

# The Link

Newsletter | November 2021



## More than Just Talk

by Linda Jovanovich  
HMA Executive Vice President



Call me nonsensical, but I'm already gearing up for the Thanksgiving holiday. I love the excitement, noise and chaotic clutter that comes with having family and friends close by. And, I'm looking forward to sampling some of those delicious holiday treats that for some reason, we only enjoy at Thanksgiving! (So much to be thankful for!) But before I get the party started, I'd like to address a few 'business' items.

First off, if you have yet to do so, I encourage you to register for HMA's upcoming **Virtual Fall Regional Meeting**. The camera crew and I toured the Troy, Pennsylvania, facilities of HMA member **Cummings Lumber Company, Inc.** And you'll want to see this.

The event specifics, including to-date sponsors, can be found in this issue of *The Link*. And remember, for HMA Members and 2021 National Conference & Expo vendors, sponsors, and promotion contributors, there is no charge to participate. Simply register at [HMAmembers.org](https://HMAmembers.org).

And secondly, in a recent blog, Alan Beaulieu, president of ITR Economics™, discussed a critical issue that has been menacing employers everywhere—the labor problem—and I thought it important to share his insight with you.

*"Labor will be an ongoing issue for most companies in 2022 and 2023. The battle for skills will be ongoing, and recruitment, retention, compensation, benefits, and culture will be constant topics of conversation at companies that are aggressively battling for labor. The reality is that you will have to spend the money if you are going to have the labor to get the work done. And, it will be expensive."*

From where I sit, he's doing much more than sharing some uncomfortable news. He's talking about **Investing in the Future**. And ironically, that's the theme of HMA's 2022 National Conference and Expo. Many of the Conference presenters will be discussing actions needed today, in order to experience a more fruitful tomorrow. And your participation is critical.

You'll find the preliminaries of the March 23–25 event in this month's issue of *The Link*, so continue reading, please, and by all means, plan to join us.

## Also In This Month's Issue

- HMA's Virtual Fall Regional Tour – Register Today!
- NatCon 2022 – "Investing in the Future"
- Conference Registration is OPEN
- Become a Conference Sponsor
- Bipartisan Lawmakers address Unfair Shipping Practices, *by Dana Lee Cole*
- Rethinking Your Social Media Strategy for 2022, *by Ian Faight*
- The "Pluses" of Thermally Modified Hardwood
- Avoiding the Micromanaging Trap

## New "Digs" for the HMA

Yes, you read that correctly. We're making a move. And HMA will soon be settling into a new space, located north of Pittsburgh and more conducive to our scaled-down requirements. Please make a note of the following change:

### Hardwood Manufacturers Association

One Williamsburg Place, Suite 108  
Warrendale, PA 15086



## HMA's Virtual Fall Regional Tour – Register Today!

Calling all HMA members! How about a close-up look at upstate Pennsylvania, and all from the comfort of your office? Then join us for a virtual tour of the sawmill, pellet, and flooring facilities of HMA member, **Cummings Lumber Company, Inc.**

This online event is set for **Thursday, November 18, 3 pm (EST)**. You'll be hearing from various members of the Cummings Lumber team, including Roy and Scott Cummings, seeing their sawmill and kiln operations, and touring the facilities where they manufacture their Barefoot Brand Flooring, Barefoot Pellets, and Sunfire Heating Blocks.

For HMA Members and 2021 National Conference and Expo vendors, sponsors, and promotion contributors, there is *NO* charge to participate. Other industry stakeholders interested in this 'virtual' visit to Cummings Lumber are welcome to participate for the registration fee of \$95.

*Important Note:* Advance registration is required for all participants. So please, take care of business today at [HMAmembers.org](http://HMAmembers.org). Then, one week before the event, all registrants will be emailed a link to the virtual presentation. Don't miss this!

And special thanks to our sponsors:  
**Corley Manufacturing Co., Lewis Controls, Inc.,**  
and **Mellott Manufacturing Co., Inc.**







## HMA National Conference and Expo

Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort  
Miramar Beach, Florida

March 23–25, 2022



## NatCon 2022 – “Investing in the Future”

If you agree that success is measured by meeting both goals and challenges, then join us to discuss this—and much more—at HMA’s 2022 National Conference and Expo, **March 23–25**, at the Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort in Miramar Beach, Florida.

The theme of our event is ***Investing in the Future***, because now is the time to expand your frame of reference; be flexible to change; look to others as resources for growth; and invest in alternative processes in order to progress and achieve success.

The multi-day event is open to all hardwood industry stakeholders, and details regarding presenters, discussion topics, registration, exhibit space, and sponsorship opportunities will be heading your way. But first, here is important travel and hotel information.

- Air travelers have **two** airport options: Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport (VSP) or Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport (ECP).
- **Sand Dollar Transportation** is the recommended airport-to-hotel transportation company. They offer a simple, flat-rate fee, but reservations must be made in advance. Call **850.687.9650** or visit **[SandDollarTransportation.com](https://www.sanddollartransportation.com)**.
- **The Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort** is a 2,400-acre destination resort, located between the Gulf of Mexico and the Choctawhatchee Bay. It offers 4-star accommodations, ultra-modern amenities, gourmet dining, four award-winning golf courses, and countless adventures in or on emerald green water. **Make your reservation**, today.

### Conference Registration is OPEN

Don’t be left out! **Register** to attend HMA’s 2022 National Conference and Expo and secure your participation in this not-to-be-missed event.

Not an HMA member? No worries. The Conference is open to all hardwood industry stakeholders! So join us and experience what the majority of our members say is the greatest benefit of their HMA membership—a significant connection to a unique forest products industry brain trust, and a collective wisdom that is shared openly, freely, and with great enthusiasm.

It is simply **peer-to-peer networking** at its best. And it’s your opportunity to mix and mingle with a host of interesting and experienced hardwood industry professionals. Don’t be left out.

Conference details can be found at **[HMAmembers.org](https://HMAmembers.org)**. Questions? Contact the HMA at **412.244.0440**.

### Become a Conference Sponsor

Please keep a close watch on your email, because coming your way soon is everything you’ll need to know about being a sponsor of HMA’s 2022 National Conference and Expo. What’s the big deal about being a sponsor?

- For starters, it’s a great way to advertise your Company’s products and services. And it’s also an easy, cost-effective way to establish your ‘company presence’ at the Conference, without taking a step away from your desk.
- To thank you for your extra measure of financial support, HMA will “spotlight” **you** at **[HMAmembers.org](https://HMAmembers.org)**, in ***The Link***, and throughout the event in Florida.

Hands down, it’s a ‘win-win’ for all involved. So, get the ball rolling by contacting the HMA at **412.244.0440** or **412.215.9256**. This is an advertising opportunity too good to pass up!

## Bipartisan Lawmakers Address Unfair Shipping Practices

by Dana Lee Cole

*Executive Director, Hardwood Federation*



As lawmakers juggle multiple priorities this fall, a bipartisan group of House lawmakers have begun to move legislation that would protect U.S. exporters, including the hardwood industry, from unfair ocean shipping practices that hinder the movement of products to overseas markets.

In August, Reps. John Garamendi (D-CA) and Dusty Johnson (R-SD) introduced the industry-supported “Ocean Shipping Reform Act of 2021” (H.R. 4996). This important bill would make long overdue updates to the federal “Shipping Act;” institute remedies for unfair shipping practices that exacerbate global supply chain disruptions caused by the pandemic; and specifically empower the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) to prevent ocean carriers from declining export cargo, if the containers can be loaded safely and within a reasonable time frame. The bill would also:

- Establish reciprocal trade to promote U.S. exports as part of the FMC’s mission.
- Require ocean carriers to adhere to minimum service standards to reflect best practices in the global shipping industry.

- Require ocean carriers, or marine terminal operators, to certify that any late fees—known in maritime parlance as “detention and demurrage” charges—comply with federal regulations, or face penalties.
- Shift the burden of proof regarding the reasonableness of “detention or demurrage” charges from the invoiced party to the ocean carrier or marine terminal operator.
- Prohibit ocean carriers from declining opportunities for U.S. exports unreasonably, as determined by the FMC in a new, required rulemaking.
- Require ocean common carriers to report to the FMC, each calendar quarter, on total import/export tonnage and 20-foot equivalent units (loaded/empty) per vessel that makes port in the U.S.

Back in September, the Hardwood Federation signed on to a letter—including more than 100 agriculture associations—in support of the legislation. Additionally, the Hardwood Federation and its coalition partners—ranging from the American Farm Bureau Federation to the American Chemistry Council—are campaigning to increase the number of bill co-sponsors to give H.R. 4996 momentum, moving forward.

So far, dozens of House lawmakers—including Democrats and Republicans—have signed up as co-sponsors of the bill. And while the likelihood for a stand-alone vote this year remains uncertain, lawmakers could fold the legislation into other vehicles, including Coast Guard reauthorization legislation.

The Hardwood Federation will continue to signal our support of H.R. 4996 to the Administration and Congress. And as always, we will keep you updated on the situation.



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**HARDWOOD**  
 FEDERATION

## Rethinking Your Social Media Strategy for 2022

by Ian Faight

Marketing, Communications, and Digital Content Director, HMA

We're rapidly approaching the end of 2021, and now is a great time to review your social media strategy, take a deep dive into analytics, evaluate what worked, and make adjustments for 2022. Here are a few tips to implement in the new year.

### Deliver Content that's Wanted

According to the **2020 Sprout Social Index™ report**, 57% of consumers are hoping to learn about new products and services from a brand's social feed, and 89% say they'll buy from a brand they follow.

It's also important to rethink your delivery method. The report says that 68% of consumers prefer engaging with images and 50% prefer videos—and those numbers are likely to increase. On the flipside, only 30% of consumers prefer reading text-based posts and just 16% want to click on links to other websites.

What does this mean for your company? Simply put, less words and more visuals. Spend time sharing the pros of your products and how they can benefit consumers—and do so in a creative way by turning words into infographics or videos.

importantly, influencers have large audiences, and they are people who their followers trust for product reviews and endorsements—and that's where they can fit in with your social media strategy.

Both B2B and B2C brands are having great social media success by partnering on projects with influencers, and this trend will continue growing. **Research from Hootsuite** shows that nearly 68% of marketers in the U.S. will use some form of influencer marketing this year, and that's expected to increase to more than 72% in 2022.

How should you go about getting started? First, you'll need to do your research, set goals for a sponsored campaign, and find an influencer who is a good fit for your company, product, and budget. For example, if you follow a YouTuber who is building or renovating their home, reach out through a direct message or email, strike up a conversation about your company, and ask if they'd be interested in partnering on a project, such as a shiplap wall, ceiling treatment, or mudroom cabinetry. If they're interested, work out the details and provide talking points about your product.

### Do More in Less Time

Let's face it, if your company doesn't have a dedicated team or person handling your social media, there's not a lot of free time during the day to develop and implement a comprehensive social media strategy. And that's ok! Take advantage of tools that are available to you for free or a small fee.

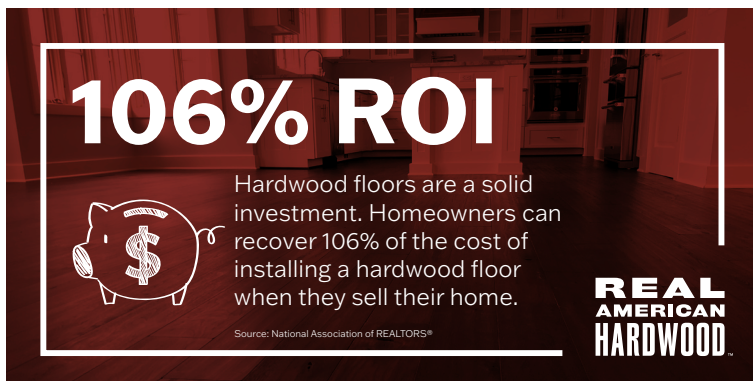
Need help automating various tasks? Use a service like Buffer, Hootsuite, or Sprout Social to schedule posts across your various platforms, monitor analytic data, and run reports.

No eye for design? Take advantage of an app like Canva or Adobe Spark to create attractive graphics and short videos.

Are your links to webpages or documents long and clunky? Visit **Bitly.com** or **Tiny.cc** to shorten, customize, and even brand your links with vanity URLs.

### Help is Available

Social media will continue evolving and HMA is here to help keep you on track. If you have any questions, send me an email at [ian@hardwood.org](mailto:ian@hardwood.org).



The Real American Hardwood Coalition is sharing infographics on Twitter at [@RealAmericanHwd](https://twitter.com/RealAmericanHwd) and on Facebook at [@RealAmericanHardwood](https://www.facebook.com/RealAmericanHardwood). The library of infographics is [available online](#) for you to share too!

### Influence with Influencers

You may have heard of social media influencers, and if not, it's time to read up. Influencers are people who have built a reputation and established credibility in a specific industry (think of the host of your favorite HGTV show) or a niche, like DIYing, lifestyle blogging, or travel vlogging (video blogging). And while niche creators may not seem like they're relevant to your business on the surface, remember that their audience may align with your target of first-time homebuyers, renovators, or design professionals. Most



## The “Pluses” of Thermally Modified Hardwood

To all of the architects and designers out there: If you are not specifying thermally modified hardwood, perhaps you should be. The material is an environmentally friendly alternative to chemically treated wood and boasts an aesthetic appeal that will enhance both indoor and outdoor applications. Consider that thermally modified hardwood is:

**Non-toxic and Chemical Free** | No chemicals are used in the process to thermally modify hardwoods. The material is developed with just heat and steam, in contrast to chemically preserved wood materials or synthetic products. And being chemical free, end-of-life disposal poses no threat to the environment and is not subject to special regulation.

**Dimensionally Stable** | Thermal modification uses heat to create chemical changes in wood cells. Cross-linking at the water absorption sites limits the ability of wood to absorb moisture. Less moisture absorption means increased dimensional stability—ergo less cupping and warping. Historically, untreated American hardwoods could not be used in **outdoor applications**—cladding, decking, flooring. But with the thermal treatment process, they perform well. (Thermally modified wood expands and contracts five to 10 times less than untreated wood.)

**Decay Resistant** | During the treatment process, the wood undergoes both physical and chemical changes. Thermal modification removes organic compounds, including sugars, that can be nourishment or “food” for insects and decay-producing fungi that can feed on the hemicelluloses and carbohydrates in untreated wood. By destroying these food sources, thermally modified lumber is very resistant to decay.



*A residence hall at the Iolani School in Honolulu, Hawaii, features thermally modified American ash. The VikingWood™ cladding by AHC Hardwood Group was specified for its exotic looks and performance.*



*The Infinity Bench was designed by Martino Gamper in collaboration with the American Hardwood Export Council for the London Design Festival 2012. The bench is made from a selection of thermally modified American tulipwood, hard maple, red oak, ash, and yellow birch.*

**Appropriate for Interior Applications** | Thermally modified hardwood flooring is especially suited for kitchens, bathrooms, and basements, where water exposure and humidity changes often cause stability issues. The material also has been used in exacting applications such as window jambs, where both decay resistance and dimensional stability are required.

Additionally, the elimination of sugars and resins makes the material lighter in weight and easier to cut, aiding in the installation process for both interior and exterior applications. Thermal modification also causes permanent reactions throughout the hardwood, changing its color to a rich chocolate brown throughout the board's thickness. This deep brown color lends a tropical appearance to the American Hardwood, mimicking the look of exotic species that do not grow in temperate climates.

Visit the American Hardwood Information Center at [HardwoodInfo.com](http://HardwoodInfo.com) to learn more.

## Avoiding the Micromanaging Trap

"Keeping employees engaged and motivated in their work is particularly important now, given the ups and downs of the job market. So, if you're lucky enough to find and hire a talented, qualified employee, the next big (and critically important) step is being able to retain that employee for as long as possible."

A recent article distributed by HMA member, Baillie Lumber Company, speaks to the labor issue. Here's an excerpt from, *"Could Micromanaging Employees be Driving Them Away from your Business?"*

"Probably the most effective way not to keep employees happy is by micromanaging them. How can leaders avoid the micromanaging trap?

- Talk frankly with employees and team members about their preferred management style. Some will welcome a more hands-on approach, while many others will voice the hope you can trust in their knowledge and capabilities.
- Match a project with the right team and leader. Set realistic expectations and make sure your expectations are understood. Encourage your high-performing employees to share techniques and habits their co-workers can successfully emulate.

- Because you want your business to have a reputation as a place where employees thrive, provide them with opportunities to grow in their careers, make profitable decisions, and consistently find new and better ways of getting things done.

Bottom Line: You hire people based on their experience, judgement, and skillsets. Give them the space to use those abilities, without stifling motivation or creativity. When you do, everyone wins!"

To read the entire article, visit [Baillie.com](https://baillie.com).



*The Link* is published each month exclusively for members of the Hardwood Manufacturers Association. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the HMA; HMA staff welcomes comments and questions.

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