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OCTOBER 2008

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Going green isn't just for tree huggers anymore

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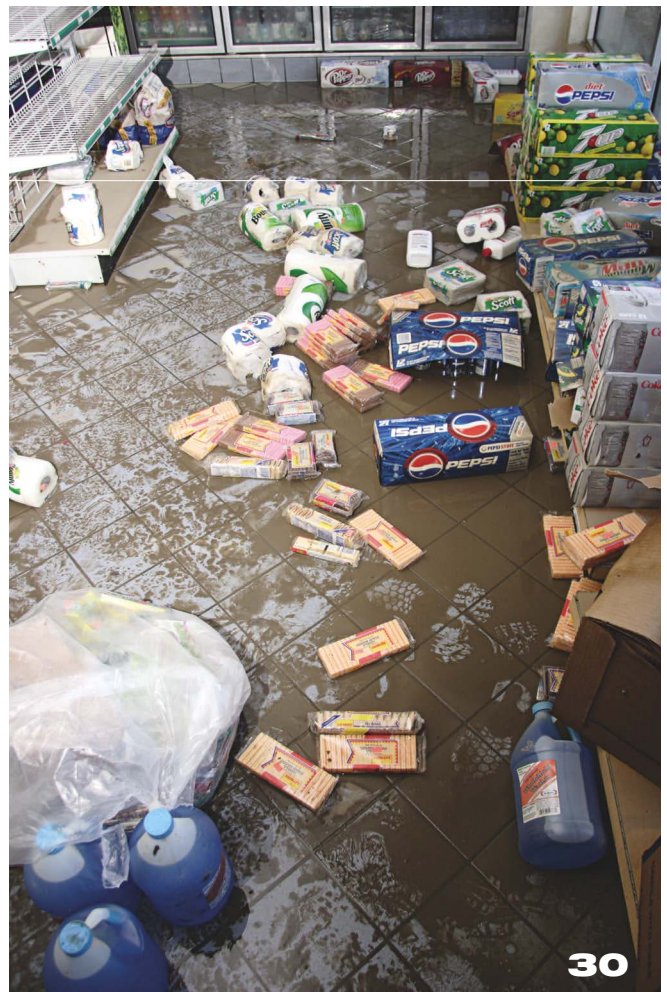


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Embracing Green

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Remodeling Notes

Senior Editor Jonathan Sweet posts the latest news and views from the remodeling industry several times a week.

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ONLINE POLL

What are your clients' attitudes about green?

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LEVERAGE YOUR CLIENT BASE

Past customers have officially regained their lofty status at the top of the heap of potential future clients.

When the economy was going well, a lot of remodelers I talked to were so intent on growing their business and finding new customers that they took their eye off the ball when it came to marketing to their past clients.

Unfortunately for many of you, not focusing on your existing client base included a loss of focus on customer service. And it's pretty difficult to build a successful marketing plan aimed at generating repeat and referral business when your clients don't love you.

Speaking of love, there's a great new book on this subject: "Loyalty is Love: How to Hold Clients Close for Life," by Beverly Koehn (www.bkoehn.com/loyalty_is_love.html). If customer service is a priority for you, I'd suggest you read it.

Here's a taste:

"When the housing market plummets, companies try to stop the bleeding," Beverly writes. "We cut back on training and customer care because we don't look at training and care as *the heart of the business*. It supplies our business with life. If you cut customer care in the recent economic cycle, did you first think how much business

comes from treating customers as you would like to be treated?"

During this downturn is the perfect time to reconnect with your customers. Not only will this help you generate business with them now, it'll prepare you for great success when

the market turns for the better.

At the Remodeling Show last month, I was glad to hear many remodelers I know say they already are making this shift in their business back to a focus on customer service and marketing to past clients. One large remodeling firm owner is having his salespeople fill in open slots on their calendar to make phone calls to all their past customers. It's not so much a sales call as a customer service call to ask if everything is going OK with the past work they performed and if there's any new service they can provide.

This strategy has generated a fair share of warranty work that had gone unreported, but it has also caused plenty of these customers to see the company in a new light ("Wow, they really care about me!"). And the company now has some new projects, too.

What strategies are you taking to leverage the relationship you have with these folks? **PR**



Michael R. Morris
Editor in Chief

Unfortunately for many of you, not focusing on your existing client base included a loss of focus on customer service.

>> Contact me at michael.morris@reedbusiness.com or 630/288-8057

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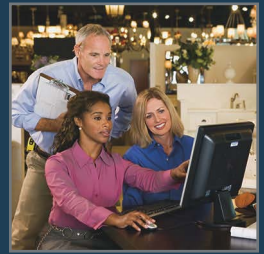
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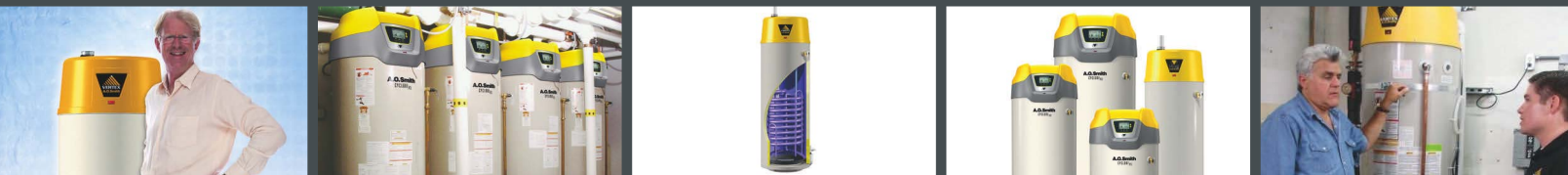


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BUSINESS OF CHANGE

The struggling economy may be spearheading a batten-down-the-hatches consumer mentality for spending. But as history has shown, small businesses are part of the solution to a turnaround, and today is no exception. Small businesses drive our economy. They create 70 percent of new jobs and more than half our non-farm private gross domestic product, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration.

That may have little meaning as you try to meet payroll. But it's an optimistic sign that there are things that you can do today to position your business for success now and on the road ahead.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

With huge questions looming over the American conscience, it's no wonder that people are putting remodeling projects on hold indefinitely. They're more concerned with the presidential race, the credit crisis and what it costs to fill up a gas tank. In return, remodelers are feeling the pinch.

Then add the impact of increased competition, such as home builders' entering the remodeling market, the rising costs of materials and the buying power you have with suppliers if you have less work on the books. Suddenly, a wave of things is affecting your bottom line.

As a remodeler, the best thing to do is come to terms with those environmental changes that are affecting your business. Then get proactive about what you can do to meet the needs of your business and of your consumers in light of that environment.

The answer lies in how your business changes to address those environmental changes. Being agile, acknowledging real-world financial challenge and then finding ways to innovate and show services that are attractive to clients living within that change puts remodelers

on the defining edge of a vital turnaround.

While big corporations struggle (look at the stock values of big box retailers), small businesses can adapt. They can do it quicker, see results faster and, in the end, prosper.

Hanging your hat on issues that are beyond your control is what puts your business in a rut. Instead, try remodeling your business to be the solution for creating a wave of tighter budgets and leaner living.

SOCIETAL CHANGE

Today, remodeling your business means addressing societal changes. Consumers are no longer motivated by bigger-is-better luxury living that comes at any cost. They want value, perceived and real. Value comes in a variety of forms that are in actual demand.

New home construction is down 65 percent from a high two years ago. The real need, instead, is to make existing homes conform to the evolving needs of families' staying put.

Energy costs continue to rise, and so does consumer interest in finding ways to lower their monthly heating and electric bills.

The casual dining industry continues to lose money, close stores and raise prices to stay ahead of escalating food costs. In return, people are choosing to cook at home and reconnect as families.

The societal hot buttons involve greener living, energy savings and a return on any investment. It means protecting the single biggest asset, a home, even in a declining real-estate market because it is the very shelter that people

have in an often discomforting time. Remodelers are the gateway to addressing these issues head-on.

Look for trends in the projects that you book and then market to those potential projects in greater numbers. Maybe your job average is going down,

but you're closing more sales when you market energy savings as part of the project. Perhaps the newer homes that don't really demand a facelift are being replaced by older zip codes where remodels can make a home up-to-date. Your Yellow Pages may not be producing phone calls, but maybe your green remodeling direct mail piece has won you business.

A keen insight into the minds of your clients in good times and in bad is the difference between remodelers who thrive, those who just survive and the casualties that cannot adapt or adapt too late and perish in the business world.

Patterns of change dictate patterns of opportunity. And despite forces that are beyond your control, there is much more in your toolbox than you may recognize. Think of the how and why versus "It's impossible." Evaluating the how and why help you uncover opportunities that you might otherwise not see with an "It's impossible" attitude. **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.



Doug Dwyer
Contributing Editor

Consumers are no longer motivated by bigger is better luxury living at any cost. They want value, perceived and real.

>> For more Doug Dwyer on Leadership, visit www.ProRemodeler.com.



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THE RIGHT SYSTEMS CAN LEAD TO RAVING FANS

In my first article on this subject, we talked about the concept of creating client satisfaction through company culture. In the second, we discussed giving everyone in your company a common language of customer satisfaction. Remember “9s and 10s”? It is a way of rating client satisfaction — from 1 through 10 — where a 9 or a 10 would indicate an absolute “raving fan” of your company. In this article we are going to provide some tools to use in the pursuit of the often elusive “9 and 10.”

Delivering an experience for clients that creates that 9 and 10 begins systematically and ends in a more organic, naturally occurring way. So you must start by having systems in place for everything you do, from the initial contact by the client to the final warranty support. Creating true raving fans cannot be a hit-or-miss deal, where you make up for problems and mistakes with heroic gestures of customer service. In fact, when good systems are in place and a solid foundation is laid, getting a client to 9s and 10s should not take massive efforts.

Here are some critical systems that will set the stage for creating raving fans:

- The Client Relations Management System is the first and ongoing connection between you and your client. When a new client calls into your office it is handled the same way every time — no exceptions. Hopefully, a warm and caring person answers the phone. Client information is entered into a system that provides access to that information by all team members involved in serving that client; there is no need for double entry of data by multiple people. And as a project makes it through your system, the details are captured in a logical and consistent way.

- The Sales System properly introduces the company to the client (and vice versa) and sets client expecta-

tions. Clients are educated about how the company works and what to expect (and what not to expect) if they choose to do business with you. Any salesperson should be able to give the same client the same experience; they need to be able to “tell your story” in a way that gets all the key points across. If not, you have work to do! They also need to set production up for success by not promising the moon. It takes discipline and self-restraint, but your salespeople must “under-promise” so production can “over-deliver.” Even when done well, the process of remodeling is an inconvenience to our clients; telling them that everything will be easy is the perfect way to fail your clients and your company.

- The Production System ensures that your projects are kicked-off, produced, completed and warranted in the same way every time. Your production process controls the job site, determines the schedule, coordinates the flow of work and ensures that the work you produce has the client experience in mind at all times. Similar to the first sales meeting, the pre-construction meeting (with the salesperson, production manager, lead carpenter and clients all in attendance) offers the chance to reinforce what has been said in the sales process. It also ensures that the client’s expectations are in line with production’s capabilities. Your clients now understand what to expect, who to call with questions and concerns and that they are confident that they are in the capable hands

of your production team.

Systemization of your company’s key processes allows you to be predictable and consistent, freeing up your people to take the client experience to the next level. The reality is that each system area is comprised

of many sub-systems and procedures. Building rock-solid systems is not an overnight task but one well worth the effort. When systems work, time normally wasted correcting for inconsistencies can now be used to exceed your client’s expectations!

In our company, 9s and 10s are rarely the result of Herculean efforts. More often, they are small, consistent efforts perceived by our clients as personally meaningful or “above and beyond” the call of duty — small things such as involving the kids in the project, showing an interest in the family pets or buying a toy tool belt for a preschooler. There are many more examples,

but the core must be employees who noticeably care about our clients and the work they do for them. When you get each member of your team to truly own their part of the client experience, you begin to create raving fans and your company secures its future in your market. **PR**

Dave Bryan is the president and CEO of Blackdog design/build/remodel in Salem, N.H. He is also a facilitator for Remodelers Advantage. Contact Dave at dbryan@blackdogbuilders.com.



Dave Bryan
Contributing Editor

You must start by having systems in place for everything you do, from the initial contact by the client to the final warranty support.

>> For more Dave Bryan on Customer Satisfaction, visit www.ProRemodeler.com

THE ROAD TO WORK-LIFE BALANCE

With effort, remodelers can make it happen

WITH CELL PHONES, LAPTOPS AND BlackBerries, we no longer work 40 hours a week. Our jobs come home with us. How and when do you draw the line that says, enough is enough, I need a Life! That's what we're discussing today: How to get a balance between your work and your life without giving up your business.

Jud: Michael, describe what your schedule was like before you started focusing on trying to get the work-life balance under control.

Michael: I'd have to go back when I started the business to answer that accurately. Back in those days, 1980-1985, I wore all the hats. I was working in the field, I was selling, estimating and even doing the bookkeeping. I was doing payroll. I had a small company with less than five people for those years. I pretty much worked seven days a week. I worked out of my house, as many small contractors do to this day. It was really hard to get away from work. I kept my schedule and would eat breakfast

and start work around 7 a.m. I would work until 5 or 6 in the evening, take a dinner break, and go back to work from 7:30 to 10:30 — pretty much did that seven days a week for several years to get the business going. Over the last 23 years, I've been slowly delegating work and getting to the point where I have a business that I run, instead of the business running me!

Jud: Good point. Jason, how about you?

Jason: When I started, for the first 3½ years, my wife did not have a husband. I worked 80 to 100 hours a week. I wore many more hats than I do now and pretty much did everything. It was very stressful.

Jud: Jason, what was the first step in the process of getting the balance in there? What did you do to begin with?

Jason: I hired a part-time admin as the first step, and I hired a helper in the field, a carpenter's apprentice.

Jud: Michael, what about you?

Michael: The first thing I did was hire helpers in the field. I started the business in 1980, and about 1985 I had three or four guys working for me in the field. It wasn't until the late 1980s that I eventually got admin help, 1986 or 1987. It took me a long time.

Jud: In that process, both of you have indicated that the part of the name of the game was to hire additional help. Would that be a fair statement, Michael?

Michael: Yes, a very fair statement. In my case, the first thing I hired or delegated was production work. The second thing was foreman level. Supervision. The third thing was admin, and then eventually sales.

Jud: Did either one of you get any help in making this decision that you needed



PHOTO: GARY LAUFMAN

JASON: "I worked 80 to 100 hours a week. I wore many more hats than I do now and pretty much did everything. It was very stressful."

to delegate authority to get your balance of life?

Michael: My wife definitely helped me. Another person who helped me was Walt Stoeppelwerth. In those days, he used to go around and teach classes. He'd teach about markup, delegation and this kind of stuff. I worked on it. There was a time dur-

This month featuring:

Jason Kirkpatrick, Owner

Kirkpatrick's Construction, Centreville, Va.

A high-end residential remodeling company focusing on the Washington, D.C. area. The firm has been in business for six years, has five employees and expects to do \$1.4 million this year.

Michael McCutcheon, President

McCutcheon Construction, Berkeley, Calif.

In business since 1980, this design/build remodeling firm has 35 employees. The volume for this year is expected to be \$7 million.

MICHAEL: “There’s just something about getting out of the way of your good people and letting them figure it out. I think that alone strengthens the company.”



PHOTO: BILL GEGGER

ing the mid-80s where, as Jason said with most people starting, your 80- to 100-hour weeks were not as much wearing me down but were wearing my wife down. I remember one time she said, “It’s time to take a vacation!” I thought, “I can’t take a vacation, are you nuts? Take some time off?” She wanted a week. “I can’t do that!” About two or three days later, she gave me one of those looks and said, “We’re taking a vacation!” I knew she meant business. We actually did. We delegated to everybody we had, and we got on a plane to Hawaii, and it was a great time. We had a couple of issues, because it was very impromptu. I learned from that that the company could survive without me for a few days.

Jud: That’s great. Jason, what about you?

Jason: Yes. My wife was definitely a key player in the same respect. She wanted weekends. I’d work an 80- to 100-hour work week; that’s 15 hours a day, seven days a week! She got bored being a newlywed and sitting at home by herself. What also came into play was I realized I needed to start putting things into place — things such as boundaries with clients so there were no phone calls during the weekends and things of that nature, because we were wanting to have children. I wanted to be the best father that I possibly could, having grown up without a father, and I knew there was no way I could continue the way I was working and be a good father simultaneously. I didn’t have time to be a husband; how in the world was I going to be a good father? Those were two paramount points of motivation.

Jud: Michael, did you find your company grew because of this?

Michael: Yes. One of my guys here, our vice president, Paul Montgomery, has been with me for over 20 years. Years ago, he commented to me when I got back from a two-week vacation, and said, “You know, you’re right, it was fabulous!” He’s a production guy, not a great computer guy. He said, “Typically, I have a problem with the computers, I just run in and you help me fix it. When you weren’t here, I had to fix it myself. I learned more in the last two weeks than in the last two years.” There’s just something about getting out of the way of your good people and letting them figure it out. I think that alone strengthens the company.

Jud: That’s good. Michael, also, was this delegation difficult to overcome?

Michael: I think it’s extremely tough. Anyone who has done the work and was any good, your God’s gift to creation. You’re the only one who knows how to trim and do concrete. I had a really inflated idea of my ability to do everything.

Jud: Jason? Was the delegation hard to overcome?

Jason: It was extremely hard. As I continue to delegate more and more and hired more people — a full time office manager, a part-time bookkeeper, another lead for the field — it does get easier.

Jud: Jason, describe your schedule now in comparison to what it was when you were working 100 hour weeks.

Jason: I have a life! It’s night and day. The largest difference is going to be in the overall easily measurable way of looking at it as the fact that I still do work 60 to 65

hours a week. However, to me that’s like being on vacation. My roundtable group is constantly on my back about getting that down. One of the key things for me of the difference is that when I started setting boundaries with my clients in terms of being available by mobile phone from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. If you can’t get me during those times, I’ll

reach you the following day and will check the messages to make sure your house isn’t on fire. I do not accept calls or make any appointments or anything else on the weekends.

Jud: Michael? What does your schedule look like differently than it was when you first started 28 years ago?

Michael: It was pretty much seven days a week, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., with a couple of breaks. I always did a lot of work on the weekends; it was just crazy. I still work five days a week, Monday to Friday. My hours are roughly 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or 6 p.m. in that range. The latest is around 6 p.m. I do sometimes get in a little bit before 8 a.m. for my own convenience. I take a lunch break, have dinner, exercise in the morning and meditate twice a day. During the weekends, no work; not any more. **PR**



Jud Motzenbocker
Contributing Editor

TALK BACK

>> For the rest of the discussion on this topic or to listen to the podcast, visit www.ProRemodeler.com/bestpractices.

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Getting in on the ground floor

All too often, people buy a home with plans to remodel but don't realize how much their planned upgrades are going to really cost.

Getting to those clients before they pay too much for a home is the idea behind Renewal 360, a new program from Decatur, Ga.-based Renewal Construction.

"A lot of times we'd be telling them it was going to cost two to three times what they expected to do what they wanted," says Peter Michelson, CEO of the design/build firm. "A lot of people were buying homes based on advice from real-estate agents and getting misled."

Now, for \$750, potential homeowners can hire Renewal to visit up to three homes and

let them know if their proposed project is feasible and give them a rough idea of what it would cost. This allows the client to make a more informed offer. If the client doesn't have a real-



estate agent, Renewal can also refer them to one of the company's local partners.

According to Renewal, 80 percent of homes in Atlanta and 87 percent of homes in Decatur, the two cities in which the company works, were built before 1980, making them prime can-

didates for major remodeling.

The service is not a full home inspection but rather a quick look at the home to see what's possible. And because Renewal only works within six miles of the company's office, the cost to the company is minimal.

Renewal had been performing the service for past clients, but charging for it now allows the company to weed out those clients who aren't as serious. Setting the fee low keeps it from scaring away real prospects.

The program also gives Renewal an early edge if the client does decide to remodel.

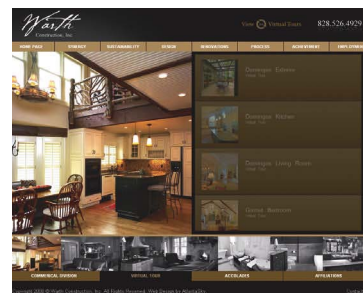
"As a design/build company, getting into that home early on is an advantage," Michelson says. "We've already gotten some nice projects out of it."

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

A 360-degree virtual tour

Warth Construction is harnessing the power of virtual tours to show clients how the company can transform their homes.

For the last two years, the Highlands, N.C., design/build firm has used virtual tours to create full replicas of projects to help clients make design choices. The tours are created by taking photos of the room, then linking those photos together to create a 360-degree view of the home. (To view tours of completed projects, visit www.warthconstruction.com/virtualtour.asp.)



Although originally created for in-office use, Warth decided to add it to the company Web site when it was recently redesigned.

"We got such a good reaction to it, we got really excited about using it to generate interest on our Web site," says company CFO Danielle Warth.

THE GREENPIECE Whole-house checkup

Like many remodelers, Case Design/Remodeling has a lot of clients asking about green remodeling. At the same time, the company has been struggling to convert that interest into actual work in the green arena.

"Clients are interested in the topic, but they typically don't come to us because they want to do the green thing," says George Weissberger, senior vice president and director of research and development. "They come to us because they want to do an addition or bathroom."

So the management team for the Bethesda, Md., company has been trying to figure out ways to generate more interest in green. That's where they came up with the idea of offering home performance evaluations as a standard part of the company's preliminary agreement,

which is the stage when the company makes its measurements and estimates.

"We figured we're already in the home measuring things and looking at the house, why not take a look at these other things?" Weissberger says.

After the evaluation, Case produces a five- to 10-page report that makes suggestions for the home, such as adding insulation or upgrading the HVAC system. The extra inspection only adds about half an hour to the time the staff would already be in the house.

Case has only been offering the service for a few months, so it's too early to say how big an impact it will have on sales, but it should offer a competitive advantage when clients are choosing between multiple contractors, Weissberger says.

Embracing

GOING GREEN ISN'T JUST FOR TREE HUGGERS ANYMORE

By Jonathan Sweet, Senior Editor

IF THE LAST FEW YEARS WERE ABOUT DEFINING GREEN, this year seems to be all about embracing the green movement. It's nearly impossible to turn on the TV, walk through a store or listen to a speech in this election year without hearing about energy efficiency, climate change or other green topics. Whether it's energy prices hitting to the pocketbook, increased social awareness or just a hot trend, 2008 is shaping up to be the year green went mainstream.

The results of our annual green survey of remodelers bear that out. We surveyed more than 500 professional remodelers across the country about their attitudes and how green is affecting their business. We also talked to some of the leading green remodelers in the country about what they're seeing in their businesses and local markets. (We're also hosting a live Webcast presenting and discussing the results Oct. 23. For more information or to register, visit www.ProRemodeler.com.)

By an overwhelming majority, remodelers are enthusiastic about green. In fact, 80 percent of them say they think it's important to use green building techniques in their company's remodeling projects. An equal number say green features are important to them when choosing which products to use.

Although attitudes toward green seem to be predominantly positive, not everybody is convinced.

Twenty percent of remodelers say they think green remodeling is a fad. Those in the West are most likely to think so (28 percent), while in the Northeast, only 16 percent see it as a fad.

Even some of those who are big believers in green see some truth in that statement.

"I think partly the reason they're saying that is that they're smart," says Michael McCutcheon, president of McCutcheon Construction in Berkeley, Calif. "They've picked up on the fact that there's a lot of 'greenwashing' going on."

Too many companies — whether building products manufacturers or oil producers — are not changing their behaviors yet still slap a green label on a product to take advantage of the green hype, McCutcheon says.

"Everybody wants to claim to be green," he says. "In that sense, it is a fad."

The problem may be one of education, says Donna Shirey, president of Shirey Contracting of Issaquah, Wash., and a national officer with NAHB.

"I think some of them say it's a fad because they don't know much about it," she says. "They're scared, so they say it's a fad."

METHODOLOGY

Survey invitations were e-mailed to a random sample of remodelers who subscribe to *Professional Remodeler* magazine. Responses were collected online from June 26 through July 14, 2008. To encourage participation, *Professional Remodeler* donated \$10 to Habitat for Humanity for each of the first 250 completed surveys. A total of 556 usable surveys were completed by the closing date.



Green

89 percent of remodelers say their staff is receptive to training in green.

They don't want to have to learn something new."

Whether a fad or not, remodelers need to know what's going on in green to deal with more informed clients, says Michael Ansel, a principal with Otogawa-Ansel Design Build in Minneapolis.

"I would rather position my company to be ahead of the trend, and if it's a fad and the fad lasts 10 years, and it means that my company benefits and our clients benefit, I don't see the problem with it," Ansel says.

Not surprisingly, the increased focus on green from remodelers is in response to rising consumer demand.

"Over the last six months, some of the remodelers in our market who previously didn't look very favorably on the whole green movement have started doing green projects, and that's because their clients are requesting it," Ansel says.

PHOTO BY MARC BERLOW

20 percent of
remodelers think
green remodeling
is a **fad**.

Although not every client is coming to his company asking for green remodeling, that number is growing.

"It's maybe 10 percent, but when you offer the opportunity, most homeowners will respond, 'Yes, I want that,'" he says.

Remodelers are also finding their staffs are open to green remodeling, with 89 percent reporting that their staff is receptive to training in green remodeling.

"Initially, maybe 10 years ago when I started down this road, there was a lot of opposition," McCutcheon says. "What's happened is the ones who aren't interested have dropped off. We've attracted people who are excited about it, and the people who aren't interested, they've just ended up going elsewhere."

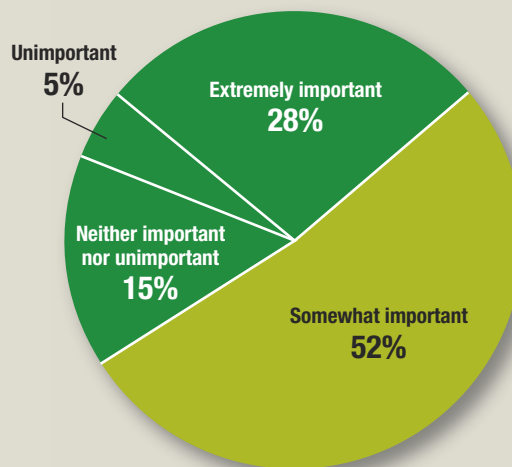
To make sure people are going to mesh with the company culture of community service and taking into account the needs of others, McCutcheon discusses "green" in the interview. To him, a candidates' interest in green is an important indicator of whether or not they will be a good fit with the team.

"We make it really clear it's not an option, it's not something we want them to think about; it's an absolute requirement," he says.

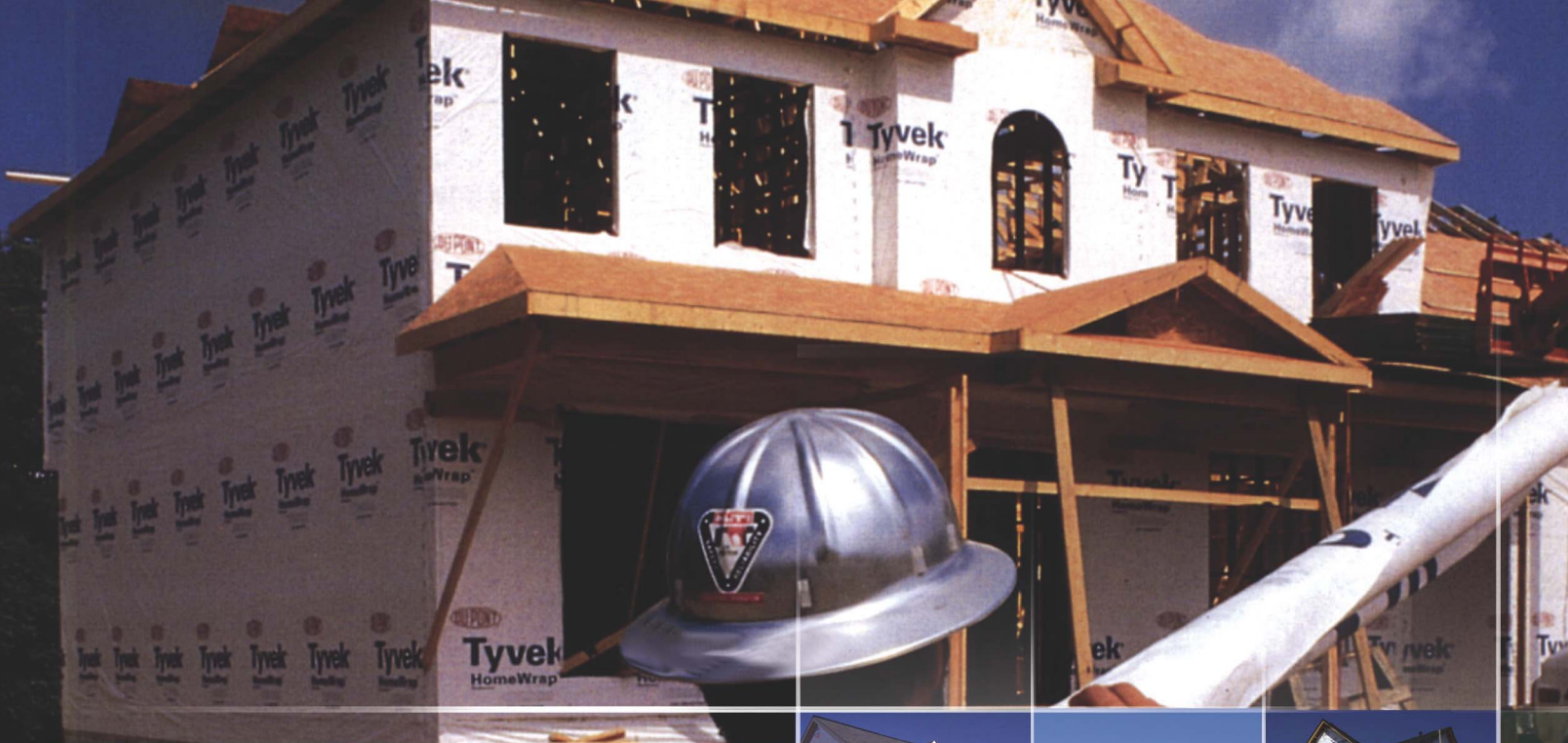
For Sage Homebuilders in St. Louis, green has helped the company land some very talented employees, says Principal Jason Stone.

"The people we've hired are kind of drawn to the idea that we're endeavoring to do this next big thing," he says.

How important are green features when selecting a product?



Source: Professional Remodeler 2008 Green Survey



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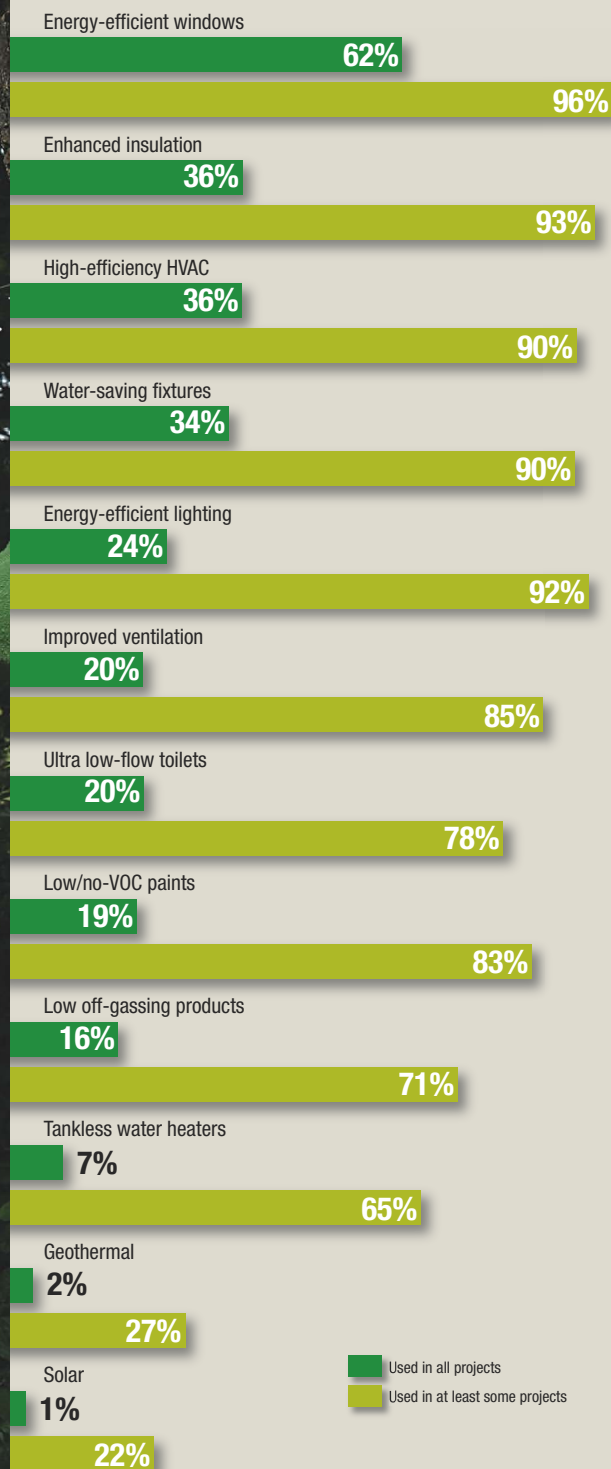
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SPECIAL REPORT

2008 GREEN SURVEY

Most popular green features



Source: Professional Remodeler 2008 Green Survey

FROM ATTITUDES TO ACTIONS

REMODELERS ARE TURNING THEIR BELIEFS ABOUT GREEN into action to varying degrees.

Only 1 percent of remodelers say they haven't incorporated any green features into their remodels. The most popular features are energy-efficient windows, appliances and lighting; high-efficiency HVAC; and water-saving fixtures. (See adjacent chart for the complete list.) Not surprisingly, these are features that can provide a return on investment for homeowners in the form of lower utility bills. More expensive changes, like geothermal and solar, aren't as popular.

"A lot of our clients are intrigued by the green products out there but aren't necessarily ready to pay the premiums for them," Stone says.

While a lot of features and practices are driven by customer requests, many remodelers are making moves to green projects on their own.

"We don't give them an option," McCutcheon says. "We don't ask them if they want to use low-VOC paint. We just tell them, 'You'll be happy to know we're using low-VOC paint.' Nobody objects to that."

We also asked remodelers to rate themselves on how green their projects were, on a scale of 1 (have used no green practices or materials) to 10 (have maximized use of green materials/practices). The majority of remodelers (60 percent) rate themselves 4 through 7. Nineteen percent recorded an 8, 9 or 10; 22 percent registered a 1, 2 or 3.

Many remodelers also think it's more difficult to remodel green, with 57 percent saying so. Beyond that, 85 percent of remodelers say green disrupts normal remodeling processes, citing increased costs, confusion over certification and more trouble finding products.

The challenge for many remodelers is that they try to do much green all at once and get overwhelmed, Shirey says.

"You can do just one thing to get started," she says. "You don't have to be putting every green feature into every building."

(For more on easy green fixes, see this month's Green Room department on p. 41.)

57 percent of remodelers say it's **harder** to remodel green.



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75 percent of remodelers say there should be minimum standards before a company can say it's 'green.'

Who should set green standards?

Third-party programs

34%

Trade associations

32%

Federal government

15%

State government

11%

Local government

5%

Other

3%

Source: Professional Remodeler 2008 Green Survey

WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

MOST REMODELERS (75 percent) say there should be minimum standards before a company can call itself green.

"It's important — it's actually critical — that when we talk about green building, we talk about it in the context of a standard that is legitimate," Anschel says. "Without that, it gets very subjective about what is and what isn't legitimate."

That's where the agreement ends, though. Remodelers are divided into three almost equal camps on who should set those standards: third-party groups (34 percent), trade associations (32 percent) or the government (31 percent). Right now, of course, all of these groups are setting standards to varying degrees.

This has created a situation where there are so many programs that it's not clear exactly what each stands for. More than half of remodelers cited confusion over the various certification programs as one of the things that makes green difficult. Many cities or states have their own standards. NARI and NAHB are pushing their programs. All told, it can leave remodelers incredibly confused.

"If remodelers are confused, imagine what the consumer must be feeling," Stone says. "These programs need to get together so there is a clear understanding for the consumer that there is an accepted program. Otherwise, the risk for greenwashing is there."

One of the problems is that while local programs in places such as Austin and Atlanta have been around for years, national groups such as USGBC, NARI and NAHB have only released national residential guidelines in the last year.

"There have been a lot of successful local programs, and we've kind of been behind at the national level," says Shirey, a national vice chair of the NAHB Remodelers. "NAHB is finally catching up, and we need to figure out how all these programs are going to fit together."

Another problem is that a standard put together by NAHB, NARI or any other trade group is unlikely to be accepted by most consumers, McCutcheon says.

"I think we need a strong green building standard — one," he says. "The thing is nobody's going to believe the home builders. Nobody's going to believe the remodelers. It's like having the car companies set fuel efficiency standards. It doesn't work."

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How remodelers train their staffs in green

In-house training

58%

Seminars/conferences

36%

Webinars

17%

Other

8%

Source: Professional Remodeler 2008 Green Survey

How remodelers learn about green

Trade media

81%

Suppliers

66%

Trade partners

41%

Associations

39%

Designers/architects

39%

Customers

38%

Consumer media

33%

Consultants

24%

Source: Professional Remodeler 2008 Green Survey

HITTING THE BOOKS

REMODELERS ARE EAGER TO LEARN more about green, as well as get their teams educated on the trend, with 76 percent of companies training their employees in green remodeling.

Companies are using a variety of methods to train their staffs. In-house training is the most popular option, so it seems most companies are relying on finding their own information from a number of sources (see chart on this page).

"We're always looking and learning," Shirey says. "We do our best to stay up on everything and relay it to our staff."

For Sage Homebuilders, the three principals spend a lot of their time reading and researching green by attending conferences and local events.

"We see that as a potential competitive edge — developing our own in-house training and best practices," Stone says. "We have a policies and procedures manual, and one thing we're striving toward is to make sure that encompasses the best green practices."

Because there is a wealth of information out there, sorting out the good from the bad is an important part of the job.

"At the core, that's the piece that's probably the most important — just the constant questioning of what's out there, filtering through all the noise to get to what's real," Anschel says.

Otogawa-Anschel does that by bringing the staff together in regular meetings where the team discusses the information and tries to evaluate it. They'll also bring trade partners and field staff into the discussion to see what they think of the information.

One of the most important things the team looks at is where the information comes from. If the source is the Department of Energy, for example, Anschel is going to regard it with more weight than if it comes from a manufacturer. Sometimes the decision comes down to gut instinct.

"Is it sound, does it resonate right, does it stand up to criticism and analysis?" he says. "This is not a purely quantitative field. When you talk about issues of health, issues of social justice, those are not quantitative things. You can't measure them."

76 percent
of companies
train their
employees in
green remodeling.



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36 percent
of companies
market
themselves
as green.

GETTING THE GREEN WORD OUT

WHILE MOST COMPANIES ARE REMODELING GREEN to at least some extent — even those who think it's a fad — most are not marketing themselves as green to potential clients. Only about a third of companies, in fact, are doing so.

Interestingly, that small group includes a significant portion (11 percent) that think green is fad. So while they may not be believers in it themselves, they're recognizing a business opportunity.

There's a significant difference based on volume, with 43 percent of companies doing more than \$1 million in 2007 revenue marketing themselves as green, compared with only 27 percent of those with less than \$1 million. A lot of that difference, though, may be because many companies with less than \$1 million in business are much less likely to do much, if any, marketing at all.

Companies in the West (42 percent) were the most likely to market themselves as green, compared with 37 percent in the Midwest, 35 percent in the Northeast and 32 percent in the South.

Many companies are focusing on education as a way to deliver the green message by holding seminars and workshops for homeowners. Shirey Contracting is preparing a model zero-energy home that will demonstrate high-performance options to potential clients. The company then will offer tours to consumers to show off the cutting-edge technology.

Marketing green is really like marketing any type of remodeling service, Anschel says.

"Marketing is marketing," he says. "You can put out there luxury, luxury, luxury, or you can put words out there about design, or you can have a message of cheap, cheap, cheap, or you can talk about green."

Otogawa-Anschel has also won several awards for green remodeling and has parlayed that into local media coverage and a reputation as a local green expert.

The most important part of any marketing effort is to focus on the benefits a company can deliver, Stone says.

"A lot of people, you can call it 'green,' but they don't really know what that means," he says. "We talk about the lower utility bills, we talk about the improved air quality, we talk about the environmental impact. We try to be a little cautious when we get into those conversations because we don't want this to be a political thing." **PR**

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Never a Dull Day

J.C. RESTORATION THRIVES IN THE CHALLENGING INSURANCE MARKET



By Jonathan Sweet, Senior Editor

HOMEOWNERS DON'T PLAN FOR DISASTER. They're not saving brochures or checking out Web sites to make careful decisions about how they're going to recover from a flooded home or a fire as they would for an average kitchen remodel.

"People are never happy to see us," says Steve Rost, general manager of J.C. Restoration. "Hopefully they're happy by the time we're done, but if we're showing up, it's not a good day for them."

That's one of the many differences the Rolling Meadows, Ill., insurance restoration firm has to deal with when compared to traditional remodeling work. Emotional homeowners, uncertain business and industry-controlled pricing all combine to make for a uniquely challenging way to do business. Despite those challenges, J.C. Restoration has continued to rapidly grow business from about \$4 million in 2005 to an estimated volume for 2008 of nearly \$15 million.

B2B MARKETING

When it comes to marketing, insurance restoration requires a totally different approach. Homeowners aren't looking for restoration until they need it, so tactics like direct mail or advertising don't make much sense (although J.C. Restoration does run Yellow Pages ads).

Instead, it's all about networking and taking the idea of referrals to a new level. It's a strategy of face-to-face direct marketing and relationship building, focused primarily on insurance agents, bro-

kers and claim departments. The company also markets to building owners and facility managers for commercial properties, as well as other contractors who may be able to send work its way.

That job falls to the company's four marketing reps who visit their various contacts six times a year.

"We want to constantly be reminding them we are here," Rost says. "We want to be ever-present, but not too much in their face. It's not traditional sales, because they can agree that their going to use our company, but they might never need us. It's all about building that relationship in case they need us."

J.C. Restoration tries to do that by being a resource for the agents and contractors. The company frequently offers "lunch and learns" and other educational opportunities in its large classroom facility at its Chicago-area headquarters. When a client has an event, the marketing reps are sure to attend. They attend a lot of golf outings and chamber of commerce events.

"Most people are going to get a recommendation from their insurance agent, so that's what we focus on," Rost says. "If we don't effectively market to them, our referrals are going to go away."

One of the biggest concerns agents have is that a recommendation they make will not work out. To address those worries, J.C. Restoration's marketing team talks about the company's more than 25 years in business, its large restoration facility and the 24/7 availability of the team.



The uncertain nature of insurance restoration work requires J.C. Restoration to be ready to respond at a moment's notice with its fleet of trucks, both large and small.

"We go to that agent and tell them, 'We're going to make you look good,'" Rost says. "It's our job to make sure the clients say good things about them when we're done."

Once the call comes from an owner who's been referred to J.C. Restoration, the company sends an estimator to the job. That's when they'll sit down with the owner and engage in more traditional sales. One thing J.C. Restoration will never do, though, is show up at a disaster site uninvited.

"There are companies out there that do that — the 'fire chasers,'" Rost says. "These people listen to scanners and try to show up and take advantage of homeowners, get them to sign a deal right away. That's the slimy side of the business."

MAINTAINING BALANCE

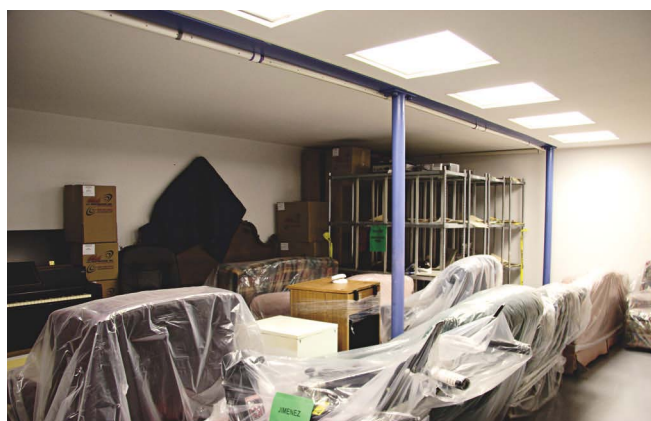
While it's not quite feast or famine, the work doesn't come in a nice, even flow. Although Rost doesn't know where the next job is coming from, non-catastrophic situations, such as a single-home fire or a burst pipe, happen every day. The company's marketing efforts are designed to make sure the company captures enough of those jobs.

On the other extreme are catastrophes such as large storms that cause massive flooding. That's when hundreds of calls come in each day, such as during recent flooding in the Chicago area.

"We couldn't physically take care of everyone," Rost says. "We had a system, but every time we turned around there were five more people on the line to get on the list."



PHOTOS: MARC BERLOW



After a disaster, personal belongings are stored in numbered crates (top) at the company's 87,000-square-foot, climate-controlled warehouse. Items that have suffered smoke damage are treated with pure oxygen in the ozone room (bottom) to remove the smell.

When that happens, J.C. Restoration turns to Disaster Kleenup International, which is a network of insurance restoration firms across North America. When a member (such as J.C. Restoration) has too much work to handle following a disaster, other DKI members come to the market to help meet the need.

This way, J.C. Restoration is able to refer its clients to companies they know and trust rather than an unknown company that may pop up trying to take advantage of the need for work. By the same token, J.C. Restoration will travel to work in other markets when its services are needed, such as during the serious floods in Iowa and Wisconsin earlier this year.

The company is able to do that with a mobile response unit, a bus that seats 45 people and is fully outfitted with satellite communication, computers and other office equipment. Combine

that with a semi-trailer truck capable of hauling 2,000 pieces of equipment and the company can essentially do business anywhere. That ability is a big reason the company has been able to grow so much in recent years, with 30 percent of its business now coming from outside the Chicago area.

Although the uncertain nature of insurance restoration work means J.C. Restoration doesn't know where the next job is coming from, it also means the company is not as susceptible to the cycles of the remodeling market.

"We're stable and steady," Rost says. "We don't see the spikes when the economy's good, but our business doesn't go down in bad economic times."

CONTROLLING COSTS

One of the biggest challenges for insurance restoration firms is that prices are set by the insurers. That means J.C. Restoration has to be especially efficient because the company can't add extra markup to its prices to make more money.

Controlling costs has become even more important this year with rising gas prices. With a fleet of 35 vehicles and no ability to add a gas surcharge to estimates, watching every drive is important. To do

"We don't see the spikes when the economy's good, but our business doesn't go down in bad economic times." —Steve Rost

that, J.C. Restoration invested in a GPS system, so the office can track every vehicle on the road. This not only guards against potential misuse of company vehicles but also allows the office to dispatch the closest vehicle to a job site at a moment's notice. The investment has saved the company thousands of dollars.

The company also has to take a tough line with subcontractors on pricing. J.C. Restoration has agreements in place with everyone from the guy who brings the trash containers to the site to electricians, so the production department knows exactly what the service will cost and that they will be on the job at a moment's notice.

"We show them the prices we're working from and tell them, 'This is what we're going to get paid for your services, and we need to make a profit from that, so if you want to work with us, here's the pricing we can work with,'" Rost says.

Having a warehouse division also saves the company money. That group of employees is responsible for ordering supplies and materials in bulk. That reduces costs and ensures the production

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

J.C. Restoration, Rolling Meadows, Ill.

CEO/President: Warner Cruz

General Manager: Steve Rost

Company focus: Insurance restoration

2007 projects: 690

2007 volume: \$9.5 million

Projected 2008 volume: \$14.9 million

Employees: 70

Founded: 1982

Biggest challenge: Growing the company while managing the uncertain workflow of the insurance restoration business.

Web site: www.jcrestoration.com

crews have everything they need — even at 3 a.m.

A third shift is on duty to prep all of the vehicles. Their job is to make sure the company is ready to go at a moment's notice, so the emergency response team can be at the site within two hours.

"They work at night, replace missing equipment, wash the vehicles, gas them up and leave the key in the ignition," Rost says. "To know you don't have to come here and worry about getting everything on the truck makes it a lot easier."

BEYOND RESTORATION

The goal for J.C. Restoration is to be a \$20 million company within the next two years. One of the keys to continued growth will be expanding work beyond the scope of restoring a home by adding remodeling projects.

Currently, that accounts for less than 10 percent of the company's business, but Rost sees it as a growth opportunity.

"Our structure division doesn't know how to sell it, because they're not really salespeople," he says. "We want them to have that mentality, because there's money that we are potentially leaving on the table." Toward that end, Rost plans on having estimators go through sales training.

The only time the company does extra work now is when the homeowner requests it. Rost admits it's a fine line, because he doesn't want the company to be taking advantage of people at an emotional time in their lives.

"We don't want to push them, but we want to have that conversation with the homeowner so they know what's out there," Rost says.

The company is also expanding its services beyond restoration to additional areas such as mold and asbestos remediation. It's all part of a strategy conceived by CEO and President Warner Cruz when he bought the company from his parents in 2002, when the firm had revenues of about \$1 million. Although Rost runs the day-to-day operations, it's Cruz who has set the company on its course.

Says Rost, "Day-to-day he's believed in us enough to allow us to manage our jobs, but he's the one who thinks big picture." **PR**

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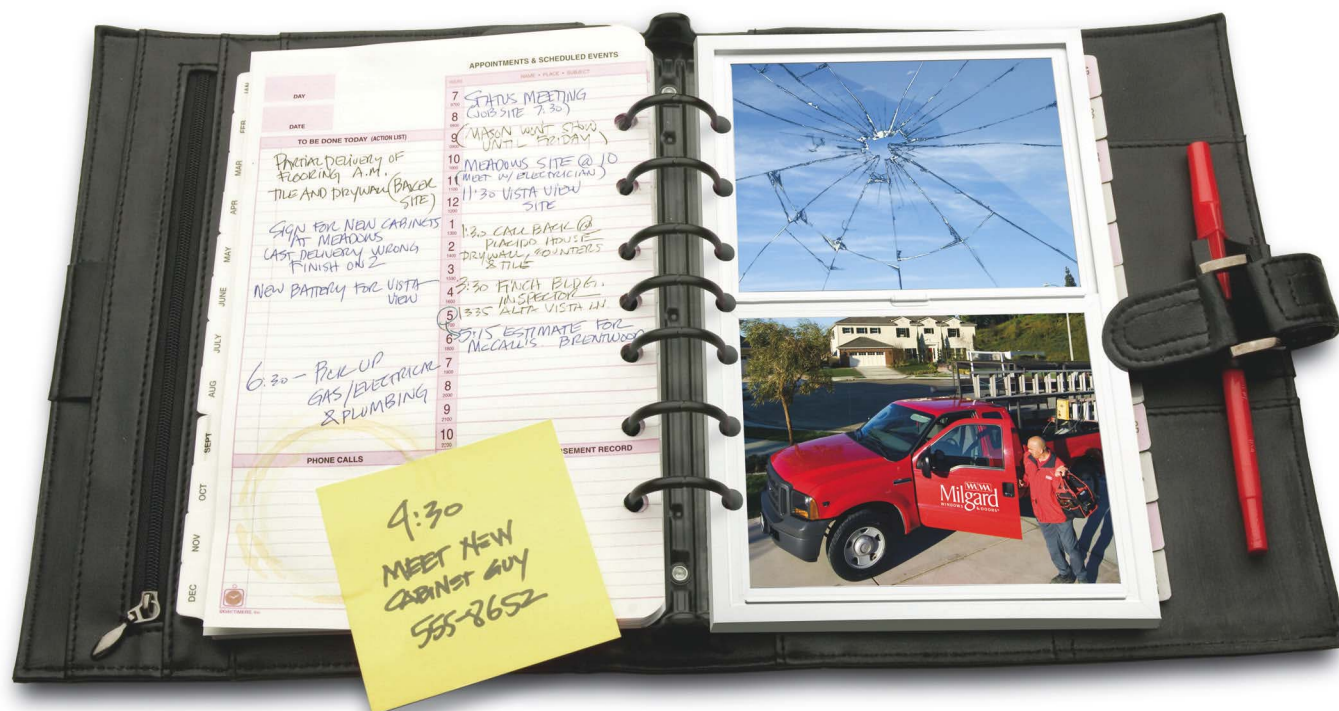
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AFTER PHOTOS: PHILIP WEGENER PHOTOGRAPHY

SPANISH ACCENT

A traditional two-story home becomes a Mediterranean beauty

KITCHEN REMODEL

REMODELER: Consolidated Construction Management, Lakewood, Colo.

ARCHITECT: Doug Walter Architects, Denver

PROJECT LOCATION: Denver

AGE OF HOME: 80 years old

SCOPE OF WORK: Redesign and replace existing roof and upgrade of home's exterior style to one that compliments its historic community.

By Ann Matesi
Senior Contributing Editor

SIMPLE BUT CAREFULLY CHOSEN

exterior changes transformed this single-family home from eyesore to elegant ambassador to the neighborhood. The primary unifying element that made the most dramatic difference in this 1920s Denver home's appearance may be the new clay tile-accented hip roof that the remodeler installed to replace a gable style shingle roof.

The house is located directly adjacent to an ornate, century-old Spanish-style gateway that leads into a well-established upscale community. The home's owners

BEFORE



The home's new Mediterranean-style exterior was inspired by its proximity to the historic "Spanish Gate" entry to the upscale community. The new hip roofline is repeated on the front porch, which adds visual interest to the home's new streetscape.

PRODUCTS LIST

Ceramic Tile: Dal-Tile **Garage Doors:** Ankawr **Garage Door Opener:** Raynor **Roofing:** Bartile **Windows:** Weather Shield **Lighting Fixtures:** Halo **Insulation:** Johns Manville **Locksets:** Baldwin **Paints & Stains:** Benjamin Moore



The rear terrace features the same finishes and battered column design used on the front porch to create unity. The new roof's deep overhangs include beautifully detailed support brackets.

objected to the bland exterior even more so because of the striking and historic surrounding. They vowed to correct things once they moved in. The home was such an eyesore that the Denver Landmark Commission deemed it “non-contributing” to the local historic district.

Remodeling projects over the years had transformed the living spaces of the traditional residence into “something special” inside, but the changes actually had the

opposite effect on the home’s exterior, says local architect Doug Walter, principal with the Denver-based firm that designed its most recent and most remarkable makeover. Walter teamed up with remodeler Fred Ahlert of Consolidated Construction Management, of Lakewood, Colo., to take on the difficult project.

“Each ‘re-muddling’ — and there were at least five previous ones — pushed the limits of propriety on the outside of the

home,” says Walter. In the end, the gateway inspired the design of the residence’s new Mediterranean-style façade. “This gave us a lifeline toward a way out of the architectural swamp. It was decided to make a strong gesture to both the gate and the neighboring home to the south. The real story of this remodel is how small gestures can utterly transform a home.”

“The original front elevation of the home, was not symmetrical, or unified, at



Photo:
Partners Ernest, Jessica and Eric Gilbert

ERNEST AND JESSICA GILBERT

Owners: Gilbert Construction Inc.,
est. 2001

Owner: DreamMaker
Bath & Kitchen,
est. 2006
Sarasota, Fla.

Ernest Gilbert started out as a framer, sharpening his skills in the construction industry literally from the ground up. Then he launched his own construction company, Gilbert Construction Inc., in 2001 and found that framing a business required a whole different talent. When he invited his wife Jessica into their Sarasota firm to assist with the growing enterprise, they agreed that the business demanded some order. Happily, their sense of urgency to streamline operations also provided the perfect answer to succeeding in a changing economy.

Why did you choose to buy a franchise?

Ernest: We had a construction company that did a little bit of everything - new homes, additions, remodels, a lot of the hurricane repair work and insurance restoration. But we felt as though we needed to have an identity. So, in fall of 2005, we decided to focus our business in three areas: kitchen

"The first full year, we increased our volume tremendously ... the only reason I think this is happening is due to DreamMaker ..."

remodeling, bath remodeling and room additions. The franchise helped take us to our desired result.

What led you to choose DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen?

Ernest: In May of 2006, I was reading an article about a construction company that also had a DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen franchise. What was interesting in the article was here was this guy who had a construction company, but he also had a franchise focusing on kitchen, bath and interior remodels. That was important to me because I did not want to wipe away the entire company I built from scratch to start DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen.

Jessica: On the personal side of it, Ernest said, 'We have to specialize. I feel like we keep trying to reinvent the wheel.' Here is a company that has already gone there before us and has a lot of things figured out that we can just plug in place. The other franchisees we spoke to were very excited about being with DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen, especially because of the Code of Values. That a company had such an excellent structure of morality behind it was kind of a roadmap.

What results have you experienced since joining the DreamMaker franchise?

Ernest: We have been surprised that our volume continues to grow even in the current economic conditions. The first full year, we increased our volume tremendously while at the same time dropping off other services. And the only reason I think this is happening is due to DreamMaker teaching us to run the business by the numbers, watching our financial statements, and encouraging us, while providing coaching and tools to market, and continue to market, even when things might appear to be slow.

Jessica: Before, we might have had a vague feeling about things, but now we can see it on paper. That is a direct benefit of owning a franchise. I do not think we would have weathered the economic storm we are in without our DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen franchise.

Have DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen business systems helped your business run smoother?

Jessica: They definitely helped us increase our price and net profit. Before we did not know how much we should charge. They taught us how to price jobs with added value. We are bringing more to the table than before and we are bringing more value to the client, doing it with a higher standard of excellence.

What have been the biggest benefits to becoming a DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen franchise owner?

Ernest: The biggest benefits have been the help with marketing, established vendor relationships, and, above all, the association of peers. There are all these other franchisees you can share ideas with who are doing the same thing you are doing. Plus, we know who we're marketing to and we know who our customer is. Before, I had some ideas; I tried to do some advertising, but I never really thought about who my customer is.

Why do you think your franchise is so successful?

Jessica: Having a niche and doing the same things over and over, we get better all the time. I think that is another reason clients like doing business with DreamMaker. Yes, we do other things, but we specialize in kitchens and baths. It's not just one of the other things we do.

About DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen:

Based in Waco, Texas, DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen has approximately 100 independently owned and operated franchises nationwide.



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Experience Contributes to Remodeler's Top-Notch Approach

Remodeler Frank Ahlert came to this Denver project with experience that helped him with a big overhaul: replace a featureless gable roof with a trussed hip design that included deep overhangs.

"When we build a new second-floor addition above the existing floor structure, we call them 'pop tops'. We have a lot of experience with them because we actually do a lot of these types of projects in our area."

Timing was everything in this case, he says, because his clients actually continued to live in their home throughout the remodel, and their second-floor master bedroom was directly beneath the primary work site. "Our challenge was that we were actually working right on top of functioning living space."

In this case, the age of the home actually made things easier for the remodeler. "Because

this was an older home, it was not built like homes are today. With the 2 by 6 ceiling joists cut into the roof, the original ceiling is not compromised during replacement of the roof. The old plaster and even the insulation can remain in place if you want it to." In this case, blown-in insulation was added to the new attic space that was created.

Ahlert has learned that one of the key elements that helps to simplify and speed a project like this one is the use of custom-built, pre-ordered trusses. "The use of pre-ordered trusses played a very important role on this project because, as we removed the existing roof, all of the existing ceiling joists and ceiling plaster were left exposed. We needed to work very quickly."

The existing roof was removed in one day and was completely framed and sheathed six days later.

all," says Ahlert.

In addition to the completely new roofline, the project included re-configuring the front porch; removing and replacing the windows to create a consistent look; adding a second-floor sunroom, a basement office, and a rear, pergola-shaded deck; and re-surfacing the entire exterior of the home in stucco. Other elements included replacing "stick on" shutters with authentic ones, changing the exterior color scheme, adding new landscaping and replacing the front walkway and entry steps.

"The new design now gives it a much more pleasing and well-balanced exterior elevation," says Ahlert.

The complete redesign and replacement of the roof proved to be a major challenge. Sections of the home's existing brick exterior walls had to be carefully reinforced to carry the 12,000-pound loads demanded by the new girder beams as part of support for the deep, 3-foot-plus overhangs that surround the entire structure.

When it came to restructuring the roof, the remodeler and his team worked very

quickly, he says. "We literally took off the entire roof in one day, and six days later the framing and sheathing for the new one was complete."

The project also included some diligent babysitting from the construction team when a storm hit between the time the old roof was removed and the new one was in place.

The project superintendent actually slept in the new roof rafters under the tarp that had been installed to protect the construction work site and the living space below. "He had to spend the night bailing water off the tarp to minimize the potential for damage from water that was leaking and blowing in during the storm," says Ahlert.

Ultimately, the team's dedication paid off. The clients were overjoyed with the results, telling the remodeler, "at last we have a house that compliments the lovely old homes in our neighborhood. Thank you for making our dreams come true." **PR**

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QUICK AND EASY GREEN

Going green doesn't have to mean an all-or-nothing approach

For a lot of remodelers, the idea of green is overwhelming. There's a wealth of information out there, but at the same time it can seem like if you're not doing it already, you're too far behind the curve. According to leading green remodelers, the best way not to be swamped is to take it one step at a time. Don't try to do everything at once; instead, pick one or two things you can do to green your projects. Then when you've mastered those, add something else.

"You don't have to go to extremes to be doing green remodeling practices," says Jason Stone, a principal with Sage Homebuilders in St. Louis. "You can find things that are easy to do green."

With that in mind, here are what leading green remodelers label as some of the easiest things to do to remodel green. For full coverage of our annual green study, see the cover story starting on p. 18.

Low-E, Argon gas-filled windows

You may not think of it immediately, but these windows are one of the easiest ways to go green. They reduce heat gain by reflecting light during the summer and help keep heat inside during the winter. Simply making that your standard replacement window can save homeowners money and reduce their reliance on heating sources that produce greenhouse gases.



Low-E windows like the Gorell 5100 are an easy green upgrade.

High-efficiency furnaces

Another area where it's easy to sell homeowners is the energy payback. If they are going to have to replace the furnace anyway, why not pay a little more to get the savings back on energy bills? As utility bills continue to rise, anything that cuts energy use will be an easier sell to clients.

Low-VOC paints & finishes

This one's not so much about saving the client money — in fact it will cost them more — but improving their general health and comfort.

Many people (especially those with asthma or other respiratory problems) have negative reactions to the volatile organic compounds found in most finishes, so using products with no or low levels of VOCs can go a long way toward improving indoor air quality. Depending what type of paint you're

looking at costs, could be \$30 or \$40 more per gallon, so you have to balance the desire of the client to get the best price versus any health concerns.

Dual-flush toilets

These are just what the name implies: toilets with two flushes, one for liquid waste that uses less water (usually 1.0 or 0.8 gallons per flush or gpf) and one for solid waste that uses more (1.6 gpf).

These offer an obvious savings over pre-1992 toilets that used around 5 gpf, but they are also a nice alternative to the required low-flow toilets, (which typically use 1.6 gpf for every flush), allowing homeowners to regulate their own flushing needs while using even less water when possible. And if you're really ambitious, you could try pitching the zero-water urinals some companies have on the market now.



The Karsten Rockton dual flush is one of several water-saving toilets on the market.

Low-flow fixtures

Just as with toilets, a number of faucets and showerheads are available that reduce water usage. If you're dealing with a home with pre-1992 fixtures, your client could realize a 25 to 60 percent water savings by switching to low-flow fixtures.

Reconfigure first

Can you find a way to get what the owner wants without adding space? A lot of times when clients

>> If you have ideas or comments, e-mail the author at jonathan.sweet@reedbusiness.com.

want more space, they actually just need better-designed space. A smaller home will use fewer materials and less energy to heat and cool.

Buy local

Without changing anything else, if you increased the amount you buy from local manufacturers, you'd be reducing your impact on the environment.

Transportation of materials is one of the biggest ways a product affects the environment. If you can get products made down the road instead of across the country, that can make a significant difference. Buying local is also good for the area economy, and with rising fuel prices, transportation costs are only going to increase.

Make your company green

Besides incorporating certain types of products into your projects, you can change the way you operate to make your company more green.

Some simple examples:

- Allen Associates in Santa Barbara, Calif., subsidizes employees' purchases of hybrid vehicles and also offers incentives for employees who use alternative methods of getting to the office such as public transportation, carpooling or riding a bike.
- McCutcheon Construction of Berkeley, Calif., has instituted a composting program for food waste in its office.
- The Newman Co. in Riley, Ind., donates products to the Habitat for Humanity ReStore for reuse in projects, benefitting the community, the environment and the company's bottom line — it reduces dumping fees by 20 percent.
- Thompson Remodeling of Grand Rapids, Mich., (one of many remodelers who has done so) has implemented in-office recycling programs and focuses on reducing paper waste by "thinking before printing." **PR**



LEED THE WAY

Richelieu introduced three collections of the only solid brass decorative hardware in the marketplace that contribute toward satisfying recycled content credits under LEED. The hardware is made from 100 percent recycled brass in a process that recovers 98 percent of the waste metal generated in its production.

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KICKING ON THE DECK

Kichler's 15765AZT textured architectural bronze six groove LED mini deck light is a versatile little 1.9-Watt LED-based accent lighting system. The lights are housed in die-cast aluminum in multiple finishes and can illuminate decks, steps and landscapes. The cable connector is included as an added bonus.

For FREE info, visit
<http://pr.hotims.com/20103-253>

SITTING IN THE SUN

Made from an Idaho sustainable forge using recycled materials, the latest Sun Valley Bronze hardware pieces come handcrafted and hand-finished in bronze. The Textures Collection, shown here, is a great complement to modern architecture. Kitchen, bathroom and cabinet hardware pieces are also available.

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TAKING IT BACK

The Reclaimed From Nature line by Greyne Custom Wood Co. uses reclaimed or other environmentally friendly products for a distinct look. The Reclaimed floor boards join the company's scrape-textured hardwood line, Inspired by Tradition, and customizable Originals Inspired by You lines.

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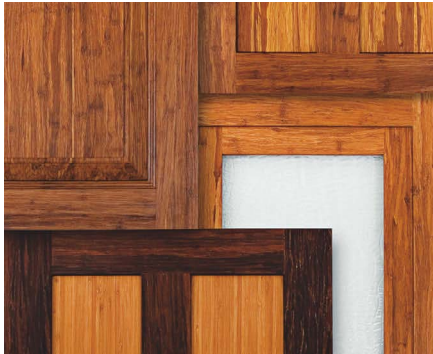
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A DIFFERENT KIND OF SYNERGY

Available in wheat, chestnut, java, as well as brindle, a beautiful new color blending natural and caramelized bamboo strands, Teragren's Synergy Strand bamboo panels are perfect for kitchen and bathroom cabinetry. The panels are made by fusing bamboo strands with an eco-friendly adhesive to make them harder than oak.

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ONE FRAME OF MIND

The latest improvements to Ply Gem subsidiary Great Lakes Window's UniFrame includes the addition of a new folding, locking, rigid nail fin. The windows feature the company's patented glass and insulation system, resulting in a U-Factor as low as .18, which easily beats Energy Star requirements.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20103-256>



POWERED BY THE SUN

PV Powered's new photovoltaic line is designed to provide maximum energy harvest for smaller PV installations. Models PVP1100, PVP2000 and PVP3000 are available with or without a built-in, multi-function display. They also include wired or wireless data monitoring, which provides access to current and historical system performance data through a customized online interface.

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MYTHICAL COLORS

We've heard of low-VOC paints before. Mythic Paint, according to the manufacturer, is the first and only high-performance paint that has zero VOCs, zero toxins and is non-carcinogenic. The low-odor line has 1,232 colors in both interior and exterior finishes; the company can also color match competitor's paints.

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SOAKING UP THE BAD

The H-300 drinking water system from Everpure reduces lead to below the Federal Action Level of 15 ppb and effectively adsorbs VOCs and other nasties. The 1/2-micron filtration provides NSF-certified aesthetic chlorine/chloramine reduction and removes or reduces off-tastes and odors. New KDF media controls bacteria and inhibits its lime scale build-up.

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Remodelers can create a squeak-free floor while taking it easy on the environment. iLevel's Subfloor Adhesive fills the gaps and creates a strong bond between floor panels, joists and other framing components — even if the joists are wet or frozen. The formula's low VOC count gives you piece of mind while making your homes tighter.

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Many homebuyers understand the benefits of cooking with propane. But they might not realize that once propane is installed for the kitchen, it's easy to expand it throughout their homes. From tankless water heaters, dryers and furnaces to fireplaces and grills, clean-burning propane gives off less than half the greenhouse gas emissions of electricity. To help your clients get the performance, comfort and efficiency of propane inside and out, visit buildwithpropane.com.



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Here comes another bamboo product to hit the market. Mr. Bamboo's latest SimplyGreen Bamboo Cabinets combine clean European-inspired lines with a warm look and low or no VOC content. The line features two styles, the milano and cascata, in two bamboo colors. Glass insert options are available.

For FREE info visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20103-262>



SHOWERING PRAISE

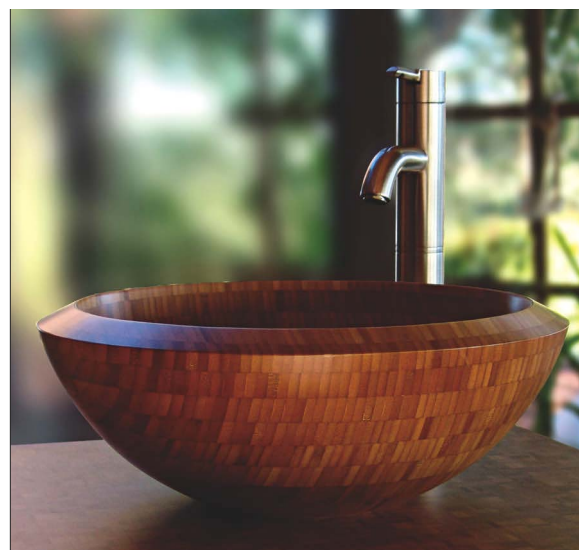
Danze's new low-flow showerheads use only 1½ gallons per minute regardless of low or high water pressure. The showerheads are available in five popular decorative designs. Shown is the lamp sunflower showerhead, which features 36 jets and is available in chrome and brushed nickel finishes.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20103-261>

LOW PROFILE, HIGH STYLE

The Sydney Low Profile by Caroma is ideal for installations that require a shorter toilet due to space restrictions, such as under a counter or where a grab bar is located above the tank. This high efficiency toilet uses 1.6 or .8 gallons per flush (full/half flush). Two configurations of the model have already been WaterSense-approved.

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TOTALLY AWESOME

First flooring, then cabinets. Now bamboo has hit the sink. Totally Bamboo's solid bamboo sink is 17 inches wide and 6 inches tall; has a 1½ inch thick wall; and has a recessed drain opening. The vessel sinks come in a variety of shapes and size. It is sealed in water-proof polyurethane and has a 10-year guarantee.

For FREE info visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20103-264>

young leaders

call for nominations

***Professional Remodeler* is looking for the next generation of leaders.**

The January issue of *Professional Remodeler* will feature the **Young Leaders** — those people **under 40** who will be setting the agenda for the remodeling industry for the next decade and beyond.

To submit your nomination, please complete the form at right and fax this page to 630-288-8145 or e-mail the information to Senior Editor Jonathan Sweet at jonathan.sweet@reedbusiness.com.

Deadline: November 3, 2008

**Professional
Remodeler**

Describe what makes the nominee a **Young Leader**:

Nominated by: _____

Name of nominee: _____

Age of nominee: _____

Nominee's title: _____

Nominee's company: _____

Street address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Web site url: _____

E-mail: _____

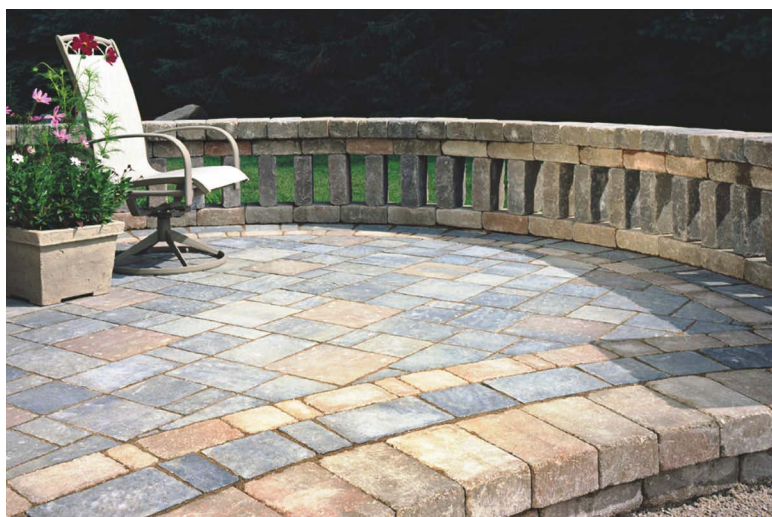
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GOT SOLAR?

Rheem Solaraide systems use a specially developed, freeze-proof heat transfer fluid to absorb and deliver heat energy even on cold and overcast days for solar water heating systems. The fluid also circulates in a “closed-loop” environment, which further protects against freezing. It is made for Rheem by its Australian subsidiary Solahart.

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PAVED OVER

If you're chasing the slate look, try using Belgard's new Urbana paver line. The line uses a three-piece modular system with an optional large square to add a broader range of shapes and patterns. The pavers are lighter and more efficient to install than their natural counterparts, and a contractor can save plenty on installation costs.

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PERFORMANCE ENHANCED

Performance Brick is an environmentally friendly panelized product for the façade and is made of recycled gypsum and reinforced with high-density polymer materials. The moisture-resistant panels interlock with the company's Fast-Track system to provide up to ¾-inch airspace behind each panel to allow for air flow and water drainage.

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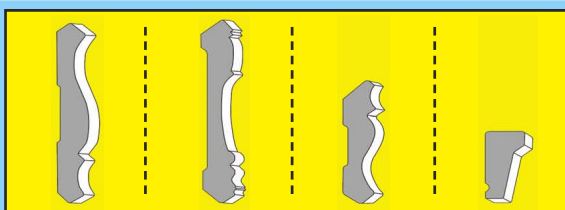
DON'T CROSS ATLAS

The CrossVent from Atlas Roofing Corp. is an eco-friendly polyiso foam insulation board for use over sloped unventilated roof decks. The CrossVent contains vent spacer strips to separate ¾-inch OSB from the foam insulation to promote air circulation. It combines a nailable surface, insulation and a ventilating airspace all in one panel.

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Product Showcase

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PVM-47 4-5/8" x 11/16" \$31.68 ea. (\$1.98 ft.)
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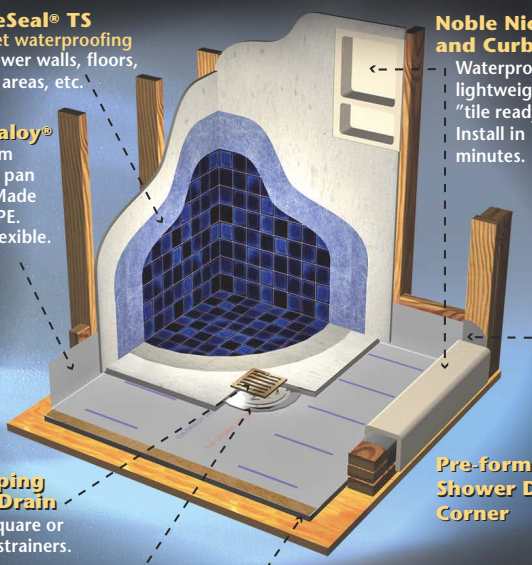
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WHAT CAN YOU RECYCLE?

Almost every renovation project has a Dumpster parked in front. Dumpsters, those ubiquitous steel containers, are an easy way to get rid of waste. Throw it in, haul it off and it's gone (usually with a neighbor's couch thrown in). But where does it actually go? Usually to a landfill, many of which are being closed as they fill up. So it goes to a transfer station, where it is unloaded, then reloaded and driven farther away to a new landfill. This takes time, money, fuel and land, all of which are limited resources. On top of this, much of the debris that remodelers throw away can be reused or recycled, saving money and our natural resources in the process.

We all know how to recycle the basics; recycling construction debris is more involved, but with a little extra effort, can be very successful.

Let's look at what can be recycled in a remodeling project. Asphalt and fiberglass shingles can be ground up and recycled into a gravel-like material that can be used as a base for driveways, or, in larger quantities, roads and parking lots. After the roof comes off, usually the decking, rafters and other framing materials follow. Depending on where you live, you may find framing materials made from heart pine, cedar, fir, cypress, and other old woods, all of which can be salvaged and remilled into flooring and other trim. Any unpainted lumber, new or old, can be ground into mulch and used for erosion control or plant bedding. Nails can be

removed and lumber reused on the site or sold at a premium.

Masonry and concrete are easily recycled. I recently salvaged more than 15,000 bricks from a house being demolished and delivered them to a renovation project down the street where they were reinstalled. Landscape contractors and suppliers may be interested in older bricks, which they can use to build walls and walkways. Broken or unusable bricks, as well as concrete block and clay roof tiles can be ground into gravel for use on or off the job site. Cabinets, appliances, doors, windows, plumbing fixtures, lighting, and flooring can be removed carefully and reused on or off the job site, sold, or donated to many non-profit organizations that reuse or resell them to support their programs. Copper wires and pipes, aluminum gutters, and other non-ferrous metals are easily segregated during demolition and construction and sold at recycling centers.

And this is just the start of a long list.

Knowing the challenges involved is important: locating resources to take your excess materials; educating your staff and trades to properly sort recyclables from waste; and finding enough

space on the job site to store materials waiting for recycling. Your local waste management authority is a good place to look for information on recycling. Check out Habitat for Humanity and local municipal landfills and recycling

centers (remember that donations to non-profits can provide tax deductions for your clients — another selling point!). To properly educate your team, write and publish a company waste management policy, post it on the job site, and include it in your employee handbook and subcontract agreements. If space on your job site is tight and your customer is concerned about their yard resembling a landfill, enlist them in the process — get their buy in on your recycling program before you start. Turn it into a marketing opportunity by posting signs saying "This Remodeler Recycles."

Instituting a recycling program on your job site won't be easy, but then

again, we didn't become remodelers because we thought it was easy. With some careful planning, team education and job site management you can reduce the waste generated during demolition and construction providing both cost savings and environmental benefits. **PR**



By Carl Seville
Advisory Board
Columnist

Much of the debris that we throw away can be reused or recycled, saving money and our natural resources in the process.

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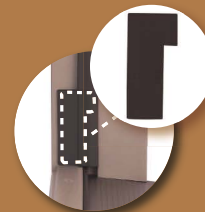
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