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From: [Remodeling magazine October 2008](#) | Posted on: October 1, 2008

Renewed Dedication

Getting back to basics could help you survive in today's tough market.

By: [Les Cunningham](#)

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Remember the sense of urgency you felt when you first started your company? You wanted to get a job, any job, so that you could get some cash flowing through the business. You worked or traveled to jobsites all day and took care of paperwork and accounting in the evening.

Fast forward five years: 65% of your competitors are no longer in business, and you have survived. We are in tough times, and it could get tougher. In a recent report, Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies says that it does not anticipate any upswings until mid-2009, or more likely, the upswing will occur in 2010.

The skills you used during your initial success will be needed again to help you ride out the coming year. Review these basics to help you meet upcoming challenges:

- If you have cut back your hours over the years, consider returning to a 60-hour workweek. Review and tighten your schedule to make sure you are spending your time efficiently.
- If you are physically able to do field work, consider putting your toolbelt back on and contributing to the production side.
- Understand that your employees and subcontractors need to provide the same high-quality product and service that you provided when you were in the field.
- Accept enough jobs to give you the cash flow you need to pay your bills.
- Charge what you need to cover your overhead and make a profit.
- Find more and better ways to flatten the peaks and valleys in the market.
- Reduce your staff to the point of only doing work that is essential to your economic survival.

If you've tried all of these basic practices and are still not able to make a profit, as painful as it might be, you may need to contemplate closing your doors. Before doing so, seek out a mentor, peer, or consultant to help you review the changes you have made and the results of those changes.

—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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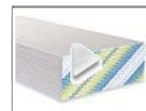


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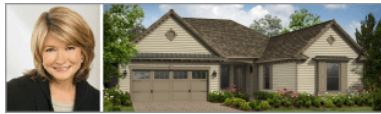
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