

# The Painter's RAG



PDCARESIDENTIALFORUM.ORG

## In this Issue...

From the President

Editor's Note

Name That Conference

Save the Date

PDCA EXPO & PIPP  
(entry deadline is  
Jan 8, 2015)

How Will Your  
Team Plan for 2015?

Niche Markets &  
Winter Work  
– Kitchen Cabinet  
Refinishing

2015 Colors of the Year

Vendor Spotlight  
Advisors on Target

Board of Directors

Sponsors



## From the President



### I am a service snob.

In fact I occasionally mortify my daughter in public over my disbelief that I have to beg

people to be excited or engaged as they take my money. The reason is simple. At Precision Painting and Decorating, we strive to make the painting experience a great one. In fact that experience is stated in our Purpose:

*"Our team of service professionals are altering the perception of the contracting world by providing our clients with complete confidence and minimal disruption from beginning to end."*

What amazes me is the diminishing customer experience, despite it being a critical value to most every corporation, consultant, self-help business book...you get the picture. I am amazed at Home Depot, where obviously the directive of the day is to great every "guest" with hello or good morning. What I could really use is some help with the information I am deficient in. I really do not want to be friends. I need some plumbing guidance. I'm actually flabbergasted that somehow they think "friendly" equates to customer satisfaction. I may be the minority, but I would rather talk to no one unless they can solve my problem!

And how does it make sense that there is a wait at McDonald's? They don't have much of anything that improves our lives but cheap and fast. In my world, you lose the fast and there goes the cheap as I waste productive minutes waiting for my Large Diet Coke no ice. It might be cheaper to send a driver to get it for me. And of course it is always a bummer when they run out of freshly brewed Pikes Place at Starbucks since that is essentially why they exist. Are they truly shocked that people actually come in and buy it? Or were they too busy being a cutting edge work place, chatting and being hip, to pay attention to the fact that they had run out of coffee to pour? And don't get me started on restaurant servers. These days, they are so

## December 2014

inattentive that you almost have to get up and re-fill your own water, yet they're still counting on a **20% tip** for the massive effort it took them to get off the couch (where they were most likely playing x-box in their pajamas) and drag themselves to work just to serve you a lousy burger and fries. I think you get the picture.

What I want to ask all of you, and myself is - *do we make it easy for potential customers to do business with us?* Do we answer the phone? Do we return calls? Do we send timely and well-written estimates? Do our crews show up on time? Are we responsive to questions and/or complaints? The reality is (in my opinion) that so many contractors are only in love with what they offer technically, which is a nice paint job. I however, do not think we are actually painting contractors. Rather, we are customer service experts who happen to provide painting as one of our many services. Most potential homeowners think that a good paint job is the baseline offered by each company they have requested a proposal from. Prior to selecting a company to complete the project, they have no idea of all of the others factors they should be considering before handing over a deposit check. They don't know which contractor does the best prep work, or is the neatest, or is always on time, or if they will even be around to address things if something is not quite satisfactory. They may, however, think the company that has eliminated the buying barriers with exceptional customer service prior to the actual project commitment might just be the company that does the best job. **Just something to consider...**

When you sit down over the next few weeks to finalize your game plan for the coming year (*hint, hint*), why not consider adding killer customer service as one of your main goals for 2015! I am pretty sure you already offer a great paint job.

**Scott Lollar**

Precision Painting and Decorating



**Save The Date**  
more details inside...

**AST 16 – July 17-18, 2015**  
Providence, RI





## Editor's NOTE:

It's hard to believe that another year is drawing to a close, but as the saying goes ...  
*"time flies when you're having fun."* We hope 2014 was a great year, that you lived, learned, survived the ups and downs, and are ready to tackle **2015** with some new tools and strategies under your belt.

While we all dread the slow winter months, please do yourself a favor and use some of the quiet time to catch up with family and friends, and the other part planning for the busy season. Just as all good gardeners know you have to plant bulbs in the fall if you want beautiful flowers in the spring, getting off to a great start when the exterior season does begin again is also the result of planning and "planting" in the quiet months. Wishing you all a beautiful holiday season and see you next year.

Yours truly,  
**Suhaiba Neill**

**A Note  
 From the  
 Editor**

## Name That Conference



We've received some great suggestions, **BUT** we're giving you one last chance to submit a new name for before we choose a final winner.



Please submit your suggestions to **Tony Kozak** by the end of the year. The board will select a new name from your submissions, and the winner will receive a **\$50** Amazon gift card plus bragging rights (which are priceless in this group). Ready, set, go!!

# Save The Date

**AST 16** – July 17-18, 2015

**Renaissance Providence Downtown Hotel  
 Providence, RI**

## Join the Residential Forum Team

We're always looking for new members to join the **Residential Forum** team. If you're interested in joining a committee (*Painter's Rag, AST, PDCA EXPO*, etc...) or would like to learn more about what it's like to serve on the board, please contact **Tony Kozak** for details. As a peer driven organization, we rely on our members to keep the forum moving in the right direction, and your contributions are essential to our success.

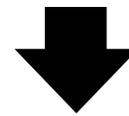




# PDCA EXPO 2015 & The PIPP AWARDS



Each year, PDCA members are recognized for their **OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS** in the industry. In 2015, these awards will be announced during the second annual Paintball.



**KILZ®** Picture it Painted Professionally Awards (PIPP)

2015  **KILZ®**  
Picture It Painted Professionally Awards

Have you completed a **UNIQUE, HISTORIC,** or just plain **BEAUTIFUL** project this past year? If so, we encourage you to submit your work to the Annual PIPP AWARDS contest. This is not only an opportunity for your company to gain national recognition, but to also recognize the employees who helped to make it possible.



**Entry Deadline**  
**January 8,**  
**2015**

The KILZ® PIPP Awards, the very first national awards to honor the **VERY BEST** of the painting industry, is PDCA's way of paying tribute to the work of professional painting and decorating contractor. This National recognition for a company's best work also honors craftsmen by showcasing their **STELLAR** work among their industry peers from across the nation. For **submission** and **guideline** questions, please call *Beth Thompson* at 800-332-7322.





## HOW WILL YOUR TEAM PLAN FOR **2015**?

By: **Jeremy Brooks**, *Brooks Painting*

**AS** we move into our final month of the year, the team at *Brooks Painting* is focused on **FINISHING STRONG, HITTING GOALS,** and **MAXIMIZING OUR NET PROFIT.** And while the focus is still on 2014, it is also time to start planning for **2015.** We have seen nice, healthy growth this year and our net profit is closing in on **10%**, so in terms of numbers, the year has been a successful one. We added a few new faces in the field this year and plan do so again next year. Because of this, one of our mantras for 2014 was to have **PROCEDURES FOR EVERYTHING.** Despite all of the planning and best of intentions, however, our year didn't fully play out as we hoped. With key positions vacant for long periods of time in 2014, we didn't accomplish many of our plans for the year.

I have been in the painting business for **22** years now, 18 of those years as the owner of *Brooks Painting*. I have been fortunate to have some excellent coaching during most of those years. We started holding planning retreats with our management team in 2005. This team was comprised of **MYSELF, my OFFICE MANAGER, my SALES STAFF,** and a **FIELD MANAGER.** I decided it was beneficial to leave our normal routine behind so that we could focus on planning. We rented a cabin near Lake Tahoe and spent two days evaluating and planning. We took a few years off from retreats during the down economy, as we were focused on simply surviving as a business. Last year we went away again, and we are now planning for our **2015** retreat. It is very refreshing to focus on the **FUTURE AND PLAN FOR GROWTH,** instead of just hoping to keep the business alive.

We go away in early January, but December or February could also be a good months for a planning retreat. The point is to **SET GOALS** and **MAKE PLANS** for coming year so that you have something to work towards as a team. I do think it is important to get away (*out of town*) so that normal distractions are not vying for your attention. The cost of a retreat will vary with the area and length of stay, but we spend roughly **\$1,500.** We take our key office staff, but no crew leaders or painters. The number of people is not important, what really matters is, that the people included are **KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO THE BUSINESS.** While we do have a good time on this trip, the attendees are expected to have quality input and ideas during "*working hours*" because what we are truly here for is to put our heads together and plan for the future.





The five of us spend two full days working on the business. We get to the house around noon on **Friday**, spend **THREE** to **FOUR** hours working before calling it a day. On **Saturday**, we will work a full day with a few small breaks before heading out for a special dinner to celebrate the year. **Sunday** we work through the morning, and then wrap things up to head home.

Our starting point is reviewing the **PREVIOUS YEAR'S BUDGET versus ACTUAL NUMBERS**. Next, we look at our marketing budget and ROI to evaluate **WHAT WORKED** and **WHAT DIDN'T**. We also complete a **SWOT** analysis and create a *"parking lot"* for items we want to work on at a later date. **Finally**, we review the upcoming year's budget and make any necessary changes. This includes talking about our employee events and when they will be held, our annual charity paint project, and much more. There really isn't any aspect of the business that we don't touch during our retreat. I spend quite a few hours preparing in advance so that we have everything in order and the meetings run smoothly. The result of every retreat has been **GROWTH** and **FOCUS** for the coming year. They can be a lot of work, but we have found our planning retreats to be invaluable, and they get easier to plan and execute with each passing year.

I would be happy to share our outline from last year's retreat with anyone interested in planning a retreat of their own.

Please feel free to send me an email at [Jeremy@brookspainting.com](mailto:Jeremy@brookspainting.com)





# NICHE MARKETS WINTER WORK

*Are you searching for something additional you can paint to keep busy during the winter months?* If you answered **YES**, and you have the time and ability, kitchen cabinet refinishing has become a hot trend over the past few years. Some of you may already offer this service, but the real question is – do your past customers know this? Past customers are the easiest to sell to, and sometimes a gentle reminder of the additional services you offer is all it takes to line up a few more jobs in the winter months.

## "THE CABINET CRAZE"

**By: Peter Moon**

- from the *Paper Moon Painting & Wallcovering Blog*

Okay, so you decided that your cabinets need a facelift. You thought your Uncle Herb said that he left you some "fracking land", but it just sounded like that, what with his south Texas accent; he actually said some "freaking land" (of course, Uncle Herb doesn't curse). Now you wish he would just keep his... never mind. Anyway, there goes your chance for new cabinets. So, *cabinet refinishing* it is.

*What are your options, and what are you in for?* As we stated in our previous post, outdated cabinets are a common plague and there are cottage industries sprouting up virtually all over the place trying to provide a quick, effective, affordable solution. The big-box stores are ahead of the game because they recognized the trend early. They have been offering the highest-priced

option, which is complete cabinet replacement, and the second highest option, which is new doors and refacing. Both of these options are *beautiful* - I've seen them in my client's homes - but as we pointed out last time, they run in the **\$10,000 - \$20,000** range or more. The big boys often make this possible through in-store financing options, so you'll be paying for those cabinets for quite a while.



Or you could go "old school" with the complete stripping and refinishing of the cabinets. And while it is possible, in my 37 years in the painting business, I have rarely seen it done successfully, and never by a do-it-yourselfer. Don't get me wrong, we've all seen a great piece of stripped and refinished furniture, so we know at some level it is possible to do the same with cabinets, but those who try, soon realize the daunting task they have undertaken. Every door can be like a piece of furniture, so imagine refinishing fifty to a hundred pieces in your kitchen alone; it is not for the faint of heart. *Maybe your Uncle Bob back in Kansas did it once.* Good for him. But I would almost bet you he was retired, with plenty of time on his hands, and probably worked in the construction business before then.

So then you think to hire a professional to do this tedious work. The key word is "tedious". The pro knows what this entails and will charge accordingly. So unless you've got access to someone who has recently escaped from a *Siberian gulag* and will therefore work for *pennies per day* (and he'd better have worked as a



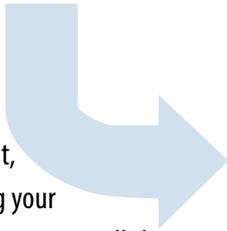


furniture refinisher before), then it's time to look for more *practical alternatives*.

The technique we've found to be the best overall is *lacquer*. We all tend to think of clear topcoats here, but lacquer can have a sheer tint like a *stain*, or solid coverage of color like a *paint*, so it can be used in any design scenario. And it has tremendous practical benefits. It is the hardest, most durable finish, which is why it has traditionally been used as a topcoat. (In fact, if your cabinets were factory-finished, there is a **95%** chance that they were done with lacquer.) Its adhesion qualities are excellent. It also dries incredibly quickly, thus allowing for multiple coats to be sprayed in one day (*so you can get back to your new kitchen faster*). It's a no-brainer. It's perfect for those of you wanting to retain the rich look of stained woodwork. By adding stain-like tints to clear lacquer, we can turn your old, "Little House on the Prairie" cabinets into *up-to-date, espresso-toned beauties*. Or walnut, or whatever type of wood stain you wish. Honestly, you have to see it to believe it. The moment I first saw cabinets transformed with tinted lacquer, I knew it was the future of cabinet refinishing and began to amass knowledge, equipment and crews experienced in lacquer spraying. With all the demand I'm getting for kitchen updates, I'm gearing up big time. Here is an example of a simple White lacquer cabinet job we just completed.

By the way, this technique typically runs **20 – 50%** of the cost of cabinet replacement, so you won't need to take out a loan to bring your kitchen into the twenty-first century. Not to mention all the space that'll be saved in the landfill. *Save a tree, lacquer your cabinets!*

(Just kidding... **kinda.**)



Of course, another way to refresh your cabinets is to simply paint them with oil- or water-based paint. I do this as well and, if you don't want the stained look, this works *beautifully*. Honestly though, I recommend using colored lacquer rather than traditional paint. It is roughly the same procedure and look, yet lacquer is usually more *durable* and definitely *quicker* to apply. So this means the workers should be out of your house sooner, and therefore the overall cost will be cheaper. We use traditional paint mainly when we're going to apply a decorative glaze or antiqued finish on top – otherwise, *lacquer wins*, hands down.

Finally, there are several product newcomers to the market vying for your decorating dollars, "*chalk paint*" among others. And while some of them have very cool properties for certain applications, I am not a fan of these for kitchens... I'll explain why in a subsequent post. So choose wisely and always remember that the joys of a cheap price fade long before the pain of substandard workmanship.





# 2015 *Colors* of the Year



By **Suhaiba Neill**

*Did* you know one of the top reasons that homeowners put off painting is due to the fear of choosing the wrong color? While **Pantone** is known worldwide as the leading expert on all things color, over the past few years the big name paint vendors have also begun to select and share color palettes with their customers in hopes of making choosing colors for their homes easier. While not all of the selections are right for everyone, having a basic idea of what's popular can be helpful to those who do not consider themselves "color experts."

Here are the top four for **2015** from *Pantone, Benjamin Moore, Sherwin Williams* and *PPG*. I would also suggest creating your own "popular" and "classic" color palettes for your specific customer base. What works in Key West may not be suitable in Cape Cod, and being able to help your customers choose colors with confidence will add to your ability to set yourself apart from the rest and deliver a truly satisfying experience.

## Pantone – Marsala 18-1438

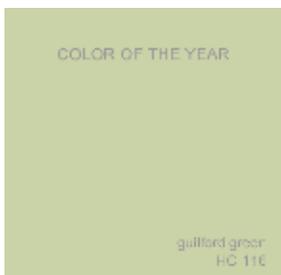


“ This hearty, yet stylish tone is universally appealing and translates easily to fashion, beauty, industrial design, home furnishings and interiors. ” – **Leatrice Eisman**, *Executive Director*, Pantone Color Institute

Add elegance to any room by incorporating this rich and welcoming hue in accent pieces, accessories and paint. **Marsala's** plush characteristics are enhanced when the color is applied to textured surfaces, making it an ideal choice for rugs and upholstered living room furniture.



## Benjamin Moore – Guilford Green HC-116

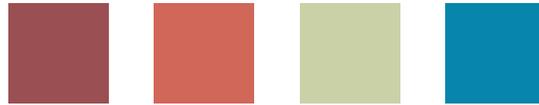


“ A neutral that's natural. A silvery green that works with, well, everything. No worries. No second thoughts. Just a brush, dipped in a can, whooshed on a wall, and a whole lot of happily ever after ”

– **Ellen O'Neill**, *Creative Director*, Benjamin Moore

Ground Yourself in **Green** - the color that ties things together. This silvery shade of green is the centerpiece of Benjamin Moore's color trend story for 2015, a palette of 23 shades of green, blue, blush and berry designed to mixed and matched.





**Sherwin Williams – Coral Reef SW 6606**



“Coral Reef embodies the cheerful approach to design that we’re seeing for the coming year. Its unexpected versatility brings life to a range of design aesthetics, whether traditional or contemporary. This carefree color will liven up a client’s space.”

– Jackie Jordan, *Director of color marketing, Sherwin-Williams*

Perfectly suited to celebrate a mid-decade year that’s poised for revitalization, **Coral Reef** (SW 6606) is Sherwin-Williams **Color of the Year 2015**. The uplifting hue is the perfect blend of pink, orange and red that can be used to liven up any space. Pulled from the Sherwin-Williams Buoyant palette, Coral Reef is influenced by our botanical fixation and optimistic outlook for the future.



**PPG – Blue Paisley PPG1238-6**



“As the world becomes more globally connected, our desire to explore the world around us, taking in the unique sights and colors of our natural surroundings, has grown considerably. We are experiencing the popularity of the soft blue shade across all markets, such as home decor, automotive and electronics, making it a clear PPG Color of the Year selection.”

– Dee Schlotter, *National Color Marketing Manager, PPG Pittsburgh Paints*

The PPG Pittsburgh Paints brand named **Blue Paisley**, a lavish, almost-but-not-quite royal shade of blue as its **2015 Color of the Year**. Experts from PPG Industries anticipate Blue Paisley to play a prominent role in the home decor trends for the coming year as homeowners look to positively influence their lives and decisions with vibrant hues.



# Vendor Spotlight



The president of **ADVISORS ON TARGET**, *Linnea Blair* provides business coaching and consulting services to small business owners who are ready to take action to become effective leaders and run a more profitable and professional business.

Linnea developed the **ON TARGET** Program for Painting Contractors in 2002 and since then she has worked one on one with well over **100** Residential and Small Commercial Painting Contractors to help them develop more successful painting businesses. She also provides group coaching, online business intensives, webinars and workshops.

Committed to helping painting contractors to grow their businesses, **ADVISORS ON TARGET** has been PDCA National Associate Member for many years, and Linnea regularly provides education sessions for Painting Contractors at PDCA Expo and for PDCA Contractor College. Linnea enjoys being a Partner Supporter of the PDCA Residential Forum and has attended **13** Advanced Shop Talk conferences! She started attending AST in 2002 and has *not missed one yet*.

Born in the Midwest, Linnea grew up mostly in Arizona, graduating from Northern Arizona University. She has lived

in many interesting and enjoyable places over the years, including three years in Spain. She now lives in the paradise that is San Diego, California. Prior to launching her own coaching business in 2003, Linnea was the business consulting manager for a large local CPA firm in San Diego.

For more information on Linnea's coaching programs for Painting Contractors, visit:

[www.AdvisorsOnTarget.com](http://www.AdvisorsOnTarget.com)



“ *I love the PDCA Residential Forum!* I find the members to be wonderful people who are committed to helping each other to be more successful in business. It is great to see how much good information is enthusiastically shared among Residential Forum members at AST. Many long standing friendships have been formed in this group, and I enjoy seeing how the member's businesses have grown and flourished over the years. I tell every painting contractor I meet that they should do two things whether or not they decide to work with me. First join the **PDCA** and second, become a member of the **Residential Forum**. ”



**2014-2015  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Executive Director**

**Tony Kozak,**  
PDCA Residential Forum  
63 Marne Rd., Buffalo, NY 14215  
(716) 844-8174  
tonykozak@pdcaresidentialforum.org

**President**

**Scott Lollar,**  
Precision Painting &  
Decorating Corp.  
(630) 774-6581  
scott@ppdpainting.com

**Vice President**

**Randy Fornoff**  
MTS Painting  
(602) 397-6778  
randy@mtspainting.com

**Treasurer**

**Doug Imhoff,**  
Imhoff Painting, Inc.  
(303) 650-0933  
imhoffpainting@msn.com

**Director**

**Mark Lane,**  
Rite Painting  
(206) 412-9688  
mark@ritepainting.com

**Director**

**Dan Brady,**  
Dan Brady Painting & Restoration  
(231) 943-0161  
dan@danbradypainting.com

**Immediate Past President**

**Suhaiba Neill,**  
John Neill Painting  
(610) 664-5555  
sneill@johnneillpainting.com

**Premier Sponsors:**



**Partner Sponsors:**



**Supporter Sponsors:**



**Disclaimer -**

While this newsletter is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information on subjects covered, the association is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional or technical advice. Accordingly, the association cannot warrant the accuracy of the information contained in the newsletter and disclaims any and all liability, which may result from publication of or reliance on the information provided herein. If legal advice or other expert assistance or advice is required, the services of a competent, professional person should be sought.

P D C A N A T I O N A L C H A M P I O N S

