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Lisa Pickell: Raising the Roof on Custom Home Building

Carrying on a rich family tradition, the next generation at Orren Pickell Building Group keeps focus on the customer

By WINGER MARKETING (Open Post) July 30, 2015



Lisa Pickell, 35, Chief Operating Officer of Northfield-based Orren Pickell Building Group, may be a rarity in the homebuilding industry, but she's literally raising the roof to help the company's clients achieve their dreams of owning a custom-built home.

Q: What is it like to be one of the few women in the industry?

A: I don't know if it's really any different for me than it is for my brother, Eric, who runs our Remodel Lite division. It's important to me, no matter what, to make an indelible mark on the industry and, hopefully, I can serve as a good role model for other young women who want to enter this business.

Q: How long has the company been around?

A: My father, Orren, has been in the homebuilding business for 40 years now and I've been in the industry for almost 20 years.

Q: Tell us about a typical day at work.

A: There are no typical days. Every day is different. I oversee an awesome team of 23 people—and am involved in every aspect of the daily operations, focusing on estimating and project management. Every project from the personalities involved to the scope of work is 100% unique. It's never dull.

Q: What do you like to do in your spare time?

A: I love to cook, one of the reasons I attended the culinary program at Chicago's Kendall College and, happily, I just became a certified docent with the Chicago Architecture Foundation. On the weekends, you can usually find me giving architecture tours or scouting around the West Loop Green City Market and trying out all of the city's fabulous dining destinations.

Q: Do you like sports?

A: Do I like sports?! I am addicted to any adventure sport like skiing, sailing, ice climbing, and scuba diving.

Q: What's your dream job (besides being COO of OPBG)?

A: My dream job is to be a scuba diver at the Shedd Aquarium so that I can feed the fish and clean the tanks. I'm actually about ten hours away from having enough logged scuba time to qualify as a volunteer.

Q: Do you have any pets?

A: Oh, yeah; my BFF (best furry friend) Franklin and I met 2 years ago at PAWS. We are frequent visitors to the dog parks in Chicago.

Q: What's your advice to other young women who want to enter the homebuilding industry?

A: Get as much experience in the business as you can, including work in architecture, construction, marketing and home-product sales. Don't be afraid to get out into the field. Find a great mentor - I can't tell you how lucky I am to have two amazing parents that have both taught me TONS about our industry and our business. Surround yourself with experts, so that you can obtain answers to tough questions you might not be able to answer yourself. Never stop asking questions; even when you have an answer to your question already. There is always another way to do it, and maybe even a better way. Be a lifelong learner. The world is a big place and changes quickly.

About Orren Pickell Building Group:

With four decades of homebuilding experience, Orren Pickell continues to lead the industry in design, innovation and unparalleled customer service. Orren Pickell Building Group's custom homes, extraordinary remodels and unrivaled reputation are echoed by the hundreds of awards they have received. Capabilities extend to all facets of design and building, including Architectural Design, Custom Home Building, Remodeling, Vacation Homes, Home Maintenance, and CabinetWerks. For more information, please call 847-572-5200 or visit pickellbuilders.com.

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