

“So, what do you want to be when you grow up?” - Jay Pires, Douglas Lumber

It's a simple question that most of us were asked many times as children. The question posed to us as adolescents by parents, family members, teachers, and guidance counselors takes on a different tone once we hit our final years of high school and college. *What exactly **do** I want to do with my life?*

It's safe to say that working in the lumber and building materials industry isn't the first answer that would spring to a student's mind when pondering that question but it should certainly be on the list. At the risk of sounding cliché, this isn't your father's lumber yard. Today's building industry offers a variety of opportunities for a recent graduate to pursue, many of them with tremendous growth potential. Here are five reasons to consider pursuing employment in the lumber and building materials industry.

Expanding roles

Gone are the days when the only roles our industry had to offer were sales, warehouse, and driving positions. Today's lumber yards have IT departments that need to be staffed with well educated, innovative thinkers, capable of helping our businesses evolve with the times as technology plays a larger role in our lives and the way we do business. The growing popularity of engineered lumber has given birth to a need for engineers to design floor and roof systems that ensure structural integrity and the safety of the homeowner. Designers with CAD experience are needed in our kitchen and bath departments to help consumers design the cabinetry of their dreams along with providing them with a visual representation of their ideas. Industry marketing departments are expanding as well as the use of social media and web advertising to reach our audience grows in importance. Employees with backgrounds in human resources, accounting, and logistics are also in demand. The opportunities are endless in today's home centers as our industry continues to change shape.

An injection of youth is needed

Our industry is greying as our work force ages. This trend has created a tremendous opportunity for younger workers entering our field. This isn't simply a retail job, it's a career with serious growth potential as administrative and managerial roles are vacated by older employees. Our industry needs an injection of youth. It is in need of new, fresh ideas to carry our business into the future. You are afforded a remarkable opportunity to have an immediate impact on the way business is conducted and truly make your mark on your company.

Dynamic environment

Research has shown that a growing percentage of millennials are moving away from positions that require them to work in a cubicle and towards companies that offer a more dynamic, fast-paced, and collaborative work space. Our industry offers all of these. The old saying “time is money” is particularly true in our business as the slightest delay, back order, or mistake made in the office can cause hourly laborers in the field to run out of work, or material, thus causing a loss of productivity and possibly delaying the next phase of construction. These strict deadlines mean that issues need to be

addressed quickly and decisively so as not to place an undue burden on our customers. The challenges we face ensure that we are active and engaged every day. No two days are ever the same in our industry and there is no time for complacency or boredom to set in.

Relationships are important

If you enjoy human interaction and relationship building, this industry offers plenty of opportunities. We build relationships not only with our fellow employees but with our customers and suppliers. Due to the time sensitive nature of our work frequent interaction with the consumer and vendor are required in order to ensure timely completion of each project. We earn our customers trust by guiding them through the construction or remodeling process while offering our knowledge and experience. Our vendors are our trusted partners in helping the consumer construct the home of their dreams. Relationships and a sense of community are also developed through membership in organizations such as the Rhode Island Lumber and Building Materials Dealers Association or the Rhode Island Builders Association which allow us to network and build friendships with our peers and customers.

Community Involvement

Our dealers frequently give back to the local community by making donations to various charitable organizations often by providing material for projects that benefit their communities, and sponsoring youth sports teams and organizations. This business will allow you the opportunity to give back to the community and provide assistance to those less fortunate.

Our industry may not be glamorous and you may not have dreamt of being in this business as a child, but the opportunity exists to build a long term, fulfilling, and successful career in the lumber and building materials industry!