



## **Whiz-Q Stone announces partnership with Belgard Hardscapes**

Providing national attention at a local level helps Jewell | Oldcastle expand their distribution footprint in a critical partnership with one of DFW's top Hardscapes Dealers.

**Customer:** Whiz-Q Stone, the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex's largest selection of Natural Stone, Landscaping Supplies, and Outdoor Living Products. Located just outside of Fort Worth, Whiz-Q was founded 30 years ago by Jim Whisenand, has expanded from a starting location of 3 to over 22 acres, and continues to be run by family (sons and grandson Mike and Derek) today.

**Market:** Jewell | Oldcastle APG, a CRH Company

**Introduction:** With only 2 manufacturing sites in their large market (Louisiana, Oklahoma, Arkansas and all of Texas), Belgard is in a precarious position against top competitor Pavestone to have product readily available and stocked across the region. This limited capacity necessitates strong partnership with dealers and distributors across the region to stock product. While Belgard is available and sold out of 7 Jewell | Oldcastle owned stores, large footprints across the region went underserved and lost share of market to Pavestone and other top competitors.

A top North Texas Hardscapes Dealer, Whiz-Q, spoke with Belgard leadership on and off for almost a decade to determine if Belgard would be a good fit across their already stocked Unilock and Pavestone product offerings, but Whiz-Q ownership had strong concerns about the customer service of Belgard at the local level.

**Solution:** By fostering a national marketing support relationship with owners Derek and Mike Whisenand, I was able to present to Whiz-Q program and product support that brought confidence to a partnership with Belgard.

**Action:** Though multiple conversations I created a strategy for the partnership launch that included:

- A drip campaign across North Texas teasing at Belgard's stocking expansion into Fort Worth (where Whiz-Q's yard is located)
- A formal press release and launch of the partnership in January of 2020 at North Texas Belgard events, in local media, and online
  - o Mention of Belgard being a locally manufactured product as well as Whiz-Q's impending expansion bringing jobs to Fort Worth
  - o Formal Announcements to the trade at Belgard University events February 18<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and March 5<sup>th</sup>
  - o Formal Announcement to Homeowners at the Fort Worth Livestock Show (month long event February 2020)
- Customized Collateral for Whiz-Q featuring key stocked Belgard pavers and outdoor living elements such as a fireplace, grill islands and firepit kits.
- Designs and coordination for product installation in a newly expanded outdoor display that would be launched to both the trade and homeowner customer in two audience specific events to occur in April 2020 (events did not occur due to pandemic, but product and displays were installed)

**Results:** While immediate results showed at the Jewell | Oldcastle level through the ordering of over 50 trucks of product, local impact at Whiz-Q was unprecedented.

In lieu of the planned Grand Opening events targeting trade and homeowner customers, Whiz-Q remained open for business during quarantine as they were nationally deemed “an essential business” and Texas government allowed contractors to continue to work. Having had advertised their new display through the invitations for their Grand Openings, homeowner traffic increased from 15% to 65% month over month in March, April, and May of 2020.

**Statistics & Conclusion:** Sales of Belgard Hardscapes products were immediately successful but have grown 15-30% month over month since stocking launch with Whiz-Q in February of 2020 and continue to grow.

More importantly, the relationships developed with Whiz-Q ownership have given Jewell | Oldcastle better insight into larger opportunities with TNLA (Texas Nursery Landscape Association), the HNA Council (Whiz-Q owner Derek Whisenand serves on their board), and more, local, opportunities that would not have been gained without their partnership.

