



The Story – Jennings Builder Supply It's what you don't do that might cost you.

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Dick Jennings, Owner, Jennings Building Supply & Hardware

The Challenge

When you've been going strong for as long as Jennings Builders Supply and Hardware, it's easy to understand why they'd be hesitant to tinker with what's working. After all, if it ain't broke, why fix it? But in 1998, they held their breath and did just that. And they've never looked back.

The Solution

Over 30 years, Jennings Builders Supply had built itself into the largest independent lumber dealer in Western Carolina, with locations in Brevard, Cashiers and Franklin. They take pride in the level of knowledge, expertise and service they offer their customers. But it still took a lot of phone calls and meetings before Dick Jennings finally agreed to take Clint Darnell, of Sunbelt Rack and sister company CT Darnell Construction, up on his suggestion to replace the wood-framed sheds in his Cashiers yard with high-quality steel T-sheds from Sunbelt Rack. “We had been housing our lumber materials in standard pole barns – pretty primitive and basic, but we didn't realize there were better options out there.”

As you might expect, Dick was worried about cost. Jennings is able to offer high-quality materials for a fair price because they run a tight ship. Dick was reluctant to spend money on something that seemed like a ‘nice to have’ instead of a ‘need to have.’

“Boy was I wrong,” mused Dick. “Not only do those T-sheds get our lumber off the ground and out of the weather, they can be configured in multiple spaces to handle our long-form product in a way that's easy to load and unload.”

Soon all the Jennings locations boasted hard-working rack sheds, which was a big step in the right direction toward maximizing their space. Adding Sunbelt Rack's highly acclaimed and customizable drive-thru buildings literally took Jennings' ability to service their customers to a whole new level. “The efficiencies gained by having facilities that weren't just for storage, but also served as working retail aisles for our customers were remarkable. We were literally able to decrease our labor by 35% at a time when we increased sales 20%.” Sunbelt Rack was even able to relocate a drive-thru building when Jennings moved a location.

Since 1985, Sunbelt Rack has built its best-in-class reputation on designing and constructing high-quality storage solutions for LBM clients just like Jennings. Brad Bedford, project manager for Sunbelt Rack, reflected on Jennings' initial hesitation to invest in new systems. “Taking that first leap can be a little scary for some folks,” he said. “But it's very easy to see the ROI on products like our T-sheds and drive-thru buildings because they not only organize and provide faster access to your materials, they keep them protected so they last longer and look better.”

According to Brad, “You can pay for a T-shed or drive-thru in a few years just by reducing shrinkage alone. Mix that with the decreased labor cost and faster inventory turns and it's a no-brainer.”

Contact CT Darnell & Sunbelt Rack today and find out how they can help optimize your lumberyard.



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