



Lumber dealers cautious about social media

SOME industries are filled with “early adopters”—companies and individuals obsessed with embracing the latest technology. The lumber industry is not among them.

So it has been no surprise that as the “social networking” craze snowballs into Twitter hysteria, the average LBM company has turned a deaf ear. Indeed, in a *BPD* search among 50 randomly selected LBM dealers only seven (14%) had a Facebook presence. In a tough market, dealers figure they have better things to do than to troll for friends on the computer.

Yet there’s never been a better time for your company to get started in social media. It’s easy and inexpen-

sive to get started (depending how much time you devote to it). It can help promote your brand, drive more traffic to your website, and provide useful information for your customers. And, best of all, its core is the same as the lumber business’s—communicating with and strengthening bonds within a specifically defined community. It’s about relationships.

While you won’t find a large percentage of LBM companies using social networking sites, you will find a huge number of customers and prospects. According to *Corporate Logo Magazine*, more than 50% of Americans now have a Facebook page, and Facebook has more than 200 million active users—and its

greatest growth isn’t in penniless college kids, but in adults aged 35-49. LinkedIn is the second-largest social media platform with more than 39 million professionals. Twitter has more than 14 million unique visitors and receives over 2 million “tweets” per day. About 5,000 small businesses join Twitter every day.

“We dipped our toe into social media by signing onto Twitter for the very first time two months ago,” said Scott Thomas, director of marketing for distributor Parksite, Batavia, IL. “We were encouraged to find many like-minded businesses in our industry: builders, fabricators, lumberyards, architects and suppliers. We were intrigued and impressed with what

