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**2008 Remodeling
Forecast Mixed / 24**

**Moisture Repair Project
Turns Into Extensive
Remodel / 34**

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VOLUME 11 NUMBER 8



FEATURES

COVER STORY

The Corner Office/20

Attention to detail makes SilverLining Interiors a leader in the Manhattan market

MARKET WATCH

Mixed Forecast/24

The remodeling outlook ranges from sunny to stormy

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Attention on Deck/34

A quest to fix moisture damage turns into a complete and convenient back-of-the-house remodel



Trade Secrets

Timesheets On the Go

9

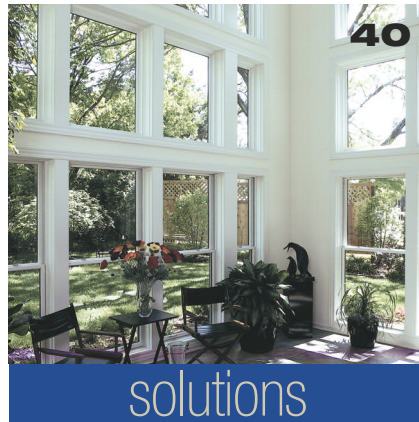
Remodelers' Exchange 10

Healthy Partnerships

Leadership

Lead by Example

17



Portfolio Interior

Musical Rendition

40

Construct

Shedding Light on Your Remodel

47



Product Preview

New Product Showcase

53

Interior Products

Heat/Ventilation/Air Conditioning

57

Exterior Products

Siding

60

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departments

From the Editor

5

The Board Room

68

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EDITOR IN CHIEF

Michael R. Morris
630/288-8057; michael.morris@reedbusiness.com

SENIOR EDITOR

Jonathan Sweet
630/288-8170; jonathan.sweet@reedbusiness.com

MANAGING EDITOR

Judi Damm
630/288-8193; judi.damm@reedbusiness.com

COPY EDITOR

Sara Zailskas
630/288-8197; sara.zailskas@reedbusiness.com

PRODUCTS EDITOR

Nick Bajzek
630/288-8187; nicholas.bajzek@reedbusiness.com

SENIOR EDITOR, E-MEDIA

Mark Jarasek
630/288-8171; mark.jarasek@reedbusiness.com

SENIOR CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Wendy A. Jordan

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Doug Dwyer, Alan Hendy, Jud Motsenbocker, Tom Swartz

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

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CEO, REED BUSINESS INFORMATION

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WHAT WILL 2008 LOOK LIKE?

Harvard University doesn't expect a nationwide downturn in remodeling in 2008. But if you own a remodeling company in the industrial Midwest or another part of the country where the local economy and housing industry has taken a turn for the worse, that's small consolation.

The fact is, many remodeling firms have had a significant slowdown in 2007 business, and some of them are concerned that 2008 won't look much better (see page 25).

Consider this e-mail I received last week from a remodeler in Pennsylvania who invested in growing his business during the heyday that was the last 5-10 years. He's now having to scale back drastically just to make it through the next year and beyond.

Dear Mike:

Business is slow for us. Volume is down 40 percent over last year to date. The difference is that the first half of 2006 was strong and the second half slow. We're hoping it will be the opposite for 2007. Gross profit numbers look good. Unfortunately we're not producing enough volume to carry the large overhead we set up. With the opening of our new showroom and hiring of additional staff in the spring of 2006 we were certainly projecting our volume to be up, not down. We slimmed the ranks with a long-term layoff (goodbye) in late October and a short-term layoff (3-4 weeks) in February. We're now looking at another layoff of a production supervisor and office/design support staff. Not the most fun I've ever had.

New calls are steady, with most folks gathering information and sitting on it. Competition is stiffer because everyone who gets laid off collects unemployment and does side work for wages. All of the subs who were doing new construction are now remodelers.



Michael R. Morris

Editor in Chief

630/288-8057

michael.morris@reedbusiness.com

I'm optimistic but discouraged. Hope all is well with you.

Kermit Baker, Senior Research Fellow with the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University and the Remodeling Futures Committee, points out that similar scenarios are playing out in several markets across the country. Hopefully yours is not one of them.

"The reason we don't expect a big downturn (in remodeling) is that the weakness is happening at a time when the broader economy is relatively strong," Baker says. "We're certainly not in recession at least, No. 1. And No. 2, when you have all this recent run-up in home values and all this massive home equity, it's giving homeowners a buffer to stabilize any downturn."

What does your local market look like as we creep ever closer to 2008? Is your number of qualified leads going down? Is your average job size getting smaller? Are you getting squeezed on gross profit?

Take a look at these key areas of your business before it's too late to do something about it. **PR**

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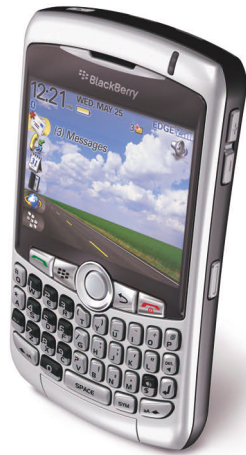


Timesheets on the go

Paper timesheets are notoriously unreliable.

Many employees don't fill them out until the end of the week, when it's difficult to remember what they were doing on Monday. And even then they may be more worried about getting their hours than being accurate.

AAA Services of Central Florida wanted a more accurate way to track the company's labor costs, so the company now uses Field Force Manager, a service offered by Verizon through employees' cell phones. The features allows field employees of the Largo, Fla., company to clock in and out on their



phones. AAA managers can check the information on a secure Field Force Manager Web site and print out a weekly

report that tallies payroll, says Vice President Doris Logar.

The system also incorporates GPS technology, so managers can see where employees are at any time. They can also see a 90-day history of movement, so past activity can be checked as well.

"We were worried the employees were going to think we were spying on them, but we haven't had anyone complain about it at all," Logar says.

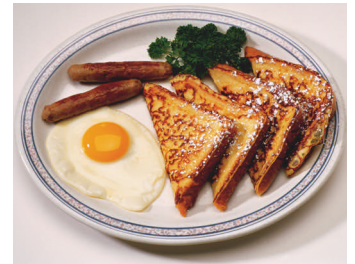
AAA has been using the system for about six months, and the company has already realized a savings in increased efficiency and more accurate job costing, Logar says.

>> If you have a **Trade Secret** you would like to share, e-mail Senior Editor Jonathan Sweet at jonathan.sweet@reedbusiness.com.

Trade partners

Having the best trade contractors is essential for success for Winans Construction, so the company does everything it can to keep them informed and educated.

"We want to work with those people who want to be successful,



who realize this is a business," says Nina Winans, vice president of the Oakland, Calif., design/build firm.

One of the ways Winans both educates and rewards its trades is through the annual Trade Contractor Alliance Breakfast. This year's theme is "The Client's Perspective," with a presentation emphasizing that, to clients, a project is not just a job; it's their home. The presentation is also translated into Spanish. More than 30 trade contractors and their staff attend the meeting.

The breakfast is also an opportunity to recognize trades with awards, such as Best Proposal, Best Attitude and Fewest Change Orders. The awards are voted on throughout the year by Winans staff.

Keeping clients up-to-date

Working primarily on vacation homes means Sawbucks Contracting deals mostly with absentee owners.

The majority of the Ocean Grove, N.J., company's clients live in north New Jersey or New York City but still want to be kept up-to-date on project progress. So using FastTrack Schedule, a computer scheduling program, Sawbucks developed a process to keep the client informed. At the preconstruction meeting where the project transfers from the estimator to the project manager, Sawbucks gives the client a calendar that details the entire process, including scheduled payments.

"Clients are surprised that we're so open about the process," says company co-owner Susan Solebello. "They love it because they can see just how the project is going to progress."

Sawbucks developed the process about a year ago by adapting the FastTrack software it was using for its internal scheduling. The project manager updates the calendar daily, and Sawbucks e-mails updated calendars to clients every Friday after the company's weekly production meeting.

Sawbucks provides a paper copy for clients who don't use e-mail.

"They can look at it and communicate with us if they see any problems," Solebello says.

ONLINE POLL QUESTION

What is the most common way you communicate with clients?

To participate in this month's poll and view the results as they are tabulated, visit www.ProRemodeler.com

HEALTHY PARTNERSHIPS

Building a win-win relationship with distributors and manufacturers



PHOTO BY DON IROCK/GETTY IMAGES

Terry Skilling, Owner and CEO Rhino Builders

Located in Kansas City, Kan., Rhino Builders has been in business since 1996 and a full-service remodeler since 1999. The firm has four lead carpenters; a production manager; field superintendent; in-house designer with CAD and Chief Architect; an office manager; and a salesperson. Volume for this year will be about \$2.1 million with a job size averaging \$25,000.

www.rhinobuilders.com



PHOTO BY GARY LAUFMAN

Pete Valentino, Owner Fisher Construction

Fisher Construction in Fairfield, Calif., is a design/build that does start-to-finish remodeling. The company has been in business since 1988, with Pete taking ownership in 2005. The firm has six employees: three in the field; a certified kitchen and bath interior designer; and an office manager. Volume is about \$1.5- \$1.6 million a year and will probably go up to \$1.9 million this year.

www.fisherdesignbuild.com

Regardless of the size of your company, everyone benefits from healthy partnerships: owners, suppliers and clients alike.

Jud: Pete, describe your partnerships, just in general, that you have either with your suppliers or manufacturers or whoever they may be.

Pete: We have two partnerships. One is a local appliance store in town here. We remodeled their business about seven or eight years ago. We put some kitchen displays in there and cabinet displays. They put their appliances in there. We get to showcase our cabinets and kitchen designs. They let us put our pamphlets, newsletter and brochures. It's kind of a win-win situation. They have nice looking kitchens to showcase their appliances, and we're able to get leads from that. People look at the cabinets and ask, "Oh, who put this in?" Another partnership is a granite company we work with. As we go along and install granite countertops in our kitchens, we'll photograph them for our Web site, which is for the marketing. We've got a deal with the granite company where they'll pay for half of the professional fees of the photographer. We give them the pictures. Anything they use as marketing in our area, they will mention our name. Those are some of the ways we try to work with our subcontractors and people in the area.

Jud: Terry, give me a review of some partnerships that you have.

Terry: Jud, I wouldn't say it's complicated, but we work with our suppliers and trades closely on a lot of things. One way is to create leads and another is for education. Another way is to save costs, and to be faithful to them. We're really concerned about service to our clients, so our partnerships are developed so that all of us are on the same page as to how we'll work with our clients. They and our employees in the field are really important. As an example, my window distributor will measure all our windows for us. This happens to be a company called Windsor, the manufacturer.

Pacific Mutual Door is the distributor. We use my rep, who we've developed a relationship with. He'll actually come to the house and do all our window measures for us along with my lead carpenter. We make sure that we have those right. At the same time, because we have that relationship, they take us to their factory once a year to study and learn about their windows. That's also nice. We believe a lot in education. We want to make sure we work with our distributors so that we educate. We do customer appreciation nights at our distributors, especially our appliance distributor. We'll set up a nice showroom and bring in a chef or they will bring in a chef and we do dinners for our clients there. That's kind of nice. Since I'm so involved with NARI, I've had to work with a lot of the distributors on the manufacturer's side on lots of different programs. I've worked with national people like Owens Corning and Pella and some of those to do educational programs for our NARI group here. I've worked with Bosch and some of those — SkillsUSA. These are relationships we've developed that, I think, over the years are really going to pay off. It helps the quality of our work, it educates our people and gives us good strong relationships throughout our whole industry life. Does that make sense?

Jud: It absolutely does.

Terry: Ten years from now, I want to be able to call up and have a strong relationship with people. If I was in California and wanted to talk to someone, say, about the beautiful vanities that I see on Pete's Web site, I could call up Pete. He could say, "Let's go up and see this guy about these vanities." I might be able to get a better vanity than anyone in Kansas City! Does that make sense?

Jud: Yes! What you're saying is your partnerships are relationships more than anything else to help you better service the client. On the other hand, in servicing the client, you also are getting an

education from them to stay abreast of what's going on. In your particular case, you're even using some of your suppliers to enhance the look of you to your client in the way of appreciation nights and that type of thing. It totally makes sense to me.

Terry: They invest in our brochures. We just did a big charity event for a home for handicapped kids. With one of my suppliers, I just had to make one phone call and ask him if he wanted to provide a door for this for a silent auction. It ended up being such a nice door that they put it in a live auction — and there were only four things in it. It gets our name out there without having to spend money.

Jud: That's another advantage. Being in this partnership, you're also getting your name out there in other ways.

Terry: Anything that we can to do get these great quality leads or recognition. We don't have to pay for that.

Jud: Pete, did that ring a bell for you? Did you want to add anything to that about some of the relationships you've built, either with your appliance people or your granite top people?

Pete: Well, it's funny, too, because while you were talk-

ing I was thinking of the whole idea about relationships. That is key, including the relationships that we have with our subcontractors. We've had the same plumber for 18 years. What do we do that keeps him happy? We give them work, and they don't have to do anything but wait for the call from us. On the flip side, when we ask them to be somewhere on a certain day, they're there. We try to pay them, "If you give me an invoice on Tuesday, I'll have a check waiting for you on Friday." We want to be able to turn that around. The whole idea of the relationship is really powerful as how your company is perceived.

Jud: Partnerships become relationships more than just a partnership, per se. I think you've both said that.

Pete: I agree with that. It's a relation-



Jud Motsenbocker
Contributing Editor

ship, and not so much just a partnership.

Terry: We'll have a company party this year. We'll invite all of our manufacturers' reps, all our trades. We'll have a separate one for our clients, and we don't invite them to that. But, even then, one of our manufacturers or distributors would provide the space for it.

Pete: We have a party like that right before Christmas. It's actually for past clients and our subcontractors. Our subcontractors have built relationships with our clients. They're in the house working. It's a good time for everyone to get back together and touch base.

Jud: That's what often happens. The actual worker out there on the job, trade contractor or employee — it makes no difference — they end up with a relationship with the client. That makes a difference; it helps them remember to call you because of that relationship. It goes back to what Terry said regarding the education side of the thing. Pete, do you get leads from any of the trade contractors, suppliers or manufacturers?

Pete: We do. Over the years, you'll get a lot of leads, and then you won't get leads for a while. You question, "Is this really a good partnership?" And, all of a sudden, the phone will ring and two or three leads come in. That may turn into a \$100,000 kitchen. You think, "Alright, this is still working!" We can go out and have lunch with the owner to talk over what we can do or what are we not doing. "Can we set up appointments with our clients with your salespeople instead of having our clients just walk in?" We'll do things like that just to keep the relationship open and make sure everyone's comfortable with the direction in which we're going. We're in two of their stores. It works out pretty well. We do get a lot of leads from them.

Jud: Being in those stores must help tremendously on the appliance and granite tops. Terry, do you get leads from some of the manufacturers and/or suppliers?

Terry: Yes. We have a database on that.

So far this year we've gotten seven projects from it. They've been at about \$142,000. Some distributors are better than others. We get most of the leads from our kitchen cabinet (supplier); we have a custom cabinet maker who gives us some. We have a plumbing distributor who gives us some. We have an architect who gives us some. They're just really good leads. That was one of the things we really try to develop with those relationships. We solicit them. We don't take them to lunch or anything,

"Over the years, you'll get a lot of leads, and then you won't get leads for a while. You question, 'Is this really a good partnership?'"

but whenever I'm with my rep, I always talk about leads. I also give them some, too; it's a fair trade.

Jud: The sales material — do the manufacturers and suppliers give you the proper amount of sales material that you'll need?

Terry: Anything we want. We have a library for it. All of the sales material are mostly production books, magazines, brochures on materials, and a lot of "how to" literature.

Jud: Pete, do you use sales materials from them?

Pete: Typically, we get a lot of samples from our granite company. They'll give us any sample we need. They do have some literature, but not that much. On the appliance side, we'll call if we need specs. Now it's just as easy to go online and download the specs for any appliance. We've kind of gotten away from calling. Our thing is being able to put our material in their store. We get more out of that.

Jud: You're going into reverse to some degree; going into their territory instead of them coming into yours, realistically.

Pete: That's exactly what it is.

Jud: We've got both sides of the fence here going each way. Pete, do you use samples of any kind from your manufacturers? Do you have problems getting those?

Pete: Typically no; not at all. About six or seven years ago, they cut us a deal on a Wolf stove. We had the stove in our showroom. There was a time we were doing cooking shows in our showroom. It was propane, and we hooked up a tank. We had a 30-inch Wolf range that we could wheel out. We had professional chefs cooking with it. They cut us a deal on that because of the relationship we had.

Jud: Terry, how about you with displays and samples?

Terry: There is no problem at all. When we do our home shows, a couple of our people will provide customized displays for that. We get sales items that we need; we've had them make custom cases for us, there isn't a problem at all. We try to keep a lot of that stuff to a minimum or it just sits around your office, like granite and stone samples, bags — that's pretty easy to get.

Jud: Do either one of you have an unusual manufacturer or supplier that you use? You both talked about cabinets, appliances, windows and doors. Do you have any unusual thing, Terry?

Terry: One of the things we're trying to develop right now, and the people I'm talking to, are suppliers of the green building materials. In our area, and in other areas, I think that's going to be a big part of the future. We try to do it as much as we can now, but there are people in the area that are really specializing in putting together information about products that are available. I don't want to say it's unusual, but it's different. I have a relationship with an artist on glass tiles and different specialty things we might like to use in kitchen back splashes. We look for really nice, high-quality items.

Jud: Pete, you're out in California. You've got to have some unusual relationships with different products.

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Pete: We do. We have a gentleman who does metal ironwork that's more artistic than anything. It's really beautiful and takes time to get. It's just something that the typical person doesn't have out there. We want to bring products that the typical consumer doesn't see. But, again, we have relationships with a glass company that does custom stained glass, whatever we want to design. And, this metal fabricator, he does a lot of custom artistic metal for us. If the consumer was really sharp, did their homework and has some design flare, they probably could find that stuff. Our thing is making it easier in bringing that design flare to our clients. That's part of what our relationship with the clients is. Let us do the leg work. Let us come up with the design that blows everyone away. We're always on the lookout for something new and different.

Jud: How do you go about finding these unusual suppliers and manufacturers?

Pete: We go to trade shows all the time. We went to the National Kitchen & Bath Association show in Vegas. It was a three-day affair. We brought the whole company. We try to go to as many of those shows as we can to really see what new products are out there. My designer has a really creative side. If she sees something that sparks her design ideas, she says, "Look at that, we could do something like that!" And then again, just day-to-day driving around seeing stuff. You've got to be constantly on the lookout for somebody and just talk with people.

Jud: Terry, where do you find these unusual people?

Terry: A lot of times we look in the trade publications, like *Professional Remodeler*, looking at the pictures. They always have sections on new products. We have relationships with designers and architects. I'll just get on the phone and call two or three of them that I know and say, "Hey, we're really thinking about this idea. Is this possible? Could we put a waterfall in behind the Wolf range? How do we do it?" Things like that. We keep on the lookout for things, but mostly we would contact the designers we have relationships with or go online and look in the publications.

Jud: Do you do trade shows?

Terry: I might go to one trade show a year. I've done those before and they didn't appeal to me that much. I know you could probably see a lot at those things, especially the kitchen and bath one. There are beautiful things. I've just never really gotten into that.

Jud: Terry, give me some kind of an idea of how many leads you might get per week that you can contribute back to a manufacturer and/or a distributor.

Terry: Probably three on average is what I've looked at over the first six months.

Jud: Out of that, how many closings might you have?

Terry: Generally one out of three. I think over the first six months, we've gotten like 21 or 22 leads. They're great leads, don't get me wrong. We've closed, like, seven. Especially a distributor — when a distributor recommends you to a client, if someone came into the plumbing showroom and picked out supplies for a new bath and needed someone to install the bathroom for them, it's a different kind of lead because the plumbing supplies are running direct through the distributor, so we're mostly doing labor, except for miscellaneous materials.

Jud: And you will do it that way?

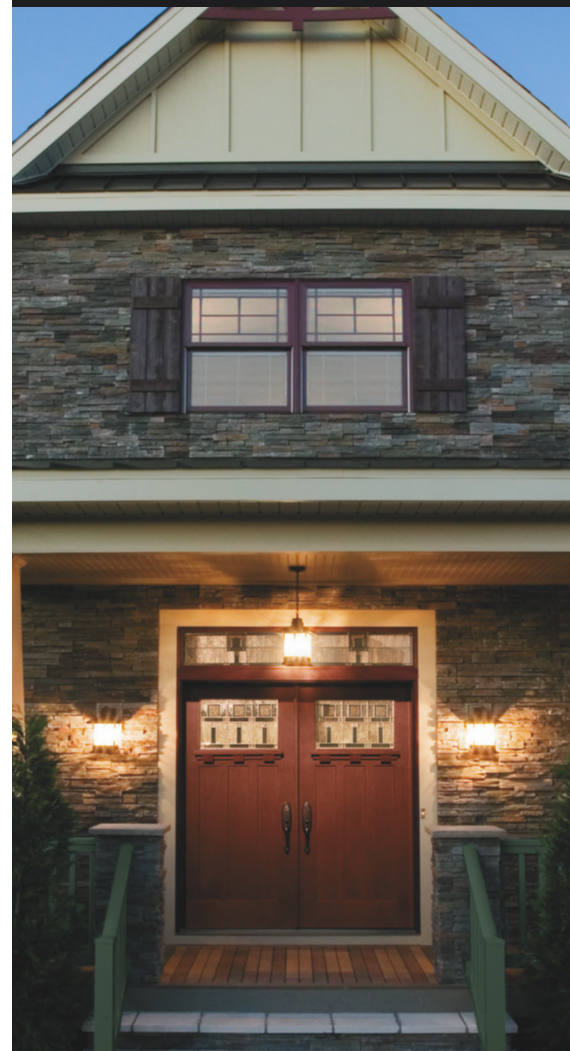
Terry: Absolutely, we'll do it. They are jobs where we've been recommended. The client probably feels safe with us, because we've been recommended by someone they feel safe with.

Jud: I think it's called third-party marketing. Pete, how many leads do you get a week, and what's your closing rate?

Pete: I would look more at a month. I may have two or three a month from a company. Typically, I'll get three, sometimes four; we'll probably close one or two. Our marketing is more geared toward past clients; that's really where we get most of our work. It's just one more spoke in the wheel of the whole marketing program. I wouldn't say it's the biggest spoke. **PR**

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LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Good leaders create employees who mirror their behavior

LEADERSHIP IS OFTEN CONFUSED with management. They are closely related, yet have distinctions making them quite different. Managing tends to focus on getting things done through others and mostly involves the day-to-day operations, while leading focuses on creating an environment that develops people into leaders who guide others and themselves to accomplish company objectives. Both are critically important to business success, and leadership has its own attributes remodelers should know.

As leaders we have tremendously important roles to our team. Employees watch every move we make consciously and subconsciously. What we do affects their behavior more than we sometimes realize or want to admit.

There is a saying I learned some time ago regarding parenting: "Children are natural mimics; they act like their parents in spite of every effort to teach them good manners." If we translate that into business, it would sound something like this: "Employees are natural mimics; they act like their leader in spite of every effort to teach them the business system." As business leaders, we can get so focused on training and education that we and our leadership team can overlook the importance of modeling correct behavior (following the system) — especially important if we expect others to do the same.

Most of us probably remember the saying, "Do as I say, not as I do." As we learned, that is not the most effective leadership strategy. As human beings, we instinctively mimic and become like those around us, especially those in a leadership role close to us. Think about people who have had the greatest influence on your life. Did they influence you by the words they said or by their attitude and approach?

I experienced one of the best examples of leading by example while working at the Deer Valley Ski Resort in Utah. The leaders at the ski resort expected me to treat customers with an upbeat service attitude, with true sincerity all while being knowledgeable in my job as a ski instructor. I can tell you that they treated me exactly how they wanted me to treat the customer. It was very motivating and effective training. They also taught me educational skills a ski instructor needs: about child development, depth of perception, motor skills, skiing dynamic, etc.

If I simply treated the customer the way I was treated as an employee, then I was delivering a great customer experience. And with the

For example, at DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen, we do a lot of team building, including spending a day on a ropes course. That said, I have climbed the high pole (approximately 20 feet) on the course and walked across it many times, so it is not as challenging as it used to be. Therefore, during a team building exercise, I decided to attempt walking across the pole with my eyes closed in order to stretch

myself. Although I didn't make it across the pole, I was able to grow personally. And at the end of the day, one of my employees acknowledged my efforts and told the group I inspired him to want to be better at what he did because he saw me strive to better myself.

In addition to stretching



Doug Dwyer
Contributing Editor

"Employees are natural mimics; they act like their leader in spite of every effort to teach them the business system."

training on the technical aspects of being a ski instructor, I was properly equipped to do my job well. Yes, we need to provide excellent training and education, yet not forget to lead by example to the best of our abilities. It's not about being perfect, but rather having a reputation of excellence. Nobody is perfect.

Another important aspect of leading by example is stretching ourselves as leaders to develop new skills and abilities. By doing so, we will inspire and encourage our team to do the same.

ourselves to develop new skills and abilities, we should acknowledge mistakes we make with the utmost humility. In doing so, you and I are modeling the way we want employees to handle similar situations. **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.

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The Corner Office

ATTENTION
TO DETAIL
MAKES
SILVERLINING
INTERIORS
A LEADER IN
THE MANHATTAN
MARKET

By Jonathan Sweet, Senior Editor

"The Corner Office" is a look at the top executives at large remodeling firms. In each of the next three months we'll profile these industry leaders and examine their unique business issues.

IF YOU CAN MAKE IT THERE, YOU CAN MAKE IT... well, you know.

The Manhattan remodeling market is not one to be entered into lightly. Congested streets, demanding clients and tough regulations keeps a lot of remodeling firms out of the city.

"Manhattan's a very complicated place to work," says Joshua Wiener, chief executive officer of SilverLining Interiors. "There's not a lot of us who can do this kind of work."

The pressure gets even greater when you focus on the high-end of the remodeling spectrum. And with a client list that reads like a who's who of politics, media and entertainment, SilverLining is involved in projects with little room for error.

"These are people who expect a lot," Wiener says. "They tell us, 'We want the Rolls-Royce or Mercedes-Benz,' but those things are built in factories, so our challenge is to explain to them that we're building everything for the first time, but that we're still striving for quality."

QUALITY CONTROL

From his beginnings as a painter, that focus on quality has been Wiener's calling card. He worked his way through college by painting apartments in New York. After graduating from Vassar with degrees in psychology and drama, he decided to start his own painting firm, incorporating SilverLining in April 1987.

"Since the beginning, I've been a high-end finisher," Wiener says. "I'm a perfectionist myself, so I always wanted to do the very best work."

That desire for perfection led Wiener to focus SilverLining on the high end of the market; it costs a lot of money to pay attention to every detail, and not everyone is willing to pay for quality work.

"These are the people who are used to having the best," he says. "I felt they were the clients who would appreciate the type of work we do."

By 1990, the company had grown to 17 painters and was

SilverLining Interiors CEO Joshua Wiener has built the company from a one-man painting operation to one of the largest remodeling firms in New York City.

becoming well-known for its high-quality painting work. Clients were approaching the company looking for other types of projects. Wiener recognized the opportunity and expanded SilverLining into remodeling.

"Because of our reputation as a painting firm the remodeling jobs came pretty quickly," Wiener says.

In 1991, Wiener hired his first project manager, allowing him to focus on selling more remodeling work. He had already left field work behind in 1988. The company landed its first \$1 million project in 1993.

"Once you've broken that barrier, a lot of those types of jobs keep coming," Wiener says.

Fourteen years later, SilverLining now has 11 project managers with 20 projects going at one time. As the company has grown, quality control has been crucial to SilverLining's continued success.

One of the ways the company maintains quality is with a large management team. Each project manager is responsible for overseeing about two projects at a time. Besides the project manager, each project has a full-time site supervisor and, below the super, a lead carpenter.

Wiener also promoted one of his site supervisors to general supervisor for all of the projects. That job oversees quality control at all ongoing projects.

"We dealt with it by taking the guy in the field I most respected and put him in charge of quality," Wiener says.

Maintaining quality was also one of the reasons Wiener kept his

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SilverLining Interiors, New York

CEO: Joshua Wiener

2006 projects: 39

2006 volume: \$33 million

Projected 2007 volume: \$37 million

Employees: 128

Founded: 1987

Biggest challenge: Keeping the large staff constantly working. "That was my biggest challenge even back when I had six employees, but now I know there are a lot more people and their families depending on me to keep everything going," Wiener says.

Web site: www.silverlininginteriors.com

“I’ve got to make sure I do the stuff that’s most valuable for the firm, not what I feel most comfortable doing.”

in-house painting division and plasterers, so SilverLining wouldn’t have to rely on subcontractors for those important trades.

“By doing our own finishing on all the projects, it allows us to fix whatever wasn’t done well,” he says.

With more than 120 employees, it’s not surprising that personnel issues are one of Wiener’s major challenges as a CEO.

“When I first started out, I didn’t have any strategies for dealing with paying employees,” he says. “I’d just walk out on a job site and give someone a raise.”

Now, employees are evaluated by their managers using a formal rating system, and there are wage guidelines in place. With a company as large as SilverLining, it’s the only way to make decisions fairly, Wiener says.

Besides implementing systems, Wiener relies on his management team to keep the company running smoothly. As he’s moved away from day-to-day management, Wiener has created an executive committee, made up of his CFO and four of his project managers, that he meets with on a regular basis.

“Separating myself and implementing that layer of middle management has been a challenge,” he says. “I had to accept a certain risk factor in taking on these people, but we need high-priced people in order to grow.”

Wiener says he would like to see his role evolve in the company to the point where he’s just running a management team, which manages the individual project managers and site supers.

“I’m still spending a little too much time putting out fires,” he says. “I need to make sure I’m always doing CEO stuff, even if I’d rather not sometimes. I’ve got to make sure I do the stuff that’s most valuable for the firm, not what I feel most comfortable doing.”

MANAGING THE HIGH-END

Even though his clients include famous personalities like Matt Lauer and Bette Midler, keeping them happy is really no different than handling any other client, Wiener says.

“I wish there was some great secret to getting those clients, but it’s really pretty straightforward,” he says. “If you consistently deliver high-quality work, clients will continue to be attracted to you.”

When SilverLining was getting started in remodeling in the early ’90s, Wiener was surprised to find most remodelers providing terrible service. Simply returning phone calls and showing up for scheduled appointments put SilverLining a step above much of the competition.

“The service bar was pretty low,” he says. “We just did what we said we were going to do and did it as best as we could.”

SilverLining has also shown it can handle the difficult projects that many of its clients are looking to undertake. Most of the company’s work is in multi-tenant buildings built in the 1920s or earlier and often involve total rebuilds, including new mechanicals and walls. It’s not unusual for SilverLining’s project to involve new structural steel, concrete pours and masonry work.

At the same time, many of SilverLining’s clients want incredibly tight time frames to get their project done. Combine that with restricted access to the buildings due to co-op rules and managing the projects takes a delicate balancing act. Typically, SilverLining can only work from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in most buildings, and access to upper floors is only available through cramped elevators.

Throw in incredible amounts of paperwork for everyone from city officials to preservation groups down to co-op boards and it’s easy to see why it’s a difficult market in which to get a foothold.

With more than 15 years in the local remodeling market, SilverLining has developed a reputation for being able to handle those difficult projects.

“We sell our experience and our client list,” Wiener says. “What we’ve done gets us the next job.” **PR**

A WEEK IN THE LIFE

How SilverLining CEO Joshua Wiener spends his average week.

Management meetings: He spends about 15 hours a week in meetings in the office with his CFO, his executive committee and the managers of his cabinet and painting divisions. **15 HRS.**

On-site project meetings: Wiener spends about 15 hours a week at project-specific site meetings with project managers, site supervisors and other staff. **15 HRS.**

Putting out fires: The time commitment that Wiener would most like to reduce is the 10 hours a week he spends dealing with problems, including meeting with trade contractors, local officials and co-op boards and current clients. **10 HRS.**

Sales: Wiener also spends about 6 to 8 hours meeting with potential clients. **8 HRS.**

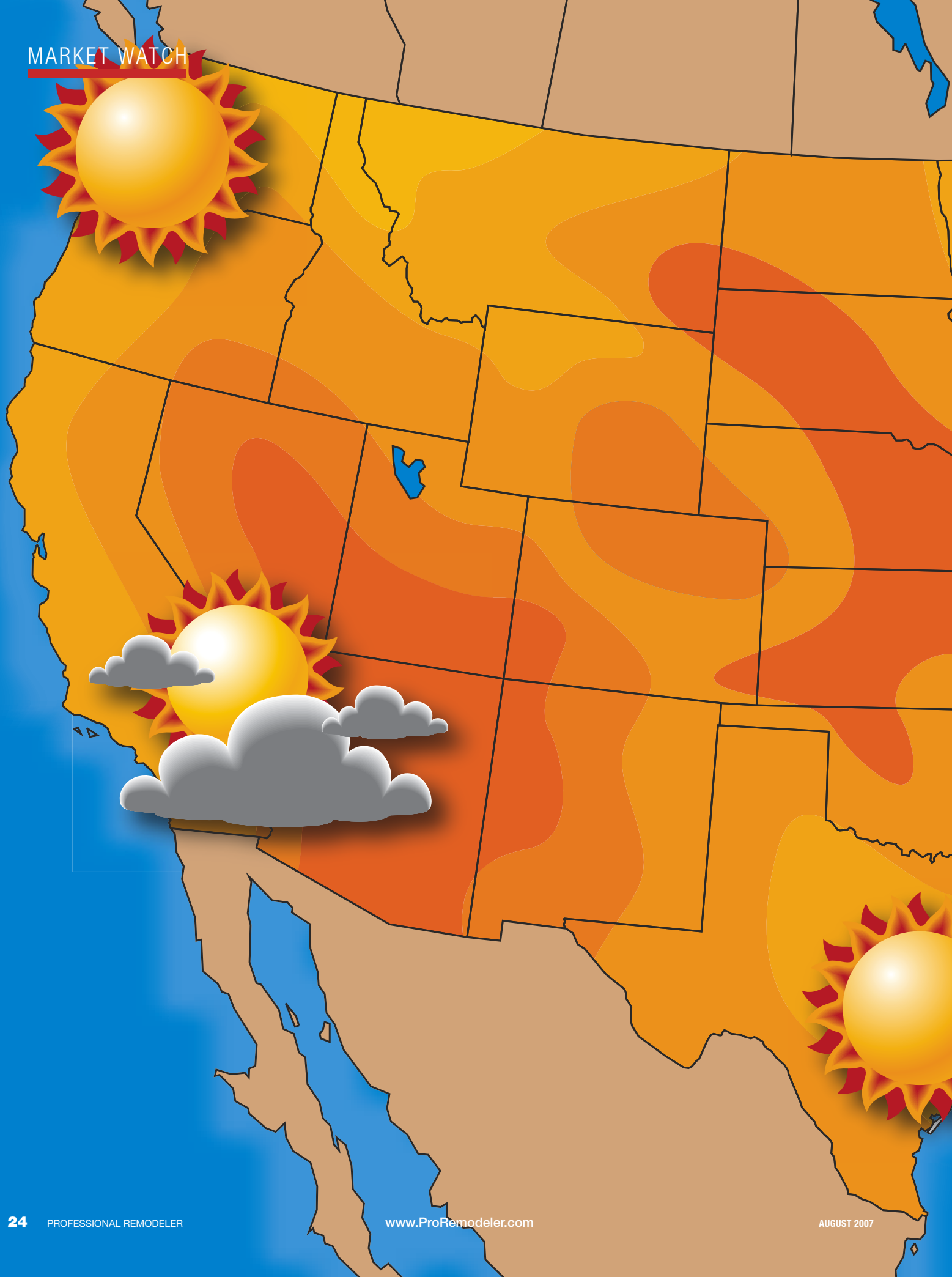


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Mixed Forecast

THE REMODELING
OUTLOOK RANGES FROM
SUNNY TO STORMY

By Jonathan Sweet

LIKE FORECASTING THE WEATHER, figuring out the remodeling and construction market over the last year has been a difficult task. Every time a recovery has been forecast, a new storm cloud has appeared on the horizon. Whether it's overbuilt new home inventory, tightening lending standards or simple consumer wariness, plenty of factors combined to make this a tough year for the remodeling industry.

More than ever, though, the market is local. While remodelers in Detroit may be struggling, those in Seattle can be flourishing. On the other hand, similar things drive remodeling no matter where you work: it's about the health of the local economy and the local real-estate market. Even then you can find one remodeler succeeding and another failing across the street from each other.

Those markets that are doing best seem to be those where new construction has been hit less than others, as well as those with diverse local economies. The ones that are the worst are those that rely on an industrial base, such as the automotive industry, for their success.

"It's generally mimicking what's going on in new construction," says Kermit Baker, a senior research fellow at the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. "The markets that are having trouble are the ones where we're really seeing the hit in new construction."

We've talked to national experts and local remodelers to take a look at what the forecast holds for the country as a whole and a few representative markets. To add your local view to the discussion, visit www.proremodeler.com/blogs.

Remodeling market holding steady

Remodeling activity by quarter (Annualized totals in billions of dollars)

2007

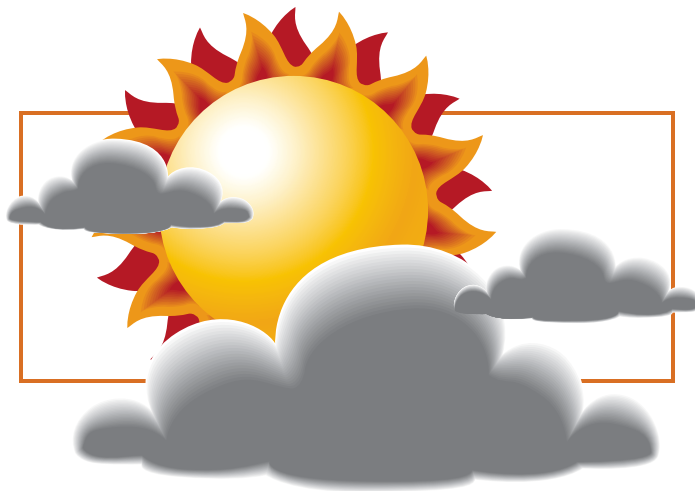
1st Quarter	\$180.7
2nd Quarter	\$185.0
3rd Quarter	\$185.3
4th Quarter	\$183.1

2008

1st Quarter	\$186.8
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Source: Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University

Harvard researchers continue to predict year-to-year growth in the market.



PARTLY CLOUDY

For the country as a whole, the forecast is for a basically flat year for remodeling.

"I think that's really because of what is happening in the housing market in general," says NAHB Chief Economist David Seiders.

While there's a notion that remodeling is counter-cyclical to new construction, the numbers don't bear that out, Seiders says. The reality is that the market follows roughly the same cycles as home building, but with less extreme peaks and valleys.

The latest NAHB forecast predicts modest inflation-adjusted declines this year and next of less than 2 percent, with the market growing again by 2009. The Leading Indicator for Remodeling Activity from the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University is predicting slight increases in the market for this year and early next year.

"The reason we don't expect a big downturn is that the weakness is happening at a time when the broader economy is relatively strong," Baker says.

The decline in remodeling activity can be largely tied to a 5 to 6 percent drop this year in improvements to owner-occupied homes, Seiders says. In other words, homeowners may be opting to wait on "want" projects like kitchens and additions, but are still undertaking "needs," such as a new roof.

Two factors are largely responsible for that: declining home sales and dropping prices.

"There's historically a pretty good relationship between existing home sales and remodeling activity," Seiders says. "Homeowners will do a lot of work in preparation for a sale and new buyers tend to do some remodeling soon after purchase."

Declining prices in some markets also are making homeowners a little less likely to remodel.

"The change in the price picture has alerted homeowners that they may not be able to get that money back in a sale," he says.



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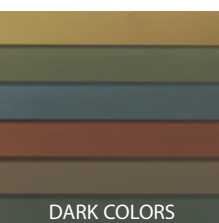
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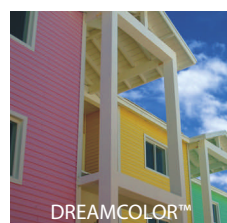
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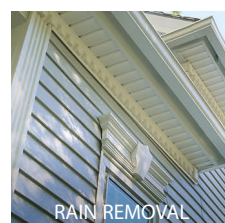
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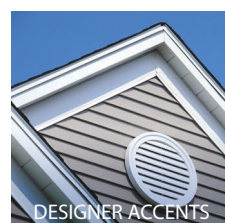
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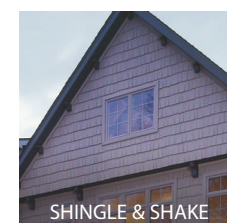
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"On the other hand, there is a very large amount of homeowner equity out there, so the financing is still available."

That will lead to less "speculative" remodeling by people looking to ride the wave of rising home prices, but remodeling should remain strong, Baker says. "People will not be as likely to do remodeling just for the sake of doing it, but it looks like we're going to hold on to that sort of routine activity that households traditionally undertake."

Markets that most represent the "partly cloudy" condition are, ironically, sunny places like Southern California, Phoenix and Florida. These are the same places that saw incredible price increases over the last few years, and while home sales have lagged, the equity homeowners have built up seems to be keeping the remodeling industry going.

In Southern California, home sales are down drastically from their peak in 2005, but remodeling has kept a steady if not spectacular rate. Gary Marrokal, president of Marrokal Construction Co. in Lakeside, Calif., says the worst appears to be over for the San Diego market.

"Our produced volume is down this year, but our sales are up leading into projects for next year," he says.

The second half of 2006 and first half of this year were slow, but Marrokal is now seeing more serious leads and referrals coming through. With more than 35 years in the business, it's nothing Marrokal hasn't seen before.

"When home sales slow down, that means people stay in their homes," he says. "They'll build that 'new home' in their current home."

That change doesn't happen right away, though, because homeowners have to go through a period of adjustment to the new realities of the housing market.

"Two years ago people could get a premium for their homes," he says. "Now it's worth 10 percent less and people have to get used to it."

That's where the market is now, with people accepting the idea of remodeling for themselves not for future home values.

"We talk to them about the benefits of remodeling for them, how it will add value to their lives," Marrokal says.

Phoenix also saw huge price run-ups over the last few years. As prices have dropped this year, some homeowners are less likely to invest in remodeling, says Mark Olson, president of Legacy Custom Building & Remodeling in Scottsdale, Ariz.

"It's definitely slowed down after the biggest boom we've ever seen," he says. "We had 49 percent home price increases in 2005-2006 and everyone was interested in remodeling to cash in on that."

After a 46 percent increase in business from 2005 to 2006, Legacy is on pace to hold steady at the 2006 level of almost \$10 million.

"We're happy just stabilizing," Olson says. "I'm very pleasantly

surprised we've been able to maintain that level this year."

That's better than much of the competition has been able to do, Olson says.

"A lot of guys are falling by the wayside," he says. "A lot of remodelers have shut down over the last couple of years."

Although the company hasn't made its projections for 2008 yet, Olson expects to see solid growth in Legacy's business. He credits a lot of that to investing in marketing and hiring good employees while other companies are making cutbacks.



RAINY DAYS

While remodeling has not taken the steep drops new construction has, there are still some markets that are struggling greatly. Most of those are concentrated in the industrial Midwest, where cities like Cleveland and Detroit are bucking the national trend of low unemployment and economic growth.

The struggling domestic auto industry has put Detroit on a downward trend that started last year and looks likely to continue, says Mat Vivona, president of Father & Son Construction in Troy, Mich.

"Home values have dropped drastically," he says. "That's made it difficult for the people that have wanted to remodel to qualify for financing. It's not that the demand isn't there, but the equity isn't."

Many of his competitors have not survived, with several remodelers in the area going out of business recently. In fact, one of Legacy's newest salespeople was a successful remodeler who decided to shut down his Michigan company and move to Arizona, Olson says.

To make it through the downturn, Father & Son is selling projects for less than they were a year ago. The tight market has caused a lot of trade contractors to cut their prices, a savings that the company can pass on to consumers.



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"We're telling people that they can get their projects done at a substantial savings right now," he says.

The company is also reducing its overhead to cover lower prices. For any employees who can go on a spouse's health insurance, the company is offering them money to put toward that expense in lieu of covering them. At the same time, Vivona has upped the deductible on the company's vehicle insurance to reduce that premium. Layoffs have also been necessary as sales volume has dropped from nearly \$8 million in 2006 to about \$6 million this year.

He's also looked at the company's advertising and has reduced spending that wasn't working, such as the Yellow Pages, in favor of more effective methods, like billboards. The company is also offering incentives to clients, such as free drywall and insulation with a room addition or a free sink with a kitchen remodel.

"We're doing anything we can to make them start thinking it's a good time to remodel," he says.

Detroit has been through downturns before, and the city will recover from this one as well, Vivona says.

"We know it will turn around, but we just have to be able to weather it until then," he says. "I've heard it may be a little better next year than it was this year, but you never know."

SUNNY SKIES

Everything Detroit is, Seattle is probably the opposite. While Detroit's population has plummeted, Seattle's is growing. While Detroit's economy is struggling, Seattle's is soaring.

"The market has been very insulated by its tech and aerospace industry," says Mike Tenhulzen, general manager of Tenhulzen



Remodeling in Redmond, Wash. "Ever since the dot-com bust, it's been steadily growing."

Seattle is also one of the few markets where home sales and values continue to be strong. That, combined with growth restrictions caused by government policies and geography, has made it a great place to be a remodeler.

"There's so much work to go around that we rarely run up against a competitive situation," Tenhulzen says.

The only negative to the great market is that costs continue to rise as good trade contractors find themselves constantly in demand.

"People are able to continually push up their prices, so that's meaning some higher prices for homeowners," he says.

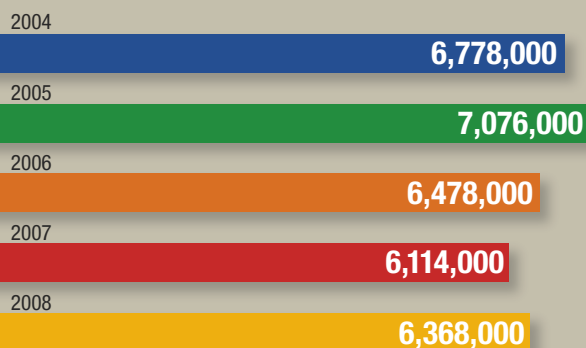
Unlike Seattle, Chicago has seen a slowdown in new construction this year, but the market continues to be strong, says Mike Nagel, president of Remodel One in Roselle, Ill., and chairman of the NAHB Remodelers.

"Chicago is a good market to be in because we're not dependent on one segment of the economy," he says. "We're having our best year ever, and I've talked to other people in the market and they're doing very well."

Nagel expects 2008 to be just as good, and from his discussions with remodelers across the country, believes that will hold true for most of the country.

"We're hearing it'll be down 2 or 3 percent nationally, but in most places I'm not seeing it," he says. "I think the big problem is we have a handful of really bad markets like Detroit that pull down the national average. The truth is, I don't put a lot of faith in the national numbers, because it's all about your local market." **PR**

Existing home sales expected to bottom out this year



Source: National Association of Realtors

The beginning of a recovery in existing home sales next year should mean an uptick in remodeling activity.

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A QUEST TO FIX MOISTURE DAMAGE TURNS INTO A COMPLETE AND CONVENIENT BACK-OF-THE-HOUSE REMODEL

Attention on Deck

By Wendy A. Jordan

KEEPING UP WITH THE NEIGHBORS took on a whole new meaning while Nan and Mark Remme prepared their wooded enclave outside Minneapolis for sale.

The homeowner had the 1993 house inspected, only to discover moisture damage behind the stucco siding. Alarmed, owners of neighboring 1993 stucco houses erected by the same builder hired a testing company to examine their houses. For many, the news was not good. The Remmes found moisture damage behind the stucco plus more under their deck that was so severe the framing would “rot away if not treated,” says Mark. They sued the builder. After three years, they reached a legal settlement in 2005 that would cover some of their repair costs.



Not wanting to get burned again, Mark Remme carefully searched out three contractors with regional experience. “I spent a lot of time on the phone” with their past clients, he says. One company, College City Remodeling, “got clean reviews across the board.” That, coupled with the company’s willingness to work with the Remmes’ schedule, sealed the deal to hire College City to fix their troubled house. The sales and design consultant Jeremy Hussey’s non-pushy, consultative selling style, was a huge factor, too.

MOISTURE REPAIR EXPERTISE

The project was well timed for the design-build firm, which had just established a business niche of repairing the area’s all-too-



PHOTOS BY ROBERT CHURCH PHOTOGRAPHY

College City pulled the rotting deck off the back of the house and replaced it with a four-season porch and an adjoining deck. New windows include tall units to capture sun and views. The new porch expands entertainment options, working as dining area, sitting area and link to the outdoors. Clipped corners on the porch make room for extra windows.

common residential moisture intrusion problems. Codes in the early 1980s and 90s, explains Hussey, “had houses wrapped so tight that water could not get out. Builders were basically building Hefty bags.”

PRODUCTS LIST

Appliances: GE Appliances, Jenn-Air, Wolf **Faucets:** Delta **Fireplace:** Heat-N-Glo **Housewrap:** DuPont Tyvek **Insulation:** Owens Corning, Foam Enterprises **Light fixtures:** Hinkley **Locksets:** Schlage **Paints and stains:** Benjamin Moore, Hirshfield's **Porcelain tile:** Ariana **Roofing:** CertainTeed **Security:** Prowire **Siding:** Owens Corning, James Hardie **Sinks:** Elkay **Windows:** Marvin





Faulty installation — not the stucco itself — can invite moisture intrusion problems, but the homeowners didn't want to take chances. To eliminate potential concerns about stucco at resale and to freshen the look, they chose fiber cement panels and stone facing for the front of the house.

“Our job [in moisture intrusion projects] is to be efficient, professional, and to put the house back together with the least amount of hassle,” says General Manager Bjorn Freudenthal. To explain the process, manage expectations and assure moisture repair clients that their work is in capable hands, College City gives them a professionally designed 21-step project outline. It identifies every step of the way and approximately how long each step takes — from initial contact by a clients’ attorney through legal proceedings to remediation and retesting one year after completion of repairs. Estimated time for the remediation itself: 63 days.

In January 2005, Hussey and Production Manager Steve McDonald, a building science expert, assessed the Remme house, identifying about \$100,000 in moisture damage. Some occurred

around inadequately flashed windows and roofing joints; other damage hit areas where the stucco came in direct contact with the ground. In one situation, Hussey’s team tore stucco off to have the sheathing come with it — the worst rotting occurred under the deck and the wall of the bedroom under it. The deck studs were rotted, and there was no vapor barrier between block and insulation in the bedroom wall.

The Remmes replaced all the siding, windows and roofing. They also upgraded to fiber cement siding and an eye-catching stone veneer front. Mark Remme says they wanted to get away from stucco because it affects resale value. And because the walls were being opened and College City offers design build services, the Remmes seized the opportunity to add a porch and

THE FINANCIALS

College City Remodeling normally uses a six-draw schedule, but General Manager Bjorn Freudenthal broke with the standard for the Remme project, allowing the homeowners to combine several draws in one large payment at final walk-through. “We were playing with the way their funding was coming through” from the insurance company, he says. Having worked closely with the Remmes during project planning, he explains, “we had a level of relationship that made us feel com-

Budget History

Initial estimate:	\$250,329
Final estimate:	\$250,329
Change orders:	\$19,883
Final price of job:	\$270,212
Cost to produce:	\$215,799
Gross profit:	\$54,414
Budgeted gross profit:	22%
Actual gross profit:	20.1%

fortable doing this.”

Gross profit on the job slipped 1.9 points, to 20.1 percent. Though relatively small, such slippage “usually does not happen for us,” says Freudenthal. “We recognize a margin

gain on a yearly basis on all our projects. Our planning process up front is extremely elaborate,” he explains. “Product selections and plans are signed off on before construction starts, so we don’t have to put the fluff factor into our pricing. That helps us stay competitive, but sometimes it bites us.” A few factors, including slightly underestimating the moisture damage under the deck, having to reinstall the porch windows at a lower height, and repairing the great room carpet, nibbled at gross profits on the Remme project.



new deck, update the kitchen and create a more open, integrated entertainment space.

HASSLE-REDUCTION QUOTIENT

Because the battle-weary Remmes occupied their house during the repair, the hassle-reduction quotient had to be especially high. To minimize intrusion, College City built the porch addition before breaking through the adjoining kitchen wall. "That was very much appreciated," says Mark Remme. Next they installed new vapor barriers, windows, siding, and flashing. During the kitchen remodel, the crew removed all debris via the addition and left parts of the kitchen functional whenever possible. Work on the lower level came after the main level was finished.

"Keeping the job site clean was our No. 1 concern," says Hussey. Plastic zip walls protected occupied rooms from dust and the elements. The crew put tarps over the furniture and replaced protective floor runners frequently. The site was always clean and free of tools at the end of the day, says Mark Remme. "They always left the job site secured and covered, assuming it might rain" — which it often did.

College City tailored its communication system to reduce client stress. The project superintendent kept the homeowners' informed. "We weren't surprised when the water or electricity was turned off," Mark Remme says. All questions were answered quickly; "We had [the superintendent's] cell phone number and he had our office numbers," and "everybody [who worked on the job] was courteous," says Mark Remme. "I never heard foul language."

As part of College City's standard service, staff designer Jennifer Murnan not only designed the project but also provided interior and site design guidance and problem solving along the way. She went to product showrooms with the Remmes, for example, and designed a lighting plan for the newly landscaped backyard.

It was Murnan who suggested the new three-sided fireplace near



The remodeled kitchen features dark granite counters, an earth-tone tile backsplash, wood cabinets and wood flooring that meld with the home's location and complement the finishes in the porch and great room.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Date	Stage of Project	Payment
Jan. 7, 2005	Initial meeting	
March 16, 2005	Budget estimate signed	\$550
May 16, 2005	Construction contract	\$62,582
May 19, 2005	Begin tear-off	
June 10, 2005	Complete framing	
July 1, 2005	Begin drywall	\$62,582
July 11, 2005	Begin deck	
July 30, 2005	Complete siding	
August 18, 2005	Final kitchen plumbing and electrical	
Sept. 2, 2005	Exterior walk-through	
Oct. 4, 2005	Interior walk-through	\$140,000
Dec. 12, 2005	Final payment	\$4,498

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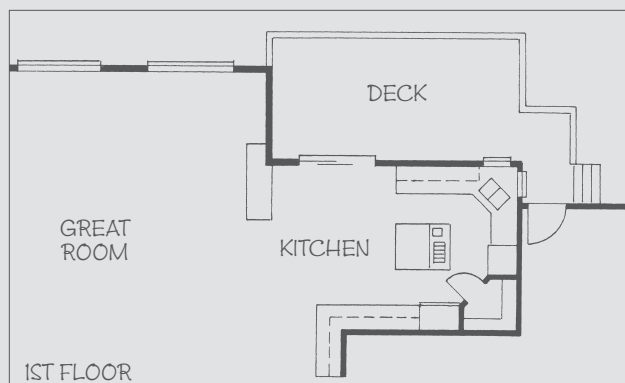
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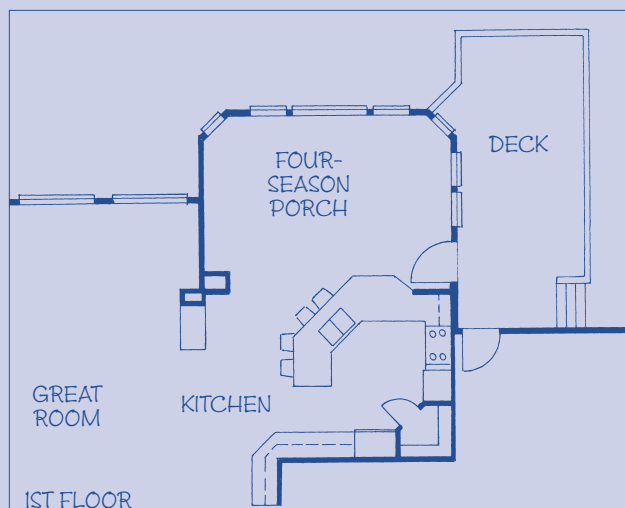


The four-season porch becomes an extension of the kitchen and provides an open-entertainment area with spectacular views to the river valley.

Before



After



COMPANY SNAPSHOT

College City Remodeling

(a division of College City Homes)

Owners: Daren, David, and Dale Pavak

Location: Lakeville, Minn.

2006 volume: \$2,684,353

Projected 2007 volume: \$3,882,704

Biggest challenge: Providing a hassle-free remodeling experience for clients when almost every room would be affected

Web site: www.collegecityremodeling.com

the entry be finished with stone to match the exterior. She also calculated the perfect height for the unit, assuring that the fireplace would be sufficiently elevated yet not obstruct views between the family room and kitchen. For code reasons the fireplace could not be vented straight out the back. Instead, College City ran the vent up through the roof inside a slim, stone-faced chase.

SMOOTHING THE WAY

Extensive planning up front precluded delays for product selection or subcontractor availability. All told, the job took about a month more than planned, mainly due to change orders. "They kept the project going as fast as they could," Mark Remme says.

Though subcontractors generally handle all College City production except the framing and finish carpentry, they function as members of a tight-knit team. That's because most have long-term relationships with College City and because they are managed as part of the company. "We know each other's operations inside and out," says Freudenthal. "We look at our subs as part of ourselves. All our subs come in for quarterly communications meetings to set our company goals and standards. It's the way we make sure they will meet our expectations."

College City advised the Remmes to choose neutral colors and finishes that wouldn't soon look dated. They preferred earth tones anyway, especially because of their home's wooded setting. Deer, fox, wild turkeys, eagles, coyotes and rabbits often wander into their backyard. Every year female turtles wind their way up from the river to a high point in the Remmes' back lawn to lay their eggs. During the remodel dismayed workers found turtles in their path and asked what they should do. "Work around them," said the Remmes. So they did. Sawhorses straddling their nests, the turtles survived. **PR**

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MUSICAL RENDITION

PHOTOS BY RICH SISTOS PHOTOGRAPHY

Homeowners sing the praises of a conservatory that fosters both creativity and relaxation

SUNROOM ADDITION

REMODELER AND ARCHITECT: Lehner Brunton Remodelers, Warrenville, Ill.

PROJECT LOCATION: Wheaton, Ill.

AGE OF HOME: 30-plus years

SCOPE OF WORK: Two-story rear addition with floor-to-ceiling windows

FOR THIS SUNROOM ADDITION in

Wheaton, Ill., it was imperative the homeowner, who is an opera singer, have a beautiful, inspirational place to sing and write music. The room also had to reflect her and her husband's world travels. They approached Lehner Brunton because the company had done two previous additions on the client's home.

"She spends lot of time in Europe, and she brought a lot of the ideas of what she wanted in the project, like the type of flooring and the balcony treatment, based on places she'd seen," says Robert E. Lehner, president and owner of Lehner Brunton Remodelers in Warrenville, Ill. "Because she had a very distinct idea of what she wanted, I knew it would not be a typical sunroom. It would be grand, and it would not be traditional."

The number of window installations doubled the project time from two months to four months. "Because of the commercial-grade materials and techniques, we went slower than usual, but it was important to double- and triple-check," Lehner says.



BEFORE



The imported Italian stone flooring was a must-have for the homeowners, who gave up a sill cock and floor drainage system that didn't meet code specifications. The sill cock was moved to the exterior wall, and couldn't be split because it would have required poking holes in the steel beams.

PRODUCTS LIST

HVAC: Carrier **Doors:** Pella **Home Systems Control:** Leviton, Lutron **Lighting Fixtures:** Halo, Juno **Housewrap:** Tyvek
Insulation: Owens Corning **Locksets:** Schlage **Paints & Stains:** Benjamin Moore **Millwork & Molding:** Woodgrain Millwork
Roofing: CertainTeed **Siding:** Norandex **Windows:** Pella, Velux

Steel to scale

Bearing the loads of each window and maintaining the integrity of the corners where the walls meet was crucial, so subcontracting crews welded 12- and 18-foot steel I-beams to the wood framing to strengthen the walls and reduce stress from the roof weight. To secure the window headers, Lehner Brunton Remodeler's crews used microlams perpendicular to the beams.

"We knew these types of techniques were common to commercial construction, and we had used that type of steel on a horizontal basis for floor loads, but never in walls," Robert Lehner, the company president, says. "This added at least a week, with the crane and spot-welding."

The 600-square-foot conservatory features 31 windows and six remote-controlled skylights that ventilate the room and provide shade. The skylights can be set by timer, and also have weather sensors to automatically close. The floor slabs were built with both electrical wiring and ductwork to accommodate speakers, a television and a watering outlet for plants.

Matching the conservatory siding to the existing home posed a big aesthetic challenge; the existing siding style had been discontinued, and the homeowners did not want to replace the home's siding just to match the addition. Lehner Brunton crews went to approximately six shops throughout the country before they found a product that was really seamless in both color and grain pattern.

"Both of the homeowners work very hard, and they want to enjoy their 'castle.' They now have a place to relax with fresh air, lots of light, lovely plants and a view of their garden from within," Lehner says. "They have no intention of moving; they are only making improvements for themselves — not for increasing the resale value of their home." **PR**

— Meghan Haynes

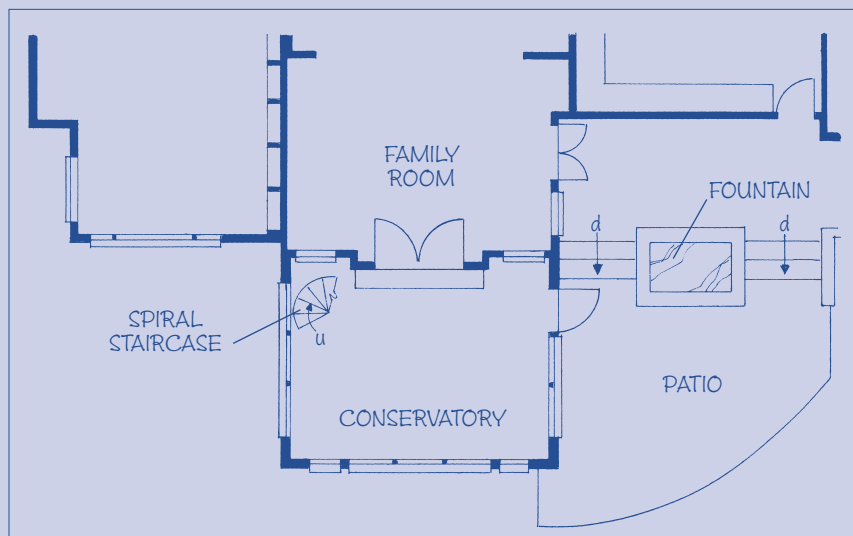
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The master bedroom's window had to be carefully dismantled to accommodate the new French window and preserve the existing arch. The wrought iron railing and spiral staircase echo the casing of the arch and bold color balance against the existing sand-colored window and door trim.

After



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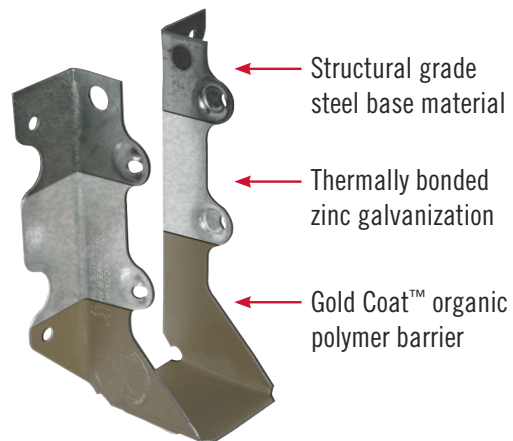
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SHEDDING LIGHT ON YOUR REMODEL

How to choose bulbs that make your project look its best

By Kelly Cutchin
for PATH Partners

PICTURE YOUR CLIENTS IN A HOME

improvement store trying to buy light bulbs. Many people — remodelers and homeowners alike — feel guilty reaching for the incandescents — in different shapes, sizes, outputs and color — which sit next to shelves of CFLs. CFLs are more efficient, but which do people likely choose?

The wide variety of bulbs now available can be overwhelming. It's awfully tempting to install incandescent bulbs everywhere. It's the easy choice — but it's rarely the best one.

When talking with your clients about lighting, we recommend encouraging them to give CFLs a second look. Many people think that fluorescent lighting is bad, but with new technologies — and an understanding of what works best where — it can work for you and your clients.

Your options abound. There's a place for motion sensors, dimmers and halogens, too.

Read on to discover how these bulbs and controls can deliver high quality light and energy savings for your clients to enjoy.

How to Pick a CFL: Base Camp

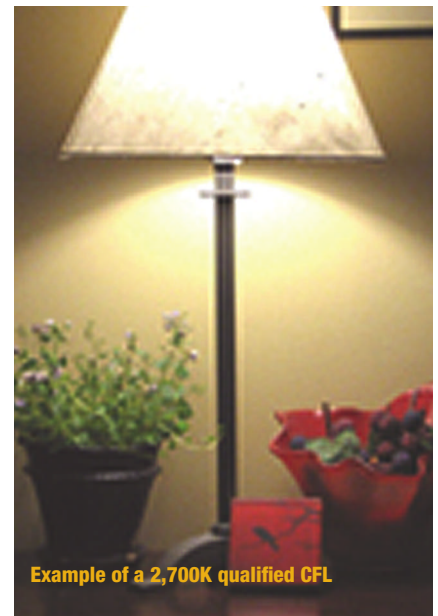
Fluorescents, which include tubular bulbs and compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), use 75 percent less energy than incandescents. CFLs also last about 10 times longer and have a much lower operating temperature, so they're cool to the touch.

So, let's start with the basics — or the bases. CFLs come with two types of bases: screw-in and pin-base.

Screw-in bases are easy to integrate into a lighting plan because they are physically



Example of a 3,500K qualified CFL



Example of a 2,700K qualified CFL

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ENERGY STAR

compatible with existing fixtures. Installing them in fixtures with rapid on-off cycles (like the bathroom) results in quicker-than-advertised burnout rate. For fire safety reasons, only use CFLs with a dimmer if the packaging says you can.

Pin-base bulbs plug into specifically designed fixtures. Some of these fixtures isolate the ballast from the light source, making both ballast and bulb last longer. These bulbs can only be replaced with more CFLs, ensuring continued energy savings. Drawbacks of pin-base bulbs include the cost of new fixtures and the potential that a specific base type will be discontinued.

Finishing School

A space's lighting affects its look and feel. A properly lit living room feels warm and inviting. Lighting architects earn top dollar to

design lighting strategies for retail spaces. It's important to offer effective lighting in homes, too.

To achieve the right ambience, you must answer two questions: how much light does the client want, and what color should it be?

Because incandescent bulbs are labeled in watts but light output is actually measured in lumens, picking a CFL to recommend can be confusing. Start with an Energy Star-qualified CFL, and find one that produces an equivalent amount of lumens as the bulb you would normally install. Manufacturers include this information right on the product packaging.

The color of the light a bulb produces is identified by the correlated color temperature (CCT) measured in Kelvins (K). At first, the CCT appears to be counterintuitive, because what we term "cooler" falls on the

Three main lighting functions

Type of Lighting	Use Pattern	Example	Bulb Suggestions	CCT Recommendations
General Lighting	Short-term Use	Hallways, bathrooms, laundry rooms	CFL or incandescent bulb with a motion sensor	High CCT (3,500K) Natural, full-spectrum or "bright white"
	Long-term Use	Kitchen overhead	CFL	High CCT
Task Lighting		Living area overhead	CFL or incandescent on a dimmer	Low CCT (2,700K)
		Washing dishes, chopping veggies	CFL	High CCT
Safety Lighting		Reading, etc	CFL	Low CCT
		Inside	CFL	High CCT
		Outside	Halogen or CFL on motion sensor	Doesn't matter

Source: Energy Star - Learn more at www.energystar.gov



higher (or hotter) end of this scale. A lower CCT indicates a warmer light. Thus, a CFL with a CCT around 2,700 Kelvins is similar to a "soft white" incandescent bulb and accentuates warm colors. In the kitchen, a 3,500 Kelvins bulb is closer to natural daylight and provides a fresh, clean look.

If you purchase a lot of bulbs at once and have a place to store them, you might consider purchasing them in bulk. Energy Star-qualified screw-in and pin-based bulbs and the associated fixtures (along with other energy-efficient products) are available for bulk purchase at www.quantityquotes.net.

Know the Function

Lighting is usually described in terms of its function. The three main functions are:

- General lighting: overhead fixtures that illuminate a large area, like the kitchen

or hallway

- Task lighting: fixtures placed to illuminate a specific area (like a reading lamp beside your living room chair or a recessed light over the kitchen sink)
- Safety lighting: usually outside lights that illuminate steps, walkways or driveways.

Design projects with the function of the space in mind to achieve high-quality lighting and energy savings. For example, if you have a lighting fixture on either end of the kitchen ceiling, each equipped with two 75-watt bulbs (general lighting) both fixtures must be on to avoid casting a shadow over the sink when doing dishes. That's a total of 300 watts (75 watts x 4 bulbs) of energy use. One recessed 100-watt lamp installed above the sink (task lighting) would provide superior light for one-third the operating costs. Similar inefficiencies hold true if task lighting is used for general lighting.

General lighting: Long-term general lighting is overhead lighting that is left on for hours in a row almost every day — the kind you find in the family room or kitchen. CFLs are ideal for these applications because they perform best when they are left on for long periods of time.

Short-term general lighting is for short bursts of light in the bathroom, hallway or laundry room, for example. In these cases, motion sensors are convenient and great for energy savings. They also offer hands-free operation, which is nice for clients with limited mobility. And they'll never have to remember to turn out the lights either.

Nothing lasts forever: How to dispose CFLs

Eventually, your CFLs will burn out and need to be replaced. CFLs are categorized as hazardous household waste (HHW) because they contain about 5 milliliters of mercury — enough to cover the tip of a ballpoint pen. Like batteries and oil-based paints, CFLs must be disposed of properly. Did you know:

- Recycling bulbs can reclaim up to 95 percent of the mercury. To see if there is a recycling facility in your area, visit www.earth911.org.
- Many municipalities have a HHW section or offer special pick-ups.
- If the bulb has burned out within the warranty period, you can return it to the retailer and get a new one.
- If a bulb breaks, do not vacuum the pieces, as this will spread mercury through the air. Instead, clean up fragments using disposable materials. Use tape to pick up the smallest pieces and place them in a sealed plastic bag to throw out.

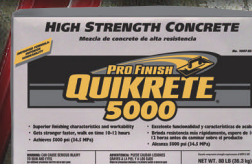
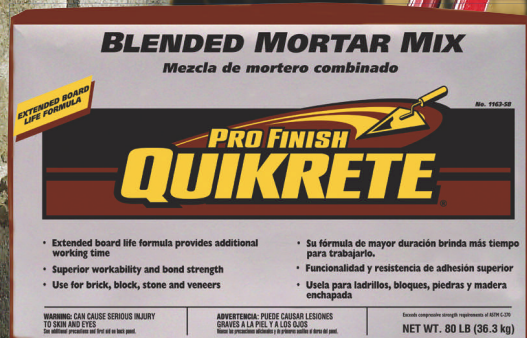
For more detailed clean-up instructions, visit Energystar.gov and click on lighting, then "How to Dispose of Compact Fluorescent Lamps: CFLs and Mercury."



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Light Output Equivalency

To determine which Energy Star qualified light bulbs will provide the same amount of light as your current incandescent light bulbs, consult the following chart:

Incandescent light bulbs	Minimum light output	Common ENERGY STAR qualified light bulbs
Watts	Lumens	Watts
40	450	9-13
60	800	13-15
75	1,100	18-25
100	1,600	23-30
150	2,600	30-52

Source: Energy Star - Learn more at www.energystar.gov

Manufacturers make it easy to determine light output.

With a motion sensor, CFLs will consume less electricity than incandescents, but they may burn out after two years instead of the advertised seven years because of short on-off cycles. If you do choose a CFL, look for one with a CCT rating around 3,500 Kelvins ("bright white" and "natural light").

In some cases, the versatility of incandescent bulbs outweighs the energy savings of CFLs, and that's usually true for dimmers. Incandescents on dimmers can soften the lighting and save energy as well.

There are CFLs on the market that are dimmer-compatible, but they don't yet offer the same range of light quality we've come to expect. CFLs only dim to about 20 percent of the rated lumens, don't have the "softening" effect, and when turned down too far, they turn off completely. If you do install a CFL with a dimmer, be sure the package says the CFL is meant for this use.

Task lighting: Proper task lighting is specifically placed to illuminate a work area, such as the kitchen counter where food is prepared.

If the homeowner simply wants better light for washing dishes, install a screw-mounted fluorescent tube light (available at most hardware stores for \$20) beneath the upper kitchen cabinets.

For more versatile lighting, install recessed cans under the cabinets above the counter space. Equip them with reflector, dimmable CFLs to function as task lighting when needed and as mood lighting or nightlights when desired. Like other kitchen lighting,

kitchen task lighting looks nicer when bulbs have a relatively high CCT.

For reading, recommend they equip table or floor lamps with screw-base CFLs in the lower CCT range to achieve a cozy look.

Safety lighting: Safety lighting illuminates walkways or driveways and should connect to either a motion sensor or photocell so that even unannounced guests can find their way safely up the front steps. CFLs work fine in this situation if you bear two things in mind. First, people have reported difficulties combining CFLs and photocells. To avoid problems, install dimmable CFLs with photocells. Second, CFLs are limited by a minimum operating temperature. Below the minimum, they take longer to illuminate, so in the winter in cold climates you may be up the stairs by the time the lights are on if they're connected to a motion sensor. For year-round use in cold climates, halogens on sensors are the way to go. Halogen bulbs use more electricity than CFLs but still only one-third the electricity of incandescent bulbs. Because of their high operating temperature, halogens are not recommended for use in torchieres indoors. **PR**

Kelly Cutchin writes about better building practices on behalf of the Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing (PATH). PATH is administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Learn more at www.pathnet.org.

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CAMBRIA

The Desert Collection of surfaces from Cambria reflects, according to the company, a consumer trend toward using a variety of colors on different surfaces.

The Cherrybrook (shown), Fieldstone, Hazelford and Oakhampton are among the offerings — all of which feature natural quartz color and pattern variations.

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The Motif series from Aquatic is a departure from traditional tubs but eschews the antiseptic, ultra-modern look of other manufacturers. The tub features a curved edge for neck support and multiple massage jets. Five to seven new tubs will be introduced across the company's product lines by 2008.

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Easy-Arch pre-formed metal framing arches reduce time and labor spent on forming arches in the field. According to the company, trade professionals can install 12 to 18 Easy-Arch arches in the time it takes to build one manually. The arches are delivered ready to install in standard sizes for 2 by 4, 2 by 6 and adjustable applications.

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HUSKY

Weighing in at a slim 10 ounces is Husky's 5-in-1 Professional's Drywall Tool. Designed to provide users with the five hand tools used most frequently when installing sheet rock or drywall, the tool measures only six inches from end to end and is constructed of aircraft-grade aluminum.

For FREE information, visit
<http://pr.ims.ca/5348-130>



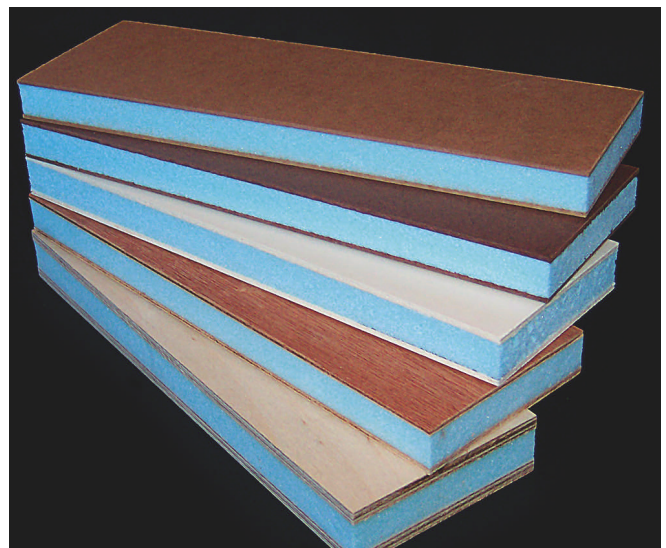
SYMMONS

Previously available for the bathroom and originally designed for world-class hotels, the Elements line is the latest collection of pull-out kitchen faucets from Symmons. The offerings include five new styles:

Andora, Fiano, Forza, Moscato and Vella.

The faucets are available in polished chrome, Radiance satin or Radiance polished brass finishes.

For FREE information, visit
<http://pr.ims.ca/5348-131>



THE KERFKORE CO.

Foamkore is a lightweight panel that features a polystyrene foam core and thin face materials with a proprietary moisture-resistant glue. The panels, made by The Kerfkore Co., can accept a variety of edging options, including edge capture, edge insert, outer edge band, edgebanding and corner post. Sizes run 4 by 8 with thicknesses ranging from 3/4 to 3 inches.

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*Independent Market Research



MYSON

Pre-planning and installation can be a headache when it comes to HVAC renovations. Myson's T6 IVC Center-Connection Radiator is a dual-panel, double convector radiator that offers the advantages of a 2-inch central connection as well as the standard four corner connection to save remodelers time. The T6 IVC replaces baseboard up to 29 feet and delivers up to 16,036 BTUs per hour. It carries a five-year warranty.

For FREE information, visit
<http://pr.ims.ca/5348-133>



CONSTRUCTION SOLUTIONS

With fire safety in mind, the DBX1000M metal dryer box from Construction Solutions minimizes fire hazards by providing a recessed area in the wall for the dryer vent hose, thereby reducing the possibility of kinks in the hose, which largely contributes to fires caused by lint build-up. It also allows the gas line connection to be made within the cavity, and the box can be rotated in any direction to accommodate both upward or downward venting.

For FREE information, visit
<http://pr.ims.ca/5348-134>



YORK

It's all about giving homeowners options, and York's Hybrid Comfort System aims to do just that. An electric heat pump provides warmth during mild winter weather, while a gas furnace provides supplemental heat during colder days. The company says the system can contribute to big savings on utility bills, and the units may also help homeowners qualify for utility and tax incentives.

For FREE information, visit <http://pr.ims.ca/5348-135>



RINNAI

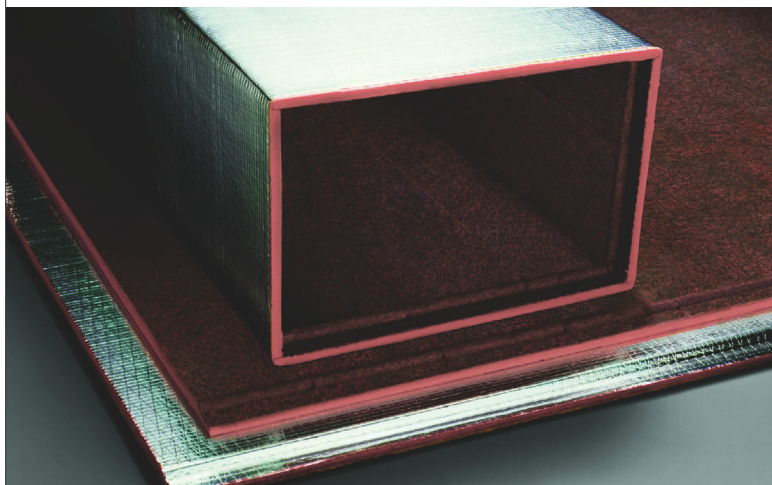
Recently certified by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), the C98 series (also known as the 3237 series) from Rinnai is now available in both indoor and external versions. The R98i-ASME and R98e-ASME are for residential use where ASME certification is required. The units have 9.8 gallon-per-minute output at a 35-degree temperature rise.

For FREE information, visit
<http://pr.ims.ca/5348-136>

OWENS CORNING

Nothing is worse than noisy ducts in the middle of the night. Owens Corning's QuietR ducts offer, according to the company, 75 percent more energy efficiency than plain sheet metal ducts. Air leaks are reduced eightfold, resulting in less sound transmission through the house, and, most importantly for some, the pops and creaks found in normal sheet metal ducts are greatly reduced.

For **FREE** information, visit <http://pr.ims.ca/5348-137>



COLEMAN HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING

The Comforter TCGD series of air conditioners with MicroChannel coil technology from Coleman Heating & Air Conditioning are made in eight 13+ SEER models. The smallest unit only measures 24 inches high by 23½ inches wide by 23½ deep and weighs only 96 pounds. The units use R-22 refrigerant and feature a standard limited warranty (five years on parts and five years on the compressor).

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Best of both worlds

It can be difficult to separate yourself from the pack selling exterior remodeling.

That's why Rembrandt Remodeling has always focused on offering products that are different from the competition, says President James B. Bishop.

"We sell fiberglass windows when the competition is selling vinyl; we have the Owens Corning basement system instead of drywall," he says.

The latest differentiator for the Marietta, Ga., company is EnergyClad, a siding system Rembrandt developed using James Hardie fiber cement.

"The idea was to offer a maintenance-free siding that had all the properties of HardiePlank," he says. "People want a siding that doesn't look like vinyl but is still something they don't have to take care of."

The system features eWrap thermal barrier behind the siding, which blocks up to 97 percent of radiant heat in both directions. The HardiePlank itself is coated with CoolWall, an acrylic coating from Textured Coatings of America. All together, the system has a lifetime warranty and reduces energy costs by up to 20 percent, Bishop says.

The company has been selling the new system for less than a year, but Rembrandt's siding business has doubled since last year, representing a little less than half of its \$8 million annual volume.

"Everybody who sees it wants it on their home," Bishop says. "The only problem we have is the high price tag, which is discouraging some people."

Bishop estimates that homeowners could buy James Hardie siding from someone else for about half of what he sells the system. The price difference stems from not only the improvements he makes during installation, but also the fact that much of Rembrandt's competition is pick-up truck contractors without the type of overhead an established company has to worry about.

For more information on Rembrandt's EnergyClad system, visit www.energy-clad.com.



TEMPLE-INLAND

Adding to its line of engineered wood siding, Temple-Inland's CypressShake lap siding combines a cypress texture with the installation simplicity of lap siding. Tagged a "hybrid product" by the company, it can be applied in horizontal courses like lap siding while featuring vertical texture like panel siding. CypressShake is available in 1/2-inch thickness and in one-foot wide laps and 16-foot lengths.

For FREE information, visit
<http://pr.ims.ca/5348-139>

STO CORP.

Cement board stucco by Sto Corp. now includes three system options: the StoQuik Silver System I for weather-protected walls and ceilings; the NEXt for all-weather exposures and the NEXt-Ventilated, which provides a drainage cavity. According to the company, all three systems require very little maintenance and provide impact and weather resistance.

For FREE information, visit
<http://pr.ims.ca/5348-140>



ELDORADO STONE

Inspired by a customized blend developed by the company for a California community, the Cypress Ridge profile from Eldorado Stone features a combination of irregular stone shapes, multiple rustic-influenced colors and varying depths. Colors include moss-like Orchard, warm-hued Summerhouse and the warm/cold stone colors of Countryside.

For FREE information, visit
<http://pr.ims.ca/5348-141>



ATLANTIS PLASTICS

Half-round and shingle options from Atlantis Plastics include the Cedarway. Designed with the look and feel of natural split cedar, the line comes in eight of the most popular exterior shades in two distinctive profiles. Matching accessories for maximum design flexibility are available. According to Atlantis, the product won't crack, warp, rot or split.

For FREE information, visit <http://pr.ims.ca/5348-142>



ALCOA

Available in 5-, 6½-, 7- and 9½-inch profiles to accent gable areas or even cover an entire home, the Cedar Discovery molded shingles from Alcoa resemble the look of hand-tooled, half-round cedar shingles. According to the company, the shingles require little maintenance and carry a warranty from the manufacturer.

For FREE information, visit <http://pr.ims.ca/5348-143>



BUECHEL STONE CORP.

Veneers and manufactured stone have stolen the headlines, but the Chilton Woodlake Blend from Buechel Stone Corp. is a natural building and cladding stone that features a combination of irregular- and rectangular-shaped pieces. Colors include gray, blue, brown, lavender and mauve. The company's stone offerings are quarried and distributed nationally.

For FREE information, visit <http://pr.ims.ca/5348-144>

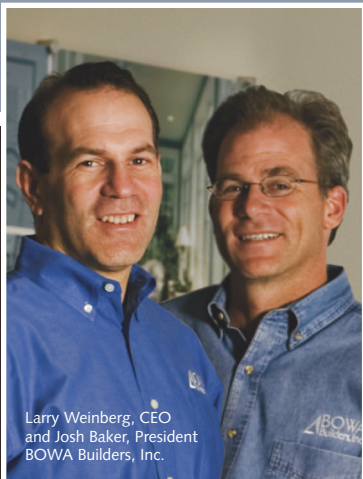


ALSIDE

The Prodigy Next Generation Insulated Siding from Alside is a one-piece insulated siding system with precision-contoured insulation bonds secured to the siding panel to create an integrated system. The product's overall thickness provides an R-value of 5.0. It features a patent-pending interlocking panel design for a secure fit with no insulation gap.

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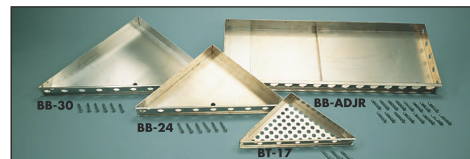
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DaimlerChrysler Corp.	38, 39	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-16
Dow Chemical Company	27	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-12
Ford Motor Company	6, 7	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-4
James Hardie Building Products Inc.	55	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-25
JELD-WEN	C2-1	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-1
Latitudes	C3	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-32
LG HI-MACS	4	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-3
Marvin Windows & Doors	18, 19	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-10
Moen Inc.	41	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-17
Pella Corp.	14, 15	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-7, 8
+ PGT Industries	52-A	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-23
Professional Remodeler	62	
+ Quality Stone Veneer	59-A	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-28
Quiet Solutions	33	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-15
Quikrete Companies	49	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-20
Red Wing Shoe Co.	16	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-9
Reico Kitchen & Bath	46	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-19
SBR/Simonton Windows	31	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-14
Silver Line Windows	23	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-11
Therma-Tru Doors	C4	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-33
Trex	56	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-26
TTI Group	8	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-5
Unico	58	
US Cellular	51	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-22
USG	50	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-21
USP Structural Connectors	45	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-18
Weyerhaeuser	2	http://pr.ims.ca/5348-2
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CONTACT INFO:

Associate Publisher/Director of Sales

Tony Mancini
610/205-1180, Fax 610/205-1183
armancini@reedbusiness.com

E-media Solutions Manager

Shannon Darmody
630/288-7963, Fax 630/288-8145
shannon.darmody@reedbusiness.com

Regional Manager Northeast

CT, DC, DE, ME, MD, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, VA, WV
John Huff
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Jason Dragos
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Regional Manager Great Lakes

IN, KY, MI, OH, Eastern Canada
Jeff Elliott
616/846-4633, Fax 616/846-4802
jelliott@reedbusiness.com

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AZ, AR, Southern California, CO, HI, LA, NM, OK, TX
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Emily Clay
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emily.clay@reedbusiness.com

Inside Sales

Shelley Perez
630/288-8022, Fax 630/288-8145
shelley.perez@reedbusiness.com

Business Development

KT McNamara
563/332-9231, Fax 630/288-8145
ktmcnamara@reedbusiness.com

Events/Custom Publishing Director

Judy Brociek
630/288-8184, Fax 630/288-8145
jbrociek@reedbusiness.com

Administrative Support

Rebecca Breskman
Administrative Assistant
610/205-1179
rebecca.breskman@reedbusiness.com

Arlean Talley

Administrative Assistant
630/288-8183
arlean.talley@reedbusiness.com

Advertising Production Manager

Christopher Melody, 630/288-8423

Advertising Contracts

Stephanie West, 630/288-8419
stephanie.west@reedbusiness.com

Director of Electronic Media

Karthi Gandhi, 630/288-8145
karthi.gandhi@reedbusiness.com

Editorial & Publishing Office

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2000 Clearwater Drive, Oak Brook, IL 60523
Phone: 630/288-8000, Fax: 630/288-8145



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GO VISIT THE ELEPHANT

Our nation was built on the back of successful small family business. Our national economy still rests on the small to mid-size privately held firm involved in providing products or service to clients. The majority of firms in the professional remodeling field are made up of family members who build a reputation and grow with referrals.

Why do so many of these remodeling firms fail to make it to the next generation? Studies show only 34 percent of these family businesses will make it to the second generation. Far fewer will get to the third or fourth. Here are a few reminders to make your family remodeling business stay and remain strong:

1. Resolve conflict between generations. The first generation doesn't want to talk about the future. The second wants to know where they stand. You need to understand that everyone has emotional issues to get off their chest — the "elephant in the other room." We all have gray issues, some worse than others. You may

peek in the other room and see the whole issue, or even worse, just the trunk of a large pachyderm on someone's mind. The sooner you visit the elephant in the other room, the better off you will find yourself.

2. Prepare future generations for leadership. The second and succeeding generations need to learn how to lead and build trust with the rest of the family. There are clear goals for everyone (not just non-family members) that will be followed. Job descriptions are important so everyone knows the expectations. Everyone will be accountable and have clarity on where they stand.

Even if you resolve all the issues the family may have, you still need good leadership.

3. Define the family employment policy. A written employment policy is very important to govern the current and future rules for joining the family business. These are best if they are written out and also explained at a family council meeting in person. Set aside time for anyone who is interested to attend and answer questions

from spouses, children and any others interested in joining the business full time or for summer help. It can handle questions on company trucks, educational requirements and if family members should supervise other family members.

4. Understand the succession plan. You need to have plenty of time and some professional help to make the succession plan work. Many families spend 10 years on this plan, so make sure you get started early. Accurate valuation of the business and cross-purchase agreements in the event of an untimely death are a great place to start. You may also need financing arrangements and advice to pay the first generation for the stock it owns. A financial planner will assist with stock gifting questions all generations will have. Surround yourself with a good accountant, lawyer and financial professionals to help you answer questions.

Those families who visit the tough issues will provide a wonderful service to the next generation and foster a successful place to succeed. **PR**



Alan Hendy

Advisory Board Columnist

Birth Date: Sept. 19, 1966

Company: Neal's Design-Remodel

Location: Cincinnati

Favorite Business Books: Anything by Tom Peters

Best Advice You've Received: "Do it right the first time," from my Dad

If I Weren't a Remodeler: I would like to write books

Most Important Issue Facing the Industry: Improving service levels

Greatest Business Achievement: Better Business Bureau's Torch Award for Business Ethics

Hobbies: Golfing, fishing

Pets: Harry, my dog, Truman, my cat

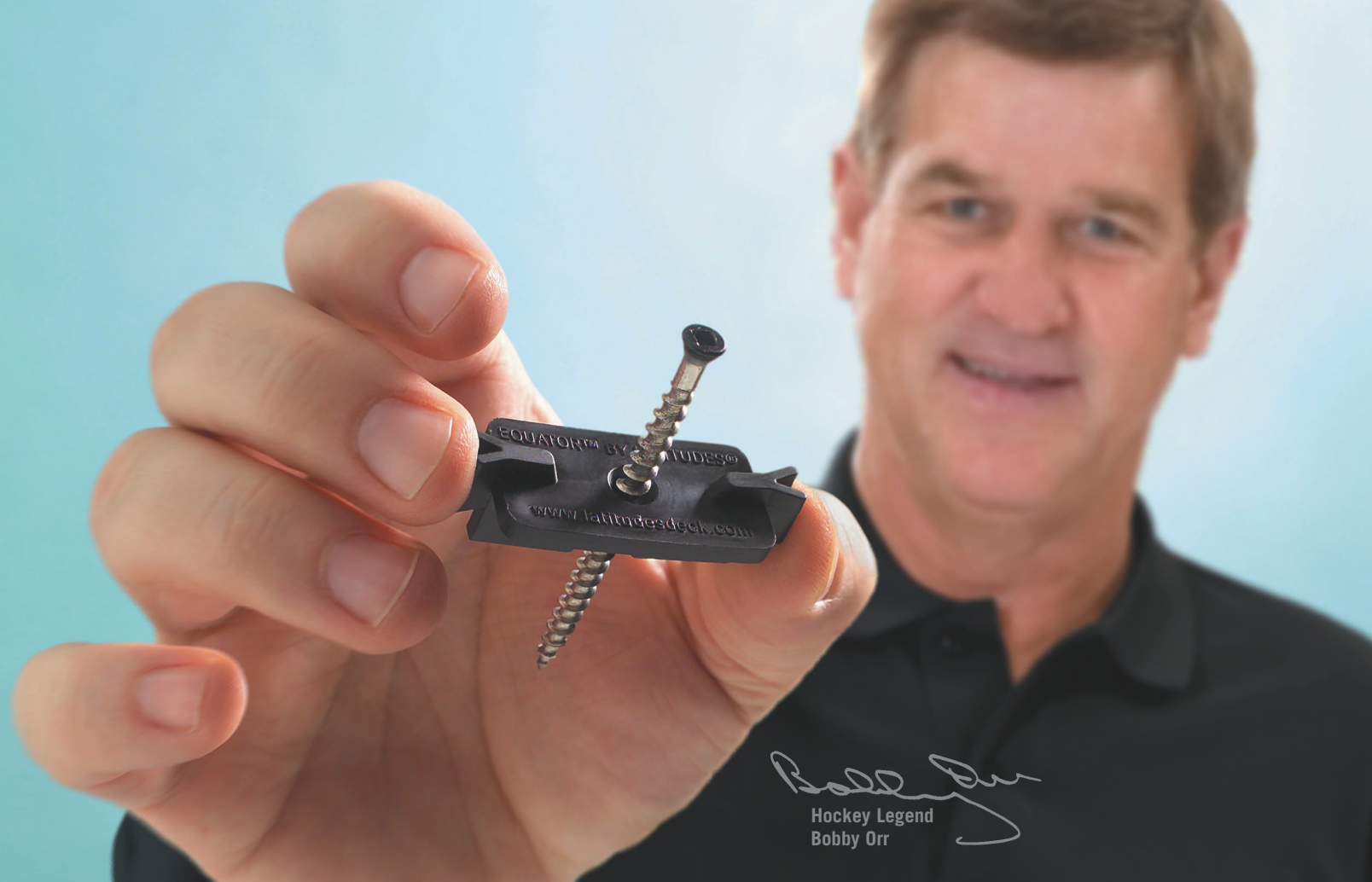
Most Embarrassing Moment: Lost my suit in a swim meet, didn't stop and finished second

What You Wanted to Be When You Grew Up: Cincinnati Reds Pitcher
Something No One Knows About Me: I love Euchre

Editorial Advisory Board

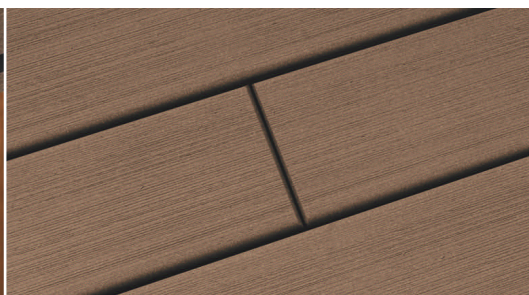
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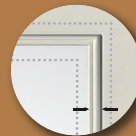
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