

BUSINESS

Remodeler Ranked Largest in the Nation

BY MEREDITH BILLMAN-MANI
THE CONNECTION

BOWA Builders Inc., headquartered in McLean, has emerged in the remodeling business as the little engine that could. The company is now ranked as the largest whole-house remodeler in the nation but has managed to do so with only a few jobs a year.

BOWA specializes in upscale renovation and addition

projects in the area. Western Fairfax county has emerged as one of their strongest markets, with an average renovation costing over half a mil-

lion dollars.

Annual billings for BOWA are over \$23 million, and the average number of projects the company takes on is only 30.

Industry insiders say the company has built an incredible reputation in a short period of time based in large part on its full-service mantra.

"Being the largest whole-house remodeler is kind of cumulative. BOWA has kept on top of the evolution in the remodeling industry," said industry analyst John Byrd. "They've done it by knowing what the clients want and by being able to offer a range of services to their clientele."

BOWA co-founder Josh Baker said, "Our commitment is heroic customer service and delivering for our client."

Those efforts have paid off, according to Baker. Forty percent of their business these days is repeat clients, and 90 percent of new projects are from word-of-mouth references.

Baker and his partner, Larry Weinberg, started the business 17 years ago. They hatched the idea as fraternity brothers at the University of Virginia.

"We decided we wanted to go into business together and started from there. With each job we tried to grow our business," said Baker.

The pair started out building decks after

college and soon realized there was an open niche in doing upscale remodeling. As the company grew, Baker and Weinberg realized that attracting quality employees would help them further the business.

"Our core ideology is to hire good people, to treat them well, and to invest in them," said Baker.

BOWA now has 75 full-time employees and was recently named by Washingtonian magazine as one of the best companies to work for in the area.

"As BOWA grows, attracting and retaining good management will be paramount in remaining at the top of our industry," said Weinberg.

"In allowing executives to rise to the level of owner, BOWA has a competitive advan-

tage in the war for talent that will help ensure the company's success for years to come."



BOWA founder Josh Baker