

Professional Remodeler®

THE CRITICAL EDGE FOR HIGH-PERFORMANCE REMODELERS



Jon Vogel takes an aggressive approach to success

Page 22

MATT CARR/GETTY IMAGES

THE LEADING EDGE

- 9 **Best of the Blogs:** Finding the right employee fit
- 10 **Sustainability:** Overcoming 'green fatigue'
- 12 **Remodelers' Exchange:** Trade partners
- 18 **Roundtable:** Crafting a strategic plan

FEATURES

- 22 **Cover Story:** Remodelers that are bucking the trend

Six remodelers tell us how they're succeeding in a down economy

- 31 **Supplement:** Decking & Outdoor Living

Leading remodelers share their views on the latest trends and products

- 40 **Research:** Siding project profile

Exclusive research shows the exterior market remains strong

- 45 **Research:** Green challenges

Annual study indicates growing willingness to pay for green

- 48 **People You Should Know:** Bill Fotsch

Founder of the Great Game of Business Inc. shares his insights

- 52 **Corner Office:** Father & Son Construction

Mat Vivona has kept his company strong in the hard-hit Detroit market

NEW PRODUCTS

- 57 **Stat Sheet:** Flooring, fixtures and more
- 58 **IBS Stat Sheet:** Highlights from the show
- 60 **Kitchen & Bath:** Traditional styles lead trends
- 62 **AFCI:** Adoption spreads, misconceptions linger

EDITORIAL

- 7 **Sweet:** Bucking the trend

Remodelers are finding ways to succeed, even in this economy

Do-It-All Goes KNOW-IT-ALL. FORD COMMERCIAL TRUCK



Ford Commercial Trucks have always given you the muscle you need. Now, they're offering something no other truck has – brains. And with new available technologies that let you track your tools, keep an eye on your company vehicles, go online and create and print documents from an in-dash computer – they're making your workday more efficient. Plus, no one offers a wider range of work vehicles than Ford Commercial Trucks* The top of the tool chain.

commtruck.ford.com *Based on division offerings. Excludes SUVs and cars.

For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-1



We're calling for nominations for outstanding young leaders in the residential construction industry



NOMINATE: Yourself or someone else as one of the "40 Under 40" stars of the industry. "40 Under 40" nominees may come from any field related to the residential design, construction and development community, including home building, remodeling, land development, interior design, architecture, engineering and project management.



QUALITIES + CHARACTERISTICS:

- Leadership Skills
- Inventiveness
- Sustained Career Progress
- Client Relations
- Academic Training
- Dedication
- Personal Integrity
- Technical Skills

Enter today at: **HousingZone.com/AwardsPrograms**

Submissions are due April 30, 2010

**Professional
Builder** Professional Remodeler



National Housing

Quality Awards

CALL FOR ENTRIES

Deadline for submissions: May 14, 2010

Download the submission form at: www.HousingZone.com/AwardsPrograms

The NHQ Award is regarded as the highest level of quality achievement in the housing industry. From leadership and strategic planning to human resources and business results, these builders have set themselves apart, within their markets and in the profits they pull to the bottom line every day. We offer self-assessment tools, handbooks and case studies to help you prepare to achieve the excellence NHQ awards.



Professional Remodeler
www.HousingZone.com/PR



LESS MILES. MORE GALLONS.



Get Behr® paint, with exceptional quality and coverage, delivered fast and free to your jobsite.

Forget all the running around. Place your order for Behr paint or stain at the Home Depot when stocking up for your next job. Behr will expedite delivery to your jobsite—at no extra charge.

With volume pricing, one-stop shopping and precision-color tinting, Behr saves you time and money while providing the quality you demand.

For more information about the Behr Direct To ProSM program, visit your nearest Home Depot Pro Desk.

BEHR 
DIRECT TO PRO

Available
exclusively at:



See what Behr services are available in your area by visiting behrpro.com/mystore.



For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-2

Professional Remodeler

STAFF

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Jonathan Sweet

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

ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR

Sara Zailskas

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

PRODUCTS EDITOR

Nick Bajzek

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

SENIOR CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Wendy A. Jordan

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Jud Motsenbocker, Tom Swartz

GROUP CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Bill Patton

SENIOR ART DIRECTOR

Larry Nigh

DIRECTOR OF EVENTS

Judy Brociek

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR

Karen Ruesch

ADVERTISING PRODUCTION MANAGER

Mike Rotz

AUDIENCE MARKETING MANAGER

Angela Tanner

GENERAL MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION MEDIA

Dean Horowitz

GROUP DIRECTOR, SALES & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Tony Mancini

DIRECTOR OF RESIDENTIAL TITLES

Jeff Elliot

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

Bruce Ksiazek

EDITORIAL AWARDS

American Society of Business Press Editors Awards: 2009 Midwest (1) • 2008 National (1) and Midwest (3) • 2007 National (1) and Midwest (1) • 2006 Midwest (3) • 2005 Midwest (1) • 2004 National (1) and Midwest (3) • 2003 National (3) and Midwest (4) • 2002 National (1) and Midwest (2) • 2001 Midwest • 2000 Midwest • 1999 National and Midwest

Jesse H. Neal Awards: 2003 National Business Journalism Certificate • 2002 Editorial Achievement Award • 2001 Editorial Achievement Award • 2000 National Business Journalism Certificate (2) • 1999 Editorial Achievement Award • 1998 Editorial Achievement Award

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES

Customer Service, Reed Business Information

8778 S. Barrons Blvd., Highlands Ranch, CO 80126

Phone: 800/446-6551, Fax: 303/470-4280

subsmail@reedbusiness.com

CEO/CFO, RBI-US

John Poulin

PRESIDENT, RBI-US

Jeff DeBalko

VICE PRESIDENT INTERACTIVE MEDIA & SALES MANAGEMENT

Karthik Krishnan



Editorial

By **Jonathan Sweet**, Editor in Chief

Bucking the trend

For those of us who are news junkies, it'd be easy to get the idea that no one has bought, sold or remodeled a home in the last three years.

The reality, of course, is a lot more nuanced. We all know we can't paint the industry with a national brush. There are plenty of markets — Dallas, Pittsburgh and Omaha, to name a few — that have stayed relatively strong in the downturn. And in remodeling, conditions can vary practically from neighborhood to neighborhood.

In our cover story this month (p. 22), we've got six examples of remodelers bucking the national trend.

From New Jersey to Utah, they've found

ways to succeed in this economy, whether it's aggressively expanding their services or increasing their marketing budgets while other companies are cutting back.

In almost every city there are success stories — heck, even Detroit has remodelers finding ways to survive; that's what Mat Vivona of Father & Son Construction, who we profile in our Market Leaders Corner Office article (p. 52) is doing. Although the company's volume has dropped from \$8 million to \$3 million in just five years, Vivona's smart business decisions and willingness to take on smaller jobs have kept the company afloat.

These are just a few examples. I get e-mails and calls every week from remodelers talking about their successes. We've also been providing part of the education program at the Pella Pro Expos all over the country this year, and while the remodelers I talk to there have certainly seen better days,

there's no doubt that most of them are pretty optimistic.

And they have good reason to be. While we've got to make it through this, the long-term outlook is excellent for remodeling. The recession will end, jobs will come back and people will start spending again.

There's also going to continue to be more incentives from the government to "go green." The HomeStar program we've written about in the past seems to be edging closer to reality as I write this. That could

The recession will end, jobs will come back and people will start spending again.



inject billions more into the energy retrofit industry.

Market research firm SBI Energy projects huge increases for the market over the next few years in its recent report, "Energy-Efficient Home Renovations Market" (available at www.sbireports.com.) The group predicts

a 15 percent growth in the energy-efficient window market by 2013; 25 percent growth in insulation installation this year alone; and 20 to 30 percent annual growth in energy-efficient residential roofing through 2013.

Our own research published in this issue (p. 45) shows that while many homeowners aren't yet willing to pay extra for green features, there's been marked improvement there since our first green survey in 2007.

So whether it's green, a new tightened focus on customer service or design that blows clients away, find your success story — and to be sure to let us know about it. •

Contact me at jonathan.sweet@reedbusiness.com or 630/288-8170, or follow me on Twitter @SweetEdit

LIFETIME LUMBER IS A NEW ALTERNATIVE TO WOOD AND COMPOSITES FOR DECKS, DOCKS, ARBORS & FENCES.



FIRE SAFE, GREEN AND LASTS A LIFETIME

LifeTime Lumber® is a leading-edge alternative to wood and composite lumber. It offers the aesthetic beauty of wood while solving the problems of degradation, weathering and perpetual maintenance. While wood rots and plastic-wood composites deteriorate, LifeTime Lumber stays strong and continues looking new, even after years of weather exposure and heavy use.

LifeTime Lumber products are naturally Class B fire rated, with Class A products available. Meanwhile, the environment won't be compromised. Our products are made from 60% recycled material and undergo an energy efficient manufacturing process. For long-lasting performance with low maintenance benefits that are best in class — choose LifeTime Lumber.



Scientific Certification Systems SCS-MC-01356.
Certified minimum pre-consumer 60% recycled content.



LIFETIME
L U M B E R ®

For more information and to locate a dealer,
visit www.LifeTimeLumber.com or call 877-285-4338

For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-3

BEAUTIFUL. GREEN. FOREVER.

PERSONNEL

WE ARE INTERVIEWING FOR A PROJECT EXECUTIVE position. We



have received almost 200 resumes. We hold dreams in our hands of good and, in our case, experienced candidates. How on earth do we make any decisions?

Consider how the “American Idol” judges know who can “make it” after two bars of a song. They

know from the second the contestant walks into the room.

So as you watch yourself being seduced by exceptional talent exhibited on a resume, stop.

• First, define your “idol”—your ideal employee. Who is a person that would fit hand and glove into your culture? Who do you want

representing your brand? Why do you define that person as ideal? It won't be about that person's skill set as much as it will be about how that person lives.

• Next, don't kill yourself with endless hours of interviews. You will know in the first few minutes — if not when he or she walks through the door — if there is a fit. Let the candidate know ahead of time it works best for you to do a short preliminary interview.

• And lastly, as the Idol judges know a person by what he or she chooses to sing, let the candidate interview you. The questions they ask will give terrific insight into self image and priorities.

— From the blog “Allison Iantosca on Performance Management”

“We know who we are and we know who can thrive in our culture.” — ALLISON IANTOSCA

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

ACCORDING TO WIKIPEDIA.COM, “com-



pound interest” arises when interest is added to the principal, so that from that moment on, the interest that has been added also itself

earns interest.

Customer satisfaction has a similar compounding effect on customer referral sales. The problem is, most businesses don't think about their current customers in a “compounding” comparison; too many are focused on short-term results, solutions and returns. These companies seem to gravitate to simple interest returns while viewing a compound interest formula as too much short-term hassle for its short term return.

In our recently study we found that top performing homebuilding companies — over time — saw significant returns on their prior customer care and referral sales strategies. We saw builders with “Customer Referral Sales” rates of 50 percent of total sales compared to the industry average of 11 percent. They grew their customer-centric culture by including customer care metrics into their management dashboard and focused on continuous improvement in satisfaction.

— From Charlie Scott's blog, “Customer Relationship Matters”

GREEN TECH

THE RECENTLY RE-DONE SMART HOME at



Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry (in conjunction with Wired magazine) opened to the public this week. I was fortunate enough to snag a

press pass and take a tour of the modular-built, Michelle Kaufmann-designed home.

The home, factory-built by All American Homes, has been open to the viewing public since 2008. It has now has been spruced up with newer products and accessories.

It features a lot of the trends and products I've been covering: Benjamin Moore & Co. low-VOC paints, a GE tankless water heater, Uni-Solar Thin Film photovoltaics on the roof, Rabbit Air purifier, a Southwest Wind-power home wind turbine, Icynene spray-foam insulation, Progress Lighting LED fixtures, Warmboard radiant heating and Bosch appliances, to name a few (there's even a biodiesel fuel collector/converter and a solar-powered autonomous lawnmower in the garage. Can you say sweeeeeet?) You can see the full list of products at www.msichicago.org/smarthome.

— From Nick Bajzek's blog, “The Product Guy”

SUPPLY CHAIN

THE STANDARD DEFINITION of the building



material supply chain goes something like this:

Raw material manufacturer
> Building material manufacturer.
> Distributor > Contractor > Builder

The supply chain can be expanded to include key influencers who are code officials, utilities, lenders, architects, state and local HBA's. Let's look at each a few of these and I will explain what I mean (see the full list online at www.HousingZone.com/blogs).

• Code Officials — Many manufacturers focus on state and local code officials by educating them on the proper installation of their products as well as providing building science education to them. This effort minimizes field issues with regard to the manufacturers new and existing products.

• Lenders — A manufacturer can get ahead of its competition by learning of new projects early in the game by developing relationships with key lenders in a given market.

• Architects — It is important to identify those architects in a market who have key builder clients as they can influence builders in determining which products to specify.

— From Glenn Singer's blog, “Supply Chain Connections”

REGISTER NOW!

www.thePROEXPO.com

888-644-EXPO

THE LEADING EDGE

Sustainability

Overcoming 'green fatigue'

Talk to remodelers and marketers who bill themselves as green and everyone agrees on four key points:

- Your audience – the homeowner – is sophisticated and educated.
- They're bombarded with all-things green.
- They all have a different idea about what green is.
- Green is constantly changing.

"The message that worked 12 to 18 months ago isn't going to work today," says Jerry Yudelson, president of Yudelson Associates, a Tucson, Ariz.-based consultancy specializing in green building and marketing services.

Avoiding green fatigue is possible. Knowing what's new – whether it's a millennial's mentality toward green or the latest low-flush toilet – is important as you build your image as a green remodeler.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE INSIDE AND OUT

Do homeowners in your area want reclaimed woods to make their home green, or are they talking about improving the building envelope?

"You need to know what your audience cares about," says Brian Flook, president and CEO of Power Marketing & Advertising in Hagerstown, Md. That, he says, will direct your message and promotions.

Earl Williams knows his demographic like the back of his hand. His clients in the Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas, vicinity tend to have household incomes around \$200,000, live in homes about 15 years old and be around age 50 – and their bodies ache just like anyone else who's getting older. He's spent a lot of time listening, he says, and what they've told him shapes how he presents himself and his company, Earl Williams & Associates.

"I can relate quickly to what their definition of green is and tailor my thoughts and questions to where they're coming from," he says. "I'm getting smart enough that I pretty much know what age group is going to say."

Jarro Building Industries' President Ray Accettella listens, too: Gen Xers in his Long Island, N.Y., area call his office to ask green

building questions, while his 50-plus market is less interested.

STAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE

The only way to market yourself as green and be successful is to stay ahead of the curve, Williams and Jarro agree. Both rely on continual education and certification to keep abreast of new products, technology and trends. It helps them build better and explain the benefits of their companies to clients.

"The decision is to be ahead of the consumer. ... If you're not ahead of the consumer, you're missing the boat," says Accettella. Someone from Jarro attends a local monthly green building council meeting, the team participates in the local HBA and certifications are a must.

Earning certifications and awards – and promoting them at every opportunity, Williams says – will help you build credibility and your reputation.

'STAY IN CONVERSATION'

Your green education and your marketing tactics go hand in hand.

Each of the remodelers in this story has a Web site that promotes green remodeling, an obvious first step. Take it further, Yudelson says, and "stay in the conversation." The experts echo each other's ideas to brand yourself as the remodeler for green:

- Use your Web site and marketing collateral to emphasize your green message.
- Keep a blog and use social media to tell prospective clients about what you're learning and can do for them.
- Be visible! Host a seminar – then make it a Webinar.
- Be the remodeler in a parade of homes for builders.
- Brag to the media about green awards.
- Send past and prospective clients a pamphlet on "green news"
- Pair up with local utility companies like Jarro Building Industries does to educate inspectors and homeowners and conduct home energy audits. •

– SARA ZAILSKAS, ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR

March 2, 2010 • Des Moines, IA • Iowa Events Center

March 4, 2010 • Atlanta • Turner Field

March 9, 2010 • Charlotte, NC
Bank of America Stadium

March 11, 2010 • West Caldwell, NJ
Atlantic Health Jets Training Center

March 16, 2010 • Richmond, VA
Richmond International Raceway

March 18, 2010 • Chicago • Soldier Field

March 23, 2010 • New York City • Citi Field

March 25, 2010 • Boston • Gillette Stadium

March 30, 2010 • Philadelphia
Citizens Bank Park

April 1, 2010 • Kansas City, MO • Kauffman Stadium

April 6, 2010 • Pittsburgh • Heinz Field

April 8, 2010 • Grand Rapids, MI • Van Andel Arena

April 13, 2010 • Milwaukee • Miller Park

April 15, 2010 • Minneapolis
Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome

April 20, 2010 • Columbus, OH
Schottenstein Center

April 22, 2010 • St. Louis • Busch Stadium

April 27, 2010 • Cincinnati
Great American Ball Park

April 29, 2010 • Cleveland
Cleveland Browns Stadium

May 4, 2010 • Toronto • Rogers Centre

May 6, 2010 • Detroit • Ford Field

May 11, 2010 • Seattle • Safeco Field

May 13, 2010 • Portland, OR
Oregon Convention Center



NOTE: Dates and venues subject to change.

Please check thePROEXPO.com
for the most up-to-date information.

© 2010 Pella Corporation

For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-4

2010

THE POWER OF **YELLOW**.®

Your ticket to the **BEST** game in town!

THE PRO EXPO™ Presented by Pella is coming to 30 markets – including yours! This all-star event delivers the best in industry awareness of the latest product innovations, education workshops – and an MVP experience! Come learn how **The Power Of Yellow** will help keep you on top of your game in 2010.

REGISTER NOW!

www.thePROEXPO.com

888-644-EXPO

© 2010 Pella Corporation

THE PRO EXPO Presented by Pella and its National Partners:

contractors.com



JamesHardie

KOHLER



Thermador

Sprint

PROFILE OF INNOVATION



ROCKY MOUNTAIN



Proudly Supporting



DOING
THE MOST
GOOD

For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-5

Successful trade contractor partnerships

Having good relationships with trade contractors is more important than ever. *Professional Remodeler's* Tom Swartz talked to remodeler Stephen Hann and roofing contractor Steve Waggoner about making the most of trade contractor relationships. Highlights of that conversation appear here. To listen to the full discussion, visit www.HousingZone.com/remex.

This month featuring:

Stephen Hann, President

Hann Builders, Stafford, Texas

Located in the Houston suburbs, Hann Builders is a remodeling and custom home building firm with \$4 million in annual revenue and six employees. Hann founded the company in 1993 and was the 2007 NAHB Custom Home Builder of the Year.

Steve Waggoner, Owner

Santa Fe Contracting, San Diego

Santa Fe Contracting has been in business for more than 20 years as a roofing contractor in the San Diego area. Most of the company's work is for design/build remodelers.

SWARTZ: *Stephen, define a good relationship between you, as a remodeling contractor, and your trade contractors.*

HANN: The first thing that comes to mind, Tom, is that as a general contractor and somebody who has the overview of the project, I rely on my trade contractors to be experts in their particular area; to identify and help solve problems before they catch any of us; and to point out coordination issues that are going to potentially create problems. The biggest thing I want is open communication and someone who's anticipating the needs of the job ahead of us as a general contractor.

SWARTZ: *Steve Waggoner, how do you define a good*

relationship?

WAGGONER: Before you get a project, you want to bid it correctly. You have to know the scope of work; you have to have the plan. It really helps to visit the job site before you even start. You can't go in bidding a job over the phone and then have someone give you a set of plans, and say, "OK, I'll take your bid, now here're the plans," and you're doing something completely different.

SWARTZ: *Steve, what's the most important characteristic that you look for in the remodeling contractor you work for?*

WAGGONER: I think it is a little bit of personality — being honest, everyone wants that. But seeing people being friendly, you can watch them

get along with the customers, and they get along with you. There's no yelling or screaming on the job or things like that. You want a nice smooth working relationship.

SWARTZ: *Stephen, what do you think the most important characteristic of a trade contractor is?*

HANN: Reliability and open communication. I need people to be their word, to be where they say they're going to be and do what they say they're going to do. If they aren't able to do that — communicate — because it has a domino effect through the job and to our profitability. The bottom line is I just expect people to do what they say they're going to do, and if they're not able, communicate that so it isn't a surprise.

SWARTZ: *Good. I have to note: Steve, with you it's about relationships: personality, friendly, smooth-working relationships and not price. In other words, they're not beating down on price and they're not taking you because you're the lowest price. And Stephen, again you didn't mention price: reliability, open communication and giving their word. If anyone gets anything out of this article, it's that everyone thinks today in this*

world is all about price. So far, I haven't gathered that from you two. Stephen, what specific tools do you use to manage the relationship? Do you use things such as trade contractor checklists; guidelines or manuals; trade contractor agreements; detailed plans and specs; and that type of thing?

HANN: The biggest one is a detailed plan from specifications. Back to the trade relations, in pretty much every case, we're involving trade contractors before the specifications are even finalized. We want to get feedback to make sure we're not spec-ing something that's more difficult or doesn't serve the project. At the end of the day, we have the blueprints and specifications for the whole team to work off of. We do have a master subcontractor agreement we keep on file on an annual basis that gets updated. We have the administrative side where we make sure we track everyone's insurance. We issue a purchase order for each particular job. Internally, it's the project manager's responsibility to review the proposal and the purchase order before it's issued. The field lieutenant knows that project better than anyone and can make sure that specific scope items, those can be included. We've got basically a checklist that we use by trade contractor as a template. When we make mistakes or forget something or miss something, that's added to the list so that next time at least there's a reminder. Again,

it's up to the purchasing agent to review if there are competitive bids. Often times there are.

SWARTZ: *Steve, in your dealings with the remodeling contractor, are there any specific tools that you work with to manage the relationship between the two of you?*

WAGGONER: To be honest, maybe that's where we're lacking. I feel like we're heading to jobs not knowing what we're supposed to do. You can have the plans, you can have the scope of work, and you can have the agreement. But is anyone always double checking in a residential remodel if it's what homeowner really wanted, or did he agree to something that you misunderstood? That can cause a huge problem.

SWARTZ: *I appreciate your candidness, because that is a problem. That's a huge problem sometimes. It sounds like they're not getting the proper tools that would be good. What are the things that you'd like to see happen that aren't up to snuff right now?*

WAGGONER: I agree with what Stephen said about keeping in touch and all the proper paperwork. You have to go back to the old school and say, "You want that color tile? Let's set 24 pieces up here and see if that's what you really want." With the drywall, it's a certain texture and you do the whole house. The homeowner says, "That's not what I wanted." Why not just take a bare sheet, test it in the garage and have them initial it? You can have all the paperwork in the world and it doesn't make the homeowner happy.

SWARTZ: *Let's talk about pricing, Stephen. How important is pricing these days?*

HANN: It's more important than it has been, in my opinion, in the last decade, both for us to get the jobs and be able to run the jobs profitably.

SWARTZ: *Steve, do you feel the same way?*

WAGGONER: Yes. For us to take a job and not make any money, sometimes it's better to stay home and work on your own house if you're going to work for free.

SWARTZ: *Stephen, do trades quote each job or do you have unit prices for certain things?*

HANN: The answer is both. But I think the clear answer is that they actually bid each project, because projects tend to be larger and more complicated than what we have broken down on unit prices. We do have some unit price agreements for things that get added in; I'm thinking of the electrician. We walk every project with our clients before we start pulling the wire. We have kind of a menu of things that we all know: how much is a plug, how much is a switch, how much is a three-way. We have that in some of our trades; I don't have the depths of that I'd really like.

SWARTZ: *You make sure that you get each job because it's probably a higher-end design/build where they're unique. The question always comes in when they say, "I*

can't give you a unit price because each project is different," when in fact there are some similarities and just a little difference but everyone wants to take a look at it. So that's how you do it on that. Steve, how do you generally do a price on a project?

WAGGONER: I'm old-school. I've got a little chart I keep current on what I can do tiles and shingles for. And then I have what I input the difficulty factor — yhe pitch or if it is a cut up roof, and access is the No. 1 issue.

SWARTZ: *Stephen, I think you mentioned that you get*

ing contractors you've worked for, for a long time?

WAGGONER: Stephen brought up a really good point that I don't usually get to hear very often. Competitive pricing is one thing; shopping is another. I guess shopping irritates me. You have what you bid it for, and when someone beats you by about half and they get it, you think, "Why am I in this business?" I feel like I've gone too far and I've been in this too long to be beat like that. In the past they'd say, "Maybe they know something you don't know," and it's the other way around. A lot of the jobs are

"I almost feel that they'll take the low bid and if something goes wrong, it's the subcontractor's fault." — STEVE WAGGONER

competitive prices within your trade contractors for a project. Talk to me about that; when do you get a competitive price for your projects?

HANN: Again, we do design/build, but in probably 20 percent of the projects I do during the year, clients just bring you plans and specifications. The answer varies a little bit by the type of job and how it develops internally. It depends on the complexity of the job. Normally, yes, I bring in probably two just to get different perspectives. They tend to see different things, which just makes for a better project and makes for a better steadied preliminary.

SWARTZ: *Steve, you say you're getting more competitive prices. What happens when there are competitive prices, especially at remodel-*

being done incorrectly.

SWARTZ: *Therefore, they're comparing apples to oranges and just taking them on price only.*

WAGGONER: From what Stephen says, comparative pricing I understand. But just shopping a price without looking at what you're getting ... I almost feel that they'll take the low bid and then if something goes wrong, it's the subcontractor's fault. Because if his bid is wrong, we'll just dump it on you. Which is counter-productive again because you could be almost done with the project and an inspector or even a fire marshal could say, "Let me see your receipt." If it's the wrong material, it looks bad for the roofers and it looks bad for the remodel contractor. Everyone's watching the project, it's



CUT IT. DRILL IT. FASTEN IT. **WORK IT.**



NO SPECIAL TOOLS REQUIRED.

Work LiteSteel™ beam on-site with the same tools you already use and get quicker, easier installations, lower installed costs and less headaches. The unique LSB® design is on average 40% lighter than hot rolled steel, or engineered wood, with equivalent load-carrying capacity. LSB delivers the advanced structural performance and strength you need to span the distance and carry the load.

Spec LITE for your site.

Visit LiteSteelbeam.com

**for more technical information and
to download your FREE LSB Selector
Software and FREE LSB Installers Guide**



LSB

LiteSteelbeam

LiteSteel Technologies America, LLC is a OneSteel Group Company

LiteSteel™ beam is a trademark and LSB® is a registered trademark, and are used under license by LiteSteel Technologies America, LLC. US Patent Numbers 5163225, 5373679, 5401053, 10-561185, 11-570937, 11-570942.

©2009 LiteSteel Technologies America, LLC

For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-6

almost done and then it goes backward all of a sudden.

SWARTZ: *Let's go on to cleanup. Who does the cleanup in each trade?*

HANN: The trade contractor is responsible for getting the house clean. Theoretically, they clean up. I can't tell you how much I spend cleaning up our projects — a lot of time.

SWARTZ: *I could emphatically say our trade contractors clean up. I also know that our project managers clean up and just don't tell anyone.*

HANN: That's part of the computation when you're looking at value for price. How much waste? How much do I have to run around behind this

guy? Is he going to show up and do what he says he's going to do? All that comes into that analysis. For us, it isn't necessarily about the bottom-line number. Obviously we've got to stay in business for everybody's benefit. But that is part of our analysis. We have those discussions internally.

SWARTZ: *Stephen, do you evaluate the trade contractor? If you do, how do you evaluate and how often?*

HANN: That's a great question. It just pointed out a gap to me operationally. I told you about our Tuesday operations meeting; that does come up

there. We also have a staff meeting about once every three weeks to talk about what's going on in the business, what we've signed up. That's also a time to talk about

the "heroes and heels," as we call it; Who's really doing what needs to be done

above and beyond for Hann Builders? And on the other side, is there somebody who's dropping the ball? It's a way for the project managers to talk among themselves to find out we're all having a problem with the same guy or if he's working us against each other. The only real feedback they get

is if they hear about it through the project managers if they're not performing on a job-by-job basis. We also do what I call an autopsy, or review, at the end of every project. Those key players are in the room internally in Hann Builders so we can look at the profitability.

SWARTZ: *Does that information routinely get back to the trade contractors?*

HANN: No.

SWARTZ: *That's our problem. We say we evaluate them, but I think our evaluations sound similar to yours.*

HANN: You're right. The way he gets feedback is if he doesn't get the next job and then he's going, "What happened?" •

To listen to a podcast of the full conversation, visit www.HousingZone.com/remex

HousingZone.com Every day there is a reason to visit.



Stimulus Package?

Professional
Builder

Professional Remodeler 

Custom Builder VisibleCity

housing
giants

The pros and cons of handyman work

It seems like everyone wants smaller jobs. Should we add a handyman division to take advantage? What are the dangers?

—*Full-service remodeler, Georgia*

Doing small projects can be a great way to service — and stay in touch with — past large-project clients, not to mention winning over new clients, stoking the referral fires, keeping crews busy and fueling cash flow. Ron Cowgill says the small projects division of his company, D/R Services in Glenview, Ill., is “clearly what’s kept us alive during the past year and a half.” Mark Holliday of Trace Ventures in Atlanta reports that the company’s new small project division logged \$358,000, or 20 percent of total revenue, in 2009; he expects that number to grow to \$510,000, or 27 percent, this year. Steve Gray of Steve Gray Renovations in Indianapolis launched a small projects division in January 2009. He says, “Anybody who has a good remodeling business [should consider opening] a handyman division. The more time you spend with clients, the stronger the bond between clients and yourself.”

But before opening a small projects division, ask yourself two questions: Do you want to add small projects to your repertoire or true handyman work, such as maintenance and repairs? And what adjustments will you have to make to your systems and staffing to do the new work profitably and well?

Taking on small projects — scaled back versions of the remodeling projects you’re accustomed to doing — is much safer than diversifying into the handyman business. You’ll be tapping into your company’s strengths and modifying proven systems. In fact, Guy Semmes, co-owner of Hopkins & Porter, a design/build firm in Potomac, Md., advises remodelers to “go after [this work] as hard as you can.”

Handyman work is another matter. Says Semmes: “It’s a totally different animal.” Though Hopkins & Porter has run a handy-



man division since the mid-90s, Semmes urges contractors to think twice before opening one, especially during an economic downturn. The last thing you need is to stumble and disappoint clients, damaging your reputation and drying up referrals.

Handyman moves fast. Really fast. Handyman clients want the job done, done right and done now. “Go in and do what you say you are going to do,” says Gray, or you’ll fail. Your entire handyman team — office staff, crew, subcontractors, and suppliers — must be organized, detail-oriented and on schedule while maintaining the same standards of professionalism.

Most handyman crews work on an hourly basis and might do several projects in a day. You need a sales system that keeps the job pipeline full and a project management system that tightly controls scheduling. Handyman crews have to be multi-skilled and able to assess job needs accurately, generate reliable cost estimates and carry out projects on the spot. If you are not willing to let your crews do estimates, handyman projects probably will be too overhead-heavy to be profitable for you.

The small projects division at Macon Con-

struction of Kensington, Md., handles jobs starting at about \$20,000. Company co-owner Carl Mahany prefers these projects to handyman because they are controlled by a dedicated, small-jobs manager who visits every potential project site, prepares an estimate and oversees the work.

On the plus side, the management and standards that you as a general remodeler will bring to handyman projects are likely to be far superior to what most handyman-only companies provide. You can and should charge premium rates for this premium service.

Gray points out another bonus of doing small projects or handyman: visibility. “In the first six months of 2009, our trucks were all over town six days a week,” he recalls. Homeowners didn’t know what size jobs Gray was doing. They just saw that Gray’s company was busy.

Look for marketing opportunities at job sites, too. While in homes to do handyman work, Holliday says the team tells clients about the company’s other capabilities and areas of expertise that could help them, from

design/build remodeling to aging-in-place home modifications to a TVA weatherization service

Trace is certified to provide. As Holliday puts it, you want to be “light on your feet,” ready to take whatever jobs are out there. Make your company the one-stop shop for all your clients’ remodeling needs. •

— WENDY A. JORDAN, SENIOR CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Wendy A. Jordan, CAPS, has more than 30 years of experience covering the residential remodeling industry as an award-winning writer and trade magazine editor. She’s the author of many books on residential remodeling, most recently “Universal Design for the Home” and a 2009 edition of “The Paper Trail: Systems and Forms for a Well-Run Remodeling Company.”

Have a question?
Contact editor in chief Jonathan Sweet:
jonathan.sweet@reedbusiness.com

You have better uses for water than flushing a toilet.



The **Karsten® toilet**, with **0.8/1.6gpf Dual Force® technology**, is the perfect bathroom fixture. Sleek styling is coupled with water-saving functionality that's light on the environment without sacrificing performance. For more information on environmentally friendly toilets and all of our bath and kitchen products, visit SterlingPlumbing.com.

STERLING
A KOHLER COMPANY

Inspired by the realities of life !

For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-7

Strategic planning: Prepping for future challenges and opportunities

As part of a new regular feature in Professional Remodeler, we'll be tapping the insights of our National Housing Quality Executive Council in monthly roundtables. This month, Editor in Chief Jonathan Sweet talks to four members of our council – Bruce Case, Allison Iantosca, Denis Leonard and Douglas Shipman – about how remodelers can craft a strategic plan for their business. To listen to the full roundtable discussion, visit www.HousingZone.com/roundtable.

JONATHAN SWEET: *Let's get started with the basics. Why should remodelers have a strategic plan? Why is it important?*

BRUCE CASE: A couple things at least from my perspective: One is I want to run the business not have the business run me, and I feel like if I don't have a strategic plan I'm going to be more of a victim or more reactionary toward the business and what direction it goes.

And the second reason, at least here at Case, is that we have a strategic plan because we feel like sometimes when times are more difficult that's the best time to move the ball forward, and without a plan, it's easy to say we don't have time to do that or we don't have the capital to do that. But sometimes it's the right time to do it.

ALLISON IANTOSCA: You know I can't get over how powerful it is to put your goals down on paper. It's amazing how often I have had things in my head about where I'm headed or what I'm thinking I might do, and it's very easy to let those things go. And when I have taken the time to actually write them down onto paper and put them out in front of myself as things I'm wanting to do, ways to move forward and being as specific as possible, when there actually out in front of myself and then the company, it's remarkable how much you can achieve.

DOUGLAS SHIPMAN: I couldn't agree more with Bruce that a strategic plan is absolutely required. The strategic plan is

going to give you a very clear vision of your financial capital needs, and when you're out looking for money, whether it's banks or the private market for some kind of financial backing, you've got to have a strategic plan to be able to impress and even communicate even reasonably effectively with anyone in the financial lending market.

DENIS LEONARD: Bruce had mentioned about being proactive and I think that's a major advantage of a strategic plan. So many good business people out there can react very well to a situation but having a strategic plan, thinking through what your upcoming year is going to be like, what your resource needs are, to proactively think through the challenges and opportunities that may be out there ... I think the time spent doing that sort of planning, coordinating your resources, can be very powerful.

SWEET: *One thing we hear a lot from remodelers is they think this is something big businesses do. How can it help a small business, you know remodelers doing \$1 million, \$2 million a year?*

CASE: In some ways I'd argue or debate that it's more important for a smaller business because the resources—meaning potentially capital but also just the number of people to push an initiative forward—are tougher so it's even more critical that that business aligns the team pushing the

wheelbarrow in the same direction on the right strategic goals.

And the second thing is I feel like with any business, but especially a small business, it needs to meet the personal goals of the owner as well as the business needs and the owners personal goals need to align with that strategic plan and without a plan the owners personal goals won't get met in which case it can be a tough road for a small business owner.

LEONARD: Strategic planning can be easily used and effectively used by a small business.

That kind of fear ... with strategic planning is that somehow you have to create this huge complex document, and that's actually not the case. It's about creating something that's going to help you be proactive and is going to support your organization that's going to

be useful to you. And that particular plan and how that's put together depends on the size of the organization. So there's no reason

why remodelers can't put together a good strategic plan and get the benefits from it.

SWEET: *One thing I want to touch on that Bruce brought up is personal goals and business goals and when putting together a strategic plan what's the roles those should have in a plan?*

LIANTOSCA: On the personal level if you don't know why you are doing what you are doing in your business or what you're striving for then it's really hard to know how to develop a plan for where your company is going and the why. So there needs to be, especially for smaller company owners, some level of understanding of what your life is going to get out of a successful roadmap. As a company leader it seems critical to me that that is a very clear part of the strategic plan, such that you know what you're working back from in order to achieve all the

To listen to a podcast of the roundtable, visit
www.HousingZone.com/roundtable

goals you have on the personal side of life.

SWEET: *Lets take a little bit of a step back. For somebody who wants to try to tackle this, what are some of the elements they need to think of? How should they approach this as they look to getting started with creating their first strategic plan?*

IAENTOSCA: Create buckets, if you will, as one way to think about it. There's a sales bucket, there's a production bucket, there's a people bucket, there's a marketing bucket – they're ways of just kind of breaking your business out into different pieces and then identifying where you want to go with each of those buckets or where you want to take it. There's a sort of brass-tacks way of approaching it, and if you are someone who can have a great vision and then has a hard time ... turning it into something ... it's a way of breaking the vision down into parts and pieces.

LEONARD: I think it's worth taking the larger view and starting to articulate what the vision and mission is of the organization -- what are you, what is the ultimate goal, what are you trying to be, who are you trying to be as an organization -- to really contextualize. And that might mean defining you're going to work within a certain city, a certain county, a certain state.

SWEET: *Who should be involved in crafting the strategic plans: just the owners? Owners and managers? Do you bring in employees from all levels of the company?*

LEONARD: Well my personal view is I think it's worth involving everyone in the organization. I think it gets easier as you do it. The first time you do that it can feel laborious and a little structured and difficult, but it becomes easier and more fluid. The strategic plan is the same way: I think perhaps the first time you do it, it really is the key leaders sitting down and having a discussion amongst themselves about

where they think the organization is going.

I think that's a good way to start it, and then involve other employees.

Particularly in this industry, the people who have the greatest intelligence gathering capabilities are your employees. I've worked with construction and production manag-

the next ring where we brought larger-size groups together. At least the way we've worked on it, we've gotten everybody's input but in a different series of steps and tried to keep the groups smaller because I really do want that honest, deep buy-in and questions and concerns brought up.



This month's roundtable participants:

Bruce Case is president of Case Design/Remodeling, the Professional Remodeler 2010 Remodeler of the Year. The company has both a local business serving the Washington, D.C., metro area and a national franchise operation.

Allison Iantosca is a partner at F.H. Perry Builder, a boutique residential general contractor that focuses on remodeling and restoration projects in the greater Boston market.

Denis Leonard is president of Business Excellence Consulting, a consulting firm that focuses on quality management and process improvement.

Douglas Shipman is the CEO of Developer Financial Solutions, a company that provides financing solutions for the construction industry.

ers who have been with the company for 30 years, 40 years, and they've seen the recessions and the booms a number of times in the past. Not listening to them is a huge loss.

CASE: The way we've tried to do some of this is to almost picture a target with the small inner core ring, and then you have rings going outbound. And so, right or wrong, we started with more the senior management group.

Then think of the next ring; we have different advisory groups for sales and production and PMs, brought it to them, talked to them and got their input – what's right, what's wrong with it, let's tweak it, let's adjust it. You know, really work it through. Then we had a series of town halls, so that's sort of

SWEET: *How often should you revisit this plan and look at it?*

IAENTOSCA: My sense is that these end up on the back shelf because they're too hard to work on. They feel too intangible, and it's a remarkable process to get from a vision to a strategy to an action plan to an execution plan.

We have spoken of it in our company much like the execution of a project. You have the idea of a kitchen, and it's beautiful, and there's a vision to it, and it's going to glow ... and there's just this wonderful idea – that's what the clients call us with.

And then there's a strategy around how we're going to deliver that – a strategy that

Strategic planning: Prepping for future challenges and opportunities

ties with the vision – and then there's an action plan around getting numbers from each of the trades and building a budget and getting to a place where we are signing a contract. And then even beyond that, something very specific: the real who, what, when, where and how test. Can you answer all of those questions for that particular action so that it's being executed?

I think that's how you maintain a vitality and a vitality to your plans so it doesn't end up on a back shelf, saying we are going to grow; we are going to have 10 new clients next year; we are going to be the top of mind brand in our market. Those are all awesome, awesome strategies, but they need to be as specific and as in-the-moment as possible to get the execution piece happening. Then it

feels like a document you really are visiting regularly because it's your pathway.

LEONARD: Kind of a good acid test for your strategic plan is not just how much dust is on it but, did you review it at the end of the year/ In terms of what did you learn from last year's strategic plan and from last years operations, how on track were you? How good was your vision? And how good was your planning? What was the variance between what you wanted to achieve and what you achieved?

So first of all, looking at how you actually did versus planned is very important, and then learning the lessons from that. What went wrong? I mean, did certain things happen in the market that are outside of our control, but what was within our control that

can we learn from? What can we adapt to? What can we change from that we learned from last year that we can put into this year's plan and help us be more focused in this coming year? I think that backward-looking learning opportunity is so often missed in strategic planning because by definition it's about looking forward.

IAN TOSCA: Well, back to the employee piece, they want to see that. They want to work with you on that; they want to know that they've moved forward and that they've had a part to play in that and that they can check some of this stuff off. It's not just sort of big leader speak about who we're going to be and where we're going to go, but did we get there and how did we do it and did we do it together and how can

Generate leads with customer-created video testimonials!

Who can enter? Any client of a NARI Member

How do I get my clients to enter? Reach out personally—tell them about the contest and that they can win \$500 in prizes that include Home Depot gift cards and video cameras.

More details here: www.nariremodelers.com/video-contest



Questions about joining NARI?
Contact us at info@nari.org or call (800) 611-NARI

For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-8

I be a part of it, and if you bring it out on a regular basis, there's an accountability there as a collective that also gives it some renewed energy.

LEONARD: I think that's a great word, accountability, and it's back to what you talked about earlier, Allison, about individuals' being accountable and the steps that it takes in the execution to actually make it happen. Otherwise, you're essentially pontificating and you're putting some terms out there and putting numbers out there and it looks like a great plan, but if there isn't the nuts and bolts, the steps to help you make that happen, it just all falls apart.

And you're right: people want to know how did we do. We worked hard this year; how did we do based on plan? And if that next year just seems like another number that was pulled out of the hat, you're just going to kill motivation. You know, I've seen a lot of companies when they're setting their strategic goals for the coming year or two years having, let's use the term stretch goals, what their referring to is their goal is really a stretch goal its really beyond what their capacity is to actually achieve. But they're not putting it there as a stretch goal, they're putting it there as the actual goal. And you almost demoralize your people immediately because they're thinking, how the heck do we achieve that? So when you're talking about strategic planning it's useful thinking in terms of what your ideal goal is, and then if you can exceed those expectations, what's a stretch goal? Something that will stretch you but is not impossible.

SWEET: *OK, annual goals was something I was going to ask about, so I'm glad you brought that up, Denis. Are there any common mistakes that you have made in your own business when crafting a plan or you've seen other companies make? For example, putting a stretch goal out there as your only goal.*

CASE: A couple we've made -- the stretch goal is one. Another one is some people try

to use the plan to motivate the team to try to get to (the stretch goal). I've found short-term that that may or may not work, depending on the people, but long-term at least I've found that that's not the way I believe in.

That's one thing; the second is doing the plan and setting it on the shelf, versus living and breathing it. A third one that has been apropos for us lately is how often we revise it. Some people never revise it and put it on the shelf, which is a mistake. But at the other extreme, if it's revised quarterly or too often, I think you lose the foundation of the plan. It needs to be adjusted to reflect reality, so ... we look at it every month and look at how we are doing versus actuals. But every six months we sit down and say, OK, do we need to revise the plan for what's reality? We used to do it every quarter, sometimes every month. And then you lose all bearings, in my opinion.

IANOSCA: I think one error that could be made is too much of drinking your own Kool-Aid and setting up this whole plan around who you think you are and who you think you want to be without gathering some data about how the market sees you and if you can go down that road.

We had a third-party person call our clients and say, what do you think of F.H. Perry Builder? What do you know about them? Who are they?

She also called people who did not hire us -- prospects and projects that we had lost -- and asked, why didn't you hire F.H. Perry Builder and what was it about the process that you didn't like or didn't work for you? And so if the answers to those questions didn't align with this great self-image that we had, there was some work for us to do on either figuring out how we were going to realign our message to the market such that they could know who we are, or say, great, we're on the right track and we're just going to blow that out of the water and make sure that our brand really does represent that because that's what people are seeing and wanting. •

HousingZone.com

Every day there is
a reason to visit.

What is Green?

Professional
Builder

Professional Remodeler

login
and learn.com

Custom Builder

VisibleCity

housing
giants

Remodelers that are bucking the trend

Six remodeling firms that are doing well despite the economy share their strategies for staying afloat and even prospering. Their secrets for success may not be what you think.



By Judy Schriener, Contributing Editor

The last few years have been an unprecedented challenge for most remodeling firms. Some companies, though, have found a way to thrive. The six firms on the following pages each have forged strategies that pulled them from the brink of disaster. What the companies have in common is that none has a magic formula that is outrageous or overly innovative. Mostly, the firms have gone back to the basics, circled the wagons and tightened up their organizations. Their employees have supported and volunteered their sacrifices when things turned dire, and in each case, were rewarded when things turned positive again.

New Outlooks Construction Group

Revenues at New Outlooks Construction Group in Robbinsville, N.J., rose from \$3.1 million in 2008 to \$3.7 million in 2009. Owner Jon Vogel expanded his firm from within to attain that growth.

“Instead of waiting for people to come to us, we have gotten more aggressive in offering more divisions and services,” he says. In 2007, the company broke out handyman services and painting services, which Vogel offered anyway as part of the repertoire of the firm. He created a new logo for the painting business, put some job-site signage up, sent newsletters to existing clients and generally promoted the services separately from the design/build construction and remodeling business.

It paid off. “They probably gave us about \$600,000 to \$700,000 worth of business last year,” Vogel says. “Most of our clients are fairly well-to-do,” he explains, so they are receptive to paying for the extra services that many people perform for themselves.

Vogel is also trying to go after more commercial clients, including offering maintenance services for condominium associations; townhouse areas; and radiology suites and other medical facilities.

The company partnered with two other firms to develop a program called ExpressBath, which offers three levels of bathroom remodeling — classic, premium and luxury — that



Jon Vogel's company learned to be more aggressive.

can be completed in 10 days or less. The secret to being able to do in 10 days what generally takes much longer is limiting available selections. That allows the firm to inventory most of the products, create a standard schedule of events and get discounts on products from major suppliers — steps that combine to reduce the price point of a fully remodeled bath to \$9,000, compared with what was previously \$20,000 to \$25,000 for a job where homeowners chose every element.

Initially, Vogel spent no money on marketing. “We had an existing client base. If you’re a reputable contractor and take care of clients, it’ll pay dividends,” he says. Starting in 2006, he gradually developed a marketing program, although even now

his entire marketing budget is less than 1 percent of his entire operating budget. In 2009, he spent \$33,000 on marketing — primarily on advertising the handyman and painting services — and this year he is starting to advertise the ExpressBath program in local newspapers.

The company’s success of its handyman services is heartening to Vogel but not a great surprise, given the affluence of much of his clientele. He says, “We clear gutters, check smoke detectors, do furnace servicing and other preventive maintenance. It’s kind of like getting your oil changed in your car — things people could do for themselves but now don’t have to.”

New Outlooks Construction Group

Robbinsville, N.J.

www.newoutlooksconstruction.com

Jon Vogel, CEO, President, Owner

Specialties: Design-build construction and remodeling, handyman services, painting services

Year founded: 1984

Employees: 18

2009 revenues: \$3.7 million

Top 2 Tips

1. Break out and market services that you already perform — such as handyman services and painting services — to gain additional clients who might not otherwise contact you.
2. Partner with other companies and go to suppliers to get volume discounts to enable you to repackage your services for new revenue streams.

Remodelers that are bucking the trend

Renewal Design-Build

Peter Michelson, CEO of Renewal Design-Build in Decatur, Ga., lives by the maxim that a remodeling firm is a business, not a practice. However, his attitude about the people he hires is more humane than the ways most businesses typically treat their employees. Consequently, when the effects of the recession started to hit the company in about September 2008, the entire team gathered; discussed the numbers, which Michelson makes available to them as part of his open-book policy; and came up with a plan. Michelson and his brother and partner David each took pay cuts, and the team across the board took a 10 percent salary cut. "Every one of them said thank you," says Peter Michelson. Full pay was restored less than a year later.

"As the economy is recovering for us, we've got our biggest book of work in our history, \$2.5 million," says Michelson. "That's five or six good-size job starts for the next three months. We couldn't do that if we had to ramp people up with new hires."

Revenues in 2008 were \$4.3 million; in 2009 they were \$3.4 million. Michelson is looking for \$4.5 million in 2010. He thinks the firm's marketing boost will help make that possible. While staff had their pay reduced by 10 percent, Michelson doubled the marketing budget from 2 percent of revenues to 4 percent. Marketing leads were up 24 percent



Peter Michelson's entire team crafted a survival strategy.

in 2009. "My belief is that we have hugely gained in market share," he says. "At the same time, other companies around us are laying off people or closing their doors."

Michelson, a fourth generation contractor, strives to present the firm as an industry leader. "If your presence is felt in the community, you must have the best value" in clients' minds, he says. "When people pay money to put an ad in a magazine and then say they got no results, they're not asking the right question. The ROI is much more subtle than that. Our homeowners need to see us from multiple angles from multiple sources." That includes ads, publicity, job site signs, nicely lettered trucks, clean

trucks and a presence throughout the geographical area. "If people can get that one point, then they've learned a lot," he says.

Trust is a big factor in getting clients to select you, Michelson stresses. He pulls Dun & Bradstreet reports on his own firm and shows them to prospective clients. He reinforces the trust factor by posting client testimonials on his own Web site, plus Yelp and Kudzu. He also lets time-starved homeowners know that his firm guarantees its pricing and delivery date. "We also let people know that our average change order on \$100,000 is 1.9 percent. Most homeowners are used to 20 to 30 percent." He adds, "It's differentiate or die."

Top 2 Tips

1. Marketing is critical. Renewal doubled its marketing budget from 2 percent to 4 percent, even as it made across-the-board pay cuts. Leads for 2009 were up 24 percent.
2. Don't measure return-on-investment success by how many leads you get directly from advertising. Homeowners need to see you from multiple angles from multiple sources.

Renewal Design-Build

Decatur, Ga.
www.renewaldesignbuild.com
 Peter Michelson, CEO
 David Michelson, President
 Specialty: Turnkey solutions for renovations and additions
 Year founded: 2001
 Employees: 15
 2009 revenues: \$3.4 million



Inside every carton of Mastic Home Exteriors vinyl siding you'll find more than best-in-industry low maintenance building products — you'll discover a team of industry professionals committed to your success. With one call you can access industry-leading customer service and support tools and customized training opportunities. All to help you build your business, satisfy homeowners, and succeed in today's marketplace. And because Mastic is a part of Ply Gem, you also gain the power and reach of the industry leader. For details, visit SucceedWithMastic.com or call 1-800-962-6973.



Windows Siding Stone Veneer Fence+Rail Designer Accents plygem.com



For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-9



Build your business by realizing homeowners' dreams



Whether your next project is a simple remodel or whole new development, NAPCO offers the quality vinyl and aluminum exterior building products you need to make homeowners happy and to build your business. Products like American Essence™ insulated siding, Cedar Select® shingle and round cuts, coordinating accessories and rainware. And many NAPCO products are NAHB Green Approved to help you meet sustainability goals. Find out more at www.napcoproducts.com today.



Windows Siding Stone Veneer Fence+Rail Designer Accents plygem.com



TRANSFORM ANY HOME

WITH THE BEAUTY OF PLY GEM STONE.



Who says change has to be hard? Transform the look of any home — inside or out — with Ply Gem Stone. Our authentically recreated, easy-to-install, affordable stone veneer is available in more than 100 stone and brick style and color choices that work with a variety of home styles. With installation support at plygemstone.com and a dedicated customer service team to answer your questions, Ply Gem Stone is a natural choice for any project. Learn more at plygemstone.com or call 877-804-1670.

NATURAL PERFECTION IN A HANDCRAFTED STONE VENEER.

Fieldstone, Tuscan Fieldstone, Shadow LedgeStone, LedgeStone, Cut Cobblestone, Cobblestone, Ridgestone, Riverstone, Brick



This product has been Green Approved by the NAHB Research Center. This means you can be assured that this product complies with specific green practice criteria in the National Green Building Standard. Visit www.GreenApprovedProducts.com for more details.



Windows Siding Stone Veneer Fence+Rail Designer Accents plygem.com

Remodelers that are bucking the trend

Homework Remodels

While so many firms were falling victim to the sagging economy, Steve Shinn saw his company, Homework Remodels in Phoenix, more than double its revenues, from \$365,000 in 2008 to more than \$700,000 in 2009.

It wasn't a smooth road getting there. Like many other businesses, 2008 hit his design/build firm hard. "In December 2007, we finished a project and realized in January of 2008 that we didn't have another project," Shinn says. He drew upon his roots as a handyman, which he was for many years before getting his contractor's license in 2005.

"The first six months of 2008 we switched into handyman mode," he says. "We had our employees doing anything and everything — some work that some people would consider nuisance work." Meanwhile, says Shinn, "I went into marketing mode." After a personal banker at his bank asked him to remodel her ranch home into the style of a mid-century modern home — his specialty — he started advertising on the Modern Phoenix Neighborhood Network to gain exposure to people interested in "classic mid-century design, art and architecture in Phoenix."

One day while taking pictures of a home he had remodeled, a neighbor walking his dog turned out to be an architect who asked Shinn to help him with plans he had already drawn up for remodeling his own home. That job was followed by a



Handyman services kept Steve Shinn's company afloat.

project for a business banker and another for a couple.

"My job right now is largely marketing," says Shinn.

Along with marketing, Shinn is focusing on improving his systems in his business. He has been a sponge, eagerly learning from trade publications, courses, experts and consultants.

"I feel my company is at the point where I need to lock in all of my systems of how I do every step: the design phase; gathering information; getting selections down pat in writing and approved by the owner. These things don't seem too important when you don't have so many balls in the air, but if we don't tighten up when we grow, we'll drop the ball."

Another challenge has been to figure true job costing, including labor, and get it aligned with his accounting system, Intuit's QuickBooks. That took consulting with a CPA in Texas who developed an add-on that gives him the data he needs. Being debt-free, which Homework Remodels has been since early on, makes job estimating easier, Shinn says.

Shinn's other focus is green building. He is the only Green Certified Professional in Arizona, as certified by NARI. Some business has come to him because of that certification, he says.

Shinn says, "If in 2010 we only did the same [volume] as this year but we became totally systemized, I would be happy with that. If we can do that and grow our business more, all the better."

Top 2 Tips

1. Get back to basics. Look at the house as a whole, not just the individual pieces of the job. Same with the business: set up systems for everything you do. Take care of the important things, not just the urgent things.
2. Pay attention to marketing, which includes everything from how you greet the client to wiping your feet when you go into the house, the signs on the trucks and working with the press to get exposure for something you've done well.

Homework Remodels

Phoenix
www.homeworkremodels.com
Steve Shinn, President
Specialty: Remodeling older homes, green remodeling
Year founded: 2005
Employees: 4
2009 revenues: \$700,000–\$800,000

Remodeling Designs

Throughout the recession, the only bad time for Remodeling Designs in Dayton, Ohio, was January through June 2009. Total revenues for those six months were just \$400,000 — not even close to being on track to match 2008 revenues of \$1.8 million.

“It was horrible, very, very, very scary,” says company President Erich Eggers. “We were scrambling to make adjustments, laying people off, doing what everybody else was doing.” The firm ended 2009 with revenues of \$1.4 million, has rehired nearly every laid off person and is finding projects to do all the way to August, comprising the biggest backlog in a long time, says Eggers.

What happened in the meantime? Remodeling Designs only subcontracts about 24 percent of its work, says Eggers, a mechanical engineer by training and experience, which explains the preciseness of his number.

“Many other companies subcontract the entire project,” he says. “The upside is we have tighter control over the project; the downside is when you don’t have work to do, you’re laying people off. ... I still like our model. I think our model is part of the reason we have so much work to do today. Our clients like it.”

Eggers’ clients tend to pay for their remodeling projects from savings or investments and don’t rely on financing. The projects tend to be extensive, since most clients have lived in their homes a long time and want to stay.



Erich and Kelly Eggers focus on how much they subcontract.

“They are doing these projects because it’s what they want to do; they aren’t dramatically concerned about resale value,” says Eggers. About 80 percent of Remodeling Designs’ business comes from repeat business and referrals — about half from each — so Eggers has made an effort to increase that business through greater contact with existing clients.

“We really work hard at staying in front of our clients,” says Eggers. The only advertising the firm does is in Housetrends, a glossy magazine that gets delivered to homes of a more affluent clientele. The company has put more effort into more personal contacts, newsletters, cards and e-mails to existing clients. Also, when the firm finishes a major

project, Eggers encourages the owners to host a party at their house, which the company pays for.

“We want them to invite their friends, their family, their associates, and if we have a client that we are closing to getting a deal with, we invite them,” says Eggers. “That has really been helping our referrals.”

In 2009, the firm started hosting seminars — one on kitchen remodeling, one on bathroom remodeling — in its showroom. Eight or 10 people attended each one.

“We closed three pretty major projects from those seminars,” Eggers says.

Remodeling Designs

Dayton, Ohio
www.removedesigns.com
Erich Eggers, President, Co-Owner
Kelly Eggers, Vice President, Co-Owner
Specialty: Upscale remodeling
Year founded: 1990
Employees: 10
2009 Revenues: \$1.4 million

Top 2 Tips

1. If a large part of your business comes from repeat business and referrals, increase it by getting and staying in front of your current clients through more personal contact, newsletters and a party after the project is finished.
2. Think about conducting seminars on remodeling of specific rooms. The media exposure and education value draw potential clients.

Remodelers that are bucking the trend

Jackson & LeRoy Remodeling

Jackson & LeRoy Remodeling in Salt Lake City is on fire. Last year, 2009, was the firm's best year ever, with \$3.93 million in revenues up 10 percent from 2008's \$3.53 million, and the company is on track for \$6 million in 2010, according to co-founder Brandon LeRoy.

What are LeRoy and his co-founder partner Jeremy Jackson doing right? Nearly everything, it seems. Some of it they control; some of it they don't.

Call it luck or just being in the right place at the right time, but remodeling is in demand in Salt Lake because the landlocked city is surrounded on all sides by mountains, so there's no room to sprawl. "It's a natural fit to turn to remodels," says LeRoy.

Another piece of luck — or, more accurately, earned luck — had to do with timing. "We landed several key jobs before this collapse started to happen," says LeRoy. "What we saw [after that] were struggling architects, interior designers and real-estate agents, and if you didn't have work, it was harder to get work. We had these landmark jobs and everybody turned to us to get work. The few jobs they had, they referred that work to us. It was the domino effect."

The company didn't lose work, mostly because "80 percent of our customers pay cash," LeRoy says. "Our clientele is so upscale that any cancellations we had were clients who



Smart decisions and luck factor into Brandon LeRoy, left, and Jeremy Jackson's success.

couldn't afford what they were trying to do anyhow." Most projects are in the \$1 million range, whether for new construction or remodeling, he adds.

LeRoy and Jackson met when they were both in the construction management program at Brigham Young University in 1998. "We just gelled from day one," says LeRoy. Both came from construction backgrounds. The young men knew they needed experience before starting their own business, so they went their separate ways, learning from the large companies they worked for until 2005 when they formed Jackson & LeRoy.

The highlight of their marketing efforts is their newsletter, which they mail to clients twice a year.

"We spend tens of thousands of dollars on photography of our projects," says LeRoy. "We don't do the magazine ad to create direct leads; we do magazine ads to establish us as a brand in the industry." Even the service work the firm does, such as remodeling four rooms a year at the Ronald McDonald House as part of the Utah Remodelers Council, garners media attention.

And even though the company relies on a lot of repeat and referral business, the combined exposure from the newsletter, the Web site, advertising and more give the firm exposure to hundreds of thousands of people, LeRoy estimates. "We fish with a fishing net, not with a fishing pole."

Top 2 Tips

1. It's vital to keep in touch with people you know — including current clients. It's just as important to extend your influence and your brand beyond those you already know.
2. Don't just do marketing; focus on branding. Everything you do should establish you as a force in the industry. Therefore, don't focus on individual results from advertising and instead concentrate on the big picture.

Jackson & LeRoy Remodeling

Salt Lake City
www.jacksonandleroy.com
Brandon LeRoy, Co-Owner
Jeremy Jackson, Co-Owner
Specialties: Upscale remodeling and custom homes
Year founded: 2005
Employees: 9: 7 full-time, 2 part-time
2009 revenues: \$3.93 million

Kirkpatrick's Construction

Jason Kirkpatrick always knew he wanted to be in the construction business. He grew up building rock climbing walls, skate board ramps and tree houses. When other kids went on to do something else, he stayed. He put himself through college by building 6,000- to 15,000-square-foot custom homes and building wine cellars. "It's so much fun; it's like Legos for adults," he says.

It was not much fun for Kirkpatrick's firm, Kirkpatrick's Construction in Centreville, Va., when it "hit the wall" after the recession began. "At the end of 2008 and beginning of 2009, for four months we had a total of five leads," he says. "I'd never had that experience before. So we realized that the D.C. metro area was well insulated by the federal government but not impervious to the effects of a global recession. We were in dire straits. So we immediately changed our tune."

Kirkpatrick sat down with his staff at their monthly meeting and said, "Guys, here's our dilemma. We can continue moving forward with the same overhead for the next three months or so, and none of us will have a job — including myself — or we can all sacrifice something." He took a \$20,000 pay cut. At that meeting, every team member voluntarily gave back the gas allowance that was given when gas prices went higher, plus dental insurance. No one got paid vacations or paid sick days from January to June. A call to Victoria Downing, president of consulting group Remodelers Advantage, of which Kirkpatrick's was a member, resulted in axing \$120,000 from overhead.



JOSHUA ROBERTS/GETTY IMAGES

Team sacrifice made Jason Kirkpatrick's company leaner.

"We are now leaner and meaner than we've ever been and we continue to stay that way," says Kirkpatrick.

Once Kirkpatrick swallowed his pride, he tapped into existing clients and, without sounding desperate, bluntly said his firm had the time and would appreciate any and all recommendations. The response was overwhelming. "They acted as our marketing team; they gave us a lot of referrals," he says. He also contacted the five clients whose projects were being estimated and offered to cut 10 percent off because the firm had restructured and reduced overhead. Three of the five came through, a higher percentage than usual. By June everybody had whatever they had given up restored.

This past Christmas, Kirkpatrick gave out the largest bonuses he had ever given. Revenues grew 30 percent in the last eight months compared to the two years before. The firm will hit \$1.5 million in revenues when the fiscal year ends on May 31, Kirkpatrick says. He had optimistically budgeted for \$1.4 million.

Now Kirkpatrick is ready to start hiring again — a lead carpenter and an apprentice carpenter. He is so people-oriented that he encourages his staff to leave right away if a relative is ill and not to do anything their gut tells them not to do, regardless of what it is. For both employees and subcontractors, he hires first for "the un-trainables," meaning morals and values and second for talent. "When it's just them and God by themselves and they have the choice, I can't teach them the right way to go." •

Kirkpatrick's Construction

Centreville, Va.

www.kirkpatrickconstruction.com

Jason Kirkpatrick, President

Specialty: Design/build

Employees: 9: 5 full-time, 4 part-time (and hiring more)

Projected fiscal year (ending May 31)

2009/2010 revenues: \$1.5 million

Top 2 Tips

1. Without sounding desperate, tap your current network for referrals when you are slow.
2. Hire both employees and subcontractors first for morals and values — the so-called "un-trainables" — and second for talent.

Build better, Build greener

Over 12 years of severe weather testing have proven that the non-metallic preservative plus wood stabilizer in Ecolife™ Stabilized Weather-Resistant Wood dramatically reduces cracking, warping and splitting. And that means **less maintenance** for consumers, **fewer callbacks** for contractors, and **reduced culls** for retailers.

Ecolife™ Stabilized Weather-Resistant Wood provides improved fastener performance and can be used in direct contact with aluminum siding and flashing, even in wet applications. Plus it's backed by a lifetime limited warranty against decay and termites, and its light color makes staining or painting easier. AWWA standardized for above ground use applications and building code approved: ICC-ES Report No. ESR-1851.



This NAHB Research Center **Green Approved** mark is your assurance that a product is eligible for points toward National Green Building Certification.



"Ecolife stability means less service calls."

"And because it repels moisture so effectively, it doesn't crack and warp in wet environments like other types of treated lumber. We highly recommend it for framing, substructures, docks, and decks and even mill it into decorative railings and moldings. When it comes to treated lumber, Ecolife is our first choice."

—Bob Heidenreich, Owner The Deck Store, Apple Valley, MN



For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-10



For more information on the full line of Viance treated wood products, call 800-421-8661 or visit treatedwood.com



Decking & Outdoor Living

A supplement to *Professional Remodeler*



JIM SCHMID PHOTOGRAPHY

Aluminum Railings Available Spring 2010

What inspires you
to build outdoors?



DecoRators®
Inspiration for Outdoor Living™

Railings | Balusters | Post Caps | Accessories | 1.866.910.9096 | decorators.com/prm
For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-11

DECKING & OUTDOOR LIVING



The State of the Great Escape

By Lisa Skolnik, Contributing Editor

For the last decade, Americans have been enthusiastically bringing the indoors outside and transforming their patios, decks and parts of their yards into full-fledged — and often lavish — living rooms, dining areas and kitchens.

“Just about any feature that we’ve become accustomed to using inside can now be brought outdoors, from grills, ovens and gourmet appliances to electronics and all-weather furniture that doesn’t look outdoorsy at all,” says Craig Plekkenpol, who heads Plekkenpol builders in Bloomington, Minn.

And up until last year, these features were being brought outside with growing enthusiasm, regardless of locale. “In our climate, we have a shorter outdoor season than most, and that may even drive demand. After such bad weather in the winter, people are anxious to get outdoors and enjoy it when it’s good,” Plekkenpol observes.

Just in time for warm weather, elective projects are beginning to pick up steam and decks are the first outdoor lifestyle feature to make an official comeback. The third quarter report of ServiceMagic.com’s 2009 Home Remodeling and Repair Index found that they are a popularly requested project

as the “staycation” trend continues. And the demand for them is pretty even nationally; also in 2009, the NAHB found that decks were the most commonly requested outdoor project in every region of the country (the figures are 70 percent in the Northeast, 70 percent in the south, 66 percent in the Midwest, and 67 percent in the West).

Coupled with good fourth quarter news from ServiceMagic.com that remodeling service requests increased by more than 37 percent over the same period in 2008, things may be looking up outside. Servicemagic.com CEO Craig Smith predicts that as the year progresses, “gains in remodeling will average about 30 percent in every quarter and aspirational projects will make a comeback.”

Cold climate outdoor living

For Plekkenpol, who does 200 to 300 projects a year, outdoor lifestyle projects never went away. “It’s one area that has at least held its own for us, probably because people are travel-

Lanais remain popular along the Florida coast, although some clients are scaling them back.

DECKING & OUTDOOR LIVING



Features like fireplaces and flatscreen televisions help to bring the “indoors out.”

ing less and giving up second homes due to the economy. This is an alternative that is actually a version of scaling back, especially because they can recover some of the costs when they sell if it's done tastefully,” he says. “But they are being more creative and a little less elaborate.”

Most of that creativity takes the form of mixing it up when it comes to materials for Plekkenpol's customers. “There is such a proliferation of choices in this area, and they are available at every price point. It gives the customer design freedom and economic freedom,” he notes, pointing out that they use this newfound creative license most frequently on fireplaces and decks, which are the two most important features in this northern locale. The former often incorporate masonry such as brick and stone; metals such as copper and stainless steel; and ceramics in the same project, while for the latter, a combination of low-maintenance stamped concrete or natural stone pavers is popular.

Rich Politowicz of Professional Home Services in Lake Barrington, Ill., outside Chicago finds that features that incorporate fire and decks clad in concrete or stone pavers are also his company's most popular outdoor project right now. The fire features are getting more elaborate and usually incorporate pit-style or built-in seating areas and gas, because people don't want to deal with wood.

“They want to walk outside and just turn it on,” he says. And the trend in patios and decks is toward concrete or stone pavers and away from wood. “My clients want the finished product to be nicer and last longer. Pavers don't rot, bend, warp,

twist and are easier to use for interesting designs and shapes, especially the new colored concrete products,” he says.

Outdoor life in temperate weather

In more temperate regions, projects that extend a family's ability to live outdoors more of the year are holding their own.

In Fort Collins, Colo., where winters are relatively mild and summers are decidedly hot thanks to the dry climate, “people really need covered decks. It's a big deal here,” says Bryan Soth, co-owner of HighCraft Builders. Fully covered and often sporting a deck on top to mine every inch of outside space and maximize view, they become bona fide rooms that extend the outdoor living season for their owners. “You don't get scorched from the sun in the summer, and it's easier to stay warmer in late fall and early spring,” says Soth.

Yet every area also has its nods to local conditions. Here, the sun and the views are salient. Because of the sun's intensity, “wood doesn't last so we use a maintenance-free wood and plastic composite or concrete pavers,” Soth says. And thanks to the spectacular views of the mountains in the distance, “we use a lot of wrought iron handrails in interesting but open patterns instead of solid fences. They really open up the views,” he notes.

In the Atlanta metropolitan area, where the outdoor luxury kitchen business is still good for Bernie Smith, owner of MasterWorks Atlanta in Roswell, Ga., two other big boons for business are two-story decks and pervious pavers. Smith has a diverse clientele, and at the high end is a preponderance of athletes. Despite the economic downturn, he completed



Double-story decks are a popular project for Georgia remodeler MasterWorks Atlanta.

several lavish kitchen projects last summer, complete with swim-up bars. But the decks have broad appeal because they become “three-season porches here,” and the pavers, which allow water to pass through them so they do not destroy the natural water table of the land by causing erosion, are “desirable because they are green.”

Smith has his own economical take on the outdoor room with a double-story deck he developed by lining its top level with a waterproof membrane, which can be topped in myriad materials but is most effective in a thin natural stone or through body porcelain tile. This creates a water-impervious space below that can be used for an outdoor kitchen, living area or both and is particularly effective when it is raining outside. Pervious tiles come into play on the lower level for homeowners who are restricted by code from building any more hard surface structures on their land.

In Portland, Ore., another moderately mild area where the three-season porch is a useful family-friendly feature, Greg Olson of Olson & Jones Construction says a valuable addition to these outdoor “rooms” are expected, namely kitchens and fireplaces, and they include the unexpected: heaters and speakers.

“People are still doing outdoor projects, but they’re being cautious and thoughtful so they can really get a lot of use out of these spaces,” he observes.

Balmy living

Not surprisingly, in the balmy southern and western reaches of the country where outdoor living is a huge part of life,

everybody wants to mine the square footage outside their homes. But tough times have dictated bare-bones projects.

“Lanais have always been a big part of our business, and in the last six or seven years they have been more intricate and involved. We’ve done a number of complete kitchens that open on to pools and decks,” says Daniel Ashline, who heads a namesake design and remodeling firm in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Yet his customers “have felt the pinch, don’t have a lot of disposable income right now and want value. Their sense of urgency has been replaced with a sense of caution, and they’re cutting back,” he says. The result is that lanais are becoming more basic again for most of his customers. “No one wants to over-improve,” he notes.

In Tucson, Ariz., “almost every project we do involves outside space. It may have a patio, or a covered deck, but that doesn’t mean it will get extensive right now,” says Greg Miedema, president of Dakota Builders. Yet people still want to forge their patios into “more of a gathering place, with more than just bare bones,” he adds.

Right now, this translates into simple but effective fixes, such as straightforward built-in bancos surrounding a center island; built-in grills instead of full-blown outdoor ovens; and larger, strategically designed countertops, such as an L-shaped one the company just completed that enlarged an island and turned it into a full-fledged outdoor eating area. “Islands with cooking equipment, fridges and sinks are much more common than fireplaces or pits because we just don’t get that cold here,” says Miedema. ☀

Kodiak® Decking and Railing

For residential and commercial applications in any environment



New & Available in 2010

Kodiak® cellular PVC decking

- Proprietary Korelite™ technology for dense interior cell structure that is light weight, yet strong under foot
- Industry-leading SunShield® technology for superior performance in all types of weather
- Durable surface resists damage from moisture, insects, sun exposure and staining

Kodiak composite decking and railing

- Evenly dispersed color throughout each plank allows for beautiful routed edges and eliminates the need for painting and staining
- Natural, wood-grain finish – without the splinters – for a warm, barefoot friendly surface

Kodiak Plus railing featuring SunShield

- Versatile railing systems in styles and colors to complement any deck, porch or balcony
- Available with aluminum-reinforced top and bottom rail

For more information, visit

www.deceuninck-americas.com, call 1.877.563.4251 or e-mail support@deceuninck-info.com.

Innovating solutions for the environments of your life.™ **deceuninck®**

The name and logo of Deceuninck NV, of its affiliated companies and of the products and services manufactured by them, are trademarks and trade names protected by national and international laws. Kodiak and SunShield are registered trademarks and Korelite is a trademark of Deceuninck North America.

© 2010 Deceuninck North America. All rights reserved.

For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-12

A supplement to Professional Remodeler

DECKING & OUTDOOR LIVING

What's New in Alternative Materials

By Nick Bajzek, Products Editor



Trex

TRANSCEND LINE

Attributes: cPVC decking; 95 percent recycled plastic and wood flour core

Colors: gravel path, tree house, fire pit and vintage lantern

Other: three-side shell to allow moisture to drain

Warranty: 25-year limited stain and fade

Online: www.trex.com

For more info, go to <http://www.housingzone.com/PRinfo> and enter # 251



TimberTech

RELIABOARD

Attributes: Recycled wood / post-consumer recycled and virgin HDPE

Profile: full 5.4" wide plank surface, square-edge profile, flat grain surface pattern

Colors: Grey and cedar

Lengths: 12', 16' and 20' / Maximum 16" O.C. span rating

Online: www.timbertech.com

For more info, go to <http://www.housingzone.com/PRinfo> and enter # 252



MoistureShield

VANTAGE COLLECTION

Profiles: 5/4" x 6"

Colors: Walnut and tigerwood (new)

Formula: Minimum 30 percent post-consumer / 60 percent pre-consumer recycled content

Grain: Embossed wood grain finish on both sides

Other: Boards can be ordered with or without grooves for hidden fastener systems

Online: www.moistureshield.com

For more info, go to <http://www.housingzone.com/PRinfo> **and enter # 253**



AZEK Building Products

ARBOR COLLECTION

Profiles: Tropical wood grain pattern

Colors: Morado, acacia and redland rose

Sizes: Available in 1" x 3 1/2" and 1" x 5 1/2" sizes

Online: www.azek.com

For more info, go to <http://www.housingzone.com/PRinfo> **and enter # 254**



Fiberon

HORIZON LINE

Profiles: Square edge or grooved

Colors: Ipe and rosewood (new), sand, brick, bronze, slate

Other: Grooved boards can use company's Phantom hidden fasteners

Online: www.fiberon.com

For more info, go to <http://www.housingzone.com/PRinfo> **and enter # 255**



Proof positive

Duradek is the ultimate method of waterproofing decks and walk-on roofs.

- Durarail aluminum railing systems
- Certified professional installers
- Sundecks, patios, pools, hot tubs, stairways, roofdecks



duradekTM

TOLLFREE 800-338-3568
www.duradek.com
www.durarail.com

For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-13

DECKING & OUTDOOR LIVING



CertainTeed

EVERNEW CPVC DECKING

Attributes: Fusion-bonded Lumenite solar-reflecting surface technology, Class 1-A fire rating

Boards: 1 x 5-1/2"

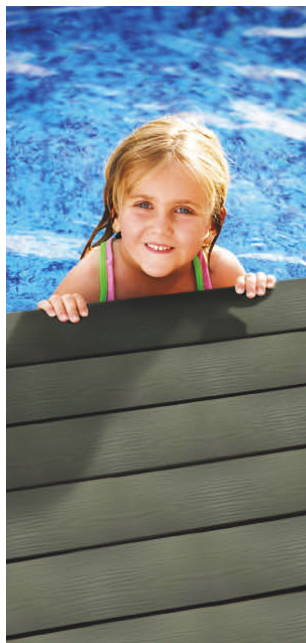
Lengths: 12', 16' and 20'

Colors: Saddle, sequoia, dune, greystone

Warranty: 10-year stain and fade resistance

Online: www.certainteed.com

For more info, go to <http://www.housingzone.com/PRinfo> and enter # 256



Deceuninck

KODIAK CPVC WITH KORELITE

Attributes: Korelite dense cellular foam core w/o wood or wood fillers

Planks: Wrapped in Sun-Shield PVC

Installations: Swimming pool decks, docks and other outdoor applications

Colors: four earth tone colors; wood grain embossing

Other: Matching 5/8" thick fascia

Online: www.deceuninck-americas.com

For more info, go to <http://www.housingzone.com/PRinfo> and enter # 257

NEW PERMEABLE CLAY PAVERS!



English Edge® look for public projects where ADA surface restrictions apply—meets 1/2" max. joint size.

RainPave Rumbled® Permeable Pavers also available.



Preserve natural stormwater infiltration through a permeable pavement system.

Genuine clay pavers - strong, durable and colorfast.

800-334-8689

www.claypaver.com

For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-14



Universal Consumer Products / Deckorators

ALUMINUM RAILING KITS

Colors: Powder-coated black or white

Options: Post sleeves, stair rail bracket kits, angled brackets and matching post caps (including a solar powered version)

Other: Fully compatible with company's baluster styles

Warranty: Limited lifetime

Online: www.deckorators.com

For more info, go to <http://www.housingzone.com/PRinfo> and enter # 258



Texture for Living.™



dramatic stone profiles
natural color variation
limited lifetime warranty

At StoneCraft, texture is our building block. Our stone veneer delivers the grace, charm, and powerful feel of stone. Backed by a limited lifetime warranty, StoneCraft is manufactured for endurance and beauty. So, be rugged. Be stylish. Be ornate. StoneCraft completes your vision with a Texture for Living.



Innovation Born from Original Thinking™

www.theTapcoGroup.com

ROOFING :: SIDING :: SHUTTERS :: SIDING COMPONENTS
TOOL SYSTEMS :: EGRESS SYSTEMS :: TRIM :: STONE VENEER

© 2010 Headwaters

For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-15

Exterior projects staying strong in downturn

Jobs holding steady in price, popularity, survey shows

By Jonathan Sweet, Editor in Chief

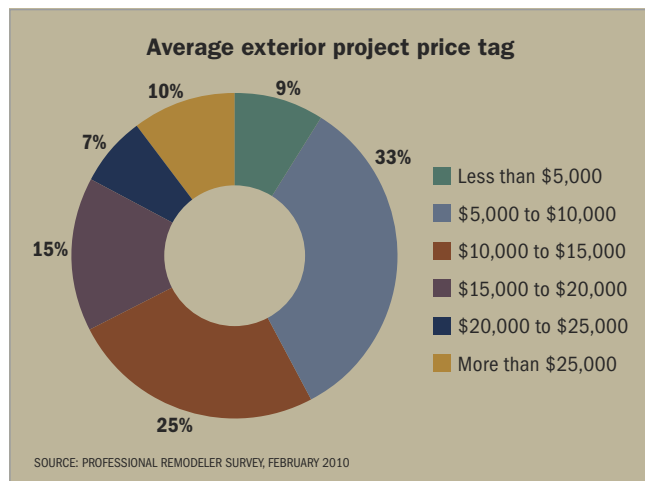
Homeowners are continuing to invest in the exteriors of their homes and many remodelers are doing pricier exterior projects than they were a year ago, according to the latest *Professional Remodeler* research.

More than 90 percent of remodelers undertook at least some projects in 2009 that included siding replacement and other exterior remodeling. Nineteen percent of respondents performed exterior remodels on more than half of their projects — and this was from a group where only 3 percent self-identified as an “exterior remodeler.”

For most remodelers, exterior work has stayed a steady part of their business; 55 percent said there was no change over the last year. At the same time, 30 percent said it was a growing portion of their business. Only 15 percent said it was making up a smaller part of their job mix.

Despite the downturn in the overall remodeling market, job prices for exterior projects are remaining strong. In our survey of remodelers last year on overall market conditions, 77 percent said their average job size had decreased and only 11 percent reported an increase in average price tag.

When it comes to exteriors, though, those numbers are starkly different: 47 percent of remodelers said the price



For most remodelers, the price tag for the average exterior remodel falls between \$5,000 and \$15,000, although 10 percent average more than \$25,000.

for their average exterior job increased last year. A third of remodelers saw no change and 20 percent saw a decrease. Clearly, exterior jobs are weathering the storm better as homeowners opt for more need-based projects. The only

What remodelers recommend

We also asked you which exterior products you recommend most often and why. Here's some of what you had to say:

Fiber cement (42 percent)

- "These products hold up the best in my climate conditions (East coast Florida)."
- **"Cost, appearance and durability"**
- "Long-term investment is worth the immediate cost."
- **"Stability and looks"**
- "Fire retardant and low-maintenance"
- **"Not a fad like some others."**
- "Quality and consistency of product"
- **"It stands up and performs well, good paintability, a solid feel and able to caulk and seal the exterior envelope of the building well."**

Vinyl (22 percent)

- "Readily available"
- **"Low maintenance and longevity"**
- "Efficient, lasting and maintenance free"
- **"For the price-conscious and cement board for the green conscious."**
- "It has the most choices, the installers like working with the product; most siding distributors stock more vinyl colors and styles than steel or fiber cement."
- **"Cost effective"**

Stucco (11 percent)

- "In South Florida, it holds up the best."
- **"Lower maintenance costs."**
- "Predominantly the exterior finish on homes in Southern California"

Methodology

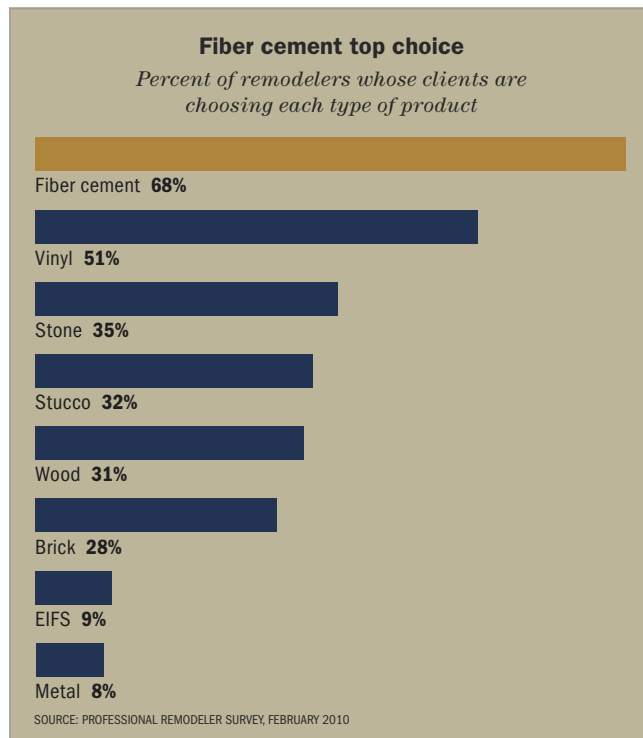
464 remodelers completed the survey via e-mail from Feb. 10-22, 2010. Participants were chosen from a random sample of subscribers to *Professional Remodeler* magazine and *Professional Remodeler* e-newsletters.

part of the country significantly different from the national picture is the West, where "only" 30 percent of remodelers reported an increase in job price — still much better than the overall market.

That average price tag does vary by region, though. Nationally, most jobs (58 percent) fall between \$5,000 and \$15,000 (see graph p. 40). The Midwest had the least expensive jobs, with half of projects under \$10,000. Remodelers in the Northeast reported the priciest projects, with 40 percent averaging more than \$15,000. Projects in the South and West lined-up almost perfectly with national trends.

Product choices

When homeowners choose to replace their siding, fiber cement and vinyl are the clear product leaders. Sixty-eight percent of remodelers install fiber cement and 51 percent are seeing at least some clients opt for vinyl (remodelers could choose more than one option). Stone (35 percent),



Remodelers are installing fiber cement more than any other exterior siding product, but more than half are seeing their customers opt for vinyl.

Exterior projects staying strong in downturn

stucco (32 percent), wood (31 percent) and brick (28 percent) remain popular as well.

There were clear differences by region, reflecting each area's unique construction styles. In the Northeast, 79 percent

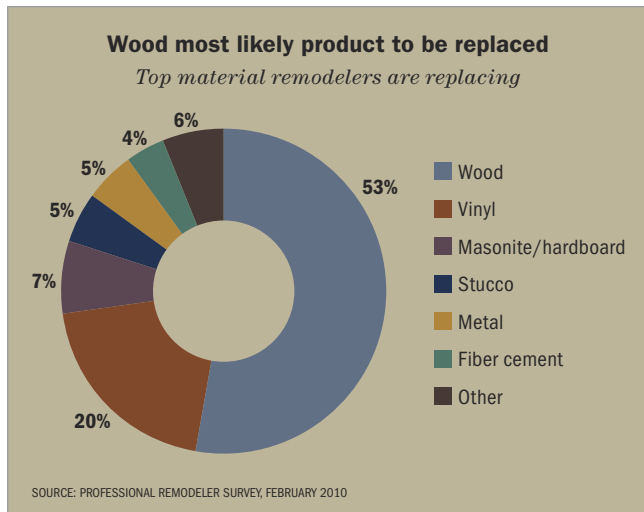
of remodelers are working with vinyl — the highest percentage of any region — compared to 63 percent who install fiber cement. The Northeast is also the top region for wood siding, used by 45 percent of remodelers there.

Vinyl is also the top choice in the Midwest, but only narrowly over fiber cement: 69 to 66 percent. Midwestern remodelers are the most likely to use stone (40 percent) or metal siding products on the home's exterior.

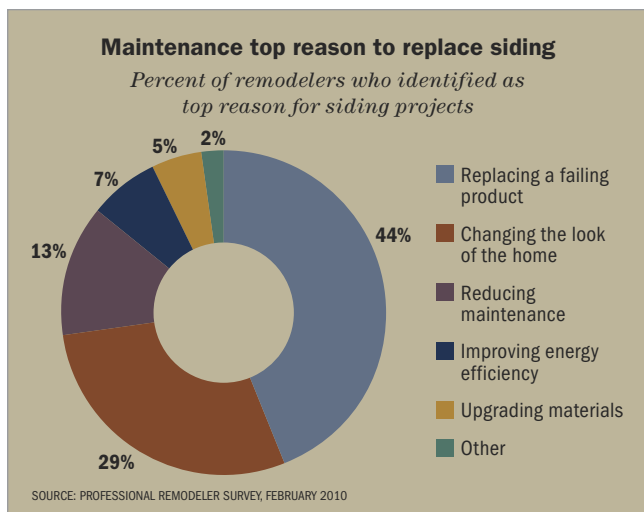
The South is the top region in the country for both fiber cement and brick, although fiber cement is the clear market leader in the South, where 80 percent of remodelers work with it. That's twice as many as the 40 percent whose clients are choosing brick finishes. Only 39 percent are using vinyl, barely above the level of stucco and stone installations.

Stucco is the No. 1 choice in the West, with 74 percent of remodelers working with it. Fiber cement (54 percent) and wood (42 percent) also have good market penetration in the West. Vinyl, on the other hand, is hardly a factor, with only 8 percent of Western remodelers ever installing it.

Not surprisingly, wood is the most common material being replaced, according to 53 percent of remodelers nationally. That number was consistent across all regions. The only other product being replaced at a significant level is vinyl at 20 percent — except in the West, where 18 percent of remodelers are replacing stucco more than any other product.



More than half of remodelers are replacing wood more than any other product. Vinyl is the only other material cited by more than 10 percent of remodelers.



More than 40 percent of remodelers cite replacing a failing product as the top reason their clients undertake an exterior remodel, but more than a quarter say their clients are looking to improve the curb appeal of the home.

Why replace?

Replacing a failing product, such as rotting siding, is the top reason remodelers are hired for an exterior project — 44 percent cited it as the No. 1 cause. But many homeowners are also choosing to remodel simply to improve the home's curb appeal, according to the 29 percent of remodelers who chose that as their top reason. Reducing maintenance (13 percent), improving energy efficiency (7 percent) and upgrading materials (5 percent) were less popular choices.

Siding replacement jobs are also almost always a part of a larger remodeling project. Only 8 percent of remodelers said their typical siding replacement job involves replacing siding only. The most common work is replacing windows, chosen by 68 percent of remodelers. More than half of companies said their typical siding job is part of a larger whole-house remodel or addition and 49 percent said they are replacing doors as part of the average project. Thirty-one percent said they are repairing or replacing the roof at the same time they remodel the exterior of the home. •



IF THERE WERE A UNIVERSAL CLIMATE, A UNIVERSAL SIDING WOULD MAKE SENSE.

Introducing The HardieZone™ System by James Hardie. Gone are the days of one siding fits all. Now we offer specific product lines that are engineered for your distinct climate. To see how we're changing the way the building industry views a home exterior, visit jameshardie.com.



BUILDING FOR TOMORROW, TODAY.



Build towards the future with Ply Gem. For more than 50 years, we've provided builders, architects, remodelers and homeowners exterior building products that can make a positive impact in the home and the environment.

Today, we're building on that commitment with Ply Gem Enviro. We are working to ensure our products and practices support sustainability — from start to finish.

Our leading window, siding and accessories, stone veneer, fence and rail brands can help meet your sustainable building goals — many include products that can help you earn points under local and national certification programs, and many of our products are Green Approved by the NAHB Research Center to earn points towards NAHB Certification.

To learn more about Ply Gem Enviro, visit plygem.com.



These logos identify products recognized by third parties as supporting green building practices.

We are proud members of these organizations that are working to define sustainable building practices.



Windows Siding Stone Veneer Fence+Rail Designer Accents plygem.com

PLY GEM
BUILDING PRODUCTS. BUILDING SUCCESS.

PLY GEM WINDOWS • GREAT LAKES WINDOW • MASTIC HOME EXTERIORS • VARIFORM • NAPCO • CELLWOOD • PLY GEM STONE • KROY
For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-17

Green growing in popularity, but challenges persist

Higher costs, lack of consumer demand top remodelers' concerns

By Jonathan Sweet, Editor in Chief

More remodelers and consumers are buying into the sustainability trend than in past years, but there's also still a healthy amount of skepticism about "green" remodeling.

That's according to our third *Professional Remodeler* survey on green remodeling challenges and opportunities. We've surveyed remodelers in 2007, 2008 and most recently in December 2009 and January 2010. (To view the full results of our past research, visit HousingZone.com/PR.)

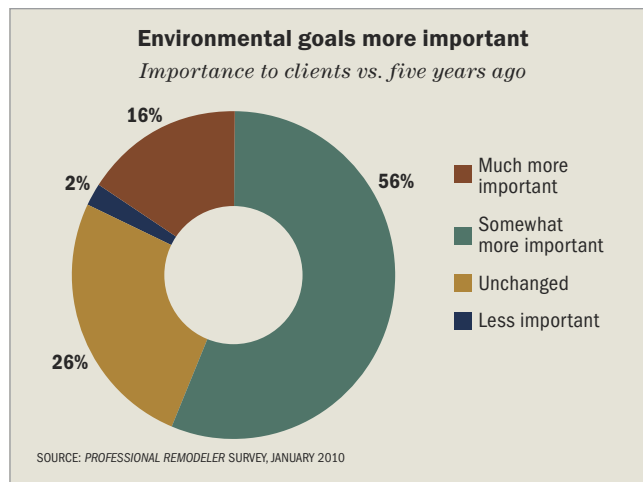
Most remodelers believe that environmental goals are more important to their clients today than they were five years ago: 72 percent agree with that, although only 16 percent say they are "much more important."

Remodelers' own attitudes have also changed over the last few years. In our most recent survey, 48 percent of remodelers said that green features help them sell projects. That's up from 2007, when barely a third of remodelers said that green improved their sales.

Easier than it used to be

There are still significant challenges to implementing green remodeling, according to most respondents, but remodelers see fewer roadblocks to sustainability than they did in the past.

The top challenge, according to 31 percent of remodelers, is that homeowners are not willing to pay a premium for green features. A quarter of all remodelers said that the additional

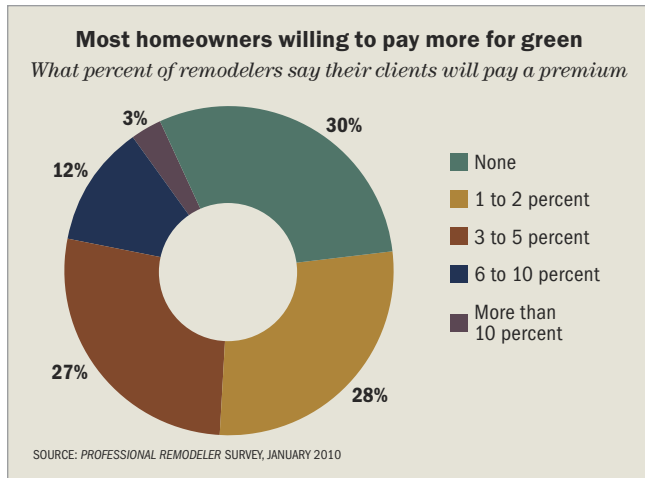


Nearly three-quarters of remodelers say that environmental goals are more important to their clients than they were five years ago.

Methodology

351 remodelers completed the survey via e-mail in December 2009 and January 2010. Participants were chosen from a random sample of subscribers to *Professional Remodeler* magazine.

Green growing in popularity, but challenges persist



Most homeowners are willing to pay at least a little more for green remodeling features – but less than half will pay more than an additional 2 percent.

costs of green are the top challenge. In fact, 78 percent said that the No. 1 challenge was either the increased costs, lack of consumer demand and the unwillingness of homeowners to pay more for green.

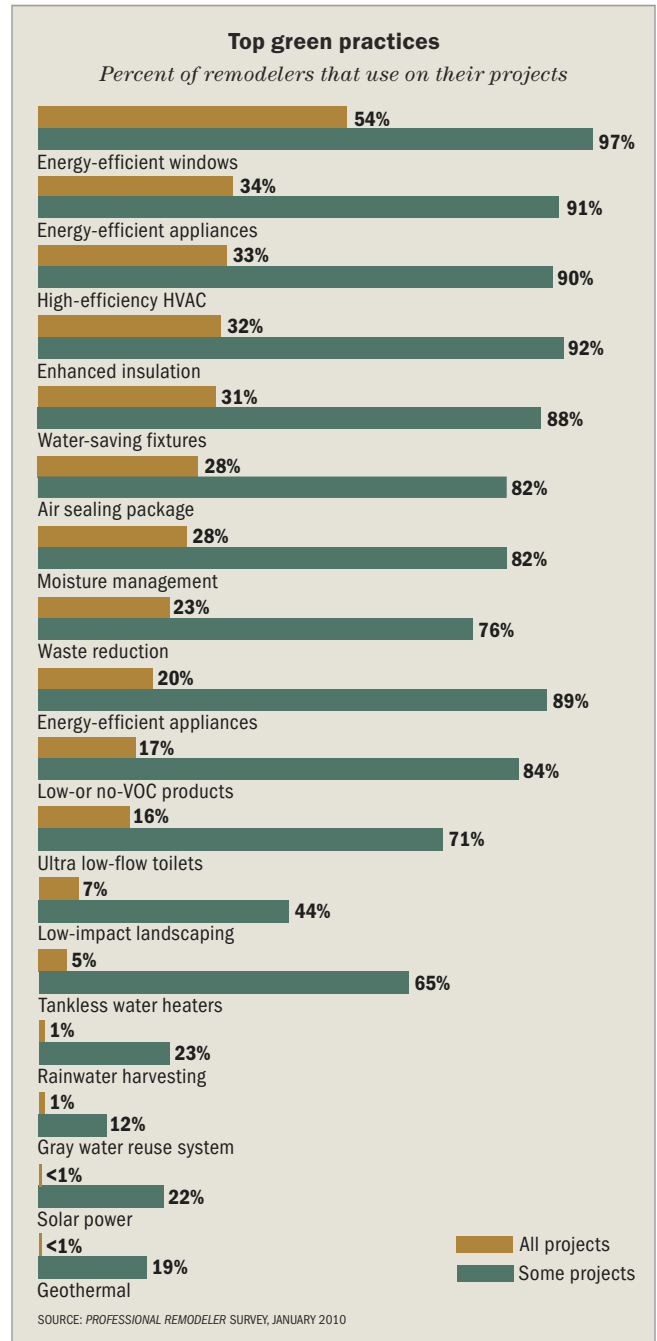
Thirty percent of remodelers said that homeowners are not willing to pay any premium at all and only 15 percent said they would pay more than an additional 5 percent to get green features.

Still, that means 70 percent of remodelers said their clients would pay at least a little more for green remodeling — a drastic increase from the 22 percent who said that in 2007.

Almost every respondent — 95 percent — said it costs more to incorporate green features into the average remodeling project. That's actually higher than the 91 percent who agreed in 2007, although remodelers say that increased cost is lower than it was just a few years ago. At that time, 73 percent of remodelers said it added more than 5 percent to the price of the average project, compared with 41 percent in our most recent study.

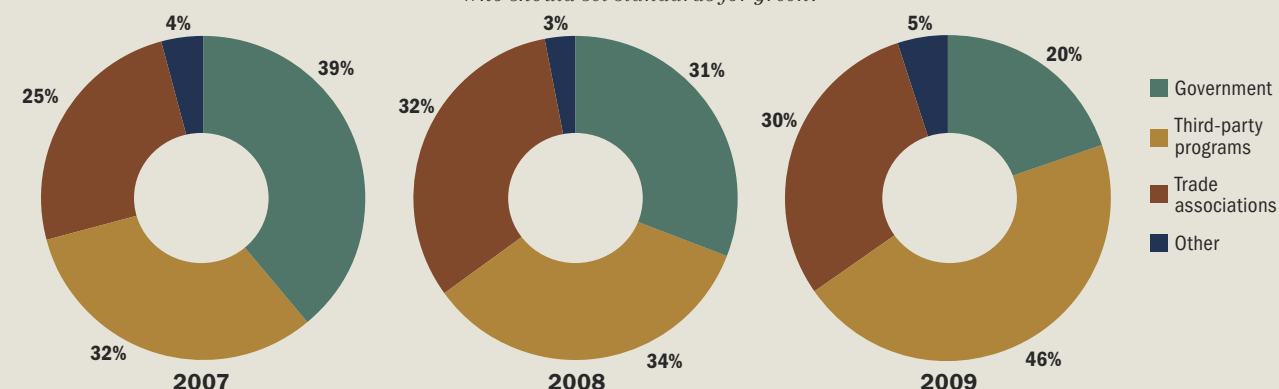
Other issues cited by remodelers as the top barrier to green remodeling:

- Insufficient return on investment (10 percent)
- Too complicated (5 percent)
- Availability of green materials/systems (3 percent)
- Reliability of vendors (2 percent)
- Performance of green materials/systems (2 percent)



Almost all remodelers are incorporating features like energy-efficient windows and appliances in at least some of their projects, but alternative energy sources are less popular.

Changing attitudes on certification *Who should set standards for green?*



SOURCE: PROFESSIONAL REMODELER SURVEY, 2007-2010

Over the last four years, remodelers have become much less convinced of the ability of government to regulate the green industry and now clearly support third-party programs as the best choice.

How are you going green?

Remodelers are implementing a wide variety of green remodeling features and practices in their projects (see chart opposite page). More than 90 percent of remodelers reported installing energy-efficient windows and appliances, high-efficiency HVAC and enhanced insulation in at least some of their projects. Those four areas were also the top ones in 2008. Most remodelers' use of all of the products and practices we asked about are virtually unchanged since 2008, with few exceptions.

While remodelers' green practices are basically unchanged over the last few years, one area that has changed drastically

is how green should be defined.

More than 90 percent of remodelers (up from 79 percent in 2007 and 75 percent in 2008) agree that someone needs to set standards that define green, but there is still widespread disagreement over who that someone should be.

"That requires a convoluted response as government is unable, while others in the past have proved to be biased in one way or another," said one remodeler. And another: "No one has the expertise without being biased by their own ax to grind."

Since we first asked the question, the opinions have shifted from favoring the government to third-party organizations. •

Difficult green

We asked remodelers to identify the biggest challenges or difficulties in green remodeling projects. Here's some of what you had to say:

- "Convincing customers that it is for the best and will give them a better living environment"
- "Not enough knowledge of products and availability of products"
- "Low consumer demand, not willing to pay extra"
- "Green washing" from manufacturers; a lot of people blowing a lot of smoke with no substance"
- "Everyone wants green until they see the cost. Finding the balance between green and budget is difficult on some projects."
- "Going green is so overused no one knows what it means anymore."
- "Finding truly knowledgeable people to instruct us as to green methods"
- "Most clients are not tolerant of the methods required to address green remodeling processes. They don't understand the additional cost or time that may be involved."
- "This is an artificial industry. Manufacturers, politicians and industry leaders are the ones driving it, not end users."
- "Government rebates are very difficult to sell/explain to the client."
- "Many clients are not interested in 'green' products or systems, unless the savings far outweigh the initial costs. Some clients even look at the term green as a gimmick to try to force them to needlessly pay higher costs for construction."
- "High cost with no local availability and lack of ease of installation"
- "All clients want it until they discover the cost is higher for better materials, energy-efficient bulbs and a better-sealed installation of components."
- "Consumer ignorance and quite frankly, a lack of knowledge on my part"
- "We are quoting green ... we just aren't closing green due to the additional cost."
- "Actually defining green"
- "In our area, most of the customers think as we do: that the green craze is a fraud."
- "The overuse of the word 'green' from people who truly do not understand it"
- "Lack of education on the part of local officials"
- "Customers are simply not impressed by the phrase 'green'. It simply has no value for them in their minds."

The 'Great Game' of the remodeling business

Top business coach Bill Fotsch shares his insights on making the economics of remodeling come alive to your employees

By Pat Curry, Contributing Editor



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GREAT GAME OF BUSINESS INC.

In the early 1980s, International Harvester prepared to shut down a nearly bankrupt division in Springfield, Mo. In a desperate attempt to save their jobs, Jack Stack and 12 other managers pooled their money — \$100,000 — and bought out International Harvester. The chance of success was so small that the bank fired the loan officer who approved their \$8.9 million loan. The managers laid out the situation to the staff and opened the books to them so they could clearly see the impact of every employee's efforts, the potential if they succeeded — and the stakes if they failed. They called the process they developed The Great Game of Business.

Since then, SRC Holdings has outperformed its competition and grown into a healthy, profitable company. In 1994, Bill Fotsch started The Great Game of Business Inc. as a consulting firm to share SRC's strategies with other companies. As its head coach, Fotsch has worked with more than 100 corporations, including Southwest Airlines, Harley-Davidson, British Petroleum — and several home remodeling firms. He talked to *Professional Remodeler* about how engaging employees in addressing the economics of the business can impact its profitability.

Since founding The Great Game of Business Inc., Bill Fotsch has consulted with more than 100 leading corporations.

BEAUTIFULLY DESIGNED. IMPECCABLY CRAFTED.
AND PERHAPS MOST SURPRISINGLY, THE **BEST TOTAL VALUE.**



When your customers choose a Marvin patio door, they're buying a perfectly proportioned and flawlessly crafted product. Thoughtful design features like our optional exclusive low profile sill create a streamlined look and smooth transition to the outdoors. Unrivaled performance and effortless operation combined with design flexibility and easy installation make Marvin Patio Doors the best total value for you and your clients.

Get a closer look at the Ultimate Sliding French Door when you visit our new **3D Product Viewer** and register for the opportunity to design your own Marvin window or door. Marvin.com/3D

MARVIN 
Windows and Doors
Built around you.®

©2010 Marvin Windows and Doors. All rights reserved. ®Registered trademark of Marvin Windows and Doors. 1-800-241-9450

For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-18

The Great Game of the Remodeling Business

Q: Some of our readers probably aren't familiar with the principles of the Great Game of Business. Can you give us an overview?

A: In a way, it's incredibly simple. It's making the economics of a business come alive in a way that helps the business generate more profits by tapping the hearts and minds of its employees, engaging them in driving the business, such that both the business and the lives of the employees improve.

Most employees in the remodeling world have not had much of a window into the economics of the business they participate in — really understanding the economics of the business — because, quite frankly, many of the folks in management aren't really attuned to the economics that drive it.

Q: How does it help employees to understand the economics of the business? Don't they have enough to do keeping up with the particulars of their particular job?

A: If you go up to an employee in a typical company and ask them if the company is winning or losing, what are the measurements? If they don't know, what's the likelihood they're helping as much as they can?

The thing that launched The Great Game of Business was all of these former International Harvester employees who were about to be unemployed. ... The probability of success would go up if everybody knew what the enemy was. They had to make the bank payment. That simple objective became the galvanizing force around what everybody did.

Q: Do you get a lot of resistance to that from small business owners?

A: I kid with folks all the time and ask them, "Why aren't you doing this?" Most of the time, there isn't a particularly rational answer to that. The concerns people have are things like, If my employees knew how much money I made, I'd be in trouble. I have a standing bet — I advise people not to bet with me because it's a sucker bet. If your employees have no visibility of the financials of the company, I'll bet my \$100 to your \$50 if we ask them how much money the owner made last year, their estimate will be twice as much as reality.

Q: So, are you saying that owners should just pass out the company's financial statement to all the employees?

A: If you just handed them income statements and balance sheets, you'd scare the hell out of them. You want to engage them around the economics of the business first. Chances

are, that's much easier to get your hands around. You may migrate to the point of going through income statements and balance sheets, but it's a lousy place to start.

Q: Let's make all of this specific to our industry. While accepting that every company's situation is unique, what are some general points that could apply to any remodeler?

A: If you were to ask most employees in remodeling what is their biggest concern right now, how high up the list do you think job security would be? In a remodeling business, what really drives job security? Referrals and backlog. If you have a backlog of work, you're probably in better shape than a lot of companies — and you've made that visible to everyone, right? In fact, it's not something they put a lot of visibility on.

Q: How does a remodeler get to the point of understanding the economics of the business?

A: Start by identifying what winning means in your business. We start with an anonymous employee survey to ask employees what they see as key issues. A next step, typically done in parallel, is to get input from the management team. The notion that management and employees see issues the same way is not what we've seen. Now you have a window on the company from the perspective of the employees and management. Pull together financials from the last five years, look at the debt, the backlog and so forth. Also, look at the competitive and customer data that you already have. If you get those perspectives, the likelihood that you'll have a decent view of the issues is pretty high.

That process gets folks thinking. We'll distill all that down. We want to make the whole process transparent. You've got this view of the issues; what would be an objective measure that would define winning based on those issues? Once you define that objective measure, that's what you build the scoreboard around. That's what you track and build incentive plans around.

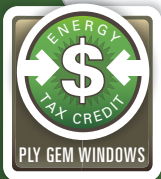
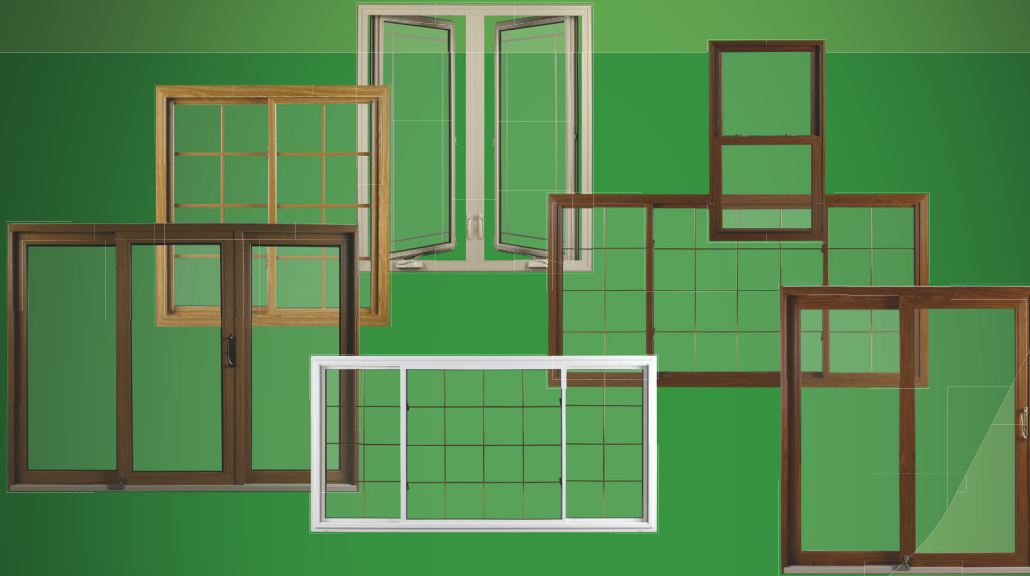
Q: Can you give us an example?

A: Let's say the number you identify as a key measurement is gross margin dollars. What are going to be the gross margin dollars we generate this month? We break it down into each job. Let's say they're currently working on six jobs. Let's estimate costs and invoicing and see how close they were at the end of the month. Keep the teams' critical numbers in focus for a year and you'll have folks who will get real smart about what drives those numbers. •



Our windows get a lot of credit.

\$1500* worth, to be exact.



At Ply Gem Windows, we realize customers want products that do more than just perform — they want products that save energy, lower maintenance, and beautify their homes. That's where we come in. We offer you the energy efficient products you need and the tools that help build your business. It's time to give your customers a little Credit. It's time for Ply Gem Windows.

Visit www.plygemwindows.com/energytax to learn more.



Windows Siding Stone Veneer Fence+Rail Designer Accents plygem.com



*Ply Gem Windows bears no responsibility in the validation of obtaining the tax credit. Please consult with your professional tax advisor.

Ply Gem, the Ply Gem logo, the "Building Products. Building Success." slogan, Ply Gem Windows and the Ply Gem Windows logo are trademarks of Ply Gem Industries, Inc. ©2010 Ply Gem Industries, Inc.

For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-19

Surviving in the Motor City

Father & Son Construction has adapted to the new reality in America's hardest-hit remodeling market

By Lisa Skolnik, Contributing Editor



JEFFREY SAUGER/GETTY IMAGES

Smart business decisions and a willingness to take smaller projects has allowed Mat Vivona's firm to succeed.

Every market has its challenges these days, but no area has been hit harder by the recession than Michigan.

With its reliance on the automakers and related industries, the Detroit area has been hit by crushing unemployment. Detroit Mayor Dave Bing placed that figure at "30 percent" at the White House Jobs Summit in December but estimated "it's probably close to 50 percent" when you account for part-timers who want full-time jobs or workers who have stopped looking altogether.

As one of the largest and most well-known remodeling companies in the area, Father & Son Construction in the Detroit suburb of Troy is feeling the impact of efforts to stay afloat. Out-of-work area residents not only don't have money for remodeling projects, they want to change professions to become remodelers and "think they can do what we do," says President Mat Vivona. "Everyone who was in the automotive business suddenly became a contractor, handyman, painter and landscaper last year."

Caveat emptor

Father & Son has been affected by these newly minted remodelers and the smaller independent contractors, but not just because of the job competition they pose.

"Everybody knows who we are, so everybody calls us for estimates," says Vivona, who credits their high name recogni-

market
LEADERS
Professional Remodeler

Smart Urban Living

In Byers Place homes, Arcadia chose to heat exclusively with Rinnai products, including Rinnai's Direct Vent Wall Furnace, Hydronic Air Handler and Intelligent Indoor Fireplace. With zone heating, homeowners are able to control the temperature in each area to match their individual lifestyle.

In a typical two-story Byers Place home, Arcadia specified:

- a Rinnai ES22 (RHFE556) Direct Vent Wall Furnace for the basement level;
- a Rinnai RHFE750 Fireplace and ES22 (RHFE556) Wall Furnace on the main level; and
- a Rinnai Hydronic Air Handler and R94LS Tankless Water Heater on the upper level.



Professional
Builder
SHOW PLACE 2010

“ We want residents to feel that a home here is an investment in their quality of living – one that not only enriches their lifestyles, but also meets their desire for sustainability.”

By incorporating Rinnai gas appliances in these single-family homes, Mark Bethel helped homeowners:

- reduce energy consumption;
- save money each month on their utility bills;
- do what's right for the environment, without ever sacrificing comfort or convenience;
- heat water only when needed, delivering a continuous stream of hot water to multiple demands simultaneously;
- minimize indoor heat loss with the use of a direct vent combustion system.

Learn more about the Rinnai green advantages for you and your customers.



Rinnai®



*Mark Bethel, Builder
Byers Place Homes
Arcadia Properties*

The remodeler's fight in Motor City

tion to a ubiquitous and catchy television commercial his father produced in the mid-1980s — Vivona modernized it with an animated iteration in 2005. The company also has stellar credentials and an A+ rating from the Better Business Bureau, which makes their free estimates a benchmark that others try to beat with lower bids.

"We're price-conscious, but now everybody's going for the cheapest bid — except that doesn't guarantee you get the best job," says Vivona. It also does not guarantee that the job gets completed. "I have never seen as many brand new leaky roofs or unfinished jobs in my life as I did in 2009," he points out. The plethora of shoddy work has led to an uptick in the number of requests Father & Son has received for detailed written estimates — but not necessarily so they could hire them to do the remediation.

"People need thorough written documentation for insurance work and lawsuits and aren't always honest about why they want the estimate. So now we charge \$250 for these types of estimates," he says.

At the same time that competition has increased, the nature of Vivona's business has changed drastically in several significant ways.

'Gotta versus wanna'

The first major change was clearly a consequence of the downhill economy: Big-ticket lifestyle jobs, which had been abundant and increasing until late 2008, became far-and-few-between, while pragmatic projects that were pre-emptive or remedial turned into the bulk of his business.

"We call it the, 'I-gotta-versus-I-wanna syndrome,'" explains Vivona. "People are doing the things they absolutely have to so their homes will stay structurally sound." Siding, roofing, electrical and plumbing projects are acceptable, but glitzy new kitchens, master bathrooms, room additions and porches are verboten.

Of course the latter are usually much larger, costlier and more lucrative than the former, and sales figures have dropped from a high of \$8 million in 2004 to \$4.6 million in 2008 and \$3 million in 2009. And at the same time, total jobs rose from 406 in 2008 to 488 in 2009, as projects got

smaller and more economical.

Unlike other remodelers of his stature, and true to the company motto immortalized by their TV commercial ("No job too big, no job too small, Father & Son, we do it all"), "we focused on the big and small. I had a lady who wanted a bathroom fan, and no one would do it for her except us," Vivona says. "Yet those small sales added up to be huge last year. And that's the work that is getting us through these trying times."

Executive Summary

President: Mat Vivona

Specialty: Full-service remodeler

2008 projects: 406

2008 volume: \$4.6 million

2009 projects: 488

2009 volume: \$3 million

Founded: 1979

Biggest challenges: Diversifying projects, increasing sales and implementing new regulatory guidelines.

Web site: www.father-son-const.com

Improving sales

But Vivona isn't waiting for a recovery to improve sales. Because small jobs have been a successful category for the company this year, he plans on capitalizing on this trend, as well as branching out into other arenas.

The former will require him to train his eight person sales staff to be more aggressive and creative. "Let's say a customer wants a new kitchen that will cost \$20,000, but they only have \$14,000. We have to be ready to show them what they can do for \$14,000. Or they need a room addition and can't afford it. We can offer them viable alternatives. Why not close off the garage, insulate it and do some dry wall work. Sometimes a customer thinks they know what they want, but they haven't really considered all

the options. So we have to educate them," he points out.

He is also a big believer in grass roots marketing. "We go to trade shows and always keep our name out there. We put out signs at our job sites. And if I'm driving down the street and see a problem — say a roof with curling shingles — I stop and leave them a note about it with my contact info," he says. In many ways, the Facebook page he just created to reach out to former customers and friends is a high-tech version of that tactic.

Another area Vivona hopes to crack is ongoing contract work. Real-estate firms often have arrangements with certain contractors who can do work on the properties they represent or manage, while Big Box stores and home centers need professional and experienced installation crews "who can bring it all to the table. When problems arise, they get lost in the bureaucracy. But we're experienced, licensed, insured and reputable and can sub-contract it right off their hands. And they know we'll be around tomorrow," points out Vivona. •



NOTHING SELLS A HOME FASTER than adding cost-effective, energy-efficient insulation and weatherization products. That's what you get when you add Dow Building Solutions to your team. Our broad portfolio of energy-efficient sheathing, housewraps, spray foam insulation and accessories is backed by 65+ years of building science experience and industry knowledge. It's building performance you can measure – in lower utility bills for homeowners, fewer call backs and increased referrals.

Find out how Dow Building Solutions can help you reach your goal for long-lasting energy efficiency at www.insulateyourhome.com or call 1-866-583-BLUE (2583).



www.insulateyourhome.com

www.dowsis.com

**THE HARDEST WORKING
TEAM IN THE BUILDING
INDUSTRY**

®™ Trademark of The Dow Chemical Company ("Dow") or an affiliated company of Dow

For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-21



HousingZone.com eNewsletters

From industry news updates, case studies, innovations and key topic reports to the education and product information you need to ensure success during these economic times. Only **HousingZone.com** provides the information you need, when you need it.

Subscribe to the eNewsletters that fit your individual residential construction information needs and have these delivered in the frequency you want.

- ⊙ *Professional Builder Weekly*
- ⊙ *Housing Giants eAlert*
- ⊙ *Custom Builder Weekly*
- ⊙ *Professional Builder Issue announcement*
- ⊙ *Custom Builder Issue Announcement*
- ⊙ *Professional Remodeler Weekly*
- ⊙ *Professional Remodeler Issue Announcement*
- ⊙ **HZ Product Solutions**
- ⊙ **HZ Product TV**
- ⊙ **HZ Hot Topic Reports**



Subscribe today.

Visit HousingZone.com
and register to receive any or all of our newsletter offerings.

**Professional
Builder**

Professional Remodeler

Custom Builder

**housing
giants**

**login
and learn.com**

VisibleCity

Stat Sheet

The latest products to hit the remodeling market

By Nick Bajzek,
Products Editor



Rheem

Prestige Series 27 to 31 EER Geo-thermal Heat Pump with Comfort Control System

Models: 2-, 3-, 4-, 5- and 6-ton capacities; split systems are available in 2-, 3-, 4- and 5-ton capacities

Features: Pumps feature durable two-stage compressors

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 259

www.rheem.com



USG

Next-Generation Durock Cement board

Features: New formula reduces the board's weight by up to 25 percent
Green: Recycled content increased by 40 percent

Attributes: Easier to cut; generates less mess and waste

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 260

www.usg.com



Milwaukee

M12 Cordless Power Port

Applications: Capable of charging up to five small electronic devices (two at a time) on a single battery pack

Other: Power compatible with most small electronics such as cell phones and MP3 players

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 261

www.milwaukeeool.com



Tate

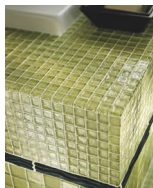
VOC-Free Engineered Hardwood Tiles

Features: 3 mm natural wood laminate bonded to an 11 mm Versacore wood veneer backer

Patterns: Four standard patterns: the new laminate can be made from a variety of species of hardwoods in optional strip sizes

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 262

www.tateaccessfloors.com



Crossville

Echo Recycled Glass

Shown: EG020 "For Keeps" 1" by 1" Clear and 2" by 2" Clear and Frosted EG110 Onyx Surf Istello tiles

Colors: 15

Green: Recycled content up to 100 percent

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 263

www.crossville.com



Gerber

Riverdale Line

Applications: Low-flow line

Features: Lead-free waterways, reliable ceramic disc cartridges

Green: EPA's WaterSense

Finishes: Chrome and brushed nickel

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 264

www.gerberonline.com



Delta

Proximity Line

Applications: Hands-free model

Features: Optic- and infrared-free; 4-inch field around body of the faucet detects hands

Models: Grail Faucet shown; 1.5 gal./min.

Green: LEED points

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 265

www.deltafaucet.com



Green Choice Flooring

Burlwood/StrandWoven line

Applications: Light commercial/residential

Features: Boards have a braided pattern with random knot-like twists in the grain

Other: Suitable for installation directly over a concrete sub-floor

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 266

www.greenchoiceflooring.com



American Standard

Yorkville

Model: 1.1 gal./flush two-piece toilet

Features: Pressure-assisted siphon jet flush action; fully glazed 2 1/8" trapway

Other: Can remove as much as 1 kilogram bulk waste per flush

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 267

www.americanstandard-us.com



Bosch

18V and 14V Mid-Range Lithion Impactors

Power: Operates at 2,800 RPM

Applications: Metal fastening, lag bolt and serial screw driving

Features: 18V Lithion Impactor Driver model is capable of driving a 3" all-purpose screw into a pressure treated 4 by 4 in about 1 second

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 268

www.boschtools.com



Bulbrite

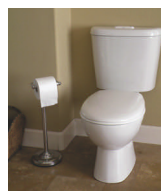
Nostalgic Edison styled bulbs

Features: Each bulb features a meticulous re-creation of light bulbs of the past

Models: Decorative flame tip features the candelabra, candle tip style; Victorian is a traditional, round styled Edison bulb

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 269

www.bulbrite.com



Caroma

Sydney Smart

Features: Dual flush, using 1.28/0.8 gallons (4.8/3 liters) per full/half flush (averaging under 0.9 gpf/3.4 lpf)

Other features: Large trapway, virtually eliminating blockages; tested at 900 grams

Green: WaterSense labeled

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 270

www.caromausa.com



Cikel

Cabo Collection

Type: 1/2" sawn wear layer; 7-plywood core body and eight layers of aluminum oxide protection

Species: cherry/Jatoba, Ipe, Tigerwood, eucalyptus (gunstock), and Amendola (cappuccino light and natural)

Green: FSC Chain of Custody

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 271

www.cikel.com

IBS Stat Sheet

Highlights from the International Builders' Show

By **Nick Bajzek**,
Products Editor



Cooper Lighting

Halo LED 600, H7 Collection

Size: 6" LED in 2700K, 3000K, 3500K and 4000K

Power: Consumes 14W, delivers 41-793 lumens

Installation: Edison screw base adapter (included with the module)

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 272

www.cooperlighting.com



On-Q

Unity Home System (Home Systems Division) Studio Collection

Applications: Combines multi-room audio, intercom and camera

Features: Two key pieces: the Integration Module and an LCD Console

Other features: Easy-to-use graphic user interface

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 273

www.onqlegrand.com/unity



Lutron

Meadowlark Eco-Minder

Features: LED light changes from red to green when the user is saving at least 15 percent energy

Operation: Slide dimmer with designer-style opening

MSRP: \$24.80

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 274

www.lutron.com



Roxul

Safe N' Sound

Applications: Soundproofing insulation

Installations: Interior walls, ceilings and floors.

Features: High density and non-directional fiber makeup deadens sound

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 275

www.roxul.com



Ply Gem

Mira Premium Series

Installations: Coastal regions where storms and hurricanes are common

Features: Impact glass prevents windblown debris

Rating: DP60 structural rating

Colors/Options: Eight exterior color options and a variety of other styles

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 276

www.plygemwindows.com



Ridgid

JobMax Kit (R82234)

Tool: 12V Base Unit with 3 interchangeable heads

Drilling: 3/8" Right-angle drill chuck: 550 RPM/120" pounds

Driving: Right angle impact head: 650" pounds

Fastening: Ratchet head: 300" pounds

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 277

www.ridgid.com



Propex

Opus Roof Blanket

Applications: Non-slip roof underlayment

Features: Lightweight, tan-colored for cooler roofs; easy to snap a chalk line and write on

Safety: Third-party rated best for slip resistance

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 278

www.propexinc.com



Delta

Linden Pull-Out kitchen faucet with Multi-Flow

Flow rate: 1.5-gal./min. standard

Function: Push button on the underside of the wand

Installation: Uses integrated, one-piece InnoFlex PEX supply lines and DiamondValve with no dynamic seals

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 279

www.deltafaucet.com/kitchen/collection/linden.html



Clopay

Canyon Ridge Collection

Door: Faux wood cladding with high definition grain

Features: 1/2" thick material is attached to an insulated three-layer steel base door

R-values: Ranging from 8.5 to 19.2

Other: UV-resistant and impervious to moisture

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 280

www.clopay.com



Behr

Premium Select High Build Primer & Sealer (K030)

Applications: Applied to drywall/plasterboard to hide imperfections

Formula: High viscosity, smooth and consistent sheen

Available: By special order only

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 281

www.behr.com



Generac

CorePower System

Applications: Residential backup power

Features: Easy roof removal; three of the four sides slide off completely for full serviceability access; no tools needed

Operation: Digital controller with LED light status and fault indicators

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 282

www.generac.com



Paslode

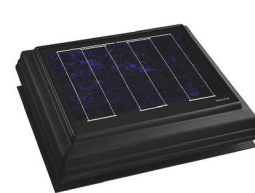
CF325 Fuel Powered Cordless Framing Nailer System

Applications: Structural, framing

Features: PowerBoost Black Tip Coating on its 3" and 3-1/4" drive the nail flush into engineered lumber such as LVL and other materials

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 283

www.paslode.com



Broan

Solar-Powered Attic Ventilator

Output: 20 KW DC Motor

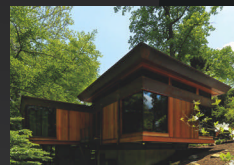
Panels: Made of highly impact-resistant tempered glass; highly-sensitive solar panels are able to power the ventilator even in times of low light.

Installation: Can lie flat on roof

For more info, go to
HousingZone.com/PRinfo and
enter # 284

www.broan.com

CALL FOR ENTRIES



Calling all Professional Remodeling Contractors, Architects and Designers

Gain national acclaim for your work done between Jan 1, 2009 - May 1, 2010

The Professional Remodeler Best of the Best Design Awards recognize the nation's best remodeling projects in 20 categories. A panel of expert remodelers and designers from throughout the country judges projects, evaluating them on construction quality, creativity, design and problem solving to pick the very best the industry has to offer. Projects are eligible for Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze awards in each category, as well as a Project of the Year.

Winners will be featured in the October issue of Professional Remodeler and in an expanded slideshow at HousingZone.com. We'll also help you promote your company's excellence with a promotional package, including logos, press releases and a link to our online slideshow!



Enter today at: **HousingZone.com/designawards**

Entry forms and fees are due June 15, 2010. You will receive an official project notebook for each project you enter. Official project notebooks must be submitted no later than July 15, 2010. (Note: CotY Award binders will be accepted, as long as Best of the Best Design Award cover sheets, entry forms and project information sheets are inserted)

Kitchen & Bath

Experts, contractors expect traditional styles and novel appliances will dominate the market in 2010

Contractors talk K&B trends

By **Nick Bajzek**
Products Editor



KOCH CABINETRY

Smaller budgets, green products and traditional styles will dominate 2010

The National Kitchen and Bath Association predicts 2010 won't see any dramatic or sweeping changes in terms of consumer tastes; traditional styles, dark colors and flexible faucets round out the top picks for remodeling projects. Remodelers can expect homeowners to be prudent, experts say.

"My sense of trends is that people are looking to do more with less money," says Ilyce R. Glink, home improvement author, blogger and talk radio host. "They're thinking about inlaying different tiles in order to maximize their bang for the buck rather than going with inlaid marbles. People are building smaller, cheaper, greener and more thoughtfully." People are looking to express themselves more through their choices than by subscribing to any fad, she adds — so no avocado-colored appliances or shag carpeting this year.

JOB SIZES, TYPES

"The only trend I see is more requests for bath projects than ever. I think it is because people have less to spend or are only willing to spend so much and they think a bath project will be cheap," says Darius Baker, CEO of D&J Kitchens & Baths. "People think you can get an entire gut and replace everything

5 by 9 bath done for \$10,000 or less." Baker says homeowners think that because the space in a typical bathroom is so much smaller than a kitchen it should be proportionately less costly. According to the company's latest figures, a 5- by 9-foot bathroom with mid-range priced products, tile surrounds and tile flooring will land in the low to mid-\$20,000s.

COUNTERTOPS

According to the Freedonia Group's "World Residential Countertops" study, laminate options will lead demand, but solid surface and natural stone countertops will each account for one-fifth of global demand. Nearly 70 percent of solid surface countertops were sold in the Asia/Pacific region, where they are an especially low-cost option, because of limited color offerings and a competitive local production base. Engineered stone, which is primarily used in the more developed countries such as the U.S. due to its high cost, is expected to achieve the most rapid gains through 2013.

"Clients are leaning toward more renewable, recyclable resources for countertops, such as recycled paper, concrete and stainless steel, which are now

running neck in neck with marble and granite," says Steve Lazar of Lazar Homes. He says accenting any kitchen with an enormous "green" butcher block table is still desirable and a nice effective way to break up the kitchen with a different countertop.

GREEN MATERIALS FOR CABINETS

"Economical and sustainable kitchens are absolutely key to moving ahead in this world," says Corey Klassen, interior designer and kitchen and bathroom specialist. Klassen points to flat-panel doors in Bamboo, Kieri board or reclaimed lumber that are clear-coated in a semi-gloss low-VOC finish as products that have become popular. "Ply-woods and particle board frames are moving toward formaldehyde-free, and even soy and hemp boards are finding their way to the marketplace. People are asking for them, and the industry is responding," he says.

FLOORING

Christine Jurs, vice president and senior designer of advance design studio, says natural and distressed elements will be a big trend for 2010. "From distressed cabinetry to dark hardwood floors or stone flooring replacing carpet, imperfections are

another way to add character to design elements in the home," she says.

Wood floors in kitchens are very popular with Lazar's clients. "As an example, I selected a more rustic distressed floor with an antique patina for our latest residence in Hermosa Beach, which will only look better over time," says Lazar. The company chose wide-planked Eastern White Pine floors for another residence, and the look is simultaneously warm, and at the same time, artfully distressed.

BATHROOM

In the bathroom, Jurs says the comfort of the classic farmhouse is being incorporated into the bathroom with dynamic retro elements such as freestanding clawfoot bathtubs; furniture-style, distressed cabinetry; and vanity pieces.

Klassen sees more technology and eco-friendly options in the bathroom, such as low-flow faucets, dual-flush toilets and integrated bathroom tech.

"Small LCD televisions and vanity spaces that are simple and clean will be built in," he says. More to come: "Color pallets will mirror kitchens with white, turquoise and grays being predominantly mixed with bamboo and low-impact woods."●

Continuing education offered in:
**eLEARNING W/ASSOCIATED LEARNING
UNITS, WEBCASTS, WHITE PAPERS,
PRODUCT DEMONSTRATIONS, VIDEOS
AND PODCASTS**

▶ ▶ ▶ AVAILABLE WHEN YOU NEED IT.

CAMPUSES INCLUDE:

ASHRAE HVAC&R
Moisture Management Solutions
Building Design + Construction
NARI's Learning Center
Brick/Masonry
Energy Efficiency
Roofing
Steel Joist/Deck
Sustainability
Technology
Windows & Doors



Register for **LogInAndLearn.com** today!

AFCIs

Though arc-fault circuit interrupters have been adopted in 34 states, some pricing and installation misconceptions nag the industry

AFCI adoption spreads, misconceptions linger

By **Nick Bajzek**
Products Editor

The 2008 National Electrical Code adoption for arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) has generally been going well. The 2008 NEC has been adopted without any amendment to arc faults in 34 states. Last September, the North Carolina Building Code Council voted to continue requiring special circuit-breakers in new homes.

However, despite the widespread adoption, misconceptions still plague the product category. Compatibility issues are first and foremost, says Lanson Relyea, product manager for AFCI manufacturer Eaton. "There's a misconception that there's incompatibility either with appliances in the kitchen or they're not compatible with ground fault receptacles," he

says. "That is totally not true. There are no compatibility issues. In my house I have them on every possible circuit."

Another problem nagging manufacturers and contractors alike is so-called "nuisance tripping," where the AFCI will shut down a circuit.

"The most frustrating thing we get back are breakers that come back but they're still good," Re-

lyea says. "We can read the trip code and identify the breaker tripped in that particular situation." Overwhelmingly, he says, the case is a faulty installation.

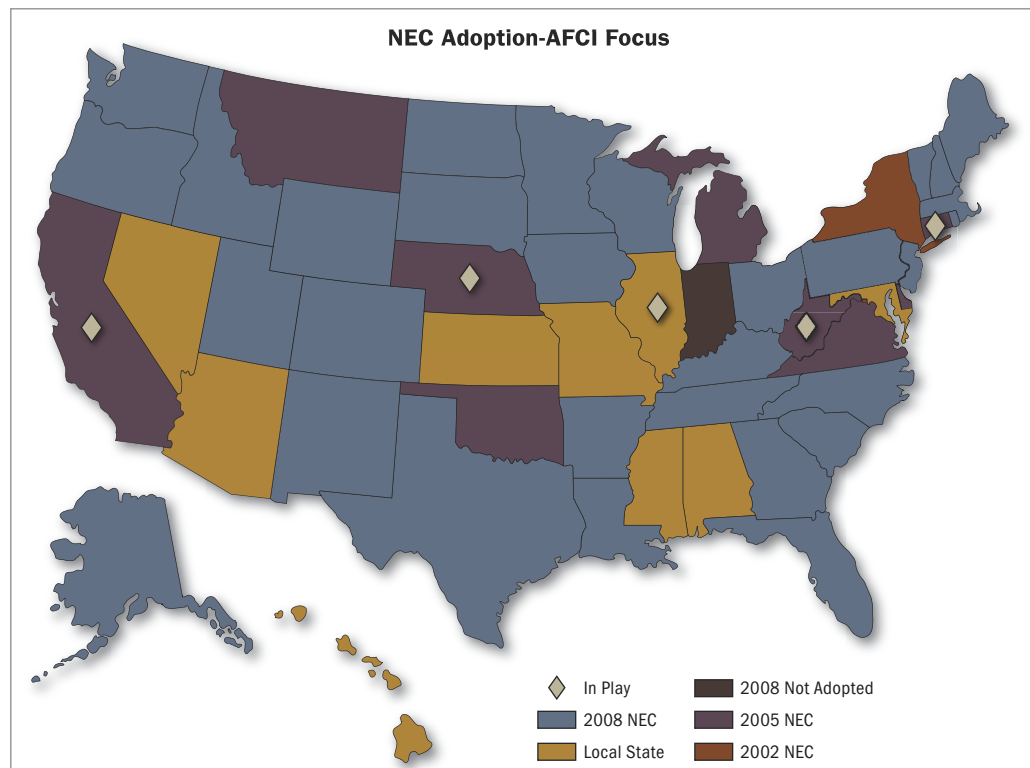
The majority of breakers sent back for testing, says Relyea, show that the products haven't been failing.

"We want to get electricians out of the mindset of replacing it outright and walking away. That can be particularly important in renovations. You can run into all kinds of wiring installations so you never know what you're going to find behind the wall." •



Older homes with ordinary circuit breakers particularly may benefit from the added protection against the arcing faults that can occur in aging wiring systems.

NATIONAL ELECTRICAL MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION



AFCIs have already been adopted in 34 states.

AFCI progress

According to authors Bill Unseld and Alan Manche in their article, "Understanding the Combination AFCI Expansion in NEC-2008," AFCIs are now better programmed to discern a dangerous arc from normal operation. Although combination AFCIs have been on the market for about the past year or so, Unseld and Manche say the technology in these devices have been extensively field tested by facing day-to-day usage conditions in numerous homes.

PRODUCT TRENDS



Pella Helps Customers Save Energy.

Pella offers numerous energy-efficient glass options — including SunDefense™ Low-E insulating glass, made from three layers of thermal protection that offer year-round comfort and energy savings.

www.pella.com

Pella Corporation

See our ad on page 11



Strength meets versatility - LiteSteel™

beam is here! LSB® is on average 40% lighter than hot-rolled steel beams and LVLs. There are no special tool requirements and you can place LSB by hand. Visit www.LiteSteelbeam.com now.

www.LiteSteelbeam.com

LiteSteel beam

See our ad on page 14



No Paint, No Stain, No Hassles.

Mastic Home Exteriors™ by Ply Gem Cedar Discovery® has an expanded color offering for 2009. The selection includes over 700 unique colors and custom matching capability. The siding features the rugged look of real cedar shakes and shingles in four styles, all with realistic textures.

www.plygem.com

Mastic Home Exteriors by Ply Gem

See our ad on page 25



Andersen makes easy.

With our unique combination of SmartSun™ glass and Perma-Shield® cladding, almost every window and patio door in our 400 Series product line meets or exceeds the stringent new energy tax credit qualifications—without the expense of triple-pane glass. That gives you thousands of styles, shapes and sizes. For details and a complete list qualifying Andersen windows and patio doors, just visit our website.

andersenwindows.com

Andersen Windows

See our ad on Back Cover



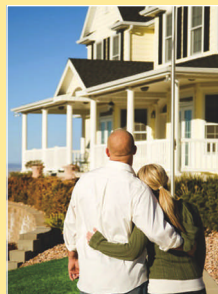
Meet the Ultimate Casement Collection.

Inspired by your suggestions, this revolutionary new line of windows combines the craftsmanship and innovation you've come to expect from Marvin. Larger sizes, increased durability, easy wash mode and energy efficiency make it a win-win for you and your customers.

www.marvin.com

Marvin Windows and Doors

See our ad on page 49



Sunshield, a Deceuninck® Technology.

More than 50 million windows, railings, decks and fences featuring SunShield® are installed in homes and offices across North America... for good reasons. SunShield, a Deceuninck® technology, is formulated to withstand the harsh effects of any climate, offering industry-leading color retention while providing low maintenance that busy lifestyles require.

www.deceuninck-americas.com

Deceuninck North America

See our ad on page 36



Unmatched performance. Unrivalled beauty. Unmistakably Genuine Trex®.

Our greatest asset is the same as yours: reputation. To prove this point, we have invested \$24 million to refine our manufacturing process and are introducing trexpartners.com, featuring side-by-side product comparisons and other educational resources. Learn how our continuous innovation is what sets the standard that helps set you apart.

Trexpartners.com

Trex®



Energy-Efficient Ply Gem Replacement Windows.

Ply Gem® offers a complete family of replacement windows designed to meet the specific needs of the replacement and remodeling market. With three series – Premium, Pro, and Contractor – there's a Ply Gem window for every project. Ply Gem windows are ideal for energy efficiency upgrades with U factors as low as .19.

www.plygem.com

Ply Gem

See our ad on page 51



Custom Carved Interior Doors.

With more than 100 designs, several panel choices and raised molding options, JELD-WEN® Custom Carved interior doors provide endless combinations to complement your décor. Made from medium density fiberboard (MDF), these reliable doors are developed with a solid core that provides up to 50 percent more sound inhibiting peace and quiet when compared to a standard hollow core door. For more information visit: www.jeld-wen.com/interiordoor/customcarved

JELD-WEN®



Milgard. The first window manufacturer recognized by the Arthritis Foundation.

Standard on all Tuscany™ premium vinyl windows, Milgard's award winning SmartTouch lock™ provides simple, one-touch operation to open and close the window. As the first window company to receive the Arthritis Foundation's Ease-of-Use Commendation our windows have undergone extensive independent testing. To find out more visit arthritis.org

pro.milgard.com

Milgard Windows & Doors

PRODUCT SOLUTIONS



Building Information Modeling Software for Remodelers

- 3D Sales Presentations
- Construction documents
- Detailed material takeoff
- Kitchen and bath design
- Decks and landscaping
- Manufacturers' catalogs



Now integrated with 20-20 Design®

30 Day Free Trial at www.cadsoft.com

sales@cadsoft.com

1 888-223-7638

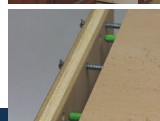
For FREE info go to <http://pr.hotims.com/29404-125>

RESIDENTIAL COMMERCIAL INSTITUTIONAL



CABINET BOXES,
DRAWER BOXES,
Contemporary FRONTS,
CLOSET SYSTEMS
and more...

Modular or Custom Configured
Flat Packed, Ready for
Easy Assembly
Thermofused Melamines
Wood Veneers on MDF
.5 to 3mm Thick Edgebands
Functional Hardware



CabParts, Inc.®

970.241.7682

To learn more or to download a free catalog
www.cabparts.com


HIGH QUALITY COMPONENT MANUFACTURING


For FREE info go to <http://pr.hotims.com/29404-126>




Since 1964, Finlandia Sauna has been nationally recognized as a manufacturer of saunas without equal. We design and build custom, pre-cut, and prefabricated rooms of any size and shape and use the highest quality materials. Call for a free brochure at 800-354-3342 or browse our website at www.finlandiasauna.com.
Finlandia Sauna

For FREE info go to <http://pr.hotims.com/29404-127>

**TWO BLADES
IN ONE!** 

M-42 Bi-Metal—BOTH Edges 

TPI Configurations:
7x7 • 7x10 • 10x14
All Configurations in All Sizes:
6" 8" 10"

(800) 523-3437
www.boarblade.com 

For FREE info go to <http://pr.hotims.com/29404-128>

ZipWall™ ZIPPER SYSTEMS

- Easy access in and out of job-site enclosures.
- Available in Standard and Heavy Duty.



ORDER DIRECT TODAY AND SAVE. CALL 24 HOURS.

1.800.789.6633

or go to www.protectiveproducts.com

For FREE info go to <http://pr.hotims.com/29404-129>

Quick Low Cost



**FALL
PROTECTION**



throughout construction
including drywall

Build a freestanding OSHA compliant guardrail in minutes using construction grade 2X4s and Safety Boots.



1-800-804-4741 • www.safetyboot.com

Independently certified to exceed OSHA temporary guardrail regulations, Safety Boots anchor to most surfaces including concrete and are fully reusable.

Freestanding design allows guardrails to remain in place throughout construction, including drywall installation.

For FREE info go to <http://pr.hotims.com/29404-130>

PRODUCT SOLUTIONS

Create a Watertight Shower *in Less Time*

NobleSeal® TS
Waterproofing Membrane



Chloraloy®
Waterproofing Membrane



PRO-SLOPE™
Code Required Preslope



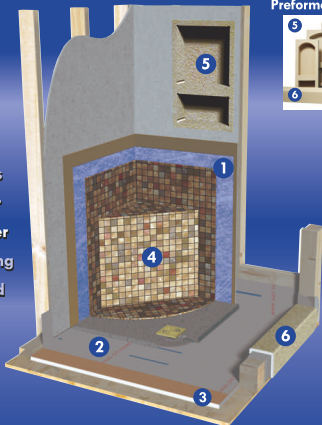
Noble Benches
Shower Benches



Noble Niches & Curbs
Preformed Niches & Curbs



Noble Company produces products that make shower installations easier and faster – saving installers time and money.



800.878.5788 www.noblecompany.com



For FREE info go to <http://pr.hotims.com/29404-131>

BUILD IT TOUGH.



High strength with a shorter clamp time along with no dyes for a natural finish makes Gorilla Wood Glue ideal for your woodworking and building projects.

FOR THE TOUGHEST JOBS ON PLANET EARTH®

GORILLATOUGH.COM

1-800-966-3458 Made in U.S.A. © 2009 Gorilla Glue Company

For FREE info go to <http://pr.hotims.com/29404-132>

CHECK OUT



VISIT
Housingzone.com



OR
LogInAndLearn.com



HAVE YOU CHECKED OUT
VisibleCity.com

Professional Remodeler

HousingZone.com

LogIn
and Learn.com

VisibleCity

Professional Remodeler

CONSTRUCTION MEDIA

General Manager, Construction Media

Dean Horowitz, 630/288-8180
dhorowitz@reedbusiness.com

Group Director - Sales & Business Development

Tony Mancini, 610/688-5553
armancini@reedbusiness.com

Director - E-media Solutions

Shannon Wasiolek, 630/288-7963
shannon.wasiolek@reedbusiness.com

WESTERN REGION

Director - Residential Titles

Director - Western Region

Jeff Elliott, 616/846-4633
jelliott@reedbusiness.com

Key Accounts - Integrated Sales

Brian Grohe, 630/288-8159
brian.grohe@reedbusiness.com
States: AZ, CO, ID, MT, NM, NV, TX, UT, WY

Jeff Elliott, 616/846-4633

jelliott@reedbusiness.com
States: AK, CA, HI, OR, WA, Western Canada

Product Specialists - Integrated Sales

Brian Grohe, 630/288-8159
brian.grohe@reedbusiness.com

EASTERN REGION

Director - Eastern Region

Tony Mancini, 610/688-5553
armancini@reedbusiness.com

Key Accounts - Integrated Sales

Adam Grubb, 317/913-1608
adam.grubb@reedbusiness.com
States: CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, Eastern Canada

John Huff, 630/288-8189

john.huff@reedbusiness.com

States: AL, DC, DE, FL, GA, MD, MS, NC, SC, VA

Product Specialists - Integrated Sales

Jan Varnes, 630/288-8143
jan.varnes@reedbusiness.com

MIDWEST REGION

Director - Midwest Region

Rick Blesi, 630/288-8140
rblesi@reedbusiness.com

Key Accounts - Integrated Sales

Mary Adee, 630/288-8134
madee@reedbusiness.com
States: AR, IA, IN, KS, LA, MO, ND, NE, OK, SD, WI

Tim Gillerlain, 630/288-8168

tim.gillerlain@reedbusiness.com

States: IL, KY, MN, OH, TN, WV

Product Specialists - Integrated Sales

Rob Bertrand, 630/288-8615
rob.bertrand@reedbusiness.com

Director of E-Media

Mary Nasiri, 630/288-8576
mnasiri@reedbusiness.com

Custom Project Manager

Emily Yarina, 630/288-8109
emily.yarina@reedbusiness.com

Director of Events

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

Marketing & Client Services Coordinator

Dawn Batchelder, 630/288-8141
dawn.batchelder@reedbusiness.com

Custom Reprints and Electronic Usage

The YGS Group: Rosie Hassell,
800/290-5460, x136
professionalremodeler@theygsgroup.com

Advertising Production Manager

Mike Rotz, 630/288-8427
michael.rotz@reedbusiness.com

Advertising Contracts

Melinda Werner, 630/288-8065
melinda.werner@reedbusiness.com

Graphic Production Manager

Shirley Surles, 630/288-8442
ssurles@reedbusiness.com

Main Office

Professional Remodeler
2000 Clearwater Drive, Oak Brook, IL 60523
Phone: 630/288-8141, Fax: 630/288-8145

For subscription inquiries and change of address:

Customer Service,
Reed Business Information,
8878 S. Barrons Blvd., Highlands Ranch, CO 80126-2345
phone: 800/446-6551;
fax: 303/470-4280;
e-mail: subsmail@reedbusiness.com

For **FREE information** on any advertiser, go to **www.HousingZone.com/PR** and enter the reader service #.

ADVERTISER INDEX

Advertiser	Page No.	Reader Service No.
*Andersen Windows	Back Cover	24, 25
Behr Process Corporation	6	2
Deceuninck	36	12
Deckorators Inc.	32	11
Dow Chemical Company	55	21
Duradek US Inc.	37	13
Ford Motor Company	2, 3	1
James Hardie Building Products Inc.	43	16
LifeTime Lumber	8	3
Litesteel Technologies America, LLC	14	6
Marvin Windows & Doors	49	18
NARI	20	8
Pella Corp.	10, 11	4, 5
Pine Hall Brick, Inc.	38	14
Mastic Home Exteriors by Ply Gem	44	17
Mastic Home Exteriors by Ply Gem	25	9
Ply Gem Windows	51	19
Rheem Manufacturing Co.	67	23
Rinnai America Corp.	53	20
Sterling Plumbing	17	7
The Tapco Group	39	15
*US Cellular	56	22
Viance LLC	30	10

+ REGIONAL

Professional Remodeler (ISSN 1521-9135) (GST #123397457) Vol. 14, No. 3 is published monthly by Reed Business Information, 8878 S. Barrons Blvd., Highlands Ranch, CO 80129-2345. Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier, is located at 360 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010. Tad Smith, CEO; John Poulin, Chief Financial Officer. Circulation records are maintained at Reed Business Information, 8878 S. Barrons Blvd., Highlands Ranch, CO 80129-2345. Phone 303/470-4445. Periodicals Postage Paid at Littleton, CO 80126 and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **Professional Remodeler**, P.O. Box 7500, Highlands Ranch, CO 80163-7500. Rates for nonqualified subscriptions: U.S.A., \$89.99 1-year; Canada, \$109.99 1-year; Mexico, \$109.99 1-year; all other countries, \$149.99 1-year. Single copies are available for \$10 US and \$15 foreign. Please address all subscription mail to Professional Remodeler, 8778 S. Barrons Blvd., Highlands Ranch, CO 80129-2345. Professional Remodeler is a registered trademark of Reed Elsevier Properties Inc., used under license. Printed in U.S.A. Reed Business Information does not assume and hereby disclaims any liability to any person for any loss or damage caused by errors or omissions in the material contained herein, regardless of whether such errors result from negligence, accident or any other cause whatsoever. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: RCS International, Box 697 STN A, Windsor Ontario N9A 6N4

NATIONAL HOUSING QUALITY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

William Asdal, Asdal Builders
David Caligaris, The Green Company
Bruce Case, Case Design/Remodeling
Stephen Crandall, Extended Home Living Services
Jim Deitch, Southern Crafted Homes
Michael Draper, Palm Harbor Homes
Kevin Estes, Estes Builders
Peter Feinmann, Feinmann Inc.
Julian Francis, Market Set
Dan Gorski, Veridian Homes
Dan Green, The Green Company
Jeff Hunt, Brothers Strong Residential Design Build
Allison Iantosca, F.H. Perry Builder
David Johnston, What's Working

Denis Leonard, Business Excellence Consulting
Michael Luzier, NAHB Research Center
Stephen Moore, BSB Design
Serge Ogranovitch, The Potomack Group
Erik Pekarski, New Home Star
Chip Pennington, Shea Homes
Dean Potter, K. Hovnanian Companies
Duncan Prael, IBACOS
Keith Robinson, Extraordinary Talent Consulting
Bill Saint, Simonini Builders
Charlie Scott, Woodland, O'Brien & Scott
Scott Sedam, True North Development
Douglas Shipman, Developer's Financial Services
Glenn Singer, Builder Partnerships
Tom Stephani, Stephani Enterprises



RHEEM HEAT PUMP WATER HEATERS

Super efficient!

HP-50



Rheem HP-50

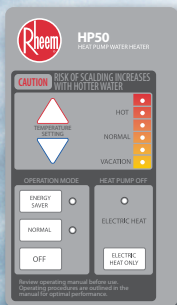
Our Most Advanced, Energy-Efficient Electric Water Heater

Rheem air-source heat pump extracts the heat from warm air, intensifies the heat with a compressor, delivers the heat to the water, and exhausts the cooler air. Because it uses warm ambient air to do most of the work, it is super efficient.

2.0 energy factor

Over TWICE the efficiency of standard electric water heaters

- Rheem heat pump technology for superb energy-efficiency
- LED touch pad controls three energy efficiency settings and water temperature
- Easy to install! Drop-in replacement in attics, garages, furnace rooms
- Standard 3/4-inch NPT water inlet/outlet and condensate drain connections
- 50 Gallon capacity
- Fast first hour recovery



Visit us today! www.rheemhpwh.com

email sales@rheemhpwh.com



See tax advisor for details.



Rheem Water Heating
101 Bell Road • Montgomery, AL 36117-4305
800-621-5622 • rheem.com • sales@rheem.com

relax
It's Rheem®

RH012610

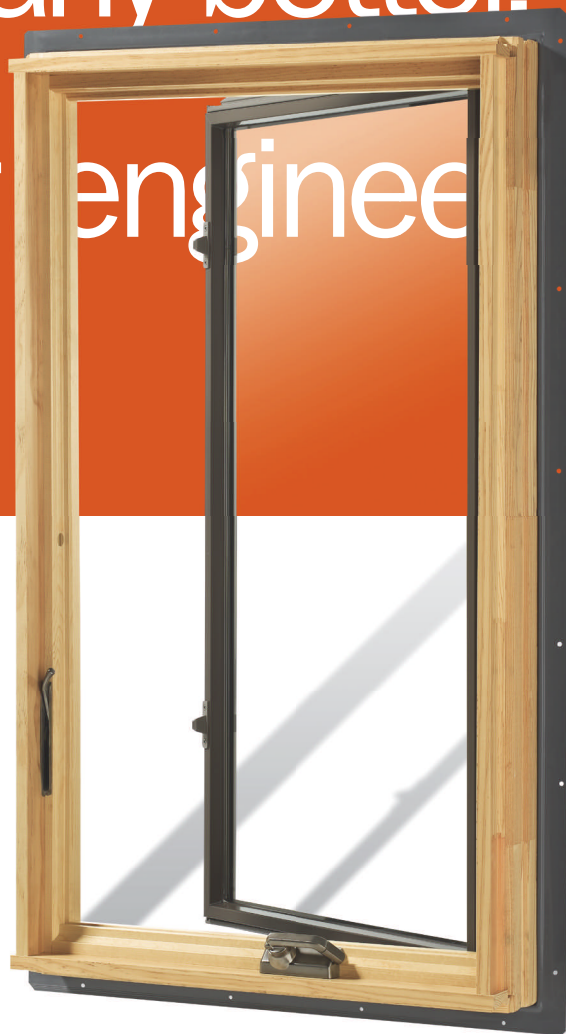
For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-23

Some said Andersen® 400 Series windows couldn't get any better.

That's all our engineers had to hear.

400 SERIES CUSTOM SIZING

The challenge isn't just to set the standard, it's to keep raising the bar. Once again, Andersen® 400 Series windows and doors deliver, this time with custom sizing to fit virtually any opening. Add that to their reputation for combining long-lasting* performance with value, and it's no wonder builders come back to them year after year. To learn more, visit andersenwindows.com/400series, or contact your Andersen dealer.



Now available in custom sizes.

*Visit andersenwindows.com/warranty for details. "Andersen" and all other marks where denoted are trademarks of Andersen Corporation. © 2010 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved.

For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRinfo and enter # 29404-25