

January/February 2000

"Putting a Human Face on the Component Industry: Solving Problems Before They Arise" by Melinda Caldwell



Sometimes running a business requires gracefully dealing with those days when everything that can go wrong does. But to run a successful business, you must be prepared for more than damage control—you need to be ready with viable solutions to problems. In the last few months, WTCA has talked a great deal about “putting a human face on the component industry.” The concept has become something of a theme for the association in its efforts to help members grow their businesses. But a concept remains rather distant and impersonal until people who benefit from its results put it into action. For this reason, *WOODWORDS* is excited to introduce a new column entitled “Human

Faces,” to share stories of real life businesspeople that have put this concept into practice.

Take Billy Nunley of Contractors Building Systems, Inc., (CBS) in Madison, Alabama. A few months ago, CBS faced what appeared to be a dilemma beyond their control, yet one that could severely damage their reputation with their customers—the Alabama State Department of Transportation computers were down for an entire week and getting the wide load permits necessary to deliver their trusses was impossible. State Troopers refused to make any exceptions, despite the unusual circumstances, leaving CBS with trusses that were stacking up and customers who were losing their cool. This was one of those situations that, in a company that lacked foresight, could have caused serious damage to a business’s reputation.

Fortunately, this wasn't the case for CBS and Billy Nunley. Having taken an interest in the most recent state legislature election, Nunley chose to support Jeff Enfinger, a local land developer from the county CBS calls home. By developing this relationship, Nunley made the concept of putting a human face on the component industry real for CBS and his community.

When Nunley contacted Enfinger with the specifics of this unusual situation and the impact it would have on his business, Enfinger had a face and a relationship to connect to a business and to the truss industry as a whole—the face of a loyal constituent he could help in a real and meaningful way. Enfinger was able to get the permits needed to deliver CBS’s trusses just in time to keep their customers happy. Because Nunley took the time to make contact with more than just those people who could directly affect his bottom line, he created solutions to unforeseeable problems before they arose.

“The old adage ‘it’s not what you know, it’s who you know’ becomes incredibly true when you’re in a situation where all the knowledge you could possibly have about your industry can’t fix the problem,” said Nunley as he recounted this event. “Developing relationships outside the industry is so important because you need to choose your friends and know who you can trust. Thankfully,

we learned the easy way what a positive effect putting a human face on the component industry can have on our business.”

Does your business have a “human face” to share with *WOODWORDS* readers? Has an effort to develop relationships in your community paid off in a positive way for your company? Has a grass roots initiative produced favorable results in a local legislative issue? Contact Melinda Caldwell at 608/274-4849 or email mcaldwell@woodwords.com with your story. Putting a human face on the component industry can make a difference!

[SBC HOME PAGE](#)

Copyright © 2000 by Truss Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. For permission to reprint materials from SBC Magazine, call 608/310-6706 or email editor@sbcmag.info.

The mission of Structural Building Components Magazine (SBC) is to increase the knowledge of and to promote the common interests of those engaged in manufacturing and distributing of structural building components to ensure growth and continuity, and to be the information conduit by staying abreast of leading-edge issues. SBC will take a leadership role on behalf of the component industry in disseminating technical and marketplace information, and will maintain advisory committees consisting of the most knowledgeable professionals in the industry. The opinions expressed in SBC are those of the authors and those quoted solely, and are not necessarily the opinions of any of the affiliated associations (SBCC, WTCA, SCDA & STCA).