

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

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Corey Boyer, A Man With Long-Term Vision

Bold Color In The Kitchen And
Asymmetrical Tubs Latest Trends

Dialogue with a Designer:
Kendra Benson

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THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

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Feature Story

06 Corey Boyer, A Man With Long-Term Vision

By Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID

03 Publisher's Note

04 7 Ways To Manage Supply Chain Issues In Your Business

by Sheles Wallace, Billionaire Thoughts

10 Bold Color In The Kitchen And Asymmetrical Tubs Lead Kitchen And Bath Design Trends

By Linda Jennings

11 International Flooring

13 Metal Wood Glass Innovations

14 Dialogue with a Designer Kendra Benson

17 Hardwood Products

19 Baths of America

20 Directory Of Suppliers And Service Providers

For Local Information Contact:
themetropolitanbuilder@yahoo.com
832-317-4505
www.themetropolitanbuilder.com

2206 Paso Rello Drive
Houston, Texas 77077
832-317-4505

Owner/Publisher
Giselle Bernard

Editor
Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID

Magazine Layout & Design
Pamela Larson

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Giselle Bernard
Publisher

You can google the characteristics of a good sales professional and get several traits to seek in an individual. For example, Indeed's Career Guide notes 18 qualities that make a good salesperson, most of which are significant to the company's profit margin. These are sales skills.

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Active listening | 10. Communication |
| 2. Empathy | 11. Persistence |
| 3. Competition | 12. Attention to detail |
| 4. Confidence | 13. Ambition |
| 5. Enthusiasm | 14. Charisma |
| 6. Resilience | 15. Patience |
| 7. Organization | 16. Independence |
| 8. Honesty | 17. Technical ability |
| 9. Adaptability | 18. Profit motive |

While some of these sales skills apply to customer satisfaction, when talking about building customer relationships and making an impression on the customer,

that is a different can of worms. In talking with the builders, remodelers, and interior designers I've visited throughout the last 15 years in the industry, I find that they focus on the following when choosing their "go-to" vendors, suppliers, and sub-contractors. They look for companies whose businesses have established a clear set of values that promote ethical practices and social responsibility, companies who back their company representatives' products and services.

They look to work with sales professionals & business owners who know and understand the industry as well as the timelines of the building process. Company representatives need to understand the products and services they provide. They look to work with company representatives with the same integrity they expect from the company they serve. They look to work with someone reliable and trustworthy. The building professionals love working with company representatives who follow the job from start to finish and personally walk the job after completion to ensure the job has been completed and done right. In other words, they take the extra step to ensure they have their customer's back.

These are the same attributes I look for when recruiting vendors, suppliers, and subcontractors to represent to building professionals in the industry. I choose from companies that are referred and vet their company representatives. When bringing on a new vendor, subcontractor, or supplier, look to The Metropolitan Builder; we will assist.



7 Ways To Manage Supply Chain Issues In Your Business

by Sheles Wallace



It is difficult to predict specific supply chain issues that may occur in 2023, as they can be influenced by various factors such as natural disasters, economic conditions, and geopolitical events. However, some potential issues that could affect supply chains in the future include the following:

- Disruptions caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic
- Trade tensions and tariffs
- Transportation and logistics challenges
- Labour shortages and rising wages
- Sustainability and environmental regulations
- Increased demand for digital and technological solutions for supply chain management

Companies should have a variety of contingency plans in place to adapt to unexpected disruptions in the supply chain, including:

1. **Diversifying suppliers:** Having multiple suppliers for key components or materials can help mitigate the risk of supply chain disruptions caused by issues at a single supplier.
2. **Building up inventory:** Keeping a sufficient amount of inventory on hand can help a company weather disruption in the supply chain.
3. **Establishing alternative transportation and logistics routes:** Having multiple options for getting goods

to customers can help a company avoid disruptions caused by issues with a single transportation or logistics provider.

4. **Developing digital and technological solutions:** Investing in digital and technological solutions, such as automation, digital inventory management, and supplier management tools, can help companies better track and manage their supply chains.
5. **Risk management and incident response plans:** Identifying potential risks and have incident response plans in place can help organizations respond quickly and effectively to disruptions.
6. **Review and test the plans:** Continuously review and test the plans to ensure they are adequate and effective in dealing with disruptions.
7. **Build resilient supply chains:** Build resilience in supply chains by implementing sustainable practices, ensuring that the supplier base is diversified and flexible, and invest in digital technologies and automation.

By having these contingency plans in place, companies can be better prepared to adapt to unexpected disruptions in the supply chain and minimize the impact on their operations and customers.

For more information on creating systems to manage and scale your business, schedule a free discovery call with our team.





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Corey Boyer, A Man With Long-Term Vision

By Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID

When developers talk about “vision,” often that vision might include their current project and the one to follow. Not Corey Boyer. When he mentions “vision,” he really means long-term vision, twenty or thirty years from now. J.P. Morgan, the successful American financier of the Gilded Age, often referred to as the Victorian era, once said, “Go as far as you can see. When you get there, you’ll be able to see further”.

That is certainly true in Corey’s case. Ten years ago, Corey was a general contractor, working on his own rehabbing houses and renting those properties to people who needed them. He knew he could do more than only rehab homes. He began to think about the housing market in terms of “need.” That is the key to understanding “Vision.” There

must be a need. Where there is a need, there is exponential room for growth.

At first NC4L, LLC focused on home building and continues to build spec and high-end, technology-loaded custom residences in the 1.3-million-dollar range with a square footage of approximately 4200 square feet. Most of these homes are an open plan contemporary style. They are bold and beautiful and meant for families as most are four and five-bedrooms with separate family areas and loaded with adequate storage.

Corey grew up in a small Missouri town with nearly 1,000 people. Everyone knew everyone. I think that accounts for Corey’s open, friendly, personable nature. He looks for the

Continued on page 8





Continued from page 6

best in people, and when he finds them, they become part of his professional family of sub-contractors, employees, and financial contacts. From the first meeting, it becomes a working partnership of sorts.

He graduated from the University of Missouri with a BS in personal financial planning and made the leap to move to Texas, first to Dallas, and finally settled in Houston, where he recognized the for-quality housing at affordable costs. That's how his long-term "vision" began...a need for hard-working people to afford a place to hang their hats and call home.

Need equals long-term vision. That is how his company NC4L, LLC began with the focus on buying smaller parcels outside the Houston market that would eventually become a development that people in that area needed.

His first purchase was a 13-acre tract in Baytown. A nice parcel of land, surrounded by a lovely long-time residential neighborhood, will be used as a single-family residential development with 51 homesites.

Corey is excited about a new project in Santa Fe, Texas. It will consist of 137 one, two-and three-bedroom apartments. There has not been a development of this caliber and style in that area for over 20 years. Citizens will have the

opportunity to experience first-class living amenities and security. Pet lovers will also be happy to know there will be a Dog Park for residents only.

There is a definite focus on "security." The property will be surrounded by trees, a security fence, and a camera-monitored gate designed only to allow residents access. Each apartment will come equipped with a personal app-driven key. The high-tech key will provide residents only access to a community room and the fitness area. Another feature will be Electric Vehicles charging sites for the convenience of residents. It was designed by Alex Garcia of Garcia Architects, who has over 20 years of experience in multi-family design.

Corey is also extremely excited about the new Santa Fe Senior Living Community. This development is designed to allow family members to comfortably age in one location that can and will address their needs, whether that be independent living, Assisted Living or Memory Care. There will be a total of 175 units featuring a variety of floor plans and great amenities that include walking trails, a community garden, a dog park, two dining areas, courtyards, a salon, and fitness areas. This will be the first \$24+ million facility of its kind in Galveston County. Construction is scheduled to begin in the 3rd Quarter of 2023 and will be completed in phases. Silver Point Senior



Renderings of FM 646 Apartments, Santa Fe Texas, Top Left - Aerial View, Center Left - Courtyard, Bottom Left - Fitness Center, Top Right - Buildings, Center Right - Clubhouse Front, Bottom Right - Clubhouse Rear



Aerial view of future Kings Oak Village

Living from New Braunfels will operate this licensed community. It is being designed by Pi Architects from Austin.

NC4L, LLC will shortly become Development of Texas. It will continue to specialize in acquisition and investment solutions to add value and vision to communities in Texas. Facebook followers will be able to be a part of this industrious developer's vision as he takes viewers



behind the scenes to show the development process from beginning to end.

It will be a fascinating look at the good, the bad, and the ugly sides of a developer's projects and life.

Currently, people can follow Corey on Facebook under Development of Texas, formerly NC4L. The company's website address is www.developmentoftexas.com To speak with Corey personally, email corey@developmentoftexas.com

Bold Color In The Kitchen And Asymmetrical Tubs Lead Kitchen And Bath Design Trends

By Linda Jennings

Transform your space in a big way with these newest fixtures and fittings designed to make a bold statement for modern builders while also offering superb function with attention to wellness. Embrace these stylish

products designed to create a beautiful, liveable space. Bold faucets from Italy, functional bath hardware from Britain and sensual freestanding tubs from Spain offer a global perspective with designs that excel in luxury.



The Ziel 1360 from Isenberg Faucets

Viva Magenta

Celebrate a new year full of joyful possibilities with the dramatic Ziel kitchen faucet by Isenberg, now offered in a dazzling shade of magenta in honor of Pantone's 2023 Color of the Year: Viva Magenta. The Ziel K.1360 faucet is a versatile choice for today's busy kitchens. It has a modern aesthetic that is sleek and industrial, while its high-arched spout adds a sense of elegance and refinement. Crafted from premium 316 stainless steel, the Ziel is thoughtfully designed with a 360° swivel spout and 18" of pullout hose for maximum reach and accessibility to all areas of the sink. The faucet is a deck-mounted design with single hole installation and includes a dual-function sprayer and matching soap dispenser. Isenberg offers Ziel with their full range of color finishes, including 20 beautiful options to choose from. Possibilities range from navy, crimson and sky blue to army green and gunmetal gray. All thin-film, ceramic-based finishes are oven-cured and finished to perfection for a remarkably durable product that is eco-friendly and highly resistant to corrosion, scratches and chips.



Acquabella's Serena Bath

Sea-Inspired Bathtub

Acquabella ushers in a new era of bathing with their asymmetrical freestanding tub creation, the Serena. A softly contoured tub with graceful curves inspired by undulating ocean tides, this beautiful bath is a brilliant pairing of traditional elegance and modern innovation. Measuring a generous 67" x 29" x 32", Serena has been thoughtfully designed to cradle the bather in singular comfort. The Serena bathtub is crafted from Acquabella's signature Dolotek material, a superior mineral composite, resulting in a flawless finish that is silky smooth to the touch. Dolotek offers the added benefit of providing an antibacterial surface that is easy to clean, is amazingly durable and resistant to UV rays and thermal shock. The Serena tub is offered in a snow white standard finish and includes options for a striking dual-tone look with pairings in brown, light grey, dark grey and black.

Continued on page 12



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Richard Arnold -
richard@ifhouston.com
 Richard Arnold is the proud co-founder of International Flooring and is based in Houston, TX. With over 25 years of experience in the building industry, Richard has worked his way up from Construction Manager overseeing over 200 home builds to becoming the CEO of three construction companies: International Flooring,

Texas Treads, and Karina Homes. His robust construction knowledge qualifies him to solve a variety of building needs, from product sourcing to installation, crew management, and more. Richard takes a hands-on approach with clients through multiple job site visits and straightforward advice. Working with Richard means connecting with Houston's top custom builders, designers, and remodelers

Customer Reviews

David Herzog, CEO - Herzog Homes, LLC

Herzog Homes has built over 2,000 on the east coast. When we opened our Texas division, we learned of Richard Arnold, owner of International Flooring, by way of a very strong recommendation from our construction lender. Any referral from a construction lender is extremely credible. We met with Richard and the rest is history. They installed the flooring in our first home over 5 years ago, and they have done every home since, including two of my personal homes. Accordingly, we have given Richard and his company abundant referrals to customers, friends, designers, and builders alike. Additionally, we strongly recommended them to the CBUSA builder chapter for membership. This is a very selective organization, comprised of over 50 regional builder who work with our internally approved trade contractor and suppliers. After membership vetting, they were accepted, and we are elated to have them as part of the CBUSA team. Richard and International Flooring have executed expertly, their employees are professionals, and we cannot say enough great things about this company. They are regularly voted favorite quarterly trade by our team, and we look forward to decades of continued partnership. I am happily available to discuss our superb relationship with International Flooring. I can be reached at David@HerzogHomes.com or 832-314-9000.

Selena MacKay, Owner of The WM

International Flooring is my go to source for flooring. The selection is outstanding. Richard is very knowledgeable and is able to always meet our budget with quality products that make my clients super happy!! The service is excellent and overall a great experience working with him.

Steve Gulledge, Gulledge Homes

I highly recommend using International Flooring for all your flooring needs. Richard Arnold, an owner of International Flooring, knows his product inside and out. He can explain the different wood species and flooring options to my clients, so they are well-informed in making their flooring decisions. Richard bids on the job and walks the jobs, overseeing the jobs closely. He communicates daily and closely with his project manager, Eduardo Trigo with whom I really enjoy working. International Flooring provides my clients and I with outstanding service. If there are issues with punch items, they take care of it right away. I must add that Richard has built an island butcherblock countertop for me that turned out fabulous.



Ruvati's Dual-Tier Nova Workstation Sink

Continued from page 10

Impressive Functionality

Ruvati has elevated the popular workstation sink to a singular level of stylish sophistication with their new Dual-Tier Nova Collection. Available in 33" and 45" configurations, the Dual-Tier Nova sink brings impressive functionality to today's kitchens. A stacked pair of tracks allows accessories to slide into place as needed for prep, serving and clean-up in one compact space. The accessories are made of an extremely durable black composite mix of resin and wood fiber, creating a surface that is weather resistant and dishwasher safe. The Dual-Tier Nova Collection has been thoughtfully designed from top to bottom. The brand's innovative one-inch SlopeBottom ensures all water and debris streams easily toward the drain, while a stainless steel grid protects the bottom of the sink from impact and scratches. An offset drain may be installed on the right or left side to allow for maximum under-sink storage, and a beautiful commercial-grade brushed finish is easy to clean and blends well with other appliances. The Nova is crafted from 16 gauge premium T-304 stainless steel that will never rust or stain.

Art for the Kitchen

Elevate the kitchen with new 316 Kitchen faucets, part of the Art for Chef's Collection by Gessi. The 316 Kitchen Collection is comprised of *Mechanica* models clad in woven metal textures and *Flessa* models with a smooth, sleek base. Both models offer all the functionality any chef could dream of. Swiveling spouts and pull-out sprayers provide an exceptional range of movement and feature a push button to easily switch between a forceful jet spray and a softer aerated flow. The collection is crafted from stainless steel and available in a variety of beautiful finishes, including chrome, matte black and brushed variations of nickel, steel, copper, brass and warm bronze.



Gessi's 316 Kitchen Faucet Collection

The hoses are available in standard black, grey, white, or orange to add a pop of color.

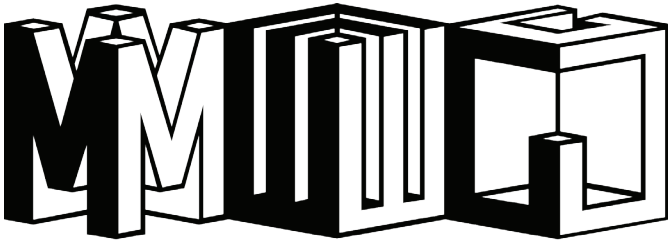
British Beauty

The new sleekly engineered Chelsea Double Washstand package from Sterlingsham Company is destined to be a beautifully practical piece in any décor. Crafted from solid brass, it features a marble slab with a stunning upstand that showcases the Chelsea edging, and is finished with a British-Made White Vitreous China Bowl. Standard finishes include polished brass, polished chrome, polished or matte nickel, antique gold, copper, and various shades of bronze with optional distressing. Marbles offered include Carrara Polished (Pictured), Carrara Honed, Arabascato, and Nero Marquina and come with 1, 2, 3, or no tap holes.



Sterlingsham Company Ltd.'s Chelsea Double Washstand

To find out more about the hardware and fixture products mentioned here, visit their websites:
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www.ruvati.com • www.gessi.com
www.sterlingsham.co.uk



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Photos courtesy of Fairmont Custom Homes

Customer Reviews

Matt Sneller -
Sneller Custom Homes

We are a custom builder/remodeler and have been working with Esvin/MWG for about 4 years now. They are one of our best trade partners that we have. Esvin is extremely creative and great around our clients, but he also does what he says he's going to do and is great about staying in communication. He has done everything from simple framed glass shower doors to very detailed shower enclosures to custom cabinet doors to a custom metal and wood table for our new conference room. I would highly recommend working with MWG!

Michael Pelletier
President/Owner Fairmont Custom Homes

We have been working with Esvin Tista and MWG Innovations for over 5 years. Esvin is our go to for shower glass and mirror work. I am proud to say that we have been able to set market trends with the help of MWG Innovations and his excellent customer service. Rarely, do I find an individual that is as reliable as Esvin in our world of building custom homes. Esvin has been a great partner for Fairmont Custom Homes bringing excellent value to our customers and helping us become the number one builder in Fulshear, TX. We look forward to our continued relationship with MWG Innovations.

Brandon Kraut -
Construction Project Manager at Urban Craftsman
The MWG team does beautiful work, has great customer service, communicates clearly, and provides a great experience! I am a project manager for a custom home builder and we exclusively use MWG for our shower enclosures and glass work. I had them do my new shower enclosure at home as well. You can't go wrong with MWG!

Sales Professionals



Esvin Tista - *Esvin@mwginnovations.com*

In his 12 years of experience in the glass industry, Esvin found himself wanting to do more than install glass. As a true Texan, he believes everything is bigger in Texas and decided to open his own business in 2018. Esvin is talented and has the passion and vision for designing and fabricating unique pieces of art for metal, wood, and glass consisting of shower doors, vanities, mirrors, handrails, and more. He credits his passion to his loving family and success to his professional team. When his not working, you will find Esvin enjoying the beautiful Houston weather fishing, hoping to catch more than a cold breeze on a sunny, rainy day, all in one trip to the bay!



Lilian Tista - *ltista@mwginnovations.com*

Lilian is experienced in management accounting. In search of a better balance between work and family time, she joined Metal Wood Glass Innovations LLC in 2021. Her commitment is to provide excellent service, helping the corporation to create and build a better business. She enjoys the opportunity to serve customers on a personal level and the originality behind each project. She spends her free time with her son. She loves to run, and occasionally you will find her running marathons and obstacle course races.



Dialogue with a Designer

Kendra Benson

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 turned into a one-stop shop for designers, builders, and architects, offering the latest designs and trends in the market.

This BATHS OF AMERICA speaks with: Kendra Benson, Allied ASID, a Houston native, who discovered her passions for construction and design in her teen years and decided to attend The Art Institute of Houston, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design in 2009. She then studied under some of Houston's top designers, such as Jane Page Crump of Jane Page Design Group and Teena Caldwell of Twenty-Two Fifty Interiors. Kendra eventually moved into an administrative position for The American Society of Interior Designers Texas Gulf Coast Chapter, where she came to know many industry partners and designers across Greater Houston. In 2019, she started her own company, Kendra Benson Interiors, and has designed 10+ homes as the lead designer with

Echo Custom Homes, a company of Houston natives that serves the needs of the evolving Houston culture. Kendra recently became the 2022-23 President-elect to the board for The American Society of Interior Designers Texas Gulf Coast Chapter and will serve as President for the 2023-24 year. On top of running her own business and serving on the ASID TXGC board, Kendra also coaches middle school and high school cheerleading at her Alma Mater, Lutheran North Academy.

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

Kendra Benson: I grew up in a construction family - my grandfather was in construction, my dad is currently the COO of a large commercial and industrial concrete construction company, and my brother is the Director of Project Management for that same company. In my teen years, I constantly rearranged my bedroom, updated my bedding, and even organized and rearranged my friend's rooms during sleepovers. But when my childhood home flooded in 2001 during Tropical Storm Allison, I decided Interior Design would be my career path. We had to gut and remodel the entire 1st floor of the home, which overwhelmed my mom, so she relied on my eye to make final decisions. Before college, I worked at an interior



design boutique specializing in baby bedding and furniture, among other things. I didn't know what I was doing, but I quickly learned how to pull fabrics and finishes together. That job helped me confirm that I wanted to move forward in the field of interior design.

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

Kendra Benson: Technology and media have been the main changes I've seen since graduating with my degree in Interior Design. In my final year of school, 3D modeling was just introduced into the Interior Design world but was mainly used in commercial design. Anyone can create a 3D image of a space if they want. The virtual reality technology that is being done now is also insane. Clients can walk through their fully furnished home using VR before the home is even built!

Media has also changed since I graduated. HGTV was becoming popular, Instagram hadn't even launched, and Facebook was pretty new to the public. Before these media outlets, Interior Design was something you only saw in high-end magazines and was more of a luxury than a commodity. Media has changed Interior Design by making it accessible and acceptable to a broader spectrum of people. Now, everyone can see thousands of photos online to get inspiration, see DIY tips and tricks, and even purchase products directly from those photos.

While media and technology have helped the industry grow and become more commonplace, it has also hindered the profession. Client's now think they don't need a designer because they saw an influencer DIY something on Instagram. They believe that they can narrow down their design style and make all the purchases because they have access to thousands of photos online. While some people can do those things, most end up spending way more money and time than needed and hiring a designer to "clean up" what they've started. The moral of that story is to hire a designer from day one to at least consult you through the process. I always tell potential clients, "I'm here to help you make this house YOUR home, not mine."

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

Kendra Benson: This is my favorite question because it's what I specialize in. Many people think that Interior Designers are here to pick paint colors, select sofas, and fluff pillows. While we do indeed make those selections, we offer so much more than that! Interior Designers are trained in all aspects of the building process. While we are not framing, electrical, plumbing, etc., experts, we have ample knowledge of each field. The building and remodeling processes can be very overwhelming, even to

Continued on page 16



for during the building process and what questions to ask; we speak the same language as the builder. We understand the cost, time, and quality products and can help ensure that the job is done correctly. We can help you stay on track with making selections and ordering products, so the project runs smoothly and you stay within budget. Designers are also helpful in the building and remodeling process because we can suggest revisions early on to avoid costly change orders. I had a client recently that hired her own contractor and already had the idea of how she wanted to remodel the kitchen and master bathroom. She initially hired me to only help with selections, but soon realized that she was unable to answer some of the contractor's essential questions and ended up bringing me in to help answer those questions. We also made a few minor changes to her original remodel design, which helped open the space even more and make it more functional.

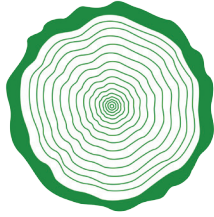
The main thing I hear from clients when someone suggests hiring a designer to help them with their new build or remodel is that it's an extra cost they don't need or can't afford. Builders and contractors are not detailed and are not designers. They will not tell you that a door is in an awkward spot, lights need to be moved, or plumbing isn't in the right place – they will build whatever is on the plan and not even blink. Then, in the end, you wind up spending more money to fix the problems than if you had hired the designer, to begin with. Many people might ask how I find an excellent designer to work with me on my project. Ask the builder or contractor if they have worked with a designer before. Most of them have a list of designers they work with and trust. Also, don't be afraid to interview the designers. Working with a designer equates to a relationship. You will spend a lot of time with that person over the following three months to a year (or more), so you want to ensure your vibe.

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

Continued on page 18

Continued from page 15

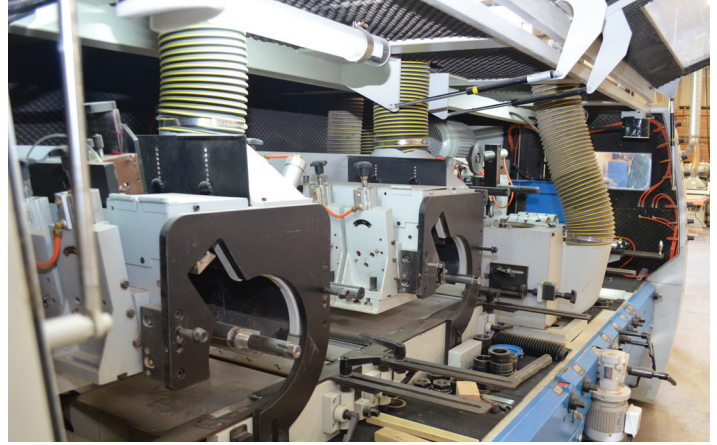
a construction professional. Take my brother, for example, he builds large buildings like skyscrapers and stadiums every day, but the process of building his house was very overwhelming due to all the little details that went into it. Interior designers make selections and act as the liaison between the builder and the client. We know what to look



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Sales Professionals

Customer Reviews

Cullen Franz - Savannah Grace Homes

“Hardwood Products has gone over and above to source the best quality materials for the best price to help me grow my business. Kenny Francis and the HWP team has provided me with outstanding customer services that leaves other competitors in the dust. I can’t say enough about the value that I have received in partnering with HWP. My custom homes have never looked so good !! Thank you Kenny and HWP !!”

Matt Sneller – Sneller Custom Homes and Remodeling

“I have known and worked with Kenny/Hardwood Products for over 15 years. We consider them to be one of our most loyal and trusted trade partners. We are a custom builder/remodeler and use them for a lot of our interior and exterior trimwork/materials. Their pricing is fantastic, but even better than that is their customer service. Kenny is always easy to get a hold of and super responsive to any issue that arises. We would highly recommend using them!”

Rick Davis - DC Kitchens & Remodeling

I can’t say enough about working with Hardwood Products. I’ve been in business for about 35 years and have been working with Hardwood products for as long as I can remember. I find their entire staff trustworthy and extremely professional, especially Kenny and Laura. The entire staff has a full understanding of their extensive line of hardwood products. I find that they are extremely dependable, and their customer service is outstanding. They always go out of their way in providing the very best in high-quality materials and for the best price. Not only that, I find them to be very dependable. I can trust that they will always be on top of things. I feel more comfortable working with them than anyone else.



**Charlie Molloy -
cmolloy@hwp.us**

Charlie has over 30 years of experience in the building material industry, dating from 1992 to the present. He has expert knowledge of most building products, including hardwood lumber, plywood, cabinet hardware, plastic laminate, and custom moldings. In his previous years, he was a manager in the grocery industry

for Eagle Discount Supermarkets and Randall’s Food markets in the Houston area. His strengths include managing employees, customer service relations, logistics, and outside sales. He has lived in the Houston area since 1968 and spent his childhood in Spring Branch, graduating from Spring Woods High School. He went to the University of Houston where he majored in Music, Hotel and Restaurant Management, and Business management. Hobbies include playing the National Anthem with his trumpet at professional baseball games, hiking in the Big Bend area, and woodworking. Charlie has been married 39 years and has one son, a daughter, and two grandchildren.



**Kenny Francis -
kfrancis@hwp.us**

Kenneth has 32 years of experience in the building industry from 1990 to present. He started at Wilsonart in 1990-2001 in the Houston area. He was employed as the operations manager of over 27 employees. He decided to take his sales knowledge & expertise to Hardwood Products 2001 - present. Kenny enjoys working

with companies & building relationships. From commercial millwork shops and remodelers to Custom Builders. Every day is a challenge, from supply & demand to rising costs. Providing innovation & service for the customer is the bottom line. Kenny has lived in Houston his entire life & knows the area well. His hobbies are anything outdoors, from hunting and exercise to sports. He has a wife of 17 years & two beautiful daughters.



and reconfigure it within the current bones of the structure is always such a fun and challenging puzzle. The main challenge I find in remodels is trying to make a difference without removing structural walls. Typically I'm not particularly eager to get engineers and permits involved due to the time and red tape, so I do my best to work within the support walls. This may initially stress the client, but they eventually come to appreciate the time and money saved from doing so and of the ending results.

BATHS OF AMERICA: How do you begin the materials selection process when working with builders' and remodelers' clients?

Kendra Benson: It all begins with the clients. Inspiration photos help me to narrow down a look and style. The clients usually have an idea of what kind of look they want for their home, so I help them bring all the best and budget-friendly pieces together to achieve that look. Clients always want to start with tile and countertops, but I always begin with cabinets and plumbing and build from there. It's hard for many of them to visualize that, but it always comes together in the end.

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

Kendra Benson: The main common mistake is not hiring a designer. The designer doesn't have to be there to add elaborate changes and details but can act as a consultant and a liaison between the builder and homeowner.

A super common mistake builders/architects make is not planning space for the furniture that is going to be in the room. The fireplace may not be centered correctly in a living room, making for poor furniture planning. Maybe bedroom windows are too low to the ground or in locations where a bed should go – no bed wall. Perhaps the kitchen layout isn't functional. One complaint I hear the most from people building new homes is that the closets are too small and/or shallow. Clothes take 21-24" of depth when hanging – that's a lot of space! While designers can maximize that hanging space based on their layouts, some clients still lose the precious space they thought they had. To avoid mistakes, hire a designer early in the process – that goes for builders and homeowners!

Continued from page 16

Kendra Benson: This is a hard one... I think that all design projects have their challenges. Most of my large remodel projects have been challenging in some way, but they are my favorite. Having to take something that already exists

**Kendra Benson, Allied ASID,
Kendra Benson Interiors**

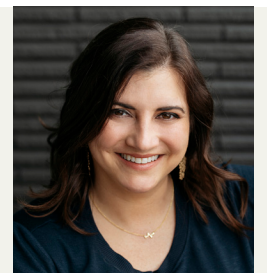
**ASID Texas Gulf Coast Chapter
President-elect 2022-2023**

Phone: 832-405-4582

Email: kendra@kendrabensoninteriors.com

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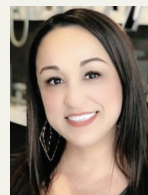
Jeff Steiner -
jsteiner@bathsofamerica.com

Jeff has always enjoyed working with people and being able to offer them his exceptional services. No matter the size of the job, Jeff makes sure that the customer is satisfied and that the job he started gets his full attention until completion. After sales, Jeff also follows up with clients to ensure they are aware of the functions of the products they have purchased and if he can assist in any product demo in person. Jeff, along with his assistant, Hillary Ratliff, started the appliance builder sales division at Baths of America. He has been in the appliance industry for 30 years now and has led Baths of America to one of the largest appliance dealers in Houston, TX.



Hillary Ratliff -
Hratliff@bathsofamerica.com

Hillary has been in appliance builder sales for the past four years and has no plans to go to another industry. Assisting Jeff with his builders, Hillary makes sure that products are ordered, scheduled for installation and the logistics of jobs are handled sufficiently. Hillary enjoys the appliance category as it is a very niche, and the relationships that she's made in this industry. Helping builders and meeting new clients and industry partners has become a reason why Hillary plans to keep continuing her plans to grow in the appliance industry.



Chadney Alvarez-
chadney@bathsofamerica.com

Chadney has been in plumbing and hardware sales for 25 years now. Starting as a bookkeeper at EXPO Design Center at age 18, she has developed herself into one of the leading salespersons in the plumbing and hardware industry. Developing customer relationships is very important to Chadney and a key reason why she's been very successful in maintaining her business. Starting from the beginning, when plans are just on paper, making selections, and seeing the final projects come to fruition a year or so later makes me love what I do.

Customer Reviews

Brian Phillips - Cayson Graye/Alair Homes

As a custom home builder, we have specific needs when it comes to appliances for our projects. Jeff and his team offer not only the selection we need for our clients, but also the expertise, competitive pricing and professional installs. Baths of America is a vendor with whom we are very proud to partner.

Courtney C - Client

After having a horrible experience at another appliance dealer, we stopped into Baths of America on a whim and were paired with Vincent. We told him about our situation and the terrible experience we had been having with the other company, and he was able to get us our appliances in a reasonable time. Not only was he upfront with us, but he was in constant communication with us throughout the whole process. We had some issues with installation on our end due to our contractor's mistake, and Vincent was even able to help us remedy the situation. Thank you, Vincent for helping us 100% through the whole process and always being in constant communication. True customer service!

Coraline Wheeler - Designer Details

Love! Love! Love this place. You will be pleasantly surprised to enter a beautifully designed showroom with a lot of exciting eye candy!! Every time without fail, the customer service has been excellent. Their knowledge and quick turnaround with quotes are always impressive, especially given the current environment. The range of products is a visual delight as well as impressive to take clients to when sourcing appliances, faucets, hardware etc. A must-visit! You won't be disappointed.

DIRECTORY OF SUPPLIERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

As a service to area building professionals, The Metropolitan Builder presents this listing of local suppliers and service providers in which are working with some of the most outstanding builders in the Greater Houston area. They have all been referred and/or vetted. Shouldn't they be working for you?

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Cameron Architects, Inc. 713-502-6644
Stephen Cameron
Architects@pdq.net
www.cameronarchitects.com

BANKER

Allegiance Bank 832-615-6807
Richardo Riojas
Richardo.riojas@allegiancebank.com
www.allegiancebank.com

CUSTOM BUILDER/RENOVATOR

Alair Homes Houston 713-922-7893
Chris Bolio
Chris.Bolio@alairhomes.com

BOOKKEEPING SERVICES

Efficient Bookkeeping Services 832-289-2401
Laura Daugherty
LDaugherty@efficientbookkeepingservices.com
www.efficientbookkeepingservices.com

BUSINESS COACH

Billionaire Thoughts 832-371-6642
Sheles Wallace
ShelesWallace@ActionCoach.com
www.billionairethoughts.com

CAST STONE

The Ark Cast Stone 713-695-2001
Harry Durham
harry@arkconcrete.com
www.arkconcrete.com

CUSTOM FLOORING

International Flooring 832-282-3073
Richard Arnold
Richard@ifhouston.com
www.ifhouston.com

CUSTOM IRON DOORS & STAIRS

Casabona Doors & Stairs 281-802-6909
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www.jthomsdoor.com

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Michael Milton
mike@smarthvacpros.com
www.smarthvacpros.com

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www.designsanewhouston.com

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LENDER

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www.isbcapital.com

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Hardwood Products 713-203-0449
Kenny Francis
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www.hwp.us

MIRROR & GLASS

Metal Wood Glass Innovations 713-834-4627
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esvin@mwginnovations.com
www.mwginnovations.com

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www.piercingmedia.com

PROPERTY & CASUALTY

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www.greenlineinsgroup.com

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Rigo Villarreal 832-868-6981
RigoismyRealtor@gmail.com
www.thevillarealtygroup.kw.com

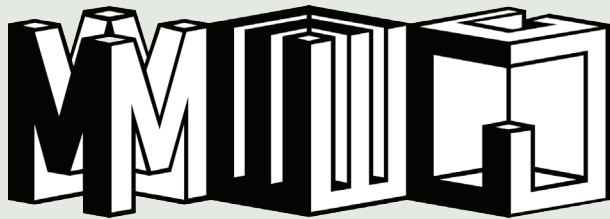
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Jay Coleman
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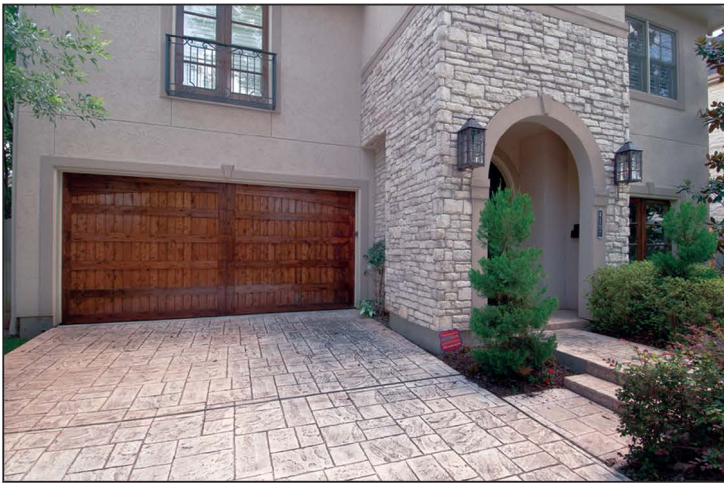
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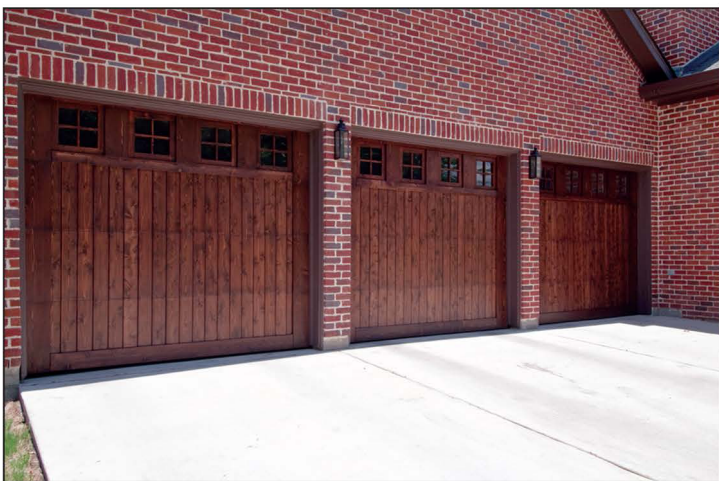
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