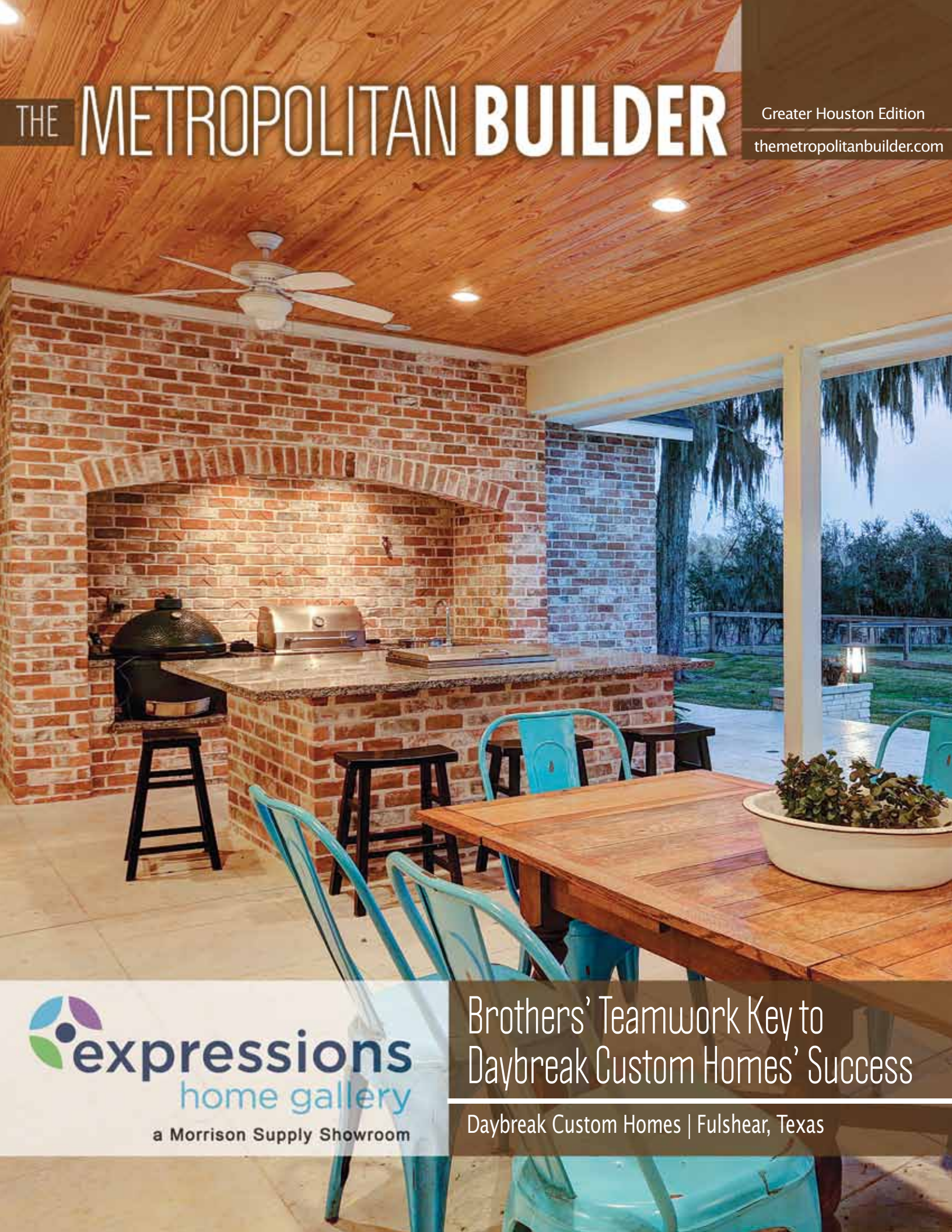


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Feature Builder Story

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Giselle Bernard
Publisher

Dear Readers:

I've found that many professionals confuse the terms marketing and advertising. Do you know what the difference is between the two?

Marketing is the process used to define your company brand, which is used to attract a goal set for the share of market you wish to attain. It involves understanding exactly who your target market is and what attracts that market to your product and/or services. Marketing involves company branding which includes elements like logos and all other design elements that will help align the image of your products and services with the interests of the market you have chosen to target.

Advertising, on the other hand, is the method used in making your company's products and services known to your target market. It is the way your marketing efforts are communicated to the market place. It is the consideration of how you spread the word about what your company has to offer and what differentiates your business, products and services from that of your competitor.

That being said, we are approaching the time of year when businesses start to think about new marketing and advertising strategies. The goal of both marketing and advertising should be to generate interest, to generate new leads.

Some things for you to consider when thinking about investing in advertising is whether you want to grow business and if you have the sales team and work force to handle new leads. A company should only invest in

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marketing
analysis **advertising** ideas
branding **leads** target **design**
success **networking** **sales** **growth**
plan

marketing if it has insufficient leads and has a work team in place to handle additional business. If you don't have a work team in place to handle additional leads, your business's hard-earned reputation could falter in the mishandling of new leads. If you wish to grow business, make sure you have the workforce in place to handle the growth.

If business is good and you are not interested in growing your company, then you may want to think about investing in the marketing aspect of the business. If your interest is in targeting the millennials, do you have marketing material in place in which may be used for social media? The main method of communication for the millennials is via the internet. Is your website up to date? How are you differentiating your company's products and services from that of your competitor? Keep in mind that technology is always evolving; therefore, the marketing material used to communicate to your target market needs to evolve also.

Giselle Bernard, Owner/Publisher

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Brothers' Teamwork Key to Daybreak Custom Homes' Success

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Daybreak Custom Homes, established in 2000, offers a unique “brotherly team approach” in working with their clients. Brothers Ray Hurlbut, Jr., and Michael Hurlbut co-own the west-side business.

Clients tell us “it’s working with the two of us that really makes the difference,” according to Ray, the older brother by two years. Mike agreed. “We make a good team because we have different strengths and different approaches,” he said.

“We truly enjoy what we do and love coming to work every day. People like working with Mike and me because we’re easily relatable and they get two experienced, yet separate perspectives” he noted. “It’s one of the things that sets us apart [from other builders].”

Mike Hurlbut, who has a degree in accounting from Texas A&M, is the president of Daybreak. “Mike is more analytical and more disciplined with numbers. He’s also better at visualizing and laying out architectural plans” according to Ray. “He is easy to work with, and he’s more

reserved. Some clients gravitate toward Mike, while others gravitate towards me.”

Ray, who is vice president of operations, is more on the marketing side and is very personable and very optimistic, like their father, Ray Hurlbut, Sr., (“a walking Zig Zigar”) who is a retired builder and works as a consultant for his sons at Daybreak. “Ray has a way of connecting with people and making them feel valued. He’s good at understanding their needs and their vision for their homes,” said Mike.

“People think of us like the Property Brothers [of HGTV fame]. Together, with our different strengths, we create a pretty awesome team,” Ray said.

The brothers share a mutual focus on customer satisfaction. “Our top priority is that our clients walk away smiling with a good feeling at the end of the project. That’s very important to us. It’s huge,” Ray said.

The brothers pride themselves and their staff on being easily accessible to their clients. “We try to answer every



email by the end of each day, pick up the phone each time it rings and return messages in real time. We are willing to do whatever it takes to make the client feel well taken care of. It is our whole team's approach. Our clients can talk to anyone on our team. We all give the clients the time and attention they need," Ray stated.

Mike added, "Sitting down, listening and translating the clients' needs is key. We stay in constant contact during the construction. Our goal is to be proactive versus reactive in communication."

"We make it a goal to contact our clients at least once a week" to update the clients on the construction progress, even if it's not visible, Ray said. "We consider our homeowners to be part of our team."

Also on the team are two other family members. The brothers' younger sister Rebecca is Daybreak Custom Homes' office manager. "She's the glue that keeps us together," Ray said. Their mom Nancy is in charge of selections, which is critical to the team's organization.

Other critical team members include Scott Terreo as vice

president of construction and Jim LeRoux as project manager. "One of the things that sets us apart, aside from the construction expertise, is that they're friendly, which can be unusual for the construction field," Ray said. "Besides being personable, they're both very organized and professional. Both are veterans, and their military training is a big plus for the company," he added.

Daybreak works with local architects Newberry Architecture and Garcia & Hernandez Designs depending on the clients' needs and level of involvement. Shellaine's Interior Designs provides about 40 hours of design work on each project. "Shellaine Henderson is a crucial part to ensuring a smooth construction process. She guides our clients in their color selections and custom finishes to stay ahead of the construction schedule. This keeps our homebuyers from feeling overwhelmed," Mike noted.

Daybreak Custom Homes focuses its building from the Loop out to the west side of greater Houston. "Our business is booming right now. We're grateful to be an approved builder in the very exclusive, high-end community of

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Dialogue with a Designer

Allison Moore, Paragon Design Firm

International Flooring knows that dreams, reality and inspiration make a house a home. It also knows that an interior designer or interior design firm often becomes an integral part of this process. As a National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA)-certified company, International Flooring takes great pride in working with some of the finest professionals in the Houston market, providing the best quality wood flooring and carpets available and providing superb customer service. International Flooring offers its clients a private showroom full of exotic wood floors not found in retail showrooms. This month International Flooring speaks with Allison Moore, an interior designer with Paragon Design Firm.

Allison Moore has been in the interior design industry for more than a decade. Her vast knowledge of materials and products makes her an exception in the industry. Communication is key, and Allison believes listening to clients and incorporating their ideas and personalities into each project is what makes each space unique and a true reflection of the client. Allison considers her work an art form, providing an exceptional eye for detail with every project.

Allison is exceptional in that she can be extremely flexible with styles and designs. She enjoys a challenge and loves working with clients to not only create a space for their families to make memories, but also to reflect their personalities and make every square foot as functional as possible.

International Flooring: What motivated you to get into the

interior design field?

Allison Moore: *I was very interested in interior design at a very young age. I would have creative visions of some thing or some space and immediately needed to create it. I was always re-arranging the furniture in my room, playing with colors and patterns and designing new looks. At age 11, I learned to sew on my grandmother's vintage Singer sewing machine and created my first window treatments. I still sew only on that machine.*

International Flooring: How has the field of interior design changed since you graduated?

Allison Moore: *Since I have graduated I have seen trends come and go; however, my designs don't really focus on trends as much as the client's personality and taste.*

I have worked in various fields of the interior design world. My first job was working as a designer's assistant at a design firm during high school. I had a wonderful internship during college where I was able to design all of the window treatments for an NFL football player's home and work with some extremely talented ladies. After college getting into the industry was not as easy as I hoped. I began working in furniture stores designing vignettes and then decided it was time to make the move to my goals.

I then had an opportunity to move into the custom home world and am now co-owner of Paragon Design Firm. I set goals and made steps to reach those goals, and with each

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step I learned different aspects of the trade and businesses. Trends have changed but the integrity of why I chose this career remains the same: To create beautiful spaces that families can make precious memories in.

International Flooring: How can an experienced interior designer help custom home builders or remodeling contractors with their building or remodeling projects?

Allison Moore: It is so important to use an experienced designer for many reasons. People are so visual, and it is our job to not only listen to the client but also help them to see that vision. Organization is key when working with custom builders. There are so many details that go into a home, and most clients don't realize what goes into it all.

We have completely re-vamped the Paragon Design Firm's website to be geared towards our clients and builders, helping them to know what to expect and how to be prepared for their selection meetings.

We pride ourselves at Paragon Design Firm on the design packages that we offer all of our builders. It helps to keep everyone in the job organized and on the same page.

International Flooring: What sets you apart from other designers?

Allison Moore: I have worked with many clients over the years. Some have worked with a designer in the past, and for some it's their first time using a designer. Through it all one thing has been a consistent comment from clients who have worked with me: "She listens." Too often clients shy away from designers because they are scared they are going to be strong-armed into something they are not comfortable with. When I first meet with clients, we discuss their goals for the space. If there are any special requests, those are all taken into consideration. I love that I get to meet so many different people. All the stories are different, hence, my designs are always different. Every detail is considered.

International Flooring: What has been your most challenging project and why?

Allison Moore: I would say the most challenging part of any project is working with a client who is not properly educated on the design process or clients who take everything they see on television designing shows literally (pricing). It is so important to educate yourself on the process and products you put in your home.

Another challenging project (or series of) was helping clients rebuild after the devastation of Hurricane Harvey. Building and remodeling can be an emotional process in itself, but adding a life-altering situation and its emotional challenge to be there for the client while also staying focused on getting the selections made was huge. At Paragon Design Firm we contributed to helping re-build



Houston by cutting our prices in half for all flood victims and working around the clock to get all of the projects done. We also became the clients' shoulders to cry on, the ears that listened to countless stories of flooding, rescues

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Pompei & Company Stained Glass Highlights Any Area

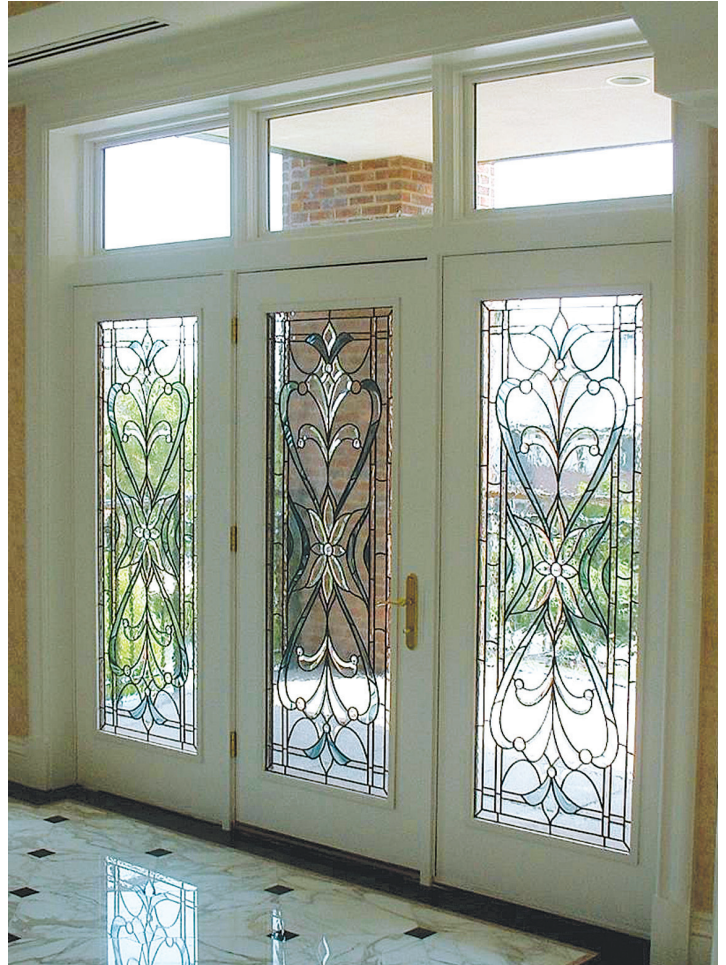
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The artisans at Pompei also create leaded glass windows and elegant luxury wood and composite entry doors.

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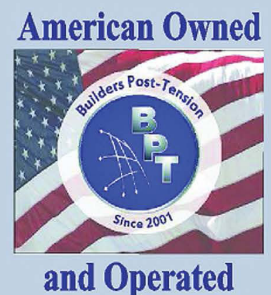
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Continued from page 5

Fulbrook in the Fulshear area,” Ray stated. “We’ve built in Royal Oaks, Kingwood Greens, Cinco Ranch, the Inner Loop, and we just love building on acreage.”

They typically have seven to 15 projects underway at any given time with home sizes ranging from 3,500 to 10,000 sq. ft., although they will build whatever size the client wants. Their finished projects typically range from \$600,000 to \$10 million for larger, more elaborate homes.

Many of their clients work in the oil and gas industry, are engineers, or are commercial construction owners. Ray stated that Daybreak uses very conservative building methods, which appeals to engineers “who are attracted to our ultra-energy efficiency” or commercial builders “who like the way we build the guts of the house.”

They learned those conservative building practices growing up, playing in, cleaning up and later working in construction sites for their dad, who has 40 years’ experience working for Newmark Homes. “He is a marketing expert in Houston and has trained many successful salespeople,” Ray said proudly.

They originally started Daybreak Custom Homes with their dad in 2000. “Construction has always been in our blood.

We grew up going to PRISM award ceremonies [presented by the Greater Houston Builders Association] and saw our dad win many awards. We dreamed of winning those awards one day,” said Ray.

Ray explained that he knew he always wanted to become a builder. “Mike and I used to dream of building unique and very creative homes that had hidden passages, secure rooms and mega theaters. And now, we get to actually design and build them.”

During their almost 20 years in business, Ray and Mike have seen changes in the construction business. “Buyers have so many more ideas these days. They have more access to information and come to us with creative and innovative ideas,” Ray said.

Mike added, “Because of the information they get online, more people know what they want, which is a good thing. We are constantly learning, researching, and putting these ideas into application.”

“The more they know up front, the less changes throughout the process, which can save them both time and money” Ray noted.



The Hurlbut brothers expect strong but steady growth in Daybreak Custom Homes during the next few years. “Our goal is to have consistent, healthy growth over the next five years. We will continue to give our clients a higher level personal service,” they agreed.

Despite their lifetimes spent in the building industry, “We thoroughly enjoy every build. It’s a lot of fun for us and is such a gratifying profession,” Ray said.

The Hurlbuts prove that family togetherness can lead to success and happiness. Not only do they spend their days together at the office, they live near each other in homes they built in Weston Lakes, just minutes from their office in Fulshear. Ray is married to Jennifer and they have two boys

and two girls. Mike is married to Kate and they have four girls.

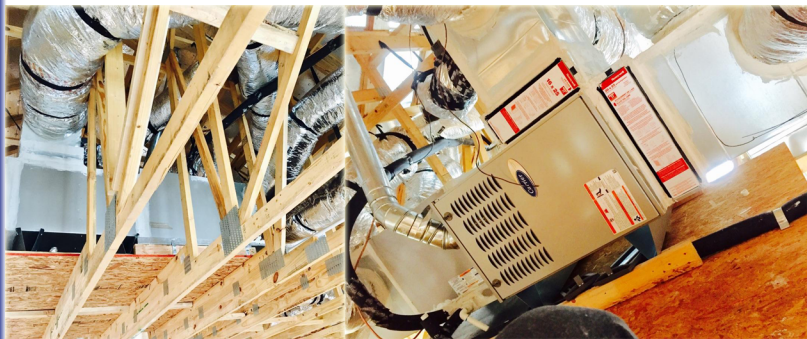
If you’re out on the west side, look for the “Property Brothers of Fulshear.” They’re probably not far from each other. They’re a team that knows how to succeed

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When a Storm Smashes Your Gingerbread House

By Burk Moreland

Is your Gingerbread Business House built solid enough to withstand the coming storms?

As many of you read this, my guess is that you are going through a myriad of emotions because, at the moment, business is as good as it has ever been. However, some of you may have noticed a few storm clouds on the horizon.

For example, the market has cooled a little. While this cooling may seem like a negative trend, those of us that remember a few previous economic cycles can assure you that this “cooler” market represents a more normal sustainable rate of growth.

Another challenge you may be experiencing is a shortage of labor. Right now, labor is unbelievably tight—so tight that you can’t even get to most of the work you have because the labor you need is simply unavailable or too expensive. If those two factors weren’t enough to give you pause, material prices are continuing to increase.

Have I made you feel good yet?

Last month, I suggested you and your team build gingerbread homes together. Did you build them to withstand the test of time? In order to make a candy house that will stay up, you need three things: 1) A great foundation, 2) good walls with a roof made of solid material, and 3) icing done to the right consistency so it dries rock hard and holds everything together. Consider this—your business is no different.

The Foundation: The foundation for every business is the value of the product you sell. Most of us instantly think of our product as better than other similar products. But, do you know why it’s better? Is your customer’s experience part of the reason? In any business, the experience our customers have with us is a large component of quality. In today’s fickle society how we do something is so easy to copy, but why we do it becomes paramount.

Your product or service needs to be good. That is the ante to get into the game, but the value of a product is not measured entirely by functionality. Lots of companies have products and/or services that get the job done. What you need to know is why some of those companies succeed



while others fail, even though their product or service seems the same.

Two key mistakes that lead to failure are cutting corners and producing cheap products or services. Cutting corners to save time and money may work when the market is starved for what you offer. However, basic economics tells us that as soon as demand slows, a company offering inferior products or services will be crushed because buyers will not only have more options, they will also have better options. Companies that do either of these things are the first to go

out of business as the market levels itself out and pumps the brakes.

Another factor that is sometimes overlooked is the customer’s experience with the company. If you are not monitoring how your customers feel about your product or service or response to their concerns and complaints, you are missing an important bit of data.

It would be impossible to discuss the specifics of this process as it relates to each company, because for each company it would be slightly different. Suffice it to say each of you has multiple opportunities to enhance the experience of your customers. Whether you do it or not is up to you. The quality you bring to the relationship with your customers (both physical and experiential) is the foundation of your business house. Commit the time and money to make it solid while you can.

The Walls and Roof: The walls and roof are made of the data you collect and analyze to make sound decisions. Those decisions will be based on this data as well as some educated guesses. Although I would never tell someone not to listen to a “hunch” or “feeling,” I always encourage my clients to back up those hunches with sound data. At the very least, I suggest that they generate and evaluate data before following that intuitive inner voice because I have found that sometimes the data will lead to a change in course. This directional change often helps refine your original “hunch.”

A good place to begin is the process of collecting and analyzing data including logical, thorough financial reports, cost of acquisition, marketing reports, and job costing. Careful collection and accurate analysis of this

Continued on page 16



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data is critical. Too often, I talk to business owners, execs and managers that think they have real data when, in fact, the data they have is useless because it has not been monitored consistently or collected based on the correct indicators.

Good data, properly monitored and evaluated, can protect you from the metaphorical storms that bad or poorly executed plans can cause, much like the walls and roof of a house. If carefully planned and constructed, data can protect a family from the wind and rain of actual storms.

Finally—The Icing: My favorite part. This is the sweet stuff that pulls everything together or causes it to collapse if it is the wrong consistency. This final piece is your people. Are they committed? Do they understand their jobs? Do they feel like they are a part of something? Do they understand what you do, how you do it, who is supposed to be doing what and why it is important? Now is the time to find out exactly what they know and how well they are using that information.

It is also the time to protect these valuable assets—make sure they are doing their job with enthusiasm and commitment, but also make sure that they are being managed with sensitivity and care. Your competitors are

nipping at your house constantly for the best sweets, I promise you. Better be sure they are secure.

Some of you think you have a few weeks until the next “race” starts. I have news for you—it already has. Many of your competitors are already running. Better start catching up! Most people wait to invest in training and outside help when things are not good, but if you wait until things are bad, you probably won’t be able to afford the help you need. It’s a lot easier to spend money to strengthen your house when finances are good and the approaching storms are still on the horizon. Invest some time and money in longevity now. Then go make it happen.

Nearly every company “survives” a great market. What will yours do as things cool a bit? Will you be around to read this next year?

For help with this concept as well as anything else in your business, contact our team today for a free consultation at 832- 356-458 or burk@burkmoreland.com.



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Continued from Page 8



and precious things lost. I think lots of patience and understanding got us through those challenges.

International Flooring: *How do you begin the materials selection process when working with builders' and remodelers' clients?*

Allison Moore: When beginning the selection process, I discuss the floor plan with the clients and try to pull as much information about their likes and dislikes as I can. We work from the outside in. Once we are on the interior selections, we work from the ground up. This approach allows our clients to see their home taking shape before their eyes.

International Flooring: *What are some common mistakes made by builders and homeowners?*

Allison Moore: A common mistake that I see often is that the client is not properly informed about floor plan details and do not understand layouts. I have taught myself a 3-D rendering software, and we offer those perspectives to clients to help give them a view of what their home flow

will be like once built. These 3-D views have actually saved builders a lot of headaches down the road.

International Flooring: *How do you keep yourself up-to-date with all the design trends happening in the industry today?*

Allison Moore: I stay up-to-date on all the trends happening just by educating myself and by doing research. We have wonderful product reps that call on us at Paragon Design Firm and keep us updated on all of the newest products. We try and go to market once a year, but there is so much information on the internet that it's easy to keep caught up.

Last comments: It's wonderful to be inspired by trends, but my advice to clients is stay true to you and what makes you feel at home. Push boundaries that you're comfortable pushing. Create stunning show stoppers. But remember, ultimately it's their home, and I want my clients to feel comfortable in their space.

For more information, contact

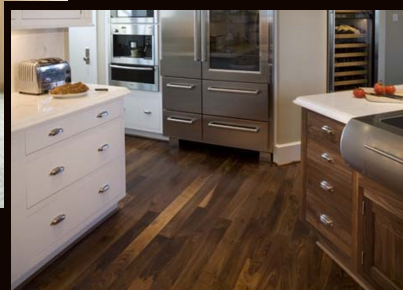
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Tired of the same old, standard-issue drain? Looking for a special accent to your bathroom remodel or new bathroom construction? There is a solution. Jewelry for the shower!

Designer Drains are the newest and most creative shower accents available to the interior design market. Its more than 50 variations and themes can accommodate all conceivable interior designs. Some of its designs feature ocean life creatures, geometric shapes and scrolling while others feature whimsical starfish, puzzle pieces and spider webs.

The design possibilities are endless with either round or square drains produced on virtually any material, including travertine, stainless steel, aluminum, stone and brass, among others. The finishes include polished, brushed or satin brass; copper; chrome; nickel; and even natural weathered finishes. Individual preference and imagination are the only limitations.

Custom grates made from reclaimed 304 stainless steel will never rust, fade or tarnish.

Designer Drains' staff will assist builders and homeowners to order the correct style and size. The most important information to know is the outside diameter or dimension and the dimension between fastening holes, if any. The drains are very easy to install, typically in less than half an



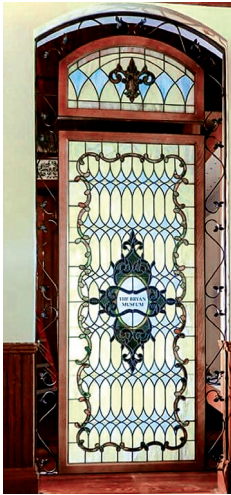
hour with just a screwdriver or sometimes with no tools at all.

These conceptual drains are made to fit almost every drain

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Museum where Joe Pompei was commissioned to create stained glass for the museum's entry, several accent windows and two large Victorian windows containing the Bryan Museum name.

Other Texas commissions include a large Frank Lloyd Wright Coonley Playhouse window at the base of a stairwell for a private residence in Plano, custom leaded glass panels for a home in Palestine and a whole house commission of 25 of Frank Lloyd Wright-style stained glass windows and doors for new construction in Hallettsville.

A Pompei specialty is stained and beveled glass inserts made to fit stock windows from Andersen, Marvin and Pella. Pompei has developed a simple system where its stained glass is installed as interior inserts or piggy-backed against the insulated glass and held in place with a simple installation kit.

Pompei will also fabricate the whole window when supplied with a design by a customer.

Starting the company in 1979, Joe was joined by his wife, Ivy Pompei, as a full-time partner in 1981. After being originally located in West Medford Square, Mass., the Pompeis moved the business in November 2012 to the Western Avenue Studios in Lowell, Mass., now the largest artist colony of its kind on the East Coast. Marissa Pompei-Libby, a fused glass artist, joined the studio two years ago, making Pompei Stained Glass Studio a true family business.



For more information email info@pompeiglass.com or visit www.pompeiglass.com or call 781-395-8867. The company is located at 122 Western Ave., Unit A416, Lowell, Mass. 01851.

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rough-in, such as Zurn, Ebbe, California Faucets, Oatey, Sioux Chief, Smith, Kerdi-Schluter, Pasco and American Brass to name a few. The Designer Drains' grates may also fit other drain manufacturers.

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