

How to Choose the Right Supplier for Your Building Materials Center or Lumberyard

As the demand for building products has increased, so have costs. It's more important than ever to look for ways to reduce carrying costs. Partnering with the right suppliers is key.

Good relationships between lumber dealers and suppliers are beneficial, and they're an integral part of an efficient supply chain. To achieve such relationships, you must do business with suppliers focused on building *partnerships*.

A strong partnership with a key supplier is instrumental in your ability to become more competitive in your marketplace. And a supplier's location, product availability, and internal systems have a direct impact on your dealership's ability to minimize carrying costs.

7 Things to Look for in a Building Materials Supplier

Consider these *potential* features and benefits of doing business with building product suppliers, then decide what's most important to your business.

1. Maintains Supply Chain Visibility

Supply chain visibility helps mitigate issues like frequent deliveries to your warehouse, yard or job site. A supplier can improve your visibility by offering shipping notices and requiring drivers to photograph deliveries. [BPI's advanced shipping notices](#) provide you with real-time information about shipment statuses, including enroute with ETA, updated ETA, order arrived, and order delivered. The [Delivery Picture Program at BPI](#) requires drivers to take a photo of each delivery. The images and delivery receipts are saved and timestamped, so tracking is easy and proof of delivery is immediately available.



2. Offers Enhanced Secure Packaging

When products arrive with shipping damage, the consequences can be costly and time-consuming. Look for a supplier whose packaging has been field-tested [and received positive reviews](#) for its ability to help mitigate the damage that can occur during transport. [BPI's enhanced packaging process](#) ensures all building materials and millwork arrive in pristine condition. The proprietary process includes shrink-wrapped trim, customized racking on trucks, and a specialized palleting solution for doors, siding, and decking.

3. Ensures Wide Product Availability

Lumber dealers need an array of products to serve multiple customer types with varying budgets. Suppliers with [expanded distribution centers](#) will offer a wider selection for you to choose from. Additionally, in many cases, they have a distribution center located in your area. When time is of the essence, and you need products fast, a supplier with a wide selection of materials near you is incredibly valuable. And, of course, choose a supplier that offers products and materials from quality brands you can trust.



4. Fulfills Orders On-Time and Accurately

Delivering building products late or shipping the wrong materials can delay and even halt contractors' project deadlines. One way suppliers can uphold speed and accuracy is to have an organized order fulfillment process. BPI has recently improved its internal systems through [optimized bin locations](#), which involve re-sequenced and relabeled product locations for every item. The product bin labels are barcoded and contain information about the stock or overstock of the item located in that specific location. This innovative solution also works seamlessly with BPI's warehouse management and enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems.

5. Fosters Good Relationships with Top Manufacturers

The right supplier will regularly attend manufacturer educational sessions and product demonstrations. This means that your supplier reps will know the building products well and can access experts to educate your staff. They'll also be able to suggest the right materials for the application at hand and inform you of new innovations.

6. Enhances Your Relationships with Customers

Every building materials dealer has a unique set of needs. And customer requirements call for solutions developed through close collaboration between manufacturers, your supplier, your company, and your contractors, leading to satisfaction up and down the supply chain. Your supplier reps also consistently meet with your contractors to introduce them to new products, understand what their concerns are and learn what's happening in the industry.

7. Helps You Compete Against Big-Box Stores

Aim for a supplier whose primary focus is on the success and profitability of your business. This will, in turn, help you stay competitive in a dynamic market. They should provide:

Education: Has a knowledgeable sales staff.

Resources: Implements programs and solutions that support your success.

Customer Support: Connects regularly to ask about your needs and address challenges.

Sales Support: Trains your sales staff on products and assists them in presentations to your customers to increase conversions.

Boosting profitability can also be achieved through lowering your total procurement costs. Working with a dealer that can anticipate demand and help you optimize inventory levels is a great way to improve efficiently. Your dealer should also continuously work to improve their service to you to minimize product damage, incorrect orders, and optimize the entire buying process. Finding a supplier that will check these boxes for you will greatly help to lower your operating expenses.

Choosing the Right Supplier Today Will Garner the Greatest Benefits Tomorrow

With over 50 years of experience in the building supply industry, Building Products, Inc. is the top supplier of building supplies to dealers throughout the Midwest. Our locations in Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin mean that dealers can count on us to supply lumber while minimizing costs and boosting profits.

We're passionate about serving our customers with excellence and integrity through teamwork and accountability. [Contact us today](#) to learn more about how we can partner with you.

