

# A 127-Year-Old Family-Owned Business's Journey to Lasting Success

**Curtis Lumber Company** is a 127-year-old family-owned business and local provider of lumber serving local communities in the upstate New York and Northern Vermont regions. Their locally managed stores pride themselves on providing high-quality products and services, priced right.

## Challenge

Curtis Lumber Co. is one of the 3% of family-owned businesses that have made it past the fourth generation. In fact, they've made it even farther, recently employing its sixth generation. Curtis Lumber Co. established its lumber and building material business in 1890, having survived major historical events from The Great Depression to The Great Recession and everything in between. As an organization, they had set the foundations for success. As time passed, the organization grew and industries and results changed. The company felt to maintain a history of success, actions would need to be taken to strengthen the company and align around results. It was decided that empowering the employees and culture would be the tool for success.

## Solution

In 2013, Curtis Lumber Co. engaged Partners In Leadership's Accountability Builder® program (formerly known as Self Track®) and successfully trained over 550 employees in the program. Out of this training Curtis Lumber identified a lack of connection between individual teams and overall organizational goals.

The leadership implemented a simple and elegant solution, placing dry-erase boards in every department, with the company's top three goals and progress made, along with space for employees to identify accountability gaps. Employees were encouraged to express not only the actions that caused those gaps, but the underlying beliefs that led to those actions.



## SUCCESS SNAPSHOT

Curtis Lumber Company is a 127-year-old family-owned business and local provider of lumber serving local communities in the Upstate New York and Northern Vermont regions.

**Challenge:** Creating a culture that would be as progressive as the organization needed to be to stay competitive in the industry.

**Solution:** Partners In Leadership's Accountability Builder training program to bring greater accountability and ownership to all 550 employees.

### Results:

- 3% year over year growth since 2014
- As of 2018 on track to set a milestone sales year.

These "Solve It® Boards" became a key communication tool for fostering inter-departmental collaboration. They are now the core of a larger initiative, which includes procedures to follow up on employee feedback and internally crafted workshops to reinforce the positive cultural changes being seen.

## Results

As a result of Curtis Lumber Co.'s focus on culture and accountability, since the first year of implementation they grew 3% year over year. In addition to this result, as of 2018, Curtis Lumber Co. is on track for a milestone sales year.