

# The Supply Side

Builders and architects share what they want from supplier relationships and which attributes would make them consider using a new product

By Mike Beirne, Senior Editor

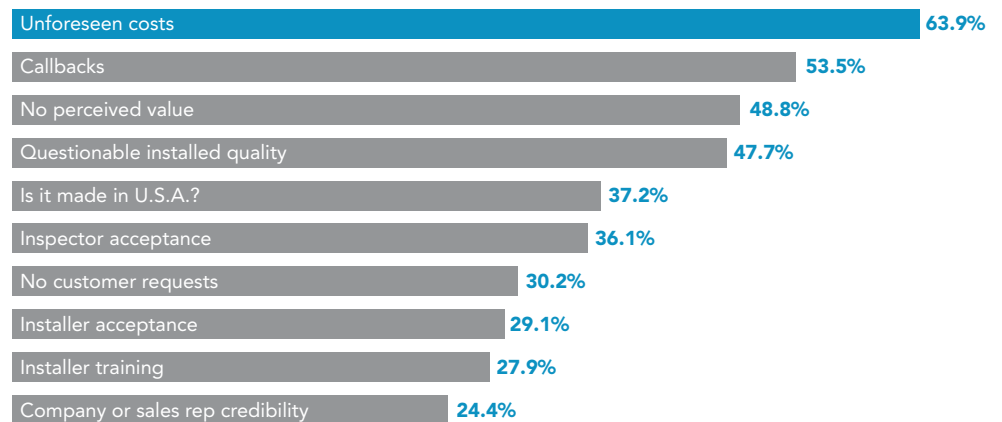
**B**etter quality, reduced price, and some assurance that trying a new product isn't going to lead to callbacks and ill will with the homebuyer are among the key takeaways from *Professional Builder's* 2017 Supplier survey. Responses from *PB's* readers and from members of Builder Partnerships also noted that real-life demos on the jobsite that show ease of use or proper installation can score points with them. However, the hands-on approach still is second to quality and price.

As for pitching a product to a home builder, survey participants noted that they see more credibility in manufacturing and building material supply reps who understand the fine line between shaving a couple of days off the build time and keeping a project from financially going into the hole. More results about what builders and architects want from new products and suppliers are in the charts that follow.

#### METHODOLOGY AND RESPONDENT INFORMATION:

This survey was distributed between June 8, 2017, and July 10, 2017, to a random sample of *Professional Builder's* print and digital readers and to members of Builder Partnerships. No incentive was offered. By closing date, a total of 89 eligible readers had returned surveys. Respondent breakdown by discipline: 39.3% custom home builder; 33.7% diversified builder/remodeler; 10.1% production move-up/move-down builder; 6.7% architect/designer engaged in home building; 3.4% production first-time buyer; 1.1% manufactured, modular, log home, or systems builder; and 5.6% other. Approximately 53.4% sold one to five homes in 2016 and 10.2% sold more than 100 units.

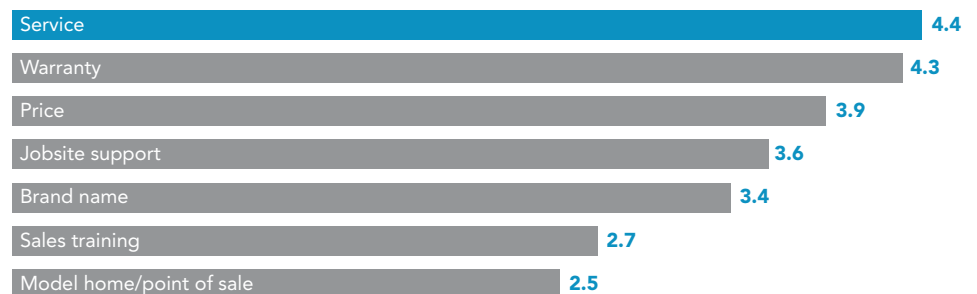
#### WHAT ARE YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT NEW PRODUCTS? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY



BASE: 86; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 SUPPLIER SURVEY

**Builders want a sure thing, so worries about the failure of a product eroding profit and requiring warranty work are top concerns regarding whether to try something new.**

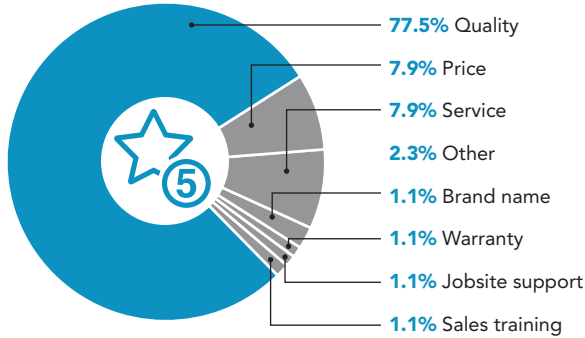
#### ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5, WITH 5 BEING THE MOST VALUABLE ATTRIBUTE, RANK THE FOLLOWING TRAITS YOU WANT IN YOUR MANUFACTURER PARTNERS



BASE: 86; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 SUPPLIER SURVEY

**When asked to rank their answers, survey respondents wrote that a partnership with a manufacturer/supplier was most desirable, which could explain why long-term commitment items such as service and warranty ranked high.**

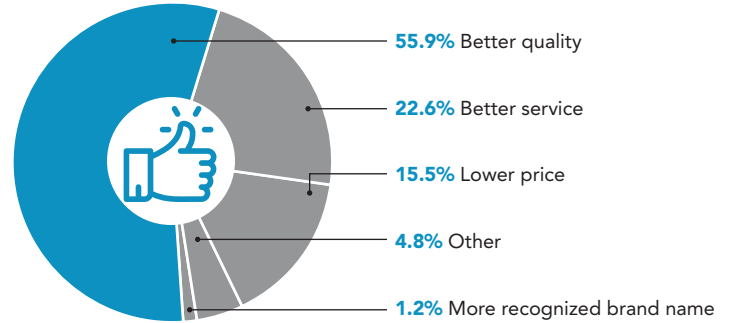
**WHAT DO YOU VALUE MOST FROM A BUILDING-PRODUCT MANUFACTURER?**



BASE: 89; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 SUPPLIER SURVEY

Product quality is the most valued attribute builders want from their manufacturer partners, which aligns with their concerns about product failure eating away profit margin and creating callbacks.

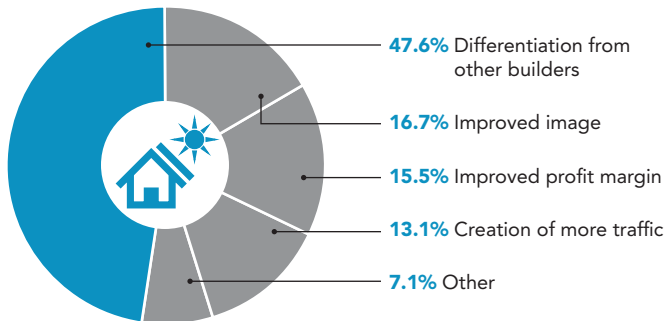
**WHEN A MANUFACTURER WANTS TO CONVERT YOU FROM ANOTHER MANUFACTURER, WHAT IS THE BEST WAY?**



BASE: 84; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 SUPPLIER SURVEY

Several respondents wrote that the combination of better quality with lower prices, via a lower price point, model home discounts, and/or rebates, would move them to consider switching manufacturers.

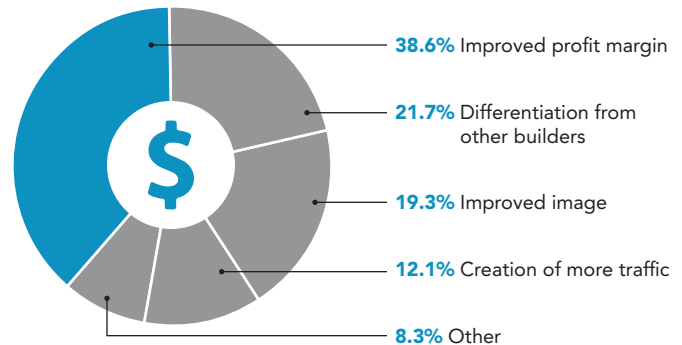
**WHEN A MANUFACTURER/SUPPLIER WANTS TO SELL YOU A NEW PRODUCT IN A CATEGORY THAT YOU HAVEN'T USED IN THE PAST (SUCH AS SOLAR ROOF PANELS OR A TANKLESS WATER HEATER), WHAT'S MOST LIKELY TO INTEREST YOU?**



BASE: 84; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 SUPPLIER SURVEY

Standing out from competitors could be a compelling enough reason for most respondents to try an unfamiliar product, but some builders wrote that demand from homebuyers must be in the mix. Other benefits mentioned that could prompt a switch were products that produce energy savings and those that "were better for my customers."

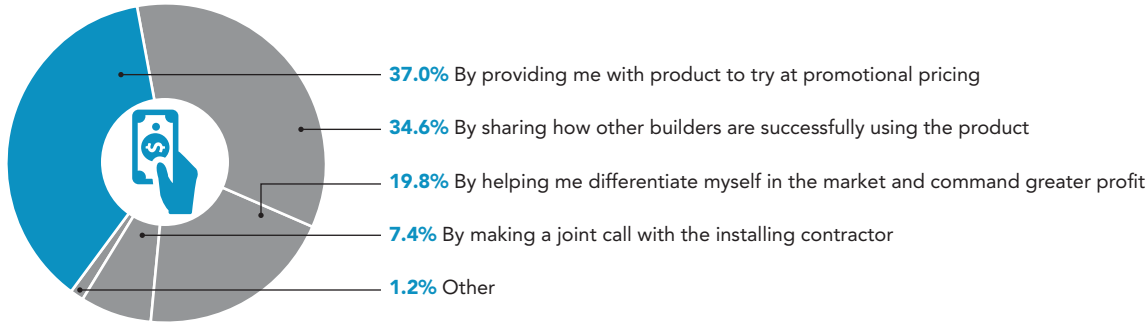
**WHEN A MANUFACTURER/SUPPLIER WANTS TO SELL YOU AN UPGRADE FROM A PRODUCT THAT YOU ARE CURRENTLY USING, WHAT'S MOST LIKELY TO CONVINCE YOU TO MAKE THE PURCHASE?**



BASE: 83; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 SUPPLIER SURVEY

Other selling points that builders mentioned could sway them include: ease of use, proof that the upgrade is a better product, better quality with lower price, and a good warranty.

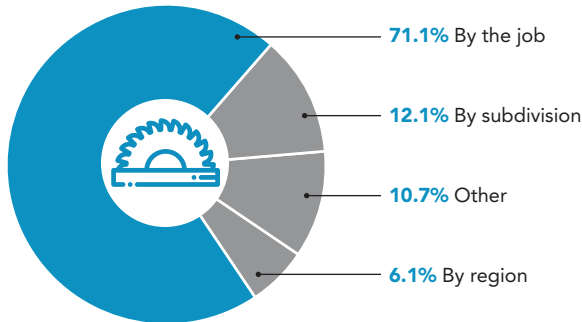
WHAT IS THE BEST WAY FOR A MANUFACTURER/SUPPLIER TO PRESENT A NEW PRODUCT TO YOU?



BASE: 81; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 SUPPLIER SURVEY

Hands-on trial with discounted pricing has been the best way to get a builder to try a new product in consecutive surveys since *Professional Builder's* 2013 poll.

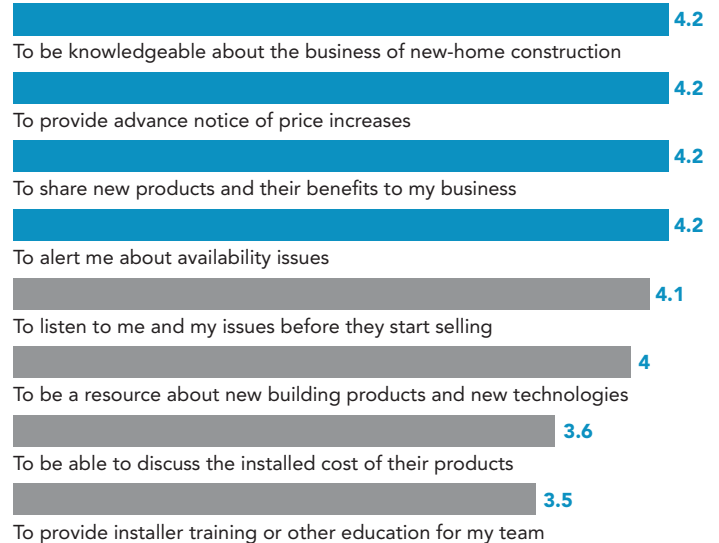
WHAT IS THE BEST WAY FOR A MANUFACTURER/SUPPLIER TO CONVERT YOU FROM YOUR CURRENT SUPPLIER?



BASE: 83; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 SUPPLIER SURVEY

A hands-on demo or deal specific for a jobsite could be a tactic that gets a prospective supplier's foot in the door.

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5, WITH 5 BEING THE MOST IMPORTANT, WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM A MANUFACTURER/SUPPLIER SALES REP?



BASE: 86; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2017 SUPPLIER SURVEY

Uncertainty is the bane of any construction schedule and budget, so advance notice of changes in pricing and availability is very much desired by survey respondents. Also, reps knowledgeable about the home building business, not just about their product line, is a perennially top-ranking trait builders want from sales reps.