



How James Hardie® learned more about its audience and optimized operations using Sprout Social

100%

increase in total social followers

462%

increase in total social
engagements

2,000%

increase in total social impressions



There's a reason [James Hardie®](#) products can be found on more than 8 million homes across North America.

The company is a pioneer in the building materials industry, consistently innovating for more than a century to become the market leader in home siding and trim. And its commitment to staying on the cutting edge doesn't stop with the products it manufactures and sells.

James Hardie® continues to blaze trails in its industry on social media. From advanced analytics to social listening and beyond, the company relies on Sprout Social to capture valuable insights and create real connection with online audiences.

Building a brand

James Hardie® has long distinguished itself from competitors through more than its product line, according to Senior Digital Marketing Manager Bridget Kulla.

“I would say that as an industry, building materials is pretty behind others as far as digital strategy,” Kulla said. “James Hardie® has done a lot of work over the years to make sure we have a very strong digital foundation, and a big part of that is thinking about social media.”

Unlike others in its industry, James Hardie® recognized the far-reaching value of crafting a strong social presence. The company used social as a primary channel for publishing thought leadership content and providing customer care, building up a community of brand fans in the process.

“Social is no longer just for younger generations,” said Digital Content Marketing Manager Kara Wenman. “Everyone is on social media these days; it’s how they engage in communication.”



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Michael Buck
Associate Marketing Manager

In fact, nearly half of consumers have [used social to communicate directly with a brand](#), a fact known well by Associate Marketing Manager Michael Buck.

“Just think about how often people are on their phones now,” Buck said. “You hardly buy anything anymore without hopping on your phone and researching, and people often come to us through social on their phones for questions, customer service and help with their products.”

As the company's social strategy evolved, so did its focus on creating real connection with consumers.

"It became more important to understand who our audience really is," Kulla said.

And just like the contractors and builders that rely on James Hardie® every day, the company needed the right tools for the job if it was going to take its social strategy to the next level.

Renovating social strategy

Experiences with a previous social media management software had left James Hardie® feeling frustrated.

"At the end of the day it was just so clunky to use that we gave up on it," Kulla said.

While researching replacements, the company discovered Sprout Social.



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Kara Wenman

Digital Content Marketing Manager

“Not only would Sprout help us with community management, it made it easier to schedule posts and get all the analytics we were looking for from a single location,” Kulla said.

Sprout’s [advanced analytics](#) quickly became a favorite feature.

“It’s important for all of us to have line of sight into what’s going on, so we all get together regularly to do a deep dive into our analytics, and Sprout is really a huge component of that,” Buck said. “It allows us to pull data in a consistent and really easy way.”

This data directly informs strategy, enabling the team to better utilize Sprout’s [scheduling and publishing tools](#).

“Having all our analytics under one roof really helps us be more effective and efficient in testing out content,” Kulla said. “It’s so much easier to hone in on the types of content that work best for us, whether it’s by channel, by time or something else.”

Assembling industry intelligence

As James Hardie® learned, Sprout’s data gathering capabilities go well beyond performance reporting.

“I personally really love the [social listening tools](#),” Wenman said.

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Bridget Kulla

Senior Digital Marketing Manager

Through social listening, James Hardie® is able to engage in audience and trend analysis, research sentiment regarding its products, identify industry influencers and conduct competitor comparisons. Even better, the company can take the insights it uncovers and use them to optimize its business operations outside of digital marketing.

“Not only is it good from a brand health and marketing angle, it’s also important information we can pass on to our sales teams and product teams,” Kulla said. “We can find trends and common themes that come up in conversations. We can identify not only our own brand advocates, but brand advocates for our competition. It’s been good from so many perspectives.”

Using social to collaborate with teams outside of marketing has long been a priority for James Hardie®.

“We have one of the largest field sales teams in the industry, and I think because of that it’s sometimes difficult to make sure we have a tight feedback loop with them,” Kulla said. “And while we’d gotten to the point in our social marketing maturity where we were doing a good job of getting content out there, we weren’t really doing a great job of understanding what was happening on a local level and positioning all our employees as thought leaders.”

The company required a way to empower its sales team with social content, as well as provide a way for the sales team itself to supply the marketing department with local story ideas.



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Bridget Kulla

Senior Digital Marketing Manager

Enter [Bambu by Sprout Social](#), which gives employees a simple way to amplify their brand’s reach by sharing curated content across their personal social profiles. Not only does Bambu enable sales teams to increase quality leads and conversions through streamlined social publishing, it allows companies to crowdsource content from employees.

“Bambu has really helped us become more relevant, more targeted and have that line of communication with the sales team that we didn’t really have before,” Kulla said.

Surveying return on investment

James Hardie® knows social ROI comes in all shapes and sizes. However, one of the most important metrics for the company is website traffic driven by social activity, which is often dependent on views, engagement and link clicks.



Over the first six months of using Sprout Social, across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Pinterest, it achieved approximately:

- 23 million impressions (an increase of 2,000%)
- 51,000 engagements (an increase of 462%)
- 134,000 link clicks

That translates to nearly:

- 11,000 new social followers (an increase of 100%)
- 3,700 new social messages (an increase of 19,000%)

The workflow efficiencies and customer care opportunities also represent major successes.



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Kara Wenman

Digital Content Marketing Manager

“Sprout created efficiencies that save us a lot of time,” Kulla said. “People talking to us are going to get a much faster response than they would have otherwise. Also, I think it gives us better line of sight into what people are talking about, which helps us take those trends back to the business.”

Buck agrees.

“We want to make sure people feel like they’re getting their questions addressed, not just driving traffic to our website,” Buck said. “We want to make sure we’re providing value to our customers. You have someone that may come to you with a complaint, and with Sprout we’re able to come in and really steer that conversation around the other way and provide the guidance they need so it ends up positive for everybody.”

Soon after adopting the Sprout Social platform, the company viewed it as an important part of its evolution.

“I really think this is the natural next step in our maturity from a social perspective,” Wenman said. “We laid the groundwork over the past couple years, we have a strong following, we’ve had popular content that’s been engaging, but I think Sprout has really helped us get to the next level as it relates to creating a truly engaged network, rather than just a one-way brand microphone. Sprout has helped us better understand who our audience is, how we can be most relevant and effective and really take a customer-first approach. That was difficult for us to do before without having all the dots connected.”

James Hardie® has been leading the way in its industry for more than 100 years, and with the help of Sprout Social, it looks to continue the trend well into the next century.