SUGARAI · GUIDE · BUILDING MATERIALS MANUFACTURING

The building materials manufacturer's revenue playbook

Winning more business when input costs are squeezing everyone

Building materials manufacturers operate at the intersection of several compounding pressures in 2026. Raw material costs are climbing – driven by tariff policy uncertainty on steel, aluminum, wood products, and concrete additives. Energy prices are up 10–13%. And the construction market remains difficult to forecast with confidence.

Meanwhile, industry consolidation is reshaping buying relationships. A distributor partner gets acquired. A contractor chain centralizes purchasing. Accounts your team has managed for years are suddenly operating under different ownership, with different decision-makers and different vendor preferences.

> The sales teams that win in this environment aren't necessarily the ones with the most reps or the biggest marketing budgets. They're the ones with the clearest intelligence about what's actually happening across their account base.

5.4%

Average input cost increase expected by manufacturers (Deloitte 2026)

$5B+

in sector M&A – buyer relationships are shifting fast (DSG 2025)

78%

of manufacturers say trade uncertainty is #1 concern (Deloitte 2026)

Strategy 1: Get ahead of account drift before it becomes account loss

In building materials, account relationships can feel solid right up until they aren't. A contractor starts buying from a competitor for a few projects – just to compare. A distributor shifts its preferred vendor mix in response to pricing pressure. These changes don't announce themselves. They show up quietly in order data that most reps never look at closely enough.

THE APPROACH

Build buying pattern visibility into your sales process. Connect your ERP order history to your CRM – so that when an account's order frequency or product mix changes, it automatically surfaces as a signal for the rep to act on. Not a quarterly report. A live flag.

The practical outcome: reps stop managing by relationship feel and start managing by actual account behavior. Early intervention is possible. Account drift becomes recoverable.

Strategy 2: Prioritize by margin impact, not familiarity

Building materials reps often manage large account bases spread across contractors, distributors, home improvement retail, and commercial buyers. When every account feels like a priority, nothing is. Reps default to whoever is most responsive – not necessarily whoever represents the most revenue upside or risk.

THE APPROACH

Give your reps a system that ranks account priorities based on revenue impact, margin contribution, and behavioral signals – not rep intuition. A Precision Selling platform synthesizes ERP and CRM data to surface the accounts worth acting on first, every time a rep logs in.

The practical outcome: reps spend more time on accounts that move the revenue needle. The accounts most at risk – and the opportunities most likely to close – get attention before it's too late.

Strategy 3: Turn consolidation disruption into a door opener

Industry consolidation isn't just a threat – it's an opportunity. When a distributor partner gets acquired, their vendor relationships are up for review. When a contractor group centralizes purchasing, whoever gets in front of the new decision-maker first often wins the business. Building materials sales teams that are tracking these changes systematically have a significant first-mover advantage.

THE APPROACH

Build M&A and ownership change tracking into your account management process. When buying relationships shift, your CRM should flag those accounts for immediate outreach – before a competitor does. The prompt is simple: this account's buying structure just changed. Who's making the call?

The practical outcome: your team turns market disruption into pipeline. Consolidation becomes a trigger for proactive engagement rather than a source of account atrophy.

Strategy 4: Arm reps with context before every conversation – not after

One of the most consistent patterns in building materials sales: reps walk into contractor or distributor meetings without the full picture. Order history is in the ERP. Recent service issues are in a ticket system. The last three email exchanges are in Outlook. No one has time to pull it all together before a call.

THE APPROACH

Connect your systems so that account context – purchase history, product adoption, open quotes, service interactions – is available in a single view before any customer conversation. The rep's job is to build the relationship and respond to what they learn. The platform's job is to make sure they're prepared.

The practical outcome: rep conversations are more productive. Customers feel known. Upsell and cross-sell conversations happen naturally – because the rep already knows what the customer is buying and what they're not.

Strategy 5: Build gorecast confidence from data, not from rep optimism

Forecasting in building materials is notoriously hard. Demand is tied to project pipelines that are sometimes invisible to the manufacturer. Reps are often optimistic – understandably so – about accounts where relationships are strong. And traditional CRM forecasting relies on what reps input, not what the data shows.

THE APPROACH

Use a CRM that synthesizes ERP order data, pipeline activity, and behavioral signals to give sales leaders a data-driven forecast view – not just a roll-up of rep-reported opportunities. When leaders can see which deals are actually likely to close, and which accounts are at risk before they show up as lost revenue, the entire team operates with more confidence.

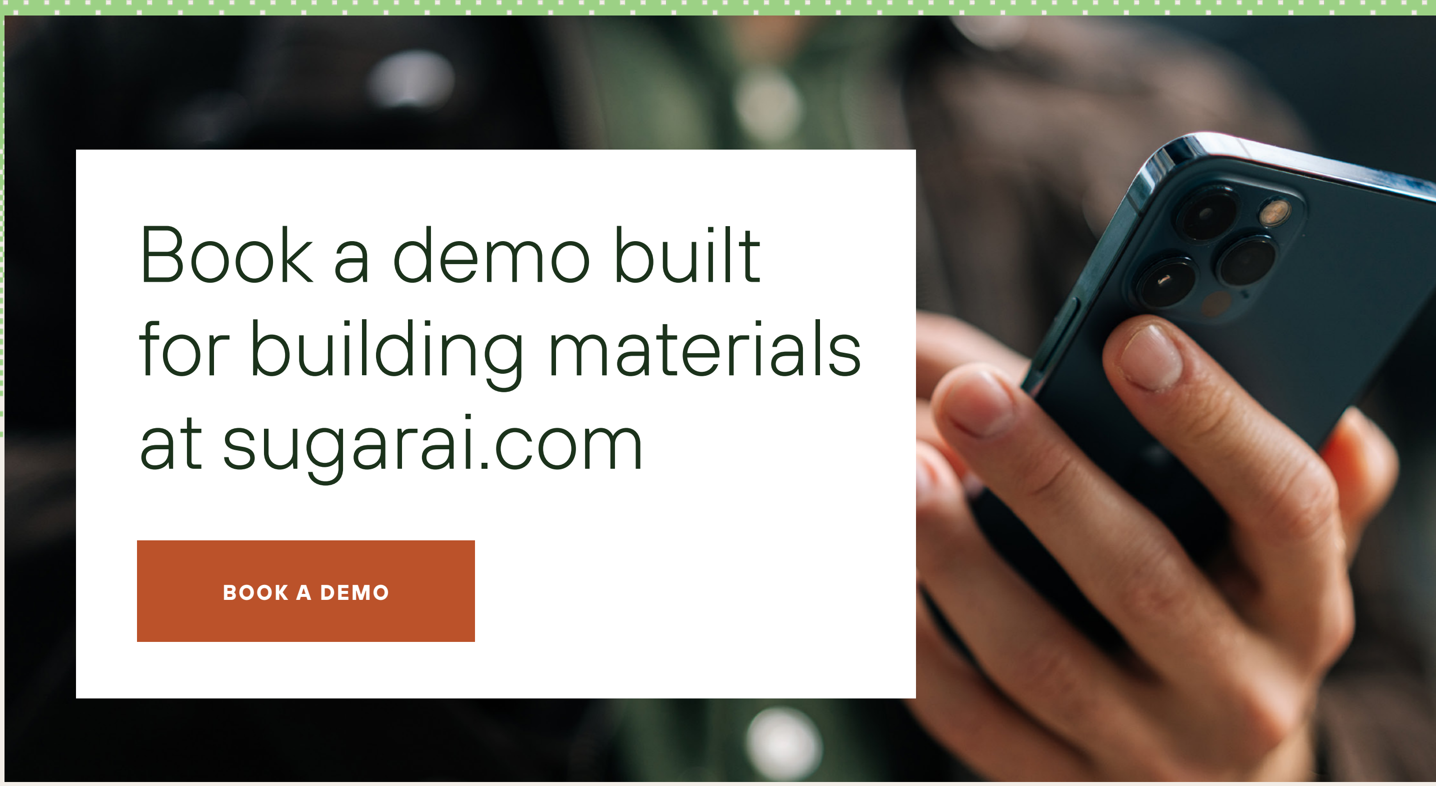
The practical outcome: forecast accuracy improves. Leaders can coach earlier and intervene where it matters. And the team doesn't get surprised by misses that the data would have predicted weeks in advance.

The 5–question readiness audit for building materials sales leaders

1. Can your reps see changes in account buying patterns without pulling a custom report?
2. Do your reps start each week with a prioritized account list – or do they build one themselves?
3. When a distributor relationship changes hands, does your team know within days or weeks?
4. Can a rep walk into a contractor meeting with purchase history, open quotes, and product gaps – in one view?
5. Does your forecast reflect what the data shows, or what reps told you last week?

If two or more of these are answered “no” or “not easily,” your sales team is leaving revenue on the table – especially in a margin-constrained market.

SugarAI’s Precision Selling Platform helps building materials manufacturers protect accounts, surface growth opportunities, and forecast with confidence – even when market conditions are tough.



SugarAI

Unlock sales potential

About SugarAI

SugarAI goes beyond traditional CRM to power account-first, AI-driven selling. Our Precision Selling platform helps sellers win and grow the accounts that matter most by uncovering hidden risk, revealing expansion opportunities, and guiding every next move for complex, relationship-driven businesses.

Learn more at www.sugarai.com