



*If you can envision it,
we can build it.*



FALL 2008 NEWSLETTER

Welcome back to all of our readers. The first half of 2008 has brought many new opportunities to Vision Builders. Our work took us all over New England, into cities and towns across Massachusetts, building out a Newbury Comics in Norwood, the Dudley Square Restaurant in Roxbury, and various renovations for the Archdiocese of Boston.

Our crews set up in several New England locations, transforming McDonald's fast-food restaurants into new "McCafe's".

Executive Vice President Bob Zicher and I also traveled to Las Vegas in May to attend The International Council of Shopping Centers Convention, which brought landlords, tenants and developers together to create opportunities for expansion in retail markets. We learned more about the latest trends in the industry, and met with some of the most influential and powerful names in the business. We'll be bringing what we learned out into the field as we take on new construction projects for our growing firm.

Vision Builders will soon be constructing a new 6500 square-foot retail building in Swampscott, MA, for a repeat client, Centercorp Retail Properties, a company for which we constructed a building in Salem in 2007. The new space will include a Dunkin' Donuts, a T-Mobile and one of the area's first Five Guys Burgers. We work hard to establish relationships with customers that lead to repeat business, and we're excited to continue to grow with Centercorp.

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**Quick Service Restaurants
Pick Up Speed in a
Slowing Economy**

by
Anthony Gagliardi, President,
Vision Builders Co.

As Vision Builders grows in scope and size, we promise to keep our focus on upholding our promises to clients and customers, especially when the hurdles we face seem insurmountable. We will work hard to hone our skills, learn new techniques, and enhance safety procedures, so that our projects run as seamlessly as possible.

We appreciate your business, and know that together, we will build the foundation for a successful future

Sincerely,
Anthony Gagliardi, President, Vision Builders Company, Inc.

From Cars to Comics: Project Spotlight on Newbury Comics



When the Newbury Comics in Norwood, MA, closed last year, fans of the New England-based music retailer wondered where they would get the latest CDs, DVDs, and other pop-culture related goods, including hard-to-find comic books. Never fear: like the superheroes that grace the pages of the serial story books, Newbury Comics reappeared on the scene just this month, bigger, better, and more equipped to handle its local fan base than ever before.

Auto Giant Ernie Boch's New-to-Used Cars dealership on Route 1 in Norwood recently underwent a "quick change" that resulted in the brand-new 12,500 square-foot retail store. The challenge: how to transform a former showroom and service garage into a hip, happening space to showcase comics, not cars, CDs and DVDs, not drive shafts.

Anthony Gagliardi's *Vision Builders'* team set out on an aggressive 14-week schedule, rebuilding the location to accommodate the growing demand for Newbury's services and products. "We had to completely gut the place," he says. "We poured a new slab floor, demolished all the tiny stock rooms to create a big, open space, and installed new walls, and new bathrooms, which called for all new underground plumbing. We

In today's challenging economic environment, it's difficult for developers and business owners alike to predict a company's survival rate. Increases in gas and energy prices have put the brakes on transporting and traveling, and the skyrocketing cost of food has many restaurateurs starving for profits.

You've most likely experienced the impact already. Favorite sit-down restaurants seem to be empty on most weeknights with would-be customers opting to cook at home or wait for the weekend to splurge on a meal out. So, where's business booming? Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs).

It is estimated that more than 25% of adults eat at fast-food restaurants on a daily basis. This is one trend that doesn't seem to be slowing, along with the economy.

The QSR industry is thriving, in part, because customers are looking for value pricing. Even though casual dining supply growth is dropping, none of the numbers indicate that people are giving up dining out -- they're just looking for a less-expensive price point when they do dine out.

If you're a franchiser, developer, or business owner thinking of expanding your physical space with an addition, remodel, or a whole new QSR, follow this advice:

also remodeled the whole façade of the building," adds Gagliardi. "So, there was a lot of work to do, but not a lot of time to do it."

The last-minute addition of a coffee bar to the store wasn't a jolt to these veteran builders, even though it meant clearing it with the health department, often a time-consuming task. "We were wrapping up," says Gagliardi, "but we shifted resources, reworked crew schedules, and handled the logistics so that the clients experience was seamless. We don't mind rolling with late changes to a project plan."

Gagliardi and his crew finished on schedule, everything on their "punch list" complete, to the delight of the client. "Anthony was accessible at all times and communicated well with us," says Mike Holland, who heads up Purchasing, Properties and Construction for Boch Automotive. "He pushed his staff, worked around the clock to meet deadlines, and came up with necessary solutions to get the job done."

Gagliardi says it's important for retailers who expand or relocate to do it quickly, or risk losing out to the competition. "Many business owners think it will cost too much time or money, but with the right team, they can grow their company, and their customer base."

Just as the popular retailer has to work fast to stay in tune with the latest in entertainment, music, and novelty merchandise, so, too, does **Vision Builders**, to stay true to its company's mission. "When our team promises a client we'll reach a goal, we do everything we can to meet it," says Gagliardi. "Anything less than our best is not an option."

Building a Culture of Safety



Pick a good builder

Be sure to choose wisely when picking a construction firm to build out your physical space, one that comes highly recommended, has great references, and has worked on similar projects in your sector. You'll optimize time and money if you make the right choice up front.

Open quickly

The faster you can open your doors to a public hungry for your products or services - in this case, food - the better chance you'll capture a good share of your target audience. If you advertise or post an opening date, make sure your builder can meet those deadlines. Never open without being 100% done with the build-out or remodel.

Multiple Branding Sites

Consider joining with other business owners, or, if you can handle it on your own, open a "multiple branding site" - one large restaurant that includes several major chains onsite to satisfy a variety of customer needs. This works for groups who want to please their entire party in one quick trip, and for business owners who want to split the rent but not the profits.

Focus on a space that will allow business during "fringe" hours

More QSRs are reverting to the "carhop model," by extending traditional eating hours or staying open around the clock with convenient drive-thru service. These venues are being frequented by the younger set, who have more disposable income to spend on

Construction has always been a high-hazard occupation. Safety procedures have been updated over the years, but on-site incidents are just part of the job, a danger most workers think comes with the territory.

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, construction has the third highest rate of death by injury. Leading causes of death among construction workers are falls from elevations, motor vehicle crashes, electrocution, the misuse or malfunction of machines, and being struck by falling objects.

Nowadays, many General Contracting firms are taking extra measures to make sure they're not part of these statistics. Private safety consultants, drills, crisis planning, and weekly "toolbox talk" sessions are some of the procedures instituted by *Vision Builders* to prevent worksite accidents or injuries.

As *Vision* grew, Anthony Gagliardi took the prevention theory one step further by hiring Applegate Associates, a firm that provides comprehensive Safety and Health Management services. Applegate develops a company-specific written Safety Program and Procedural Manuals, and offers classroom site-supervisor instruction and inspections in the form of "on the job" training.

"Anthony realizes that pre-planning for safety will ultimately affect his company's bottom line," says Applegate's Vice President Catherine Applegate. "One bad accident can put a company out of business, and ruin its reputation for years to come." Applegate inspectors conduct unannounced inspections/training on projects twice a month. *Vision* benefits, since employees think: "What if Applegate shows up today?" Additionally, the company provides annual refresher classes, and conducts training for new hires.

Gagliardi admits maintaining safety is an ongoing challenge, as worksites change on almost a daily basis. "We urge staff to notice what's different about each job and 'think it through' before hammering in the first nail," he adds. "We take our safety training very seriously." Applegate also provides *Vision* an annual report card with a breakdown of any recorded violations.

"It's important from a financial standpoint, but it's also smart to practice good safety out of an ethical responsibility to employees," says Applegate. "If OSHA visits a worksite and cites a contractor, having updated systems and procedures in place can help towards appealing those citations, saving a company time and money."

"Clients appreciate the safety program too, because they know that accidents cost them, either directly or indirectly," echoes Gagliardi. "This prevents them from being liable for incidents that happen on their property." He says this line of thinking reinforces *Vision Builders'* promise to meet customer goals on time and on budget.

quick meals and speedy service; the demographic with which the fast food industry is seeing most of its growth. Operators of QSRs should allow for changes to their physical space to accommodate future trends.

Give customers options, but don't fix what's not broken

By giving customers new options, be it value pricing on combo meals, or new offerings like McDonald's McCafe menu, you'll engage your current clientele, with the option of capturing an additional share of the market. That's not to say you should stop offering the staples that made you successful in the first place. Think outside the take-out container and test-drive some new ideas.

Your builder should understand your goals, from design and preferred materials, to your timeline, and everything in between.

In 2005, Americans spent roughly \$127 billion at quick service restaurants, and those numbers are growing. To be successful in today's market, build your business after careful research, painstaking planning, meticulous accounting, and with solid construction. Only then will you know you've truly protected your investment.

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Vision Builders Sets Sights on Big Name Projects

Vision Builders started the year off working on several new major projects, expanding its scope to include a range of new industries. From renovating two old churches in Whitman and Carver, MA, for the Archdiocese of Boston, to building out the Dudley Square Restaurant in Roxbury, to jobs with retail giants like Walgreen's, and Mattress Discounters, crews have been keeping busy meeting a series of aggressive deadlines.

Likely the most noteworthy of those projects is the renovation of nearly a dozen McDonald's restaurants; transforming these particular locations of the veteran fast-food chain to include new McCafes: same menu, same quick service, but with a whole new look and feel. There's a different décor, with "cushier" booths, strategically mounted plasma TVs, and free Wi-Fi, plus a slew of new coffee-bar type menu items like lattes, cappuccinos, smoothies, iced coffee and sweet tea. The idea: customers will now think of McDonald's when they think of coffee.

By the middle of 2009, McDonald's will upgrade the majority of its 14,000 U.S. restaurants; a good majority of which are independently owned by franchisees. The fast food chain claims it already sells half-a-billion cups of coffee every year, and that one in every ten cups consumed outside the home comes courtesy of their brewing machines. In order to capitalize on an estimated \$60 billion industry, most owners have ordered up "McMakeovers" for their restaurants.

Vision Builders has already completed work on nine locations across Massachusetts: including Swansea, Lawrence, Plainville and North and South Attleboro; and in Rhode Island: in Pawtucket, East Providence, and two locations in Cumberland. The firm is doing the construction work overnight, so customers who stop in for their morning "cup of Joe" see the transformation take place right before their eyes. VB is on deck to renovate dozens more restaurants in the latter half of the year.

"It's a challenge, since many of the McDonald's we've worked on are technically open 24 hours a day," says Anthony Gagliardi. "Customers will be stopping at the drive-thru to order some fries, and we'll be drilling a hole in the floor. We've managed to build out the new coffee areas while the restaurant continues to serve its clientele." In some cases, Gagliardi says, the locations that aren't open around the clock will close a little earlier and open a bit later, but the public is never inconvenienced.

We hope you enjoyed our newsletter. Please visit our website for a complete list of current projects awarded to Vision Builders.

Sincerely,

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