



November 18, 2009

Upcoming Ohio Valley NARI Events

Save the Date: December 10, 2009: Ohio Valley NARI will be hosting our Annual Evening of Excellence at the Montgomery Inn located in Montgomery, OH. Come join us as we recognize our local CotY recipients as well as swearing in the new Board of Directors. The cost for this year's event is \$60.00 per person for all pre-registrants and \$70.00 per person at the door. Please note that this and all future events are targeting to be prepaid adventures, virtually eliminating the need for invoicing. Please call 1.800.498.NARI to register today!

Special Seminar: February 10th, 2010 – 8:00am – 4:00pm: 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.

Congratulations CotY Winners

Ohio Valley NARI is proud to extend their sincere congratulations for the accomplishment of our members who participated in this year's CotY competition. The decisions were tough again this year and the following businesses found themselves in the "Winners Circle":

Residential Kitchen \$60,001- \$100,000 – Neal' Design & Remodel
Residential Kitchen over \$100,000 - Neal' Design & Remodel
Residential Bath \$30,000-\$60,000 - H. Glasgow Construction Co.
Residential Interior \$100,000 and over - Neal's Design & Remodel
Residential Addition \$100,000-\$250,000 - Neal's Design & Remodel
Residential Exterior under \$100,00 - Murphy Home Improvement
Entire House under \$250,000 - Gregory Construction Co., Inc.
Commercial Exterior - Murphy Home Improvement

Thank you all for your participation. Please consider your involvement to be an excellent achievement towards professionalism and remember you are all winners in the remodeling industry. Start planning your CotY entries for next year today!

Silent Rivers Design & Build

by Chaden Halfhill

How we build our businesses, while important to operational effectiveness, does not ensure whether or not the business survives, nor whether we, as individuals, thrive in spirit and have the resilience and inspiration to weather tough times. Understanding *why* we are in business—the unique driving force within each of us—remains a more vital one to help us during tough economic times, for the reasons we choose a career in remodeling define how we operate our business and perhaps, more important, how we respond to difficult circumstances impacting our business's fundamental existence.

I stumbled into remodeling with a fine arts degree in the early 90s, during which time I pursued a career as an artist, fusing sculpture and architecture. My passion for bridging creativity with craft soon generated the need for different tools and, with tool expenses, the justification to afford them. Friends and family began to request assistance with repairs and small projects, so it wasn't long before a career in remodeling sprouted. As project scope continued to expand, so did my excitement. My first deck project catalyzed my entry into the outdoor living market, a niche discipline ripe with opportunity for creative solutions. I was hooked on the lifestyle and integrity of our industry—I realized the art of building lies in the heart of the remodeler. Within this discovery I found the purpose and confidence to commit to business development, and subsequently to fostering my own growth as a business owner.

The challenges resulting from this commitment have evolved as my business has matured, despite efforts to manage outcomes. Each challenge has helped strengthen my determination to succeed and facilitate personal, company and industry change. I realized early on the importance of connecting with why I was driven to this profession—strong tenets that continue to provide inspiration and direction: a) craft is an imperative—design and construction are inherently interconnected, resulting in superior value, b) attention to details must be unwavering—caring about personal performance ensures the work exceeds expectations, c) support the wellbeing of others—people need spirit to be restored in the homes within which they dwell, d) respect for earth is essential—we must build with conscious connection to the natural world, and finally, e) change is constant—the ability to remain fluid and inventive is paramount.

An experience in college showed me the importance of remaining flexible with one's given circumstances while staying true to one's principles. It taught me an important lesson in life and business: Mistakes do not equate with failure. I was working on my thesis. I envisioned a sculpture that was intended to contrast the constraint of creative expression with a child's loss of innocence. I held a very definite image of how the sculpture should look and function. My medium was formed concrete, and I planned to embed a box of white silica sand inside the concrete casting.

Everyone in construction knows cement provides limited time to work the material, and sometime it has a life of its own. Despite well prepared plans, I did not anticipate that the box of sand would rise to the surface as I vibrated air bubbles from the wet cement. As the cement set, I was pressured to fabricate a makeshift jig to hold the container within the heart of the casting, leaving an imprint on the work surface of the concrete. I left the casting

to cure, disappointed. I immediately started to imagine how this flaw might be overcome, reshaping the image in my head, with hopes to avoid redoing any work.

The next day, I discovered that the concrete had significant cracking. The container of sand had swollen as the concrete cured. To add insult to injury the silica leached into the cement, discoloring what was intended as a pristine grey surface. Furious and distraught, I stormed out of the building, determined to scrap the whole piece, which I neither had time nor resources to do! Only upon my return did I garner the support of peers. What started as an opportunity to vent spawned a discussion over the intent of my sculpture, reevaluating the conceptual foundation for its creation and how its execution reinforced this basis. This collaboration helped to compare my initial image with the resulting outcome and revealed that the perceived failures within the making of casting ultimately resulted in an outcome that deeply reinforced the intended meaning of the sculpture while entirely redefining the direction of my thesis.

Application of this principal does not come easily, or quickly, because it requires acceptance of the vulnerability and often rejection associated with failure. Similarly, the emotional proximity and attachment we experience with our businesses can be extremely personal, and “failure” typically forces a reassessment of goals, unveiling a discovery that efforts and expectations are misaligned with intention. In other words, we become so close to our work that we lose sight of our vision. To this day, I am grateful for this experience as it serves as a metaphor to guide my entrepreneurial tendencies—a defining moment that reminds me to reflect on the core of my business when external forces feel overwhelming.

We all have defining moments within our lives and careers that awaken our understanding. Can we consciously apply this understanding for maximum impact and growth on a personal and professional level? Embracing our mistakes for direction and clarity, rather than letting them encapsulate our aspirations, serves to reconnect us with our core purpose—that driving force behind the decisions we make. The outlook for the next 12 months remains dismal. As we look for new opportunities and stability, diversifying our markets and our services, remember to ask how potential options pair with your beliefs. Do new opportunities have resonance with who you are as a person, why you are in business and how you intend to serve and impact customers, staff and your greater community. Understanding the answers may just help you find the solutions you need to weather these difficult times.

Scavenger Hunts Help You Reconnect with Clients

By Morgan Zenner

Gary Rochman, owner of Rochman Design-Build, was excited to celebrate his company's 20th anniversary. Instead of throwing a party or issuing a press release, Rochman came up with unique way to celebrate and promote his company.

“When I think about the last 20 years, I think about the projects we’ve done and the families that have helped us stay in business,” Rochman says. “Because most of our leads come from referrals, we wanted to create a way to reconnect with clients and promote our company in their neighborhoods and social networks.”

Rochman designed an elaborate scavenger hunt around Ann Arbor, Mich., that sent participants to 60 homes he remodeled during the last 20 years.

According to the rules, players had the month of September to complete the hunt. The game required participants to visit each home and record the number listed on a game sign outside of the house onto the entry form.

“We provided players with the street names but no addresses were given,” Rochman says.

There were seven finalists who recorded the correct numbers for each home. Those seven were included in the first-place drawing, where the winner received the grand prize, an iPod Touch. The second place drawing included the rest of the players, and the winner received a \$25 iTunes gift card.

“We did a great deal of thinking about what the grand prize should be,” Rochman says.

“Our area is comprised of older, wealthy homeowners, and we thought the iPod Touch would be hip, of interest and valuable,” Rochman says.

In addition to several months planning and implementing the scavenger hunt, they promoted the hunt by sending a press release to local media, e-mail blasts to their database and a postcard mailing to local residents.

The goals of the contest included bringing attention to Rochman’s projects and raising traffic to the company’s Web site. “We placed the 20th anniversary announcement prominently on our Web site, and the scavenger hunt form need to be downloaded from our site,” he says.

The contest provided an element of jobsite marketing. The hunt gave Rochman an excuse to contact old clients with whom he hadn’t talk in a while. “We were knocking on doors, asking our clients if they would participate, and most of the time, got to talking about the company and what we have been up to,” Rochman says.

Also, the signs outside each home generated attention within neighborhoods where potential clients were prevalent. “People took notice of the signs and our work,” Rochman says. “They were asking a lot of questions.”

Some homes had new tenants, and the hunt gave Rochman an opportunity to introduce himself to the new owners.

He says roughly 75 percent of past clients agreed to participate in the hunt, and he was able to talk to at least a quarter of all of his clients face-to-face. Half of the scavenger hunt participants were past clients and the other half were local residents.

Rochman says that most clients were overjoyed to see him again and felt some pride to having helped Rochman remain in business over the last 20 years.

As a thank you, Rochman gave each client a pound of coffee and a handwritten note. One month has gone by since the hunt, and Rochman has signed on two small jobs from past

clients. Also, his Web site traffic increased during the month of September the way he had hoped.

“I think of the hunt as a success because it reinforced our brand to our clients and created buzz in the area,” Rochman says.

Rochman and his team are so pleased with the results that he promises not to wait another 20 years before planning something similar. “I would be willing to plan an event in five years and again in 10 years because of the good promotion and connections I was able to make,” he says.

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