

ATLANTA

BUILDING NEWS



A Change in Focus

**New Cost/Value Expectations =
New Challenges for Remodelers**



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The SMC Bus is Ready to Roll Again

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



By Mike Smith

Americans Have Spoken – “Housing Strengthens Communities”

Trying to predict the future of the Atlanta's housing market has been tough the past few years. Economic uncertainty and conflicting news coverage regarding new home sales can drive anyone to throw their arms up in disbelief. Housing start permits are up one month, builder and consumer confidence are down the next month.

Despite the changing data reports, now and moving forward, I believe we can at least ground ourselves knowing that the American dream is still alive. According to the results of a recent poll conducted by the Republican and Democratic polling firms of Public Opinion Strategies and Lake Research Partners for the National Association of Home Builders, homeowners and non-owners alike consider owning a home essential.

An overwhelming 75 percent of those surveyed said that owning a home is worth the risk of the fluctuations in the market. Ninety-five percent of homeowners said they are happy with their decision to own a home, and 73 percent of renters said that owning a home is one of their goals.

You can translate the data any way you want, but home ownership is still one of the best investments for individual households.

Also, Americans still believe that a strong housing industry means more jobs and more money to keep local economies growing, and that the government should continue to promote homeownership through tax incentives. The survey found that nearly three out of four American voters—73 percent—believe that it is reasonable and appropriate for the federal government to provide tax incentives to promote homeownership.

And 81 percent of voters are convinced we should do more to improve the housing finance system because we need policies that encourage homeownership if we want to rebuild the middle class.

The poll also found that an overwhelming majority of respondents oppose eliminating the mortgage interest deduction and would be less likely to support a candidate for Congress who wants to do away with this vital tax incentive.

“Despite the current housing downturn, Americans still see homeownership as a key building block of being in the middle class and creating strong jobs in their communities,” said Celinda Lake, president of Lake Research Partners, which conducted the survey along with Public Opinion Strategies.

Home ownership provides important emotional and financial benefits, while housing fills an important hole in the economy. No matter how long it takes to get housing back to normal, we can all be reminded that, at the end of the day, home is where we want to be.

At the Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association, we will continue to work to protect homeownership and to reinforce the importance of our industry in our community and to our economy. 🏠

The Voice of the Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association

ATLANTA BUILDING NEWS

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OCTOBER

- 4**
Green Building: Risk and Realities, The Housing Center, 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- 5-6**
OSHA 10-Hour Course for Construction, The Housing Center, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- 6**
SMC Silent Auction, The Villa Christina, 5:30 p.m.
- 11-12**
Builder Licensing Exam Prep Course: Commercial Supplement, The Housing Center, 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- 11**
Kitchen Design and Décor, The Housing Center, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
- 12**
Builder Opportunity Breakfast, 9:30 a.m.
- 13**
CPHB Builder Speed Dating, 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.
- 20-21**
Residential Contractor Licensing Exam Prep Course, Southern Polytechnic State University, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- 20**
Scaffolding Safety: Compliance Based Lunch & Learn, The Housing Center, Noon – 2 p.m.
- 25-November 17**
Builder Licensing Exam Prep 4-Week Course, The Housing Center, 8 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (Tuesday & Thursday)
- 25**
SMC Bus Tour, 9 a.m.
- 26**
Level 1-A: Fundamentals of Erosion and Sediment Control Re-Certification, The Housing Center, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- 27**
General Membership Meeting, 4 p.m.

NOVEMBER

- 8**
EarthCraft House Renovation, Southface Energy Institute, 9 – 5 p.m.
- 8-10**
Certified New Home Sales Professional (CSP) Course, The Housing Center, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- 12**
OBIES, Cobb Galleria, 6 p.m.
- 16**
MetroStudy Market Update, The Housing Center, 8 – 10a.m.
How to Develop Your Company's Safety Program Lunch & Learn, The Housing Center, Noon – 2 p.m.
- 17-18**
Residential Contractor Licensing Exam Prep Course, Southern Polytechnic State University, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- 17**
High Performance Homes 101 and the Basics of Certified Green Building Lunch & Learn, The Housing Center, Noon – 2 p.m.
- 21**
EarthCraft House Building, Southface Energy Institute, 9 – 5 p.m.
- 29**
Lead Certified Renovator, The Housing Center, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Calendar Key to Events:

All meetings will be held at HBA's Housing Center unless otherwise noted. The Housing Center is located at 1484 Brockett Road in Tucker at the corner of Brockett and Cooledge roads next to Highway 78.

Editor's Note: Changes in the dates and location of events listed on our calendar occur. Please call the HBA at (770) 938-9900 or check the latest calendar online at www.atlantahomebuilders.com.

NOVEMBER

- 30-December 1**
Green Building for Building Professionals Course, The Housing Center, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

DECEMBER

- 7**
Homeowner Handbook Orientation, The Housing Center, 9 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
- 8**
Level 1-A: Fundamentals of Erosion and Sediment Control, The Housing Center, 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Adapting Your Building Company for Remodeling, The Housing Center, 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- 13**
Marketing & Communications Strategies for Aging and Accessibility (CAPS I), The Housing Center, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- 14**
Design/Build Solutions for Aging and Accessibility (CAPS II), The Housing Center, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Partnering Guide Lunch & Learn, The Housing Center, Noon – 2 p.m.
- 15-16**
Residential Contractor Licensing Exam Prep Course, Southern Polytechnic State University, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- 15**
Business Management for Building Professionals, The Housing Center, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.



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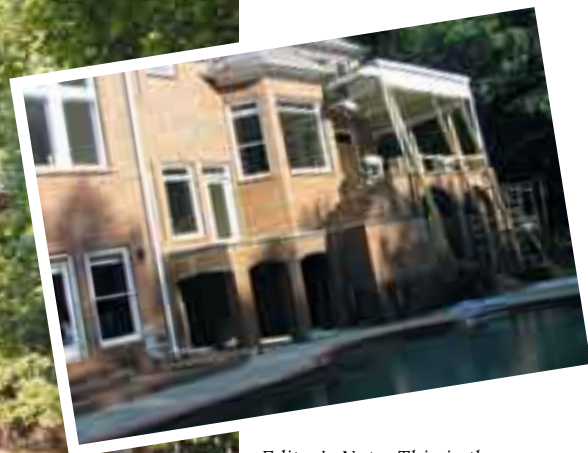
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FEATURE



A Change





Editor's Note: This is the second of a two-part series focusing on remodeling and the changes some GAHBA member businesses have made to make the most of a trend toward staying put and improving over moving and starting over. The first part of the story appeared in the Spring issue of Atlanta Building News.

in FOCUS

By Elsbeth W. Russell

While many builders have welcomed increases in their remodeling business as new home construction has waned, new consumer expectations for cost and value have also created new challenges for them to face.

Builders are turning to continuing education classes to stay on top of new trends that allow for improvements in efficiency without a loss of quality. At the same time, they're reexamining their business practices and the way they work with supplier and sub-contractors. Builders are also taking part in government programs and incentives that allow them to pass savings on to consumers.

"We have seen a dramatically increased interest in energy-efficient design," says Rob Myers, the owner and president of Colonnade Custom Builders. "It's not that they want to not spend money. It's that they want to get the most out of every dollar."

MANAGING THE COST

"For contract renovation work, the planning and budgeting phase is critical, as well as helping the client manage their own expectations," explains Jim LaVallee with EpiCity and Epic Development. "We have to look for ways to value engineer the project for our client's benefit, while still maintaining high quality in our finished product. It is easy for the

clients' dream project to outpace their wallet, so helping them stay focused on achieving their initial objectives is also important."

Once a builder knows what his client wants to see, areas of focus LaVallee says are keys to keeping a project costs down are design and managing your supplier and sub-contractors.

Myers — who works in design-build for new custom homes, and also offers renovation and repair work on custom homes — agrees that managing these business relationships is one of the most important areas he and his colleagues at Colonnade have focused on.

"We have been cutting out the middle man whenever possible;



buying materials direct and hiring labor for the install, rather than subcontracting the work,” Myers said. “It is more management intensive at our level, but we aren’t paying someone else to do what we are capable of doing ourselves. We carefully track costs and negotiate on everything. We need to know we are paying the right prices. We do all of our work using work and purchase orders. We do not commence any work without knowing the total cost.”

Managing materials can also be key when it comes to keeping costs down on a project.

LaVallee says he dedicates a lot of time during the planning stages of the construction cycle to figuring out how to maximize the existing home structure when planning out a renovation.

“Not only are we trying to maximize the use of existing framing, hardwood flooring, etc., while

minimizing the use of inefficient framing and other costly features, but we are also trying to be friendly to the environment by not just ripping everything out and tossing it in the dumpster,” he says. “Execution of this strategy isn’t easy, as everyone on the builders team needs to be cognizant of how old is going to meet new.”

But LaVallee also cautions that in some cases, new can be better. For example, replacing older windows rather than reusing the old windows in a remodel generally makes more sense.

“Sometimes attempting to save certain elements is just not cost effective if you have to spend too much money repairing or altering them,” LaVallee says.

When you’re looking to buy new materials, the builders advise that you keep your budget in mind.

“Select the appropriate material for the price point of the area you are working in, so you don’t overbuild,”



Cooper says. “The most expensive product is not always the best choice.”

KEEPING IT FRESH

While it’s important to stay on track with budgeting, it’s also important for builders to be up-to-date on new techniques and industry trends when working on a remodel.

“We attend continuing education classes and meeting at the Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association,” says Thomas Cooper, vice president of Cooper Remodeling. “This also helps with networking, learning about the latest products and regulations. We also consult with top suppliers to help keep up with latest trends, which saves everyone money in the long run.”

Cooper, who has been building and remodeling in the metro Atlanta area for over 15 years, says “to reduce your own costs, you must know the new building codes and regulations.”

“We have become members of Remodelers Council, Green Builders Council, and are on the Board of Directors for the GAHBA, in order to network, learn about new products and learn about what other builders are working on,” Cooper added.

Both Myers and LaVallee agree that sharing ideas with other builders can help not only to keep you aware of what’s hot in the industry, it can also be a good way to keep your sanity.

“The information available at meetings and through the educational offerings helps us stay on the forefront of industry trends,” said LaVallee, who is a member of the Green Building and Remodelers Councils, and regularly attends GAHBA’s Builder/Lender/Developer Council meetings. “With the market in such turmoil during the past two years having a network of other professionals to bounce ideas off of has been reassuring.”





Some of the top industry trends that these builders see requested most often by consumers are upgrading styles and appliances and making home more energy efficient.

LaVallee says that most initial inquiries involve a combination of a kitchen, a master suite including a bath, or a family room addition.

“As part of the projects they are interested in green features such as tankless water heaters, increasing the efficiency of their HVAC systems and windows, and addressing the adequacy of their current insulation,” he says.

For Myers, whose company, Colonnade Enterprises, is both Earthcraft and Energy Star certified, staying up-to-date on the newest

trends in green building is a great way to give consumers what they’re looking for.

“We believe the Earthcraft program allows a sensible approach to green building,” Myers says. “Earthcraft does not require pricey technology; many of the items are simple common sense practices that let us really show the customer the value in going green.”

And that, after all, is what customers are looking for when they choose to start a remodel, rather than moving out and on to a new home.

“Value, value, value,” Myers said. “Our customers are willing to spend, but we have to show them where the value is.” 🏠

INTERESTED IN REMODELING?

For members interested in remodeling, the Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association has a very active Remodelers Council. The Remodelers Council holds informative classes and programs for remodelers throughout the year. Also, Remodelers Council members are featured in *Remodel Atlanta Magazine*. For information on the HBA’s Remodelers Council go to the HBA’s website at www.AtlantaHomeBuilders.com/councils/Remodelers.cfm or you can contact Janel Grant at jgrant@atlantahomebuilders.com or (678) 775-1446.



Limitations on Right to Repair Act

By Frank O. Brown, Jr.

In *Lumsden v. Williams*, the Georgia Court of Appeals addressed an issue under Georgia's Right to Repair Act. The act is a mandatory alternative dispute resolution process designed to resolve residential construction defect disputes before they reach court or arbitration. In *Lumsden v. Williams*, the buyer of a house provided written notice of alleged construction defects to the builder, but the notice did not comply with "notice of claim" requirements of the act.

When the builder did not respond to the satisfaction of buyer, the buyer made some remedial repair, at least some of which the buyer contended were necessary to lessen damages to the house. The buyer then sued the builder.

The builder responded with a motion to dismiss the lawsuit for the buyer's failure to provide the notice of claim as required by the act. Consistent with the terms of the act, the trial court did not dismiss the lawsuit, but stayed it pending compliance by the buyer with the act's notice of claim requirements. The plaintiffs then provided a notice of claim. When the parties were unable to resolve their disputes under the act, the lawsuit continued.

The builder then filed a motion for summary judgment on a number of grounds, including that the buyer could not recover damages relating to the

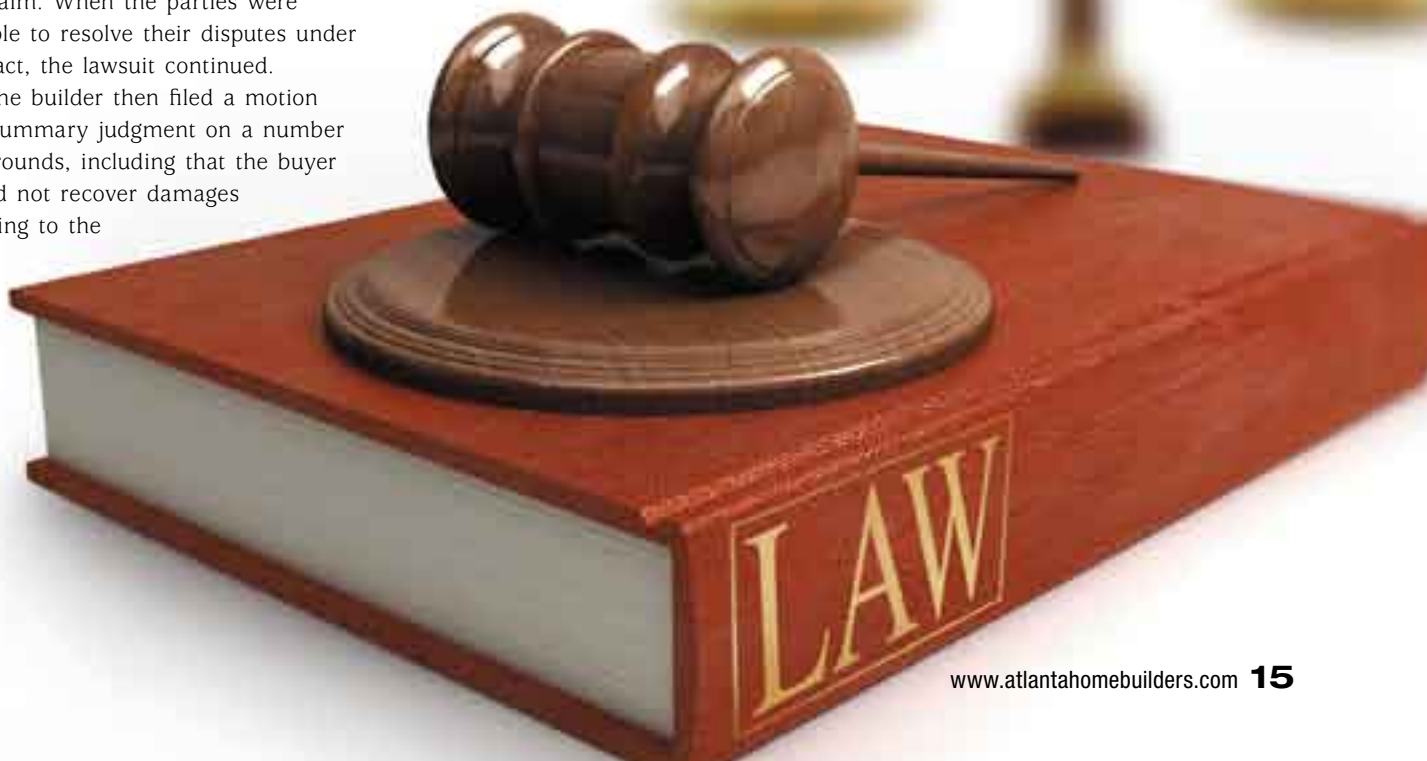
remedial repairs made prior to providing the notice of claim. The trial court granted summary judgment to builder on that basis. Summary judgment meant that, subject to the buyer's right of appeal, the case was over and the builder had no liability to the buyer in the lawsuit.

However, the buyer did appeal and on appeal, the Georgia Court of Appeals reversed the trial court, reasoning that while the remedial repairs may create a jury issue as to any potential damages, they do not justify summary judgment. Significantly, the court added that: "Nothing in the act prevents a potential claimant from taking action to mitigate his losses."

The lesson for builders from the *Lumsden v. Williams* decision of the Georgia Court of Appeals is that, even when a buyer makes repairs (at least those necessary to lessen damages) without first having provided the mandatory notice of claim and even when a buyer files suit without first having provided a mandatory

notice of claim, the builder can still potentially be liable for the costs of those repairs. 🏠

Frank O. Brown, Jr. is General Counsel to the Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association, Inc. and a shareholder in Weissman, Nowack, Curry & Wilco, P.C. For questions or comments regarding this article, he may be reached at (404) 926-4504 or frankbrown@wncwlaw.com.



CPHB Welcomes New Members



The Housing Institute, Inc. (THI) is pleased to announce that Aycock Properties, Hynes Homes, LLC, Massey Construction and Robert Wilkins, LLC have earned the prestigious Certified Professional Home Builder of Georgia (CPHB) designation. The aforementioned companies were approved at THI's board meeting in September.

To attain this certification, the companies had to meet a variety of

criteria, including having at least three years of home building experience, offering an approved limited warranty and mandatory binding arbitration, maintaining appropriate insurance coverage, providing a total of 14 references from homeowners, trade contractors, suppliers and financial institutions and passing a code certification exam. They also agreed to complete 16 hours of continuing education each year to maintain this certification, which must be renewed annually.

"We are proud to receive this important certification," said Jerry Hynes of Hynes Homes, LLC. "It recognizes our long-standing commitment to solid customer service and home building professionalism."

The Georgia legislators passed a builder licensing law that went into effect July 2008, but the law grandfathered

most of Georgia's current builders. This law left homebuyers with the same list of builders as before. The first of its kind in the State of Georgia, this voluntary certification program was created to connect the home buying public with Certified Professional Home Builders of Georgia who are dedicated to maintaining the highest level of professionalism, customer service and homeowner satisfaction. The program, administered by THI was created to promote home building professionalism in Georgia.

To learn more information about Aycock Properties, please contact Kevin Aycock at (404) 220-7693 or visit www.aycockproperties.com. To learn more about Hynes Construction, LLC, please contact Jerry Hynes at (706) 268-2890. To learn more information about Massey Construction, please contact Richard S. Massey at (404) 840-4852 or visit www.chesrokeebasements.com. To learn more about Robert Wilkins, LLC, please contact Robert Wilkins at (770) 521-1968 or visit www.robertwilkinshomes.com.

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Verification Testing Requirements in the New Georgia Energy Code

By Matt Hoots
President, Sawhorse, Inc. and Green Building Council Chair

Georgia has received national attention recently because of its new testing requirements. According to the code's provisions, all new homes permitted after July 1, 2011 must undergo envelope and duct tightness tests.

So how do the testing requirements affect us as builders?

Here are a few common questions and answers that will help guide you through the testing process.

WHY TEST?

The ideal building envelope, or the exterior shell of a building that separates conditioned spaces from unconditioned spaces, is airtight, ensuring conditioned air does not escape the home and unconditioned air from the outdoors or polluted air from the attic or crawlspace or garage does not enter. The ideal duct system should also be airtight to make sure it successfully and efficiently delivers conditioned air to the living spaces in a home and not to the attic, in between the walls or any other space you do not wish to waste energy cooling.

Testing the envelope and duct system verifies proper air-sealing and duct-sealing has been done. The blower door and duct blaster tests can also help find areas not air-sealed. As you improve the tightness of a home's envelope and duct system, you may notice fewer customer complaints and call backs, because a well-sealed home will have lower utility bills, improved indoor air quality and a higher comfort level.

WHO CAN PERFORM THE TEST?

Anyone, including the builder or HVAC contractor – as long as they are a certified duct and envelope tightness (DET) verifier. To find a certified verifier or an organization to help you become DET verified, visit www.dca.state.ga.us/development/ConstructionCodes/programs/DET.asp.

HOW MUCH DOES THE TEST COST?

Numbers vary by location and will fluctuate with market conditions, but the price for both an envelope (blower door) test and a duct system test on a 2,000-square-foot house with one duct system has been estimated at around \$330. A stand-alone blower door test may cost around \$200, based on a 2010 Southface poll of 38 individuals from the home performance, HERS and utility industries. On average, individuals indicated they would charge \$215 for a stand-alone blower door test (with no home diagnostics) and \$329 for both a stand-alone blower door test and a duct pressurization test.

WHEN DOES MY HOME NEED TO GET TESTED?

All new single-family homes must be tested for envelope tightness at post-construction or final. Envelope testing

cannot occur until drywall is up and all doors and windows are installed.

New duct systems must be tested if any part of the system is outside the building envelope (e.g., ducts in unconditioned attics or crawlspaces). The duct tightness test can be performed once the air-handler is installed either at "rough-in" or "final." If you insulate the attic roofline or crawlspace walls, duct testing is not required.

WHAT ABOUT EXISTING HOMES?

A blower door building envelope test is only required in existing homes if you work on the entire building envelope. Testing is not required for additions, but if you are doing a full renovation or gut rehab, testing is required. An existing duct system does not have to be tested unless you are replacing more than half.

HOW DO I PROVE THAT I PASSED?

The Georgia energy code requires the passing test results be listed on an energy code compliance certificate. You can find a Georgia-approved energy code compliance certificate at www.dca.state.ga.us/development/ConstructionCodes/index.asp.

Builders may find it is easier to pass the envelope test and harder to pass the duct test. To pass the former, a home's building envelope must show less than seven air changes per hour at 50 Pascals (7 ACH50). A duct system can either pass a total leakage test or a "leakage to the outside test" at post-construction. The rough-in total (RIT) leakage must be less than or equal to 6 percent, the post-construction total (PCT) leakage must be less than or equal to 12 percent and the post-construction leakage to outside (PCO) must be less than or equal to 8 percent.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I FAIL THE TEST?

If you fail either the duct system or envelope test, the DET verifier may be able to help you find the leaks in your home using equipment. Look over the Georgia Energy Code Field Guide at www.southface.org/energy-codes for air-sealing tips and information about the mandatory air-sealing requirements in the code. Keep in mind that the new energy code requires ductwork be sealed with mastic at least a nickel thick between the duct system and air handler, at all joints and seams in the duct system and where the duct boot is connected to drywall or the subfloor.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

For more information on Georgia's energy code, visit www.dca.state.ga.us/development/ConstructionCodes or www.southface.org/energy-codes. 🏠

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- Prepare a home in five easy steps
- Stage on a budget

This session will include group exercises in which the attendees will view current MLS listings to identify staging problems and ways to fix them.

Melanie Serra will facilitate this session. Melanie is the owner of Interior Revivals, Inc. here in the

Atlanta area. She is also an instructor for the Emory University- Center for Life Long Learning. Melanie works closely with the local real estate community staging homes for resale, and merchandising model homes. She has been praised for increasing the average market value of a home by 20% with her "staging" techniques.

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10 Ways to Make Your Remodeling Business Stand Out

By Melina R. Wilkinson
Oneida Builders and Remodelers Council Chair



Quite often, remodelers will ask me to reveal the most powerful marketing strategy I use.

I can say without hesitation that it has little to do with advertising, direct mail, websites, referrals or blogs.

Before any of those things will really have any impact, you've got to uncover and communicate a way in which your business is different from every other remodeling business that does what you do. You've got to stake your claim on a simple idea or position in the mind of prospective clients.

Product - Can you offer a product that is so unique or even trendy that your business is associated with that offering? Or can you extend a product and offer a valuable service to make the product more useful to the customer?

Service - Many times this can be the packaging of a service as a product. Consulting is often delivered on an hourly basis. Packaging a consulting engagement based on an outcome, with defined deliverables and fixed package price, is a very effective way to differentiate a service offering. Don't forget to give the service a powerful name.

Market Niche - Carve out an industry or two and become the most dominant player serving that industry. A really nice bonus is you can usually raise your prices dramatically when you specialize in this manner.

Offer - Can you become known by an offer you make? Start a client referral program and give the rewards to existing clients, and they will refer all their friends and family and keep coming back for years.

Solve a Problem - Is there something prospects in your market fear or believe is universal for what you do? If so, focus on communicating how you have the answer. Painless dentistry, for example. I know a remodeling contractor who found what his clients appreciated most was the way his crews cleaned up at the end of the day. He began to promote the fact that he owned more ShopVacs than any remodeling contractor on the planet.

Message of Value - Many times there are things you do that don't get communicated. Extras that you provide or services you think should be included. Your positioning might just rest in more effectively communicating. So say it in your branding. (Like On Time/On Budget).

Unique habit - I know a financial planner who has his a client's car detailed out in his parking lot when they come in for their annual review. They can't help but rave to their friends. Do something like leave a fresh flower

arrangement or a wine basket in their new kitchen. Or nice fluffy his and her robes in their new master suite.

Guarantee - Can you offer a guarantee so strong that no one else in your industry would dream of doing it? This one frightens some people, but you probably guarantee your work anyway, you just don't say so. Come out and boldly announce you guarantee results, and watch what happens!

Customer Service - Give them something more than you promised. Give them a gift. Give them a related service for free.

Against the competition - Many times you create your category niche by looking for holes in the offerings of your competitors. If everyone in industry fails to address a certain problem, boldly grab on to solving that problem and use your competition as the point of difference.

Clues to uncovering your difference - Look at your current clients. What common elements exist? Interview your clients. See if they can tell you why they chose to work with you, why they stay and why they refer? Study your competitors more closely. What do they do that you could do better? What don't they offer that you could? How do they position themselves?

Communicate the difference - Once you find your chosen strategy or combination of strategies, all of your advertising and promotion should be centered around it.

Commit to it, stay at it and resist the temptation to wander off in the next new direction. Building a brand, and that's what I'm talking about, takes time and patience. The payoff is what differentiates the winners from the losers in this big marketing game. 🏠

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HomeAid Partners with Walmart for Green Retrofit to Help Decatur Cooperative Ministry

HomeAid Atlanta recently completed an energy efficiency retrofit at a Decatur home operated by Decatur Cooperative Ministry (DCM), a nonprofit organization serving homeless families in the Decatur/DeKalb area. The project was the first of its kind as part of a new national environmental sustainability program launched by HomeAid Atlanta's parent organization, HomeAid America, and funded by a grant from the Walmart Foundation.

HomeAid Atlanta partnered with WellHome, an affiliate of Masco Home Services, to complete a majority of the green, energy saving upgrades at the home. The scope of work included air sealing and insulating the attic and crawl space, adding a radiant barrier to the roof rafters, duct tightening, adding energy efficient lighting and sealing roof penetrations. In addition, GE Appliances and Lighting provided new, more efficient appliances. It is estimated that these improvements will reduce the home's energy use by at least 40 percent, allowing DCM to focus more of their funding on direct client services, like counseling, job training and financial education.

"We were excited to have HomeAid's first Environmental Sustainability project, and thankful for the opportunity to assist Decatur Cooperative Ministry through this green initiative," said Dan O'Dwyer, president of HomeAid Atlanta. "In today's economy, it's more important now than ever before that organizations like DCM save as much as possible on operating costs, like utility bills, so that they can concentrate their resources on serving families in need in our community."



Jeff Slavin, CEO of HomeAid America (left), visited the home with Christy Oraelosi, manager of DCM's Family House transitional program.

Other improvements were also completed around the home, including the addition of a carbon monoxide detector, courtesy of SawHorse, the installation of new flooring in one of the bedrooms and the addition of a door on the laundry room.

The introduction of the Environmental Sustainability Program was made possible through a grant received by HomeAid America from the Walmart Foundation. The purpose of the program is to enable HomeAid chapters across the country to retrofit existing facilities serving the homeless with energy efficient upgrades, allowing the service providers operating those facilities to increase their service delivery capacity to their clients by reducing their operating costs for energy.

Special thanks to the Walmart Foundation and the following partners for making this project a great success: Builders II, Edwards Heating & Air, GE Appliances & Lighting, O'Dwyer Homes, Redmont Homes, SawHorse and WellHome. 🏠

50+ University Day

Six continuing education credits in one day, at the low cost of \$35 for Atlanta 50+ Council members and \$50 for non-members, including great sponsors with a little business and a little fun for everyone?

Hold the date! **Wednesday, October 12**, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Cobb Galleria is a unique day for the local housing community. On that day, the 50+ Housing Council holds the inaugural University Day, a unique opportunity to learn more about

the needs, wants and desires of the largest, most affluent and challenging segment of the housing market. Learn what's important to these buyers, what new influences shape buying decisions, and their changing attitudes about community and housing.

This is an important conference, and affords participants the opportunity to **earn 6 CEUs in a single day**. We've got eight quality sessions taught by leading industry experts.

Here's a class summary:

STEPPING STONES TO CLOSING THE SALE

Today's post-family buyer faces unprecedented challenges. Earning power may have peaked, and many have a lifetime of savings; but they've seen those savings drop as much as 50 percent. They are concerned there is not enough time left to recover. In the *Stepping Stones to Closing the Sale* series offered at 50+ University Day,



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We look forward to seeing you!

you will learn the keys to understanding and meeting these concerns, and the differing perspectives of these buyers. In particular, participants will learn how to identify and monetize assets that seniors may overlook in assessing affordability.

Keeping up with grandchildren requires technology. The senior market is the fastest growing adopter of smart phones, internet and digital media. However, they want it simple and straightforward. Use the right techniques properly to market, stay in touch and build relationships. *Stepping Stones* identifies the differences among buyers in the generation that includes Steve Jobs, Hank Aaron and Beetle Bailey. Learn how to use appropriate forms of social media to reach the different segments of this group.

DRIVING SOCIAL MEDIA TO THE 50+ CONSUMER

Your greatest competitor is inaction. Building relationships is the key to action. Staying put can be the most disastrous decision any senior may make; it's up to the well informed housing professional to show the way to the fulfilling later stages of life. Social media is an effective tool in spreading this message.

SMALL SPACES: FUNCTIONAL AND EFFICIENT

For more than 40 years, the Ford F150 has been the best-selling truck brand. The V-8 has been the most popular engine choice. Would you be surprised to learn that Ford's new sales leader – by far – is a six cylinder F150? Would you be amazed to learn that it offers performance comparable to Dodge's legendary Hemi V8? Imagine how confusing housing can be for seniors raised in the larger is better era!

Seniors still want the nicer touches in their homes, but they have trouble adjusting to smaller sizes. For many, price points equate to size. *Small Spaces: Functional and Efficient* explores how to use efficiency as a luxury tool to appeal to the downsizing senior. Learn how smaller sizes can mean less stress and better health to the buyer, the greatest luxury of all.

KITCHEN DESIGN: WHAT WOMEN WANT!

Master suites and kitchens sell homes. *Kitchen Design: What Women Want!* shows you the newest trends in kitchen design for the 50+ market. Universal Design allows people of all ability levels to continue their lifelong love affair with food. More importantly, a well-designed kitchen is crucial to the senior buyer's sense of dignity and independence. Most seniors want the next home to be their last home. The universal design kitchen is a must-have feature to support graceful aging.

INCORPORATING GREEN AND ACCESS WHILE REMODELING YOUR HOME

Our children remind us to be good stewards of the environment, but being green is important to seniors, too. For them, it may take more of an efficiency tone, but the message is the same. Certainly, many senior new home buyers want to leave a good legacy, but low operating cost is important, too. A recent survey of utility executives (Black & Veatch) foreshadows energy costs rising by as much as 50 percent by 2015. Increasingly, the green home, the efficient home will stand apart from the rest and command a market premium. *Incorporating Green and Access* is one of the *Hot Topics in the 50+ Market*. Don't miss it!

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND BOOMERS – A WINNING COMBINATION

Smaller homes place greater emphasis on community. Walk-able communities with front porches, convenient amenities and shopping mean better health and better lifestyle. Boomers are social, and they want to retire to a social lifestyle. *Community Planning and Boomers – A Winning Combination* will provide greater detail.

University Day is an important day for the professional housing industry. It has attracted top notch sponsors and offers extensive networking opportunities. **Save the date - Wednesday, Oct. 12.** 🏠

The Truth About Green, Affordable Housing

By Abby Schwimmer, Southface

In Georgia, the myth that green building is a high-end market niche is on its way out.

Over the past several years, key policy changes have supported the expansion of green, affordable housing across the state – a reflection of its importance, and its potential to positively impact Georgia.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 15 percent of the state's population lives below the poverty line. For this at-risk population, making ends meet is a daily struggle, and having a safe, healthy place to call home is imperative to achieving long-term stability and success. Green, sustainable homes deliver energy and water savings, healthy indoor air quality, and reduced maintenance and utility costs – attributes that are critical to low-income residents, who are less likely to have the means to perform necessary repairs or mitigate indoor environmental health issues. By helping those with least to spare, green affordable housing promotes stability and self-sufficiency, addressing important social and economic goals.

Of course, green housing does not just impact tenants. For developers and operators, it means decreased operations and maintenance costs. The analysis required by third-party green building verification programs can also have a positive impact, as a more thorough design process may reduce construction cost overruns.

One of the most effective instruments for supporting green affordable housing in Georgia has been the Qualified Allocation Program (QAP), which guides the annual distribution of federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). 2009 was a monumental year for green affordable housing in the state, when



guidelines for QAP were modified to encourage third-party verification by an independent green building program, such as Enterprise Green Communities, LEED or EarthCraft.

A prime example of using policy to support economic, social and environmental goals, the Georgia Qualified Allocation Program has done an admirable job of protecting and improving the lives of Georgia's low-income citizens. Georgia's efforts have not gone unnoticed, either. In 2010,

Global Green USA released its fifth analysis of state QAPs, ranking them based on their conduciveness to smart growth, energy efficiency, health protection and resource conservation. For the second year in a row, Georgia was ranked first, tied with Connecticut. The investment that Georgia has made in advancing green, affordable housing is commendable, and its initiative has established it as a model of forward-thinking affordable housing policy nationwide. 🏡

What's Going On with the SMC

THE SMC BUS IS READY TO ROLL AGAIN!



On October 25, the Atlanta Sales & Marketing Council Bus Tour will once again roll through the neighborhoods of Builder members showing off some of the best communities

that Atlanta has to offer.

Started two years ago and proclaimed a resounding success, the SMC bus tour is a way for the Home Builders Association to reach out to the top producing agents and make them aware of the great value that our builder members are offering in new homes. Plus, in today's

era of high gas prices it also provides local realtors an economical and convenient way to gain valuable sales information, win cash prizes and enjoy the camaraderie with fellow agents.

Bus tour destinations have not been finalized so if you are a builder to showcase your community or if you are an agent and would like to hop on the tour please go to www.AtlantaSMC.com for more information.

THE 2011 OBIE AWARDS



In other SMC news, planning continues for the OBIE Awards to be held on Saturday November 12th at the Cobb Galleria. On August 12th & 13th judges from across the county flew to Atlanta to judge OBIE entries in the Building, Marketing,

Remodeling and Personal Achievement categories. Stay tuned to see who the winners are!

TOP RUNG AWARD WINNERS



The SMC is also continuing its highly popular quarterly "Top Rung Club" Awards for highest achievement among local new home agents in both units and dollar volume closed. The awards were given out for the second quarter at the July 21st evening meeting held at Cantina Taqueria in Buckhead.

The Atlanta SMC "Top Rung Club" Winners for the 2nd Quarter of 2011 are:

- Holly Yaeger, Lennar Atlanta - Individual Sales Volume Closed - \$3,477,110
 - Chrishena Stanley, Coldwell Banker NRT Development Advisors - Individual Units Closed - \$2,751,676
 - Tamra Wade & Partners, Remax Center - Team Sales Volume Closed - \$3,863,728
 - Al Arritola, Rahin Kassam & Antar Johnson, Beazer Homes - Team Units Closed (27 Total, \$7,341,340)
- Keep your eye for information on how to enter third-quarter awards.

Curious what the SMC is going to be up to next? Go to www.AtlantaSMC.com or "Like" us on Facebook. 🏠



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Hardwood Flooring: Greener than You Think



Concern for the environment has some considering hardwood alternatives like bamboo, lyptus (eucalyptus) and cork. Many believe hardwood flooring contributes to deforestation. Not true.

In fact, most hardwood flooring worldwide is produced in compliance with environmental policies set forth by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Past generations harvested trees without regard for streams or wildlife. Today, forestry professionals work to maintain biodiversity and ensure harvesting of lumber is done without an impact on nature. Sustainable forestry combined with eco-friendly finishing make traditional hardwood flooring a green flooring option.

Hardwood alternatives appeal to eco-minded consumers because they have a short growth cycle. Bamboo is a stalk that grows between one to three feet per day. Eucalyptus trees grow between six and 12 feet annually. Cork is harvested by cutting the bark off of the oak cork tree. These are selling points for bamboo, lyptus (eucalyptus) and cork flooring. They are environmentally sound options for flooring when processed correctly.

However, bamboo flooring should be made with mature stalks aged 5 years or longer. Cork can only be harvested every 10 to 15 years. Lyptus

comes from eucalyptus trees, which take at least 15 years to mature.

Traditional hardwood flooring comes from trees with long growth cycles. It is for this reason forests worldwide are managed using sustainable forestry practices set forth by the FSC. These practices include planting of new trees, removal of diseased and infested trees, water and soil conservation, clearing of dead brush which poses a fire hazard and the protection of wildlife habitats. Forest stewardship is not solely for the benefit of the industries which utilize timber. Millions of people enjoy the benefits of healthy forests for hiking, biking, photography, camping, hunting, fishing, boating and other forms of recreation. Conservation practices used to grow and harvest lumber mean healthy forests for everyone's benefit.

The hardwood flooring industry benefits our economy as well. There are very few industries manufacturing products in the U.S. these days. Most of the solid hardwood flooring installed in the Atlanta area is oak flooring – grown, logged, milled, manufactured and packaged in the southeastern United States. The green hardwood alternatives are all imports. The carbon footprint from transportation of hardwood flooring from the forest to the floor is less than bamboo, lyptus and cork. In Atlanta, oak flooring is installed more than

any other species. The oak comes from the Appalachian Mountains. It is milled in the area it is grown. If the trend toward hardwood alternatives continues, Appalachia will suffer job losses.

Deforestation still occurs in many parts of the world, but not in the U.S. The amount of forest land here, 750 million acres, has remained stable since the beginning of the 20th century. The Forest Stewardship Council is working to stop deforestation in countries that are not as protective of their natural resources.

When purchasing exotic hardwood flooring from abroad, it is important to look for the FSC logo. The logo now appears on the labels of all major brands of hardwood flooring. It certifies the wood is from a responsibly managed forest with a verifiable chain of custody. There is no agency to regulate the standards and practices of bamboo flooring manufacturing. Unfortunately, the market has been flooded with cheap, low-quality bamboo, some of which emit toxic levels of formaldehyde. There's nothing green about that.

Hardwood flooring is renewable, reusable and can be recycled. Renewal is commonly known as refinishing. Dustless sanding with HEPA filtration and the use of low VOC and no VOC finishes is accomplished without impacting the environment. When wood flooring is removed, it can be reused. Reclamation of hardwood flooring is growing in popularity. Wood flooring can also be recycled by using wood fibers in the manufacturing of laminate and engineered flooring. Other flooring options are temporary. Even tile needs replacement as styles change. And carpet? Millions of pounds of bulky carpet and padding fill landfills every year even though carpet recycling is available in most areas of the country.

Perhaps the greenest quality of hardwood flooring is that it never requires replacement. When clients ask you for recommendations for green flooring, there's nothing greener than flooring that lasts a lifetime. Recommend hardwoods. 🏡

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