

Lumberyards vs Big Box Stores – BPI’s Strategy for Your Success

Lumberyards need to expand and market their unique services if they want to outcompete big box stores. Unlike the big box competitors, your lumberyard is much more than just a place to buy products – you provide the knowledge and services that make a builder’s job easier. Focus on what differentiates your business - the value-added services that benefit builders and DIY homeowners, such as:

- **Value-Added Products:** Many lumberyards and building material dealers generate a significant share of their income from value-add work such as selling and installing manufactured millwork components.
- **Take-off Lists:** These continue to be a mainstay of lumberyards despite the growth of outside-cost estimating companies. Many builders still find value in having lumberyards provide these lists to assist them while they plan projects.
- **Component Manufactured Products:** Demand for fabricated components continues to grow, especially for roof trusses, floor trusses and wall panels. Working with a supplier, like BPI, that can efficiently provide these products is a great way to continue sales growth.
- **Design Services:** Having in-house design services, especially for kitchen and baths, helps ensure supplies are purchased at your lumberyard.
- **Installation Services:** If you supply kitchen cabinets and countertops, then installation of these items is a great addition to your service package. Given the overall labor shortage, having these services available for contractors and remodel customers is a big selling point.



7 steps to help your lumberyard outperform big box stores

Make sure to choose a supplier that will support your goals to lower procurement costs, optimize inventory, educate customers, help you prepare for business surges and market your strengths.

1. Choose suppliers that help you lower procurement costs

Partner with a reliable supplier like BPI for high-quality products at fair prices plus additional services that will help lower operating costs. For example, how products are packaged and delivered can significantly lower your procurement costs, as does consulting with your supplier to optimally manage your inventory levels.

2. Partner with a supplier focused on your success and profitability

Your supplier should be actively supporting your business and helping you stay competitive in a shifting market. They should provide:

- Education: A knowledgeable staff and site visits from product manufacturers.
- Resources: Programs and solutions that support your success.
- Customer Support: Regular communication about your needs, challenges, and soliciting constructive input.
- Sales Support: Training on products and assistance in customer presentations to increase leads and sales.

A good supplier should also provide resources for you to increase business, such as ways to prepare and plan for up-surges in business during storm damage season:

- Planning ahead to get storm business ahead of big-box stores
- Creating storm damage activation and marketing plans
- Using BPI and GAF resources to gain storm damage business



3. Provide a high level of customer service

Be more than just a merchant - offer easily accessible and knowledgeable advice for builders. For example, if you don't provide installation services for a particular product, have a list of installation specialists or contractors that can assist the customer with their project. Ensure that customers can easily find a rep to help them with any questions or concerns. Becoming an information center for your customers will greatly help to ensure that your business is always top-of-mind.

4. Implement technology to allow self-service

Ecommerce and electronic communication have undergone dramatic growth and will soon be a necessity to keep ahead of big box stores. Customers should be able to view and pay their bills online. They also want to check availability in real-time and have BOPIS (Buy Online, Pick up In Store) possible.

5. Provide educational resources for contractors and homeowners

A partnership with a good supplier like BPI can help you educate your customers through multiple channels, such as:

- Manufacturer visits for training on new products
- Sessions for contractors on product compatibility, availability and repairability to help them more accurately estimate costs for remodeling projects or storm damage repair
- Resources for homeowners and contractors on how to prepare for and deal with storm damage repair and insurance claims
- Providing hail and storm damage reports for contractors to help build their business with realtors and inspectors.

6. Marketing - communicate regularly with customers

You can benefit from marketing emails to customers, providing educational content and turning them into brand advocates. Regular newsletters can keep customers informed about new products, seasonal deals, inspiration ideas, as well as your lumberyard and your team members. Yard signs or door hangers advertising that you provided roofing or siding materials on a remodel project are also a good investment.

7. Use social media

Strategic social media campaigns are one of the best ways to compete against big box stores and can be used for online customer service or advertising new product launches and sales events. Image-centric channels like Pinterest and Instagram are a great way to show off clients' projects, keep customers engaged and get them thinking of investing in their own visions. Showcase expertise in your niche with informative blogs, checklists or "how-to" videos to keep top-of-mind.

BPI has the resources to help you implement these tactics to help you compete more effectively with big box stores. [Contact BPI](#) to see how we can level-up your strategy.

