


# remodeling

YOUR TOOLBOX FOR SUCCESS

## BIG 50

2017's roster of top remodelers

A full-page photograph of Stephen Samuels, a Black man, standing in a construction site. He is wearing an orange blazer over a blue patterned shirt, dark trousers, and brown leather shoes. He has his hands in his pockets and is looking towards the camera. The background shows a brick wall, wooden framing, and construction debris on the floor.

**Stephen Samuels** of DES  
(Dreams Envisioned & Sustainable)  
Home Renovations does it all. He  
even built the website templates.



by  
**Marisa Mendez**  
and  
**Gary Thill**

**We don't pick the Big50** based on size, revenue, number of jobs, or firm type. Rather, we aim to recognize the industry's best and brightest. The firms honored this year range in age from 2 to 60 years old. They use innovative marketing techniques. They have embraced new technologies to find customers and improve operations. They subscribe to customer-first, customer-driven business models. As you read the profiles of this year's Big50 class, expect to discover new ideas and useful tips—practices that one day could help your company reach Big50 status.





### Todd Crockett

**Crockett Construction**  
Homer Glen, Ill.

**Years in Business:** 23  
**2016 Volume:** \$1.7 million  
**Staff:** 11

When the recession hit, a lot of remodelers closed. Todd Crockett opened up a showroom and a handyman service. "That got our face and name out in front of people even more. It helped develop a whole new segment of business," says Crockett, the owner and president.

It also helped Crockett refine his business model. Today, an expanded showroom helps customers make all of their decisions from inception to finished product—and sets Crockett apart. "They don't have to go to 15 different vendors or separate contractors," he says. "We facilitate the entire process."

That process gets a tech assist: iPads help customers envision projects, vendor apps assist in choosing products, and 3D rendering enables them to see their design come to life.

Crockett relies heavily on Houzz to help clients—and gain new ones. Leads are up 15% to 20%.



### Allyson Case

**Integro Rehab**  
Chicago

**Years in Business:** 4  
**2016 Volume:** \$1.3 million  
**Staff:** 4

Allyson Case (pictured above, standing) knows what she wants. Her woman-owned Integro Rehab focuses on major remodeling projects and historic homes. These large, high-budget projects mean that Integro completes an average of just four to six projects a year.

"We're not a company that takes everything we can get," Case says. "We focus on the type of work that we love doing."

Taking so few projects at a time may seem limiting, but Case says she and her team refuse to take small projects just to get additional revenue. "I turn down non-design projects by saying, 'I can absolutely do this for you, but I'm going to price myself out of it. You need someone who specializes in this kind of work.'"

Case adds that taking a limited number of projects allows her and her team to really devote their time to each client and control their product. As project manager, Case is the main point of contact for her clients, communicating by phone quite a bit. She also has a foreman and a superintendent on-site for her projects.

"There are a lot of people touching the project and making sure there's nothing falling through the cracks," she says. All of the actual labor is handled by a network of subcontractors Case built through referrals from other subs. To help ensure reliability, Integro's network has two subs for each trade.

"I have these guys under contract before I sign on the dotted line with my clients," Case says. "We have a detailed schedule of when these guys are supposed to be starting. There are no issues with availability." And since Case feeds the contractors a steady stream of work, it helps everyone control their prices.