

# DBS Remodel: Four Decades of Care and Craftsmanship

By Jeanne Cotroneo Darrow



Lead Carpenters Mike Whalen, Jeff Luse, and Andrew Philipp bring precision, professionalism, and heart to every home renovation project.



In this 1990 photo, President and Founder Brian Altmann stands in front of the barn where DBS Remodel (then known as Dutchess Building Specialists) got its start.

Brian was featured on the cover of *Remodeling* magazine's May 2008 issue.

It was 40 years ago this month when Brian Altmann, fresh out of college, grabbed his tools and started taking on handyman jobs for neighbors. Thanks to his craftsmanship, honesty, and genuine care for homeowners, what began as a simple summer job in 1986 has grown into what is now DBS Remodel—one of the Hudson Valley's most respected residential remodeling companies.

From the beginning, he had carved out a niche: high-quality design-build remodeling in occupied homes. Kitchens, baths, finished basements, additions, porches, decks, and whole-house renovations are all completed while families continue to live in their homes. It's a demanding specialty, one that requires exceptional communication, organization, and respect for the homeowner's space.

"Being a guest in someone's home is challenging, but we love that challenge," says Brian. "We've built systems and procedures that allow us to curate great success."

## QUALITY AS A SYSTEM, NOT A SLOGAN

As DBS Remodel celebrates its 40th anniversary, Brian reflects on the values that have shaped the company's identity. "I am most proud of our steadiness over the years in being committed to our brand slogan—when cleanliness, politeness, and trust matter—in our employee longevity, and in the quality of the remodeling experience we deliver."

For Brian, quality is a philosophy embedded in every step of the client journey. "Quality means doing everything the best we can and continuing to improve in perpetuity," he says. "We want the first call to be enjoyable, the introduction to be uplifting, the contract signing to be calm and pressure-free, the preconstruction meeting to be reassuring, and the build to be the best experience they've ever had."

He also believes in continuous, incremental improvement. "That mentality has shaped who we are," Brian says.

## TAKING THE LEAD

Leadership has been central to DBS Remodel's growth. "When you have over 25 employees, it's as much about being a leader as it is about remodeling homes," he says. His forming an internal leadership team 10 years ago was a turning point that strengthened the company's culture and stability. "We're focused on emotional intelligence (EQ). EQ is the cornerstone of great leadership."

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These efforts have not gone unnoticed. In 2024, Brian received one of the remodeling industry's highest honors: the Fred Case Remodeling Entrepreneur of the Year Award, a national recognition of innovation, leadership, and excellence.

## GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

Education has always been central to the company's mission. For nearly 20 years, DBS Remodel has hosted homeowner seminars on how to safely hire a contractor and ask the right questions. Altmann also wrote a *Homeowner Handbook: Your Guide to Selecting a Remodeling Contractor* and has spent 18 years as a national speaker and consultant.

Beyond education, DBS Remodel supports local families and nonprofits throughout the Hudson Valley, contributing to Habitat for Humanity, local food banks, clothing drives, Miles of Hope, Rebuilding Together, Bark and Build, and suicide-prevention initiatives. To help with recruiting, it also engages local youth through BOCES, community days, job fairs, online outreach, and is planning seminars for teens.

## A FAMILY LEGACY—AND FUTURE VISION

DBS Remodel has grown alongside Brian's own family. His daughter, Ayla, now serves as marketing director, and his son, Reed, recently signed his first contract as a remodeling consultant.

As he reflects on the past four decades and the future of his family enterprise, Brian offers a final thought: "I have unbelievable gratitude for everyone who has been part of this journey—our employees and their families, our amazing clients, and our trade partners and vendors. May God bless them all." ♦



The team at DBS Remodel is now 25 strong and growing.