

# When the Economy is Down, Van Millwork is Up

BOSTON, Mass., Jan. 5 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – In a questionable economy with so many unknown variables, many companies are quick to react by slashing prices and searching far and wide for new business albeit small. Van Millwork has taken a different approach to the state of the economy and the results are paying off. Sales have started to rise at year end and the business has stayed in line with 4th quarter sales from 2007. The company is making profitable decisions at a time when the overall residential building and remodeling industry is down 30-40 percent. “We have held our own and have made the tough decisions to make it through these trying times,” explains President and CEO, James Donlin.



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Obvious question is: How are they doing well when many companies in the housing industry are failing? The answer can be attributed to product offerings and most importantly professional relationships. Mr. Donlin came aboard the forty year old company in 2007. He ascertained Van Millwork's position in the marketplace and decided to expand the company's product line. As early as first quarter of 2008, the industry was already showing signs of distress, but Mr. Donlin trudged forward with a strategy to expand Van Millwork's product lines. He brought on Azek exterior trim and mouldings as well as multiple lines of hardwood flooring including Stuart, and Bruce.

To jumpstart sales for the new brands, the President initiated a competitive promotional offering which has generously paid off for the company as well as its customers. As the promo boasts in its offering, it helps "Liberate Your Bottom Line." Any order that includes up to 1,000 square feet of flooring is awarded a 3 percent discount on the entire order – that includes the remainder of their stock inventory of interior and exterior doors, hardware, stair parts, mantels, trim and mouldings. Anything over 1,000 square feet receives a 5 percent discount. This has proven successful and increased sales for flooring as well as overall.

With that success under his belt, Donlin has concentrated on other areas of the business including what he calls "the company's gem" – the \$1 million dollar showroom in Needham that Van Millwork shares with its sister companies, C&R Flooring and Dustless Floor Sanding. The showroom displays full-size applications of Van Millwork's products in nine vignette rooms that showcase different distinct architectural styles that allow a homeowner, builder, designer, contractor or architect to match their room's design.

With little effort, Van Millwork has increased traffic into their showroom by maximizing its relationships with associated partners in the building industry. Along with their partners and Design New England magazine, Van Millwork has hosted six free Design Seminars in 2008 which have attracted close to 300 consumers and interior designers to its Needham showroom to learn new ideas in conjunction with product knowledge enhancement.

The seminars include either a sit-down lunch or brunch for attendees prior to the hour-long seminar presented by greater Boston area experts. Thanks to Van's media sponsor, Design New England of Boston Globe Media, the advertising cost is minimal and the seminars operate at less than \$250 each. In addition, Van Millwork worked with their vendors to create a two-day Continuing Education course that offered up to 10 credits for AIA certified architects. Van Millwork hosts many events for the media, designers, builders, and most recently their chosen charitable organization, The Room To Dream Foundation, in their showroom. The response has been overwhelming and has allowed Van Millwork to forge new relationships with potential consumers and long term relationships with trade professionals.

One element that has remained true and steadfast among the professionals at Van Millwork is a dedicated focus on customer relationships. While words like "Service," "Quality," and "Satisfaction" are often used as lip service to promote businesses, Van Millwork prioritizes these words as goals.

Van Millwork's Vice President of Operations, Mary Wills states, "We're proud of our employees' consistent execution of service and quality, which results in our customers' satisfaction. It is strengthening our relationships and points to future growth opportunities."

The logo features the text "News from Send2Press® Newswire" in white serif font, centered within a blue rectangular border. The background is a dark blue, abstract pattern of overlapping lines and shapes, resembling a network or a stylized tree structure.

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The company attributes their professional relationships to what has allowed them to survive the down economy and by continuing to nurture these relationships, they have confidence that they will stay afloat. Van Millwork is implementing a new business strategy that customers will find rewarding.

As Donlin puts it, "Our biggest reward is customer loyalty so why not give something back to them. If we don't focus on our customer base, someone else will, and we value them too much to lose them." While he won't say what his plan is, he is excited that his customers stand to gain more through their relationship with Van Millwork.

President and CEO, James Donlin might be on to something. After all Boston Home Magazine just named Van Millwork Best of Boston for 2009 in the Millwork category, in addition to choosing the company's Custom Division for Custom Woodworking in its Stockist Resource Guide.

Founded in 1967 as a full service lumber company, Van Millwork has grown into the largest interior millwork supplier in New England. The company offers a full array of millwork products and architectural trim for the interior and exterior of the home, including moldings, interior and exterior doors, stair components, signature mantels, wainscot panel systems, and columns. The company also offers showrooms in Bellingham, Needham and Mashpee, MA, and a full-service custom woodworking shop in Fitchburg, MA.

Van Millwork's corporate offices are located at 27 Maple Street in

Bellingham, MA. For more information on flooring or other products and services call 508-966-4141 or visit the website at [www.vanmillwork.com](http://www.vanmillwork.com).

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