



“*Envisioneer makes it easier to sell remodeling projects. Every remodeler can build. It's selling the project that's key.*”

Ed Butler
President
Brickwood Builders, Inc.

On the Leading Edge

Cadsoft Envisioneer gives Brickwood Builders an edge over the competition, and gets projects sold.

Profile

Like many design/build professionals, Ed Butler grew up in the construction business. After college he worked in unrelated industries, but found himself designing and remodeling for friends as time allowed. In 2004 he founded Brickwood Builders, Inc. — a full-service design/build company specializing in custom remodeling and home additions.

With a new company on the go, Ed was looking for something “a little different” that would help his business get noticed. Envisioneer first grabbed his attention about four years ago at a remodeling show in Baltimore, when the software was first being introduced to the market. About a year later, he decided to buy it. “We’ve been with it ever since”, says Ed.

The Right Fit

Ed chose Envisioneer for a number of different reasons. The software’s short learning curve was a definite advantage to a company that was on the rise and looking to gain ground quickly. Also, Envisioneer’s competitive price fit nicely within the

company’s modest budget. In terms of features, Ed considered Envisioneer’s 3D modeling and presentation features to be the secret weapon that would win clients over and cast Brickwood Builders into the innovation spotlight. “I felt we really needed something that would make a difference between us and the competition, and I thought that 3D modeling was the way to do that”.

Smoothing the Road to Success

Prior to Envisioneer, Ed had extensive experience with graphic design and 3D modeling programs such as Adobe® Photoshop® and Dimensions®, which helped him transition to Envisioneer, but limited experience with home design software. Envisioneer’s user-friendly, point-and-click interface made it easy to jump right into the software. Within a week, he was using it for actual business projects. Although some concepts took a while to learn and understand, such as roofs and stairs, Ed has found Cadsoft’s technical support team to be very helpful. Additionally, he considers the Cadsoft User Forum to be a great resource when new issues arise.



Ed's Top 3 Features in Envisioneer are:

- **2D Designing.** Create structures and develop design ideas in a simple, point-and-click environment.
- **3D Viewing/Animations.** An easy switch to 3D shows gives customers a true sense of what they're getting.
- **Worksheets.** Easily create detailed elevations and other construction documents.

Ed connected with Cadsoft team members at a Customer Appreciation event held during the 2007 NAHB Builder's Show. Reflecting on that experience, Ed says, "Getting to know the people [at Cadsoft] was a big help. That's a big thing".

Giving Customers What They Want, and More

Ed's multi-phased remodeling process begins with concept discussions and information gathering at the customer's home. Ed's wife, who now does most of the designing, is then able to re-create the key elements of the home in Envisioneer, and start working out new design ideas.

According to Ed, Envisioneer's ease of use can be attributed to the ability to work in 2D, without having to do any 3D modeling. "It does it for you", he says. Envisioneer's 3D presentation and animation tools give him a distinct advantage when interacting with clients. He says that customers typically look past 2D plans and drawings, but are "wowed by the 3D". He adds, "As a design/build business, it's important to be able to show the customer what their new addition, kitchen, or whatever they've asked for, is going to look like. We want to show them how things are going to change, how they can move from room to room, and things like that". He adds, "It would be a hard sell if we were just working in two dimensions".

Typically they do two versions of a design: one that shows what the customer's budget will buy, and one that shows what their needs are. Ed adds, "Generally money is always an issue. When the customer sees the project in 3D, most of the time we are able to sell what they want rather than what their money will buy".

Currently Ed is also taking advantage of the new Worksheet mode

available in version 4.0. He states, "Being able to do elevations is probably the biggest help for us".

Boosting Business

One of Brickwood Builders' major projects involved a dated, two-story home built in 1963. As is typical of homes this age, the main level contained a number of small, closed-in rooms. Their goal was to design a new open floor plan that included an enlarged custom kitchen, a larger dining room, and a new laundry room.

Using Envisioneer they were able to easily create a modern design that was functional and fit the customer's budget. Taking it a step further, they created a design with some alternative enhancements. Because of Envisioneer's impressive 3D capabilities, the customer approved the higher-priced design, resulting in a 40% project upgrade.

Making a Mark

A member of the Greensboro Builders Association in Greensboro, North Carolina, Brickwood Builders was a participant in the 2007 Tour of Remodeled Homes.

Brickwood Builders set up computers at the tour to demonstrate how they use Envisioneer to help customers understand what they're buying. "If a person is spending \$100,000 on a project, they deserve to see what they're going to get", he says. Their use of Envisioneer captured great attention. "We used Envisioneer and its capabilities to show how we can help customers, and that was our differential factor. It worked out well for us. The newspaper picked up on it and included us in a write-up before the show." Not only has Envisioneer helped Brickwood Builders boost their business; it has also helped them stand out among the crowd. On the web:

www.brickwoodbuilders.com