

# Distribution MATTERS

SUMMER 2018



An Interview with Missy O'Daniel  
Distributor Roundtable Discussion  
Supplier Roundtable Discussion  
A Conversation with Kevin Gammonley  
2018 Member Directory

**NBM/DA**  
North American Building Material Distribution Association

# What Suppliers See Emerging

Suppliers and distributors work closely to ensure that their customers have access to the latest and best products. Because of that relationship, suppliers have a close-up perspective on what's happening in distribution and the market. To tap into that knowledge, Surface & Panel asked supplier members of the NBMDA Steering Committee to share emerging trends and practices that they see affecting their distribution partners in response to evolving customer wants and needs.

## Best Software Possible

**Jeff Winters** | SALES MANAGER, NORTH AMERICA, KESSEBÖHMER



### SOFTWARE

Distributors must rely on the best software possible in order to keep up with the times. Everything has to be linked—inventory, sales, history, geography and more. The need for instant access to information to make the reps successful and fully armed is essential. Some of the distributors are ahead of the game with dashboards or portals to link all sides of the sales equation.

### LOGISTICS

Whether it is incoming or outgoing, it is a challenge. The bigger of the two is outgoing. Whether the distributor delivers everything themselves or relies on outsourcing shipping, solutions need to be worked on to improve their process. New laws for drivers and rising freights costs are a recent challenge, as well.

### PEOPLE

As unemployment rates have declined, distributors are struggling to find and retain good employees. The distribution business, particularly in our industry, doesn't get a lot of attention, and we're all trying to think of ways to make this business more attractive to new people ■

## Win-Win: European Wood Finishes

**Jeff Takac** | MANAGING DIRECTOR, MILESI WOOD COATINGS—IVM CHEMICALS



In wood finishes, certainly the biggest market trend we see is the paradigm market shift and transition to European wood finish technologies. This trend is accelerating rapidly as end users exit away from older domestic wood finish technologies such as pre-cat and conversion varnishes, which used to be the gold standard of our industry. While these older legacy technologies are certainly proven systems, the features and benefits of European-designed wood coatings cannot be denied. European products offer end-users and distributors alike many distinct advantages and the opportunity to differentiate themselves in the market. This industry awakening or revolution is analogous to when European cabinet hardware burst into our industry in the early 1980s. We know the history from there—explosive growth and now the norm of our industry. We are definitely seeing the same trend in European wood finishing products. It's a natural progression to want the very best available.

Early adopters—both end-users and distributors—are seeing the benefits and capitalizing on the amazing opportunity that this paradigm industry shift presents. Win-win situations are hard to find, but this revolution is definitely one of them, and we believe within five years the dominant wood finish systems will all be European technology. Furthermore, this movement is also being driven by stricter environmental standards, which align favorably with European-based wood finish chemistry.

While the benefits and quality of the Euro product technology even incorporating nano-technologies is documented, the education and training that comes with it have lagged seriously behind. Educating our industry partners, no different than legacy coatings, is the key to unlocking the potential, which is why we at Milesi have made a huge investment in training and educating the industry to better understand European wood coatings technologies and the benefits. I encourage all of our industry colleagues to do their own research to better understand the trend and get on board to the future. Most will need to look no further than their local markets. ■