



Bcmc 2006

Exhibitor Spotlight: Finnforest USA

One long-time exhibitor reveals how the show has changed, why his company continues to participate and how he uses it to make product improvements.

by Stephanie Watrud

As Managing Director for Finnforest USA, Jim Gilleran knows what it takes to be successful at the Building Component Manufacturers Conference (BCMC). Exhibiting since 1994, Gilleran's company has seen the show change from the alternate year tabletop display format to the full show structure including machinery and exhibitor demonstrations. He has witnessed the growth of the show as well as the longevity and stability of the component manufacturers that attend BCMC, and is amazed at the show's transformation in a little over a decade.

"The show has grown and is so well attended by decision-makers that it's a very good source for our company to discuss, negotiate with and learn from our existing customers," said Gilleran. "It's also a great opportunity to get to know potential new customers." Another change Gilleran has noticed is there is no longer just equipment at the show; there are higher end engineered products. "BCMC is a great place to expose one's products," said Gilleran. "It's also very important for everyone in your organization to see what the competition is doing."

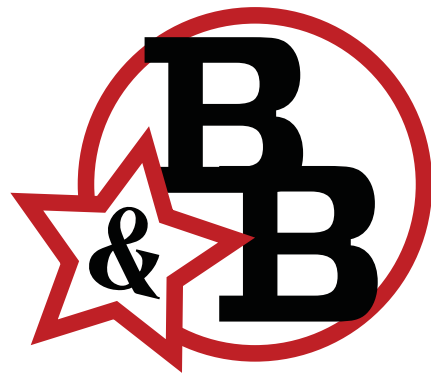
At the 2005 show, Finnforest USA premiered a new stair product. Gilleran recognizes how effective stairs are as components, and believes launching new products and technology at the show is part of the global industry. When a new product is unveiled at the show, Gilleran says it drives attendee feedback, which in turn facilitates product improvement. "There has been an overall cultural shift in the show, as well as an increased opportunity to learn about equipment. That focus on education wasn't there 12 years ago," said Gilleran.

"There are qualified individuals dealing with engineered wood products and other materials at the show that were not there when we started exhibiting years ago," said Gilleran. Companies are sending every level of their staff to BCMC to maximize their current knowledge and exposure to all that is new. Although not every attendee is the "head" decision-maker, most report back to the company owner, president or CEO to let them know about a product or feature that they feel would enhance their operation. As a result, manufacturers are that much closer to real purchasing or implementation decision maker for a product.

Along with the upper management, Finnforest sends a representative from several departments to the show: research and development, marketing, logistics and customer relations. Once BCMC has concluded, they have a debriefing session to regroup on feedback, issues or suggestions made by customers. They determine adjustments to be made in how to go to market, how to proceed with new trends, and how to implement attendees' creative suggestions. Gilleran said the team asks themselves, "What can we improve upon for next year's show?"

Gilleran said his company strives to nurture relationships between staff members and existing customers at the show, by "truly working as a team to serve our customers." **SBC**

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at a glance

- Exhibiting at the BCMC show is a great opportunity to get to know potential new customers.
- Engineered wood products become increasingly prevalent at BCMC in the last several years.
- When a new product is unveiled at the show, Jim Gilleran says it drives attendee feedback, which in turn facilitates product improvement.

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