



# ON THE HOUSE

Ideas for Improving Your Home

FALL 2009 Volume 2 Number 2



Client Focus

## A Real Master Bathroom

Architects, contractors and other building professionals will tell you they can look at a house and immediately determine when it was built and what kind of amenities it has.

For example, houses built in the 1960s have a certain flow and charm to them. But they have something else in common – the rooms tend to be smaller. According to Maurice Forde, owner of Forde Windows & Remodeling, the issue with small rooms extends beyond cramped living space for the occupants. “If you decide to move and need to sell your house, small rooms make it that much harder.”

This includes having very small master bathrooms. Recently, owners of a 45-year-old home in Chicago’s north suburbs approached Forde Windows & Remodeling with such a problem. While they did not want to



sell their house, they were not happy with their master bathroom.

“The bathroom was too small and we needed to make it bigger,” the client said. “It was basically a closet turned into a bathroom. There was not enough room for two people. There was no storage space. We couldn’t even hang a towel. Plus, it was getting extremely tired, and we needed to get something done.”

Getting something done would mean considerable structural work, which is why the client turned to Forde. “This was Forde’s third project with us. They had just completed structural work in the living room and kitchens and ceilings. So I did

not trust somebody else to do this.”

According to Maurice Forde, the project was complicated. “First we had to break through the outer walls to extend the exterior of the house. We had to work around the chimney and roof line. We had to replace the dry wall in the ceiling. And there were all sorts of leaks in the plumbing that we had to fix.”

Once the structural work was completed, the Forde team was able to make the bathroom a more functional space. The process began with Maurice Forde going with the client to purchase the right materials.

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*From Maurice*

## **Relationships**

Wikipedia (you can't use Webster's anymore) defines a relationship as "a relatively long-term association between two or more people. This association may be based on emotions like love and liking, regular business interactions, or some other type of social commitment."

Relationships are a key to success in my business, as I am sure they are in yours. For example, it is very important for me to have strong relationships with my clients. Many of my clients do business with me over and over again. For example, the project featured in this newsletter was the third project we did for this client.

Additionally, we rely heavily on our clients for referrals. We find that our current clients are our best source of new business. So maintaining excellent relationships with our clients is important for repeat business, as well as new business.

Strong relationships with our suppliers are also very critical to our success. It is important for us to work only with high quality suppliers, so we can provide our clients with the highest quality products. But there are plenty of companies that provide high quality products. We only have relationships with a small percentage of them – suppliers that can back their products with excellent service and will deal with us honestly. These relationships allow us to get the best prices and service for our clients. A good example of a supplier we have a great relationship with is Innovative Insulation Solutions. We used their foam insulation product in the client project cited in this newsletter.

But my most important professional relationships are with my employees. Now, many people might say our most important relationships should be with our clients. But I could not possibly have strong relationships with clients without having strong relationships with my employees.

The most important relationships I have in my life are with my family. That starts with my wife Sari, who also works with me in the business. You can learn more about her on the back page of this newsletter. And of course, right with Sari are my relationships with my children – Ilyssa and Jared.

So what is the basis of a strong relationship? I am no expert, but I think there are two keys to a successful relationship. I try to remember these every day.

First, the most important attribute of a successful relationship is communication. It has to be honest and open. For example, I make certain that my clients know exactly what they can expect when we initiate a project for them – both the plusses and the minuses. And if we fall short, we expect them to let us know. The same holds true with our suppliers, and our employees.

Second is trust. If you don't trust someone, you can't work with them. I need to be able to trust that my suppliers will be honest with me, and won't make promises they can't deliver. And, obviously my employees and you, my clients, need to trust me that our company will deliver what we promise.

Relationships aren't easy, but they have played an important role in helping me both personally and professionally, I hope you can say the same thing.

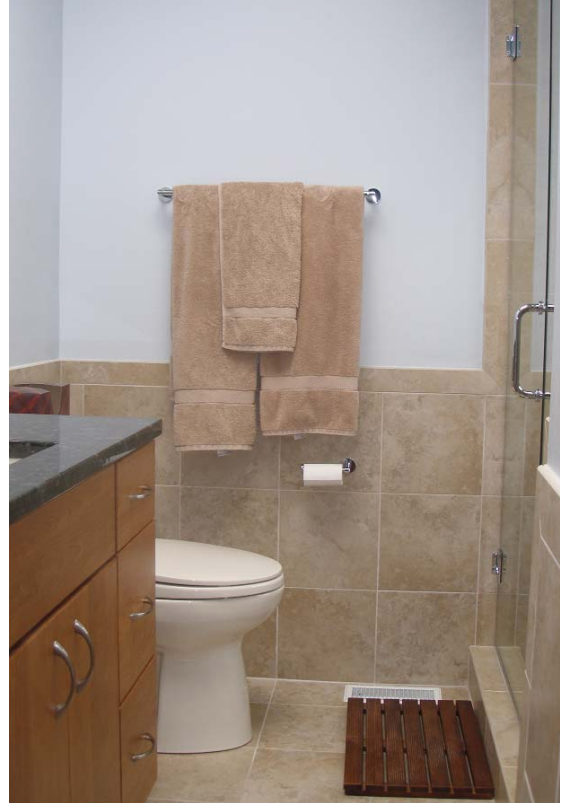
*Maurice*

## **"A Real Master Bath"**

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"Maurice helped us work with the right reps at all the places. They facilitated the decision process and helped us get to a decision when my wife and I disagreed," the client said.

The new bathroom now has a much roomier shower with modern fixtures and a new vanity



with built in soap dishes and plentiful storage. "Everything is top drawer in terms of the tile and materials," the client said. "It was a nice, thorough job and we are very pleased. We even have a place to hang a towel," the client concluded with a smile.

**For more information about this project, or others, call us at 847/562-1188, or e-mail us at [info@fordedesignbuild.com](mailto:info@fordedesignbuild.com)**



## Become More Energy Efficient and Get a Tax Break

If you didn't take advantage of Cash for Clunkers, the government is giving you another way to save money and at the same time help the environment. Under the Federal Energy Star program, homeowners can save up to \$1,500 on their taxes by making their homes more energy efficient this year.

Tax credits are available at 30% of the cost, up to \$1,500, in 2009 & 2010 for:

- **Windows and doors**
- **Insulation**
- **Roofs (metal and asphalt)**
- **HVAC**
- **Water heaters (non-solar)**
- **Biomass stoves**



This offers the following benefits:

- You'll be helping the environment by conserving energy
- In the long run, you will be saving money because your energy costs will be lower
- You will get the quick hit tax credit

You can go to our Website ([www.fordedesignbuild.com](http://www.fordedesignbuild.com)) and click on the link to the program at the bottom of our home page for more information. Even though this program runs through 2010, take advantage of it this year and begin enjoying the benefits right away.



### Product Focus

## Spray Foam Insulation – The Sensible Choice

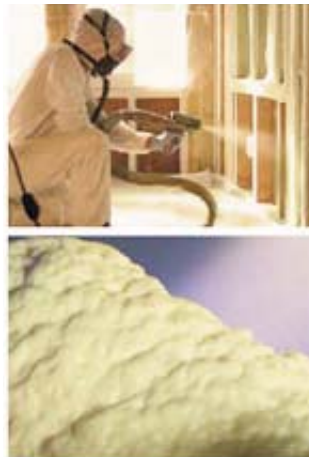
Spray foam insulation, such as that offered by Innovative Insulation Solutions, has several advantages over more traditional types of insulation. The most important is that it is much more energy efficient than other types of insulation because it sticks to the structure and expands to fill every crack and opening.

So why doesn't everybody use it? One word – cost. Spray foam insulation costs more than other types of insulation. However, if you look at cost over the life of the structure, spray foam insulation actual-

ly is a bargain. First, labor costs for installing spray foam are less than for installing other types of insulation. So you make up a lot of the cost differential there. But more significantly, since spray foam insulation is so much more efficient, your energy costs will be much lower.

That is why we used spray foam insulation in the project highlighted in this newsletter, and why we constantly recommend it.

For more information, visit [www.gotfoaminsulation.com](http://www.gotfoaminsulation.com).





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Meet the Forde Team

## Meet Sari Forde



When you call our office or receive a call to schedule work, chances are you will be talking with Sari Forde. Sari takes care of all the administrative and behind the scenes tasks that keep our company running smoothly (yes, that includes sending out those bills you get from us).

“My favorite part is talking with customers and helping them,” Sari said. “It’s great to help people solve their problems, and very satisfying to hear that we’ve done a good job for them.”

Sari, whose father was also in the contracting business, lives in Northbrook with husband Maurice, children Ilyssa and Jared, and dogs Fiona, Decklin, and Murphy.

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