



THE CUTTING EDGE

WOOD MACHINERY MANUFACTURERS OF AMERICA

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Future for the Domestic Wood Furniture Industry?

Ken Hutton, Director

What needs to happen in order to keep a manufacturing base for the wood furniture industry here in the United States?

In June 2001, a group of executives from a variety of disciplines impacting the wood furniture industry gathered to discuss the future domestic prospects for this industry segment. The group became known as the Furniture Steering Committee (FSC) and included representatives from the furniture industry, the U.S. Forest Service, various universities, industry consultants, machinery builders, machinery importers, and machinery distributors. The group's objective was defined as identifying viable strategies to maintain critical mass for the wood household furniture industry in the U.S.A.

One of the FSC members, Urs Buehlmann of North Carolina State University, made a presentation to a collection of association leaders and executives during the meeting of the Chicago Peer Group held during the 2001 Anaheim Show. In his presentation, Mr. Buehlmann outlined similar trends in the wood office furniture industry, the kitchen cabinet industry, and the upholstered furniture industry that mirror what had already occurred within the wood household furniture industry.

Last month another gathering of the Furniture Steering Committee was held. WMMA Past President Michael Burdis (of James L. Taylor Manufacturing), WMMA Vice President Chuck Granger (of 3M), and WMMA Executive Vice President Ken Hutton attended. It became clear that the overall supply chain for the wood household furniture industry is under attack. The manufacturers of wood household furniture are fighting for survival; an entire range of domestically manufactured products is not competitive at various price points in the retail marketplace.

Given the dynamics in the end use market, what is the ability of the woodworking equipment industry to change its business model? The current economic malaise within the manufacturing sector of the U.S. economy is masking some fundamental shifts taking place in the historical customer mix. Whatever the New Year brings, it is clear that the marketplace for the woodworking equipment industry has fundamentally changed.

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Attention IWF Exhibitors

Editors Note: The following summary is courtesy of Frank York and Russ McBroom from the recently completed IWF Board meeting.

The next installment payment for IWF exhibit space must be postmarked no later than January 18, 2002 in order to retain your 20% discount. Mark your calendars now and don't forget!

Exhibit space sales for 2002 have already topped the 800,000 square feet budgeted. IWF '00 had 1,291 exhibitors holding 706,007 net square feet. As of November 30th, there were 1,127 exhibitors with 25% deposits paid for 813,857 net square feet.

You should have already noticed more publicity sooner on IWF than ever before! There have been more space advertisements earlier in the various issues of the industry press that are focused on bringing the buyer to IWF. If you have not done so already, check out the IWF website at <http://www.iwf2002.com>. There are a number of enhancements already in place and more planned. Be sure to direct your customers to this valuable tool, which will enable them to better plan their time spent at the Georgia World Congress Center.

Speaking of the Georgia World Congress Center, the construction of the third hall is



proceeding on schedule. The first show occupying this space is slated for June 2002. By the time IWF '02 rolls around in August, most of the construction, but maybe not all, should be completed. Viaduct construction on International Blvd. may require bus detours; and there may be a "temporary" walkway accessible for pedestrians only. Moreover, some new parking lots will be available, but for 2002 there will be a net loss of 250 spaces; for 2004 there will be a net gain of 3,000 spaces. MARTA is still the best alternative; be sure to advise your staff and customers accordingly.

By now, all member companies should have received the mailing on housing for IWF '02. WMMA has once again secured rooms at

the Marriott Marquis for WMMA members. Mail or fax the WMMA individual Reservation Form to reserve a room at this property; check the Members Only section of www.wmma.org for additional copies and information.

The IWF Show Office has already mailed a brochure on the Challengers' Award for IWF '02. To date, the requests for entry forms have totaled 100, which is 20 more than this time two years ago. The judging schedule this year also allows for more promotion time on the finalists prior to the Show. In addition, finalists and winners will have enhanced promotion on the IWF website and at the Show. If you would like more interest on this award, please contact the IWF Office at (770) 246-0608.

The IWF Board identified WoodLINKS USA as the recipient for Education & Research grants this year. An additional grant next year was approved contingent on WoodLINKS securing matching funds from industry sources. WoodLINKS will also be the recipient of a \$10 donation per visitor/buyer as he/she may so designate on their registration form; \$5,000 was raised that way during IWF '00.

New Registration Fee Structure for the 2002 WIC!

During the latest WMMA Board meeting held in early December, some new registration discounts have been rolled out to promote the attendance at the 2002 Woodworking Industry Conference and to award current WMMA members that are active in the association. The discounts are as follows:

-  All WMMA Committee members will receive 15% off the delegate registration fee
-  All WMMA Committee Chairs will receive 25% off the delegate registration fee
-  All WMMA Board Directors will receive 50% off the delegate registration fee
-  All WMMA Executive Committee Members will receive 75% off the delegate registration fee
-  One first time attendee from any WMMA member company that has previously attended the WIC will receive a free delegate registration. That is a 100% discount!



In addition, there again is a special offer for member companies who have not attended a WIC in the past five years. That offer is two free registrations plus a \$500 stipend per company. The money is for use to help defray travel or lodging costs. Companies eligible are those where no one has attended a WIC over the years 1997-2001. If two delegates per company register, this offer will be available to the first 15 companies responding. Please remember that this unique offer is only available to those member companies which have had no WIC attendance from 1997 through 2001.

Take advantage of these special offers. Bring someone new from your company. If you have never attended in the past, now is your chance! This conference is crucial for your business. You will gain insight on day-to-day business matters such as employee retention, customer service, ergonomics and exporting, not to mention the highly successful contact table session.

Watch your mail for registration information. It is scheduled to be mailed out in late-December. The WIC dates are May 1 - 4, 2002. The location is the new Westin La Cantera Resort located in San Antonio, Texas.

Remember, all members are responsible for making their own contact table appointments. Contact Table scheduling forms will be mailed out with the registration brochure.

To make appointments, contact your suppliers and distributors directly!

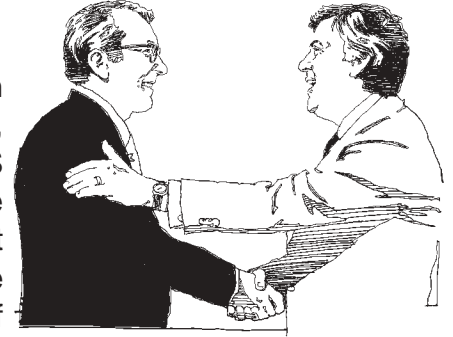


'Tis the Season

The WMMA Staff wishes all members and their families a joyous holiday season and a prosperous New Year. After the tragic events of September 11th, we need the time to remember what is truly important in our lives and to reflect on how blessed we all are to live in this wonderful country.

Using Distribution...Potent potential for partnership

*Jon Elvrum, Director
Ritter Manufacturing Inc.*



Every manufacturer reaches a point, early in their company history, when they realize they need help delivering their product to market. At this point, you see signs in trade show booths, affirming in big print: DISTRIBUTORS WANTED! Most companies who have managed to build machinery, as we do at our company, or develops a new idea about market needs that produces for manufacture a product, arrive square up against the realization that they cannot get their product to market without the help of others. The market, particularly the U.S. market, is too large, too diverse, too regional, too specialized, too fragmented and too interest-specific. Immediately, although without a clear understanding of difficulties involved, it becomes crystal clear that a manufacturer needs partnering relationships to channel goods and services to a market that is vast in potential.

When successfully accomplished, this process has become know as *channel partnering*, and it reflects a way of sharing responsibility for getting product from the manufacturer to the consumer in a way that makes it a beneficial experience for all concerned. When the process is not successful, it produces frustration and mistrust and hurries failure for all involved. When successful, there are some key things present in the relationship. When unsuccessful, these same key things, if ever truly present, will have eroded or disappeared completely. These hallmark requirements include: *Trust, responsibility, commitment, formal goal sharing* and the most important thing: *regular and formal communication*. Any of these key ideas that do not take hold in the partnership will drag it down and lead to weak programs.

Let's look at them individually:

Trust: For about a century the cotton market in Memphis operated without formal documentation (million dollar deals concluded on a handshake) purely on the strength of trust. Phrases linger in our language that derive from the free market that was centered on Front Street. "On my honor as a gentleman..." and "My word is my bond" are among them. Indeed, so strong was this market that if anyone failed to keep his word in *any* agreement, it was a causes for being shunned in the whole world market. Fail to live up to your unwritten agreement and you were essentially blacklisted. No one on the street or in the international cotton market would give you the time of day, much less access to cotton. In this rigidly self-regulated system there was no need for lawyers. On the other hand, when the agreement was honored, again and again, true trust developed, and King Cotton flourished through the emerging market and the chain of distribution emerged where all involved were well served. The planter took goods to the gin, which sold it to a variety of agencies and brokers, who processed or re-distributed cotton in all its eventual forms from swab tips to denim trousers. Without flexible, fluid and formal distribution, cotton would never have left the fields. This system grew and flourished only because of the trust between the channel partners, backed up by a *one-strike* and *you're out* mentality.

Responsibility: Key to the process is the formal willingness of distribution channel partners to assume the role of the manufacturer as their surrogate representative. The successful channel partner will be perceived as speaking and acting for the company as the company. The successful relationship has both parties in the channel behaving as if they were one, and working out the necessary details of this representation even as it goes along, in matters of delivery, service and representation. The responsibility for the fist formal contract and the delivery of product, literature, training, installation and after-market service falls to the distributor. Success is assured when the manufacturer responsibly

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participates in the process and supports its channel partner as required by events, keeping in mind primarily what is fair for both and what is good for the ultimate use-client.

Commitment: The measure of *commitment* is understood not when things are rosy, but when things are not doing so well, when goals are not being met and success is hard to measure. Committed channel partners take this time to review programs, to assess results and intentions, to re-think. The last two elements we have set forth - *goal-sharing* and *communication* are here recognized as being pivotal to *measuring, evaluating,* and *jointly redefining* strength of commitment from *both* ends of the partnership channel that distribution is. Markets and companies change. Product, people and emerging technology shape the changes; channel partnerships must be routinely assessed, results analyzed and discussed; the channel relationships must be subjected to regular discussion and review. More than anything, such discussions show interest and offer opportunities to improve offerings and increase the valuable interface that keeps everyone on track.

Goal-sharing: It is very important to have goals. It is more important that all members engaged know what the goals are and a strategy to achieve the goals must be

clear from the top to the bottom of the distribution systems. At the management level the goal may be financial, but at the ground level it must be tactical. This does not happen unless at the management level there is discussion and planning about the tactical, and agreement on what resources will be committed to the partnership by the partnership. A commitment to advertising needs a considered and responsible lead follow-up program. Information useful to measuring results of strategic planning needs to be fluid and easily obtained at both ends of the channel and all along the channel where anyone needs to tap in. What is required is openness and clarity of the shared objective, and the expectations should be measured routinely and often - without rancor. Sharing goals goes directly to how we measure success of any program: do we meet our goals? If not, why not? Were the goals wrong? If so, revise. Were the performances of the partners unequal? If so, reaffirm and redirect energy. Share results often. It is never too early to discuss concerns...it is rarely too late to re-think a plan that is not working - a plan that is not realizing an agreed and shared goal.

Communications Finally, as all of the above should clearly show, what is at the core of successful distribution channel partnering is a

willingness; more, a determination, to share information candidly and routinely. Regular reporting on results from channel partner to channel partner from both ends of the channel to the other is the thing the system demands most. Regular periods of performance need to be recorded and measured. How many widgets move through distribution in a specific time period [measured quarterly or monthly]? Other key issues for such evaluation are *performance against prior year,* for the same period, or *sell-through-* (how much has cleared the channel partners' warehouse). Are there quality and service issues that are changing? Are changes for better or for worse? What is being done well? What is not satisfactory for both ends of the channel partnership? The willingness to openly discuss these kinds of issues, to examine for *success* what things can be jointly done by all involved to improve what is not fruitful is the essence of communications and will make distribution work and will make much easier the regular practice and incorporation in-process of these five key virtues - Trust, Responsibility, Commitment, Goal-sharing and Communication. Their formalized inclusion in any channel distribution plan will sustain channel partnerships for years and years of good results.

Nominations to WMMA's Board of Directors are Open!

WMMA's Leadership Development Committee, formerly known as the Nominating Committee, is starting the hard work in preparing the slate of Directors for the Board term expiring in 2004. Todd Herzog, Chairman of the Leadership Development Committee, is open to your suggestions as to whom the committee should consider for these openings. Your suggestions should consider people of member companies who have been active in the Association and its activities. These individuals should be known for their character strength and integrity. They must also embrace change, while maintaining the strengths of the existing organization and identifying the key challenges facing the Association and industry.



Balance in the Board is also an important factor. "Balance" means that there are representatives with different geographical locations, different sizes (in sales and number of employees), and different product types.

Nomination suggestions should be immediately sent to Mr. Herzog, care of Accu-Router, Inc. at 634 Mountain View Industrial Drive, Morrison, TN 37357; fax: 931.668.9187; email: todd@accu-router.com.

SUBMIT YOUR NOMINATIONS

The Ralph B. Baldwin Award

Who will be awarded the prestigious Ralph B. Baldwin Award for Excellence in 2002? Do not miss your opportunity to honor an industry peer for his/her contributions to the U.S. woodworking industry.

Please note that emphasis is on "the industry." The nominated individual may or may not be from a member company of WMMA. The nominated individual, for example, could be an association or trade show executive from an industry organization that has made a measurable difference in the U.S. woodworking industry. Maybe, the nominated individual has established an educational program that greatly benefits the industry or produces students regularly hired by industry companies. Sit back and reflect upon those who have helped you during your Business career in the woodworking equipment and cutting tool industry; then give serious consideration to their nomination for the Baldwin Award.

The nomination forms that were distributed to members in November are due in February. Remember, all previous non-winning candidates are eligible for submission this year. The winner will be announced in April at the Woodworking Industry Conference in San Antonio, TX. Submit your entry form to WMMA headquarters today!

For more information on the Ralph B. Baldwin Award of Excellence and a list of our prestigious winners, visit the website at www.wmma.org/rbaldwin.htm

If you need more information or another nomination form contact Headquarters at 215-564-3484.

Export Development

The Euro Debuts January 1, 2002

*Harold Zassenhaus, Export Development
(thanks to the NY Times and Financial Times for input)*

Since January 1, 1999, the Euro has been a phantom currency. Initially 11, and more recently 12, European countries have adopted it, companies have been required to invoice in it in addition to their local currency, the world has been keeping track of its value and trading in it. However, no notes or coins have been issued. This will change shortly. Euro notes and coins will be introduced in January 2002, with member countries having until July 1, 2002 to cease using the national currency. The twelve countries comprising making up the "Eurozone" are Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.

Small and medium-sized Eurozone companies, the biggest concern for the Euro planers, seems to be making the changeover. Yet, their progress still has a ways to go. A survey, conducted by EOS Gallup Europe and released in November shows a big jump to 43 percent in the share of companies saying they are already ready for the Euro from only 23 percent when polled previously in July and August. Around three quarters of SMEs claim to have started fixing their prices in Euros, while 16 percent say they systematically invoice in the single currency. The use of the Euro for payments by companies inside national borders has doubled in volume terms from 7.8 percent to 15.1 percent. The Euro now accounts for nearly 40 percent of the volume of international payments by businesses, up from 33 percent three months before.

For businesses with the means and the ability to exploit them, the Euro presents unique opportunities for growth. But for those that are not ready to adapt, the single currency could prove a disastrous, if not terminal, experience.

For most businesses, the Euro will open up a huge new market. The ability to be paid in the same currency will enable them to offer their goods across 12 countries. "Suddenly, we will be able to roam in a market that is many times the size of our markets now," says one industrial goods manufacturer in Belgium. However, the sudden enlargement in market size will bring some downsides. "The price transparency brought about by the Euro is one of the most important issues for businesses," says Iona Hamilton, economic adviser at Unice, the European employers' federation. "Companies will have to adjust their marketing strategies because it will be easy for customers to compare prices and choose the lowest-cost producer."



In the medium term, prices are expected to converge downwards, forcing companies with higher costs to sharpen up to compete with their more efficient rivals. The Euro has also forced companies to change internally in order to deal with their new enlarged market. For groups that already operate in more than one European country, the arrival of the single currency requires an overhaul of their internal financial systems.

Larger businesses will benefit from a reduction in foreign exchange risk and will not have to invest in complex, costly hedging instruments such as derivatives. Small and medium-sized businesses, however, will be in a worse position. Many of them do not have substantial operations outside their domestic market but will still have to bear the costs of adapting to the single currency. Analysts predict that, for many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the short-term benefits of being in a larger market will be outweighed by the costs of moving to the new regime. "We have to pay the entry price, but I am not sure we'll enjoy the show," says one small business organization.

Larger firms will not be immune from the problems of their smaller counterparts, especially if they are their suppliers. If bills and invoices are not sent, or not received in Euros, some businesses, large and small, could find themselves unable to cope. As Ms Hamilton says: "The first question for any business is: 'are we ready for the Euro?' but the second one is: 'what are our suppliers doing?'"

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Export Development

The Euro Debuts January 1, 2002 (continued from previous page)

So, should U.S. companies selling to Europe change their invoicing practices? There is no legal requirement to do so. However, as more and more European companies switch to pricing in Euros, more purchasers may require that they do so. There are some pundits that have stated that the Euro will become a more influential global currency than the U.S. There are just as many, however, that forecast that the U.S. dollar would continue its dominance as the world's favored currency. The Euro was trading at 88.45 cents in mid-November far from its high of \$118.00 shortly after its introduction in January 1999. If the dollar remains strong or gets stronger, U.S. companies can maintain their margins but may lose European customers as the U.S. product becomes too costly. Knowing your competition, the market and being flexible may be the answer here.

Aside from the exchange rate and a 12-nation Eurozone trading in one currency, U.S. companies should also watch for changes in distribution patterns. Distribution territories may not be limited any more by country boundaries. As a unified market with a common currency, representatives may modify their territories based more on culture, language and communications costs and distance. Don't look for this to happen overnight, though. Keeping current on the effects of the Euro is going to be important.

(WMMA members: to view other recent international trade articles and items of interest, click on the "members only" section, select "Export Development" under "WMMA Activities" and click on Export Opportunities Bulletin. You will need your user name and password. Don't have one or forgot it, wmma@fernley.com or 215-564-3484 to request the information that you need.)

Public Policy

A New OSHA Rule for A New Year

John Satagaj, London & Satagaj

On January 1, 2002, new OSHA regulations regarding recordkeeping and reporting will go into effect. The new rules update three recordkeeping forms: OSHA Form 300 (Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses) which was simplified and printed on smaller, legal size paper; OSHA Form 301 (Injury and Illness Incident Report) which will include more data about how the injury or illness occurred; and OSHA Form 300A (Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses) which is a new form created to make it easier to post and calculate incidence rates.

In addition, different criteria for recording work-related injuries and work-related illnesses are eliminated; one set of criteria is used for both. (The former rule required employers to record all illnesses, regardless of severity). Employers are required to record work-related injuries or illnesses if they result in one of the following: death; days away from work; restricted work or transfer to another job; medical treatment beyond first aid; loss of consciousness; or diagnosis of a significant injury/illness by a physician or other licensed health care professional. New definitions are included for medical treatment and first aid. First aid is defined by treatments on a finite list. All treatment not on this list is medical treatment. The recording of "light duty" or restricted work cases is clarified. Employers are required to record cases as restricted work cases when the injured or ill employee only works partial days or is restricted from performing their "routine job functions" (defined as work activities the employee regularly performs at least once weekly).

Employees are given new "involvement rights." Employers are required to establish a procedure for employees to report injuries and illnesses and to tell their employees how to report. The new rule informs employers that the OSH Act prohibits employers from discriminating against employees who do report. Employees are allowed to access the 301 forms to review records of their own injuries and illnesses.

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A New OSHA Rule for A New Year (continued from previous page)

Employee representatives are allowed to access those parts of the OSHA 301 form relevant to workplace safety and health.

OSHA did delay the implementation of three requirements. The provisions, postponed until January 1, 2003, are: the criteria for recording work-related hearing loss; the rule's definition of "musculoskeletal disorder" (MSD); and the requirement that employers check the MSD column on the OSHA log. As you know, the Secretary of Labor was expected to announce in September her plan for developing a new ergonomics standard. Due to the agency's involvement in workplace issues involving anthrax, the Department has announced that announcement has been postponed indefinitely.

In addition to the delay of those specific requirements, the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) and the U.S. Department of Labor recently signed an agreement settling an NAM lawsuit challenging the record keeping regulation. The agreement requires the Department to inform its enforcement officers nationwide of the meaning of several critical provisions of the new rule. It also specifies that OSHA will not issue citations for violations of the rule during the first 120 days after January 1, provided the employer is attempting in good faith to meet its obligations and agrees to make corrections necessary to comply.

The NAM brought suit in part to ensure that only injuries and illnesses actually caused by work are recorded on a company's log. The agreement makes clear that a case is presumed work-related "if, and only if, an event or exposure in the work environment is a discernable cause of the injury or illness or of a significant aggravation to a preexisting condition." In an enforcement action, if the employer determined that a case was not work-related, OSHA would have the burden of proof to show that it was.

The agreement provides that a complaint by an employee is not enough to establish a recordable injury or illness. Even when a minor discomfort leads an employer to provide a work restriction as a preventative measure, the case is not recordable if a health care professional determines that the employee is fully able to perform all of his or her routine job functions. Moreover, the administering of oxygen as a purely precautionary measure to an employee who does not exhibit any symptoms of an injury or illness is not recordable.

States that operate their own job safety and health programs will be adopting comparable recordkeeping rules that will also be effective January 1, 2002. States must have the same requirements for which injuries and illnesses are recordable and how they are recorded. However, other provisions, such as industry exemptions, may be different as long as they are as stringent as the federal requirements.

Details on the new requirements can be found at OSHA's website at <http://www.osha-slc.gov/recordkeeping/index.html>


PROFIT THROUGH AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY



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Member News



PLP&D
Winter Workshop
January 24 -25, 2002
Hyatt Regency
Orlando International Airport
Orlando Florida

Meeting topics include:

Core Curriculum #2 - Focus on Engineering...Case History Updates...Roundtable - Videotapes of Service Calls...Group Insurance Program Update...Use of Electronic Mediums...CE Standards...and more!

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RESERVATIONS DEADLINE: January 8, 2002

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Member News

K-PRENE URETHANE INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS CATALOG



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Acrotech Inc. has become known as a manufacturer of wood machinery "replacement parts" that work better, last longer and ...are less expensive! Our new products catalog (Molder drive wheels, Power feed tires & tubs, Double End tennon "hold down" pads, re-coating hubs, shafts etc.) have been recently revised.

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NEW MMC MOISTURE METER LINE INTRODUCED BY WAGNER

Wagner Electronics is excited to announce the release of three new digital "pin-free" moisture meters. These meters are designed with Wagner's patented core sensing technology and highly stable electronic circuitry. They are virtually unaffected by surface moisture or the temperature of the wood. All three models allow the user to select species settings, eliminating the need to refer to manual correction tables, and feature Easy-to-read, digital LCD displays. A variety of features to choose from including: press/hold reading function, and extended range setting for measuring exotic and imported species of wood.



NEW DATA COLLECTION MOISTURE METER INTRODUCED BY WAGNER

Wagner Electronics is excited to announce the release of the digital "pin-free" MMI 1100 moisture meter. MMI 1100 is designed with Wagner's patented core sensing technology and highly stable electronic circuitry, making it virtually unaffected by surface moisture or the temperature of the wood. This tool allows the user to select species settings, eliminating the need to refer to manual correction tables, and features an easy-to-read, digital display. A variety of features including: Data collection, press/hold reading function, and extended range setting for measuring exotic and imported species of wood.

