

B2B Profile: Heidi Flanders, co-owner/designer, Integrity Development & Construction, Inc., Amherst

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NAME: Heidi Flanders

JOB TITLE, COMPANY: Co-owner and designer, Integrity Development & Construction, Inc., Amherst

WEBSITE: www.integbuild.com

AGE: 34

WHEN THE BUSINESS STARTED: Integrity was started in 1991 by Peter Jessop. Anna Novey and I became partners in 2012.

WHAT YOU DO: We are a full service general contractor, providing innovative design/build solutions for commercial and residential projects.

EXPERIENCE: We have completed jobs ranging from small residential projects to multimillion-dollar commercial contracts.

THE MARKET: Homeowners, businesses and institutions throughout the Pioneer Valley, seeking creative design solutions, fine craftsmanship and exceptional customer service.

HOW YOU REACH OUT: We try to sponsor as many community events as possible, whether it be volunteering our own time or donating to a worthy cause. Community involvement has always been part of our corporate culture. We also use traditional advertising, such as print ads, postcards, newsletters, our website, etc.

WHAT FINANCING HURDLES HAVE YOU FACED AND HOW HAVE YOU HANDLED THEM? As new partners of Integrity, Anna and I work countless hours necessary to run the business while maintaining our current positions as project manager and designer.

KEY TO SUCCESS: By providing our clients with excellent project coordination along with quality construction, we are building relationships with each job. When customers are happy, they tell their friends and neighbors. There is no better PR than our clients' referrals.

CHALLENGES: The cost of construction varies depending on the project and materials selected. The challenge for us is to align the clients' budgets with their desires. Here at Integrity, we've made a commitment to maintaining a full-time design and project management staff who work together with our clients to find innovative solutions using a wide variety of products to fit their budgets and to fulfill their dreams.

MISSTEP YOU LEARNED FROM: Past experiences have led us to avoid giving off-the-cuff estimates without details and knowledge of the project and products being used. The first and lowest number anyone hears is the one they remember.

WHAT OTHERS COULD LEARN FROM YOU: I believe that continuing education is the cornerstone to my advancement. I recently became a Certified Aging in Place Specialist, which enables me to better communicate the importance of sustainable design and provide cost-effective design solutions that will accommodate clients' current and future needs without sacrificing style.

WHO HELPED MENTOR YOU PROFESSIONALLY: My business partner, Peter Jessop, having been in the industry for over 40 years, continues to be a great source of knowledge for me and Anna. We hope to follow in his footsteps by mentoring young business professionals and continue his legacy of building this business with integrity.

TOP GOALS FOR 2013: Expand our client base in the Pioneer Valley.

ADVICE FOR OTHERS SEEKING BUSINESS SUCCESS: Be honest. Be respectful. And be decisive.

PARTING THOUGHT: Find what it is you love to do and believe in yourself.

