



2019 Top 15 RCS Influencer Insights



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See all RCS Influencers' articles at www.rooferscoffee.com/rcs-influencers.

We have been asking important questions to our diverse group of RCS Influencers that have expertise in different areas of a contractor's business. Often times, we see articles written on a subject with one person's opinion or suggestions, but there are many sides to the coin.

With our RCS Influencers opinions, tips or advice a reader gets a feeling for all sides of a topic. A beneficial twist is including companies that are not only roofing contractors but also companies that service the contractors. All will have an interesting perspective based on their interactions with the roofing industry.

We would like to share the top 15 blogs of 2019 for your education and enjoyment. RoofersCoffeeShop is honored to share their expertise that they are generous enough to share back with the industry they love through regular posts on our website and social media channels.

We hope you enjoy reading the valuable input by this group.

Vickie Sharples and Team



Service Departments Take Extreme Organization

By Jennifer Stone

RCS Influencer Jennifer Stone says that women are leading service and maintenance departments nationwide.

We have seen a huge rise in service and maintenance departments across our industry. Service is taking center stage to round out our businesses and for good reason. A steady and dependable service department is recession proof, extremely profitable and a necessary marketing tool for the rest of your roofing pipeline.

What I've personally seen in the last few years is that it is another nice niche for women in our industry to capture.

A service department takes extreme organization, the ability to juggle multiple tasks and dispatches, change of direction at a minute's notice, patience, emotional intelligence, culture building skills, champions of the waterproofing professional and a varied day-to-day job description. Service departments are also extremely important as a vital customer-facing brand ambassador for the roofing business.

Women are thriving in our industry in these roles and as they excel, we are seeing very well run and profitable service divisions nationwide. In fact, one of the leading service departments in the country is run by our own National Women in Roofing (NWIR) Community Service Chair, Diana King of Springer-Petersen out of Florida.

Women like Diana are working in roofing service departments as leaders, administrators, roof technicians and salespeople. They are taking the service departments to new levels working side-by-side with men and showing how successful a balanced organization can be. Some of those include Madison Smith of AAA Roofing by Gene, Cheryl Fields, Crystal Grisham, Emily Lindsey, Shannon Butler, Megan Malone, Lauren Headerick, Karissa Dolan of Southern Roofing, Cindy Smith of Division 7, Wendy Wilson, Jill Tackett of North American, Kim Baxter of National Roofing Partners, Brittany Wylke of ESP Solutions, Cristina Cardenas of Best Roofing, Donna Smith of Davco Roofing, many women at Rackley Roofing and Ciana Keplar is on the roof in service for Division 7.

As you read this, think to yourself: Is this an opportunity for me to excel my career in roofing? Service is the hot ticket right now. Who can you promote within your company to the service department?

Send us your profiles of women in the service departments within your company. Hashtag #NWIR and #RoofersCoffeeShop to promote women in our industry. Representation matters for recruiting and our industry needs diversity to thrive!

Check out the NWIR website for career postings at www.nationalwomeninroofing.org, which by the way is powered by RoofersCoffeeShop®. Become a sponsor and as a member you can also find other women working in roofing service in our directory. So, to answer the RCS Influencer question of "Do you have a Service and Maintenance Department?"

Yes, and women are leading a lot of them.



Associations Offer Business Owners Resources That They Can't Get Anywhere Else

By Mike Hicks

RCS Influencer Mike Hicks says if you're in business you need to be involved in trade associations.

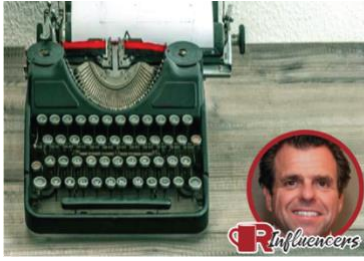
I belong to three trade associations. The National Roofing Contractors Association, the Midwest and the Ohio Roofing Contractors Associations. I also belong to several other things like the National Federation of Independent Business and things that are business related.

The NRCA, I believe, offers a lot to contractors that really want to grow their business simply because of the educational resources that are available and it's the only voice that we have in Washington for roofing contractors. For years, roofers were completely ignored by Washington, D.C. and I give Reid Ribble and the leadership a lot of credit for their new initiative to form a group that has a voice and we're starting to accomplish some things. So if you are a roofing contractor and you don't like to pay taxes or you don't like the government in your face and the regulations that bog you down, the only way that you're going to affect anything is to join an organization like the NRCA and I think the NRCA's the right one to go to.

Besides the political reach of the NRCA, the resources available are wide reaching. Everything from the multiple roofing installation detail publications, covering every facet of commercial and residential roofing, to help with labor force recruitment and exceptional training materials, plus a wide range of offsite and electronic classes, many of which include continuing education credits.

Then organizations like the NFIB (National Federation of Independent Business) are fighting every single day on our behalf in Washington DC, often killing over reaching and burdensome legislation before it ever makes it to a vote, and often being the difference when bad bills do make it to the floor.

Personally, I feel that to be in business, and NOT be a supporting member of trade organization is more than just a poor business decision. I think it's lazy and I think it's downright foolish.



2019 Will be About Better Service, Better Relationships and Building a Better Place to Work

By Marty Stout

RCS Influencer Marty Stout says that in 2019 his company is going to do everything they can to continue improving.

We know we can provide better service to our customers, be a better place for our employees to work and a better company for our vendors to do business with.

Better Service: Our goals for 2019 are to be quicker with providing reports and to add depth to the reports we provide so our customers can make quicker, more informed decisions. We are working to strengthen our team across all of our markets to be better equipped deliver repair, maintenance and reroofing services at competitive prices. We are investing in improving our cloud platform for tracking jobs and schedules to be better able to deliver.

We know lots of good companies do what we do, so we want to try to provide an edge that will inspire good companies to want us to be on their team.

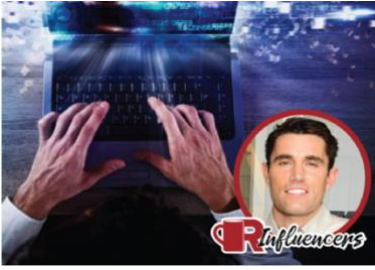
Better Place to Work: We value our team and understand that what is important to them needs to be important to us. We are continuing to encourage and expand our work from home platform so that our team can be closer to family and personal interests when they need to be. We will promote a few good people and strive to add to our team a few quality people that will make a positive difference.

We know lots of there are good companies to work for so we want to do what we can inspire good people to want to be on our team.

Better Vendor Relationships: We want to be the company every vendor (roofing subcontractor, supplier, insurance company, tire repair shop, etc.) wants to service first. We are working improve our Purchasing process in an effort to streamline things to make it simpler and at the same time more accurate. We will work to get closer to the "touch it once and move on" model in an effort to create efficiency for us and for our vendors. We are focusing on quicker payment cycles.

We know our vendors have lots of good companies to sell too so we want to try to inspire good companies to want to do business with us.

We know that if we continue to strive for improvement, we will be a better business in 2019 but not as good as we will be in 2020 and beyond.



From Leads to Estimates to Project Management, This Company Has a Tech Solution Every Step of the Way

By Drew Smith

RCS Influencer Drew Smith says that technology is used every day and on every job from start to finish at Brad Smith Roofing.

At Brad Smith Roofing, we have found success using several different programs that all work together to help us run the business. Those programs are:

1. JobNimbus
2. EagleView
3. CompanyCam
4. Clock Shark
5. QuickBooks
6. GPS TrackIt

We researched and worked with several different CRM programs in the past, but JobNimbus has proven to be the most compatible with its operation. The JobNimbus program is open on every computer and the app open on every company iPhone all day operating its client's complete account information and sales calendar.

JobNimbus also has the ability to formulate estimates, send, receive and track all lines of communication with the client throughout their customer history whether it originates in the office or out in the field. We are able to open all saved contracts, documents, emails, invoices, and estimates wherever we are. It is a cloud-based system, so internet service and a device is all we need to access the vital information necessary quickly.

When I have JobNimbus open working on a proposal for a client, I simultaneously have EagleView and CompanyCam open in order to connect all the dots. EagleView gives us the satellite blueprint with which to estimate a project while CompanyCam quickly opens the field photos gathered during the initial inspection. The field photos saved on CompanyCam allow verification that the findings and notes match the EagleView report before putting the final touches on an estimate.

CompanyCam also allows multiple people from the office staff, to the foreman on site or the project manager to see the same photo in real time, despite being in separate places to quickly communicate with each other and make important decisions. CompanyCam has revolutionized our operations at Brad Smith Roofing and reduced important time downloading photos and has eliminated the need to print project photos because they are so easily accessible from anywhere, anytime, with a date and photographer (user) stamped notation.

We can visually identify the problem areas in the photos using text and shapes superimposed over the photo in the edit feature of the app and it makes for a very professional and visually informative presentation for the customer, as well as, simple processing for the crew members when setting out to perform the work. Every department of our business relies on the project documenting capability of this application to fulfill tasks. Newly added features to this app also include the ability to read the actual slope degree of the roofline and accurately measure the roof, line by line. These features are just another way to make the diligence of the estimator that much more efficient and accurate.

Clock Shark has done very well for us integrating with QuickBooks and allowing quick tracking and documenting of individual crew member labor time, travel time and location. Each crew member can clock in and out of projects throughout every day with the user-friendly app on their mobile device. The time that the Brad Smith Roofing team spends verifying payroll has dramatically decreased since implementing Clock Shark. We are also able to take the information that Clock Shark provides in real time and then use it to cross check with GPS TrackIt that is installed on

each service vehicle to ensure there is accurate documentation to report back to a customer or insurance company for labor time verification and invoicing.

QuickBooks organizes all purchase orders, vendor invoices and everything financial and makes it easily viewed at the click of a mouse. Job costing should not be considered complete without the use of Clock Shark, GPS TrackIt and QuickBooks.



Research Matters When Starting Your Business

By Trent Cotney

RCS Influencer Trent Cotney says that contractors just getting started should evaluate the industry and its trends.

For contractors starting out, I would advise them to establish the foundation of their company first. You shouldn't start your business without creating a blueprint. The best way to start is by researching your industry. Collect and analyze data related to your market and the prospective clients and competitors in your industry. What are your competitors doing effectively and what are their weaknesses? Is it possible to compete with their services as a startup business? Is there a benchmark company that you aspire to replicate?

After you evaluate your industry and its trends, you can tailor strategies that align with these business needs that will also help you estimate what you will require for the future expansion of your business. Over time, you can tweak and update this business plan to align with the ever-changing needs of your business in the present and future.

Once you've done the research, make sure to prepare for the unexpected. Disputes are common on construction projects, so you want to protect your company from the get-go. Make sure you are in compliance and have all your legal documents in place long before litigation arises. Consult with an attorney from the beginning. A good construction lawyer can not only represent clients in disputes, but also help manage risks and advise on good business practices.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this article is for general educational information only. This information does not constitute legal advice, is not intended to constitute legal advice, nor should it be relied upon as legal advice for your specific factual pattern or situation. Regulations and laws may vary depending on your location. Consult with a licensed attorney in your area if you wish to obtain legal advice and/or counsel for a particular legal issue.



Technology can Help Support Your Business' Growth

By Mike Pickel

RCS Influencer Mike Pickel says that his company is trying to integrate more and more technology into their systems to help them keep up with growth and continue to be able to offer an outstanding customer experience.

Mike Pickel's company, Texas Traditions Roofing, is in its fifth year of business. They have reached a critical growth point where it's time for the company to turn to technology solutions to help them be more agile and support their growth. RCS Editor Karen Edwards had the chance to interview Mike at the International Roofing Expo in Nashville this month where he talked about his company's technology stack heading into 2019. Watch the interview here or follow the transcript below.

KE: Hey, everybody. This is Karen Edwards. I'm the Editor at RoofersCoffeeShop, and I am here, at the International Roofing Expo, with Mike Pickel from Texas Traditions Roofing. He recently joined our RoofersCoffeeShop® influencers team. We're going to talk about February's topic, which is your technology stack. Mike, tell me a little bit about what you're doing with technology in your business.

MP: We're trying to integrate technology more, and more, into our systems. We're finding that more of the companies are letting us integrate between the two, so that, right now, we're using QuickBooks to follow all of our accounting systems. We have come onboard with JobNimbus, brought them on into our project management. When we create an invoice, now that is integrating into QuickBooks, so we're not having to enter into JobNimbus, and go to QuickBooks and enter that in. It's communicating between the two, so it reduces the amount of time we're spending opening and starting jobs.

KE: So, what you are saying is it's important for your systems to be able to talk to each other?

MP: When possible. All of them don't, but when they can, we look for that when we're talking to companies about what their product does. We ask them, "Do they integrate with this? Do they integrate with this," or "What do you integrate with?" To see if that might work for us.

KE: Is that what you are looking for here at the Roofing Expo?

MP: Yes. We're looking to see what the next sky measurement, the roof measurement, system is. Then we're trying to see, "Does that integrate with JobNimbus? Will it be integrating with it in the future?"

KE: Have you had any challenges integrating technology into your business?

MP: Usually, it's operator error, but it's real challenging. We go into it having one expectation, but then when we get the system, it doesn't fully meet our expectations. But then we just have to modify our expectations, so that it works with what we are wanting it to achieve. It's not that the product doesn't meet our expectations, we may have had our expectations too high. But most of the products that we do invest in work for us really well.

KE: So, it's been a plus for your business to put some technology tools into place?

MP: Absolutely.



You Can Make a Difference When You Participate and are Involved in Your Community

By Ken Kelly

RCS Influencer Ken Kelly says that there are many ways that contractors can make a difference in their communities from a roofing standpoint.

Hey, RoofersCoffeeShop® community. This is Ken Kelly, Kelly Roofing from Naples, Florida. We're up in Washington DC today, taking part in Roofing Day. Our goal is to spread the good word of the roofing industry, hopefully get some senators and house representatives, congressmen, and women to support our industry. So, thinking about this event, and this month's topic of how we as roofers go about helping the community. I've got Ivan Elias with me. He's our operations manager. He runs 230 employees. Everything from inside office on the operation side all the way through supervisors, crew foremen, and roof technicians out in the field.

And a couple of things that we've come up with when it comes back to how we serve our communities from a roofing standpoint, a couple of things, you can get on local committees and boards. For instance, if you have Code Enforcement Agency or a Licensing Department, they're always looking for volunteers who are willing to help out and dictate new legislation codes, enforcement, or help decide on cases or things that are going on in your community. It also helps you look like the expert to say for instance in a sales presentation, that you're on the Code Enforcement Board. It really helps give a lot of credibility to making sure that you're going to do the job right if you are awarded the bid.

Some other things you can do is help by volunteering, giving away free roofs, helping veterans, participating in honor flight, and those types of things. And when it comes to the government, there's always issues that are coming up that impact us as business leaders, as individuals, as community, as a general community population and whether it's city council, or it's county commissioners, they're always looking for input from the public. So, don't be afraid to attend those meetings, sign up and speak because it really does make an impact.

We're in DC today, and it's really amazing to see how well received our message is. We're sitting down with our senators and our congressmen and they're listening to us. They care. They want to do what's right. The thing that surprised me the most is they don't always know; we assume that they know what our industry issues are. And they don't. They don't all come from a contractor background. They might be in different industries and they just don't know the challenges that we face.

So, if anything, you're helping to educate them so they can make good decisions, which will eventually help us. When it comes to you supporting the legislative side of your community, just participate. Everything from the smallest town hall meeting all the way to something grand like this here in DC. Whatever you do, just participate. So anyways, thanks RoofersCoffeeShop community, and hopefully we'll talk to you again next month.



2019 is About Pushing Boundaries

By Heidi Ellsworth

RCS Influencer Heidi Ellsworth says that RoofersCoffeeShop® will continue to grow opportunities for roofing contractors in 2019.

As a partner of RoofersCoffeeShop with Vickie Sharples, I feel that I can relate to the challenges of owning a business and the ongoing need to push yourself and your company out of the “comfort zone”. Since 2015, Vickie and I have worked very hard to change up the Coffee Shop without losing the heart and soul of what made our contractors and roofing professionals love it.

That is a lot like a roofing company. You worry everyday about keeping your customers and employees happy but sometimes you have to make a change. It is disturbing to think that change may upset your customers but for the sake of the business it is critical to stay in tune with the economy, technology and basic market changes that are happening rapidly in this day and age.

I have talked to many contractors who say, “If I change from fax to email, they are not going to like it,” or something similar to that. But change is happening, and a new generation is nipping at our heels so if you are not changing to meet market demands, employee needs and overall business requirement, then there won’t be much to talk about in 2019.

So, like all of you, the Coffee Shop is looking at change. In fact, shortly you will see a whole new website. We will have the option to read our content in English, French and/or Spanish. We will have Canada as a part of the classifieds, forum and throughout the site. We are adding pages that will help all of you find the resources you need from award information to scholarships to ongoing information about top industry events like the International Roofing Expo.

Let me tell you, it has not been easy. Vickie would share that sentiment probably much more vocally, but we knew that nothing really good comes easy. I would challenge all of you to do the same, pushing the boundaries of what is comfortable and upgrading your business. What do you need to do differently for your employees? What do you need to do different in regard to technology? And what do you need to do overall to take your business to the next level? It may be a succession plan; it may be new technology and marketing tools, and it may even be changes within your company that are not easy but necessary. Whatever they are, look at them now and make them happen in 2019.

As we look at what we are doing for our business in 2019, the Coffee Shop is focused on offering what all of you need, when you need it. If your plans include improved networking, contractor to contractor business, updated materials and technology or ongoing continuing education, you will find it on our updated site. We know how hard you all work on your business and we are committed to the same.



Training and Education are Imperative to the Success of a Company

By Rudy Gutierrez

RCS Influencer Rudy Gutierrez says that certifiable education will be of utmost importance.

At Shell Roofing Solutions, we support any education program that allows for employee self-development. We encourage our team members to pursue high learning.

Currently we are involving our team members in the NRCA Pro-Certification™ program. This program is going to allow our employees to show their roofing expertise by earning certifications in multiple roofing system installations. As a company we are benefit with higher retention and the ability to share those certifications with our customers.

As a an NRCA Board member, I can validate that the amount of work that has gone into this program. It is enormous but if we are going to improve the professionalism of our industry and retain our employees, we must have strong training, education and the ability to show certifiable proof of the talent of our roofers.

For this month's influencer topic, I would like to share with you information from the NRCA website at www.nrca.net:

Through a series of assessments, NRCA will certify workers who have met all the requirements for each type of roof system installation allowing them to earn professional credentials. NRCA also will be certifying foremen and other mid-level roofing company personnel.

The goals of NRCA ProCertification™ are to:

- Create a career path for industry field workers
- Elevate the roofing industry to be on par with other trade professions that currently offer national certifications
- Address the workforce shortage by making the roofing industry more appealing
- Protect consumers by providing national, professional certifications for those doing work on their home or building
- Educate consumers on the value of hiring an NRCA ProCertified roof system installer
- Increase consumer confidence that workers have the knowledge and skills to do the job well

Certifications, offered in English and Spanish, include:

- NRCA ProCertified Thermoplastic Systems Installer (e.g., TPO, PVC)
- NRCA ProCertified Asphalt Shingles Installer
- NRCA ProCertified Roofing Foreman

The roofing industry is constantly evolving, and as you look for ways to grow your business, you also need to find ways for your workers to grow. This holds true for existing, experienced workers and new employees. Labor shortages and worker retention continue to be a struggle in the roofing industry, and NRCA is helping you address this issue through ProCertification.

When you invest in your workers, you show them you appreciate their knowledge and skill sets and want them to have successful careers with your company. By certifying your workforce, you demonstrate your commitment to professionalism, quality and your employees' futures while also providing your company with a significant competitive advantage.

Additional benefits to certifying your workforce include:

- Strengthened customer and supplier confidence
- Increased productivity
- Consistency of installation (fewer problems and callbacks)
- Improved safety
- Enhanced reputation and position in your local market(s)
- Increased profitability

When you consider all the benefits of certifying your workforce, you quickly realize it can dramatically and positively affect your company.

There always will be a strong demand for people who can install roof systems properly and safely. Roofing work allows people to work with their hands to build and create roofs—the single most important component of a home or building that is essential to protecting customers' most valuable possessions. NRCA ProCertification provides experienced roofing workers the ability to demonstrate their skills and knowledge and become certified by NRCA in specific roof systems installations. Professional certification offers workers the opportunity to take pride in and be recognized for their skills and expertise—recognition that can stay with them forever. The demand for skilled roof system installers is real, and the opportunities are limitless.

Additional benefits of becoming an NRCA ProCertified installer include:

- National, professional achievement and recognition
- Certifications and badges stay with workers throughout their careers
- Increased knowledge and confidence
- Expertise and skills independently validated by NRCA
- Increased employer confidence and, potentially, pay
- Pride in professionalism



Customers Want to Be Educated

By Jon Stantz

RCS Influencer Jon Stantz says this his customers want to know when, how, and why now more than ever.

At Pell Roofing and Siding our approach is pretty simple. We make sure that we have the correct brochures, products for demonstration, warranty information, building code requirements, possible recycling issues, disposal info readily available for every job. We have found that our customers want to know when, how and why more now than ever.

With everyone's accessibility to the Internet, customers are collecting lots of information ahead of time and are armed with questions. The only problem they have is that they aren't sure how the entire project goes together with what product. I recently did a presentation on flat roofs for the facilities manager of our state highway department. He had never dealt with single-ply roofs before (old BUR guy) so I had EPDM, PVC and TPO roof membranes and literature for all three systems. Now he can make a much more educated decision as to what membrane works the best for certain applications.

The same approach also works well with residential customers. Installing a new roof is a big decision for most people and our job is to help them feel secure with the proper information, understanding and timing of the project. I guess that the time issue is a little problematic for some installers but EVERY customer desires to feel like they are first and foremost in the contractor's mind.

Now with that being said, I feel that our roofing organizations (NRCA, MRCA, etc.) need to do more demonstrations/applications at home shows, trade shows, county fairs, wherever we can interact with the general public. When customers can see a demonstration, touch the products and ask questions they will be more informed and more at ease when it comes time for them to repair or replace their roofs



11 Tips for New Contractors just Getting Started

By Ross Riddle

RCS Influencer Ross Riddle says that a new contractor should be sure to understand what they are taking on and to be as prepared as possible.

If I had one piece of advice to offer a contractor just getting started, it would be...make sure you know what you're getting yourself into, and that you are well prepared. That said, here's a short list of things I'd offer for consideration:

- Plan this venture ahead of time and don't go into it haphazardly
- Start with adequate working capital
- Assemble a good crew and pay them a good wage
- Have the proper insurance, both workers comp, and general liability
- Work with a supplier who can help you stay out of trouble, and that has your back. Remember, the relationship has to be mutually beneficial
- Find a good mentor...and listen to him or her
- Stay small and manageable and grow slowly and when you're prepared for it
- Don't work for wages...the biggest mistake I see is people working too cheap. If a job doesn't look profitable going into it, don't do the job!
- Always be honest and up front with your help, your customers, and your supplier
- Pay your bills on time and take the discount
- Don't forget to have a cash reserve...if you don't have to use it, Great! If you do need it, you'll be glad you have it





It's a Super Exciting Time to be in Roofing

By Charles Antis

RCS Influencer Charles Antis says that it's an exciting time to get into roofing because of what the future has in store.

Well, I'm excited. I'm really excited that young people are interested in roofing and I think I'm excited because it wasn't always this way. When I started in roofing, there was a certain banner of shame that I wore, and I was ashamed of the caulking in my fingernails and the cuts on my hands and I remember I'd put my hands in my pocket. But if you notice me talking, I use my hands all the time, because I had a mind shift somewhere in there when I realized that we were the ones, we were those cowboys that were up on the roof when no one else would go, keeping families safe and dry.

So, when I talk to somebody about roofing, I think that's what I want them to see. Like, "Wow, there's a real need." Everything in our county, everything in the land that you see needs to be protected. Those babies, your family, that expensive equipment, that's our job. We go out in rough weather and we still take care of it. I want somebody first to accept that this is an awesome, awesome trade of superheroes, but I would also point out the values in the roofing industry. Karen, my COO, when she came here, she said, "Oh my gosh, roofers have the biggest hearts." And that's true, roofing professionals do and now we're organized in a national give with Ronald McDonald Houses that's making a tremendous difference across the country and it's lifting up who we are.

I would tell a new contractor that, but the most exciting thing about roofing is this is a trade that's always going to be there and it's a trade where the wages in the next couple of decades are going to go way up because there's going to be a technology play. There's going to be drones, there's going to be apps, there's going to be robotics up on the roof, and that's how it's going. This is a super exciting time to be in roofing and I'm not saying that just because I'm on the National Roofing Contract Association Board, although I do say that because being on the Board and being in the Roofing Alliance and being in the Roofing Technology Think Tank, I learn and see so much of what's coming in the future of roofing and it is a super exciting time.

I mean, if you're listening to Reid Ribble, our COO, we're talking about advocating. We're going to have 600 roofing professionals show up in Washington on April 3rd and 4th. That is amazing. We are talking about certification, education. We're creating certifications for flat, for slope, for tile, for shingles, performance, for the roofing industry as a whole. The most exciting to me is that we're lifting communities by taking care of families and keeping them safe and dry and close to their sick kids when they need it the most. This is what our industry's doing and it's exciting. So, come join us, that's what I'd say.



Giving Customers a Little ‘Extra Time’ to Pay Will Lead to Cashflow Issues

By Thea Dudley

RCS Influencer Thea Dudley says that not having a good understanding of your collections and accounts receivable could end up being your biggest cost of doing business.

Not always noticeable until it is too late, the biggest cost or impact to businesses that I have encountered this year is roofing contractors not keeping a tight enough rein on their collections and accounts receivable (AR). The cost sneaks up on you in a good economy.

When times are good, and money is flowing many companies take their eye off their accounts receivable. They allow customers a little “extra time” to pay the account. Before you know it, that “little extra” has crept out to 15 - 20 days or more days past due, eventually creating a cashflow issue for your company.

Extended terms is another cashflow killer and impact to your business, in any economy. Your customer asks for a change in the payment terms and you generously allow the extra 30 or 60 days they requested, and it ends up playing havoc on your AR. Unless you are getting the same terms from your supplier you are creating another unintentional cost to your business.

Once you open the barn door for either of those scenarios it is tough to get it back under control. You have to retrain your customers to pay you on time. It is even harder to reel those extended terms back down.

Take a moment to review your AR and see who is trending slow and start the retraining process now. Follow up on commitments and hold your customers accountable. The fear is always (I hear this from every single customer EVER) that you will lose their business. You may, but how much is it costing you to carry them and what happens when money tightens up? Will they have the ability to pay you?

If you have given out extended terms, make time to revisit the conversation and see what was driving the need for them. Most often customers ask to see if they can get it or keep the money in their pocket longer with no real reason for it.

The longer your money is in someone else’s pocket the more opportunity there is for it to never make it to yours. 2019 is a good year to “reset the table” and give your accounts receivable a health check. Treat your AR with the same set of guidelines regardless of what the economy is doing.



Use Technology as Leverage to Grow your Business

By Wendy Marvin

RCS Influencer Wendy Marvin says that when considering technology, ask around.

Technology is the leverage we use in our roofing businesses. It can administer tasks faster, store data, provide calculations, and so much more. Technology and all the changes and headaches that it can bring, is necessary for a growing business.

We live in a world of information. Where names, details, numbers, and data are just plain too much for our brains to hold and still remain functional. Ever have someone say, you have too many balls in the air and you're dropping some? Technology can be a handy helper to eliminate this problem.

In business – technology is necessary. You need an accounting mechanism, even if it's an excel spreadsheet, to assess the health of your business. We started with the standard accounting software that's available online and desktop. It's robust for reporting and keeps accounts payable and accounts receivable updated. You can balance your checkbook here too. Problems arise however, as you grow with data growing exponentially with your company growth. Slogging through all that data to give you daily information takes a robust backend program. Most starting programs just can't handle the load. Moving to a new system means hoping you chose an old system that allows exporting of data in a manner that's usable by your new system.

All in all, although difficult and frustrating, I recommend that when choosing technology for your business, you consider your future growth and try to head off the frustrations of working with multiple systems that don't talk to each other. Currently, my office has three places they have to place information before a bid can be processed. The process is inefficient and costly. We are designing our own system, to hold massive amounts of data, and then add apps around that data to allow us to run our business with efficiency and exceptional customer service.

In operations - technology is also necessary IF you want to remain competitive and grow your business.

- **Distribution:** We work with an app that confirms time and site of deliveries, show us pictures of the load and gives us the ability to pick up additional materials and add to the PO for a current job. Most larger distribution companies now produce such apps for free.
- **Estimating:** We use satellite-based apps that gather accurate information for us. Our program notifies the customer when we're on the way, it gives our estimators a GPS map to follow, and sends and receives notes and pictures live. We are also currently in working towards our Drone pilot certification. We see drones as a "get going or get left behind" type of technology in our industry.
- **Payroll:** We're moving to an app for payroll. Instead of messy, water spotted and poorly written time cards, our data will now be supplied via geo-fencing (address is gathered when they're on site) and show that the roofing professionals has done the "clock in, clock out" onsite. Yes, we still have to verify data, but it won't be ten hours of trying to get the information we need to process payroll. Again, efficiency and cost savings for our company.

When considering technology, ask around. Identify the needs of your company (ask employees), and then find a company that meets most of those needs. Expect customer service, as you'll need help setting up your company with whatever they offer. Technology is expensive and choosing incorrectly can be frustrating. Most of all, be patient with yourself, and with your employees. We all have barriers to learning new things, but by sharing the payoff, and savings of technology, our employees often become advocates and assist us through the process.



Want to be a Roofing Contractor? Buy an Existing Company

By Shelly Duhaime

RCS Influencer Shelly Duhaime says that anyone who wants to be a roofing contractor should consider buying an existing company rather than start their own.

I think any person that wants to own a roofing company should buy an existing company. There are a lot of really good roofing contractors out there that have been in business, have good reputations, but don't have succession plans. They have an established client base. Usually, they know the competition quite well. You could also transition with some of the key people within that roofing company, so if I were saying to my own son, who said, "Hey Mom, I want to be in the roofing contracting business," I would say, "Find a way to buy an existing company."

Some of you may be thinking, "isn't it easier to just get a truck, some tools and start my own company?" It goes back to the main issue in construction, and that is labor. More and more, you're going to have to have better benefit packages to acquire, retain, and keep good labor, not only labor but leaders too - your estimators, your foremen, the people running the jobs, your safety people. That part of the business is going to become more and more important to maintain and more costly. The ability to get people is going to be very difficult, so if you're starting off with one truck and one ladder, then it's going to be very hard for you to expand your business to do any more than what you could do with one truck, and one ladder, and a couple of people that help you.

Imagine you've got an established roofing company, that maybe has 75 people. They've got a good client list. They've had somebody running the company that's been a very good operator, can serve as a mentor, give you guidance. You know, I think that's the best route to success, and I think there's a lot of opportunity out there. I talk to roofing contractors all the time, and a lot of them are concerned about what their succession plan is going to be.

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