



September 30, 2009

Upcoming Ohio Valley NARI Events

Save the Date: 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.

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

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.

The CotY's are coming The CotY's are coming!

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 to download your entry packets today!

NARI Suffers Another Loss

It is with great sadness we report that Thomas Hanger, the son of NARI Past President Thomas J. Hagner, was involved in a helicopter crash on Sunday in Washington County, Oregon, and did not survive. The news story can be found by clicking [here](#). NARI will arrange to send condolences on behalf of the organization. Personal expressions of sympathy may be sent to Tom at his home:

Thomas J. Hanger
4884 South Hawthorne Drive
New Berlin, WI 53151

How I Built My Business

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 sometimes 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, re-evaluating 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 principle 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.

Marketing Yourself With Webinars

By Morgan Zenner

In its nearly 30 years in business New Spaces, a design/build remodeling company in the Twin Cities, has developed a reputation for providing informational resources to homeowners. Shawn Nelson, president of New Spaces, has been at the forefront of the success of his company by guiding clients to the many resources his firm provides online.

Ten years ago, Nelson and his team began organizing consumer workshops on various remodeling topics. The workshops helped connect the company with homeowners, display their expertise and inspire homeowners to remodel.

Last spring, Nelson decided that hosting a Webinar may be a different approach to garner similar results for the tech-savvy clients who have trouble penciling these workshops into their calendars.

“The Webinars are a lower-cost platform for us to reach consumers,” Nelson says. “Logistically, it makes sense on both our end and the consumer end.”

The Webinars are 1-hour live Web seminars that cover a variety of consumer topics such as the stimulus package, questions to ask contractors and green remodeling. Some seminars feature expert guests, and others feature Nelson.

Nelson promotes the Webinars through e-mail blasts to his database, on his Web site, e-mail blasts through a local paper—as part of a larger partnership—and

newspaper advertisements.

“The idea behind these is to provide people with content-rich presentations to help guide their decision-making in home remodeling,” Nelson says.

Episodes do not include sales pitches or hidden marketing messages that dilute the topics.

In order to host these Webinars, Nelson gathers a team of designers, marketing and sales employees to come up with a content plan each spring and fall. He uses an online Web conference service known as GoToWebinar that costs \$99 per month, for unlimited Webinars. The only restriction is he can host only one Webinar at a time.

The other overhead cost is labor. It takes 4 to 8 hours to customize the PowerPoint template to go with the featured Webinar topic. Each episode includes a question and answer session where attendees can type in a question to be answered.

Since the spring, Nelson averages five to 10 participants per Webinar. He has noticed some fluctuation with attendance according to topic and time.

“The Webinars are live, and we are playing around with different times of the day or day of the week to see what works best,” Nelson says.

For example, a recent Saturday afternoon Webinar was poorly attended because of the nice weather and a child’s day-time activity schedule. “We started the Webinars because we thought it would be more convenient. Now that they are available, we need to figure out what time is most convenient for people to watch,” he says.

Lately, the Webinars have taken place in the evening after dinner, but for those who can’t make the live episode, Nelson is working on recording the Webinar and posting it to his Web site.

The biggest challenge for Nelson is making the Webinars as interactive as his workshops. “I’ve noticed our Webinars limit the interactivity and relationship building, which is a major component in our workshops,” he says. “I’m trying to figure out how I can sustain a higher level of interactivity among myself and the participants.”

Regardless of the challenges, the response from those who have attended has been good. Participants are required to register to sign up for the Webinar and fill out a survey after with their feedback. Overall, Nelson has received positive feedback on the content and increased interest in his company.

“One to two people usually contact us after the Webinar with interest in remodeling their homes. We have also seen our Web site traffic increase in the pages where the Webinars are listed,” he says.

The Webinars provide a way for Nelson to gather e-mail addresses from potential clients, although he is careful about what he sends them and how often. “I don’t want to overload participants with marketing e-mails that feel like spam, but I will send them links to other educational opportunities we are sponsoring,” Nelson says.

Over the last decade, the integrity of New Spaces was built by Nelson, who put a lot of effort into the workshops and presentations he gives.

These days, Nelson sees the Webinars as an extension of the reputation he has built. His use of technology and his professionalism in providing these resources gives homeowners the idea that New Spaces is an advocate of a consultative process where Nelson helps clients make wise decisions in their homes and their futures.

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