

Qualified Remodeler

QualifiedRemodeler.com

January | February 2021



NAHB Remodeler of the Year

Alan Archuleta, CGR, GMB 24

Design Solutions:
1960s Usonian House 34

Roofing Product Trends 48

Yoho: How to Operate Profitably 54

Purchasing

Purchasing Supplies? It's Never Been Easier.

How The Home Depot streamlines the checkout experience for pros

PRO REMODELERS spend a lot of time buying supplies for their next project. It's essential that their shopping experience is easy and efficient, and that they have flexible purchasing options to accommodate their changing needs and concerns.

That's why The Home Depot has been putting extra effort into enhancing the benefits of Pro Xtra, its loyalty program built just for pros. In the beginning of October, Pro Xtra launched Pro Xtra Perks — rewards members can earn just for spending — giving pros chances to save money while shopping.

Plus, recent updates to The Home Depot app streamline members' purchasing experience and checkout process. The simpler these tasks are, the more efficiently pros can run their businesses.



The Home Depot App

The Home Depot app was designed to help Pro Xtra members stay organized, manage their shopping experience and get rewarded. It's the hub for all things Pro Xtra and a digital tool that helps members access all their benefits.

Earning Rewards

The app makes it super easy for members to identify themselves at checkout — this is essential, because tracking spending is how they can start earning Perks.

Currently, Pro Xtra offers two money-saving rewards to choose from once members unlock a Perk:

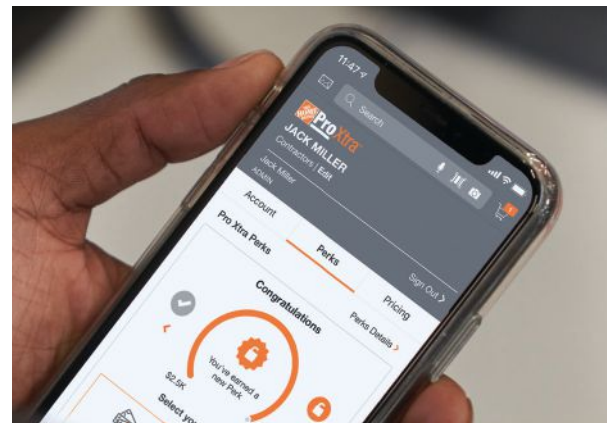
- Pro Xtra Dollars — a digital reward card that can be used like cash in-store or online
- Tool Rental Perk — a discount on in-store rentals

As members' spending adds up, the value of their rewards increases. Pro Xtra even surprises its members with Bonus Perks, like a free drink or snack, just for being part of the program.

Identifying at Checkout

Identifying at checkout also makes it easy for members to track purchases, which can help with tax prep and project organization. Plus, all Pro Xtra savings — like discounts from the Paint Rewards program, or personalized Exclusive Offers — are automatically applied when members identify themselves before checking out. This ensures that pros don't miss out on any savings or waste time digging for coupons.

Members have two convenient options to identify themselves when they're checking out in-store. They can either scan their Virtual ID (an individual bar code — found in the app — assigned to each Pro Xtra member), or they can add a credit or debit card to their member account and use it to pay at checkout. Both methods automatically track purchases.



Flexible Purchasing Options

In addition to providing these time- and money-saving purchasing tools, Pro Xtra was designed to offer members flexible options for how they shop. If pros want to limit in-store time or simply want to shorten the length of their supply run, they can buy online and pick up in-store or they can place an order for curbside pickup.

Many pros will opt to complete their entire shopping experience online. Fortunately, all Pro Xtra savings and benefits can be applied to online purchases as long as pros sign in to their member account prior to checking out. And, of course, all purchases made online also count toward earning Perks.

Pro Xtra even offers members a benefit called Text2Confirm, which allows pros to approve employee purchases remotely via text.

Each of these Pro Xtra benefits was designed specifically to make the pro shopping experience easier and more efficient.

Expert Help

Finally, Pro Xtra offers members a resource called the Pro Desk — a hub of experts located in each Home Depot store where pros can get expert advice, expedited service and answers to all Pro Xtra-related questions.

Join the Loyalty Program Built for Pros

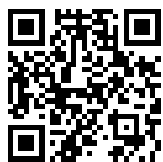
The enhanced Pro Xtra program is making it easier for pros to shop and save efficiently — through its member benefits, The Home Depot app, and in-store and online resources. Join today to start taking advantage of this free program and watch your savings add up.

Save time, save money and get rewarded — visit homedepot.com/proxtra to learn more.



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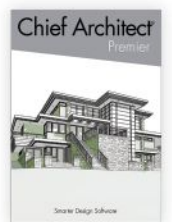
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CONTENTS

January | February 2021

PROJECTS



Photo: Andrew Wilkinson

Design Solutions

Princeton Design Guild restores a Usonian-style house tucked into the hillside and brings it up to contemporary standards.



Photo: Mike Beiser

Designer's Notebook

Ealy Construction transforms a dark, crowded kitchen with water damage throughout into an open and bright, modern living space.

COVER STORY



Photos (including cover): Eric Lanel

NAHB Remodeler of the Year

After only 12 years in business and just five years of association membership, Alan Archuleta, GMB, CGR, is the 2021 NAHB Remodeler of the Year.

HOMEIMPROVEMENT PRO™

54 Creating Positive Cash Flow

Dave Yoho

57 Selling Is the Next Big Technology Challenge — *Scott Siegal*

COLUMNS

18 On Your Business
Shawn McCadden, CR, CLC, CAPS

20 Full-Service Remodeling
Christopher Landis, AIA

22 NARI Perspective

66 Top 500 Profile

PRODUCTS

48 Trends: Roofing

58 What's New

60 Exterior

62 Kitchen

63 Tools

DEPARTMENTS

8 Editor's Note

10 In Brief

16 What's Online

64 Events & Index

Items on My Watch List



Patrick L. O'Toole
Editor & Publisher

IT'S TRUE THAT remodelers have been very fortunate over the last 12 months despite the disruption and tumult of the pandemic. Business is good and, just since the new year, forecasts for remodeling activity are being revised upward. But lingering risks could easily bite us this year. My watch list has nothing to do with Netflix. It's about downside risks for remodeling.

The way I see it, there are two kinds of business forces coming our way this year. The first kind are those that are known to exist but are difficult to peg as determinative factors. These are factors that we can anticipate. They are out there to be counted. We can protect against their potential impact.

In no particular order, these include the ongoing pandemic, a skilled-labor shortage, supply-chain issues, the rising cost of qualified leads, and the business impact of a changing regulatory environment. There are others, but these are the big ones.

The second type of forces coming our way are unknown. These invariably emerge out of nowhere. As entrepreneurs, you have to be ready for the unknowns. The COVID-19 pandemic last spring is a perfect example. The impact of an unknown is greater because we aren't on guard. It could be a war in another part of the globe. Or it could be a terrorist attack. One or more of these can knock the economy off its rails or more likely impact the price of key building products. Like you, I am hoping for the best regarding these unknowns.

Among the known risks for 2021, supply-chain issues are of particular concern.

Many of you are reporting dramatic product-sourcing issues. It's happening across several product categories—from asphalt shingles and appliances to cabinets and hardware. Some are on backorder for months. As a result, remodeling jobs are being deferred and delayed. How many deferred or delayed jobs does it take before your annual profit evaporates? Additionally, if these imbalances continue, prices for backordered products will certainly rise. My concern is that building product price-hikes could take the air out of remodeling demand.

The second known risk worth watching is the ongoing pandemic. Are we letting our guard down now that vaccines are available? Halfway through February we still have 200 million people to get vaccinated before

anything close to normalcy returns.

At our company, we plan a return to business travel by late summer. I'm convinced that most people are champing at the bit to return to their pre-pandemic lives. I assume restaurants will be filled and all kids will be back in school by September. I also assume that paychecks will again flow to furloughed and laid-off workers. In all likelihood, that outlook is too rosy. With new, possibly more dangerous variants of the virus cropping up, the pandemic could last into 2022.

Just as 2020 challenged us, 2021 will do the same. What's on your watch list? Email me at patrick@solabrands.com. **QR**

Patrick O'Toole

**MY WATCH LIST
HAS NOTHING TO
DO WITH NETFLIX.
IT'S ABOUT
DOWNSIDE RISKS
FOR REMODELING.**

Qualified Remodeler

Published by

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Codes

Energy Conservation Code Published after Multiple Appeals

FOLLOWING A THREE-YEAR development process, the 2021 ICC family of model building codes has been published. Numerous changes to the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) are of particular interest to residential construction professionals this year.

The development of the 2021 IECC was marked by controversy, culminating in multiple appeals by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and others.

In a release, NAHB said it sees several problematic code changes that had been twice disapproved but made it into the 2021 IECC. The changes are in dispute because they were approved using a controversial online ballot that allowed block voting from non-code enforcement government officials that was linked to a single voting guide, NAHB said.

“Many of these proposals are not cost-effective for homeowners and will negatively impact housing affordability with little energy savings benefit. It will take several decades to achieve a simple pay-back on the initial investment under some of the new measures,” the release said.

Significant changes to the 2021 IECC requirements include:

- Increased prescriptive attic insulation: R49 in Climate Zones 2-3 and R60 in Climate Zones 4-8.
- Increased prescriptive above-grade wall insulation: R20+5 or R13+10 in Climate Zones 4 and 5.
- Increased prescriptive slab insulation: 2 feet at R10 in Climate Zone 3 and 4 feet at R10 in Climate Zones 4 and 5.
- Ducts in conditioned space will have to be tested for tightness in all new dwellings.
- Dimmers, occupant sensor controls or other controls will be required for most lighting fixtures.



Photo: © Adobe Stock / FrankBoston

On top of compliance with the base energy code, the new provisions will require that an additional packaged solution be superimposed from a predefined list of measures: insulation and glazing, heating and cooling, water heating, ducts entirely within conditioned space, or air sealing and ventilation. Alternatively, an additional 5 percent improvement must be shown via a performance compliance path or the Energy Rating Index (ERI).

For the ERI compliance path, the maximum ERI thresholds are lowered by 5-8 points (9-13 percent increase in stringency) depending on the climate zone, and the amount of credits available for onsite renewable energy has been limited to 5 percent or less of energy use.

Kitchen & Bath Trends

Kitchen storage priority in renovations, Houzz study finds

Kitchen storage is a key priority that's leading to continued growth in cabinet replacement and modification, according to a survey conducted by Houzz, Inc., the Palo Alto, Calif.-based online platform for home renovation and design.

According to Houzz's "2021 U.S. Kitchen Trends Study," 94 percent of the kitchen renovations initiated by survey participants

included some work on cabinets, with most (64 percent) replacing all cabinets.

Of the one-third of homeowners who opted for partial cabinet upgrades, more than a quarter added at least some cabinets to their newly renovated kitchen, nearly four times as many as the previous year, Houzz said. The percentage of homeowners adding or upgrading a pantry space also increased, with nearly half the surveyed homeowners upgrading pantry cabinets and 1 in 8 adding a walk-in pantry, both gains from the previous year.

"Storage has really come into focus as people have spent more time at home during the COVID-19 pandemic," said

Liza Hausman of Houzz. "We're seeing an increase in the amount of cabinetry added in renovations, and more homeowners are reaching out to professionals for help making their kitchens work better, most often within the same layout and square footage."

Among other key survey findings:

- Cabinetry in renovated kitchens is often equipped with built-in specialty organizers, drawers or trays. The most popular organizers are for cookie sheets and spices (48 and 39 percent, respectively), while the most common specialty drawers are pull-out waste or recycling drawers (60 percent). More than one-third of kitchen



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renovations include specialty shelving trays, such as revolving trays, pull-out or swing-out trays, making hard-to-reach spaces more accessible.

- The number of renovating homeowners creating an open-concept floor plan by opening their kitchen to other interior spaces has dropped dramatically since 2019, although 1 in 5 homeowners opens the kitchen up to outdoor space.
- Nearly two-thirds of renovated kitchens feature an island, and more than half of those newly added or upgraded islands feature a new appliance, up 3 percentage points from the previous year. Among these islands, more than a third include a dishwasher and/or microwave.
- High-tech features appear in more than half of upgraded faucets and nearly one-third of upgraded appliances. Popularity for appliances with wireless controls has grown by 5 percentage points since last year.

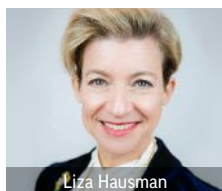
Houzz's survey was conducted online among more than 2,000 homeowners using Houzz who are in the midst of, are planning or recently completed a kitchen renovation, according to the company.

Webcast Series

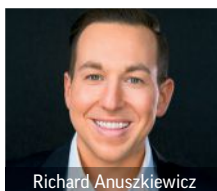
SOLA Group partners with Houzz to produce trends webcasts in 2021

Qualified Remodeler and its sister publication *Kitchen & Bath Design News* are teaming up with Houzz in 2021 to produce a series of four webcasts. The series is intended to bring to life important market research and trend information from Houzz.com, a top platform for the exchange design and construction ideas between homeowners, designers and remodelers.

Houzz VP of Industry Liza Hausman will be the lead presenter on all four webcasts. She will be joined by an all-star team of leading designers and remodelers who will serve as co-presenters. The first webcast on kitchen trends scheduled for Feb. 17 will feature noted kitchen designer Richard Anuszkiewicz of Design Galleria Kitchen & Bath Studio in Nashville. Architect, remodeler and *Qualified Remodeler* columnist Christopher K. Landis AIA of Landis



Liza Hausman



Richard Anuszkiewicz



Christopher K. Landis



Jonas Carnemark

Construction in Washington, D.C. will co-present May 13 for the webcast on client expectations. And Jonas Carnemark of KONST SieMatic in Bethesda, Maryland, will co-present Nov. 10 in a discussion of the latest bath design trends from Houzz.

"We are excited to partner with Houzz on this series," said Patrick O'Toole, co-owner and editorial director of SOLA Group Inc., which owns *Qualified Remodeler* and *Kitchen & Bath Design News*. "Their research is a great indicator of design and market trends. We are also excited to utilize the Zoom Webinar platform, which will create additional interactive capabilities for remodelers and designers who attend the programs live."

Feb. 17: Trends in Kitchens

Project types, consumer preferences and the very latest design trends.

New research from Houzz will shed fresh light on fast-evolving consumer preferences for kitchen design. Houzz VP of Industry Marketing Liza Hausman presents an overview of Houzz's "2021 U.S. Kitchen Trends Study." Co-presented by Richard Anuszkiewicz.

May 13: Client Expectations Today

The changing needs and desires of today's homeowners who are renovating.

Houzz VP of Industry Marketing Liza Hausman takes the wraps off the latest Houzz research about changing client expectations based on user surveys. Christopher K. Landis, AIA, will co-present.

July 14: The 2021 Houzz & Home Survey

The latest remodeling and renovation trends post-COVID-19 pandemic.

Landmark annual research from Houzz about the composition and shape of the building, remodeling and repair markets in 2021.

Nov. 10: Trends in Baths

Project types, consumer preferences, and the very latest design trends.

Liza Hausman presents an overview of Houzz's "2021 U.S. Bath Trends Study." Jonas Carnemark of KONST SieMatic in Bethesda, Maryland, will co-present.

To learn more about the webcast series and to register for one webcast or all four, go to QualifiedRemodeler.com/houzz2021. All webinars will begin at 2 p.m. Eastern, 11 a.m. Pacific.

Training and Certifications

NARI announces upcoming training opportunities

The National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) announced its lineup of training opportunities for the first half of 2021. Interested remodelers can browse the entire year of start dates for every certification at NARI.org.

Certified Remodeler (CR)

Starts Feb. 1

Runs 12 weeks, meeting once per week on Mondays 5-7 p.m. Central Time

Certified Kitchen and Bath Remodeler (CKBR)

Starts Feb. 4

Runs 12 weeks, meeting once per week on Thursdays 5-7 p.m. Central Time

Certified Lead Carpenter (CLC)

Starts Feb. 25

Runs 8 weeks, meeting once per week on Thursdays 5-7 p.m. Central Time

Certified Remodeling Project Manager (CRPM)

Starts March 2

Runs 8 weeks, meeting once per week on Tuesdays 5-7 p.m. Central Time

Universal Design Certified Professional (UDCP)

Starts March 30

Runs 4 weeks, meeting once per week on Tuesdays 2-4 p.m. Central Time

The site offers additional information on each course by clicking individual course links on its website.

Awards

Nagel, Peterson Inducted into HOF

Mike Nagel, a remodeler from Chicago, and Bob Peterson, a remodeler from Fort Collins, Colorado, were inducted into the National Remodeling Hall of Fame for their contributions to the remodeling industry.



Mike Nagel



Bob Peterson

“It is an honor to induct both of these men into the National Remodeling Hall of Fame for their significant contributions to our industry,” said NAHB Remodelers Chair Tom Ashley. “Throughout their careers, each has had a profound impact on furthering the remodeling industry on a variety of levels.”

Nagel has served in a variety of roles during his 40-plus-year career. He was twice the chair of the Remodelers Council at the Home Builders Association of Greater Chicago, a past chair of NAHB Remodelers, and a past president of the Home Builders Association of Illinois. Nagel has received numerous accolades for his contributions to the industry. He was named the NAHB Remodeler of the Year in 2004 and received the Distinguished Service Award from NAHB Remodelers in 2018, in addition to many design awards over the years.

Peterson also has received numerous honors throughout his career spanning more than three decades. He was NAHB's Remodeler of the Year in 2007, the Colorado Remodeler of the Year in 2002, and Northern Colorado Home Builders Association Remodeler of the Year in 1997, as well as the recipient for many other local and state design awards.

Peterson served as the NAHB Remodelers Chair in 2011, was a State Representative from 2007-2008 and 2013-2014, has been an NAHB National Director since 2012, and served on many other committees over the

years. Peterson twice served as the president at the Colorado Association of Home Builders and Northern Colorado Home Builders Association. He is also certified to teach seven NAHB designation courses nationwide.

Market Outlook

Harvard's LIRA sees added growth in 2021

Annual gains in spending for improvements and repairs to owner-occupied homes are expected to be modestly higher in 2021 compared to last year, according to the Leading Indicator of Remodeling Activity (LIRA) released by the Remodeling Futures Program at the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. The LIRA projects an uptick in year-over-year growth of home renovation and repair expenditure from 3.5 percent at the close of 2020 to 3.8 percent by year-end 2021.

“The remodeling market continues to benefit from a strong housing market—including

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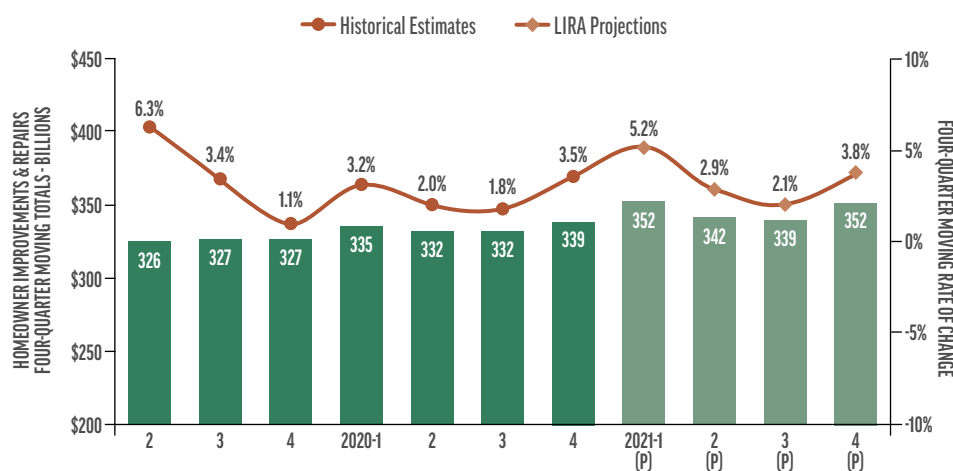
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Leading Indicator of Remodeling Activity

Fourth Quarter 2020



Note: Historical estimates since 2019 are produced using the LIRA model until American Housing Survey benchmark data become available

Source: Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University

accelerating growth in homebuilding, sales, and home equity,” said Chris Herbert, managing director of the Joint Center for Housing Studies. “In addition to routine replacement and repair projects, homeowners are likely to pursue more and larger discretionary home improvements this year as the broader economy recovers.”

“With the release of new benchmark data from the American Housing Survey, we’ve raised our projection for market size in 2021 by about \$4 billion, or 1 percent, to \$352 billion,” said Abbe Will, associate project director in the Remodeling Futures Program at the Center. “Spending in 2018 and 2019 was slightly more robust than previously estimated, growing 12.8 percent over these two years compared to 11.5 percent as estimated.”

The Leading Indicator of Remodeling Activity (LIRA) provides a short-term outlook of national home improvement and repair spending to owner-occupied homes. The indicator, measured as an annual rate-of-change of its components, is designed to project the annual rate of change in spending for the current quarter and subsequent four quarters, and is intended to help identify future turning points in the business cycle of the home improvement and repair industry. Originally developed in 2007, the LIRA was re-benchmarked in April 2016 to a broader market measure based on the biennial American Housing Survey.

Regulations

Administration pauses regulatory initiatives, including independent contractor rule

The Biden administration has implemented a regulatory freeze for all pending regulations. Of note to the remodeling community, this action means that the U.S. Department of Labor’s final independent contractor rule that was put forth in the waning days of the Trump administration, and scheduled to go into effect March 8, is likely to face a delay, NAHB said in a release.

The effective implementation date of the independent contractor rule is expected to be pushed back beyond March 8 while the Biden administration determines how to proceed and examines its options on whether to revise or even repeal the rule.

“This rule brings long-needed clarity for American workers and employers,” said former U.S. Secretary of Labor Eugene Scalia on Jan. 7 announcing the Trump Administration version. “Sharpening the test to determine who is an independent contractor under the Fair Labor Standards Act makes it easier to identify employees covered by the Act, while recognizing and respecting the entrepreneurial spirit of workers who

choose to pursue the freedom associated with being an independent contractor.”

NAHB believes the final independent contractor rule represents a positive step forward that would provide more clarity for employers to determine whether a worker is an independent contractor or an employee under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

The regulatory freeze includes any rules before the Office of Management and Budget and those already ready for publication in the Federal Register. All pending regulations will need to be reviewed and approved by a Biden administration official before they can move forward.

Federal agencies and departments are also asked to consider postponing for 60 days the effect dates of any rules that have already been published but have not yet taken effect “for the purpose of reviewing any questions of fact, law and policy the rules may raise.”

Home Improvement Pro

West Shore buys New Bath Alabama

West Shore Home, the No. 7 company on the *Qualified Remodeler* Top 500 list, recently acquired Alabama-based bath remodeler, C&C Enterprises, which operates as New Bath Alabama.

This is West Shore Home’s fifth acquisition in the past two years. The company also operates offices in Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Indiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia and Texas across 20 locations.

“Adding New Bath and their incredible staff to our team provides us an exciting entrance into the state of Alabama,” said B.J. Werzyn, president, CEO and founder of West Shore Home. “We are excited to bring efficient, reliable and convenient home remodeling services from West Shore Home to the people of Alabama.”

In a release, the company said the integrations will be quick. “We were able to complete this acquisition in record time due to a streamlined approach, open dialogue with the seller, and our goal to produce a win-win for both parties,” said Andrea Hayden, director of mergers and acquisitions for West Shore Home. “We strive to make the process a smooth, positive experience for the seller and its employees.”

With the acquisition, West Shore Home estimates it will be the largest bathroom remodeler in the nation and fourth-largest home remodeling company in the country.

Home Improvement Pro

MI Windows buys Sunrise Windows

MI Windows and Doors finalized its acquisition of vinyl replacement window manufacturer Sunrise Windows & Doors.

MI said the acquisition fits its strategy to expand in underserved channels and end-markets. MI said Sunrise, based in Temperance, Michigan, will operate with its current leadership and existing plans.

“Sunrise has a strong reputation among premier replacement window dealers throughout the eastern United States—an ideal complement to our existing market presence,” said MI CEO Matt DeSoto. “I’m excited to welcome the Sunrise team into our owner-operated business with family-first values.”

Carl Will, Sunrise president and CEO, said, “We are excited to become part of the MI family. Our shared vision of the importance and attractiveness of the dealer-direct channel creates meaningful opportunities for continued investment and growth for Sunrise.”

This is the second time in 13 months that MI has acquired a window manufacturer. They acquired Tacoma, Washington-based Milgard Windows & Doors in November 2019. MI manufactures vinyl, aluminum, and fiberglass windows as well as sliding patio doors.

“Sunrise has a strong team and great relationships with their customers,” added Anthony Matter, director of marketing for MI. “Their leadership team has outlined a strong plan for growth. We intend to support that plan and help expedite the successful execution of the strategies they’ve identified. Doing so will strengthen relationships between Sunrise and their customers and, in the not-too-distant future, provide capacity expansion for existing MI customers as well.”

Kitchen & Bath

NKBA: Mid- and high-end projects to fuel 2021 growth

Unlike the do-it-yourself trend of 2020, kitchen and bath remodeling in 2021 will be driven by mid- and high-end projects, according to a new forecast from the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA).

NKBA’s annual Market Outlook report, released by the Hackettstown, New Jersey-based trade association, projects annual kitchen and bath revenues to reach \$158.6 billion in 2021, a 16.6 percent increase over an estimated \$136 billion in 2020.

NKBA pointed to “multiple encouraging indicators as a cause for optimism.” Among them are near-record-low mortgage rates as well as significant home-price appreciation, which has historically been a precursor for jump-starting high-end home renovations. The NKBA also pointed to a lowering of risks associated with COVID-19. [QR](#)

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NAHB Remodeler of the Year: Expanded Coverage



After only 12 years in business and just five years of association membership, Alan Archuleta, GMB, CGR, is the 2021 NAHB Remodeler of the Year. To read the article and explore further coverage, visit [QualifiedRemodeler.com/ROY2021](https://www.qualifiedremodeler.com/ROY2021)

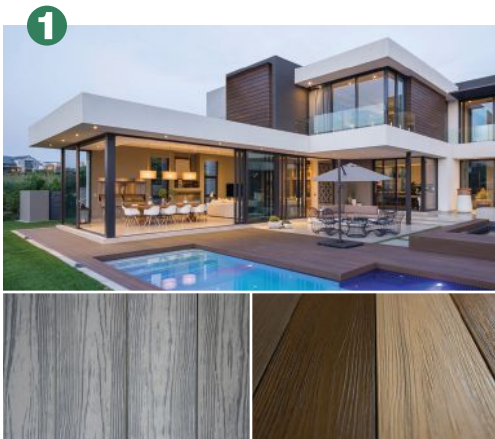
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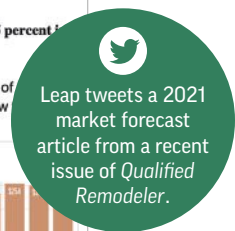
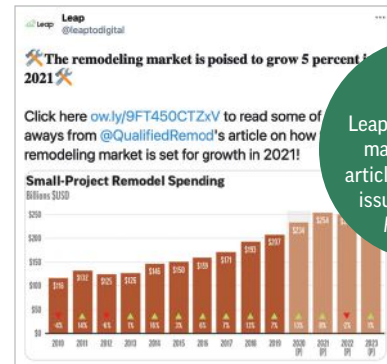
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Are You Willing to Put That in Writing?

by Shawn McCadden, CR, CLC, CAPS

AS BUSINESS OWNERS we all have dreams. First, we dreamed about starting and having our own business. Then we dreamed about what our businesses would be like and what it would do for us. Then, perhaps due to our courage and oftentimes our ignorance of what business ownership entailed, we just did it.

For remodeling business owners who leap, it is the first step of turning a dream into a reality. Unfortunately, for most remodelers who start this way, the new reality of owning and growing a business quickly brings with it surprises that we never considered. In some ways, starting with nothing but a dream is why, here in America, we have so many small businesses contributing to our economy. If we really knew what we were getting into before we got started, would there be so many small businesses?

Today, you own a remodeling business. I challenge you to stop dreaming and start making plans to achieve your dreams. Going forward, I challenge you to put your plan down in writing. Here are four reasons why writing down your plans will make it more likely your dreams will come true.

It Proves Your Plan Will Work

By taking the time to thoughtfully write out your plan, you're far more likely to unearth, consider and implement the objectives you need to do to achieve your plan; but you are also more likely to spot the things that will compromise your plan. I like to think of it as a way to prove, in writing, that your plan will work. It might also tell you, well before you lose a lot of money and valuable time, that your plan just won't work—at least your original plan.

If you've not done this before, don't be afraid of being perfect as you write out your plan. Assume you will miss a few critical considerations. A few spelling or grammar mistakes are insignificant, especially compared to the benefits of making your dreams actually come true. Write the things that will work for you and your business.

For some it might be writing out a complete, long-winded narrative. For others, it might be just a bulleted list in an organized and critical-path order. Be sure to include a timeline for your plan. The bottom line is to capture in writing what needs to be considered as well as what you are really committing to. That way your dream will become a plan, and you can then work your plan.

It Helps You Get Input from Others

After you have drafted your plan, it's imperative to have others you respect review your plan and offer feedback. This is a great way to verify that your plan will work. It's also a great way to uncover any critical omissions and alternative—or even quicker—ways of accomplishing items in your plan.

This is important. To make sure this review by others will really help you, you must be open to the potential challenges and criticisms that are likely to come with the reviews. I encourage you to be careful about defending your plan while others review it. Defend it where needed but consider the goal of asking others to review your plan is to increase the likelihood it's really going to work. If you concentrate on defending too much, you might just miss out on the new and helpful ways you could enhance your plan. With the help of others, your draft plan can move forward and become your plan of action.

It Helps You Get the Support You'll Need

Having a well-thought-out written plan will help you prioritize the steps you and your business need to take. Because you have a written plan with a measurable timeline, I also suggest it will likely help you understand how much more you need to accomplish than you can do on your own. Recognizing this reality will help you avoid getting overwhelmed. It will also protect the personal time you and your family really deserve and need. Even that bunny needs to freshen the batteries now and then to keep going.

With a written plan in hand—a plan you are committed to—you can then share the burdens and responsibilities of your plan with others. You can share it with your significant other, a fellow business owner, key employees or your business coach. Choose one or more people to hold you accountable to your plan. These people can be there to support you through the business-related and emotionally challenging times that are sure to pop up. They are more likely to support you because they know there is a real plan, and they have confidence in the written plan you shared and reviewed with them.

It Can Help Hold You Accountable

Very few remodeling business owners put things in writing. Yes, there is a small group of remodelers who can successfully make and keep plans in their heads and achieve better-than-typical success in remodeling. It is also my opinion, based on interacting with thousands of remodelers over my career, that many remodelers are afraid of sharing their real goals and are even more afraid to put them in writing. My theory is that they are afraid of being wrong, even more afraid that others will find out they were wrong and/or failed at achieving their true dreams.

Unfortunately, winging it every day leads to mediocre results and often eliminates the ability to retire on purpose with comfort. To these people, I encourage you to draft your plan. I also encourage you to find the right person, someone you trust, to hold you accountable to accomplishing your dreams as well as your plan. So what if there a few missteps along the way? With a written plan there will be far more accomplishments than failures. A dream without a plan is likely to be just a fantasy, and it could also lead to a nightmare. **QR**

McCadden is a speaker, business trainer, columnist and award-winning remodeler with more than 35 years of experience. He can be reached at shawnmccadden.com.

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5 Things to Consider When Creating a Board for Your Company

by Christopher K. Landis, AIA

ARE YOU thinking about creating a board for your company? Had that thought not struck you until this very moment? I ran my business for 30 years without a board, but I am here to tell you that when the time came for me to put a board together, I learned how invaluable they can be for a company's success.

Our reasons for wanting to form a board revolved around my decision to retire from the company that I founded with my brother Ethan. We wanted a smooth transition, and we wanted to bring our sons into the business as well.

Our first step in forming a board was to get advice on what a transition like this would require of our company. We reached out to several board consultants, each with their own expertise in aspects of the corporate transition process. The expert we hired suggested an advisory board. This type of board has no voting power or control over the company. Their role is to advise leadership, to provide expertise and experience and to help expand our firm's sphere of influence.

When creating a board there are many important considerations. Which kind of board will it be? It could be a voting board, an advisory board like ours, or something else. What are my goals for this board? Who should be on my board? The list goes on. When asking yourself those questions, I believe there are five key points to consider:

1. Get fresh opinions.
2. Look for culture.
3. Be purposeful.
4. Hire for the *then*, not the *now*.
5. Prepare yourself and your team.

No. 1: Get Fresh Opinions

Early on when my brother and I began the process of putting together our board, a consultant advised us that our board should be made up of strangers. We were a bit surprised by this advice. We each already had a mental list of friends who we thought would be great for the board.

Our consultant explained that having strangers on your board helps to ensure your board members are not swayed by their biases, are truly qualified for their position on the board, bring professional perspectives from outside your existing professional network, and are focused on the success of the company, not the health of a longstanding friendship. We agreed with our consultant and have found the idea of purposely selecting strangers as a critical component to the success of our board.

**CHOOSE STRANGERS
TO BE ON YOUR BOARD.
THAT WAY YOUR
BOARD MEMBERS WILL
OFFER ONLY UNBIASED
OPINIONS.**

No. 2: Look for Culture

Ultimately, when you're recruiting a board, fit matters a lot. All of your candidates should, of course, be highly qualified. In trying to find a candidate for the highest level of the organization, culture is paramount. This candidate should be in tune with the core values and the mission of the business, and they should have palpable excitement to be a part of the team and help shape the future of the company. While your board will not be coming into work and interacting with your employees each and every day, they will become mentors for the leaders of your business, and they will be working to shape the strategic vision for the business. No matter how qualified a candidate might be, they are not the right fit if they don't add to your firm's culture in a positive way.

No. 3: Be Purposeful

Understand your firm's needs and goals and keep those in mind throughout the process. Your board should not just be filled with incredibly talented people, it should be filled with the right incredibly talented people. Create criteria that is meaningful and work with your team to make sure that you know exactly what to look for in the candidates for your board.

No. 4: Hire for the *Then*, Not the *Now*

Choose your board for where you want the business to be in 5 to 10 years, not for where it is now. You want board members that will challenge the status quo and who have been around corners that you are just now approaching.

No. 5: Prepare Yourself and Your Team

Ultimately, you will get as much out of your board as you are willing to. You have to put in a lot of work to make sure they are as informed as possible and, in the end, it is up to you and your team to take their advice and execute on it. Prepare your team and ensure they are set up for success. Make sure you have robust reporting capabilities in place and make sure that your team is open minded and ready to be challenged.

OK, that's just about it. Before you go, let me remind you that these considerations are not exhaustive, and that they are meant to be tools that help you ask and answer the right questions when venturing to put together a board. But, if you can commit to these principles, you will be well on your way to creating a successful board for your company. Good luck! **QR**

Christopher K. Landis, AIA, owns Landis Construction in Washington, D.C. He brings 30 years of remodeling design, construction and management experience to this—his first in a series of columns for the magazine. You can reach him at chris@landisconstruction.com.

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When the Dust Settles, We Will Feel It

by Doug King, CR

A LOT OF ARTICLES have been written about what to do to survive and maintain our remodeling businesses during this pandemic. I'm going to take a different approach this month. I want to approach this column less from the left side of our brains, which tends to be analytical and logical. Instead, I'd like to explore the right hemisphere and appeal to your more creative instincts.

Nearly all businesses that serve the home remodeling industry have prospered this year. Most remodelers have experienced a record number of sales, unless you are unlucky enough to work in one of several states that had stricter shutdown protocols. But for most remodelers, the last six months of 2020 were very strong. This surge in sales has, in many cases, pushed our companies to their limits for dealing with this huge, totally unexpected influx of new business. But if remodelers are anything, they are flexible and able to quickly react to market changes. As a group, we've done pretty well this past year.

Business Aside, We Are in a Rough Patch

Many of our friends, family members and neighbors who work in the service sector have suffered greatly since the pandemic began last March. Many have suffered. Aside from COVID-19 deaths, our society is dealing with growing problems in other areas. Drug overdoses are at record levels. Divorces and suicides are at all-time highs. Alcohol and other drugs continue to take their grim toll. This past year was vastly different for a large portion of our society.

Visiting with relatives has been diminished, especially for the elders of our tribes. Office parties are rare. Neighborhood and other social events are not occurring. Indeed, emotions are running high. For children, already stressed with a weird type of schooling environment, there is a high degree of social isolation. Maybe their parents lost their jobs last year and remain on the hunt

for work. There was a recent statistic that 1 in 7 Americans are struggling to keep food on the table. Remodelers, let's be thankful for our many blessings we experienced last year into 2021.

Let's be grateful we were able to keep working when many others could not.

Let's be thankful we have revenues, even better than seen in recent years.

Let's be thankful we have dedicated employees who wanted to keep working and were willing to work even harder.

REMODELERS ARE VERY LUCKY TO BE SO BUSY. THERE HAS NOT BEEN A MOMENT TO REFLECT.

Pay It Forward

Let's harness all of the gratitude we should be feeling and pay it forward. If you are able and feel safe doing so, go out and eat at a local restaurant three or four times per month and be sure to tip your server well.

Use a food delivery service and tip all the parties involved. Get your car washed, oil changed and service work done a little sooner than you might need to at a locally owned small-business establishment. And even though you may only wear a certain suit or dress once or twice a year, take it to your local dry cleaners anyway. There's no telling how many folks you might make happy by doing this.

Buy a new pair of shoes, a new shirt or a sign or banner for your business from your local entrepreneur. Donate clothing or cold hard cash to your favorite local charity to help families in need. Send flowers from a local florist to your spouse, to a client or to anyone in your town who might need a little "perking up." Of course, take precautions and

do not take unnecessary risks in anything you decide to do. My message is simply to spend some of that thankfulness locally and help your neighbors.

'Corona Shock' Is Real

When we look back to this time, say three to five years from now, only then will the reality of what we are experiencing at this time be fully comprehended. The memory will resound loudly, and it will pull on our heart strings perhaps even more so than it does now.

Simply put, we are all in "corona shock" right now. It's been this way for nearly a year. For most of us in the remodeling business, we've also been lucky to have been so busy throughout this time. I am certain that it has helped us cope from a mental-health standpoint.

Indeed, we are *very* lucky because we've been so consumed with reacting to and handling the surge in business that we have not had much time to reflect. We haven't had a spare moment to experience the negative thinking and the outright devastation that many families and individuals have experienced throughout this pandemic.

Through being a member of the National Association of The Remodeling Industry, I know that our industry is full of caring and big-hearted folks, just like you.

I feel honored and privileged every single day to not only be a member of NARI, but to also be a part of our industry and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the professionals who make the remodeling industry so vibrant and innovative. I will leave you with a quote from author and addiction recovery specialist Melody Beattie.

"Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow." **QR**

Doug King, CR, is president of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry and owner of King Contracting, Inc., St. Petersburg, Fla.

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On the Move

After only 12 years in business and just five years of association membership, Alan Archuleta, GMB, CGR, is the 2021 NAHB Remodeler of the Year.

by Patrick L. O'Toole

THOSE who've read the biography of Alexander Hamilton, or who have seen the play, know the subject is portrayed as a man in a hurry. Alan Archuleta, GMB, CGR, the 2021 NAHB Remodeler of the Year, would not agree with any comparison to Hamilton, but in the five years he's been involved with NAHB locally and nationally, contractor-in-a-hurry fits.

At 45, Archuleta is in the prime of his remodeling career. He founded Archuleta Builders 12 years ago and today is enjoying the fruits of a hard-won reputation for excellence in New Jersey's finest suburban areas. The typical Archuleta Builders' client works in New York City in business, law, finance or technology.

The company specializes major remodeling projects in the \$300,000 to \$600,000 price range. They fill in with smaller projects like kitchens, baths and basements. In 2020 the four-person firm completed nine jobs billing \$2.5 million. For 2021 they've signed contracts for \$1.8 million. Some of it is new business, and some of it is old business deferred due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wearing a baseball cap and a COVID beard, Archuleta conveys a relaxed demeanor despite his potentially overwhelming number of professional and personal commitments. Beginning with the personal side, he and his wife Melissa are parents of three active kids. In winter months he's frequently away coaching his kids' ski team.

On the professional side, he's an active member of the Metropolitan Builders Association of New Jersey, the New Jersey Builders Association and NAHB Remodelers at a national level, where he is currently a trustee. In 2023, he will serve as the organization's national chairman. Archuleta is also active in the Executive Association of New Jersey.

Keeping these commitments while running a successful remodeling company is a juggling act. This is particularly true in an industry where remodelers tend to work long hours in their businesses rather than long hours working on their businesses. Colleagues from the industry say he manages to strike the right balance.

"'Professional' is the best word to describe him," says architect Ken Fox, of Fox Architectural Designs, who has worked with Archuleta on several major remodeling projects. "He's organized. He communicates well with clients. He's very good working off plans. It all comes down to working with the right attitude. And the other significant factor is his education. Not every builder is great on green or sustainable design and not every builder is great on framing. He knows it. He's put in the time."

Since 2016 Archuleta has found time to earn six professional designations from NAHB: Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS), Certified Graduate Associate (CGA), Certified Graduate Builder

Fast Facts About Alan Archuleta, GMB, CGR

Company: Archuleta Builders

Location: Morristown, N.J.

Specialty: Major remodels, additions, kitchens and baths

Annual Revenue: \$2.5 million

No. of Jobs: 9

Awards and Honors

- 2021 2nd Vice Chair, NAHB Remodelers
- 2019 NJBA Meritorious Service Award
- 2019 Metropolitan Builders & Contractors Association of N.J. Builder of the Year



(CGB), Certified Green Professional (CGP), Certified Graduate Remodeler (CGR) and Graduate Master Builder (GMB). To Archuleta, he was like a horse coming to water.

"It was apparent to me from day one as a member of the association that I had real thirst for knowledge. The classes I took were that good."

"'PROFESSIONAL' IS THE BEST WORD TO DESCRIBE HIM. HE'S ORGANIZED. HE COMMUNICATES WELL WITH CLIENTS. HE'S VERY GOOD WORKING OFF PLANS. IT ALL COMES DOWN TO WORKING WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDE."

Ken Fox, Fox Architectural Designs

I eventually learned that even more important is the knowledge I gained from interacting with my NAHB colleagues," Archuleta says. "I've been learning in leaps and bounds from them."

Early Training and Education

His certifications with NAHB were not Archuleta's only formal training in construction—far from it. A Colorado native, Archuleta studied construction management at Colorado State University, a

The Archuleta Builders team from left to right: Barbara Berton, office manager; Alan Archuleta; Jose Donaldo Mendoza, Jr. carpenter, eight years; Donaldo Mendoza, lead carpenter, 11 years; and Erick Gonzales, carpenter, four years. Archuleta is wearing his NAHB meeting badge with ribbons denoting his committee assignments and six professional designations.



knowledge he gained while working for an employer who had hired him at the age of 15 as a jobsite helper.

The company he worked for back then held a patent for acoustical panel systems. The company was master distributor of the product. They also provided installation services to national clients. After leaving Colorado State, Archuleta went back to work for his original employer, managing jobsites all over the country. Throughout the 1990s, he traveled extensively for clients such as Lucasfilm at Skywalker Ranch and many other important clients throughout the country.

Eventually he tired of the travel and requested a job that would keep him at home. Soon after, he met Melissa, a native of Morristown, New Jersey, who was working and living in Colorado. They married and moved east in the early 2000s. There, Archuleta was hired as an outside lumber sales representative for 84 Lumber and then Warren Lumber in Phillipsburg, New Jersey.

“I killed my sales quota each month just out of pure hustle,” Archuleta notes. “And I quickly found a series of guys that found value in a guy like me.

That’s when I made my transition to remodeling. I took a job working for a builder/remodeler. When his business slowed in 2007, I took a job with another remodeler for 14 months before I realized that it was time for me to go out on my own.”

Starting out in the remodeling business in 2008 at the very beginning of the Great Recession could be seen as the definition of bad timing.

“It turns out to have been a genius play,” Archuleta says, citing some good advice from a local architect. “He told me to ‘go for it’ but to stay lean and to make my mistakes while I was small. He told me to build the business correctly and to put good systems in place. That way, the next time the market recovered, I would be able to ride the wave with it.”

Archuleta attributes his early success to his lumber sales experience and his innate social skills. He knows how to work well with all types of people. He also believes his more laid-back Colorado style is a positive factor. He is less edgy than his many New Jersey competitors. “I wasn’t just another harsh New Jersey or New York City contractor. There’s a real edge to many of my colleagues in the

industry. I put people at ease. It helps me convey a sense of trust that I will do a good job.”

Archuleta says luck also played a role in his early success. He was able to immediately secure a \$50,000 basement project as well as a smaller mudroom renovation. But his third job ever was a \$600,000 room addition for a family in Madison, New Jersey.

“That job really put my name on the map. To this day I take pride in it. I constantly reach out to this family who I now know on personal basis, and I make sure everything is okay,” Archuleta explains. “They are a young family, and they’re going to be in Madison a long time. It’s proof that our company did the right thing. We built quality. It was something that architects could look at and see what I could do as the new kid on the block.”

Open-Book Construction Management

To Archuleta, his construction management approach as well as his open-book method are keys to his success attracting and excelling on large-scale remodeling projects. For those big jobs, he prefers these business models to the lump-sum pricing favored by many remodelers. Whereas a lump-sum approach might yield a bigger gross margin of between 35 and 40 percent, Archuleta is okay with a 13 to 17 percent management fee. From a sheer dollars-earned perspective, these smaller margins

are sufficient for big-ticket projects. The open-book approach offers the kind transparency his ‘Type A’ clientele gravitates to. And with construction management methods, his clients agree to share risk for the overall success of the project.

“It puts more risk on the homeowner. They need to follow the project and to make sure we’re on

“I WASN’T JUST ANOTHER HARSH NEW JERSEY OR NEW YORK CITY CONTRACTOR. I PUT PEOPLE AT EASE. IT HELPS ME CONVEY A SENSE OF TRUST THAT I WILL DO A GOOD JOB.”

Alan Archuleta

track to hit budget. It’s a team effort. At the same time, I am getting paid every month for my services no matter how much money he or she spends that month,” Archuleta explains.

A key function for Archuleta is to get three bids for all trades while retaining strict control of the scope-of-work for each trade contractor. The client selects the trade contractor, but Archuleta’s view of

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: Custom Home with Tesla Solar



Construction management practices enabled Archuleta and his client to make calculated trade-ups to high-end features including a Tesla roof, Powerwalls and charging stations.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: Custom Remodel



This house was once a single-story, three-bedroom ranch. An investment group purchased the home to remodel and sell. Archuleta Builders managed the project. Today, it is a six-bedroom, six-bathroom house complete with a high-ceiling, walkout basement.



which contractor of the three will best fully complete the scope is made known. “I make it clear to my clients that they’re not allowed to just use the cheapest subcontractor. I tell them that it’s hard to manage to a quality result with low bidders.”

Archuleta cited two recent projects as examples of the benefits of his approach. One was a remodel and expansion of a 6,000 square-foot, 200-year-old carriage house. The project took two years to complete. The other project was a new custom home loaded with the latest bells and whistles.

On the custom-home project, Archuleta and his client took a calculated risk by selecting the low bidder for drywall in order to achieve a net savings of \$30,000. The goal was to use the money elsewhere on the project. Archuleta overcame his inherent mistrust of low bidders by calling references. Other contractors vouched for the drywall firm. In addition, he felt that if they underperformed on the job, he could add back funds to enlarge the scope for the painting contractor, who could fix any drywall errors.

The \$30,000 savings encouraged the client to upgrade to a Tesla roof, add two Tesla Powerwalls and two Tesla charging stations. According to Archuleta, these types of upgrades would be more difficult to fund if the project is contracted under a traditional set-price model.

“With set-price contracts, the average margin in New Jersey is anywhere between 35 percent

and 40 percent. It could be even higher when you add higher-end products like the Tesla roof and spray-foam insulation,” Archuleta explains. “When specifying new, high-end products, the fear is greater of missing something in the bid, a fear of not bidding it in properly. You’re always rounding up quantities to manage the risk. A builder is taking a larger risk with those more expensive products, so the price just keeps laddering up.”

The 200-year-old carriage house project offers a different example of how an open-book construction-management approach works well for Archuleta. The original structure was supported by four different foundations. Additionally, the building had undergone dozens of overlapping improvements over the decades. Because of these complications, the project took two years to complete and ended up at 11,600 square feet, almost double the original size.

“Because that job was construction management, I knew that I had a certain amount of dollars coming in each month just from that project, which can cover a lot of costs,” Archuleta explains. “If I’m over there framing for four months, my guys have nothing to do. So that’s when you pick up a \$30,000 to \$50,000 basement project. Or you’re doing a kitchen, and you’re pulling guys and sending them to get it done. It helps keep cash flow consistent and with planning the job, which is done from the office with myself and my office manager.”

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- 2016** Michael Menn, AIA, CGR, CGP, CAPS
- 2015** Greg Rehm, CGR, CAPS, CGP
- 2014** Tim Ellis, CAPS, CGR, MCGP
- 2013** Tim Swafford, CGR, CAPS, CGP
- 2012** Robert Criner, GMR, CAPS, CGP
- 2011** Mike Nagel, CGR, CAPS
- 2010** Sherry Schwab, CGR, CAPS
- 2009** Doug Sutton, CGR, CAPS
- 2008** Jeff Hunt, CGR, GMB, CAPS, CGP
- 2007** Bob Peterson, CGR, CAPS
- 2006** Cindy Knutson-Lycholat, CGR
- 2005** Bob Bell, CGR, CAPS
- 2004** Randall Hall, CGR, CAPS
- 2002** Don Novak, CGR, CKD, CGB
- 2001** Mark Brick, CR
- 2000** Bill Asdal, CGR

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: Major Remodel, New Garage



Archuleta Builders converted this single-story ranch with attached garage into a two-story home with a first-floor master suite replacing the existing garage. The quality of the exterior detail is shown as well as the new garage, which includes an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) above.



Attracting a Younger Cohort

NAHB and other building trades associations are working diligently creating programs they hope will attract the next generation of remodelers, builders and specialty contractors. The relatively youthful Archuleta is a finalist for the NAHB Young Associate award this year. Age 45 is the outer limit for that award. To Archuleta, the challenge of how to attract younger professionals is a focus of his work on behalf of the industry. It starts by finding new ways to attract kids to chart a career path into the trades. Then it's about getting them to start as members and to meet others they can learn from and network with, Archuleta says.

When it was suggested to Archuleta that young professionals in the tech industry really enjoy meeting at industry events like South by Southwest in Austin, Texas, Archuleta agreed that attracting younger builder and remodeler members is do-able and is about finding the right formula to bring them together. He pointed out that after one more year in Orlando, the International Builders' Show moves permanently to Las Vegas.

"It's a strong move for IBS to commit to Vegas indefinitely, right? One last year in Orlando and then we're out there forever. I think Las Vegas draws younger professionals. It's a little more appealing. There's more to do," Archuleta says. "Now it's about reaching out to the manufacturers and

the suppliers that you know showcase there to really to reach that younger audience with newer products and really sell the sizzle of this business."

The sizzle in this business is new products, he says, new building-envelope products, products that are sustainable and energy-efficient and solar products, like the Tesla roof, Powerwalls and charging stations. These advancements have the power to draw in the next generation of remodelers.

One of Archuleta's mentors in the remodeling business is NAHB Remodelers past chairman Bob Peterson, CGR, who was Remodeler of the Year in 2007. Peterson is a remodeler and custom builder in Fort Collins, where Archuleta went to college. Archuleta says that if he knew Peterson back then, he probably never would have left Colorado. From Peterson's perspective, Archuleta is a very worthy Remodeler of the Year and is someone who represents the future for the association.

"Alan embraced what makes NAHBR powerful: education," Peterson says. "He is ultra-relationship driven. He jumped in full speed, soaking up everything he could, as quickly he could and just as quick showed NAHB leadership and the leadership development committee his talent. He quickly volunteered for positions that it takes many less-assertive people years to get involved in. At that point, his talent, passion for the industry and the NAHB federation skyrocketed." **QR**



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¹ Study of homeowner perceptions of leading national brands. Study commissioned by Pella, 2019.

² Performance solutions offering an unbeatable combination of energy efficiency, sound control and value require upgrades to triple-pane, AdvancedComfort Low-E and mixed glass thickness. Based on comparing product quotes and published STC/OITC and U-Factor ratings of leading national wood window and patio door brands.

³ Window energy efficiency calculated in a computer simulation using RESFEN 6.0 default parameters for a 2,000-sq.-foot new construction single-story home when Pella Lifestyle Series windows with the respective performance package are compared to a single-pane wood or vinyl window. The energy efficiency and actual savings will vary by location. The average window energy efficiency is based on a national average of 94 modeled cities across the country with weighting based on population. For more details, see pella.com/methodology.

⁴ Reduction in sound based on OITC ratings of Pella Lifestyle Series windows with respective performance package compared to a single-pane wood or vinyl window with an OITC of 19. Calculated by using the sound transmission loss values in the 80 to 4000 Hz range as measured in accordance with ASTM E-90(09). Actual results may vary.



Dramatic Exposure

Princeton Design Guild restores a Usonian-style house tucked into the hillside and brings it up to contemporary standards.

by Kyle Clapham

OFTEN real estate agents in Princeton, New Jersey, will ask architect Kevin Wilkes to preview a home with them and give advice they can use to sell the property. After touring a Usonian-style house built in the 1960s, Wilkes told the agent it would require extensive work. The agent lined up a couple of interested buyers, nevertheless, and they each had a consultation with the architect.

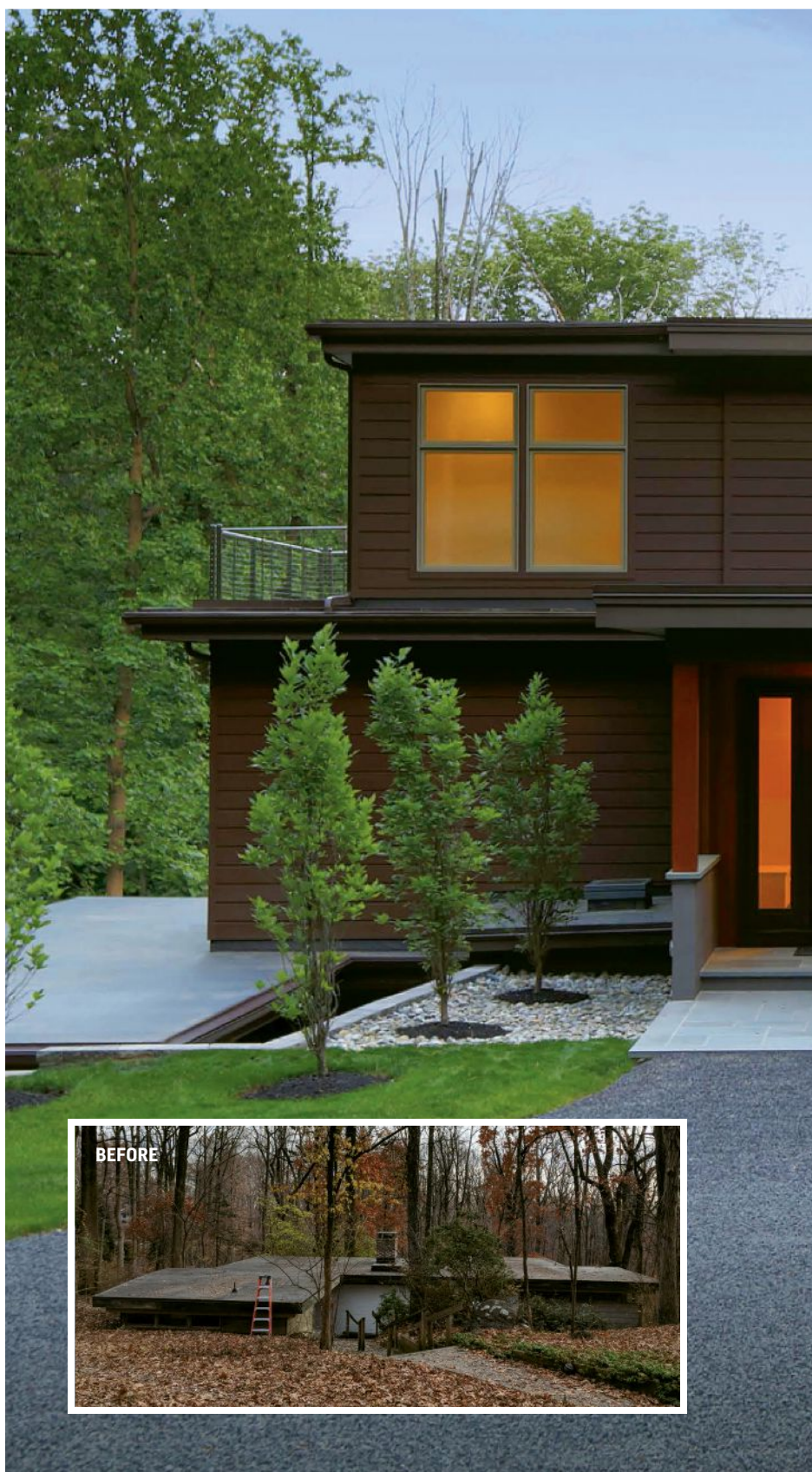
“Unfortunately, in both cases after I was done, the people went running over the hillside, and it languished on the market,” says Wilkes, who founded Princeton Design Guild in 1985. “I kept thinking about it because I knew it had a lot of potential, but it was encumbered with wetlands restrictions; it had very steep slopes. And that’s before you even look at the decaying building.”

Wilkes told a friend who flips properties about the original home and beautiful lot, and he made a modest offer to the daughter of the professors who built it. After a back-and-forth conversation over the course of a year, she agreed to sell the property. With more than 35 years of experience, Wilkes had turned around some pretty miserable homes—and this project would be no different.

Grandfather Rights

Designed by Allan J. Gelbin of Connecticut, an apprentice of Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin East, the house sits on a 3-acre lot on a ridge that faces south. The home originally contained three bedrooms, two bathrooms and a galley kitchen behind a joint dining and living room. J. Robert Hillier designed the addition on the north side of the residence in 1971, Wilkes notes.

“It has a modest pedigree; it’s not a super-famous architect, but it was a man who studied under Frank





MASTER DESIGN AWARDS 2020 | WHOLE HOUSE MORE THAN \$700,000 | GOLD

COMPANY INFORMATION

Princeton Design Guild
Belle Mead, N.J.
pdguild.com

PROJECT INFORMATION

Designers: Kevin Wilkes and Michael Kluck
Location: Princeton, N.J.
Square footage before: 1,725
Square footage after: 3,826
Total cost: \$1.2 million

PRODUCT INFORMATION

Interior doors: Hamilton Building Supply
Tile: Princeton Stone and Tile; Lunada Bay
Flooring: Princeton Design Guild
Molding/trim: Princeton Design Guild
Lighting: Tech; WAC; Hinkley
HVAC: Carrier
Roofing: Smart Home Improvement
Siding: Boral
Brick/stone/stucco: Amazin Masons
Exterior doors: Jammer Doors

Windows: Loewen
Locksets/hardware: Baldwin
Structural: Hamilton Building Supply
Insulation: Coastal Insulation
Paint/stain: Sherwin-Williams
Pavers/patio: Amazin Masons
Railing: Invisirail
Cabinetry: Princeton Design Guild
Countertop: Princeton Stone and Tile
Sinks: Kohler
Faucets: Kohler

Range: Wolf
Exhaust hood: Wolf
Oven: Wolf
Drawer appliances: Sharp
Refrigerator: Sub-Zero
Freezer: Sub-Zero
Dishwasher: Miele
Tub: Signature Hardware
Toilet: TOTO
Shower: Glass Castle

Photos: Andrew Wilkinson



BEFORE

AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE



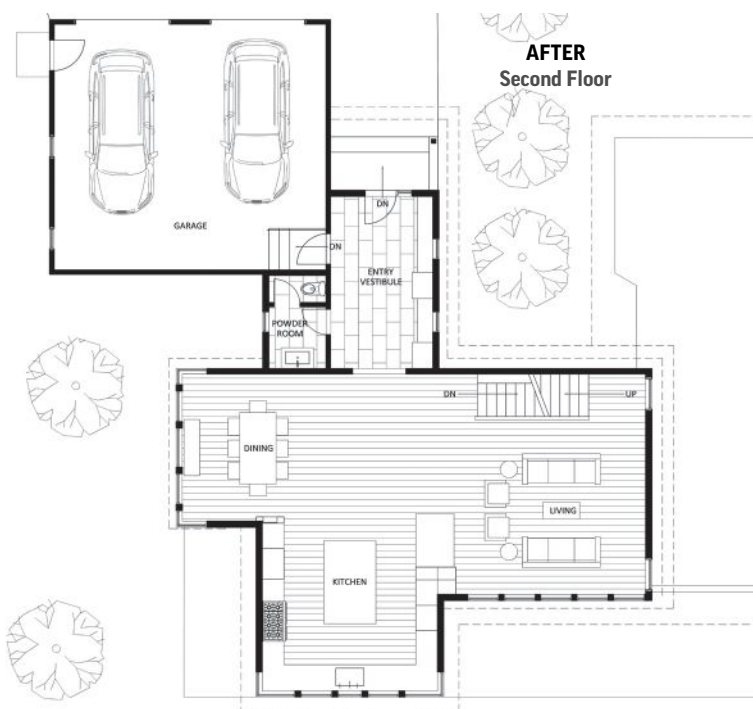
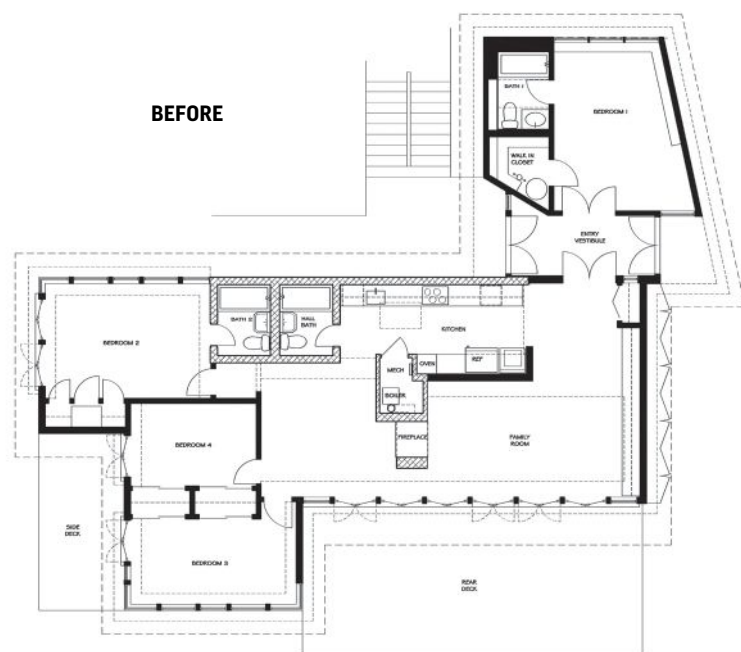
AFTER

The company resolved to revive the home, previously considered a teardown, and design an addition in its original spirit. Adding new living space on top of the existing one-story created a three-story house.

Lloyd Wright. And he had a very solid career in Connecticut in the middle of the 20th century,” he adds. The professor couple who commissioned the house lived there from their 50s into their 90s and then departed for nursing care, leaving the property bereft of proper attention.

While many people figured the home would be a teardown, Wilkes recognized the integrity of the original structure and became resolved to salvage it. Building new would also sacrifice the initial modest side-yard setback; since the 1960s, the municipality “downzoned” setbacks from 10 feet to 50 feet to combat “McMansion sprawl,” he says, so half of the house did not conform.

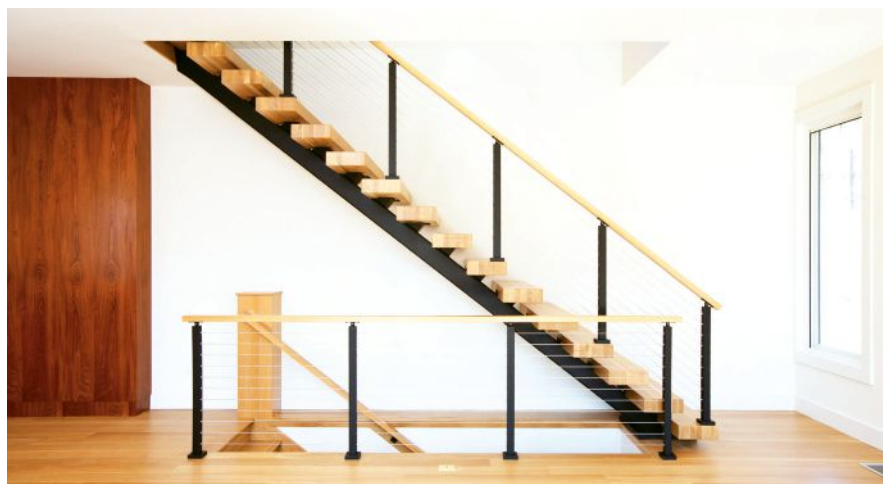
“If you tore the house down, that would not be grandfathered. And if you tore the house down and pushed it to the west, you’d have greater wetland encroachment issues than the house had,” Wilkes explains. “[It’s] always easier to permit a remodel than a completely new home; so, by keeping the house, the rights to a four-bedroom property in that footprint were grandfathered.”



This decision also made the property's encroachment into the wetlands on its western edge fairly minimal. "There's a 300-foot buffer," he says. "We were only encroaching 20 feet or so into that, so the [New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection] granted us a permit to build a new septic field in the wetland buffer. Whereas if this were a new project—a new house—it's not clear that they would have [done so]."

Super New Structure

Adding new living space on top of the existing one-story home produced a three-level residence that takes advantage of the scenic southern views and does not expand into the prohibited eastern setback. Working with JT Engineering, the team put the load of the two new floors on a steel superstructure poised above the original house to prevent any weight on the wood-frame structure.



“The site slopes steeply—about 40-feet-plus to the south—so there are great views to be captured to the south and the west, but that one-story house was tucked into the hillside,” Wilkes explains. “It was immediately obvious to me the [right] move would be to lift it up into the air and do that by adding two stories on top of the one that existed. The existing one-story was framed with 2x4s and 2x3s—and 2x6s and 2x8s in the roof—so there was no way you could place any load on it.”

He describes the steel superstructure as a spider “to perch above that house and straddle on

The gathering hall of living, dining and cooking is 10 feet tall and warmed by the pommele, plain-sliced and ribbon grains of Sapele paneling and cabinets. A new third floor above incorporates the master suite and ample roof deck.

eight-point loads around its perimeter.” The firm rehabilitated the original home—now the ground level—and retained existing siding and window locations (replaced with efficient glazing) and re-conceived the plan as three bedrooms, two baths and a family room.

“It was an arduous process of digging; it required brute force, and we had to modify some of the dimensions to make that ground floor work,” Wilkes adds. “Once we had the steel superstructure fabricated, brought to site and erected, it was fairly straight flying. There were positional issues and some things we had to nudge a little here and there to get the layout to work as best it could.”

The firm did add a mechanical room and a laundry room to the north side of the ground level, as well as some hidden service space underneath the new entry. “The roof on the south side is 45 to 50 feet up in the air—way up there,” he says. “There was a lot of careful pump-jack work and scaffolding work. We spent more time setting up and dismantling than we did setting windows.”

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Many distinguishing features support the home's pedigree, including radiant-heated flagstone floors, the corner glazed clerestory windows and a south-facing glazed window/door wall. The original structure remains intact and visible, but it has been remade with contemporary standards for living, entertainment and enjoyment.



Interesting Looks

Wilkes stripped everything inside the original house, spray-foamed the walls and put up a vapor barrier to the earth, although he kept the original siding because of its integral look. He specified a poly-ash product for the new exterior siding above but changed the five-quarter lifts on the 7-inch exposures to a five-quarter gap or recess, so the shadow lines match up despite the difference in siding materials.

"The poly-ash product is completely rot-resistant. This home is in a forest, and the original house had significant carpenter-bee damage, so I was

pretty determined to put something up that those little buggers can't drill through," Wilkes explains. "I wanted something that looked interesting in the dark-green forest in summer, but also now [when] it's completely bare and naked brown."

He opted for a copper-rust, brown color scheme that works well with the dense greens present in summer and the browns and grays in winter. "It's an interesting site because it changes feeling so dramatically throughout the year; in the summer, it's like you're in a treehouse looking out, and in the winter, you're on the bow or bridge of a ship after all the leaves drop, looking at treetops."

The central, open living spaces of the four-bedroom home reside on the middle floor and can be accessed directly from the north driveway and new two-car garage. This gathering area features 10-foot-tall ceilings and is warmed up by the pomele, plain-sliced and ribbon grains of Sapele paneling and cabinets. The new third level above comprises a master suite and ample roof deck.

High R-value, closed-cell spray foam helps improve the energy efficiency on all floors, as do the EnergyStar appliances throughout the house. Replacing the old boiler with a high-efficiency one that supplies both the hydronic radiant heat and hot water upgraded the heating system. The new air-conditioner has a 20 SEER rating with 13 zones. "It's got remarkably low heating and cooling bills," Wilkes says. "The heating bill in the cold month of February last year was \$215, and that's keeping the whole house at 68 or 69 degrees—three stories with a lot of outside wall exposure." **QR**

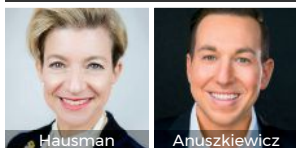
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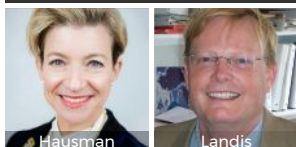


Trends in Kitchens

Project types, consumer preferences, and the very latest design trends.

New research from Houzz will shed fresh light on fast-evolving consumer preferences for kitchen design. Houzz VP of Industry Marketing, Liza Hausman presents an overview of Houzz's "2021 U.S. Kitchen Trends Study." The survey of more than 2,000 homeowners on Houzz includes trends in storage, finishes and features as well as colors and floor plans. Also presenting will be noted kitchen designer Richard Anuszkiewicz, well known for his live in-market presentations for *Kitchen & Bath Design News*. He will review the top trends from KBIS 2021.

MAY 13

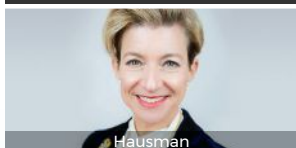


Client Expectations Today

The changing needs and desires of today's homeowners who are renovating.

Houzz VP of Industry Marketing, Liza Hausman takes the wraps off the latest Houzz research about changing client expectations based on user surveys. The webcast will also feature analysis of the design impacts of the pandemic. Christopher Landis, AIA, the design columnist for *Qualified Remodeler* will present the latest remodeling trends from his perspective as head of a design-build remodeling firm in Washington, D.C., Landis Construction.

JULY 14

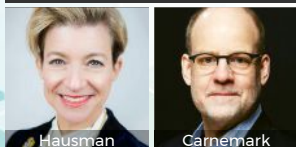


The 2021 Houzz & Home Survey

The latest remodeling and renovation trends post COVID pandemic.

Landmark annual research from Houzz about the composition and shape of the building, remodeling and repair markets in 2021. Houzz VP of Industry Marketing, Liza Hausman presents an overview of all project types, and consumer insights on emerging preferences from hundreds of thousands of survey respondents across the country.

NOVEMBER 10



Trends in Baths

Project types, consumer preferences, and the very latest design trends.

From shower systems and tile to tubs and fixtures, Houzz unveils top bath trends from its annual survey of homeowners around the country who are renovating their bathrooms. Houzz VP of Industry Marketing, Liza Hausman presents an overview of Houzz's "2021 U.S. Bath Trends Study." Top designer Jonas Carnemark of KONST SieMatic in Bethesda, Md. will also present the latest bath trends he is seeing.

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Applicants for NARI Contractor of the Year and the Chrysalis Awards may submit those materials for the Master Design Awards.



Farmhouse Fresh

Ealy Construction transforms a dark, crowded kitchen with water damage throughout into an open and bright, modern living space.

by Nathaniel Ealy and Alex Walton

AFTER our clients discovered extensive water damage in their kitchen's subfloor, they started dreaming of what their kitchen could become: an open, bright and inviting space to entertain guests and raise their growing family.

Our clients had never been happy with the home's original kitchen. Separate kitchen and dining areas left their family feeling isolated and cramped around the dining room table, while damaged black-tile countertops and backsplashes gave a dark and dingy feel to the space. As mold started to grow behind the cabinets, so did our clients' frustration with their kitchen.

OUR APPROACH INCLUDES EXTENSIVE PLANNING WITH CLIENTS TO CREATE SPACES THAT FIT THEIR PERSONAL STYLE.

"One day we noticed the floor around the sink was starting to peel up," they said. "We didn't think much of it because it was right by the sink. At some point we started pulling boards back and realized the water had gone underneath the whole floor.

"What we realized in the course of that was that water was just freely flowing out of the dishwasher and then going underneath our floating floor. There was mold on the walls, and there was water under all the cabinets. There wasn't an easy fix to that. Once that sunk in, we realized we really needed to redo the whole kitchen. That turned into, *what kind of kitchen do we want?*"

As a design-build remodeler, our approach includes extensive planning with clients to create spaces that fit their personal style. We went through an extensive design process to flesh out the shortcomings of the existing space and develop the modern farmhouse kitchen that you see here.

Due to budget constraints, we needed to work with existing soffits and can-lighting locations. This left us almost no room to alter the layout. Removing the wall separating the kitchen and dining areas unified the spaces while bringing more natural light into the kitchen.

After removing the wall that supported the existing vent hood, we needed to engineer a way to suspend a new one. When we set the height of the hood vent, the deep soffit gave us less than 1 inch of



Photos: Mike Beiser



Eliminating a wall that supported the existing vent hood meant the company had to engineer a way to suspend a new vent hood. Custom-fabricated brackets fit inside the adjustable shrouds and were tightened into place with a magnet-tipped screwdriver.



MASTER DESIGN AWARDS 2020 KITCHEN LESS THAN \$75,000 | GOLD

COMPANY INFORMATION

Ealy Construction
Moscow, Idaho
ealyconstruction.com

PROJECT INFORMATION

Location: Moscow, Idaho
Square footage: 580
Total cost: \$65,791

PRODUCT INFORMATION

Countertop: Hanstone Quartz
Wall tile: White 3x6 subway tile
Flooring: LL Flooring
Faucet: Delta
Cabinet hardware: Amerock
Range: Samsung
Range hood: ZLine



Because of budget constraints, the company had to work with existing soffits and can-lighting locations. It left no room to alter the final layout.

Nethaniel Ealy, owner of Ealy Construction, is a serial entrepreneur who lives in Moscow, Idaho, with his wife and five children.

Alex Walton, marketing director at Ealy Construction, is a graduate of the University of Idaho and loves creating memorable and enjoyable customer experiences.

clearance between the adjustable shrouds. Our lead carpenter engineered and custom fabricated brackets that could be fit inside the shroud and tightened into place with a magnet-tipped screwdriver.

The final layout carried flooring all the way through the newly combined rooms. This posed a challenge because the kitchen, dining and living areas were built out of square. Advanced planning and careful installation ensured that lines remained straight through the entire space. Cabinets were also adjusted to mask imperfections in the squareness of the room.

Because of the extensive water damage to the space, tearing out and replacing some subfloor, insulation and sheetrock was required. During demolition we discovered some additional water damage from a refrigerator's faulty ice maker. Timely identification and communication kept the repairs in sequence and under 5 percent of the total budget.

Our clients lived in the home during construction with their five small children and a dog. Dust-control measures and HVAC protection were critical to their health and comfort during construction. Our team covered all vents and fully isolated the space with zippered plastic access points. The client gave us a great compliment that the disruption and dust "was far less than you warned us it would be."

When the homeowners threw us a party to christen their new kitchen, their smiles were brighter than the sunlight pouring into the space.

The final layout combines the kitchen and dining rooms into a communal space. A massive increase in counter space allows for two breakfast bars that tie in the adjoining rooms. Bold, blue cabinets make a statement, while reclaimed wood shelves echo existing reclaimed wood accents and tie the kitchen in with the rest of the home.

Newly installed quartz countertops and subway tile backsplash contrast with darker cabinets and LVT flooring selections, emphasizing the bright and open feel that our clients love. A farmhouse sink and new chandeliers reinforce the farmhouse theme while a new gas range, dishwasher and relocated light switches make the kitchen a pleasure to work in.

At the close of construction, we came in on-schedule and on-budget, including the minor change orders for the unexpected water damage.

Our clients were thrilled with the transformation from a dark, crowded kitchen to an open and modern living space, and they were happy to share that in their testimonial. "We got rid of the wall, added two bars and opened up the dining room, so it's now part of the kitchen, and that took away all of the isolation. It's just an excellent living space. It feels new and fresh, and it's actually a place you want to be." **QR**

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Searching for Predictability

Roofing remains a constant, unavoidable product homeowners and contractors must contend with. These manufacturers are working to make maintenance and durability their top priority.

by Emily Blackburn



Lighter colors, such as **TAMKO'S** Heritage Olde English Pewter (left) and the Cool Roof Rated Glacier White (above), are less of a heat sink and are therefore more energy efficient in keeping homes cool. tamko.com

BETWEEN the increasingly volatile nature of weather across the country and uncertainty in the economy, there are few things homeowners rely on as steadily as the integrity of their roofs. However, consumers are making choices for their homes they've never considered before as unpredictable weather patterns sweep into regions previously unaffected by hail and wind storms, causing damage to their roofs. Meeting consumer needs of innovation, cost-effectiveness and protection, while still maintaining that desire for aesthetically appealing exteriors, is a must for manufacturers. "People want a roof that not only has long-lasting

curb appeal but also has comprehensive protection for their home," says Davis Ellis, GAF vice president of residential marketing. The need for predictability has led many homeowners to focus on their roofs in the last year, choosing to prioritize their biggest asset.

Volatility of Nature

"Summers are hotter, the rain season is stronger, we have more flooding events than we've ever had, and the most active hurricane seasons on record; more and more you're seeing that volatile weather in places where traditionally you haven't," explains Jeff Williams, IKO brand director of North



Reinforced nail-beds have become more popular among contractors, allowing workers greater control over the placement of the nail and shingle while also speeding up construction, increasing productivity and decreasing the amount of time workers remain up on the roofs. Pictured is **GAF'S** Timberline HDZ shingles, worked in tandem with Layerlock technology. gaf.com

America. This rise in expected but violent weather patterns has led contractors and homeowners to choose shingles and roofing options they might not have considered in the past.

“For too long people have associated impact resistant (IR) products of Class 3-4 products as just a hail solution; so, if you live in a hail belt you have to get an IR product, but that’s not the case anymore,” says Williams, who adds that there’s no longer a strict hail belt, with places as far south as Texas and as far north as Minnesota getting record damage reports. “So you’re seeing an explosion across the industry of what we call Class 4 impact products. The challenge is [that] nature is unpredictable. We provide impact-rated product for the purposes of our homeowners to get a discount on their insurance policies [because] the insurance companies are recognizing that softer,

polymer products resist impact damage a variety of sources better.”

IKO isn’t alone in focusing on impact resistance. Other manufacturers, such as concrete roofing manufacturer Eagle Roofing, are also focusing their work on impact resistance. Class 4 resistance is something Eagle Roofing has boasted since 2016.

Besides impact resistance, there are other volatile weather patterns contractors and homeowners must be aware of. Aaron Adams, DaVinci Roofing’s regional sales manager for the Midwest, South Central U.S. and International markets, stresses the importance of fire resistance as fire seasons grow longer and spread farther across the country from historical ranges.

“The Wildlife Urban Interface (WUI) building codes that are now being implemented out west are making their way through the mountain areas,

“HOMEOWNERS SHOULD BE KEEPING PRODUCTS THAT COMBINE PREMIUM PERFORMANCE WITH HIGH-END DESIGN TOP OF MIND. LOOK FOR ADDED FEATURES THAT PROTECT AGAINST THE ELEMENTS.”

Davis Ellis, GAF

and that's a big deal in the roofing industry right now because wildfires and climate change are all at the forefront out west; and as that permeates the middle of the country, we're seeing a big push in the high-performance aspect in Class A Fire Ranges and environmental and stable products in those areas as well as now in the Midwest." This is especially important, he says, as homes are rebuilt or repaired after fire damage, and where new developments butt up against existing wildlife areas, such as forests.

Performance Innovation

With weather and performance concerns constantly at the forefront of manufacturers' and consumers' minds, it's not a wonder to know that performance innovation also comes up. GAF's Ellis says, "Homeowners should be keeping products that combine premium performance with high-end design top of mind. Look for added features that protect against the elements," including wind warranties for roofing shingles, IR and algae-fighting power. WindProven from GAF is the first shingle with a no-maximum wind-speed limit warranty



when installed with LayerLock Technology. The LayerLock process mechanically fuses the common bond asphalt-to-asphalt to offer a new StrikeZone nailing area.

IKO's Williams also emphasizes reinforced nail-zones: "We're not just going to make a shingle, we're going to make a higher-performing shingle, so we reinforce our nail zone with the FastLock sealant so that it sticks and stays."

"These products are engineered for fast and accurate installation," Ellis explains. "Products that can be installed fast and accurately are appealing to both the contractor and the homeowner." It is also appealing to contractors, whose workers must spend less time on the roof and can finish a job more quickly without sacrificing safety and quality.

For contractors who are on the fence about the higher IR-rated products, Williams is ready. "Too often people will say, 'Well that's a hail shingle,

Built with additional reinforcement at the nail zone, **OWENS CORNING** TruDefinition Duration series shingles have a highly visible nailing area that helps provide consistent and quality installation, as well as reinforcement against wind uplift.
owenscorning.com



DAVINCI'S Bellaforte composite shake shingle resists hail, impact, decay and fire without the hassle of real shake shingle maintenance and repair. Maintenance and performance, Adams says, are the top attributes homeowners consider when they choose their roofing.
davinciroofscapes.com

IKO'S Nordic Shingles are engineered for superior wind and impact resistance and offer a Class 4 Impact Resistance Rating. iko.com



I don't need that!' I disagree. I think if you're a homeowner, you can't take your roof for granted anymore; you have to put your roof up there with the thought that, *OK, this protects everything, it's important.* We really talk about IR as an all attribute for every market in the country, and I think that's a fundamental shift when it comes to the polymer modified technology."

For IKO specifically, this means expanding the traditionally architectural design product lines to be higher performing, such as the ArmorShake Shingle's asphalt basketweave pattern, which

achieves the softer polymer impact resistance without sacrificing the aesthetics. "If you see innovation from us, it's likely at this point not to be purely aesthetic. Everything that we're focused on is improving the product and that speaks to duration and longevity."

Polymer modified roofing has been gaining popularity, with prices fast becoming comparable to the more expensive asphalt options. The added IR benefits, as well as the versatility of the product aesthetics, are what draws a lot of homeowners and contractors to the material over more traditional shakes, slates and metal. "Polymer—or polyeth-

"WE CAN MAKE ALMOST ANYTHING COOL-ROOF COMPLIANT, AND THAT INCLUDES SOME OF OUR DARKEST COLORS, JUST BY INCORPORATING SOME REFLECTIVITY TECHNOLOGY INTO OUR ROOFING TILES."

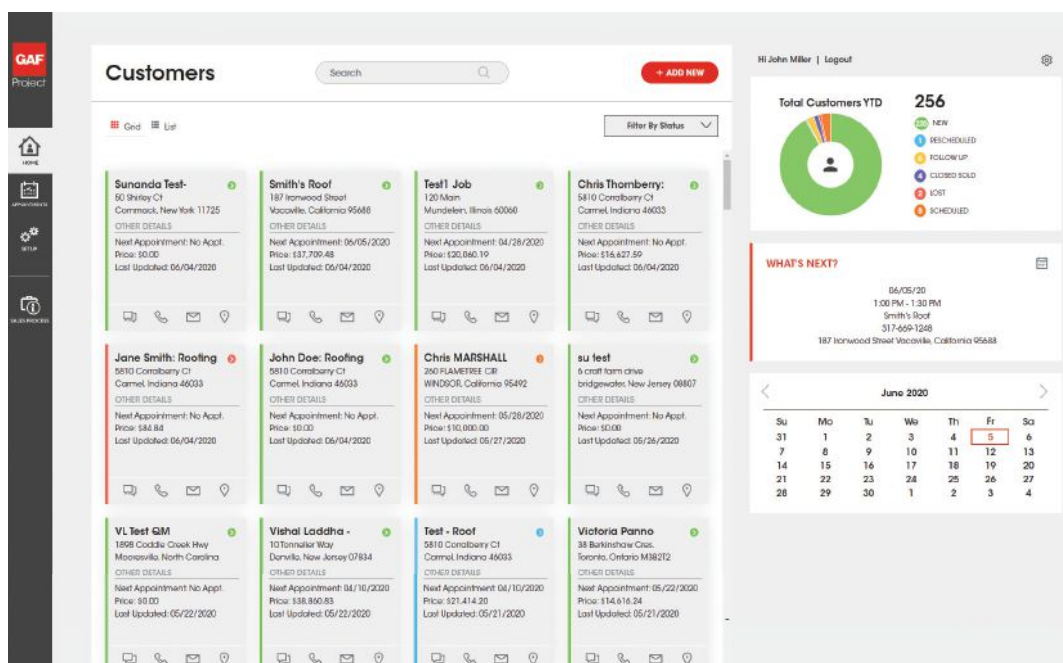
Aaron Adams, DaVinci Roofing

ylene, which is our base—is very stable from an expansion/contraction standpoint, so it holds up extremely well in any environment such as right on the equator where we have products and northern Canada where we have products and everywhere in between," Adams explains.

Reflecting on Efficiency

"There are a lot of considerations for homeowners when installing a new roof, but one of the most prevalent we're seeing is the need for more reflectivity in roofs. In California, for example, with Title 24 in place, new homes are required to have solar photovoltaic systems installed," Ellis says.

This can be difficult to accomplish, with the majority of consumers and contractors choosing darker shingles for the contrast between facade and roof. Unfortunately, that creates a heatsink. Lighter colors, though less popular, reflect more and absorb less heat. This, together with minimum Solar Reflective Index (SRI) unit standards for California's Title 24 regarding darker colors, means more and more shingles appearing on the



Contractors are adapting to contactless meetings with customers by using digital platforms, such as the **GAF PROJECT**, a customization digital sales platform that helps contractors with everything from lead management to payments. The end-to-end offering enables contractors to create a consistent selling experience that is easy to use and accessible anywhere. gaf.com/en-us/project

market have reflective, cooling properties. The SRI value reflects how well a roof rejects solar heat.

According to Adams, “We can make almost anything cool-roof compliant, and that includes some of our darkest colors, just by incorporating some reflectivity technology into our roofing tiles. As the colorant is added to our polymer base, we can inject an additive that increases the reflectivity of the tile itself. It’s a nominal increase in cost.” Products such as DaVinci’s Cool Roof EcoBlend tiles, the GAF Timberline Cool Series, Boral Roofing’s Steel Cool Roof System and IKO’s Cambridge Cool Colors all fit the bill.

Williams explains: “The granules protect the asphalt, so they’re critically important to the shingle because the sun will break down asphalt over time, so that’s the reason we put granules over top is to protect the shingles. Then we do two things: We optimize the [color] drop, using granules that we know have certain SRI qualities, so the blend achieves the desired SRI rating, and then we coat the granules in home-safe chemicals, which helps preserve the life of the granule and improves the qualities of reflectance. So, it is a combination of two things: color reflectance of the individual granules as well as the coating technology.”

COVID Adaptations

For Ellis, one of the most valuable developments he’s seen in the last year has been the use of digital tools and technologies. “We expect this trend to continue as more contractors leverage them to engage customers as they navigate business during the pandemic.” Aerial imaging for measurements

and inspections like GAF QuickMeasure, Boral’s Virtual Remodeler or TAMKO’s Building Products’ Shingle Styles Visualizer are seeing significant industry adoption.

“These technologies are also finally coming together for contractors on singular platforms that help accelerate their ability to serve customers in a high-quality, virtual sales experience. [These offerings] help provide contractors with greater insight across their sales team, delivering more consistent sales and service to customers.”

“Virtual technology like this is more important than ever,” said Stephen McNally, TAMKO’s vice president of sales and marketing, in a statement earlier this year. “We are developing new resources for our contractors and dealers to help them operate and grow their businesses during this difficult time,” he added.

As homeowners become accustomed to doing things from the comfort of their own homes, this rise in virtual scheduling and planning isn’t likely to go away even as hopes rise for the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the associated precautions and lockdowns, coming to an end.

“People are home more, so they’re taking better care of their spaces,” Williams says. “I think we’re going to continue to see a lot more of that in the coming year. But it’s hard to predict a trend. The trend right now is searching for predictability in a really unpredictable market and economy. We’re really aiming for consistent supply chain performance and trying to provide an expected—no, a better than expected—level of service for our customers.” **QR**

Creating Positive Cash Flow



Photo © Adobe Stock / Olivier Le Moal

Questions and answers about operating a profitable (or more profitable) business with positive cash flow.

by Dave Yoho

DURING these chaotic times it is important to examine your business plan as well as your sales/marketing model. This calls for an intense review of cash management, marketing costs, commission plans and the analytics of lead distribution.

Here are a series of the most frequently asked questions we received on this subject.

Q: As part of your methodology to retain 10 to 20 percent pre-tax net profit, how do you handle a salesperson selling a short (less than the price listed) contract?

Like everything else, this requires a plan. Start by making salespeople aware of selling “value” as opposed to utilizing a price drop to make the price more justifiable. A salesperson selling a contract below your price standards has to understand in advance that each contract must stand on its own as a profitable entity. If sold at a lower price than the system calls for, the sale is evaluated as such.

EXAMPLE

A salesperson brings in a \$15,000 priced contract for \$14,000. This represents a \$1,000 reduction (.066%)

Solution 1: The job is 6.6% (\$1,000) short. If the salesperson was entitled to 10% at full price, he should receive roughly \$500 as commission on that transaction.

Solution 2: Your price anticipates a 10% pre-tax profit (\$1,500) now short by \$1,000. If you decide to be generous, the \$1,000 could be split 50/50. However, this should not be standard practice.

NOTE: If it is your desire to maintain a 10% pre-tax net, you have to use a formula similar to solution 1 or 2. An arithmetic problem demands an arithmetic solution.

Q: How can we measure the true cost for an individual salesperson based on the number of leads they receive?

Operate with an understanding of fully loaded marketing costs. If at the end of a month you took in ‘x’ dollar volume in new sales, and your fully loaded marketing costs were 15 percent, you divide the total number of leads you “issued” in that period to determine the actual cost per issued lead (the national average runs anywhere from a low of \$200 to a high of \$600 per lead issued). Then multiply the number of leads issued to the individual salesperson by your issued lead cost.

EXAMPLE

7 leads issued (per week) at a cost of \$400 each = \$2,800. In a four-week period, that's \$11,200. Approx. \$145,000 for a year.

That plus the commission paid is the annual cost to keep that salesperson in the field.

If that salesperson brought in \$1 million worth of business, it cost you in excess of \$145,000 plus the commission to provide the salesperson with leads. Your sales compensation model may need re-evaluation.

Many of our clients' salespeople are required to self-generate leads and offer a customer reward program after a sale is made for referrals.

Q: Does purchasing (from vendors) via credit card increase cash flow?

Yes, in many cases. **EXAMPLE:** If you were to purchase (via credit card) \$50,000 in one month, there is a "closing date." **EXAMPLE:** The 23rd of each month. If that \$50,000 is on the 24th of the month, you don't pay that amount to the credit card company until 30 days later.

Q: What is your solution to high turnover when hiring salespeople?

There will always be turnover, particularly in sales and marketing jobs. The problem arises when turnover is excessive. One of the major reasons for turnover is "mis-hires." The second most common reason is mismanagement and lack of coaching—including the failure to do efficient "ride-alongs."

We have studied training and coaching methods over the last 40-plus years. Along the way we have developed systems to considerably reduce turnover. Modern companies identify turnover as a costly issue. Reducing turnover has a major impact on reducing costs for hiring/training with sales and marketing departments.

We have developed a series of remarkable, easy-to-use online assessments. One of these is the **DISC Behavioral Profile**. The one we developed was an outgrowth of five years of research and, to our knowledge, is **the only DISC Profile that is successfully used both for hiring and training employees.** It is an evaluation tool and a guide that reinforces training and coaching.

The DISC Profile is best suited to be given to an applicant before the in-person interview. It is completed online and takes 10 minutes, and the results are immediately sent to whoever is making the hiring decision. The results of the DISC Profile respond to the three major hiring questions:

- **Can they do the job?**
- **Will they do the job?**
- **Do they fit the model of your organization?**

A modern sales and marketing organization has to rely on something beyond "intuition" or outdated hiring and training philosophies. The selection and retention of qualified sales and marketing personnel depends on management. In short, **"sales managers do not manage sales, they manage people."** Once you establish that, you can start to develop systems and methods to **hire the right people and avoid the wrong ones.**

Q: How do we get more referrals?

Ask the average sales or marketing employee to identify which leads received by the company are the most preferable; in most cases, referrals are the overwhelming choice. A modern marketing plan calls for methods to solicit referrals. In most organizations there is a "customer referral plan," which is given to the customer after the sale is made. **A caution:** Most states have laws that prohibit the use of offering the referral bonus as an inducement to buy.

Here is how to put this into practice: Once the sale is made, the salesperson states the following:

"Mr.—or Mrs.—Jones, thank you for your confidence in our company. While the installation is in progress, your friends or neighbors may ask 'What project is being done and by whom?' It is my hope that you will suggest to them that they contact us—and for that purpose, here is a plan developed by my company, which includes an added incentive."

It is at this point a request for referrals is first generated. However, to achieve the greatest impact, someone from the company should follow up at the conclusion of the job. Many of our savvy clients repeat the process at least three times after the job is completed by a combination of a letter, an email, a personal call or a text.

In addition to all else, project managers and installation crews should be actively trained to suggest the same thing. Every salesperson should be trained and re-trained via scripting to call back their old customer list with that intent. The ideal time for this is often when the salesperson is driving from one lead to another, and it is referred to as "windshield time."

Finally, there are numerous online referral programs that can supplement your efforts. Most of them are simple, easy to implement and revenue-driven.

A special note: A referral lead will typically reduce your marketing costs while adding to your "bottom line."

We invite your individual questions, the answers to which will be published on our blog at www.daveyoho.com. **QR**



Dave Yoho Associates is the oldest (since 1962), largest and most successful consulting company representing the remodeling, home improvement and home services industries. They are credited with the introduction of Customer Satisfaction Selling, Step Selling and How to Run a More Profitable Business to those selling products and installation directly to the consumer. The company has a staff of Account Executives who consult for large and small retailers, manufacturers and service providers. For more information email admin@daveyoho.com or visit www.daveyoho.com.

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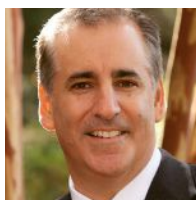
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Selling Is the Next Big Technology Challenge

by Scott Siegal

A YEAR LIKE no other forced our company into the future of home improvement sales.

When the pandemic prompted a shut-down last March, we were like every other business in the home improvement industry. Even if you have a disaster plan in place—and most companies don't—how do you plan for a super contagious and potentially lethal virus? We had to figure it out, one piece at a time.

One good thing about the business we're all a part of is that the need for the service we offer never goes away. Lead flows showed that our customers were still out there. We also had backlog. Moreover, where many businesses were ordered closed, ours was classified as essential.

Selling Was the Biggest Hump

But we had to work things out. One, for instance, was how to operate in a way that kept our frontline employees safe. All person-to-person contact had to be rethought. We arranged for office employees to work at home and mandated use of personal protection equipment for those who had to interact with others.

Selling was a bigger challenge. We had one really lousy month. Prospects canceled appointments, asked for emailed estimates or refused to meet with us. So, with appointments booked and no shortage of leads, how best should we go forward?

Some of our competitors continued to dispatch reps to the house. Others emailed quotes to prospects. Neither approach appealed to us. Not only did many homeowners not want salespeople in the home, but salespeople weren't thrilled about being exposed to potential infection. As far as emailing an estimate goes, that's not the same thing as selling a job. It's not even half of it. When you email a quote, price is the only thing customers look at.

We distanced. We worked from home. And we communicated the approach we were taking in our advertising, promotional materials and on social media. We soon realized we needed to find a way to have an online conversation to sell that proposal.

Why Not Use Zoom?

Like a lot of companies, we'd started using Zoom so that employees operating remotely could communicate. Video capability was the big attraction. You're face-to-face in real time. A few weeks into the pandemic we began to give thought to the idea of using Zoom for sales calls.

We'd considered online sales before. We'd even talked with some software vendors. At that point we weren't completely sold. Also, there was the problem that online selling seemed to work for small projects but not for anything big-ticket or complicated.

WE ARRANGE A LIVESTREAM MEETING WHERE REPS PRESENT THEIR PROPOSAL.

Now we needed a solution that would enable us to close business online. Our sales effort aims to communicate what makes a job by our company unique, and why that's worth paying more for. A month into lockdown, since customers were already using Zoom for business and personal interaction, arranging a Zoom sales meeting seemed the way to go.

Kitchen Table vs. Computer Screen

Here's how it works: We set up a no-contact visit to inspect the property. Then we arrange a livestream meeting where reps present their proposal.

We reworked our sales presentation to accommodate the online format. It's different. We quickly discovered the attention span on Zoom diminishes rapidly. It's the nature of the medium. Time is key. You're just not going to hold anyone's interest for much more than an hour. We had to figure out a way to condense our standard one-hour and 15-minute presentation by about 20 percent.

It takes close to an hour before you get your price out. That leaves a few more minutes to overcome price objections.

Like anything else, the more we did it, the easier it became. We found out there's not a big difference between the kitchen table and the computer screen. Customers were grateful to buy safely, and reps could meet with many more prospects in a day because a lot of drive time was eliminated.

No Going Back

In early spring, no one was really sure how long the pandemic would last. Why make substantial changes if it was only going to go on for a few weeks? But at a certain point, "a few weeks" went away and we were into something that seemed, then anyway, without end.

A year later, the pandemic is still raging, but vaccines have put the end within sight. So, here's the big question: Will we return to the sales process we used before?

No way.

Online is how we sell now. Sure, it was an adjustment moving sales to Zoom. But we found online to be just as effective and far more efficient. Plus, homeowners are not just used to this, they prefer it.

There are big advantages for small contracting companies in adapting new technology to different company functions. There's also resistance. It requires time, money and attention. That said, online selling will happen whether anyone wants it to or not. Remember when marketing was mostly newspaper ads, fliers and postcards? Or when it was mostly shows and events? Today, most homeowners find you online.

Selling will be the next big tech challenge. Most contractors aren't thinking about it and won't change unless they have to. That could work to your advantage. It has for us. **QR**

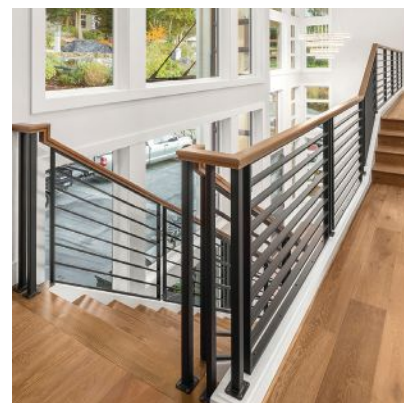
Scott Siegal is owner of Maggio Roofing in Washington, D.C., and also owns the Certified Contractors Network. You can learn more about CCN by going to the website contractors.net.

What's New



Brown hue enhances capped composite decking

MOISTURESHIELD debuts Cold Brew, a warm and inviting medium-roast brown with subtle color variegation, within its Vision capped composite decking line. Cold Brew joins five other natural colors: Smokey Gray, Spanish Leather, Sandstone, Cathedral Stone and Mochaccino. Cold Brew, along with Mochaccino and Cathedral Stone, offers the added option of CoolDeck technology, which minimizes heat absorption by up to 35 percent versus traditional capped composite boards in a similar color. Vision also features Solid Core Difference technology for protection against moisture absorption, warping, rotting and damage from insects. moistureshield.com



Metal-panel stair system speeds up installation

L.J. SMITH STAIR SYSTEMS offers nationwide availability of the Metal Panel System in its popular Linear Collection. The pre-assembled panels do not require any installation by a specialized stair builder; trim carpenters can easily install the system. It includes fast-install spacer newels, panel posts, square-nose-designed treads and handrails. The panels are pre-built to fit and only require a few screw holes drilled for installation. A special easy-install feature of the system is no glue, sanding, drilling of baluster holes, marking or cutting to fit are needed. ljsmith.com

Subfloor screw shows off fire-retardant coating

SIMPSON STRONG-TIE presents the Strong-Drive WSVF subfloor screw, approved for use with fire-retardant-treated lumber. WSVF joins the WSV family of collated screws, which has been developed for fastening subfloor sheathing using the Quik Drive auto-feed screw driving system. Featuring a fire-retardant coating, the subfloor screw provides corrosion resistance for use with fire-retardant-treated wood and wood-based materials that might otherwise compromise the performance of carbon-steel fasteners. WSVF offers a no-squeak, efficient subfloor connector for repair and replacement projects that opt for fire-resistant subfloor materials. strongtie.com



Extra-thin slabs help solve weight sensitivities

CAMBRIA launches its quartz in a thin and lightweight 6mm slab profile fit for both commercial and residential applications. A 6mm thickness retains the elegance and performance of quartz surfaces with added functional advantages, provides versatility in design and is a complement to 1cm, 2cm and 3cm slab offerings. The extra-thin slabs solve a need for commercial clients who encounter weight-sensitivities in projects, as well as for residential clients looking for cladding options on fireplaces, backsplashes and shower and tub surrounds. cambriausa.com

Designs, finishes offer more hardware options

DELANEY HARDWARE adds seven fashion-forward styles and finishes to its portfolio of luxurious hardware. From contemporary to farmhouse style, the new offerings include design styles in a matte black finish and satin brass finish; a Digital Lock with a Logan Lever; Contemporary Square Pocket Locks; a Barndoor 12" Round Pull combo; an Interconnected Deadbolt with a Vida Lever; and a Tulina Lever with Square Backplate. The company offers a construction lock program as well as tenured keying technicians who key over 100,000 locks annually. delaneyhardware.com





Versatile finish used as symbol of both love, protection

TRUE RESIDENTIAL announces a deep blue/gray finish, Jupiter, that easily pivots between serving as a neutral and a bold design choice. The calming hue, lauded for its versatility and conjuring aromatic images, seamlessly melds into color pairings ranging from off-white to black for one ultra-chic effect. The new addition allows both designers and homeowners a choice of 60 unique color combinations from the manufacturer's Build Your True collection of custom hardware and finishes in its large repertoire of full-sized and indoor/outdoor undercounter units.

true-residential.com

Switches engineered to excel with all bulb types

LEVITON introduces a new line of LED Illuminated Switches that achieves optimal performance with all bulb types, including LEDs, CFLs and incandescent. The switches also do not require a neutral wire for installation. Patent-pending technology eliminates the flickering of the switch's illumination and other performance issues that can occur when lighted switches are paired with LED and CFL lighting loads. Featuring white LED switch illumination, the switches display a soft glow when in the off position, making it easy to locate in a dark room.

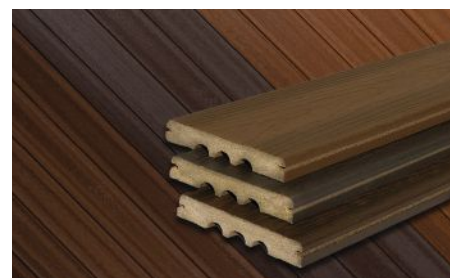
leviton.com



Gas fireplace features realistic burning-log look

ORTAL rolls out its latest innovation for luxury fireplaces, the Wilderness Collection with Firelog Technology, which delivers a lifelike log-and-flame experience without the mess or the lingering smell of wood fire. The real-fire appearance is achieved by allowing gas to flow directly within the log media, resulting in a taller, more realistic flame. The fireplace media also creates a fuller flame, more closely resembling the traditional look and feel of a campfire. Wilderness Collection fireplaces are also equipped with internal lighting.

ortalheat.com



Decking ideal for any kind of project, skill level

ENVISION BUILDING PRODUCTS expands its Ridge Premium collection with a 20-foot length square edge and new 16- and 20-foot grooved edge boards. With the addition of both the longer 20-foot length and the grooved edge option, Ridge Premium is now an ideal choice for any size project and any skill level. Crafted using proprietary Compress Technology, Ridge Premium's high-density cap and EverGrain Core are physically bonded together with tremendous heat and pressure to squeeze out air pockets and create a deep grain.

envisiondecking.com



Additions expand ways to achieve unique flooring

CARLISLE WIDE PLANK FLOORS unveils four distinctive, nature-inspired additions to its full-time offering. The floors represent the most common requests that Carlisle has received from its designer and consumer clients to alter floors in the company's standard hardwood flooring collections. Inspired by the ebb and flow of the natural world, the newest additions include Forest Path (Traditional Collection); Ocean Sand (Casual Collection); Snow Drift (Retreat Collection); and Winter Light (Casual Collection). The company offers a broad continuum of options, ranging from its collections to fully customized floors.

wideplankflooring.com

Exterior



Ceramic cladding system provides fire resistance

GLEN-GERY launches Terraçade, its first ceramic façade cladding system designed and created to appeal to both creative and practical applications. The Terraçade system includes ceramic tiles offered in an impressive range of colors and finishes, as well as a wide array of accessories and system components to make installation quick and easy. Terraçade tiles are engineered to not fade or change color, and the façade system can withstand all forms of extreme weather, from intense UV and heat to heavy storms and freezing temperatures.

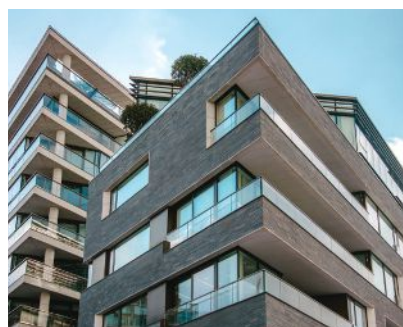
glengery.com



On-trend shake color offers look of blackened cedar

TANDO announces a new Char color as the latest addition to its TandoShake Cape Cod Perfection line of classic shakes. Char's unique color offers the beauty of charred, burnt or blackened wood, a look rooted in a centuries-old Japanese wood preserving process known as Shou Sugi Ban, the practice of burning wood to protect it from the elements. With the beauty of burnt-wood cladding and none of the mess, Tando's Cape Cod Perfection Char shake has an architecturally accurate, 5-inch exposure with crisp edges and an authentic aesthetic.

tandobp.com



Masonry veneer systems compatible with envelope

STO CORP. introduces its Sto Masonry Veneer Engineered Systems (MVES), which allow the pairing of veneers of natural stone, thin brick, cultured stone or ceramic tiles with the company's fully engineered EIFS, stucco or cement board systems. StoTherm ci MVES, StoPowerwall MVES and StoQuik Silver MVES offer durability as well as air, water and vapor protection, plus the complete compatibility with other Sto architectural surfaces or systems. They also provide designers with even more options within the Sto family of building envelope solutions.

stocorp.com

Entry doors set new standard for wood construction

TRUSTILE engineers its first entry door collection—Wood Entry Door Systems—to encompass an expansive selection of door, sidelite and transom combinations. Professionals and homeowners can select from featured entry systems such as modern, traditional, coastal and craftsman styles, or they can build a custom entry system around one of TruStile's 500 door styles now available as entry doors. The entry system was designed and developed over two years in partnership with Marvin and includes innovative materials such as Tricoya, a highly engineered, exterior-grade medium-density fiberboard.

trustile.com



Hardware solution simplifies opening, closing of windows

PELLA unveils the Easy-Slide Operator, introducing a new way to open and close casement and awning windows. The hardware solution enables homeowners to easily slide the operator up to open and down to close the window, offering a much smoother operation than continuously cranking. The result of more than two years of design development, operator refinement and consumer testing, Easy-Slide Operator is available on Pella Impervia casement and awning windows, and the company plans to expand its availability to additional product lines in 2021.

pella.com

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Kitchen



Electric wall-oven provides power, performance

THOR KITCHEN debuts its first wall oven with the new 30-inch Professional Single Electric Wall Oven, which features multiple cooking modes—including convection bake and convection roast, a glass touch control panel and a hidden bake element. The stainless-steel unit joins professional-grade power and performance with modern style and design to offer home chefs a total cooking experience. The glass touch control panel

simplifies the user experience and offers a high-end, seamless look with an easy-to-clean surface. thorkitchen.com



Refrigeration offers wealth of personalization options

THERMADOR delivers reimagined preservation possibilities with its new Freedom Refrigeration Collection, which features a bold, stainless steel interior. With the option to choose Masterpiece, Professional or custom panels, the collection includes integrated refrigerator, freezer and wine column configurations, enabling design freedom within any area of the home. The collection is also Wi-Fi-enabled with the Thermador Connected Experience by Home Connect and boasts notable features such as remote temperature settings and notifications via the Home Connect app.

thermador.com

Link helps join undermount sinks, laminate countertops

MR DIRECT unveils SinkLink, an innovative installation piece that conjoins an undermount sink and laminate countertop in a flushed finish. Constructed from thick durable plastic, SinkLink is available in white, gray and black to match any decor. It also comes in different sizes, making it compatible with a wide range of MR Direct stainless steel and porcelain undermount sinks. The smooth texture allows for a perfect pairing with an array of laminate countertop styles, enabling contractors to be creative with their work. mrdirectint.com



Dual-tier workstation transforms kitchen functionality

RU VATI introduces an expanded Workstation Ledge Sink Collection with dual tiers and additional accessories for improved functionality. A two-track system with sliding accessories increases the range of activities performed at the kitchen sink, and a versatile mix-prep station allows cooks to prepare and organize an entire dinner party. The solid-wood platform spans the generously sized basin and holds a 5-quart stainless-steel mixing bowl with non-slip silicone bottom. A matching colander and lid with grater/slicer attachments can be used with the mixing bowl.

ruvati.com



Gas wall-oven stands out with substantial oven cavity

VERONA announces the Designer Series 30" Gas Built-in Wall Oven with powerful performance and a generous 3.5 cubic feet oven cavity. Available in stainless steel or matte black, the Verona Designer Series 30" oven has superior design upgrades including a soft-close door, temperature indicator, heavy-duty glide rack supports, commercial-style closed door broil, convection bake options and competitive pricing. The wall ovens are part of an expansive Kitchen Suite program that recently launched, which can save consumers with instant in-store rebates.

veronaappliances.com

Tools



Brushless tools give more power, longer run-time

RYOBI 18V ONE+ HP & 40V HP Brushless Tools utilize advanced technologies and superior ergonomics to deliver high-performance tools and a premium user experience. The ONE+ HP Brushless Series offers tools with greater power and speed to get the job done faster and more efficiently. They are optimized to deliver longer run-times and more work per charge and have a design for comfort during extended use without compromising on performance. The brushless motors not only deliver more power—they are lighter and more compact than brushed motors. ryobitools.com

Heated jacket, hoodie help to keep workers warm

BOSCH POWER TOOLS announces its newest heated gear additions, the GHJ12V Heated Jacket and GHH12V-20 Heated Hoodie. Including enhanced, modern designs and light, durable materials, both the jacket and hoodie feature three temperature settings for enhanced control and comfort. Strategically placed heat zones in the chest and lower back offer thorough, efficient heating in a lightweight, easy-to-wear package. Both products come packaged with the Bosch GAA12V-21 12V Max Portable Power Adapter, enabling users to take full advantage of their Bosch 12V Max Battery. | boschtools.com



Wood-boring bits make fast cuts with less torque

SPYDER unveils new additions to its STINGER line of professional-grade wood-boring tools that complement the company's spade and auger bits with several unique features. STINGER Power Bits are designed for drilling both soft and hard wood, as well as plywood, laminated wood and particle board. The new bits are optimized for use on both high- and low-torque drill motors and impact tools. They require up to 50 percent less torque than standard threaded auger and spade bits, slowing battery drain on cordless tools. spyderproducts.com



Power supply eliminates need for gasoline, cords

MILWAUKEE TOOL gives users efficient, quiet and portable power anywhere with the MX FUEL Carry-On 3600W/1800W Power Supply. Part of the new MX FUEL Equipment System, the power supply provides 3,600 peak watts/1,800 running watts of pure sine wave energy and powers everything from high demand 15A tools to sensitive electronics. Its compact size, zero emissions and quiet operation allow users to safely operate the unit in confined, indoor spaces, and a roll cage provides durability for outdoor jobsite use. milwaukeetool.com

Metal-connector nailer fits easily in tight spaces

PASLODE updates its 1-½" Positive Placement Metal Connector Nailer—Model F150S-PP—to be compact and provide the power, speed and accuracy to make it the one of the most productive on the market. A new nose improves reliability and minimizes jamming, and a new crescent-shaped driver blade strikes more surface area of the nail, allowing for consistent drive performance and higher productivity. An in-line, compact one-strip magazine design for balance, maneuverability and unobstructed operation allows for a capacity of up to 29 nails. paslode.com



Upcoming Events

FEB. 17

"Trends in Kitchens" – Kitchen & Bath Design Remodeling Webcast Series, powered by Houzz

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qualifiedremodeler.com/houzz2021

MAY 13

"Client Expectations Today" – Kitchen & Bath Design Remodeling Webcast Series, powered by Houzz

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JULY 14

"The 2021 Houzz & Home Survey" – Kitchen & Bath Design Remodeling Webcast Series, powered by Houzz

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qualifiedremodeler.com/houzz2021

NOV. 1-3

TOP 500 LIVE

"Power Forward"

Marriott New Orleans

Learn from the industry's top home improvement company CEOs and experts. Register at www.top500live.com

NOV. 10

"Trends in Baths" – Kitchen & Bath Design Remodeling Webcast Series, powered by Houzz

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PRODUCTS	PAGE NO.
Bosch Power Tools	63
Cambria	58
Carlisle Wide Plank Floors	59
Delaney Hardware	58
Envision Building Products	59
Fortress Building Products	16
Glen-Gery	60
INOX	16
L.J. Smith Stair Systems	58
Leviton	59
Milwaukee Tool	63
MoistureShield	58
MR Direct	62
Ortal	59

ADVERTISER	PAGE NO.
ABC Supply Company	9
Chief Architect	4-5
Dave Yoho Associates	39
DaVinci Roofscapes	21
Diablo Tools (Freud Tools)	67
Docking Drawer	31
Franklin International	23
GAF Materials Corporation	68
Home Depot	2-3
Kitchen & Bath Design Remodeling Webcast Series	41
NARI	47
National Remodeling Foundation	61

PRODUCTS	PAGE NO.
Paslode	63
Pella	60
Ruvati	62
RYOBI	63
Simpson Strong-Tie	58
Spyder	63
Sto Corp.	60
Tando	60
Thermador	62
THOR Kitchen	62
True Residential	59
TruStile	60
Verona	62
Viewrail	16

ADVERTISER	PAGE NO.
NKBA	17
Pella	32-33
Petersen Aluminum	6, 65
Progressive Insurance	13
ProVia LLC	29
QR Master Design Awards	42-43
QR Top 500	56
Sentrel Bath Systems	11
The Best Postcards	Outsert
Viewrail	19
WalzCraft Industries	65
ZipWall, LLC	15

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Qualified Remodeler (USPS 353-830, ISSN No. 0098-9207 print, ISSN No. 1948-5656 online). Volume #47, Number 1 January | February 2021. Published by **SOLA GROUP, INC.**, 1880 Oak Avenue., Suite 350, Evanston, IL 60201; (847) 440-3000. Copyright ©2021 by **Qualified Remodeler**. No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from the publisher. **Qualified Remodeler** is published nine times a year. All statements, including product claims, are those of the organizations making the statements or claims. The publisher does not adopt any such statement or claim as his own, and any such statement or claim does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the publisher. One year subscription to nonqualified individuals: \$50.00 payable in USA funds; print or digital copy within USA; digital copy only outside USA; valid email address required for digital copy. Single issues available to USA only (prepayment required), \$10.00 each. For **subscription information** and address changes, write to: **Qualified Remodeler**, Circulation Dept., P.O. Box 3007, Northbrook, IL 60065-3007, or call **(866) 932-5904**, or email circ. QualifiedRemodeler@omeda.com. Postmaster: Send address changes to **Qualified Remodeler**, Circulation Dept., P.O. Box 3007, Northbrook, IL 60065-3007. Periodicals Postage paid at Evanston, IL and additional mailing offices. Printed in USA.

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Clients for Life

No. 153 Mountainwood Homes leverages previous experience and industry connections to ease the remodeling process for customers.

by Kyle Clapham

AFTER SERVING 10 YEARS as vice president of construction for a luxury custom home-builder, Robert Wood encountered a difficult situation in 2008. His company began cutting back and instituted a reorganization because of the recession, impelling him to contemplate the future. He and his wife Heather, an interior designer, ultimately decided to create their own residential design-build firm.

"Our first project was a little backyard shed. My father-in-law said, 'Hey, if you can beat the price that Home Depot's doing for a Tuff Shed, you can build it for me,' and off we started," recalls Robert, who has a degree in civil engineering. "Because of our past experience—and my connections to trades and

because we want to get a chance to create a relationship with our clients. And that's what we're all about is having a relationship from the very first phone call they make into our office. That's what makes this whole thing work—the relationship and trust that soon forms, and the ability to transform their space into what they've been thinking about."

The company renovates homes and builds custom houses around Portland, Oregon, as well as in southwest Washington. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Washington shut down its construction business, but Oregon stayed open, putting Mountainwood in a unique position. "We actually had a Washington project start one day, and we closed it down the next morning," Robert says. "But the majority of our work is in Oregon, so we got to keep that part of our work going; then when Washington came back, we layered in our Washington work because we're right on the border."

Unfortunately, however, Wood had to lay off about 30 percent of his workforce because 60 to 70 percent of jobs went on hold. Even in areas where the company could operate, most clients opted to pause their projects while everyone waited on more information about the virus and associated risks. Mountainwood has since brought back all the positions that were furloughed, Robert notes.

"It's caused us to make sure that we're refining our processes and taking care of people," he says. "Internally, we're working on making sure that we're being more efficient with how we do things and moving clients through our process—making sure we're taking care of them. There are some material things going on as far as shortages and timelines, and so that causes us to stop and make sure we're planning around those things, so we can still bring projects in on time and on budget."

Job leads dried up for about six weeks in March and April, but since then they have completely turned around, Robert adds. In fact, the company received more leads in



ROBERT WOOD,
President/Owner

COMPANY:
Mountainwood Homes

HEADQUARTERS:
Beaverton, Oregon

DESCRIPTION: Design-build remodeler

TOP 500 RANK: No. 153

REMODELING SALES: \$11.4 million

2020 than in any other year to date. "We are seeing a trend of larger projects—additions with kitchens and bathrooms, or just additional bedrooms. We're seeing additions with office space. We almost never talk to anyone in which office space isn't a priority. Probably 50 to 60 percent need two workspaces."

Some clients are even planning for the possibility of another pandemic, so they ask for an office area and a space open for future use, he notes. "People have been making the choice to get these projects done now. Our buyer typically is a high-tech professional in the Portland area, so high-tech companies just sent their people [to work from] home, and they still kept making money."

Mountainwood achieved \$12 million in revenue on its remodeling jobs last year and has forecasted \$13 million for 2021, Robert says. The company does not project massive growth this year as a result of the ongoing pandemic but believes the market will be very strong in 2022. "We want to keep our heads up and make sure that if things are changing, we can act and react accordingly with our team, take care of our clients and take care of our teammates—take care of each other."

"Our motto is 'building clients for life,'" he continues. "It's important that people get a builder on their side. They have doctors and attorneys and all these other professional services; and so, we've just created that relationship with a lot of people, and they call themselves clients for life." QR

"IT JUST CAME TOGETHER NATURALLY; WE KNEW THAT PEOPLE NEED [A DESIGN-BUILD] SERVICE."

Robert Wood, president/owner

people in the industry—we got to leverage that as we grew. We already had personnel connections in the community, so we just kept doing a good job for people, taking care of them."

Mountainwood Homes continued to earn repeat business and project referrals from clients as the company embraced the importance of marketing and branding. "It just came together naturally; we knew that people need [a design-build] service," Robert says. "It's a service we offer so that we can help to make this whole remodeling or custom construction project easier for the clients."

"Some people like to get plans from other people and just quote those plans and move forward," he adds. "We don't want to do that



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