

Advancing Professionalism

Michael A. Menn, AIA, CGR, CAPS, has built a career around award-winning remodeling design and improving industry professionalism.

By Jon Minnick, Managing Editor



Michael Menn, AIA, CGR, CAPS, is one of the principals of Design Construction Concepts, Ltd. (DCC) of Northbrook, Ill. He has built a career around giving of himself and his company, winning awards and instilling a higher level of professionalism for the industry.

“I think at this point in my life and career, we can be more focused on giving back to both the association and to the public in a very even way,” says Menn. “Both of my business partners and my involvement outside the everyday business is probably greater now than it ever was in the last 17 years.”

In 2007, Menn was chairman of the local NAHB Remodelers chapter. He has also sat on the local chapter’s board of directors for the last five years. Currently, he also serves as the local chairman for the NAHB Remodeler membership drive called the Road Show. He is also chairman for the local tour of remodeled homes which DCC sponsors every May.

To Menn being part of any professional organization or association is a must for any business. “My involvement with NAHB has allowed me to grow both professionally; it has given me education, and other opportunities both on a local and national level,” says Menn. “It has opened up doors for meet-

ing other remodelers and builders across the country that have given me insight into how people do their business. To me, that’s invaluable.”

In his local community, Menn has sat on his local zoning board of appeals and local senior housing commission. He is also involved with Rebuilding Together, a national charity program that supports families through remodeling work on their primary residence. His firm, DCC, also does a lot of work for the homeless and women in need.

In 2004, DCC won the Greater Chicago Better Business Bureau Torch award for marketplace ethics which was a daunting task for the company, but a great honor. “We were one of the first construction type companies that have won this,” explains Menn. “Our industry has a bad reputation to begin with and to win this Marketplace Ethics award was just phenomenal. Anytime we can elevate our profession, we’re doing a great justice for remodelers locally and nationally. To win this award elevated DCC to the point where we’re a qualified recommendation. When you get an award from the BBB it helps in our marketing.”

Menn and DCC have also done things to grow the business and become more professional. A little over two and a half years ago DCC merged with another company that

mainly does multifamily renovation and some exterior renovations. DCC felt this was a way to level out the ups and downs that the industry follows.

DCC is also currently going through a process of rebranding to help become even more professional in the marketplace. “Through the wisdom of the consultants, we were told that we need to be more professional than a lawyer or any other professional that our affluent clientele use on a constant basis. So we’re taking steps both internally and externally to achieve that goal,” says Menn.

Menn and his partners are also standardizing their processes to be more professional. Menn feels that marketing is all encompassing for a company and includes everything from the company’s appearance to stationary cards, brochures, site

signs and how someone conducts a meeting on-site with a homeowner and subcontractor.

“Every employee must understand the process from the time that a call comes in until the one-year warranty is through,” explains Menn. “So whether it’s my partner or myself, a project manager, one of our staff architects or our administrative assistant, whoever answers the phone, it’s always answered the same way. If we’re going to send out a fax transmittal, it would always be filled out the same way. Everyone is familiar with that process.”

Menn feels his best business practice that helps DCC and himself be successful is making sure every single client understands the process they’re going through. This starts with the design and continues through until the end of the one-year warranty. | QR

FAST FACTS ABOUT MICHAEL A. MENN, AIA, CGR, CAPS

- **Company:** Design Construction Concepts, Ltd.
- **Location:** Northbrook, Ill.
- **Years in business:** 18
- **Industry involvement:** 2007 local chairman of remodelers council (HBAGCR); local chapter board of directors for last five years; local chairman for the Road Show and local tour of remodeled homes; has been asked to be vice chairperson of the NAHBR Public Affairs committee.
- **Achievements:** Winner of the Greater Chicago Better Business Bureau Torch Award. Over last 15 years has won several awards through the Greater Chicago Home Builders Association, Master Design Awards, and Chrysalis Awards. Company has also been honored by being named state and regional remodeler.