware president and CEO Kevin Macnab).

Thompson joined Home Hardware at the beginning of 2019 after serving as SVP of North American sales at Jeld-Wen Inc.





# Industry News (cont'd)

## JOSH Project Donation

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This will be a big help towards building our gym, music room and getting even more people off the streets.

People helping people is what it's all about.

Thank You ALL for the Support.



## Home Hardware unveils pro rewards transition

Home Hardware Stores Ltd. will roll out a new Scotiabank Home Hardware Pro Visa Business Card for its contractor clientele later this month. As a result, it will conclude its existing Top Notch Rewards program at the end of June. Scotiabank will announce more details about the new program on Jan. 31. Home Hardware has been partnered with Scotiabank through the financial institution's Scene+ program since last summer.

## Reflect on this...

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# Industry News (cont'd)

## Global Windows and Doors

Global Windows and Doors are pleased to announce that Sylvie Godin is expanding her role as Human Resources Manager into Marketing responsibilities as well. Her journey with Global Windows and Doors reflects her strong spirit of ensuring their team's growth and success. Congratulations Sylvie!



## Most economists expect interest rates to fall in 2024.

The Bank of Canada held its benchmark interest rate steady at five percent in its last three decisions of 2023. However, that was up steeply from 0.25 percent in March 2022, when the central bank decided to hike interest rates in an attempt to cool inflation.

In a series of year-end speeches, Tiff Macklem, the governor of the Bank of Canada, acknowledged that the multiple interest rate increases had indeed cut inflation (which was last measured by StatCan at 3.1 percent, year over year, in November).

So, when will interest rates fall? Economists are divided on the issue, not surprisingly. Some of them expect the Bank of Canada to lower its benchmark rate early in 2024. Others expect the central bank to wait until later in the year.

Banks have already begun to cut five-year fixed-rate mortgage rates, presumably in anticipation of rate cuts to come. And also because some 2.2 million Canadian household mortgages are due for renewal over the next two years, according to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. The competition for better rates will be stiff.

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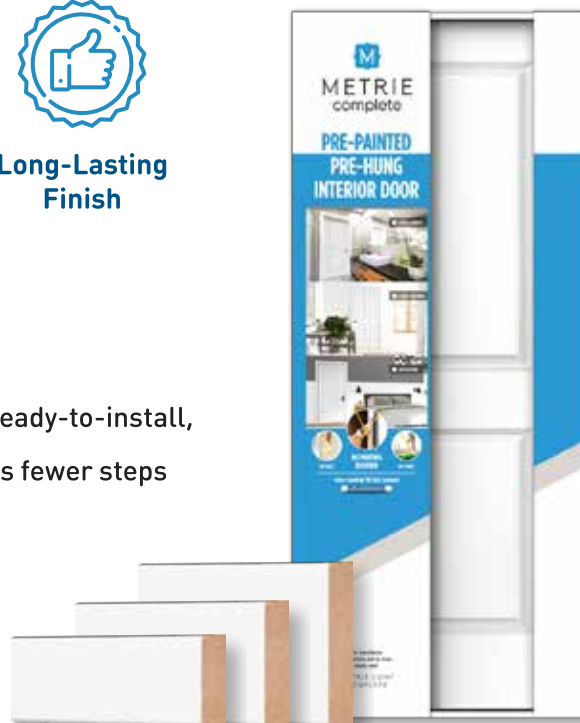


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# Industry News (cont'd)

## Lowe's introduces rewards program for DIY customers

BY Michael McLarneyPublished: January 11, 2024

Lowe's has introduced a loyalty program for DIY customers. The program is designed to help them save on items they need for their homes and earn rewards toward future purchases. Called MyLowe's Rewards, it offers savings as well as exclusive perks for members such as free shipping on standard deliveries. Customers who used a MyLowe's Rewards credit card will save five percent on eligible purchases.



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Jamie Adams,  
Adams Building Centre  
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