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On the Cover: Kitchen design by Twelve Stones Design, construction by Realty Restoration; both are based in Austin, Texas.

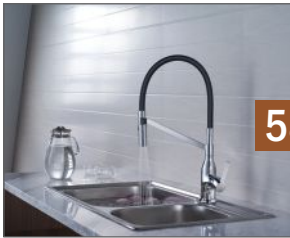
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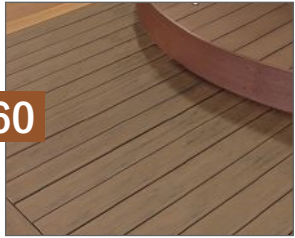
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a Scranton Globe Communications company3030 W. Salt Creek Lane, Suite 201
Arlington Heights, IL 60005-5025
847/391-1000 • Fax: 847/390-0408

STAFF

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR/PUBLISHER

Patrick O'Toole
847-954-7919
potoole@sgcmail.com

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Timothy J. Gregorski
847-954-7941
tgregorski@sgcmail.com

MANAGING EDITOR

Kyle Clapham

SENIOR CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Wendy A. Jordan

INDUSTRY ADVISER/COLUMNIST

Mark Richardson

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Lynne Fort, Abby Kleckler, Amy McIntosh, Jeff Zagoudis

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Craig Duroske, Michael E. Gerber, Jean Feingold,
Dave Lupberger, Jud Motsenbocker, Tom Swartz

DESIGNER

Kelsey Craig

EVENTS MANAGER

Judy Brociek

MARKETING MANAGER

Nadia Porter

GROUP DIRECTOR - PRINCIPAL

Tony Mancini

DIRECTOR OF AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Doug Riemer

MANAGER OF EDITORIAL & CREATIVE SERVICES

Lois Hince

EDITORIAL AWARDS

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Editors Awards and 8 Jesse H. Neal Awards

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES

Circulation Department
Professional Remodeler
3030 W Salt Creek Lane, Suite 201
Arlington Heights, IL 60005-5025
circulation@sgcmail.com

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Editorial

BY TIM GREGORSKI, EDITOR IN CHIEF

Numbers are adding up for 2014

Let's start the year off with some good news. If the remodeling industry continues at the pace recorded at the end of last year, remodelers will experience a fourth consecutive year of increased spending in 2014.

In 2011, remodeling spending was \$276 billion for home and rental property improvement and repair; 2012 saw that number increase to \$284 billion, and 2013 was projected to hit \$317 billion, according to the Remodeling Futures Program at Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies (JCHS).

Tempering the enthusiasm slightly, JCHS is predicting remodeling spending to flatten in the middle of 2014 based on a slowdown in home building in late 2013 that is concurrent with a rise in financing costs. Despite the predicted tapering, the remodeling industry is expected to remain at healthy levels for the entirety of 2014, according to JCHS.

Meanwhile, the National Association of the Remodeling Industry's (NARI) Remodeling Business Pulse (RBP) data of current and future remodeling business conditions reported quarter-over-quarter increases in almost all of the subcomponents measuring remodeling activity. In late 2013, when remodeling work typically tends to be on a downswing for the year, NARI reported its highest overall rating on business conditions at 6.41, up from the previous quarter's 6.31 rating. The RBP has increased for the past six quarters, according to NARI.

In a final measuring point indicating market resurgence, all three major components of the National Association of Home Builders' Remodeling Market Index (RMI), which measures current market conditions, increased in late 2013. Major additions and alterations increased from 51 to 55, minor additions and repairs from 55 to 58, and maintenance and repair from 57 to 59.

The future market indicators component of the RMI remained even with the previous quarter reading of 56.

Most remodelers we've spoken to in the latter part of 2013 indicated they increased their margins in 2013 and expect to do so again in 2014. In a feature story entitled "2014 Market Forecast: Carrying the Momentum" (see December 2013 issue of *Professional Remodeler*), 71 percent of remodelers expect their revenue to increase in 2014; 19 percent expect no change to their revenue in 2014; and only 10 percent expect their revenue to decrease compared with 2013. Aggregated, ninety percent of remodelers expect their revenue to stay the same or increase in 2014 compared with 2013, a year in which \$317 billion was spent on home and rental improvement. Those are some staggering numbers, and if the industry continues at this economic pace in 2014 even with the projected flattening in the middle of the year, the \$317 billion mark notched in 2013 will be eclipsed.



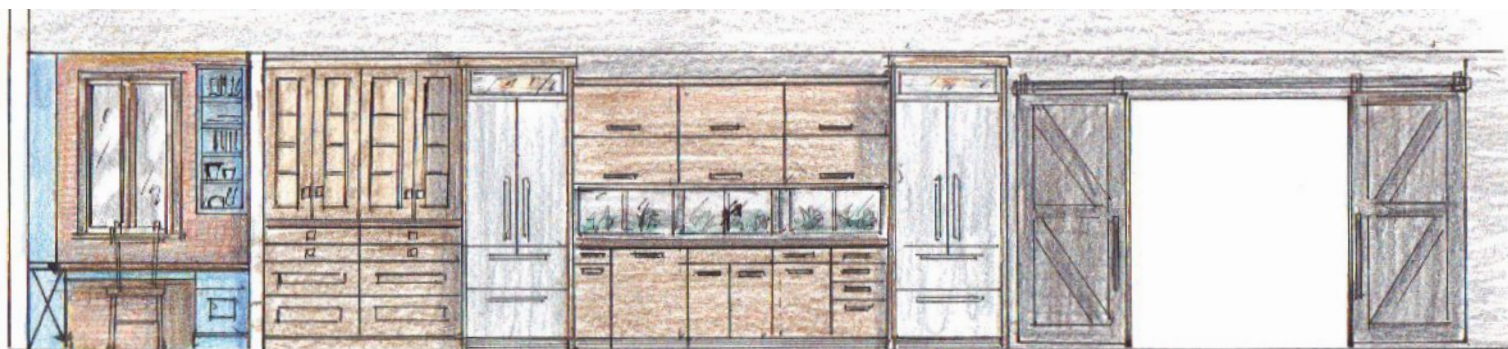
The remodeling industry is expected to remain at healthy levels for 2014.

Do you think the industry has the momentum to continue at this pace? Is your staffing at the proper level and will your business have the bandwidth to take on the additional workload? Do you want the increased workload?

To find out exactly how the industry is preparing for what could be a monumental year in terms of spending, visit my Industry Insider blog on our website, ProRemodeler.com. There you will find discussion in regard to the questions I listed above as well as predictions from your peers about what they expect in 2014. **PR**

Read my blog at
www.ProRemodeler.com

Contact me at tgregorski@sgcmail.com
or 847.954.7941.



NEW AT SHOW VILLAGE 2014: THE ULTIMATE KITCHEN

With the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS) and International Builders' Show (IBS) being a combined event in 2014, a stand-alone kitchen unit is a natural addition to *Professional Builder's* Show Village "neighborhood." In addition to the Ultimate Kitchen, Show Village offers show attendees three modular homes to tour.

Food & Wine magazine is partnering with *Professional Remodeler* in collaboration with renowned kitchen designer Wendy Johnson, CKD, on the

modern, high-end unit.

"A multi-use kitchen and living space is the trend for today's modern active families," Johnson says. "Everyone is spending more time at home and together—and that always centers around the kitchen."

The Ultimate Kitchen will be designed to handle the demands of two gourmet cooks at once, featuring oversized countertops and sinks with a 17-foot island as the focal point. Johnson will work with the *Food & Wine* editors to develop kitchen design concepts.

"The style is transitional with a mixture of

warm, modern rustic wood and smooth organic materials with exciting color inspired by nature," Johnson says.

The Ultimate Kitchen allows sponsors the opportunity to have their products displayed in a real setting for IBS/KBIS attendees to view. Evening entertainment and block parties will draw additional attention. After the Feb. 4-6 event, the Ultimate Kitchen will travel to the Pacific Coast Builders Conference, June 25-26, in San Francisco. Estimated combined attendance for both shows is more than 95,000.

2014 CHRYSALIS AWARDS ACCEPTING SUBMISSIONS

As a remodeler, you're on a relentless quest for professional credibility, working to build the kind of reputation that makes people respect you and want to do business with you. That credibility comes from success in the Chrysalis Awards for Remodeling Excellence.

Winners will have their own free page on the Chrysalis website, www.chrysalisawards.com. Before and after pictures of the winning entries are on that page, as well as important information that homeowners would want to know.

Entry deadline: March 28, 2014

Eligibility: Projects completed after Jan. 1, 2011

Who may enter: Any remodeler or design professional from any state in the U.S.

Entry packages: Entry packages for the Chrysalis Awards can be downloaded online. The entry fees are paid when entries are submitted.

Judging: Entries are judged in April, and the entrants will be notified no later than May 17, 2014.

The entry package is a "writeable" PDF, so you can complete your entry easily. You can also format your entry using the word processing program you prefer by just incorporating the answers

to the four questions in the package.

Chrysalis also accepts entries in other competition formats with no changes required.

The Chrysalis Awards for Remodeling Excellence began in 1994. The awards cover 28 categories of residential and commercial remodeling, and winners are selected for each of four geographical regions of the country. The regional winners are then judged to select a national winner for each category.

The competition is open to any professional remodeler or design professional. There is no requirement to be a member of any specific trade association. Entrants can use the Chrysalis entry form or may submit in any other format, as long as the answers to the primary Chrysalis questions are addressed somewhere in the entry package.

Chrysalis website: Winners will have their own company page on the Chrysalis website, www.chrysalisawards.com, which will include photos and descriptions of their winning entries, as well as contact information for their company. The site is designed for consumers contemplating a remodeling project and generates hundreds of thousands of dollars in sales leads each year. Winning remodelers remain on the website for a

minimum of five years.

Professional Remodeler: Winners are listed in the pages of *Professional Remodeler* magazine, the publishing sponsor of the Chrysalis Awards.

Chrysalis Award: The award itself is an attractive acrylic trophy that can be displayed in your company office. Duplicates may be purchased to present to clients or project team members.

For more information, or if you have questions, contact Ken Kanline, Chrysalis director, at 888.263.5687 or email at info@chrysalisawards.com.

2014 "40 UNDER 40" APPLICATION PROCESS OPEN

Professional Remodeler is currently accepting nominations for the 2014 "40 Under 40" program that recognizes the top under-40 professionals in the remodeling industry. Applications are due February 28, 2014.

Professional Remodeler's "40 Under 40" is open to remodeling professionals who are under 40 years old as of July 1, 2014.

If you have questions or comments, feel free to contact editor Tim Gregorski at tgregorski@sgcmail.com or 847.954.7941. **PR**



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5 mistakes that can be avoided

Many believe success is a product of “seizing the day” or embracing opportunities that present themselves. Others go out and buy lottery tickets and cross their fingers they will be lucky and, therefore, successful. Others believe the harder you work the more successful you become. While all these may contribute to positive results, many better leaders realize success is just as much a matter of what you don’t do versus what you actually do.

Avoiding mistakes in business today may be the most important element to success.

There are many metaphors that relate to avoiding mistakes. A pilot has a very successful and safe flight as a result of a very strict preflight process. A baseball team that can avoid fielding errors and making mental mistakes will generally win. A delicious meal is not necessarily one that is new and creative, it may be just a product of the correct ingredients and the proper cooking times. All these, while simplistic, are a product of not making mistakes to have a positive outcome.

As a student of business and having watched hundreds of remodeling leaders, the most successful are the ones who make fewer mistakes. A friend of mine with a remodeling business years ago said, “If I only had the money back from the bad decisions I made, I could now retire.”

This struck a chord, and ever since I’ve focused on the methodology of not making mistakes and on avoiding the potholes as much as the opportunities. The following are some mistakes I commonly see that could have been avoided.

MISTAKES THAT CAN BE AVOIDED

1) Overly aggressive growth Business growth is like dieting. There is an ideal amount of pounds that a person should lose per month (to lose weight successfully and keep the weight off). If you do a crash diet of 20 or more pounds

a month, you run the risk of getting sick or gaining it back. If you lose only a couple of pounds a month, you will not see the results quickly enough to motivate you to continue to lose. Whereas if you target 2-to-3 pounds per week (8 to 12 per month), it becomes more sustainable. Business growth is analogous. Thirty percent or more annual growth for many businesses is like a crash diet. This level of growth affects the basic culture, the product quality, and the team. I have seen many businesses crash and burn with overly aggressive growth.

2) Bad hiring A bad hire is expensive. Depending on the role it can easily cost you \$25,000 to \$50,000. If you can avoid some bad hires then think of the improved returns. While you cannot bat 1.000, a low batting average with hires will kill you. Go back three years and list all the people who are no longer with you, then multiply by \$35,000 and see what you could have had in the bank—not to mention all the stress, too.

3) Elephant hunting Many are enamored by the big projects (the elephants or whales). If your business’ sweet spot is medium-size projects, these big jobs can kill you or make you less profitable. If your average-size project is \$75,000 then don’t go after the \$750,000 projects. I know it is tempting. There are more risks and these projects require different processes that you may not have in place.

4) The wrong client Give the right client a hug

and run from the potential wrong client. Years ago I created a 10-point checklist of the right client. A few of the criteria are: **A)** Do they value your advice? **B)** Are they decisive? **C)** Do they communicate well? **D)** Are their expectations realistic? **E)** Are they emotionally stable? If you say yes to all of these then proceed, if not then punt.

5) No plan Fail to plan, plan to fail. You would never start a serious remodeling project without a plan. Most businesses dive into activities/programs/processes without a proper plan. Like a remodeling project a good plan takes into account time, recourses, solutions details and risks. A good plan measures and helps you know when to hold them or fold them.



If you avoid the speed bumps and potholes, your business can experience a chance for growth.

A few other common mistakes include not thinking out important decisions, not doing enough care and feeding of key team members in their development, doing projects that your team is not competent doing, and not getting proper buy-in or alignment from your team members on important decisions that affect them.

As you can see, there may be more ways to make mistakes than not. If you can just avoid the speed bumps and potholes, your business can experience a better chance for healthy growth. And you may even enjoy the journey more, too. **PR**

Mark Richardson, CR, is an author, columnist, and business growth strategist. He authored the best-selling book, “How Fit is Your Business,” as well as his latest book, “Fit to Grow.” He can be reached at mrichardson@mrichardson.com or 301.275.0208.

For more from Mark Richardson, visit
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Creating an enduring company

In 1988 at the age of 18, I started my business. At the time, I didn't have the systems and processes in place that I do now, and I was making mistakes—a lot of them. At the same time, I was watching successful businesses all around me shut their doors from the recession. They had processes, systems, employees, and learned lessons... but the lessons learned are now gone.

A while ago, we were contracted for a challenging kitchen remodel by a homeowner who was also an engineer by profession. He said something that made me think differently about our systems and processes and how we apply them.

He said, "We have mishaps all the time; when there is a failure, we don't look at the failure, we look at the process that allowed the failure to happen and go to work on the process."

What if, as an industry, we did that and were able to hand them off to the next generation? When you started your company, or entered this field, what did you start with? How many systems and processes did you have in place? How many learned lessons did you have? What if you started with the knowledge of a successful company? Would you agree, as an industry, we would be better off building enduring companies that outlive the owner, the leader, and creating less-fragmented businesses?

You might have been faced with challenges from the economy in the last few years that you had not had to face before. You had the opportunity to retool your operations, become more efficient and leaner, and might have focused on the client more than ever. How do we pass our lessons learned to the next generation so they respond to market changes better, quicker, and with fewer mistakes?

My business partner of 20 years, Bob Gallagher came on board in the early years and helped plug the holes in the boat one by one as we hired team members, created systems, and put processes in place. And yes, I made many mistakes along the way. As proof, we now have a database that contains more than 600 lessons learned from our own jobs.

BUILT TO LAST

As we look forward, how do we transfer our knowledge from one generation to the next? How do we pass this beyond the tangible assets?

We must create an enduring company that lasts beyond the owner, the person, and the product. A company built to last forever. Why?

For us, we have been working on improving our business for 25 years. Think about the processes and systems you have created. Now imagine starting your business where you are now and how much further ahead you would be. Think about the experience for the owner of the business, for the client, for the employee, and for the trade and vendor partners. Everyone wins. If you were to shut your doors and lose all of those valuable lessons, no one wins.

BUILD A CULTURE

Have you ever heard someone tell you their house never looked as good as they day they sold it? What if you decided to keep your house in that condition every day? Or what if you were not worried about resale, and you lived in a culture where you handed down the house from generation to generation? You would make very different choices on the materials you used to renovate your home. Finally, what if I said a Realtor was coming to show your house this Saturday morning. What ongoing maintenance to your house, that long list of "to-dos." would rise to the top?

I use this analogy as a homeowner, but what if you applied the same principles to your business?

Read more from Craig Durosko
at www.ProRemodeler.com.



What if you created a business with the mindset that it would last forever, putting the proper systems and processes in place and yet with the sense of urgency and upkeep as if we were going to sell it tomorrow?

How do we pass lessons learned so the next generation will respond better, quicker, and with fewer mistakes?

This isn't about selling a business; it is about creating an enduring company that can last beyond the owner, the person, and the product.

Think about the culture of your business. Think about being a commodity business. You've probably heard the reference "apples to apples" before. What if you really were selling apples? Think about two grocery stores in your area. The one your family enjoys shopping at the most and the one you enjoy the least. Why? Usually it is the experience you get shopping for your apples. It is not about the apples. They have created a culture, trained and educated their staff, and hired for that experience. What do you have to do to sustain the culture in your business?

What is your why? What is in it for you? Understand why you want to create an enduring company to fuel that passion. Is it to create a company for the next generation in your family, for your employees, for your legacy? Then define how you will do it and go to work at it. You can't change the past but you certainly can influence the future. **PR**

Craig Durosko is the founder of Sun Design, a design/build firm located in McLean and Burke, Va., that is celebrating its 26th year in business. The company has won more than 90 design and service awards and was recently named one of the "Best Places to Work" in Virginia for the second year in a row. Durosko can be reached at craig@sundesigninc.com.

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Getting value for the business you created

One of the biggest issues remodelers face is how to value and sell their business.

Initial response—it's not easy. Secondary response—it can be done. There are myriad issues here, but with the appropriate planning and team of advisers, you can work toward creating a business model that will have value when you decide to exit the business and transfer ownership.

I recently spoke with Jeff Kraai, the president of Exit Strategies Inc., a company that assists contractors in the insurance restoration industry with preparing their companies for sale, and eventually offering consulting services for an ownership transition. While Jeff works in the insurance restoration industry, the very same principles apply to the sale or transfer of a remodeling company.

We started at the beginning:

- Whom do I talk to?
- Where do I start?

He pointed out that while many people invest in stocks and bonds, a remodeling company owner has the majority of their funds invested in one thing—their business. The question is how to convert this lifetime of work into a successful retirement (whatever that might look like).

SUCCESSION PLANNING

Succession planning starts with the hard questions about your business, such as:

- Is it best to sell my business, or transition to family members or key employees?
- How do I sell my business and to whom?
- How do I prepare my business for sale?
- When is the best time to sell?
- What is my business worth?

One of the most significant questions larger remodelers face regarding the decision to sell or transfer their business is wealth preservation—the process of converting their life's work into a solid, future cash flow. To do this successfully, estate planning is mandatory. Most remodelers don't understand detailed tax laws, so plan on working with a competent estate planner who can

begin to highlight the transfer of wealth in the most appropriate and tax-efficient strategy. With the balance of your wealth at risk, understanding how to protect and preserve it is time well spent.

MOST BUSINESSES LACK A SUCCESSION PLAN

Despite the growing awareness that designing an exit strategy is an essential process with numerous benefits, a recent study titled “Effective Succession Management” found that only **1 percent** of surveyed business owners rated their succession plans as “excellent.” Sadly, more than 60 percent of owners described their succession plans as “nonexistent or poor.”

Business owners take calculated risks on a regular basis and have spent thousands of hours building and managing their business, but these same owners are spending little time designing an effective exit plan. Finding the handful of hours necessary to preserve the wealth they have created is falling to the bottom of their “to-do” list.

This is not a time to be the Lone Ranger. You will need to build a “transition team” that includes:

- A CPA
- Estate and financial planning
- A business transaction attorney
- A business broker or acquisition adviser

Working in harmony with your skilled advocates, your team members will have two priorities:

- Maximizing financial and emotional yield
- Minimizing your risk, both at the point of sale and into retirement

Ideally, this planning process starts three-to-four

years before your retirement. This way, you have the ability to manage key value-drivers:

- Dedicated client list—a “book” of clients whom you work with on a regular basis
- Owner involvement—an owner working 20 hours instead of 70 hours a week
- Recurring revenue—your book of clients creating recurring revenue
- Management capacity—having the right people in the right seats

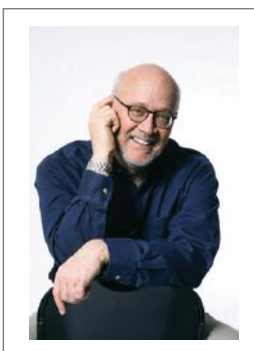
Only 1 percent of surveyed business owners rated their successions plans as “excellent.”

Unfortunately, for some contractors this planning begins less than a year in advance, and happens as a result of illness or disability. This “forced sale” is the worst possible outcome and can leave you with nothing to show for your lifetime of work. Alternately, the best-case scenario is creating an effective plan that protects you, your family, and your employees. A good plan protects the quality of your future. Protect your assets. Assemble the team who can assist you in creating a plan that does so.

Jeff Kraai is offering a free educational article titled, “Preparing Your Remediation Company for Sale.” Though industry specific, you'll find an exact parallel to readers wanting to know more about building equity and transitioning their remodeling businesses.

Please email me at David@RemodelForce.com with the word ‘article’ in the subject line; I'll then forward the article for your convenience. **PR**

David Lupberger has been in the remodeling industry for more than 20 years and is author of “Managing the Emotional Homeowner,” “The Remodelers Turnkey Program,” and “The Home Asset Management Plan.” You can reach him at david@davidlupberger.com, or at 303.442.3702.



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Does a virtual showroom increase business?

Our use of a virtual showroom continues to be one of the main reasons clients want to do business with our company, Design Build Pros, based in Toms River, N.J.

In the year since the article, “Tips to create a virtual showroom,” appeared in the February 2013 issue of *Professional Remodeler*, several remodelers have contacted our firm to find out how to start their own, how to outsource, and/or how to improve their existing virtual showrooms. I believe the importance of 3D design and a virtual platform to review projects in development will continue to grow in the years to come.

Requests for 3D design from homeowners have also increased significantly in the last year. In years past, we had to sell our clients on the benefits the service provides. Homeowners today have already seen 3D design on HGTV or the DIY network, and sold themselves on the notion that they want to “see it before they build it.” They are now actively seeking 3D design.

3D DESIGN INCREASING PROJECT SIZE

In 2013, we also saw the average project size increase in scope and overall investment. Many of the items in the scope that add cost do not have the same impact on a 2D plan that a 3D view can provide.

For example, a “bypass shower door” and “frameless shower door” listed in your work scope may not have a visual impact to the client, but a 3D image of their bathroom showing the difference will help justify the additional cost of the frameless door. The additional costs for upgraded trim packages are easily depicted as well.

Homeowners are becoming more tech-savvy each year. Older generations are adapting and now accepting new technology. Millennials also are rapidly becoming a part of our client base. Both ends of that spectrum want easy, fast, and



Above: A 3D kitchen rendering created for a client by Design Build Pros. Below: An image of the kitchen project shortly after completion. Do you notice the similarities and differences?

virtually on-demand service. By making online meetings, shared files, and pinboard accounts readily available, you will be able to provide faster service for them, and save time for yourself.

In addition to our standard Design-Build Development Agreements, we have expanded our design services in additional areas. Real estate agents are a perfect connection to any remodeler with design ability. Most cannot see the hidden potential in a home. We create design books for homes on the market to show changes like simple paint and flooring, as well as kitchen remodels and additions.

Visit www.ProRemodeler.com
for more on technology.

We place our logo, contact information, and cards in the book, so all prospective buyers see our information, and contact us to work on that, or any other home they purchase.

If the real estate agent works with 203k loans, you may be able to sell a project with the purchase of the home.

House lifting has become a major factor in many coastal areas. Even if the home design does not change, how high it is lifted, the foundation finish, and the new entryways will affect any home’s aesthetics. Creating a good design for a homeowner will give you a significant advantage when securing an order for the non-lift items that go into a house lift.

NUMEROUS VISUAL DESIGN OPTIONS

One of the most significant impacts our approach has made over the past several years has been to offer design options. Providing only one design leads to a yes/no conclusion.

By offering three different options, the conclusion should be yes—one of the three, or a portion of each.

We have enhanced this approach by making the third option our WOW plan. We candidly tell a client that we are going to show a plan that is above their budget (within reason for the client, neighborhood, and home) to showcase some potential upgrades. Any upgrades can be added to the first two plans, or taken away from the third to bring it back in line with the budget.

This allows our clients to upsell themselves proving that a virtual showroom can increase a remodelers profit margin. **PR**

Jason Parsons is a remodeling project designer for Design Build Pros, which provides in-home sales services throughout N.J., eastern Pa., and remote design services nationally. Parsons can be reached at 800.451.2066 or jparsons@designbuildpros.com. Follow Parsons on Twitter @jpremodeler.

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Protecting your profit

This month, the Remodeler's Exchange focuses on how to effectively protect your profit margin in an increasingly competitive marketplace. *Professional Remodeler's* Tom Swartz spoke with Rob Hajek and Tim Lawrence about how they preserve the bottom line of their remodeling business.

This month featuring:

Tim Lawrence, CGR, GMB, CAPS, CGP
Blue Ridge Home Improvement Inc., Blacksburg, Va.

Opened in 1979, Blue Ridge Home Improvement is a home repair and maintenance contractor that also offers custom design and remodeling services. The company has 10 employees and generates \$1.5 million in annual revenue.

Rob Hajek, CGR, CAPS, CGP
HRT Building & Remodeling/Home Repair Team, North Liberty, Iowa

In business since 1988, Home Repair Team offers full-service residential and commercial remodeling and handyman services. The company currently has 10 employees and generates approximately \$2 million in revenue annually.



TIM LAWRENCE



ROB HAJEK

TOM SWARTZ: *Do you have a specific profit percentage in mind for the year, or is there a specific profit percentage you want to achieve for each project?*

TIM LAWRENCE: I typically have a net profit of 10 percent in mind each year. I've done this for a number of years; it's a good round number and a recognized industry standard.

ROB HAJEK: We have a net-profit percentage we look at achieving before owner's compensation, which is approximately 5-to-7 percent. We look at each project separately because they both have different margins. Our service division has a lot higher margin than our remodeling division. When we get down to the bottom, we are shooting for 5-to-7-percent net profit after owner's compensation. We don't look at each project separately; however, when we do estimating we do talk about margins, but just for the larger-size jobs.

SWARTZ: *Can you explain your definition of expenses and gross margin or profit?*

HAJEK: In our gross margin, we have certain line items that are "above the line" as we call it, and that is the gross expenses it takes to do operations—that's the field operation work that we break out separately. When we do our P&L statement, we have about 15 line items that are set up on top and those provide our gross margin based on what really happens in the field. Our expenses, the G&A for us, includes some of the overhead building costs such as insurance, advertising, or things that we as owners can really affect as opposed to what really happens in the field. Our net profit is what's left over at the bottom. The owner's comp is in the G&A section.

LAWRENCE: We operate our business in a similar manner. We figure anything above the line would be direct job cost such as labor, sticks, and bricks—everything that's included in the cost of the job. Below the line is the gross profit. Any office expense, insurance, and any-

thing else that may be considered an overhead expense is also below the line. The owner's compensation is mixed in with bottom category and the 10-percent net profit is left over at the end.

SWARTZ: *Is there an approximate number you want to keep your expenses at during the year?*

LAWRENCE: Our goal is, at a minimum, to have the job costs to be at 60 percent of the total cost. That leaves 30 percent for overhead, which includes the owner's compensation, and 10 percent for net profit. It's a very simple model.

HAJEK: Our expenses are a little higher for our handyman business because we have a larger staff to handle the phone calls that come in for the handyman business. We have a gross margin at the top, an average between the two divisions, and overhead is usually around 33-to-36 percent. We are budgeting 42-to-45-percent gross.

SWARTZ: *How do you protect that gross margin on each of your major projects?*

To listen to the entire discussion, visit
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The Hard Choice



HAJEK: We have a scheduling department and what they do is manage a software program that helps us oversee our expenses. The software program gives the guys in the field exactly the amount of time in terms of hours as well as costs budgeted into a project. So not only are they in charge of controlling that budget, so is the project manager that runs the software through the office. One of the things we did a few years ago that helps manage time is that we purchased cell phones that allow us to do all of our timecard tracking. The cell phones with this service allow us to manage the employees in the field using work codes and how long they spend on each work code. The control of our job costs has been very good over the last few years because of the implementation of this software and technology. From that report, we run Sage software, which is coordinated with our accounting system. The cell phone/GPS tracking work codes basically operate in a manner where no one manually fills out a time card. They punch in codes associated with that job number. So, if they are going to framing work, they punch in the code associated with that work. The reports tracking each of the specific jobs are phenomenal as it helps us maintain more control in the field.

LAWRENCE: First, you have to have gross margins so you have to estimate correctly. There are a number of people in our industry that don't estimate correctly to start with, so if you don't have any gross profit you cannot protect it. My first point is to estimate the job right—you need to know your numbers and know what your overhead is for each project. After that, you have to pay attention to those numbers. There are people out there that get a number, then go produce the job, and don't pay attention to the numbers until the job is done. Like Rob was saying, you have to pay attention to those numbers, and he's got a method that enables him to do that effectively. We do the same thing, maybe not to the extent that Rob is doing. We don't use the time-tracking programs through the cell phones, although we've considered it in the past. We use XactRemodel software for estimating

and we export reports from that into QuickBooks for the accounting side of a project.

**Diversifying your investments
is key because none of us
knows what the future holds.**

— TIM LAWRENCE

SWARTZ: *How do you keep your margins competitive and how does pricing come into play for the sales process?*

LAWRENCE: I've been in business almost 35 years, so we have a tremendous number of previous customers that come to us for repeat business as well as referrals. For those jobs, rarely is price the main consideration. To be competitive when we are not typically going to be the least expensive contractor, we offer more to the customer. We offer the incentives that a lot of professional remodelers think are industry standards if you operate on a professional level, but they may not be so common for someone that operates out of the back of a truck. For example, this may be a clean job site, regular communication, or feed-back that may be a surprise to the homeowner that has never worked with a professional remodeler before. We are trying to offer more benefits to our customers to offset the fact that we may be a little more expensive.

HAJEK: My answer is pretty similar to Tim's. We don't typically spend a lot of time thinking about margins with the competition level and our pricing methods. We have a certain margin we want to maintain on a job, and so we are not ever really reducing our prices to get a job. The screening process starts with us on the initial phone call. Our sales process is pretty intense when that first call comes in. We try to screen that customer and answer questions to figure what they are doing and how many other contractors they may be

getting bids from for a project. We also charge for estimating, so that weeds out people that are not that serious about their remodeling project. We try to take care of this on the front end, before we actually spend a lot of time putting an estimate together only to find out we are double the price of the competition. It's the process we go through. We bring clients into our showroom to go over that contract, we have pictures, we have jobs on the computers, and they can meet our employees, which is huge for us. We want customers to call here and get a live person on the phone; you can walk in the door and find three people in our office at all times. We are not working out of a truck, and these are the expenses we have to offer professional remodeling services. When it comes to the job process, it's the cleanup, the procedures we go through for a job, including scheduling as well as the time it's going to take to complete the job—those are all things we try sell to our customers.

SWARTZ: *When you charge for an estimate, if the client ends up doing the project, does that cost go toward the total job price?*

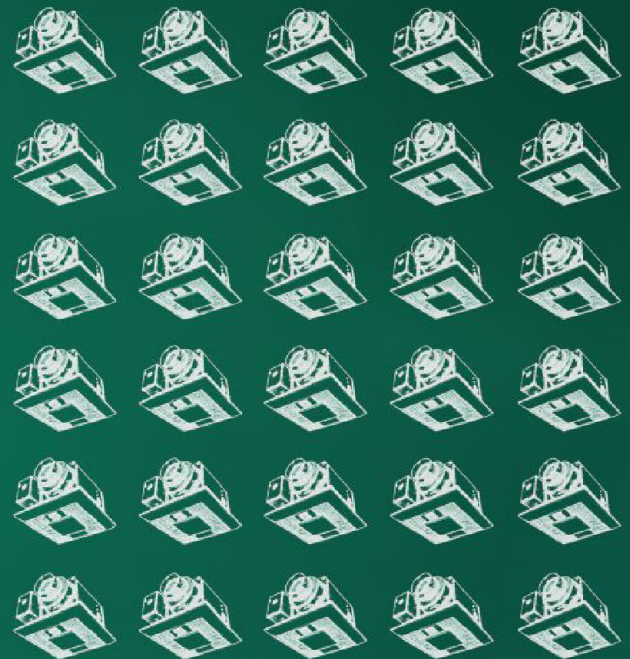
HAJEK: For new customers, no it does not. There is a fee that is upfront for us to come out and look at the project and put together an estimate. That does not get credited back toward the job if they end up doing it.

SWARTZ: *How many people actually end up paying that fee as opposed to hanging up and calling another remodeler to get a free estimate?*

HAJEK: We probably get about 60 percent of the people that call in to pay for the estimate. The interesting thing is that after they pay that fee, which is only \$75 to come out and view the project within a 15-mile radius, our closing ratio on those homeowners that pay the fee upfront is twice as high as our normal closing ratio. We have just found that we are not running around, spinning our wheels. Our closing ratio has gone up, from our total leads to our total jobs coming in, after we put in that fee. For us, it's been huge.

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You have to remember with our handyman division, people are calling us out to do an estimate for a \$150 job. We can't do that so we push them through our service department as much as we can. If they don't do that, we have the fee process. If they pay it, we will be glad to come out. They are paying for a service, a professional, to come out and give them some advice.

SWARTZ: *Do you ever discuss with a client what a fair profit margin may be for a project?*

HAJEK: No, we never do. The only thing we talk about sometimes is the cost of us doing business—employee costs such as insurance and medical benefits, for example. We don't give out specific numbers and we never talk about profit. I won't do a job to include a profit at the end.

LAWRENCE: Virtually never. My response is very much like Rob's as we operate very similarly. I also charge a fee for what we call an initial consultation, which is \$110. I started that fee years ago, and it's the best screening tool we've ever had because if a homeowner won't pay for a professional to come out and discuss their project, they are going to nickel and dime you all the way through the project. If we get out there and the homeowner wants any kind of a project that would require design, we won't collect the initial consultation fee but we will charge a design agreement fee. If it's a small job, they will pay the initial consultation fee and we will do an estimate for them. If it's a larger job, we won't charge the initial consultation fee but we will collect for a design agreement fee to develop the design for them.

SWARTZ: *What is your design agreement fee?*

LAWRENCE: Usually, we do a percentage of what the budget calls for the project. This is approximately 5 percent of the projected budget.

SWARTZ: *What percentages of the clients take you up on the design agreement fee?*

LAWRENCE: We've already gone through the screening process on the phone, and they've agreed to pay a fee. Most of the time, the client is very familiar with our company and many have called to say they are going to have us design and build their project. We close a very high percentage of those clients. The fees are figured into the estimate, so they are basically paying a deposit on the job, but it covers us in case they don't move forward with the job.

HAJEK: We don't do a lot of design-build work. Most of our design work involves a kitchen in-house, and we have a flat rate for that work. When we have a larger project, we use outside design for that work.

SWARTZ: *Do you have a contingency plan in case of unexpected change-orders or even if a project is canceled?*

HAJEK: We try to protect ourselves with the change-order process because our estimates are so detailed, they come out as a line item through our software program—every single item is listed. It doesn't show the price for each item, but it shows a total for the project. For a bathroom remodel, there might be 70 line items that print out to get you a total price. We know what's in every line item; the customer knows what's in every line item, so if we run into something unexpected we know it's not included in our estimate.

LAWRENCE: Our estimating program also does the line-item listing—the scope of work we call it. This is more detailed than what most people think of in terms of a scope of work. It includes details of actually what is going in to the project—windows, linear feet of baseboard, crown moulding, square feet of paint, etc. We also add a contingency for each project. Our software has a base service charge, and we have always used that as a contingency amount. Obviously, the bigger jobs we will put a little more in than usual. For the smaller job, that amount is reduced. There is no set percentage that we use right now.

SWARTZ: *Are there specific areas where you invest your profits that might be better for the future?*

LAWRENCE: I am a firm believer in making a profit and the owner getting rewarded for owning the company. Investing back into the company is good, but I also think it can be short-sighted because owners need to diversify outside of the company. We have a 401k and profit sharing for employees, which is a good way to retain employees. Beyond that, owners should look at real estate because it is a natural investment for someone in the remodeling business. Diversifying your investments is key because none of us know what the future holds; some investments may do better than others.

HAJEK: We offer 401k profit-sharing plans for employees. As owners, we try to max out our 401k programs to plan for the future for yourself. As for real estate, it is a natural in this business to have rental properties. When it comes to our employees, we have incentive plans that, at the end of the year we try to invest back in those programs.

SWARTZ: *What advice would you give a remodeler who wants to invest their company profits?*

LAWRENCE: Again, diversify your investments because we can't predict the future and if you put all of your eggs in one basket, that's not a good thing in terms of investments. A multipronged approach with investments is very prudent. Obviously, you need to reinvest in your company to keep it strong. Also consider investing in opportunities outside of the construction industry.

HAJEK: You have to diversify your investments much like Tim said. Look for ways to create personal wealth as well. If you're in the remodeling business to make a living, you're probably going to have some rough times. You need to look at saving money and putting money away for bad times. You can look at diversifying, spreading your money around, but make sure you have a little stockpile of cash because you never know when you are going to need it. **PR**

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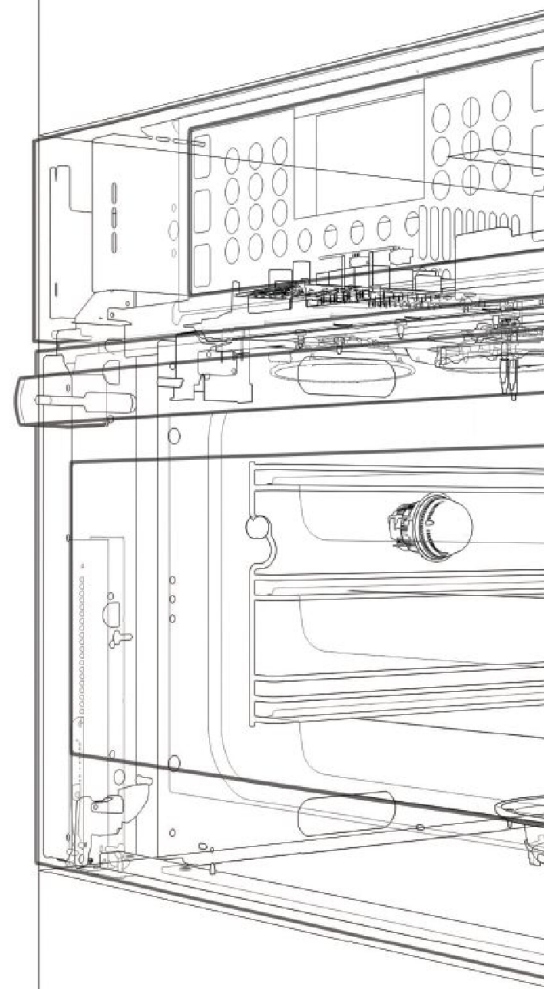
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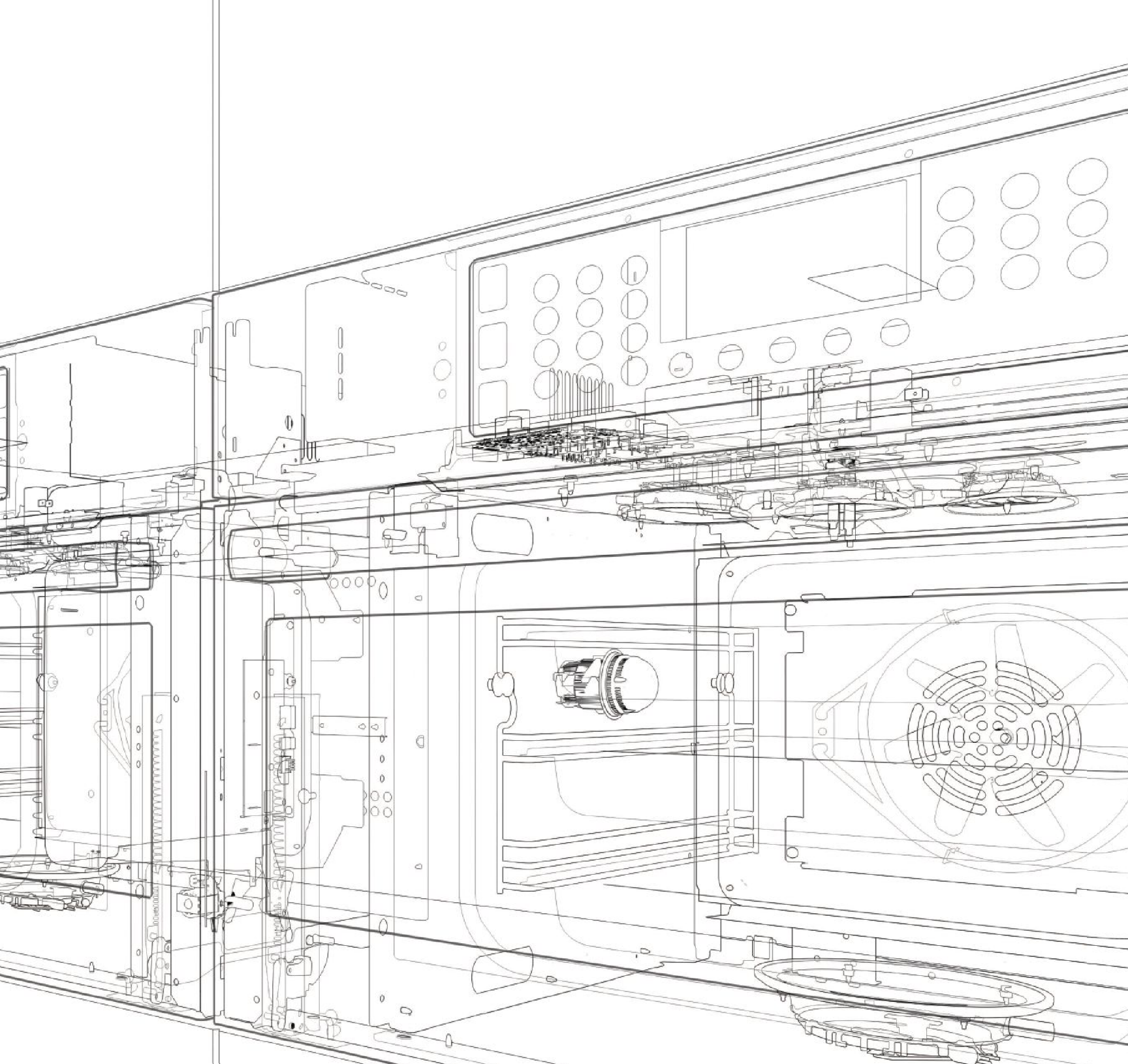
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16 K&B DESIGN TRENDS FOR 2014

Innovative and traditional trends define homeowners' needs and creative designs

BY TIM GREGORSKI, EDITOR IN CHIEF

For the past three years, remodeling spending has continued to increase partly due to a consistent number of kitchen and bath projects. In 2011, remodeling spending was \$276 billion for homeowner and rental improvement repair, \$284 billion was spent in 2012, and 2013 was projected to hit \$317 billion by the end of the year, according to the Remodeling Futures Program at Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies.

In the last five years, U.S. homeowners, on average, spent \$28,030 to remodel their kitchens with costs varying widely at different budget levels, according to research provided by Houzz. Nationwide, the average cost for a high-end kitchen was \$54,942, for a mid-range kitchen \$22,390, and \$7,133 for a lower-budget kitchen.

The average cost of bath remodeling in 2013 was \$18,538, which was down slightly from 2012, according to the National Kitchen & Bath Association.

Because homeowners are investing in kitchen and bath projects, 94 percent of remodelers indicate they generated

at least some of their business from kitchen remodels in 2013, according to the recent *Professional Remodeler Kitchen & Bath Trends Survey* (see *Investment Continues in Kitchens and Baths*, page 38). The survey also finds that 96 percent of remodelers generated some of their 2013 business from bath-related projects.

Furthermore, 77 percent of remodelers generated at least half of their business from kitchen remodels in the past year, up 15 percentage points from 2012. Additionally, 79 percent of remodelers generated at least half of their business from bathroom remodels in the past year, which is on par from the percentage recorded for this category in 2012.

As part of the survey, we also asked remodelers to identify the latest kitchen and bath trends incorporated into these projects. As a result of their aggregated responses combined with research culled from a variety of remodeling industry resources, *Professional Remodeler* assembled this list of 16 Kitchen & Bath Design Trends for 2014. **PR**

PROFESSIONAL REMODELER'S TOP 8 KITCHEN TRENDS FOR 2014

1. Open kitchen design
2. Kitchen lighting
3. Countertop material, black color
4. Refaced kitchen cabinets
5. Apron/farmhouse sinks
6. Appliance finishes
7. Kitchen islands
8. Floating shelves

PROFESSIONAL REMODELER'S TOP 8 BATH TRENDS FOR 2014

1. The bathroom spa experience
2. Stand-alone tubs
3. Radiant heating
4. Multigenerational design
5. High-quality faucets
6. Diverse color palettes
7. Freestanding and hovering vanities and cabinets
8. Natural stone and custom tile

TOP 8 KITCHEN TRENDS FOR 2014

1 OPEN KITCHEN DESIGN



Seventy-seven percent of the respondents to the Houzz Kitchen Trends study indicated they prefer their kitchens to be open to other rooms. In addition to more space, respondents also indicated they prefer to incorporate a kitchen island as well.

As more homeowners embark on major renovations of their home, many have been opting for a larger, open kitchen to connect with at least one adjoining living area in order to evolve their kitchen into the home's social hub.

"Regardless of the age of my clients, their number one request is, and they all use the same term, 'We want a kitchen where we can hang out with family and friends.' The open kitchen design supports a much more relaxed and informal way of living, which I find is the way most people want to live," says Mick DeGiulio, principal, DeGiulio Kitchen Design, Wilmette, Ill.

The kitchen of today is the new living room. The open-kitchen trend is here to stay because homeowners who have adopted the design are increasingly pleased with the results.

"I've never had a single client who said they wish their kitchen was smaller or they wish they had not opened the kitchen to other living areas," says DeGiulio.

Homeowners are even eliminating a formal dining room so they can incorporate that space into the kitchen in an effort to create space they will actually use everyday.

"The open kitchen design has changed the hierarchy of home design. Today, for many people, the kitchen has become the priority. It's occupying the choice space in a home in terms of best views and square-footage allocation. It is receiving the same attention to architectural detailing and appointments you would see in more public spaces such as living rooms and dining rooms. This also means it has become a priority in terms of budget," says DeGiulio.



2 KITCHEN LIGHTING

As energy-efficient LED lighting continues to evolve in terms of applications, the lights continue to be popular for both kitchen and bath applications.

"I'm seeing LEDs improve in their color and dimmability. I'm also seeing LEDs show up in more fixtures including remodel-friendly can lights, vanities, and appliance interiors," says Jamie Gold, a San Diego-based industry consultant and author of "New Kitchen Ideas that Work" (Taunton Press, 2012).

Because LEDs last much longer than any other type of light bulb available on the market, they are a great solution for homeowners who are looking for a low-maintenance option. The LED bulbs also burn much cooler than incandescent, Xenon, and Halogen bulbs, making the LEDs more versatile and safer.

For kitchen applications, LED strip lighting is excellent as an under-cabinet light.

"It's dimmable and burns very cool so it won't heat the inside on the cabinet like Xenon and Halogen bulbs. We also use small LED pucks in glass and open cabinetry to add ambiance or a focal point," says Leslie Lee, designer, Normandy Design Build Remodeling, Hinsdale, Ill.

As for natural lighting, it is always preferred in a kitchen design. The key is finding a proper balance of natural and artificial light for the day-to-day kitchen tasks.

"When natural light is just not available in the kitchen, additional ceiling, cabinet, and wall lighting can be added to help compensate for a lack of natural lighting," says Lee.



3 COUNTERTOP MATERIAL, BLACK COLOR

According to the Fall 2013 Kitchen Trends Study by Houzz, which included 7,812 homeowners and registered Houzz users in the U.S. and Canada who are planning or in the midst of a kitchen-remodeling project, 94 percent of respondents are planning to change their kitchen countertops. Fifty percent prefer granite while 36 percent prefer quartz countertops, both of which remain the most popular countertops currently used in kitchens. Some homeowners have taken to mixing different types of material for their kitchen countertops.

"We've seen a trend toward people straying from the traditional, perfectly matched look in the kitchen," says Shelia Schmitz, editor of Houzz.

The mixing of countertops can be functional as well; using a butcher block in an area for food preparation or stone in a serving space are two examples.

Waterfall countertops, where the material drops over the side of a kitchen island, are becoming more common in contemporary kitchens.

In terms of colors, the use of black kitchen counters in either granite or quartz will increase in 2014, according to the Zillow Digs Home Design Trend Report for 2014.

"We are seeing more black granite that is honed or has a leather finish," says Adam Hunter, owner, Adam Hunter Inc., West Hollywood, Calif. Hunter says the black countertops provide a tasteful, yet dramatic look especially when paired with a lighter-colored countertop such as marble or light gray for contrast.

4 REFACED KITCHEN CABINETS



Budget-conscious homeowners who want to update the look of their kitchen are opting to reface their kitchen cabinets rather than replace them.

"We have seen more clients want to do a remodel later, but do not want to invest the amount required for a full remodel with new cabinets. This is because of cost. The fact that a client can opt to just do the refacing of the cabinets and not replace the countertops allows them to have their kitchen remodeled at a significantly less amount than a complete remodel that includes new countertops, plumbing, and electrical, in addition to new cabinets," says Vince Nardo, president, Reborn Cabinets, Anaheim, Calif.

Using open shelf and glass-front cabinets that display the kitchenwares is a growing trend among kitchen-cabinet options, according to the Zillow Digs Home Design Trend Report for 2014.

"As the kitchen has become a central meeting place for family and friends, presentation has become a priority for many homeowners. It is now fashionable to display almost everything in the kitchen from dishes to pot and pans," says Kerrie Kelly, founder, Kerrie Kelly Design Lab, Sacramento, Calif.

Colored cabinets including gray and off-white remain the preeminent colors homeowners prefer. In some kitchens, colors tend to be broader based on geographic location.

"Some color trends tend to be more specific to the Pacific Northwest color palette, which includes subtle earth-tone hues such as charcoal, blue, and green," says Suzie Atkin, design consultant, Neil Kelly Co., Portland, Ore.



5 APRON/FARMHOUSE SINKS

Kitchen-sink styles are constantly changing and evolving. Currently, the sink of choice is the apron or farmhouse sink.

"The apron or farmhouse sink has a very traditional style and some might even say a rustic look in certain applications," says Jim LaVallee, principal, Epic Development, Atlanta, Ga. "The general trend we see across the country, and especially in cosmopolitan areas, is a push toward cleaner, simpler lines on the interior of the homes whether mixed with a traditional and contemporary exterior. The apron sink, with a flat simple front, integrates well into this look."

To ensure cleaner lines in a kitchen with an apron sink, cabinet doors should be flat or in a simple shaker style. A stainless steel apron sink also matches well with stainless steel appliances, according to LaVallee.

6 APPLIANCE FINISHES



The U.S. market for consumer appliances is expected to grow 3.8 percent to \$56 billion in 2014, according to Euromonitor International, an independent consumer-market research firm.

Stainless steel is still the favorite because it's a good neutral and works well in a variety of environments, according to John Petrie, president, National Kitchen & Bath Association.

In an effort to tap into the market share stainless steel appliances has in American kitchens, appliance manufacturers launched more furniture-like appliances with rounded edges and handles, less metallic sheen, and in different colors. Appliances in white with hints of metal as well as a softer, natural gray matte finish have started to make their way into homes.

In the Houzz Kitchen Trends study, 65 percent of respondents prefer stainless steel appliances, 16 percent want to integrate appliances into cabinetry, 12 percent prefer white or colored appliances, and 7 percent indicated they prefer to combine appliance finishes such as paneled, fully integrated refrigerators and dishwashers.

The timeless stainless steel look continues to blend well in kitchen designs, although the appliances must effectively blend in with the entire design to avoid being the focal point of the kitchen.

"Integrating appliances into the cabinetry is particularly desirable in open-floor homes, where the kitchen can be seen from many rooms and multiple stainless steel appliances may draw unwanted attention," says Houzz's Schmitz.



7 KITCHEN ISLANDS

Kitchen islands are a multipurpose area used to create extra space for prep work, storage, and dining, and serve as the social hub for gatherings with family and friends.

"The kitchen is the heart of the home and that's where most of the time is spent. Having an island also allows families to be together. For example, a parent can be cooking while their children are working on their homework on the island," says Liz Lee, senior designer, Sun Design, Burke, Va.

The diverse kitchen island can include the main sink, bookshelves for cookbooks, and cooking surfaces with large expansive hoods that extend past the range or cooking surface with no wall cabinets flanking the hood.

"Islands have become a given in most kitchen remodels and designs. It is something most clients expect and want included in their kitchens. How much seating is required and the clearances needed can impact the design of a kitchen island and can be a challenge," says Rebekah Zaveloff, co-founder and director of design, KitchenLab, Chicago.

An island with clean lines and traditional design works well in most style of homes and works with both stained and painted finishes. From a decorative standpoint, the island is the focal point of the room and should have stylized elements such as a unique finish or decorative lighting that includes antique brass and accents.

"Our clients like the island to have a substantial feel with furniture-like qualities. Most prefer an island that is one level that still allows for seating but offers a large, open surface for entertaining as well," says Laura Barber, designer, Normandy Design Build Remodeling, Hinsdale, Ill.



8 FLOATING SHELVES

Breaking away from the concept that every last inch of wall space must be host to some sort of closed storage, floating shelves help break up the wall into lighter, less-obtrusive space free from a wall of hanging cabinets.

"The floating shelf is a very simple, yet attractive architectural element. Its appeal is simplicity. Light and airy, floating shelves complement any contemporary design very well," says Fabian Genovesi, design consultant, Neil Kelly Co., Portland, Ore.

By leaving sections of walls behind the floating shelves open, it facilitates the use of color throughout the kitchen. The brighter and bolder color schemes allow homeowners to move away from the traditional whites and neutral colors used for kitchens. By incorporating lights into the shelves, the kitchen walls can become even more attractive when color and light are combined.

Floating shelves can also bring a sense of casualness into the space making it less formal and more open to conversation based upon the items that may be placed on the shelves, according to Genovesi.

Stained-wood veneers and glass tend to make up the most popular materials used for floating shelves. They can also be used as part of the home's structure, which are then covered by drywall or plaster and painted.

"I have also created massive floating shelves with weathered wood beams, live edges, and stone embedded into walls," says Genovesi.



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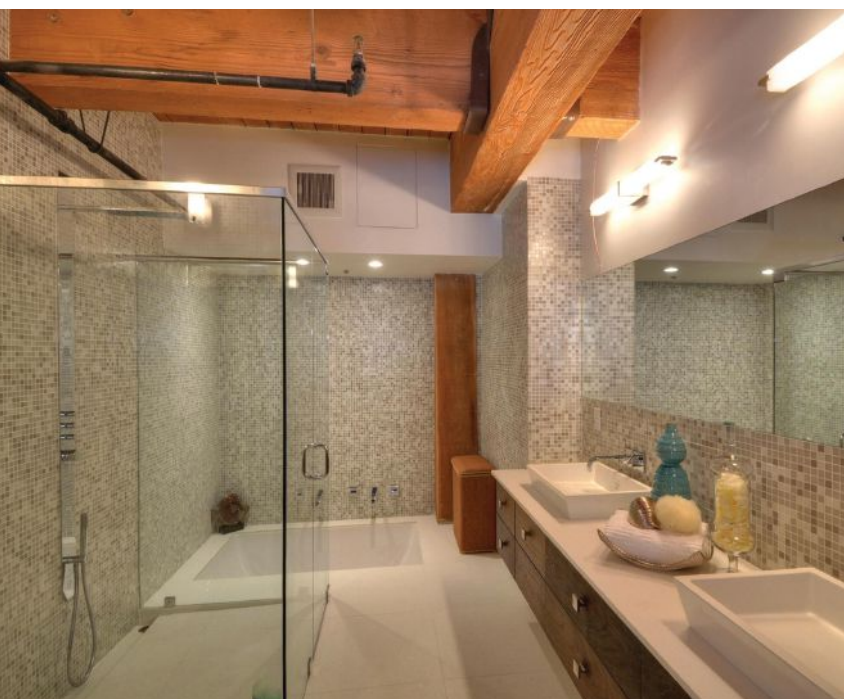
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TOP 8 BATH TRENDS FOR 2014

1 THE BATHROOM SPA EXPERIENCE



Many homeowners seek a bathroom that provides a relaxing and comfortable retreat from their hectic lives. The bathroom spa experience brings that sense of serenity to a homeowner.

“A spa-like bathroom can come in many forms, but is generally a clean-lined, contemporary space with a mix of rich, textural elements blended with polished surfaces, neutral earthy tones, and natural materials,” says Normandy Remodeling’s Barber.

In the bathroom spa experience, storage is important because clutter should be kept to a minimum.

In the shower, elements like steam, multiple showerheads, therapeutic body sprays, and even music are all ways that can enhance the showering experience.

Stand-alone baths are popular and offer different bathing experiences such as bubble-massage, massaging jets, heated tub surface, and even chromatherapy. Radiant-heated floors feel luxurious underfoot and are a great feature in the cold winter months.

“There are many options available to homeowners today to create a customized spa-bath experience in their home, regardless of the size of their space. We begin and end the day in the bathroom so make it a space you can enjoy,” says Barber.



2 STAND-ALONE TUBS

One aspect of the bathroom spa experience that homeowners are incorporating into their bathroom remodeling projects is the stand-alone tub. If homeowners want a tub experience in 2014, it’s likely they will select a stand-alone tub as a structural element, which takes up much less space in the room than the old tiled-in tub deck. In some cases, the stand-alone tub may be more aesthetic than functional.

“It seems the stand-alone tub, in the eyes of our clients, is much more the for ‘look’ than actual functionality and day-to-day usage,” says Bill Shaw, president of William Shaw Associates, Houston.

Cost is another issue when comparing a stand-alone tub with a deck-mounted drop-in bathtub. The cost of the deck material, steps, surrounding materials, and accessory pieces of the deck are lower when compared with the cost of the stand-alone tub and the related plumbing hardware.

“The cost of the free-standing tub has significantly increased, so we find most of the time, there is not a significant cost issue. The final decision is usually about the look versus function,” says Shaw.

3 RADIANT HEATING



As homeowners opt for bathroom designs that offer more comfort built into space, the installation of radiant heating systems has also risen.

“With newer, easy-to-install radiant heating systems, that luxury is becoming more attainable for homeowners. It’s no longer just a feature you’d build into a whole-house new construction project,” says author and consultant Gold.

In the 2013 Houzz & Home survey, 34 percent of respondents indicated energy efficiency was a driving factor in remodeling projects. Radiant heating in the form of in-floor warming systems contributes to energy efficiency while also adding another layer of comfort to the homeowner. Ceramic, slate, and marble tile in the bathroom offers the aesthetic appeal to the bathroom while a radiant heating system can quietly and uniformly heat the bathroom without the need for forced-air heat. Radiant-heated floors continue to radiate heat even after the system has been turned off.

Radiant heat is available in three forms: air-heated radiant, water-heated radiant, and electric-heated radiant. Electric-radiant heating is typically used to heat a bathroom because it is the easiest system to install and requires little maintenance when heating a smaller space.



4 MULTIGENERATIONAL DESIGN

The family bathroom is one of the few rooms in a home that can meet the different needs of multiple generations, therefore the design of a family bathroom must be diverse as well as practical. It must be useful for people of all ages, abilities, and sizes.

One aspect of multigenerational bathroom design has been the introduction of curbless or zero-threshold shower stalls with a channel drain, according to members of the Milwaukee chapter of NARI.

“The initial investment is larger, but in the future, as family members get older, they may have trouble getting in and out of a traditional shower and at some point, if they need to use a wheelchair, this type of shower would allow for easy access,” says Gordon Caesar, president, Bath and Kitchen Specialists Inc., Brookfield, Wis.

Other multigenerational design options include replacing lower toilets and sinks with a taller option that requires less stooping or bending; larger 32-inch doorframes in the bathroom as well as other rooms within the home to ensure there is enough clearance for a wheelchair; and space underneath the sink to allow for a wheelchair to roll right up to the wash basin.

“We work with a lot of aging-in-place homeowners who choose to remodel their bathrooms for more functionality and easier use as they age and their capabilities to use the existing bathing and toileting rooms change. Most of the bathrooms we remodel are barrier free designs and will include and/or plan for installation of grab bars in the future or for the project,” says Joseph Irons, president, Irons Brothers Construction, Shoreline, Wash.



5 HIGH-QUALITY FAUCETS

Because the bathroom continues to evolve as a personal space designed to ensure maximum relaxation and comfort, high-quality faucets must be timeless, stylish, and practical.

Single-lever faucets specifically designed in an arc manner and combined with stain-free materials such as chrome have proven popular throughout the U.S.; however, the finish may differ depending on geography. According to the NAHB Research Center, chrome is most popular in the Northeast, while polished nickel is often most specified in the Southeast and Mountain regions.

The overall style of the home also dictates faucet style as well; for example, in a contemporary space, the faucets should be clean and simple. Streamlined contemporary sinks built into eco-friendly natural cabinets mesh well with high-quality fixtures.

“Our clients have been requesting better faucets for both their bathroom and kitchen projects. They like both the look, feel, and efficiency of the better-made faucets and they are willing to pay for the better-quality items that will last longer,” says Cathy Doucet, interior designer, Doucet Remodeling & Design, Stoneham, Mass.



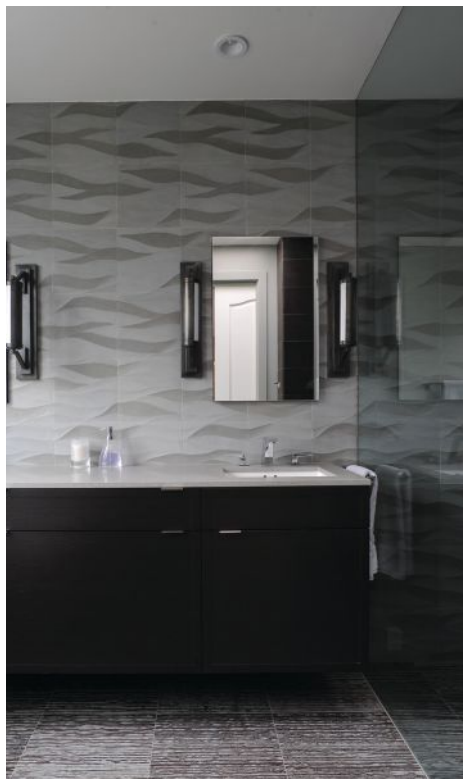
6 DIVERSE COLOR PALATES

Varying shades of blue, green, gray, and purple continue to be popular colors due to their calming nature. Vibrant colors should be used in smaller amounts as accents to complement a room's dominant color as well as in light fixtures and backsplash tiles, for example.

"Grays, whites, black, and charcoal greens have been trending as the neutrals an entire space may be designed in. It's much easier to then add in the pop of color for focus, and less expensive to change it out later when the trend or desire for that specific color has faded," says Neil Kelly Co.'s Atkin.

Bolder colors as the focal point of a bathroom is considered a risk because of the cost associated with changing these colors if it filters down beyond the walls into countertops or fixtures.

7 FREESTANDING AND HOVERING VANITIES AND CABINETS

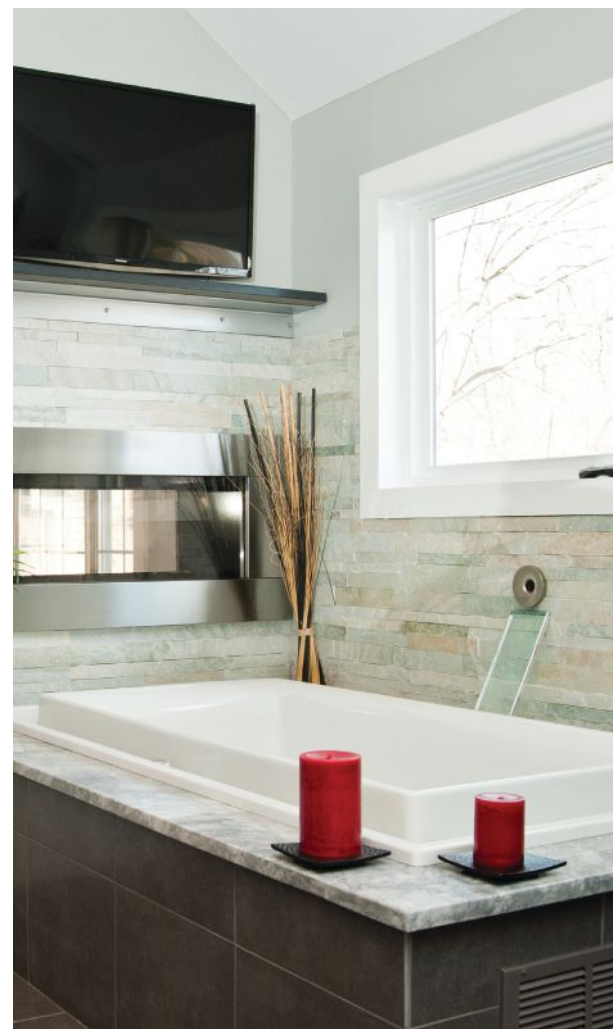


For smaller bathrooms, freestanding vanities with furniture styling continue to be admired by homeowners. Some standalone vanities can provide a great deal of storage while creating a spacious feel surrounding the vanity.

"In the most recent bathroom renovations, we have found homeowners are still looking for the most storage. Most homeowners want a more spacious and inviting space, creating their own 'spa' regardless of the size of the room," says Doucet.

Hovering or cantilevered vanities have also seen an increase of interest lately.

"Because they are open underneath the countertop, you can tile the floor up to the wall, adding to the continuity of the bathroom's appearance," says Jake Ruiz, owner, Quality Remodeling Specialists Inc., Pewaukee, Wis.



8 NATURAL STONE AND CUSTOM TILE

Designing a bathroom that uses the same natural stone and custom tile for the walls, floors, and corners is one trend contributing to the open design of a bathroom, according to members of the Milwaukee chapter of NARI.

"Today, an emerging trend is to have the layout of the bathroom be as open as possible, says Quality Remodeling Specialists' Ruiz. "Rather than the shower being a closed-off space in the corner, walls and floors are often designed using the same tile. This style makes the bathroom feel like one continuous space and not compartmentalized."

From opulent to sophisticated, and matte finish to highly polished, the broad array of natural stone and custom tile options provide high performance and durable surface with an endless number of style options.



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INVESTMENT CONTINUES in Kitchens and Baths

Remodeling projects continue to drive up profit margins

BY TIM GREGORSKI, EDITOR IN CHIEF

After leading the remodeling industry out of a crippling recession, kitchen and bath projects continue to be the main driver of a remodeler's margin almost four years later.

Because homeowners are investing in kitchen and bath projects, 94 percent of remodelers indicated they generated at least some of their business from kitchen remodels in 2013, according to the recent *Professional Remodeler Kitchen & Bath Trends Survey*. Concurrently, 96 percent of remodelers generated some of their 2013 business from bath-related projects.

Seventy-seven percent of remodelers generated at least half of their business from kitchen remodels in the past year. This is up from the 65 percent reported by remodelers in 2012. Additionally, 79 percent of remodelers generated at least half of their business from bathroom remodels in the past year, just a fraction down from the 80 percent that was recorded for this category last year.

34% OF REMODELERS
said their average kitchen price was
more than \$50,000 in 2013.

Work continues to increase

Just as in 2012, more than half of the remodelers who responded to the *Professional Remodeler 2013 Kitchen & Bath Trends Survey* reported their kitchen remodeling work increased in 2013, with 57 percent experiencing an increase. In 2013, only 13 percent said their kitchen remodeling business had decreased, down from 16 percent reported in 2012.

Last year, 52 percent of remodelers reported their kitchen work had increased or held steady.

The allure of open space in kitchens, the adaptation of islands, and new appliances continue to influence the homeowner's decision to remodel.

"More people want new islands in their kitchens," said an East Coast remodeler.

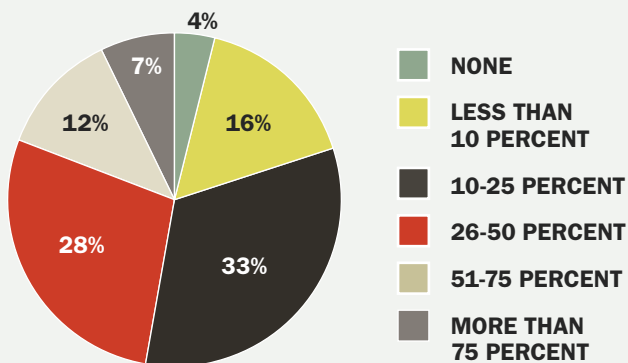
"Homeowners want a completely open and integrated kitchen and family room space with upgraded, professional appliances," said a Midwest remodeler.

When asked about their bathroom-related work, more than half of the survey respondents indicated their bathroom remodeling increased in 2013. Fifty-eight percent (up from the 53 percent recorded in 2012) of respondents indicated their bathroom work increased last year, while only 9 percent said their bathroom-related work decreased in 2013.

The uptick of homeowners remodeling their bathrooms builds on the fact that homeowners are reinvesting in their own homes

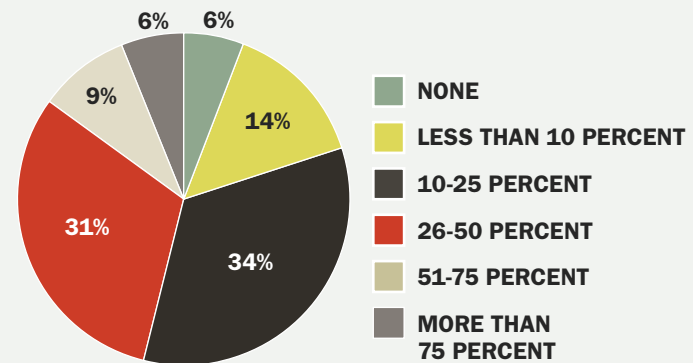
Kitchen Remodels Remain Strong Business Segment

Percent of projects that were kitchens in 2013



Bathroom Remodels Account for Large Portion of Business

Percent of projects that were bathrooms in 2013



specifically to update the appearance of the bathroom.

"Many homeowners are updating the appearance of their bathrooms with more affordable, higher end faucets and fixtures," says one East Coast remodeler.

Breakdown of job types

In our 2013 Kitchen & Bath Trends Survey, 24 percent of remodelers reported they are specifically remodeling only the kitchen. Twenty-seven percent indicated they are remodeling the kitchen as part of a larger interior remodel that does not include an addition. Twenty-five percent said they are remodeling the kitchen as part of a whole-house remodel or addition. Finally, 24 percent said they are remodeling both the kitchen and bathroom.

Breaking down the specific types of job associated with a bathroom remodel, 26 percent of remodelers said the bathroom work was part of larger interior remodel that does not include an addition. It was an even split at 22 percent for bathroom-related work that was part of a whole-house remodel and addition, and remodelers who indicated the work was part of a kitchen and bath package remodel. Slightly more than 30 percent of respondents indicated the bathroom work was the only job contracted for the project.

High-end kitchens compound growth

After taking a slight dip in 2012, the average price range for a kitchen remodel increased in 2013, especially for the highest price range. Fifty-seven percent of remodelers indicated their average

price for a kitchen remodel ranged between \$10,000 and \$50,000, down slightly from the 60 percent recorded in 2012 for this range.

In the mid-range, 22 percent reported an average job price between \$10,000 and \$25,000 and 34 percent reported the price of their kitchen remodels ranged between \$25,000 and \$50,000. Continuing to build on momentum gained in recent years, 34 percent of remodelers said their average kitchen project was more than \$50,000 in 2013. The higher-end kitchen remodel reflected 30 percent of the kitchen business recorded by remodelers in 2012, following 28 percent reported in 2011 and 22 percent in 2010.

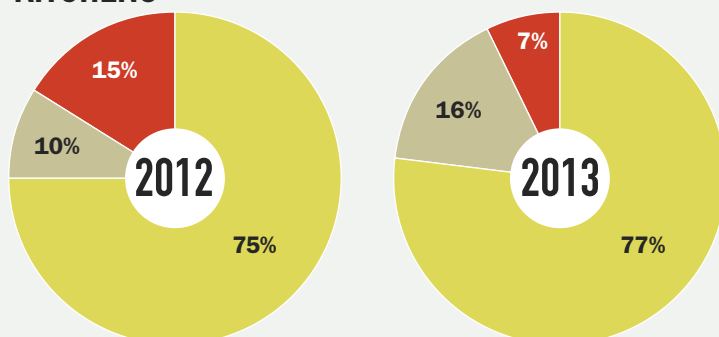
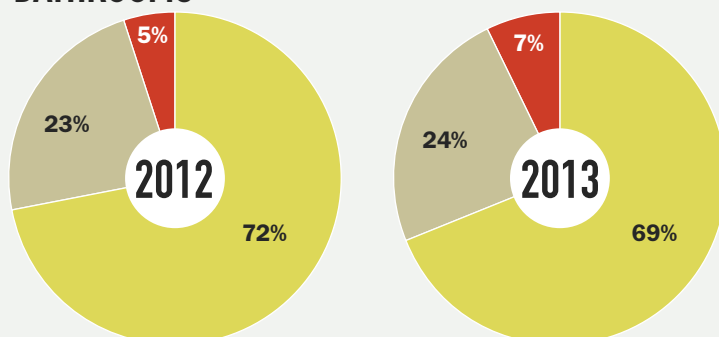
In 2013, 50% OF REMODELERS indicated the average price of a bathroom remodel was between \$10,000 and \$30,000.

Seventy-seven percent of remodelers reported their average kitchen price went up in 2013, while 7 percent said the average price went down. Last year, 75 percent of remodelers said their kitchen price went up while 9 percent said the price went down.

"People have been more willing this year to select higher-end

Kitchen & Bath Remodeling Prices Remain Steady*Change in average kitchen and bath prices over previous year*

■ INCREASED
 ■ NO CHANGE
 ■ DECREASED

KITCHENS**BATHROOMS**

products than the previous three-to-four years,” said one Mid-west remodeler.

In regard to 2013 bathroom prices, 50 percent of remodelers indicated the average price of a bathroom remodel was between \$10,000 and \$30,000. Twenty percent reported a price range from \$10,000 to \$15,000 and 30 percent indicated a price range from \$15,000 to \$30,000. At the highest end, 13 percent indicated a price range of greater than \$30,000. Thirty-seven percent indicated an average price of a bathroom project of less than \$10,000.

Sixty-nine percent of remodelers said their average bathroom project price went up in 2013, while 7 percent reported their average price went down.

“This past year, I had more clients selecting higher-end finishes, materials, and fixtures for their bathroom products,” said an East Coast remodeler.

Top Reasons Clients Decide to Remodel Kitchens*As ranked by remodelers*

- 1** Preparing home for sale
- 2** Creating more space
- 3** Replacing old appliances/finishes
- 4** Updating appearance
- 5** Improving usability of kitchen

Top Reasons Clients Decide to Remodel Bathrooms*As ranked by remodelers*

- 1** Updating appearance
- 2** Replacing old fixtures/finishes
- 3** Creating a more luxurious bathroom
- 4** Improving the usability of the bathroom
- 5** Creating more space

Reasons for K&B remodeling

The No. 1 reason homeowners are choosing to renovate their kitchens: They are preparing their home for sale. This answer, which was also the leading answer in 2012, was followed by creating more space, replacing old appliances and/or finishes, updating appearance, and improving the usability of the kitchen.

New cabinets and countertops remain the top features homeowners choose to update their kitchen followed by flooring, appliances, and sinks/faucets.

In regard to bathrooms, the No. 1 reason homeowners are electing to renovate their bathrooms is to update the appearance. This answer is followed by replacing old fixtures/finishes, creating a more luxurious bathroom, improving usability of the space, and creating more space.

Again this year, cabinets and countertops lead the way for specific bathroom features that are updated followed by bath/shower surfaces, fixtures, and sinks and faucets. **PR**

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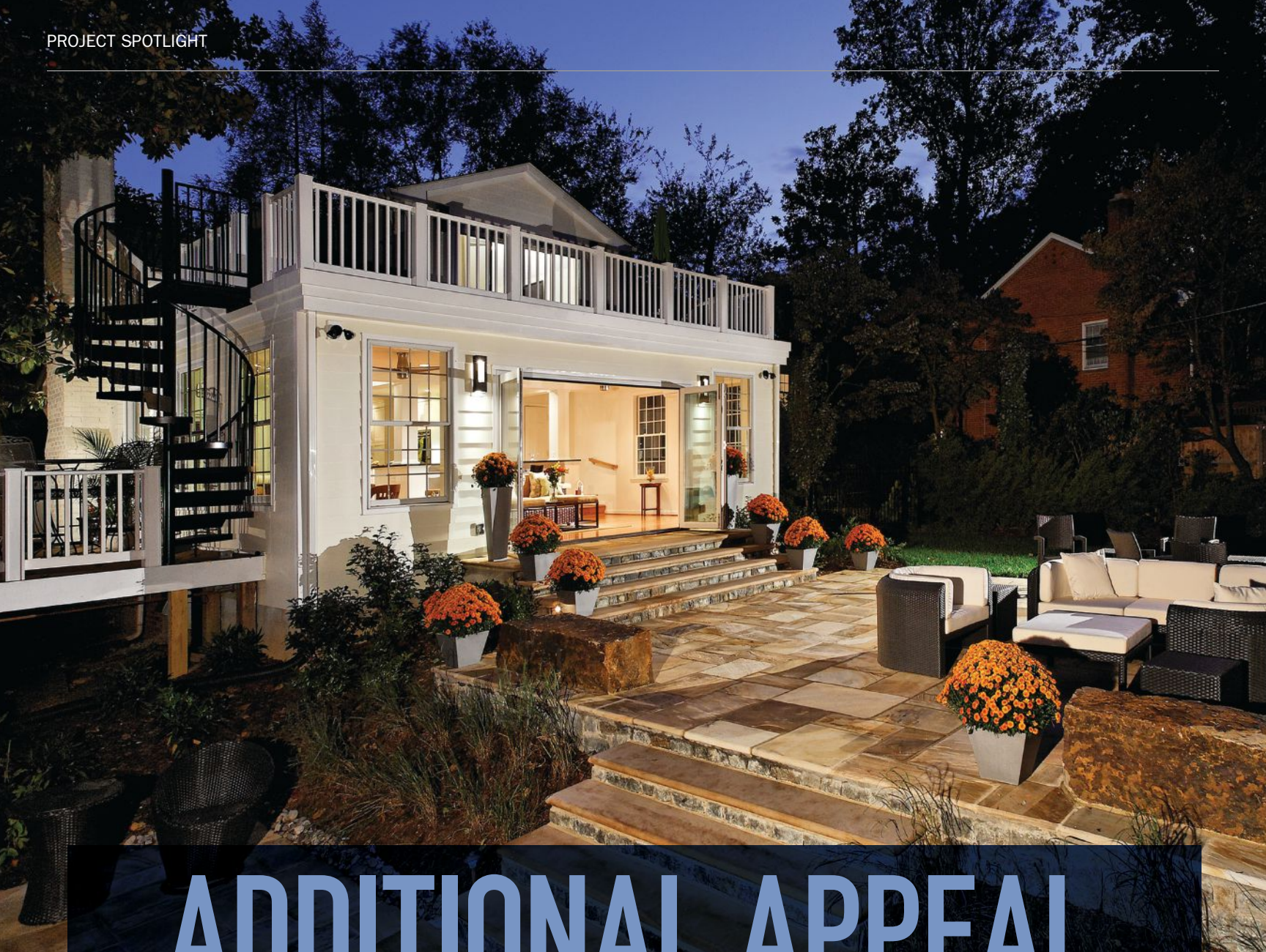
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ADDITIONAL APPEAL

Smiley Renovations fashions breezy sunroom to complement backyard boost

By Kyle Clapham, Managing Editor

This sunroom addition in Bethesda, Md., concluded the second and final phase of the homeowner's effort to establish an open interior floor plan that flows into an expansive outdoor living area. Smiley Renovations, a local design-build firm, previously remodeled the client's attic to create a second-story master suite and set up future access to a rooftop patio through sliding glass doors.

The homeowner wanted to enclose a large space but also permit an abundance of natural light, and suggested the possibility of a screened-in porch. Smiley owner Daren Smith figured a sunroom with 9-foot bi-fold door, built-in screen system, and numerous windows would achieve the desired effect; but, nonetheless, he

presented the client with designs incorporating a screened-in porch over the home's existing deck, which resides on an adjacent side of the house.

After seeing firsthand the impact of a large bi-fold door while on vacation, the homeowner determined a sunroom would develop enough of a connection with the backyard and scrapped the idea of a screened-in porch. Smith continued with plans for the addition, which allowed for a rooftop patio off the master suite, and expanded the project to include a swimming pool directly behind the sunroom.

Pool problems

Once the client approved his updated design, Smith approached



BEFORE

local officials about the pool's location. County ordinance mandates that a residential pool must be in the backyard, and Smith suspected the home's unusual orientation on a double lot might affect what authorities considered the rear of the house. The county ruled the side of the home approached by a pipe-stem driveway represents the front of the house; therefore, Smith's proposal violated the ordinance because the pool would not be in the backyard.

The homeowner expressed interest in petitioning the decision, but after Smith explained how the expense and length of a potential challenge would not justify the slight chance of winning, the client agreed to consider some alternate conceptions. Smith worked diligently to maintain the cohesion of the outdoor space since the pool

The client desired a connection between indoor and outdoor living, and Smiley Renovations responded with a bouyant sunroom that extends out to an entertainment area replete with swimming pool.

now had to be moved to a lower elevation farther from the addition. He developed a design with several patios at different grades that gradually progress to the pool deck and allowed Smiley to minimize the number of steps between levels.

The firm also dropped a step into the addition from the house, which increased the height of the sunroom without raising the ceiling and reinforced the flow toward the backyard. This provision became especially important as Smith deliberated how to ensure the rooftop patio aligned flush with the floor of the master bedroom without compromising the addition's ability to support the extra weight.

Ceiling challenges

The home uses 2-by-10-inch ceiling joists, which presented Smith and his team with the project's main obstacle. They needed a taller joist in the sunroom to accommodate enough space for R-38 insulation, and they would have to taper the joists in order to achieve a proper roof slope of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch per foot. If the firm specified a 2-by-10 at the end of the addition, the rafter would measure just 6 inches—not nearly enough depth for R-38 insulation or enough strength to brace the rooftop patio. If Smiley opted for a larger joist to solve the problem, the ceiling of the sunroom would



Smiley incorporated a custom hidden-screen system within the opening for the large bi-fold door to increase the openness of the sunroom and further satisfy the homeowner's initial request for an enclosed porch.

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

COMPANY: Smiley Renovations

OWNER: Daren Smith

LOCATION: Silver Spring, Md.

2012 SALES VOLUME: \$1.7 million

PROJECTED 2013 SALES VOLUME: \$1.4 million

WEBSITE: www.smileyrenovations.com

PROJECT TIMELINE

DESIGN CONTRACT:
December 18, 2010

DESIGN COMPLETION:
March 9, 2011

SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION:
July 15, 2011

PERMIT APPROVAL: February 25, 2011
CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT: March 16, 2011

PROJECT CONCLUSION:
August 31, 2011

be lower than the rest of the house and the client would have to step up to the rooftop patio from the master bedroom, which likely would lead to other issues.

"It creates an area where leaves will get trapped, and it's just not good from a weather-proofing perspective," says Smith, who took the blueprints to the company's engineer so the two could brainstorm a solution.

They determined spraying closed-cell foam in the 6-inch rafter would circumvent the need for a larger joist and also meet the required thickness to reach R-38 insulation. "There was no other way it was going to happen," Smith says. Because the spray foam performs so efficiently, the firm did not have to vent the roof and turned its attention to fortifying the structure.

Smiley employed laminated veneer lumber (LVL) and set these pieces 16 inches on center; as a result, the spacing and stability afforded by the LVLs enabled the company to cut the end of the joists down to 6 inches and allow for rainwater to properly run off the roof. Combined with the step down from the house into the sunroom, the use of spray foam insulation and LVLs maintained the desired ceiling height and ensured a seamless transition between the master bedroom and rooftop patio.

Rooftop reservations

Early in the design phase, the client expressed concerns regarding the outdoor living area above the sunroom. The homeowner wanted the space to emulate a patio and reflect other exterior finishes in the backyard, as opposed to looking like a flat metal roof with chairs on top. Smith considered several options for the rooftop patio but found standard roofing products lacked the integrity to withstand foot traffic. He also reasoned that building a deck would be a waste of money because it would have to be removed whenever repairs or replacement were required.

Smiley eventually settled on a vinyl membrane designed for foot traffic and suited for the placement of furniture, but this product did not satisfy the client's request for an upgraded patio finish. The firm integrated an additional component over the membrane and laid stone pavers that complemented the other large stone patios and walls included in the project. Adjustable pedestals underneath the pavers make sure the corners stay level and also preserve enough space for water to run into the gutter.

The nature of the project meant visitors often would be outside looking back at the sunroom, which brought into question how they would view the edge of the roof from the ground. Smiley could not just hang



A spiral staircase allows the client to access the rooftop patio and master suite without having to travel back through the main house. The unit had to be constructed offsite and then shipped to the home.

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SIDING: James Hardie
THERMAL BARRIER: DuPont Tyvek
EXTERIOR TRIM: Azek
HANDRAILS: Fiberon
FLOORING: Bruce Hardwood
PAINT: Benjamin Moore; McCormick Paints

BUDGET HISTORY

ESTIMATED COST: \$90,800
CHANGE ORDERS: \$4,398
FINAL COST: \$95,198

a gutter and leave the bottom side of the pavers exposed; to conceal the drainage system on the sides of the addition, the company built custom curbing and directed all water to the front of the sunroom.

The firm then applied PVC trim in layers to hide the vinyl membrane as it wrapped around the sides of the addition, and repeated that process at the front of the roof to disguise the gutter. The client now had an authentic rooftop patio with effective drainage, curb appeal, and smooth passage to the master bedroom.

Finishing features

The homeowner valued a hot tub in the existing deck but lamented having to trudge back through the house to reach the stairs and ultimately the master suite. The concept of a “private” staircase leading to the master bedroom appealed to the client, but a traditional staircase would have taken up too much space. After some consideration, Smiley incorporated a spiral staircase as an elegant and casual solution for accessing the rooftop and master suite.

The firm had to measure and order the staircase before finishing the patio because of the long lead time required to build the unit, which the manufacturer constructed offsite and shipped to the house for installation. Exact measurements became critical in order to secure a flush transition between the stairs and the pavers. After Smiley set up the unit, however, the homeowner lamented not being able to see the pool from the sunroom and asked for a window looking out through the staircase.

Smith had already installed a mini-HVAC system in that location

but moved it to the other side of the sunroom to accommodate the request. The company decided early on to institute a separate heat pump for the addition despite setting up a geothermal system to serve the main house in a previous renovation. “We didn’t want to tax the existing unit because now it would have to work super hard to heat and cool that area with all those windows,” Smith says.

Business boost

The homeowner emphasized openness in design from the outset of the project, and Smiley produced an airy sunroom with a limited footprint—just under 400 square feet—and a rooftop patio overlooking an extensive outdoor entertainment area. Smith further appealed to the client’s initial vision of an enclosed porch by installing a hidden screen system that can stretch across the 9-foot opening of the bi-fold door. The firm asked the manufacturer to make the screen longer than the standard model and built out an additional interior wall in the sunroom to hide the screen with not in use.

Not long after finishing the job, Smiley hosted a party at the house for about 80 people, including the homeowner’s friends, previous Smiley clients, and prospective customers. The company landed a major addition as a result of the celebration and banked two additional projects from another party there in which nearly 150 guests attended. In fact, the homeowner still allows Smith to give tours of the house and showcase the firm’s work upon request.

“They were just very easy to get along with,” Smith says of his longtime client. **PR**

Planning Tips from Bathroom Pros

BY THE NATIONAL KITCHEN & BATH ASSOCIATION

Planning a bathroom requires knowledge about many concepts related to people and their houses. The designer must draw on information about plumbing and electrical systems, bathroom fixtures, finishes, and the people who will be using the space.

The NKBA Bathroom Planning Guidelines with Access Standards includes several recommendations that deal with the general layout and design of the bathroom. These include the entry, ceiling height, and circulation spaces within the bathroom.

There are many different ways to approach designing bathrooms. The NKBA Bath Planning book focuses on the center concept. A center is an area where a particular task or function occurs. The user, space, fixtures, and other components are all analyzed in order to design a center for a particular task. The basic tasks and corresponding centers in the bathroom are grooming, bathing/showering, and toileting.

As you examine the space of an existing bathroom or the plans for a new one, there are several general things that should be assessed. Not only are the dimensions of the space important but the form of the space needs to be considered.

How will the space join to adjacent rooms or areas? Are there other openings, such as windows? Is the space a basic rectangle shape or are there curves or angles? How will the user(s) move about the space?

Bathroom entry

One of the first decisions for the design is how to get into the bathroom. Door placement can make a real difference in the available space and in the circulation and sight lines to adjacent rooms. If a major remodeling or new construction is taking place, look carefully at the entry and examine all possibilities for its location.

In more modest remodeling projects, there may not be space or budget to allow for a change in door location. It is recommended the entry to the bathroom have a 32-inch clear opening between the door



Planning a bathroom using the center concept encourages the designer to use the NKBA Bathroom Planning Guidelines and Access Standards. They guidelines include recommendations for general layout and design.

jamb. This can be accomplished by specifying at least a 2-foot, 10-inch door. While this is larger than what has been typical in the past, consumers are requesting this enhancement.

Not only will it make the bathroom more spacious, it will accommodate larger people, some people with assistive devices, and a large tub or shower installation.

If a doorframe of a remodeled bathroom cannot be modified, NKBA allows a door as small as 2 feet, but it will be difficult for many people to use and will not meet basic visit-ability or access standards. It will allow you to get a 21-inch-deep vanity into the room, but not larger cabinetry or fixtures.

In many cases, a 3-foot door is preferred as it provides 34 inches of clear opening for even greater clearance. When the clear space of a door is less than desired, a swing-clear hinge may be

Right: The Bathroom Planning Guidelines provide recommendations for space clearances for the fixtures. Below: Entry to the bathroom must have a 32-inch opening between door jambs. A minimum of 18 inches on the pull side of the door allows a person using a wheelchair clearance.



used to gain clear passage by moving the door out of the opening. For a person using a wheelchair or mobility aid, a minimum of 18 inches on the pull side of the door is recommended to allow room for the person to maneuver around the swing of the door. Actual clearances are impacted by a person's approach and the door configuration.

The IRC requires that entry doors and other cabinet doors not interfere with activity centers and circulation in the bathroom. A poorly placed door could interfere with getting into the bathroom or shower to help someone who has fallen. An improperly placed doorstop or doorknob could interfere with a passage for a person with a vision or mobility impairment.

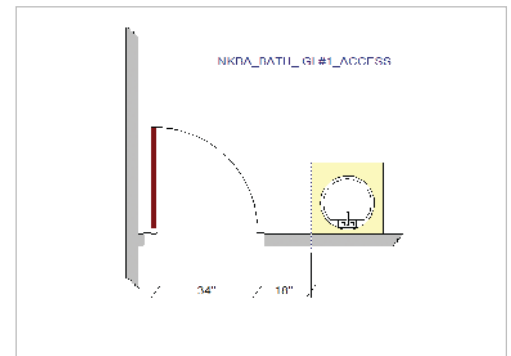
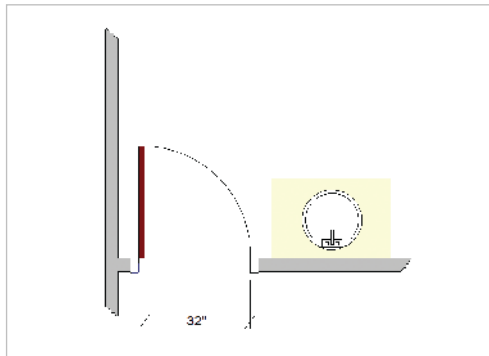
In private bathrooms, you may consider café doors, which are two doors hinged to the opposite door frames, meeting in the middle, thus reducing the amount of room needed for door clearances. The doors swing in both directions and close automatically once a person has passed beyond the door swing. Others may not need or want a door at all. A single user and certain family members may not feel the need for a full door to assure privacy.

Proper bathroom planning

The bathroom is an important part of any home and often a bathroom is located in both private and social areas. All bathrooms are composed of a combination of centers where the major activities of the bathroom occur: grooming, bathing/showering, and toileting. Planning a bathroom using the center concept encourages the designer to examine and use the NKBA Bathroom Planning Guidelines and Access Standards for each area.

The Planning Guidelines are based on human factors and the 2012 International Residential Code. The Bathroom Access Standards are based on the 2009 International Code Council ANSI 1.117.

Budget, time, and space restrictions will influence how you incorporate the guidelines within the parameters of each bathroom design. Of course, local building codes will have to be met and should be



referenced during the design process. The Bathroom Planning Guidelines incorporate several building code requirements that must be followed when planning a bathroom: for instance, minimum space clearances, and requirements related to windows, doors, and access panels.

Beyond building codes, the Bathroom Planning Guidelines provide recommendations for space clearances at the entry and at each fixture. Universal design recommendations are also incorporated. Recommendations for slip-resistant flooring, rounded counter edges, grab bars at bathing and shower fixtures, and seating in the shower are helpful features that will make the bathroom safer.

Remember that infrastructure requirements also must be considered. There are also decisions related to mechanical systems. Lighting, ventilation, heat, and placement of receptacles are important to consider when you start to design a space. **PR**

This article is excerpted from the NKBA Professional Resource Library volumes: Kitchen & Bath Residential Construction and Systems by Jerry Germer; Kitchen Planning, Second Edition by Julia Beamish, PhD, CKD, Kathleen Parrott, PhD, CKE, JoAnn Emmel, PhD, and Mary Jo Peterson, CKD, CBD, CAPS, CAASH. Copyright: 2013 National Kitchen & Bath Association; published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. This material is reproduced with the permission of John Wiley & Sons Inc.



OPEN YOUR MIND

to Sell More Business

Critical tips for understanding an effective selling process

BY DAVE YOHO, PRESIDENT, DAVE YOHO ASSOCIATES

The home improvement/remodeling business is front-loaded with perceptions of why consumers buy or don't buy. Issues such as the economy, the uncertainty of the times, homeowners being reluctant to commit, and consumers being more price-conscious probably head the list.

So how did some of the largest, most successful companies in the industry increase their sales and profitability last year?

Closely tied to these faulty perceptions are the attitudes and biases about marketing and sales practices of many that own/run small-to-moderate-sized home improvement companies. There are diverse groups when it comes to defining how home improvement projects should be marketed and presented to consumers.

Two groups with different concepts

One group believes that reliance on their credentials—knowledge of remodeling products—coupled with design capabilities and capable project managers, installers, and subcontractors are sufficient reasons for customers to select their company's proposal. Many in this group believe that a smart response to economic slowdown or buyer procrastination lies with “cutting corners,” including reducing quality and meeting or beating price competition. The latter usually leads to many problems in maintaining a profitable business balanced with customer satisfaction.

Moreover, this group believes that selling practices and aggressive sales practices are detrimental to their credibility and are dia-

metrically opposed to the image they created for their business.

The second group believes that a strong counterbalance to economic conditions, price competition, or consumer reluctance can be solved with extensive and diverse marketing, coupled with aggressive and sometimes questionable selling techniques. Both groups reinforce their beliefs and continue the practices they have established while bemoaning what they do not fully understand rather than searching for the truth.

Neither group would question that the marketplace has changed. The customer base includes many younger buyers interested in upgrades, more economical maintenance, and energy-saving improvements. Older buyers are often responding to safety, security, and ease-of-use products. The availability of financing, diversity of advertising options, and expansion of competition all contribute to the growth and expansion of this billion-dollar industry.

In short, the customer has changed, products and product availability has changed, and with it buyer habits and methods of decision-making have changed.

So the question for both groups is, how do you plan to change?

Opening your mind to change

Many companies are deluded or simply misunderstand the selling process, frequently assessing it as an art form, manipulation, chicanery, or worse. The dictionary contains numerous definitions, some as simple as “exchanging property, goods, or service for money”

Sales: A Modern Definition

“Whenever an interaction between two or more parties takes place for the purpose of establishing new ideas, exchanging goods or services, or the development of a relationship, some form of selling will occur and the skills of the communicator will determine the outcome.”

—Dave Yoho, The Science of Successful In-Home Selling

or “to establish faith, confidence, or belief in certain products or structures.” Further on in the definition there are phrases such as “a trick or hoax” and “to cheat or dupe.”

The fact is it isn't the numerous definitions that cause the confusion, rather the various ways in which some companies tend to interpret methods of communication, or to devise methods to convince others, change mindsets, or promote the sale of their goods and services without first examining the thinking and communication techniques of their counterpart—the customer.

Recently, we produced a 90-minute virtual sales webinar entitled, “Open Your Mind To Close More Sales.” Over 900 companies plus their salespeople (estimated between 3,500 and 4,000 participants) registered. Through a sampling of their questions and our answers, we offer you “school for thought” on the two groups defined earlier.

How do you design a sales system that is effective and doesn't corrupt your credibility?

The prospect/customer is the key ingredient in a sound sales methodology. How the prospect thinks and feels has to be the major consideration in the development of a sales system or that system will eventually fail.

You cannot design a sales system without first studying the habits, the language, the attitudes, and the practices of those to whom you wish to sell your products or services. Only then can a selling method be designed as “methodology,” which is the orderly arrangement of facts and data so as to respond to the habits, practices, and values of those to whom you wish to sell.

We've never given importance to what you call “the walk around” or searching for “needs.” Are most companies weak in this area?

Great sales training has more to do with understanding your customer than having your customer understand you. All too frequently salespeople are measured by their ability to talk. This skill has to

be balanced with the ability to ask questions then being patient with the answer from your customer, often asking another question to get more clarity. This is called processing, and if done correctly it leaves a distinct impression on your prospect that the questions are being asked to ascertain more about what they desire as an outcome if they select your company and your product. Salespeople who do not sufficiently discover unstated “needs” miss sales and blame it on someone other than himself or herself.

You frequently use the word “methodology” in describing sales training. What does that mean?

Methodology is defined as the branch of logic concerned with applying the principles of reasoning to practical and philosophical inquiry. Think of it this way: “a method by which to accomplish a task.” The second part of the word (ology) implies logic. Simply defined, a methodology requires a presentation that logically reaches the customer at their level of understanding while responding to both their needs and their value system.

How does a sound sales system relate to “step selling”?

Step selling requires that all the steps in your selling process be handled individually and in a coordinate order. Our company first introduced this premise in 1962 before 1,000 sales and management executives at a seminar in New York City.

As related to selling home improvements/remodeling in the home it became six selling steps:

1. Sell (resell) the appointment (the value of the visit)
2. Sell your way into the prospect's presence (all interested parties with sufficient time to complete all the steps)
3. Sell yourself (be a great listener and ask questions)
4. Sell your company (promote five unique company practices)
5. Sell your product (present it as a response to their needs)
6. Sell your price (the total offer concept)

Some companies create eight or nine steps. Some have created “sub-steps.” No matter, step selling enables the prospect to understand sequentially what the salesperson is trying to explain. It becomes teachable when each step is broken down as to “purpose.” As an example, selling yourself does not mean talking about yourself, it means doing/saying things properly and asking exploratory questions which makes the prospect want to listen further. Also, it builds rapport (trust, credibility).

What are some of the guidelines and cautions in developing and refining a sales training program?

To simplify the answer, here are just six issues:

1. A major caution, much of what is considered sales training is based on the personal philosophy or the history of an individual. This training usually has minimal “long range” value. Instead, adopt practices that can be taught easily and can be measured effectively.

2. Stop telling; selling is not an art form. It requires a lot of listening. Listening itself requires a great deal of practice. Teach yourself and your salespeople to answer questions, and when receiving a response, write it down and comment on it by saying, “I see” or “I understand” or “Run that by me one more time.”

3. Listening and processing information equates with helping and caring in the mind of the customer.

4. Get to know your prospect early on and understand his/her value system and needs prior to presenting your company and product.

5. Creative selling occurs when the buyer is convinced it is their decision to buy. Notice that people most frequently say, “I bought this from...” then they name a company or a salesperson. They seldom say, “Joe Smith sold this to me.”

6. A sound sales methodology requires scripting as a teaching platform. Many companies and their salespeople resist this concept, although they tend to accept it when they see great acting or well-rehearsed announcers delivering a commercial. A reminder: It only sounds like a script if you haven’t practiced it. Once you practice a scripted presentation, it reaches the customer better and produces better results.

Why is such an importance placed on scripting?

First, if the scripting is based on how the prospect thinks and feels the message is better received. It also ensures the steps are being followed correctly, and it aids salespeople from succumbing to their natural aversions (what they will go out of their way to avoid).

Some of the more simple aversions are: being put into new or different situations, possibility of rejection, and anticipating failure and attracting contradictions.

Selling remains an individual accomplishment. Some do well if they have a great personality or they are charismatic. Others who are not, become “more so” when they follow a script. Scripting truly aids even the most skilled salesperson in being more effective.

Who benefits most from structured selling?

Everyone. The prospect/customer benefits by having a better understanding of what the presentation is all about. The company benefits because they ensure that all customers are given the same story about their product, its benefits, warranties, and protections. Most of all the salesperson benefits because abundant case

history has proven that structured salespeople sell more (usually with the same number of leads).

How does “selling” the product differ from “telling” the prospect about the product/service?

In most buy/sell relationships the customer defines “wants.” They want to know more about the product, what it looks like, and above all they want the price. Telling usually responds to wants. The proper sales presentation enables salespeople to uncover needs. People don’t buy the product or service you sell, they buy what that product or service will do for them. Through structured selling you can determine needs.

What role does emotion play in a sales presentation?

A great deal. Many decisions to buy are based on emotion, contradicting the belief that logical arguments and statistical presentations by themselves satisfy the customer. The majority of purchases your customer makes such as a car, rug, furniture, appliance, and even their home all represent a finished product with little need to create mind pictures. Home improvement projects on the other hand require that you use pictures and “word pictures” to create an image that responds to the prospect’s feelings, which were developed during needs assessment (i.e. how they would like this to “look” when completed or what they would like to see as an outcome of their decision).

Prospects are stimulated by word pictures accompanied by the energy and enthusiasm provided by the presenter.

There is no such thing as a cold, rational, dispassionate homeowner who buys solely on merit, although they frequently state their preference for such. Usually, they are prompted and motivated by a number of emotional prods, all of which are built into the salesperson’s application of the sales methodology. **PR**



Dave Yoho is the president of Dave Yoho Associates, Fairfax, Va., founded his consulting company in 1962. It is the oldest, largest, and most successful consulting company in the industry. They also produce the best selling recorded (CD) series “The Science of Successful In-Home Selling” and the web-based video training series “Super Sales Training.” Visit www.daveyoho.com or call 703.591.2490.

For more information on presentation development and additional information on sales presentations, consult the blog www.daveyoho.com/wordpress.

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Bigger, Brighter, Bolder

Customizable windows prove key as sizes trend upward, colors get darker, privacy persists, and energy-efficiency technology advances

By Abby Kleckler, Associate Editor

Whether windows are completely torn out or simply replaced during a remodeling project, the results can impact an entire home.

“Your window choice is the one decision you make in your house that impacts every single room,” says Elizabeth Souders, director of product management for Jeld-Wen. “You really have to make sure it works with all the different types of spaces you’re creating.”

Making sure these windows complement areas of the home aesthetically is only part of the challenge. Windows also must let in abundant amounts of light while still maintaining privacy (when desired) and lowering energy bills.

Creating light

A trend toward indoor-outdoor living spaces is prevalent throughout the remodeling industry, whether with kitchens, decks,

porches, or doors. Large windows have become yet another way to mesh these spaces.

“The demand and desire for larger sizes [of windows] bridge traditional and contemporary,” says Christine Marvin, director of marketing for Marvin Windows and Doors. “Regardless of your style, the one thing we all share is a desire to maximize views and allow daylight to come into our homes.”

Newer construction often includes high ceilings, so homeowners are finding ways to take advantage of additional wall space with what Stacy Einck, brand public relations and social media manager for Andersen Windows Corp., calls “monumental-sized” windows.

“If you consider a standard ceiling height of 8 or 9 feet, then the windows are proportional to that,” she says. “But in some cases where ceiling heights are getting to be 10-, 12-, 14-, or 15-feet high, the windows are proportionally getting bigger too.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARVIN WINDOWS AND DOORS

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARVIN WINDOWS AND DOORS



To achieve the feel of an indoor-outdoor living space, many remodelers are choosing to pull the window sill down as close to the floor as possible. In these expanded openings, windows with clean lines are bringing the maximum amount of light to both traditional and contemporary designs.

During a project many remodelers, however, may not have the luxury of working with high ceilings or the ability to increase the ceiling height. In situations such as these, remodelers and homeowners are choosing to bring more light into the home by pulling the sill down, sometimes all the way to the floor, according to Einck.

Another way to obtain large expanses of windows that command wall space is with combinations.

“We’re seeing more homeowners and remodelers opt for factory-mulled combinations of two or more windows to create focal points in a home,” says Kathy Krafka Harkema, spokesperson for Pella Corp. “By combining several standard-sized windows into a larger grouping, you add architectural interest, open up a room, and invite in more natural light.”

Although some arch-top or half-round windows may be used in combinations, the general trend is toward contemporary, squared-

off windows. Windows with clean lines, however, are not only gaining popularity in contemporary design but also in traditional design, according to Marvin.

Integrating privacy

With large walls of windows comes the challenge of maintaining privacy in particular areas of the house or at specific times of day.

Many manufacturers are offering different options of blinds that are integrated into the window system and give homeowners the ability to control privacy whenever they choose.

“Internal blinds and shades are becoming more important,” says Chris Pickering, vice president of marketing for Ply Gem. “They want larger windows and privacy, which means being able to move a lever to easily change the window from open-viewing to complete opacity is important.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDERSEN WINDOWS CORP.



Although rectangular windows with straight, clean lines are the new normal, some homeowners choose to accent these styles with arched or other specialty shapes. These combinations add architectural interest without obscuring the views or preventing natural light from entering the room.

Homeowners do not have just one choice when it comes to integrated blinds. Interior and exterior shades as well as those between two panes of glass all solve privacy concerns but with different advantages.

“Between-the-glass blinds and shades are made-to-order, to provide a precise fit,” Krafka Harkema says. “Because they’re between glass, they’re a cleaner option and ideal for homes with children or pets.”

Marvin Windows and Doors, however, has moved its shade system all the way to the exterior. This eliminates any concern of the system scratching certain glazed coatings and thereby hindering energy efficiency, according to Marvin.

“We house the exterior shade system into our casing cavity. It’s beautiful and it’s seamless,” she says. “It’s another approach to allowing privacy control of your home but not necessarily by way of obscure glass, where you’re actually obscuring the view.”

With automatic features on these systems, homeowners can program when they want their shades to open and close depending on the time of day.

Marvin’s newest release of interior shades offers privacy without the automation but with the perfect fit by integrating them into the window system. Homeowners can open the windows in a top-down or bottom-up manner to let in just as much light as desired.

Although shade systems are becoming popular options for large expanses of windows, privacy glass and art glass have a strong

PHOTO COURTESY OF PLY GEM



presence in some areas.

“Where houses are closer together, obscure glass is often sought after, especially in bathrooms or bedrooms,” Krafka Harkema says.

These closer houses are popping up in contemporary neighborhoods throughout the country, so homeowners now more than ever are looking for more innovative ways to add privacy to key areas of their homes.

“Privacy just doesn’t have to be the frosted or sandblasted glass anymore,” Souders says. “It really can be an opportunity to be a decorative or art-like element.”

Souders says she has seen more people coming in with customized ideas or artist renderings they want to turn into privacy glass for a bathroom or hallway.

Customizing aesthetics

Customization is not only a key element with glass but also with window shapes, colors, and hardware throughout the house.

“We’re seeing a return to wanting to personalize. This may be attributed to the downturn of the economy, but we saw people have very functional needs: ‘My window isn’t durable anymore, it isn’t energy efficient, and I have a problem I need to fix,’” Souders says. “Now we’re still seeing them say that but then saying: ‘I want it in the right color and the right finish, and I want my hardware to coordinate amongst other items in my house.’”

Left: When confined to tight constraints with a remodel, double-hung windows can provide an open feel. Right: Combining multiple standard-size windows together is one way to achieve the wall-of-windows look in a home with high ceilings.

White used to be the most common color for windows, and it still is, but now there is less of a percentage of white windows, according to Einck. Homeowners want to incorporate windows into their entire design plan.

“Consumers want a wide range of exterior window color options that match or accent siding, roofing, decking, and other trim components,” says Steve Gillhouse, vice president of sales for Simonton Windows. “On the interior, window colors and wood grains are being coordinated to complement popular cabinet wood grains and furniture.”

To appeal to homeowners’ willingness to experiment with color, Ply Gem has introduced four new colors to its lineup of painted vinyl windows: Black, Evergreen, Royal Brown, and Sharkskin. Andersen also recently released a dark bronze to embrace this trend.

Homeowners are giving much more attention to window hardware, and manufacturers are innovating new material options in this category.

“More choices in hardware finishes allow homeowners to make a statement and match other finishes within their home,” Pickering says. “It’s about creating an inviting and warm atmosphere within the home.”

Standardizing energy efficiency

As homeowners really hone in on customization and aesthetics, they are not willing to give up the energy-efficient characteristics that are often the primary reason for replacement.

“In a post Energy-Star and energy-tax credit era, consumers are more educated regarding energy efficiency and the options that are available to them to achieve optimal performance,” Gillhouse says. “Combine this knowledge with rising energy costs, and improved energy efficiency is one of the key drivers for window demand.”

Boosting energy efficiency can take many forms including double- or triple-pane windows instead of single-pane, enhanced glazings on the glass, sill materials, and proper installation to name a few.

Many manufacturers are incorporating things such as low-E coatings into standard window packages. Energy-efficient products tailored to certain areas of the country are often no longer upgrades.

Some homeowners and remodelers, however, are now looking to



PHOTO COURTESY OF JELD-WEN

fine tune other aspects of window purchases to maximize efficiency and minimize energy bills. One of these aspects is house orientation.

“If you’re trying to orient a house to a certain direction, you may choose a window that’s going to give you an energy efficiency that will allow more solar heat gain or less depending on if it’s on the north, south, east, or west side of the house,” Einck says. “That’s not to say the other sides won’t have energy-efficient windows, but you may want something different.”

As a key component to new and replacement windows, energy efficiency can now be seamlessly combined with the large walls of durable windows and customized aesthetics in the marketplace.

“Windows have gone through an extensive evolution over the years, and they’re better built, better technologies, better materials and better processes to craft those windows,” Marvin says. “In the end, you have a very robust, durable, and appealing product as a result.” **PR**



PHOTO COURTESY OF PELLA CORP.

RESOURCE LIST

Andersen Windows Corp.....	www.andersenwindows.com
Jeld-Wen	www.jeld-wen.com
Marvin Windows and Doors	www.marvin.com
Milgard Windows & Doors.....	www.milgard.com
Pella Corp.....	www.pella.com
Ply Gem.....	www.plygem.com
Simonton Windows	www.simonton.com
Western Window Systems.....	www.westernwindowssystems.com

Product Introductions



1

1 VanitEase Bathroom Vanities

The L.E. Smith Co. has launched its VanitEase line of affordable bathroom vanities. The stone vanities provide quick and clean installation and are available in Caesarstone Quartz, Natural Granite, and Engineered Stone options that are highly resistant to scratches, abrasions, and other damage. Nine options ship in just one week while custom vanity tops are available in two weeks.

For more information, No. 840 on reader service card.



2

2 SPI Drywall Screws

Screw Products Inc's new line of drywall screws are available in six sizes, ranging from a #6-by-1 1/8 inch to a #8-by-3 inch and feature both fine and coarse threads. The screws have a bugle head to prevent tearing, a phosphate coating to help resist corrosion, and a Phillips drive recess. They are available in 1-pound jars, 5-pound jars, bulk pails, and 50-pound boxes.

For more information, No. 841 on reader service card.

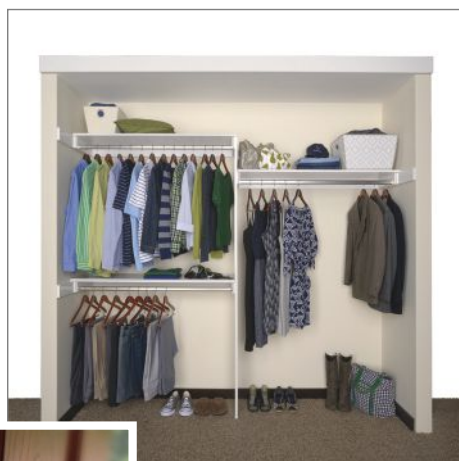


3

3 Whirlpool Double Oven Freestanding Range

The new Whirlpool Induction double oven free-standing range features efficient cooking technology and easy cleaning. The large 6.7-cubic-foot capacity, with a 2.4-cubic-foot upper oven and a 4.2-cubic-foot lower oven, is meant to handle the largest of meals. The AccuHeat induction technology provides powerful cooking without feeling heat from the cooktop, and TimeSavor convection cooking distributes hot air more efficiently.

For more information, No. 842 on reader service card.



4

4 WoodTrac Reach-in Wood Closet

WoodTrac's new reach-in wood closets are made from the same materials and finishes as its full-size, walk-in closet line and are meant as an upgrade to wire closets throughout the home. The wood shelves allow clothes to be stored without the impression of marks and are easy to clean and wipe down. They are available in white, cherry, and espresso, and can be installed in spaces up to 8-feet wide. Kits are comprised of 18-, 24-, and 36-inch cabinets.

For more information, No. 843 on reader service card.



5

5 ProVia Fiberglass Entry Doors

ProVia's Signet line of fiberglass entry doors has strong hardwood stiles and rails dovetailed at each corner. The professional-class doors are hand-stained and customizable with different styles, colors, and finishes on each side. Finishes include Cherry, Mahogany, Fir, and Oak. The DuraFuse finishing system features P3 Fusion that allows for a 10-year finish warranty. The doors can be ordered in widths and heights in 1/8-inch increments.

For more information, No. 844 on reader service card.

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1 Arizona Tile Porcelain Tile Booth N1875

Africa and Waterfall are the newest additions to Arizona Tile's line of wood-look, plank-style porcelain tiles. Crafted in Italy and available in four colors, each tile features a unique, digitally printed pattern. The Africa series is offered in 6-inch by 24-inch and 12-inch by 24-inch tiles; Waterfall is available in the 12-by-24 model as well as a 6-inch by 36-inch version.

For more information, No. 810 on reader service card.

2 DAP SmartBond Adhesives Booth S2210

This range of polyurethane construction adhesive foaming gel products provides eight times the coverage of standard cartridge adhesives across a wide array of applications and construction materials. DAP also boasts 25-percent faster application thanks to the aerosol distribution. Products in the line include a subfloor adhesive, subfloor gun-grade adhesive, heavy duty adhesive, landscape adhesive, and an adhesive cleaner.

For more information, No. 811 on reader service card.

3 Isenberg Pull-Out Kitchen Faucet Booth N1144

Isenberg recently launched this new contemporary faucet, which is now available for sale in the U.S. It features an Italian-made sprayer from AMFAG, German-made ceramic disc cartridges from Fluhs, and a 1.8-gpm aerator from Neoperl, Germany. Made of solid brass, the faucet is available in Brushed Nickel and Chrome finishes.

For more information, No. 812 on reader service card.

4 Artifacts Collection Booth N2005

Homeowners can customize their own faucets from a choice of three spouts and three handles in this collection from Kohler. All pieces sport a traditional, turn-of-the-century look, but can be placed in traditional, transitional, or modern bathrooms. Kohler offers 15 accessories to complement the line, including a tumbler, soap dispenser, and toilet paper carriage. Five different finishes are available.

For more information, No. 813 on reader service card.

5 LP SmartSide Trim and Siding Booth C3811

LP SmartSide Trim and Siding combine the beauty of cedar grain texture with the durability of an engineered wood product. They cut with standard woodworking tools and are lightweight (for less breakage) with fewer seams for fast, easy installation. All pieces are created via the proprietary Smart-Guard process for strength and resistance to decay and termites, and are backed by a 5- or 50-year transferable limited warranty. LP SmartSide products are also impact resistant.

For more information, No. 814 on reader service card.

6



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6

R-20 ProPink EcoTouch Insulation Booth P16/17

The latest addition to Owens Corning's ProPink EcoTouch insulation line boasts a designated R-value of 20 for a 5-1/2-foot wall cavity, in compliance with the most up-to-date building codes. The product is made of 99-percent natural materials, including a minimum of 58-percent recycled content. ProPink EcoTouch is GreenGuard Gold-certified for indoor air quality, contributing to numerous green certifications. Each piece can be cut and split to fit small or oddly shaped cavities.

For more information, No. 815 on reader service card.

7

Panasonic EcoVent Booth C7131

This Energy Star-rated ceiling fan includes the Veri-Boost feature to ensure designed airflow is achieved without compromising style. EcoVent can be used to comply with ASHRAE 62.2 and Energy Star for Homes 3.0, with easy airflow testing capability. The smaller grille size helps the unit blend into the ceiling, leaving the aesthetic of the room uninterrupted. Panasonic offers EcoVent in contractor packs; it can also be used in tandem with the WhisperGreen ventilation fan.

For more information, No. 816 on reader service card.

8



8

SheerWeave Fabrics Booth S1113

Ideal for the bathroom, these interior sun-control fabrics reduce solar heat and glare while still allowing natural light into the room. Each sheet is fused with Microban antimicrobial product protection, which resists stain- and odor-causing microbes for the life of the product. They can be hung as a single sheet or paired with draperies, creating a perfect fit with the design of the room. Phifer offers a variety of colors, weaves, and openness factors.

For more information, No. 817 on reader service card.



9

9

Poggenpohl Ash Wood Veneer Booth N509

Poggenpohl's Core Ash wood veneer features an expressive grain pattern and combines well with the company's Sand Grey matte lacquer cabinetry for a kitchen design inspired by nature-influenced colors and textures. The set features a new backsplash accessory system, thin-profile framed Core Ash ash door fronts, and motorized flip-up upper wall cabinets with integrated LED lighting. A floating breakfast bar is also offered.

For more information, No. 818 on reader service card.

10

Ultra Series Water Heaters Booth C7343

A unique condensing design with two heat exchangers gives these tankless Rinnai water heaters greater energy savings for residential applications, with an Energy Factor rating up to .96; this is an upgrade over traditional gas tank water heaters. The temperature-lock function prevents unauthorized or accidental changes to water temperature. The Scale Detection System detects limescale buildup and alerts the user when maintenance is required.

For more information, No. 819 on reader service card.



10

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Englehorn Collection Booth C3508

This new, modern collection from Sea Gull Lighting melds a variety of features together to create a sophisticated look. The three-light chandelier—with gently waved, chrome-finished arms topped with flawless solid K9 optic crystal accents and Opal glass shades—is one of the highlights of the collection, which has 15 pieces total, including additional chandeliers, flush mounts, pendants, bath lighting, and more. Energy Star-certified lamping is available. **For more information, No. 829 on reader service card.**

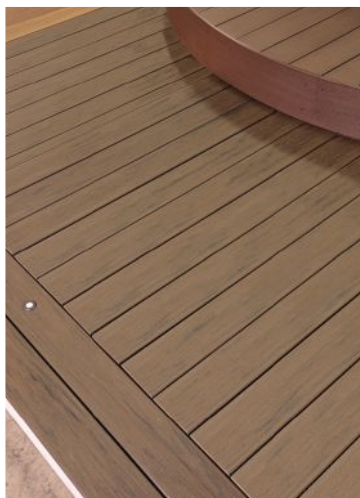
12

Strata Mat Booth S1200

Designed to replace traditional underlayment materials, Strata Mat is a next-generation, high-performance uncoupling mat for use under ceramic tile and stone installations. The unique patent-pending design provides an enhanced mechanical bond of the adhesive mortar for faster drying of the mortar; this in turn allows for shorter time to grout. Specifically designed for use with both modified and unmodified mortars, Strata Mat allows for proper adhesive mortar use with porcelain or large format tiles and stone.

For more information, No. 820 on reader service card.

13



13

Legacy Collection Booth C3015

The Legacy Collection is the latest update to TimberTech's Earthwood Evolutions line of capped composite decking, designed to bring the indoor look of hand-scraped wood to the outside. Three distinct colors are available: Mocha (a deep, rich walnut color); Pecan (a warm reddish-brown to complement brick or stone); and Tigerwood (a blend of dark and light shades to emulate Ipe, a tropical rainforest hardwood). Sizes include 12-, 16-, and 20-foot lengths with color-coordinated fascia and riser.

For more information, No. 821 on reader service card.

14



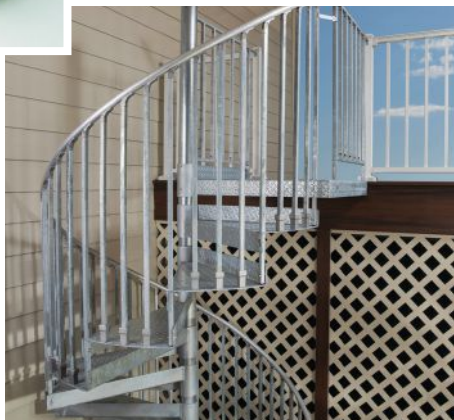
14

Chateau Collection Booth N2175

Three new pattern suites have been added to Top Knobs' Chateau Collection of bathroom hardware: Reeded (2 knobs, 5 pulls, and 1 appliance), Chalet (1 knob, 5 pulls, and 1 appliance), and Shrewsbury (2 round knobs, a T knob, and 3 pulls). They join the original Tuscan designs, with the whole collection suitable for transitional and modern kitchens. Available finishes include Black Iron, Tuscan Bronze, Brushed Satin Nickel, Polished Nickel, and Polished Chrome.

For more information, No. 822 on reader service card.

15



15

Trex Spiral Stairs Booth C5431

This new spiral staircase line is designed to work in tandem with other pre-existing Trex decking and railing systems to create one system. A lip-up tread design ensures space between the risers does not exceed 4 inches. The LED-dimmable Trex DeckLighting system can be added for additional style and safety. Galvanized steel and aluminum models are offered in addition to the traditional composite option. A total of 12 customizable options are available.

For more information, No. 823 on reader service card.



16 Uponor Radiant Floor Heating Booth C6908

Uponor offers two different radiant floor heating solutions for remodels and retrofits. The Radiant Ready 30E is a complete radiant mechanical room designed in a compact, pre-assembled, easy-to-install panel—just hang the panel on a wall and connect the tubing, thermostat, and electrical power. The Fast Trak system is a series of knobbed mats that make for faster, easier installation of PEX tubing in overpour applications anywhere in the home; available models (based on pipe thickness) include Fast Trak 0.5 and Fast Trak 1.3i.

For more information, No. 824 on reader service card.

17



16

17 Clean, Quiet & Safe Glass Booth C4526

This new laminated glass from Velux—which will debut on its No Leak Solar Powered Fresh Air Skylights in 2014—offers cleaner, quieter, and safer operation. A super-thin coating of titanium dioxide and silicone dioxide on the exterior keeps it smooth. Outside noise is reduced by up to 50 percent compared with other materials. Finally, this glass satisfies building code requirements where any point of the skylight is 12 feet above the floor.

For more information, No. 825 on reader service card.

18



18 Versatex Max 2x Trimboard Booth C7139

This new trimboard product is similar to the Versatex Max extruded cellular PVC sheet, offering the convenience of dimensional lumber with different widths for easier handling. With board sizes of 2 x 8 inches, 2 x 10 inches, and 2 x 12 inches, the product is ideal for laminated pergola beams, custom mouldings, corbels, spindles, and other fabricated items. Initially, Versatex Max 2x Trimboard will be sold in 18-foot lengths with a smooth finish only.

For more information, No. 826 on reader service card.

19



19 Reflections 5500 Vinyl Windows Booth C6113

This series of vinyl windows from Simonton feature a classic frame design with high energy-efficiency and long-lasting beauty. ProSolar low-E glass with argon gas is standard; high-performance options include a triple-pane insulating glass unit and ProSolar Shade low-E glass. Reflections windows can be customized with Decorum by Simonton features, including seven exterior colors, three woodgrain options, and four premium hardware finish options.

For more information, No. 827 on reader service card.

20



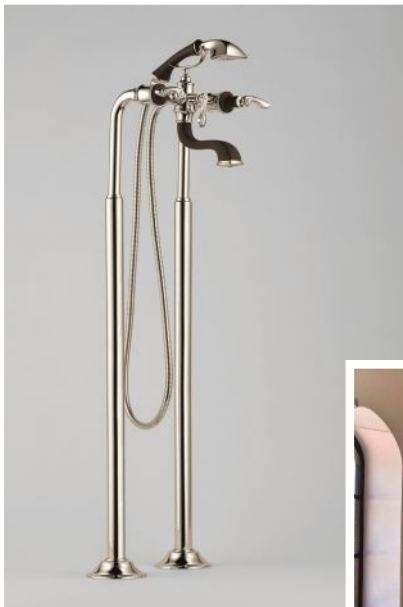
20 PUR Window and Door Trim Booth C6113

Decorative and durable, Fypon polyurethane window and door trim can be used on the interior and exterior of homes and commercial projects. Available in a wide range of styles and sizes, the weather-resistant pieces are easy to install, paint, stain, and maintain. Pilasters, pediments, crossheads, window panels, keystones, and shutters are all available to accent windows and doors. This closed-cell product is resistant to moisture and insects as well as rotting, warping, cracking, peeling, crumbling, and deterioration.

For more information, No. 828 on reader service card.

Tubs & Showers

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5



1 Tool-Free Shower Chair

This shower chair from Moen Home Care offers safety in the shower with easy, no-hassle assembly—simply snap the back and legs in place. It fits most tubs and showers and also is height adjustable from 15 to 21 inches. The large seat provides superior stability and comfort for users up to 350 lbs. Other features include a non-slip surface with built-in drainage and a built-in handheld shower holder.

For more information, No. 830 on reader service card.

2 Juliet Tub

Part of MTI's Boutique Collection, this new tub features an asymmetrical, organic shape that appears to change shape as the viewing angle changes. Manufactured in MTI's proprietary, organic Engineered Solid Stone, it's available as a soaker or air bath. Other features include an integrated pedestal and slotted overflow with a chrome toe-tap drain.

For more information, No. 831 on reader service card.

3 Brizo Freestanding Tub Fillers

These new solid brass freestanding tub fillers from Brizo can be selected to fit any style of bathroom, with single- and double-handle options and a wide variety of finishes. Single-handle models sport a flow rate of 14.5 gpm; two-handle models flow at 12 gpm. A patent-pending rough system—available with or without integrated stops—simplifies installation by creating a more stable connection, eliminating the need for an additional support bracket.

For more information, No. 832 on reader service card

4 Mid-Town Collection

The simple design of this new collection from Danze offers a contemporary look for any bathroom. The collection includes single-handle and widespread faucets and tub/shower variations, including a Mono Chic 5- by 8-ft single-function showerhead option. Chrome and Brushed Nickel finishes are available. Features shared with other Danze products include ceramic disc valves for longer life, a laminar flow, touch-down drain assembly, and a flow rate of 1.5 gpm.

For more information, No. 833 on reader service card.

5 Delta Freestanding Tub Fillers

This new tub filler is the first released by Delta. The company's MultiChoice Universal Valve cartridge system, which allows functional and stylish trim changes without changing the wall valve, is included with the filler. The unit also features a separate handshower with pivoting arm and Touch-Clean Technology for easy cleaning. Single-hole, one-post installation makes for a quick setup.

For more information, No. 834 on reader service card.



6 Starck 2 Collection

First introduced in the U.S. in 1998, the updated Starck 2 line from Duravit includes a new washbasin, tub, and shower trays. The ceramic washbasin—now ovalar instead of circular—features a flat base with gently rounded corners while keeping its trademark depth. The rectangular tub boasts an integrated neckrest for added comfort. Slim-line shower trays sport a flat installation height, reducing the rim to $\frac{4}{5}$ of an inch to make it ideal for all standard shower enclosures.

For more information, No. 835 on reader service card.

7 Quaryl

Villeroy & Boch created this new design material by combining quartz and acrylic, which allows for greater flexibility in tub construction. The non-porous material retains heat, keeping bath water hotter for longer periods. Tubs will retain a full body color and permanent shine thanks to Quaryl's non-porous properties. It also repels dirt and limescale easily for quick cleaning. Quaryl is available in the Aveo, Squaro, Oberon, and La Belle collections.

For more information, No. 836 on reader service card.

8 Geberit Bath Waste and Overflow Systems

Geberit offers two new entries in the bath waste and overflow (BWO) category. The PushControl BWO opens and closes the drain with a simple push and is adaptable to different bathtub thicknesses. Critical working parts are outside the waterway and away from the flow of water to prevent clogging. The new Cascading Tub Filler is integrated as a BWO, assuring reliable filling and draining in an all-in-one unit. Flow rate is 18 gpm. Several filler models are available for tubs 17-to-24 inches deep.

For more information, No. 837 on reader service card.

9 One Freestanding Bath

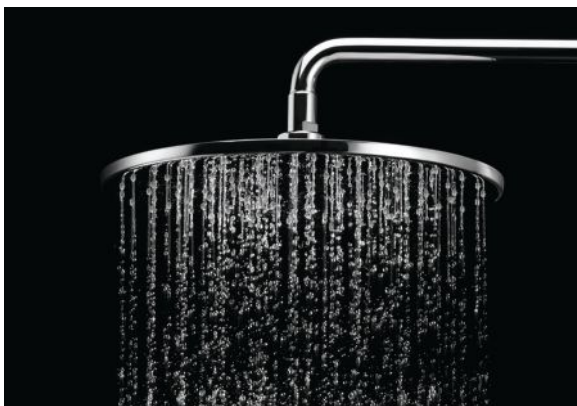
At 72 inches by 40 inches, this new bathtub from Kallista is large enough for two, with a slotted overflow that allows a deep soaking experience; a centered side drain further enhances the experience. Strict exterior lines combine with subtle interior curves to create a clean, minimalist design aesthetic. The bath is available in either a Stucco White or Linen finish.

For more information, No. 838 on reader service card.

10 TOTO Shower System

This new shower system from TOTO includes overhead rain showers, handshowers, and bodysprays. The overhead rain shower uses air-injection technology to increase the volume of water in each droplet, which decreases total water consumption. The handshower and bodyspray utilize TOTO's Gyrostream water massage function. For the handshower, users can choose a sprayface with Gyrostream, air injection, and cascading flow or a sprayface with air injection only. All three elements are offered in Contemporary and Traditional designs.

For more information, No. 839 on reader service card.



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Tony Mancini, 610.688.5553
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Editorial Director/Publisher – Principal

Patrick O'Toole, 847.954.7919
potoole@sgcmail.com

Director – E-media Solutions

Adam Grubb, 317.219.7546
agrubb@sgcmail.com

INTEGRATED MEDIA CONSULTANTS

Paul DeGrandis
pauld@accelmediasolutions.com
States: IA, IN, OH, WI

Jeff Elliott, Principal 616.846.4633
jelliott@sgcmail.com
States: Eastern Canada

Beth Emerich, 203.656.9553
bemerich@sgcmail.com
States: New York City

Tim Gillerlain, 847.954.7916
tgillerlain@sgcmail.com
States: IL, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE,
OK, SD, TN, TX

Michael Stein, 610.918.1828
mstein@sgcmail.com
States: AL, AR, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, KY,
LA, MA, MD, ME, MS, NC, NH, NJ,
NY except NY City, PA, RI, SC, VA, VT, WV

Robert Reed, 630.460.2585
reedmedi@sbglobal.net
States: AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR,
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Education and Awards Coordinator

Heidi Riedl, 920.397.7056
hriedl@sgcmail.com

Inside Sales Manager

Pete Pirocanac, 847.954.7935
ppirocanac@sgcmail.com

Advertising Coordinator

Lucia Currans
lcurrens@sgcmail.com

Reprint Sales

Heidi Riedl
hriedl@sgcmail.com

Administrative Coordinator

David Schwer, 847.391.1039
dschwer@sgcmail.com

For list rental information, contact

Geffrey Gardner, 845.201.5331
geffrey.gardner@reachmarketing.com

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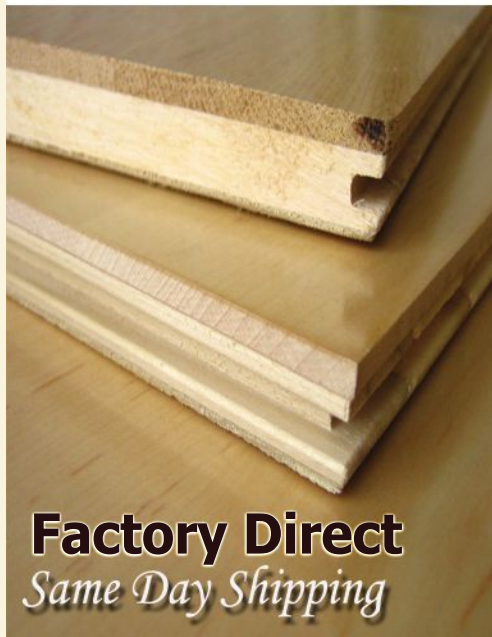


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EMPLOYEE-DRIVEN ACTIVITIES

Recognizing that one of the highest line item costs in our budget is personnel, our approach has always been to generate a high revenue-to-employee ratio. That doesn't mean good people will never lose focus at times, have life events get in the way of work, or just suffer from occasional job burnout. To keep our focus, we do frequent team-building

activities that may or may not be centered on a business theme. An example was last year when one of our designers organized a team to participate in a local run. Another event involved bringing in a motivational speaker. Both events were employee-driven. This speaks to having "A" players to begin with.

Bill Simone, President

Custom Design & Construction, El Segundo, CA



FOCUS ON PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GOALS

The best way we have found to keep our team members focused on the success of our business is to focus on the success of their personal life. Recently, we asked team members how the company can help them achieve their personal and professional goals. One of our field guys said that Cipriani is the first company to ever ask how



KEEP EMPLOYEES INVOLVED

To keep our employees focused on the success of our business, I feel it is imperative they are involved in every step of the process—from planning and budgeting to final completion of a project. We strive to keep them informed and engaged so they understand their role in our success.

Nick Coglian, President

NEWPRO, Woburn, MA



INVOLVE EMPLOYEES IN ANNUAL PLANNING

At Neil Kelly, beyond a variety of incentive/commission compensation programs that cover in some way just about every employee in the field, we have found that involving our employees in our annual planning process gives them both a chance to provide input as well as engage in the success of the business. We do a very deep dive, holding meetings with all employee groups and all locations. It can be exhausting for us as managers, but the results can be very special and sometimes magical.

Tom Kelly, President

Neil Kelly Inc., Portland, OR

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