

Every Job is an Opportunity

Continual learning and constant communication keep Tennessee remodeler on track

By Kenneth W. Betz

Each remodeling job is different than the last and presents new challenges and opportunities. Patrick J. Mahoney, CGR, CAPS, likes it that way.

The May NAHB Remodeler of the Month is owner of Remodeling Consultants, Inc., in Germantown, Tenn., not far from Memphis. He started out as a home builder but switched to remodeling and found he enjoyed it. He's been at it ever since.

Potential clients are calling because they want a change or they have a dilemma that needs to be solved, Mahoney relates. "Most people in the [remodeling] industry are used to that," he says. "They don't look at it as a problem. It's a challenge or an opportunity to do something."

"I always tell my guys not to use the word 'problem' on the job. All you do is put everyone in a negative mood, and you're acting like you don't want to do it," Mahoney says.

Because every job is different, Mahoney is a steadfast supporter of learning new techniques and ideas on a continuing basis, whether it is through industry publications, trade events or local remodelers' council events. He sees keeping up with the latest methods and techniques as a way of maintaining a competitive edge.

Product knowledge is another area in which Mahoney says remodelers must keep informed. Potential clients today know a lot about products and what's available, he says. "If they know more than you do, it's not going to take them too long to figure out that they don't really need you."

"Clients know what they're looking for, but they're also looking for a professional to do the work because they recognize their home is their biggest investment. They want a businessperson working with them to protect that investment," Mahoney says.

Communicating with clients is another of Mahoney's priorities,

and he's recently started using a computer program that allows him to share online construction documents and schedules with clients and trade contractors alike. "It's everything I've always done on paper, but now it's on the computer," he says.

After clients receive a price for the job, the second question is always "when can you start and how long will it take," Mahoney says, and the program helps answer that question with a detailed schedule. "They don't think you're hiding anything from them. They know everything you're doing, and you're building trust," he explains.

Mahoney's business practices are reflected in this advice to contractors who may be just getting started in the remodeling business. "Learn as much as you can," he says, "and have good communication with your clients and tradespeople. The biggest trust-builder is communication, and it doesn't just happen — you have to work at it."

He also advises that remodelers surround themselves with good people and learn from them. "Hang around other people and learn from them," Mahoney says.

Building a knowledge base is a confidence builder, Mahoney continues. "When I talk to a client, I know what I'm talking about and can earn their trust; it doesn't take clients long to figure out if you're only pretending to be knowledgeable."



Patrick J. Mahoney, CGR, CAPS

Staying involved with the industry also is important. "Many people have asked me how I can afford to stay so involved with the association. I just tell them I can't afford not to stay involved. Clients can tell how committed you are by your involvement in the industry. It helps me stay updated on legislation, best practices, green, new products and lead-safe methods," Mahoney says.

Currently serving as chairman of the association's remodelers council, Mahoney has been a member of the Memphis Area Home Builders Association since 1974. He served as president in 1985 and all other officer positions. He was named Builder of the Year in 1981. He has been a state and national director, recipient of the Bryan Patchen Scholarship (NAHBR Leadership Grant Scholarship) and recruited 21 remodeling members last year. | Q3

FAST FACTS: PATRICK J. MAHONEY, CGR, CAPS

- **Company:** Remodeling Consultants, Inc.
- **Location:** Germantown, Tenn.
- **Years in business:** 35
- **Industry Involvement:** Current chairman, remodelers council, Memphis Area Home Builders Association; member of the local association's public relations, green building, endowment and relocation committees; member, NAHB public affairs committee; past president, home builders association, 1985; builder of the year, 1981; state and national director; past chairman, State of Tennessee Home Improvement Committee

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