



Relationships and teamwork are the foundation of success



By J.A. Berger

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Matt Griggs's philosophy is simple. "It's about relationships and teamwork," he said. As the owner and president of Remodeling Innovations Group (RIG), those tenets have served him well. He has been in the industry for 23 years, although his path began somewhere else. "I went to school to be a chiropractor." Soon, he realized it wasn't for him. A neighbor who recognized his talent took Griggs under his wing, teaching him all

he knows about carpentry. Griggs never looked back from that point on. He moved to Arizona where he ran a building crew, later returning to Wisconsin to work for a builder. After five years, he decided it was time to try something on his own. There was a lot of pressure to succeed. "My wife was pregnant at the time, but it was the best thing I've ever done," he said of starting the Kinzley Group. Five years ago, he started RIG. Today, the company completes 50 to 100 home remodeling projects a year. "We specialize in custom kitchens, baths and lower levels -- and our focus is always on quality." Griggs took some time to reflect on the remodeling industry.

What do you enjoy about remodeling?

I like working with the client. This is a relationship-driven business. Remodeling hits on a personal level. Clients have people in their homes doing projects, so I'm very selective about whom we work with and who comes into my clients' homes. The crew, the trades people are a direct reflection of me.

How do you differentiate your business from others?

We take a team approach. Everyone on the team has something to do with the process of achieving our client's satisfaction. In remodeling, you get what you pay for. I'm intent on having skilled, trained professionals in your home. I'm a hands-on project manager from concept to completion. You have to be comfortable with the people you are doing business with.

What advice would you give someone looking to remodel?

Get two estimates or proposals and compare apples to apples. Have a realistic budget and know what can and can't be done within your budget. We do custom work. For example, our cabinets are crafted for the space. We build around you, your lifestyle and how you function in your home. We give you value at a fair price.

How do you incorporate your client's ideas into your plans?

First, we listen to a client's wants and needs. We look at the space. We listen to client's ideas and see how we can integrate them as we look at what works for clients and their lifestyles. It's collaboration.

What activities do you participate in at the MBA?

We have been a member of the MBA for about five years. We have participated in the Home Building & Remodeling Show and we are looking to refocus our involvement in the remodeling council. We will probably be involved in the Fall Tour of Homes. The MBA is a fantastic organization with helpful resources.

How has technology changed your business?

Technology has made us more efficient with our time and communications. We email or text our clients and our blueprints and bids are now all electronic.

What advice would you give to someone looking for a career in the building industry?

Many people think they can do this, but this is a tough business. Get a good education -- whether you want to be a skill trades person or a contractor. Pay attention. This business isn't all about money; it's about making people happy. I love seeing the progress of a project and how clients react when the work is done; it's very rewarding.

What is your proudest professional achievement?

I'm very proud of becoming a carpenter and owning a successful business. We stick to what we know best. Past clients contact us all the time to do other projects for them. They tell me, "We trust you," which makes me feel proud.

What is one of your greatest business challenges?

There is a huge level of expectation in this business. You just have to remember, 'don't rush and do it right.' We are not looking to meet expectations; we are striving to exceed them.

What is the best advice you were ever given?

You only get out of life what you put into it.

What inspires you?

My family inspires me. They always come first.

Who is your personal hero?

My grandfather, Sherman Griggs. He was more like a father to me. He mentored me and taught me about life. He passed away last fall. He was a great man.

What is your dream project?

I'm living the dream.

What charitable groups are you involved with?

We are getting involved in an Autism group which sends kids to camp. We will be sponsoring two kids this summer. We also support the Little League baseball team in Germantown.

