

RENEWABLE ENERGY

PRODUCT LAUNCH GUIDE





The U.S. renewable energy industry is taking off, sparked by tax credits provided by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and states and the overall demand to be more environmentally conscious and for enhanced energy reliability. The solar PV market is estimated to grow to \$44 billion by 2030¹, with an estimated 15% of homes by 2030² having an installed system that turns light into energy.

To help you effectively and successfully launch into renewable energy products, we have provided guidelines and suggestions from solar ABC Supply branches. By following these guidelines, you will be able to meet the growing demand for renewable energy and gain market share.

¹ Grand View Research (<https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/us-residential-solar-pv-market-report>)

² Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) (https://www.seia.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/Q2%202023-%20Solar%20Heat%20Sheet_0.pdf)

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CHAPTER 1

GETTING INTO RENEWABLE ENERGY DISTRIBUTION

IDENTIFY THE RIGHT PEOPLE AT THE BRANCH TO PROPEL THE INITIATIVE

Selecting the right people to drive growth and penetrate the RE market is critical to the success of your solar program. Some of the key characteristics to look for in your lead solar person are:

- Passionate and committed to being all in on solar.
- Go-getter who is self-motivated to do the legwork and actively research to make the program successful.
- The ability to identify existing accounts not producing and reallocate them within the branch to focus on the new potential with solar.
- Acknowledge they need to sell what the branch has determined as the product offering and what ABC Supply stocks. Instead of promising to get other products, this person must be knowledgeable enough to convince the contractor why the products the branch stocks are comparable to what they are already using.
- Wants to be an active part of the contractor's business and help them create growth.

***SOLAR BRANCH
MANAGERS AGREE A
DEDICATED SOLAR
LEAD IS HELPFUL AND
LEADS TO A SUCCESSFUL
INTEGRATION.***

Suggestion: In addition to a dedicated solar salesperson, a dedicated inside sales associate who wants to understand and learn solar can also be beneficial. In time, they can help educate staff and support outside sales.

GAIN KNOWLEDGE AND GET EDUCATED ABOUT SOLAR

Now that you have your solar lead, it's time to learn about the green energy industry and RE products.

- **Step 1** – Review the 5-Step Solar Action Plan located at S:\Resources\Solar
- **Step 2** – Read the Selling Solar 101 and Solar Education 101 guides available at S:\Resources\Solar
- **Step 3** – Read solar publications like [Solar Power World](#) and [Solar Builder Magazine](#) and visit vendor sites to learn as much as you can about the RE products. Sites like [IronRidge.com](#) or [solarpowerworldonline.com/solar-power-world-classrooms](#) offer free online training courses to help you understand how a solar PV system works.
- **Step 4** – Continue your deep dive into the RE world by visiting association sites like [SEIA.org](#) (Solar Energy Industries Association). It is also a good idea to familiarize yourself with your area's tax credits and codes.

Suggestion: Remember, customers have the potential to interact with everyone at your branch, so it's not enough to have only one person knowledgeable. A good rule of thumb is to ensure that everyone at your branch knows the basics of solar and understands the products you stock. Once a week, on Solar Thursdays, have your associates take online training courses from manufacturers like IronRidge, Unirac, Duracell, etc.



***BEFORE GOING ANY FURTHER, HAVE YOU FOUND THE 5-STEP SOLAR ACTION PLAN AND REVIEWED IT (BOTH BRANCH MANAGER AND SOLAR LEAD)? IF NOT, DO IT NOW.
GO TO S:\RESOURCES\SOLAR***

STAY ORGANIZED

Use the [Renewable Energy Launch Checklist](#) to stay organized and complete all the steps in the product launch process. A printed form of the checklist is available in the appendix. An Excel template is available at S:\Resources\Solar\RE Launch Checklist.

LEARN YOUR RENEWABLE ENERGY MARKET

The key to any successful go-to-market strategy is understanding your market. Like any of ABC Supply's other product categories, you must learn your market and understand what the contractors and installers need before purchasing any materials.

- Research what manufacturers and products are sold in your area and at what margins.
- Get “comp shops” from your customers. Don't have prospective RE customers yet? Get a referral(s) from a roofing customer first. Then, reach out to that solar installer. It gives you the qualified lead and the opportunity to land the solar installer as a customer. They trust the roofer, who already trusts ABC Supply as their distributor.
- Compare ABC Supply's RE product line with what is already being sold in your market. If we don't sell it, find what is similar in warranty and price that we carry.
- Understand the needs of the area contractors.
You must have conversations before purchasing any material.
 - What manufacturers are they currently using?
 - Are they installing the entire system (panels, racking, inverters and batteries)?
 - What is the most crucial thing they want (price, service, warranty, credit terms/limits, rebates, etc.)?

***IMPORTANT: DON'T
BRING IN A BUNCH
OF INVENTORY THE
MARKET DOESN'T WANT.
RESEARCH FIRST!***

Suggestion: We know people do not like change. So, if ABC Supply doesn't carry what a customer is installing, be prepared with supporting information and facts about why our product offering is comparable. For any of the products your branch is stocking, you must be able to confidently talk about the features/benefits, warranty, output and pricing.

DEVELOP MANUFACTURER RELATIONSHIPS

Your relationships with your manufacturer representatives are vital to keeping your ear to the ground. They will have connections you don't have in the green energy industry.

Your manufacturer reps are also a resource for industry trends and product knowledge. Do a ride-along to solar projects, and don't be afraid to ask questions.

CHAPTER 2

GETTING THE BRANCH READY FOR SOLAR

TRAINING FOR THE PRODUCT LINES YOU ARE STOCKING

Failing to prepare and educate not only yourself and your solar salesperson but also your entire branch is preparing to fail. RE is a new industry for ABC Supply, so talk to your manufacturer reps. They are an excellent resource for product knowledge. Set up product knowledge training sessions once a month at your branch to give your team hands-on training and a deep understanding of the products your location is stocking.

Suggestion: Manufacturer-led training sessions are also beneficial for your current roofing customers interested in solar and potential RE customers looking for a single-source supplier, but keep them separate from the training sessions you schedule for your staff. Doing two different events allows everyone to get their questions answered and your branch the opportunity to show off your services. Make it an open-house event!

SOLAR THURSDAYS ARE AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUR TEAM TO GET EDUCATED ABOUT SOLAR. SET UP WEEKLY ONLINE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS OR BI-WEEKLY TEAM LUNCH-AND-LEARNS.

ORGANIZING THE BRANCH

The Warehouse

- Designate an area in your warehouse to stage all your electrical items and racking accessories to keep them out of the elements. Always keep the site clean and well-organized. It will save you valuable time and minimize frustration when fulfilling orders.

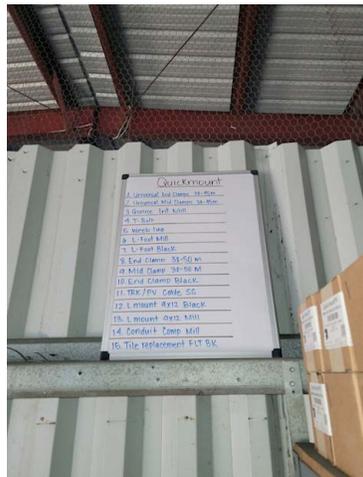
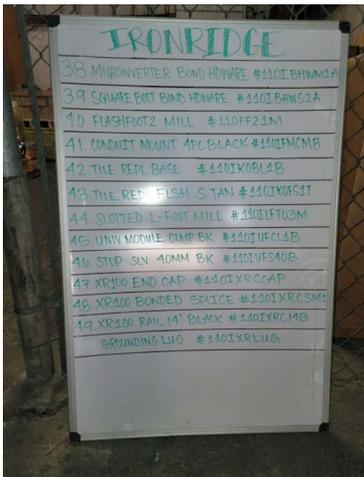


- Rails and panels can be stored outside. Cover panels with wrapping to keep them and the inverters underneath safe from the weather.



IF YOUR CUSTOMERS DO A LOT OF THEIR OWN PICKUPS, IT'S BENEFICIAL TO HAVE A DESIGNATED DOCK AND YOUR MATERIALS EASILY ACCESSIBLE FOR YOUR WAREHOUSE ASSOCIATES.

- A whiteboard system is helpful to identify products easily and efficiently. Assign a number to each product and write a short description. The number should then correlate to the designated basket of items in the warehouse.



- Remember, your warehouse staff should also have basic knowledge of solar and understand your procedures.

Suggestion: Including your warehouse associates in the product knowledge training sessions is a good idea. At the very least, make sure your warehouse lead can attend.

The Showroom

Layout the RE area of your showroom to explain the solar process. Doing so gives your customers (and possibly even your team) a better understanding of the products you stock and how they work in the solar PV system.

1. Display the sales program for the customer to the homeowner.
2. Proceed with solar panels, racking, inverters, and batteries.



The Counter

The counter is your central hub, so ensure the staff understands solar, the brands you stock and the branch's processes. A cheat sheet of the solar items and the associated SKUs is beneficial, as well as the Solar Education 101 guide found at S:\Resources\Solar.

Also, don't forget your solar signage for walk-in customers. Counter signs are available at S:\Resources\Solar. If you don't have a color printer, contact the marketing department to have them print one for you. It's free and will ship in your branch mail. Other attention grabbers are product sail flags, a solar banner (from Ad Press), and a wall showroom poster (from Heidi Mallicoat x2412).

PURCHASING MATERIALS

Actively researching your market and talking with customers and solar installers will dictate what materials you should purchase. Only purchase and sell the RE products from the vetted manufacturers with whom ABC Supply has relationships. Find all the world-class manufacturer partners on the ABC Supply [website](#) or go to S:\Resoureces\Solar\Vendor Contacts and Pricing-Shortcut link.

Do not sign solar supplier contracts. Only authorized ABC Supply personnel from the renewable energy team can contract with RE suppliers.

When ordering, communicate with your manufacturer rep approximately how many jobs you are projected to do monthly. They will assist you in determining how much product you will need to have in stock. Also, specify what type of delivery vehicle you need to receive the product. Will the delivering truck have a dock to back into, or will they need to offload in the yard?

IMPORTANT: DO NOT SIGN SOLAR SUPPLIER CONTRACTS. ONLY AUTHORIZED ABC SUPPLY PERSONNEL FROM THE RENEWABLE ENERGY TEAM CAN CONTRACT WITH RE SUPPLIERS.

Tips:

- A container of solar panels can hold approximately 40 solar jobs.
- Hub and spoke is recommended if you do not have 40 jobs monthly.
- Don't forget to specify the type of delivery vehicle you need to receive the product.

PREPARING QUOTES AND WHAT TO DO WHEN THE CUSTOMER WANTS TO ORDER

Creating a quote for solar is like building a quote for a roofing contractor.

- You type up the quote through the ABC Supply quote system.
- Your customer should supply the Bill of Material (BOM). However, a customer might request the ABC Supply rep assist with the racking BOM.

Remember, the first impression is everything, so be sure to ask questions if you don't understand the BOM. Never make assumptions and always provide world-class service.

Suggestion: Have a system to keep track of open quotes for follow-up. If a quote doesn't turn into an order, find out why and explain how ABC Supply can make it easy.

The customer is prepared to order; now what?

1. Verify the order and pricing.
2. Find out if the customer would like two deliveries – one for the racking and accessories and the second for the solar panels.
3. Does the customer want the order roof loaded or ground dropped (branches vary)?
4. Create the order.

Tip: Create a solar price list that can be updated with the products your branch wants to expedite out of stock.

SPREAD THE WORD THAT YOUR BRANCH IS STOCKING SOLAR

The marketing department has developed collateral to help you launch solar and spread the word in your market. From storefront banners to product line cards to postcards and solar training flyers, they have it all or can work with you to create a specific marketing piece. Review the Solar Marketing Resources Guide available at S:\Resources\Solar\Solar Marketing.

The marketing team is here to support you. To learn more about their services, go to S:\Resources\Marketing\Marketing Resources Guide or <https://knowledgehub.abcsupply.com/MarketingResources/index.html>.

CHAPTER 3

YOU HAVE THE PRODUCTS, NOW WHAT

RECEIVING AND STORING PRODUCT

Follow your branch's standard receiving procedures.

Most RE manufacturers' delivery vehicles need loading docks to unload products safely. However, if your location doesn't have docks, this should be specified during purchasing.

Following the suggested numbering system outlined in the [Organizing Your Branch](#) section, number your product boxes accordingly.

- Panels can be stocked outside and double-stacked. Be sure to store them panel-side up so the connectors are not exposed to the elements. Leaving the connectors exposed will cause them to rust. Cover opened crates to prevent water and dust from coating the panels.
- Railing can also be stocked outside.
- All electrical components must be stored inside the warehouse out of the elements.

IF THE PRODUCT IS ALWAYS IN THE ELEMENTS ON THE ROOF, IT CAN BE STORED IN YOUR YARD.

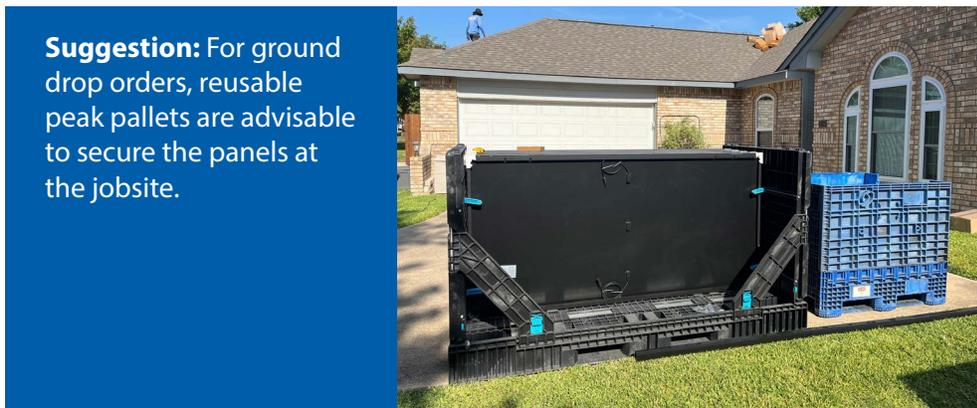


DELIVERING MATERIALS

When delivering the materials to the jobsite, ABC Supply is the best in the industry because of our CSDS process. It is how we get it right the first time, every time, and as a new solar distributor, your first impression is everything. Follow ABC Supply's CSDS process for RE deliveries to demonstrate how we make it easy for solar contractors to get their jobs done with minimal hassle and interruptions.

For Delivery:

- Panels should be placed on a pallet, plum, and shrink-wrapped to minimize damage during transport. If not aligned, the glass can break.
- Use plastic or paper bags for solar accessories.



HANDLING RETURNS

- Process all returns per ABC Supply's Hassle-Free Return Policy.
- Only accept items for return that can be resold in their original packaging.
- If a product is discontinued or will be, communicate that with the customer before the sale. You should not accept discounted or soon-to-be-discounted products for return.

ONLY ACCEPT PRODUCT RETURNS THAT CAN BE RESOLD IN THEIR ORIGINAL PACKAGING.

DEALING WITH SERVICE AND WARRANTY ISSUES

- All product issues should be taken care of by the manufacturer rep.
- The branch manager handles issues related to ABC Supply's product delivery.
- Do not handle technical issues, blueprints, solar design or electrical scenarios.
- For warranty issues or claims for damaged products, contact your manufacturer rep to determine the company's RMA procedure.

CHAPTER 4

ADVICE FROM SOLAR STOCKING LOCATIONS

To further help you in your solar journey, we asked solar-stocking branch managers to weigh in with their advice for other locations wanting to take advantage of the opportunity renewable energy presents. Here's what they said.

#1 PIECE OF ADVICE

"Go learn your market. Don't just bring in a bunch of inventory. You need to talk to your customers and solar contractors in your area. And remember, you can't get what everyone wants; you need to be strategic about what you offer."

James Hawthorne

Managing Partner at National City, CA
Selling solar since 2017.

"Don't think it's [your solar business] going to happen in your first year. It may take two or three years for you to see significant returns, but it will be there. The industry isn't going away."

TJ Brackett

Managing Partner at Grand Junction, CO
Began planning for solar in Oct. 2022. Started selling solar in March 2023.

"Solar poses a significant market opportunity for ABC Supply, but it's a new market with terms and nuances you might not be familiar with. Check your ego at the door. Don't be afraid to ask your manufacturer or customer questions or explain things. However, you need also to find time to learn about the business; otherwise, it won't work."

Eric Hunt

Managing Partner at Tavares, FL
Started selling solar in 2023.

"Learn as much as you can, not only the product but also, most importantly, your market. Have as many conversations as possible with reps, customers and solar installers that you can before ever purchasing your materials."

Jordan Seewald

Branch Manager at Waxahachie, TX
Brought solar originally to the Tyler, TX, location he managed. Waxahachie was stocking solar when he arrived.

WHY BUY FROM ABC

“We provide credit terms and will house their materials so that their P&Ls look better. ABC also saves them time because we can load the materials onto the roof.”

- James Hawthorne, Managing Partner at National City, CA
619-477-2393

“We can carry the material for them. Many installers need to put funds upfront to purchase and store materials, while ABC can do it for them. Also, we deliver to the rooftop or ground drop, whatever the customer needs, with great communication and accuracy at every turn.”

- TJ Brackett, Managing Partner at Grand Junction, CO
970-256-1390

“If you’re already stocking CertainTeed shingles and bringing in CertainTeed Solar, we strengthen the contractor with the opportunity to get CertainTeed certified and offer a great warranty to the homeowner. Plus, we make it easy and remove their friction.”

- Eric Hunt, Managing Partner at Tavares, FL
352-742-1520

“ABC Supply has competitive pricing and better service than our competitors. Our ability to deliver accurate orders and make multiple trips to deliver what the customer needs when they need it is what sets us apart from our RE competitors.”

- Jordan Seewald, Branch Manager at Waxahachie, TX
972-937-1052

The Renewable Energy Team

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Business Development Manager: Anthony Romero, 505-359-0794

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RE LAUNCH CHECKLIST

Action:	Status:	Date Completed:	Results:	Comment:
Market Analysis				
Prospect List (Jessica Kettle x2430)				
Target Customers				
Identify Brands				
Warehouse Needs (Contact Regional Operations Mgr)				
Delivery Needs (Contact Regional Fleet/ Operations Specialist)				
Associate Representation Identified				
Vendor Meeting				
Vendor Setup/Software				
Associate Training by Vendors				
Samples/Literature				
Advertising/Showroom				
Stocking Position				
Phone On Hold messages				
Update Branch Website				
Joint Sales Calls				
Sales Blitz				