

## RICK AND MARCIA WILLET WILLET CONSTRUCTION

Lincoln, Neb.

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**Years in Business:** 23  
**2017 Volume:** \$2.2 million  
**Staff:** 16

Longevity has been key for Rick Willet. Several carpenters and the production manager have been with the company at least 16 years. Willet says these employees have become "the face of the company."

Willet adds that there is no magic bullet for keeping employees so long. He says that they simply enjoy working for the company and he treats them like family, paying them as well as he can and including them in company decisions.

"We talk about everything within the company," Willet says. "We are open to suggestions to make it a better company for our customers and also a better company for our employees."

He also makes sure his subs adhere to the same company ideals. Subs sign an agreement that lays out the company's expectations. In addition, Willet meets with his subcontractors to revisit the expectations and to get feedback about his company.

Happy employees bring happy customers. Willet says about 60% of his business comes from repeat and referral clients. And more than that, Willet says some of those clients have come back frequently. While some customers may return every three years or so with a project, Willet has some clients who return to the company for a new project every year.

"In our mission statement, it's stressed that our main purpose is to provide such great service they can't wait to do the next project," Willet says.

"I account this to all our team that they make it such an enjoyable process," he continues. "... My employees have made Willet Construction what it is today."



## ERIC SWANSON DESIGN BUILD REMODELING GROUP OF MARYLAND

Sykesville, Md.

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**Years in Business:** 5  
**2017 Volume:** \$2 million  
**Staff:** 5

After running a firm that primarily did smaller jobs, Eric Swanson created a company in his preferred niche: major renovations and alterations. Once he began Design Build Remodeling Group (DBRG), Eric brought in his brother, Todd, as general manager. About the time Eric launched the business, he moved to Denver.

Having an absentee owner from the get-go is rare, but it doesn't faze these two. "I've been working for Eric for 23 years," Todd says. "He taught me everything I know. I know what he expects while being gone and how he would do things."

Eric estimates about half of DBRG's prospects approach the company for a project without having arranged a way to pay for it. To relieve financial worries, DBRG has partnered with a local bank to offer financing options.

## JOE REED AND JACOB THOMPSON HOME RUN SOLUTIONS

Mill Creek, Wash.

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**Years in Business:** 12  
**2017 Volume:** \$1.2 million  
**Staff:** 7

For Jacob Thompson, creating a name for his company centered around one term: solutions. To him, remodeling is all about finding solutions to budget issues, design challenges, and more. And for the rest of the name, he turned to his favorite sport. "The home run is the most exciting, impactful aspect of the game, and with that I felt I had captured the purpose of my business," he explains.

Home Run Solutions lets employees self-schedule their work and choose start times that meet family needs. It sends carpenters to jobs relatively near their homes so they'll require less commuting time. That's vital in this area 20 miles north of traffic-plagued Seattle.

Processes matter, too. One time, a fridge stuck out further beyond the countertop than a customer imagined. Now that potential problem is part of the design checklist.