

Women in Business Networking



Interview with Cynthia White, Centerville Building & Design



WiBN: Tell us about your business

Cynthia: Centerville Building & Design is a full service Design/Build business established to update and remodel kitchens, bathrooms, mudrooms, home offices, room additions, basements, decks, etc within our client's resources; and to provide home maintenance and repairs. We initially meet with our prospective client to discuss their project ideas, goals and range of available resources; and assess the existing conditions of the home. At this time a budget range for this project will be discussed. The size and complexity of the project may require design services to plan the space, altering the layout and flow of fixtures, cabinets or walls to simplify work processes and ergonomics. With larger projects, I'll meet with our client to select cabinets, tile, granite, faucets, lights, windows, etc. Material samples, photos of fixture selections, cabinet layouts with storage systems and detail drawings will all become part of the final contract, so we're all on the

same page throughout construction.

With repairs and home maintenance projects, work is often completed within a day. Quite often, small projects allow everyone to form a strong working relationship and we move on to larger modifications that really make an impact on one's home!

WiBN: How long have you been in business?

Cynthia: Centerville Building & Design was established in 2008 and become accredited with the Better Business Bureau one year later.

WiBN: What did you do before you opened your business?

Cynthia: I have a Bachelor of Science, in Interior Design, from Ohio University; and a Certified Kitchen Designer (CKD) accreditation from the National Kitchen & Bath Assn. (www.nkba.org). Throughout my career, in the last 25 years, I've been involved with planning functional, creative and aesthetically pleasing kitchens, bathrooms, home offices, home additions, decks; and banks, corporate interiors and restaurants.

Also, I've focused on working with clients to select cabinets, faucets, tile, flooring, plumbing and light fixtures, doors and windows to create a functional, beautiful and unique home.

WiBN: What or who has been your greatest influence in business and why?

Cynthia: As a recent college graduate, I had the opportunity to work for a very creative, brilliant and seasoned architect, in Cambridge, MA for 6 years. He believes in "Form follows Function" and taught me how to plan and design homes, and sent me to Harvard University's Architectural Lecture Series for 5 years, where I learned from other experienced architects and designers. Sarah Susanka is another architect I admire: in "*Home by Design*" she discusses "the architect's toolbox- the principles architects use to sculpt space and light, to imbue their creations with a sense of order, and in so doing, turn basic square footage and volume into exceptional living space." In "*The Not So Big House*" Sarah empowers homeowners to transform a house from a mere shelter into a comfortable home filled with character and beauty. Another person I admire is Judi Sheppard Missett, founder of Jazzercise, Inc: the instructors in this program are continuously trained to provide excellent cardiovascular workouts for women of all ages and abilities, the choreography is challenging, the music is current and the workout is great!

WiBN: What do you enjoy most about your work?

Cynthia: Using creative problem solving as a designer and space planner to change people's lives... getting to know my clients and their families allows me to plan and design their home to meet their goals, within their resources. I'm passionate about identifying how my client's home could be altered to meet their needs: One family has the challenge of needing to move their table each time they gather for dinner, because the kitchen is poorly designed, so we alter the cabinet layout, allowing more space for the dining area, creating work stations in the kitchen for her family to prepare meals together. Another client has a dropped ceiling with low cabinets, which hinders storage space and makes her "feel like she's in a kitchen cave": we open up the ceiling, install taller wall cabinets, and drastically change her kitchen into a bright, airy, inviting space. With a bathroom remodeling, there's a leak in the shower wall, causing mold and destruction. The oversize whirlpool tub has become a huge dust catcher. And there is no linen storage. We remove the tub, provide a linen cabinet and install a luxurious vertical spa, in the enlarged shower. Each morning my client starts the day in her own personal spa!

WiBN: What's the best advice you have received as a businesswoman that you wish to pass on to our readers?

Cynthia: Find mentors within your business field and gain as much information and learning from that relationship as possible, also take advantage of your mentor's network for additional learning and sponsorship.

WiBN: What has been the most effective marketing initiatives or programs you have used to promote Centerville Building & Design?

Cynthia: We receive lots of personal referrals from clients we've completed work for. Our clients continuously call us for additional projects, home maintenance and repairs. We take care of them and they take care of us.

WiBN: What do you do for fun/relaxation?

Cynthia: I enjoy spending time with my family and/or friends: hiking, cycling, kayaking, Jazzercising and shopping for antiques. Also, I get together with friends each month for a Cooking Light group, and a game night group. And, I'm always working on projects around my home and garden.

WiBN: What is number one business goal you plan to accomplish over the next year?

Cynthia: I would like to consistently photograph our completed projects and upload them into our website photo gallery.

WiBN: Is there anything else you'd like to share with our readers?

Cynthia: I would encourage any woman in business or looking for a career change to join us for a Koffee Chat and consider joining WiBN.

WiBN: How did you hear about WiBN?

Cynthia: An advertisement in the Dayton Daily News, Business Calendar caught my attention.

WiBN: What influenced you to join WiBN as a Status Plus Member?

Cynthia: Jeanne Porter invited me to join several times, she's been very patient with me. I was interested in joining WiBN from the first Koffee Chat, but couldn't fathom adding one more activity to my plate! The women in the WiBN are amazing... there is such a great diversity of professional expertise and personalities: I always learn something new and become so inspired, that I finally joined!

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