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CIRCLE 751

BUILDER'S ADAPTIVE SPIRIT BREEDS HOMEBUILDING SUCCESS



Bob Koplos has always been active and energetic, but after he was hit by an out-of-control car in front of his home, he focused that energy into deliberate action: starting his own business, Steel Root Builders, in Asheville, North Carolina.

"The first thing I did was wiggle my toes," Bob said about the moments after the car struck him. "My leg was broken, but I was actually kind of excited that I wasn't paralyzed."

"Being a builder means I'm always on the go. There's an ever-changing aspect to the job, so you have to adapt to creating at any given moment in time."

Bob Koplos, Owner - Steel Root Builders

A Texas native, Bob journeyed to North Carolina to attend Warren Wilson College, where he deepened his woodworking craftsmanship.

"Being a builder means I'm always on the go," Bob said. "There's an ever-changing aspect to the job, so you have to adapt to creating at any given moment in time."

After school, he joined a green construction crew in Asheville. The accident happened during the time he worked with that crew, and he moved into project management while healing.

Over the next few years, Bob realized he needed more than working for someone else could offer. He sought the opportunity to grow his business management skills, while finding more space to create in his own way. His company, Steel Root Builders, now serves the greater Asheville area and specializes in modern, energy-efficient homes.

The mountainous landscape offers additional challenges for homebuilding, whether on a steep slope or in a heavily wooded area.

"AdvanTech® subflooring helps us ensure that quality and durability are maintained throughout the process," Bob said about building custom homes on rugged terrain. "I want to keep the tried-and-true elements of the build, like a good subfloor assembly, in place, so we can adapt the rest of our process around every unique project and



deliver a product that is durable and beautiful and lasts a long time."

From fine art to craft beer to custom homes, Asheville is a maker's town. Surrounded by mountains, Bob says the natural beauty of the landscape is both inspiring and motivating for creativity. His injury helped him channel that inspiration into a resilient spirit and a new business venture.

"The accident helped me create a work ethic and desire to get the most out of what I have in front of me every single day."

Hear the rest of Bob's story at AdvanTechAGame.com.



Open your smartphone camera app to scan QR code for video link.

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DEPARTMENTS

- 7 **From Erika**
Editor's column
- 9 **News Front**
Short takes on what's new and noteworthy in the industry
- 11 **In Business**
Mark Richardson; Pre-Construction Checklists; Insights Combined
- 58 **Profile**
Danny Lipford / Lipford Construction & Today's Homeowner

PRO TRADE CRAFT PICKS

Highlights from ProTradeCraft.com

- 23 **Jobsite Know-How**
How to Retrofit a Radon Mitigation System

PRODUCTS

- 17 **Innovative Products**
Daltile RevoTile; SunFlare; Owens Corning
- 53 **Product Updates**
Caulks & Sealants; Flooring

FEATURES

- 31 **2020 FORTY UNDER 40**
Each year we think we couldn't be more impressed by our Forty Under 40 winners. And each year, we're proven wrong. It's time to meet this year's exceedingly impressive group.
- 46 **MAXIMIZING PROFITABILITY ACROSS STAGES OF GROWTH**
Use these flow charts to gain insights into your company's staffing and the role of each team member.
- 50 **7 TIPS TO TACKLE HOMESHOWS**
They're exhausting, exciting chances to network, capture leads, and seal deals—but only if you survive.



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The Human Touch

THERE AREN'T MANY GOOD THINGS

about COVID-19, but the pandemic has given company leaders a chance to learn about their own communication styles and readiness in a crisis.

The messaging you send now is important. Your response will remain in the minds of clients and employees long after the crisis is over. Here are a few tips for effective communication during troubled times.

Respond Quickly and Correctly

Multiple studies have shown that the first message is the most powerful. This is why a news story that gets the facts wrong still influences people's thinking even after a correction is published. Most of us remember the wrong information better than we do the correction.

Companies that take too long to communicate an action plan and attitude will suffer. Employees lose confidence when there's an information vacuum, and leaders are left scrambling to repair that loss rather than creating the perception that they want.

Be Truthful About Bad News

If you had to lay off team members, it's imperative to announce the downsizing after it happens. This helps prevent rumors, and also gives leaders a chance to craft the right narrative around the reduction in force. You might discuss issues like reduced lead flow, lost revenue, client cancellations, and official mandates that affect current projects.

Encourage questions and answer them with as much transparency as possible. Also, remind employees that your door is open anytime for a private meeting. Finally, empower your managers to talk with their teams and help them with messaging. When handled correctly, a crisis can actually galvanize people to pull together and renew ties.

Remember Three Cs

There are three aspects to establishing trust and loyalty from your team during a



EMPLOYEES WILL LOSE CONFIDENCE WHEN THERE'S AN INFORMATION VACUUM

crisis, and it's important that as a leader you embody them all. Most of us can smell when these things are faked.

Caring: Research shows that when leaders are perceived as caring about their team, all messages are more likely to be accepted. Validate people's fears. Acknowledge their uncertainty about the future. The human touch goes a long way.

Competence: While it may be necessary to adjust policies during a changing situation, it's important to project an air of decisiveness and control. This inspires confidence in the company and in your leadership.

Commitment: State your goals whenever possible. What are the company's short-term objectives? Are you still hoping for a flat year? Commit to those goals and keep them as talking points. This creates a sense of structure during a scarily unstructured time.

Unfortunately we can't change the disruption that has happened in our businesses and our lives. But we can control our reactions to them. And that makes a huge difference.

Erika Taylor, Director of Content

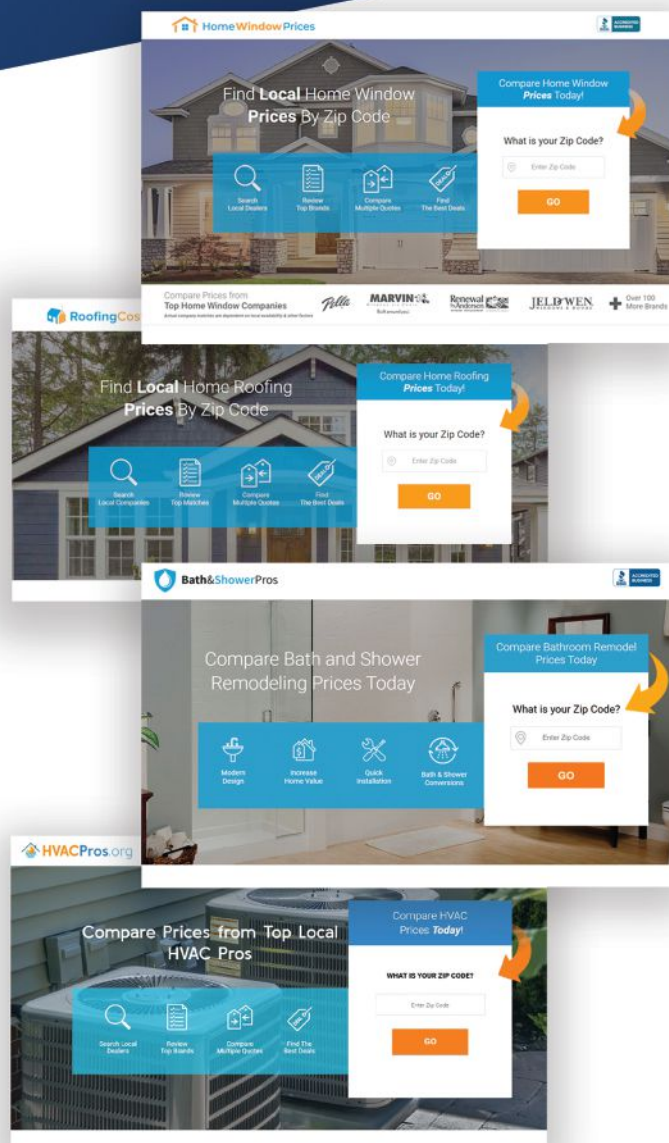
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CIRCLE 754

COVID-19 RESOURCES

DOTTEDYETI / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

Since COVID-19 first appeared in the U.S. earlier this year, the virus' effects have become widespread and serious—both in a public health and economic sense.

To help remodelers protect themselves and their businesses throughout these turbulent times, we've assembled and will continue to update a news and resource page readers can reach at proremodeler.com/covid-19-what-remodelers-need-know

VICE PRESIDENT ASKS CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FOR ITS N95 MASKS




SCALIGER / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

Concern over contracting the novel coronavirus has created a run on face masks, causing a problem for some construction businesses, according to multiple local news reports.

Joe King, owner of 1st Patriot Enterprises in Evansville, Ind., has seen the issue first hand. His painting company uses the masks every day, but he is one of a number of business owners seeing their supplies running out. "Anyone involved in drywall or painting will constantly need a protective mask of some kind," King told a local NBC news station.

While the masks are effective in filtering 95% of big and small particulates, they are also notoriously difficult to wear properly, said US Surgeon General Dr. Jerome

Adams in a March 2 interview on Fox & Friends. "Folks who don't know how to wear them properly tend to touch their faces a lot and actually can increase the spread of coronavirus."

A week after the Surgeon General's remarks, Vice President Mike Pence publicly requested construction companies donate their supply of N95 masks to hospitals and delay any future orders to ensure their availability to healthcare workers, who've been trained in their proper usage. In his statement he said: "What we ask construction companies—which our president knows very well from his background—we are asking them to donate their N95 masks to their local hospitals and also forgo making additional orders." 

SBA OFFERING EMERGENCY LOANS

The Small Business Association announced last week it will be offering low-interest loans to small businesses and nonprofits severely affected

by the COVID-19 pandemic as part of its Economic Injury Disaster Loan program.

The virus is a public health risk the likes of which businesses in the U.S. have not faced, and the economic implications are scary—particularly for small businesses like remodelers. In an interview this week with *The New York Times*, Michael Greenberg, a professor at the University of Maryland who researches financial stability, said that "the economy is coming to a half of a dead stop."

It's because of this economic disruption that the SBA is offering its low-interest emergency loans. "Small businesses are vital economic engines in every community and state, and they have helped make our economy the strongest in the world," said SBA Administrator Jovita Carranza in a statement. "SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans offer up to \$2 million in assistance for a small business. These loans can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing."

To learn more about the SBA's emergency loan program and whether your business qualifies, please visit sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance





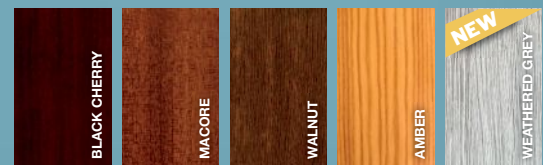
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BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Time to Lead

10 TIPS FOR LEADING YOUR COMPANY DURING A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY AND FEAR

WE ARE STILL EARLY IN THE YEAR, BUT ALREADY 2020 HAS BROUGHT SERIOUS DISTRACTIONS.

Distractions are counter to the clarity, alignment, and focus you need for success. Distractions create confusion and fear. As a leader, you need to address them.

I am not suggesting that you have answers to the present challenges or even need to take a vocal position, but I am saying it's your job to make sure that clients and employees are confident in your leadership.


Many years ago, we hired a grievance counselor to help the team process the tragic death of a beloved team member. I remember struggling with how they were dealing with this situation. Why were some vocal and others quiet? Why were some crying, and others were not? Why were some present while others didn't attend?

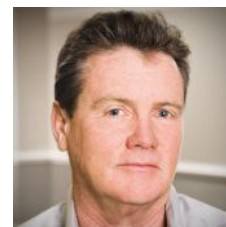
The grievance counselor said something I'll never forget, and it has since become an important leadership lesson. She said, "Don't judge others on how they process death. You may not agree, but don't judge them."

The novel coronavirus is similar in that I am seeing many people process the situation differently. Some are so fearful they can't think clearly. Some are looking at the news for direction on how they should feel. Others refuse to stop shaking hands or giving hugs to make a statement. The bottom line is it is a major distraction, and as the leader of a business, you need to lead.

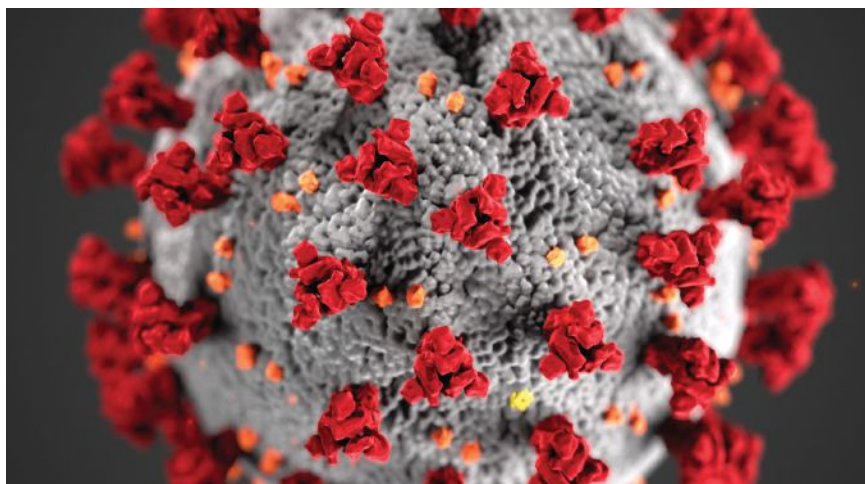
Following are 10 leadership actions.

- 1] **Stay proactively informed but not obsessed.** Try to be the leader but not caught up in the craziness.
- 2] **Review your 2020 plan.** You might be a little more conservative and set aside cash to get you through what could be a tough few months.
- 3] **Bring the team together and share your thoughts.** Include that you realize the unknowns create differences in how they are processing this. Express your commitment to the business and the team. Remember that displaying confidence is important.
- 4] **Create the right work environment.** This means balancing business operations with people's anxiety.
- 5] **Proactively set digital options for in-person meetings or postpone some meetings that are not as important.**
- 6] **Create messaging for your clients ASAP.**
- 7] **Be intentional with your techniques.** In the future, people will remember how you approached this, not just "what" you did.
- 8] **Be a role model for health & safety, not an alarmist.**
- 9] **Outline how and when you will provide updates.**
- 10] **Remain present and listen.** This is not time for you to be unavailable.

How you lead your business through this situation is important. It's the difference between good leaders and great ones. 



Mark Richardson, CR, is a speaker and business growth strategist. He authored the best-selling books *How Fit Is Your Business?*, *Fit to Grow*, and *The Art of Time Mastery*. He also hosts the podcast *Remodeling Mastery*.
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THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS SITUATION IS A MAJOR DISTRACTION, AND AS THE LEADER OF A BUSINESS, YOU NEED TO LEAD

Employees look to company leadership for a response and regular communication. How you handle COVID-19 will have long-range implications.



PRECONSTRUCTION CHECKLIST

SAVE YOUR TEAM A HEADACHE BY USING THIS DETAILED PRE-CON LIST WITH CLIENTS BEFORE THE JOB STARTS

BY DAN BAWDEN | LEGAL EAGLE CONTRACTORS



DAN BAWDEN

WE'VE USED an extensive precon-struction checklist for awhile now, and it's helped us time and again. The list is part of the handoff from Sales to Production, and we require that all decision-makers on the project be present and sign the document. Before going over the check-list, we walk the job and discuss the scope of work. We then explain each item, so the clients can understand that this is for their protection as well as ours.

Here is a look at our checklist, with a more detailed explanation of various elements.

In case the plumber makes a mistake and water is shooting from the walls, you want to be able to turn it off in a few seconds.

One of the things that's mandatory is that we know which spouse is the ultimate decision maker. That has saved us some headaches over time.

Our yard signs are bigger than usual, and great for lead gen. We also have a "take a flier box," and we run out of them constantly. Our signs produce a new project about 20% of the time.

Countertops, shower glass, and mirrors are all examples of midstream things that can add time to the job.

We usually have the meeting on a Friday to give clients the weekend to prepare and take things out of cabinets.

Kitchen Renovations

Pre-Construction Check List

Production Questions ~ call Project Manager
Accounting/paperwork questions ~ call Office
General Questions ~ call Sales Representative

ITEMS REVIEWED WITH OWNER(S):

- ☐ Working hours & days - M-F + Sat
- ☒ Location of main water cutoff and breaker box
- ☐ Security & Access issues - lockbox location.
- ☐ Construction Schedule - what activities to expect for the first 1 to 2 weeks.
- ☐ Dust and fumes.
- ☐ Additional Work Requests policy and procedures.
- ☐ Communication: What to do if problems arise
- ☒ Communication: Who is the final decision-maker we can rely on? _____
- ☐ Contract specifications and Drawings, if required. If it is not on there, it is not include.
- ☐ Location for material storage: _____ Trash location: _____
- ☐ Access to job: front door _____ back door _____ Lock box key given?: _____
- ☐ Owner's bathroom available for use: _____
- ☐ Owner's telephone available for use: _____
- ☐ Progress payments can be paid by credit card or through Builder Trend App, (with a small convenience fee), or a check dropped by our office. Payments are due within 3 days of billing.
- ☐ Change Orders are due/paid when approved, not later, and can be paid with above methods.
- ☐ Estimated starting date: _____ Estimated duration: _____
- ☐ Final touch-up list - One list.
- ☒ Yard sign to remain during construction.
- ☒ Lead Disclosure Pamphlet Delivered? ___ Y ___ N. Texas Disclosure statement? ___ Y ___ N.
- ☐ Inspections may add 2 to 3 weeks to project
- ☐ Funk Chart & Expectations
- ☒ Job duration may be extended by fabrication time.

OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES:

- ☐ Keep alarm system off during the day.
- ☐ Keep children and pets clear of the construction area. Be advised: It is a dangerous place.
- ☐ Have all selections made for paint, tile, flooring etc. before work begins.
- ☐ Have all fixtures and appliances on site before work begins.
- ☐ Remove and reset all wall hangings, furniture, computers & valuables in areas surrounding remodeling work.
- ☒ Empty cabinets and clear countertops if applicable.
- ☐ Remove any shrubbery, flowers, etc that you want to save (room addition Projects).
- ☐ Dust is inevitable - please cover belongings with plastic, move computers, close doors to other rooms, and vacuum more often to help control dust from spreading.
- ☐ Clear traffic areas to allow access to work areas for tools, materials and construction activities.
- ☐ Material selections still to be finalized:

NOTE:

- ☐ Contractor is not responsible for missing parts of "FBO" (Furnished by Owner) items.
- ☐ Contractor will not be expected to go to store for exchanges or returns of FBO items.
- ☐ We go by NAHB Industry Standards - We do not promise perfection

Note:

Agreed to by:

Owner	Date	Owner
	and	
COMPANY NAME	Date	

For further explanation of the form and to download a version for yourself, go to <https://www.proremodeler.com/preconstruction-checklist>

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How East Coast Roofing, Siding & Windows uses the GreenSky® Loan Program for Success

A perfect example of how a business is using both GreenSky's technology and financing as tools for success is **East Coast Roofing, Siding & Windows**.

"In 2017, we changed our sales process to a one-stop consultation in which our consultants meet with the homeowner and provide a proposal. During the proposal, our customers can apply for financing which allows us to close the deal in one appointment. Financing makes the funds available so our customers don't have to wait until a later time to start their project. Financing also allows them to get additional work done or upgrades. An easy application process and variety of

payment options are crucial to us and GreenSky provides both."

"GreenSky has helped tremendously in our siding and window business. We have witnessed a significant increase in multiple projects at one home. Affordability has allowed folks to design and purchase the home of their dreams. As opposed to them having to find \$55,000 to replace all of their windows and siding, we find the money for them at GreenSky!"

The GreenSky® Loan Program is dedicated to helping contractors become more successful business owners.*



Watch the case study online!

If you would like to hear Jeff Kay discuss how GreenSky has helped **East Coast Roofing, Siding & Windows** grow for yourself, please visit [GreenSky.com/ProAdvantage](https://www.greensky.com/ProAdvantage).

Every company should be financing 40% - 60% of their business when selling big tickets. -Jeff Kay, East Coast Roofing, Siding, & Windows



Visit [GreenSky.com/ProAdvantage](https://www.greensky.com/ProAdvantage) to watch the interview with Jeff Kay of East Coast Roofing, Siding & Windows

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INSIGHTS COMBINED

3 REASONS TO IMPLEMENT PERSONALITY AND SKILL TESTING INTO YOUR HIRING PROCESS

BY SHEILA LANIER | HOMEWORK REMODELS



SHEILA LANIER

USING PERSONALITY AND SKILLS TESTS to vet potential employees isn't a new strategy to our company, or to the industry. But a few years ago, Homework Remodels owner, Steve Shinn, and I realized that we needed a more in-depth hiring process in order to lower employee turnover rates.

Currently, we use a multi-step interview process that requires candidates to take

the DiSC assessment, a skills qualification test. We also use the True Colors personality test (my personal favorite).

Here are three tangible benefits of this process.

1 The Assessment Doesn't Lie

Coming out of an initial interview, it's easy to know if you could work well with that person. But it's important to recognize that in an interview, that person is putting on the absolute best version of themselves, and we cannot always be that best self.

Using a variety of personality and skills tests has enabled us to step back from our initial assessment and take into consideration a person's underlying personality—not just the image they present to you.

2 It's Easier to Spot a Mismatch in Skills


True Colors has been particularly helpful for us with this, because it's a lesser known assessment than the popular DiSC or Enneagram tests. True Colors categorizes personality types into four colors—Orange, Gold, Green, and Blue—and emphasizes how each color interacts with other color types. The focus is on creating an environment of collaboration through understanding how people interact with other personalities.

The skills test we give includes job-specific questions that we are looking for a new employee to have—carpenters won't get the same questions as administrative assistants, or even as production managers. Combining the interview with the unbiased tests allows us to take into account our gut feeling while also recognizing that certain skills and traits are necessary for someone to succeed in a given role.

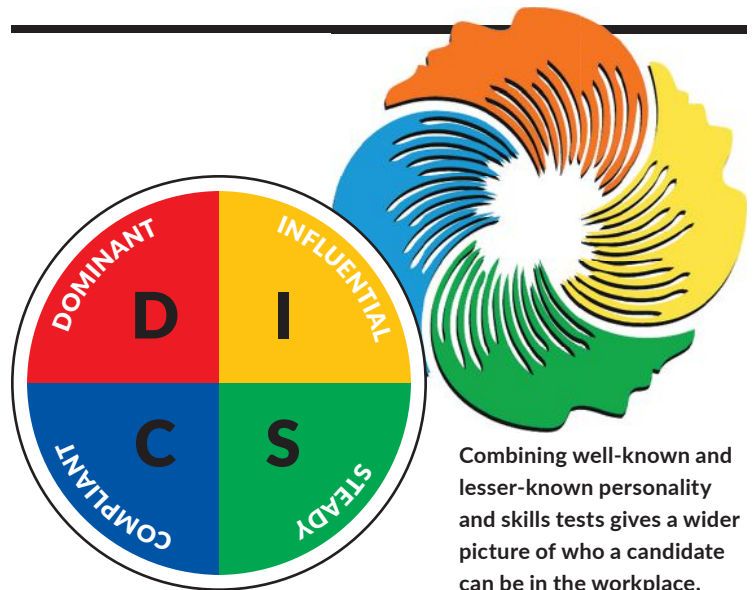
3 The Test Results in Longer Tenures

All remodeling companies have been in a situation where you need a new employee *now*, and so you have to take the first reasonable candidate you find. We've also all had those

situations end poorly, and we're back where we started, in need of a new employee.

I will not pretend that we haven't ended up losing an employee, even after they've gotten through our process. But when we have, it hasn't been because we didn't do our due diligence; for example, our most recent project manager had to leave us due to personal circumstances that neither he nor we could have seen. But there were no hard feelings, because we knew that we had made a solid choice, and recognized that even with this, sometimes life has other plans. 

THE FOCUS IS ON CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT OF COLLABORATION THROUGH UNDERSTANDING HOW PEOPLE INTERACT WITH OTHER PERSONALITIES



Combining well-known and lesser-known personality and skills tests gives a wider picture of who a candidate can be in the workplace.

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INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS

NEW AND UNIQUE PRODUCTS AND THE STORIES BEHIND THEM

BY PRO REMODELER STAFF

Two New Products from Owens Corning

THE SHINGLE COLOR OF THE YEAR IS ... BLUE? YEP! AND HOMEOWNERS CAN CHECK OUT MULTIPLE OPTIONS WITH THE NEW BUILD YOUR ROOF TOOL.

As a complement to the recent design trend seen in so many kitchens, Owens Corning has selected Pacific Wave as the company's shingle color of the year.

"Pacific Wave is a color that people unexpectedly fall in love with," says Sue Burkett, Owens Corning Roofing Strategic Marketing Manager. "Blue is a calming and serene color; yet it's also strong and powerful. Many people who love blue hesitate to use it as a roof color choice, but ... it's a surprise and delight when they see all of the possibilities Pacific Wave brings to a home's exterior."

Disrupting conventional approaches to blue and gray shingles, Pacific Wave was inspired by the constantly shifting palette of the ocean. A gentle blue mixed with shades of dark and light gray add dimension that can create a relaxed beachy vibe or a more stately look. Pacific Wave elevates standard gray shingles to a whole new level.

"The color was chosen based on its versatility and how it complements ... interior trends," Burkett adds.

The Shingle Color of the Year was introduced in 2017 as part of an initiative to recognize the role of women in roofing decisions. As a result of that and other innovations, Owens Corning earned the Women's



Pacific Wave can bring elegance or a more relaxed coastal look depending on the home's design.

Choice Award as America's most recommended roofing products for the second consecutive year.

Build Your Own Roof

Launched at the International Roofing Expo in February, the Build Your Roof tool is a way for customers to "have more power in the reroof process," says Stephanie Ball, a market lead with Owens Corning.

"Industries like automotive have tools where purchasers can customize what they are looking for," she explains. "We

thought it was important for them to see that we have a Good, Better, Best in our portfolio, and that they understand those differences."

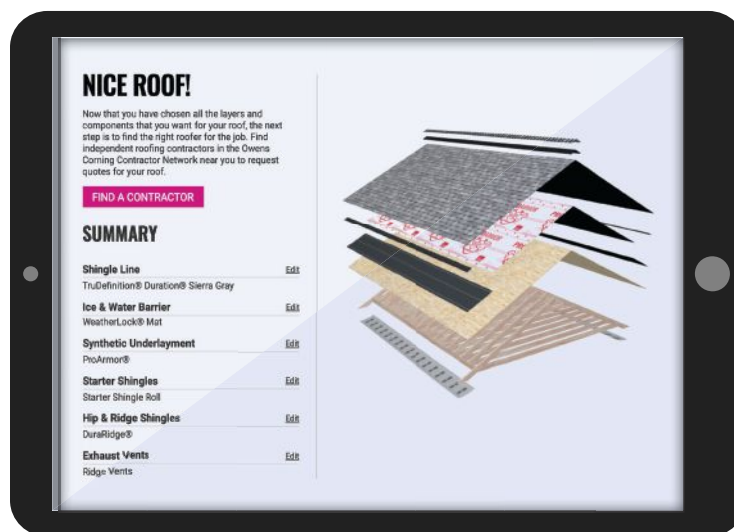
The tool is designed to educate homeowners on the importance of what Owens Corning calls Seal, Defend, Breathe. Seal helps create a water-proof barrier, Defend protects the home from the

elements, and Breathe is for balanced ventilation.

After building the roof they want, homeowners then receive a summary they can print or share in email. Contractors in the Owens Corning network also receive that lead, along with the roof "designed" by the homeowner.

The next phase for Build Your Roof is to turn the tool into something a contractor can use as part of an in-home sales presentation. Owens Corning's total protection roofing system comes with a limited lifetime warranty. **Owenscorning.com**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CIRCLE NO. 851 ON THE READER SERVICE CARD



Build Your Roof educates homeowners on roofing design while showcasing a suite of Owens Corning products.

Daltile RevoTile

A FLOATING FLOOR SYSTEM THAT INSTALLS TWICE AS FAST AS TRADITIONAL TILE

It's been a few months since the 2020 International Builders' Show, but we still want to send a shout out to RevoTile, a click-to-fit porcelain tile floating floor system introduced by Daltile at the show.

Installing RevoTile consists of only three steps: Place the underlayment, click the tile into place, and grout immediately. No mortar is required, and there's no wait time necessary between placement and grouting. It comes in 26 marble, wood, stone, and concrete looks.

Daltile also offers approved accessories designed to further simplify the process.

When the full system is used (tiles, RapidPrep, and RapidGrout), a lifetime warranty is included for residential applications. RapidPrep is a moisture-protected, fanfold underlayment. It's installs easily and reduces sound transmission, among other benefits.

RapidGrout does not require sealing, allowing for same-day install of the tiles. It is also stain resistant and antimicrobial.

The ClicFit install kit, while not required to qualify for the lifetime warranty, adds a final layer of ease. The pre-assembled kit includes a heavy-duty steel pullbar featuring protective coating; a tapping block; and 20 tapered, stepped wall spacers. The only thing missing is a mallet



to help you get the tiles tightly into place.

Daltile says RevoTile can be installed over many existing flooring surfaces, and it's great for second-story floors, thanks to the reduced sound transmission.

Check it out at daltile.com / CIRCLE NO. 852

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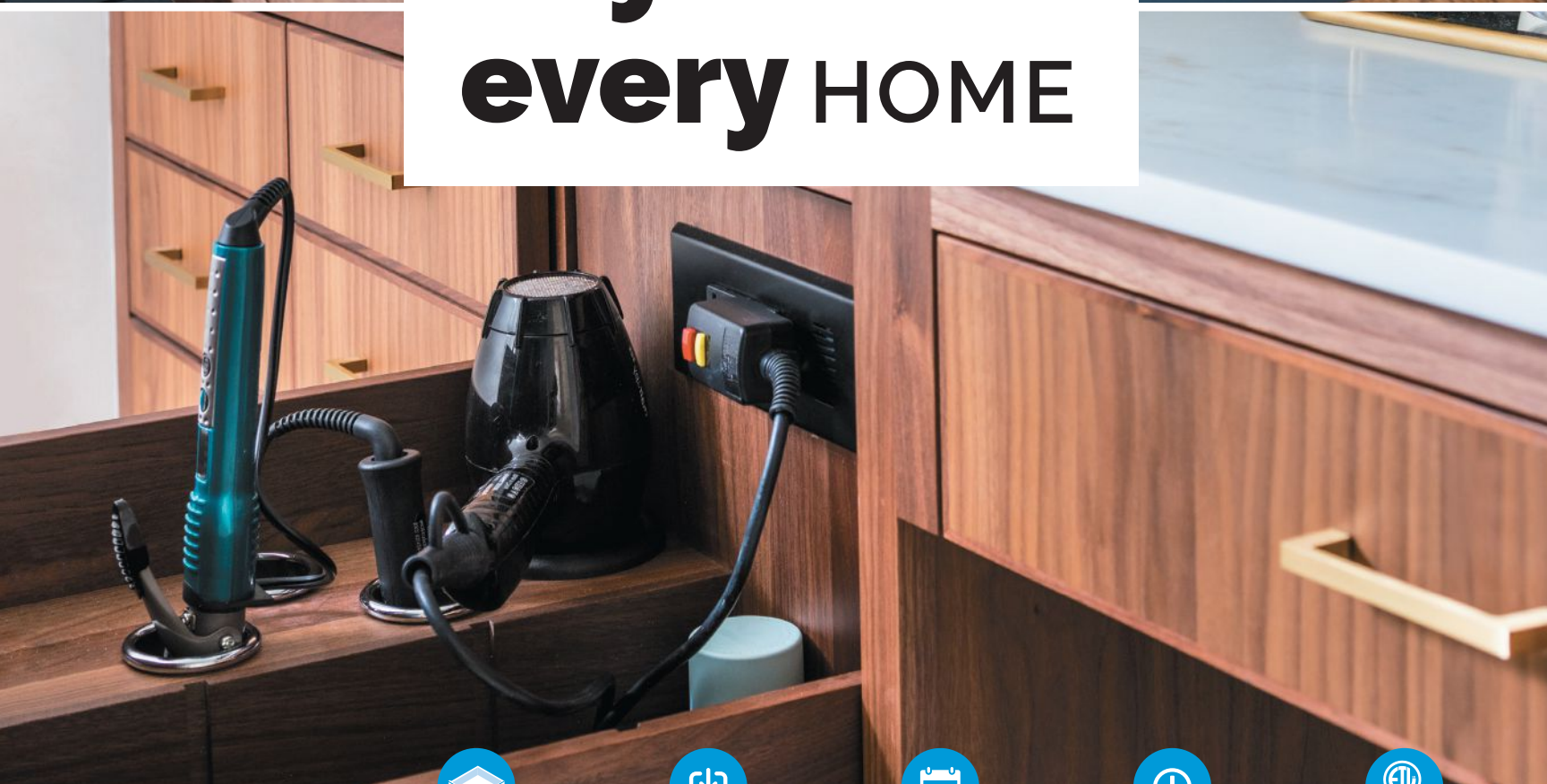


CIRCLE 759



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PRODUCTS

[INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS]

Sunflare PowerFit 20



NO GLASS, NO WRACKING, AND ONE-QUARTER THE WEIGHT OF SILICON PANELS

PowerFit 20 solar panels are a novel solar energy option for homes with metal standing seam roofs, which have seen a significant bump in popularity over the past several years. The product's manufacturer, Sunflare, promises improved efficiency and ease of installation over traditional panels.

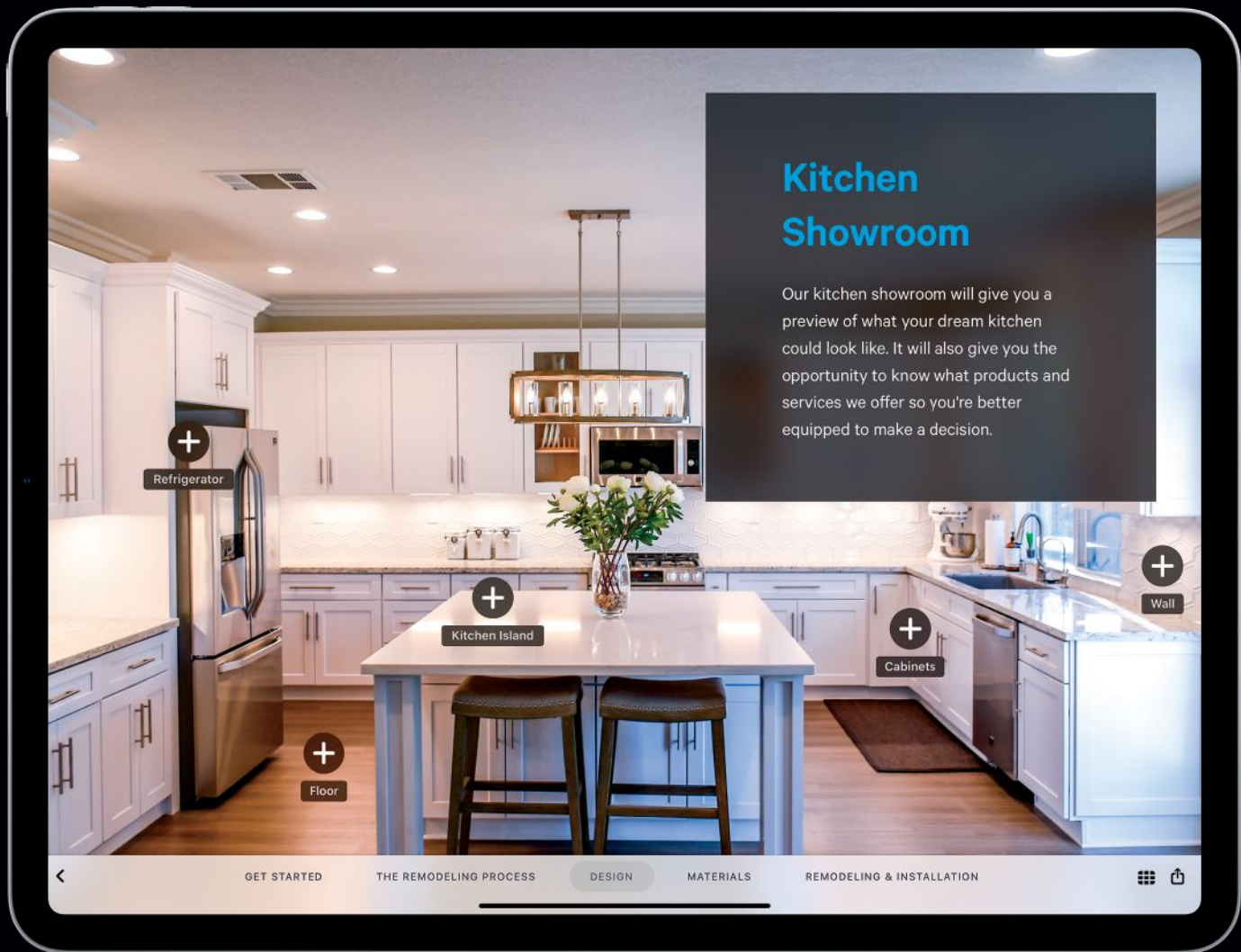
The system is designed for efficiency in every regard. The 60-watt panels are light, flat, and flexible. They don't use glass and fit snugly between the seams in a metal roof using a peel-off adhesive on their back—no aluminum wracking nor roof penetrations required.

"Staging at the installation site takes less than a quarter of the time that staging with traditional panels would take," Sunflare said in a press release. One person can do it.

Power production on the panels is also efficient. The manufacturer claims that due to the panel's unique chemistry (i.e., copper, indium, gallium, selenide), the cells produce more energy than traditional cells in low-light settings—so at dusk and dawn. The panels also work better in partial shade, as demonstrated in a live test Sunflare posted to YouTube entitled, "Shade? No problem." Because each of the panel's cells have a bypass diode—where traditional panels have only one per string of cells—if a single cell is covered in shade but the rest of the panel is still in light, all but the shaded cell will continue to generate power. On a traditional panel, the entire string of cells would be rendered inactive. Power is output via straightforward Mc4 connectors at the tops of the panels.

Scheduled for a launch this July, each purchase comes with a 10-year 90% energy efficiency, 25-year 80% energy efficiency guarantee.

sunflaresolar.com / CIRCLE NO. 853



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CIRCLE 762

A portrait of a middle-aged man with short, dark hair, smiling and looking slightly to his left. He is wearing rectangular-framed glasses and a bright red polo shirt. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm lighting.

Lowe's Home Services recently chose us as their national partner for bathroom remodeling. With the opportunity to service 1,700+ Lowe's stores, it has never been a better time to join Re-Bath.

*Average among territories with 500,000 to 1.25 million people in 2018. 34% of territories matched or exceeded the average. Your results may differ. See the Re-Bath Franchise Disclosure Document for details.

A map of the United States with 30 red stars indicating the states where the book 'The American Revolution' is available. The stars are located in Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Alaska.



CIRCLE 763



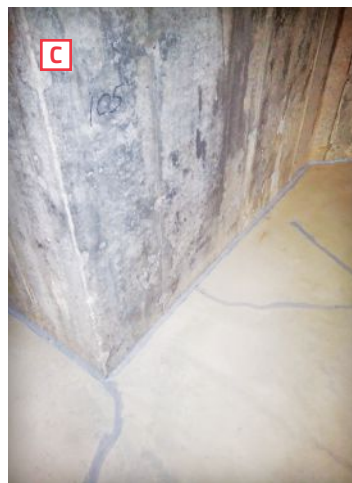
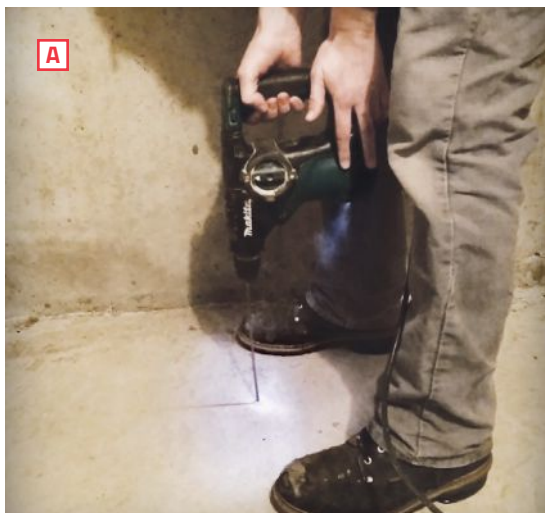
How to Retrofit a Radon Mitigation System

TO DRAW AIR FROM SUB-SLAB SOIL, THE SLAB MUST BE AIRTIGHT

BY SAL ALFANO | EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Radon is a colorless, odorless gas that can be found all across the U.S. As a natural byproduct of uranium decay in soil, radon is radioactive: according to Radon.com, the alpha radiation emitted by radon gas is the same as that emitted by other sources, such as plutonium. Radon can find its way into any type of building, typically seeping into the basement through exposed soil or via cracks in the foundation or slab.

As awareness of the danger posed by radon grows, many home buyers and sellers test for levels of radon above 4 pCi/L (pico-curries per liter), the EPA's recommended action level for radon exposure. Fortunately, the radon hazard can be mitigated in both new and existing structures by capturing the gas and venting it to the outdoors. In "radon-resistant new construction," this typically involves a layer of sub-slab stone that promotes air movement, and a sub-slab layer of polyethylene sealed to a PVC riser that penetrates the slab and runs through the roof to daylight. If radon is detected



2 The cold joint between the slab and foundation walls often develops a gap that needs to be sealed **C**, as do obvious cracks in the field of the slab. Small cracks can usually be sealed as-is, but sometimes using a grinder to widen the crack **D** will result in a better seal **E**.



1 To test the slab for air-tightness, the crew drills through the slab **A**, then connects a digital manometer to record air pressure **B**. Erickson's crew uses a long $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch masonry bit because it makes for a very tight fit for the manometer testing tube.



after construction is completed, the PVC riser can be cut and an in-line fan installed to draw radon out of the building.

Unfortunately, radon-resistant construction techniques were rarely followed in homes built before the 1990s, and are still not required by code in some jurisdictions. To find out how radon gas is handled in most older existing homes, we turned to Erickson Foundation Supportworks, a Hudson, New Hampshire-based foundation and concrete repair company whose services include radon mitigation. (Note: This article does not cover testing for radon, but numerous sources are available online that describe when and where to test, the type of test to undertake, and how to interpret the results.)

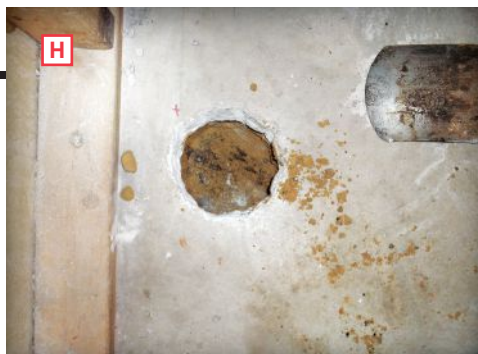
1] Check the Slab for Air Leaks

Radon mitigation typically involves running a PVC pipe system from one or more holes in the slab, and installing an in-line fan to draw in sub-slab air and push it outdoors above the roof. But for the vacuum created by the fan to work properly, the slab must be airtight. So the first step is to check for air leaks **1**.

The number of test holes needed depends mainly on how many radon "zones" the house has. "A perfectly square house with no interior footing, no crawlspaces, and no raised or lowered slabs will have one zone," explains Andrew Ahlquist, Radon Mitigation Specialist at Erickson Foundation Supportworks. "Every time you add a separation, like a footing or raised or lowered

slab, you add a new zone." Crawlspaces also count as separate zones.

Every zone gets a manometer test and at least one penetration point, but the level of radon also affects the number of penetrations. "If a 1,200-square-foot house has a radon reading of 6 pCi/L," Ahlquist says, "we will most likely only suggest one penetration point. But if that same house has a reading of 35 pCi/L, we would probably recommend a penetration point at each side of the house." Ahlquist also says that the type of soil can affect the system design. "Crushed stone is the perfect soil for easy air flow across a basement, but if the crew discovers that it's hard-packed clay, they might suggest another penetration point to the customer."



3 The fastest and easiest way to drill through the slab, especially when many penetrations are needed, is with a wet coring bit **F** mounted in either a hand-held drill or a portable drilling machine. For smaller projects, another option is to use a standard masonry bit to drill a series of smaller holes to outline the larger penetration **G**, then use a cold chisel to remove concrete until the slab is exposed **H**. The ragged edge of the opening will eventually be covered when the PVC pipe is sealed to the slab

Loose, sandy soil can usually be removed by hand **I** or with a shop vac; occasionally, more densely-packed soil must first be loosened using an auger bit at slow speed. A sump pump may be necessary to remove sub-slab water, which interferes with radon gas collection. Although sump pits are usually open to the air, where radon is present, the pit must be sealed **J** so that no air is released into the living space.

Test holes are typically drilled far away from proposed penetration locations—usually on the opposite side of the zone. This enables the crew to retest again from the same point after the installation is complete, when a negative manometer reading is an indication that any leaks have been sealed and the system is working properly.

2] Seal Cracks

The overall goal of the system is to suck up most of the sub-slab air rising through the soil. The more airtight the slab, the better the suction, which increases the amount of air—and radon—the system removes.

When the manometer test shows poor suction, the crew checks for cracks, starting

with the perimeter. Slabs are typically placed after the walls, and over time a gap can develop at the “cold joint” at the perimeter. This and any obvious cracks in the field of the slab **2** are sealed with NexusPro, a silicone-based, UV-resistant sealant with a fast drying time. For large cracks, the crew carries an assortment of backer rod ranging from ¼-inch to 1½-inches in diameter. Ahlquist says that most small cracks can be sealed as-is, but sometimes they use a grinder to create more surface area, which improves the chance for a good seal.

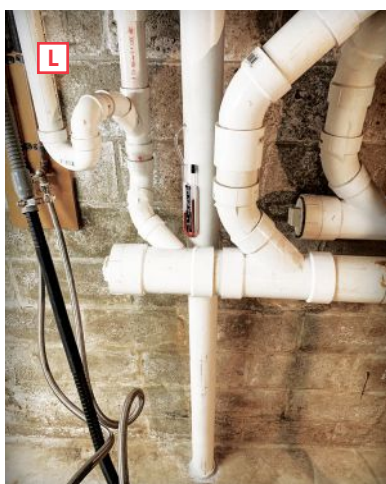
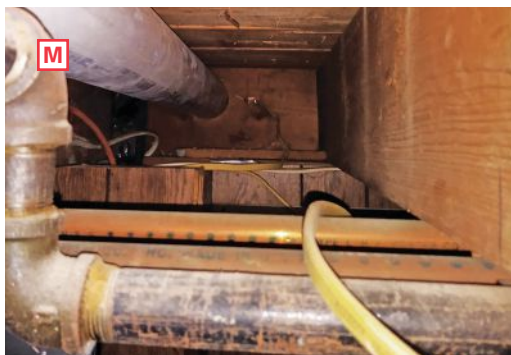
After the cracks have been sealed, the crew repeats the manometer test. Depending on the results, they may use a smoke pencil to check for leaks at small

cracks that were not sealed the first time through. The tests may also lead to an increase in the number of penetrations.

3] Cut Holes in Slab, Remove Soil

Wet coring bits mounted in a hand-held drill or on a portable drilling machine will drill a clean hole in the slab, but a series of holes drilled using a standard masonry bit will also do the job **3**.

To create more surface area for the suction to act on, up to 10 gallons of soil should be removed from under the slab in the area around each hole. This can usually be done by hand or with a shop vac. In cases where water is present under the slab, a sump pump may have to be installed.



4 PVC risers typically come straight off the slab holes with only small offsets **K**. Penetrations are often located in basement corners or near existing plumbing where they are less conspicuous **L**. Like plumbing vent lines, horizontal runs pitch slightly upwards. Occasionally floor framing allows horizontal piping to be concealed in a joist bay **M**; more commonly, however, piping runs below the joists, then bends up and over the foundation wall, exiting through the rim joist to the outdoors. A U-tube manometer is permanently mounted on the pipe in the basement **N**. When the fan is operating, homeowners can check the fluid in the manometer on the side that has a small tube extending into the pipe. If it reads above zero, the air is being vacuumed upward and the system is working correctly.

5 In retrofits, the inline fan is commonly mounted to the exterior **O**. Some fans are pre-wired to a junction box that is mounted to the wall; wiring running inside can connect to a circuit breaker or be plugged into an existing outlet, so long as continuous power is applied. The fans themselves are quiet, but an optional muffler **P** can be mounted to the end of the PVC to damp the sound of moving air.

4] Install and Seal PVC Pipe System

Designing the PVC piping system begins with the location of the penetrations **4**. “If possible,” says Ahlquist, “we try to locate penetrations in basement corners where they can be more easily hidden.” In new construction, the stack can run through closets or mechanical chases all the way to the roof. In retrofits, however, risers more often join a horizontal run in the basement that vents to the outside. “If the floor framing allows, we can run the pipe between the joists,” says Ahlquist. “But we

do have to keep a pitch on the pipe as well, which sometimes leaves us with limited areas to run the pipe.”

5] Mount and Wire the Fan

In new construction, the in-line fan is often mounted in the attic. Occasionally in a retrofit, the pipe can run through an interior space, such as an attached garage, then daylight through the roof. More commonly in retrofits, however, the fan is mounted outside, just beyond where the PVC exits the rim joist and turns upward **5**. Building

codes set minimum requirements with regard to location and height of the vent pipe in relation to the roof line and nearby openings into conditioned space. But local codes may vary so check with the building inspector for up-to-date specs.

A version of this article appeared on ProTradeCraft.com under the title “How to Install a Radon Mitigation System in a New Home.” Thanks to Niles Erickson and Andrew Ahlquist at Erickson Foundation Supportworks for their help updating the information for retrofits.



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FORTY UNDER 40

CELEBRATING REMODELING'S YOUNG LEADERS

THE 2020 FORTY UNDER 40 SHOWCASES THE INDUSTRY'S GROWING SOPHISTICATION.

Twenty years ago, remodelers had a uniform: hammer and a nailbag. It was the look of the “Chuck with a truck,” who always had a clipboard on hand, and who represented what the average homeowner believed to be The Remodeler. One could argue that it was fairly accurate.

In 2020, “Remodeler” is a more complicated term. It still represents Chuck, but also it represents a much wider spectrum of professional, and a much more sophisticated level of business. It includes tech enthusiasts that digitize design processes, and college-educated business leaders that emphasize transparency to keep up with client expectations. It includes innovators and thought leaders.

This year's Forty Under 40 class is proof of that increased sophistication—proof that remodeling has a bright future.



OWNER

LINDSEY BLUM, 30

OWNER

R&J SERVICES / FLAGSTAFF, ARIZ.

2019 REVENUE: \$850,000

ON RECRUITING MILLENNIALS: The key to increasing recruitment is to dispel stereotypes about what the industry is, and what it is not. I'm a Millennial, and many of my peers were motivated by the promise of profit, and joined the commercial sector only to be disillusioned about how individuals are actually valued within that industry. **Millennials want purpose and personalization in the work they do, along with a degree of flexibility to accommodate their lifestyles.** Remodeling can satisfy all of those criteria. There is ample room for autonomy, creativity, collaboration, and innovation, and that needs to be incorporated into the broader message of what this industry offers.

LEADERSHIP

ANDREW SCIACCA, 36

VICE PRESIDENT

NEW JERSEY SIDING & WINDOWS / RANDOLPH, N.J.

ON GENERATING LEADS: Print advertising seems to be coming back, even though online is still king. **We hadn't run billboard ads in more than a decade, but we're bringing it back this year, and we'll monitor how it goes.** With people my age and younger, online advertising is of course more likely to generate leads, but there is still a large amount of people in their late 40s and 50s looking to remodel. We continue to run an ad in the newspaper geared toward that demographic, and while it doesn't generate as much traffic, the leads that come from that ad are serious and likely to turn into clients.



DEGREES FROM COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:

TOTAL WINNERS WITH DEGREES

31

17

14

WINNERS WITH INDUSTRY-RELATED DEGREES

WINNERS WITH NON-INDUSTRY-RELATED DEGREES



OWNER

PETER SOARES, 32

OWNER

PETE'S CONSTRUCTION / METHUEN, MASS.

2019 REVENUE: \$2.3 MILLION

ON THE FUTURE OF THE INDUSTRY: Designers continue to become more valued by contractors. There's a greater recognition of what they bring to a company and how they complement and strengthen production. **There are**

more contractors in our industry that truly appreciate design expertise and a great looking project. There is a designer I've been trying to work with for years, and we're finally getting the opportunity—I could not be more excited to have her expertise on one of my projects.



OWNER

MELISSA HELVEY, 36
OWNER & PRINCIPAL
CRAFTED KITCHEN DESIGN
/ POST FALLS, IDAHO
2019 REVENUE: \$97,000

ON TRAINING: My experience is more well-rounded than a lot of my peers, and I think it gives me an edge. I started with an education focused on commercial projects, moved into a design-build firm, worked for an independent designer, joined a flooring company, and worked

in corporate for a stint. Being able to be hands-on in multiple facets of the industry gave me a greater understanding of how the whole process works. You gain trust faster when you know the language.

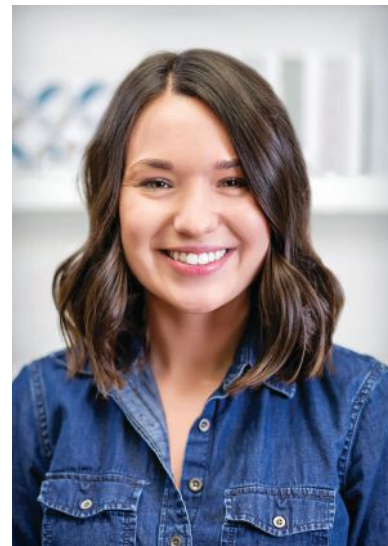
ON COMPETITION: There is enough work to go around. **Instead of viewing your peers as your biggest competition, reframe them as your biggest resource.** Healthy competition is great, but collaboration grows the industry and all businesses involved.

DESIGN

STEPHANIE HOFFMEIER, 26
HEAD OF DESIGN
BELLWEATHER DESIGN-BUILD / PHILADELPHIA

BIGGEST CONTRIBUTION: When I was hired, Bellweather had never had a true designer. So once I started, **we worked to create standard operating procedures and checklists to ensure quality control and a written standard for the design process.**

Many of the checklists and spreadsheets I've created for the design department are based off my own ideas for how things should read and look for overall organization and a thoughtful approach to the process. I think to myself, "If I was filling this out, what would I write down first, or what would I need to check first in order to get through this meeting as efficiently and effectively as possible?"



OWNER

LENA McNALLY, 32
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT & OWNER
HIVEX BASEMENT FINISHING CO. /
FREDERICKSBURG, VA.
2019 REVENUE: \$5.2 MILLION

ON REFERRAL PROGRAMS: About 30% of our sales comes from referrals, and the HIVEX Gold Club is our way of investing in ongoing relationships with our clients. Just because their project is completed doesn't mean that the client-contractor relationship has to end. **Investing in our customers and helping them remember us and feel valued increases the likelihood they will refer us to their friends.**

When adding a client to our Gold Club, we look at online reviews, referrals, and responses to the Guild Quality surveys that each client completes, among other criteria. We spend around \$20K annually on our Gold Club members, particularly on gifts that could be used in basements.



OWNER

**ANNA GRAHAM, 26
OWNER & PRINCIPAL
DESIGNER**

**ANNA GRAHAM
INTERIORS /
ODENTON, MD.**

2019 REVENUE: \$120K

ON UPCOMING INDUSTRY

CHANGES: I think we will see an increase of women getting involved in the construction industry. The percentage of women now hovers just under 10%, and I think there is definitely an influx coming. **Designers who used to specialize in custom furnishings and window treatments are expanding to get involved in remodeling because "trade-only"**

brands that don't currently employ a designer are struggling to be fully accessible to homeowners who want it all under one roof.



OWNER

**PAIGE MAURER, 30
OWNER & DESIGNER
PAIGE LEE
INTERIORS /
TRAVERSE CITY,
MICH.**

**2019 REVENUE:
\$433,000**

ON COMMUNICATION:

Many of my clients live out of town, and most are too far to drive up for

something like an electrical walk-through or a last-minute meeting. I use technology to my advantage with this, particularly FaceTime. **Those clients can't make a multi-hour drive, but they can usually take an hour out of their day to FaceTime while we complete that walk-through or run through a checklist of items to be addressed.** Having that conversation face-to-face, even if it's via screen, is more personal than talking on a phone, and they get to feel like they're on the jobsite with me and give their input, even from miles away.



PRODUCTION

**NOAH JAY-BONN, 37
PROJECT MANAGER
CRAFTSMAN DESIGN & RENOVATION /
PORTLAND, ORE.**

ON CREATING STANDARD PRACTICES:

Largely, carpentry is an experiential tradition passed down orally from carpenter to carpenter. You learn by doing, and you learn how to do it by someone showing you. But how do you make sure that your process is the same company-wide and that everyone is achieving the same results? And then how do you codify these processes without it being a stuffy document no one remembers? One of the answers I came up with is Workshop Wednesdays. **Our lead carpenters facilitate a workshop for all the other carpenters on site, every week, for 20 minutes to an hour, where they demonstrate**

how and why we do things. These workshops pass knowledge from carpenter to carpenter, increase efficiency, and provide quality control on our work. By doing them every week with the entire company, we're creating a living set of best practices that touches on all aspects of each project.



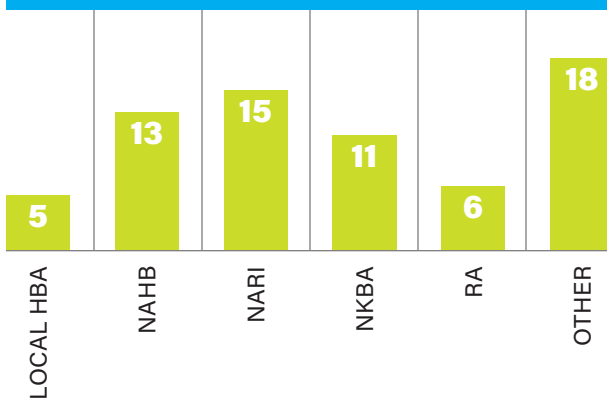
OWNER

CHRISTOPHER McNALLY, 32
PRESIDENT & OWNER
HIVEX BASEMENT FINISHING CO. /
FREDERICKSBURG, VA.

2019 REVENUE: \$5.2 MILLION

ON ATTRACTING EMPLOYEES: We invested into remodeling an unused portion of our office into an employee center called "The HIVE," a space that's all about our people. We intentionally designed the space to be friendly, fun, and unique, and it includes a full kitchen, TVs, projector for movie nights/training, a gaming system, custom HIVEX arcade, shuffleboard, darts, and soon will include a pool table and kid's playhouse. **We also have our Friday morning meetings in this space so we can all be together in a comfortable environment, which inspires more open conversation and encourages camaraderie.**

ARE THE FORTY UNDER 40 MEMBERS OF ASSOCIATIONS?



LEADERSHIP TEAM

CHRIS FORD, 37
PROPERTY INSPECTOR
& TRAINER
HOME REPAIR, LLC /
KING OF PRUSSIA, PA

LEAD GENERATION: We have strong relationships with our clients, businesses, and real estate agents in our markets. We receive many referrals to increase curb appeal, conduct repairs and replacements due to wear and tear, and provide storm damage restoration work. I ramped up our restoration program to provide maps of the storm areas to help educate our markets and notify others of potential damage.



OWNER

ASHLEY WAINSCOTT, 31
OWNER & CEO
SIMPLY SOLD /
AUSTIN, TEXAS
2019 REVENUE:
\$2 MILLION

ON STARTING A BUSINESS: Avoid winging it. It's key to recognize that you don't have to have all the answers, and that there are people out there who you can learn from and who are willing to teach you. When I started Simply Sold, I was figuring out on the fly

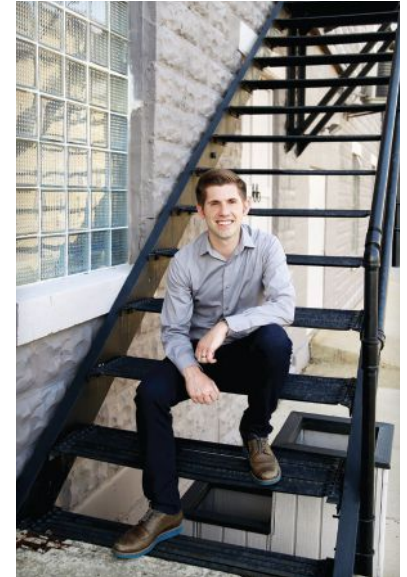
what worked, what didn't, and what I wanted my company to look like, but you can only wing it for awhile before it becomes a snowball effect. **Look for a mentor, consider hiring a business coach, and surround yourself with people who complement the areas where you may not be as strong or knowledgeable.**



LEADERSHIP TEAM

PATRICK "MICK" LYNCH, 32
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF
INSTALLATIONS
POWER HOME REMODELING GROUP /
CHESTER, PA.

BIG-COMPANY CHALLENGES: We'll complete almost \$900 million in installation revenue this year. At that scale, any inefficiency in our system is amplified. **It forces us to truly define what we're going to tackle as a business to ensure a consistently high-quality experience in all our markets.** Another challenge is navigating the supply-chain world to provide all the required products for our installations. It requires constant researching and vetting of new products and new vendors to make sure we are able to keep up with the demand at the volume that we do.



OWNER

GREG OLSEN, 36
CO-OWNER
KRUMWIEDE HOME PROS /
BENSENVILLE, ILL.
2019 REVENUE: \$3.7 MILLION

INDUSTRY TRAJECTORY: Where there is a need, there will be contractors to fill it. If the labor industry continues its decline, that may be the only real limit to remodeling's growth. I'm optimistic that labor will catch up a few years down the road.

STANDING OUT: We do not try to be all things to all people. Simplifying what we do has given us less problems and more profit.



OWNER

JOSEPH DANZ, 36
PRESIDENT
BOSTON EXTERIOR
REMODELING /
BOSTON
2019 REVENUE:
\$3.5 MILLION

ON BEING A NURSE: I have been a registered nurse since 2008 and worked as a nurse at Boston Medical Center until my son was born about a year ago. The nursing profession taught me critical-thinking strategies and emotional intelligence. **Those skills assist me when I am faced with complicated construction designs, maneuvering different worksites, and home-owner preferences.**

EXTERIOR CHALLENGES IN BOSTON: We have some of the oldest and most beautiful homes per square mile in the country in this city, some that have been in families for generations. Unfortunately, from the 1970s to the '90s, a lot of homes were "updated" with poor products, many installed improperly. There are times we strip old siding from a home and unearth beautiful 100-year details.



DESIGN

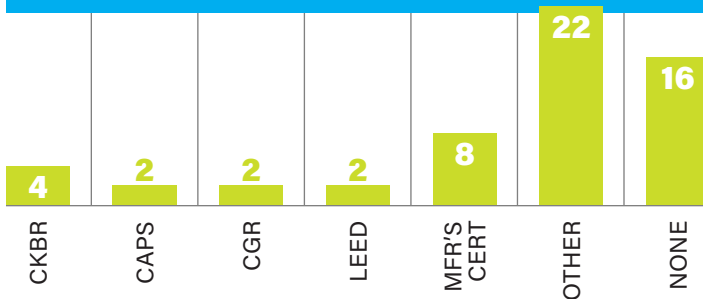
**ASHLEY NOETHE, 32
DESIGNER**

NORMANDY REMODELING / CHICAGO

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN: Understanding how our environment influences the way we feel and behave has led me to alter certain renovations to provide homeowners a psychologically sound environment. **Acknowledging the emotion behind a space, especially one as personal as a home, is critical.** By observing behaviors and having conversations to learn more about my clients, I am able to interpret them more efficiently and better alter renovations to meet their specific needs.

STANDING OUT: Our clients get to work with one designer from beginning to end, which is a unique characteristic of our service that allows us to form an individualized relationship with our customers.

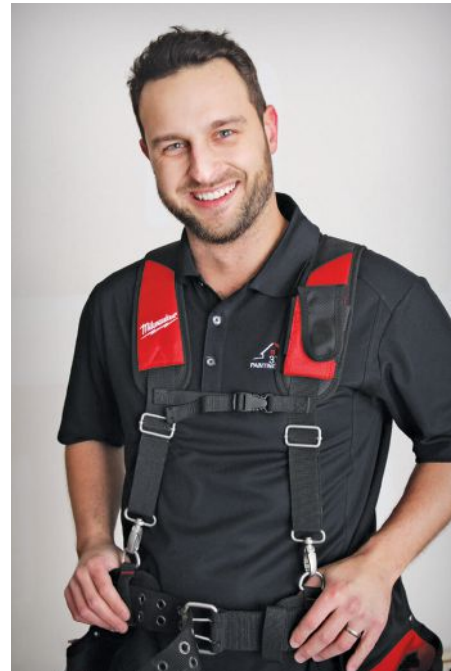
FORTY UNDER 40 CERTIFICATIONS



OWNER

**LUKE DOBBINS, 39
OWNER
WAKE REMODELING /
APEX, N.C.
2019 REVENUE:
\$1.9 MILLION**

**FACING THE LABOR
SHORTAGE:** We are employing apprentice-level carpenters and training them in the trade. **We are engaging with education on the front lines** and partnering with other organizations to gain industry interest on a high-school level.



OWNER

**ANDRE
KAZIMIERSKI,
32
CO-OWNER /
FOUNDER AND
CEO
3RD GEN
PAINTING AND
REMODELING/
IMPROOVY /
WESTERN
SPRINGS, ILL.
2019 REVENUE:
\$1.4 MILLION**

**TECH
INNOVATION
FROM WITHIN:**

As crazy as it may sound, I believe we are at the precipice

of a home improvement tech revolution. New tech companies in the space like Block Renovation and Made Renovation are neat pitch-deck fodder, but in my eyes they are missing the mark. **I believe real change in home improvement will be spurred by innovators within the industry—innovators that understand the subtle nuances needed to really scale in the space.** Not to mention, remodelers and home improvement pros are loyal and tend to promote from within.



LEADERSHIP TEAM

LOU SALGE, 32

VICE PRESIDENT

FOUR SEASONS DESIGN & REMODELING / ANGOLA, IND.

LABOR SHORTAGE: Quality team members are fewer and farther between, compared to five to 10 years ago. That's one of the significant challenges for the next decade. So our company has created a master-apprentice system where we team up the older and younger tradespeople. **Some of our project leads are looking to retire soon, and they have immense knowledge that needs to be transferred quickly.** Also, it's unrealistic to think the younger guys can become knowledgeable in all fields in just two or three years. So we try to keep them focused on specific directions. For example, if they're carpenters, they might focus on cabinetry or rough framing.



SALES & DESIGN

JUSTIN FREDRICKS, 33

LEAD DESIGNER & ESTIMATOR,

DMG DESIGN + BUILD / METAIRIE, LA.

INDUSTRY TREND: Clients are naturally gravitating towards technology in their homes such as smart home systems that control temperature, lights, curtains, the whole house. As a designer, it's important to integrate innovative technology from the beginning as part of the big picture.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: A lot of clients have difficulty visualizing the end design. We provide high-quality presentations with blueprints, drawings, and 3D renderings so that we're showing them versus telling them. **I see my blueprint designs as telling a story.**



OWNER

MARK OLSEN, 34

CO-OWNER

KRUMWIEDE

HOME PROS /

BENSENVILLE, ILL.

2019 REVENUE:

\$3.7 MILLION

FAMILY BUSINESS

BENEFITS: It helps especially with the company's culture.

We are a family that cares about our employees and wants what's best for our customers.



OWNER

MARK WATSON, 39
OWNER
EXTERIOR MEDICS / SPRINGFIELD, VA.
2019 REVENUE: \$16 MILLION

ROOFING TRENDS: We've been seeing a higher influx in designer shingles for asphalt roofing. Homeowners ask about it because it allows them to get a premium look on their asphalt roof without having to change the material. Also, I can't not mention the trend-elephant in the room: metal roofing, which appears to be getting more and more popular. Metal offers a host of benefits such as longevity and low maintenance but boasts a higher price tag. Lastly, solar shingles are the future. Exterior Medics continues to research this technology and measure client demand, and we look forward to adding this segment to our business in the near future.

COMBATING THE LABOR SHORTAGE: It's common for construction companies to have high turnover. That's why a positive company culture is so important. **Hire on the personality, train on the skill. You focus on bringing enthusiastic, bright, and vibrant people in, and the rest manifests.**



DESIGN

MELISSA COOLEY, 34
DESIGNER-INTERIORS SPECIALIST
CASE DESIGN/REMODELING /
BETHESDA, MD.

OPEN CONCEPT: Design trends always fluctuate, but I think the idea of open-concept living is here to stay. People are finding more reasons to gather and socialize, and parents are balancing life while working from home, making open sight lines even more desirable. **The beauty of design is its ability to accommodate an ever-changing world.**



PRODUCTION

MATTHEW KEESIS, 39
FIELD SUPERINTENDENT
CAREY BROS. REMODELING /
BRENTWOOD, CALIF.

PRICING TRANSPARENCY: Our estimate is computerized and quite extensive, including every aspect of work, right down to the door bumpers. We summarize prices for each division of work. We share with our clients our contingency, overhead, and profit as separate line items.

CREW CHALLENGES: I schedule and manage based off my crew's varying skills. **If we have a certain trade scheduled that the crew member on site isn't skilled in, I'll switch them with someone more skilled.** There are times when I may need to wait a day or two for the right crew member to ensure the work is completed correctly.



OWNER

NICK SCHEEL, 38

OWNER

UNTAMED CONSTRUCTION / SPOKANE, WASH.

2019 REVENUE: \$940,000

BEST INNOVATIONS: We used to give a free estimate to anyone that wanted it. Then I shifted to a design-build model and started charging for the time to do estimates. **It was difficult to change my thinking and accept the idea that my time is valuable and I shouldn't give it away for free.** Also, the best thing I ever did was hire an interior designer. I'm creative, but the stuff I come up with doesn't come close to what she does. That helped us get higher-end projects



SALES

ANDREW ROONEY, 37

REMODELING CONSULTANT

MyHOME DESIGN &

REMODELING /

NEW YORK CITY

BIGGEST CHALLENGES:

Getting things done takes a little longer in New York City. In a suburb or another city, you can work on a site to or past 5pm. Here, you can only work from 9am to 4pm. We also have to work with tradespeople, super-intendents, doormen, porters—

there are a lot of hands in the jar for every project. So we often meet internally to discuss ways to keep costs down and deliver the product to the client at a palatable price point. **We have to be flexible and nimble.**



SALES & MARKETING

KRISTA AGAPITO, 39

DIRECTOR OF SALES

S&W KITCHENS / WINTER PARK, FLA.

ESTIMATES: With our estimates, we break things out by group. Some clients only want the design product; others also want construction services. So we break it out and let the client have control how much product or service they want.

DESIGN TREND: People will move away from the white Shaker cabinets that have been incredibly popular for so long and get into darker, warmer, more organic finishes.

LABOR SHORTAGE: The older guys are putting down their tool bags and retiring, but young people aren't really getting into the vocational trades. So we host interns from one of our local colleges in central Florida to let them see and understand this industry. And we've hired many of them. **If we as an industry turn our backs on what's happening, we'll get to a point of desperation where the designs are good but the construction isn't.**

DESIGN

JOSEPH CLYMER, 26
DESIGN-BUILD SPECIALIST
AMIANO AND SON
CONSTRUCTION /
SOUTHAMPTON, N.J.

LABOR SHORTAGE: The last several years, we have had a lot of success hiring young help, with little to no experience. **It allows us to train to our company standards and embraces growth with other positions.** Most of our current field staff has moved up in positions and has been with the company for many years.



30%

**AVERAGE INCREASE IN
REMODELING COMPANY
REVENUE FROM 2018-2019
(OWNERS ONLY)**

*ONE COMPANY SAW AN INCREASE OF 200%, BUT THEY
WERE AN OUTLIER AND REMOVED FROM THIS DATA SET



DESIGN

KINGSLEY CATALUCCI, 28
DESIGN CONSULTANT
RI KITCHEN & BATH DESIGN +
BUILD / WARWICK, R.I.

SALES TIP: People are investing a lot and want to feel they can count on me. That means protecting their interests, proposing materials that don't blow the budget, and not bullying them into something that they are uncomfortable with. **Read the client, read the room.** [Catalucci had an annual sales volume of \$1,050,000 in her first 9 months.]



OWNER

JOSH OQUELI, 39
OWNER & ARCHITECT
BONSAI DESIGN + BUILD / DENVER
2019 REVENUE: \$3 MILLION

STAYING ON BUDGET: We operate on a cost-plus basis. When we present a budget to a client, we also present a fee that's assessed to the cost. If we fail to adequately budget, we can get in trouble. **To protect against that, we give clients a concept service.** We conceptually design the project—site plans, floor plans, elevations—and put them into a set of drawings. We charge a small fee for that. Once we have the concept package in place, we budget. Because we understand the project so well by then, we can budget very accurately. We have not gone over budget for three years.



DESIGN

ALLIE MANN, 38
SENIOR INTERIOR DESIGN SPECIALIST
CASE DESIGN/REMODELING / BETHESDA, MD.

GIVING BACK: I graduated with seven people in my interior design major. This was before HGTV really became what it is today. I only had three professors, but they would lecture from the book and not offer personal insights. When I found an opportunity to connect with Northern Virginia Community College, I realized I had the chance to give back and be different than the professors I had. **The students appreciate that I share my real experiences and don't just teach from a book.**

DESIGN TREND: Color is having a moment. We're seeing a lot of clients and designers being more bold with selections. I'm still seeing the classic blue—in the last six months I've done three or four all-blue kitchens, but I'm also seeing green come on the scene, although it's not as strong as blue. Blue is the new neutral.

25.6%

AVERAGE INCREASE
 IN DESIGN COMPANY
 REVENUE
 FROM 2018-2019



PRODUCTION

BRYAN McLAIN, 37
PRODUCTION MANAGER
SARDONE CONSTRUCTION / DALLAS

BID PROCESS: I'm a believer in having a dedicated estimator who communicates with sales, design, production, and accounting. Our process works like this: 1) Sales Call 2) Design (paid for) 3) "Guesstimate." For this, the estimator comes up with a number within a \$12K range. 4) Walk through bid day with subs. I show them a set of plans and scope of work. This produces the true estimate.



OWNER

BROOKE EVERSOLL, 38
OWNER & PRINCIPAL DESIGNER
BEE STUDIOS / ST PETERSBURG, FLA.
2019 REVENUE: \$915,000

SOCIAL MEDIA: I've been active on Instagram for four years, and over the past two or so I've been getting more leads from there. It's now an equal split between Houzz, Google, Instagram, and referrals. I used to advertise on Houzz and showed up high in their listings. Even before I started paying, 80% of my business came from Houzz. But over time, Instagram has gone up where as Houzz has fallen off, although to be fair, I'm no longer paying. All the leads are about the same quality. Instagram is also great for communities. I've become friends with designers in other markets and learned a lot from them. **We have Instachats and commonly bring each other in if we have something that's stumping us.**



OWNER

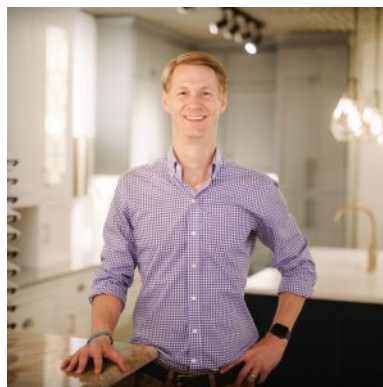
STACY EAKMAN, 38
PRESIDENT

EAKMAN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY / SEATTLE

2019 REVENUE: \$7.2 MILLION

REMODELING ACTIVITY: I see remodeling activity continuing to increase for the foreseeable future. In Seattle, one of the country's biggest tech hubs, there's not enough property, so the houses that were built here in the early 1900s to 1930s need to be remodeled desperately.

SOCIAL MEDIA: I believe wholeheartedly that social media is the cheapest and best way to advertise. We spend almost all of our marketing budget on content creation. It's not often that people call and want us to build them a house because they saw us on Instagram. That's not the goal. But when an architect tells a client about us, that client can follow us on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, or TikTok. When they sit down with us, they know who we are. **Social media builds their confidence and legitimizes our company. That's the goal.**



OWNER

DREW MARKS, 37
OPERATIONS MANAGER & PARTNER
MARKS-WOODS CONSTRUCTION SERVICES / ALEXANDRIA, VA.

2019 REVENUE: \$5.3 MILLION

IN-HOUSE TEAM: Bringing interior design and cabinetry services in-house gave us more control over project schedules and costs.

Cutting out the middleman allows us to have an active role in every aspect of a home remodeling project. Trust is very important to us, and by keeping services in-house, our clients get to know each team member and can trust their home is in good hands.



LEADERSHIP TEAM

LINDSAY HELMICK, 34
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

ALLEN CONSTRUCTION / SANTA BARBARA, CALIF.

TRANSPARENCY: We're incredibly transparent. We give everyone specific line items. Clients feel more comfortable knowing where their costs are going. It's also a selling point.

BEST INNOVATION: Our owner and founder is a leading advocate for building green. His home, which we built, is a good example. **We have green committees in-house for both business and building practices, and we help clients understand why that's an added value, as well as why it's good for the environment and for them.**

BECOMING AN EMPLOYEE-OWNED COMPANY: As of 2020, we are a majority employee-owned company. That's a huge deal not only for internal morale but also from a control perspective. Now, we have a say in our own fate.



SALES & MARKETING

JOSH YAGER, 34
MARKETING DIRECTOR
MAD CITY WINDOWS & BATHS /
NEENAH, WISC.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: Getting qualified individuals. Our solution to that problem was to overhaul our pay structure for entry-level brand-ambassador positions. We pay up to 40% more on average than our competitors for the same marketing position. **We invest more to generate more business and be more competitive.**

BUSINESS HACK: Anywhere people gather, we make our presence known. When I started here in 2016, we did about 36 marketing events. This coming year, we'll have over 600 events. Staying heavily involved in the community and getting word-of-mouth referrals has been our biggest move forward; we generate as much as 70% of our total business from canvass, retail, and marketing events.



OWNER

MATTHEW HEMENOVER, 39
OWNER
HEMENOVER
CONSTRUCTION /
KANKAKEE, ILL.
2019 REVENUE: \$2.5
MILLION

ON BEING A THIRD-GEN

OWNER: We are going into our 84th year. My father had a stable of long-time subcontractors and vendors that worked with him for many years. But a lot of those vendors were on their second generation as well and didn't have a third one to take over the business. So, I've had to find new, high-quality vendors—plumbers, electricians, and so on— that will continue to uphold our values and quality. **We have aligned ourselves with some younger companies that are able to adapt and fit into our processes, better than maybe the 40-year-old company that's more set in their ways.** Not to say there isn't value with that company, but I hope to pass this company along to my sons one day, and want to ensure we are growing our subcontractors with us.

SALES & DESIGN

MONICA PARSEL, 35
DESIGNER & ESTIMATOR
WINSTON BROWN REMODELING / TOPEKA, KAN.

BALANCING BUDGET: Clients have endless ability to look for what they like. **We find out what exactly it is in that picture or space that they want, and then we're as creative as possible to achieve that within budget.**

For instance, sometimes we use high-end porcelain to achieve the look of the most expensive natural stone. Also, people are staying in their homes a lot longer today. So we're doing designs for clients at their current

stage of life but with the intent of staying put for a very long time, even when they're not as mobile.



OWNER

DAVID PARRAGUIRRE, 37

OWNER

HOMEOWNER SOLUTIONS / COLUMBIA, MD.

2019 REVENUE: \$1.5 MILLION

TRAINING SHORTAGE: I'm from Mexico and came to the U.S. when I was 14. As leaders in this industry, we should do a better job training Hispanic people. In my area, 75% of people in the trades are Hispanic, but many of them never learned the right way to do things. I want to do something for the Hispanic community in this industry.

My goal is to conduct trainings for groups of Hispanic

people, in their own language.

I am a Brand Ambassador for Versatex and moving toward working with LP SmartSide in the same capacity, and would love to get them involved in this initiative.



A MEASURE OF OPTIMISM: WILL REMODELING ACTIVITY INCREASE, STAY THE SAME, OR DECREASE IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

INCREASE 97%

STAY THE SAME 3%

NOTE: THIS SURVEY WAS COMPLETED BEFORE COVID-19 BECAME WIDESPREAD



GO FURTHER

with the recognition to back you up.

Let your experience work in your favor

while you build distinction for your business with a professional Certification from NARI—THE trusted resource for the remodeling industry.

FIND THE CERTIFICATION THAT FITS YOU BEST:

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Certified Kitchen and Bath Remodeler (CKBR): Remodeling experts who provide services specific to kitchens and bathrooms.

Certified Lead Carpenter (CLC): Field professionals who oversee the technical aspects of the project, including personnel management and material flow.

Certified Remodeling Project Manager (CRPM): Professionals overseeing the administrative aspects of a project such as customer satisfaction, scheduling subcontractors, record-keeping, risk management, financial controls, etc.

Universal Design Certified Professional (UDCP): Professionals who handle renovations for improved accessibility and ease of use.

Certified Remodeler Specialist (CRS): Professional remodelers who specialize in one area, such as concrete and masonry, electrical, insulation, mechanical systems, plumbing systems or roofing and siding.

Certified Remodeler Associate (CRA): Professionals in a supporting profession such as architects, designers, manufacturers, suppliers and consultants.

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CIRCLE 767



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
THE REMODELING INDUSTRY
Remodeling Done Right.™

MAXIMIZING PROFITABILITY ACROSS STAGES OF GROWTH

USE THESE FLOWCHARTS TO GAIN INSIGHTS INTO YOUR COMPANY'S STAFFING AND THE ROLE OF EACH TEAM MEMBER

BY DOUG DWYER | DREAMMAKER BATH & KITCHEN

As a full-service design-build kitchen, bath, and interior remodeling franchise company, we are always looking at how we can improve our systems and processes for greater effectiveness, efficiency, and profitability.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE AND KEY INSIGHT

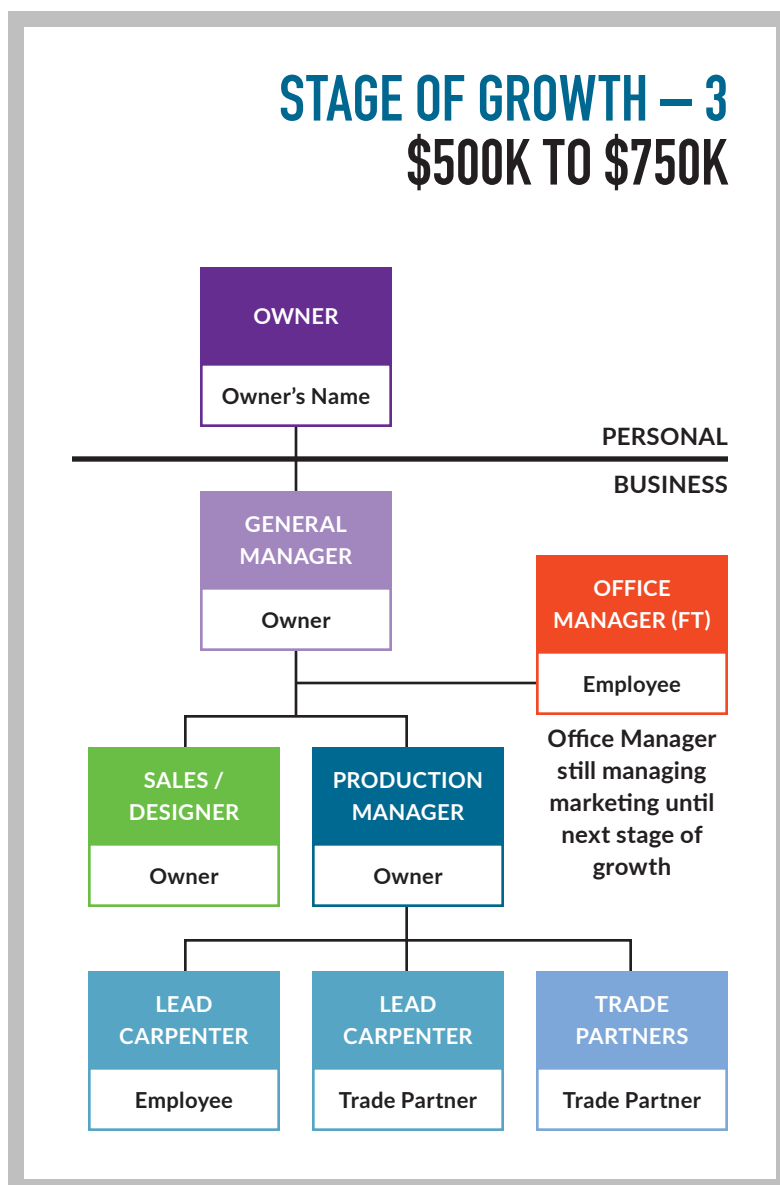
Back in 2012, we were working on creating a Visual Process Flow Map of what happens with a lead, beginning with our sales process through our administration, production, and accounting system until the job has been successfully completed. When we started to analyze how different revenue levels of our locations across the country had different needs to scale profitably, we discovered something that puzzled us.

Up to that point we couldn't fully figure out why one remodeling franchise doing more than \$1 million a year in revenue, could pay themselves very well, and was left with a double-digit net profit, while another location with the exact same revenue struggled with cash flow and to breakeven. By digging into the data and org charts, we discovered one of the key reasons this was happening: The company that was always struggling at a million in revenue was overstaffed.

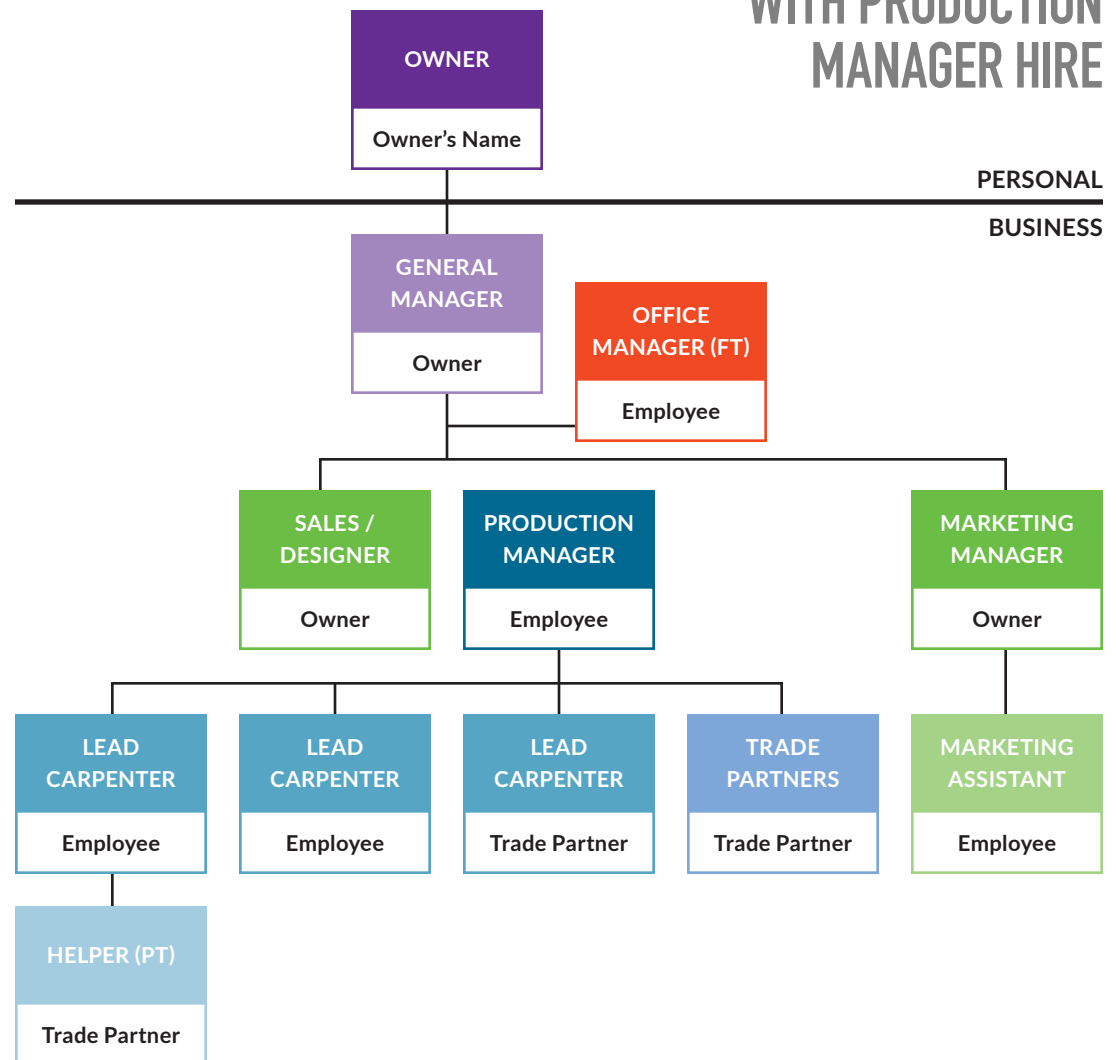
How and why does this happen? I have found there are several potential reasons:

- 1 Quickly throwing people at business challenges.** Some company leaders/owners think staffing is the solution to solve problems in the business, versus applying systems.
- 2 Staffing heavy.** Some keep hoping sales will increase to justify the number of staff; this can become vicious cycle and potential trap without the right experience and/or counsel.
- 3 Lacking knowledge, awareness, and time.** Some are just blind to the reality they are overstaffed. They don't know what they don't know because they lack the time or business experience to do the deep dive to gain these kinds of insights.

Despite the business challenge we knew we had to solve, it was exciting that after 15 years of being re-branded as DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen, we had enough resources and time to dig into this.



STAGE OF GROWTH – 4 \$750K TO \$1.2 MILLION WITH PRODUCTION MANAGER HIRE



THE SOLUTION TO OUR CHALLENGE: THE STAGES OF GROWTH MAP

But what would we do with the insights we gained regarding revenue and staffing and their major effects on profitability?

In 2015, we took on a new project developing a Stages of Growth Map to show what it takes to get from a start-up with no sales to a multi-million-dollar company. As you could imagine, this was a tedious and time-consuming project. It was only possible because of the data we were able to gather from having enough locations,

sales volume, years with a national business presence, and resources to embark on the study. We ultimately discovered and created a detailed "Stages of Growth Map," outlining a clear path forward for our locations starting with zero revenue all the way to \$5.2 million (with a vision toward an even much larger company).

STAGES OF GROWTH MAP INSIGHTS

Let me share some specific insights we gained. For this example, I will focus on just one of the critical roles in a remodeling company and how that person's responsibilities change as the business increases in

annual revenue (or moves from one stage of growth to the next).

The role is an Office Manager, "OM". Their job will change not only as revenue increases, but also as the company's number of projects increase. With larger jobs, an OM can handle more sales volume, whereas an OM with smaller job averages cannot manage as much sales volume because they are dealing with a greater number of clients. Average job size isn't necessarily good or bad, it is just understanding how they affect the dynamics of your business and staffing needs. The OM in our model has six key areas of responsibilities (see sidebar on next page).

Now that you've become familiar with the OM responsibilities, allow me to share two examples on how their role evolves as the business grows.

EXAMPLE 1: OM ROLE IN STAGE OF GROWTH - 4

As a company starts growing into the middle of "Stage of Growth - 4" (\$750K - \$1.2 million in annual revenue with a job average of \$25K), the first transition of responsibilities from the OM will be the marketing duties. The general manager will create a new part-time marketing position for their company. Why? Because the OM cannot provide excellence in service with his or her other responsibilities. Marketing or some other accountability will suffer.

You cannot afford for marketing to suffer, and now the need for maintaining lead flow is greater because of the higher sales volume. And you never know when the economy will shift, or a new competitor will come into play. We have learned the hard way you have to keep your marketing arm strong to weather the ups and downs of business. See the infographic that illustrates this transition from Stage of Growth - 3, to Stage of Growth - 4.

EXAMPLE 2: OM ROLE IN STAGE OF GROWTH - 8

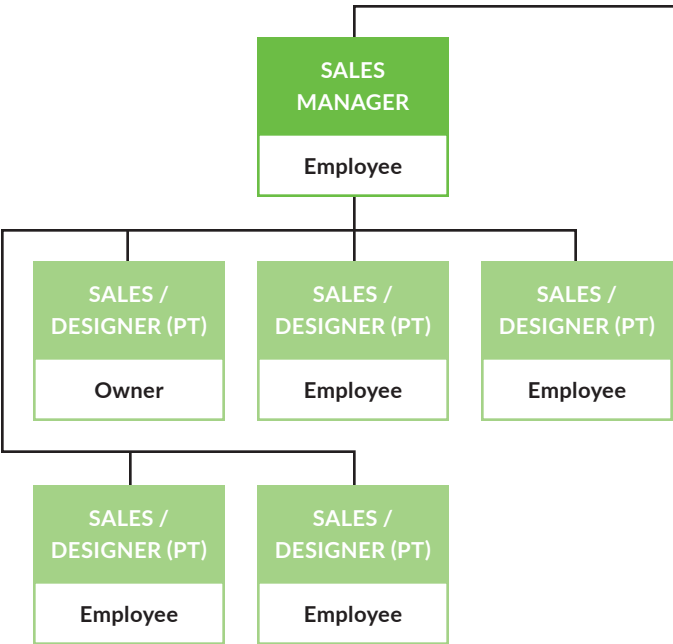
If your annual revenue is about to break \$2.7 million with an average job size of \$25K, your OM can only handle the top three responsibilities out of the six. Why? Because with the volume of jobs being moved through the company, they will not have the capacity to keep up with all the details. Thus, your organizational chart and staff grows, as you now have brought on new hires for Accounting/HR and Purchasing. The key we have found is to know when to make these moves so that

you are maximizing profitability and ensuring you are delivering excellent customer service to help drive repeat and referral business.

See the infographic of our "Stage of Growth - 8" organizational chart related to the example just explained.

Insight: the higher your average job size is, the lower number of salespeople you will need on staff (this example again is based on a

PERSONAL
BUSINESS



SIX KEY AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY OF AN OFFICE MANAGER (OM) SERVING AS MARKETING MANAGER (F)


RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- 1) Administrative duties.
- 2) Sales duties. (support role only)
- 3) Production-related duties. (support role only)
- 4) Purchasing duties.
- 5) Accounting duties (includes HR).
- 6) Marketing duties (will transition to a new marketing asst. employee (PT) in the next stage of growth).

NOTES: All part-time duties at this level of sales; The red indicates the need for a transition to the next stage of growth.

INSIGHT: If your average job size is \$80K, then you can probably grow one more stage of growth before making this transition. Let's take a look at a second example on how the OM role changes as your business grows to be a \$3-million company.

\$25K average job size).

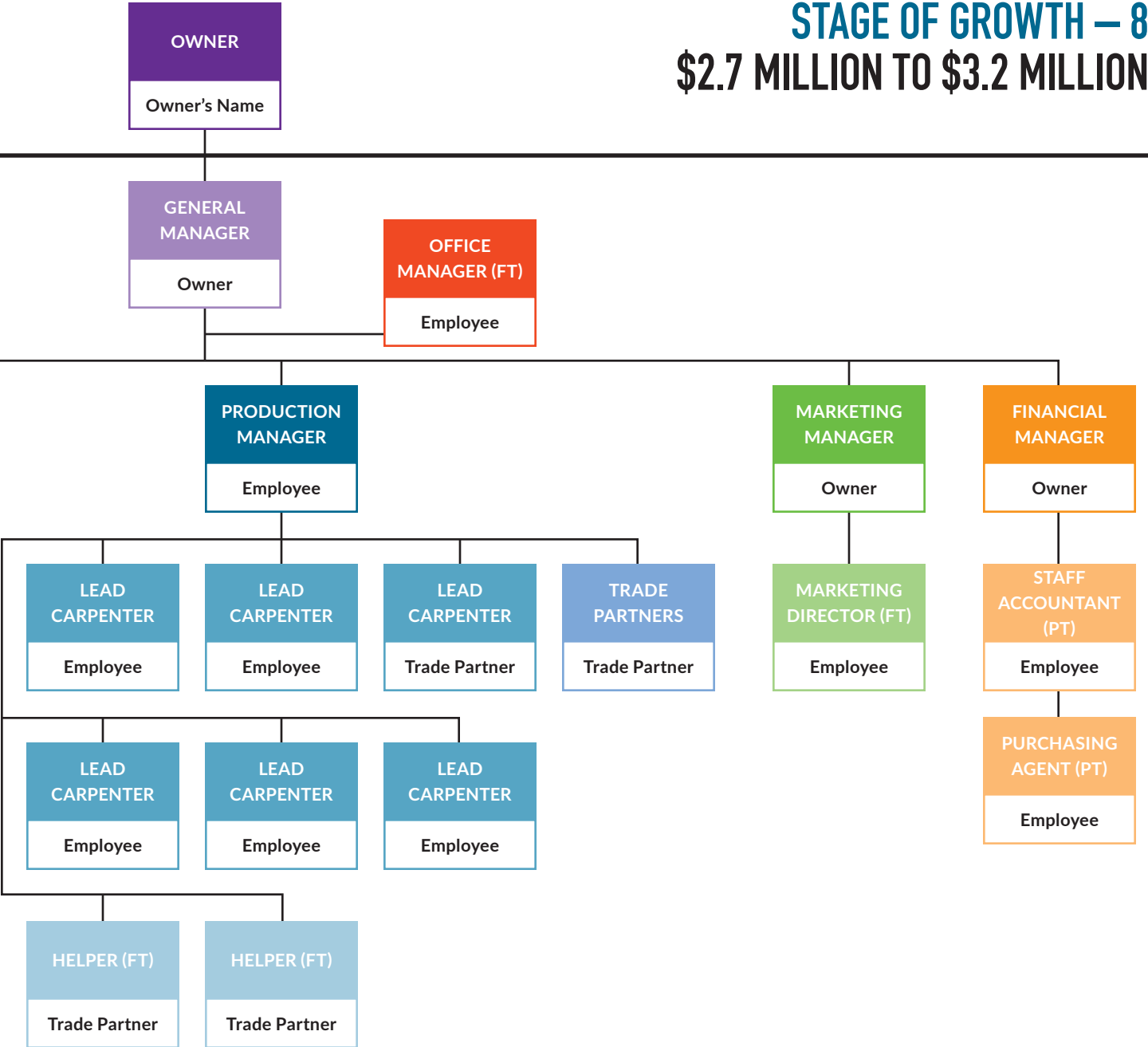
It is my hope you picked up some nuggets to help on your road to operating a more stable, profitable business and a better quality of life. Should you have any questions on our stages of growth map, please send me an email, give me a call, or send me a connection and message on LinkedIn. 



Doug Dwyer is president of DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen. A recognized speaker and writer in the home services and franchising industries, he has 25-years' experience helping remodelers and others from a construction related field to build successful businesses. He also helps entrepreneurs from outside the industry grow into successful remodelers.

STAGE OF GROWTH – 8

\$2.7 MILLION TO \$3.2 MILLION



TIPS TO TACKLE HOMESHOWS

THEY'RE EXHAUSTING, EXCITING CHANCES TO NETWORK, CAPTURE LEADS, AND SEAL DEALS—BUT ONLY IF YOU SURVIVE

BY ANGIE BUCHINGER



The Homeshow Gods will test you. A bunch of things will go wrong at the last minute, and you need to be okay with that.

Even though you sent a text reminding your team to “spring ahead” for daylight savings time, you’ll be short-handed an hour because a team member forgot. The electricity for your booth will not work, the neutral-colored carpeting you ordered will arrive in bright red, and you’re probably going to lose your wallet at least once. Your display will break, your khakis will get dirty, and the call center rep’s going to give you attitude.

Stay strong my friend, and remember that things are going wrong for your competitor, too. Take a few deep breaths, and follow these tips to get you through it.

1 GET IN EARLY, STAY THERE LATE

You might not love rising with the sun, but you’ll get the best parking spot and have time to prepare. After all day on your feet, you won’t have to walk a mile to find your car.

Make the most of your time on the floor, and stay through the end. If I had \$100 for every set I made in the last 15 minutes of a show, I’d be writing this from my own private island.

2 KEEP UP WITH COMMUNICATION

Answer your phone, return your texts, and check your emails. Imagine the baton pass of a relay race; now multiply that by 5,000. Between the events team and the call center passing leads back and forth, homeshows can start to feel like those races. Remaining responsive and clear in your communications can prevent major problems from occurring.

It’s impossible to do this without a little prep. Keep your phone



charged, and bring chargers for your team. Also, test out your mobile service before the show. Homeshows are often housed in large metal buildings with below average reception. It's important to troubleshoot before the show, rather than during. If all else fails, and you need to step outside to get connectivity, communicate to both the call center and your team when that will happen.

3 MOTIVATE YOUR TEAM

It's easy to get caught up in the details while you're working long hours. Remember what the goal of each show is: to hit appointments-set targets, while offering your team and visiting patrons a fun experience.

Recognition can be a powerful motivator. For example, offer spiffs for the most sets from the day before. Take the winning team member's picture, and post their name and results in a group chat for the team.

As prospects walk away, ask for their contact info and reiterate in the request whatever initially brought them to your booth.

4 ENERGIZE AND HYDRATE

What you eat and drink before and during the show is crucial. We speak to hundreds of people during a show weekend, so don't forget the water. Protein snacks keep you full and focused during the show, and will help ward off cravings. Zero-prep items—something as simple as an apple or a banana—take low effort and pack well in your bag.

5 ALWAYS GET THE CONTACT INFO

Being approachable and friendly comes with clear perks, but don't forget the drawbacks. Because you were personable, they don't want to let you down. So, when people say they'll come back around later to speak with you, prepare to say goodbye to your lead. It's helpful to prepare your team ahead of time for this objection and others.


Think of it as a negotiation. Before going into any negotiation, it's important to know what you need and want to get out of the conversation. For example, I'd like to get an appointment from every conversation I have with a homeowner, but at a minimum, I need their contact information.

6 LOOK PROFESSIONAL, BUT KEEP COMFORT IN MIND

If the leadership in your company allows the team to wear athletic shoes, do it, and ensure they match with the company uniform. Your shoes, and the rest of your uniform, should be clean and crisp—it's you're the first impression of the company a prospect sees, even before they get to the product.

7 PROVIDE CONTINUOUS SUPPORT & TRAINING

We all know the constant tasks of planning, setup, showtime, and tear-down, but when a setter brings in 10 leads instead of five, you can easily see the ripple effect of good training. Check in with team members throughout the show. It will help them feel your presence and your investment in the show, while also acting as a reminder for them to be at their best.

Before sharing the show's results with your team, remind them of the important role they played, ask about favorite sets, and provide the opportunity for celebration of the wins, before getting into the nitty-gritty of what can be improved before the next show. 

Angie Buchinger is the marketing manager for home improvement company Tundraland, based in Appleton, Wisconsin.

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LET'S TALK

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1 For those needing a construction adhesive that can hold vertical projects in place instantly without the need for bracing or clamping, there is **DAP's** reformulated DynaGrip Heavy Duty. It provides 50% more instant grab than previous formulations; works for interior and exterior construction and remodeling projects. Besides stronger, more durable bonds, it's easier to gun for greater efficiency, and its low-odor formula complies with VOC regulations. Offered in 5 oz., 9 oz., and 28 oz. sizes. **DAP.com** / CIRCLE 854

2 **Titebond Construction Adhesives'** new WeatherMaster Ultimate MP Sealant offers the high-performance characteristics of other WeatherMaster sealants, plus the value and convenience of a multipurpose product. It seals windows and doors; metal and vinyl siding; offers waterproofing and general roofing applications; works on vents, gutters, exterior applications; and more. Available in 18 colors, including translucent. Its low VOC content meets LEED, NAHB, CARB, and Green Globes building standards. Comes in 10.1-oz. cartridges and 20-oz. sausage packs. **Titebond.com** / CIRCLE 855

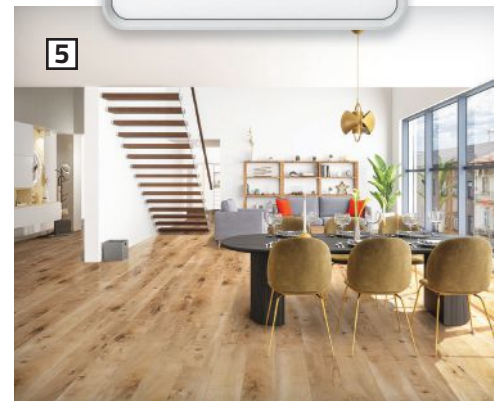
3 **Custom Building Products** introduces eight new grout colors: Steel Blue (shown), Arctic White, Cool White, Coffee Bean, Brown Velvet, Ash, Warm Gray, and Shadow. Custom's grouts come in 40

hues, so users can handle everything from tile patterns to natural stone installations. The company also enhanced its Polyblend grout, and the result is Polyblend Plus, which has brighter, enhanced color and is more efflorescence resistant without compromising durability. Polyblend Plus comes in sanded and non-sanded versions.

Custombuildingproducts.com / CIRCLE 856

4 **Bostik** introduces VCT-Lock tile adhesive. Approved for use over "cutback" stains, it is solvent-free and dries translucent. Tiles can be laid into the adhesive for an extended period of time after drying. VCT-Lock is highly water resistant when dry. It contains an advanced antimicrobial system to protect the adhesive from bacteria and fungus. It may be used with most manufacturers' vinyl composition tiles. Designed for interior installations only. **Bostik.com** / CIRCLE 857

5 **Mapei Group's** Ultracolor Plus Max grout offers two new shades: Pure White and Jet Black. Suitable for grouting tile and stone joint widths from $\frac{1}{16}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Such fine-sand aggregate means there's no scratching of delicate tiles and stones. This grout features DropEffect technology, which reduces surface absorption to help repel water, dirt, and grime from penetrating grout joints. Meets or exceeds ANSI A118.7 for high-performance cement grouts. **Mapei.com** / CIRCLE 858




1 AHF Products introduces its waterproof, 100% hardwood flooring product from Bruce. Hydropel is engineered hardwood that's infused with proprietary technology to resist water for up to 36 hours. It can be installed in bathrooms, kitchens, mud rooms, entryways, and more. Easy to install, it comes in an array of design options, and is available in oak and hickory, in smooth, scraped, and brushed textures. Its low-gloss finish is available in 5" planks up to 48" long. **AHFProducts.com** / CIRCLE 859

2 Daltile has launched the TREAD line of 2cm outdoor porcelain pavers. Its looks include wood, quartzite, assorted stone, slate, French limestone, and Belgian bluestone. These pavers are made to resist stains, fading, scratches, fire, and slips. The porcelain pavers consist of six collections: Assemble, a contemporary stone-look paver (shown) and Commissary, a natural wood-look paver—plus existing porcelain paver collections that are now part of the Tread line: Ambassador, Diplomacy, Delegate, and Dignitary. **Daltile.com** / CIRCLE 860

3 Emerson's new thermostat provides remote control of floor-warming systems from mobile devices. The Warm Tiles ColorTouch Wi-Fi-enabled thermostats come in two models: the ESW ColorTouch wireless thermostat and the standard ES ColorTouch thermostat. Both monitor and regulate Warm Tiles DFT, DMC, SAM,

and WTE floor warming systems, as well as 120/240V systems from other leading manufacturers. The thermostats work with flooring material including ceramic and porcelain tiles, marble, granite, stone, laminate, or LVT tiles. **Emerson.com** / CIRCLE 861

4 Mannington is adding to its Restoration Collection of laminate flooring. This spring, the Anthology pattern will join the lineup. Anthology combines the look of White Oak, Hickory, and Maple to create a rich, dramatic look. The company's first laminate flooring pattern to feature 20 unique plank visuals, Anthology also features the firm's updated SpillShield Plus Waterproof technology, which is perfect for homes with children and pets. Anthology comes in five colors: Parchment (shown), Ink, Tannin, Suede, and Quill. **Mannington.com** / CIRCLE 862

5 Cali Brands has launched its "Longboards" Luxury Vinyl Collection, featuring longer, broader, and a more authentic hardwood look than ever. The coastal-inspired flooring sports extra-large dimensions with planks measuring 70½" long by 9" wide. Longboards are 100% waterproof and can be installed in kitchens, bathrooms, and below grade. The extra-durable construction makes for easy cleaning and includes a commercial-grade, 20-mil-thick, scratch-resistant wear layer for high traffic walkways. **Califloors.com** / CIRCLE 863 

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753	762	771	780	789	798	807	816	825	834	843	852	861	870	879	888	897	906	915	924	933	942	951
754	763	772	781	790	799	808	817	826	835	844	853	862	871	880	889	898	907	916	925	934	943	952
755	764	773	782	791	800	809	818	827	836	845	854	863	872	881	890	899	908	917	926	935	944	953
756	765	774	783	792	801	810	819	828	837	846	855	864	873	882	891	900	909	918	927	936	945	954
757	766	775	784	793	802	811	820	829	838	847	856	865	874	883	892	901	910	919	928	937	946	955
758	767	776	785	794	803	812	821	830	839	848	857	866	875	884	893	902	911	920	929	938	947	956
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1. Which of the following best describes your company's primary business? (Check one box)

- 10 ☐ Both Residential AND Commercial Remodeler
- 20 ☐ Residential Remodeling Contractor ONLY
- 30 ☐ Commercial Remodeling Contractor ONLY
- 40 ☐ Residential Kitchen & Bath Specialist
- 50 ☐ Exterior Replacement Contractor
- 60 ☐ General Contractor Engaged in Residential Remodeling
- 70 ☐ Residential Fire Damage or Insurance Restoration Contractor
- 90 ☐ Other (please specify): _____

2. Which category best describes your job title? (Check one box)

- 10 ☐ President, Owner, Partner, CEO, VP, General Manager
- 20 ☐ Project Manager, Designer, Construction Supervisor, Foreman
- 30 ☐ Purchasing Director, Salesperson / Estimator or Other Manager
- 90 ☐ Other (please specify): _____

3. Are you a home improvement contractor? (Check one box)

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. How many years has your company been involved in remodeling? (Check one box)

- A ☐ 11 or more years
- B ☐ 6-10 years
- C ☐ 3-5 years
- D ☐ 2 years or less

5. What is your company's annual installed dollar volume (labor and materials)? (Check one box)

- A ☐ More than \$10 million
- B ☐ \$5 million to 9.9 million
- C ☐ \$3 million to \$4.9 million
- D ☐ \$2 million to \$2.9 million
- E ☐ \$1 million to \$1.9 million
- F ☐ \$500,000 to \$999,999
- G ☐ Less than \$500,000

6. Does your company have a showroom for its remodeling business? (Check one box)

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Are you or someone with your firm currently a member of the following associations? (Check ALL that apply.)

- A ☐ NAHB C ☐ NKBA
- B ☐ NARI D ☐ USGBC

8. Which of the following products do you buy, specify, or recommend for your remodeling project? (Check ALL that apply.)

- 01 ☐ Appliances
- 02 ☐ Cabinets
- 03 ☐ Carpet
- 04 ☐ Countertops

- 05 ☐ Decks/Patios
- 06 ☐ Doors
- 07 ☐ Drywall
- 08 ☐ Energy-Efficient Products
- 09 ☐ Faucets
- 10 ☐ Fireplaces
- 11 ☐ Floors
- 12 ☐ Garage Doors
- 13 ☐ Home Security/Automation
- 14 ☐ HVAC
- 15 ☐ Insulation
- 16 ☐ Lighting
- 17 ☐ Locksets/Hardware
- 18 ☐ Masonry
- 19 ☐ Other Green/Sustainable Products
- 20 ☐ Paint
- 21 ☐ Patio Doors
- 22 ☐ Plumbing Fixtures
- 23 ☐ Roofing
- 24 ☐ Siding
- 25 ☐ Skylights
- 26 ☐ Sunspaces
- 27 ☐ Tile
- 28 ☐ Tools
- 29 ☐ Trucks/Commercial Vans
- 30 ☐ Tubs/Shower Surrounds
- 31 ☐ Windows
- ☐ None of the above

9. Which of the following publications do you receive personally addressed to you? (Check ALL that apply.)

- A ☐ Remodeling
- B ☐ Qualified Remodeler

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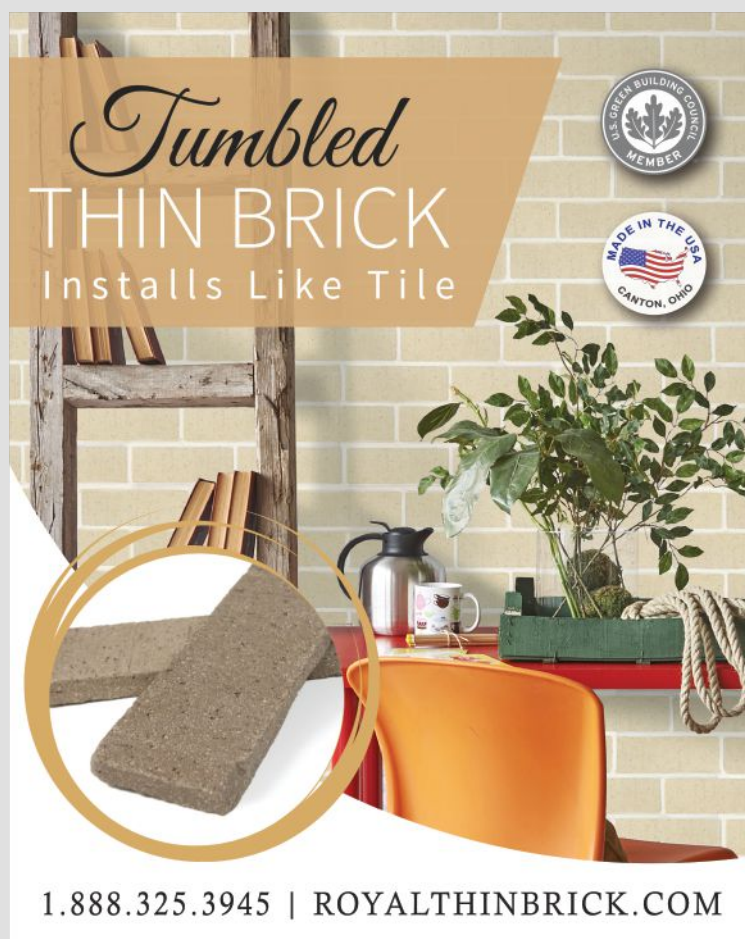
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ADVERTISER	PAGE #	RS #
Advantech.....	IFC-3.....	751
BathWraps.....	6.....	753
Country Wood Flooring.....	57.....	773
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Elias Woodwork.....	57.....	775
Ferguson Enterprises Inc.....	15.....	757
FootingPad.....	56.....	771
Franklin Intl.....	BC.....	777
Geico.....	4.....	752
Greensky Credit.....	13.....	756
Ingage.....	21.....	762
IronRock.....	56.....	770
Marlimar Mobile Strategies.....	16.....	758
NARI - Natl. Assn. of the Remodeling Ind.....	45.....	767
Pella Corp.....	27.....	764 / 778
Protective Products.....	57.....	774
QuinStreet.....	8.....	754
ReBath.....	22.....	763
Royal Building Products.....	30.....	766
Skilled Labor Fund.....	28-29.....	765
SoftPlan Systems Inc.....	20.....	761
Surefire.....	IBC.....	776
Versatex.....	10.....	755
Zipwall.....	18.....	759

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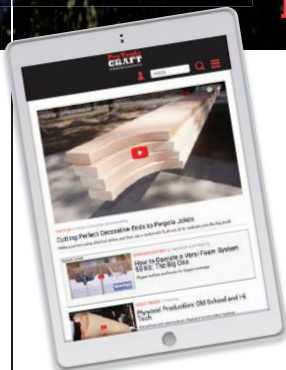
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The Relatability of a Remodeler Turned TV Host

AS UNIQUE AS DANNY LIPFORD'S CAREER IS, THERE ARE PLENTY OF LESSONS IN IT FOR THE EVERYDAY REMODELER

DANNY LIPFORD WAS A REMODELER before he was a television show host. Now he's both. He owns Lipford Construction out of Mobile, Alabama, and he's the face of the nationally syndicated home improvement show *Today's Homeowner*—which is on its 22nd season and typically airs on Sundays. He's also the president of Today's Homeowner Media, which owns the rights to the show, and the radio program, podcast, and website, and other related media.

As a remodeler, Lipford's career appears anomalous—not a lot of contractors make a decent living on television. Still, in many ways his experiences reflect those of the everyday remodeler.

Lay a Foundation

Lipford started his on-screen appearance as the host of a local cable show called *Remodeling Today*, for which he built his own sets and was paid about \$100 per week. Before that, he was making his way as a remodeler. He launched Lipford Construction after college on the back of a single, big project, and grew his business through self study, industry engagement, careful hiring, and practicing professionalism and systemization.

"Our organization is strong because of things we were doing 20 years ago," Lipford says. "Everything is systematic: pre-construction conferences, rapid followup. Regular communication with everyone is crucial, and we do it well."

Increase Your Profile

Lipford began growing his public profile as an industry thought leader in the mid '80s, after establishing his business. "Back then, the big thing was to get in the newspaper," he says. "Get your project in the paper, and your phone will ring off the hook." Today the equivalent would be going viral on YouTube.

"I realized early on that the easiest way to get a paper to feature you was to make it as easy as possible," he says. So Lipford would send project dossiers to local editors. He'd include details, loads of photos, and would confirm that the reporter would have access to the project (in case they wanted to stop by for an interview).

"The phone was absolutely ringing off the hook after that." But it wasn't until he got more active in the National Association of Home Builders and started speaking at events that he caught the attention of a local cable channel.



Lipford credits being involved with remodeling and building associations, like NAHB, with helping him raise his profile earlier in his career.

Anticipate Your Audience

As the host of *Remodeling Today*, Lipford needed to engage the audience. He did it by preempting their questions. "After 10 years as a remodeler, I knew what people were going to ask," he says, "so I'd answer before they could."

It's a practice he carried over to *Today's Homeowner*, but also one he built into his business. "It makes people feel so comfortable," he says. "For instance, everyone wants to know a job's start date. So, I imagine they'll ask, and tell them up front."

Applied to web content, it's a formula for showing up in Google's coveted "position zero," otherwise known as the "Featured Snippet."

Transition Without Letting Go

After years of growing his local cable presence, Lipford was approached by *Today's Homeowner*, at the time a national magazine making the leap into television. The job greatly upped Lipford's profile, and he had to relinquish the majority of his responsibilities as owner of Lipford Construction.

Transitioning the business to managers meant having employees he'd trusted, and also properly motivating those employees. "We started a simple bonus program that pays out to employees when projects are particularly profitable," he says. "We've been in business more than 30 years, and this year was our most profitable ever. The guys joke that I should've scaled back years ago." 📺



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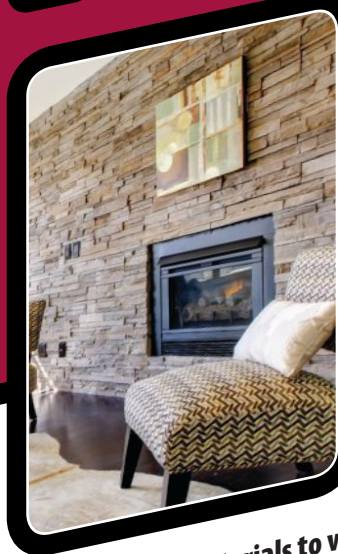
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