

Building Stronger Associations



The Industry's Two Largest Retail Associations Forge Closer Ties

In early February, the North American Retail Hardware Association (NRHA) and the Paint and Decorating Retailers Association (PDRA) released a joint announcement outlining a new strategic alliance between the industry's two largest associations.

The goal of the alliance was to expand access across the home improvement industry to a broader array of products, programs and services than both associations offered individually.

Together, NRHA and PDRA represent more than 50,000 independent retail outlets and offer their members training materials, industry information, advocacy and marketing programs, as well as a variety of live events throughout the year. Moving forward, these two organizations will share more resources in an effort to enhance these offerings.

Hardware Retailing spoke with Bob Cutter, chief operating officer of NRHA, and LeAnn Day, executive director of PDRA, to discuss the particulars of this alliance and how they see it having a positive impact on the constituents served by their organizations.

Hardware Retailing (HR): Tell us a little bit about what this new alliance will mean to the retail communities you serve.

LeAnn Day (LD): There are just so many similarities between our membership at the PDRA and that of NRHA. We both represent small business owners who are facing many of the same challenges. This alliance will provide our two organizations the ability to build on these synergies and do an even better job of providing independent retailers with the information, education and programs they

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—Bob Cutter,
NRHA chief operating officer

need to succeed in today's economy. We are much more powerful working together than trying to do everything on our own.

Bob Cutter (BC): I agree 100 percent with LeAnn here. Independent retailers in this industry are facing some very critical challenges right now. From finding the right employees to growing their operations to dealing with issues like succession and regulations, they have a lot on their plates. It doesn't matter what they are selling; there are more common issues than there are different ones. This alliance makes sense because together we can address these common issues more effectively.

HR: Why did this alliance make sense for both of your organizations right now?

LD: With the similarities of the organizations, the timing was right to build upon these synergies. We all need to evolve and adapt, and given the current climate, it made sense to do this now. I have no doubt that this alliance will

The Immediate Impact of the New Alliance

- NRHA will begin publishing PDRA's monthly magazine, *Paint & Decorating Retailer*. Dan Simon will remain publisher of *Paint & Decorating Retailer* and will work with the NRHA team to produce the magazine.
- With assistance from NRHA, PDRA will begin hosting two annual member roundtable events, where retailers can share best practices and insights.
- NRHA and PDRA will jointly conduct two annual research projects to provide their retail members with even greater insights into the channel and consumer trends.
- The associations will work to expand NRHA and PDRA member access to a broader range of educational and training materials.
- The two associations will work together more closely to provide limited joint programming at the annual National Hardware Show® and the PDRA Paint & Accessories Show in Las Vegas.
- NRHA and PDRA will continue exploring ways to share association resources that could benefit both organizations' constituents.

provide more opportunities for each organization to provide independents with the tools they need to be successful.

BC: Just a few years back, the industry faced a real crisis with the recession and the downturn in the housing market. Coming out of that downturn, more and more companies serving this industry, from retailers to manufacturers, started thinking outside the box and looking for ways to do things smarter and better. In some ways, I think this alliance is a reflection of that. It's also our rallying cry at NRHA, if you will. We tell retailers that we are stronger when we work together. We encourage them to break down the walls of store affiliation and size of operation to come together and share resources with one another. Why wouldn't we practice what we preach?

HR: What are some of the tangible benefits retailers can expect to see?

BC: When you look at each organization, I think we both have our areas of expertise. NRHA has had a long experience in the publishing, education and training side of the equation, while PDRA has some really unique marketing concepts. So, I think retailers will immediately benefit from the sharing of resources in this area. Next, I think one of the biggest benefits will come from broadening interactions between our member retailers and theirs.

LD: I certainly agree with Bob here, too. Across the board, we'll find opportunities to share resources in education, training and networking, and will be a benefit to both our member bases.

HR: How are your organizations addressing issues that small business owners face today?

LD: A lot of the same things we talked about earlier, like hiring, training and retaining quality employees, marketing and planning for succession are all areas where the PDRA and NRHA have individually developed programs to help retailers. Now we will be working even more closely together to bring tools to all of our retailers to tackle these challenges.

BC: In addition to the tools we will develop and roll out together as part of this alliance, I don't think you can discount the importance of networking. I feel like we just opened up an entirely new resource to our members and PDRA members. Now we can focus on building opportunities for our members to connect with one another in order to share ideas and best practices. That may be the most valuable tool to emerge from this whole alliance. ➔

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