



## WMC 2020 HR Award Recipients

After a challenging year and a drawn out awards program due to the virus, travel restrictions and health concerns, the Wood Manufacturing Council (WMC) is pleased to announce the recipient of its 2020 HR Award of Distinction - Stan Pauls, owner of Decor Cabinets, Morden, MB. Our 2020 Award of Distinction recipient is someone who is described as a visionary when it comes to wood manufacturing and growing a successful company. His firm is at the forefront of the Canadian kitchen cabinet industry and is also growing continuously in the US market. Stan Pauls is a very intentional person, who has endless ideas and is described by his people as a great leader with a passion for craftsmanship - but his greatest passion is his focus on people.

Stan Pauls genuinely cares for his employees and is committed to their growth. He believes the company culture must challenge and support people to reach their full potential. And with this comes the expectation that everyone in the organization, seeks to “be better, to do better and to think better”. Stan’s desire is to have people “go home happier and have a happier home”. Stan has stood for and has worked hard to create family in his company - and it is now truly a family business with his wife Connie joining the senior leadership team.

Stan has an eye on the future – he is ready to revamp, build, expand, and market. His company vision is to be “Undeniably Different”. To respond to the needs of customers, the performance of Decor’s cabinets is top of mind, and Stan studies the requirements of different demographics, including aging Canadians. He consciously applies design and functionality to ensure Decor’s cabinets can best serve all customers.

Stan has recognized that digital transformation is critical to the success and growth of the business and he wants Decor to be the Digital Disruptor, not the company whose business model becomes obsolete. He recognizes that if the outside rate of change is faster than the inside rate of change, you will be disrupted. Even before COVID-19, Stan had his team working on how Decor can interactively work with partners and clients - developing new tools to reach people through technology and he continues to invest in this area. With the investment in a new ERP system, Decor is focused on streamlining their customer experience and internal processes. They are modernizing the plant floor to provide more relevant information to their operators and reduce paperwork across all operations.

Decor looks continuously at technology and improvement as key priorities. Along with significant equipment purchases to stay at the forefront, Decor is doing unique things on the operational side. The process by which continuous improvement is undertaken is always under

review and subject to change. Decor implemented '2 Second Lean' to achieve this and it has paid off. Employees have come up with numerous changes, from the simple to the complex, that have resulted in great enhancements.

With all the focus on being a leading-edge company, community involvement remains a top company priority. Stan recognizes the power to bring positive, measurable change to both the community they live in and those around the world. The company supports various organizations that give help to those in need, including Opportunity International Canada.

With the nomination, it was the desire of other leading figures from the wood industry to recognize Stan Pauls - citing his business acumen and his tremendous passion for people. The award was presented in late December, over Zoom, by WMC Chairman Pete Fournier, Triangle Kitchen, Dieppe, NB and his father, Roger Fournier, a previous Award of Distinction recipient. The WMC is very proud to recognize Stan Pauls with our 2020 Award of Distinction.

The other HR awards were handed out throughout 2020. The Post-Secondary Educator Award was given, for the first time, to Mark Bramer, Professor, Conestoga College. This award is for someone from a Post-Secondary woodworking program or institution who demonstrates dedication and leadership with students and who supports and promotes education and academic learning in the woodworking industry. Mark was recognized for a remarkable career supporting student success in their preparation for careers and his active promotion of post-secondary woodworking education. His extensive participation and support of local, provincial, national and even international skills competitions and his work internationally in the promotion of skill and competency standards has been exemplary.

The Employee Recognition Award recipient is Amanda Gay, Marketing and Product Manager, Planit Canada. This award is presented to an outstanding individual who excels in their role, someone who either has overcome challenges, proposed creative solutions to a problem or exemplifies a great work ethic and an enthusiasm that motivates others around them. Amanda was recognized for her constant forward-thinking along with her willingness and success at trying new things. She has thrived in a supportive work environment to research, learn and bring new technology and thought to the company. When things go wrong, she is the person you want at the table working on the solution. She invests so much planning into each event and all marketing material. Amanda is also a rare creative person who is ultra-organized and brings positivity and energy to all tasks. She has demonstrated and been noticed for her efforts, not only on behalf of her company, but also on behalf of the industry. She has freely contributed her marketing expertise, which is self-taught, to several industry organizations.

The Innovation in Human Resources Award (Individual) was awarded to Amrita Boghal, HR Manager, Sunrise Kitchens Ltd, Surrey, BC, who received the Innovation in Human Resources Award (Individual). The purpose of the award is to discover, celebrate and inspire innovation in the HR field. It is for an individual that makes a difference to people or business management, through an innovative HR program or practice. Amrita has embraced the principles of Kaizen from the Kaizen Institute and is applying those business principles at Sunrise Kitchens to shift the culture within her organization. She is using Kaizen because of its focus on people. She firmly believes that you must take care of your people first if you want to improve production. But while Kaizen provides a framework, it's up to the individual to apply the methodology. This requires creativity and innovation because Amrita is taking a

theory and turning it into a practical tool within her company. She has shared her experiences and best practices with the industry, through her trade association, the CKCA.

The Innovation in Human Resources Award (company) is for an organization that makes a difference to people or business management, through an innovative HR program or practice. The challenge for our recipient is that with a high number of employees retiring over the next 5 years comes increased demand on Managers, Supervisors and other remaining skilled employees to train and develop new employees to take on the more highly skilled jobs. Companies are faced with increasing competition from firms throughout the world. Newer employees with less experience and skills have a greater chance of making errors, resulting in wasted materials, as well as labour and production delays.

To overcome these challenges, West Bros Furniture invested in their managers, supervisors and other lead employees to support their efforts to increase company capability and performance. They reviewed various options to increase the performance of their workforce and recognized that they already have most of the necessary skills in-house. The need was to organize their effort and provide additional tools for their employees to use. Paul West tasked Adam Hofmann to develop a *Train the Trainer* program for the company. Hofmann, using his thorough knowledge of the company, combined with a significant amount of research, to create a program for supporting and increasing the transfer of skills from the current senior staff to newer, less-experienced employees. They created a structured and documented learning process so a Train the Trainer facilitator and other technical experts can provide additional tools and skills for their current leaders, who are performing and/or overseeing most of the on-the-job training for new and existing employees.

The benefits of implementing this system can result in increased productivity, reduced material and labour waste, and increased quality etc. Having a higher skilled workforce improves productivity, and lowers costs, resulting overall in a stronger wood manufacturing business. This stronger company can share the benefits through increased wages, improved working conditions and increased job satisfaction. Job security increases through skills enhancement, cross-training and flexibility for each employee. When employees know their jobs well, feel productive, produce high quality results and are recognized for it, they have a better chance of being satisfied. This program can be customized for any company and a generic version is being shared with the WMC for the benefit of all.

The WOODLINKS Success Award has been awarded to Gloucester High School (formerly Rideau High School) and to teachers Mark Backmann and Robert Aucoin for their work on the 1917 Streetcar Restoration Project. Numerous local volunteers wanted to see an old streetcar restored to its former glory. The high school group was invited to assist and has been participating since 2013. They have to date volunteered more than 4,000 student hours, building and fabricating parts. The initiative has allowed for multiple grades and skill levels to participate and the engagement of female students has been noticeable. Such an extended and comprehensive project would not happen without the strong leadership and commitment of the teachers. From an educational prospective, the cross-curricular involvement, where the streetcar project has proven to “leap” subjects, has been impressive. Students and teachers from woodworking and transportation classes, co-op education, graphics, English and history have all contributed to the effort.

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