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CLOSING THE BOOKS ON 2008

As you close the books on 2008 and begin to write your business plan and budget for 2009, here are some things to keep in mind.

If 2008 was a difficult year for you in terms of sales or profits, you should

expect it to get worse in 2009 and plan accordingly. Predictions by both the Joint Center for Housing Studies Remodeling Futures Program and NAHB are for another year of decreasing revenue nationally. The catch is that there is no national remodeling market to speak of, so national forecasts really have little bearing on the course you should map out for your business.

All remodeling businesses are local, and your specific market conditions will never match the predictions that come out of Cambridge or Washington, D.C. This means you need to make your own predictions based on the trends of your recent business results and the conditions affecting your market.

I just returned from giving a presentation on strategic marketing in today's economic climate to the local NARI chapter in Boston and the local NAHB Remodelers chapter in Jacksonville, Fla., and I found that many companies of similar size, sales volume and business model were having wildly different results within the same market.

What this proves is that not only does your market affect how you should plan your business' future but that there are traits unique to every company that also have a tremendous impact on your business results.

The best way, then, to set your 2009

business goals and be able to sleep soundly at night in today's economy is to know your company inside and out. That begins with knowing precisely who your primary target customers are, what will motivate their decision to remodel right now, what your best sources of producing leads from that customer are and how many leads you can realistically expect to convert to sales during the next calendar year.

Armed with this knowledge, you can then begin to build your marketing budget, sales strategy and optimal workforce to be able to execute a realistic plan for a successful year.

While you're at it, I'd suggest you also read Vince Butler's column, "Let the Survival Tactics Kick In," on page 54. Vince has navigated his company through uncertain times on more than one occasion and provides a sound strategy for how to create a practical business plan that will give you the best chance for success in 2009 and set you up for a prosperous future well beyond just next year. **PR**



Michael R. Morris
Editor in Chief

The best way to set your 2009 business goals and be able to sleep soundly at night is to know your company inside and out.

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

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BUDGETING — THE GOOD AND THE BAD

Have you completed your budgeting process for the new year? With most of us experiencing a challenging year, it is tempting to think the worst for 2009 and believe it will be less successful than it can be.

Is this a good or bad thing? I say, it depends! From a budgeting standpoint, it is prudent to have a worst-case-scenario budget. But from a leadership and sales perspective, that can be a business death sentence.

Let's look at the positive of worst-case thinking within your budget. First, if you do a good job and really think through the changes in overhead and staffing to survive the worst case, it will force you to deal with your fear. Fear, if not faced, can be paralyzing to you as a leader and manifest itself in some subtle, but very unhealthy attitudes and behavior.

Cutting overhead is hard and it is difficult as business owners to deal with ending working relationships we have had for 5, 10 and 20 years or longer. Unfortunately, life and business have some very hard realities we must face to preserve what is left for us and our remaining team members. If we don't, then we risk losing it all because we put our head in the sand due to fear and the pain of change.

Although I have not found this process enjoyable, it is necessary to progress. We must develop the mental, emotional and spiritual toughness to succeed as business leaders. I wish it were different, but it is not. The key is to remain caring while thinking through and even making these tough decisions.

We cannot control how people will react when we have to make a change. Yet we do control how we handle the situation by giving and showing them dignity, honor and respect.

With this hard but necessary part completed, adjusting the numbers in your worst-case-scenario budget is

the easy part.

Now here is where the danger lies: If you don't shift gears into also developing separate realistic and dream budgets and business plans for 2009, then you will most undoubtedly get your worst-case scenario. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy and could be your business' death sentence.

Remember, I said it was prudent to do a worst-case-scenario budget. I didn't say it was wise to have that remain your dominating thought as you lead your team. The old saying is "Expect the best, but plan for the worst." So, shift your mental, emotional and spiritual focus and energy to how to make your realistic or dream budget come true.

What I find amazing is that if you will do this work, you will have reduced or eliminated your fears because you are prepared, and you are free to focus on the possibilities. I highly recommend seeking the support of trusted business friends or consultants to aid you through the process. One simple reality is you may need to hire an accountant to help you with the actual number crunching so that it gets completed in a timely fashion and creates some accountability.

There are some wise proverbs that can help guide us through these difficult times. The first is "the prudent see danger and take refuge but the simple keep going and suffer for it." A different and even more straight forward translation says, "A prudent person sees trouble coming and ducks; a simpleton walks in blindly and is clobbered."

Don't just ignore what is going on; go ahead and make the changes based on your current realities.

The other proverb is, "So as a man thinketh so shall he become." If you think the worst all the time with fear, worry and doubt, then that's what you

will get. But on the other hand, if you think there are people out there who need remodeling work done, positive things can happen for your business.

At DreamMaker, we believe that there are potential clients who are tired of waiting to remodel because of all of the uncertainty, and we think, "I am going to help make their dream come true," thus creating a bright spot in their life in spite of the current economic environment and negative daily news.

As you work through your 2009 budgeting and planning process, I encourage you to read Chapter 9 of Joel Osteen's book "Your Best Life Now: 7 Steps to Living at Your Full Potential," which

shares one man's story about the power of what we believe. I think you will be challenged and encouraged. This story has been used by many authors and speakers, yet this one is written in a way that is quite fitting given our current challenges. **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

Shift your mental, emotional and spiritual focus and energy to how to make your realistic or dream budget come true.

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



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STAY THE COURSE WITH YOUR MARKETING PLAN

I am not a runner. It makes my knees hurt. And my profusion of sweat looks more like a kid caught in a rainstorm than a professional athlete in a Gatorade commercial. Being a non-runner is not a bad thing except that I live in the tiny town of Hopkinton, Mass., 26.2 miles from downtown Boston. Hopkinton is a non-town except for the third Monday in April when 20,000 of the world's best runners descend on the town square to begin the Boston Marathon. And it is on this Monday every year that I contend with the fact that I am not a person able to endure acts of massive physical stamina, like running from home to Boston — a trip I can just as easily do in a nice comfy car in about 30 minutes.

While physical stamina eludes me, I do like to think that I have a strong capacity for mental stamina. Though easier to sip cream-laden coffee while showing off mental endurance, the discipline required for execution is similar: goal setting; constant training and retraining; determination; and, when feeling unmotivated, hitting it even harder. This is the same discipline I enforce to carry my firm's marketing plan through an entire year.

Like the start of any well-intentioned plan, it's good to work backward from the ultimate goal. For some, the goal is to finish the Boston Marathon in under four hours. For me the goal is to reach a new pinnacle of brand familiarity in the marketplace for F.H. Perry Builder. Both goals are lofty. Both are attached to a vision. Both need a chain link of support built one link at a time. But unless the goals are specific and definable, one is just as liable to drive to Boston as one is to run.

So before the end of each year, I write a disciplined and actionable

marketing plan. It states a clear vision for the year ahead and includes specific events, ad placements, marketing consultants and logo applications, all attached to a dollar amount. Simply said, I know what my goals are, and I know how much it is going to cost to achieve them. The plan serves as a beacon to constantly correct my direction.

And usually, the first month of the plan is brilliant. I am executing as outlined and am on budget to the penny. The ads are beautiful, I fend off a few yellow pages ad sales reps and I garner the attention of a local magazine to do a write-up about a recent project. Brilliant. I feel much like the runner I would imagine who went from one mile to five over the course of four weeks and maybe even dropped a pound or two on the way.

Then it happens: a knee injury. Not debilitating, but excruciating. Or, much less dramatic, my favorite publication sends a contract with an unexpected 25 percent rate increase — funds I had committed to a new sponsorship or to a program book for a charity auction.

I've come to expect these things. So like any real athlete, I take a time out with a chocolate covered donut. When that only provides temporary relief, I slow down, take a deep breath and start to retrain. First, I review the ultimate goal. Second, I review the budget. Third, I note other parts of

the plan that will be sacrificed or compromised. Fourth, I recognize and recommit to the plan — retrain and build up again, link by link, to the ultimate goal.

There is a need for a relentless offense when doing anything worthwhile, but I like to keep things simple. When you watch the elite runners, the "front of the pack," they keep it simple, too. It's as if they can see Boston from the starting line 26.2 miles away and nothing matters much but the steady slap of their feet on the pavement keeping pace. They don't get distracted by orange slices and water stops. They seem to trust their training and their ultimate goal and keep running.

That's how I like to think about it. Jan. 1 every year, I just start to run with my marketing plan. Steady and focused. I like to think that this strengthens the muscles of my company. Our brand, therefore, has stamina and endurance. Injuries along the way don't deter us from our ultimate goal. Unfortunately, this does not result in killer calves for

me, but I'll revisit that next April. **PR**

Allison Perry Iantosca is vice president of marketing and sales for F.H. Perry Builder, a preeminent custom builder in the Boston market. She can be reached at aiantosca@fhperry.com.



Allison P. Iantosca
Contributing Editor

Like the start of any well-intentioned plan, it's good to work backward from the ultimate goal. ... For me the goal is to reach a new pinnacle of brand familiarity in the marketplace for F.H. Perry Builder.

>> For more Allison P. Iantosca on Sales and Marketing, visit www.ProRemodeler.com

HIRING A BUSINESS COACH

When and why do you need a business coach?

BUSINESS COACH, CONSULTANT or pseudo-shrink: whatever you choose to call that person, they can help your business and personal life run more smoothly. Today we'll get insight from both remodeler Michael Spreckelmeier and his business coach, Paul Winans.

Jud: Michael, I'll start with you. I'd like some of the readers to be able to relate to why you chose to use a business coach. What kind of problems were you having when you made this decision?

Michael: I was having psychological problems, overworking problems, working too much and not getting enough out of my life and also, normal day-to-day business problems. It's been about 15 or 16 months now that I've been involved in the program. The slowdown in the economy has definitely been a problem. There are a lot of ways to deal with it. I think a business

coach can help one to identify the best ways to deal with those problems.

Jud: Michael, how did you hear about a business coach?

Michael: I'm a member of Remodelers Advantage. Several of my friends in the group and other company owners had business coaches. Some were inside the remodeling profession and some were from outside. I happened to choose one that I thought would best suit me, inside the remodeling business.

Jud: Michael, what motivated you to go and seek out a business coach?

Michael: I know Paul has facilitated numerous meetings that I've been involved in. I saw the connection there that I thought would benefit me personally in my business, then and in the future. I run a small company; I do not have a college degree. I was looking for some outside wisdom and knew that I needed it. Sometimes the hardest part is realizing that as smooth as we may think we are and as intelligent as we really are, it always helps to get that fresh paradigm.

Jud: Paul, anything more about why people seek out a business coach?

Paul: I know that, particularly in the remodeling community, there are a lot of guys who run a business, and I don't know how someone does this on their own. Having worked with my wife for many years, I would come home and she just did not want to listen to some of the challenges that I was facing. We needed someone else to be able to talk to. I think especially with those who are doing this as sole proprietors who are "the guy" in the business, it's very difficult to get the sounding board that you need without bringing work home and hav-



PHOTO BY BRIAN TIETZ/GETTY IMAGES

MICHAEL: "I am the only owner ... I need outside opinions that I can trust. I wait with those questions to ask someone that I can trust."

ing it become a big focus inside a personal relationship with your spouse. There are people who are able to manage the challenges all on their own. But I think they are very few and far between.

Jud: Michael, what about the business coach format has been most beneficial to you? First of all, what is that format that

This month featuring:

Michael Spreckelmeier, President

Progressive Builders, Fort Myers, Fla.

Progressive Builders is a design/build/remodeling firm that will celebrate its 20th anniversary next year. The company has six employees and subcontracts 50 percent of its business.

Paul Winans, Business Coach

Remodelers Advantage

Paul is the former owner with wife Nina of Winans Construction in Berkeley, Calif. They owned the company for 29 years before selling it in 2007.

He is also on the *Professional Remodeler* advisory board. Paul can be reached at 541/488-6452 or paul@remodelersadvantage.com.

PAUL: “There are people who are able to manage the challenges all on their own. But I think they are very few and far between.”



PHOTO BY BRIAN PRECHTEL

you and Paul have worked out that you're doing and what parts to you like the best?

Michael: I'm not sure how everyone else does it, but with us, there is usually a hot topic — hot topic meaning something that we're both recently familiar with. The format seems to change, it's not always you talk five minutes, I'll talk five minutes. A few meetings ago, I had some past employees approach me about purchasing the business. I had some concerns and thoughts on that. We spent about half of that call talking about buying and selling of businesses, what would my clients think, etc. Paul usually will have other — not necessarily opinions — but he will send me links to a Web site or to someone who has recently sold a business, or something that is around that particular topic. All of the advice isn't

always coming from Paul. He may “justify” what we're talking about by saying, “Go to this Web site” or “Talk to a broker who handled mine.” Our phone calls are typically about an hour long. It starts out as kind of a recap about what's been happening since the last phone call and is pretty brief. It seems — and I hate to admit it — like I always have a problem! That problem seems to be different most weeks. About every other phone call we talk about some sort of balance in my life. I am the only owner; I don't have a vice president.

My wife is not involved in the business. I need outside opinions that I can trust. I wait with those questions to ask someone that I trust.

Paul: One of the things you do fairly often, which I think is very effective, Michael, is to actually write an e-mail that is a recap of the call and shoot it over to me. When Michael

does that, it really helps embed the ideas and information that we shared.

Jud: Paul, are there common problems that you help most of your clients solve? Are they usually tailored specifically to a company, or is it both ways?

Paul: I think it's both ways. You find that the best clients are the ones who are the most frustrated. They're more highly motivated to address issues that, to some degree, might be uncomfortable. One of the reasons people end up working very hard is that it becomes a way of protecting them from addressing the core issues in their life that they know they really need to pay attention to. Depending on the client, it might be a leadership focus, a boundary focus or maximizing the value of your business.

Jud: How is this structured? In person? At the client's office? By phone? E-mail?

Paul: Because many of the people I work with, if not through Remodelers Advantage or speaking on shows like the Remodeling Show, JLC, speaking at NARI chapters around the country or Remodelers Council events. My clients more often than not are remote. In other words, it would be very expensive to have a

face-to-face meeting. We will meet on the phone, and it depends on the client. There might be e-mail exchanges between calls where a particular problem comes up: “Here's the agenda I'd like to discuss; give me a tid-bit of advice, I've got a challenge with an employee, this is what I'm thinking of doing.” We will interact between calls. Depending on the client, the frequency of the calls is different. Some people interact every two weeks, every month. If it goes longer than a month, I don't think you're going to get the change you really want.

Jud: Paul, what advice would you suggest to any remodeling company or owner thinking about seeking a business coach?

Paul: To really get clear on an individual level what change you would like to make. If the relationship was great, what would the outcome be at some point in the

future? How would your life be different? How would your business be different? How would your relationship with your company and/or your family and/or your employees be different? Maybe jot down a couple of thoughts about that. There are many, many different resources. As Michael mentioned, the way we connected was because Michael was smart enough to get involved in a peer group company, Remodelers Advantage specifically. That's another way to meet very good people; through those types of interactions. You get a feel for them on a personal level. If you're reading Web sites or remodeling publications like *Professional Remodeler*, and you see people mentioned — check them out! If it sounds like what they're saying is a fit for you, really listen to your gut. This is so important. It is a business relationship but it's a personal relationship. **PR**



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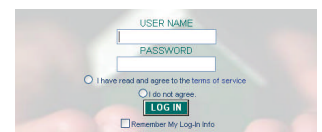
>> If you have a **Trade Secret** you would like to share, e-mail Senior Editor Jonathan Sweet at jonathan.sweet@reedbusiness.com.

Private access

For Hurst Design-Build-Remodeling, using private online project tracking software for its clients has made projects run more smoothly and helped the company land more jobs.

For about three years, the Middleburg Heights, Ohio, company has been using My Design/Build Project, a Web-based software solution that allows remodelers to offer clients password-protected sites dedicated to their specific project.

"We were looking for a difference maker," says Vice President Patrick Hurst. "We had seen log-in sections with other companies, particularly large commercial companies. We



thought it'd be great if we had something like that, because nobody we compete with does."

By keeping all the documents and plans in one place, it makes it easier to communicate with clients without having to have a face-to-face meeting, a benefit for many busy homeowners. The company can also show the system off to potential clients, which helps them seem more tech savvy. It gets homeowners, especially younger ones, excited about working with the company, Hurst says.

A Community goes solar

The high costs of energy has many homeowners interested in solar, but all too often they get turned off by the high upfront price. With systems that cost thousands of dollars to install, most homeowners are not willing to wait years for payback of the investment.

Gayler Construction of Danville, Calif., found a way to address that concern with a unique community program the company put together earlier this year. Owners Darlene and George Gayler were looking for a community service project for the company to undertake. They had heard about programs where homeowners had banded together to negotiate reduced prices from solar providers and thought that would be a good fit for their local community.

To make it even better, the company was able to strike a deal with solar company SolarCity and banker Morgan Stanley to offer a lease program.

The benefit of a lease program is that it allowed SolarCity, as the owners of the panels, to take advantage of commercial tax credits of 30 percent that aren't available to homeowners, George Gayler says.

"It's a huge tax credit, but you can't get it on residential normally," Gayler says. "That allowed us to charge no upfront costs (to the homeowner) because the costs were covered by the credit." Homeowners had to sign a 15-year lease and have the option of purchasing the panels at the end of the lease.

Because there are no upfront costs, the cost savings is immediate for homeowners. The Gaylers had a system installed on their own home and estimate they're saving about \$50 a month, a number that will only increase as utility rates go up.

"Over a period of 15 years, I'll probably be saving something like \$600, \$700 a month, and I'm producing 80 percent of the power I use in my house with clean, green technology," George Gayler says.

The company signed up almost 40 homes for the program, along with a local church and paper plant, taking the equivalent of 160 homes off the grid, Darlene Gayler says.

The only reasons more people couldn't sign up is that the company ran out of time. Systems have to be installed by the end of this year to qualify for the tax credits that expire this month.

"I would have liked to keep it going," Darlene Gayler says. "If the rebates come back into effect, I think we'd be able to convince SolarCity to do it again."

Beyond the energy-saving benefits, the program also ended up earning money for the community. To help close the deal, SolarCity offered Gayler a referral fee for each system. Because the Gaylers had intended the project as community service, they didn't want to accept the money themselves but instead were able to get SolarCity to donate the money to the local Rotary Club, raising nearly \$20,000 for local schools.

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Greener Pastures

2008 BEST OF THE BEST DESIGN AWARD JUDGES



Left to right: David McNulty, McNulty Design Group; Daniel Griffin, Griffin & Associates; Andy Poticha, Design Construction Concepts; Dave Gravel, Enon Hill Associates; and Cindy Knutson-Lycholat, Knutson Bros. II.

By Michael R. Morris, Editor in Chief

GREEN BUILDING PRACTICES AND products are becoming more readily used in every type of project, from kitchens to whole house remodels and everything in between.

That certainly was apparent in this year's Best of the Best Design Award entries, as the majority of projects in this year's competition featured at least some form of green building practices and products. (For more on how green can be effectively incorporated into an award winning design scheme, see The Green Room on page 43.) With a record 335 entries in 20 categories — including the debut of our Whole-House Green Remodel category — that was no small accomplishment and didn't go unnoticed by our panel of judges.

This year, 58 projects received awards at the Remodeling Show, including seven Platinum awards and one project chosen by our judges as The Best. For an expanded photo slideshow of all of this year's winning projects, log on to www.ProRemodeler.com/designawards.



Revisionist

UPDATING THIS HISTORIC
HOME REQUIRED BLENDING THE PAST
WITH CONTEMPORARY LIVING

By Michael R. Morris, Editor in Chief

COMPLETELY RESTORING A 115-YEAR-OLD, shingle-style Victorian in a historic neighborhood is complicated enough. When you throw in a two-story addition on a tight setback, a full boat of long-needed mechanical updates and extensive structural remediation to save the whole shooting match, the odds of everything coming together in award-winning fashion are about as high as they get.

But that's exactly what happened when Gardner/Fox Associates took on the renovation of a two-and-a-half story 1893 home in the South Wayne Historic District of Wayne, Pa., 13 miles west of Philadelphia, beginning in May 2006. Over the next year and 11 months, the Bryn Mawr, Pa., design/build firm orchestrated a complete transformation of the Wynhurst estate — winning this year's Best of the Best Design Award competition as the judges' overwhelming choice for project of the year.

To pull this off, Gardner/Fox paired one of the firm's top architects, Alex Rice, who has a passion for and background in historical preservation, with a talented team of craftsmen and artisans to turn the estate into a dream-come-true reality for its clients, a family of five that had recently purchased the home.

"You get a handful of projects like this, but you don't get these

Gardner/Fox Associates transformed this 1893 shingle-style Victorian into a contemporary home for a family of five without sacrificing any of its historic charm and character.

PHOTO BY HOLLY CHARLES, GARDNER/FOX

History



HISTORIC RESTORATION

Remodeler: **Gardner/Fox Associates**, Bryn Mawr, Pa.



By carefully dismantling the home's former arched stone entryway, the Gardner/Fox team was able to power-wash the stones and use them to match the exterior on most of the two-and-a-half car garage addition.

every day, and I understood that," said Rice, who worked in the historic preservation field for 11 years before joining Gardner/Fox. "Projects like this is why I do this for a living. If you can't get excited about this, you're going to have a hard time getting excited about any job."

The design process took the better part of six months, as Rice had to deal with numerous issues, including how to harmoniously blend a large two-story addition onto the existing home's asymmetrical elevations without ruining its historic character and charm, which included a prominent three-story turret on the corner. The original acreage had been subdivided over the years and left just 13 feet of buildable space in the back where the addition was to go. This forced Rice to come up with a creative design that he approached less as a traditional addition but rather a deconstruction of the original structure and creation of a distinct new overall composition.

(To listen to a podcast with architect Alex Rice; see before and after floor plans; and view an extended slideshow of the photos of this project, log on to www.ProRemodeler.com/designawards.)

A BRAND NEW INTERIOR

Because the home's interior was designed for a family in the late 1800s, many of the existing spaces needed to be redesigned to suit the needs of a contemporary family. For example, the sec-

ond floor sewing room and adjacent sleeping porch were turned into a master bathroom and dressing room.

The first floor was reconfigured to have a more contemporary open floor plan than the original. The kitchen was completely renovated and opened into the new family room addition, as well as a breakfast area and pantry. The team converted the original butler's pantry into a convenient computer area next to the kitchen.

A fourth bedroom was added to the second floor to group all the bedrooms there, along with a laundry room and home office. The second floor was just two rooms deep, with an elongated hallway running the length of the house. The bedroom and home office addition above the garage added 30 feet to that length, so Rice incorporated alcoves and vestibules to break up the space and make it feel more intimate.

"What I tried to do was break up this long corridor to create thinner vestibule transition spaces so that at no point was the run too long," said Rice. "At one space, you're at two of the girls' bedrooms. At the next space, you're at the bathroom and the laundry room. And ultimately at the end, the last knuckle in the corridor, I created a two-story space with transoms and clerestories up above so that natural light poured down on this end destination point in the corridor. Now, as you're making your way down the long hallway, you're kind of drawn to those last rooms by natural light."

The renovated third story now includes two guest bedrooms; a

guest bathroom; an arts and crafts room; a children's study area; and a playroom in the top of the turret.

EXTERIOR COHESIVENESS

The exterior design provided a number of challenges for Gardner/Fox. The home's existing gothic stone arched entry had eroded from years of water damage, so it and the porch needed to be dealt with. They were replaced by an open, covered porch and custom balustrade, which, although traditional in style, blends well with the shingle-style Victorian home and allows more natural light to fill the interior space than before.

"It tied in the first and second floors just as we needed it to," said Rice. "We didn't try to overdo the front porch. There are a lot of elements where we did kind of go for it, but the front porch we kept simple."

The existing cedar shingle siding on the second and third floors was removed down to the wall sheathing and new building wrap was installed. Then, the team installed a new western cedar shingle siding, hand-dipped in stain on site.

Because the original stone on the first floor exterior was so unique, it was difficult to find matching new materials anywhere on the East Coast to cover the addition. For that reason, every stone removed from the front entry was power-washed and reused to cover the addition. Even then, the rear of the addition had to be covered with a similar stone that was not an exact match. The rest of the home's existing stone was also power-washed to bring out its original beauty.

For the two-and-a-half car attached-garage addition, the decision was made to turn the garage toward the side of the property so it would open to a new circular drive and be hidden from the street view. Period-accurate windows, which were incorporated throughout the home, were installed on the street-facing side of the garage to disguise it as living space.

The existing warped roof sheathing and shingles were removed to make way for new sheathing and architectural shingles. A comprehensive system of gutters and downspouts now alleviate ice-damming. There are new rake boards and moldings throughout.

STRUCTURAL AND MECHANICAL SOLUTIONS

Structurally and mechanically, Gardner/Fox had many problems to solve as well. Water infiltration had taken its toll on much of the original stone masonry construction, especially on the turret, where the mortar had turned to mere powder over the years. The original structural wood framing was also failing in many spots and had to be replaced to support the weight of the addition.

"There were numerous structural issues," says Rice. "In general, the house was soundly built, but there were definitely areas



The original stone hearth (top photo) stands in the entry foyer as a nod to the home's historic past. The kitchen, however, was completely remodeled with contemporary amenities and an open floor plan that unites the family room, pantry and breakfast area.

where bearing lines and bearing points didn't line up and were off center. And over 100 years, there were parts that were failing. There were no imminent catastrophic failures but a number of spots where we had to reframe."

The home's mechanical systems needed massive upgrading as well. There was no air conditioning in the existing home, and the heating system was a hybrid of four different methods: radiant steam gravity-fed, hot-water radiators, electric baseboard and hydronic floor heat. These were replaced with an energy-efficient forced air heating and cooling system separated into six zones to handle the more than 10,000 square feet of space. Antiquated plumbing and electrical systems were also replaced throughout the home. **PR**



Reusing to go Green

WHOLE-HOUSE GREEN REMODEL

Remodeler: **Orion General Contractors** Haverford, Pa.

Architect: **Archer & Buchanan Architecture** West Chester, Pa.

By Jonathan Sweet, Senior Editor

REUSE IS ONE OF THE MOST important tenets of green remodeling. With that in mind, this reclaimed barn turned retreat seems the very embodiment of green.

The 176-year-old barn, which was scheduled for demolition, was saved by the clients who decided to move it 45 miles and turn it into a “party house” for guests and entertaining.

Orion had the dual mission of making the barn look as vintage as possible and at the same time incorporating green features. Both goals were helped along by extensive reuse of the original materials, as well as those from other older structures.

“Every piece of wood that came out of there was somehow reused in the new structure,” says Pete Maruca, owner of Orion General Contractors.

Overall, 90 percent of the materials Orion used in the remodel were salvaged from the original barn or other vintage structures. The company used salvaged materials



Orion General Contractors used “110 percent” of the original structure in remodeling this vintage barn, even going so far as using stones from the original foundation as a veneer on the new foundation.

for almost the entire interior structure, along with 24 windows and all but one interior and exterior door. Orion fabricated the kitchen island countertop from a slate patio that was removed to clear space for the barn.

The design team also gave special attention to environmentally friendly choices. The entire structure is insulated with spray foam. Radiant heating, powered by a 97 percent efficient boiler, was used throughout the building. The building is cooled by a two-stage, 21-SEER cooling system. Orion used a low-VOC sealant on the floor, but made limited use of any other coatings throughout the rest of the project.

AFTER PHOTOS BY CHRISTY GIUGLIANO, ORION GENERAL CONTRACTORS



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From 60s Blah to Modern Escape

WHOLE-HOUSE UNDER \$500,000

Remodeler: Phil Kean Designs Winter Park, Fla.

ARCHITECT PHIL KEAN WAS LOOKING for two things when he found this weekend home in Cocoa Beach, Fla.: a waterfront location and a home that hadn't been too botched up with prior remodels.

"This particular house had really good bones, so that's what made it a remodel versus a teardown," Kean says.

The major goal for Kean was to create a relaxing weekend escape out of the 1960s ranch home. Like many homes of that era and style, the home was divided into lots of small rooms. Many of the walls were removed to open up the kitchen, dining room and living areas of the home.

The original terrazzo floor ran beneath the walls, so Kean was able to leave that basically unchanged. He retained the terrazzo everywhere except in the foyer, where it was replaced by slate tiles to set off that area from the rest of the home. The company used foam insulation to make the home more energy-efficient and brought the building up to current hurricane standards.

The original home was not designed to take advantage of the waterfront view, so Kean added a second master suite and a lanai. The lanai featured retractable



AFTER PHOTOS BY HARVEY SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY

Architect Phil Kean took advantage of the home's location on the Intercoastal Waterway by installing large sliding doors, a new lap pool and patio.

screens that could be raised or lowered depending on how bad the mosquitoes were. Kean also incorporated mosquito misters in the back yard to help keep the pests under control.

Because Kean wanted the home to continue to blend in with the neighborhood, he didn't make many changes to the exterior of the front of the home, with the exception of a new stone wall along the front entryway. One of the major design flaws of the original home was that when someone came out of the front door they looked right at the corner of the garage. The diagonal wall helps to pull attention away from the garage. It also continues into the house, defining the entryway and funneling people toward the water. — Jonathan Sweet



Outdoor Luxury

OUTDOOR LIVING

Remodeler: **Lewis Aquatech** Chantilly, Va.

Architect: **J3 Design Collective** Falls Church, Va.

THE OWNER OF THIS 46,000-SQUARE-FOOT home in suburban Virginia wanted to create an incredible outdoor space and enhance his stunning view of the Potomac River. With a steep slope from the river to the home 200 feet above and a site with limited access, Lewis Aquatech was facing a tough challenge.

Luckily, the company had recently completed a project in a similar setting only a block away. That experience impressed the owner and landed the job for Lewis Aquatech.

The homeowner wanted to have two terraces, with a top level featuring a small deck with a pool and a bottom level for entertaining large groups. On the upper terrace, Lewis Aquatech installed an infinity pool so the pool would blend directly into the view of the Potomac. French limestone was chosen for the decks and walls because its light color would keep it cooler underfoot during the summer. To make the terraces usable year-round, the company installed an intricate network of snow-melt systems.

Because of the layout of the site — nearby homes and the steep slope making access to the back nearly impossible — materials and tools had to be moved in non-traditional ways. Everything that could be was hand-carried around the sides of the house. Larger materials, including the slabs of limestone, had to be craned over the top of the home. Even the Bobcat skid-steer had to be moved over the house by crane.

“There was no way to drive to the left- or right-hand side of



AFTER PHOTOS BY MORGAN INC.

With a historic Frank Lloyd Wright home next door, a steep slope and the water nearby, reaching this site proved to be the biggest challenge for Lewis Aquatech in crafting this two-level, luxurious outdoor retreat along the Potomac River.

the house because of existing structures that were present and historic structures that were present,” says Principal Don Gwiz. “The logistics of scheduling all this was our biggest challenge.”

At the same time, the company was facing an aggressive timeline, with the owner wanting the project completed as quickly as possible.

“With all that, if we didn’t have a well-organized site and didn’t pre-plan, we never would have made this work,” Gwiz says. — Jonathan Sweet



Matching New and Old

EXTERIOR

Remodeler: Magee Construction Co. Cedar Falls, Iowa

ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN expanding a historic home is making sure the new addition blends. Magee Construction Co.'s success in pulling that off is what made the Best of the Best judges recognize it with a Platinum award.

"We have done quite a bit of historic work in the past, and it's always nice when we finish a project and you can't tell what we did," says project manager Deb Waterman.

Magee had worked with the homeowner on several smaller maintenance projects over the years on the 1896 home, so it was natural for her to turn to the company when she was ready to add on a garage and laundry room.

The garage was designed to be much taller than necessary so it wouldn't be dwarfed by the home. The round gutters and downspouts were custom-ordered to match the original home, and the garage



Magee Construction Co. paid careful attention to matching the detail work above the garage with that of the second floor so the addition blends seamlessly with the original home.

doors, although new, were chosen for their vintage look.

Magee matched the windows of the original home by reusing two windows that had to be removed to connect the addition. The remodelers carefully removed the 100-plus-year-old windows, repaired them to ensure longevity and reinstalled them in the new garage.

The Magee team paid special attention to matching the detail work above the garage window to that on the original home. The carpenters accomplished this by carefully tracing and redrawing the pattern, then custom cutting and painting the wood to match. — Jonathan Sweet

AFTER PHOTOS BY CATHY MICHELS' BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

Remodeler Heal Thyself

KITCHEN \$75,000 – \$150,000

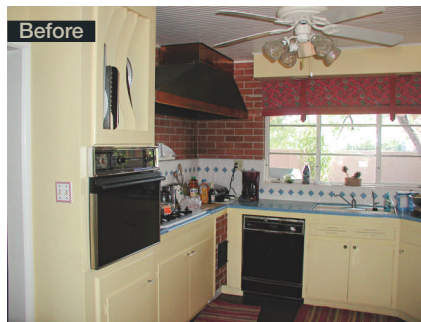
Remodeler: Eren Design and Remodel Tucson, Ariz.

FOR YEARS, JANICE DONALD HAS been remodeling other people's homes as the owner of Eren Design and Remodel. At the same time, she wanted to improve the kitchen in her 1955 ranch home but had never gotten around to it.

As she heard more and more about green remodeling over the last year, Donald decided she had an opportunity to not only give her kitchen a much-needed update but also show her clients what could be done in the green arena.

Tucson has a lot of highly visible green construction, such as straw-bale homes and solar energy, so clients tend to assume green has to be that extreme, Donald says.

Eren reused as many materials as possible and looked for other reclaimed products to bring into the project. For example, the island countertop was crafted from the salvaged floor of a 1790 schoolhouse. New



Eren Design and Remodel owner Janice Donald designed the kitchen in the spirit of her grandmother's home (which was light and airy and featured a lot of light colors) but with modern amenities.

materials that were brought in were chosen for their green features, such as the EcoTop countertop, which is made from bamboo and recycled wood products.

As important as green was, Donald also wanted to achieve her dream kitchen. Eren significantly increased the footprint of the room by moving the kitchen into what had been an eating area and expanding it into the adjacent laundry room. The former kitchen became a breakfast nook, and a pantry was added where a bathroom had been. The laundry room and powder room were relocated to what had been a storage room. — Jonathan Sweet

AFTER PHOTOS BY ROBIN STANCLIFF PHOTOGRAPHY



Creating a Private Retreat

BATH OVER \$50,000

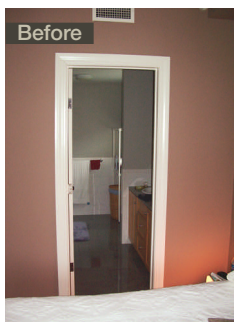
Remodeler: Lee Kimball Winchester, Mass.

THE CLIENTS FOR THIS MASTER suite remodel by Lee Kimball were frequent travelers and wanted to recreate the spa-like feel they had encountered in the luxury hotels and resorts they frequent.

The original space consisted of a hallway, walk-in closet and the typical master bathroom you would find in an older home, with a simple tub, double sink and dated tile walls. The new bathroom features a double vanity with trough sink, a soaking tub and a steam shower. To capture additional space, the team pushed the bathroom out into the closet, then replaced the hallway with a dressing suite that incorporated closet space.

That dressing suite, with a floor of silk carpet, helps to make the transition from the public area of the home to the private retreat the clients wanted to create, says E.J. Krupinsky director of design.

Another challenge for the company was considering ecology along with luxury. The company tries to offer



With so many different materials in the bathroom, Lee Kimball had to be careful to make sure that the room didn't end up looking like a "sample room," director of design E.J. Krupinsky says.

packages that include green features such as tankless water heaters and LED lighting. At the same time, they realize a project with multiple shower heads and other luxury features is not going to be overly green.

"It's not to the level of a LEED standard or anything like that, but we can take smaller steps that reduce the impact," Krupinsky says. — Jonathan Sweet

AFTER PHOTOS BY EDUA WILDE PHOTOGRAPHY



Modern Jewel with Vintage Flavor

COMMERCIAL REMODEL

Remodeler: **Creative Contracting** North Wales, Pa.

Architect: **Karl R. Weiss** Pennsburg, Pa.

CREATIVE CONTRACTING WAS HIRED to transform this 1950s-style theater to a modern venue for live performances. The owner wanted to update the theater's lobby while at the same time preserving the historic character of the building, parts that dated back to the stables originally built on the site in 1894.

The biggest problem with the existing theater was a lack of space for people to gather before and after a show. The building was not able to accommodate the nightly crowds that often topped 300 people.

"He wanted to be able to sell more snacks, more drinks. He didn't want people to just come see the show and leave," says project manager Rich Tomlinson.

The existing lobby was only about 200 square feet, coupled with a small outdoor patio. After remodeling, the theater has more than 800



Throughout the 17-week remodel, Creative Contracting had to make sure the theater could stay open for shows every weekend. That meant working long days and during off hours to keep things running.

square feet of public space, including a 400-square-foot deck that can comfortably seat more than 200 people.

To achieve the vintage look, Creative used reclaimed materials throughout the project, including the decorative doors on the exterior of the building, the barrel ceiling and trim throughout the lobby. The exterior was redesigned to better match the historic look of downtown Sellersville, Pa. — *Jonathan Sweet*

AFTER PHOTOS BY OZZIE OSWALD, RVO PHOTOGRAPHY



WHOLE-HOUSE GREEN REMODEL
Bowers Design Build McLean, Va.



WHOLE-HOUSE OVER \$1,000,000
Remodeler: Block Builders Bethesda, Md.
Architect: GTM Architects Bethesda, Md.



WHOLE-HOUSE \$500,000 – \$1,000,000
Remodeler: Zieba Builders Long Beach, Calif.
Architect: Patterson Design Vancouver, Wash.



ADDITION OVER \$200,000
The Wills Company Nashville, Tenn.



ADDITION UNDER \$200,000
Sun Design Remodeling Specialists Burke, Va.



HISTORIC RESTORATION
Remodeler: Hodges and Heathman Properties Lexington, Ky.
Architect: Stewart Architecture Lexington, Ky.



EXTERIOR

Landis Construction Corp. Washington, D.C.



REBUILD ON EXISTING FOUNDATION

Remodeler: Crawford Renovation Houston

Architect: Kent & Kent Houston



REBUILD ON EXISTING FOUNDATION

Thomas Pruitt Builders Charlotte, N.C.



OUTDOOR LIVING

Remodeler: Crawford Renovation Houston

Architect: Gonzalez Architects Houston



OUTDOOR LIVING

Remodeler: Michael K. Walker & Assoc. Sarasota, Fla.

Architect: CMSA Sarasota, Fla.



INTERIOR REMODEL/SPECIALTY ROOM

Architect: Architectural Resource Ann Arbor, Mich.

Remodeler: Mark Dennis Remodeling Dexter, Mich.



BASEMENT REMODEL
Sun Design Remodeling Specialists Burke, Va.



KITCHEN OVER \$150,000
USI Remodeling Grand Prairie, Texas



KITCHEN \$75,000 – \$150,000
Normandy Builders and Architects Hinsdale, Ill.



KITCHEN UNDER \$75,000
Remodeler: Platinum Construction Co. West New York, N.J.
Architect: Imaginative Design Center Hoboken, N.J.



BATH OVER \$50,000
Carnemark Systems + Design Bethesda, Md.



BATH UNDER \$50,000
Associates in Building and Design Fort Collins, Colo.

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WHOLE-HOUSE OVER \$1,000,000
Remodeler: Strobel Design Build St. Petersburg, Fla.
Architect: Clemmons Architecture St. Petersburg, Fla.



WHOLE-HOUSE OVER \$1,000,000
Thomas Pruitt Builders Charlotte, N.C.



WHOLE-HOUSE \$500,000 – \$1,000,000
Architect: Doug Walter Architects Denver
Remodeler: Creative Remodeling Aurora, Colo.



WHOLE-HOUSE UNDER \$500,000
Charlotte Design-Build Charlotte, N.C.



ADDITION OVER \$200,000

Remodeler: **Hodges and Heathman Properties** Lexington, Ky.
Architect: **Stewart Architecture** Lexington, Ky.



ADDITION UNDER \$200,000

Remodeler: **Modern Yankee Builders** Cumberland, R.I.
Architect: **Solley Design** Barrington, R.I.



HISTORIC RESTORATION

Remodeler: **Plath & Co.** San Rafael, Calif.
Architect: **Carey & Co.** San Francisco



EXTERIOR

Remodeler: **North Shore Design** Falls Church, Va.
Architect: **Nawrocki Architects** McLean, Va.



INTERIOR REMODEL/SPECIALTY ROOM

MCM Construction Lake Oswego, Ore.



FINISHED BASEMENT

Finished Basement Co. Denver



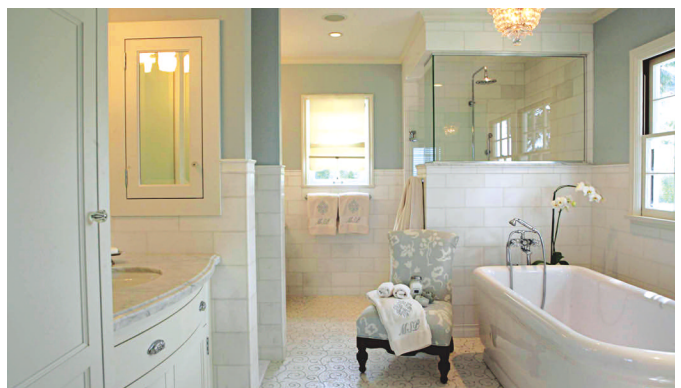
KITCHEN OVER \$150,000
Lifestyles Design Perkiomenville, Pa.



KITCHEN \$75,000 – \$150,000
Sun Design Remodeling Specialists Burke, Va.



KITCHEN UNDER \$75,000
Creative Design Construction Northvale, N.J.



BATH OVER \$50,000
Remodeler: VanBerg Construction San Diego
Architect: Kevin Rugee Architect Coronado, Calif.



BATH UNDER \$50,000
Remodeler: Villa Builders Arnold, Md.
Architect: Base 8 Albuquerque, N.M.



WHOLE-HOUSE OVER \$1,000,000
Creative Design Construction Northvale, N.J.



WHOLE-HOUSE \$500,000 – \$1,000,000
Remodeler: **Crompton & Seitz** Feasterville, Pa.
Architect: **Roy Leone Design Studio** Brooklyn, N.Y.



WHOLE-HOUSE UNDER \$500,000
USI Remodeling Grand Prairie, Texas



ADDITION OVER \$200,000
Remodeler: **BOWA Builders** McLean, Va.
Architect: **Gaver Nichols Architect** Alexandria, Va.



ADDITION UNDER \$200,000
Silent Rivers Clive, Iowa



EXTERIOR
Remodeler: **RPI Design Build** Morris Plains, N.J.
Architect: **Andrew M. Fethes** Oradell, N.J.



HISTORIC RESTORATION
Remodeler: **Revival Construction** Atlanta
Architect: **D. Stanley Dixon Architects** Atlanta



FINISHED BASEMENT
Jackson and LeRoy Salt Lake City



KITCHEN OVER \$150,000
The Classic Group Lexington, Mass.



KITCHEN OVER \$150,000
Carnemark Systems + Design Bethesda, Md.



KITCHEN \$75,000 – \$150,000
SEA Construction San Mateo, Calif.



KITCHEN UNDER \$75,000
Otogawa-Anschel Design-Build Minneapolis



BATH OVER \$50,000
Carnemark Systems + Design Bethesda, Md.



BATH UNDER \$50,000
Wentworth Chevy Chase, Md.



ACCESSIBLE REMODEL
Remodeler: Alward Construction Co. Berkeley, Calif.
Architect: B.H. Bocook Architect Palo Alto, Calif.

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Holding Steady

MOSBY BUILDING
ARTS SUCCEEDS
WITH SMART
MARKETING AND
STEADY GROWTH

By Jonathan Sweet, Senior Editor



IT WAS 25 YEARS AGO that Scott Mosby bought a \$1,300 workers' comp credit from his father, effectively taking over the two-man family construction business. After nearly 40 years in business, his dad was ready to take a step back, and Mosby was "just smart enough and young enough to realize the name was valuable."

Fast forward to today and Mosby is overseeing Mosby Building Arts, a 70-employee company that will end the year with \$9.5 million in 2008 sales.

"I wound up in a place in 1983 where I had to sit down and figure out what I wanted to be when I grew up," Mosby says. "I decided 'I'm really good at this and I really like this.' I couldn't imagine doing anything else."

When Mosby took over the company, he never imagined he'd end up with 70 employees or a company approaching \$10 million in annual volume. While he knew he wanted to expand on what his father had started, initially he wasn't sure how to go about doing it. Even when growth came, it was secondary to building the kind of team he wanted.

"I'd love to tell you it was a plan," Mosby says. "It was a desire for me to work with smart people."

Mosby knew that good employees would want to be where there was a chance to grow professionally. In a small remodeling company, that's hard to do because you can only advance so far before you slam right into the owner. That was what had caused Mosby to lose his best employee in the mid-1990s when his "right-hand man" left to work for another remodeler that provided better opportunities for him.

"I've got a bunch of smart people behind me, so I grew because I wanted to keep those good employees," Mosby says. "My growth was to keep talented employees in the boat rather than competing against me."

ON THE AIR

One of the biggest factors in the growth of Mosby Building Arts has been the weekly radio show Scott Mosby has hosted on KMOX radio for 13 years. For three hours every Saturday, Mosby

Scott Mosby has built Mosby Building Arts from a "mom and pop" operation to one of the largest remodelers in the St. Louis area over the last 25 years.

answers home improvement questions from listeners.

The greatest benefit of the show, Mosby says, has been in recruiting employees. Many other professional remodelers and contractors tune-in to the show. Those former self-employed contractors often make the best employees.

"The business model has been for 10 years that I want to be the place that worn-out remodelers go when they're tired of working 16-hour days," Mosby says. "Our most extraordinary, very successful field people were typically in their own businesses and would listen to me every week out of curiosity."

Mosby has a lot of respect for the talented craftsmen in remodeling, and that respect comes through on the radio, Mosby says. So when those craftsmen have enough of working for themselves, they often come to Mosby Building Arts.

The radio show also helped increase business, but not as much as you might expect. Everybody knew who Scott Mosby was, but it wasn't until Mosby Building Arts started advertising on the radio station four years ago that the company saw a marked increase in sales from the show.

"It was an incredible branding experience, but through my experience I learned the difference between branding and marketing," Mosby says. "KMOX is considered the voice of St. Louis, so I would probably say I am the voice of remodeling in St.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mosby Building Arts, Kirkwood, Mo.

President: Scott Mosby

Specialty: Design/build

2007 projects: 191

2007 volume: \$7.3 million

Projected 2008 volume: \$9.5 million

Employees: 70

Founded: 1947

Biggest challenge: Managing the overhead costs of 70 employees while delivering high-quality work at a price the market is willing to pay.

Web site: www.mosbybuildingarts.com

“I’ve got a bunch of smart people behind me, so I grew because I wanted to keep those good employees.”

Louis, but people didn’t call until I started looking like a guy looking for a job.”

Once he started advertising, though, the response was immediate. The branding from the radio show had made Mosby a well-known name and once it was supplemented with traditional advertising, the company had phenomenal success.

“The business has grown over the last four years because of us repeatedly telling people, ‘This is what we do. Please call.’”

Radio is now the No. 1 source of leads for the company, even outpacing referrals. The company has also been successful generating leads from the Web, with print advertising a distant fourth.

The company originally created the Web site, www.mosby-buildingarts.com, in 1997 as a way for Mosby to promote the company on his radio show without violating FCC rules by directing listeners to the site for more information on various topics. Over the last several years, the company has used the site as a marketing tool on its own to attract younger clients and to make sure the company doesn’t become too dependent on the radio show to drive new business.

“I visit a Mosby job site, and if the employees are 35 or younger, they’re listening to Sirius, not broadcast radio,” Mosby says. “They really don’t watch much on broadcast TV, and when they want something, they go to the Web.”

The site, which Mosby describes as “good, not great,” is loaded with information, including a large section devoted to the radio show. Site visitors can submit a question to the Mosby team, and the answers are posted under the Frequently Asked Questions

section of the site. Mosby spends a few hours a week answering questions that come in through the site.

Toby Weiss, the company’s marketing director, also has a blog on the site that the company uses to keep visitors up to date on what’s going on with the company. Weiss also blogs outside the company at <http://tobybelt.blogspot.com>, where her following helps bring attention to the company, Mosby says.

“We wanted a Web site where they can experience Mosby Building Arts,” Mosby says. “Outside of the radio show, our marketing is primarily the Web site and blogging.”

PLANNING FOR THE DOWNTURN

Although the company has been able to grow volume over the last few years (from \$6.2 million in 2006 to \$9.5 million this year), Mosby is trying to be proactive to make it through the slowdown.

An important part of that has been what the company calls “solution sales” — small repair jobs that don’t require any architecture or design.

“Basically, we’re back to doing what we used to do 20 or 30 years ago,” Mosby says. “Even if someone’s house is worth less, they still need to maintain it. That’s where our strength is now.”

Those smaller jobs will represent \$3 million to \$3.2 million, or about a third of the company’s revenue this year. The average job size is less than \$20,000, compared with the average design/build job at \$152,000.

As for those design/build jobs, the company is continuing to emphasize its service and quality as an important differentiator. Another difference, which Mosby has had for years, is that the company has architects on staff. It’s been a useful marketing tool over the years.

“The reason we are licensed architects is mostly for marketing,” Mosby says. “People have this idea that remodelers are all crooks, so I just won’t be one of those guys.”

Mosby figures that he would need to have designers on staff anyways, so why not spend the extra money to have architects and reap the benefits. Plus, with the large projects the company builds, there would most likely be an architect involved anyway. Even with plans from an outside architect, the Mosby team would still end up doing a lot of design work.

“Every business that didn’t serve us adequately, we went into that business, whether it was architects, painters or carpenters,” Mosby says. “That’s how we became a full-staff remodeling company.” **PR**

A WEEK IN THE LIFE

How President Scott Mosby spends his average 60-hour week

Direct selling/reviewing contracts	20 hours
Meeting with key members of management	10 hours
Reviewing company numbers and planning	4 hours
Marketing and product planning	6 hours
Visiting projects	2 hours
Long-range planning	2 hours
Hallway discussions with co-workers	2 hours
E-mail	6 hours
Answering Web site questions	3 hours
Weekly radio show	5 hours

THE BEAUTY OF GREEN

Best of the Best Design Award winners prove green design can also look good

If there's one thing this year's winning projects in the Best of the Best Design Award competition proved, it's that form and function can come together with beautiful, award-winning results.

All designers and architects know that style and substance are not mutually exclusive, but in the specific realm of green design, the focus for most remodeling firms is on the building science component of green. A less-publicized but highly relevant aspect of green, especially for remodelers, is reusing materials and installing sustainable products.

Green innovations have been made in many building product categories that affect the aesthetics of a project, from flooring to countertops to cabinetry and more. With this increasing number of beautiful options that are produced with sustainable materials, it makes more sense than ever to specify these products in a project. Rarely does it take a life-cycle cost analysis to sell these features, because they cost little or no more than any of the non-green options.

Reusing materials has a dual positive impact on a remodel. Because the materials don't get shipped off to a landfill, it's good for the environment. And because new materials are not purchased for the renovation, it saves money for the client and reduces the overall demand for the production of new building products, which uses our natural resources.

Nowhere is reusing materials more appropriate or readily encountered than in historic restoration projects. In this year's project of the year (see page 18), Gardner/Fox Associates removed many materials from the 1893 shingle-style Victorian and then reused them to complete the whole-house historic restoration.

Gardner/Fox reused the original stone that formed the historic home's gothic arched entryway to build part of the addition for the project. Although architect Alex Rice would have preferred to keep the stone structure part of the new design, structural engineers determined that years of runoff from an open downspout had eroded the existing mortar to dust, rendering it near collapse. So, the entry was carefully dismantled and the stones

were power-washed and used to construct the front and side elevation of the 30-foot garage addition (see photos at right). Gardner/Fox actually didn't have enough of the original stone to complete the addition, but fortunately they had enough to make the turn from the front of the house to the side before using the closest matching new stone they could find for the back of the addition.

Another example is the second floor sleeping porch, which had been neglected over the years but was restored to its natural beauty as a master dressing room using original materials.

"I knew that we were going to get a lot of bang for our buck if we took the original details and put them and painted them and restored the sleeping porch to how it was originally," said Rice.

"It's probably the best detail in the house, and we got a lot of pressure just to cover it with new windows. But you have to kind of hold your ground on the important items, but not irresponsibly."

Reusing materials doesn't always have to be confined to historic restoration or even the same project. Remodelers can look for opportunities to salvage materials from older homes they're remodeling to save and use in future projects.

Eren Design and Remodel makes it a standard practice to reduce the impact of their work on the environment whenever possible. That was apparent in their Platinum Award-winning kitchen (see page 27), in which the company created an island countertop from salvaged wood from the floor of a 1790s schoolhouse.

Eren's owner, Janice Donald, is on a mission to educate her clients that green can be beautiful.

"When clients talked about green, there was nothing about beauty; it was all about smartness, whether it be capturing rainwater or the type of insulation or windows," said Donald. "It was never about pretty product, because frankly they didn't

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



Gardner/Fox Associates reused the stone from the original arched entryway (left) to construct part of the two-and-a-half car garage addition (right).



know there were any."

Another Platinum Award-winning remodeler that incorporated reused materials with significant aesthetic and environment impact was Orion General Contractors. Orion used 90 percent of the barn's original materials for its whole-house green remodel including a kitchen island countertop made from the slate removed from the patio on the property. **PR**

FIND OUT MORE

For more on the ongoing innovation in the marriage between residential green design and aesthetics, visit these sites.

- Architecture for Humanity
www.architectureforhumanity.org
- GreenByDesign.com
www.greenbydesign.com
- Inhabitat.com
- Treehugger.com
www.treehugger.com/design_architecture

NEW PRODUCTS

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One of Trex's latest products, Trex Trim, uses the company's latest in innovative, low-maintenance PVC wood replacement products. The trim pieces are easy to work with and are paintable, routable and bendable — a great option for window/door surrounds, deck trim, soffit, fascia and other trim applications.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-251>



TOP DOG

Small-scale contractors and woodworkers will like Bench Dog's ProTop Phenolic Router Table Top. One-piece, 3/4-inch-thick phenolic construction produces this ultra-flat, smooth-sliding table that won't break down. Phenolic's natural resistance to warping, denting and scratching makes the ProTop incredibly durable.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-252>

A STILL WINTER'S EVE

Bring a rustic look to your customers with Meyda's new Winter at Stillwater wall sconce. The fixtures are hand-made from wrought iron with steel roots and trunk. The sconce measures a foot tall by 7½ inches wide and has a steel wall plate with arms that extend out with icicle-like crystals.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-253>



COZY UP TO THIS

Morsø's new 5660 Std fireplace features a convection system that ensures optimum heat distribution in the room and a large combustion chamber that can take logs of up to 20 inches. The fireplace can pump out a maximum of 50,000 BTUs per hour.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-254>



TINY TANKLESS

Engineered and manufactured in Germany, the newest member of the Stiebel Eltron family of tankless, on-demand water heaters is the Mini series, designed for low- to medium-flow point-of-use applications. The compact Mini only weighs 3½ pounds and can fit almost anywhere, such as beneath a sink or cabinet.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-255>



HIT THE SHOWERS

Contractors can use the new Vedana to give their customers five spa-quality care options. Made by Quebec City, Canada-based BainUltra, the unit can be mounted on a shower wall instead of tearing apart everything in sight. The sound therapy option gives users a selection of preprogrammed music as well as the option to plug in an SD card.

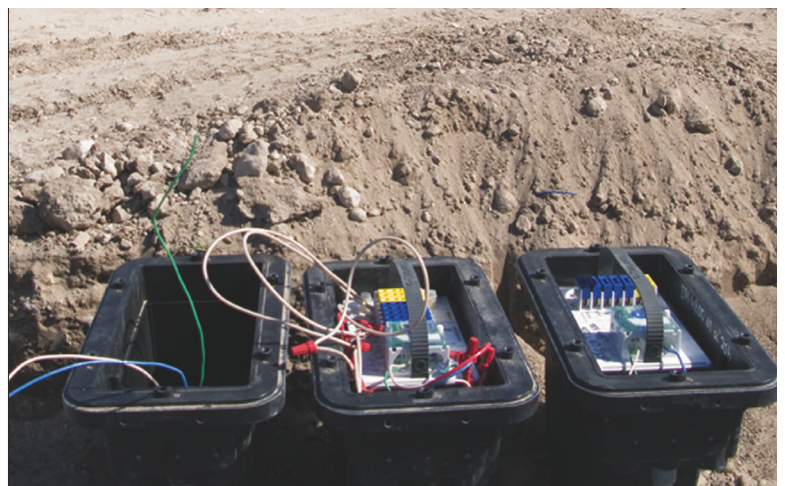
For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-256>



THE OL' SWITCHEROO

Time is money, nowhere more so than when it comes to bathroom remodels. Swanstone's Bathtub Replacement Kit simplifies the process with a kit that contains one shower floor, a bench seat, two dishes, a recessed shelf and a shower wall kit with installation materials. The kit replaces a standard 32- by 60-inch tub.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-257>



LIGHTS IN AND ALL AROUND

The Q-Scape by Q-Tran is a complete system of 217 originally designed components that encompasses most fixtures in and around the home. To facilitate multiple connections securely and safely, a triangular in-ground hub box (the injection molded Q-Trix) was designed with a total of 160 cubic inches to allow dozens of wire pairs to be connected.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-258>

SPRAY AWAY

Duct-sealant maker Hardcast recently introduced the Spray-Seal duct sealant specially made for spray applications on the job site. Working in conjunction with the Hardcast Mobile Duct Sealant Delivery System, it provides enhanced performance for virtually every duct sealant application.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-259>



BULLET-PROOF

Seal those stone countertops, people! DuPont's StoneTech Professional Natural Stone Countertop Sealer combines the company's BulletProof technology with the convenience of a spray dispenser to deliver superior protection against water- and oil-based stains while preserving the natural look of the stone.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-260>

SEALED UP LIKE SARDINES

Specialty Construction Brands' LiquiDam Penetrating Moisture Vapor Barrier is the latest addition to its TEC family of installation products. The LiquiDam is a two-part, 100-percent solid-based epoxy that reduces moisture vapor transmission from damp concrete by creating a barrier between the substrate and the floor.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-261>



THE SENSITIVE TYPE

DriTac Flooring Products has a new pressure-sensitive adhesive for professional wood and cork flooring installations in the Eco-6200GR Green Pressure Sensitive Wood Flooring Adhesive. The 6200GR contains zero VOCs and zero solvents; is easy to spread; and has excellent bond strength for wood and cork flooring installations.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-262>



SEALING ON THE NANO-LEVEL

If you want deck sealant on a nano-tech level, research SEI Chemical's SCS-100 Wood Deck Sealer. Made in natural and tinted formulations, the sealer has a high degree of water repellency, faster surface dry times and long-term performance. The nanoparticulate-based formula doesn't allow moisture to hold a wet edge.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-263>



DEMONSTRATING LEVELHEADEDNESS

Get your floors done nice and level the first time with Sakrete's B-1 Trowel Grade Leveler. The underlayment is polymer-modified and cement-based and is designed for a variety of surfaces including concrete, cementitious backer board, exterior grade plywood and embossed vinyl tile. B-1 may be covered with asphalt, tile, vinyl flooring, carpet or wood flooring.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-264>

A CONCRETE FACELIFT

It's going to be a rough winter in most parts of the country. Prepare with ProSpec's Concrete Resurfacer. ProSpec, a part of Bonsal American, made the Resurfacer with a corrosion inhibitor for surface renewal of old or worn concrete, including concrete structures exposed to de-icing salts.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-265>



NO, NOT MICROSOFT

Sherwin-Williams' Loxon XP isn't a new Microsoft application. It's a direct-to-concrete and masonry high-build coating that goes on without priming. The Loxon XP provides resistance to the elements. For best results, this product should be applied at a minimum of 14-18 wft (wet film thickness) and 6.4-8.3 mils dft (dry film thickness).

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-266>

TOOLS



YOUR TOOL BELT WILL NEVER BE THE SAME

Dremel's unique new Multi-Max Oscillating Tool System is a compact yet full-featured multitasking tool. This handy little guy moves from side to side at high speeds in 3-degree arcs to undertake a variety of tasks, from sanding and cutting to scraping and grinding. The Multi-Max has 12 different accessories.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-267>



FAIR AND BALANCED

You and your crews will appreciate the lighter frame and exceptional balance on Metabo's SE2800 screwdriver. The screwdriver's ergonomically designed shell houses a heavy-duty forward and reverse running motor featuring up to 106 inch-pounds of tightening torque suitable for driving up to No. 8 tek screws into metal or up to No. 14 wood screws.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-269>



NAILED IT

Magnesium makes everything smaller and lighter, from car parts to power tools. Senco recently made two new nailers and a stapler out of the metal in the FinishPro line. Perfect for cabinets, small assemblies and more, the SLS18Mg 18-gauge stapler (shown) features increased durability and is lightweight, making it perfect for extended use in tight conditions.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-268>



BREAK ON THROUGH

The new RS35 by Bosch is made for the heavy work — demo crews, plumbers and remodelers will get consistent high-powered cutting every time. A 15-amp motor and the company's Constant Response circuitry with variable speed control maintain power. The adjustable aggressive orbital action provides superior cutting performance over a broad range of materials.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-270>



SAFETY FIRST

OLFA's SK-9's self-retracting mechanism retracts the instant the blade loses contact with a cutting surface. The handy tape slitter at the opposite end of the handle adds extra functionality whether for cutting tape, tucking cartons or working as a screwdriver, staple remover and more.

This new addition to your tool belt will be available in first quarter 2009. For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-271>



THE LIGHT OF MY LIFE

Spotlights are great, but they're not the most versatile things. Enter Stanley's 3-in-1 Tripod LED Flashlight, a union of three removable lights. Each generates 20 lumens of directional lighting; the multi-directional heads rotate up to 120 degrees and generate a precision spot beam, while the hexagonal bodies allow for five different positions.

For FREE info, visit <http://pr.hotims.com/20093-273>

DRILL-SLINGERS

Now your crews can argue over who's the fastest draw with DeWalt's new ½-inch heavy-duty drills, models DWD215G and DWD210G. The drills are equipped with a high-performance 10-amp motor. The new motor design has approximately 40 percent more copper than previous models at the same motor size, offering users up to 50 percent more power, more torque, and 0-1,200 RPM.

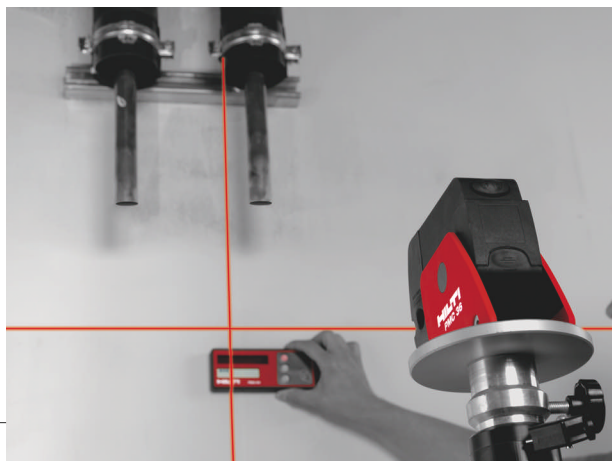
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Product Showcase

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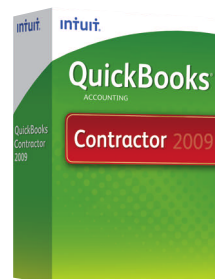
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LET THE SURVIVAL TACTICS KICK IN

This time last year, the remodeling market was expected to continue its growth with some softening in the 4th quarter.

Things have certainly changed in ways very few experts expected. Remodeling expenditures are down more than 10 percent, and most remodelers are struggling to maintain sales volumes and margins. Survival has become a major issue for many companies. So as we prepare our plan for 2009, let's look at some basic survival tactics to ensure we're here when the market heats back up.

OVERHEAD

There's no other financial aspect of our business that is more essential to understand and control when the market softens than overhead. It's no coincidence that when management teams are brought in to oversee a company's restructuring in bankruptcy they cut overhead. Remember that the classic definition of gross profit is overhead plus net profit. In other words, every dollar we cut from overhead becomes a full dollar of net profit (or reduces the loss if things are really bad). Look closely at your overhead expenses and cut, cut, cut.

MARKETING

The one exception to the rule above is marketing expenditures. When leads are down we need to market more. Focus on the most effective marketing techniques that generate projects you produce most profitably. Hopefully

you've been tracking your leads in the past and identified those projects that produced the highest gross profit. If not, you probably have a sense of which are your most successful so go with your gut and go after those projects. Employ marketing such as contacting past customers, cold calling designers and visiting suppliers to spread the word that you are looking for work. Keep your name in the marketplace in any way you can.

CASH FLOW

If profit is the food of a growing business, then cash is its lifeblood. We can survive for a time without profits. It's not fun, and we'll grow weak, unable to take advantage of opportunities, but we'll get by. But if we start bleeding, our demise comes very quickly. A significant portion of the businesses that go bankrupt are profitable at the time. What brings them down is lack of cash to pay the bills. So, project at least a month of two out where your cash is coming from and what you need to pay. If cash gets tight, prioritize payments and, if necessary, negotiate payments with your creditors. Whatever you do though, pay those taxes. If you have a

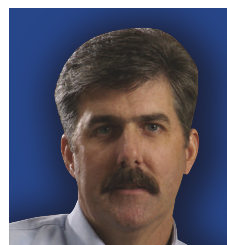
line of credit and plan to access it during those short periods, be sure to talk with your banker and confirm that it will be available.

PLANNING

Now is the time to finalize that budget for next year. But be realistic when you make your projections. Most projections are for a tight remodeling market through 2009. Look at your numbers for the last two years and analyze the trend. Set your revenue projections at a conservative level and budget overhead that is affordable at that reduced income level. Don't plan optimistically in this current market. The risk is just too great. You can always ramp up if sales beat estimates. Monitor your revenue, gross margins and overhead carefully and be prepared to make changes as events dictate. Remember, the goal here is survival to play another day.

Decide to be one of the companies that survives now and is positioned to

make the most of the next upturn. **PR**
Vince Butler is president of Butler Brothers in Clifton, Va. Contact Vince at vbutler@bbcbuilder.com.



By Vince Butler
Advisory Board
Columnist

Monitor your revenue, gross margins and overhead carefully and be prepared to make changes as events dictate. Remember, the goal here is survival to play another day.

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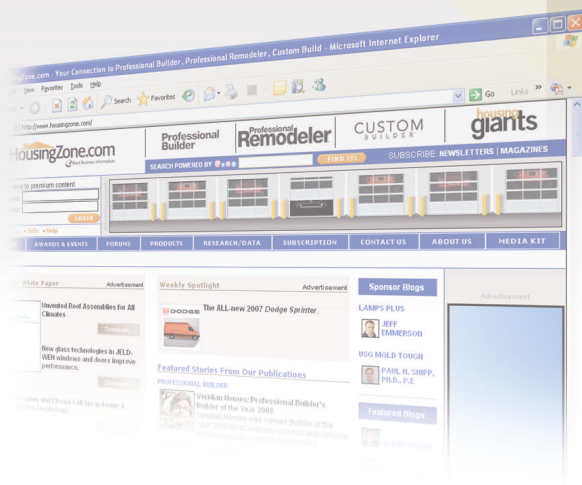
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