HELPING MILLER WOOD PUBLICATIONS BE A CUT ABOVE

WHO IS MILLER WOOD?

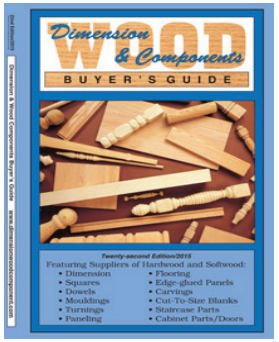
The billion-dollar forest products industry is booming. Over 737 million acres (about ⅓) of the United States is covered in forestland. Suppliers and buyers of forest products need a meeting ground and a means to gather information about one another to facilitate business relationships. Since 1927, Miller Wood Trade Publications has exclusively served both buyers and suppliers of forest products through the publishing of 10 wood-trade publications that are distributed to specialized markets worldwide. These publications serve every segment of the billion-dollar industry.

CHALLENGES MILLER WOOD FACED

Step into the shop of a skilled woodworker and you will quickly notice several things. First, you will be aware of how neat and organized the space is. Every tool will be clean, sharp, and in its place. And (unless they're in the middle of making something) there won't be much of a mess anywhere. Then, if you were to get to watch them work, you'd notice how they live by the adage "measure twice, cut once" and are careful to cut with the grain.

After decades in the forest products publication business, Miller Publications realized that their "shop" was a mess, their tools had lost their edge, they were making multiple (often unnecessary) "cuts" in their work. It was becoming difficult for their craftsmanship to shine, so they reached out to Mind Over Data for help.

They faced multiple challenges related to their data entry processes, all of which were slow and tedious–costing time and money. They desperately needed a way to simplify and streamline their information in order to keep the plates of 10 different magazines spinning in sync!



- For years, the information for each of Miller's publications was stored in individual QuarkXpress files. Since companies are frequently featured across multiple publications, every change had to be made manually multiple times–a time-consuming process that often led to errors and inconsistencies.
- To verify that information was correct prior to printing, listings had to be contacted by printing individual validation requests. Mailing those requests also meant printing and affixing the address labels that went with them. "Inefficient" didn't begin to describe it!
- Miller Wood's website did not allow customers to search for current information on company listings or easily find what they were looking for.

OUR SOLUTION

After meeting with Miller Wood Publications and discovering where their pain points were, we developed a plan to address all of them via a centralized database and an easy-to-use administration system.

- While the database stores all of the company directory information for each of their publications in one place, the admin system allows their entire staff to easily maintain and update information through a common interface. They can then add tags to link company information to relevant publications as needed.
- We streamlined the data entry process for the staff by incorporating drop-down menus, tabs, and keyboard shortcuts on all forms where possible.
- We automated the validation/update request process and made it more efficient. Instead of individual forms and mailing labels, tri-fold letters are generated on which the relevant addresses are printed and visible through envelopes with clear windows. (Miller might have used some time we saved them to properly say goodbye to their mailing labels.)
- For the Miller Publications website, we created new external search sites which allow visitors to do customized searches of the centralized directory in order to get up-to-date information faster and more easily. The new sites were created to match the main website design to provide a seamless transition. (People may not even be aware they've left the main site.) Customers who have purchased magazine space are also now able to view their current ads online.

TESTIMONIAL

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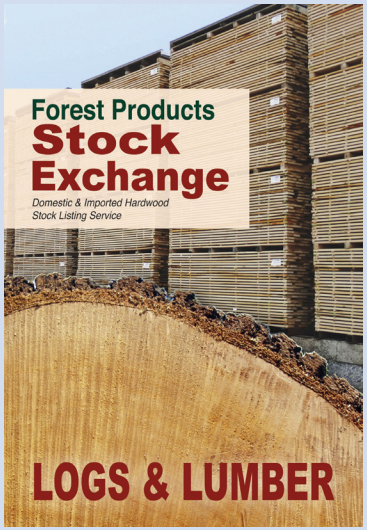
Sed commodo risus nec aliquam rhoncus.

RESULTS

The improvements in efficiency, consistency, and user experience have been dramatic. All of the changes we helped Miller Publications implement have resulted in multiple efficiencies, productivity, and profitability.

- With all company directory information in one place—accessible through a common interface—changes across publications only need to be made once. And with all of the data stored in once place, gone are the days of outdated information lurking in multiple locations.
- Data entry is now faster and more accurate.
- Automated processes have reduced the number of manual tasks. This has freed employees up to work on more productive projects.
- Faster online data searches and improved interfaces for website customers have helped visitors have a significantly better user experiences.