

Small Jobs: A Pipeline to Bigger Projects

The present remodeling market is gaining strength. Between low interest rates and work that was postponed during the downturn, we have a perfect storm in the remodeling industry, and many firms have a backlog of several months of work.

Speaking from 30 years of experience watching the remodeling industry, however, I issue this cautionary note: It will not always be this way. If you have been in business for any amount of time, you have experienced more than one market downturn or recession. The next one is coming, we just don't know when. One precaution is to take on small projects.



Expanding your service offering in this way will help recession-proof your business, while also providing past clients with a service that they really need.

I understand that most remodelers have an aversion to small jobs, for a variety of reasons. They are difficult to schedule, they take time away from larger projects, and it's hard to make a profit.

But there are also some intrinsic benefits to small projects. For starters, every one of your past clients has a list of little things that need fixing. And because of your past relationship, making the sale is easy—it's frequently a one-call close.

HOW IT WORKS

One reason why small projects are unprofitable is that they are simply too small. Small jobs require scheduling several stops at different homes in one day, with lots of travel time in between.

Another drain on profit is waiting until the last minute to collect the materials needed for a small project. That usually requires at least one trip to the supplier, which makes it even harder to work at more than one site per day.

One way to solve both problems is to be proactive. Instead of waiting for past clients to call you with a to-do list, meet with them on a regular annual or semi-annual schedule. Listen to what they want done, but also take a walk around the house to evaluate items that they may not have thought about. Once you have a day's worth of work, sign a contract and set a time frame to complete the work.

Approached this way, small projects can be profitable. By signing a contact for several items bundled into a day's work, you save travel time between sites, and you eliminate a supply run because you can pre-order the materials you'll need. Plus, the flexible schedule enables you to use these small projects to fill potential downtime.

SMALL TO BIG

You already have a relationship with past clients that no other service professional has. That makes past clients your company's best source for future work. A proactive small-project management strategy will augment your marketing through client interaction. More importantly, regularly monitoring their homes for small jobs will help you identify larger remodeling projects in advance.

Help past clients with the small stuff, and the bigger work will follow. **PR**

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