



October 07, 2009

Upcoming Ohio Valley NARI Events

Save the Date: Last Call!!! October 8, 2009 will be the date for Ohio Valley NARI's **Feature 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.

Save the Date: November 5, 2009, Viewings would like to present to Ohio Valley NARI members the trends they see in the world of automation and "going green". The program will be held in the beautiful Green Diamond Gallery, located in Montgomery. There we will experience one of the largest privately-owned collections of baseball memorabilia in the United States. Your friends at Viewings will provide the food; the drink and a GREAT raffle (it's a secret)! We are sure to enjoy a night of education that will further distinguish NARI as the premiere association of remodeling experts. Visit www.naricincinnati.org to register or call 1-800-498-NARI and RSVP Today!

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.

Special Seminar: February 10, 2010, Ohio Valley NARI along with Roth & Associates will be presenting a Sandler Sales Training Program. Highlights: Why salespeople fail... and what to do about it. • How traditional sales practices turn salespeople into unpaid consultants. • How to get to the real decision maker. • How to touch 100% of your desirable opportunities, 100% of the time. • Why everyone looks busy, but sales remain low. • Do your salespeople have what it takes to succeed in today's volatile economy and marketplace? • Is your sales management strategy and structure optimized to produce the results YOU need to succeed? For more information or visit www.naricincinnati.org.

Ohio Valley NARI 2010 CotY Awards

It's that time again. Ohio Valley NARI and NARI National are launching the CotY Awards campaigns for 2010. Plan your projects and join the race!

Awards Information

All winners will receive a plaque as well as a framed photo collection of their winning entry. The homeowner/business-owner of the winning project may be invited to attend the December "Evening of Excellence" event to receive the award in-person, should the winning contractor wish.

A Great Way to Enhance Your Image

Contractors in the Ohio Valley Chapter of NARI are invited to compete for the prestigious Local Contractor of the Year Awards (CotY) in recognition of their recently completed projects. Companies report that winning this award is a major factor in enhancing their image within the industry as well as with the buying public. Winners are selected by an impartial panel of judges comprised of experts from within the industry and associated fields. Publicity material about the winners will be distributed to the local media.

Judging Categories/Remodeling

Residential Kitchen * Residential Bath * Residential Interior * Residential Interior Specialty * Residential Addition * Residential Exterior * Residential Exterior Specialty* Entire House * Residential Historical Renovation/Restoration * Residential Universal Design * Commercial Interior * Commercial Exterior * Commercial Specialty * Home Theater and Media Rooms

How to Enter Local Awards

Enclosed is a complete packet of information. An eighty-five dollar (\$85) fee must be submitted with each **individual entry** on or before November 2, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. An eighty-five dollar (\$85) fee per contractor member per entry and a seventy-five dollar (\$75) fee per team member per entry must be submitted with each **team entry** on or before November 2, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. Visit www.naricincinnati.org for entry packets.

Taking CotY Awards to the Next Level

By Morgan Zenner

It's time again to start thinking about NARI's Contractor of the Year (CotY) awards. For those who have received CotY awards and those who are considering in submitting an entry in the future, there are some marketing advantages to winning this prestigious award.

Daniel Steinkoler, of Superior Home Services Inc., has won several Metro DC Chapter CotY awards and recognizes the full potential of these honors.

"After winning the grand prize for Entire House over \$1 million last year, I can pretty much get my foot in the door anywhere," Steinkoler says.

That includes the doors of both clients and prominent industry professionals. Steinkoler has made strategic alliances with the area's top architects and designers, who are soliciting him to work on their projects.

"I have found that trades people know and understand the value of a CotY award and consider it a top honor that only the best remodelers receive," Steinkoler says. "It's no wonder that architects are calling me to help carry out their visions."

But that's not all. Steinkoler also spends big money marketing his awards in local magazines, brochures, e-newsletters, Facebook, Google Ad buys and on his Web site. He

also issued a press release to the media and received a few article mentions.

“I am not shy about letting clients know that I am a winner. Qualified, educated clients want to hire industry leaders, and I make it known that I am a part of that group,” Steinkoler says.

Bob Kocis, CR, owner of L.I.Remodel.com agrees with Steinkoler that winning a CotY and marketing the award helps him attract the type of clientele he prefers.

“The CotY award separates us from average remodelers in the area,” Kocis says. “It adds credibility and value to our company by being able to say ‘award-winning’ before our name.”

Kocis also makes his awards a major focus on his Web site, including links to NARI’s complimentary YouTube video of him accepting his award during the Evening of Excellence. (See Kocis’ video here <http://bit.ly/3FI8Hk>.)

Then there is the big selling point attached to being a winner. Both Steinkoler and Kocis tell clients when they are considering a project to use as a CotY entry.

“Clients love it when I tell them I want to submit their remodeling projects for an award,” Steinkoler says. “Once they find out, they almost want to spend more money to ensure that I win.”

There’s no question that clients feel partially responsible for the award when their remodelers win because they are the force behind the project, having it in their home and helping with the design.

To show his appreciation, Kocis presents clients with what he calls a Brag Book filled with before, during and after photos as a memento.

“I give them the book to keep on their coffee tables and show to all of their friends when they come over,” Kocis says. He does this in hopes that their friends will call him when they decide to remodel.

Both also agree that not every project deserves submission for an award, especially considering the investment.

“I will admit, it gets very competitive especially around here. When I submit an entry, I am in it to win it,” Steinkoler says.

Regardless of the initial investments for time and photography, the benefits of winning the CotY award are so great that it’s worth every penny to Kocis and Steinkoler. In fact, now that they have already won, they are waiting for the right project to come along to display their different areas of expertise.

Creating a Successful Remodeling Company

By Morgan Zenner

During the economic downturn, many small business owners are trying to keep their heads

above water. According to Greg Antonioli, GCP, president of Out of the Woods Construction in Arlington, Mass. there's hope for others facing similar obstacles.

In fact, Antonioli's profits are up this year, and he claims not only does he turn down clients, but also refuses to advertise. Many would wonder how a remodeling contractor could survive on these terms, but Antonioli is convinced that there are reasons for his success.

It's all about the Client/Contractor Fit

One unique feature of Out of the Woods Construction is that employees must follow a rigid sales process, and clients, too, must comply with a strict production process. For example, both husband and wife must meet with Antonioli for the first office meeting, and if they decide to continue, clients must pay for an at-home estimate.

"I have come up with a certain way of doing things," Antonioli explains. "I have learned over the years, that if I make an exception and deviate from this process, something usually goes wrong." For example, "I need both spouses on board with the job and I need a first meeting to get to know if the client is a good fit with my company."

The first meeting is crucial in determining whether the job is a "good fit." It consists of discussing client needs and expectations, personalities and attitudes toward remodeling, client commitments and Antonioli's explanation of the process and why it is necessary. Notice, there is no talk of design and estimations during the first meeting.

Antonioli estimates that three out of five interested callers actually come in for the first meeting at his office. (Antonioli says that the remaining 40 percent of interested callers decline the invitation to meet at his office and become part of this process of elimination.) Out of those three who get through the office meeting, only one person will end up becoming his client. Statistics like these seem discouraging to the average business owner, but not after considering the alternatives. Small business owners have limited resources, such as employees, time or raw materials, and it's the owner's job to make sure those resources are used efficiently.

Antonioli explains that if the first meeting doesn't feel right there's really no need for the client and him to continue. "I can tell right away if the job is going to work out. Otherwise, my team and I will take up more hours and resources trying to please a client that I should have dropped in the first place."

Not only do difficult clients cost more in the end, but they will have a ripple effect on the quality of your other jobs. In a business where quality and customer service influence your success, one client's negative experience can have a detrimental impact on your business. In one sense, you find yourself using up too many resources to please one client or you develop a bad company reputation by disappointing your client. Either way, the loss can be devastating.

Employees are #1

When Antonioli talks about his team, he is referring to his trusted staff, which in his mind,

always comes first.

“Employees are number one,” he says. “Too many small business owners are consumed with the external influences, many of which they cannot control. I, on the other hand, focus on internal influences by making sure my staff is happy and motivated. Most of the time, if they are happy, the client is happy.”

When hiring new staff, one of the first things to look for is a positive personality and the ability to work well with others. Politeness, communication skills, friendliness and punctuality are all things that clients appreciate when workers are in their home. Antonioli provides a generous work package with benefits and competitive salaries to attract employees who have both skill and personality.

“Drill Before the Thrill”

For many contractors, convincing someone to hire you over other remodelers is the hardest part. Especially in today’s market where people talk to five or six companies and have limited budgets. However, there are ways to increase your chances of closing the sale.

Antonioli describes this as an increased level of confidence in your company and the project. When talking to potential clients, Antonioli is conscious about the signals his body language might be giving off. For example, tone of voice, posture or nervousness could be a sign that he is unreliable. The goal is to let people know that he is competent and excited to work on their homes.

“I call it the “drill before the thrill.” As I’m driving in my truck on the way to meet clients, I always go through a mental process to collect myself and ramp up my excitement,” he says. Antonioli knows that clients will not hire people they don’t want to associate with and usually it’s because of a lack of confidence.

Some ways to make yourself more appealing to clients include lifting your shoulders back, making good eye contact and smiling. Be sure to always listen to clients and never interrupt. And of course, be responsive and ask questions when appropriate.

No Advertising?

As far as refusing to advertise, Antonioli claims his clients prefer his decision. “I promise all of my clients any profit that I make, is not going to unnecessary expenses; it will go right back into providing the same quality to another client that I provided to them.”

The refusal to advertise also keeps Antonioli on his toes. His only way of gathering leads is through referrals. “More than 90% of my business is referrals, if I don’t do a good job, I won’t be in business.”

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