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Making BCMC the Best It Can Be: BCMC 2002...Yes! by Carl Schoening

As many SBC Magazine readers know, I travel a great deal each year. I visit component manufacturers from the East Coast to the West Coast, from Alaska to Texas. I normally spend a lot of time talking about new products and changes in the component industry. Since last November, however, I have spent as much or more time talking about WTCA, the revised ANSI/TPI standard and BCMC 2002. As I began discussing BCMC 2002, a strange thing occurred, component manufacturers started giving me crazy reasons why they didn't attend BCMC.

Uh-oh...I feel the soapbox rising beneath my feet as I launch into a sweating, gasping-for-air tirade about the importance of component manufacturers supporting their trade association and the value they can derive from attending BCMC 2002. I am very passionate about the truss industry, having spent a great deal of my adult life working in it. As I am the "West Coast Distributor" of being involved, I always feel compelled to correct the reasoning of those who view the component industry as just another part of the construction industry. As I traveled this year, I wrote down some of the reasons why component manufacturers don't attend BCMC and how I shared with them the value of the show. In most cases, I was able to convince people that they could reap benefits from sending employees to BCMC 2002. Of course, they could have just been agreeing to get me off the soapbox, but I will be calling them as the show nears (you know who you are...expect my call). Below are a few of the more unusual excuses people give for not wanting to attend and my responses.

REASON:

I used to go to BCMC, but there is never anything new to see.

RESPONSE:

ARE YOU KIDDING ME?!?!? Every year there are new products that have been developed since the one before. Many companies use BCMC to launch new product marketing plans. If you aren't there, you have to wait until a salesperson comes by, which could be months later. This gives your competition a head start of a few months in your marketplace because they attended BCMC and you didn't.

REASON:

It is too expensive to attend BCMC.

RESPONSE:

ARE YOU KIDDING ME?!?!? If you are in the market to upgrade equipment, where else can you see the latest in saws, tables, material handling equipment and jiggling equipment in ONE place?

Think of the expense of traveling to several different locations to compare saws, and when you are done, trying to remember the subtle differences between each. At BCMC you can simply walk back across the show floor and ask more questions or watch the demonstration again. If you are considering new software, it is an incredible advantage to be able to see, touch and test-drive software with all the newest bells and whistles. Compare that to the amount of lost time in your design office when you have each company come in and present a demonstration for a day. The lost productivity in these examples more than pays for attendance and travel to BCMC.

REASON:

The truss industry is archaic and there really isn't anything to learn at BCMC.

RESPONSE:

(This is where I lost it.) ARE YOU KIDDING ME?!?!?! The component industry is the single most sophisticated part of the construction industry! The BCMC 2002 format has been changed to allow manufacturers greater opportunity to learn and move our industry farther ahead of other construction-related industries. Workshop tracks including Production Management, Sales Management, Technical Management, and Risk Management and Insurance are being offered. These workshops are being conducted BY component manufacturers, FOR component manufacturers. We can all learn much from our peers who have been doing the same business we have been doing, but looking at it from their own point of view. If you bring your point of view, everyone in the room wins. The sharing of this information will help propel some manufacturers to the next level. Component manufacturers will be able to hear about and see how others cut, build, ship and track production. One positive improvement from this information will offset any expense of attending BCMC 2002. Finding ways to reduce liability and improve risk tolerance will be valuable for years to come. Improving the management of sales and design will help component manufacturers derive greater value and profitability from areas viewed as fixed costs by many.

I wasn't finished yet, but my boss pulled me back into my seat. He didn't think that the customer could back his chair up any farther without cutting a hole in the wall (I want to apologize again for that....you know who you are....expect a call).

I hope that everyone can see the value of attending BCMC 2002. The BCMC Committee has worked hard and is expecting a great turnout. We have new exhibitors again this year and long time exhibitors with new and improved products. Please join us in Columbus, Ohio for BCMC 2002: Building A New Tomorrow.

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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).