

# EMPIRE STATE

## B U I L D E R



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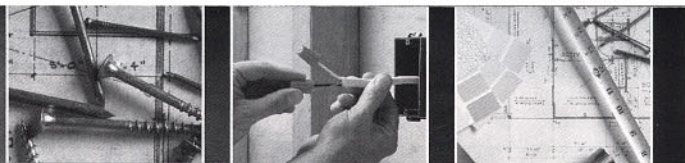
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**Builder Profile**  
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# GB Construction & Development

## Two People, Two Specialties, One Business

Husband and wife team alternate between remodeling and new home construction to create one successful business.



by Jennifer McDermitt

Talk to Gary and Joanne Bechhoff of G.B. Construction & Development, and you will think that they run two businesses — and in a sense, they do. Originally starting out in home improvements and eventually getting into new home construction, G.B. Construction & Development is

a company that is definitely market driven. Ten years ago, the Bechhoffs were thriving in the new home construction area, but today they are swamped with home renovations, dormers and extensions.

Despite the company's somewhat split personality, there is one common thread that keeps G.B. Construction & Development one of the

most regarded companies in Suffolk County, and that is their ability to customize. Whether building a new home or renovating an older one, G.B. Construction & Development makes each home special, customizing it to its owner and creating a one-of-a-kind creation that will impress for years to come.

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*I want to know what is going on at all times, and I am there from start to finish. I am not the type of person who can just let someone else follow through, and I think that is an important part of our customer service.*

— Gary Bechhoff, G.B. Construction & Development

## Builder Profile

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### I'm With Her

Gary started in the building industry at a young age, working for family acquaintances at 15 or 16 years old. However, he was the first in his family to get into the industry. In 1986, Gary earned his license and started G.B. Improvements. "I really enjoyed doing the smaller home improvement jobs like renovations, windows and doors," Gary said.

Those small innovations didn't hold his attention for long, however. In 1989, Gary built his first home from the ground up and changed G.B. Improvements to G.B. Construction & Development. "I still enjoyed the renovations, but building a home was something different. I decided I would do both in my business, because I like doing both," said Gary.

Gary's wife and vice president of the company, Joanne, brought a lot of experience and knowledge to the business as well. Joanne has a degree in business management, certification in architectural design, and she is a licensed real estate broker. Gary jokes, "Boy, she sounds more important than me, doesn't she?"

Although they work in different areas of the business, this husband and wife team run the business with one thing in mind: keeping their



**Before**



**After**

customers happy. "It's important for both of us to stay hands-on with the business," Gary said. "I want to know what is going on at all times, and I am there from start to finish. I am not the type of person who can just let someone else follow through, and I think that is an important part of our customer service."

### Customizing Makes Both Jobs Worth It

Gary says that knowing which hat he will wear in his business — the remodeler hat or the builder hat — is mostly market driven. For

instance, just a few years ago, Gary was building homes and that market was hot. However, things have changed dramatically in the last few months.

"We see the tide changing," said Gary. "More people are staying in their homes, and it has been really crazy with the amount of home renovations we have been doing. Interest rates are so low that people find it is easier and cheaper to just stay in their homes and make them better."

While remodeling has become the main focus of his business recently, Gary says G.B. Construction & Development is still involved in building and looking at land to purchase. G.B.

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**Before**



**After**

## Builder Profile

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Construction & Development builds both custom and spec homes, but Gary says that his heart is really in custom building.

"It's always nice to see a home go from nothing to something when you build, but I like the custom building because it has a touch of the person you are building it for, and I don't find myself building the same house over and over," noted Gary.

It's the idea of customization that also makes Gary enjoy remodeling so much. "I like taking someone's existing home and making it theirs. In other words, we are customizing their home to fit their present needs.

"Trying to make a home fit the customer can be a challenge, too. When you remodel, you are working off something someone else built and trying to make it all work. That can be difficult. But, in the end we aim to make the customer happy, and we are usually able to do that."

## Learning to Juggle Work, Family and Association Involvement

Staying hand-on with the business has its advantages and disadvantages, according to Gary. Besides running the business with his wife, Gary coaches three different sports teams and still tries to make every game his three children (two boys and a girl) are involved in.

"When you are doing your own estimates at night and selling part of the time, it can be hard to have a family life, but we manage," said Gary.

A member of the Long Island Builders Institute, Gary says that association involvement is one area that he wished he had more time for. "I don't get to attend a lot of meetings, but I still consider my membership to be very important. I know the association is working for me, even if I am not there."

As for the future, Gary says that only the market can tell which way his business will go, but he expects to be doing more remodeling. "Land is just getting too expensive in New York State. People are not going to be able to move like they did in the past, and they are going to want to improve their existing homes, which is just fine with me."

For more information about G.B. Construction and Development, call (631) 878-5865 or visit their Web site at [www.gbconstruction.org](http://www.gbconstruction.org).

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