

Remodeling

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50 Big 50 Business Savvy

Gregory Smith, CKBR
Greg Smith Co.
Falls Church, Va.

Design/build remodeling
19 years in business
2006 volume: \$2.6 million
Staff: 1 office, 10 field

Gregory Smith made “the big leap” from lead carpenter to business owner in 1988, necessitated by moonlighting work that peaked with “an \$80,000 job that I couldn’t do on the side,” he says. It was another decade or so before he took the step that transformed his comfortable practice into a systematized business. “I stopped being in the field,” Smith says.

Since then, Smith (center) has handed off increasing responsibility to his lead carpenters; computerized estimating, job tracking, and accounting; created a company manual; embraced job “autopsies”; joined a peer review group; and begun work on a strategic action plan. “I’m trying to kick everyone up to the next notch,” he says. Jobs have gotten bigger, and he’s been able to dabble in new endeavors, such as limited speculative building in coveted urban neighborhoods.

Smith was a savvy marketer even before he hung up his toolbelt. He’s had a Web site for seven years, and constant refinement keeps it a strong lead source. He is proudest, however, of his volunteer service, especially a program that helps high school students remodel the homes of their less-privileged neighbors. —L.T.

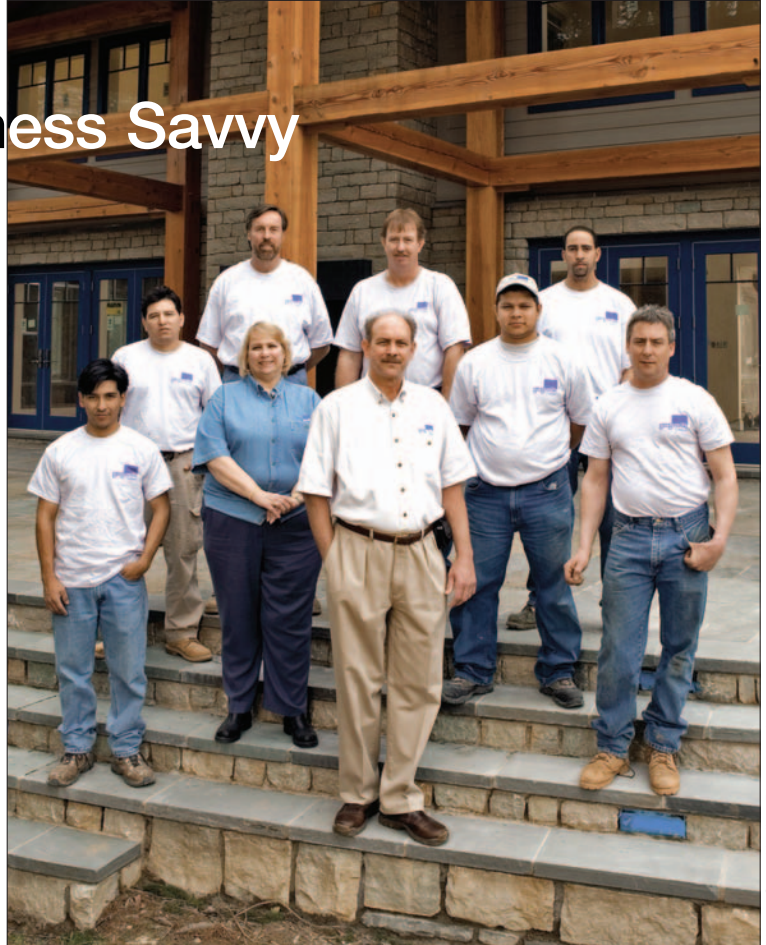


Photo: Greg Hadley Photography

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