

### David Lupberger

SEMINAR: "MANAGING THE EMOTIONAL HOMEOWNER"



On behalf of Northern California Chapter, Patricia Brown thanked the event host: University Electric Home Appliance Center and meeting sponsor: GE Monogram for excellent food and great wine! Their continued support to the chapter is very much appreciated.

Jim Heintz (UE) acknowledged GE for their long relationship with them. He also requested professionals to visit the North Hall Section at PCBC to view new lines and products of GE. John Schmitt (GE) thanked everyone for joining the evening.

Patricia Brown thanked Carol Gillum, Mollyanne Sherman and Jennifer Ho for driving to Sacramento to oppose SB 1312 on May 29<sup>th</sup>. She also encouraged all CKDs and CBDs to take the CCRE Exam on Oct 18<sup>th</sup>, to become CIDs. Deadline for applications: Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Please note that: **THIS IS THE LAST EXAM BEING OFFERED IN THE OLD FORMAT** (i.e. 75 questions on California codes)...Starting 2009, the new exam will have 175 questions, and will also include Title 24. Patricia also informed about the New Design Competition introduced by the chapter, and encouraged everyone to participate and enter their best works!! She thanked Marge and Judy for putting together the wonderful Competition Brochure.

Charlene Rouspil talked about the membership drive from Mid-Sept to Oct, which will include excellent prizes!! (please look for more information on prizes, on chapter web site). Flyers will be out in Aug.

Toni Dewaal thanked California Home + Design. *We've been in their event calendar and RSVP section.*

Nancy Wolford, Dept. Chair, Canada College, acknowledged 4 Canada Students who received \$50 awards for winning GE Charette.



Sherry Faure introduced David Lupberger, the Seminar speaker for the evening! 90% of Lupberger's works comes from referrals, and his experience in managing customer expectation urged him to write his book: *Managing the Emotional Homeowner*. Lupberger believes that best customer service comes when a remodeler can deliver consistent results!



## Seminar Recap: "Managing the Emotional Homeowner"

*"As a designer, you understand construction, what you don't understand is people's emotions"*

When a project starts, what expectation does a homeowner have? They've probably seen the "home makeover shows" on TV, and they think projects take much less time! What they *don't* know is what their 5-day spreadsheet looks like! The staging is not shown on TV. They had probably 40 plumbers working at one time, and the electricians had 10 hours to finish the job! ... *How often do you have 40 plumbers working for your job?!* It is important that we start with creating "realistic" expectations!!

### We'll take 3 steps for discussion tonight:

- In Homeowner's shoes
- Specific tips
- Identifying the homeowners from HELL

### In Homeowner's shoes:

For homeowners, home is the biggest investment; there is financial risk involved. Home is an extension of their personalities; it is a reflection of "who they are". Homeowners are scared of custom building. Their fears...

- Crooks: fear of being deceived
- Money: they always think project is costing more
- Disappointment: *I didn't know all this was involved in the construction process, after spending all the money, what if I don't like it!*
- Disruption: Clients staying in the house through the remodel, have a lot of disruption in their schedules.
- Loss of control: Can't find anything!

Homeowners are scared of the construction process, and *they don't trust contractors!*  
Time of high anxiety by homeowner...

- Financial stress

- Emotional stress: the Fear Factor...*Projects grow from little to big. Am I ready for this!*
- Dependency: on others to do the job
- Marital stress: between partners...who wins the decisions!

For homeowners its their life! Designers make their dream happen – it is an important task!

“People know that extracting the wisdom tooth by a dentist will be painful, so nobody wants it!”  
*How can we prepare people for the process, their thoughts, their feelings!*

One of the contractors had a habit of talking to the homeowner 15-20 mins at the beginning of the day, for what would be done, and 15-20 mins. at the end of the day before leaving. What was he doing? *Selling experience!*

Homeowners go through an “Emotional Roller Coaster” ride through various phases of the project. For example, when the design begins, their mood level is at peak, then it slowly dips, and bottoms out at bids/contracts! They think: the design process has taken too long! Then the curve again rises during the construction process, when they feel...*its actually happening!* They’ll say...*this is wonderful, you’ll be done in 3 weeks!* Next it dips around “dry wall sanding”...when they see the spaces taking shape, and feel...*oh this is not too big, or what if this bathroom moved there!* They think: *how bad can the dust be through construction!* But their mood changes when they take out their black suits full of dust!  
*3 months* after the last doorknob is installed and the project has finally finished, their energy is elevated again and they feel...*thank God I did this!!! 3 MONTHS!* ...It takes long for negative memories to leave!!

There are 4 elements of trust...

- Consistency: Disorganized workers bug! Homeowners like consistency on time.
- Honesty: Letting people know what’s happening. Acknowledge mistakes...take responsibilities. 90% of homeowners appreciate honesty. It diffuses situation, and preserves reputation.
- Promise keeping
- Reassurance: If you stop by a homeowner’s house and just ask...*Is everything OK?* It will probably spark an hour of discussion, but... that they were able to vent when they needed most, and your spending time with them is what they will remember. They will definitely give you more referrals.

### **\$1000 Tips:**

- Simple documentation w/carbonless memo forms: fill in action items. Having all notes in writing takes out some of the emotion! When required, you have a “*paper trail*”, with homeowner’s signatures, to use as reference.
- Homeowner’s notebook: Give them a copy of documents to keep, not in loose sheets of paper, but as a notebook, which they would want to keep, this is important!
- Weekly progress meetings: Meetings on T, W or Th mornings are good, because everyone’s awake and fresh!

- Documented schedule: People do not understand MS Project! So, use a simple spreadsheet explaining the weekly jobs, also include the payment schedule. Its easier to see in one sheet when what is due!
- On-site job book: From the pre-construction phase, set their expectation to write the questions in the on-site book, and that the designer would respond in 24 hours! Also, take digital pictures as the job progresses, and put them in the book.

## **Homeowner from HELL!**

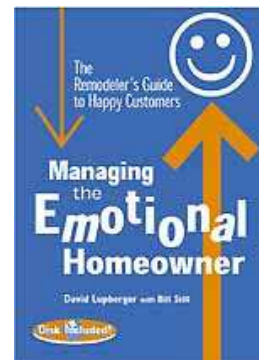
Some homeowners don't have a problem putting you out of business! When did you know it was a difficult client? ...*people who are not clear, and have a disconnect somewhere!*

Taking a project is like a marriage between the designer and the client for 4-6 months! So, it is very important to communicate clear! Look for RED FLAGS! If it looks they do not trust you, do not take the job! *Who is to control the job?!!* You are the expert, you know best! The client should agree to job procedures, before the job starts!

Learn how to say NO!! Sometimes we tend to compromise to make a sale. Take your project manager with you, and see his reaction! If he says...*I'm not working if you take this project, then...!*

How do you say "NO" to people you don't want to work with? Do you say...*I'll give him a high price?* Be honest! Just say...*I can't give you what you are looking for!* If you're straight, they respect you for it! Be clear about your job and procedures!!!

For purchase of book: "*Managing the Emotional Homeowner*", please go to: [www.turnkeyprogram.com](http://www.turnkeyprogram.com)



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