

# Loose Screws

October 14, 2009

## Upcoming Ohio Valley NARI Events

**Save the Date: November 5<sup>th</sup> 8am:** *Quick Fix* - A Tile workshop for NARI Friends and Baths Plus Employees! Start your day with education; wrap it up at the Green Diamond Gallery with a baseball and audio experience hosted by Viewings Audio & Video Automation!

**Setting Tile in Today's Building Environment:** This workshop will cover the basics of thin-set mortars and applications for different sized tiles and formats. We will cover the different sizes of notched trowels and the applications they are suitable for or not, as well as show the proper troweling technique and hydration of absorbent substrates. We will also show the proper coverage required for tile installations and review the ANSI specification for coverage on floors, exterior applications and wet areas.

Other topics will include the various grouts that are now available to the market and their properties. A demonstration of the proper techniques for mixing, spreading and dressing grout joints will also be included.

With the overwhelming use of porcelain bodied tile in the market, we will discuss the issues with regard to modified and un-modified mortars with porcelain and their use in wet and dry areas and with large size format tile as well as small glass mosaics.

The estimated time for this workshop is approximately one and a half to two hours.

*Where: Baths Plus Inc., 8711 Reading Road, 45215 **RSVP 821-7464***

**Save the Date:** November 5, 2009- 6:00pm., 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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.naricincinnati.org).

### **Link up with clients... on LinkedIn**

*By Morgan Zenner*

When you visit John Murphy, CR, owner of Murphy Bros. on LinkedIn, you will notice a vibrant page filled with nearly a dozen recommendations, group affiliations and company information. To Murphy, his online presence, especially through LinkedIn, legitimizes him as a professional.

"I question people I am unfamiliar with if they are not on LinkedIn or don't know what it is," Murphy says. "I also question people who are on LinkedIn, but have no recommendations or few connections."

LinkedIn is one of the largest professional social networking Web sites. Professionals create profiles that mirror their resumes and make connections based on industry or company networks. There are thousands of interest groups to join where discussions are played out and events are posted.

"I have always taken on a Webcentric approach to my business because I think it is important to stay in front of people on the Internet," Murphy says.

Murphy started using LinkedIn about four years ago, when it first became popular. He has a knack for investigating and searching out new things to join in the social media world.

Right now, he spends 20 to 30 minutes a week updating his status, adding new information, making connections or commenting on discussion boards.

Murphy sees several benefits of using LinkedIn. The first is to stay connected to past clients, other professionals or acquaintances, by keeping them in the loop about his company to keep him top of mind if they ever need him.

The next benefit is staying connected to people within the industry. This includes subcontractors, suppliers or trade magazine editors who may be interested in what is going on in his company and latest projects.

Finally, the third benefit is connecting with his competitors. He estimates at least 15 competitors in his network and thinks of them as a resource to share information.

"I am a lot more open to share information with competitors now than I ever was before,"

Murphy says. "I'm not protective anymore like I used to be because I don't have anything to hide."

Considering all of these benefits that Murphy believes he gains from LinkedIn, he is very thoughtful of his actions on the site. For example, he does not connect to just anyone, he needs to have direct correspondence to people in order to accept a request.

"I need to either have had a conversation with you, a meeting or e-mail correspondence in order to associate with you on LinkedIn," Murphy says.

He also actively seeks out recommendations that are listed on his site from past clients and colleagues. "I am not embarrassed to ask clients who I've had good experiences with to write me a recommendation," he says.

These recommendations can be very insightful for an outsider to gain perspective about how a person acts professionally, and what to expect out of them. Some argue the recommendation feature on LinkedIn is just as effective as other sites that use rating systems or comments to provide feedback or a testimonial section on a company Web site.

Murphy believes these recommendations work to his benefit when new clients read the comments that previous clients write about him.

"In the future I will probably include my LinkedIn profile URL in my signature line at the bottom of e-mails so potential clients can see my recommendations," he says. "I think they represent a positive image of myself."

Then there are the group discussions, which professionals within the remodeling industry are especially active in. The NARI discussion group and Green Remodeling discussion group on LinkedIn are filled with valuable advice and information shared among its members every day.

"I pick my battles when it comes to commenting on discussion groups, otherwise I would be commenting all day," Murphy says.

He also cautions users to be careful about the nature of their comments because these discussions last forever and visible to all. His participation has introduced him to other industry professionals from across the nation and helps him put his name out there and increase traffic to his page.

Overall, Murphy believes in the power of the Web.

"We are living in a world where 90% of people are trusting and relying on the Web for information, and I feel my participation is a necessary part of being a business owner," Murphy says.

### **New Online Stimulus Tools Aid Contractors**

Contractors who are looking to bid, or who must report, on federal stimulus projects can

find help online with two federal portals: [www.recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov) and [www.federalreporting.gov](http://www.federalreporting.gov).

FederalRecovery.gov, which was revamped Sept. 28, 2009, allows users to find stimulus projects by congressional district, state or ZIP code. Visitors can use its mapping application to find stimulus projects in their local communities.

As of Oct. 1, companies that receive federal stimulus funds were required to begin filing reports on FederalReporting.gov.

Subcontractors on stimulus projects whose prime contractors will not report on their behalf must register on the federal reporting Web site with a company name, e-mail address, DUNS number and Central Contractor Registration number. Once registered, subcontractors must report the company's physical address, award number, project location, amount of Recovery Act funds used, and the number of jobs created or retained.

Home remodeling activity has increased in certain U.S. regions for the first time in more than a year, according to a new report by RemodelorMove.com.

The site's *Remodeling Activity Report*, based on a sampling of remodeling permits, notes a significant increase in the value of second-quarter remodeling projects, compared to the first quarter of 2009.

"The size of these projects is the most notable change," the site reports. "The average expenditure by homeowners in the sampled regions for permitted remodeling projects was more than 20% greater than spent in the same quarter of both 2007 and 2008."

The results are in line with the site's Spring 2009 *Remodeling Sentiment Report*, which reported a 5% increase in the number of homeowners who reported that they were likely to remodel in the next 12 months.

Recent government stimulus packages, rebates for energy efficient remodels and steep reductions in overall remodeling costs have all encouraged many homeowners to begin remodeling projects in the second quarter of 2009 that were previously on hold, the site reported.

The Northeast and Southwest regions of the U.S. show the most signs of improvement in remodeling expenditures during the second quarter of 2009, compared to the same quarter in 2008, according to the report. The rest of the country has yet to see much of a recovery, while remodeling in the Southeast remains in decline.

The release of RemodelorMove.com's forward-looking *Remodeling Sentiment Report* next month will provide additional insight on the strength and duration of the economic recovery as it relates to the U.S. home remodeling market through the end of 2009 and 2010.

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