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JULY 2006

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## Marketing MASTERS

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Dorothy Booze, Co-Owner  
DesignLine Remodelers



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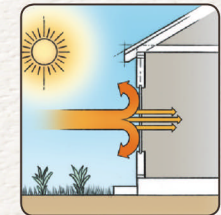


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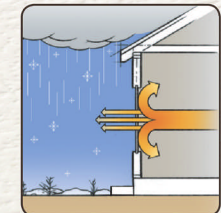


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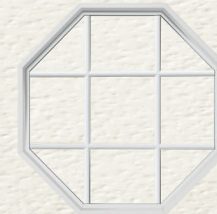
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JULY 2006  
VOLUME 10 NUMBER 7

### ON THE COVER

**Dorothy Booze of DesignLine Remodelers has helped lead the Richmond, Va., firm through a growth spurt with its strategic marketing campaign.**

*Photo by Bill Geiger*



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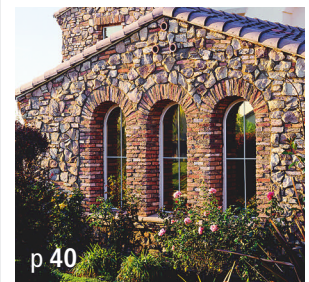
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### Enter Your Nomination for Remodeler of the Year

Are you excellent in all aspects of remodeling, highly reputable in the market you serve and innovative in areas such as design, business management and profitability? Tell us why your remodeling firm merits consideration for this prestigious award.

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### The Conversation Continues Online

This month's Remodelers' Exchange has a wealth of information on how to choose the right corporate structure for your company. To read more about this important topic, visit us online.

[www.ProRemodeler.com/bestpractices](http://www.ProRemodeler.com/bestpractices)

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DesignLine Remodelers in Richmond, Va., shows how saturating the marketplace with quality marketing materials can spur growth.

*By Michael R. Morris, Editor in Chief*

spotlight

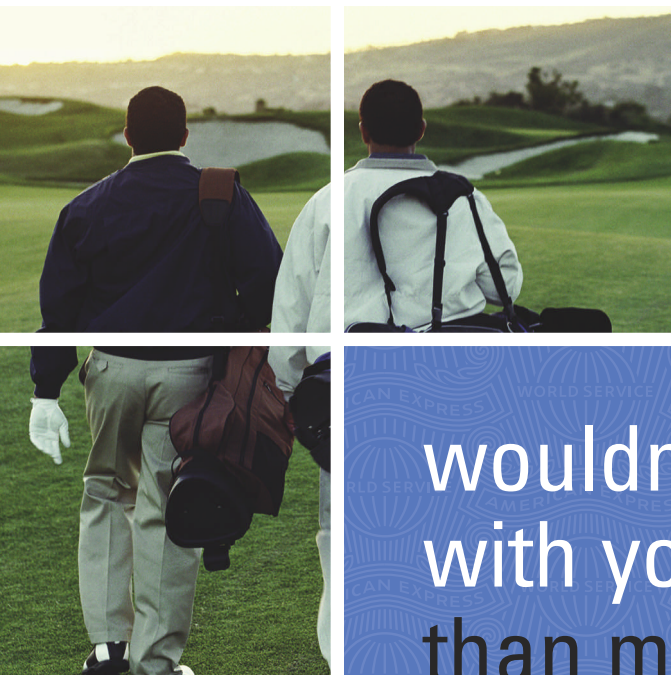
## Weathering the Storms p 24

Hurricanes Ivan and Dennis changed remodeling plans for a townhouse perched on a Florida bay.

*By Wendy A. Jordan, Senior Contributing Editor*



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# Selling Relationships

Keith Alward's Ph.D. in developmental psychology comes in handy almost every time he meets a client. Because Alward charges time and materials, he runs into a fair share of cautious people who want to know just one thing: "How much is this going to cost?"

And that would be a problem if he didn't know how to read and quickly react to a client's nonverbal, and even sometimes even verbal, cues.

"It's an extremely difficult human moment," says Alward, "because no matter what I've said and no matter what I've sent them, they're nervous about being taken advantage of, getting into some situation that they won't be able to control, spending more money than they ought to spend, all the possible fears. That's where my focus is. What are these fears and how do we get beyond these fears? And it might be talking about their house or whatever. I try to find some connection and I'm looking for every cue."

Alward, CR, president of Alward Construction in Berkeley, Calif., got into the remodeling industry almost by accident (like a lot of remodeling firm owners I've talked to). After graduating from Cal-Berkeley, he was constantly being asked by friends and acquaintances if he would fix this or remodel that, because of his advanced carpentry and people skills. Before he knew it, he was making a living doing something he loved — working with his hands.



**Michael R. Morris**

Editor in Chief

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Twenty six years later, Alward Construction is doing \$7.5 million in sales volume per year with 35 full-time employees. Yet Alward remains the primary sales person for all of the company's work. Although this puts a fair amount of pressure on Alward to close a lot of sales per year, he's hands-down the best person for the job.

"I think of the people I work for as clients, not customers," he says. "I don't think as though I'm selling them a product. Instead, I'm engaging them in a relationship. I just convince people that I'm fair, open, honest and that I will try to figure out with them what their project's going to cost in a completely open way."

"I have an incredibly good reputation, and they usually know that before I go out to their house," says Alward, who gets 90 percent of his jobs from referrals. "They're not looking to see whether we can build it; they're trying to figure out whether or not they want to work with an odd duck like me."

*Do you have an interesting story to tell about how your company has overcome obstacles to growth and/or success? Send me a letter or an e-mail. **PR***



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# LLC, S-Corp or Sole Proprietor?

## What business structure is right for your company?

**T**his month we're taking a little different approach to our topic. Instead of remodelers, Tom Swartz talks to a CPA and an attorney who counsel remodelers and help them choose the correct business structure for their company.

**Tom:** *Today's topic is one that I get asked about a lot. I call it one of my unspeakables. When you talk about the structure of your remodeling company, you get different answers. So we're going to talk about business structure. I think we'll hear terms like*



Marilyn Mobley, CPA  
**Mobley & Associates**

Mobley has been a public accountant since she became a CPA in 1979. She focuses on helping small and medium-sized businesses choose a proper operating structure.

Before starting her own practice five years ago, she was affiliated with Rogoff, Diamond and Walker in Albuquerque, N.M.

*Photograph by Dale W. Anderson*

*sole proprietor, S-Corporation, C-Corporation and LLC. We are going to be joined today by a CPA, Marilyn Mobley. We're also going to be talking with an attorney that is very well versed in this particular area that will bring a new dimension for remodeling contractors. That is Laurie Hedrich.*

**Tom:** *Marilyn, one of your major clients is a remodeling company in Farmington, N.M. Is that correct?*

**Marilyn:** I have several clients in Farmington in the construction industry. Lonnie Rutherford is my husband and a client; he owns Legacy Construction. He is a small remodeling contractor; I think in his peak he had 12 people. He's gone more into using subcontractors rather than employees.

**Tom:** *His business would be volume-wise about what?*

**Marilyn:** It really depends on the year, whether he throws in a couple of new constructions in there. Range would be \$1 million to \$2 million.

**Tom:** *Marilyn, would you describe from a remodeling standpoint and a small business standpoint, major differences between the types of corporation setups that are available to the remodelers in small business today?*

**Marilyn:** Primarily, we have the sole proprietor, which is a lot of times how people start. They just throw the hammer in the back of the truck and they're in business. So there's no formal entity, no liability protection – they're just out there. Then there is the corporate structure. And within this, they can elect Subchapter S status. And then there's the partnership or the LLC (Limited Liability Company).

**Tom:** *Why don't you set us up as to the differences between corporate structure and Subchapter S. Are there other corporate structures?*

**Marilyn:** There's a C-Corporation.

The part for me is how are those different entities taxed; what are the tax ramifications for each one of those situations. The C-Corp is taxed at the entity level, so if there are profits in the corporation, those are taxed in the corporation and that's it. If the remodeler chooses to be a corporation but decides to elect S-Corp, all that does is change that to what in the tax laws is called a pass-through entity. Partnerships are pass-through entities, LLCs are pass-through entities, as are S-Corps. They're taxed a little bit differently: the LLCs are taxed with the partnership rules as are partnerships; the S-Corps, virtually everything passes through and is taxed on the individual's individual return. All of those separate items kind of flow through separately. It's not just one lump number that pops on their returns.

**Tom:** *If there's one person that owns the company and he has a Subchapter S, that would come to that one person and be taxed to that one person. Can there be two people in that S-corporation?*

**Marilyn:** There can be up to 100 – that's one of the limitations of S-Corp. There can only be 100 shareholders. Typically this is not a problem with startups or small businesses.

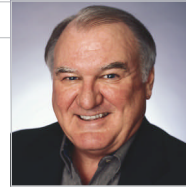
**Tom:** *The partnership – how does it get taxed?*

**Marilyn:** It's similar – different rules apply to a lot of the income and the ability to specially allocate items of income or expenses. That also flows through and is taxed to the individual partners on their personal return.

**Tom:** *Similar to Subchapter S. Talk to me about an LLC, not corporation. Why would you do it for tax purposes?*

**Marilyn:** It's a limited liability company, not a corporation. Tax-wise, you have more flexibility. There're a cou-





**Tom Swartz**  
Contributing Editor

ple of reasons. One is that if you are a single member in the LLC – if there's just one owner, they're called a member – you can treat it as a disregarded entity and everything is still taxed on their personal returns but slightly differently than a pass-through entity. As a single-member LLC, you would have Schedule C reporting in a remodeler business. You're as if it's disregarded for tax purposes so you don't have to file a separate return, which is a cost savings. Then it's reported on your Schedule C. And then you still have that legal risk of that limited liability because you do have that recognized entity. So that's one of the reasons that people starting out as a sole proprietor with no formal structure; they might want to form an LLC to get some limited liability but still do the same income tax reporting that they did the day before.

**Laurie:** I have a question for Marilyn, actually. There are certain assets that you would prefer not be owned in an S-Corp, right?

**Marilyn:** Yes, real estate being one.

**Laurie:** If a remodeler owns the building that they're working out of, for example, that might be an asset you would put into an LLC, separate from doing an LLC for the business, right?

**Marilyn:** Just because of the tax treatment of any appreciable property, typically real estate as we've seen over the past few years has escalated in price and value. So there is potentially a double taxation on that real estate if you wanted to get it out of the S-Corp.

**Tom:** So what Laurie is saying – let's say you're operating out of an office building; you put that office building as an LLC, the remodeler as the single member, and then he rents to himself as an S-Corp and the S-Corp pays rent to the LLC for the building.

*Is that correct?*

**Marilyn:** That's perfect.

**Tom:** Laurie, talk to us about the legal benefits of each one of these.

**Laurie:** If a client asks about choice of entity, comes in and has been operating as a sole proprietor, I have a duty to explain to them that to the extent that there is any kind of accident or loss and it exceeds the amount of their liability insurance or in the instance they are not carrying liability – I have to explain to them that (under New Mexico law) they would be personally liable if there was a judgment against them and that the only asset that would escape that judgment would be any qualified retirement that they've established, or any insurance policies. We, like a number of jurisdictions, have homestead rules – but you can certainly file a lien against houses, against real property.

**Tom:** And in today's world of suing, that wouldn't be something you would probably recommend.

**Laurie:** I tell clients that if they still want to operate "out of sole proprietor" we need to at least form an LLC, and they can be a single-member LLC filer. The reason why is that both LLCs and corporations, if properly formed and properly maintained, should afford the remodeler with limitations on liability. The caveat is with corporations and with LLCs you have to observe the formalities that you build into a document. I think the reason why clients in general like LLCs a little bit more from a practical standpoint than corporations is that there are fewer required corporate formalities. Again each state will differ. In New Mexico, there's no requirement that you hold meetings, that you file annual reports (in an LLC).

**Tom:** But there are requirements for annual

meetings and other things in corporate structures.

**Laurie:** Right. In a C-Corp or an S-Corp, there is a requirement that you hold annual meetings, that you maintain a minute book, that you observe corporate formalities. And if you fail to observe corporate formalities, if you fail to keep the entity in good standing with the New Mexico public regulation commission (differs with states), you may lose that limitation on liability. The legal term is called "piercing the



**Laurie Hedrich**  
**Attorney at Law**

Hedrich has practiced since 1984, starting in Albuquerque, N.M. in 1995. Seventy-five percent of her practice focuses on estate planning and devotes the rest to business law.

Prior to working in New Mexico, Hedrich served as an in-house attorney for developers and builders and represented troubled loan departments in banks as in-house attorney.

*Photograph by Dale W. Anderson*



corporate veil.” It is when someone fails to observe those formalities, or even more troubling, is when someone fails to keep their personal records, personal finances separate from the entities. And that is particularly difficult for small businesses who have been operating using their own checking account and are used to loaning money each month to make payroll and suddenly they find themselves in an LLC or corporation and they run short. They’ve lent money in a prior month and they’re flush for a month, and then go and write a check to themselves personally. They won’t document it and maybe they’ll go and pay for something personal. If down the road litigation ensues, one of the prob-

*if you don’t do that, you could be open for liability if somebody gets into a problem, and they say wait a minute, you say you’re a C-Corp – but you’re not. Now you’re going to be judged as what? So you have to document it, and if you don’t, what happens?*

**Laurie:** Again, it’s a potential for liability. Each case is going to court and look at the facts and make decisions, but, for example, the things that I look for when I look through somebody’s records are did they enter into contracts, did they just sign their own name or did they sign their own name as president of Legacy Construction. That’s one of the things I’ve talked to Lonnie about. Don’t sign your own name. Make sure when you sign it, it says Legacy Construction and

start laughing. So there’re formalities, and we try and encourage everyone to think that way and react that way, even though it’s their pair of pants, they own the entire pair of pants. This is my corporate pocket, this is my personal pocket, and keep those separate.

**Laurie:** And sometimes with small businesses, there are going to be times for cash flow reasons that the small business owner is going to have to lend money to the entity. In those cases, at least document – if you’re not going to do the minutes at that moment – at least document: “On such and such date, I personally lent the corporation the sum of \$5,000, which is payable back to me at such and such a time.” Just

## I try to give them a visual. You’re no different than General Motors once you form a corporation.

lems that can happen is that an attorney will review their books and review their banking records and then will ask the court to enter an alter-ego theory – make the person personally liable because they really weren’t exercising corporate formalities. They weren’t treating the corporation as a separate entity.

**Tom:** *I want to expound on this just a bit. A lot of remodeling contractors that I talk to at shows and seminars, some of the remodeling contractor owners are what they are because of advice from people like you as an attorney or like Marilyn as a CPA. I’m not sure they understand all the ramifications, so in this particular exchange, you’ve just hit a nerve. You’re saying to me that if a company is an S-Corp, which I think a lot of them are – and Marilyn the question is going to be coming to you: I want you to see if the S-Corp is the most popular – we happen to be a C-Corp. However, to keep that you have to keep certain corporate entities that you have. And you mentioned minutes in a corporate book, an annual meeting. And,*

then you can sign it.

**Tom:** *What entity, Marilyn, is Legacy Construction?*

**Marilyn:** They’re an S-Corp.

**Tom:** *Don’t get caught up in using your personal credit card to get miles and expect it to go over. What happens then – does the corporation reimburse him?*

**Marilyn:** I remember once I was in a class where I was speaking and there was also an attorney speaking, and it was to a group of small business owners. His comment was that the very first thing that he does if he is suing a contractor is to get hold of their books and ask for their minutes because he’s looking to see if they respected that corporate entity – were they operating as a corporation, were they acting as a corporation. One thing that I try to give people when I counsel them, I try and give them a visual. I say, you’re no different than General Motors once you form a corporation. And if you think of that – would you just go into GM and say give me some cash? They would just

put a note in the corporate notebook to demonstrate. The problem is from a legal and an accounting perspective it becomes very difficult after the fact to go back and try to re-create what somebody did six months or a year later to go back and try to figure out, why did this \$5,000 come into the corporation? What was the intention here? Was it treated as a loan? Are we keeping the pockets separate?

**Tom:** *What would you suggest to someone coming to you and asking how to set up his business?*

**Marilyn:** It’s very specific to that individual. That’s one of the things I wanted them to come away from this with, the whole point is that they find people in their area that they can talk to about these issues – an attorney and a CPA – just kick around those things as they relate to themselves. What do you think you are going to make a year?

**Tom:** *If I come to you and say my business plan says I’m going to do \$500,000 a year and when I pay all the labor, material,*





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*subs, cleanup and permits, I'll have a gross profit of \$200,000, and my expenses are \$150,000, and included in that is my salary of \$50,000. And I have \$50,000 profit. Typical of a small guy just starting up. What are you going to do to him?*

**Marilyn:** Typically the entity I suggest is the S-Corporation. If I feel like they're going to be very cavalier and not do the formalities, we might suggest an LLC but one of the reasons that I like the S-Corp is that the taxation is straightforward – easy for them to understand – and I think it's critical that they understand the taxation. Under partnership taxation, it's far more flexible and therefore far more complex. If they're a single person, if there's just

*Do you recommend a partnership agreement to be in writing, and what's the first step? What's the advice you could give someone to stay partners?*

**Laurie:** Let me say that if there is no written partnership agreement, I tell my clients that they are general partners (a general partnership); they are each individually and mutually liable for any mistakes that their partner makes. And, that it is in my view, the very worst way for them to do business. I recommend that if they don't want to be involved with the formalities of forming a corporation that they form an LLC and that they can each be a managing member of the LLC. But in terms of maintaining that entity, whatever it is, I think that it's

buy/sell language, which is what happens if somebody wants to or needs to get out; include some clarification. How are you going to value the corporation or the LLC or the partnership? There're all sorts of different formulas. Are you going to require an appraiser come in? Are you going to do it based upon certain percentage of the last three years prior gross receipts? There are all sorts of different ways. That's where it's beneficial to have an attorney assist you on the front end in getting your business established. It's always difficult because claims come to you at a point in time when they're wanting all of their capital to be invested in getting their business off the ground, and sometimes

## What will happen if somebody dies or retires or remarries? What will happen if somebody becomes disabled?

the one shareholder or member, typically if we get them early enough we can get them structured so that they clearly understand the few things that they absolutely have to do. Then we can get them started on the right path. As far as the S-Corp, only the amount that they pay to themselves as wages is going to be taxed for payroll taxes for the social security and Medicare – that's all that's going to be taxed. The \$50,000 that comes out and is taxed on their personal returns is not subject to self-employment tax. There's still a lot of discussion happening in the LLC arena, but right now all of the profits would be subject to self-employment tax. In the LLC, it flows through and is taxed on their personal returns as a Schedule C, so then the bottom line basically is that it's all subject to self-employment tax. But the S-Corp is fairly straightforward, fairly similar reporting; it's a preferred entity for me.

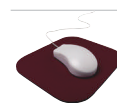
**Tom:** *What advice would you have for someone who is going to start a partnership?*

imperative to have a written agreement, whether it's a written operating agreement or a partnership agreement that spells out what I like to call the road rules. Who's going to make the decisions? How are the decisions going to be made? How are profits and losses going to be allocated? What will happen if somebody dies or retires or remarries? What will happen if somebody becomes disabled? What will happen if somebody wants to leave? What are we going to do if one of us doesn't like the other person and wants to get out? To have that discussion and figure out and draft a document that addresses those things. How are we going to value a member's interest if he dies? Are we going to obtain insurance so that we have some mechanism? Because I know that a lot of my clients come in and say, "I love John to death; but if he dies, I don't want to be a partner with his wife. But I want to make sure that if I die, that my spouse is going to get paid for my interest in this company." Include

you have to really arm-wrestle them to understand that it's really to their benefit to pay an attorney to advise them, and to sit down with a CPA, and to sit down with somebody that will provide them with insurance, and to take a team approach. I think their chances of surviving in the long run are really aided by having those professionals.

**Tom:** *You've touched upon 15 or more areas of all the things that will probably give the readers chills as to what happens to one of the partners and how they deal with the other spouse and things of that nature.*

**Laurie:** What if they get divorced? Those are the things I like to sit back – Marilyn and I talk about this all the time – from a very practical perspective. We've seen businesses crater and the causes for it. **PR**



For the rest of the discussion on this topic and more **Best Practices**, visit

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**Doug Dwyer**  
Contributing Editor



## Get Focused on Profits

The world is full of remodelers who are busy helping customers. But the world is also full of customers who could be busier helping remodelers. I'm talking about

focus groups, that academic-sounding idea of asking customers (and the people you would like to win as customers) how they make purchasing decisions for remodeling needs.

Can you think of an easier way to find out what's important to your target market than simply asking? Whether it involves people who already know your business, or people you wish would know your business, what matters to them needs to matter to you – and a focus group is a good way to get there. But where do you begin?

Focus groups can be highly complex and expensive, and involve third-party research firms that specialize in the business. Or, they can be as simple as assigning an employee to survey customers of completed jobs. The important thing is to start somewhere, collect data and gauge your company's performance. Based on feedback, you may get a wealth of information for how to market your services and win even more business.

When you've completed a remodeling job, don't consider it the end of your relationship with the customer. He or she could be the ambassador you need, someone who can refer others to your business. One way to find out is to ask. Invite your top customers to a focus group. Consider feeding them and paying them for their time. Make them feel special for being chosen to participate. Start by asking how

and why they chose your firm, and ask if you lived up to expectations. Invite suggestions for how you could improve the business, and ask them if they would recommend you to others. Foster a dialogue among participants without steering the discussion. And don't get defensive when they point out weaknesses. Remember, this information is meant to help you make better decisions, it's not meant to dictate how you do things. You may be the remodeling expert, but they are the reason you are a success and could make you be an even bigger success.

**The important thing is to start somewhere, collect data and gauge your company's performance.**

Choosing the right participants is key. You don't want "do-it-yourselfers" advising you how to run your company, because they are not going to hire you or pay a premium for what they might tackle on their own. You do want "do-it-for-me" – prospects and customers" – who have already used your services. They can tell you why they would retain your firm for a particular project, use you again; or refer you to a friend. And they are willing to pay for a quality job. That should be all the motivation you need for doing a little research that could create a roadmap for the future.

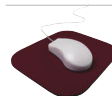
Lastly, focus groups aren't just a

way to affirm what you have done. They can provide direction for what more you can do. In the 12 years that my company has conducted focus groups, we've had customers tell us they wished the salesperson had been better because they were only sold what they were willing to pay for versus what they really wanted, and they were unhappy with the results. In truth, they would have been willing to pay more for what they wanted if they had been confident it was what they would truly be getting. They wanted to be sold on a job that would make their dreams come true and were willing to pay more to get it.

The feedback was an eye-opening experience that helped us improve our sales approach, encourage higher-grade materials, and offer more bells and

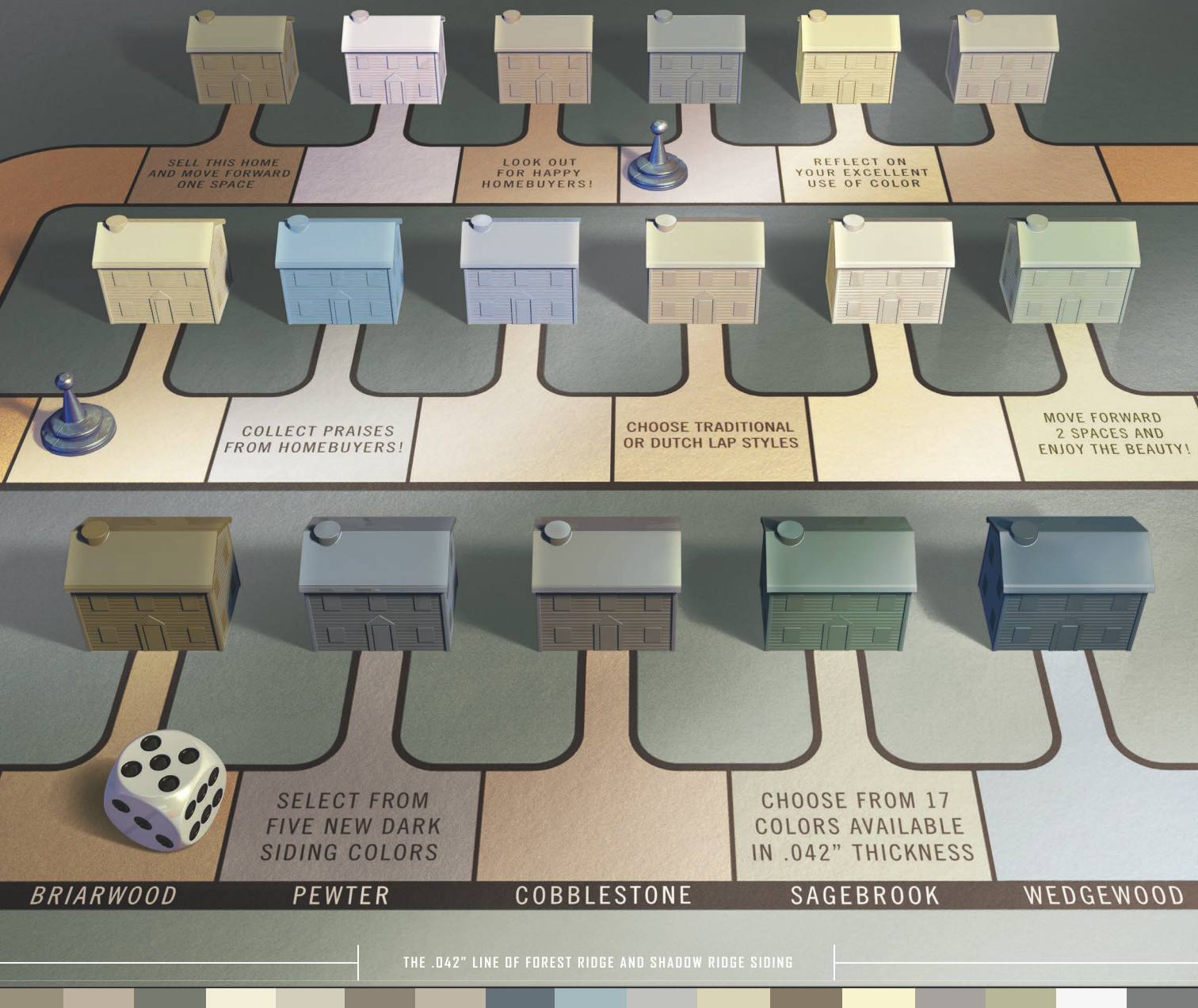
whistles to confidently sell at higher margins. In return, remodeling projects have reached higher price points and profit margins have increased dramatically. Ultimately, this showed that we had very satisfied customers as well as a way to create cheerleader customers. We got focused. You can, too. **PR**

*Doug Dwyer is president and chief stewarding officer of DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen by Worldwide, one of the nation's largest remodeling franchises. He can be reached at [doug.dwyer@dwyergroup.com](mailto:doug.dwyer@dwyergroup.com).*



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# Marketing Masters

DesignLine shows how saturating the marketplace can pay off

SECOND OF A TWO-PART SERIES

By Michael R. Morris

*Editor in Chief*

**In his book,** “Monopolize Your Marketplace: Separate Yourself from the Competition – Then Eliminate Them,” Richard Harshaw describes effective marketing like this:

“To distinguish your business from the pack and lead prospects to say, ‘I would have to be an absolute fool to do business with anyone else but you – regardless of price.’”

**With a new marketing plan in place, all signs are pointing up for Wayne and Dorothy Booze of DesignLine Remodelers.**

*Photo by Bill Geiger*

The CEO of Y2Marketing, one of Inc.’s Top 50 Fastest Growing Companies from 2002-2004, goes on to describe exactly how any small business can develop a comprehensive strategic marketing plan that will eliminate much of the pressure from the sales call and prime prospective clients for a quicker and easier decision to hire you.

In this second installment of Professional Remodeler’s two-part series on sales and marketing strategies for increasing local market share, we illustrate the ways one company, DesignLine Remodelers Inc. of Richmond, Va., has created a detailed marketing strategy based on a well-defined client



## CREATING CLASSIC DESIGN

The design/build team at DesignLine Remodelers creates unique living spaces featuring classic appeal and functionality.

by Linda Bennett

When DesignLine Remodelers Inc. was founded in 1996, husband-and-wife team Dorothy and Wayne Booze combined their building industry backgrounds to create a singular vision. The company promotes a design/build concept whereby the entire remodeling project, from initial design to actual construction, is performed by a single entity. This enables DesignLine to run the project efficiently for the client, who has a single point of contact throughout the process.

"We want to help people fulfill their dreams and improve their lives by creating a beautiful project from nothing but their ideas," Wayne says.

This year's Parade of Homes spotlighted two DesignLine projects, which had over 500 visitors in one afternoon.



Dorothy and Wayne Booze, owners

and-after remodeling projects, including Certified Graduate Remodeler, Certified Kitchen & Bath Remodeler, and Certified Lead Carpenter.

"bump-out" projects, including Certified Graduate Remodeler, Certified Kitchen & Bath Remodeler, and Certified Lead Carpenter.

FROM OUR TEAM: The construction industry is affected by leading rates and the housing market. Gwen Osborn, a private mortgage banker with Wells Fargo in Midlothian notes that although remodeling has eased off somewhat in many parts of the United States, in our area, interest rates are still good and leading for home improvement projects is still active. "We are seeing a correction in the market," Gwen noted. "Central Virginia has historically been a strong market and is expected to remain strong during this market adjustment. Home equity lines of credit are still in prime and currently (June 14, 2006), prime is 8%."

DesignLine Remodelers has been especially busy with kitchen remodels and expansions. We are finding that more and more homeowners want larger kitchens designed for gourmet cooking and entertaining. We agree with our clients that the kitchen is the heart of the home and should be a welcoming space. Yorktowne Cabinets, for which we have the exclusive distributorship in our area.

Four phases of renovation A recent Richmond project involved a master bath renovation, an extensive kitchen remodel, screen porch addition and new cabinets in the office area.

"I chose DesignLine over several other companies because I had a large project and wanted someone who could see only do it all but would do it to my satisfaction."

Remington marble with porcelain under mount bowls, with Gold Sealers, satin nickel and brass finish fixtures. The shower is a custom built corner unit, fully tiled, complete with a frameless glass door and Grotto fixtures. This is topped off with the ultimate in comfort: an electric, Rainfall Chiropractic.

DesignLine Remodelers, Inc.

profile, clear sales goals and quality materials.

### The goal

When DesignLine owners Wayne and Dorothy Booze decided they wanted to take their then seven-year-old remodeling company to the next level in 2003, they had some important decisions to make.

How fast do we want to grow? What kind of projects do we want to specialize in? Which kind of customer do we want to reach?

"We try to be very realistic about our growth because

I think managing growth is the key to success," says Dorothy, who oversees all marketing, financial and human resource operations within the company. "It's been very tempting to want to try and grow too fast because of the way the economy's been over the last several years. There's a lot of business out there, but we've been very strategic about our growth."

The Boozes decided 20 percent annual growth was a reasonable, achievable goal. To do that, they figured they would need to target upper-middle class clients who were interested in large design-build projects within a 25-mile radius of DesignLine's office. Their target audience became clearly defined: couples age 45 or older, owning a home at least seven years old between \$450,000-\$750,000, with a desire to improve the house or fulfill a need such as an in-law suite, aging in place adjustments, space conversion for a different use, or an addition that usually included a kitchen.

### The strategy

DesignLine began by hiring Biz-comm, a Fairview, N.C. marketing agency specializing in the remodeling industry, to plan and implement a new marketing program in 2003.

Several meetings with Biz-comm President Patrice Olivier-Wilson followed. The discussions started by identifying DesignLine's past clientele then branched off into defining a detailed target client profile, designing a new version of its logo, developing a coordinated set of collateral materials and developing a stronger Web site.

"When we first met them, their marketing budget was limited," says Olivier-Wilson. "So we started them off gently budget-wise with a Web site and a series of 'neighborhood' postcards that worked small areas at a time."

As sales have increased through the additional marketing, DesignLine has also upped its marketing budget, which is about 3 percent of annual gross sales, or \$43,000 in 2006.

"It really is a whole process," says Dorothy. "When I started working with Biz-comm, they really educated me

### DesignLine's Marketing and Sales Results 2005

Promotion	Cost	Leads	Contracts	Sales
Web site	\$3,185.00	7	2	\$196,750
Uniforms	\$2,273.04	-	-	-
Print Ads	\$3,210.00	3	0	\$0
Direct Mail	\$2,891.09	1	0	\$0
Newsletter	\$3,690.12	0	0	\$0
Company Functions	\$1,784.60	0	0	\$0
Customer Gifts	\$548.80	-	-	-
Awards	\$716.94	-	-	-
Membership Fees	\$2,088.60	-	-	-
Photography	\$3,370.54	-	-	-
Postage	\$86.00	-	-	-
Parade of Homes	\$7,770.29	23	2	\$316,107
Idea House	\$1,737.14	1	0	\$0
Referral	-	53	5	\$740,551
Repeat	-	9	4	\$125,702
Job signs	-	1	0	\$0
Other	-	2	0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$33,352.16</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>\$1,379,110</b>





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on the fact that it isn't just one facet of marketing. You really do need to have a marketing plan. And we try to touch every facet of the target market. Every piece that we send out does something different."

The direct-mail strategy Biz-comm devised went like this: after the targeted neighborhoods received DesignLine's "introductory" piece, they moved from that list to the newsletter list that also includes past clients and anyone who had called on them at any point in the past.

These efforts were revamped in 2006 by a more aggressive campaign that identified a larger list of potential clients who were mailed cards with a series of messages over a six-month period. Those geographical areas that show the most response from the 2006 campaign will be added to the newsletter list.

"Before, we were sending our newsletter out to not only past customers but quite a large prospect database, and we decided that we were going to reserve the direct mail for our universal targeting and only send our newsletter out to people who really know us, who already have a relationship with us," says Dorothy.

DesignLine's Web site has been a work in progress. In 2003, the company simply updated the site to resemble something of an online "brochure" of high-profile past projects.

This year, it redesigned the look of the Web site to better convey the high-end image the team developed and added the "clients only" module that allows DesignLine to efficiently communicate product selection, change orders and anything else that comes up during a project's lifespan.

"As they grew in size, they also grew in quality of leads," says Olivier-Wilson. "Hence the need for a more upscale image."

"In 2004, we changed quite a bit as a company," says Dorothy. "We have a different target market. Our projects are much larger. So we just had to redesign the Web site. It was a few years old and with the new postcards, we wanted to tie everything together. And we really wanted to look at our Web site not just as a brochure of pretty pictures. We wanted to use it as an interactive tool. We wanted prospects who may have received our mailer to go on to the Web site and learn more about who we are."

"And we wanted clients who we were working with on projects to be able to use it to keep in communication with us. Each client has their own password, so they can upload photos, upload change orders, notes, what have you, and there's a good documentation of conversation that's going on between us. It's really about communicating with and educating the client."

"It's exciting because we do think that the Internet is the

## Marketing Tips

**There is no magic bullet for marketing;** a remodeling firm can only position his or her company to be the remodeler of choice when a homeowner is ready to remodel.

Patrice Olivier-Wilson, President of Biz-comm Inc., a marketing agency specializing in the remodeling industry, suggests the following priorities when designing a marketing plan for growth:

1. **Strong corporate identity.** This includes logo development for use on stationery packages, yard signs, truck signs, direct mail, Web site, presentations, etc.
2. **Effective Web site.** It's a waste of money to develop a strong campaign if a remodeler doesn't have a good Web site; if folks get a card, go to the site and are disappointed, it's a lost effort: It's better to have no Web site than a poor Web site.
3. **Direct mail postcards.**
4. **Direct-mail newsletters.** Ideal for staying in touch with past clients and those homeowners who have already been introduced to the company via direct-mail postcards.

For more information on marketing strategies for remodeling firms, visit [www.biz-comm.com](http://www.biz-comm.com).

wave of the future and we want to make sure that we're staying up to date and truly using it as a tool. So many remodelers out there, I go on their Web sites, and they haven't changed it in years and it's outdated. Why have it if it isn't going to be a strong marketing tool for you?"


DesignLine's marketing plan also includes the typical job signs, print ads, company shirts and gift baskets, but Dorothy also utilizes All The Buzz, a Richmond public relations specialist, to place articles in the local media, a strategy that produced a feature story in a high-profile business magazine called KLEOS this year.

"This magazine is distributed to senior level executives, high-income households and high-level career people, and I was amazed how many people have come up to me and said, 'I saw you in KLEOS this year,'" says Dorothy. "The phones haven't necessarily been ringing with people asking for remodeling jobs, but because it's such a highly respected publication, just to have been involved in it really put us in a different arena."

"We've had a few articles written this year in various publications that are local to the Richmond area, and it's just a great way to keep your name out there."

All The Buzz President Linda Barrett helped DesignLine put together a new marketing concept last year, an idea house, which essentially is an open house held at a





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past client's home from 4 to 8 p.m. on a Friday. They sent a mailer to the adjacent neighborhood and some target neighborhoods inviting prospects to tour the home and enjoy complimentary refreshments. Between 50 and 60 people attended and talked to Dorothy and Wayne, the project manager and designers and filled out a lead sheet.

"It was very successful, and we're going to do another one this fall," says Dorothy. "We keep trying new things. Sometimes they work and sometimes they don't. But the key is to just get your name out there."

Dorothy, who was chairman and co-chairman of her local NAHB Remodelers Council from 2002-2004, organized a remodeled home tour in conjunction with the Richmond Parade of Homes, in which DesignLine participates.

"Last year we entered into it and had a nice entry," says Dorothy. "But we really needed to get the word out and let people know that it was happening. So we got a wonderful news article written about it, and we had over 500 people come through. It was hugely successful. A lot of people saw the article. So we're doing it again this year, and little by little it's gaining popularity."

### The results

Although most of DesignLine's leads still come via repeats and referrals, the fact remains that the marketing strategy has allowed the firm to increase its annual installed sales volume 46 percent from 2004 (about \$1.1 million) through 2006 (\$1.6 million projected).

"Most of our business in 2005 and 2006 comes from referrals, which many remodelers will tell you is ideally what you want," Dorothy says. "The thing I'm finding, though, is that in talking to customers and prospects that come into our office, they are seeing our direct mail, they're seeing our newsletter, they're seeing our articles in the newspaper, so it's all working. In essence we're creating top of mind awareness. I know that I may send out a direct mail piece and they may not necessarily pick up the phone right away because they don't have a need yet. But when they do have that need, I want them to think of us first."

She is quick to point out, however, that the increase in business would not have been possible if DesignLine's staff wasn't able to keep up their end of the bargain.

"Our team is one of our best marketing assets," says Dorothy. "They represent our company and define our company image. It is of no value to generate numerous, well-qualified leads if we do not have the systems and team in place to execute the process that will result in a satisfied customer." **PR**

## Web Site Strategies

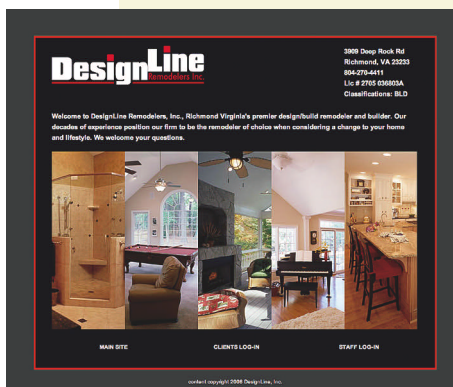
**Not having a strong Web site** puts you at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to landing new customers as well as generating the repeat and referral business that will help you grow your business.

Here are some tips from Brian Kraff, CEO of Market Hardware in Bethesda, Md., a small business Web site marketing consultant specializing in the remodeling industry:

- A remodeling business Web site's design should be

somewhat conservative with little to no loud graphics, cute animations, wild colors or very large fonts. You don't want customers feeling as though they have landed at a used car lot.

- Have your site built so search engines know how to match you. If you build a site yourself, do your research on how to use



metatags and how to set your site up for the best possible search engine placement. If you use a company or design shop, ask how they optimize your site for searching and how often they update their techniques. Those updates are important as search engines frequently refine or completely change their formulas.

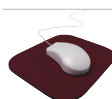
- Your front page must deliver a message in less than 30 seconds – the length of time that most consumers take to decide whether they stay and read more or leave your site. Put the most important information – what types of projects you do, your specialty, why a potential customer should consider you – right up front in an easy-to-read font style and size.

- Make sure your page background color and font color don't conflict.

- Make sure your contact information is available on every page of your site.

- As your business changes, your site needs to change as well. When you have new certifications, specials or seasonal services to highlight, make that information available quickly.

For more information about Web site marketing, visit [www.markethardware.com](http://www.markethardware.com)



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r Amenhotep, the son of Hapu, appear.  
rafts in the hypostyle hall are lists of the  
Among these names is the designation  
this may possibly be one of the earliest  
er god of the Israelites.

126 Avenue of sphinxes at Wadi-es-Sebua  
Nineteenth Dynasty, reign of Ramesses II, ca.  
1260 BC.

Originally on the bank of the Nile before  
being relocated, this temple was linked to the  
river by a quay. On each side of the temple  
entrance stood a statue of the king and a  
sphinx. An avenue of sphinxes led through  
two courtyards to a pylon in front of which  
stood two monumental statues of the king  
holding a staff. The actual temple building  
was behind this, inside the rock. Like the  
temple of Derr, the rock temple of Wadi  
es-Sebua was relocated in 1964 and is now  
situated 4 km farther to the west.





# Weathering the Storms

Hurricanes Ivan and Dennis changed remodeling plans for a townhouse perched on a Florida bay

**By Wendy A. Jordan**  
Senior Contributing Editor

**Location is what drew Russell Lambert** and his wife to buy their house in 1997, and location is what destroyed it. Perched on 6-foot pilings, the Pensacola, Fla., townhouse took in great views of Escambia Bay, but on Sept. 16, 2004, it took in some of the bay itself when Hurricane Ivan crashed through, packing winds so powerful that 25-foot waves from the bay barreled into the first floor of the house. “The lower floor was completely gone,” Lambert says.

**JETT Construction beefed up the framing to support the new sunroom and adjacent elevator tower. The back stairs were designed to share a landing with the neighbors.**

With much of Pensacola devastated by Ivan and with two earlier 2004 hurricanes keeping many contractors busy elsewhere in Florida, it was hard to find someone available to repair the house. Lambert eventually landed a company that was going to work on other damaged houses in the complex, but he discovered that the contractor who showed up at the door on the tail of a storm may not have





**Hurricane Ivan gutted the ground floor of the Lamberts' house and Hurricane Dennis drenched the walls and ceilings of the upper floors.**

been the best one to do the job. After months of frustration — and another hurricane — Lambert brought in JETT Construction to pick up the pieces.

#### **Contractor quandary**

Lambert had first hired JETT in 1992 to repair fire damage to a rental property, drawing the Pensacola company's name from the preferred contractor list provided by his insurance company, USAA. "They did good work," says Lambert. Six months before Ivan, JETT completed a second job for Lambert, repairing damage from a broken pipe in his house.

Naturally he called JETT after Ivan. "I trusted them," he says. But others beat him to it. "I was inundated with prior clients asking us to help with repairs," says co-owner Jeff Jackson. "I told Mr. Lambert it would be quite a while before we could help him."

In addition to the hurricane repair, Lambert planned to convert a second-floor porch to a sunroom, install an elevator and finish a bottom floor studio and bath. The first contractor started the house, then went on vacation in summer 2005 without installing the sunroom windows or adequately boarding up the openings. When Hurricane Dennis hit in July 2005, water again poured in. "We lost the top two floors and the chimney," Lambert says.

In desperation he called JETT again. "We've seen that scenario dozens of times," says Jackson. "Homeowners get help after a storm and it goes sour. Because I knew him so well I agreed to meet with him and see if I could help him out." By rearranging other jobs, he was able to fit

## THE FINANCIALS

**W**ith 17 years of insurance repair and remodeling experience bolstered by co-owner Kyle Biles's decade of previous work as an insurance adjuster, it's no surprise that JETT prepared an estimate on the Lambert project that was close to the mark.

The estimate had a cost cushion to cover materials and labor price jumps after a natural disaster didn't. A management fee was factored into the estimate that covered coordinating the work of the electrician, plumber and HVAC contractor the property owner hired directly. The extra framing to support the sunroom and elevator shaft was included in the estimate for improvements outside the scope of the insurance repair.

What JETT could not anticipate was Hurricane Katrina. After the colossal storm roared through the South in late August 2005, the labor pool in JETT's northwest Florida region dried up. "We had to pay extra to get people in," says co-owner Jeff Jackson. To complete the finish and trim carpentry on the Lambert project, JETT turned to the multitasking tradesman whom Lambert had hired for the plumbing and electrical work — creating a \$3,000 expense that reduced JETT's gross profit by 5 percent. "It could have been a heck of a lot worse because of Hurricane Katrina," says Biles.

The decline in JETT's annual volume since 2004 is actually a healthy sign. "In the past we did a lot of smaller insurance jobs — 300 jobs a year" — and few remodeling projects, says Jackson. "We felt we were not making enough money [to compensate for] the hassle that we went through." Jackson and Biles decided to scale back and to shift the balance of projects, and now they do about 120 jobs a year: 60 percent of them large remodeling projects and 40 percent large insurance repair projects. "Profits have gone way up and headaches way down," says Jackson.

#### **Budget History**

Initial estimate:	<b>\$68,660</b>
Credits: (plumbing, electrical, light fixture)	<b>\$5,774</b>
Final price of job:	<b>\$62,886</b>
Cost to produce:	<b>\$37,622</b>
Gross profit:	<b>\$25,264</b>
Budgeted gross profit:	<b>45%</b>
Actual gross profit:	<b>40%</b>

Lambert's project into JETT's schedule.

The company started on the house in August 2005. Two weeks later, Katrina slammed the coast west of Pensacola, drawing JETT's subcontractors from the area. Suddenly the company, which subs all its work, had far fewer crews. But after calling around for two weeks, Jackson rounded



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Though the second floor had to be jacked up and re-leveled after the storm, all the Mexican tiles remained intact. The sunroom overlooking Escambia Bay replaces a porch. Ivan knocked out sections of the I-10 bridge a quarter mile away.

up a group. JETT was back in action on the Lambert house by October 2005 and completed the job in February.

#### Hurricane cleanup

Hurricane Ivan had “pretty much blown out the bottom floor,” says Jackson. “It was a shell.” All the contents were gone, and the water had pushed a car 100 yards out of the garage. Interior breakaway walls performed as designed, detaching to allow the flood waters to flow through, which limited resistance and structural damage. JETT framed new walls, installed drywall, enclosed a storeroom to create a studio and finished the bathroom.

Above the breakaway walls, the Mexican-tile-covered second floor sank  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch. JETT shored up and re-leveled it, salvaging all the tiles. They “held up very well,” says Jackson, because they had been laid over cement board.

Hurricane Dennis ripped off sections of siding and shingles. Water had poured through these areas as well as the window openings, saturating the walls. “Three-quarters of the house had to be gutted after the second storm because the insulation was wet,” says Lambert. JETT replaced all the insulation, drywall and carpeting in the second and third floors; reinsulated the attic; repaired the siding and roof; and rebuilt the chimney.

“We added a lot of framing in back,” says JETT co-owner Kyle Biles. Some of the framing supports the new sunroom JETT completed, and some shores up the elevator shaft JETT built. (Because the house sits on pilings, the shaft had no concrete slab.) During construction the shaft developed “a water intrusion issue,” says Jackson. “We beefed up the flashing and closed the seams” to seal the shaft, he says.



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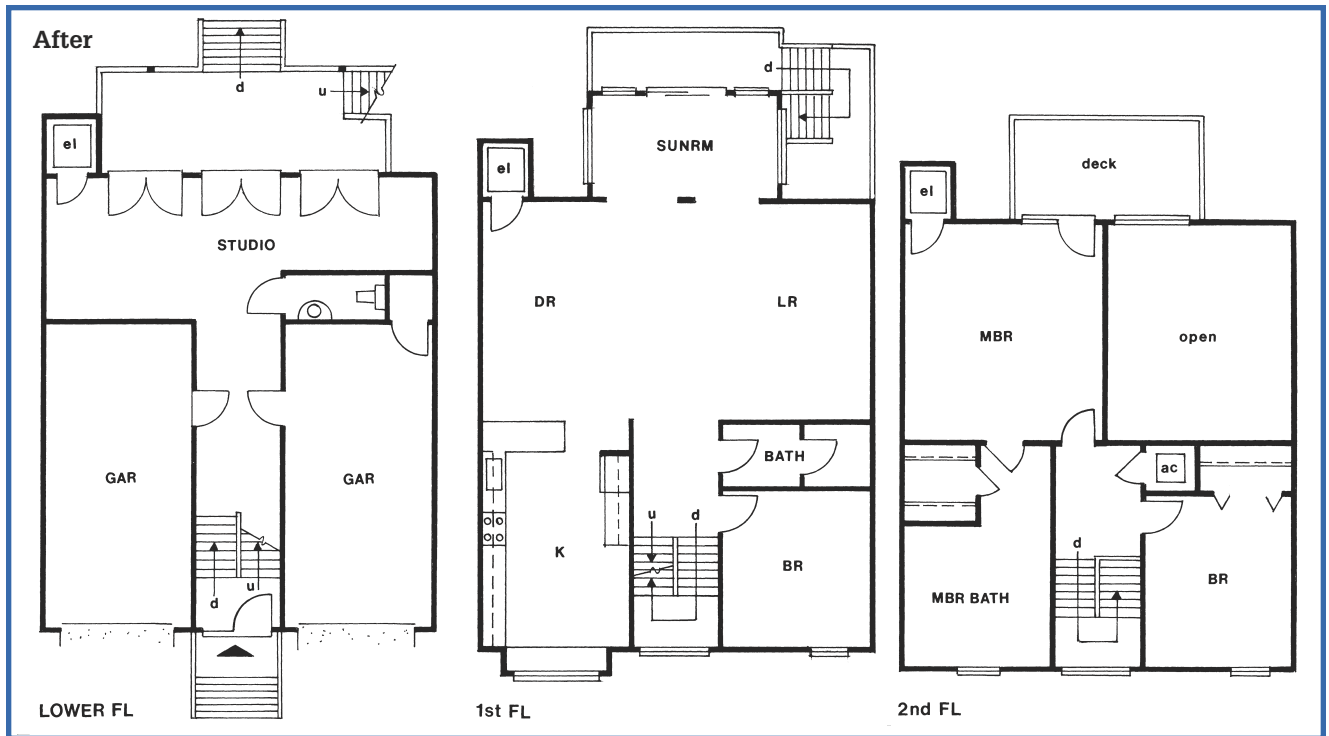


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The ground under the concrete front steps had been washed out, so JETT re-leveled it. The wood stairs at the back of the house were also gone, so JETT built new stairs and decks, coordinating efforts with the new contractor working

next door to tie in the back staircases for the two homes.

"Trim was a big part of this house," says Biles. On the exterior, "we rebuilt the columns and installed custom trim around the front door." On the interior, the trim presented match-making issues. "Mr. Lambert found a photograph in a magazine showing how he wanted the trim in the sun-room," says Biles. "We took the photo to several suppliers to find a manufacturer" who made that trim. Unable to locate the exact trim, JETT ordered similar trim and "our trim guy made a few adjustments. It's very close."

Other parts of the house "had wide, ornate baseboard and trim that we had to match up" when damaged sections were replaced, says Biles. JETT found the same molding at a local supplier, but that solved only half the problem; the existing trim was stain grade and had been stained years earlier. "Stain changes color after a couple of years on a wall," says Biles. "We had to stain [the new trim] three or four times and blend stains" to match the older pieces.

### Stress control

All things considered, the Lambert project was pretty low-stress. Jackson and Biles accepted the job because the odds were good that it would be. "We were juggling 20 jobs" in the wake of Ivan, says Biles, "but it could have been 100 jobs. We weren't going to take more than we could handle."

Biles and Jackson have become very selective about what insurance projects to take on. JETT has five selection criteria:

## SNAPSHOT



**Remodelers:** Jeffery Jackson and Kyle Biles, JETT Construction  
**Location:** Pensacola, Fla.  
**Type of company:** Remodeling contractor and insurance repair specialist  
**Staff:** 2 office, 0 field  
**Years in business:** 17  
**Sales history:**



2002	\$2.1 million
2003	\$2.2 million
2004	\$2.5 million
2005	\$2.1 million
2006 (projected)	\$2 million

**Annual jobs:** 120

**Workweek:** 50 hours

**Software:** QuickBooks Premier: Contractor Edition; Intuit Customer Manager; Microsoft Office; AutoCad; Xactimate

**Contact:** 850-478-JETT (5388),  
[www.jettllc.com](http://www.jettllc.com)





The Lamberts' house looked so good after the insurance repair — with new siding, roofing, entry columns, trim, and re-leveled, brick-paved concrete steps — that it attracted a buyer a month after completion.

1) **History.** "Our prior customers always come first," says Biles.

2) **Worthiness.** "The job needs to be good size," says Jackson.

3) **Location.** It needs to be no more than 20 miles from JETT's headquarters.

4) **Efficiency.** Jobs referred by neighbors, i.e. jobs that can be bundled with others for efficient production, are good choices.

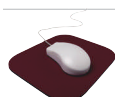
5) **Communication.** "Because many insurance companies can be difficult to deal with, we prefer to work directly with customers" on estimates and payments, says Biles.

JETT used this criteria in all 20 Ivan jobs. USAA settled directly with Lambert after Ivan and Dennis, and a finance company held most of the money, releasing it at his request in three draws.

Lambert has had enough of insurance repair stress, too. A month after JETT completed the work on his house, he sold it and moved to Texas. He left hurricane territory and its worries behind, but kept the water view. "I have water in the backyard," he says. "My pool." **PR**

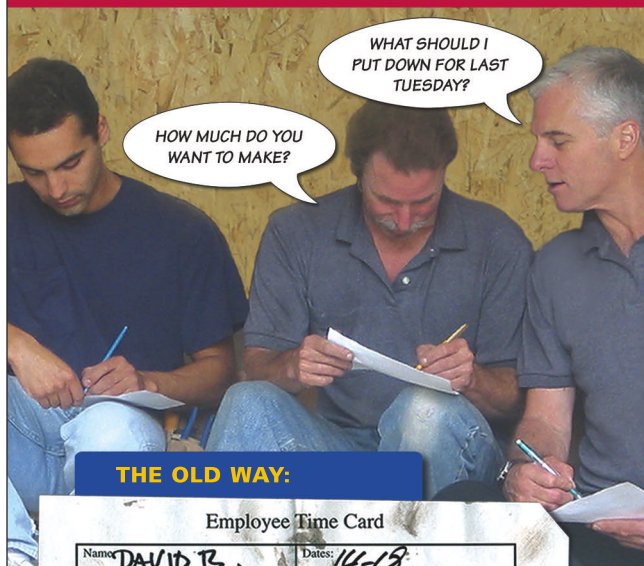
## PRODUCTS LIST

**Doors:** Jeld-Wen, Annona. **Drywall:** USG. **Fireplace system:** Monessen Hearth Systems. **Locksets:** Kwikset. **Siding:** Norandex/Reynolds. **Interior trim:** Woodgrain Millwork. **Insulation:** Owens Corning. **Roofing:** Owens Corning.



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Tuesday	7	1/2	3:30			8
Wednesday	7	1/2	4			8 1/2
Thursday	7	1/2	4			8 1/2
Friday	7	1/2	4			8 1/2

Employee Signature: *David B.* Total Hours: **41 1/2**

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Employee Report

David Burns

Jobsite Name: **Morris Property** Date Range: **8/14/2006 through 8/18/2006**

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Mon 8/14	7:08 AM	12:05 PM	Framing	4:57 hours
	12:41 PM	3:22 PM	Framing	2:41 hours 7:38 hours
Tue 8/15	7:12 AM	12:07 PM	Framing	4:55 hours
	12:43 PM	3:23 PM	Framing	2:40 hours 7:35 hours
Wed 8/16	7:12 AM	12:02 PM	Framing	4:50 hours
	12:46 PM	3:49 PM	Framing	3:03 hours 7:53 hours
Thu 8/17	7:17 AM	12:19 PM	Drywall	5:02 hours
	12:50 PM	3:46 PM	Drywall	2:56 hours 7:58 hours
Fri 8/18	7:13 AM	12:07 PM	Drywall	4:54 hours
	12:44 PM	3:39 PM	Drywall	2:55 hours 7:49 hours

Signature: *David Burns* David Burns Employee total: **38:53 hours**



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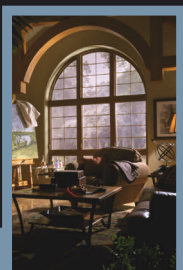
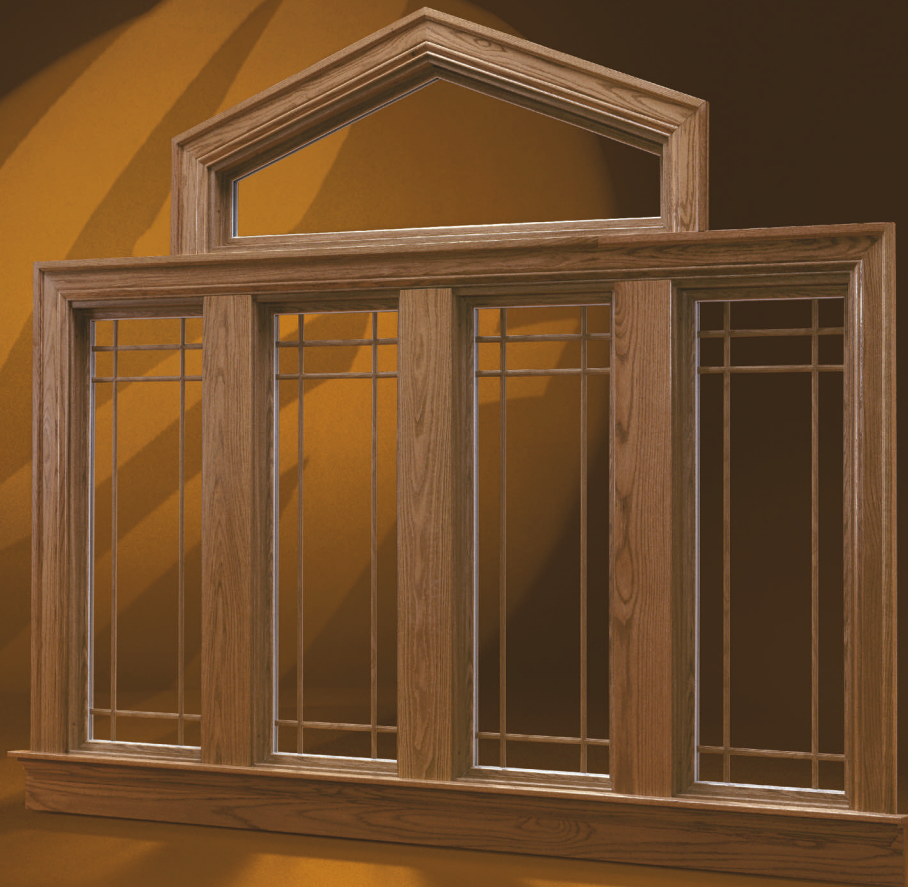
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outdoor living

## Peak Opportunity

Collaboration and attention to detail allow one remodeler to capture a mountain view for the client



**T**he driving impulse for this project rested on generating the perfect view of Washington's Mount Rainier. But Seattle's oft-inclement weather during the drawing stages didn't allow for a clear idea of where the homeowners would have the best vantage point.

To guarantee that the homeowners would have precisely the view they sought, Blue Canyon Construction crews built mock-up deck platforms, and when the mountain appeared through the clouds, they would summon the homeowners, who would rush home to weigh in. Rick King, the company's president, estimates that six such mock-

ups were created over the course of 30 days before the perfect placement was achieved.

To augment the home's ranch style yet retain its classic Northwest feel, the sandstone bricks along the exterior were reversed for a "like-new" effect, creating a key spatial and structural boundary for the patio. The new clear cedar siding on the home establishes a relationship with the new window frames and doors, which King says were purposely specced as fiberglass so that the homeowners have the option to paint in the future. Stucco walls create privacy and ambiance, which are especially key given the patio's location at the front of the home.

**Remodeler and architect:** Blue Canyon Construction, Seattle; Pelletier + Schaar, Stanwood, Wash.

**Project location:** Seattle

**Age of home:** 54 years

**Scope of work:** A 350-square-foot patio addition with outdoor kitchen and fire pit

**The outdoor stove and propane-fueled fire pit — and the fact that the patio is situated directly parallel to the home's dining room and kitchen — give the homeowners many options for cooking, serving, eating and entertaining.**

*Kathleen King Photography*





### On Solid Ground

**A**lthough there was relatively little excavation necessary to create the footings for the new patio, the slope of the land required effective structural deterrents against settlement and shifting. To prevent this, Blue Canyon had its landscaper, DHR Enterprises of Shoreline, Wash., bring in “4-6 man” rocks to fill in the area. The surrounding dirt and topsoil buries at least three-quarters of each rock, which ensures the surrounding earth is stable and allows for a more gradual slope than the yard had before. Having two stairways with an adjoining platform also eases the ascent from sidewalk to entryway and provides more space for vegetation.

“In a project like this, a good relationship with a professional landscaper is key,” King says. “Even with the dramatic elevation change we were able to stay within code restrictions, and the landscaping as a whole gave the project a dramatic update; the rock croppings are important aesthetically so that the cap wall does not seem like a fortress.”



The old-growth cedar trellis creates an eye-catching focal point; functionally, it shades the eating area. The multicolored Indian slate tiles and copper caps and iron handrails pick up the color schemes of Mount Rainier Park and Lake Washington, and the columns echo the sandstone siding and the pillars at each corner of the patio.

*After photo by Steve Keating*

Most notably, beyond giving the homeowners a space they could use year-round to take in the beauty and activities of the surrounding area, the pillars of the patio were hard-wired with speakers, telephone access, accent lighting and Internet access. “When the weather is beautiful here there is no better place, and on those beautiful days, it was important that the homeowner be able to work from the patio if he wanted,” King says.

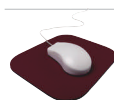
The four-month project cost \$87,950.

“This project is a testament that you can still get value for a project without adding huge rooms or changing the footprint,” King says. “Here we lived in the footprint, and by using upgraded materials on this exterior addition, we really made the project blend in the neighborhood and improved the homeowner’s asset.” **PR**

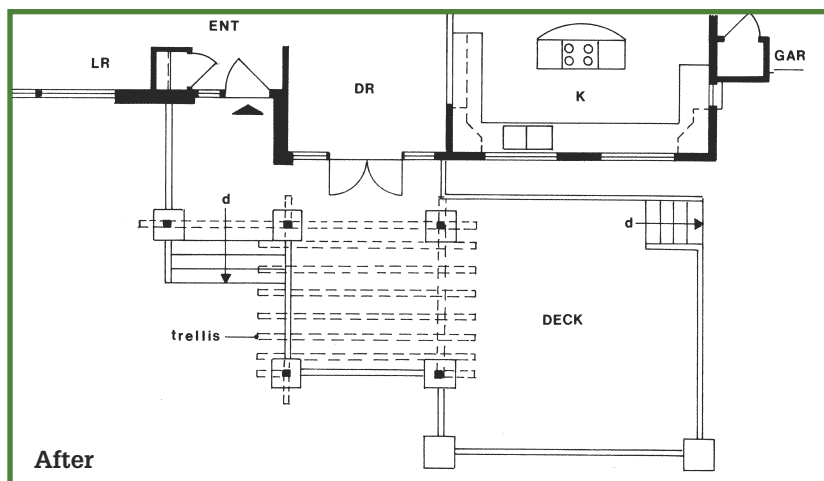
– Meghan Haynes

### PRODUCTS LIST

**Doors:** Simpson. **Fire pit:** Vermont Castings. **Lighting fixtures:** Juno. **Paints & stains:** Cabot. **Windows:** Milgard



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# Making Weather Work

Take these simple steps to weatherproof exterior walls



By Scott T. Shepherd  
*PATH Partners*

**Y**ou've just completed a new addition with a beautiful pitched roof and high-end windows. After all that hard work, are you ever proud of the job.

But will your addition be mold- and water-free in five years? It will if you take the time to weatherproof the roof and exterior walls.

"For us, weatherproofing is a 5-star,

priority issue," says Tommy Strong, project manager with Brothers Strong remodeling in Houston. "In the last few years, it has become more and more of a priority for our clients, especially with growing concerns over mold."

If you don't block air, manage water vapor and prevent bulk water infiltration, your proud accomplishment could turn into an embarrassing callback.

When it comes to weatherproofing, the first line of defense is a strong, durable roof. Add properly installed

**In windy areas, roof coverings and underlayment can blow off. Roof decking can protect if it is sealed with a self-adhesive asphalt/rubber tape.**

housewrap or building paper, flashing and overhangs to keep out moisture, and you can stand by your project for years to come.

Always start with dry materials. Use wet supplies and you're gambling with future moisture problems.





**Extend the fascia board below the underside of the soffit by building the fascia from a 1x6 instead of the standard 1x4, which creates a drip edge and prevents water from leaking into the eaves.**

#### **Weatherizing the roof**

Having a waterproof roof is essential. Here are some tips:

Start by minimizing the number of penetrations in the roof. Use baffled ridge vents to prevent airflow and wind-driven rain from entering the attic through the ridge vent. Soffit vents with perforations concentrated near the outer edge also minimize the area that rain can enter, and they cost about the same as standard vents.

To withstand strong winds, it's best to use plywood or fiber-cement soffit materials and attach them securely to framing. A lumber baffle securely installed over the framing inside a soffit will greatly reduce water entry into the attic.

Extend the fascia board below the underside of the soffit by building the fascia out of a 1x6, instead of the standard 1x4. This creates a drip edge so that strong winds can't drive rain across the soffit surface and into the eaves. The added cost is no more than the difference between the price of 1x4's and 1x6's.

Choose roof sheathing that is a minimum of  $\frac{19}{32}$ -inch thick for added strength. Thicker sheathing can also offset sensitivity to overdriving.

Use 8d ring shank nails at 6 inches on center or as required by code. Also, make sure that sheathing is properly spaced. Allow a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch gap between sheets for thermal expansion. H-clips can provide this spacing while adding strength to the horizontal connections.

Add synthetic, tear-resistant roof underlayment, which is an integral part of the roofing system and a second layer of moisture protection. For the best performance, closely follow the manufacturer's directions and use approved fasteners.

In high-wind areas, roof coverings and underlayment can blow off, leaving the roof decking to act as the water and wind barrier. But decking can still provide an effective level of protection if you've sealed it with a self-adhesive asphalt/rubber (modified bitumen) tape that is at least 4 inches wide. Another alternative is to use a peel-and-stick roof membrane over the entire roof deck.

## **5 Need-to-know tricks to installing house wrap**

- 1.** Follow product manufacturers' instructions to a T. Many people don't.
- 2.** Tape all seams.
- 3.** Tape tears or holes in the house wrap. A small tear makes a big difference in air and water infiltration.
- 4.** Make sure the wrap covers gables and corners without ripping because water entering at these points goes directly to the structure and can lead to extensive rot. You may want to add a layer of tar paper over these areas as well.
- 5.** Install flanged windows over the top of flashing paper at the bottom of the window while having flashing overlay the flanges at the top of the window. The flashing paper can then be slotted in the house wrap and secured with flashing tape.

#### **Paper or house wrap?**

Weather-resistant barriers – either house wraps or building paper – shed water in bulk, protecting the house from driving rain. They also both allow the wall to breathe, letting water vapor pass through so the wall can dry out when needed, but house wrap generally does it faster. Determining which one is right for your addition depends on where you're building.

Because building paper slows the flow of water vapor, it is recommended for areas where humidity levels outside the wall sheathing is typically greater than inside: hot and humid regions, behind a brick veneer, or under unsealed wood siding.

In most other applications, where walls dry from the inside out, house wrap



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**The first step to weatherproofing is minimizing the number of penetrations in the envelope, particularly in the roof.**

is the best choice. House wrap is unique in its ability to stop both bulk air and water leakage while allowing water vapor that gets into the wall cavity – where it

a callback.

“Flashing is a crucial element in weatherproofing a home – and not just the metal flashing that is commonly

This eliminates the time-consuming and often flawed process of cutting tape pieces to fit around curved and rounded openings. While a little more expensive than traditional flashing tape, the flexible variety makes the process quicker and easier.

### **Hanging in there**

Overhangs may seem like an extra to keep out the hot summer sun, but a properly installed overhang will go a long way toward protecting the home from rain. The larger the overhang for windows or doors, the fewer moisture problems will occur on exterior and foundation walls.

The local climate will determine the minimum size of overhangs. As a general rule, the wetter the climate, the larger the overhangs you’ll need to install. Use 12-inch eaves and rakes in moderately dry climates; 18-inch eaves

## **Flashing is a crucial element** in weatherproofing a home — and not just the metal flashing that is commonly found above windows.

could do damage – to get out.

However, for house wrap to be effective, remodelers have to install it right. If you see holes in your house wrap, it’s flapping in the wind, or it’s installed top to bottom rather than bottom to top like a shingle, you can bet you didn’t.

“There are only a handful of tricks – three or four – that you need to know to install housewrap, and those are intuitively logical,” Strong says. (See list of tips on page 36.)

In all, house wrap costs about \$150 more in materials and labor than building paper to cover a 2,500-square-foot home.

### **Weatherize in a flash**

Flashing is one of the longest lasting building components, so be sure to do it right. Take your time – it could save

found above windows,” Strong says. “This is where water and air can infiltrate the walls.”

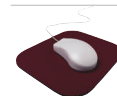
Here are a few tips:

- Water runs downhill, so remodelers should overlap flashing like the scales of a fish to provide repetitive layers of resistant material.
- Wind can move water uphill, so be sure to install the flashing with the amount of overlap the manufacturer recommends.
- If flashing is not sufficiently lapped or it is placed on a low-pitch roof, water may move into the joints between the flashing. Take extra precaution in these situations.

Brothers Strong also recommends using flexible flashing tape, a rubberized tape that easily curves around window-sills, door frames and custom shapes.

and 12-inch rakes in moderately moist climates; and a minimum of 24-inch eaves and 12-inch rakes in very wet climates. As a bonus, properly sized roof overhangs over south-facing windows will also block unwanted summer sunlight but allow heat from sunlight in winter. **PR**

*More tips on proper weatherproofing can be found in “Durability by Design: A Guide for Residential Builders and Designers” available at [www.pathnet.org](http://www.pathnet.org) under the Resources and Publications tabs; and “Moisture-Resistant Homes: A Best Practice Guide,” in PATH Tech Set No. 2, Building Envelope, located under Tools.*



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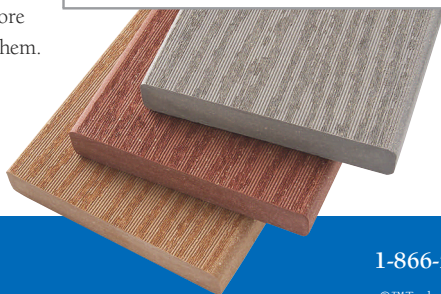
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# Exterior Variety

Roofing, siding and cladding to spruce up curb-appeal

## Fypon

Fypon's PVC Trim is designed for non-load-bearing applications in wood-grain and smooth styles, plus beaded and corner boards with a density comparable to pine. The trim is insect-, mold- and mildew-resistant and can be ripped to size with a sable or circular saw. Sheet stock is available in 5/8", 3/4" and 1" thicknesses. Preassembled corner boards are available in 4×4"×10'

and 6×6"×10' configurations. The trim can be made into a variety of products including door and window trim, soffit, fascia, rake boards, battens and other architectural millwork.

800/446-3040

[www.fypon.com](http://www.fypon.com)

Circle 125 or go to

<http://pr.ims.ca/5146-125>



## Crane

Crane Performance Siding's CraneBoard Double 6½" authentic Beaded siding allows panels to interlock and keep seams tight and flat. The backing has an R-Value of 2.8 and includes Perform Guard to repel pests. Panels come in 12' lengths and offer a 45 percent reduction in sound and 300 percent more impact resistance than typical beaded siding. The four recently added colors are: regatta blue, cabin brown, lighthouse red and evergreen.

800/366-8472

[www.cranesiding.com](http://www.cranesiding.com)

Circle 126 or go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5146-126>



## Elk

Manufactured with SBS-modified asphalt and fiberglass reinforced, Elk's 12" Ridglass high-profile hip and ridge shingles feature a pre-folded design to reduce installation time. The shingles meet UL 997 wind uplift rating, are UL 790 Class A fire rated and have the company's Stain-Guard treatment. Originally available only on the West coast, the line reached distributors in the Midwest and East in April.

972/851-0500

[www.elkcorp.com](http://www.elkcorp.com)

Circle 127 or go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5146-127>



## CertainTeed

CertainTeed's Vinyl Carpentry soffit and siding panels feature InvisiVent triple 3/8" vents to offer more than 50 percent more ventilation than standard vinyl soffits without perforations and have a Class 1(A) fire rating. The Solid Triple 3/8" vertical siding panels can be used to accent areas that don't require ventilation. The company offers a lifetime limited warranty.

800/233-8990

[www.certainteed.com](http://www.certainteed.com)

Circle 128 or go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5146-128>



## Tamko

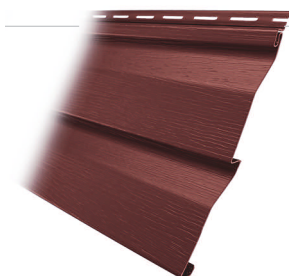
Tamko released its latest offering of scalloped and diamond shapes for its 12" Lamarite Slate Composite shingle line. The shingles are formulated with composite materials that are both robust and flame-retardant, meeting UL Class A fire resistance and UL Standard 2218, Class 4 impact resistance. The shingles come in four colors: slate green, dusk grey, mulberry and midnight black. The Lamarite line features a 50-year limited warranty from Tamko.

800/641-4691, ext. 2245

[www.tamko.com](http://www.tamko.com)

Circle 129 or go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5146-129>





### Royal Building Products

Royal's Colorscapes vinyl siding is made with Luran S ASA, BASF's colorfast, heavy gauge (.044") thermoplastic to withstand 180 mph. A 3/4" butt height and double rolled nail hem ensures panels fit tightly. The panels are manufactured to ASTM standards and are available in natural low-gloss woodgrain finish.

866/852-2791

[www.royalbuildingproducts.com](http://www.royalbuildingproducts.com)

Circle 130 or go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5146-130>



### Decra

Decra's shingles use a light-weight blend of zinc/aluminum alloy-covered steel with 3M ceramic stone granules and sealed with a polymer coating. The company provides a 50-year limited warranty, 120 mph wind sustainability and impact resistance to UL 2218 specifications and is non-combustible, Class-A rated. The line includes traditional shingle, shake, Mediterranean tile and shingle-plus options.

951/272-8180

[www.decra.com](http://www.decra.com)

Circle 132 or go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5146-132>



### Met-Tile

Met-Tile now offers its Spanish-tile-look steel panels in custom sheared lengths in addition to standard lengths of 2-20'. The panels have a 230-plus mph wind rating in accordance with wind uplift tests performed by Underwriters Laboratories and meet test requirements for fire retardant roofs based on Uniform Building Code Standard No. 32-7.

909/947-0311

[www.met-tile.com](http://www.met-tile.com)

Circle 131 or go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5146-131>



### Azek Trimboards

Azek's Frontier Series Bead-board has a 5/8" x 4" profile featuring precision milled edges, a center bead on one side and a v-groove on the other for deck trim, stair risers and covering exposed joists. The boards are comprised of cellular PVC with small-cell microstructure for a wood-like density and can be heat-formed for rounded shapes and arches.

877/ASK-AZEK (275-2935)

[www.azek.com](http://www.azek.com)

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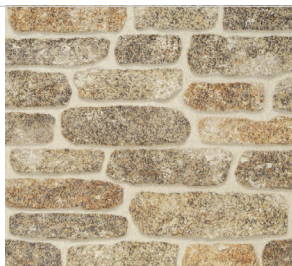
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### Nichiha

Nano-technology is Nichiha's exclusive silicon-clear protective surface coating that provides self-cleaning and low maintenance features for its three new fiber cement panel lines: Quarry Stone, Canyon Brick and Field Stone (shown). A thin layer of silica self-cleans the panels when it rains, or they can be cleaned by spraying the surface with water. Each panel line is available in three colors.

86 NICHHA 1 (866/424-4421)

[www.nichiha.com](http://www.nichiha.com)

Circle 134 or go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5146-134>



### DaVinci

DaVinci synthetic shake shingles feature both wavy and straight grains throughout all blends, colors and sizes. The 3/8" profile deepens shadow lines and enhances the look of rough-hewn cedar. Available in four natural color blends with five different sizes and five individual wood-tone colors. The shakes are packaged with all five sizes and wood-tone colors in each bundle.

800/DaVinci (328-4624)

[www.davinciroofscapes.com](http://www.davinciroofscapes.com)

Circle 135 or go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5146-135>



### Owens Corning

Severe WeatherGuard HP shingles feature a 130 mph wind warranty. The shingles are a patented composite construction with special adhesive that helps retain the protective granules and have a spun-bound, impact-resistant webbing at the shingle base. The complete severe weather system includes matching WeatherGuard HP hip and ridge shingles.

800/GETPINK (438-7465)

[www.owenscorning.com](http://www.owenscorning.com)

Circle 136 or go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5146-136>



### US Tile Company

ProShake Plus tiles are lightweight clay designed specifically for redoing residential roofs. Weighing less than six pounds per square foot, they can be installed without roof reinforcements. The clay tiles are fire-resistant and carry a Class A fire rating. They have the look of real cedar shake and are available in two styles: madera shake and weathered cedar.

800/252-9548

[www.ustile.com](http://www.ustile.com)

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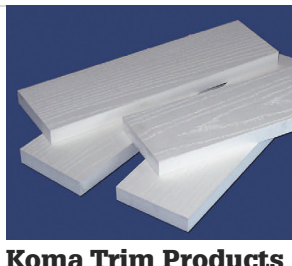
### Follansbee

TCS Satin metal roofing is a stainless steel substrate plated with Follansbee's patented ZT alloy. This specially formulated zinc and tin combination is micro-embossed with a pattern resembling the satin patina of pure zinc plate. The non-reflective, uniform, textured finish weathers naturally to a cool gray patina. Installation is simplified because no back coat is required.

800/624-6906

[www.tcssatin.com](http://www.tcssatin.com)

Circle 138 or go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5146-138>



### Koma Trim Products

Koma PVC wood grain trimboards have the appearance of natural, rough-sawn wood grain on one side and a smooth finish on the other side. The trimboards are water- and salt-resistant, insect-proof and never need painting. The white color throughout is UV-protected and won't swell, rot, split, delaminate, cup or craze. Trimboards can be cut, glued, nailed and routed with the same tools used on standard wood.

800/330-2239

[www.komatrimboards.com](http://www.komatrimboards.com)

Circle 139 or go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5146-139>



### Eldorado Stone

This new veneer brick product line offers four Eldorado Brick profiles – RomaBrick, TundraBrick, ViaBrick and ModenaBrick in 14 different colors. Each profile is unique with bricks that are textured and atypical with rough and worn edges. The bricks vary in size and thickness, so no two bricks are the same. The line is handcrafted using precise molds and complements Eldorado's architectural stone profiles.

800/925-1491

[www.eldoradostone.com](http://www.eldoradostone.com)

Circle 140 or go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5146-140>



### AlSCO

AlSCO aluminum trim products offers Perfect Trim, a complete line of pre-fabricated fascia, soffit, roof-edge, trim coil, roof molding and shutters in 44 of the industry's most popular designer colors. Thirty-eight of the colors are also available in a complete rainware system called Perfect Trim Plus. The Dymalar 2000 resin finish is formulated to resist weathering and staining.

800/231-9333

[www.alscometals.com](http://www.alscometals.com)

Circle 141 or go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5146-141>





### James Hardie

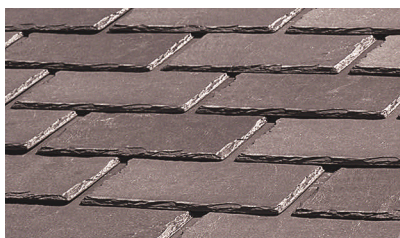
Hardisoffit fiber cement soffit panels are pre-cut and eliminate the need for separate box or strip vents and minimizes the need for cutting. The panels are available vented or non-vented — smooth or Cedarmill finish — in a range of pre-cut sizes. All styles are pre-primed with Prime-

Plus sealer and primer, ready to paint. The panels come with a 25 year transferrable limited warranty.

866-4HARDIE (442-7343)

[www.jameshardie.com](http://www.jameshardie.com)

Circle 142 or go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5146-142>



### EcoStar

EcoStar's Majestic slate roofing is made of recycled rubber and plastic polymers that are molded in the shape of a slate tile. Majestic slate is 12" wide, 18" long and 1/4" thick and is available in nine colors and four designs with the look and feel of natural slate. The shingles can be installed using stainless steel roofing nails with pneumatic equipment.

800/211-7170

[www.ecostar.carlisle.com](http://www.ecostar.carlisle.com)

Circle 143 or go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5146-143>



### Sto Corp.

The Powerwall stucco system combines fiber-reinforced cement stucco with elastomeric finishes to create a stucco-type cladding system. The product is so flexible it stretches and coats and finishes hairline cracks to keep out moisture. Tint and color are also flexible with more than a quarter million tint formulas to choose from. Powerwall comes pre-mixed and pre-measured.

800/221-2397

[www.stocorp.com](http://www.stocorp.com)

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# Materials Costs Skyrocket

No end in sight to the high price of building products

**T**here's no relief in sight for remodeling firms that have been hit hard by the increased cost of building materials, says economist Ken Simonson.

Simonson, chief economist for the Associated General Contractors of America, said that some of the increases may level off as the housing market cools due to the highest mortgage interest rates in more than four years. But he also noted that most of the price increases are tied to strong U.S. and world demand for materials and freight transportation, so construction materials costs will continue to outstrip the overall rate of inflation.

In light of that trend, Simonson said public agencies, private owners and contractors need to "face this new reality."

Simonson made his comments after the Bureau of Labor Statistics issued its report on the producer price index (PPI) for May.

Overall producer prices increased only 0.2 percent in May and 1.5 percent in the last year (outside of food and energy). But the PPI for construction materials leaped 1.2 percent in May and 7.8 percent over the last 12 months, including a 12-month increase of 8 percent for new single-unit residential construction.



The highest increases for materials in the last 12 months were 87 percent for copper and brass mill shapes, 48 percent for asphalt, 40 percent for diesel fuel, 26 percent for gypsum products, 18 percent for plastic construction products and 15 percent for cement.

"Budgets must allow for more inflation, for purchas-

ing materials earlier, and for sharing the risk and reward from price volatility," he said.

Availability and delivery of building products has also been affected, with the longest delays in fabricated steel products. The high cost of diesel fuel has also led to delivery surcharges of up to 22 percent.

## Masonry Veneer Group Formed

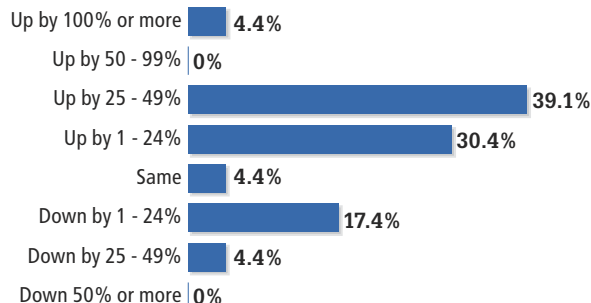
**R**apid growth in the manufactured stone and brick veneer product category has created a need for codes and standards of installation of these products.

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For information, contact Executive Director Russell Snyder at (202)785-3232.

## THE RESULTS

### How does your 2006 projected sales compare to 2005 sales?



Results from June reader poll as of June 23, 2006.

## THE POLL

### Which of these cost increases is your biggest concern?

1. General liability insurance
2. Health insurance
3. Workers' compensation insurance
4. Lumber/OSB/drywall
5. Concrete/steel/copper/PVC
6. Other building materials
7. All of the above
8. None of the above

To cast your vote and view the results as they are tabulated, visit [www.ProRemodeler.com](http://www.ProRemodeler.com).



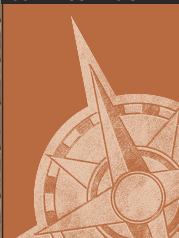


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