



Your Green Roofing Partner by Dr. Jim Hoff

With this month's *Roofing Contractor* focus on distribution and the supply chain, I thought it would be important to talk about how your local distributor can be an important partner in building a successful and sustainable roofing business. Distributors offer important business resources to help you get more involved in sustainable roofing, especially when it comes to transporting materials and providing local inventory for new products.

Recycling can be an important part of any sustainable business initiative, and in the past few years, more and more contractors are recycling an increasing number of roofing materials, including shingles, single-ply membranes and board insulations. However, recycling requires more than just collecting materials at the jobsite. After existing materials are collected and stored, they still need to be picked up, frequently stored at a central collection site, and eventually transported to a recycler. Because local distributors have extensive transport and logistics capabilities, they have the capability to fill in critical gaps in developing a consistent and reliable recycling program. And most local distributors have connections to a national network of distribution that in turn may help coordinate recycling efforts.

In addition to recycling existing materials, the sustainable building movement has developed many new materials with reduced impact on the environment. Common examples of green roofing products include adhesives and coatings with reduced VOC content as well as membranes and insulations with increased recycled content. In addition to lower impact versions of current roofing products, new roofing accessories are being developed with the aim to increase energy efficiency. These new energy-saving products include high performance skylights, storm water collection systems and highly reflective roof coatings. Finally, the opportunity to go beyond energy savings and actually produce clean energy on the rooftop has generated an incredible array of new roofing products, including solar racking systems and a variety of solar modules and collectors.

Many of your customers may be interested in these new sustainable and energy-saving products, but turning this interest into a sale frequently requires local inventory to assure the products are available when you need them. And by providing adequate and timely supplies of these new



materials, the local distributor plays a critical role in the success of new and highly roofing products. After visiting the websites of roofing distributors across the country, I am pleased to see that many distributors are focusing on these new and highly profitable products, especially solar energy products and systems. And as distributor interest in these products increases, your opportunity to sell more profitable roofing work increases as well.

Because the opportunities in sustainable roofing can be so powerful and profitable for your business, I would encourage you during the month of July to take time to visit your local roofing distributor and see how you can expand your business relationship to include new opportunities in recycling and sustainable roofing products. I think you'll find a receptive partner who can help you grow your business, provide more value for your customers, and contribute to the sustainability of your community. **R**

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