

THE BUILDER'S JOURNAL™

Greater Atlanta Edition

*National Feature
Countertops*



Renewal Construction, Inc.
A Higher Standard in Remodeling Construction



Photo by Warren Bond Photography.

Renewal Construction, Inc. A Higher Standard in Remodeling Construction

By Dan Sabbott

When CEO Peter Michelson founded Renewal Construction, Inc. in 2001, he set out to create a company that is “the best renovation company to work for, as well as the best one for clients to work with.” He is well on his way with 70 successful projects completed in 2007; a team whose combined construction experience exceeds 150 years and recognition by “*Qualified Remodeler*” as one of 2007’s Top 500 Remodelers in the country.

Renewal Construction is based in Decatur, GA and serves the surrounding in-town Atlanta communities. The

company is a full-service general contractor that offers kitchen, bathroom and attic renovations, as well as major additions and whole house renovations. The company formed its Small Projects Division about 5 years ago to meet growing demand for renovations focused on one room or one part of the house. Renewal Construction also participates in EarthCraft’s voluntary green building program to make houses more energy efficient, reduce utility costs and protect the environment. In 2005, EarthCraft named Renewal Construction its Renovator of the Year,

acknowledging the company’s excellence in building and leadership in meeting environmental and energy efficiency standards.

The Renewal Construction team possesses expertise in many different areas of residential construction. They all share a common passion for the type of work they do. In 2004, Peter’s brother David joined Renewal Construction, bringing more than 20 years of construction experience to the company.

Renewal Construction’s success begins with its innovative approach to remodeling construction. It is an ap-



Photo by Warren Bond Photography.

proach with the highest standards, from the company's renovation project guarantee to its commitment to green building to its comprehensive processes for guiding homeowners through remodeling projects, and much more. The company believes that, for its clients, these standards result in improved remodeling experiences, homes with superior craftsmanship and projects that add greater total value to properties. As Peter says, one of his greatest sources of satisfaction comes "when clients

are happy with their home and with Renewal's remodeling process."

Part of Renewal Construction's innovative approach to remodeling includes its **Guaranteed Renovation**® which translates into peace of mind for homeowners going through renovation projects. **Guaranteed Renovation**® covers all projects over \$50,000 and according to Peter, "we guarantee the end date, and we guarantee the fixed cost of the project." If Renewal misses the project delivery date, they refund

See Page 14

"The bottom line is: if you use Renewal Construction, your project will be an enjoyable process, done in a timely manner, on budget, and something you'll be proud of for years to come. I hope at the end of the day the whole crew at Renewal will allow themselves a moment for a smile and think "another job well done." It would be well earned!"

-J. Hixson, Decatur, GA



Photo by Warren Bond Photography.



Photo by Warren Bond Photography.

Continued from Page 7

to the client \$200 for every calendar day they are late. Their craftsmanship is also guaranteed and never compromised.

Renewal Construction's relationships with its trade partners are also unique. Peter says, "We don't call them 'sub-contractors.' We call them 'trade partners.' The reason being, the prefix 'sub' means under." In Renewal Construction's view, being equals in the relationship fosters ownership of problems and, consequently, the ability to solve problems more quickly. As Peter describes it, "Because it is a relationship, you don't get this butting of heads and finger pointing. You get it resolved. You get it worked out, and we deliver

the best product we can for our clients...It's not that issues won't come up. It is how you resolve them when they do come up."

Renewal Construction's relationships with its trade partners are designed to deliver greater quality and value to homeowners. Their approach is a stark contrast to the bid-it-out approach where the emphasis is price. Peter explains, "A lot of people think you always have to bid it out, and then what you are getting is the lowest price, but then you are not necessarily getting the best value." Renewal Construction ensures that prospective clients understand its value proposition, as Peter

maintains, "When we meet with clients, I always tell people that we are not going to be the cheapest, but we'll bring you the best value."

You could say that construction is in the Michelson family genes. Peter and David Michelson are fourth generation builders. Their Polish-born great-grandfather, Joseph Slotnik, founded a construction business in 1896. His company specialized in commercial construction, building many schools, hospitals and parking garages in the Boston area. Through the years, company leadership passed through the generations, from grandfather, to father, and finally to father

"I recommend Renewal. They performed the work on time and we had a tight deadline. The vendors they sent to work with us were quality and reliable...They are probably on the higher side of medium but you get it back in problems avoided. I would use them again; they made a difficult process go smoothly."

—Cindy Shannon, Decatur, GA

“When my home burned down in May 2004, I was at a complete loss. I needed to rebuild from scratch, and I was completely uneducated about the renovation process as well as unprepared to make any decisions about rebuilding . . . David and Peter Michelson walked me through every step and helped me make informed decisions about my new home.”

—Denise Duke, Decatur, GA

and David combined. According to Peter, “We grew up in that whole business. Our night time stories around the dinner table were more about the business side of things than the construction side of things. Vacation time was always spent with my dad in his office and around job sites.”

Peter found that he enjoyed the smaller scale residential work. After graduating from the University of Michigan, he moved to San Francisco. There he worked for the Carpenters’ Union and then for small residential companies where Peter says “that’s where I really cut my teeth in residential remodeling...we did additions, did historic preservations, renovation work on the old Victorians, very detailed work.”

From there, Peter took a break from building. He traveled throughout Asia, which included some time teaching in Taiwan. Peter enjoyed his teaching experience, so when he returned to the states, he got a Masters Degree in education, and he soon landed at The Waldorf School of Atlanta. After 5 years of teaching at The Waldorf School, Peter felt the call of construction once again, and soon thereafter he founded Renewal Construction.

Peter’s teaching experience has had a profound influence on his remodeling business. Renewal Construction’s processes place great emphasis on educating their clients and prospective clients about remodeling projects. The company’s preconstruction process is a



Photo by Warren Bond Photography.

great example. Preconstruction is the 2-5 month period which starts with the homeowner’s decision to undertake a renovation project and ends once ground is broken for construction.

“People don’t necessarily know what to expect in the remodeling process, so we really walk them through it,” Peter explains, “We’ll educate

people about what we have to do.” A Preconstruction Manager is assigned to a client, and that Manager works with the client through every detail. Preconstruction Managers can help in selecting an architect, in choosing cabinetry, flooring, etc., in conducting meetings with trade partners, and even in reviewing a project expectations

See Page 17

“Selecting a builder was a lot easier for us than finding an architect. Our same criteria applied - we wanted to find a builder who had experience with EarthCraft houses /renovations, since we didn’t want someone cutting their teeth on our project, and we also wanted the benefit of their experience as we thought through the design.

—KC Boyce, Oakhurst, GA



Photo by Warren Bond Photography.

Continued from Page 15

book. Renewal Construction makes the extra effort to lay out every facet of the project; even things like construction dust, noise and emotional experience are discussed with the homeowner. “We want them to review in detail what is going to be involved,” Peter asserts.

Emphasis on education also carries over into green building. When homeowners are undergoing any remodeling project, there are opportunities to incorporate green building features. Peter has been quick to point out to homeowners that green building is often a sound investment. A slightly higher investment upfront in a green feature such as high-efficiency HVACs can quickly pay for itself in lower utility bills. Also, for clients with a desire to have some impact on Atlanta’s water crisis, Renewal Construction can provide water-conserving options like

dual flush toilets and cisterns for rain water harvesting.

Green building is a guiding principle for Renewal Construction, and the company is clearly a leader in green. “We put some green building into every project we do,” explains Peter, “whether it’s super high-efficiency HVACs or tankless water heaters or Icynene insulation instead of fiberglass.” In fact, the company’s green leadership has even drawn national attention. The Discovery Network has selected a Renewal Construction renovation project in Decatur’s Oakhurst community to feature on its “Renovation Nation” TV show. The show will debut in 2008. The project builds on the home’s existing foundation and retains much of the original flooring. The show will follow Renewal

Construction’s progress in incorporating green elements that are essential to the renovation.

At the end of each remodeling project, Renewal Construction has a tradition of giving the homeowner a set of CUTCO knives. CUTCO makes some of the finest cutlery in the world, renowned for its craftsmanship. Peter Michelson chose the knives partly for this reason, but also because he feels the knives’ craftsmanship parallels the quality of work that Renewal Construction delivers. With the portfolio of successful projects, with the dedication and expertise of the Renewal Construction team and with so many satisfied clients, it would be hard to disagree with him.

For more information, please contact Renewal Construction at 404-378-6962 or visit them online at www.renewalconstruction.com.

TBJ