

4 Trends in Residential Repaint

...and how to make them pay off for you



With the economic downturn taking a toll on new construction, residential repaint has become a key opportunity area for many contractors. Understanding the current trends will help you prosper in this competitive market.

Trend No. 1: Expanded Services

It's not just about painting siding, walls and trim anymore. Many professional painting contractors are looking for new sources of revenue that complement their painting skills. Faux finishing, staining decks, sealing walkways, waterproofing driveways and coating concrete are all possibilities. Some have even expanded into the role of remodeler. You might consider listing any or all of these options on your quote to let your customers know you offer these services.

In the world of decorative finishes, many painting contractors have chosen in the past to refer or subcontract this work to specialists. If you've shied away from going

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after this kind of work yourself, new easier-to-use tools coming to the market in 2010 could make it your year to test the waters.

Sherwin-Williams, for example, is introducing a new line this summer called Faux Impressions that is designed to make it easier than ever for residential painters to explore opportunities in this lucrative niche market.

The Faux Impressions system uses fewer and easier steps to get beautiful results in up-to-date colors and timeless styles. The full array of products, application techniques and tools helps you get consistent results. Most of the techniques are engineered to work with the matte finish of the company's popular Duration Home Interior Latex as the basecoat and the paint used to tint the glaze.

Similarly, you can create a new income stream by using DeckScapes, a complete line of deck care products ranging from cleaners and prep products to stains and sealers.

Concrete coatings are another growth opportunity for residential painters. Easy-to-use products like SherCrete Flexible Concrete Waterproofer give you the opportunity to expand your services to concrete balconies, walkways, pool decks, patios, planters, and concrete block and stucco walls. Sherwin-Williams Concrete & Driveway Sealer and Porch & Floor Enamel can help you expand into weatherproofing and coating concrete and wood floors.



Trend No. 3: Green Growth

The momentum of the green movement continues to gain speed, and now is the perfect time to reap the benefits in your residential repaint business. And, with new government indoor air regulations going into effect across the country, your customers need a partner who can help them meet stringent environmen-

tal requirements without sacrificing performance.

Painters can learn from the examples already set by companies who embraced the green business model early on, like T. Paul Sek Painting in Santa Cruz, Calif.

"In the beginning, we had to do a lot of client education on the benefits of greener products, but now people are calling us," says Debbie Sek, a partner in the company with

Trend No. 2: Marketing

As contractors look for ways to attract new jobs in a sluggish economy, marketing is more important than ever.

“When cash flow is squeezed, marketing budgets are often the first to get slashed,” says Jared Blank, an analyst with Zeta Interactive. Instead of eliminating marketing, he says, it’s the perfect time to become more efficient and customer-focused.

“Lean times are exactly when your company needs marketing the most,” adds Terry Begue, an Ohio contractor and author of *The Wealthy House Painter’s Guide To Having It All*. “Consumers are restless and looking to make changes in their buying decisions.”

There are some good industry-specific programs to help you upgrade your marketing materials without spending a lot of money. One example is Painters Advantage. This web-based resource includes a complete collection of business building tools, from custom apparel with your company logo to templates for direct mail cards, door hangers, quote forms, signage, business cards, thank you cards and other business forms.

Painters Advantage also provides access to podcasts, webinars and industry training, as well as a free monthly e-mail newsletter with product tips and success stories from painters across the continent. See paintersadvantage.com to sign up and get more ideas.



her husband Paul. “We’re positioned today as green painting experts in our community and beyond for our eco-friendly practices, techniques and top-notch material choices.”

Their website, greenpaintingcontractor.com, includes a “Go Green” page in which they outline their green business practices, and Sek attributes their continued strong sales at least in part to their green strategy.

Sek promotes the use of Sherwin-Williams GreenSure® designated coatings like Duration Home

and Harmony Interior Latex and recycles or re-uses 90 percent of all project materials. Like zero-VOC and low-VOC products, the green practices you install at your company can also be used for marketing and positioning purposes to help you stand out from your competition. The Sherwin-Williams LEED® and VOC Coatings Reference Guide plus detailed green paint information and resources can be found at swgreenspecs.com.

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Trend No. 4: Selling Color

To residential customers, color selection is often the most important aspect of the paint job. But selecting colors can be overwhelming for homeowners and frustrating for contractors. In the past, many painters have chosen to avoid the potential pitfalls by leaving color choice up to designers and the homeowner. But you now have a golden opportunity to increase your color-consulting capability thanks to new and improved color tools.

A perfect example is the recently updated Color Visualizer on sherwin-williams.com. It is an excellent and powerful tool to help your customers in the color selection process. You can now work with your customer and upload photos of their home – exterior images or interior rooms – to see how any number of color combinations will look before a drop of paint is purchased. Custom colorized images of their rooms can be saved, emailed, downloaded and printed.

“When it comes to color selection, there’s nothing more important than making sure the shade you select is one that

matches a space’s surroundings,” says Jackie Jordan, director of color marketing for Sherwin-Williams. “We know that our customers have been looking for a way to navigate this process with greater ease and efficiency, and we’re thrilled to provide them a solution with the latest enhancements to the Color Visualizer.”

The free ColorSnap iPhone application (swcolorsnap.com) is a fun and effective way to help your customer find the colors and coordinating palettes that most closely match their favorite hues. Sherwin-Williams’ new Exterior Residential Color Cards are another tool that helps you make the color selection process with homeowners go easier. Because color choice varies from region to region, six color cards have been created. Each card consists of eight home styles with three color schemes for each, so homeowners can easily visualize the options.

Some painting contractors have increased their color credibility with customers by working in conjunction with professional designers and interior decorators. Learn the advantages of this approach from a one-man shop in the Midwest in our “Painter to Painter” column on page 14. **PPC**