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Feature High-End Details

Dialogue with a Designer
Pamela O'Brien

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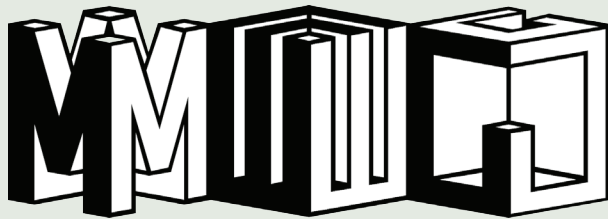


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THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Giselle Bernard
Publisher

The key indicator of the financial health of a company is determined by its consistent, positive cash flow. The following article addresses various issues businesses face involving cash flow problems. This is an Action Coach article, given to us to by my awesome business coach; Sheles Wallace with Billionaire Thoughts, an Action Coach Partner, Enjoy...

Common Cash Flow Problems and What To Do About Them

Cash flow isn't sales or revenue but the money that flows in and out that keeps a business alive. A common fear for entrepreneurs is running low on cash. Check out these tips for recognizing issues and maintaining healthy cash flow today!

Customer Payment Delays

Are customers not paying before your bills come due? Try these tips!

Solutions

- Get paid upfront or partially with a deposit. If deposits aren't possible, consider offering a discount for early payment.
- Send an invoice the day you do the work or ship the product. Delays in sending out invoices hurt cash flow and indicate that your billing process needs to be adjusted.
- Ask for credit information on new customers before the sale.
- Receiving payments and depositing funds may seem like a no-brainer, but the process you set up will help cash flow!

Not Enough Safety Net Cash on Hand

Are you worried you might run out of cash when payroll is due or supplies are needed?

Solutions

- Take a look at the payment due days offered by your vendors and renegotiate to extend if possible.
- Consider establishing a credit line that you can use

in times of emergency to prop up your business until customer payments are received.

- Keeping your accounting system updated daily is the best way to make intelligent decisions.
- You have to know your numbers to make good decisions, so plan for bumps in the road and how your business will handle them.



Too Much Money Tied Up in Inventory

Do you track how long it takes to sell inventory?

Solutions

- Take a look at the process used to forecast inventory needs. Is it working correctly? If not, how can it be improved? If your numbers aren't correct, the decisions you make based on them will be wrong.
- Close the gap on the time inventory sits on the floor. Work with vendors to shorten order times and carry less inventory in-house.
- If there are products in inventory that don't sell but hold the numbers – get rid of them! Hold a clearance sale to turn it into cash! Check with customers who purchased these items in the past and get rid of them.

Too Much Spent on Overhead

Is overhead eating up your profit?

Solutions

- Monitor expenses carefully by category and recognize

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DC Pines - Changing The Face Of The Home Building Industry

By Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID

I met Jeff Ternois, managing director of DC Pines Homes, for what I thought would be a short but sweet interview, to talk about his view of the Houston homebuilding business. Three and a half hours later, we were still talking. Jeff is a rare breed. He has a definite vision in mind for DC Pines Homes, and he knows exactly where that vision will take him...to the top of the industry, one home at a time.

From what I gathered about Jeff's teen years, he'd always had a vision of his future. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in criminal justice from Texas State, alma mater of the King of Country Music, George Strait and a former president of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson. Not bad company. He then attained his MBA from the University of Houston.

Jeff had always planned to join the military after college, and even though he had job offers, He stuck to his vision. He served in Germany and Afghanistan, in charge of Stryker Infantry Platoon, and Battalion S1, responsible for tactical employment of the platoon in support of combined arms maneuver and wide area security operations. Jeff served our country during Operation Enduring Freedom. Served as principal advisor to the Squadron and Troop Commanders on all personal matters.

After service in the Army, Jeff was fortunate to work for Perry Homes for two and half years. He was responsible for a yearly output of eighty homes of various designs and styles. The job was almost 24/7; but Jeff is grateful that he learned homebuilding from the ground up and upheld the



quality in the field that Perry Homes expects and is known for within the homebuilder and real estate community.

In 2020, Jeff and his friend Alex Packard, also formerly with Perry, decided to start building their own homes. It was a tough year, with the continuation of Covid; but like everything else, Jeff and Alex persevered and now are building nine different homes in the Northern Heights, Spring Branch and a custom home in Tanglewood.

Their goal is to build homes efficiently. Their motto is “do it right the first time”. They want to be known as a homebuilder that cares, follows up, does what they say they will do and also honors warranties. There are many moving pieces in building a home from the construction plans

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hardware, sinks, tubs and wonderful furnishings from a wide variety of high-end antiques to equally high-end mid-century, contemporary, transitional and modern furnishings. Houston also has a well-versed trade community that DC Pines Homes utilizes.

One of the areas of building that DC Pines intends to focus on is “quality craft homes.” It is affordable housing with a high-end look. These homes will sell in the neighborhood of \$400,000 -1.4 million.

Without a doubt, DC Pines Homes are builders that are going places. There is a steely resolve in Jeff’s eyes that tells “you” everything you need to know. You can trust this builder to do what he says he will do, and know that he means what he says. Afterall, it is their reputation riding on their word...and from this writer’s viewpoint, their word means something in this industry.

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to the finished product. Each home takes approximately nine months to a year to build. Jeff and Alex are hands on builders who are on the job site, daily, working with the various trades to make sure each phase is accurate and on time.

They are focusing on a new “affordable custom line” that allows homeowners to build a custom home. DC Pines can either build on a client’s own lot or help them find a lot that suits their needs. Jeff states. “they can work with our CAD designer for house and construction plans and then select finishes at our design center, all of which is included in the price of the home”.

Jeff sources materials locally. It saves time and money. Sourcing abroad creates supply chain problems and delays. Houston is one of the cities in the United States that is stocked with so many sources...from woodwork and cabinetry, beautiful wood and tile flooring, bath and kitchen

For more information,
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Penberthy Custom Builders Feature High-End Details

It isn't often that husbands and wives become partners, much less home builders, but that is exactly what happened to Jason and Tammy Penberthy 11 years after they both graduated from Texas A&M University. They "cut their teeth," so to speak, working for a couple of local Houston builders for just over ten years. Those years of learning the business from the ground up paid off. Now, their Team builds one to three high-end custom homes a year, along with thirty to forty remodels and renovations.

Their backgrounds couldn't be more different, oddly the same, with strong family connections. Tammy comes from Argentina, and Jason grew up in St. Louis. They met while shopping at HEB in the Apple section their senior year while attending Texas A&M University, relocated to Houston to start their careers, and married two years later.

A few years before Jason and Tammy started their business,

they purchased a house together with her parents. "In Latin America, it is incredibly common for extended families to live together. Honestly, I do not know how we would do it without family—it is a special thing that our kids get to grow up knowing their grandparents as they do." Jason and Tammy's upbringing and faith in God play a significant role in their personal and professional decisions. Building or renovating a home can be demanding, so they strive to create a positive family environment for each client rooted in their faith-based values. Penberthy Custom Builders wants to be known as "a detailed persons' builder. Details matter, as we often say in interior design. Details involve extensive planning and preparation on the front end of the project, along with quality control measures during the project to achieve the highest quality results,

Customer service is a crucial element to success in earning



a client’s trust. Tammy runs the office, shepherds clients through the initial sales process, and heads the Accounting Department. At the same time, Jason assists with sales, as well as the architectural and construction process supervising the project managers & trade partners, ensuring the architect & design teams plans are followed “to a T”, and running projects himself. Nothing skimped, nothing wasted.

Staying innovative is one aspect of being known as a builder who puts “attention to detail” at the forefront of their business. They aren’t just building a structure but creating an unforgettable experience for their clients by embracing design challenges and demanding quality craftsmanship.

Whether a small project, such as a bathroom or kitchen upgrade, an addition, or a complete home makeover, Penberthy gives every project a high level of customer service and attention to detail, as they do for their high-end custom homes. “We will earn your trust through hard work that reflects our commitment to our clients and hopefully will turn a client into a great personal relationship. Great

“My husband and I hired Penberthy Custom Builders to build our dream home. I was impressed with their ability to make suggestions during the process that were innovative and stylish. We were delighted with our home. I highly recommend them for any custom home or renovation project in Houston”. – K. Foster

homes and great friendships stand the test of time. We create homes that are not only a source of pride to us but also our clients for many years to come.”

Penberthy Custom Builders are generally in the 4,500-8,000 square foot range. Penberthy is also expanding to the Hill Country with three new custom Ranch Homes

in 2022. They will build any style that suits a client’s needs and preferences, from a New Orleans-style home to a transitional one that spans the gap between traditional and modern, from a mid-century modern in suburbia to a ranch house that fits hill county property. The Team understands architectural styles and enjoys

working with architects to achieve clients’ wants and needs. “We love different architectural styles and understand that our client’s dreams are incredibly important to helping the Team stay focused. If it is simply picking up some architectural / design books or traveling to another city to study a particular style, we get excited when we can help a client this way.”

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LIVEABLE LUXURY

New Products Redefine Function In Kitchen And Bath Design

By Linda Jennings

Invest in kitchen and bath products that offer that special bonus of luxury while also being efficiently designed for longevity. Form and function combine to create fixtures that are the focal point of new builds and renovation projects. From zero threshold shower bases to Chef inspired Italian kitchen faucets the

look is sculptural elegance with a meticulous attention to detail. With passion as the core of creativity these products redefine luxury - and present a new vision. Go beyond the ordinary and invest in a luxury that celebrates livability.



Acquabella's Base Shower Pan in Snow White

Create A Zero-Threshold Shower

Acquabella's Base shower pan collection has a modern organic style and is available in two high-definition textures: Beton captures concrete's visual and tactile experience, and Slate, like its namesake, is more subdued. The engineered stone collection is offered in six sizes, ranging from a square 36" x 36" to a linear 36" x 60" with built-in drains for easy installation. These pre-sloped models can be installed above the floor or in a recessed configuration to create a zero-threshold shower perfect for a multi-generational, ADA bath design. The non-slip surface is resistant to impact and thermal shock and includes non-porous, antibacterial properties for easy cleaning and maintenance. The bases are constructed from Acquabella's signature Akron compound of polyurethane and mineral fillers. They are available in Snow White, Brown, Light Grey, Dark Grey, and white and color combinations.

Kitchen Design Gets Elevated

Elevate the kitchen with the new 'Art for Chefs' Faucet Collection by Gessi. Each model embodies the best of Italian workmanship with even the small details given



Gessi's Art for Chefs Kitchen Faucet Collection

meticulous attention and care. Every faucet is a sculptural masterpiece, with swiveling spouts and pull-out sprayers to provide an exceptional range of movement and feature a push button to easily switch between a forceful jet spray and a softer aerated flow. All mixers are equipped with ceramic disk cartridges tested to more than 10 years of function, and the sprayers are outfitted with specially designed components to minimize limestone deposits. The kitchen faucets are offered in a variety of beautiful finishes, including chrome, matte black and brushed variations of nickel, steel, copper, brass and warm bronze.

Elegant Silhouette

With graceful curves and an elegant silhouette, the Alva tub by MTI Baths features an organic oval-shaped bowl that rests snugly on a low-profile base. Measuring 74" x 36" x 20", the Alva is a soaker tub with a semi-rolled rim and a continuously curved interior bowl that is generously sized to accommodate two bathers with comfortably sloped backrests. It is crafted from MTI's proprietary SculptureStone, a largely organic blend of natural minerals and high-performance resins that creates the look and feel of molded stone. Each tub is completely solid with a nonporous surface that is easy to clean and resistant to stains, mold and mildew. Alva tubs are offered in a soft



The Alva freestanding tub from MTI Baths

matte white finish or optional hand-polished deep gloss. The exterior may also be ordered in a choice of six colors, including dramatic hues such as sapphire blue, terracotta and onyx. Each tub is handcrafted in the USA and finished according to MTI's demanding standards of quality and excellence.

Inspired by the Sea

The elegant Seashore Series offers a transitional style at home in modern and traditional settings and is the perfect choice for the popular "coastal chic" and "beach barn" decor styles. Clean lines and graceful curves combine to create this kitchen and bar faucet series offered with a straight or arched spout and featuring a lively handle design. The Seashore Series is offered in Polished Chrome, Brushed Nickel, Mahogany Bronze and Oil Rubbed Bronze. All MICO faucets have the distinction of being crafted in Italy using only the finest components, such as lead-free brass and premium ceramic disc cartridges, resulting in a finished piece that will provide years of remarkable service.



The Seashore Kitchen Faucet by MICO

To find out more about the hardware and fixture products mentioned here, visit their websites:

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Dialogue with a Designer

Pamela O'Brien

BATHS OF AMERICA opened its doors in January 2005 when brothers Ali and Zeeshan Sultanali decided to start selling plumbing and tiles to the Houston market. Baths of America focuses on customer service and partners only with brands offering quality products and customer service. In addition to plumbing, Baths of America now provides door and cabinet hardware, major appliances, cabinetry, and countertops. It has become a one-stop shop for designers, builders, and architects, offering the latest designs and trends in the market

This month BATHS OF AMERICA speaks with Pamela O'Brien, an award-winning luxury interior designer, writer, and speaker. She's been celebrated in the press (House Beautiful, Houston Chronicle, Houston Modern Luxury, and Wall Street Journal, to name a few) for mastering the art and science of designing custom spaces that put the client first. For 20+ years, Pamela has been known for building robust partnerships with her clients, who become friends and collaborators.

BATHS OF AMERICA: *What motivated you to enter interior design?*

Pamela O'Brien: I have always loved houses. I was raised in a real estate-oriented family, and homes were essential

to our lives. The women in my family were all lovely hostesses and took pride in their homes. No matter their circumstances or means, they strived to make their homes beautiful, comfortable, and inviting.

BATHS OF AMERICA: *How has the field of interior design changed since you graduated?*

Pamela O'Brien: I studied languages and business in college and trained in design afterward. Design has changed a lot since I started in the early 2000s when we were right on the cusp of the Do-It-Yourself trend and the advent of the internet for everyday use. I embraced the fact that some people like to be involved in the design work and that they had many new tools available. I think most design relationships are more interactive now, with clients gathering ideas, brainstorming, and collaborating with us more than ever before.

BATHS OF AMERICA: *How can an experienced interior designer help a custom home builder or a remodeling contractor with their building or remodeling projects?*

Pamela O'Brien: Some of my best projects are referrals from builders or remodelers. I like to sit with the client and the builder or contractor as soon as possible. I think from the outside in when designing a house. I think about

how the clients will live in and use the home, not just what the house will look like and what materials will be used. I concentrate on their daily activities. For example, is the pantry easy to access while cooking, or is it around the corner or down the hall? Can people come and go without disturbing the whole household? Is there enough privacy for the master suite? We can help create a home that supports the clients' lifestyle and make their lives easier and more comfortable. We love working with builders and contractors. They appreciate that we are organized and help keep the project on track. Sometimes it is overwhelming for clients to do it alone. A large project can almost be a full-time job. We can help streamline the process, make it a lot easier and less stressful for everyone and create beautiful results.

BATHS OF AMERICA: What sets you apart from other designers?

Pamela O'Brien: There are a lot of designers in Houston. I am proud of that and admire my colleagues. Some of our strengths are that my team and I are professional, organized, and excellent communicators. We are also very good about respecting a budget. I think we excel at that. We keep it in mind every step of the way and discuss it with the client frequently. Plus, we are genuinely nice people and are a lot of fun! We want the client and the rest of the team to really enjoy designing with us and look forward to our meetings. We forge deep relationships with our clients, builders, contractors, and vendors. We are good team players and are easy to work with. We pride ourselves on being flexible. Clients can be as involved as they like or leave the details to us. We don't have to be control freaks. We want everything to be under control.

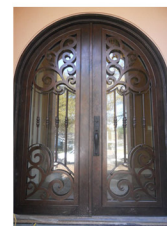
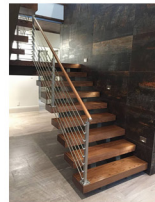
BATHS OF AMERICA: What has been your most challenging project, and why?

Pamela O'Brien: This is a hard one... I think that all design projects have their challenges.

We remodeled a historic soda bottling factory in downtown Houston. It was a weird, dark, quirky labyrinth of tiny rooms. As you can imagine, with a turn-of-the-century building, there were many unknowns. We had to make all the selections months before the project started to get precise bids. Of course, many changes popped up along the way. We had great architects on the job, and worked as a team to solve problems efficiently. It turned out so well that the architects decided to lease the unused office space area and are currently building it to suit their needs. I am proud that we gave an old building new life. That project also won a Paper City Design Award for Commercial Historical Restoration/Preservation!

BATHS OF AMERICA: When working with builders' and remodelers' clients, how do you begin the materials

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selection process?

Pamela O'Brien: I like to meet with the client and the builder early in the process to get an overall feeling of the style and design of the house. We brainstorm and collaborate to learn preferences and must-haves. We talk about the budget and allowances immediately to help guide the client. I like to have a conversation about splurging and saving because that is bound to occur at some point during construction. Today's easy access to photographs and great design photos allow us to learn the client's taste quickly. Our studio's first showroom visit or "show and tell" session is always an exciting meeting.

BATHS OF AMERICA: What are some common mistakes made by builders and homeowners?

Pamela O'Brien: Not being upfront about costs and budget can cause a lot of stress in a project. It is worth sitting down for a few hours to review the contract line by line so everyone is clear on what is expected, how long it could take, and what it will cost. Everyone also needs to understand that few things go exactly as planned. Many problems are the result of a lack of communication. Clear communication can prevent many issues and help solve others.

BATHS OF AMERICA: Speaking about staying current, how do you keep yourself up to date with all the design trends happening in the industry today?

Pamela O'Brien: Houston has a vibrant design community, and we have constant sources of inspiration. New ideas are everywhere, from the outstanding showrooms and TWO design centers to the industry reps around town. One of the "high points" of the year for me is the Furniture Market in High Point, NC. It's inspiring to see the creative things people are doing. I also love to travel, and not surprisingly, I focus mainly on the design, art, and architecture of the places I visit.

BATHS OF AMERICA: Any last thoughts, or comments?

Pamela O'Brien: At Pamela Hope Designs, we believe that good design is a great pleasure. We want our clients, vendors, builders, and contractors to enjoy the design experience and the results.



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“We were very pleased with Jason and Penberthy Custom Builders from conception through architectural planning, building, and the finishing/follow-up processes. His knowledge and experience was so valuable as we worked our way through planning a home that fit our needs and desires, as well as one that fits our lifestyle on the lot on which we built. We bought our lot for its view as much as for the neighborhood. Jason’s educated vision helped us avoid mistakes and enhanced our beautiful final product. Jason and his crews have attended the few follow-up work orders with the same urgency as they had the original build. We are extremely happy with our new home, and we consider Jason and Tammy as our friends well beyond the house build. They and their children were very welcome among our post-build Super Bowl Party guests.” – P. Gottspooner

“We hired Penberthy Custom Builders to renovate our guest bathroom, update our kitchen and add a summer kitchen to our first home. We then hired them to gut our next home down to the studs and build a new pool house. In every aspect of the projects, from planning to the final punch list, Penberthy Custom Builders exceeded our expectations for professionalism and production of an exceptional final product. Jason’s attention to detail and commitment to excellence permeated every interaction and decision, and as a result, the process of updating our home has been enjoyable. Penberthy Custom Builders is marked by its integrity and high standard of quality workmanship. We highly recommend them for an outstanding result and experience for a custom remodel or home in the Houston area! They are the BEST!” – B. McGown



where changes need to happen. Tackle the most significant concern first and then move on to the next one.

- Without taking on more roles, are there areas where you can automate the process instead of hiring more employees? Payroll is typically one of the most significant strains on cash flow. Using caution when adding staff is critical to controlling overhead.
- Map out a plan for spending for the year. You have to spend money to make money, but that spending should be planned and not done impulsively.
- When revenue flows in, it can seem like time to spend. But careful planning will keep you on track when conditions change.

Cash Flow Control

Remember that a business can make a profit and still have severe problems without proper cash flow management. Use these tips to get your cash flow under control, and call Sheles Wallace for more help.

Jason and Tammy Penberthy can be contacted at info@penberthycb.com or at 832-282-8720.



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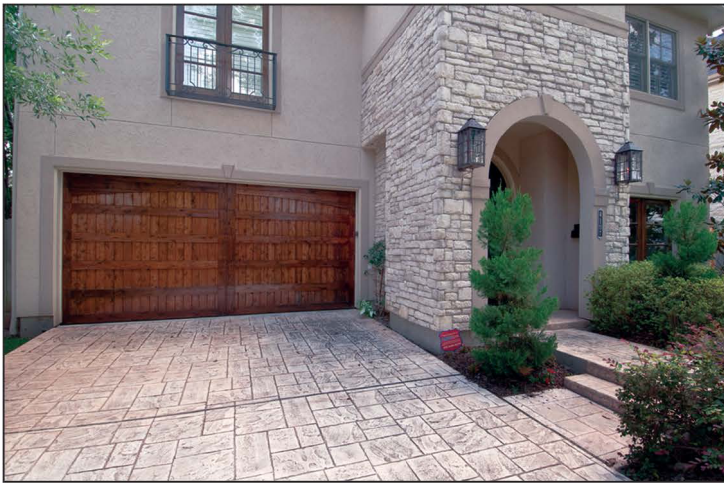
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