

Poised for Growth

Second generation redesigns the family business

By the time the recession hit in 2008, Andrew Schroeder was well-trained and perfectly positioned to take over the family business. And he has been able to make changes and move the company forward, including creating a real estate division and getting the company involved in house flipping.

Now the company has a backlog and Schroeder is looking to develop a more extensive design team.

- There are two design/build processes: one for larger remodels and a

fast-track for smaller ones. A new set of procedures helps accommodate the increase in small jobs.

- All staff have access to Co-construct including the phone app.
- Every procedure from the company's 27 years in business is documented.
- Before starting a design/build project, 100% of selections are completed and all the trades come in to look at the project.
- Goal: five open houses per year in neighborhoods that fit the firms' sweet spot.

Andrew Schroeder

Schroeder Design/Build • Fairfax, Va.
Design/build remodeling • In business: 27 years
2012 volume: \$1.8 million • Staff: 6 office, 5 field

By the Numbers

Having a financial background pays off

A former New York City banker, Arnold Karp now keeps his eagle eye on projects ranging from new kitchens to spec homes. "We tend to be budget hawks," he says. "We want to give the clients as much value as we can, and the best way to do that is to build a cohesive team."

Karp prefers to be the point person on a team that often includes architects, engineers, and surveyors. "When we run the project, it's well budgeted with a line item

for everything," he says. "Not only are we providing construction services, but also financial overview of the client's needs."

- Karp's team doesn't sacrifice margin to win a job.
- The company engenders loyalty among trades by always paying on time, using working capital if the client hasn't paid in full.
- Karp stays involved in the community as a board and committee member of organizations such as the local nature center and high school.

Arnold Karp

Karp Associates • New Canaan, Conn.
Full-service remodeling • In business: 27 years
2012 volume: \$9.1 million • Staff: 3.5 office, 4.5 field

On Top of Things

Consultative method keeps remodeler in charge

Stephen Gordon, InSite's main salesperson and estimator, says he uses a "modified design/build" approach: Once a homeowner has contracted with an architect, Gordon puts together a plus or minus 10% of estimate based on the client's initial wish list, the architect's drawings, and supplier input. He helps clients make "economic choices" to reach their desired investment amount. Once selections are made, he provides a revised contract with an approximate start date. Though

labor-intensive, the approach provides clients with a more precise estimate.

- Neighborhood listservs keep InSite Builders top-of-mind locally.
- Technology helps streamline processes. InSite uses iPhones and iPads, and uses Evernote for sharing information within the office, and BuilderTrend for scheduling and communication with subs.
- Gordon took a universal design course and his goal this year is to implement the concepts on every job.

Stephen L. Gordon

InSite Builders • Bethesda, Md.
Full-service remodeling • In business: 17 years
2012 volume: \$1.4 million • Staff: 2 office, 1 field



Flexible Future

Stephen Gordon, with Mary Gordon, vice president, plans to implement more universal design concepts this year.



Photo: Jennifer Hoak Kirvan, Jennifer Hoak Photography