

# Georgia

## CONSTRUCTION TODAY



## Challenging the Status Quo: Embracing Change

- Legislative Impact
- Creating Your Personal Leadership Development Plan
- Convention Highlights
- Young Industry Leaders Give Back to Community
- New Safety and Work Place Trends, Guidelines and Rule Changes
- Build Georgia Award Winners
- Plus . . . What's Happening in 2010

# Challenging the Status Quo: Embracing Change



By Trudy Shay Petty  
Petty and Associates

Let's get right to the point – adapt and thrive, or fall behind. There are no two ways about it and this applies in good economic times and bad. Sometimes as business leaders we become complacent especially in the good times where we perpetuate the status quo for ourselves and our companies. Why do we resist the opportunity to change and grow? Some possible answers – it is easier to do things like we have always done them than acquire new skills and new ways of thinking – we are by nature creatures of habit. Or we convince ourselves everything has worked fine up to this point so why go through the hassle of changing and learning something new. Or we are focused solely on surviving today and not thinking about or planning for the future.

A frequently cited reason for clinging to the status quo is fear – fear of the unknown, not knowing what it is that we should be doing better or different, not knowing how to get others on board if we initiated a change, or concern we will look less confident to others when we are out of our comfort zone. While it is often more appealing to do what is most comfortable, the definition of insanity is “doing things like we have always done them and expecting different results.”

See if you agree with this statement, ‘Most people naturally resist change.’ I have asked about this in seminars over the years and the answer might surprise you. On average, 80 to 90 percent of people agree suggesting the majority of people perceive change negatively. However if you look at human nature over the years, people are designed to change. Over time as we age from infancy to adulthood, we learn to change and adapt. The lesson is we need to capitalize on our natural ability to change and grow, and not fight it.

Now think about what happens when you and others hear the word “status quo.” Usually people wince thinking about its

A frequently cited reason for clinging to the status quo is fear – fear of the unknown, not knowing what it is that we should be doing better or different, not knowing how to get others on board if we initiated a change, or concern we will look less confident to others when we are out of our comfort zone.

negative connotation even if nothing specific is mentioned. Webster defines status quo as “the existing state of affairs.” So why do so many people hear something else? The answer is when people are happy with how everything is going in their life, “status quo” doesn’t trigger a reaction. However most people can think of at least one thing that is not working as well as they want it to and thus the negative feelings. Each of us has an opportunity to choose status quo or change, and for some people more than others, the choice is more difficult. You have the promise and uncertainty that change offers or the comfort and security of the status quo.

Successful industry leaders Walt Gill, President of Pinnacle Prime Contractors, Inc. in Valdosta, and Rilo Stephens, President of Eckardt Electric Company in Chamblee, both know to compete today they must strive to be different. When talking to these gentlemen you don’t get the impression that change is something they fear or resist. Quite the contrary – each embraces and promotes positive change for themselves, their employees, clients and companies.



Gill says, "While today's economy certainly presents unique challenges, to me the economic crisis is a shameful thing to waste and provides us at Pinnacle with an opportunity to reset our course. When we are running at 100 percent capacity and doing the best we can to keep up with projects and customers, we don't have as much time as we would like to refocus our energies, talents and insights on improving internal operations. We now have the opportunity to put new business processes in place to help elevate our firm from being perceived as a commodity to more of a value-based company. A hard bid delivery system combined with many industry leaders' lack of willingness or sense of urgency to learn and change over the years has contributed to some of the downfalls I see in the construction industry today. To help develop myself as a leader, I dedicate time every day to reading. I also have surrounded myself at the

company with people who are more knowledgeable than me in key areas. I do everything I can to accelerate my growth and learning to benefit our employees, clients and other business partners so we can successfully challenge status quo thinking."

For Stephens who grew up in the family business and is a third generation owner, leading change has been a careful balance of honoring the traditions and history of a 70+ year old company while implementing new ways of doing things. He says, "Change is hard and I knew it started with me. With new responsibilities to lead Eckardt into the future, I recognized early on my need for training to make the transition into this



leadership role. I became active with a national peer group of electrical contractors and have taken advantage of executive management education through NECA. I learned I couldn't rely on how my grandfather and father ran the company. Instead I needed to give myself permission to be open to new ways of doing things. While there has been some resistance, I am excited about the changes we are implementing that build on our company's strong foundation of taking care of customers and doing what is right. We hired a controller for the first time, upgraded and integrated our software across departments, and several of our project managers work from home a few days each week. My message to our employees is we are a great company but we want to be better."

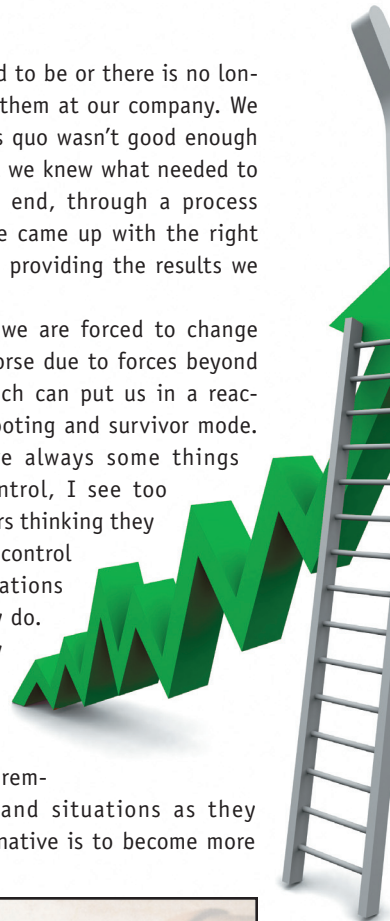
One thing for sure – when any of us decide to try new things, mistakes happen and we will falter in some of our efforts which is normal in getting to a better place. This is how we learn, grow

and make progress. As the saying goes, "if we aren't growing, we are dying," and this applies to people as well as companies.

Skeet McGowan, General Superintendent, with Batchelor & Kimball, Inc. in Lithonia, who oversees field operations and is responsible for company-wide safety says, "Over the course of a few years, I tried everything to get our people to take personal responsibility for being safe. We relied on the 'tried and true' methods of handing out rules and regulations, having our people attend safety classes, telling them over and over what to do, getting after them when they were unsafe, and rewarding them when they were safe. After all of that, we still weren't as safe as I felt we needed to be so after much trial and error, self-reflection and collaboration with David Batchelor. Today, we now are experiencing greater success in safety by investing the time to change one person at a time and do whatever it takes to get them

where they need to be or there is no longer a place for them at our company. We knew the status quo wasn't good enough and we thought we knew what needed to change. In the end, through a process of discovery, we came up with the right solution that is providing the results we want."

Sometimes, we are forced to change for better or worse due to forces beyond our control which can put us in a reactive, troubleshooting and survivor mode. While there are always some things beyond our control, I see too many contractors thinking they have a lot less control in certain situations than they really do. They typically rely on their well-honed fire-fighting capabilities to remedy problems and situations as they arise. The alternative is to become more



## The National Advantage



**It's the great price,  
service and dependability!**  
**Temporary Fence • Portable Restrooms  
Mobile Storage Containers**

**Serving all of Georgia**  
 3242 Bankhead Highway • Lithia Springs, GA 30122

**NATIONAL**  
 CONSTRUCTION RENTALS  
Since 1962

**770-819-7787**  
[rentnational.com](http://rentnational.com)



Recipient of the  
**Habitat**  
 for Humanity  
 Hammer of Hope Award



Established 1984

**Full Service Fire  
Protection  
Contractors**

- Inspections
- Service
- Design
- Installation

**24 Hour  
Emergency Service**

**770-995-1045**

**Fax 770-995-7966**  
 745 Creekside Industrial Court  
 Lawrenceville






proactive and open-minded about trying out new possibilities over what you can control and investing more upfront time in anticipating problems and planning both for the short and long term.

Company leaders can set a positive example and encourage new thinking by challenging the status quo and asking employees and clients the following type of open-ended questions:

- What is it we need to start doing better or different to make sure we get a better or different result?
- What is a worst case scenario for our future we need to plan for now?
- What are we doing that duplicates efforts or is done a certain way because this is how it has always been?
- What do we know about how our clients and their respective industries are changing? And what are the implications of these changes for us so we can be better prepared?
- What are the areas in our company where we don't see the results we want and expect?

For companies looking to control and lower costs, increase revenues, improve quality, win new clients, and achieve greater efficiencies, often challenging the status quo and opening up to change and new ideas can yield new and different approaches. Certainly no one is advocating change for change sake plus this type of change is harder to sell to ourselves and anyone else for that matter. It is easy to run into a lot of resistance when we are trying to change something even if it is for the better. Thus, we have to learn how to make a compelling case for why a specific change is needed and carefully show people how a proposed change can make things and especially their life better.

For Tony Pellicano, President of Pellicano Construction in Albany, his story about changing and growing as a leader came from looking for a better quality of life. "In the early '80s, the adversarial nature of the construction industry was taking a toll on me and the industry I loved so much was changing," Pellicano says. "I knew there had to be a

better way and wanted to recapture the feeling I once had of looking forward to going to work every day. Taking the time to reflect and understand myself prompted me to start transitioning the company in 1985 from 100 percent hard bid to more negotiated opportunities in the private sector. This meant putting a greater emphasis on marketing and sales than what we had done before. After several stops and starts in our

business development efforts, we began to see things improve tremendously in 2000 where today 90 percent of our work is negotiated and a result of the relationships we have built throughout the Southeast. To accompany this change, I assembled a different kind of team who could successfully lead the negotiated effort and allow me to transition more of my daily responsibilities to others. Making this happen sooner instead



## A partnership for savings.

Verizon Wireless has teamed up with National Purchasing Partners to offer exclusive discounts to members of the AGC Georgia Branch. It's the perfect opportunity to save on America's largest Push to Talk coverage area\* and America's Largest and Most Reliable Wireless Network. And make your business a lot more productive. As an AGC member, you may be eligible to receive:

- **22% off Monthly Access** on Calling and Data Plans. For existing customers or new 1- or 2-yr. activations, on plans with \$34.99 monthly access or higher. (Activation fees, taxes and other charges apply.)<sup>†</sup>
- **35% off accessories, plus savings on the latest equipment!**



Verizon Wireless 8975

To learn more, visit [findmyvzwrep.com](http://findmyvzwrep.com).

<sup>†</sup>Our surcharges (incl. Fed. Univ. Svc. of 12.3% of interstate & int'l telecom charges (varies quarterly), 7¢ Regulatory & 92¢ Administrative/line/mo. & others by area) are not taxes (details: 1-888-684-1888); gov't taxes & our surcharges could add 5%–37% to your bill. Activation fee/line: \$35 (\$25 for secondary Family SharePlan® lines w/ 2-yr. Agmts). **IMPORTANT CONSUMER INFORMATION:** Subject to your Major Account Agreement or Customer Agreement, Calling Plan and credit approval. Limited-time offer. Up to \$175 early termination fee and other charges. Offers and coverage, varying by service, not available everywhere. Accessory discounts are off retail prices and cannot be combined with bundled offers or promotions. Network details and coverage maps at [verizonwireless.com](http://verizonwireless.com). \*Largest claim based on comparison of carrier's own/operated network. Push to Talk only available with other Verizon Wireless Push to Talk customers. © 2009 Verizon Wireless. 94224



of waiting until I was closer to retirement has afforded me the opportunity to mentor and develop company leaders." Today Pellicano supports these leaders in an advisory role while personally overseeing the financial management of the firm. He says having a strong team in place allows him to focus more of his attention on the best direction for the company to grow – looking for opportunities to do things differently, staying on

top of market shifts, and keeping up with changes in the business climate. He also has more time to give back to the industry, something he cares deeply about, and invest in his own personal growth and development especially in leadership and marketing.

### Concluding thoughts

Are you waiting for things to get better or go back to 'normal' so you don't

have to change? Are you doing things like you have always done them before and expecting different results? Most of all, are you leading or chasing change?

Change is a gift and something we need in our lives. Just as people breathe, we must adapt to a changing world that demands alternatives. With change comes growth, improvement, discovery, and adventure. Without change, we limit ourselves – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Effective leaders embrace change to make a difference in their quality of life and in the lives of those around them. If the status quo produces the results you want, don't change. The choice is yours! ■

Trudy Petty is owner of Petty and Associates, a Dallas, Texas-based management consulting firm. For the past 15 years, she has worked with the AEC industry helping successful companies and industry professionals become more high-performing and customer-focused. In addition to being recognized as an expert in customer service and marketing, she has been instrumental in helping clients successfully navigate organizational change. She works with numerous AGC chapters including Georgia Branch, AGC and other high-profile construction industry clients in the U.S. Contact Trudy at 214.341.1713 or [trudy@pettyandassociates.com](mailto:trudy@pettyandassociates.com).

## WET ABOVE DRY BELOW



**DryJoist** is the first alternative to wooden deck joists that provides the structure of the deck, a waterproof solution and a finished ceiling—all in one step!"

### DryJoist Facts

- ✓ **Sustainable Building Product:** made from 50% recycled aluminum which is fully and repeatedly recyclable
- ✓ **Single System:** provides structural support and creates a waterproof area below your deck
- ✓ **100% Effective:** integrated 2" deep water channel is never interrupted or pierced by fasteners—backed by our Leak-Proof Guarantee and Lifetime Warranty
- ✓ **Simple Installation:** requires standard deck building tools and can be performed by any building professional or handyman
- ✓ **Non-Combustible:** fireproof joist system will not ignite or burn; ideal for high fire risk zones
- ✓ **Eco-Friendly:** a sustainable building product and qualifies for LEED credits

### Ultimate Appearance Flexibility

- ✓ Structural support for deck boards every 4"
- ✓ Eliminates additional supports to the joist structure
- ✓ Surface boards can be fastened 8" /16" /24" on-center
- ✓ Unlimited deck board options & design patterns



ADDITIONAL PRODUCTS BY WAHOO DECKS








WahooDecks.com    877.270.9387 Toll-Free    678.343.2317 Phone



## Looking for bid notices in Georgia?

Service and construction bids are printed in Georgia's legal organ newspapers in all 159 counties.

Georgia's newspapers go one step further and also make bids and other public notices available in a free & searchable database online.

[www.GEORGIAPUBLICNOTICE.com](http://www.GEORGIAPUBLICNOTICE.com)  
 Georgia Statewide Database of Public Notices