

# What is the REMODELING Big50?

## REMODELING Magazine's Annual Big50 Award

The Big50 is a remodeling business excellence award for best practices. Every May, REMODELING inducts 50 new companies who have set the standard for professionalism and integrity through smart marketing, exemplary business practices, unique design, and extraordinary impact on their community or the industry at large. Big50 remodelers run successful, growing companies of various sizes that have taken the lead in raising the standards of the industry. To date, more than 1,000 remodelers who have demonstrated such excellence can boast being a member of the Big50.

### Nominations

The selection process begins in November and December, when we ask all of our editors and columnists for nominations. We also ask for suggestions from the leadership of NARI and the NAHB Remodelers Council, along with leaders in larger chapters of these associations. Typically, these sources generate an initial list of about 300 names.

We also include the names of remodelers who have, in effect, nominated themselves over the course of preceding years. Typically, these companies have already sent us the kind of information about their firms that we eventually seek from all nominees. The kinds of materials we like to see include clippings about special projects or community-based efforts they're involved in; distinctive marketing or presentation materials they use with clients; descriptions of unique internal management systems and sample forms; and photos of their work (especially if they want to be considered for the design category). Most important, nominees provide a paragraph or two explaining why their firm is different, why their approach to doing business is better, and how our readers can learn from their company. Many also include references and testimonials from fellow business people and other remodelers.

### Making the Picks

Once we've received nominations - typically between 300 and 350 names -- the editorial staff goes to work narrowing the field. Companies nominated by more than one source are strong candidates, as are companies who get strong recommendations from their peers. We talk with a variety of people at the companies themselves, and often to their competitors, clients, suppliers, and subcontractors. Big50 contractors must meet industry standards of operating excellence, and must measure up to certain financial benchmarks.

After all this research is complete, the REMODELING editorial staff selects 50 remodelers who exemplify the very best of the industry and have something to offer other remodelers in proven practices. Winners are matched to one of the following categories:

- **Business Savvy:** remodelers with effective, established business systems
- **Fine Design:** remodelers with high aesthetic standards for their projects
- **Industry Impact:** remodelers who have taken an active leadership role in industry building activities
- **Market Wise:** remodelers who have built their business around a keen understanding of the market they serve
- **Movers & Shakers:** larger remodeling companies that aggressively expand their market share
- **Niches:** remodelers who have built successful companies serving an easily overlooked but profitable corner of the market
- **Sales & Marketing:** remodelers with effective systems for obtaining leads and closing sales
- **Teamwork:** remodeling companies with personnel who work together effectively to achieve more than the sum of their individual work

Over the years, Big50 has become a tightly-knit community of more than 1,000 remodelers who return regularly to the Remodeling Leadership Conference, a two-day series of seminars that include the awards banquet at which the current winners are announced. One of the most valuable side benefits of selection to the Big50 is the opportunity to build relationships with other winners, many of whom keep in touch with each other throughout the year.

In the end, the name "Big50" is something of a misnomer, since the awards have little to do with a company's size. The award recognizes excellence and leadership, and the companies who belong to this select group set an example for the rest of the industry.

# Remodeling

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE REMODELING SHOW

## Joseph A. Fick, Jr., J. Patrick Fick, and Jeffrey P. Fick: Fick Bros. Roofing & Exterior Remodeling Co.

Source: REMODELING Magazine

Publication date: May 1, 2008

**By Chris Keimig**  
**Baltimore**

*Exterior remodeling*

*60 years in business*

*2007 volume: \$4.6 million*

*Staff: 15 office, 35 field*

# 50

**Big50**

Most replacement contractors can't survive on a steady diet of largely repeat and referral business, but Fick Bros. Roofing & Exterior Remodeling — a fixture in the Baltimore market for the last 60 years — is not your typical replacement company.

Joseph Fick (far left, pictured with Jeffrey, center, and Patrick, right), who took over the company in 1980, says the difference lies in their systems and practices. “We're probably one of the higher priced contractors in our market,” he says, “but, as far as we're concerned, our service and quality are far beyond the competition.”

Fick adds that the company works a lot with slate and copper roofing, which appeals to a higher-end client. “Few companies do that kind of work. Even fewer do it well,” he says.

Fick Bros. distinguishes itself from competitors in other ways, too. By instituting pre-construction meetings with clients and project managers, and internal post-construction meetings, Fick Bros. has adopted many of the practices of successful design/build companies.

Fick credits the company's consistency to his employees, many of whom have been with Fick Bros. for more than 20 years. The key: offering quality benefits and incentives, including generous profit-sharing.

“We want long-term, stable employees,” he says, “and we make sure we provide for them.”



Photo: Richard W. Rochfort