



August 19, 2009

### Upcoming Ohio Valley NARI Events

**CKBR Certification Class to begin September 9, 2009.** Miami Valley NARI is offering the Certified Kitchen and Bath Remodeler course beginning this September 9, 2009. The classes will be held every Wednesday from 6:00pm-9:00pm at the Miami Valley NARI offices, 136 South Keowee Street, Dayton. They will conclude November 11, 2009 and the test will be conducted Saturday, November 14, 2009. The classes are being discounted this year until November 1, 2009 and are being offered to both Chapter's members and friends. This is a great time to take advantage of the financial savings and achieve this highly desirable Certification. Please call 937-222-NARI for details or click [here](#) for application. There is limited space available so RSVP Today!

**Save the Date:** September 10, 2009 Ohio Valley NARI will be conducting a General Membership meeting to be held at Latitudes Café at 18 Main Street in Milford. The evening is set as a casual get together for all of our members who wish to attend. There will be no Presentation or Official Business to discuss, just a good old fashioned round table forum for all of us to get together and discuss what we are all seeing in our industry. This is a great opportunity to some of the folks we haven't seen in a while and to simply talk and enjoy the company. We will get together at 5:00pm in the Latitudes Meeting Room. There will be a light buffet meal and 2 drink tickets. The cost for the event is just \$25.00. Please plan on attending. RSVP at 1-800-498-6274 today. Visit <http://latitudescafe.net/> for Café information and directions.

#### **Notice:**

Building Value is currently in search of scaffolding material that can be utilized as lumber racks.

Building Value LLC is a nonprofit building materials re-use enterprise that salvages quality building materials otherwise destined for the landfill and resells them in a public retail center. The enterprise provides on-the-job training opportunities in construction and retail, two of Ohio's highest growth sectors.

Please contact Scott Beard at (513) 475-6783, or [sbeard@buildingvalue-cincy.org](mailto:sbeard@buildingvalue-cincy.org).

**Save the Date:** October 8, 2009 will be the date for Ohio Valley NARI's **Featured Vendor Night!** Meet suppliers of building supplies and services. Enjoy a Deli Buffet Dinner, Free Beer and Sodas, Cookies and Door Prizes. The cost is just \$25.00 for NARI members and you can bring your whole crew! That's right, one cost of \$25.00 and your entire crew can attend! The event will begin at 6:30pm. and should "wrap-up" around 9:00pm. The location is the Holiday Inn on Hauck Road. RSVP today by calling 1-800-498-6274. Please click [here](#) for registration form.

Vendors Tables are still available! Click [here](#) for Vendor Table Application or call 1-800-498-6274 for details.

### **A magazine, a niche marketing tool**

*By Morgan Zenner*

Four years after starting his remodeling company, Ralph Stow, president of Regenesi Design Build LLC added a new job to his resume—publisher. He pulled his money together to start a magazine to grow his remodeling company in today's tough market.

Over the last few years, Stow became increasingly frustrated with his normal monthly advertising and marketing initiatives and was doubtful about the results.

"I was spending anywhere from \$3,000 to \$4,000 a month on advertising, either direct mail postcards, local magazine advertisements and direct mail solicitation," Stow says.

But he wasn't sure he was getting his money's worth.

He decided to invest in his own magazine that would feature him and him alone. Technically, the magazine would be a high-quality promotional brochure for his projects and his company, but also include editorial pieces and advertisements.

"We came up with a nifty magazine title, and I wrote the editorials based on my knowledge of the business. All of the projects featured inside the magazine belong to Regenesi Design Build," Stow explains.

In order to do this, Stow actually bought a struggling publishing company in the area. The publishing company came with a graphic artist, an officer manager, an editor and a sales associate. He also hired a professional photographer to take pictures of his top remodeling projects for the magazine.

Together, they built the first issue of "Luxury Home Renovation Magazine" in May 2009. The first issue boasted 5,000 copies, the least amount you can print, and was distributed to a select group of homeowners in his market.

The first issue included an article featuring Jeff Lewis from the Bravo TV show, "Flipping Out," which features Lewis renovating luxury mansions. "We thought he was a great addition to the magazine for our target audience, a 30- to 60-year-old female, and he boosted the magazine's credibility," Stow says.

Stow built a Web site to accompany the magazine as well. The Web address is mentioned throughout the magazine and encourages homeowners to visit the

site to learn more about the projects featured in the magazine.

“At first, homeowners did not make the connection between the magazine and my company,” Stow says.

“But once they visited the Web site, many figured it out. At that point, the consumer was so enamored by what they saw in terms of our work, they didn’t care that I produced the magazine,” he says.

### **Extending This Opportunity to Others**

If starting a magazine is an overly ambitious and costly marketing strategy for you, don’t be so quick to write it off as unrealistic. Stow devised a template that remodelers can use by substituting Regensis’ pictures and local advertisers for a different remodeling company and sending it to a targeted mailing list in a completely different market.

“My editorial pieces will remain, and the remodeler can feature three to five projects per issue and an advertisement. The sales associate at the magazine will help the remodeler sell advertisements to his local subcontractors in the magazine for below the cost of other local magazines,” Stow says.

The issue also comes with national advertisers that have agreed to pay for a spot in all the magazines to help offset costs. Depending on the size of the market, the number of copies and issues can be negotiated.

To address cost concerns, Stow claims starting the magazine costs less than his original marketing plan.

According to his calculations, his previous advertising budget during a three-month period was \$12,000. If Stow releases four issues per year, he claims his advertising costs are less than before and more targeted to his core audience.

A big selling point is the longevity of magazines compared to a postcard or newspaper advertisement. Stow says that customers contact him 60 to 90 days after the release date, saying they found his name in a magazine.

“I have been to homes where my magazine was still lying on their coffee tables months later,” he says.

Something to consider is your target market. Stow suggests that this type of marketing is really geared toward remodeling companies that bring in \$3 to \$6 million dollars in remodeling projects per year. Also, the magazine is most appealing to consumers who spend at least \$75,000 per remodeling project.

Those remodelers who find themselves outside of that range can use a

magazine as a opportunity to show a variety of remodeling projects, both big and small, to appeal to larger group of consumers.

There's a level of preparation remodelers must have before committing to a magazine. First of all, professional before and after photos of recent projects are a must, and homeowners must sign a consent form to be featured in the magazine.

### **Reaping the Benefits**

Although the concept is relatively new, Stow has witnessed major benefits from his feature in the first issue.

"It was an exceptional lead generation tool. We received more than 2,400 Web site hits in the first two weeks, and several new and large project opportunities," Stow says.

But there's a hidden benefit that becomes apparent once clients get to know him. "We were able to build our credibility within our market as experts in the industry and clients perceive Regenesys as a high-quality remodeling company in every way from marketing to remodeling," Stow says.

This perception is subtle and hard to track, but Stow knows it exists and is very important to his high-end clients, many of which are successful in their own industries and appreciate Stow's professionalism.

Stow can talk all day about the benefits he has gained and the benefits to come after he releases a few issues. He realizes each issue will grow his business a little more.

"Even if I end up being the only person using the magazine, I will still continue to publish it regardless in order to grow my company," he says.

### **New Member Benefit for Ohio Valley NARI Members**

Today, one of the most needed merchant services is the ability to take and process credit/debit cards and other electronic forms of payment. Your Better Business Bureau has partnered with Merchant Payment Services, Inc. (MPS) to offer an extensive array of these products to help meet Ohio Valley NARI members' needs. MPS' motto says it all: "Helping Merchants Make the Right Choices." Here are five different ways MPS can support your business:

**Credit Card Terminals:** By using wired or wireless credit card terminals,

companies can handle credit/debit card payments easily while enjoying low customized rate plans, unmatched service quality and superior response times. These terminals are great for small to mid-sized businesses. Businesses offering delivery or transportation services will benefit greatly with the ability to swipe customers' cards on the spot.

**E-Commerce Programs:** MPS offers several e-commerce solutions, perfect for home- or web-based businesses, to enable them to accept credit cards through Web site shopping carts.

**ATMs:** Both cash and cashless ATMs offer the flexibility to accept credit/debit cards while reducing bad check risks and eliminating per transaction fees. You can experience higher profits by sharing in the surcharge amount and increased customer traffic by giving customers a cash back option. MPS provides signage for maximum visibility and ensures your ATM meets current compliance standards.

**Electronic Check Conversion:** This is a great way to convert paper checks into electronic payments that hit your account in 48 hours with funds fully guaranteed against NSF, stop payment, closed accounts, etc. It's a worry-free way to confidently accept paper checks without worrying if they're good. When you receive an approval through our equipment, you're guaranteed payment.

**Gift/loyalty card programs:** Ensure repeat business with these programs. They encourage customers to keep coming back. Statistics show 80 percent of Americans enjoy incentives. Consumer Reports states 60 percent of Americans will spend almost \$35 billion alone this year on gift cards, of which astoundingly one-third will never be claimed. That's almost \$12 billion dollars given to merchants for free. What better way to increase your bottom line.

To get more information about how your Ohio Valley NARI partnership with MPS can help your business succeed, call (800) 454-3158 today. Or, visit.

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