

Home Improvement

Home Lumber's Winfield Store Remodel Receives Recognition



In today's age of cookie-cutter hardware stores and home center chains that are more identified by color than anything else, it's not often that you see a retailer step out of the traditional store design mold and come up with something completely unique and fresh. But that's what Home Lumber recently did with a store remodel project that took place at its Winfield, Kan., location last fall. Within just the first few months of the project being completed, this prototype store has already been recognized for its efforts by the people who matter most—the community of Winfield.

"It's always nice to be recognized for your efforts," says John Humphreys, president of the 15-store Home Lumber chain. "We received an award from the Winfield Main Street Committee, which is affiliated with the Kansas Main Street Program. The program encourages merchants to focus renovation efforts on their historical store fronts, so we uncovered the exterior cladding not really knowing what to expect."

While the goal of the interior portion of the project was to create more of a modern shopping experience conducive to the way people shop today, the exterior portion of the project was more of a step back in time, especially for store manager Sid Spooner, who says the building looks more like it did when he first started working at the store 45 years ago.

When customers enter the store, they have all of the comforts of shopping at a modern home improvement store, with a salesfloor layout and interior signage that lends itself to self-service shopping. Shoppers also have access to an Internet Café where they can log onto www.homelumber-supply.com and order product, pull up a list of projects with step-by-step instructions or just surf the net looking for home improvement ideas.

"I recently read that over the next few years retail sales are expected to increase between 3 percent and 5 percent. But the projected sales increase from people who research their products online is expected to be closer to 17 percent," says Humphreys, who says with the new focus on project sales, they are already starting to see an increase in the average transaction size.

The Winfield Home Solutions store is also seeing more new faces, and staff members are hearing good things from customers about the store remodel. "From the feedback we have heard, people are impressed with what we have done. It's kind of funny that many people think the store is bigger, and we didn't increase the footprint at all."

Humphreys also gives a lot of credit to Blish-Mize

and store designer Brian Christy from Ruvella, who came up with the plan for the prototype store. "Our goal was to establish a unique identity and appearance, and from the beginning, Brian came up with something that suited us very well," he says. "Between Blish-Mize, Brian and a terrific effort by our local staff, we're very happy with the way the project was completed. It has really made for a much more professional presentation."



Colorful signage at the store's service counter lets customers know this is where they can find information for their home improvement projects, both from trained employees as well as online. In fact, Home Lumber recently added e-commerce to its Website as well as a host of project-related information. As a result, the retailer has already seen project sales start to increase.



Home Lumber's newly refurbished Home Solutions concept store in Winfield, Kan., was recently recognized by the Winfield Main Street Association for a renovation of both the interior and exterior that took place last fall. According to Store Manager Sid Spooner (pictured at left accepting the award), the exterior looks more like what the building resembled 45 years ago when he started working at the store.



The new floor plan exposes customers to more endcaps and creates unique sightlines on the salesfloor to add visual interest while shopping.



Custom-designed interior and exterior signage ties everything together, including the graphic elements found in the store's new logo and colors found on the salesfloor.