



The Kitchen & Bath Insider[®]

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“Extreme Makeover - Home Edition”

A couple of weeks ago I was contacted by Gulick Associates, LLC to see if I was willing to participate in an episode of ABC’s hit television show *“Extreme Makeover - Home Edition”*, (Sundays 8pm, ABC). Going out on a limb here, I assume that the majority of my readers have a television set, and therefore already know about this great show. However, for the minority that may not, (or has one but doesn’t turn it on), I’ll give you a quick synopsis.

Actually, just calling *Extreme Makeover* a show doesn’t give it the credit that it deserves. It’s sort of a combination of *Queen for a Day*, *The Millionaire*, and winning the lottery. The basic premise is a family that is down on their luck is given a new house, but it goes much further than that. They’re not just given a house, they’re given a home, designed with their personal needs and desires incorporated into the building and decorating. They are also given a host of other things including appliances, vehicles, college scholarships for their children, computers, etc. Everything necessary to turn around the circumstances of their lives and give them a chance to get back on their feet.

From my myopic perspective, the most amazing part of this whole process is that it’s all done in one week, from the complete demolition of the old house, to the family moving in to their new home, eight days later. All of the contractors and volunteers donate their time to make this miracle happen, and it takes a lot of people, working 24/7 to accomplish this. How could I say no!

But who knew what I was getting into? I had seen the show before, but I never thought they really do this in a week, after all, it’s TV. How can you build a house from scratch in just a week? I volunteered to install the kitchen cabinets in a time frame of six-hours, on a Sunday evening. But as the day approached, the kitchen expanded to include a mud room/laundry room and eating area adjacent to the kitchen. Big deal thought I, I’ll just bring more men. Since it was scheduled for Sunday, I got my whole staff to agree to come, along with my youngest son, Benjamin, and some of the other counselors at the camp where he was working. Then, the project manager asked if we could handle the four bathrooms as well! I of course, said “no problem,” as long as we got additional volunteers to help us and some extra time.

Our start time of 7:30pm on Sunday had to be moved up because the framing of the house took longer than expected, so we didn’t start until 4am! It was like working in a bee hive, with hundreds of people working on different aspects of the house, all at the same time. But, I’m pleased to say that there wasn’t one fight! It was quite an experience. We ended up working for 16 hours straight, with the finishing touches being done by the volunteers the next day. While we worked, additional volunteers brought us drinks, sandwiches and wet towels (it was over 90 degrees that day).

The feeling on the site was incredibly positive as we were all working our hardest (and fastest) to help a family in need. And all the while, the cameras were rolling. Producers, directors, and STARS were all over the site, working, helping and kibitzing.

We didn’t get back to the showroom until about 7pm on Monday, exhausted, but everyone felt really good about participating in the project. (Many thanks to all our clients that were scheduled for Monday and had to be put off one day). My hat is off to the show’s project manager who dealt with each challenge, (we don’t like to call them problems), as quickly as they arose, and incredibly, he does this every week!

For details on the project that we worked on you can go to Gulick Associates, LLCs web site at <http://www.gulickassociates.com/extreme/index.htm> and ABC’s web site: <http://abc.go.com/primetime/xtremehome/>.

Unfortunately, now each of our clients who has heard about our experience with “Extreme Makeover – Home Edition” wants their project completed in six hours. Well, forget it. There were approximately 3,000 volunteers helping us on this project, and without them, your stuck with our same old schedule.