

STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE (FORMERLY WOODWORDS)

June/July 2000

From Our Readers:



Via Email:

Great article in the April *WOODWORDS*, Kirk! [See "Can an Asset Make Your Business Complacent?"] You have touched on something that we have been discussing here at Littfin's since we were using a Prime 2250 (1984). I can tell you the biggest abusers of our time are engineers and architects. They often change the plan at least a couple of times while it is in our design department. While changes to the original plan are part of the problem, a greater part is that the plans most often will not work as originally drawn. Our best estimate is that at least 60-70 percent of the plans that we receive cannot be trussed according to the plan.

Our business is done through a dealer network. A plan is already bid at the point that a technician begins to work on it. Details that are critical at the design stage are not as important at the bid stage. Bidding is still a process of estimating the selling price of the job. If we were to treat each estimate as if it were an actual job, we would have to triple the number of technicians we have to handle the design work. This would only add an additional cost as it is not possible to get paid for bidding (I wish!). While we do get paid for the costs that are incurred because of the effects of the changes on the actual trusses, we have not been very successful in getting paid for the additional design time. There are too many manufacturers that are willing to do it at no additional charge.

I think a bigger problem is that with the shortage of good truss technicians and a booming economy, the time that they spend re-designing is more of a concern to me. Even if I was able to bill out their time at an acceptable rate, I do not want to. My responsibility is to keep the plant filled with a steady supply of work, not make our layout/design department into a profit center. My thoughts are that the market already has engineers and architects that need to start doing their jobs and give us complete and accurate plans. On the jobs that do not have an engineer/architect we have discontinued answering the questions that should be answered by them and are referring our customers to them. We have a list of names and numbers that we pass on to them. Our hope is that by directing our customer to the people that should be answering these questions, we don't create the opportunity for them to have us do it for nothing. This goes back to the question that you ask in the third paragraph of your article, "What business are we in?" We are truss manufacturers. Once again, great article!

Bob Mochinski, Engineering Manager

Littfin Truss Company, Winsted, MN

Hi Kirk,

I read with interest the *WOODWORDS* article, "What You Should Do IMMEDIATELY when the Media Calls!" (April 2000, p. 17). The information was right on point. The media feeds on "emotion" and does not seem to deal well with facts provided in a calm and unhurried manner. I would suspect that anyone who deals with structural components on a building would do well to review the prescribed Action Checklist and know, in advance, who to call and what to do.

Keep up the great work!

Truly,

Rich Kessler, Sales Representative
Simpson Strong-Tie Company, Inc., Longwood, FL

Kirk:

Just a short note to tell you how well done I thought the articles were in the April *WOODWORDS*. I especially enjoyed your piece on complacency in the face of ever-mounting risks—which our members are assuming without being compensated. As you know, it's a theme you and I have been preaching for some time. Your article was a good synthesis.

WOODWORDS was also brought up at last evening's WTCCA Chapter and Board meetings—and unanimously praised.

Thanks for all your hard work for the industry.

I also saw you on the Houston video interview. Good job, especially under the circumstances.

Regards,

Allen Holt Gwyn
Conner Gwyn Schenck PLLC, Greensboro, NC

[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).