

PROFESSIONAL

# PAINTING CONTRACTOR

SUMMER 2005

## ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Page 6

**3rd-Story Profits**  
Reflective coating helps  
painters tap into new market

Page 36



Mike Cesario  
Rockford IL



Randy Newman  
Chattanooga TN-Chattanooga TN



Alice Newman  
Chattanooga TN-Chattanooga TN



Ed Mayo  
Rochester NY



Larry Bankson  
Angleton TX

# NO WORRIES



*New York painter takes care of all the details*

E.J. Mayo is a professional painting contractor, but the best thing he offers his customers, he says, is “peace of mind.”

In a nutshell, that means three things:

1. Nothing but the highest painting standards.
2. No money exchanged until the job is done.
3. No surprises.

Mayo learned the value of customer service growing up in southern Colorado. His grandfather was a sign painter, his uncles were in the building trades, and his father, brother and brother-in-law are all painting contractors. Mayo started

young, painting rental properties and apartments for his dad’s business. From there he went into the retail grocery business, working as a journeyman meat cutter in Colorado, Idaho and New York.

His last supermarket job was in Rochester, his wife Amy’s hometown. Mayo had always dreamed of being in business for himself, and he saw painting as his best opportunity.

“I told my wife that if we were going to stay here in Rochester, I was going to chase my dreams,” he says. “I had big goals, things I wanted to achieve, and she supported my vision.” He founded Mayo & Son Painting in 1997. Today he employs three full-time painters with a primary focus on the upscale residential repaint market.

“I work with homeowners who appreciate the value that we can offer,” Mayo says. “I make it a point to cater to my clients’ needs, from custom staining and lacquering to hand-rubbed wall finishes to transforming any room to what the homeowner envisions.”

## Mayo & Son Painting

Rochester, N.Y.  
Founded 1997  
4 employees

**BUSINESS MIX**  
80% residential  
20% commercial



***"If you're going to be successful in this business, you have to build a rapport with your customers. Repeat customers are my most valuable asset."***

He insists that employees go the extra mile for their customers.

"We do a lot of little extras," Mayo says. "For example, we'll bring in the customer's newspaper or return their garbage cans from the curb. We've carried wood for customers, things that have nothing to do with the paint job. Even a little of this goes a long way in creating a positive impression."

Customers note his high level of service – most of his business comes from word-of-mouth referrals. He further encourages referrals by sending restaurant gift certificates to customers who lead him to a new client.

"If you're going to be successful in this business, you have to build a rapport with your customers," Mayo says. "Repeat customers are my most valuable asset." That's why he appreciates a paint supplier that shares the same ideals and dedication.

"Sherwin-Williams has been a big help for me in achieving the goals I set 10 years ago," Mayo says. "My paint rep and the people at the store really care about my business. They know that if I am successful, they in turn will be too. They want to see someone rise to the top of their game."

#### **Right paint, right process**

Situated on two Great Lakes with the chain of seven Finger Lakes nearby, there's a lot of water in the Rochester area, and the seasons are harsh. "Winters are brutal and there's high humidity in the summers," Mayo says. "It's hard to keep paint on a house in this kind of climate."

He overcomes these challenges with a combination of solid technique and quality Sherwin-Williams products. Dew point is a factor in paint failure in the Rochester area – Mayo minimizes

*E.J. Mayo wins repeat business in the exclusive Finger Lakes area near Rochester by providing top-quality finishes on both exterior and interior residential projects.*



the problem by directing his crew to wait until after 10 a.m. to start applying exterior paint. Mayo prefers WoodScapes stains for exterior shingles, a common substrate in the area. For hardiplank and other siding, he recommends Duration Exterior Coating.

"Duration's elasticity and ability to move helps my paint jobs last longer," he says. For interior work, he recommends Cashmere Interior Latex and Wood Classics stains. He recently put these four premium Sherwin-Williams coatings to good use completing a critical 8,000 square foot custom home project on Canandaigua Lake.

"They give me the product confidence I need on important jobs like this where there is extreme lakefront weather," he says.

### Balancing act

Even with all his attention to the technical side of painting, Mayo believes the business side is just as critical.

"It's a balancing act to juggle interior and exterior work with a small crew," he says. "I work hard to keep my people busy all year." When he first started his business, he bid low to land jobs, but now is content to get "four out of 10" at better margins. This also helps him manage his

own hours, dropping his weekly workload from 70 down to 40. To track employee hours, he invested in a product called Exaktime Jobclock, which enables him to automate timecards and more accurately track labor costs. Data can be downloaded daily into his Palm Pilot, then into the office computer.

"Employees tend to round up when reporting hours," he says. "This system is more accurate. It may be only five or 10 minutes every time, but when you're paying three employees those extra hours add up fast. The system helps me control payroll costs and work quality. It paid for itself in a year."

This strategic use of cutting-edge software, like his use of the latest coatings technology, is one way Mayo has found to give himself the same thing he gives his customers — that ever-elusive "peace of mind." **PPC**

## POINTERS *for* START-UPS

Rochester painting contractor E.J. Mayo's tips for a successful business:

**MONEY MANAGEMENT:** Pay bills on time and establish a line of credit so you have enough cash flow to support the company when payments are late. Focus on containing labor costs; if payroll gets out of hand, it will crush you. Maintaining a 40-hour workweek makes budgeting payroll easier.

**SCHEDULING:** Plan ahead so you don't waste time running around putting out fires. Coordinate travel time and make sure crews have the sundries and coatings they need. You don't want your top paid worker going to the paint store to get supplies. Also, encourage workers to pack a lunch. This saves them money, time and helps them be more productive after lunch.

**FOCUS:** Try to concentrate on one job from start to finish instead of scattering energy on a lot of different projects. I like to have my whole crew working at the same job site. When the job is almost finished, I'll send a couple people to the next site to prep and prime before the full crew arrives.



**Holly Davis of Mayo & Son Painting uses premium Sherwin-Williams Wood Classics to stain a door on a residential job site.**