



BUILDING LIFESTYLES

Racing to be the best



By J.A. Berger

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Racing cars is a skill that takes confidence and precision. Scott Riemer loves to race stock cars and takes those skills very seriously. “I’m very competitive,” he freely admitted. He carries those traits into the business he loves, as the director of sales and marketing for Gabor Design Build.

Riemer has been in the building industry for nearly two decades, and has benefitted from an honorable legacy. His grandfather, A.J. Riemer, built much of the housing stock in the once-burgeoning Thiensville area. After a number of years in the Navy and Army Reserves, Riemer joined his father in the building trades. He joined Gabor in 2015.

Being in sales and marketing does not confine Riemer to a suit and tie. “I’m in blue jeans and work boots every day, and always a red Gabor hat. I’m much more comfortable with a nail gun than with a computer.”

Gabor Design Build does both remodeling projects and new construction. Riemer took time to talk about his time in the industry.

What do you enjoy about building and remodeling?

I enjoy everything about this business: the clients, their ideas, collaborating with them on ideas and fulfilling their dreams. When a client chooses us, they are putting a lot of trust in us. I take that very seriously.

How do you differentiate your business from others?

We have what we call the ‘Gabor Design Process.’ We schedule a time with a client, ask a lot of questions, offer ideas and, most importantly, listen to what they want. We do a ‘needs analysis’ in new construction to understand how clients want

to live in their new homes. We follow up with a preliminary scope of work and price it out. We have four designers, so we present a 3-D plan. Once a client signs off on the project, we give him or her the start and completion dates. We do a pre-construction walk through. We have four project managers – all of whom have bachelor degrees or higher. We have project coordinators, too. There's a change of command at Gabor. A client can reach anyone of us. Communication is the most important thing in this business.

What advice would you give someone looking to build or remodel?

Interview, interview, interview the builders or remodelers. Your home is probably the most important possession you have. Ask if they have done projects like the one you are interested in doing. Ask if they are accredited. Have they won any design awards? Don't settle. The time you take to research a company is time well spent. Be comfortable with the design/build firm you choose.

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

People ask me what my style is. My style is my client's style. I'm a realist. I need to be honest with clients. If they want a certain design or product material that isn't functional or exceeds the budget, I will tell them. That's why clients need a certain level of trust in the company they hire. We're experts. We've done this before. I'd rather not do a job than have someone unhappy with something we went along with just to get the job.

How has being a member of the MBA helped your business?

Being an MBA member has helped me throughout the years. It keeps up with code changes and has contracts its members can use. It has an attorney on staff. It offers educational resources, which are open to all our employees. It vets its members, giving us credibility in the market. The events are great networking opportunities. I've conducted consumer seminars on choosing a remodeler for the MBA. This organization is worth the membership fee.

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

Get in this business. You can make well above-average income. We are in need of good trades people – electricians, plumbers and framers. Attend a tech or trade school, or get on-the-job training.

What is your proudest professional achievement?

I've won the Contractor of the Year award three times. I've also been a Gold winner in the Residential Historical Renovation/Restoration \$250,000 or more category, and a Silver winner in the Entire House \$500,000 to \$750,000 category. We have just recently acquired another company and have moved to a 5,000 square-foot show room in Germantown. I'm very proud of that.

Who is your personal hero?

Vince Lombardi. I'm very competitive so his saying, 'Winning isn't everything; it's the only thing' resonates with me.

What is your dream project?

That's a little like asking which of your children is your favorite. Every project is my dream project. We have designed and built an indoor hockey rink in the lower level of a client's home.

What charitable groups are you involved with?

I'm involved with Checkup for Chicks, which is a breast cancer screening program through FM 106. We're involved in the Children's Abuse Prevention Fund and the Hunger Task Force. We are a putting in a movie theater in our new site. We are hoping to open it up for community/charitable events.

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