

Managing an award-winning business takes a lot of savvy, determination, grit and relentless drive to offer a product and service of unparalleled superiority. No matter how successful a business is,

a series of personal trials that have given her a greater understanding of how the tests in one's private life sometimes challenge – and eventually empower – one's professional life.



however, there are those days when obstacles may fall onto the path quicker than one can pick them up and turn them over into stepping stones. Mary Thompson is one such business owner who has seen

Mary and her husband Joe own Architectural Craftsmen, a leader in the home remodeling industry with a focus on historic homes. Recently, however, Mary has experienced a number of personal



setbacks that might have caused a less experienced and less motivated entrepreneur to put on the brakes. Not only has she battled breast cancer with multiple surgeries, she also lost a brother last October and, like many business owners, has had to navigate her enterprise through the COVID-19 crisis. Despite all of these road blocks, Mary, along with Joe's support, maintains a positive mindset.

"The lesson I have learned is that you can take whatever life dishes out to you and use it to your advantage," she reflected, realizing she has her own story to tell that supports the story her business conveys.

The Thompsons understand every home has a story to tell, and it has become their mission to reveal those stories and make them page-turning works of art through their unique architectural design and craftsmanship. They are not only seasoned professionals within the industry, but also perfectionists, honest and proficient at their craft. The current pandemic, however, has created somewhat of an enhanced motivation for the Thompsons in that they perceive education of the client as a highly integral part of the process.



"It is important to educate clients about the cost of remodeling projects," explained Mary, who indicated that certain home improvement shows tend to convey the wrong ideas and often present unrealistic expectations, making the whole process



seem a bit more glorious than it might actually be.

"We prefer to gather our information and educate our clients through the use of NARI or NAHB that can show actual costs and expectations of projects," stated Mary.



"We just want clients to understand upfront what their particular project entails so there are no misunderstandings or surprises."

During the pandemic, Architectural Craftsmen team has focused its efforts on smaller projects, such as kitchen and bath updates, which is actually the staple of the business. And when one-on-one meetings with the client are not ideal, there are other approaches to get the job successfully accomplished.

"We enjoy using Houzz and Pinterest to share ideas when we cannot get together with a client," expressed Mary. "We have also conducted several project meetings through online applications."

Architectural Craftsmen is a well-oiled machine, able to withstand not only the test of time like many of the homes on which they work, but also the unexpected "adventures" that fuel this business's passion to continue offering an unwavering premier product and service even when outlying situations tend to waver. ■

PRO TIPS...

Life will not always be easy, at home or in business. The key is to constantly surround yourself with support. Professionally, that could mean hiring a banker or an accountant to maintain bookkeeping records. Build relationships with vendors and clients now so that when unexpected hardships arrive, you have the strength and resolve to overcome what you previously thought you could not. Sometimes a bit of adversity is the secret ingredient to success.

