



July 2019

### More than just talk

By Linda Jovanovich  
HMA Executive Vice President

In late May, *The Wall Street Journal* ran an article about how market changes have forced magazine publishing giant, Meredith Corp., to recalibrate its modus operandi. The article's title, "In Lousy Market, Magazine Giant Axes Nostalgia," certainly got my attention. The following 'snippets' really hit home.

- "Meredith's top brass believes business can be divided into '**problems**' and '**situations**.' Problems can't be solved with any amount of time and money. Situations, on the other hand, can. Managing the difference is the key to surviving a declining industry at its darkest moment."
- Meredith's path forward: "Be direct and unemotional in business. Invest in assets with the promise of profit growth; don't waste money trying to fix hopelessly weak ones, no matter how strong the romantic attachment."

Meredith's 'recalibration' has been significant - selling off time-honored magazines *Time*, *Fortune*, *Money*, *Sports Illustrated*; investing in publications more focused on "lifestyle content," women's service, celebrity, epicurean, culture and news. In short, modern publishing has changed. And so has Meredith Corp.

As I contemplate today's hardwood industry, there's a lesson in this for us all. Accepting change is far from easy. Failing to manage it can be ruinous.

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### Your opportunity to combat the Labor Crisis

Looking to advance that promising, career-minded employee within your organization that is looking for more? If so, then don't miss this opportunity to grow, groom and inspire your aspiring, shining star.

Open to all hardwood industry stakeholders is the **NTC Hardwood Manufacturers Certificate Program**, a unique 12 week/14 credit program geared to the labor needs of the hardwood industry. The program will soon be convening at the Northcentral Technical College, Antigo, Wisconsin, and the application deadline is fast approaching.

- Courses will be conducted, **September 3 – November 22, 2019**, at Northcentral Technical College's 27,000 square foot state-of-the-art Wood Technology Center of Excellence in Antigo.
- The program is endorsed by the Hardwood Manufacturers Association as an excellent vehicle to grow, groom and inspire the supervisors, lumber inspectors, Kiln

operators, quality control technicians and plant managers so desperately needed in your hardwood facilities.

- Program specifics – detailed course descriptions, course costs, housing information - are available at [www.HMAmembers.org](http://www.HMAmembers.org). And questions regarding the Certificate Program should be directed to Wood Science Instructor, Travis Allen at 715.348.7723 or [allen@ntc.edu](mailto:allen@ntc.edu).

The application deadline is **August 9**, and prospective students may apply **online**. Don't miss this.

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### Fall Regional Meeting a work in Progress

The final details of HMA's 2019 South Atlantic Regional Meeting, **September 24-25**, Virginia/North Carolina, are being completed, and will soon be available on [www.HMAmembers.org](http://www.HMAmembers.org). In the meantime, we thought it important to share what's already etched-in-stone for this signature, **Members Only**, HMA event.

- An HMA Board of Directors Meeting will convene the afternoon of Monday, September 23, at our base of operations hotel, **Hilton Norfolk The Main**. This is an open meeting, and all HMA members are welcome to attend and observe.
- **Hotel room reservations** can be made by calling Hilton Norfolk The Main, 100 East Main Street, Norfolk, Virginia 23510, at **757.763.6231**. Mention the HMA room block to secure the 'special' room rates of \$149/Single or \$159/Double.
- To date, confirmed **Tours** include [Gates Milling, Inc.](#), Gatesville, North Carolina and [Josey Lumber Company, Inc.](#), Scotland Neck, North Carolina.
- **Meeting Registration** for HMA members and 2019 National Conference Sponsors and Exhibitors, and the complete **Meeting Agenda** will soon be up and running at [www.HMAmembers.org](http://www.HMAmembers.org).

Yes, you can be a Meeting Sponsor. At the \$1000 **Gold** Sponsorship level – which includes one complimentary Registration - your company could help host the Tuesday Cocktail Reception, Tuesday Lunch, or the Bus transportation to the Tuesday tour sites. And at the \$500 **Silver** level, sponsorship opportunities include hosting Tuesday's Bus Refreshments and more.

Call us at the HMA office, 412.244.0440, for additional information. And remember, all of the Meeting details will be available at the HMA member website, [www.HMAmembers.org](http://www.HMAmembers.org). Check it out and prepare to get on board!

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### The “ins and outs” of Promoting Hardwoods

Today's online information seekers are sophisticated, tech-savvy and rather impatient. That's why the **American Hardwood Information Center (AHIC)** is spreading our American Hardwood message via 'listicle.' The results have been great. And here's why.

#### **These days, less is more!**

A listicle is simply “an article that appears in the form of a list.” The writing form is super popular on the internet, and serves as a great way to connect with all who want information quickly and succinctly. Add some smokin'-hot images to the content; forward the finished product to our 'go-to' editorial service, and in a matter of hours, millions of mobile devices and desktops have our information.

The stats for listicle, “**Six Value-Added Upgrades for Your Home**,” have been over-the-top. Take a quick look at the listicle, and you'll understand why it's working for us.

### There's more

If you're still on-the-fence regarding the viability of **Social Media**, get onboard. Via Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Houzz, and most recently, **Instagram**, **AmericanHardwds** connects with world-wide audiences 24/7/365. Significant stats indicate that our social media presence continues to grow. And did we mention that the cost is minimal? Follow us! We post new content daily. ([https://www.instagram.com/American\\_Hardwds/](https://www.instagram.com/American_Hardwds/))

### The power of Face-to-Face

One-on-One interaction continues to be an important medium on our Promotion tool-belt. Case in point is the recent furniture design competition sponsored by **AHIC**. The goal: showcase the versatility of **Red Oak - the Sovereign Wood** + engage the next generation of Design Pros. As you will see, it was a time investment for us. But the long term results are legion.

- The Pratt Institute School of Industrial Design, Brooklyn Campus, agreed to partner with **AHIC** by offering a "hardwood" class to their graduate and senior furniture design students.
- At the opening session of the class and representing AHIC, HMA Executive Vice President Linda Jovanovich lectured on the basics of American Hardwoods.
- Weaber Inc., Lebanon, Pa., graciously donated all of the Red Oak for the project.
- To showcase the ingenious and beautiful creations of the students, and to spotlight American Hardwoods to the New York City design community, **AHIC** sponsored a space at **WantedDesign BROOKLYN** - a platform dedicated to promoting design.
- Congratulations go out to Jeongbin Im and her inspired piece called, "*ritual*," a unique makeup vanity that opens to reveal a storage compartment.

Visit the American Hardwood Information Center, [www.HardwoodInfo.com](http://www.HardwoodInfo.com), for more on the design competition.

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### Just when you thought you'd seen it all ...

There it is, a fresh twist on an old classic, and just the inspiration you needed to get your artistic juices flowing. We're talking about the creative use of American hardwoods. Here's a look at what Wendy Silverstein and her bevy of design/build pros have come up with in New York City and beyond.

#### **INC Architecture & Design** (inc.nyc)

"In creating a new triplex penthouse out of two existing apartments in a New York City building, INC Architecture & Design emphasized the contrasts between the austere modern and the sensuously organic.

- The strongest organic element is found in the spiraling stair that winds its way sinuously through the light-filled triplex.
- Comprising open treads of bleached **maple**, striéd-glass panel balustrades, and a pale **oak** handrail, the stair is cradled in a curving nautilus-like shell of pale-gray plaster that introduces a flowing sculptural form into the largely hard-angled space.
- Although it's a substantial architectural element, the elegantly detailed stair is disarmingly light on its feet."

#### **Wellborn Cabinet, Inc.** ([www.wellborn.com](http://www.wellborn.com))

At the 2019 Kitchen & Bath Industry Show, Alabama-based, high-end cabinetry manufacturer Wellborn Cabinet, Inc. presented a "show-stopping industrial-loft-style kitchen installation. The designer played with multiple materials, door styles, and cabinetry stains and colors.

- The wall cabinetry is Wellborn’s Chelsea door style in **maple** with the new Suede stain.
- The island’s cabinetry is the Chelsea style in maple, too, with the new Mink paint finish.
- The lower base cabinetry is the Antigua door style in maple with the new Shale stain.”

**Great Neighborhood Homes** (greatneighborhoodhomes.com)

“In Edina, Minnesota, a new custom house by Great Neighborhood Homes, a regional design-build firm, makes imaginative use of a Dutch door for its front entrance.

- This type of wood door—horizontally divided so the two halves operate independently—was ubiquitous in the Netherlands during the 17th century.
- When the Dutch colonized North America, they brought the distinctive style with them.
- The glazed top half of this painted **poplar** model provides a perfectly framed view of the leafy surroundings even when closed.”



**INC Architecture & Design**  
Photo: Joshua McHugh



**Wellborn Cabinet, Inc.**  
[www.wellborn.com](http://www.wellborn.com)



**Great Neighborhood Homes**  
Photo: LandMark Photography

**Wendy Silverstein**, a consultant to the design industry and a former editor at *Architectural Digest*, *Home*, *Kitchen & Bath* Customer Planner, and *Home/Style* magazine, is a regular content contributor to the American Hardwood Information Center. Visit [www.HardwoodInfo.com](http://www.HardwoodInfo.com) for more of her work.

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## Trade and Tariffs Call-to-Action

By Dana Lee Cole

Hardwood Federation Executive Director

Because of how the current Trade and Tariffs situation is adversely affecting the hardwood industry, the Hardwood Federation (HF) recently held a “Trade Days” Mini Fly-In – the first of its kind in HF history. **Our Goal:** meet with Senators and select Administration officials to leverage the most possible action from those who have the President’s ear – because in the end, the only person who is going to grant any sort of relief to the Trade War with China is President Donald Trump himself.

In total, 24 Hardwood Industry representatives joined HF in Washington D.C. We met with 17 Senate offices (including 10 Senators) and one new Representative; participated in 2 phone calls with Senators; held one round table discussion with Senior USDA FAS Staff, and another with the Vice President’s Chief of Staff and Policy Director. What did we tell them?

**“Everyone in the industry is being impacted, even those who don’t export!”**

- The trade war with China and the increase to 25 percent Tariffs have triggered cancelled orders, products stuck on the water, shift cuts, wages lost, and in extreme cases, total closures.
- Pre-Tariffs, the hardwood industry exported approximately \$4 Billion of goods worldwide, 50 percent of that total going to China. There is no immediate market, domestic or international, to replace that!
- The decline in exports has led to an excess of product on the open market, driving down lumber prices, forcing layoffs and closures, impacting tree growers and loggers. Bottom Line: **affecting the entire supply chain.**
- Even with an incredible outpouring from the industry, it was very disappointing that U.S. hardwood producers were not included in the recent financial support program announced by USDA.

### What now?

The Hardwood Federation - Board and Staff – continues to work every angle to make Congress and the Administration aware of the plight of our industry. We ask **you and your employees** to do the same.

Use the HF Contact Congress tool, [www.votervoice.net/THF/Campaigns/67128/Respond](http://www.votervoice.net/THF/Campaigns/67128/Respond), to reach out to your elected officials. Share your stories. Express your concerns. This is the most powerful tool we have and cannot be understated! **YOUR calls for action will be amplified by industry pressure and participation.**

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### About Social Media and Benchmarking

During “**Best Business Practices Soundbytes**,” a session at HMA’s 2019 National Conference and Expo, business and industry associates - **Isaac Oswalt**, 21 Handshake-Founder/Owner, and **Bree Urech-Boyle**, National Wood Flooring Association-Chief Financial Officer - presented information and insight regarding Social Media Marketing and Benchmarking. Here are their ‘short clips.’

#### Social Media - The Ultimate “Middle Man” – Isaac Oswalt, 21 Handshake

These days, we can get anything that we want via the Smartphone, aka the ‘remote control’ of our lives. By having immediate information at our fingertips, we’ve grown impatient, and more so than ever before, we covet our TIME.

So, as potential customers search for information, today’s businesses now need to be a place for prospects “to click to.” And **Social Media** is the ideal way to create attention, and get the conversations started.

- **Stats tell the story** – “The average that a United States user is on social networks is 116 minutes, per day. Seventy one percent of the United States is on Facebook, and the average user checks it eight times a day. The average time spent on Facebook is 35 minutes, per day. Instagram is the fastest growing social media platform. Google is the largest search engine and owns YouTube, the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest search engine.
- Social Media is the avenue to build a relationship when you’re not “Face-to-Face” with your prospect. Your social media accounts should tell the story of your brand and business, and most importantly, show (not tell) why people should” engage in building a relationship with you.
- The days of ‘only during business hours’ are over! Social Media is “your digital sales channel ... operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year ... to create



and nurture relationships of those who choose to get to know, like and trust you, via the smartphone.”

- **Bottom Line:** Don't keep anyone waiting. Use Social Media – the ultimate “middle man” – to engage your potential customers. Connecting online will earn you the opportunity to meet via text, phone, Facetime, and eventually “Face-to-Face.”

Oswalt concluded his presentation with a special ‘Thank you’ offer when he said, “Send me an email – [Isaac@21handshake.com](mailto:Isaac@21handshake.com) – and share with me how you'd like Social Media to help your business. I'll provide you a one page customized “How,” based on what we do for our clients – FREE.”

### **Benchmarking** - Bree Urech-Boyle, National Wood Flooring Association

How do you know you are successful and secure? For many it's “staying constantly alert, and then reading and reacting to potential problem situations before they materialize.” Sounds a lot like good management. And good management includes benchmarking.

- What is it? Benchmarking is the act of comparing financial, operational and external performance metrics against a standard or trend. Analysis of this valuable data tells the story of what your business is or isn't doing.
- If you are not Benchmarking, get started. Identify the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for your business – Gross Profit margin, Funds Management Ratio, Percentage of Waste, Customer Satisfaction, Raw Goods Costs, etc.
- Then, create a Dashboard for your KPI – graphs and charts get a message across more efficiently. Monitor the data regularly. Lagging indicators provide historical data. Leading indicators identify opportunity or needed changes.
- **Knowledge is power.** Embrace Benchmarking as an effective way to implement positive change in your business, and in any area of life.

Visit the **Members Only** section of [www.HMAMembers.org](http://www.HMAMembers.org) for Isaac's and Bree's Powerpoint presentations and audio recordings.

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### **Scientists refer to is as ‘Superwood’**

The treatment process is called **Densification** – “chemically softening and compressing **wood** to remove the spaces between cell walls.” And when burned, the resulting charred, outside layer helps preserve the material's internal strength. Denser, stronger and less likely to ignite – it's SuperWood. And the source material is literally growing on trees.

Dubbed ‘super wood’ by materials scientist, Liangbing Hu, and colleagues at the University of Maryland:

- “The densified material is created by first chemically treating timber with sodium hydroxide and sodium sulfite to partially remove its lignin, the organic polymer which makes cell walls rigid.
- Subsequent hot pressing creates a dense material free of lumina – the tiny channels that create a porous structure – and possessing three-and-a-half times the compressive strength of regular wood.
- When burned, the modified structure causes a dense, insulating char layer to form on the material's surface. Together, these properties can double the material's ignition time, and decrease its maximum heat release rate by more than a third.”

**Bottom Line:** “Densification of the wood hinders combustion and leads to the formation of a layer of char, during burning, that helps to prevent it catching fire. If used for construction, the treated wood could effectively prevent the collapse and destruction of wooden structures, and gain precious rescue time when a fire occurs.”

Information Source: *Chemistry World* ([www.chemistryworld.com](http://www.chemistryworld.com))

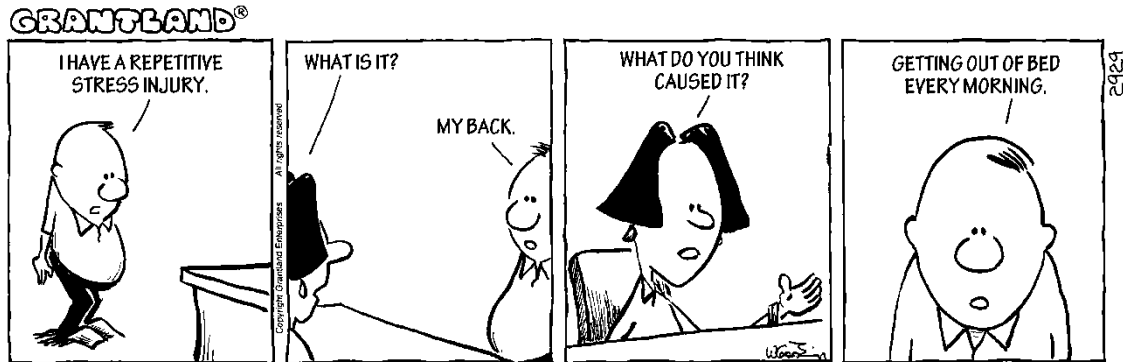
### Free Safety Brochure Series available

According to the Forest Resources Association (FRA), "nearly one half of all logging injuries occur to workers with less than one year on the job!" OUCH! But the FRA is going beyond simply reporting the not-so-good news. They're taking steps to educate and train.

The **Forest Resources Association** (FRA) is "a national trade association concerned with the safe, efficient, and sustainable harvest of forest products and their transport from the woods to the mill." With a long history of working to improve the safety of the forest work environment, the **FRA's** Southwide Safety Committee "has made its popular Safety Brochure series available for free download at [loggingsafety.com](http://loggingsafety.com). The brochures, some available in both English and Spanish, provide concise summaries of basic forest operations and woodyard safety pointers, and can serve as supplements to an orientation program, or as safety reminders. What's available?

- **First-Year Safety Program & Timber Harvesting Safety Manual** - An outline for orienting new logging employees in the crucial first year
- **Logging Safety Resource Guides** - Handbooks, videos, and pamphlets to educate/train employees on specific areas of timber harvesting safety
- **Logging Safety Links** – an alphabetical listing of logging safety resources suppliers

Visit [loggingsafety.com](http://loggingsafety.com) for the complete listing of available brochures, and to learn more about the FRA.



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