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Owner Issues

From: **Remodeling magazine September 2010** | Posted on: September 10, 2010

Accelerated Shifts

By: Les Cunningham

According to a well-known business pattern, it takes a business owner 90 days to realize the need for a change at his or her company, 90 days to determine what that change should be, and another 90 days to implement it. In today's tough business arena, owners can't afford 270 days to make an important change. This process can be shortened if you do these three things:

- 1. Communicate** the proposed change to all employees, subcontractors, vendors, suppliers, and clients in a timely manner so you have the opportunity to lead the company to change. Put your ego aside to ask for help from everyone involved.
- 2. Allow employees a say** in the proposed changes. This will help staff believe in the changes and trust that you will stay committed to the plan.
- 3. Follow through** with the changes, manage the process, and lead your staff in affecting the changes.

Decision Time

As business slowed in fall 2008, most remodelers thought the economic meltdown would be short-lived and that all they had to do was tighten up the ship and ride things out. But remodelers who adopted this attitude did not recognize, in a timely manner, that a fundamental change had occurred in the remodeling industry. And, unfortunately, many remodelers are still waiting for the economy to stabilize and return to "normal."

Employees know when things are not going well, but they're not about to fire themselves or cut their hours or pay. As company owner, you must make those tough decisions, and most remodelers hate to make decisions that will hurt anyone in their company. However, if you ask employees for their input, they will be straight with you and can help you in making tough decisions. Then, once you and your employees have made decisions as a group, it's up to you, the owner, to step up and apply the plan.

In the current market, the sales process is particularly important. Owners should start by reviewing a list of potential projects at the beginning of the week and again midweek. This review should help indicate which aspects of the company require improvement.

—Les Cunningham is president of Business Networks, a peer-review organization for the remodeling and insurance restoration industries. les@businessnetworks.com.

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