

Episode 34: Getting the Inside Story on the Value of Our Preferred Accounts Team

Daniel Robbins: All right, here we are again for another episode of Above It All, a podcast by Johns Manville, dedicated to the roofing industry. Today is really special because we have not had a lot of salespeople on for the podcast, but today I'm blessed to have Megan Keyes on. Megan is... Actually Megan, I'll let you tell everybody a little bit about your role, go ahead and fill us in on your story at JM and kind of how you got there.

Megan Keyes: Hey, Daniel. Well, thanks so much for having me, I'm really excited. And I'm very happy to have been invited. I started with JM in 2002, originally as a contract employee in HR, I was in recruiting and then became aware of an opening on the marketing team, which is what my degree was actually in for the roofing team, and I applied for the position. So from marketing, I moved to Tampa, Florida, and then to Houston, Texas as a field tech rep, where I was able to learn the products and the industry through real world experience and working with roofing contractors. I later moved over to our building and insulation division and started my career in sales as a territory manager in the South Texas market, and then transitioned to national accounts with responsibility for the commercial channel and drywall distributors, companies like ABC and Beacon. And I was in that position for about four years before moving to managing a team of sales reps in the South Central region for the BI division. And then finally returned to my roots and roofing in late 2020 and started working with the preferred accounts team at that time, and then in around July of last year, we transitioned to one team across preferred and strategic accounts. So, long history over the last two decades, actually.

Daniel Robbins: No, I love that. I feel like that's a common story at JM, people love the company and they've gotten to work all these different angles that ultimately bring them to an even better point in their career with the brand, so with preferred accounts just to kind of touch on that a little bit for whoever is listening, our preferred accounts are our top customers, and kind of, what is that? What does that role look like for you a little bit?

Megan Keyes: So, for me, I think that the most valuable part of the relationship in with the preferred accounts team is really transparency and joint commitment to the relationship. We have been able, through this time, to build relationships with all parties because our customers have been willing to provide us with information that we need about their projects well in advance and have been willing to make introductions to other parties so that everyone is working toward a common goal. So our preferred clients have been willing to explore other options on the roofing membrane itself, and most of all, to communicate with us. I just can't stress enough the importance of the communication, the transparency, and ultimately the teamwork.

Daniel Robbins: Your projects tend to probably go better because of that communication level that's being added, and I know that's a huge value add for all of the customers. So let's move into talking about the current market. I know everybody really in the entire industry and outside of our industry has been dealing with the supply chain crunch a little bit, so to speak. What would you say the roofing market has looked like as far as materials and things like that, just from a general standpoint?

Megan Keyes: I would say in general, from my viewpoint, demand continues to be strong, I think the industry really recognizes the importance of the roof and the importance that it plays in maintaining their schedule and their interior build out. And JM for me has done a great job of being reliable and communicating effectively, and even with some clients, reporting retraction in the industry due to earnings and rising interest rates, demand for JM product remains very strong.

Daniel Robbins: Important Project that we kind of got recently, we can't use names, but it was a big box project, and I wanted to know why this project was important for JM to show up for the customer and what were some things that we could talk about to just talk about how we try to fill that role of being a reliable supplier of choice in this time?

Megan Keyes: Yeah, so you're right, Daniel, we had a great coming together a couple of weeks ago, so the building was about 1.2 million square feet, an industrial building, as you mentioned, in South Florida. TPO with R30 insulation, so a couple of layers of insulation. And then, as you know, and we've talked about, there are financial implications when project schedule slip, that can include loss revenue, loss rental income, increased material pricing as the project goes out further, etcetera, so when projects are delayed, everybody is really affected, and so we have really focused on having relationships, again, with the building owner, the tenant, the developer, the GC, and the roofing contractor, and this project really exemplified how all of those parties working together can have a positive result, and ultimately we were able to keep the project on schedule by having all of those partnerships in place.

Daniel Robbins: Let's talk about it a little bit. It was mechanically attached correct TPO.

Megan Keyes: Right, exactly.

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Daniel Robbins: Awesome, so we did mechanically attached TPO, I know that there's always been this fastener issue right now in supply chain, but we were able to get them all the fasteners that they needed, and I know too that we use more fasteners because it did have a wind uplift requirement, and so it just... I think it's kind of really good to hear that we're able to take care of customers like that right now. Is there some specific ways that kind of stuck out in your mind that we were able to provide that JM experience?

Megan Keyes: Yes, so I think it started with the visibility into the project well ahead of roofing being needed. I think that was the most important part, and then we were able to present all the parties with the solution that was really out of the box and outside of our normal process, and then each member of the team did their part to make it happen. So, the owner and the tenant provided the information, as I said, as well as the transportation logistics. The developer and the GC worked together to make accommodations on the job site, so that our experiment could work, and our pinnacle contractor mobilized his crew to get the roof installed on time. So it really was a group effort and everybody played a role.

Daniel Robbins: And I know we were on-site and the GC was talking about how there was some issues getting on site with materials. So they built their own makeshift loading dock, which was really cool, and that's one small thing, it's kind of an experiment. There was a lot of problems that arose that needed extra communication. Right? And so that process is not common with other customers or is it something that you see really common with preferred accounts and that's why they're preferred accounts.

Megan Keyes: No, I can, honestly, say that this was the first time. So there's kind of a first time for everything, but I don't think that it would have been successful if from a preferred accounts perspective because of those relationships, it wouldn't have been probably even an option, let alone successful, so that relationship really did matter.

Daniel Robbins: Yeah, I think that's a really good testament for whoever is listening, and even if customers end up listening to this too, that the more we can become involved with the other aspects of the projects, such as the GC, I don't know if you were... Did you mention the architect too, but there was several pillars, and if we can all figure out a way to work more cohesively, the project ends up benefiting everybody, right?

Megan Keyes: Absolutely.

Daniel Robbins: So I wanted to ask one more question before we go. And you probably have a lot of experiences, what kinds of customers do we value when it comes to quality of Business, integrity, things like that, when it comes to letting people become one of our preferred accounts?

Megan Keyes: Right, so again, going back to the transparency, I know I've mentioned it several times, but it really is that important. So giving us insight into the business and what you're forecasting and what your pipeline looks like well ahead to give us time to plan is certainly at the top of the list. The willingness to make introductions so that we're talking, all the parties involved are talking, and then again, I think that there's a component of that future relationship, that that partnership, when you show up for them, they show up for you and you continue that relationship on into the future beyond supply-constrained or increased demand. I think those are the things that really are important to me, and what my team is really focused on, qualifying our customers by those things, by those behaviors.

Daniel Robbins: So as far as qualifying like a customer can't be like, "I would love to be in your preferred accounts program," it has to be something that we really assess as a valuable situation for us to get into it, right?

Megan Keyes: Yeah. And certainly we value the historical relationships that have been in place, the folks that were really partnered with JM and prioritized JM even before the current market condition, so certainly we have those relationships that I think have gotten even stronger, but certainly I think as we are presented with new opportunities, we're doing everything we can to really evaluate whether we're gonna be a good fit for one another into the future. Are we both exhibiting the behaviors of good partners, and do we both share that common goal that's gonna still be there when material is more available?

Daniel Robbins: I love that as testament to the JM experience and doing the right business with the right customers. We are out of time, Megan, but thank you so much for getting light into your world and this project a little bit, 'cause I know the whole Preferred accounts thing, I think we've been talking about it a lot internally, but to be able to put something out where we can talk about it and people can kinda learn more about it on their own accord is valuable. So, thank you again.

Megan Keyes: Thank you, Daniel, for the time, I really appreciate it.



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Daniel Robbins: Alrighty. Thanks so much for tuning in. And just remember, you can get all of the episodes on our website, blog or more easily, you can access them on iTunes. So, you go to Apple podcast, type in, Above It All by Johns Manville or just Above It All and you'll see us come up, go check out the episodes we have there, you'll be able to see topics easier, scroll through them pretty fast, quick at a glance, kind of thing. And also as well, just remember these episodes are a great way to learn about Johns Manville, so whether it's about product innovation, products that we're offering, topics in the industry that we're addressing, services that we offer our customers, key thought leaders in the organization, you name it, it's on there and you can learn some really valuable things about this brand and how we bring value to our customers. With that, we'll close it out. Stay safe out there. We'll catch you next time.