

March 18, 2015



“Preserving the Past while Building the Future.”



Celebrating 131 Years of Service

A note from the Siewers Family...

Spring is on its way! We are really excited to put this cold, wet, snowy winter behind us!

We have an exciting newsletter for you this month. Johnny Siewers, our Chairman, will share memories and thoughts from his earlier years here at Siewers Lumber Co. Johnny will continue to share these memories with us in the coming months.

Speaking of fond memories, Siewers Lumber Co. will celebrate Founder's Day on Thursday, May 7th, from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM. We will be hosting the event along with Simpson Strong Tie and Cox Wood Preservers. Mark your calendar and plan on joining us for lunch and birthday cake. We will be celebrating 131 years of business!!!!

Thank you for reading our newsletter and for your ideas on ways of making it better.

Please continue to let us know your needs and that your needs are being met!

-The Siewers Family

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Contractor News

3 Do's and 3 Don'ts to Boost Your Presence Online

By: Dennis Schaefer

Want to boast a bigger social media footprint? Do these three things to boost your social presence:

1. Search your company name on Google and review the first five pages of results. Do this on a quarterly basis.
2. Claim or create your company's profile on the top 10 social platforms for your industry: Facebook, Houzz, Pinterest, Porch, BuildZoom, Twitter, LinkedIn, Manta, Zillow, and Merchant Circle.
3. Build a following, and post on your page at least once a week. Keep your followers entertained and intrigued.

Find out what you can showcase -- and how -- on your company's LinkedIn page to attract new employees and new business. <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/242723>

And DON'T do these three things:

1. Do NOT get on your soap box with religion, politics, or personal issues on your business profiles. Save that for your personal pages.
2. Do NOT start profiles and then leave them abandoned for months and months.
3. Do NOT bore your followers with a bunch of pictures without a story. And above all, do NOT post a year's worth of pictures in just one day.

Dealing with Client Conflict: How to navigate the 4 stages *Seek first to understand, and then to be understood.* **Stephen Covey, Author**

There are the four stages to the client conflict cycle. Following are tips and tactics on how to handle a disgruntled client throughout the way.

Stage 1: The notification

This is when your client first voices his concern. You may receive a phone call but even more common is an email. (Probably because it starts the paper trail for the worst case scenario).

While email is a great way to communicate, it's not the way to respond to problems. Even if your client chooses to complain in an email, resist the urge to follow suit. Instead, pick up the phone and set a time to meet face to face. A friend and fellow business owner says, "If you find yourself having difficulty writing an email in response to a client, that's a clear sign that it's not an email issue."

Stage 2: Remove the splinter before it gets infected

The longer it takes to address the problem the bigger the problem gets in your client's eyes. No one enjoys facing unhappy customers, but speed is one of the most important elements in handling these issues effectively.

The minute you hear about a problem—whether directly from a client or from an employee—reach out immediately. This shows that you are concerned and dedicated to client satisfaction.

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Stage 3: Release the pressure

When you finally meet with the client, keep your cool. Even if you know the client is dead wrong, don't let your emotions get the best of you. Losing your temper will get you nowhere and could damage your relationship forever.

Most importantly, listen first. You may be tempted to try to solve the problem right away (or worse, defend your position). But by this point, the problem has been festering. You need to allow the client an opportunity to vent. So let him. Don't interrupt. Just listen carefully to what's being said. It shows that you sincerely care about the problem and want to help.

Stage 4: The Solution

Once he's released all the pent up emotion, it's time for you to talk. The first words out of your mouth should be his. In other words, repeat the concerns he just voiced. This reinforces to the client that you were listening and understand the problem – it helps calm the situation.

Say, "Let me see if I understand. You're unhappy because. . ." In addition, repeating the issue will ensure that you and the client are in agreement about the full scope of the problem.

If you're not certain what will make the client happy, ask him. This way, he can have some input into solving the issue. Plus, in many cases the client will offer a solution that's much less time intensive or less expensive than you had expected.

Conclusion

While we'd all love to go through life without having to deal with client complaints, that's simply not reality. Problems will arise. So instead of putting your head in the sand and avoiding the issues, follow these tips to turn problems into opportunities!

Click the following to open a great article on "Improving America's Housing 2015"

http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/jchs.harvard.edu/files/jchs_improving_americas_housing_2015.pdf

Quick Contractor Tip

A Tricked Out Miter Saw Cart

Five wheels and a half-sheet of plywood are all it took to build this ingenious mobile base. (*View the slideshow by clicking on link at the end of the article*) By [Brian Way](#)

The mobile base carries a miter saw stand and multiple tools—including a compressor and dust extractor. The stand is a BestFence Pro 3 and the dust hood is a prototype of a new ChopShop hood. Both tools are from FastCap. On the stand is an 8 1/2-inch Hitachi slide miter saw.

The rolling base reduces the amount of time we spend walking to the saw, by making it easy to keep the cut station close to the work.

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To keep the stand from sliding around, the legs drop into 2-inch rubber pipe caps screwed to the base. A plywood frame holds the dust collector in place. Note the tool bag tucked between the compressor and vac.

Cutoffs and trash go into the orange bucket—which pivots out for easy access and tucks away for transport.

My company installs millwork and trim on commercial projects, some so large we might have to walk ¼ to ½ mile inside the building to reach the place where the work is to occur. And the work might be spread out over a large area, as was the case on a recent project where we trimmed a ¼-mile long corridor in a hospital.

At the beginning of the job I realized we'd have to set up our cut station multiple times or spend a lot of time walking back and forth from wherever it was. I didn't feel like wasting that kind of time so I built a mobile base for our miter saw stand from a sheet of plywood, some casters, and a handful of fasteners. Including design time, the base took just over two hours to build—time well spent given the countless hours we saved by keeping the cut station close to the work.

The base has five 2-inch rubber casters, two at each end and one in the middle. The back edge is stiffened by a 6-inch vertical rip of plywood. The center wheel is at the non-stiffened edge so the base can float (flex) over humps in concrete floors. Because the casters are small, they offer enough resistance that there's no need to lock them when using the saw; the stand only moves when I want it to.

The base was made to fit FastCap's BestFence stand—though really, it could have been designed to carry any commercial or home-made saw stand. To keep the stand in position, each of its four feet lands in a 2-inch rubber pipe cap that is screwed to the base. Between the legs we carry a small ultra-quiet compressor, dust extractor, and the safety cones the hospital requires us to use. The dust extractor is held in a cradle to keep it from rolling around and the trash can swings out on a plywood pivot for quick and easy access. With all of this stuff on the base, there is still room to store a tool bag, nail guns, and other small items. We hang our hoses and cords from the BestFence handles. When it's time to move we simply roll the base to wherever the cut station needs to be.

I've built this cart more than once, modifying the design to suit the job at hand. Typically, I unload at the loading dock, put everything on the base, and then roll it to the work area. If there are stairs, I won't load the cart till I get everything to the top—at which point I'm able to roll it around the facility. The base saves us a lot of time by making it easy to keep our cut station and associated tools close to the work area. We use it in much the same way as we use our mobile tool cart.

How would you like to be published in a future issue of Siewers Newsletter?

Be sure it is a quick tip that can help another contractor and one that is simple to understand (“Even I need to understand it!”) It also must be economical to create. Submit your tips to us at laurenf@siewers.com.

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Excerpts from Johnny Siewers II

For the next 6 months, we will be sharing excerpts from Johnny Siewers II's memories of the old mill on Belvidere. Join us as we travel back in time through thoughts and impressions that a young man had over 60 years ago. I hope you enjoy them as well as we have.

1955: Graduated from high school, worked in the summer. We delivered in a pickup truck. Unloaded box cars by hand. Hand unloaded all tractor trailers, taking a whole day to unload and 2-3 days to place lumber in right areas.

We had two offices. The upstairs office, at the top of the stairs, was our estimating office where Fred Siewers, Jr. and Paul S. Diffie worked. The offices had KWP paneling and a window air conditioner as well as a steam heater for the winter. It was a typical 1950's office, barren but sufficient.

The downstairs office was another story. It was a typical 1900 office that had remained the same since my grandfather built the building around 1884. The office had a Pot Belly Stove that was used to heat the office in the winter – always either too hot or too cold.

The Steam Boiler was on the alley behind the mill where we burned shavings, scrap wood and sometimes coal in the winter to generate steam heat for parts of the mill, located on the corner of Belvidere & Canal Streets. Most of the mill building was not heated. We only had cold water in the sinks with toilets that were from around 1900. We had three toilets – one in the office downstairs that was not heated in the winter.

We had a ticket book to write orders in and used carbon paper to make 3 copies when you wrote up the ticket. We had no price book as we priced everything by the inch. In 1960 Yellow Pine Mouldings sold for \$.03 per inch. We milled all our Y.P. boards D4s. For instance $\frac{3}{4}$ Y.P. Quarter Round sold for \$.03 L.F. $3 \frac{1}{2}$ Y.P. moulding trim sold for \$.12 L.F.

Feel Lucky!

Be sure and bring your business card next time you visit Siewers. Just drop it into the glass fish

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*bowl on the counter to enter a monthly drawing.
Good Luck!!!*

**Congratulations to *Travis Gardner* our
March winner!**



Economy Snap Shot.....

	<u>Unemployment Rate – Entire U.S.</u>	<u>Consumer Confidence (Indexed to value of 100 in 1985)</u>	<u>Total Housing Starts/Seasonally Adjusted Annual Rate</u>
February 2015	5.5%	96.4	897,000
Prior Month – January 2015	5.7%	102.9	1,081,000
Prior Year – February 2014	6.7%	78.3	928,000

	<u>Gallon (\$) Of Gas</u>	<u>Existing Home Sales</u>	<u>National Avg. Mortgage Rate</u>
February 28, 2015	\$2.37	N/A	3.71
Prior Month – Jan. 2015	\$2.05	4,820,000	3.67
Prior Year – February 2014	\$3.46	5,078,000	4.30

Market Summary

	<u>March 17, 2015</u>	<u>1/01/15</u>	<u>2/28/14</u>
DOW	17,977	17,823	16,321
NASDAQ	4,929	4,736	4,308
S&P 500	2,081	2,058	1,859

Long & Foster Market Minute / February 2015

New Listings	Current Contracts	Sold Vs. List Price	Months of Supply
1,854	1,570	98.0%	6.8
	Median Sales Price	Days on Market	
	\$195,500	74	

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Company Mission

To serve the needs of contractors and do-it-yourselfers.



**“We often miss opportunity because it’s dressed in overalls and looks like work.”
Thomas Edison**

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**Hours:
Monday – Friday
7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

Share with others.

***If you know someone that would like to receive our
“Siewers Newsletter”, have them email us at
laurenf@siewers.com and we will add them to our
distribution list.***

....Next issue April 17th