



Bright ideas Keeping your cash flowing

Economic downturns are cyclical, and peaks and troughs are a natural part of any business life cycle. So it is feasible to expect that at some stage of your business life, you will face tough or leaner times as a result of a downturn.

Leaner times are now with us and so cash flow has become increasingly important. As part of our alliance with NSW Business Chamber we are able to provide to you some very valuable business productivity tools including:

- **Bright ideas for business – Keeping your cash flowing:** a practical common sense guide to keeping your house in order by monitoring your financial condition and making effective financial decisions. (Available to TABMA members free of charge)
- **Business Vitality™ Check:** Assess your business health using Business Vitality™ Check, a confidential, practical and easy-to-use online diagnostic tool. (Available to TABMA members at a discounted NSW Business Chamber member rate)
- **Business Vitality™ Express Check:** an abbreviated version of the Business Vitality™ Check for the time poor. (Available to TABMA members at a discounted NSW



Business Chamber member rate)

- **Business Vitality™ Plus+:** Drive bottom line results using Business Vitality™ Plus, a three month improvement program delivered by a specialist advisor, who will provide independent mentoring and guidance to achieve your business goals. (Available to TABMA members at a discounted NSW Business Chamber member rate)

For further details please contact John Theoharris on 02 9277 3144 or john@tabma.com.au

TABMA Annual Awards 2009

TABMA's Annual Awards is an evening where the industry meets to socialise and acknowledge the efforts of those TABMA members that are excelling in their businesses. A judging process is conducted in the months leading up to the evening where members are judged to a set of criteria. Awards are given in several categories with the major award being Member of the Year. The night includes entertainment, fine food and wine and will be again held at the very popular venue as last year's Gala Dinner, Luna Park. The date is **Friday 6 November 2009**, so put this in your diary and we look forward to seeing you there.



TABMA is a member-based industry organisation representing building materials suppliers, timber merchants, timber importers and related service providers. TABMA provides companies with practical solutions to improve business management, growth and profitability.



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From the CEO's Desk

Welcome to the 2nd edition of the new look TABMA Talk.

Chain of Custody (CoC)

As you may be aware CoC Certification is now with us. The importance of Chain of Custody is that there is a real and visible link from forest to consumer.

This traceability is the fundamental priority in order to support and adhere to sustainable forest management practices.

Consumers are becoming better informed and more concerned about the environmental source of the goods they purchase. If you are not already, you will soon find government and commercial builders insisting on CoC Certification.

To this end we have invited Kayt Watts, the CEO of Australian Forestry Standard (AFS), to address the next TABMA Board Meeting to explain in full the requirements of CoC and the certification process.

It is intended that shortly after Kayt's presentation to the Board, she will be invited to address all TABMA, WADIC and HBT members on the ramifications of CoC. Members will be advised of the date and venue.

Growth

As part of TABMA's growth nationally we have opened an office in Adelaide. The address is Level 5, City Central Tower 2, 121 King William Street, Adelaide SA. 5000.

Our alliances with WADIC and HBT have presented us with the opportunity to

promote Group Training, OH&S audits and Recruitment in SA.

There are a combined total of 47 WADIC and HBT members in the State and they will all be receiving a visit from a TABMA representative.

New Additions

It is with pleasure we welcome Todd Regner and Lynn Gabriel-Kenworthy to the TABMA team. Todd joins as Membership Manager for NSW and Lynn as Membership Manager for WA.

Todd is an original TABMA trainee and is a qualified carpenter/builder by trade. As well as regularly calling on all TABMA, WADIC and HBT members throughout NSW, Todd will also be assisting John Theoharris in promoting BTC.

Lynn, who has a Bachelor of Commerce degree as well as a Cert IV Workplace Assessment & Training qualification, will be visiting all TABMA members in WA to promote the services and benefits we offer, as well as asking what more we can do to increase the relevance of TABMA in WA.

Tough Times

Many of our members are feeling the pinch from the global economic crisis. The Federal Government has taken action recently, with a series of measures aimed at facilitating economic activity. Many of these measures are aimed at helping business.

I would encourage you to have a look at the detail on the Internet via <http://www.economicstimulusplan.gov.au> to get a sense of what Government initiatives may be of assistance to you.

Colin Fitzpatrick

Introducing....



Travelcorp is the newest of TABMA's partners, bringing travel benefits to our members. Travelcorp have recently been voted Coca Cola's Best External Supplier. They are the fastest growing travel management company in Australia. In these challenging times, more and more businesses are recognising the value Travelcorp can add to their company. One client calculated savings in the first nine months of working with Travelcorp to be \$1,587,000. Another found a saving of \$800 on a simple domestic airfare when comparing Travelcorp to their old travel provider. And Bayer Pharmaceuticals recently reported Travelcorp's ticket prices to be on average \$2000 cheaper than a global travel company.

Unlike others, Travelcorp provide total transparency and honesty, giving clients absolute access to their back office system. They will be working on behalf of TABMA as a group to gain us special deals, and will also take care of business or holiday travel for each TABMA member as an individual.

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Timber Product Knowledge Session

TABMA recently held a Timber Product Knowledge Information session at the Courtyard by Marriot, Parramatta. Over 30 people attended. Topics included timber grading, timber storage, durability of timber, hazard levels/timber treatment, timber applications, engineered timber products and the differences between hardwood & softwood.

All feedback received was positive, though some participants felt there was too much information for a morning session. TABMA will be looking to conduct similar sessions during the year, breaking them down into more manageable units.

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Skills Shortage: Timberstart

In the previous issue we flagged that TABMA Training was preparing two job ready courses to help address the lack of skilled workers in the industry. Two courses, one in Joinery/Shopfitting and one in Timber Merchandising have now been developed and given the title of "Timberstart".

The Timberstart courses will be run over a period of six weeks, the first week being at TAFE learning the basics of OH&S, communications and the fundamentals of the applicable trade or traineeship. The remaining five weeks shall comprise three days at TAFE, learning the theoretical and hands on aspects of Joinery/Shopfitting and Timber Merchandising, followed up with two days per week unpaid work experience.

Please note that the unpaid component or "work experience" shall have the workers compensation aspect covered at no expense to the employer.

We at TABMA Training expect the Timberstart courses to commence in June/July and ask for any potential work experience employers to contact TABMA Training on (02) 9277 3177 and register your company's name and the number of potential work experience candidates you may be interested in taking on.

Training Courses

TABMA Training has implemented a new training initiative and presents the following training courses for the consideration of members. These courses have been discounted for TABMA members.

Course 1 – Skills Development for Supervisors

This is a one day course 9.00am to 4.00pm
Cost: \$110.00 (Incl. GST) per person

Course 2 – Timber Grading Workshop

1 day course 9:00am 4:00pm
Cost: \$110.00 (incl. GST) per person

Course 3 – Manual Handling in the Timber/Joinery Industry

½ day course 8:00am 12:00pm
Cost: \$70.00 (incl. GST) per person

Course 4 – Safe Operating Procedures Development Workshop

1 day course 9:00am 4:00pm
Cost: \$110.00 (incl. GST) per person

Please note that the above courses are dependant upon numbers. For further information please contact TABMA Training on (02) 9277 3177.

Todd Regner

TABMA / BTC Membership Manager

I have spent the last 20 years or so gaining experience and working in the building/construction and timber industries.

I originally started my working career as a TABMA trainee in 1987 and my host employer was MLM at Toongabbie & Homebush Bay. On completion of my traineeship I was able to secure a carpentry/joinery apprenticeship, and after the four year course I opted to continue on for a further three years and obtain my builder's license.

After ten years or so working on the tools I realised I liked to talk and interact with people, so a career in sales and marketing was only a matter of time.

Choosing to complete a tertiary course to better equip myself for my new career, I undertook several sales and marketing courses and acquired a Certificate III in Business.

The opportunity to come back and work for TABMA is something that took me by surprise. The idea of coming full circle and assisting the association in servicing and being a voice for the members is great. So much has changed since I last worked for the association but like any business it has evolved and grown for the better.

I look forward to growing our membership base and also assisting our members where ever possible.

Trueform Frames & Trusses Pty Ltd

Trueform Frames & Trusses commenced operations in September 1996 and moved to their current site in Mulgrave in outer Sydney in January 2008.

The company was formed by Bill Twitchen (*pictured opposite*) in partnership with his wife Sadie, sons Mark and Jason, and Craig Helyer. Currently Bill is Managing Director, Mark is General Manager, Jason is the Senior Detailer and Craig is in charge of the factory and dispatch, while Sadie is the Company Administrator.

Employees now total 26 with an annual turnover in excess of \$6million.

Prior to starting up Trueform, Bill who at the age of 27 migrated to Australia from Buckinghamshire, was General Manager of New Line Building Supplies for four years.

Before New Line he was State Manager of Bowater Scott and prior to that was a Senior Manager with Millers Timber.

Trueform Frames & Trusses has been a TABMA member since they started and have always employed apprentices and trainees. They currently employ three TABMA trainees and have three ex TABMA trainees still working for the company.

Trueform was and always will be a family business with many families on staff, apart from the Twitchens employed.



20 major customers make up the bulk of Trueforms business with Chateau Constructions, Beechwood Homes, Provincial Homes and Billyard Homes the backbone of the business.

Bill believes that the building industry in NSW has been in recession for the past 2–3 years, so the State is unlikely to be affected by the current economic situation as dramatically as some other States. He also believes that we will start to see an economic upturn by the end of 2009.

All in all Trueform Frames & Trusses is a profitable and well-managed organisation and is poised to take advantage of future growth.

TABMA is proud to have them as a member.



Succession Planning Part 2

According to Bill Hovey, CEO of the Linchpin Group Australia, which is currently in partnership with NSW Business Chamber members on succession planning, it's a serious situation that requires immediate attention.

"Ineffective succession planning results in family disharmony, destroys the value of the business and can lead to the family losing both control and ownership.

"Many business owners simply don't know what to do with themselves once they exit the business. Basically, they are not prepared for 'life after business'."

Mr Hovey suggests that business owners explore alternatives that provide them with the best possible outcome – alternatives that don't put undue pressure on the owner. Getting a premium price for a business, he said, is only one side of the equation.

"Most business owners want to leave behind a profitable and sustainable business, a brand,

a team and culture they have formed and nurtured, and an untarnished reputation.

"These elements become important anchors in the whole process."

Mr Hovey suggests that business owners:

- think rationally and objectively before they make a decision to either sell up or handover the business
- implement a strategy well in advance to achieve the most favourable financial outcome, regardless of whether they terminate or transition the business. They need to ask themselves: 'is selling the best option?' How much would you get for your business if you sold it today? What would be the net result of selling your business?
- need to evaluate their priorities: for example, do you have enough cash to fund your retirement?
- must consider what sort of legacy they want to leave to the family, community, charity etc.

"Succession planning is a multi-dimensional problem that requires a multi-disciplined approach. It's not something that your lawyer or accountant can necessarily fix on their own. In fact, succession management affords the ideal opportunity for co-operation and collaboration of advisers across a range of disciplines.

"The best approach is to consider all the options and issues in a rational and objective way so that the business owner gets the best outcome, and the new owners are best positioned to continue growing the business."

How prepared are you for succession?

Australian Business has set-up a free online diagnostic. It doesn't take long and will provide you with information tailored to your situation. Visit www.tabma.com.au/copy-of-reports-nsw.php for a free diagnostic.

Sourced by  NSW Business Chamber

Tips for creating a flexible workplace

In today's working environment finding good staff, training them and retaining them is a challenge that can be costly but if done correctly can pay dividends over time. While there are many strategies to achieve this sometimes management overlooks the benefits of a flexible workplace to keep employees happy. The tips below may not work for all organisations, however they are worthy of consideration.

There is no such thing as a 'cookie cutter' approach to flexible workplace practices. Businesses need to think innovatively and create flexible work practices that work for their own business and staff needs.

Lead by example. Implement a culture based on outcomes rather than the number of hours at the office. Decide to keep working hours to a reasonable level and encourage managers to do the same.

Create a flexible workplace that works in the best interests of both staff and the business. Management and staff should meet together to develop working

arrangements that hold real benefits for all concerned. There is no 'one size fits all' solution.

Be flexible. For example, management could organise for the accountant to work online, at home from after 3:00 pm, allowing her to pick her children up from school and supervise their homework. Job sharing two days a week could be arranged for the receptionist. A phased retirement plan over 5 years could be organised for the warehouse manager, who may also agree to mentor a younger employee keen on following in his footsteps.

Determine flexible working arrangements by consulting with staff. This approach proves to be extremely beneficial to the business because it raises possibilities that management may never have considered, or envisaged would work. Productivity, loyalty and job satisfaction can be improved as a result.

Think outside the box. Parents of young children often find it difficult and costly to get children minded after school. Set up an

after school crèche for the young children of all workers and allow the parents to leave at 3.00 pm to pick up their children.

Non parents can be included through flexible starting and finishing times negotiating individually; and when employees occasionally work long hours to meet a client's deadline, their working hours may be scaled back the next week.

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Peter Hutchison

TABMA Chief Executive Officer:

Colin Fitzpatrick

TABMA Board Members:

John Harrison (Vice President)
Ian Halliday (Vice President)
Danny Gattone, Ron Gattone, Michael Swan, John Wilson, Gary Walker, David Nash, Glenn Johnston, Mark Willey, Brenton Christopher

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