



Hinman Construction

Jami and Kimberley Hinman

Success Magazine: Jami how did you get started in the construction field?

Jami Hinman: In 1978, I came home from college on a Friday and went to work for Carefree Homes, a remodeling firm in Clifton Park, the following Monday. But, I always looked at the industry with amazement. I grew up in Jonesville, and was fascinated by the development over the years. As a child, I took note of the progression of houses along my bus route, instantly understanding the theory and logistics of construction.

SM: What type of construction did you focus on at the start of your company?

JH: Working and learning for five years, I was fortunate enough to have been shown the full gamut of remodeling—basement, kitchen, bath, roofing, etc. So, a remodeling and addition business was the natural course of events.

SM: What areas of construction do you specialize in today?

JH: That's a good question. The construction industry is a dynamic and competitive business. We found that in order to be a viable member in the professional remodeling field, acquiring the necessary skills in all phases of any project is crucial. I can say with great pride, we specialize in all phases.

SM: How did you develop into your current area of expertise?

JH: I think the niche Hinman Construction enjoys is due to our knowledge of the business. Usually

our first appointment with a potential client is in the form of a wish list—what they have been thinking about changing in their home. Adding a second floor, changing or “repurposing” existing interior space, or perhaps an addition off the back or side, etc. Upon first presentation we can describe in detail what has to happen and make some suggestions based on our experience. We ask a lot of questions and we listen to the answers, and then chart our course accordingly.

SM: What is your favorite type of construction project?

JH: I think if I had to put a point on one particular type of remodeling project, it would be constructing additions. Either one: single level or removing a roof system and adding a second story. All these projects have the least amount of disruption to the families involved since most of our clients remain living in the home during the construction process. Our work is visible to the homeowner. They can walk around and get a feel for size of the space and how it could best be used with respect to furniture, cabinetry (custom built by us or ordered), or lighting. Their lives are virtually uninterrupted as we continue with forward progress on their project.

SM: Why has your company thrived throughout the years while other contractors have perished?

JH: On a personal level, I believe our mission statement stands after twenty-eight years in this business: “Deliver a quality product at a fair price with honesty and integrity”. We approach every project with the understanding that our performance today will determine whether or not we are called for the next project five or ten years down the road. We do have a family business. My wife Kimberley has total control of the office, while my efforts are concentrated in the field. Many responsibilities come with having

your family name on the side of your vehicle. The most important is never forgetting that I share that name with my wife and children. We treat people the way we would like to be treated and always deliver what we promise.

SM: What is the most important aspect for your success in the field?

JH: I would say listening is at the top of the list. And when asked a question, I always try to answer truthfully, even if it hurts. If I don't know the answer, I will the next time we talk.

SM: What design services do you offer for your clients?

Kimberley Hinman: On most projects visuals are important. Not everyone has the ability to envision the end result. I try to help with that by providing drawings to show the finished product. I have a professional CAD program for this. I will draw the initial plans for preliminary review and approvals and then work closely with our engineer who will produce the final construction drawings. We also handle the permitting process, variances, and historical and/or architectural review committee approvals when needed.

SM: Kim, how did you become involved in the family contracting business?



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KH: I guess I married into it! Actually, after we built our own home in the early 90's I developed a passion for the projects and all the details related to them. Having had experience in the advertising and design field, I found I really enjoyed the whole process of planning and designing projects and following them through to fruition. Taking photos before, during, and after is very gratifying—not to mention the enjoyment one gets from happy enthusiastic clients.

SM: What balance do you bring to your company?

KH: Well, I suppose I bring another side into the equation. I am the first one people speak with when they call. In our business that in itself is important. From there I begin the process of introduction and review the preliminary project requirements. Once we meet with a client, the details are planned for and confirmed. I assist our clients with things like additions, kitchen and bath designs, as well as product selections for their project. We have some projects which may require additional details such as variances, and architectural and/or historical committee approvals. I work with our clients to develop "visuals" and conceptual drawings that coordinate with the scope of work and budget that will meet their needs. This includes design options related to their priorities and preferences. Budgets are important. No one likes surprises and in order to ensure there won't be any, coordination, planning and communication are our priority.

SM: What is your ideal client like?

JH: When Kimberley and I enter a home for the first time, immediately after introductions one party (usually the wife) produces an overstuffed file of pictures torn from magazines representing their ideas. While the ideal client has a definite vision of what they want, they may not necessarily know if it



is actually possible given the existing design of the home. Maybe someone has already told them it won't work and they will need to modify their dream. You are only governed by the limits of your imagination. There is a chemistry that begins to develop when we start explaining ideas and different ways to achieve them. Once the concept is established and everyone agrees, Kimberley draws preliminary plans with elevations...then the excitement begins!

The "ideal client" is our responsibility. Answering questions truthfully from the beginning establishes trust. We understand there may be some anxiety approaching a renovation on your castle. It is our job to reach a comfort level long before the drop cloths hit the floor.

SM: What is it like to work together in the family business, since it is so much a part of your lives?

KH: We operate as a team—all pulling together to get the job done as efficiently as possible. We work hard, but we play hard too. Many of our friends are our customers and many of our customers are our friends. That is a wonderful thing. Also, in working with family, we each have our own responsibilities, which is important. We enjoy our work and we enjoy working together. Having a family business has afforded us the opportunity to enjoy the flexibility that comes from working for yourself. There are risks, but there are also wonderful rewards. We have been able to enjoy and appreciate all that comes with running a family business.

SM: When working with your clients, how do you maintain contact throughout the job?

JH: My responsibilities in the field include daily conversations on site with the homeowner.

SM: How do you define success?

JH: Success, I believe, is being able to make a living doing what you enjoy. The remodeling and building business has allowed us to raise our family and make the dreams of our clients' remodeling needs become a reality. We have been very fortunate, dare I say blessed, to leave our legacy in such a timeless business—it is gratifying to think that our projects will be here long after we are gone!

KH: Success is having the opportunity to enjoy life and appreciate the many forms of success that come along with it. Raising a family, having a son in college, running a business, and being able to adjust our schedule so we never miss our kids' soccer games and track meets!

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