



WOOD INDUSTRY RESOURCE COLLABORATIVE

Wood Industry Resource Collaborative to Spark Workforce Growth

Eleven wood industry associations are pleased to announce the formation of a coalition aimed primarily at perpetuating the long-term growth of the industry by sustaining an engaged workforce. Since its formative two-day brainstorming meeting in November 2017, the group has chosen to organize under the name Wood Industry Resource Collaborative (WIRC). Pronounced “Work,” the name does a great job maintaining the group’s mission and goals.

The collaborative group is a consortium of trade associations, all related to the woodworking or the wood products manufacturing industry. The group’s purpose is to provide a collection of tools and solutions for the wood industry to attract and retain employees, while improving the perception of the industry. This group exists to connect industry associations with one another and support and strengthen the woodworking industry and their associations’ members by sharing information and resources.

The charter members of the collaborative group agreed to the following goals and identified those influencers who can effectively drive interest in the wood industry as a career path (e.g. parents, teachers, social media, and financial resources):

- **Attract Employees:** Increase student awareness of wood industry careers; increase parent awareness of wood industry careers; increase student engagement; and increase High School counselor awareness of wood industry careers.
- **Retain Employees:** Increase association memberships; improve association member engagement and satisfaction; and improve work culture at member companies.
- **Improve the Perception of the Industry:** Develop and communicate the stories of the industry; increase positive media coverage; increase engagement with legislative and educator communities; and involve more associations in WIRC initiatives.

The primary target for the group’s efforts will be Generation Z—people born between 1995 and 2014 who are the most diverse and multicultural of any generation in the U.S. Fifty-five percent are Caucasian, 24% are Hispanic, 14% are African-American and 4% are Asian. In addition to the youngest generation, the group will also target Millennials and possibly Gen Xers (parents).

If a trade association would like to participate in the group, they are represented by their executive-level staff. Among the benefits of membership in the collaborative group are: inclusion in the ongoing conversation about industry-wide topics, such as workforce development; and access to resources and information developed or shared by the group.

The collaborative group meets monthly via phone and semiannually in person to explore and prioritize the goals and tactics for achieving them. “The group is working to identify what each association brings to the table, and what each needs for their members to change corporate culture and attract and retain good employees,” said group organizer Adria Salvatore, Education Director of AWFS®. For more information about WIRC, visit www.woodindustryed.org/wirc.

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Charter Member Organizations

Forum organizers and charter members include executive level representatives from the following associations: AWFS® (Association of Woodworking & Furnishings Suppliers); AWI (Architectural Woodwork Institute); CMA (Cabinet Makers Association); HMA (Hardwood Manufacturers Association); NBMDA (North American Building Material Distribution Association); NWFA (National Wood Flooring Association); WCMA (Wood Component Manufacturers Association); WMIA (Woodworking Machinery Industry Association); WMMA (Wood Machinery Manufacturers of America); WPMA (Wood Product Manufacturers Association); and WMMPA (Moulding & Millwork Producers Association).