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THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Giselle Bernard
Publisher

I was recently questioned, by two people, about what to do when a customer purposely tries to tarnish the reputation of another out of what might be perceived as spite? Because of a disgruntled or a negative experience, such as a dispute or perceived mistreatment, some may seek to retaliate by damaging the other's reputation as a form of retribution. This is called defamation. Some people feel the need to abuse their power through their authority or influence by defaming a person or company when they are unhappy or to assert control, gain leverage, or manipulate the business relationship.

Dealing with someone who is defaming your company can be challenging, but handling the situation professionally and accurately is essential. Here are some steps you can take to address the issue effectively:

1. **Stay calm and composed:** It's natural to feel upset or defensive when your company is being defamed, but it's crucial to remain calm and avoid responding in an emotional or confrontational manner. Maintain a professional demeanor throughout the process.
2. **Assess the situation:** Before taking any action, assess the extent and impact of the defamation. Determine whether it's an isolated incident or if there is a pattern of negative comments from the same customer. This will help you understand the severity of the situation and plan an appropriate response.
3. **Gather evidence:** Collect evidence of the defamatory statements made by the customer. Take screenshots or record relevant conversations, emails, or social media interactions containing defamatory content. This evidence will be helpful if you need to escalate the issue or seek legal advice.
4. **Respond privately:** Contact the customer personally, preferably through a direct message or email, to address their concerns. Remain polite and professional in your communication, and avoid arguing or trading insults. Seek to understand their grievances and offer a resolution.



5. **Publicly address the situation:** Respond publicly if defamatory comments are made publicly, such as on social media platforms or review websites. Craft a well-thought-out and factual response demonstrating your commitment to customer satisfaction and highlighting any steps your company has taken to address the issue. Avoid getting defensive or engaging in a back-and-forth argument.
6. **Encourage positive reviews and feedback:** Counterbalance the negative comments by encouraging satisfied customers to share their positive experiences. Prompt them to leave reviews or provide feedback on platforms where the defamation occurred. This can help mitigate the impact of the negative comments and show that the defamatory customer's views do not represent your overall customer base.
7. **Monitor and report:** Continuously monitor the situation and any further defamatory comments the customer makes. If the defamation persists or escalates, consider reporting the issue to the relevant platform or website where it occurs, providing the evidence you've gathered. They may have policies to handle such situations and take appropriate action.
8. **Seek legal advice if necessary:** If the defamation is severe, persistent, or causing significant harm to your company's reputation, consult with a lawyer who specializes in defamation law. They can guide you on the appropriate legal steps, such as sending a cease and desist letter or pursuing a defamation lawsuit.

Remember, it's crucial to maintain professionalism and integrity throughout the process. Responding with dignity and respectfully addressing the issue will demonstrate your commitment to customer satisfaction and help protect your company's reputation.

Elevating Team Performance: The Essential Role of Critical Thinking Skill

by Sheles Wallace

Delegation is an essential leadership skill required to grow your business. We discussed 6 Keys to A Winning Team in last month's publication. This month we will take it a step further and discuss how your team can have an enhanced impact on your business. It calls for a suite of critical thinking skills enabling business owners and managers to solve problems efficiently and inspire their teams toward innovation and growth. These crucial skills include Observation, Questioning, Research, Creating, and Problem-Solving. Let's delve into each of them and explore how they can effectively be used in team management.

Observation - The ability to observe is a critical thinking skill often overlooked. As a business owner or leader, watch your team's dynamics, communication, and workflow. Pay close attention to non-verbal cues, listen actively, and recognize patterns.

Observing can reveal underlying problems, identify strengths, and expose areas for improvement. For instance, communication breaks down during high-stress projects, decreasing productivity. Awareness of these patterns allows you to address issues proactively before they escalate.

Questioning - Critical thinking thrives on asking the right questions. Questioning is a powerful tool for discovery and innovation. "Good leaders ask great questions that inspire others to dream more, think more, learn more, do more, and become more." - John Maxwell

Ask probing questions encouraging your team to think deeper, analyze situations, and reflect on their actions. This process not only helps in uncovering hidden issues but also stimulates creative thinking.

Remember, your goal is to inspire thoughtful discussion, not to make your team defensive. So, make sure your questions are clear, unbiased, and open-ended.

Research - Continuous learning and staying abreast of new developments is essential regardless of industry or field. In this context, research means learning from internal and external sources. Internally, it can involve gathering data about team performance, project outcomes, or employee satisfaction. Externally, it could mean staying up-to-date with industry trends, new tools or technologies, or best management practices.



Researching helps you make data-driven decisions, predict industry trends, and guide your team with informed suggestions. Encourage your team to adopt a similar approach to their projects and tasks.

Creating - Creativity is the driving force behind innovation. It involves imagining new ways to solve problems, coming up with original ideas, and being willing to take calculated risks. Encourage your team to share ideas, no matter how unconventional. Remember, today's crazy idea could be tomorrow's breakthrough. The story goes Flamin' Hot Cheetos was created by Richard Montañez, then a janitor at Frito-Lay's Rancho Cucamonga.

Problem-Solving - Problem-solving is arguably the most important critical thinking skill. It involves analyzing a problem, generating and comparing multiple solutions, then selecting and implementing the most effective one.

To be a successful problem solver, you must be patient, open-minded, and resilient. Guide your team through the problem-solving process, encouraging them to look at the problem from various angles and develop solutions.

Conclusion - Critical thinking skills are essential for successful team management in today's complex business world. By honing these skills and encouraging their use within your team, you can boost productivity, enhance creativity, and foster a positive, engaged work environment. Remember, the power of critical thinking lies not only in solving problems but also in creating a resilient and adaptable team that can navigate any challenge that comes their way.

Sheles Wallace

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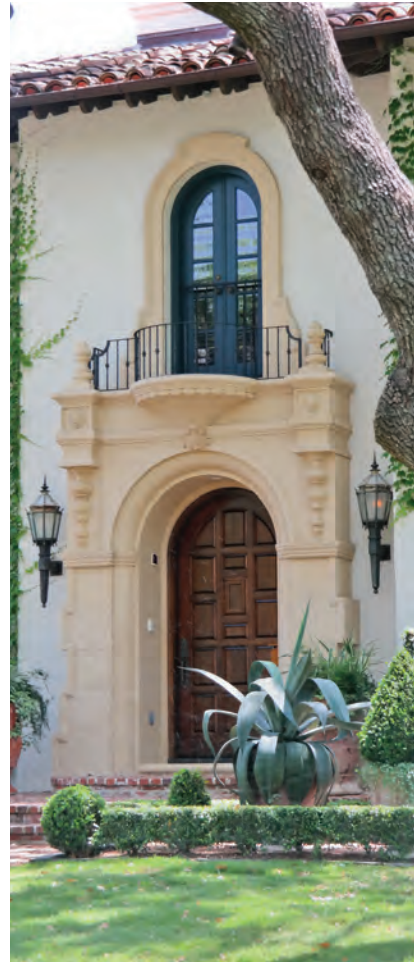
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CAM Construction

Collaborative Excellence for Unforgettable Spaces

By Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID

Jeff and Carroll Patrizi love people and are utterly customer-centric in everything they do. They appreciate and value the clients whose homes or commercial spaces they build. Having clear insight as to the clients' needs and wants is most important when bringing their dream spaces to life. They believe that honesty and integrity encourage strong relationships. Therefore, they say what they mean and mean what they say, which has resulted in clients trusting their expertise and integrity for decades. Jeff and Carroll believe in teamwork; they value and credit the entire CAM Construction Team for all success. I realized they were exceptional from the outset of our interview.

For over 20 years, CAM Construction has provided residential and commercial general contractor services in

Houston, Galveston, and the surrounding areas. Led by Jeff and Carroll Patrizi, the CAM Team offers a uniquely comprehensive approach to the construction process, one that is grounded in decades of experience with a diverse array of building projects. Jeff began his construction career in 1983. Harnessing Jeff's weather catastrophe expertise and many years as an insurance specialist, CAM has guided clients through the aftermaths of Tropical Storm Allison and Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Ike, and Harvey. The CAM Team values creative style, design, detail, and quality building—and they appreciate the opportunity to serve their clients with all of their construction needs.

'When I think about what sets CAM apart from other

Continued on page 9







Continued from page 6

construction firms, three things come to mind. First, our extensive base of expertise in both the residential and commercial spaces and our proficiency in weather-related catastrophes,” stated Jeff. “Secondly, we feel it is a privilege to work with our clients within every aspect of their projects; and third, teamwork is everything. We work closely with our client to get the details right, “added Jeff. “CAM is a family-owned business, and our dedication to our clients is important to both of us. We want the process to be transparent, streamlined, and enjoyable as possible”, said Carroll.

CAM is committed to helping clients create their visions. Their comprehensive process is grounded in decades of experience with a vast array of small and large projects. Carroll and Jeff truly care about those they work with and for; they are creative, inspirational, transparent, aligned and all about you, the customer!

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The Key To Success Is A Solid Foundation

By Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID

Debo Homes evolved through a deep sense of family, unity, mutual support, and an intense pride in the business and its history, ensuring the family business's evolution and its' satisfied customers. Juan Carols Fernandez, Sr., and Juan, Jr. are an unbeatable father/son team in the Houston home-building industry. Both take tremendous pride in their family-owned and operated business. Juan Sr. handles the majority of residential construction. Juan Jr. joined his dad after graduating from college with a degree in finance and is now the company's director of financing.

Juan Sr. has been in the business since the early nineties and began his construction career as a foundation expert, which is the most critical construction factor. A foundation acts as a stabilizer against lateral or side movements, keeps walls from cracking, and studs straight and level. Foundations distribute the total load of the structure and prevent differential settlement of the overall design. All of

the company's foundations in their three developments are built on an elevated mixture soil and sand pad a foot and a half higher than street level to avoid flooding.

Designing and constructing foundations slowly evolved into the decision to build his own homes. He parlayed those early homes into cash, began buying small parcels of land, and gradually became a turned developer and home builder. Every pad for the foundation is a 60/40 mixture. Sixty percent clay and 40 percent sand, which makes for a solid base for the foundation.

The family has two sold-out developments, Los Pinos and Horseshow Estates, with a third in line for completion. The two prior developments were a mixture of set floor plans. "The company is now semi-custom in the newest development, Blue Jay's Landing in Needville, which Juan Jr. developed himself. All homes are built on acre lots",



stated Juan, Jr, “with deeper ditches and retention ponds.” The homes range in price from \$490,000 to the upper \$800,000.

Customer service has always been high on the list of the company’s policies. They want the families who purchase homes in their developments to have their “dream home” and work very hard to accomplish each client’s goal from start to finish. Every home is plywood wrapped with only the top-of-the-line materials. Blue Jay’s landings architecture consists mainly of popular farmhouse styles, board and batten, stone or brick in the common areas.

The company’s success is attributed to a strong and family-bonded team. Abraham Romero, who has been with Juan Sr. since the beginning, now supervises all foundation pours and is the lead foreman; architect Chris Dominguez, Juan and Eduardo Cisenros are the superintendents. Almost

all subs have been with the Fernandez company since its inception and are considered family.

The entire team at Debo Homes understands that a successful business harnesses the engagement of all its Employees and that doing the right thing ethically bolsters reputation, trust, and, ultimately, the company brand. They understand that it’s important to remember that every customer is different, so it’s essential to take the time to understand their customer’s wants and needs. At the same time, they strive to go above and beyond their customer’s expectations. Surprise them with something they weren’t expecting, and they will surely appreciate it.

For more information:

www.mydebo-home.com

Juan Fernandez, Jr. – 281-342-3528

Create Statement Spaces

Luxe Up Your Design With Products That Create That Wow Factor

By Linda Jennings

Every month we search through an exciting selection of stylish new designs for the builder market - from luxury bath faucets in dramatic color profiles to bath sinks in organic colors - the visual treats found here are both practical and classic. Elevating the design aesthetic to a

new level. Simple but distinctive pieces with a testament to craftsmanship. Many with bold gradients of color sure to set the scene in kitchens and baths. Here's what caught our eye this month in luxury products for home design.



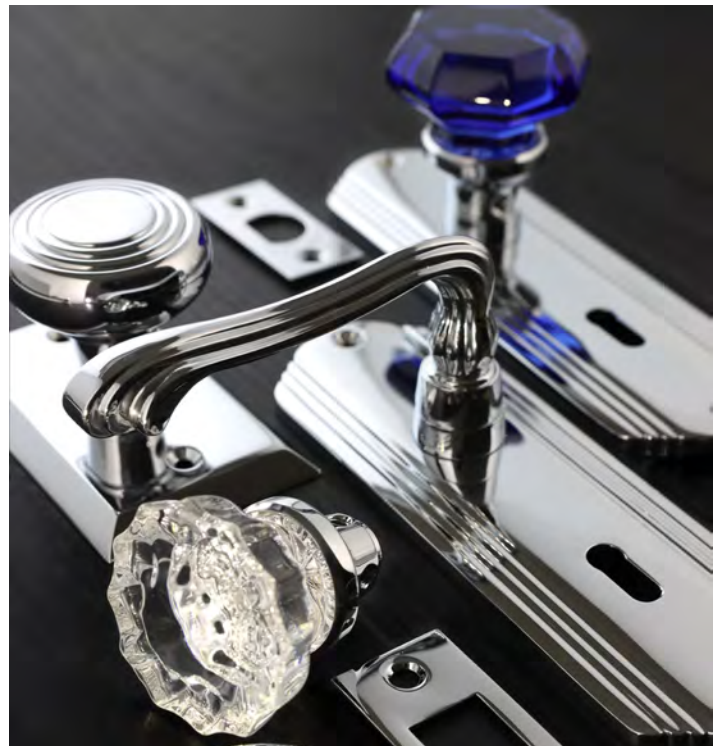
Gessi **ORIGINI** Wall-mount Faucet

Transforming Moods & Language Into Color!

Stunning bathroom faucets take center stage in the new **ORIGINI** collection from Gessi. With its mesmerizing array of colors, shapes and finishes. The faucets are meticulously sculpted into inspired silhouettes and finished with rich glossy hues or beautiful metallics. Gessi offers seven different faucet styles in this collection, including a space-saving wall-mounted design that is a beautifully practical addition to any bathroom. The three-hole basin mixer is offered in two heights, both notable for their gracefully arched spouts. Also available in two sizes, the collection's signature basin mixer has a chic industrial vibe with a pipework-inspired design and hard angles softened by rounded edges. Of particular interest is the finish insert that fits neatly inside the knobs and allows an extra indulgence of color and customization.

Come To Grip With The Latest In Hardware

Fans of vintage style are loving the latest interior design trends which continue to reflect high demand for period-inspired décor. Nostalgic Warehouse offers several collections that perfectly mirror this look. Their Victorian Collection is ornate vintage at its best, and the Egg & Dart Collection is a well-known classic line notable for its distinctive repeating border and beautiful floral crowns. The brand's Deco Collection is an eclectic line that brings



Nostalgic Warehouse's Vintage Inspired Hardware

a modern twist to old Hollywood glam, and the New York Collection offers a look that is clean and sophisticated with tailored lines and a timeless appeal. Each piece of hardware from Nostalgic Warehouse is meticulously crafted from solid brass for heirloom quality hardware that will last through generations.

Salò Art has introduced a new hand-crafted hardware design that creates a vibrant, modern look. The newest addition to their popular Flowerday Designs brand is the stunning Glass Meld Collection, an artisanal line of colorful and expressive glass knobs set into beautifully finished metal bases. Skilled craftsmen fuse the glass through kiln firing with temperatures reaching up to 1500 degrees to achieve the line's signature dual layer designs. Each knob is unique with its own variations in patterns and swirls,

but all are remarkable hand-crafted works of art that are certain to elevate their surrounding décor. The glass knobs are offered in seven gorgeous colors, from liquid blue and dramatic marbles in shades of coral, sapphire and turquoise to more subtle options like forest green, mica black and majestic white. The finished glass is securely mounted into metal bases finished in matte black, polished nickel, satin brass or white. This fabulous collection is now available on MyKnobs.com.



Glass Meld Knobs from Salò Art Design available at myknobs.com

A Perfectly Symmetrical Silhouette That Soothes

BainUltra brings new light to the luxury bathing experience with the latest addition to their extraordinary Libra Collection of freestanding tubs, the Libra Aurora. The Aurora tub features symmetrical curves with softly sloped interior walls. BainUltra offers the Aurora in two configurations with a full menu of therapy options - a luxurious soaker tub or the Thermomasseur version, which provide hydro-therapy massage. Customers can personalize their tub by selecting additional options such as Illuzio chromatherapy with soothing colored lights for an elevated sensory experience, and the WarmTouchShell system with heating zones placed inside the bath's inner shell. It is meticulously crafted from the brand's 100% pure acrylic, creating a non-porous surface that is extremely durable, resistant to stains and scratches, and easy to clean and maintain. Aurora is available in a beautiful glossy white finish, a dramatic black and white combination, or the brand's sumptuous UltraVelour matte finish.



The Libra Aurora by BainUltra



Portsmouth Mirror by Sterlingham Company Ltd.

Design Excellence From Britain

With the option of either our ornate fluted pin details or plain round pins, whichever best suits your theme, the new Portsmouth Mirror from Sterlingham Company really is a showstopper. It is created from a hand-formed brass frame that encases a high-quality 6mm flat glass mirror. The frame is joined using traditional hand soldering technique in England.

All components are then hand polished before assembly and go through a scrupulous inspection before and after electroplating in the customer's choice of finish. A bracket for concealed mounting is also supplied. They are offered in a selection of 16 finishes including Gun Metal, Brushed Brass, Polished Nickel and Matte Black. This mirror is a defining style element in any room, from the bedroom or bathroom to the living room or hallway.

Shower Floors Reimagined

With an array of styles, sizes, textures and colors to choose from, the Cosmopolitan shower base offers an impressive level of flexibility and is a smart choice for any bathroom remodel or design plan. The Shower Bases in the Cosmopolitan Collection have a sleek and clean aesthetic with no unsightly grout lines to maintain. The bases are offered in three styles: Lado, an end drain with a uniquely curved matching end drain cover; Centrar, a center drain with unique cover; and Artesa, a covered trough end drain. Available with two different organic texture options and four color options: white, gray, black and sand. They feature low-profile designs with multiple thresholds for the ultimate in installation flexibility. The bases are crafted



from Cast Engineered Stone, using MTI's signature mineral composite blend of organic Dolomitic Limestone and then finished by hand for a result that is a non-porous surface that is resistant to scratches, stains, mold and mildew, and is easy to clean and maintain

"MTI Baths Lado Shower Base"

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

www.gessi.com • www.grandeurhardware.com
www.myknobs.com • www.bainultra.com
www.sterlingham.co.uk • www.mtibaths.com

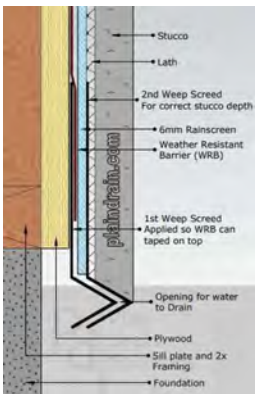
When It Comes To Stucco, Plain Drain Solutions Addresses The Moisture Management Issues So Prevalent In The Houston Market

Have you ever wondered why your wood fence lasts longer than the plywood behind your stucco, even though it's exposed to the same elements? The answer is simple: your fence can dry properly, which the plywood can't.

It rains in Houston -- a lot! With all that rain comes a lot of opportunity for moisture intrusion. While Stucco is often blamed for moisture problems, the reality is that the lack of moisture management is the underlying issue. To address this problem, the new 2021 building code requires the inclusion of a 3/16" drainage cavity behind stucco.

A cost-effective way to achieve this is by using the Plain Drain Solution 6mm Rainscreen. It will provide you with drainage cavity that will help drain your assembly and allow it to dry out.

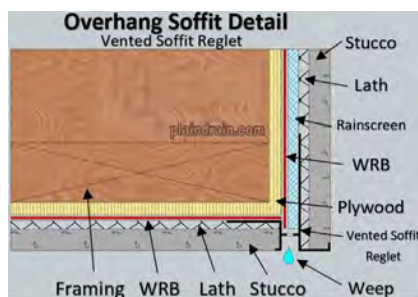
What is a Rainscreen?



A 6mm Rainscreen (or drainage mat) is a moisture management product that provides a drainage cavity between your weather barrier and your exterior cladding (stucco, siding, stone). It is this drainage cavity, that will allow any incidental water to drain quickly, preventing any moisture buildup that can lead to mold, rot, and other damage. It is a cost-effective, easily installed product that will meet the requirements of the new 2021 building code.

Why is rainscreen required behind stucco?

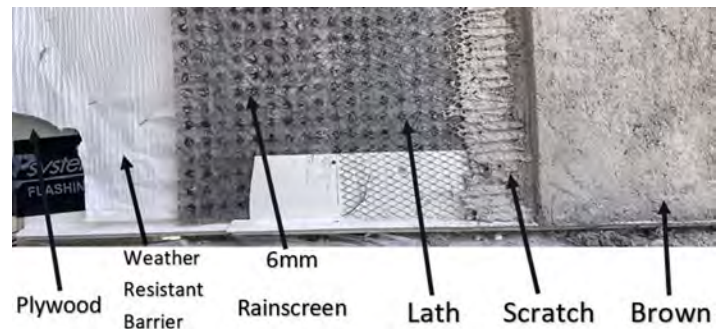
Due to our heavy rainfall, moisture intrusion in Houston can cause significant damage and rot. While stucco is often blamed, it's the lack of proper moisture management that's the root cause. Wood can begin to mold and rot when it's not allowed to dry. The current drainage system, which is supposed to work between two tight pieces of paper, doesn't always work as intended. Thankfully, the new 2021 building code requires a 3/16" drainage cavity behind stucco to address this issue. The Plain Drain Solution 6mm Rainscreen can meet this code requirement, allowing any incidental moisture to exit the system quickly and efficiently.



How Does Rainscreen Work?

Rainscreen is installed between the stucco and the sheathing, creating a gap that allows air and moisture to flow freely. This cavity ensures that any moisture that gets behind the stucco can quickly drain away, rather than being trapped and causing damage. Rainscreen also allows the system to dry out,

preventing mold and rot from taking hold. With rainscreen, you can offer your clients peace of mind knowing their stucco houses are protected from moisture damage

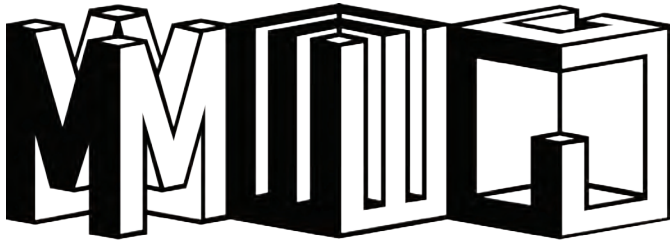


Check out the Weep Screed Detail

At the base of the system, it is important that we allow a gap for the water to exit the system. This can be accomplished by installing a double weep screed detail. The first is wrapped behind our WRB. Then we install Plain Drain rainscreen and ensure we backlap it for the built-in bug screen. Next, we install our 2nd weep screed to ensure we have the correct depth thickness.

Plain Drain was started to help change the perception of stucco in Houston. It's mission is to provide innovative and effective moisture management solutions that protect and enhance the built environment. It's goal is to be a trusted partner to architects, builders, and property owners, helping them create buildings that are not only functional and beautiful, but also resilient and sustainable for generations to come. Their goal is to provide cost effective solutions and products to ensure you have a healthy building after years in the stucco industry. Moisture management is where they excel. With this understanding of how water works, the Plain Drain Solutions team is able to help you create the right details to ensure that you have a working moisture management system when using stucco.

For more information contact Bruce Honore at Plain Drain Solutions • (281) 830-1308



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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

Shundra Harris

MWG INNOVATIONS - With a passion for designing and working with glass, Esvin Tista founded MWG Innovations in 2018 on the idea that offering custom bath glass and mirrors for new construction and remodeling projects should fall in the line of an exquisite art job. Esvin takes great pride in creating unique pieces of art designed to bring life to the ideas given to him by the builders, designers, and trades he partners with. His work includes intricate designs of fabricated unique custom metal, wood, and glass pieces for shower doors, vanities, mirrors, handrails, and more. MWG Innovations is committed to providing all clients with high-quality products and services in which yield outstanding customer satisfaction.

This month MWG INNOVATIONS speaks with Shundra Harris, founder and principal of Shundra Harris Interiors (SHI), professional member of American Society of Interior Designers, NCIDQ certified and a Texas Registered Interior Designer whose pursuit of thoughtful and intelligent design for all people and all spaces has made her a national leader in Design.

Shundra is one of the elite Past Presidents of the American Society of Interior Designers, TX Gulf Coast Chapter. She now volunteers to write for the NCIDQ exam and has

served the National Board of ASID as Chair of the Chapter Support Team. She is also on the National ASID Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Throughout her design career, as a student, and ultimately as the Past President of Texas Association for Interior Design, Shundra has advocated for Interior Design in Texas. One of the most rewarding experiences in her career has been shaping design minds as an Adjunct Professor at the prestigious Prairie View A&M University, School of Architecture.

MWG INNOVATIONS: What motivated you to enter interior design?

Shundra Harris: Frankly, design found me! Like most designers, I've had "the" creative gene for as long as I can remember but I studied and worked as an engineer in my first career. Renovating my own home in 2002 gave me visibility to the industry. Research and love for construction led me to an education and career change to interior design.

MWG INNOVATIONS: How has the field of interior design changed since you graduated?

Shundra Harris: There is a relentless effort (by national design organizations, ASID, IIDA, NCIDQ, CIDA) to promote and educate how design of the built environment

Continued on page 18



When looking for appliances, plumbing, and hardware for a project, we assure you of a great selection, outstanding installations, and service.

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Sales Professionals



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

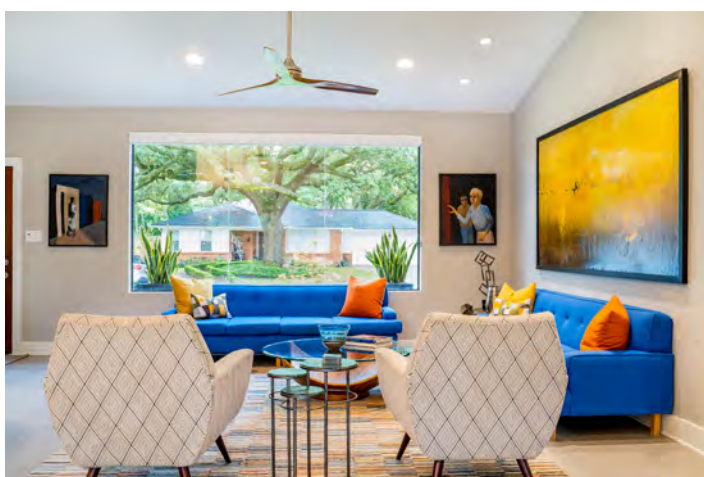
As a custom home builder, we have specific needs when it comes to appliances for our projects. Jeff and his team offer not only the selection we need for our clients, but also the expertise, competitive pricing and professional installs. Baths of America is a vendor with whom we are very proud to partner.

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.



Continued from page 16

affects the health, safety, and wellbeing of the end user. We no longer look at design with a lens of luxury or aesthetic alone. Contrarily, functionality, sustainability, and how the designed environment nurtures and supports people are the primary goals and foundation of design.

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

Shundra Harris: A designer's working knowledge of construction, the built environment, project management, material specifications, accurately communicating conceptualized design details and technical solutions, and a command of industry terminology and jargon are crucial to helping contractors and builders build successful projects.

MWG INNOVATIONS: *What sets you apart from other designers?*

Shundra Harris: I am a registered Interior Designer, qualified by education and examination. I am also a trained Engineer with an understanding of structure and construction. Those technical skillsets coupled with creativity have been invaluable to my projects and ultimately my career in design.

MWG INNOVATIONS: *What has been your most challenging project and why?*

Shundra Harris: One of my first projects was the design of a 12,000 sf Montessori school (commercial design). However, my client hired a residential contractor. Several of the commercial product specifications failed, due to residential building methods utilized. That lesson taught me to ask, verify, review and document questions and concerns throughout the construction process. Now, I host a lean design meeting with contractors and sub-contractors to review and qualify design specifications prior to implementation to alleviate and decrease unknown and unforeseen issues.

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

Shundra Harris: No matter what the project is, I develop scaled CAD drawings of the project site and proposed material selections and request the builder's material and labor allowances to ensure budget is adhered to. Design details are communicated to the construction team for installation clarity.

MWG INNOVATIONS: *What are some common mistakes builders and homeowners make?*

Shundra Harris: The top mistakes I've seen have been related to budget and schedule overruns, generally due to the lack of successful communication and proper

Continued on page 20



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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

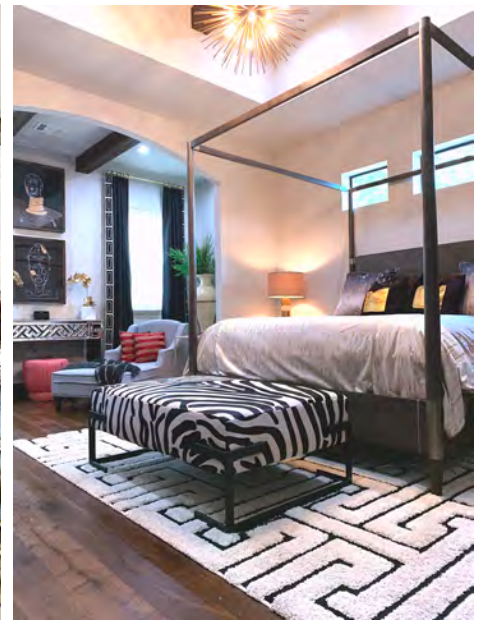
Herzog Homes has built over 2,000 on the east coast. When we opened our Texas division, we learned of Richard Arnold, owner of International Flooring, by way of a very strong recommendation from our construction lender. Any referral from a construction lender is extremely credible. We met with Richard 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.



Continued from page 18

expectations. Also, misinterpretation of design documents or lack of design information are other areas where mistakes are prevalent.

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

Shundra Harris: I attend major building and industry market shows and events annually. I also attend and teach twelve interior design continued education hours annually, required for my interior design licensing with Texas Board of Architectural Examiners and my affiliation with the American Society of Interior Designers.

MWG INNOVATIONS: *What is your favorite design style?*

Shundra Harris: My personal favorite design style is Mid-Century modern. However, my role as a designer is to guide my clients in curating the style that elevates the way they live and enhances their visual pleasures respectively.

MWG INNOVATIONS: *What fascinates you, and how have you incorporated that into your designs?*

Shundra Harris: I am fascinated by nature. It is the first source where we find good design elements. I incorporate



principles of biophilia into my designs.

MWG INNOVATIONS: *What would be your recommendation for “what to do first” in a decorating project when working with the builders and/or homeowners?*

Shundra Harris: Incidentally, “decorating” is the last 10 to 15 percent of my overall design process. The bulk of the project (85 to 90%) is analyzing, planning, developing, and sourcing. I begin projects with the programming phase, to fully understand the clients’ needs and desires.

SHUNDRA HARRIS, ASID, RID, NCIDQ

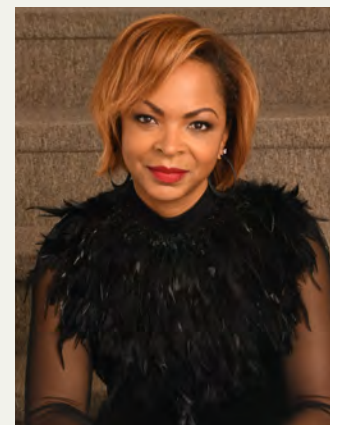
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- *Registered Interior Designer (RID)*
- *Seminars by Design*

*VP Media and Technology, TAID |
Site Advisor, CIDA |
Item Writing, NCIDQ Examination*

*DEI Committee, ASID |
Engagement Committee, ASID
Foundation*

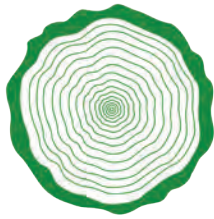
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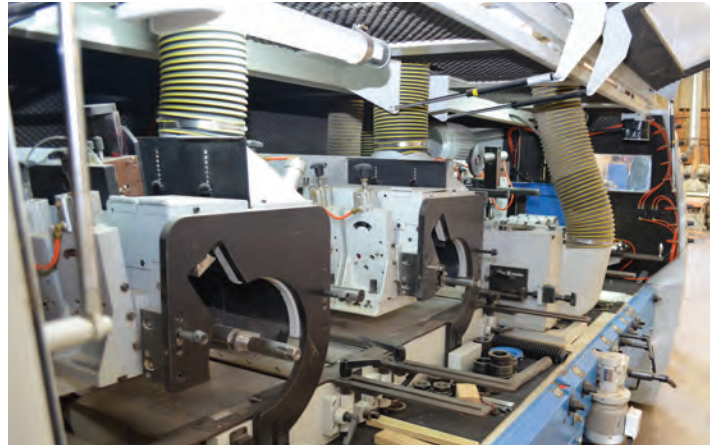
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Cullen Franz - Savannah Grace Homes

“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.

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